

THE ELEMENT OF COMMITMENT AS A CATALYST TO AMAL JAMA'I CONCEPT (TEAMWORK): A STUDY ON AL-WAHIDA MARKETING SDN. BHD. ENTREPRENEURS

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Abstract

This study focuses on a management issue that involves commitment as a catalyst to the concept of teamwork. One of the most talked about issues in an organization at present is about ineffective teamwork that is often caused by a lack of commitment in the discharge of the tasks entrusted. Hence, this study aims to identify the element of commitment as a catalyst to teamwork among the staff at al-Wahida Marketing Sdn. Bhd. For the study, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are employed to investigate the issue of teamwork, and commitment, as one of the main elements. The findings of this study show that commitment is a contributing factor to the concept of teamwork. In addition, the study has also managed to portray the actual reality behind the concept of teamwork which is practiced by a leading Bumiputera company that has successfully marketed its products through teamworking. Sample of the study involves 144 entrepreneurs who have been awarded by Syarikat HPA. The selected respondents are a mixture of both ordinary entrepreneurs, and those who hold ranks in the al-Wahida organization throughout Malaysia.

Keywords: Commitment, Catalyst, Amal Jama'i, Al-Wahida Marketing

Definition of 'Amal Jamā'ī According to Linguistics and Nomenclature

Linguistically, '*amal*' means jobs and professions, and it can also refer to various other meanings. In *Kamus Mawrīd* (Mawrid Dictionary), apart from the definition of 'jobs and professions', the words '*amal and jama'i*', have been combined to mean *teamwork* [1]. Thus, the word '*amal jamā'ī*', when broken down into two parts, namely '*amal*' and '*jamā'ī*', each word carries its own meaning. '*Amal*' refers to the existence of something that becomes the hope of the soul, or what is commonly known as charity, either in the form of speech, bodily acts or acts of the heart. '*Amal*' should be based on the intention as no charity is without intention. Each '*amal*' is evaluated by Allah S.W.T, based on the intention. '*Amal*' can also be categorised into three types, namely, charity, acts of worship and righteousness. Generally, '*amal*' that relates to acts of worship, means all types of activities, either in writing or action, verbal, as well as those actions that are clearly manifested or obscure, that are addressed to, and intended for Allah S.W.T. In the words of Allah S.W.T:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

(Al-Dhāriyāt 51:56)

Translation: And I (Allah) created not the jinns and humans except they should worship Me (Alone).

As stated in the *Lisān al-'Arab*, Allah S.W.T has ordered the believers that when performing a job based on the '*amal jamā'ī*' way, they are instructed to follow the instructions and get the consent of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W [2]. Thus, the word '*amal jamā'ī*' when combined, means work or task, that is carried out as a team.

The Understanding of 'Amal Jamā'ī

A job, or a task, that is done together in a group or as a team, will generate more benefits, blessings and advantages as compared to task that is done alone [3]. In the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W., there is a clear allegory on the advantages and strengths of doing work consensually in a team-liking it to a herd of goats that will not be eaten by a wolf but the wolf will definitely attack a lone goat that has gone astray from its herd [3, 4]. There is also a Malay saying about similar situation on the advantages of teamwork – a single skewer can easily be broken, but not a clutch of it [5, 6]. Hence, the concept of '*amal jamā'ī*' is well renowned by all on its advantages, rather than working on one's own. Historically, it has been proven that the previous Moslem generations were successful due to their consensus planning. In fact, it has been encouraged for Moslems to be in congregation at all times, as this is in accordance to what the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W, and those who were rightly acknowledged as his companions, tabi'in, and religious scholars, would concur [2, 7].

No matter whether they were in peace or facing adversities, the prophets, their companions, *salaf al-ṣalīh* and scholars had always carried out their duties in a congregational manner. The application of '*amal jamā'ī*' as a strategised work concept helps to ease their trials and tribulations of life [8, 9]. As an example, when Moses and Aaron allied together to face the Pharaoh, as recorded in the Quran, it portrayed good teamwork and collaboration between the two that led to positive results despite facing the tyrannical Pharaoh. Each work performed was based on the revelation of Allah S.W.T that served as a point of reference to them [4, 10]. Islam guarantees its believers success to those who adhere to the Holy Quran, which is also a guide to the Apostles, as their main point of reference when facing the worldly life and the hereafter [7, 11]. Every task performed will usually have some form of a base as its guide. The arrival of

the Messengers itself shows that the human race is in dire need for guidance and enlightenment for the realization of their lives to become civilized human beings. In the word of Allah S.W.T:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

(Al-Aḥzab 21: 21)

Translation: Indeed in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad S.A.W) you have a good example to follow for him.

Background of Al-Wahida Marketing Sdn. Bhd.

Al-Wahida Marketing Sdn. Bhd. (AWM) is one of the subsidiaries that to market's the products of Herba Penawar Al-Wahida Industries Sdn. Bhd. (HPA) which was founded by Ismail bin Ahmad from Perlis. AWM was established on 1 February 1996 with the registration number 376131-A. It obtained its license under the Direct Selling Act from the Ministry of Home and Consumer Affairs, and functions through the *Multi-level Marketing* concept system. As a subsidiary of HPA, AWM has to ensure that each product item must reach all the target groups. Therefore, the main purpose of why this company was established is to market the HPA products throughout Malaysia. The company was initially known as Perubatan Tradisional Al-Wahida (Al-Wahida Traditional Medicines) that began as a small operation in September 1987. The founder who was born on June 1, 1963, was the son of a farmer who grew up in a modest family [1, 12].

Literature Review

[5, 6] has conducted a study on the relationship of teamwork and teamwork leadership with four aspects of group behavior, and they are job satisfaction, rapport, commitment, and performance. [8, 13] in her study on civil servants and teamwork, found that elements such as clear network goals, commitment, information sharing, trust, good leadership and other related elements, have already been practiced highly satisfactorily by civil servants, ranging from N3 senior officers to those in the support staff group. Teamwork involves aspects of trust, partnership and commitment [11] states that teamwork is a job undertaken with planned activities, that is internalised together towards achieving a purpose. In addition, he found the job requires commitment from all levels and involve all members of the organization as a whole. [12, 13] define teamwork as an understanding and commitment between all members of the team towards achieving their team goals[9]. states that teamwork is a collaboration of a number of individuals with interdependent competencies, in terms of capabilities, expertise, skills and knowledge. They each bear accountability and commitment to the performance of the team and are ever ready to carry out any challenging tasks.

Methodology

This study encompassed data collection related to the subject of the study. Documentation was the main method used as it was more relevant to the title. It focused on documents that were related to the research problems. In addition, field work was also conducted among the entrepreneurs at Al-Wahida Marketing Sdn. Bhd. Other methods used in this study were questionnaire and observations. Before conducting any external fieldwork, questionnaires were distributed for reviewing, to several potential respondents who could give constructive feedback. Generally, this form of survey covers two sections:

Part A: Personal Information

Part B: Commitment among Entrepreneurs in a Team

Items in the questionnaire were adapted from previous studies (Abu Bakar Sarpon, 2005).

Findings

The findings of this study are divided into two parts, namely Profile of Respondents, and Element of Commitment among Entrepreneurs in a Team.

Profile of Respondents

The respondents who were selected were the ones directly involved in the AWM MLM. They consisted of those who were from the ordinary and higher ranks, such as the Jati Setia Director (PJS) and the Jati Emas Director (PJE) throughout Malaysia. In addition, the respondents also consisted of previous Jati Emas Directors and other ranks, who had been with al-Wahida Marketing Sdn. Bhd. ever since its first inception. Out of the total 144 respondents involved in this study, 68 were men (47.2%) and 76 were women (52.8%), with a mean age of 32.6 years. The most populous in the age category, was 45 people, who were of 41-50 years old (31.3%), followed by 43 people (29.9%) who have a mean age of 20-30. Subsequently, 36 people (25.0%) were with a mean age of 31-40, while 17 people (11.8%) were of those aged 51-60. The remaining 3 persons (2.1%) were those aged 60 years and above. Most of the respondents were married, with a total of 123 persons (85.4%), followed by a total of 12 people (8.3%) who were single, 6 people (4.2%) who were widows, while the remaining 3 (2.1%) were widowers.

Almost half of the respondents had a good level of education, with 62 (43.1%) holding *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM), followed by 22 (15.3%) with a bachelor's degree, and a total of 20 respondents (13.9%) with a diploma. 14 (9.7%) respondents held the *Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia* (STPM), and subsequently, 8 (5.6%) obtained *Sijil Rendah Pelajaran* (SRP) and master's degree each respectively, while 7 (4.9%) respondents had skills certificates from various local skills institutions. However, there were 2 (1.4%) respondents who only had primary school certificates and only 1 (0.7%) who held a doctorate degree.

On the other hand, in terms of highest level of religious education, majority of the respondents did not formally possess any. Upon close scrutiny, it was found that a total of 94 (65.3%) respondents had no formal religious qualification certificates. A total of 36 (25.0%) respondents attended formal religious education but only up to the secondary level. 6 (4.2%) respondents possessed the *Four Sanawi/Shahada Certificate*, 5 (3.5%) received religious education from the Islamic cottage (traditional) institution, and only 3 (2.1%) respondents obtained the *Malaysian Higher Religious Certificate* (STAM).

Elements of Catalyst to the Concept of 'Amal Jama'i (Teamwork) among the AWM Entrepreneurs

To strengthen the existing findings, a total of 144 questionnaires were distributed and the results indicate that the element of commitment acts as a catalyst to the concept of teamwork in al-Wahida Marketing Sdn. Bhd.

Based on the result analysis of the element of commitment, it is found that items on spiritual dominated the other items. This is due to the fact that items on sincerity attribute as the main causal factor for the majority of the entrepreneurs to be committed to the organization. In addition, the balance between material and spiritual aspects are evident for items 2, 3, 4 and 5. As such, the study found that a total of 123 (85.4%) respondents have strongly agreed with the item on *sincerity is the heart to an entrepreneur's commitment*, followed by 19 (13.2%) respondents who agreed with similar item, and only 2 (1.4%) responded Mildly Agree.

The study also found that respondents *would be more committed if Islam was given a priority*. A total of 124 (86.1%) respondents strongly agreed with the item specified, 17 (11.8%) agreed and 2 (1.4%) respondents mildly agreed. Only 1 person (0.7%) disagreed on the said item. Subsequently, a total of 122 (84.7%) respondents strongly agreed on the item that stated respondents would be *happy if a given commitment can increase the status of Islamic traders*, followed by 20 (13.9%) who agreed, and only 2 (1.4%) respondents mildly agreed. Next finding revealed that *commitment was born out of deep faith*. A total of 121 (84.0%) respondents strongly agreed with the item specified, followed by 22 (15.3%) who agreed, and only 1 (0.7%) mildly agreed. The next subsequent finding indicated that the respondents were *willing to give commitment in all matters for the sake of Islam*. In relation to this, a total of 121 (84.0%) respondents strongly agreed with the item, 19 (13.2%) agreed and 3 (2.1%) respondents mildly agreed. Only 1 (0.7%) person disagreed with the item stated above.

The result of the next finding shows that a total of 120 (83.3%) respondents strongly agreed with the item that touched on their *commitment to Islamic goods over other goods*, followed by 22 (15.3%) who agreed, and only 2 (1.4%) who mildly agreed. Further finding indicates that 120 (83.3%) respondents strongly agreed with the item that states *commitment is an important element in the MLM business syariah*, followed by 19 (13.2%) who agreed to the said item and a total of 5 (3.5%) respondents who mildly agreed. The next finding is on the item on *success is unachievable without commitment*. There were 124 (86.1%) respondents who strongly agreed with the item, 17 (11.8%) who agreed, and 2 (1.4%) who mildly agreed. On the contrary, only 1 (0.7%) respondent did not agree with the aforementioned item. Further finding shows a total of 117 (81.3%) respondents strongly agreed with the item that stated *commitment is the best way to achieve success*, followed by 25 (17.4%) who agreed and only 2 (1.4%) mildly agreed. Next finding shows that 114 (79.2%) respondents strongly agreed with the item on them *giving full commitment to the HPA MLM syariah*, followed by 26 (18.1%) who agreed, and only 4 (2.8%) who mildly agreed.

The study found that *the success of an organization is based on a person's commitment*. A total of 113 (78.5%) respondents strongly agreed with the stated item, 26 (18.1%) agreed and only 2 (1.4%) expressed mildly agreed and disagreed respectively. Further findings reveal a total of 110 (76.4%) respondents strongly agreed with the item that stated *commitment is one of the elements that need to be continuous in a teamwork*, followed by a total of 30 (20.8%) respondents who agreed, and only 4 (2.8%) who mildly agreed. Respondents also replied that *commitment should be a continuous practice in life*. A total of 108 (75.0%) respondents strongly agreed with the item, followed by 31 (21.5%) who agreed, and only 3 (2.1%) who mildly agreed. 2 (1.4%) respondents expressed both strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. The next finding show that 106 (73.6%) respondents strongly agreed with the item that stated *respondent's commitment on Islamic business should be above everything else*. This is followed by 32 (22.2%) who agreed with the item, and 5 (3.5%) mildly agreed. Only 1 (0.7%) respondent disagreed with the stated item.

Meanwhile, the respondents are *willing to give their commitment if they are clear of the objectives*. This is evident when a total of 105 (72.9%) of respondents strongly agreed with the stated item, followed by 33 (22.9%) who agreed, and 4 (2.8%) who mildly agreed. Meanwhile, only 2 (1.4%) of the respondents had disagreed. The findings also show that the respondents concurred that *commitment was a result of trust and partnership among them*. Thus, a total of 103 (71.5%) respondents strongly agreed with the item, followed by 29 (20.1%) respondents who agreed, and 10 (6.9%) who responded mildly disagreed. Only 2 (1.4%) respondents expressed mildly agreed and disagreed respectively. The final finding indicates that respondents *did not expect any form of bonus when giving their commitment to the MLM HPA Syariah*. This is evident from the item analysis that shows 101 (70.1%) respondents strongly agreed with the stated item, followed by 30 (20.8%) who agreed, and 8 (5.6%) who mildly

agreed. On the other hand, 4 (2.8%) respondents disagreed with the item, followed by only one person (0.7%) who strongly disagreed. Thus, all in all, the elements of trust, partnership and commitment are interconnected with each other to meet the goals of the team.

Conclusion

Islam is a complete religion that comes with a comprehensive package that guides its believers in carrying out the trust and responsibilities given to them. What is indicated through the *Sunnah Nabawi* serves as a complement to all God's orders, instructions and prohibitions that need to be observed by all mankind. In carrying out any job that is entrusted, it is inevitable that one would do it best the '*amal jama'i*' way. Commitment is one of the many elements that highlights the importance of teamwork that is important in strengthening a team or organization. Hence, success in an organization can be achieved if the *Sunnah Nabawi* is fully observed to serve as a guide to the believers when carrying out their religious obligations. As caliphs (of Allah), mankind has been provided with a complete guidance to turn the world into a more prosperous place.

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