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Exploring the concept and the communication principles of negotiation among Islamic corporate organizations

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Abstract

Purpose – The acceleration of globalized commerce and economic activities has meant that conventional and Shariah (Islamic law) compliant organizations transact and negotiate among themselves. Therefore, this study aims to explore the concept of corporate negotiation and the communicative principles that guide the negotiation process among Shariah-compliant organizations.

Design/methodology/approach – The study uses a qualitative method through an inductive interpretative approach by conducting 20 in-depth interviews among four groups of experts. These consist of three muftis, ten academicians in Islamic assets, finance and asset jurisprudence; three practitioners in charge of inter-organizational negotiation and decision-making; and four shariah board members of selected Islamic banks.

Findings – The findings reported that business negotiation is used by Islamic organizations for reconciliation, consultation, resolving disagreements and as a means of achieving spiritual satisfaction. Furthermore, the key communicative principles of the negotiation process consist of the credibility of informational exchange, flexible interactions and the openness and truthful disclosure of information.

Research limitations/implications – The empirical data discussed in this study supports the claim that macro-environmental factors and social and cultural values should be considered when examining business negotiating behaviors. However, this study focuses only on the banking/service organization negotiation. Therefore, future research should focus on the Islamic negotiation process in the context of diplomatic and international relations.

Practical implications – The findings reported in this study offer insight for negotiators operating among Islamic organizations to understand the principles and process of negotiation in the purview of Shariah standards and principles.

Originality/value – In terms of theoretical implications, this study reveals a clear conceptual difference between the conventional concept and the Islamic perspective of corporate negotiation. Also, this study highlights the impact of organizational culture, specifically Islamic management strategies, on the business negotiation process and business communication principles.

Keywords Business negotiation, Islamic organizations, Islamic negotiation process and principles, Islamic negotiation principles

Paper type Research paper

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Introduction

The literature on the business negotiation process has thoroughly explored various conventional approaches, frameworks and models for corporate organizations. However, there appears to be no specific model that offers an all-inclusive approach to business negotiations that applies to every organizational culture and management system (Agndal *et al.*, 2017). Additionally, the conceptualization of corporate negotiation using the Islamic process has remained largely unexplored. However, given that the Islamic finance and banking market is valued at US$2.88tn with the projected possibility of reaching US$3.69tn by 2024 (Statista, 2022). This therefore necessitated expanding the understanding of the broader process involved in effective communications with business partners within an Islamic business context and Sahirah-complaint organizational culture.

More so, as more organizations endeavor to adopt Islamic principles and management systems (Zahid *et al.*, 2012), it is crucial to lay a theoretical foundation for the communication method and process for Islamic organizations to conduct effective and Shariah-compliant negotiation with their various customers and associates. At the same time, previous studies on negotiation either fail to address the Islamic religion or their evaluation of the Islamic negotiation approach is superficial. Meanwhile, the few studies that have explored negotiation from an Islamic perspective are either fragmented or simply skim the surface of business objectives (Ghanim and Fatima, 2009).

Understanding the cultural and social context in a negotiation process can provide a meaningful outcome for negotiations (Cai and Darake, 2000; Schoop *et al.*, 2008; Moghimi, 2018). It follows that no single universal model will suit every case (Cohen, 1997). Thus, this study explores the Islamic-compliant communication methods and negotiation processes applicable to Islamic organizations. The study uses a qualitative approach in providing answers to the following research objectives:

- to explore the concept of corporate negotiation from an Islamic perspective; and
- to determine the communication principles guiding the corporate negotiation process of Islamic organizations.

Literature review

The Islamic worldview of negotiation

In the conventional literature, negotiation has been widely defined as "a process of combining conflicting positions into a common position, under a decision rule of unanimity, a phenomenon in which the process determines the outcome" (Zartman, 2008; Nikolaev, 2001). Similarly, Al-Zuhaili (2003) defined negotiation from the Islamic perspective as an outcome-oriented discussion between Muslims and others to resolve conflicts within organizations, between business partners and in interpersonal relationships. Additionally, Ghanim and Fatima (2009) noted that negotiation is a communication – that can be direct or indirect – between two parties or more to set up relations, define rights and obligations or reconcile any divergences and resolve disputes. Based on various Qur'anic verses, these assertions allude to the importance of negotiation between individuals as an effective means of building relationships and ending any conflicts that might arise from differences of interests, personal goals or points of view (Ghanim and Fatima, 2009). For instance, Allah (SWT) instructs His Prophet (PBUH) to invite the people of the Book to negotiate:

> O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians): Come to a word between you and us, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah. Then, if they turn away, say; "Bear witness that we are Muslims." (Surah AlImran, 3:64)

In another verse, Allah (SWT) urges Muslims to help the believers by facilitating an end to their conflict, saying:

> If you fear a breach between them (the man and his wife), appoint (two) arbitrators, one from his family and the other from hers; if they both wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation. Indeed, Allah is ever all knower, well acquainted with all things. (Surah An-Nisa, 4:35)

Islamic scholars are unanimous in defining the value of negotiation as a constructive tool that can help establish stability and peace, halt feuds and hostilities and solve complex problems related to conflicting interests, goals, rights and business transactions (Al-Zuhaili, 2003). According to Ghanim and Fatima (2009), negotiation – essentially based on an Islamic viewpoint – is used to resolve disputes between individuals, groups, organizations and states. It also helps bolster the sense of concord and understanding between parties and encourages the acknowledgment of mutual rights and respect even when the opinions between two or more parties are disliked or opposed. The existing Islamic literature, such as Al-Zuhaili (2003), Alikhani (2011) and Ghanim and Fatima (2009), has highlighted the general principles on which all negotiations between nations, organizations and individuals should be based. As mentioned, however, negotiation studies from the Islamic perspective are limited and inadequate in their assessment of shariah-compliant tactics and in the negotiation strategies necessary for resolving or managing disputes among Islamic organizations (Ramdani *et al.*, 2016).

The communication principles of negotiation

According to Nikolaev (2001), communication is fundamental to any negotiation process. Similarly, Lewicki *et al.* (1999) asserted that communications are at the heart of the negotiating process, and Fisher and Ury (1991) defined negotiation as "back and forth communication" designed to reach an agreement between two parties with similar interests. At the same time, however, the literature, including the extant communication studies, indicated that most existing negotiation models, whether they concentrate on the process or the outcome of the negotiation, have a common game-theory heritage (Jonsson, 1983). However, Jonsson (1983) opined that a few weaknesses exist when applying game theory as an analytical tool in the negotiation process. These include the following:

- Due to its static nature, the application of game theory might hinder peaceful resolution.
- The propositions of game theory homogenize actors and their interests; that is, the inherent belief in every actor that they must win.
- Game theory also envisages unitary actors.
- Finally, game theory proffers a "black box" approach in the form of an information-processing model that is problematic because it undermines the transactional decision-making process in negotiation.

To overcome these criticisms, Jonsson (1983) proposed the cognitive negotiation theory. Approaching negotiation as a social communication process, the cognitive theory asserts that negotiating tactics and strategies are contextually interpreted and judged by negotiators. In other words, all parties in a negotiation setting interpret the actions and inactions of their partners contextually (Jonsson and Hall, 2003). Nevertheless, from the cognitive point of view, the information-processing mechanisms are essential and must be

investigated more deeply because the interpretation of information lies at the very heart of the negotiation process (Nikolaev, 2001).

The literature shows the importance of having all the relevant information for reaching effective negotiation agreements. As Walton (1991) stated: if negotiating parties have insufficient information to define the problem, the outcome of the negotiation will be less effective, fewer alternatives will be generated and the potential consequences of these alternatives will not be thoroughly explored. The cognitive approach focuses on the belief systems of the negotiation parties' bargaining skills. As such, each party comes to the negotiation table with beliefs and expectations about themselves, the opponent and the negotiation issue (Jonsson, 1983). Moreover, Rubin and Brown (1975) specified that if one party knows the other's intention, they will be able to develop a more effective and precise bargaining position than would otherwise be possible. Subsequently, the outcome of every negotiation in this instance would depend on the mental abilities of the parties to process the information and manipulate their negotiating partners. In other words, going by the cognitive model, negotiation is mainly a process of intercepting, classifying and interpreting information in terms of pre-established belief systems, regardless of the social context or any circumstantial conditions surrounding the negotiations. All negotiation involves an interpersonal communicative process occurring within a guided context and with outcomes dictated by a constellation of social factors. These include social knowledge, organizational social norms and actors' communication skills (Thompson *et al.*, 1995; Fisher and Ury, 1991; Lewicki *et al.*, 1999; Culo and Skendrovic, 2012).

In the same vein, Thompson *et al.* (1995) further break down several social norms that include social interaction norms, decision-making norms and negotiation norms as the underlying principles of the communicative process in negotiation. For example, the social interaction norms connecting two negotiating parties might dictate polite behavior, reciprocity in disclosure and turn-taking. Similarly, when standard decision-making norms bind negotiating partners, they might agree to adopt a certain method (e.g. majority rule, consensus) for making decisions. Finally, a unifying negotiation norm determines the conduct of bargaining (e.g. agendas, reciprocity, good faith bargaining, symmetric concessions) and appropriate outcomes (e g. focal points, compromises).

Given the role of social factors in determining the communicative experience, the acceptability of conventional tactics and strategies negotiators can deploy in a conventional environment might not be entirely relevant to the social context of negotiation among Islamic organizations guided solely by Islamic scriptural laws and morals. Punturaumpom (2001), for instance, identified three major conventional strategies in the negotiation process, namely, competitive (win-lose), cooperative (win-win), or a combination of the two. Under the competitive strategy, Wall (1985) identified three types of tactics as follows: enhancing one's strength (i.e. improving one's abilities and skills), undermining the opponent's strength, status or expertise, and lastly, manipulating one's relative strength (i.e. exposing a rival's weaknesses and hiding one's own). Overall, these conventional strategies are relatively well documented in the extant literature on negotiation (Fisher and Ury, 1991; Kraus, 1997), whereas the tactics and strategies that apply to the Islamic negotiation process are understudied.

What is more, the importance of contextual communicative tactics and strategies in negotiation has been corroborated by Islamic researchers. (Ramdani *et al.*, 2016), for instance, suggested that the term *Shurah*, which translates to "consultation," is a scripturally prescribed tactical decision-making process in an Islamic negotiation context. The Islamic explanation of Shurah resembles the conventional principle of negotiation as a transactional decision-making process (Zartman, 1977). Similarly, Mahmoud (2002) noted

that Islam – a communication-based religion – is dominated and constituted by negotiation and persuasion. The knowledge of the communicative experience and negotiation tactics among Islamic organizations is somewhat limited.

Comparing conventional negotiation with Islamic negotiation principles

According to conventional negotiation theorists, the fundamental guiding principle in business negotiation is the perception of mutual win by all parties involved (Alpa, 2010). In other words, negotiation is generally expected to result in a win-win situation, where all parties benefit, regardless of the personal qualities and the situational conditions that facilitate or hinder the development of such outcome (Bazerman and Neale, 1992; Thompson, 2020). Covey (2004) defines win-win as "a mindset and attitude that continuously seeks mutual benefit in both business and personal interactions". Similarly, Nalis *et al.* (2018) describe win-win solutions as "results of interpersonal interactions that surpass what each participant could achieve individually". Fujita *et al.* (2017) characterize win-win as "ideas that can provide most of what both parties desire". Thompson and Gonzales (1997), on the other hand, consider a "win-win outcome to be efficient, meaning that there is no other possible outcome where at least one party would prefer it without reducing the utility of the other party". In simpler terms, a win-win situation implies that all parties in a negotiation feel like winners.

The significance of the win-win concept is evident in its widespread application across various fields of study, offering viable solutions to a wide range of challenges (Altarawneh *et al.*, 2022). However, the win-win principle is not foolproof, as some scholars have pointed out that negotiators who are fixated on always winning can fall into what is known as the fixed-pie bias. This bias hinders the optimal exchange of interests and encourages negotiators to settle for merely acceptable compromises (Bazerman, 1983; Harinck *et al.*, 2000). It has been observed that this mindset can exacerbate the competitive aspect of negotiation, leading negotiators to focus more on asserting their "claiming" and positions (Gruenbacher, 2000; Ruiz Cortés *et al.*, 2002; Thompson, 2020).

Moreover, Lute (2002) emphasized that the win-win principle is not a one-size-fits-all approach, especially given the inherent differences in management styles, culture and negotiator individual differences. For this reason, Marken (2002) introduced a new form of win-win negotiation known as "principled negotiation." This approach advocates for effective negotiations by promoting collaboration toward a common objective. It focuses on interests rather than positions, emphasizes separating people from the problem and encourages the exploration of options for mutual gain through objective proposals. Åge and Eklinder-Frick (2017) also sought to enhance the practicality of the win-win principle by proposing a goal-oriented approach that prioritizes the satisfaction and happiness of every negotiating party, rather than just focusing on winning.

However, on the contrary, Shariah-compliant negotiation principles, rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah, have a distinct focus. The primary objective of negotiation in Islamic tradition is to prevent armed conflict, resolve ongoing disagreements and ultimately achieve mutual understanding among the parties involved (Al-Zuhaili, 2003). According to Islamic negotiation ethics, as outlined by Ghanim and Fatima (2009), three major guiding principles govern Shariah-compliant negotiations: the absence of coercion, respect for diversity and differences of opinion and adherence to credibility, flexibility and justice. These principles guide negotiators towards the recognition of others' rights and freedom of choice. Islam upholds the freedom of belief, thought, speech and action within reasonable bounds. Therefore, Shariah-compliant negotiation emphasizes that individuals have the liberty to choose to negotiate wisely or unwisely, with the understanding that their attitudes, perceptions and actions are their own responsibility.

In this context, no person is allowed to force others into negotiation, even if it may seem to be in their best interest. This principle aligns with the pursuit of an amicable Zone of Possible Agreement (ZOPA) in business negotiations. Often, negotiators, driven by the win-win principle, attempt to manipulate or pressure their counterparts into creating a positive ZOPA. However, in a Shariah-compliant negotiation, parties would be better off walking away from the table if a mutual settlement seems unattainable. Hence, negotiators ought to pursue an agreement when a favorable ZOPA, that is, when the buyer's maximum offer exceeds the seller's minimum acceptable price. Conversely, if a negative ZOPA arises, hence, where the buyer's maximum offer falls short of the seller's minimum acceptable price, negotiators should be ready to discontinue negotiations and part ways amicably. This approach aligns with the principles of lack of coercion, respect for diversity and adherence to credibility and justice in Islamic negotiations.

Finally, business negotiators are guided by different rules and norms regarding their bargaining behaviors (Thompson, 2020). While following the win-win principle, it may be deemed acceptable to deceive about having a Best Alternative to Negotiated Agreement (i.e. the course of action the negotiator will take if no agreement is reached), in Shariah-compliant negotiations, such actions are considered unethical and illegal. The ethical landscape becomes more intricate because negotiators tend to view their own behavior more favorably than that of others.

Method

Research approach

The primary goal of this present study is to delve into the concept of negotiation from the Islamic perspective, focusing on Shariah-compliant negotiation principles and practices. To accomplish this, we have used a qualitative research method that aligns with the realism and constructivism paradigms. This approach aims to gain a profound understanding of the subject matter, going beyond surface-level examination (Mohd Khairie, 2010). Specifically, this study adopts an inductive interpretative method through a qualitative approach to explore the Islamic-compliant communicative practice and process applicable to Islamic organizations. This approach is appropriate in reporting the informants' perceptions, attitudes, and understanding of the subject matter (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Specifically, the in-depth face-to-face interviews is viewed as the most relevant for social reality studies, were conducted to answer the research questions. The rationale for using this data collection technique is to explore the deeper meanings in the philosophy of Shariah-compliant negotiation. Intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents constitute the in-depth interview technique for exploring their perspectives on a particular idea in a richly detailed manner (Boyce and Neale, 2006; Baxter and Babbie, 2004).

Key informants

The study aims to gain in-depth insights into the holistic view of the Shariah-compliant communicative negotiation process used in Shariah-compliant organizations. As such, four groups of experts were purposively selected to be interviewed. These consist of the following:

(1) three Muftis from three different states in Malaysia;

(2) ten academicians in the field of Islamic assets, finance and asset jurisprudence at various Islamic academic institutions that include the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), the International Shariah Research Academy for Islamic Finance (ISRA) and International Centre for Education in Islamic Finance (INCEIF);

(3) three practitioners from Islamic corporate banks who are in charge of inter-organizational negotiation and decision-making; and

(4) four shariah board members of selected Islamic banks.

In line with the convention of the qualitative research approach as presented by Creswell (2007), the absolute number of informants is subject to saturation. Saturation is achieved in qualitative data when further interviews do not reveal any new information. As such, sufficient data was collected to reach saturation by the 20th interview, which is considered sufficient for this kind of research (Holliman and Rowley, 2014). Table 1 presents the informants' profiles.

Interview design and data collection

This study conducted one in-depth face-to-face interview with each of the 20 informants. The interviews were guided by a list of questions for the interviewees. However, the interviewer allowed the informants' flexibility to speak freely in providing answers to the questions. The interviewees were mainly asked about their viewpoint and understanding of the principles and communicative negotiation methods from the Islamic perspective. The interview protocol was developed from the research questions and the study themes.

Additionally, the interviewer presented ten open-ended questions (Table 2) aligned with the highlighted research objectives. Further questions were promptly posed during the interviews in response to the interviewees' answers, with the interviewer extending the debriefing beyond the questions listed in the interview guide as necessary. Thus, the interviewer probed deeply to gather all the thoughts and opinions of the informants to achieve the fullest answers possible concerning the subject matter (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Before conducting the main interviews, three pilot interviews were conducted, allowing the researcher to pre-test the interview among researcher colleagues to establish content validity (Saunders *et al.*, 2007). These interviews yielded a finely tuned and refined guide and helped determine the time needed to conduct the main interviews. Subsequently, the interviews ranged from approximately 45 min to about 1 h and 30 min. Additionally, before the commencement of the interview, the interviewees were shown the guide and informed of the interview's purpose. They were then given sufficient time to prepare their responses.

Ethics

The researchers ensured that conventional research ethics were applied in this study. Formal consent was obtained from all informants before their participation, and they were informed about the nature of the study. Each informant was provided with a research information sheet that explained the objectives and significance of the research as well as the operational definition of the principal terms used in the study. Additionally, the researcher assured all the interviewees of their anonymity and the confidentiality of the interviews, assuring the participants that the collected data would always remain confidential. Also, the findings of this study were reported in such a way that the informants could not be identified either by their names or by their organization. Finally, participation in this study was voluntary. As such, all the interviewees were informed of their right to withdraw from the study either before or after the data collection.

Analysis

The researcher used the thematic data analysis technique to analyze the interview data, allowing the researcher to identify the relevant themes and perspectives (Creswell, 2007). The themes for each research question were developed through a deep reading of the transcribed materials using thematic analytic techniques, which involve a process used by

S/N	Informant	Position/organization	Expert type	Interview duration
1	M1	Mufti at Darul Ifta	Mufti	
2	Sh2	Associate Professor of Islamic Finance and Banking at ISRA and Bank Shariah Board Member	Bank Shariah Board Member	1 h and 18 min
3	Sh3	Member of Bank Shariah Board	Bank Shariah Board Member	50 min
4	A4	Associate Professor of Islamic Finance and Banking at INCEIF	Academician	30 min
5	A5	Associate Professor of Islamic Assets Jurisprudence at INCEIF	Academician	1 h and 5 min
6	A6	Associate Professor of Islamic Jurisprudence at IIUM	Academician	53 min
7	A7	Assistant Professor of Islamic Jurisprudence at IIUM	Academician	1 h and 5 min
8	A8	Head of Department and Associate Professor of Islamic Marketing and Finance at IIUM	Academician	1 h and 15 min
9	A9	Associate Professor of Islamic Finance and Banking at IIUM	Academician	1 h and 15 min
10	A10	Associate Professor of Islamic Jurisprudence, Islamic Finance, and Economics at IIUM	Academician	1 h and 30 min
11	A11	Head of Department and Professor of Shariah, Islamic Finance and Banking at IIUM	Academician	53 min
12	P12	Negotiator and Mediator/Associate Professor of Law, Islamic Legal Studies at IIUM	Practitioner	1 h and 19 min
13	A13	Associate Professor of Law, Islamic Legal Studies at IIUM	Academician	45 min
14	Sh14	Vice President of Bank Shariah Management	Bank Shariah Board Member	1 h and 12 min
15	P15	Vice President, Marketing/ Treasury	Practitioner	1 h, 11 min and 25 s
16	A16	Ph.D. holder and Researcher at ISRA	Academician	43 min
17	P17	Corporate Communication Manager of Bank Shariah Management	Practitioner	55 min
18	P18	Deputy Manager of Bank Shariah Management	Bank Shariah Board Member	1 h and 3 min
19	M19	Mufti at Darul Ifta	Mufti	57 min
20	M20	Mufti at Darul Ifta	Mufti	1 h

Table 1.
Informant profiles

Source: Developed from Research Interview Transcript

most, if not all, qualitative methods to establish themes and formalize the identification of the themes (Thomas and Harden, 2008). The researcher followed Creswell's (2012) interview data analysis guidelines. After transcribing the data, considerable time was spent reading the interviews. Each interview document was read several times, giving the researcher a clear understanding of the data. The arrangement in which the coding emerged was controlled at the same time. Afterward, the transcribed materials were sorted according to different themes in line with Yin (2011), who recommended altering and re-altering these arrangements and themes until achieving a satisfactory result. Next came the stage of grouping the different data that belonged to similar concepts. Lastly, the transcripts were

S/N	Research objective	Interview questions
1	To explore the concept of corporate negotiation from an Islamic perspective	What do you understand by Islamic negotiation? What is the concept of negotiation in Islam? How do the Quran and the Sunnah explain negotiation? What is the significance of practicing Islamic principles in negotiation?
2	To determine the communicative principles of the negotiation process among Islamic organizations	Which principles of Islamic negotiation do you put into practice in your organization? What is your evaluation of practicing Islamic negotiation in your organization? What are the acceptable methods of communication among corporate negotiators of Islamic organizations?

Source: Developed by researchers

Table 2.
The interview guide

classified according to the themes that had been identified and developed. These include the following:

- the concept of negotiation from an Islamic perspective (purpose, process and outcome);
- the communicative principles of negotiation among corporate Islamic organizations; and
- the practice of SCN in Islamic corporate organizations. All these processes were facilitated using the qualitative analysis software NVivo 8.

Finally, to ensure the reliability and validity of the data presented in this study, the researchers invited the informants to review the major themes and subthemes derived from the data before reporting. All informants provided their consent and agreement, and thus, affirming the reliability and validity of the data.

Results

Negotiation from an Islamic perspective

Concerning the first research objective to explore the conceptual understanding and process of negotiation from an Islamic perspective, the informants unanimously agreed that negotiation is based on the Islamic scriptural point of view. As such, it is an interactive process that provides a platform for objective arguments between two parties or more within the Shariah teachings, intending to obtain spiritual satisfaction. Three specific sub-themes emerged: negotiation as a Platform for Dispute Resolution, Shariah-Compliant Process and Spiritual Satisfaction, the main key concepts used for describing negotiation from an Islamic perspective. These sub-themes adequately capture negotiation's purpose, process and outcome from an Islamic point of view. The following subsections present the sub-themes individually.

Negotiation as a platform for reconciliation (sulh), consultation (shurah) and communication (purpose)

The informants in this study all viewed negotiation as a vital tool for resolving disputes and disagreements among individuals and corporate parties. Specifically, regarding the purpose of negotiation among Islamic organizations, the informants emphasized three main scriptural concepts, namely, *Sulh* (reconciliation), *Shurah* (discussion) and communication,

which encourage and motivate Islamic organizations to deploy negotiation as a means of resolving disputes. As explained by the interviewees, *Sulh*, or reconciliation, is the idea that motivates Muslims to engage in negotiations. That is because, according to informant A10, "Based on my humble [understanding] of the Qur'an and Sunnah, the term *Sulh* is usually used in the Qur'an as means of resolving any forms of disagreement." This claim was confirmed by informants A12, A7 and Sh4. The informants further explained how the idea of Sulh has a long history within Arab and Islamic societies and originates in the pre-Islamic Arabian period. Therefore, the word "*Sulh*" is derived from the Arabic word *Saluha* or *Salaha*, which can be literarily translated to mean deeds that are good, right, proper, suitable, practicable and serviceable. However, Informant A7 argued that Sulh, in the present context, referred to negotiation, conciliation, mediation, arbitration, reconciliation, amicable settlement and the process of reaching a compromise.

Furthermore, the informants' believed *Sulh* was the term that best described negotiation and its purpose as the preferred means of resolving disputes and ensuring harmony and peace among Muslims. Many informants, including A7, A11, A12 and A13, corroborated that negotiation was perceived as a means of achieving reconciliation and resolving disputes amicably, citing various verses from the Qur'an. A7, for instance, noted Surah Al-Nisa, (4:114):

> No good is there in much of their private conversation except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to Allah's approval- then we will give him a great reward. (Surah An-Nisa 4:114)

Informants A11, A12 and A13 cited two other verses from Suratuh An-Nisa (4:128) and Surah Al-Anfal (8:128), where Muslims are urged to practice Sulh (reconciliation) in any disagreement or dispute to restore peace.

Additionally, most informants justified their understanding of negotiation because several prophetic sayings and deeds connect negotiation with Sulh. For example, informant A7 argued that:

> Sulh is the [method] preferred by the Prophet (PBUH). He (PBUH) missed the Assar prayer because He was [engaged in] Sulh between two parties, which is a solid justification for the importance of establishing this concept among people. Another example was when the people of Quba fought until they threw stones at each other. When Allah's Apostle was informed [. . .] He said: "Let us go to bring about reconciliation between them." Narrated by Sahl bin Sad. (Sahih Al-Bukhari 3:860).

Further, many informants believed negotiation to be the preferred means of reconciliation in all kinds of Muslim disputes and disagreements (e.g. SD04, SD14). Informant A10, for instance, referred to Surah A-Nisa (4:35) as an example of a Qur'anic mention of the *Hakam* (mediator) and recommended Sulh for resolving personal or family disputes. Meanwhile, Informant M20 cited Surah Al-Hujraat (49:9) as the basis for encouraging Sulh as a negotiating tool for Islamic corporate organizations. Similarly, informant A12 affirmed that: "many verses of the Qur'an and hadiths from the Sunnah [can be] quoted to justify that Islam authorizes and encourages all means of peaceful settlement, including Sulh (reconciliation)".

The second example of the key terminology used by informants to explain the purpose of negotiation in an Islamic corporate organizational context is Shurah, which can be translated as "discussion" and "consultation". According to the explanations by most of the informants in this study, Shurah can be described as a negotiation process through consultation and deliberation (SD02, SD15, A9 and A10). The following quotes justify this view:

> Shurah is another way of explaining negotiation [from an Islamic perspective]. [Shurah] is when an organization decides consultation [. . .] So, my understanding of negotiation is [. . .] discussing a subject matter [so] [. . .] you [will] be able to make a better decision. (Informant A10)

Informant A10 further explained the importance of Shurah in negotiation. The fundamental belief advances the need for negotiation in an Islamic organization. And in the Qur'an, the term "Shurah" is used on the family, social, and political levels (informant A10). Informant Sh15 corroborated this argument by referring to a Qur'anic verse in Surah Aal-E-Imran (3:159), where Allah says:

> And by the mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh, they would have broken away from about you; so, pass over (their faults), ask (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs. Then when you have decided to put your trust in Allah, Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).

The final critical construct used to describe negotiation for resolving disputes among Islamic organizations was the need for communication. Several participants explained how the negotiation process allowed communication among disputing parties (A05, A08 and A16). These informants expressed that many minor crises could degenerate into severe ones when those involved fail to communicate their grievances effectively. As such, Informant A16 pointed out that "negotiation from an Islamic point of view is a means [of] communication between disputing parties to achieve a mutually beneficial goal". Furthermore, many informants asserted that the importance of communication between disputing parties could not be overemphasized. According to Informant Sh4, negotiation in Islam is a transactional communication that involves two or more disputing parties as a means or process of discovering agreeable terms of reference for their rights, obligations, and accountability in any given context.

According to Mahmoud (2002), Islam is a communication-based religion as it implies that negotiation and consultation were practiced among the elite of the Ulama (scholars). Informant A5 detailed that the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah are full of stories of negotiation processes during crises based on communication and dialogue. Informant A5 buttressed that:

> If we [refer] to [Islamic history] (Sunnah), [there is a popular] story of the Al-Hudaybiya Treaty which [was preceded by] a daily communication or negotiation between the prophet (PBUH) and his companions, and non-Muslims. [Moreover] [. . .] the Qur'an [tells us that] we will see how Allah (SWT) with [. . .] His almighty power [. . .] negotiates by communicating and explaining His terms and conditions [for His relationships] with people.

Shariah compliant negotiation (process)

The second sub-theme that emerges from viewing negotiation from an Islamic perspective is the explanation that the negotiation process is shariah-based. The informants in this study confirmed that Muslims are guided by Shariah (Islamic law) during religious activities and in their day-to-day actions. Shariah is a system of law that regulates and postulates the rules of conduct in all aspects of a Muslim's life. It governs right and wrong, good and evil. Therefore, the informants in this study argue that the negotiation process must comply with Shariah (informants P3, Sh2, A8). Informant A13, for example, explained that:

> [The] Shariah-compliant negotiation process enables disputing parties to engage within the stipulated rules of conducts [. . .] by applying the Islamic teachings. [The process] must be in line with [. . .] Islamic principle[*s*] and [the negotiation should be] based on the Qur'an.

Informant A11 added: "Basically, for me, negotiations must align with [. . .] Islamic principles and values [. . .] And what is important is [that disputing parties negotiate] [. . .] within [the] *Hudud* (boundaries) of Allah (SWT)." For example, negotiating for justice is one of the Shariah principles that differentiate the negotiation process of Islamic-compliant organizations from conventional ones. To illustrate this point, Informant A16 cited the Quranic verses (Surah An-Nahl 16:90 and Surah Al-Maeda 5:08) to show how justice, as the essence of negotiation, is the guiding light of the negotiation process. Furthermore, Informant A07 opined that "negotiation [. . .] to my mind is all about justice". Similarly, Informant A10 disclosed that the importance of practicing negotiation in his organization was to avoid extremes. He said:

> Justice is a [. . .] vital principle in negotiation, and Islam emphasizes [. . .] it. Therefore, I try as much as possible to [achieve] justice, [which] is defined as trying to avoid extremes, be moderate, and put things in the right places.

Subsequently, informants SD02, SD18 and A05 explained that the concept of justice in Shariah-compliant negotiation means: "[not] misusing] someone's right or interest" and "giving] [. . .] equal right[*s*] to all even to [the] enemies". In line with this flow of thought, the analysis of this study has indicated that the informants differentiated between the concept of justice in negotiation and the other two sub-principles (Fairness and Win-Win).

Some informants identified that "fairness" means that negotiation should not involve transgression against any parties' rights. Negotiation must rely on this principle in all dealings (Informant A11). Furthermore, Informant SD02 distinguished between the principle of justice and the idea of fairness:

> "Justice is to give [. . .] equal right[*s*], but fairness is something inner: it means you would like to give [it to] someone, [and] if [. . .] you [were] in his place, you would like to receive the same."

In other words, fairness means showing no bias towards anyone, whereas justice, in broader terms, means giving a person his due. Therefore, in Shariah-compliant negotiations, the negotiating parties should be treated fairly in all situations because, in Islam, people are all viewed as equal and deserve fair treatment. Accordingly, informants A08, P17 and SD15 stressed that fairness is paramount in any Shariah-compliant negotiation and that negotiation is successful when the outcome is fair to all the negotiating parties.

In addition, Informant A13 stated that "Islam emphasizes [. . .] the principle of Al-Adl (fairness), and the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) always [made] sure to be fair to both [parties] when he [. . .] negotiate[d] between the tribes." Informant A06 explained that the presence of this principle helps to prevent any oppression or injustice in closing a business deal. He justified his claim by adding, "we can see that from some of the prophets like Daoud and Sulaiman (PBUT)."

In conventional negotiation, the goal is to win or achieve a fair negotiated outcome (Welsh, 2003). However, Informant SD04 affirmed that a Shariah-compliant negotiation process "is [not only] a platform to resolve the [involved] parties' interests without a major compromise, but to arrive at a win-win decision." This view was equally corroborated by informants SD14 and SD18, who pointed out that conducting negotiations from the Islamic point of view is all about win-win outcomes. The reason is that Shariah-compliant negotiation relies on justice and fairness in all business transactions.

Spiritual satisfaction (outcome)

The final important sub-theme that emerged from the concept of negotiation from an Islamic perspective was the element of spiritual satisfaction as the outcome of the negotiation. The data revealed unanimous agreement among the informants that spiritual satisfaction was

the main outcome of a successful negotiation process when viewed and conducted in the context of a corporate Islamic organization. Several informants confirmed that Islamic organizations are motivated to negotiate in the case of a dispute because, to them, negotiation is not just a managerial necessity but an act of worship, a means to avoid *Haram* (something forbidden) and to ensure unity (SD15, SD18, A06 and A08). One informant, for example, stressed that most Islamic organizations believed in negotiation as an effective process of resolving issues because it is scripturally recommended. The informant added that "for us [organizations operating according to Shariah laws], we do not negotiate just to achieve [our own] interest[*s*], but we do it for the sake of Allah (SWT)" (Informant A10). Likewise, Informant M01 noted that the Prophet's (PBUH) negotiations were conducted with complete sincerity for the sake of Allah (SWT), and therefore, He succeeded in all His negotiations. Consequently, informants A16 and SD04 said that the importance of practicing Shariah-compliant negotiation is to demonstrate the symbolic nature of Islam and allow people to see that Islam goes beyond religious matters. Additionally, promoting this practice brings spiritual satisfaction.

Further, informants A05 and A08 stated that negotiation allows Islamic organizations to avoid Haram. For example, "When negotiating contracts for our banks, we must avoid *Reba* and *Gharar* (interest and uncertainty) and Haram investments and projects." They added that the purpose of Shariah-compliant negotiation is to avoid actions that are Haram and perform those that are *Halal* (permissible) instead, thereby providing Shariah-compliant solutions that are beneficial to all. In other words, in identifying the concept of negotiation in Islam:

> When we talk about negotiation for Islamic organizations, everything is negotiable, excluding the [things that are] Haram. If the [bone of] negotiation [falls] within the Islamic [. . .] boundaries, it should be alright. So [. . .] negotiation is permissible in Islam if you don't negotiate something [. . .] unlawful [to make it] lawful or something lawful to [make it] illegal. (Informant A13)

Ensuring unity is another important goal that is one of the spiritual outcomes of negotiation from an Islamic point of view. Some informants related that the Qur'an and the Sunnah validate certain negotiation forms to resolve disputes and ensure unity. All the participants in this study declared agreement as a fundamental principle in Islam. For instance, Informant A07 averred that: "the main objective of Shariah is to ensure the unity of the Ummah (Muslim community) because, without unity, there will be no progress." Informant A10 added that:

> Negotiation [. . .] drives progress in society and provides social security and cooperation. So, I think this is fundamental that we cannot live without.

Also, informant A07 agreed with this claim in his identification of the value of practicing negotiation in Islam. He said: "Without Sulh, life will never be comfortable." Negotiation is [essential to] the life of the human being. [It] provides unity of the Ummah and [erases] the page of enmity. Thus, if it [is] conducted correctly, [negotiation] enhances productive collaboration and cooperation among Islamic organizations."

Communication principles and process among Islamic organizations

The second theme that emerged relates to the second research objective. The informants in this study asserted that as Islamic organizations operate within the purview of Islamic rules, certain Islamic principles guide their negotiation process. Specifically, Credible Communication Principles, Flexible Interactions and Information Disclosure are the fundamental principles of

communication within the negotiation process among Islamic organizations. These principles are discussed separately in the following sections.

Credible communication principles: truth, honesty and respect

The informants explained that the communication principle of credibility protect the outcome of negotiations among Islamic organizations. According to them, credibility refers to genuine, honest, and respectful interactions between the negotiating parties. The informants explained that when negotiators of Islamic organizations communicate during negotiations, they are committed to speaking the truth. Informant M1 contended, "[The] truth is something everyone tries to find out. In negotiations, truth is [. . .] vital because to make decisions, true information is required [and] without the truth, we cannot reach [any] common ground [on which] to negotiate." Informant P3 added:

> From my experience, I believe that first, when you negotiate with your client, [you must not] lie. And when you want to sell your product, don't just say something your customers want to hear [. . .] I think [that] is something like over-promising or lying. I think those are very important [points to remember] when you negotiate with your clients.

In line with this view, Informant SD4 pointed out that for any negotiation to be successful, Muslims must be imbued with certain ethical principles and values that are also embedded in their negotiation practice. According to him, negotiators of Islamic organizations must not lie or over-promise and must never deceive or cheat their partners. The informant added:

> "If both parties in a business transaction [. . .] speak the truth and make everything clear, they will be blessed in their transaction; but if they tell a lie and conceal important details [. . .] the blessing on their transaction will be blotted out".

Honesty is the second component of the credible communication principle of Shariah-compliant negotiation among Islamic organizations. Informants A13, M19 and P17 all asserted that honesty and integrity are paramount in Shariah-compliant negotiation because honesty is a vital attribute in Islam; and one of the bases of the religion. Thus, Islam considers honesty as the moral fiber of believers. Informant SD14 revealed that "generally speaking, if honesty is one of the foundations of Islam, it is, therefore, an important principle [in] Shariah-compliant negotiation." Informant A16 specified how "*Amanah* (honesty) must be there [as it] is the bond between the involved parties. So, I must ensure that what I communicate with [negotiating partners] is true".

Similarly, Informant SD14 emphasized this quality: "When you negotiate, you must be honest in explaining and receiving your counterpart['s] arguments."

Additionally, honesty from the Islamic viewpoint also means fulfilling a promise, both to the letter and to the spirit, regardless of whether it is written or spoken. The same view was expressed by Informants P3 and SD18 when they discussed their experience in their respective organizations. For example, Informant P3 said:

> I believe that first of all, when you negotiate with your client, [you must not] lie. I had experienced previously [from] when I was working [for] another organization; when you want to sell the product, you are tempted to say something that your customers want to hear [. . .] [such as] over-promising or [even] lying.

According to Shariah-compliant negotiators, the final indicator of credible communication is respectfully participating in interactions. The informants affirmed that respectful communication is a significant component of successful negotiation. Informant A5 explained:

> Communication during negotiation is always about [give and] take [. . .] [w]e cannot insist [only] on our interest. Therefore [. . .] Shariah-compliant negotiation is based on honest and respectful communication. In this case, when we negotiate with our partners, we respect each other and [. . .] try to convey the message in a way that is not provoking [to] the other person [. . .] My practices are to listen first and then talk after [. . .] always giving the other person the right to speak. Also, I respect him and will not try to impose my opinion.

In line with this standpoint, Informants A9 and A13 express that respectful engagement is a crucial communicative principle in Shariah-compliant negotiation. Whatever the other party is or wherever they come from, you must respect them and their opinion and rights because respect is one of the pillars of Islamic ethics and conducts. They explained that Muslims believed respect should be given to everything, as everything has been created for a purpose. Additionally, according to Informants A12, P17 and M19, disrespecting other peoples' rights can cause conflict and create impossible problems for the negotiating parties.

Flexible interaction: tolerance, concession and achieving common goals

The informants explained that flexible interaction, another aspect of Shariah-compliant negotiation, refers to the negotiator's ability to adapt and their openness to any alterations and changes without compromising the organization's core values or principles. Informant P17 clarified that negotiation from the Islamic perspective is the most flexible method of dispute resolution. In this regard, Informant SD2 opined that:

> Flexible interaction during negotiation means [that] negotiators shouldn't be too strict to the extent of becoming [rigid]. For example, in Sulh Hudaybiya, the prophet Mohammad (PBUH) was [very] flexible, which means [that] in negotiations, we shouldn't focus on the marginal issues; the focus should be on the core issues. You can compromise on the marginal [but] not on the core issues, and you cannot judge people based on your conviction.

Furthermore, according to Informant A9, flexibility in negotiation means "you must be [. . .] open [. . .] to new ideas. [Otherwise,] [. . .] what is the purpose of [engaging in] negotiation?" Therefore, flexibility in interactions during negotiation can involve tolerance and a willingness to make concessions while respecting the common goals of the negotiating partners. Informants M19 and SD2 also agreed that flexible interaction among Shariah-compliant negotiators requires tolerance, referring to Quranic verses such as Surah Al-Ankaboot (29:46) and Surah Taha (20:44), where Allah urges Muslims to be tolerant of different opinions and viewpoints. Emphasizing this point, Informant M20 said:

> [. . .] we should tolerate [the others] in our negotiations. No matter what the dispute is, we should [be] tolerant. There is no doubt that Islam teaches tolerance at all levels because the best conduct in Islam is to treat people with dignity, equal[it]y and justice.

Thus, Muslim negotiators conduct their negotiations in the spirit of tolerance by recognizing and respecting their partners' dignity and beliefs, their opinions, and the fundamental freedom of thought (Informant M19).

Making concessions through the process of give and take is another key point used in demonstrating flexible interaction in communication during negotiations among Islamic organizations. The informants explained that Shariah-compliant negotiators are prepared to make sacrifices and concede some of their organization's interests to achieve their purpose (Informant A17). Furthermore, Informant SD2 pointed out that making concessions in negotiation means:

> [. . .] you will lose [. . .] [your] explicit rights. This can mean conceding 30 % of your right[*s*] to [gain] 70 %. In Shariah, there is something called the calculation between harm and benefit. So, either you lose [. . .] all your rights [completely], and your case will be pending for 20 years, or you negotiate and [gain] at least half or three-quarters of your rights. That means we negotiate to reach an agreement on [. . .] common ground, even though [inwardly, you] know that you are wrong, and you are taking our rights, but instead of losing [all our] rights, at least we will lose [only] part of [them].

Finally, informants in this study explained that being flexible means communicating to achieve common goals in negotiation. According to Informant A12, this means that negotiators neither compete with nor behave aggressively towards their partners within the context of Islamic-compliant business. Instead, Islamic-compliant negotiators prefer to focus on common goals. Similarly, Informant A11 noted that:

> [. . .] normally, we negotiate when we want to achieve certain things [about] which the other party may have their expectations [. . .] [Therefore], when there is some kind of mismatch between [ours and] the counterpart's opinion, we would negotiate for a common outcome where both of us can agree.

Confirming this point, Informant A7 claimed that such flexibility within an Islamic context is generally what negotiation is about. "If I [can define] it, I will say [it means] two people or two contracting parties communicating to reach [. . .] middle ground; that is [. . .] negotiation in general".

In the same context, Informant A13 reiterated that within Shariah-compliant negotiation, the negotiating parties should always focus on the common interest, so both parties will obtain what they want and be happy. That is because, according to Informant M1:

> In shariah-compliant negotiation, we must have the spirit of understanding, not the spirit of intolerance to reach [. . .] common ground. That (spirit of understanding) will not be achieved unless you [. . .] separate yourself from the problem. Thus, focusing on the collective goal is [. . .] [instrumental in] [. . .] reaching the common ground between the negotiating parties.

Information disclosure: accuracy, transparency and confidentiality

The disclosure of the information is also among the main communication principles of Shariah-compliant negotiation. According to most of the informants in this study, every negotiation starts and ends with exchanging various types of information. However, for Shariah-compliant negotiators, Accuracy, Transparency, and Confidentiality are essential when disclosing any kind of information during negotiation. Informant SD18 elucidated on this point:

> We are in [an] Islamic banking and finance institution [and] the staff [who] do the sale[*s*] and marketing, first [. . .] have to [collect] enough information about the product and the client [;] then they negotiate.

As such, transparently disclosing accurate information among the negotiating partners is crucial for the negotiators of Islamic organizations (Informant A8). Thus, the more information shared, the quicker the negotiating parties can arrive at a favorable resolution, and the more efficient the outcome will be (Informant SD4). Informant SD18, therefore, stressed that the information presented in any Shariah-compliant negotiation must be accurate. Informant M1 added: "In our organization, we must know the truth about the subject matter by getting all [the] information about the negotiated issue, and then we can [make] our decision."

Additionally, the evidence of this study showed that transparency in information is a crucial principle of Shariah-compliant negotiation. As such, Informant SD15 noted that "whatever the

topic of negotiation might be, negotiators must be transparent." Informant SD18 also stressed that "Shariah-compliant negotiators must not [. . .] mislead their negotiating partners." Informant SD4 added: "Here, we are talking about the obligation of the parties to disclose all relevant information accurately and transparently during negotiation." Additionally, several other informants alluded to the importance of confidentiality as a crucial principle in Shariah-compliant negotiation. To this effect, Informant SD4 stressed that "confidentiality is essential for maintaining good relationships between negotiating parties [and] it is a sign of honesty that increases trust among them.

Discussions, implications and conclusions

This study explores the notion of negotiation from the Islamic perspective and examines the communicative principles guiding the negotiation process among Islamic organizations. In line with the highlighted objectives, the findings reported here reveal essential insights into the negotiation practices and communicative principles guiding the process within the context of Shariah-compliant organizations. The theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed herein. In line with the first research objective, this study reveals that negotiation can be defined as threefold. First, it is seen as a platform for reconciliation, consultation and communicating differences. Second, the negotiation process among Islamic organizations must be Shariah-compliant, and finally, Shariah-compliant organizations use negotiation to achieve spiritual satisfaction.

Additionally, the findings reported in this study reveal a clear conceptual difference in the conventional understanding and Islamic-organizational perspective of corporate negotiation. As discussed above, negotiation – in a conventional sense – is a collaborative decision-making process. To Islamic negotiators, however, the process is more than just a managerial necessity; it is also an undertaking that is enjoined with several Quranic verses. Further, several solid historical references point to how the Prophet Mohamed engaged with his opponents while propagating the teachings of Islam through negotiation at the same time as a means of communicating his differences, consulting his opponents' positions and reconciling among them. The informants repeatedly used the Arabic words "*Sulh*" and "*Shurah*" to describe their purpose of engaging in negotiation as reaching out and building bridges between two or more conflicting organizations. In addition, the results of this study also highlight the tendency of Islamic negotiators to adopt an integrative and interest-based negotiation approach by focusing on solving problems between their organizations and others as opposed to adopting a positional approach (Miller *et al.*, 2010). Thus, negotiators for Islamic organizations tend to focus on reconciling differences, communicating their interests, and consulting their counterparts rather than focusing on their positions or being authoritatively assertive in a negotiation.

Additionally, these negotiators in Islamic organizations stressed how the entire negotiation process must be Shariah-compliant. Furthermore, the findings reported in this study clarify that Islamic organizations do not negotiate on any disputed topic but focus entirely on Halal issues. Third, to an Islamic organization, negotiation is a scriptural mandate for attaining spiritual satisfaction. According to Ramdani *et al.* (2016), however, the last factor of spiritual fulfillment stems from first achieving unity. Negotiators must ensure that Islamic organizations conduct their dealings from the Shariah viewpoint to bring about internal and external harmony. Conceptually, agreement forms the foundation of human cohesion. It refers to where ethnic groups, religious groups and individuals from different locations live in peace (Yassin and Dahalan, 2012). Accordingly, Islamic literature refers to 'spirituality' as a means of using intellect and other abilities to become aware of the reason for the creation of man. Humanity was created to worship Allah (SWT) alone and to accept

and practice His instructions – in this case, the Shariah-compliant negotiation – to His satisfaction. In this way, human actions are linked to the purpose of life (Marzband *et al.*, 2016). In line with this assertion, this paper has shown that in Islam, spiritual fulfillment relates to daily and business transactions. This is because Muslims are commanded to surrender entirely to Islam, which means all their activities, including their business dealings, must be in accordance with Allah's (SWT) pleasure. Therefore, Muslims say or do everything spiritual based on the Islamic creed. Consistent with this view, Ramdani *et al.* (2016), claim that practicing Shariah-compliant negotiation leads to spiritual satisfaction because it is a form of negotiation founded on Islamic principles and therefore contributes significantly to developing organizations that are entirely Shariah-based.

From an Islamic perspective, the primary purpose of every negotiation is to achieve spiritual satisfaction. Given this, negotiators do not see their negotiating partners as enemies that must be defeated by any means but rather as parties with whom they seek to settle a dispute that will satisfy both sides. Also, an Islamic-compliant negotiation must be within the boundaries of permissible topics. Finally, negotiators do not come into any negotiation with predetermined positions but are always willing to shift ground and ensure that everyone leaves the negotiating table with a sense of victory and satisfaction.

Furthermore, this study reveals that certain principles guide a typical negotiation process among Islamic organizations. According to the data reported in this study, Credible Communication Principles, Flexible Interactions and Information Disclosure are the key elements Islamic organizations employ in the negotiation process. Credible communication relies on truthfulness, honesty and respectful informational exchange between negotiators. As stated above, Islam guides the conduct of its believers in every aspect of their lives. Therefore, most of the Islamic principles are based on a solid premise that leads to a good lifestyle that is pleasing and secure, making credibility a crucial characteristic of a true Muslim. As such, Muslim negotiators must display credibility value through the open and honest exchange of information while negotiating. To do this, the negotiators extend their focus beyond any economic or other worldly gains for their organizations to avoid undermining honesty, truthfulness and respect during negotiation. In conclusion, Ghanim and Fatima (2009) specified that credibility refers to a commitment to truth both in word and action, which is consistent with the nature of successful negotiations and prosperous relations.

In addition, the experts in this study expressed their belief that negotiation must be flexible in a manner that allows for concessions and helps to achieve common goals. Researchers such as Ghanim and Fatima (2009) stressed that Islam is a religion that permits flexibility. The Qur'an and Sunnah are full of recommendations highlighting this in worship, fulfilling religious duties, conduct, dealings and negotiations between people. As such, we see evidence in the example of the Prophet (PBUH), who applied this principle in all transactions and dealings (Ghanim and Fatima, 2009; Ramdani *et al.*, 2016) and asked Muslims to follow him. When the Prophet was speaking to one of his companions, Jabir bin Abdullah, He (PBUH) said: "May Allah's mercy be on him who is lenient in his buying, selling and in demanding back his money" (Imam Al-Bukhari, 2009). In agreement with this view, Ramdani *et al.* (2016) emphasized this principle and considered it one of the pillars of Shariah-compliant negotiation. These authors agreed on the importance of flexibility in motivating and inspiring the negotiating parties and helping facilitate positive outcomes. Without flexibility, it is challenging to negotiate. Finally, all negotiating partners must be accurate, transparent and confidential when disclosing information.

The findings reported in this paper provide several suggestions and insights for individuals who plan to engage in corporate negotiations with Islamic organizations. These insights include, for instance, the Muslim understanding of organizations. Such gleanings

go a long way in revealing Muslim negotiators' behaviors, attitudes and expectations. For example, a non-Muslim or a negotiator from a non-Islamic organization should understand that Muslims do not follow any positional or argumentative negotiation style. Instead, they negotiate to consult opinions and communicate differences. Ultimately, they look forward to winning the negotiation for economic gain and a favorable spiritual outcome.

In line with many previous studies, this research emphasized the importance of organizational social value and culture in determining negotiation success (Miller *et al.*, 2010). Moreover, every organization is responsible for creating sociocultural values that fit its mission and vision. As such, this study has demonstrated how Islamic values and principles guide Shariah-compliant organizations. This research allows for a deeper understanding of Islamic negotiation and reveals the principles guiding the process within Islamic organizations. The findings presented here also show the context in which negotiators of Islamic organizations are to be approached and understood. In addition to the underlying impact of the Islamic scriptural teachings and values on the organizational culture and management of Islamic organizations, the empirical data discussed in this study supports the claim that macro-environmental factors and organizational dimensions should be considered when examining business negotiating behaviors.

Finally, one notable limitation of our study lies in the exclusive use of in-depth interviews within financial organizations. While this approach facilitated a profound exploration of the Shariah-based principles relevant to business negotiations, it does have certain constraints. To attain a more comprehensive understanding of how Shariah-compliant negotiation aligns with the conventional win-win strategy, future researchers might contemplate employing an experimental research design that incorporates focus groups. Such an approach would enable a comparative analysis between these two strategies, potentially yielding richer insights and a broader perspective on the subject matter. Another limitation of this study is its focus on a specific industry, namely Islamic financial institutions. This limitation may therefore, constrain the generalizability of the study's findings to a certain extent. On this basis, future researchers may explore comparisons between different industries to enhance the universality of the applicability of Shariah-compliant negotiation principles across various sectors.

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