

Reconstructing Qur'anic Managerial Responsibility: Leadership, Servanthood, and Trust

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Abstract

The ongoing leadership crisis, low integrity, and weak organizational governance highlight the need for a managerial paradigm grounded not only in technical competence but also in moral and spiritual values. This article aims to reconstruct the Qur'anic concept of human responsibility by integrating three key notions—*khalifah* (leadership mandate), *'ibad* (servanthood and value orientation), and *amanah* (trust and accountability)—into the framework of Qur'anic Managerial Responsibility (QMR). The study employs a qualitative approach using thematic (*maudhu'i*) interpretation and hermeneutical analysis, examined through the lens of contemporary Islamic management theory. Data are derived from Qur'anic verses, classical and modern tafsir literature, and scholarly works on Islamic leadership and management. The findings demonstrate that *khalifah* represents a strategic leadership mandate and sustainable stewardship, *'ibad* constitutes the spiritual–ethical foundation guiding leadership behavior, and *amanah* functions as a structure of moral and institutional accountability. The integration of these three pillars forms a holistic Qur'anic leadership model conceptualized as Leader–Servant–Trustee. Furthermore, the study shows that QMR is not merely theoretical but can be operationalized in Islamic finance, education, and business sectors through ethical governance and accountability practices. Theoretically, this research bridges the epistemological gap between Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic management studies, offering a value-based leadership framework relevant to contemporary organizational contexts.

Keywords: Qur'anic Managerial Responsibility, Khalifah, 'Ibad, Amanah, Islamic Leadership.

Abstrak

Krisis kepemimpinan, rendahnya integritas publik, dan lemahnya tata kelola organisasi menunjukkan perlunya paradigma manajerial yang tidak hanya bersifat teknokratis, tetapi juga berakar pada nilai moral dan spiritual. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk merekonstruksi konsep tanggung jawab manusia dalam Al-Qur'an melalui integrasi tiga konsep utama, yaitu *khalifah*, *'ibad*, dan *amanah*, ke dalam kerangka Qur'anic Managerial Responsibility (QMR). Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode tafsir tematik (*maudhu'i*) dan hermeneutik, serta dianalisis melalui perspektif teori manajemen Islam kontemporer. Data bersumber dari ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an, kitab tafsir klasik dan modern, serta literatur manajemen Islam dan studi kepemimpinan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *khalifah* merepresentasikan mandat kepemimpinan strategis dan stewardship berkelanjutan, *'ibad* membentuk orientasi nilai spiritual dan etika kepemimpinan, sedangkan *amanah* berfungsi



sebagai struktur akuntabilitas moral dan institusional. Integrasi ketiganya membentuk model kepemimpinan Qur'ani yang holistik dengan paradigma Leader–Servant–Trustee. Studi ini juga menunjukkan bahwa QMR dapat dioperasionalkan secara nyata dalam sektor keuangan Islam, pendidikan, dan bisnis melalui praktik tata kelola yang etis dan akuntabel. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini menjembatani kesenjangan epistemologis antara studi tafsir dan manajemen Islam, serta menawarkan kontribusi konseptual bagi pengembangan kepemimpinan berbasis nilai Qur'ani dalam konteks modern.

Kata kunci: Tanggung Jawab Manajerial Qur'ani, Khalifah, 'Ibad, Amanah, Kepemimpinan Islam.

Introduction

The modern era is witnessing a growing crisis in leadership, public integrity, and institutional accountability, accompanied by weakening organizational ethics (Leliana & Castrawijaya, 2024). Ethical failures in governance are increasingly linked to a lack of moral and spiritual orientation in management practices, suggesting that technical competence alone cannot ensure ethical leadership (Junus et al., 2024). This alarming situation highlights an urgent need for frameworks that integrate ethical, spiritual, and managerial dimensions to address these systemic challenges.

The Qur'an offers a comprehensive ethical foundation through the concepts of *khalifah*, *'ibad*, and *amanah*, which collectively shape human responsibility. Humans are positioned as *khalifah fi al-ard* (QS. Al-Baqarah: 30), entrusted to manage resources fairly and responsibly (Saleh, 2010). As *'ibad*, humans embody spiritual awareness and ethical orientation, which underpins moral agency and ethical leadership (Muhammad & Sari, 2021). Meanwhile, *amanah* establishes accountability structures, ensuring integrity, transparency, and ethical compliance in organizational and social life (Miftahussurur et al., 2025).

Despite their relevance, previous studies have shown a significant gap between Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*) and Islamic management theory. Exegetical research tends to present these concepts in normative-theological terms without connecting them to leadership frameworks or governance structures (Wijayanti & Candrayani, 2018). Conversely, Islamic management literature often interprets Qur'anic texts normatively, without applying systematic exegetical methodology, weakening its epistemological foundation (Kahfi & Mahmud, 2024). Research on *khalifah* often emphasizes human spiritual roles without linking to leadership models such as visionary, ethical, or sustainable governance (Rahman, 2012; Kemajuan et al., 2019). Studies on *'ibad* focus on ritual and personal morality rather than ethical or spiritual-based leadership. Similarly, research on *amanah* is generally limited to

individual work ethics, neglecting its role in organizational accountability and corporate governance (Abidin, 2017).

Internationally, scholars such as Beekun & Badawi (1999; 2005) highlight Islamic leadership based on *amanah* and justice, Ali (2005) emphasizes the spiritual basis of moral agency, and Fry (2003) links spiritual values to visionary leadership (Nugroho & Pratiwi, 2023). However, these studies often explore the dimensions separately, failing to integrate the three Qur'anic concepts into a unified managerial framework. This gap underscores the need for a holistic Qur'anic managerial paradigm, conceptualized here as Qur'anic Managerial Responsibility (QMR), where *khalifah* represents a strategic leadership mandate, *'ibad* forms a spiritual-ethical orientation, and *amanah* establishes accountability structures.

The novelty of this study lies in three areas. First, it bridges the epistemological gap by integrating hermeneutic and thematic (*maudhu'i*) interpretation with modern Islamic management theory, fostering interdisciplinary dialogue. Second, it reconstructs a theoretical model that holistically combines *khalifah*, *'ibad*, and *amanah* into an applicable managerial paradigm. Third, it offers practical contributions by translating Qur'anic values into guidelines for ethical leadership, organizational accountability, and sustainable governance in the contemporary context (Miftahussurur et al., 2025).

In sum, this study aims to explore how the Qur'an frames human responsibility through *khalifah*, *'ibad*, and *amanah*, and to reconstruct these concepts into a holistic Qur'anic managerial model. By integrating leadership mandate, ethical orientation, and accountability, this approach not only enriches thematic exegesis but also advances the discourse on Islamic management theory, leadership ethics, and value-based governance in modern societies.

Methodology

This study analyzes the Qur'anic concepts of *khalifah*, *'ibad*, and *amanah* as the primary units of analysis, complemented by Islamic management literature on ethical leadership, accountability, and governance. A qualitative research design is adopted because the research aims to interpret and reconstruct the ethical and managerial dimensions of these Qur'anic concepts, which require deep textual and thematic understanding rather than quantitative measurement. This approach enables bridging the epistemological gap between exegetical studies (*tafsir*) and modern Islamic management theory.

Primary data sources consist of the Qur'an and classical and contemporary tafsir literature that elaborate on the three core concepts, while secondary sources include scholarly works and case studies on Islamic leadership, organizational ethics, and management theory.

Data are collected through document analysis, employing both hermeneutic and thematic (*maudhu'i*) interpretation methods. This process involves identifying relevant Qur'anic verses, reviewing tafsir literature to extract theological, ethical, and managerial insights, and compiling contemporary management studies to contextualize Qur'anic concepts within modern leadership and governance frameworks.

The analysis applies qualitative thematic methods, integrating hermeneutic interpretation with Islamic management theory. Verses and literature are categorized according to *khalifah*, *'ibad*, and *amanah*, and patterns, principles, and managerial implications are identified within each category. The findings are then synthesized into a conceptual model of Qur'anic Managerial Responsibility (QMR), emphasizing strategic leadership mandate, ethical-spiritual orientation, and accountability structures. The model is validated through cross-referencing classical exegesis with contemporary management practices, ensuring both theological fidelity and practical applicability. This methodological framework allows for a systematic and epistemologically grounded reconstruction of Qur'anic values into a holistic managerial paradigm suitable for addressing contemporary challenges in leadership, ethics, and governance.

Results and Discussion

A. Qur'anic Managerial Responsibility Integrating Leadership Mandate, Servant Ethics, and Accountability

The analysis indicates that Qur'anic leadership can be divided into three main pillars: *khalifah* (leadership mandate), *'ibad* (spiritual-social value orientation), and *amanah* (accountability structure). These three pillars form the foundation of the Qur'anic Managerial Responsibility (QMR) model, emphasizing human responsibility in addressing leadership crises, low integrity, and weak modern governance (Faisal, 2024; Rahayu et al., 2024).

Surah Al-Baqarah [2]:30 explicitly mentions the term *khalifah*, highlighting humanity's position as holders of the divine mandate. The following table illustrates the themes, verse quotes, thematic meanings, and conceptual implications of this verse:

Theme	Verse / Quote	Thematic Meaning	Conceptual Implications
Divine Mandate	إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً	Allah appoints humans as caliphs	Humans carry spiritual-social duties

Theme	Verse / Quote	Thematic Meaning	Conceptual Implications
Angel's Concern	أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ	Potential for human corruption	The Caliph must manage justly and civilly
Potential for Good	وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ	Recognition of worship values	The Caliph is oriented toward purity and spiritual values
Divine Wisdom	إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ	Allah knows the wisdom of creation	The Caliph's role is part of the divine plan

Source: Al-Maraghy (2017); Rif'an & Said (2022); Zain (2019).

Classical exegesis emphasizes agentive masculine language, positioning humans as active agents in the divine mandate. This ideology normalizes gender hierarchy in leadership and affirms humans' roles as moral and social leaders (Solihin, 2020; Ali Rif'an & Akhmad Said, 2022).

The concept of 'ibad is not merely a spiritual status but the epistemological foundation of human responsibility in leadership (Beekun, 1997; Ali, 2005). This understanding links servanthood awareness with ethical behavior, decision-making, and social management (Armelia & Sintia, 2024; Nurhafizah & Muti'ah, 2024). The maudhu'i interpretation expands the meaning of worship into a managerial function, forming value orientations that guide organizational behavior (Abdurrahman, 2018; Sumadi & Siyamto, 2019).

Amanah represents ethical and institutional responsibility in leadership, encompassing vertical (habl min Allah), social (habl min al-nas), and personal (competence & discipline) dimensions (Fitrayani, 2025; Sa'banil, 2024; Kahfi & Mahmud, 2024). Amanah functions as an internal regulator preventing abuse of power and ensuring moral integrity within organizations (Gustani, 2021; Titin Andika et al., 2020).

The three concepts—khalifah, 'ibad, and amanah—are read integratively as a Qur'anic leadership system. The table below summarizes classical meanings, managerial reconstruction, and leadership implications:

Concept	Classical Meaning	Managerial Reconstruction	Leadership Implications
Khalifah	Allah's representative on earth (QS. Al-Baqarah:30)	Leadership mandate: steward, not ruler	Visionary, manages resources sustainably

Concept	Classical Meaning	Managerial Reconstruction	Leadership Implications
‘Ibad	Servant of Allah in submission	Servant-leader identity, ethics & worship orientation	Work ethic, honesty, ethical decision-making
Amanah	Moral responsibility	Vertical, social, and personal accountability	Transparency, competency-based task allocation, mandatory supervision
Integration	Khalifah-‘ibad-amanah	Leader–Servant–Trustee	Benefit-oriented, strategic, and just leadership

Source: Sari & Yusoff, 2021; Febriani, 2021; Sofyan, 2023; Hidayatullah, 2022; Alfaridli & Agus, 2024.

The implementation of the QMR model is evident across multiple sectors. In Islamic finance, BAZNAS demonstrates a clear mandate (khalifah), social orientation (‘ibad) through empowerment programs for mustahik, and accountability (amanah) via sharia audits and transparent reports (Purwaningrum & Yazid, 2024). In education, Gontor applies waqf-based leadership, character education (Panca Jiwa) as ‘ibad orientation, and collective, transparent management as amanah (Budiman et al., 2023). In business, Bank Muamalat acts as a representative of the Muslim community, implements sharia principles (‘ibad), and applies Good Corporate Governance and Sharia Supervisory Board mechanisms as amanah (Aten et al., 2024; Thoriq, 2024).

These findings indicate that QMR integrates the three pillars of Qur’anic leadership: mandate (khalifah), value orientation (‘ibad), and accountability (amanah). Agentive masculine language and gender hierarchy ideology highlight humans as moral agents. Implementation in finance, education, and business demonstrates that the model is practically applicable, effective, and systematic.

Overall, QMR provides an operational model connecting Qur’anic values, managerial functions, and leadership ethics. The patterns, classifications, and empirical evidence across sectors provide a strong foundation for discussing practical, ethical, and strategic implications in the following discussion.

B. Conceptual Analysis of Qur’anic Managerial Responsibility (QMR)

The results highlight that Qur'anic leadership integrates divine guidance, ethical values, and accountability principles. Building on these findings, the discussion focuses on a conceptual analysis of the Qur'anic Managerial Responsibility (QMR) model. This framework bridges theological insights with managerial theory, showing how the pillars of *khalifah*, *'ibad*, and *amanah* guide human action in leadership, organizational governance, and social responsibility. By linking the Quranic mandate to practical organizational behavior, this section explores how QMR transforms normative concepts into operational leadership principles, providing a foundation for theoretical implications and integration into modern management contexts (Al-Maraghy, 2017; Faisal, 2024).

The concept of *khalifah* positions humans as moral and managerial agents tasked with stewardship over the earth, emphasizing justice, ecological balance, and ethical governance. This role transcends theology to inform operational leadership, requiring humans to act as stewards rather than owners of resources. Caliphs are mandated to manage social relations, natural resources, and organizational affairs in alignment with divine guidance. The Qur'anic mandate situates leadership within ethical, ecological, and social responsibilities, linking spiritual purpose with practical outcomes. This operational dimension of *khalifah* underlines strategic responsibility and governance integrity (Zain, 2019; Rahayu et al., 2024).

The concept of *'ibad* provides the epistemological foundation for leadership, connecting worship with ethical decision-making and managerial behavior. Servanthood is not only spiritual devotion but also a normative framework guiding moral action and organizational responsibility. Only morally conscious servants (*'ibād*) can translate divine values into practical leadership, ensuring that decisions align with both ethical principles and social welfare. This linkage between spiritual awareness and management ethics enables leaders to maintain integrity, prioritize social justice, and promote value-driven organizational behavior (Beekun, 1997; Ali, 2005; Armelia & Sintia, 2024; Said, 2016; Muadzin & Sunarto, 2025).

Amanah operationalizes trust as an accountability structure across three dimensions: vertical accountability toward God, social responsibility toward others, and personal discipline and competence. By transforming trust into a structural and operational principle, *amanah* governs transparency, delegation, and oversight within organizations. This ensures that leadership is not merely symbolic but is ethically and institutionally anchored. *Amanah* integrates with the other pillars to form a comprehensive leadership framework that safeguards moral integrity, enforces accountability, and maintains sustainable governance practices in

both social and organizational contexts (Fitrayani, 2025; Titin Andika et al., 2020; Gustani, 2021; Kahfi & Mahmud, 2024).

In summary, the conceptual analysis demonstrates that the QMR model links divine mandate, spiritual value orientation, and ethical accountability into a coherent framework. Khalifah provides strategic stewardship, *'ibad* ensures value-driven decision-making, and amanah operationalizes trust and integrity. Together, these pillars form a holistic leadership paradigm that integrates theological, ethical, and managerial dimensions. This conceptual foundation establishes the basis for theoretical implications and the practical application of QMR across sectors, providing a robust lens to analyze contemporary Qur'anic-inspired leadership practices (Al-Maraghy, 2017; Faisal, 2024; Rahayu et al., 2024).

C. Theoretical Implications of Qur'anic Managerial Responsibility (QMR)

The Qur'anic Managerial Responsibility (QMR) model provides significant theoretical contributions by bridging classical Qur'anic teachings with contemporary management theory. Khalifah, as a concept of leadership mandate, aligns closely with stewardship theory, emphasizing strategic vision, sustainability, and moral responsibility in organizational and social contexts. Leaders as caliphs are not merely authority holders but stewards accountable for resources, social welfare, and ecological balance. This theoretical alignment provides a normative and operational framework to understand leadership from a Qur'anic perspective while integrating modern managerial principles, highlighting the ethical and functional dimensions of human authority (Zain, 2019; Faisal, 2024).

The concept of *'ibad* enhances the theoretical understanding of leadership by embedding spiritual and ethical orientations into decision-making processes. *'Ibad* represents morally conscious servanthood, guiding leaders to internalize divine values as a foundation for ethical choices and social responsibility. This perspective aligns with value-based leadership theories, demonstrating that effective governance requires more than technical competence; it necessitates a moral-ethical compass. By framing spiritual awareness as a managerial mechanism, QMR integrates theological and practical reasoning, enabling leaders to harmonize ethical principles with organizational objectives and human-centered outcomes (Nurhafizah & Muti'ah, 2024; Armelia & Sintia, 2024).

Amanah, as a principle of trust and accountability, contributes to theoretical discourse by framing ethical governance within institutional structures. Amanah operationalizes accountability in vertical, social, and personal dimensions, transforming abstract moral responsibility into enforceable managerial practice. This allows organizations to monitor,

regulate, and evaluate leadership behavior, ensuring alignment with both Qur'anic norms and contemporary governance standards. Theoretically, amanah supports frameworks such as God-centric and value-based leadership models, showing how moral and institutional accountability enhances organizational integrity, transparency, and compliance, thus bridging ethical theory with practical management applications (Asutay, 2015; Rahman & Radin, 2019).

Empirical studies in Indonesia further reinforce the theoretical relevance of QMR. Research indicates that integrating khalifah, 'ibad, and amanah strengthens leadership effectiveness across diverse sectors, including finance, education, and business. For example, eco-leadership, ethical governance, and social responsibility practices are consistent with Qur'anic pillars, demonstrating compatibility with contemporary leadership paradigms. These findings extend classical exegesis into operational contexts, showing that Qur'anic leadership principles can inform decision-making, strategic planning, and value-driven organizational culture while maintaining moral integrity and social accountability (Rahayu et al., 2024; Tri Widyastuti Ningsih, 2021).

In conclusion, QMR provides a theoretical framework that links divine mandate, spiritual orientation, and ethical accountability with modern management theory. Khalifah, 'ibad, and amanah collectively reinforce the integration of moral-ethical values into leadership practices, showing that Qur'anic principles remain relevant for contemporary organizational governance. The model extends beyond normative teachings, offering insights for leadership theory, ethical decision-making, and institutional design. By positioning QMR within stewardship, value-based, and God-centric frameworks, it demonstrates the potential of Qur'anic concepts to guide effective, responsible, and sustainable leadership in modern socio-organizational contexts (Solihin, 2020; Ali Rif'an & Akhmad Said, 2022).

D. Integration of Qur'anic Managerial Responsibility (QMR) in Leadership Practice

The integration of khalifah, 'ibad, and amanah forms a comprehensive Qur'anic leadership model, known as Leader–Servant–Trustee. Khalifah establishes the strategic mandate, directing leaders to manage resources and social responsibilities with vision and justice. 'Ibad embeds a value-driven and ethical orientation, ensuring that leaders internalize divine principles in decision-making and organizational behavior. Amanah operationalizes trust as a structural and moral principle, fostering accountability, transparency, and integrity in institutional practices. This integrative approach connects theological concepts with

practical managerial functions, providing a holistic framework for understanding Qur'anic leadership in contemporary organizational contexts (Faisal, 2024; Zain, 2019).

In the Islamic finance sector, BAZNAS exemplifies the operationalization of the QMR model. The institution exercises khalifah through its mandated authority to manage national zakat funds, demonstrating institutional responsibility and legitimacy. The 'ibad dimension manifests in social welfare and empowerment programs, addressing economic needs and promoting community development. Amanah is implemented through transparent financial reporting, sharia audits, and performance monitoring, ensuring ethical and accountable management. This case demonstrates that QMR principles can guide operational governance, aligning divine mandate, social ethics, and institutional oversight, producing leadership practices that are morally grounded and socially impactful (Purwaningrum & Yazid, 2024).

In the education sector, Gontor's waqf-based leadership illustrates the integration of QMR principles. Khalifah is reflected in the trust-based mandate of leadership over endowments, emphasizing collective responsibility rather than private ownership. 'Ibad is embedded in character education through the Panca Jiwa framework, cultivating moral, spiritual, and intellectual development in students. Amanah is operationalized via collective governance, transparent decision-making, and accountability mechanisms that monitor educational and institutional outcomes. This implementation demonstrates that the QMR framework is adaptable to leadership in educational contexts, linking spiritual values, ethical responsibility, and managerial accountability to produce effective and holistic educational administration (Budiman et al., 2023).

In the business sector, Bank Muamalat operationalizes the QMR model by integrating sharia-compliant financial services with ethical and value-based leadership. Khalifah is represented in the bank's role as a community representative, mandated to implement Islamic finance principles. 'Ibad is applied through maqashid-oriented ethics, focusing on the welfare of stakeholders and social justice, while amanah is maintained via Good Corporate Governance (GCG), Sharia Supervisory Board oversight, and financial transparency. This integration ensures that business operations align with moral, social, and spiritual principles, demonstrating that QMR can guide responsible, sustainable, and faith-aligned leadership practices in the corporate sector (Aten et al., 2024; Thoriq, 2024).

Overall, the QMR framework demonstrates the practical integration of theological, ethical, and managerial principles into leadership practice. Authority is understood as a delegated mandate rather than ownership, spirituality informs ethical orientation, and trust

underpins structural accountability. Across finance, education, and business, QMR provides a replicable model that fosters moral integrity, social responsibility, and sustainable governance. The Leader–Servant–Trustee paradigm ensures that leadership remains both ethically grounded and operationally effective, highlighting the potential of Qur’anic principles to guide contemporary organizational management in diverse cultural and institutional contexts (Purwaningrum & Yazid, 2024; Budiman et al., 2023; Aten et al., 2024).

Conclusion

This study reveals that the Qur’anic concepts of *khalifah*, *‘ibad*, and *amanah* form an integrated and complementary framework of human responsibility, which is highly relevant for modern leadership and organizational governance. The *khalifah* represents a strategic leadership mandate, emphasizing stewardship, justice, and sustainable management of resources. *‘Ibad* provides the ethical and spiritual orientation, guiding leaders to prioritize moral values, collective welfare, and integrity. *Amanah* functions as the accountability structure, ensuring transparency, trustworthiness, and ethical compliance in organizational and social contexts. Collectively, these three pillars constitute the Qur’anic Managerial Responsibility (QMR) model, which bridges spiritual, ethical, and managerial dimensions into a coherent leadership paradigm.

The study contributes scientifically by integrating thematic Qur’anic interpretation (maudhu’i) with contemporary Islamic management theory, thereby offering a systematic framework that links theology with practical leadership and governance applications. The reconstruction of *khalifah*, *‘ibad*, and *amanah* into operational managerial functions presents a novel Leader–Servant–Trustee model. This model provides both theoretical enrichment to the discourse on Qur’anic leadership and practical guidance for developing ethical, value-oriented, and accountable organizations in various sectors, including finance, education, and business.

Despite its contributions, the study has certain limitations. First, the research is primarily conceptual and interpretive, relying on textual and literature-based analysis, which may require empirical validation. Second, the application of QMR in diverse cultural and institutional contexts may vary and needs further exploration. Future research should empirically examine the implementation of QMR in organizations, assess its impact on leadership effectiveness, and explore adaptations in multicultural and corporate settings to enhance the generalizability of the model.

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