

Determinants of Business Success: An Analysis of Islamic Perspective

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Abstract

This study explored the determinants of business success from an Islamic perspective, focusing on the relationship between Allah's decree, human endeavor and individual or business success. The paper is conceptualised based on library research method, involving a comprehensive review of literature from the Quran, books of Hadith, and scholarly journals. The views of Islamic scholars were obtained and analyzed to justify the relationship between the variables under investigation. The study revealed that there are specific success factors that individuals and businesses should identify and utilize to achieve success because success is a combination of effort and reliance on Allah and taking necessary means and making efforts in order to achieve it. The study also revealed that action is necessary in shaping an individual's destiny, and individuals need to actively participate and make choices as such choices affect their journey both in this life and the hereafter. The study recommended that individuals and businesses should identify and utilize the success factors discussed while exerting effort towards their goals. It further advised against pessimism regarding Allah's decree and encourages perseverance and confidence in working towards success.

Keywords: Allah's decree, Business success, Human endeavour, Business Success factors.

Introduction

Islam is a comprehensive way of life that encompasses all aspects of human existence, sourced from two main doctrines; the Quran and Sunnah. It aims to bring happiness, freedom, dignity, peace, and prosperity to Muslims and the world at large. However, many misconceptions about Islam have led to confusion and hindered Muslims from enjoying the benefits of their faith and prevented others from benefiting from interacting with them. To better understand and appreciate the

teachings of Islam, it is essential to study the Quran and Sunnah, as well as the rich history and diverse practices of sound Muslim communities especially during the prophet's life time, that of his companions and those that follow them. This helps to dispel common myths and stereotypes about Islam and showcase the religion's ability to address global issues, such as economics, politics, social justice, and healthcare.

Islam is a moderate religion that emphasizes the importance of relying on Allah (SWT) alone for success and sustenance. This means that Muslims are encouraged to work hard and seek lawful means to achieve their goals, but they must also recognize that their ultimate success is in the hands of Allah (SWT). As such, Islam condemns practices such as visiting soothsayers, relying on magicians, and believing in superstitions, as they go against the fundamental principles of Islamic belief. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) stated, "Whoever visits a soothsayer or magician and believes in what they say has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad" (Abu Dawud: 3904, Ibn Majah: 639, authenticated by Ibn Hajar in Fathul Bari 10/217 and Albani in Sahih Abi Dawud. See Sahih Muslim 2230).

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized the importance of striving for success, stating, "Strive/try your best and know that no one becomes successful with just his act (endeavor), except when Allah has mercy on him" (Muslim: 2664, 2816, Ibn Majah: 79). This Hadith highlights the importance of working hard towards one's goals while recognizing that success ultimately comes from Allah's mercy. Therefore, Muslims should not be complacent or rely solely on their own

efforts, but rather strive to do their best while putting their trust in Allah (SWT).

In Islam, there is a concept known as "Assabab" which means cause. This means that while Allah (SWT) has power over everything and can make anything possible, He has also created a system where certain actions or efforts can lead to certain outcomes. Allah (SWT) has laid out a plan for each individual, and success or failure is not solely determined by luck or chance but by one's own efforts and the blessings of Allah. As mentioned in the Quran, "And whoever strives only strives for [the benefit of] himself. Indeed, Allah is free from need of the worlds" (Ankabut 29:6).

The argument presented is based on Islamic principles, which are supported by various Quranic verses and prophetic traditions. For example, the Quran states, "You will not be rewarded, judged except from your deeds" (Yasin 36:32), and "Verily, man is in loss, except those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth and recommend one another to patience" (Asr 103:1-3). Similarly, the Quran emphasizes the importance of seeking Allah's favor and remembering Him, as stated in Jumaa 62:10.

Prophetic traditions also support the idea that success in life is closely linked to one's deeds and actions. For instance, the Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said, "Everybody will enter paradise, except

those who denounce it" (Bukhari: 7280). He also said, "The paradise is surrounded by undesired things and the hellfire is surrounded by desired things" (Bukhari: 6487, Muslim: 2822-2823). Additionally, the Prophet emphasized the importance of striving and doing one's best, stating: "strive and try your best and know that nobody will enter paradise because of his deeds" (Muslim: 2816).

The objective of this study is to explore the interplay between three key concepts in Islam - Allah's decree, human effort, and business success - and to analyze their relevance in shaping an individual's future and level of achievement in business. Specifically, the study aims to examine the relationship between these concepts, as well as to identify the factors that contribute to variations in success levels among individuals and businesses.

Literature Review

This section covers various concepts relevant to the study variables. It reviews the concept of destiny, the power of Allah, the tradition of Allah, business success, business success factors, level of business success, relationship between Allah's decree, human endeavour and business success, and the scholars' view on the relationship.

The Concept of Destiny

In Islam, the belief in destiny, or Qadr, is a fundamental aspect of faith. Muslims are

expected to believe that everything that happens, whether good or bad, is part of Allah's divine plan. This belief is rooted in the Quran, which states, "We have created all things in measure, and Our command is but one, like a glance of the eye" (54:49-50). The hadith, or prophetic tradition, further emphasizes the importance of belief in destiny. It is reported that the Prophet Muhammad said, "Be mindful of Allah, and He will take care of you. Be mindful of Him, and you shall find Him with you. If you ask, ask of Allah; if you seek help, seek it from Allah. Know that if the whole world were to gather together in order to help you, they would not be able to help you except if Allah had written so. And if the whole world were to gather together in order to harm you, they would not harm you except if Allah had written so" (Tirmidhi: 2516).

Furthermore, it is confirmed from the prophetic tradition that in the beginning, Allah created a pen and asked it to write all that is going to happen. This hadith was narrated by Tirmidhi (2155, 3319) and Abu Dawud (4700) and authenticated by Albani. In short, belief in destiny is an integral part of the Islamic faith, and Muslims are expected to accept and act upon it. The Quran and prophetic tradition provide evidence and guidance on this belief.

According to Islamic belief, Muslims are obligated to believe in destiny, whether good or bad, as Allah has already planned everything that will happen up to the last day. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) confirmed this in a hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah:

"Verily, Allah has written down the good deeds and the bad ones. Then He explained it [by saying that] he who has intended a good deed and has not done it, Allah writes it down with Himself as a full good deed, but if he has intended it and has done it, Allah writes it down with Himself as from ten good deeds to seven hundred times, or many times over. But if he has intended a bad deed and has not done it, Allah writes it down with Himself as a full good deed, but if he has intended it and has done it, Allah writes it down as one bad deed." (Bukhari: 6126, Muslim: 131)

Additionally, it is believed that each person's creation is assembled in the womb of their mother and an angel is sent to put the "Ruh" (soul) into the fetus. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"Verily, the creation of each one of you is assembled in the womb of his mother for forty days in the form of a drop, then he becomes an alaqah (clot of blood) for a similar period, then a mudghah (a lump of flesh) for a similar period. Then an angel is sent to him, who breathes the soul into him and who is commanded to write four

things: his means of livelihood, his life span, his actions, and whether he will be blessed or wretched." (Bukhari: 3036, Muslim: 2643)

These hadiths confirmed the Islamic belief in predestination and the idea that everything that happens in life is according to the plan of Allah. For an entrepreneur and business manager, believing in the predestination of their success and accepting whatever Allah chooses for them can provide assurance and comfort in times of hardship and setbacks. It can also encourage them to work hard and strive for excellence while acknowledging that the ultimate outcome is in the hands of Allah.

The Power of Allah

Allah is the only creator, sustainer, giver, and denier. No one can deny what He has given, and no one can give what He has denied. He has power over everything and can do and undo whatever, whenever, wherever, and however, He wishes. He decides what people will have in terms of wealth. As stated in the Quran (Yasin 36:82), "Verily, when He intends a thing, His command is 'Be' and it is." Allah's power is limitless; He created Adam from sand without a father and mother, as He created Jesus without a father. He also made someone who begged his relatives to burn his body and pour the ashes into water successful (Bukhari: 3478, Muslim: 2757).

Allah also made Jesus and the son of an adulterer who accused Juraij, to speak while they were in their cradle (Bukhari: 1206, Muslim: 2550). Therefore, Allah can make a venture, entrepreneur, or manager successful or the most successful. This knowledge enables an entrepreneur or manager to be a positive thinker and optimist, following Allah's guidance and trying their best towards success, knowing that Allah is the one who gives objectively.

The Tradition (Sunnah) of Allah

It is important to note that Allah's will and power are the ultimate determinants of everything. However, Allah also observes certain patterns and traditions, including the concept of "as-sabab" or cause and effect. This means that things happen for a reason or condition, and individual efforts and actions can determine one's future.

The Quran mentions Allah's approved practices among those who lived before and that these practices do not change (Al-Ahzab 33:62). Additionally, Allah provides the means to achieve ends (Al-Kahf 18:84). In a prophetic tradition, a wounded companion asked if he could forgo a ritual because of his wound, but his colleagues said he must still observe it. He did so and died, and the prophet criticized his colleagues for causing his death (Abu Dawud: 337). Therefore, every human endeavor, including business, has success factors that can be identified and acquired

by a business manager. These success factors will be explained in the next section.

Business Success

The concept of success is one that is universally recognized and sought after by individuals and societies alike. Conventionally, success is often associated with achieving material wealth, fame, or power. However, the Islamic perspective on success goes beyond these conventional markers and emphasizes a more holistic and spiritual understanding of success.

In Islam, success is defined as achieving the ultimate goal of human existence, which is to attain nearness to Allah and gain His pleasure. This is achieved through the practice of faith, good deeds, and moral conduct. In the Quran, success is mentioned numerous times in the context of those who believe and follow Allah's guidance. For example, in Surah Al-Baqarah, it is mentioned that those who believe in Allah and perform good deeds will have success in this life and the Hereafter (Quran 2:277). In Islam, success is not limited to individual achievements but also encompasses the well-being and success of the community as a whole. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the importance of working for the betterment of society and promoting social justice as a means of achieving success. He said, "The best people are those

who are most beneficial to others" (Sahih Bukhari).

The concept of success in Islam also recognizes the importance of balance and moderation in all aspects of life. Islam encourages individuals to strive for success in this world while also keeping in mind their ultimate goal of attaining success in the Hereafter. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "The world is a provision and the best provision in the world is a good spouse" (Sunan Ibn Majah).

Similarly, business success is generally defined as achieving the desired outcomes in terms of profits, growth, and sustainability. In conventional business literature, success is measured by financial performance indicators such as revenue, profit margin, return on investment, and market share. However, in Islamic business literature, success is defined not only in financial terms but also in terms of ethical and social responsibility (Kasri et al., 2021).

In Islam, the concept of business success is based on the principles of Tawhid (Oneness of Allah) and Akhlaq (moral values). According to Islam, business success is achieved when it is based on the principles of Halal (lawful) and Tayyib (goodness), and when it contributes to the well-being of society (Kasri et al., 2021).

The Islamic concept of business success is based on the idea of Barakah, which means blessing and abundance. Barakah is believed to come from Allah and is not limited to material wealth but also includes blessings in health, family, and community (Alserhan & Brink, 2015). Islamic scholars suggested that business success is achieved when it is based on ethical and moral values, and when it benefits society as a whole, rather than just a select few individuals (Kasri et al., 2021).

In Islam, business success is also linked to the concept of Rizq (provision). Muslims believe that Allah is the provider of Rizq, and that it is pre-determined by Him. However, it is also believed that individuals can increase their Rizq through honest and hard work, and by seeking Allah's blessings (Alserhan & Brink, 2015).

Business Success Factors

In conventional business studies, success factors are the key components or strategies that contribute to the achievement of business goals and objectives. These factors can vary depending on the nature and size of the business, but generally include factors such as financial resources, market demand, customer satisfaction, efficient operations, and effective leadership (Prajogo & Ahmed, 2006).

In Islam, success in business is also believed to be influenced by a combination

of factors. In addition to conventional factors, there are also spiritual and ethical factors that are emphasized in Islamic teachings. These include factors such as honesty, fairness, trustworthiness, and fulfilling one's obligations (Hassan, 2002). The concept of Barakah, which refers to Allah's blessing and favor, is also important in Islamic business success. Barakah is believed to bring success and prosperity to a business as a result of the owner's good intentions and actions, and their adherence to Islamic principles (Ahmad & Haron, 2002).

Moreover, Islamic business success is also associated with the concept of Tawakkul, which refers to trust and reliance on Allah. Muslims are encouraged to put their trust in Allah and have faith in His plan, while also taking necessary actions to achieve their goals (Al-Attar & Halim, 2012). This means that in Islamic business, success is not solely determined by external factors, but also by the individual's efforts and reliance on Allah.

Level of Business Success

In Islamic perspective, the level of business success is deeply rooted in the understanding of Allah's decree and the belief that He has ultimate power and control over everything. The Quran states, "Whenever He decrees a matter, He only says to it, 'Be,' and it is" (Quran 36:67).

This verse highlights the absolute authority of Allah and His ability to bring about any outcome He wills.

According to Islamic teachings, while Allah's decree plays a significant role in determining the ultimate outcome, the level of individual or business success is also influenced by various factors such as efforts, commitments, seriousness, and resources deployed. The Quran states, "Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves" (Quran 13:11). This verse emphasizes the importance of individual effort and initiative in shaping one's own destiny.

Individuals or businesses may differ in their levels of success based on the varying levels of effort and commitment they exert. It is unlikely for two businesses or individuals to achieve the exact same level of success due to the unique circumstances and opportunities they encounter. Allah states, "It is Allah who opens the doors of provision for whomever He wills" (Quran 42:12). This verse indicates that Allah bestows His blessings and provisions according to His wisdom and will.

Islamic scholars have discussed the concept of effort and its relationship to business success. Sheikh Abdul Rahman Al-Sa'adi, in his book "Tafseer Al-Sa'adi," explained that human effort is an integral part of Allah's decree and that individuals should

strive and work diligently to achieve their goals (Al-Saadi, 2012). Sheikh Muhammad Al-Sha'rawi, in his book "Tafseer Al-Sha'rawi," emphasized the importance of sincere effort and utilizing available resources while relying on Allah's guidance and support (Al-Sha'rawi, 2003).

Additionally, Islamic teachings encourage individuals and businesses to seek Allah's help and guidance in their endeavours. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "If Allah guides someone through you, it is better for you than the whole world and everything in it" (Sahih Muslim). This hadith highlights the importance of seeking Allah's assistance and relying on His guidance for success.

In conclusion, the level of business success in Islamic perspective is determined by a combination of Allah's decree and the efforts, commitments, seriousness, and resources deployed by individuals or businesses. While Allah's decree is ultimate and cannot be changed, human effort and initiative play a crucial role in achieving success. Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of striving diligently, utilizing available resources, and seeking Allah's guidance and support in all business endeavours.

Allah's Decree, Human Endeavour and Business Success

In Islamic theology and philosophy, there is a widely debated topic regarding the

relationship between Allah's decree and human endeavour. The concept of divine predestination, known as Qadr in Arabic, refers to the belief that Allah has predetermined the fate of every individual and event in the universe. Nevertheless, human endeavor or free will is the ability of individuals to make their own choices and actions that can potentially change their destiny.

According to Islamic beliefs, Allah's decree is absolute and final, and no human action can change it. The Quran emphasizes this by stating, "And never say about anything, I will do this tomorrow without adding, 'If Allah wills'" (Quran 18:23-24). Muslims believe that Allah has predetermined the life span, sustenance, and all other events in the life of every individual.

However, the concept of human endeavour or free will is also emphasized in Islamic teachings. The Quran states, "Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves" (Quran 13:11). This verse highlights the importance of human effort and action in changing one's destiny. Muslims are encouraged to work hard, make the right choices, and seek guidance from Allah to achieve their goals.

Islamic scholars debated the relationship between Allah's decree and human endeavour. Some scholars argued that human endeavour is meaningless since

Allah has predetermined everything. They believed that any action taken by an individual is only a result of Allah's decree. However, majority of scholars believed that Allah's decree and human endeavour are not mutually exclusive, but rather work in harmony. They argued that while Allah has predetermined events, individuals have the freedom to choose their actions and shape their destiny.

In the context of business success, the concepts of Allah's decree and human endeavour imply that success in business is not solely determined by external factors such as economic conditions or market trends, but rather by the combination of both divine decree and human effort. Quranic verses such as: "And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for" (53:39) emphasize the importance of human endeavour in achieving success.

Islamic teachings emphasize that it is the responsibility of individuals to take practical steps towards achieving their goals. For example, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Tie your camel and then put your trust in Allah" (Tirmidhi). This implies that while it is important to have faith in Allah's decree, individuals must also take practical steps to achieve their goals.

However, it is important to note that success in business is not solely determined by an individual's effort. Islamic teachings

emphasize that the ultimate success is in the hands of Allah and that individuals should remain humble and grateful for any success they achieve. Quranic verses such as: "And say, 'My Lord, increase me in knowledge'" (20:114) remind individuals to seek knowledge and guidance from Allah to achieve success in all aspects of life.

Scholars View on the Relationship Between Allah's Decree and Human Endeavour and Business Success

In Islamic theology, the concept of Allah's decree (Qadr) and human endeavour (Ijtihad) are intertwined, each playing an important role in achieving success in business or any other aspects of life. According to Islamic scholars, success in business comes from a combination of both Allah's decree and human endeavour.

One of the most famous Islamic scholars, Imam Al-Ghazali, wrote extensively on this topic. He stated that: "success in any endeavour is ultimately dependent on Allah's decree, but human beings are still obligated to exert their best efforts and use their intelligence and resources to achieving success" (Al-Ghazali, 2000).

Similarly, another renowned scholar, Ibn Taymiyyah, believed that "Allah's decree is all-encompassing and all-powerful, but it does not absolve humans from their responsibility to work hard and strive for success" (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2013).

In contemporary times, Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, a prominent Islamic scholar, has also discussed this topic extensively. He stated that: "Allah's decree is the ultimate factor in determining success, but human endeavour is necessary to fulfil one's obligations and responsibilities" (Al-Qaradawi, 2010).

Scholars like Khair (2013), Zakaria (2015), Kareem (2020) and Qutb (2004) further emphasized the importance of taking necessary means and making efforts towards one's goals, while also understanding the ultimate role of Allah's decree in determining success. Khair (2013) highlighted the importance of obedience and action, while Zakaria (2015) argued that action is the only space where individuals can actively participate and choose their destiny. Kareem (2020) emphasized the importance of supplication, and Qutb (2004) stressed the need for reliance on Allah while confidently working towards one's plans.

In conclusion, Islamic scholars believed that success in business or any other aspect of life is a combination of Allah's decree and human endeavour. While recognizing the ultimate role of Allah's decree in determining success, human beings are still obligated to strive for success through hard work, use of their intelligence and resources, and supplication.

Research Methodology

In this study, a conceptual library research method was employed. The study reviewed relevant literature from the Quran, books of Hadith, and scholarly journals. Islamic scholars' views were obtained and analyzed to justify the relationship between Allah's decree, human endeavour, and business success.

Results and Discussions

The study conducted an analysis of the relationship between Allah's decree, human endeavour, and individual or business success. Findings revealed that there are factors that individuals and businesses need to identify and utilize in order to succeed. The study also found that success is made possible and simpler for those who are destined to be successful, and that success usually does not come accidentally but the result of an effort and leaving the rest to Allah.

One example of a success factor mentioned in the study is taking necessary means (cause) and making effort while having the belief that the means are not the ultimate, but Allah is. Khair (2013) argued that it is expected of an obedient servant to take necessary means and that believing in destiny does not negate striving and making effort.

Another success factor mentioned in the study is the importance of action in shaping

an individual's destiny. Zakaria (2015) argued that action is the only space where an individual can actively participate and operate to choose their destiny, whether on earth as Allah's servant or vicegerent or in the hereafter where they will experience the consequences of their actions.

Furthermore, supplication is also considered as a success factor in the study. Karem (2020) argued that supplication is an act of worship that Allah has commanded and has a great impact on an individual's destiny. Supplication is considered a cause that Allah considers to change the occurrence of something.

In conclusion, the study emphasizes that belief in destiny should not be a reason for laxity in pursuing success. An individual or business should identify and utilize success factors while leaving the rest to Allah's decree.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the study highlighted the relationship between Allah's decree, human endeavor, and individual or business success. It was found that there is a direct relationship between human effort and success, and the level of success depends on the level of effort exerted. Khair (2013) emphasized that taking necessary means and making effort is expected from an obedient servant.

Zakaria (2015) stated that an individual can actively participate and operate to choose his destiny by taking action. Karem (2020) explained that supplication is a cause that Allah considers to change the occurrence of something. Qutb (2004) asserted that an individual should rely on Allah and work out plans in confidence.

The study recommends that individuals and businesses should identify and utilize success factors while making effort towards success. They should not become pessimistic about Allah's decree and should work hard towards success as their effort determines their level of success. The study used a conceptual library research method by reviewing documented materials in the Quran, books of Hadith, and scholarly journals to obtain and analyze Islamic scholars' views.

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