Educational Leader Attributes in Imam Khomeini Views

Ensieh Zahedi, Zahra Abbasadeh

[1]Dean of valiasrcollege, Theran, Iran,
[2]The professor of valiasr college, Thran Iran
ensiehzahedi@yahoo.com; abbszahehz@yahoo.com

Abstract: The objective of this paper was to study leadership attributes of educational managers as prescribed in Imam Khomeini's speeches. Imam Khomeini is a role model and a unifying force for management practices in our country. Therefore, leaders in Islamic organizations, especially in education sector, should adapt Imam Khomeini's teachings in their leadership approaches. This study explores the leadership qualities that are applicable to educational organizations. The study population of this research was a collection of Imam Khomeini's speeches (Sahife Imam). Because of study limitations and special research criteria, only speeches relevant to management were selected to deduce educational leadership attributes. The methodology used in this study was content analysis. This study focused on three leadership functions, namely, continued employee advancement, continued process improvement, and human relationship development. Research tool used for this study was a questionnaire prepared by researcher. Cronbach Alpha Test was the means to determine the questionnaire reliability. The test result of 81% indicated the reliability of questionnaire. Collected data was analyzed by applying Freedman Test using SPSS software. Final analysis showed that continued process improvement was the most important leadership function of educational managers.
[Ensieh Zahedi, Zahra Abbasadeh. **Educational Leader Attributes in Imam Khomeini Views**. Journal of American Science 2012; 8(3):199-205]. (ISSN: 1545-1003). http://www.americanscience.org. 25

Introduction

Educational system plays an important role in the development, advancement, and survival of a society. Implementation and evaluation of educational programs require proper leadership. The required adjustment of educational system to complex social changes, the need for a comprehensive high quality education, and globalization of human communication have created an opportunity for educational managers to rise above mere administrators and become the most important agent for educational renovation.

These new demands require additional leadership skills from educational managers creating a need for a role model. Adhering to Islamic values, understanding the complexity employee behavior, and maintaining a attitude are sensitive issues in an Islamic organization. Imam Khomeini's leadership and his conducts during turbulent years of revolution can teach many lessons to anyone in leadership position.

His knowledge of Islamic mannerism and the foundation of an Islamic society helped him understand the complexity of his followers. This understanding helped him to provide guidance and introduce behavioral changes to his followers. He put Islamic revolution on the right track by resurrecting the traditional Islamic model. His leadership style deserves further studies, deliberation, and promotion to make it a true model for educational managers. This paper looked into a collection of Imam Khomeini speeches in search of important leadership attributes to be adapted by educational managers.

Problem Definition

Effective leadership is a development indicator in today's global world. A capable and effective leader utilizes organizational potentials to create sustainable development. Educational organizations require effective leadership to achieve self-sufficiency, discipline, superiority, innovation, and responsiveness.

Studies have shown that lack of effective leadership in our school system has created a passive and unsatisfactory atmosphere. An effective leadership in our school system shall motivate school employees to apply their full potential in providing better education to students and achieving educational objectives (Bani Hashemian, 1385).

A manager who merely resorts to rules and regulations and applies the power vested in his position will drive his organization into many difficulties. An effective manager can influence his subordinates and gain their acceptance (Mozaffari, 1381, p. 44). Effective educational managers need to understand management principles and theories and have leadership capabilities (Gharaie Moghaddam, 1375).

Leadership is a complex process under influence of morality and spirituality, and therefore, it is different from management (Stephan Paul, 2007). Using a role model like Imam Khomeini can elevate management position in educational system and increase its effectiveness and productivity.

Study Questions
1-   What leadership attributes Imam Khomeini mentioned in his speeches?
2-   How did Imam Khomeini break down these leadership attributes?
3-   Which leadership attribute had the highest importance in view of management scholars?
4-   Which component of leadership attributes had the highest importance in view of management scholars?

Research Methodology
Methodology in this study was analytic - descriptive. Researcher extracted leadership attributes for educational managers from the theoretical discussions presented in Imam Khomeini's speech. Afterward, researchers sought expert views on suitability of the selected attributes with the study objectives. The findings of this study were made available to responsible individuals to be applied for educational manager selection.

Statistical Population
Statistical population for content analysis included Imam Khomeini speeches published in 22 volumes. Religious and management experts use this collection for reference.

Statistical Sample
The study objectives were the base of statistical samples selection for content analysis. This study focused on Imam Khomeini speeches with management connotations, relevant to public administration, and/or about treatment of subordinates.

Sampling Method
Sampling method is focused (judgmental) and non-probable when experts select the study sample from statistical population (Delavar, 1380). Sampling for this study was focused and researcher selected units or individuals that seem to be suitable and could provide useful information.

Data Collection Tool
Researcher used inductive content analysis (identification and extraction of leadership attributes and their components from Sahifeh Imam) to gain deep understanding and provide accurate description of data. Researcher designed a questionnaire based on the findings to seek opinions of religious and management scholars on the relevance of study findings.

Induction Method
Research reliability depends on its repeatability (Khoiee Nejaz, 1383, p. 275). When content analysis is based on human coding, the reliability is referred to as "reliability among coding individuals", which indicates agreement between two or more coding individuals. This questionnaire was presented to 20 religious and management experts in order to determine the underlying coefficient. Cronbach Alpha Analysis showed questionnaire reliability at 81% by using SPSS software. Freedman Test was used to classify components.

Analysis of Study Questions
1-   What leadership attributes Imam Khomeini mentioned in his speeches?
Imam Khomeini believed that human behaviors that manifest in management are representations of human desire to reach perfection. As long as human being is far away from reaching his real self, he is immersed in a disruptive illusion that moves him insatiably toward power and wealth driving him away from a tranquil state (Delshad Tehrani, 1380, p. 189). Imam Khomeini believed in a leadership style built on feelings of affection, friendship, and tolerance. He emphasized on continued endeavor of reaching to people. He maintained that such leadership style should introduce humanistic management practices to organizations, which would attract God's blessing - a requirement for organizations to move toward perfection.

Continued employee advancement
Effective educational managers provide development opportunities to employees for growth and advancement toward self-actualization. Managers welcome criticism, encourage employee participation, and reward innovation. Successful organizations provide an environment for constructive discussions and criticism by offering free expression opportunities to employees. Free expression strengthens employee self-belief leading to personal enrichment.

Continued process improvement
Imam Khomeini believed that effective educational managers require employees to perform tasks properly with emphasis on self-control.

Human relationship development
Educational managers should use "governance of hearts" as a tool to influence subordinates and introduce behavioral changes. This component includes such qualities as honesty, , and respect towards employees.

2-   How did Imam Khomeini break down leadership attributes?
1.1.   Effective leaders can provide continued employee advancement when they adhere to the followings:

View criticism as suggestion
According to Imam Khomeini offering and accepting criticism are required characteristics of an educational leader. Criticisms initiate corrective actions. Organization shortcomings are never highlighted without criticism.
"A self-assured person is not afraid of criticism by subordinate and in fact welcomes it" (Almousavi Khomeini, v. 13, p. 198). "Criticism does not mean vengeance. Criticism should be constructive. On these two conditions, anyone can criticize others". (ALmousavi Khomeini, v. 13, p. 205)

Emphasis on discussion and dialogue
Employee participation in organization practices and decision-making should be adapted to improve employee interactions, create motivation, and promote royalty. Imam Khomeini emphasized that: "Our people require information; those with higher abilities should take over responsibilities; Islam obligates us to participate; staying on the side line is not beneficial to anyone" (ALmousavi Khomeini, v. 19, p. 180). Imam Khomeini repeatedly encouraged people participation in country affairs. The attitude toward people should create a feeling that their views are valued and taken into consideration.

Promote employee development
According to Imam Khomeini, a good education leader maintains interaction and communication with employees. Such attitude creates a dynamic organization. Employees easily accept the final decisions when they participate in organizational decision-making. Such acceptance creates a friendly environment, which Imam Khomeini always prescribed, encouraging closeness and kindness among employees.
Imam Khomeini encouraged students in his teaching classes to express their views and analyze what has been discussed (Amid Zanjani, as quoted in Sherbaf 1370, v. 5, p. 136). In his reviews of previous scholars works, he never allowed that persons fame to prevent scrutiny and criticism. He would state that; "It is not important who that person is. This statement is flawed regardless who stated that." He encouraged students to research and not limit their creativity and innovation by simply accepting everything just because it was stated by a notable person (Amid Zanjani, as quoted in Roodsari, 1383, 3 p. 154).

Create self-belief
One management quality that contributes to employee development is the ability to help them create self-belief. Self-belief motivates employees to utilize their abilities and talents. An educational system shall turn into an environment for self-actualization. When there were no question or objection in a class session, Imam Khomeini would comment if it were a memorial ceremony that all remained silent.
He would propose to students to prove themselves to show their desire for self-actualization (Morteza Langeroodi, as quoted in Rajaiee, 1379,p. 87). When there was a hardworking and talented student in his classes, he would comment: "These students should be encouraged and developed" (Saghafi, as quoted in Sotoodeh, 1374, p. 143). Imam Khomeini emphasized on "creating self-belief" as part of employee development to utilize their potentials, to promote unity, and to increase dynamic effectiveness in an organization.

Promote virtue and prevent vice
Educational leaders have many functions and responsibilities and therefor are not able to provide continued supervision over employees. They can provide better management by promoting virtue and preventing vice when they encourage criticism throughout the organization.
Imam Khomeini insisted that we are all responsible in front of God and toward our conscience. We have to constantly correct ourselves and encourage others to do the same.

Provide Free Speech Opportunities
Maintaining open communication with employees and listening to them are important for employee motivation. Imam Khomeini encouraged responsible persons to organize gatherings and report to people about their problems and their accomplishments. He believed that open communication would encourage participation and consent (Almousavi Khomeini v. 16, p. 304).
1.2.   Effective leaders can provide continued process improvement when they provide an environment for the followings:

Accurate Performance

Educational leaders should encourage employees to perform their duties accurately leading to process improvement in organization and increasing organizational effectiveness and productivity. Imam Khomeini maintained that employees should satisfy their own conscience when performing their duties. "You should serve to your own satisfaction no matter logic you believe in." (Almousavi Khomeini, v. 20, p.285)

Emphasize on self-control

A leader who is always present and supervises all activities is never an effective educational leader because of the limitation this type of supervision offers. A leader who manages through providing guidance, planning, policy, and ideas is a more effective manager. A leader who promotes self-control among employees has better control over organization. Imam Khomeini explained the need for self-control in educational organizations in these words: "God is everywhere and supervises everything. We are standing in front of God. If we do something wrong, he is observing." (Almousavi Khomeini, v. 8, p.388) "Watch out what and be careful about what you do." (Almousavi Khomeini, v. 8, p.192)
Promotion of self-control in educational organizations is important for achieving organizational objectives. A strong self-control together with a belief that they are acting in front of God, will help employees to be more careful about what they do and they will do them well.

Set a time for tasks

A successful leader is responsible for organizational progress. Therefore, it is imperative that employees perform their duties within established timetables. Imam Khomeini always gave high importance to punctuality and demanded others to observe it too. He also allocated time to different tasks based on their priorities (Sotoodeh, 1374).
Imam Khomeini was keen on where funds were being spent and when. Although he had free hand on spending funds and could build hospitals and schools but he only spent funds for living expenses of students, where it was admissible (Fazel Lankarani, as quoted in Rajaiee, 1379, p.133). An educational leader not only has to observe organizational policies but also shall demand the same from employees.

Emphasis on law abiding

In Imam Khomeini's view, respecting law and following orders will lead to effective performance and prevent tasks from interfering with each other.

He believed that everyone should respect and follow rules and regulations after approval through administrative process. He always insisted that: "Everyone is obliged to abide by law and no one should be allowed to violate any law" (Almousavi Khomeini, v. 11, p. 476). He went on further to say that: "Everyone should act according to his legal responsibility. Law determines responsibilities for different personalities. If someone does not observe the pertinent laws and attempt to do otherwise, he has committed to something nonreligious. Everyone has to do the same thing that has been determined by laws and do it well." (Almousavi Khomeini, v. 13, p. 62)
Educational leaders should manage their organizations within their responsibilities. They should also make sure that their employees do the same because observation of organizational policies should take precedence over personal relationships or objectives.

1.3.   Effective leaders can facilitate human relationship development when they observe the followings:

Punctuality

One important quality of an effective educational manager is discipline. A leader who expects his employee to report to work on time, should do the same and be present at work before others arrive. Imam Khomeini was a disciplined person and always demanded discipline and punctuality from people who worked around him. One of his people once commented that he was so punctual that you could set your watch with it.
Imam Khomeini believed that good timing was required for social development (Almousavi Khomeini, v. 9, p. 489). "I try hard when it is required, I write when it is necessary, and I deliver speech when it is time. This is my religious obligation". (Almousavi Khomeini, v. 10, p. 195)
Imam Khomeini's social, educational, and personal life was full of many evidences that he was a disciplined person. Educational leaders should follow his example and use good timing for their functions and tasks in order to be a role model for his subordinates.

Honesty and integrity

Honesty and integrity are two Islamic values that touch people's beliefs and Islam has greatly emphazed on them. Leaders can promote public justice by adhering to honesty and integrity. Justice is one of the four virtues in ethics. Imam Khomeini believed that country should be administered based on honesty and integrity without discrimination.

Nothing could divert his views and thoughts from reality.

Imam Khomeini encouraged officials to perform their obligations with the same honesty and integrity they feel toward their families. Imam Khomeini believed that that government officials and organization leaders would work with honesty and good intentions. This approach would reduce employee corruption, objections, and underwork bringing about organizational improvement and abolishment of greed and injustice. He believed that promotion of injustice in an organization would create a strong human bond between leadership and employees pushing the organization further toward perfection.

Respecting employees

Imam Khomeini encouraged establishing subordinate relationship based on human values and maintaining communication mutual respect. He believed that such organizational relationship would produce employee satisfaction resulting to respect and trust toward organizational leaders. In such an environment, employees can better accept organizational values.

Employee attendance and absence

Another quality of educational leaders is paying attention to employee attendance and absence. Imam Khomeini was always keen about students' attendance and absence in his classroom. If any student were long absent from classroom, we would ask about him to find out the reason. He was always present on time in the classroom and noticed students who were early or late. He would comment to them that only disciplined individuals would succeed in life (Jafari, 1380).

Solving employee problems

Imam Khomeini always paid special attention to students' personal lives. Any time they had problems, he would ask about them. He insisted that responsible person should attend to needs of poor people (Almousavi Khomeini, v. 5, p. 363). Imam Khomeini repeatedly insisted that officials attend to problems of poor people, tribes, farmers, workers, etc. Paying attention to needs of employees is a desirable characteristic for educational leaders. Such an attitude should result in employee growth and self-actualization.

Honoring employees

An effective leader can guide change and control employees. Effective implementation of this requires human skills in addressing employee mistakes. Effective handling of employees and avoiding their humiliation shall lead to a better understanding of their past behavior in order to guide future behavior. This understanding will help organization leaders to provide better guidance to employees and to exert more control over their behavior.

Imam Khomeini argued: "If I were to abuse my people and belittle them, I were Mostakber and they were Mostazaf. If you belittle your subordinates and abuse them, then, you are Mostakber also." (Almousavi Khomeini, v. 7, p. 489). "We should adhere to Islamic morality. We should not try to elevate anyone without any reason and we should not belittle anyone without any reason. We should not try to do any one of these." (Almousavi Khomeini, v. 18, p. 289)

Imam Khomeini's treatment of people around him was good example of this belief. He believed that proper treatment of people was a good way to influence them.

2. Which leadership attribute had the highest importance in view of management scholars?

Table 1: *Freedman Test for Continued Employee Advancement*

Mean ranks	
Take criticism as suggestion	3.12
Emphasis on discussion and dialogue	3.12
Employee development	3.22
Creating self-belief	3.28
Promote virtue and prevent vice	3.95
Free speech opportunities	4.30

Table 2: *Test Indicators*

Number	20
Chi squared	19.53
Degree of freedom	5
Significance level	0.002

Freedman test on entries of table 1 showed that experts believed that "take criticism as suggestion" and "employee development" had the highest importance and "free speech opportunities" had the lowest importance. Chi square for six entries of table 1 was 19.53 with 5 degrees of freedom.

Table 3: *Freedman Test for Continued Process Improvement*

Mean ranks	

Accurate performance	2.45
Emphasis on self-control	2.45
Emphasis on law abiding	2.55
Determining a time for performance of duty	2.55

Table 4: Test Indicators

Number	20
Chi squared	0.300
Degree of freedom	5
Significance level	0.96

Freedman test on entries of table 3 showed that experts believed that "accurate performance" and "emphasis on self-control" had the highest importance and "emphasis on law abiding" and "determining a time for performance of duty" had the lowest importance. Chi square for four entries of table 3 was 0.300 with 5 degrees of freedom.

Table 5: *Freedman Test for Human Relationship Development*

Mean ranks	
Honesty and integrity in dealing with employees	3.08
Honoring employees	3.08
Respecting employees	3.22
Leader punctuality	3.30
Attention to employee attendance and absence	3.88
Solving employee problems	4.45

Table 6: *Test Indicators*

Number	20
Chi squared	28.18
Degree of freedom	5
Significance level	0.002

Freedman test on entries of table 5 showed that experts believed that "honesty and integrity in dealing with employees" had the highest importance and "solving employee problems" had the lowest importance. Chi square for six entries of table 5 was 28.018 with 5 degrees of freedom.

3.   Which component of leadership attributes had the highest importance in view of management scholars?

Table 7: *Freedman Test for Leadership Attributes (Continued Process Improvement, Continued Employee Advancement, and Human Relationship Development)*

Mean ranks	
Continued improvement of processes	1.12
Human relation	2.32
Continued employee development	2.55

Table 8: Test Indicators

Number	20
Chi squared	27.217
Degree of freedom	2
Significance level	0.000

Freedman test on entries of table 7 showed that experts believed that "continued process improvement" had the highest importance. Chi square for three entries of table 7 was 27.217 with 2 degrees of freedom.

Conclusion

When educational leaders possess the required leadership attributes, organizational activities shall serve the mission established for the organization. The study findings indicate that, in view of Imam Khomeini, educational leaders should have certain attributes including continued employee advancement, continued process improvement, and human relationship development. Imam Khomeini's views, as can be understood from his speeches, had roots in pure Islamic values and were based on human's craving for perfection.

As the highest educational leader in country, Imam Khomeini never thought of people as means for achieving material benefits. Rather, his mystical views made him believe that human yearning for perfection would facilitate individuals to perform professional duties. The heavenly side of human and the obligation to follow God's order would drive human toward achieving goals. Leader need only provide an environment for employees to drive closer to their heavenly side.

Imam Khomeini's views always put human being in a very high position. Therefore, providing service to human was the same as serving God. In addition, gaining people satisfaction was the same as satisfying God. Imam Khomeini adhered to this belief in his life. His treatment of people made them believe that he was at their service and wished them well.

We can conclude that Imam Khomeini and his people had reached a heavenly agreement. His belief in ruling by hearts had manifested itself in his charismatic personality. Educational leaders shall take Imam Khomeini as a role model and adhere to leadership attributes outlined in this paper not only to achieve organizational objectives but also in a drive for perfection to feel closer to heavenly being.

Corresponding Author:
Ensieh Zahedi, Zahra Abbasadeh
Dean of valiasrcollege, Theran, Iran,
The professor of valiasr college, Thran Iran
ensiehzahedi@yahoo.com
abbszahehz@yahoo.com
Tel:+9891904796910
Mobile:+98912-3224553
Ensieh Zahedi, Zahra Abbasadeh Dean of valiasrcollege, Theran, Iran, The professor of valiasr college, Thran Iran

Suggestions
1.   Feasibility study for implementation of attributes that are important for effective educational leadership
2.   Conduct more research to determine educational leadership attributes based on Imam Khomeini views
3.   Document leadership attributes for educational organizations based on Islamic writings
4.   Promote leadership attributes taken from successful and effective organizations at national and international levels
5.   Conduct further research to discover why "honoring employees" and "honesty and integrity" received the highest ranking by experts
6.   Conduct further research on reasons why "free speech opportunities" received the lowest ranking by experts
7.   Advocate adaptation of "honoring employees" and "honesty and integrity" by leaders of effective educational organizations

2/23/12

References
1.   Almousavi Khomeini, Roohollah (1384), Sahife Imam in 24 Volumes" Khorooj Publishing, Tehran
2.   Bani Hashemian, K. (1385) "School Manager's Leadership Style: Leadership of Emotion-Intelligence Relationship", Master's theses, Tarbiat Modares University (Professor Training University)
3.   Delavar, A. (1385) "Research Method in Psychology and Educational Sciences", Virayesh Publishing, Tehran
4.   Delshad Tehrani, M. (1380) "Political Idiology with Emphasis on Imam Khomeini's Views", Darya Publishing, Tehran
5.   Gharayee Moghadam, Aman al-Allah (1374) "Educational Management", Abjad Publishing, Tehran
6.   Jafari Nadooshan, Ali Akbar (1378) "Sunshine Beyond", Islamic Revolution Document Center Publishing, Tehran
7.   Khoy Nejad, Gh. (1383) "Research Methods in Educational Sciences", Samt Publishing, Tehran
8.   Mozaffari, M. (1381) "Educational Leadership and Management and It's Role on Achieving Educational Objectives", *Training Technological Growth,* No. 141, p. 44
9.   Rajayee, Gh. (1379) "Implications of Imam Khomeini's Tradition in Training and Education", Orooj Publishing, Tehran
10.   Sotoode, A. R. (1374) "Tracing Sun, Said and Unsaid from Imam Khomeini's Life", Panjereh Publishing, Tehran
11.   Stephan Pall (2007) "Educational Management Administration and Leadership", *Leadership of Academics in Research*, V. 35, N. 4, Sage Publishing, London