

Penyampai : TAN SRI DATO SERI AHMAD SARJI BIN ABDUL HAMID
Tajuk : PERASMIAN SEMINAR ISLAM AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING: A PERTINENT
CULTURE FOR MANAGING ORGANISATION
Lokasi : DEWAN BESAR IKIM
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1. On behalf of IKIM, it gives me great pleasure to say a few words on the subject of the seminar.

But first, let me take this opportunity to thank the paper writers and the organising committee members for making this seminar on Islam and Continuous Learning: A Pertinent Culture For Managing Organisations a reality. I hope this one day seminar can be of great benefit to all participants.

2. All firms or institutions possess organizational knowledge. An insurance company, for example knows about insurance, and an automobile manufacturer knows about automobiles. But what an insurance company knows about insurance is, as a rule, what its employees know about insurance, and is much the same as what other insurance companies know about insurance. Organizational knowledge should be distinctive to the firm, and is more than the sum of the expertise of those who work in the firm, and is not available to other firms. For some firms, technical knowledge is the business. But if the company is to add value, it needs to create organizational knowledge from the skills of its members. Large competitive advantages come when the organizational knowledge is unique, appropriate to the firm, and relevant to a market which is large or a range of markets which is wide.

3. There has been false accusations that Islam is an obstacle against the freedom of thought, restraining scientific investigation and setting barriers in the face of knowledge and philosophy.

4. Islam, however, compels its adherents to progress, by requiring them to pursue knowledge and learning with special attention. This is because one's character is formed and promoted mainly by way of knowledge. God says: "Are those who know equal to those who know not? It is only those who are endued with understanding that receive admonition" (XXXIX:9). This verse offers a special praise of knowledge. Allah decides that men of knowledge surpass others, and limits the reception of admonition to those endued with knowledge and understanding.

5. In another verse, The Koran declares that people of knowledge are placed in ranks in the Presence of their Lord, and are more favoured than others: "God will raise up, to (suitable) ranks (and degrees), those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge" (LVIII:11).

6. The Koran also instructs people to rely on definite knowledge, and reproaches those who follow mere illusion and doubt: "Nay, the wrong-doers (merely) follow their own lusts, being devoid of knowledge" (XXX:29). They say "There is naught but our life of the world; we die and we live, and naught destroyeth us save Time". But of that they have no knowledge; they merely conjecture. (VLV:24).

Allah commands Moslems to abide by this principle, saying: "Follow not that of which thou hast no knowledge; for every act of hearing, of seeing, or of (feeling in) the heart will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning)" (XVII:36).

7. What kind of knowledge does Islam call for? Is it religious knowledge only, as some prefer to say? Certainly it is not so. It is any kind of knowledge that keeps people away from the grip of ignorance, whether in religious or human matters. Besides religious knowledge, the Koran puts an equal stress on natural sciences, psychology, history, geography, sociology and the other fields of knowledge. God urges people to arm themselves in such fields, so that they may come to know better the Grandeur of God that appears evident in His Creation. Besides this, there are also the benefits that issue from the mastery of such fields of knowledge, as employing scientific facts and principles in managing one's life affairs. Technology has now become the competitive weapon par excellence.

Technology is to corporate life what the nervous system is to human life. It connects the various parts of the body in an integrated network of information sharing and decision making. It "wires" together

disparate parts of the organization, allowing them to progress together toward a common goal rather than remain hopelessly disjointed. It can improve speed and efficiency, for example, through the automation of slower and error-prone human tasks. So, Malaysian managers and workers have to be literate in information technology. Most important, it provides the means to link and integrate the knowledge held by individuals within and across corporations. The new economic order is becoming more reliant on the knowledge worker and less on the industrial means of production and distribution.

8. It is recognised by many these days that the central problem in business organisations is the tendency of some people to lose their moral bearings or religious commitments so that they are now governed only by their immediate impulses and desires to earn quick and large returns immediately.

This, selfish desire oriented world view can be detrimental to sustainability of the business organisations in the long-run. Modern education should not over emphasise upon reason and rationality and underestimate the ethical and moral principles. Education should develop an individual in terms of one's character, world view, intellectual ability and professional competent.

From Islamic point of view, education is a process which helps one in acquiring wisdom. This can be achieved through a comprehensive process. This is because it trains emotional, intellectual and sensual faculties simultaneously. Islam insists that the sound principles of adhering to high spiritual and moral values should be given more attention. These values can ensure fairness in our way of doing things.

9. Muslims are taught that as long as the world exists and before it ends, every single plan and action of an individual and organisation has to be for continuous human betterment. Quality human living in all perspectives has to be continuously refined and the move towards this end is very challenging. Apart from knowledge acquisition, workers must have the correct ethical and moral values. I hope you will discuss these issues at this seminar.

10. On this note, I officially declare open this seminar.