



GSJ: Volume 5, Issue 11, November 2017, Online: ISSN 2320-9186

[www.globalscientificjournal.com](http://www.globalscientificjournal.com)

# **RESEARCH PROPOSAL: EMPLOYEE RIGHTS WITHIN A BUSINESS: DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYEE RELATONS FROM THE STUDY OF IMAM ALI IBN ABI TALIB'S PRINCIPLES ON EMPLOYEE RIGHTS**

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## KeyWords

Employee rights, low, Imam, Ali Ibn Abi Talib's, employee relations, business

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## **1 Research area**

The study is proposed to be in the area of law.

## **2 Topic**

Employee Rights within a Business: Developing sustainable employee relations from the study of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib's Principles on Employee Rights

## **3 Background**

Human dignity is guaranteed through a number of ways today's society. One of these ways is by using 'law' which is an instance of a normative system for the respect of individuals as well as the preservation of the social order. Human rights law more specifically has emerged as a field of law in its own right to respond to the growing need for states, non-state actors and individuals to understand, and especially respect, protect and fulfill human rights which is a cross-cutting field. Hence, human rights law is a complex legal system which attempts to ensure that human dignity is preserved whilst reconciling, without compromising, the diverse needs of all actors.

It has become increasingly necessary for managers to understand human rights and grasp the complex structure and functioning of human rights law and related issues today as these issues are becoming daily human issues. Having done an undergraduate degree in law and an advanced degree in Business Administration, it is compelling to bring the two fields together and see how they can help complement each other in helping a business organisation attain and sustain competitive advantage. Both fields are important and this is the aim of this paper to investigate exactly how this can be done.

The research evidence in the Future of Work Programme does point to an undoubted fact - we are going through an uncertain time for employees and trade unions. It would be wrong, however, to embrace a deterministic pessimism. The new workplaces and unstable labour markets make it clear in Britain as elsewhere that we cannot expect to witness a return to the relatively settled and all-embracing industrial relations system that existed in the so-called golden age that followed the Second World War. Underlying social and occupational changes, with the steady but irreversible growth of a post-industrial society, suggest we are experiencing a profound transformation. What this means for workers and trade unions is not yet entirely clear.

When employers, employees and trade unions or other employee representatives work together in a relationship of mutual trust the benefits are enormous.

Employees are much more concerned to have an effective and professional servicing of their individual concerns than in the past.

This study is about understanding the contribution of adherence to employee rights to the success of the business. The study will not only look at how observing employee rights contributes to the success of a business but will also attempt to develop best practice principles on observing employee rights based on the works of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib.

Ali Ibn Abu Talib is famously revered as the "Commander of the faithful, the first of the Imams of the believers, of the rulers (wulat) of the Muslims and of God's (appointed) successors in religion after the Apostle of God, the truthful one and the trusted one, Muhammad Ibn Abd Allah<sup>1</sup>".

"In Muslim culture, Ali is respected for his courage, knowledge, belief, honesty, unbending devotion to Islam, deep loyalty to Muhammad, equal treatment of all Muslims and generosity in forgiving his defeated enemies, and therefore is central to mystical traditions in Islam such as Sufism. Ali retains his stature as an authority on Quranic exegesis, Islamic jurisprudence and religious thought"<sup>2</sup>. In the Arabic world, Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib is just as famous for being a great jurist and man of letters<sup>3</sup>.

It is probable that the United Nations Legal Committee could have voted that the order of Imam Ali to Malik al-Ashtar (Nahj Al-Balagha letter 53) should be considered as one of the sources of International Law while urging the Arab nations to use that letter as a model.

The then UN secretary General Kofi Annan said: "The words of Ali ibn Abi Talib, 'O Malik! The people are either brothers in religion or your equal in creation' must be adhered to by all organisations and it is a statement that all humanity must embrace."

Annan suggested that the document of Imam Ali to Malik al-Ashtar must be considered from the legal viewpoint and after lengthy studies and considerations by the UN Legal Committee, member states voted that the document should be considered as one of the sources of International Law.

Earlier, the UNDP in its 2002 Arab Human Development listed six sayings of Imam Ali about the importance of knowledge and establishment of ideal governance.

The UNDP quoted the following sayings of Imam Ali (AS) in its 2002 Arab Human Development Report<sup>4</sup>:

1. "He who has appointed himself an Imam (ruler) of the people must begin by teaching himself before teaching others. His teaching of others must be first by setting an example rather than with his words, for he who begins by teaching and educating himself is more worthy of respect than he who teaches and educates others."
2. "Your concern with developing the land should be greater than your concern for collecting taxes, for the latter can only be obtained by developing; whereas he who seeks revenue without development destroys the country and the people."
3. "Seek the company of the learned and the wise in search of solving the problems of your country and the righteousness of your people."
4. "No good can come out in keeping silent to the government or in speaking out of ignorance."
5. "The righteous are men of virtue, whose logic is straightforward, whose dress is unostentatious, whose path is modest, whose actions are many and who are undeterred by difficulties."
6. "Choose the best among your people to administer justice among them. Choose someone who does not easily give up, who is unruffled by enmities, someone who will not persist in wrong doings, who will not hesitate to pursue right once he knows it, someone whose heart knows no greed, who will not be satisfied with a minimum of explanation without seeking the maximum of understanding, who will be the most steadfast when doubt is cast, who will be the least impatient in correcting the opponent,

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.al-islam.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali>

<sup>3</sup> <http://paulsarmstrong.com/articles/caliph-ali-letter-to-malik-ashtar/>

<sup>4</sup> [Arab Human Development Report 2002](#)

the most patient in pursuing the truth, the most stern in meting out judgment, someone who is unaffected by flattery and not swayed by temptation and these are but few.<sup>5</sup> "

#### **4 Objectives of the study**

The study seeks to study and develop the best practices, contemporary principles on employee rights and relations based on the Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib's principles and teaching. Particularly, the study is proposed but not limited to the following proposed objectives:

1. To gain an in-depth knowledge of human rights law in its multidisciplinary application to observing employee rights and critically analyse the functioning of human rights law for a business.
2. To develop principles for the achievement of good employee relations in a business organisation for sustainable competitive advantage from the study of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib's works.
3. To assess contemporary trends in labour laws and employee human rights for a business organisation and survey how Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib's works could be institutionalised in the contemporary business environment to enhance employee relations.
4. To establish to what extent employees may be aware of their rights (including health and safety) within a business organisation and how this relates to the performance of the said organisation.

#### **5 Process and Proposed Methodology**

The research is tentatively planned to survey an organisation or a number of organisations where Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib's principles will be studied and applied to develop best practices on employee relations. The study will look at the influence of law on employee relations. The study will involve observations, questionnaires and interviews with both experts and employees to establish appropriate findings. This study will involve study from books, institutional and regulatory bodies on employee relations,

#### **6 Work schedule**

The study period will largely depend on the overall period of study. The researcher, however, is desirous of having this study to be done within a timeframe of two years since the student intends to be a fulltime student and researcher. The Gantt chart below is a tentative plan:

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2002e.pdf>

ID	Task Name	Start	Finish	Duration	Timeline																																															
					Feb 2016				Mar 2016				Apr 2016				May 2016				Jun 2016				Jul 2016				Aug 2016				Sep 2016				Oct 2016				Nov 2016				Dec 2016							
					3/1	7/2	14/2	21/2	28/2	6/3	13/3	20/3	27/3	3/4	10/4	17/4	24/4	1/5	8/5	15/5	22/5	29/5	5/6	12/6	19/6	26/6	3/7	10/7	17/7	24/7	31/7	7/8	14/8	21/8	28/8	4/9	11/9	18/9	25/9	2/10	9/10	16/10	23/10	30/10	6/11	13/11	20/11	27/11	4/12	11/12	18/12	25/12
1	Synopsis Approval and Selection of supervisor	2/1/2016	3/1/2016	4.4w	[Task 1 duration bar]																																															
2	Synopsis Presentation	3/18/2016	3/18/2016	2.8w	[Task 2 duration bar]																																															
3	Review Research Methodology concepts	3/21/2016	4/18/2016	4.2w	[Task 3 duration bar]																																															
4	Study of Literature on topic	4/20/2016	6/20/2016	8.8w	[Task 4 duration bar]																																															
5	Prepare research instruments	6/20/2016	7/29/2016	6w	[Task 5 duration bar]																																															
6	Visit research sites – data collection	8/1/2016	11/1/2016	13.4w	[Task 6 duration bar]																																															
7	Conclude data collection	11/1/2016	12/1/2016	4.6w	[Task 7 duration bar]																																															
8	Writing Thesis	12/1/2016	5/1/2017	21.6w	[Task 8 duration bar]																																															
9	Submit Thesis Draft	1/2/2017	1/31/2017	4.4w	[Task 9 duration bar]																																															
10	Make amendments to Thesis	1/2/2017	3/20/2017	11.2w	[Task 10 duration bar]																																															
11	Thesis Defense	1/2/2017	1/31/2017	4.4w	[Task 11 duration bar]																																															
12	Thesis editing and resubmission	1/2/2017	3/2/2017	8.8w	[Task 12 duration bar]																																															



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