ISLAMIC INNOVATION IN MALAYSIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

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ABSTRACT

Presently, there are few articles that discuss on Islamic innovation. Henceforth, this article will try to elaborate on this matter about the concepts, principles, purpose, factors of innovation in Islam, famous Islamic scholars for innovation and modern Muslim innovators. In addition, this article will also elaborate the concepts of Islamic innovation which are tajdid, islah and ijtihad in Malaysian public service context by using library research method i.e., through examining online reports, document review from previous research, and Quran and Hadith verses. This understanding is pertinent as Malaysia is an Islamic country whereby Islam is the official religion. The public sector should be spearheading innovation in the country to elevate the country to greater heights.

Keywords: innovation, public service, Islam, Malaysia, *tajdid*, *islah*, *ijtihad*

INTRODUCTION

Islam does not disregard innovation. In fact, innovation is very important in Islam. Without innovation, Islam cannot advance and grow. Hence, there are some terms that are referring to innovation in Islam such as *islah, tajdid, ijtihad* and *bidaah*. *Islah, tajdid* and *ijtihad* are good innovation while *bidaah* is innovation in religion which can be commendable or bad. However, this article does not concern about innovation in religion. The objective of this article is to discuss more on

the innovation at workplace especially in the Malaysian public service. Malaysia is an Islamic country whereby Islam is the official religion. Innovation is vital and crucial in the public sector to deliver quality services to the public. This is because despite improvement made in Malaysian public service, it still suffers from inefficiency (Noore Alam 2006). Thus, this article will explain the concepts, principles, purpose, factors of innovation in Islam, famous Islamic scholars for innovation and modern innovators. In addition, this article will also elaborate on the concepts of Islamic innovation from the Malaysian public service context.

CONCEPTS OF INNOVATION IN ISLAM

Innovation means improvement or new idea. It is not invention. Invention is totally making a new product or service such as the telephone by Alexander Graham Bell in 1875 or the computer by Charles Babbage in 1838 and others. The terms that are linked with innovation in Islam are *islah, tajdid* and *ijtihad*.

Al-ʾIṣlāḥ is an Arabic word usually translated as "reform," in the sense of "to improve, to change, or to put something into a better position" (Siti Arni et al. 2016). However, according to Maszlee (2019), another word for *islah* is *taghayir*, means to renew in a positive way. *Islah* also has a connotation with *tajdid*. As Allah says in Surah an-Nisa, verse 146, "Except those who repent and improve (cleanse their souls' hearts) and hold fast to Allah and make their religion pure for Allah. Those are then with the believers, and Allah will soon grant the believers a Mighty Reward."

Tajdid; (Arabic: تجديد tajdīd, literally means renewal). In an Islamic context, *tajdid* refers to comprehensive basic change in concepts, philosophy, content, direction, and results with progressive and dynamic orientation in accordance to the time (Norullisza, Hayati and Abdulloh 2018). One who practices *tajdid* is called a *mujaddid*. As Allah says in Surah al-Isra, verse 49, "And they say, 'When we are bones and crumbled particles, will we [truly] be resurrected as a new creation?'"

According to Baba (2007), *tajdid* is more towards transforming. In other words, *tajdid* concerns more on the objective of innovation i.e., for the betterment of *ummah*. This is due to Allah's command in Surah al-Syua'ra, verse 83, "And do not deprive people of their due and do not commit abuse on earth, spreading corruption."

Ijtihad (Arabic: اجتهاد *ijtihād*, literally means physical or mental exertion in order to achieve certain objectives). From terminology, it means to exert effort in order

to get relief from doubts by using reasoning and interpretation. It is an Islamic legal term referring to independent reasoning through critical thinking in finding a practical solution to a new legal question or problem by referring to Quran, Hadith and *ijma'* (Nazlida and Mizerki 2010) and by conducting *tahqiq al-manat, takhrij al-furu' 'ala al-furu', takyif al-fiqhi* and *istinbat* processes (Umar Faruq 2006; Mohamad Zaim et al. 2015; Noor Naemah and Muhammad Ikhlas 2018). A person who wants to do reasoning should be qualified and an expert in Arabic language, jurisprudence and Islamic Law and possess piety and integrity. *Mujtahid* is an expert and pious person who does reasoning and interpretation (Smock 2004; Noor Naemah and Muhammad Ikhlas 2018). According to Mohamad Zaim et al. (2015), there are two types of *ijtihad* which are *ijtihad tarjihi* dan *ijtihad istinbati*. Furthermore, there are three methods of *ijtihad* which are *ijtihad istislahi*, *ijtihad 'urfi* dan *ijtihad maqasidi*.

However, according to Alias et al. (2016), there are two types of *ijtihad*. Firstly, *ijtihad intiqa'i* that is selective comparative *ijtihad* i.e., to re-*ijtihad* or to relook at past *ijtihad* of scholars, then to compare and select the best in terms of suitability, benefits and priority. Among the decision criteria are the opinion should be suitable with the present lifestyle, beneficial to people, simplify people's life, emphasise *maqasid* sharia and prevent harmful and destructive (*mafsadah*) matters. Thus, in exerting new legal terms in these fields, one does not have to be a *mujtahid*. Secondly, *ijtihad insya'i* which is innovative constructive *ijtihad* i.e., to exert legal regulation which is not available previously. Muhammad Ikhlas et al. (2016) added the third form of *ijtihad* which is the combination of both types of *ijtihad* i.e., to select the most suitable and the most credible opinion. Both authors agree that *ijtihad* can be done individually (*ijtihad juz'i* i.e., according to one's specialisation or in group (*ijtihad jama'i*). However, collective *ijtihad* is more significant as it is the *fatwa* (Islamic verdict) exerted by the *fatwa* council either at state or federal level ('Adnin et al. 2019) and thus, it is higher than individual *ijtihad* (Aznan 2003). There is a unique feature of *ijtihad* whereby it is irrevocable as it is made according to its special requirements such as needs according to place, circumstance, intention, tradition and time. Thus, *ijtihad* is not merely opinion or judgement with good reasons but it involves certain process, methodology (Abdallah 2006) and sources (Nazlida and Mizerki 2010). Henceforth, a quite popular type of thinking today known as "to think out of box" is not considered as *ijtihad* as it does not mean to innovate based on Islamic principles but to think out of the circle.

Islam ordains its people to innovate. The encouragement to innovate could be seen clearly from these two following Hadith:

> From Muaz, Prophet Muhammad sent Muaz to Yemen. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "How do you decide things?" (Muaz replied), "I decide by the law of Allah," The Prophet (PBUH) said, "If it is not in the book of Allah?" Muaz said, "I will decide with the Sunnah of the Prophet." The Prophet (PBUH) said, "If it is not in the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad?" Muaz replied, "I swear by my opinion." The Prophet (PBUH) said, "Praise be to Allah who has guided the Prophet." (Abu Isa al-Tirmidhi 2000)

> The Prophet (PBUH) stated that: "If the ruler has judged a new event and made *ijtihad* rightly, he will get two rewards and if he judged it wrongly, he will get one reward." (Ṣunan Bukhari n.d.)

According to Alias et al. (2016), there is another form of *ijtihad* which is contemporary *ijtihad* or contemporary Islamic jurisprudence that refers to the *fatwa* research methodology in a way to answer to new legal questions that arise in society specifically on science and technology issues. There are no direct references to Quran and *sunah* (practices) as for cloning and genetic modification, for example.

Muhammad Ikhlas et al. (2016) also concur on this matter. Both groups of authors agree that contemporary *ijtihad* (*al-mu'asir)* is implemented in accordance to time and tradition. However, other than science and technology, there are other fields that also need *ijtihad* such as food, politics and administration, economics and banking. This is due to civilisation and globalisation that raise the need of someone to observe *ijtihad*.

On the other hand, *bidaah* (Arabic: بدعة *bid'ah*) refers to innovation in religious matters. The Prophet (PBUH) said: "Every *bid'ah* is misguidance, and the path of every misguidance [leads] to the Fire." Muhammad Safwan, Luqman and Muhammad Ikhlas (2018) supported this statement that innovation in religious matters is misguidance and forbidden. Thus, it is out of scope of the focus of this article. However, according to them, if the activity is to produce *maslahah* or benefits in this life and Hereafter, it is called *sunnah hasanah* or *usul al-fiqh masalih al-mursalah* which is permissible. On the other hand, Hairunnizam, Ab Razak and Mohd Ali (n.d.) call it as *al-ibda* (innovation). Thus, there are a lot of connotations of *bidaah* which is not the focus of this article.

ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES IN INNOVATION

Islam has underlined some principles for people who want to innovate. First and foremost, innovation in Islam should benefit people and not prohibited (haram) i.e., according to Quran and *sunah* or Islamic principles known as sharia. In other words, the ingredients or materials and process made by innovation should be permissible (halal) i.e., free of pork, intoxicants, interest (*riba*) and gambling.

Maqasid sharia or the purpose of sharia is classified into three levels which are necessities (*ḍaruriyyāt*), supporting needs (*ḥājiyyāt*) and luxury (*taḥsiniyyat*). Necessities are further classified into what preserves one's faith (*ad-dīn*), soul (*an-nafs*), mind (*al-ʿaql*), offspring or procreation (*an-nasl*), and wealth (*al-māl*) (Tengku Fatimah Muliana, Azizah and Noraini 2017). The importance of these necessities is arranged in order accordingly (Noor Naemah et al. 2013). Thus, this shows that the order of the importance of innovation in Islam is in accordance with the level of necessities. Hence, innovators should strive to come up with innovation concerning faith first as it is the most important, and next is soul and so forth. Wealth is of least importance. This means that the innovators should think more of some innovation in preserving faith such as mobile prayer room and sharia compliant hospital (Shaharom and Abdul Rashid 2016). On preserving soul, one may innovate substitute halal food or drink. On preserving healthy mind, one may innovate special apparatus or tools for long life learning or special diet food to enhance IQ. On preserving offspring, one may innovate drugs that can prolong life. Finally, one may innovate online payment on preserving wealth (Azrina 2011).
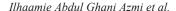
According to Tengku Fatimah Muliana, Azizah and Noraini (2017) and Noor Naemah et al. (2013), the *ḍaruriyyat* are called necessities since their non-availability will result in disruptions and termination of life in this world and thereafter and this results in losing salvation and blessings. *Maslahah or maqasid* sharia according to Al-Ghazali is an expression for the acquisition and justification of *manfaʿa* (benefit) or the removal of *maḍarra* (injury and harm). Thus, innovation according to Islam, must comprise those five types of necessities.

Siti Khatijah, Ridzwan and Khairul Afnan (2016) also concur on this matter. They added further that, *maslahah* is a branch of one of the important methods of the *fiqh* known as *al-darar yuzal* (harm must be eliminated). The maxim is derived from a Hadith of the Prophet (PBUH): (لا ضرر ولا ضرار) (Sunan Ibn Majah n.d.) which means "there should be no harm nor return of harm" (Tengku Fatimah Muliana, Azizah and Noraini 2017).

Meanwhile, *hajiyyaat* are the interests which are required for the betterment of the society. Thus, its absence may not create chaos, unlike *daruriyyat* but it may lead to a slight hardship and difficulty. For example, religious rituals, transactions, customs and punishment. While *tahsiniyyat* are beautification interests leading to a desirable status. For example, wearing perfume in mosques and while attending assemblies (Tengku Fatimah Muliana, Azizah and Noraini 2017; Noor Naemah et al. 2013). Thus, its absence does not lead to disruptions as *daruriyyat* and difficulties as *hajiyyat* (Noor Naemah et al. 2013).

PURPOSE OF INNOVATION IN ISLAM

According to Hairunnizam, Ab Razak and Mohd Ali (n.d.), innovation in Islam serves the purpose of:

Vicegerent

And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority". They said, "Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?" Allah said, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know" (Surah al-Baqarah, verse 30). As the vicegerent of the earth, it is our duty to ensure that our planet is not polluted and destructed. To ensure that our planet and community are prospering; thus, innovation is crucial. And this is the purpose of our existence and creation in this universe.

Tauhid

There are three levels of *tauhid* which are *hablun minallah* (relationship of man and Allah), *hablun minannas* (relationship of man with man) and relationship of man with this universe.

By innovating, one can strengthen their relationship with the Creator, man and universe as problems of people are solved and as the results, they are really thankful and grateful. For example, by producing an innovative product that is beneficial for man and universe, his or her deed will be appreciated and acknowledged by all including his or her Creator (Ab Mumin, Siti Arni and Hasan 2015).

Ibadah

"And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me" (Surah Az-Dzariyat, verse 56). In Islam, *ibadah* or worship or religious duties do not only include prayers, fasting, hajj and *zakat* but it also includes our intention to obtain Allah's favour and blessings in anything. Thus, our intention and behaviour in innovating because of Allah is considered as *ibadah* as long as our work does not transgress the Islamic principles and is beneficial for mankind.

Allah's Blessing

They swear by Allah to you [Muslims] to satisfy you. But Allah and His Messenger are more worthy for them to satisfy, if they should be believers (Surah at-Taubah, verse 62). The most important objective of innovation in Islam is to obtain Allah's favour and blessing and not just to seek people's pleasure in our innovation. This means that we must produce beneficial innovation that please people and not to produce otherwise that could lead to people's contempt and misery.

Paradise

The final and utmost purpose of innovation in Islam is of course to seek a better place in the Hereafter i.e., Paradise as this is a permanent place compared to this world which is only temporary. Thus, this shows the importance of playing our roles well in this world as it gives promise to the good outcomes in the Hereafter. Hence, we must ensure that we use this chance as good as possible by innovating only on the good causes (Hairunnizam, Ab Razak and Mohd Ali n.d.). Thus, success in this world is the bridge to success in Hereafter (*al-falah*).

FACTORS OF INNOVATION IN ISLAM

Islam has laid down some principles of innovation. First and foremost is that innovation has to be in line with Islamic principles i.e., sharia which constitutes the Quran and *sunah*. This means that innovation should be beneficial to the *ummah* and it does not lead them astray from their belief in Allah as their only God and Muhammad as their Prophet.

> O you who have believed, do not violate the rites of Allah or [the sanctity of] the sacred month or [neglect the marking of] the sacrificial animals and garlanding [them] or [violate the safety of] those coming to the Sacred House seeking bounty from their Lord and [His] approval. But

> when you come out of ihram, then [you may] hunt. And do not let the hatred of a people for having obstructed you from al-Masjid al-Haram lead you to transgress. And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty. (Surah al-Maidah, verse 2)

Before they innovate, they must make sure that their intention in innovating is to seek for Allah's blessing or known as *madhatillah*. This is because if they innovate primarily because of worldly affairs, they will only obtain the worldly bounties but not Allah's blessings (Siti Arni and Ilhaamie 2011). "Whoever intercedes for a good cause will have a reward therefrom; and whoever intercedes for an evil cause will have a burden therefrom. And ever is Allah, over all things, a Keeper" (Surah al-Nisa', verse 85).

The next condition in having Islamic innovation at workplace is having clear objectives. The top management need to brief or inform their employees that they need to innovate to ensure that the objectives of the organisation will be attained in terms of productivity, profitability and service quality. And most importantly, the need to innovate should be linked with reward and recognition (Siti Arni et al. 2016). Consequently, the employees will be clear of what they are supposed to do, i.e., what kind of innovation that they should produce and when they have to submit their ideas and innovation to their superiors.

> Indeed, We established him upon the earth, and We gave him to everything a way. So he followed a way. (Surah al-Kahfi, verse 84–85)

> Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided. (Surah an-Nahl, verse 125)

Knowledge is the basis of innovation. Without knowledge, one cannot think rationally and innovate. Thus, knowledge is the source of innovation. However, in Islam, the Greatest innovator is God Almighty (Anita et al. 2016). "Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like thereof? Yea, indeed! for He is the Creator Supreme, of skill and knowledge (infinite)" (Surah Yassin, verse 81). This is because human being is limited in being innovative. This means that not everybody can innovate. Knowledge, personality and environment are important influencing factors in innovation (Azrina 2011). Thus, organisations need to provide some training such as design thinking, critical thinking, problem-solving skills to equip their employees with innovation skills. In fact, Islam ordains its people to be knowledgeable. It is obligatory for Muslim to search for knowledge

either *aqli* (technical knowledge) or *naqli* (revealed knowledge). This is because with *aqli* knowledge, one can produce good technical innovation while with *naqli* knowledge, one can produce Islamic innovation. With both types of knowledge, the innovation will not lead people astray but is beneficial for all people and to the planet as well.

> Then We made the upper side of that town lower side and rained upon them stones of baked clay. Indeed in that are signs for those who discern. (Surah al-Hijr, verse 74–75)

> There has already been a lesson for you in the two parties that met on the battlefield (the Battle of Badr). One party fighting in the Way of Allah and the other disbelieving. They saw them to be twice their own number by (their) eyesight; and Allah strengthens with His Aid whom He wills; most surely there is a lesson in this for the (owners of) insight. (Surah al-Imran, verse 13)

> Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding. Who remember Allah while standing or sitting or [lying] on their sides and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire." (Surah al-Imran, verse 190–191)

> Allah alternates the night and the day. Indeed in that is a lesson for those who have vision. (Surah al-Nur, verse 44)

> It is He who expelled the ones who disbelieved among the People of the Scripture from their homes at the first gathering. You did not think they would leave, and they thought that their fortresses would protect them from Allah; but [the decree of] Allah came upon them from where they had not expected, and He cast terror into their hearts [so] they destroyed their houses by their [own] hands and the hands of the believers. So take warning, O people of vision. (Surah al-Hasyr, verse 2)

> O you who have believed, when you are told, "Space yourselves" in assemblies, then make space; Allah will make space for you. And when you are told, "Arise," then arise; Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees. And Allah is Acquainted with what you do. (Surah al-Mujadalah, verse 11)

In order to innovate, employees need to be patient, highly committed, disciplined and convinced that they are able to produce good innovation that are valuable to their workplace. This is important as innovation may not be successful at all

times. In short, there is a tendency that some innovation might fail. In this case, one must not blame themselves and give up. They have to put trust in Allah as He is Al-Mighty and we as human beings have limited capabilities. In other words, perseverance is another soft skill that one should have to be innovative (Hasan, Ab Mumin and Siti Arni 2013b). Before one innovates, he or she must pray to Allah Al-Mighty that he or she will innovate big ideas. *Ilham* or inspiration is an element of innovation. Allah will never give inspiration or ideas to someone without a clear mind and heart. In short, innovation comes in the form of inspiration or ideas which come to the person's mind. After innovation, the innovator has to put trust in Allah that his or her ideas or innovation will be accepted by the top management and society. Accepting one's failure and not to be jealous of others' success are also important. This is not to dampen someone's spirit in giving his or her fullest in being innovative (Hasan, Ab Mumin and Siti Arni 2013a).

> Have We not expanded your chest for you (Prophet Muhammad), and relieved you of your burden that weighed down your back? Have We not raised your remembrance? Indeed, hardship is followed by ease, indeed, hardship is followed by ease! So, when you have finished (your prayer), labour (in supplication), and let your longing be for your Lord (inhumility). (Surah al-Insyirah)

Accountability is another soft skill needed in order to be innovative. Accountability means to perform one's duties and responsibilities as good as possible and to be responsible in making mistakes and failures in innovation. This means that employees should not run from problems and failures but be brave and stand up to his or her mistakes (Siti Arni et al. 2019). Bravery or courage is also another condition for innovation (Ab Mumin, Siti Arni and Hasan 2015). This is because to be successful in innovation, one has to be brave of the consequences. One might not foresee whether the ideas are successful or not but only Allah knows. This is in line to what Allah SWT says in Surah al-Zalzalah, verse 7–8, "So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it."

Once given the duties to innovate from his superiors, it is the responsibility of the employees to perform it diligently. The employees cannot sway or run from his or her responsibility to innovate or leave or give up an incomplete innovation project as he or she is entrusted to perform this duty and responsibility (Ab Mumin, Siti Arni and Hasan 2015).

Leadership also plays a role in innovation. Other than being a model in being innovative and inculcating the innovative culture in the organisation, a leader must be trustworthy in his or her duties and responsibilities. He or she must be honest in

fulfilling all promises in providing support and facilities to his or her employees. Without support and facilities, the employees will not be able to innovate as there are too many limitations at workplace. Otherwise, organisation objectives might not be able to be attained (Ab Mumin, Siti Arni and Hasan 2015).

It is very important that the top management plays its role in being the model to emphasise innovation at workplace. The top management must introduce some Islamic innovation at workplace. They must socialise innovation at workplace by inculcating innovation values in the mission and vision of the organisation (Siti Arni et al. 2016). In Islam, employees' effort must be rewarded in terms of monetary reward such as bonus, salary increment or worst come to worst, non-monetary reward like compliments, certificate and appreciation letter (Siti Arni et al. 2016).

To innovate is a good thing or known in Islam as *ma'ruf* which is a pillar in Islam. To do this, one needs cooperation as he or she cannot innovate alone. He or she also should not sabotage one another but should provide help and assistance when his or her co-worker is facing problems in his or her innovation project. Cooperation and assistance are good values in Islam and someone who does these will get good favour in return (Siti Arni et al. 2019). As in Surah at-Taubah, verse 71:

> The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give *zakah* and obey Allah and His Messenger. Those – Allah will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.

The ultimate purpose to innovate is to obtain success in this world and the Hereafter and to receive Allah's blessings (Hasan, Ab Mumin and Siti Arni 2013b; Ab Mumin, Siti Arni and Hasan 2015). Success in this world is in the form of promotion, bonus, salary increment and recognition while success in the Hereafter is whereby the good innovations are considered as good deeds and paradise is subsequently granted (Siti Arni et al. 2019).

FAMOUS ISLAMIC SCHOLARS IN INNOVATION

Muslim scholars have long been indulging with innovation. Some Islamic scholars famous for their innovation are al-Biruni, al-Khwarizmi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Khaldun, al-Farabi, Ibn al-Haytham and al-Kindi. Most of these Islamic scholars were famous during the Abbasid Caliphate.

According to Syed Aslam (2010), Muhammad Ibn Musa Al-Khwarizmi is considered to be one of the founders of algebra. Al-Khwarizmi developed the concept of the algorithm in mathematics and for this reason, some people called him the grandfather of computer science. He also made major contributions to the fields of trigonometry, astronomy, geography and cartography. Al-Farabi was a great Muslim philosopher, who also made considerable contributions to logic, music, psychology, sociology, mathematics and medicine. Al-Kindi was a philosopher, astronomer, chemist, mathematician, musician, physician, physicist and a pioneer in cryptography. Al-Haytham was a polymath who made significant contributions to the principles of optics as well as to astronomy, engineering, mathematics, medicine, ophthalmology, philosophy, physics and theology. Al-Biruni was a physicist, an anthropologist, an astronomer, a historian, a geographer, a geodesist, a geologist, a mathematician and a physician who contributed greatly to all of these fields. Ibn Sina is regarded as the father of early modern medicine. Besides that, he was a philosopher, a mathematician, an astronomer, a chemist, a physicist, a theologian, a statesman and a poet. Ibn Khaldun is the forerunner of several social science disciplines like historiography, demography, sociology, cultural history and modern economics.

Our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself is an innovator. During his days, most innovations were used in the battlefields such as Khandaq whereby trenches were dug as protection from the enemies (Amal Hayati and Muhamad Rahimi 2016). The Madinah charter is also another innovation whereby his brilliant idea saved the Muslims from fighting each other. By using his cloak, the *Hajarul Aswad* (black stone of Kaaba) was put back at the right place by all four main religions in Madinah and thus, all the concerned groups were fully satisfied with the decision and action taken (Adibah et al. 2015).

In Malaysia, some famous modern Muslim innovators are our previous prime ministers such as Tun Mahathir Mohamad, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, and others, namely, YM Ungku Abdul Aziz, Dato' Abdul Halim Ismail, Tan Sri Idris Jusoh, Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat, Tuan Hj. Shaharom Shariff, Coach Fadzil Hashim, Natasha Ozeir and YM Tunku Kaiyisah. Tun Mahathir was the person who established the International Islamic University of Malaysia (Rosnani 2013), made Malaysia as the Islamic banking hub by enacting the Islamic banking act (ElGindi, Said and Salevurakis 2009) and spearheaded the halal certification in Malaysia by establishing a special Islamic regulatory department known as Bahagian Hal Ehwal Agama Islam and later, Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM) (Farah et al. 2015). Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the fifth Prime Minister founded the Halal Corporation Development (Azis Jakfar, Mohd Daud and Ahmad Nasir 2017). YM Ungku Abdul Aziz was responsible for the establishment of the

pilgrimage saving corporation known as Lembaga Urusan Tabung Haji in 1963 (Abdul Azim 2018), while Dato' Dr. Abdul Halim Ismail founded Bank Islam Malaysia Berhad (Kitamura 2020). Tan Sri Idris Jusoh is famous for integrating *tahfiz* education with the science stream known as Ulul Albab (Mohd Shahril and Sidek 2013). Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat was saluted for his *pondok* and *madrasah* in reviving Islamic education (Farish 2010). Tuan Hj. Shaharom Shariff is the CEO and Group Managing Director of an-Nur Specialist Hospital which is the first sharia compliant hospital in the country (Shaharom and Abdul Rashid 2016). Coach Fadzil Hashim is popular for introducing Islamic Montessori in pre-schools in Malaysia (Maruf 2019). While Natasha Ozeir and YM Tunku Kaiyisah are the pioneer of halal online cosmetics store known as Pretty Suci (Nurul Aqmar and Nor Hashima 2018).

Apart than these, there are many Muslim innovators around the world such as in Bangladesh, where Professor Muhammad Yunos founded Grameen Bank in 1976 which is a microfinance organisation that extends help to poor people in making loans without having any collateral. As a result, he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 (Alaro and Alalubosa 2019). Hamad Abdulla Al Mulla is the CEO and Board Member of Katara Hospitality who introduced sharia compliant hotels in European cities (Zakiah and Fadilah 2013). Jawed Karim and his friends introduced YouTube in 2005 which was later bought by Google for more than 1 billion dollars (Syahrul 2020). Nushmia Khan and Rashid Dar founded Musallah, an application (app) that can locate places to pray in New York city. Irfan Ahmad founded Irhal, an Islamic travel mobile app which provides information on places to visit, shopping, hotels, halal restaurant and mosques in more than 90 cities. It also has *qiblat* direction and prayer times for all the cities. Karim Saad founded Halal Trip which was later acquired by a Singapore-based company. This app allows us to book halal travel and check their ratings (Ummah Wide 2015). While Erwan Mace, is the founder of Bitsmedia Ltd based in Singapore which developed Muslim Pro applications for prayer time, holy Quran, *qiblat* direction, *azan* clock, Islamic Hijri calendar, map of halal restaurants and mosques (Wee 2011). Rushdi Siddiqui was the co-founder of Zilzar in October of 2014, a global online marketplace focusing on Muslim consumers looking for certified halal products. It is similar to a platform like AliBaba or Amazon (Ummah Wide 2015). Ugur Sahin and Oezlem Tuereci, a Turkish Muslim couple physicians are the developers for the COVID-19 vaccine. Both are board members of BioNTech, a pharmacy company in Germany (Aslam 2020).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Apart from the literature review on concepts, principles, purpose, factors of innovation in Islam, famous Islamic scholars for innovation and modern Muslim innovators, this article will elaborate on types of Islamic innovation in the Malaysian public service context by using content analysis i.e., document review from previous research, online reports and Islamic documents and texts which are from Quran and Hadith. Content analysis is a systematic reading of texts, images and symbolic matter, not necessarily from the author or user perspective. It is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use (Krippendorff 2018). Thus, it is qualitative in nature which focuses more on library research in obtaining and analysing the examples of Islamic innovation in Malaysian public service from the three concepts of Islamic innovation. Social innovation which is part of public service is not the focus of this study as it has been examined by previous researchers.

FINDINGS

Islamic Innovation in Malaysian Public Service

Innovation in public service context means creative ideas to enhance public service delivery. The ideas can be in terms of process, technology, product or service. In Malaysian public service, the emphasis on innovation is increasing. The previous Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak had launched the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) in 2010. Thus, the focus now is on innovation and not on quality anymore. For example, 2010 is known as year of creativity and innovation. Apart than this, quality day has been replaced with innovation day. Furthermore, Quality Control Circle (QCC) has been transformed to Innovative and Creative Circle in 2009 (MAMPU 2006). In 2017, this innovation policy has been enforced through a new horizon known as innovation value (MAMPU 2016). The idea is to increase efficiency and cost effectiveness of the government system.

Tajdid

Most Islamic innovations in the Malaysian Public Service are for the benefits of people and they are necessities and thus, they are for people's life improvement (*tajdid*). This is in line with *maqasid* sharia in safeguarding faith, life, intellect, posterity and wealth (Siti Arni and Ilhaamie 2011). For example, Malaysian Shariah Index which was launched on 10th January 2015, as a benchmark to determine if the country is fulfilling the five sharia objectives (*maqasid* sharia). This index is

headed by the Malaysian Fatwa Council (*The Star* 2015) that measures Malaysian government performance in eight areas which are education, law, politics, health, economy, culture, social affairs, and infrastructure and environment. In 2015, the Malaysian government had obtained an overall score of 75.42% (*Borneo Post Online* 2016).

Other examples of Islamic innovation in Malaysian public service that fall under the *tajdid* principle is the Malaysian Quality Management System from the Islamic perspective or known as MS1900. It includes three major principles which are compliance to the principles of halal and haram, organisational operation based on Islamic values and action taken in line with the objectives of sharia (Siti Arni and Ilhaamie 2011). The principles of embedding Islamic elements through the sharia requirements in MS 1900 is the first ever effort done in the world by Standard of Industrial Research Institute of Malaysia (SIRIM) under the responsibility of Department of Standards Malaysia, Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation in 2005 (Siti Arni et al. 2017). MS 1900 is unique for having Islamic terms such as sharia compliance, *fiqh* council, sharia advisory committee, sharia compliance unit, halal, Quran, Hadith, sunna, *al-ijma'* and *fatwa* (Siti Arni and Ilhaamie 2011).

There are lots of benefits of MS 1900. Ilhaamie, Sharifah Hayaati and Siti Arni (2013) argued that MS 1900 implementation brought many benefits, namely, a guide for the preparation of halal products and services nourished with Islamic values, benchmark for quality management systems for products and services, improving customer trust, increasing market share, enhancing transparency, protecting workforce interests and organisational image enhancement. Meanwhile, Siti Arni and Ilhaamie (2011) suggested that the implementation of the MS 1900 not only helps organisations to improve their management systems, but also enables organisations to practice management systems that comply with sharia and Islamic obligations. This further led to many benefits for organisations, such as receiving Allah's blessings, market growth, increasing public trust, increasing confidence of Muslim customers, enhancing Islamic quality culture, and improving organisational management as a whole (Hasliza, Siti Arni and Musaiyadah 2016).

According to Muhammad Hisyam and Fadillah (2018), the basic principles of MS 1900 are implicitly built upon the very foundation of *jalb almaṣlaḥah wa daf'al-mafsadah* in promoting what is good and beneficial, and preventing what is evil and harmful. Therefore, any institution aiming at attaining MS 1900 certification should ensure that positive values such as ʿadl (justice), *ukhūwwah* (brotherhood), *itqān* (conscientiousness and knowledgeable in all endeavours), *iḥsān* (perfection or excellence), *ikhlāṣ* (sincerity) and others be promoted and

instilled into the minds of individual members of the organisation. These positive values will not only drive them to perform tasks dutifully and diligently, but also provide strong abstention from committing sins and forbidden acts such as exploitation, corruption, selfishness or any dishonest practices at the workplace.

Ministry of Housing and Local Authorities is the only ministry that adopted MS 1900: 2014. Among the Islamic values implemented are trustworthiness, justice, sincerity, honesty, gratefulness, courage, caring, cooperation, courtesy, humility, tolerance, respect, learning, discipline, commitment, innovativeness, efficiency and effectiveness. In fact, they assimilate innovativeness with *tajdid*.

Another example of Islamic innovation in Malaysian public service is iZakat which is an online system that provides information to customers on their *zakat* account. This online system simplifies customers that they do not have to go to Pusat Zakat Melaka to check their *zakat* account. Instead, they can access their account in any branch of Pusat Zakat Melaka (Hasan, Ab Mumin and Siti Arni 2013b).

JAKIM, a government agency under the Prime Minister's Department together with the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, Ministry of Home Affairs Malaysia have developed Smart Quran as the first Quran mobile application that is approved by the Al-Quran Printing Control and Licensing Board, Ministry of Home Affairs Malaysia under the Printing of the Quranic Text Act 1986 (Act 326). Smart Quran consists of Malay and English translations and the public can select their favourite reciter from the list. Earlier, JAKIM also developed e-Braille which is Quran developed for the blind and Quran with Mandarin translation (Siti A'isyah 2019).

Besides, JAKIM is also very active in innovating Islamic e-Government innovation programmes as follows:

1. e-KAFA Islam GRID

2. Portal e-Halal – Won innovation award for Prime Minister's Department (Champion – ICT category) for 2012

3. Portal e-Fatwa – Finalist for Case Study Award Open-Source Software

In the same vein, the Ministry of Women Development has won United Nations Public Service Innovation award on National Poverty Data Banking System (eKasih) in 2012. The system is pertinent as it overrides information redundancy of poor people in Malaysia by establishing a central database where all public agencies can get access to.

Meanwhile, sharia court has won the first quality award for ICT known as AKICT in 2007 through e-sharia. This system is an integrated case management system that integrates all the processes involved in the handling of cases in the sharia court. Other than these are e-Nafkah, e-Bicara, e-Faraid, e-F.O.S (e-Fast. Order. Sulh) and EZ-Nafkah (in Terengganu only). This innovation has succeeded in receiving gold international award in the International Conference on Quality 2014 at Shinjuku, Japan. These innovations are introduced due to many complaints received from the public regarding delay in public services. By having these innovations, problems of the public could be solved the fastest as possible within one day (Ramizah and Khairunnasriah 2019).

As a result of Islamic innovation increase in the public sector, JAKIM spearheaded the Islamic Innovation Challenge in 2019 together with SME Corporation Malaysia, Agensi Inovasi Malaysia and Halal Development Corporation. Some of the halal products categorised for the competition are health and beauty, flavour and ingredients, food source and processing, pharmaceutical, travel and tour products and services, machinery, devices, tools, facilities, apparels, software system and apps and personal devices. JAKIM also founded Halal Innovation and Technology Center (HITeC) which is responsible for (1) Designing, creating HITeC related to innovation and halal technology; (2) Designing, managing and executing the annual programme of HITEx; and (3) Monitor and regulate systems and applications developed by the Halal Hub Division.

Islah

Reformation practice or *islah* in the Malaysian public service has taken place since the 1980s. However, many of them are conventional innovations. An example of Islamic innovation in Malaysian public service that is the principle of *wasatiyyah* or moderation. According to Sharifah Hayaati et al. (2015), the implementation of *wasatiyah* in the Malaysian public administration can be seen as the innovation programme is implemented. The innovations implemented in the Malaysian public administration are in line with the opinion of al-Qaradhawi (2009) which states that one of the principles of *wasatiyah* is to call for reformation in the context of *fiqh ma'alat* which emphasises the outcome or impact of a programme.

Islah conflicts with the existing culture as people are normally hesitant to accept changes due to their attitude of resistance to change. Thus, *wasatiyyah* movement has stopped since the former Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Najib Razak was replaced with the new government. Similarly with Islam Hadhari which was introduced earlier in 2004 by the fifth Prime Minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. Islam Hadhari had 10 objectives that include faith and piety in Allah, mastery of knowledge, cultural and moral integrity, just and trustworthy government,

balanced and comprehensive economic development, good quality of life for all, free and independent people, protection of the rights of minority groups and women, protection of the environment and a strong defence policy (Abdillah 2014). Knowledge is important to innovate. Tun Mahathir was no exception. He had introduced the instillation of Islamic values in Malaysian public service in 1985. Some of the values are trustworthy, responsibility, sincerity, dedication, hardworking, discipline, cooperation, being virtuous and gratitude. In 1987, he launched the Islamic work ethics. Some of the Islamic work ethics are quite similar with the Islamic values except for competence, teamwork and collective peace (Ilhaamie, Sharifah Hayaati and Siti Arni 2013). Later, when Tun Mahathir was the seventh Prime Minister, he proposed the concept of *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* which comprised values such as being friendly, worldly, respect, peace and harmony. However, the policy was not implemented when Tun Mahathir resigned after leading the country for almost two years with the opposition.

Islah or continuous improvement is very pertinent in quality management especially in MS 1900 to ensure that quality is continuously improved and zero defection can be attained in public service (Siti Arni et al. 2017). Continuous improvement is the seventh MS 1900 activity other than sharia compliance (Hasliza, Siti Arni and Musaiyadah 2016). Through continuous improvement, the third objective of MS 1900 of sharia compliance and stakeholder confidence could be obtained (Siti Arni and Ilhaamie 2011).

Afrin and Islam (2018) and Afrin et al. (2019) have developed a new model of continuous improvement from the Islamic perspective, however; they have not tested the model yet. In short, the model has not been implemented yet in any sector in Malaysia. Instead of "Plan Do Check Action" model introduced by Deming, they proposed NAMS model which constitute of *niat bil ikhlas* (good intention), *amal* (implement), *muhasabah* (evaluate) and *syukur* (gratitude).

Ijtihad

The National Fatwa Council which is operated under the Religion Affairs Division can be considered as a public agency which issues *fatwa* or known as collective *ijtihad.* The council is represented by mufti in each state in Malaysia. Fatwa can be categorised into animal, crime, *mualamat*, clothing, social/sharia, faith, *ibadah*, food, marriage, medical, *zakat* and administration. Thus, it rarely touches on public service. These *fatwa* are to be adhered by all Muslims in the country. In addition, each *mufti* can derive his own *fatwa* whereby the people of the state are obliged to follow the rulings (Mohd Kamel 2020). Meanwhile, individual *ijtihad* is implemented by jurist in the sharia court (Mohd Kamel, Mohd Al Adib and Mohd Izhar 2016) or by scientists on approving science and technology products

in ensuring that they are not transgressive in Islam as Muslims are not allowed to utilise them as long as they are not against the principles of Islam or known as sharia. For example, deciding on who are to receive *zakat* is not *ijtihad* as this is already laid out clearly in al-Quran. This kind of *ijtihad* can be categorised as contemporary *ijtihad* (Mohamad Zaim et al. 2015).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of innovation in Islam is *tauhid*, vicegerent, *ibadah*, to seek for Allah's blessing and to obtain Paradise. Contemporary *ijithad* is the cornerstone of innovation in Islam. It is neither *bidaah* nor *islah* or *tajdid.* There are many factors of innovation in Islam to enhance innovation at workplace, such as leadership, reward, training and innovative characteristics in employees such as possessing knowledge either *aqli* or *naqli,* skills, patience, discipline, perseverance, accountability, courage, cooperation, trust, commitment, dedication and others. To exemplify famous Islamic scholars is not easy, one must start early with education and skills such as Ibn Sina and others and of course, to possess important soft skills such as determination and dedication. In this modern world, Muslims either in Malaysia or foreign countries also contribute to innovation. The Malaysian government has foreseen the importance of innovation in enhancing quality services to the public. Islamic innovation in Malaysian public service centres on the principle of *maqasid* sharia. Many innovations are exerted from the *tajdid* principle while *Islah* in Malaysian public service means reformation and continuous improvement, such as Islamic work values and ethics, Islam Hadhari and *wasatiyyah*. On the other hand, there is lack of *ijtihad* in Malaysian public service as contemporary *ijtihad* concerns more on innovation in private affairs such as *ibadah*, food, marriage, consumerism and science and technology. Hopefully, the Malaysian government will be able to produce more Islamic innovation and continue to grow and prosper in the future.

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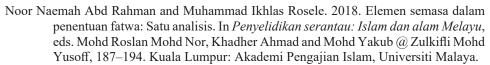Azrina Sobian, ed. 2011. Islam, kreativiti dan inovasi. Kuala Lumpur: Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia.

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