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Choosing the Governor in Early Islam: Lessons from Caliph Umar ibn Khattab

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This paper reveals the indicators or qualifications used by Umar bin Khattab (634-644 AD) in the choosing of officials to manage public affairs.

Design/methodology/approach – This research method entailed a meticulous examination and coding of classical Islamic texts. Furthermore, recent publications have contributed to the expansion of the available references. The narrative concerning Umar bin Khattab's selection and appointment of officials was meticulously catalogued, coded, and categorized to ensure the presentation of findings was both coherent and accessible.

Findings – Umar bin Khattab utilized a multifaceted framework to assess the suitability of prospective public officers, incorporating criteria such as piety, professional competence, moral integrity, and adaptability. Each position necessitated a distinct set of criteria, yet piety, competence, and integrity were universally regarded as paramount virtues. A notable finding from Umar's government practice was his capacity to harmonize the spiritual and functional dimensions, thereby establishing a streamlined, effective, and public service-oriented bureaucratic structure.

Research implications – The findings of this study can serve as a foundation of knowledge and consideration for the appointment of public officials in Muslim-majority and -minority countries alike. Government practitioners may find inspiration in Umar's multidimensional approach, which establishes integrity and piety as the moral foundation, followed by competence and adaptability as the drivers of work effectiveness.

Originality/value – Despite the numerous studies conducted on the reign of Umar ibn Khattab (13-23 H), there has been a dearth of literature that delves into the nuances of Umar's perspective on the role of a leader or statesman during this period.

Keywords Umar bin Khattab, Election of state officials, Islamic governance.
Paper type Review paper

1. Introduction

The appointment of public officials represents a critical component of government systems in numerous nations worldwide. The process entails more than merely allocating individuals to specific positions; it also mirrors the values and principles espoused by the nation. In numerous nations, public officials are selected based on criteria such as competence, integrity, and loyalty to the country (Dobel, 1990; Herasymiuk et al., 2020; Hood & Lodge, 2006). In the United States, the president is entrusted with the responsibility of appointing the nation's leading officials (Wurman, 2024). This process is meticulously designed to ascertain that the individuals chosen are adequately qualified for the roles they are to assume. In China, public officials are expected to demonstrate unwavering allegiance and a readiness to face the ultimate punishment for transgressing against the nation's hallowed legal principles (Cai, 2024). In European countries such as Germany and the UK, meritocracy is the foundation for the appointment of public officials (Bovens & Wille, 2017; Ebinger, 2022). Individuals are selected based on their ability and merit, rather than on political connections or personal affinity (Rahmat et al., 2023).

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In the context of Islamic history, the appointment of public officials represents a significant concern, particularly during the period of Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him (PBUH) leadership and the subsequent caliphate. Caliph Umar bin Khattab is recognized as a leader who exercised discernment and rigor in the selection and appointment of state officials (Numani, 2004; Personal et al., 2018). He did not perceive office as a form of reward or gift, but rather as a substantial burden of responsibility before God. A thorough examination of the practices of appointing officials during the time of Umar bin Khattab reveals clear indications that take precedence over other indicators. For instance, Umar selected Abu Ubaidah bin Jarrah for the governorship of Sham, recognizing his piety and his aptitude for managing the region in the post-war context. Similarly, Abd al-Rahman bin Samurah was selected as governor of Khurasan, a region where he demonstrated a remarkable capacity to adapt to the local populace, many of whom had recently embraced Islam but exhibited a tendency towards discord (Ash-Shalabi, 2017; Haikal, 2002). The decisions made by Umar demonstrate that the selection of public officials should be based on qualifications that align with the needs and challenges facing the region.

A plethora of scholars and historians have conducted studies on the appointment of officials in early Islam. A number of earlier studies have drawn attention to certain aspects, including the leadership principles of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and the caliphs, as well as the impact of these figures on Islamic society during their respective periods of leadership. However, research specifically addressing the indicators or qualifications utilized by Umar bin Khattab in the selection of public officials has not been identified. The majority of studies concentrate on broad aspects of leadership or on specific figures without undertaking a thorough examination of the criteria employed in the selection of officials. The objective of this study is to identify the indicators or qualifications that Umar bin Khattab employed in the selection of officials to oversee public affairs. It is anticipated that this research will contribute to the development of a more nuanced understanding of the principles of leadership that can be applied in the context of modern government. The pressing nature of this research stems from the fundamental importance of comprehending the principles of leadership that were operationalized in the nascent stages of Islam. These principles, when examined through a contemporary lens, offer valuable insights that can be applied to the governance of present-day governments. Furthermore, the findings of this study can contribute to the development of a meritocratic system in the appointment of public officials in various countries.

2. Method

This qualitative study employed a content analysis approach. The disclosure of the qualifications of public officials according to Umar bin Khattab was obtained from classical books: *As-Sirah an-Nabawiyah* (Hisyam, n.d.), *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk* (Ath-Thabari, 755), *Tabaqat al-Kubra* (Sa'ad, n.d.), *Maghazi* (Al-Waqidi, 1999), and *Tarikh Khulafa*' (Al-Suyuti, 1881). Additionally, sources were obtained from the works of Al-Baladzuri (1996), al-Mubarkpuri (1999), Asqalani (1358), Numani (2004, 2015), Ash-Shalabi (2017), and Haikal (2002). Following a series of readings, the sections of the books that were found to be pertinent to the practice of appointing officials were annotated and compiled into a tabular format. Indicators or qualifications with analogous characteristics and supporting data were catalogued for inclusion in an explanatory section. The results of the data processing are presented in the subsequent section, following the research questions that were set out at the beginning of this study. In conclusion, the primary findings of the present study are presented, along with recommendations for future research.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 The reign of Umar bin Khattab

Umar's full name was Umar bin Khattab Ibn Nufail Ibn Abd al-'Uzza Ibn Riyah Ibn Qurth Ibn Razah Ibn 'Adiy Ibn Ka'ab Ibn Lu'aiy al-Qurasyiy al-'Adawiy (Ash-Shalabi, 2017; Numani, 2004, 2015; Personal et al., 2018). Umar was born thirteen years after the year of the Elephant (the year of the Prophet Muhammad's birth). This means that Umar was thirteen years younger than the Prophet Muhammad PBUH.

Prior to his conversion to Islam, Umar was recognized as one of the prominent figures who vehemently opposed the call of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. It is noteworthy that Umar embraced Islam only in the sixth year of the prophetic era. At that time, Umar bin Khattab was twenty-seven years old. He is recognized as the caliph who introduced Islam to the region. Among the numerous narrations, the most renowned one is the one attributed to Anas bin Malik. On one occasion, Umar received news that his sister, Fatimah, and her husband had converted to Islam. This provoked an immediate and intense reaction from Umar, characterized by anger and fury. Umar proceeded directly to his sister's residence. In this particular instance, Umar's anger was expressed in an immediate manner toward his sister, resulting in a physical altercation involving a slap directed at Fatimah and her husband. At the zenith of his fury, Umar encountered a sheet inscribed with a verse from the Qur'an. According to certain narrations, the verse is believed to constitute the beginning of Surah Taha. Thereafter, Umar proceeded to take the sheet and peruse the verse. Following the reading of the text, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) experienced a sense of inner peace and tranquility. Subsequently, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) expressed a desire to meet the Prophet Muhammad PBUH at al-Arqam's house (Haikal, 2002; Numani, 2015).

During this period, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH engaged in secret da'wah, or religious proselytizing, in the home of Al-Arqam. Upon arriving at the designated location, the Companions present in Al-Arqam's residence, with the exception of Hamzah bin Abdul Muttalib, the Prophet's uncle, experienced a state of apprehension. However, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH exhibited composure and firmness in his reception of Umar's arrival, which led to Umar's subsequent softening and fear. Subsequently, the Prophet commanded Umar to embrace Islam. Subsequently, Umar proclaimed his conversion to Islam and articulated the two sentences of the creed.

Following his migration from Mecca to Medina, Umar bin Khattab played a pivotal role in the development of Islamic society. Umar was recognized as one of the most intimate and trusted companions of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. In the city that would become the centre of Islamic government, Umar played an active role in various aspects of people's lives. His courage, intelligence, and decisiveness rendered him an instrumental figure in the strategic decisions made by the Prophet (Al-Mubarkpuri, 1999). Notably, he participated in nearly all of the significant battles led by the Prophet and played a crucial role in the drafting of pivotal treaties that charted the course for the future of the Muslim community. Furthermore, Umar was recognized as a trusted advisor whose counsel consistently aligned with the tenets of the Qur'an, thereby underscoring the profundity of his faith and the high degree of confidence the Prophet placed in him. Amidst the expanding community of Medina, Umar emerged as a figure who upheld justice, demonstrated courage in enforcing the law, and exhibited a profound concern for the welfare of the populace.

Umar's life in Medina was distinguished by its simplicity and a profound sense of connection with the local community. He lived with discipline and zuhud, eschewing luxuries, and set an example of sincerity and moral firmness (Sa'ad, n.d.). Umar demonstrated a firm commitment to maintaining the integrity of Islam, readily reprimanding any individual or group who deviated from its tenets, even among those in his inner circle (Al-Mubarkpuri, 1999; Ash-Shalabi, 2017).

He demonstrated a profound comprehension of the theoretical underpinnings of an ideal Islamic society, and thus, from its inception, he played an instrumental role in the establishment of a social system that prioritized the needs of the vulnerable and the disempowered. In the mosque, he frequently dispensed religious counsel, addressed inquiries from the congregation, and assisted in the resolution of societal issues. Although he had not yet become caliph, Umar's influence in state decision-making was already being felt. This suggests that Umar's leadership was firmly established long before his formal appointment as caliph, as his character and role had already come to embody the ideal leader in the eyes of Muslims since the prophetic era.

During Umar's tenure as caliph, he implemented a government system characterized by the principles of justice and honesty, thereby laying the foundations for a democratic state. This initiative can be attributed to Umar's belief in the right and responsibility of the populace to engage in governmental affairs. Furthermore, during the ten-year period of Umar's reign (13 AH/634 AD–23 AH/644 AD), the expansion of his government system was predominantly marked by military conquests aimed at extending the influence of Islam beyond the Arabian Peninsula. Furthermore, Umar implemented substantial reforms in the domain of state administration, thereby enhancing the system of government previously established by Abu Bakr. Umar inquired of the senior companions (*al-sabiqun al-awwalun*) to remain in the city of Medina. Umar's energy proved instrumental in the execution of his responsibilities.

3.2 The Practice of Appointing Governor

During the reign of Caliph Umar bin Khattab, the territory of Islam underwent significant expansion. Among his other accomplishments, he successfully conquered Egypt with its first governor, Amru bin 'Ash. Amru is recognized as the inaugural propagator of Islam in the North African region. The expansion of Islam also encompassed Libya, Barqoh, Persia, Iraq, Armenia, Khurasan, Nisabur, Azerbaijan, Basra, Syria, Jordan, Gaza, Baitul Maqdis, and numerous regions along the Mediterranean coastline. In addition to maintaining the policies of his predecessor, Caliph Umar also achieved revolutionary breakthroughs during his reign.

In the interest of defense, security, and order in society, Umar established a police force, a military corps with registered soldiers. The subjects were compensated at varying rates. Furthermore, he established military outposts in key locations, demonstrating a strategic approach to military deployment. In the domain of law, Umar implemented significant reforms to the Islamic judiciary. He is recognized as the progenitor of the principles of justice, as evidenced by his authorship of a treatise addressed to Abu Musa Al Ashary. Subsequently, the treatise was designated *Dustur Umar* (Umar's constitution) or *Risalah Al Qadla* (Letter of Justice).

In an effort to enhance the efficacy of governance at the regional level, Umar endowed his governors with a range of personnel, including chief secretaries, military secretaries, tax officials, police officials, financial officials, and judges as well as officials from the religious ministry. As stated in the book *Al Asyrah Mubasysyirun bil Jannah*, Umar is recognized as a pivotal figure in the development of Islamic practices and institutions. He is particularly noted for his contributions to religious devotion, as evidenced by his promotion of tarawih prayer, establishment of the Islamic calendar (*hijriyah*), and organization of the Baitul Mal wa Tamwil. Additionally, Umar is recognized for his role in prohibiting mut'ah marriage, instituting zakat, creating coinage, and developing postal services. However, Umar, who was fatally wounded by a Magi named Abu Lu'luah during morning prayers in the year 13 Hijriyah, has bequeathed a substantial corpus of values whose benefits are instrumental in the transformation of a society from anarchic, uncivilized conditions to a humane and prosperous society (Al-Suyuti, 1881; Al-Waqidi, 1999; Hisyam, 2006).

He did not hesitate to extend invitations to non-Muslims to participate in government and development activities without discrimination.

Table 1. Governors in Umar's Period

Sn.	Governor	Region	Main Reason for Appointment
1	Abdurrahman bin Harith	Makkah	Strong leadership and high integrity (Al-Baladzuri, 1996; Sa'ad, n.d.)
2	Suhail bin Amr	Makkah	Diplomat, decisive and capable of administration (Al-Baladzuri, 1996; Sa'ad, n.d.)
3	Uthman bin Abi al-As	Tha'if	Democratic, very brave and has high integrity (Al-Baladzuri, 1996; Sa'ad, n.d.)
4	Abdullah bin Zubair	Hijaz	Managing Muslim worship and security (Ath-Thabari, 755; Sa'ad, n.d.)
5	Abu Ubaidah bin al-Jarrah	Syam	Highly trustworthy, simple in life and skilled in administration and the military (Al-Asqalani, 1358; Al-Baladzuri, 1996)
6	Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan	Syam	Good at diplomacy, stable in vulnerable areas, Quraysh background (Ath-Thabari, 755; Sa'ad, n.d.)
7	Abu Musa al-Ash'ari	Basrah	Fair and stable leadership manages the region's finances (Al-Baladzuri, 1996; Sa'ad, n.d.)
8	Amr bin Ash	Egypt	Proficient in administration and military, diplomacy, success in expansion (Al-Baladzuri, 1996; Al-Mubarkpuri, 1999)
9	Abdullah bin Zubair	Hijaz	Managing Muslim worship and security (Ath-Thabari, 755; Sa'ad, n.d.)
10	Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas	Kuffah	Kepemimpinan, integritas, dan ketaatan (Al-Baladzuri, 1996; Al-Mubarkpuri, 1999)
11	Al-Mughirah bin Syu'bah	Kuffah	Leadership, integrity, and assertiveness (Al-Baladzuri, 1996; Sa'ad, n.d.)
12	Al-Hurr bin Qais	Kuffah	Democratic, very brave and has high integrity (Al-Baladzuri, 1996; Sa'ad, n.d.)
13	Syuraih bin al-Harits	Kuffah	Honest, fair, and well-versed in Islamic law (Al-Baladzuri, 1996; Al-Mubarkpuri, 1999)
14	Iyadh bin Ghanm	Al-Jazirah	Courageous and fair in ruling (Al-Baladzuri, 1996; Ath-Thabari, 755)
15	Jarir bin Abdullah al-Bajali	Najran	Integrity, assertiveness and administrative skills (Ath-Thabari, 755; Sa'ad, n.d.)
16	Uthman bin Affan	North Africa (Maghrib)	Expertise in financial management and people's welfare (Ath-Thabari, 755; Sa'ad, n.d.)
17	Alqama bin Qais	Azerbaijan	Having an attitude of ethnic and cultural tolerance, knowledge in religion, skills in government administration (Al-Baladzuri, 1996; Ath-Thabari, 755)
18	Abd al-Rahman bin Samurah	Khurasan	War strategist, diplomatic and master of geopolitics (Al-Baladzuri, 1996; Al-Mubarkpuri, 1999)
19	Ziyad bin Abi Sufyan	Iraq and most of Persia	Firm, courageous, and fair in ruling (Al-Baladzuri, 1996; Ath-Thabari, 755)
20	Al-'ala bin al-Hadhrami	Bahrain	Integrity, assertiveness and administrative skills (Al-Baladzuri, 1996; Al-Mubarkpuri, 1999)

3.3 The Practice of Appointing Governor.

Umar bin Khattab is recognized as a leader who demonstrated discernment, firmness, and fairness in the selection and appointment of state officials. Umar did not perceive office as a form of reward or gift; rather, he regarded it as a substantial burden of responsibility before Allah. A thorough examination of the practices of appointing officials during the time of Umar bin Khattab reveals clear indications of the factors that were prioritized over others. The subsequent presentation will outline the indicators of officials from the most significant or primary qualification.

a. Adherence to the Laws of Allah SWT

Umar bin Khattab is recognized for his unwavering commitment to upholding justice, firmness, and high morality in government. One of the fundamental principles he adhered to in appointing officials was piety, defined as the selection of individuals who exhibited profound faith, personal piety, and a profound reverence for Allah. For Umar, piety was not solely a spiritual practice; it was also an indication of moral integrity and adherence to Allah's law. He firmly believed that a devout official would exercise greater caution in carrying out his duties, would not abuse his power, and would prioritize the satisfaction of Allah as the ultimate objective. Consequently, he refrained from appointing officials based on criteria such as popularity, affluence, or political clout. Instead, he seeks individuals who are apprehensive about committing missteps, driven by the profound awareness that they will be held responsible for their actions in the afterlife.

One of the most prominent examples of the application of this principle is the appointment of Abu Ubaidah bin Jarrah. He was widely known as a very pious person, humble, and never interested in the world. It is noteworthy that the Prophet PBUH himself once referred to him as "the most trustworthy person in the ummah." Umar not only admired Abu Ubaidah's piety, but also regarded him as a role model in matters of leadership. He was appointed governor of the Levant region because Umar believed that a man who fears Allah will safeguard the trust of his people with unwavering commitment. Abu Ubaidah's lifestyle was characterized by simplicity, a refusal of luxurious facilities, and a consistent presence among his community. Umar's profound trust in Abu Ubaidah is evidenced by the following statement: "*Had Abu Ubaidah been alive, I would have appointed him as my successor without hesitation*." Another notable example is Uthman b. Abi al-As, who was appointed governor of Tha'if despite his youth. The selection of Umar was not influenced by his administrative experience; rather, it was due to his exceptional piety. Uthman was known to be meticulous in his worship, proficient in the recitation of the Qur'an, and exhibited a profound concern for the laws of the Shari'ah. It is evident that he demonstrated the capacity to lead the populace in a fair manner, thereby fostering stability and order within his domain.

Umar's application of the principle of piety extended beyond the governor level, encompassing the appointment of zakat officers, judges, and amil-amil in various Islamic regions. He systematically inquired about the religious background of prospective officials, meticulously tracing their religious life and relationship with the Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunnah. For instance, he appointed Ziyad bin Abihi to the administration after ascertaining that he possessed both the necessary intelligence and spiritual depth. Umar frequently disapproved of candidates who exhibited excessive worldliness or a penchant for luxury, perceiving such qualities as indicative of a deficient piety. In one of his speeches, Umar once stated that his greatest concern for a leader was the absence of fear for Allah, as this could potentially lead to injustice and abuse of power.

b. Competence (person-job fit)

A hallmark of Umar's governance was the rigorous implementation of a personnel policy that prioritized the alignment between an individual's competencies and the demands of their position, thereby ensuring optimal performance and job satisfaction (Rahmat et al., 2023). Umar came to the realization that a position is not a gift or a form of respect for personal closeness;

rather, it is a significant mandate that must be carried out by the most worthy and most capable individual. Consequently, the selection of officials was not predicated solely on piety or proximity to the ruler; rather, it was informed by criteria such as an individual's genuine aptitude, intelligence, experience, and probity in executing public responsibilities. In the course of appointing officials, Umar meticulously evaluated whether the individual possessed the capacity to effectively manage the region or the task assigned to them. Furthermore, he maintained a rigorous oversight of the performance of his officials, with the authority to dismiss those who demonstrated an inability to fulfill their responsibilities adequately or were found to be abusing their authority.

A notable illustration of this principle's implementation is evident in Umar's appointment of Mu'awiyah bin Abu Sufyan as governor of the Levant region. Notwithstanding Mu'awiyah's lineage from the Bani Umayyah, a family that had previously been in opposition to Islam, Umar recognized his aptitude for overseeing a multifaceted region such as Syria, which was proximate to Roman territory and comprised a heterogeneous array of non-Muslim communities. He regarded Mu'awiyah as demonstrating a capacity for responsiveness to political and administrative matters, and as being highly skilled in the realm of diplomacy. This appointment underscores a notable shift in Umar's hiring practices, indicating a departure from conventional norms that often prioritize an individual's past credentials and experience. Instead, the emphasis appears to be on assessing candidates based on their current and future capabilities and potential. In addition to Mu'awiyah, Umar also appointed Amr bin Ash as governor of Egypt, recognizing his intelligence, proficiency in military strategy, and skill in negotiation. Amr was a distinguished diplomat and military leader who successfully led the conquest of Egypt with minimal bloodshed, while ensuring the region's stability in the aftermath of the conquest. Umar placed considerable trust in Amr's proficiency in fostering harmonious relations with the indigenous populace, particularly the Coptic Christian community that constituted a substantial demographic within Egypt during that era.

Furthermore, Umar designated Abu Ubaidah bin Jarrah as the commander-in-chief of the Islamic forces in the Levant region, a position he held subsequent to Khalid bin Walid's departure. Despite his reputation as an exceptional military leader, Khalid's formidable combat prowess was eclipsed by Umar's assessment of Abu Ubaidah's aptitude for administrative responsibilities and post-war leadership. This judgment was influenced by Abu Ubaidah's disposition, characterized by his mild temperament, contemplative nature, and profound humility. He was regarded as more competent in the areas of managing civilian relations, pacifying the population, and establishing a stable system of government in the recently acquired territories. This suggests that Umar's evaluation of individuals extended beyond their military accomplishments, encompassing their aptitude for enduring social and administrative responsibilities. Al-Mughirah bin Shu'bah serves as an illustrative example of an official who was appointed due to his aptitude for diplomacy and administration. However, he was dismissed by Umar at one point when he was found guilty. Nevertheless, subsequent to being proven innocent, he was granted another mandate.

c. Integrity

For Umar, integrity constituted the primary foundation for holding office, as the absence of integrity could lead to the misuse of abilities and intelligence for personal gain. He frequently evaluated the probity and authenticity of prospective officials by observing their daily lives, the manner in which they interacted with the community, and the extent to which they safeguarded themselves from the allure of worldly temptations. Umar's rejection of individuals harboring excessive ambition for office was not driven by personal bias; rather, it was a strategic decision motivated by a belief that such ambition could potentially lead to unethical practices.

One notable example of an official appointed by Umar due to his integrity was Abu Ubaidah bin Jarrah, who was regarded by the Prophet as "Aminu hadzihil ummah," meaning "the most trustworthy person among the Muslims." Umar held Abu Ubaidah in high esteem and placed considerable trust in him. This regard was rooted in Abu Ubaidah's modest disposition, aversion to worldly pursuits, and unwavering commitment to integrity. He was subsequently appointed governor of Sham, succeeding Khalid bin Walid in the role. While Abu Ubaidah's military strategy was not as renowned as that of Khalid, Umar regarded his leadership in managing the post-war region and its inhabitants as superior. This assessment was based on the principles of sincerity and high integrity that characterized Abu Ubaidah's leadership. Furthermore, Umar selected Ash-Shurahbil bin Hasanah as a governor in the Levant region, recognizing his reputation for fairness, integrity, and unwavering commitment to his duties. In certain narrations, Umar lauded Shurahbil's character, noting his independence from material wealth and social standing, and his unwavering commitment to justice.

Furthermore, Muhammad bin Maslamah was entrusted with numerous sensitive missions, including the investigation of officials' wealth and the delivery of dismissal orders. Muhammad's reputation was characterized by his unwavering honesty, his strict adherence to established rules, and his firmness and integrity, which earned him both fear and respect from his constituents. In the course of his professional obligations, he consistently demonstrated a commitment to justice, prioritizing it over individual interests. Furthermore, Umar frequently conducted audits of the wealth of appointed officials. In the event that an official exhibited a suspicious increase in wealth, the official was investigated, and they could even be removed. One notable instance of this phenomenon is the instance in which Umar removed Sa'd bin Abi Waqqash from the governorship of Kufa. This action was not taken due to any perceived incompetence on the latter's part, but rather in response to popular complaints regarding his leadership. While the investigation failed to provide definitive evidence of Sa'd's culpability, Umar nevertheless implemented substantial measures to bolster public confidence in the Islamic government. The policies enacted by Umar provide compelling evidence that he successfully fostered a culture of integrity within all echelons of government. He exhibited an unwavering commitment to upholding the principles of trust and regarded his role in office as a means of serving the public interest rather than as a vehicle for personal advancement.

d. Adaptability

In the course of expanding the territorial boundaries of Islam, Umar confronted significant challenges, as the conquered territories were characterized by a wide array of cultural, religious, and social diversities. Consequently, Umar's selection criteria for officials encompassed not only piety and integrity, but also the capacity to assimilate into the local community, particularly in regions experiencing conflict or recent upheaval. Umar came to the realization that a governor or regional official must possess social sensitivity, diplomacy, and situational intelligence to effectively manage the populace, prevent rebellions, and maintain regional stability. Those lacking an understanding of local dynamics run the risk of exacerbating the situation and thereby increasing the potential for conflict. Consequently, Umar exercised discernment in the appointment of regional leaders, ascertaining that they possessed a degree of adaptability, effective communication skills, and a comprehensive understanding of the circumstances prevalent within their respective communities.

Khurasan was a highly strategic yet complex region, as its people consisted of various tribes and ethnicities, were mostly new to Islam, and had a cultural and religious background far different from that of Muslim Arab society. Umar was well aware that a region as new to Islam as Khurasan needed a leader who could adapt, not only administratively and militarily, but also socially and culturally. One clear example of this policy was the appointment of Abd al-Rahman bin Samurah as governor of Khurasan.

Abd al-Rahman bin Samurah was known as a calm, wise, and unhurried approach to both proselytizing and governance. He had diplomatic skills and high emotional intelligence, which were needed in leading a society that was still in the transition stage towards Islam. Umar chose him because he was confident that Abd al-Rahman could maintain the stability of the region, avoid violence, and build the trust of the local people in the Islamic government. In carrying out his duties in Khurasan, Abd al-Rahman did not only focus on enforcing Islamic law rigidly, but also gave space for local people to understand Islam gradually, through a gentle and understanding approach to their cultural background. This approach proved successful in reducing potential conflicts that could have arisen from social tensions and resistance to the new government.

An adaptive leader is far more important than one who relies solely on military might or the rule of law. Umar wanted Islam to enter the hearts of the people, not just be formally accepted, and this required a leader who was patient, wise, and understood the psychological and social conditions of his people. With Abd al-Rahman leading Khurasan, Umar hoped that the process of Islamization would proceed naturally, without generating resistance or rebellion to the detriment of Islam's growing political stability. Abd al-Rahman's success in maintaining order, developing da'wah, and strengthening the presence of Islam in the eastern region is proof of the accuracy of Umar's decision in choosing a leader based on his ability to adapt and understand local dynamics.

4. Conclusion

Umar bin Khattab established remarkably elevated standards for the selection of state officials, designating four primary indicators: piety, competence, integrity, and adaptability. The four indicators in question demonstrated not only Umar's capacity for foresight in assessing an individual's character and capacity, but also reflected a profound comprehension of the fundamental requirements for a just, stable, and people-oriented government. A notable finding from Umar's governmental practice is his capacity to harmonize the spiritual and functional dimensions of leadership, thereby establishing a streamlined, effective, and public service-oriented bureaucratic structure. Umar's approach was not predicated on a single criterion; rather, he conducted a comprehensive evaluation of each candidate, assessing their moral integrity, technical expertise, and socio-political background. This lesson is of particular significance for contemporary government practitioners, as it underscores the necessity of a robust foundation of values as a prerequisite for genuine bureaucratic reform, superseding mere technical management expertise.

The implications of Umar's policy are highly pertinent to the enhancement of contemporary governance, particularly with regard to the selection of public officials who continue to be susceptible to nepotism, the politicization of positions, and the absence of integrity. Government practitioners may find value in Umar's multidimensional approach, which places integrity and piety at the core of its ethical framework. This approach is further supported by competence and adaptability, which are identified as key drivers of work effectiveness. A subsequent study might benefit from a comparison of Umar bin Khattab's indicators of official selection with recruitment practices in modern governments worldwide, particularly in Muslim-majority countries. Furthermore, empirical research can be directed at the effectiveness of Umar's leadership model in building legitimacy and public trust. This would allow for the formulation of an ethical leadership model that is able to answer the challenges of increasingly complex and multicultural governance in today's global era.

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