



The Qur'anic Paradigm of Organizational Culture: A Thematic-Hermeneutic Study of Surah al-Fātiḥah

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Abstract

This study explores Surah al-Fātiḥah as a Qur'anic paradigm for constructing a spiritually grounded and ethically robust model of organizational culture. The purpose of this research is to reinterpret al-Fātiḥah through a thematic-hermeneutic approach, uncovering seven interrelated Qur'anic values that can serve as the foundational framework for contemporary organizational culture within an Islamic worldview. The research integrates classical tafsīr sources—such as Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm by Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Marāghī by Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, and the modern interpretation Tafsīr al-Mishbah by M. Quraish Shihab—with modern organizational theories proposed by Edgar H. Schein and Stephen P. Robbins. Findings indicate that al-Fātiḥah contains seven Qur'anic pillars - God Awareness, Self Awareness, Giving Awareness, Vision, Purpose & Mission, Values, and Behavior each corresponding to one dimension of organizational culture. These pillars represent an integrated structure linking spirituality, ethics, and professionalism in a balanced form. The research concludes that al-Fātiḥah provides a holistic moral epistemology for developing organizational culture, reconciling faith-based principles with modern management paradigms. The originality of this study lies in its development of a Qur'anic Organizational Culture Framework, an integrative model that unites theological depth with practical management relevance, offering a new paradigm for leadership and organizational development rooted in divine consciousness.

Keywords: Qur'anic values; organizational culture; al-Fātiḥah; Islamic management; hermeneutics; value-based leadership; spirituality at work.

Received: January 11, 2026 | Revised: January 24, 2026 | Accepted: February 25, 2026

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era of organizational complexity, many institutions face a profound ethical and existential crisis. The relentless pursuit of profit, efficiency, and competitiveness has often overshadowed the moral and spiritual dimensions of human work. Corporate scandals, leadership failures, and burnout among employees reveal a void of meaning and authenticity. The question of how organizations can integrate ethical integrity and spiritual purpose into their operational systems has become one of the central challenges of the 21st century.

Classical theories of organizational behavior—such as those proposed by Robbins (2019) and Schein (2017)—emphasize the structural and psychological aspects of culture.



Culture is understood as a system of shared meanings and assumptions that guide behavior. While these frameworks are valuable, they tend to be anthropocentric and secular in orientation, overlooking the metaphysical and ethical dimensions of human action. The absence of transcendental awareness results in moral relativism, where values become negotiable tools rather than principled commitments.

Islamic scholarship, in contrast, situates organizational ethics within a divine framework. Human action is viewed as a trust (*amānah*), guided by the consciousness of God (*taqwā*), accountability (*mas'ūliyyah*), and justice (*'adl*). Within this paradigm, the Qur'an serves not only as a source of moral law but also as a living guide for constructing systems of governance, leadership, and culture that reflect divine attributes. However, the integration of Qur'anic values with modern management theory remains underdeveloped. Previous works, such as Ali (2005) and Beekun & Badawi (1999), introduced Islamic perspectives on management, yet they often relied on abstract ethical prescriptions without direct textual grounding in specific Qur'anic surahs. Meanwhile, contemporary Islamic management scholars—among them Hassan & Noordin (2019), Khalil & Alam (2020), and Syed & Ali (2023)—have begun to explore spirituality at work, though comprehensive Qur'anic models of organizational culture remain scarce.

This research addresses that gap by analyzing Surah al-Fātiḥah—the opening chapter of the Qur'an—as a universal charter of ethical and organizational principles. Known as *Umm al-Kitāb* (the essence of the Book), al-Fātiḥah encapsulates the epistemological, moral, and spiritual foundations of Islamic life. By interpreting its seven verses through thematic–hermeneutic analysis, this study seeks to formulate a Qur'anic-based framework of organizational culture that integrates faith, reason, and action.

Moving on from this goal, this study seeks to answer three main interrelated questions. First, what Qur'anic values in al-Fātiḥah correspond to the dimensions of organizational culture? Second, how can these values be interpreted hermeneutically to build a holistic Islamic organizational culture model? Third, to what extent are these values able to enrich or even transform the secular paradigm that has dominated modern management theory? These three questions are the common thread that connects all dimensions of analysis in this study.

Academically, this research contributes to three scientific domains at once. From the theoretical side, this study expands the scope of Qur'anic hermeneutics by applying it in organizational studies, thereby bridging the gap between revelational knowledge and social science. From a methodological perspective, this research offers a hybrid interpretive framework that combines thematic interpretation (*tafsīr mawḍū'ī*) with philosophical hermeneutics to read sacred texts as a guide to life in the context of contemporary organizations. From a practical point of view, the results of this research are expected to provide a normative foothold for Islamic organizations, policymakers, and educators in building an ethical culture, trustworthy leadership, and professionalism rooted in divine awareness.

Ultimately, this study argues that a sustainable organizational culture can only grow from a spiritual worldview. Al-Fātiḥah, as a moral microcosm of the Qur'an, offers a time-

transcending model for aligning visions, values, and behaviors within an organization toward a true divine goal (*maqsad*).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational Culture in Modern Theory

Organizational culture has been defined as a system of shared meaning held by members that distinguishes the organization from others (Robbins & Judge, 2019, p. 512). Edgar Schein (2017) deepens this understanding by describing culture as a dynamic pattern of assumptions that groups learn as they solve problems of external adaptation and internal integration. He classifies culture into three interrelated layers: artifacts, which encompass tangible elements such as rituals, symbols, and policies; espoused values, referring to explicitly stated norms and philosophies; and basic underlying assumptions, which are deeply held beliefs that unconsciously guide behavior. Together, these layers form a coherent cultural architecture that shapes organizational identity from surface practices down to its deepest cognitive foundations.

Strong cultures create cohesion, commitment, and clarity of purpose. However, they can also perpetuate rigidity and conformity when disconnected from ethical reflection. Modern organizational literature increasingly recognizes the role of ethics and spirituality in culture formation (Fry & Kriger, 2022; Yusof & Khan, 2020). Yet, these integrations often lack a theological anchor, reducing spirituality to emotional well-being or mindfulness techniques. As a result, moral guidance becomes subjective and fragmented. A Qur'anic framework offers a transcendent basis for ethics, grounding behavior not merely in social consensus but in divine accountability.

Islamic Perspectives on Organizational Culture

Islamic management theory approaches culture as a reflection of *tawhīd* (divine unity), wherein every dimension of organizational life — including leadership, communication, and motivation — must align with the divine will (*mashī'ah*) and moral law (*sharī'ah*). The Islamic worldview treats the workplace as an arena of worship (*'ibādah*) and stewardship (*khilāfah*), where human beings act as trustees (*amīn*) of God's resources.

Ali (2005) conceptualized Islamic work ethics by emphasizing sincerity (*ikhhlās*), justice (*'adl*), and social responsibility, while Beekun and Badawi (1999) proposed that Islamic leadership combines moral excellence (*iḥsān*) with a spirit of service (*khidmah*). However, these frameworks remain largely descriptive in nature. Recent empirical studies have demonstrated the positive relationship between Islamic spirituality and organizational commitment (Mahmood & Khattak, 2022; Hassan & Noordin, 2019; Kamil, 2021), yet they often lack a Qur'anic textual foundation that anchors their findings within a coherent scriptural logic.

This study seeks to address that deficiency by deriving organizational principles directly from the Qur'an, focusing on *al-Fātiḥah* as a text that contains theological, ethical, and operational dimensions. Each verse provides a structural element for constructing what this study terms "The Seven Qur'anic Pillars of Organizational Culture."

Qur'anic Hermeneutics and Thematic Exegesis

The Qur'an presents itself as a guide (*hudā*) for moral, social, and intellectual life. To uncover its relevance to modern disciplines, interpreters employ *tafsīr mawḍū'ī* — a method of thematic exegesis that collects verses related to a common theme and interprets them within a unified conceptual framework. When combined with philosophical hermeneutics, this approach allows the Qur'anic message to be understood dynamically in new and contemporary contexts.

Gadamer's concept of the fusion of horizons (1975) posits that understanding emerges through dialogue between the historical text and the interpreter's present context. Applied to the Qur'an, this means that the divine message retains its universality while inviting continuous contextual reflection. The hermeneutic circle — moving between text, context, and application — enables a living understanding that informs contemporary ethical systems in an ongoing and generative way.

In the context of Surah al-Fātiḥah, hermeneutic analysis reveals its structure as a comprehensive worldview encompassing the recognition of divine mercy, human dependence, moral accountability, and ethical direction. As al-Attas (1995) explains, *tawḥīd* integrates ontology, epistemology, and axiology into a unified vision of reality. Thus, interpreting al-Fātiḥah hermeneutically allows us to uncover not only its theological essence but also its broader sociological and managerial implications — making it a foundational resource for constructing an Islamic model of organizational culture.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative thematic–hermeneutic design aimed at interpreting the moral and organizational dimensions of Surah al-Fātiḥah. The research is interpretive rather than merely descriptive, seeking meaning (*ma'nā*) beyond literal textual analysis and aligning with the Qur'an's epistemological purpose as guidance (*hudā li al-nās*). The thematic approach (*tafsīr mawḍū'ī*) is combined with philosophical hermeneutics (Gadamer, 1975) to establish a dialogical understanding between text, context, and contemporary organizational practice.

The interpretive framework acknowledges that the Qur'an speaks through universal principles rather than rigid prescriptions. Accordingly, al-Fātiḥah is treated as a meta-ethical structure from which enduring principles can be derived and contextualized for modern application. By reading it in light of contemporary theories of organizational culture (Schein, 2017; Robbins & Judge, 2019), the study constructs a bridge between revelation (*naql*) and reason (*'aql*)—two foundational epistemic pillars of Islamic thought—without subordinating either to the other.

The study draws on two categories of sources. The primary sources consist of three classical and modern works of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*). The first is *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm* by Ibn Kathīr (2000), which represents classical Sunni exegesis grounded in hadith-based evidence and Arabic linguistic analysis. The second is *Tafsīr al-Marāghī* by Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī (1998), which integrates rational reflection (*ra'y*) with moral interpretation, reflecting the reformist current of modern Islamic thought. The third is *Tafsīr al-Misbāḥ* by

M. Quraish Shihab (2006), which offers a contemporary Indonesian hermeneutical perspective that foregrounds the socio-ethical relevance of Qur'anic teachings in everyday life. Together, these three works provide interpretive breadth across time, geography, and methodological orientation.

The secondary sources comprise academic scholarship on organizational culture and Islamic management theory. These include foundational works by Schein (2017) and Robbins & Judge (2019) on organizational dynamics, as well as Islamic management perspectives advanced by Ali (2005) and Beekun & Badawi (1999). The analysis is further enriched by recent empirical and conceptual studies that situate Islamic values within contemporary organizational contexts, including Hassan & Noordin (2019), Mahmood & Khattak (2022), and Syed & Ali (2023).

The analysis unfolds across four interconnected hermeneutic stages, each building upon the preceding one to deepen interpretive understanding. In the first stage—*textual identification*—each verse of al-Fātiḥah is isolated as a discrete unit of analysis, allowing its linguistic and theological particularity to come into focus before broader connections are drawn. In the second stage—*thematic clustering*—verses are grouped according to emerging moral and organizational themes, a process guided by the internal coherence of the text rather than by external categorical imposition. The third stage—*interpretive reflection*—contextualizes the meanings uncovered within the ontological framework of the human–divine relationship, attending to how each verse positions the human being before God and within the moral community. The fourth and final stage—*integrative synthesis*—maps Qur'anic themes against contemporary organizational theories, enabling the construction of the Qur'anic Organizational Culture Framework (QOCF). This sequential yet recursive process allows the text's theological depth to be expressed in a conceptual language accessible to management and organizational studies, without reducing its spiritual substance to mere managerial utility.

In qualitative hermeneutics, validity is understood not as statistical precision but as interpretive coherence—the degree of alignment between textual meaning, contextual understanding, and theoretical integration. This study achieves triangulation by cross-referencing three *tafsīr* sources that differ in period, methodology, and scholarly tradition, thereby corroborating key interpretations across time and geography and reducing the risk of idiosyncratic or anachronistic readings. Member validation is achieved indirectly by anchoring interpretations within the widely recognized Islamic scholarly consensus (*ijmā'*) on the meanings of al-Fātiḥah, ensuring that the analysis remains accountable to the broader tradition of Qur'anic scholarship. Reliability, in turn, is maintained through the principle of *ta'abbudīyyah*—devotional integrity—as a moral safeguard throughout the interpretive process, ensuring that the analysis remains faithful to Qur'anic intent and does not subordinate revelation to theoretical convenience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of the Seven Qur'anic Pillars of Organizational Culture

The analysis of Surah al-Fātihah yields seven major themes corresponding to the structural and ethical dimensions of organizational culture. These themes form what this research terms the Seven Qur'anic Pillars of Organizational Culture, each derived from a distinct verse of the Surah and translated into a conceptual framework applicable to modern organizational management. The seven pillars are presented in the following table.

Table 1. The Seven Qur'anic Pillars of Organizational Culture

No	Verse (Arabic)	Conceptual Pillar	Organizational Meaning
1	بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ	God Awareness	Foundation of divine consciousness guiding every action.
2	الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ	Self Awareness	Gratitude and humility as basis of accountability.
3	الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ	Giving Awareness	Compassion and service as organizational ethics.
4	مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ	Vision	Long-term divine accountability guiding justice and purpose.
5	إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ	Purpose & Mission	Devotion, teamwork, and dependence on divine guidance.
6	إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ	Values	Commitment to truth, fairness, and ethical direction.
7	صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ	Behavior	Integrity, consistency, and avoidance of corruption.

Theological Interpretation and Organizational Relevance

The first pillar, God Awareness, is derived from the opening verse Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm, which establishes divine consciousness as the foundation of every intention and organizational action. Awareness of God (taqwā) transforms work into worship ('ibādah), instilling sincerity and accountability at the deepest level of organizational motivation. From a management perspective, this principle creates intrinsic motivation, replacing external control with internal moral discipline rooted in the awareness of divine presence.

The second pillar, Self Awareness, emerges from the verse al-ḥamdu lillāh rabb al-'ālamīn, where gratitude (shukr) functions as the primary vehicle for self-recognition. In this context, gratitude reflects the consciousness of one's dependence on God and on others, which in organizational settings fosters humility, empathy, and ethical reflection. Leaders who embody gratitude inspire trust among their followers and align naturally with modern theories of authentic leadership, which emphasize transparency, relational integrity, and value-based conduct.

The third pillar, Giving Awareness, is drawn from the twin divine attributes Ar-Raḥmān ar-Raḥīm, representing rahmah (mercy) and raḥīmiyyah (compassion). These

attributes symbolize the values of generosity, compassion, and service, and their organizational translation means nurturing cultures of collaboration, mutual support, and institutional benevolence. This pillar resonates strongly with Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership model, which places the needs of others at the center of organizational purpose.

The fourth pillar, Vision, is derived from Māliki yawm al-dīn, which acknowledges divine sovereignty over the Day of Judgment. This verse situates all organizational actions within a framework of ultimate accountability, where every decision carries eschatological weight. Organizations guided by this principle develop long-term ethical vision, prioritizing justice and sustainability over short-term profit. The awareness that all earthly authority is ultimately accountable to a higher moral standard becomes a corrective mechanism against institutional corruption and moral drift.

The fifth pillar, Purpose and Mission, is articulated through the verse Iyyāka na'budu wa iyyāka nasta'in, which expresses dual commitments—devotion to God and reliance upon Him. This verse shapes organizational mission toward sincere service (ikhlaṣ) and interdependence (tawakkul), implying that effective organizational performance rests upon both dedicated intention and collaborative reliance. In practice, this translates into team synergy grounded in shared purpose and trust in a higher guiding principle that transcends individual self-interest.

The sixth pillar, Values, emerges from the prayer Ihdina ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm, which implores divine guidance toward the straight path. This verse emphasizes moral direction and consistency, forming the ethical core of organizational culture through the values of truthfulness, justice, and steadfastness. It aligns with Edgar Schein's concept of espoused values—those declared principles that shape group identity and guide decision-making across an institution's daily operations.

The seventh pillar, Behavior, is extracted from the closing verse of the Surah—Ṣirāṭ alladhīna an'amta 'alayhim ghayr al-maghḍūbi 'alayhim walā ḍ-ḍāllīn—which distinguishes the righteous, those blessed with divine favor, from those who go astray through arrogance or ignorance. This verse translates values into concrete conduct, representing the alignment between espoused and enacted values (Robbins, 2019). In organizational terms, it calls for integrity, behavioral consistency, and the active avoidance of corruption in all its forms.

Integrating the Seven Pillars with Modern Organizational Culture Theory

The integration of the Seven Qur'anic Pillars with Edgar Schein's three-layered model of organizational culture reveals a profound structural coherence between Qur'anic revelation and contemporary management theory. By mapping the seven pillars onto Schein's framework—which distinguishes between basic assumptions, espoused values, and artifacts—the study demonstrates that Qur'anic spirituality provides the ontological base upon which organizational culture can be constructed. The alignment is illustrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Integration of Qur'anic Pillars with Schein's Cultural Layers

Qur'anic Pillar	Schein's Cultural Layer	Organizational Manifestation
God Awareness	Basic Assumptions	Faith as metaphysical foundation for ethics.
Self & Giving Awareness	Espoused Values	Humility, gratitude, and compassion as core values.
Vision & Mission	Espoused Values	Strategic goals aligned with divine accountability.
Values & Behavior	Artifacts	Ethical policies and actions embodying Qur'anic guidance.

As shown in the table, God Awareness operates at the level of basic assumptions—the deepest, most invisible layer of organizational culture—because it functions as the metaphysical ground from which all other values and behaviors proceed. Self Awareness and Giving Awareness, by contrast, correspond to espoused values, as they are the consciously held principles of humility, gratitude, and compassion that an organization declares and promotes. Similarly, Vision and Purpose & Mission belong to the espoused values layer, translating divine accountability into strategic goals and institutional direction. Finally, Values and Behavior constitute the artifact layer—the visible, tangible expressions of Qur'anic ethics in the form of ethical policies, professional codes of conduct, and the daily enacted behaviors of organizational members. This alignment shifts management from a purely functional activity to a moral vocation, wherein organizational leadership is understood as a form of ethical stewardship.

The Qur'anic Organizational Culture Framework

The Qur'anic Organizational Culture Framework (QOCF) emerges as a conceptual synthesis that unites divine ethics with organizational pragmatism. Rather than imposing religious doctrine onto management practice in a reductive manner, the QOCF articulates how the internal architecture of Surah al-Fātiḥah naturally generates a complete organizational philosophy. The framework is structured in three concentric layers that mirror both the literary composition of the Surah and the layered model proposed by Schein.

At the innermost core lies the Faith Layer, centered on God Awareness. This layer establishes divine consciousness as the ontological root of all organizational culture, asserting that the legitimacy of any institutional purpose ultimately derives from its orientation toward the divine. Moving outward, the middle layer constitutes the Value System, encompassing Self Awareness, Giving Awareness, Vision, and Purpose & Mission. These pillars translate the faith of the core into operational ethics—they are the principles through which divine consciousness becomes institutionalized in the values, mission statements, and relational norms of an organization. The outermost layer represents Behavioral Expression, comprising the pillars of Values and Behavior, which manifest the inner faith and middle-layer ethics in

tangible organizational systems, including governance structures, performance norms, and everyday professional conduct.

This tripartite structure parallels both the architecture of al-Fātiḥah—which moves from theological affirmation to ethical aspiration to behavioral guidance—and Schein's cultural theory, reflecting how divine revelation provides an integrated moral architecture capable of guiding institutions from their deepest assumptions to their most visible practices.

Epistemological and Practical Implications

The QOCF carries significant implications at both the epistemological and practical levels. Theologically, it asserts that all cultural systems derive their ultimate legitimacy from tawḥīd—the oneness of God—and that organizational ethics is not a secondary concern but an expression of theological commitment. Epistemologically, the framework demonstrates that revelation and reason are not dichotomous but complementary sources of knowledge. Surah al-Fātiḥah functions in this context as a dialogical text, enabling a productive integration between faith-based certainty and organizational rationality, between the immutable and the adaptive dimensions of human institutional life.

At the practical level, the QOCF provides a framework for developing what Rahim and Salleh (2021) describe as spiritually intelligent organizations—institutions that balance competence with conscience, and combine efficiency with empathy. Within such organizations, leadership becomes a form of servitude rather than dominion, management becomes moral guidance rather than mere coordination, and performance becomes a means of worship rather than an end in itself. This reorientation has tangible institutional consequences: it promotes cultures of accountability without coercion, cultivates intrinsic motivation among members, and situates organizational success within a broader ethical horizon that resists corruption and short-termism.

Hermeneutic Reflection

Applying Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics to the reading of Surah al-Fātiḥah reveals the Surah as a living conversation between divine text and human agency, one that is perpetually renewed in every context of application. The fusion of horizons—a central concept in Gadamer's hermeneutics—occurs when the organizational challenges of the present moment, including corruption, injustice, institutional disengagement, and ethical drift, are interpreted through the Qur'anic lens provided by al-Fātiḥah. In this interpretive encounter, the text does not merely describe historical realities but speaks directly to contemporary institutional dilemmas, offering not a fixed prescription but a generative moral orientation.

The Qur'an thus functions simultaneously as both a mirror and a compass for organizational reform: a mirror that reflects the ethical condition of an institution against the standard of divine guidance, and a compass that orients decision-making toward justice, compassion, and truth. This study exemplifies how religious texts, when approached hermeneutically rather than literalistically, transcend the boundaries of ritual interpretation and enter the realm of ethical praxis. The interpretive move from theological meaning to

organizational application is not a distortion of the text but its fullest realization—a recognition that revelation speaks not only to the individual soul but to the collective human enterprise of building just and humane institutions.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that *Surah al-Fāṭṭḥah* provides a coherent and dynamic paradigm for building Qur’anic-based organizational culture. Its seven pillars collectively represent a spiritual system that aligns intention, ethics, and behavior toward divine objectives. Integrating these values with modern theories (Schein and Robbins) reveals that true organizational excellence is inseparable from spiritual integrity.

The *Qur’anic Organizational Culture Framework* thus redefines management as a moral enterprise, bridging the divide between spirituality and structure. For leaders and policymakers, the implications are clear: organizations rooted in divine consciousness will exhibit higher resilience, trust, and ethical performance. Training programs and institutional policies should embed *taqwā*, gratitude, service, and justice as organizational competencies.

Future research should empirically test the QOCF model across diverse sectors—education, public administration, and business—to measure its impact on employee engagement, ethical climate, and sustainability. Cross-cultural studies comparing Islamic and secular organizations would also deepen understanding of how divine values transform management paradigms globally.

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