CREATIVE SPIRITUALITY FROM THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE: PRACTICES AMONGST STUDENTS OF A PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT COMPETITION

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the state of creative spirituality on product development among students who participated in the Islamic Innovation Student Competition (i-REKA) 2017 at Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM). The study employed the quantitative approach through a survey instrument design. Data were collected using questionnaires, and the constructs used were developed from prior research and previously-tested for reliability. A total of 147 questionnaires were analysed from the respondents in this study. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the characteristics of the respondents, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, while the multivariate technique which was employed was regression. The findings revealed that significant relationships exist in the state of creative spirituality among students of the products development competition. These findings may provide a distinctive perspective on the concept of creative spirituality and product development, and its necessity in the Islamic educational system for the contemporary modern era.

Keywords_: Islam, creative spirituality, product development_

INTRODUCTION

Islam encourages human beings, in particular Muslims, to be creative in order to have a comfortable and happy life. The Qur'an encourages Muslims to use their

intellects or *aql* to find solutions to problems that occur in their everyday lives. The Quran keeps repeating and stressing on certain words to remind and encourage Muslims to be creative and aware of their needs and wellbeing. In Surah al-Imran, verse 190-191, Allah says "Verily! In the creation of the heavens and earth, and in the alteration of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding…" It shows that the value of creativity and innovation is not in everyone. Only those who ponder and understand the wisdom or *hikmah* and reasons behind the creation of mankind and the creatures of the earth, would try to benefit life in full while being obedient servants of Allah, the Creator (Jamal, 2004, 2011).

The terms of Islamic perspective of creativity, it is considered necessary to explain the conceptual meanings of this concept and its development in the Islamic heritage. The Arabic dictionary *Al-Mo'jam Al-Waseet* defines the verb "to create" as "to bring something into being in a way that was not before" (Mustafa, Al-Zayyat, & Al-Najjar, 1989). Therefore, creativity is producing something that was not in existence before or has nothing similar to it. Likewise, the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, to create is "to cause to exist; bring into being; originate." Creativity, therefore means "having the ability or power to create things" (Morris, 1981; Al-Karasneh & Saleh, 2010).

The spirit of creativity and innovation are special, and only certain people are bestowed with such a wisdom, knowledge and capability to achieve innovation. These people are men of understanding (*ulil al-bab*) as mentioned in the above surah. The Quran further says "Those who remember Allah while they are standing, sitting and lying down on their sides, and think deeply about the creation of the heavens and the earth, (saying): Our Lord! You have not created all this without purpose, glory be to You! Save us from the torment of the Fire." Again, the Qur'an stresses on those 'who think deeply' about the creation of earth and the heavens, and that Allah, the Creator, does not create the heavens and earth in vain. In another Surah, as-Sad verse 29, Allah says "This is a Book (the Qur'an) which we have sent down to you, full of blessings so that you may ponder over its verses, and that men of understanding may engage in remembrance".

Creativity is linked to ideas. One individual can produce an idea which could be an outstanding or a mediocre idea, while another can generate an assortment of ideas, some of them original and brilliant. The difference between the first person and the second has to do with creativity. Before the mid-1950s, creativity received little scholarly attention (Sternberg, Kaufman, and Pretz; 2002) in spite of the fact that scores of creative people in all fields of knowledge lived in the years, decades, and centuries before the middle of the twentieth century. On the other hand, the significance of creativity was acknowledged by Islam and this is evident from the examples shown by Prophet Muhammad pbuh (Mohamad et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the Prophet Mohammad's (p.b.u.h.) role was also creative. He was able to create and build a Muslim society from scratch. He transformed people

from worshipping idols to worshipping one God and from fighting one another to building a strong solidarity and brotherhood among all. The Prophet was the door through which a completely new system of behavior for human beings was displayed. The first Islamic society established by the Prophet was creative in nature in the sense of newness and uniqueness, and that small society was to be the base of the great Islamic civilization to follow (Samih, 2010).

Koontz (1986) in connecting creativity and spirituality, explores connections between creativity and spirituality from a feminine perspective. The idea highlights that creativity and spirituality are co-extensive and interrelated that lead towards integrity in life.

Therefore, it is clear and worth saying that in Islam, there is an element of spirituality in creativity and innovation that are interconnected to each other with the basis that Islam is a religion that encourages human beings to think and ponder over the creation of Allah. In every creativity and innovation made, the source of knowledge is the Qur'an, and Allah the Creator who inspires in people the best ideas whose products are of benefit to the Ummah.

Innovation is a continuous process of extracting benefits from products, services or even from procedures. The continuous evolution of extracting benefit from the original idea or invention is termed as innovation. From a business point of view, effective management of innovation needs close calibration between various internal business units of an organization.

In an organization, more people will be involved in implementing a new idea than in formulating it. More of them own the solution rather than the problem. A company has a number of forces operating on it in different directions and the balance of these forces makes the organization stable. It may also set off a whole new set of creative explorations and directions. It is for this reason that the human systems resist change. Pushing in a given direction will create equal and opposite pressure while pushing harder will only increase resistance. The industry will only move in a desired behaviour if the forces resisting change are decreased or removed. Therefore, an idea will only be successfully implemented when people change their behaviour.

Realizing its importance in providing a competitive edge and contributing towards better product competition performance, this research was undertaken to focus on the effect of creative spirituality on product development in a competition among students at USIM. Thus, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What is the state of creative spirituality on product development in a competition among students?
2. What is the relationship between creative spirituality on product development in a competition among students?

Based on these discussions, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: There is a significant relationship between creative spirituality and product development in a competition among students.

Figure 1 below illustrates the proposed model that hypothesized the relationships between creative spirituality on product development.
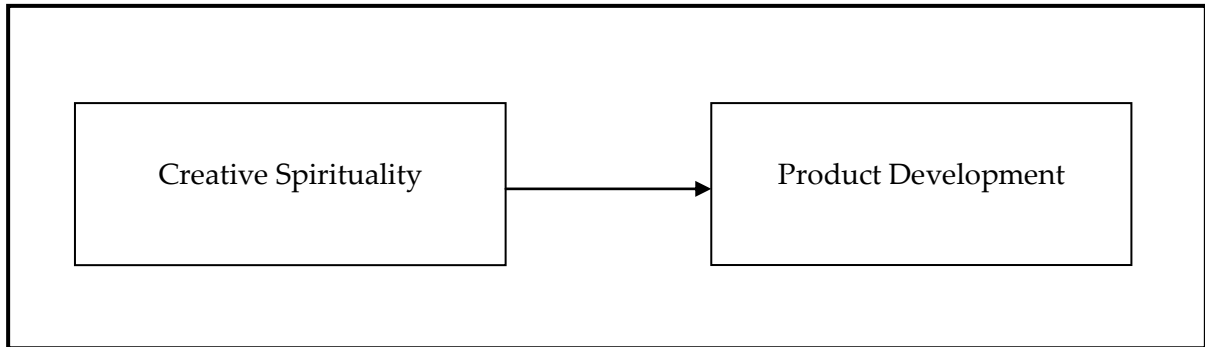

Figure 1: Creative spirituality and product development relationship framework

METHODOLOGY

Using SPSS (2012) version 20, the mean and standard deviation of each indicator and construct were calculated. All the indicators were measured by a range of 1 to 7 via the Likert scale. In the effort to gain an initial general overview of the respondents, descriptive analysis was performed on all constructs of the study.

The study employed the quantitative approach through a survey instrument design. Data were collected using questionnaires, and the constructs used were developed from prior research and previously tested for reliability. A total of 147 questionnaires were analysed from the respondents in this study.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the characteristics of the respondents, including frequency, mean, and measures of reliability, while the multivariate technique employed was multiple regression analysis.

RESULTS

This research was conducted among Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) and other university students who were involved in the Islamic Innovation Student Competition (i-REKA) 2017 that was held in the university (Table 1).

Table 1: Characteristics by Faculty

Faculty	Frequency	Percentage

Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies (FPQS)	33	22.4
Faculty of Leadership and Management (FKP)	2	1.4
Faculty of Syariah and Law (FSU)	5	3.4
Faculty of Economics and Muamalat (FEM)	47	32.0
Faculty of Science and Technology (FST)	35	23.8
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FPSK)	4	2.7
Faculty of Major Languages Studies (FPBU)	10	6.8
Faculty of Dentistry (FPg)	1	0.7
Others	10	6.8

Accordingly, the response of the respondents on all constructs of the study in terms of the mean and standard deviation values are summarized in Table 2 and 3. The result in Table 2 shows the scores' creative spirituality construct were revealed. This construct explains the aspect of spirituality in creativity. The average score is also moderately high which is 5.97. The range of scores is between 5.76 and 6.22. The highest score (mean = 6.22) is the admission of students that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is their role model in applying creativity.

Table 2: Means of Creative Spirituality

Item	Creative Spirituality	Mean	Standard Deviation
SC1	I know creativity is one form of *ibadah*.	5.76	1.284
SC2	I know Islam encourages its believers to be creative and innovative.	5.87	1.240
SC3	Whenever I have problems, I will pray to Allah for guidance and inspiration.	5.91	1.260
SC4	Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is my role model.	6.22	1.226
SC5	I believe my creativity is improved and at the best level when I am in an Islamic environment.	5.85	1.273
SC6	I need to be creative like past Muslim scholars.	6.05	1.187
SC7	I know creativity is part of *ijtihad*.	5.90	1.286
SC8	I realize that Allah is the best Creator and Innovator.	6.21	1.299

Table 3 shows some of the elements in product development among students. The highest score is 5.61, which indicates their products have significant contributions

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to Muslims. On average, the score is moderately high which is 5.4.

Table 3: Means of Product Development

Item	Product Development	Mean	Standard Deviation
PD1	Inventor knowledge	5.20	1.214
PD2	Skill and talent	5.31	1.285
PD3	New invention	5.33	1.267
PD4	Quality of creations	5.32	1.287
PD5	Novelty	5.32	1.227
PD6	Creativity	5.46	1.289
PD7	Usefulness and Practicality	5.44	1.234
PD8	Market Potentialities	5.36	1.334
PD9	Integration of Naqli and Aqli	5.44	1.381
PD10	Problem solving	5.50	1.257
PD11	Significant contribution to Muslims	5.61	1.342
PD12	Society wellbeing	5.56	1.293

The results in Table 4 show the link between creative spirituality and product development. The value of adjusted R^2 is 0.49, which means aspects of spirituality explain 49 percent of the variance in product development (F= 138.76, p < 0.001). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is accepted as the results indicate a positive association between the aspects of creative spirituality and product development.

Table 4: Relationship between Spirituality and Product Development

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
				R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
.699a	0.489	0.485	0.81536	0.489	138.759	0

The findings revealed that significant relationships exist between the state of creative spirituality among students in product development competitions. These

findings may provide a distinctive perspective on the concept of creative spirituality and its necessity in the Islamic educational system for the contemporary modern era.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The unique finding from this study is the factor of creative spiritual aspects that seem as giving impact to product development. With strong belief and reliance on Allah SWT, a person will always think about the benefits and contribution that they can offer from the products developed. As Muslim innovators, it is important to always bear in mind that Allah SWT is the greatest innovator and all creative ideas are actually gifts from Him.

By applying such principles, creative spirituality from Islamic perspectives, social studies educators can foster creativity in their classroom. Effectiveness and efficiency will then be enhanced and objectives are likely to be achieved. Such healthy classroom may achieve success and lead the way for the future of the Muslim society. By having the creativity traits, social studies educators will be able to lead their respective classroom in a way that allows them to cope with the daily changes and be ready to face the future and follow the development that is required for any classroom to succeed. The study also managed to highlight and consistent findings with the main fundamentals of creativity from an Islamic perspective (Malik, 2002; Al-Karasneh, 2010).

This paper has attempted to provide a distinctive perspective on the concept of creative spirituality and product development in Islam as exemplified by Muslim scholars and the necessity of its implementation in the contemporary Islamic educational system. In fact, this topic of creative spirituality should be considered as crucial skills that need to be mastered by youngsters nowadays to survive in the era of creative spirituality and product development based on science and technology. A further study is indeed necessary and is in progress to model a more comprehensive concept of creative spirituality and product development in Islam based on the examples of Muslim practices.

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