

## MANAGING THE SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS TOWARDS ETHICAL SOCIETY: A STUDY ON HUMAN RESOURCE UTILIZATION FRAMEWORK OF SUNNA NABAWIYYAH

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### ABSTRACT

A society consists of several social institutions that operate to meet different needs and demands of its members. The effective management of these social institutions is crucial to create a fully developed nation strengthened by strong moral and ethical values. The effective management of a social institution depends on leaders and managers of these institutions, along with those who participate in the management process. Appointing the right people across different decision-making areas, ensures positive impact on overall performance and output of the institution. A good number of scholars have recognized that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as the most successful leader in human history, who managed different social institutions successfully. His methodology of 'appointing the right person for the right work' is significant and noteworthy. Therefore, this research explores the human resource utilization framework used in Sunna Nabawiyah and its' implication in managing the social institutions. In this research, the researcher used content analysis method to analyze related Hadiths and the biographical notes of the Prophet (pbuh) by coding and classifying them to derive the framework. This research found that the human resource utilization framework based on the Sunna Nabawiyah contained four key criteria namely; (i) natural talents, (ii) competencies, (iii) integrity, and (iv) receptivity. Outcome of this research not only helps in reviewing existing management system of social institution but also develop a nation with strong moral and ethical values.

**Keywords:** *Ethical Society, Social Institution, Sunnah, Human Resource Utilization, Natural Talents*

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## INTRODUCTION

A society is “a large group of people who live together in an organized way, making decisions about how to do things and sharing the work that needs to be done” (Society, 2019). Accordingly, various affairs of a society are governed by set of rules and regulations to ensure law and order. However, the existence and sustainable development of a society depends not only on those rules and regulations set by its decision makers, but also depends on the manner how does each individual of the society behave in his or her personal and social life, those behaviors are broadly known as social ethics. Ethics are self-governing principles that maintains the lifestyle of a society in a predictable pattern. While the rules and regulations govern the official affairs of the society, ethical principles keep the people at self-controlled and committed to live within the society. Hence, a society incorporated with well-established ethical principles will perform well to materialize it’s intended common good and social justice. Therefore, it’s the responsibility of the societal leaderships to identify the appropriate ways and means to educate, retain, and promote their ethical principles in the society.

Ethics, similar to any other aspects, could be inculcated through formal educational processes, so that the younger generation could be grown up based on them. In addition to the formal approaches, literatures, public sermons, and other media also could be utilized to educate and motivate the public to adhere to the ethical principles. As far as the administration of a society is concerned, the people at leadership hierarchy must be able to lead the societal affairs such a way to deliver their responsibilities corroborated with ethical principles (Waggoner, 2010). Consequently, the society itself as an institution or integration of several social institutions will be operated upon the ethical principles. When each person who hold the responsibilities in social institutions have the capability to deliver the assigned roles, the immediate beneficiaries and the society at large will be able to fulfill their needs and expectations. Therefore, the researcher assumes that the appointment of the right person at the right position of social institutions should be the basis to establish an ethical society. This paper examines human resource utilization process in the Sunnah Nabawiyya to pursuit the framework he applied, which eventually supported to transform a normative tribal society as a civilization based on ethical principles.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to sociology, a society is a system based on social relations, in terms of political, economic, religious, family, and personal nature. A society is an institution or an integration many institutions which are operated with various aims and goals (Hechter, et al. 2018). According to functionalist theorists in sociology, social institutions are formed to address functional prerequisites of a society to enable its survival. Hence, social institutions do not appear spontaneously, rather form to address gaps in the society as perceived by the founders of those institutions. The type of the institution is chosen by the founders according to their own justifications, experiences, and capabilities, either economic, educational, religious, or political to achieve their goals.

Social institutions are broadly classified in to five: family, religious, educational, economic, and political institutions (Nonyelu, 2009). A healthy society should be managed such a way to align the aims and goals of all the institutions towards the common interests of the society (Hechter, et al. 2018). Hence, effective management of social institutions is one of the critical success factors to form a society based on ethics. That said, each social institution must be managed such a way to fulfil the intended purposes of its existence, consequently meet the expectations of its stakeholders. As far as the management of a social institution is concerned, the people who lead and manage the social institution (Waddock, 2007), as well as the people who participate within the institution to play various roles have direct impact on its overall delivery (Swanson, 2008; Snellman, 2015). Hence, managing human resource effectively across all the decision-making levels of the social institutions could bring positive impact on overall delivery of the social institutions towards establishing a society based on ethical principles. Contemporary scholars acknowledged that Prophet Muhammed was successful in managing his human resources in his institution in the process of transforming the normative people around him as a civilization. Studies reveals that Prophet Muhammad was successful to form a society based on ethical principles.

Prophet Muhammad formed his society based a charter, which illustrated the rights of the people of Medina from different religious and tribal background (El-Syam, 2017). Mehrandasht et al. (2014) found that the information ethics were observed in the Prophet’s society optimally. They found the ethical measure practices

in the Prophet's society, such as right seeking and right telling, veracity, eloquence, fluency, affability, good-temperedness, optimism, source validity, and constructive criticism. In addition to them, some of the key ethical issues were strictly evaded, such as, hypocrisy, cursing, falsehood, backbiting, lie, evil and idle talk, accusation, information prodigality, suspicion, and bad investigation. El-Syam (2017) describes the society established by Prophet Muhammad in Medina as "a flourishing nations in the pleasure of God." He discusses further that the people were not distinguished based on their race, language, and nationality, but they had the right and power to lift and reject. Omer (2010) studies on the architecture of Prophet's Mosque in Medina reveals that it paved the ways towards some of the key ethical values such as respect for the environment; cleanliness; promoting just social interactions; and maintaining relationship between the indigenous and migrants (Matthews, 2015). Hence, one of the key features of the Prophet's society was social justice, which include peace, love, brotherhood, and prosperity. According to Rahnamaei and Mosadi (2016) the society of Prophet Muhammad was recorded as one of the most glorious era of citizenship rights, which included civil, political, economic, social, minority, and judicial rights.

Prophet Muhammad initiated his mission as a single person, and eventually he was able to gather members little by little to form his institution. He was curious to identifying and utilizing the right people on various responsibilities (Siddiqui, 1998). At a point the Prophet was successful to absorb most of the people around him and engaged them on various responsibilities to manage his institution. Since the message and the guidance of the Prophet (incorporated with ethical principles) was perfect as it was revealed from God, the next critical success factor was the suitability of the implementation body. The Prophet trained the people who joined his institution spiritually and morally. However, Prophet Muhammad did not have training facilities to produce office-bearers to hold various responsibilities in his institution. Hence, the strategy of the Prophet was to identify the right people among his members who were already trained spiritually and morally by himself, and assigned them to the right positions.

There is a handful of studies that try to discuss the criteria used by Prophet Muhammad to select people for various assignments (Khan, Farooq, and Hussain, 2010; Branine, and Pollard, 2010; Rahman, et al. 2013; AlQahtani, 2014; Alarimy, 2015; Khan, 2016; Razimi, Romel, & Kamarudin, 2017). However, the researcher found that there are no comprehensive studies available to illustrate the human resource utilization framework in Sunnah Nabawiyah.

The objective of this study is to understand the framework used in Sunnah Nabawiyah to utilize the human resources towards establishing an ethical society? The researcher believes that the outcomes of this study will be useful for the contemporary social institutions, and consequently contribute towards ethical society.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The qualitative content analysis method is used in this study. Qualitative content analysis allows to comprehend the social reality of an aspect in a scientific manner as well as focus on unique themes and phenomenon rather than the statistical significance (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The researcher chose inductive approach in this study, which more appropriate to develop theories (Elo & Helvi, 2008). The 'Purposive sampling' method was used to collect data in this research (Sbaraini, et al., 2011). Accordingly, Hadiths and biographical notes were selected deliberately from the authentic sources for the important information that cannot be gotten as well from other choices (Maxwell, 1997). Each Hadiths and biographical notes were considered as 'unit of analysis' and coded, and classified to identify the themes, and synthesized to derive the framework. Data collection, data analysis, and interpretation were performed carefully to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. In addition to that triangulation of data and theoretical sampling were performed to enhance the trust worthiness of this study. As far as analyzing the Hadith is concerned, the researcher maintained the ontological and epistemological positions as 'realist' and 'subjective/interpretivist' respectively (Groen, Simmons, and McNair, 2017). The findings were verified from the contemporary scholars thorough semi-structured interview.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The fundamental aspects must have contributed to establish such a society were divine guidance (Al-Qur'an), exemplary life style of the Prophet, and the people who supported the Prophet to implement the divine guidance. As far as the human resource utilization is concerned, Al-Qur'an has placed sufficient instructions and guidance to be adhered. For example, Al-Qur'an (02:286) states that "Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity." According to the commentary of Ibn Kathir (2003) to this verse, Allah will not make accountable a person anything beyond his or her capabilities. Further Allah expects the human to supplicate to Allah that "Our Lord! Put not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear" (Al-Qur'an: 02:286). Ibn Kathir (2003) explains that the 'burden' indicates o the obligations, hardship and afflictions, which the people cannot bear. Therefore, Al-Qur'an taught the Prophet and the mankind in general to consider the limitations of people. Hence, Prophet Muhammad was aware the consequences of wrong assignments and emphasized his people to choose the best among the lot. Prophet Muhammad said, "He whoever hires a person and know that there is another one who is more qualified than him, has betrayed Allah and His Prophet and the Muslims" (Al-Mustadrak, Hadith No: 8414). Indeed, this Prophetic statement explains the potential risks of the appointing the unsuitable and unqualified people to various positions. Depending on the criticality of the responsibilities involved the consequences could be varied. For example, a wrong salesman may negatively impact on the business; a wrong teacher may spoil the next generation; and wrong state leader may destroy whole nation. Moreover, the Prophet was aware the difficulties to find the right people for the right job. He mentioned that "You will find that people are like a hundred camels, among whom a man cannot find one that is fit for riding" (Sahih Muslim, Hadith No: 6499). Hence, the Prophet (PBUH) emphasized the need for serious attention to look for the right people from the available lot.

As far as the human resource selection process is concerned, generally the major criteria used in contemporary institutions is competencies of a candidate related to a particular job or responsibility. However, this study revealed that the Prophet used three more criteria in addition to competency, to choose people for responsibilities: natural talent related to the particular responsibility, receptivity related to the context, and integrity. Following sub-sections discuss these criteria and propose the framework of human resource utilization approach based on the Sunnah Nabawiyah.

### **Competencies**

Studies reveal that Prophet Muhammad assigned people to various responsibilities based on their merits (Khan, 2016). According to Khan (2016) and Razimi, et al. (2017), Prophet Muhammad emphasized to choose the person with best among the lot, with highest qualification. Prophet Muhammad said that "Whosoever appointed on a position, and such a person who is not the best among the available lot, he cheated God, His prophet and all the Muslims" (Al-Munziri, 2008). Khan (2016) discusses that this hadith stipulates the criteria used by the Prophet Muhammad in terms of modern selection process of competencies.

The term 'competency' is a comprehensive criterion, which is used in different meanings across the world. It is understood as individual characteristics in the USA; as occupationally defined values in the UK; and as a multi-dimensional concept in France and German (Le Deist & Winterton, 2005). Razimi et al. (2017) holds the opinion that competencies include experiences in addition to knowledge and skills related to specific job. The right experience is an important criterion which increases the probability of suitability of a candidate. The years of experiences of a person in a particular job will assure him or her the fitness for a similar job type (Bartlomiejczuk & Jin, 2015). The definition provided by the UNESCO (2015) supports this view. Thus, the competency is the capability to apply or use a set of related knowledge (information, understanding, skills, values, and attitudes) required to successfully perform critical work functions or tasks in a given situation.

### **Natural Talents**

The perception of Prophet Muhammad about the natural talent is expressed through his various Hadiths. Prophet Muhammad classified the people in terms of natural talents, and explained to his people metaphorically. The Prophet mentioned that the people are like metals (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith No: 3383), such as gold and

silver (Sahih Muslim, Hadith No: 6709). In fact, the natural properties of metals different each other, and they are identified and utilized accordingly to gain the advantage from them. According to Ibn Hajar (1959), in his commentary to this Prophetic Hadith, they opined that this Prophetic Hadith explains about the varieties of people in terms of their natural aspects of human being, similar to the mines like gold and silver. Therefore, it is revealed that Prophet Muhammad had recognized the people according to their natural talents. There are plenty of evidence available in Prophet Muhammad's biography to support this opinion. Khattab (1999) argues that the 'talent' is one of the key criteria employed by Prophet Muhammad to successfully utilize his members. There are ample evidences available in the biography of the Prophet to support this argument (Al-Ghandur, 2011). For example, the Prophet assigned Mus'ab ibn Umar and Ja'far ibn Abi Talib as his delegates to Medina and Abyssinia respectively; supplicated God to strengthen his institution by Umar bin Khattab; recruited Zayd Ibn Thabit as his scribe while Zayd was a teenager; and supplicated for Ibn Abbas to become a scholar of Qur'an. All of those members performed well and appreciated (Ibn Kathir, 2006). The Prophet supplicated several times for Ibn Abbas to become a scholar of Qur'an (Musnad Ahmed, Vol.3, Hadith 3060). It is noted that the Prophet did not supplicated for him to become a commander or someone else, but the supplication of the Prophet was specific, and eventually Ibn Abbas became the pioneer scholar of Qur'an.

In another Hadith, the Prophet mentioned that "Everyone will do the deeds for which he has been created to do or he will do those deeds which will be made easy for him to do" (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith No: 6596). This statement explicitly disclose that the people could perform well according to the natural talents with they are created. Thus, the Prophet was always looking for the right people with natural talents to take charge various responsibilities. Subsequently, Prophet Muhammad was able to utilize his volunteer forces already trained spiritually and morally by him to accomplish his goal of ethical society.

When one of his companions approached him to appeal for a critical position in the public administration, the Prophet refused him by pointing out his inabilities to take charge such a responsibility, candidly but lovingly by saying that "You are (administratively) a weak person and the said post is a trust, which may put the occupant in disgrace on the Day of Judgment..." (Sahih Muslim, Hadith No: 1825). This statement explains that the Prophet was not only he intends to ensure the quality of the work, but he also wanted to protect the members of his institution from becoming accountable to responsibilities that didn't suit their nature.

From these Hadiths, it is confirmed that Prophet Muhammad applied the 'natural talents' as one of the criteria to screen the right people for various responsibilities in his institution. Furthermore, he was very cautious not to assign people tasks that were not in line with the people's talents. He stressed the importance of utilizing people based on their talents and warned them to avoid misusing people.

### **Receptivity**

Shinqeeti (2018) suggests 'receptivity' as one of the key criteria of Prophet Muhammad to identify the right people for various responsibilities in his institution. Receptivity, according to Shinqeeti, it's the appropriateness of the person to the context he or she is assigned to work. There is enormous evidence exist in the biography of Prophet Muhammad to support this opinion.

The Prophet chose Uthman ibn Affan from his companions as his messenger to negotiate with the leaders of Makkah at Hudaibiya (Ibn Kathir, 2006). The Prophet identified Uthman more suitable than some of the prominent companions such as Abu Bakr, Hamza, and Umar. Shinqeeti (2018) opines that the reason behind the decision was receptivity, that Uthman and his tribe was highly respected and honored among the people of Makkah. Appointment of Muadh ibn Jabal as the governor to Sothern Arabia (Yemen) is another evidence (An-Nasai, Hadith No: 2437). Though Muadh was comparably young companion the Prophet noticed his suitability in addition to his qualification (Shinqeeti, 2018). In fact, the ancestors of Muadh was originally from Yemen, the Prophet must have found that the people of Yemen will find comfortable to be under the leadership of their own people.

Another example is selection of Ali Ibn Abi Talib over Abu Bakr as the representative of the Prophet himself to announce the final procedure of Hajj pilgrimage. According to the Hadith (Sahih Bukhari, Hadith No: 1622)

Prophet Muhammad appointed Abu Bakr to lead the Hajj pilgrimage (AH 8). However, when the Prophet was instructed by Allah to cease the current practices and announce the right procedure, he sent Ali Ibn Abi Talib for that task. It's obvious that Ali belongs to most honored clan compare to Abu Bakr, though Abu Bakr was prominent than Ali in many aspects.

Hence, these incidents support that Prophet Muhammad applied 'receptivity' as the final criteria to screen the most suitable personnel among the qualified people for various responsibilities.

### ***Integrity***

The 'integrity' was one of the key criteria observed by Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet emphasized the importance of integrity as a general indicator of a faithful person. The Prophet said that "Whoever does not have integrity does not have faith and whosoever does not keep promises does not have any religion" (Musnad Ahmad). Further the Prophet explained the 'integrity' in relations with doomsday. The Prophet said that "When the integrity is lost, then wait for the Doomsday." Then he was asked, "How will that be lost?" The Prophet said, "When the power or authority is given to those who do not deserve it (unfit persons), then wait for the Doomsday (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith No: 59, Vol-1, p.88). Accordingly, Prophet Muhammad warned about absence of integrity, which could lead a disaster, eventually the distraction of the whole world.

Khan (2016) discusses that the 'integrity' is the fundamental reason to create a social and organizational culture with discipline, punctuality, efficiency, accountability, honesty, responsibility, motivation and commitment. As far as the people who were assigned various responsibilities, Al-Qur'an and the Prophet kept clear guidelines. The members of the Prophet's society in general and the people who hold responsible positions were instructed by God to fulfil responsibilities with due diligence. God states that "Verily God directs you to assign trusts/ duties/ things to the care of whom they are due and to judge with justice when you decide between people" (Al-Qur'an 4:58). According to Ibn Kathir (2003), Allah commands to the members of the Prophet's society to fulfill the trusts and responsibilities to the rightful manner. Prophet Muhammad instructed the members of his institution to behave ethically while they are performing the responsibilities. The Prophet said "Fulfil the trust for the one who entrusted you, and do not cheat the one who cheated you" (At-Tirmidhi, Hadith No: 1264, Vol.3, pp.73). Moreover, the Prophet warned to those in the positions by saying that "There is no person whom Allah puts in charge of others, and when he dies, he has cheated his subjects, but Allah will forbid Paradise to him" (Sahih Muslim, Hadith No: 364, Vol.1, pp.232). In another occasion the Prophet mentioned that "There is no commander who becomes in charge of the Muslims, then does not strive sincerely for them, but he will not enter Paradise with them" (Sahih Muslim, Hadith No: 366, Vol.1, pp.233).

### ***HR Framework***

The human resource utilization framework of Prophet Muhammad could be illustrated as below by comprehending the sequence of each criteria as below (Figure 1). This subsection provides the logic behind the proposed framework.

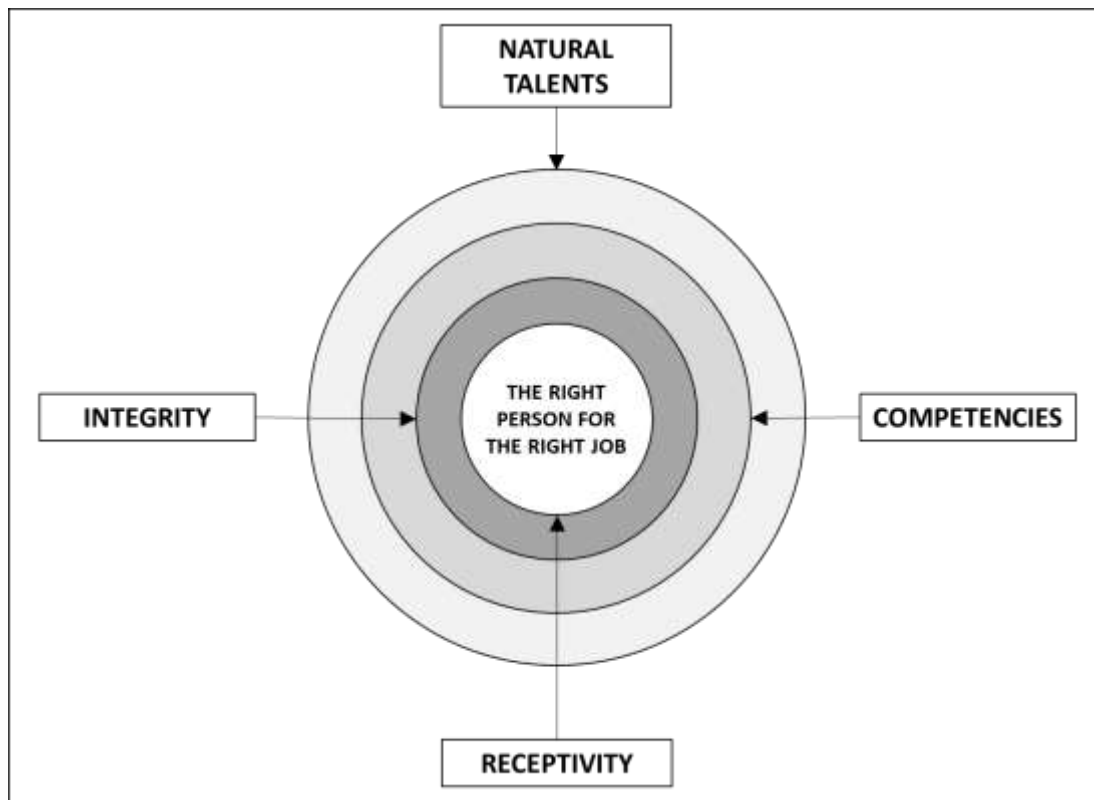


Figure 1: Human resource utilization framework uncovered in this study

The study reveals that the Prophet considered the natural talents of his members as a criterion before assign them to any responsibilities. Prophet Muhammad was fully aware of the consequences of wrong assignments, and he warned that assigning an inappropriate person to an assignment could bring adverse outcomes. The Prophet said in-line with the verse of Al-Qur'an (02:286) that "You should not overburden those (subordinates) with what they cannot bear, and if you do so, help them" (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith No: 2545). In another hadith, the Prophet Muhammad said that "He whoever hires a person and know that there is another one who is more qualified than him, has betrayed Allah and His Prophet and the Muslims" (Al-Mustadrak, Hadith No: 8414). It's obvious that a person who does not possess the talents to perform a particular assignment may bring disappointment to the people, those who depend on his services.

Furthermore, the appointment of newly converted people on various responsibilities in public affairs and gaining support from non-believer reveals that 'natural talents' and 'competencies' were given priority by the Prophet. For example, the Prophet appointed Khalid ibn Walid to the leadership position based on his qualification in warfare, and appointed non-believer as his guide during migration to Medina (Siddiqui, 1998). Accordingly, the natural talent is considered as the primary criteria of a person to become eligible for an assignment. When the competency supports the natural talent, it increases the suitability of the person for particular job (Bibb, 2016). As discussed, the 'competency' criteria also include the 'experience' and the degree of experience on the jobs related to his or her natural talents will increase the suitability to particular assignment. Because, the right expertise could enhance the performance, reduces the probability of mistakes and improve efficiency regarding time and resources utilization (McDaniel et al. 1988; Quiñones et al. 1995; Bartłomiejczuk & Jin, 2015). However, general experiences may not have a positive correlation with the performance (Peake & Marshall, 2009). The 'integrity' is identified as the next essential criteria, which will ensure that his or her values lends support to perform the responsibility genuinely within the policies, rules and regulations (ethical manner). Technically speaking, a person lacking in integrity could also perform a job well. However, the desired objective may not be achieved in terms of discipline, punctuality, efficiency, accountability, honesty, responsibility, motivation and commitment (Khan, 2016). The last but not least, 'receptivity' is the final criteria to choose the best among the qualified people in terms of natural talents, competencies, and integrity.

## CONCLUSIONS

Existence of an ethical society is based on the suitability of the people who lead and participate in various social institutions. Hence, it is one of the critical success factors to form an ethical society. Studies reveal that Prophet Muhammad was a successful personality who established an ethical society, and his effective human resource utilization approach in addition to his values and principles contributed to succeed his mission. The objective of this study was to explore the human resource utilization framework behind his success. Accordingly, the study revealed that there were four distinguish criteria used to choose the right people for the various positions in the society. They were natural talents, competencies (including right experiences), integrity and receptivity respectively. As far as the management of a social institution is concerned, the people at decision-making positions at all levels have significant influence on the delivery of the institution whether to align with ethical principles or not. The criteria found in the sunnah nabawiyah can assure placing the right persons across all the decision-making levels of the social institutions, that could bring positive impact on overall delivery of the institutions. Hence, the researcher concludes that the contemporary societal institutions could review their human resource utilization practices in-line with this framework to optimize their resources towards formations of ethical society.

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