

Role of Social Entrepreneur Companions at the Early Days of Muhammad Prophethood

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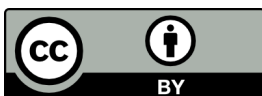
<https://doi.org/10.20885/iconish.vol2.art13>

Abstract: This research explores the role of social entrepreneur companions (SEC) in supporting the mission of Muhammad and establishing the early Muslim community. The term SEC refers to the early companions who had backgrounds in entrepreneurship, trade, or business, for instance Khadijah, Abu Bakr, Uthman, Abdur-Rahman ibn Awf, and Talhah Ibn Ubaydullah. Additionally, this study identifies the key principles adopted by these SECs in allocating and distributing their resources. The research also examines the long-term impact of the social investments made by these companions up to the present day. To address these research questions, a literature review methodology was employed. The study finds that the SECs provided two major forms of support to Muhammad: financial and psychological. Five key principles guided the SECs in managing their resources: (1) prioritizing the establishment of the early Muslim community, (2) innovation and adaptability, (3) sustainability and long-term vision, (4) social value creation, and (5) ethical leadership and role modeling.

Keywords: Muhammad, early companions, social entrepreneurship

1. Introduction

Social entrepreneurship in Islam is, in fact, like the lifeblood of the body—inseparable and essential. This study explores the social enterprise practices carried out by the companions of Prophet Muhammad during the early years of his prophethood, specifically the 10 years in Mecca and the 13 years in Medina. The study focuses on the roles of Khadijah, Abu Bakr, Uthman, Abdur-Rahman ibn Awf, and Talhah bin Ubaydullah, who are historically recognized as successful merchants in Mecca and among the earliest converts to Islam (Al-Awlaqi, 2019; Ibn Kathir, 1983; Khalid, 2005; Safiur-Rahman, 1979). We uncover remarkable lessons from



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these figures, who were known as successful entrepreneurs in Mecca and later allocated their resources and business outcomes to address social and spiritual issues for the early Muslim community. Consequently, the authors introduce the term “social entrepreneur-companions (SEC)” to describe the companions of Prophet Muhammad who were entrepreneurs and utilized their resources to tackle social challenges.

Despite the difficulty in defining a clear and unified definition of social entrepreneurship (Chalmers, 2020; Ebrashi, 2013; Praszkiec & Nowak, 2012; Salaff et al., 2011; Wiguna & Manzilati, 2014), there is a consensus in the research community that social entrepreneurship is fundamentally composed of two main elements: entrepreneurship and social impact. While the practice of social entrepreneurship is not new, the term itself gained prominence through Bill Drayton, who founded Ashoka in 1980, an organization that supports social entrepreneurs worldwide. Drayton highlighted the concept of individuals using innovative solutions to tackle social issues, which played a significant role in popularizing the term “social entrepreneurship” (Praszkiec & Nowak, 2012; Wiguna & Manzilati, 2014).

Muhammad was born in Mecca in 571 CE and was appointed as the Messenger of God at the age of 40. Many years before his prophethood, Muhammad was already known for his exemplary character and trustworthiness. The people of Quraysh even bestowed upon him the title of “Al-Amin” (the most trustworthy) (Ibn Kathir, 1983; Safiur-Rahman, 1979). For instance, when the Quraysh were in dispute over who should have the honor of placing the Black Stone (Hajar al-Aswad) back in its position during the reconstruction of the Kaaba, they sought Muhammad’s assistance, recognizing him as the most honest person in Mecca (Ibn Kathir, 1983). From a young age, Muhammad refrained from idol worship, which was common in his community, and he never engaged in any wrongdoing. On the contrary, he was widely known for his helpful nature and integrity.

Muhammad had been exposed to entrepreneurial activities from a young age. He accompanied his uncle on trading (using a merchant caravan) journeys to Syria, in which the uncle met Bahira (Ibn Ishaq, 1955) and managed small businesses in his community, such as herding sheep and goats. Eventually, Muhammad’s entrepreneurial skills caught the attention of Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, a successful entrepreneur in the region. What set Muhammad apart was not only his business acumen but also his reputation for honesty, honourable character, and trustworthiness. Mentioned by Ibn Ishaq (1955), Muhammad, when he brought Khadija’s property and goods to Syria, he sold it and it amounted to double or thereabouts (Ibn Ishaq, 1955).

After the apostle received the first revelation in the month of Ramadhan, amongst those who support him during that difficult times were entrepreneurs, such as Khadijah, the Prophet’s most beloved wife, and Abu Bakr, the Prophet’s closest companion. It is interesting that in his lifetime, the Prophet was always surrounded by entrepreneurs. Therefore, this article seeks to explore the following research questions: (1) How did the prophecy of Muhammad receive support from social entrepreneurs in the early time? (2) What were the social entrepreneurship practices of the companions of Muhammad, and what social problems did they address? (3) What was the impact of the social investments made by the Prophet’s companions?

2. Literature review

The study of social problems has its roots in Hart's (1923) research, and the definition of social problems has largely remained consistent since then. Hart (1923) defines a social problem as "a challenge that impacts or has the potential to impact a large number of people in a similar manner, making it most effectively addressed through collective measures rather than treating each individual case in isolation. Such problems require coordinated or organized human efforts." Social problems could be variety for examples, poverty and unemployment, health-related challenges such as living conditions and access to healthcare, political concerns like immigration and civil rights, socio-psychological issues including racism and gender inequality, educational problems such as access to education, and environmental challenges like climate change (Hart, 1923).

In this section, the discussion on the role of social entrepreneur-companions (SEC) will be linked with three key concepts: entrepreneurship, social issues, and Islam. Social entrepreneurship has become a prominent research area since the 20th century, particularly as persistent social problems continue to surface in various societies. This study will initially explore topics closely aligned with the concept of social enterprise within the framework of Islamic faith.

2.1 Social entrepreneurship and spirituality

The discussion of Social Entrepreneur-Companions (SEC) cannot be separated from aspects of spirituality and faith, as faith is the primary driving factor that motivates SEC to provide remarkable support for Muhammad's mission. The relationship between social enterprise and spirituality has been widely discussed since the 2000s. Regarding the concepts of religiosity and spirituality, a study by Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005) suggests that spirituality is a broader concept than religiosity.

Spirituality, as an abstract concept within an individual, is not visible but plays a crucial role in shaping one's mindset and personality, including influencing how one perceives social problems (Hobson, 2014; Sloan et al., 1999; Wuri et al., 2019).

All religious beliefs encourage their followers to engage in solving social problems. For example, Christianity emphasizes the importance of charity, social justice, and caring for the marginalized, as evident in the New Testament's teachings on loving one's neighbor and aiding the poor (Hiebert, 2022). Judaism includes the concept of "Tikkun Olam" (repairing the world), although this principle often contrasts with the realities of supremacy and Zionism, which cause harm contrary to the concept's intent. A significant example is the events of October 7th, where the actions of Zionism and the apartheid nation of Israel resulted in over 70,000 casualties, including the deaths of 40,000 people, half of whom were children. These actions have created severe social problems, such as poverty, food shortages, the destruction of healthcare facilities, trauma, and more. Nevertheless, the pure teachings of Judaism uphold values that encourage followers to address social issues (Klug, 2020).

In Hinduism, the concept of Dharma (duty/righteousness) plays a similar role, while Buddhism emphasizes compassion (Karuna) and loving-kindness (Metta), urging followers to alleviate suffering in the world, which includes addressing social problems.

Moreover, Islam, known as the “religion of mercy to all creation” (rahmatan lil alamin), emphasizes that it is a blessing not just for humans, but also for animals, plants, and everything on Earth. There is no doubt that every religion and spiritual belief encourages its followers to do good for humanity. Addressing social problems within society is an integral part of an individual’s spirituality.

2.2 Social entrepreneurship from Islamic perspective

Sahasranamam and Nandakumar (2020) summarize various definitions of social entrepreneurship from different studies, highlighting key aspects such as addressing unmet social needs that are overlooked by commercial enterprises, driving social change through innovative strategies, fulfilling unaddressed needs, creating social value through market-based solutions, combining a social mission with the characteristics of commercial businesses, and innovatively pursuing opportunities to catalyze social change and meet social needs. Functionally, social enterprises differ from commercial enterprises in their mission, performance metrics, opportunity recognition, time perspective, and organizational structure (Sahasranamam and Nandakumar, 2020). Although definitions of social entrepreneurship are varied and sometimes inconsistent, research typically identifies two core components, i.e., social and entrepreneurial elements (Sahasranamam and Nandakumar, 2020; Zhang and Swanson, 2014).

The concept of entrepreneurship in Islam can be linked to the teachings of the Quran, which encourages entrepreneurial activities. For instance, the Quran states: “On earth will be your dwelling place and your means of livelihood for a time” (Qur’an 2:36); “...to men is allotted what they earn, and to women what they earn. But ask Allah of His bounty, for Allah has full knowledge of all things” (Qur’an 4:32); “It is We [Allah] who have placed you with authority on earth, and provided you therein with means for the fulfillment of your life...” (Qur’an 7:10); “We have made the night and the day... that you may seek bounty from your Lord...” (Qur’an 17:12). These verses can be interpreted as divine encouragement for entrepreneurial endeavors, signifying Allah’s Taala guidance for humankind (Uba Ibrahim, 2019).

Additionally, there are numerous prophetic teachings (hadith) that emphasize the value of self-employment and the virtues of being an honest and trustworthy entrepreneur. For example, the Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said, “A trustworthy, honest, and truthful businessman will be with the martyrs on the Day of Resurrection” (Ibn Majah, 2007). Furthermore, as narrated in Sahih Bukhari no.286, the Prophet emphasized the importance of earning one’s livelihood through honest work: “No one has ever eaten a better meal than that which one has earned by working with their own hands. The Prophet of Allah, David, used to eat from the earnings of his manual labor” (Al-Bukhari, 1997).

According to a hadith reported by Tirmidhi (no. 1130), “A truthful and trustworthy trader will be resurrected with the Prophets, the righteous, and the martyrs” (At-Tirmidhi, 2007).

Another hadith states, “Allah shows mercy to a person who is kind when he sells, when he buys, and when he makes a claim” (Al-Bukhari, 1997). These teachings illustrate that Islam places a significant emphasis on contributing to economic growth through productive work, as opposed to the idle lifestyle that negatively impacts society today (Uba Ibrahim, 2019).

Islam encourages Muslims to earn their livelihood through entrepreneurial activities, as reflected in the primary sources of Islam. The Prophet Muhammad himself was introduced to entrepreneurial activities from a young age by his uncle, Abu Talib, and grew up as an entrepreneur with distinct qualities that set him apart during his youth (Uba Ibrahim, 2019).

Social entrepreneurship in Islam is deeply embedded in the faith’s core principles, which highlight ethical behavior, social justice, community welfare, and the fair distribution of resources. This concept involves applying entrepreneurial skills and business expertise to address social issues and enhance the well-being of the community, all in accordance with Islamic teachings.

2.3 Key Elements of Social Entrepreneurship in Islam

The concept of social entrepreneurship in Islam extends beyond the conventional understanding of social enterprises. In conventional social entrepreneurship, the primary focus is often on community responsibility, which is just one of several key components. In Islamic social entrepreneurship, the following elements are significant:

- **Responsibility Towards Community (Maslaha):** Islamic social entrepreneurship emphasizes the creation of social value and addressing community needs, thereby contributing to societal well-being and prosperity. Social enterprises in this framework address diverse social issues such as poverty, health, disability, environmental concerns, and unemployment (Taman, 2014).
- **Maqasid al-Shariah (Objectives of Islamic Law):** A fundamental element in the Islamic view is the achievement of Maqasid al-Shariah, which represents the broader objectives of Islamic law. These objectives include the protection and preservation of essential aspects of human life, including religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. Islamic social enterprises aim to fulfill these goals by providing essential services and enhancing community welfare (Taman, 2014).
- **Ethical Business Practices:** Another key element of Islamic entrepreneurship is the adherence to ethical business practices. This involves conducting entrepreneurial activities in accordance with principles such as honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, and avoiding harm to others. Entrepreneurs are expected to operate with integrity, ensuring that their actions benefit society and do not exploit or deceive others. Therefore, even if a social enterprise appears highly successful in addressing a social issue, such as environmental concerns, it does not meet the core criteria of Islamic social entrepreneurship if it engages in unfair practices or causes harm to others (Rice, 1999).
- **Zakat (Almsgiving):** Another important element is zakat, a concept extensively discussed in Islamic literature. Zakat, one of the Five Pillars of Islam, mandates that Muslims allocate a portion of their wealth to those in need. This practice fosters wealth redistribution and supports the development of social enterprises aimed at combating poverty and reducing social inequality (Kahf, 1999).

- **Waqf (Endowment):** Waqf refers to an Islamic philanthropic practice where assets are donated or endowed for religious or charitable purposes, with the benefits directed toward community welfare. Historically, waqf has been utilized to finance educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and social services, thus reflecting the principles of social entrepreneurship (Abbasi, 2012; Abdullah, 2018).
- **Sadaqah (Voluntary Charity):** Sadaqah refers to voluntary charity given out of compassion, love, friendship, or generosity. Unlike zakat, which is compulsory, sadaqah is discretionary and can be utilized to support a range of social causes, including the development and operation of social enterprises (Bonner et al., 2003; Kahf, 1999).
- **Tawheed (Unity and Oneness):** The concept of Tawheed emphasizes the interconnectedness of all aspects of life, advocating that economic activities should enhance societal harmony and balance. Social entrepreneurs in Islam are driven to establish ventures that embody this principle of unity and contribute to the collective well-being (Choudhury, 1983).

3. Method

This section details the research design and methodology employed to conduct a comprehensive literature review aimed at addressing the research questions. The methodology encompasses the procedures for gathering, selecting, analyzing, and synthesizing relevant literature to effectively respond to the research questions.

3.1 Research design

The research employs a literature review methodology to consolidate existing knowledge and discern patterns, gaps, and insights regarding the intersection of social enterprises and Islamic principles. This study also examines historical literature from authoritative sources, including texts written in Arabic, such as *hadith* collections, *seerah* (biographical accounts of the Prophet Muhammad), and Islamic history books.

3.2 Objectives

The objectives of this study are to explore and investigate the following research questions:

1. How did social entrepreneur companions around the prophet contribute to establishing the foundations of muslim community in its early days?
2. What were the key principles employed by social entrepreneur companion in the allocation and distribution of resources?
3. How the impact of the social investments made by the social entrepreneur companions?

3.3 Literature search strategy

Databases Used: The literature search was conducted across a range of academic and scholarly databases, including but not limited to Google Scholar, JSTOR, PubMed, ProQuest, and specialized journals focusing on Islamic studies and social entrepreneurship. **Keywords and Search Terms:** A combination of keywords was employed to retrieve relevant literature. These keywords include: “Social enterprise,” “Social entrepreneurship in Islam,” “Zakat,” “Waqf,”

“Islamic business ethics,” “Case studies in Islamic social enterprises,” “Khadijah,” “Abu Bakr,” “Abdur-Rahman ibn Awf,” “Talhah ibn Ubaydullah,” and “Uthman ibn Affan.

3.4 Method of analysis

To explore the role of the social-entrepreneur companions of Muhammad in the development of Islam in the early period, I used the literature review method combined with historical research method by investigating existing sources. Then I followed several stages analyse the existing literature as follows. First, source Collection and Evaluation. Gather primary sources such as hadith collections, biographies (Seerah), early Islamic histories, and other relevant documents. Evaluate these sources for authenticity and relevance. Second, contextual Analysis. Examine the historical, social, and political contexts of the early Islamic period to understand the environment in which the companions operated. Third, thematic Analysis. Identify and analyze recurring themes or roles associated with the companions. This might include their contributions to social, economic, and political aspects of early Islamic society. Fourth, synthesis. Integrate findings to provide a comprehensive overview of how the companions influenced the early development of Islam.

4. Result and Discussion

The results of the analysis conducted in this research will be discussed in several sub-sections, first the role of social entrepreneurs around Muhammad in supporting the establishment of the foundation of the Muslim community in the early days. Second, the key principles carried out by the prophet Muhammad in the process of resource allocation and distribution. Third, the impact of social investment carried out by companions of the prophet until present.

4.1 Key roles of social entrepreneurs in the early days of Islam.

The threats and pressures faced by Muhammad from the Quraysh in the early days of his da'wah were extraordinary. Various attempts to hinder Muhammad's mission were carried out in various ways, from negotiations to assassination attempts (Safiur-Rahman, 1979). Support from those closest to Muhammad was very important at this time. Financial and psychological support for came from businessmen such as Khadijah and Abu Bakr (Ibn Ishaq, 1955; Ibn Kathir, 1983). As mentioned by Ibn Ishaq (1955) and other sirah books, Abu Bakr not only provided financial support, but also provided great psychological support by inviting another successful entrepreneur, Uthman bin Affan, to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet. In fact, the first eight people to convert to Islam were also brought by Abu Bakr (Ibn Ishaq, 1955), including Uthman, Talhah, dan Abdur-Rahman (Ibn Ishaq, 1955; Ibn Kathir, 1983; Safiur-Rahman, 1979).

The concept of social entrepreneurship, as we understand it today, refers to individuals or organisations who develop, fund, and implement solutions to social, cultural, or environmental problems using entrepreneurial principles (Defourny and Nyssens, 2010). They are characterized by their ability to innovate, their inventiveness, and their dedication to creating social value. The early Companions certainly used their resources to create new social value among the people

of Mecca. There is no dispute that the support from those closest to him as I mentioned earlier had a profound impact on Muhammad’s psychology, as mentioned in the main books of the Prophet’s life such as Ibn Ishaq (1955), Ibn Kathir (1983), Lings (1983), and Safiur-Rahman (1979).

In general, there were two main roles of the Companions around Muhammad: Psychological support and financial and wealth support. Both forms of support were very significant amidst the pressure exerted by the Quraysh on Muhammad. The Quraysh did everything they could to stop Muhammad. The pressures faced by Muhammad and his Companions are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Forms of threats/challenges in the early days of Islam

Forms of threats/ challenges	Action	Descriptions
Social and economic persecution	Boycott	The Quraysh imposed a severe economic and social boycott on the Prophet’s clan, Banu Hashim, and Banu Muttalib, cutting them off from trade and social interactions. This lasted for three years and caused significant suffering, including hunger and deprivation.
	Excommunication	Early converts to Islam, especially those from lower social strata or those without tribal protection, were ostracized. They were often cut off from their families and community support systems.
Physical Abuse and Torture	Torture of Converts	Many early Muslims, particularly those who were slaves or lacked tribal protection, were subjected to brutal torture. Bilal ibn Rabah, for example, was laid on the burning desert sand with a heavy stone on his chest to force him to renounce Islam.
	Beatings and Assaults	The Prophet himself was often subjected to physical assaults. On one occasion, while he was praying at the Kaaba, Uqba ibn Abi Mu’ayt threw the entrails of a sacrificed camel on his back.
Psychological and Verbal Abuse	Mockery and Insults	The Quraysh mocked the Prophet, calling him a madman, a poet, and a sorcerer. They tried to undermine his message by spreading false rumors and lies about him.
	Attempts to Humiliate	They would often try to publicly humiliate the Prophet by disrupting his gatherings and creating disturbances whenever he preached.
Attempts on His Life	Assassination Plots	As the Prophet’s influence grew, the Quraysh attempted to assassinate him. The most notable plot was during the night of the Hijra (migration) to Medina, where they planned to kill him in his sleep. However, he managed to escape with the help of divine guidance.

Political Pressure	Pressuring Tribal Leaders	The Quraysh exerted pressure on tribal leaders to not support or protect Muhammad and his followers. This made it difficult for him to gain any substantial political or social foothold in Mecca.
Attempts to Bribe and Negotiate	Bribery	They offered him wealth, power, and marriage alliances in exchange for abandoning his mission, but he refused all such offers.
	Negotiations	They tried to negotiate with his uncle, Abu Talib, asking him to restrain Muhammad from preaching or to hand him over to them.

Source: all abovementioned points summarised from various sources (Haykal, n.d.; Ibn Ishaq, 1955; Ibn Kathir, 1983; Khalid, 2005; Lings, 1983; Safiur-Rahman, 1979)

4.2 Key principles of social entrepreneurial activities adopted by SEC

The companions of the prophet put the mission of overcoming social and religious problems as part of their personal lives. This social mission is not only part of the business mission or company mission, but also becomes their daily mission. The results of their entrepreneurial activities are allocated to achieve their social goals. The practices they do are then known by experts as the concept of social entrepreneurship. The consensus of experts as discussed by Sahasranamam and Nandakumar (2020) states that apart from the various definitions of social entrepreneurship, there are two main components in defining SE, namely social elements and entrepreneurial elements. Other studies such as Dees (2001) say that among the unique abilities of social entrepreneurs is the ability to recognize complex social problems and try to solve these problems with their vision, work, and activities. They seek fresh opportunities and generate positive impacts by using leadership and management methods (Dees, 2001).

In Islam, the basic principle in viewing worldly affairs, especially career, business, and enterprise, is that they are not separate from religious affairs. In Islam, there is no separation between faith and work as in today's modern society which places faith as a personal matter (Hamid and Saari, 2011; Muhamed et al., 2018; Wolf, 1951). In this section, I will outline the themes that emerge from the literature analysis of the principles held by the Prophet Muhammad's companions in carrying out their entrepreneurial activities.

4.2.1 Support for the Early Muslim Community

Similar to the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in modern business, the companions of Muhammad integrated their business missions with a commitment to the welfare of the Muslim community, rather than focusing solely on personal gain. Companions such as Khadijah, Abu Bakr, Uthman, Abdur-Rahman, and Talhah provided substantial financial support (Ibn Ishaq, 1955). They held a strong belief that their "investments" would yield significant "returns" in the future. Despite Muhammad's nascent status and lack of power within the Quraysh society at that time, these companions remained steadfast in their support and contributions to the early Islamic mission.

Khadijah exemplifies exceptional support for the early Islamic faith. She keenly identified the need to support the nascent religion and its adherents. Her primary objective was to assist Prophet Muhammad in fulfilling his mission, which aimed to address social injustices, promote ethical conduct, and enhance the community's overall well-being. This support was particularly crucial during periods of economic and social ostracism imposed by the Quraysh tribe (Safiur-Rahman, 1979). According to Safiur-Rahman (1979), the Quraysh pagans convened at a location known as Wadi al-Muhassab, where they formed a confederation against the Banu Hashim and Banu al-Muttalib tribes. This coalition resolved to halt all business interactions and social contact with Muhammad and his supporters, maintaining this stance until Muhammad was either killed or surrendered to them (Safiur-Rahman, 1979). During these trying times, Khadijah leveraged her influence through her nephew, Hakeem bin Hizam, to supply flour to Muhammad's supporters. Although Hakeem bin Hizam was a prominent ally of the Quraysh pagans, Khadijah's influence surpassed his.

Khadijah also utilized her wealth to support the propagation of Islam. This involved aiding early converts, many of whom endured persecution and adversity. Her financial contributions were crucial in sustaining these individuals, allowing them to concentrate on advancing the new faith without being preoccupied with their immediate needs. If a nation has both a founding father and mother, Khadijah is often regarded as the founding mother of the Islamic community. As Imam adh-Dhahabi remarked, "Khadijah, the mother of the Believers, was the first to believe in the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad and to affirm them before anyone else" (adh-Dhahabi, 1996).

Another notable supporter was Abu Bakr, the next individual to embrace Muhammad's message. According to Hadith reports recorded by Bukhari (no. 3656) and Muslim (no. 2383), the Prophet Muhammad stated, "If I were to take a friend other than my Lord, I would have taken Abu Bakr as my friend, but he is my brother and companion. Allah has made me His friend" (Al-Bukhari, 1997; Muslim, 2007). Abu Bakr was renowned for his exceptional generosity and financial support to the early Muslim community. He used his resources to support the Prophet Muhammad and early Muslims, many of whom were oppressed and in dire need. Abu Bakr also worked to bridge social gaps and eliminate class distinctions, emphasizing welfare and equality within the community. For example, he purchased and freed numerous slaves who had converted to Islam and were being persecuted, such as Bilal ibn Rabah. In accordance with Muhammad's teachings, Abu Bakr believed that the most virtuous individuals were those who exhibited the greatest piety toward Allah.

Another early companion who provided substantial support to the early Muslim community was Talhah. Talhah received substantial wealth from Hadramaut, specifically a valley in Yemen valued at 700,000 dirhams (equivalent to approximately Rp 35 billion today). His wife suggested that this wealth be distributed among the poor and needy. Talhah agreed with his wife's recommendation and distributed all of his wealth, leaving nothing remaining (Ibn Kathir, 1983; Khalid, 2005). Numerous other sources attest to Talhah's generosity towards Islam. He once sold land for 700,000 dirhams and, feeling unsettled that the funds had not yet been donated, promptly distributed the money at dawn to the poor, orphans, and those in need.

Supporting the Hijrah

After two to three years, large numbers of people began to embrace Islam. The Prophet Muhammad began to publicly disseminate the message of God as instructed. As stated in the Quran, “Proclaim what you have been ordered and turn aside from the polytheists” (Quran, 15:94), and again, “Warn your family and your nearest relatives, and lower to them the wing of humility” (Quran, 26:214), and “Say, ‘I am a plain warner’” (Quran, 15:8-9).

The Quraysh tribe grew increasingly agitated by the Prophet and his followers. They incited opposition against him, labeling him a liar, insulting him, and accusing him of being a poet, a sorcerer, a diviner, or possessed by jinn (Ibn Ishaq, 1955).

The Hijra to Medina represents a pivotal turning point in the development of Islamic civilization. The pressure and threats from the Quraysh in Mecca had become increasingly dire, with their objective being to eradicate Muhammad and all his followers. Abu Bakr accompanied Muhammad through many significant moments, with the Hijra being one of the most notable. This event is commemorated in the Quran: “If you do not aid him (Muhammad), then know that Allah has already aided him when the disbelievers drove him out of Mecca, and he was one of two when they were in the cave, and he said to his companion, ‘Do not grieve, indeed Allah is with us’” (Quran, 9:40).

4.2.2 Innovation and adaptability

The innovation and adaptability principles demonstrated by the early companions in their entrepreneurial activities can be categorized into two forms:

Supporting New Ideas

Khadijah’s immediate acceptance of Islam and her support for Prophet Muhammad’s revelations were pioneering for her time. Imam Adh-Dhahabi highlights this by stating, “Khadijah, the mother of the Believers, was the first to believe in the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and to affirm them before anyone else” (adh-Dhahabi, 1996). Her readiness to embrace and promote a radically new social and religious order illustrates a forward-thinking mindset, which is essential for any social entrepreneur.

Among the male companions, Abu Bakr exemplifies this principle. During the event of Isra and Mi’raj, when Muhammad’s report of his miraculous night journey from Mecca to the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Palestine and back was met with widespread scepticism and disbelief, Abu Bakr stood firm in support and validation of Muhammad’s experience. While many people abandoned Muhammad and questioned his sanity, Abu Bakr unreservedly supported and confirmed the event (Ibn Ishaq, 1955; Lings, 1983; Safiur-Rahman, 1979).

Encouragement of Trade and Commerce

Abu Bakr actively promoted trade and economic activities that benefited the community, fostering an environment conducive to the growth of social and economic initiatives. Similarly, Uthman, known for his success as a merchant, supported trade and economic endeavors, significantly contributing to the economic stability of the Muslim state. Uthman played a pivotal role in enhancing the economic prosperity of the Muslim community through his involvement

in trade and commerce. Additionally, Abdur-Rahman ibn Awf, upon migrating to Medina, established a new marketplace known as the Market of the Ansar. This market subsequently became a central hub for trade among Muslims (As-Sallabee, 2007).

4.2.3 Social Value Creation

The contributions of Khadijah, Abu Bakr, Talhah, and Abdur-Rahman ibn Awf in generating social value within the early Muslim community can be viewed as a form of social entrepreneurship. Their business profits and resources were redirected towards societal improvement.

Building Community Resilience

Social value is a principle that emphasizes the comprehensive well-being of both present and future generations (Ormiston & Seymour, 2011). This principle was prominently reflected in the significant efforts made by the early companions. Khadijah's contributions, for instance, were instrumental in creating a supportive community capable of withstanding external pressures and thriving despite substantial challenges (Bahri & Batoebara, 2020; Riyadi et al., 2021). This community-centric approach exemplifies social enterprises, which strive to achieve social value in addition to financial sustainability. Khadijah's support was crucial in ensuring that the early Muslim community remained resilient and continued to develop, underscoring her role in fostering enduring social impact.

Promotion of Education and Knowledge

Abu Bakr was a staunch advocate for education and knowledge, recognizing their critical role in societal advancement. He supported scholars and the dissemination of Islamic teachings, understanding that knowledge was a fundamental driver of social and economic progress (As-Sallabee, 2007.; Ibn Ishaq, 1955; Safiur-Rahman, 1979). Khadijah, a respected member of the Quraysh and a successful businesswoman, played a crucial role in supporting the Prophet Muhammad and his followers in their pursuit of learning the Quran and applying its teachings. Her social standing provided credibility and a degree of protection, which helped mitigate some of the early opposition and hostility faced by the Prophet and his followers. Khadijah's strategic use of her resources—whether financial, material, or social—was vital in advancing the Prophet's mission, particularly his early efforts to educate people about the oneness of God and to discourage idol worship.

Investment in Social Welfare

Abu Bakr demonstrated extraordinary commitment to the Prophet's mission by relinquishing all his wealth. His actions went beyond personal generosity; he invested in the welfare of the community, ensuring that resources were allocated to those in need. As narrated by Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), "The Prophet Muhammad commanded us to give charity, and we complied. I hoped to surpass Abu Bakr, so I brought half of my wealth. The Prophet asked, 'What have you left for your family?' I replied, 'The same amount.' Then Abu Bakr arrived with all his wealth. The Prophet asked him, 'What have you left for your family?' Abu Bakr answered, 'I have left for them Allah and His Messenger.' Umar said, 'By Allah, I will never be able to surpass Abu Bakr'" (At-Tirmidhi, 2007).

Another notable figure in charitable efforts was Talhah bin Ubaydullah. Renowned for his exceptional generosity and one of the ten promised Paradise, Talhah dedicated a significant portion of his wealth to support the Prophet and the Muslim community. His continuous acts of charity earned him the title “Talhah the Generous.” For instance, Talhah settled debts for those around him, including paying off an 80,000-dirham debt for ‘Ubaid bin Ma’mar and a 10,000-dirham debt for a man from his tribe. Additionally, Talhah purchased a well for the community’s water needs and provided animals for their consumption (Cizakca, 2000; Hamid & Saari, 2011; Khalid, 2005).

4.2.4 Sustainability and long-term vision

Long-Term Support

The early companions of Muhammad played a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of his mission. Given the immense pressure exerted by the Quraysh on anyone who followed Muhammad, the mission could have easily been derailed. For instance, Bilal ibn Rabah was subjected to severe torture, with a heavy stone placed on his chest under the scorching midday sun, and he was tied up with ropes. Similarly, Ammar, his father Yasir, and his mother Sumayyah faced brutal persecution. Yasir succumbed to the torture, while Sumayyah was killed when Abu Jahl, a prominent figure among the Quraysh, impaled her with a spear through her private parts (Ibn Ishaq, 1955; Ibn Kathir, 1983; Safiur-Rahman, 1979).

Amidst the severe persecution faced by Muhammad and his followers, Khadijah’s unwavering support persisted until her death, playing a critical role in maintaining the continuity of the early Muslim mission. Her long-term vision and commitment to the cause exemplify the qualities essential for successful social enterprises. Khadijah’s contributions laid the foundation for the future growth of Islam, highlighting a sustainable approach to social change that extended well beyond her lifetime.

Abu Bakr also made significant contributions by donating most of his wealth to support the Muslim community, including financing the migration (Hijrah) to Medina. During the Tabuk expedition, he demonstrated his unwavering commitment to Islam by donating all his wealth. When asked what he had left for his family, he responded, “Allah and His Messenger” (As-Sallabee, 2007; Ibn Kathir, 1983).

Uthman, the third caliph, was a prosperous merchant who also spent generously in the cause of Islam. He is renowned for purchasing the well of Rumah and donating it to the Muslims when water was scarce in Medina. Uthman further financed the expansion of the Prophet’s Mosque in Medina and equipped the army during the challenging times of the Tabuk expedition. During this expedition, Uthman provided 300 camels and 1,000 dinars. His contributions were so substantial that the Prophet remarked, “Nothing will harm Uthman after what he did today” (As-Sallabi, 2007).

Supporting the Islamic State

Abdur Rahman ibn Awf played a crucial role in supporting the nascent Islamic state, particularly during times of war and crisis. During the Battle of Tabuk, Abdur-Rahman donated

a significant portion of his wealth to equip the Muslim army. This support was vital in ensuring the Muslim community could defend itself and thrive. He provided substantial support to the Muhajirun (migrants from Mecca) who arrived in Medina, helping them to settle and integrate into the new community. Abdur-Rahman ibn Awf was one of the wealthiest companions who spent generously in charity. He was known for his support of the Muslim community through his wealth, freeing many slaves, and financing military expeditions. He was among the ten promised Paradise and used his wealth to support various charitable causes. During the expedition of Tabuk, Abdur-Rahman donated 200 ounces of gold. He also provided half of his wealth to the Muslim community on multiple occasions (Ibn Ishaq, 1955; Ibn Kathir, 1983).

Building Institutions and Infrastructure

Abdur-Rahman ibn Awf's contributions extended beyond immediate aid to the community; he played a significant role in building and supporting key institutions within the early Islamic state. His efforts in establishing and promoting fair trade practices were instrumental in developing marketplaces that became central to the economic life of the community. Additionally, Abdur-Rahman supported the construction and maintenance of mosques and other religious institutions, which helped foster a sense of community and spiritual growth.

Similarly, Uthman ibn Affan was renowned for his immense wealth and generosity, consistently using his resources to support the Muslim community in times of need. One of his most notable contributions was the purchase of the well of Rumah in Medina. Initially owned by a Jewish man who charged exorbitant prices for water, Uthman purchased the well and made its water freely available to all Muslims, ensuring access to this essential resource. During the Battle of Tabuk, Uthman provided significant financial support by equipping a large portion of the Muslim army with the necessary supplies, further demonstrating his deep commitment to the welfare and security of the community (Safiur-Rahman, 1979).

4.2.5 Ethical Leadership and role modeling

Many of the early companions of Prophet Muhammad were distinguished by their strong character and leadership qualities. Abu Bakr, for instance, was widely recognized for his immense generosity, consistently supporting the community by freeing slaves, aiding the poor, and funding various communal needs. Uthman ibn Affan was also renowned for his charitable actions and economic contributions to the Muslim community, notably purchasing and donating a well in Medina for public use and equipping the army for the Battle of Tabuk (As-Sallabi, 2007). Abdur-Rahman ibn Awf, known for his business acumen, frequently used his wealth to support the needy, finance community projects, and contribute to the overall welfare of the Muslim community.

Umar ibn al-Khattab implemented numerous social reforms, establishing public welfare systems that provided stipends for the poor, orphans, and widows. His governance was characterized by a strong focus on justice, social equity, and community development, embodying a commitment to what can be seen as early forms of social entrepreneurship. Additionally, Talhah ibn Ubaydullah was known for his generosity, often paying off the debts of those around him.

These companions exhibited qualities and engaged in activities that closely align with the modern concept of social entrepreneurship. Their actions in addressing social issues during the early period of Islam highlight two key themes: first, their ability to manage crises effectively, and second, their commitment to maintaining ethical business practices.

Crisis Management and Leadership

Uthman's leadership during times of crisis was crucial in maintaining the stability and resilience of the Muslim community. Throughout his caliphate, Uthman encountered multiple rebellions and internal conflicts. Although his methods of handling these crises were sometimes met with criticism, his primary objective was to preserve peace and order within the Muslim state (As-Sallabi, 2007; as-Sibaa'ie, 2003).

Similarly, Abu Bakr's leadership was marked by his adherence to principles of ethical governance and his deep commitment to the well-being of the community, reflecting the essence of social entrepreneurship. During his caliphate, Abu Bakr faced significant challenges, including the Ridda Wars (Wars of Apostasy). His strategic and inclusive approach was instrumental in stabilizing and unifying the Muslim community. He prioritized the provision of essential public services such as security, justice, and welfare programs, ensuring that the community's basic needs were met (As-Sallabee, 2007.; Ibn Ishaq, 1955).

Another companion who played a key role in the governance of the Muslim community was Abdur-Rahman ibn Awf. As a member of the Shura council appointed by Caliph Umar ibn Al-Khattab to select the next caliph, Abdur-Rahman held a highly respected status and demonstrated significant leadership within the community. When the Jewish community monopolized the economy in Medina, Abdur-Rahman took the initiative to establish a Muslim marketplace, known as the Ansar market. His leadership and personal conduct set a standard for ethical leadership, emphasizing values such as integrity, honesty, and social responsibility.

Ethical Business Practices

All the early companions who engaged in business were known for their honesty and integrity, reflecting the principles of ethical commerce. This included the Prophet Muhammad himself, who was famously referred to as "Al-Amin," meaning the trustworthy. They never engaged in fraudulent transactions, manipulated weights and measures, misrepresented the quality of goods, or sold substandard products. For example, Khadijah was renowned for her ethical business practices, which are fundamental principles of social entrepreneurship. She conducted her business with integrity, ensuring fair treatment of her employees and partners. As a role model, Khadijah's actions and ethical stance provided a template for future Muslim entrepreneurs and leaders, highlighting the importance of aligning business practices with broader social and ethical values. Similarly, Abdur-Rahman ibn Awf was also known for his honesty as a merchant. His business practices consistently prioritized quality and integrity, earning him a reputation as a "crazy rich" figure in Mecca due to his success and ethical conduct.

4.3 Social Investment Return by the early companion

The early companions who invested their wealth and resources in the establishment of Islamic civilization made what can be considered the most valuable investment from an Islamic perspective. In Islam, the highest form of investment is one made sincerely in the path of Allah. This concept is exemplified in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 261, which states: “The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] that sprouts seven ears; in every ear are a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.” (Quran, 2:261).

Islam encourages its followers to make investments that continue to yield benefits even after their death, known as sadaqah jariyah. This concept is further supported by a hadith in Sahih Muslim: “When a person dies, their deeds come to an end except for three things: ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge, or a righteous child who prays for them.” (Hartog et al., 2010; Muslim, 2007). Examples of sadaqah jariyah include endowments (waqf), building mosques, schools (madrasahs), providing access to clean water, digging wells, planting trees whose fruits are shared, and other projects that provide continuous benefit to society.

Another hadith emphasizes that those who inspire others to do good deeds will receive the same reward as those who follow their example. This underscores the immense rewards likely earned by the early companions who provided moral, psychological, and financial support to the establishment of Islamic civilization. From a small group of followers in the early days, the number of Muslims has grown to approximately 2.02 billion globally as of 2024.

Entrepreneurs like Khadijah, Abu Bakr, Abdur-Rahman ibn Awf, Uthman, and Talhah, who invested their resources to address social issues within the early Muslim community, have left a profound legacy. Even though they did not live to see the full impact of their contributions, the fruits of their efforts are evident today in the significant social and spiritual returns that have been realized.

Recent studies have developed various methods to measure the social return on investments (SROI). One such method, developed in 1996 by the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund (REDF), is used to assess the social impact generated by social enterprises. SROI essentially monetizes social impacts relative to the initial investment, thereby distinguishing “social return” from conventional private (profit-based) returns (Crisan-Mitra & Szilágyi, 2010; Li et al., 2019) (Crisan-Mitra & Szilágyi, 2010; Li et al., 2019).

With the number of Muslims growing to over 2 billion (Pew Research Center, 2011), Islam has become the fastest-growing faith in the world. Islamic civilization developed rapidly, with its foundations solidly established during the 23 years from when Muhammad began his prophethood in 610 CE until his death in 632 CE.

The achievements of the Muslim community today are a direct result of the significant contributions made by those closest to Muhammad, such as Khadijah, Abu Bakr, Uthman, Abdur-Rahman ibn Awf, and Talhah, all of whom were entrepreneurs. When Muhammad began his mission to promote monotheism (Tawheed), these individuals provided essential financial support at a time when the Quraysh tribe largely abandoned or opposed him (Khalid, 2005;

Pew Research Center, 2011). Their dedication and willingness to invest their wealth in support of Muhammad's mission played a critical role in addressing the spiritual and social challenges of Meccan society, laying the groundwork for a thriving Islamic civilization.

5. Conclusion

This study identifies two critical roles played by the social-entrepreneur companions (SEC) who embraced Islam during its earliest days: financial support and psychological support. The financial support provided by these companions included funding for the Prophet's logistics and livelihood, freeing slaves, building essential infrastructure such as wells and mosques, financing the migration (Hijrah), funding military campaigns, and supporting the spread of Islam through various means. In terms of psychological support, these companions offered unwavering trust and loyalty to the Prophet Muhammad, standing by him in the face of threats, persecution, assassination attempts, and other challenges.

There are at least five key principles that guided the entrepreneurial activities of these SECs in supporting the Prophet's mission: prioritizing the establishment of the Muslim community, demonstrating innovation and adaptability in the face of an unstable business and trade environment due to Quraysh hostility, social value creation, focusing on sustainability and a long-term vision, and exemplifying ethical leadership and role modeling. The impact of the social investments made by the Prophet's early companions, who were entrepreneurs, is evident today. From a handful of followers, the Muslim population has grown to approximately 2 billion, with adherents of Islam found in every corner of the world. Islamic civilization is now projected to become the largest in terms of population within the coming decades.

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