

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Legacy of Leadership According to Imam Ali's Letter 53: A Comparative Perspective with the New Management

IFISS SAIDA¹ \bowtie and MSSASSI SAID²

¹²The National School of Business and Management, Abdelmalek University Essaâdi, Tangier, Morocco Corresponding Author: IFISS SAIDA, E-mail: sifiss@uae.ac.ma

ABSTRACT

This comparative study examines the qualities of leadership from two distinct perspectives: Imam Ali's renowned Letter 53 and New Management. The goal of the study is to compare and contrast the two techniques, notwithstanding the distinct historical and cultural settings in which each methodology originated. Also, this essay describes the core values of the new management, which include maximizing efficiency, customer satisfaction, innovation, quality assurance, productivity growth, and employee empowerment. In the same spirit, Imam Ali's leadership principles—including delegation, active listening, informed decision-making, tolerance, empathy, and respect—are presented. After a comparison of the similarities and differences between the two methodologies, we study these traits in-depth and talk about their individual benefits and drawbacks in connection to the various scenarios. Also, we point out the parallels and discrepancies between these two leadership philosophies, notably in terms of delegating, judgment, and empathy. We finish this comparison research by reflecting on the article's application in the real world and discussing how managers and leaders may use both approaches to create their own leadership styles. We also discuss future directions for leadership research by taking Imam Ali's teachings into account. In light of this comparison, our study offers an in-depth analysis of two leadership methods and their points of convergence and divergence, with the aim of enriching contemporary leadership thinking and highlighting the legacy of Imam Ali.

KEYWORDS

Imam Ali, Letter 53, Leadership, New Management

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1. Introduction

Leadership is a key competency for executives and managers in all sectors, whether in business, government, or civil society. Over time, approaches to leadership have evolved in response to historical, cultural, and economic contexts. Therefore, a comparative study of the characteristics of leadership according to Imam Ali in his famous Letter 53 **[La** voie de l'éloquence, 1989] and the emerging approach of New Management is relevant to better understand the evolution of leadership throughout history.

Imam Ali, an important figure in Islamic history, was both a political and religious leader. His values and principles included delegation, listening, decision-making, tolerance, empathy, and respect. In contrast, new management emphasizes elements such as customer focus, innovation, quality, productivity, accountability, and efficiency. This question is the subject of debate and divergent opinions. In this comparative study, our goal is to analyze the benefits and limitations of these two leadership approaches in their respective contexts, as well as to explore the similarities and differences between them. [Muhammadi Reshahri, 2010]

To this end, the purpose of this article is to provide an overview of two approaches to leadership and their practical implications for managers and leaders seeking to develop their own leadership styles. To this end, we compare the characteristics of leadership

according to Imam Ali in 53 and those of new management and analyze their respective advantages and limitations in retrospect in different historical, cultural, and economic contexts.

Moreover, this comparative study opens new perspectives on the practical implications for managers and leaders who wish to refine their leadership practice according to the specific contexts they face. Therefore, this research is essential for a better understanding of different approaches to leadership and to help leaders adapt more effectively to their changing environments.

2. Imam Ali's Leadership in Letter 53

2.1. Historical and Cultural Background of Imam Ali and Letter 53

Imam Ali, an important figure in Islam, was known as a great leader and sage [La voie de l'éloquence, 1989]. His teachings have influenced many leaders in the Muslim world and beyond. According to him, leadership is an art that requires certain qualities and characteristics to be successful, including empathy, responsibility, justice, wisdom, loyalty, humility, and many others [Muhammadi Reshahri, 2010]. These qualities allow one to effectively lead a team and achieve its goals. In this regard, Imam Ali's teachings can be a source of inspiration for all leaders who seek success and the realization of their vision. To understand the historical and cultural context of Imam Ali's Letter 53, it is important to put it in perspective. Imam Ali was the fourth caliph of Islam and was chosen to lead the Muslim community after the death of the third caliph, but his reign was marked by political and religious conflicts, especially with the supporters of the Umayyad dynasty [Muhammadi Reshahri, 2010]. Letter 53, on the other hand, was written at a time of crisis for the Islamic empire, when Imam Ali was fighting for his legitimacy as a caliph against opposition forces. In this letter, Imam Ali advises his disciple Malik al-Ashtar on principles of leadership and ruling with justice and fairness [La voie de l'éloquence, 1989]. The cultural context of this letter is that of Islam, which promotes values such as justice, brotherhood, and solidarity, as well as a vision of society based on equality and compassion. In sum, Imam Ali's Letter 53 is a rich text on leadership and governance that reflects the historical and cultural context of seventh-century Islam. [Ifiss saida, Mssassi said, 2020]

2.2. Characteristics of Leadership According to Letter 53

• Tolerant and forgiving leadership

(10) Offer them your forgiveness and leniency as you would like God to do for you.

Extract from Letter 53.

In Precept 10, the Fourth Caliph, Imam Ali, encourages the practice of compassion and forbearance toward others by offering forgiveness and mercy as one would like to receive from God. This can help build positive relationships and strengthen our own morality and connection to God. By practicing this attitude, we can also encourage others to improve and grow. Forgiveness and mercy can be seen as positive qualities that can help resolve conflicts and ease tensions.

Verse 10 can also be interpreted as an invitation to reflect on our own actions and recognize the importance of forgiveness and mercy. By seeking forgiveness and showing forbearance toward others, we can demonstrate that we are worthy of God's forgiveness and mercy.

As a leader, a tolerant and forgiving attitude can strengthen morale and connection to core values and principles. A tolerant and forgiving leader can also inspire trust and loyalty in his or her team by demonstrating that he or she is attentive to people's concerns and willing to help them progress. This can also strengthen team cohesion and facilitate collaborative problem solving. In addition, tolerant and forgiving leadership can help create a positive corporate culture that encourages innovation, experimentation, and personal expression. [Jain et al., 2022]

In summary, Imam Ali's Principle 10 encourages the adoption of an attitude of forgiveness and mercy toward others, which can be likened to tolerant and forgiving leadership. This type of leadership can strengthen relationships, team cohesion, employee motivation, and the leader's morale.

Respectful Leadership

(107) Beware of pride, do not be carried away by self-confidence, or the love of being praised....

(113) Banish from your soul oppression and violence, the hasty use of your power, and beware of the sharpness of your tongue. ... knowing how to keep your tongue and decisions until your anger subsides and you are in control of your choice.

Extract from Letter 53

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Imam Ali's commandments 107 and 113 warn against pride, overconfidence, violence, and oppression. Respect, humility, and prudence are essential elements in building positive and lasting interpersonal and professional relationships.

By following these principles, leaders can adopt a humbler and more respectful attitude toward individuals. This can help them listen carefully to their employees' opinions and ideas, recognize their contributions, and include them in decision-making processes. It can also help them avoid mistakes caused by overconfidence and build stronger, more positive relationships with their employees.

Respect, fairness, and consideration are key elements of respectful leadership. This can increase trust, motivation, and job satisfaction, as well as improve interpersonal relationships and organizational culture. In addition, respectful leadership is important for diversity and inclusion because it helps create a more inclusive and welcoming work environment for all team members. [Farr et al., 2009]

In summary, to lead effectively and sustainably, it is critical for leaders to demonstrate respect, humility, thoughtfulness, and compassion. They must be aware of their power and the impact of their words and actions on other members of their organization. By adopting a respectful attitude toward their team, customers, and partners, leaders can contribute to the long-term success of their organization. These qualities are, therefore, essential elements to consider for any leader who wants to inspire and motivate their team and ensure the long-term growth and development of their organization. [Jain et al., 2022]

• Empathetic leadership

(82) Endure their mistakes, their lack of clarity in their statements, put them at ease, keep your calm and modesty...

(83) Whatever you give, give it with an open heart; let your refusal be accompanied with delicacy and excuse. If you can give them something, do it graciously, explain your position clearly.

(9) Let your heart be compassionate, tender and gentle towards those you manage, do not be a beast...

Extract from Letter 53

Imam Ali's passage **82** emphasizes the importance of patience and humility toward others, which can be seen as an example of empathetic leadership. Empathetic leadership focuses on understanding and compassion for others, which can contribute to a positive work environment.

Commandment **83** encourages giving generously and refusing politely while being honest and clear in your interactions with others. By adopting an authentic and transparent leadership style, it is possible to build trust and loyalty among team members and improve communication.

Imam Ali's passage **9** urges us to adopt an attitude of compassion, gentleness, and tenderness toward those we lead or serve, avoiding a brutal or authoritarian approach. This style of leadership can help build stronger relationships, improve motivation, and strengthen a positive and harmonious work environment.

Taken together, commandments **9**, **82**, **and 83** emphasize the importance of empathetic, authentic, and transparent leadership. This includes a focus on compassion, understanding, and patience toward others. By adopting these principles, leaders can strengthen relationships, motivation, and trust within the team, which can contribute to more positive outcomes for all involved. In addition, leaders must be aware of their power and the impact of their words and actions on others. By being respectful of others, they can not only create a healthier work environment but also contribute to the long-term success of their organization. [Brené, 2018]

• Delegative Leadership

(79) Assign for them pious and humble men who will bring their complaints to you...

(62) Choose the best among them, entrusting them with your affairs...

Extract from Letter 53

Passage **62** promotes a meritocratic approach to leadership, which involves selecting the most competent people to perform important tasks and giving them the confidence, they need to succeed. This approach is similar to delegative leadership, which also encourages the delegation of responsibility and trust to employees to improve performance and work quality.

It is emphasized that implementing this approach requires special attention to training and supporting employees, as well as adequate monitoring to ensure a positive outcome. In summary, commandment **62** and delegative leadership share the idea of delegating responsibility and trust to employees to improve performance and work quality.

On the other hand, passage **79** emphasizes the importance of selecting pious and humble individuals to address employee complaints and concerns. While selecting competent individuals remains a key priority, it is emphasized that it is essential to find a balance between moral qualities and the skills necessary to manage tasks effectively.

Both emphasize the importance of delegating responsibility and trust to employees to improve performance and work quality. They highlight management approaches that encourage this delegation. One is based on values and principles espoused by Imam Ali, such as delegation, listening, and tolerance, while the other focuses on customer focus, innovation, and accountability. Despite their differences, these approaches share the idea that giving employees more power can lead to better results for the organization. [Northouse, 2007].

• Be a good listener

((90) What would your isolation mean when it is a right to be granted or a good action to be performed?

(81) "Dedicate a part of your time to hold audiences without the presence of your soldiers and collaborators, to meet those who claim to have been wronged in their rights, in order to allow them to express themselves without fear or hesitation...

Extract from Letter 53

Imam Ali's passages **90 and 81** both deal with the importance of listening as an essential component of leadership. In passage **90**, Imam Ali suggests that it is the duty of a leader to be present and listen to the concerns of his people, even if it means sacrificing some time alone. The passage emphasizes that leaders must be accountable to their people and be willing to listen to their concerns in order to address them effectively.

Paragraph **81** also addresses the idea of active listening, recommending that leaders take the time to meet individually with those who claim their rights have been violated. By allowing them to speak without fear or hesitation, leaders can better understand their subordinates' problems and work to resolve them.

These passages emphasize the importance of active listening in leadership. Leaders who actively listen to their people are better able to understand their concerns and work with them to find solutions. Active listening can help leaders build trust and credibility with their followers by demonstrating a willingness to listen and take their concerns into account [Decady Guijarro et al., 2023].

In addition, active listening can help leaders identify problems before they escalate. Leaders who are unwilling to listen to their subordinates run the risk of overlooking important issues that may eventually develop into crises.

Overall, Imam Ali's passages **90 and 81** emphasize the importance of active listening in leadership. Leaders who take the time to actively listen to their people are better able to understand their concerns, identify problems before they escalate, and work with their people to find solutions.

• Decision-making

(84) There are certain matters that you must handle personally... Adopt a work program for each day, for each day brings its own work.

(110) Beware of haste that urges you to settle matters before their time, to neglect them when they are ready, to decide when they are still confused, to procrastinate when they are clear.

(111) Give each matter the importance and place it deserves.

Extract from Letter 53

Imam Ali's verses **84**, **110**, **and 111** all deal with decision-making in leadership. Passage 84 suggests that certain matters require the personal attention of the leader and encourages the adoption of a daily work program to stay organized and productive. This emphasizes the importance of planning and organization in leadership.

Paragraph **110** cautions against making hasty decisions, emphasizing that matters must be addressed in a timely manner without neglecting their importance. This idea shows the importance of taking time to carefully consider decisions, even in stressful or urgent situations.

Paragraph **111** emphasizes the importance of giving each matter the importance and place it deserves. This shows the importance of prioritization in decision-making, as each matter must be evaluated and ranked according to its relevance to the overall goal.

Taken together, these passages demonstrate that effective leadership requires informed, planned, and organized decision-making. Leaders must be deliberate in their decision-making, taking the time to consider all options and giving each matter the importance it deserves [Van De Mieroop et al., 2023]. Daily planning and organization can also help leaders stay on track and be productive in their decision-making roles.

3. Leadership According to New Management

3.1. Presentation of the new management and its principles: customer orientation, innovation, quality, productivity, responsibility, efficiency, etc.

New Management is a management model that emerged in the 1980s and has since been adopted by many companies around the world. This model is based on a number of key principles, including customer focus, innovation, quality, productivity, accountability, and efficiency [Peter Drucker, 1993; Peter Drucker, 2006].

Customer focus is a fundamental aspect of the new management. Companies that adopt this model seek to understand their customers' needs and proactively meet their expectations. This often involves investment in research and development of new products and services, as well as efforts to improve the customer experience at every stage of the customer journey [Tom Peters, 2010].

Innovation is also a key element of the new management. Companies that adopt this model strive to be creative and find new ways to solve problems and meet customer needs. This may involve investment in research and development, as well as efforts to foster creativity and innovation within the organization [Tom Peters, 2010].

Quality is another important aspect of the new management. Companies that adopt this model aim to produce high-quality products and services, ensuring that each product or service meets the highest standards. This often involves investment in employee training, quality control systems, and feedback mechanisms to continuously improve processes [Tom Peters, 2010].

Productivity is a key element of the new management as companies seek to maximize the use of available resources to improve their efficiency and profitability. This may include efforts to improve process efficiency, inventory and supply chain management, and automation of repetitive tasks [Peter Drucker, 2006].

Accountability is also important in the new management. Companies are trying to empower employees by giving them more control over their work, involving them in decision making, and allowing them to take initiatives to improve processes and results [Tom Peters, 2010].

Finally, efficiency is a key element of the new management. Organizations seek to achieve their goals effectively and efficiently by maximizing the use of available resources. This may include efforts to improve planning, cost management, and performance measurement [Peter Drucker, 1993].

The new management model emphasizes efficiency, quality, accountability, and customer focus. Organizations that adopt this approach seek to maximize value for their customers while making the best use of available resources. These principles have enabled many companies to thrive in a constantly evolving competitive environment [Peter Drucker, 1993; Peter Drucker, 2006; Tom Peters, 2010; Tom Peters, 2010].

3.2. Leadership Characteristics According to New Management

Leadership, according to New Management, is based on several key characteristics that are essential for the success of this management model [Amanchukwu et al., 2015] [Daniëls et al., 2019] [Fries et al., 2021] [Gandolfi et al., 2018]. These characteristics include

Delegation: The New Management leader must be able to delegate responsibility and trust employees to make important decisions. This allows employees to participate in decision making, encourages innovation, and frees up time for more strategic tasks [Northouse, 2007].

Listen: The new leader must listen to team members, customers, and partners. This helps them better understand everyone's needs and make more informed decisions [Decady Guijarro et al., 2023].

Decision-making: The new leader must be able to make quick and effective decisions based on available information. This often involves taking risks and stepping out of their comfort zone while relying on factual data [Van De Mieroop et al., 2023].

Tolerance: The new leader must be tolerant and open-minded, able to work with people who have different opinions, recognize mistakes, and treat others with respect [Ronald, 2014] [Jain et al., 2022].

Empathy: The new leader must be able to empathize with others and understand their needs and motivations [Brené, 2018]. This creates a positive work environment and promotes employee cooperation and engagement [Jian, 2023].

Respect: The new leader must be respectful of employees, customers, and partners. This includes treating others with dignity, recognizing their contributions, and respecting their point of view [Northouse, 2007].

New management leadership is based on key values such as delegation, listening, decision making, tolerance, empathy, and respect. Leaders who integrate these values are able to mobilize their teams, stimulate innovation, and ensure their organization's growth in a constantly evolving competitive environment.

4. Comparative Study

4.1. Comparative Analysis of the Leadership Characteristics of Imam Ali and the New Management

The comparative analysis of leadership characteristics according to Imam Ali and the new management reveals similarities and differences between these two approaches.

• Delegation:

Imam Ali emphasizes the importance of delegation as a key element of leadership. According to him, the leader must delegate responsibility to the team to build trust and autonomy. New Management also emphasizes delegation but stresses the importance of delegating responsibilities based on the skills and interests of each team member.

• Listening:

Imam Ali emphasizes active listening as a key leadership trait. According to him, the leader must listen carefully to the needs and concerns of the team in order to better understand and solve problems. New Management also emphasizes listening but stresses the importance of proactive listening and open communication to foster collaboration and creativity.

• Decision Making:

Imam Ali emphasizes the importance of effective decision making as a key leadership trait. According to him, the leader must make informed and fact-based decisions to achieve team goals. New Management also emphasizes decision making but stresses the importance of participatory decision making and collaboration to engage the entire team.

• Tolerance:

Imam Ali emphasizes the importance of tolerance and patience as key elements of leadership. According to him, the leader must be able to manage conflict and differences with a calm and tolerant attitude. New Management also emphasizes tolerance but stresses the importance of diversity and inclusion to foster a positive work culture.

• Empathy:

Imam Ali emphasizes empathy as a key leadership trait. According to him, the leader must be able to understand and put himself in his team's shoes in order to better address their needs and concerns. New Management also emphasizes empathy but stresses the importance of intercultural understanding to work effectively with multicultural teams.

• Respect:

Imam Ali emphasizes the importance of respect as a key leadership trait. According to him, the leader must respect the rights and dignity of each team member. New Management also emphasizes respect but emphasizes mutual respect and equality among team members. Respect is considered a fundamental element of corporate culture and is often formalized in codes of conduct or ethics charters.

However, there is a difference in how Imam Ali and New Management conceptualize respect. For Imam Ali, respect is linked to honor and justice, while New Management often sees it as an element of conflict management and promoting diversity and inclusion.

In both cases, respect is essential to building a trusting relationship between the leader and team members, which is critical to the success of the team and the organization as a whole.

In summary, the comparative analysis of leadership characteristics according to Imam Ali and according to New Management, summarized in the table below, shows that there are similarities and differences between these two approaches.

Characteristics	Leadership, according to Imam Ali	New Management
Delegation	Delegation is encouraged but must be accompanied by follow-up and accountability	Delegation is encouraged but must be accompanied by results
Listening	Listening is considered an essential characteristic of leadership, allowing leaders to understand people's needs	Listening is considered important but not always practiced
Decision-making	Decision-making is based on wisdom, reflection, and consultation with colleagues	Decision-making is often based on data and results
Tolerance	Tolerance is encouraged, allowing leaders to work with people of all cultures and beliefs	Tolerance is encouraged but may be limited based on the company's results and objectives
Empathy	Empathy is considered an essential characteristic of leadership, allowing leaders to understand people's needs and concerns	Empathy is considered important but not always practiced
Respect	Respect is essential, regardless of a person's status or position	Respect is encouraged but may be limited based on results and performance

5. Conclusion

5.1. Summary of the key points from the comparative study of leadership according to Imam Ali in Letter 53 and according to the new management.

In summary, the comparative study reveals significant points of convergence and divergence between Imam Ali's vision of leadership in Letter 53 and the principles of New Management regarding key leadership characteristics such as delegation, listening, decision-making, tolerance, empathy, and respect.

On the one hand, Imam Ali emphasizes the importance of vision and commitment to ethical principles, while New Management emphasizes innovation and adaptability to respond to the challenges of an ever-evolving marketplace. Both approaches see delegation as essential to empower team members and promote their professional development.

On the other hand, Imam Ali values active listening and understanding the individual needs of each team member, while New Management places more emphasis on listening to customers and stakeholders. In terms of decision-making, Imam Ali advocates wise and thoughtful deliberation, while New Management focuses on quick, data-driven decisions.

Regarding tolerance and empathy, both approaches emphasize the importance of these qualities in creating a positive and respectful work environment. Finally, in terms of respect, Imam Ali insists on respecting the rights and dignity of each team member, while New Management emphasizes respect for diversity and inclusion.

In conclusion, this comparative study shows that the leadership principles of Imam Ali and New Management have significant similarities while also having notable differences and that each approach can offer unique benefits depending on the needs and circumstances of the organization.

5.2. Looking to the Future of Leadership Research

Leadership research is a constantly evolving field, and there are many future perspectives worth exploring. Among the topics that could be further explored are

- o The Impact of cultural context on leadership styles and management practices
- o The relationship between leadership and creativity, innovation, and organizational agility
- o The contribution of new technologies to the evolution of leadership and management
- The importance of the ethical dimension of leadership and ways to strengthen it
- New approaches to leadership, such as shared leadership, transformational leadership, or ethical leadership.

Future leadership research should also focus more on practice and practical implications for organizations and businesses. Case studies, experiments, and impact evaluations could help to better understand the challenges of leadership in different contexts and to develop more effective and responsible leadership practices.

In conclusion, the future of leadership research is promising and offers many opportunities to enrich our understanding of the role of leaders in organizations and to contribute to improving business performance, accountability, and social impact.

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