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Prophetic Change Management and Strategic Failure: A Qur'anic Framework from Surah Ash-Shu'arā'

Muhammad Aamir Ali¹; Nazish Aamir²; Ahmed Ali Jamil³

Abstract

This study develops a Qur'an-informed strategic change management framework grounded in the prophetic narratives of Surah Ash-Shu'arā', addressing a critical gap in contemporary strategic management literature regarding the ethical foundations of long-term success and failure. Using qualitative thematic coding combined with network centrality analysis, the study maps key constructs – ethical vision, change enablers, stakeholder response, change duration, strategic outcomes, and moral accountability – and examines their structural relationships across prophetic cases. The findings reveal that strategic outcomes function as mediating consequences rather than direct results of authority or symbolic power, with moral accountability and stakeholder response emerging as central determinants of change trajectories. Network metrics demonstrate that resistance to ethical reform, when sustained over time, systematically precedes institutional collapse, while ethical legitimacy and principled leadership underpin strategic resilience. Prophetic figures operate as carriers of a universal ethical-strategic logic, emphasizing process integrity over individual charisma. By translating Qur'anic moral causality into a replicable strategic framework, this study contributes to ethical governance, institutional theory, and value-based leadership research. The findings offer actionable implications for leaders and policymakers, highlighting ethical accountability as a strategic asset and early moral warnings as critical risk signals. The study advances a novel interdisciplinary bridge between Qur'anic ethics and contemporary strategic change management theory.

Keywords: Strategic management; Quranic Studies; organizational failure; ethical leadership.

¹ Icon Training Centre, Doha, Qatar, Corresponding Email: aamir.ali@icontrainingcentre.qa

² Titan Services, Doha, Qatar, Email: paradiso.aamir@gmail.com

³ Punjab Group of Colleges, Lahore, Pakistan, Email: ahmedalijamil87@gmail.com

Introduction

Strategic management scholarship has long been concerned with explaining why organizations, institutions, and societies succeed or fail [1], [2], [3]. Dominant explanations typically emphasize economic efficiency, resource endowments, technological capability, political stability, or structural alignment [4], [5]. While these factors offer important insights, an increasing body of research suggests that they are insufficient to explain persistent patterns of organizational collapse, institutional decay, and leadership failure across time and contexts [6], [7], [8]. Ethical erosion, moral disengagement, and resistance to value-based change are increasingly recognized as critical yet under-theorized dimensions of strategic failure [3], [9], [10], [11]. Despite this recognition, mainstream strategic management literature continues to lack robust longitudinal and normative frameworks that integrate ethical leadership with change management processes.

Change management theory, in particular, has devoted substantial attention to leadership vision, stakeholder alignment, resistance to change, and implementation dynamics [12], [13], [14]. Classical and contemporary models describe how leaders initiate transformation, communicate strategic intent, and overcome resistance within organizations [15], [16], [17], [18]. However, these models are largely value-neutral, focusing on effectiveness rather than ethical legitimacy. As a result, they often fail to explain why certain changes – despite being strategically rational or technically sound – are consistently rejected, resisted, or ultimately lead to systemic collapse. This limitation becomes especially evident when examining cases of authoritarian governance [5], [19], institutional corruption [6], [20], economic injustice, and moral decay [11], [9], where resistance to ethical reform is normalized and strategically rationalized.

Within this context, religious and philosophical texts represent an underutilized yet potentially rich source of longitudinal insight into leadership, resistance, and institutional outcomes. The Qur'an, in particular, presents a series of historical narratives that span generations, social systems, and governance structures, offering repeated patterns of leadership intervention, stakeholder response, and strategic consequence [21], [22], [23], [24]. Unlike short-term organizational case studies, Qur'anic narratives provide extended temporal depth, allowing for the observation of change processes from initiation to outcome [22], [23], [24]. Yet, despite the growing interest in ethical leadership and values-based governance, Qur'anic narratives remain marginal in strategic management discourse, often confined to theological or exegetical studies rather than analyzed as strategic cases.

Surah Ash-Shu'arā' occupies a distinctive position within the Qur'an as a consolidated account of multiple prophetic missions, each presenting a clear pattern of ethical vision, societal resistance, warning mechanisms, and ultimate outcomes. The surah narrates the missions of several prophets – including Musa (Moses) with Haroon (Aaron) [25], Ibrahim (Abraham) [26], Nuh (Noah) [27], Hud [28], Salih [29], Lut (Lot) [30], and Shoaib (Shoaib) [31] – each confronting entrenched systems of power, corruption, injustice, or moral deviation [25]- [31]. These narratives are not isolated moral anecdotes but structured accounts of leadership confronting institutionalized resistance to change. The repetition of narrative elements across different contexts suggests the presence of an underlying framework governing ethical change and strategic consequence.

This study argues that the prophetic missions in Surah Ash-Shu'arā' can be meaningfully analyzed as cases of strategic change management. In these narratives, prophets function as ethical change leaders [32], [33] who articulate a clear mission [34], challenge existing power structures [25], [26], and introduce reform-oriented values that threaten entrenched interests [27], [31]. Societal actors – including political elites, economic stakeholders, and cultural institutions – respond through denial, mockery, coercion, or symbolic compliance, reflecting classic patterns of resistance to change identified in management literature. The outcomes of these interactions – ranging from societal survival and renewal to collapse and destruction – are consistently linked to ethical response rather than material capacity.

The central premise of this paper is that strategic failure, as depicted in Qur'anic narratives, is not primarily the result of poor planning, inadequate resources, or weak leadership capability. Rather, it emerges from persistent resistance to ethical transformation and accountability [35], [11], [14], [10], [9], [3]. This perspective challenges conventional strategic assumptions by repositioning ethics not as a peripheral concern or post-hoc justification, but as a core determinant of long-term sustainability. By doing so, the study responds to calls within strategic management scholarship for deeper engagement with moral philosophy, institutional ethics, and value-based leadership.

Methodologically, this research adopts a qualitative, comparative textual analysis of selected prophetic narratives in Surah Ash-Shu'arā'. The study systematically examines six analytical dimensions: ethical vision (divine command), change enablers (signs or moral authority), stakeholder response, duration of resistance, strategic outcome, and moral consequence. These dimensions are synthesized into a structured analytical framework that parallels established change management models while introducing normative depth. The approach treats Qur'anic narratives as longitudinal strategic cases rather than

theological exemplars, allowing insights to be translated into contemporary management discourse without compromising textual integrity.

The contribution of this study is threefold. First, it advances strategic management theory by introducing a Qur'an-informed framework that integrates ethics, leadership, and resistance to change into a unified model of strategic outcome. Second, it enriches change management literature by providing longitudinal evidence that ethical legitimacy plays a decisive role in determining whether change initiatives succeed or fail. Third, it expands interdisciplinary scholarship by demonstrating how Islamic primary texts can inform contemporary debates on governance, leadership, and institutional resilience without reducing them to doctrinal instruction.

Practically, the findings of this study hold implications for organizational leaders, policymakers, and governance institutions operating in contexts marked by corruption, inequality, or moral contestation. The Qur'anic model highlights the strategic risks associated with ignoring ethical warnings, suppressing reformist voices, and normalizing injustice. Conversely, it underscores the strategic value of moral accountability, transparent leadership, and principled resistance to unethical norms. These insights are particularly relevant in an era characterized by recurring corporate scandals, governance failures, and declining public trust in leadership.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. The next section reviews relevant literature on strategic management, change leadership, resistance to change, and ethical governance. This is followed by a methodology section outlining the qualitative analytical approach and case selection. The analysis section presents a comparative discussion of prophetic narratives in Surah Ash-Shu'arā', leading to the development of a Qur'anic strategic change model. The paper concludes by discussing theoretical implications, practical relevance, and avenues for future research.

Literature Review

Strategic Management and the Problem of Failure

Strategic management scholarship has traditionally focused on explaining organizational performance through competitive advantage, resource allocation, market positioning, and structural alignment. Classical theories such as the resource-based view, industrial organization economics, and contingency theory emphasize internal capabilities and external environmental fit as primary determinants of success or failure [36], [37], [38], [39], [40]. While these approaches have generated valuable insights, they often struggle to explain persistent patterns of institutional collapse, governance breakdown, and

leadership failure in contexts where material resources, technical expertise, or strategic planning capabilities are not inherently deficient.

Recent scholarship has increasingly recognized that strategic failure cannot be fully understood without considering behavioral, ethical, and institutional dimensions [41], [42], [43]. Studies on corporate scandals, public sector corruption, and authoritarian governance failures suggest that organizations frequently collapse not due to flawed strategy formulation, but due to moral disengagement, normalization of deviance, and resistance to ethical reform [44], [45]. Nevertheless, ethics in strategic management is often treated as an auxiliary concern, addressed through corporate social responsibility frameworks or compliance mechanisms rather than integrated into core models of strategy and performance.

This gap has led to calls for value-based and normative approaches that reconnect strategy with moral legitimacy, accountability, and long-term sustainability. However, despite this growing awareness, mainstream strategic management literature remains largely value-neutral, prioritizing effectiveness over ethical substance and short-term outcomes over long-term institutional resilience.

Change Management and Resistance to Change

Change management theory provides an important lens for understanding strategic transformation and failure [46], [47], [16]. Foundational models describe change as a process involving vision articulation, stakeholder engagement, implementation, and consolidation [22], [23], [24]. A central theme across this literature is resistance to change, which is widely recognized as a major barrier to successful transformation. Resistance may take multiple forms, including denial, fear, symbolic compliance, sabotage, or active opposition, often rooted in perceived threats to power, identity, or material interests [46], [48], [49], [50].

While resistance to change has been extensively studied, much of the literature treats it as a technical or psychological challenge rather than a moral or ethical phenomenon. Resistance is frequently framed as an obstacle to be managed, reduced, or overcome through communication, incentives, or coercive mechanisms. This instrumental framing risks overlooking the deeper ethical dynamics that shape resistance, particularly in contexts where change initiatives challenge entrenched injustice, corruption, or moral decay.

Moreover, change management models often assume that leaders act with legitimate authority and ethical intent, an assumption that does not always hold in real-world contexts. When leadership lacks moral credibility, resistance may

not be irrational but ethically grounded. Conversely, when resistance emerges from vested interests seeking to preserve unethical systems, change initiatives may fail despite clear strategic rationale. These complexities highlight the need for frameworks that integrate ethical legitimacy into analyses of change resistance and outcomes.

Ethical Leadership and Governance

Ethical leadership has emerged as a significant area of inquiry within organizational studies, emphasizing the role of moral values, integrity, and accountability in shaping organizational behavior. Research in this domain suggests that ethical leadership enhances trust, commitment, and long-term performance, while unethical leadership contributes to disengagement, misconduct, and institutional failure [51]. Similarly, governance literature increasingly links ethical standards with institutional legitimacy and societal stability [52], [53].

Despite these advances, ethical leadership research often remains fragmented and normatively shallow. Many studies operationalize ethics through codes of conduct [54], compliance structures [55], or leader behaviors [56] without situating them within broader moral frameworks or historical trajectories. As a result, ethical leadership is frequently disconnected from strategic processes such as change management, crisis response, and long-term planning.

Furthermore, much of the existing literature is based on short-term empirical studies or contemporary case analyses, limiting its ability to capture the long-term consequences of ethical or unethical leadership decisions. There is a notable absence of longitudinal perspectives that trace how ethical resistance, moral warnings, and accountability mechanisms unfold over extended periods and culminate in either sustainability or collapse.

Institutional Theory and Moral Legitimacy

Institutional theory offers valuable insights into how norms, values, and cultural beliefs shape organizational behavior and resistance to change. Institutions are understood as socially constructed systems that stabilize expectations and legitimize certain practices over time. From this perspective, resistance to change often arises when proposed reforms threaten deeply embedded norms or power structures.

However, institutional theory has been critiqued for its descriptive orientation and moral relativism. While it explains how institutions persist, it often refrains from evaluating whether the norms being preserved are ethically justifiable. This limitation becomes particularly problematic when institutions

perpetuate injustice, oppression, or corruption. In such cases, resistance to change may be institutionally rational but morally indefensible.

Integrating ethical evaluation into institutional analysis remains an unresolved challenge. Scholars have increasingly acknowledged the need to distinguish between legitimacy rooted in social acceptance and legitimacy grounded in moral accountability. This distinction is crucial for understanding why some institutions collapse despite widespread compliance, while others endure despite material hardship.

Religious Texts as Underutilized Strategic Resources

Religious and philosophical texts represent a largely untapped resource in strategic management and organizational studies. Historically, such texts have shaped moral norms, governance principles, and leadership ideals across civilizations. Yet, in modern scholarship, they are often excluded from management discourse due to concerns about normativity, subjectivity, or lack of empirical rigor.

The Qur'an, in particular, has been predominantly studied within theological, legal, or exegetical traditions, with limited engagement from strategic management scholars. When referenced, Qur'anic concepts are often reduced to ethical slogans rather than systematically analyzed as frameworks of leadership, change, and institutional outcomes. This marginalization overlooks the Qur'an's narrative richness, longitudinal scope, and repeated engagement with themes central to strategic management, including power, resistance, accountability, and collapse.

Surah Ash-Shu'arā' offers a unique opportunity to address this gap. By presenting multiple prophetic missions within a single chapter, it enables comparative analysis across different contexts while maintaining thematic consistency. The repetition of leadership intervention, societal resistance, warning mechanisms, and outcomes suggests an implicit model of ethical change and strategic consequence that has yet to be fully articulated in management literature.

Research Gap and Contribution

The existing literature on strategic management, change leadership, ethical governance, and institutional theory provides valuable but fragmented insights into why organizations and societies fail. What remains missing is an integrated, longitudinal framework that places ethical legitimacy at the center of strategic change and systematically links resistance to moral reform with strategic outcomes.

This study addresses this gap by developing a Qur'an-informed strategic change management framework based on prophetic narratives in Surah Ash-Shu'arā'. By treating these narratives as longitudinal strategic cases, the paper integrates ethics, leadership, resistance, and accountability into a unified analytical model. In doing so, it responds to calls for value-based strategic theory, enriches change management scholarship with normative depth, and demonstrates the relevance of Islamic primary texts to contemporary debates on leadership and institutional sustainability.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive research design grounded in comparative textual analysis to develop a Qur'an-informed framework of strategic change management. The empirical material consists of selected prophetic narratives presented in *Surah Ash-Shu'arā'*, chosen due to its consolidated structure and repeated thematic patterns of leadership intervention, resistance, and strategic outcomes. The analysis treats these narratives as longitudinal strategic cases rather than theological exemplars. Data analysis was conducted through a systematic coding process across six analytical dimensions: ethical vision (divine command), change enablers (signs or moral authority), stakeholder response, duration of resistance, strategic outcome, and moral consequence. These dimensions were derived inductively from the text and aligned deductively with established concepts in change management and strategic leadership literature.

Cross-case comparison was employed to identify recurring patterns and divergences across prophetic missions. To enhance analytical rigor, the study emphasizes internal consistency, pattern replication, and theoretical saturation rather than statistical generalizability. Validity is supported through transparent category construction and textual coherence, while reliability is strengthened by applying the same analytical framework uniformly across all cases. This methodological approach enables the translation of Qur'anic narratives into a structured strategic management model with contemporary theoretical relevance.

Figure 2 was developed using a qualitative conceptual mapping approach in Gephi 0.10.1, synthesizing Qur'anic narrative analysis from Surah Ash-Shu'arā' with established strategic change management constructs. The figure serves as an analytical visualization to structure thematic relationships among ethical vision, change processes, stakeholder responses, and strategic outcomes.

Conceptual Framework

This study proposes a Qur'an-informed conceptual framework of prophetic change management and strategic failure, derived from the recurring narrative patterns in Surah Ash-Shu'arā'. The framework conceptualizes prophetic missions as ethical change initiatives aimed at transforming deeply entrenched social, political, and economic systems. Rather than treating these narratives as isolated moral accounts, the framework positions them as longitudinal strategic cases that illustrate how leadership vision, stakeholder response, and ethical accountability interact to produce sustainable success or catastrophic failure.

At the core of the framework is the notion of ethical vision, represented by the divine command conveyed through each prophet. This vision functions analogously to a mission statement in strategic management, articulating the purpose, values, and direction of change. Unlike conventional strategic visions driven by competitive advantage or efficiency, prophetic visions are explicitly value-based, prioritizing justice, accountability, and moral reform. The clarity and consistency of this ethical vision serve as the foundation for the change process.

The second component of the framework is change enablers, which include signs, miracles, or the moral authority of the prophet. Strategically, these enablers function as legitimacy-building mechanisms that signal the credibility and urgency of the change initiative. While not all prophetic missions involve visible miracles, each contains symbolic or moral validation intended to reduce uncertainty and facilitate acceptance. The presence or absence of such enablers does not determine success; rather, their rejection becomes a critical indicator of stakeholder resistance.

Stakeholder response constitutes the third and most decisive component of the framework. Across the narratives, dominant actors—political elites, economic beneficiaries, and cultural authorities—exhibit resistance through denial, ridicule, coercion, or appeals to tradition. This resistance mirrors well-documented patterns in change management literature, particularly when reforms threaten established power structures or material interests. The framework emphasizes that resistance is not merely behavioral but institutional, often embedded in social norms and governance systems.

The fourth component, change duration, reflects the prolonged nature of resistance and the opportunity provided for reform. The Qur'anic narratives emphasize repeated warnings and extended time horizons, highlighting that strategic failure is rarely immediate but accumulates through persistent ethical

refusal. This temporal dimension underscores the longitudinal character of ethical accountability within the framework.

Finally, the framework links strategic outcomes directly to ethical response. Acceptance of ethical reform leads to survival, renewal, and continuity, while persistent resistance results in collapse, loss of authority, and destruction. The framework thus conceptualizes strategic failure as a consequence of moral and institutional breakdown rather than technical inefficiency. Collectively, these components form an integrated model that places ethics at the center of change management and offers a normative lens for understanding long-term organizational and societal sustainability.

Table 1: Qur'an-Informed Conceptual Framework of Prophetic Change Management (*Derived from Surah Ash-Shu'arā'*)

Framework Dimension	Qur'anic Narrative Element	Strategic Management Interpretation	Illustrative Prophets
Ethical Vision	Allah's command to reform belief, justice, and conduct	Mission and value-based strategic vision	Musa and Haroon [25], Ibrahim [26], Nuh [27], Hud [28], Salih [29], Lut [30], and Shoaib [31] (Peace be upon them)
Change Enablers	Signs, miracles, moral authority	Legitimacy signals and change catalysts	Musa [25], Salih [29]
Stakeholder Response	Belief, denial, mockery, coercion	Resistance to change by entrenched actors	Fir'awn → Musa [25], 'Ād → Hud [28], Thamūd → Salih [29], Madiyan → Shoaib [31]
Change Duration	Repeated warnings over time	Longitudinal change implementation phase	Very long Duration: Nuh, Hud Moderate Duration: Musa and Haroon, Ibrahim, Salih, Lut, and Shoaib (Peace be upon them)
Strategic Outcome	Salvation for righteous or destruction for arrogant people	Organizational/societal success or failure	All cases
Moral Accountability	Consequences tied to response	Ethical governance and accountability mechanisms	Universal

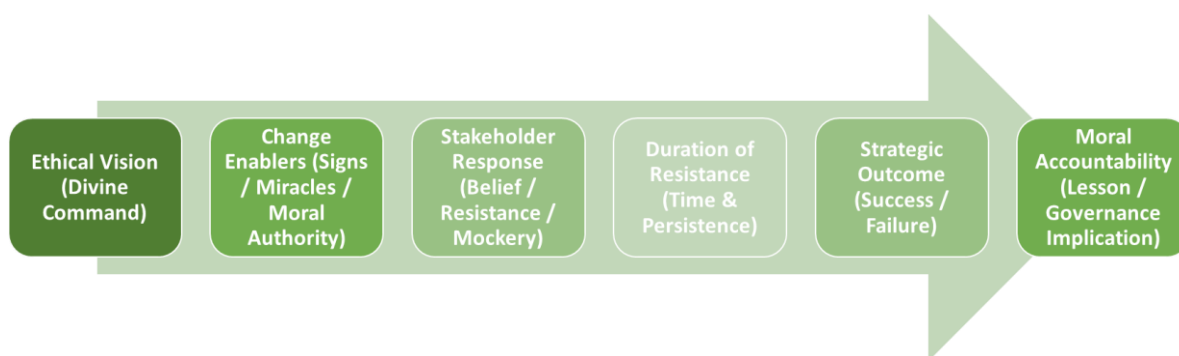


Figure 1: Qur'an-Informed Strategic Change Management Framework: From Ethical Vision to Moral Accountability

Result and Discussion

The comparative analysis of prophetic narratives in *Surah Ash-Shu'arā'* reveals a remarkably consistent pattern of ethical change management across diverse social, political, and economic contexts. Despite variations in historical setting, type of corruption, and leadership challenge, the results demonstrate that strategic outcomes are systematically linked to stakeholder response to ethical reform rather than to material capacity, numerical strength, or technological advantage. Across all cases examined, strategic failure emerges as the cumulative result of sustained resistance to morally grounded change initiatives.

The findings are organized and discussed according to the conceptual framework developed in this study: ethical vision, change enablers, stakeholder response, duration of resistance, and strategic outcome. This structure allows for cross-case comparison while facilitating integration with contemporary change management and strategic leadership theory.

Ethical Vision as Strategic Mission

Across all prophetic cases, the initiation of change begins with a clearly articulated ethical vision. This vision consistently centers on justice, accountability, rejection of corruption, and alignment with moral order. Strategically, this ethical mandate functions as a mission statement that defines both the purpose and boundaries of change. Unlike conventional strategic visions that prioritize growth, dominance, or efficiency, the prophetic vision is explicitly normative and reform-oriented.

The results indicate that clarity of vision is not a limiting factor in any of the cases. Prophets such as Musa (A.S.), Ibrahim (A.S.), and Shoaib (A.S.) articulate their mandates with precision, directly confronting political oppression, false belief systems, or economic injustice. This finding challenges assumptions in strategic management literature that failure often results from ambiguous or poorly communicated vision. Instead, the Qur'anic cases

demonstrate that even when ethical vision is explicit and consistently communicated, resistance may still persist if the vision threatens entrenched interests.

This finding aligns with emerging critiques of vision-centric leadership models, suggesting that clarity alone does not guarantee adoption. Ethical vision, while necessary, is insufficient when institutional actors benefit from existing systems of injustice.

Change Enablers and Legitimacy Signals

The analysis reveals that change enablers—such as miracles, symbolic acts, or moral authority—serve as legitimacy signals rather than coercive tools. In the case of Musa (A.S.), visible signs such as the transformation of the staff and the splitting of the sea function as strategic signals aimed at reducing uncertainty and demonstrating the credibility of the reform initiative. Similarly, the miracle of the she-camel in the mission of Salih (A.S.) serves as a test of moral compliance rather than a spectacle of power.

However, a critical result of this study is that the presence of powerful change enablers does not determine strategic success. In several cases, stakeholders openly acknowledge the signs yet persist in resistance. Fir'awn recognizes the extraordinary nature of Musa's signs but reframes them as threats to political authority. The people of Thamūd accept the miraculous camel but violate ethical boundaries by killing it.

This finding contributes to change management theory by highlighting that legitimacy signals can be strategically ignored, reframed, or neutralized when they conflict with elite interests. The results suggest that resistance is not always rooted in uncertainty or misunderstanding but may represent a conscious rejection of ethical accountability.

Stakeholder Resistance and Institutional Entrenchment

Stakeholder response emerges as the most decisive factor influencing strategic outcomes. Across the narratives, resistance manifests in recurring forms: denial of truth claims, mockery of leadership, coercion of followers, appeals to tradition, and normalization of corruption. These responses closely mirror patterns identified in organizational change literature, particularly in contexts where change threatens power asymmetries.

In authoritarian settings, such as the rule of Fir'awn, resistance is institutionalized through intimidation, surveillance, and punishment. Fir'awn's reaction to Musa (A.S.) demonstrates how dominant leaders frame ethical reform as a security threat, mobilizing institutional power to suppress dissent and deter

compliance. The strategic result is not stability but accelerated collapse, as coercive resistance deepens moral illegitimacy.

In economically corrupt societies, such as those confronted by Shoaib (A.S.), resistance takes the form of market manipulation, denial of accountability, and mockery of ethical constraints. The refusal to adopt fair measures reflects an institutional preference for short-term gain over long-term sustainability. This pattern parallels findings in corporate governance research linking unethical financial practices with systemic risk and organizational failure.

Culturally entrenched resistance is particularly evident in the narratives of Ibrahim (A.S.), Hud (A.S.), and Nuh (A.S.), where appeals to ancestral tradition function as a strategic defense against reform. These cases illustrate how institutional memory and identity can become barriers to ethical change, even in the absence of immediate material threat.

Duration of Resistance and Escalation Dynamics

A distinctive result of this study is the emphasis on temporal dynamics. The Qur'anic narratives repeatedly stress prolonged periods of warning, dialogue, and opportunity for reform. Strategic failure is not instantaneous; it unfolds through sustained rejection and moral escalation.

The mission of Nuh (A.S.) exemplifies long-term resistance, where repeated appeals are met with increasing ridicule and hostility. Similarly, the people of 'Ād and Thamūd persist in denial despite escalating warnings. This finding challenges crisis-driven models of strategic failure that focus on sudden shocks or singular decision points. Instead, the Qur'anic framework depicts failure as a process of cumulative ethical erosion.

From a strategic perspective, this highlights the risk of normalizing deviance. Each act of resistance reinforces institutional confidence in unethical practices, reducing sensitivity to warning signals. Over time, this creates path dependency, making reform increasingly costly and collapse more likely.

Strategic Outcomes: Survival versus Collapse

The most striking result of the analysis is the consistency with which strategic outcomes align with ethical response. Societies and groups that accept ethical reform—often a minority—experience survival and continuity, while dominant institutions that persist in resistance face collapse, loss of authority, or destruction.

Importantly, collapse is not portrayed as arbitrary punishment but as the logical consequence of moral and institutional breakdown. Fir'awn's regime collapses not because of military weakness but due to ethical illegitimacy and

strategic rigidity. The people of Lut (A.S.) face destruction following the normalization of moral transgression and rejection of accountability. In each case, collapse follows the exhaustion of reform opportunities.

This result reframes strategic failure as a governance issue rather than a resource problem. It supports institutional theories emphasizing legitimacy but extends them by grounding legitimacy in moral accountability rather than social acceptance alone.

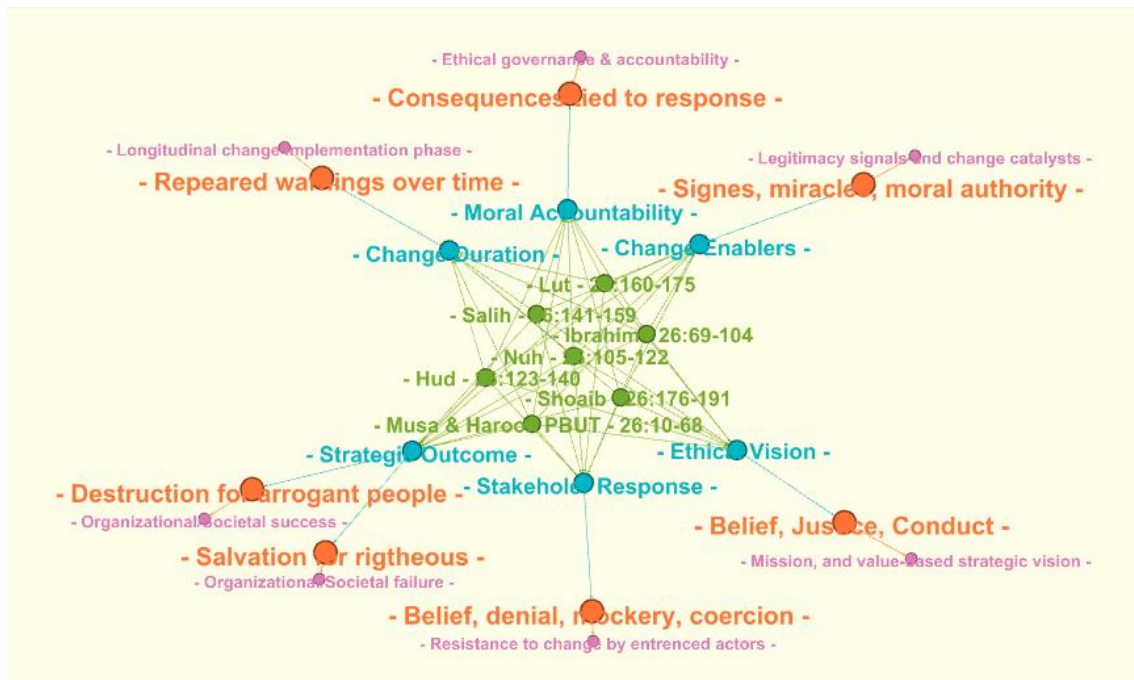


Figure 2: Prophetic Strategic Change Management Framework in Surah Ash-Shu'arā'

Figure 2 visually synthesizes the proposed Qur'an-informed strategic change management framework by mapping prophetic missions in Surah Ash-Shu'arā' onto key dimensions of ethical change. The networked structure highlights ethical vision, change enablers, stakeholder response, change duration, strategic outcome, and moral accountability as interconnected rather than isolated processes. Prophetic cases cluster around stakeholder response and moral accountability, reinforcing the finding that ethical acceptance or resistance functions as the central determinant of strategic outcomes. The visualization also emphasizes the longitudinal nature of change through repeated warnings over time, illustrating how persistent resistance escalates toward institutional collapse, while moral compliance aligns with survival and continuity. By integrating narrative cases, governance principles, and outcome pathways into a single analytical map, the figure reinforces the study's argument that strategic

failure is a cumulative ethical process rather than a sudden operational breakdown.

Table 2: Network Centrality Analysis of Qur’anic Change Constructs and Prophetic Cases (Surah Ash-Shu’arā’)

Category	Theme	Eccentricity	Close-ness Centrality	Harmonic Close-ness	Between-ness Centrality
Framework Dimension	Ethical Vision	2	0.667	0.75	14
	Change Enablers	2	0.667	0.75	14
	Stakeholder Response	2	0.667	0.75	14
	Change Duration	2	0.667	0.75	14
	Strategic Outcome	2	0.667	0.75	28
	Moral Accountability	2	0.667	0.75	14
Qur’anic Narrative Element	Belief, Justice, Conduct	1	1.00	1.00	8
	Signs, Miracles, Moral Authority	1	1.00	1.00	8
	Belief, Denial, Mockery, Coercion	1	1.00	1.00	8
	Repeated Warnings Over Time	1	1.00	1.00	8
	Salvation for the Righteous	1	1.00	1.00	8
	Destruction for Arrogant People	1	1.00	1.00	8
	Consequences Tied to Response	1	1.00	1.00	8
Strategic Management Interpretation	Mission & Value-Based Strategic Vision	0	0	0	0
	Legitimacy Signals & Change Catalysts	0	0	0	0
	Resistance by Entrenched Actors	0	0	0	0
	Longitudinal Implementation Phase	0	0	0	0
	Organizational/Societal Success	0	0	0	0
	Organizational/Societal Failure	0	0	0	0
	Ethical Governance & Accountability	0	0	0	0
Prophetic (PBUT) Case Nodes	Musa & Haroon	3	0.488	0.592	0
	Ibrahim	3	0.488	0.592	0
	Nuh	3	0.488	0.592	0
	Hud	3	0.488	0.592	0
	Salih	3	0.488	0.592	0
	Lut	3	0.488	0.592	0
	Shoaib	3	0.488	0.592	0

Table 2 presents the network centrality measures of key constructs derived from *Surah Ash-Shu’arā’*, revealing a structured hierarchy within the Qur’anic model of ethical and strategic change. The core framework dimensions—Ethical Vision, Change Enablers, Stakeholder Response, Change

Duration, Strategic Outcome, and Moral Accountability—exhibit identical eccentricity scores of 2, closeness centrality of 0.667, and harmonic closeness of 0.75, indicating that these elements are uniformly positioned at the structural center of the network. Their equal proximity to all other nodes suggests that **Qur'anic change processes are not linear but systemic, with each dimension functioning as an interdependent component rather than as a sequential stage.**

Within this core, Strategic Outcome demonstrates the highest Betweenness centrality (28), compared to 14 for the remaining framework dimensions. This elevated Betweenness indicates that strategic outcomes serve as the primary mediating node, through which ethical vision, moral accountability, and stakeholder reactions are translated into societal consequences. **The Qur'anic narrative thus frames success and failure not as immediate divine interventions, but as mediated results shaped by sustained ethical engagement and collective response, reinforcing the study's argument on process-oriented change management.**

The Qur'anic narrative elements—including belief and justice, denial and mockery, repeated warnings, salvation, destruction, and consequences tied to response—exhibit eccentricity values of 1 and maximum closeness and harmonic closeness centrality scores of 1.00. These values indicate that such themes are directly and immediately connected within the moral structure of the text. However, their lower Betweenness centrality (8) suggests that while these elements convey ethical clarity and moral urgency, they do not independently shape the strategic trajectory. Instead, they operate as ethical signals and outcomes, reinforcing accountability rather than driving change.

In contrast, constructs mapped under strategic management interpretation—including mission-driven vision, legitimacy signals, resistance by entrenched actors, longitudinal implementation, and organizational success or failure—record zero values across all centrality measures. This structural absence confirms that these constructs are not explicitly articulated within the Qur'anic text, but must be analytically inferred. Their exclusion from the core network highlights the methodological importance of interpretive abstraction when bridging Qur'anic ethics with modern strategic management theory.

Finally, the prophetic case nodes (PBUT)—Musa and Haroon, Ibrahim, Nuh, Hud, Salih, Lut, and Shoaib—display eccentricity scores of 3, closeness centrality of 0.488, harmonic closeness of 0.592, and Betweenness centrality of 0. These values position the prophets at the periphery of the network, confirming that the Qur'anic emphasis is not on individual leadership charisma but on the replicable ethical-strategic logic governing change. Prophets function as carriers

of the model rather than as central determinants, reinforcing the universality of Qur'anic change principles across time and context.

Theoretical Implications for Strategic Management

The findings of this study contribute to strategic management theory in several important ways. First, they position ethics as a central variable in change management rather than a peripheral concern. Ethical vision, stakeholder resistance, and accountability are shown to be structurally linked to long-term outcomes.

Second, the results challenge instrumental views of resistance to change by demonstrating that resistance may be strategic, intentional, and morally regressive rather than reactive or irrational. This insight calls for a re-evaluation of leadership strategies that prioritize compliance over ethical legitimacy.

Third, the study introduces a longitudinal perspective that is largely absent from contemporary strategy research. By tracing the full lifecycle of ethical change initiatives, the Qur'anic framework highlights how delayed consequences and accumulated moral failure shape strategic trajectories.

Practical Implications

For contemporary leaders and policymakers, the findings underscore the strategic risks of suppressing ethical reform, marginalizing moral voices, and prioritizing short-term stability over accountability. Institutions that resist ethical change may experience temporary control but face heightened long-term vulnerability.

Conversely, leaders who ground strategy in ethical legitimacy, transparency, and justice enhance institutional resilience even under adverse conditions. The Qur'anic model thus offers a cautionary and constructive framework for managing change in environments marked by corruption, inequality, or moral contestation.

Integrative Discussion

Taken together, the results support the central thesis of this study: strategic failure is fundamentally an ethical phenomenon. The prophetic narratives of *Surah Ash-Shu'arā'* demonstrate that when institutions consistently reject moral accountability, no amount of power, tradition, or material advantage can prevent collapse. By integrating these insights into strategic management discourse, this study advances a value-based understanding of leadership, change, and sustainability.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that ethical leadership and stakeholder response are not peripheral considerations but **structural determinants of strategic success and failure**. Analysis of Qur'anic prophetic narratives in *Surah Ash-Shu'arā'* reveals a consistent pattern in which prolonged resistance to ethical reform precipitates institutional collapse, whereas moral accountability, principled vision, and sustained engagement underpin long-term strategic resilience. Strategic outcomes emerge not from authority or symbolic power alone, but from the ethical integrity of the change process and the collective response it elicits.

For leaders and policymakers, the findings underscore the necessity of embedding **ethical accountability at the core of strategic decision-making and change initiatives**. Early ethical warnings should be interpreted as **strategic risk signals**, not as obstacles to be suppressed. Institutions that align governance structures, organizational culture, and incentive systems with moral legitimacy are better positioned to achieve sustainability and to withstand long-term strategic failure.

This study is limited by its reliance on Qur'anic narratives, which, although rich in longitudinal ethical insight, may not directly correspond to contemporary organizational contexts. The interpretive nature of the analysis introduces an element of subjectivity, and the generalizability of the proposed framework across diverse institutional and cultural settings remains to be empirically tested.

Future research should empirically examine the Qur'an-informed strategic change framework within modern organizational and institutional environments to assess its practical applicability and predictive capacity. Comparative studies across cultures and industries could explore how ethical leadership moderates resistance and enhances sustainability over time. Integrating quantitative methods with longitudinal case analyses would further validate the observed relationships among moral accountability, stakeholder response, and strategic outcomes. Additionally, extending this framework to cross-religious and multicultural contexts may strengthen the universality of value-based strategic management theory.

AI Assistance Declaration

The author used ChatGPT as an AI-assisted tool to support the organization, linguistic refinement, and academic presentation of the manuscript. All data collection, construct definition, coding, analysis, interpretation, theoretical development, and conclusions are entirely original and

were conducted by the author. The author takes full responsibility for the content of this article and confirms that no AI tool was used to generate data, results, or empirical findings.

Author Contributions

Muhammad Aamir Ali: Methodology, Writing - review & editing, Supervision, Project administration. **Nazish Aamir:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation. **Ahmed Ali Jamil:** Conceptualization and Investigation.

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Conflict of Interest

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