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Decision-Making Styles from the Perspective of the Holy Qur'an with Emphasis on Imam Khamenei's Thought

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Abstract
Research Article

Decision-making is a multifaceted and complex process that encompasses a variety of styles based on different criteria. These styles include categories such as individual and group decision-making, rational and emotional, as well as strategic and short-term approaches. The selection of an appropriate decision-making style plays a decisive role in enhancing efficiency and achieving optimal outcomes. Therefore, the explanation and study of decision-making styles from a research perspective is both significant and necessary. In the Holy Qur'an, the term "*'azm*" (resolution) is the most explicit term associated with decision-making and points to different decision-making styles. The present study, employing a descriptive-analytical method, aims to identify and analyze decision-making styles from the perspective of the Qur'an, with particular emphasis on the Qur'anic thought of the Supreme Leader, Imam Khamenei. Through examining relevant Qur'anic verses and analyzing the statements of Imam Khamenei on this subject, the study concludes that his perspective on decision-making—deeply rooted in Islamic and Qur'anic teachings—represents a comprehensive and integrated style. This style incorporates elements such as rational-logical decision-making based on intellect and reasoning, consultative decision-making utilizing collective wisdom, wise decision-making with attention to long-term interests, responsible decision-making about consequences and obligations, and Jihād-oriented decision-making characterized by proactivity, effort, and perseverance. This integrated approach highlights the comprehensive nature of Qur'anic principles in the domain of decision-making.

Keywords: Holy Qur'an, Imam Khamenei, Qur'anic thought, Decision-making styles.

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Introduction

Decision-making is fundamentally a mental process that all individuals continuously engage in. Culture, values, beliefs, perceptions, knowledge, and insight significantly influence the quality and manner of their decisions. Islamic management, as an emerging paradigm in the field of management, is rooted in Islamic teachings and the Qur'anic worldview. It addresses all managerial issues, including decision-making, in a comprehensive and appropriate manner. Optimal decision-making in the real world requires the application of scientific methods and a precise understanding of the decision-making process (Manṣūrī 1992, 58). In contemporary management, decision-making is closely linked to problem-solving and is generally defined as the process of identifying a problem, selecting an appropriate solution, or utilizing available opportunities and situations (Center for Training and Research in Development and Foresight 2016, 7).

The Holy Qur'an contains numerous verses that explicitly (direct indication) or implicitly (by implication) refer to various methods and styles of decision-making under different conditions and circumstances. Through careful study and reflection on these verses, it is possible to derive a comprehensive framework of decision-making styles suited to diverse contexts and needs. Verses such as *"and [conduct] their affairs by counsel among themselves"*[5] (Quran 42:38) and *"Consult them in the affairs"*[6] (Quran 3:159) emphasize the importance of consultation in decision-making. Similarly, verses like *"Who listen to the word [of Allah] and follow the best [interpretation] of it"*[7] (Quran 39:18) also point, in their own way, to different decision-making styles.

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[5]. ﴿وَ أَمْرُهُمْ شُورى بَيْنَهُمْ﴾ (الشورى/٣٨)

[6]. ﴿وَ شاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ﴾ (آل‌عمران/١٥٩)

[7]. ﴿الَّذينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ﴾ (الزمر/١٨)

The intellectual system and the scholarly-practical character of the Supreme Leader, Imam Khamenei—formed upon Islamic and Qur'anic foundations—hold significant value in elucidating and interpreting Qur'anic managerial styles. Therefore, to attain a comprehensive framework of Qur'an-based decision-making styles, attention to his statements is also deemed necessary. Accordingly, this study, aiming to present a framework of decision-making styles derived from Qur'anic verses with an emphasis on the exegetical views of the Supreme Leader, adopts a descriptive-analytical method. In this regard, alongside reviewing and coordinating the perspectives of other Qur'anic exegetes and scholars in the field of management, the statements of the Supreme Leader, Imam Khamenei, are interpreted and analyzed from an exegetical perspective.

Literature Review

In Aristotle's theory of decision-making, the term *prohairesis* was used to denote purposeful choice. Terence Irwin was the first to substitute the term *decision* for *prohairesis* (Mullā Yūsufī & Shirkhānī 2017, pp. 250-251). Throughout history, decision-making has been a subject of interest and study across various disciplines, with diverse styles and types of decisions evolving in accordance with each field of knowledge. The earliest widely recognized decision-making style in management was the rational model. However, due to the shortcomings and limitations of classical rational decision-making theory in the West, scholars proposed alternative styles such as rational-intuitive and satisficing decision-making (Raḥmānī 2017, 49).

In the Islamic context, several studies have also explored decision-making. For example, decision-making based on expediency or public interest is one approach rooted in Islamic teachings, supported by strong Qur'anic and jurisprudential foundations (Muqīmī 2015, 164). Ayatullah Javādī Āmulī identifies five Islamic criteria that significantly influence decision-making: consultation, inner calm, tranquility, comprehensive and

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detailed examination of the issue, and mindfulness of being in the presence of God (Javādī Āmulī 1993, pp. 6-8).

Concerning the specific background of the present study, reference may be made to the doctoral dissertation titled *"Naẓariyya-yi Taṣmīm-gīrī-yi Athar-bakhsh az Manẓar-i Qurʾān"* [A Theory of Effective Decision-Making from the Perspective of the Qur'an] by ʿAbdulhāshim Mīrzāʾyū in 1396 Sh/2017. Moreover, Dihkurdī and colleagues, in their article *"Shināsāʾī-yi ʿAwāmil va Muʾallafih-hā-yi Shuhūd dar Tasmīm-gīrī az Dīdgāh-i Qurʾān"* [Identifying the Factors and Components of Intuition in Decision-Making from the Perspective of the Qur'an] introduced four elements—vision of the heart, inspiration, power of discernment, and divine light—as forms of intuition in the Qur'anic context (Furūzandih Dihkurdī et al. 1394Sh/2015). Similarly, Qiyāsī and colleagues, in their article *"Barresī-yi Naqsh-i Mudīriyyat-i Khavāhish-hā dar Taṣmīm-gīrī az Manẓar-i Qurʾān-i Karīm"* [Examining the Role of Desire Management in Decision-Making from the Perspective of the Holy Qur'an] addressed the direct impact of managing and controlling desires on making sound decisions (Qiyāsī Kārgar Muqaddam et al. 1398Sh/2019).

Nevertheless, no comprehensive and independent research has yet been conducted—or at least is inaccessible to the authors—on decision-making styles in the Qur'an or decision-making from the perspective of the Supreme Leader. Therefore, the present study seeks to fill this gap.

Research Methodology

The present study was conducted using a descriptive-analytical approach. The research process began with the collection of initial data and information on decision-making from scholarly sources through a document-based method, followed by systematic categorization. Subsequently, the study employed the method of elicitation or exegetical reasoning as introduced by Shahīd Ṣadr to analyze the verses of the Holy Qur'an.

After determining the results of the elicitation or exegetical reasoning (*istinṭāq*) including the confirmation or rejection of hypotheses, the findings were compared with the theories and perspectives of Imam Khamenei on the subject of the study. His exegetical remarks concerning verses related to decision-making were also incorporated into the body of the research. Therefore, the methodology of conducting this research was a combination of several methods.

Conceptual Framework

In academic research, the precise definition of key concepts is essential. These concepts form the core of any study and provide a framework for accurate understanding and analysis.
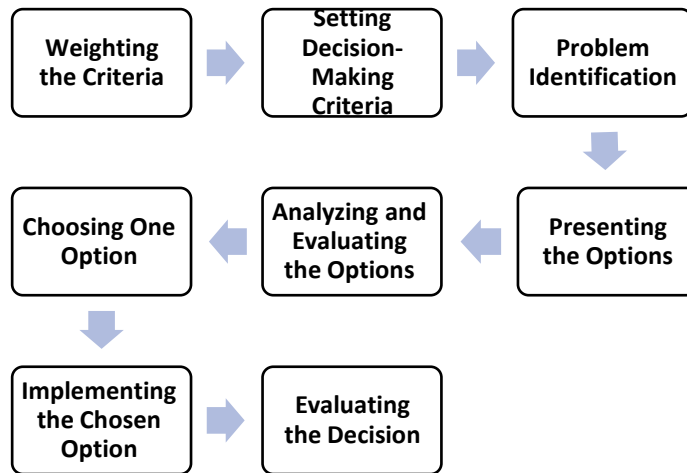
Decision-Making

Linguistically, the Persian word "*taṣmīm*" means purification, firming up, committing oneself to an action, and making a resolution. The compound verbal noun "*taṣmīm-giriftan*" is used in the sense of making a decision, intending, and resolving to act (Dihkhudā 1998, 5:6774–6775). In the Qur'anic context, the term closest in meaning to decision-making is "*ʿazm*," which signifies seriousness, willpower, and determination (Ibn Manẓūr 1993, 12:399). Therefore, the term "*taṣmīm*" refers to the firmness and steadfastness in one's opinion and belief following intention and desire.

Herbert Simon equated 'management' with 'decision-making' and considered 'decision-making' synonymous with 'will'. According to Richard Daft, decision-making is the process of identifying and solving problems; Alvani defined it as choosing one solution among various alternatives. James March and Simon, in critiquing the rational decision-making model, proposed the concept of bounded rationality, while Brunsson introduced the notion of non-rational decision-making styles (Rāzīnī & ʿAzīzī 2015, 77).

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Decision-making involves selecting one of the possible solutions to address a problem. It constitutes the primary task of managers and represents the core of the planning function within organizations (Department of Structure and Organization, 2009, 19).

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┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐
│  Weighting   │  →   │   Setting    │  →   │   Problem    │
│ the Criteria │      │  Decision-   │      │Identification│
│              │      │   Making     │      │              │
│              │      │   Criteria   │      │              │
└──────────────┘      └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘
                                                    │
                                                    ↓
┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐
│ Choosing One │  ←   │ Analyzing and│  ←   │  Presenting  │
│    Option    │      │  Evaluating  │      │ the Options  │
│              │      │ the Options  │      │              │
└──────────────┘      └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘
       │
       ↓
┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐
│Implementing  │  →   │  Evaluating  │
│ the Chosen   │      │ the Decision │
│    Option    │      │              │
└──────────────┘      └──────────────┘
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Figure 1 – Decision-Making Stages

1. Decision-Making Styles in Management Science

An individual's decision-making style reflects their personal approach to perceiving and responding to the task of decision-making. In identifying the decision-making styles of managers and organizations, not only do personality traits play a role, but organizational and environmental factors also have an impact (Hādīzādih Muqadam & Ṭihrānī 2008, 126).

Herbert Simon proposed two types of decision-making styles: programmed and non-programmed. Hersey and Blanchard, based on two dimensions—relationship orientation and task orientation, and taking into account the willingness and ability of subordinates, introduced four

decision-making styles: directive, consultative, participative, and delegative (Zarandī & ʿIzzatī 2015, pp. 6-7). Scott and Bruce presented five decision-making styles: rational, intuitive, dependent, spontaneous, and avoidant (Hādīzādih Muqadam & Ṭihrānī, pp. 126-128). Thus, Western scholars have each introduced their own preferred styles, and to date, no consensus or unified classification has been reached among them regarding decision-making styles.

2. Decision-Making Styles in the Qur'an

In the Qur'an, the concept of decision is expressed using the term "ʿazm" (resolution). This key term and its derivatives appear about nine times in various verses of the Qur'an (see Quran 2:227 & 235; 3:159 & 186; 31:17; 42:43; 46:35; 20:115; 47:21). Linguistically, the term "ʿazm" is defined as "a firm resolve or binding of the heart to carry out an affair," and in most Qur'anic contexts, it is understood to mean determination or decision-making (Qurashī Banāʾī 1991, 4:345).

In Islamic teachings, decision-making can be categorized into three levels: the implementation of divine laws and commands, the level of prophethood, imamate, and guardianship (wilāyah), and the level of the members of the Islamic community. The latter—pertaining to the members of the Muslim community—is itself divided into two categories: individual (such as personal transactions) and collective (such as administration and governance) (ʿĀbidī Jaʿfarī & Maʿṣūmī-Mihr 2013, 68).

In the present study, decision-making refers to collective and organizational decision-making, which is undertaken and implemented by the organization's authorities for goal-setting, resolving organizational problems, and achieving institutional objectives. Various styles of decision-making can be identified and interpreted from the perspective of the Qur'an—such as consultative, expediency-based, decisive, and responsible decision-making. The study proceeds to analyze these styles

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from a Qur'anic viewpoint, with particular emphasis on the views of Imam Khamenei.

2.1. The Decisive–Wilāyah-Based and Jihād-Oriented Decision-Making Style

This style of decision-making is specific to Islamic management. The phrase "'azm al-umūr" (the steadiest of courses) in the verse *"…that is indeed the steadiest of courses"*[8] *(Quran 42:43)* refers to actions that require firm determination and decisive commitment from a person (Makārim Shīrāzī 1993, 20:471). Similarly, in the verse *"…when the matter has been resolved upon…"*[9] *(Quran 47:21),* the phrase "'azm al-amr" signifies the emergence of a condition in which strong, authoritative, and decisive will is necessary (Qarā'atī 2009, 9:87). In rhetorical terms, the phrase "'azm al-amr" means the seriousness and finality of a decision once the matter is settled and the intent to act is confirmed (Ṭūsī, n.d., 9:303; Ṭabarsī 1993, 9:157).

The term "'azm" in the verse *"that is indeed the steadiest of courses"*[10] *(Quran 3:186)* is interpreted as referring to strong and firm determination (Makārim Shīrāzī 1993, 3:205; Ṭabarsī 1993, 2:904). Likewise, in the verse *"That is indeed the steadiest of courses"*[11] *(Quran 31:17),* "'azm" signifies either God's definite will concerning a matter or a person's firm decision to carry something out (Qarā'atī 2009, 7:261). It may also refer to a pre-action intention or the inner resolve that precedes action (Ṭabarsī 1993, 8:501), while "'azm al-umūr" denotes matters that are firmly settled (Fakhr Rāzī 1999, 25:123).

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[8]. ﴿إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمِن عَزِم ٱلأُمُورِ﴾ (الشورى/٤٣)

[9]. ﴿فَإِذَا عَزَمَ الأَمْرُ﴾ (محمد/ ٢١)

[10]. ﴿فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الأُمُورِ﴾ (آل عمران/ ١٨٦)

[11]. ﴿إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الأُمُورِ﴾ (لقمان/ ١٧)

The general meaning of the verse *"…once you are resolved, put your trust in Allah…"*[12] *(Quran 3:159)* is as follows: just as one is to be flexible and consultative during the process of gathering opinions and information, one must be equally decisive and firm once the results of consultation are clear and a final decision must be made—hesitation must be abandoned. In this verse, "*'azm*" clearly refers to decisive determination or resolution (Makārim Shīrāzī 1993, 3:149).

The Supreme Leader, Ayatullah Khamenei, has repeatedly emphasized this style of decision-making, inspired by Qur'anic verses and Islamic teachings. He considers courage in decision-making a fundamental criterion in evaluating executive performance in government: "Fortunately, taking courageous measures is one of the prominent features of the incumbent government, for which I am grateful to Allah. It is not possible to do great deeds with wavering and vacillation. It is necessary to take valorous action, but this does not mean that one should act rashly. What it means is that if after enough consideration you decide to do something, it should be done without any hesitation or wavering. *'…Consult them in the affairs, and once you are resolved, put your trust in Allah' (Quran 3:159).* You should consult with experts and study various aspects of the issue that is under consideration. Then after you make your decision, trust in Almighty Allah and enter the arena courageously. This courage is necessary" (Leader's Address to Executive Officials, June 30, 2007, https://B2n.ir/rm3168).

In another instance, he stated: "So, showing patience means not giving up, not becoming weak and not having doubts, and stopping the enemy with courage and wisdom and subjugating him. The Holy Quran says: *'If there be twenty patient men among you, they shall overcome two hundred; and if there be a hundred of you, they shall overcome a thousand of the faithless, for they are a lot who do not understand' (Quran 8:65) …* This

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[12]. ﴿وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ﴾ (آل عمران/ ۱۵۹)

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happens under certain circumstances. In some circumstances, you can confront ten times as many, in certain circumstances twice as many" (A televised speech delivered on the occasion of Nowruz and Eid ul-Mabʿath, March 22, 2020, https://B2n.ir/wm9037).

He has described courageous and Jihādi management as a prerequisite for structural reform: "We are able to work on reforming the structures at this point in time. This requires some brave management. Executive officials should get involved in this area with courage... courageous, hopeful and jihadi management accompanied by presence in the field in order to resolve problems …activeness in the face of the enemy and refusal to condition the economy of the country to the decisions of this and that person. This is an important issue" (The speech delivered in a meeting with the government officials of the Islamic Republic on the 8th day of the month of Ramadan, May 14, 2019, https://B2n.ir/ry8911).

Given the above, which highlights both the explicit implications of Qur'anic verses calling for decisiveness and avoidance of hesitation and the exegetical guidance of the Supreme Leader emphasizing jihādi and resolute leadership, it becomes clear that "Decisive and Jihād-Oriented Decision-Making" is a distinct and clearly defined style. It is substantiated both in Qur'anic discourse and exegetical scholarship, as well as in the leadership thought of Ayatollah Khamenei.

The most important characteristic of this style is that decisions are made and implemented promptly, without delay, hesitation, or doubt. A key element in this process is trust in God—a principle notably absent in Western management models but one that is central to Qur'anic thought and is emphasized by the Supreme Leader. It enhances decisiveness and fortifies the spirit of decision-makers. This form of decision-making has no equivalent in Western management theory.

2.2. The Rational Decision-Making Style

Rational decision-making is a managerial approach that emphasizes decisions based on systematic processes and scientific precision, often employing definitive and quantitative models (Riḍā'iyān & ʿAbdullāhī Nisiyānī 2016, 9). This style is grounded in logic and the actual conditions within the organization focused on organizational goals and are known for its high efficiency (Ḥamīdī-Zādih 2008, 61). Therefore, rational decision-making refers to a process that follows logical reasoning and analytical evaluation.

In Islam, sources of knowledge are not limited to reason and human experience; rather, they follow a hierarchy: revelation (*waḥy*), intuition, reason (*ʿaql*), and experience. Thus, rationality in Islam is not merely instrumental rationality but entails the integrated use of all epistemological tools in organizational decision-making (Furūzandih Dihkurdī & Shahābī 2015, 132).

All verses related to decision-making in the Qur'an can, in one way or another, be seen as promoting rationality in decision-making. Among them, verse 18 of Quran 39 makes this especially explicit: *"Who listen to the word [of Allah] and follow the best [interpretation] of it. They are the ones whom Allah has guided, and it is they who possess intellect"*[13] *(Quran 39:18)*. In this verse: *"[those] who listen to the word"* refers to those who apply reason, argument, and reflection as criteria for judgment (Fakhr Rāzī 1999, 26:438). And *"and follow the best of it"* means they discern and choose the best through their insight and intellect (Abū Ḥayyān 1999, 9:193). *"They are the ones whom Allah has guided"* refers to those who possess sound and pure intellect (Bayḍāwī 1997, 5:40; Ibn Kathīr 1998, 7:81). The Arabic phrase *"Lubb"* is a sound heart that leads one to guidance and salvation (Quṭb 2004, 5:3046). Hence, rational decision-making holds a significant position in the Qur'an and Islamic teachings.

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[13]. ﴿الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمْ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ﴾ (الزمر/۱۸)

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The Supreme Leader, Imam Khamenei, has made clear and explicit statements regarding rational decision-making. He stated: "When considering domestic issues … idealism and realism are the two factors that should be taken into account. You should adopt an idealist perspective. As far as your ideals are concerned, do not settle for a compromise. Your perspective should be an idealist perspective, but you should also pay attention to the realities… It is not appropriate to see realism as opposed to idealism. We should aim for our ideals - this is the criterion. But at the same time we must not lose sight of the realities. We should not get delusional. Sometimes one may get delusional when making decisions or doing what should be done. This is equally problematic. It is necessary to keep the ideals in mind, but it is also necessary to take the existing realities into consideration and move towards the ideals one step at a time" (Leader's Address to MPs, June 8, 2010, https://B2n.ir/zd2581). Elsewhere, he remarked: "It is clear that general policies must be so transparent, explicit, and realistic that they enable serious implementation by executives and allow for measurable evaluation" (Message to the Chairman of the Expediency Discernment Council regarding the review of the government's proposed matters, 8 April 1999, https://khl.ink/f/2938).

Based on the above, and considering the keyword *"aḥsan"* [the best], which relates to the quality of the decision, and "*ulu al-albāb*" (those who possess intellect), referring to those capable of discerning sound decisions, it is evident that the rational decision-making model emphasized in the Qur'an is both comprehensive and robust. This is because such decision-making, carried out by the wise and competent within organizations, is always supported by divine revelation, inspiration, and unseen assistance (guidance).

Moreover, it is only the rational individuals who are capable of making the best and most optimal decisions, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and no one else. Additionally, phrases such as *"Do you not apply*

reason?" [14] (Quran 2:44,76; 3:65; 6:32; 7:169; 11:51; 12:109; 21:10; 23:80; 28:60; 37:138), *"Do they not contemplate?"*[15] (Quran 4:82; 47:24), and *"Do you not reflect?"*[16] (Quran 6:50), which appear in various verses of the Qur'an, underscore the importance of intellect and rational thought. It is evident that, based on such expressions in the Qur'an and the exegetical statements of the Supreme Leader, decision-making is highlighted as one of the most important matters in human life, and from these Qur'anic expressions, the rational style of decision-making can also be inferred.

Therefore, it can be said that the rational decision-making style, while emphasizing idealism (achieving the best outcome with the least cost), also takes into account the existing events and realities. In alignment with these, the best option is chosen from among the various alternatives, and the decision is made accordingly. This style of decision-making, both in the Qur'anic verse mentioned under the title of rational decision-making and in the statement of Imam Khamenei (which is based on the Qur'an), is affirmed and emphasized by highlighting its various characteristics and features. Both the Qur'anic verse and the statements of the Supreme Leader explicitly refer to such a decision-making style. Moreover, the rationality proposed by Islam is far more complete and flawless than the instrumental rationality of the West, which itself supports the superiority of the rational decision-making style endorsed by the Supreme Leader over the style preferred by Western thinkers.

2.3. The Intuitive Decision-Making Style

The recognition of intuition and emotional insight in the decision-making process began with Herbert Simon, who acknowledged their significance

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[14]. ﴿افلا تعقلون﴾

[15]. ﴿افلا یتدبرون﴾

[16]. ﴿افلا تتفکرون﴾

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in managerial contexts. De Wit and Meyer later described intuition as the antithesis of conventional analytical problem-solving. Subsequently, Naresh Khatri and colleagues examined the role of intuition in enhancing organizational performance (Furūzandih Dihkurdī et al. 2015, 78).

Intuitive decision-making is a process rooted in the subconscious, shaped by an individual's past experiences and personal traits. The goal of intuitive (or insight-based) decision-making is to arrive at decisions informed by inner perception, guided by reason and discernment. This style is especially relevant in crises, unstable environments, or time-constrained contexts (Manṭiqī 2016, 17). Therefore, this style of decision-making is neither based on the opinions of others nor rational analysis, but rather is inspired by the heart, emotional capacity, and the intuitive insight of the unconscious mind of the decision-maker.

Inspiration (*Ilham*), Discernment (*Furqān*), and Divine Light (*Nūr*) are among the influential aspects of intuition in decision-making, which are mentioned in several verses of the Qur'an (Furūzandih Dihkurdī et al. 2015, 82-84). Inspiration, as mentioned in verse 8 of Quran 91 means that a decision or awareness of a matter or issue occurs in the heart of a person as a result of divine impartation. The inspiration of evil and piety in this verse is essentially the practical intellect (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1970, 20:298-299). In verse 29 of Quran 8, the term "*furqān*," a superlative form of the word *'farq,'* refers to a special type of luminosity and the ability to distinguish right from wrong (Makārim Shīrāzī 1992, 7:141). "*Furqān*" is what illuminates the insight, uncovers the path, and removes ambiguity (Quṭb 2004, 3:1500). The term "*furqān*" means the criterion, salvation, and the separation between truth and falsehood (Ibn Kathīr 1999, 4:38). "*Nūr*" (Divine Light), in verse, *"and give you a light to walk by"*[17] *(Quran 57:28),* is something that Allah grants to certain servants to guide them in both this world and the Hereafter (Qarā'atī 2009, 9:494). It is guidance by

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[17]. ﴿وَ يَجْعَل لَكُمْ نُوراً تَمْشُونَ بِهِ﴾ (الحديد/۲۸)

which a person is led (Ṭabarsī 1993, 9:368; Ṭūsī, n.d., 9:539). *"Whoever is wary of Allah, He shall make for him a way out"*[18] (Quran 65:2) means that Allah shows a way out of every difficult and narrow situation in the world (see Fakhr Rāzī 2000, 30:563; Ibn Kathīr 1999, 8:169; Quṭb 2004, 6:3602; Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1970, 19:315). Therefore, intuition, according to the views of the Quranic exegeses and the verses of the Quran, is one of the most important and effective decision-making styles compared to other styles.

Imam Khamenei has also addressed this form of decision-making. In a speech to Basīj members, he stated: "… social miracles are directly related to individuals' willpower: *'Indeed Allah does not change a people's lot, unless they change what is in their souls' (Quran 13:11)*. Whenever a people make a decision, show willpower and take action in line with their goal, then social miracles will happen. This steadfastness, resistance, decision and self-sacrifice on the scene of our society and country was witnessed thanks to the purity, broadmindedness and insight which are visible today in the religious and basiji youth of our country" (Leader's Speech in Meeting with Basijis of Hamedan Province, July 6, 2004, https://B2n.ir/ut1374).

As observed, the Qur'anic verses concerning "way out" (*makhraj*), "inspiration" (*ilhām*), "criterion" (*furqān*), and "divine light" (*nūr*)—all categories of "intuitive cognition" (*shuhūd*)—articulate a distinct style of decision-making and goal attainment, termed "intuitive decision-making." The Qur'anic indications of inspiration and intuitive cognition are explicit. Furthermore, the exegetical statements of Imam Khamenei, which present other verses as relevant to intuitive decision-making and action, also demonstrate a considerable degree of explicitness and implication regarding the intuitive decision-making style.

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[18]. ﴿وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا﴾ (الطلاق/٢)

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Managers and decision-makers can, in critical situations, heed their feelings and inspirations and make decisions based on them, which constitutes the intuitive decision-making style. In Western thought, intuitive decision-making is a relatively new approach. Many Western scholars consider it superstition, while only a few acknowledge its effectiveness. Therefore, this decision-making style, in addition to resolving many problems, highlights the superiority of the Islamic management paradigm over the Western management paradigm.

2.4. Responsible Decision-Making Style

Responsible decision-making refers to a process in which decision-makers carefully consider both the short-term and long-term consequences of their decisions and acknowledge their own accountability regarding those outcomes. There is a considerable gap between decisions made with such foresight and awareness, and those made carelessly without considering the consequences. This concept is emphasized in various verses of the Qur'an. For instance, in the verse: *"Certainly We had enjoined Adam earlier; but he forgot, and We did not find any resoluteness in him"*[19] *(Quran 20:115)* where "*'azm*" signifies resolution or firm intention, alluding to God's covenant with Prophet Adam (a) when He stated, *"Do not approach this tree"*[20] *(Quran 2:35).* However, Adam (a) forgot this covenant and did not possess the resolution or intention within himself to uphold it (Ḥusaynī Hamidānī 1983, 10:520).

In another verse: *"But if they resolve on divorce, Allah is indeed all-hearing, all-knowing"*[21] *(Quran 2:227).* The word "*'azm*" here points to a responsible decision, indicating that if a man makes the decision to divorce, God is fully aware of the intention and the man bears the

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[19]. ﴿وَلَقَدْ عَهِدْنَا إِلَى آدَمَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَنَسِيَ وَلَمْ نَجِدْ لَهُ عَزْمًا﴾ (طه/۱۱۵)

[20]. ﴿لَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ﴾ (البقرة/۳۵)

[21]. ﴿وَإِنْ عَزَمُوا الطَّلَاقَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾ (البقرة/۲۲۷)

consequences of this serious decision—no longer under the umbrella of divine forgiveness and mercy (Qarā'atī 2009, 1:354).

The verse: *"Every soul is hostage to what it has earned"*[22] *(Quran 74:38)* also implies responsible decision-making, as the actions a person takes—including decisions—are a form of "earning," for which one is held accountable (Quṭb 2004, 6:3761). Additionally, verses such as: *"all of these are accountable"* [23] *(Quran 17:36)* refer to the ultimate accountability for one's actions, including decisions (Ibn Kathīr 1999, 5:70; Bayḍāwī 1997, 3:255).

The Supreme Leader, Imam Khamenei also stated in a speech:

> … we said that this year is the year of "responsiveness" … Responsiveness is an Islamic truth. It is the same as being responsible. Being responsible means that individuals - at any level they are - should primarily criticize themselves. They should see what factors influenced their behavior, statements and decisions. They should see if their behavior was reasonable and on the basis of piety or it was based on selfishness, lust and personal motives. If individuals can ease their conscience and answer these questions, they will be able to be responsive to others as well: *'Indeed hearing, eyesight, and the heart—all of these are accountable.' (Quran 17:36)* …All of us should answer what we saw with our eyes and if we ever saw anything or if we wanted to see, hear, make a decision and take action or not. This is responsiveness … All of you are responsible. Of course, those individuals whose words and decisions influence a large number of people are more responsible than others. This is why I said that the high-ranking officials of the country and the three branches of government - ranging from the Leadership to all officials and

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[22]. ﴿كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ﴾ (المدثر / ٣٨)

[23]. ﴿كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنهُ مَسئُولًا﴾ (الأسراء/٣٦)

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managers - should all be responsive. (Leader's Speech in Meeting with People from Different Social Backgrounds on the Occasion of the Holy Prophet's (s) demise anniversary, April 14, 2004, https://B2n.ir/bn4290)

Taking into account the above verses and statements, it becomes clear that responsible decision-making—which is built on the foundation of accountability—is a legitimate and identifiable decision-making style from the Qur'anic viewpoint. Whether individual or collective, decisions should be made and implemented with full awareness of their implications for both the decision-maker and the wider community.

Notably, this decision-making style does not contradict decisiveness; rather, they can overlap and reinforce one another. In some cases, they may even be applied simultaneously to ensure both moral responsibility and effective leadership.

2.5. The Wise Decision-Making Style

Wise decision-making is a process rooted in a monotheistic worldview, wherein the decision-maker manages personal and social affairs by employing knowledge and managerial skills. This style relies on both clearly defined ideological principles and values, on one hand, and a realistic understanding of the prevailing internal and environmental conditions surrounding the issue at hand, on the other (Manṭiqī 2016, 225). The result of relying on scientific knowledge, the opinions and views of others, practical research outcomes, high intelligence and holistic thinking, a healthy and coherent intellectual system, and deep insight—instead of personal inclinations and preferences—is referred to as wise decision-making (Karamī & Parch 2016, 136).

Wise decision-making comprises seven stages: defining principles and foundations, research and understanding of the subject, decision-preparation, decision-making, implementation planning and

determination, execution (implementation) of the decision, and finally evaluation and rectification of components (Tāftih & Kalāntarī 2015, 137).

Wise decision-making is referenced in various verses of the Qur'an. For instance, the verse *"Do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge"*[24] *(Quran 17:36),* although it absolutely forbids following the unknown, also implicitly suggests that decision-making—being one of the most critical matters—should never be undertaken without adequate knowledge and wise analysis of its consequences. Another verse states: *"[Those] who listen to the word [of Allah] and follow the best [sense] of it. They are the ones whom Allah has guided, and it is they who possess intellect"*[25] *(Quran 39:18).* This verse explicitly outlines the style of wise decision-making.

The Arabic term *"qawl"* here refers to any statement that bears upon action, and the "best word" is that which is most beneficial for human beings. Human by nature seeks perfection and is inherently inclined toward the best word, opting for better over good, and best over better, when making choices (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1970, 17:251; Abū Ḥayyān 2000, 9:193). Furthermore, the meaning of "good word" in the verse is not merely about eloquent phrasing and stylistic excellence. Rather, it refers to a statement that brings benefit to a person in both this world and the hereafter. Choosing the "best word" over a "good word" is akin to choosing an obligatory act over a recommended one (Mughniyyah 2003, 6:404; Ālūsī 1994, 12:243).

According to the Qur'anic exegetes, the phrase *"those who possess intellect" (ulu al-albāb)* in the verse refers to possessors of sound intellects and upright innate dispositions (*fiṭrah*) who can distinguish and discern between various statements through their reason and pure wisdom (Ibn Kathīr 1999, 7:407; Ibn ʿArabī 2001, 2:201). Therefore, the beginning,

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24. ﴿وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ﴾ (الأسراء/۳۶)

25. ﴿الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَ أُولَئِكَ هُمْ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ﴾ (الزمر/ ۱۸)

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middle, and end of this verse indicate wisdom, reason, and the performance of all affairs, as well as making choices between different matters, based on rational thought and wisdom.

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution has also explicitly and implicitly emphasized this matter in multiple statements. For example, he once stated: "The Majlis is the center of decision-making in the country" (Leader's Speech to People of Kermanshah, October 12, 2011, https://B2n.ir/jq9196), and elsewhere affirmed: "Majlis is a place for wise and logical discussions" (Leader's Speech to MPs of 9th Majlis, June 13, 2012, https://B2n.ir/yh8579). In another instance, addressing the members of Parliament, he said: "You should increase your tolerance in parliamentary debates and try to avoid arguments that are rooted in obstinacy. … You should listen to the statements of all MPs even if they do not belong to your movement, your group, or your front. When you see what they are saying is right, *'follow the best of it' (Quran 39:18).* The Quran advises us to 'listen to the Word, then follow the best of it.' We should listen to different arguments, and then accept whatever that is good - even if the good arguments are presented by the people we do not like or believe in" (Leader's Address to MPs, June 24, 2009, https://B2n.ir/yy4257).

Abstaining from following uncertain matters, listening to and examining diverse opinions, and analyzing and selecting the best among them is a wise course of action aligned with wisdom, as alluded to in the preceding verses. Furthermore, the exegetical points made by the Supreme Leader regarding the importance of decisions stemming from the clash of ideas and argumentation in the parliament and other institutions collectively illustrate the Wise decision-making style. This is because all the characteristics of wise decision-making are explicitly presented, affirmed, and emphasized in the Qur'anic verses and the Supreme Leader's exegetical statements. Such a style of decision-making is not evident in Western management practices.

2.6. The Consultative Decision-Making Style

One of the most important benefits of adopting the consultative style of decision-making is that it gives dignity to those involved, prevents sabotage, avoids accusations of authoritarianism, encourages the intellectual growth of subordinates, and fosters support and cooperation in the implementation of decisions (Muqīmī 2015, pp. 179-180). The essence of consultation is that a person seeks the opinions of a group of people in order to uncover the truth about a matter (Aḥmadī Bīghash 2023, 21).

The Qur'an contains two verses that directly and explicitly support consultative decision-making:

Verse 1: *"...and their affairs by counsel among themselves"*[26] *(Quran 42:38).*
This verse declares that all affairs of the believers—except divine commandments, which are solely God's domain—must be managed through consultation (*shawrā*). The word *"amr"* (affair) in this verse encompasses all matters, including decision-making (Makārim Shīrāzī 1992, 20:463; Qurṭubī 1985, 16:37). According to Sayyid Quṭb, all aspects of life should be governed by the principle of consultation (Quṭb 2004, 5:3165). Ibn Kathīr notes that no matter should be finalized unless it is discussed and agreed upon through consultation (Ibn Kathīr 1998, 5:193).

Verse 2: *"...and consult them in the affairs, and once you are resolved, put your trust in Allah"*[27] *(Quran 3:159).* Ṭabarsī lists five benefits of consultation under this verse, one of which is the promotion of a culture of consultation (*shawrā*) within the Islamic ummah (Ṭabarsī 1993, 2:870). After the disappointing outcome of the Battle of Uḥud, some assumed that the Prophet (s) would no longer consult with others. The revelation of this verse affirmed that consultation remains a principle of Islam. While the

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[26]. ﴿وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَي بَيْنَهُمْ﴾ (الشورى/٣٨)

[27]. ﴿وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ﴾ (آل عمران/١٥٩)

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term "*amr*" (affair) is general and includes all matters, the Prophet (s) did not consult others regarding divine rulings and legislation. However, in matters of execution and strategy, he consistently consulted with his companions (Makārim Shīrāzī 1993, 3:144). Temporary failures should not devalue the importance of consultation; the Prophet (s) was divinely commanded to consult, even with those who had previously erred (Qarā'atī 2009, 1:637).

Imam Khamenei considers consultation essential at the highest levels of decision-making. He states: "There are things which are part of the natural traditions of collective behavior. These things should be observed. One of these traditions is that we should consult with others. We should think and consider other people's rights. Of course, this should be followed by *'and once you are resolved, put your trust in Allah' (Quran 3:159)*. We should do that as well" (Statement during the meeting with the President and members of the Cabinet, August 29, 2018, https://B2n.ir/jr9811). Elsewhere, he describes the verse *"and their affairs by counsel among themselves" (Quran 42:38)* as a sign of true faith (Statement during the meeting with the officials of the Islamic Councils, May 25, 1999, https://khl.ink/f/2949).

Thus, from the perspective of the Supreme Leader, consultation and collective deliberation is not only one of the styles but indeed the principal Qur'anic method among decision-making styles. In other words, the logic of the Holy Qur'an regarding decision-making is based on benefiting from the collective wisdom and consultative thinking to the extent that even the Prophet Muhammad (s), despite being needless of the thoughts and opinions of others, adhered to and practiced this important principle.

Similarly, the Supreme Leader, who both in theory and practice moves in accordance with the guidance of divine revelation, has given special attention to this effective decision-making method and has seriously urged other officials to adopt this principle in handling major and sensitive national issues. Therefore, it can be stated that Imam Khamenei's decision-

making style is consultative, grounded in collective wisdom, and free from despotism and self-will.

2.7. The *Tawakkul*-Based Decision-Making Style

The concept of "*tawakkul*" (trust in God) is that the servant regards his Lord as his trustee, manager, planner, and caretaker in all affairs. It implies that the individual refrains from clinging to incomplete and imperfect causes, instead placing reliance on the true cause — God, the ultimate Cause of all causes (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1996, 9:412).

The Qur'an contains many verses emphasizing the importance of *tawakkul* (trust in God) in decision-making and the conduct of affairs. A *tawakkul*-based style of decision-making offers managers and decision-makers various benefits, such as divine support, psychological peace, freedom from despair, divine assistance, reliance on God's power, and sound planning under spiritual assurance (Muqīmī 2015, 185).

The Islamic model of decision-making, especially in management, emphasizes "*tawakkul*" (trust in God) at every stage of the process. This fosters bravery, decisiveness, and peace of mind in managers and decision-makers (ʿĀbidī Jaʿfarī & Maʿṣūmī-Mihr 2013, 69). In this model, external pressures do not dominate or distort the decision-making process, because it is grounded in the belief that all affairs are ultimately under God's control, and all success is sought through Him (Karamī & Parch 2016, 121).

There are verses in the Noble Qur'an that, in various ways, indicate a decision-making style grounded in "*tawakkul*" (trust in God). For instance, the verse, *"and once you are resolved, put your trust in Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who trust in Him"*[28] *(Quran 3:159)* means that (O Prophet!), once your heart has become firmly committed and resolute

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[28]. ﴿فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ﴾ (آل عمران/١٥٩)

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about an action and its implementation, then rely on God and entrust your affair to Him (Ṭabarsī 1993, 2:870). In this verse and the one following it, where "*tawakkul*" is strongly emphasized, it is indicated that after consultation (*shawrā*) and making use of material means and resources in resolving problems and making decisions, one must trust in God in order to benefit from the constant support of the Divine, inexhaustible power. In this way, a person safeguards themselves against future events and the potential consequences of the decision made (Makārim Shīrāzī 1993, 3:151).

The verse, *"And put your trust in Allah, for Allah suffices as Trustee"*[29] *(Quran 4:81)* also reflects the *tawakkul*-based decision-making style. In this verse, after revealing the hypocrites' insincere motives in rebelling against the Prophet's commands, God instructs the Prophet (s) to distance himself from the hypocrites and to manage affairs and make decisions not based on their opinions or consultations, but solely by relying on Allah (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1970, 5:20). Also, in the verse *"If they incline toward peace, then you [too] incline toward it, and put your trust in Allah. Indeed, He is the All-hearing, the All-knowing"*[30] *(Quran 8:61),* trust in God (*tawakkul*) is mentioned as a source of reassurance in the process of peacemaking (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1970, 9:118). Another verse, *"In Him, I have put my trust, and to Him I turn penitently"*[31] *(Quran 11:88),* indicates that the pursuit of societal reform must be goal-oriented and grounded in trust in God, alongside sincere effort (Qarā'atī 2009, 4:111). From this verse and others such as *"And whoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him"*[32] (Quran 65:3), along with all verses containing the keyword "*tawakkul*" (trust in

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29. ﴿وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا﴾ (النساء/۸۱)

30. ﴿وَ إِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَ تَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ﴾ (الانفال/۶۱)

31. ﴿عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ﴾ (هود/۸۸)

32. ﴿وَمَن يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ﴾ (الطلاق/۳)

God), the *tawakkul*-based style of decision-making can be clearly derived from the Qur'an.

Imam Khamenei has also frequently emphasized the principle of *tawakkul*-based decision-making. He once stated: "… after enough consideration you decide to do something, it should be done without any hesitation or wavering. *'...and consult them in the affairs, and once you are resolved, put your trust in Allah. Indeed Allah loves those who trust in Him' (Quran 3:159).* You should consult with experts and study various aspects of the issue that is under consideration. Then after you make your decision, trust in Almighty Allah and enter the arena courageously" (Leader's Address to Executive Officials, June 30, 2007, https://B2n.ir/rm3168). In another instance, he remarked: "We should rely on Allah the Exalted and ask for His help in all tasks. We should trust divine assistance. When you ask Allah the Exalted to help you, all paths will open to you*: 'Whoever is wary of Allah, He shall make for him a way out, and provide for him from whence he does not count upon' (Quran 65:2-3)*" (Leader's Speech in Meeting with Laborers of MAPNA Group, April 30, 2014, https://B2n.ir/rg1306).

From the verses of the Qur'an and the exegetical statements regarding *tawakkul* and the verses related to it, it can be inferred that one of the most important decision-making styles in Islamic teachings is the *tawakkul*-based decision-making style. This is because the verses containing the key term "*tawakkul*" (trust in God) and the references made by the leader of the Islamic Revolution in various instances, and in some cases explicitly, indicate the existence of a *tawakkul*-based decision-making style within Islamic teachings and organizations with an Islamic approach.

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Decision-Making Styles in the Qur'an (with Emphasis on the Thought of Imam Khamenei)

Wise Decision-Making Style (Quran 17:36; 21:37; 39:18)	Consultative Decision-Making Style (Quran 42:38; 3:159)	Decisive Decision-Making Style (Quran 47:21; 42:43; 31:17)	Tawakkul-Based Decision-Making Style (Quran 3:159; 11:88; (65:3)	Intuitive Decision-Making Style (Quran 91:8; 8:29; 57:28)	Responsible Decision-Making Style (Quran 20:115; 2:227; 17:36)	Rational Decision-Making Style (Quran 39:18)

Figure 2 – Decision-Making Styles

Conclusion

The decision-making style rooted in the worldview of thinkers determines the approach taken in dealing with various situations. In contemporary management knowledge, which stems from a materialistic Western worldview, various decision-making styles, such as rational, group-based, and others, are discussed and examined. In contrast, the Qur'an, with its comprehensive view of humans as multi-dimensional beings, and by defining both material and spiritual worldviews, offers a specific approach to decision-making and its styles. By analyzing the Qur'anic verses and the intellectual and exegetical perspective of Ayatullah Khamenei, it is possible to specifically derive and present seven decision-making styles. According to the Qur'anic verses and the exegetical views of the Supreme

Leader, Ayatullah Khamenei, the decision-making styles of wisdom, consultation, decisiveness, responsibility, rationality, intuition, and trust in God (*tawakkul*) are presented as the most important decision-making styles in Islamic organizations.

Organizations, by utilizing these styles, either individually or in combination, will perform more effectively in confronting challenges and achieving organizational goals. This is in contrast to Western decision-making styles, which primarily emphasize consultative and rational approaches, neglecting other Qur'anic decision-making styles. It is important to note that when applying the seven decision-making styles, one cannot simply rely on a single style for different organizational decisions. Depending on various temporal and spatial conditions, one style may be more appropriate and effective than others.

Moreover, different decision-making styles cannot be considered entirely separate and independent from one another, as there is often overlap and synergy between them in many cases. In solving problems, one can utilize a combination of styles. For instance, one can apply a wise decision-making style while simultaneously incorporating *tawakkul*-based and rational elements, which does not contradict the existence of multiple decision-making styles in Islam. In conclusion, it is recommended that future researchers conduct further studies on decision-making styles in the Qur'an to explore and possibly identify additional styles that were not addressed in this study.

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