

Practical Steps for Implementing Islamic Decision-Making



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Sajjad research interests lie in the fields of decision science and complex systems. He has also been involved in several research projects in the areas of system dynamics modeling and agent-based modeling.

In this essay, he has tried to summarize some of the works of **Dr. Mehdi Hamzepour** and **Dr. Seyed Mehdi Azizi** regarding the application of Islamic management and express them in simpler language.

The practical application of management theories is one of the most important steps in utilizing the diverse theories and teachings of management science in the field of practice. In this regard, Islamic management must also make increasing efforts to achieve this important goal. Decision-making, on the one hand, as the most central issue of management, and on the other hand, as a domain that can be divided into Islamic or non-Islamic, more than anything else needs to be applied and operationalized. In fact, by making Islamic decision-making theory practical, a wide range of activities of Muslim executive managers can be Islamized.

In this note, Islamic teachings are considered as the basic basis for the use of the fundamentalist approach, which is one of the most important research and knowledge production methods in Islamic management. In this paper, we will examine the words that have been mentioned and that we deem necessary to review them, which are presented below:

Decision-making

In specialized terminology, decision-making is introduced as the essence of management science and various definitions have been presented for it. For example, see: Simon ۱۹۶۰, p. ۱۳۴; Daftar ۱۳۹۰, p. ۴۲۵; Azizi ۱۳۹۴). Also, great theorists such as Simon and Peter Drucker have considered management to be equivalent to decision-making (Baqarian, ۱۳۸۰, p. ۶۰). In this paper, among the different definitions of decision-making, the same common managerial understanding of decision-making has been considered and, in other words, decision-making has been assumed to have the same meaning as willing (Simon, ۱۹۶۰, p. ۱۳۴).

Authenticity

Authenticity generally means the competence of a matter for use and reliance as a shari'a proof (Badri ۱۴۲۸q, p. ۱۲۸). In other words, if the authenticity of a matter is proven, that matter can be a reason for the validity of an act from a shari'a point of view. The discussion of authenticity in usul al-fiqh is used in many cases, including authenticity of the unit of news, authenticity of appearance and authenticity of certainty. In this research, one of the subsets of the discussion of authenticity of appearance has been used and considered. To clarify this matter, it is also necessary to consider the meaning of the following specialized terms: authenticity of appearance in usul al-fiqh, which means authenticity of appearance verbal shari'a evidence and the need for evidence to set aside the appearance of texts (Hosseini, ۱۴۱۵q, p. ۶۵) which is part of this appearance is related to apparent rulings. It should be added that the real ruling is a ruling that has been obtained by using definitive and certain evidence such as mutawatir news in detail the intention of the shar'a on a

subject (Khoui, ١٤٢٢, vol. ٢, p. ٢٢١). The apparent ruling also means a ruling that is obtained in the absence of a real ruling using credible indications or principles (Hosseini, ٢٠٠٧, p. ١٥٠.)

Maslahat (Interest)

Maslahat means good, righteousness and rightness. Maslahat has been considered synonymous with the word benefit and has been defined as a benefit that has a lasting effect (Askari, ١٤١٢, p. ٢٠٦). As the second step for the practical application of Islamic decision-making after observing authenticity, it has the most important place in the practical application of decision-making. In fact, in the previous step, by making decision-making based on authenticity, we provided the most important factor in the practical application of a decision-making theory. Another important factor in the practical application of decision-making, which has the most important role in the comprehensiveness of the application of this theory, is this factor. This factor is attention to the public good and the good of society. In the Islamic decision-making system, as we will see below, this factor is ensured by paying attention to the maslahat in decision-making

Elimination of Specificity (al-Gha'i al-Khususiyyah)

The literal meaning of elimination of specificity (al-Gha'i al-Khususiyyah) is the removal of the attributes and characteristics of a thing. However, in Islamic jurisprudence (usul al-fiqh), it has a specific meaning:

Elimination of specificity in usul al-fiqh refers to the removal of attributes and characteristics that are mentioned in the reasoning for a ruling (dalil al-hukm) along with the subject of the ruling (mawdoo' al-hukm). These attributes and characteristics are considered to have no interference in the establishment of the ruling (ithbaat al-hukm) for that subject according to common understanding (urf) and based on certain indications (qara'in). The consequence of applying the concept of elimination of specificity is the expansion of the scope of the ruling (shumul al-hukm) to include subjects that lack those

attributes. When applying elimination of specificity to a text (nas) from the shari'ah, a jurist (mujtahid) examines all the attributes of the subject or case of the ruling. They then identify and eliminate those attributes that they are certain do not play a role in the application of the ruling to the subject. By doing so, the jurist expands the scope of the ruling to encompass more subjects and generalizes its application. Elimination of specificity is particularly important in understanding the conduct (seerah) of the (ma'sumin) and deriving rulings from their actions. The condition for applying elimination of specificity is that the attributes and characteristics mentioned in the reasoning for the ruling, according to the common understanding (urf), do not play a role in determining the ruling (ithbaat al-hukm) for the subject, either as an explanation of the subject matter of the shari'ah ruling, or based on internal or external indications (qara'in dakhliyyah aw kharijiyyah). [Na'ini, 1404, vol. 4, p. 335]

Based on the fundamentalist approach (usul al-fiqh), the following steps have been extracted for implementing Islamic decision-making with a focus on authenticity (hujjah):

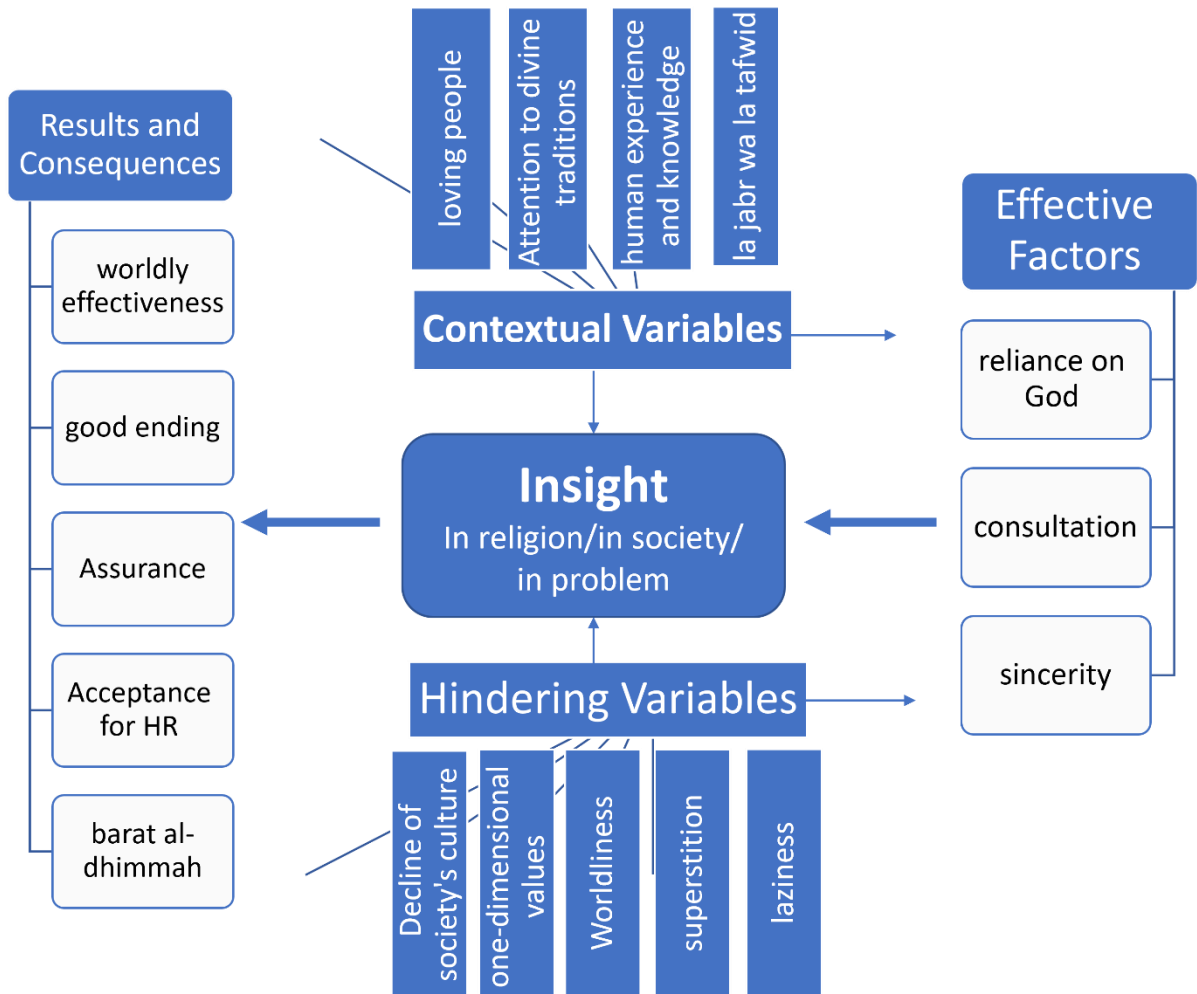
- 1- Consensus (Ijma') on the Islamic Decision-Making Theory
- 2- Making Islamic Decision-Making Authenticity-Based
- 3- Directing Islamic Decision-Making towards Maslahat (Interest)
- 4- Operationalizing Sira (Conduct) Research
- 5- Elimination of Specificity (al-Gha'i al-Khususiyah)

In the following, we will explain each of these steps and how to implement them in detail.

Step 1: Consensus on the Islamic Decision-Making Theory

The first step in extracting the consensual Islamic decision-making theory is to identify the effective Islamic teachings on decision-making. To this end, through a review of written works and interviews, nearly seventy effective Islamic teachings on decision-making were extracted. Then, using a grounded theory approach, the following model was presented It

can be claimed that this model presents the consensual Islamic decision-making theory. We will briefly explain the model below:



Insight (Basirah) as a Central Component of Islamic Decision-Making

In addition to the emphasis placed by various experts in Islamic sciences on the issue of insight (*basirah*) in the interviews conducted, other factors and considerations also influenced the selection of insight as a central factor in Islamic decision-making.

Insight holds a special place in Islamic literature. For example, Imam Ali (as) states in the difficult conditions of the Battle of Siffin: No one has the ability to fulfill this divine duty of jihad against the Syrians except those who have insight, patience, and knowledge of the positions of truth (*Nahj al-Balaghah*, p. 241). This statement highlights the importance of insight especially in complex and sensitive situations.

Effective Factors

Authentic Islamic texts extensively emphasize the factors of reliance on God (*tawakkul*), consultation (*mashura*), and sincerity (*ikhlas*) (*Al-A'raf* 89, *An-Nisa'*: 61). Additionally, the sayings of the Infallible Imams (as) point to both the otherworldly and worldly benefits of these factors (*Misbah al-Shari'ah*, p. 164). Moreover, these factors (especially reliance on God) are particularly necessary for decision-making in difficult and sensitive situations. For instance, Imam Ali (as) would always mention reliance on God and the sufficiency of God's support in his sermons during the Battle of Siffin (*Al-Manqari*, 1370, p. 429).

Moderation (*i'tidal*) also holds a special place in Islamic teachings. Moderation in this research refers to nothing other than the words of Imam Ali (as) when he said: Left and right are deviation, and the middle path is the main road (*Kulaini*, 1429, vol. 8, p. 68). In other words, moderation means avoiding extremism in certain Islamic teachings that are effective in decision-making. Therefore, moderation encompasses many important teachings that may appear to be contradictory or at opposite ends of the spectrum, such as honesty and consideration of *maslahah* (interest), realism and idealism, generosity and frugality, patience and speed, assertiveness and receptivity to criticism, and so on.

The connection between these factors and the central factor, namely insight, lies in the fact that a correct, deep, and far-sighted understanding of the issue and its conditions, which is the meaning of insight, is only possible when the decision-maker is not caught up

in anxiety or an emotional state. This state is most effectively achieved through the factor of reliance on God. On the other hand, a correct and deep understanding, or insight, is only complete when the decision-maker does not rely solely on his own thoughts and also benefits from the opinions of others, which is the factor of consultation.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, one aspect of insight is having insight in religion. One of the requirements of having insight in religion, as can be understood from Imam Sadiq's (as) argument against the Sufis, is to avoid extremism and undue emphasis on one of the religious teachings without due consideration of the overall body of religious teachings (Harrani, 1404, p. 352). This important factor is also directly related to the factor of moderation. It should be added that insight has an independent existence and therefore these factors are not a sufficient condition for the formation of insight; however, they can be considered a necessary condition.

Contextual Variables

The importance of knowledge holds a special place in Islamic literature. The sheer volume of hadiths (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad and the Imams) dedicated to this topic is a testament to its significance. Indeed, several volumes of the extensive hadith collection Bihar al-Anwar are dedicated to knowledge (Majlisi, 1403).

Love for humanity is another fundamental teaching in Islamic literature. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is described as a mercy to the worlds (Al-Anbiya': 107). The Islamic perspective on free will and predestination, known as *la jabr wa la tafwid* (neither compulsion nor delegation), is also emphasized in Shia hadiths. Many of these hadiths can be found in the Tawhid (unity of God) sections of hadith books (Majlisi, 1403). The utilization of human experience and knowledge is an essential component of moderation.

Hindering Variables

Martyr Murtada Mutahhari extensively discussed the problems and drawbacks of focusing solely on one-dimensional values (Mutahhari, 1382).

Other hindering factors include laziness, superstition, and worldliness. These issues are addressed in Islamic ethics books and Shia hadiths. Laziness, apathy, and superstition each impede proper tawakkul (reliance on God) in their own way. Worldliness, in addition to being directly opposed to ikhlas (sincerity), also hinders the central factor of this research, as excessive attachment to the world prevents one from attaining clear-sightedness, deep understanding, and accurate insight. As Imam Ali (as) said, Love of the world blinds and deafens a person (Kulaini, 1407, vol. 2, p. 136).

Results and Consequences

One of the most important results of Islamic decision-making is the fulfillment of one's duty and the attainment of barat al-dhimmah (release from responsibility). The issue of barat al-dhimmah, which is related to one's obligation to fulfill one's duties, holds a fundamental place in Shia jurisprudence (Musavi Khomeini, 1380).

In addition to these, worldly effectiveness, a good ending, assurance, and acceptance among others are also results of Islamic decision-making. Perhaps one of the main reasons for these results and consequences for Islamic decision-making can be found in the fact that divine support is not limited to the afterlife, as can be proven from verses of the Quran (Ghafir: 51). In fact, a person who makes an Islamic decision, which is an example of choosing what is right and true, becomes worthy of divine support. Divine support, in turn, has numerous worldly and otherworldly benefits, which are the results of Islamic decision-making for the decision-maker.

Step 2: Making Islamic Decision-Making Authenticity-Based

Any decision-making theory is only practical if the decision-maker is first willing to use it. In modern management literature as well, if a theory does not have practical usefulness and

efficiency, no decision-maker will use it. Therefore, the first step in making Islamic decision-making practical is to establish its operational efficiency. To establish operational efficiency in Islamic decision-making theory, we must address the issue of authenticity (hujjah) and show that authenticity-based Islamic decision-making has operational efficiency.

But what are the results of such decision-making, and how high is its operational efficiency?

In this regard, we first must point out that we believe the Islamic Lawgiver is the creator of the universe and the laws that govern it. Therefore, acting in accordance with his laws and decrees, which are the real rulings, has the highest operational efficiency. This is because He is the one who created this universe, and therefore He knows better than anyone else how to best utilize this universe (Taha: 124, Ra'd: 19-30, Al-Imran: 42).

However, operational efficiency should not be equated with material gain, which is the basis of Western decision-making (Martin, 2006, p. 202). Instead, it refers to real benefit and growth (Mutahhari, 1364, p. 209).

Now, the question is: Does shifting from Islamic decision-making based on real rulings, which has maximum operational efficiency, to authenticity-based Islamic decision-making reduce this operational efficiency?

To answer this question, based on religious sources and the views of jurists, we can generally say that the main benefit and growth, which is the ultimate goal of any action and decision from an Islamic perspective, lies in fulfilling one's duty (Nisa': 13-14, Hud: 7). And as mentioned earlier, the duty of decision-makers in the absence of a real ruling is to follow authenticity-based Islamic decision-making. Therefore, authenticity-based Islamic decision-making, as it is an act of fulfilling one's duty, from an Islamic perspective, has the most important element of efficiency, namely achieving growth and a good ending.

Step 3: Directing Islamic Decision-Making towards Maslahat (Interest)

The first two steps, making Islamic decision-making authenticity-based and consensus-based, ensure that the decision-maker's primary concern is to fulfill their duty and act in accordance with the will of God. However, Islam also emphasizes the importance of considering the common good (maslahat) in the decision-making process. While personal spiritual and material benefits are secured by adhering to authenticity in decision-making, the third step involves a process that takes into account the dual importance of the individual and society. This process is the consideration of maslahat in decision-making. In this step, we focus on the concept of maslahat as a decision-making criterion and explain its characteristics:

- Alignment with Islamic Goals and Motivations: Maslahat should align with the general and overarching goals and motivations of Islam for governing and guiding society
- .Non-Contradiction with General Sharia Rulings: The identified Malahat should not contradict the general rulings of Sharia (Islamic law).
- Observing the Principle of Greater Good and Lesser Good:
 - Timely and Accurate Understanding of Context: The decision-maker should have a timely and accurate understanding of the context in which the decision is being made.
 - Foresight and Comprehensiveness: The decision-maker should exercise foresight and consider all aspects of the situation.
 - Goal-Orientedness: The decision-maker should have a clear goal in mind and make decisions that are aligned with that goal.
 - Prioritizing Society over the Individual: In general, the interests of society should take precedence over those of the individual.
 - Prioritizing the Organization as Part of Society over the Individual: In the context of organizations, the interests of the organization, as part of society, should take precedence over those of the individual.

- Reliance on Expertise and Consultation: The decision-maker should rely on the expertise of others and engage in consultation to make informed decisions.

Given the social dimension of maslahat, it is crucial to refer to the experience of Shi'a governance in order to provide a practical understanding of this concept. Additionally, to ensure the relevance of the discussion, it is necessary to go beyond simply referencing other Shi'a governance experiences and instead focus on the issue of maslahat and its criteria in the context of the Islamic Republic. By incorporating these considerations into Islamic decision-making, we can ensure that decisions not only align with the will of God and fulfill the duty of the decision-maker but also contribute to the betterment of society as a whole. This, in turn, brings us closer to realizing the ultimate goal of Islamic decision-making: establishing a just and equitable society that reflects the values and principles of Islam.

Step 4: Operational Sira Research

In this step, we aim to provide a framework for Muslim managers to take the initiative and implement Islamic decision-making in their organizations. Therefore, this step, operational Sira research, is designed as follows to make Islamic decision-making practical:

Observing and emulating a similar decision in the Sira of the Infallible Imams that was based on similar teachings is the first step in this field and the third step in making Islamic decision-making practical. Here, it is necessary to explain the concept of a similar decision.

A similar decision in the Sira of the Ahlul Bayt is a decision that, after going through the process of elimination of specificity from similar teachings in Islamic decision-making theory, has its roots in similar teachings. In simpler terms, two similar decisions are identical in terms of the involved internal and external factors, although the conditions and factors that are specific to time, place, and people may differ between them. It should be

added that through the process of elimination of specificity, the impact of these specific conditions of time, place, and people is identified and disregarded. More precisely, in the process of elimination of specificity, we conduct a sensitivity analysis of the decision-making process with respect to these specific conditions and do not include the level of sensitivity in the decision-making process when emulating it.

It must be acknowledged that going through this process is never easy. To be more precise, one should never expect to look at the organizational decision-making process needed and take a quick look at the Sira of the Ahl-al-Bayt in search of similarity, and then, after finding a similar historical event, use this similarity as the basis for their decision and act in accordance with that historical event. This is almost a caricature of using the Sira of the Ahlul Bayt in decision-making, and it is obvious that it will lead to equally caricatured and incorrect results.

In the correct approach, first, the factors influencing the decision-making process must be identified, and then, by referring to Islamic decision-making theory and the set of teachings that influence decision-making, an initial list of teachings related to decision-making should be created. Then, one should refer to an event in the Sira whose list of influencing factors is similar to the decision-making process we need, and the list of effective Islamic teachings in this decision-making process of the Infallible Imam should also be extracted. If the set of initial lists of effective Islamic teachings in our decision-making is a subset of the list related to the decision-making of the Infallible Imam, then the process of elimination of specificity should be applied to the decision-making. We will learn more about elimination of specificity in the next step.

Step 5: elimination of specificity in Sirah Research

The fifth and final step in the process of applying Islamic decision-making is elimination of specificity. As mentioned earlier, by conducting operational Sirah research, one can gain a wealth of practical lessons on how to apply Islamic decision-making and the important

issues in this field, including prioritizing teachings. In this final step, we strive to remove the specificity and characteristics of the positions and decisions made.

More precisely, in each issue there are various variables that affect that issue. In the process of abstraction, our goal is to eliminate interfering variables and focus on the direct and indirect variables of the issue. In this way, we take the guidance of the Infallible Imams as our model.

Applying authority-based Islamic decision-making provides a valuable framework for ethical and effective management practices. By adopting this approach, Muslim managers can ensure that their decisions align with their faith and contribute to the well-being of their organizations and society as a whole. This note serves as a foundation for further exploration of Islamic decision-making principles and their practical applications in various managerial contexts.