

# Sudanese Proverbs and Their Implications on Management Practice

## Topic One: Decision Making

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### ABSTRACT

Proverbs are an integral part of a society's collective heritage, embodying the values and principles passed down through generations. This study explores the role of Sudanese proverbs in shaping managerial decision-making processes, focusing on how cultural wisdom can be integrated into modern decision-making practices.

Using a qualitative approach, the research collects and analyzes Sudanese proverbs relevant to managerial decision-making. These proverbs were categorized into common themes and aligned with established decision-making theories, including Rational Decision Theory, Intuitive Decision-Making Theory, Consequences Theory, and Psychological Theories of Indecisiveness. Through thematic analysis, the study illustrates how proverbs reinforce key decision-making behaviors, such as gathering information, trusting intuition, considering long-term consequences, and addressing indecision.

The findings highlight how Sudanese proverbs align with core decision-making principles. They emphasize early problem identification, in-depth analysis, and avoiding superficial judgments, reinforcing the need for flexibility and root cause analysis. The proverbs also stress the importance of intuition and self-reliance, encouraging individuals to trust their instincts, especially in uncertain situations. Additionally, they advocate for the careful consideration of both immediate and long-term consequences, in-line with Consequences Theory. The study also reveals how psychological factors, such as information overload and anxiety, contribute to indecision and choice paralysis, supporting psychological theories of indecisiveness.

The findings also reveals that traditional cultural wisdom holds significant value for modern management practices. These proverbs, deeply rooted in Sudanese culture, align closely with well-established decision-making theories. By tapping into these cultural insights, leaders can enhance their decision-making processes through a balanced approach that combines logical analysis, intuition, and an awareness of cultural perspectives.

Based on these findings, the study offers actionable recommendations for organizations and leaders. It suggests integrating the cultural wisdom found in proverbs into leadership development programs to help leaders adopt a balanced approach to decision-making that combines logic, cultural awareness, and adaptability. The research also emphasizes fostering early problem identification, encouraging feedback and consultation, and promoting critical thinking and flexibility. Furthermore, addressing psychological factors like indecision can help leaders become more confident and decisive, improving overall leadership effectiveness.

### General Framework of the Study

### INTRODUCTION

Humans employ a variety of methods to communicate effectively in different situations, tailoring their approach to the context, audience, and purpose of the message. Some individuals prefer to be explicit and direct, expressing their thoughts in a clear and straightforward manner, using words and sentences in their literal sense. Others may choose for a more implicit and indirect approach, using metaphorical language and

non literal expressions that not only capture attention but also provoke deeper thought or emotion. This indirect forms of communication, often making the message more memorable. One such device that plays a significant role in both direct and indirect communication is proverbs.

Proverbs can be used to create a connection between the speaker and their audience through shared cultural knowledge. According to Kövecses (2002), proverbs, can significantly enhance the effectiveness of communication by encapsulating complex ideas into familiar phrases that carry emotional weight and practical wisdom. The use of proverbs is not limited to everyday conversations; they are commonly employed in a variety of settings, from casual dialogues to public speeches and media. Public figures in Sudan often use them in their speeches. They are also found alongside the heading of articles in Sudanese newspapers. Sudanese politicians often use proverbs to allows them to tap into the collective memory and cultural identity of the Sudanese people, making their messages impactful and memorable.

Elsadiq El-Mahdi, a prominent Sudanese political and religious leader, throughout his career, skilfully used proverbs to convey his ideas. For instance, he employed the proverb 'الجار قبل الدار' which translates to 'The neighbour before the house' to highlight the importance of Sudan's relationships with its neighbouring countries, emphasizing the need for regional cooperation and peace. By using this proverb, he not only reinforced his message but also appealed to the shared values and cultural understandings of the Sudanese people, strengthening the connection between him and his audience.

As a form of oral literature, proverbs are among the possessions of a society and culture, as they reveal the prevalent values and rules transferred from generation to generation. These values contribute to shaping organizational culture, as individuals within organizations often carry the societal norms that shape their behaviour. And so, proverbs are important in motivating employees, defining roles and responsibilities, and reinforcing the norm in the organization. Proverbs used in organizational contexts could have multiple reasons behind their use, such as:

- Justifying actions that align with societal norms and expectations.
- Providing guidance on how to address problems and make decisions.
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities and reminding employees of their duties and expectations.
- Reinforce shared identity, strengthen the understanding of organizational norms, and cultivate a cohesive and effective work environment.

Proverbs, as a form of oral literature, are an integral part of a society's collective heritage, reflecting the prevailing values and principles passed down through generations. These values also influence organizational culture, as individuals within organizations often carry the societal norms that shape their behavior. As such, proverbs play an important role in motivating employees, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and reinforcing organizational norms. Proverbs in organizational settings may serve various purposes, such as:

- Justifying actions that align with societal norms and expectations.
- Providing guidance on how to address problems and make decisions.
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities and reminding employees of their duties and expectations.
- Reinforce shared identity, strengthen the understanding of organizational norms, and cultivate a cohesive and effective work environment.

### Statement of the Problem

Proverbs often contain two kinds of meaning: their literal or primary meaning, and a deeper or implicated meaning (Gibbs, 1994). The implicated meaning is not always transparent, and listeners, in order to interpret

such proverbs, need to have social and cultural background knowledge (Lauer, 2000). Despite the widespread use of proverbs in Sudanese daily conversations and their influence on both societal and organizational culture, formal studies of Sudanese proverbs and their role in management and organizational contexts remain limited (Al-Roubaie, 2005).

Several proverbs reflect key aspects of management, such as attitudes toward decision-making, planning, leadership, cooperation, corruption, delegation, teamwork, and ethics in the workplace. Understanding these proverbs provides valuable insights into the cultural tendencies that may influence individual behavior within organizational settings. The present research is significant because it addresses this gap by exploring Sudanese proverbs and examining their influence on management practices, with a particular focus on the decision-making process. By delving into the intersection of culture and management, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how traditional wisdom shapes organizational behavior and leadership dynamics in Sudanese contexts.

### **Aim and Objectives**

The primary aim of the study is to investigate the implications of proverbs, which are deeply embedded in the culture, on the decision-making process in managerial contexts. This involves understanding how traditional wisdom carried through proverbs can shape leadership and managerial decisions in modern organizational settings.

Specific objectives are:

- To shed light on the role of proverbs as carriers of wisdom in decision-making context.
- To identify how the principles of proverbs applied to guide decision-making process.
- To offer new insights into their practical applications in modern management.

By achieving these objectives, the study would contribute to understanding the intersection of traditional wisdom and decision-making process. Consequently, it could help leaders and managers in Sudan (and potentially beyond) integrate cultural values into contemporary decision-making while preserving important cultural elements.

### **Previous studies on Sudanese Proverbs**

Previous studies on Sudanese proverbs are relatively new area as no study was found before 2000. These studies focused on examining the role of proverbs in education, social values, racial attitudes, and the representation of women. These studies revealed how proverbs function as powerful tools for preserving cultural identity, imparting wisdom, and reinforcing social norms. However, they also shed light on the potential negative impact of certain proverbs, such as the perpetuation of racist ideologies and gender stereotypes.

Ahmed's (2005) study examines the role of proverbs in the educational and social contexts of Sudan and England, focusing on how they express key cultural values, social norms, and traditions. The research highlights the significant role proverbs play in both societies as tools for imparting wisdom, guidance, and moral lessons. Although Sudanese and English proverbs differ in their cultural applications, the study demonstrates that both share the common function of shaping educational values, social behaviors, and individual conduct. Ahmed concludes that proverbs are essential for preserving cultural identity and guiding behavior across generations, underscoring the universal importance of oral traditions in influencing and shaping human behavior.

Mubarok (2017) examines how Sudanese proverbs reflect traditional views of women's roles and gender in society, using a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) approach. The study analyzes seven proverbs specifically addressing women, selected from written sources, with the aim of exploring the interplay between

language, gender, and culture, and shedding light on how proverbs mirror societal attitudes toward women. The findings reveal that women are often portrayed in stereotypical and limiting ways in Sudanese proverbs. The study emphasizes that these proverbs tend to depict women in negative, subservient roles, promoting stereotypes that contribute to gender inequality. Additionally, proverbs frequently portray women as symbols of virtue, embodying purity and moral integrity, reinforcing the idea that a woman's worth is tied to her adherence to societal standards of morality and domestic roles.

Ali et al. (2018) explore the role of Sudanese proverbs in reinforcing racist attitudes within Sudanese society. The authors analyze how certain proverbs, shaped by their cultural and historical significance, promote ideas that contribute to racial discrimination and the marginalization of specific ethnic groups in Sudan. The paper concludes that while Sudanese proverbs are an important aspect of cultural heritage, they can also serve as tools that perpetuate racism and ethnic divisions. The authors advocate for a critical re-examination of proverbs, urging the identification and challenge of those that reinforce harmful racial ideologies, with the aim of fostering more inclusive and equalitarian social dynamics.

Abbas (2022) studies how Sudanese folk proverbs represent women, focusing on their moral and ethical qualities, as well as their social and cultural status. The study reveals that Sudanese folk proverbs effectively portray women by highlighting their virtues, roles, and contributions both within the household and in the broader society. These proverbs emphasize women's involvement in family life and various societal activities, underscoring their importance in both private and public spheres. The research demonstrates how these proverbs shape the image of women, using them as expressions to reflect their status, roles, and cultural significance in daily life.

In conclusion, this body of research underscores both the positive and problematic aspects of Sudanese proverbs, highlighting the need for critical engagement with these cultural expressions in light of contemporary social dynamics. Additionally, one notable gap in the existing literature is the lack of studies exploring the role of proverbs in management and leadership contexts. Future research could explore how proverbs are utilized in management practices, providing a deeper understanding of their potential applications in contemporary work environments.

### **Importance of the study**

The researchers' believe that Sudanese proverbs that could play a significant role in management and leadership practices is indeed the driving force behind selecting this topic. While research on proverbs in the Sudanese context is a relatively new phenomenon, they focused on analysing proverbs from very limited angles. However, the management and leadership dimensions of these proverbs have not been sufficiently explored, constituting a gap in existing research. By focusing on how Sudanese proverbs can influence leadership styles, decision-making processes, and communication within organizations, our study intends to fill that gap.

This paper, which focuses on decision-making, is part of a series studies, exploring the rich and previously under-researched topic of Sudanese proverbs and their implications for management practices. The series will cover a wide range of proverb-related topics, with each article addressing specific aspect only. By discovering, analyzing, and understanding these proverbs, we could gain insights into the deeper aspects of management within Sudanese culture.

Sudanese society is governed more by customs and traditions than by formal rules and regulations. Individuals live by these proverbs, absorbing their meanings and applying them to both personal and professional life, often passing them on to their children. Through this research, we aim to reveal how these proverbs shape organizational behavior and contribute to a broader understanding of management within the Sudanese cultural context.

Through this research, we specifically aim to reveal how these proverbs shape leadership styles and decision-making processes within organizations. By exploring the unique role of proverbs in this specific cultural and

managerial context, the study will offer new insights into their practical applications in modern leadership, contributing both theoretically and practically to the field of management studies.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The aim of this study is to explore the implications of Sudanese proverbs on the managerial decision-making process. The research method involves several stages: first, proverbs were collected from a variety of sources and purposive sampling was employed to ensure that relevant proverbs. Next, the proverbs were translated into English. Following translation, the non-literal meanings and cultural context of each proverb were interpreted. Finally, a thematic analysis was conducted to categorize the proverbs into decision-making themes, and to assess their alignment with established management theories.

### Step (1): Searching

In this stage, the population of the study consists of Sudanese proverbs (from various regions and communities) that relate to various aspects of life. Proverbs were gathered from a variety of sources; written and oral, including:

- Books such as Sudanese Proverbs (by Babiker Badri), Sudanese Proverbs: Translated, Transliterated & Explained (by Muna Ibrahim Zaki) and Sudanese Common Proverbs (published by the Sudan Ministry of General Education).
- Online articles, blogs, and media sources, especially those which focused on folklore and oral traditions.
- Direct collection through daily conversations with people who are knowledgeable of proverbs.

The aim of utilizing diverse range of sources is to guarantee well-rounded and rich collection of proverbs. This collection constitutes the sample frame, which is a subset of the population from which the actual sample was selected (Neuman, 2014). The sample frame includes those proverbs specifically related to aspects of decision-making in management.

To enhance the relevance of the collected proverbs, purposive sampling was employed. In purposive sampling, the researchers' deliberately chose individuals, items, or data that are most informative or relevant to the research question (Palinkas et al., 2015). Therefore, specific proverbs that relate to decision-making were deliberately selected. This ensured that the sample consists of proverbs that offer insight into decision-making in management context allows for deeper exploration.

### Step (2): Translating

Translating is an essential part of making Sudanese proverbs accessible and understandable to English-speaking audience. The translation process was multi-step:

- **Literal Translation:** The proverbs were first translated literally, to ensure that the meaning remains as close to the original as possible.
- **Cross-checking:** Tools like Google Translate and ChatGPT were employed to verify and refine the initial translation.
- **Consulting Experts:** For idiomatic phrases or culturally specific elements that were challenging to translate, Sudanese cultural experts were consulted to ensure the original meaning is maintained.

For example the proverb 'بعد ما شاب ودوه الكتاب' is literally translated 'After he got old, they sent him to the Qur'an school.' This phrase was then explained, noting that 'شاب' means got old and 'الكتاب' refers to the traditional Qur'an school (symbolizes a place of learning, in old times, where children used to go to learn reading and writing).



### Step (3): Meaning & Usage

After literal translation, each proverb non-literal meaning was explained by providing the underlying message rather than what the words mean. A concise note that explains the meaning and cultural background of each proverb is presented. This is essential for making sense of the proverbs' cultural context.

For instance, the proverb ‘ بعد ما شاب ودوه الكتاب ’ means that after a person reaches old age and, experiences ageing signs (like gray hair), it is too late for him to engage in something he is not accustomed to (such as learning or adapting to a new skill). It is used to illustrate the difficulty of asking someone to get accustomed to something late in life. The proverb reflects a part of Sudanese culture that acknowledges the idea that there is an appropriate time for everything, and that certain thing cannot be learned or achieved after the right time has passed.

### Step (4): Sorting (Thematic Analysis)

These proverbs were sorted and analysed based on common themes. Thematic analysis is a method for systematically describing and interpreting the meaning of qualitative data by assigning codes to the data and reducing the codes into themes, followed by analysis and presentation of these themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The details were described below.

- **Assigning Codes to Proverbs:** During this step, the proverb is interpreted and assign codes based on its meaning. The analysis focuses on identifying key aspects related to management. Codes may include decision making, planning, delegation, risk, corruption and others.
- **Theme Identification:** The codes were grouped into broader themes that reflect the underlying message of the proverb. As for decision making, it is revealed that there are 32 proverbs. The 32 proverbs were not only identified but also further categorized under specific decision-making theories as shown below.

Proverbs Interpretation	Theme	Number
Proverbs that emphasize the need for gathering information to assess a situation, considering all options, and ensuring that every decision is well thought to minimize mistakes.	Theory of Rational Decision Making	14
Proverbs that encourage relying on intuition and gut feelings rather than lengthy deliberations were categorized under intuitive decision-making.	Theory of Intuitive decision-making.	3
Proverbs that encourage people to consider the impact of their actions and think through the possible outcomes before making a decision.	Consequences Theory of Decision-making.	4
Proverbs that emphasize indecisiveness or inability to make decision.	Psychological Theory of Indecisiveness.	6

- **Theme Analysis & Interpretation:** This step involves interpreting the meaning of these proverbs and explain their contextual relevance.
- **Presentation of Themes:** In the final step, the identified themes and interpretations are presented in a structured manner to highlight their relevance.

### Theoretical Framework of the Study

The study of decision-making in management is shaped by a variety of theories that examine how choices are made within organizational settings. Management functions such as planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling are linked with the decision-making process, which forms the foundation of actions taken by organizational members. While there is no single comprehensive theory to fully capture the complexity of

decision-making, several key theories offer unique insights into how decisions are made and their implications for organizational success.

### **Theory of Rational Decision Making**

Rational decision-making refers to a systematic, analytical approach to making decisions, where choices are based on reason, facts, and clear logical steps (Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011). Rooted in economics and social sciences, rational choice theory originated with thinkers like Adam Smith and was further developed through modern economic and decision theory (Boudon, 2003). In business contexts, rational decision-making involves identifying the problem, gathering relevant information, generating alternatives, evaluating the costs and benefits of each alternative, and making the most logical choice (Elbanna, 2006; Oliveira, 2007; Towler, 2010).

Key elements of the rational decision-making include a systematic approach which involves a structured process that clearly identifies problems and solutions. It also emphasizes objective analysis, where decisions are based on evaluating evidence and seeking optimal outcomes to minimize risks and maximize benefits (Oliveira, 2007). The overarching goal is optimization, ensuring that the decision chosen delivers the greatest value, supported by data-driven analysis.

This theory is foundational for business practices in areas like financial planning and strategic forecasting, where decisions are guided by facts and logical analysis rather than subjective opinions. It also enhances accountability and transparency, fostering trust among stakeholders and improving organizational performance by ensuring decisions are grounded in data-driven reasoning.

### **Theory of Intuition Decision Making**

Intuition can be defined as the ability to understand or know something immediately, without the need for conscious reasoning or deliberate analysis (Dean, Mihalasky, Ostrander, & Schroeder, 1974). The concept of intuition has its roots in psychology, where early work focused on understanding how individuals make decisions without relying on deliberate analytical thinking. In the field of management, intuition can be traced back to Chester Barnard (1938). In his book, *Functions of the Executive*, Barnard introduced both rationality based logical and intuition based illogical process of decision making (Novicevic, Hensch, & Wren, 2002). However, research on intuition began gaining attention after the 1990s. Before that, decision-making in management was predominantly based on rational analysis and structured processes.

Intuitive decision-making is a process that involves making choices based on gut feelings, instincts, and internal guidance rather than on analytical reasoning and empirical data (Goldberg, 1983 & Klein, 1998). This process contrasts with rational decision-making by relying on subjective judgments rather than analytical reasoning (Goldberg, 1983; Klein, 1998).

Intuitive decision making style earned much popularity in the recent years. The reasons may be due to time constraints, decision speed, and cost of acquiring information restricted twentieth-century theorists to make decisions with inadequate amount of information (Buchanan & Connell, 2006).

### **Consequentialism Ethical Theory of Decision Making**

Decision-making often entails anticipating the consequences of one's choices over time. However, real-world choice outcomes are not always immediate, adding significant challenges to determining their long-term implications for behavior.

The term "consequentialism" is derived from the root "consequence," and it refers to a class of normative ethical theories that assess the morality of an action based on the overall consequences it produces. In this sense, it is the consequences of an action that determine whether or not it is morally permissible, rather than the motives behind the action (Smart, 1973).

Several scholars have played a key role in shaping consequentialism. Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) is best known as an early advocate of utilitarianism, which forms the foundation of consequentialist thought (Bentham, 1789). John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), building on Bentham's work, refined the theory by arguing that higher intellectual pleasures should be given more weight than physical pleasures in moral decisions. In modern times, Peter Singer has applied consequentialist principles to contemporary issues like animal rights and global poverty (Singer, 1975). Together, these theorists have shaped consequentialism by emphasizing the importance of maximizing positive outcomes and minimizing negative ones, with a focus on ethical responsibility.

### **Psychological Theory of Indecisiveness**

Indecisiveness, which is a widespread and complex phenomenon, is defined as a tendency to experience problems with making decisions across situations and domains (Crites, 1969). It has been described as a trait meaning a stable characteristic of some individuals that influences their decision-making processes in multiple areas of life (Rassin, 2007).

The psychological theory of indecisiveness was primarily developed by Eric Rassin, a Dutch psychologist, in the early 2000s. His work centred around understanding the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects of indecisiveness, and how this phenomenon affects decision-making, particularly in the context of everyday life and work environments.

In the management field, several scholars have contributed to understanding indecisiveness in decision-making, leadership, and organizational behaviour. For instance James G. March studied decision-making under ambiguity, highlighting how uncertainty can paralyze managers, contributing to indecisiveness (March, 1982). Peter Drucker, advocated for clear goals and decisive leadership, emphasizing that indecisiveness can hinder organizational effectiveness. He warned that indecisiveness could hinder an organization's ability to act quickly, thus compromising its overall effectiveness (Drucker, 2001).

Germeijs and de Boeck (2002) identified several common characteristics that may characterize indecisiveness, which can manifest in various ways:

- Extended decision-making time
- Perceived difficulty in making decisions
- Uncertainty during decision-making
- Delaying decisions
- Avoiding decisions
- Changing decisions
- Regret and worry about decisions

This theoretical framework of the study provides a multifaceted view of decision-making in management, showcasing the various processes and influences that shape how managers make choices. The theories discussed above offer distinct perspectives that inform decision-making practices. Understanding these theories can help managers navigate the complexities of decision-making and improve organizational effectiveness by selecting the most appropriate decision-making approach for different contexts.

### **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

Decision-making is a core component of leadership and management, as it plays a pivotal role in shaping the success and direction of organizations. Both Sudanese proverbs and contemporary decision-making theories



offer insights perspective on how individuals approach this complex process. This section explores the intersection between Sudanese proverbs and the well-established decision-making theories. By highlighting key cultural proverbs that resonate with these theories, it is possible to foster a deeper understanding of decision-making dynamics in various contexts, particularly in leadership and management.

### Rational Decision-Making Theory

Rational Decision-Making Theory is a structured approach to make decisions based on logical reasoning, evidence, and systematic analysis. Interestingly, many Sudanese proverbs match closely with the core principles of this theory. This section sheds lights on these proverb and sorting them into three headings emphasizing critical reflection, consulting others, understanding consequences, and evaluating all options before making a decision.

### Problem identification

As the literature suggests, problem identification is the foundational step in the decision-making process, as it sets the direction for how the issue will be addressed and resolved. Sudanese proverbs offer valuable insights on how we identify the problem, they highlight the role of understanding context, analysis, flexibly and proactive thinking . Moreover, they encourage thoughtful and comprehensive approach as well as to focus on the core problem rather superficial details.

For instance, the proverb 'الايديو في المويه ما زي الايدو في النار' which cab be translated as 'he whose hand in water is not like he whose hand in fire' is used to explain that people's behaviours may be the result of circumstances that are completely different from those of the speaker. 'He whose hand in water' represents a calm or non-pressured situation, where a person can act normally without major external pressures. 'He whose hand in fire' represents a difficult, stressful, or pressured situation, which pushes a person to act differently than usual. This proverb reminds us that the circumstances surrounding a person in that particular situation influence his actions. In the context of decision-making, the proverb calls for understanding and flexibility; people may behave based on their experiences or the situations they are facing, which might be different from our own circumstances or expectations. The proverb reminds us that when evaluating someone's actions, we should first seek to understand the circumstances influencing his decisions. This helps in diagnosing the underlying issue, rather than addressing only the symptoms or surface-level actions.

similarly, the proverb 'الجمرة بتحرق الواطيها' which can be translated as 'The ember burns only the one who steps on it.' It means that the person who is facing a problem is the only one who truly feels its impact, much like how the ember only burns the person who steps on it. It conveys the idea that others may not fully understand the struggles someone is facing because they are not experiencing it themselves. The proverb can be related to the process of identifying problems seeing that the person who faces a problem is often the first one to truly understand the depth of the issue. Others may see the situation from a distance and may not perceive the full extent of the problem or its impact. This reflects how identifying a problem often starts with the person who is directly affected by it.

Furthermore, the proverb 'عينك للفيل تطعن في ضله' which can be translated as 'You look at the elephant and stab its shadow' conveys a similar idea to the previous one, but with a slightly different meaning. It refers to focusing on something superficial or misdirecting your attention to something that is not the real issue at hand which is represented by the 'shadow of the elephant' whereas the 'elephant' itself symbolizes the actual problem. It can also imply misplaced priorities—attending to something less important while neglecting the bigger, more pressing issue. In the context of decision-making and problem identification, this proverb emphasizes that focusing on the symptoms and ignoring the root causes can lead to ineffective or misguided decisions.

The proverb 'الماعون اللين غسيلو هين' which can be translated as 'The dish is easy to wash while it is still soft.' It means that one should address an issues before it's too late similar to washing a dish while it is still soft, before the food stains dry and make it harder to clean. In decision-making and problem identification, this proverb highlights the importance of recognizing issues at their earliest stages to allow quicker intervention and more

effective solutions. By addressing challenges early on, one can prevent them from developing into larger and more complicated. Therefore, this proverb underscores the value of proactive thinking, where early identification and quick decision-making are essential to avoiding long-term challenges or more difficult decisions in the future.

The proverb 'المردم ما كله ليمون' can be translated as 'Not everything that glitters is lemon.' It implies that things are not always as they seem, or that situations are not always as perfect as they appear; even what seems "complete" or "ideal" on the outside may have its own challenges or hidden difficulties. In problem identification, this proverb serves as a reminder that we must look beyond surface-level observations to uncover underlying issues. Therefore, effective problem identification requires a deeper analysis, considering potential complexities and hidden factors that may not be immediately obvious.

These proverbs align closely with the Rational Decision Theory, which emphasizes logical, systematic, and data-driven approaches to decision-making (Hammond, Keeney, & Raiffa, 1998). The proverbs 'The dish is easy to wash while it is still soft' and 'Not everything that glitters is lemon' highlight, as the Rational Decision Theory suggests, the importance of early problem identification and deeper analysis (Simon, 1997). The proverbs 'He whose hand in water is not like he whose hand is in fire' and 'The ember burns only the one who steps on it' emphasize flexibility and the significance of understanding the context in addressing problems, as external pressures influence behavior and choices, a principle also central to the Rational Decision Theory (Hammond et al., 1998). The proverbs 'You look at the elephant and stab its shadow' and 'Not everything that glitters is lemon' encourage deeper analysis to uncover hidden complexities and understand the core problem. They warn against addressing only symptoms, urging decision-makers to focus on the real issue, a key component of the Rational Decision Theory's emphasis on root cause analysis (Simon, 1997).

### Information Gathering

In decision-making process, the gathering of relevant information is an essential step that guides the outcome. One of the oldest methods of gathering information is consultation. It is deeply ingrained in Sudanese culture, where collective decision-making is highly valued. Several Sudanese proverbs emphasize the importance of consulting others, reflecting cultural norms that promote collaboration, self-awareness, and openness to feedback. These proverbs serve as guiding principles that remind individuals to seek advice, listen to others, and recognize their own limitations before making decisions.

The proverb 'الجمال ما بشوف عوجه رقبتو' can be translated as 'the camel can not see its own hump,' or 'the camel does not know the crookedness of its neck.' It means that people often fail to recognize their own shortcomings while can easily spot those of others. In the context of decision-making, the proverb emphasizes the importance of inquiring and careful reflection before taking a decision. It suggests that, before acting or passing judgment on others, one should first acknowledge any personal biases or shortcomings, and seek a full understanding of the situation at hand. In this sense, the proverb serves as a reminder to examine one's own perspective and potential weakness before acting, making it relevant in both personal and professional contexts.

The proverb 'ما خاب من استشار' can be translated as 'he who seeks advice does not fail,' or 'whoever seeks advice is never disappointed.' The proverb highlights the value of seeking counsel before making decisions, reflecting a deep appreciation for the wisdom that comes from others' experiences. It suggests that when consulting those who are knowledgeable or experienced, we are more likely to make informed and thoughtful choices, which reduces the risk of regret or failure. It reminds us that wisdom often comes from listening to the experiences and insights of others which opens the door for new ideas and solutions to problems. When we ignore the advice of others, we may miss out on these important benefits and end up facing consequences we could have avoided.

The proverb 'اللو اتنين قالو ليك راسك مافي المسو' can be translated as 'if two persons tell you that your head is not there, touch it.' The proverb suggests that when more than one person give you similar feedback or advice, it is important to take it seriously and reflect on it. It is used to encourage people to listen to each other's advice. In the context of decision-making, this proverb emphasizes the value of being open to feedback and criticism.

It suggests that when we hear the same thing from more than one source, we should not dismiss it but rather take the time to evaluate it carefully. Ignoring repeated advice or criticism can lead to missing important insights that could help us improve or make better decisions.

Also, the proverb ‘بيت الشوري ماخرب’ can be translated as ‘a house of consensus will never fall apart.’ This proverb emphasizes the power and strength of collective decision-making, suggesting that when a group makes a decision together, the result is more stable, well-founded, and effective. In essence, the proverb advocates for collaboration and teamwork in decision-making and warn against the dangers of acting alone. It encourages consultation and shared responsibility. It can serve as a reminder that the wisdom of many is stronger than the judgment of one, and that making decisions in isolation can lead to unexpected consequences, while collaboration fosters strength and stability.

Moreover, the proverb ‘نص رأيك عند اخوك’ which can be translated as ‘half of your opinion is with your brother’ emphasizes the importance of consulting others, particularly close relatives and trusted individuals, when making decisions. It suggests that no one has full understanding of a situation on their own and insights from others, especially those who know you well, are crucial to gaining a complete perspective. In the context of decision-making, the proverb implies that a person may have their own views or ideas about a situation, but these views are only partial. By seeking the opinions of others—particularly those who are close to you, you can obtain valuable additional information and a broader perspective.

The proverbs discussed above highlight the value of consultation, self-reflection, and openness to feedback, which are essential for making informed and rational decisions (Ahmed, 2005). The proverb ‘the camel cannot see its own hump’ encourages self-awareness and reflection to recognize any biases before making judgments. Similarly, ‘He who seeks advice does not fail’ and ‘half of your opinion is with your brother’ highlight the importance of considering multiple perspectives and fostering collaboration, a crucial component of the Rational Decision Theory (Ali et al., 2018). This cultural wisdom from Sudanese proverbs enhances the rational decision-making process by emphasizing the importance of consulting.

## Sources of Information

Identifying the right sources of information is crucial according to the Rational Choice Theory. The quality of the decision is directly impacted by the quality and trustworthiness of the sources from which the information is drawn. Sudanese proverbs often emphasize the importance of seeking advice from the right sources, valuing experience, and embracing constructive criticism. These proverbs offer insights into how individuals should approach decision-making by focusing on the value of feedback, the wisdom of elders, and the significance of learning from experiences. The importance of the source of information in decision-making is highlighted in numerous proverbs.

The proverb ‘اسمع كلام البيكك.. ماتسمع كلام البضحك’ can be translated as ‘listen to what makes you cry, not what makes you laugh,’ or ‘listen to the one whose advice makes you cry, not to the one whose advice makes you laugh.’ It suggests that individuals seeking guidance should prioritize those who offer constructive feedback, even if it’s uncomfortable, over those who provide praise comments. This proverb encourages individuals to value criticism that highlights their weaknesses rather than simply accepting praise that reinforces their strengths. This proverb is connected deeply to the decision-making process as it emphasize the value of constructive criticism in addressing weaknesses and pointing out the risks and downsides. So, decision-makers are more likely to make well-informed choices that avoid future mistakes.

Some proverbs promote valuing the age spectrum as it encourages respect for the wisdom and experience of the elders. For instance, the proverb ‘أكبر منك بيوم أعرف منك بسنة’ can be translated as ‘older than you by a day, more knowledgeable than you by a year,’ or ‘older than you by a day, wiser than you by a year.’ A day here is a metaphor and expresses a short period of time. It conveys that even a slight difference in age can result in a significant difference in experience. It suggest that with age comes the accumulation of experiences, and these experiences shape a person's ability to navigate the challenges with greater understanding and clarity. This wisdom is not just theoretical knowledge, but the practical application of lessons learned through years of

trials. The experiences of elderly offer guidance and insight, which can help younger individuals make more informed decisions, avoid common pitfalls, and gain a deeper understanding of the world.

A fascinating perspective on the value of experience over education is debated in the proverb ‘اسأل مجرب ما تسأل طبيب’ which can be translated as ‘ask an experimenter, not a doctor’ or, ‘seek advice from someone who has had the experience, rather than a doctor.’ The proverb draws on the idea that individuals who have gone through similar experiences, are likely to have developed a deep understanding of what works and what does not. In this way, their insights are seen as potentially more relevant and practical than the knowledge a doctor might provide. This view places a higher value on experiential learning than on academic or theoretical education. Since learning from the experiences of others, and the exchange of personal stories and lessons can lead to better, more informed decision-making.

However, some proverb warns against consulting the wrong people—those who are unqualified, narrow-minded, or inexperienced. For instance, the proverb ‘الليباري الجداد بيودي الكوشة’ can be translated as ‘those who follow chicken will go to waste garbage,’ it can be also translated as ‘those who go with chickens will reach to landfill.’ Chicken stands for small minded people. Garbage dump/Landfill stand for awful consequences. This proverb urges people to stay away from bad companions and not follow their example. It serves as an essential reminder that the consequences of poor decisions are often linked to the quality of the sources we consult.

The insights from these proverbs align closely with the Rational Decision Theory, which emphasizes the importance of using credible sources of information. The proverbs reinforce this approach by encouraging individuals to seek wisdom from trusted, experienced, and knowledgeable sources, avoid impulsive decisions based on shallow or biased input, and take time to reflect on the consequences of their choices. The proverb ‘listen to what makes you cry, not what makes you laugh’ encourages constructive criticism. This principle ties with the Rational Decision Theory, which advocates for gathering all relevant information, including feedback on potential risks and downsides, to make well-informed decisions (Simon, 1976). Similarly, ‘older than you by a day, wiser than you by a year’ and ‘ask an experimenter, not a doctor’ emphasize the value of experience and learning from those who have faced similar challenges. The Rational Decision Theory stresses the importance of basing decisions on evidence (Von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1944). Furthermore, the proverb ‘those who follow chickens will go to waste garbage’ warns against consulting individuals who are unqualified, as their advice may lead to poor outcomes. The Rational Decision Theory emphasizes the need to gather information from credible, relevant sources to avoid biased or faulty decision-making (Bazerman, 2006).

### The Theory of Intuition Decision Making

Intuitive decision is based on what feels true or right instinctively, without going through an in-depth thought or learning process. Several proverbs encourage key elements of intuition theory; highlighting the importance of self-reliance, inner wisdom, and the ability to act instinctively without being overly influenced by external factors.

For example, the proverb ‘عقلك في راسك تعرف خلاصك’ can be translated as ‘you have your brain, just use it to get through,’ or ‘your mind is in your head, you know how to get out of your troubles.’ It means that every one has his brain in his head, so he ought to be able to get out of his troubles. It does not encourage seeking help in solving problems. In the context of decision-making, the proverb emphasises on an individual's innate ability to make decisions quickly and effectively without extensive calculation. It reflects that, individuals have the capacity to trust their gut feeling and instincts to navigate through it, even when they can not fully explain how or why they arrived at a decision.

Also the proverb ‘الضوء مايقولوا لي سو’ can be translated as ‘do not need to tell the light to do anything.’ The meaning of the proverb is that the person who is aware of his duties and responsibilities does not need to be reminded of them, as he knows them completely and carries them out automatically. The ‘light’ refers to someone who is self-aware, knowledgeable, and capable of making decisions without the need for external reminders. The proverb emphasizes self-awareness, responsibility, and the intuitive ability to make decisions without external reminders.



The proverb 'سد دي بي طينه ودي بي عجينه' which literally translated as 'close this with clay and that with dough' represents a deliberate attempt to block out negative or distracting influences, allowing the person to focus on their own judgment and decisions. 'Clay and dough' symbolize the means by which the person closes their ears, representing a deliberate effort to ignore things that may negatively affect or disturb them. The proverb reflects a strategy of intentionally blocking out external influences that might interfere with one's ability to make independent decisions. While this may seem to imply a form of isolation, it can also resonate with the intuition theory, where one trusts his internal feelings and judgments without external input.

The proverbs discussed, such as 'You have your brain, just use it to get through' and 'do not need to tell the light to do anything', underscore the value of self-reliance and intuitive decision-making. They encourage individuals to trust their inner judgment and cognitive resources when faced with challenges, aligning with the idea of the intuitive decision-making (Kahneman, 2011). Also, the proverb 'close this with clay and that with dough' further emphasizes the importance of blocking out negative or distracting influences, allowing individuals to focus on their internal reasoning. Together, these proverbs reflect the value of personal intuition, self-awareness, and the internal decision-making processes that guide individuals toward effective solutions. These cultural insights are closely aligned with principles found in the intuitive decision-making theories, where intuition plays a critical role in decision-making, particularly under uncertainty or time pressure (Gigerenzer, 2007).

### The Consequences Theory of Decision Making

The Consequences Theory of Decision Making emphasizes the importance of carefully considering both the positive and negative consequences, as well as the intentional and unintentional outcomes of our actions when making decisions. Sudanese proverbs offer valuable insights into this concept, reflecting a variety of perspectives on decision-making and the consequences of one's actions. The proverbs are categorized into several themes that align with the principles of the Consequences Theory of Decision Making including:

- Proverbs aligned with the Consequences Theory of Decision Making.
- Proverbs non-aligned with the Consequences Theory of Decision Making.
- Proverbs on good Intentions lead to bad outcomes
- Proverbs spot trouble before it escalates

### Proverbs Aligned with the Consequences Theory of Decision Making

The proverb 'التسوي بأيديك يغلب اجاويك' can be translated as 'what you do with your own hands will outweigh your words' or 'what you do with your hands will defeat your excuses.' 'التسوي بأيديك' refers to actions that a person takes, implying that the person is responsible for their own mistakes. 'يغلب اجاويك' means that your actions will have a greater impact than any words, justifications, or excuses you may offer later. This proverb is used when someone does something, that causes a problem and is unable to control or fix afterward. It suggests that actions speak louder than words, and no amount of explanation or justification will undo the consequences of poor mistakes. In decision-making context, the proverb reflects a deep awareness of the need for accountability and the long-term effects of our decisions, urging us to make decisions that align with our goals while considering potential outcomes.

Also, the proverb 'التسويو كريت في القرض تلقاهو في جلد' can be translated as 'what the goat does to the Qard plant, will find it in its skin.' 'كريت' refers to a goat or sheep. 'القرض' (Qard or *Acacia nilotica* is a type of plant, commonly used in tanning hides due to its medicinal and industrial properties). 'تلقاهو في جلد' refers to how the effects of the goat's actions on the plant (such as eating or damaging it) will eventually be reflected in its skin. It highlights the idea that the consequences of one's actions are often reflected back to him in the future—sometimes in ways that are directly connected to the initial cause. In decision-making context, the proverb calls not only to consider the immediate benefits or costs but also to assess how actions may play out



in the future. It imply that the understanding that the consequences of our actions will come back to us in one form or another.

Furthermore, The proverb 'الجفلان خلهن أقرع الواقفات' literally translates to "let the ones that ran go, and focus on the ones that stayed. الجفلان refers to the animals (such as horses or donkeys) that ran away, and 'خلهن' means let them go. 'أقرع الواقفات' refers to the animals that have stopped and remained in place. The essence of the proverb can be translated as do not waste time on what you have lost, focus on what you have left." The proverb encourages decision-makers to focus on available opportunities, adapt to current circumstances, and leverage existing resources to make the best possible choices moving forward. This aligns with a key aspect of effective decision-making: prioritizing current opportunities over missed ones and make decisions that will maximize the potential of what remains.

Moreover, the proverb 'من فش غيبتو ضيع قضيتو' can be translated as 'he who acts hastily loses his cause.' It advises not to act hastily or not to make quick judgement without thinking through the consequences. The term 'غيبتو' implies acting impulsively, especially in a moment of frustration or pressure. 'ضيع قضيتو' means that such an impulsive decision will lead to losing or jeopardizing one's cause or goal. In decision-making, this proverb underscores the importance of thinking through decisions and avoiding rash actions made under pressure or frustration that could lead to greater losses, emphasizing the need for careful evaluation of risks and consequences before taking action. It reinforces the idea that hasty decisions often result in greater losses and taking the time to reflect can ultimately lead to better outcomes.

These proverbs collectively reflect a deep understanding of the Consequences Theory of Decision Making, which emphasizes the importance of carefully considering the consequences of one's actions when making decisions (Bazerman & Moore, 2013). The proverb "What you do with your own hands will outweigh your words" underscores the need for accountability. It aligns with the basic assumption of the Consequences Theory of Decision Making, as it encourages individuals to think carefully about the long-term consequences of their actions (Kahneman, 2011), since these actions will have a greater influence than any explanations or justifications we might later offer. The idea that the consequences of our actions are often reflected back to us is mirrored in the proverb "What the goat does to the Qard plant, will find it in its skin." This proverb encourages decision-makers to consider not just the immediate outcomes, but also how their actions may affect them in the future. It matches the Consequences Theory of Decision Making, which stresses the importance of anticipating both the immediate and long-term impacts of decisions (Bazerman & Moore, 2013). The proverb "Let the ones that ran go, and focus on the ones that stayed" advocates for adaptability and prioritization in decision-making. It encourages focusing on the resources or opportunities still available. In line with the Consequences Theory, this reflects the importance of making decisions based on current resources and available opportunities, while acknowledging and leveraging what remains to maximize future potential (Kahneman, 2011). Lastly, the proverb "He who acts hastily loses his cause" reinforces the principle of evaluating risks and carefully considering the potential outcomes before taking action, a key element of the Consequences Theory of Decision Making (Bazerman & Moore, 2013).

### Proverbs Non-aligned with the Consequences Theory of Decision Making

The proverb 'للو غلبك سدها وسع قدها' can literally be translated as 'If it defeats you, block it and expand its capacity.' The phrase 'وسع قدها' translates as 'expand its size' or 'make its extent larger.' The word 'سدها' can be translated as 'block it' or 'seal it.' This proverb advocates making extreme decisions when faced with a difficult situation. Instead of taking a rational approach to resolve an issue, the proverb encourages opting for hasty actions that could escalate the problem further rather than solving it, resulting in unintended consequences.

Similarly, the proverb 'لا لرهيفة التتقد.. واليابسة التتحت' which can be translated as 'delicate perforate and dry fall.' The word 'الرهيفة' refers to something light or small in scale. 'اليابسة' is used to describe something that is solid, or hard. This expression is used to refer to pushing situations or crises to their extreme limits, often with the goal of forcing and influencing other parties through a real or perceived threat that things could reach a point of no return. The proverb suggests that small actions can have an effect even on something solid or difficult to shape. Recently, the proverb is linked to a statement by First Lieutenant Mohamed Siddiq Ibrahim during a

critical historical moment in Sudanese history, where he said ‘Al-Rahifa will save.’ This suggests a belief that even small, seemingly insignificant actions—such as disobeying orders during a protest—can lead to substantial, meaningful change.

These two proverbs, ‘If it defeats you, block it and expand its capacity’ and ‘delicate perforate and dry fall’ could be linked to Brinkmanship strategy. In Brinkmanship decision-maker deliberately pushes situations to the extreme, fully aware that the consequences of pushing too far could be severe (Kissinger, 1994). But continues to maneuver and delay, hoping to achieve their goals without crossing the point of no return. The Brinkmanship demonstrates how people can balance risks and rewards in difficult situations. This contradicts the Consequences Theory, which argues that individuals make decisions based on the potential outcomes of their actions, weighing risks against rewards. Bazerman & Moore (2013) and Kahneman (2011), argue that careful consideration and evaluation of all potential consequences—both intended and unintended—are essential when making decisions is essential.

### Proverbs on Good Intentions Lead to Bad Outcomes

The proverb ‘ زاد الطين بله ’ can be translated as ‘ added mud to the clay ’ and interpreted as ‘ making a bad situation worse. ’ It highlights the importance of understanding the broader impact of one's choices to prevent unintended negative consequences. In the context of decision-making, this proverb refers to situations where a decision taken unintentionally worsen an already difficult or problematic situation. Instead of resolving an issue or improving things, the decision ends up making things worse. Since the action added more problems to an already existing one, making the situation worse rather than better. In the context of decision theory, it serves as a cautionary reminder about the potential unintended negative consequences that can arise when a decision is made without fully considering its effects on an already complicated situation.

The proverb ‘ جاء يكحلها عماه ’ can be translated as ‘ he came to beautify it but blinded it, ’ or ‘ he came to fix it but made it worse. ’ Like the previous proverb, it refers to a situation where someone attempts to improve or solve a problem but unintentionally ends up making it worse due to lack of skill, poor judgment, or an unintended consequence of their actions. It is often used to criticize actions that seem misguided, ineffective, or counterproductive, despite good intentions. In decision-making, the proverb serves as a cautionary reminder that good intentions, if not carefully planned and thoughtfully executed, can lead to unintended negative outcomes. It underscores the importance of considering potential consequences, understanding the problem thoroughly, and evaluating options carefully before taking action.

Both these proverbs share the core lesson that even good intentions can have unintended negative consequences if not carefully thought through. They underscore the necessity for thorough evaluation, understanding of the problem, and thoughtful decision-making.

### Proverbs Spot Trouble before it Escalates

The proverb ‘ العود كان ما فيهو شق مابقول طق ’ can be translated as ‘ the stick doesn't crack unless it has a flaw. ’ It means that if the stick is smooth and flawless, it can endure pressure and use without making a sound. But if it has a hidden flaw or crack inside, when pressure is applied, it will break and you will hear the ‘ crack. ’ It suggests that just as a stick with an internal flaw will eventually crack under pressure, so situations that appear strong or solid but harbour hidden weaknesses. In the context of making a decision, the proverb advises to look beyond the surface and addressing underlying problems before they escalate. It calls for proactive evaluation, early intervention, and risk management can help prevent small issues from turning into crises, leading to more informed, effective, and sustainable decisions.

The idea of the proverb ‘ مافي دخان بدون نار ’ which can be translated as ‘ there is no smoke without fire ’ is quite similar to the proverb ‘ العود كان ما فيهو شق مابقول طق ’. It means that when there are signs of something wrong or suspicious, there is usually a real issue behind it. Both proverbs emphasize the importance of addressing early signs of problems before they escalate and investigating potential hidden issues to make more informed and proactive decisions.

Both these proverbs emphasize the significance of identifying early signs of potential issues that warrant further investigation. This concept aligns with the Consequences Theory of Decision Making, which posits that understanding the outcomes of our choices is crucial for effective decision-making (Bendor & Moe, 1985; Schwenk, 1984). By advocating a proactive approach and urging thorough exploration of hidden problems, these proverbs promote informed decision-making that seeks to address issues at their inception, thereby minimizing broader consequences (Janis, 1989).

### The Psychological Theory of Indecisiveness

Indecisiveness or inability to make decision is defined as a tendency to experience problems with making decisions across situations and domains (Crites, 1969). It has been described as a trait (Rassin, 2007, Van Matre and Cooper, 1984). The psychological theory of indecisiveness typically looks at the underlying causes, mechanisms, and factors that contribute to individuals struggling to make decisions. The following collection of proverbs explores different aspects of indecision, highlighting the consequences of being easily influenced, overcomplicating situations, failing to act, avoiding involvement, and disengaging when overwhelmed.

The Sudanese proverb 'كلمة توديه وكلمة تجيبه' can literally be translated as 'a word takes him away, and a word brings him back.' It is used to describe someone with a weak and fluctuating opinion. As these type of persons are easily influenced by words of others and change their stance quickly often without clear reasoning. The proverb reflects the challenges of indecisiveness, especially in decision-making contexts as it encapsulates a psychological phenomenon where an individual's opinions and actions are easily turned by external influences, resulting in a lack of consistency in their decisions. This instability often stems from a lack of confidence in his beliefs or decisions, leading to a pattern of fluctuating choices based on immediate, external feedback rather than a well-considered, long-term plan. The proverb can encourage individuals to develop greater self-confidence, make decisions grounded on reasoned judgment and to stick to decisions, especially in situations demanding consistency and long-term planning.

The proverb 'يغرق في شبر مويه' which literally translated as 'drowns in a span of water' is used to describe someone who lacks experience and fails even at the simplest of tasks. 'The span of water' refers to a very small amount of water, so small that no one could possibly drown in it. However, the proverb is applied to someone who hesitates despite the solution being clear and uncomplicated. In the context of decision-making, the proverb highlights how someone who lacks experience or confidence may overcomplicate even simple tasks. This type of indecisiveness can also be linked to decision paralysis, where the individual becomes overwhelmed or unsure about even the simplest decisions. This paralysis may stem from lack of confidence or self-doubt, which prevents the person from moving forward. The proverb serves as a reminder of the importance of experience, sound judgment, and confidence in making decisions, especially in situations that, on the surface, should not be difficult to handle.

The proverb 'لا بخل ولا بربط' which literally translated as 'neither solves nor ties' is used to describe someone who lacks the ability to take action or influence situations around him. 'neither solves' means they cannot solve any problems or offer any contribution, while 'nor ties' means he is unable to organize or set things in place. The proverb refers to a person who is inactive and has no impact, not improving the situation or taking steps to resolve matters. In the context of decision-making, the proverb suggests a passive individual who avoids stepping forward to take charge, even when his input is needed. This type of person may exhibit a form of avoidance behavior, where he refrains from making decisions or taking action, possibly due to fear of failure, anxiety about making mistakes, or a lack of confidence. This passivity can lead to missed opportunities and an overall lack of progress in any given situation.

The Sudanese proverb 'لا يجده ولا يجيب الحجاره' which literally translated as 'neither throws nor brings the stones' is used to describe a person who is indifferent to both big and small matters, not involving himself in either. 'Neither throws' means he does not engage in significant actions or conflicts, like throwing stones, while 'nor brings the stones' means he does not even get involved in collecting the stones that others throw. It is used to describe people who do not contribute to solving issues or who prefer to stay away from any form of involvement. The proverb relates to indecisiveness, as the individual is unwilling to commit himself to any action. The person may fear making the wrong decision, leading him to avoid making any decision at all. The

avoidance of conflict is another key factor contributing to this type of indecisiveness. This indecisiveness can lead to missed opportunities and an inability to effect positive change. The proverb serves as a critique of those who hesitate to make decisions, even when it's clear that action is needed. In a broader sense, it warns against the dangers of passivity in situations that require leadership and initiative.

The proverb 'لو كثرت عليك الهموم ادمم ونوم' can be translated as 'If worries accumulate on you, close your eyes and sleep.' The meaning of the proverb is that when you are overwhelmed with problems, the best thing is simply to ignore them, rather than actively addressing or solving the problems. It can imply a sense of passivity or avoidance. In the context of decision-making, the proverb could have a negative meaning, suggesting a tendency to avoid making decisions or addressing problems when overwhelmed. It implies that, instead of taking action or making choices, one may choose to disengage, procrastinate, or avoid the responsibility of making decisions. In this sense, the proverb warns against passivity and avoidance in decision-making. While temporarily disengaging from problems might offer a sense of relief, it often leads to long-term issues, missed opportunities, and unaddressed challenges. Thus, it encourages individuals to confront problems directly rather than waiting for them to disappear on their own.

In summary, these proverbs capture the essence of indecisiveness in decision-making, aligning with the psychological theories that explore the causes and mechanisms of hesitation, avoidance, and overcomplication in decision-making (Crites, 1969; Rassin, 2007). The proverb 'A word takes him away, and a word brings him back' mirrors the psychological concept of bounded rationality, where decision-makers are limited by the information they can process (Simon, 1957). The two proverbs 'Drowns in a span of water' and 'Neither solves nor ties' could be connected to the theory of self-efficacy, which stresses the importance of belief in one's abilities, since a person who lacks confidence may overcomplicate even simple decisions, leading to decision paralysis (Bandura, 1977). 'Neither throws nor brings the stones' aligns with the principle that the fear of loss and regret causes people to avoid making decisions or taking action (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Lastly, the proverb 'If worries accumulate on you, close your eyes and sleep' is linked to the psychological theory of indecisiveness with respect to the paradox of choice, where an overabundance of options or problems can lead to decision paralysis (Schwartz, 2004).

Since indecisiveness can have detrimental effects then, overcoming indecisiveness is essential for effective leadership and organizational success. By understanding the psychological mechanisms that lead to indecision and drawing on cultural insights about decision-making, leaders can develop confidence, structured approach, and proactive mindset needed to make timely, impactful decisions (Van Matre & Cooper, 1984). This not only helps to avoid the detrimental effects of indecisiveness but also fosters a culture of decisiveness, clarity, and leadership within organizations.

## CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

### Conclusions

The exploration of Sudanese proverbs in the context of decision-making reveals that traditional cultural wisdom holds significant value for modern management practices. These proverbs, which are deeply rooted in Sudanese culture, align closely with well-established decision-making theories. By tapping into these cultural insights, leaders can enhance their decision-making processes through a balanced approach that combines logical analysis, intuition, and awareness of cultural perspectives.

The conclusion highlighted in this study underscore the importance of integrating these proverbs into leadership development programs, that encourage early problem identification, foster culture, feedback and consultation, and promote critical thinking and adaptability. Additionally, by addressing the psychological factors that influence decision-making, such as indecisiveness and the need for accountability, organizations can improve the overall decision-making capacity of their leaders.

Incorporating the wisdom found in Sudanese proverbs into organizational decision-making processes not only enriches the leaders' ability to make informed and well-rounded decisions but also fosters a culture of



reflection, collaboration, and strategic thinking. In doing so, organizations can enhance their effectiveness, adaptability, and sustainability in a complex and rapidly changing business environment.

### Recommendations and Policy Implications

Based on the discussion of Sudanese proverbs and their alignment with various decision-making theories (Rational Decision Theory, Intuitive Decision-Making Theory, Consequences Theory, and psychological mechanisms of indecision), the following recommendations are suggested to organizations and leaders:

- Incorporate cultural wisdom embedded in Sudanese proverbs, into leadership development programs. Leaders can be guided to use proverbs as a tool in their decision-making processes. This will assist them in balancing rational analysis, cultural insights, and flexibility when addressing challenges in dynamic environments.
- Encourage managers to apply the principle of early problem identification, as suggested by proverbs like ‘The dish is easy to wash while it is still soft.’ This approach aligns with Rational Decision Theory, which stresses the importance of identifying and analyzing problems early to avoid escalation.
- Foster a culture where seeking advice and feedback is encouraged so as to improve decision-making and minimize biases as reflected in proverbs like ‘He who seeks advice does not fail’ and ‘the camel cannot see its own hump.’ This could include regular team meetings, feedback loops, and workshops.
- Incorporate flexibility and adaptability in decision-making, as suggested by proverbs such as ‘Let the ones that ran go, and focus on the ones that stayed’ and ‘He who acts hastily loses his cause.’ This could be realized by developing decision-making frameworks that allow for flexibility and adaptability while still focusing on long-term goals.
- Promote accountability and careful consideration of the consequences of actions in decision-making as suggested by the proverbs like ‘What you do with your own hands will outweigh your words.’ Leaders should be trained to assess not only the immediate outcomes but also the long-term effects of their decisions.
- Address and overcome hesitation in decision-making, as reflected in proverbs like ‘A word takes him away, and a word brings him back’ and ‘Neither solves nor ties.’ This can be achieved by offering training on decision-making skills, helping leaders build confidence in their abilities.
- Encourage proactive critical thinking and deep analysis, as suggested by proverbs like ‘You look at the elephant and stab its shadow.’ therefore, introduce training that focuses on critical thinking and problem-solving techniques, which will allow leaders to identify underlying issues rather than addressing only the immediate problems.

These recommendations will ensure that the application of Sudanese proverbs in decision-making is practical and actionable, benefiting leadership practices in modern organizations.

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