

OHAZURUME: The Philosophy and Practice of Decision Making and Consensus Building among the Ndigbo of Nigeria

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This paper studies the OHAZURUME philosophy and practice of decision making and consensus building among the Ndigbos (the Igbos) of Nigeria. OHAZURUME, which literally means 'it is the communal will; is a, philosophy and practice that ensures that decisions are easily accepted because of its collective properties. Because the issue is decided collectively by the 'oha' [the people], no individual can overturn it. OHAZURUME draws from the overall 'ohaka'[the community is supreme] philosophy and is predicated on the conditions that the matter is tabled openly for discussion, that EVERYBODY is allowed to contribute and that the preponderance of public opinion is upheld as the communal judgment. This paper adopts the participant observation and interview methods and identifies a simple, Nine-stage process of OHAZURUME and establishes that as in other decentralized systems, individual rights and views are respected; individuals accept and respect the communal interest; dissent is accommodated; there is direct participation in decision making and every eligible male has equal right. The paper also undertakes a comparative analysis and discovers that OHAZURUME shares the basic features of other consensus building models like Japanese, Quaker, and CODM, which include group ownership of decisions, participation, and respect for dissention. The paper avers that the key attraction of OHAZURUME is its simplicity. The implication of this study, especially for an international audience is that it develops and articulates a new management concept and practice, enlarges the consensus literature, identifies management philosophies and practices from other climes and expands the dimensions to comparative management.

Keywords: OHAZURUME, UMUNNA, consensus, decision-making, Ndigbo

Introduction

Aspiring managers are usually made to study and understand the history and development of management thoughts and philosophy but there is no explanation as to why this has always been so. In a roundtable discussion on the issue, five scholars, which included Alfred Chandler argued that history is important to managers because they need to draw from the lessons and experiences of others and get events and facts into a shared memory. History also supplies a solid reference point, removes the tendency to reinvent the wheel and enables them to understand why and how certain things happened especially in this chaotic environment (Kantrow, 1986, p.81). But probably because of the way modern management was developed and popularized, most of the thoughts, philosophies and practices appear to be limited to the happenings in the western world. Even when Koontz bemoaned that these developments were overgrown and entangled by a jungle of 'approaches and approachers leading to confused and

destructive jungle warfare by cult leaders bent on carving out a distinct[and hence 'original'] approach to management, he only listed the prevalent schools as management process, empirical, human behavior, social systems, decision, and mathematical (1961, p.194). Luthans who proposed a convergence through the contingency approach as the 'path out of the existing jungle in management'(1976, p. 271) did not fare much better as he limited himself to process, human relation, operations research, quantitative, systems, behavioural, management science and organizational behavior approaches .

Osuntokun (2001, p.99) had this mindset in view when he declared that 'It is assumed that management developed in recent years and also in modern countries particularly in OECD countries; that the world before the modern times 'merely muddled through without much thought about means and ends of human endeavours as well as goals and aspirations and a strategy to attain them'. He recalled that the first university in the world was built in Africa: The Al-Qarawiyin in Fez Morocco, 859AD and Al Azhar University, Cairo, 970AD; 200 years before the first university was built in the western world in Bologna Italy. Berning et al (2004, p.3) identified the

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key pre-classical management practitioners and practices as follows: the Sumerians (5000 BC; inventories, money and tax systems), the Egyptians (4000-1600BC; decentralized and participatory management) the Babylonians (1800BC; Hamurabi code; wage and incentive systems) the Hebrews (1500BC; Jethro/Moses introduced management by exception and the scalar chain); the Chinese (1100BC; standardization and specialization) the Greeks (400BC; job rotation, division of labour) the Romans (200BC; job description and central control) Jesus Christ(20AD; servant leadership and the golden rule).

In Africa and Nigeria, the indigenous peoples had their own management philosophies and practices before the advent of colonialism and they were indeed able to survive a very tortuous past-slavery, colonialism, brutal economic exploitation and attempted cultural annihilation- through these philosophies and strategies. This has been summarised as follows:

‘They like to move from the real to the ideal; they take the system the way it is. If it is strong, all well and good but if it is weak, they factor the weakness into the intended strategy for solution; we have identified the fact that collective wisdom is better than solitary approach to solving problems. Solutions are time specific and new problems require new approaches. There are no eternal solutions that would apply to all problems, it is better to move from the recognition that we do not know everything than to assume omniscience because ignorance hidden will always show. The historicity of knowledge is appreciated and one generation builds on the intellectual shoulder of past generation in an unbroken chain of human knowledge connecting the past with the present and the present with the future. African approach to solving problems is knowledge based and one wise man makes for all the differences and geniuses are not for a penny. Specialization and division of labour are inherent in African concept of management and hard work without ceasing does not always produce success unless it is tampered with leisure and relaxation and hard work alone does not guarantee success unless based on exchange of ideas with others’(Osuntokun 2001, p.107).

These indigenous philosophies, thoughts and practices survived the colonial era and are still practiced today. The colonial system did not displace the consensus based governance structures where they were entrenched in the pre-colonial era (Gartrell, 1983) and specifically in Igboland, the enthronement of warrant chiefs did not displace the village councils that pre-dated the Whiteman (Uwazie, 1994). It is in view of this that this article examines the OHAZURUME approach to decision making and consensus-building among the Igbos, with specific emphasis on Igbo-ukwu, the heart of Igboland.

OHAZURUME literarily means ‘the people collectively did this’ [it is the peoples will; the people have spoken]. It is a concept, philosophy and practice in the management of affairs among Ndigbo that ensures that decisions are easily accepted and implemented because, the people have collectively decided. Consensus on the other hand is a situation where all people involved in a decision or an issue can say ‘they either agree with the decision or have had ‘their day in court’ and were unable to convince others of their view point. In the final analysis, everyone agrees to support the outcome’. This indicates that consensus does not require unanimous agreement because group members may still disagree with the final decision but are willing to work towards its success (Parker, 1990; Kreitner & Kinicki, 2012, p.352)

The objectives of the paper are to articulate, define and identify the process and features of OHAZURUME and also compare it with other existing consensus based models. It is divided into five parts: introduction, literature/conceptual review, methodology, results and discussions and conclusions.

Literature Review

Traditional African societies are broadly classified into two: decentralized (consensus-based) systems in which law making, social control and allocation of resources are managed by entities like village groups, ‘umunna’, age-grades; and centralized(chieftaincy-based) systems (ECA, 2007) The guiding principles of the consensus (decentralized) based systems include curbing the concentration of power, averting the emergence of rigid hierarchy and narrowing differences through negotiations rather than adversarial strategies that produce winners and losers (Largesse, 1973). Under the decentralized systems:

- Individual rights and views are respected.
- Individuals accept and respect the interest of the community or face communal censure.
- Minority views are accommodated and this reduces conflicts.
- The political and social gap between leaders and the led are reduced because of direct participation in decision making.
- There is respect for dissent and protection of minority views through the consensus strategy
- Every eligible male has equal right.
- Wives and young adults are expected to be represented by their fathers/husbands and their voices are thus lost. But in Igboland, there are the women wings that discuss issues and liaise with the men; the daughters (umuada) are very influential and resolve conflicts that are intractable in the ‘umunna’ while

the youths are integrated into the mainstream through the age-grade system which assigns certain responsibilities to them.

Otumfuo (2004) also identified two types of traditional African leadership: the decentralized and the centralized traditional states.

- In the decentralized (fragmented) traditional states, techniques of control revolve around the dynamics of clanship, a normative scheme that consisted of elaborate bodies of well established rules of conduct usually enforced by heads of fragmented segments and in more serious cases, by spontaneous community action. it has two major features
- Existence of well defined norms despite the absence of a hierarchical sovereign headed by a sovereign.
- Direct and pronounced participation of the people in decision making, assuring visible democratic process.
- Centralised traditional states on the other hand are organized under well entrenched highly structured political authority, a political sovereign backed by law enforcement agency and habitually obeyed by the people.

The Igbos with their Umunna based socio-cultural units are one of the foremost examples of the decentralized (consensus based or fragmented) systems. Other peoples in Africa operating similar systems include Tallensi of Northern Ghana, Sukuma of Tanzania, Nur of South Sudan, the Baito in Eritrea, the Gada system in Enomo, Ethiopia and Kenya and the Kiama [council of elders] of the Kikuyu, Kenya. The fragmented and decentralized paradigm of the Igbos influenced all aspects of their lives including management thoughts and philosophy and that was/is also why the philosophy of OHAZURUME is possible in the first place. The worldview and practices of the Igbos also reflected this consensus-based systems and practices. Thus, when the Igbos say 'Igbo enwe-eze' (Igbos have no kings), it is an acknowledgement of the fragmented/decentralized system as discussed above; it is also indicative of the fact that most of the Igbo towns had no kingship patterns and power was not centralized. The political system was flexible and democratic, characterized by federated representation from the various lineages in the clan, elders, age-grades and the titled societies which constitute the decision making body by whom decisions are reached by consensus (Forde & Jones, 1950; Uchendu, 1965). It also points to Igbo political consciousness and Igbo independence and republicanism. The Igbos are the most individualistic people in Nigeria manifesting a loose communal base with no totalitarian center (Chukwuma, 1991). The Igbo society was also democratic and what struck the

first western visitor to Igboland was the extent to which democracy was truly practiced (Isichei, 1976:21) while Henry Johnson who visited Asaba reportedly felt that he was in a 'free land, among a free people' (Johnson, 1882, p.547).

Nnamani's (2003) perspective of the Igbo society is not different from the foregoing. "The traditional Igbo social organization is... a model of stateless or acephalous society and at other times, a quintessential republican polity. It is usually a tapestry of views, group and individual aspirations bending to the yearnings of the community assembly. In this way, the society strives towards equilibrium and consensus." The Igbo traditional society was characterized by a diffuse way of living that can be located in the peoples pronounced sense of social equality; in the prevalence of horizontal political organization that emphasizes leadership in contradistinction to a vertical, hierarchical and centralized political structure which emphasizes authority. The various institutions were intertwined, complimentary and inevitably mutually reinforcing. Their essence and vitality lay in their functionality, reverence and sheer effectiveness in achieving social cohesion and broad consensus. The democratic tendencies, republicanism, 'igbo-enwe-eze' syndrome and other aspects of the Igbo worldview made it possible for the OHAZURUME philosophy to develop and mature in Igboland.

OHAZURUME literally means 'the community did this collectively'; 'the people have concurred'; 'it is the peoples will'; 'the people have spoken'. It is a concept, philosophy and practice in the management of affairs in Igboland that ensures that decisions are easily accepted and implemented because, the people have collectively decided. Because the issue has been decided collectively by the 'oha' (the people), no individual can upturn or reject it. The OHAZURUME philosophy is predicated on the condition that the matter is tabled openly for discussion, that EVERYBODY who wishes to contribute is allowed to contribute; that the preponderance of public opinion is upheld as the communal judgment, that the person who is not favoured by the outcome is given an explanation (a summary of the public opinion which he would have would have perceived himself) and even despite the overwhelming western influences as at today, voting is not encouraged; it is not in consonance with the OHAZURUME philosophy. Under the OHAZURUME paradigm, (and in line with the underlining principles of other consensus-based systems) individual rights and views are respected; individuals accept and respect the interest of the community or face communal censure; minority views are accommodated and this reduces conflicts;

there is direct participation in decision making which reduces the gap between the leaders and the led; there is respect for dissent and protection of minority views through the consensus strategy and every eligible male has equal right. Indeed, long before the Whiteman came with their democracy, the Igbos had the OHAZURUME paradigm which is the foundation stone to 'ohacracy', equivalent to the western democracy. This revolves around the people, the 'oha'!

Consensus on the other hand is a situation where all people involved in a decision or an issue can say 'they either agree with the decision or have had 'their day in court' and were unable to convince others of their view point. In the final analysis, everyone agrees to support the outcome'. This indicates that consensus does not require unanimous agreement because group members may still disagree with the final decision but are willing to work towards its success (Parker, 1990. Kreitner & Kinicki, 2012, p.352). It means an overwhelming agreement and the product of a good-faith effort to meet the interests of all stakeholders. The key indicator of whether or not a consensus has been reached is that everyone agrees they can live with the final proposal; that is, after every effort has been made to meet any outstanding interests. Thus, consensus requires that someone frames a proposal after listening carefully to everyone's interests. Interests, by the way, are not the same as positions or demands. Demands and positions are what people say they must have, but interests are the underlying needs or reasons that explain why people take positions. It is also important to note that consensus is not synonymous with unanimity though it usually starts as an effort to attain unanimity. But because there will always be people who believe that their interests are better served outside the emerging agreement, and it is not advisable or possible for the entire group to acquiesce to this hold-out tendency, a consensus emerges. Thus, rather than chasing the elusive unanimity, the group settles for an overwhelming agreement that goes as far as possible toward meeting the interests of all stakeholders.

Consensus is an issue because even when people are essentially good-willed and easy to get along with, they have different perspectives on issues, especially when they represent different interests. Furthermore, there is a 'fundamental difference between expressed public agreement and true consensus and conviction' and to assume that there is consensus when there is not (a fake consensus?) leads to difficulties in implementation and commitment (Cooke & Slack, 1991, p.313) Wikipedia defines consensus decision-making as a group decision making process that seeks the consent, not necessarily the agreement of participants and the

resolution of objections. It is defined, as first, general agreement, and second, group solidarity of belief or sentiment. It has its origin in a Latin word meaning literally feel together and is used to describe both the decision and the process of reaching a decision. Consensus decision-making is thus concerned with the process as well as the social and political effects of using this process. Consensus seeks to improve solidarity in the long run. As a decision-making process, consensus decision-making aims to be: agreement seeking (attempting to help everyone get what they need) collaborative (shared proposals that meet the concerns of all as much as possible), Cooperative (strive to reach the best possible decision for the group and all of its members, rather than competing for personal preferences) Egalitarian (All members afforded equal input into the process: to present, and amend proposals; as much as possible); Inclusive (as many as possible are involved in the process) and Participatory (actively solicit the input and participation of all) (Wikipedia, 2012; CDM, 2011; Hartnett, 2011 & Sandelin, 2007).

Methodology

The method used for this study is the participant-observation in that the writer participated severally in the process in question. There were also some unstructured interviews with some leaders and elders from the community, including Ichie C.S Umeafonta, a retired headmaster and former chairman of Nigerian Union of Teachers, East Central State chapter, who is the traditional head of his umunna [Umuokezughu in Ihite, Igbo-Ukwu] and a member of the Idu cabinet; Mr Cyril Onyebuchi, a retired headmaster and the most articulate/educated elder in his umunna [about 80 years; Umummenofor, Ngo, Igbo-Ukwu] and HRH, Igwe M.N Ezeh, Idu 11 of Igbo-Ukwu, a lawyer who also holds a degree in public administration and the traditional ruler of Igbo-Ukwu. While the study is based on the decision making processes as observed, these elders were interviewed on the philosophical and traditional foundations of OHAZURUME, conditions for its effectiveness, whether there are conditions that render it ineffective and why the emphasis on 'OHA'.

Igbo-Ukwu is chosen because the archaeological discoveries present it as the root of Igbo race while some even argue, of human race. Ummummenofor was chosen for convenience. Igbo-ukwu is in Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State of Nigeria and lies on a high ground of 335 meters above sea level, an estimated area of about 29 square kilometers and inhabited by about 115000 people (Shaw, 1975; Ezenibe, 2011, p.1; Acholonu, 2010). Igbo-Ukwu has 36 Umunnas and is divided into three

administrativecum political units (Ngo, Ihite, Obiuno). Thus the structure is Umunna, the tripod, called quarters and the general town union. At all the levels, there are political and traditional leaderships. The umunna is at the center of social, economic and political activities in Igboland. It is a group of families that trace their roots to one ancestral father (Ifechukwu, 2000); it is a territorially kin-based unit made of a number of compounds and each compound composes of a number of economically independent households (Okafor, 1992).

Ndigbos (the Igbos) constitute one of the three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria, totally occupying the South-East geo-political zone (5 states) and with significant presence in the South-South and North-Central zones of the country. Ethnographically, the Igbos, present a strikingly distinct socio-cultural outlook, vis-à-vis the other two major cultural groups in the country: the Yorubas and the Hausa-Fulani. The Igbo society in its traditional setting is an egalitarian and highly competitive socio-cultural tendencies with the basic framework founded on the constancy of gerontocracy and mobility of social title systems (Nwaezeigwe, 2007:3). The Igbo traditional government was participatory and extremely democratic. Every grown up male could have and indeed had his say at the assemblies taking decisions on matters of interest to the village' Onwumechili, (2000, p.26). This type of government was described as being in line with democratic habits of the modern world (Davidson, 1981).

The Igbos are widely travelled within and outside Nigeria and their land area is located roughly between latitude 5 and 7 degrees north of the Equator and longitude 6 and 8 degrees east of the Greenwich (Ilogu, 1974, p.2).

Results and Discussions

The OHAZURUME process in practice

1. The leader presents the issue at stake which may concern a parcel of land, family squabble, representation at the center, how a daughter was treated by her husband in another umunna even how the umunna should celebrate the imminent new yam festival.
2. Somebody else may need to elaborate further depending on the issue and the person's knowledge or involvement the issue. This is called 'ikwa-nma'; literarily, to sharpen the knife, but it means to elucidate further or fine-tune.
3. Contributions are taken from EVERYBODY who wishes to contribute, with priority given to questions and requests for clarifications.

4. Nobody is given a second chance to speak when others have not had a first chance unless he is asking or answering a question or making clarifications.

5. If a person who is central to the issue is not around, the matter is deferred to the next meeting or, depending on the nature of the matter, a special meeting is fixed. The key person, persons or group(s) are then specifically invited and notified that he/they are summoned at the next meeting. If he/they fail to attend at that meeting, the decision may proceed without waiting for them, unless there is a very COGENT reason for such absence.

6. Taking contributions from EVERYBODY and ensuring that interested parties are present are central to the OHAZURUME philosophy. It ensures participation and equity.

7. After everybody who wishes to speak has spoken, when no new ideas are being raised or when ideas have become repetitive, the leader gauges the general view and articulates the umunna position on the matter.

8. The umunna is asked to affirm the position by being asked: 'I hope this is what we have agreed!' There may be further fine-tuning at this stage. This is supported by a collective chorus of 'eeyi' and the decision holds. This affirmation stage is very critical; it seals the decision just like 'the ayes have it' in parliament.

9. In some cases, sanctions are attached for breaking the decision so that this is decided without having anybody in mind. At times the decision stands on its own and the sanction is discussed if there is a breach. But whether the sanction is determined up-front or not, everybody knows that any breach of the umunna position attracts a sanction most especially because, it is an OHAZURUME affair; the oha has decided!

10. Implementation follows. Implementation is swift and experiences minor or no hitch because everybody [oha] was involved and even those whose views were not upheld are satisfied by the fact that their voices were heard.

The process articulated above holds for Umummenofor, the other 35 umunnas and other institutions in Igbo-Ukwu which include the quarters (Ngo, Ihite, Obiuno); the town as a whole which assembles at its ancestral headquarters-AMAEHULU-where it holds the 'ono-n'unonaonon'ama'(home and abroad) meetings ; the Idu in council(The traditional ruler and his cabinet), the umu-ada(married daughters who return to their fathers umunna to participate in funerals, marriages and even conflict resolutions); inyom-ona;(assembly of wives) etc. There are slight differences though. The Amaehulu assembly is representative because of crowd control and logistic issues; it may also not be possible to allow everybody to speak because of the same size and

the multiplicity of issues to be addressed. The Idu in council is also representative, made of one representative per Umunna, one per quarter and the Idu himself (total membership of 40).

The above is how consensus-based decision making within the context of OHAZURUME philosophy works in Igbo-ukwu and indeed among the Ndigbos of Nigeria.

Discussions

Most aspects of communal relations and social dynamics among Ndigbo are based on the OHAZURUME philosophy. Ifechukwu (2000) for instance states that the Igbo approach to dispute resolution is conciliatory and win-win as against the adversarial, win-lose, western judicial system. The primary goal is reconciliation between the parties. It is a process that involves discussions, investigations, reconciliation and celebration before implementation and offers the special advantages of conciliation, social stability and protection of the weak. Ten years later, he (Ifechukwu, 2010, p. 52) restates the conciliatory approach of the Umunna philosophy in which social mutual concern or the principle of co-prosperity is the core value: 'It emphasizes communal feelings and the idea that I am because you are; what happens to one happens to all. Our joys and sorrows are shared and therefore in resolving disputes, we must seek the middle way'.

'While the Yorubas of Nigeria are traditionally a part of the centralized systems, Olupona (2012) describes their cultural understanding of leadership as "a horizontal construction where each person is empowered to benefit the larger community and respond to the dictates of the situation; a paradigm that recognizes the value of individuals beyond mere instruments for turning profits and empower them to implement leadership at the grassroots to make necessary changes by identifying windows of opportunity". He introduces the concept of the 'alatunse', the title given to the person who takes full responsibility for making sure that things are in order. He takes charge because of his character and knowledge. The cultural principles of alatunse is that he/she will mend the world, resolve crises even when he does not lead the group or is not the top guy. He assesses the situation, devises the strategy and implements for collective benefit.

Nigerian cultural heritage values individuals who are able to lead according to their capabilities even when they are not the obvious leaders. There are proverbs in the various ethnic groups to the effect that even a junior or a woman is capable of moving the family forward. Our deep cultural wisdom holds

that we should not wait for the top guy if things are getting bad due to inability of the eldest to perform the role. He argues that this is the type of indigenous paradigm that matches the values of the community with an appropriate form of leadership and management. It also captures the type of grassroots civic leadership empowerment rather than the western top-down affair where power is concentrated at the top and which does not consider how individuals in collectivist contexts can exercise leadership that will address problems, create solutions and benefit the entire community. This is an example of indigenous management philosophy and practice and is also related to the OHAZURUME philosophy because even though there is central leadership, the people also exercise leadership whenever the need arises.

The Japanese decision making system also has a lot in common with the OHAZURUME philosophy. While the western managers are in a hurry to answer the question, the Japanese spend a lot of time in defining the question; to determine whether there is a need for a decision in the first instance and in this process, they get everybody involved so that once they decide that it is a worthwhile affair, they move with a lightning speed. Thus, the Japanese, by sending different groups to the same negotiation, ensure that all those who will be involved in implementation are part of the discussions and decision. Whenever they have all agreed on the need to move forward, there is a consensus and they don't have to sell or impose their decisions because the people (the 'oha') are already involved from the very beginning. They have also learnt from the process, areas where there may be resistance and are proactive in handling such. Having achieved a meeting of the mind, the action stage is very speedy. Drucker who sees the Japanese system as the essential of effective decision making (1974, p.466) summarises this method as: they focus on deciding what the decision is all about; they bring out dissenting opinions because there is no decision until there is consensus; they focus on alternatives rather than on the right solution and it eliminates the need to sell decisions because it builds execution into the decision making process.

In line with this process, the RINGi-SHO has become a critical document in the Japanese corporate world. A ringi-sho is an approval/signature document that Japanese employees create to obtain approval for new projects, expenditures, or process changes. Once created, the ringi-sho is submitted for signature to the relevant parties in ascending hierarchical order. At any stage in this process, it may be necessary for the originator of the ringi-sho to modify and resubmit the document. A well-written ringi-sho contains an adequate explanation of the problem, proposed action,

the costs and benefits and other related issues involved. There are also other consensus- based methods of decision making around the globe. The underlying principles of the Quaker Consensus Model are:

- Multiple concerns and information are shared until the sense of the group is clear.
- Discussion involves active listening sharing information.
- Norms limit number of times one asks to speak to ensure that each speaker is fully heard.
- Ideas and solutions belong to the group; no names are recorded.
- Differences are resolved by discussion. The convener identifies areas of agreement to push discussion deeper.
- The facilitator articulates the sense of the discussion, asks if there are other concerns, and proposes a ‘minute’ the decision.
- The group as a whole is responsible for the decision and the decision belongs to the group.
- The facilitator can discern if one who is not uniting with the decision is acting without concern for the group or in selfish interest.
- Dissenters' perspectives are embraced (Quaker Foundation, 1996)

The Consensus-Oriented Decision-Making (CODM) Model on the other hand has these seven steps: framing the issue, facilitating open discussion, identifying underlying concerns, collaborative proposal development, choosing a direction, synthesizing a final proposal and closure. The shared ownership of decisions inherent in this model fosters commitment, enthusiasm and successful implementation (Hartnett, 2011; Makelainen, 2012).

Conclusion

OHAZURUME is an Igbocontribution to the world of management thoughts, philosophies and practices and an indigenous solution to a complex and complicated global problem. Consensus building is a multi-billion dollar industry with immeasurable resources committed annually on complex decision making models, trainings, books and consensus building measures. Like all consensus models, it is built on collaboration, inclusion, mutual respect, empathy and shared ownership of decisions which facilitates execution. OHAZURUME shares the same basics with the Japanese, Quaker, and CODM models: group ownership, participation, ease of execution, respect for dissention. Like all other models, it ensures that decisions are effectively executed and as asserted by Makelainen, (2012) A “B grade” decision executed well because of a strong sense of shared ownership may have far better results than an “A grade” decision poorly

implemented because of lackluster support. Furthermore, the long-term health of a group is typically more important its decisions and this health is enhanced under the OHAZURUME philosophy because members feel included and respected in the decision-making process, even if they don’t always get everything everyone wants. It also encourages unity in diversity: diversity of thought and diversity of perspectives yet unity in action because everybody is allowed to have a voice. The inclusiveness and shared ownership of the OHAZURUME model becomes obvious when compared with the-person-in-charge model; where an individual is the lord and master. The ultimate advantage of the OHAZURUME model is its simplicity and this becomes very obvious when compared with a SHORT (!) guide to consensus building developed by MIT and which is about 30 pages! The downside is that as the size of the group increases (like in the home and abroad assemblies) it becomes a representative affair and further becomes difficult for everybody to contribute. It may also take time as everybody wants to speak even on what others have spoken so as not to be seen as redundant.

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