How to Survive in an Organization: Understanding the Other Side of Managers

Rogers Rugeiyamu and Amani Shayo

Local Government Training Institute, Dodoma, United Republic of Tanzania.

Abstract- The study aims to reveal the other side of managers in organizations. Some managers today uses the legal authority to generate and uphold despotic tendencies to control employees'. The survival of employees' depends on how well they fit to such unarticulated managers' despotic principles. The study is built along longitudinal design; data were collected through observation and documentary review and analysed through narrative approach. The study extending the work of Jackall (1998) provide understandings of informal principles that employees have to comply with to ensure their survival in an organization. It was revealed that, the said informal principles are a detrimental factor to organization efficiency. The article draws attention to management practitioners to make other studies on the way the despotic tendencies of some managers can be ended in organizations.

Index Terms- Despotic, Managers, Organization, Survival

I. INTRODUCTION

Organizations today are administered under the legal rational authority which entail that, everything done in it are justified by the rules and regulations governing them and the authority to be practiced in a rational way(Allen, 2004; Al-Habil, 2011). This type of authority distinguishes itself from charismatic and despotic (dictatorial) authorities. The latter types in which in the words of the authors are old fashioned modes of managing differ a lot from the former type of authority in various features.

The charismatic authority is described as the kind of authority in which authority derives from charisma of a leader (Terlouw, 2010; Joosse, 2014). The charisma of a leader is explained by Weber (1978) as a certain quality of an individual (manager) personality by virtue of which he or she is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with super natural or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities (Shamir *et al*., 1993).The charismatic qualities make them charisma in organizations (Terlouw, 2010). Such qualities define the leader followers' relationship.

Again, the despotic authority is regarded as a leadership style which provides that a leader/manager dictates rules/policies and procedures. Here, the leader dictates goals and controls all organization activities without any meaningful participation of subordinates (Cellar *et al.,* 2001; Malos, 2012).

In this aspect, the manager directs the employees' accomplishment of organizational goals and in fact employees should follow directions provided by the manager. In such leadership, the manager does not require the views/ideas/thoughts of employees on how the organizational goals should be realized. This is to say, not criticizing manager's idea is normal for employees under this leadership style. Again, under this authority, internalization of rules and regulations governing the organization is a must on the side of employees as managers uses them effectively (Dyczkowska and Dyczkowsk, 2018).That being the case, employees have to find the careful way of surviving in the organization to escape the brutality of managers.

On the other side, legal rational authority is the one in which the organization is tied to legal rationality. In most cases, legal rational authority is exercised in bureaucratic settings. In this aspect, most formal organizations today are in some way bureaucratized (Allen, 2004). That is to say, they are characterized by written rules, a hierarchy of positions constituting both a chain of command and a career ladder, universalistic allocation of positions and based on certified expertise and application of impartial manner by bureaucrats(Wren, 1994). In this type of authority, strictly personal characteristics of managers (as applied in charismatic authority) are irrelevant to subordinates belief in the validity of commands. Thus, it is argued that, this is best organization management practices that the 21st century world has experienced (Naseer, 2017).

However, it is argued that, theoretically most of organizations today are shaped by the legal rational authority (Al-Habil, 2011) though practically some are characterized by the despotic system of managers. Arguably, managers have become intelligent manipulators of the legal rational principles. They are working under the name of legal authority to justify their own agenda. Despite the fact that, managers are appointed under such principles but their leadership is guided by what the study call unwritten/articulated despotic principles of managers (Ashforth, 1994).

Debatably, managers have become giant and powerful individuals who can use the organization principles to justify their despotic leadership. Here, employees' are becoming victims of managers' leadership. Therefore, employees need to understudy their managers to ensure their survival in organizations. This is supported by Weber (1958) who argued that, no authority could actually be extensively bureaucratic (rational) because some positions would be held by charismatic leaders (Williams, 2003). Thus, the survival of employees in organizations depends on how well they fit or forced to shape themselves to the informal despotic principles of managers. Focusing on formal organizations, the article provides the unarticulated principles that managers wish to

be upheld by employees but first, it provides the understandings on the despotic nature of managers.

II.   REVIEW ON THE UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE DESPOTIC NATURE OF MANAGERS

In formal organizations, managers are empowered by rules to give directions to subordinates (Haugaard, 2017).Such rules are designed to ensure that, democratic values are internalized in organizations and defines the manager subordinate relationship (Stillman, 2000).Arguably, such internalization has remained to only employees while managers are struggling to ensure their survival through the defined rules. The legal rational authorities practiced today provide the chance for managers to build their authoritarianism tendencies in the organization and therefore, making employees grovel to them even when they are in the position of truth or in favor of rules.

For the sake of ensuring survival in positions or not being criticized by subordinates, managers fashion the organizational rules and become the principle carriers of such rules. Organizational rules are subjected to changes to cope with what managers would love to achieve. Such achievement is not necessarily that, it must aim to benefit the organization. On the other side employees are bound by organizational rules made by managers to ensure that employees bend on their arms. Despite the fact that, rules which shape managers-employees relationship might pass through democratic system, managers ensure that, three important aspects exists in such rules. One, their survival is protected, second, subordinates cannot criticize their authority and bag for mercy to survive and third, their interests are maintained and if possible improved.

In this aspect, manager becomes the King/Queen or God like. This is due to the fact that, their words become law despite the presence of written rules. Managers' wishes are regarded as commands by employees. Employees find themselves in a position to listen to what managers are saying and putting efforts to understand them. The king like nature of managers makes employees submit fear to them. Doing what managers wishes and any criticism to the manager put employees at jeopardy because managers will find a way of punishing them. That being the case, by *de jure* organizations authority may be defined as legal rational but *de facto becomes* despotic. This is what defines the manager-employee relationships.

III.   MANAGER- SUBORDINATE RELATIONSHIP UNDER DESPOTIC TENDENCIES

The relationship that exists between managers and subordinates under despotic tendencies is characterized by employees' fear. Employees are required to follow and implement what the manager wants. The wants of a manager is not necessarily that must be directed towards the achievement of organizational goals. Failure to follow the wishes, a manager may find the loop hole to deal with the opponents. In the process of punishing the opponents, the manager may impinge the important rights of employees. Such rights may be related to rewards, training or any other entitled rights.

On the aspect of rewards to be paid to employees due to their participation in some projects, managers expect that, their names must appear in the list of those entitled to be paid even if they did not participate. If the manager's name does not appear in the payment list, there can be delays of payments or passing through serious and complex bureaucratic procedures which may take long time to accomplish the payments. Sometimes the payments may not be effected until the name of the manager appears in the payment list. At this juncture, employees' right to be paid can be delayed.

On the aspect of training, the manager would love always to be above subordinates in everything including education level. In this aspect, the manager will always fight to ensure that, he/she get the training privileges prior to subordinates despite the fact that, the subordinate may have the right to receive training before the manager as per the organizational plan/policy on training. If managers realize that, subordinates are in favor of the made policies on training, they may force the change of such policies to justify their agenda by any means possible (Ashforth, 1994).

Basing on the aspects provided above, managers do not expect any opposition from subordinates. If opposed, managers can make evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of their opponents. After assessment, managers plan a coup and rehearse the appropriate reasons to legitimate them to punish opposing subordinates. That being the case, subordinates have to believe that, the boss is always right, even when is seen to be wrong. The boss is regarded as everything and controlling employees' life at work and this creates fear to employees.

The fear created purposely to ensure that no one is opposing managers. For example in organizational meetings, an employee should not criticize the manager in front of fellow employees. This might be regarded by the manager as a serious offence. Managers hear what they want to hear. If you are the opponent of the manager you will never be given the chance to speak at the meeting. Sometimes if you will be given a chance, a manager may tell you to keep your arguments short and you might be obstructed by the manager's responses making your argument end up meaningless. If the manager fails to control you, the manager may locate your movements and call the meeting when you are absent. That being the case, in the manager's minds, posing arguments against their wishes is regarded as errs. Here, in one way or another they might find a way including the provided above mechanisms to deal with the opponents.

Again, the fear created by managers in organization is made for the aim of ensuring that they get what they want. This is because some managers think that, the life of employees at the organization belongs to their hands. Despite the existence of statutory instruments to regulate the employment relationships, there is a secret and hidden mechanism of making sure that, managers get what they want. Employees should study the behavior and speeches of managers to realize what the manager want and comply.

But sometimes employees may fail to realize the wishes of their managers. For the sake of gaining such understandings, employees try to become friends of a manager. The aim of such friendship is to get close to the manager for the aim of realizing such wishes. Those who are not the manager's friend, they must be friends of the friends of a manager for sake of gaining information of the wishes of a manager. However, the friendship

created between a manager and an employee does not end the fear of employees towards their managers. Rather, managers' get a chance of improving their tendency and their friends becomes the agents of perpetuating such tendencies to other employees. Such informal communication channel reaches the entire organization and therefore, all employees become the victims of the friendships to the manager. The study provides that, the wishes of manager do not necessarily be directed towards the achievement of the organizational goals.

IV. HOW MANAGER- SUBORDINATE RELATIONSHIP AFFECTS EFFICIENCY OF ORGANIZATIONS

As what defines the manager-subordinates relationships is fear, the efficiency in organization becomes difficult to achieve. While managers are struggling to develop new mechanism of dealing with employees and ensuring that their dictatorial tendencies are maintained, employees on the other side are struggling to study their managers to comply with their tendencies. The fear creates inferiority complex among employees in a sense that, they cannot criticize or advice managers when they deviate from the proper conducts. At this juncture, efficiency in an organization becomes vulnerable to such tendencies.

Sometimes, subordinates with innovative contributions towards organization efficiency can be seen as enemy by some despotic managers. Managers are afraid of their positions being taken by subordinates who are seen to be innovative. In that sense, even if the idea given by an employee might be contributing a lot towards efficiency of an organization, managers might find a way not to implement the idea for the aim of protecting their position from been taken away. This demoralizes those with innovative ideas in a sense that, they stop contributing anything to the efficiency of an organization. Managers become the main innovators and idea givers in organizations. It is not necessary that the ideas given by managers have high percent of improving efficiency of organization. What manager's care is that, no employee is better than them. Managers think that, they are the organization main genius who can foresee and innovate than subordinates. This authoritarian tendency of managers shapes the efficiency of organization.

Leaving aside efficiency, the improvement in the organization becomes difficult as every move is done by managers of which sometimes their moves may not be essential to the growth of an organization. This might be the reason as to why it takes a long time for the organization to grow due to the relationship that exists between managers and subordinates. Sometimes, subordinates with contributing idea might be undermined by managers for the sake of maintaining their positions and advance their interests. Even those who remain in the organization stay quiet waiting for the managers to set agenda for improvements which may not come at all. Here, the organization never grows until the manager retires or is appointed for other position or leave the organization. However, it is possible also that, the new manager can inherit the tendency of the dropped manager and therefore, organization growth becoming again a problem.

V. STUDY JUSTIFICATION

This study argumentatively, provides the clear picture of the despotic nature of managers and how employees are forced to shape themselves to the informal despotic principles of managers. The article provides the unarticulated despotic principles that managers wishes employees to be shaped in. Such tendencies are not formal to an organization rather they exist in the mind of some of managers and being transferred to employees in an informal way. The article aims to keep employees updated of how they can survive some managers' despotic principles.

It should be born in mind that, the discussed unarticulated principles are more of informal based on the authors' experience working in organizations and claims by people employed in organizations that the authors have come across with. The said principles are backed up by Jackall (1998). Again, it must be remembered that the article does not intend to attack any ones leadership rather to be used for academic understanding of the behaviors of managers. It is the wish of authors that, the article will contribute a lot to behavioral understanding of managers in management discipline.

VI. STUDY METHODS

This entails a systematic and orderly approach taken towards the collection and analysis of data so that information can be obtained from those data (Jankowicz, 2000). In this study, the longitudinal design which involves repeated observation of the same variables over short or long period of time was applied (Thomson, 2007). Data were collected through documentary review and observation. Again, the narrative approach was used in the analysis of data as below.

Data Collection Methods

This entails the methods of gathering and measuring information which enables one to answer relevant questions and evaluate outcomes. The study used observation and documentary review methods in the collection of data as below.

Observation

The study applied participant observation which entails researchers immersing themselves in a social setting for an extended period of time, observing behaviour, listening to what is said in conversations both between others and with the fieldworker, and asking questions (Baryman, 2008). Through this method researchers were able to collect information based on the previous organization that they worked. Also, researchers were able to ask questions to other employees whom they previously came across with on the behaviours of managers in organizations.

Documentary Review

This method deals with using documents and other sources to support the viewpoint or arguments (Scott, 2006). In this study, the method was used to review studies done on the despotic nature of managers. Again, it was used to review the work of Jackall (1998) *Moral Mazes: The World of Corporate Managers (pp. 109-110)*. The study extended the work of Jackall (1998) by showing how those principles can affect employees' survival.

Data analysis

The study used narrative approach in the data analysis. The approach entails a genre of analytic frames whereby researchers interpret stories that are told within the context of research and are shared in everyday life (Smith, 2000). In this aspect, the observed and told experiences about the study were presented in narrations.

VII. Results and Discussions on the Way Employees' can Survive in Organizations

Surviving in an organization is not easy as people may think on the side of employees. This is due to the fact that, employees find themselves being forced to comply with the managers' unarticulated principles. Managers always fight to ensure that, they stay in their positions and interests are protected. For the sake of ensuring their agenda, they ensure that, employees understand and comply with what they want. This part provides unarticulated principles that managers' wishes be internalized by employees in order to ensure their survival in an organization. These informal principles are enforced by managers through sanctions that can be posed to employees when they fail to comply. They explain what managers wish employees to act and react to their directions and wishes. Employees find themselves in the world of managers' informal principles which may put organization efficiency at jeopardy.

Tell the manager what he/she wants to hear

Some managers in the organization are agenda setters and expect employees to work in their world of agenda. Employees are expected to read, study, investigate and understand what are managers' wants and therefore telling them what they want to hear. Managers do not wish to be opposed in their thoughts by subordinates as they regard themselves as extraordinarily and employees should implement what they are directed without objection. That being the case, employees should be precautious when talking to a manager and choose words that praise the manager. When an employee tells against what the manager wish to hear he/she may face punishment that can be technically prepared by the manager without the employees' realization. An employee can be aware of the manager's wants through speech, behavior and their stand in a certain agenda. Therefore, employees should seriously study the speech which expresses the managers' behavior and wishes and act accordingly. This will ensure employees' survival in peace and enjoying privileges entitled to them in an organization.

Those who fail to understand the direction of the manager and therefore thinking against the manager can be punished by any means possible and their survival in an organization can be at stake. The punishment that can be posed against those who are against the wants of the manager include not getting new opportunities happening in an organization such as new projects, training and trips.

If the manager wants something dropped you drop it

Managers are not impressed by issues raised by some employees who they see in their own understanding shakes their existence. They will try to make sure that, the raised agendum is dropped. Manager becomes careful on the aspect that, if the agenda is against their will or shakes their existence they will ensure that it is dropped.

Managers can put efforts to ensure the agenda is dropped. Efforts may include word of mouth towards those raising it, words like *"I am not impressed by the agenda you are raising, drop it,"* or it can be by watching every step of those rising the agenda. When managers find the weakness of employees raising the agenda, they may punish them through such weaknesses. That might be a reminder of self-assessment to employees rising the unwanted agenda by the manager and therefore to drop it. In this aspect, if employees who are raising the agenda are punished yet they have not dropped it, the manager may use their friends *"the managers friends"* to deliver a message to them that, they are punished because they have not understood what the manager wants, *"you are punished because you are not dancing the boss song."* It means they should drop their agenda and *"shut their mouth"* otherwise the punishment will carry on. The manager's friends can be used whether knowingly or unknowingly. Knowingly they may be told by the manager to deliver a message or unknowingly they might use friendship affections to deliver a message.

Sometimes employees raising and addressing the unwanted agenda can be punished by not being involved in opportunities happening at the organization. In this aspect, the manager may grant new opportunities to royal employees and not involve those few continuing with the unwanted agenda. The punishment can be understood by such employees when they start to ask themselves why they are not involved in new opportunities. Therefore, by being told or common sense they may realize that they are not given new opportunities because they are perpetuating the unwanted agenda.

At this juncture, it is significant for employees to be aware of the agenda rising and assess them if they impress the manager or not. If the employee won't pay attention to the nature of the agenda they raise, they may end up in the despotic jurisdiction of the manager hence failing to survive happily in the organization.

Employees' should be sensitive to the managers' wishes

Every manager in an organization wishes see subordinates helping realize his/her wishes. The manager's desire may relate to realization of organization objectives, improving the performance of an organization and sometimes strengthening their leadership existence. The former two can be articulated in the organization development plans and therefore being understood and sensitive to any of the employee. However, the latter wish requires high employee's sensitivity to grasp and forecast. Managers can manipulate the good intentions of the former wishes to advance their hidden wishes.

The direction of the manager towards realizing the organizational goals determine what the manager wishes. The manager can use that chance and ensure that all employees' efforts are counted to his/her favor. In this aspect, the manager can even present the employees new ideas invented towards the realization of organizational goals as he/she is in the board of directors meetings (Ashforth, 1994). Such presentation can be used to seek support from the organization's board of directors and therefore, advancing their existence. Here, employees are used by the manager to make sure that, they exist in their positions.

In this aspect, employees should be sensitive to the doings and words of managers. For them to survive they should not contradict such wishes or to oppose them in a sense that, may show that, the manager is weak and it does not matter whether manger's wishes are directed towards the achievement of organizational goals or not.

Not to report issues that the manager does not want them to be reported

In this principle, it is better for the employee to remember the issue of covering up. Some of managers behaviorally wishes some issues to be reported and others not be reported. Managers feel praised and comfortable when employees report things that brings credit to them and feel an employee is disgusting when reporting issues that the manager does not want be reported.

In this aspect, reporting involves an employee to reveal issues happening under the manager jurisdiction or control. It can be the repercussion of the manager decision or anything happening in the organization that is the result of manager's doings. Therefore, an employee should get informed that revealing issues that may put the picture of the manager as incompetent in front of public should not be reported. In this aspect, employees should make sure that, they are covered up and it is not known to others that, it is the manager who caused it. If revealed, there can be some punishment to an employee which indirectly deteriorates the employee-manager relationship which can be a problem to an employee or direct or close supervision by the manager.

Focus should be on doing what the job requires and remember to close up the mouth

The despotic behaviors of a manager can be seen when the employee becomes talkative especially of the manager's weaknesses. Managers are not impressed by an employee who always talks of the weakness of the manager or the organization at all. Speaking about it is seen as err. Even if what an employee talk may contribute to the realization of organizational goals or improve the organization's practice, if it does not impress the manager an employee is seen as an enemy.

The employee talking can happen in an organization meeting in most cases. Revealing the manager's weakness in the meeting is a serious errs. In this aspect, the manager wishes that, an employee to keep working on assigned tasks and keeping the mouth shut. If the weakness in running the organization occurs, managers think that, they are the ones with keen eyes to see and correct and not to be corrected by an employee.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The other side of managers is seen to be a challenging factor to employees and organization's efficiency. As provided in this study, behaviorally, some managers use their positions to uphold the despotic tendencies which are the detrimental factor to organization's efficiency. The article calls attention to management scholars to make studies on the methods that can be used to eliminate the said tendencies so that employees' can perform their duties in organizations without fear.

REFERENCES

[1] Al-Habil, W. (2011), Rationality and Irrationality of Max Weber's Bureaucracies. IJMBS Vol. 1, Issue 4, pp. 106.

[2] Allen, K. (2004), *Max Weber: A Critical Introduction*, London: Pluto Press

[3] Ashforth, B. (1994), Petty tyranny in organizations,*Human relations journal*, Vol. 47. No.7, pp. 756-763.

[4] Bryman, A. (2008), *Social Research Methods, 4th edition,*Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[5] Cellar, D. F *et al*. (2001), Effects of leader style, leader sex, and subordinate personality on leader evaluations and future subordinate motivation, J. Bus. Psychol, 16pp.

[6] Dyczkowska, J. and Dyczkowsk, T. (2018), Democratic or Autocratic Leadership Style? Participative Management and its Links to rewarding Strategies and Job Satisfaction in SMEs, *Athens journal of business and economics*, Vol. 4, No.2, pp. 193-215.

[7] Haugaard, M. (2017), What is authority?, *Journal of classical sociology*, pp. 3-4.

[8] Jackal, R. (1998), *Moral mazes: The world of corporate managers*, New York, Oxford University press.

[9] Jankowicz, A. (2000), *Business research projects*, 3rd Edition, Thomson Learning, London.

[10] Joosse, P. (2014), Becoming a God: Max Weber and the Social Construction of Charisma, *Journal of Classical Sociology,* Vol. 14(3), pp. 266–283.

[11] Maloş, R. (2012), Leadership styles, Annals of EftimieMurgu University Resita, Fascicle II, Economic Studies, pp. 421-426.

[12] Naseer, A. S. (2017), Max Weber's concept of Rational-Legal Authority and its importance for modern day mass democracy, BAIS 2017.

[13] Scott, J. (2006), *Documentary research*, London, Sage Publications.

[14] Shamir, *et al*. (1993), The motivational effects of charismatic leadership: A self-concept based theory, *Organizational Science*, Vol. 4, pp. 577-594.

[15] Smith, C. P. (2000), *Content analysis and narrative analysis*. In: Reis HT, Judd CM, eds. Handbook of research methods in social personality psychology, New York, Cambridge University Press.

[16] Stillman, R. J. (2000), *Public Administration: Concepts and Cases*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

[17] Terlouw, K. (2010), Charisma and space. *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Vol. 10, No. 3, pp335-346.

[18] Thomson, R. (2007), The qualitative longitudinal case history: Practical, methodological and ethical reflections, *Social Policy and Society*, Vol. 6, pp. 571-582.

[19] Weber, M. (1958), The three types of legitimate rule, Berkeley Publications in Society and Institutions, 4 (1): 1-11, Translated by Hans Gerth.

[20] Weber, M. (1978), *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (ed G Roth and C Wittich). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

[21] Williams, D. (2003), Max Weber: Traditional, Legal-Rational, and Charismatic Authority, pp1-11.

[22] Wren, D. A. (1994), *The Evolution of Management Thought*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

AUTHORS

First Author – Rogers Rugeiyamu, Local Government Training Institute, Dodoma, United Republic of Tanzania., rogerruge@gmail.com

Second Author – Amani Shayo, Local Government Training Institute, Dodoma, United Republic of Tanzania.