

Deconstructing “Management” and its implications for learning and teaching of management in Sri Lanka

J.A.S.K. Jayakody<sup>1</sup> & W.M.A. Sunjeewani<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dept. of Management Studies,  
Faculty of Management and Finance,  
University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.  
E-mail: susantha20002001@yahoo.com

<sup>2</sup>Trainee Manager, People’s Bank, Dalugama, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.

Taking the deconstructionists’ approach, this paper questions the promises of management by deconstructing the underlying dominant assumptions of management. After exploring the historical factors that led theorists to conceptualize management as a cause and effect relationship with their pre-occupation with the control of chaos, the writers argue that chaos theory rather than Newtonian theory qualifies as a way of conceptualizing management of organizations. Drawing the examples from Hawthorn experiments and various suggestions for job designing, the writers question the notion of controlling organizations towards the desired outcome and the modernists’ promise of continuous progress. After questioning the validity of epistemological and ontological assumptions of positivism – a dominant approach to study organizations, the writers emphasize the need of taking anti-positivistic approach as an alternative methodological paradigm to study organizations. The writers also draw the attention to the inability of management curricula in Sri Lankan universities to incorporate postmodernists’ explanations of the behavior of organizations and lack of recognition given by Sri Lankan researchers to anti-positivistic approach as an alternative methodological paradigm to study organizations. Finally, they call for Sri Lankan scholars to take a broader perspective in studying Sri Lankan organizations drawing methodological traditions which are largely found in other disciplines such as sociology and anthropology.

Key words: Learning; Organizational behavior; Positivism; Pedagogical issues; University curricula