MILITARISM IN MANAGERIAL PRACTICES OF PAKISTAN

Ashique Ali Jhatial
Dr.Farah Lalani

ABSTRACT

This paper presents critical analysis of management theory and practice and identifies stream of influences from military strategy and practice on modern day managerial practices. With extensive review of mainstream literature on management theory and practice, this study discovers a range of classical examples of militaristic trends in managerial practice from history, military strategies and tactics. Paper also classifies heroic attributes of military generals that most often are adopted by business managers at workplace. This research also presents comparative study of militaristic influences on managerial practices across the world including Pakistan. In light of the discussion, article finally illustrates policy implications for further research, managers, government and other stakeholders.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, more academia and research community in social and management sciences began to focus on predicting and explaining stream of external influences on management theory and practice. In this context, the extant literature reports social, religious, cultural and economic factors on management practice in cross-cultural contexts (Budhwar and Debrah, 2009; Khilji, 2003). The mainstream management philosophy emphasizes on accomplishment of organizational goals which requires human resource or manpower that essentially need to be effectively and efficiently influenced, motivated and directed. Human resource management (HRM) involves the effective management of people to achieve organizational goals. Indeed, HRM is commonly defined as the "productive use of people in achieving the organization's strategic business objectives and the satisfaction of individual employee needs" (Stone, 1998, p.4).

In pursuit of organizational goals, managers are empowered to guide, mentor and motivate employees at work. This allows managers a significant liberty to exert negative and positive force that often goes beyond theory and practice (Miner, 1980; Miner et al, 1995). To be successful, a manager needs to understand human psychology, sociology, human needs, values and emotions. In absence of such knowledge, motivation remains only a concept whereby managers behave as military generals and apply force, coercion threats and sometimes abusive behaviour. A careful review of literature suggests that there is limited research available to explain the phenomena of when, why and how far modern corporate managers behave like military generals. Do contemporary managers behave in their personal fear of failure as manager? Are they biased and pick and choose certain employees? There are several academic and research questions yet need to be answered through empirical research. This article presents criticism on management theory and practice in a historical context. The critical analysis focuses on intrusion of militaristic influences on theory and practices of contemporary management in cross-cultural context. In light of the literature review, a conscious attempt has been made to highlight comparative analysis of cross-country analysis and relate discussion in context of Pakistan. This article has been structured as follows: first introduction to management and militarism has been presented with key examples from the founders of the management and military strategists. Then, comparative analysis has been presented to give general understanding about the military influences in management theory and practice. Next, the context of Pakistan has been discussed at length to illustrate ongoing influences on management practice in the country. Last section focuses on conclusions and policy implications for future research and management practitioners.

MANAGEMENT

Management theory and practice, in present times, have unprecedented and profound influence in business, governments, not-for profit organizations and religious institutions in terms of decision making and goals attainment. Managers play central role in making things happen according to plans. Management research, on the other, creates great body of knowledge that equally benefits

the societies, governments, businesses and not-for profit organizations across the world. Samuel C. Certo (1997) defined management as: "process of reaching organizational goals by working with and through people and other sources". In order to work with employees and get work done accordingly, managers do several activities which are known as functions of management such as planning, organizing, influencing and controlling. Accomplishment of task and achievement of goals are the key elements of managerial responsibility for which they plan in advance, organize resources, influence people at work and direct them accordingly. Influencing function of management refers to motivating, leading, directing or stimulating manpower in the organization (Certo, 1997).

There is large body of literature that reports managerial coerciveness and unnecessary abusive behaviour on employee at workplace. Douglas McGregor (1960) identified that there are evidences that managers believe that employees inherently dislike work and they are lazy e.g., theory X. As a result, managers adopt coercive leadership style to get work done. The significant number of studies has examined the linkages of negative behaviour of immediate boss with employees' job satisfaction, commitment and intention to quit (Lam, Hui and Law, 1999). Much recent research of (Avey, West, and Crossley 2008; Cheung, Wu, Chan, and Wong 2009) reported that there are several ways that boss/supervisor behave like a military general and show harsh, abusive and militaristic behaviour (e.g. militarism) at work which directly affects employees' satisfaction and commitment. Previous research also reveals that those of the bosses who behave militarily at work hardly earn respects of employees (Einarsen, Aasland and Skogstad 2007). There is large body of literature reports evidences of managers commonly behave in a militaristic way and adopt very tough posture to exert coercive influence on employees for the accomplishment of task and objectives (Tepper, Duffy and Shaw (2001).

There are two different interpretations of *militarism and management*; first approach advocates that managers adapt militaristic strategies and tactics in organizations by creating

culture of fear and punishment and they lead staff as military generals do. The second interpretation focuses on the opinion that in a number of developing countries military officers are deployed in public sector enterprises where they function militaristic way as they do in their parent military organizations.

MILITARISM

Alfred Vagets defines militarism in a similar spirit as: "vast array of customs, interests, prestige, actions and thought associated with armies and wars and yet transcending true military purposes". Indeed, author further suggests that militarism is so constituted that it may hamper and defeat the purposes of military way. Its influence is unlimited in scope (Vagets, 1959:13). Moshe Lissak (1967) argues that engagement of military officers in civilian administrative tasks is not new and unusual phenomenon in countries where military is exclusive ruler or a direct and active partner in the power structure of the country. However, even in Western countries where military is not constitutionally active part of power, military as organization (not individual officers) take charge of services of civilian administration (Lissak, 1967).

Military, generally, is considered as pivotal organ of the state which is entrusted to defend the borders and maintain national security. Unluckily, in many countries in Asia and Africa, the infiltration of military officers in politics and public life is common and uninvited as partner in power not as an *apparatus of the state* (Marx & Engles, 1948). Siddiqa (2007) argues that military in a number of developing countries has been functioning beyond their constitutional capacity and act as partner in the game of power and politics and dominates at the key decision-making positions in public sector enterprises (PSEs) and it is also true in Pakistan (Siddiqa, 2007).

MILITARISTIC INFLUENCES ON MANAGEMENT THEORY AND PRACTICE

The history of organization and theory and practice of modern management have roots deep down in military and religious organizations. The military strategists and geniuses have contributed classic works to the development of management. For

example, Sun Tzu's *Art of War,* Carl Von Clausewitz's *On War* and Nicollo Machiavelli's *The Prince* have greater influence and contributions to pre-industrial history of management. Additionally, Socrates philosophical search for 'truth and knowledge' through epistemological and ontological assumptions and Aristotle's 'analytical thinking' helped management in problem solving methods and theory building. Herbert Spencer's Social Darwinist philosophy of *survival of* fittest (Kidwell & Roland, 1995:767-91) appears to have far greater contribution in modern day competitive corporate culture at work place.

Although the modern management theorists and philosophers Max Weber, F.W. Taylor, Henri Fayol, Mary Follet, Douglas McGregor, Elton Mayo and Peter Drucker have laid down the very foundations of management theory and practice, yet the *management practice* in real corporate world is similar to military strategies and tactics (Bracker, 1980:219-24). As a matter of fact, managers in real life profoundly embrace heroic and patriotic militaristic styles and lead organizations or departments in a militaristic way.

There is long history of leaders and managers who romanticize military strategic, tactical and operational parallels in business organizations. In today's cut-throat competitive corporate culture, management practitioners act beyond theory and practice and adopt lone heroic risk-taking styles similar to individual heroic warriors as traditional military soldiers do (Handy, 1885). Similarly, the contemporary mission and vision statements of organizations visualize expansion of 'market share' and 'establish dominance' in markets for particular product/service which resonate with traditional military strategies of winning wars against enemy and defending territories and national borders. Moreover, corporate image, corporate logos, corporate clothing, uniforms, cultivation of corporate identity and ethos are examples of militarism which are often taken as the form of upholding arcane military traditions. This gives unique identity and sense of belonging to the members of the organization and fosters unflinching loyalty similar to patriotism in military personnel (Hopton, 1999:71-82).

As contemporary managerial and business practices evolved from the heritage of traditional military strategies, tactics and designs the same organizational structures such as line organization, staff organization have been developed on military organizational patterns. The general perception regarding military as epitome of authority and command and control has dominantly shaped the history of modern organization and management functions (Windsor, 1996:34-42). Hoskin and Macov (1990) trace modern management history in the disciplinary and "grammocentric" practices of US military from 1817 and onwards. They claim that graduates of US military academy at West Point secured high positions in railroads where they transferred military practices in industry. This paved the way for militarism in management (Hoskin & Macve, 1990:17-22). Several commentators have observed that today's business organizations have adapted divisionalized and multidivisionalized organizational designs and structures from military structures (Talbot, 2003:330-340).

ATTRIBUTES OF MILITARY GENERALS ADOPTED BY MODERN MANAGERS

Sun Tzu's classical work on military strategies philosophy: "*He whose ranks are united in purpose will win*" has lifelong influence on contemporary management theory and practice. As a result the managers in business organizations naturalized 'virtues, values and personality attributes' of military generals. Today's, managers boast their task accomplishments and proudly present themselves as heroes with attributes that were suggested some 2000 years ago by a Chinese war-strategist Tzu. Sun Tzu's suggested that a good military general is one who is wise, sincere, benevolent, courageous, and strict. These attributes can widely be found in today's managers. Tzu further suggested that generals must discard recklessness, cowardice, short-temperedness, sensitive to honour, overly compassionate as negative qualities to avert disaster (Chen, 1994:42-48). A large number of leadership theories also have focused on a number of traits which relate to the qualities of military generals.

Machiavelli's philosophy of *'the end justifies the means'* endorses today's managerial attributes rather managers romanticize the endeavours of corporate heroes as valiant warriors. Today's managers consider market as battlefield and profoundly proclaim that '*everything is fair in war'*. Windsor (1996) argues that organizational militarism is a reality of corporate culture whereby all-powerful managers or CEOs act as heroes and own all organizational success by envisioning future directions. Today, military generals and business managers demand total loyalty of their workforce by creating discipline and fear as military generals do with their soldiers in military organizations.

Jay (1994) on the other hand reports that business managers create fiefdoms and exercise their full autonomy and absolute powers in feudalistic way by governing subordinates as subjects (Jay, 1994). Business managers not only share hierarchical, specialized, dictatorial and disciplinarian features of military organization rather find ancient military principles and strategies most helpful in solutions of today's business problems. Large number of studies has examined the civil-military relations and political economy of military organizations in several developing countries.

MILITARISM IN MANAGEMENT WORLDWIDE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

A part from being custodians of national borders; militaries all over the world play additional roles in natural calamities and emergencies nations face, they also pursue their business interests. The mechanism and manifestations vary from country to country. Military in United States, United Kingdom, France, Israel and South Africa operate as partner with civilian corporate sector and government. In Iran, Cuba, China military manifests its interests through a vivid partnership with dominant political party or individual leader. In cases of Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand and Pakistan military is single powerful institutions to operate independently. The totalitarian political phenomenon in Pakistan and Myanmar indicates their pre-capitalist socioeconomic structures. As these nations are not fully developed, militaries take active part in economic exploitation, whilst in developed nations

the militaries have secondary role in procurement and sale of military equipments therefore primary benefits go to private corporations.

Brown (2006) portrays picture of militarism in economic and social life in Indonesia. She argues that military generals not only enjoy pervasive role in political and economic life but they are offered lucrative company directorship and even they secure ministerial portfolios which are offered to them after their retirement. This culture of *dwifungsi* (dual role in society) bred corruption through random expropriation of land, contracts and license (Brown, 2006). Bradford (2004) contends that although military officers do not possess required expertise in doing business, contrary to the fact, they have been managing military-owned enterprises as part their official duties and generated huge profits despite terrible mismanagement and endemic corruption in Indonesia (Bradford, 2004).

Militaries in western societies also engage in profit-making business ventures. For example, after disintegration of USSR and steady fall in defence budget frustrated Soviet army which engaged in illegal money-making ventures to meet financial pressures. Defence restructuring nations like US, UK, France and South Africa do not have traditions to engage active serving military officers in civilian jobs rather these nations force retired military officials to establish companies to offer military training and facilitate on sale of equipments to their and foreign governments (Siddiqa, 2007). The private military enterprises (PMEs) and private security organizations in US, UK, France and South Africa are some of the encouraging examples of militarism where economic benefits accruing to the civilian-corporate sector and military. PMEs are relatively a recent phenomenon which has emerged in 1990s focusing on retired military officer cadre for security assignments in countries like Bosnia, Croatia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sierra Leone and Iraq.

Countries following communist ideology or authoritarian political system such as China, North Korea, Viet Nam, Cuba, Syria, Egypt, Russia, Sri Lanka and post-Islamic revolution Iran

concentrate on single-party system, individual or group of people who dominate political sphere of the country encourage militarism in PSEs (Perlmutter, 1981). The prolonged military hegemonic rules in 1970s and 1980s in Chile, Argentina, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Peru, and Haiti are extreme cases of totalitarianism and militarism. Societies and public enterprises there still suffer the consequences of military rule. The despotic leaders such as Idi Amin of Uganda, General Somoza of Nicaragua and Francois Duvalier of Haiti have been worst examples who militarized the public sector (Perlmutter, 1981). Some states in African continent which are known as 'failed states' are prey of prolonged ethnic violence where rule of law does not prevail also give rise to militarism in the society. Countries such as Ethiopia, Zaire, Mozambique, Liberia, Sierra Lone, Somalia and Afghanistan fall in that category. Warlords and feudal leaders encourage militarism and offer patronage to ethnic groups of the society (Van de Walle & Nicolas, 2001:1979-99).

Military interventions in West African states in 1960s, 1970s and 1980s have produced interesting literature about the causes of military rule and consequences on the political process. Over the years, a sustained stream of scholarly work has depicted the sufferings of the society and enterprises as military deployment in public enterprises became commonplace. The history of Nigeria, Gambia, Malawi, Kenya, Botswana and Ivory Coast have experienced lasting military rule. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Kenya and Nigeria all former British colonies were rated as most corrupt countries in the list of Transparency International in 1996, one of the main cause of corruption is attributed to prolonged military rule.

In developing countries, militaries engage their officers in money-making commercial activities with a view to contribute to national development on one hand and deploy large number of officers in public sector on the other. The very fundamental reason military infiltration in public sector is based on the belief that they are more patriots, disciplined, professionally well-trained, organized and less corrupt than civilian bureaucrats. Therefore bigger responsibility lies on their shoulder to work for national interests. Several western academics have praised the capacity of

third world counties' militaries. Morris Janowitz holds that third world militaries have capacity to manage diverse challenges and stand as result-oriented (Janowitz, 1964). Huntington goes further and suggests that third world militaries act as socioeconomic modernizers (Huntington, 1996). Some other authors believe that fragmented and praetorian societies pave the way for stronger military organizations. In context of developing nations, Pakistan presents a unique and perfect case for research and discussion where military presence in politics, public enterprises including private and multinational companies has been common and that affects managerial practices as well.

MILITARY INFLUENCES ON MANAGEMENT PRACTICE IN PAKISTAN

A stream of influences on managerial practice across government, private and multinational companies in Pakistan comes through secondment of in-service or retired military officers. Ansar Abbasi (2007/2008) wrote several comprehensive articles in The News International about the military infiltration in PSEs and their influences on managerial practices. Ayesha Siddiqa (2007) research puts Pakistan in a *militaristic-totalitarian* countries' list on the grounds that country has been directly ruled by several generals over thirty years' history of the country and own a large network of private businesses. On the contrary, Stephen Cohen holds high regards about Pakistan army and praises in following words: 'there are armies that guard their nation's borders, there are those that are concerned with protecting their own position in society, and there are those that defend a cause or an idea. The Pakistan Army does all three'. As a matter of fact, military service in the country enjoys special status. The prestige, power and degree of independence earn them high pride. The armed service is the most attractive and appealing profession in the country. It offers great status, influence, social mobility and welfare benefits after retirement.

Apart from military's prestige, political role and direct influence in government organizations (especially in former military regime of general Musharraf), it owns and runs a huge network of commercial organizations (Siddiqa, 2007; Mani 2007).

Military's investments traditionally focus on the primary sector, oil, gas, and agriculture. More recently, they have shown interest in high technology sectors, such as software manufacturing. The army, navy, and air force foundations have invested in service sectors as well including real estate, insurance, media, shipping, education, private security, and banking. For example, the most prominent holding of the army foundation, the Army Welfare Trust (AWT), is Askari Commercial Bank.

Some military enterprises have earned great success as a result they dominate in that particular industry. Military-owned corporations have successfully participated in the state's privatization programmes and bought up public corporations through competitive price bidding (http://www.privatization.gov.pk). Apart from fighting in battlefield and safeguarding the national borders, men in uniform get do multiple roles including building roads, catching electricity thieves, and running large network of commercial enterprises and weeding out corruption from the country. The Fauji Foundation (FF), Army Welfare Trust (AWT), Shaheen Foundation (SF) and Bahria Foundation (BF) run pretty big business enterprises. These foundations manage diverse enterprises in nature ranging from smaller-scale enterprises such as bakeries, farms, schools, universities, private security firms to commercial banks, insurance companies, fertilizer, cement and cereal manufacturing plants. Some eight million retired, serving military officers and their family members are absorbed in military-owned enterprises (Jalal, 1990).

Military corporatism in Pakistan is not a new phenomenon but it has long and roots deep down in history. In the name of welfare of retired servicemen, foundations have established over ten billion pound Business Empire (Farouqui & Schofield, 2002:4-23). Some authors consider Pakistan military's involvement in economic ventures as directly proportional to their sense of judgment regarding political control of the state. Since political power nurtures greater financial control thus military thoughtfully perpetuates their pervasive existence in political spheres to safeguard their vested economic interests (Siddiqa, 2007).

MILITARY INFLUENCES IN MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SECTOR

There are two prime reasons for Pakistan military's presence especially in public sector first; the military's 10 per cent share in civil services is protected by constitution. Second, the weak political system, fragmented society, endemic corruption, civil bureaucratic structure, landed elitism, tribal and feudal class have been main reasons for military officers' intrusion in lucrative public sector organizations. Pakistan military officers potentially argue that their morale, analytical capacity, patriotism and loyalty for country have been far better than civilian officers and politicians. They boast about their training, professionalism, managerialism, and better governance styles than civilian officials. Military officials also praise their courage, risk-taking, strategic, analytical and tactical abilities which help them to make quicker and considerably correct decisions in times of hardships.

However, there is very limited rather acute shortage of empirical evidence found in support of their claims. This is interesting to do research about managerialism, professionalism and performance of military officers working government, private and multinational organization in comparison to civilian managers. Since, military men generally lack proper education and training in business management therefore they lack motivating and inspiring skills to earn and maintain employee satisfaction and commitment as compared to civilian professionals. Since the takeover of General Musharaf in 1999 coup, a large number of military officers were deployed in public sector enterprises to root out the culture of corruption and to raise the productivity and efficiency (Abbasi, 2007/2008). The prestigious English newspaper "Daily Dawn" reported deployment of some 1027 military officers at the key decision-making positions in commercial enterprises of government sector where they directly lead, control, influence, motivate employees and involve in HRM practices (Dawn, October 3, 2003). Moreover, several retired and serving military officials were also appointed to the top administrative positions in universities in Punjab for example the appointment of (Lt.-General (Rtd:) Arshad Mehmood as Vice Chancellor in University of Punjab invited huge criticism from academia and students.

Another militaristic influence on management practice comes through direct appointment of retired military officers in private and multinational companies. Military officers get retired relatively in young age, well-trained and disciplined as a result they seem highly attractive professionals to private sector and MNCs where they likely manage HRM, payroll, finance and other top administrative positions. They direct, lead and motivate a large number of employees under their supervision. From current discussion, it appears that there are direct and indirect influences from military personnel strategies, practices and tactics on today's managerial practice. The military influences on management theory and practices seem long and deep-rooted. Moreover, modern-day competitive corporate culture also puts managers under immense pressure consequently manager's cascade down same pressure with even further fervour on manpower at work.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In the past 50 years, the field of management theory and practice has had a remarkable influence on both the academic literature and management practice and grown into new fields such as HRM, strategic HRM and yet the trajectory is on. This article has attempted to bring hidden issues into the notice of contemporary research discourse. As a result, one of the purposes for writing this article is to highlight those influences that management theory and practice inherited from military designs, tactics, strategies and practices. Today, in pursuit of organizational objectives, more and more managers seem prone to adopt militaristic styles and exert unwarranted force on employees. Managerial militarism is growing common from developed to less developed countries including Pakistan. This phenomenon is equally prevailing in cross-cultural work-settings regardless of type, size and nature of organization. Managers romanticize heroic style by adopting attributes of military generals and boast high performance and goals achievement.

Despite remarkable progress of the field of management, yet the knowledge and research on why, when and how far corporate managers adopt qualities of military generals, needs more attention

from research and academic scholarship. Thus, it is the question for research community to undertake empirical research and investigate the rate of success of such managerial militarism along with the degree of employee satisfaction, commitment and turnover respective firms. More the empirical research is undertaken accurate and valid knowledge would be contributed in the field to guide both management practitioners and management researchers.

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