

FACTORS RELATING TO TEACHERS' FOLLOWERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES IN THAILAND

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Abstract: The study was conducted to identify teachers' followership styles; to identify the factors affecting teachers' followership based on literature and expert interviews; to determine factors including Professionalism, Emotional Characteristics, Teamwork Attitudes, Department Climate, Satisfaction, Leadership Styles, and Teachers' Development; and to determine the effects of these factors on teachers' followership in international universities in Thailand. The examined population comprised 365 randomly selected instructors from the sample universities. The data was analyzed with regard to frequency, mean, standard deviation, and multiple regressions. The study found that in international universities in Thailand: (1) Followership styles from the most to the least frequent were pragmatist or exemplary followership, conformist followership, alienated followership and passive followership. (2) Teachers' professionalism showed: the majority of teachers had master or doctoral degrees; 6-10 years teaching experience; academic positions were teacher; teaching the subject related very much to their major; they attended and presented papers at professional workshops, seminars, international conferences an average of once a year; conducted and published one study during the last 5 years; but most teachers haven't written and published books or obtained any professional awards inside or outside of their university. (3) Teachers' Emotional Characteristics were "good". (4) Teachers' Teamwork Attitudes: were "positive". (5) Department Climate was "positive". (6) Teachers' Satisfaction was "satisfied". (7) Teachers' perception towards Development was "unclear about the professional development activities". (8) Study on Leadership Styles showed: (A) most leaders were using Participative leadership, followed by Delegative leadership and Autocratic leadership. (B) (a) To some extent; Autocratic leadership was likely to produce passive followers; (b) Participative leadership was likely to produce exemplary or pragmatist followers; and (c) Delegative leadership was likely to produce pragmatist or conformist followers. (9) The rank of significant variables contributing to teachers' followership from high to low at .05 level of significance is: Professionalism, Emotional Characteristics, Satisfaction, Leadership Styles, Teamwork Attitudes, Department Climate, and Teachers' Development. (10) The significant multiple correlation was .857 with the multiple coefficient of determination $R^2 = .735$ or 73.5% of teachers' followership could be explained by the prediction equation from the combined predictors, i.e.: $\text{Teachers' Followership} = .182 \text{ Leadership Styles} + .422 \text{ Professionalism} + .235 \text{ Emotional Characteristics} + .131 \text{ Teamwork Attitudes} - .121 \text{ Department Climate} + .211 \text{ Satisfaction} + .073 \text{ Teachers' Development}$ (in standard score form)

Keywords: Professionalism, Emotional Characteristics, Teamwork Attitudes, Department Climate, Satisfaction, Leadership Styles, Teachers' Development, Teachers' Followership, International universities in Thailand.

Background of the Problem

Followers have been in existence for as long as there have been leaders. Not until the late 1960s was there official mention of the importance of followership when Wiles (1967) stated that followership and leadership may be equal, despite not exploring the dynamic of their relationship. Then in 1988, Robert E. Kelley came up with a groundbreaking text on the existence and importance of followership. Since then, Ira Chaleff followed with a text of his own, *The Courageous Follower* (1995), bringing the dynamic of "courage" to followership analysis. Both of these works call for more research. Of the researchers who take up this challenge are Dixon and Westbrook (2003), who validate the existence of followership at all organizational levels. The current status of followership research is that it is highly decentralized, though thoughtfully considered in a number of different sources. The authors of these sources lend years of experience in their fields to justify their claims of the importance of followership. However, the ratio of leadership to followership books is 120:1. The lack of research and emphasis on followership relative to leadership in the world is ironic considering that the two are so interdependent.

Diversity and change in the workplace highlight the need for examining followership in more depth. Cross & Parker (2004) state that the traditional organizational hierarchy between leaders and their followers has eroded over time thanks to expanding social networks and the growing empowerment of followers through their ability to access information more easily. The advent of the information age has highlighted the need for more flexible leader-follower relationships. These changes have made the study of followership increasingly necessary as organizations seek new ways to select, train, and lead followers for maximum productivity. Flexibility is a key ingredient for both leaders and followers when it comes to their overall approach to work.

Into the 21st century, these changes also happened in educational fields, with more international universities' arrival and more international communications promotion. The traditional rigid up-and-down structure was limiting for the development of universities, more educational leaders tried to signify the need to reevaluate the tendency to focus on leadership to the exclusion of followership. Therefore, recently in many multicultural institutes and international universities, the educational leaders focused a lot on developing their teachers' skills so as to create high performance organizations. And the developmental approaches such as "total quality management", "team building", "quality of work life", "job enrichment", "empowerment", "management by objectives", were not only used in also business world, but also were used in university educational administration and leadership work.

As is known, the international institutes and universities in Thailand educate many learners for Thai society every year. Hundreds of thousand of non-Thai students from around 100 different countries from year to year come to Thailand and study in the international institutes. These institutes are really "international"—where not only all their programs are international, but also all the teachers, administrators, staff and students are international. In those highly international communities, English was used as the medium of instruction and the most popular communication channel in the campus; people could integrate and learn from the others well. The best example of this kind of international institute is Assumption University, which is the first and biggest international university here in Thailand and famous for creating a very multicultural environment where different nationality teachers, staff and students work closely and study effectively.

Purpose of the Study

This research aimed to highlight the focus on followership styles and provide some analyses of factors affecting followership in international education institutes in Thailand, so that the leaders in educational administration or leadership positions can take advantage of the findings to understand more of their followers, and their followership styles including themselves. Firstly, the research worked towards identifying the teachers' followership styles in international universities in Thailand. Secondly, it found the factors relating to teachers' followership styles in international universities in Thailand based on a literature review and expert interviews. Then, this research found what the real situation was concerning the personal and organizational factors of the teachers' followership styles including Professionalism, Emotional Characteristics, Teamwork Attitudes, Departmental Climate, Satisfaction, Leadership Styles, and Teachers' Development in international universities in Thailand. Finally, this research determined the effects of personal and organizational factors on teachers' followership and gave some suggestions and recommendations as to how to develop the desirable followers for international universities in Thailand.

Research Instrument

The researcher prepared a 5-page questionnaire. The questions for each part were acquired from reviewing books, theses, dissertations, and journals, which had a bearing on the present study. Particularly, the Emotional Characteristics refers to Goleman's Emotional Intelligence questionnaire. The Teamwork Attitudes part refers to Yukl's questionnaire of "Are you Team-worker". The Department Climate part refers to University of Wisconsin-Madison "Climate Survey for Department". The Leadership Style part refers to "Leadership Style Survey" in Lunenburg's Educational Administration book. The Followership style part refers to Kelley's "Followership Style Survey". All the questions were adjusted and rewritten to meet the objectives and needs of this study and the Thai context.

Data Collection

The researcher requested permission from the Vice Presidents of the sample universities by letter before distributing the questionnaires. Then the questionnaires were distributed to the 3 international universities.

From the end of June to the end of September, 2008, 175 valid questionnaires (70%) were returned from Assumption University; 50 valid questionnaires (71%) from Asian Institute of Technology, and 31 valid questionnaires (71%) from Asian University. Total 256 valid questionnaires (70%) were returned from the sampled universities and used as data in this study.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data for objective Number 1: frequency and percentage were used to identify the teachers' Followership styles in the international universities of Thailand.

To select factors for objective Number 2: literature review and expert interview were used to identify the factors that related to teachers' followership in international universities in Thailand. Chapter II provided the details about the procedure, the experts and how factors were selected.

To analyze the data for objective Number 3: Firstly, frequency and percentage were computed and used to show teachers' Professionalism in the international universities of Thailand. Second, means and standard deviations were used to determine the factors of the teachers' followership including Emotional Characteristics, Teamwork Attitudes, Departmental Climate, Satisfaction, and Teachers' Development in the international universities of Thailand. Lastly, frequency and percentage were computed and used to identify Leadership Styles that the teachers' leaders are utilizing in the international universities of Thailand.

Findings

Research Objective One: The statistically significant results were: among teachers who were working in the international universities, 30.5% of them were acting as pragmatist follower; another 30.5% of them were acting as exemplary follower; 18.7% of them were acting as conformist follower; 12.9 % of them were acting as alienated follower; 7.4% of them were acting as passive follower.

Research Objective Two: As the result of interview with the outside experts and consultation with major advisors were the selection of Professionalism, Emotional Characteristics, and Teamwork Attitudes, for this study. The organizational factors selected included Department Climate, Satisfaction, Leadership Styles, and Teachers' Development in international universities in Thailand.

Research Objective Three: (1) Concerning teachers' professionalism in International Universities in Thailand, the study found that: the majority of teachers from the international universities in Thailand had master or doctoral degrees; they had 6-10 years teaching experiences; their academic positions were teacher; they were teaching the subject that related very much to their major; they attended professional workshops, seminar, international conferences inside and outside of the campus once a year; presented papers on those professional workshops, seminars, international conferences inside and outside of the campus once a year; they conducted one study for their teaching subject during the last 5 years; they published one paper or study during the last 5 years; but the majority of teachers haven't written and published a books in their career life until now, and most of them haven't obtained any professional awards inside and outside of their university until now.

(2) Concerning teachers' emotional characteristics in International Universities in Thailand, the study found that: the overall teachers' emotional characteristics in international universities was 4.03, which meant the overall teachers' emotional characteristics in international universities were "good emotional characteristics". The highest score was in "Self-awareness" (4.11). The lowest score was in "Interpersonal skills" (3.94).

(3) Concerning teachers' teamwork attitudes in International Universities in Thailand, the study found that: the overall teachers' teamwork attitudes in international universities was 3.95, which meant the overall teachers' teamwork attitudes in international universities was "positive teamwork attitude". The highest score was in "I prefer to participate in team-oriented activities" (4.53). The lowest score was in "I prefer to be rewarded for my team's performance rather than my individual performance" (3.80).

(4) Concerning the department climate in International Universities in Thailand, the study found that: the overall teachers' perception of department climate in international universities was 3.93, which meant the overall teachers' perception of department climate in international universities was "positive department climate". The highest score was in "I didn't experience subtle or overt forms of harassment or

discrimination due to my gender, race or other personal attributes” (4.08). The lowest score was in “Others recognize how my work contributes to my department.” (3.85).

(5) Concerning teachers’ satisfaction in International Universities in Thailand, the study found that: the overall teachers’ satisfaction in international universities was 3.93, which meant the overall teachers’ satisfaction in international universities was “satisfied”. The highest score was in “I’m satisfied with the medical and life insurances that my university provides” (4.07). The lowest score was in “I’m satisfied with the salary that my university provides” (3.87).

(6) Concerning teachers’ development in International Universities in Thailand, the study found that: the overall teachers’ development in international universities was 3.86, which meant the overall teachers’ development in international universities was “unclear about the professional development activities”. The highest score was in “My University provides Professional Development activities that can help create a positive learning climate” (4.09). The lowest score was in “Professional Development activities in my university were an integral part of a board university-wide educational improvement plan” (3.63).

(7) Concerning teachers’ perception of leadership styles in International Universities in Thailand, the study found that 45.7% teachers’ leaders were using Participative leadership in their work; 35.9% teachers’ leaders were using Delegative leadership in their work; and 18.4% teachers’ leaders were using Autocratic leadership in their work.

Meanwhile, it also found that: all 19 passive followers were under Autocratic leadership. 53 out of 78 exemplary followers were under Participative leadership. 43 out of 78 pragmatist followers were under Delegative leadership; 24 out of 48 conformist followers were under Delegative leadership.

Research Objective Four: The rank of significant variables contributing to teachers’ followership from high to low are: Professionalism, Emotional Characteristics, Satisfaction, Leadership Styles, Teamwork Attitudes, Department Climate, and Teachers’ Development. The significant multiple correlations were .857 with the multiple coefficient of determination R Square= .735 or 73.5% of teachers’ followership could be explained by the prediction equation from the combined predictors, i.e.: Teachers’ Followership = .422 Professionalism + .235 Emotional Characteristics + .211 Satisfaction + .182 Leadership Styles + .131 Teamwork Attitudes -.121 Department Climate + .073 Teachers’ Development (in standard score form)

Conclusions

1. Teachers’ followership styles from the most often evident to the least evident in the international universities were: pragmatist or exemplary followership, conformist followership, alienated followership and passive followership.

2. Factors used as variables relating to teachers’ followership styles included; Professionalism, Emotional Characteristics, Teamwork Attitudes, Department Climate, Satisfaction, Leadership Styles, and Teachers’ Development.

3 Regarding teachers’ professionalism: the majority of teachers from the international universities in Thailand had master or doctoral degrees; they had 6-10 years teaching experiences; their academic positions were teacher; they were teaching the subject that related very much to their major; they attended professional workshops, seminars, international conferences inside and outside of the campus once a year; presented papers on those professional workshops, seminars, international conferences inside and outside of the campus once a year; they conducted one study for their teaching subject during the last 5 years; they published one paper or study during the last 5 years; but the majority of teachers haven’t written and published a books in their career life until now, and most of them haven’t obtained any professional awards inside and outside of their university until now.

4. The overall teachers’ emotional characteristics in international universities were “good emotional characteristics”. Most teachers had excellent Self-awareness, but their Interpersonal skills were quite weak among all of their emotional characteristics.

5. The overall teachers’ teamwork attitudes in international universities were “positive teamwork attitude”. Most teachers preferred to participate in team-oriented activities, but as for the way of rewarding, they prefer to be rewarded for their individual performance rather than their team’s performance, which is quite contradictive as human’s nature goes.

6. The overall teachers’ perception of department climate in international universities was “positive department climate”. In the international universities in Thailand, teachers never experience

subtle or overt forms of harassment or discrimination due to my gender, race or other personal attributes. But to build more positive department climate, teacher should know more about others recognition of their work contributes to the department.

7. The overall teachers' satisfaction in international universities was "satisfied". Teacher's satisfaction towards the medical and life insurances that the university provides was the most, but their satisfaction towards salary was the least.

8. The overall teachers' development in international universities was "unclear about the professional development activities". What teachers agreed the most was that professional development activities provided by their university that could help create a positive learning climate. But what they were very unclear was whether Professional Development activities in their university were an integral part of a board university-wide educational improvement plan or not.

9. (1) As perceived by teachers, most leaders were using Participative leadership in their work in the international universities, followed by Delegative leadership and Autocratic leadership. (2) To some extent; Autocratic leadership was likely to produce passive followers; (3) Participative leadership was likely to produce exemplary or pragmatist followers; and (4) Delegative leadership was likely to produce pragmatist or conformist followers.

10. There is a significant relationship between the teachers' followership and the personal factors including professionalism, emotional characteristics, and teamwork attitudes, and the organizational factors including leadership, department climate, satisfaction, and teachers' development. From the multiple regression, it can be concluded that: the rank of significant variables contributing to teachers' followership from high to low at .05 level of significance is: Professionalism, Emotional Characteristics, Satisfaction, Leadership Styles, Teamwork Attitudes, Department Climate, and Teachers' Development.

11. The significant multiple correlation was .857 with the multiple coefficient of determination $R^2 = .735$ or 73.5% of teachers' followership could be explained by the prediction equation from the combined predictors, i.e.: Teachers' Followership = .422 Professionalism + .235 Emotional Characteristics + .211 Satisfaction + .182 Leadership Styles + .131 Teamwork Attitudes - .121 Department Climate + .073 Teachers' Development (in standard score form)

Recommendations for Practice:

To improve teachers' professionalism in International Universities in Thailand, the recommendations for practice include: (1) International universities in Thailand should encourage teachers to attend and present more papers or studies on the professional workshops, seminars, or international conferences inside or outside of the campus. (2) International universities in Thailand should encourage teachers to conduct and publish more studies or researches. (3) International universities in Thailand should provide more professional awards inside and thus encourage teachers to get more motivation in improving their professionalism.

To improve teachers' emotional characteristics in International Universities in Thailand, the recommendations for practice include: (1) International universities in Thailand and faculties should provide more opportunities such as workshops, annual party, field trips and so on to help teachers to improve interpersonal skills. (2) All teachers are encouraged to study more regarding emotional intelligence.

To promote teachers' teamwork attitudes in International Universities in Thailand, the recommendations for practice include: (1) International universities in Thailand should maintain teacher's positive attitudes towards teamwork; and keep encouraging them to participate in team-oriented activities. (2) International universities in Thailand policy can be flexible in rewarding team's performance or individual performance.

To promote department climate in International Universities in Thailand, the recommendation for practice is: International universities in Thailand should keep maintaining the positive department climate, but should let teachers recognize how others' work contributes to department efficacy when building the positive department climate.

To promote teachers' satisfaction in International Universities in Thailand, the recommendations for practice include: (1) International universities in Thailand should keep providing good medical and life insurances, job security and working conditions etc so as to maintain teacher satisfaction. (2) If possible, an increase of salary will let the teachers enjoy their work more, and help develop them into the more desirable followers.

To promote teachers' development in International Universities in Thailand, the recommendations for practice include: (1) International universities in Thailand should not only provide teachers' development activities, but also need to let teachers learn more about what the professional development activities are and how they can use the knowledge of professional development in their teaching and work; so as to create a positive learning climate as well. (2) Professional Development activities in international universities in Thailand should be strengthened as an integral part of a board university-wide educational improvement plan.

To implement the appropriate leadership styles in International Universities in Thailand, the recommendations for practice are: (1) Leaders in international universities in Thailand should use more Participative leadership or Delegative leadership in their work, so that the institute can have more exemplary followers and pragmatist followers. (2) Autocratic leadership will easily produce passive followers; therefore, leaders should avoid using autocratic leadership too frequently.

To cultivate the effective follower, since all the variables including Satisfaction, Professionalism, Leadership Style, Emotional Characteristics, Department Climate, Teamwork Attitudes, and Teachers' Development from high to low significantly contributing to teachers' followership, the recommendations for practice are: (1) International universities in Thailand should focus not only the personal factor including Professionalism, Emotional Characteristics, and Teamwork Attitudes; but also the organizational factors including Satisfaction, Leadership Styles, Department Climate, and Teachers' Development so as to select teachers and develop effective followers. (2) In developing desirable followers, international universities in Thailand should care about teachers' Satisfaction, Professionalism, Leadership style, Emotional Characteristics, Department Climate, Teamwork Attitudes, and Teachers' Development as ranked from high to low. (3) International universities in Thailand should try to develop exemplary followers, who may be regarded as the most effective followers for organizations. International universities in Thailand should encourage teachers to focus on the goal, not the job; do a great job on critical-path activities related to the goal; contribute to the growth of other team members; help keep the team on track plus take the initiative to increase their value to the organization; realize they add value not just by going above and beyond their work, but, also, by being who they are with their unique experiences, ideals, and personalities. Universities should nurture and leverage a web of organizational relationships with team members, organizational networks, leaders and followers.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future research regarding teachers' followership are: (1) Further Research can explore why teachers worked as Exemplary or Pragmatist followers, for the most part, in international universities in Thailand. (2) Future research can explore other factors affecting or relating to teachers' followership in international universities in Thailand. (3) Future research in different educational institutes or schools at different educational levels to re-check the model that was suggested by this study. (4) Future research can develop more practical strategies or training programs by focusing on both the personal factors including Professionalism, Emotional Characteristics, and the organizational factors including Teamwork Attitudes, Satisfaction, Leadership Styles, Department Climate, and Teachers' Development. (5) Further studies on all the factors that were studied in this research are encouraged to be conducted in a more wide ranging type of scope and to a more diverse extent. (6) Comparative studies in different contexts and other countries are welcomed to explore what factors influence teacher followership, and how to develop desirable teacher work and follower styles in different cultures and contexts.

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