



Impact of Teachers' Choice of Teaching Profession on Their Followership Styles

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The teaching profession seems like a fun if served with interest to interact with learners and to inculcate morals and values in them. A motivated teacher has the capacity to contribute massively towards the development of learners and improved learning. However, many public school teachers in Pakistan want to shift their profession indicating lack of exemplary followership that is a desired quality particularly among the teachers. Therefore, causal comparative survey was arranged using self-developed followership scale to evaluate the situation critically. Conveniently accessible 346 school teachers have provided the data. Findings revealed that 53% teachers joined teaching as first choice while 47% as lateral choices. Moreover, the number of teachers having first choice of teaching profession were increased with the betterment of followership style of the teachers. Hence, preference should be given to candidates having high level of choice to serve in teaching profession. Moreover, professional development programs may be organized for existing teachers having poor followership.

Keywords: commitment, competence, courage, followership styles, self-management, teachers' followership

INTRODUCTION

Effective followership is vital for success of any institution (Benmira & Agboola, 2021; Bufalino, 2018; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014) and vice versa. In researcher's context, school leaders complain about the reluctant behavior of many teachers towards professional responsibilities, and they consider school teaching as a transit profession, which they want to change even for a job of at the same pay scale. However, school leaders also report that a reasonable proportion of teachers follow the orders effectively and want to remain in this profession. The possible reason for the flaw of followership among these teachers can be due to their choice to join teaching as profession. Therefore, this

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research is an effort to examine that how teachers' followership varies with variation in their levels of choice for choosing teaching as profession.

Followership can be conceptualized as willingness for collaborative work to accomplish institutional goals, to establish a high level of teamwork and to build unity among the team members. Effective followership is a like a cornerstone for the effective leadership (Dencheva, 2014). Researchers such as Kelly (1992) and Dencheva (2014) have also explored many qualities to determine the effective followership. However, this study focuses on three major qualities i.e. courage, commitment and competence to investigate the influence of teachers' choice.

Discrepancy between choice and profession means a discrepancy between personality traits and job description, as Sharma and Suri (2019) claims profession determines an individual's personality and perspective about life. Similarly, Nugent and Faucette (2013) claims the choice of choosing a profession is a critical determinant of success in the next stages of life. According to findings of Avgousti (2017), the philosophy for someone to choose teaching preferably is based on his knowledge, self believes and aspirations to join teaching profession. However, the issue with Pakistani graduates and teachers is the lack of aspirations to be a part of the academia and they join teaching by chance due to lack of opportunities in their desired professions. Consequently, they become cause of poor quality teaching and barrier to effective management of school.

Rationale

One of the top contributing factors to a learner's academic achievement is the teacher's quality of instruction (Arshad & Zaman, 2020; Sardabi et al., 2018; Williams, 2023). However, the current potential market gives the impression of lacking interest among individuals to join teaching as first choice and the teachers with lateral choices are reluctant to perform professional duties. Moreover, the development of followership among teachers is least addressed in current professional development programs that is needed for quality teaching and effective teamwork in schools. As Dubrin (2015) suggests the type of followership and personal qualities of followers are critical to create an effective team. Owing to the arguments, the possible cause of lack of teamwork in schools may be due to the teachers by chance having least interest to follow the orders. Therefore, this research is focusing on the following research objective to examine the situation:

Research Objective

The objective of this research is to investigate the impact of teachers' choice of serving in teaching profession on their followership styles. Moreover, this article explains the proportion of teachers in terms of their choice to serve in teaching profession as well their followership that is novel addition to literature.

Literature Review

The contributing factors regarding individual's choice to select a profession as first choice are social status of its professionals, previous knowledge, self-perception about different aspects of the profession, but mainly the aspiration to be in that profession

(Ahmed & Yousaf, 2021). In the context of teaching profession, interest in teaching is the most significant factor to select teaching profession as compared to “inspiration through role models”, “love for children”, and “financial reasons” (Avgousti, 2017; Malik, 2023). In a broader sense (Yüce et al., 2013; Tomšik, 2016; Tustiawati, 2017) intrinsic, altruistic and extrinsic motivation are the key influencing factors regarding the decision to choose teaching profession as first choice. Intrinsic motivation comprises of self-satisfaction, love for teaching; altruistic motivation comprises of purpose to serve community members and country (Eryilmaz & Kara, 2017). While, extrinsic motivation contains pay, service security and work place conditions. However, the influencing factors influence differently with respect to different regions and countries (Bastick, 2000; Yılmaz, 2023).

Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice) Model

The FIT-Choice model by Watt and Richardson (2007) integrated critical motivational factors contributing in the choice of choosing teaching as career. The model contains social influences (previous teaching-learning experiences and societal discouragement), task demand (expert profession, high demand), task return (status in society, self-esteem, remuneration), self-perceptions (teaching capability), intrinsic profession value, utility value (professional security, time for domestic responsibilities), social usefulness (children’s future, social involvement, engagement with children and youngers) and fallback career as crucial factors (Richardson, Karabenick, & Watt, 2014; Hennessy & Lynch, 2017; Nesje et al., 2018; McLean et al., 2019; Rana et al., 2022; Yi & Wen, 2023).

The model contains a brief list of motivational factors influencing choice of choosing teaching (Richardson et al., 2014) and the teacher who joins the teaching with high level of the motivational factors is more likely to support the school leader with an exemplary team member or subordinate for success of school. As Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) identifies the effective subordinates as effective followers because of their active response to the seniors in position. Moreover, Arshad et al. (2008) indicate effective followers as supportive to school leader and work beyond their official duties. Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) stressed the understudied status of followership.

Zaleznik’s (1965) in his study on, “The Dynamics of Subordinancy”, suggested to recognize individuals as follower, rather than subordinates. Abraham Zaleznik was the first who presented idea of followership through types of followers in 1965, using a 2x2 matrix. On axis of the 2x2 matrix is based on dominance vs. submission while the other is on active vs. inactive behaviors with the leader. Zaleznik explored four categories of followers i.e. impulsive, compulsive, masochistic, and withdrawn (Kellerman, 2008; Kilburn, 2010). Zaleznik’s effort for categorizing followers provided base to the researchers for the further studies. The existing literature (e.g. Kelley’s followership typology, 1992; Chaleff’s followership characteristics, 1995 & 2003; and Kellerman followership styles, 2007) is evident regarding importance of Zaleznik’s work on follower types.

Though, theorists (such as Zaleznik, 1965; Kellerman, 2008; Kelly, 1992) typify followers from most effective to least effective, but, the work of Kelley is most

frequently used by the researchers in the field of followership. Kelley (1992) accounts followers as approximately 80% contributors in organizational success.

Kelley (1992) decoded followers in five styles i.e. exemplary, conformist (active), pragmatist, passive (sheep) and alienated. These styles are generated through blend of followership dimensions i.e. active engagement and critical/independent thinking. Moreover, Kelley states that the effectiveness of followership varies depending upon the followership style of the follower. Kelly has also highlighted four crucial qualities of effective followers i.e. self-management, commitment, competence and courage. According to Dubrin (2015), the type of follower and his qualities are critical factors for organizational success. Moreover, Bligh and Kohles (2012) highlighted a possible cause of ignoring followership is to consider it less important than leadership.

Kelley (1992) highlights self-management skill as the first quality of effective follower indicated through his effective working as a leader in the absent of close supervision. Secondly, the effective followers are committed to organizational goals, products, and values beyond their capabilities. Thirdly, the effective follower has competence and focus that is useful for organization. Fourthly, they have been independent critical thinkers and have courage to ask question to the leaders on their decisions.

Dencheva (2014) has also highlighted qualities of effective followers that they are focused to organizational goals, willing to accept new tasks, committed, accept decisions, suggest better alternatives, optimistic even in hard times and like to work in group. However, these qualities seem overlapping with the effective followership qualities of Kelly (1992) that is still more cited by the researchers.

Kelly (1992) graded exemplary followers at the top of hierarchy. Blanchard et al. (2009) indicated exemplary followers as proactive and responsible beyond their job responsibilities. In addition, they are actively engaged, utilizing their talents fully and support their leader or organization when in agreement with their policies. Moreover, exemplary followers are seen to display a courageous sense of right and wrong that helps them distinguish between right and wrong, leading them to challenge the leader. Kelley (1992) noted that exemplary followers were often described as self-confident, innovative and creative. Kelley described exemplary followers as those who put their talents to work for the good of the project or organization and do not stop until goals or tasks are completed. These types of followers often stand out from other followers and often relieve the leader of tasks, rather than letting the leader bear the burden of the success or failure of an initiative. Exemplary followers like collaborative environment in workplace (Bjugstad et al., 2006) and like to evaluate decision of leader through independent evaluation (Kellerman, 2008).

Conformist followers are second in hierarchy of effective followership because they lack independent thinking particularly to question the leaders' decisions. Kelley (2008) mentioned the conformist followers as "yes people" because they accept their role as traditional obedient workers and feels job satisfaction even with authoritative leaders (Kellerman, 2008). Conformist followers display high level of active engagement but they are dependent/uncritical thinkers (Kelley, 1992).

The pragmatic followers are in the middle of hierarchy with moderate level of engagement and critical thinking. They do not want to lead others or be in the last numbers. Maintaining status quo is valuable for pragmatic followers and they do not take actions immediately rather wait for the crises to pass (Kelley, 2008), therefore, initially Kelley (1992) labeled them as survivors. Pragmatism emerges when the organization itself becomes unstable (Kelley, 1992). While pragmatists want to do a good job, they are not willing to stick their necks out, or worse, to fail. Their scores are middling in independent thinking and middling in active engagement.

Passive followers are below the pragmatic followers in hierarchy. They have low level in the both dimensions that is active engagement as well as critical thinking (Kelley, 1992). They follow the direction unquestioningly (Bjugstad et al., 2006), therefore, Kelley (2008) labeled them “sheep” because they wait for the continuous direction of the leader while completing a task (Latour & Rast, 2004). The last in hierarchy are alienated followers displaying high level of independent thinking but lowest level of active engagement (Kelley, 1992). They use independent thinking for negatively criticizing the leaders. They willingly oppose the leaders (Kelley, 2008). Kelley (1992) identifies alienated followers as high in critical/intendent thinking but lowest in active engagement. They behave like non-interested, irresponsible followers.

Teachers with exemplary followership are crucial for school success (Aldahmash et al., 2019). A little bit poor level of the followership can be compromised in other professions where subordinates obtain least opportunities to work as leader. However, in educational institutes, teachers have to work as leaders in discipline duties, record management and particularly while teaching in classroom. Moreover, teachers with exemplary followership have high level of interest for the improvement of school progress and interest depends on the work of choice as a rule of thumb (Susilo, 2023). Therefore, exemplary teachers should be preferably inducted by considering their interest or choice of teaching as career. As Avgousti (2017) proved interest in teaching as the most significant factor to select teaching profession rather than “inspiration through role models”, “love for children”, and “financial reasons”.

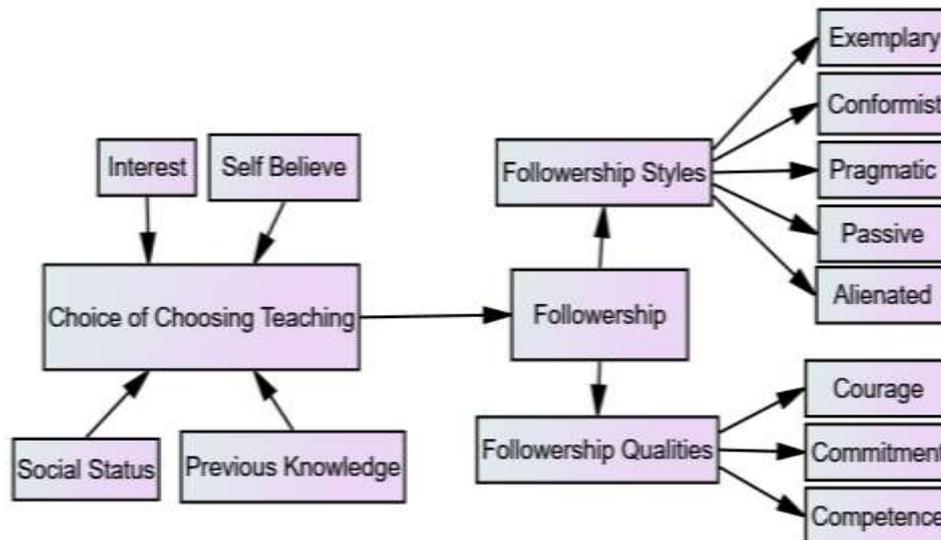


Figure 1
Conceptual model

Research Design

Causal comparative survey design was used to examine the influence of teachers' choice of choosing teaching profession on their followership styles and qualities. Independent variable in the study is teachers' choice of choosing teaching. Three categories of teachers were formulated bases on their score in the choice of teaching questionnaire. Further, based on these three level of choices, teachers were having 1st, 2nd, and lateral choices to serve in teaching profession. The dependent variables is followership among teachers having four factors i.e. competence, commitment, courage, and self-management. Based on the overall score on the scale, the teachers were nominated into alienated, passive, pragmatic, conformist, and exemplary followers (Kelley, 1992).

Population of the study is interested set of subjects for a researcher (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2016). Accessible population of the study includes 9953 public high school teachers from district Gujrat and Sialkot. Online survey using convenient sampling was used due measures of to Covid-19 pandemic in 2022 and online survey was employed to obtain the data. Boonroungrut et al. (2022) highlighted that many researchers conducted researchers with necessary limitations due to Covid-19 pandemic. The data were obtained from 346 respondents as, Fraenkel and Wallen (2010) suggest 100 respondents are enough for survey research.

Instrumentation

Scales on teachers' choice of teaching profession and followership among teachers were developed. Standardized validation procedures were followed for this purpose.

Followership scale consisted of four factors i.e. competence, commitment, courage, and self-management (Arshad et al., 2022) each linked with sufficient indicators, as Kline (2013) recommended criteria of minimum 03 indicators to measure a construct. Similarly, the moderate correlations among the factors indicate their unidimensionality and absence of multicollinearity. Eigenvalues are considered critical in choosing the most suitable indicators and each of the indicators shows an eigenvalue of more than 0.40, which is above the suggested cut-off value as recommended by Hair et al. (2010). The next step after observing the AMOS graphic for the scale is to check the model fit indices.

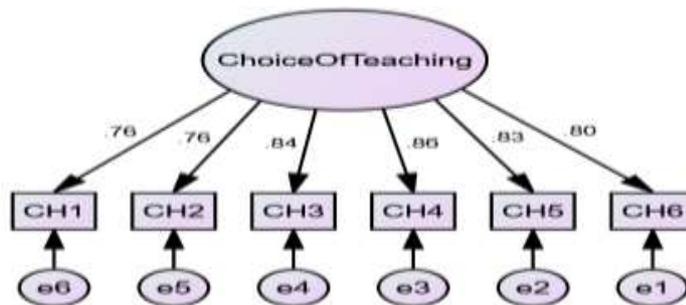


Figure 2
Measurement model for scale on teachers' choice of teaching profession

CFA is employed to confirm the association of items to the choice of teaching profession. The findings on AMOS-21 on CFA are clear in the following diagram. Kline (2013) recommended minimum 03 items to measure a construct. Therefore, this scale qualifies the criteria.

The next section explains data analysis using pie chart and bar graph were used to address the research objective.

FINDINGS

In this section, pie chart has been used to find out proportion of teachers having different choices and bar graph to assess the variation in the proportion of followership styles among teachers based on their choices to join teaching profession.

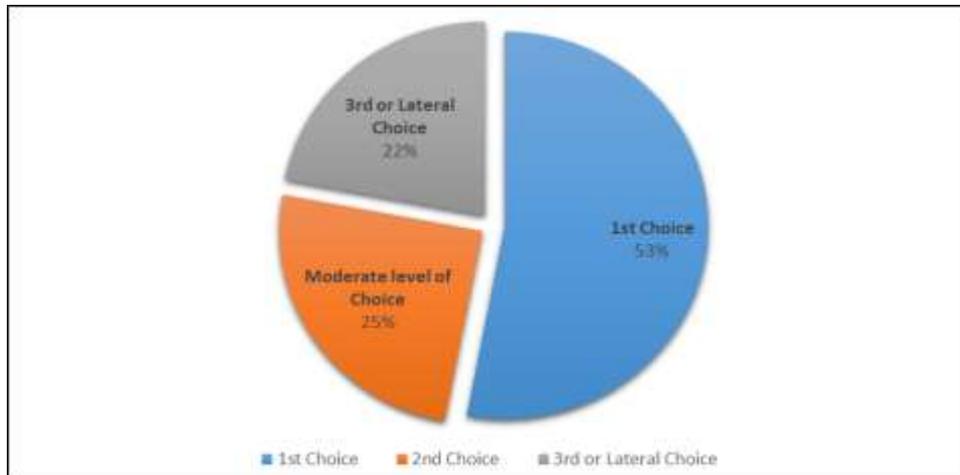


Figure 3
Proportion of working teachers in terms of choice of teaching

Pie chart shows the proportion of teachers' choice of teaching profession as 1st, 2nd and 3rd or lateral choice. There are 53% teachers serving teaching profession as 1st choice, whereas, 47% teachers were not serving in teaching as first choice. From these 47% teachers, 25% having 2nd choice and 22% have 3rd or lateral choice.

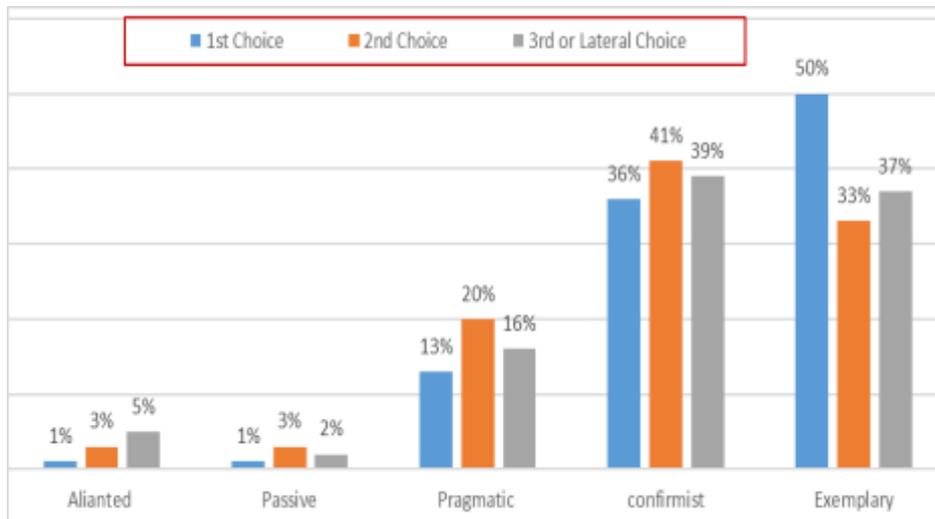


Figure 4
Variation of followership style among teachers based on choice of choosing teaching profession

Bar graph shows the percentage of teachers' followership styles in terms of their choice to join teaching as profession. Alienated and passive followers are incomparable due to insufficient frequencies. However, teachers with 2nd choice (20%) have better proportion in pragmatic followership style as compared to the teachers having 1st choice (13%) and 3rd or lateral choice (16%). Similarly, teachers with 2nd choice (41%) have comparatively higher proportion in conformist followership style as compared to the teachers having 1st choice (36%) and 3rd or lateral choice (39%). However, in exemplary followership, teachers with 1st choice have comparatively better proportion (50%) as compared to the teachers having 2nd choice (33%) and 3rd or lateral choice (37%).

DISCUSSION

The study estimated proportion of working public school teachers who are serving in teaching as 1st, 2nd and 3rd or lateral choice. Moreover, variation of followership styles among the teachers due to variation of their choice is also examined. Results revealed a major portion of working teachers were serving in teaching not as 1st choice and among these teachers many of them even did have 2nd choice. The reason may be lack of interest for teaching as profession among the fresh graduates as Avgousti (2017) proved that interest in teaching is the most significant factor to serve teaching profession rather than “inspiration through role models”, “love for children”, and “financial reasons”. Moreover, results from big data quantitative research studies indicate that the main issue is not the shortage of educators but the real problem seems to be the choice newly graduated choose not to enter teaching at all (Luekens, 2004), or leave after just a few years (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006). The least interested teachers serve in the teaching not as first choice and present poor followership styles. As, the results on variation of proportion of followership styles due to variation in choice of choosing teaching profession explores the importance of serving in teaching profession as a 1st choice. Exemplary followers' proportion is much better on teachers with 1st choice category as compared to others. Many teachers join and serve in teaching due to pressure of other factors such as family, society and age security for joining government service but their performance is discouraging. As, Sharma and Suri (2019) found the influence of others could be wasteful regarding joining an undesired profession. Moreover, Godbey & Johnson (2011) states that professionals would be more contented with the jobs they choose rather than ones they fell into due to lack of opportunities in their desired profession. Sharma and Suri (2019) also stressed to consider on the relevancy between an individual's personality and profession and Kelley (1992) believed that organizational success is approximately 80% attributed to the followers. Dubrin (2015) discussed types of followers and the personal qualities of productive followers as critical factors to create effective team. Sharma and Suri (2019) claims that profession determines an individual's personality and view point about life. Therefore, the flaw between an individual's personality and profession may cause dissatisfaction and passiveness to perform the responsibilities. Nugent and Faucette (2013) also highlights the choice of choosing a profession as determinant factor for success in life.

CONCLUSION

Many teachers were found serving in public schools without 1st choice that is causing lack of exemplary followership among them. Moreover, the qualities of effective followership i.e. competence, commitment, courage, and self-management are lacking in teachers with 2nd and 3rd or lateral choices to serve in teaching profession. Currently, Pakistan would recruit many teachers by 2030 to achieve Sustainable Development Goals of universal primary and secondary 'quality' education. The biggest deficiency of educators can be observed particularly in developing countries, however, growing gaps of this issue are also evident in Western countries, such as the USA, Ireland, Spain and Sweden (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006). Therefore, this research is an alert for policy makers to urgent and wise decisions for recruiting teachers who will serve with interest and having 1st choice to serve in teaching profession. As Avgousti (2017) proved that interest in teaching is the most significant factor to serve in teaching profession, so the main focus to develop interest or recruit teachers who are interested to join teaching as a preferred choice. Moreover, professional development organizations also focus on development of exemplary followership and its qualities through inclusion of motivation factors in training programs. Otherwise, the education system may face a big challenge of poor followership due to more number of teachers who join teaching as a transit profession. Future researchers may conduct the similarly research in their own context because the choice of teaching profession is influenced by many factors such as social status, salary, future security, environment to serve, etc.

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