Validation of Multicultural Leadership Model for Chinese School Administrators in Northeast Region of Thailand

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Abstract

This research was aimed to use grounded theory to uncover underlying processes, interactions, and contexts that shape effective multicultural leadership practices. A total of five Chinese school principal were purposively selected from northeast region of Thailand participated in semi-structured interviews using an interview guide as a tool. The qualitative data were analyzed using Multi-Attitude-Consensus-Reading method. The results revealed that a total of 34 approaches and their key success indicators can be utilized by Chinese school administrators to promote multicultural developmental practices. In conclusion, this Multicultural Leadership Model has been validated in terms of its practicality.

Keywords: *Chinese School Administrators, Grounded Theory, Multi-Attitude-Consensus-Reading Method, Multicultural Leadership Model.*

INTRODUCTION

Multi-cultural leadership is a type of inclusive leadership practices that create a welcoming and supportive environment for individuals from various backgrounds. Therefore, multi-cultural leaders seek diverse perspectives actively, value differences among the teachers, and ensure all the team members including teachers and staff feel heard and respected (Yang et al., 2024). A school administrator with multi-cultural leadership style must equip themselves with the skills to manage conflicts that may arise due to cultural differences. This includes fostering an understanding of cultural diversity and addressing potential misunderstandings proactively (Webb, 2013). In short, a multi-cultural school administrator should ensure that organizational policies support diversity and inclusion as he or she should be familiar with and committed to promoting these policies, and creating an inclusive workplace culture (Wilson, 2013).

Yang et al. (2024) conducted their research using an exploratory research design with a cross-sectional approach to explore factors and related indicators of multicultural leadership development for Chinese school administrators in the northeast region of Thailand. In the first phase of their research, they conducted a thorough document analysis to analyze relevant previous literature, reports, and public policies to identify the important factors and indicators related to multicultural leadership development. The explanatory research design was used to provide a deeper understanding of the observed relationships to identify key factors and indicators related to multicultural leadership development model by interviewing the five experts (Morgan, 2022). The results of document analysis and cross-examined by the five experts in the first phase of Yang et al.'s (2024) research, have identified four important factors of multicultural leadership development, namely (i) personnel development (PD); (ii) multicultural educational management (EM); (iii) multicultural communication (CM), and (iv) multicultural competencies (CP).

In addition, Yang et al. (2024) found out that all the 12 indicators which derived from the four factors were found fitting to the Thai context. The details of the first phase study as follows: (i) Personnel development (PD) factor with three indicators, namely developing personnel knowledge (PD1), encouraging personnel (PD2), and motivating personnel (PD3); (ii) multicultural educational management (EM) factor consists of three indicators, namely developing curriculum (EM1), community participation (EM2), and promoting equality

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(EM3); (iii) multicultural communication (CM) factor is comprised of three indicators, namely avoiding conflict (CM1), having multicultural communication skills (CM2), and being aware of cultural variation (CM3), and (iv) multicultural competencies encompasses three indicators, namely multicultural attitudes (CP1), multicultural knowledge (CP2), and multicultural skills (CP3).

In the second phase, Yang et al. (2024) conducted a survey to 255 respondents from 19 research schools using a questionnaire consisted of 36 items with a continuous five-point Likert scale. This questionnaire consisted of five sections such as four items about demographic information and 32 items about four factors of multicultural leadership development. Yang et al. (2024) employed structural equation modelling to analyze quantitative data to develop a multicultural leadership developmental model. The results of intercorrelation between the 12 indicators of multicultural leadership development indicating that there are positive correlations for all relationships between pairs of 12 indicators. Their results of second phase provided the implications as one indicator increases, the other tends to increase too. In addition, the magnitude of the correlation coefficients ranged from 0.495 to 0.813 revealing the strengths of the relationships from moderate to strong.

In addition, Yang et al. (2024) also found that the relationship between having multicultural communication skills indicator (CM2) and being awareness of cultural variation indicator (CM3) ($r = .815$; $r<.01$) was the highest magnitude of the correlation coefficient. However, the lowest magnitude of the correlation coefficient was community participation indicator (EM2) and having multicultural communication skills indicator (CM2) ($r = .495$; $p<0.01$). On top of that, the co-variance with the multicultural leadership development factors ranged from 65.30 to 82.30 percent while the factor loading of all the multicultural leadership development factors are ranged from 0.808 to 0.907 and was statistically significant at 0.01. The factor with the highest factor loading value was personnel development. This was followed by multicultural educational management, and multicultural competencies. The factor that has the least capacity of factor loading value was multicultural communication. Following this line of reasoning, the researchers concluded that all the identified factors were found to be important constructs of multicultural leadership development for Chinese school administrators in northeast region of Thailand.

Besides, the co-variance with the multicultural leadership development indicators was found in the range of 65.20 to 85.20 percent. Moreover, the factor loading of all the multicultural leadership development indicators were ranged from 0.807 to 0.923 and was statistically significant at 0.01. Therefore, all the identified indicators could be considered important construct for the multicultural leadership development model (Yang et al., 2024). The ultimate results of goodness of fit indicated that the multicultural leadership development model fits between the obtained values of collected data and the expected values as follows: $\chi^2 =744.564$, df = 47, p-value = 0.064, CFI = 0.989, TLI = 0.984, RMSEA = 0.048, and SRMR = 0.021 (Yang et al., 2024).

Materials And Methods

The origin of this research encompassed three phases, Yang et al. (2024) have reported the first and second phase of it as discussed above. In this paper, the researchers aimed to validate the multicultural leadership developmental model using grounded theory and analyzed the data using Multi-Attitude-Consensus-Reading (MACR) in the final phase.

Research Design

The researchers employed grounded theory via muti-case research design. Grounded theory is a qualitative research methodology that involves generating theories from data collected through systematic research. The grounded theory research design is particular useful for exploring complex phenomena where existing theories may not fully explain the intricacies of the subject. When applied to examining a multicultural leadership model, grounded theory can help the researcher to uncover the underlying processes, interactions, and contexts that shape effective multicultural leadership (Makri & Neely, 2021).

At the beginning of this phase, the researchers defined the research problem by understanding how Chinese school administrators effectively manage and lead in multicultural environments in order to validate the key factors and indicators of successful multicultural leaders using the multicultural leadership developmental model as created in the second phase. A multi-case study also known as a collective case-study, is an in-depth

investigation of several cases to understand a broader phenomenon. The aim of this final phase was to make a theoretical conclusion of approaches to develop multicultural leadership practices of Chinese school administrators in northeast region of Thailand. The major contribution of this final phase was to propose these guidelines for Chinese school administrator when they are implementing the multicultural leadership developmental model. Moreover, the purpose of choosing this multi-case study was to explore differences and similarities across cases, enhance the generalizability of results, and develop a deeper understanding of the research problem as mentioned above.

Selection of Research Setting and Participants

The researchers used purposive sampling to select Chinese school administrators and teachers who can provide rich, relevant data from two schools (cases) on multicultural leadership practices. Besides, the researchers choose diverse school organizations or contexts where multicultural leadership is prevalent, namely Case 1 is an excellent school in Nakhon Ratchasima province while the Case 2 is an excellent school in Khon Kaen province. The strengths using purposive sampling in this context were to make sure that all the five informants, namely three from Case 1 school and two from Case 2 school are relevance, have rich data, and efficiency. The five informants have more than five years of working experience. This is to ensure that all informants have significant, relevant experience, and can provide valuable insights. Moreover, rich data can be gained by focusing on detailed, in-depth data from knowledgeable informants. Owing to fulfil research efficiency, the researchers identified and selected informants who met specific, relevant criteria without the need for large scale random sampling (Gay et al., 2009).

Research Instrument

A semi-structured interview was employed to explore the application of a multicultural leadership developmental model as a useful research instrument. The semi-structured interview guide combines predetermined questions with the flexibility to probe deeper based on informants' responses. Before the researchers started to collect interview data, they made appointments with the five informants by explaining the purpose of the interview was to gather insights on the use and effectiveness of a multicultural leadership developmental model. Moreover, the researchers explained how the data would be used to the informants to ensure confidentiality (Silverman, 2021).

A total 13 questions were included in this semi-structured interview guide, covering six core areas besides informants' background information such as informants' position, school, experience, and highest academic qualification. The six core areas of the interview guide were understanding of multicultural leadership, current practices, implementation of the Multicultural Leadership Developmental Model, challenges and barriers, outcomes and impact, and recommendations for improvement. The following questions were developed and piloted by the researchers before the researchers collected the actual qualitative data as follows:

Understanding of multicultural leadership: (i) Can you describe your understanding of multicultural leadership? (ii) How important do you think multicultural leadership is in your school?

Current practices: (iii) What strategies does your school currently use to develop multicultural leadership? (iv) Can you provide examples of successful multicultural leadership development initiatives within your school?

Implementation of the Multicultural Leadership Developmental Model: (v) Are you familiar with any multicultural leadership developmental models? If so, which ones? (vi) How has your school implemented the model? (vii) What were the key steps taken to integrate the model into your leadership development program?

Challenges and barriers: (viii) What challenges have you faced in implementing multicultural leadership development program? (ix) How did you overcome these challenges?

Outcomes and impact: (x) What positive changes have you observed as a result of implementing multicultural leadership development program? (xi) Can you share specific examples or success stories?

Recommendations for improvement: (xii) Based on your experience, what improvements or changes would you suggest for the multicultural leadership developmental model? (xiii) How can schools better support the development of multicultural leadership skills?

Other than the 13 interview questions, the researchers also prepared four probing questions as follows:

Can you elaborate on that point?

Why do you think that approach was effective (or ineffective)?

How did the team respond to this initiative?

What specific skills or competencies do you think are essential for multicultural Chinese school administrators?

Data Collection

The semi-structured interview was suitable to employ in this multi-case study because the method of data collection could help the researchers to gather comprehensive insights into the use and effectiveness of multicultural leadership developmental model, providing valuable data for further analysis and improvement (Silverman, 2021). Firstly, the researchers defined the informants as Chinese school administrators with at least five years of experience. Their schools have been proven track record in multicultural environments and recognized for good practices in multicultural leadership.

This was followed by scheduling and conducting interviews focusing on specific examples of effective multicultural leadership. The informants would share their multicultural leadership practices in school settings. The researchers recorded, collected, coded, and analyzed data to identify key themes such as communication strategies, conflict resolution techniques, and team building practices.

Data Analysis

The Multi-Attitude-Consensus-Reading (MACR) approach was used to analyze the qualitative data as it was a teaching and learning strategy designed to enhance reading comprehension and critical thinking by engaging researchers with multiple perspectives and fostering consensus-building. However, the researchers were following these key processes of MACR to analyze the interview data, namely exposure to multiple perspectives, critical analysis and discussion, consensus building, and reflection and synthesis.

Firstly, the researchers read interview transcripts or engage with recorded materials that presenting diverse viewpoints on the topic of multicultural leadership practices. After engaging with the interview transcripts, the researchers critically analyzed the different perspectives, for example, they discussed the merits, biases, and underlying assumptions of each viewpoint in case settings (Silverman, 2021). The researchers worked towards finding common ground or developing a synthesized understanding of the multicultural leadership practices. This consensus building step emphasized the importance of listening to others, negotiating differences, and integrating various perspectives. Finally, the researchers reflected on the process and outcomes of the consensus-building activity. The researchers synthesized their findings in written formats, demonstrating their understanding of the multicultural leadership practices and the value of considering multiple attitudes (Silverman, 2021). The MACR approach aimed to develop higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, by encouraging the researchers to engage deeply with complex issues and appreciate diverse viewpoints. It could be particularly effective in research like social studies and ethics, where understanding different perspectives was crucial.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of five Chinese school administrators who were involved in the in-depth interviews and labelled as P1 to P5. The researchers synthesized the approaches to develop multicultural leadership practices that suggested by the five Chinese school administrators in northeast region of Thailand to develop the guidelines. The ultimate results revealed that there were eight approaches for personnel development factor, eight approaches for multicultural education management factor, nine approaches for multicultural competencies factor, and nine approaches for multicultural communication factor and their key success indicators have been suggested

by the five informants. Table 1 presents the evaluation results of Multicultural Leadership Model before and after the MACR method was implemented.

Table 1: The Evaluation Results Multicultural Leadership Model Before (B) and After (A) MACR

No.	Item	Mean Score						*SD*		Significant Level	
		Group 1		Group 2		Total					
		(B)	(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)	(A)
1.	**Title**: Multicultural Leadership Developmental Model for Chinese School Administrators in Northeast Region of Thailand.	88.00	82.00	90.00	86.20	89.00	84.10	3.162	5.705	High-est	High-est
2.	**Principles and theories:** Multiculturalism theory, multicultural leadership theory, Knowledge-Skill-Attitude (KSA) theory, principles of multicultural education, principles of multicultural education, principles of curriculum development, learning by doing theory, equity theory, participatory theory, and Knowledge-Attitudes-Practice principle.	78.00	88.00	78.00	94.00	78.00	91.00	12.293	6.992	High	High-est
3.	**Objectives**: To propose approaches to develop multicultural leadership of Chinese school administrators.	59.00	92.00	74.00	96.00	66.50	94.00	29.064	6.992	High	High-est
4.	**Goal**: Chinese school administrators can develop their multicultural leadership.	58.00	88.00	76.00	94.00	67.00	91.00	28.304	5.676	High	High-est
5.	**Personnel development PD** ***Developing personnel knowledge (PD1)*** *Developing administrators' administrative knowledge* Key success indicator 1.1: Administrators apply professional administrative knowledge to school administration.	84.00	88.00	90.00	92.00	87.00	90.00	4.830	4.714	High-est	High-est
6.	*Developing teachers' academic knowledge* Key success indicator 1.2: Teachers appreciate administrators' support for their professional development and bringing new knowledge into teaching.	86.00	88.00	70.00	93.00	78.00	90.50	24.404	5.169	High	High-est
7.	*Developing personnel knowledge of language and culture* Key success indicator 1.3: Personnel have a better understanding of cultural diversity.	85.00	85.40	72.00	87.00	78.50	86.20	21.864	5.160	High	High-est
8.	***Encouraging personnel (PD2)*** *Encouraging personnel for further education*	87.00	86.00	92.00	90.00	89.50	88.00	6.852	5.869	High-est	High-est

#	Item	(B)	(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)	(A)
	Key success indicator 2.1: Personnel appreciates the support of administrators and work harder in return.										
9.	*Encouraging personnel to learn from cultural mistakes* Key success indicator 2.2: Personnel has further understood of culture variation.	(B) 85.00	(A) 85.00	(B) 87.00	(A) 89.00	(B) 86.00	(A) 87.00	(B) 4.595	(A) 5.375	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
10.	**Motivating personnel (PD3)** *Motivating teachers by building their confidence* Key success indicator 3.1: Teachers appreciate administrators' affirmation and become confident.	(B) 86.00	(A) 84.00	(B) 84.00	(A) 84.00	(B) 85.00	(A) 84.00	(B) 7.071	(A) 5.164	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
11.	*Motivating teachers by rebuilding relationships with teachers and school* Key success indicator 3.2: Teachers appreciate administrators' motivation and take an active role in developing the school.	(B) 87.00	(A) 82.00	(B) 86.00	(A) 85.00	(B) 86.50	(A) 83.50	(B) 7.472	(A) 6.687	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
12.	*Motivating personnel with a skills matrix* Key success indicator 3.3: Personnel develop themselves based on the skill matrix.	(B) 94.00	(A) 87.00	(B) 90.00	(A) 86.00	(B) 92.00	(A) 86.50	(B) 4.216	(A) 4.116	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
13.	**Multicultural educational management EM Developing curriculum (EM1)** *Developing administrators' multicultural education knowledge.* Key success indicator 1.1: Administrators apply multicultural education knowledge to develop curriculum.	(B) 89.00	(A) 85.00	(B) 90.00	(A) 89.00	(B) 89.50	(A) 87.00	(B) 5.986	(A) 4.830	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
14.	*Organizing culture and language activities* Key success indicator 1.2: Teachers and students from different cultures better understand cultural differences and diversity.	(B) 84.00	(A) 89.00	(B) 82.00	(A) 90.00	(B) 83.00	(A) 89.50	(B) 6.749	(A) 3.689	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
15.	*Inviting experts to school to develop new curriculums* Key success indicator 1.3: Students develop better through the new curriculums.	(B) 88.00	(A) 88.00	(B) 86.00	(A) 90.00	(B) 87.00	(A) 89.00	(B) 8.233	(A) 4.595	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
16.	**Community participation (EM2)** *Building relationships with the community* Key success indicator 2.1: Administrators have friendly relationships with the community.	(B) 84.00	(A) 86.00	(B) 84.00	(A) 86.00	(B) 84.00	(A) 86.00	(B) 5.164	(A) 3.944	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
17.	*Collaborating with communities*	(B) 88.	(A) 85.	(B) 92.	(A) 88.	(B) 90.	(A) 86.	(B) 8.165	(A) 4.084	(B) High-est	(A) High-

No.	Item										
	Key success indicator 2.2: Administrators collaborate with different groups.	00	00	00	40	00	70				est
18.	**Promoting equality (EM3)** *Creating an equal school community* Key success indicator 3.1: Individual from different cultures in school lives equally together.	(B) 86.00	(A) 88.00	(B) 88.00	(A) 82.00	(B) 87.00	(A) 85.00	(B) 8.233	(A) 7.071	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
19.	*Applying equality to administer school.* Key success indicator 3.2: Administrators support equal chance to develop for teachers and students.	(B) 84.00	(A) 91.00	(B) 86.00	(A) 87.00	(B) 85.00	(A) 89.00	(B) 7.071	(A) 5.676	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
20.	**Multicultural competencies CP** **Multicultural attitudes (CP1)** *Being proud of administrators' own cultures* Key success indicator 1.1: Administrators are proud of their own cultures.	(B) 86.00	(A) 86.00	(B) 81.00	(A) 88.00	(B) 83.50	(A) 87.00	(B) 9.443	(A) 5.375	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
21.	*Respecting cultural diversity* Key success indicator 1.2: Administrators value and respect different cultures.	(B) 88.00	(A) 85.00	(B) 88.00	(A) 87.00	(B) 88.00	(A) 86.00	(B) 7.528	(A) 3.944	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
22.	**Multicultural knowledge (CP2)** *Learning about Chinese language and culture* Key success indicator 2.1: Administrators understand Chinese culture and use Chinese to communicate with others.	(B) 86.00	(A) 89.40	(B) 88.00	(A) 86.00	(B) 87.00	(A) 87.70	(B) 6.749	(A) 5.229	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
23.	*Learning foreign languages* Key success indicator 2.2: Administrators can use foreign languages to communicate with foreign teachers at school.	(B) 85.00	(A) 90.60	(B) 88.00	(A) 90.00	(B) 86.50	(A) 90.30	(B) 8.182	(A) 5.143	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
24.	*Developing multicultural knowledge* Key success indicator 2.3: Administrators understand different cultures in the world.	(B) 84.00	(A) 91.00	(B) 84.00	(A) 92.00	(B) 84.00	(A) 91.50	(B) 6.992	(A) 5.798	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
25.	**Multicultural skills (CP3)** *Creating a united work environment* Key success indicator 3.1: Personnel from different cultures of different departments can cooperate together happily.	(B) 82.00	(A) 88.00	(B) 85.00	(A) 86.00	(B) 83.50	(A) 87.00	(B) 4.743	(A) 5.869	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
26.	*Adjusting behaviors based on the context* Key success indicator 3.2: Administrators get along with people from different cultures	(B) 83.00	(A) 90.60	(B) 87.20	(A) 92.00	(B) 85.10	(A) 91.30	(B) 4.725	(A) 7.243	(B) High-est	(A) High-est

No.										
	without conflicts.									
27.	*Being able to analyze diverse cultural differences* Key success indicator 3.3: Administrators get along with people from different cultures without conflicts.	(B) 87.00	(A) 93.00	(B) 88.00	(A) 89.00	(B) 87.50	(A) 91.00	(B) 8.580	(A) 4.595	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
28.	**Multicultural communication CM** ***Avoiding conflict (CM1)*** *Communicating with rules to avoid conflict.* Key success indicator 1.1: Administrators communicate with teachers from different cultures with rules to avoid conflict	(B) 85.00	(A) 86.00	(B) 89.00	(A) 89.00	(B) 87.00	(A) 87.50	(B) 7.888	(A) 4.249	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
29.	*Communicating directly to avoid conflict* Key success indicator 1.2: Administrators communicate directly to avoid conflict.	(B) 83.00	(A) 92.00	(B) 88.00	(A) 86.00	(B) 85.50	(A) 89.00	(B) 4.972	(A) 5.164	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
30.	*Respecting communicators to avoid conflict* Key success indicator 1.3: Administrators respect communicators to avoid conflict.	(B) 80.00 86.00 90.00 88.00 5.869 Highest	(A) 86.00	(B) 90.00	(A) 90.00	(B) 85.00	(A) 88.00	(B) 7.454	(A) 5.860	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
31.	*Discussing with people holding different opinions outside of meetings to avoid conflict* Key success indicator 1.4: Administrators discuss with people with different opinions outside of meetings to avoid conflict.	(B) 83.00	(A) 85.00	(B) 87.20	(A) 88.00	(B) 85.10	(A) 86.50	(B) 4.725	(A) 5.297	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
32.	***Having multicultural communication skills (CM2)*** *Communicating with people from different cultures in their native language* Key success indicator 2.1: Administrators have good relationships with people from different cultures.	(B) 83.00	(A) 86.00	(B) 88.20	(A) 89.40	(B) 85.60	(A) 87.70	(B) 5.502	(A) 6.201	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
33.	*Listening carefully to multicultural communication* Key success indicator 2.2: Administrators listen carefully in multicultural communication.	(B) 87.00	(A) 91.00	(B) 90.00	(A) 92.40	(B) 88.50	(A) 91.70	(B) 5.297	(A) 7.227	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
34.	*Using easy language to communicate* Key success indicator 2.3: Administrators use easy language to communicate in multicultural communication.	(B) 84.00	(A) 85.80	(B) 92.00	(A) 85.00	(B) 88.00	(A) 85.40	(B) 9.189	(A) 5.317	(B) High-est	(A) High-est
36.	***Being aware of cultural variations (CM3)*** *Being aware of cultural diversity*	(B) 90.00	(A) 87.20	(B) 84.00	(A) 87.80	(B) 87.00	(A) 87.50	(B) 6.749	(A) 4.882	(B) High-est	(A) High-est

	Key success indicator 3.1: Administrators understand cultural diversity.									
37.	*Being aware of cultural differences* Key success indicator 3.2: Administrators understand cultural differences.	(B) 82.00	(A) 87.20	(B) 86.20	(A) 87.80	(B) 84.10	(A) 87.50	(B) 5.705	(A) 4.882	(B) Highest / (A) Highest

CONCLUSION

The major contribution of this research was the researchers managed to use grounded theory to examine the Multicultural Leadership Developmental Model and develop a nuanced understanding of how Chinese school administrators navigate and leverage cultural diversity in their teams and schools (Makri & Neely, 2021). The researchers followed a scientific method involving several steps to ensure the model's relevance, effectiveness, and applicability within the specific cultural context of Chinese schools to validate the Multicultural Leadership Developmental Model.

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