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Guidelines for School Administration to Promote a Multicultural Learning Environment in Schools under the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Thailand

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Abstract

This study aimed to 1) identify the priority needs of school administration to promote a multicultural learning environment in schools under the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and 2) develop guidelines to effectively enhance this environment. This study used a mixed-methods approach. Phase 1 quantitatively assessed priority needs using a sample of 370 BMA teachers selected through multistage sampling. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the Modified Priority Needs Index (PNI_{modified}). In Phase 2, administrative guidelines were developed through semi-structured interviews with seven senior educational officials and school principals, and the interviews were analyzed using content analysis.

The results indicate that the priority needs for multicultural school administration are high. The most critical need was community engagement, followed by resource support, curriculum development, teaching and learning management and professional development. Based on these findings, the guidelines propose five core components: collaborative community engagement, learner-centered curriculum development, culturally competent professional development, freedom of learning choice, and diversity-inclusive resource support for teachers. In conclusion, effective multicultural school administration requires a holistic approach that actively integrates community participation and tailors the curriculum to the diversity of students. For future research, exploring the application of these guidelines in different educational jurisdictions and evaluating their direct impact on student coexistence and academic achievement is recommended.

Keywords: School Administration, Learning Environment, Multicultural Context, Guidelines, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration Schools, BMA Schools, Multicultural Education Management, PNI Analysis

Introduction

Thailand is a democratic nation committed to providing effective and inclusive education for all groups. Article 54 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand 2017 (B.E. 2560) states that the State shall provide and promote education at all levels, with a focus on quality and individual differences. Additionally, the National Education Act 1999 (B.E. 2542) and its amendments specify that Thai education should develop individuals into well-rounded human beings—physically, mentally, intellectually, morally, and culturally—so they can live and coexist happily with others in society while recognizing equality and cultural diversity.

The National Security Council (NSC) also outlined security strategies related to education and culture in the “20-Year National Strategy 2018–2037 (B.E. 2561 - 2580),” emphasizing the importance of strengthening national security by promoting harmony and peaceful coexistence within multicultural settings, especially in highly diverse large urban areas. Locally, Bangkok, the country’s economic and cultural hub, exhibits high diversity in terms of ethnicity, religion, language, and lifestyle. Consequently, schools operated by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) inevitably function in a multicultural environment.

The BMA Department of Education has prioritized this issue and established annual educational goals. For example, in the 2024 academic year, the focus was on creating a learning system that offers equal opportunities for all students to grow and promotes coexistence rooted in an understanding of diversity. Despite policies and laws supporting education in multicultural settings, many schools in Bangkok struggle to implement these approaches effectively. For instance, there is a lack of appropriate planning and management tailored to the needs of culturally diverse students. Teachers often lack knowledge and understanding of multicultural learning, and cross-cultural communication is not systematically encouraged ([Ligo et al., 2025](#)). This was especially clear in a large urban area such as Bangkok, which is home to a diverse range of ethnicities, religions, languages, and lifestyles among its learners. This diversity embodies a multicultural environment and impacts how learning is managed, requiring careful consideration of students’ cultural differences ([Senket & Piatanom, 2024](#)). Creating an open learning environment that respects differences and encourages peaceful coexistence is now vital, as such an environment not only boosts mutual understanding among students from different cultures but also cultivates virtues, ethics, kindness, and a sense of belonging to school. This, in turn, influences student learning in a culturally diverse setting ([Cook, 2022](#); [Karadimou & Tsioumis, 2023](#)). Therefore, school leaders play a key role in establishing policies and management practices that nurture a learning environment that reflects cultural diversity.

Effective administration requires an understanding of learners’ culture and the promotion of open-mindedness and appreciation of diversity among teachers, staff, and students. Developing management strategies is essential for creating safe, fair, and inclusive learning environments.

Recent research has found that many schools in Bangkok lack clear administrative guidelines in a multicultural context, which may hinder the development of an effective and inclusive learning environment and lead to disparities in learning, social interactions, and feelings of alienation among certain student groups ([Senket & Piatanom, 2024](#); [Ligo et al., 2025](#); [Cook, 2022](#)). Despite these known issues, there is a critical research gap regarding empirical studies that systematically quantify and prioritize specific administrative needs within the BMA system. Previous studies have largely remained descriptive and failed to provide an actionable, prioritized framework tailored to the unique sociocultural dynamics of BMA schools. Considering the importance of school administration in fostering a learning environment in a multicultural context, the research team was interested in examining how school administration can promote a positive learning atmosphere within schools in the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA). It is expected that the research findings will be useful for developing guidelines for school administration that support a multicultural learning environment to understand the current situation, challenges, and suitable administrative strategies, ultimately leading to the development of an administrative model that effectively responds to the multicultural context and supports the learning of all student groups.

Therefore, the findings are expected to provide school administrators with guidelines for a multicultural setting, helping them develop instructional management practices that consider cultural diversity among students. Additionally, the guidelines can be used for policy development or to improve school administration to effectively promote an equitable learning environment that values diversity in a multicultural context.

Research Objectives

- To identify the priority needs of school administration to promote a multicultural learning environment in schools under the BMA.
- To develop guidelines for school administration to promote a multicultural learning environment in schools under the BMA.

Research Questions

- What should be the priority needs of school administration to promote a multicultural learning environment in schools under the BMA?
- What guidelines should be established for school administration to promote a multicultural learning environment in schools under the BMA?

Review of Literature

Effective multicultural education administration goes beyond mere acknowledgment of student differences; it requires proactive and systemic administrative redesign (Hollowell, 2019; Cook, 2022). A critical analysis of recent educational frameworks reveals that many current administrative models treat cultural diversity as a peripheral issue, resulting in isolated instructional adjustments rather than holistic structural changes (Senket and Piatanom, 2024; Santimetnidon et al., 2020). Consequently, school leaders often lack the necessary operational paradigms to align curriculum development, resource allocation, and community engagement to effectively address systemic disparities (Lormae et al., 2024; Saengthong, 2021). To build an authentically inclusive environment, literature argues for boundary-spanning leadership that integrates cultural competencies directly into professional development and systemic teaching management (Karadimou and Tsioumis, 2023). By synthesizing these perspectives, this study categorizes the essential elements of multicultural school administration into five core domains: community engagement, curriculum development, professional development, teaching and learning management, and resource support.

Conceptual Framework

The school administration to promote a multicultural learning environment based on the

concepts of Srihanart (2022), Saenkhamma et al. (2025), Lormae et al. (2024), Saengthong (2021), Songsuea and Boonrat (2024), Aromchuen (2021), Dola et al. (2022), Hanmontree (2025), Ligo et al. (2025), Santimetnidon et al. (2020), Somja & Wichaakkharawit (2022), Senket & Piatanom (2024), Hollowell (2019), and Cook (2022) as the conceptual framework for the research. The details are presented in Figure 1.

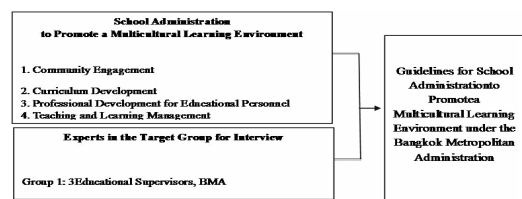


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Methodology

This mixed-methods research had two phases, as follows:

Phase 1: A study to identify the priority needs of school administration to promote a multicultural learning environment in schools under the BMA

Population and Sample

In this study, the population included 13,214 teachers under the BMA in the 2024 academic year from 437 schools. The sample consisted of 370 people, obtained using Cohen et al.'s (2018) table at a .05 significance level. Multistage sampling was used as follows:

Step 1: Schools of various sizes (small, medium, and large) in each district, selected through stratified random sampling, were randomly chosen.

Step 2: Schools were randomly selected within each district—Central Bangkok, Southern Bangkok, Northern Bangkok, Eastern Bangkok, Northern Krung Thon, and Southern Krung Thon—based on school size using simple random sampling. A draw was held to select 18 schools: six small, six medium-sized, and six large.

Step 3: Teachers were randomly selected from each school using simple random sampling based on sample size, yielding a total of 370 participants.

Research Instruments

The research instrument was a questionnaire

designed to identify the priority needs of school administrators to promote a multicultural learning environment in schools under the BMA. The questionnaire used a 5-point rating scale based on Likert's method (1967), covering five areas: 1) Community Engagement, 2) Curriculum Development, 3) Professional Development for Educational Personnel, 4) Teaching and Learning Management, and 5) Resource Support.

Instrument Quality Check

The content validity of the developed questionnaire was evaluated by five experts in terms of content validity, comprehensiveness, and linguistic clarity using the Item Objective Congruence (IOC) index. Items with a score above 0.5 were considered acceptable, and 34 items were reviewed.

To ensure reliability, the questionnaire was revised based on expert feedback and tested with 30 teachers who shared similar characteristics with the sample. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The analysis indicated a reliability coefficient of 0.974 for the full questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The data from the responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation.

The priority needs of school administrators to foster a multicultural learning environment in BMA schools. The PNI_{modified} (Wongwanich, 2019) was determined based on the current and desired conditions of the schools using the following formula:

$$PNI_{\text{modified}} = I - D / D$$

Where:

I (Importance) = Mean of the desired state

D (Degree of Success) = Mean of the current state

This modified index is crucial because it not only measures the gap between the desired expectations and the current reality but also scales this gap relative to the current level of success. A higher PNI_{modified} value mathematically signifies a larger discrepancy, indicating a more urgent need for administrative intervention and resource prioritization in the specific domain.

Phase 2: Guidelines for school administration to promote a multicultural learning environment in schools under the BMA

Research Instruments

The research instrument was a semi-structured interview based on the experiences of seven experts selected through purposive sampling, aimed at identifying school administration to promote a multicultural learning environment in schools under the BMA's jurisdiction. This semi-structured interview questionnaire was developed by PNI_{modified} based on the results of the first phase.

Data Collection

The data collection procedures involved requesting interviews and data through the Graduate Studies Department, Faculty of Education, Ramkhamhaeng University, and submitting these request letters to the experts. A specific date, time, and location were set, and the interviews were conducted at a mutually agreed-upon time.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis was conducted using a rigorous content analysis. The interview responses were systematically coded to identify the core issues and emerging themes related to multicultural educational administration. These themes were then categorized into predefined administrative areas, and frequency distributions were used to determine the level of consensus among the experts. Finally, the components with the highest frequencies were synthesized to formulate practical guidelines for school administration in the BMA.

Research Results

Phase 1: A result of the priority needs of school administration to promote a multicultural learning environment in schools under the BMA

The analysis of the priority needs (PNI_{modified}) yielded an overall index of 0.4728, indicating a substantial gap between current administrative practices and the expected standards for a multicultural environment. When evaluating specific aspects, community engagement emerged as the highest priority need (0.4967), suggesting

that while internal school operations are functioning reasonably well, administrators face the greatest challenge in effectively integrating external community stakeholders into the multicultural learning process. Analytically, this indicates a systemic disconnect between schools and the highly diverse urban communities they serve. The data imply that traditional administrative boundaries are insufficient for modern multicultural education,

requiring a paradigm shift towards boundary-spanning leadership, where the community is viewed as an active educational resource rather than a passive recipient. This was followed by resource support (0.4785), curriculum development (0.4739), teaching and learning management (0.4508), and professional development for educational personnel (0.4357).

Table 1 The Priority Needs of School Administration to Promote a Multicultural Learning Environment in Schools under the BMA

School Administrator to Foster a Multicultural Learning Environment	Importance (D)			Degree of Success (I)			PNI _{modified}	Needs Ranking
	X $\bar{}$	S.D.	Level	X $\bar{}$	S.D.	Level		
1. Community Engagement	3.00	0.609	High	4.49	0.300	Highest	0.4967	1
2. Curriculum Development	3.06	0.586	High	4.51	0.285	Highest	0.4739	3
3. Professional Development for Educational Personnel	3.19	0.688	High	4.58	0.343	Highest	0.4357	5
4. Teaching and Learning Management	3.15	0.697	High	4.57	0.312	Highest	0.4508	4
5. Resource Support	3.08	0.715		4.48	0.354		0.4785	2
Overview	3.08	0.536	High	4.53	0.249	Highest		

Phase 2: A result of developing guidelines for school administration to promote a multicultural learning environment in school under the BMA

Based on the results of the first phase, which assessed the importance and degree of success, the top three questions from the questionnaires about these conditions in each area were selected as interview questions for seven experts from the target group. These experts suggested guidelines for school administration to promote a multicultural learning environment in schools under the BMA's jurisdiction. The details are as follows.

Community Engagement: Collaborative community participation involves the community in designing learning experiences that allow learners to think, analyze, and reflect on their understanding within their own and others' cultural contexts.

Curriculum Development: A learner-centered curriculum design refers to a school curriculum that focuses on the needs, interests, and differences among learners. The assessment results of priority needs and the cultural context are used to create a curriculum that encourages meaningful learning based on the learner's unique identity.

Professional Development for Educational Personnel: Culturally competent teachers refer to the process of developing teachers and educational staff to acquire the knowledge, understanding, and skills necessary for managing learning within a culturally diverse setting and for designing teaching activities that properly respect and promote students' unique identities.

Teaching and Learning Management: Freedom of learning choice refers to learning activities that give students the right to select what to learn based on their interests, abilities, and identities, with encouragement from teachers and administrators to help them reach their full potential while respecting cultural diversity and individual learning styles of students.

Resource Support: Diversity-inclusive budget allocation involves efficiently distributing funds to support instructional activities and develop resources that foster learning within a multicultural environment. This includes learning materials, cultural activities, field trips and staff training.

Discussion

A study of the priority needs of school administration to promote a multicultural learning environment in schools under the BMA found that the priority needs index (PNI_{modified}) was 0.4708. When analyzing each aspect, the highest-priority need was community engagement, as the community served as an educational partner and directly influenced learners' holistic development. Strong community engagement between schools and communities allows schools to access cultural resources, local wisdom, and the expectations of community stakeholders more effectively. This promotes meaningful learning relevant to students in a multicultural environment, encourages pride in their cultural roots, and fosters positive attitudes toward cultural diversity. Additionally, collaboration with the community creates opportunities for teachers, school administrators, parents, and local experts to participate in the design of the curriculum, activities, and learning environment. As a result, schools comprehensively address students' needs and support holistic development as a core part of education in a truly multicultural society. This aligns with [Lormae et al.'s \(2024\)](#) study, which found that school administration, especially regarding community engagement in fostering a learning atmosphere within a multicultural context, was at the highest level. Similarly, [Ligo et al. \(2025\)](#) showed that school administration placed significant emphasis on community engagement to promote a multicultural learning environment. School administrators build strong relationships between schools and communities, promoting the preservation of local wisdom as a key to effectively applying knowledge in real life. This is consistent with the study by [Karadimou and Tsioumis \(2023\)](#), which indicates that systematic school administration in a multicultural setting—particularly in terms of interactions and relationship building with the local community—was highly rated. School administrators are expected to continually foster relationships with the community and lifelong learning institutions to integrate social and cultural contexts and facilitate relevant learning aligned with social dynamics. This aligns with [Cook \(2022\)](#), particularly regarding meaningful relationship building with stakeholders

and community involvement, both of which were at the highest level. School administrators openly communicate and collaborate with parents, community members, and all stakeholders to develop a learning environment that respects cultural diversity and promotes inclusive, equitable education for all students.

Guidelines should be developed for school administration to promote a multicultural learning environment in schools under the BMA. The BMA revealed that these guidelines include community engagement, such as collaborative efforts; curriculum development focused on a learner-centered approach; professional development for educational staff, including training in cultural competence; teaching and learning management that emphasizes freedom of learning; and resource support, including funding for diversity initiatives. These are essential components of school administration that nurture a multicultural environment by respecting cultural differences, encouraging participation, and supporting the holistic development of students. Community engagement through participatory learning creates opportunities for learners to think critically and analyze and reflect on their own and others' cultural identities. As a result, learning becomes meaningful and relevant to real-life situations, while fostering a curriculum tailored to learners' needs, interests, and differences. This leads to curriculum flexibility, cultural adaptability, and targeted learning that responds to each student's potential. Additionally, improving teachers' and educational personnel's knowledge, understanding, and skills in instructional management within diverse cultural contexts is crucial for respecting student identities and cultivating a safe, open, and conducive learning environment for all students. Instructional management that allows learners the freedom to pursue learning based on their interests, skills, and identities—encouraged by teachers and administrators—enables students to realize their full potential and demonstrates respect for varied learning styles. Furthermore, resource support through planning and budgeting should consider cultural diversity to ensure the ongoing, tangible implementation of activities, teaching materials, and professional growth. In summary, these school administration guidelines for creating

a multicultural learning environment underscore the need for integrated school management in the BMA region. School administrators should promote community involvement, curriculum development, staff professional growth, effective teaching and learning management, and resource support to foster an environment that respects cultural diversity and supports sustainable student development. This aligns with [Lormae et al.'s \(2024\)](#) study, which identified four components: 1) instruction based on local context, 2) community engagement, 3) participation promotion with all stakeholders, and 4) professional development for educators and staff. This concurs with [Saengthong's \(2021\)](#) findings, which include: 1) instruction rooted in the local context, 2) community engagement, 3) professional development, and 4) collaboration-based participation promotion. Additionally, [Karadimou and Tsioumis \(2023\)](#) found that school administration in multicultural settings involves: 1) culturally responsive leadership, 2) participatory policy-making, 3) a democratic and humanistic school climate, 4) conflict management within multicultural contexts, 5) teacher leadership and change agency, and 6) systematic communication and relationship-building with the local community. Similarly, [Cook \(2022\)](#) outlined that effective administration includes: 1) culturally responsive leadership, 2) modeling such leadership, 3) ongoing professional development for teachers and staff, 4) meaningful stakeholder and community engagement, 5) management of bias and resistance to change, and 6) continuous professional growth and sustainability.

Conclusion

From the perspective of teachers under the BMA, school administration should focus on fostering a learning environment in a multicultural context, prioritizing the most important aspects. Community engagement was the highest priority, followed by resource support, curriculum development, teaching and learning management, and professional development for educational personnel. These are interconnected and mutually reinforce each other. Therefore, balanced importance for all components can foster a learning atmosphere suitable for a multicultural context and support learners' holistic and sustainable development.

A study on guidelines for school administration to foster a multicultural learning environment in schools under the BMA found that school administration should be systematic and integrated. School administrators should prioritize community engagement by participating in the design of learning activities, developing curricula based on learner differences, developing teachers and staff to understand cultural diversity, managing teaching and learning that allow students to choose how to learn according to their interests and skills, and providing appropriate resources for learning in a multicultural context. Accordingly, a learning environment is fostered that respects differences, promotes understanding and coexistence, and leads to sustainable development of educational quality in BMA schools.

However, this study has some limitations. First, the study collected data from teachers at schools within the BMA, which may not capture the perspectives of other stakeholders, such as learners, parents, or the community. Second, the study presented only conceptual administrative guidelines and recommendations and therefore did not test them in schools. Future research should increase the sample size and study the practical application of the guidelines to evaluate their effectiveness in school administration within a multicultural context.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Implementation

Short-term Strategies

The findings from community engagement revealed that the primary needs of school administration to foster a multicultural learning environment in schools under the BMA had a PNI_{modified} value of 0.4967. For the most important issue, school administrators should consistently promote community engagement by offering opportunities for community leaders, parents, and local organizations to participate in planning and developing learning activities within schools. Schools should also establish transparent and accessible two-way communication channels to foster mutual understanding between the school and the community regarding cultural and educational matters. Cultural activities that showcase student diversity, such

as local cultural events and community-based projects, should be encouraged to promote pride and acceptance of differences. Community information should serve as a foundation for developing school administration plans to ensure sustainable education that genuinely responds to the social and cultural context.

The findings from professional development for educational personnel revealed that the priority needs of school administration to foster a multicultural learning environment in schools under the BMA had a PNI_{modified} of 0.4357 as the lowest priority. This indicates that BMA school administrators should maintain and further develop the potential of existing educational personnel to ensure sustainability, promote collaborative learning among teachers and staff through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), develop guidelines suitable for a multicultural context, regularly hold workshops on learning management based on cultural diversity to enhance understanding and equitable teaching skills, and establish a system of incentives and recognition for personnel with outstanding performance in promoting a positive learning environment and understanding cultural diversity.

Long-term Strategies

The BMA should adopt the proposed guidelines to enhance school administration and promote a multicultural learning environment within its schools. Additionally, BMA teachers and educational staff should be prepared before appointment as school administrators. Because BMA schools are highly culturally diverse, school leaders with multicultural leadership skills are necessary to create safe, equitable, and respectful learning environments. Pre-training helps reduce cultural conflicts and communication issues, build trust with parents and the community, and ultimately improve student satisfaction and academic performance. This approach ensures that school administrations comply with BMA policies and human rights principles (SDG4) when developing a leadership pipeline, lowers post-appointment costs, and increases effectiveness from day one.

Recommendations for Future Research

In-depth qualitative research should be conducted to analyze the administrative processes and practical guidelines of successful school administrators in fostering a learning environment within a multicultural context as a model for developing policy guidelines.

The scope of the research should include schools outside Bangkok to compare differences in social and cultural contexts and examine factors affecting the effectiveness of school administration within a nationally multicultural setting.

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