Academic Article

EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION MODEL FOR ESTABLISHING MULTICULTURAL TEACHING

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Abstract

In recent years, multicultural education (ME) has drawn attention from teacher, teacher educators, and researchers in the field of education in Thailand. ME is introduced and explored to challenge the concept of monocultural education that historically and highly dominate the landscape of Thai education system. This study is on the development of multicultural learning and teaching in Thailand. The study aimed to create the educational supervision model for establishing multicultural teaching. This study took place in an ethnically and linguistically diverse school located in the area between Thai-Lao Border. With participatory action research approach, the study invited various stakeholders to participate in the study: a school principle, teachers, parents, students, local cultural experts, and community leaders. The data was collected by a semi-structure interview, an observation, and a group discussion. The study found that the educational supervision model for creating multicultural teaching in the culturally diverse school is consisted of three main components: supervisors, participants, and a supervision process. This study argued that the educational supervision is one of the effective means to advocate multicultural teaching and curriculum. Yet, empowerment, participation, and collaboration were required throughout the supervision process.

Keywords: Educational Supervision, Multicultural Teaching, Empowerment

Introduction

Thailand is historically known for ethnic and linguistic diversity. Premsrirat et al. (2004) indicates that there were about 62 ethnic groups characterized by names called by ethnic people and about 70 groups categorized on the basis of five language families including Mon-Khmer, Austronesian, Sino-Tibetan, Tai languages, and Hmong. However, only ethnic Thai is represented and dominated in most aspects such as culture, religion, social institution, value, norm, language, and education. Other ethnic cultures were either assimilated or integrated through various means over several decades since 1940s to construct and reinforce nationalism.

However, in the recent decade, the concept of multiculturalism is introduced and explored to challenge the long-term nationalism that privilege ethic Thai or Thainess over other ethnic and minority groups and to address the ongoing insurgence in the deep south of Thailand. In the field of education, the concept of multicultural education (ME) is gradually explored to contest Thainess-based education and to address challenges in educating students from ethnic minority backgrounds and migrant students from neighboring countries. ME historically came out of the civil rights movement of people of color in the United States of America during 1960s (Banks, 2010). According to Banks (2010), ME is an approach to respond, to resist and to challenge the structural power that leads to inequality, prejudice, and discrimination based on the fundamental differences of cultures. In the same way, The Royal Institute Dictionary (2010) defines ME as an approach to promote learning management in schools of different cultures, including ethnicity, religions, and languages, in order to create understanding and be able to live peacefully in a multicultural society. Concerning the development of this approach, Nawarat (2018) views the approach of multicultural education as a process where teachers help prepare learners who are from diverse cultures to live together with empathy and create education equity, and ME is necessary for every learner.

Since its introduction in Thailand, ME has been studied and employed either a concept or an approach in various research projects ranging from pre-school level to undergraduate level. For examples, ME was explored in classroom management research at the pre-elementary school level (Munsettavith, 2011); at elementary level (Vaiyavutjamai, 2018; Yongyuan et al., 2012); and undergraduate level, (Wannapaisal et al., 2016). It has also been used in learning management for migrant children, (Nawarat & Yimsawat, 2017); textbook (Arpattananon, 2013); pre-service teacher's preparation (Saenghong, 2017); and the improvement of the administrative personnel for schools with diverse cultures (Wehachart, 2013).

However, the review of literatures regarding ME in Thailand indicated that ME is less explored in the context of educational supervision. Educational supervision is regarded as one of the important approaches to improve the quality of teaching and learning (Laoriandee, 2013). It is also an effective method to assist teachers, especially novice teachers, in understanding the principles, patterns, methods, and strategies of learning management in the classroom. Despite the importance of this topic, research in the area of the use of educational supervision for multicultural learning and teaching is limited. In this study, the multicultural teaching and learning refer to the integration of ethnic contents into core subjects such as Thai language, social studies, math, and science. Yet, some studies indicate that the supervision with the involvement of the stakeholders including teachers, administrative persons, parents, school board, and community leaders is considered an effective approach in creating and sustaining the multicultural teaching and learning (McCallum & Wilson, 2017).

This paper is part of a larger study that studies the exploitation of educational supervision in creating and implementing multicultural education curriculum in an ethnically diverse school. Yet, this paper will only present the educational supervision model for establishing the multicultural teaching in a culturally diverse school. In other words, how does the educational supervision model that supports the occurrence of the multicultural teaching in an ethnically diverse school manifest?

Objective of the Study

The study aimed to create the educational supervision model that established multicultural teaching in a culturally diverse school.

Research Methodology

The study used participatory action research (PAR) (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988) in examining the educational supervision model leading to the multicultural teaching and learning which was relatively new to the participating school and communities. PAR in this study was utilized to initiate the multicultural teaching and learning by underlining action, involvement from various stakeholders throughout research activities, empowerment, and power-sharing. The study conducted research activities based on the framework of participatory action research (PAR) (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988) which is composed of four phases or cycles: plan (P), act (A), observe (O), and reflect (R), as it is shown in diagram 1. And each cycle is composed of sub-cycles/phases—plan (p), act (a), observe (o), reflect (r). The detail of main activities of each major phase is shown in Table 1.
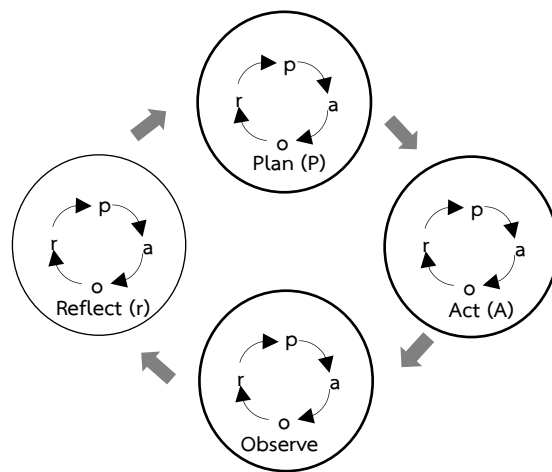
Figure 1 Cycle of participatory action research (PAR)

Setting

This study took place in an ethically and linguistically diverse school located in remote and mountainous areas in upper north of Thailand. It's in the area between Thai-Lao border that various ethnic groups from neighboring provinces and from Lao resettled. The school is an opportunity expansion school and provides education from kindergarten to lower secondary level (K-9) to students from three farming communities with diverse ethnic groups—Tai Yai, Akha, Chinese Yunnan, Hmong, Tai Yuan, and Lahu. In the 2017 academic year, there were 272 students: 58 kindergarten students, 155 primary school students, and 58 lower secondary students. In term of gender, there was 140 males and 132 females. The student boy was ethnically diverse: 83 Akha, 70 Tai Yai, 66 Chinese Yunnan, 32 Tai Yuan, 10 Hmong, and 10 Lahu. The school had twenty personnel: one school principal; nineteen teachers, and two school staffs. Sixteen teachers were ethnic Tai Yuan and there was only one ethnic Hmong teacher. However, the school did not integrate cultures of ethic students into its curriculum or school activities. The school implemented the curriculum that was rather standardized and based on the dominant Thai culture. The significances of culture and knowledge of students and communities were not recognized. In contrast, their cultures were viewed to cause difficulty in teaching and learning. The students sometime encountered detrimental conflicts or disputed each other due to cultural differences.

Research Participant

Research participants, selected by purposive sampling, include twenty people from seven groups (fourteen males and ten females): one school principle; nine teachers of the 4th -6th grade from four disciplines (i.e., Thai language; social studies, religion and culture; art; and occupation and technology); two parent representatives, four ethic cultural experts; three school committees; three community leaders, and two educational supervisors in which one of them was the researcher of the study. The participants involved in this study based on their voluntary and were varied in term of ethnicity, age, gender, education, and occupation.

Data Collection

The study employed several data gathering methods: document, semi-structure interview, observation, and focus group. Document was collected from the official documents of the school such as the educational development plan, self-assessment report, the school curriculum, lesson plans, and teachers' reflection notes. The study also conducted semi-structured interview with all research participants at the beginning and the end of the research project. The former interview aimed to learn about their backgrounds, incentives to participate in the study, anticipated contributions and roles, and issues taking place in and out of the school on the basis of cultural diversity. The latter interview focused on their reflection over their involvement in the research project, their actual roles, changes they observed, and their observation and understanding about multicultural teaching and learning in classrooms throughout a semester. The study also conducted both participant observation (e.g., group meetings and field trips) and non-participant observation (e.g., teachers' teaching in classrooms) throughout the research project. The study also employed focus group where research participants, especially teachers and the school principle, were often gathered to report, reflect, discuss, or offer help to each other over related research activities.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is divided into five stages: 1) organizing collected data into different categories; 2) transcribing interview data and data from focus group discussions; 3) coding, interpreting data, and building themes; 4) drawing and refining conclusion; and 5) examining the credibility of the results by obtaining member checking.

Findings

This study focused on the educational supervision model that lead to the teaching of students' cultures in the ethnically diverse school, which was historically oriented in monocultural education approach, through the approach of participatory action research (PAR). The study found that the educational supervision, especially the supervision process, is an effective means to commence the multicultural teaching and learning. The supervision model had three key components: supervisors, participants, and the supervision process. Each element had its features and method for action, as shown in Figure 2. The details of each component are as follows.
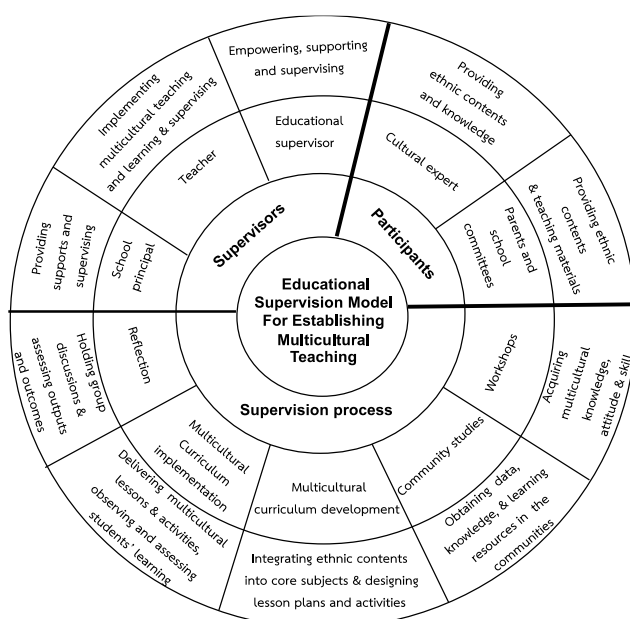

Figure 2 The educational supervision model for establishing multicultural teaching

Supervisors

Supervisors in this model referred to the administrative personnel or school principle, teachers, and educational supervisors. This is contrast to an ordinary supervision model where the educational supervisor solely performed the supervision responsibilities. Each group of supervisors perform different roles in creating multicultural teaching and learning.

The school principle had a role in implementing the policy regarding the multicultural teaching and learning into action and reinforcing empowerment. That is the principal supports the teachers to engage in about multicultural education; allows teachers to involve in decision-making process; supports

teachers to independently and collaboratively create the multicultural curriculum, lesson plans, and teaching strategies and tools; supports with required budget, and provides constructive feedbacks on teachers' teaching based on his classroom observations.

In general, the teachers normally perform teaching tasks and are less designated to take the supervision role within their own school. Yet, in this study, all nine teachers took the supervision responsibility along with other duties. The teachers had a role in developing the multicultural curriculum and implementing it into the classroom. They created multicultural curriculum by integrating ethnic contents into the subjects they taught including Thai language, Social Study, Religion and Cultures, History, Occupations & Technology, and Arts; designed lesson plans; created instructional media and activities; delivered the multicultural lessons based on the learning styles of the learners; and conducted the learning assessment. However, the analysis indicated that the empowerment was greatly required for the teachers. The empowerment for teachers started from the external empowerment by the administrative personnel and the educational supervisors. This was done by providing an opportunity for teachers to participate and acclaim them at the same time. Self-empowerment was also important, for example, in searching for additional knowledge, having a clear goal of work, and creating confidence in organizing activities for multicultural learning.

Educational supervisors have critical roles in making the multicultural curriculum possible. For example, one of the teachers reflected during the weekly reflection session that "obtaining feedbacks and suggestions from the supervisors is critical to our attainment in organizing the multicultural teachings." Another teacher stated in the interview that "We would like the supervisors to give supports to us in developing the multicultural curriculum since it's novel to us and also offered required advises on the multicultural content selection and how to design the lesson plans that are consistent with the multicultural concept." The educational supervisors were responsible for supporting teachers and administrative personnel throughout the project. They organized trainings on multicultural education; organized the ethnic community-based learning for teachers; supported multicultural knowledge and skills to teachers during the development of multicultural curriculum, provided ongoing feedbacks and needed supports to teachers during the multicultural curriculum was implemented; and organized weekly teacher reflection sessions.

Participants

The second key component of the educational supervision model is participants including ethic culture experts, parents, and school committees. The possibility of using the educational supervision

to initiate the teaching and learning of ethic contents in various subjects is dependent on the involvement of the identified participants. All participants accepted the importance of teaching and learning ethic contents to their children and agreed to provide resources and support to the teachers. They also realized the importance of participation and commitment, as one of the school committees stated during the meeting session "If there is a good cooperation between the school and the communities, the school will be developed." While one of the local cultural experts reflected that "successful multicultural teachings and learnings must come from the cooperation of teachers, parents, and the community members since each group has different knowledge, skills, and strengths to offer."

The finding shows that the participants took different roles in the educational supervision model. The parents provided ethnic-based educational materials such as ethic clothes, ethic food, ethnic household utensils, and ethic music instruments to the teachers since they were not available in supple store or market. Meanwhile, the ethnic cultural experts became an important source of knowledge on ethic culture, wisdom, values, tradition, custom, religious practices, and myths for the teachers. Some of the cultural experts also were invited to the classrooms to offer lessons and activities on ethnic cultures as requested by the teachers. This is very critical since the majority of the teachers that decided to integrate ethic contents into core subjects are from northern Thai background. They are less knowledgeable and experienced about ethic contents and cultures. The availability of ethnic cultural experts actually helped reduced the teachers 'concern over ethic content accessibility and accuracy as well as a possible misrepresentation of ethic cultures among the teachers. The school committee played the role based on the position by principally agreeing for the school to teach ethnic contents to the ethic students but took fewer active roles than the parents or the cultural experts.

Supervision process

The supervision process consists of four stages which is framed based on the process of participatory action research (PAR). The first author of this paper, as an experienced educational supervisor, supervised and provided guidance and vital supports to the rest of stakeholders throughout all stages. In each stage, a sub-cycle of PAR (i.e., paor) was used to enhance a completion of research activities and processes. The details of each major stage can be explained as follows.

Table 1 Research procedure based on PAR's framework

PAR Stage	Aims	Major Activities
Plan (P)	- To form mutual agreements about the research project. - To acquire knowledge, attitude, and skill about multicultural education. - To gain knowledge about various ethnicities in the three communities.	- Holding the meeting to introduce the research project. - Collaboratively designing research activities and assigning roles and responsibility. - Holding workshops on multicultural education. - Holding field trips to the communities. - Surveying the learning sources in the three communities. - Learning with the local cultural experts.
Act (A)	- To examine cultural diversities and multicultural aspects of the school. - To develop the multicultural curriculum. - To implement the multicultural curriculum in the classrooms.	- Holding group meetings and examining school curriculum, school policy and practices, textbooks, student's ethic cultural backgrounds. - Selecting academic subjects that were appropriate for integrating multicultural content, teaching, and learning. - Integrating ethnic contents of students into the school curriculum. - Designing lesson plans, teaching strategies, learning sources, and evaluation methods. - Organizing teaching and learning activities based on the curriculum. - Conducting reflection sessions on the given lessons.
Observe (O)	To observe teaching activities and to collect data to provide feedbacks and comments to teachers.	- Observing the classrooms by the supervision team. - Holding reflection sessions which allow each person to reflect their thoughts and experiences and to discuss ways to collaboratively work for the proceeding activities.

PAR Stage	Aims	Major Activities
Reflect (R)	To review and examine the research activities and expected outputs.	- Conducting reflection session after carrying out each activity to address pinpointed issues and adjust plan for the subsequent activities. - Conducting reflection session with all research participants by the end of the research process.

Stage 1, as the planning stage, focuses on the attainment of multicultural knowledge and attitudes. This is a critical stage since all teachers were less acquainted and knowledgeable about the concept of multicultural education although they worked in an ethnically diverse school. The school principle indicated in the interview that the trainings on multicultural education or multicultural teaching and learning was greatly required since it was a new thing for the teachers. He further stated that from this point of view and observation, it's important to make teachers acquire positive attitudes towards students of various ethnicities and languages before the multicultural curriculum was developed. So, after introducing the research project to the stakeholders, one of the educational supervisors as the researcher organized the several workshops on multicultural education to teachers and the school principle. The community members such as parents and ethnic cultural experts were invited to the workshop, but they could not fully participate due to their farming obligation. In this stage, the teachers and the school principle also organized fieldtrips to three villages to gain knowledge about various ethnicities and locate the learning sources and the local cultural experts who were later invited as guest speakers for the multicultural curriculum. Fieldtrips to the communities and interviewing community leaders and cultural experts created positive changes to teachers. For example, teacher A (pseudonym) mentioned that it was her firs time to visit the community even though she was in the school for a long while. She said the trip allows her to learn about the cultures of the community, know about the cultural learning resources, and get acquitted with ethnic cultural experts. She said, "I think I got knowledge and resource for doing multicultural teaching and learning in my class."

Stage 2, as the acting stage, emphasizes developing and implementing the multicultural curriculum. The major activities were as follows. A group of teachers with the support of the researcher examined cultural diversity in the school and the school curriculum, school practice, school policy, textbooks, student's ethic cultural backgrounds. Such examination disclosed that the school did not include ethnic contents in the school curriculum but allowed ethic students perform cultural dances occasionally during special days such as new year. The examination lead to the teachers' decision in

integrating ethic contents into four core subjects for grade 4th -6th including Thai language, social study, occupations and technology, and arts, and followed by designing lesson plans, teaching strategies, learning sources, and evaluation plans. However, the observations indicate that some teachers understood the process of the development of a multicultural curriculum while some of them faced difficulties in grapping multicultural concepts or having a clear picture of multicultural curriculum. Teacher C (pseudonym) revealed that "the process should start from the analysis of the existing school curriculum, identify the indicators which are related to multicultural teaching and learning, designing and organizing of activities that allow students to get involved, and assessing students' learning." Then, the teachers implemented the multicultural curriculum for four months with ongoing different supports from the educational supervision, the school principle, parents, the cultural experts.

Stage 3, as the observing stage, underlines the observation of teaching and learning activities during the four months of the multicultural curriculum implementation. The observation conducted by the supervisor team including the school principle, the teachers, and the educational supervisors. But it turned out that the educational supervisor who was a researcher mainly conducted observations in the classroom and provided feedbacks and comments to teachers on the basis of observed data. The teachers could not conduct observation as planed due to other non-teaching daily obligations.

Stage 4, as the reflecting stage, emphases on the review of research activities and intended output outcome. The reflection was carried out two levels. First, it was carried out by the end of each major stage (i.e., Plan, Act, Observe, Reflect) of the research procedure mainly with the teachers and the school principal to locate expected outputs and encountered difficulties and reorganized the plan for the succeeding stage. The reflection was conducted in the form of group discussion where the researcher guided the discussion and acted as the mediator. The interviews of all teachers indicated that ongoing reflection sessions allowed them to reflect their concerns and obtained guidance or needed assistances from other teachers or the educational supervisors. Second, the reflection was conducted after all activities in the plan, act, and observe stages were carried out. This reflection was conducted to measure overall pictures of the project.

Discussions

This study aimed to create the educational supervision model that advocates the development and implementation of multicultural teaching and curriculum in a culturally diverse school. The model was formed after completing the research activities based on the framework of participatory action research. The study found that the educational supervision model for establishing

the multicultural teaching included supervisors, participants, and supervision process. This study sheds lights on another important conduit to extend the likelihood of the multicultural teaching that allows ethnic minority students to learn both their own ethnic content and other ethnic contents. Being taught to culturally and socially learn and appreciate about themselves and others who are ethnically different would otherwise less possible or impossible in the school setting that is highly dominated by the mainstream Thai culture. The educational supervision is considered as a substantial approach to create educational and cultural equity in school. The discussion on identified components of the educational supervision model is as follows.

Supervisors in this study play different key roles. These include: the school principal works toward school policies that sanctions the undertakings of multicultural teaching and curriculum, teachers develop and implement multicultural curriculum; and educational supervisors pledge, empower, support, and guide teachers and other stakeholders in the project. This joint effort of teachers, the administrative personnel, and the educational supervisors increases the likelihood of the development of multicultural teaching. This form of exertion can be used in enhancing educational quality (Office of the Basic Education Commission, 2015). Participant with commitment was another factor that leads to the manifestation of multicultural teaching (Sanrattana et al., 2018). The participants such as ethnic cultural experts and parents often have less roles or involvements in teaching or in school. But this study indicates that developing and implementing of cultural teaching is less realistic if contributions from them is unattainable since the teachers don't belong to the ethnic groups that they draw the contents from. The teachers also neither speak languages of their ethnic students nor have adequate knowledge and experiences about ethnic groups they teach about or talk about in their class. These stakeholders—ethnic cultural experts, community leaders, and ethnic parents—have knowledge and understanding about the background of cultures, traditions, ways of living, history, and also the folk tales of their community and nearby areas. states that a school highly needs supports and collaboration from stakeholders in providing education to diverse learners and nurturing them to accept and appreciate cultural differences in ethnicity, religion, languages, and cultures.

The supervision process is the last component that is also as vital as the first two components. The integration or teachings of ethnic contents depends on the supervision process where the supervisors observed, provided feedbacks, reflected, and offered supports to the teachers and the rest of stakeholders. Also, the supervision process allows the stakeholders to have power in decision making throughout the research activities and give an opportunity for everyone to express their opinions.

Supervision process consists of five stages. The first stage focuses on obtaining multicultural knowledge and skills and learning about the communities. Learning and having accurate information and understanding is crucial to the success in creating and implementing multicultural curriculum. Then following stage is to develop and implement multicultural curriculum. The result of the study found that the development of the curriculum needs to be harmonized with the ways of life of the learners so that it could be meaningful. This complies to the National Education Act of B.E. 2542 (1999) and Amendments (Second National Education Act of B.E. 2545 (2002), and the National Education Act (No.3) B.E. 2553 (2010), Section 27 which states that the Basic Education Institutions shall be responsible for prescribing curricular substance relating to the needs of the community and the society, local wisdom. To successfully implement the multicultural curriculum in the classrooms, teachers needs to use learning activities that allows the students to be active and have high expectation (Office of the National Education Commission, 2010), as Nieto (2007) (cited in Nawarat, 2018) validates that multicultural education aiming to reduce inequality and discrimination against races in the school and classroom is conceivable if teacher gives hold high expectation of every student and realizes that every student is talented and can be successful. Observation is the third stage of supervision process. This state underlines observations on especially teaching activities during the curriculum implementation. The review of the action is the last stage of the supervision process. This stage highlights reviewing completed activities to better plan for subsequence activities and to summarize outputs of the whole research project. This stage allows all participants to express their opinions and learn about ideas of the others through group discussion and reflection. Allowing the teachers to have self-reflection about what they do, how they do, why they do and accompanied by observation data and feedback from other teachers is the way to improve quality of teaching (Glickman et al., 1995).

Conclusion

This study focused on the model of the educational supervision that advocates the development and implementation of multicultural teaching. The study employed participatory action research where various stakeholders (i.e., school principle, teacher, ethnic culture expert, and parent) involved in the research project. The study revealed that the educational supervision model has three features. The first component of the model is supervisor which includes the school principle, teachers, and educational supervisors. The second component is participation of stakeholders including parents, ethnic culture experts, and school committees. The last component is supervision process in which the school supervisor as the researcher organizes and conducts activities with the stakeholders

that lead to the development and implementation of multicultural teaching and curriculum. The study indicates that the educational supervision can be exploited to promote multicultural education and practice in schools. It's important to acknowledge that the educational supervision can be as an advocacy tool for a multicultural education when it involves participation, commitment, and engagement of stakeholders. Yet, the stakeholders can fully and meaningfully participate in the development and implementation of multicultural education unless they are empowered.

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