

# The Cross-Cultural Leadership Strategy of School Administrators under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1

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## Abstract

The objective of this survey research is to study and compare the cross-cultural leadership of school administrators under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1 classified according to the academic standing, special classroom in foreign language, and school size. The sample population consisted of 357 teachers working in schools under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1 during the 2022 academic year. The research instrument was a five-rating scale questionnaire. The test of accuracy found an index of item objective congruence (IOC) between 0.60-1.00 and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.969. The statistics used in the data analysis were frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The researcher also employed a t-test technique and the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) technique in addition to Scheffe's multiple comparison method. The results were that the cross-cultural leadership of school administrators under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1 had an overall high-level average. When the five aspects were considered, it showed as follows: multicultural acceptance, cultural communication, equity and ethics, positive power, and organizational relationship. In addition, the teachers who differed in academic standing and school size exhibited overall differences in their opinions towards the cross-cultural leadership of school administrators at a statistical significance level of .05. However, there were no differences in the opinions of teachers who differed in special classroom in foreign language.

**Keywords:** Cross-cultural leadership, Educational administration, School administrator, Leadership, Cross-culture

## Introduction

The world has become a more connected and interdependent place because of globalization and social changes. Nowadays connecting with people on the other side of the world is much easier than it was in the past. People from different countries, languages, ethnicities, cultural attitudes and other aspects must understand one another and express themselves to others effectively in order to live and work together (Akarachantachote, 2018). The Strategy for Human Capital Development and Strengthening in The National Strategy (2018-2037) aims to develop Thai people of all ages in a multidimensional manner to become good, skillful, and quality citizens. Transforming social values and culture of Thai people are one of the key development guidelines. Thai people are encouraged to unite in instilling desirable values and culture through fostering values and culture within communities; promoting positive values and culture in the business sector; and creating values and culture via the mass media. Finally, Thailand will have an integratedly managed public sector that adheres to the National Strategy as an end goal and can effectively support and promote developments at all levels, issues, missions, and areas (Strategic Transformation Office, 2018).

According to The National Strategy (2018-2037), the Ministry of Education (2021) announced a budget policy regarding the recruitment of native English-speaking teachers for all schools in 2022. This policy is expected to improve Thai students' proficiency in English. All departments of the Ministry of Education have to plan and prepare a budget for having native English-speaking teachers in their schools.

The Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1 has determined the strategy for human development and competitiveness enhancement. The purpose of the Educational Service Area Office is to improve students' learning efficiency and develop competencies of learners and equip them with 21st century skills. Learning foreign languages is important for those competencies and skills. Each school has to develop its curriculum and adjust to different conditions to become a world class standard school. In view of the above, it is important to recruit foreign teachers.

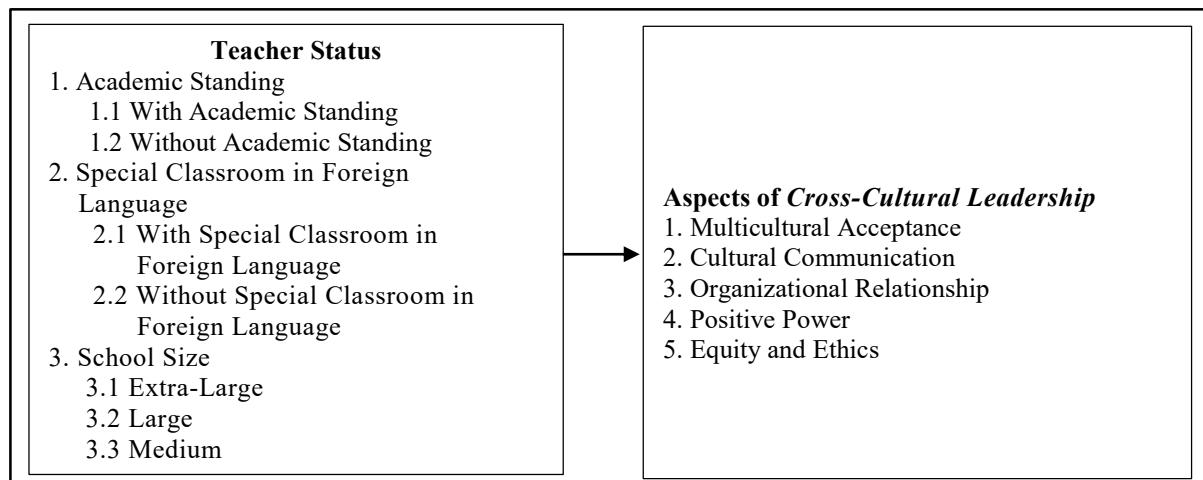
Although many schools in The Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1 are ready to recruit native English-speaking teachers, already hired foreign teachers encounter working problems (Chaiyasaeng & Sudrung, 2019). A lot of foreign teachers usually give up teaching because of cultural differences and misunderstanding. This causes students' learning to be discontinued and this interrupts educational development. Consequently, school administrators need cross-cultural leadership which is the main concept of understanding people who differ in cultures, nations, languages, cultural attitudes, religions, and genders to manage foreign teachers efficiently and help both Thai and foreign teachers to work together in harmony to reach objectives of the organization (Petersen, 2019).

Cross-cultural leadership is the concept of understanding different people who work in an organization. This leadership style comprises of the ability to motivate and influence people's attitude and behavior to reach a common organizational goal. It is important for administrators to be open-minded to understand differences in other cultures (Hofstede, 2010). After reviewing various related concepts, theories and literature, five aspects were found. These five aspects include; multicultural acceptance, cultural communication, organizational relationship, positive power, and equity & ethics (Srikaew, 2020; Poopatanapong, 2019; Promta, 2019; Chinawong, 2019; Rinthaisong, 2018; Jantarakot et al., 2018; Mangklasiri, 2017; Petersen, 2019; Hofstede, 2010; Grisham & Walker, 2008). The cross-cultural leadership strategy of school administration should be implemented in the way that is beneficial and valuable to educational administration further on. School administrators, therefore, need to

possess cross-cultural leadership, which is the strategy for leaders in managing human resources that differ culturally, such as language, values and attitudes to understand differences, seek ways to work together, respond to environmental changes, and know how to adapt themselves. Cross-cultural leadership affects school administrations because it reduces the rate of foreign teacher resignations in schools. That ensures constant learning for students.

The main purpose of this study is to study and compare the cross-cultural leadership strategy of school administrators under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1 classified according to the academic standing, special classroom in foreign language, and school size. It would get ideas of how to develop the cross-cultural leadership of school administrators. This study could be a guide for developing effective cross-cultural leaders in educational institutions that aligns with the context of the schools under The Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1. In addition, this could be used as information for other Educational Service Area Offices to develop effective cross-cultural leadership in schools under their jurisdiction.

After synthesizing the aspects of cross-cultural leadership, there were five aspects which are as follows: multicultural acceptance, cultural communication, organizational relationship, positive power, and equity & ethics (Srikaew, 2020; Poopatanapong, 2019; Promta, 2019; Chinawong, 2019; Rinthaisong, 2018; Jantarakot et al., 2018; Mangklasiri, 2017; Petersen, 2019; Hofstede, 2010; Grisham & Walker, 2008). The diagram of the conceptual framework was presented below.



**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework

**1. Multicultural Acceptance** is the understanding of leaders towards various dimensions of culture. Leaders have a proper understanding of the culture of the organization and the culture of other nations. They avoid behaving inappropriately in a way that is detrimental to other cultures and are able to manage cultural diversity.

**2. Cultural Communication** is the communication process of leaders with individuals from different cultures, considering differences, constructive communication, and having appropriate communication channels.

**3. Organizational Relationship** is the process of open-mindedness, listening, attentiveness, and intentionality of leaders in creating relationships amidst cultural differences both inside and outside the organization including promoting knowledge, understanding, and acceptance of diversity. It also fosters cooperation in working together to achieve the goals.

**4. Positive Power** is the behavior of leaders who have influence over others in directing individuals to follow and use democratic principles to assign tasks that are appropriate without cultural bias.

**5. Equity and Ethics** is the acceptance in working equally for both Thai and foreign people. This takes into account the relationship between individuals and the freedom to work, creating an awareness of ethics, adhering to the principle of harmony, and having a sense of justice, compassion, and self-sacrifice.

### Research Objectives

1. To study the level of the cross-cultural leadership strategy of school administrators under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1.
2. To compare teachers' opinion towards cross-cultural leadership of school administrators under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1 classified according to the academic standing, special classroom in foreign language, and school size.

## Methodology

The purpose of this part is to illustrate the research methodology of this study. The study's method and process of data collection are also represented in this part. This research was quantitative. The objective of this research is to study and compare the cross-cultural leadership of school administrators under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1 classified by academic standing, special classroom in foreign language, and school size.

### Population

The population comprised 5,000 teachers working in schools under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1 during the 2022 academic year.

### Sample

The sample of this research consists of 357 teachers. The number of sampled respondents was determined by using the table of Cohen et al. (2011) at the statistical significance level of .05 (with the level of accuracy of 95 percent).

### Sampling Method

The sample was selected through the technique of proportional stratified random sampling used to obtain 3 levels of stratification according to school sizes; extra-large, large, and medium. After that, the technique of simple random sampling was used to determine the proportion of sampled respondents in 6 groups of schools.

### Research Instrument

The research instrument used is a five-rating scale questionnaire with 47 items. The first part was about the respondents' background and the second part was about the cross-cultural leadership of school administrators. The test of accuracy found an index of item objective congruence (IOC) between 0.60-1.00 and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.969. The questionnaire used was also presented to advisors for approval prior to the completion of the questionnaire.

### Data Collection

The questionnaire used was transferred to Google Form, after which generated QR code was sent together with a letter of request for data collection via registered mails to 18 schools within the sample group. The researchers received 329 responses via Google Form, which accounted for 92.16% of all questionnaires. Then, the questionnaires received were checked for completeness prior to its analysis and interpretation.

### Data Analysis Methods

The statistical methods used in the data analysis were frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The techniques of t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) in addition to Scheffe's multiple comparison method were also employed. The research used items in the aspect at the least levels to suggest cross cultural leadership strategies that school administrators should develop.

## Results

1. The level of cross-cultural leadership of school administrators under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1 is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1** The level of cross-cultural leadership of school administrators

Aspect	Mean	SD	Level
1. Multicultural Acceptance	4.28	0.82	High
2. Cultural Communication	4.18	0.87	High
3. Organizational Relationship	4.14	0.89	High
4. Positive Power	4.14	0.91	High
5. Equity and Ethics	4.16	0.91	High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.17</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>High</b>

**Note.** The criterion of Punthai (2016)

Table 1 illustrates the information of level of cross-cultural leadership of school administrators under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1 using mean and standard deviation. The overall cross-cultural leadership average was at 4.17 indicating high level according to the illustration above. Multicultural acceptance had the highest average (4.28) followed by cultural communication (4.18), equity and ethics (4.16), positive power (4.14) and organizational relationship (4.14) respectively.

2. The results of comparing teachers' opinion towards cross-cultural leadership of school administrators under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1 classified according to the academic standing, special classroom in foreign language, and school size are summarized in Table 2-4.

**Table 2** The results of comparing teachers' opinion towards cross-cultural leadership of school administrators classified by academic standing

Aspect	With		Without		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Academic Standing Mean	SD	Academic Standing Mean	SD		
1. Multicultural Acceptance	4.05	0.73	4.36	0.86	-3.334*	0.001
2. Cultural Communication	3.97	0.76	4.31	0.91	-3.643*	0.000
3. Organizational Relationship	3.88	0.81	4.32	0.89	-4.509*	0.000
4. Positive Power	3.90	0.82	4.30	0.93	-4.033*	0.000
5. Equity and Ethics	3.91	0.85	4.32	0.92	-3.984*	0.000
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.94</b>	<b>0.77</b>	<b>4.32</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>-3.970*</b>	<b>0.000</b>

**Note.** \**p* < .05

Table 2 illustrates that teachers who differ in academic standing exhibited overall differences in their opinion towards cross-cultural leadership of school administrators under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1 at the statistical significance level of .05.

**Table 3** The results of comparing teachers' opinion towards cross-cultural leadership of school administrators classified by special classroom in foreign language

Aspect	With Special Classroom		Without Special Classroom		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1. Multicultural Acceptance	4.21	0.85	4.30	0.73	-0.942	0.348
2. Cultural Communication	4.16	0.90	4.23	0.79	-0.632	0.528
3. Organizational Relationship	4.12	0.90	4.22	0.84	-0.926	0.355
4. Positive Power	4.10	0.94	4.26	0.82	-1.448	0.148
5. Equity and Ethics	4.12	0.94	4.25	0.83	-1.121	0.263
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>-1.029</b>	<b>0.304</b>

**Note.** \**p* < .05

Table 3 illustrates that teachers who differ in special classroom in foreign language exhibited no overall differences and in each of their opinion towards cross-cultural leadership of school administrators under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1.

**Table 4** The results of comparing teachers' opinion towards cross-cultural leadership of school administrators classified by school size

Aspect	Extra Large		Large		Medium		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1. Multicultural Acceptance	4.28	0.85	4.03	0.85	4.21	0.55	1.845	0.160
2. Cultural Communication	4.22	0.90	3.93	0.90	4.20	0.55	2.382	0.094
3. Organizational Relationship	4.22	0.90	3.74	0.90	4.17	0.59	6.147*	0.002
4. Positive Power	4.19	0.95	3.87	0.89	4.21	0.58	2.675	0.070
5. Equity and Ethics	4.21	0.95	3.90	0.93	4.17	0.54	2.387	0.094
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.22</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>3.89</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>4.19</b>	<b>0.55</b>	<b>3.043*</b>	<b>0.049</b>

**Note.** \**p* < .05

Table 4 illustrates that teachers who differ in school size exhibited differences at a statistical significance level of .05 overall and in regard to the organizational relationship of their opinion towards cross-cultural leadership of school administrators under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1.

After using Scheffe's multiple comparison method, the result showed that teachers working in extra-large school had their opinion towards cross-cultural leadership at higher average level as compared to teachers in medium-sized schools. No differences were found in other aspects.

## Discussions

The level of the cross-cultural leadership strategy of school administrators under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1 overall and in each aspect was at a high level. Multicultural acceptance had the highest average followed by cultural communication, equity and ethics, positive power, and organizational relationship respectively. This could be because of the degree of enforcement of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand (Office of the Council of State, 2017). People who differ in race, origin, language, religious belief, disability, sex, age, physical or health condition, personal status, economic or social standing or education must not be unjustly discriminated. Moreover, according to Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is important for school administrators to be aware of the dignity and worth of all persons (United Nations, 1948). As a result, school administrators under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1 had efforts to communicate with foreign teachers in their schools to achieve goals. Obviously, cross-cultural leadership is the main concept applied to manage foreign teachers efficiently. This is consistent with Sangsawang (2015) stating that the level of cross-cultural leadership applied by private school administrators at the primary level in the Bangkok area is at a high level. Similar to Jantarakot et al. (2018) stating that cross-cultural leadership of world-class standard schools in the Secondary Educational Service Area 25 is at a high level.

Comparing teacher's opinion towards cross-cultural leadership of school administrators classified by academic standing, special classroom in foreign language, and school size is presented as follows:

1. Teachers who differ in academic standing exhibited concomitant differences in their opinions towards cross-cultural leadership of school administrators overall and for all aspects at a statistical significance level of .05. This could be because the teachers with academic standing normally had more working experience. Those teachers could easily realize and understand the characteristics of school administrations much clearly. On the other hand, teachers without academic standing might have less experience dealing with school administration. This was consistent with Pho-On (2015) stating that after comparing leadership of school administrators perceived by administrators and teachers under Singburi primary educational service area office divided by academic standing, there were differences at a significance level of .05.

2. Teachers who differ in special classroom in language did not evince concomitant differences in their opinion towards cross-cultural leadership of school administrators overall and for all aspects. This could be because the Ministry of Education and the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1 requires schools to recruit foreign teachers to develop students' English skills. Whether schools provided special classroom in language or not, they must comply with the policy. This was consistent with Mangklasiri (2017) stating that the outcome of comparing multicultural leadership of school administrators under secondary educational service area office 1 found that there are no differences in the special classroom aspect.

3. Teachers who work in schools with differences in sizes exhibited concomitant differences in their opinion towards the cross-cultural leadership of school administrators overall and in the aspect of organizational relationship at a statistical significance level of .05. This could be because extra-large schools are fully equipped with educational resources such as, human resources, materials, money and management. The extra-large schools were in readiness for cross-cultural leadership. At the same time, medium schools were prominent in organizational relationship because the school administrators were close to the teachers.

Nevertheless, large schools had problems with lack of educational resources and gap between the school administrators and teachers. This was consistent with Promlut (2018) stating that the teachers who work in schools of different sizes exhibited concomitant differences in their opinions of the roles played by administrators overall and in all aspects at a statistical significance level of .05. Similar to Buabang & Suebor (2022) stating that the comparative analysis of School Administrative Innovation in a multicultural society classified by school size and location of Prachuapkhirikhan Primary Educational Service Area Office 1 showed a statistically significant difference at 0.05 level.

## Conclusion and suggestions

### Conclusion

Overall, and in all aspects, the level of cross-cultural leadership of school administrators under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1 is at a high level.

The results of comparing teacher's opinion towards cross-cultural leadership of school administrators under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Bangkok 1 are summarized as follows:

1. Teachers who differ in academic standing exhibited concomitant differences in their opinion towards cross-cultural leadership of school administrators overall and in all aspects at a statistical significance level of .05.
2. Teachers who differ in special classroom in language did not evince concomitant differences in their opinions towards cross-cultural leadership of school administrators overall and in all aspects.
3. Teachers who work in schools with differences in sizes exhibited concomitant differences in their opinions towards cross-cultural leadership of school administrators overall and in the aspect of organizational relationship at a statistical significance level of .05.

### Recommendations

Based on the finding to develop educational administration strategy, the school administrators should promote teamwork among people working in a cultural diversity environment. They should encourage cooperative learning as well. According to the aspect of positive power, school administrators should follow the principles of Good Governance, as it is widely trusted by both Thai and foreigner teachers. Furthermore, school administrators should characterize and develop organizational culture to determine the direction of schools. School administrators should accept the principle of democracy and be open-minded.

Regarding future research recommendation, the researchers would recommend to future research to study into the factors of developing Thai and foreign language proficiency and using languages to illustrate the characteristics of school administrators. In addition, future research should aim to study other factors that affect foreign teachers' needs.

## New knowledge and the effects on society and communities

To understand the differences of leadership in each educational administration culture, cross-cultural leadership is the main characteristic of school administrators to manage foreign teachers in schools. School administrators have to be aware of diversity and it is impact on enriching people's lives as individuals. There are five elements of cross-cultural leadership which are as follows: multicultural acceptance, cultural communication, organizational relationship, positive power and equity & ethics.

### 1. Multicultural Acceptance

School administrators should be able to manage cultural diversity and understand and accept diverse cultural dimensions, culture of organizations and other countries properly. Moreover, they should avoid inappropriate behavior that conflicts with other cultures.

### 2. Cultural Communication

The communication process between school administrators and individuals with different cultures must involve learning about each other, considering differences, communicating creatively, and having appropriate communication channels.

### 3. Organizational Relationship

School administrators should be open-minded about listening to others' opinions and having proactive attitude towards creating harmony among cultural diversity within and outside the organization. They have to promote learning, understanding, and acceptance of diverse cultures, as well as collaboration in achieving goals together.

### 4. Positive Power

School administrators need to understand leadership behavioral patterns that have influence over others to convict them of following directions. Furthermore, school administrators have to use democratic principles to assign tasks appropriately. They should be able to observe and analyze work efficiently. It is important to avoid cultural biases.

### 5. Equity and Ethics

School administrators accept the importance of progress in work, according to the organizational culture of both Thai and foreign personnel, with consideration for interpersonal relationships and freedom in work, awareness of ethics, adherence to the principles of mutual benefit, justice, kindness, and sacrifice.

Therefore, School administrators must have the ability to lead across cultures, which is a process of thought for leaders in managing human resources that are diverse in terms of culture, such as language, values, attitudes, and ways of thinking. They need to understand differences and plan the ways to work together, by using knowledge, skills and experience. It is important to adjust to the uncertain world.



**Figure 2** The Elements of Cross-Cultural Leadership

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