

## MULTICULTURAL LEADERSHIP FOR GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPALS IN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS IN BANGKOK

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**Abstract:** The objectives of this research are 1) to ascertain the profiles of multicultural leadership for global citizenship for principals in international schools in Bangkok 2) to find out the gap between the actual practices and the ideal expectations of principals concerning multicultural leadership for global citizenship in international schools in Bangkok 3) to develop a strategic plan to enhance the multicultural leadership for global citizenship of principals in international schools in Bangkok. A questionnaire constructed by the researcher based on Lynch's (1989) educational goals in multicultural education for a global society was used. From the population of 83 principals, simple random sampling was conducted, and questionnaires were sent to 42 principals (50% of the population). 40 questionnaires were returned and used for data analysis. The major findings were as follows: 1) attitudes and values were rated to be the highest in all three dimensions, followed by skills, and then knowledge in the actual practices as well as ideal expectations of multicultural leadership for global citizenship of principals 2) significant gaps were found between the actual practices and ideal expectations of multicultural leadership for global citizenship in all three dimensions, namely knowledge, (-4.53\*\*), skills (-6.10\*\*), and attitudes and values (-5.24\*\*), the highest being the dimension of skills. 3) gender affects multicultural leadership for global citizenship of principals in some sub-dimensions of attitudes and values. Women rated sub-dimensions such as encouraging abolition of environmental pollution and facilitating ability to judge history of one's own country within the context of world history significantly higher than men. 4) ethnic background affects multicultural leadership for global citizenship of principals in some sub-dimensions of skills and knowledge. Caucasian principals ranked significantly higher than Oriental principals in skills such as encouraging communication, problem-solving and conflict resolution. Oriental principals ranked significantly higher than Caucasian principals in cultivating an awareness of economic and power motivations in human relationships. Caucasian principals ranked significantly higher than Indian principals in encouraging understanding of differential impact of technology on people and biosphere. The findings along with extensive documentary research were integrated and developed into a strategic plan, verified by experts, and proposed to principals, administrators and other educators in various educational

settings to further enhance their multicultural leadership for global citizenship.

### **Rationale**

The world is becoming a global village as boundaries and barriers disappear and countries become increasingly interdependent upon one another. Societies are becoming more multicultural, creating numerous challenges for today's leadership. Globalization of the world can be seen clearly in the field of education. Technological advances such as the internet and satellite education allow educators and learners to obtain information in myriad forms from all over the world.

As globalization continues to permeate our world, leaders must be able to provide teachers and staff with multicultural leadership that is responsive to their different needs, origins and backgrounds. According to Adler (2002), the competencies required for successful leadership in a multicultural context include cultural sensitivity, the ability to foster relationships, communication, synergistic problem solving skills, and the ability to negotiate across cultures. Leaders and educators must develop multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills in order to respond to both the problems and opportunities that arise from domestic demographic changes and globalization (Connerley and Pedersen, 2005).

In addition, due to the political, economic, environmental, natural and social disasters our world is facing, multicultural leadership needs to be exercised with a global approach. In order to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, multicultural leadership should be working towards producing effective global citizens. Lynch (1989) calls for educators to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes and values concerning multicultural education in a global society. Oxfam (2006) defines global citizens as those people with flexibility, creativity, and proactive approaches to challenges. They need to possess the skills of problem-solving, decision-making, critical-thinking, communicating, and working in teams. Andrezejewski (1999) defines global citizenship as the "knowledge and skills for social and environmental justice" (p. 3-9).

As stated by the Ministry of Education, one of the goals of education reform in Thailand is "to enhance the knowledge of the Thai people, who will be endowed with the basic qualifications of global citizenship" (Office of the Educational Council, 2003). In this light, the efforts of educational leadership in Thailand should be directed towards developing attitudes of global citizenship, or producing global citizens. In Thailand's case, the increasing economic cooperation between nations in various regions and global communication facilitated by developments in information technology have nurtured the growth of international education services, as explained by Dr. Mathana Santiwat, the President of the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions of Thailand

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