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Shifting from managerial implementor to culturally responsive leadership: Rethinking the framework for progressive educational leadership in Thailand

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Article Info

Abstract

The present article aimed to examine the meanings of Culturally Responsive Leadership and how Culturally Responsive Leadership was formulated to support educational leadership theories in Thailand. Two research questions were demonstrated as follows: (1) what does Culturally Responsive Leadership mean? and (2) how is Culturally Responsive Leadership formulated to support educational leadership theories? Documentary studies as qualitative analysis was employed to collect data from printed texts, research works and journals available in online database, which were more than 100 cases. The exclusion criterias included the documents with only abstracts and must be studies conducted in Thai and English that focused the unit of analysis in Thailand and Thai contexts. The research results indicated that educational leadership theories could be categorized into three approaches; Inclusive Leadership, Community and Place-Conscious Leadership, and Culturally Responsive Leadership. Each of three constructs significantly interrelated and overlapped to some extent in terms of concepts, perspectives and actions with one another. The results then were conceptualized based on theoretical concepts from critical curriculum literature as a framework for categorizing Culturally Responsive Leadership that were formulated to support the construction of educational leadership theories. Culturally Responsive Leadership as part of broader reconceptualist movements internationally in the field of critical curriculum leadership aims to construct socially just curriculum as well as providing implications for school principals to develop innovative, democratic and justice perspectives and practices in schools in the midst of Thailand's latest efforts for democratic educational reform.

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Introduction

Over the past decade, education reforms that emphasized decentralization, area-based education, school-based management and locally relevant curriculum have greatly influenced the mindsets of school principals and teachers in Thailand (Office of Education Council, 2016). Shifting from the managerial and politics-driven charateristics, the educational leadership of school principals has been promoted as a normative tradition within the Thai educational system. In this light, the image of technocratic leader perpetuating conservative ideals and rejecting to embrace innovative changes began to be challenged by the shifting of progressive leadership frameworks amidst the verge of social transformation (Hallinger & Lee, 2011; Lao, 2020). Concurrently, the socio-cultural, ideological and political contexts, transnational flows of capitals and media configurations and its impacts upon the modernization as well as diverse cultural capitals of students are prominent, leading to the question as to what suitable leadership theory should be, and how such theory would lead to a concrete educational leadership, especially for school principals in Thailand (Hallinger & Lee, 2014).

Answering such questions is an issue that has challenged the contemporary status of educational leadership and administration. Since the 1990s, leadership theory has been presented with more diverse perspectives, and the substance of theory has shifted away from being dominantly instrumental management to process-oriented leadership. As a result, new language in educational leadership seeks to understand and respect culturally diverse capitals, promote collaborations between school and community, and support schools to be socially just and culturally responsive institutions (Buasuwan, 2007; Kulophas & Hallinger, 2021). The reconceptualization of educational leadership theory has given rise to innovative approaches in educational leadership such as transformative leadership, community-based leadership and social justice leadership (Furman, 2012; Lopez, 2016; Ylimaki, 2012).

The utilization of educational leadership theory that best responds to situational contexts of schools remains a contentious challenge for school principals. Although new languages of educational leadership have been presented in various contexts, for example, in the schools located in highland and rural areas in the North of Thailand, where diversities of geography, ethnicity, language, culture and social practices exist, it is imperative for school principals to demonstrate the leadership reflecting his or her recognition of diverse community contexts. In this regard, they are expected to demonstrate

leadership that is linguistically and socio-culturally responsive and to gain deeper understanding of the community, and to collaborate with teachers to support students' diverse backgrounds for academic achievement to build strong relationships between school and community. In other words, educational leadership theory that is responsive to diverse community funds of knowledge, henceforth referred to as *Culturally Responsive Leadership* (CRL), is therefore an innovative approach that embraces the diversity of learners, and emphasizes the collaboration with communities and stakeholders to cultivate learners as citizens, whose backgrounds are different regarding race, class, gender, ethnicity, language, culture and political orientations, to be equally successful in education (Banks, 2004; Johnson, 2014)

Therefore, the authors would like to present innovative perspectives on school principals' roles in building school-community partnerships in connection with CRL and critical curriculum theory. The conceptual framework of multicultural education in schooling proposed by Banks (1997; 2004) will be employed to conceptualize theoretical discussion and construct implications for rethinking the framework for progressive educational leadership in Thailand. By repositioning educational leadership and administration field with curriculum theory in contemporary discussion, this construct has been developed into the field of critical curriculum leadership (Dugan et al., 2012; Ylimaki, 2012). This justice-oriented curriculum leadership aims to develop socially just curriculum as well as examine curriculum leadership in the midst of Thailand's educational reform mandates, particularly in response to the aspirations of the Educational Innovation Area Act (EIAA) 2019, all of which seem to enhance a particular set of progressive ideologies in juxtaposed with neoconservatives/neoliberal ideals. By reviewing empirical studies from selected ducuments, the authors aimed to examine the meanings of CRL and how CRL was formulated to support educational leadership theories in Thailand. The cases of educational leadership would be discussed based on the following questions: (1) what does CRL mean? and (2) how is CRL formulated to support educational leadership theories?

Literature Review

In the past two decades, Thailand has given utmost importance to educational provision with community participation, as inscribed in the National Education Act (NEA) in 1999 and the amendment in 2002. Equally significant is the current situation, which is the transitional

period after the government announced the National Education Plan 2017–2036, the latest NEA 2019, and the EIAA 2019, emphasizing the decentralization and empowerment for schools, so they have freedom in educational decision-making on their own. School and community are allowed to create curriculum that is suitable for the locality while still being in line with the national basic education curriculum. Also, school and community can serve as experimental areas for new educational innovations according to the EIAA 2019 guidelines for creating educational innovation areas (Jatuporn, 2022).

Policy-related documents suggested that schools in all educational service areas must take into account the cultural capitals of the community in that area. That can be achieved when schools are motivated to build active relationships with communities. This approach is in line with the NEA and the National Education Plan, that establishes strategies for building school-community partnerships. Furthermore, these policy documents indicated the "All for education" approach, so that every sector can participate in educational provision with quality (Poonsub, 2020). The NEA has also clearly defined the roles of stakeholders in educational provision; for example: (1) parents are expected to cooperate with schools and teachers to develop students and support with resources and learning activities of students; (2) The private sector and the media are expected to support with educational resources, jointly organize education and present examples of successful educational provision; and (3) local communities are advised to support with investment in education and cooperate with schools in taking preventive measures and helping students with their various problems. It can be stated that school principals, therefore, play instrumental roles in educational leadership by enhancing school-community partnerships and community revitalization.

Other significant school principals' role is to ensure the mutual participation of school board committees and community representatives. However, previous literatures indicated that there was inadequate participation from local representatives when it came to deliberating school policies and initatives with teachers and school principals. They were occasionally invited to participate in school events. In other words, school board committees had less involvement in supporting works related to educational quality assurance and resource mobilization to assist the disadvantaged and students with special needs. They also had less involvement in preparing of reports, supervising and monitoring the use of school budget and in voicing the needs for teachers and students as well as having little

involvement in the execution of schools' annual operational plan. From the above example, developing schools through the participation of school board committees, mostly representatives of community members, remains to be a challenging mission for school principals to build just, active and democratic community participation (Gamage & Sooksomchitra, 2004; Office of Education Council, 2016)

As aforementioned, primary and secondary schools in Thailand adopt and operate a similar approach to establishing school-community partnerships. Such approach consists of steps as follows: (1) providing academic services to community and allowing the community to use schools' facilities and learning resources; (2) seeking for cooperation or mobilizing community funds of knowledge by inviting knowledgable people to be guest speakers and organizing students' social service activities in conjunction with local organizations; (3) communicating with community in regards to school activities through various means, such as parent meetings, newsletters, community radio announcements, websites, and students' home visits; (4) working with school board committees and community representatives to jointly formulate policies, practices or school development plans catering to the needs of community; and (5) encouraging students, teachers and school staff to take part in community-based activities such as social services and cultural revitalization (Pimmas, 2018; Poonsub, 2020).

At practical levels, school principals have built the relationships between school and community; the methods adopted are closely linked with the concept of education for cultural diversity. For example, school newsletters were dispatched in local dialects along with Thai language to parents or some community members who could not read Thai. Teachers who can communicate with parents in the mother tongue used by parents or community members are assigned to visit or engage them through local dialects and Thai. Despite the lack of empirical evidence, it is the perspective of the authors, based on the informal conversations and personal communications, that most school principals are aware of the importance of building good relationships between school and community that are culturally responsive and contextually situated in the community, and that school principals themselves and teachers should develop appropriate conduct in accordance with the culture, and be cautious that no disrespectful acts are shown toward customs and practices of people in the community while they are visiting or participating in community activities.

Demonstration of understanding, honor and respect towards the ways of conduct, culture, language, religion and belief of the people in the community will boost the community's acceptance and trust in school, while reducing conflicts between school and community. However, what does not appear in previous and current literature about school-community partnerships is the shifting from the managerial implementor of state policy to CRL. In this regard, cultural diversity is an accepted norm of Thai socio-cultural and political authoritative bodies. The formal administrative distributions of Thailand embrace diversity, thus central, northern, northeastern and southern Thailand do not just demonstrate geographical nation-state boundary but also feature socio-cultural and ethnic identities demarcated by proximal states. The government policies of providing education for ethnic minorities, highland indigenous peoples and hill tribes were historically evidenced based on the assumption that they are minorities, being of a different culture, the ones who are still behind and do not belong to the state (Jory, 2000; Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2016).

Therefore, it is necessary that education be delivered to their communities. The purposes are not only to develop these people to be literate and effectively communicate with the government officials, but also to build loyalty to the main powerful institutions in Thailand; namely, nation (Thai), religion (Buddhism), and the monarchy. Such bases of thought and policies are, in fact, a form of internal colonialism and semi-colonization, which the ruling classes and government officials in the center (Bangkok) have used to forge "the others" in the periphery (regional provinces) within the nation aiming to win minorities' consent into the state constructed identity. This is no different from the way Western colonial regimes exercised their influences in colonial times on their own colonized nations (Leepreecha & Sakboon, 2021; Sunanta, 2013).

In this vein, the authors would like to argue that school principals are still the most significant instrumental actors in implementing the policies determined by the state and in transtating as well as recontextualizing them into locally situated practices. By doing so, school principals must have critical reflexivity of what they are doing and demonstrate a vision that adheres to the principle of educational equity and justice as well as for the sake of all students. Issues concerning equity and justice need to be deliberately addressed in a way to answer such questions as what kind of education is of most worth, for whom, how and why? (Furman, 2012; Lopez, 2016). By realization of their own positionality as

active agent of educational provision, the roles of school principals are gradually shifting from the managerial implementor to CRL. However, current research works indicate that the perspectives of school principals on school-community partnerships varies based on education and training backgrounds, race, class, gender, ethnicity as well as political and ideological orientations they hold (Marshall & Khalifa, 2018; Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017). Most view culturally responsive education as well as issues regarding multiculturalism as being strictly about culture, religion and ethnicity, which reflects a narrow and limited perspective on specific issues of culture, religion and ethnicity. Only a few have a broad view of multiculturalism; that multiculturalism is not limited to just culture, religion and ethnicity, but also linked to other aspects in regard to race, class, gender, ethnicity and identity constructions (Maitreephun, 2019; Sungtong & Maxcy, 2010).

Holding a perspective in which schools are the representatives of the state propagating the dominant ideologies, as well as a fixed perception of multiculturalism, may affect practitioners' beliefs and approaches to provide education that is both locally and socio-culturally responsive. In this light, it must be noted that if school principals hold a narrow view of issues regarding multiculturalism, the internalization of these issues will have significant impacts upon their leadership positionality as well as hinder them from providing education that can truly develop socially just curriculum for culturally diverse learners and build school-community partnership to be ultimately innovative, democratic and justice space (Ylimaki, 2012).

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative documentary analysis approach, utilizing a systematic review of extant literature. Data were sourced from peer-reviewed journals, research publications, and scholarly texts available in online repositories, specifically the Thai Online Journals (ThaiJo) and Thai Digital Collection (TDC). The data collection process involved a comprehensive examination of over 100 cases, which were treated as textual artifacts pertinent to the research topic. Selection criteria were predicated on the validity, reliability, and objectivity of the documents, as suggested guidelines for qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2002). The temporal scope encompassed the period from the inception of the first wave of educational reform, marked by the enactment of the NEA

in 1999, to the present day. The focus was on Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRL) and associated themes related to school-community relationship building. Exclusion criteria were applied to documents presenting only abstracts. The corpus was limited to studies conducted in Thai and English, with the unit of analysis specifically centered on Thailand and Thai contexts.

Content analysis was performed using a thematic approach, guided by two predetermined research questions. The analytical framework was grounded in Critical Curriculum Leadership theory, as conceptualized by Ylimaki (2012) for the development of educational leadership theories. Through a critical review of the selected documents, the authors engaged in a discursive analysis of educational leadership in Thailand, addressing the aforementioned research questions. This was followed by a theoretical analysis to elucidate the salient aspects of the research and provide a foundation for scholarly discourse. This methodology allowed for a rigorous examination of the evolution and current state of educational leadership in Thailand, with particular emphasis on CRL and its implications for school-community relationships.

Results

Based on textual documents analysis aforementioned, research results will be divided into two parts as follows: (1) the notions of Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRL); and (2) educational leadership theories in Thailand: from inclusive to culturally responsive leadership (CRL).

The Notions of Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRL)

Based on the conceptual framework of educational leadership theory that serves the state, school principals function as the state's ideological mechanism for the development of the state towards modernization. Such process was achieved through education in the schooling system. In the process, the marginalized people, mostly refered to as indigenous people, are therefore assimilated into the mainstream narrative of the state, directed by the nation-building discourse manifested in the form of formal schooling and public education. That is, the process of merging the marginalized, indigenous and ethnic minority people with the dominant Thais was executed by the nation-building policy aiming for the solidarity of the state. That unifying cherished sense was created by a national symbol, standard language, educational system, rules and regulations, including the

creation of various national institutions, especially schools, most often followed by a graduate diploma. This is the construction of a new civil society model of the modern nation-state that emerged in Europe and spread to other regions of the world (Banks, 1997). Schools and educational systems became state power technologies, creating a discourse on modernity and loyalty in the three major institutions of the state that students are compelled to follow. It is noted that the state constructs public perception about the marginalized, indigenous and ethnic minority groups through the education system in a way that is consistent with the essense of internal colonialism and semi-colonization that mimics the colonial system of the Western world to geopolity of the Thai state (Leepreecha & Sakboon, 2021).

Over half a century of education in the highland indigenous communities by the Thai state saw a considerable success in building collective consciousness and changing their ethnic identity. Similar fate is given to local communities and ethnic groups across the country. This was until people realized that there is a need for the restoration and conservation of identity and local wisdom, which is one of the domains thoroughly considered during the drafting of Thailand's constitution in 1997. The key events that followed were supplementary educational regulations, active agencies and others related to the process of civic movements that were different from the mainstream rhetoric in educational reform. Lessons can be learned from the initiatives taken by Chiang Mai Administrative Provincial Organization in organizing culturally responsive education by themselves, the emergence of Indigenous and Ethnic Monority Education Network, as well as other alternative education coalitions that have focused on teaching the mother tongue as part of the bilingual and multilingual curriculum in indigenous and ethnic community schools for nearly a decade.

By positing the educational leadership in Thailand into the global and international movements, the shifting from managerial implementor of the state to CRL as well as supporting theoretical constructs related to community capitals and cultural funds of knowledge (González, 2005), place and community-based education (Gruenewald & Smith, 2010) as well as the reflective roles of educational leader and school principal as policy initiator or instructional leader (Hallinger & Lee, 2014) and the current culturally responsive and socially just leadership (Lopez, 2016) have been conceptually proposed to support the leadership of school principals to demonstrate actions and praxis for school-community partnerships. That is, the desired school principals must have vision and expertise to administer school, and also need to understand socio-cultural,

historical, political and economic contexts of the community. School principals are expected to be able to mobilize resources and engage community members to participate in school development. In turn, school principals must seek approaches to get involved students and teachers in reconstituting community. This is evident in the case of rural small-sized schools located in community as both school and community have developed mutual relationship. For that reason, community members are likely to have expectations that school principals, teachers and school staff understand community funds of knowledge, as both school and community constitute an essential part of healthy civic institutions.

Recognizing and utilizing CRL with the efforts to build school-community partnerships is crucial for school principals in culturally diverse areas. In this light, Maitreephun (2019) studied the CRL based on the perceptions of faculty members teaching in the educational administration program in the three southernmost provinces. The findings revealed that essential attributions of school principals with CRL were to understand community funds of knowledge, collaborate with teachers by empowering diverse students for academic achievement, and develop mutual partnerships between school and community. All three dimensions were interconnected and influenced one another.

As aforementioned, CRL places importance on the role of school principals to build partnerships with teachers, parents and the community, develop schools and promote students' achievement. Many current literatures have concluded that school principals working in highland and rural areas in the northern provinces as well as the three southernmost provinces should acquire knowledge about multicultural education, community funds of knowledge and be conscious of cultural diversity in terms of language, ethnicity, identity, religious beliefs, and local history (Maitreephun, 2019; Manokarn, 2017; Pornwiang, 2015; Sungtong & Maxcy, 2010). School principals are advised to conduct informal meetings with the leaders of local organizations, community and spiritual leaders to introduce themselves and learn about the culture which is different and unique in the context of the community. That will enable school principals to conduct themselves in accordance with and suitable for diverse cultural capitals of the community. Furthermore, school principals should learn local dialects to communicate more effectively with parents and community members, which may also reduce conflicts between school and community. Finally, school principals who embrace CRL should encourage school and community to accept each other, by developing teachers and school staff to understand students' cultural capitals, cultural sensitivity, and cultural diversity concept, and by providing curriculum, instruction and evaluation that takes into account diverse differences of students in the community.

Educational Leadership Theories in Thailand: from Inclusive to Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRL)

The notion of school principals' roles in building school-community partnerships and culturally responsive education is conceptualized based on the understanding of innovative concepts in educational leadership theory. While educational leadership literature at national level focuses on managerial and instrumental rationality of school principals to be cognizant of local contexts and develop relationships between school-community, current international literature discusses more indepth perspectives implying that theoretical concepts remain essential if school principals' roles in constituting school-community partnerships are to be enhanced. The school-community partnerships should be constructed based on CRL, which can be categorized into three perspectives as follows.

1. *Inclusive Leadership* is a concept rooted in liberal education tradition, which focuses on supporting and welcoming students with diversity in all dimensions to learn in classroom, school and community. However, it must be noted that there is a great amount of current literature in educational administration and leadership that shares both perspectives and approaches with the inclusive leadership as well as foreground the construction of educational leadership based on the rhetoric of transformational leadership and growth mindset. In this light, transformational leadership was developed based on the rationale behind the effectiveness of school as a unit of public modern organization. By taking into account the importance of human capitals under the concept of modern leadership and the application of laissez-faire leadership principle, school principals will allow teachers and school staff to make their own decisions without waiting for final considerations approved by school principals (Hallinger, 2011). By means of school reform, this approach makes significant changes in the lifeworld of teachers, students, and school staff by promising new orientations, perspectives and practices. In other words, transformational leadership is different from the relationship-based approach which foregrounds its philosophical orientation from managerial rationality by focusing on two-way relational exchange between school principals and teachers since it does not depend only on the leader and member exchange. It also depends

on school principals' personality, character, and disposition to change through communicating visionary and committed goals by focusing on mutual interests of all school members.

Inclusive leadership was formally reflected in the World Declaration on Educational for All and its proceeding Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs employed by the World Conference on Education for All in March 1990 at Jomtien, Thailand (Buchert, 1995). It was also reiterated in Thailand's NEA in 1999 and has been continued since then, which aims to encourage students with special needs to have equal opportunity to learn alongside other students in the same classroom. However, school principals' roles in building relationships between school-community that is culturally responsive, in this context, therefore, requires them to gain deeper understanding of diverse identities regarding language, race, class, gender, ethnicity, and disability, all of which overlap within the cultural diversity categorizations. The role of school principals may extend to encouraging teachers to organize the celebrations of cultural diversity, food and fair festival that are inclusive to all groups of students and to create an atmosphere of acceptance of various cultures in school. In addition, school principals should recognize that the cultural diversity of the community is, in fact, a valuable social asset. Therefore, multicultural education must be promoted in schools and inspiring acts must be created by teachers to develop the curriculum and teaching approach responsive to cultural diversity of all students.

2. *Community and Place-Conscious Leadership* refers to a concept that has its roots in progressive educational tradition, focusing on the analysis of community funds of knowledge surrounding schools that may affect students' achievements and failures. The role of school principals in building relationships with community is to build a bridge linking school-community together, and to welcome all members of the community, especially the minority or marginalized people, to participate in educational activities. In this sense, there are empirical evidences in a great number of literatures related to school-community partnerships and similar constructs in Thai educational reform discourse such as community-based education, place-based education, locally relevant education and area/site-based education and education for local community revitalization since the promulgation of NEA in 1999 (Jatuporn, 2022; Manokarn, 2017; Nakornthap, 2008).

The capability of school principals to analyze socio-cultural, economic and political determinants outside the school is therefore essential to fostering students' success. Such understanding can be demonstrated in events such as parents' meeting organized in the afternoon instead of the conventional morning session if the school is located in a community where some parents work in coffee plantations or fruit orchards, and the products must be collected in the morning. School documents or newsletters distributed to the parents will be prepared in local ethnic languages used in everyday life by parents. Local elders can be invited to share their local wisdom to students in school. To sum up, school principals using the community as foundation for educational provision and enabling mutual school-community partnership are thus essential disposition of educational leaders demonstrating the shift from managerial implementor to CRL.

3. *Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRL)* is a concept rooted in critical education theory and social justice in education, the emphasis of which is placed on curriculum development and pedagogical approaches aiming for social justice and transformation. The essence of this concept is that school principals must be transformative leaders, possess critical reflexivity, and create alliances to move towards education reform. That is, school principals who recognize multiculturalism and social justice issues will demonstrate serious concerns to macro issues arising from inequality regarding race, class, gender, ethnicity, language, political stance and various community funds of knowledge, both at community and societal levels.

However, it must be noted that, since the official promulgation of NEA 1999 and its revised versions throughout two decades of Thai educational reform and the current EIAA 2019, school principals have been key instrumental in translating and recontextualizing educational policy discourses into pratices implying that educational management must be provided in accordance with both NEA and EIAA (Lao, 2020). By doing so, school principals can fulfill the aspirations expressed in both NEA and EIAA as follows: (1) developing educational innovations, curriculum and pedagogical approaches to enhance the educational achievements of all students; (2) reducing inequality in education and enabling a more just and fairness in education; (3) decentralizing power and providing autonomy for educational actors and empowering good practices schools in local community; and (4) creating and developing mechanisms for mutual collaboration and partnership between government sectors, local government organizations, private sectors and civil society in local community.

As aforementioned, it can be stated that philosophical and ideological underpinnings in the goals of educational provision implied in NEA and EIAA have contentiously provided a deliberative, democratic and visionary space for all sectors to participate in educational reform. CRL is thus an innovative approach that is well responsive to the policy and structural contexts democratized by the state as well as practically cherishes learners' diversity, and emphasizes the collaboration with communities and stakeholders to cultivate learners as active citizens, with various identity backgrounds and belong to diverse community funds of knowledge, to be equally successful in education (Banks, 2004; Johnson, 2014). In this light, the practical frameworks and guidelines for schools in educational innovation areas have been proposed to facilitate agencies from all sectors to provide culturally responsive education to schools, improve educational quality by using locally appropriated and situated educational innovations and organize educational provisions emerging from local community needs to be consistent with the national basic education curriculum, NEA and EIAA respectively.

The recognition of these issues have great impacts upon the vision and leadership practices of school principals. In this light, school principals cannot be indifferent to inequity and injustice issues that may occur in both school and community, as it will obstruct educational achievements of ethic minority and marginalized students. For example, while the school uses only Thai language as a medium for instruction, students who use Thai as a second language may need special assistance from teachers so they are able to learn equally with their Thai-speaking counterparts or students with different political orientations from teachers may need a safe space to deliberate their positions and be respected for different standpoints. Table 1 indicates that the recognition of educational leadership theories is a vantage point for school principals to develop school-community partnerships and to support students of diverse cultural backgrounds, through collaboration of teachers, parents, and community representatives in a deliberative, democratic and just manner.

Discussion and Recommendation

Although the classification of educational leadership theories into three categories is presented as conceptually divided and there are supporting theoretical frameworks explaining the embeddedness of philosophical traditions from liberal, progressive to critical education, in schooling practices, it is found that each of these three constructs significantly interrelate and overlap to some extents with one another. In particular, community and place-conscious leadership and CRL both have similar grounds in terms of concepts, perspectives and practices. In this light, it would be essential to consider the conceptual framework of multicultural education

Table 1 Educational leadership theories and its conceptual underpinnings and key characteristics

Educational leadership theories	Conceptual underpinnings	Key characteristics
Inclusive Leadership	Liberal education	- Supporting and welcoming students with diversity in all dimensions to learn in classroom, school and community. - Encouraging schools to organize cultural celebrations for all groups of students, to create an acceptance environment valuing diverse cultures in schools. - Recognition of the cultural diversity of community and social cultural capitals.
Community and Place-Conscious Leadership	Progressive education	- The analysis of community funds of knowledge surrounding schools that may affect students' achievement and failure. - Designing education based on community and place-based contexts. - Building relationships with communities by welcoming members of the community, especially the minority or marginalized people, to participate in educational activities.
Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRL)	Critical education theory and education for social justice	- Curriculum development and pedagogical approaches aiming for social justice and transformation. - Transformative leaders, possess critical reflexivity, and create alliances to move towards a socially just education reform. - Serious concerns to macro issues arising from inequality regarding race, class, gender, ethnic backgrounds, language, political stances and various community funds of knowledge, both at community and societal levels.

in schooling proposed by Banks (1997; 2004), who presents various aspects of multicultural education, consisting of (1) the integration of contents, (2) the process of knowledge construction, (3) the reduction of prejudice, (4) the pedagogy for equity and justice, and (5) the empowerment of school culture and reconstitution of social structure.

The aforementioned aspects of multicultural education, when employed as conceptual framework in schools, under the context of three groups of educational leadership theories, are highly interrelated and overlap, and are not clearly polarized from one another. This means that in schooling practices and actions each dimension needs a deliberate critical reflection and emphasis (Lopez, 2016). For instance, inclusive leadership and community and place-conscious leadership both aim to create equity between school and community. Both also aim to cultivate a culture that respects diversity, equity, and democracy in schools. Meanwhile, in regard to cultural and everyday life practices, school principals demonstrate nuanced understandings of ideologies, standpoints, and practices, theories whose bounderies are difficult to distinctively justify (Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017; Ylimaki, 2012).

This issue reflects the current state of educational reform in Thailand. Although the state has continuously provided political support and empowered schools at various levels to organize culturally responsive education, education for diversity and marginalized populations as well as increasing financial resources, there appears to be a considerable mismatch, recognized as "Thailand's educational paradox" (Fry & Hui, 2013; Lao, 2020), between the values embedded in educational reforms and culturally responsive education at everyday life practices of educators and relevant practitioners. The lack of both professional and situated knowledges have bearings on teachers and school principals, especially in the role of school-based and locally relevant curriculum development as well as how to reconstitute schools to be culturally responsive (Hallinger & Lee, 2014; Jatuporn, 2022; Lao, 2020).

Therefore, it is worthwhile to conduct research on school principals' roles in enhancing school-community partnerships, as the results of the studies will be employed as theoretical framework providing innovative insights of school principals' roles in building relationships between school-community through CRL (Johnson, 2014; Khalifa, 2018; Lopez, 2016). Such undertaking can support school principals to better understand the

directions towards which the relationships between school-community can be mutually enhanced, and enable possible active agencies to support school principals to work in congruence with the authentic needs of the community. More importantly, the issues regarding school principals in enhancing school-community participation and partnerships by adopting CRL into the master and doctoral program in educational administration should be critically addressed in order to equip school principals with CRL concepts, perspectives, and practices for providing socially just education.

Conclusion

The authors examined the meanings of CRL and issues related to school-community partnerships in Thailand and discussed the cases of educational leadership as an attempt to provide conceptual definitions of CRL and how they were formulated to support educational leadership theories. The insights into the roles of school principals in building school-community partnerships have been anchored in the understanding and recognition of CRL, a theoretical concept embedded in the field of critical curriculum leadership, the focus of which is centered on developing socially just curriculum in school and community as well as educational leadership under the contemporary challenges posed by the dominant hegemonic ideologies of the state which has been contentiously occurring not only in Thailand but also in all modernised nation-states around the world. The phenomena have arisen juxtaposed with the influx of global flows of capital and the cultural practices in community contexts, which struggle to organize education that respects equity, justice, democracy and sustainable society in the midst of Thailand's latest efforts for democratic education reform.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgement

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