

TEACHERS' CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS AND PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES IN MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOMS: A CASE STUDY OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN CHIANG MAI PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

Multicultural classrooms are becoming more common in Thailand, making it important to understand how teachers work with students from different cultural backgrounds. This study looked at how teachers' own cultural backgrounds affect their teaching and what they do to manage cultural diversity in the classroom. The research used qualitative methods. We collected data from 30 primary school teachers in 4 schools in Chiang Mai Province. We observed each teacher's class for about an hour (30 hours in total), conducted interviews, and reviewed relevant documents. We analyzed the data to find patterns in how teachers handle cultural diversity. We found that teachers come from very different backgrounds. Some grew up in Chiang Mai and know the local communities well. Others were transferred from different parts of Thailand and are still learning about the area. This affects how they teach. Local teachers often draw on their knowledge of the community, while transferred teachers rely more on formal training and general teaching strategies. Despite these differences, all teachers share similar values. They accept diversity, respect each student's background, and try to create harmony in the classroom. However, they face real challenges. Many have not received specific training in multicultural education, and they often lack time to develop specialized approaches for different students. On the positive side, teachers show adaptability and creativity in using whatever cultural knowledge they have. These findings have practical uses. Teacher training programs need to address multicultural teaching more directly. Schools should provide ongoing support, especially for teachers new to the area. Policymakers should consider these needs when designing professional development. The study adds to our understanding of how teachers manage diverse classrooms in Thailand's specific context.

Keywords: Multicultural Education, Teaching Practices, Cultural Backgrounds, Primary Education

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