ABSTRACT

Through a mixed method research approach, four identified international middle schools in the International Schools Association of Thailand, ISAT, participated in research, which ascertained their perceptions about character education, character traits, and how they were prepared to provide character education at their schools. The study investigated the perceptions of 123 international middle school teachers and leaders. A forced response questionnaire was used to collect data.

The study attempted to answer the following questions (1) what are the perceptions international middle school leaders and teachers have on character education? (2) what are the perceptions international middle school leaders and teachers have on character traits? (3) What are the current practices of international middle school leaders and teachers regarding character education? (4) how are international middle school leaders and teachers prepared to provide leadership in character education? (5) How can the character of international middle school students be developed effectively? Data were statistically treated employing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The findings revealed that respondents believe that character education should be taught from an international perspective and character development is equally important as academic achievement. Character traits such as, responsibility, respect for diversity and respect for others were selected as the top three character traits to be taught. The

research also indicated that what international middle schools in ISAT were currently doing in the area of character education was not enough. They were not involved in the development of their current effort, they were not modeling the behavior they wanted their students to develop, nor did they know if their current intervention was making an impact on the development of the character of their students. The respondents did indicate that the most frequently used source for preparation for character education came from personal readings, which indicates no collaborative or consensus approach by the schools. The researcher then offers a solution to improve the character development effort by way of an implementation model.

Field of Study: Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership

Graduate School of Education   Student's signature ....

Academic Year 2011   Advisor's signature ....