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Character Education and Adolescents' Moral Identity Development (Actual and Ideal)

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Dedication

Most of all thanks and Al-Hamd to **Allah** the Divine who makes the impossible possible.

There are a number of people without whom this dissertation might not have been written, and to whom I am greatly indebted. It is with my genuine gratefulness and warmest regard that I dedicate this dissertation to …

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ABSTRACT

Moral identity is the individual's degree of considering his or her moral character as a dominant part of his or her self-concept (Bock & Samuelson, 2015). Moral identity is a part of one's character. Character education is a means of facilitating moral/character development. This research is an effort to examine the relationship between character education and moral identity (actual and ideal). The purpose of this study is to provide empirical evidence that moral identity is an outcome of character education. In order to better understand how character education impacts moral identity development, a clearer understanding of identity as a concept is necessary.

In this study it was hypothesized that (a) adolescents in character education schools (high and medium implementation) have higher levels of moral identity (actual and ideal) than those in other schools; and (b) within character education schools (high and medium implementation), adolescents involved in specific character education activities/experiences show higher levels of moral identity (actual and ideal) than those who are not involved in these experiences.

Two measures were used in the study. The first measure was the Moral Identity Scale by Aquino and Reed (2002), and the second was the Moral Ideal Self Scale by Hardy, Walker, Olsen, Woodbury, and Hickman (2013). This study involved over 1500 Midwest US middle school students.

A Pearson product-moment correlation and an analysis of variance (ANOVA) were run on the quantitative data to determine equivalency and differences between groups. Statistically significant differences were found between the groups mean scores on the Moral Identity Scale (actual identity) and Moral Ideal Self Scale (ideal identity). Higher character education implementation was significantly related to higher moral identity (actual and ideal), participation in specific character education experiences was also significantly related to moral identity.

Study results suggest that character education has the potential to support adolescents' moral identity development. It is hoped that this study will fuel scientific research regarding character education, provide educators with information on character education's impact on adolescents' moral identity development, and encourage schools to deeply incorporate character education into their practices.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDICES

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter 1: Introduction and Review of Related Literature

Identity is the individual's sense of who he or she is, and each individual has a unique way of seeing himself or herself. Erikson (1963) proposed that an identity is rooted in the very core of one's being. Identity is a central essence of the human being; it is formed inside and it reflects on the outside. An individual's sense of identity develops predominantly during adolescence. The formation of identity is one of the main developmental tasks of adolescence (Erikson, 1968). Identity is a crucial component of an individual's character, and it can orient one's behavior, because individuals tend to behave consistently with their beliefs and values (Burk, 1980; McAdams & Cox, 2009; Moshman, 2004; Pearson & Bruess, 2001; Pratt, Hunsberger, Pancer & Alisat, 2003; Splitter, 2010). One's beliefs and values are primary components of one's identity.

Morality is another developmental aspect that significantly develops during adolescence. It represents care (Moshman, 2005), justice (Berkowitz, 2012a; Moshman, 2005), and concern for human welfare (Berkowitz, 2012b; Moshman, 2004). The integration of identity and morality starts in early adolescence and extends into adulthood (Berkowitz, 2012a; Damon, 1984; Erikson, 1968). Moral identity is a facet of one's identity. Moral identity is the individual's degree of considering his or her moral character as a dominant part of his or her self-concept (Bock & Samuelson, 2015).

During adolescence, family and school are two of the primary developmental contexts for morality and identity (Frimer & Walker, 2009). School's role as a social context influences various dimensions of adolescents' development that are associated with identity. It has a significant influence on one's moral identity development (Moshman, 2005).

There are various educational approaches implemented in schools, which support adolescents' development. Character education is among the successful approaches in supporting adolescents' development (Berkowitz, 2012a, 2012b). Character education is an umbrella term that covers very different educational approaches and approaches of very different in their quality, and in this study the focus was on approaches with the following features: (a) school-wide; (b) evidence based practices; (c) professional development; and (d) leadership opportunities. Character education is a means of facilitating moral/character development. It nurtures one's personal and prosocial development (Berkowitz, 2012a). One's personal development includes commitment to moral values, which is correlated to one's prosocial development that includes one's moral judgment.

The moral values are correlated to one's prosocial development, and prosocial development includes one's moral judgment. Many experts in character education consider it as a successful approach that supports the development of several outcomes. Experts emphasize that character education fosters moral reasoning (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006; Berkowitz, 2012a; Sokol, Hammond & Berkowitz, 2010), prosocial development (Berkowitz, 2012b), identity development (Berkowitz, 2013; Fleischer, 2005) and moral development (Berkowitz, 2011a, 2013).

Moral identity is a part of one's character, but the researcher could not identify a study that has looked at character education's relation with it. Having searched the data bases ERIC and Psycinfo, using the keywords moral identity and character education, no empirical research studying character education's relation to moral identity development was found. In this study it was hypothesized that character education schools enhance adolescents' moral identity development.

The gap in the literature revealed that character education's effect on moral identity has not been studied yet. The purpose of this study is to provide empirical evidence that moral identity is an outcome of character education. In order to better understand how character education impacts moral identity development, a clearer understanding of identity as a concept is necessary.

Identity

Identity has been studied through different lenses and perspectives in the literature. Identity, for example, has been discussed through the psycho-social perspective (Markus & Nuirus, 1986). Identity has also been discussed through the cognitive developmental perspective, which studies the individual's recognition of one's own mental process as a result of biological maturation and environmental experience. Another perspective that has studied identity is the three-layered theory, which explains one's identity in different periods of a human's life (James, 1892). The three layers are the self as actor, the self as agent, and the self as author. More recently McAdams referred to the three-layered theory as the narrative study of lifespan. It indicates that one's identity forms by the integration and internalization of life experiences (McAdams, 2010).

The psychosocial perspective is the main perspective that is written about and studied most in the literature comes from the work of Erik Erikson (1963). The psychosocial perspective studies one's psychological development, in interaction with a social environment. Erikson (1963) proposed a sequence of eight psychological tasks that reflected the primary crisis associated with each specific stage of one's life. The psychological task of identity formation versus identity confusion emerges during adolescence. Adolescents experience a challenge of developing a sense of identity. It is a

key task of adolescence to develop an "authentic individual identity" (Fleischer, 2005, p.180), however, not accomplishing the task of developing authentic identity results in role confusion (Erikson, 1963). It is a lack of self definition. Role confusion involves not being sure about oneself or one's place in society (Erikson, 1963). Adolescents who are confused about their identity "can never experience identity in any human relationship" (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2013, p. 316). Therefore, they will not be prepared for the stages of adulthood.

Identity is comprised of many components. Identity refers to dynamic self-understandings (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Schachter & Rich, 2011), and self-definition (Schachter & Rich, 2011), which include different aspects such as one's goals (Damon, 2008), values (Moshman, 2004; Pearson, & Bruess, 2001; Pratt et al., 2003), beliefs (Bronk, 2011; McAdams & Cox, 2009), commitments (Cobb, 2004), standards for behavior and standards for decision-making that one sets for him or herself (Bock & Samuelson, 2015).

Self vs. Identity

Self and identity are related and often confused. The self and identity are enduring and related concepts that relate to various dimensions of human life. Previous literature includes different ways of referring to the relationship between self and identity; however, there is no consistent literature that clarifies the difference between the two concepts. One prevalent way of thinking about the relationship between self and identity is that identity is an aspect of one's self-definition (Bock & Samuelson, 2015), meaning that it is included in one's way of defining the self. Others say that identity *is* self-definition in its entirety, which is used to "structure, direct, give meaning to and present the self" (Schachter & Rich, 2011, p.223). Others think of identity as something that establishes self-schema, which

means that identity forms one's cognitive representations of one's self (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Cross & Markus, 1994). Most literature studies identity as a theory of the self (Berzonsky, 1986; Dunkel & Anthis, 2001; Grotevant, 1987; McAdams & Cox, 2009; Moshman, 1999; Schachter & Rich, 2011), or part of it (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Burke, 1980). Given that there is not clear sensation about the relationship between self and identity, this study uses the two terms interchangeably. This study mainly uses the term identity, but uses "self" in the section concerning possible selves, which introduces the research on ideal identity.

Identity functions. Identity has three functions. It is a source of integrity, motivation, and commitment. Integrity is one's sense of self wholeness, motivation is one's sense of enthusiasm, and commitment is one's sense of consistency in beliefs and values that one follows (McAdams & Cox, 2009; Moshman, 2004; Pearson & Bruess, 2001; Pratt et al., 2003).

Identity as a source of integrity. Forming a sense of identity leads to having inner unity, or inner self (Erikson, 1968; McAdams & Cox, 2009). This inner unity/inner self refers to a sense of wholeness (McAdams & Cox, 2009), and sameness (Cobb, 2004; Moshman, 2004). The inner self is the chief power within the individual that controls "social actions and agency" (McAdams & Cox, 2009, p. 9).

Identity as a source of motivation. Identity not only provides integrity to the individual, it also motivates his or her actions. One identity function proposed by Burke (1980) is being "a source of motivation" (p. 20). Having a particular identity is a motivation resource (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Burke, 1980; Schachter & Rich, 2011), because it

influences the individual's performance. However, the motivational strength of identity is changeable over time (Aquino & Reed, 2002).

Identity as a source of commitment. Identity not only motivates action, but also embodies commitment to a course of actions, which is one component of being a source of commitment (McAdams & Cox, 2009). The person who establishes a clear sense of identity represents continuous commitment to a consistent set of values and beliefs, which together form a control base of his or her actions (McAdams & Cox, 2009; Moshman, 2004; Pearson & Bruess, 2001; Pratt et al., 2003).

Generally, identity and commitment predominantly develop during adolescence. Adolescents attempt to form a consistent sense of identity in "critical life areas" (McAdams & Cox, 2009, p. 22), such as developing "a sense of career, moral, ethic, religious, political, and sexual identity" (Bronk, 2011, p. 32). Ultimately, the person who establishes a sense of identity will have "a flexible but durable commitment in these areas, or what Erikson called *fidelity*" (McAdams & Cox, 2009, p. 22). Fidelity indicates the importance of consistency and flexibility to develop a sense of identity.

Commitment is associated with different aspects of one's life. Rest and Narvaez (1995) propose a model of general processes through which people address actual moral decision-making and behavior, in which commitment is one of its components and focuses on issues of valuing. Rest and Narvaez's model is a description of the various paths of decision-making regarding one's own course of action, which is based on one's main personal goals and beliefs and consequently, one's identity. The course of action that one decides to choose in terms of "cheating" depends on "the value hierarchy" (Pratt et al., 2003, p. 564) of that person. Considering honesty as a primary value leads to a more moral

course of action than considering achievement as the salient value. In fact, "the establishment of identity involves the individual in a succession of commitments to life goals" (Cobb, 2004, p. 62). Therefore, commitment is a central aspect of identity formation.

Identity Formation (Psychosocial Perspective)

Generally, the first two decades of a human's life are central in developing a sense of identity (Spencer et al., 2015). More specifically, however, adolescence (Damon, 1988; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004; Spencer et al., 2015), late adolescence (Dunkel & Anthis, 2001), and early adulthood (Arnett, 2000; Bronk, 2011) are vital stages. These time periods (Arnett, 2000) play the most significant role in identity formation.

Identity formation is central to Erikson's theory of psychosocial stages of development. The stages are defined by crises that are psychosocial challenges that the individual faces in order to achieve one's identity (Erikson, 1963). The consequences of these crises depend upon how individuals cope with these challenges (Erikson, 1963). Developing a sense of identity is a central task of adolescence, and one of the eight psychosocial crises proposed by Erikson. Consequently, adolescents are essentially responsible for and involved in "the developmental project of reflecting upon, understanding, and even constructing selves" (Berkowitz, 2013, p. 116). Strictly speaking, they intentionally build their own identities (Berkowitz, 2013). Establishing a sense of identity in adolescence is important in preparing youth for the challenges of adulthood (Cobb, 2004; Fleischer, 2005; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2013). All psychosocial stages are related to identity development. However, identity formation is the core challenge in the fifth stage in adolescence. The earlier stages build precursors of identity; the later stages are about maintaining identity under changing conditions of life as the person ages.

There is a debate in the literature regarding the extent to which identity formation is a process of discovery (Waterman, 2011) or construction/ creation. Identity discovery or construction/creation are associated with the philosophies of eudaimonisn and existentialism, respectively (Waterman, 2011). Identity exploration is associated with identity crisis in which young people experience active exploration, self-discovery, and decision-making (Berman, You, Schwartz, Teo & Mochizuki, 2011). Some young people do not experience this active exploration of examining alternatives. They internalize the values, characters and beliefs of their culture, and tend to meet the expectations of their culture's authority characters (e.g., parents) (Berman et al., 2011).

The social context is a resource for developing a sense of identity by defining one's self through different aspects, such as group membership (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012; Moshman, 2004, 2005; Splitter, 2010). Accordingly, identity is a social product (Oyserman et al., 2012), meaning that defining one's identity is deeply social (Moshman, 2004). Social contexts such as school and neighborhood are vital to defining one's identity (Oyserman et al., 2012). The individual defines him or herself as a member of his or her family, class, and a member of the larger community (Damon, 1988; Marshall, Caldwell & Foster 2011; Moshman, 2004; Moshman, 2005). According to Piaget's theory, the formal-operational stage develops in adolescence (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2013; Spencer et al., 2015) during which adolescents see themselves through the eyes of others (Berkowitz & Grych, 1998; Spencer et al., 2015).

Arnett (2000) states, "identity formation involves trying out various possibilities and gradually moving toward making enduring decisions" (p.473). The enduring decision which Arnett (2000) refers to is the establishment of a consistent sense of self that

adolescents achieve after imagining and experimenting with different characters (Arnett, 2000; Cobb, 2004; Damon & Gregory, 1997; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2013).

The decision-making process of establishing the self is fundamentally managed by the person himself (Arnett, 2000; Berkowitz, 2013). Moshman (2004) explains, "because of its organization and its explanatory function, an identity can be said to be a theory" (Moshman, 2004, p. 86). Thus, establishing an identity means that an individual constructs a "theory" (Bronk, 2011; Moshman, 2004) about the kind of person he or she is (Moshman, 2004) and the person he or she hopes to become (Bronk, 2011). The process of making decisions about one's identity involves trying out various possibilities (Arnett, 2000; Knox, Funk, Elliott & Bush, 2000; Markus & Nurius, 1986). These experimentations of possibilities represent adolescents' investigation of possible selves (Arnett, 2000; James, 1910; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2013; Knox, Funk, Elliott, & Bush, 2000; Markus & Nurius, 1986). Investigating possible selves gradually moves adolescents toward establishing a clear sense of who they are (Arnett, 2000; Cobb, 2004; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2013; Knox, Funk, Elliott & Bush, 2000).

Possible Selves

James (1892) was the first to propose the notion of multiple selves. He theorized that generating possible selves plays a profound role in self-development and consequently identity formation. Possible selves are important features of the self (James, 1892). According to Dunkel and Anthis (2001), the production of possible selves is a mechanism that reflects the significance of identity exploration in the identity formation process. Possible selves are important in contributing to identity development. Adolescence is critical for the development of possible selves (Cross & Markus, 1991; Dunkel & Anthis,

2001). Possible selves refer to the personalized subset of outcomes or goals, and also refer to the "given self-relevant form or meaning" (Oyserman & Markus, 1990, p.113). The number of possible selves each person examines is different (Cross & Markus, 1991; Dunkel & Anthis, 2001). Dunkel and Anthis (2001) stress that "the number and variety of possible selves depend on the individual" (p. 767), and his or her age (Cross & Markus, 1991). Cross and Markus (1991) measured possible selves using a cross-sectional approach, and found that the "number of both feared and hoped for possible selves generated decreased with age" (p. 767). Late adolescent participants in their study were found to possess the largest number of possible selves, with significantly less in late adulthood participants (Dunkel & Anthis, 2001).

In most literature, the cognitive paradigm is the main perspective through which the concept of "possible selves" has been examined. The possible selves concept is seen as as cognitive/mental representations of the self (Hardy, Walker, Olsen, Woodbury & Hickman 2013; Markus & Nurius, 1986). Possible selves refer to the "self-schemas" (Markus & Nurius, 1986) that people have about who they will be (Hardy et al., 2013; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Yowell, 2002), which is the expected self (Yowell, 2002).

There are other terms that specify the types of selves based on one's ambitions: the hoped-for self and the feared self. The hoped-for self (Dunkel & Anthis, 2001; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Yowell, 2000) is called ideal self (Hardy et al., 2013). Aspects of the ideal self could include one's happiness and work satisfaction (Dunkel & Anthis, 2001; Markus & Nurius, 1986) in the future. Aspects of the ideal self could include the social and financial status that the individual hopes to attain. The current self (Hardy et al, 2013) is the present self and it's related but different from possible selves. Aspects of the current self could

include one's present position and social status. The feared self (Yowell, 2000, 2002) is also called the dreaded self (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Aspects of the feared self could include undesireable status such as poverty and loneliness (Dunkel & Anthis, 2001; Markus & Nurius, 1986). These types of selves represent the individual's image of who he or she is like, hopes to become, and fears to become.

Possible selves as motivation. Possible selves are seen as "cognitive components of hopes, fears, goals, and threats" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 955). Possible selves are also defined as a manner in which identity motivates the individual generally (Hardy et al., 2013; Oyserman & Markus, 1990; Yowell, 2000), and affects his/her goals, fears (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & Markus, 1990), anxieties (Oyserman & Markus, 1990), and ambitions (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

Oyserman and Markus (1990) stress that possible selves "give precise self-relevant form, meaning, and direction to these dynamics" (p. 113). They add, "they are specific and vivid senses, images, or conceptions of one's self in future states and circumstances and are viewed as essential elements in the motivational and goal-setting process" (Oyserman & Markus, 1990, p. 113).

Possible selves "represent awareness of one's potential" (Oyserman 1990, p. 113), aspirations and concerns about the future (Dunkel & Anthis, 2001; Markus & Nurius, 1986). Possible selves influence (Hardy et al., 2013), motivate and control (Oyserman & Markus, 1990), and organize (Cross & Markus, 1994) behavior and decision-making (Hardy et al., 2013). In other words, possible selves represent a resource of motivation (Cross & Markus, 1994; Oyserman 1990). Therefore, possible selves facilitate one's moving from the current self and direct one's actions towards the path of what one wants

to become, and ultimately, approach one's hoped-for self that is also called the ideal self (Cross & Markus, 1994; Oyserman & Markus, 1990).

Regarding the motivational power of possible selves, Oyserman and Markus (1990) proposed the idea of positive and negative possible selves, stating, "the desire to avoid this negative self should strengthen one's flagging motivation to achieve the desired state" (p. 113). They add:

> "Positive possible selves alone may be quite successful in facilitating or guiding behavior, but if a particular positive possible self is one that may compete for expression with other positive possible selves, then a matched feared possible self can be motivationally useful" (Oyserman & Markus, 1990, p.114).

Hardy et al. (2013) believed that the individual experiences negative feelings caused by recognizing the differences between the current and ideal selves. Being not who we want to be means that one possesses negative feelings about him or herself when he or she thinks about the ideal self, and feels more positively when he or she approaches the ideal self (Hardy et al., 2013). In other words, negative feelings about oneself lead to the desire to avoid this negative self, which has a motivational power. The person tries to achieve the self he or she desires and tries to avoid the self he or she are afraid to become.

Possible selves and purpose in life. During adolescence both a purpose in life and a clear sense of identity develop (Erikson, 1968). Research has shown that adolescents plan for the future and examine their options and set future goals, therefore it is hypothesized that there is a link between possible selves and purpose in life. Regarding this link, "hoped

for selves act as goals" (Dunkel & Anthis, 2001, p. 773), and striving to pursue these goals is central in the identity formation process.

Damon, Menon, and Bronk (2003) believe that purpose refers to "a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is both meaningful to the self and of intended consequence to the world beyond the self" (p. 121). Having a personal purpose is a durable motivation (Kocabiyik & Kulaksizoğlu, 2014). Bundick and Tirri (2014) emphasize, "purpose is at its core, a type of goal (i.e., an intention to accomplish something) that has particular qualities (i.e., that it is stable over time, generalized across life domains, personally meaningful, and of intended consequence beyond-the-self)" (p.148). Purpose involves "orthogonal constructs such as identity development, future orientation, and prosocial orientation" (Bundick & Tirri, 2014, p.149).

Possible Selves and Identity Formation

There are several elements required for the establishment of sense of identity. The main elements are the process of experimenting with possibilities, the person's trials of conducting these experiments, approaching the ideal self, and avoiding the feared self. Ideally, these elements lead to the establishment of a consistent sense of identity (Dunkel & Anthis, 2001). Examining different possibilities is a significant player in the process of developing a sense of identity.

Moral Identity

Most studies discuss moral development in a cognitive developmental perspective (Kohlberg, 1984; Piaget, 1960; Rest, Narvaez, Thoma & Bebeau, 2000). Accordingly, moral identity is a cognitive self-schema structured with a set of common moral traits (Bock & Samuelson, 2015). According to Cross and Markus (1994), "self- schemas

represent one's *domain-specific* attributes or abilities and one's experiences in these domains" (p. 423). Self- schemas play a foundational role in the development of one's future cognitive representations of the self (Cross & Markus, 1994). Having a self-schema in a specific domain is a strong predictor of one's future behavior in that domain (Cross & Markus, 1994).

A moral person acquires moral schemas, and it enables him or her to "evaluate, access, and practice the current state of a social condition in his or her mind" (Kocabiyik & Kulaksizoğlu, 2014, p. 852). Accordingly, moral identity is defined as "the extent to which people identify with, and are invested in, being a moral person and doing what is moral" (Hardy et al., p. 45). Moral identity is the individual's degree of considering his or her moral character as a dominant part of his or her self-concept (Bock & Samuelson, 2015).

Moral Identity Formation and Components

Identity is a part of the self. There are multiple dimensions of the moral identity such as emotions, cognitions (Berkowitz, 2012 b; Lapsley & Carlo, 2014), commitment (Blasi, 1984; Pratt et al., 2003), judgment (Hardy et al., 2013; Lapsley & Carlo, 2014), and actions (Aquino & Reed 2002; Berkowitz, 2012 b; Lapsley & Carlo, 2014; Pratt et al., 2003). Moral action is easier to observe than is moral commitment (Pratt et al., 2003). Moral action is the emergent quality of a moral commitment. A commitment is within and actions can evince or contradict commitment. A clearer understanding of moral commitment and action is necessary, which leads to the discussion of Kohlberg's theory.

Kohlberg's theory of moral development is the main theory of moral cognitive development (Kohlberg, 1984). Kohlberg examined morality by "acknowledging the Piagetian paradigm" (Kocabiyik & Kulaksizoğlu, 2014, p. 851). Moral identity has been assumed to be a factor that bridges the gap between moral understanding/judgment and moral action (Blasi, 1984). Candee and Kohlberg (1987) considered "responsibility judgments" to be the bridge between moral judgment and action. The moral judgment action gap refers to the state of having moral judgment that is not consistent with one's moral behavior (Bock & Samuelson, 2015). An individual with a strong moral identity attempts to maintain consistency between conceptions of one's moral self and actions (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Blasi, 1983, 1984; Younis & Yates, 1999).

Developing a commitment to moral values influences the development of identity (Blasi, 1983; Pratt et al., 2003). Moral commitment is at the core of a strong moral identity; it indicates considering moral values as vital components of one's self-understanding (Blasi, 1983; Pratt et al., 2003). The person who has deep commitment to certain beliefs and has a clear sense of identity aligns his or her actions with these beliefs (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Blasi, 1983, 1984; Hardy et al., 2013; Youniss & Yates, 1999). There is a strong link between moral identity and moral behavior (Hardy et al., 2013; Lapsley & Carlo, 2014; Pratt et al., 2003). Moral identity motivates moral action (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Blasi, 1983; Burke, 1980; Erikson, 1963; Hardy et al. 2013).

Moral identity is an aspect of one's identity (Bergman, 2004; Damon, 1988). Previous literature uses the terms differently such as Nucci (2004), who uses the term moral self. Moral identity shares the same developmental process with one's identity (Nucci, 2004). Many experts emphasize that a person's moral identity includes specific attitudes

and beliefs (Aquino & Reed 200; Berkowitz, 2012b; Damon & Gregory, 1997; Pearson & Bruess, 2001). Essentially, moral identity formation is a process in which moral values are central to establishing a consistent sense of self (Damon & Gregory, 1997).

There are multiple components of moral identity, and authors have identified these components. Morality components are deeply discussed in Berkowitz's (2012b) "moral anatomy" model. Accordingly, morality includes "seven psychological domains: moral action, moral values, moral personality, moral reasoning, moral identity, moral emotions, and foundational characteristics" (Berkowitz, 2012a, p. 249). Moral emotions and moral reasoning are significant components to moral identity (Berkowitz, 2012a).

Moral Identity in Adolescence

Adolescents attempt to form a consistent sense of identity in the main dimensions of their lives (Erikson, 1986; McAdams & Cox, 2009), such as developing "a sense of career, moral, ethic, religious, political, and sexual identity" (Bronk, 2011, p.32). The integration of identity and morality starts in early adolescence and extends into adulthood (Berkowitz, 2012a; Damon, 1984; Erikson, 1986). In middle adolescence, morality becomes a main feature of the self (Bergman, 2004; Cobb, 2004; Damon, 1988; Oyserman et al., 2012; Spencer et al, in press), and the self becomes "more defined in moral terms" (Damon, 1984, p. 109).

The adolescent starts thinking of him or herself as a moral person. The integration of morality and identity occurs during adolescence because in this developmental stage these two systems change from being more self-focused to becoming more ideological and interpersonal (Hardy et al., 2013). Based on each person's consideration of morality as an aspect of the self, some people may consider their morality as a marginal element of their

self-identities (Damon, 1984). Others consider their morality as a vital element of their self-identities (Damon, 1984), such as moral exemplars. This study considers moral identity to be a facet of one's identity.

Moral exemplars have strong bonding between self and morality (Colby & Damon, 1993; Walker, 2013; Walker & Frimer, 2007, 2015). Their self and morality are intertwined, as they define themselves in moral terms (Bergman, 2004; Colby & Damon, 1993; Hardy et al., 2013)**.** And their clear sense of identity is based on their morality. Adolescent moral exemplars use moral terms in describing their self-concepts more than comparison youths do (Hardy et al., 2013).

Moral Ideal Identity

Ideal identity is one of the individual's possible selves; it is the hoped for self (Hardy et al., 2013). Ideal identity is a person's self-schema about what one hopes to become, which includes aspects such as academic, social, and moral (Hardy et al., 2013). Morality as an aspect of ideal identity includes one's concern and action for human welfare (Berkowitz, 2012b; Moshman, 2004) and justice (Berkowitz, 2012b). Berkowitz adds the reduction of evil and promotion of good to be included in morality. The cognitive developmental perspective sees morality as justice and care (Moshman, 2005).

Moral ideal identity is the moral aspect of one's ideal identity. Morality is an enduring concept, integrating various dimensions of life and representing a main component of ideal identity. Morality and ideology become noticeable during adolescence, and support one's ideal identity (Dunkle & Anthis, 2001; Hardy et al., 2013). It is important to nurture the development of moral identity and moral ideal identity during adolescence. School is one of the social contexts that influences such developmental aspects.

Moral Identity and School

There are various ways by which schools foster moral identity development among adolescents. Social institutions, such as family and school, are the main resources that teach morals and values (Berkowitz, 2013; Lickona, 1985). School helps the adolescent to integrate morality into his or her own identity (Berkowitz, 2006). Research emphasizes school's role in moral formation (Berkowitz, 2011a, 2013; Frimer & Walker, 2008, 2009).

As a social context schools play a significant role in providing guidance and direction for structuring the adolescent's moral identity (Damon, 1988; Fleischer, 2005; Oyserman et al., 2012; Moshman, 2004; Schachter & Rich, 2011; Spencer et al., 2015). According to Erikson (1968), under optimal conditions, a clear sense of identity develops during adolescence and emerging adulthood (Erikson, 1968). This study hypothesized that character education is a characteristic of an exemplary environment fostering such a developmental aspect.

Character Education

It is important to define character before defining character education to understand the type of education on which this study will focus. Berkowitz and Puka (2009) define character as "the composite of those characteristics of the individual that directly motivate and enable him or her to act as a moral agent, that is, to do the right thing" (p.109). Character education is the educational process that nurtures these characteristics. Character*plus* defines character as "an acquired human quality derived from learned practices that achieve intrinsic outcomes, devoid of external rewards" (Marshall et al., 2011, p.52). The "practices" to which Character*plus* points represent character education. The Jubilee Center considers character education as an umbrella term for all educational

activities in and out of school which support the development of youth positive qualities. Character education is also defined as "the school-based intentional promotion of the development of students' character" (Berkowitz, 2012a, p. 253). Moral identity is a component of this character (Berkowitz, 2012a).

Character education is a dynamic and a broad field; there are multiple terms used to refer to some elements of character education and sometimes to refer to the whole domain. Berkowitz (2012a) provides a list of examples of these alternate terms including "social-emotional learning, civic education, democratic education, positive psychology, social justice, and civic engagement" (p. 248). Character education integrates educational goals and practices from each one of these approaches, which enables the field to become effective in supporting adolescents' prosocial development.

It is important to note that the educational practices are not ideal as the scientific research and theory behind them seem to be. Berkowitz (2011) explains the reason behind that to be the irrelevance of research to practice or the miscommunication between theory and practice. This study examined the character education practices which are implemented in the participating schools, knowing that these are not ideal character education practices, which character education experts theorized.

Moral education and character education. Moral education is another term that is strongly related to character education. In fact, there is an overlap between character education and moral education (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). Compared to the moral education movement, character education is an evolving movement, and a relatively less theoretical and scientific movement (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). In their comparison between character education and moral education, Althof and Berkowitz (2006) state that

moral education, relatively, "tends to be theory-based and character education tends to be a theoretical" (p.499). However, recently there has been a growth of empirical school-based research studies, which supports the efficacy of character education (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). Damon and Gregory (1997) mention various approaches that reflect the diversity within moral education field:

> Values clarification, pro-social skill and negotiation training, Aristotelian ethics, Deweyesque participation in democratic governance, Durkheimian efforts to create orderly school climates, Kohlbergian moral dilemmas and "just community" procedures, feminist and critical-theory reflection sessions, narrative exemplifications of public virtue through literature and history and in vivo demonstrations of personal virtue through teacher action. (p. 4)

All these theories, approaches, and models represent educational attempts to support youth's moral development. Althof and Berkowitz (2006) stressed that the "cognitive-structural models of moral reasoning and development" had a strong influence on moral education (p. 499). The current moral education is a rich mixture of these approaches (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006; Damon & Gregory, 1997).

Another difference between character education and moral education is the focus area of each field. Character education has larger and more comprehensive outcomes, while moral education's focus at least as most commonly practiced in the US, is limited to "the development of moral reasoning structures" (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006, p. 499). Character education exceeds moral education's focus to include non-moral concepts (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006; Berkowitz, 1997; Lickona & Davidson, 2005), which are foundational characteristics for moral agency (Berkowitz, 1997). Althof and Berkowitz (2006) mention

courage, perseverance, and loyalty as examples of such characteristics. The main similarity between character education and moral education is their ultimate goal: to educate for positive youth development (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006).

Character Education Goals

The character education approach targets both prosocial youth flourishing and positive youth development (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). This approach has been broadly applied to children and adolescents (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005, 2007; Edgington, 2002; Sokol et al., 2010). Character education focuses on youths' motivation and socio-moral competencies (Sokol et al., 2010). It aims to produce prosocial, moral, and generally good citizens (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006; Berkowitz, 2011a; Berkowitz, 2012 a; Caplan, Weissberg, Grober, Sivo, Grady & Jacoby 1992; Edgington, 2002; Lickona, 2008; Sokol et al., 2010; Splitter, 2011), who know the good, desire the good, and do the good (Berkowitz, 2012a; Edgington, 2002, Lickona 1991). Character.org (www.character.org) refers to this notion of moral knowledge as the head, moral desire as the heart, and moral action as hand. Character education helps adolescents create balance between these forces within themselves. Several character education programs and methodologies support achieving character education goals.

Character Education Programs

There are various youth programs that aim to promote social competence, provide adolescents with the applicable knowledge of ethics and social skills (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005, 2007; Caplan et al., 1992). These educational programs design opportunities for young people to interact prosocially within their community. In fact, 33 youth programs are noted as effective (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005, 2007).

Positive social interaction is a dynamic feature throughout character education programs (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005, 2007), and is also key for identity development (Berkowitz & Grych, 1998; Marshall et al., 2011; Piaget, 1952; Spencer et al., 2015; Splitter, 2010), and moral development (Berkowitz, 2012a; Berkowitz & Bier, 2014; Elias et al., 1997; Lickona, 2004; Sokol, 2010; Youniss & Yates, 1999). Positive social interaction provides an opportunity for the adolescent to see him/ herself through the eyes of others. In the majority of these programs, students gain knowledge, then apply it and practice social skills during the interactive teaching/learning environment.

Another dynamic feature throughout character education programs is creating a caring community in school settings (Althof, 2008; Berger, 2003; Berkowitz, 2012a; Kohlberg, 1985; Pratt et al., 2003; Urban, 2008). Such caring communities foster youth's psychosocial development (Berkowitz, 2012b, 2013; Kohlberg, 1985; Lickona, 1985; Oyserman et al., 2012). Identity and morality are examples of psychosocial developmental aspects, on which character education has a deep influence. Character education nurtures youth's psychosocial development in various ways. The following section illustrates how character education is structured to impact moral identity.

Character Education and Moral Identity

Character education focuses on building character. The increasing interest in character supports the research on moral identity, which started in the 1980's (Blasi, 1983; Colby & Damon, 1992; Lapsley & Carlo, 2014). Character education also inspires research on moral identity development (Lapsley & Carlo, 2014). There are several features that define a character education school, and support the formation of youth's identities. As a social context, school community includes social values and relationships (Berkowitz,

2012b, 2013; Lickona, 1985; Oyserman et al., 2012), which are key factors for identity development. Defining one's identity includes commitments to social groups (Damon, 1988; Marshall et al., 2011; Moshman, 2004, 2005; Oyserman et al., 2012) such as classmates and the school community, and the social values derived from those social groups (Berkowitz, 2013; Lickona, 1985; Oyserman et al., 2012).

Character Education Features

Character education can be delivered at different levels. For example, it can be delivered at the school level, a classroom level, or as an extra-curricular club. In character education, the classroom often functions as a community in which each individual is encouraged to perceive herself or himself as one among others (Marshall et al., 2011; Splitter, 2010), which influences the student's sense of identity. In this study intensive character education experiences, which are available to a specific group of students, (e.g. a class or a club) are refereed to as "particular character education experiences." This section addresses some character education features and their roles in identity formation. Ideally, in character education, schools foster positive relationships among its community members and cooperative learning among its students. The following sections justify some features of character education that are likely to impact the development of moral identity.

Empowerment. Character education is ideally an empowering educational process (Berkowitz, 2011b), in which students see themselves as proactive individuals, who are capable of decision-making. The literature on best practices includes democratic classrooms (Sokol et al., 2010), class meetings (Berkowitz, 2012a; Sokol et al., 2010), moral dilemma discussions (Berkowitz, 2012a; Sokol et al., 2010), and authentic student

government (Berkowitz, 2012a; Davidson & Lickona, 2005) as examples of pedagogies of empowerment. For instance, class meetings are empowering educational strategies because they provide a chance for students' engagement in creating class norms, making decisions, and solving problems (Berkowitz, 2012b; Developmental Studies Center, 1997). These activities of class meetings give students the power to choose, and become effective members of their school.

In his emphasis on the importance of decision-making throughout human life, Urban (2008) states, "the greatest power that a person possesses is the power to choose" (p. 159). Some character education programs represent this belief throughout empowering students (e.g., caring school community). Empowering students indicates enabling students to use their voices with confidence (Berkowitz, 2012b; Lickona, 2004; Lickona & Davidson, 2005; Noddings, 2013; Urban, 2008). Empowering students also indicates considering students as proactive individuals, who have a significant role in the decision making process (Berkowitz, 2012b; Sokol et al., 2010).

Character education is, ideally, a democratic system (Berkowitz, 2011b), in which teachers play a significant role in providing students with opportunities to participate in the decision-making process (Berkowitz, 2012b; Noddings, 2013; Sokol et al., 2010; Urban, 2008). For example, they can decide where a field trip will go. This is an effective way of guiding students toward democratic thinking. It is not enough to insist that students be taught democratic values, instead, schools must provide opportunities for students to practice democracy as a mode of associated living (as Noddings, 2013, rephrases John Dewey).

Decision-making is a lifelong skill; it is a key for the individual's process of defining one's own self (Markus & Nurius, 1986), and school supports the development of this skill in students' through empowering them. Lickona (2004) believes "we create our character by the choices we make. Good choices create good habits and good character. Bad choices create bad habits and bad character" (p. 200). Developing good character indicates developing strong attitudes towards good choices and also applying them in behaviors and habits.

Caring and safe climate. Character education does not only have democratic settings that empower students, it also gives them a chance to maintain their power of choice and feel safe while practicing this power. Students feel safe for being involved in the decision-making process and for being part of a caring community and positive relationships (Berger, 2003; Berkowitz, 2012a; Pratt et al., 2003). Spencer et al. (2015) stress that having safe places and relationships is required for establishing an adolescent's identity. Character education schools also focus on preventing antisocial behaviors, such as bullying, which is another facet of a safe environment. It is important to build "a safe environment" for learning and sharing (Berger, 2003, p. 64). Safe social environment includes positive relationships, which is another feature of character education that has an impact on the development of moral identity. Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, and Smith (2006) consider a caring community as a criterion of an effective character education program.

Some character education programs consider creating a caring community within the school as critical (Althof, 2008; Berger, 2003; Berkowitz, 2012a; Kohlberg, 1985; Urban, 2008). Urban (2008) justifies the need for a caring community because it is more

likely that students become caring and engaged when "they feel accepted and affirmed by the group" (p. 63). Caring is like a two-way street, which indicates giving and taking at the same time. When a student feels that others care for him or her, he or she starts showing the care back, and develops feelings of belonging (Splitter, 2010).

Positive relationships. Social relationships are important for identity formation (Moshman, 2004; Pearson, 2001). To emphasize the importance of relationships in character education, Berkowitz (2011a) says, "the three R's of character education are relationship, relationship, relationship" (p. 115). Building positive relationships is also one of the five principles of character education in Berkowitz's PRIME model (Berkowitz, 2009, 2013; Berkowitz & Bier, 2014). Being a part of social relationships is central to understand one's own self and explaining the self to others (Moshman, 2004; Pearson & Bruess, 2001).

Having relationships with different people indicates different expectations and obligations. Therefore, character education focuses on all kinds of relationships (Lickona, 2004; Lickona & Davidson, 2005), it "focuses equally on the development of both horizontal and vertical relationships" (Berkowitz, 2013 p. 117) in school settings. A student-student relationship is a horizontal relationship, and a student-teacher relationship is a vertical one.

Positive relationships with their peers (Moshman, 2004; Pearson & Bruess, 2001; Urban, 2008), and their teachers (Fleischer, 2005; Moshman, 2004; Pearson & Bruess, 2001) are central to adolescents' identity development. Fleischer (2005) emphasizes educators' role in nurturing youth's identity, and states, "educators, as potential adult

mentors, are seen as having a crucial role to play in helping students find genuine connection, compassion, and character" (p. 179).

Positive relationships are also central to moral development (Fleischer, 2005). Peer interactions represent enriching opportunities for a child's moral growth. A positive student-teacher relationship also promotes moral development (Lickona, 1991; Sokol et al., 2010). Following Lickona (1991), teachers influence their students' moral development through three main roles they play: caregivers, models, and mentors.

Both student-student, and student-teacher relationships are based on trust (Berkowitz & Bier, 2014; Elias et al., 1997; Watson, 2007). Watson (2007) proposed a three principle approach to moral discipline techniques. Supporting good student-student and student-teacher relationships are two of the three principles. The third principle is using student misbehaviors as opportunities for social and moral instruction. There are several approaches that cultivate positive relationships within the school community such as cooperative learning, which is another form of character education (Benninga et al., 2006) that impacts identity development (Berkowitz, 2013; Fleisher, 2005) and moral development (Berkowitz, 2011a, 2013).

Cooperative learning. Cooperative learning is an example of an effective educational approach (Berkowitz, 2012b; Johnson & Johnson, 1989), which is broadly implemented in character education. Cooperative learning is an example of peer interactive pedagogies (Berkowitz, 2012a; Johnson & Johnson, 1989), in which students find ways to contribute and learn without competition (Developmental Studies Center, 1998). It depends on group work in sufficiently varied activities that enables different students with different abilities to participate as members of a group (Developmental Studies Center, 1998).

Cooperative learning aims to create a sense of partnership (Developmental Studies Center, 1998, Splitter, 2010), respect (Developmental Studies Center, 1998), responsibility (Althof, 2008; Developmental Studies Center, 1998) and social competence (Althof, 2008; Berkowitz, 2012a; Johnson & Johnson, 1989) like considerateness (Althof, 2008). As a group member, each student learns to respect others in the group, and to find ways to contribute and learn among the group (Developmental Studies Center, 1998; Sokol et al., 2010; Splitter, 2010). When different students with different abilities collaborate, they learn from each other's strengths as well as weaknesses.

Cooperative learning helps students to experience themselves as members of a caring community. Cooperative learning is an effective method to deepen students' commitment to values such as caring (Developmental Studies Center, 1998). These values are effective in building social relationships not only within the school community, but also through other social contexts such as sports teams.

Althof (2008) stressed the importance of cooperative learning in moral development. Cooperating with others entails encountering, understanding, and coordinating new perspectives (Sokol et al., 2010), which is central skill for moral reasoning (Berkowitz, 2012a; Sokol, et al., 2010). Cooperative experiences in a school setting support adolescents' sense of identity (Splitter, 2010), and moral identity (Splitter, 2010; Youniss & Yates, 1999).

Considering the features of character education schools, this study hypothesizes that character education schools promote moral identity development among adolescents. This hypothesis is supported with Berkowitz's (2012a) conclusion:

It is clear across the array of studies and outcome variables that all parts of the

> model of the moral person are affected by character education implementations. The glaring omission is the failure of researchers to measure the impact on the moral self-system. (p. 255)

Conclusion

Identity is a crucial component of one's character, and it can orient behavior. Individuals tend to behave consistently with their beliefs and values (Burk, 1980; McAdams & Cox, 2009; Moshman, 2004; Pearson & Bruess, 2001; Pratt, Hunsberger, Pancer & Alisat, 2003; Splitter, 2010), which are primary components of moral development. Character education is a means of facilitating moral/character development. Character education experts highlight that character education fosters moral reasoning (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006; Berkowitz, 2012a; Sokol, et al., 2010), prosocial development (Berkowitz, 2012a), identity development (Berkowitz, 2013; Fleischer, 2005) and moral development (Berkowitz, 2011a, 2013). However, there is no empirical research to support the experts' argument that character education fosters moral identity development.

Purpose of Study

Moral identity is a part of one's character, but no research has looked at the impact of character education on moral identity. Moral identity is one's degree of seeing his or her moral character as a central part of his or her self-concept (Bock & Samuelson, 2015). Upon reviewing the literature, a gap was present because there was no empirical research on character education's effect on moral identity.

School is a main influence on one's social and psychological development (Berkowitz, 2013; Lickona, 1985). Literature shows that school has a profound influence on one's identity (Moshman, 2004, 2005; Oyserman et al., 2012; Splitter, 2010). Oyserman

et al. (2012) emphasized that school as a social context is source for developing a sense of identity by providing adolescents with social experiences through which they define themselves. Group membership is an example of those social experiences that nurture the development of one's identity (Moshman, 2004, 2005; Splitter, 2010). Accordingly, identity is a "social product" (Oyserman et al., 2012, p.76), which develops through social interactions. Oyserman et al., (2012) listed "family, school, and neighborhood, and the family processes and socialization practices with which one grew up" (p. 76) as examples of social context that are important to defining one's identity.

School also has a profound influence on moral identity development (Moshman, 2005). Commitment (Moshman, 2005) and attachment (Bock & Samuelson, 2015) to social groups is a primary mechanism of moral identity development. School is a social group that represents a source of moral norms (Damon, 1988; Moshman, 2005), which students internalize. School's moral culture and atmosphere have a significant impact on an individual's moral identity development (Bock & Samuelson, 2015). Character education supports adolescents' identity development (Berkowitz, 2013; Fleischer, 2005) and moral development (Berkowitz, 2011a, 2013). In his explanation of character education's goals, Berkowitz (2013) stressed that character education "fosters the development of those psychological characteristics necessary for the inclination (motivation) and capacity to act morally; i.e., to recognize, desire, and do the ethically right thing" (p.109).

There are some discussions in the literature about character education's impact on identity development and moral development, however, there is no empirical research to support this discussion. A literature review using the keywords; moral identity and character education in the data bases; ERIC and Psycinfo, revealed no empirical research

studying character education's impact on moral identity development. In this study, it is hypothesized that character education schools enhance adolescents' moral identity development.

Research Hypotheses

In this study it was hypothesized that adolescents in character education schools (high and medium implementation) have higher levels of moral identity (actual and ideal) than those in other schools. It was also hypothesized that within character education schools (high and medium implementation), adolescents involved in particular character education activities/experiences show higher levels of moral identity (actual and ideal) than those who are not involved in these experiences.

Chapter 2: Methods

This chapter describes the methods used to conduct this study. A quantitative methods research design is discussed. Following that, this chapter describes the sample of students studied, measures used, ethical considerations, and the procedures for data collection.

Research Design

This study employed an ex post facto quasi-experimental research design. It is a quasi-experimental design because it involves the gathering of information without random assignment of subjects. The collection of data about adolescents' development was conducted from three comparison groups: high, medium and beginning character education implementation. This comparison will be described in more details below. The proposed study also employed an ex post facto research design as described by Kerlinger (1973):

> Ex post facto research is systematic empirical inquiry in which the scientist does not have direct control of variables. Inferences about relationships among variables are made from any determined variations between the studied variables. (p. 344)

No manipulation of the variables by the researcher was possible; instead any determined differences are an ex post facto in nature in that they stem from differences in results in the measurement efforts according to moral identity scores and moral ideal identity scores.

Population and Sampling

In its broadest conceptualization, this study was intended to address the population of adolescents in character education middle schools in a Midwestern metropolitan region.

However, the vast diversity of this population would make it a massive undertaking to design a study that reflects the population, and most schools would likely not participate. Therefore, it was necessary to delimit the setting from which a sample for the study was drawn. The reason to choose a sample of middle school adolescents is because this age is a critical factor for the development of moral identity.

Middle schools adopt different educational practices and strategies, and vary in the degree to which they apply character education principles. Therefore, not every school that claims to adopt character education is considered a sufficient example of a character education school. Having character education implemented is not necessarily a guarantee that it is uniformly and successfully implemented. The groups' selection was based on recommendations by character education experts in the St. Louis region who nominated character education schools for the high and medium character education implementation groups. The nominated schools were asked to participate in the study. There were criteria of character education that determined if a school was among a character education group or not. These criteria included (a) National School of Character (NSOC); (b) four years of recognition as a school of character; and (c) expert opinion of character education practices in the school. Each school in the high and medium character education groups offers a set of supplementary particular character education experiences in which only some of their students participate. These experiences will be an aspect of comparison within these groups. Leadership class was an example of these experiences (see p. 51 for more examples).

After that, the experts nominated schools for the other two groups (i.e., medium and beginning character education implementation). There is a comparison in the study

between the three groups, which indicated the need to have equivalence in the demographics of these groups. Therefore, each school in the high implementation group has a similar school in the demographics in the medium and beginning implementation groups. Character education experts provided a second check on the group lists, to check that the schools were appropriate to be in the sample, and particularly the respective implementation groups.

Sample. A nonprobability purposeful sampling method. Participation in this study was voluntary and was decided by the school principal and the district superintendent. The high implementation for this study, thus, consisted of all adolescents (whose parents passively consented, and who signed the assent forms) attending seven middle schools in the metropolitan Midwest region within three types of schools, forming three groups.

Seven middle schools participated in the study. Sample size from each school ranged from 280 to 800. The sample of students from all schools who completed the survey was 1509. The first group included three schools that systematically applied character education and are recognized for their deep implementation of character education (e.g. recognized by Character.org as National Schools of Character) (n = 585) completed surveys. The medium implementation group included two middle schools that applied character education, but were less systematic and not recognized for their implementation of character education (n = 669 completed surveys). The beginning implementation group included two middle schools that did not systematically apply character education (n = 255 completed surveys). Choosing these three groups provided a sample of adolescents grouped as comparison groups: high, medium, and beginning implementation.

The variations in moral identity scores and moral ideal identity scores among 1509 students enabled statistical comparisons for the study's hypotheses that provided new information about character education's relation to moral identity and moral ideal identity development. A description of the three groups follows:

Group 1, high implementation of character education. This group consisted of three schools with a total of 960 students. Ultimately, 585 students participated in the study. The white (non Hispanic) students were 55.2% of the students in this group, the Hispanic or Latino students were 3.5% of the students in this group. The Black or African American students were 17.9% of the students in this group. The Native American or American Indian were 2.3% of the students in this group. The Asian/ Pacific Islanders were 10.3% of the students in this group, and the students who are two or more races were 10.8% of the students in this group. The age of participants ranged between 11-14 years for 99.3% of the students in this group. The percentage of students who receive a free or reduced lunch was 67% of the students in the first school, 71% of the students in the second school, and 54.95% of students in the third school (see Table 1).

Group 2, medium implementation of character education. This group consisted of two schools with a total of 1550 students. Ultimately, 669 students participated in the study. The participating students reported their ethnicity as follows: the white (non Hispanic) students were 78.5% of the students in this group. The Hispanic or Latino students were 3.6% of the students in this group. The Black or African American students were 4.3% of he students in this group. The Native American or American Indian were .8% of the students in this group. The Asian/ Pacific Islanders were 7.2% of the students in this group, and the students who are two or more races were 5.6% of the students in this

group. The age of participants ranged between 11-14 years for 99.6% of the students in this group (see Table 1).

Group 3, beginning implementation of character education. This group consisted of two schools with a total of 530 students (one of these schools included fifth grade, which was not included in the study). Of these 530, 255 students participated in the study. The white (non Hispanic) students were 43.6% of the students in this group. The Hispanic or Latino students were 7.2% of the students in this group. The Black or African American students were 29.6% of he students in this group. The Native American or American Indian were .8% of the students in this group. The Asian/ Pacific Islanders were 1.2% of the students in this group, and the students who are two or more races were 16.4% of the students in this group. The age of participants ranged between 11-14 years for 98.4% of the students in this group (see Table 1).

Table 1

Schools' Demographics

Group	High implementation			Medium Implementation		Beginning Implementation	
School	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Location	Urban/Suburban	Urban	Suburban	Suburban	Suburban	Urban/Suburban	Urban
Grades	6-8	6-8	6-8	6-8	6-8	6-8	5-8
FRL	67%	71%	54.95%	17.2%	13.04%	80%	90%
Number	350	330	280	750	800	320	210
Participants	299	127	159	146	523	181	74

Missing values

Before proceeding with the data analyses, all variables were screened for missing values, using IBM SPSS frequencies and missing value analysis. The student data (n = 1509) were screened for missing values on three initial variables. The initial variables analyzed included two continuous variables (i.e., actual and ideal moral identity), and one categorical variable (i.e., character education experiences). The missing values of all variables that were discovered were deleted using listwise deletion, using Little's MCAR test. The missing values were Missing Completely At Random (MCAR), which means that the missing values were randomly distributed through the groups of the study, not systematically. Consequently, 300 cases were deleted from the analysis. Of the 300 cases, 69 cases were missing MIS variable, 229 cases were missing MISS variable, and 22 cases were missing character education variable. Some cases missed more than one of the variables.

Measures

In this study, three instruments were employed to measure school demographics (age, gender, location, etc.), two independent variables (character education implementation level and particular experiences of character education), and two dependent variables (Moral Identity Scale and Moral Ideal Self Scale). Measures are described below.

Demographic Survey

The demographic survey consisted of six multiple choice items requiring general

information about the participant. This survey asked about the participant's gender, age, ethnicity, current grade level, and the grade level which he or she started the current school. The last question asked the participant to choose the character education experiences that he or she participated in while attending the current school. This last question was customized to each school (see Appendix A).

Principals identified the terms unique to their school for the specific character education experiences. The researcher used those terms to write the options of the last question of the first section of the survey. Hence, this question was customized to each participating school. All schools had the last two options the same (i.e., none and more than one). The options of the particular character education experiences for each school ranged from 5- 9 options, such as Choir or drum line, Tight 20, Girls on Fire, Student Council, Character Leadership, Character Council, National Junior Honor Society NJHS, Leadership League, Student Advisory, Bullying Prevention Ambassadors, etc.

Dependent Variables

The actual moral identity. Actual moral identity was measured using the Moral Identity Scale (MIS) developed by Aquino and Reed (2002) The MIS consists of nine stimulus traits (caring, compassionate, fair, friendly, generous, helpful, hardworking, honest, and kind), and 13 items assessing self-importance of these traits (e.g., being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am). The measure included two subscales: (a) Symbolization and (b) Internalization. Participants answered the 13 items (see Appendix A) using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Aquino and Reed (2002) reported acceptable (Kline, 1999) internal

consistency reliabilities of .77 and .71 for Symbolization and Internalization, respectively. The respective test–retest reliabilities for the Internalization and Symbolization scales were .49, which is not acceptable (questionable) and .71, which is acceptable (Kline, 1999). The authors also reported that the instrument showed convergent, nomological, and discriminant validity. This dependent variable is referred to in this study as actual moral identity.

The ideal moral identity. It was measured using the Moral Ideal Self-Scale (MISS) developed by Hardy, Walker, Olsen, Woodbury, and Hickman (2013). The MISS is a self-report measure that focuses on moral ideal self. The moral ideal self-scale, is a 20-item instrument comprised of a 7-point Likert scale (1= not at all, 7= very much). The authors reported good reliability. Hardy et al. (2013) reported the instrument's convergent validity (r = –.13), discriminant validity (r = .04), and construct validity (r = .21), which are not high validity values. This dependent variable is referred to in this study as ideal moral identity. In their study, Hardy et al. (2013) looked at moral identity internalization and the relationship with four outcomes (a) environmentalism, (b) school engagement, (c) internalizing, and (d) externalizing (see appendix B).

Reliability of Instruments

The reliability of these instruments for the sample of this study is almost identical with the original reliability reported by the authors. Cronbach's alpha was calculated as the reliability statistic of the Moral Identity Scale (α = .78, .74) for Symbolization and internalization subscales, respectively, which are acceptable values of Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency (Kline, 1999). The reliability of the Moral Ideal Self Scale was (α

=. 94), which is an acceptable value of Cronbach's alpha (Kline, 1999).

Independent Variables

There were two independent variables in this study. The first independent was character education school. There were criteria that determine what makes a school a character education school that were used to categorize these schools. These criteria included (a) National School of Character (NSOC); (b) four years of recognition as a school of character; and (c) expert opinion of character education practices in the school. The second independent variable was the particular character education experiences. Each school had different character education experiences/ activities that it offered to a particular group of students as an elective class or a club. This study focused on these experiences for being intensive character education experiences that not all students participated in.

Demographic Variables

In addition to the above dependent and independent variables, two demographic variables were assessed: age and gender. Gender had not been widely examined in the research on moral identity. Some research found that there was a difference in moral identity between males and females (e.g., Hardy, 2006, Hardy et al., 2013). Other research found females to be higher on moral identity than males (e.g., Hardy, 2006). Other studies have not found any gender difference (e.g., Aquino & Reed, 2002). Age has also not been widely examined in most research on moral identity either. Some research has shown that moral identity development is not related to age (Hardy et al., 2013; Krettenauer, 2011; Pratt et al., 2003). Like the current study, these studies have mainly studied adolescence.

Ethical Considerations

IRB approval of this study was pursued before collecting data from participants (see Appendix D). Participants were the students whose parents passively consented, meaning that they did not sign the non-consent form, and they did not object that their children take part in the study (see Appendix E). Participants signed assent forms (see Appendix F). Even if their parents did not object, they still had the right not to participate in the study. It was required that participants complete the survey booklet, which is in a paper pencil format. The participants had the right not to complete the survey.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher contacted each school principal to ask for his or her permission to collect data from their students. Schools' principals were contacted via email twice. First, the dissertation chair, who is an expert in character education, contacted them to introduce the researcher and state that he was supervising the research study. Then the researcher sent principals an email introducing herself and her research interest. The researcher also contacted district superintendents to ask for their permission to collect data from particular middle schools in their districts. Written permissions were collected from schools and districts willing to participate.

A few days before data collection, the researcher visited all principals of the participating schools and provided them with copies of an information sheet (see Appendix G) that explained the main facets of the research study, and provided the researcher's contact information. The information sheet included an explanation about the research purpose, parental consent forms and assent forms, and data collection procedures. The

researcher provided each school with copies of forms that were needed for all students in each school.

During the researcher's visit to schools' principals, she asked principals of character education schools (high and medium implementation schools) to list any special experiences or classes that served as character education opportunities in their schools. They were also asked to explain each of these experiences.

To aid in recruitment of the subjects, the researcher provided an information sheet that was given to teachers (see appendix H). This sheet consisted of detailed instructions for the teachers about the process. It explained step by step how to handle forms and surveys. It also included the researcher's contact information to give teachers an opportunity to ask any questions before and/or during "the survey day."

Teachers announced to students a due date to bring back the parental forms and reminded the students to return the forms before the due date. Parents who agreed that their child could participate were instructed not to sign the consent parental form and not send it back to school; however, their child still had the right to refuse to participate in the research study. The child whose parents agreed and did not want to participate did not sign the assent form on the "survey day," but the child whose parents agreed and he or she agreed to participate signed the assent form and participated in the study. In case parents did not agree to let their child participate, then the child could not be part of the study, and he or she had to bring back their signed consent parental form and drop it in the "drop envelope" in the classroom. The assent forms were given before the surveys.

For purposes of confidentiality, schools were labeled A- G. The forms were given to 2290 students, which are all the students in schools A, B, C, E, F, and G. Thirty-one parents

from these 6 schools did not let their children participate. School D has 750 students, but the principal agreed to only let 180 students participate. The principal of school D did not agree to let all students in his school participate in the study, because it would be easier for him to conduct the survey on a few classes instead of the whole school. He chose two classes from each grade level to participate. The participating 180 students from school D were given the forms; 7 parents from school D did not let their children participate. Students did not sign the assent form and did not participate in the study.

In each classroom, the teacher provided one paper survey booklet to each participating student. Each participating student, individually, completed the survey without writing his or her name on it. It took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the survey. Research results of each classroom were not shared with the schools. Each class's identity was protected. The researcher asked the teachers not to write their names or the class number on the envelopes.

Chapter 3: Results

This study hypothesized that (1) adolescents in character education schools (high and medium implementation) have higher levels of moral identity (actual and ideal) than those in medium and beginning character education implementation schools, and (2) within character education schools (high and medium implementation), adolescents involved in certain character education activities/experiences show higher levels of moral identity (actual and ideal) than those who are not involved in these experiences.

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the collected data and the results of statistical analyses. Aligned with the hypotheses, four main types of analysis were conducted in this study. First, in order to provide a description of the sample from which data were collected, descriptive results were provided on each of the schools (location, grade level, free and reduced price lunch, mean scores on actual identity and ideal moral identity, and number of students). Second, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated on Moral Identity Scale (actual moral identity) and Moral Ideal Self Scale (ideal identity) mean scores for high, medium, and beginning character education implementation groups to determine any differences in actual identity and ideal moral identity mean scores according to the effect of the independent variable (high, medium, or beginning character education implementation). Third, an ANOVA was also used to determine any differences in actual identity and ideal moral identity mean scores between the high and beginning character education implementation groups, dropping the medium group from the analysis. Finally, to determine any differences in actual identity and ideal moral identity mean scores according to the effects of the independent variable (attended one character education

experience, attended two or more character education experiences, or did not attend any) an ANOVA was used.

Sample Description

In order to provide a description of the sample from which data were collected, descriptive results were provided on each school (location, grade level, free and reduced lunch, mean scores of actual identity and ideal moral identity, and number of students). Seven middle schools participated in the study. Schools clustered into three groups: high, medium, and beginning levels of character education implementation. The number of students in each school ranged from 280 to 800. The sample of students from each school who completed the survey ranged from 74 to 523. The sample of students from all schools who completed the survey was 1509. For ideal moral identity, the medium character education implementation group showed the highest mean scores (6.81, 5.75), and the beginning character education implementation group showed the lowest mean scores (5.42, 5.23). For actual moral identity, the high character education implementation group showed the highest mean scores (3.33, 3.22, 3.20) and the beginning character education implementation group showed the lowest mean scores (3.09, 3.06). For FRL (free/ reduced lunch), the medium character education implementation group showed the lowest percentage (17.2%, 13.04%), which means it was the highest on socio-economic status. The beginning character education implementation group showed the highest FRL percentage (80%, 90%), which means it was the lowest on socio-economic status. See Table 2 for descriptive results.

Table 2

Means and Frequencies by School

Group	High Implementation			Medium Implementation		Beginning Implementation	
School	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Location	Urban/ Suburban	Urban	Suburban	Suburban	Suburban	Urban/ Suburban	Urban
FRL	67%	71%	54.95%	17.2%	13.04%	80%	90%
Actual *M*	3.33	3.22	3.20	3.27	3.04	3.09	3.06
Ideal *M*	5.62	5.58	5.92	6.81	5.75	5.42	5.23
Participant *N*	350	330	280	750	800	320	210
Actual Scale *N*	281	121	158	142	499	169	67
Ideal Scale *N*	245	113	150	132	445	135	60

Correlation Between Instruments

Prior to answering the research hypotheses, the correlation between the two dependent variables was calculated. It was expected that there was a statistically significant correlation between the two instruments used in this study: Moral Identity Scale (actual identity) and Moral Ideal Self Scale (ideal identity). They are part of a broader construct, but they measure distinct aspects of moral identity. A Pearson product-moment correlation explored the relationship between actual moral identity (M = 3.17, SD = .63) and ideal moral identity (M = 5.72, SD = 1.06). The correlation was found to be statistically significant, $r = .35$, $p < .01$. Results indicated a small positive linear relationship between the instruments. The explained variance is $r^2 = .12$ or 12% and the unexplained variance $r^2 = .88$ or 88%.

The First Research Hypothesis Results:

The first hypothesis was: Adolescents in high character education schools have higher levels of moral identity (actual and ideal) than those in other schools.

Group Equivalency

Descriptive results showed that schools varied in their ethnicity and socio-economic status. It was necessary to check if these variables were related to the dependent variables (i.e., actual and ideal identity). Therefore, it was necessary to examine the relationship between school groups, their ethnicity, Socio-economic status, and the dependent variables. Three different groups of schools (high, medium, and beginning character education implementation) were assessed with two instruments (actual and ideal identity). Pearson product-moment correlation were used to examine the relationship between the

dependent variables and potential confounding variables (i.e., ethnicity and socio-economic status). Ethnicity was a student level variable, which was measured by students' answers on an item of the survey (see Appendix A).

Analysis of variance explored the relationship between student's ethnicity and the scores on actual identity and ideal moral identity. This analysis was found not statistically significant for actual moral identity, $F(3, 1423) = 1.33$, $p = .26$. However, this analysis was found statistically significant for ideal moral identity, $F(3, 1265) = 4.22$, $p = .01$ indicating a weak statistically significant negative relationship between ethnicity and score on ideal moral identity. While this relationship was statistically significant, the explained variance was extremely small (less than 0.5%). Therefore, ethnicity was dismissed as a confounding variable to control for in the data analysis.

Socio-economic status was a school level variable, which was operationalized by the free and reduced lunch (FRL) percentage for each school (see Table 2). Pearson product-moment correlation explored the relationship between school socio-economic status and the mean scores on actual identity and ideal moral identity. The analysis was not statistically significant for actual moral identity, $r = -.10$, $p > .05$. The explained variance was $r^2 = .01$, which means that socio-economic status explains 1% of the variance on actual moral identity. However, the analysis was found statistically significant for ideal moral identity, $r = -.81$, $p < .05$, indicating a negative relationship between socio-economic status and score on ideal moral identity. The explained variance was $r^2 = .66$, which means that the socio-economic status explains 66% of the variance on ideal moral identity. In other words, schools with higher percentage of reduced lunches had lower ideal moral identity.

Since higher reduced lunch is a marker of lower SES, this can be interpreted as a positive confounding variable because of the association between SES and ideal moral identity.

The medium character education implementation group included suburban schools that had a lower free and reduced lunch average (15%) than both the high and beginning character education implementation groups. The high group included urban/suburban schools that had a relatively high free reduced lunch average (64%). The beginning character education implementation group included urban/suburban schools that had a very high free reduced lunch average (85%). This indicated that the majority of students in high and beginning groups qualified for free and reduced lunch, while the majority of students in the medium group did not. Therefore, the medium character education implementation group was dropped from the data analysis. Because socio-economic status is a school level variable, it was not possible to use it in analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) as a control variable, because the variable could over or under estimate the results. Therefore, it was decided to conduct an analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the three groups, then, to dismiss the medium group and conduct it again. Conducting the analysis twice, once including three groups and once including two groups enabled the researcher to check if both analyses yielded similar results.

Three Group Comparisons

Actual moral identity. An ANOVA was used to determine any differences in actual moral identity mean scores according to the effects of the independent variable: high (M = 3.27, SD = .67), medium (M = 3.10, SD = .59), or beginning character education implementation group (M = 3.08, SD = .72). The results were statistically significant for actual moral identity, $F(2, 1437) = 13.30$, $p = .000$ Post hoc analyses using the Tukey post

hoc criterion for significance indicated that the high character education implementation group was significantly higher on the actual moral identity than both the medium and beginning character education implementation groups. The effect size for the actual moral identity partial Eta Squared ($\eta_p^2 = .018$) indicated that less than 2% of variance in actual moral identity was attributed to the group. This effect size is considered small (Cohen, 1988).

Ideal moral identity. An ANOVA was used to determine any differences in ideal moral identity mean scores according to the effects of the independent variable: high (M = 5.70, SD = 1.03), medium (M = 5.82, SD = 1.00), or beginning character education implementation group (M = 5.36, SD = 1.26). The results were statistically significant for ideal moral identity, $F(2, 1277) = 13.73$, $p = .000$. The high and medium groups were significantly higher than the beginning character education implementation group on ideal moral identity. The effect size for the ideal moral identity partial Eta Squared ($\eta_p^2 = .021$) indicated that about than 2% of variance in ideal moral identity was attributed to the group. This effect size is considered small (Cohen, 1988).

Two Group Comparisons

As mentioned above, conducting the analysis twice, once including three groups and once including two groups enabled the researcher to check if both analyses yielded similar results. Socio-economic status (operationalized as percentage of students in the school qualifying for free or reduced price lunches; FRL) was found to be significantly correlated with ideal moral identity. The medium character education implementation group was higher on socio-economic status than other groups. Therefore, the medium implementation group was dropped from the analysis.

Actual moral identity. An ANOVA was used to determine any differences in actual moral identity mean scores according to the effects of the independent variable: high (M = 3.27, SD = .67) or beginning character education implementation groups *(*M = 3.08, SD = .72). The high implementation group scored higher than the beginning implementation group on actual moral identity. The results were statistically significant F (1, 795) = 13.07, p = .000. The effect size for the actual moral identity partial Eta Squared (η_p^2 = .016) indicated that less than 2% of variance in actual moral identity attributes to the group. This effect size is considered small (Cohen, 1988).

Ideal moral identity. An ANOVA was used to determine any differences in ideal moral identity mean scores according to the effects of the independent variable: high *(*M = 5.70, SD = 1.03) or beginning (M = 5.36, SD = 1.26). The high character education implementation group scored higher than the beginning implementation group on ideal moral identity. The results were statistically significant F (1, 701) = 13.06, p = .000. The effect size for the ideal moral identity partial Eta Squared (η_p^2 = .018) indicated that less than 2% of variance in ideal moral identity attributes to the group. This effect size is considered small (Cohen, 1988).

The Second Hypothesis Results:

The second hypothesis was: Within character education schools (high and medium implementation), adolescents involved in certain character education activities/experiences show higher levels of moral identity (actual and ideal) than those who are not involved in these experiences.

There was an item in the survey asking whether the student was involved in any special character education experiences. The students indicted which choices they were involved

in and chose none if they were not involved in any those experiences. The answers were coded as: 0 = did not get involved in any experiences; 1 = involved in one experience; and 2 = involved in two or more experiences. Accordingly, students were divided into three categories: was not involved, involved in one, and involved in two or more character education experiences.

To test the second hypothesis, both high and medium implementation groups were considered as subgroups in one main group of schools, which implemented particular character education experiences (as shown in Table 3). The total number of students in the main group (including both high and medium implementation) was 1245, 46.7% of them were students from the high implantation group and 53.3% of them were students from the medium implementation group. The total number of students who did not attend any of the character education experiences was 648 students; 35% of them were from the the high implementation group and 65% of them from the medium group. The total number of students who attended one of the character education experiences was 466 students; 58.6% of them were from the high implementation group and 41.4% of them from the medium implementation group. The total number of students who attended two or more character education experiences was 131 students; 61.8% of them were from the high implementation group and 38.2% of them were from the medium implementation group.

Table 3

Character Education Experiences By Group

Implementation Group		Character Education Experiences			
		None	One	Two or more	Total
High	Students N	227	273	81	581
	Percentage	35.0%	58.6%	61.8%	46.7%
Medium	Students N	421	193	50	664
	Percentage	65.0%	41.4%	38.2%	53.3%
Total	Students N	648	466	131	1245
	Percentage	100%	100%	100%	100%

Actual moral identity. The involvement in particular character education experiences might relate to actual moral identity, but that relationship might differ across levels of involvement. A two-way ANOVA tested actual moral identity mean scores of students in high ($M = 3.27$, $SD = .67$) and medium ($M = 3.10$, $SD = .59$) character education implementation who were not involved in any character education experiences ($M = 3.13$, $SD = .64$), who were involved in one character education experience ($M = 3.20$, $SD = .62$), and who were involved in two or more character education experiences ($M = 3.35$, $SD = .64$). First, students in the high and medium character education implementation groups

showed significantly different mean scores on actual moral identity ($F(1, 1188) = 9.09$, $p = .003$). Second, students involved in character education experiences from both groups (i.e., not involved, involved in one, and involved in two or more experiences) showed significantly different mean scores on actual moral identity ($F(2, 1188) = 3.97$, $p = .02$). Third, the interaction of group (i.e., high and medium implementation) and character education experiences was not statistically significant ($F(2, 1188) = .04$, $p = .96$).

A post hoc comparison using Tukey HSD test was conducted to evaluate differences among the means. There was not a statistically significant difference in the mean scores between the students who were not involved in any character education experiences and students who were involved in one character education experience. However, Students who were involved in two or more experiences had significantly higher mean scores actual moral identity than students who were not involved in any experiences. There was also a statistically significant difference in the mean scores between the students who were involved in two or more character education experience had significantly higher mean scores on actual moral identity than students who were involved in one character education experience from both groups.

Ideal moral identity. The involvement in particular character education experiences might relate to ideal moral identity, but that relationship might differ across levels of involvement. A two-way analysis of variance tested ideal moral identity mean scores of students in high *(*$M = 5.70$, $SD = 1.03$) and medium ($M = 5.82$, $SD = 1.00$) character education implementation groups who were not involved in any character education experiences ($M = 5.78$, $SD = 1.01$), who were involved in one character education experience ($M = 5.71$, $SD = 1.02$), and who were involved in two or more

character education experiences (M = 5.84, SD = 1.07). First, students in the high and medium character education implementation groups showed no statistically significant different mean scores on ideal moral identity ($F(1, 1071) = 1.59$, $p = .21$). Second, students involved in character education experiences from both groups (i.e., not involved, involved in one, and involved in two or more experiences) showed no statistically significant different mean scores on ideal moral identity ($F(2, 1071) = .66$, $p = .53$). Third, the interaction of group (high and medium implementation) and character education experiences was not statistically significant ($F(2, 1071) = .16$, $p = .86$).

Chapter 4: Discussion

This chapter provides a brief overview of the study. The majority of this chapter summarizes and offers an interpretation of the findings of this quantitative study based on the research hypotheses and the previous literature. Implications of the findings, limitations of the study, and directions for future research in this area are also discussed.

Study Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between character education and adolescents' moral identity development (actual and ideal). There were two research hypotheses. First, Adolescents in high character education implementation schools have higher levels of moral identity (actual and ideal) than those in other schools. This hypothesis was partially supported. Second, within character education schools (high and medium), adolescents involved in particular character education activities/experiences show higher levels of moral identity (actual and ideal) than those who are not involved in these experiences. This hypothesis was partially supported.

Implications of Findings

The First Research Hypothesis

The first hypothesis posited that adolescents in schools that more fully implement character education have higher levels of moral identity (actual and ideal) than those in other schools. This study is the first to provide an empirical test of whether degree character education implementation is related to moral identity development (actual and ideal). Two types of comparisons were used to test this hypothesis; using three groups of character

education implementation levels and two groups of character education implementation levels.

The relation of character education to moral identity (actual and ideal). The findings of both comparisons (i.e., two groups and three groups) consistently showed that students in high character education implementation schools have higher moral identity (both actual and ideal) than students in beginning character education implementation schools. This result indicated that the more deeply the school implements character education, the more moral identity (both actual and ideal) develops. The results showed that students with higher socio-economic status exhibited higher ideal moral identity (but not actual identity) than students in lower socio-economic status. This showed that the higher socio-economic status the higher is ideal moral identity among adolescents. This positive correlation between socio-economic status and ideal moral identity may be explained by the adolescents' positive attitudes towards their future and their competences.

The results of this study are consistent with the literature that showed that school in general has a profound influence on one's identity (Moshman, 2004, 2005; Oyserman et al., 2012; Splitter, 2010). This study supports Oyserman et al.'s (2012) emphasis that school as a social context is a source for developing a sense of identity by providing adolescents with social experiences through which they define themselves. School is a social group that represents a source of moral norms (Damon, 1988; Moshman, 2005), which students internalize. School's moral culture and atmosphere have a significant impact on an individual's moral identity development (Bock & Samuelson, 2015).

This study supports research on the school's influence on adolescents' moral identity development. Considering the results of this study along with previous research, character education may be an effective approach in terms of supporting the development of morality (Berkowitz, 2011a, 2013), identity (Berkowitz, 2013; Fleischer, 2005), and moral identity. As a social context, school community includes social values and relationships (Berkowitz, 2012b, 2013; Lickona, 1985; Oyserman et al., 2012), which are key factors for identity development. This study provides empirical evidence that character education environment may foster adolescents' moral identity development.

The Second Research Hypothesis

The second hypothesis posited that within character education schools (high and medium implementation), adolescents involved in certain character education activities/experiences show higher levels of moral identity (actual and ideal) than those who are not involved in these experiences. This study is the first to provide an empirical test of whether the involvement in particular character education experiences is associated with moral identity development (both actual and ideal) within character education schools.

The relation of particular character education experiences to moral identity (actual and ideal). The results suggest that the involvement in particular character education experiences is related to actual moral identity in high and medium character education implementation groups. Students who were involved in two or more character education experiences scored higher on actual moral identity than students who were not involved in any character education experiences and students who were involved in only one character education experience. However, these results yielded no evidence of an

association between involvement in particular character education experiences and ideal moral identity in the high and medium character education implementation groups. No differences were found for any pair of involvement groups for ideal moral identity.

The results of this study provide evidence that participation in those social experiences (i.e., particular character education experiences) is related to the development of one's identity (Moshman, 2004, 2005; Splitter, 2010). Defining one's identity includes mechanisms such as commitment (Bronk, 2011; Damon, 1988; Marshall et al., 2011; Moshman, 2004, 2005; Oyserman et al., 2012) and attachment (Bock & Samuelson, 2015) to social groups. In this study these groups were the students who were involved in particular character education experiences. The social values are derived from those social groups (Berkowitz, 2013; Lickona, 1985; Oyserman et al., 2012), which are central for the development of moral identity. Accordingly, identity as a "social product" (Oyserman et al., 2012, p.76) can be nurtured by social interactions such as particular character education experiences.

The results are consistent with the theoretical predictions. In terms of empirical data, a prior study found evidence for the correlation of moral identity to service learning experiences (Youniss & Yates, 1999), which were provided as a full one-year social justice course. Service learning is a type of the particular character education experiences that were examined in this study. The involvement in particular character education experiences adds more intense experiences that enhances the development of students' characters beyond school wide character education implementation. The involvement in a particular character education experience represents an opportunity for the student to practice his/ her prosocial skills in a more intense context. On the other hand, these results are inconsistent

with Blasi (1993), who considered that accomplishing moral identity is more likely to happen in emerging adulthood. The results of this study showed that adolescents begin developing a sense of moral identity in middle school (early adolescence).

Concluding Remarks

Significance

This study of moral identity and character education is innovative because it brings together analyses of actual and ideal moral identity with a study of educational practices, in this case character education practices. This study makes at least two contributions to the areas of character education and educational psychology.

First, the study contributes to the expanding knowledge base of moral identity. Moral identity is a facet of one's identity. It is the individual's degree of considering his or her moral character as a dominant part of his or her self-concept (Bock & Samuelson, 2015). Moral identity is "the extent to which people identify with, and are invested in, being a moral person and doing what is moral" (Hardy et al., p. 45). Morality represents care (Moshman, 2005), justice (Berkowitz, 2012a; Moshman, 2005), and concern for human welfare (Berkowitz, 2012b; Moshman, 2004). Therefore, it is important that educators understand and nurture the development of moral identity among adolescents. Expanding the knowledge about moral identity, encouraging educational institutions to support its development, and the implementation of effective strategies help cultivate youth who care for the welfare of humans. It is anticipated that this study may identify ways through which education can contribute to support the development of moral identity among adolescents.

Second, this study is the first attempt to study the relation of character education to

moral identity (actual and ideal). The study should contribute toward a better understanding of whether there is a relationship between character education and moral identity (actual and ideal) development. As more is known about the relationship of character education to such areas as moral identity, it will be possible to more strongly spread character education within schools that do not apply it. This study has found that character education has a relationship with moral identity development, which will encourage schools that aim to such developmental outcomes to implement character education or deepen their current implementation. The researcher is particularly committed to sharing the results of data analysis with the participating schools, in the hopes that this work will not just be an extraction of facts, but will give them information with which they can better serve their long-term educational goals. The results of this study are a basic foundation for future research on moral identity, ideal moral identity, and character education.

Limitations

Five limitations are described related to the study. First, the study is limited in terms of its generalizability to the middle school adolescents' population. Like any other age group, middle schools are a very heterogeneous population in terms of ethnicity and the kind of elementary schools that adolescents attended. While the study sample is quite diverse, the fact remains that certain segments of the middle school population were not accounted for; e.g., religious status, rural populations, etc. The narrow age range of the sample indicates that the results might not apply to other age groups.

A second potential limitation of the study is that the dependent variables were measured as adolescents' perceptions and self-reporting, which do not necessarily match their moral actions. The study relies on self-reports of moral aspects that are disposed to

errors of recollection or social attractiveness response bias. Perhaps using parents' reports and or observations would have strengthened the self-reported results of this study, and should be addressed in future research. Third, the reliability of the Moral Self Scale is another limitation to the study.

Fourth, the survey did not include a student level item about socio-economic status, which caused having to measure socio-economic status as a school level variable. Therefore, it was difficult to control for it statistically. Therefore, the confound of socio-economic status and medium character education implementation group was a limitation. Finally, another limitation to the study is that a small number of schools participated. These schools were not randomly assigned or matched.

Future Directions

Character education is related to the development of moral identity. Moral identity is the extent to which a person identifies him or herself as a moral person who knows and does what is moral such as concern for others. Therefore, character education should continue to be implemented to support the development of moral identity in adolescents. Future studies should investigate the educational practices by which character education could improve students' moral identity. This includes practices that support identity achievement, and moral commitment, which are vital for moral identity development. In addition, the role of age and gender of students in identity development should be studied.

It is also important to investigate whether these findings are consistent with a larger sample, which includes participants in a broader age range than studied here. For example, How does character education correlate with the development of moral identity in late

adolescence? Finally, future research should look at the relationship between character education and educators' moral identity. How does practicing character education associate with educators' moral identity? Is there a significant difference between educators' moral identity who work in character education schools and educators who work in other schools?

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Appendix A: Survey

"Name" School

Survey

Dear student,

This survey is a part of a research study on adolescents' identity. Identity is one's basis for defining him or herself. A person's identity may be associated with their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.

By signing the assent form you agree to become a part of the study. This survey has two parts: (1) general information; and (2) identity. Please read the questions carefully and use the pencil provided to fill in the space corresponding with your answer in the attached green answer sheet. For your privacy your name will not be on this booklet or the answer sheet. Thank you for your participation.

General information

1. What is your gender?
   a) Male
   b) Female

2. What is your age?
   a) 11 years old
   b) 12 years old
   c) 13 years old
   d) 14 years old
   e) 15 years old

3. What is your ethnicity.

   a) White (non Hispanic)
   b) Hispanic or Latino
   c) Black or African American

d) Native American or American Indian
e) Asian / Pacific Islander
f) Two or more races

4. What is your grade level?
   a) Sixth grade
   b) Seventh grade
   c) Eighth grade

5. Which grade level did you start in this school?
   a) Sixth grade
   b) Seventh grade
   c) Eighth grade

6. Please indicate if you have you ever participated in any of the following while attending this school? (Note: this question will be customized to each school).
   a)
   b)
   c)
   d) None
   e) More than one

Appendix B: Moral Self Scale

Instructions:

Listed below are some characteristics that may describe a person.

Caring Compassionate Fair Friendly Generous Hardworking Helpful Honest Kind

The person with these characteristics could be you or it could be someone else. For a moment, visualize in your mind the kind of person who has these characteristics. Imagine how that person would think, feel, and act. When you have a clear image of what this person would be like, answer the following questions.

Item	**Scale**				
	A *(Strongly disagree)*	B	C	D	E *(Strongly agree)*
7. It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics.	A *(Strongly disagree)*	B	C	D	E *(Strongly agree)*
8. Being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am.	A *(Strongly disagree)*	B	C	D	E *(Strongly agree)*
9. A big part of my emotional well-being is tied up in having these characteristics.	A *(Strongly disagree)*	B	C	D	E *(Strongly agree)*
10. I would be ashamed to be a person who has these characteristics.	A *(Strongly disagree)*	B	C	D	E *(Strongly agree)*
11. Having these characteristics is not really important to me.	A *(Strongly disagree)*	B	C	D	E *(Strongly agree)*
12. Having these characteristics is an	A *(Strongly disagree)*	B	C	D	E *(Strongly agree)*

important part of my sense of self.					
13. I strongly desire to have these characteristics.	A *(Strongly disagree)*	B	C	D	E *(Strongly agree)*
14. I often buy products that communicate the fact that I have these characteristics.	A *(Strongly disagree)*	B	C	D	E *(Strongly agree)*
15. I often wear clothes that identify me as having these characteristics.	A *(Strongly disagree)*	B	C	D	E *(Strongly agree)*
16. The types of things I do in my spare time (e.g., hobbies) clearly identify me as having these characteristics.	A *(Strongly disagree)*	B	C	D	E *(Strongly agree)*
17. The kinds of books and magazines that I read identify me as having these characteristics.	A *(Strongly disagree)*	B	C	D	E *(Strongly agree)*
18. The fact that I have these characteristics is communicated to others by my membership in certain organizations.	A *(Strongly disagree)*	B	C	D	E *(Strongly agree)*
19. I am actively involved in activities that communicate to others that I have these characteristics.	A *(Strongly disagree)*	B	C	D	E *(Strongly agree)*

Appendix C: Moral Ideal Self Scale

Instructions: When you think about the future, what do you want yourself to be like? This could be how you want to be later in your life, how you want to be next year, or even how you want to be tomorrow. With this in mind, rate each trait below according to how much it describes the type of person you really want to be. You should use a range of responses to show which traits most describe what you want to be like, and which traits least describe what you want to be like. In other words, you should try using most of the numbers on the scale from A to G at least some of the time, rather than putting the same number every time.

Item	Scale						
20. Generous	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
21. Good example	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
22. Depressed	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
23. Respectful	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
24. Disorganized	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
25. Truthful	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
26. Stands up for his/her beliefs	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
27. Makes good choices	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
28. Responsible	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
29. Easily upset	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
30. Follows values	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
31. True	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
32. Loyal	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
33. Arrogant	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
34. Does good actions	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
35. Understanding	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
36. Thankful	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
37. Self-centered	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
38. Compassionate	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
39. Quiet	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
40. Has good values	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
41. Loving	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
42. Forgiving	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
43. Uncreative	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
44. Critical of others	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
45. Considerate	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
46. Caring	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)
47. Helpful	A (*Not at all*)	B	C	D	E	F	G (*Very much*)

Appendix D: IRB Approval

Office of Research Administration

One University Boulevard

St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499

Telephone: 314-516-5899

Fax: 314-516-6759

E-mail: ora@umsl.edu

DATE: October 8, 2015

TO: Amani Qashmer

FROM: University of Missouri-St. Louis IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [801520-2] Character Education and Adolescents' Moral Ideal Identity

REFERENCE #:

SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: October 8, 2015

EXPIRATION DATE: October 8, 2016

REVIEW TYPE: Full Committee Review

This proposal was approved by the University of Missouri-St. Louis IRB for a period of one year starting from the date listed above. The University of Missouri-St. Louis IRB must be notified in writing prior to major changes in the approved protocol. Examples of major changes are the addition of research sites or research instruments.

An annual report must be filed with the committee. This report should indicate the starting date of the project and the number of subjects since the start of project, or since last annual report.

Any consent or assent forms must be signed in duplicate and a copy provided to the subject. The principal investigator is required to retain the other copy of the signed consent form for at least three years following the completion of the research activity and the forms must be available for inspection if there is an official review of the UM-St. Louis human subjects research proceedings by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Protection from Research Risks.

This action is officially recorded in the minutes of the committee.

If you have any questions, please contact Carl Bassi at 314-516-6029 or bassi@umsl.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

Appendix E: Consent Form for Parents

Department of Educational Psychology, Research, and Evaluation

One University Blvd.
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4400
Telephone: 314-516-5783
Email: afq526@mail.umsl.edu

Informed Consent for Child Participation in Research Activities

Adolescents' Identity Development

Participant _____ HSC Approval Number _____

Principal Investigator: Amani Qashmer PI's Phone Number: (314) 546-8028

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1. Your child is invited to participate in a research study conducted by Amani Qashmer under the supervision of Dr. Marvin Berkowitz at the University of Missouri St. Louis. The purpose of this research is to assess students' identity development.
   If for any reason you do not wish your son or daughter to participate in the survey, please sign this form and return it by (December, 7th , 2015).

2. a) Your child's participation will involve

   - Completing a survey on paper. The survey requires choosing one option to answer each question. There are two sections of questions. The first is "general information" and asks about his/her gender, age, and school. We will not ask for the students' names. The second section, "identity," asks about the student's thoughts about his/her own identity. "Identity" refers to one's answer to the question: who am I?
   - All students in your child's school will be asked to complete the same survey, with the permission of the principal. Your child will complete the survey once, and he or she will complete the survey in the classroom with his/her teacher in the classroom.
   - Up to 8000 students may be involved in this research.

   b) The amount of time involved in your child's participation will be 10-15 minutes.

3. There are no anticipated risks to your child associated with this research.
4. There are no direct benefits for your child's participation in this study. However, your child's participation will contribute to the knowledge about youth identity and may help society.

5. Your child's participation is voluntary and you may choose not to let your child participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent for your child's participation at any time. Your child may choose not to answer any questions that he or she does not want to answer. You and your child will *NOT* be penalized in any way should you choose not to let your child participate or to withdraw your child.

6. We will do everything we can to protect your child's privacy. By agreeing to let your child participate, you understand and agree that your child's data may be shared with other researchers and educators in the form of presentations and/or publications. In all cases, your child's identity will not be revealed. In rare instances, a researcher's study must undergo an audit or program evaluation by an oversight agency (such as the Office for Human Research Protection). That agency would be required to maintain the confidentiality of your child's data.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Amani Qashmer's Cell: (314) 546-8028 or Dr. Marvin Berkowitz, (314)-516-7521. You may also ask questions or state concerns regarding your child's rights as a research participant to the Office of Research Administration at 516-5897.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions.

Please note that you ONLY sign and send back this form IF you DO NOT want your child to participate in this study.

Parent's/Guardian's Signature	Date	Parent's/Guardian's Printed Name
Child's Printed Name		
Signature of Investigator or Designee	Date	Investigator/Designee Printed Name

Appendix F: Assent Form for Students

Department of Educational Psychology, Research, and Evaluation

One University Blvd.
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4400
Telephone: 314-516-5783
Email: afq526@mail.umsl.edu

Assent to Participate in Research Activities (Minors)

Adolescent's Identity Development

1. My name is Amani Qashmer
2. I am asking you to take part in a research study because we are trying to learn more about identity development. Identity is a person's definition of who he or she is.
3. If you agree to be in this study you will complete a paper survey in your classroom, with your teacher in the classroom. The survey consists of a series of multiple choice questions, and you will be asked to choose one option for each question.
4. There will be no risk to you if you participate in this research study.
5. There will be no benefits to you if you participate in this research study.
6. Please talk this over with your parents before you decide to participate. I also will ask your parents to give their permission for you to take part in this study. Even if your parents have no problem with you taking part in the study, you still can decide not to do this.
7. If you don't want to be in this study, you don't have to participate. Remember, being in this study is up to you, and no one will be upset if you don't want to participate or if you change your mind later and want to stop.
8. You can ask any questions that you have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you and your parents can call me at (314) 546-8028.
9. Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study.

_____ _____ _____ _____

Participant's Signature Date Participant's Printed Name, age, and grade

Appendix G: Letter to Principals and Information Sheet

Dear Principal,

I'm Amani Qashmer, a PhD student at UMSL, studying with Dr. Marvin Berkowitz. I came to the United States with a scholarship from the University of Jordan. I'm conducting a research study on adolescents' moral identity development. I'm contacting you to see if you would allow me to collect data for my research in your school. I will be asking all students in your school to fill out a 15-20-minute questionnaire in their classrooms. All data will be held in the strictest confidence. To help you understand the study, I am providing the attached information sheet; however, I will be glad to answer any other questions you or your school's teachers may have.

Your cooperation and your teachers' cooperation will be appreciated.

Information Sheet

What is moral identity?

Identity is one's answer to one's own question: "who am I?" Moral identity is associated with certain beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors affecting one's prosocial actions.

Why it is beneficial for schools to participate in this research study?

Adolescence is a critical period for moral identity development. Promoting adolescents' moral identity development helps them direct their behaviors in a prosocial way. Participating in this research study provides your school with a report on the distribution of moral identity among your students. And you will have a copy of the questionnaire in case you would like to use it again in the future to see if there is a difference in students' moral identity development through time.

Participating in this research study you will get information about a concept that is strongly related to behavioral issues in most schools. Moral identity predicts higher prosocial behavior and lower antisocial behavior among adolescents. It has been found that moral identity is related to several psychological and behavioral outcomes as follows: LESS cheating and aggression; MORE school engagement, altruism, sympathy, self-esteem and environmentalism.

What are the procedures for using the survey?

The multiple-choice questionnaire booklet includes questions about students' general information and prosocial behaviors. The questionnaire will be given in a paper pencil format. We will do the testing in one day to all students in attendance that day. This will take students approximately 10-15 minutes.

What are the costs and hazards for schools' participation in this research study?

The cost is only the time needed to complete the survey. And there is no hazards regarding school's data. As mentioned above, confidentiality of your school data will be guaranteed; the research results will not include schools' names or students' names.

Thank you for your consideration and cooperation.

Amani Qashmer

Appendix H: Instructions for Survey Administration

Dear Teacher,

I am Amani Qashmer, a PhD student at the University of Missouri St. Louis (UMSL) studying with Dr. Marvin Berkowitz. I'm conducting a research study on adolescents' moral identity development. Your school's principal agreed that your school will participate in my research study. I'm contacting you to thank you for your willingness to help in this research study and explain the purpose and procedures of the study.

First, it is important to introduce the main concept of this study; Moral identity. Identity is one's answer to one's own question: "Who am I?" Moral identity is associated with certain beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors affecting one's social actions. Second, as educators you might be wondering why it is beneficial for schools to participate in this research study. As a middle school, your students are in their early adolescence stage, which is a critical period for moral identity development. Promoting adolescents' moral identity development helps them direct their behaviors in a prosocial way. By participating in this research study, you will get information about a concept that is strongly related to behavioral issues in most schools. Moral identity predicts higher prosocial behavior and lower antisocial behavior among adolescents. Research also shows that moral identity is related to several psychological and behavioral outcomes such as: LESS cheating and aggression; HIGHER levels of school engagement, altruism, sympathy, self-esteem and environmentalism.

The school district and the principal have agreed to participate in this study. For you to participate I will ask that all of the students in your classroom fill out a 10-15 minute survey in their classrooms. All data will be held in the strictest confidence. To help you understand your role in the study, I am providing the attached instruction sheet, and I will be glad to answer any other questions you may have. Please note that it is important that you use the bullets of the instruction sheet as a guide for administering the survey with your students. My Cell: (314) 546-8028. My Email address: afq526@mail.umsl.edu **Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.**

Instructions Sheet

- **What material is needed for administering the survey**

A week before the "survey day," the researcher will provide you with:

- **Parental consent forms**: a 2-page sheet that's entitled is "Informed Consent for Child Participation in Research Activities." You will send a copy home with each student. You will take copies of this form from the principal's office.

On the "survey day," the researcher will provide you with the following:

- **Survey booklet**: a 4-page paper booklet that is labeled "survey," which includes multiple choice questions.
- **Envelopes**: empty envelopes that you will give to to each student for the completed survey to be placed in.
- **Assent forms**: a sheet that's title is "Assent to participate in Research Activities (Minors)." You will give a copy of this form to each student to sign if he/she is welling to take part in the study.

Your school's principal will inform you of the exact dates ahead of time.

- **What are the procedures of completing the survey**

The multiple-choice survey booklet includes questions about students' general information and prosocial behaviors. The survey will be given in a paper pencil format. We will do the testing in one day to all students in attendance that day. This will take students approximately 10-15 minutes.

- **What is your role**

You will send home with all students the parental consent forms, which will be about a week before the "survey day." If there were absent students on the day when you send home the parental consent forms, please make sure they take their forms home the following school day.

One drop envelope will be placed in each classroom, and students will drop signed consent parental forms in it.

- **How to handle signed forms**

When the students turn in signed consent parental forms, please ask them to place them in the envelope that is labeled as "Drop Study Forms" in their classroom.

- **What material will you need on "the survey day"**

In the principal's office, there will be surveys, envelopes, and assent forms for each class labeled for your class and ready for you to pick up.

- **How to start completing surveys**

You will find an envelope labeled "Drop Study Forms." Please use the parental consent forms in it to call for the students names written in the bottom of it. These forms are signed by parent who DO NOT agree that their children take part in the study. Therefore, you will call for the students and ask them to get engaged in any activity in the classroom that you assign for them while other students complete the survey.

After that you will announce to the class:

> "Now we will take some time of the class to complete the survey that you were informed about last week. I have a list of students who are not participating. You cannot participate if your parents declined your participation. You are free to decline participation even if your parents did not object. I will pass an assent form for you to sign, if you agree to participate, and those who sign it will complete the survey now."

- **When to hand the surveys**

You will hand surveys to the students who signed except for the listed names, whose parents objected.

- **How will students complete the surveys**

You will pass one survey booklet and one empty envelope to each student whose parents agreed to let him or her participate, and he or she agreed to participate. While you pass out the survey, please ask students:

- Not to write their names.
- To read each question.
- To choose one choice for each question.
- To answer individually.
- To place the completed survey in the envelope and seal it.

The students who do not wish to participate in the study will not be given the surveys and the envelopes even if their parents had agreed. Please ask these students to do any activity to keep them busy and quite while participating students complete the survey.

Each participating student will, individually, complete the survey without writing his or her name on it. Students will then place it in the envelopes and seal it, then, hand the sealed envelope to you. You will send all sealed envelopes to the principal's office at the end of the class period.

- **How to handle students' questions**

If a student has a question, please ask him or her to answer the questions that he/she knows and wait for the researcher to come to his classroom. Then, please call the researcher immediately.

- **What if a student asks a question when they are taking the survey**

While completing the survey, if a student asks a question about the content you will reply by saying that you do not have exact knowledge about the content of the survey, and it's only for students to complete with their best guess of what the items mean for them. You can call me during the survey. My phone number is (314) 546-8028 or the email address: afq526@mail.umsl.edu.

- **How to handle completed surveys**

You will collect them and place them in the big envelope. Then, please send them to the principal's office after the class period.

- **What to report to the principal's office**

The privacy of each classroom's data will be protected. The results will be reported as a whole school, not individual classrooms.

Thank you for your consideration and cooperation.

Amani Qashmer