A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER CHARACTER EDUCATION

EFFICACY BELIEFS IN NORTHEAST GEORGIA

by

Franleata Manise Sorrells-Blackmon

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

Research in the field of education has identified both the importance of character education in schools and the relationship between teacher efficacy and student success. While several studies have examined teacher efficacy beliefs for character education, more specific research was needed in order to understand the variances in efficacy beliefs, as well to help determine possible improvements in implementation, professional development, and teacher support. This quantitative study examined the efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers in northeast Georgia. Guiding the study were the following two research questions: (1) Will the character education efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers in private, faith-based schools differ from those in public schools? and (2) Will the character education efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers differ based upon their level of teaching experience? A convenience sample ($N = 127$) of willing public and private, faith-based middle school teachers within a 50-mile radius of northeast Georgia completed the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument anonymously. While statistical analysis did not identify significant differences in teacher character education efficacy beliefs based upon level of teaching experience or through an interaction of the two independent variables, a difference in the character education efficacy beliefs of teachers based on type of school program was found to be statistically significant.

Keywords: character education, efficacy beliefs, teacher efficacy, self-efficacy

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Dedication

This work is dedicated with deep appreciation, admiration, and love to the author's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen H. Sorrells. Together they have continued to instill in this developing scholar an unyielding belief in the great value of the investment in one's education and in the development of one's character.

Acknowledgements

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List of Abbreviations

Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI)

Character Education Partnership (CEP)

General Teaching Efficacy (GTE)

Institute for Excellence and Ethics (IEE)

Integrative Ethical Education (IEE)

Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC)

Personal Teaching Efficacy (PTE)

Social-Emotional and Character Development (SECD)

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES)

Teacher Self-Efficacy to Instruct Character Education (TSICE)

Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The role and success of character education is an important consideration for all stakeholders of a school. Prior research has indicated that teacher efficacy beliefs are strong indicators of student success in school. Therefore, the examination of teacher character education efficacy beliefs may ultimately help all schools more effectively approach and implement character education initiatives. The following chapter presents the background and significance for the research while also identifying both the problem and purpose statements. The two research questions guiding the study are introduced and terminology is defined.

Background

Children spend at least 40 hours each week with school teachers. The influence potential is great and is broader than a specific classroom subject. Weissbourd (2012) suggested that an underlying moral curriculum continually exists in all schools. As such, the education of children extends beyond academics, and most schools recognize the need to develop students socially as well as intellectually (Berkowitz & Bustamante, 2013; Cohen, 2006). "Moral deliberation and imagination must be fostered in order to cultivate individuals with moral character that will be able to reflect on their own received tradition" (Gronum, 2015, p. 1). Character education cannot be taught in one year or even a set span of years; rather, it is a cumulative and collective developmental process that continues even into adulthood (Hersh, 2015). A long-term, collaborative commitment to such instruction is key (Sojourner, 2014).

Self-efficacy is critical for the motivation for and outcome of almost any goal (Bandura, 1977). Thus, instructional self-efficacy has a profound impact on student outcomes and school success (Narvaez, Khmelkov, Vaydich, & Turner, 2008). Malloy et al. (2015) found that teacher

perceptions can largely affect the implementation of social-emotional and character development (SECD) programs. Therefore, teacher efficacy beliefs play a significant role in the results of character education initiatives. It is worthy to consider such beliefs and to explore possible variances in order to better prepare, support, and encourage teachers in this critical component of schooling.

Historically, student character development has been an important aspect of the American education system with even public school programs initially influenced by values and religion. However, during the twentieth century, public schooling evolved with a more secular approach to such instruction (Davis, 2006). Narvaez (2006) introduced Integrative Ethical Education (IEE), which places great emphasis upon mentoring to foster independent moral deliberation and imagination. While many private, faith-based programs still ground character education in religious doctrine, not all private institutions link the two (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2008). Moreover, many contemporary efforts within a variety of school contexts focus upon appropriate behavioral expectations as a result of Lickona's (1991) research advocating for a revival of emphasis on student character attributes such as respect and responsibility.

The Character Education Partnership (CEP, 2008) has suggested that performance values such as effort, diligence, and perseverance should be guiding goals of character education in schools. Additionally, the findings of Berkowitz and Bier (2007) suggest that effective character education programs encompass a variety of school-wide approaches such as modeling, positive behavior interventions, and service learning, as well as on-going professional development for teachers. Similarly, Lewis, Robinson, and Hayes (2011) described authentic character education as "a basic construct woven into the school-wide curriculum that pulls together all the associated programs in the school" (p. 230).

American society relies upon compulsory education to help prepare children to become productive members of the community. As reports of school bullying are on the rise and juvenile crime rates increase, the need for focused character education in schools seems particularly relevant (Lewis et al., 2011). Elias (2014) described moral and performance character outcomes "as powerful predictors of college and career success" (p. 42). Likewise, Davidson (2014) cited character performance as a powerful predictor of success. To that end, teachers are expected to guide children "in the process of character development for the betterment of society" (Waters, 2011, p. 122) as well as for a student's own benefit.

Whether intentionally or not, teachers do affect the character development of students (Bahm, 2012). Though efforts are made particularly in public education to separate the teachings of schools from those of the church, Van Brummelen (2002) noted that a completely neutral curriculum is difficult, if not impossible, to develop. Duality becomes a concern when the education of a child becomes compartmentalized (Schultz, 2002). As such, confusion can occur when the character values taught in the home or at church seem to conflict with those taught at school (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2008). This can further result in educators and others developing valid concerns regarding appropriate authority and effectiveness for such instruction. To that end, the expectations of society for the outcomes versus the methods can appear inconsistent (Holter & Narvaez, 2011). Such conflict and confusion can often lead to diminished confidence or apathy in teachers.

However, as the research of Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, and Smith (2006) and Park and Peterson (2009) suggests, there is a growing acknowledgement of the positive link between not only character education and classroom behavior, but character education and classroom performance as well. Assessing the character strengths of students, therefore, may not only be an

important tool for educators in determining effectiveness of such instruction. As such, the results of such data could also be strong predictors of academic success and thus be vital to overall student success (Benninga et al., 2006).

Specifically related to the chosen middle school setting of this study, the recent research of Köse (2015) contends that adolescence, in particular, is a critical time for developing one's sense of self and moral identity. Furthermore, findings suggest that teachers have a critical role to play in the character development of students and specifically that "a postive teacher-student relationship is very important for character education" (Köse, 2015, p. 301).

The theoretical framework for this research is rooted in Bandura's self-efficacy construct, social learning theory (1977), and social cognitive theory (1986a). Defining self-efficacy as the perception of one's own potential, Bandura (1977) theorized a triangular model for individual performance determination comprised of human behavior, personality traits, and external environment (as cited in Fenyvesiová & Kollárová, 2013). In theory, a person's beliefs regarding their own abilities and potential can be greater determinants of success than personal skill level.

The self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), which visualizes motivation as a continuum of increasingly self-determined behaviors (Koh, 2012), also helps to define the scope of this topic. Teachers experiencing higher levels of self-efficacy by nature feel more empowered and can yield greater success (Bandura, 1977). To that end, autonomy-supported classrooms promote individual empowerment, which better enables self-determination (Berkowitz & Bustamante, 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Furthermore, DeVries (1998) referenced Piaget's views that "a morality of obedience will never lead to the kind of reflection necessary for commitment to the internal or autonomous

principles that typify moral character" (p. 42). Such implications from constructivist theory (Piaget, 1932; 1965) suggest that all schools have "a socio-moral atmosphere that either promotes or hinders character development" (DeVries, 1998, p. 45). Thus, the question that remains is not whether teachers have influence and effect upon students' character, but rather the depth and scope of such influence and its determining source.

Finally, a biblical worldview cannot be minimized as a contributing theoretical foundation to this subject. While not all private schools lean upon biblical doctrine to support and guide the character development of students (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2008), many do. And though a separation of church and state is maintained in the public realm, Wilhelm and Firmin (2008) contended that any school that does not implement such programs from a Judeo-Christian view of the construct is vulnerable to "values clarification, situational ethics, and other post-modern foundational options" (p. 182).

Politically correct or not, traditional American values for society and law are historically rooted in biblical ideals. Proverbs 22:6 (New King James Version) states, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Though undeniably biblical, this verse holds a certain degree of neutrality. Regardless of doctrinal or intellectual origin, the lessons of childhood will extend into a person's adult life. As such, character development is a critical component of a child's education, be it from parents, teachers, the community, or the church. Caring relationships with adults are the most pivotal components in the avoidance of poor outcomes for a child (Sojourner, 2014, p. 70). Therefore, those with daily influence over students must possess a certain degree of motivation, confidence, support, and self-efficacy in order to be effective in producing whatever outcomes are deemed desireable.

Problem Statement

Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2009) suggested a need for the construct of teacher self-efficacy as a whole to be conceptualized and measured consistently. Prior research has explored connections to teacher character education efficacy beliefs with various factors (Milson, 2003); however, many studies have only explored self-efficacy as a general construct rather than specific to the character education domain. The self-efficacy research of Klassen and Chiu (2010) in particular highlighted a link between the contexts in which teachers worked and their self-efficacy beliefs and also discovered a nonlinear relationship between self-efficacy and experience level.

Huberman (1989) theorized that teachers progress through various stages in their career. This theory provided basis for the self-efficacy study by Klassen and Chiu (2010) that categorized teacher experience into four groups: <1 year, 1–5 years, 6–10 years, and 11+ years of experience. As such, these levels are used in the present study as well.

Tsouloupas, Carson, and Matthews (2014) found that teaching experience and various personal and school cultural factors predicted variance observed in the teacher efficacy domain of handling student misbehavior. Thus, an expanded opportunity to further investigate the relationship between teachers' character education efficacy beliefs and variables such as school context and teaching experience has been established.

Additionally, studies have highlighted differences in character education efficacy beliefs between elementary school teachers and high school teachers (Ledford, 2011; Milson, 2003); however, little research exists with a primary focus upon middle school teacher efficacy beliefs in this realm. Comparing the differences in teacher efficacy for character education, if any, which exist between public and private school teachers can provide further insight and a unique

consideration of the literature. While Milson and Mehlig (2002) found that educators trained at private, religiously affiliated universities had a greater sense of efficacy for character education, there is minimal research available regarding the character education efficacy beliefs of practicing K-12 teachers at private, faith-based schools.

Waters (2011) described the importance of "examining how the expanding presence of high stakes testing is impacting teacher efficacy beliefs in the values domain" (p. 123). While efforts must be made to meet academic standards and show measureable growth through observable data, the education of children should maintain a prominent place for and focus upon developing the character of students. To that end, research that focuses upon teachers' efficacy beliefs can play a more active and prominent role in improved character education practices (Leming, 2008).

Therefore, the problem addressed in this study is the varying efficacy belief levels of middle school teachers regarding character education in schools. This study specifically sought to uncover any potential differences between the character education efficacy beliefs of private, faith-based teachers and their public school counterparts while considering teaching experience levels.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study of differences was to illuminate the character education efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers and to identify if differences exist based upon type of school setting and level of teaching experience. A causal-comparative design was chosen for this quantitative study. The independent variables in this study were type of school program (private, faith-based school or public school) and level of teaching experience (less than one year of experience, 1–5 years experience, 6–10 years experience, or 11+ years experience). The

dependent variable was teacher character education efficacy beliefs as measured by the Character Education Efficacy Belief instrument (CEEBI; Milson & Mehlig, 2002).

In an effort to study a specific population of teachers for which little published knowledge of this construct currently exists, a convenience sample of middle school teachers from a northeastern, rural area of the state of Georgia in the United States of America provided the participants for this research. Teachers from a public school district and three private, faith-based K-12 schools within the same 50-mile radius of Northeast Georgia comprise the sample.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study may significantly enhance the existing literature in several ways. The knowledge base for the character education field could be strengthened in regards to efficacy beliefs, training and support, and implementation.

Narvaez et al. (2008) acknowledged a lack of research regarding teacher self-efficacy for moral education. While social issues play an increasingly polarizing role in American politics and society, the ideal of good character becomes more difficult to define, yet the necessity for its development in students remains imperative. Research has indicated that self-efficacy judgments are strong indicators of effort, motivation, and outcomes (Tsouloupas, Carson, & Matthews, 2014). As such, it is concerning that teachers in higher grade levels have reported lower self-efficacy in general than their elementary counterparts. The decline of efficacy beliefs in more seasoned teachers is equally troubling (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Do these belief trends hold true when specifically related to character education? Are these findings consistent in both public and private programs? And what, if any, differences exist between educators in such programs and of various experience levels? This study sought to provide further illumination and satisfaction to this research curiosity.

A better understanding of teacher efficacy within the character education domain can offer increased understanding and direction for improved training and support. It is disheartening that a higher level of efficacy for character education among preservice teachers versus practicing teachers was recently identified (Lowe, 2013). The field of education cannot rely on undergraduate programs alone to provide the knowledge and guidance necessary to prepare teachers for career-long character education instruction. Though not the primary focus of schooling, character development is undeniably involved (Berkowitz & Bustamante, 2013). Furthermore, even if not structured, character education in schools will take place (Bahm, 2012). Understanding the efficacy beliefs of teachers specifically for character education will help administrators and educational leaders to better support and motivate teachers at critical stages in their careers. In addition, if significant differences in efficacy beliefs are discovered between public and private, faith-based programs, then a sharing of knowledge may be beneficial. Sometimes the answers provided through research are unexpected and may not be those desired, but the revelations can initiate necessary conversations that can lead to enlightenment and increased potential.

Toney (2012) suggested that effective character education "must be embedded in the school culture and curriculum by teachers with confidence" (p. 6). The implementation of any initiative is reliant upon motivation and desire, as well as self-assuredness. Revealing how teachers within a particular school setting feel about a specific part of the curriculum can help to better structure programs and delivery models for a greater opportunity for success. Moreover, acknowledging the specific beliefs of teachers with varying experience levels will help to pinpoint possible strengths and weaknesses within the practical field. As Leming (2008) maintained, in listening directly to teachers, "a more fruitful approach to understanding the role

of research in improving practice will be found" (p. 34). Research that does not in some way transfer or connect to practice is essentially insignificant. As such, perhaps the most significant contribution this study can offer will be found in drawing further attention to the beliefs and voices of practicing teachers within the field.

Research Questions

RQ1: Will the character education efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers in private, faith-based schools differ from those in public schools?

RQ2: Will the character education efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers differ based upon their level of teaching experience?

Definitions

1. *Character education* – Instruction and learning experiences intended to develop understanding, commitment, and tendencies for ethical behaviors in students (Milson & Mehlig, 2002).

2. *Self-determination* – Heightened motivation through a continuum of increasingly self-guided behaviors and decisions (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

3. *Self-efficacy* – The perception of one's own potential to meet goals and achieve designated outcomes (Fenyvesiová & Kollárová, 2013).

4. *Strengths self-efficacy* – Individuals' beliefs in their capability to apply personal strengths in their daily lives in order to maximize their potential (Lane & Schutts, 2014).

5. *Teacher efficacy for character education* – The beliefs of teachers that their influence upon students can positively affect students' moral character and behavior (Narvaez et al., 2008).

6. *Teaching experience level* – Categorized through four teacher experience groups: <1
   year, 1–5 years, 6–10 years, and 11+ years of experience (Wolters & Daugherty, 2007).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Supporting the purpose of this study to further illuminate the character education efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers, this chapter provides a contextual foundation for this research. This study aims to expand investigations into teacher efficacy for character development by specifically seeking to quantitatively determine if differences exist in such teacher efficacy beliefs based upon school setting and level of teaching experience. Therefore, this chapter will outline the theoretical framework supporting the research and will present the scholarly literature related to the topic. Because the findings of this study could assist administrators in more successfully structuring character development programs for specific school settings and providing helpful and effective professional development and teacher support at critical career stages, the literature is reviewed in terms of practical application as well as historical and philosophical relevance.

Theoretical Framework

Theories of Moral Development

Moral development in children has long been a topic of inquiry and debate among researchers and theorists (Miller, 2011). A constructivism theorist, Piaget (1932, 1965) critically examined dual moralities identified as heteronymous (conforming to external rules) versus autonomous (following self-constructed principles), the latter of which was found to be more productive. "In Piaget's view, following the rules of others through a morality of obedience will never lead to the kind of reflection necessary for commitment to the internal or autonomous principles that typify moral character" (DeVries, 1998, p. 42). Expounding upon this idea, Kohlberg (1981; 1984) later focused on specific cognitive stages of moral development, which

further emphasized the role of self-motivation in the process (Kocabiyik & Kulaksizoglu, 2014).

Moreover, regardless of whether educators believe they can affect a child's character,

implications from constructivist theory (Piaget, 1932, 1965) suggest that "every school and

classroom has a socio-moral atmosphere that either promotes or hinders character development

as well as intellectual development" (DeVries, 1998, p. 45).

Social Learning Theory

Bandura's (1997) theory of social learning is also referred to as socio-cognitive theory

(Bandura, 1986a). The construct of self-efficacy is defined as the perception of one's own

potential (Fenyvesiová & Kollárová, 2013). "Based on social cognitive theory, teacher self-

efficacy may be conceptualized as individual teachers' beliefs in their own ability to plan,

organize, and carry out activities that are required to attain given educational goals" (Skaalvik &

Skaalvik, 2009, p. 1059). Bandura (1977) coined the term *self-efficacy* and focused upon a

triangular model for individual performance determination that includes human behavior,

personality traits, and external environment (Fenyvesiová & Kollárová, 2013). In essence, the

theory contends a person's beliefs regarding his or her own abilities and opportunities for success

are often more powerful than the person's true skill levels. This idea lends weight to the

consideration of teacher efficacy, as was explored in this study, as a potential success contributor

or deterrent. Moreover, social learning theory suggests a heightened and effective influence of

role models, such as teachers, on the development of social behaviors and aspects of character

(Berkowitz & Bustamante, 2013), which relates directly this research.

Self-Determination Theory

Also related is the Ryan and Deci (2000) self-determination theory, which describes

motivation as a continuum of increasingly self-determined behaviors (Koh, 2012). Essentially,

people must experience a sense of empowerment to yield lasting achievement in specific areas of learning, development, and performance. Specifically, the self-determination theory in relation to education suggests that autonomy-supported classrooms are more effective for academic advancement as well as for the development of character and values (Berkowitz & Bustamante, 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2000). This theory considers not only that teachers should maintain a certain degree of autonomy within the classroom, but that students should be afforded such power in certain circumstances as well. Authentic experiences such as student representation and student input regarding school community expectations can facilitate the moral development of many students (Berkowitz & Bustamante, 2013). To that end, teachers who experience higher levels of self-efficacy by nature feel more empowered (Bandura, 1977), thus resulting in greater self-determination to afford such opportunities and experiences to students.

Career Stages

Because this study considered the teaching experience levels of participants, it is important to include information regarding research in this domain. Huberman (1989) studied the professional life cycle of teachers and theorized that teachers progress through various stages in their career which include: (a) survival and discovery (0–3 years), (b) stabilization (4–6 years), (c) experimentation and activism or reassessment (7–18 years), (d) serenity (19–30 years), and (e) disengagement (31–40 years). Based upon this theory, Klassen and Chiu (2010) considered these career stages in relation to self-efficacy citing also the efficacy research of Wolters and Daugherty (2007) that identified four teacher experience groups: <1 year, 1–5 years, 6–10 years, and 11+ years of experience. As such, this study utilizes these research-based stages to categorize level of teaching experience.

Related Literature

Teacher efficacy for character education, based upon Bandura's theories (1977, 1986, 1997), can be described as the belief of teachers that their influence upon students can positively affect students' moral character and behavior (Narvaez et al., 2008). Current research suggests that the need for improved and increased character education programs in schools is rising (Koh, 2012). Moreover, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2009) concluded that the construct of teacher self-efficacy as a whole should be conceptualized and measured consistently. While contemporary studies have considered relevant personal and school cultural factors of teacher efficacy in handling student misbehavior (Tsouloupas et al., 2014), it is important to also examine the factors contributing to teacher self-efficacy in effective character development instruction and influence (Koh, 2012). Such revelations may result in an improved proactive approach to student behavior. If teachers perceive their efforts can be effective, motivation increases and successful outcomes are more likely.

Using the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI), Milson and Mehlig (2002) discovered that "teachers who earned their undergraduate degrees from private, religiously affiliated universities have a greater sense of efficacy for character education" (p. 47). This finding further establishes scholarly curiosity into the efficacy beliefs of those who actually teach in private, faith-based K-12 settings. Students are affected by their environment, and teachers act as moral guides and models whether they set out specifically to do so or not (Levingston, 2009). Therefore, research of character education effectiveness should also consider various school settings in order to identify any possible differences between them. Perhaps the results will aid educators in bridging gaps and gaining additional insight into effective implementation, practice, teacher support, and overall school culture.

More recent studies have continued to reveal additional research opportunities in the field. A subsequent investigation by Milson (2003), which surveyed teachers representing the United States, Guam, and Puerto Rico, revealed an overall positive sense of efficacy for character education but a doubt in teaching abilities to change students' pre-existing character. Furthermore, it was observed that elementary teachers had significantly higher levels of efficacy toward character education than did high school teachers (Milson, 2003). Toney (2012) similarly studied the perceived character education self-efficacy beliefs of public elementary teachers in West Virginia using the Teacher Self-Efficacy to Instruct Character Education (TSICE) instrument, which was an adapted version of the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES).

Additional studies have focused upon preservice teacher character education efficacy beliefs as well as the effects of teacher training programs on such beliefs (Ledford, 2011; Lowe, 2013). Osguthorpe (2008) specifically addressed the importance of training teachers in the moral demands of the teaching profession not only to aid directly in the character development of students, but to simply fulfill the duties of the job effectively. Research by Smith (2007) presented findings on school leaders' self-perceptions as character education leaders and the impact demographic variables have on such beliefs. Various opportunities exist for further study regarding active classroom teacher efficacy beliefs for character education and the variables that may affect them.

It is often prudent to look backward before looking forward. To that end, the related literature will be more deeply explored in the following sections from philosophical, historical, and practical research and applications.

Character Education in Schools

      History and purpose of character education. Shaping character and developing better citizens remained the overriding goal of education from ancient times up until the late 19th century (Tatman, Edmonson, & Slate, 2009). The democratic teachings of Plato and Aristotle suggested that "the purpose of education was to train good and virtuous citizens" (Tatman et al., 2009, p. 2). During the fifth century B.C., the Greek sophist Isocrates, who is considered the father of education, defined an education person as "one who manages daily circumstances well, and demonstrates accurate judgment, decency, goodness, honor, and good-nature" (Tatman et al., 2009, p. 3). Similar to the teaching from the book of Proverbs in the Bible, Isocrates likened such virtues to wisdom and wholeness (Tatman et al., 2009).

      Aristotle suggested that people have intrinsic reasons to act which are relative to individual priorities, well-being, and obligations (Hartman, 2006). In a sense, one's actions are dictated by one's desires, and, in turn, one's behavior affects and is affected by one's worldview and overall outlook upon life. Therefore, "psychological health and good character coincide" (Hartman, 2006, p. 70). "Good character, then, is a matter of practice and the development of habits" (Robinson, Jones, & Hayes, 2000, p. 21). Thus the education of children, especially in the formative years, becomes critical to the development of positive traits, habits, and views that will determine equally positive behavior and choices of character throughout life.

      The 17th-century philosopher John Locke also recognized the importance of virtuous training in schools. In Locke's view, academics were important but secondary to the development of good character and wisdom. In the 18th century, educators welcomed and expected the task of moral education in schools (Tatman et al., 2009). "There was no effort to separate the teaching of knowledge from the teaching of virtue" (Tatman et al., 2009, p. 3).

As America flourished as a young country, the common schools movement outlined a significant place for character education in primary, secondary, and post-secondary schools (Tatman et al., 2009). Moreover, "the precedent for a consensual concern for character and citizenry knowledge and practice would guide America's educational goals, curricula, and pedagogies through the end of the sixth decade of the 20th century" (Tatman et al., 2009, p. 4).

Contemporary character education. Since the early 20th century, the role of character education in American schools has been reviewed, researched, and debated. Milson and Mehlig (2002) defined character education as "the process of developing in students an understanding of, commitment to, and tendency to behave in accordance with core ethical values" (p. 47). Hersh (2015) described character education as a collective and cumulative developmental process. Yet from where and whom these core ethical values are effectively learned continues to persist as a debatable curiosity in educational research.

Traditionally, children's development in the moral realm has been influenced primarily by the home; however, as the notion of "modern families" continues to challenge and broaden traditional parenting roles, the need for consistent and enhanced character education in schools has heightened (Brannon, 2008). Early focus upon character education in American public schools was both values- and religious-based (Davis, 2006). Schools held character education in the highest priority and viewed reading the Bible as the primary goal for developing literacy (Tatman et al., 2009). As the twentieth century progressed, public schooling became further removed from the church and those desiring such faith-based instruction were left to consider private programs or to rely primarily on the church and home. In the latter part of the 20th century, the United States Supreme Court ruled to remove Bible readings and prayer from public schools (Jeynes, 2009). Interestingly enough, what began as the primary character-building and

literary goals for public schooling were subsequently banned. Jeynes (2009) pointed directly to these decisions as the catalysts for moral decline in the nation and increased juvenile crime.

Yet public school character education was not obliterated; it merely evolved with a greater focus "on the development of particular virtues within the individual person" (Davis, 2006, p. 7). Character education as an integral part of K-12 schooling's overall mission has since remained and perhaps even strengthened. However, the connection to biblical teaching and religion has been significantly diminished.

In recent years, many schools have adopted programs emphasizing performance character as much or even more than moral character (CEP, 2008). The Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) is but one example of a highly effective program that stresses performance character with an emphasis on leadership development (Tatman et al., 2009).

Schools of late have begun to offer additional opportunities for character growth that focus upon social and emotional health as well as service learning. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) teaches students to better control their emotions and places emphasis on social growth as well as academic growth in schools. Service learning puts character education into action and enables students to think critically about ethical issues (Tatman et al., 2009).

Recent research has linked strength-based initiatives to positive outcomes and offers support for the increased development of positive character education programs (Oppenheimer, Fialkov, Ecker, & Portnou, 2014). "In building upon students' character strengths, schools might be able to create happier, more engaged students resulting in possible increases in academic achievement and improvements in behavior" (Oppenheimer et al., 2014, p. 93). Likewise, Park and Peterson (2006) found a relationship between certain character traits and happiness, even in very young children.

Moreover, as juvenile crime rates rise and reports of school bullying increase, character education seems an even greater necessity (Lewis et al., 2011). Jeynes (2009) suggested that the decline in consistent moral instruction in schools since the early 1960s has led to the current increased juvenile crime rate and discipline issues in schools. Perhaps foreshadowing the current educational state, Lickona (1996) pointed to ten disturbing trends leading the nation into the 21st century:

- Rising youth violence;

- Increasing dishonesty;

- Greater disrespect for parents, teachers, and other legitimate authority figures;

- Increasing peer cruelty;

- A rise in bigotry and hate crime;

- The deterioration of language;

- A decline in the work ethic;

- Increasing self-centeredness, accompanied by declining personal and civic responsibility;

- A surge of self-destructive behaviors such as premature sexual activity, substance abuse and suicide; and,

- Growing ethical illiteracy, including ignorance of moral knowledge (Lickona, 1996).

Thus, as the new century dawned, a revitalized concern for character education programs in the United States occurred (Benninga et al., 2006). Sanchez (2005) went so far as to state, "In an era that is witnessing a decline in the influence of the family, the apparent apathy of the government, and the rise in power and influence of the media, the school must reestablish itself as a seedbed for the teaching of values and take the initiative" (p. 111).

Even with the onset of high-stakes testing and standards-based instruction through the contemporary accountability movement, teachers are still expected to "serve as positive role models for students and guide them in the process of character development for the betterment of society" (Waters, 2011, p. 122). Yet the increased pressure on meeting standards and measuring academic growth through assessments often pulls the current educator's daily focus away from character development concerns (Benninga et al., 2006). However, Schaps, Schaeffer, and McDonnell (2001) maintained that character education is imperative to the success of both society and the individual. And whether intentional or not, schools and educators will affect character development (Bahm, 2012). Thus, Lickona (1991) called for an infusion of moral training in all areas of schooling.

The research of Berkowitz and Bier (2007) suggested that "character education can effectively positively impact a range of risk behaviors, a set of prosocial competencies, various school outcomes including academic achievement, and social-emotional competencies" (p. 42). Additionally, Elias (2014) categorized moral and performance character outcomes "as powerful predictors of college and career success" (p. 42). Therefore, the potential impact of focused character education and the role teachers play in this effort should not be trivialized. "The essential challenge for educators is to help students want to grow as moral beings, and to equip them with the internal resources to act effectively on that desire" (Schaps et al., 2001, p. 40).

Thus need for character education is not so much in debate as "the meaning of character education itself, the initiatives for doings so, and the ultimate evaluation of those initiatives" (Sanchez, 2005, p. 106). In short, in today's society, can a form of values instruction still be broadly and effectively included in formal schooling, and if so, how?

Principles and characteristics. Character education is generally defined through overarching principles. Though often research-based, these principles may vary in differing organizations and contexts. As such, this section aims to provide an overview of several leading definitions of character and concepts of character education in order to provide the reader with a deeper understanding of the defining characteristics of the subject.

Aristotle's definition of good character consisted of "right conduct in relation to other persons and in relation to one's self" (Lickona, 2001, p. 240). To that end, Lickona (2001) proposed that a goal of character education must be moral maturity. Moral maturity is reached through the continual instruction and growth of three facets of the human personality which work in synergy. Thus, the specific components of good character as defined by Lickona (2001) are as follows:

- *Moral Knowing* – moral awareness, knowing moral values, perspective-taking, moral reasoning, decision making, and self-knowledge;

- *Moral Feeling* – conscience, self-respect, empathy, loving the good, self-control, and humility; and,

- *Moral Action* – competence, will, and habit (Lickona, 2001, p. 241).

Robinson et al. (2000) suggested a relationship between humanistic education and character education. To illustrate this point, they list several basic tenets of humanistic education, which suggest obvious overlap with character education:

- basic skill development for functioning effectively in a complex world,

- a humane approach for fostering respect of self and others as well as conflict resolution,

- the improvement for quality of life, and

- the establishment of a supportive, yet challenging learning environment.

"The ultimate goal of both is to affect children in a more holistic way to help them function effectively in this world" (Robinson et al., 2000, p. 25). However, the primary difference between humanistic education and character education is the foundational principle of the latter "that there are specific virtues that should be a part of education for all students (Robinson et al. 2000, p. 22). Likewise, Borba (2001) identified seven virtues for the building of moral intelligence: (a) empathy, (b) conscience, (c) self-control, (d) respect, (e) kindness, (f) tolerance, and (g) fairness. These essential virtues basically construct a complete character education approach for parents and educators.

Lickona (1996) further outlined 11 principles of effective character education, which have been adopted by the Character Education Partnership (CEP, 2010). The CEP (2010) defines character education as "the intentional effort to develop in young people core ethical and performance values that are widely affirmed across all cultures" (p. 1). Moreover, effective character education:

- promotes core values;

- defines "character" to include thinking, feeling, and doing;

- uses a comprehensive approach;

- creates a caring community;

- provides students with opportunities for moral action;

- offers a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum;

- fosters students' self-motivation;

- engages staff as a learning community;

- fosters shared leadership;

- engages families and community members as partners; and finally,

- assesses the culture and climate of the school (CEP, 2010).

These principles and the California Department of Education character education standards were used by Benninga et al. (2006) to develop six defining criteria of character education programs. Within each of the following criteria, a specific component of character education is addressed: (a) the school promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character, (b) parents and other community members are active participants in the character education initiative, (c) character education entails intentional promotion of core values in all phases of school life, (d) staff members share responsibility for and attempt to model character education, (e) the school fosters an overall caring community, and (f) the school provides opportunities for most students to practice moral action (Benninga et al., 2006, p. 450).

Taking a more strengths-based and individual approach, Park and Peterson (2009) described good character not as "the absence of deficits and problems but rather a well-developed family of positive traits" within a person (p. 1). Their *Values in Action Classification of Strengths* (Park & Peterson, 2009) outlined 24 character strengths, which were categorized into the following six overarching virtues: (a) wisdom and knowledge, (b) courage, (c) humanity, (d) justice, (e) temperance, and (f) transcendence.

The goal of the Values in Action program (Park & Peterson, 2009) was to create better ways to assess the development of good character in order to "provide a legitimized vocabulary for psychologically-informed discussion of the personal qualities of individuals that make them worthy of moral praise" (p. 3). This effort aimed to redefine character development in a way that would highlight individual strengths through self-assessment and application. Putting this into practice, Weber and Ruch (2011) used the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths for Youth as

one measure in a study of 12 year olds to determine the impact of character strengths in the classroom. Their findings suggested that good character was predictive of positive classroom behavior and was also related to positive subjective experiences and objective school outcomes (Weber & Ruch, 2011). Likewise, Tough (2012) referred to character as the "grit" which is necessary to one's success in school and in life.

Borba (2001) wrote of moral intelligence, meaning the necessary development of intrinsic values knowledge and understanding; though, putting such concepts into action has become an equally integral pathway on the journey of one's character education. Somewhat similar in concept to the Values in Action program, the Smart & Good Schools model (Davidson, Lickona, & Khmelkov, 2008) suggested a paradigm shift in the way character and character education were defined. This model promoted the idea that an individual's performance character must be fostered simultaneously with moral character (Davidson, et al., 2008, p. 373). Incorporating the viewpoints of the Institute for Excellence and Ethics (IEE), Davidson (2014) listed the following imperative goals for character education:

- develop moral and performance character,

- attend to ethical conscience and conscience of craft,

- educate for conscience and competence,

- ensure that character is caught and taught, and

- measure character performance assessment and grade point average (Davidson, 2014).

Regardless of which guiding principles or construct is followed, it is only through a shared understanding and collective mindset that schools and stakeholders can approach an

initiative such as character education effectively. Moreover, schools must consistently find ways to put such goals into successful practice.

Effective practice. Lickona (1991), considered a leading expert in the contemporary field of character education and its best practices, advocated for a revived emphasis on character attributes such as respect and responsibility within schools. Recognizing that an underlying moral curriculum continually exists in schools (Weissbourd, 2012), Lickona's (1991) suggestions focused more upon including such efforts in designated school-wide programs through modeling and mentoring, positive behavior interventions, and democratic activities that permeate daily all areas of the school versus direct classroom instruction in the subject (Berkowitz, 2011; Brannon, 2008). Schaps et al. (2001) suggested that students in a school must be engaged in these types of ongoing culture- and individual-building activities thus to have the feeling of personal connectedness that is necessary for character development to thrive. In contrast, they stated, "There is little evidence that moralizing to children or giving them direct instruction in moral principles has much effect" (Schaps et al., 2001, p. 40). Even more recently, the research of Köse (2015) further substantiated the need for character education to saturate a school's culture. Furthermore, Sojourner (2014) insisted that "character education requires sustained, long-term commitment" (p. 69). Yet while many initiatives are implemented school-wide, Sanchez (2005) highlighted still the power of such instruction and development at the classroom level led and modeled simply by individual teachers.

Berkowitz and Bier (2007) discovered that effective character education relies upon a myriad of practices involving strategies such as modeling, service learning, and focused professional development. Moreover, their encouraging findings suggested that when implemented broadly and with fidelity, character education in schools focusing on moral values

and reasoning could be highly successful (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; 2007). In addition, the CEP (2008) contended that "character education must also nurture performance values such as effort, diligence, and perseverance in order to promote academic learning, foster an ethic of excellence, and develop the skills needed to act upon ethical values" (p. 73). To that end, Lewis et al. (2011) concluded that "authentic character education should be a basic construct woven into the school-wide curriculum that pulls together all the associated programs in the school" (p. 230). Similarly, Schaps et al. (2001) promoted a complete school culture throughout which mutual respect and kindness permeate.

More recent school-wide approaches to character education in schools have included the following strategies:

- *Developmental Assets* – the use of support systems for various challenges faced by students such as substance abuse, violence, depression, and detachment;

- *Ethical Learning Communities* – the integration of ethics and excellence through collaboration;

- *Value Statements* – the public posting of behavior expectations and school-wide statements promoting community values (Tatman et al., 2009).

With the current strides in technology, recent research has spotlighted character education in the digital age. "The digital age beckons us to usher in a new era of character education, aimed directly at addressing the opportunities and challenges of living a digital lifestyle" (Ohler, 2011, p. 25). Just as Schultz (2002) cautioned of the repercussions of actively separating students from their religious lessons and practices outside of school, Ohler (2011) similarly warned of the school taking a hands-off and restrictive approach to students' character and moral development in practice while using technology. Lee, Jen Der Pan, Liao, Chen, and Walter

(2013) focused on the need for online (or e-) character education and suggested that that approach may be the only engaging way to combat the more negative influences reaching the youth of today from the Internet and the media.

As the arm of technology in many ways embraces and brings the world closer together, character education must also become relevant and relatable to a global society. Lee and Manning (2013) stated that "each society values different character traits as necessary to maintain their peaceful society" (p. 283). Thus, character education programs vary culturally, politically, socially, religiously. However, "it is necessary for educators in all nations to help children in the development of the most common and broad positive character traits" (Lee & Manning, 2013, p. 283).

Character education is not a subject relegated to the past. Clearly, research has both promoted and presented a place for character education today and a fostering of student ethics within contemporary K-12 schools. As society moves forward with new innovations, character education will help to bridge the values of the past to the present while navigating new challenges brought on with the digital age. Ohler (2010) points directly to character education as the most appropriate and accessible means for developing digital citizenship.

Schools, by nature, are environments that evoke change (Oppenheimer et al., 2014). Teachers are the ultimate change agents who daily engage in transformational leadership (Razik & Swanson, 2010). Yet in order for character education to truly inspire effective growth in students, "it must be embedded in the school culture and curriculum by teachers with confidence in themselves and their ability to influence the student's character" (Toney, 2012, p. 6).

Implementation. Though most parents and educators agree on the need for such developmental guidance for children, the specific pathway is often a bumpy road to navigate, as

the subject of character yields overtones of morality and spirituality (Holter & Narvaez, 2011).

Pala (2011) suggested that character education programs must focus upon qualities such as

responsibility, kindness, patriotism, and honesty, among others. More specifically, Shin, Boo,

and Suh (2015) developed the following teaching and learning models for character education at

the middle school level: (a) respect model, (b) self-directed model, (c) cooperation-centered

model, (d) self-interest model, and (e) story sympathy model. Supporting Lickona's (1991)

constructs, Pala (2011) wrote, "To be effective, character education must include the entire

school community and must be infused throughout the entire school curriculum and culture" (p.

27).

Van Brummelen (2002) described a four-phase model of a balanced curriculum that aims

to infuse values in a school's total curriculum:

- Setting the stage through real life experiences,

- Disclosure of concepts in a formalized way,

- Reformulation of learning through practice, and

- Transcendence through individual application.

Van Brummelen (2002) suggested that students need this balanced approach to all learning, not

just character education, in order to reach "insightful, reflective, and committed response and

action" (p. 111).

However, people often fear character instruction can lead to political and religious

indoctrination (Aslan-Blair, 2012). "Implementing character in the public and Christian schools,

apart from a Judeo-Christian view of the construct, leaves schools open to values clarification,

situational ethics, and other post-modern foundational options" (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2008, p.

182). Even though public systems in particular attempt to achieve neutrality in the delivery of

lessons, Van Brummelen (2002) declared that a completely neutral curriculum simply cannot exist. Likewise, Levingston (2009) stated that a "morally neutral" school is impossible, yet contended that there is a difference between moral and religious education. Moreover, Sanchez (2005) argued that "natural virtues do exist and can be identified as nonsectarian and vital to our citizenry" (p. 107).

Schultz (2002) warned of the dangers of duality in which education and life experiences are separated and compartmentalized for children rather than complementary and consistent. Confusion then exists when the character values taught in school seemingly conflict with those taught in the home or at church (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2008). With such potential for discrepancy, some educators may question their authority as well as their effectiveness in the character development of students. In light of such challenges, some may ponder if the risk is worth the gain or even if a viable opportunity for making a difference exists. Therefore, in order to better understand the goals and outcomes of character education implementation efforts in general, it becomes increasingly necessary to consider the efficacy beliefs of teachers regarding such instruction.

Assessment. According to Park and Peterson (2009), just as schools strive to measure academic growth through assessment, so should they seek measurement in character education. "One measures what one values, and one values what one measures" (Park & Peterson, 2009, p. 4). However, with the rise of high-stakes testing in public schools, educators are often hesitant of devoting too much time away from the academic path (Benninga et al., 2006).

Nevertheless, research has supported ideas that academic achievement is actually strengthened through the inclusion of character education (Benninga et al., 2006). Park and Peterson (2009) discovered that certain attributes of character had a positive effect on academic

achievement. Specifically, "among middle-school students, the character strengths of perseverance, love, gratitude, hope, and perspective predict academic achievement" (Park & Peterson, 2009, p. 4).

Similarly, Benninga et al. (2006) found through a four year study of high-performing schools in California that higher test scores significantly and positively correlate with character education. From this research, four principles or indicators of strong character education programs were revealed: (a) ensure a clean and secure physical environment; (b) promote and model fairness, equity, caring, and respect; (c) encourage student contributions in meaningful ways; and (d) promote a caring community and positive social relationships (Benninga et al., 2006, pp. 450–451).

Research has indicated that character education can and should be held to the same standards and expectations of instruction and assessment (Benninga et al., 2006). Moreover, in doing so, students may experience greater success in all areas of learning. In their comprehensive character education framework, DeRoche and Williams (2001) included benchmarks for assessing the progress and results of character education programs similar to academic standards that are continually assessed and data-driven. As such, Park and Peterson (2009) concluded that character education cannot be viewed as simply an extra-curricular opportunity but rather an integral part of the school's mission and overall curriculum which "requires no tradeoff with traditional academic goals" (p. 4). However, Davidson (2014) observed that "there is growing evidence that character performance is a powerful and important predictor of success; and yet, there is still very little systematic assessment of the growth and development of character competencies" (p. 83).

A collaborative approach. Regardless of orientation, most schools do share similar goals for students, which include academic achievement, character development, and socialization (Berkowitz & Bustamante, 2013; Cohen, 2006). While public schools are constitutionally required to remain maintain separation from religious instruction, private programs have the option of including faith-based instruction if foundational to the school's mission. However, not all private schools choose to embrace methods of faith ,lending further support to many claims that education and even moral instruction need not be specifically connected with religious doctrine (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2008).

Though some educators may feel their roles in student development should primarily be linked to academic growth, Aslan-Blair (2012) strongly advocated for a partnership between the school and the home in the development of personal character. Köse (2015) found that the teacher-to-student relationship is highly instrumental in character development, and that teachers must be knowledgable and accepting of the critical role they can play in this area. In addition, Köse (2015) highlighted the school-parent-community partnership. Similarly, Brannon (2008) emphasized a joint responsibility of both parents and educators in the character education of students. To that end, biblical references such as Proverbs 22:6 maintain children should be taught from an early age distinct knowledge of right and wrong. Likewise, many Christians, in particular, continue to believe that the teachings of school should mirror and supplement those of the church and the home (Schultz, 2002).

Nevertheless, while all schools will not and should not embrace the beliefs of a particular religion, schools are expected to and must focus on more than just academics. Research has shown that "there is a positive effect on a school's ability to meet the social, emotional, and cognitive needs of pupils following the implementation of a whole-school prosocial development

program" (White & Warfa, 2011). Britzman (2005) specifically noted the important role school counselors play in the development of character. However, the efforts of the educators are not enough. The qualitative research of Dardenne (2014) identified the influence of the home as critical to the success of character education programs within schools. Moreover, a phenomenological study by Skinner (2013) revealed that though the participants agreed upon the importance of character education, most felt that the lessons from home were most necessary. However, Chin, Lee, and Seo (2014) reported that many parents "conceptualized character as an alternative to academic achievement" (p. 85). This discovery suggests a growing challenge in character education (Chin et al., 2014).

The role of the student in the learning process can also not be discounted. Tough (2012) suggested that in order to prepare children for success, there needs to be an increased emphasis on developing positive, intrinsic character traits. Goodman (2002) contended that students must be active participants in moral development. As Schaps et al. (2001) revealed, direct instruction in moral education is not enough. Just as students must take ownership and responsibility within the classroom regarding academic growth, they must also be provided the tools necessary to become independent moral agents (Goodman, 2002). While cognitive skills remain important, schools cannot overlook the human development of students (Tough, 2012). Just as academic skills should be consistently reviewed and practiced, character can be as well. As Van Brummelen (2009) suggested, "learners must respond to what they learn in a personal way" (p. 12). Educators must instruct, mentor, and model; however, school can also serve as a safe setting in which students can practice making independent moral judgments (Goodman, 2002).

Thus, research supports greatly a concerted, mutual collaboration amongst educators, parents, students, and community in the character education and moral development of children.

"All stakeholders must play an important and active role in the education of the child to ensure the future success of that child" (Benninga et al., 2006, p. 452). That being the case, the question of how teachers actually perceive their individual roles and impact potential in such a collective effort to develop a student's character persists.

Teacher Perceptions of Character Education

  Professional development and support. Several researchers have focused on preservice training as well as professional support in the field of character education and the possible effects on teacher efficacy beliefs. Somewhat surprisingly, Lowe (2013) discovered a higher level of efficacy for character education among preservice teachers when compared to practicing teachers despite the earlier findings of Milson (2003) that pointed to increased professional development as having a positive impact on teacher efficacy for character education.

  In actuality, many teacher education programs do not seek to prepare teacher candidates specifically in character education (Nucci, Drill, Larson, & Browne, 2005). For many, character education is merely a chapter or a discussion within a required child development or child psychology course (Nucci et al., 2005). As a result, many practicing educators remain somewhat uncomfortable teaching character education or any subject within the values domain (Lickona, 1993). Hence, several researchers (Berkowitz, 2011; Berkowitz & Bier, 2005) listed professional development as a necessary component for successful character education implementation. As with almost any educational initiative, proper training and support is critical, and in the field of character education, current research indicates there are still improvements to be made. Notably, Revell and Arthur (2007) exposed such inadequacies in the character education preparation of teachers in training.

Sanger and Osguthorpe (2011) suggested that pre-service preparation for teachers should include an emphasis on the development and understanding of teacher beliefs. Osguthorpe (2008) also promoted a concept of teacher education focusing on "preparing teachers of good disposition and moral character simply for the sake of teaching that accords with what is good, right, and virtuous" (p. 297). Teacher preparation is often primarily concerned with the development of knowledge and skills while the moral virtues of the teaching profession are unaddressed. Moreover, teacher candidates may often be judged more on their demeanor than their moral convictions (Osguthorpe, 2008).

Rebore (2001) stated that one's own belief system will ultimately affect one's influence over others. Not only do one's beliefs dictate how one interacts with others, but these beliefs in teachers determine how they serve as models, mentors, and mediators. Given the critical role that teachers have in character education, emphasis on beliefs is a necessary part of teacher training programs (Köse, 2015). Therefore, teachers in both preparation and practice must be given not only guidance and support, but opportunities to define, develop, and further understand their own belief systems in order to become positively impactful in the classroom (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2011).

Efficacy beliefs. One's beliefs influence judgement, perception, and, ultimately, behavior (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2011). "While instructional self-efficacy has proved to be one of the most powerful teaching beliefs that influence teacher classroom behavior and student outcomes, little is known about teacher self-efficacy for moral education" (Narvaez et al., 2008, p. 3). Because increased motivation has been linked to positive teacher efficacy beliefs (Ahmad, 2011), the potential effects of such on character education programs in schools cannot be easily dismissed. Though teachers possess, in general, a deep concern for the character education and

moral development of their students (Holden, 2011; Milson, 2003), many simply do not believe themselves capable of having an impact or significant opportunity for such influence. To that end, Milson & Mehlig (2002) suggested that the complexity of the process does not often yield immediate or measurable results.

Osguthorpe (2008) stated, "If there is a truism in education, it is that good teaching requires a teacher to be knowledgeable in content, skilled in method, and virtuous in disposition and character" (p. 288). Teachers are held to high ethical standards, and as such, model ethical and moral behavior to students. They must always be attentive to their mentoring role in regard to character education (Köse, 2015). Levingston (2009) concluded that all teachers are moral examples for their students, whether they intend to be or not. Therefore, if teachers lack confidence in the outcomes, motivation to seek positive outcomes will often decrease (Ahmad, 2011), and discouragement and apathy can begin to spread (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009). In such cases, unintended negative results could even occur.

Research by Wolters and Daugherty (2007) indicated low effects of teacher experience on self-efficacy; however, a more recent investigation has revealed a possible stronger relationship. Though not specifically addressing character education efficacy beliefs, Klassen and Chiu (2010) considered possible relationships with three domains of teacher self-efficacy and various factors such as teachers' years of experience, gender, and teaching level. While Bandura (1997) hypothesized a stability in teacher self-efficacy beliefs once established, these more recent findings "suggest that teachers gain confidence in their teaching skills through their early years and into the mid-career years but that these levels of confidence may decline as teachers enter the later stages of their careers" (Klassen & Chiu, 2010, p. 748). In short, this study showed "how self-efficacy varies with years of teachers' experience" (Klassen & Chiu,

2010, p. 747), revealing nonlinear relationships with instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement self-efficacy factors increasing from early to mid-career and then declining afterward (Klassen & Chiu, 2010).

In addition to teachers' years of experience, school type was also linked to efficacy beliefs including the classroom management domain (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Consistent with previous studies, "teachers in higher grade levels reported lower self-efficacy than teachers in lower grade levels" (Klassen & Chiu, 2010, p. 748). Noting that variations of teachers' self-efficacy in relation to teaching level can occur within individual types of schools, Klassen and Chiu (2010) pointedly suggested that additional research on the influence of teaching context (i.e., type of school and grade level) on teacher self-efficacy is needed.

Because "individuals are typically guided by their judgments of self efficacy" (Tsouloupas et al., 2013, p. 165), the degree to which educators experience positive results with character education efforts may well be connected to levels of efficacy for the subject. This in turn could relate directly to student success. The CEP (2008) even suggested that schools "foster, in both faculty and students, a growth mindset that emphasizes the importance of effort" for character development in particular (p. 77). Character development will occur whether there is effort behind it or not. The difference will simply be whether the results are more positive or negative in essence.

The research of Lane and Schutts (2014) specifically examined strengths self-efficacy, which considers one's beliefs in one's own talents and abilities, thus revealing a link to teacher self-efficacy. For many educators, teaching is a calling through which to use multiple skills and talents to fill a variety of roles ranging at times from artist to facilitator to steward or even craftsperson (Van Brummelen, 2009). Strengths self-efficacy has been determined to "positively

predict the presence of meaning through increased hope and well-being" (Lane & Schutts, 2014, p. 23). To that end, the most meaningful character education programs are led by teachers who dedicate themselves with a purpose and hope for higher expectations (Berkowitz, 2011). It is the belief in the potential impact one can have that motivates many educators. When that belief is diminished or challenged, one may begin to question the effort. Thus, explorations of character education should include efficacy studies and listening to teachers in order to facilitate more practical application of the research (Leming, 2008).

Summary

Character education, whether approached through direct instruction, modeling, school culture, or a mixed approach, is a component of K-12 learning. Levingston (2009) argued that character education is most certainly within the scope of both public and private schools and is distinctly different from religious education. Character development has been identified as a powerful tool for student success (Tough, 2012). Moreover, connections between character traits and overall life satisfaction have been identified through research (Park & Peterson, 2006).

It has been established through scholarly literature that educators and school experiences have an impact, even if not directly intended, upon the character development of students (Levingston, 2009). "Teachers play a significant role in character education" (Köse, 2015, p. 303). Thus, in order to be successful, teachers must possess a certain level of confidence in their abilities to positively affect student development in this area.

Educators should desire to partner with parents in the efforts of character development; however, once children enter elementary school a strong foundation of basic character has often already been established (Brannon, 2008). Park and Peterson (2006) determined that many character strengths begin to be embedded in preschool-age children. Thus, Milson (2003) found

that "teachers possess doubts about their abilities to provide character education for students who may lack good character" (p. 93).

Research has further suggested that this concern only increases at the middle and high school levels (Milson, 2003). Waters (2011) suggested, "If teachers lack confidence in the ability of direct instruction on character traits to influence student development, then character education may have a much more difficult time succeeding" (p. 118), especially beyond the elementary level. As such, the findings of Ledford (2011) similarly revealed significantly lower character education efficacy levels for high school teachers. One could question then, if teachers lack the belief in their potential to have much of an impact anymore, what will be the motivation for continued efforts?

Therefore, from the self-determination and social-cognitive theories specifically regarding the construct of teacher self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Ryan & Deci, 2000), it can be inferred that the potential for student success and growth in a subject in which the efficacy levels of teachers are continually decreasing would seem minimal at best. The research of Klassen and Chiu (2010) highlighted a link between the contexts in which teachers worked and their self-efficacy. And whereas Milson's (2003) and Ledford's (2011) research highlighted significant differences in character education efficacy levels based upon school level (elementary and secondary), a study of teachers' efficacy for character education in relation to the actual type of school program (public or private, faith-based) may offer additional insight. Consequently, Bahm (2012) identified further research directed towards "the intensity of needs in the school setting (location, population, local economic situation, etc.)" (p. 137) as potentially valuable for the body of knowledge.

In addition, Klassen and Chiu (2010) discovered that "teachers' self-efficacy was influenced by years of experience in a nonlinear relationship" (p. 747). Though the earlier research of Wolters and Daugherty (2007) showed only a minimal effect of experience on self-efficacy, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2009) discovered that teachers' emotional exhaustion and depersonalization over time were negatively related to teacher self-efficacy. Furthermore, the results of a study by Tsouloupas et al. (2014) have indicated that teaching experience as well as other personal and school cultural factors predicted a substantial portion of the variance observed in the teacher efficacy domain of handling student misbehavior. Thus, these findings reveal an additional opportunity to explore the relationship between teachers' character education efficacy beliefs and levels of teaching experience.

This study was not intended to compare public and private school teachers in an effort to reveal betterment or ranking. Rather, it was aimed at identifying possible differences in efficacy beliefs so as to help the educational leadership better prepare, support, and assist teachers in this important aspect of formal schooling. As the research has established, one's own belief system translates significantly to one's behaviors, goals, and strategies (Rebore, 2001). And while it is important to consider the belief systems of teachers and the impact they can have upon student character development (Osguthorpe, 2008), it may be necessary to initially investigate the belief teachers have in themselves.

Self-efficacy is described as the perception of one's own potential to meet goals and achieve designated outcomes (Fenyvesiová & Kollárová, 2013). The motivation to succeed is often fueled not simply by desire, but by an intrinsic belief in one's individual abilities and possibilities (Ahmad, 2011). Thus the belief in the potential for success is necessary to the process. Self-efficacy beliefs have been shown to guide judgements and perceptions (Sanger &

Osguthorpe, 2011; Tsoluloupas et al., 2013), and have also been identified as a powerful determinant of teacher effectiveness and student success (Narvaez et al., 2008, p. 3).

Regardless of programs implemented and resources available, if teachers do not believe that they can truly and positively affect student character, the potential for impact is minimal. If teachers lack confidence in themselves and the process, their motivation and efforts will be diminished. Good teaching requires passion and an unyielding desire for and belief in the potential for success. Unfortunately, one teacher's ineffectiveness through apathy, disengagement, or frustration for just one year can greatly affect a child's future. Therefore, it is critical to examine the individual attitudes teachers hold regarding character education self-efficacy. If added support could be impactful in certain educational settings or at certain points in a teacher's career, the benefits from this knowledge would be immeasurable.

Whether desired and intended or not, teachers do affect student character development (Bahm, 2012). It is critical that this influence be positive regardless of whether the path is through direct instruction, school-wide initiatives, modeling, or service learning programs. Having teachers who not only possess moral character, but who also believe in themselves and the process are imperative (Narvaez et al., 2008; Osguthorpe, 2008).

Any type of curriculum is only effective if delivered appropriately. Though some efforts have been made to determine the outcomes of character education programs through formal assessments (Park & Peterson, 2009), the true effects are often much more subjective. Teachers are involved with students on a daily basis and thus develop opinions on character development through personal observation and interaction. These opinions can have an effect on teacher self-efficacy and should be heard.

Moreover, Waters (2011) advised, "As pressure continues to rise on teachers to increase student test scores during the era of high stakes testing, it is important that educators and researchers spend some time examining how the expanding presence of high stakes testing is impacting teacher efficacy beliefs in the values domain" (p. 123). Tough (2012) cautioned that schools today have a misplaced focus on skill development, and they should focus more, or at least equally, upon character development. "Less funding, time, commitment, and resources for character-based programs and dwindling associated professional development and teacher training all have hampered the movement toward comprehensive character education" (Sojourner, 2014, p. 69).

As Leming (2008) suggests, "A more fruitful approach to understanding the role of research in improving practice will be found in the act of listening to teachers" (p. 34). This study offers an avenue specifically towards this end. Therefore, this study aimed to contribute to the literature by considering any potentially identifiable differences in the character education efficacy beliefs of teachers based upon type of school program (private, faith-based school or public school) and level of teaching experience (first-year teacher, 1-5 years experience, 6-10 years experience, or 11+ years experience). It is further anticipated that school administrators, pre-service instructors, and professional development facilitators will find practical value in the findings in order to better equip, train, and support teachers in the efforts to positively influence the character development of students.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

In this chapter, the research design chosen for this study of differences is explained. Descriptions of the participants and setting comprising the sample are provided. In addition, the chosen instrument is examined for validity and reliability. Finally, the procedures used for data collection are explained, and the process of data analysis is revealed.

Design

A causal-comparative research design was selected for this study. The independent variables in the study are type of school program (private, faith-based school or public school) and level of teaching experience (first-year teacher, 1–5 years experience, 6–10 years experience, or 11+ years experience). These teaching experience intervals are based upon Huberman's (1989) theory of career stages, which provided the basis for the use of these ranges in a self-efficacy study by Klassen and Chiu (2010). Additionally, Wolters and Daugherty (2007) cited these levels as selected for a self-efficacy study to "reflect the notion that teachers may change or develop most dramatically within the earlier parts of their career" (Wolters & Daugherty, 2007, p. 184). The dependent variable is teacher character education efficacy belief measured by the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument for which permission to utilize in the study was obtained (Milson & Melig, 2002; Appendix A). There are no covariates in this design.

Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) described a causal-comparative method as one used "to explore possible causal relationships between variables" (p. 298) and further state that a "critical feature of causal-comparative research is that the independent variable is measured in the form of categories" (p. 306). Hence, a causal-comparative design is appropriate for this study. Moreover, as there was no manipulation of the independent variables, this design relies "on

observation of relationships between naturally occurring variations" (Gall et al., 2007, p. 306) in the variables.

Research Questions

RQ1: Will the character education efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers in private, faith-based schools differ from those in public schools?

RQ2: Will the character education efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers differ based upon their level of teaching experience?

Hypotheses

The null hypotheses upon which the research analyses for this study are based are as follows:

$H_0$1: There is no statistically significant difference in middle school (6–8) teachers' character education efficacy beliefs based on type of school program (private, faith-based school or public school).

$H_0$2: There is no statistically significant difference in middle school (6–8) teachers' character education efficacy beliefs based on level of teaching experience (first-year teacher, 1–5 years experience, 6–10 years experience, or 11+ years experience).

$H_0$3: There is no statistically significant interaction in middle school (6–8) teachers' character education efficacy beliefs based on type of school program (private, faith-based school or public school) and level of teaching experience (first-year teacher, 1–5 years experience, 6–10 years experience, or 11+ years experience).

Participants and Setting

A convenience sample of 127 middle school teachers from a northeastern, rural area of the state of Georgia in the United States of America was used for this study. According to the necessary sample size tables created by Olejnick (1984), when using an ANOVA, the utilized

sample size is considered acceptable for the selected alpha ($\alpha = .05$) in order to yield a medium effect size (Gall et al., 2007). Teacher volunteers completed the efficacy and demographic surveys at their respective schools (Appendix B).

Public school participants ($n = 78$) were currently employed middle school educators within a rural public school district in Northeast Georgia. Private, faith-based school participants ($n = 49$) were currently employed middle school educators within three private, faith-based K-12 schools throughout the same 50-mile radius of Northeast Georgia. Participants from the public school system comprised 61.4% of the sample, while 38.6% taught at private, faith-based schools.

Of those surveyed, teaching experience levels spanned the following: 3.1% first-year teachers, 28.3% with 1–5 years experience, 19.7% with 6–10 years experience, and 48.8% with 11+ years experience. On questionnaires, 85% of respondents reported that their respective schools currently implemented a character education program, while 15% reported no character education program in place.

The following demographic information further describes the convenience sample from which data were collected: 73.2% of the participants were female, and 26.8% were male. Race/ethnicity was reported as follows: 0.8% African American, 95.9% Caucasian, 1.6% Latino/Latina, and 1% other.

Instrumentation

The instrument chosen to assess the dependent variable of character education efficacy beliefs in this study was the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI) developed and validated by Milson and Mehlig (2002). Permission to use and adapt, if necessary, the CEEBI for this research study was successfully obtained (Appendix A).

First used in a study by Milson and Mehlig (2002) as well as in a subsequent study by Milson (2003), the CEEBI consists of 24 statements to which participants respond on a five-point Likert scale (Milson, 2003). The CEEBI can be completed in approximately 15 minutes. Based on the dimensions of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) from Gibson and Dembo's (1984) teacher efficacy scale (TES), the creators of the CEEBI contend, "Consistent with research on the teacher efficacy construct, the CEEBI was designed to achieve an appropriate level of specificity, with a balance of positive and negative phrasing, and a balance of internal and external locus orientation" (Milson, 2003, p. 93).

In their paper weighing content validity, Pajares and Urdan (2006) cited Bandura's guidelines for constructing self-efficacy scales and advised that efficacy assessment items should specifically reflect perceived capability. Therefore, such content "should be phrased in terms of *can do* rather than *will do*" (Pajares & Urdan, 2006, p. 308). In addition, "perceived self-efficacy should also be distinguished from other constructs such as *self-esteem*, *locus of control*, and *outcome expectancies*" (Pajares & Urdan, 2006, p. 309). The CEEBI achieves such through the carefully composed wording of the items that focus on individual capability assessment as opposed to self-worth and intentions (Pajares & Urdan, 2006).

As a result of the initial study utilizing the CEEBI, Milson and Mehlig (2002) "reported a bivariate correlation coefficient of .648 between PTE and GTE and reliability coefficients of $\alpha =$ .8286 for PTE and $\alpha = .6121$ for GTE" (Milson, 2003, p. 93). Moreover, the follow-up study by Milson (2003) yielded similar correlation and reliability coefficients, suggesting that "the instrument has maintained across administrations similar and acceptable levels of internal consistency as well as correlation between the scales" (p. 93). While a more recent study cited Cronbach's alpha as $\alpha = .79$ for PTE and $\alpha = .80$ for GTE (Bahm, 2012), Nucci et al. (2005)

reported the internal consistency measured by Cronbach's alpha as $\alpha = .90$. Used also as a chosen measure in studies by Ledford (2011), Lowe (2013), Sierman Smith (2007), and Waters (2011), the CEEBI continues to be acknowledged in the field as achieving consistent and reliable results for evaluating teachers' efficacy beliefs for character education.

Procedures

Prior to collecting any data for this study, the research proposal was presented to the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB), authorized, and exempted from further review (Appendix G). Because similar studies using the selected measure were cited in the literature, no pilot study was conducted.

Following initial IRB conditional approval (Appendix F), contact was made with the K-12 district superintendent and the headmasters of the K-12 private, faith-based schools in order to explain the study and request permission to conduct the research within the district and schools (Appendix C). Appropriate procedures, as outlined by each educational entity, were then followed in order to gain approval for research within each proposed system and school.

Once this approval was secured and the IRB authorization was granted (Appendix G), contact was made with the middle school principals of the selected schools to explain in depth the purpose and procedures of the study and request to meet with the middle school faculty during a monthly faculty meeting or to contact teachers in a manner determined most effective and appropriate by the principal (Appendix D). Follow-up phone calls and emails were made to assure the principals' understanding and approval as well as to secure faculty meeting dates or to determine the appropriate method by which contact with teachers should be pursued. Any requests for additional information were met.

Recruitment letters and consent forms were provided to all potential participants (Appendices E and H). One school requested an electronic survey submission process; thus the internet-based tool Google Forms was used to reach out to some potential participants.

Data collection included the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument as well as a demographic survey (Appendix B). All demographic and efficacy surveys remained anonymous. Demographic surveys provided the necessary information regarding teacher experience levels and designation based on school type.

As an expression of gratitude following survey completion, participants were voluntarily entered into drawings for gift cards as tokens of appreciation for their time and willingness to participate. In addition, snack items were provided at each site for those participating. Anonymity of responses was in no way compromised by these gestures. All results of the study were made available, if desired, to the participating districts and schools.

Data Analysis

Research Hypothesis 1

Data analysis began with a test of main effect for Factor *A* (type of school program) to address the first research hypothesis. To determine if a statistically significant difference had occurred between the character education efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers based on the type of school program independent variable, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical test was used. Since this variable had only two levels (private, faith-based school or public school), a *t* test was considered; however, given that the additional independent variable in this study had four levels and that a two-way factorial ANOVA was used to also test for any interaction between the two variables, an ANOVA was the more appropriate choice (Warner, 2013).

An alpha level of .05 was set prior to the analysis, and IBM SPSS statistical software was used to analyze the data. Effect size was reported using partial eta squared, which is widely used in statistical power tables (Warner, 2013) and interpreted using Cohen's (1988) conventions.

Assumption tests included the examination of a histogram to determine normality, the Levene's test to assess homogeneity of variance, and a review of the box and whiskers plot to determine the existence of possible outliers (Warner, 2013). The Shapiro-Wilk test was also used to more accurately determine "whether the overall shape of an empirical frequency distribution differs significantly from normal" (Warner, 2013, p. 153). It should also be noted that the ANOVA is considered to be a fairly robust statistical assessment for such assumptions (Warner, 2013).

Research Hypothesis 2

A test of main effect for Factor *B* (level of teaching experience) then took place for the second research hypothesis. Level of teaching experience was the second independent variable in this study and included four levels (first-year teacher, 1–5 years experience, 6–10 years experience, or 11+ years experience). Thus, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was chosen to compare character education efficacy means on this variable with multiple groups (Warner, 2013). Using a pre-determined alpha level of .05, IBM SPSS statistical software was again utilized for data analyzation. Effect size reported as partial eta squared was interpreted using Cohen's (1988) conventions.

It was expected that "scores should be approximately normally distributed in the entire sample and within each group, with no extreme outliers" (Warner, 2013, p. 221). Therefore, the Shapiro-Wilk test and histogram and box and whiskers reviews were used to ensure such

assumptions were met (Warner, 2013). In addition, the Levene's test assessed homogeneity of variance.

Research Hypothesis 3

This study ultimately involved the means of more than two groups for comparison on one dependent variable; therefore, statistical analysis also included a test of the A x B interaction to satisfy the third research hypothesis. Thus, to determine if an interaction existed between type of school program and level of teaching experience, a two-way factorial ANOVA was used (Warner, 2013). More specifically, a 2 x 4 factorial design was initiated since the research involved one factor with two levels ($a = 2$) and one factor with four levels ($b = 4$) (Warner, 2013). The groups of Factor A (type of school program) were designated as A_1 = private, faith-based school and A_2 = public school. The groups of Factor B (level of teaching experience) were designated B_1 = first-year teacher, B_2 = 1–5 years experience, B_3 = 6–10 years experience, and B_4 = 11+ years experience. The two variations of Factor A (A_1 and A_2) and the four variations of Factor B (B_1, B_2, B_3, and B_4) were manipulated simultaneously (Gall et al., 2007). Consequently, to consider the main effects as well as all possible interactions, the overall design had eight conditions (a x b) (Warner, 2013). Thus the eight cells for analysis included assessments of A_1B_1, A_1B_2, A_1B_3, A_1B_4, A_2B_1, A_2B_2, A_2B_3, and A_2B_4.

Using IBM SPSS statistical software, the assumption of normality was assessed prior to analysis using the Shapiro-Wilk test and histogram examination (Warner, 2013). In addition, the Levene's test assessed homogeneity of variance, and the existence of possible outliers was determined through a box and whiskers plot (Warner, 2013).

Post Hoc Testing

The Tukey HSD *t* test for multiple comparison would have offset the probability that a significant difference for any main effects was found between mean scores "simply because many comparisons are made on the same data" (Gall et al., 2007, p. 319). However, post hoc tests were not performed for the type of school variable because there were fewer than three groups (Laerd Statistics, 2015). Instead, pairwise comparisons were made using unweighted marginal means.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

This study was designed to reveal any significant differences in the character education efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers based on either type of school program, level of teaching experience, or an interaction of these two variables. The findings reported in this chapter are based upon results from the use of IBM SPSS statistical software to run a two-way factorial ANOVA and subsequent tests for main effects and pairwise comparisons, as appropriate. An alpha level of .05 was set prior to the multiple analyses on the collected data.

Research Questions

RQ1: Will the character education efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers in private, faith-based schools differ from those in public schools?

RQ2: Will the character education efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers differ based upon their level of teaching experience?

Null Hypotheses

$H_0$1: There is no statistically significant difference in middle school (6–8) teachers' character education efficacy beliefs based on type of school program (private, faith-based school or public school).

$H_0$2: There is no statistically significant difference in middle school (6–8) teachers' character education efficacy beliefs based on level of teaching experience (first-year teacher, 1–5 years experience, 6–10 years experience, or 11+ years experience).

$H_0$3: There is no statistically significant interaction in middle school (6–8) teachers' character education efficacy beliefs based on type of school program (private, faith-based school

or public school) and level of teaching experience (first-year teacher, 1–5 years experience, 6–10 years experience, or 11+ years experience).

Descriptive Statistics

One hundred twenty-seven (*N* = 127) middle school educators in Northeast Georgia completed the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (Milson & Mehlig, 2002). As shown in Figure 1, of the total participants (*N* = 127), 61.4% were public school teachers (*n* = 78) and 38.6% (*n* = 49) were private, faith-based school teachers (Appendix I).
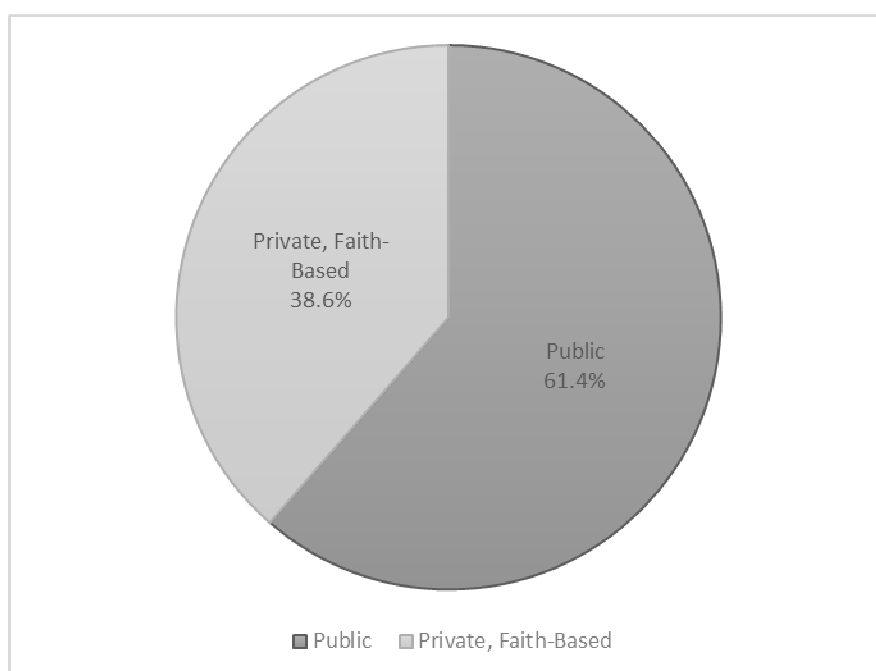

Figure 1. Participant type of school.

The frequency of teaching experience across the sample (displayed in Figure 2) was 3.1% (*n* = 4) first-year teachers, 28.3% (*n* = 36) with 1–5 years experience, 19.7% (*n* = 25) with 6–10 years experience, and 48.8% (*n* = 62) with 11+ years experience (Appendix J).
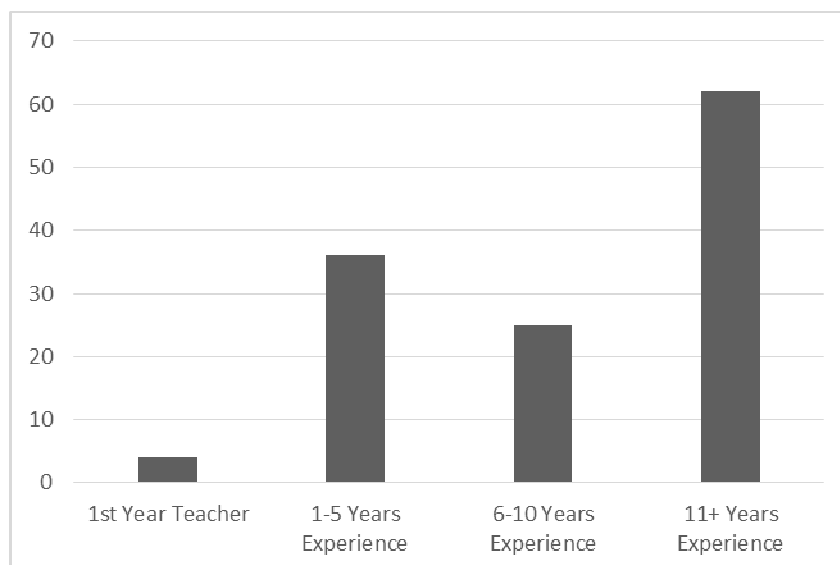
Figure 2. Participant levels of teaching experience

The character education efficacy belief scores ranged from 63 to 86 with an overall range of 23. Resulting scores indicated a relatively normal distribution ($M = 74.71$, $SD = 3.91$) with a variance (SD^2) of 15.30. Table 1 indicates the percentile scores for $P10$, $P20$, $P30$, $P40$, and $P95$. As shown by the $P95$ score, 95% of participants scored below 80.60.

Table 1

Character Education Efficacy Belief Score Percentiles

Percentile	Score
$P10$	70.00
$P20$	71.00
$P30$	72.00
$P40$	74.00
$P95$	80.60

Results

Assumption Tests

Visual examination of a histogram (see Appendix K) to determine normality indicated a

relatively normal curve. Further split file analyzation using the Shapiro-Wilk test for analyzation

confirmed that the $p > .05$ requirement for the assumption of normality had indeed been met for

the residuals for character education efficacy belief (see Table 2).

Table 2

Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality

School Type	Teaching Experience	DF	Sig.
Public	<1 year	4	.235
	1-5 years	17	.208
	6-10 years	13	.894
	11+ years	44	.885
Private, faith-based	1-5 years	19	.442
	6-10 years	12	.060
	11+ years	18	.222

Box and whisker plots (Appendix M) indicated no outliers existed in the data.

Furthermore, homogeneity of variances was achieved, as assessed by Levene's test for equality

of variances, $p = .169$ (see Table 3).

Table 3

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

F	df1	df2	Sig.
1.545	6	120	.169

Research Hypothesis 1

A test of main effect for Factor *A* (type of school program) was completed to consider the null hypothesis stating no statistically significant difference exists between the character education efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers based on the type of school program. A *t* test could have been chosen to test this hypothesis since this variable has just two levels. However, since the additional independent variable in this study has four levels and a two-way factorial ANOVA was used to also test for any interaction between the two variables, an ANOVA was the more appropriate choice (Warner, 2013).

Based on an alpha level of .05 set prior to analysis, the results of the two-way ANOVA indicated a statistically significant main effect for type of school, $F(1, 20) = 4.912$, $p = .029$, partial $\eta^2 = .039$ (see Table 4). Though a statistically significant main effect was observed, post hoc tests were not performed for the first research hypothesis because there were fewer than three groups (Laerd Statistics, 2015). However, pairwise comparisons were made using unweighted marginal means. The marginal means for character education efficacy beliefs were 73.77 ± 0.63 for public school and $75.74 \pm .057$ for private school, a statistically significant mean difference of 1.97 (95% CI, .29 to 3.65), $p = .022$ (Appendix M). Data are mean $\pm$ standard error, unless otherwise stated. As Figure 3 illustrates, private, faith-based school type was associated with a mean character education efficacy belief score 1.97 (95% CI, .29 to 3.65) points higher than a public school type, which indicated a statistically significant difference, $p = .022$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.
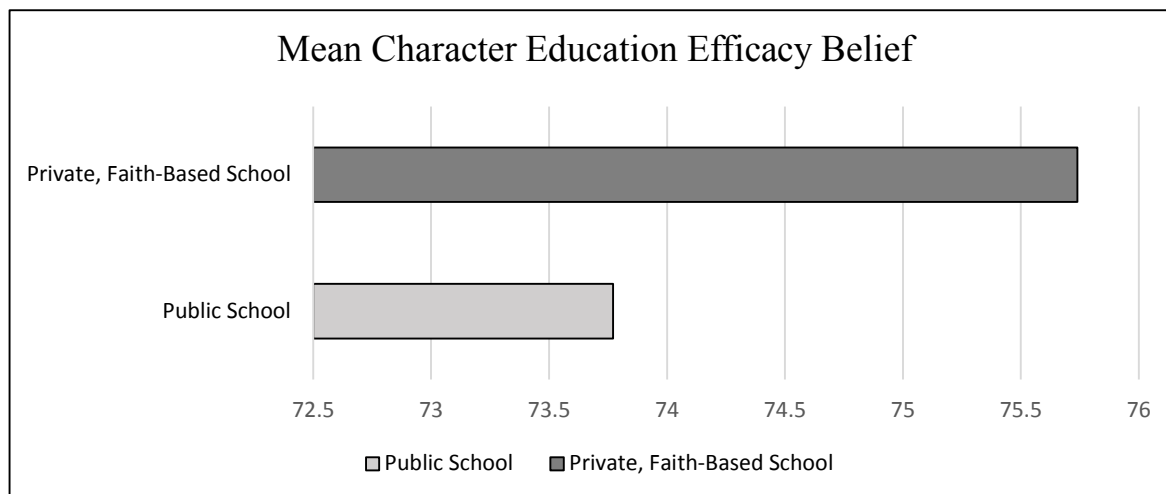
Figure 3. Type of school pairwise comparisons

Research Hypothesis 2

A test of main effect for Factor *B* (level of teaching experience) was conducted through a two-way ANOVA with a pre-set alpha level of .05. The second null hypothesis states there is no statistically significant difference in middle school teachers' character education efficacy beliefs based on level of teaching experience. As displayed in Table 4, results indicated that there was not a statistically significant main effect for level of teaching experience, $F(3, 120) = .141$, $p = .935$, partial $\eta^2 = .004$. Thus, there was a failure to reject the second null hypothesis.

Research Hypothesis 3

A statistical analysis of the *A* x *B* interaction was made to consider the null hypothesis that no interaction in middle school teachers' character education efficacy beliefs exists between type of school program and level of teaching experience. As shown in Table 4, results from the two-way factorial ANOVA indicated there was no statistically significant interaction between type of school and level of teaching experience for character education efficacy beliefs in middle school teachers, $F(2, 120) = .112$, $p = .894$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$. As such, there was a failure to reject the third null hypothesis.

Table 4

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Research Hypothesis 1 Type of School	75.288	1	75.288	4.912	.029	.039
Research Hypothesis 2 Teaching Experience	6.486	3	2.162	.141	.935	.004
Research Hypothesis 3 Interaction	3.441	2	1.721	.112	.894	.002

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

The conclusions of this research present the results of the current study in relation to the existing body of literature. Using the two research questions as guides, the results are compared with findings from prior research and discussed in terms of support or contradiction. Implications of the recent findings are also addressed, as well as the limitations of the study which helped to determine recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The purpose of this study of differences was to illuminate the character education efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers and to identify if differences exist based upon type of school setting and level of teaching experience.

Research Question 1

The first research question driving this study sought to determine if the character education efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers in private, faith-based schools would differ from those in public schools. The recent research of Malloy et al. (2015) affirmed that teacher perceptions play a significant role in character education, and the findings of Berkowitz and Bustamante (2013) further emphasized the need for schools to develop children socially as well as academically. Moreover, research has revealed that teachers affect the character development of their students whether they are purposefully attempting to or not (Bahm, 2012).

Narvaez et al. (2008) specifically pointed to the need for more research regarding teacher self-efficacy for moral education. While previous studies of character education efficacy beliefs had considered such variables as school level (Milson, 2003; Ledford, 2011), this study is unique in that it analyzed type of school program.

Holden's (2011) research upheld the findings of Milson (2003), indicating the deep concern that all teachers, in general, maintain for the character education of their students. The results of this study further support these findings as the character education efficacy belief scores ranged from 63 to 86 with an overall range of 23 (Appendices I and J). Given that the CEEBI has a potential overall range of 96, the data indicate that the participants of this study similarly possess a vested interest in the topic.

Earlier findings of Berkowitz and Bier (2005; 2007) suggested that character education success is achievable only when implemented with fidelity and throughout the school culture. In addition, Sojourner (2014) found that a collaborative approach over time is essential. Similarly, Lewis et al. (2011) came to the conclusion that character education must encompass all programs within a school-wide curriculum in order to flourish. Revealing a statistically significant difference in character education efficacy belief levels based upon type of school program, the current study substantially adds the consideration of context and setting of such a school-wide approach to the literature base. This further establishes a synergistic connection through all of these studies relating directly to the constructs of Lickona (1991) and to Pala's (2011) conclusion that character education is heavily immersed in and determined by a school's culture.

Research Question 2

The second research question of this study explored differences in middle school teacher character education efficacy beliefs based upon level of teaching experience. The findings of the study suggest that a statistically significant difference in middle school teacher character education efficacy beliefs based on level of teaching experience does not exist.

Bandura (1997) theorized that teacher self-efficacy beliefs would remain relatively stable once established. Wolters and Daugherty (2007) found teaching experience level to have a

minimal effect on self-efficacy. However, the more recent findings of Klassen and Chiu (2010) suggested that confidence is gained as teachers move from the early years in the field to mid-career and then begins to decline in the later stages. Similarly, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) identified a negative relationship between time in the field and teacher self-efficacy. However, the failure to reject the second null hypothesis in the present study, does lend support to Bandura's (1997) original theory suggesting that teacher efficacy beliefs are not significantly altered throughout one's career. Nonetheless, the data also showed some parallels to the findings of Klassen and Chiu (2010) and Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010), as the mean efficacy scores for private, faith-based teachers showed an increase from early to mid-career and then a decline (Appendix M) .

Hersh (2015) contended that character education is not developed during a certain year or at a specific stage, but rather it is an ongoing process that must be continually strengthened and built upon throughout one's education. Köse (2015) found that middle school was a uniquely important stage for character development. The teacher-student relationship is critical, as positive relationships with adults lead to the greatest outcomes for students (Köse, 2015; Sojourner, 2014). To that end, if the efficacy beliefs of teachers are not strong and somewhat consistent, the risk for gaps in student development is heightened. Self-efficacy beliefs are guiding forces for teachers (Tsouloupas et al., 2013; Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2011). For character education to be effective, teachers must maintain confidence in their opportunity to help students develop in this area (Toney, 2012; Waters, 2011). Thus when compared to the research of Lowe (2013), which discovered lower levels of efficacy for character education among practicing teachers than preservice teachers, the results of this study are encouraging. This finding may

suggest that the efficacy levels of teachers in the field are either increasing or, at the very least, not decreasing significantly.

The research of Berkowitz (2011) and Berkowitz and Bier (2005) highlighted in particular professional development as a key to successful implementation of character education in schools. To that end, the results from this study may also indicate that practicing teachers are more recently receiving the necessary support and development in the field in order to guard against a decline in character education efficacy beliefs over time.

Implications

Milson (2003) and Ledford (2011) both found in previous research that elementary school teachers had higher levels of teacher efficacy beliefs for character education. One might consider this finding to be attributed to the age of the students and perhaps even to a reduced level of involvement by middle and high school parents. Brannon (2008) discussed in depth the importance of a joint effort between teachers and parents for the character development of children to yield successful results. However, parents and even teachers often expect more independence from students as they move into middle and high school, which can result in a less active parental presence in schools.

The prior findings that elementary school teachers had higher efficacy beliefs for character education than middle and high school teachers sparked a particular interest for this study to hone in on the middle school setting for research. Köse (2015) suggested that the middle school student is at a distinct crossroads for the development of one's sense of self and character. To maintain high levels of efficacy beliefs in teachers at this critical level may be particularly impactful for students who are at a particularly vulnerable point of development.

When testing for the main effect of type of school program, this study uncovered a statistically significant difference between the character education efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers at public and private, faith-based schools. Might this difference also be partially attributed to parent involvement? Aslan-Blair (2012) promoted the need for a continual partnership between the home and the school particularly in regard to character education. Public schools, though, often strive to maintain a neutral curriculum (Van Brummelen, 2002), thus risking a slippery slope with the implementation of specific character instruction. Aslan-Blair (2012) noted in particular the fear of indoctrination that often exists in the public realm when values and morals are addressed in the school.

Values without a moral compass that are introduced outside of a grounded context, however, are in danger of being ambiguous. Consider Schultz's (2002) stance on the perils of duality. Likewise, Wilhelm and Firmin (2008) warned of confusion when character values taught in the home and in the school do not align. Continuity is important to a child's discipline and development. Dardenne (2014) found that the influence from home plays a critical role in character education, and Skinner's (2013) phenomenological study likewise revealed that lessons from home are powerful. When there is true partnership between the school and the home, teachers feel more support and there is a greater opportunity for success (Köse, 2015). Therefore, perhaps there is more parallel between character development in the home and the school, as a whole, in private, faith-based schools where, for many parents, the selection of the school was based largely upon the belief set of the school.

Moreover, attempting to teach in a neutral way is virtually impossible (Levingston, 2009; Van Brummelen, 2002). Bahm (2012) contends that teachers affect student character development, whether purposeful or not, because they are positioned as guides and models

(Levingston, 2009). An underlying moral curriculum is constantly present in all schools (Weissbourd, 2012); thus the implications of this study suggest that teachers who feel positioned to bring this moral curriculum to the forefront due to the type of school program have a stronger efficacy belief in the outcomes.

Furthermore, when rooted in a faith that provides a firm and consistent foundation which can be referenced, character instruction may have more opportunity for success. At the very least, maybe such grounding offers more confidence and support to those teaching it. Perhaps, then, the greatest implication from this study is that the context in which one learns and in which one teaches is often as important as what is being taught.

Limitations

The researcher acknowledges that limitations to the present study did exist and must be considered when interpreting the results. Every effort was made to ensure that data were collected and reported with fidelity; however, due to various situational circumstances, certain limitations were unavoidable.

Methodological limitations included the relatively small sample size, the convenience sample, and self-reporting nature of the data collection. Due to the convenience structure of the sample, a limited number of potential and willing participants were available to the researcher. Though meeting the necessary sample size to yield a medium effect size (Gall et al., 2007), a larger sample size would have further reduced the possibility of a Type II error. Furthermore, the convenience sample admittedly limited the external validity of the results and generalization potential to other populations. This study also relied solely upon self-reported data. As such, this type of data collection remained vulnerable to participants' individual bias and differing interpretations of survey response categories.

Recommendations for Future Research

While this study has offered additional insight into the character education efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers, additional research is still needed. Considering the results and limitations of this study, the following recommendations for future research are suggested:

1. A similar study with a more expansive sample size;

2. Additional studies within various and larger geographic locations;

3. The addition of private, secular schools and charter schools as type of school program variable levels;

4. The inclusion of other potential interaction variable factors, such as teacher gender, pre-service training type, subject area, etc.; and,

5. Qualitative research to better determine specific factors which may affect teacher character education efficacy beliefs.

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APPENDIX A: Permission for Instrument Use Correspondence

Re: Character Education Efficacy Belief
Sorrells-Blackmon, Franleata Manise

Thu 2/5/2015 6:45 PM
To: Milson, Andrew J ██████████
...

Thank you very much for your prompt reply and permission to use the instrument. I appreciate your well wishes and extend mine to you, as well, in your current endeavors.

Sincerely,

Franleata Sorrells-Blackmon

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 5, 2015, at 5:22 PM, "Milson, Andrew J" < ████████████ > wrote:

Dear Ms. Sorrells-Blackmon,

Thank you for your interest in using the CEEBI for your research. You have my permission to use and adapt the instrument as needed for your work. Best wishes for a successful dissertation study.

Andy Milson
UT Arlington

From: Sorrells-Blackmon, Franleata Manise
Sent: 2/5/2015 2:15 PM
To: Milson, Andrew J
Subject: Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument

Greetings Dr. Milson,

My name is Franleata Sorrells-Blackmon. I am an Ed.D. dissertation candidate at Liberty University. As I enter the prospectus phase of the dissertation process, I would like to request permission from you to use the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument in my research.

I plan to explore the character education efficacy beliefs of middle school teachers of varying experience levels in Northeast Georgia in both private, faith-based and public school settings. The CEEBI is a valid instrument which will provide reliable data. It is my hope that my findings will offer added insight in the field of character education with particular regards to teacher perceptions and efficacy.

Please let me know if further information is needed or if you have any questions regarding the scope of my study. I look forward to your response and would appreciate the opportunity to use the CEEBI in my research.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Franleata Sorrells-Blackmon, Ed.S.
Doctoral Student, Educational Leadership
Liberty University
Lynchburg, VA

APPENDIX B: Demographic Questionnaire

Instructions: *Please complete the following demographic information by selecting the most appropriate answer to describe yourself. All information is to be provided anonymously.*

Gender

_____ Male _____ Female

Race/Ethnicity

_____ African American _____ Caucasian _____ Native American

_____ Asian/Pacific Islander _____ Latino/Latina _____ Multiracial

_____ Other (please specify): _____

Teaching Experience

_____ 1st Year Teacher (i.e., you are currently in your first year of teaching, having not yet completed a full year)

_____ 1-5 Years Experience (i.e., you have *completed* at least 1 full year of teaching, but no more than 5)

_____ 6-10 Years Experience (i.e., you have *completed* at least 6 full years of teaching, but no more than 10)

_____ 11+ Years Experience (i.e., you have *completed* at least 11 full years of teaching or more)

Type of School

_____ Private, Faith-Based School _____ Public School

Does your school have a character education program? (This could include direct classroom instruction and/or school wide initiatives, such as positive behavior strategies, character building, etc.)

_____ YES _____ NO

Did you graduate with an education degree (undergraduate, graduate, specialist, and/or doctorate) from a private, faith-based institution?

_____ YES _____ NO

Thank You For Your Participation!

APPENDIX C: Superintendent/Headmaster Contact Letter

███████████████
███████████████

[Date]

[School District Superintendent or Headmaster]
[School District or School]
[Address]
[City, State, Zip Code]

Dear [School District Superintendent or Headmaster],

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for the doctor of education degree. The title of my research project is **A Comparative Study of Middle School Teacher Character Education Efficacy Beliefs in Northeast Georgia**. The purpose of my research is to examine the efficacy beliefs of teachers within both public and private schools for character education. Prior research has indicated that teacher efficacy beliefs are strong indicators of student success; therefore, it is my goal to add useful information to the research base, which can ultimately help all schools more effectively approach and implement character education initiatives.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at [School District/School Name] Participants will be asked to complete a brief demographic questionnaire, as well as the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI). Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. In addition, data collection will ensure anonymity of individual participants and schools. Thus the potential risk to those involved in the study is considered extremely low. If desired, results of the final study will be made available to you and can also be shared with participants.

At your earliest convenience, could you please provide me with information on how to attain approval for research specifically in your [School District or School]? I also welcome any opportunity to further discuss my research proposal with you and to answer any questions you may have. I can be reached via email at ████████████████████ or by phone at ███████████. I look forward to hearing from you and thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Franleata Sorrells-Blackmon
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX D: Principal Contact Letter

████████████████
████████████████
[Date]

[School Principal]
[School]
[Address]
[City, State, Zip Code]

Dear [School Principal],

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for the doctor of education degree. The title of my research project is **A Comparative Study of Middle School Teacher Character Education Efficacy Beliefs in Northeast Georgia**. The purpose of my research is to examine the efficacy beliefs of teachers within both public and private schools for character education. Prior research has indicated that teacher efficacy beliefs are strong indicators of student success; therefore, it is my goal to add useful information to the research base, which can ultimately help all schools more effectively approach and implement character education initiatives.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at [School Name]. Participants will be asked to complete a brief demographic questionnaire, as well as the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI). Depending upon your preference, I am able to collect data of willing teachers at either an upcoming faculty meeting or via an electronic method with teachers. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. In addition, data collection will ensure anonymity of individual participants and schools. Thus the potential risk to those involved in the study is considered extremely low. If desired, results of the final study will be made available to you and can also be shared with participants.

I have been in contact with [School District Superintendent or Headmaster] and have received authorization to conduct research within the [School District or School]. I would appreciate the opportunity to further discuss my research proposal with you and to answer any questions you may have. At your earliest convenience, please let me know how we can proceed. You may contact me via email at ████████████████████ or by phone at ████████. I look forward to hearing from you and thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Franleata Sorrells-Blackmon
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX E: Participant Recruitment Letter

[Date]

Dear Educator,

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for the doctor of education degree. The purpose of my research is to study the character education efficacy beliefs of teachers with varying levels of experience among public and private schools. Self-efficacy is defined as the perception of one's own potential to meet goals and achieve designated outcomes. Prior research has indicated that teacher efficacy beliefs are strong indicators of student success; therefore, it is my goal to add useful information to the research base, which can ultimately help all schools more effectively approach and implement character education initiatives.

I am writing to invite you to participate in my study. Data for this research will be collected using the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI), a valid and reliable instrument developed by Milson and Mehlig (2002). The CEEBI is a brief questionnaire consisting of 24 statements to which participants respond on a five-point Likert scale. **This can be completed in approximately fifteen minutes.** Data collection will also include brief demographic surveys necessary for statistical comparison; however, all surveys will remain completely anonymous.

I have been granted approval through the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB), as well as the [School District or School] to conduct this research and to request your willing participation. Data collection will ensure anonymity of individual participants and schools. Thus the potential risk to those involved in the study is considered extremely low. If desired, results of the final study will be made available to participating schools and can also be shared with individual participants.

If after reviewing the attached consent form, you are willing to participate, please complete the anonymous survey and place it in the envelope provided. As a token of appreciation for your participation, on-site participants will be entered into a drawing for various gift certificates at local business establishments. If you wish to be a part of the drawing, please fill out a ticket and place it in the raffle box after your survey has been completed. Please be sure to not put your name on your completed survey so that your anonymity will not be compromised.

If you are receiving this invitation electronically, please review the attached consent form. If you are willing to participate, please click the link at the bottom of this email to proceed. As a token of appreciation for your participation, you are invited to send me a separate email after

completing the anonymous survey so that I can include you in a drawing for various gift certificates at local business establishments. Please be assured that your completed survey can in no way be linked to your email and your anonymity will not be compromised.

I am happy and available to answer any questions you may have about this research study. Please feel welcome to contact me via email at ██████████████████████ or by phone at ███████████. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Franleata Sorrells-Blackmon
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX F: IRB Conditional Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

8/9/2016

Franleata M. Sorrells-Blackmon

IRB **Conditional Approval** 2583.080916: A Comparative Study of Middle School Teacher Character Education Efficacy Beliefs in Northeast Georgia

Dear Franleata M. Sorrells-Blackmon,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been **conditionally** approved by the Liberty University IRB. Conditional approval means that your complete approval is pending our receipt of certain items, which are listed below:

Documented approval on letterhead from each research site you are enrolling in your study.

Please keep in mind that you are not permitted to begin data collection until you have submitted the above item(s) and have been granted complete approval by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well as you continue working toward complete approval.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

The Graduate School

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APPENDIX G: IRB Exemption Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

November 21, 2016

Franleata M. Sorrells-Blackmon

IRB Exemption 2583.112116: A Comparative Study of Middle School Teacher Character Education Efficacy Beliefs in Northeast Georgia

Dear Franleata M. Sorrells-Blackmon,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

> (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
>
> (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

The Graduate School

Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971

APPENDIX H: Informed Consent Document

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER CHARACTER

EDUCATION EFFICACY BELIEFS IN NORTHEAST GEORGIA

by

Franleata Sorrells-Blackmon

Liberty University

Informed Consent Document

CONSENT FORM

A Comparative Study of Middle School Teacher Character Education Efficacy Beliefs in
Northeast Georgia
Franleata Sorrells-Blackmon
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of teacher character education efficacy beliefs. You were selected as a possible participant because of your school setting and level of teaching experience. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Franleata Sorrells-Blackmon, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this research is to study the character education efficacy beliefs of teachers with varying levels of experience among both public and private schools for character education. Prior research has indicated that teacher efficacy beliefs are

strong indicators of student success; therefore, it is a goal of this study to add useful information to the research base, which can ultimately help all schools more effectively approach and implement character education initiatives.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

1.) Complete a brief questionnaire consisting of 24 statements to which participants respond on a five-point Likert scale. Completion of this survey is expected to take approximately 15 minutes. All responses will remain completely anonymous.

2.) Complete a brief demographic survey necessary for statistical comparison of the data.

Completion of this survey is expected to take less than five minutes. All responses will remain completely anonymous.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study: The risks involved in this study are minimal and no more than participants would encounter in everyday life.

The benefits of participation, while relatively indirect to individual participants, may prove beneficial to the field of education at large as a meaningful contribution to the research base regarding character education.

Compensation: There is no monetary compensation for participants; however, those completing on-site, paper questionnaires will be entered into drawings for various gift cards at local business establishments as tokens of appreciation for participation in the study. Online participants may send a separate email to the researcher, following completion of the surveys, if they wish to be entered into a gift card drawing. Additional expressions of appreciation for participation may be offered on site in the form of refreshments.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report that may be published, no information that would make it possible to identify a subject will be included. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records. Names should not be added to surveys by participants and completed surveys will be placed in unidentifiable envelopes provided. In no way can email addresses of participants completing electronic surveys be linked to individual responses.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or with your school of employment. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Franleata Sorrells-Blackmon. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her via email at ███████████████████████ or by phone at ████████████. You may also contact the researcher's faculty advisor, Dr. Paul Tapper, at ████████████████.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Green Hall Suite 1887, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information to keep for your records.

APPENDIX I: Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
CE Efficacy Belief	127	23.00	63.00	86.00	74.7087	3.91195	15.303
Type of School	127	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.3858	.48872	.239
Teaching Experience	127	3.00	1.00	4.00	3.1417	.94049	.885
Valid N (listwise)	127						

Dependent Variable: CE Efficacy Belief

Type of School	Teaching Experience	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Public School	1st Year Teacher	73.0000	4.83046	4
	1-5 Years Experience	73.8235	3.02563	17
	6-10 Years Experience	73.9231	3.49908	13
	11+ Years Experience	74.3409	4.64028	44
	Total	74.0897	4.10633	78
Private, Faith-Based School	1-5 Years Experience	75.5263	4.40162	19
	6-10 Years Experience	76.0833	2.15146	12
	11+ Years Experience	75.6111	2.97319	18
	Total	75.6939	3.39242	49
Total	1st Year Teacher	73.0000	4.83046	4
	1-5 Years Experience	74.7222	3.85902	36
	6-10 Years Experience	74.9600	3.07517	25
	11+ Years Experience	74.7097	4.24027	62
	Total	74.7087	3.91195	127

APPENDIX J: Frequencies

Statistics

		Type of School	Teaching Experience	CE Efficacy Belief
N	Valid	127	127	127
	Missing	0	0	0

Type of School

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Public School	78	61.4	61.4	61.4
	Private, Faith-Based School	49	38.6	38.6	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

Teaching Experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1st Year Teacher	4	3.1	3.1	3.1
	1-5 Years Experience	36	28.3	28.3	31.5
	6-10 Years Experience	25	19.7	19.7	51.2
	11+ Years Experience	62	48.8	48.8	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

CE Efficacy Belief

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	63.00	1	.8	.8	.8
	65.00	1	.8	.8	1.6
	67.00	1	.8	.8	2.4
	68.00	4	3.1	3.1	5.5
	69.00	3	2.4	2.4	7.9
	70.00	7	5.5	5.5	13.4
	71.00	12	9.4	9.4	22.8
	72.00	10	7.9	7.9	30.7
	73.00	5	3.9	3.9	34.6
	74.00	12	9.4	9.4	44.1
	75.00	20	15.7	15.7	59.8
	76.00	11	8.7	8.7	68.5
	77.00	10	7.9	7.9	76.4
	78.00	10	7.9	7.9	84.3
	79.00	3	2.4	2.4	86.6
	80.00	11	8.7	8.7	95.3
	81.00	3	2.4	2.4	97.6
	83.00	1	.8	.8	98.4
	84.00	1	.8	.8	99.2
	86.00	1	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

APPENDIX K: Histogram

CE Efficacy Belief
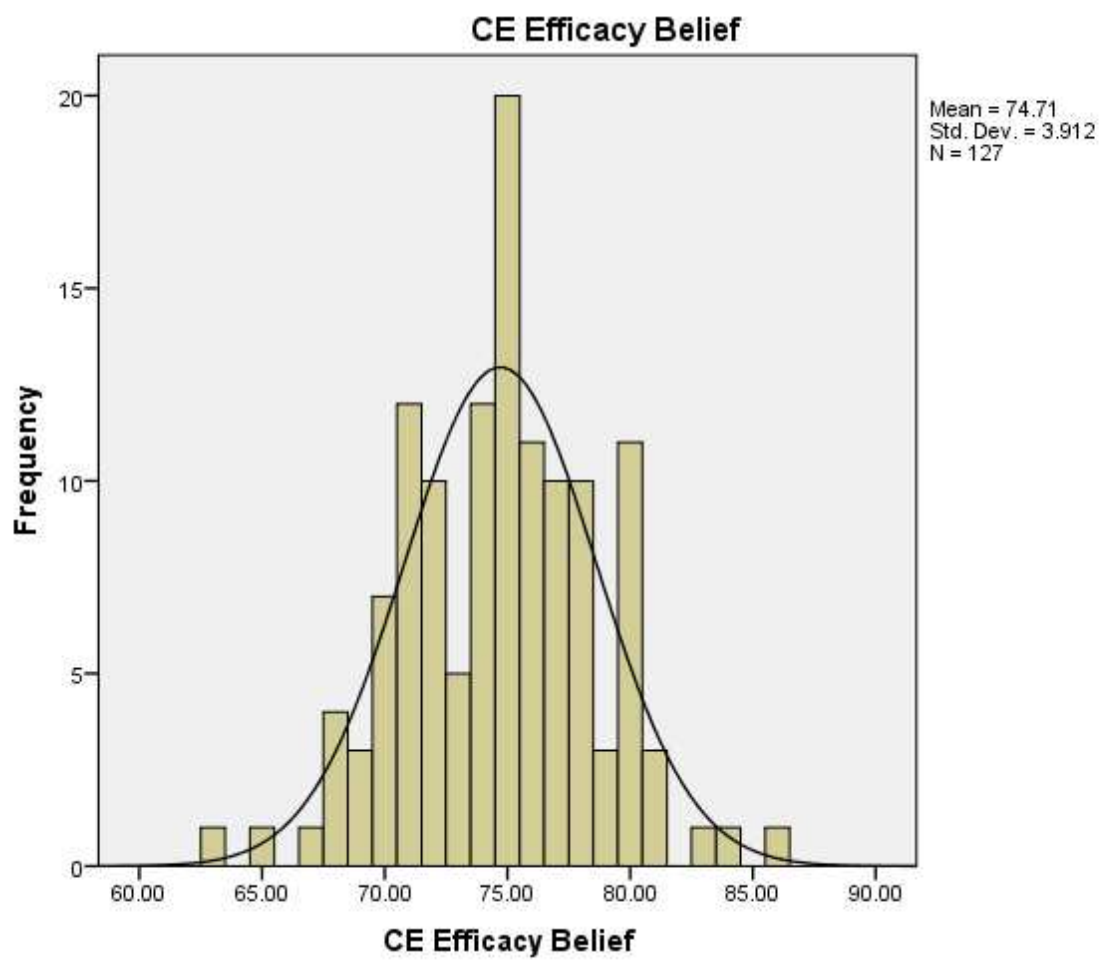
APPENDIX L: Box and Whisker Plots

Type of School: Public School, Teaching Experience: 1st Year Teacher

Residual for CE_Efficacy_Belief

Type of School: Public School, Teaching Experience: 1-5 Years Experience

Residual for CE_Efficacy_Belief

Type of School: Public School, Teaching Experience: 6-10 Years Experience

Residual for CE_Efficacy_Belief

Type of School: Public School, Teaching Experience: 11+ Years Experience

Residual for CE_Efficacy_Belief

Type of School: Private, Faith-Based School, Teaching Experience: 1-5 Years Experience

Residual for CE_Efficacy_Belief

Type of School: Private, Faith-Based School, Teaching Experience: 6-10 Years Experience

Residual for CE_Efficacy_Belief

Type of School: Private, Faith-Based School, Teaching Experience: 11+ Years Experience

Residual for CE_Efficacy_Belief

APPENDIX M: Estimated Marginal Means and Profile Plots

Type of School * Teaching Experience

Dependent Variable: CE Efficacy Belief

Type of School	Teaching Experience	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Public School	1st Year Teacher	73.000	1.957	69.124	76.876
	1-5 Years Experience	73.824	.950	71.944	75.703
	6-10 Years Experience	73.923	1.086	71.773	76.073
	11+ Years Experience	74.341	.590	73.172	75.509
Private, Faith-Based School	1st Year Teacher	.a	.	.	.
	1-5 Years Experience	75.526	.898	73.748	77.305
	6-10 Years Experience	76.083	1.130	73.846	78.321
	11+ Years Experience	75.611	.923	73.784	77.438

a. This level combination of factors is not observed, thus the corresponding population marginal mean is not estimable.

Estimated Marginal Means of CE Efficacy Belief

Non-estimable means are not plotted

Estimated Marginal Means of CE Efficacy Belief

Non-estimable means are not plotted