A CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM TAUGHT TO PARENTS AND ITS EFFECTS

ON PERCEIVED PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

by

Vernon Dewitt Ball Jr.

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University

2017

A CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM TAUGHT TO PARENTS AND ITS EFFECTS

ON PERCEIVED PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

by

Vernon Dewitt Ball Jr.

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2017

APPROVED BY:

Steven McDonald, Ed.D., Committee Chair

Kristina DeWitt, Ph.D., Committee Member

Paul Noe, D. Min., Committee Member

ABSTRACT

The concept of character education is important one for everyone in our society. The issue of character affects business, schools, law enforcement, and even churches. It is particularly important for families who are trying to raise their children the best they can, and schools which are seeking better means to improve student morals and academic performance. This study sought to determine if a character education program taught to parents would affect family dynamics (measured by three subscales of the PCRI) and student academic achievement (measured by grades in the four core subjects). The sample consisted of second through fifth grade parents of a suburban/rural elementary school in a southeastern state ($n = 24$ in each group). A quasi-experimental nonequivalent control group design was employed. The character education class was taught at the beginning of the third quarter of the school year. Data was analyzed using one-way between-subjects ANOVA for parent relationship sub-scales at the end of quarter three of the school year. The results did not show a statistically significant difference in the means of the three subscales from pre-test to post-test. For grades, one-way within-subjects ANOVAs were used. There was no significant difference in the grades for either the control or the experimental group. Future studies should consider increasing the treatment exposure, using different and larger populations, and basing character education programs explicitly based on Christian ideals.

Keywords: character education, moral behavior, parental responsibility, student values, family, GPA.

Copyright Page

Dedication

This manuscript is dedicated to my wonderful wife Robin and our three awesome children- Jordan, Andrew, and Caroline.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge those who gave of their time and talents to help bring this project to completion: Dr. Robert Maddux, Mandy Lowe, Bruce Lee, and the parents of Happy Mountain Elementary School. Thanks to my church family at Old McDonald Fish Camp, and to Sandra Ceja at WPS for excellent service. Thanks also are due to Dr. Steven McDonald, my dissertation chair, and the others on the committee: Kristina Dewitt and Paul Noe.

I would also like to acknowledge my Maker, who gave me a few talents, which I hope to use well for His service. (Galatians 2:20; 3 John 13)

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Civics and Moral Education (CME)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Parent Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI)

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The first chapter of this dissertation is a description of the study at hand. First, the background of the issue of character education is discussed. The main problem is presented next, and the research gap is described. Next, the purpose and significance of the study are presented. Last, the research questions and null hypotheses are delineated.

Background

The challenge of morally educating students is an important issue in American life today. Its roots go deep in American education (Liu, 2014; Gutek, 2011). Most schools throughout the United States have some type of character education programs. But even with the consistent recent emphasis on character development in schools, there are still problems to be explored and questions to be answered. According to Etherington (2013), people in American society used to get their values from the Bible. More recently, the individual was the primary source of morals. Today, many people get their morals from society and the media. As is well documented, the behavior of students, and people in general has become more problematic.

Many students finish school, but become a burden on society (Fall & Roberts, 2012). The rates of crime and abuse are still climbing, and educationally, the United States is not gaining on the progress of other countries. Murray (2014) sees the issue as a long and difficult challenge to restore civic culture. Some would argue that the decline in the morals of this country can be traced back to the removal of prayer in schools. Whatever the cause, this country is working toward solutions to the character education issue.

There are some who would say that character education programs are not sufficient. Many programs are focused on knowledge or understanding, but not action. Davidson (2014)

argued that what the research needs is a new focus. His idea is to not only teach the morals to children, but also to add the element of "moral competency" in order that children will not only have a knowledge of what is morally right, but also be able to actually follow through with good decisions when the time comes for action. Another author laments that most character education programs are more about socialization of children rather than critical thinking (Nord, 2010).

Another part of the issue is the question of responsibility. Some would say it is the schools' job to function as deliverer of values to children (Holmes, 1991). Others question the limits of the school's authority to teach values. What a school should be responsible for doing is a complicated and important issue. The schools can function in this way, and many are. But should this be the case (Elias, 2014)? Certainly some schools are teaching values that some parents may find incongruous with their beliefs. Parents' options are limited when this is their situation. They can homeschool their children, send them to a private or religious school, or try a different public school.

The issue of the values themselves is another important aspect of this study. Different organizations decide which values they think are worthy of including in their programs. There will be disagreement about whose values or which values will be taught. There are some values that are almost universally accepted as right, such as honesty and responsibility. Beyond these universal ideas, it is more difficult to agree on what the "right" values are. Etherington (2013) would say that character education is definitely necessary, but that the proper foundation for values is found in the concepts of the Bible. Character education is certainly a difficult and divisive issue, and is one that will most likely not be solved easily or quickly.

Historical Context

According to Murray (2014), a central part of the founding of the United States was that its people must be willing to be led by and trust in the government. Not only that, but the people must retain certain characteristics or virtues for the idea of American democracy to sustain itself. Murray goes on to describe how these founding virtues or moral bases for this country are composed of two characteristics and two institutions. The two characteristics are industriousness and honesty. The two institutions are marriage and the Christian religion (Murray, 2014). In society today, it can be observed that this country has moved far from these moorings.

Religion and philosophy are important concepts to discuss as well. In a pluralistic society, there are citizens with varying religious and philosophical positions. Because of this, it is unlikely and unrealistic to think there is an easy solution to the issue of teaching values in schools. The traditions go back many years for many religious groups, and sometimes these traditions are opposed to each other. Different groups view people differently. According to Kenan (2009), one problem with modern culture is the way people are conceptualized. He laments that most societies see people in a mechanistic way, not allowing for the inner part of man. He argued that modern society has not been able to solve its problems using this approach. In addition, others have reported that since No Child Left Behind (NCLB), schools have tended to neglect other student needs as well (Parkay, Hass, and Anctil, 2010).

Character education was historically taught in homes and in religious schools, but in recent years has been accepted into publicly funded schools (Lovat, Clement, Dally, & Toomey, 2010). Some, such as Brannon (2008) have written that the responsibility to teach morals is a joint responsibility between parents, schools and teachers. Schultz (1998) disagreed with Brannon, stating that the primary responsibility for educating children belongs to parents at

home, with the schools supporting them. Holmes (1991) seemed to take both into account by stating that the primary function of a school is transmitting values. Lake (2011) added a twist to the argument by stating that researchers and parents should consider the rights of the children themselves and advises caution when approaching the subject of values.

Parents as a resource have also been studied. Historically, it was the parents who taught their children their beliefs and moral duties. But today, the transference of morals from one generation to the next is lacking (Tay & Yildirim, 2009). Parents are certainly able, but some do not see themselves as capable to teach their children (Tay & Yildirim, 2009). The duty to teach children morals must fall to someone. In the past, the parents were the ones who got the job done. Today, some parents do not take responsibility for this duty (le Sage & de Ruyter, 2008).

In a recent study of the effectiveness of seven nationally known character education programs, the Institute of Education Sciences found that none of these programs made a significant difference in 56 of the 58 character scales measured (US Department of Education, 2010). It seems that at least a few more differences in these program scales would have been expected. Perhaps the problem is with the approach or philosophy undergirding these efforts. Part of the problem is that parents and society in general have drifted far from the historical foundation of morals.

The Judeo-Christian mindset also speaks to this issue. When God was giving the law to His people, He meant that one generation should pass on the teachings and morals to the next generation (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). This is one of the most important passages to Jews who honor the Old Testament. Fathers are instructed to talk about the biblical laws as they went through the normal routines of the day. In the New Testament, the same idea is echoed in Galatians 6:4. Fathers are warned not to exasperate their children, but raise them in the ways of God, "in the

nurture and instruction of the Lord" (NIV). According to those of the Jewish and Christian faith, the transmission of values is of great importance.

Influence on society, community, and education system

The influence of solid character education has many long-lasting consequences in society, in communities, and in the educational system. Prisons are full of men and women who have made bad choices and are paying the price of their actions. It could be argued that these men and women were not taught values, or did not choose to follow the values they knew about (le Sage & de Ruyter, 2008). Children who do not learn good moral behaviors and act on them may someday find themselves in one of these institutions. Le Sage and de Ruyter (2008) also argued that it is the responsibility of parents to morally educate their children, and that some of the criminal responsibility falls on them for the actions of their children. Even the financial crisis of 2008 was seen as a moral crisis by Bernasek (2010). She described the failures of businesses as not due to just bad business practices, but of personal moral inadequacies.

The style of parenting is important to how much children internalize their parents' values. According to Hardy, Padilla-Walker, and Carlo (2008), those with a more authoritarian style of parenting resulted in children with less values internalization, while a more supportive style led to greater internalization of parents' values. A community of families who subscribe to this idea will likely have lower crime rates and other community problems. One study involving Latino families found that greater family involvement resulted in better grades and study habits (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). Perhaps the direct involvement of families can affect their children's morals as well. In a report from Iowa, the state business council was strongly in favor of the teaching of ethics in kindergarten all the way through college (Iowa Business Council,

2011). This group realized the importance of growing employees who have a good sense of right and wrong, and of working toward excellence.

The educational system can also be affected positively by better values acquisition among students and educators. For example, students who spend less time out of class due to in-school or out of school suspensions earned higher grades (Bartik & Lachowska, 2014; Byrd, Loeber, & Pardini, 2012).

Theoretical Background

The work of Piaget, Erikson, Bandura, and Kohlberg provided the theoretical underpinnings of this study. Piaget postulated that children can understand the reasons parents are making the decisions they do by understanding the intentions of the parents' words and actions (Miller, 2011). Erikson's psychosocial theory states that children in this stage are seeking competency in their activities (Miller, 2011). The other side of the stage is inferiority. Parents (in their stage) also have a need to feel competent in their role, need to feel needed, and want to pass down their knowledge. Bandura's social learning theory also contributed to this study. Parents can help in the moral development of their children most by being a role model (Miller, 2011). Children will learn socially through watching other people (vicarious learning), and by seeking self-efficacy. Kohlberg expanded Piaget's work by propounding six levels of moral reasoning, moving from reasoning based on others' perceptions to the perceptions of self (Nather, 2013).

These theorists all add to the questions this research will seek to answer. If children can understand the intentions of parents' directives, and if morals can help guide parents and children into better understanding of how to make better choices, then the relationship between the parent and child may improve. As a possible residual effect, the children's grades may also improve.

According to the theorists, parents are to be role models (Miller, 2011) and have a need to pass down their knowledge and experience to their children. According to Erikson (1963), children also have a need to achieve a sense of accomplishment in their lives. This need may provide a key to better relationships between parent and child.

The teaching of the Bible also adds to the theoretical background. The basis of holy living is built on the principles of good behavior found in the Ten Commandments, and in the stories of the characters found throughout the text. God has said in the following verses that He will reward those who follow Him, according to their deeds (Jeremiah 17:10; Revelation 22:12). These verses state that man's moral behavior is important to God. One other relevant teaching from the Bible is the idea of the sinful nature of man. It can be argued that one reason we have parents in authority is because we need them. The Bible teaches that man is born sinful (Genesis 3:1-16; Jeremiah 17:9), and is in need of moral direction. This direction is provided through the relationship between parent and child, guided by the standards in the Bible. The Bible teaches that man is trying to find his identity apart from a relationship with God (Jeremiah 2:13; Romans 1:18-32). For those who understand and accept this teaching, the true self is only found in a right relationship with the Creator.

Problem Statement

Character education is a foundational issue in society and needs to be studied comprehensively. Many aspects of character education have been explored. There are many studies which show the effects of character education programs. Several theories point to parents as being very influential in the positive development of their children (Miller, 2011). The Bible also agrees, calling on parents to be the leaders in the area of moral and character development. Hardy et al. (2008), reported that one area that has not been explored is how

parents should be educated in how to impart their values to their children. Their study showed that parenting style affects internalization of values, but does not teach the parents the morals to be inculcated.

Le Sage and de Ruyter (2008) reveal more of the research gap by calling for parents to teach their values to their children. They argue that the state should bear part of that responsibility and "attend to its task of providing at least the minimal conditions necessary for this moral education and development to take place" (p. 799). They go on to suggest that free classes for parents is one idea to be explored (le Sage & de Ruyter, 2008). In addition, Etherington (2013) further reveals the research gap in his article when he reported 13 problems inherent in values education programs. One of the problems he lists is that "values education focuses on the individual in isolation from family" (p. 191). He sees the family as of great importance to finding the deeper meaning in the transferring of values from one generation to the next.

Taken together, these three ideas: parents being educated in how to pass on their values, state sponsored classes for parents to learn values, and strengthening the connection in values education to families, form a strong case for parents being more involved in values education with their children in an educational setting.

These research gaps lead the way toward new studies involving parents as the ones who should be taught the character education in hopes of passing them to their children. This study seeks to fill these gaps in the literature, and to provide a source of information for future study in this area. It may be necessary for schools to have a greater role in teaching parents values and how to pass them on to their children. Thus, the problem is that the effects of the parent-child relationship as a result of the delivery of a character education program to elementary school

students' parents has not been studied. Parents need to be equipped to pass down their values to their children, and the possible outcomes of improved parent-child relationship, and grades need to be evaluated.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative study is to explore whether a character education program taught to parents will have an effect on three aspects of the relationship between the parent and their child (satisfaction with parenting, communication, and limit setting), as well as on the children's grades. The independent variable for this study is the participation or non-participation in the CHARACTER COUNTS! character education program to parents. The four dependent variables are satisfaction with parenting, communication, and limit setting, (the three subscales of the Parent Child Relationship Inventory), plus the students' grades measured by quarter core subject averages. Thus, the design for this study is a quasi-experimental nonequivalent control group design.

Parents will be taught the CHARACTER COUNTS! program, and will be encouraged to inculcate the information into their everyday family situations. The population of this study is parents of second through fifth graders in an elementary school in a rural county in a southeastern state. The sample will consist of those parents who agree to take part in the program (the experimental group), and those others who are willing to complete only the PCRI (the control group; see Appendix C).

Significance of the Study

The parent-child relationship is very important to the positive continuation of schools, families and society. This relationship is multi-faceted. The parent is to be the provider of physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of their children. This study seeks to find out if teaching

a character education program to parents will influence that relationship. If so, it may be a key to better schools, families, and society.

Better schools should not only be measured by standardized test scores. Students should also be evaluated in some way by how they are developing morally (Elias, White, & Stepney, 2014). Character education programs for students are in many if not most schools in the United States. But purposefully involving parents in the values education process may lead to a better balance between high stakes testing and family development. When students grow up, many will become members of the work force. What is not clear is the kind of people they will become. They will probably be able to perform the job prescribed by their bosses. But the level of conscientiousness about the type of work they are producing is another matter (Davidson, 2014). Their sense of honor, self-respect, and honesty in business dealings will be seen as they move into positions of responsibility. These qualities are just as important, or more so than the ability to perform a task (Elias, 2014). They may or may not be the type of employee employers will seek out and try to keep because they are invaluable. Better test scores only will not achieve this goal. The timeliness of this study is revealed as answers are sought concerning better homes and families, more stable job situations, and improved schools.

The school where this research will take place is a Title I school. For a school like this, a character education course for parents might influence the school to improve. Many low socio-economic status (SES) schools seem to remain problem schools (Coleman et al., 1966; Lam, 2014) even when they have character development emphases (Hurlburt, Therriault, & LeFloch, 2012). But poverty among families should not have to equal poverty of morals. Character education for parents may have an effect on this type of school. It is possible that parents who are educated in morals education may do a better job of parenting their children (Brannon, 2008;

le Sage & de Ruyter, 2008). This in turn may cause students to do better on grades, and take more pride in doing their best. Simply providing Title I funding is not sufficient for making schools like this better.

There are many groups concerned with and working toward better character in today's children. Some of these groups are Sunday School classes, parents, pastors, public and private schools, businesses, and even national organizations. They come from different perspectives, but generally have the same goal in mind: morally educating children to have better lives. This timely study hopes to strengthen and further define for these groups what works in character education. Positive results from this study may influence the direction of these groups. Finding a positive difference when a character education program is taught to parents may help these groups as they look to the future for ideas on how to proceed.

Research Questions

RQ1: Will parents/guardians report a change in their satisfaction with parenting as a result of the character education course as opposed to parents who do not participate in the character education course?

RQ2: Will parents/guardians report a change in their communication as a result of the character education course as opposed to parents who do not participate in the character education course?

RQ3: Will parents/guardians report a change in their limit setting as a result of the character education course as opposed to parents who do not participate in the character education course?

RQ4: Will there be an effect on students' grades as a result of the character education course taught to parents as opposed to parents who do not participate in a character education course?

Null Hypotheses

H₀1: There is no statistically significant difference in the satisfaction with parenting subscale between parents who participated in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program and parents who did not participate as measured by the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI).

H₀2: There is no statistically significant difference in the communication subscale between parents who participated in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program and parents who did not participate as measured by the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI).

H₀3: There is no statistically significant difference in the limit setting subscale between parents who participated in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program and parents who did not participate as measured by the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI).

H₀4: There is no statistically significant difference in academic performance between elementary school students whose parents/guardians participated in the CHARACTER COUNTS! character education course and those whose parents did not participate in the course as measured by student grades.

Definitions

1. *Character education*: a planned and systematical approach in terms of self- respect, responsibility and honesty etc. for being a good citizen (Cubukcu, 2012).

2. *Parent/guardian*: one or ones who are the ultimate source of survival, providing shelter, nutrition, and protection (Wei, Schvaneveldt, & Sahin, 2013). For this study, parents, grandparents, guardians, or other adults who watch over the student will be tested on the

PCRI as the person who is responsible for the well-being of the student. The term *parent* will be used for any of these persons.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This chapter explores the background of the issue at hand. First, the historical and theoretical context is explored, with emphasis on recent psychological theories discussed. Second, current research and ideas surrounding the issue are given. Third, ideas and possible trends and directions for the future of values education are explored. Finally, the last section is an exploration into the connection between values education and the Bible.

Introduction

There has been much research in the area of values for children in schools (Collier & Dowson, 2008; Merlone & Moran, 2008). There are organizations who are working to develop ideas and programs for the transmission of values to students, both as part of school curriculum (Brady, 2011; Collier & Dowson, 2008), and as separate programs (Power, 2014). Parents have contributed to articles by giving their opinions to researchers (Kenan, 2009; Tay & Yildirim, 2009), and have been studied to see how their parenting styles and involvement relate to their children's values (Mo & Singh, 2008; Wolff & Crockett, 2011). But there are not many studies on whether parents, if given the proper tools, can influence the values of their children.

Historical and Theoretical Context

Brief History of Character Education

Bad behavior and the issue of character development have been around a long time (Rosenthal, 1968). Actually, the subject goes back in time to the creation of the world. According to the Bible, God created it, and with it, He included people, who would have true choice (Genesis 3:1-16). With this gift (or curse), man can choose to do good or evil. Since man chose evil and is fallen, he needs the support of laws or principles to guide him in making good

decisions. And since God knows everything, these values were part of creation from the beginning. The Bible has much to say about morals and values, especially in the laws given by God to Moses, and through Jesus (see the Biblical Basis section below). Throughout time, man has either taken God's laws and tried to build his life on them, or rebelled and attempted to make his own rules in his own way. This can be seen in the development of both secular/humanistic ideas about character education, and in the design in the Old and New Testaments.

Other ancient societies beside the Hebrews had law codes in place to ensure compliance to societal and moral standards, such as is found in the Code of Hammurabi (Johns, 1904) and on the Ebla Stone. The Code of Hammurabi contains laws about casting spells, as well as more common ideas such as being a false witness in a trial, and stealing. It includes consequences for these actions, such as restitution of property, repayment of money, prison time, being thrown into the sacred river, or death, among other punishments. It also contains information on proper social relationships: especially for husbands, wives, and family relationships (Johns, 1904; Leick, 2003). From earliest times, the importance of good and moral behavior is seen as important to the continuation of a preferred society. Men were seen as accountable to each other, and to a higher authority.

In ancient China, the ideas of Confucius were and still are an important philosophy for many people. In Gutek (2011), Confucius' philosophy is described as an ethical theory which should help people find and travel down the best path of life. It is called the *tao*, or the Way. God is seen as an impersonal force or intelligence whose laws (of nature) oversee the universe. In his ideas, there is not an accountability to a god, but the ideas of moral actions do surface. It is the responsibility of people to follow this Way for the family and society they live in. This Way can be taught by someone who has been properly trained, or a "rightly informed teacher"

(Gutek, 2011, p. 15). Confucius believed that people can control their morality, and have a responsibility to others.

This idea of moral responsibility is important for the development of this chapter. The reader should see that even if ancient or modern, writers in many time periods relate life and especially education to some type of moral development, even those who believe that man is essentially good.

Plato asked the question of what is good, true, and beautiful. This question is similar to the ontological ideas of the present day. It is important to know what is worth learning. In Greek society, citizens were expected to be involved in civic life. To do this they must have some type of knowledge to guide their decisions. Plato was a dualist, believing that there was a natural life, and a higher life; the life of reason. He reasoned that since the world is constantly changing, truth would not be found in in this transitory world (Knight, 2006). He believed that the greatest goal (or good) was to live by reason. Socrates thought that knowledge was the source of the virtuous life. Plato differed from this in his belief that the *Form of the Good* (Gutek, 2011, p. 39) was the highest goal and source of knowledge. His *Form of the Good* idea was like a higher consciousness, guiding the person to goodness, through reason. It is in line with Plato's Allegory of the Cave. As humans look at the wall of the cave, they see shadows, which are thought to be reality. In actuality, there is a fire burning behind the people which is casting the shadows. The people cannot or do not see the fire, because they are not using their reason.

Plato's ideas form somewhat of a basis for modern humanistic thought. One difference is that Plato believed people were naturally ignorant. He also believed that it was a purpose of education to teach people to use their intellect, and to make good moral choices. He is another author who links moral ideas and education.

In the 1200s AD, another educator adds to this discussion. Thomas Aquinas was a Dominican monk in the Catholic Church. He is known as a theologian, philosopher, and educator. As a Christian educator, he believed that the student must be guided by divine guidance into a pursuit of theology and ultimately to God (Gutek, 2011). He also stressed that not only was God's guidance important to becoming a mature person, but human reason was also important. He believed that a person's reason would also guide him. The combination of God's guidance (belief) and reason would allow a person to make good choices (Knight, 2006). Some of these ideas were drawn from ancient Greek philosophers such as Aristotle (Gutek, 2011). Similar to Confucius, Aquinas also stresses the importance of teachers having knowledge in order to pass along the teachings of the Bible and the Church, and having virtue (Donohoe, 1968). The good teacher, according to Aquinas, had to have a deep faith and piety, defined by contemplation and reflection. He saw teaching as a calling, similar to the calling of priests and nuns (Gutek, 2011).

As an example of a Renaissance thinker, Erasmus was a philosopher and educator who took his ideas from ancient Greek and Roman thought. He was a Christian humanist, and believed in the importance of a classical education; focused on ancient languages, such as Greek and Latin; and on the importance of being involved in reforms of the Catholic Church (Gutek, 2011). But unlike Luther, he tried to stay within the confines of the Church (Gutek, 2011). In addition to counting on the Bible to teach morals, Erasmus looked to ancient Greek and Latin texts (Kristeller, 1961). He brings out an interesting and important point: that good literature and good morals can and should be complimentary to each other (Thompson, 1978). It is important that teachers choose good (and moral) books for students, especially those who learn best by reading. Erasmus lived at a time between the Middle Ages and the later Enlightenment, where

notable thinkers relied on the Bible and divine revelation, and where philosophers abandoned the concept of God and how He is involved in guiding people to truth and into positive moral behavior.

In between these time periods was the Reformation. John Calvin serves an example of a reformer and educator. He believed that all persons should be educated. This was so that they could read the Bible, and serve as an educated citizenry. He can be considered as the father of public education (Gutek, 2011). He also advanced the ideas that knowing God and knowing oneself are the two most important types of knowledge (Calvin, 1536). Both types of knowledge relate to having good morals.

He thought that a classical education (similar to Erasmus) was important for ministers. The ministers were to disseminate information to their congregations, and the congregations should be educated enough to be responsible members of their parish. Another benefit was to further assure civil order (Cottret, 2000). Calvinistic (protestant) values such as "hard work, effort, honesty, diligence, thrift, literacy, respect for property, and respect for the community" (Gutek, 2011, p. 123) form a surprisingly similar list to modern and some ancient ideas on what the model behaviors are for people living together in society. The inclusion of respect for property (among others) reflects the protestant ideal of capitalism which was emerging as the medieval period of feudalism was coming to an end.

In the Enlightenment period, several authors began to count on human reason and scientific knowledge instead of on God's revelation for the structure of values. Values became more humanistic, pragmatic, and utilitarian (Gutek, 2011).

One of these Enlightenment philosophers was Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Much of the philosophical underpinnings of Rousseau's ideas can still be found today in modern education.

As with some other Enlightenment thinkers, and similar to some ancient philosophers such as Plato, God was seen as an impersonal force, and not directly involved in the lives of people. The Enlightenment was a time of human-centered thought, where the growth of people and advancement of society would be accomplished through scientific advances (Gutek, 2011). Rousseau stated that one major problem in society was the way people thought before the time of science (Gutek, 2011), most likely a reference to reliance on religion. He also believed that churches and even monarchies stood in the way of social progress. According to Rousseau, what society needed was new forms of civics education and new rational (naturalistic) forms of government to go with them (Chisick, 1981). His ideas of social changes are reflected in the political philosophies of Marxism, liberalism, and conservatism (Gutek, 2011).

Rousseau also believed in the inherent goodness of people, and their ability to make their society better. He focused the educational process not on the goal of education, or the processes of educating a child, but on the ideas of the natural progression or maturity of every child. One of his most famous books was a novel called *Emile*. In this book, he chronicles the development of Emile, a male child. Rousseau describes the stages of Emile's development as he grows up on in a country environment, free from the evils of society. This idea of living in nature (a primitive lifestyle) as the best environment for people is a major theme of the Enlightenment (Gutek, 2010). Emile passes through the stages of development as he grows into a man and is always being directed by his tutor. It is interesting that though Rousseau would say that people are inherently good (Knight, 2006), the growing Emile still needs the constant eye of the tutor to help him develop. Also in this book, Rousseau teaches that moral development begins at about age 12. He states that it is not productive to try to teach morals before this, especially through a religious type of education including memorization. The two parts of moral development,

according to Rousseau, are the natural virtues which cannot be taught (they are inherent), and morals based on social connections to others (which the tutor must instill). It is also important that character cannot be delivered just by verbal teaching. Emile must learn by doing, as many people do today, reflecting on his actions, and whether these actions bring pleasurable or painful results.

Hopefully, character development should be based on more than just pleasure and pain. The consequences that a person's actions bring to others and society should also be considered. Emile's life reflects that of Rousseau. Jean-Jacques' mother died when he was seven days old. He and his father were close, but the relationship lasted only until Jean-Jacques was ten years old. His father had an argument with another man, and he fled 15 miles away, abandoning Jean-Jacques to live with the pastor of a church. According to Gutek (2011), many of Rousseau's educational ideas stem from this difficult childhood. One of these ideas was giving moral directives that children cannot understand. Rousseau believed that these children would learn to be deceitful to avoid being punished (Gutek, 2011). It seems that Rousseau was biased, bringing some of his unresolved childhood difficulties to bear as part of his philosophy. It is possible that his ideas are reactive, and centered in personal experience, rather than in universal principles.

The ideas of Pestalozzi also show the progression of humanistic philosophy in education and character development, but with a balance between humanism and Christian philosophy. He, like Rousseau, believed that children were essentially good, but had been morally corrupted by society; especially the industrial revolution's factory system. As a result, he thought that school should be home-like, especially for those children who did not have mothers (Gutek, 2011). He saw people as having three parts: moral, intellectual, and physical (Gutek, 2011). He went on to say that many schools only focus on the intellectual, neglecting the other two. Moral

development was important to Pestalozzi. He said that one of the purposes of education was to lead children to be morally sensitive to others, which according to Gutek (2011) was a reaction to the inhumane conditions of the factory. Similar to Rousseau, he believed that nature and sensory input was important to learning, but did not agree with Rousseau's idea of the totally natural environment for school. Pestalozzi also believed in the importance of moral values being taught to children (Gutek, 1999; Horlacher, 2011).

Interestingly, Gutek (2011) mentioned Pestalozzi's idea of *love* of teachers for their students, and vice versa. Gutek also reported that Pestalozzi's religious beliefs were more eclectic than others, being influenced by Calvinism, as well as the *pietist* movement. In this movement, adherents practiced a "religion of the heart, rather than a doctrinal theology" (Gutek, 2011, p. 161). It is interesting that this author put piety and theological doctrine opposed to each other. In character training, it does seem that what is being taught is also influenced by the love of the teacher/trainer/parent for the one being taught. Perhaps Pestalozzi knew and experienced this. God's love, as it guided pietists, was one of the guiding and enabling forces in their lives (Gutek, 2011). The important issue at this point is analogous to the dichotomy seen in Pestalozzi's life. Character education can be seen as an application of principles guiding behaviors, or as a process of inner change. The former is only concerned with what is seen, and the latter is concerned with the heart of the person. The other important detail is the idea of the love of the teacher for his student. In character education, it seems that this is an important factor.

Catharine Beecher is a lesser known advocate for character education. She was the daughter of a famous minister, and she wrote *Suggestions Respecting Improvements in Education* in 1829. In the book, she emphasized that it is a function of schools to develop moral

character, good personal habits, and civics expressed as calmness and gentleness. She also stressed that schools, families, and churches should work hand in hand to develop children's character (Sklar, 1976). These are important ideas for this study.

The ideas of Horace Mann and Herbert Spencer also add to this discussion. In the first half of the 1800's, Horace Mann was a very influential educational leader. He believed that the United States held a very special place in the world, and should strive to maintain its leadership. He said that this could be accomplished through common schools, also known as public schools. In accord with many before him, he believed that these schools should reflect the morals of society (Gutek, 2011). In this case, it was the dominating Protestant (Calvinist) view of ethics. But, the cultural landscape of the US was changing. Many immigrants were coming to the US, and were of differing national, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Foreign immigration contributed to religious and cultural pluralism in this country. It was Mann's belief that churches should separate from control of public schools, but that the schools can and should still teach morals to their students Gutek, 2011). This idea of pluralism would have an effect on education that exists until today.

Around the same time in England, Herbert Spencer was creating his educational philosophy. Spencer was brought up in the English middle class, and was against the idea of inheriting wealth. He was heavily influenced by Darwin's theory of evolution, and applied this theory to society and education. As a boy, his father led him to question socio-cultural mores and religious beliefs. He became a civil engineer, and developed "an engineer's outlook on how the world worked" (Gutek, 2011, p. 314). This mechanistic view of the world is similar to many modern educational thinkers (Kenan, 2009). Spencer asks the important question of whether schools should just reflect social conditions, or should they be actively involved in changing

them. When the conditions are bad and the schools are attempting to make conditions better this is a good idea. However, if the conditions are good, and some want to change the schools and society, this might not be a good idea (Dewey, 1909). It depends who is defining the terms, and defining what "good" is. For Spencer's social Darwinism, good meant whatever works. This is a utilitarian view of the world, and speaks less to character development, except as it promotes harmony between people. It is not based on a higher standard.

These humanistic ideas have dominated educational theory and practice (Greene, 2003; Ryan, 2013). In the 20th century, psychologists have been in the forefront of the thinking about how children develop. Many educators are still following their ideas. Some of the leading secular psychologists and their ideas concerning children and their parents are discussed below. Many of their ideas are pertinent to this study.

Theoretical Foundations

Piaget. With older elementary school students in mind, Piaget helps in the understanding of how students are moving into the concrete operational stage. This stage involves children from about ages seven through eleven. During this stage, children put actions and ideas into organized categories. Their thoughts are no longer disjointed or unorganized (Miller, 2011). According to Miller (2011), children in this stage can also understand the intentions of moral judgments of their parents and others. In other words, children can put together that rules are to be followed because of either the reason given by the parent, or the punishment that might be coming. The rules are no longer isolated, but are becoming part of a larger concept. Though children may not be able to fully evaluate the personal moral rightness or wrongness of a rule yet (as in the following formal operations stage), they can still understand the rules, and the relationship with their parents which exists behind the rule. This idea is different from the idea

of Rousseau who believed a child's moral education should not begin until age 12 (Gutek, 2011). The idea of understanding the intentions of a rule given by a parent is important for this study. If parents are taught a character education program and learn how to give rules and expect them to be followed, or communicate something important to their child, the children in this Piagetian stage should be able to understand the parents' intentions to give a rule for the good of the family.

Equilibration is another concept Piaget wrote about, and is worth considering here. In Miller (2011) he put forth the idea of *cognitive adaptation*. Cognitive adaptation has two facets: assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation is "fitting reality into our current cognitive organization" (Miller, 2011, p. 63). When new information comes in, it is put into already existing files, or paradigms. On the other hand, accommodation is described as creating a new file for information which does not fit into an already existing file. In other words, there is a shift in paradigm. Equilibration is the balancing of these two ideas. This is important because students need to decide how they will relate to their parents, what values they will adopt as their own, and how they will make important decisions. Some of these children, in their next few years, will begin to think of their parents as second-class, and not worthy to listen to. Others will likely continue to submit to their parents' authority. This cognitive adaptation will be seen in the decisions they make as they become older. It is hoped that this cognitive adaptation will be seen in the factors of communication, limit setting, and overall parental satisfaction employed in this study.

Erikson. Erikson's psychosocial theory is the next psychological theory considered. In his thinking, students go through several stages, or conflicts which must be resolved. He calls the stage elementary students are in the industry versus inferiority stage. This stage involves

children roughly from age six to puberty. Erikson's is a theory based on needs. According to his ideas, children in this stage are looking to fulfill the need for accomplishment in the things they are a part of (Miller, 2011). In other words, it is the search for efficacy through doing. Erikson explains that children in this stage receive positive reinforcement as they accomplish activities or though good experiences, and develop a sense of competency. On the other hand, children who experience failure in their activities will feel inferior to their peers (Miller, 2011). Parents will reinforce their children's behavior whether positively or negatively, and can help at this stage by choosing to encourage their children. They need to monitor the self-esteem of their children and be there when they fail. Parents can help children understand their failure and keep it in context. Parents can also reinforce the good feelings brought about by all the good experiences of the children, from team sports to reading to grades. In accordance with Erikson's ideas, parents can be a vital key to developing competence in their children.

Erikson also believed that society has a tremendous influence in what children become (Miller, 2011). The first society can be defined as the family, and can be beneficial or detrimental to the children, depending on the family in question.

Erikson's theories also speak to the parents. The middle adult stage or conflict is called *Generativity versus Stagnation and Self-absorption* (Miller, 2011). In this stage, the need for adults is to help the younger generation become established and succeed. Erikson would probably say that one important reason parents want their children to do well is because of this need at this stage in their lives. They want to pass on the best of their lives to the next generation (generativity). This idea will be tested in this study as parents are taught to inculcate good character in their children. To summarize, the children's and parents' needs can work together or against each other to determine the outcome of the interactions they experience. Teaching a

character education program to the parents may help parents' needs and children's needs work together in a positive way.

 Bandura. Similar in application is the teaching of Bandura. Even though he is a behaviorist, he focuses on the social aspects of learning. The concepts discussed here are self-efficacy, modeling, and moral judgments. Self-efficacy is a person's own perception of their own competence (Miller, 2011). People must believe in themselves, and think in their own mind that they can accomplish a task. This is important to this study because students and their parents must have confidence to believe that they can be successful; in school, work, or even parenting. Bandura lists some of the sources of self-efficacy: previous attempts (successes or failures), verbal persuasion, vicarious experience, and the "psychological and affective states" (p. 244) of the person. Importantly, Miller (2011) reports Bandura as believing that the largest contributor to children's self-efficacy is the family. The author goes on to state that children will adopt the parents' behaviors, values, and beliefs through observation (Miller, 2011). Teaching values to parents hopefully will create a positive circle of self-efficacy leading to improved parent-child relationships.

 Another important idea from Bandura is that personality is learned. Not only are behaviors learned through observing and imitating, but the child's personality is at least partly formed as they grow and experience the lives of others. If this is true then it is of vital importance for parents to set the example in their speech, dress, habits, and the way they parent their children. It seems there is an interplay between the actions of the parents, and the receptiveness of the child. According to Miller (2011) children are active contributors, almost like actors studying a script, who add to their own development as they watch and live with others, especially parents.

Parents can help in the area of positive role modeling (Miller, 2011). If parents are the primary and greatest source of influence, then they should do all they can to positively influence their children as consistent positive role models. According to Bandura, positive and consistent modeling is important because parents must "practice what they preach" (Miller, 2011, p. 249). If not, their hypocrisy will be easily seen by their children. This agrees with a study by Hardy et al. (2008), who found that less authoritative styles of parenting (more support and modeling) led to deeper internalization of the parents' moral values.

Kohlberg. The work of Lawrence Kohlberg is also pertinent to this study. Kohlberg furthered and expanded the research of Jean Piaget (Miller, 2011). Piaget came up with two levels of moral thinking. The first was applicable for most children under the age of about 11. It stated that rules are to be obeyed because an authority figure said to do so. The second and more mature level of thinking thought of rules as ideas to help people get along, and can be altered as needed (Kohlberg, 1966).

Kohlberg created three levels of moral reasoning with two stages within each level. The first of the three levels is the pre-conventional level. Most people in this level are children about 9 years old and younger. In stage one, morals are shaped by parents and other authorities. Rules are followed because they are rules (similar to Piaget's first level). In this first stage it is important for parents to make, keep, and maintain firm and fair rules for their children. In stage two, children believe there can be more than one viewpoint on an issue. Level two is called Conventional. Most adolescents and adults stay in this stage, according to Kohlberg (1966). Rules are accepted because of the acceptance or approval of others (stage three), or because of group norms (stage four). Only 10 to 15 percent of people reach the third level in their moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1966). People who reach stage five know that rules exist for the greatest

number of people, but sometimes can work against individuals. Stage six is the highest level of moral reasoning. Those who think like this believe that the only true laws are universal, and are above man's conventional laws for keeping order. This person creates his own set of moral values and lives by them. Kohlberg identified the stages in people, mostly children, through the use of moral dilemmas, such as the Heinz dilemma (Liu, 2014).

Kohlberg was critical of character education programs, which focused on developing habits (Liu, 2014). Kohlberg stated that the only basis for morals is justice (1971). However, if the goal is to reach the highest level of moral reasoning, a person simply becomes totally selfish, creating his own set of "my rules." To this author that does not seem advanced as a thinking process. Justice becomes whatever a person defines it to be. Van Brummelen (2002) agrees, arguing that Kohlberg's ideas do not take faith into account. He continued by stating that reason must function within some type of basis involving faith. In other words, any decisions are made within a circle of a worldview. Any worldview involves believing in some system, even if it is evolution. Kohlberg argued that children cannot handle moral dilemmas, but Van Brummelen (2002) disagrees again and says that children can make solid moral judgments when the dilemmas are placed in the context of stories. It is also interesting that Kohlberg would say that, because most of his work was accomplished with children between ten and sixteen (Rosen, 1980). According to Knight (2006), Kohlberg's ideas were not connected to the concept of God. His ideas were humanistic in their philosophy. Nash (1990) goes farther, saying that the modern "educational crisis is not exclusively a crisis of the mind, but also a crisis of the heart, a values crisis" (Nash, 1990, p. 29-30). Gilligan (1977) also weighs in, stating that Kohlberg used mostly boys in his work, leading to wrong or skewed data which does not include the perspective of females.

Summary of History and Theory

Moral judgments seem to be the logical conclusion to this section. Children must have self-efficacy and positive role models in their parents. But as they grow, it will be they who are making the moral decisions. Miller (2011) states that these decisions will be based on their personal standards, peer influence, adults' prohibitions, and expected punishments or rewards (this last factor would be critical for Bandura and his classical conditioning position).

We know that children and adolescents sometimes make poor decisions that can harm themselves. At times they go against their own standards, against their normal self-efficacious behavior, and against their parents. This is a question Bandura was also interested in knowing (Miller, 2011). Current research seeks to answer some of these questions.

Recent Research and Thought Concerning Values

The subject of values or character education is one that has many facets. Some of the questions being considered by researchers include the content of values, i.e., which values should be taught. A second question concerns whether values education should only be taught in Christian schools, or are they appropriate for all schools. Another question is about who is responsible and authorized to teach the values: teachers, parents, the government, or Confucius' "rightly informed teacher" (Gutek, 2011, p. 15). Still another idea which is being considered is the role of parents. In light of the many pluralistic societies around the world, the issue is even more confusing (Koh, 2012). But it is almost universally accepted that parents have a particular and unique responsibility to teach their children values. The elements of this issue are many and the question seems to not have one answer, but clues might be found in an overview of recent research and writings in this area.

Basis of Morals

The first question to be addressed concerns the basis of morals. Should the morals espoused be based in religious thought and writings (Ackerman, 2007; Etherington, 2013; Fowler, 2004; Schultz, 1998), or in some other basis (Akhan & Altikulac, 2014; Fisher, 2013)? Or should they come from a third source such as secular psychologists or philosophical pragmatists, such as Kohlberg suggested (Knight, 2006)? Two articles, one from the West, and one from the East attempt to give clarity to this question. The first article was written by Kenan (2009) from Turkey. In this article, the author postulated that the missing element in modern education is values. The author explained that the educational world today is dominated by mechanistic, positivists such as Herbert Spencer who think they can explain all aspects of life in scientific terms, and saw this position as a weakness. The author stated that this perspective will not answer ontological questions about purpose and meaning in life. Kenan (2009) went on to examine how this mindset has not addressed the problems facing the world today: family and community crises, the lack of civic culture, financial malpractice, and even the irresponsible behavior of businesses which have partly contributed to global warming and climate change, among other issues (Kenan, 2009), though the author did not provide any proof of these assertions.

The other article is by Kevin Ryan (2013). He echoes parts of the Kenan article, and explains that empiricism and the scientific method are the ultimate reality for many educators, and that these ideas will not be sufficient to teach students morals because they do not understand what morals are. He argued that character cannot be measured by a test. He called some programs indoctrination, rather than an awakening of conscience. Crabb (1988) agrees with this, seeing the process of values internalization as a process of getting in touch with all that

is in one's conscious mind. Ryan (2013) went on to explore the connection between education and the spiritual component of life, saying that education should help in the development of a student's personal and spiritual life. Ryan (2013) summed up his article by saying that modern character education is failing because of three reasons: it fails to rightly define what character education is, it does not link character education to deeper personal issues, and it places control of the educational process totally in the hands of the state. Conversely, he stated that it will succeed when it is linked to the deepest parts of humans, when it is directed toward the acquisition of virtues, and when parents cooperate and support the process. Etherington (2013) agrees with this conclusion, adding that moral education must be founded upon a theistic base. However, some programs, such as the Living Values Program (LVE), espouse the belief that those who go through their program should "choose their own personal, social, moral, and spiritual values" (Living Values, 2012).

Adult Responsibility to Teach Character

Brannon (2008) wrote that character education is a joint responsibility between home and schools, but struggled with the exact role of each in a child's moral education. The author went on to bring out that children are receiving mixed messages at home and in society and sometimes do not know what is acceptable in schools. This is a problem for students when they are in schools, and when they leave (le Sage & de Ruyter, 2008). Sharma and Mohite (2007) report that in India parents and the society are expected to play the larger part in the moral education of children. The responsibility of teaching morals must be accomplished consistently. Without everyone working from the same piece of music, the sounds will be cacophonous and confusing. Van Brummelen (2002) wrote that school, family, and community, and church must be sending consistent messages for values education to be effective. Brannon (2008) also points to

modeling, discussions, role-playing, and service projects as effective strategies for schools to implement character education. She also stressed the consistency of the messages children are being taught at home, with friends, in the media, and at school (Brannon, 2008).

Several studies looked at the role and influence of parents in the picking up of moral values by their children. Generally, these articles showed that parents still have a great influence in the moral education of their children. One goal of parenting is to help children independently regulate their own thoughts and behaviors in line with the values parents want them to have (Hardy et al. 2008). In this study, these authors examined the factors of parenting, and how they affected the internalization of moral values. They reported on four levels of morals internalization: external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation. They were ranked from most external to most internal. The "pinnacle of internalization, then, is when values become part of one's sense of self and behavior freely emerges from the self" (Hardy et al. 2008, p. 206). This would be the level known as integrated regulation. The three dimensions of parenting which were factors in this study were parental involvement, autonomy support, and structure. The study found that the strongest factor leading to integrated regulation was parental involvement. It also showed that too much or inappropriate structure was counterproductive to the internalization of morals. This is good information for parents hoping to pass on their values to know.

Another study asked about the effects of parental involvement on student engagement and student achievement. In this study by Mo and Singh (2008), they looked at the direct and indirect effects of parental involvement. One important factor they found was that parents must have high aspirations for their children, a vision for a successful life. The authors put some of

the responsibility on schools for not having enough opportunities for parents who want to be involved (Mo & Singh, 2008).

The next study took this idea a step further. Le Sage and de Ruyter (2008), argued that parents have a moral obligation, and even a criminal obligation to teach their children values. The question they raised was whether the chain of responsibility is strong enough to legitimately punish parent for the wrong behaviors of their children. The authors concluded that parents can be held responsible if they have been guilty of neglect in fulfilling their duty to reducing the possibility of risk of harm to others (le Sage and de Ruyter, 2008). They added that for their children to develop a strong moral base, they need "affectively warm relationships and need to live in a safe environment in which they can develop secure attachment relationships" (p. 796).

Which Schools Should Teach Character

Should character education be taught only in Christian schools? This question was studied by Lovat, Clement, Dally and Toomey in a 2010 article. This paper argued that even though values education has been mostly associated with Christian schools, current research has shown that solid character education programs support improvements in academic advancement in all types of schools. They referred to the results of the *Values Education Good Practice Schools Project*, and the *Project to Test and Measure the Impact of Values Education on Student Effects and School Ambience,* both of which are studies from Australia (Lovat et al., 2010). In these studies, teachers have also changed the way they perceive and accept the importance of values education in their schools (Lovat et al., 2010). Blackaby and Blackaby (2011) and Van Brummelen (2002), would both agree that all schools should be built on a foundation of good moral principles. Etherington (2013) goes a step farther by stating that schools should teach morals, but they should be based not only in good moral principles, but in biblical ideology.

Current and Emerging Strategies

In recent years, values education has been a topic of great concern and effort. Two reasons for this are the decline of civic culture and the increase in lawless behavior. Some are even worried that America is losing its edge as a world leader because of its loss of values (Ryan, 2013). In the last few decades, there have been several emphases in the world which influence educational thought. More recently, people such as Mohandas Gandhi, W.E.B. DuBois, and Paul Freire bring political ideas to bear on education. They are advocates for the interests of social change, African-Americans, and liberation of the downtrodden and politically powerless, respectively (Gutek, 2011). These leaders are vocal for social and political change, and their influence extends into educational processes and structures. Values are one of the processes in schools. These people are concerned with good values, but mostly as they affect their interest group.

Others recently have written of how modern education has failed to properly address values education. As stated above, Ryan (2013) wrote that modern society has not fully grasped the problem as it really is. He and Kenan (2009) both argued that most prevailing educational ideas are mechanistic and positivistic, not being able to answer the deeper questions of values from this scientific base of thought.

Ryan (2013) reported that the Federal government released the results of a research study of seven values education programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). He stated that none of the programs were a success. Of the 60 impacts studied, two were positively statistically significant. They were teacher reported measures of *student support for teachers* in years 1 and 2. Three impacts were expected to be significant due to chance. It seems that possibly what is needed is a new direction or approach to make character education programs more effective.

The teacher is also a factor in how to proceed. One study from Australia by Brady (2011) discussed the importance of the values of the teacher. Certainly this is a valid point. A teacher who does not model and attempt to live out the values he or she is teaching will not be the one desired to teach morals to students. The author listed realness, acceptance and caring, empathic understanding, and "a fully functioning person" (Brady, 2011, p. 58) as desirable qualities in a teacher. One other important factor is the quality of the teaching. Lovat and Clement (2008) argued that for effective learning to take place, the teacher must employ high quality practices as well as values education curriculum. Brannon (2008) also argued for the inclusion of solid methods for values education to be effective.

Character Education Programs

There are many character education programs which go by almost as many names as there are programs (see Table 1 for a few examples). One is called Play Like a Champion (PLC), which was used in a study by Power (2014) with basketball players in an urban setting. Another is the Power2Achieve program, used by the Institute for Excellence and Ethics (Davidson, Khmelkov, Baker, & Lickona, 2011). There are the six foundational values of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program, the Seven Habits from Stephen Covey, and the Eight Keys program also. It is difficult to know which program will best fit one's situation. Many programs overlap with each other in the lists of values and ideas espoused, especially with the traits of honesty and responsibility.

Table 1

Comparison of Six Character Education Programs

Name of program (and origin)	Character traits	How it is taught	Target audience
CME Civics and Moral Development	Respect, responsibility,	Perspective taking, role-playing, moral	All students in primary, secondary,

(national program from Singapore)	integrity, care, resilience, and harmony	dilemmas, storytelling, service learning	and pre-university levels
VIA Institute on Character (Neal H. Mayerson, Martin E. P. Seligman; positive psychology)	Wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence (These six core traits with sub-traits for a total of 24)	Online tests for children, youth and adults; speakers and training for businesses	Individuals and businesses
CHARACTER COUNTS! (Josephson Institute)	Trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship	Setting an example, present do's and don'ts of the behavior, role-play, family discussion, hypothetical situations	Families and schools (students up to age 18)
7 Habits (Stephen R. Covey)	Be proactive; begin with the end in mind; put first things first; think win-win, seek first to understand, then be understood; synergize; sharpen the saw	For students- whole school approach (change the school culture through integrating the seven habits into curriculum and all aspects of the school)	Elementary age students, teens, and adults (separate programs for each)
Eight Keys (Learning Forum International)	Integrity, failure leads to success, speak with good purpose, this is it, commitment, ownership, flexibility, balance	One key is taught per month. Activities include student journaling, writing assignments, test prep tips	Two: families with children; and schools (all ages of students)
Project Wisdom (Project Wisdom, Inc.)	32 character traits- including love of learning, Golden Rule, non-violence, confidence, patience (this sampling is not found in most other programs' lists)	Daily messages over the PA system in schools. Also character-based lesson plans.	Elementary and secondary students

Sources (in order of table): Koh, 2012; VIA Institute on Character, 2015; Josephson Institute, 2005; Covey, 2004; Learning Forum International, n.d.; Project Wisdom, 2015.

One seemingly important focus of recent research is in the trait of gratitude. Froh and

Bono (2014) report their own research as well as others in this area in their book *Making*

Grateful Kids. They see gratefulness as a core trait; important as a way to impact children and adults. Froh and Bono's work (2014) , along with the work of others, report that gratitude can influence other important traits and processes. Some of these are respect for others, kindness, self- motivation, less envy, social competence (Raver & Knitzer, 2002), and less motivation toward materialism (Froh, Emmons, Card, Bono, & Wilson, 2011). In addition, other qualities that show improvement are self-respect, optimism, self-confidence, goal setting, and self-control (Froh & Bono, 2014). These studies were conducted with children and/or adolescents.

These authors also report that gratitude acts as a moral barometer, giving a value to the behavior of others (McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, & Larson, 2001). Secondly, gratitude acts as a moral motivator. In this capacity, gratitude motivates a person to reciprocate kind acts and words to others, and well as extending kindness to others without prompting (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006; Tsang, 2006). The third function of gratitude is that of a moral reinforcer. Understood as such, one person's gratitude motivates another to act morally again (McCullough, et al., 2001). This book is important because it seems to have found one character trait which affects other traits, and affects proper functioning in society. Perhaps there are other core traits which are most important to the development of morals in children.

Looking to the Future

Looking toward the future, it is important to ascertain just what the purposes of schools are. Should they be the place where values are taught (Elias, 2014)? Schools are also places for students to prepare for the work force. According to Ken Kay (2009), the president of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, schools need to redefine their vision. He states that elementary schools' mission is to prepare students to learn, and high schools get students ready for college and careers. In Kay's article, he says middle schools need to teach 21st century skills

such as "professionalism, work ethic, oral and written communication, teamwork and collaboration, and critical thinking and problem solving" (Kay, 2009, p. 43). He reported that these skills will help students become better citizens and workers. According to this author, in order for middle schools to fully implement these skills, the foundation of values should be carefully and substantially laid during elementary school. The teaching of values may help elementary schools in their mission to prepare students to be able to learn.

Several authors offered some direction for the future of values education. Sojourner (2014) stated that what is needed is for each child to have at least one significant relationship with a caring adult. He also mentioned that this might be why some values education programs are failing. They do not take the parent-child relationship aspect into account. Related to this, Elias (2014) argued for whole-school approaches which attempt to change the entire culture of the schools. An example of this type of approach would be the Seven Habits program. Also in this article, he asks the important questions of which America people really want, and which schools can contribute to it. Kilpatrick (1992) agreed with Elias (2014) stating that the communities must also be involved in the character training of students. Dewey (1909) added that schools should make use of all of its resources and people to teach values to children.

Another possible future focus is found in a study by Collier and Dowson (2008). They reported that they believe that part of the solution for values education effectiveness lies in the methods of transmission. In their study, they stated that educators need to teach values in post-modern ways in order to reach the current generation in meaningful ways.

Murray (2014) added the variable of civic culture to the list of future emphases for values education. He looked at American history, and used the term "founding virtues" in describing what the first Americans stood for (p. 2). The list included two character traits: industriousness

and honesty; and two institutions: religion and marriage. Last, Matthew Davidson (2014) wrote

an article entitled *A character education research perspective for the 21ˢᵗ century.* In this article,

he stated that as it stands, character education programs only based on moral character is not

sufficient. Moral character should include "an ethical conscience as well as an *ethic of*

excellence" [emphasis added] (Davidson, 2014, p. 78). In other words, the author was stating

that students need to be able to think right and *do right,* in order for the effectiveness of values

education to meet its potential. He also expressed strong feelings about the issue of values

education in the following statement: "Character education should be at the center of the most

pressing educational and economic issues, not on the sideline" (Davidson, 2014, p. 79).

Biblical Basis for Character Education

Because of the nature of this topic, the biblical basis is very important. It seems to this

author that a research project on values/character/morals education must consider how

researchers conceive these values. The source of their thinking needs to be explored. The

question of whether schools should be a part of the moral development of children should be

answered. Parents must learn to trust schools to administer values that they agree with.

According to Kenan (2009), there is a vacuum of morals, both ethical and spiritual in many

societies. In this section this author will seek to connect the lists of values from different

programs to the Biblical model.

There is one command specifically for children listed in the Ten Commandments. It is to

"honor your father and mother" (Exodus 20:12). In most families and in many cultures around

the world, this is accepted as common sense. This command helps maintain the order in a

household. Supporting this idea is the belief that parents are in charge, and are expected to lead

their family in an honorable way. There is also the idea that the children are to follow the rules

and directives of the parents. This command also assumes the presence of both father and mother. In this research, this factor will have to be addressed. It is also implied that the parents should be setting the example of what a good home life should be, and make it easier for the children to honor their parents. Children are also instructed in Proverbs 4:1 to listen to their father's instructions, and in Proverbs 10:17 to heed discipline, and not ignore correction. In summary, a child is to honor their parents by doing what is asked of them, being accountable, and submitting to their role as the parent.

On the other hand, parents have certain responsibilities to their families. In the Apostle Paul's missionary letter to the Ephesians, the commandment to the children to honor parents is repeated, followed by an instruction to fathers (parents) not to exasperate their children, but to "bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4, NIV). Deuteronomy states that parents should teach the ways of God to their children, talk about them as they go about their lives, and even put signs of the Lord on their houses and gates as reminders (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). Here it is clear that parents are the ones who are to pass on their values to their children. These values include such ideas such as honesty, responsibility, and caring for others. Parental instincts and society tell us that parents should also provide a safe and secure environment for their children, provide for their basic needs of food and clothing, and be available, consistent, and thoughtful in behavior.

The Old Testament

The Ten Commandments. The foundation for values education is found in the Ten Commandments listed first in Exodus 20. Some of the commandments are listed as positive statements, and some are listed as negatives, but they all speak to the idea of how to live in a world in which God is present. The idea is that people do have a certain way to live because

according to the Bible, they will give an account to God for the way they lived. These ten statements provide an excellent framework for personal and corporate morals for all people.

The first command is to put God first (Exodus 20:3). In His world, He should be each person's primary focus. A principle people can draw from this first commandment is about priorities. People should be careful how they live, and live their lives with the end in mind (Covey, 2004): that God will get glory from their lives, and they contribute to it. Also they should remember to put their selves second, serving God and others who need them. One problem in today's society is that many people, including parents, put themselves first, even above the needs of their children. This conflicts with the passing down of morals; parents may not have them, and they are selfish and are not free enough to focus on their children's spiritual/moral needs. In one word, this section can be summed up as priorities, or as in the Seven Habits program, "putting first things first" (Covey, 2004).

The second command given concerns idols (Exodus 20:4-5). In modern society, there are not many people who have idols in their homes to which they bow down, but there are other kinds of idols. The idea here is not to make things into gods. People are free to enjoy the creation, but to remember that it is for their use, not worship. People should be careful not to put money, self, other people, or something else higher than God. Service to others is a very important idea in the Scriptures. Service is also an important idea in several character education programs.

The third commandment is in Exodus 20: 7, where people are commanded not to misuse God's name. His name is the most precious one in the world. Orthodox Jews even today do not say or write the name of God, for fear of breaking this command. The moral idea of this command is to be careful how people use their words. They are powerful, and can build up or

tear down others. Some of the concepts mentioned in character education programs are respect for others, and the importance and power of a person's words.

The fourth commandment in the list directs followers to keep the Sabbath day (Exodus 20:8-11). One day of the week was set aside to rest, reflect, and worship. People in this society (including students working on an academic degree) sometimes forget to stop and enjoy. All people need time to collect themselves, and times to do something different from work. The word "Sabbath" means to stop. It is important that each person find time for rest, to review priorities, and to seek spiritual renewal. In the Seven Habits program, this would be an example of the seventh habit, *sharpen the saw* (Covey, 2004). In the CHARACTER COUNTS! program, it is expressed as *fairness and caring* (Josephson Institute, n.d.).

Commandment number five (Exodus 20:12) concerns honoring parents. All people (not just children) are commanded to give honor to parents. Especially in this society, some children do not have a sense of honor toward their parents, and sometimes parents are truly not worthy of respect, but people are still commanded to give them honor. Family is a place where God's love can and should be exhibited. The giving and receiving of *respect* are important concepts of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program (Josephson Institute, n.d.).

The last five commandments are a series of directives given in the negative form. These deal with relationships to those who live close by. All of them can be given as positive principles of morals which can help people live in a stable and honorable society.

The sixth command says, "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20: 13). Stated positively, it could say, "Life is precious." People are to see human life as a gift, and they are free to enjoy the gift of life, and not take it from another person. It also tells people that they are their brother's keepers, and are responsible and accountable for personal relationships to others. No

one is better or worse than another person. Equality is one principle here. Again, the principle of *respect* is highlighted (Josephson Institute, n.d.).

Commandment seven, found in Exodus 20:14, instructs people not to commit adultery. The freedom here is to enjoy the spouse God gave us. The Scriptures tell us that the lives and bodies of husband and wife belong to each other, and should not be withheld. However, marriage is in crisis in this country today. Many people struggle with what love really is, and how to live and love as a couple. Here is where parents and guardians can be positive role models. The way couples interact in front of their children is an important time for learning about life: forgiveness, trust, caring, and especially the marital relationship.

The eighth commandment instructs people not to steal (Exodus 20:15). Again there is a positive idea here. As recipients of God's love and care, people are free to enjoy what He has given them. They are to want and enjoy what they have. To steal is to say that God is not being fair, and it is fair to take His place to make things right. His command also carries the idea of a responsibility for the poor in this world, another idea expressed in the Bible. *Responsibility* for self and others is a key teaching in many character education programs, such as the ideas of integrity and ownership from the Eight Keys program (Learning Forum International, n.d.).

In Exodus 20:16, the ninth command involves character in matters of law and order. People are directed to not bear false witness. They are to be honest, especially when it involves someone else who needs a person to tell the truth. It does not matter if this person is someone you like, respect, or admire. The truth is the truth, and those of faith are to be people of the truth; people of integrity at all times. In the CHARACTER COUNTS! program, three of the pillars of character are *trustworthiness*, *citizenship*, and *fairness* (Josephson Institute, n.d.).

The final commandment concerns coveting (Exodus 20:17). *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (1977) defines it as having an inordinate desire for what is not rightly yours. As in the eighth commandment, we are free to enjoy the things God has given us, without wanting what we do not have. It is okay to want certain things, but not to want what is outside God's will. It seems that this idea of enjoying what God has given us is a theme in the Commandments, and acts as a summary idea.

This is a short list, and the Commandments are further explained in Exodus in the chapters that follow it, as well as in other areas of the Bible, including commentary by Jesus. This author believes that if a program were developed from this list, it would be an important addition to current practice. Also, many of the extant character education programs draw their monikers from the principles found in this list.

The moral law and character traits go hand in hand. Their purpose is the same: people acting responsibly. But the roads to achieve each one are different. One is motivated and powered by God. He initiates and fuels an inner change in people. Secular character education is many times only concerned with a change in behavior, without the idea of the spiritual part of man.

The New Testament

The teaching of Jesus. In the New Testament, Jesus gave two great commandments in His exchange with the expert in the law in Matthew 22: 34-40. These two are analogous to the Ten Commandments in Exodus. The two given by Jesus both concern love: love for God and love for neighbors. Instead of a list of "dos" (commands one through five) and "do nots" (six through ten), Jesus summarizes them into two moral directives. Overarching values should be based on love. If people do these two things, they will fulfill the law. But these are not just

items to check off. Love is not something people just do because they are told to. True love must come out of a person from the inside. This is a fatal flaw of most contemporary values education programs and systems. Values cannot just be put on like a set of clothes. They go deeper. If the only reason a person does not steal is because God will punish him, he does not fully understand the intent of the law.

Fruit of the Spirit. It is possible that the nine Fruit of the Spirit can be said to be in apposition to the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament. The Ten Commandments stand for the old law, a list of some principles, and some directives the people of Israel were supposed to follow. The Fruit of the Spirit were given as an expression of what God would accomplish through His people as they remained in relationship with Him. Yet, the two lists are related. The Ten Commandments were "have to dos" and the Fruit of the Spirit were/are "God will dos." The Fruit of the Spirit also form a basis for character education programs used. Many of the ideas in this list can be seen either with the exact words, or in principle.

The Bible gives credit for character change to God and His work in people. In most other programs the writers hope the people who engage in their programs will change due to the exposure and learning (their effort). This is an important difference in philosophical approach to how character education should be accomplished.

Love is the first fruit listed. The Greek work is agape and means love that is shown no matter what the other person does. It is a self-starting action for the benefit of the other person (Barclay, 1976). No return is looked for or expected. This love is given freely, and without strings attached.

Joy is the second fruit. Joy is not happiness in circumstances (Young, 1977). It flows through a believer who realizes God is in control of all circumstances. It is also a sort of

apartness from circumstances, where a person knows that whatever happens is okay because God allowed it to happen. It is the opposite of worry (Strauss, 1958).

Number three is peace. It is based in knowledge, the knowledge that a person is completely in the hands of his Creator (Barclay, 1976). It is also described in Isaiah as the state of affairs of the person who keeps his mind focused on the goodness of God (Isaiah 26:3). Young (1977) also described this peace as "wholeness" (p. 112). This important word occurs 80 times in the New Testament, and is in every NT book (Boice, 1976). The first three fruits seem to be describing inner qualities. The next six move to qualities which people would exhibit in relation to others.

The fourth fruit listed is patience. This quality is described as the ability to wait a long time without being offended, or having quiet resolve (Young, 1977). This is also how God's attitude toward people is described (Romans 2:4).

Kindness is the fifth fruit listed in Galatians. It is described by Barclay (1976) as sweetness or positivity. He also compared this word to old wine (mellow and sweet).

The sixth fruit, goodness, is set in contrast with kindness. At first, these words seem almost as synonyms. But the meaning of goodness is of an all-around goodness, the ability and wisdom to exercise discipline and rebuke, as well as encouragement (Young, 1977). The idea is that of not just the absence of badness, but the readiness to act on behalf of what is right.

Seventh in the list is faithfulness. It is the abandonment of self (Young, 1977) to Someone else. The idea here is also of consistency in word and deed, or reliability.

The eighth fruit is gentleness. Gentleness can be described as strength under control (George, 1979). This person could act in any way, but chooses to act in the best interest of all.

This person is also described as teachable, and as willing to be angry at the right time, in the right amount, for the right reason (Barclay, 1976).

The last fruit (self-control) sums up all the others, and contains them all. It is described as the result of the athlete's discipline, allowing him to achieve greatness in the arena (1 Corinthians 9:25). It is also described as working with God to master self. There does seem to be a "God" part of this fruit, and a "self" part. The word has been applied to a ruler who keeps his private and public life in good order (Barclay, 1976).

Self-control can be said to be one of the goals of character education. In fact, all of these fruits might be good for society. They can also be seen as core traits, as the aforementioned trait of gratitude. It is interesting that the next verse in Galatians stresses that there cannot be any laws against these qualities. They are universal. The problem or difference is how people see the inner part of man. If a person is seen just as a machine or biological result of evolutionary processes, these qualities do not make sense. An "accident of nature" would not need to think about joy or kindness. Perhaps moral behavior should not even be an area of concern or exploration of evolutionists at all. The concept of God, being created in His image, and an accountability to Him bring meaning to the fruit of the Spirit, and even to all character education programs. Character education involves changing the thinking, the inner person. But the two purposes must be seen. One brings glory to God, and gives life meaning and focus. It says that what people do morally is good and serves the good of man. The other is simply to control behavior to make life easier for the greatest number of people in a society.

As an example, self-control is a concept that can be seen in other character education programs. In the Seven Habits program, the habits of keeping first things first, beginning with the end in mind, and sharpening the saw can all be seen to be similar to this fruit (Covey, 2004).

One of the principles of the Eight Keys program (Learning Forum international, n.d.) is called *This is it!* It instructs people to make the most of each moment. Another one of the eight keys is *ownership*. This is also similar to the idea of self-control. Many of the ideas which are evident as character traits or principles in the Bible are represented in many if not most secular character education programs. It seems possible that there are some people who want good character education, and want their children to exhibit good morals, but they do not want their children to be exposed to "religious" ideas. However, unknown to many of them, the character education materials taught them are based in biblical ideas and principles.

Conclusion

This review of research and philosophy brings out several conclusions and illumines this study's timeliness. One of the most important is that character education is important for the development of families, schools, and nations. Strengthening morals would have many benefits for any family, group, or country. According to some, there is a need for greater emphasis on inner development (Etherington, 2013; Kenan, 2009; Ryan, 2013). They conclude that the mechanistic and humanistic approach does not address the whole person, and thus does not educate to the whole person. Some would argue that this is okay, since educating the whole person includes religion, an area that is off limits for public schools. But many would agree that character education has benefits for all types of schools (Brannon, 2008; Lovat, Clement, Dally, & Toomey, 2010; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2008). And the presence of character education programs in schools is a testimony to its felt need in schools.

The Bible clearly states that parents are to bring up their children according to the ways of God (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ephesians 6:4). Current research has also shown that parental involvement is still an important key to the transmission of and internalization of values to their

children (Hardy et al. 2008; Mo & Singh, 2008). Modern psychological and educational theorists agree that parents have an important part to play in the development of their children. Piaget informs this research in his teaching that children are developing new categories and paradigms of thought (Miller, 2011). It would follow that there can and should be a morals category for children and that it needs to be developed. Children need to know and follow the rules of the parents, since they can understand the intent of their parents' rules (Miller, 2011). Adding to this, Erikson postulated that children need to gain competence. One good way to build this is by learning how to think and act morally (Miller, 2011). According to Bandura, parents can act as role models, reinforcing their children's good actions (Miller, 2011).

Parent involvement and the resulting effect on children's school engagement and achievement has been researched (Mo & Singh, 2008), as have many other topics relating to character education in schools (Lovat & Clement, 2008; Lovat, Clement, Dally, & Toomey, 2010).   But one gap that has not been explored is in the teaching of values to parents to see the results on their relationship to their children (le Sage & de Ruyter, 2008). Also, the responsibility to teach these values falls to the parents, but the state should provide the resources and means to help facilitate this process (Hardy et al. 2008). This is the other gap which this research hopes to fill.

When values are taught to parents, they can decide how to teach their own children. It is hoped that there will be a change in parent-child relationship, and in the children's grades. It is also hoped that teaching parents a system of moral values will improve home environments, build better students, and increase parents' sense of responsibility and obligation to teach moral values to their children. Schools, communities, and political groups may see the need to include parents as one important key to improving the moral education of children.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

Chapter three is a detailed description of the methods used to conduct this quasi-experimental study. The research questions and null hypotheses are listed; participants and the setting are delineated; the background, validity, and reliability of the instrument used (the PCRI) are discussed; the procedure followed are explained; and the methods of data analysis are discussed.

Design

The design for this quantitative study was a quasi-experimental nonequivalent control group design (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003; Warner, 2013). The participants in the study were divided into one control group and one experimental group. In previous studies, this design has been used. In one study from Australia, Collier and Dowson (2008) used this design with a character education program taught to middle school students. Wolff and Crockett, in 2011 used this design in a research project using archival data at two different times to assess how parenting, friends, and decision making affect teenage risk behavior. This design is consistent with the use of ANOVA (Gall et al., 2013; Warner, 2013). The independent variables were the participation or non-participation in the character education program taught to parents. The dependent variables were three sub-scales of the PCRI (for the first three null hypotheses), and student grades for the fourth null hypothesis.

Research Question(s)

RQ1: Will parents/guardians report a change in their satisfaction with parenting as a result of the character education course as opposed to parents who do not participate in the character education course?

RQ2: Will parents/guardians report a change in their communication as a result of the character education course as opposed to parents who do not participate in the character education course?

RQ3: Will parents/guardians report a change in their limit setting as a result of the character education course as opposed to parents who do not participate in the character education course?

RQ4: Will there be an effect on students' grades as a result of the character education course taught to parents as opposed to parents who do not participate in a character education course?

Null Hypotheses

$H_0 1$: There is no statistically significant difference in the satisfaction with parenting subscale between parents who participated in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program and parents who did not participate as measured by the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI).

$H_0 2$: There is no statistically significant difference in the communication subscale between parents who participated in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program and parents who did not participate as measured by the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI).

$H_0 3$: There is no statistically significant difference in the limit setting subscale between parents who participated in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program and parents who did not participate as measured by the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI).

$H_0 4$: There is no statistically significant difference in academic performance between elementary school students whose parents/guardians participated in the CHARACTER COUNTS! character education course and those whose parents did not participate in the course as measured by student grades.

Participants and Setting

For this study, parents of second through fifth graders in one elementary school provided the sample for this study. These parents were drawn from the accessible population of all the second through fifth grade parents in the school. The number of students in these grades was 420. The number of parents for the same group was estimated at ≈ 700. The target population for this study is parents of second through fifth graders in similar schools. This sample was located in a rural county during quarters two and three of the 2016-2017 school year. The school is a Title I school in a district consisting of mostly lower to middle income families. All participants in the study were volunteers. The study was introduced to the population by way of school flyers, newsletters, phone tree, web site information, and direct letters to potential volunteers. The experimental group consisted of those parents who attended the character education program.

The sample size for this study was 42 participants. Some of the participants had more than one child in the study. The total number of surveys filled out was 48 ($n = 24$ for each group). This sample size met the criteria for a medium effect size and statistical power of .7 at the alpha level of .05 (Warner, 2013). The entire sample was drawn from Happy Mountain Elementary School (a pseudonym), which has a total student population of 741 students (E County Schools, 2016). The school is located in the southeastern United States. 47% of the students ($n = 346$) are receiving free or reduced lunch (Southeastern State Department of Education, 2015). Ethnicities of the student population are: 65% White, 24% Black, and 4% Hispanic. Six percent reported two or more races (E County Schools, 2016). The per capita income for the county is $19,900, and the poverty rate is 21.2% (U. S. Department of Education, 2014). Of the children of the total parent volunteers, there were ten second graders, six third

graders, nine fourth graders, and eight fifth graders. Of the parents of the 420 students in grades two through five, 20 volunteered to participate in the character education program. Four of the parents in the experimental group had more than one child in the study. The completion rate for the surveys was 100 percent (Gall et al., 2003). The total number of surveys in the treatment group was 24 and the total number in the control group was 24. Ethnicity was not part of this study. More women participated than men. There were six men in the experimental group (30%), and 14 women (70%). In the control group, there were nine men and 13 women (41% and 59% respectively).

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study for the first three research questions was the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI), designed by Anthony Gerard in 1994 (Western Psychological Services, 1994a), (see Appendix C). It is a 78-item self-report questionnaire given to parents. This instrument was developed to evaluate parents' attitudes toward parenting and their children. Before the PCRI was developed, the most widely used instrument of the time was the Mother-Child Relationship Evaluation (MCRE). It was developed in the early 1960s, and is only usable with mothers (Western Psychological Services, 1994a). With the coming of more and more custody cases, a new instrument was needed for use with both mothers and fathers. The PCRI was also developed to reflect better psychometrics, and allow clinicians and researchers to have a more current and valid instrument. In addition, it can be used with parents who read at a lower level, expanding its use to parents in high and low SES groups (Western Psychological Services, 1994a).

The instrument started as 345 items. It was rated by 11 judges from diverse backgrounds: item-writing experts, school psychologists, clinicians, and one nationally known child abuse

expert. Other professionals and parents reviewed the items. The instrument was reduced through this process to 107 items. Validity studies were then carried out over a period of four years. After this, the final 78 item form of the PCRI was the result. It is written on a fourth-grade reading level (Western Psychological Services, 1994a).

There are seven parenting scales available: parental support (nine items), satisfaction with parenting (10 items), involvement (14 items), communication (nine items), limit setting (12 items), autonomy (10 items), and role orientation (nine items) (Western Psychological Services, 1994a). The range of scores for the PCRI are from 78 to 312. The lowest possible score in the content scales is 73, meaning that the parent does not feel good at all about his relationship to his child, and is reflective of poor parenting skills. The highest score, 292 would indicate the opposite; that the parent fells very good about many aspects of her relationship with her child (reflecting good parenting skills).

There are a few questions which are not part of the content scales. They are part of the two validity indicators: social desirability and inconsistency. In the social desirability scale there are five items which should realistically never be answered positively. This scale indicates when a parent is making their child look unrealistically good. The inconsistency scale shows when a test-taker is not paying attention to their responses, or is responding randomly (Western Psychological Services, 1994a). Scores of two or more pairs of questions answered differently means that a responder is possibly answering randomly.

Three of the subscales were used for this study: satisfaction with parenting, communication, and limit setting. The range of scores for these subscales are 10-40, 9-36, and 12-48 respectively. For the three sub-scales, the highest score possible is 144, and the lowest possible score is 31. Overall, reliability for the PCRI was determined by internal consistency

(Cronbach's alpha = .82). The three subscales chosen have the highest rate of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .85, .82, and .88, respectively). These three subscales were also the most reliable when subjected to cross-validation during the test's development (.85, .82, and .87, respectively) (Western Psychological Services, 1994a). The first of the sub-scales/constructs is *satisfaction with parenting*, explained in the Parent Child Relationship Inventory Manual as "the amount of pleasure and fulfillment an individual derives from being a parent" (Western Psychological Services, 1994a, p. 1). The second sub-scale which was measured was *communication*. It is defined in this test as assessing "a parent's perception of how effectively he or she communicates with a child" (p.1). The last construct measured is *limit setting*. The focus of this subscale is "a parent's experience disciplining a child" (p.1).

In one study, the PCRI was found to have a reliability coefficient of .87 (Raya, Pino, & Herruzo, 2011). A longitudinal study of the PCRI showed good internal consistency (Coffman, Guerin, & Gottfried, 2006). The PCRI has been used in other studies as well (Beurkens, Hobson, & Hobson, 2013; Larkin, Guerin, Hobson, & Gutstein, 2015; McKeown, Haase, & Pratschke, 2006).

The questions are written on a fourth-grade level, and use a four-point Likert type scale: strongly agree = 1, agree = 2, disagree = 3, and strongly disagree = 4. Forty-seven of the questions are negatively keyed, and 26 are positively keyed. Following is an example of a positively keyed item: "I get a great deal of satisfaction from having children." A lower score indicates a positive agreement. An example of a negatively keyed item is: "I spend very little time talking with my child" (Western Psychological Services, 1994b[1]). The higher number

---

[1] Sample items for the PCRI copyright © 1994 by Western Psychological Services. Reprinted by V. Ball, Liberty University, for scholarly display purposes by permission of the publisher, WPS. Not to be reprinted in whole or part for any additional purpose without the expressed, written permission of the publisher (rights@wpspublish.com). All rights reserved. (See Appendix B.)

scored in this second example indicates that the parent disagrees with the statement. For

negatively keyed items, the scores are reversed when scored to match up with positive questions.

The test can be administered to individuals or groups, and takes approximately 15 minutes to

complete (see Appendix C for instructions). The instrument was scored by two people who

entered the information into SPSS. They cross-checked each other's work to verify accuracy.

The PCRI can be used for both families who are experiencing family or parenting problems, and

those who are not (Western Psychological Services, 1994b). It has been reviewed by experts and

has been found to be a valid instrument. Permission to use the PCRI was obtained from Western

Psychological Services (see Appendix A).

Procedures

After completing the prospectus, proposal, and defending the proposal, the first item

completed was securing Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (see Appendix H for

approval letter). Next, approval from the district and school was procured (see Appendix D).

The researcher met with school administration and staff to ensure clarity of purpose, explain the

study, and to engage support. Dates were set for all aspects of the administration of the study

with the approval of the Happy Mountain Elementary School administrators and District

officials. Administrative aspects include the first gathering of student grades, the teaching of the

CHARACTER COUNTS! program to the experimental group, the administration of the PCRI to

both groups and the second gathering of student grades.

Newsletters and flyers were sent home to parents telling them about the study and the

importance of their participation. School administrators and teachers helped with recruitment.

Parents were given an informed consent letter to sign and return (see Appendix G).

At the beginning of the third nine weeks, the experimental group attended the character

education program. Both groups completed the PCRI at the end of the third nine-week period.

Demographic information was recorded on the PCRI, and included name and gender. Names

were removed after the completion of the scoring and entry into SPSS$^®$ 24. The parents who

received the character education training had their instrument marked to identify them as part of

the treatment group. Parents who did not complete the PCRI were contacted and followed up.

Grades were gathered for both groups at the beginning and the end of the nine-week period. To

help insure fidelity involving the students' grades, parents will not be told about the information

gathered about their children's grades until the end of the third nine weeks.

The teaching material was adapted from the CHARACTER COUNTS! guide for parents,

entitled *Parenting: The Most Important Job in Your Life* (Josephson Institute, 2005; see

Appendix F). The main presenter was a local pediatrician who has been teaching parenting

courses for several years. The second presenter ensured treatment fidelity by keeping an

observation checklist. The teaching time was split between the six pillars of the CHARACTER

COUNTS! program: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship (see

Appendix F for lesson outlines). The teaching time also included general information about

parenting. This is discussed in greater detail in chapter five.

The character education program was taught on one weekday night in the Happy

Mountain Elementary cafeteria at the beginning of the third nine weeks. The total teaching time

was two hours. Activities for the children were provided as an incentive to them, and so that

more parents would attend. After eight weeks, the parents were contacted to remind them of the

upcoming administration of the PCRI. After nine weeks had passed, the parents in both the

control group and experimental group completed the PCRI (see Appendix C), (Driscoll & Pianta,

2010; Van der Oord, Bogels, & Peijnenburg, 2012). Surveys were sent to parents through their

children's homework folders and parents were called to remind them to complete and return the survey. Once the minimum number of surveys needed from the experimental group was returned, the number was matched for the control group. PCRI assessments were returned through students' homework folders to their teachers.

All data was separated into control and treatment groups. It was entered into SPSS®, and the proper statistical procedures were performed. After all the data was input into SPSS®, all identifying information was removed. In order to increase internal validity and reduce experimental treatment diffusion, compensatory rivalry, and compensatory equalization of treatment, the control group will be offered the opportunity to take part in the character education class for parents following the completion of the research study (Gall et al., 2003).

Data Analysis

To test the first three null hypotheses concerning the effect of the character education program on the three sub-scales of the PCRI, one-way between-S ANOVA was used. There are three subscales which were analyzed (Gall et al., 2003). All data analysis was performed using SPSS®. Assumption tests for ANOVA are one dependent variable, one independent variable with two groups, normal distribution of scores, and homogeneity of variance (Warner, 2013). The independent variable is an ordinal (Likert) scale; the PCRI. The independent variable with two groups are the control and experimental groups. Also, the groups were independent from each other. The alpha level to test the first three null hypotheses was set at $p < .05$. The sample size for the study was $n = 24$ participants.

For the fourth null hypothesis concerning the differences in student grades, two one-way within-S ANOVAs were used. This test was chosen because the means of the grades for each quarter will be compared within each group: quarter two grades and quarter three grades for the

control group will be compared, and the same will be done for the experimental group. Assumption tests are same as above: one dependent variable, one independent variable with two groups, normal distribution of scores, and homogeneity of variance (Warner, 2013). As for the first three null hypotheses, the alpha level for rejecting this null hypothesis will be set at $p < .05$. The effect size is expected to be medium, and will be measured in η^2 (Gall et al., 2003). The same sample used for the first three null hypotheses was used for the student grades (H_o4). The minimum sample number for a medium effect size is $n \geq 24$ (Warner, 2013).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter contains descriptions of the data gathered from the study and the findings discovered. First, the research questions and null hypotheses are listed. Next, descriptive statistics from the experimental and control groups are given. The next section includes listed and charted data that was gathered. Next, the results are discussed by null hypothesis. Finally, there is a table which includes the overall findings.

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine if a character education program taught to parents would have an effect on three aspects of the relationship between the parent and their child (satisfaction with parenting, communication, and limit setting), as well as on the children's grades. The PCRI (Parent Child Relationship Inventory) and student grades were used to gather the appropriate information needed to conduct the proper analyses. The validity and reliability of the PCRI and its subscales was discussed in chapter three. Experimental group parents took part in a two-hour character education seminar at the school. After nine weeks, when the number of parents in the experimental taking the surveys was known ($n = 24$), the same number of parents who made up the control group were sent a copy of the PCRI through their students' homework folders with instructions to complete them. Quarter two and quarter three grades were collected from school administrators. Any parents who did not complete the PCRI correctly were followed up.

Research Questions

RQ1: Will parents/guardians report a change in their satisfaction with parenting as a result of the character education course as opposed to parents who do not participate in the character education course?

RQ2: Will parents/guardians report a change in their communication as a result of the character education course as opposed to parents who do not participate in the character education course?

RQ3: Will parents/guardians report a change in their limit setting as a result of the character education course as opposed to parents who do not participate in the character education course?

RQ4: Will there be an effect on students' grades as a result of the character education course taught to parents as opposed to parents who do not participate in the character education course?

Hypotheses

$H_0$1: There is no statistically significant difference in the satisfaction with parenting subscale between parents who participated in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program and parents who did not participate as measured by the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI).

$H_0$2: There is no statistically significant difference in the communication subscale between parents who participated in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program and parents who did not participate as measured by the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI).

$H_0$3: There is no statistically significant difference in the limit setting subscale between parents who participated in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program and parents who did not participate as measured by the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI).

H₀4: There is no statistically significant difference in academic performance between elementary school students whose parents/guardians participated in the CHARACTER COUNTS! character education course and those whose parents did not participate in the course as measured by student grades.

Descriptive Statistics

For the 48 administrations of the PCRI, the test was very consistently answered by the participants. Only three participants scored two on the inconsistency scale. This scale shows when people are possibly not paying attention to their answers or are answering randomly. A two on this scale is considered possible random answering. In other words, a two means that someone who took the PCRI answered two similar questions in dissimilar ways. No one taking the test scored above a two. Missing scores were given the value prescribed by the PCRI instructions. No test taker had more than one empty score. These were all exclusively on one question, which will be discussed in chapter five. Since the PCRI scales were one to four, there were no significant outliers.

Table 2

Statistics for the Control and Experimental Groups

Group	Surveys completed	Number in each group (M/F) and total	Percent male/female in each group	Parents with two or more children	Guardians or grandparents
Control	24	(9/13) 22	41/59	2	2
Experimental	24	(6/14) 20	30/70	4	1
Totals	48	(15/27) 42	36/64	6	3

Note. Total number of parents is different from total surveys. Some parents filled out more than one survey.

A total of 48 surveys were completed, with 24 in each group. According to Warner (2013), the sample size must be at least $n = 24$ for a medium effect size and power of .70 when

using ANOVA. In the experimental group, there were six males and 14 females. In the control

group there were nine males and 13 females. The reason for the difference in the number of

parents and number of surveys is that some parents had more than one child in the age range, and

completed a survey for each child. The total percent of males to females was 36% to 64%

respectively. There were 39 parents or step-parents and 3 grandparents or guardians in the study

(see Table 2). Of the students, 19 were male, and 14 were female. By grade, there were ten

second graders, six third graders, nine fourth graders, and eight fifth graders (see Table 3).

Table 3

Number of Children by Sex and Grade in each Group

	Sex		Grade			
	Male	Female	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Control	8	7	3	3	5	4
Experimental	10	8	7	3	4	4
Totals	18	15	10	6	9	8

Note. Total of 33 children.

All of the PCRI scores and grades were entered into an Excel® spreadsheet and then

transferred into SPSS®. There were 10 columns of data: parent number, student number, group

(control or experimental), student gender, parent gender, PCRI (three columns for the three

subscales), quarter two grades, and quarter three grades. The means of the PCRI instruments

were taken and compared (see Table 4).

Table 4

PCRI Descriptive Statistics by Groups

Subscales	PCRI Means	S. D.

Control Group		
SAT	37.08	2.873
COM	27.67	2.745
LIM	35.29	3.381
Experimental Group		
SAT	36.46	3.336
COM	26.88	2.771
LIM	35.54	4.433

SAT=Satisfaction with parenting; COM=Communication; LIM=Limit setting (subscales of the PCRI).

Results

Null Hypothesis One

The first null hypothesis stated that there is no statistically significant difference in the satisfaction with parenting subscale between parents who participated in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program and parents who did not participate as measured by the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI). Examination of histograms showed a slight positive skew to both sets of scores. This assumption was slightly violated, and there were no extreme outliers. The Levene test was also conducted to examine if there was a violation of the homogeneity of variance assumption. No significant violation was found: $F(1,46) = .484$, $p = .21$. The effect size for ANOVA and $n = 24$ was $\eta^2 = .7$. The one-way between-S ANOVA was employed to evaluate this null hypothesis. The results of this test were as follows: with $CI = 95$, and alpha level set at $p = .05$, there was no statistically significant difference between the control and experimental groups for the satisfaction with parenting subscale of the PCRI: $F(1,46) = .484$, $p = .49$. Since the p-value is greater than .05, the first null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Null Hypothesis Two

The second null hypothesis stated that there is no statistically significant difference in the communication subscale between parents who participated in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program and parents who did not participate as measured by the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI). Examination of histograms showed normal bell-shaped curves for both sets of scores. This assumption was tenable. There were no extreme outliers. To examine if there was a violation of the homogeneity of variance assumption the Levene test was also conducted. The test revealed a non-significant result: $F(1,46) = .219, p = .64$. The effect size for ANOVA and $n = 24$ was $\eta^2 = .7$. The one-way between-S ANOVA was employed to evaluate this null hypothesis as well. The results of this test were as follows: with $CI = 95$, and alpha level set at $p = .05$, there was no statistically significant difference between the groups for the communication subscale of the PCRI: $F(1,46) = .989, p = .32$. Since the p-value is greater than .05, the second null hypothesis cannot be rejected either.

Null Hypothesis Three

The third null hypothesis stated that there is no statistically significant difference in the limit setting subscale between parents who participated in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program and parents who did not participate as measured by the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI). Examination of histograms showed normal bell curves for both sets of scores. This assumption was tenable, and there were no extreme outliers. The Levene test was conducted to examine if there was a violation of the homogeneity of variance assumption for this hypothesis. No significant violation was found: $F(1,46) = 1.23, p = .27$. The effect size for ANOVA and $n = 24$ was $\eta^2 = .7$. The one-way between-S ANOVA was used to evaluate this null hypothesis. The results of this test were as follows: with $CI = 95$, and alpha level set at $p = $

.05, there was no statistically significant difference between the control and experimental groups for the limit setting subscale of the PCRI: $F(1,46) = .048$, $p = .82$. As with the first two null hypotheses, since the p-value is greater than .05, this third null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Null Hypothesis Four

The fourth null hypothesis stated that there is no statistically significant difference in academic performance between elementary school students whose parents/guardians participated in the CHARACTER COUNTS! character education course and those whose parents did not participate in the course as measured by student grades. Two within-S ANOVAs were done to evaluate this hypothesis. This test was chosen because it compared the means of scores from quarter two and quarter three for the control group, and quarter two and three scores for the experimental group (Warner, 2013). Examination of histograms showed normal bell-shaped curves for each group. This assumption is tenable. The Levene test was conducted for the homogeneity of variance assumption. The results of this test for the quarter two scores showed no violation: $F(1,46) = .090$, $p = .76$. The eta squared value for ANOVA and $n = 24$ was .7. The results of the ANOVA for the control group did not show a statistically significant difference within the group from quarter two to quarter three: $F(1,47) = .443$, $p = .50$. For the experimental group, histograms did not show any violation of the normality assumption. The Levene test for homogeneity of variance was also not violated: $F(1,46) = .144$, $p = .70$. The ANOVA conducted did not show a statistically significant difference for the experimental group from quarter two to quarter three: $F(1,47) = .412$, $p = .52$. Since the p-values for both tests are greater than .05, the fourth null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Table 5

Summary of Null Hypotheses

Null number	Description	Test conducted	*p*-value	Reject null?

$H_0 1$	Satisfaction with parenting (PCRI)	One-way between-S ANOVA	.49	No
$H_0 2$	Communication (PCRI)	One-way between-S ANOVA	.32	No
$H_0 3$	Limit setting (PCRI)	One-way between-S ANOVA	.82	No
$H_0 4$	Student grades	One-way within-S ANOVAs	.50/.52	No

Note. Control group scores are listed first for the fourth null hypothesis.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

The fifth chapter is a discussion of the results of the study. The first section is an explanation and interpretation of the findings by null hypothesis. Second, conclusions concerning the study are discussed; including possible reasons for the non-significant results, and treatment and instrumentation issues. Limitations are discussed next, including threats to internal and external validity. The last section includes ideas for further research in the area of character education.

Discussion

The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore whether a character education program taught to parents would have an effect on three aspects of the relationship between the parent and their child (satisfaction with parenting, communication, and limit setting), as well as on the children's grades. The study took place in a rural Title I school in a southeastern state. Twenty-four parents filled out PCRI surveys after taking part in a two-hour character education seminar based on the six character traits of the CHARACTER COUNTS! character education program. The traits are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Parents were scored on three of the PCRI subscales: satisfaction with parenting, communication, and limit setting. The results did not show a significant difference on any of the three subscales between the control and experimental groups. Students' grades for two successive quarters were also recorded and evaluated. For this fourth hypothesis, there was not a significant difference in the control group's children's grades nor the experimental group's grades from quarter two to quarter three. The purpose of this section of the chapter is to discuss the results and how they relate to the earlier literature review, other studies, and social science theories.

Null Hypothesis One

      The first hypothesis looked at the possible effect of a character education program on a group of elementary school parents on their satisfaction with parenting. It was first assumed that after teaching a character education program to parents, there would have been a positive change in their scores on the Parent Child Relationship Inventory on that subscale. A positive effect would have shown that parents were experiencing more pleasure and fulfillment as parents (Western Psychological Services, 1994a). However, if parents realize the job they have been doing is not up to what was taught in the character education program, and they realize there is more they should be doing and teaching, it is possible that their scores may have decreased. In other words, they may not be experiencing the same amount of pleasure or fulfillment as before. A decrease might have actually revealed growth in this area. This growth might be part of the idea of the tension or difference between where the parents are and where they know now that they need to be.

      This might also be true for the psychological theories discussed in chapter two of this paper. Though this study did not specifically address the idea of getting across the intentions of rules, it definitely comes into play for this study. It was Piaget's idea that children will better follow rules given by parents when the intentions of the rules are given (Miller, 2011). Parents are to give children reasons for the rules, and give ideas about consequences which will come if rules are not followed. A parent's satisfaction should increase when he or she can give rules clearly and expect to have them followed. The reasons for rules are part of character education. When a child is told not to hit his sister, the reasons are at least partly moral in nature. In addition to making the sibling cry or become upset, there are moral ideas behind this as well, such as respect and kindness. The work of Bandura supports this as well. Bandura saw parents

primarily as role models. Satisfaction with parenting would be described by him as the ability to show their child what a successful/moral person looks like (Miller, 2011). A person who takes a character education class might realize that they are not the role model they should be, and a lower score might show initial improvement. The same could be said of Erikson. According to his teaching, a successful parent wants to help the next generation succeed (Erikson, 1966). If a parent sees that he or she is not accomplishing this goal, satisfaction with parenting scores may have decreased.

In a recent study (Hardy et al. 2008), the authors showed that parental support was most closely associated with internalization of parents' values. It also showed that too much structure was counterproductive to children assimilating parents' values. It is probably the case that some parents are too rules oriented, and are not as involved as they want to be. The satisfaction with parenting subscale score results in this study may have been a result of all of these factors. In general, the scores on this subscale may have not been statistically significant due to these reasons. Parents did not seem to either reject or accept the teaching, causing the nonsignificant results.

A similar line of reasoning could also hold true for both the communication and limit setting subscales of the PCRI. It is possible that this group of parents could see that their communication and their thinking on how they set limits for their children are in need of improvement, thus resulting in lower scores on these two subscales, rather than an increase in scores.

Null Hypothesis Two

To this author, the subscale most likely to show a positive change would have been communication. The question the hypothesis asked here was whether the communication

subscale would be affected by the character education program. The passing down of morals is caught, but it is also taught. Words are definitely necessary in the process of developing the character of children. As seen with Mo and Singh's study (2008), parents must have a vision for the success of their children. Certainly this vision must be communicated to their children. And sharing it would be facilitated through good communication. It would seem that a character education program would give parents the words they need to communicate a vision for their future, as well as a vocabulary for the passing down of the six character traits. It was shown earlier in a study by le Sage and de Ruyter (2008) that they believe parents have a moral and even criminal obligation to teach values. But some parents are not effective communicators. The factors that make up good communication were outside the parameters of this study. As seen from the results of the communication subscale, there was not a significant difference in the perceived effectiveness of parental communication.

Null Hypothesis Three

The third hypothesis considered whether the character education class would have an effect on how parents perceived their limit setting for their children. For this hypothesis, there was no significant difference in the limit setting subscale of the PCRI.

This issue, more than the others, is connected to deeply held practices; based in both religious/personal belief, and in personal experience. Limit setting is more of a hot topic than the others to this researcher. According to some (Etherington, 2013, Van Brummelen, 2002), values are to be based in Christian ideals. Others, such as Brannon (2008) find it more difficult in how the schools and society should work together in teaching morals. Rousseau believed, as many do, in the inherent goodness of people (Gutek, 2011). Van Brummelen (2002) summarizes the issue by stating that students need consistent messages from parents, schools and society. Ryan

(2013) says that one problem is that parents have given the state the authority to discipline and teach morals.

With such a diverse range of opinions and beliefs, it is no wonder schools and parents struggle with which values to teach, and how to set limits for their children. Parents of a religious faith different from traditional Judeo-Christian values may be marginalized in society. Christian parents trying to raise their children according to the principles of the Bible may be seen as bigoted and narrow-minded. Schools who take a stiff stance against inappropriate behavior risk being seen as prejudiced or non-accepting.

The PCRI explained the limit setting subscale as "a parent's experience disciplining a child" (Western Psychological Services, 1994a, p. 1). But is limit setting the same as disciplining a child? There may be a subtle, yet significant difference here. The reason for the non-significant result in the surveys may not fully be understood until further research is conducted.

In a society where many believe as Rousseau in the inborn goodness of people, it should not surprise people that limit setting is an important issue. And in a culture where many adults do not exercise much self-control, it might be true that these parents are okay with how they are setting limits for their children, and the teaching did not have an effect.

Null Hypothesis Four

The fourth research question asked if the character education program taught to the experimental group would have an effect on student academic achievement. Grades were taken at the same time as the teaching of the character education program, and again nine weeks later (at the end of the second and third nine-week grading periods).

The results were not statistically significant. The families of the students in this study

were mostly low to middle class families (Southeastern State Department of Education, 2015).

The school was a Title I school in the southeastern United States. Some have reported that lower

SES schools have lower test scores and higher discipline issues (Hurlburt et al., 2012; Lam,

2014). But this author would argue that lower SES students do not necessarily mean lower

grades, unless the academic ability of the students is lower than other children. There must be

another reason for lower scores from lower SES families. It is possible that reasons may include

morals of the families, the culture of the community, education level of parents, or parents'

expectations for the success of their children (Mo and Singh, 2008). As for the three other null

hypotheses, this particular subset of parents may not have been typically representative of other

parents in similar situations.

Bandura's ideas focused on the self-efficacy of children (Miller, 2011). He postulated

that making attempts at something, verbal persuasion, and vicarious experience all can work to

increase self-efficacy. Parents can and should have a lot to say to children about their grades in

this area. Erikson would agree with Bandura at this point. He taught that children grow in self-

efficacy through positive reinforcement (Miller, 2011). Parents are a vital key to developing

competence in their children. The nonsignificant results of this hypothesis show that the

character education class in its present form did not have a meaningful effect on children's

academic performance. The way the research was conducted, there did not seem to be a

connection between the character education class and grades.

Lovat et al., 2010, reported higher levels of student achievement in all types of schools

who had a character education program. Conversely, Ryan (2013) reported that a US

Department of Education study of seven character education programs, none were successful,

and out of 60 indicators, only two were significant (2010). The results are mixed. It seems that

there are many who would like character education programs to make a difference in children in general, and especially in their scholastic achievement.

Grades are an important indicator of student growth and achievement. They are also linked to character education. Satisfaction with parenting, communication, and limit setting are also indicators of how parents see the development and success of their children. None of the null hypotheses were rejected because of nonsignificant statistical results. However, there are some important ideas concerning the issue discussed in the following sections.

Conclusions and Implications

In this section, four aspects of the study will be examined and reviewed. The first review will be how the study in its present form was not effective enough to register a statistically significant change in the parents' perceptions about parenting, and in the students' grades. Secondly, the idea of change will be discussed; especially the way change is perceived and measured. Third, a short discussion of right and wrong will be offered. Lastly, a biblical perspective on true change will be discussed.

Possible reasons for the nonsignificant results

This study did not result in a significant change in the behavior of the parents as recorded by the PCRI. There are several possible reasons why this was the case. The first is the correlation between the null hypotheses and the six character qualities of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program. The first three null hypotheses dealt with the ideas of satisfaction with parenting, communication, and limit setting. None of these ideas was specifically addressed during the character education seminar. The six character traits were trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

Satisfaction with parenting is a subscale that is an overarching idea, like a summary of all the feelings and actions of parents. This is a difficult variable to measure because of its subjective and personal nature. It is very possible that someone who is doing a terrible job of parenting can perceive themselves as doing a very good job. Added to this is the sinful nature and selfishness of people. It is likely that people do not see themselves as clearly as they might due to sinfulness. How can a person accurately evaluate themselves on a scale which measures at least in part something that is as central to a person as how well they are doing at the job of parenting? What may be possible is when a parent is exposed to what is good parental ideas or practice, their score may increase because they have taken on the qualities they have seen, or their scores may go down due to the realization of the gap between what they thought, and what they now realize is not as good as it could be. This might have been the case in this study.

The communication subscale measures how good parents feel about their communication with their children. Again, what is measured is not how well they actually communicate, but how they feel about it. This is another subjective factor. The six character traits can facilitate better communication, but there is not a direct link from the character education study to communication. This idea was not expressly detailed. It was hoped that the ideas of the character education program would be shared from parents to children. It is possible that if they were, there may have been a change in parents' perceived communication. It seems that this was not the case. One possible way to observe communication as it relates to character education and actual parent practice, would be to conduct a qualitative study.

Limit setting is the subscale most closely aligned to the six character traits. Each one of the six qualities could be related to the idea of limit setting. For example, if a child was to learn respect, the parent could set a limit on something such as going outside. If the child disobeyed,

the parent could enforce the consequence to breaking the rule (exceeding the limit). The idea of fairness is another trait which could be taught through the idea of respect. A parent who allows one child to take part in some activity should usually allow the other child to also do the same activity when appropriate. If either child abuses the privilege, they should receive the same discipline. Real-life examples could have been shown or explained to the parents in order to help them see the connection between the trait and their circumstances. This idea will be further explained later in this chapter. It does not appear that enough direct correlation between the character traits taught, and the ideas of the study, were taught.

Another possible reason for the nonsignificant results was the character education seminar teaching itself. The seminar of two hours was possibly not long enough or thorough enough to make a significant impact on the parents. In fact, the presenter only talked about the six character traits for about 50 minutes of the two hours. As he did he was reading the information from his notes. For the rest of the time, he was giving other parenting advice and stories. This was frustrating to this researcher. The presenter had sent a copy of the teaching seminar outline, but it did not include the time allowed for each section. There was much more information in the outline on the six character qualities, but more time was given to what the presenter said was what he usually does at a parenting meeting (J. D. Allen, personal communication, January 10, 2017).

The presenter also read most of the six character qualities notes to the parents present for the character education seminar. This was probably not the most effective way to present the material. He could have used a PowerPoint program, other media, or role play to create more interest. He also could have involved the parents more in the discussion. In addition, he might

have used more examples of what character qualities such as fairness or citizenship looked like in common family situations.

Another important possibility was the lack of follow up. Part of the design for this study was to see if the character education seminar would make a difference in parents' perceptions. Those three variables were isolated by not allowing for follow up. If it was allowed, the change might have been possibly due to the follow up, at least in part. The parents were only exposed to the ideas of the six character traits for a short period of time. They did not review or revisit the qualities unless they did so at home on their own. Parents were not contacted during the period after the character education for the same reason. It is possible that more contacts of one form or another would have affected the results. In order to have seen a change, parents would have to feel the deep need for change in themselves and their children, have enough teaching inside them to be able to pass on the knowledge, and set aside time to implement changes. To summarize, this study in its present form did not yield significant results. Perhaps if some of the ideas listed above had been part of the study, the results might have been different.

Change

The second review of the study is in the realm of the concept of change. The idea of change is a complicated and multi-tiered concept. On one level is the choice one makes, and then there are deeper levels of the mind and soul. Crabb (1988) and Pestalozzi (in Miller, 2011) and would agree that man is made up of different internal components. These parts of man flow and work together, creating the whole of what is known as the personality. It might be beneficial to isolate which level of the personality the research was hoping to affect. Change at the more superficial level might bring about a change in the PCRI, which measured parents' perceptions. However, true and lasting change is brought about by a deep inner change (Crabb, 1988). It is

on this level that the participant will actually bring about the desired result looked for in this study. A change in PCRI scores would probably have pointed to this deeper change at work.

According to the Biblical idea of the sinfulness of man, it is possible that participants in the character education seminar might have perceived themselves as doing a good job of parenting. Perhaps their perceptions were based in good feelings about themselves. Then, after receiving the character education material, and reflecting on how they were doing based on this new information, they made some changes in their parenting. However, it was not enough to affect the PCRI scores.

In contrast, grades were included as a more objective marker of change due to the character education program. Grades are not perceptions, they are numbers. It was assumed that if a parent made changes in the deeper parts of themselves, that grades would have also been affected. Higher character awareness should have had an effect on many aspects of a child's life, possibly including grades. However, this was not the case. It could be that the study would have to be conducted in a different way for this result to be seen. A direct connection between character traits such as dependability and citizenship and how they relate to doing/being one's best might need to be taught more explicitly.

Right and wrong

It may seem out of place to discuss the philosophical merits of the concepts of right and wrong. However, this idea is at the forefront of making decisions both for oneself, and for others. These concepts are seen in the way parents changed or did not change their behavior as a result of the character education training. The presenter asked the attendees if they thought children were born with a sinful nature. Out of 20 people, two raised their hands. From this informal survey, it may be questioned whether a character education program was important to

this group of parents. Only those who have a perceived need for their children to develop better character would take the seminar seriously. This basis of not seeing children as needy of moral guidance may have affected the results.

If the parents do not see their children needing to know right from wrong, their answers to the PCRI questions would not have shown a change. This is possible in this case. Parents may be working from a post-Christian mindset about right and wrong. If so, then they might not understand the importance of morals. They might reject the idea of absolutes in the universe. They may just be caught up in their own concerns. Perhaps they feel they are too busy with other details to think deeply and critically about their own actions and words. The answer to this series of possibilities could be one or a combination of more than one for each person.

Biblical perspective

The final idea to be discussed in this section is the Christian perspective of character and change. Some of the theorists mentioned in this study come from a mechanistic and evolutionistic point of view. They do not take into account the existence of God. However, some accept that there should be a moral foundation for our actions. Piaget suggests that parents should make the intentions of rules known to their children. This sounds like a moral base or reason behind the rule. If there are reasons behind rules, then it follows that morality counts and is important. If this is true, evolutionary theory and its approach to morals breaks down. Evolution teaches the survival of the fittest. However, being good, nice, or morally beneficent goes against the idea of the purposelessness of Darwinist ideas. If survival of the fittest means whatever is best for the person in question, there is no basis for moral behavior.

A mechanistic response from Spencer (Miller, 2011) might suggest that the best behavior is what is best for the greatest number of people. But sometimes what is best for the greatest

number of people is not what is best for the individual. For example, Jesus died for all people. He did what was best for the greatest number of people. But this was not what He wanted. He prayed that his cup would be able to be avoided. He accomplished this great purpose, giving up what He wanted to do so the world could be saved. In a sense, this is the highest morality. Or as the Bible describes it, the highest or greatest love (John 15:13; 1 Corinthians 13:13).

Rousseau believed in the innate goodness of people (Gutek, 2011). He taught that there are innate virtues, but also a second level of morals which need to be taught. This researcher would argue that the first set is the right we know as we grow. The second set includes the sinful nature and people's inability to consistently make right choices. The idea of the innate goodness of people seems to be prevalent today. Most people probably want their children to be moral, and avoid negative consequences, but don't see the innate sinfulness of themselves or others. If someone does not see sinfulness within themselves, they most likely will not see it in others. They might interpret the golden rule in the way other religions do. It tells people to *not do* to others what you don't want them to do to you, instead of the positive, self-starting way of *do* unto others (Luke 6:31).

The Christian perspective is that true change only comes from the inner man, and the only one who can ignite and sustain that change is God himself (Crabb, 1988). It has been said that Christianity is not a self-improvement program. It is life out of death. Also, only Christians can make this deep change due to the indwelling Holy Spirit. Others may be able to make changes in their lives, but not to the extent as a Christian. Parents who need to make changes in the way they parent may be able to make some changes, but Christians should be motivated by pleasing God, and empowered by the Holy Spirit's impetus. The difference is that being a moral person is not something a person does, but what a person is becoming. It is therefore necessary

that character education programs also have a spiritual component, and should be brought to the forefront of the teaching. One major idea here is that character education is a spiritual issue.

Isolating the variables of moral character is a complex undertaking. There are many variables at work in and between people. Some of these variables are the post-Christian culture we live in, the teaching people received from their parents, the faith people are taught in their churches, friends and their influence, social media, and even the spiritual world. The forces of evil do not want overt Christian-based moral teaching to enter into the public arena again.

Character education programs can only be truly effective when they take into consideration the spiritual aspect of people (Etherington, 2013; Kenan, 2009). In the present culture, it does not seem that this is likely. There may be a few areas where the Judeo-Christian basis for morals could be taught in a public school setting. However, even if a character education program which included the spiritual aspect of people were taught, some organizations would immediately attack them and attempt to undermine their work. If similar research were done, and included a strong Christian message of the workings of the inner man, it might yield a positive effect. The idea of morals being based in Judeo-Christian faith needs to return to the public arena.

Limitations

In this study, there were several threats to both internal and external validity. In an experimental design such as this one, it is not possible to control all the variables associated with the study (Gall et al., 2003). However, the technique of using control and experimental groups likely helped with some of the issues of validity.

Several internal factors need to be considered as potential problems for this study. The first is the time factor. It is not possible to know that happened during the time between the

character education course and when the PCRI was given. One group or subgroup may have had a life-changing experience the other group did not. However, the control group may have limited this threat. Related to this, it is possible that one of the groups changed in some way which is not controllable. The control group may have also helped with maturation of groups, and instrumentation issues. Participants in both groups may have wanted to be seen as a better parent who wants to be seen in a different way than was honest. However, to limit this threat, the PCRI instrument has validity indicators to help. The social desirability scale and consistency scale helped to limit this issue.

The character education program was offered to the control group in parental communications before the study was conducted. It is hoped that this would limit the differences in treatment groups, rivalry issues, and treatment mortality. From the non-significant results, it seems that this was not an issue. A last possible issue of internal validity was experimenter bias. This researcher was known by several of the participants. However, the character education program was taught by a person in the community, and the experimental instruments were passed out through their children's homework folders. The only contacts made by this researcher with the participants was being present at the character education class, and sending group emails encouraging the completion and return of the PCRI.

There are also a few external factors which need to be discussed. The first factor which may have affected the validity of the study is the generalization of the results of the study to the population. Since there was a small sample, and the results of each of the null hypotheses were all non-significant, there is not much leverage to make generalizations to other groups. The sample size was definitely a factor which affected the applicability of the study to other similar groups. According to Warner (2013), using ANOVA and a sample size of $n = 24$, the statistical

power was .70. There may have also been issues associated with this sample which threatened

external validity. Some of these characteristics are the ability and/or IQ of this groups, their faith

as religious people, the level of school involvement they participate in, their other personal

values, and their history (Gall et al., 2003). For example, the mean scores of both the control and

experimental groups were above 90 percent for children's grades. A different population of

students with lower grade averages might have had more room for improvement. Any of these

characteristics, or a combination of two or more may have affected the dynamics of the groups,

and consequently, the results.

Another idea which might have had a detrimental effect was the administration of the

PCRI. The instruments were sent home by the children in their homework folders. It is possible

that either wives completed the instruments for husbands, or vice versa. This may have affected

the study results.

The instrument used is also an area for concern. The PCRI was written in 1994 for

families who need an assessment of parents' attitudes about their parenting, and toward their

children. The instrument has been found to be reliable. However, at least one test item was

worded in a way that caused a few people to leave it blank. The item mentioned the test taker's

spouse. This item reflects the assumption of both father and mother in the house. In many

homes today, this is not true. Also, the PCRI measures the parents' attitudes about their

parenting and about their children. This is a self-report, and as such, is susceptible to personal

bias. As has been discussed earlier, it is possible that parents made themselves sound better than

actually true.

Another important issue is treatment fidelity. This has also been discussed earlier, but the

issue of the scope of the instruction needs to be mentioned. The amount of time taken on the

seminar night to teach the character education curriculum, combined with the actual items discussed and how they were discussed, may have been too weak to obtain a significant result. This weak treatment is a factor which should be addressed in future research. Character education should not just be a one night program, but a way of teaching about life in its entirety. Less than two hours of talking about character was not enough time with parents to yield the results looked for.

A final aspect of external validity is the idea of representative design. Snow (1974) mentions that quasi-experimental designs are sometimes not realistic. Designs should reflect the complex nature of people's lives, and should be designed to reflect the complexity of life, and the natural way people learn. In a sense, it is artificially making the design more natural. He states that this approach will make findings more generalizable (Snow, 1974). The location of the character education seminar, the classroom feel of the teaching, and the limited exposure to the material may have contributed to the non-significant results.

Recommendations for Future Research

Character education has been studied for many years, and will continue to be studied. The differing approaches reflect several different world views and theoretical schools of thought. However, there are basically two approaches to character education: one which acknowledges the existence of God, and all the rest. A Judeo-Christian approach recognizes that any values people hold are related to the character of God. Others seek to find meaning in a worldview which places randomness and chance as the basis for life choices. The belief in a random world, and the search for values are not possible to mate. Life either has purpose or not. The recommendations for future research reflect the idea that values are founded in the character and goodness of God, and in a purposeful universe.

The first recommendation is to find a more direct connection between the values taught during the character education seminar and the subscales of the PCRI. The six character traits are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. The PCRI measured parents' perceptions of how they were doing in the areas of satisfaction with parenting, communication, and limit setting. Certainly these ideas go together, but not very directly. It might have been the case that some of the parents taught their children more about citizenship, but this was not reflected either in the parents' perceptions, or the children's grades. What may be needed is a different assessment that actually measures these six traits in parents. Again, if this is a self-reporting assessment, it will be difficult to measure change due to factors discussed before.

A second area needed for future research is the sample used in this study. The nonsignificant results were not seen in this small sample in this particular school. There may be several reasons for this. This group may not have been representative of typical parents in this type of school. It is possible that this was a good group of parents with a good group of children. If so, the results would not have far to improve. Other samples such as families of students who have been in trouble chronically, or whose parents have stated they do not know what to do to help their student need to be considered. It is possible that the gap between the control and experimental groups would have been greater if such a sample were found.

Demographics is an important area for more research as well. In other areas of the country, or in another area of the county, a different result might have been seen. Demographic information such as this may have helped yield a different outcome. Other items such as individual income, ethnicity, females and males, families with fathers, grandparents, age of parents, age of children, disorders of the children, the psychological state of parents (Byrd,

Loeber, & Pardini, 2012), and others need to be studied to see if character education will make a difference in some of their lives.

A Christian approach to character education needs to be brought to the forefront. Research may be furthered by revealing character education's basis more explicitly. As stated above, morals are based in God's character. It may be that churches can be a place where character education classes are taught with the biblical background intact, making the connection between values and God. It may be that this could be an outreach of either the churches or the public schools. There are some states which have a family and community office that work with churches to help facilitate character building (Southeastern State Department of Education, (2015). Much work needs to be done to help parents raise their children in today's society. The different pressures students face, coupled with the constant barrage of media combine for a tough situation for parents and families. Parents need a stronger basis for raising their children. All parents need this, so the teaching would have to be taken outside the churches into communities.

The theoretical bases for character needs to be evaluated as well. The constructs of this research were brought from Kohlberg, Piaget, Bandura, and Erikson. These men are important and knowledgeable in this field. However, without the biblical approach, the spiritual aspect of life might be missed. According to the Bible, people are not just machines, or conditioned by instinct. They sense the presence of God, and know there is something more to life than just existing (Ecclesiastes 3:11). None of the men above mention God in their ideas. Perhaps some see the mentioning of God as not scholarly. Further research must include more of the biblical, God-centered mindset. If morals are based in God's ideals, character education research should be based on biblical ideas and principles. Even the instrument used should be based on biblical ideas.

The final area of recommendation for further research is in the area of the teaching itself. It is believed that one issue which led to the non-significant results was the ineffective teaching. Character education involves a holistic view of life, and should reflect this idea. Solid character involves all decisions, actions, and thoughts. An effective character education program should be modeled after this (Snow, 1974). One idea is to make the character education program more varied. It should involve several types of approaches: discussion, question and answer, role playing, and watching visual anecdotes of common situations. Better teaching and learning would be possible by having homework, or take-home sheets to remind parents of what they were taught. Another idea is to have several sessions where parents come back and discuss what was happening at home. Research needs to be done to see if any of these techniques will cause a change in the experimental group. The larger goal of raising adults; i.e., raising children to become responsible, contributing members of society needs to be kept in the minds of the parents who are involved in the program. The ultimate goal also needs to be stated explicitly as well. This goal is to glorify God with one's life.

REFERENCES

Ackerman, B. (2007). *P.R.A.I.S.E. - Effectively guiding behavior*. Colorado Springs, CO: Purposeful Design Publications.

Akhan, N. E. & Altikulac, A. (2014). An example of creative drama implementation in values education: Mevlana's global messages "love-respect-tolerance." *International Journal of Progressive Education, 10*(2), 14-31.

Barclay, W. (1976). *The letters to the Galatians and Ephesians* (Revised edition). Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press.

Bartik, T. J. & Lachowska, M. (2014). The Kalamazoo promise scholarship. *Education Next 14*(2): 72-78.

Bartlett, M. Y., & DeSteno, D. (2006). Gratitude and pro-social behavior: Helping when it costs you. *Psychological Science, 17*(4): 319-325.

**Beachum, F. D., McCray, C. R., Yawn, C. D., & Obiakor, F. E. (2013). Support and importance of character education: Pre-service teacher perceptions. *Education, 133*(4), 470-480.

Bernasek, A. (2010). The economics of integrity: From dairy farmers to Toyota, how wealth is built on trust and what that means for our future. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Blackaby, H. & Blackaby, R. (2011). *Spiritual leadership*. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing.

Brady, L. (2011). Teacher values and relationship: Factors in values education. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 36*(2), 55-66.

Brannon, D. (2008). Character education: It's a joint responsibility. *Kappa Delta Pi Record, 44*(2), 62-65.

Beurkens, N., Hobson, J., & Hobson, R. (2013). Autism severity and qualities of parent-child relations. *Journal of Autism & Developmental Disorders, 43*(1), 168-178.

Boice, J. M. (1976). Galatians. In F. E. Gaebelein (Ed.), *Expositor's Bible commentary* (pp. 407-508). Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

Byrd, A. L., Loeber, R., & Pardini, D. A. (2012). Understanding desisting and persisting forms of delinquency: The unique contributions of disruptive behavior disorders and interpersonal callousness. *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 53*(4), 371-380.

Calvin, J. (1536). *Institutes of the Christian religion* (F. Battles, Trans.). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing. Paperback edition, 1995.

Chisick, H. (1981). The limits of reform in the Enlightenment: Attitudes toward the education of the lower classes in eighteenth century France. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Coffman, J. K., Guerin, D. W., & Gottfried, A. W. (2006). Reliability and validity of the parent-child relationship inventory (PCRI): Evidence from a longitudinal cross-informant investigation. *Psychological Assessment, 18*(2), 209-214.

Coleman, J. S., Campbell, E. Q., Hobson, C. J., McPartland, J., Mood, A. M., Weinfeld, F. D., & York, R. L. (1966**).** *Equality of educational opportunity.* Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office.

Collier, J., & Dowson, M. (2008). Beyond transmissional pedagogies in Christian education: One school's recasting of values education. *Journal of Research on Christian Education, 17*, 199-216.

Cottret, B. (2000). *Calvin: A biography.* (M. Wallace McDonald, Trans.). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Covey, S. R. (2004). *The seven habits of highly effective people.* New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Crabb, L. (1988). *Inside out.* Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress.

Cubukcu, Z. (2012). The effect of hidden curriculum on character education process of primary school students. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice, 12*(2), 1526-1534.

Dewey, J. (1909). *Moral principles in education.* Chicago, IL: Houghton Mifflin.

Davidson, M. (2014). A character education research perspective for the 21st century. *Journal of Character Education*, *10*(1), 77-83.

Davidson, M., Khmelkov, V., Baker, K., & Lickona, T. (2011). Values education: The Power2Achieve approach for building sustainability and enduring impact. *International Journal of Educational Research, 50*(3), 190-197.

Driscoll, K. C., & Pianta, R. C. (2010). Banking time in Head Start: Early efficacy of an intervention designed to promote supportive teacher-child relationships. *Early Education and Development, 21*(1), 38-64.

Donohoe, J. W. (1968). *St. Thomas Aquinas and education.* New York: Random House.

E County Schools. (2016, March 14). Happy Mountain Elementary School demographics. [Break down of the numbers of student in each grade by race and sex]. E County Schools District office, E, SC.

Elias, M. J. (2014). The future of character education and social-emotional learning: The need for whole school and community-linked approaches. *Journal of Character Education*, *10*(1), 37-42.

Elias, M. J., White, G., & Stepney, C. (2014). Surmounting the challenges of improving academic performance: Closing the achievement gap through social-emotional and character development. *Journal of Urban Learning, Teaching, and Research, 10*, 14-24.

Etherington, M. (2013). Values education: Why the teaching of values is necessary, but not sufficient. *Journal of Research on Christian Education, 22*, 189-210.

Erikson, E. H. (1963). *Childhood and society.* New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc.

Fall, A. & Roberts, G. (2012). High school dropouts: Interactions between social context, self-perceptions, school engagement, and student dropout. *Journal of Adolescence, 35*(4), 787-798.

Fisher, Y. (2013). Exploration of Values: Israeli Teachers' Professional Ethics. *Social Psychology of Education: An International Journal, 16*(2), 297-315.

Fowler, L. (2004). *Rock solid kids: Giving children a biblical foundation for life.* Ventura, CA: Gospel Light.

Froh, J. J., & Bono, G. (2014). Making grateful kids: the science of building character. West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press.

Froh, J. J., Emmons, R. A., Card, N. A., Bono, G., & Wilson, J. A. (2011). Gratitude and the reduced costs of materialism in adolescents. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 12*(2), 289-302.

Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2003). *Educational research: An introduction* (7th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

George, D. C. (1979). *Layman's Bible book commentary: 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians.* Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

**Gentile, M. (2010). *Giving voice to values: How to speak your mind when you know what is right*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. (In Davidson, 2014)

Gerard, A. B. (1994). *Parent Child Relationship Inventory: PCRI*. Los Angeles, CA: Western Psychological Services.

Gilligan, C. (1977). In a different voice: Women's conceptions of self and of morality. *Harvard Educational Review, 47*(4), 481-517.

Greene, A. E. (2003). *Reclaiming the future of Christian education*. Colorado Springs, CO: Purposeful Designs Publications.

Gutek, G. L. (1999). *Pestalozzi and education.* Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Gutek, G. L. (2011). *Historical and philosophical foundations of education* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Hardy, S., Padilla-Walker, L., & Carlo, G. (2008). Parenting dimensions and adolescents' internalization of moral values. *Journal of Moral Education, 37*(2), 205-223.

Holmes, A. F. (1991). *Shaping character: Moral education in the Christian college.* Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Horlacher, R. (2011). Schooling as a means of popular education: Pestalozzi's method as a popular education experiment. *Paedagogica Historica, 47*(1-2), 65-75.

Hurlburt, S., Therriault, S.B., and Le Floch, K.C. (2012). *School Improvement Grants: Analyses of State Applications and Eligible and Awarded Schools* (NCEE 2012-4060). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education

Iowa Business Council. (2011). Focus: Serving as a catalyst for economic development. Retrieved from http://www.iowabusinesscouncil.org

Johns, C. H. (1904). *Babylonian and Assyrian Laws, Contracts and Letters.* Boston, MA: Reprinted by Adamant Media Corporation, 2005.

Josephson Institute (n.d.). *The six pillars of character*. Retrieved from the CHARACTER COUNTS! website: https://charactercounts.org/sixpillars.html

Josephson Institute (2005). *Parenting: The most important job of your life.* Los Angeles, CA: Josephson Institute of Ethics.

Kay, K. (2009). Middle schools preparing young people for 21st century life and work. *Middle School Journal, 40*(5), 41-45.

Kenan, S. (2009). The missing dimension of modern education: Values education. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice, 9*(1), 279-295.

Kilpatrick, W. (1992). *Why Johnny can't tell right from wrong.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Knight, G. R. (2006). *Philosophy and education: An introduction in Christian perspective* (4th ed.). Berrien Springs, MI; Andrews University Press.

Koh, C. (2012). Moral development and student motivation in moral education: A Singapore study. *Australian Journal of Education, 56*(1), 83-101.

Kohlberg, L. (1966). Moral education in the school: A developmental view. *School Review, 74,* 1-30.

Kohlberg, L. (1971). Stages of moral development as a basis for moral education. In C. Beck, B. Crittenden, & E. Sullivan (Eds.), *Moral education: Interdisciplinary approaches*. Toronto: University of Toronto.

Kristeller, P. O. (1961). *Renaissance thought: The classic, scholastic, and humanist strains.* New York: Harper Torchbooks.

Lake, K. (2011). Character education from a children's rights perspective: An examination of

    elementary students' perspectives and experiences. *International Journal of Children's*

    Rights, 19: 679-690.

Lam, G. (2014). A theoretical framework of the relation between socioeconomic status and

    academic achievement of students. *Education, 134*(3), 326-331.

Larkin, F., Guerin, S., Hobson, J. A., & Gutstein, S. E. (2015). The relationship development

    assessment- research version: Preliminary validation of a clinical tool and coding

    schemes to measure parent-child interaction in autism. *Clinical Child Psychology and*

    Psychiatry, 20(2), 239-260.

Learning Forum International (n.d.). Eight keys of excellence. Retrieved from

    http://8keys.org/8keys_defined.aspx

Leick, G. (2003). *The Babylonians: An introduction*. New York: Routledge.

Le Sage, L., & de Ruyter, D. (2008). Criminal parental responsibility: Blaming parents on the

    basis of their duty to control versus their duty to morally educate their children.

    Educational Philosophy and Theory, 40(6), 789-802.

**Lickona, T., & Davidson, M. L. (2005). *Smart and good high schools: Integrating excellence*

    and ethics for success in school, work, and beyond. Cortland, NY: Center for the 4th and

    5th Rs.   (In Davidson, 2014)

Liu, X. (2014). The problem of character education and Kohlberg's moral education: Critique

    from Dewey's moral deliberation. *Philosophical Studies in Education, 45*, 136-145.

Living Values. (2012). *Living values overview.* Retrieved from http://www.livingvalues.net

** London, H. B., & Wiseman, N. B. (2004*). For kid's sake: Winning the tug-of-war for future*

    generations. Ventura, CA, Regal Books.

Lovat, T. & Clement, N. (2008). Quality teaching and values education: Coalescing for effective learning. *Journal of Moral Education, 37*(1), 1-16.

Lovat, T., Clement, N., Dally, K., & Toomey, R. (2010). Values education as holistic development for all sectors: Researching for effective pedagogy. *Oxford Review of Education, 36*(6), 713-729. doi:10.1080/03054985.2010.501141

McCullough, M. E., Kilpatrick, S. D., Emmons, R. A., & Larson, D. B. (2001). Is gratitude a moral affect? *Psychological Bulletin, 127*(2): 249-266.

McKeown, K., Haase, T., & Pratschke, J. (2006). Evaluating springboard: Impact of a family support program in Ireland. *Journal of Children's Services 1*(1): 16-28.

Merlone, L., & Moran, D. (2008). Transition works: Self-awareness and self-advocacy skills for students in the elementary learning center. *Teaching Exceptional Children Plus, 4*(4), 2-10.

Miller, P. H. (2011). *Theories of developmental psychology* (5th ed.). New York: Worth Publishers.

Mo, Y., & Singh, K. (2008). Parents' relationships and involvement: Effects on students' school engagement and performance. *Research in Middle Level Education, 31*(10), 1-11.

Murray, C. (2014). The coming apart of America's civic culture. *Journal of Character Education, 10(*1), 1-11.

Narvaez, D., & Lapsley, D. K. (2008). Teaching moral character: Two alternatives for teacher education. *Teacher Educator, 43*, 156-172.

Nash, R. H. (1990). *The closing of the American heart: What's really wrong with America's schools.* Dallas, TX: Probe Books.

Nather, F., (2013). Exploring the impact of formal education on the moral reasoning abilities of college students. *College Student Journal, 47*(3), 470-477.

Nord, W. A. (2010). *Does God make a difference? Taking religion seriously in our schools and universities.* New York: Oxford University Press.

O'Donnell, J., & Kirkner, S. L. (2014). The impact of a collaborative family involvement program on Latino families and children's educational performance. *School Community Journal, 24*(1), 211-234.

Parkay, F., Hass, G., & Anctil, E. (2010). *Curriculum leadership: Readings for developing quality educational programs* (9th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Power, F. C. (2014). With liberty and justice for all. *Journal of Character Education, 10*(1), 31-36.

Project Wisdom (2015). *Project wisdom: Helping students make wiser choices.* Retrieved from http://www.projectwisdom.com/ERS/OurApproach.asp

Raver, C. C., & Knitzer, J. (2002). *Ready to enter: What research tells policymakers about strategies to promote social and emotional school readiness among three- and four-year-olds.* Chicago, IL: Harris School of Public Policy Studies, University of Chicago. Working Papers.

Raya, A. F., Pino, J. M., & Herruzo, J. (2011). Family variables related to behavioral problems in childhood. *Israeli Journal of Psychiatry and Related Sciences, 48*(2), 117-122.

Rosen, B. (1980). Moral dilemmas and their treatment. In B. Munsey (Ed.), *Moral development, moral education, and Kohlberg*, pp. 232-263. Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press.

Rosenthal, H. M. (1968). *Educational field trips for disadvantaged pupils in non-public schools. Evaluation of ESEA Title I projects in New York City, 1967-1968* (Report No. CUF-A-083). New York: Center for Urban Education.

Ryan, K. (2013). The failure of modern character education. *Revista Española de Pedagogia*, *71*(254), 141-146.

Schultz, G. (1998). *Kingdom Education* (2nd ed.). Nashville, TN: Lifeway.

Sharma, D., & Mohite, P. (2007). Teachers' perceptions of values education for children. In C. Tan & K. Chong (Eds.), Critical perspectives on values education in Asia (pp. 30-49). Singapore: Prentice Hall, Pearson education South Asia.

**Shea, T. W., & Bauer, A. M. (2012). *Behavior management: A practical approach for educators* (10th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Sklar, K. K. (1976). *Catharine Beecher: A study in American domesticity*. New York: Norton.

Snow, R. E. (1974). Representative and quasi-representative designs for research on teaching. *Review of Educational Research*, *44*, 265-291.

Sojourner, R. (2014). It's unanimous: Effective character education is not quick or superficial, and it begins with caring relationships. *Journal of Character Education, 10*(1), 69-75.

Solomonidou, C., &Kalantzi, S. (2008). Teaching thermal phenomena by the use of educational software of constructivist inspiration. *International Journal of Learning, 15*(6), 253-261.

Southeastern State (a pseudonym) Department of Education, (2015). *2014-2015 E-Rate by district*. Retrieved from http://ed.sc.gov/data/other/

Strauss, L. (1958). *Devotional studies in Galatians and Ephesians*. New York: Loizeaux Brothers.

Tay, B., & Yildirim, K. (2009). Parents' views regarding the values aimed to be taught in social studies lessons. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice, 9*(3), 1529-1542.

Thompson, C. R., ed. (1978). *Collected works of Erasmus: Literary and educational writings 2: De copia/de rationae studii*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Tsang, J. (2006). Gratitude and pro-social behavior: An experimental test of gratitude. *Cognition and Emotion, 20*(1), 138-148.

U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Research. (2010). *Efficacy of schoolwide programs to promote social and character development and reduce problem behavior in elementary school children.* Retrieved from http://ics.ed.gov.ncer/pub/20112001/pdf/20112001.pdf

U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics (2014). Retrieved from Institute of Education Sciences website: http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/

Van Brummelen, H. (2002). *Steppingstones to curriculum: A biblical path* (2nd ed.). Colorado Springs, CO: Purposeful Design Publications.

Van der Oord, S., Bogels, S., & Peijnenburg, D. (2012). The effectiveness of mindfulness training for children with ADHD and mindful parenting for their parents. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 21*(1), 139-147.

VIA Institute on Character (2015). Do You Know Your 24 Character Strengths? Retrieved from http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths/VIA-Classification#nav

Wang, Y., Engler, K.S., & Oetting, T. L. Expectations lead to performance: The transformative power of high expectations in preschool. *Odyssey: New Directions in Deaf Education, 15*, 36-39.

Warner, R. M. (2013). *Applied statistics: From bivariate through multivariate techniques* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Wei, Q., Schvaneveldt, P. L., & Sahin, V. (2013). Children's Perceptions and Definitions of Family in China, Ecuador, Turkey, and the United States. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 44*(5), 643-662.

Western Psychological Services (1994a). *Parent-child relationship inventory (PCRI) manual.* Author.

Western Psychological Services (1994b). *Parent-child relationship inventory (PCRI).* Author.

Wolff, J. M., & Crockett, L. J. (2011). The role of deliberative decision making, parenting, and friends in adolescent risk behaviors. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 40*, 1607-1622.

Woolf, H. B. (Ed.) (1977). Webster's new collegiate dictionary. Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Company.

Young, J. T. (1977). *The Spirit within you: Straight talk about God's gift to all believers.* Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

APPENDICES

Appendix A   Permission to use /reprint PCRI

Appendix B   Permission to copy five items of the PCRI

Appendix C   PCRI instrument

Appendix D   Permission from the cooperating district and school

Appendix E   Permission to use Character Counts! materials

Appendix F   Teaching materials developed from Character Counts!

Appendix G   Participant consent form

Appendix H   IRB approval

Appendix A

PERMISSION TO USE/REPRINT THE PCRI (Parent-Child Relationship Inventory)

wps
unlocking potential

March 8, 2016

Vernon Ball Jr., ABD
Liberty University
1811 Birch Drive
North Augusta, SC 29660

Dear Vernon—

With reference to your email of 29Feb'16, thank you for arranging for Dr. Steven McDonald to provide a letter in support of your request for permission to reprint copyrighted test material in the appendices of your dissertation.

Due to your committee's requirements, Western Psychological Services authorizes you to reprint the entire item content from an AutoScore™ Form for the *Parent-Child Relationship Inventory* (PCRI), solely for the above-described purpose, on the provision that each reprint bear the following required notice in its entirety:

> Copyright © 1994 by Western Psychological Services. Reprinted by V. Ball, Liberty University, for display purposes by permission of the publisher, Western Psychological Services, (rights@wpspublish.com). Not to be reprinted in whole or in part for any additional purpose without the expressed, written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.

Please note that this authorization is strictly limited to paper-bound copies of your dissertation as required for distribution to your committee and your institution's archives, and specifically does not extend to reproduction by microfilm/microfiche or any other media (digital, electronic or otherwise). Due to the potential for public availability of microfilmed copies and other media, WPS does not authorize sample reproduction of its tests in this manner. While we regret any inconvenience our position may cause, we trust you understand the ethical considerations involved.

We appreciate your interest in this instrument as well as your consideration for its copyright. If you have any follow-up questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Rights & Permissions Specialist

sceja@wpspublish.com
424.201.8857

625 Alaska Avenue, Torrance, CA 90503   1.800.648.8857 or 424.201.8800   f 424.201.6950   rights@wpspublish.com
www.wpspublish.com

Appendix B

PERMISSION TO USE/REPRINT FIVE ITEMS FROM THE PCRI (Parent-Child Relationship

Inventory)

WPS
unlocking potential

March 2, 2016

Vernon Ball Jr., ABD
Liberty University
1811 Birch Drive
North Augusta, SC 29860

Re: *Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI)*

Hello,

This follows up your email dated 29Feb'16, seeking permission to reprint selected copyrighted items within the body of your dissertation.

Western Psychological Services authorizes you to reprint for inclusion in your dissertation (and in articles based directly thereon) items #5, #22, #39, #54, and #63 from the *PCRI* on provision that each reprint bear the following required notice in its entirety:

Sample items from the *PCRI* copyright © 1994 by Western Psychological Services. Reprinted by V. Ball, Liberty University, for scholarly display purposes by permission of the publisher, WPS. Not to be reprinted in whole or in part for any additional purpose without the expressed, written permission of the publisher (rights@wpspublish.com). All rights reserved.

Please note that this authorization extends to paper-bound copies of your dissertation as may be required for distribution to your committee and your institution's archives, as well as reproduction by microfilm and any other media (digital, electronic or otherwise) as may be required.

On behalf of WPS, I appreciate your interest in this instrument as well as your consideration for its copyright. It's our privilege to assist helping professionals, and I hope we can be of service to your future work.

Sincerely yours,
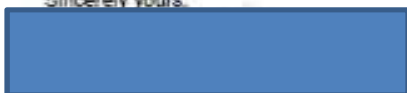
WPS Rights & Permissions Specialist
e-mail: sceja@wpspublish.com

Appendix C

REPRINT OF THE PCRI

Profile Form — Father

Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI)

Name: _____ Date: _____ ID Number: _____

WPS® — Test with Confidence

REMOVE THIS SHEET BEFORE COMPLETING FORM

T-Score	SUP	SAT	INV	COM	LIM	AUT	ROL	Percentile
85	36							
84								
83								
82								
81	35		56		47	36	36	
80								
79							35	
78								
77					46			
76	34					35		
75					45			
74			55			34	34	
73	33				44		33	99
72					44			
71					43			
70	32			36		33	32	
69			54					
68		40			42			
67	31					32	31	
66			53	35	41			95
65	30							
64			52	34		31	30	
63				33	40			90
62	29	39	51				29	
61				32	39			
60	28	38	50	31	38	30	28	
59								
58			49		37			
57				30		29	27	75
56	27	37	48		36			
55							26	
54		36	47	29	35	28		
53	26						25	
52			46					
51		35	45	28	34	27		
50	25						24	50
49		34	44		33			
48	24	33		27		26	23	
47			43		32			
46		32						
45	23		42	26	31	25	22	
44		31						
43	22		41		30	24	21	25
42		30		25		23		
41					29			
40	21	29	40	24	28	22	20	
39		28			27	21		
38	20	27			26	20	19	
37			39		23–25	19		10
36		26		23	22		18	
35	19		38			18		
34					21	17		5
33	18	25		22	20		17	
32			37			16		
31		24			19			
30	17		36	21			16	
29		23	35		17–18			
28		22					15	
27	16	21	34	20	16	15	14	1
26							13	
25		20			15		12	
24	15			19			11	
23	14	19				14		
22								
21			33	16–18	14		10	
20								
19	13	18		15			9	
18								

VALIDITY INDICATORS

Inconsistency Indicator:

17 ☐	55 ☐	53 ☐	39 ☐	49 ☐
36 ☐	67 ☐	60 ☐	46 ☐	78 ☐
24 ☐	64 ☐	63 ☐	10 ☐	25 ☐
27 ☐	77 ☐	72 ☐	26 ☐	32 ☐

Social Desirability Score: _____

Inconsistency Score: _____

Profile Form — Mother

Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI)   WPS — Test with Confidence

Name: _____ Date: _____ ID Number: _____

T-Score	SUP	SAT	INV	COM	LIM	AUT	ROL	Percentile
85								
84								
83								
82								
81								
80					48			
79								
78	36				47			
77					46	37	36	
76	35							
75					45			
74	34				44	36		
73							35	99
72	33		56		43	35		
71								
70	32					34	34	
69					42			
68			55	36			33	
67	31					33		
66		40			41		32	95
65	30		54			32		
64					40		31	
63								90
62	29			35	39	31	30	
61			53		38			
60	28	39		34				
59			52		37	30	29	
58	27			33				
57		38	51		36		28	75
56	26			32		29		
55			50	31			27	
54		37			35			
53	25		49	30			26	
52		36	48		34	28		
51	24						25	
50		35	47	29	33			50
49	23		46			27		
48		34			32		24	
47	22		45	28	31	26		
46		33					23	
45	21	32			30	25		
44		31	44		29		22	
43				27	28	24		25
42	20	30						
41		29	43		26–27	23	21	
40	19	27–28			25	22		
39			42	26	24	21		
38	18	26			23	20	20	
37			41		22	19		10
36	17			25	21	18	19	
35		25	40		20	17		
34				24			18	5
33	16		39		19			
32		24	38	23		16		
31							17	
30	15	23	37		18		16	
29		22	36	22	17	15		
28			35	21	16		15	
27	14	21	34	20		14		1
26					15			
25	13		33	19	14		14	
24		19–20				13		
23		16–18	30–32	18		12		
22	12	15	29		13			
21								
20		14	25–28					
19	11							
18		13	24	17		11	13	

VALIDITY INDICATORS

Inconsistency Indicator:

17 ☐	55 ☐	53 ☐	39 ☐	49 ☐
36 ☐ ___	67 ☐ ___	60 ☐ ___	46 ☐ ___	78 ☐ ___
24 ☐	64 ☐	63 ☐	10 ☐	25 ☐
27 ☐ ___	77 ☐ ___	72 ☐ ___	26 ☐ ___	32 ☐ ___

Social Desirability Score: _____

Inconsistency Score: _____

Directions

The statements below describe different ways some parents feel about their children. For each statement, decide how you feel. If you *strongly agree*, circle the 1 next to that statement number on the answer sheet. If you *agree*, circle the 2. If you *disagree*, circle the 3 on the answer sheet. If you *strongly disagree*, circle the 4. Please make sure that you are circling the correct response on the answer sheet.

Use a ball-point pen only, and make heavy marks that completely circle the appropriate response. If you want to change your answer, cross out your first mark and circle another response.

Try to respond to all of the statements. If you aren't sure how you feel, mark the response that comes closest to your feelings at this time. *There are no right or wrong answers.*

PCRI

Anthony B. Gerard, Ph.D.

Name (Optional): _____ Date: _____

ID Number: _____ Age: _____

Ethnicity: ☐ Asian   Parent: ☐ Mother ☐ Father
☐ Black
☐ Hispanic   Child's Age: _____
☐ Native
American   Child's Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female
☐ White   *Gracie* _____
☐ Other_____

Examiner's Name: _____

Strongly Agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

PLEASE PRESS HARD WHEN CIRCLING YOUR RESPONSE.

1 2 3 4	**1.**	My child generally tells me when something is bothering him or her.
1 2 3 4	**2.**	I have trouble disciplining my child.
1 2 3 4	**3.**	I get as much satisfaction from having children as other parents do.
1 2 3 4	**4.**	I have a hard time getting through to my child.
1 2 3 4	**5.**	I spend a great deal of time with my child.
1 2 3 4	**6.**	When it comes to raising my child, I feel alone most of the time.
1 2 3 4	**7.**	My feelings about being a parent change from day to day.
1 2 3 4	**8.**	Parents should protect their children from things that might make them unhappy.
1 2 3 4	**9.**	If I have to say no to my child, I try to explain why.
1 2 3 4	**10.**	My child is more difficult to care for than most children are.
1 2 3 4	**11.**	I can tell by my child's face how he or she is feeling.
1 2 3 4	**12.**	I worry a lot about money.
1 2 3 4	**13.**	I sometimes wonder if I am making the right decisions about how I raise my child.
1 2 3 4	**14.**	Being a parent comes naturally to me.
1 2 3 4	**15.**	I sometimes give in to my child to avoid a tantrum.
1 2 3 4	**16.**	I love my child just the way he or she is.
1 2 3 4	**17.**	I get a great deal of enjoyment from all aspects of my life.
1 2 3 4	**18.**	My child is never jealous of others.
1 2 3 4	**19.**	I often wonder what the rewards are in raising children.
1 2 3 4	**20.**	My child tells me all about his or her friends.
1 2 3 4	**21.**	I wish I could set firmer limits with my child.
1 2 3 4	**22.**	I get a great deal of satisfaction from having children.
1 2 3 4	**23.**	I sometimes feel if I don't have more time away from my child I'll go crazy.
1 2 3 4	**24.**	I regret having children.
1 2 3 4	**25.**	Children should be given most of the things they want.
1 2 3 4	**26.**	My child is out of control much of the time.
1 2 3 4	**27.**	Being a parent isn't as satisfying as I thought it would be.
1 2 3 4	**28.**	I feel that I can talk to my child on his or her level.
1 2 3 4	**29.**	My life is very stressful right now.
1 2 3 4	**30.**	I never worry about my child.
1 2 3 4	**31.**	I wish my child would not interrupt when I'm talking to someone else.
1 2 3 4	**32.**	Parents should give their children all those things the parents never had.
1 2 3 4	**33.**	I generally feel good about myself as a parent.
1 2 3 4	**34.**	I sometimes feel overburdened by my responsibilities as a parent.
1 2 3 4	**35.**	I feel very close to my child.
1 2 3 4	**36.**	I'm generally satisfied with the way my life is going right now.
1 2 3 4	**37.**	I have never had any problems with my child.
1 2 3 4	**38.**	I can't stand the thought of my child growing up.
1 2 3 4	**39.**	My child would say that I am a good listener.

PLEASE TURN THE FORM OVER NOW AND COMPLETE STATEMENTS 40 THROUGH 78.

WPS
Test with Confidence

Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI)

Anthony B. Gerard, Ph.D.

WPS
Test with Confidence

(See Scoring Directions on back)

Name (Optional): _____ Date: _____
ID Number: _____ Age: _____

Ethnicity: ☐ Asian   Parent: ☐ Mother ☐ Father
☐ Black   Child's Age: _____
☐ Hispanic
☐ Native American   Child's Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female
☐ White   Grade _____
☐ Other _____

Examiner's Name: _____

	SUP	SAT	INV	COM	LIM	AUT	ROL	SOC	SUP'	SAT'	INV'	COM'	LIM'	AUT'	ROL'	SOC'					
1.	4	3	2	1													40.	4	3	2	1
2.	1	2	3	4													41.	1	2	3	4
3.	4	3	2	1													42.	1	2	3	4
4.	1	2	3	4													43.	4	3	2	1
5.	4	3	2	1													44.	4	3	2	1
6.	1	2	3	4													45.	4	3	2	1
7.	1	2	3	4													46.	1	2	3	4
8.	1	2	3	4													47.	4	3	2	1
9.	4	3	2	1													48.	1	2	3	4
10.	1	2	3	4													49.	4	3	2	1
11.	4	3	2	1													50.	4	3	2	1
12.	1	2	3	4													51.	4	3	2	1
13.	1	2	3	4													52.	4	3	2	1
14.	4	3	2	1													53.	4	3	2	1
15.	1	2	3	4													54.	4	3	2	1
16.	4	3	2	1													55.	4	3	2	1
17.	4	3	2	1													56.	4	3	2	1
18.	1	2	3	4													57.	1	2	3	4
19.	1	2	3	4													58.	1	2	3	4
20.	4	3	2	1													59.	4	3	2	1
21.	1	2	3	4													60.	4	3	2	1
22.	4	3	2	1													61.	4	3	2	1
23.	1	2	3	4													62.	1	2	3	4
24.	1	2	3	4													63.	4	3	2	1
25.	1	2	3	4													64.	4	3	2	1
26.	1	2	3	4													65.	1	2	3	4
27.	1	2	3	4													66.	4	3	2	1
28.	4	3	2	1													67.	4	3	2	1
29.	1	2	3	4													68.	1	2	3	4
30.	1	2	3	4													69.	4	3	2	1
31.	1	2	3	4													70.	4	3	2	1
32.	1	2	3	4													71.	4	3	2	1
33.	4	3	2	1													72.	4	3	2	1
34.	1	2	3	4													73.	4	3	2	1
35.	4	3	2	1													74.	1	2	3	4
36.	4	3	2	1													75.	1	2	3	4
37.	1	2	3	4													76.	4	3	2	1
38.	1	2	3	4													77.	4	3	2	1
39.	4	3	2	1													78.	4	3	2	1

		=	
SUP + SUP'		=	Parental Support
SAT + SAT'		=	Satisfaction With Parenting
INV + INV'		=	Involvement
COM + COM'		=	Communication
LIM + LIM'		=	Limit Setting
AUT + AUT'		=	Autonomy
ROL + ROL'		=	Role Orientation
SOC + SOC'		=	Social Desirability

Scoring Directions

Scoring the PCRI Scales.

For each item, transfer the number that has been circled to the corresponding box for that item. (For missing responses [up to eight; see below] use the modal responses, indicated in red, for the ones that are missing.) Then add the values in each column (SUP through SOC and SUP' through SOC') and enter those sums in the appropriate boxes at the bottom of the page. Finally, add those sums (SUP + SUP', SAT + SAT', etc.) as indicated, to get the raw scores for the PCRI.

Scoring for Protocol Validity.

If the client did not give a response to nine or more items, the protocol is not valid and should not be scored. If this is not the case, the answer sheet of the AutoScore™ Form includes the necessary information for scoring the PCRI's protocol validity indicators.

The Social Desirability indicator score may be transferred from the answer sheet to the Profile Form, where a space has been provided. A score of 9 or less on the SD indicator suggests that the client's responses are strongly influenced by a desire to present his or her situation in an unrealistically positive light.

The scoring form for the Inconsistency indicator is included at the bottom of the Profile Form. Transfer an item's numerical score to the space next to the corresponding item number on the scoring form. If the responses within a pair contain at least a 2-point difference, then that pair is scored. In general, a score of 2 or higher on the INC indicator suggests the possibility that the client has responded inconsistently, inattentively, or randomly.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
1	2	3	4		**PLEASE PRESS HARD WHEN CIRCLING YOUR RESPONSE.**
1	2	3	4	40.	I often lose my temper with my child.
1	2	3	4	41.	I am very involved with my child's sports or other activities.
1	2	3	4	42.	My spouse and I work as a team in doing chores around the house.
1	2	3	4	43.	I have never been embarrassed by anything my child has said or done.
1	2	3	4	44.	My child really knows how to make me angry.
1	2	3	4	45.	Parents should be careful about whom they allow their children to have as friends.
1	2	3	4	46.	When my child has a problem, he or she usually comes to me to talk things over.
1	2	3	4	47.	My child never puts off doing things that should be done right away.
1	2	3	4	48.	Being a parent is one of the most important things in my life.
1	2	3	4	49.	Women should stay home and take care of the children.
1	2	3	4	50.	Teenagers are not old enough to decide most things for themselves.
1	2	3	4	51.	My child keeps many secrets from me.
1	2	3	4	52.	Mothers who work are harming their children.
1	2	3	4	53.	I feel I don't really know my child.
1	2	3	4	54.	I sometimes find it hard to say no to my child.
1	2	3	4	55.	I wonder if I did the right thing having children.
1	2	3	4	56.	I would really rather do a lot of other things than spend time with my child.
1	2	3	4	57.	It's a parent's responsibility to protect his or her child from harm.
1	2	3	4	58.	Sometimes I wonder how I would survive if anything were to happen to my child.
1	2	3	4	59.	I miss the close relationship I had with my child when he or she was younger.
1	2	3	4	60.	My child rarely talks to me unless he or she wants something.
1	2	3	4	61.	A father's major responsibility is to provide financially for his children.
1	2	3	4	62.	It's better to reason with children than just to tell them what to do.
1	2	3	4	63.	I spend very little time talking with my child.
1	2	3	4	64.	I feel there is a great distance between me and my child.
1	2	3	4	65.	For a woman, having a challenging career is just as important as being a good mother.
1	2	3	4	66.	I often threaten to punish my child but never do.
1	2	3	4	67.	If I had it to do over, I would probably not have children.
1	2	3	4	68.	Husbands should help with child care.
1	2	3	4	69.	Mothers should work only if necessary.
1	2	3	4	70.	Some people would say that my child is a bit spoiled.
1	2	3	4	71.	I worry a lot about my child getting hurt.
1	2	3	4	72.	I seldom have time to spend with my child.
1	2	3	4	73.	Below age four, most children are too young to be in a regular preschool or day-care program.
1	2	3	4	74.	A woman can have a satisfying career and be a good mother too.
1	2	3	4	75.	I carry a photograph of my child in my wallet or purse.
1	2	3	4	76.	I have a hard time letting go of my child.
1	2	3	4	77.	I feel I don't know how to talk with my child in a way that he or she really understands.
1	2	3	4	78.	Having a full-time mother is best for a child.

Appendix D

PERMISSION LETTERS FROM COOPERATING DISTRICT AND SCHOOL

████████████████ SCHOOL DISTRICT

████████████████., Ed.D., Superintendent

_____

████████████████

████████████████████

████████████

February 2, 2016

Liberty University
Department of Graduate Education
1971 University Blvd
Lynchburg, Va. 24515

To Whom It May Concern:

After reviewing the proposed study, "A Character Education Program Taught to Parents and Its Effects on Perceived Parent-Child Relationship and Academic Performance", presented by Mr. Vernon Ball, I have granted authorization for him to conduct research in the ████████████ School District. This dissertation study is in partial fulfillment of the Doctor of Education degree with Liberty University under the direction of Dr. Steve McDonald.

I understand the purpose of the study is to examine the effects of character education on student parent relationships and student academic performance.   Mr. Ball will conduct research activities at ████████ Elementary School to determine if there is a difference in the grades of students randomly assigned to either the experimental or control group. The results of this research may guide researchers, parents, and school officials in how they implement character education programs in the future.

Mr. Ball has provided a copy of the Liberty University approved parent consent form that clearly outlines the purpose, procedures, and confidentially safeguards of this study. Additionally, Mr. Ball has agreed to provide a copy of the study results, in aggregate, to our district.
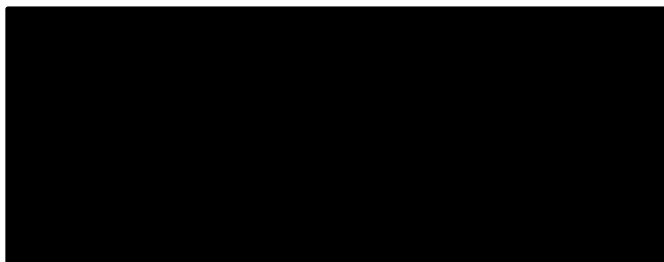
If the Department of Graduate Education of Liberty University has concerns about the permission being granted by this letter, please contact me.

Sincerely,

███████████., Ed.D
Superintendent

February 4, 2016

Liberty University
Department of Graduate Education
1971 University Blvd
Lynchburg, Virginia 24515

To whom it may concern:

After discussing Mr. Vernon Ball's proposed study, "A Character Education Program Taught to Parents and its Effects on Perceived Parent-Child Relationship and Academic Performance," we have granted authorization for him to conduct research using the students and parents of ███████████████. We are excited to work with Mr. Ball as he begins his dissertation study.

Character Education has always been a focus of our school; however, we have not conducted parenting classes in conjunction with our program. We look forward to seeing the effects of character education on student-parent relationships and student academic performance. The results of this research may guide how our character education program is implemented in the future as we join with our state department in following the characteristics stated in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.

Please feel free to contact us with any further questions.

Sincerely,

Principal
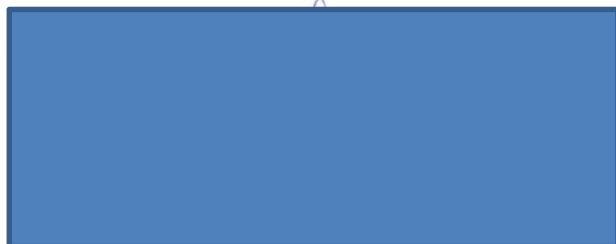
Appendix E

PERMISSION TO USE CHARACTER COUNTS! MATERIALS IN TEACHING

CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM

Dear Mr. Ball,

We've reviewed your "Permission Form" request and approve its intended use with the understanding that you agree to abide by the "conditions of reprint permission" at the bottom of the form you submitted. Also, by signing this form, you further agree that you will not market or sell any publication or materials that you generate which include our copyrighted marks and language without notifying Josephson Institute of Ethics and/or CHARACTER COUNTS! to request approval prior to publication.

Good luck with your project and thank you for your interest in our program.

CHARACTER COUNTS!
@charactercounts.org
800-711-2670, ext. 805
310-846-4805

Appendix F

TEACHNG MATERIALS BASED ON CHARACTER COUNTS!

PARENTING

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

    A. ENCOURAGEMENT FOR ATTENDANCE

    B. PURPOSES OF MEETING

        1. PROVIDE TOOLS FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION IN CHILDREN

        2. TEST FOR RESULTS OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

II. SOUP

    A. DIFFERENT WAYS OF MAKING SOUP

        1. CANNED

        2. HOMEMADE

    B. YOUR CHILD—THE TWENTY-YEAR SOUP

    C. IMPORTANCE OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL YEARS

        1. ABILITY TO PARTICIPATE—CHORES, SPORTS, ENTERTAINMENT

        2. ABILITY TO CONVERSE

        3. ABILITY TO CHOOSE

        4. TEENAGE YEARS ARE COMING

    D. INGREDIENTS

        1. LOVE

        2. WORDS

        3. ACTIONS

4. ENTERTAINMENT

5. FRIENDS

6. TEACHERS/PASTORS/RABBIS/PRIESTS/COACHES

7. YOUR TIME—THE MOST IMPORTANT INGREDIENT

    a) MEALS

    b) ACTIVITIES—CHORES, SPORTS, TELEVISION, MOVIES

    c) VACATIONS

III. TEAM

A. TEACH

1. TALK TO KIDS ABOUT CHARACTER

2. WATCH MOVIES AND TV SHOWS THAT SHOW CHARACTER

B. ENFORCE

1. RULES

    a) POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR

    b) NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR BAD BEHAVIOR

    c) DON'T GET COMPLACENT

2. ADAPT TO A MATURING CHILD

C. ADVOCATE

1. DISCUSS CHOICES OTHERS MAY MAKE

2. POINT OUT CHARACTER ISSUES AS YOUR FAMILY ENCOUNTERS THEM

D. MODEL—YOUR ACTIONS MEAN MORE THAN YOUR WORDS

IV. SIX PILLARS OF CHARACTER (In each Pillar, examples will be elicited from the audience or presented by the instructor. Simple questions will be encouraged but complicated questions may be deferred due to time constraints.)

    A. TRUSTWORTHINESS—BEING HONEST, TELLING THE TRUTH, KEEPING PROMISES, BEING LOYAL

        1. HONESTY

            a) DO'S (1) Tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, even if it costs you (2) Be straightforward, open, and direct (3) Be sincere. Say what you mean and mean what you say (4) If you find something that doesn't belong to you, return it. Even extra change.

            b) DON'TS (1) Lie (2) Cheat (3) Steal (4) Mislead

        2. PROMISE-KEEPING

            a) DO'S (1) Be reliable. Keep your word (2) Pay your debts (3) Return what you borrow (4) Make only promises you can keep

            b) DON'TS (1) Make promises you can't keep (2) Break promises you do make (3) Keep anything that isn't yours (4) Use loopholes or deceit to get out of commitments

        3. LOYALTY

            a) DO'S (1) Be careful with private information that could embarrass or hurt someone (2) Support and protect the best interests of you family, friends, teachers, employers, community and country

b) DON'TS (1) Talk behind people's backs, Spread harmful rumors or gossip (2) Lie, cheat, steal or harm others for approval or friendship (3) Ask a friend to do something wrong as a condition of your friendship

4. INTEGRITY

a) DO'S (1) Share your beliefs and values with your kids (2) Discuss people who stood up for convictions despite the cost (3) Share stories of integrity (4) Walk your talk and talk your walk (5) Praise your children for their good choices

b) DON'TS (1) Say one thing and mean another (2) Say one thing and do another (3) Lie to avoid difficult situations (4) Give into pressure and make dishonorable decisions

B. RESPECT—SHOWING OTHERS THEY ARE VALUED

1. DO'S a) Be courteous and polite b) Be patient c) Respect the individuality of others d) Be tolerant and appreciative of individual differences, including political opinions e) Base your opinion of others on their character merits, not race, religion, nationality, gender, physical or mental condition, or social or economic status

2. DON'TS a) Insult, abuse, demean, mistreat, or harass others b) Make inappropriate or unwanted comments about a person's race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation c) Manipulate or take advantage of other people

C. RESPONSIBILITY—DOING WHAT YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO DO. RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE THINK AHEAD, SET GOALS, CONTROL TEMPERS, AND DO THEIR BEST

1. DO'S a) Think before you act, considering the consequences for yourself and others. Does your decision reflect the Six Pillars? b) Be accountable. Take responsibility for your actions or inactions. c) Be reliable. Fulfill your role, whether at school, home or work. d) Set a good example e) Do your best in all you do f) Complete your tasks

2. DON'TS a) Blame others for your failures or mistakes b) Take credit for other people's work or accomplishments c) Give up d) Neglect your duties

D. FAIRNESS—PLAYING BY THE RULES, TAKING TURNS, SHARING AND LISTENING. FAIR PEOPLE HEAR ALL SIDES AND DON'T BLAME UNJUSTLY. THEY DO NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OTHERS.

1. DO'S a) Treat all people fairly b) Listen closely to others. Try to understand. c) Consider all the facts from all sides, before making a decision. d) Correct your mistakes

2. DON'TS a) Take advantage of other people's mistakes or ignorance b) Take more than your fair share c) Let personal preferences, prejudices or other feelings interfere with decisions needing your impartial judgment

E. CARING—KIND, HELPFUL AND GENEROUS. THE GOAL OF CARING IS TO MAKE OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES BETTER.

1. DO'S a) Show you care about others through kindness, caring, generosity, and compassion. b) Commit obvious acts of charity as an example to your children c) Live by the Golden Rule d) Think how every word, decision, or action will affect others.

2. DON'TS a) Be selfish b) Be mean or cruel c) Be insensitive to the feelings of others

F. CITIZENSHIP—DOING YOUR SHARE TO HELP YOUR FAMILY AND COMMUNITY A BETTER PLACE

1. DO'S a) Obey the rules b) Obey the laws c) Make your school and neighborhood a better place d) Vote, and encourage your children to value their right to vote e) Be a good team player f) Be aware of the impact your choices have on the environment

2. DON'TS a) Bend the rules b) Break laws c) Complain without working to be part of the solution d) Spoil the environment e) Waste resources or consume thoughtlessly

V. CLOSING—We have spent the last two hours talking about the Six Pillars of Character, as presented by the Josephson Institute. The goal of this presentation is to help you instill character into that 20 year soup that is your child. And in doing so, you may find more confidence and satisfaction in your own character

Appendix G

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of study: A character education program taught to parents and its effects on perceived parent-child relationship and academic performance

 Principal researcher: Mr. Vernon Ball, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

Liberty University Academic Department: Department of Education

Dear Parent or Guardian:

You are invited to be a participant in a research study about character education and its effects on your relationship to your children and how they perform academically. This research involves taking a survey and being a participant in a two-hour character education course. Nine weeks after the course, you will be asked to complete the survey again. The survey asks questions about issues such as communication, limit setting, and overall parenting satisfaction. Also, grades will be measured at the beginning and end of the nine weeks to see if the character education course you took influenced your children's grades. You were selected because you have a child or children in the second through fifth grades at ▮▮▮▮▮▮ Elementary School. Please take a moment to read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study. This study is being conducted by Vernon Ball, an eighth-grade teacher at ▮▮▮▮▮▮ School in ▮▮▮ County, ▮, as a dissertation study for a Doctor of Education degree with Liberty University. Dr. Steve McDonald of Liberty University is the supervisor of the study. Your school principal has granted permission for this study to take place at your school.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to understand how a character education course taught to parents might affect your relationship to your children, and their grades. Parents and guardians are the most important people in a child's life. The results of this research may guide researchers, parents, and schools in how they implement character education programs in the future. The results may benefit many families like yours.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Any published report will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records.

To assure no breach in confidentiality, all documents will be secured in locked locations by your children's principals and the researcher. Participant names will be redacted from the survey after its completion.

In order to protect your identity, the consent form and the survey will not be stored together, further limiting the risk of breach of confidentiality. Signature forms and surveys will be secured

in separate envelopes that have no means for personal identification. The data will be secured by the researcher for a minimum of three years. The aggregate data may be used for future writings and studies regarding character education. After completion of future writings and studies, the data will be shredded.

Procedures: If you agree to participate in this research, you will be asked to do the following things: 1. You will be asked to return the consent form (bottom portion) to ▮▮▮ 2. You will be randomly assigned to one of two groups. 3. Both groups will complete the PCRI (Parent-Child Relationship Inventory). Those in Group 1 will take part in a character education program at the school. Those who are in Group 2 will not take part in the character education course at this time, but will be given the option of taking the course at the end of the research. 4. After the character education course, those in Group 1 will receive a short letter with tips and encouragement concerning the implementation of the character education training. 5. At the end of nine weeks, both groups will take the PCRI survey again to see if the character education course taught to Group 1 made a difference. The survey will ask for your name, age, and race; and your child's gender and grade. A few examples of questions from the survey are "I spend a great deal of time with my child", and "My child would say that I'm a good listener." (See permission to use sample items of the PCRI below.) You will be asked to mark your answer on an agree-disagree scale. The total time you will spend in this research is less than three hours: two hours in the character education course (Group 1), and about 40 minutes taking the PCRI survey two times (about 15-20 minutes each). If you have more than one child in grades two through five, you may be asked to take the surveys for each child. The school and district will receive a copy of the results of the research for anyone who is interested. Children of those taking the character education course will be provided with activities at the school if needed.

Risks and Benefits: Participants who take the character education course will be exposed to ideas such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Students will not be a direct part in this research and so will not experience any risk. It is possible your feelings and/or parenting style may change as a result of the character education program. This consequence is intended. Non-participants (Group 2) may feel marginalized in this research process as an unintended consequence. Asking parents and guardians to evaluate attitudes and perspectives on the survey can also invoke happy or unhappy feelings. However, these situations can also occur as part of life under normal circumstances.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for taking part in this research project.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. The decision whether or not to participate will not affect any current grades or relationship with ▮▮▮ or with Liberty University. 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: You are encouraged to ask any questions you have at any time by contacting these individuals at the following email addresses: Vernon Ball: vball6@liberty.edu or Dr. Steve McDonald: samcdonald2@liberty.edu

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the Liberty University Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at irb@liberty.edu

----

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Please return only this portion of the page to the ███ main office. You may keep the first pages of this information for your reference.

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the information provided on the research study. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and have received answers to my questions (if applicable). I consent to participate in this study.

Signature of parent or guardian: _____ Date: _____

Printed name of parent or guardian: _____

Parent/guardian email: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____

Appendix H

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

November 30, 2016

Vernon Ball
IRB Approval 2680.113016: A Character Education Program Taught to Parents and Its Effects
on Perceived Parent-Child Relationship and Academic Performance

Dear Vernon Ball,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB.
This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol
number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as
it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms
for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,
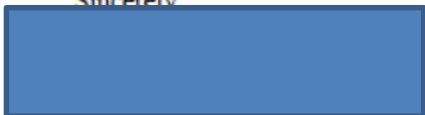
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School

LIBERTY
U N I V E R S I T Y.
Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971