COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF VALUES

INVOLVED IN CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

No aspect of life is more essential to human happiness and survival
than an objective knowledge and understanding of the development of man's
character. This subject has received much thought by philosophers and
at the same time it has received relatively little scientific research
dealing with the inner forces that shape and determine man's character
(Peck and Havighurst, 1960).

Research in this area began in the late 1920's when Hartshorne,
May, and Shuttleworth (1930) attempted to study character development
through the use of a Character Education Inquiry. This study reported
schools to have a harmful effect upon children. The results of this
study discouraged research in this area until the late 1940's (Gabriel,
1968).

↗ The development of moral character has long been a chief concern
of society. For instance, in the colonial period, reading and memoriz-
ing the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments were stressed as being
essential to the development of good moral character (Miel and Brogan,
1957). Havighurst and Taba (1949, p. 3) state that "...character is
ranked by most people as of first importance in the child's education."

The White House Conference on Children and Youth (1960) placed a
great emphasis upon character education and encouraged schools, churches,

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synagogues, character-building agencies and all citizens to work to-
gether in encouraging moral and religious character training in the
children and youth of the United States. Before this character educa-
tion goal set by the White House Conference could be accomplished,
clarification was needed as to what was meant by the word "character"
and how it develops.

 Although some research has been conducted in the area of character
development, there is a need for much more clarification concerning the
components of character. The basic problem seems to be that of iden-
tifying the values considered to be most important in promoting posi-
tive character development and fulfilling human living. When such
values are clarified and defined, the child's educators such as parents
and teachers can more effectively work cooperatively to assist the
child in positive character development.

The concepts of character and character development are less clear
in the United States than is the case in some other societies. For
example, Luckey (1964) states that the task of character development
and character education is easier in Russia than it is in the United
States. This is because the Russians have one basic goal in mind—
collectivism. The Russian educators have distinct definitions for
character qualities and the qualities that they emphasize are the ones
that will be beneficial to the people as a whole. Positive character
development may not be as clearly defined in the United States because
there is more personal freedom in choosing one's goals and individuality
is stressed. Another difficulty is that there is often conflict be-
tween the values of a child's peer group and those values of his
parents or the older generation (Bronfenbrenner, 1967).

Another problem is that of separating character development from personality development. Many times the terms are used interchangeably to mean the same thing when in reality there is a difference between the two terms. Character is a concept referring to a part of personality, the inner qualities of an individual that are not necessarily seen by others. Personality is a more inclusive concept that also refers to the outward behavior of the individual (Peck and Havighurst, 1960; Dinkmeyer, 1965).

There is a need to increase the understanding of the processes that intervene between the parent's child-rearing patterns and the child's eventual moral or character development. Though much has been written _about_ character, very little research has been conducted _concerning_ character development, especially during recent years. As Sullivan, McCullough and Stager (1970) have indicated, there is a need for much more research in this area to confirm existing theories of character development.

There is a particular need for research concerning the attitudes of college students toward character development since they have so recently gone through the process and will have recent memories of the character qualities that were emphasized during childhood.

Such studies of college students are valuable because of their recent memories of the character qualities that were emphasized and the manner in which they were learned. The recency of such memories and experiences in addition to the increasing maturity which the college student possesses suggests that the college student may have valuable ideas concerning: (a) the most important values involved in positive character development, (b) those values which parents most and least

effectively help their children learn, and (c) the most effective manner in which such values are learned.

Definition of Character as Used in This Study

The concept of character has been defined in various ways and some of these definitions will be presented in the next chapter. Underlying many of the major definitions of character is the implication that character is composed of values or inner confictions which are often considered important to fulfilling human living and which serve to guide behavior (Havighurst and Taba, 1949; Riesman, 1961).

For the purpose of this study, character is defined as an individual's set of values (values here refer to personal qualities considered by the individual as desirable and worthy) which serve to guide his behavior.

Purposes

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of college students concerning the values involved in positive character development.

The specific purposes of this study were:

1. To develop a list of values (The Positive Character Values List) most often considered to promote positive character development and fulfilling human living.

2. To determine the perceptions of college students concerning:

    (a) the five values believed to be most important for parents to assist their children in learning in order to promote positive character development, (b) the three values which parents are

most successful in helping their children learn, (c) the three
values which parents most often fail to help their children learn,
(d) the source of greatest parental influence on the character
development of children, (e) the source of greatest community in-
fluence on the character development of children, (f) the most
effective manner in which the values involved in character develop-
ment are learned, and (g) the manner in which parents most often
help children learn values involved in character development.

3. To determine if perceptions concerning the source of greatest in-
fluence on the character development of children is significantly
related to: (a) sex, (b) age, (c) employment status of mother,
(d) residence, (e) socio-economic status, (f) marital status of
parents, and (g) happiness of childhood relationships with parents.

4. To determine if perceptions concerning the most effective manner
in which the values involved in character development are learned
are significantly related to: (a) sex, (b) age, (c) residence,
(d) exposure to a family relations course, (e) prevailing type of
discipline in family of orientation, and (f) happiness of child-
hood relationship with parents.

5. To determine if perceptions concerning the manner in which parents
most often help children learn values involved in character
development are significantly related to: (a) sex, (b) age, (c)
residence, (d) employment status of mother, (e) socio-economic
status, (f) prevailing type of discipline in family of orientation,
and (g) happiness of childhood relationship with parents.

CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE

The review of literature indicates that while much has been written about character, the actual research is very limited. The following review of literature is organized into the following categories: (a) character definitions, (b) development of character, (c) family and parental influences on character development, (d) discipline and character development, (e) peer group and character development, and (f) community influences on character development.

Definitions of Character

The formation and inculcation of attitudes and values that form character, constitute a critical dimension in a child's development and are closely related to other aspects of development such as personality, intellectual and physical development, and social behaviors (Yarrow, 1960).

In studying this aspect of child development, one runs into the difficulty of defining the word "character." The attitudes and values that comprise character appear under many names and in a variety of research contexts.

According to Havighurst and Taba (1949) thirty-four representative adults in a midwestern community were asked what they understood character to mean. Their answers were very different. One said that

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character is reliability, be it good or bad. Another said, "Character is what you really are." Another said that character is the person's "inner convictions." Still another definition was, "Character is how you act when you believe yourself to be unobserved." Last of all, another definition stated, "Character is a man's attitude toward God and man."

Though Havighurst and Taba note that character is often that part of personality which is most subject to social approval, they conclude that character can be best studied when viewed as a composite of moral traits. As a result of their research, five traits were selected as representative of the traits that compose moral character: (a) honesty, (b) responsibility, (c) loyalty, (d) moral courage, and (e) friendliness.

Bronfenbrenner and Ricciuti (1960) in their study of personality characteristics define character as a tendency toward behavior associated with a particular person under a given set of conditions—character refers to a disposition to act in a certain manner.

Character has often been associated with the concept of "morals" and Aronfreed (1961) defines morals as action in accordance with a person's values. Morality, according to Talbot (1968, p. 230) "...consists of a system of rules, and the essence of all morality is to be sought for in the respect which the individual acquires for these rules."

Finally, Dinkmeyer (1965) states that character is not identical with ethical or moral behavior, but rather, that ethical and moral behavior are part of character. Ethical behavior is defined as a willingness to defend the principle in which one believes. Morality only implies the individuals' willingness to conform to the existing standards of a group in a specific situation. Character is a more

exclusive term, indicating the choices the individual makes when his actions affect the welfare of others.

Francis (1962) notes that character is the result of the techniques the individual learns and habitually uses to satisfy his own needs. Character, according to Riesman (1961, p. 4) is the "more or less permanent socially and historically conditioned organization of an individual's drives and satisfaction—the kind of 'set' with which he approaches the world and people." Thomas and Znaniecki (1958) refer to character as a set of organized and fixed groups of attitudes influenced by social forces.

The review of the literature indicates that values constitute a basic component of the concept of character. Gabriel (1968, p. 62) defines values by stating:

> Values are means, among others, by which behavior is regulated when several choices or courses of action are available to a person. Values imply more than just choice, they imply that certain standards have been accepted by an individual...are an integral part of the self-regarding sentiment.

Character, according to Yarrow (1960) is composed of values and attitudes that are concepts concerning the individual's orientation toward aspects of his personal and impersonal environment and toward himself. Yarrow further states, "The core characteristics of these concepts are then an involvement in the object, and a potential effect on the behavior relating to the objects" (p. 647). Yarrow also notes that values are not concrete goals of action, but rather the criteria by which goals are chosen.

In summary, character has been defined by educators and researchers in terms of the individuals' conscience and values which seem to guide one's relationship with others.

Development of Character

The child at birth has no conscience and no scales of values. The principal values for him are food and warmth. Gradually, the child learns values and is taught to distinguish between what his culture defines as "good" and what is "bad." Havighurst (1965) lists the development of a conscience, of morality and scales of values as a developmental task of the middle childhood years.

Most of our theoretical knowledge about character development is derived from the works of Freud and Piaget. Freud's psychoanalytic theory is concerned with the emotional and motivational aspects of the personality structure. His research has provided the main pattern for most of the recent research on the role of parental practices in shaping the child's character. The main point of his theory is that sometime in early childhood the individual begins to model his behavior after that of his parents and through this process of identification the codes of conduct such as moral standards become a part of the child's own set of standards (Hoffman, 1963).

Piaget (1932) focused on the cognitive aspects of character development. He believes that character development is the result of four stages: (a) nonrecognition of rules, (b) recognition of rules as absolute and morally correct, as given by authority, (c) recognition of the conventional, arbitrary character of rules, and (d) manipulation of and recognition of the changeability of rules.

Havighurst and Taba (1949) state that character is learned through: (a) reward and punishment, (b) conscious and unconscious imitation, and (c) reflective thinking.

Carmichael (1954) has suggested that the child learns character

responses in the following ways: (a) in accordance with the principles of goal seeking, (b) by experiencing satisfaction in connection with those responses which are ethically and socially acceptable and annoyances with those that are undesirable.

Peck and Havighurst (1960) suggest that character involves several different levels of development. They define a set of character traits that are representative of successive stages in the psychosocial development of the individual:

Character Type	Developmental Period
1. Amoral	1. Infancy
2. Expedient	2. Early Childhood
3. Conforming	3. Later Childhood
4. Rational-Altruistic	4. Adolescence and Adulthood

These traits were intended to be defined and labeled in terms of the control system the individuals use to adapt their search for satisfaction to the requirements of the social world and also to represent both operational patterns of behavior and the stages in psychosocial development to which each pattern presumable is most appropriate.

Most of the moral rules which the child learns to respect are learned from adults. This means that he receives them after they have been fully established, and most often established not in relation to the child or as they are needed by the child. Instead, the child receives moral rules through an uninterrupted succession of earlier adult generations (Talbot, 1968).

As Dinkmeyer (1965) states, the child identifies with those around him, especially his parents, imitating their language, behavior, and character. The basis of character is usually found in the punishing

acts of the parents combined with the love and reward for the child and the child's love and dependence upon his parents. Through the process of identification and role taking, the child develops within himself the warning and the punishing voice of the conscience. From this time forward he carries with him a moral controlling force wherever he goes (Havighurst, 1965).

Havighurst notes that scales of values develop slowly during the middle childhood years, but usually by the age of twelve the child is expected to be something more stable than a creature who is dominated at every moment by urgent, but temporary, whims.

Sears, Rau, and Alpert (1965) in a study of the developing conscience found that the child who is highly resistant to temptation is usually a child low in aggression tendencies, low in the immature and passive forms of dependency and well along the road toward maturity. Their theory of anaclitic identification (the way in which very young children of either sex responds to the pain produced by the nurturant mothers' gradual withdrawal of love and intimacy as the child matures) suggests that significant relationships exist between resistance to temptation and four types of parental behavior: (a) high demands, (b) nurturance, (c) love oriented discipline, and (d) the use of models and labels. They found negative behavior to be related to low demands and restrictions. The need for reassurance by the child was found to be highly correlated with high demands.

The child's empathy and concern for others emerges gradually with maturity. Children first learn to think of others by being taught how to behave in clear-cut situations. Next, the child realizes the degree to which his parents are considerate of others. At the same time, he

can discover that there are times when it is important to consider his own needs first. Then children can and will learn how to say no-- politely (Chess, Thomas, and Birch, 1965; Sears, Rau, and Alpert, 1965).

Language functions in character development as the means by which the child evaluates his actions. Parents and other adults as well as siblings influence the child enormously in helping him to use language in organizing his mental processes and his behavior. Guilt, according to Smart and Smart (1967) begins with the verbal stage, "I shouldn't have done that." The second stage is an autonomic-visceral reaction of fear or anxiety triggered by the first stage. Next, to end the unpleasant autonomic-visceral reaction of fear and anxiety, the child must change the situation which caused his guilt. If the child has learned that an apology will remove the guilt--then he will apologize. The child may also learn that some physical form of action on the part of the parent will relieve the situation and thus relieve the child's anxiety. The child may also learn that the situation cannot be changed and that he will have to bear a burden of guilt indefinitely. All of these have a definite effect upon the character development of the child and these effects are felt throughout childhood.

Kohlberg's (1958, 1970) theory of character development includes three levels and six stages of moral development, and is a hierarchial ordered sequence model. The premoral level has two stages: (a) stage one is punishment and obedience orientation, and (b) stage two is naive instrumental hedonism. The moral level of conventional rule conformity has two stages: (c) stage three is good-boy and good-girl orientation, and (d) stage four is authority maintaining morality. Finally, the level where morality is based on self-acceptance principles

has two stages: (e) stage five is morality of contract (the individual contracts with himself how he will behave), and (f) stage six is morality of individual principles of conscience (the principles that he has contracted with himself have been internalized and made a part of the individual).

Smart and Smart (1967) note that we are agents of our own character development. The unique life styles of each individual encompasses a unique pattern of abilities, habits, interests, values and concepts, on the basis of the particular life style. Each individual makes many decisions about the utilization of his hereditary, environmental, and cultural factors. Although each individual plays a part in determining his own values and attitudes, other factors play a part in the acquisition of the attitudes and values involved in character development such as family and parents, peers, and other environmental factors. These influences will be discussed in the following sections.

Family and Parental Influences on Character Development

Children of today are growing up in families that are very different from those of fifty years ago. Urbanization has reduced the extended family to a nuclear family composed of two adults and from two to three children. The nuclear family in the United States is the initial social matrix within which the character of the child is rooted and nourished. The nuclear family insures continuity of child care and the primacy of certain relationships above all others. The American child develops his morality largely through his family living experiences. The parents teach the child directly and indirectly what is right and what is wrong. The family pushes the child toward what is considered

good by the culture in which he grows and pulls him away from that which is considered bad. The family upholds its ideals for the child to see and also exerts an influence on the child's character development which the family members are often not aware of and could not control if they were (Bronfenbrenner, 1967; Smart and Smart, 1967).

Although the family has the primary legal and moral responsibility for the development of character in the child, the power or the opportunity to do the job is often lacking in the home, primarily because many parents and children no longer spend enough time together in those situations in which such character training can take place (Bronfenbrenner, 1967; Whiting and Whiting, 1960).

The order of birth can be an important factor in the character development of the child. For example, the first born is more likely to continue to be the child whom parents expect to behave most responsibly. The first born is also the child to whom parents are most likely to direct their commentaries on performance, the one at whose level conversation is pitched by the parent, and often the one that is held as a model for later born siblings (Bossard and Boll, 1956; Koch, 1954). Dittes and Capra (1962) and Zembardo and Formica (1963) also suggest that the first born, confronted by powerful adults, learns to conceal his aggressive tendencies while the later born, less confronted by adults and having a close sibling with whom to identify as well as contend, can more easily express his aggressions. Parents tend to become more permissive with later born children and may also suppress the older child while encouraging the younger child to "stand up for his rights."

Peck and Havighurst (1960) found that the personality character-

istics of the adolescents were significantly related to the emotional
relationships and the disciplinary patterns which they experienced in
the family. The evidence from Peck and Havighurst's findings indicates
that character is strongly, probably predominantly, shaped by family
experiences. They also found that different children of the same
parents do not necessarily have the same kind of relationship or
emotional experiences. One child's experiences with his parents may
be very different from that of other siblings. The family is a very
different world for each child in the family and often times the dif-
ferences are so subtle, or unconscious on the part of the family
members, that only a trained person could see the situation in an ob-
jective light. These differences make family life different for children
of the same family. Consequent differences in parental attitudes and
behavior patterns toward different children can account for noticeable
differences in the character of the children.

The objective structural characteristics of the family and its
interpersonal processes help to shape the unique nature of the child's
character and his attitudes toward the world. The values and attitudes
in the home contribute significantly to the child's functioning. Peck
and Havighurst (1960) found children's friendliness and spontaneity
to be linked with a lenient, democratic atmosphere in the home. They
concluded that the adolescent's social and moral adjustment to age
mates was a reflection of the values and attitudes that were prevalent
in the home.

In our society, we find great differences in parental attitudes
toward child-rearing practices. Lower-class mothers permit behavior
and attitudes which a middle-class mother would not tolerate. Chilman

(1965) reports that in the lower-class, the main objective of the parent and the child is to keep out of trouble. There is a lack of goal commitment, impulsive gratification, fatalism, lack of belief in long-range success, and limited verbal communication. This is contrasted with the middle-class in which there is a commitment to the development of the child from infancy to maturity. The middle-class also stresses the perceived worth of the goal of a happy and successful child. Children from various social classes exhibit differences in personality and character that can be related to the variations in the methods of child-rearing techniques (Dinkmeyer, 1965).

Research among the lower socio-economic class families indicates that parents show less concern about children's activities outside the home and thus tend to exert less direct influence on the child's character and on his peer group contacts than do upper socio-economic class parents (Cambell, 1964).

Bronfenbrenner (1967) did research on a sample of American adolescents from middle-class families. He found that children who reported their parents to be away from home for long periods of time rated significantly lower on such items as responsibility and leadership. He found that the absence of the father was more critical than that of the mother, particularly for the boys. He also found that father absence contributed to a low motivation for achievement, inability to defer immediate gratification, low self-esteem, and susceptibility to group influences and juvenile delinquency.

Many research studies have been done in the last ten years investigating the relationship between the kind of parents children have and the nature of their moral development. Most of the studies found that

when parents were warm and affectionate and reasonable the child develops what is referred to as moral realtivism. When the parents are stern, cold authoritarians, and the child is primarily motivated by fear of losing parental approval, the child develops a concept of morality that is referred to as moral realism (he realizes that his relationship with his parents is based upon his own behavior). When parents are cold, hostile and punitive and the child is motivated by the fear of physical punishment the primary morality the child acquires is that of restraint through fear of severe physical punishment (Gabriel, 1968; Johnson, 1962).

In a sixteen year longitudinal study of character development, Peck and Havighurst (1960) found more of the children's personal and moral traits correlated significantly with the children's attitudes toward their mother, and to a higher degree, than was true of their attitudes toward their father. From the results of this study they concluded that the mother has more of a profound and influential effect on character development than does the father. However, they found that for both sexes, moral values could be learned just as well from either parent. The quality of the child's morality depended on the moral qualities of the parent whom he took for his model. In the majority of the families studied, both parents were closely similar in their moral values.

Peck and Havighurst (1960) also pointed out that when fathers and mothers are in agreement, the crucial question becomes one of what kind of morality they should show in their daily treatment of their children. It is probably of secondary importance concerning what kind of morality they exhibit outside the home, insofar as their direct

influence on the child is concerned. It is the way the child is directly treated by his parents which determines for the most part how he will treat other people in life. In short, the child internalizes what he sees his parents doing and acts in the same manner rather than doing what the parents "tell" the child is the right or correct thing to do.

Discipline and Character Development

According to Smart and Smart (1967) parents teach some of the behavior patterns which constitute character by making their demands upon the child clear, consistent, firm and suited to the child's ability. They further state that through the showing of pleasure at good behavior, by giving understandable reasons for demands, and by avoiding the use of physical punishment parents can reinforce the desired character traits in their children.

The parents' presence during infancy is associated with comfort, relief of hurts, and the removal of tensions. The absence or unavailability of the parent means the opposite to the child and has a significant effect upon the development of character at a time when fear of strangers is beginning to emerge. The child quickly learns that certain acts on his part result in withdrawal of the parents and in consequent feelings of anxiety. Facial cues and tones of voice associated with these situations become sufficient enough to induce anxiety over the possibility of parental withdrawal. This is the foundation of love oriented discipline and the child begins to regulate his behaviors so as not to lose the nurturing presence or approval of a loving adult. The indication that loss of approval is imminent comes

comes from the parent first, either verbally or in gestures, and secondly from the child's own language (Smart and Smart, 1967; Dinkmeyer, 1965).

The parents' role in discipline is to help the child develop motives for behavior that are morally acceptable by society. When a child is under pressure from outside forces such as peer group pressure or from some inner desire to violate a moral standard, the child needs help in learning to exercise the controls that are necessary to resist the pressure. Should the child fail to resist the temptation and violate some moral standard, he needs to be able to tell himself that it was wrong and that if possible he should do what is necessary to correct the wrong. He needs to develop this ability to accept responsibility for his actions and to accept it not due to the fear of some form of physical punishment, but rather as a part of his conscious self (Hoffman, 1963).

The frequent use of discipline which attempts to change the child's behavior by inducing internal forces toward compliance with adult standards appears to foster the development of an internalized moral orientation, especially in the child's reaction to his own behavior. The use of coercion or physical punishment that openly confronts the child with the parents' power contributes to a moral orientation that is based on the fear of authority. The child tends to respond as a result of the fear of physical punishment rather than from a sense of moral wrongness or rightness (Smart and Smart, 1967).

Peck and Havighurst (1960) found that a lack of discipline in the sense of inconsistent parental control was associated with poor character development in children (the children were unable to act respon-

sibly in regard to their own actions and had no definite values of right and wrong). They found severe, autocratic discipline, consistently applied, to produce children who "toe the mark," but in a blind, unthinking way. These children were generally more hostile than friendly toward people even if they did not act in an openly antagonistic manner.

In contrast to this, Peck and Havighurst found that parental control that was consistent, moderate, trustful toward the child, and that allowed the child freedom to make decisions was associated with mature, genuinely self-disciplined moral behavior in children.

Peer Group and Character Development

The child is a member of two worlds, the world of adults and the world of his peers. Experiences in each of these worlds are crucial aspects of the child's life and are significant in the development of the child's character.

The peer group's role is a highly significant one. It is: (a) a determinant of acceptance and stability in social relations, (b) a contributing factor to the developing self-concept, and (c) one of the factors operating to form the child's attitudes and values concerning the world about him (Cambell, 1964).

In the United States the peer group is often an autonomous agent relatively free from adult control and is usually uncommitted—if not directly opposed to the values and codes of conduct approved by society at large (Bronfenbrenner, 1967). The peer group builds moral character within its group by giving rewards and punishments to its members on the basis of their behavior. The susceptibility of the child to group

influences leads one to the question of the influence that this has on the development of the child's character.

Peck and Havighurst (1960) report that the peer group is a laboratory for the learning of moral behavior, and is the first social group which the child meets outside of his family. Contact with the peer group tends to condition the child's attitudes and behavior in other social groups. If the child enjoys the peer group, he will be likely to approach other groups with the expectation of liking and enjoying them. Loyalty to a nation, to a community or to a profession is probably dependent upon the ability to be loyal to a small group such as an intimate group of friends.

Community Influences on Character Development

Research shows that the most significant influence on character appears to come from the home. However, schools and community agencies, as represented in the values of the people who hold social power, are also influential on character development. The child observes closely to see the parent's and the teacher's reactions to the faulty value systems of people within the community. The child also notes their responses to the individual who values such things as money more than correct judgment, or who seeks material things more than human values. The parent or teacher who either actively accepts or fails to oppose faulty values teaches a more significant lesson than through what they may have to say to the child (Dinkmeyer, 1965).

Havighurst (1965) reports that the school influences the child's conscience and morality through: (a) its teachings about morality, (b) the teachers' punishments and rewards, (c) the teachers' examples,

and (d) the child's experiences with the peer group in the school setting.

In studying the influence of school on character development, Peck and Havighurst (1960) found that there was a significant correlation between good grades and moral character; however, they did not find it to be a cause and effect relationship. Children of good moral character may do well in school because it is not uncommon for teachers, unconsciously or consciously, to reward good behavior with good grades and to punish those with undesirable behavior with poor grades. They found those with poor moral character to exhibit the qualities of instability, antagonism to social systems, and an inability to concentrate or to assimilate knowledge rationally.

The research of Kagan and Moss (1962) shows that considerable continuity between childhood and adult behavior is evident during the first four years of school. They state:

> The poorer predictive power of behavior during the preschool years suggests that developments during the age period of 6-10 induce important changes in the child's behavior orientation. The primary events of this period induce: (a) identification with parents and the concomitant attempt to adopt the values and overt responses of parents; (b) the realization that mastery of intellective skills is both a cultural requirement as well as a source of satisfaction; and (c) the encounter with the peer group. The later experiences force the child to accomodate to some degree to the values and evaluations made by the peer group (p. 193).

In studying the relationship between church experiences and character development, Peck and Havighurst (1960) found that while no one single religious denomination stood out as closely related to high or low character development, it was true that the children who ranked highest on the maturity scales attended church and Sunday school fairly regularly and tended to come from families that were actively

religious.

Summary

1. Underlying many of the definitions of character is the implication that character is composed of values or inner convictions which serve to guide one's behavior and relationships with others.

2. Among the various character development stages the child goes through as he grows from infancy to adolescence and adulthood are: (a) the amoral stage, (b) the expedient stage, (c) the conforming state, and (d) the rational-altruistic stage.

3. The child's character development is strongly, probably predominantly, shaped by parents and family experiences. The limited evidence available also indicates that the mother has more of a profound and influential effect on the child's character development than does the father.

4. Research indicates that lower socio-economic class parents tend to exert less direct influence on the child's character and on his peer group contacts than do upper socio-economic class parents.

5. Lack of discipline or inconsistent parental control is associated with poor character development in children (children who are unable to act responsibly in regard to their own actions and have no definite values of right and wrong). Severe, autocratic discipline consistently applied appears to produce children who conform in a blind, unthinking way. Such children tend to respond more as a result of fear of authority than from an inner sense of moral rightness or wrongness. In contrast, parental control that is characterized by consistency, moderation, and trustfulness

toward the child, and which allows the child freedom to make decisions is associated with mature, genuinely self-disciplined moral behavior in children.

6. The peer group is a laboratory for the learning of moral behavior and is the first social group which the child meets outside of his family. The peer group builds moral character within its group by giving rewards and punishments to its members on the basis of their behavior.

7. Children who rank highest on character maturity scales attend church and Sunday school regularly and come from families that are religiously active. There is also evidence of a significant correlation between good school grades and positive moral character.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Selection of Subjects

The subjects for this study were 237 college students who were
enrolled in the undergraduate course, Marriage 3142, at Oklahoma State
University in the spring semester of 1969. The various colleges and
departments of Oklahoma State University are represented in this
course offered by the Department of Family Relations and Child Develop-
ment. The sample was obtained by the use of a self-administered
questionnaire. The students were primarily single, Protestant, and
between the ages of 18 and 24. The students ranged in classification
from freshman to graduate student.

Instrument

The questionnaire used in this study was developed primarily to
examine the attitudes of college students concerning values that are
important in promoting positive character development in individuals.

The first part of the questionnaire was designed to obtain back-
ground information about each subject such as: (a) sex, (b) age, (c)
college classification, (d) race, (e) employment status of mother for
major part of childhood, (f) religious preference, (g) residence, (h)
siblings, (i) sibling position, (j) marital status of subject, (k)
marital status of parents, (l) exposure to a family relations course,

(m) prevailing type of discipline in family of orientation, (n) happiness of childhood relationships with parents, and (o) socio-economic status.

The socio-economic class of each subject was determined by the McGuire-White Social Class Index (1955).

The Positive Character Values (PCV) List was developed by the investigator in order to obtain a list of values most often considered to promote positive character development and fulfilling human living. The PCV List was developed as a result of reviewing the literature on character and as a result of the judgments of a panel of eight family life specialists. Specifically, the list of values are, in part, based upon research conducted by Havighurst and Taba (1949) and upon the list of values presented by Ackerman (1958).

As an index of validity, the values listed in the PCV List were determined by submitting the list to a panel of eight family life specialists in order to determine the degree of agreement among the judges concerning the importance of the listed values as components of positive character development. The judges were also asked to add any important values which they felt had been omitted. The percentage of agreement among the judges concerning the list of values was 100 per cent and the final list of sixteen values which compose the PCV List are as follows:

1. Determination and perseverance

2. Self-reliance

3. Seeing each person as having dignity and worth

4. Moral courage (courage to stand by one's inner convictions)

5. Spiritual development

6. Cooperation

7. Honesty and integrity

8. Loyalty

9. Self-discipline

10. Feeling of genuine concern and responsibility toward others

11. Initiative

12. Intellectual inquisitiveness

13. Responsibility in performing tasks

14. Self-respect

15. Friendliness

16. Appreciation

Administration of the Instrument

The subjects were first asked to fill out a background information sheet and then they were asked to choose the values they felt to be the most important ones for parents to help children learn. The subjects were also asked to choose the three values parents were most successful in teaching and the three values parents most often failed to help children learn. The subjects were then asked to choose the greatest parental influence on character development, the greatest community influence on character development, and the manner in which values were most frequently learned.

Analysis of Data

Percentages and frequencies of perceptions of college students concerning the following were presented:

(a) five values believed to be most important for parents to assist

their children in learning in order to promote positive

character development

(b)   three values which parents are most successful in helping their

children learn

(c)   three values which parents most often fail to help their children

learn

(d)   the source of greatest parental influence

(e)   the source of greatest community influence on the development

of character of children

(f)   the most effective manner in which the values involved in character

development are learned

(g)   the manner in which parents most often help children learn values

involved in positive character development.

The Chi-square test was used to examine the following null

hypotheses:

1.   There is no significant difference in perceptions concerning the

source of greatest parental influence on the character develop-

ment of children when respondents are classified according to:

(a) sex, (b) age, (c) employment status of mother, (d) residence,

(e) socio-economic class, (f) marital status of parents, and (g)

happiness of childhood relationships with parents.

2.   There is no significant difference in perceptions concerning the

source of greatest community influence on the character develop-

ment of children when respondents are classified according to:

(a) sex, (b) age, (c) employment status of mother, (d) residence,

(e) socio-economic class, (f) marital status of parents, and (g)

happiness of childhood relationships with parents.

3. There is no significant difference in perceptions concerning the most effective manner in which the values involved in character development are learned when respondents are classified according to: (a) sex, (b) age, (c) residence, (d) exposure to a family relations course, (e) prevailing type of discipline in family of orientation, and (f) happiness of childhood relationships with parents.

4. There is no significant difference in perceptions concerning the manner in which parents most often help children learn values involved in character development when respondents are classified according to: (a) age, (b) sex, (c) residence, (d) employment status of mother, (e) socio-economic status, (f) prevailing type of discipline in family of orientation, and (g) happiness of childhood relationship with parents.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Description of the Subjects

A detailed description of the 237 subjects who participated in
this study is presented in Table I. The sample consisted of 45.1 per
cent males and 54.9 per cent females. Their ages ranged from 17 to
25 years with the greatest percentage (47.9%) in the age group of 19-
20 years of age. Ninety-seven per cent of the sample was white. The
largest percentage of the subjects (35.0%) were college seniors. Most
of the subjects (63.7%) reported that their mothers did not work.
Eighty-six per cent of the sample was Protestant. Most of the sub-
jects had lived the most part of their lives on a farm (20.7%) or in
a small town (24.1%). The largest percentage of the subjects (92.3%)
reported having brothers and sisters. The largest proportion (40.4%)
of the subjects were the eldest child in the family and eighty-nine
per cent of the subjects were single. The highest proportion of the
respondents (83.5%) reported their parents to be living together.
Most of the respondents were classified as upper middle class (40.4%)
and lower middle class (41.3%) as measured by McGuire White Index of
Socio-economic Status (1955).

Analysis of Perceptions

Selected perceptions concerning character development and values

TABLE I

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUBJECTS

Variable	Classification	No.	%
Sex	Male	107	45.1
	Female	130	54.9
Age	17-18	15	6.3
	19-20	114	47.9
	21-22	100	42.1
	23-24	4	1.6
	25 and over	4	1.6
College Classification	Freshman	31	13.1
	Sophomore	66	27.8
	Junior	56	23.6
	Senior	83	35.0
	Graduate	1	.4
Race	White	229	97.0
	Negro	5	2.1
	Indian	1	.4
	Other	1	.4
Mother Employed	Not Employed	151	63.7
	Part Time	17	7.2
	Full Time	69	29.1
Religious Preference	Catholic	19	8.1
	Protestant	203	86.0
	Jewish	1	.4
	Mormon	1	.4
	None	9	3.8
	Other	3	1.3
Residence	Farm	49	20.7
	Under 25,000	57	24.1
	25,000 - 50,000	42	17.7
	50,000 - 100,000	21	8.9
	100,000 (over)	68	28.7
Brothers or Sisters	Yes	217	92.3
	No	18	7.7
Ordinal Position	Oldest Child	95	40.4
	Intermediate Child	53	24.2
	Youngest Child	71	32.4
Marital Status (Subjects)	Single	211	89.0
	Married	26	11.0

TABLE I (CONTINUED)

Variable	Classification	No.	%
Parents' Marital Status	Living Together	198	83.5
	Separated or Divorced	8	3.4
	One Parent Deceased (No Remarriage)	16	6.8
	Divorced (Remarriage)	9	3.8
	One Parent Deceased (With Remarriage)	6	2.5
Socio-Economic Status	Upper	11	4.7
	Upper Middle	95	40.4
	Lower Middle	97	41.3
	Upper Lower	29	12.3
	Lower Lower	3	1.3

important to the development of positive character development were examined both according to total group responses and according to sex. Examined were perceptions concerning: (a) the values perceived to be most important for parents to assist their children in learning in order to promote positive character development, (b) the values parents are most successful in helping their children learn, (c) the values parents most often fail to help their children learn, (d) the source of greatest parental influence on the child's character development, (e) the source of greatest community influence on the child's character development, (f) the most effective manner by which values are learned, and (g) the manner in which parents most often help children learn the values involved in positive character development.

Perceptions of the Most Important Values for Parents

to Assist Children in Learning in Order to Promote

Positive Character Development

As is shown in Table II, the five values which had the highest rate of selection as values most important for parents to assist children in learning are as follows: honesty and integrity (15.4%), spiritual development (11.4%), seeing each other as having dignity and worth (8.9%), self-respect (8.5%), and moral courage (8.2%). These results coincide with those of Peck and Havighurst (1960) who found that honesty, loyalty and moral courage were commonly considered to be basic components of character.

The infrequent selection of loyalty, cooperation and friendliness as important values to help the child learn was not anticipated in view of the emphasis that is placed upon these values by teachers,

TABLE II

PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE MOST IMPORTANT VALUES FOR PARENTS
TO ASSIST THEIR CHILDREN IN LEARNING IN ORDER TO
PROMOTE POSITIVE CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Perceptions of Most Important Values	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Honesty and Integrity	77	14.6	104	16.0	174	15.4
Spiritual Development	54	10.2	77	11.9	129	11.4
Seeing Each Person as Having Dignity and Worth	36	6.8	70	10.8	100	8.9
Self-Respect	42	7.9	61	9.4	96	8.5
Moral Courage	37	7.0	60	9.3	92	8.2
Self-Discipline	45	8.5	40	6.2	81	7.2
Genuine Concern and Responsibility Toward Others	29	5.5	50	7.7	76	6.7
Self-Reliance	40	7.6	29	4.5	67	5.9
Determination	38	7.2	21	3.2	56	5.0
Friendliness	27	5.1	28	4.3	53	4.7
Responsibility in Performing Tasks	27	5.1	27	4.2	52	4.6
Initiative	37	7.0	14	2.2	49	4.3
Intellectual Inquisitiveness	14	2.6	34	5.2	46	4.1
Appreciation	15	2.8	17	2.6	29	2.6
Loyalty	7	1.3	7	1.1	14	1.2
Cooperation	4	.8	9	1.4	13	1.2

parents, and theologians.

Perception of Values Which Parents are Most
Successful in Helping Children Learn

As is shown in Table III, honesty and integrity (11.4%), friendliness (10.0%), and self-reliance (9.3%) were the values most frequently selected by the subjects as being the ones parents are most successful in helping their children learn.

Perhaps one reason for the frequent selection of friendliness is the fact that our society places much emphasis upon having friends and being accepted by the peer group. It is the child who has many friends, makes friends easily, and who displays leadership qualities that is the most popular child (Cambell, 1964).

The frequent selection of self-reliance as a value parents are successful in helping children learn may be due, in part, to the influence that the mass media has had upon parents. Child development specialists have stressed the importance of the development of this value in their books in childrearing and in popular magazine articles.

It is interesting to note that the value, loyalty, received such a low frequency of choice. This may indicate that the value of loyalty is being emphasized by society less today than in the past.

Perception of Values Which Parents Most Often
Fail to Help Children Learn

As illustrated in Table IV, spiritual development (13.2%), genuine concern for and responsibility for others (10.4%), and moral courage (9.9%) were the values selected most frequently by the subjects as the

TABLE III

PERCEPTIONS OF VALUES PARENTS ARE MOST SUCCESSFUL
IN HELPING THEIR CHILDREN LEARN

Perceptions of Values Parents are Most Successful With	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Honesty and Integrity	41	13.4	38	9.9	79	11.4
Friendliness	28	9.2	41	10.7	69	10.0
Self-Reliance	31	10.1	33	8.6	64	9.3
Responsibility in Performing Tasks	18	5.9	33	8.6	51	7.4
Cooperation	18	5.9	32	8.3	50	7.2
Spiritual Development	21	6.9	28	7.3	49	7.1
Initiative	20	6.5	23	6.0	43	6.2
Intellectual Inquisitiveness	20	6.5	22	5.7	42	6.1
Self-Respect	19	6.2	17	4.4	36	5.2
Self-Discipline	16	5.2	20	5.2	36	5.2
Determination and Perserverance	14	4.6	21	5.5	35	5.1
Moral Courage	8	2.6	26	6.8	34	4.9
Seeing Each Person as Having Dignity and Worth	14	4.6	18	4.7	32	4.6
Loyalty	17	5.6	13	3.4	30	4.3
Genuine Concern and Responsibility Toward Others	14	4.6	11	2.9	25	3.6
Appreciation	7	2.3	8	2.1	15	2.2

TABLE IV

PERCEPTIONS OF THE VALUES PARENTS MOST OFTEN
FAIL TO HELP CHILDREN LEARN

Perceptions of Values Parents Most Often Fail With	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Spiritual Development	40	12.8	52	13.6	92	13.2
Genuine Concern and Responsibility for Others	27	8.7	45	11.7	72	10.4
Moral Courage	29	9.3	40	10.4	69	9.9
Self-Discipline	28	9.0	36	9.4	64	9.2
Seeing Each as Having Dignity and Worth	27	8.7	34	8.9	61	8.8
Self-Reliance	21	6.7	32	8.4	53	7.6
Honesty and Integrity	21	6.7	26	6.8	47	6.8
Appreciation	17	5.4	26	6.8	43	6.2
Initiative	17	5.4	22	5.7	39	5.6
Intellectual Inquisitiveness	17	5.4	18	4.7	35	5.0
Determination and Perserverance	17	5.4	14	3.7	31	4.5
Responsibility in Performing Tasks	16	5.1	13	3.4	29	4.2
Self-Respect	11	3.5	10	2.6	21	3.0
Cooperation	8	2.6	8	2.1	16	2.3
Loyalty	10	3.2	5	1.3	15	2.2
Friendliness	6	1.9	2	.5	8	1.2

values that parents most often fail to help children learn. As can be seen by examining Table IV, the responses of both the male and the female subjects tended to follow the same pattern.

The finding that spiritual development was most frequently selected as the value which parents were least successful in helping children learn is related to the results of a study reported by Bienvenu (1969) in which over 2000 adolescents were asked the question "What would you like most to have changed in your home life?" It was found that one of the three most frequently given answers was "more religion" in the home. The fact that organized religion does not have as active a role in the family of today as in the past may be partially responsible for the finding that spiritual development was most often selected as the value parents were least successful in helping children learn.

The frequent selection of genuine concern and responsibility as a value parents often fail to help children learn may be related to a study by Leichty (1963) which found that the goals of American children are more selfish and materialistic than those of Vietnamese children. Leichty's study also indicated that American children feel much less sense of obligation to, and responsibility for, their families than do Vietnamese children. As Walters and Stinnett (1971) have suggested, Leichty's results raise the question as to whether our society has stressed autonomy and independence in children, as well as separatism from adults to the extent that such emphasis has contributed to a tendency toward a self-centered orientation among children concerning inter-personal relationships. Such a self-centered orientation could, in turn, serve to de-emphasize the value of genuine concern and responsibility for others.

Perceptions of Source of Greatest Community

Influence on Character Development

The family (Table V) was selected by the majority of the respond-
ents (66.1%) as the community influence that has the greatest influence
on the child's character development. This finding coincides with the
reports of Peck and Havighurst (1960) and Smart and Smart (1967). It
is in the family that the child first encounters the experiences that
shape character and the parents are usually the first to establish
rules and codes of conduct for the child to follow. It is interesting
to note that a greater proportion of female subjects (38.6%) than male
subjects (27.5%) mentioned family as the greatest influence.

The peer group (23.6%) was also selected frequently as having the
greatest influence on the character development of the child. This
finding reflects the point made by Peck and Havighurst (1960) that the
peer group is the laboratory for the learning of moral behavior and is
the first social group which the child encounters outside of his family.
Also, Bronfenbrenner (1967) reports that, in general, there is a
turning point at about the seventh grade in which children tend to
turn from parents to peers for character development influences.

As can be seen by examining Table V, the church (0.9%) was the
community influence receiving the least frequent selection by the sub-
jects. This finding would appear to be related to the previously
stated finding that spiritual development was most often selected as
the value parents most frequently fail to help children learn, and
to the suggestion that this finding might be due to the decreasing
role of organized religion in the family of today.

TABLE V

PERCEPTIONS OF GREATEST COMMUNITY INFLUENCE ON CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Perceptions of Greatest Community Influence	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
School	15	14.4	7	5.4	22	9.4
Church	0	0.0	2	1.7	2	.9
Family	64	60.9	90	70.3	154	66.1
Peers	26	24.7	29	22.6	55	23.6

Perception of Source of Greatest Parental Influence

on the Character Development of Children

As can be seen by examining Table VI, the majority of the sub-jects (77.0%) reported the mother to be the source of greatest influence on the character development of children. This finding coincides with the conclusions of Peck and Havighurst (1960) on the basis of their sixteen year longitudinal study of character development. They found the mother to have a more profound and influential effect on character development than does the father.

Fathers may not have been selected as often because they are away from the home more frequently than the mother, especially if the mother does not work outside of the home. Some professions require that the father travel, or, as in the military service, to be away from home for extended periods of time, leaving the mother with much greater responsi-bility for rearing the children.

TABLE VI

PERCEPTION OF THE SOURCE OF GREATEST PARENTAL
INFLUENCE ON CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Parental Influence	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Mother	67	65.7	104	86.7	171	77.0
Father	35	34.3	16	13.3	51	23.0

Perception of the Most Effective Manner by Which Values

Involved in Character Development are Learned

As can be seen in Table VII, example and model (40.3%) was selected most frequently as the manner in which values involved in character development are learned. This supports the work done by Talbot (1968) who found that the child learned most of his behavior characteristics and values by observing the examples set for him by adults and by modeling his behavior after these examples.

Reward and punishment was also frequently selected (28.3%) as the most effective way in which values involved in character development are learned. Dinkmeyer's research (1965) indicated the basis of character was found in the punishing acts of parents combined with the love and reward for the child and in the child's love and dependence upon the parents. When a child fears that he will lose the love of his parents by behaving in a certain manner, the child will do what he can to prevent this if he values the love of the parent. In this manner values are learned through fear rather than through the process of understanding the importance of the values.

TABLE VII

PERCEPTIONS OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE MANNER BY WHICH VALUES
INVOLVED IN CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT ARE LEARNED

Perceptions of Most Effective Manner	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Reward and Punishment	31	29.2	35	27.7	66	28.3
Example and Models	35	33.0	59	46.4	94	40.3
Realizing Consequences of Behavior	34	32.0	29	22.8	63	27.0
Other	6	5.8	4	3.1	10	4.3

Perception of the Manner in Which Parents Most Often Help Children

Learn Values Involved in Character Development

As Table VIII indicates, reward and punishment was selected most
frequently (55.8%) as the manner in which parents most often help
children learn values involved in character development. This may
possibly be due to the fact that reward and punishment has been so
widely emphasized as a basic disciplinary technique.

Examples and models received the second highest frequency of
selection (24.0%) and realizing the consequences of behavior received
18.9 per cent of the response.

TABLE VIII

PERCEPTION OF THE MANNER IN WHICH PARENTS MOST OFTEN HELP
CHILDREN LEARN VALUES INVOLVED IN CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Perception of Manner	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Reward and Punishment	57	53.8	73	57.4	130	55.8
Example and Model	25	23.5	31	24.4	56	24.0
Realizing Consequences of Behavior	23	21.6	21	16.5	44	18.9
Other	1	1.1	2	1.7	3	1.3

Examination of Major Hypotheses

Hypothesis I: There is no significant difference in perceptions con-
cerning the source of greatest parental influence on the character
development of children when respondents were classified according to:
(a) sex, (b) age, (c) employment of mother, (d) residence, (e) socio-
economic class, (f) marital status of parents, and (g) happiness of
childhood relationships with parents.

The chi-square values obtained showed that no significant dif-
ferences existed in the perceptions of the source of greatest parental
influence upon the child's character development when respondents were
classified according to: (a) age, (b) employment status of mother,
(c) residence, (d) socio-economic class, (e) marital status of parents,
and (f) happiness of childhood relationships with parents.

There was a significant difference, however, in the perception of
the source of greatest parental influence when respondents were classi-

fied according to sex. As indicated in Table IX, the chi-square value of 13.7 was significant at the .001 level. The most striking difference was that more than twice as many males (34.3%) as females (13.3%) perceived the father as being the greatest parental influence on the character development of the child. A greater proportion of females (86.7%) than males (65.7%) perceived the mother as the greatest parental influence. These findings appear to be related to the results of Linson (1966) who found that significantly more sons than daughters revealed a high degree of involvement with their fathers rather than with their mothers. It was also reported that significantly more daughters than sons were highly involved with their mothers. It is logical that the child's degree of involvement with each parent would influence his perception concerning which parent had the greatest influence upon his character development.

TABLE IX

CHI-SQUARE VALUES REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS
OF SOURCE OF GREATEST PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON
CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT ACCORDING TO SEX

Parental Influence	Male		Female		x^2	Level of Significance
	No.	%	No.	%		
Mother	67	65.7	104	86.7	13.71	.001
Father	35	34.3	16	13.3		

Hypothesis II: <u>There is no significant difference in perceptions concerning the source of greatest community influence on the character development of children when respondents were classified according to: (a) sex, (b) age, (c) employment status of mother, (d) residence,</u>

(e) socio-economic class, (f) marital status of parents, and (g) happiness of childhood relationships with parents.

This hypothesis was examined by use of the chi-square test. The chi-square values obtained showed no significant difference in the perceptions of the source of greatest community influence upon the child's character development according to the variables examined.

Hypothesis IV: There is no significant difference in perceptions concerning the manner in which parents most often help children learn values involved in positive character development according to: (a) sex, (b) age, (c) residence, (d) employment status of mother, (e) socio-economic class, (f) prevailing type of discipline in family of orientation, and (g) happiness of childhood relationships with parents.

This hypothesis was examined by use of the chi-square test. The chi-square values obtained showed no significant differences in the perceptions of the manner in which parents most often help children learn values involved in character development according to the variables examined.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of
college students concerning values involved in positive character
development.

The sample was composed of 237 students who were enrolled in the
Family Relations and Child Development course, Marriage 3142, at Okla-
homa State University. The subjects were predominantly white, seniors
in college, and most came from farms or towns under 25,000 in population.
The data were obtained during the spring semester of 1969.

The Positive Character Values (PCV) List was developed in order to
obtain a list of values most often considered to promote positive
character development and fulfilling human living. The PCV List was
developed as a result of the review of literature on character and as
a result of the judgment of a panel of eight family life specialists.

A percentage and frequency count was used to analyze the respond-
ent's perceptions concerning: (a) the five values perceived to be most
important for parents to assist children in learning in order to promote
positive character development, (b) the three values parents are most
successful in helping children learn, (c) the three values which parents
most often fail to help children learn, (d) the source of greatest
parental influence on the child's character development, (e) the source
of greatest community influence on the child's character development,

(f) the most effective manner in which values involved in character development are learned, and (g) the manner in which parents most often help children learn values involved in character development.

The chi-square test was used to examine the major hypotheses in the study in order to determine if various perceptions concerning character development were significantly related to certain background factors.

The major findings of the study were:

1. The five values which were selected most often as the most important values for parents to assist their children in learning in order to promote positive character development were: honesty and integrity, spiritual development, seeing each other as having dignity and worth, self-respect, and moral courage.

2. Honesty and integrity, friendliness, and self-reliance were most often selected as the three values parents are most successful in helping children learn.

3. Spiritual development, genuine concern for others, and moral courage were most frequently selected as the three values parents most often fail to help children learn.

4. The mother was selected most frequently as the source of greatest parental influence on the child's character development.

5. The family was selected most frequently as the source of greatest community influence on the child's character development.

6. Model and example was most often selected as the most effective manner by which values involved in character development are learned.

7. Reward and punishment was the most frequently selected manner in

which parents actually help children learn values involved in
character development.

8.   There was a significant difference in perceptions concerning the
source of greatest parental influence on a child's character
development according to sex.

It is recommended that this investigation be duplicated in the
future with a national sample of both high school and college students.
It would be beneficial in such a study to relate perceptions concerning
character development to various childhood and personality variables
as well as the variable of race.

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Oklahoma State University Department of Family Relations and Child
Division of Home Economics Development Research NS/fs 3/17/69

   Your cooperation in this research project is greatly appreciated.
Your contribution in a research project of this type helps us to gain
greater knowledge and insight into family relationships.

   Please check or fill in answers as appropriate to each question.
Since your name is not required, please be as honest in your answers as
possible.

   The blanks at the extreme left of the page are for purposes of
coding. (Do not fill in.)

_____ 1. - 4.

_____ 5. Sex: _____ 1. male

      _____ 2. female

_____ 6. Age: _____ 1. 17-18   _____ 4. 23-24

      _____ 2. 19-20   _____ 5. 25 and over

      _____ 3. 21-22

_____ 7. College Classification

     _____ Freshman   _____ Senior

     _____ Sophomore _____ Graduate Student

     _____ Junior

_____ 8. College Major: _____

_____ 9. Race: _____ 1. White

      _____ 2. Negro

      _____ 3. Indian

      _____ 4. Other

_____ 10. Was your mother employed for the major part of your childhood?

     _____ 1. No   _____ 3. Yes (full-time employment)

     _____ 2. Yes (part-time employment)

_____ 11. Religious preference:

     _____ 1. Catholic

     _____ 2. Protestant _____

     _____ 3. Jewish (Specify)

     _____ 4. Mormon

     _____ 5. None

     _____ 6. Other

_____ 12. For the major part of your life have you lived:

         _____ 1. On farm or in country

         _____ 2. Small town under 25,000 population

         _____ 3. City of 25,000 to 50,000 population

         _____ 4. City of 50,000 to 100,000 population

         _____ 5. Cith of over 100,000 population

_____ 13. Do you have brothers or sisters?

         _____ 1. Yes

         _____ 2. No.

_____ 14. If you have brothers or sisters, are you the

         _____ 1. Oldest child

         _____ 2. Intermediate child

         _____ 3. Youngest child

_____ 15. What is your marital status?

         _____ 1. Single   _____ 4. Separated

         _____ 2. Married   _____ 5. Widowed

         _____ 3. Divorced

_____ 16. What is your parents' marital status?

         _____ 1. Living together

         _____ 2. Separated or divorced (with no remarriage)

         _____ 3. One of parents deceased (with no remarriage)

         _____ 4. Divorced (with remarriage)

         _____ 5. One of parents deceased (with remarriage)

_____ 17. Have you had a previous family relations course in high school or college?

         _____ 1. Yes

         _____ 2. No.

_____ 18. What is the occupation of the head of your family of orientation household (teacher, policeman, etc. _____.

_____ 19. What is the primary source of the above income?

         _____ 1. Inherited savings and investments

         _____ 2. Earned wealth, transferable investment

         _____ 3. Profits, royalties, fees

         _____ 4. Salary, Commissions (regular, monthly, or yearly)

         _____ 5. Hourly wages, weekly checks

         _____ 6. Odd jobs, seasonal work, private charity

_____ 7. Public relief or charity

_____ 20. What is the highest educational attainment of the principal earner of the above income?

       _____ 1. Completed graduate work for a profession

       _____ 2. Graduated from a 4 year college

       _____ 3. Attended college or university for two or more years

       _____ 4. Graduated from high school

       _____ 5. Attended high school, completed grade 9, but did not graduate

       _____ 6. Completed grade 8, but did not attend beyond grade 9

       _____ 7. Less than grade 8

_____ 21.

_____ 22. Circle the point on the scale which most nearly describes the type of discipline you had in your family.

```
1     2     3     4     5     6     7     8     9
|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|

very                                         very
permissive ──────────────────────────────▸ strict
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_____ 23. Which of the following indicates your relationship with your parents during childhood?

       _____ 1. Very happy   _____ 4. Unhappy

       _____ 2. Happy   _____ 5. Very unhappy

       _____ 3. Undecided

Character development is a great concern of all societies. Character is here defined as an individual's set of values which serve to guide his behavior. Following in the next question is a list of values which have often been considered to promote positive character development and also positive, fulfilling human living. We would like to know those which you feel are most important.

_____ 24. - 25.

_____ 26. - 27.

_____ 28. - 29.

_____ 30. - 31.

_____ 32. - 33.

From the following list of values which are often considered to be involved in promoting positive character development, please check the five (5) values which you consider most important for parents to assist their children in learning.

       _____ 1. Determination and perserverance
       _____ 2. Self-reliance
       _____ 3. Seeing each person as having dignity and worth (This involves respecting rights and needs of others.)

    _____ 4. Moral courage (courage to stand by one's inner convictions)

    _____ 5. Spiritual development

    _____ 6. Cooperation

    _____ 7. Honesty and integrity

    _____ 8. Loyalty

    _____ 9. Self-discipline

    _____ 10. Feeling genuine concern and responsibility toward others

    _____ 11. Initiative

    _____ 12. Intellectual inquisitiveness

    _____ 13. Responsibility in performing tasks

    _____ 14. Self-respect

    _____ 15. Friendliness

    _____ 16. Appreciation

_____ 34. – 35.
_____ 36. – 37.
_____ 38. – 39.

Which three (3) of the following values do you think parents of today are most successful in helping their children learn?

    _____ 1. Determination and perserverance

    _____ 2. Self-reliance

    _____ 3. Seeing each person as having dignity and worth (This involves respecting rights and needs of others.)

    _____ 4. Moral courage (courage to stand by one's inner convictions)

    _____ 5. Spiritual development

    _____ 6. Cooperation

    _____ 7. Honesty and integrity

    _____ 8. Loyalty

    _____ 9. Self-discipline

    _____ 10. Feeling genuine concern and responsibility toward others

    _____ 11. Initiative

    _____ 12. Intellectual inquisitiveness

    _____ 13. Responsibility in performing tasks

    _____ 14. Self-respect

    _____ 15. Friendliness

    _____ 16. Appreciation

_____ 40. – 41.
_____ 42. – 43.
_____ 44. – 45.

Which three (3) of the following values do you think parents of today most often fail to help children learn?

    _____ 1. Determination and perserverance

    _____ 2. Self-reliance

    _____ 3. Seeing each person as having dignity and worth (This involves respecting rights and needs of others.)

    _____ 4. Moral courage (courage to stand by one's inner convictions)

    _____ 5. Spiritual development

    _____ 6. Cooperation

    _____ 7. Honesty and integrity

_____ 8. Loyalty
_____ 9. Self-discipline
_____10. Feeling genuine concern and responsibility to others
_____11. Initiative
_____12. Intellectual inquisitiveness
_____13. Responsibility in performing tasks
_____14. Self-respect
_____15. Friendliness
_____16. Appreciation

_____ 46. Which parent do you feel is more important in influencing the character development of the child?

    _____ 1. Mother

    _____ 2. Father

_____ 47. Which one of the following is most influential in affecting the character development of children?

    _____ 1. School

    _____ 2. Church

    _____ 3. Family

    _____ 4. Peers

_____ 48. In which one of the following ways do you think values involved in character development are most effectively learned?

    _____ 1. Rewarded for desirable behavior and punished for undesirable behavior
    _____ 2. Following examples and models of behavior of others
    _____ 3. Realizing consequences of various types of behavior
    _____ 4. Other (Specify)_____

_____ 49. In which one of the following ways do you think parents most often use in helping children learn values involved in positive character development.

    _____ 1. Rewarding desirable behavior and punishing undesirable behavior
    _____ 2. Providing positive examples and model of behavior of other
    _____ 3. Helping child to realize consequence of various types of behavior
    _____ 4. Other (Specify)_____

VITA

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Master of Science

Thesis: COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF VALUES INVOLVED IN CHARACTER
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