How Character Education Impacts Teachers

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Abstract

In recent years, teacher retention rates have decreased, and student behavioral concerns have increased. This article presents if teachers who have favorable beliefs about the effectiveness of Character Education programs also have a greater satisfaction with their career. Based on the responses of 159 school teachers, a positive correlation was found between teachers who self-reported that Character Education programs are effective. These teachers also reported a higher level of satisfaction with their teaching career. Character education programs help students moderate their behavior, and boost teacher career satisfaction.

Keywords: Character Education, Teacher Education, Teacher Career Satisfaction

Teacher career satisfaction rates have dropped to a historic low in the past decade in countries like the United States (Amos, 2008). Educators have reported increased curricular demands and student behavioral compliance concerns have contributed to a lack of enthusiasm to participate within the Professional Learning Community (PLC) (Markow, Macia, & Lee, 2013). Considering disruptive student behavior has increased, along with the severity of such behavior, teacher retention

rates, which are steadily declining, may be related to the problem, despite some systems of support that have been created (Markow et al., 2013).

It has been shown that when students engage in character education programs with fidelity, which is indicated by program engagement and completion, there is an increase in appropriate behavioral choices (Lickona, 1996). Character education programs are available to students to help them moderate their behavior. This study focused on how teachers' perceptions of these programs' effectiveness relates to teachers' satisfaction with their career.

Resmovits (2012) reported that a reduction in resources, lack of administrative support, lack of collaborative opportunities for professional development, Common Core curricular implementation, and student behavioral concerns, all contributed to a decrease in retention rates (Resmovits, 2012). In addition to the aforementioned factors, research revealed one of the greatest causes of teacher dissatisfaction is disruptive student behavior (Landers, Alter, & Servilio, 2008). Disruptive students coupled with curricular stressors result in escalated emotional workplace situations (Landers et al., 2008). Furthermore, challenging student behavior has one of the greatest impacts on teacher job satisfaction in the public school arena (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). The most prevalent disruptive or challenging behavior identified was disrespect to adults and others (Landers et al., 2008). Some grade levels demonstrate these behaviors at a higher rate, leading to a significant impact on job satisfaction for teachers in those grades (Landers et al., 2008).

Comprehensive character education is a holistic approach to a set of educational approaches that place an emphasis on tough issues while developing a positive school culture (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007). These approaches include considering the "whole child" in education, social-emotional learning/intelligence, civic and community education, and service learning opportunities (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007). Using character education programs, teachers and leaders from an array of school settings have been able to transform their school cultures, reduce office-related referrals, increase academic success, shape global citizens, and increase career satisfaction while retaining teachers within the classroom (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007).

For the purpose of this study, character education was defined as the explicit teaching of expected social-emotional and societal norms with clearly defined behavioral actions considered socially acceptable (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007; Josephson, 2002). Character education programs allow teachers an opportunity to shape and develop research-based curricula designed to impact student behavior; character education programs help students develop an understanding of basic societal norms, including general courtesies and behavioral compliance within certain areas (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007; Josephson, 2002).

In 2002, The Partnerships in Character Education Programs was initiated by the U. S. Department of Education to fund character education implementation throughout the United States under the direction of each state's department of education (U. S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences [IES],

2002). This initiative served to ensure that all students received access to character development opportunities to enhance their lives outside of the classroom (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007; IES, 2002).

The modification of the Elementary and Secondary Act, which introduced the 2002 No Child Left Behind Act, raised the level of accountability metrics for primary and secondary institutions. With this amendment schools and educators reprioritized efforts to increase academic achievement and development of the whole child (Noddings, 2005). Additionally, the recent ratifications within this act, signed by President Barack Obama on December 10, 2015, as the Every Student Succeeds Act, emphasizes diversification of student resources and expanding the work that educators have accomplished by putting the academic focus back on the states to support student achievement (U. S. Department of Education, IES, 2001). The reprioritization in curricular focus has created a change in the educational climate, and the impact has influenced students and teachers.

Currently, the use of the national curriculum designed to level the academic playing field for all students has caused a heightened level of anxiety among educators (Morello, 2014). The academic demands required by state testing proficiency that teachers are now encountering have contributed to increased teacher turnover rates that are higher than they have been in decades (Morello 2014; Sloan, 2010). Surveying educators and principals, Resmovits (2012) determined that since 2008, teacher job satisfaction decreased significantly, by 23 percentage points; 39% of teachers reported that they were satisfied with the profession, which is the lowest since 1987. The percentage of teachers who communicated that they are satisfied dropped even lower, to 34%, in 2012 (Resmovits, 2012). If this rate of decrease continues, a low of 29% by 2016 could be observed (Resmovits, 2012).

Teachers have found it challenging to balance all subjects and ensure students are proficient in mathematics and reading (Blunt, 2013; Mertler, 2010). The academic expectation to meet all individualized learning approaches for all students has been a challenge in some academic environments (Mertler, 2010; Noddings, 2005). The teacher retention rates significantly decreased in schools that have high academic needs and students that experience higher rates of success risk factors (Blunt, 2013; Mertler, 2010). Teachers found the academic and behavioral expectations to be very ambitious without sustainable methods of support (Blunt, 2013; Mertler, 2010). Recruitment efforts have also become a challenge, and university education programs have not helped to fill vacancies in the areas with the highest needs (Blunt, 2013; Mertler, 2010).

Because some schools had success with implementing curriculum changes and meeting legislative expectations, consideration is being given to other factors that may cause teacher dissatisfaction and impact teacher retention rates (Mertler, 2010; Noddings, 2005). Resmovits (2012) noted, through a survey provided to educators, that the assumption is that inexperienced teachers or teachers who are burned out are the ones that would speak of having the highest levels of dissatisfaction towards their school work environment. However, the results from

the survey showed that when comparing teachers with greater and less job satisfaction, there was no significant difference in their years of experience, the grades they taught, or the proportions of their students from low-income households (Resmovits, 2012; Richmond, 2012). Resmovits concluded that student behavioral issues are the common thread that connects teachers and their level of satisfaction (Resmovits, 2012).

The U. S. Department of Education (1997) determined that student behavior is associated with teacher satisfaction; the more favorable the working conditions, the higher the satisfaction scores. In classroom environments where student behavior was managed well, teachers felt more in control and experienced a greater sense of accomplishment towards the work at hand (Ronfeldt et al., 2013).

The increase in student misconduct in classrooms has a direct impact on the way educators perceive their jobs (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Satisfaction rates drop in environments with higher occurrences of student misbehavior (Landers et al., 2008; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). The reduction in satisfaction is largely due to the teacher's expressed lack of control over student choices and feelings of helplessness within the classroom (Landers et al., 2008; Ronfeldt et al., 2013).

Student disruptive behavior is a consistent concern for educators and impacts their satisfaction with their career (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010). Clear and explicit methods for student redirection are a viable solution to the teachers' dilemma regarding student disruptive behavior (Bradshaw et al., 2010). A clear charted path to success increases buy-in for students to interact differently and generates a positive impact on the classroom and working environment (Beets et al., 2009). Character education programs provide a sense of empowerment and clear behavioral and instructional support to increase teacher job satisfaction and positively impact student behavior (Josephson, 2002).

This study was designed to determine whether there is a relationship between teacher perception of the effectiveness of character education programs and their satisfaction with their career. Ideally, the goal was to find out if there is a statistically significant relationship between teacher perception and career satisfaction. Since character education programs can help produce desired behavioral outcomes, along with developing a sense of control and ownership within the teacher, the study sought to determine how strong that the relationship was between belief in program effectiveness and teacher satisfaction with their career (Kohn, 1997; Landers et al., 2008).

Career satisfaction is defined as fulfillment with one's career choice beyond financial compensation; it is defined as having a positive perspective of career experience and progress (Conley, Muncey, & You, 2005). Career satisfaction contributes to teacher retention rates and continued progress within the work environment (Conley et al., 2005). If character education programs are seen as effective, career satisfaction is potentially high.

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. Do teachers who perceive character education programs as effective have greater career satisfaction?

2. Will school level (elementary, middle and high) affect the relationship between perception of character education and career satisfaction?

The research findings from this study might help to shape the landscape in K-12 education. The research expected outcome is that by increasing teacher retention rates at schools through creating environments that allow teachers to feel satisfied with their work, and have researched-based approaches to support student behavioral concerns… change can produce a ripple effect. Both teacher and student performance rates in the classroom might also be improved through understanding the impact of implementing character education programs (Adams, 2013). If a significant connection can be established to support teachers and shape their beliefs in the effectiveness of character education programs, the impact might not only restore trust in educational institutions, but could also contribute to student achievement. The study's outcomes could help to allow strength within communities by bestowing value within the teaching profession demonstrated by greater career satisfaction and for the acquisition of more high quality educators. Furthermore, this increased career satisfaction could provide guidance towards approaches for more effective character education programs.

METHOD
Research Design

In this research, a quantitative method was used to answer the research questions. The participants were educators who are currently teaching in Title I schools, which include elementary, middle, and high school, in an urban environment. In order to participate in this study, participants are educators in schools that have at least 90% of the students classified as receiving free or reduced lunch, as determined by the U. S. Department of Education, in the Elementary and Secondary Act (IES, 2001). The educators, who are members of Black Educators Rock, a professional group of online educators that include more than 145,000 educators, were provided with an online survey questionnaire to collect data to determine their perception of the effectiveness of character education programs and their career satisfaction. However, all educators in the group did not meet the required inclusion criteria for the study. There was a .1% response rate, totaling 170 respondents; participants were included on the basis of schools' classification of free-reduced lunch (Urban, Title I) and the 90% students' enrollment qualifications.

The Climate Analysis Report survey (Appendix A), which is a validated and reliable (with a reported kappa value of 0.8) instrument was used by the researcher with permission from its official developer, the Character Counts Organization. This survey is used to assess a schools readiness to implement character education within their school and allows the group to develop a strategic plan of action to support various schools. The survey is provided to staff and the data is used in the creation of a site-based plan. For the purposes of this research, the survey was used to look at specific items that reflect teacher's perception of

character education program's effectiveness and their career satisfaction. The survey was used to collect demographic data on educator years of experience, gender, work commute, career background (alternative or traditional education program), and current character education implementation status. The data from this instrument were used to show the relationship between the dependent variable of career satisfaction and the independent variable of perceptions of character education programs effectiveness. Additionally, comparisons for the relationship were made across school categories (elementary, middle, and high) of school teachers to determine if there are mean differences across the various school levels (Warner, 2013).

Correlation, regression, and analyses were used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the two primary independent variables (teachers' perception of character education effectiveness and school level) and the dependent variable of career satisfaction. A second regression analysis was run to determine how a teacher's teaching grade level (elementary, middle, and high school) might affect the relationship between their perception of character education programs effectiveness and career satisfaction (Warner, 2013).

The strength of the relationship between two quantitative variables can be determined by Pearson correlation coefficient, r. The range of the values for the measure of the correlation coefficient is from -1 to 1 (Beaumont, 2012; Xu, 2004). Since both the perception and career satisfaction responses from the survey were later converted to their corresponding quantitative numerical scores on a 5-point Likert scale, this study conducted the Pearson correlation coefficient test in order to determine the strength and direction of the suspected linear relationship between perception of the effectiveness of character education and career satisfaction among teachers.

The less favorable the response to a survey item, the lower the value provided to that item. A favorable response is defined as completely agree/extremely important or Agree/Important with the statement provided. An unfavorable response is defined as Neither Agree or Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Completely Disagree/Somewhat Important or Not important at all with the statement provided (Character Counts, 2015). The more favorable the response to the survey items, the higher the value, and the indication of a strong relationship between the variables. Items 2, 7, and 8 (Appendix A- part 2) are designed to identify the perceptions of character education effectiveness. Items 1, 3, and 8 (Appendix A-part 3) are designed to determine teacher career satisfaction (Character Counts, 2015).

The regression analysis will show the strength of the relationship of the variables. If a relationship has a value of .6 or higher, there is indication of a strong predictive relationship (Donalek & Soldwisch, 2004). This means that the more favorable an individual's perception of character education programs, the higher the likelihood of satisfaction with their career.

Population

The target populations in this study were classroom teachers who are employed in urban public schools from various school districts in the United States, as defined by Title I status, and servicing students in grades PreK-12th. The primary source for the participant database was provided by Black Educators Rock (BER), a not-for-profit educator group with more than 145,000 members world-wide (Appendix D). The BER professional community received the SurveyMonkey link three times per week, for a period of four weeks, through their nationwide website. There was a .1% response rate, totaling 170 respondents. The survey was made available to the entire database, however all members of the BER community did not meet the criteria to participate.

Sample

Of the 170 respondents, only 159 respondents completed the entire survey, as some of the items were optional. The 159 teachers service about 6,000-7,000 students in urban schools in the United States elementary, middle and high school).

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of teacher participants

	n	**%**
Gender		
Female	138	86.79
Male	21	13.21
Age group (yrs)		
20-30	33	20.75
31-40	66	41.51
41-50	60	37.74
Career background		
Alternative Education program	36	22.60
Traditional Education program	123	77.40
Years of experience in education		
0-5	59	37.11
16-20	67	42.14
20-25	33	20.75
School grade level currently teaching		
Elementary school	109	68.55
Middle school	23	14.47
High school	27	16.98
Work commute		
Less than 10 miles	82	51.57
Farther than 10 miles, less than 20 miles	47	29.56

20 miles or more	30	18.87
Currently implementing CE programs		
Yes	84	52.83
No	75	47.17

N= 159

The majority of participants were female (86.78%), aged 31-40 years (41.52 %), with traditional educational program career backgrounds (77.40%), 16-20 years of education experience (42.14%), currently teaching in elementary schools (68.55%), commuting less than 10 miles to work (51.57%), and currently implementing character education programs (52.83%) in their schools.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument for data collection was used with permission from the Character Counts Organization. Character Counts Climate Analysis Report is a free public use survey for teachers and is designed to help the Character Counts Team determine a school's readiness to implement Character Education Programs within their school and determine a perception of the work culture (Character Counts, 2015; Josephson, 2002). Additionally, this tool was used to determine teacher career satisfaction.

The questions in the Climate Analysis Report Survey (Appendix A) are designed to get a general snapshot of the teacher's perception Character Education and their perception of their career's level of satisfaction. The survey is comprised of eight demographic questions, including gender and age group, and 15 perception and career satisfaction questions, such as "I have confidence to develop character in students" and "I have high teacher morale." The survey can be completed in eight minutes or less and does not require any typing from the participants; all fields are dropdown items only and participants select their choice.

Data Collection

All participants were given the Climate Analysis Report Survey (Appendix A) electronically through a SurveyMonkey Link. The link was sent to the listserv of Black Educators Rock. All participants were asked to complete the survey in one sitting. The data collection window was four weeks, with reminders that were provided three times per week. Participants were not required to give their name or their geographical location, to ensure anonymity. All the data collected were exported to an Excel spreadsheet and prepared for data analysis purposes. The .1% response rate comprised 170 respondents; 159 respondents were included in data collection, as participants had the option to omit answers.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software program (version 24) to obtain descriptive summary statistics of the participants. Demographic information includes educator years of experience, gender, work commute, career

background (alternative or traditional education program), currently implementing character education programs, and perceptions toward teacher control, career satisfaction, currently implementing a character education program, and school teaching grade level. Simple regression analysis data determined educator's perception of character education programs and career satisfaction.

Bivariate correlations determine the relationship between the independent variable of perception about character education program's effectiveness and the dependent variable of teacher career satisfaction. Multiple linear regressions determine how a teacher's school teaching grade level (elementary, middle and high) might affect the predictive relationship between their perception of character education programs effectiveness and career satisfaction.

RESULTS

This study showed the relationship between teachers' perception about character education program effectiveness and their career satisfaction. It further sought to indicate whether school teaching grade level (elementary, middle, high) of teachers might affect this relationship between their perception of character education programs effectiveness and career satisfaction. It is hypothesized that a teacher with a greater perception about character education programs' effectiveness would have or rather demonstrate greater career satisfaction. It is also hypothesized that this relationship might differ across the school grade levels being taught by the teacher, and since character needs to be nurtured much earlier in life for more sustainable outcomes later in the life of the student, this relationship is expected to be most significant among teachers teaching in Elementary schools.

There were a total of 159 participants that completed the survey, and the participants included elementary school, middle school, and high school classroom teachers in schools that are Title 1 and 90% free/reduced lunch student populations (or more), based on their self-reporting of their school's status. The years of educational experience varied for all participants, as did the years of teaching experience. Both male and female teachers responded and the responses included information regarding their work commute and their educational route to education.

The data analysis question items that contributed to answering the research questions were identified as 2, 7, and 8 for determining the perceptions of character education programs' effectiveness, in the Character Education Perception section of the survey, followed by questions 1, 3, and 8 to determine satisfaction with their career, in the School Environment section of the survey. The analysis of the entire sample of participants determined the outcomes as a group. This report will provide information about research question 1. This analysis was followed by an analysis of participants at various school levels, elementary, middle, then high school. Subsequently, within various levels, trends will be discussed.

Of the 170 participant submissions, 159 participants completed the entire survey as participants had the option to omit certain items. There was a total of 23

items. The highlighted items for analysis included the number of respondents from each section.

The sample participants (N=159) responded to the questions providing information about their demographics. The demographic subgroups were: school level, years of experience, career background (route to education), work commute, current implementation status of character education programs, and gender.

Further inferential statistics were conducted in order to investigate whether a statistically significant relationship exists between the scores on perception of teacher character education programs effectiveness and their career satisfaction among teachers. In particular, both correlational and simple and multiple linear regression analyses were conducted. For all analyses, the 95% confidence level (or type I error rate=5%) was used as the cut-off for statistical significance.

The score on teacher perception of character education programs effectiveness was derived from three indicator items, namely: I have the confidence to effectively develop character in students; character education should be fully integrated into school programs; character education should be infused in the curriculum lesson plans for direct teaching. Responses from each of these indicator items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale (Completely Agree=5; Somewhat Agree=4; Neither Disagree or Agree=3; Somewhat Disagree=2; Completely Disagree=1). Based on this Likert scale scoring, the minimum and maximum total scores for an individual for the three items were 1 and 5 respectively, with higher scores (4 and above) being indications of positive perception about the effectiveness of character education programs. An overall score for measure of perception about character education programs effectiveness was derived by summing up the three question indicator items. Thus, the possible minimum and maximum scores for this overall perception were 3 and 15 respectively; with higher values (12 and above) being indications of overall positive perceptions about character education programs effectiveness.

Table 2
Descriptive Analysis of Perception of the Effectiveness of Character Education.

	N	*Mean*	*SD*	*Min*	*Max*
I have confidence to develop character in students	159	4.23	0.77	3.00	5.00
Character education should be fully integrated into school programs	159	4. 26	0.75	3.00	5.00
Character education should be infused in the curriculum	159	4. 30	0. 73	3.00	5.00

lesson plans for direct teaching					
Perception (overall)	159	12.79	2.06	9.00	15.00

Table 2 shows evidence of positive perception (at least mean scores of 4.00 on indicator items and 12.00 overall) about effectiveness of character education programs among teachers.

The descriptive analysis results for the measure of perception of character education programs effectiveness are as summarized in Table 2. The scores on career satisfaction were also derived from a set three question indicator items identified as: high quality teachers, including character competence and commitment; high teacher morale; and an ethical and caring environment that promotes learning and personal growth. Similarly, the responses from each of these indicator items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale (Extremely Important=5; Very Important=4; Somewhat Important=3; Somewhat unimportant=2; Not Important at all=1). Based on this Likert scale scoring, the minimum and maximum total scores for an individual for the three items are 1 and 5 respectively; with higher scores (4 and above) being indications of high importance and therefore, greater career satisfaction. An overall score for measure of career satisfaction was then derived by summing up the three indicator items of career satisfaction so that the minimum and maximum possible values for the measure of overall career satisfaction were 3 and 15 respectively; with higher values (12 and above) being indications of more overall career satisfaction. The descriptive analysis results for the scores of career satisfaction are as summarized in Table 3.

Table 3
Descriptive Analysis of Teacher Career Satisfaction

	N	*Mean*	*SD*	*Min*	*Max*
High Quality Teachers including character competence and commitment	159	4.34	.72	3.00	5.00
High Teacher Morale	159	4. 42	.74	3.00	5.00
An ethical and caring environment that promotes learning and personal growth	159	4. 33	.77	3.00	5.00
Career satisfaction (overall)	159	13.10	1.89	9.00	15.00

As indicated on Table 3, there is evidence of more career satisfaction (mean scores of more than 4.00 on the indicator items and mean score of more than 12.00 on overall career satisfaction) in this sample of teachers.

In order to investigate relationship between perception about career education programs effectiveness (perception indicator items and overall perception) and career satisfaction (career satisfaction indicator items and overall career satisfaction) simple bivariate correlation analysis of the Pearson correlation r was determined for each pair of comparisons. Correlation analyses were conducted between each of the three items for perception of character education effectiveness and the three items on career satisfaction. Also, another correlation analysis was conducted on the overall perception of character education programs effectiveness (sum of the three perception indicator items) and overall career satisfaction (sum of the three career satisfaction indicator items).

The correlation matrix for this analysis is as summarized in Table 4. As indicated in the correlation matrix table, all of the three indicators of perception are very strongly and positively correlated with all the other three indicators of career satisfaction, $r > .6$, ($p < .05$).

Table 4

Correlation matrix for perception of character education programs effectiveness and career satisfaction.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 High Quality Teachers including character competence and commitment	-							
2 High Teacher Morale	.81**	-						
3 An ethical and caring environment that promotes learning and personal growth	.73**	.42*	-					
4 Career satisfaction	.79**	.91**	.84**	-				
5 I have confidence to develop character in students	.61***	.73***	.67**	.79**	-			
6 Character education should be fully integrated into school programs	.60***	.75***	.69***	.83**	.75*	-		
7 Character education should be infused in the curriculum lesson plans for direct teaching	.72***	.76***	.65**	.84**	.67*	.79*	-	
8 Perception	.61**	.73*	.67*	0.90***	.90*	.92*	.90**	-

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*p< .05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

The correlation matrix shows that each of the three perception indicator items was significantly and strongly positively correlated with each of the 3 indicators items on career satisfaction ($r>0.60$, $p<0.001$). Further correlation analysis revealed that the overall perception and overall career satisfaction were very strongly positively and significantly correlated, $r (159) = 0.90, p <.001$. These results show that more favorable perception about the effectiveness of character education is strongly associated with greater teacher career satisfaction. This can be furthered stated as the more favorable an educator's perception about character education program effectiveness the likelihood increases for that teacher to be more satisfied with their career.
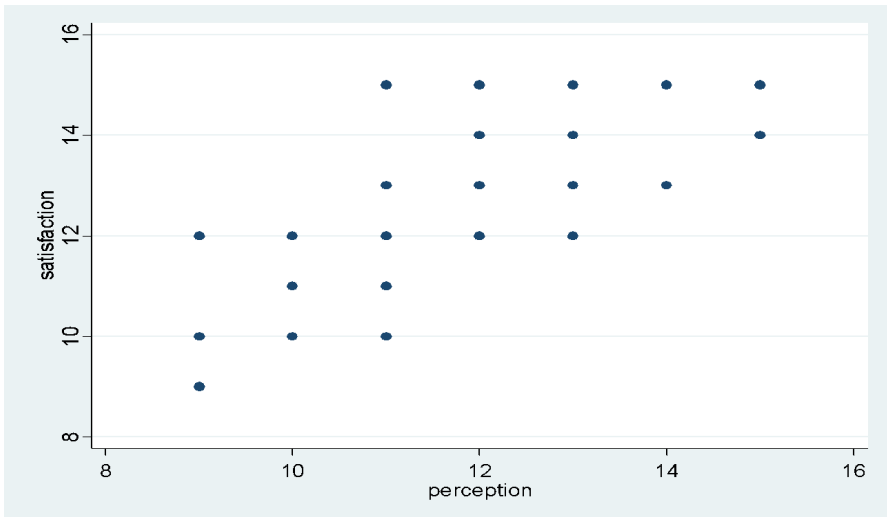

Figure 1. Scatterplot for the correlation of perception and career satisfaction. This figure illustrates the distribution of data points for overall perception of character education program effectiveness and overall career satisfaction.

As part of further investigations into the relationship between perception of character education programs effectiveness and career satisfaction, it was necessary to build a simple linear regression model for predicting the measure of career satisfaction as the dependent variable from perception of character education program effectiveness as the independent/predictor variable. Regression analysis results revealed that the F-test was statistically significant, $F(1, 157) = 634.$, $p<.001$. This means a teacher's perception of character education programs effectiveness is a strong significant predictor of teacher career satisfaction. The R^2 of 0.80 means that approximately 80% of the variance of career satisfaction can be explained by the variance perception of character education programs

effectiveness. This simple linear regression analysis produced similar results to the results obtained previously by correlation analysis.
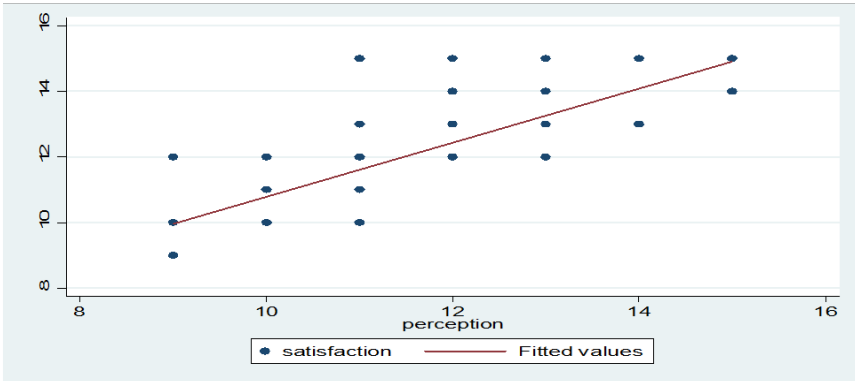

Figure 2. Regression plot for career satisfaction and perception of character education.

Figure 2 shows the data points and line of best fit for the prediction of the relationship between perceptions of character education programs effectiveness and teacher career satisfaction. There is evidence of a linear trend relationship between perception and career satisfaction. Based on both correlation and simple linear regressions analysis results, the first null hypothesis of no statistically significant relationship between perception of character education programs effectiveness and teacher career satisfaction was rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis. It was then concluded that there is a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between perception of character education programs effectiveness and career satisfaction and higher scores in the measures of perception are strongly correlated with higher scores in the measures of teacher career satisfaction. This can also be stated as a teacher who has a more favorable perception of character education programs' effectiveness may have a higher likelihood of having a greater satisfaction with their career choice.

The second research question sought to establish how a teacher's school teaching grade level (elementary, middle, and high) might affect the relationship between their perception of effectiveness of character education programs and career satisfaction. To answer this question, a multiple linear regression test was conducted using perception of character education programs effectiveness and school teaching grade level as predictors of teacher career satisfaction. The regression analysis results are as presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Regression Results for Predicting Career Satisfaction from Perception and Teacher's School Grade Level

	Middle School		High School	
Variable	*B*	*SE(B)*	*B*	*SE(B)*
Perception	0.38**	0.18	0.30*	0.19
R^2		0.76		0.84
F		216.4*		220.6**

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$

As indicated in Table 5, the independent variable, elementary school grade level, is omitted in the regression results summary. This is because it is being used as the reference teaching grade level so that the regression coefficients predicting career satisfaction from perception of effectiveness of character education for middle and high grades are compared to it.

The analysis results indicate that perception is a very strong predictor or rather is significantly related to career satisfaction, $p < .01$. Teacher's school teaching grade level, however does not seem to significantly affect the relationship between perception and career satisfaction. This is because each of the regression slopes for the three categories of school teaching grade level is statistically significant, $p < .05$.

In other words, we can conclude that there exists a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between perception about character education programs effectiveness and teacher career satisfaction and this relationship doesn't significantly differ by teacher's school teaching grade level. Therefore, the second null hypothesis was not rejected so that it was concluded that a teacher's school teaching grade level does not significantly affect the relationship between perception of character education programs effectiveness and teacher career satisfaction. In the context of this study, such a finding would imply that the relationship between teacher perception of character education programs effectiveness and teacher satisfaction is strong, positive and significant regardless of the school teaching grade level (elementary, middle, high) of a teacher. For all the inferential analyses, statistical power (80%) was determined to be based on the sample size of 159 and type I error rate of 5%.
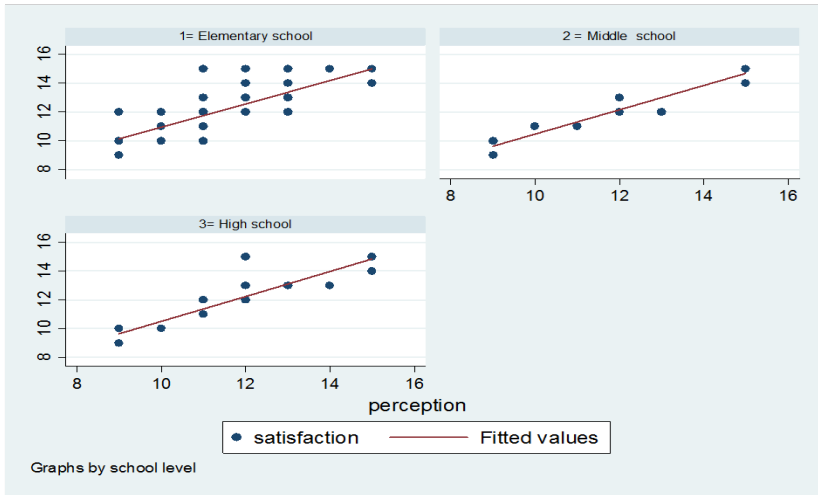
Figure 3. Regression slopes for perception and career satisfaction by school teaching grade level.

Figure 3 shows how school teaching grade level might affect the relationship between perception of character education effectiveness and career satisfaction. As demonstrated on the regression graphs for each school category, there is a general trend of higher career satisfaction associated with higher perception of the effectiveness of character education programs.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

The research conducted indicated that if the educators who perceived that character education programs were effective had a greater satisfaction with their career. About 83.5% of the respondents determined that they aligned favorably with the research question.

Although the favorability ratings are high and support the research questions, and both null hypotheses were rejected, the research was not without limitations and challenges. The original window of four weeks, was to take place during the school year, however, the data were collected during the summer season and limited the opportunity to expand the population base to educators.

Another potential rationale for the respondents' demographic limitations could have been the access to the survey link. Black Educators Rock supports all levels of education, however elementary school teachers have earlier release days and received this direct link from the researcher, which could imply that the majority of respondents would be elementary educators. Additionally, only 19% of all male teachers in the U. S. teach in elementary or middle school, and only 3% teach specifically for elementary school (MenTeach, 2014). The survey received almost 70% of elementary respondents, which lessens the likelihood of having male respondents.

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More sample group analysis was that the average educators' commute to work was 23.1 minutes, or roughly 10 miles each way (Kopf, 2015). This group made up almost 29.5% of the respondents in the survey.

Fourteen percent of all employed teachers have taken the alternative route to education certification as determined by the U. S. Department of Education, in the Elementary and Secondary Act (IES, 2014) and according to Lambert (2006). Interestingly, this subgroup did not demonstrate a large disparity either (22%), as they may have a greater passion as this was a "second-wind" profession for them. Also, 50% of teachers leave the profession within five years. More of the respondents were beyond five years, as educators that are a part of professional education groups are usually veteran educators (Kopf, 2015). The demographic outcomes support current data trends noted in the data. The findings from the study about the relationship between teachers' perceptions on character education programs effectiveness and career satisfaction were similar to other research findings.

The inferential analysis results from both correlation and regression analyses revealed that teachers' perception about character education programs effectiveness was strongly, positively, and significantly related to their career satisfaction. This observed relationship is equally strong and significant across the three categories of school teaching grade levels (elementary, middle, and high). Such findings support the quest for incorporating character education into the school curriculum in order to improve both teachers and students outcomes. It would be important to take note of the observed similarity in in the strength of relations between perception and career satisfaction across the school teaching grade levels. This means that teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools equally believe that character education programs would be effective in improving their career satisfaction even as they strive to shape their students to become more reliable global citizens by providing more appropriate behavioral choices and increasing their academic success.

CONCLUSION

The observed significant, strong, and positive correlation between perception of character education programs effectiveness and career satisfaction indicates that this relationship may inform the work of school education officials who may be interested in improving teacher career satisfaction through more informed character education programs. Such character education programs may be designed to help students moderate their behavior, and boost teacher career satisfaction.

When implemented, character education programs may help in significantly reducing student misconduct, general disruptive behavior and increase student appropriate behavioral choices while increasing teachers' career satisfaction. This change can allow an expansion to the number and professional quality of educators and help to maintain highly qualified individuals working in

high needs environments. The impact of this change can help schools assist communities to grow and develop with children as the change agents.

Also, using character education programs, teachers and leaders from an array of school settings may be able to transform their school cultures, reduce office-related referrals, increase academic success, shape global citizens, and increase career satisfaction while retaining teachers within the classroom. Such programs may help students manage life outside the classroom and provide opportunities to practice the intended expected societal and behavioral norms with more sustainable support.

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