Developing an Assessment Scale for Character. An exploratory factorial analysis

Ionescu Daniela

Romanian Academy, Iasi Branch

Developing a character assessment scale is the more distal goal of the author. In this paper I aim to present a sequence of this psychometric process, namely exploring the factorial structure of a character assessment scale. In order to achieve this aim, we first explored the psychological factors relevant for a moral character. We also explored the moral standards that are valued in the main life contexts of an individual: family, workplace, close relationships and public context. These theoretical endeavors were important for the item writing process, as they provided the content of the scale. Furthermore, the item development phase was empirically supported through some piloting studies, which highlighted the direction of the scale to assess instances of moral character failure, generically recognized as proofs of a bad character. The present paper focuses on the results obtained after performing an exploratory factor analysis on a sample of 300 participants. The results suggest that the 21-item scale best fits a four-factor structures that cumulatively explain 42.45% of the variance. The factors are: evilness, ill-tempered behavior, dishonesty, upstartness. The scale reveals the moral profile of an individual in all four life contexts.

Keywords: character, morality, moral character, assessment scale.

Address of correspondence: Daniela Ionescu, Str. Lăcrămioarei, nr.25 A., postal code: 032081, Sector 3, București. Tel: 0734084504, E-mail: daniela.ionescu27@yahoo.com

Introduction

One's character is a sub-system of the personality, an ensemble of attitudes and values which motivate the individual to follow certain norms (Narvaez, 2012). An individual with a moral character is one having a set of principles and who respects the values promoted by the society he/she lives in (Walker &Hennig, 2004).

Shlenkeret al. (2001) described character through the following basic features: integrity (sincerity, keeping promises and honesty), personal commitment to development and promoting good (selflessness and concern for others, instead of exclusive focus on oneself) and efficiency (continuous practice of self-control, responsibility, perseverance towards established goals).On the contrary, bad character refers to a disposition towards misconduct, to break social norms and values of the society he/she lives in, to lack a moral character.

Character assessment is an important concern in the research field.Clonninger and his colleagues (1993) developed the Temperament and Character Inventory

based on four temperament dimensions (novelty seeking, harm avoidance, reward dependence, persistence) and three character dimensions (self-directedness, cooperativeness, self-transcendence). The temperament traits are moderately heritable and stable and the character traits refer to a personal system of values and goals. Self-directedness is the ability of an individual to regulate his behavior according to his values and life goals and to adapt to different life situations. Cooperativeness implies the level of acceptance and identification with other people. Self-transcendence reflects spiritual values.

The focus on spirituality as an important value that can direct one`s behavior is highlighted by CSI-Spirit instrument (Isaacowitz et al., 2003). Spirituality is defined as the belief in a supernatural force.

The Values In Action Inventory (Seligman, 2002) measures 24 strengths of character that are classified into 6 clusters (defined as virtues): 1) Wisdom and Knowledge (cognitive strengths based on curiosity, creativity, love of learning, judgment, perspective); 2) Courage (strengths that sustain an individual through the process of pursuing his goals, such as honesty, bravery, perseverance, zest); 3)

Humanity and Love (interpersonal strengths as support, kindness, social intelligence, the capacity to love); 4) Justice (strengths based on communal values that can sustain the development of a healthy society: teamwork, leadership, fairness; 5) Temperance (strengths which imply the restraint from improper actions: modesty, self-regulation, forgiveness, prudence); 6) Transcendence (spiritual strengths as religiousness, appreciation of beauty, hope, gratitude, humor).

These instruments focus on values that can direct one`s behavior and reactions to different life situations and they highlight the character strengths and virtues(which can imply socially desirable responses) or are based on a single main life value (for example spirituality) that can impact upon an individual's character and behavior. We propose an instrument that takes into consideration the contextual nature of values (different life contexts can trigger different values and character traits) and which reveals a lessdesirable character profile (bad character traits).

In the introductory section of this paper, first we will briefly summarize the psychological factors that are relevant for the development and / or activation of a moral character (section 1). Next (section 2), we will focus on presenting the previous steps in developing an assessment scale for character, which due to items content and present results can actually be seen as an assessment scale for bad character. The later part is important to understand the content characteristics of the scale before conducting the empirical study to explore its factorial structure.

Psychological factors that trigger the development of a moral character

The moral character is a concept similar to that of morality. Those individuals having a moral character engage in a moral behavior to their own benefit or to the benefit of others (Narvaez, 2012).

Among the basic factors contributing to the development of a moral character one can find social norms, values, life customs, cognitive, emotional and behavioral patterns, and personality structures. Moral style and identity are considered superior accomplishments of moral development.

Social norms

Moral behavior is conditioned by the existence of norms of pro-social conduct, as these norms are responsible for creating behavioral patterns. Actional patterns can be established through repetition or association. Norms might become internal to a certain extent, and the strongly internalized ones are autonomous sources of moral behavior, being at the same time a driver of intrinsic motivation. Internalized norms function as a motivator from the point of view of the internal punishment system created by the infringement of a norm (Kaiser &Byrka, 2011).

Establishing the extent at which a general norm (e.g."tell the truth") is moral or not requires an analysis of the consequences and the impact over those around. If, by telling the truth, for example, one can harm others around him, this norm will no longer be considered to be under a moral cover (Opp, 2013). But not all norms are necessarily oriented towards the evaluation of consequences. Let us take, as an example, the"Do not kill!" norm (Elster, 1989).

Social and individual values

Character development is directly influenced by the social and individual values' system, as the human being is a social being. The development of human existence within a social environment needs to be in agreement with the principles the individual has committed to. Additionally, the individual has to be in agreement with his own self and with whom he claims to be, otherwise he might be experiencing severe psychological disorders (Schlenker, 2008).

Moral values comprise beliefs about certain action models, as well as the degree of importance of life or world-related aspects. Moral beliefs can be general or specific to certain situations. Values are responsible with orienting the individuals in the human, behavior and situation selection and evaluation (Schwartz, 1994).

There are personal and community-related values. Both categories can include moral behaviors. Those values which involve goals centered on one's own interest are individual values, while those centered on the well-being of the surrounding people are called community values (Dunlop et al., 2013). Values centered on personal goals and interests can become an impediment for moral behavior. They are opposed to the values involving goals centered on the well-being of those around. Values centered on one's own interests explain the relatively reduced frequency of moral behavior (Kohlberg, 1984; Schwartz, 1992). As far as a morally mature person is concerned, values are harmoniously integrated and expressed through his/her behavior (Bergman, 2004; Colby & Damon, 1992; Damon, 1984). When such values stand in opposition within an individual, he/she will have a tendency towards an immoral behavior. In the case in which these values are in agreement, the individual will have a moral behavior (Dunlop et al., 2013).

Values are normative, in direct connection with the behavioral standards (requirements) promoted by the society. They are integrated in the personality structure and influence the correct manner of behaving in particular life circumstances. In a situation of moral conflict, the individual gives priority to certain values to the detriment of others, structuring thus an intra-personal order of values, which can be considered the individual value system (Roccaset al., 2002). An individual's value system is influenced by one's life experiences and the pressure of the socio-cultural environment (Roccaset al., 2002). Personal values are strongly organized through concepts associated by the individual with a personal significance. Among the most valued aspects one can find: relations with family members, close friends, work, healthcare, physical appearance, help given to others, religiousness (Zang& Yu, 2012).

Values direct the individual towards certain life goals and sustain him in the efforts he makes towards achieving the former. The voluntary component of committing to goals supported by moral values creates a moral profile which is then transformed into actions and leads to the development and manifestation of one's potential (Martin, 2007).

Cognitive mechanisms

Ethical ideology stands at the foundation of a moral behavior and implies the existence of a set of values, beliefs, standards and of an image of oneself which helps

create the attitude of an individual regarding what is right or wrong. This leads to the creation of a moral scheme which the individual can use to evaluate his life events (Shlenker, 2008).

People's beliefs on morality can suffer variations from one culture to another, but thereare common elements in all cultures.One can refer to an ideal moral profile that people appreciate (Lapsley&Lasky, 2001; Wlaker& Henning, 2004). In this regard, a moral person has a set of principles and respects certain values of his society; he is also considered an honest, trustworthy and kind person, interested in the well-being of those around, at the same time as being respectful, hardworking, altruist and responsible. Adherence to moral principles is not associated with rigidity or conformism, but requires sincere commitment and mental openness (Walker & Henning, 2004).

Self-conscience.The individual is aware of his desires to act in a certain manner, and evaluates them according to his internal norms, which are in agreement, to a certain extent, with the more general social norms. Thus, the individual prepares himself a behavioral set of actions to be applied once encountering a specific situation. The passage from moral concepts and beliefs to moral action is accomplished at the same time as the evaluation of one's moral beliefs.

A behavioral pattern can be also established with the help of repetitive imaginative scenarios. The subject might be confronted with an imaginary situation, and is likely to have an action pattern as response. Changes in the ways of thinking, feeling and dealing with a situation are associated with different behavioral patterns. It would be ideal to react in a spontaneous manner, in agreement with certain moral principles in specific life situations. After the individual has developed certain ethical action plans, he/she will experience spontaneous feelings in agreement with moral principles. The critical pondering on one's ways of thinking, feeling and acting is a very important pattern, which should be developed for the continuous perfecting of moral character (Massecar, 2014).

Moral reasoning is itself a base for moral behavior, as the society allowed the formation of more and more sophisticated reasoning on oneself and the others. While people age, their capacity to reason develops more. According to the approach of cognitive development, moral reasoning plays a decisive role in moral behavior (Kohlberg, 1984). More recent approaches focus on internalizing moral goals and features, and integrating them in one's self-image (Hoffman, 2000). Combining the approaches is the optimal explanatory solution. The more complex cognitive capacity becomes, pro-social behavior tends to develop in two directions. Firstly, the individual becomes more capable to understand one's wishes and desires; thus, he can feel and act from a larger perspective and not only by referring to himself. Secondly, he becomes more self-aware, being capable to internalize pro-social ideals and value them consciously, in day to day life (Hoffman, 2000).

Moral choices. Choices made when confronted with a moral dilemma contribute to the forming of character virtues or of a virtuous character. Upon choosing action in agreement with a certain moral value, one often suppresses, in most cases, an action in agreement with another moral value. Let us take the example of a moral dilemma between being generous with someone or being honest with another one. There are situations when one cannot act in agreement with both moral values, and will have to suppress one of them. Becoming a virtuous person does not imply an equal development of all virtues in one human being and giving equal importance to each of them.

The well-being state

People are used to experiencing a state of well-being when what they do is correct and moral. The well –being state is associated with moral values (Fisher, 2012).

The practical efficiency of a moral norm is measured in social results and is subjectively evaluated, leading thus to a certain (measurable) level of an individual's well-being state. If the internalization of a moral norm leads to a significant degree of distress and affects his well-being state, then its social utility is questionable. If the individual accepts and internalizes certain moral demands, he is likely to build his life based on those. Consequently, society's moral demands need to take into consideration the individual's psychological needs (Sin, 2012).

The immediate satisfaction of desires and instincts (the hedonistic orientation of the well-being state) leads to a state of wellness, which is however and most often, an ephemeral one. The satisfaction of needs in agreement with certain moral goals and values leads to a more long lasting state of well-being which is associated with a higher level of self-awareness(Jason, 2010)

The personality

Temper, social roles and an individual's job contribute to a large extent to the formation of the moral style (Chen, 2013). Anauthentic person (here authenticity should be seen as a virtue) and in agreement with herself (as far as goal pursuit is concerned) will be able to develop easily a moral character in agreement with its valuable principles.

Moral behavior is influenced by personality traits and is likely to become a relatively stable personality feature (Clary, Snyder, 1991). There are several factors which influence it and lead to its variations among individuals. Among the personality factors which influence moral behavior one can find: trust, a secure attachment style, empathy, guilt, shame, self-regulation capabilities (Eisenberg and others, 1992; Mlčák, Záškodná, 2008), the degree of moral development, the locus of control, neuroticism, agreeability, self-consciousness and self-evaluation (Flynn et al., 2006).

Mlčák and Záškodná (2008) defined pro-social tendency through an internal motivational training intended for a pro-social action. This tendency has a great stability in the long term and leads to a high frequency of pro-social behavior.

Pro-social individuals are pre-disposed to cooperating with those around them and are more selfless in their actions, compared to those individuals who do not act in a pro-social manner. A moral behavior requires, on the one hand, the desire to become a better person, and, on the other, an adherence to moral norms. Moral norms are the most important predictor of moral behavior and can be found in the individual's attitude towards the social dilemmas he is confronted with (Kaiser &Byrka, 2011).

An individual's life ideology can lead to the development ofintegrity. This virtue is accurately perceived by those people close to one, and is expressed through his beliefs about himself and his social judgements. Integrity acts as a predictor of moral behavior, the well-being state, stress adapting and efficient social functioning. Integrity is one of the most socially desirable features (Dumas et al., 2002; Hampson et al., 1987). It is also proof of the concern shown towards other people's well-being – the individual engages in a moral action by thinking of the effects it will have over the others (McCabe et al., 2001).

Integrity is associated with a positive image of oneself, the public image that one has and the relations he/she has with the people surrounding him/her. Those who perceive themselves as incorruptible self-evaluate their behavior and see themselves as accomplishing more in the field of integrity. This evaluation is confirmed through hetero-evaluation by the people being closer to them. Integrity and authenticity are associated with moral activities such as helping those in need (Shlenker, 2008).

Spirituality is a factor which influences the structure of the value system and one's moral life. Spirituality can be defined as a life experience – a situation in which one lives according to his inner truth, relating to life in a positive manner and establishing positive social relations.

Definitions of spirituality focus on life's ultimate goal – the experience of a transcendental dimension which gives meaning to one's existence. Those whose main life value is spirituality are more compliant with the society's moral norms. Spirituality is an important factor of the psychological well-being. Spiritual traditions based on doctrines of wisdom are associated with the adherence to the society's moral norms, a fact which is known to enhance one's well-being state (Van Dierendonck, 2012).

Table 1. Socially valued moral conduct standards

Life context	Moral conduct standards
The family environment	1.Support
	2.Family care
	3.Flexibility
	4.Respect
The work environment	1.Support
	2.Correctness
	3.Power-sharing
	4.Honesty
The friendship environment	1.Support
	2.Respect
	3.Trust
	4.Consolidation of the relationship in time
The public space environment	1.Civic attitude
	2.Respect
	3.Politeness
	4.Corectness

The moral style

The choices made when confronted with moral dilemmas contribute to the appearance of moral styles. A moral choice is accompanied by moral judgements which later consolidate certain action patterns. Individuals have different moral character types and are virtuous in different manners (Carr, 2003). It is impossible for people to act at the same time in agreement with all virtues (Watson, 1984).

An interesting question refers to why some people give priority to some specific virtues and not to others when confronted with moral dilemmas? This adherence to some or others of the moral values can be explained through one's life style, the life he /she desires and which he/she has built up to present (Watson, 1984).

Moral identity

By forming a moral identity, the individual evaluates his own ethical character. The existence of ethical life principles involves a strong personal commitment towards the moral identity which also facilitated positive interaction with the ones around and a pro-social behavior. The moral identity has an important role in self-regulation, by tying moral attitudes to behavior. When the individual shows commitment to a series of behavioral norms, these norms are likely to become the main schemes of an event interpretation and of oneself'sevaluation. These behavioral norms reflect the values that the individual embraces. Commitment is an important factor of regulating one's own behavior in agreement with one's own values (Shlenker, 2008).

Previous steps in the scale development

Any scale that measures one of the contents briefly discussed above (e.g. empathy, guilt, shame, moral identity, self-consciousness etc.) can be seen as an indirect measure of moral character as these traits are predictors of this behavior. However, in the design of this original scale, we selected to focus on moral standards applied in various life contexts as a more direct measure of moral character.

The first step in the scale development was to design an open-ended survey that was completed by 150 participants. The aim of this step was to explore the moral conduct standards valued socially in four life contexts: within the family, at the workplace, in one's relations with close friends and within the public space. Participants in the survey have been asked to provide examples of desirable and undesirable behaviors for each moral standard.The author has analyzed the frequency of appearance of socially-valued moral standards and classified in some clusters or general categories based on their content (see Table 1).

This table presents, in a decreasing order of their social importance, the main moral behavioral standards valued socially in the four life contexts, as shown by the quantitative study. The author has used these examples to highlight the main character traits socially valued, and as a referencing point for developing the items to be included in a character evaluation scale. Based on this approach, an initial pool consisting of 92 items was developed.

These items were next included in a pilot study in order to assess the psychometric properties of the items based on classical item analysis. Only 21 items were selected based on their item analysis properties and on their relevance for the various life contexts. However, please note that all these 21 items provides examples of socially undesirable acts, therefore the scale might be better labeled to assess the bad character or instances of failure to involve in a moral character. However, for practical reasons, we decided to keep its name as original, as a scale to measure the moral character.

Aim of the research

The aim of the research is to focus on the next sequence of the scale development, namely on exploring the factorial structure of the 21-item scale to assess the moral character. Such a scale, when completely validated,might be a useful tool both for the clinical psychologists, as well as people working in work and organizational psychology.

Method

Participants.

The 21-item version of the scale was applied to a sample of 300 participants, as a part of a non-probabilistic convenience sample, aged between 18 and 70 years old (M =24.79; SD=9.98), of which 70.4% were women and 29.6 % were men. As it can be noticed, the sample was heavily skewed toward including young people.

Instruments.

The 21-item Character Assessment Scale is a self-report instrument. Participants' answers are provided on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 to 5, where 1 meansthe item fits the description of the participant's behavior to a very small extent, while 5 means the item fits the description to a very large extent.

Procedure

All participants in the research have voluntarily agreed to participate in this research. The questionnaire was given in a paper and pencil form, in collective settings. Individuals have been asked to provide their names, while being reassured the confidentiality principle will be applied.

Results

The quantitative data have been analyzed by using the exploratory factor analysis. The extraction method was Principal Components Analysis and the rotation method was direct oblimin, resulting thus in the structuring of a scale with 21 items and 4 factors. The 4 factors explain 48.45% of the variance, while the KMO indicator show an appropriate sample to generate the factorial structure (KMO = .863).

The four resulting factors are the following:

Factor no. 1: Evilness (7 items, Cronbach alpha: .75) – a tendency to look for means to morally harm those around, to form coalitions with a vindictive role against someone or to eliminate potential adversaries through any means.

Factor no. 2: An ill-tempered behavior (5 items, Cronbach alpha: .77) – a tendency towards a refractory behavior which does not take into account the rights that people around have, lack of politeness and imposing to others by force.

Factor no. 3: Dishonesty (4 items, Cronbach alpha: .64) – a tendency to hide the truth, a manipulative behavior and double-dealing in interpersonal relations.

Factor no. 4: Upstartness (5 items, Cronbach alpha: .71) – a predisposition towards engaging in relations with influential people, searching for opportunities to advance one's career despite merit, easily accepting compromise in order to achieve goals.

Tables 2 and 3 present the results of the exploratory factor analysis, while Table 4 presents the correlations of each dimension with the total score of the scale and the correlations between the scale's four dimensions. The results emphasize moderate positive correlations among the four factors (in the range between .30 and .40), suggesting a second-order higher factor that is common to all items, that can be also noticed from moderate and high communalities obtained for the four-factor solution

Table 2. The factors and the saturation of items within the factors as provided by pattern matrix

Factors and items	F1	F2	F3	F4
Factor no. 1:Evilness				
When someone upsets me I look for allies against the respective person.	*.60*			
I can put someone in a bad position if he/she upsets me.	.40			
Provided I could, I would not hesitate to fire those colleagues I dislike.	.75			
I would be bothered if others had opinions about my ideas.	.65			
I look for the weak spots of others in the event of competition occurring.	.49			
I try to break the relations of those who plot against me or speak ill of me.	.45			
I would not be capable of shutting a door in someone's face.	*.31*			
Factors and items	**F1**	**F2**	**F3**	**F4**
Factor no. 2: Ill-tempered behavior				
If someone raises his voice at me, then I will raise it as well.		.75		
It happens that I get sucked in arguments with others.		.65		
It happens that I raise my voice if someone does something that I do not approve of.		.74		
Should an unknown person ill-address me on the phone, I would reply in the same manner.		.63		
I will easily become ill-tempered if someone irritates me.		.75		
Factor no. 3: Dishonesty				
I hardly admit to having made a mistake, and only if it is on the brink of being discovered.			.66	
In order to solve something urgent, I would promise more than I could actually offer at the beginning/on the spot.			.33	
I find it hard to admit that my point of view was wrong.			.83	
It is an effort to be constantly polite.			.47	
Factor no. 4: Upstartness				
I seek to establish the best relations with those who seem to be climbing up the ladder.				.61
In most situations I try to impose my point of view.				.63
I support the idea of looking and having relations with persons with a good social standing and money.				.52
If I were to take part in an inheritance I would be extremely careful to achieve maximum gains.				.54
I prefer those relatives who have material achievements.				.67

Note: The total variance explained by the 4 factors is of 42.45%; KMO= .863; Bartlett Test of Sphericity: Chi-Square = 1.707, df = 210; p<.000

Table 3. Items` communalities (presented in their order in the scale)

Items	Communalities
01. If someone raises his voice at me, then I will raise it as well.	.57
02. When someone upsets me I look for allies against the respective person.	.51
03. It happens to get sucked in arguments with others.	.46
04. If I were to take part in an inheritance I would be extremely careful to achieve maximum gains.	.39
05. I prefer those relatives who have material achievements.	.47
06. I hardly admit to having made a mistake, and only if it is on the brink of being discovered.	.61
07. I can put someone in a bad position if he/she upsets me.	.39
08. It happens that I raise my voice if someone does something that I do not approve of.	.57
09. Should an unknown person ill-address me on the phone, I would reply in the same manner.	.46
10. Provided I could, I would not hesitate to fire those colleagues I dislike.	.56
11. I would be bothered if others had opinions about my ideas.	.42
12. I seek to establish the best relations with those who seem to be climbing up the ladder.	.52
13. I look for the weak spots of others in the event of competition occurring.	.39
14. In order to solve something urgent, I would promise more than I could actually offer at the beginning/on the spot.	.33
15. I try to break the relations of those who plot against me or speak ill of me.	.38
16. In most situations I try to impose my point of view.	.53
17. I would not be capable to shut a door in someone's face.	.34
18. I support the idea of looking and having relations with persons with a good social standing and money.	.52
19. I find it hard to admit that my point of view was wrong.	.70
20. It is an effort to be constantly polite.	.42
21. I will easily become ill-tempered if someone irritates me.	.63

Table 4.Correlations between the factors and with the total score of the scale

Dimensions	1	2	3	4	5
1. Correlation with the total score	_	.90**	.88**	.84**	.77**
2. Factor no. 1	.90**	_	.31**	.36**	.35**
3. Factor no. 2	.88**	.31**	_	.38**	.33*
4. Factor no. 3	.84**	.36**	.38**	_	.32*
5. Factor no. 4	.77**	.35**	.33*	.32*	_

Note: *p < .05 bi-lateral, **p < .01 bi-lateral;

Discussion

The study highlighted a factorial structure comprising 4 factors of the Character Evaluation Scale. Developing a moral character is associated with a psychological well-being state (Fisher, 2012). Thus, knowing the personnel's character can help orient interventions on a group and organization level, as well as for the evaluation of the employee character.The scale can also be applied in the clinical area, through the identification of one's dysfunctional moral tendencies, which can serve to the projection of a therapeutic intervention.

Before reaching its mature status to allow using the scale in such relevant applied contexts several validation steps will be required. First, a confirmatory factor analysis would be required, particularly on a sample with different socio-demographic features that would be more balanced in terms of age, gender, and educational status. In this way, several limitations of this study related to sample will be addressed. Second, correlations with other relevant scales are necessary in order to establish a pattern of convergence and divergence with appropriate selected constructs (e.g. self-conscious, social conformism etc.). Third, criterion validation studies on some contrast group populations (i.e. people with or without a criminal record) would be required. Fourth, as in the case of any self-report measures that tap on these sensitive constructs, its association with social desirability scales should be investigated.

In conclusion, more steps are required to validate this new instrument as a measure of (bad) character. However, the results from this exploratory factor analysis are very promising, showing a well-defined correlated four-factor structure, suggesting a second order factor that directly measures instances of failure to behave in a morally character manner.

References

Bergman, R. (2004). Identity as motivation: Toward a theory of the moral self. In Moral development, self and identity 2004, edited by D. K. Lapsley& D. Narvaez, 21–46. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Colby, A., Damon, W. (1992). Some do care: Contemporary lives of moral commitment. New York, NY: Free Press.

Clary, E.G., Snyder, M. (1991).A functional analysis of altruism and prosocial behavior, the case of volunteerism. In: M.S. Clark (Ed.), Prosocial Behavior, Review of Personality and Social Psychology, 12, 119-148.

Carr, D. (2003). Character and moral choice in the cultivation of virtue.Philosophy, 78(304), 219–232.

Chen, Y. (2013). A Missing Piece of the Contemporary Character Education Puzzle: The Individualisation of Moral Character. Stud PhilosEduc, 32, 345–360.

Cloninger, C. R., Svrakic, D. M., Przybeck, T. R. (1993).Apsychobiological model of temperament and character.Archivesof General Psychiatry, 50, 975–990.

Dumas, J. E., Johnson, M., Lynch, A. M. (2002).Likableness, familiarity and frequency of 844 – person descriptive words.Personality and individual differences, 32, 523 – 531.

Dunlop, W.L., Walker, L. J., Matsuba, M.K. (2013). The development of moral motivation across the adult Lifespan.European Journal of Developmental Psychology, 10(2), 285–300.

Damon, W. (1984).Self-understanding and moral development from childhood to adolescence.In W. M. Kurtines& J. L. Gewirtz (Eds.), Morality, moral behavior, and moral development (pp. 109–127). New York, NY: Wiley.

Elster, J. (1989). Social norms and economic theory.Journal of Economic Perspectives, 3, 99–117.

Eisenberg, N., Wolchik, S. A., Goldberg, L., and Ilene, E. (1992). Parental values, reinforcement, and young children's prosocial behavior: A longitudinal study. The Journal of Genetic Psychology, 153, 19-36.

Flynn, F.J., Reagans, R.E., Amanatullah, E.T., Ames, R.E. (2006). Helping one's way to the top: Self-monitors achieve status by helping others and knowing who helps whom. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 91, 1123-1137.

Fisher, J. (2012). Being Proud and Feeling Proud: Character, Emotion, and the Moral Psychology of Personal Ideals. J Value Inquiry, 46, 209–222.

Hampson, S. E., Goldberg, L.R., John, O.P. (1987). Category breadth and social desirability values for 573 personality terms. European Journal of Personality, 1, 241 – 258.

Hoffman, M. L. (2000). Empathy and moral development: Implications for caring and justice. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Isaacowitz, D., Valiant,G., Seligman, M. (2003). Strengths and Satisfaction across the Adult Lifespan.Internationaljournal of Aging and Human Development, 57(2): 181-201.

Jason, R. (2010). Well-Being and the Priority of Values.Social Theory and Practice, 10, 36.

Kaiser, F., Byrka, K. (2011). Environmentalism as a trait: Gauging people's prosocial personality in terms of environmental engagement. International journal of psychology, 46 (1), 71–79.

Kohlberg, L. (1984). Essays on moral development. Vol. 2: The psychology of moral development. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row.

Lapsley, D. C., Lasky, B. (2001). Prototypic moral character.Identity, 1, 345 – 363.

Martin, M. (2007).Happiness and Virtue in Positive Psychology.Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 37(1).

McCabe, D. L., Trevino, L. C., Butterfield, K. D. (2001). Cheating in academic institutions: A decade of research.Ethics & Behavior, 11, 219-232.

Massecar, A. (2014). Peirce, Moral Cognitivism, and the Development of Character.Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce society, 50(1).

Mlčák, Z., Záškodná, H. (2008). Analysis of relationships between prosocial tendencies, empathy, and the five-factor personality model in students of helping professions.StudiaPsychologica, 50, 201-216.

Narvaez, D. (2012). Moral Neuroeducation from Early Life Through the Lifespan. Neuroethics, 5, 145–157.

Opp, K. (2013). Norms and rationality. Is moral behavior a form of rational action?.Theory, 74, 383–409.

Roccas, S., Sagiv, L., Schwartz, S.H., &Knafo, A. (2002). The big five personality factors and personal values.Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 28, 789–801.

Schlenker, B. R. (2008). Integrity and character: implications of principled and expedient ethical ideologies. Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 27, 10, 1078-1125.

Schlenker, B. R., Pontari, B. A., Christopher, A. N. (2001). Excuses and character: personal and social implications of excuses. Personality and social psychology review, 5, 15 – 32.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2002). Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychologyto Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment. New York, NY: Free Press

Sin, W. (2012).Internalization and moral demands.Philos Stud, 157, 163–175.

Schwartz, S. H., & Clausen, G. T. (1970). Responsibility, norms, and helping in an emergency. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 16, 299-310.

Schwartz, S.H. (1994). Are there universal aspects in the structure and contents of human values? Journal of Social Issues, 50(4), 19–45.

Schwartz, S.H. (1992). Universals in the content and structure of values: Theoretical advances and empirical tests in 20 countries. In Mark P. Zanna (Ed.), Advances in experimental social psychology (pp. 1–65). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Van Dierendonck, D. (2012). Spirituality as an Essential Determinant for the Good Life, its Importance Relative to Self-Determinant Psychological Needs. J Happiness Stud, 13, 685–700.

Walker, L. J., &Hennig, K. H. (2004).Differing conceptions of moral exemplarity: Just, brave, and caring.Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 86, 629-647.

Watson, G. (1984). Virtues in excess. Philosophical Studies, 46(1), 57–74.

Zang, C., Yu, E. (2012). Quest for a good life: Spiritual values, life goals, and college students. Asia-Pacific Psychiatry, 6, 91–98.