

# Adolescence and Character Education (Meta-Synthesis Study)

Ilhan Kaçire

Corporate Communications Department of the Institute for Educational Research of the IDEIS Foundation, Rotterdam,  
Netherlands

Email: [ilhankacire@gmail.com](mailto:ilhankacire@gmail.com)

**How to cite this paper:** Kaçire, I. (2025). Adolescence and Character Education (Meta-Synthesis Study). *Creative Education*, 16, 477-494.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2025.164029>

**Received:** March 14, 2025

**Accepted:** April 19, 2025

**Published:** April 22, 2025

Copyright © 2025 by author(s) and  
Scientific Research Publishing Inc.

This work is licensed under the Creative  
Commons Attribution International  
License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

---

## Abstract

The efforts to impart the values and social norms of society to young people have been an important goal for every society and specifically for educational institutions. Especially in adolescence, while individuals show rapid development in terms of pubertal maturation, acquiring social values and developing social skills, they have great problems in accepting and transforming them into behavior. The fact that this period is a phase of adversity for individuals and that attitudes and behaviors that are not welcomed by the society are intensively acquired during this period makes character education even more important. Over time, from the past to the present, many studies have focused on character education and different studies have been carried out on the factors that affect the character education of the individual. Based on the findings, it has been found that these factors are intertwined with each other and that these factors directly or indirectly affect the other. Moreover, these problems within the factors have negative reflections on the character development of the individual. This study is a meta-synthesis of 33 scientific thesis (master's/doctoral) studies and articles conducted in Turkey between 2000 and 2016. The target of this meta-synthesis is to examine the research on character education in adolescence, to create a general framework based on the findings and to draw attention to the importance of the subject. As a result of the review, the findings on character education in adolescence can be categorized under five main headings. These are: a) the necessity of character education as a course in secondary school education programs, b) the necessity of a structure based on the cooperation of stakeholders in character education, c) the inadequacy of teachers who will provide character education in this field, d) the priority order of values that shape character education, e) the effectiveness of character education programs. In addition, in the discussion section, how character education should be in adolescence according to today's perspective is tried to be answered.

---

---

## Keywords

Adolescence, Character Education and Character Education Program

---

### 1. Introduction

In the 20th century, new discoveries and different acceptances in the field of science and technology have deeply affected the industrial and social life. Thus in the continuation of the process, phenomena such as the increase in migration from rural areas to cities, the establishment of large industrial cities, the transition to the nuclear family model, the participation of women in working life, the shift of some family functions to school, the acceleration of cultural flow between societies, and the corruption of beliefs and values have become a part of our lives. It is an undeniable fact that all these phenomena of change also affect the character structure of the individual.

The alarming trends in today's youth behavior: suicide, manslaughter, child pregnancy, increase in drug users, increase in crime and violence, family breakdown, increasing youth psycho-social adaptation problems, ethnic and racial conflicts, increase in unemployment and parallel to this, decrease in the number of responsible people (Kirschenbaum, 1995), are increasing day by day and taking place in society. This situation is very worrying for the individual and the social order and involves a major problem for the future of humanity. Humanity cannot afford to live with such problems occurring in the structure of society. Of course, the solution to all problems lies with human beings and the education that shapes them. At this point, the question of what kind of education should be used to raise individuals so that undesirable behavioral tendencies in individuals and society can be minimized gains weight.

From antiquity to the present day, the main goal of all divine and human systems is human virtue and happiness and social order. It can be said that the happiness of the individual and the order of society are hidden in the virtue of the individual. For this reason, all societies have endeavored to raise virtuous individuals to the extent of their means. The fact that adolescence is a stage of adversity in the individual's life and that behavioral patterns that are not accepted by the society such as "bullying, speaking loudly, being displaying arrogance, disdain for rules, inappropriate clothing style for the society" (Kılıççı, 1999) are acquired during this period makes character education even more important.

The target of this study is to examine the scientific studies conducted in universities in Turkey on adolescence and character education and to draw attention to the importance of the subject by making an evaluation within the framework of common findings.

### 2. Method

In accordance with the objective outlined above, the studies examining character

education in the adolescence period were scanned by using the keywords “adolescence period and character education”, “primary school/middle school and character education programs” from the relevant literature “thesis and articles” conducted between 2000 and 2016. Most of the theses and articles were accessed online through YÖK (Higher Education Institution) Thesis, Ulakbilim, EBSCO Host databases and Google Scholar. This technique, which [Duverger \(1973\)](#) calls “documentary observation”, [Rummel \(1964\)](#) and many others define as “document method”. Document scanning involves finding, reading, noting and evaluating sources for a specific purpose. While the two strongest aspects of this method are economy and reliability, the fact that the data is based on previous studies is one of its weaknesses ([Karasar, 2006](#)).

In this study, 33 domestic and foreign scientific researches (thesis “master’s/doctorate” and articles) were used, and as a result of the analysis of the researches, it was thought that the findings on character education in adolescence can be grouped under five main headings. These are: a) The necessity of character education as a course in secondary school education programs. b) The necessity of a structure based on the responsible in character education. c) The insufficiency of teachers who will provide character education in this field. d) Prioritization of values that shape character education. e) The effectiveness of character education programs.

First of all, the concepts of adolescence and character and the importance of character education and character education programs will be emphasized in order to provide a basis for the above findings and to add depth to the study. In addition, in the discussion section, the aim is to seek an answer to the question of how character education should be in adolescence from today’s perspective.

## 2.1. Adolescence and Character

Adolescence, which constitutes the first years of adolescence in an individual, is a term taken from the English word puberty and Latin word pubertas ([Poyraz, 2014](#)). Adolescence, which is also referred to as coming of age in society, is the age with the most important characteristics, although it covers the shortest period in our lives. In addition to being called pre-adolescence, it is also known as the age of puberty ([Kılıç, 2013](#)). According to [Saka \(1999\)](#), it is defined as the process of biological maturation of the body during the transition from childhood to adulthood.

[Hall \(1904\)](#), while explaining the period of adolescence, also makes some determinations about this period. According to him, the personality of the individual in this period oscillates between mobility/stagnation, joy/sorrow, egocentrism/other-centeredness. In his scientific studies, Hall explains the adolescence period on biological grounds ([Rice, 1997](#); [Steinberg, 2007](#)). At the same time, this period is also characterized as a period in which the foundations of character development are shaped and the formation of vocational consciousness becomes clear, along with the biological maturation of the individual. According to [Kulaksızoğlu](#)

(2002), the main characteristics of this period are as follows:

- Adolescence is a period of short and rapid physiological change.
- Their emotions are unstable and tense. Instability is dominant in their emotional reactions. In addition, the increase in the intensity of their emotions becomes exaggerated. This intensity can be observed very easily, especially when expressing emotions such as joy, sadness, anger and fear. In this period, the individual, who experiences the feeling of dependence-independence intensely, wants to be with his/her peer group more than his/her parents.
- While unwillingness to fulfill the tasks assigned to the individual, indifference, indifference and tendency to be negligent come to the forefront, an increase in the desire to be alone is observed.
- Efforts towards sexual identity development and tendency towards the opposite sex increase.
- With the effect of rapid growth, inadequacies in body coordination, clumsiness and clumsiness in psycho-motor skills may be observed. It has also been observed that children are tired, absent-minded and irritable.
- Adolescence is a phase of negativity.

Adolescents develop rapidly in terms of sexual maturation, acquiring social values and norms, and developing social skills. However, they have great problems in accepting and transforming these into behavior. It is a reality that physical, mental and emotional developments and changes in the adolescent have some effects on his/her behavior.

The body appearance of the adolescent will change with the effect of hormones, and he will look different in his own eyes as well as in the eyes of others (Guasch, 1985). In this period, concerns about the appearance of their bodies can be seen. Because children cannot have the appearance they imagine. The rapid change in the adolescent's own body causes anxiety and a sense of alienation from their own body (Ekşi, 1990). Apart from this, the cause of anxiety is usually related to whether the development of the body and genitalia and also the secondary sex characteristics is normal or not. As such, they may perceive themselves as ugly, worthless or unhealthy (Hurlock, 1985; Ekşi, 1990). During this period, some parents treat their adolescents as children and expect adult behaviors from them. While it upsets the adolescents to be treated as children, they also experience the difficulty of not being mature enough to respond to adult expectations. This situation may cause some imbalance and inconsistency in the behavior of the adolescents.

## 2.2. Character and Character Education

The word character is derived from the word "charassein" which means "to engrave" in Hellenic culture. The concept of character has gained different meanings over time and has become a person's behavioral characteristics and moral structure (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999).

Character is good behavior that is easy to understand and directly observable. Good behaviors can be defined as, using certain words, performing certain actions

or avoiding them. Furthermore, good behavior is the practice of certain virtues such as courtesy, honesty, obedience to legal authority, perseverance, a good sense of humor, integrity, and so on (Leming, 1996). If these principles or core tenets transformed into life are in conformity with the moral rules of the time and society, then character is moral (Kerschensteiner, 1954). Gough (2011) defines character in a moral sense as what we are at our core, a sum of our habits, a mixture of our good and bad habits, while Battistich (2005) emphasizes that an individual should have only positive mental, social, emotional and moral development. In short, we can define the concept of character as the conformity of individual-specific behaviors to social values and moral norms in society and their transfer to life by the individual.

Character traits are generally shaped according to the social norms and value judgments in which the individual lives. Therefore, the characteristics and the concept of character are relative and may change over time, from group to group, from society to society, from country to country. However, these three basic elements are inevitable for social order and a moral life.

According to Lickona (1997), these are a) moral knowledge, b) moral feeling and c) moral behavior. These three basic elements come together to form moral maturity. Moral knowledge is moral awareness, knowing moral values, perspective taking, moral thinking, decision making, self-knowledge. Moral emotion is consciousness, self-confidence, empathy, love for the good, self-control, humility. Moral behavior is competence, will and habit. The acquisition and transfer of these characteristics expressed by Lickona by the individual is directly related to the environment in which he/she/they lives and the achievements that can be gained by him/her/them.

As with the concept of character, it is possible to come across different definitions in the concept of character education. While Kanger (2007) emphasizes that it covers both the inherent dynamics of individuals and the family environment in which they grow up, as well as the school and social environment, Silay (2010) structures this concept as all of the organized, constructive and instructive activities of the family, schools and social environment in the process of the individual becoming a person with positive qualities. Character traits are generally shaped according to the social norms and value judgments in which the individual lives. Therefore, the characteristics and the concept of character are relative and may change over time, from group to group, from society to society, from country to country. However, these three basic elements are inevitable for social order and a moral life. Based on these ideas, character education can be defined as an effort to consciously transfer the basic moral values and social norms generally accepted in society to future generations.

### **2.3. Importance of Character Education Program**

According to scientific studies in this field (Dune, 1997; Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 1997; Gutek, 2001; Ekşi, 2003; Battistich, 2005; Narvaez, 2006), the different ap-

proaches to educational philosophies, existence, knowledge, and value have different reflections on character education programs. However, character education programs can be classified as follows according to the schools of thought they are based on and the developmental goals they care about (Ekşi, 2003). These are: a) Reasoning-Habit: Some approaches emphasize moral reasoning and reflection, while others emphasize the practice of virtuous behavior until it becomes a habit. b) High Values-Intermediate Values: Some approaches prioritize core values such as self-discipline, courage, loyalty and perseverance, while others emphasize instrumental values such as care, kindness and friendship. c) Focus on the Individual—Focus on the Environment and Society: Is character for the individual? Or should it fit into the norms and templates of the group?

The vitalization of the characteristics expressed by Ekşi is related to educational institutions. Teaching values that may or may not be explicitly stated in official programs, disciplining students in line with these rules, contributing to their moral development and positively influencing their character are among the main duties of schools. Some of the messages that students receive at school are not included in the formal program. These messages are part of the implicit program. The program influences what kind of experiences the student can/can't have at school, how he/she/they can and can't act, as well as his/her understanding of himself/herself/themselves and his/her/their view of the world (Wren, 1999). Since an individual's character is built according to value judgments and social norms, the definition of good character is also the answer to which values should be taught. People who are humble, honest, kind, loyal, patient, responsible and sincere are characterized by others as people of strong character (Akbaş, 2008).

### 3. Findings

#### 3.1. The Necessity of Character Education as a Course in Secondary School Education Programs

When the education programs of secondary schools in Turkey are examined, it is stated that there is no character education program (Çağatay, 2009). However, some private schools aim to provide the components of character education through activities prepared through the guidance services of these schools. In the new 2005 primary education program, values were added to the achievements and skills section of the lesson plans. In the program, the values aimed to be acquired between courses with an interdisciplinary approach were also determined. Especially in Social Studies, Life Sciences, Science and Technology, Folk Culture, Traffic and First Aid courses, value acquisition is emphasized (Yıldırım, 2007; Çağatay, 2009). However, these courses cannot be considered as an alternative to character education (Sirri & Mehmedoğlu, 2015). In his study, Üstünyer (2009) states that guidance courses do not provide the desired contribution to character education in terms of both curriculum and practitioners.

In the same study, the educators who participated in the research emphasized that character education is a very urgent need (Uysal, 2008; Meydan, 2012) and

that families are inadequate in giving universal values to their children, teachers are not successful due to their workload and competencies (Üstünyer, 2009) and therefore it is vital for the school to undertake such a mission (Uysal, 2008). In her study, Akçin (2016) states that the reason why character education should be in secondary school is to reduce the negative effects of factors such as family, social environment, friends and social media on student behavior, to fill this gap when they cannot find positive examples in terms of character in their families, and at the same time to provide the targeted value gains in the individual.

In a study conducted by Yıldırım (2007) to develop a model proposal for a character education program at the primary education level for Turkey and to determine the applicability of the developed model according to the views of the participants, the “Character Education Model Questionnaire” developed by the researcher was applied to a total of 1255 participants from 21 provinces, and it was found that the proposed character education model was highly applicable in schools by the participants. Berkowitz and Bier (2004) emphasize the importance and necessity of developing school-based character education.

### 3.2. The Necessity of a Structure Based on the Responsibles in Character Education

It is an undeniable fact that every single entity or social phenomenon in which an individual lives and interacts has an impact on his/her character structure. According to Kesgin (2015), family is considered as the primary influence on a child’s character formation.

In addition, school, peer group, communication tools, religious institutions and organizations are other contributing factors. (Yazıcı, 2008; Çağatay, 2009; Üstünyer, 2009; Aslan, 2011; Akçin, 2016) state that these factors, which are effective in an individual’s character development, should act jointly. In her study, Akçin (2016) states that the most important factor in students’ character development is the family factor, followed by the social environment, friends, school, teachers and social media factors, and that teachers are effective in terms of being positive role models in students’ character development. Meydan (2012) emphasizes that families are more important in terms of both responsibility and influence in values education. Üstünyer (2009), while supporting this view, emphasizes that an education cannot be successful without first recognizing the family and helping families with their problems through activities such as organizing family education programs, and that the environment in which the student lives, teachers and the media should also be made aware of this issue. Orhan (2013) also states that the most important factor in the character education of an individual is the family, but that the family has problems in realizing the role model task.

Çağatay (2009) conducted a study on the effect of school and teachers on students’ character development. According to the results of this study, it was concluded that the school was effective in students’ character development. In addition, it was found that teachers were the most influential people in the character development of students within the school, and that teachers’ classroom practices

and classroom management approaches were also effective in the character development of students. However, it is stated that extracurricular activities are not given enough importance, although they are important in students' character development.

In *Aslan's (2011)* study, the opinions of the participants support this problem. According to the results of the research, it is concluded that the most positive dimension of character education in primary education is the psycho-social environment, while the most negative dimensions are the participation of responsible and evaluation. For similar reasons, *Lee and Ho (2005)* emphasize the need for administrators, educators and community members to work together in order to be successful in character education.

### **3.3. Inadequacy of Teachers Who Will Provide Character Education in this Field**

In most of the studies conducted in this field (*Milson & Ekşi, 2003; Çağatay, 2009; Üstünyer, 2009; Aslan, 2011; Akçin, 2016*), the main task of the teacher in relation to character education is to act as an ethical guide and role model, as well as the opinions that they do not have sufficient knowledge and equipment about character education.

In his study, *Üstünyer (2009)* states that teachers need retraining due to their high workload and their competencies in this field, while *Çağatay (2009)* emphasizes that teachers have theoretical knowledge about students' character development, but they do not have enough knowledge about how character education can be done in a planned way through lessons and activities. *Gündoğdu (2010)* states that teachers attach great importance to character education, but due to the intensity of education programs, teachers perceive teaching about their branches as their primary duty and teachers are not equipped with activities related to character education.

In addition, it is seen that teachers are eager to overcome their existing deficiencies in character education (*Meydan, 2012*) and make some suggestions in order to have sufficient knowledge and equipment. According to *Akçin (2016)*, these emphasize that teachers should be subjected to training in the form of courses, personal training seminars, drama, theaters and conferences within the scope of in-service training activities, and that this subject can be given as a practical course in the faculties of education of the relevant universities. In addition, *Ada, Baysal and Koruyucu (2005)* state that teachers should be supported for character education within the framework of the new programs of primary education.

However, in some studies (*Demirel, 2009; Yüksel, 2012*), it was found that both teachers and administrators had high levels of self-efficacy beliefs in this regard. It was found that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs about character education did not vary according to the variables of gender, educational status, seniority, class size and receiving in-service training; it only showed a significant difference according to the grade level. *Yüksel's (2012)* study, which supports Demirel's study, also shows that primary school teachers have high competence regarding character ed-

ucation competence beliefs. According to the results of the study, it is seen that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs towards character education do not differ according to the variables of gender, professional seniority, marital status, number of children and graduation status, but there is a significant difference according to the branch variable. This situation was found in favor of classroom teachers and guidance counselors.

In the study conducted by [Milson and Mehling \(2002\)](#), most of the teachers emphasized that they felt competent in character education. The main reason for this is that these teachers were specifically interested in this field during their university education. The sensitivity of universities is also an important factor in this regard.

### 3.4. Prioritization of Values That Shape Character Education

One of the most debated issues in the field of character education is which values students should acquire. Although there are different views on this issue, the view that students should acquire the values that society agrees on is gaining more and more attention.

In the study conducted by [Aslan \(2011\)](#), the values that should be given to primary school students were examined within the framework of teachers' and parents' views, and according to teachers' views, the ten most preferred values were honesty, responsibility, trustworthiness, being reliable, being patriotic, being hardworking, being fair, self-respect, being understanding, respecting elders and being determined, while the values preferred by parents were belief in God and being loyal to the family in addition to these values.

In [Akçin's \(2016\)](#) study, according to the opinions of teachers in secondary schools, the values that should be given priority are respect, honesty, helpfulness, responsibility, love, having spiritual values, justice and tolerance. According to [Aktepe and Yel \(2009\)](#), it is seen that primary school teachers prefer values such as justice, honesty, responsibility, valuing family, friendship, safety, being healthy, and equality, while [Üstünyer \(2009\)](#) found that teachers prioritize values such as responsibility, honesty, family values, national and religious values, diligence, respect and love, and being a good citizen.

The lecturers in Turkey identified the positive/negative values they would like to see in their children as follows. The positive characteristics are honesty, open-minded, intelligent and hardworking. On the other hand, the most negative characteristics that they do not want to see in their children are, respectively, liar, inconsistent, ruthless, intolerant, arrogant and disorganization ([Özdemir, Ünsal, Yüksel, & Cemaloğlu, 2010](#)). [Deroche and Williams \(2001\)](#) emphasize that in order for character education to be effective, programs will be more effective if the goals and expectations of the school administration, teachers or PTA members are made clear and there is a certain specialization on them.

### 3.5. Effectiveness of Character Education Programs

In the majority of studies on the effectiveness of character education programs, it

is emphasized that these programs make significant differences on students' behaviors (Burke, Crum, Genzler, Shaub, & Sheets, 2001; Uysal, 2008; Demir, 2008; Katılmış, 2010; Çokdolu, 2013).

As a matter of fact, Burke, Crum, Genzler, Shaub, & Sheets (2001), in their study to investigate the effects of character education programs in primary schools, limited the character education program to eight key words and combined it with the curriculum. They concluded that the values of respect, responsibility, citizenship, helpfulness, fairness, empathy, honesty and flexibility positively affected student interaction. Uysal (2008), in his study titled the evaluation of character education programs, states that the majority of character education programs have a statistically positive and significant effect on students' behavior and academic achievement.

In the study conducted by Aydın (2008), it was aimed to determine the effectiveness of the character education program focused on benevolence and responsibility and a control and experimental group of 10 students each was formed. Based on the differences between the two groups as a result of the application, it was concluded that this program was effective in developing the moral maturity level of primary school students. Demir (2008) reached the same conclusion by using a character education program focused on justice and respect and a research method similar to Aydın's study.

In his study, Katılmış (2010) investigated the effect of character education program on the acquisition of some values and academic achievement in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade social studies course in primary school and found that the character education program positively affected students' acquisition of the values of science, fairness and peace and their academic achievement in a statistically significant way.

In the study conducted by Çokdolu (2013), it was seen that the character education program affected the aggression and conflict resolution levels of students studying at the second level of primary education. This effect is emphasized that while there is a decrease in students' aggression levels, there is an increase in conflict resolution levels. Şirin & Ulaş (2015) examined the relationship between character education practices and subjective well-being levels of middle school students. As a result of the study, it was determined that there was a positive relationship between the two variables and that character education practices for students increased their psychological resilience and well-being levels. In addition, there was a relationship between students' socio-economic levels and their subjective well-being, and students with low socio-economic levels reported higher levels of subjective well-being than students with high socio-economic levels. Another result obtained in the same study shows that subjective well-being differs according to the gender of the students. Accordingly, it was found that female students had higher levels of well-being than male students.

Character education programs were found to have a positive significant effect on problem solving skills, substance use, violence tendency, attitudes and knowledge about risky behaviors, emotional competence, academic achievement, school en-

gement, general bad behaviors, sexual behaviors, personal morality, communication skills and behaviors towards teachers. In short, it is emphasized that these programs positively affect the development of students' cognitive, affective and psycho-motor skills from different perspectives (Uysal, 2008).

#### 4. Discussion

It is understood that there is no character education program in the education programs of secondary schools in Turkey (Çağatay, 2009) and that the new education programs, which have been put into practice since the 2005 academic year, try to teach values with an interdisciplinary approach (Yıldırım, 2007; Çağatay, 2009). However, it is stated that teachers cannot be successful due to their course loads and competencies (Üstünyer, 2009) and therefore it is vital for the school to undertake such a mission (Uysal, 2008; Akçin, 2016). Although this finding is important in character education, it cannot be said to be sufficient. Because character education includes a structure that is too broad and detailed to be gained by the individual in the classroom environment, and which varies from society to society; evaluation, adoption and vitalization of the individual in his/her/them inner world. In other words, it means the relationship between cultural values and human integrity. In the relevant literature in this field, the view that providing character education is not only the responsibility of schools but also the responsibility of societies and even a duty of humanity (Lickona, 1992; Aytaç, 1992) comes to the fore. In addition, the view that project-based learning, creative drama methods and techniques, reconstructive teaching models such as 5E and 7E, and ethical learning community strategies, which are effective in the realization of character education, should be reintroduced to teachers, has become more popular in the modern world.

Today, while preparing character education programs, the physical, mental and emotional developmental characteristics of the adolescent should be taken as a basis, and then the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavioral patterns that the adolescent should acquire and achieve in that period should be determined. At the same time, while this situation is being realized, the behavior patterns that the adolescent should have in himself/herself and the behavior patterns that should be in the adolescent for the society should not contradict each other (Kaçire, 2015). According to this perspective, the main purpose of character education is the internal consistency of the environments that the individual comes into contact with. The findings obtained in this study are in line with this view. It is understood that the factors such as family, school, peer group, communication tools, religious institutions, etc., which are effective in the character development of the individual, should act together (Yazıcı, 2008; Çağatay, 2009; Üstünyer, 2009; Aslan, 2011; Orhan, 2013; Akçin, 2016), and it can be said that the factors are intertwined with each other and one factor directly or indirectly affects the other. In addition, it is seen that these factors, which are effective in character development, have negative reflections on the individual's character development due to

their own problems. For example, in [Meydan's \(2012\)](#) study, it is emphasized that the family is more effective in the acquisition of values, while [Üstünyer \(2009\)](#), although supporting this view, states that an education to be given without helping families with their problems through activities such as recognizing the family and organizing family education programs cannot be successful. [Orhan \(2013\)](#) further elaborates on this problem and states that the most important factor in the character education of the individual is the family, but it is seen that the family has problems in realizing the role model task.

The fact is that the way the family raises the child has a primary influence on the child's character formation. The school has a secondary influence after the parents. This is because parents are more emotionally salient in the early years of life. Schools can influence a child's self-perception, development of social skills, moral maturity, prosocial tendencies and behavior, knowledge of morality, values, etc. The influence of peers has a strong impact on self-concept, social skills, the development of moral awareness and risky behavior. The influence of mass media is centered around environmental characteristics and cultural values, which clearly influence prejudice, aggression and sense of security in the individual. Religion, on the other hand, is seen to be effective in reducing risky behaviors and better adaptation to society ([Berkowitz, 2002](#)). [Tozlu's \(2012\)](#) views also support this idea. In the family environment of a regular family, love and encouragement are essential. Respect, sense of responsibility and share of chores. He states that if these basic values can be integrated with other environments and institutions, it is possible to raise the desired human type. According to [Ülken \(1967\)](#), the first duty of education at every stage of an individual's growth and development is to prepare a favorable environment for the child.

However, it is also a reality that it is quite difficult to ensure consistency of mentality between the aforementioned circles in a globalized world. Therefore, the acquisition of the desired character in the individual is not only the duty of the family or the state, but as I. Kant stated, it is a duty of all humanity. In their study, [Lee and Ho \(2005\)](#) emphasize the need for administrators, educators and community members to work together in order to be successful in character education.

Another important point in character education is the values with which the individual's character will be shaped. Each sub-identity that makes up the society wants its own value judgments and social norms to be imparted to the young generations to come. Because values are the principles that guide our behavior. In other words, it makes the difference between how we feel and how we should behave ([Crick, 2010](#)). Although there are different views on the subject in the studies, the view that the values that the society agrees on should be imparted to the students gains weight. For example, in [Aslan's \(2011\)](#) study, among the ten most preferred values according to teachers' opinions, values such as being honest, responsible, being trustworthy, being patriotic, being hardworking, self-respect, respecting elders and being determined were also preferred by parents. In other studies

(Aktepe & Yel, 2009; Üstünyer, 2009; Özdemir, Ünsal, Yüksel, & Cemaloğlu, 2010; Akçin, 2016), it is understood that values such as honesty, respectfulness and patriotism are common values.

It is very important to know one's child's identity well when imparting value judgments and social norms to the individual. Today, parents frequently use statements such as "my child isolates himself in his room, does not communicate with us", "he gets angry suddenly", "he does not do his lessons without us telling him to do so" or "I cannot control my own child". During adolescence, it is necessary to ensure that the individual's sense of independence is respected, while developing his/her own abilities and prohibiting activities that he/she should not do, while at the same time focusing on activities that he/she can do or achieve. In the related literature, while meeting the desires and tendencies of the individual, at the same time preventing narcissistic feelings. In other words, efforts should be made for the individual to be successful in line with his/her own ability, and he/she should be supported with different educational programs and activities. However, if recruits are raised with the understanding that all roads are for success, personality types that see every road as suitable for success will gain a place in society. Even if a temporary success is achieved with an understanding that encourages recruits to pursue only their own interests, to achieve whatever they want and to be successful, even if a temporary success is achieved, the ground will be prepared for the formation of many individual and social diseases. However, criticizing or ignoring the desires and wishes of the individual out of concern that they will be harmful can lead to another wrong (Ayhan, 1986). For this reason, in character education, it is necessary to prioritize positive motivation based on the unique personality structure of each individual, with the idea that we are not their owners but their trustees.

If the egocentric feelings in adolescents cannot be transformed and educated into behavioral goals in accordance with the value judgments and social norms of the society, they can become harmful both to themselves and to the society they live in. It is possible to develop an individual's egocentric feelings and make them beneficial to themselves and society without ignoring their feelings of compassion and tolerance. At this point, it is understood that the positive motivation previously developed in the individual and the peer group that can be formed in the close and distant environment of the individual and that can be taken as a positive role model by the individual are important in shaping the character structure of the adolescent.

In addition, the individual still retains some characteristics from childhood in this period. One of these characteristics is focusing on academic and social issues. He/she expects approval from his/her environment for what he/she can learn and achieve (Sardoğan & Karahan, 2011). Montessori also describes at length the joy of individuals in the face of achieving something (Russell, 2014). When an individual gains a value judgment or a social norm that is important for himself/herself and for the society, the approval of both the parents and the individuals in

his/her close environment will develop the individual's sense of achievement and make that behavior permanent in him/her. It is also seen that the adolescent's experimentation with the social roles he/she encounters gives him/her different competencies (Burke, Crum, Genzler, Shaub, & Sheets, 2001; Uysal, 2008; Demir, 2008; Katılmış, 2010; Çokdolu, 2013; Şirin & Ulaş, 2015). In addition, this situation may lead to the emergence of different talents in the individual.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Many behavioral scientists working on character education state that character represents the ethical aspect of personality (Kerschensteiner, 1954; Leming, 1996) and that character traits are generally shaped according to the social norms and value judgments in which the individual lives (Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 1997; Gough, 2011). The fact that adolescence is a stage of adversity in an individual's life and that attitudes and behavior patterns that are not welcomed by the society (Kılıççı, 1999) are acquired intensively in this period makes character education even more important.

In some private schools in Turkey, it is emphasized that the components covered by character education, and especially the values in the new education programs, which have been put into practice since the 2005 academic year, are tried to be gained with an interdisciplinary approach through activities prepared through guidance services (Yıldırım, 2007; Çağatay, 2009). It was found that the implemented education programs had a statistically positive and significant effect on students' behaviors, such as moral maturity (Aydın, 2008; Demir, 2008), academic achievement, sense of justice (Katılmış, 2010), effective communication instruments (Burke, Crum, Genzler, Shaub, & Sheets, 2001).

In addition, it is emphasized that factors such as family, school, peer group, communication instruments, religious institutions, etc., which are effective in the character development of the individual, are intertwined with each other and that factors directly or indirectly affect the other (Meydan, 2012; Akçin, 2016), and due to the problems within the factors themselves (Üstünyer, 2009; Orhan, 2013), they have negative reflections on the character development of the individual.

In line with this information, in order for character education programs to be successful, it is important to pay attention to the following features:

- a) The internal consistency of the environments the individual engages with—that is, the integration of the value judgments and social norms that define society, where these values are unified and upheld with the same meaning and significance by different institutions within society, granting those values the right to exist in practice. This situation should be considered and implemented as a state policy.
- b) In the character acquisition of the adolescent, the individual's abilities, interests and tendencies should be well identified and shaped according to the peer group that can receive positive motivation and role models.
- c) The implementation of practices such as project-based learning, creative drama and collaborative learning in educational institutions should be increased.

These practices not only positively influence the individual's social development but also have significant effects on their levels of self-awareness.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

## References

- Ada, S. Z., Baysal, N., & Koruyucu, S. (2005). Sınıf Öğretmenlerinin Sınıf içi Olumsuz Davranışlara Gösterdikleri Tepkilerin Karakter Eğitimi ve 2005 İlköğretim Programı Açısından Değerlendirilmesi. *Değerler Eğitimi Dergisi*, 3, 7-18.
- Akbaş, O. (2008). Değer eğitimi akımlarına genel bir bakış. *Değerler Eğitimi Dergisi*, 6, 9-27.
- Akçin, B. (2016). *Ortaokullarda Verilen Karakter Eğitimi ve Uygulamalarının Öğretmen Görüşlerine Göre Değerlendirilmesi*. Ph.D. Thesis, Bartın Üniversitesi/Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü.
- Aktepe, V., & Yel, S. (2009). İlköğretim öğretmenlerinin değer yargılarının betimlenmesi: Kırşehir İli Örneği. *Türk Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi*, 7, 607-622.
- Aslan, M. (2011). *İlköğretimde karakter eğitimi ve öğrencilere kazandırılması gereken değerler*. Ph.D. Thesis, Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi/Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü.
- Aydın, Ö. (2008). *Sorumluluk ve yardımseverlik odaklı karakter eğitimi programının 7. Sınıf öğrencilerinin ahlaki olgunluk düzeyine etkisi*. Ph.D. Thesis, Yeditepe Üniversitesi/ Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Ayhan, H. (1986). *Eğitim Bilimine Giriş*. Damla Yay.
- Aytaç, K. (1992). *Avrupa Eğitim Tarihi*. Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yay.
- Battistich, V. (2005). *Character Education, Prevention, and Positive Youth Development*. [https://kremen.fresnostate.edu/centers-projects/bonnercenter/documents/Character\\_Ed.pdf](https://kremen.fresnostate.edu/centers-projects/bonnercenter/documents/Character_Ed.pdf)
- Berkowitz, M. W. (2002). The Science of Character Education. In W. Damon (Ed.), *Bringing in a New Era in Character Education* (pp. 43-63). Hoover.
- Berkowitz, M. W., & Bier, M. C. (2004). Research-Based Character Education. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 591, 72-85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716203260082>
- Burke, N., Crum, S., Genzler, M., Shaub, D., & Sheets, J. (2001). *Building Character Education in Our Schools to Enhance the Learning Environment*. Master's Thesis, Saint Xavier University Skylight Professional Development.
- Çağatay, S. M. (2009). *Öğretmen Görüşlerine Göre Karakter Eğitiminde ve Karakter Gelişiminde Okulun Rolü*. Ph.D. Thesis, Çanakkale On sekiz Mart Üniversitesi/Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Çokdolu, N. (2013). *Karakter eğitimi programının ilköğretim 2. kademe öğrencilerin çatışma çözme ve saldırganlık düzeylerine etkisi*. Ph.D. Thesis, Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi/Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü.
- Crick, R. E. D. (2012). Farklı Kavramlar mı, Madalyonun İki Değişik Yüzü mü? In *Değerler Eğitimi Uluslararası Konferansı* (pp. 196-202). İstanbul İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü.
- Demir, B. (2008). *Adalet ve saygı içerikli karakter eğitimi programının 7. sınıf öğrencilerinin ahlaki olgunluk düzeyine etkisi*. Ph.D. Thesis, Yeditepe Üniversitesi/ Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.

- Demirel, M. (2009). Sınıf Öğretmenlerinin Ve Okul Yöneticilerinin Karakter Eğitimine İlişkin Öz-Yeterlik İnançları. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 37, 36-49.
- Deroche, E. F., & Williams, M. M. (2001). *Character Education: A Guide for School Administrators*. Scarecrow Education.
- Dune, J. (1997). "A Critique of Research Evaluating Moral Education Intervention" Sample Research Project for ED 589. Spring.
- Duverger, M. (1973). *Sosyal Bilimlere Giriş: Metodoloji Açısından*. Ü. Oskay (Çev.). Bilgi.
- Ekşi, A. (1990). *Çocuk, Genç, Ana ve Babalar*. Bilgi Yay.
- Ekşi, H. (2003). Temel insani değerlerin kazandırılmasında bir yaklaşım: Karakter eğitimi programları. *Değerler Eğitimi Dergisi*, 1, 79-96.
- Gough, R. W. (2011). *Karakteriniz kaderinizdir kişisel ahlakın günlük hayatımızdaki yeri*. Bilkent.
- Guasch, G. P. (1985). Bedensel Değişim ve Yabancılık Duygusu. In B. Onur (Ed.), *Ergenlik Psikolojisi* (pp. 141-158). Hacettepe Taş kitapçılık.
- Gutok, G. (2001). *Eğitime felsefi ve ideolojik yaklaşımlar*. Ütopya Eğitim Dizisi.
- Gündoğdu, F. B. (2010). *Ortaöğretim kurumlarında karakter eğitimi sorunu (Kayseri İli Örneği)*. Ph.D. Thesis, Erciyes Üniversitesi/Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Hall, G. S. (1904). Adolescence: Its Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education. In *Adolescence*. New York: D. Appleton & Co.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/10618-000>
- Hurlock, E. B. (1985). Ergenlikte beden gelişimi. In B. Onur (Ed.), *Ergenlik Psikolojisi* (pp. 104-139). Hacettepe Taş kitapçılık.
- Kaçire, İ. (2015). Erkek Adolesan Sorunları. In H. Y. Kenan (Ed.), *Adolesanda Kişilik ve Eğitimi* (pp. 153-162). Cinius Yay.
- Kanger, F. (2007). *Hz. Muhammed ahlakını referans alan bir karakter eğitim modeli*. Master's Thesis, Marmara Üniversitesi/Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Karasar, N. (2006). *Bilimsel Araştırma Yöntemi*. Nobel.
- Katılmış, A. (2010). *Sosyal bilgiler derslerindeki bazı değerlerin kazandırılmasına yönelik bir karakter eğitimi programının geliştirilmesi*. Master's Thesis, Marmara Üniversitesi/Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü.
- Kerschensteiner, G. (1954). *Karakter kavramı ve terbiyesi*. Örnek Matbaası.
- Kesgin, S. (2015). Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ndeki Karakter Eğitimi Programları Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme (Georgiave Florida Örneği). *Değerler Eğitimi Dergisi*, 13, 117-148.
- Kılıç, M. (2013). *Gerçek Tadında: Gelişim dönemleri 2-Erlik ve Ergenlik*. Pegem Akademi.
- Kılıççı, Y. (1999). "6-15 yaş öğrencilerin gelişimsel güçleri" *İlköğretimde Rehberlik*. Nobel.
- Kirschenbaum, H. (1995). *Enhance Values and Morality in Schools and Youth Settings*. Allyn & Bacon Company.
- Kulaksızoğlu, A. (2002). *Ergenlik Psikolojisi*. Remzi.
- Lee, W., & Ho, C. (2005). Ideopolitical Shifts and Changes in Moral Education Policy in China. *Journal of Moral Education*, 33, 413-431.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240500410160>
- Leming, J. S. (1996). Teaching Values in Social Studies Education: Past Practices and Current Trends. In B. G. Massialas, & R. F. Allen (Eds.), *Crucial Issues in Teaching Social Studies: K-1* (pp. 145-180). Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Lickona, T. (1992). *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility*. Bantam Books.

- Lickona, T. (1997). The Teacher's Role in Character Education. *Journal of Education*, 179, 63-80.
- Lickona, T., Schaps, E., & Lewis, C. (1997). Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education. *Social Studies Review*, 37, 29-31.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/002205749717900206>
- Meydan, H. (2012). İlköğretim okullarında değerler ve karakter eğitimi. Master's Thesis, Sakarya Üniversitesi/Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Felsefe.
- Milson, A. J., & Ekşi, H. (2003). Öğretmenlerin Karakter Eğitiminde Yetkinlik duygusu Konusunda Bir Ölçme Aracına Doğru: Karakter Eğitimi Yetkinlik İnancı Skalası ve Türkçeye Uyarlanma Çalışması, *Değerler Eğitimi Dergisi*, 1, 99-130.
- Milson, A. J., & Mehlig, L. M. (2002). Elementary School Teachers Sense of Efficacy for Character Education. *Journal of Educational Research*, 96, 47-53.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00220670209598790>
- Narvaez, D. (2006). *Integrative Ethical Education*. In M. Killen, & J. Smetana (Eds.), *Handbook of Moral Development* (pp. 248-277). Lawrence Erlbaum Ass.
- Orhan, E. (2013). *Hayat bilgisi programını karakter eğitimi açısından öğretmen ve öğrenci perspektifine göre değerlendirilmesi*. Ph.D. Thesis, Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi/Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü.
- Poyraz, C. (2014). Gelişim Psikolojisi. In H. Ergin, & S. A. Yıldız (Eds.), *Fiziksel Gelişim* (pp. 60-104). Nobel.
- Rice, P. F. (1997). *Child and Adolescent Development*. Prentice-Hal Inc.
- Rummel, J. F. (1964). *An Introduction to Research Procedures in Education* (2nd ed.). Harper & Row.
- Russell, B. (2014). *Eğitim Üzerine*. Cem Yay.
- Ryan, K., & Bohlin, K. (1999). *Building Character in Schools*. Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Saka, N. (1999). *Erken ve geç puberte ve boy kısalığı ben hasta değilim*. In D. A. Ekşi (Ed.), *Çocuk sağlığı ve hastalıkların psikososyal yönü* (pp. 320-323). Nobel.
- Sardoğan, M. E., & Karahan, T. F. (2011). Eğitim Psikolojisi (6. Baskı). In A. Kaya (Ed.), *Kişilik Gelişimi* (pp. 119-148). Pegem Akademi.
- Sılay, N. (2010). *Yükseköğretimde karakter eğitiminin incelenmesi*. Master's Thesis, Marmara Üniversitesi/Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü.
- Şirin, A., & Ulaş, E. (2015). Ortaokul Öğrencilerinin Öznel İyi Oluş Düzeyleri İle Karakter Eğitimi Uygulamaları Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi. *Journal of Values Education*, 13, 279-307.
- Sırrı, V., & Mehmedoğlu, A. U. (2015). Karakter Eğitimi: Dün, Bugün ve Yarın. *Tarih Kültür ve Sanat Araştırmaları Dergisi. Karabük*, 4, 121-144.
- Steinberg, L. (2007). *Ergenlik*. İmge Kitabevi.
- Tozlu, N. (2012). *Eğitim Felsefesi*. Altın Kalem Yay.
- Uysal, F. (2008). *Karakter eğitim programlarının değerlendirilmesi*. Ph.D. Thesis, Yeditepe Üniversitesi/Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Wren, D. J. (1999). School Culture: Exploring the Hidden Curriculum. *Adolescence*, 34, 593-596.
- Yazıcı, A. V. D. (2008). *Sosyal Bilgiler Öğretmen Adaylarının Karakter Eğitimi Algıları*. Nobel.
- Yıldırım, G. (2007). *İlköğretim düzeyinde bir karakter eğitimi programı model önerisi ve uygulanabilirliği*. Master's Thesis, Ankara Üniversitesi/Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü.

- Ülken, H. Z. (1967). *Eğitim Felsefesi*. Milli Eğitim Basımevi.
- Üstünyer, F. (2009). *Karakter Eğitimi İle İlgili Eğitimcilerin Görüşleri Üzerine Nitel Bir Araştırma*. Ph.D. Thesis, Yeditepe Üniversitesi/Sosyal bilimler enstitüsü.
- Yüksel, G. (2012). *İlköğretim öğretmenlerinin karakter eğitimi yetkinlik inançları ile ahlaki olgunluk düzeyleri arasındaki ilişki*. Ph.D. Thesis, Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi/ Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü.
- Özdemir, M. Ç., Ünsal, H., Yüksel, G., & Cemaloğlu, N. (2010). Academicians in turkey towards their children, students and collequies. *Kuram ve Uygulamada Eğitim Bilimleri/Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 10, 1101-1112.