The moral agency of family and consumer sciences teacher candidates: a grounded theory

Enas O. Sarour
Iowa State University

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The moral agency of family and consumer sciences teacher candidates: A grounded theory

by

Enas O. Sarour

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Program of Study Committee:
Cheryl O. Hausafus, Major Professor
Beverly Kruempel
Jacques Lempers
Janice Wissman
Robert Martin

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband Abdul-Aziz Obeid
for his tremendous support.
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ABSTRACT

If we are to agree that teaching is a moral endeavor, exploring the moral dimension of teacher candidates, as future moral agents, should be considered indispensable. Assessing someone’s moral development based on the hypothetico-deductive method is valuable, yet learning how an individual views him/herself as a moral agent is also important.

This research describes family and consumer sciences teacher candidates’ (FCSTCs’) sense of their moral agency, that is their understanding of what is “good or bad” and “right or wrong.” Based on FCSTCs’ constructed meaning developed through semi-structured interviews, this research disclosed factors that shape FCSTCs’ moral agency. To gain insight into the FCSTCs’ understanding of themselves as moral agents, I used grounded theory, as an inductive research method, to avoid the influence of preconceived notions and existing theories that might skew the horizon of my research. Data were obtained from 13 female FCSTCs at Iowa State University (I.S.U.) via focus groups and individual semi-structured interviews. Following grounded theory procedures, a Moral Agency Framework with communicative and socio-psychological dimensions emerged to conceptualize key factors in FCSTCs’ moral agency.

The descriptive nature of this research acknowledges the complexity of individuals’ moral agency. This framework accounts for the multidimensional aspects that influence participants’ sense of moral agency. Communication, mainly through sharing perspectives and experiences, and less frequently through definitions and strategies, showed the participants’ understanding of their moral agency as they brought the past into the present
and drew conclusions for the future. The interaction between the self and the world is recognized in the socio-psychological dimension and highlights the concept of moral understanding, in which the individual’s value commitment to the good and right is triggered by her perception of social cues and influences. This dimension also brings to light the concept of consequentiality, in which the consequences to self and others of what is “good or bad” and “right or wrong” are considered.

This Moral Agency Framework emerged from and was grounded in the data. Credibility, transferability, and confirmability were three criteria that were used to evaluate the trustworthiness of this research.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Overview

Knowing and understanding where a learner is coming from is important. Before we teach a child how to ride a bicycle, for example, it is important for us to be familiar with the child’s current understanding of what a bicycle is and the attached meanings, beliefs, and attitudes the child has about it. It’s also helpful to know the child’s prior experience with, or stories related to, riding a bicycle, if he or she has any. Such knowledge, which might reside somewhere in the child’s implicit understanding, needs to be revealed to help us recognize the child’s needs, and thus, address these needs. In the same way, teacher education programs should strive to know what is there, what lies in the moral domain of their teacher candidates. Such understanding could reshape family and consumer sciences (FCS) teacher education theory and its practices. Family and consumer sciences teacher education programs are a fertile ground for exploring students’ moral agency, not only because of the moral base of the pedagogical practices, but also because FCS content areas must increasingly address moral issues faced by people today.

Teacher educators in the field of family and consumer sciences have the duty of teaching moral responsibility. It affects teacher candidates’ involvement in an endless number of moral issues that relate to the individual, the family, the community, and the world. Such involvement emphasizes the significance of exploring the moral agency of family and consumer sciences teacher candidates (FCSTCs), who have been introduced to critical theory as a suggested mode of inquiry by which they are prepared to address moral issues. However, there is an apparent lack of qualitative studies that explore such moral agency
specifically when it comes to FCSTCs. This dearth of information inspired me to ponder whether FCS teacher educators have a clear understanding of their teacher candidates’ moral agency.

To gain insight into the FCSTCs’ understanding and perception of themselves as moral agents, it is imperative to address how they go about constructing it. Under what conditions does this understanding occur? What factors have influenced their understanding? To explore these questions, I used grounded theory method to avoid the influence of preconceived notions and existing theories that might skew the horizon of such exploration. For example, even though moral development research is dominated by moral reasoning, this research, using grounded theory method, allows for the emergence of other dimensions in the process of exploring the aforementioned questions for the purpose of understanding FCSTCs’ moral agency.

Toward this end, and after receiving the Human Subjects Research Committee approval, I invited all 13 students enrolled in the Curriculum Planning for Family Life and Vocational Family and Consumer Sciences course at I.S.U. to participate in this research, and all of them accepted the invitation. I examined the research questions through various interviewing activities, such as a metaphoric game, abstract and concrete questions, pedagogical choice questions, and narrative-based questions. Moreover, I focused on their individual and collective construction and reconstruction of moral agency via conducting three individual and two focus group interviews.
Grounded theory, as an inductive method, was used to reveal FCSTCs’ understanding of their moral agency as an integral aspect of their professional development. Grounded theory refers to a set of systematic inductive methods that fulfill qualitative research goals in order to produce a general, middle-range theory. I used theoretical sampling and constant comparative methods to congruently collect, code, and analyze data in order to provide constant examination of theoretical relationships.

Accordingly, a beginning substantive theory, referred to as Moral Agency Framework, is generated that conceptualizes the key factors in the FCSTCs’ moral agency. This emerging framework represented two dimensions of moral agency: communicative and socio-psychological dimensions. The communicative dimension integrated four categories: definition, perspective, experience, and strategy. The socio-psychological dimension of FCSTCs moral agency reveals the importance of two categories: consequentiality and moral understanding. The former considers the consequences of the participants’ thoughts and actions. The latter, moral understanding, recognizes the interaction between participants’ perception of what is “good or bad” and “right or wrong” and their personal moral commitment to uphold a value or belief. This framework emerged from and was grounded in the data. Credibility, transferability, and confirmability were three criteria that were used to evaluate the trustworthiness of my research.

**Researcher Background**

The nature of grounded theory entails disclosing my identity as a major instrument for data collection and interpretation. Moreover, the content of the current research, moral agency, necessitates displaying the researcher’s assumptions and beliefs, especially as they relate to
the nature of truth and reality. To this end, background information on the researcher as an instrument as well as her ontological assumptions is presented. Before clarifying my ontological assumptions, I, as a research instrument, will share my position in regard to constructivism as a key concept of grounded theory method.

**Researcher as an Instrument**

Even though traditional grounded theory assumes that a researcher will be neutral and that reality will be revealed and therefore keep grounded theory in the realm of scientific inquiry (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 2001), social scientists according to Blaikie’s (2004) interpretation should provide different explanations of the participants’ social actions than those rendered by the participants themselves. By disallowing the researcher’s interpretation, we are committing linguistic fallacy, which refers to the failure to recognize that reality exists in and beyond the participants’ responses (Blaikie, 2004). Blaikie also mentioned that epistemic fallacy is another failure by which we assume that social life is understandable through focusing only on interpretive methods. That is, observing the participants’ assumptions and unspoken language might be important and allow the researcher to see the basic social process in the field (Charmaz, 2000).

Blaikie (2004) reported that uncovering the participants’ assumptions and unspoken language might be understood through reflective study as well as interpretive efforts. He also stated that it would be misleading to assume that social actors (research participants) are aware of their actions and the reasons behind them unless researchers are involved in ongoing monitoring of their actions. Contemporary grounded theory (Charmaz, 2004; Clarke, 2005) focuses on constructivism, through which the researcher is another social
actor in understanding, interpreting, and shaping reality. Therefore, the researcher’s biases, values, and judgments need to be considered and stated explicitly and independently in order to maximize the rendered meaning from the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

As the instrument of the data collection in this study, it may be helpful to reveal my qualifications. I have seven years of experience in teaching several Home Economics classes in Saudi Arabia, in which I coordinated and evaluated Home Economics students’ practica. As a graduate student in the FCS education programs at Oregon State University and Iowa State University, I built my professional resume through three years of experience as a researcher and teaching assistant and had many opportunities to observe FSC student teachers in middle school and high school. Part of my doctoral coursework included an advanced qualitative research course, in which I developed the skills necessary for the development of this study.

Given the research focus on exploring the self-understanding of FCSTCs’ moral agency, it is imperative, at this point of time, to remember that my theoretical orientation in regard to the nature of morality and truth would unconsciously influence the interpretation of the participants’ understanding. In addition to my theoretical orientation, the communication with the research participants is contingent on my developing English skills as a second language.

My academic relationship with the participants of this study has developed through previous teaching assistance experiences, as well as interaction during college activities. This relationship has its own bias, which naturally affects the research. For example, some
incidents revealed in individual interviews relate to some of the multicultural activities I organized as a teacher assistant. The constructed knowledge from the literature review, i.e., the moral self, is another bias I acknowledged in order to become sensitive to the participants’ new meaning-making throughout the interviews.

My cultural background, in relation to the nature of constructive grounded theory, calls for clarification of my assumptions and beliefs, especially as it relates to the nature of truth and reality, to which the following ontological assumptions section is devoted.

**Ontological Assumptions**

Ontological assumptions about the nature of truth, which typically rest on religious values, unconsciously guide our thoughts and actions; yet mostly remain hidden and unclear. Regardless of where our ontological assumptions come from, defining and reflecting on such an aspect of our life helps us perceive the world in a coherent way. Even though, as a Muslim, I believe in the existence of Allah (Absolute Monotheism) and His divine wisdom, I acknowledge that reality or truth can be both subjective and objective, and relative and absolute depending on what is meant by truth. I believe truth exists in the original divine transcription whether we recognize it or not. Even when it is recognized, we are required to contemplate it, clarify it, research it, and build new meaning around it. In other instances, where truth is not fully identified, we need to construct it subjectively, yet in a way that make sense with our understanding of the recognizable set of truths. The point is, as a Muslim, part of my truth is by faith, yet much of truth is to be constructed subjectively as means for better understanding.
Two examples are provided for the purpose of clarifying my point. The first example is that the blessing from Allah (God) being called for by many nations and cultures is expected to affect people positively, even though they do not know why and under what conditions it might occur! Even though Allah as a blessing provider is an absolute belief, reflection and interpretation are vital for meaning making. These meanings constructed by humans are better to be called human propositions or human-based reality because of the constant change or even opposition with each other theoretically and empirically. Another example clearly signifies that truth is there but it is our limited capacity, constructive thinking and imagination that hinder us from seeing it. For instance, in the Quran which was revealed 14 centuries ago, Allah says, “And We brought down iron” (Quran 57:25). When the verse was revealed, believers did not fully understand what it meant for iron to be brought down. However, centuries later, through reflection, inquiry and knowledge construction, it was scientifically revealed that iron was not one of the earth’s original components; instead, it had reached the earth through one of the ancient explosions (Frisch, 2000). Hence, even though this fact about iron was faithfully perceived as an independent set of truths, it is through the divine call to contemplate that such an independent (external) truth would be comprehended through cognitive and social construction.

Although faith has a significant role in my personal value system, it does not contradict my rational reasoning and the search for evidence and meaning. Islam is a religion for people who like to contemplate the truths of everything around them, as Allah says in the Quran, “And has subjected to you all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth; it is all as a favor and kindness from Him. Verily, in it are signs for people who think deeply” (Quran 45:13). In my belief system, there is no basic incompatibility between the pursuit of reason
and meaning making and the pursuit of religion. My views about the nature of reality, especially the ultimate truths, seem to lie behind the criticism of the constructivist approach. According to the understanding of Flick, Kardorff, and Steinke (2004), such criticism has led radical constructivists to deny the idea that everything is constructed, that is, they in no way reject an external reality. I believe that the tendency to be open to an external reality might explain a dimension of moral development especially for those who rely on dogmatic morality.

Thus, based on my ontological assumptions explained above, this research recognizes that participants individually and collectively are capable of constructing reality. This research will incorporate the voices and interpretations of the participants through the use of their words to name the emergent themes. This position of meaning construction is exemplified by Bishop (2005), who asserts that “meanings are negotiated and co-constructed between the research participants within the cultural frameworks of the discourses within which they are positioned” (p.125). This is to say that the researcher’s and the participants’ mutual understanding and the way they perceive each other create and recreate meanings. As Bishop clarifies, meanings as developed via discourse are neither particular nor rigid. Valuing the notion of meaning construction, this research attempts to implement semi-structured interviews, in which the bearing and appropriateness of the subsequent interview questions are allowed to be generated rather than predetermined. Interpreting the participants’ meaning is another initiative I pursue via the coding process and on-going interpretation as outlined by grounded theory. Such a practice, according to Bishop “maximizes researcher interpretation, editorial control, and ownership by introducing researcher coding and analysis in the form often referred to as ‘grounded theory’” (2005, p.
126). Though construction and reconstruction of participants’ meaning are acknowledged as a methodological paradigm, the subject/content of the current research—FCSTC’s moral agency—to which construction and reconstruction are applied, is rationalized in the following section.

**Research Rationale**

This section provides justification for why this research is needed, based on issues embedded in the nature of morality, critical science, moral education, and methodology. Figure 1 conceptually illustrates the factors that influence the justification for this research focus on the moral agency of FCSTCs.

*Figure 1. Conceptual reasoning to explore the moral agency of FCSTCs.*
The Nature of Morality

Being aware of the nature of morality, specifically in terms of moral philosophies and theories, provides a grounded justification for the current research. This section discusses moral philosophical issues, followed by major moral theories and their imbedded issues as background information that assumes to enlighten the reader about the nature of morality as it relates to the foci of the current research.

Moral Philosophies

Philosophy is a field of study in which theories about the nature of reality are created. As such, moral philosophies vary due to the nature of the realities they present. There is no doubt that all moral and ethical philosophers target the good; however, they not only have varied but also contradicting explanations of what the good is and how to justify it. Moreover, recognizing the uniqueness of, as well as the commonality between, various moral and ethical philosophies still cannot explain an old, recurrent argument: philosophers and theorists in the field remain preoccupied and challenged by the argument that identical behavior can be justified by different moral principles and that the same moral principle can lead to quite different moral behavior (Walker, 2004).

Another philosophical issue is the unresolved question regarding moral relativism and moral absolutism and how they relate to the existence of universal moral values and moral conduct. According to Turiel (2006), it is misleading to view people’s morality as either relative or absolute, although it might appear so. He explains that morality appears absolute because moral values such as justice and welfare “are not judged as arbitrary, but as obligatory across settings.” On the other hand, morality appears relative because moral
values “are not applied uniformly in all situations” (Turiel, 2006, p. 31). Relativism and absolutism obstruct our capacity to understand and explicate morality and development because such categories fail to address the way people think and struggle with moral issues—issues of right and wrong (Turiel, 2006).

Even if one values Turiel’s understanding of the nature of relativism and absolutism, it still does not explain how people would come together for the common good. In the field of morality, there is minimal agreement between philosophy and daily-life perspectives on the characteristics of moral principles and evaluation of moral behavior (Nunner-Winkler, 1996; Setiono, 2001). This clearly affects how we define and maintain people’s welfare.

As illustrated above, the unresolved tension between relativism and absolutism, as well as the varying meaning for the nature of what is “good or bad” and “right or wrong” has influenced the nature of morality that assumes to guide action. As a result of philosophical understanding about the nature of reality, two general branches of moral ethics—escriptive ethics and normative ethics—or a combination of both might occur in a society. While descriptive ethics deals with what the population believes to be “good or bad” and “right or wrong,” normative ethics is concerned with classifying actions as “good or bad” and “right or wrong.” It is clear that FCS teacher education program ethics are guided by normative principles that arise from the profession’s code of ethics. This code of ethics is thought to guide the process of moral reasoning and moral action. This code of ethics is similar in nature to the K-12 Character Education Program in the U.S. educational system, in which a set of moral values is engraved in the students’ minds. According to Sockett (1993), if we are to describe in depth what a professional is and does, we need to recover the
straightforward moral words, such as courage, honesty, kindness, carefulness, patience, and so forth.

Unarguably, courage, honesty, kindness, and carefulness, among other moral values, are naturally rooted in the practices of FCS; however, the literature seems to be extensively entrenched in the principle of justice (e.g. Brown, 1985). Furthermore, due to the influence of the work of Gilligan (1982) and Noddings (2002), the concepts of caring and being begin to appear in FCS literature. For example, Arcus (1999) and Laster (1998) address moral reasoning where both caring and judgment are put into action.

It seems that the moral challenges illustrated above remain a major philosophical issue in the field of FCS. Even though the idea of well-being has been a focus that the field of FCS has always promoted, Smith (2003) and others suggest that consensus on what well-being means has not yet been reached. The definition of well-being has various meanings. McGregor (2004) reports that some believe there is no common concept of well-being, while others assert that regardless of cultural differences, a universal concept of well-being does exist. McGregor says that well-being is commonly “defined as something in a good state, with ‘the something’ being humans or social systems, although what is meant by being good is still unclear” (2004, ¶ 2).

FCS professionals conventionally conceive well-being as having seven dimensions: emotional, social, economic, physical, spiritual, environmental, and political (personal autonomy) (McGregor & Goldsmith, 1998). However, Veenhoven’s (2003) view on well-
being, a conception that is approached from a different perspective, on which four categories of well-being is recognized:

The first thing that can be well is one’s living conditions—standard of living and social equality. The second is one’s ability to cope with the problems of life (inner life chances, capabilities, fitness). The third is personal enjoyment of one’s daily life (happiness and satisfaction, similar to our concept of quality of life). The fourth area has a moral focus and relates to the meaning of life such that the good life is good for something more than itself (e.g., some higher value than self interest, such as ecological preservation or social equity and justice). (as cited in McGregor, 2004, ¶ 2)

The abovementioned categories of well-being seem to be highly related to or determined by one’s own moral agency, by which interrelatedness among these categories might be understood. Thus, this research strives to shed light on FCSTCs’ understanding of their moral agency so that the core value of the profession, individual and family well being, might be better clarified.

As opposed to the normative aspect of ethics, this study uses the descriptive approach and utilizes the narrative approach, where participants’ actual beliefs and understanding about what is “good or bad” and “right or wrong” are analyzed from their daily common language in order to achieve the end of exploring their understanding of the aforementioned philosophical issues. If FCS teacher education programs lack this important understanding, they might be less successful in their critical journey and less developed in their theoretical understanding to address FCS related issues.

**Moral Theories**

Distinct from philosophy, theory represents a speculation for the purpose of explaining, predicting, and mastering phenomena (e.g. events, behavior). As such, moral theories are
those conjectures that explain and predict moral behavior. Moral theorists’ orientations, as well as their core moral principles, undoubtedly influence the formulation of their theories (Campbell & Thiessen, 2001). For this reason, morality can be examined from a psychological, sociological, ecological, or neurological standpoint, acknowledging the variation among and within these areas (Killen & Smetana, 2006; Turiel, 2006). Although this research will not address the neurological and ecological standpoints, it nonetheless allows the exploration of morality from more than one dimension.

Turiel (2006) asserts that there is a pervasive tendency to study morality from a psychological perspective that often involves the premise: “Something makes us act in certain ways” (p. 29). In addition, he provides a list of various causes that make us do something:

- Our genes make us do it;
- our built-in intuitions make us do it;
- our conscience makes us do it;
- traits of character or acquired virtues make us do it;
- our internalized parental authority makes us do it;
- our internalized societal values/norms/rules make us do it;
- our identification with, and commitment to, cultural ways (fostering certain ideas, emotions, or intuitions) makes us do it. (pp. 29-30)

Throughout the years, psychological theorists have tried to understand morality from various viewpoints, beginning with Freud and his notion of conscience and Piaget and the idea of moral autonomy (as cited in Killen & Smetana, 2006). Killen and Smetana further clarify that Freud’s notions of conscience, emotion, guilt, and the child-parent relationship have been contested by behaviorists, who have developed experiments designed to assess moral behavior. In general, Killen and Smetana (2006) reported that psychological theorists have been influenced by the work of Kohlberg (1981) and others, who have moved moral
development from the behaviorist paradigm to the paradigm of cognitive and age-based moral development.

Although there are several directions one can go when studying why and how people are involved in moral thinking and moral action, such as moral cognition, moral action, moral sensitivity, moral motivation, and moral identity, cognitive development theory has dominated the literature as well as empirical studies since the late 1960s, mainly due to Kohlberg’s (1981) cognitive-based moral development theory (Killen & Smetana, 2006). Over the past decades, moral decision-making, which requires a great investment of conscious cognitive selection, reasoning, and judgment, has dominated the field of morality. This domination has been influenced by a phenomenological principle, which highlights explicit moral judgment as a motivating factor for moral behavior (Lapsley & Power, 2005). This phenomenological perspective has led to unwarranted consequences: narrowing the range of behavior that can be studied psychologically and isolating moral psychology from other psychological research, such as cognition, social cognition, and personality (Lapsley & Power, 2005).

Current moral orientations concerning the acquisition of moral action have started to acknowledge the significance value imbedded in other literature, such as motivation and personality; emotion and biology; and parental and non-parental influence on moral functioning (Kellen & Smetana, 2006). For example, the literature and empirical studies regarding moral motivation for decades have focused extensively on moral reasoning and only slightly on moral emotion. However, some current studies acknowledge the role of identity as an additional source of moral motivation. Moral identity is the construction of
self around moral values (Hardy & Carlo, 2005). Moral identity can be useful for understanding the nature of moral life and the roots of moral failure (Hart, 2005). Such alternative approaches to examining morality have found a place in the literature of FCS. For example, Vaines (1999) transcends the concept of knowing how to practice moral reasoning holistically. She combines scientific inquiry with life experiences and narrative methods and brings together knowing, seeing, becoming, and doing (Vaines, 1999).

Thus, due to the ample amount of empirical research that explores moral reasoning and the dominance of associated quantifiable measurement, it is crucial that this research allow for the emergence of many possibilities when attempting to reveal FCSTCs’ natural understanding of their moral agency, which is grounded in their real life experiences.

**Critical Science**

Questions relating to how critical science (CS) explains moral values have peaked my interest since I first encountered CS in FCS educational settings during my master’s study at Oregon State University and as I continued my doctoral requirements in the FCS teacher education program at Iowa State University. This section will explain the integration between CS and the field of FCS, critical theory on which CS relies, critical theory in relation to moral principles, and the resulting issues for which this research has been undertaken.

**Family and Consumer Sciences and Critical Science**

FCS philosophical pioneers, notably Brown and Paolucci (1979), were led by their reflections on the quality of human life, as addressed by the profession, to understand the foundation of CS as an integrated aspect of what was called home economics at the time.
Such integration stemmed from the inappropriate and unproductive ways, mainly through a technical approach, that were being used to solve recurring individual and family issues. A few years later, Brown (1985) explicitly outlined the origin of critical theory, on which CS relies, and its implication in the field of FCS.

Drawing on the work of other critical theorists, chiefly Habermas (1981/1984) and Brown (1985), it is interpreted that the goal of critical theory is to “bring about consciousness to those social realities which exploit or dominate any class of human beings, and to create popular demand for liberation from exploitative or dominating forces” (Brown, 1985, p. 814). As such, critical theory seeks to address social oppression for the purpose of human liberation. In fact, emancipation from any form of oppression, internal or external, is an ultimate moral value emphasized by Freire (1984), a critical educational thinker who aimed to help the oppressed critically analyze their conditions and hence transform their lives.

Critical science has compelled educational studies to address the roles of power in the organizations’ outcomes and the meaning-making of educators and students (Giroux, 1997). Critical science is “the process, the course of action taken by individuals and groups to collaboratively examine and critique present social structures for the purpose of their own emancipation” (Gentzler, 1999, p. 23). Such moral cause has fertile ground for activation in FCS-related issues surrounding child development, parenting, food processing, teen pregnancy, and, more recently, the environment and globalization.

Although useful, the pedagogical practices that emanate from CS theory are still not ripe for immediate application in FCS teacher education. CS as a theory of social equality
(Brown, 1985; Freire, 1984; Habermas, 1983/1990) lacks corresponding instructional methodology to illustrate an optimal learning environment. Because of the inherent association between CS and moral principles, and the lack of specific methodology by which teacher candidates develop morally, as observed by Oser (1994), it is not surprising to encounter such a dearth in FCS educational programs. Although this research does not directly address CS pedagogy, the emerged moral agency of FCSTCs can add clarity to the integration of the moral foundation of CS and FCS.

**Critical Theory**

The term, critical theory, was defined by Horkheimer of the Frankfurt School of social science in the late 1930s (Lakomski, 1996). Contrary to traditional theory, which is oriented only to understanding or explaining social life, critical theory is social theory oriented toward critiquing and changing the entire society (Heath, 2001). Contemporary critical theories have been shaped largely by the work of Habermas (1981/1984) and his communicative action (Ray, 2001). Habermas differentiates between two social orders: the life world order and the system. The life world order is a domain of communication and culture that encompasses norms and languages, although the system is comprised of social orders guided by money and power and is not available for normal communication (Ray). Habermas (1981/1984) recognizes the tension between these two social orders and how they influence social life. He postulates that emancipative practices occur not because of self-agency but because of the rational agreement that is present in communication whether we acknowledge it or not (Ray, 2001). In summary, he claims his theory of communicative action uses all human ways of thinking for the end of reaching common agreement.
Prior to Habermas’s (1982) development of communicative action, he understood the tension between social norms and the system of money and power in terms of human interest (as cited in Ray, 2001). Habermas viewed the relationship between knowledge and what is happening in the social atmosphere to be more of an instrumental or technical one (Lakomski, 1996). As a result, Habermas suggests that it becomes impossible to reflect critically on existing domination because such domination and the resulting social issues appear as solvable problems influenced by the positivism/scientism tradition (1981/1984). According to Lakomski, this understanding of the concept of human interest led Habermas to categorize three kinds of interests: technical, practical, and emancipatory. These kinds of human interests are claimed to correspond to three types of sciences: natural sciences, historical-hermeneutic sciences, and critical sciences, respectively. For reasons beyond the scope of this study, the concept of interest encountered various criticisms, in light of which Habermas (1982) felt compelled to note, “My view is today that the attempt to ground critical theory by way of the theory of knowledge, while it did not lead astray, was indeed a round-about way” (cited in Ray, 2001, p. 233). This evaluation led him to ground his critical theory on the concept of linguistic communication (Habermas, 1985/1987). Habermas suggested that this kind of communication depends on the language (speech) with which it is necessary for all participants to interact, in order to reach a mutual understanding of their presumptions. Lakomski (1996) further explains that Habermas (1985/1987) wanted to show that the potential of emancipation is inherent in normal language that “both presupposes and anticipates an ideal speech situation in which communication free from domination is possible” (Lakomski, 1996, p. 1202).
Based on Habermas’s (1981/1984) communicative action theory, Ray notices that the act of communicating entails releasing the argument force from any proposition, whether empirical, moral, or aesthetic (2001). Such observation, according to Ray, requires that the speaker’s sincerity or the proposition of the utterance is subject to question. Involvement in such communication, where everything is questioned, can only be successful if we assume equal access to speech and freedom, which are motivated by the force of better argument for the purpose of reaching a common meaning (Ray, 2001). For this, Habermas (1981/1984) proposed his “ideal speech situation.”

Habermas’s “ideal speech situation” stated that for a consensus to be reached—directed by the power of better argument—whether we recognize it or not, we routinely assume the following conditions: (a) everyone has an equal chance to deploy, initiate, and perpetuate speech acts; (b) utterances are comprehensible; (c) their propositional content is true; (d) what is said is legitimate and appropriate; and (e) it is sincerely spoken (Habermas, 1981/1984). From these assumptions, it follows that “rationality can be measured by the degree of openness or closure in communication” (Ray, 2001, p. 2985). Ray asserts that Habermas realized that the above conditions of communicative competence are counterfactual and are rarely available in real life. However, Ray (2001) informs us that Habermas’s (1981/1984) transition to communication was admired because it accounts for the intersubjective aspects of ethics and dialogue, instead of merely focusing on reasoning.

How the foundations of Habermas’s (1985/1987) critical theory explain moral principles or universal values is of paramount concern, especially in relation to the purpose of this research. Although moral values and choices are viewed as a state of personal conviction,
Habermas (1982) argued that “the requirement to provide good reasons, subject to public scrutiny, renders these choices capable of truth” (cited in Ray, 2001, p. 2984). Unlike other cognitive moral theorists, Habermas formulated the moral point of view as it arose out of the multiple understandings of those affected by the discussed norm (Habermas, 1983/1990). Thus, moral reflection is taken out of the individual cognitive process and is subordinated to intersubjective processes of communication (Ray, 2001).

Such a deep focus on communication, according to Ray (2001), worried some critics, who thought that Habermas’s theory risked losing sight of universal values in favor of “romantic particularism” (p. 2986). Ray agrees with other thinkers that right as the core element or a universal value is not to be compromised, otherwise we will lose the foundation for equal treatment. However, based on the principles of Habermas’s communicative action theory, the validation of right seems to be based on group consensus.

Therefore, professionals in the field of FCS, who call for addressing CS in the profession philosophical understanding, as well as its educational practices, should strive to examine its relationship to the underpinning assumptions and moral principles that guide CS. FCSTCs’ constructed meaning of their moral agency, as a desired outcome of this research, is a possible option that might explain the ambiguity surrounding the moral base of critical science theory.

Moral Education

Moral education in the U.S. has been influenced by philosophical underpinnings as well as social and political events (e.g., the human rights movement and women movement) that
have affected the educational system’s view of how K-12 students can function morally. Such influence does not stop at K-12 schools, however. Rather it implicitly and explicitly influences teacher education programs, the job of which is to prepare teachers who are qualified intellectually and morally to teach K-12 students (Howard, 2005). Recognizing this influence, the following section discusses moral education as it relates to public schools, teacher education programs, and FCS teacher education programs.

**Moral Education in Public School**

The three major approaches to moral education that dominate the field are character education, the cognitive developmental tradition, and the caring approach. Character education is summarized by the notion that “to do the good is to know the good,” which leads to educational implications much like carving a character into a piece of wood (Howard, 2005, ¶ 3). That is, character education would impose values in the mind of the student. Howard explains that the character approach focuses on action and highlights the act of making virtuous behaviors habitual.

The cognitive developmental tradition focuses on the process of moral decision making over content-driven character education (Howard, 2005). According to Howard, the developmental tradition, with justice as a moral principle, emphasizes reason over action because it is assumed that right reason leads to right action.

Contrary to the developmental tradition and its focus on justice, relationships are at the core of the caring approach (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 2002). Noddings provides a brief summary, emphasizing care as a foundation of this approach: “Ethical caring is always
aimed at establishing, restoring, or enhancing the kind of relation in which we respond freely [to others] because we want to do so” (2002, p. 14).

These various moral education traditions, though, agree that educational institutions should cultivate responsible and reliable moral agents. The task of cultivating individuals in this manner is not easy, however (Chinnery, 2003). It is not easy because of the diversity in the United States, as well as the ill-structured FCS-related issues that need to be addressed by FCS professionals. Such difficulties, which in-service and preservice teachers often encounter, could be tackled from different angles, among them from teacher candidates’ perceptions of their role as moral agents. Revealing this kind of knowledge—that is self-perception of moral agency, the goal of this research—is valuable to moral education.

Moral Education in Teacher Education Programs

A national survey conducted by Washington-based Character Education Partnership released a study dealing with what deans and directors of teacher education reported about their institutions’ efforts to prepare future teachers as educators of character (Ryan & Bohlin, 2000). The study surveyed 600 deans of schools of education to determine what their programs were doing to prepare future teachers in character education. Although 90% of the survey's respondents agreed that core values should be taught in schools, only 24.4% of the respondents reported that their programs ‘highly emphasized’ that content. The deans attributed the gap between the program’s vision and the reality of moral education to the limited time and space in their teacher education programs (Ryan & Bohlin, 2000).
Most American higher education institutions have a mission that arguably includes moral development, such as preparation for citizenship, character development, moral leadership, and service to society (King & Mayhew, 2002). Such moral education relies on the belief that teaching is naturally a moral profession (Campbell, 2003; Goodlad, 1990) and that teacher education is a field of reflective moral action (Beyer, 1997). However, Goodlad, Soder, and Sirotnik (1990) question the efficacy of teacher education programs to prepare future moral educators. Likewise, Fullan (2001) asserts that although great emphasis is placed on teacher quality, ethical/moral knowledge is one of the most neglected aspects of teacher education and educational policies. Toombs (1993) found that higher education literature on ethics is inclined to deal with the micro-dimensions of ethical situations, as it is a safer way to treat a sensitive topic.

The absence of effective programs that concurrently improve the professional competence (performance) and disposition (such as moral judgment) of prospective teachers is one of the emerging problems for teacher education. As Reiman (2002) reported, such program designs and the assessment of those designs are still in their infancy. Although concerns about the moral agency of teaching have been raised for the past 20 years, little attention has been given to the implementation of scientific approaches to study the moral reasoning and behaviors of preservice and in-service teachers (Cummings, Dyas, Maddux, & Kockman, 2001). Researchers have noted that teacher education curricula fail to offer stimulating theory-based courses that develop the critical thinking essential for making thoughtful decisions about ethical and moral issues (Goodlad, 1994; Yost, 1997). The reasons for such failure might be due to the stress on methods courses and conventional thinking; uneasiness in discussing moral issues, as they are abstract and vague; and the
expectation for teachers to be politically and morally neutral (Cummings, Wiest, Lamitina, & Maddux, 2003).

Recently, the movement of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the largest accrediting agency, toward hyper “professionalization” and assessment-based accreditation has altered the focus of teacher preparation (McKnight, 2004). The NCATE:

has moved beyond codifying knowledge and skills to codifying the internal existence of those who desire to become teachers. The reform movement has entered into the territory of the virtue ethic with its emphasis on the notion of "dispositions." Whereas before college of education faculty were accountable for proving each preservice teacher had mastered certain ‘knowledge and skills,’ they now must also find ways to measure and assess whether the teacher candidate is the ‘right sort’ of person, to borrow a phrase from ethical philosopher Edmund Pincoffs (1986). (McKnight, 2004, p. 212)

Maylone (2002) addresses the ambiguity surrounding the concept of definition in relation to preservice teacher education programs. She illustrates that using strict rubrics of desirable disposition characteristics is not an appropriate approach to assess teacher candidates, in addition to the difficulty of identifying the rubrics’ terms. Instead of using disposition rubrics, Maylone suggests the establishment of college disposition committee to broadly assess individual preservice teachers’ dispositions.

**Moral Education and FCS Teacher Education**

FCS has no shortage of moral issues relevant to students’ lives (Arcus, 1999) as well as their families, communities, and the world (Brown, 1985). No doubt, the call for moral reasoning and moral action is prevalent in the writing and practices of FCS education. Moral reasoning, as illustrated by Brown (1980), views reasoning—knowing how to
reason—as the core of our mode of inquiry by which we can better address recurring family and community problems. It is clear that knowing how to reason morally is different than doing the right or the good thing. However, this mode of inquiry, mainly promoted by critical theories, has extensively influenced the writings of FCS education (e.g., *Inquiry into thinking: The 18th Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher Education Yearbook*, 1998, and *Toward a critical science approach: The 19th Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher Education Yearbook*, 1999)

Due to the nature of FCS, it is obvious that the practices of FCS teacher education programs inherently attend to moral issues. However, empirical research might fail to notice the importance of empirically exploring the moral domain of preservice FCS teachers. For example, a review of FCS teacher education research from 1985 to 1995 (Cascio & Southers, 1996) reflects several areas of emphasis, such as global education, political participation, and method of instruction, but does not explicitly center on moral development. Definitely, these areas of emphasis rest on several personal and contextual variables; moral agency of preservice FCS teachers is one of the significant factors that receives less attention in the research of the field. Moreover, Cascio and Southers reported a study that predicts that by the year 2000 the focus of FCS teacher education programs will be more on family development and managerial concepts than technical skills. Such prediction of less focus on technical skills might implicitly open the door to consider different aspects of development such as the moral agency of preservice FCS teachers.

Although helpful, recent empirical studies did not explore FCS preservice teachers’ moral dimension but rather focus on other aspects, such as developing national standards for the
performance of new FCS teachers (Fox, Stewart & Erickson, 2007). Moreover, Jensen (2001), Jensen and Rowley (2004), Kavaska and Lichty (2004), Kelly (2003), and Pickard (2004) have conducted qualitative studies to explore different aspects of FCS preservice teachers’ perception in regard to salient instruction and personal change, instructional approach and cognitive change, experienced events and perceived feeling and feedback, meaning of program experiences, and evaluation of teaching skills, respectfully.

Despite the ample research focusing on moral—related issues that are reported in the review of FCS teacher education research from 1985 to 1995 (Cascio & Southers, 1996), such as gender equality, global education, and social justice, the only empirical research found that purposefully focuses on exploring moral development of FCS preservice teachers was conducted by Loyd (1988) to study the relationship of practices of selection and participation in professional development activities to a vocational teacher’s personal characteristic of moral reasoning. Again, it is moral reasoning that was quantitatively measured and thus related to several aspects of professional development activities. Unlike Loyd’s study which directly targeted the concept of moral reasoning of in-service vocational teachers, including FCS teachers, Kelly’s research (2003) indirectly revealed, through one of the emerged themes, that preservice FCS teachers hold deep commitment toward the academic, social and moral development of their future students. Such commitment sheds light on preservice FCS teachers’ moral agency which this research will also explore. The apparent lack of qualitative research in the area of moral agency of FCS teacher candidates seems to support justification for conducting the current research.
Methodology

Another area that led to the development of this research is that of methodological issues. Walker and Pitts (1998) point to

an emerging trend in both moral psychology (Quinn, Houts, & Graesser, 1994; Walker et al., 1995) and moral philosophy (Flanagan, 1991; Thomas, 1989) that attempts to constrain ethical theories by an empirically informed account of how people understand morality as well as the psychological processes involved in moral functioning. (p. 404)

Empirical studies in the field of moral education have been dominated by quantitative research using, for the most part, the Defining Issues Test (DIT) developed by Rest (Narvaez, Bebeau, Thoma, & Rest, 1999; Rest, 1979), which is based on Kohlberg’s (1981) moral development theory. The DIT, as a moral reasoning instrument, was developed based on the claim that moral reasoning is a valid motivation for moral conduct (Killen & Smetana, 2006). Such reductionism views moral conduct—a complicated personal and social enterprise—as a simplified and reduced construct. Accordingly, results from meta-analyses of 80 studies using the DIT yield a weak, yet consistent, relationship between moral reasoning and moral behavior (Blasi, 1980).

Similarly, Thoma (1994), Cummings, Dyas, Maddux, and Kockman (2001), and Reiman (2002) summarized several quantitative studies that examine the all-important link between moral reasoning and action and found a weak relationship, although one that is quite consistent with other estimates of judgment and action in professional fields. Moreover, King and Mayhew (2002) analyzed 172 studies that used the DIT as a measure of college students’ moral judgment and concluded that students’ participation in higher education is associated with gains in moral development during the college years. Cummings et al.
(2001) reported few studies that have investigated moral reasoning of preservice teacher education students. In their report, they indicate that the moral reasoning of preservice teacher education students is less developed than that of college students majoring in other disciplines.

For example, McNeel (1994) analyzed college students’ moral reasoning across majors. His data showed greater growth for selected majors, including psychology (1.48), nursing (1.47), and social work (1.01). These numbers represent the effect size of major as an impact variable on moral reasoning. The interpretation of the effect size follows Bowen’s rules: small = 0.10-0.39, moderate = 0.450-0.69, large = 0.70-0.99, and very large = 1.00 and above (Reiman, 2002). McNeel attributed this growth to the major focus on “understanding humans in all their diversity and/or majors that include a central integration of ethical considerations within the content of a professional course of study” (1994, p. 34). Conversely, he found that vocationally-based majors, such as education and business, show more moderate effects (0.58). Furthermore, students majoring in education who demonstrated principled moral reasoning as freshmen have been found to show significant decreases in moral reasoning at the end of their programs (McNeel, 1994). Due to the narrow assumption on which the DIT has been developed and its weak power to predict moral conduct, this research of preservice FCS teacher candidates attempts to avoid the limitations of the DIT by opening up other avenues of possibility using grounded theory.

**Research Scope**

Although considering the issues discussed in the four sections outlined above, I recognized the need to explore the moral agency of FCSTCs that might shed light on the rather weak
connection between moral reasoning and moral conduct. Realizing the limitations of the DIT, I decided to pursue the connection between moral reasoning and moral conduct further using grounded theory. To do this, I insisted on avoiding dependency on previous theories and definitions regarding moral functioning and thus chose grounded theory method, a qualitative inquiry design for the current research. Blasi (1990) observes that research restricted by prior definitions of morality (such as Kohlberg’s (1981) has narrowed the understanding of moral functioning. And thus, there have been calls for revisiting the conceptualization of morality focusing on “common language understanding of what’s morally relevant” (Blasi, 1990, p. 40).

The goal of the present research is descriptive and exploratory in nature via its attempt to chart naturalistic conceptions of the participants’ moral domain. In practice, there are different ways to uncover moral understanding, and thus moral psychology can pursue different methods of inquiry (Walker & Pitts, 1998). One approach, which relies on prior knowledge, is to subject FCSTCs to a battery of tests, structured interviews, and the like to provide a description of the psychological factors involved in moral awareness. A complementary approach, and the one followed in this research, is to examine notions of moral understanding embedded in everyday language and common understandings. Such a ground-based examination not only fits the idea of avoiding preconceived notions, but according to Walker and Pitts (1998), also fits a psychological trend “that sees implicit psychological theories as important in their own right and as needed complements to explicit theories” (p. 405). Thus, the grounded theory used in this research is a suitable method to explore these implicit theories by inductively exploring how FCSTCs construct meaning about their moral functioning.
However, Blasi (1990) argues that “psychologists may risk missing a large portion of people’s moral life when they are rigidly guided by definitions constructed within specific philosophical theories” (p. 45). As such, current research attempts to generate ideas and meaning from the participants’ awareness and understanding of their moral agency through the use of grounded theory.

Although Narvaez, Bebeau, Thoma, and Rest (1999) acknowledge the crucial role of moral awareness and understanding in the study of moral behavior, they focus on moral awareness from a linear perspective, that is, a process which is activated when faced with a moral issue or dilemma. For example, for Rest (1984), being morally aware involves the recognition that an ethical issue is at stake. This awareness necessarily paves the way for moral judgment, which is a process of searching for the most morally justifiable action when considering different alternatives. However, the current research transcends this concept of moral awareness to also include the process of moral awareness and understanding which might exist during or after moral judgment.

This research does not include traditional hypothesis testing, except for the prediction that such ordinary and naturalistic understanding may disclose aspects of moral functioning that have been improperly incorporated in dominant moral development models which may be skewed by various prior favoritisms. A central hypothesis of this research is that the analysis of naturalistic notions of morality —those embedded in common understanding and ordinary language—can yield a broad meaning of the participants’ moral domain operating in their daily lives. Such broad meaning might be absent or simply not emphasized in contemporary moral development theory and research.
Moral Agency

Although it is against the nature of grounded theory to precisely define the studied phenomenon in order to allow for the emergence of grounded meanings, I will broadly define moral agency in order to prevent undesired ambiguity that might hinder the reader from focusing on the purpose of the research. Setting a general boundary of the current research is another reason for defining the concept of moral agency. However, participants’ understanding of their moral agency as reflected in the emerging framework is not guided by the following selection of theoretical concepts.

MacIntyre claims that in education, the trend is toward an external aspect of moral responsibility to execute one’s duties, with a special focus on carrying out one’s duties without meddling (1999). According to his claim, a teacher fosters the continuation of the high-stake test orientation by performing his or her specific teaching duties and remaining unaware that the students are not appropriately morally developed. In this sense, the teacher feels that he/she has done no harm because he/she has remained loyal to the assigned duties and has not failed in regard to the expected responsibilities.

Besides the external aspect of responsibility, Macintyre shows that moral agency emphasizes the internal as well as the external aspects of responsibility. That is, besides being loyal to one’s duty, moral agency demands that an individual be held justifiably responsible for actions within three realms. These realms are: 1) intentional actions, 2) incidental events that follow as a result of that which they should have been aware, and 3) predictable events that follow an action (Macintyre, 1999).
Similar to Macintyre (1999), Campbell and Thiessen view moral agency as “a principle-based role” (2001, p. 3). For them moral agency should consider deliberate and spontaneous intentions, actions, and reactions in relation to what teachers teach as well as in their interaction with pupils. Slightly different, Moshman (2004) clarifies moral agency in terms of moral identity. He states that possessing a moral identity is founded on defining one dimension of the self as a moral agent. A moral agent is one whose actions are based around maintaining the welfare of others (Moshman, 2004).

This research will remain open to the above concepts of moral agency but simultaneously allow for the emergence of new meaning based on the understanding of FCSTCs in regard to their moral agency. However, the definition of moral agency, as used in this research, is clarified in the following section.

Definition of terms

Definitions of relevant terms according to how they have been used in this research are presented below.

Moral agency: A participant’s knowledge about her abilities and willingness to engage in action, interpret situations, and predict consequences based on self-understanding of what is “right or wrong” and “good or bad.”

Disposition: A prevailing state of readiness and habit of teacher candidate’s character.

Teacher candidate: A novice learner who is practicing the teaching role under the guidance of a preservice teacher education program.
Qualitative research: An inquiry method through which the researcher applies narrative and constructivist approaches to deeply understand the phenomenon under study, that is, the moral agency of FCSTCs.

Grounded theory: An inductive-based inquiry in which the researcher uses constant comparative methods and theoretical sampling technique for the purpose of developing a substantive theory that emerges from and is verified in the data.

Theoretical sampling: A sampling selection strategy that recognizes the participants’ relevance to emerging key categories with the aim of exploring dimensional range and varied conditions for which grounded theory is shaped.

Critical theory: A social theory with the aim of emancipating individuals and societies from all forms of oppression.

**Contextual Description of the Family and Consumer Sciences Education Teacher Licensure Program**

Since 1871, when the program in FCS (formerly called domestic science, and later home economics) was established at Iowa State University, the program has helped create new developments in the field of Family and Consumer Sciences Education, increase the field’s knowledge base through research, and prepare professionals to be leaders in creating change in society. This program is among the largest FCS education programs in the country, offering master and doctoral degrees (Iowa State University of Science and Technology, 2007). The program’s mission is twofold: 1) to enhance the educational process for teaching FCS content, and 2) to advance the understanding of the integrative nature of the profession of FCS.
The Family and Consumer Sciences Education Teacher Licensure program is a four-year undergraduate program at I.S.U. designed for students interested in becoming licensed FCS teachers, who teach in vocational FCS education, and diversified occupational FCS programs in middle school, junior high, and high school.

Graduates in [this program] have a broad understanding of individual and family well-being. Graduates apply knowledge of family and consumer sciences content in global professional settings. They use research findings to improve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Due to the integrative and synergistic nature of family and consumer sciences, graduates address and act on complex problems confronting individuals, families, and communities. (Iowa State University of Science and Technology, 2007)

One of the performance outcomes of this program focuses on “collaboration, ethics, and relationships,” where the “graduate fosters relationships with individuals, families, and organizations in the larger community to support learning and development” (Iowa State University of Science and Technology, 2007). A complete list of the program performance outcomes is available in the appendix section (see Appendix A).

The program’s code of ethics is adopted from the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences organization (2003) (see Appendix B). This code is introduced to the teacher candidates as an overarching ethical guideline and is the standard that presumes to increase teacher candidates’ knowledge of what is “good or bad” and “right or wrong”. This code of ethics was examined through certain course activities in light of both self-determined as well as selected hypothetical moral issues. Through various activities, the code of ethics was examined either implicitly or explicitly as a method toward moral development.
A 2004 report assessing the progress of this program focused on the learning goal stating that “[s]tudents will articulate a professional philosophy of family and consumer sciences education that emphasizes social action and well-being of individuals, families, and communities” (Iowa State University of Science and Technology, 2007). Several learning objectives were selected and designed by educators in this program to meet the abovementioned learning goal. Among these learning objectives are:

1. Identify contemporary societal issues in which family and consumer sciences educators can and are meeting needs.
2. Discuss the critical science perspective as it relates to the practical problem approach.
3. Relate the critical science perspective and the practical problem approach to service-learning activities.
4. Identify and participate in a service-learning activity.
5. Maintain a learning journal of observations, practices, and reflections to document the growth of their professional philosophy of FCEDS.

To assess the efficacy of the program “students were asked to write a personal philosophy statement articulating their philosophy of social action and well-being of individuals, families, and communities.” The assessment revealed that:

Eighty percent of the students developed statements that revealed their understanding of the goal. Fifty percent of the students articulated how their college and related experiences have helped them to accomplish the goal. Forty percent of the students projected ideas of how they intended to accomplish the goal once they began working in their respective professional positions. Ten percent of the students responding did not adequately answer the question, rather focused on their personal philosophy of the profession with no connection between understanding and operationalizing the goal. One student was unable to make the connection and simply copied the mission statement of a related professional association. However,
the statements reveal better than average understanding and comprehension of the stated goal and means for accomplishing it. Program faculty agree that the assignments and activities in FCEdS 206\textsuperscript{1} and FCEdS 306\textsuperscript{2} are sufficient to provide evidence of adequately attaining this goal. (Iowa State University of Science and Technology, 2004)

**Objective**

Through the description and interpretation of the lived experiences and the constructed meaning of family and consumer sciences teacher candidates in regard to their moral agency, this study attempts to describe a substantive theory that recognizes the multidimensional aspects of their moral agency.

**Questions**

True to the nature of qualitative inquiry in general and grounded theory specifically, research questions should be in the form of overarching questions in order to allow understanding of various aspects in the studied phenomenon. However, while going through the process of constructing a grounded theory, I found that detailed questions emerged from the overlapping process of data collection and analysis.

*Overarching question:*

What factors influence FCSTCs’ understanding of their moral agency?

*Detailed questions:*

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\textsuperscript{1} FCEdS 206. Professional Roles in Family and Consumer Sciences. Introduction to various roles in professional settings, e.g., community agencies, secondary schools, business and industry, Cooperative Extension. Observation, participation, and teaching experiences in educational settings.

\textsuperscript{2} FCEdS 306. Educational Principles for Family and Consumer Sciences. Principles of teaching and learning applied to family and consumer sciences content. Instructional methods appropriate for formal and nonformal educational settings. Specific strategies for diverse audiences. May be used for family life certification.
1. What is the FCSTCs’ perspective on and experience with moral functioning for themselves and others?

2. How do FCSTCs construct meaning about their moral agency?

3. How do FCSTCs justify their responses? Under what conditions?

4. How do FCSTCs view selected values (i.e. the golden rule, honesty, responsibility, respect, freedom from oppression)?

5. How do FCSTCs anticipate applying their understanding of moral concepts as FCS teachers?

Assumptions

The following assumptions flow naturally from my ontological beliefs, as well as from the nature of grounded theory, on which this research was constructed:

1. My communication with the participants as well as my analysis and interpretation are contingent on my English skills as a second language.

2. Awareness of inequalities and injustice, and acts of oppression are part of people’s everyday lives (Turiel, 2006).

3. Understanding the moral agency of teacher candidates contributes to the progress of teacher education programs (Campbell, 2003).

4. The relativism of multiple social realities implies the impossibility of establishing a truth (Charmaz, 2000). This assumption supports the interpretive understanding of participants’ meanings as opposed to objective understanding.

5. Interviews can be seen not only as simple reports of reality or sites for expressing meaning but as a setting in which prevailing discourse shapes participants and their responses (Alvesson, 2004).
**Significance**

Teacher candidates’ perceptions of their moral agency are an important aspect of their conduct; yet in spite of this, it is an aspect of conduct that has been ignored by many researchers.

Building on my personal and professional interests, previous experiences in teacher education programs, and rationale—my perceived need for this kind of research—I believe that this research is unique because it strives to free itself from the existing philosophical and theoretical definition of morality as a starting point (Lapsley & Power, 2005). Rather this research seeks to understand from the ground level the ordinary moral domain of what Van Manen (1990) called “lived experiences.”

Harrington (2002) agrees with others that one thing teachers must do to foster student understanding is consider the students’ prior knowledge of the topic and then provide opportunities to enable students to take charge of their own learning. Unfolding FCSTCs’ understanding about themselves as moral agents is pivotal to their role as future FCS teachers because “how we view morality could have far-reaching implications for our vision of a fair and just society and how to achieve it” (Killen & Smetana, 2006, p. 3). Moreover, Colby points out that the way certain concepts (e.g., distributive justice, trust) are understood definitely plays a part in understanding ambiguous moral situations (2000). Discussing moral issues via disclosing the stories of FCSTCs and highlighting their perceptions and feelings about their moral domain is of great value if they are to be asked to function as moral agents in general and specifically as future FCS teachers.
Limitations

The limitations of this research were recognized as:

Using interviews as the main data collection method is limited by the participants’ willingness to candidly and honestly disclose information. For example, participants may have felt being observed due to the presence of the interviewer, note-taker, or research supervisor and thus answer the interview questions in a socially desirable manner. Moreover, the data are driven from participants’ understanding as well as interpretation of what they can recall and are willing to share verbally. I, as an instrument, have the potential to subconsciously influence the participants’ answers, as well as the truthfulness and forthrightness of their responses. Another limitation of the present research relates to the voluntary nature of the research. Although participants voluntarily agreed to participate, they might have felt obliged to participate because the focus group interview was conducted during their class time.

The theoretical sampling method does not yield a representative sample and therefore limits generalizability of results. Perhaps the most obvious limitation of the research sample was that 100% of the participants were Caucasian. Participants were from Midwestern states (whose primary industry is related to agriculture), and this may have influenced their lifestyles and eventually their participation in the research.

Although perceived as limitations, the above were not believed to have negative effects on the research. The researcher had made efforts to increase participants’ openness and truthfulness by inviting them to disclose information they feel comfortable sharing. Another significant method was the use of a game at the beginning of the first focus group
interview to facilitate a safe yet provocative environment for the discussion. Concerning limitations about free participation, the consent letter clearly states that the decision whether to participate or not would not affect their relationship with the program.

With reference to the drawback of generalizability of the study, it needs to be noted that it is not the desire of any qualitative study to establish generalizability. However, according to Strauss and Corbin (1998), theory that emerges from and is grounded in the data, offers invaluable meaning into the experience of the participants. Moreover, according to Strauss and Corbin, “the real merit of a substantive theory lies in its ability to speak specifically for the populations from which it was derived and to apply back to them.” (p. 267)

**Dissertation Organization**

This dissertation, which includes six chapters, begins with an introductory chapter where I present a background about myself as the research instrument and display the research rationale. In addition, this first chapter displays the research terms, scope, context, objective, questions, assumptions, significance, and limitations. The following chapter focuses on literature review in relation to the used method, grounded theory, and the content related background, mainly moral theories, morality and education, and teacher education programs. In-depth description of research procedures accompanied with several samples of data analysis is the heart of Chapter 3. This chapter ends with specifying key emerging categories that lead the development of the Moral Agency Framework. In contrast to Chapter 3 where the framework emerged from data analysis via using different coding systems, Chapter 4 engages in detailed discussion of the framework elements for the purpose of grounding the emerged framework in the data. In Chapter 5, I engage in an
intellectual reflection on key concepts related to the framework allowing myself to construct new theoretical and empirical meaning in the process. The last chapter is intended to provide a short summary of the research escorted by related implication to FCS teacher education programs as well as to future research. Finally the dissertation ends with a list of references and appendixes used in this research.
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter extensively introduces us to the literature in relation to the method used, grounded theory, and the dominant moral theories and their implications to the educational realm. The presentation of these theories expands our background about the uniqueness of each and on which the understanding of factors related to moral agency increase. The final section of this chapter displays background information regarding teacher education and related issues. Respectively, it is now the time to delve into the method that guides the research scheme and decisions.

Method

The method section intends to expand the readers’ knowledge about the method selected: grounded theory. Toward the end, I will justify the use of qualitative inquiry generally and the grounded theory specifically in respect to the research foci. Later, the history and the nature of grounded theory will be uncovered for the purpose of acquainting the readers about the foundations of grounded theory on which the research procedures rely. This section is assumed to provide a compelling explanation for my selected method of research.

Rationale of Qualitative Research

Constant world-wide change, such as social, technological, psychological and industrial change, is frequently challenging social researchers with new viewpoints and meaning. These ensuing new and ever-changing social contexts are not being sufficiently understood by the hypothetico-deductive methodology, where research questions and hypotheses are developed from theoretical models (grand theory) and tested against empirical evidence
(Flick, 2002). The deductive approach also fails to understand the multidimensional aspect of life worlds, which is reflected in “the ‘new obscurity’ (Habermas, 1996), the growing ‘individualization of ways of living and biographical patterns’ (Beck, 1992) and the dissolution of ‘old’ social inequalities into the new diversity of milieus, subcultures, lifestyles and ways of living (Hradil, 1992)” (Flick, 2002, p. 2).

There is a degree of difficulty involved in gaining insight on the unusual, the deviant, or the unexpected through quantitative study; rather, it is through qualitative inquiry that the unusual becomes a “source of insight and a mirror whose reflection makes the unknown predictable in the known, and the known predictable in the unknown, thereby opening up further possibilities for (self-) recognition” (Flick, Kardorff & Steinke, 2004, p. 1). To be familiar with what is actually taking place in life is greatly required for a new sensitivity of ever-changing social context. Such sensitivity can be approached through inductive methods, where concepts are formulated from cases, events, or individuals’ lives. However, as Glaser and Strauss (1967) indicate, both qualitative and quantitative inquiring is needed and both should be used as supplements and as mutual verification as they produce different forms of data that when integrated will generate theory. Thus, the epistemological position of qualitative and quantitative research is not in conflict, which would view both kinds of research as different methods of data collection (Kelle & Erzberger, 2004).

In addition to the above reasons for using qualitative research, the nature of this research—the self-understanding of the moral agency of FCSTCs—renders the use of inductive inquiry in general and grounded theory specifically. The rationale for selecting grounded theory, as it is related to the field of FCSTCs, is the focus of the forthcoming section.
Rationale of Grounded Theory

The lack of inductive-based theory in the area of FCS with regard to moral development is an essential reason for conducting grounded theory as a methodology for this study. For example, little is known about the nature of morality as perceived by FCSTCs, the factors that influence their understanding as moral agents, and how they develop morally especially with the implication of the critical science approach. Moreover, my never-ending contemplation throughout my graduate work regarding my moral values and the moral ground of the critical science approach is but an internal motive that led me to select grounded theory method.

Methodologically, I am in favor of grounded theory because, as Woods (1992) indicates many of the deductive theories, in general, that has been tested “were not grounded” in the empirical world and were unsound in the first place. I find the dependence on deductive inquiry true for moral theories, too; such dependency results in unclear practical values and less power to explain how people think morally and behave accordingly. As Woods indicates, the same criticism of quantitative study might also apply to qualitative inquiry which stops after extensive data description and category constructing or, at best, proposes a thin theory that has a poor relationship to the data rather than being rooted in the data and formulating a thick theory. Thus, data description and interpretation towards understanding world experience, as with ethnographic studies, is not only an end in itself, but a catalyst to generate a theory that is grounded in the lived experience (Flick, Kardorff, & Steinke, 2004). At this point, it is important to explore the origin of grounded theory and to acknowledge the unique contribution of the founders. The grounded theory’s guiding assumptions on which the current research relies will also be depicted in the next section.
History of Grounded Theory

Charmaz (2000) notes that the personal and academic experiences of Glaser and Strauss (1967) have led them to formulate a grounded theory perspective while trying to understand the process of dying as encountered by nurses. Glaser and Strauss’ dissatisfaction with the dominance of the hypothetico-deductive practice of testing grand sociological theories was the force that guided their thinking and feeling to provide us with a much broader conception of what social science investigators and researchers could and should do. They argue that social theory should be grounded in data systematically obtained and analyzed from the field (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Although grounded theory has been developed and used within the arena of sociology, grounded theory also has been successfully employed within education, nursing studies, and political science.

Glaser’s thorough quantitative methodological training brought the assumptions of American pragmatism and symbolic interactionism to grounded theory. Strauss brought the idea of agency, emergence, meaning, and the pragmatic study of action to grounded theory (Charmaz, 2004). Charmaz indicates that even though Glaser and Strauss (1967) jointly set the foundation of grounded theory, later they took different perspectives on grounded theory leading the former to remain consistent with the traditional cornerstone of grounded theory focusing on comparative methods, construct abstraction, and independent external reality. Differently, Strauss co-authored with Corbin (1998) methods to stress the concept of verification. That is, they pay more attention to ground the emerged theory in the data. However, both founders remain in the objectivist inquiry, founded in positivism by which grounded theory has received an on-going critique leading to the formulation of constructivist grounded theories (Charmaz, 2000, 2004; & Clarke, 2005).
According to Charmaz (2000, 2004), constructivist grounded theory stresses the studied phenomenon rather than the methods to study them, and encourages a reflexive position on ways of knowing and representing participants’ lives. The underpinning assumptions of constructivist grounded theory are as follows:

1. The relativism of multiple social realities (Charmaz, 2000) which implies the impossibility to establish a truth.

2. The centrality of discourse and text, which means that there is no object or phenomenon outside language.

3. The influence by pragmatism and symbolic interactionism perspectives.

The previous assumptions provided the research basis that influenced data collection methods, data analysis and interpretation as well as formulated a theory that is open to change according to a new constructed meaning. These assumptions presume that both the viewer (the researcher) and the viewed (the participants) mutually create meaning (Charmaz, 2000) about the moral agency of FCSTCs. Thus, participants’ voices, as rendered from their lived experiences, will be acknowledged through interpretive as opposed to objective understanding as exemplified in Chapter 4. The same is true for me as the research instrument, in the sense that my experience, ontological assumption (see chapter 1), and intellectual thoughts will be integrated through my interpretation and reflection on the findings as displayed in Chapter 5. I agree with Charmaz (2005) that what the observer sees or hears depends on prior interpretive frame of reference, biographies, and interest as well as the research context, relationship with participants, concrete field experience and ways of generating and documenting empirical material. The above mentioned assumptions and the resulting practices warrant for studying a phenomenon in
its context via a systematic method. Such demand entails disclosing the nature of grounded theory to which the following section is devoted. Two key themes—change and determinism—that claimed to direct grounded theory will be discussed below.

**Nature of Grounded Theory**

Unlike quantitative inquiry that starts from a developed model or theory, grounded theory moves toward developing a theory. Grounded theory, in contrast to deductive methods that aim to reduce research complexity by fragmenting it into variables, aims to study the case or phenomenon in its context thus accounting for the complexity of the study (Flick, 2002). In studying a phenomenon, “we are looking for repeated patterns of happenings, events, or actions/interactions that represent what people do or say, alone or together, in response to the problems and situations in which they find themselves” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 130).

Therefore in grounded theory we do not start with theory and prove it, rather we begin with an area of inquiry and then allow what is relevant to develop. Even though grounded theory recognizes the existing knowledge and theory, it does not give them great attention aiming to be open to other possibilities. Grounded theory refers to a set of systematic inductive methods for accomplishing qualitative research aims to produce general theory. Even though grounded theory deals with multi-strategy data collecting and analysis methods as process toward a product (developed substantive theory), the potential of grounded theory to generate middle-range theory is not fully recognized as researchers increasingly use the term, grounded theory, to mean methods for collecting and analyzing data (Charmaz, 2004).
Strauss and Corbin (1990) identify two key themes that direct grounded theory. The first is the concept of change, which is the essence of discovering certain processes that result in change. These processes affect individual and social entities, which would influence and be influenced by change. The second theme is the relationship between grounded theory and determinism. This relationship means that even though the social structure is recognized, people are not powerless, and they can make choices based on the perceived possibilities (Flick, Kardorff & Steinke, 2004). Therefore, the concept of empowering both the researchers and the participants becomes a common goal for grounded theory. Grounded theory is about gathering detailed data about specific processes, preconditions, properties, and purposes rather than describing the broad structure of a social setting (Charmaz, 2004). In a broad sense, grounded theory advances the study of any phenomenon as a process or even overlapped processes (Clarke, 2005).

To sum up this section, and before moving to the moral theories literature, Charmaz’s (2004) reasons for placing grounded theory in the forefront of the qualitative research arena will be outlined. Grounded theory is in the forefront of the qualitative research because it: 1) offers clear and sequential instructions for qualitative research; 2) provides unique strategies for data analysis; 3) combines data collection and analysis; 4) applies conceptual analysis; and 5) validates qualitative research as scientific inquiry. These reasons, in addition to the above illustration about the uniqueness of grounded theory, regarded as an appropriate method to explore the phenomenon of the current research, understanding the moral agency of FCSTCs. Understanding this phenomenon is complex and multidimensional; thus, it entails unpacking the existing literature on moral theories.
Moral Theories and Related Issues

At this point, very little is known about FCSTCs’ understanding of their own moral agency. However, this will change when theoretical sensitivity is used to investigate this phenomenon from which a theory will be generated. It is the goal of this research to contribute to the relevant literature on moral agency and self-understanding as it relates to FCSTCs. The traditional qualitative inquiry produces a conceptual schema to follow based on literature review. Nevertheless, this research, guided by grounded theory method, highlights gaps that have not been addressed in prior research studies. A refinement of the questions, hypothesis, and a critique of the literature will emerge during the data collection and analysis portion of this research: it is a matter of proper sequence in relation to the emergence of conceptualizations.

Theoretical understanding of the multiplicity of moral development and moral action has been reinforced by many thinkers and researchers (Blasi, 1980; Mustakova-Possardt, 2004; Rest, 1984). Moreover, Derryberry and Thoma have asserted that “the consensus in the field is that moral development is best represented as a collection of cognitive, social, affective, motivational, and behavioral forces” (Derryberry & Thoma, 2005, p. 68). However, an examination of empirical research in the area of moral development does not reflect such multiplicity (Derryberry & Thoma, 2005; Mustakova-Possardt, 2004). According to Derryberry and Thoma (2005), such non-recognition might occur because in the process of explaining a construct’s contribution to moral development and moral functioning, another important moral psychological construct might be eliminated out implicitly.
Moreover, the primary concern is that contemporary moral psychology suffers from a conceptual skew that is supported by a theoretical and empirical focus on moral cognition as applied to interpersonal problems and the consequent inattention to moral personality and other intrapsychic aspects of the moral domain (Walker, 2004). Therefore, selected dominant theories will be critically presented to demonstrate their capacity to reflect the complexity of morality. Given the complexity of moral development and the many factors that contribute to such complexity, adequately describing these factors that affect moral functioning seems daunting (Derryberry & Thoma 2005).

Rather than guided being specific theory or meaning, the nature of the current research method suggests a preliminary literature background to provide a point of reference for the conduct of the study to allow for the emergence of new concepts, relationships, and meanings. Moreover, these theories might provide possible theoretical explanations or at least shed light on the interpretation of the research findings. Such presentation is not intended to control the process of this research (e.g. the coding and analysis), rather, it is intended to enrich the researcher’s theoretical sensitivity as well as the reader’s background in relation to the studied phenomenon.

Therefore, each of the following sections will present general background information, perspectives, trends, and challenges with no proposed direction for this study. To this end, I will present dominant moral theories such as cognitive-based morality, four-component moral model, self-understanding, moral identity, morality of care, and moral action.
I will start with Kohlberg’s moral theory and discuss it in detail because it provides a clearer picture of moral change over time (Setiono, 2001) and has dominated the field of morality since the early 1960s (Nunner-Winkler, 1996). Furthermore, unlike other moral theories that accept existing norms as moral norms and view moral motivation as purely to fulfill self needs, cognitive-based moral theory (i.e. Kohlberg, 1981) recognizes the autonomous aspect of individuals (Nunner-Winkler, 1996).

*Kohlberg’ Cognitive-Based Morality*

Many writers, such as Killen and Smetana (2006) and Setiono (2001), have asserted that the work of Piaget, who considered knowledge and judgment about social relationships as central to morality, influenced the field of morality. Because of this influence, Kohlberg (1981) and others have moved moral development from the behaviorist realm to the realm of cognitive and age-based moral development (Killen & Smetana, 2006; Setiono, 2001).

Throughout the years psychological theorists have tried to understand morality from various viewpoints, starting with Freud and his notion of conscience, and Piaget and his concept of moral autonomy (as cited in Killen & Smetana, 2006). Killen and Smetana further explain that Freud’s notion of conscience, emotion, guilt, and child-parent relationship has been contested by behaviorists through the use of experiments designed to assess moral behavior. According to Turiel (2001), even though Piaget’s research on children’s moral judgment started in the late 1920s, it received little attention due to the sociological orientation of morality. Such orientation views morality as a shared respect for society’s rules and values, and suggests that children should be equipped with strong emotional attachments toward these rules and values (Turiel, 2001).
It is proposed by Kohlberg (1981) that morality addresses the rationality, deliberation, and assessment that an individual faces when presented with ethically conflicting alternatives during the decision-making process (Setiono, 2001). Kohlberg (1981) suggests that moral judgment development is characterized by alterations in one’s line of reasoning that justify moral standards and that provoke moral responses. During the succession of alterations, which occurs in three levels consisting of two stages each, the sociomoral perspective of the child is broadened. The sequence of alterations includes the *preconventional* level, the *conventional* level, and the *postconventional* level (Kohlberg, 1981). Each level rests on a fundament of morality, with a specific adherence to the justice principle, in which mutuality between the self and others is favored and the interdependence of moral duties and personal rights is recognized when choosing between right and wrong (Setiono, 2001).

The *preconventional* level commonly pertains to children under the age of nine. Children at this level can be identified by their tendency to appraise morality in an objective manner, and consequently, by their inability to understand morality abstractly (Kohlberg, 1981). The comprehension of moral actions is based on the direct consequences that follow (Nunner-Winkler, 1996). The full understanding of moral norms by children is founded on external cues provided by authority figures, often parents and teachers (Setiono, 2001). This reliance on external cues to determine right from wrong is a central characteristic of children in *stage one*. During this stage, correct behavior is specific to being behaviorally submissive to authority figures and the rules that are set for them, deflecting punishment, and refraining from causing physical harm. Children transition into *stage two* when they participate in correct behavior as a way to serve their own self-interest (Nunner-Winkler, 1996).
According to Kohlberg (1981), the *conventional* level, which consists of the third and fourth stages or moral development, is typically comprised of adults. At this level morality is subjective, and moral actions are first compared with internalized societal norms before being executed (Kohlberg). Kohlberg added that in *stage three*, individuals essentially strive to fill prescribed social roles in an attempt to gain societal approval. Compliance with society’s moral expectations in *stage four*, however, transcends beyond the attempt to earn widespread acceptance. Rather, moral conformity in this stage is perceived as a duty in an individualized effort to fulfill social obligations and maintain order (Nunner-Winkler, 1996).

At the third level of moral reasoning, the *postconventional* level, the focus of moral reasoning switches from being in accordance with societal norms to forming one’s own moral perspectives (Kohlberg, 1981). Most adults rarely reach the fifth and sixth stages in the *postconventional* level, but those individuals who do reach *stage five* can be identified by their aim to uphold social contracts as per obligation (Nunner-Winkler, 1996). Adults at this stage promote social welfare and fully comprehend the network of human interdependency underlying moral functioning (Setiono, 2001). Similarly, in *stage six*, adults demonstrate ethical regard for humankind. According to Kohlberg (1981), the distinction from the previous stage, however, is that ethical regard is derived from commitment to universal principles—justice, reciprocity, equality, and respect—as opposed to obligation to social contracts (Nunner-Winkler, 1996). It is important to note that, according to Kohlberg’s moral development theory, it is impossible for an individual to progress to a higher stage without transitioning through each preceding stage, just as it is
impossible to return to a former stage once a more advanced stage has been reached (Setiono, 2001).

Kohlberg’s moral stage theory depicts that moral development moves from self-interest and identification with social norms viewed as early moral stages, to a mature stage in which the principle of justice replaces social conviction (Kohlberg, 1981). Kohlberg’s moral theory gained support during the 1960s and early 1970s as it seemed to offer a universal concept of moral growth by which many educators hoped to avoid the relativism of values clarification (Nucci, 2006). This idea will be further explained in the “Morality and education” section. Moreover, according to Nucci, the moral reasoning rooted in Kohlberg’s theory freed teachers at the time from engraving a certain set of values on students and offered teachers a rationale to challenge students’ positions and thus avoid values clarification. However, in the mid-1980s, support for Kohlberg’s theory began to wane as it failed to channel strategies into the educational field (Nucci, 2006). Some of the limitations of Kohlberg’s theory as it pertains to this study will be discussed in the following section.

Walker (2004) illustrates how Kohlberg’s theory of moral development has been implicitly influenced by the Enlightenment tradition via the focus on moral reasoning regarding interpersonal problems. Walker further clarifies that such tradition has led Kohlberg “to explicate an account of moral functioning that was defined by reason and revealed through the developmental process, and to advocate a vision of moral maturity that featured principled moral judgment, an ideal ethical stance involving abstracted impartiality and universalizability” (2004, p. 548). The principle of justice as a core of Kohlberg’s (1981)
theory appears to be deficient as different moral principles emerge across cultures and gender (Setiono, 2001).

Walker illustrates that the tradition of Enlightenment “regarded moral issues primarily as those pertaining to interpersonal conflicts and relationships, and hence it flamed modern ethical thinking with an emphasis on individualism, justice, rights, duties, and welfare” (2004, p. 549). As a result, this tradition marginalized the intrapsychic dimension which included the conceptualized characteristics that determine the goodness of an individual. Constantly viewing the nature of human life in a dualistic way, which is demonstrated by reasons vs. emotions, is another contribution of the Enlightenment tradition that added to the conceptual skew of Kohlberg theory (Walker, 2004). Walker further explains that this dualistic way of viewing human life overemphasizes reasoning as a core concept of moral functioning and marginalizes passions (e.g. emotions, personality) which are perceived as demeaning biases.

Such a conceptual bias has clearly led to a measurement limitation in that moral reasoning is viewed as a sole factor for moral behavior. Besides this narrow view, a measurement instrument has been developed by Rest (1979), to overcome practical obstacles of Kohlberg’s individually administered moral judgment interview and laborious scoring system (Thoma, 2006). Thus, this practical problem of measurement was addressed by Rest (1979), who developed the Defining Issues Test (DIT), an objective measure of moral judgment based on Kohlberg's stages and one that can be group-administered and computer-scored.
The extensive research with the DIT (Walker, 2004) abandoned Kohlberg’s individual interview-based method “in favor of a view of development that entailed gradually shifting distributions of reasoning toward more developed forms” (Walker, 2004, p. 549). So far, the DIT has become the instrument of choice in the area and has prompted plentiful studies of moral judgment development (Walker, 2004). Like Kohlberg (1981), Rest (1984) perceived moral judgment development as a social and cognitive maturation process marked by the transition between subjectively construing morality to depending on postconventional rationale for moral interpretation. He emphasized the importance of recognizing cognitive processes during moral judgment in the understanding of an individual’s moral actions. Thus, Rest formulated the DIT so that Kohlberg’s developmental succession was addressed while simultaneously veering away from Kohlberg’s original interview-based method and into a more practical method (Thoma, 2006).

Another challenge to the competence of Kohlberg’s (1981) theory came from domain theorists, such as Nucci (2001), who argued that social understandings can be divided into separate domains: the moral, social-conventional, and personal-prudential (Walker, 2004). Walker clarifies the three domains of social understanding as follows:

In this perspective, the moral domain refers to justice, rights, and welfare concerns: the conventional domain refers to arbitrary but shared uniformities in social norms: and the personal domain refers to actions that pertain primarily to oneself and that preclude justifiable social regulation. An example of a prototypic moral violation might be punching someone else: an example of a violation of conventional norms might be eating with your hands in a cultural context that prescribes the use of utensils; and an example of a behavior that is frequently judged to be in the personal domain is alcohol and drug use. (pp. 549-550)
Domain theory draws on philosophical definitions of morality and psychological research to define morality in terms of “obligatory and generalizable norms, based on concepts of welfare (harm), fairness, and rights, that regulate social relationships” (Smetana, 2006. p. 121). Smetana illustrates that moral transgression is conceived as a wrong action because of the intrinsic consequences on others’ welfare and rights. Thus, moral concept or domain is hypothesized to be obligatory, universally applicable, and impersonal. Unlike moral concepts, social-conventional concepts are hypothesized to be “contextually relative, consensually agreed on, contingent on specific rules or authority commands, and alterable” (Smetana, 2006. p. 121). Copious amounts of research have revealed a distinction in how children and adults regard prototypic moral constructs in comparison to prototypic conventional norms. Whereas prototypic moral constructs are viewed as universal, morally constraining, and authoritatively autonomous, prototypic norms are considered to be subjective, regulated, and dependent on authoritative rulings (Walker, 2004).

On the contrary, the personal-prudential concept draws on the scope of morality that views the notion of rights rooted in the self and personal agency. Thus, according to Nucci (2001), individuals exercise personal agency when they declare control over personal issues; accordingly, because of how these issues pertain to the actors’ private lives, they are considered to be outside the realm of social-conventional and moral domains (Nucci, 2001).

Smetana (2006) has asserted that not all events can be clearly categorized into these three domains as they might entail overlapping concerns with morality, social conventions, prudence, and personal issues either synchronically or individually. Smetana has reported
that “an adequate explanation of development must include analyses of how individuals coordinate moral and nonmoral issues in their thinking” (Smetana, 2006, p. 123). In this regard, domain theory is challenged by defining morality too narrowly in that it fails to understand the moral implications of conventional and personal behaviors (Walker, 2004). Moreover, several researchers found considerable variation both between and within individuals in how they coordinate morality with other social understanding (Smetana).

Considering the above mentioned issues, which overemphasize moral reasoning in addition to the ambiguity surrounding domain theory, which divides social understandings into three distinctive categories, this research attempts to not limit the horizon of the participants’ social understanding. That is, the interview questions would allow them to freely select and reflect on their self-reported stories and perspectives.

Now, because of the aforementioned limitation of Kohlberg’s (1981) moral theory, I found it helpful to present Rest’s (1984) theory, which claims to account for more than the cognitive aspect of moral development. Rest’s four-component model, which was developed as a result of modifying Kohlberg’s theory of the development of moral reasoning (Derryberry & Thoma, 2005), will be briefly illustrated.

**Rest’s Four-Component Moral Model**

Rest (1984) illustrates his conception with his multiple-component model, which emphasizes four distinct and independent moral psychological components: *moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivation, and moral character*. The following paragraph illustrates Rest’s four components of morality.
Moral sensitivity involves assigning meaning to a situation and discerning the relevant moral components and significance surrounding it. One who is engaged in moral sensitivity is able to identify with each individual who would be affected by any of the various moral actions available, and does not exclude one’s own instincts and emotional responses during role-taking from the assessment. The next psychological component, moral judgment occurs when an individual takes into account the various outcomes that surround each action. Such deliberation is followed by an assessment of the possible alternatives in which the most morally admissible action is sought. Moral values take precedence over contending affairs with respect to moral motivation, in which a commitment is made to a morally justifiable action and accountability for the consequences taken by the decision-maker. The proficiency and application of strategies that parallel the moral decision, coupled with personal characteristic inclination to generate effective action, constitutes moral character.

In addition to Kohlberg’s (1981) focus on moral reasoning and moral judgment, Rest (1984) hypothesizes three other components: moral sensitivity, moral motivation, and moral character, as moral development factors. Derryberry and Thoma (2005) reported the efforts of some researchers who explicate the nature of Rest’s theory in dental and teaching professions. Those researchers have verified that the existence and the improvement of multiple components contribute to moral development and increase the probability of moral actions required in these professionals (Derryberry & Thoma, 2005).

Representational moral functioning is not constantly in accordance with reason, nor is it automatically calculated or one-dimensional, regardless of the sequential succession that
Rest’s four-component model follows (Derryberry & Thoma, 2005). They assert that the absence or weakness of a component or components leads to less advanced moral development, and moral functional outcomes may fail to occur.

Apart from Rest’s multidimensional moral development perspective, Derryberry and Thoma (2005) claim that “Rest’s empirical efforts have mainly focused on the development of moral judgment along with its contributions to various moral actions and its potential for contributing to other relevant actions and outcomes” (p. 68). For example, most of Rest’s empirical research has addressed moral judgment, leaving the impression that moral judgment is the sole factor in moral action (Blasi, 1980, 2004). Moreover, “[e]mpirical research of other components in [Rest’s] model has only been conducted in specific professional contexts, and it has yet to be shown empirically how multiple components may affect moral development and contribute to action in general populations” (Derryberry & Thoma, 2005, p. 70). For this reason, Damon and Hart’s (1982) philosophical interpretation about the nature of the self will be disclosed. Unlike Rest, who recognizes four broad components of moral development, Damon and Hart highlight the concept of self-understanding as an integral component of moral development and action.

**Damon and Hart’ Self-Understanding**

Damon and Hart’s (1982) research has led to the recognition of *self* as vital to moral development and functional outcomes (Derryberry & Thoma, 2005). However, Damon and Hart’s recognition of self rested heavily on the thoughts of earlier philosophers mainly James (1961) and Mead (1934).
Damon and Hart (1982) assert that the history of the self is rooted in the work of James’ (1961) theory, which has contributed insightfully to the psychological literature of the self. James views the self as being divided into two main components, the Me and the I; this distinction between Me and I represents the self as an object and the self as a subject, respectively (James, 1961). James further explains that the I is the subject of awareness or the self as knower, whereas the Me represents the object of awareness or the self as known. The Me self refers to the self as known or the actual qualities that constitute the self and identify it as a unique individual (Damon & Hart, 1982). This Me self, according to James, includes three constituents: material, social and spiritual. The Material Me represents self-understanding based on bodily attributes and ownership of material items, such as body, clothes, family, home, and personal property. The Social Me represents self-understanding that stimulates social relationship and affiliation. The spiritual Me includes the entire collection of our states of consciousness and our psychic faculties and dispositions (James, 1961).

James claims that the organization of the Me self follows a hierarchical structure, where each individual assigns certain values to each category of the Me self—the material, the social, and the spiritual constituents. Such a hierarchical structure is viewed by James as the same for all individuals with the material Me at the bottom, the spiritual Me at the top, and the different social self in between. Although James recognized some individual variation of the constituents formation, according to Damon and Hart’s observations, they stated that “he did not recognize the possibility that their hierarchical interrelations might vary, both across individuals and within one individual over time” (1982, p. 844).
In contrast to the Me self being classified as known, the I self is represented as knower. This self continually organizes and interprets experience entirely in a subjective account (Damon & Hart, 1982). According to James (1961), the individual is aware of I via three kinds of experiences—continuity, distinctness, and volition. James further explains that the self as knower receives its stability from the sense that I will always do the same contributing to a stable self-identity. The subjective nature of the self as knower also drives a feeling of individuality and distinctness from others. Thus, no matter how much an individual knows about others, it would not bear their qualities (James, 1961).

Experiencing the self in the sense of free will is the essence of the volition characteristic of the self as knower; this volition experience is the most fundamental kind that would exert energy over the self through interpretation and thinking processes (James). Self reflection is a second-order awareness that is implicit in the characteristics of the I self, which includes continuity, distinctness, and volition (Damon & Hart, 1982).

Regardless of the dual nature of the self as conceptualized by James, it is recommended that psychologists focus on studying the Me self because of the indeterminate nature of the I self (Damon & Hart, 1982). The indeterminate nature of the self implies that we can not predict the I self decisions due to its subjectivity. James claims the indeterminate aspect of the I self relies on the assumptions that the two selves I and Me can be separated. However, Mead (1934) presented another approach that would count for both of the Me and I selves for psychological studies.

Mead’s (1934) work on the I and Me selves led him to suggest the idea of approaching the I self through the Me self by exploring individuals’ knowledge of the I and Me selves; the
subjective and the objective self, respectfully. Based on Damon and Hart’s (1982) interpretation, Mead’s idea “amounts to a suggestion to focus the empirical study of self not on self in all its duality but, rather, on one’s self-understanding of both the Me and I” (p. 845). They further explain that the nature of studying the Me as the object of self entails the study of one’s self-understanding as one of the Me components. By one’s self-understanding of his or her subjective self, the I self is definitely open for exploration (Damon & Hart). Thus, the view of self-understanding comprehensively includes “an individual’s knowledge and reflections on the self-as-known as well as on the self-as-knower” (Damon & Hart, 1982, p. 845). Accordingly, Damon and Hart stated that self-understanding includes an individual’s conception of I features such as continuity, distinctness, volition, and self-reflection as well as the rest of the individual’s self definition of the Me constituents, which are material, social and spiritual.

A different narrow impression might also be related to Damon and Hart’s (1982) self-understanding concept. Noticeably, they were influential in highlighting the value of self-understanding and clarifying the many variables that have affected the behavior of their selected care exemplars. However, according to Derryberry & Thoma’s (2005) claim that regardless of the numbers of these variables or factors, self-understanding is viewed as the sole contributor to moral development and action. This narrowed perspective of self-understanding ignores other relevant factors such as moral judgment, verbal ability (Derryberry & Thoma) as well as sociocultural factors.

Similar to Damon and Hart’ and their focus on self-understanding, Blasi (1980) recognizes the significance of moral identity as a moral motivation source. For him, moral identity
involves moral self, moral engagement, and self-consistency to which the following section is assigned.

**Blasi’s Moral Identity**

The literature and empirical studies regarding moral motivation for decades has focused extensively on moral reasoning and only slightly on moral emotion (Killen & Smetana, 2006). Nevertheless, some current studies acknowledge the role of moral identity, the construction of self around moral concerns (i.e. moral values), as an additional source of moral motivation (Hardy & Carlo, 2005). Until Blasi’s (1980, 1984, 2004) contributions to the field of moral conduct, the function of the self had essentially been ignored. Accordingly, Blasi contributed more than two decades worth of advancements to the self model. The self model relies on self-identity as the core of moral functioning, and attempts to further explain moral behavior by incorporating moral cognition and moral functioning into the framework.

Blasi’s self model is founded on three components particular to moral functioning, which include moral self, moral engagement, and self-consistency. Moral self, the first component, concentrates on the self-identity in relation to how important moral values are to the individual. Walker (2004) reported a study that reveals the varying degrees of moral salience manifested in individuals’ lives. In the reported study, when participants were asked to disclose situations involving a moral confrontation, some were able to offer several situations from a single day, whereas others had to refer to situations that occurred decades ago. Hardy and Carlo (2005) suggest that the varying levels of morality that one incorporates into the sense of self are reflected when examining the moral self.
Consequently, those who strive to be moral are classified as having moral identities (Hart, 2005).

Furthermore, Colby and Damon’s (1992) case-study analysis of individuals who imitate morality in their lives revealed a merge between moral and personal goals, indicating a marginal distinction between morality and the self. This research supports Blasi’s proposal that the uppermost level of moral integration is attained when one’s moral understanding become part of self identity (Walker, 2004). Moreover, Walker reported a research on prosocial adolescents, in which the self-concepts of these individuals were compared with a matched group, defined themselves more often with moral attributes and included their ideal selves in the self-description. Blasi’s implication that the moral self-concept is fundamental in moral functioning is thus reinforced by this research.

The second component, a process that is also referred to as moral engagement, focuses on an individual’s personal obligation to carry out moral actions (Blasi, 1980). There is a distinction between processing the correct moral course of action to take and comprehending that it is a personal responsibility to pursue that course. Blasi suggests that moral responsibility, as an implicit connection between the process of judgment and action, becomes attached to one’s self identity. This attachment might result from developing moral attachments to others through which an individual’s moral disposition is reshaped. Self-consistency (or integrity), the third component in Blasi’s (1980) self model, is a motive dependent on the interaction of judgment and action in order to be satisfied. Harmony between moral judgment and moral action is likely to be established by
individuals with moral identities since self-consistency is an inherent human motive (Hart, 2005).

Hart explains that social psychological theory since the early 20th century demonstrates that identity is formulated by culture, social class, and relationships (2005). Thus, in order to fully understand moral functioning, we need to explore the moral identity in its social context away from hypothetical moral situations in which the role of the self is irrelevant. As Hart stated,

“If the notion of identity is to contribute to an understanding of moral functioning, then it must be a construct with deep roots in a social world. It is only by understanding the connections between moral identity and the social world that it will be possible to understand the specificity and the collapses in moral life.” (Hart, 2005, p. 260)

Hart clarified that moral identity can be useful for understanding the nature of moral life and the roots of moral failure (Hart, 2005).

Defining moral character and implementing moral problem-solving skills in one’s life appears to be founded on integrity, which is often waged when practicing moral obligation. Blasi’s suggestion that self-consistency is salient in moral functioning, especially where self-appraisal and appearing moral to others is concerned, advocates that one’s sense of integrity may be kept in tact by “distorting rationalizations and defense mechanisms” (Walker, 2004, p.4).

Although a multitude of researchers protested the weight of rationality within the field of moral psychology and leaned toward an approach that emphasized moral personality and moral character, Walker (2004) asserts that Blasi remained confident in his argument that
removing moral cognition would cause the field to be emotion-based and limited to subjectivity. By including cognition into the field of morality, Blasi (2004) suggests that not only is meaning constructed, but truth is also determined.

Because of the argument that moral psychology is ruled by many, not just a few, structures (Hart, 2005), Blasi’s structure of moral self might be challenged. Moral behavior and action have more to rely on than moral identity because of the direct and indirect impact of the surroundings. Moreover, as Hart stated “[m]oral identity is a fragile achievement which requires social nurturance and vigilance” (2005, p. 260). However, another harmonizing approach that might relate to moral identity in some sort is Gilligan’s morality of care.

**Gilligan’s Morality of Care**

Perhaps the strongest challenge to Kohlberg’s (1981) theory, and certainly the one to incite the most controversy, was articulated by Gilligan (1982). Gilligan advanced well-publicized arguments that Kohlberg’s paradigm is insensitive to females’ mode of reasoning and characterizes this reasoning as morally deficient. The apparent dilemma with the male-based study conducted by Kohlberg, Gilligan argues, is that because women naturally derive their moral domain from relationships rather than sovereignty, they are inclined to demonstrate only stage three, the *Good-boy, Nice-girl Orientation*, of the six-stage sequence. Consequently, on Kohlberg’s account, mature womanhood, which is usually typified by care for and sensitivity to the needs of others is judged to be morally lacking (Gilligan).
Walker (2006) illustrates the two contentions of Gilligan’s model. The first was that Kohlberg’s (1981) theory (as well as most theories in developmental psychology) has a masculine bias, and that this gender bias is indicated by females’ less mature moral reasoning than males as indexed by his approach (Walker, 2006). Her second contention was that there are two distinct and gender-related orientations to moral decision making. These two orientations are an ethic of justice, which is typical of males and well represented in moral psychology, and an ethic of care, which is typical of females and underrepresented and undervalued in moral psychology (Walker, 2006).

However, Walker (2006) challenges Gilligan’s (1982) claims based on three observations. First, individuals do not show the consistency in orientation usage that Gilligan claimed and that the notion implies; instead, people evidence considerable variability across contexts and over time. Second, the orientations have not been found to be clearly gender-related. Gender differences are rarely evidenced on standard moral problems or within types of real-life problems. Third, preference for orientations seems to be strongly influenced by situational factors. In other words, the nature of the problem under consideration influences the resulting moral framework to much greater extent than does an individual’s gender.

Despite the unequivocal lack of evidence for Gilligan’s (1982) allegations of gender bias within Kohlberg’s (1981) approach and her claim of gender-relatedness for moral orientations, her model was regarded by many as unarticulated (Walker, 2006). Gilligan’s theorizing, however, did contribute to the growing realization that Kohlberg’s model does not represent the full scope of the moral domain and that there are other aspects of moral
functioning that need to be incorporated into our understanding, particularly the relational aspects of personal morality, care, and commitment.

Even though the above-mentioned theories attempt to explain moral development with different emphases, the ultimate goal is to act morally. Yet, the nature of moral action has its unique characteristic that might interact with other factors, such as moral reasoning. A brief discussion of related studies is unveiled below.

**Moral Action**

Regardless of the philosophical argument about the nature of morality and the various conceptual understandings of morality as they pertain to individuals and their interaction, moral action is certainly the target. Thus, factors related to moral action become another area that is perceived as a vital contributor to moral development and moral action (Derryberry & Thoma, 2005). The manner in which moral action has been referenced has been studied as a factor that influences moral action. In fact, Derryberry and Thoma reported several studies that explored how variables of moral action (i.e. honesty, truthfulness, altruism, and taking a stand in support of human rights and liberties) are affected by moral judgment and self-understanding.

According to Derryberry and Thoma’s (2005) observation, the studies that focus on the manner in which moral actions were revealed have regarded moral actions as a unitary trait. They further explain that viewing moral action as a unitary trait implies that regardless of the attached behavior, moral actions have been considered the same or equally influenced by the same influencing factors. However, Blasi (1980, 2004) has recognized the
complexity of moral and prosocial actions. For example, due to the observation that various publicly agreed-upon instances of moral actions can be morally justified, Blasi (1980) has carried the idea that moral development should not necessarily influence different kinds of action similarly. That is, the nature of the action has its unique attribution that might interact with moral reasoning.

Another example for recognizing the complexity of moral actions is Krebs and Van Hesteren’s research (1994), through which they explore reasons for activating altruism. They have found a hierarchy of altruistic behaviors that are influenced by multi-force factors, such as age, stage of development, self-attributions, situation, and other cognitive and affective processes. Based on Derryberry and Thoma’s (2005) understanding, the above altruism research findings support Blasi’s (1980) belief that moral action can be influenced differently and also explore the various complex levels of some moral action cases.

To better understand such complexity of moral action and the interrelatedness aspect of the surrounding factors, the aforementioned theories were presented. Even though each presented theory might theoretically aim to fully understand moral development, empirically each has its unique limitations and skewed perspectives. However, these presented theories and their related issues aimed to broaden the readers and mainly the teacher education program practitioners’ conceptualization in regard to the multiplicity of moral development and moral agency.
Unlike all the previous moral theories, which place more emphasis on theorizing the field of moral development, values clarification tends more toward practical strategies for the purpose of clarifying one’s values. The following section will articulate the nature of values clarification and its practical procedures.

**Ellrod’s Values Clarification**

Values clarification movement has its root in the work of Raths and others during the 1950s and 1960s (as cited in Ellrod, 1986). Chinnery (2003) noted that as Kohlberg’s cognitive development was gaining strength, the theory and practice of values clarification emerged. Ellrod asserts that the movement of values clarification has tended more to practical technique than to theory. The following section presents Ellrod’s understanding of the implication and presumption of values clarification. Clarifying one’s values is the sole purpose of values clarification; it is not the instilling of a particular value. Chinnery (2003) illustrates that the intention of values clarification is to get closer to one’s own values and to reflect on them.

Valuing processes are offered to clarify the sincerity of one’s value-commitment through a seven-step procedure: a) choosing from alternative values, b) considering the consequences of espoused values, c) choosing freely not influenced by peers or figures of authority, d) protecting the value classified as important, e) publicly affirming values rather than concealing of denying them, f) acting by putting cherishing values into practice, and g) acting with a pattern as one’s strong values will not stop by a singular effort, rather they will appear across places and times (Ellrod, 1986).
In addition to value clarification, Ellrod (1986) identifies other psychological factors on which action is determined such as, the principle of marginal utility, doubt effect, will, and stubbornness. Competences and emotional conditions focusing on trust and care are other psychological factors that are assumed to influence action.

Supporters of values clarification hold the belief that if the road for students to reflect on the issues in their life is facilitated, they will ultimately begin to modify their behavior to the better (Chinnery, 2003). But on the other hand, critical research discovered a values-action gap and judgment-action gap (Leming, 1997) resulting in less favor for values clarification. For example, even though importing knowledge, using problem solving strategies, and treating personal experience in a creative manner are important methods for values clarification, they cannot be held responsible for moving toward a higher level of moral judgment as “they will not lead to an accommodative transformation of cognitive moral patterns.” (Oser, 2001, p.10024)

Another limitation of values clarification comes from relativism. For example, even though actions that follow values clarification might be personally pleasing and socially fruitful, they, according to Ellrod (1986), are interpreted based on the individual preferences, which reveal underlying relativism. Ellrod views such relativism as unsatisfactory for moral education. He further elaborates that values clarification, which implicitly assumes relativism,

    tends to result in the subtle insertion of tacit values which are unexamined. Even if such values are made explicit and acknowledged, there remains the question of why these particular values (e.g. democracy, self-actualization, authenticity) are chosen, whether others should also be respected and how any values are grounded since the
clarification process does not provide any justification at all for the acceptance of a value. (pp.17-18)

Current scholars also agree that values clarification, as a moral education approach, could not recover from the two most inevitable charges against it: 1) values clarification being unquestionably relativistic; and 2) that it presents threats to the privacy of participants, having to disclose private issues to the public. (Leming, 1997)

Due to the complexity of our lives, values clarification, in addition to the creativity of the aforementioned moral theories seems to be less able to fully understand, explain, and or predict the moral domain of individuals, such as moral reasoning, moral behavior, and moral agency. Thus, the current research attempts to add some meaning that would generally enrich the literature of moral theories and specifically the self-understanding of moral agency.

Now that I covered some moral theories, I will discuss their relevance to moral education approaches. I will start with general background about moral education and later discuss character education and moral cognitive education.

**Morality and Education**

Building on the moral education section discussed in Chapter 1 for the purpose of justifying the current research, I will further illustrate two prominent moral education approaches: character education and moral cognitive education. Prior to explaining these approaches, I will discuss general background on moral education.
**General Background on Moral Education**

While the newspapers and professional journals of these days are filled with articles about the fall of our society into moral decay either in our daily relations with others or the dramatic acts of violence by children and adolescents, educators are being held responsible for the moral health of the society (Chinnery, 2003). While there is widespread agreement that education institutions are to cultivate responsible and reliable moral agents, it is not an easy task especially with the varied recommended moral education approaches. Thus, it is really important to review these approaches (e.g. moral character and moral cognitive education) and illustrate their impact on teacher education programs.

As clarified in Chapter 1, moral education approaches either in the form of moral character or moral cognitive development discuss a variety of perspectives on moral pedagogy such as values clarification and a caring perspective. However, the fundamental difference between those approaches is that morality is either a practice of reason or just doing the right or the good thing. Developmental theorists focus on education for rational reasoning, reflection, conflict-resolution and autonomous choice, while advocates of character education call for inculcating in students a particular collection of moral habits by exposing them to positive role models and providing opportunities for virtues practice (Chinnery, 2003).

Moreover, because of increasing pluralism of moral values and norms, the goals and means of moral education seem “neither to be easily detectable nor readily justifiable” (Oser & Reichenbach, 1996, p. 3920). Oser and Reichenbach further clarify that due to the various perspectives on which moral philosophies rely, consensus, if any, on the goals and means
of moral education would be minimally in the negative form—*should not* sentences as opposed to their positive form—*should* sentences. However, in spite of the minimal negative agreement, Oser and Reichenbach claim that “philosophy takes its implicit task to be the justification of positive aims and means in moral education” (1996, p. 21). This means that philosophies tacitly would take the role of formulating the ends as well as the desired educational strategies.

The practice of determining the ends and means is acknowledged by Campbell and Thiessen (2001). They observe how different philosophies underpin the theoretical conceptualization as well as the empirical studies of moral agency. They further clarified that varying versions of moral and ethical perspectives are influenced by unresolved philosophical controversies regarding the nature of morality. For example, is the philosophical and theoretical authority of the nature of morality rooted in ethical principles that support the definition of objective virtues such as honesty, justice, courage, integrity and kindness? Or is it reflected in value clarification, character education, or moral reasoning?

Considering the scope of this research, two prominent moral education approaches will be explicated immediately: character education and moral cognitive education. Educational implications of these approaches are also displayed. As the oldest moral education approach, character education will be discussed now.
Character Education

According to Howard (2005), character education focuses on action and emphasizes making virtuous behaviors habitual. Howard provides a simple summary for character education stating that “to do the good is to know the good” (2005, ¶ 3). Character education implies a predetermined set of moral values that need to be modeled by some and eventually practiced by others. This tradition is perceived by many parents and school specialists as an ideal approach for children’s moral development and thus their moral conduct. Leming (1997) cited a study that was conducted in 1929 studying the moral behavior of 10,000 children. Results indicated that positive moral behavior was found to be context-related and not regulated by a consistent internal state or what might be called character. Leming speculates that after this study, people start to think that there is more to moral development than implementing character education approach.

Regardless of the publicity that surrounded moral reasoning for being perceived as a solution for moral relativism (Nucci, 2006) and a mode for justifying moral values, Chinnery (2003) found that the door is open for a more conservative mode of moral education. That is, character education is returning back to the educational setting. Chinnery illustrates that “the widespread fear and mistrust of the unfamiliar, the alien and unknown appears to have replaced the growing acceptance of heterogeneity that characterized the late 20th century, and has thereby fueled the resurgence of assimilations approaches to character education” (2003, p. 17).

DeRoche and Williams (2001) report that the flood of new immigrants and their diverse values being perceived as an intimidation to the cohesiveness of American society was
another reason for the return to character education for the purpose of remedying and
curing the immigrant problems and their diversity. Chinnery (2003) argues that
improvement in observable behavior as the goal of character education, though attractive,
is not sufficient for moral conduct. She further illustrates that the current trend of character
education with reliance on external motivation for moral behavior seems to look like
compliance with institutional and religious authorities leading implicitly to creating citizens
who will not question authority.

Unlike the character education approach which focuses on practicing predetermined
desirable virtues, moral cognitive education focuses on cognitive reasoning for the
assumption that moral reasoning would account for moral conduct. Educational
implications of cognitive-based morality are presented below.

**Moral Cognitive Education**

The cognitive developmental tradition, which relies more on Socrates’ philosophy,
emphasizes reason over action because it is assumed that right reason leads to right
action—that is, “to know the right is to do the right” (Howard, 2005, ¶ 3). Even though
Kohlberg’s theory was thoroughly discussed in the *Moral theories and related issues*
section, I will briefly revisit this theory for the purpose of presenting its relation to the
educational setting. For example, in response to the weak correlation between moral
reasoning and moral behavior (Blasi, 1980), Power, Higgins and Kohlberg (1989) studied
the process that would lead from moral judgment to moral action and tried to put it into
practical context focusing on the concept of situated learning. Such new emphasis on
judgment as it relates to action, led Kohlberg and his colleagues to the development of the
“round table model” and later on to “just community schools”. Due to its popularity, the latter is illustrated below.

The just community schools were developed as democratic communities where both students and teachers were responsible for producing and enforcing school rules and policies. Chinnery (2003) interpreted Kohlberg’s hypothesis regarding the move from judgment to action restating two kinds of moral judgment. The first is deontic judgment, a judgment about the rightness or wrongness of a particular action. The second is responsibility judgment, a judgment about whether one should follow through on one’s moral decisions. Just community schools highlight the creation of school’s environment where students and faculties enjoy a participatory, functioning, and collective moral atmosphere aiming to establish and maintain community norms through community meetings (Fallona, 2000).

Kohlberg’s (1981) theory on moral development (discussed earlier) is an example of the cognitive-developmental approach which is based on three interrelated claims: 1) that moral development occurs in stages; 2) that the order of development is invariant; and 3) that the order of development is logically necessary (Setiono, 2001). Now, even though Kohlberg (1981) sees these stages as universal and invariant, he does not expect them to develop naturally—that is, moving from one stage to the next does not happen automatically. Rather, according to Chinnery (2003), Kohlberg’s moral development requires experience; so while it might happen naturally, it might also necessitate planned educational activities.
Kohlberg’s moral theory gained a lot of support during the 1960s and early 1970s as it seems to offer a universal moral growth by which many educators hoped to avoid relativism of values clarification (Nucci, 2006). Moreover, according to Nucci, the moral reasoning rooted in this theory freed teachers at the time from engraving a certain set of values on students and offered teachers a rationale to challenge students’ positions and thus avoid values clarification. However, in the mid-1980s, Kohlberg’s theory began to wane as it failed to inform educational practices (Nucci, 2006).

According to Howard (2005), in spite of the many differences among the moral education approaches (e.g. character education, cognitive developmental, and caring), there is a consensus on four remarks that have a direct impact on teacher preparation:

1. Moral issues, which naturally appear in school settings, should be explicitly addressed through critical inquiry.
2. Teacher preparation programs should prepare the next generation of moral teachers by integrating ethics across the curriculum.
3. Teachers should be prepared with essential skills to involve students in dialogues and deliberations.
4. Academic service learning can be an influential factor for moral education.

Regardless of the above consensus among moral education approaches, Howard claims that such consensuses are not reflected in the content of such lessons or the pedagogical strategies. Thus, what? and how? become central questions for K-12 teachers and the institutions of higher education that prepare them (Howard, 2005). Therefore, let us visit teacher education programs and become acquainted with teachers’ growth areas and the
stages of their development. Subsequently, problems related to teacher education programs will be disclosed in the last section of this chapter.

Teacher Education

The concept of teaching is as old as the existence of human beings—since the time of Adam and Eve. According to the Quran, when Adam and Eve’s son killed his brother, he did not know what to do with the body until Allah sent a crow, in front of his eyes, to bury the body of a dead crow. In a similar way, we might take lessons from everything around us such as nature, space, plants, and animals. As civilizations grow, change and interact, the meanings people develop about life and their moral conduct are also refined through these processes of teaching and learning.

Considering the scope of this research, teachers’ development in terms of four different growth areas, preservice teacher education models, and teacher education-related problems are discussed in this section.

Teacher Development

Regardless of who is taking on the role of teacher, a family member or stranger, development of the student is instrumental for the family’s and society’s well being. We might quickly assume that it is the formal teacher, but for some cultures, the typical teacher is one source among others. For example, according to Islamic teachings, it is mothers who must be emotionally, intellectually, and financially taken care of so they can prepare a moral society for their children. However, in today’s society, almost universally the concept of formalized education in both public and private institutions dominates the field.
This idea of learning is not new; it has its roots in the foundations of many schools of thought, as in the example of the crow.

Even though almost all societies are concerned with teacher development, teachers’ growth takes four different types: knowledge, skills, judgment (all are classroom related), and teachers’ contributions to the professional community (Little, 1992). Even though Little’s framework of teacher development explains a wide range of growth, more emphasis should be placed on moral and social justice as a key element of teacher growth. These four areas of growth influence not only their practices, but rather teachers’ personality and their unique style. In studying the moral aspect of pedagogical style, Fallona, (2000) stated:

Garrison (1995) suggested pedagogical style reflects professional virtue. According to Garrison, professional virtues include the ability to creatively organize curricular materials, subject matter, class time, and students’ needs and desires. In a similar fashion, Jackson, Boostrom and Hansen (1993) used style to refer to how teachers handle the demands of the job, including whether they are aloof, reserved, warm, intimate, kind, cruel, scatterbrained, or methodical (Jackson et al., 1993). Upon further examination, Hansen (1993) suggested that teachers exhibit style via their personal qualities, and those personal qualities are moral because they act as models of conduct. (p. 684)

Beside the moral ground from which teachers grow, the four areas of teachers’ growth are highly interdependent. For example, the third area of teacher growth, judgment, would requires teachers to analyze the whole situation historically, socially and economically, which require moral understanding and moral judgment. Besides that, and in order to reach a just and caring action, teachers would have to contribute to the profession. Such caring and just action are the essence of the FCS teacher education programs for which this research is intended to investigate.
Unlike Little (1992) who focuses on teachers’ areas of growth, Leithwood (1992) has suggested six increasingly complex stages of teacher development: (a) developing survival skills, (b) becoming competent in the basic skills of teaching, (c) expanding one’s teaching flexibility, (d) acquiring instructional expertise, (e) contributing to professional growth, (f) exercising leadership and involvement in decision-making. Glatthorn (1996) asserts that value judgments found in leadership practices are not practiced by all teachers, as many expert teachers seem satisfied in donating their energies to teaching. Whether we agree with Glatthorn’s statement or not, placing value judgment in the highest complex stage might degrade the importance of exploring moral awareness and moral understanding, which is crucial for FCS practitioners due to the nature of their discipline. If we do agree that teaching is a moral endeavor, the aforementioned factors that affect teacher growth in general would definitely have an impact on their moral growth.

Factors in the present and future environments can affect the teachers’ growth regardless of their development stage. Three clusters of factors influence teachers’ professional growth: person-related factors, context-related and intervention-related factors (Glatthorn, 1996). Personal factors refer to cognitive, career, and motivational development. Cognitive and motivational development will be briefly discussed as their potential relation to the research foci.

Cognitive development represents the extent that teachers think abstractly, see relationships between contrasting elements, and work with ill-structured situations. Glatthorn (1996) reported research findings that provide evidence that cognitive development can be promoted through role-taking situations (such as mentoring) and continuous reflection and
support. This cognitive aspect of teacher development is the focus of Kohlberg’s (1981) model for moral development which was discussed earlier. The other personal factor is motivation. Motivation, the inner power to attain goals, is influenced by a supportive environment, belief in the meaningfulness of the work, belief system, locus of rewards, teachers’ goal, and type and frequency of feedback (Glatthorn, 1996).

As mentioned above, personal factors (i.e. cognitive development and motivation) are not the only factors that affect teacher development, but contextual elements, such as the public views about teachers, the school system, culture and leadership, peers, and the classroom environment also do (Glatthorn, 1996). Again, if we are to accept that teaching is a moral endeavor, then all of these factors would definitely affect teachers’ moral domain. The aforementioned teachers’ growth factors not only influence in-service teachers’ development, but rather impact the espoused and practiced theories, expectations, and preparation and evaluation methods in respect to preservice teacher education. Thus, the subsequent section starts with a concise illustration of the teacher education movement and later explores different teacher education models.

**Preservice Teacher Education**

What do we want to teach prospective teachers and for what purpose? These questions are among several other questions that highly influence the direction of teacher preparation programs. Different views about the aim of education have influenced the content as well as the context of teacher education program (TEP).
Several events have influenced the teacher education movement in the United States resulting in a variety of teacher preparation models, requirements, procedures and expectations. For example, in the 1800s, teacher preparation was characterized by egalitarianism, which means that the American people should be capable of self-government, economic independence, and self-reliance (Schwart, 1996). Consequently, Schwart clarifies that teachers should be literate, patriotic, be of high moral character, and represent American values. In contrast, the twentieth century was characterized by urbanization, modernization and immigration resulting in scientific reasoning, cognitive development and ultimately moral reasoning. According to Schwart, after the two world wars, teacher education programs have been influenced by relativism, standardization and multiculturalism to which teachers were encouraged to consider a student centered approach, learning in context, and authentic teaching environment. TEPs have adopted several names for the movements that assumed to describe the teacher education field over time (e.g. competency-based, performance-based, standards-based teacher education), however, the concept of teacher education remains the same (Houston, 1996).

Regardless of the names that espouse the teacher education movement, scholars have identified several states that explain what an ideal teacher is. For example, Schwart (1996) summarized a proposal of ideal teacher profiles developed by some scholars stating that the first reflects the “good employee” model, mostly preferred by in-service teachers, where teachers are prepared to behave like good teachers, accept the status quo, cope with life problems, and value experiential knowledge. In the second profile, the “junior professor” model, the emphasis is on the academic field and subject matter discipline leading to a preparation model that provide methods and pedagogy courses to be carried throughout the
process of attaining the teaching credential. In this profile, teacher education should be conducted in an academic-subject department and delivered by a master teacher with excellent knowledge in the discipline.

Where teacher education is dedicated to personal development, self-efficacy, personal value clarification, meaning discovery, and personal instructional style, it would reflect the “fully functioning person” profile. In utilizing human development knowledge, this profile proposes a positive learning environment, which suits elementary educators and psychologists. Based on the assumptions that teachers and school personnel are true reformers, they would be trained with new models not influenced by traditional antiquated ideas. This “innovator” profile is highly preferred by university educators, educational researchers and curriculum reformers. The fifth profile, the “reflective practitioner,” stresses the reflective aspects of teachers as they observe, analyze, interpret and make decisions. Here, teachers are required to search, while employing critical thinking skills, the nature of teaching and to formulate their own theoretical framework to determine what strategy to use and why. Teacher educators with qualitative and phenomenological direction would rely on such a model. In regard to these five major teacher profiles for an ideal teacher, the focus of this research seems to reflect the “fully functioning person”, where teacher candidates’ knowledge and interpretation of their moral agency are explored.

Whether teacher education programs address one or a combination of the above mentioned models, a supportive environment is an inevitable need. However, difficulties and undermining factors not only affect the academic preparation of preservice teachers, but also impinge on the opportunities for their moral growth. The forthcoming section
acquaints us with three broad problems that are assumed to negatively affect teacher education programs: a training problem, a learning problem, and a policy problem.

**Problems of Teacher Education**

During the past fifty years, teacher education has been seen alternately as a training problem, a learning problem, and a policy problem (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Cochran-Smith’s illustration of these problems will be mentioned immediately. In teacher education as a training problem, teacher candidates were trained to copy the behaviors of effective teachers based on empirically certified research (Cochran-Smith). The question was how to make the behavior of prospective teachers conform to acceptable patterns of teaching (Cochran-Smith). The goal of research on teacher education as a training problem was centered on identifying and specifying teacher behaviors that were correlated with pupil learning and applying them as treatments to classroom situations. Cochran-Smith reported that these kinds of process-product research and their effectiveness were criticized by some educational thinkers who assert that the focus should be placed on decision making, rather than on *empty techniques*, where teachers can be trained to do almost everything.

According to Cochran-Smith (2004), the view of teacher education as a learning problem recognized excellent teachers in a behaviorist nature. Via this behavioral nature, teachers were viewed as professionals who were knowledgeable about subject matter and who made decisions, built responsive curriculum, and knew how to continue learning throughout the professional career. “The goal of teacher preparation programs was to design the social, organizational, and intellectual contexts wherein prospective teachers could develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to function as decision makers” (Cochran-
Smith, 2004, p. 295). Even though some studies still focus on the behaviorist aspect of learning to teach, researchers argued that the process of learning how to teach also had to do with what prospective teachers brought to the training programs whether it was beliefs, knowledge, or experiences. In addition to the prior experiences that determine teachers’ learning, how their knowledge and skills were changed and translated into action in classroom setting over time, the ways they interpreted work in their field, and their methods of professional development are another set of challenges related to teachers’ learning (Cochran-Smith). Moreover, the overemphasis on behaviorist learning environment fails to offer stimulating theory-based courses that develop the critical thinking essential for making thoughtful decisions about ethical and moral issues (Goodlad, 1994; Yost, 1997).

Policy problems, whether controlled by institutional, state, or federal policymakers, are another set of challenges that face teacher education programs with program limited practical and fiscal resources (Cochran-Smith, 2004). According to Cochran-Smith, in the past few years, there has been an assumption that the right policies are those that thought to be based on evidence concerning the value teacher preparation adds to pupils’ scores on tests and on cost-benefit analyses of how to invest limited human and fiscal resources. In addition, the basis of the policy focus is that the goal of education, and teacher education, is to produce the nation’s workforce and maintain its position in the global economy (Cochran-Smith). Moreover, the current policy approach, mainly The No Child Left Behind Act (United States Department of Education, 2002), also includes a return to the training view of teacher education which can be assessed on a standardized teacher test (Howard, 2005). Howard asserts that such paramount concern with standards-based
practices overemphasize teaching content and skills and add pressure on educators to be accountable on the cost of diminishing the status of moral education.

In fact, the above mentioned teacher education related problems (i.e. training, learning and policy problems) provided a brief illustration of contextual elements that affect not only the intellectual preparation of preservice teachers, but also the learning environment through which preservice teachers develop morally.

Literature related to the method used for the current research occupied the first part of this chapter presenting the rationale, history, and the nature of grounded theory. The second part extensively displayed moral theories and related issues as well. Two moral education approaches, character education and cognitive moral education were discussed in the following part. The last part displayed teachers’ growth areas and the stages of their development along with various models of teacher education. Towards the end of this chapter, problems related to teacher education programs were discussed.
CHAPTER 3. METHOD

Overview

The inductive methods of grounded theory guided the process of exploring the moral agency of family and consumer sciences teacher candidates (FCSTCs). This method was chosen due to its capacity of exploring previously unexamined areas in order to develop a substantive theory. The lack of research in relation to the area of moral agency specific to FCSTCs, and particularly concerning the use of inductive methods to understand the moral agency of FCSTCs, merited grounded theory as an appropriate method. In this paper, the terms *grounded theory* and *framework* will be used interchangeably.

Even though grounded theory is explicitly explained in the previous chapter, this chapter will start with an overview of grounded theory as a reminder to help understand the research procedures. Contextual description of the FCS education teacher licensure program will follow. Later on, I will present how I chose this field of study along with a brief background about the participants. Next I will discuss the ethical consideration as a core concept of qualitative research. Detailed description about the purpose and the findings of the pilot study will follow. The interview as a data collection method will be illustrated in terms of interview type, interview questions format, and interview protocol. Next, I will unpack three data analysis methods, constant comparative method, memo writing, and theoretical sampling. The major part of this chapter is devoted to the research procedures. Finally, criteria and related methods to increase the research trustworthiness will be elucidated.
Overview of Grounded Theory

Grounded theory refers to a set of systematic inductive methods that fulfill qualitative research goals in order to produce a general, middle-range theory. Grounded theory gathers detailed data about specific processes, preconditions, properties, and purposes, rather than describing the broad structure of a social setting (Charmaz, 2004). The constant comparative method, as a grounded theory strategy, was used to congruently collect, code, and analyze data for the purpose of providing constant examination of theoretical relationships.

When using constant comparative methods, first, data are compared to data, then data are compared to a theoretical category, and finally category is compared to category in order to gain new ideas (Glaser, 1992, 2005). Data collection and analysis continue until data saturation is reached, where no new core categories are found (Glaser, 2001). Accordingly, a beginning substantive theory is generated that conceptualizes the key factors in the FCSTCs’ understanding of their moral agency.

Furthermore, theoretical sampling, a grounded theory data collecting method, is used. As opposed to the random sampling technique, theoretical sampling is a strategy used in grounded theory by which samples are selected based on the emerging gap in the data. That is, participants were selected based on their relevance to the field of study as well as the emerging theory, not to their representation of the population.
Entry into the Field

Students enrolled in the Curriculum Planning for Family Life and Vocational Family and Consumer Sciences course in the aforementioned program were invited to participate in this research for the following reasons:

1. This course, as opposed to other subject related methods courses at ISU, is more likely to address morally-related issues.

2. Teacher candidates of this class seem to be more familiar with the critical science approach, which entails moral reasoning and targets moral action.

3. Iowa State University has one of the top FCS teacher education programs in the United States.

The Curriculum Planning for Family Life and Vocational Family and Consumer Sciences course addresses curriculum development in family and consumer sciences programs for school settings. All students consented to participate in this study and furthermore, the study was approved by the department, the instructor, and the Human Subjects Research Committee Approval (see Appendix C). The students of this class will henceforth be referred to as participants. To meet the trustworthiness criteria, individuals in addition to the participants took part in the development of this research, such as FCS graduate students, a graduate student with experience in qualitative research, a major research supervisor, and an auditor. To distinguish these individuals from the participants, they will be referred to according to their titles.
Participant Profiles

Thirteen teacher education candidates were enrolled in the Curriculum Planning for Family Life and Vocational Family and Consumer Sciences course in Spring 2006. These candidates, who later on become the participants of the current research, represent a homogenous group. They are all female undergraduates in the FCS education teacher licensure program, culturally homogenous, and no female is from an obvious minority group. In respect to age, they all seem to be in their twenties. Also, at the time of the interview, they all expected to begin student teaching the following semester.

Ethical Consideration

Participants voluntarily agreed to sign the consent forms (see Appendix D), which introduced them to the purpose, importance, advantages, and disadvantages of participating in this research, as well as their right to stop participating at any time without penalty or prejudice. Their agreement to participate indicates that they have read the information provided on the form, it has been explained to them, they have been offered a copy of this form to keep, they have been given an opportunity to ask questions about this form, and their questions have been answered.

Records identifying participants are kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and are not available to the public. To assure confidentiality, pseudonyms and letter systems were used in lieu of participants’ real names. Printed materials and audio tapes were stored in a safe area in the researcher’s house and the electronic materials (digital recordings, transcripts) were saved via password protected files. The data will be retained for five years before erasure. Even when the research is
published in a journal or presented at a conference, the participants’ identity will remain confidential.

**Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted for the purpose of clarifying the proposed research questions and improving my interviewing skills. The pilot study included three female participants, two of whom were traditional undergraduate seniors student teaching at the time and one was a first-year FCS high school teacher. These participants were selected based on their agreement, availability, and relevance to the study. The group was convened to participate in a small focus group interview. The focus group lasted 60 minutes and was guided by the interview schedule (see Appendix E). The interview was audio-recorded, transcribed, and open coded. However, the data were not used in the main research.

From the open coding, certain situations emerged that, if studied in depth, would have shed light on certain factors that could influence the participants’ understanding of their moral agency. For example, one of the participants revealed the importance of clarifying values and respecting others’ values. However, later in the interview she asserted that if a value conflict arose during her group project, she would deal with the conflict by compromising and giving up. Examining such a response could clarify a certain aspect of the participant’s moral agency for which the main study is about.

The following questions are suggested examples of what might be the focus of a subsequent interview if this pilot study were to be carried on: is there any incident where you experienced value clarification or felt the need to? What do you mean by values? What
is the purpose of value clarification? Would respecting others’ values differ across different types of values? What do you mean by compromising? Can you offer any related story? Do you recall any related feelings? Responses to such questions might lead to more conceptually relative questions on which participants might render new meanings that might lead to some factors or process in their moral development.

Even though the flow of the pilot study interview was guided by the questions in the interview agenda, several questions emerged from the natural interaction among the group members and the researcher. This experience reiterated the importance of the researcher’s sensitivity toward the natural interaction within the group, on which a new set of concrete or abstract questions might be developed spontaneously. In addition, the pilot study experience, in conjunction with the research committee members’ feedback on the proposal, led to the exclusion of one of the proposed overarching research questions: “How do FCSTCs’ constructed meanings about moral and social justice relate to their perceptions of the critical science approach?”

This decision was made to avoid predetermined associations between students’ constructed meaning about their moral agency and their perception of the critical science approach. The format of this question could indicate a relationship study, which is against the nature of grounded theory. Moreover, this question was omitted because students’ knowledge and experience of critical science was still in its infancy stage. Although involving the notion of critical science was shelved for the abovementioned reasons, the concept of oppression, the essence of which critical science attempts to eliminate, occupied parts of the interviews.
Although the pilot study experience narrowed the focus of research, the proposed interview questions were deemed appropriate for the first focus group interview. Moreover, the lack of stories and examples provided by the pilot study participants stressed the importance of facilitating an encouraging environment where participants would be able to share their stories and experiences. In addition to the abovementioned advantages, my lived experience of the pilot study enhanced my ability to be more responsive to participants’ verbal clues, unspoken language, and tacit knowledge. I thus became more confident in generating unplanned or impromptu questions to respond to participants’ assumptions. Also, the pilot study helped me better estimate the time required for the proposed interview questions, as well as develop the interview protocol.

Data Collection

Data were primarily obtained from transcribed texts of participants’ verbal responses in three individual interviews and two focus group interviews which were conducted with the aim of seeing the emergence of a grounded theory. In doing so, data were derived from the participants’ natural language through the implication of the narrative paradigm and a constructivist approach.

Using face-to-face verbal interviews as a data collection method was instrumental in gaining an in-depth understanding of FCSTCs’ constructed meaning of their moral agency. Data were collected in a semi-structured way using open-ended interviewing techniques. Moreover, sharing and discussing the emerged framework with a group of graduate students and a selected few participants was another data collection method that reshaped the findings of this research.
The following figure (see Figure 2) represents the research dynamic, the interaction between data sources and collection. Considering the pilot study feedback, I constructed the first focus group interview which led to two individual interviews. Later, I conducted a second focus group interview followed by an individual interview and a member check. The developing grounded theory, which emerged from multiple interviews data, was interpreted by the researcher with the use of various data analysis techniques and was verified by external validators. Because the interview was the main data collection method, the following section will discuss, in detail, the interview types—focus group semi-structured interview and individual interview—and the interview questions’ format. The discussion will end with a description of the interview protocol used in this research.

*Figure 2.* The research dynamic.
**Interview Type**

Although posing questions and receiving responses might be more difficult than it appears, interview as a data collection method was used to acquire information. According to Fontana and Frey (2005), because of the extensive use of interviews in our daily lives, it has been said that we live in an “interview society” (p. 698). Qualitative research has realized that interviews are not neutral tools to acquire knowledge but rather “active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results” (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 698). Among the various types of interview interaction, face-to-face verbal interviews were conducted with focus groups and selected individuals.

**Focus Group Semi-structured Interview**

One of the uses of the focus group interview is to allow for hypothesis generation based on participants’ ideas (Flick, 2002). Focus group semi-structured interviews were used in the form of a conversation to help the researcher refine the research problem as well as elicit the participants’ views and constructed meaning of the studied phenomenon. Unlike field notes that elicit meaning from observing present interactions, interviews focus on meaning drawn out from past and future actions, as well as present interactions (Warren, 2004).

The advantages of the focus group interview go beyond that of being low cost. This type of interview provides *quality control*, as interviewees are more likely to “provide checks and balances on each other, which weeds out false or extreme views” (Patton, 2002, p. 386). The conducted focus group interviews also helped stimulate the participants’ responses and thus helped them recall information (Flick, 2002; Fontana & Frey, 2005). However, the difficulty of accurate note taking and the limited number of research questions that can be
discussed are among the limitations of using focus group interviews (Flick, 2002). The influence of groupthink and the possible domination of certain group members are other difficulties that one faces when conducting focus group interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Guided by the grounded theory literature as well as the nature of this research, I conducted a homogenous focus group interview, in which the participants were similar in the essential dimensions related to the research topic, as well as in their backgrounds (Flick, 2002).

**Individual Semi-structured Interview**

In contrast to the focus group interview, where generating ideas is the focus, the individual interview aims to construct detailed information regarding the interview questions. Building on the emergent categories and gaps in the collected data, specific individuals were invited to participate in in-depth interviews. These interviews were conducted with three selected individuals from the original sample for the purpose of gaining a deeper understanding of the studied phenomenon.

**Interview Question Format**

The format of the interview questions was another factor that placed the conducted interview in the category of semi-structured interview. This category corresponds with the descriptive nature of the research through which participants were encouraged to express what they believe to be “good or bad” and “right or wrong.” These expressions regarding their moral agency were elicited through their constructed meaning about 1) the interpretation of their prior moral experiences, 2) the theoretical interpretation, conscious or not, of certain moral values, and 3) what is ethical for them as future FCS teachers. The questions were open-ended to foster the identification and discussion of those elements of
lived experience as well as pedagogical expectations that reflect the deepest importance to the participants.

Moreover, in opposition to hypothetical moral questions or issues that dominate the literature of morality, this research assumed that participants would construct meaning about their moral agency if they, according to Van Manen’s (1990) concept of lived experience, reflected on past experience. This reflection was evident in both focus group semi-structured interviews and individual interviews.

Indeed, the exercise of data analysis triggered the researcher to ask questions to fill the emerged gap. These questions might be concrete or abstract; concrete questions assume answers that reflect facts and tell us about the perceived reality in the studied phenomenon. Abstract questioning assumes answers that reflect meaning, not truth, by asking what is essential to the phenomenon by those who encounter it (Charmaz, 2000).

**Interview Protocol**

Before the participants’ arrival to the interview site, the seating was arranged and the appropriateness of the audio equipment (digital and regular) and physical environment before and during the interview were considered. Food and beverages were prepared before the interview and offered to them as an appreciation of participants’ contribution.

As outlined in the first interview agenda, participants were reminded of the purpose of the research and interview as well as their rights, as illustrated in the consent form. The note taker and the researcher’s supervisor were introduced to the participants and their roles
were explained. The role of the researcher’s supervisor was to take free verbatim notes
during the group interviews and monitor the interview process in order to provide feedback
for subsequent interviews. The note taker also identified individual participants’ responses
in both focus group interviews by using their pseudonyms and following a provided note-
taking sheet (see Appendix F)

For confidentiality purposes, each participant chose a pseudonym to use in the discussion
and was asked to write it on a provided nametag. Participants sat in a rectangular-shaped
seating arrangement based on their preference. Interviews were held face-to-face and
conducted in the department resource room, a room with which the participants are
familiar. Setting the ground rules was the second item on the interview agenda of which the
participants were reminded. They were: do not judge others’ opinions’, ask for
clarification; share what you feel comfortable about; maintain an equal sharing opportunity;
respect others’ opinions; and do not speak while another person is speaking.

An analogy game was used in the first focus group as a method to set the cognitive and
emotional environment of the interview as well as to stimulate the participants’ creativity
as they interacted with the interview questions (see Appendix E). During the first focus
group interview participants divided into two small subgroups for about 15 minutes to
discuss some open-ended questions related to moral change. These two subgroups were
then invited to share their responses with the whole group.

Although interview questions were predetermined, the researcher was flexible enough to
flow with the current of the discussion as participants offered new thoughts and meanings.
For this reason, the actual interview questions tend to differ from the planned ones. In addition to being flexible with the interview dynamics, the researcher encouraged and stimulated students’ thinking and participation, ensured equal participation among members, highlighted consistency and disagreement, and generally managed the discussion. Questions were clarified as needed. At the end of the interviews, the researcher welcomed final comments and thanked the participants, research supervisor, and note taker for their involvement.

**Data Analysis**

True to the nature of grounded theory, data collection methods, described in the above section, are intertwined with data analysis and most often come in a reciprocal sequence. However, the following section provides background information on selected data analysis methods. This section will briefly discuss the concept of constant comparative methods, memo writing, and theoretical sampling as data analysis methods.

**Constant Comparative Methods**

Constant comparative methods are at the forefront in grounded theory, where the researcher compares data with data, data with theoretical category, and category with category in order to get new ideas (Glaser, 1992, 2005). A detailed implication of this method, such as the coding process, will be revealed in the *grounded theory procedures* section. The researcher’s prior experience should help enrich the constant comparative analysis; however, her knowledge should not prevent her from seeing new perspectives and patterns.
Glaser indicates that we do not have to worry about the correctness of grounded theory hypotheses as they are “constantly modified by the constant verification of fitness, relevance and workability occasioned by the constant comparison method generating categories and their properties, by conceptual saturation, theoretical sampling, and by the conceptual integration that occurs in theoretical memos and sorting” (2001, p. 39). This practice of constant comparison lessens the gap between theory and data through which a substantive grounded theory will emerge.

Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) have proposed several microanalysis tools that help in making comparisons and asking questions to facilitate the coding process. Among these strategies are word and phrase analysis, flip-flop techniques, and close-in, and far-out comparison. Phrase analysis and far-out comparison techniques were used in this research; these are further explained in the grounded theory procedures section.

**Memo Writing**

As part of the process for developing narrative analysis from the descriptive material toward analytic statement, the researcher engaged in different stages of memo writing, beginning with: examining initial codes; defining them; looking for assumptions, imbedded meaning and action; noting ambiguity; raising questions; and comparing data with data to discover the most interesting data (Charmaz, 2004). In the subsequent stage of memo writing, Charmaz recommends viewing data in terms of social and psychological processes, deciding the most significant process, and explaining it in memos. In these memos I reflected on and critically examined the data which proposed further data collection and analysis. Glaser asserts that grounded theory does not need to describe the entire situation,
but a core process within it. Theoretical concepts that developed through the inquiry are discovered in the data and have to verify themselves in the data. This aspect of grounded theory implies a “triadic and circular” analytic process in data collection, coding, and writing memos (Hildenbrand, 2004).

In later stages of memo writing, the researcher identifies and describes the emerging theoretical categories. Through continuous memo writing, inter- and intra-category comparison would be accomplished with the aim of fitting them into the emergent process and finally integrating the analysis into a theoretical framework (Charmaz, 2004; Glaser, 2001).

**Theoretical Sampling**

With memo writing and constant comparative methods, I encountered gaps that require more data to clarify and refine the developing theoretical categories (Charmaz, 2004). Theoretical sampling is the process of choosing samples based on their relevance to the field of study or the emerging theory, not to their representativeness (Patton, 2002). Therefore, participants are chosen based on the emerging gap in the data. However, initial participants in the focus group interviews (students in the Curriculum Planning for Family Life and Vocational Family and Consumer Sciences class) were selected as a total sample (n=13) to “uncover as many potentially relevant categories” as possible about the phenomenon under investigation (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 57-59). As the research proceeded, the theoretical sampling technique was implemented to select three participants for individual interviews.
Grounded Theory Procedures

The overlapping aspects of grounded theory appear naturally in the research procedures as data resources, data collection methods, sampling techniques, and data analysis methods, which co-exist and interdependently interact with each other. Ignoring this co-existence and interdependence by presenting each concept discretely is like removing the mind from the body to show how it functions. Thus, this section is devoted to the research procedures acknowledging the nonlinear aspect of developing a substantive grounded theory.

When I initially proposed my research questions to my committee members, I attempted to uncover factors or processes in the participants’ understanding of their moral agency as it relates to critical sciences. This attempt was clear via one of the proposed overarching questions: “How do the FCSTCs’ constructed meaning about moral and social justice relate to their perceptions of the critical science approach?” However, based on committee feedback on the research proposal, as well as my reflections on the pilot study, I came to realize that the research foci were too broad. Therefore, the third question was excluded. The decision to commence the first interview for this research was made at this point in time. Consent forms with information about the purpose, importance, and advantages and disadvantages of participating in the research were discussed with the class prior to the first focus group interview. All of these forms were signed for agreement.

Starting with the first focus group interview, I realized the richness of the ground level from which a theory would emerge. Going through the process of the research was both interesting and scary at the same time. It was interesting because I would build a
substantive theory from the ground level and scary because I was uncertain about what to do next with the overlapping aspects of grounded theory.

In general, after each individual interview, I would go over the digital recording to check the quality of the recording and to get a sense about the interview as a whole; this eventually led me to write down some comments before transcription occurred. The digital audio recording equipment I used facilitated e-communication as well by providing easy access to certain segments of the interview. However, depending exclusively on the audio recording undervalued the non-verbal communications that occurred during the interviews. After the transcription was complete, I reviewed the transcript, identified each responder by her pseudonym—using information from the note taker documents—and put the transcript in Rich Text Format in preparation for the coding process. I used ATLAS.ti version 5.0, 2005 as a qualitative analysis software. This qualitative analysis software, was chosen over others, such as NUDIST and NVIVO. I chose it, after studying the specifications and free educational information, based on its user-friendly qualities. ATLAS.ti is computer software for qualitative analysis of text, graphics, audio, and video data. Due to my difficulty in comprehending the software tutor, I used a trial and error method. Therefore, success in using the program, and hence starting the coding process, was slow. However, this software was used to manage, compare, retrieve, and explore pieces of data in a creative way. For example, after entering the transcribed interviews, I manually assigned codes for each phrase, sentences, or paragraph. I did not use the automatic function to extract codes. Besides accessing data, I used the software to visually connect selected codes and categories using ATLAS.ti’s graphical network editor.
Open Coding

Data coding has three distinct phases; open (initial) coding, axial coding, and selective (focus) coding. Axial and focus coding will be discussed later. Through open coding, the researcher scrutinized data using phrase-by-phrase analysis to see fresh ideas and to minimize the dominance of preconceived ideas. Open coding is a process of breaking down the thoughts conveyed through each phrase spoken during the interview and transforming these thoughts into categories as a form of research data. However, Glaser (2001) warns against using too much description through rigorous line-by-line study of the interview. According to Glaser, such needless description increases the tendency for conceptual descriptions that lose the parsimony/carefulness of good grounded theory explanation and decrease the actualization of theoretical conceptualization. Open coding was conducted after each interview, and it was an ongoing practice throughout the research process. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest focus questions to help during open coding: a) What is the major idea brought out in this sentence or paragraph? b) What seems to be going on here?

On February 21, 2006, I conducted the first semi-structured focus group interview during the participants’ designated 110 minutes of class time, following the first focus group interview agenda. The interview was audio taped both traditionally and digitally, then transcribed and entered into the analysis software in preparation for the open coding process. The first open coding process began at that time and continued as the interviews proceeded. A detailed discussion of the open coding process will be discussed later.
Besides listening to and analyzing the first focus group transcript, I used a memo writing strategy that helped cultivate some ideas that later were instrumental in developing the framework. A sample of the memos is presented in Table 1. In general, initial analysis highlighted several concepts that comprised the participants’ responses and dominated their constructed meaning about the studied phenomenon, global values, oppression, emotional involvement, and justification. The rationale for focusing on these categories in subsequent interviews was that each of these categories has a relatively high level of inter- and intra-categorical relationship (see Figure 3). Inter-categorical relationships represent the connections among the above mentioned concepts. Meaningful connections among the sub-concepts indicate an intra-categorical relationship. Moreover, each of these categories has a consequences property that can be related to self, other, or both. The relevance of these categories to the studied phenomenon, as well as the large number of initial codes in each of these four categories, was another reason for addressing them in subsequent individual interviews. These key categories and their subcategories modified and narrowed the focus of subsequent interviews:

How do FCSTCs view global values related to their lives and future practices?

What does the elimination of oppression mean to FCSTCs and their future practices?

How do FCSTCs view justification and emotional involvement in relation to moral development?
Table 1. Samples of memos.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample of first focus group interview transcript (lines 53-95)</th>
<th>Memos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The researcher: So, what is your definition of good moral behavior?</td>
<td>It is interesting to see how the participants’ responses to the proposed question, “What is your definition of good moral behavior?” was measured based on who is receiving benefit or avoiding harm. When it came to self, Madison justified good moral behavior as standing by one’s own beliefs, which might imply benefit received by the self. On the other hand, Annabell and Ella’s justifications of good moral behavior were based on not harming others. Humm…I can see how these three responses revolve around the concept of consequences. Here I can see a psychological explanation, mainly cognitive reasoning that appears naturally as they try to define good moral behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M: Standing by your beliefs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An: Not insulting others’ personal beliefs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El: By not intentionally causing harm to another—physically, emotionally, or mentally…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Sample of inter- and intra-categorical relationship.
Considering these four key categories that emerged from the life experience of the participants, I decided an in-depth individual interview was needed to gain deeper meaning on these categories, to discover how participants came to understand them, and to learn what factors motivate their thoughts and actions. Thus, a set of in-depth individual interview questions were developed (see Appendix G). Table 2 presents a sample of these questions, mainly those that occupy a significant section of their responses. Later on these were fertile ground for supporting the developing framework (see samples in Table 2.)

**Table 2.** Sample of individual interview questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Could you share a story in which you felt oppressed? Or if you do not have one, you can share a story or an observation about others who are suffering from oppression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think about those who take the role of an oppressor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think about those who take the role of a victim of oppression?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could the oppressor be a victim too? How?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is the language of oppression related to the practice of your professional career?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only did the emerged key categories influence subsequent interview questions, but they also affected my decisions about which individual participants to select to provide more details and insights on the proposed set of individual interview questions. The selection process of these individuals is referred to as theoretical sampling. Two out of the thirteen participants were selected based on the quality, as well as the quantity, of their earlier responses—during the first focus group interview—relating to the emerged key categories (global values, oppression, emotional involvement, and justification). Quantity was determined by the total number of responses either to the interview questions or as a follow-up to other participants. Quality was recognized by the participant’s new insights,
deep thoughts, and relevant responses to the abovementioned categories. Fortunately, the selected individuals accepted the invitation. Thus, the individual interviews were held on April 10 and 12, about seven weeks after the first focus group interview, and lasted about 90 minutes each. These interviews were traditionally and digitally recorded, transcribed, and open coded. The process of open coding will be described in the following section.

First, I transformed the thought behind each phrase in both the focus group and the individual interviews into an initial code (see sample in Table 3). After all of the interviews had been conducted, I ended up with more than 400 initial codes (see Appendix H). The list below presents a sample of selected initial codes that later became the *Self-benefit* category and later still became *Self-based consequentiality* on the psychological dimension of the developing framework (see Table 4). The more I examined the interviews, the more I found myself immersed in the process of open coding, which led to the act of sometimes designating more than one initial code to an individual phrase (see Table 5).

Where I had around 400 codes, I started to categorize them based on conceptual similarities and differences. This led to the creation of about 40 categories (see Appendix I). Table 6 presents a sample of these categories and their subcategories, which were later refined and integrated into the framework paradigm component (see Table 6) and viewed as the foundation for the developing framework. Due to the natural interconnectedness that characterized the studied phenomenon, much overlapping was evident among the subcategories.
Table 3. Sample of initial codes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transcripts</th>
<th>Initial (phrase-by-phrase) codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jasmine: …So it’s better to learn from others. It’s just human nature, I think, being out for yourself...survival of the fittest….I know this is a selfish reason for changing, but now I can see that I can get something by being accepting to others….Now is that actually going to benefit me? That’s probably selfish, more the reason I am saying this stuff now, but it will help me out in the long run. It’s selfish, but that’s what happened I guess…(individual interview, line 403).</td>
<td>Self-benefit: being accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ariel: For me, I wouldn’t choose model 1 because I think it would probably start a confrontation in the classroom about one person’s beliefs versus another’s and how they might spar on it. I think it could get way out of hand very fast…if it was a topic like abortion or something (first focus group interview, line 223).</td>
<td>Self-benefit: classroom management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant: I hate that in my family, my family members are racist; and I don’t have a problem with it, except for if I was to ever date a guy, I couldn’t bring him home and that’s like I’m being racist too, but I don’t want that person to ever have to feel that…then you are stuck in the middle (first focus group interview, line 311).</td>
<td>Self-benefit: not being racist, personal freedom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Samples of initial codes related to Self-benefit category.

- Feels bad if parents disappointed in behavior
- Social justice is not easy task and not always pleasant
- Grades as benefit of involvement in multicultural activities
- Learn more from others for self-benefit
- Learning to accept others for the sake of gaining more knowledge
- Sharing opinions is beneficial
- Eye-for-an-eye reaction to being disrespected
- Give respect to get it
- Selfishness is human nature; can be helpful in the long run
Table 5. Samples of multi initial codes per individual phrase.

Ella: A girl in one of our classes, uh she kinda verbally went off on me for no reason. Um, I made a statement in class and she, I don’t know how, she personally took offense to it, because it wasn’t directed at her or about her, but she did. And uh, so ever since that, I would say I haven’t been intentionally disrespectful to her, but I don’t treat her like I treat everyone else. So, I’m not saying that’s right. I’m saying she does the exact same thing, so in my mind, I justify myself….If she’s gonna treat me like that, I’m gonna treat her like that (Second focus group interview, line 51).

Table 6. Samples of categories and subcategories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-benefit</th>
<th>Other-based motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Family/parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral justification</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal freedom</td>
<td>Laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling good</td>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspectives</td>
<td>Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences</td>
<td>Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Story of disrespect in a classroom
Eye-for-an-eye reaction to disrespect
Knowing what’s right, but doing something else
Moral reasoning
Constructing more than one initial code for an individual phrase helped me see the connection between categories; and as a result, some of these categories became subcategories or a property with an extreme position on a continuum. In Table 7, for example, Moral values, a category that later will be related to the developing framework, has a property called “standpoint” that includes two extreme ends, relativism and absolutism. Another property that characterizes the Moral values category is interest, which has two extreme positions, self-based interest and other-based interest.

During the open coding process, and based on evidence from the data, I reexamined the properties or subcategories for the four key categories (global values, oppression, emotional involvement, and justification) and their inter- and intra-relationships. This examination highlighted the concept of respect, a moral value that was insightfully reemphasized in one of the individual interviews. Analyzing the subcategories of respect, presented in Figure 3 and Table 6 and Table 7, gave birth to a possible pattern that was later finalized in a grounded framework.
Table 7. Sample of Moral values category and its subcategories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral values</th>
<th>Standpoint (relativism/absolutism)</th>
<th>Interest (self-based/other-based)</th>
<th>Source (self, laws, religion, home, community)</th>
<th>Content (respect, truth, golden rule, justice, responsibility, care)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 8. Respect in relation to key categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respect</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Situational-based</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Perspectives</th>
<th>Pedagogical strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Axial Coding

According to grounded theory, when reaching this stage in my analysis I should move on to axial coding. Axial coding is “a set of procedures which guides the way data are put back together in new ways after open coding that makes connections between categories” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 96). In other words, axial coding is the process of condensing the categories and subcategories into a more workable number of concepts at the level of properties and dimensions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Analyzing the categories axially helped me “to conceptualize a phenomenon, that is, to locate it within a conditional structure and identify the ‘how’ or the means through which a category is manifested” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 127). According to Strauss and Corbin, axial coding means that we need to relate the structure or conditions pertaining to the phenomenon to the process or the action and interaction of individuals, organizations, and communities over time. This integration of structure and process in an organizational scheme is called a paradigm. Glaser (2005) offered 30 examples of paradigms that helped me sort the data in my grounded theory research.

In developing a paradigm, I considered the following questions suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998):  a) Under what conditions does the category exist? b) What is the context in which the category occurs? c) What actions/interactions affect the category? The transitional stage from open to axial coding was riddled with uncertainty and complexity. Eventually, after much thought, I found some factors which overlapped with some processes that reflected ideologies and assumptions in the participants’ moral agency.
Gradually, I started to see a clearer picture, and I found a paradigm with several components, that, when refined, led to a theoretical framework.

The first component in the framework paradigm (see Table 9) was related to factors beyond the self, such as social influence institutions and observational learning. The second component was moral change conditions, which encompassed events of moral change, intervening conditions, and consequences. Subjectivity, cultural relativism, absolutism, skepticism, and situational morality were the third set that was viewed as hidden beliefs that influence participants’ responses. The fourth component was communication factors, through which participants transformed as they constructed meaning around the interview questions.
### Table 9. Sample of framework paradigm components.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beyond-the-self factors:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social influences: family, church, college, community, religion, laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning from observation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral change conditions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Events</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to unfair events: home, school, community, media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having friendships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intervening conditions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling that X behavior is not fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing/hearing people who are oppressed or thought to be so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in a class assignment/project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choosing your battles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consequences</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective and attitude change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain self-benefit (feeling better about self, enjoying friendship, reciprocal benefit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-based benefit (concern about other’s feelings, understanding, personal freedom, and common agreement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time factor (cumulative effect, benefit duration)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beliefs underlying moral motivation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal choice subjectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural relativism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is from religion (absolutism)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not sure if there is a universal value (skepticism)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It depends (situational morality)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication factors:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concept definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This paradigm challenged my thoughts as I moved towards focus (selective) coding and ultimately to a substantive theory. This was because of the uncertainty about where to start, why, and how to validate my developing theoretical framework, especially because the theory is supposed to emerge from (and is verified by) the data. It parallels the chicken or the egg debate. However, I detached myself from this fuzzy situation and began to contemplate the issue and the purpose of my research. On April 20, 2006, about ten days after the individual interviews, I decided to go back to the same group of students to search for new meaning, if any, and to fill some of the gaps in the developing grounded theory. Another hope for revisiting the group was reaching conceptual saturation, where categories’ inter- and intra-relationships are verified and no more information is deemed necessary. For the second focus group interview, I focused on respect, universal values, and oppression following the second focus group interview agenda (see Appendix J).

Information from the note taker form (see Appendix K) was helpful for the analysis process.

To address the issue of public self-disclosure and to account for various ranges of data, a participant with the least involvement either in terms of the quality or the quantity of her responses was re-invited to participate in an individual interview. This method, called negative case analysis, is used when a range of variation is taken into analytic account (Clarke, 2005). But unfortunately, the selected participant was unavailable; I therefore contacted two others. One of them agreed to participate in a subsequent individual interview (see Appendix L), and so it was held on August 3, 2006. Although it was considered a negative case, the participant added meaning related to the care category. At that time, all the data were openly coded to an acceptable degree of conceptual saturation.
**Member Check**

After all of the interviews had been conducted, participants were asked to be involved in member checking; I explained that this technique was for reviewing their transcripts for accuracy and credibility purposes. For such purposes, I electronically sent participants’ transcripts to 9 out of the 13 participants to assure the specific rigor required by grounded theory.

**Focus Coding**

The third phase of coding, focus (selective) coding, is described by Strauss and Corbin as “the process of selecting the core category and systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development” (1990, p. 116). Moving towards constructivist grounded theory, Charmaz argues that, while coding, we should look for tacit meaning, beliefs, and contexts rather than be occupied by apparent and presumed meaning (2000). Thus, ideas demonstrated through memo writing and several concept maps were considered in order to select a category that insightfully and conceptually gripped other categories for the emerging theoretical framework.

Building on the framework paradigm components (see Table 9), the selective coding process resulted in a Moral Agency Framework with two dimensions: communicative and socio-psychological. The fourth component in the framework paradigm (see Table 9), *Communication factors*, led to the development of the communicative dimension, which represents the avenue through which participants’ understanding in regard to their moral agency was revealed. The socio-psychological dimension was rendered from the first two
components of the framework paradigm: beyond-the-self factors and moral change conditions. These two components guided me to see consequentiality and moral understanding as key categories for the socio-psychological dimension of FCSTCs’ moral agency.

Even though this Moral Agency Framework emerged from the data, it was verified by the same set of data to ensure its grounded nature, as the method implies. For organizational purposes, the discussion of this framework will be the focus of the following chapter. This section concludes with showing feedback procedures that were conducted for the purpose of generating ideas for possible future implications of the aforementioned framework.

**Feedback From Graduate Students**

On January 24, 2007, about 23 weeks after the last individual interview, the developing framework was presented via PowerPoint presentation to a group of graduate students and two members of the program’s faculty. My purpose was to share my interpretation of how the framework might be used in research and to receive feedback on how the framework might be useful for FCS teacher education programs in general. Because this feedback is relevant to the framework utility, further discussion of it will take place in Chapter 5, where future implications of the emerged framework will be offered.

**Trustworthiness**

Denzin (2004) asserts that a preoccupation with validity, reliability, and generalizability and the theoretical relevance of the biographical research, must be set aside for the sake of meaning, performance, and interpretation. The criteria for evaluating the rigor of
qualitative research differ from those of quantitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is difficult to define validity and reliability in qualitative research due to the subjectivity expressed by the participants as well as the researcher as data instrument. Thus, the important question to be considered in qualitative research is: How might the researcher convince the audience (including him/herself) that the “findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) propose certain criteria for evaluating qualitative findings and enhancing trustworthiness. These criteria were both incorporated into the research design and used to assess the qualitative findings: credibility, transferability, and confirmability.

*Credibility*

Credibility or *truth value* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) refers to the degree to which the participants’ realities are reflected in the developing theory. This criterion is an assessment of the believability or credibility of the research findings from the perspective of the study members. Member checking and the semi-structured interview format were used to assess the validity of the participants’ responses and to enhance the research credibility and initial grounded theory.

*Member Checking*

In the findings, the inclusion of member checking, that is, verifying whether the transcribed text reflects the essence of what the participants thought in regard to the discussed questions, is one method of increasing credibility. Nine out of the thirteen participants were sent an electronic document that included their actual individual transcription, and they were asked to review it for accuracy and add comments and clarification if needed.
**Semi-structured Interview Format**

To increase the reliability of the constructed data, responses were elicited via open-ended interview questions and self-selected moral issues. Participants’ ordinary language and real life experiences were the basis from which the framework developed.

**Transferability**

Explanatory power in qualitative research is the target of transferability, which means *predictive ability* or the ability to explain what might happen in a given situation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 267). Claiming to accomplish explanatory power, according to Strauss and Corbin, does not mean that a substantive grounded theory, which has emerged from a small area of investigation and a specific population, has an explanatory power over a larger or more general theory due to the belief that social/behavioral phenomena are context bound. However, Strauss and Corbin assert that “the real merit of a substantive theory lies in its ability to speak specifically for the populations from which it was derived and to apply back to them” (1998, p. 267).

A qualitative researcher can enhance transferability by detailing the research methods, contexts, and assumptions underlying the study. The current research approached transferability criteria by implementing several techniques, such as thick description, total sampling technique, theoretical sampling technique, and constant comparative method.

**Thick Description**

To allow the researcher, as well as the readers, to apply the development of the substantive theory in another context and understand how descriptions and background information might influence the findings, ethnography and samples of the original data are presented.
**Total Sampling Technique**

To increase the applicable likelihood of the present research findings, a total sampling technique, which includes participants’ shared commonalities that were relevant to the research focus, was another method used to establish transferability criteria.

**Theoretical Sampling Techniques**

Another way to ensure transferability was addressed by the use of purposeful/theoretical sampling, in which individuals were selected based on the relevance of their experiences to the research foci. Participants were chosen because they are *information rich* and illuminative, that is, they provided useful manifestations of the studied phenomenon (Patton, 2002).

**Constant Comparative Method**

Implementing constant comparative method, as a grounded theory method, helped bridge the gap in the data aiming to increase the explanatory power of the substantive grounded theory. Thus, in order to find new ideas, I constantly compared data to data, data to theoretical category, and finally theoretical category to the resulting theory (Glaser, 1992, 2005).

**Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the extent that the research findings can be confirmed or corroborated by others, mainly for the purpose of testing the degree to which the emerged categories and the substantive theory reflect the collected data and ensuring the omission of the researcher’s biases, motivations, interests, and perspectives at the time of the research. External validation and negative case analysis were conducted for the sake of increasing the research confirmability.
**External Validators**

To address questions as they arose during the research process, my major advisor, a professional and research committee member from my program of study periodically assumed the role of an external validator by addressing questions that explored biases and enriched the discussion surrounding the data collection, coding, interpretation, and the developing theory. Credibility was further established by a graduate student trained in qualitative methods who reviewed several portions of the data to verify the researcher’s interpretations and coding. Through periodic meetings with this graduate student, the researcher shared initial coding and categories for the purpose of building agreement upon the content of initial codes and the coding process. Moreover, an auditor reviewed the emerged theory and the interpretation of the responses to ensure that they were grounded in the interview data and that the inferences were logical (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

**Negative Cases Analysis**

Searching for negative cases that run contrary to most findings is another strategy that was implemented for the sake of accounting for various ranges of data.

Trustworthiness criteria were met through various methods, such as member check, peer debriefing, grounded theory guidelines, and use of an outside auditor. This chapter has provided a detailed story about the manner in which I conducted my research following the guidelines of grounded theory explicated in the previous chapter. In this chapter, I started with a concise overview of grounded theory and presented the justification for entering the field of this research, participants’ profile, the process of ethical considerations, and the process of the pilot study. Next I displayed detailed information about the interviews as the major data collection source, mainly discussing interview types, question format, and
interview protocols. Before delving into the research procedures, I talked about three data analysis methods, constant comparative method, memo writing, and theoretical sampling. An extensive part of this chapter was allocated for a thick description of the research procedures exhibiting my interaction with different coding systems (open, axial, and focus), member check, and graduate students’ feedback. Criteria for evaluating the rigor and trustworthiness of the current research were displayed along with various methods to fulfill these criteria. The presented criteria are composed of credibility, transferability, and confirmability. The next chapter will present details and evidence of the resulting grounded theory framework and suggest further meaning that could potentially reshape FCS teacher education programs.
CHAPTER 4. EMERGING FRAMEWORK

Introduction to Moral Agency Framework

This chapter will ground the developing Moral Agency Framework, which emerged from the coding process and my theoretical understanding (see Chapter 3), in the data as required by grounded theory method. This chapter begins by generally introducing the two dimensions that reveal participants’ understanding of their moral agency (see Figure 4). Detailed information and related examples will be provided about the nature of both dimensions: the communicative dimension and the socio-psychological dimension.

*Figure 4.* Moral Agency Framework.
This paper describes *what is* rather than *what ought to be* regarding participants’ moral development. Therefore, it is not judgmental or prescriptive; it is simply based on my observations. It impartially describes what I noticed and learned. In addition, at the time of the interviews, neither the students nor I were aware of the two dimensions that I eventually came to realize in this research. Therefore, this is true grounded theory, in that I wasn’t guided by any preconceived notions of outcomes. The socio-psychological dimension, in fact, emerged only as a result of the coding process and the constant comparative methods.

**Communicative Dimension**

The communicative dimension shows how the participants shared their ideas and the manner in which they did so. It shows the importance of the use of language in the process of meaning making and allowed me to examine the participants’ current perspectives, historical events, and future plans. This dimension involves four categories: definition, perspective, experience, and future teaching strategy. Participants developed meaning as they communicated their responses to a wide variety of questions that were intended to reveal their understanding of their moral agency. Meaning was created through language, which recombines historically-generated (experience-based) understanding into the generation of new understanding (Leydesdorff, 2006) that ultimately constitutes the data of this research. This communicative dimension is the tool that is used to reveal participants’ ideas through the four categories. The meaning they made as they shared their thoughts gave me insights into their moral agency. According to Leydesdorff, “Meaning is selectively used and reproduced by communication” (2006, p. 2). Consequently, two levels
of communication were revealed over the course of the interviews, historical and ahistorical communication. Historical communication is past communication that reveals a person’s developed meaning about her moral agency and has been shaped over time or over the course of the participant’s life. Ahistorical communication is communication that is not time dependent but is constructed in the moment.

The four categories of the communication dimension emerged as I studied the interview responses. I noticed that as they answered the interview questions, shared their thoughts, and told their stories, participants most often ended up communicating one of the following, a definition, a perspective, a personal experience, or a teaching strategy they plan to employ. At times a participant offered only a simple definition of a concept, briefly shared her personal experience of something, or offered her own perspective on the world. But at other times she did all three of these things over the course of a short monologue. Sometimes, although less commonly, an individual considered how her future teaching strategies might be affected by her perspectives or predicted how she would use a particular teaching strategy in the future. It was interesting to see that a participant’s response was by no means limited to only one category, however. In fact, many of their responses showed transferability. This quality denoted the element of nonlinearity in their communication, that is, it indicated that their communication did not always progress in a linear fashion.

Each of the four communicative categories has the potential to overlap with the other categories; therefore, each category is not necessarily a closed system. In order to make meaning, a participant sometimes jumped from one category to the next in order to more fully express herself. This type of natural movement, which conveys a nonlinear
progression of thought, is called transferable meaning generation. A person’s response or understanding sometimes remained static or was tied to only one of the four categories, however. In this case, the expressed category functioned as if it were a closed system and no overlap occurred. I am not interested in the business of judging why a participant’s response was static, although there are many possible reasons for it. My objective for this research is to describe what I observed.

Not all categories were touched on equally by the participants. In fact, the one that I saw surface by far the most often was the perspective category. The second most accessed category was the experience category. I noticed that when a participant shared a personal experience or the experience of someone she knows, it usually suggested that she had a deeper understanding of the issue at hand. Participants gave definitions of concepts and mentioned future teaching strategies least often, and when they did it was usually in direct response to the established interview question or a topical follow-up question. The four categories of the communication dimension were straightforward and easy to observe and classify. However, the two categories of the socio-psychological dimension were not only more difficult to derive from the research but were more challenging to explain and identify with examples.

**Socio-Psychological Dimension**

The second dimension that emerged from the interviews is the socio-psychological dimension. This dimension is more abstract and complex than the communicative dimension, in that its categories are less obvious for an observer to identify and require more inference making.
I named it socio-psychological because it relates to both the social and psychological arenas of human experience. The psychological aspect probes participants’ mental processes and shows internal cognitive reasoning and emotions as a deeper motivation behind their beliefs and actions or self-agency. The social aspect recognizes elements related to the social world, the realm of other compared to self, as an outside source of influence that constantly interacts with the self. Hence, self and other or the internal and the external work in conjunction in this dimension to reveal the influences that shape participants’ moral agency.

Participants’ awareness of their moral agency as rendered by this dimension reveals the importance of considering the consequences of their thoughts and actions as well as their moral understanding. The dimension is thus divided into two categories: *consequentiality* and *moral understanding*.

**Consequentiality**

The consequentiality category of the socio-psychological dimension considers the outcome of a person’s motivation for making moral decisions. It analyzes who might be affected by the participant’s actions, who the recipient of potential consequences might be. It asks: Does the participant hold such-and-such opinion because she believes that she (self-based consequentiality) or someone else (other-based consequentiality) will be affected by, benefit from, or suffer because of her actions? The consequentiality aspect looks at how she considers the potential effects of her actions and explores the source of her motivation for considering the outcome. The idea of morality, of what is “good or bad” and “right or wrong”, has to do with how our intentions (thoughts and actions) affect ourselves and
others. Not only are the ends of a person’s action considered, but how both the means and the ends of that action might affect others. The concept of consequentiality was exhibited when participants shared their reasoning for what they have done in the past or for what they plan to do in the future.

*Moral Understanding*

The moral understanding category examines participants’ awareness and consideration, as a core element of their moral agency, to do good and right things. It acknowledges the interaction between the internal, psychological side of an individual and the external, socially-influenced side. It is easy for a person to deem an action morally right, but it is more difficult to actually commit to or perform that right action, to *practice what you preach*, so to speak. Due to the results of grounded theory, and hence according to my framework, I found that moral understanding had two prevalent sides, which I call subcategories, perception and value commitment. The movement between these subcategories is complex and difficult to grasp due to the multidimensional nature of this category of moral understanding. In short, many factors can influence how a person chooses to behave. An individual’s perception and value commitment might be influenced by personal character, self-esteem, attachment, success in the past, social support, parenting style, self and other expectations, value hierarchy, and so on. Participants’ sense of moral understanding was triggered by many different factors, but mainly social cues. Their perceptions were based on opinions influenced by other people, opinions formed while talking to others, feelings experienced while observing something, experiences of a process or event, and beliefs in a set of norms. It shows both an interaction with outside influence(s) and an integration within the self.
Moral understanding recognizes the interaction between participants’ perception of what is “good or bad” and “right or wrong” and their personal moral commitment to uphold a value or belief. This commitment, consciously or not, considers the consequences to self and others. Although moral understanding recognizes the power of perception influenced by the outside world, it also shows the power of commitment, as rooted in the moral self that integrates what is good and right as part of the self and responds accordingly.

The perception subcategory shows how outside incidents or meaningful personal experiences influence the participants’ awareness. Participants’ perceptions are exposed to social cues beyond self triggers. Social cues, such as an event, another’s opinion or experience, social norms, or an authority figure, cause them to think differently about something. Participants then consider the social cue and go through the mental process of meaning making. Perception has an internal territory in which the seed of moral understanding starts to grow. That which resides in the individual’s territory of perception is difficult for us to explain because it very likely takes place unconsciously. All that we can see are outside influences that are integrated into the self (the perception area) or the result or constructed meaning from their perception that shapes their value commitment (i.e. their decisions, judgments, actions).

The value commitment subcategory is evident when participants reach a certain level of meaning making; at this point, we may see the active or visible side of their moral understanding. Unlike perception, value commitment reveals an external understanding that leaves the more internal territory of perception and becomes more public to the self and others. One’s commitment to certain values developed in the perception territory and
caused by social influences could be rooted in past experience and meaning, as well as present intention about what is “good or bad” and “right or wrong.”

### Moral Agency Framework: Grounded in the Data

This Moral Agency Framework serves to 1) offer an understanding of how participants construct new meaning and make choices in their perceived roles as moral agents, 2) explain the integrative aspect of four communicative categories and the interaction between the communicative and socio-psychological dimensions, 3) explore the socio-psychological factors that motivate their moral agency, 4) make clear the need to fully understand FCSTCs’ moral agency, which is assumed to increase the quality of FCS teacher education programs, and 5) suggest strategies for further research in modifying moral development curricula for FCS teacher education programs.

The communicative dimension and the socio-psychological dimension of the framework interact harmoniously. Participants construct their working understanding of their moral agency in a fluid, back-and-forth, leapfrog-like way. As they make sense of their thoughts, they may easily maneuver within the two dimensions and oftentimes their responses touch on both dimensions simultaneously.

Because there is much overlap within and between the dimensions and their related categories, oftentimes a participant’s example touched on a few different aspects of the framework. Although the format of this chapter gives more attention to the categories within the communicative dimension, my intention is not to give it supremacy over the socio-psychological dimension. It was more logical to arrange the following subheadings
according to the communicative dimension’s four categories and then infuse relevant examples from the socio-psychological dimension accordingly. I chose not to separately showcase examples of consequentiality and moral understanding under their respective subheadings because I wanted to emphasize the importance of the interaction and intersection between the two dimensions, not their separateness. The explanation and examples of the four communicative categories and the two socio-psychological categories below will illustrate how participants sometimes made meaning by staying in one category, but more importantly how their responses showed transferability, as they touched on more than one category and/or dimension. Responses with transferability more clearly exhibit the development of their thoughts on a given topic.

**Definition**

When asked to define some term, phrase, or concept in their own words, all of the participants naturally offered either a literal meaning or an association with a concept at least once. The term *definition* in this study refers to defining or seeking meaning of a specific term or phrase. These definitions influenced the participants’ moral development and learning in the interviews. The act of defining certain concepts naturally encouraged participants to examine their thoughts about that moral quality. It pushed them to consider their prior knowledge and experience of the world in order to formulate a response. Questions asked by the researcher resulted in two types of definitions from participants, denotative and connotative or associative. A denotation is “the explicit or direct meaning or set of meanings of a word or expression, as distinguished from the ideas or meanings associated with or suggested by it” (Random House Webster’s College Dictionary, 2001).
A connotation, on the other hand, is implied, not stated directly, and reveals a person’s prior knowledge or associations about a subject.

In the first focus group interview, I asked, “So what is your definition of good moral behavior?” (line 53). Madison said, “Standing by your beliefs” (line 55), and Annabell said, “Not insulting others’ personal beliefs” (line 57). In both of these examples, the participants did not provide a denotative or dictionary definition but gave an example of an action that they consider good moral behavior. Annabell’s response touches on the socio-psychological dimension category of other-based consequentiality, in that she defines the concept of good moral behavior in terms of not hurting others. During this part of the interview, after a few more participants spoke up, I asked a follow-up question, “Okay, what would your definition of bad moral behavior be?” Jasmine’s response included both a connotative and denotative definition, respectively: “Intentionally hurting someone else. Bad moral behavior is more like a conscious decision to purposefully hurt someone else” (line 71). It is interesting that her definition focuses on the intention more than outcome. Her response reflects her belief that the underlying motivation behind bad moral behavior (hurting someone else) is other-based consequentiality, that is, doing something in order to affect (benefit or harm) someone else.

In order to help participants engage in defining oppression, I asked, “What would be the thing that, if you saw it, you would say, ‘This is oppression’? What is the bottom line?” (second focus group, line 193). Ashley said, “Well, it would be something that is against their will, or forced to do something they are clearly not happy with” (line 195). She shows that she understands the concept of oppression and expresses the definition connotatively
by implying that oppression involves a victim unhappily enduring something against his/her will.

In several instances, participants avoided a direct response to a question and instead reciprocated with another question or a response such as “it depends.” For example, when I asked them for their opinions on universal values, Jasmine’s response, which shifted from the perspective category to the definition category, was, “I guess it all depends on your definition of truth, like some people believe that it’s an individual truth and others feel that it’s constant for everyone” (first focus group, line 212). She thus implies that the definition of truth is not fixed and objective but unfixed and subjective. References to subjective morality were common responses, as a matter of fact. Along the same lines, when the majority of participants tried to define a concept, they not only considered their own perspective, but other possible positions that might affect their opinion. They were reluctant to offer clear-cut, unequivocal definitions. During the first focus group, the question “Okay, when it comes to truth, how might it be affected (how ever you define truth)?” was posed. Ariel said, “Truth is to be honest. To me, you also need to be respectful to others at the same time, deal with their truth. Not everyone has the same definition of truth” (line 179). A general trend in belief in relative morality is evident in the interviews.

**Perspective**

Participants’ understanding of their moral agency was revealed to me by the perspectives they shared over the course of the interviews. The majority of responses from the interviews fit into this category, as it is perhaps the most general. Simply sharing an opinion or thought is giving a perspective. In the definition category, participants offered
objective definitions or connotative meanings, but in the perspective category, participants
presented subjective opinions, viewed as a set of unverified references based on their
personal understanding of past experiences or their emotional attachment to the topic in
question.

Sometimes, through their perspectives, participants consciously or unconsciously revealed
that they were personally conflicted about something. Making sense of one’s conflicting
and/or contradictory ideas is helpful to a person’s meaning making process. Even if a
participant was seemingly unaware of her contradictory thoughts at the time of the
interview, awareness of her inconsistency could dawn on her at some point in the future.
My intention is simply to observe the person’s struggle to make meaning, not to cast
judgment. During the second focus group, Jasmine talked about dealing with disrespect and
said she does not want to look like someone who holds a grudge against those who
disrespect her, yet she clearly showed that she can be that kind of person: “Not to look like
I’m holding a grudge, but if they disrespect me one time, I don’t even think about it, and
I’ll hold it against them forever….but if they disrespect me one time, like they will do
something half-way rude, I’ll just take it totally rude” (line 53). During her individual
interview, however, Jasmine stressed the importance of being an accepting person and
conveyed that it is important to her that her students view her as accepting. She is aware
that she does not want to be a grudge holder or intolerant, but she clearly struggles with this
issue.

The perspectives that participants shared contained differing levels of conviction. I noticed
that Ella was usually confident about her opinions; this was evidenced by her body
language, her tone of voice, and the comment she made that she likes to debate and win arguments. During her individual interview, for example, while speaking on the topic of injustice, she stated, “People are really stuck in their ways. They are stuck in how they think; and if anyone is different from them, they don’t really like it” (line 12). While Ella usually evinces an air of certainty Jasmine clearly questions herself and is even presently in the process of changing her deeply-held perspectives on multiculturalism.

Jasmine’s personal growth is evident especially over the course of one speech she made in her individual interview when she was asked to evaluate the existing I.S.U. program’s effectiveness in making her more complete and more willing to deal with diversity. “I think I fought it a lot, too. At first it was like overkill. I thought, ‘Nope, I’m Christian and all the students I’m going to teach are going to be Christian and I don’t have to try and learn anything different than that’” (line 280). She realized, however, that she has become more accepting of diversity. Jasmine is honest with herself, and the above quotation is a nice example of a participant making meaning as she jumps between the perspective and experience categories of the communicative dimension. A few sentences later, she intimates her struggle and shows that she feels conflicted about trying to accept new ideas; she says that she is currently experiencing a potential change in her long-held beliefs but is unsure about it.

Until this semester, I don’t think I would have thought about even trying to change my mind because I wasn’t going to have to teach that, so I didn’t need it...But even now I have changed a little bit. I’m not ready to say that I accept that stuff, but, like, to say that now I accept it, it kind of takes a little while. I am still at the beginning stage where I just want to learn about it before I can even say that I accept it...I’m not even sure I’m at the stage where I can teach that to other people when I’m still trying to figure it out. (individual interview, line 280)
Jasmine admits that she is open to new ideas about multiculturalism, but she is not yet convinced that she will accept them wholly. Her perspective on diversity and even some of her values, like the value she places on acceptance, have shifted since she enrolled in the FCS education program due to her experiences so far. And she questions how this will affect her future teaching strategies. This passage, therefore, simultaneously touches on three of the four communicative categories. In addition, it touches on the socio-psychological dimension’s category of moral understanding. The motivation to change her original anti-multicultural perspective, which she adopted from her hometown’s system of values, comes from her recent experiences at I.S.U. Therefore, her experiences at I.S.U. are the cause of her gradual change in perspective on multiculturism. I recognized a parallel in her preference for integrating or coming to accept new things gradually. She needs time and space to allow herself to sit and ruminate on new values, and she would like to provide students this opportunity also. She plans to gradually, naturally introduce the concept of diversity in her future classroom rather than simply dump it on her students one day at the beginning of a new unit, “But like from the first day they walk into the class to have like, put pictures up around of not only white people in the classroom, but to start that from day one. And then it [their acceptance of diversity] can gradually happen” (line 232). Changing one’s value commitment takes time.

The theme of acceptance is recurrent in Jasmine’s individual interview. Early in the interview she shares how she was struck by the acceptance she received during her Halaqa (an Islamic women’s discussion group) experience the previous Friday night, where the Muslim women greeted their guests warmly and were very friendly. Jasmine was put at ease especially by their smiles, which she interpreted as a symbol of acceptance: “But just
knowing that even though we weren’t real sure as far as how to act or what to do, seeing someone’s face and smile, it seemed to tell us, assure us, that what we were doing was appropriate or whatever” (line 208). It seems that Jasmine has become open to the notion of accepting people who are different from her through her contact with the I.S.U. community and her classes, and by bringing up the theme of acceptance several different times throughout her individual interview, she shows that she is grappling with the issue and trying to somehow place it in her moral understanding. Because this precedent of accepting diversity conflicts with her hometown community’s fear of diversity, she feels conflicted about reconciling her new beliefs with her old ones. In this case, the ideas she has learned about acceptance contradict each other, and she realizes that she must decide what is true for herself. When it comes to changing her behavior, she is torn between the two perspectives. She wants to practice acceptance of others: “Even to this day, I am not the most accepting of differences yet but I’m trying a little bit more, more than I cared to back then” (line 300). But she is uncertain about how far she is willing to open herself to it, and she is unsure if her hometown community will tolerate her acceptance of diversity in her future classroom. Jasmine’s grappling with the theme of acceptance demonstrates an interaction with two aspects of the socio-psychological dimension: 1) she is concerned about consequences to herself and her future students, and 2) her perception of what is good and right is in conflict and therefore clouds her value commitment.

During the interviews, it was less often for participants to consciously acknowledge the influence of outside sources, such as society, religion, or parental influence, on their opinions. When someone did share a perspective that she acknowledged was influenced by another source, she was actively engaged in the category moral understanding. During
Ella’s individual interview, for example, she casually stated, “Some people are just mean. My mom told me that ‘some people are just mean,’ and she was right. You just have to be okay with yourself, and then they’ll be okay with you” (line 111). Her mom taught her this perspective and she integrated it into her moral development, and it has remained a part of her. She consciously recognizes that her mother’s teaching was the force that caused her to have this perception and, as a consequence, have this value commitment.

Another example of a participant who was conscious of the source of her beliefs or the beliefs of others occurred during the first focus group’s second subgroup discussion. One woman (identity unknown) cited that religion is the reason that many people do not tolerate homosexuals. However, she does not agree with this intolerance and finds it “not morally correct” (line 321). She clearly recognizes the power religion has in influencing people’s moral values, but her own perception of this intolerance has caused her to disagree with the prevailing opinion and formulate her own. Her response shows that her moral understanding of this issue is settled and her value commitment is strong.

Another example of a participant’s awareness of the influence of an outside force, or her experience with it, is illustrated by Jasmine. In her individual interview, she described her small Iowa hometown as very homogenous and skeptical of diversity. She said that the residents of her community resent change and new ideas and judge a teacher for bringing new or progressive perspectives into the classroom. She feels pressure to conform to their standards and believes that she must not rock the boat when she returns to teach there. Anticipating herself in the position of having to face the challenge of conforming to this agenda of encouraging children to remain at home and farm, she said, “That’s going to be
scary in itself” (line 276). As mentioned earlier, she is in the process of reevaluating her own opinion on the matter of tolerance and diversity. Engaging with this process puts her in the socio-psychological dimension as she considers both her moral understanding and the consequentiality of her actions.

Participants sometimes experienced an important realization as they made sense of their thoughts while talking. A perfect example of someone clarifying a past perspective while expressing a concept in another way occurred when Ella said,

Some people factor religion into a cover-all truth. I guess that’s what I was trying to say earlier in trying to make sure that your truth doesn’t cover your classroom…. You have to be cautious in how you present yourself and how you present your opinions. (first focus group, line 214)

In this example, Ella jumps from giving a perspective on truth to giving an example of her experience (belief in God) to presenting a future teaching strategy. She maneuvers among the categories of the communicative dimension fluidly to ultimately conclude that she believes in a separation between church and state in the classroom. In fact, many participants indirectly asserted this belief over the course of the interviews, and this is perhaps part of the reason that only one of them ever publicly mentioned that her moral perspective came from her religion. Ella broached the subject of religion in the first focus group after the subgroups had conducted their smaller-group discussions. She summarized a topic that her group had discussed: “We talked about religion and kind of about how you have that set core with your family, and once you go out on your own…we talked about if you still go to church because your Mom’s not there saying ‘go’” (line 246). But discussion about religion went no further than this brief foray.
Participants offered an abundance of perspectives during the interviews, but I noticed that the perspectives that had the backing of personal experience usually held a greater depth of conviction.

**Experience**

A third factor that influenced participants’ moral understanding was their personal experience. During the interviews, I regularly asked participants to give follow-up examples or stories to further elucidate their perspectives. And during the first focus group’s subgroup discussion, the overarching question specifically asked them to discuss personal experiences that have shaped their moral lives. Their experiences were not always firsthand; sometimes, they were secondhand, meaning the participant was not the instigator of action but was indirectly affected in some way.

One of the participants in the first focus group’s second subgroup discussion shared a secondhand experience in which her brother had his school permit, which meant he was only legally allowed to drive back and forth between school and home. However, he was in a traffic wreck and inadvertently killed someone while he was driving illegally. She said that before the wreck, she was more dismissive of seemingly pointless laws like this “school permit” law, but not any longer. “Now, it’s kind of like those laws are in place for a reason. You kind of think the laws don’t apply to you until something happens….Laws are in place for a reason even though you may not see it all the time” (line 305). Her experience led her to conclude that obeying the law is more important than she supposed it was. She integrated this new perception into her moral understanding and therefore her value commitment changed, that is, her respect for the law was heightened. This experience
also shows her realization of other-based consequentiality, that is, the notion that if one obeys laws, he/she might avoid hurting other people.

As participants discussed how moral development takes place, during the private second subgroup discussion, one woman (identity unknown) said that her parents and her personal experiences in life so far have given her a different outlook. After this sentiment was expressed, several other participants opened up and shared personal stories, and the general comfort and trust level in the group rose markedly. This was valuable to me because several interesting narratives involving personal experiences came out of that session. One woman (identity unknown) discussed how her attitude about personal safety changed after one of her best friends was raped (first focus group, line 297). This example touches on moral understanding in the socio-psychological dimension because her perception of something (personal safety) changed after she learned about her friend’s misfortune, and her value commitment has thus changed. She is concerned with self-based consequentiality, as well, in that she now considers the potential danger to herself before spontaneously going out alone at night.

During the first focus group, Juliet told a brief narrative about herself and her family eating at a restaurant in Arizona. During their dining experience, an older couple made an audible derogatory remark about them: “Those beeping foreigners need to get out of our country” (line 81). After a bit of prompting, Juliet revealed that she was shocked by the judgment cast upon them because she is not a foreigner and doesn’t consider herself to be of a race different than they. After I probed a bit further with a follow-up question, she explored herself more deeply and revealed that she wasn’t angered but confused by the incident: “I
considered them ignorant. And I laughed, and it seemed funny to me” (line 81). In terms of her moral understanding, it is clear that she has thought about this incident, and it has affected her perception, but she demonstrates little evidence of value commitment, unless it is perhaps that she believes in the value of withholding judgment.

Personal experience may affect one’s opinions about teaching strategies. Ella’s experience of being teased in fourth grade for her early sexual development has influenced her future teaching strategies, in that she will be very clear with her students about what is proper behavior towards their peers. She cited the example of her “little sister,” a fourth grader she mentored a few years ago, who experienced the same teasing problem, and then shared this personal experience during her individual interview, “I was kind of a little chunky kid and I got made fun of a lot, and that kind of followed me through the rest of my life, up through high school…. And I could see her going through that path” (line 84). Because of Ella’s unpleasant experience with harassment, she feels empathy for its victims, and therefore she will aim to minimize it in her classroom. This is how:

Oh, it would be whole classroom discussion of how it is not acceptable to talk about or to another human being the way I and her (I’m sure, both) were talked to and about. That just because you see something you find funny doesn’t mean the rest of the class is going to find it funny….You don’t need to start funny little nicknames. That is just not acceptable. (line 95)

Her perspective on this matter interacts with both categories of the socio-psychological dimension. It shows moral understanding because it is a value commitment drawn from her own personal experience or perception, and it shows other-based consequentiality because she strongly believes that one child’s hurtful words and actions should not adversely affect another.
Respect is a very important value to Ella, and she articulated this clearly during her individual interview when she said, “I think everyone, regardless, deserves respect as a human being. I just think that is just how life should be” (line 36). She furthermore shared that she grew up in a household that taught her to respect people’s differences: “Just because of where I am in life or where I’m from, I’ve always felt that I’ve been respected….I was raised that everyone is how they choose to be and that’s fine” (line 8). She considers respect, along with honesty and truth, a global value; she finds it compulsory to teach and practice respect in her future classroom. Although most of the values in her classroom, she said, will not be written in stone, respect is one that will: “There are certain things that really couldn’t be argued with them, like the respect issue” (line 36). Her commitment to the value of respect was clearly influenced by her perception of her parents’ values, and hence her moral understanding was shaped.

Another valuable personal experience that Ella shared during her individual interview gave an insight into her moral meaning making on the concept of bias. As a student, she had a poor opinion of her high school physical education teacher because he was openly biased in the classroom, clearly favoring the athletic students and marginalizing the less athletic ones. “He was just a bad example of everything that shouldn’t be” (line 16), she said. She did not respect his behavior. She believes a good teacher should have respect for his/her students, him/herself, and his/her colleagues. A strategy she plans to use in her classroom is to make sure her class does not have any biases. Her physical education teacher had strong biases. She will not. Her negative experience as a teenager impacted her opinion of justice in the classroom and has therefore influenced her moral understanding; she has made meaning of it through interacting with the socio-psychological dimension. Because student
centeredness (other-based consequentiality) is primary to her, she has made a value commitment to respect and justice in the classroom and plans to honor it in the future.

Ella made a clear connection to self-based and other-based consequentiality when she discussed a college project she had worked on. She and two classmates studied the antidiscrimination clauses in high school handbooks, looking for references to sexual-orientation discrimination. She said, “I was pretty emotionally tied to that project because I went in to do it and I wanted to know more about how it would affect my students….And I really wanted to make sure that the end results were something that my class would understand” (individual interview, line 139). Ella personally gained a lot by taking on this meaningful project because her uncle is gay and homosexuality is an important issue to her, but she was also consciously committed to the idea that her future students would benefit from learning about the results of her project. Thus, her decision to execute this project intersects with both self-based consequentiality and other-based consequentiality. A person’s personal experiences in life can have a great impact on her and may profoundly influence her thoughts and actions—even the actions she might take as a future teacher.

Ella’s acceptance of and experience with homosexuality stems from the fact that her uncle is gay. Her perception of the issue was influenced by her family’s tolerance of her uncle, and she has committed to the value of tolerance accordingly. She said that her family accepted it from the beginning and that no one ever judged him as wrong for his sexual orientation. She has subsequently become passionate about the issue and gets upset when someone is discriminated against due to his/her sexual orientation.
Strategy

The last category I observed in the participants’ responses is that of strategy. When asked to hypothesize about their future classroom practices, participants willingly offered ideas. Predicting future practices was not necessarily an end in itself, however.

Most of the participants agreed either directly or indirectly about the significance of values clarification, moral reasoning, and avoiding moral inculcation, that is, steering clear of teachers’ influence on students’ moral values. Many participants revealed that they have been influenced by significant role models in their lives, however. More importantly, many of them indicated that they recognize the importance of being a good role model because, as some claim, they would thus have more influence on students. For example, Jasmine clearly appreciates the effect of being a good role model: “Yeah, sometimes that speaks so much more than what you say to them anyhow. People don’t realize how much their actions really say” (individual interview, line 300). This shows the participants’ desire to influence students’ morality but that they will only do it indirectly. In terms of what participants would directly say to their future students, they were more inclined to be value-neutral in order to avoid influencing students’ value systems. It seems that influencing students through role modeling is acceptable but verbally influencing them is not. This idea is further elucidated in Jasmine’s following response: “The way I can justify it is to show it through the way I live. But as far as what to say to them, that is kind of hard” (individual interview, line 296). This underlying desire to be a role model reveals that participants believe external influences presumably benefit students.
The strategies participants shared were largely influenced by their impression of who would benefit from their actions. For example, Paige said, “I think it is really important to stress your rules at the beginning so they [students] know their boundaries” (second focus group, line 250). Her reasoning for holding this common opinion is most likely two-tiered: She personally would benefit from a class that conforms to the rules, and the students collectively would benefit from knowing what is expected of them and what the consequences would be if they do not meet expectations. This example intersects with both self-based consequentiality and other-based consequentiality.

Participants rarely volunteered pedagogical strategy ideas unless they were prompted to do so; however, in the following instance, Juliet moved naturally, voluntarily from the concept of definition to that of strategy. During the second focus group, as I elicited dialogue on the topic of respect/disrespect, I asked, “Do any of you have a different definition?” Juliet said, “Sometimes you just have to demand respect. If you don’t do that, people will walk all over you. Like students could be a good example in a classroom. They want to take advantage or take over you” (lines 93-95). Juliet expresses recognition of what teachers may have to deal with in their classrooms and shows that she plans to demand respect to prevent such insubordination.

When I directly asked the participants how they would approach their teaching strategies from a certain angle, some of them offered thoughtful strategies. In the first focus group interview, I asked, “How would you see justice related in the planning of a curriculum or in the way that you are going to teach it?” Jasmine said, “Be current and up-to-date with different terminology….Sometimes people get categorized—like from a certain
country….Instead of just like assuming something, speak with them individually” (line 137). This shows her cultural sensitivity and awareness of the power of language. It is furthermore an example of other-based consequentiality, in that she thinks it is important that students are not labeled with a term they might find offensive.

Another example of a strategy intersecting with other-based consequentiality arose when participants were asked to choose between two models of exploring morality in the classroom during the first focus group. Elizabeth justified her selection based on gains that her students might receive. “I would prefer Model 1 because…like it could be good for the students to share their opinions, and if they are different then, like, can learn more about the other students’ opinions and maybe change some of their views” (line 225).

As participants discussed the concept of respect in a classroom setting, the idea of choosing your battles was brought up. Choosing your battles as a way to deal with respect issues in the classroom implies the concept of situational morality, in the sense that maintaining respect might not have the highest priority sometimes, due to the importance of accomplishing other things, such as finishing the lesson plan, not wasting precious class time, and so on (See Ella’s example below in second focus group, line 102.). The notion of choosing one’s battles implies that the teacher considers the future consequences that could affect either herself, her students (others), or both. Because of this, this strategy of prioritizing what is most important occupies both the communicative dimension’s strategy category and the consequentiality category of the socio-psychological dimension.
In one example, a participant showed differing, even contradictory, strategies she would use in her professional life versus her personal life. It appears that initiating efficient and professional teaching strategies is an important priority to her, for in her classroom she would prefer to rise above petty annoyances that might otherwise bother her very much. When discussing a time that she felt disrespected by a classmate in college, Ella said: “I would say I haven’t been intentionally disrespectful to her, but I don’t treat her like I treat everyone else….If she’s gonna treat me like that, I’m gonna treat her like that” (second focus group, line 51). However, later in the interview she said, “You cannot deal with everything that gets in your way; otherwise, you will never get anything accomplished” (second focus group, line 102). She exhibits the notion of situational understanding in this teaching strategy. Teachers constantly make situational priorities in the classroom. For example, if she has time, a teacher might address the issue of minor disrespect that Ella refers to, but if there are larger things to deal with at the moment, she might ignore the disrespectful behavior.

When considering strategies, participants sometimes took the maturity level of their future students into account. In the following quote, Jasmine factored maturity level into her decision on how to approach moral education in the classroom: “I think the age you are teaching maybe makes a difference....Depending on their maturity level, classes, the students that you have…they need to have experience with debating….A lot is the developmental stage they are at” (first focus group, line 231). In Jasmine’s individual interview, she likewise considered students’ maturity level, and other-based consequentiality, when worriedly thinking about how she would expose her provincial
future students to the ways of the world. She said that she has learned a lot and seen a lot about the world while in college,

But to go back home and try to teach that to kids that are at such a vulnerable age—just finally starting to make up their own ideas of how they feel. It is a critical time in them in deciding who they are, and what they believe in and stuff. I want to make sure that I give them as much information as I can, but nothing to persuade them or totally affect their judgment. (line 276)

The way the participants approached teaching strategies can be broadly classified into descriptive strategies and prescriptive strategies, but the majority of the examples I saw were prescriptive. In sharing prescriptive (normative) opinions, participants prescribed what they or their future students ought to do, or they thoughtfully judged what their past teachers should have done differently. Although this research is descriptive in nature, prescriptive opinions or judgments regarding what ought to be in the context of the classroom were extensively revealed over the course of the interviews. Several examples of this have already been illustrated in this chapter (e.g. mandatory respect for all, the necessity of choosing your battles, how it is inappropriate to preach to students). In another example, Annabell cited an anecdote in the second focus group (line 115) about a female student flashing a male student in a class that she was apparently observing. She was surprised and stated that she didn’t think the teacher responded properly to this shocking display of disrespect. Annabell’s thoughts about this incident furthermore reflect the element of other-based consequentiality, as her anecdote implies that she would have responded more appropriately if it had been her class. She said this student’s action was disrespectful to all, meaning that everyone was harmed by it. Also, Ella combined the descriptive and prescriptive elements of ethics when she reflected on her experiences of her biased high school physical education teacher’s unjust teaching strategies (see Experience
Participants are clearly engaged in making meaning about their moral agency in these instances, as they attempt to assess what is the best or most correct moral behavior for each situation.

This chapter displays abundant examples of participants offering definitions, perspectives, experiences, and strategies during the interviews in order to make meaning of their moral agency. I discovered that each of the communicative dimension’s categories was further informed by the categories of the socio-psychological dimension, that is, self-based consequentiality and other-based consequentiality in the consequentiality category and perception and value commitment in the moral understanding category.

As mentioned earlier, the goal for this chapter was to provide thick description about the different dimensions and categories of the Moral Agency Framework and show how the framework was grounded in the data. In the next chapter, I engage in scholarly reflection on key aspects of the research process and present my theoretical interpretation in regard to moral agency. True to the grounded theory method, my theoretical interpretation involves a new set of emerging literature as I reflect on the resulting Moral Agency Framework and the interaction among its categories.
CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

Unlike the previous chapter, which focuses on grounding the framework in the data from which it emerged, this chapter engages in a deeper reflection on the process and product of the research. The first half of the chapter addresses key research processes, and the second half discusses relevant literature on the subject and explicates the concepts of reciprocity, critical and empty benefit, and the unitary and nonunitary self. It explains the pertinence of each concept to the resulting framework. My guiding belief is that my reflective thinking on the research process and product will lead to new meaning in understanding FCSTCs’ moral agency.

Reflection on the Research

Reflection on key research processes, such as focus group interviews, meaning construction, narrative and self, and data analysis, is the focus of this section. As the first data collection source, focus group interviews will be the initial subject of my reflection.

Focus Group Interviews

Despite the fact that the first focus group interview began with a game to establish a safe and comfortable environment, some participants were intent on responding literally and briefly to the interview questions that followed the game. This could be explained by certain possible constraints, such as the large number of participants in the focus group interview (n=13); the abstract nature of some of the interview questions; and my cultural identity, which is very different from the participants’. I am not a Westerner. My physical appearance could make Americans uncomfortable because I dress in the traditional fashion.
of Muslim women, wearing the Hijab, and some Americans are uninformed about or even fearful of the Islamic religion. In addition, although I speak it fluently, English is not my native language, and I therefore speak with an accent. And because of my Saudi Arabian heritage, participants might not have known the extent to which I am familiar with American social norms and traditions, and this could have added to their discomfort, as well. When these constraints were absent or less intense—as in the subgroup discussion, where the number of participants was cut in half, questions were more experience-based, and I purposefully removed myself from the discussion—they were more relaxed, interactive, and willing to share personal experiences that they believed have shaped their moral agency. When I listened to the tape of the discussion, I appreciated the free flow of discussion and the diversity of experiences they expressed during this session.

The participants’ varied and sometimes contrasting views on issues related to their moral agency may be explained by the heterogeneous nature of adult development (Hoare, 2006). Adults become more heterogeneous as they age: Some adults will advance in their moral principles and actions, while others will remain static or deteriorate (Hoare, 2006). In my findings, for example, I noticed that participants’ reactions to being disrespected varied based on the situation in which they found themselves, the gender of the perpetrator, and their own maturity level. Some of the participants, indeed, seemed to be in the process of advancing in their moral principles and making meaning for themselves.

**Meaning Construction**

The semi-structured interview format allowed for the emergence of participants’ practical moral understanding and interpretation. Blasi (1980) illustrates that moral interpretation of
a specific situation offered by participants might easily differ from the theorist’s expectations. In my research, participants’ practical understanding and interpretation, aided by the use of the semi-structured interview format, led to the construction of new meaning in regard to moral agency. According to Fallona (2000), Aristotle proposed that the moral agent rather than moral values is the primary source of moral knowledge but my empirical findings in this research suggest that the participants’ constructed moral knowledge integrates other factors, such as moral understanding, consequentiality, situational morality, narrative morality, and the interaction among the four categories of the communicative dimension, in order to make meaning.

Meaning making occurs as a person or people, individually or collectively, move fluidly among different spaces of time (i.e. past, present, and future). Meaning in no sense emerges from only one factor, as it might appear. In fact, I saw meaning making emerge from the overlapping of the four communicative categories, and I recognized how one’s understanding of each category might (consciously or not) influence her understanding of the other categories. Even though unconscious learning is difficult to perceive, we can see its results in learning applications. As people reflect on their learning practices, they potentially become more able to consciously understand different aspects of their learning experiences. Berg and Sternberg (2003) acknowledge the movement of conscious knowledge in adulthood and indicate that substantial prior conscious knowledge moves to the unconscious or preconscious level almost automatically. Considering Berg and Sternberg’s observation, we could conjecture that participants’ seemingly unconscious responses evolved from previous conscious understanding. This might suggest the
importance of exploring an individual’s prior moral knowledge, on which his/her current understanding relies.

Following the constructive tradition of meaning making provides the opportunity for contextual knowledge. This finding coincides with Merriam and Clark’s (2006) observation that contextual knowledge and constructing one’s own knowledge is a common theme in some adult cognitive development theories. They also add that the stress on constructing knowledge “allows for more contextualization of adult cognitive development” (p. 32). For example, research on women incorporates concepts “related to the experience of silencing and disempowerment, lack of voice, the importance of personal experience in knowing, connected strategies in knowing, and resistance to disimpassioned knowing” (Merriam & Clark, 2006, p. 32). This research confirms the above findings on women’s ways of knowing, in that the participants, all of whom are women, made meaning through personal experience, interpersonal relationships, emotional attachment, and situational morality.

Merriam and Clark explain that “[b]y integrating abstract thinking with very pragmatic life concerns, one tolerates ambiguity, if not outright contradiction” (2006, p. 33). The emerged communicative dimension provided the opportunity for the participants to freely transfer between abstract and contextual-based knowledge and thus construct meaning, which in some instances led to ambiguity or even contradiction. The following are a few examples of ambiguous and/or contradictory thoughts that participants shared over the course of the interviews: The golden rule is good but hard to practice; respect might be a global value but definitions of respect might vary across cultures; directly influencing students’ value systems is not right, but it’s okay to be a good role model to positively influence students.
These examples show the significance of the interdependence between abstract and concrete thinking for the purpose of meaning making. Another important method for making meaning is through the use of narrative.

**Narrative and Self**

Narrative inquiry, which mainly focuses on sharing stories and reflecting on them, was the most prominent method used in this research. Narrative, according to Jalongo and Isenberg (1995), has the potential to increase professional understanding through dialogue, reflection, and analysis of critical issues that are brought to the surface by the story. Holstein and Gubrium (2000) view narrative as a constant and complex process by which self-construction is achieved:

Narrators artfully pick and choose from what is experientially available to articulate their lives and experiences. Yet, as they actively craft and inventively construct their narratives, they also draw from what is culturally available, storying their lives in recognizable ways. Narratives of the self don’t simply rest within us to motivate and guide our actions, nor do they lurk behind our backs as social templates to stamp us into selves according to the leading stories of the day. The narrative landscape of self construction is clearly also a busy one. (p.103)

An example of a busy narrative landscape resides in one of Jasmine’s stories, in which she openly fluctuates between opposing values: rejecting, questioning, and accepting the concept of multicultural education. It is clear how her reflection on her story provides her with a different way to see her moral self. Through sharing stories, people can raise deep questions and reform the landscape of their minds (Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995).

Hill (2004) suggests that ethical judgment is a process of ongoing social negotiation of what the storytellers value in terms of what they view as good and right. Participants occasionally offered brief narratives to explicate a point or provide an example, but they
more often directly stated their perspectives and prescriptive judgments without the aid of narrative. Ella shared a telling narrative during her individual interview, however, that displayed an ethical judgment in terms of what she deems good and right. She told me that she was teased a lot in elementary school due to her chubbiness; and later in life she, in turn, was able to counsel an overweight fourth grade “little sister” who was experiencing the same thing. During her short narrative, she conjectured about how she would handle hurtful teasing in the classroom, and it was evident that her previous negative experience contributed to what she now views as the right thing to do as a teacher, which is to have an open class discussion about how inappropriate it is for students to pick on those who are different.

Jalongo and Isenberg (1995) assert that personal narratives help teachers unearth beliefs, perspectives, and experiences. Moreover, personal narrative in the form of autobiographical anecdotes helps teachers build meaning around their beliefs and actions about good and right, as my research exemplifies. If we accept that the social construction process shapes reality, then narrative ethics would highlight “the belief that one story is not just as good as another and that these preferences are embedded in the histories and anticipated futures of those involved” (Hill, 2004, p. 145). Hill’s observation is further validated by my framework, especially the communicative dimension, which illustrates the overlapping nature of experience (histories) and pedagogical strategies (anticipated futures).

Either individually or collectively, participants constructed meaning as they fluidly moved back and forth among the definition, perspective, experience, and strategy categories or between the two dimensions. This kind of movement is complex and dynamic yet
nevertheless recognizes the self in its continuous interaction with itself and its surrounding factors. Through self-construction, meanings can be drawn from definition or perspective as current-based knowledge; from experience as past-based knowledge; and from strategy as future-based expectation. This concept of nonlinear movement among different spaces of time creates continuity in the individual’s self-formation and reformation, and I arrived at it through inductive study.

**Data Analysis**

The process of data analysis and framework development was conducted inductively as suggested by grounded theory thinkers. The inductive approach implies that the researcher becomes sensitive to formulating concepts from cases, events, or individuals’ lives in the hope of constructing new insights related to the studied phenomenon. This practice is different from the deductive approach, in which the researcher rationalizes selected theories and later qualitatively or quantitatively tests the relationships among selected variables.

My use of the inductive approach sometimes distracted me from seeing the whole picture because I delved so completely into an extremely detailed analysis of the data using a three-level coding system. This kind of close examination could cause the researcher to inadvertently leave behind another set of meanings. In order to maintain the other sets of meaning, I found myself naturally switching to a holistic mode of thinking, in which I would reflect on the interview texts and coding system concurrently. The coding system, nonetheless, subtly guided me in building the framework, and the act of shifting between the codes and the interview transcriptions was a worthy pursuit that could help future practices. My meticulous efforts of examining and reexamining the interview data yielded a
new theoretical understanding on a few pieces of relevant literature. I connected my work on moral agency to the notions of reciprocity and the unitary and nonunitary self.

**Relevant Literature**

The second half of this chapter discusses relevant literature on the subject and explicates the concepts of reciprocity, critical and empty benefit, and the unitary and nonunitary self.

**Reciprocity**

The act of constructing and reconstructing as a major meaning making approach of adult development helped me see new meaning as I continued my reflection on the emerging framework and the rich, complex data that shaped it. In particular, the participants’ perspectives and experiences on respect, disrespect, and the golden rule inspired me to make the connection with the concept of reciprocity. Darwin also recognized the reciprocity of the golden rule and observed that reciprocity, along with intellectual capacity and habitual influence, is foundational to morality and leads to the golden rule (as cited in Fry, 2006). The participants generally accepted the golden rule as a global value. I noticed, however, that none of them questioned the potential negative application of it, which is, if a person does not mind being disrespected, is it permissible for him/her to treat others disrespectfully? This line of reasoning led me to further examine their perspectives on respect and disrespect, and I subsequently posed several questions on this topic during the second focus group.

While contemplating the significance of the interaction between the two categories of the socio-psychological dimension of the framework, I asked myself: How does
consequentiality interact with moral understanding? What is a possible explanation of the nature of the interaction between the two categories in relation to participants’ moral agency? My scholarly reflection on these questions pointed me in the direction of reciprocity. Based on his anthropological studies, Sahlins (1965) views reciprocity as the reciprocal connection between the movement of goods in a society and social relationships. Although he used his model to explain reciprocal connection in tribal societies, I believe that it also applies to moral agency. Fry (2006) states that “a great deal of data on moral systems exists within anthropology, but this material is rarely nested within explicit considerations of morality” (p. 400). He also notes that the mass of anthropological studies substantiates the universality of reciprocity in social life. For my Moral Agency Framework, the concept of reciprocity provided possible clarification of the interaction between the socio-psychological dimension’s categories of consequentiality and moral understanding.

I considered intellectual perspectives as reciprocity in the context of morality. The reciprocity principle in moral interaction has its root in the early twentieth century work of Westermarck’s theory of moral emotions (as cited in Fry, 2006), in which he refers to the reciprocity principle as “retributive emotions”. Fry further illustrates that Westermarck’s retributive emotions refer to feelings that accompany one’s act of paying back in kind. This can either indicate retributive positive emotions related to reciprocating good deeds or retributive negative emotions, such as anger, reciprocating bad deeds (2006, p. 339).

In keeping with Sahlins’ model, an individual’s understanding and thus functioning, in respect to what is “good or bad” and “right or wrong”, can be understood through
reciprocal connection; that is, it can be based on cost-benefit and give-and-take relationships. These relationships may take different forms and therefore can be placed on a reciprocity continuum with altruistic assistance on one end and self-interest on the other. In my study, as participants attempted to reveal their moral agency, the concept of reciprocal connection and the interpersonal movement of services, benefits, and feelings were relevant. Triggered by various social instincts and events, as indicated by the perception subcategory of moral understanding, participants felt the need to provide services, benefits, or feelings as they integrated the need into their identities. This personal integration of certain values as elicited through social relationships and social instincts relates to the value commitment subcategory of the moral understanding category. On the other hand, the perceived need to share services, benefits, or feelings was considered based on the underpinning expectation of the consequences, the other category in the socio-psychological dimension of the Moral Agency Framework. The notion of reciprocity, therefore, provides some explanation of the complex interaction between the categories of the socio-psychological dimension. I focused on the three forms of reciprocity, generalized, balanced, and negative, that Sahlins (1965) proposes.

Sahlins’ three forms of reciprocity constitute a continuum that extends from freely-given or altruistic assistance in generalized reciprocity to pure self-interest in negative reciprocity. His model reflects ample cross-cultural illustrations that show that the three forms of reciprocity relate to “kinship distance” (1965, p. 149), which refers to the degree of relationship between the two involved parties. In short, generalized reciprocity is common among close kin, and negative reciprocity is more likely to occur among non-kin (Fry, 2006). According to Sahlins (1965), the first form of reciprocity, generalized reciprocity,
“refers to the transactions that are putatively altruistic, transactions on the line of assistance
given and, if possible and necessary, assistance returned” (p. 147). Based on his
ethnographical studies, he finds it present in acts of contribution, friendliness, assistance,
and openhandedness (1965). A model example of generalized reciprocity is a mother’s act
of nursing her child, in that she expects no repayment from the child.

It was interesting to detect that the participants unwittingly shared several examples of
generalized reciprocity in the interviews in order to express their moral agency. For
example, in the teen pregnancy, homosexuality, respect in the classroom, and teen driving
stories, participants provided a certain benefit to someone. The benefit was in the form of
sympathy, empathy, or support, for example, and was given without any direct payback
expected. Although it was not apparent in the interviews, however, they might have
received, or might receive in the future, an indirect return of some kind; but there was no
conditional payback at the time of the event. An indirect return could be something as
simple as an immediate feeling of well being or as complicated as a future remembrance of
the experience of benevolence that in some way allows one to achieve a deeper
understanding of herself. The indirect return of generalized reciprocity could hence occur
in either the short or long term and be either close or distant in terms of kinship distance.

Although the generalized reciprocity viewed by Fry (2006) is a unidirectional relationship,
I deduced that it can be multidirectional, as one of Ella’s life experiences reveals. Ella and
two classmates were enthusiastically involved in a project to examine antidiscrimination
clauses regarding sexual-orientation in high school handbooks because she was interested
in gay rights. She said that her passion about the issue sprang from her close relationship
with her gay uncle and her relationship with a gay friend. She found that students’ sexual-orientation was, in fact, not protected by the school’s antidiscrimination policy. Although she did not confront the school with the problem as part of the project, she and her two classmates created a guide for students and teachers on how to deal with intolerance in schools. She was quite altered by the experience and said that she plans to share her findings with her future high school students in order to inform and protect them. She will directly benefit them by exposing institutional injustice and encouraging their critical thinking about discrimination.

Although her behavior is altruistic (unidirectional), the effect of her thoughts and actions is multidirectional, as well. Imagining herself in the role of a gay person going out with her partner in public and suffering scorn, Ella concluded, “I don’t think it’s fair to tell someone that how they feel is wrong” (individual interview, line 143). Her empathy is strong and it bothers her that a person could be persecuted simply because he/she fell in love with someone. This shows a multidimensional relationship because she considered her uncle, her friend, her future students, and herself when thinking about the ills of sexual-orientation discrimination. She simply wants people, relatives or otherwise, to feel safe and free to express their true feelings. To expand on Sahlins’ findings, I concluded that not only are multidimensional relationships evident in generalized reciprocity, but so is the possibility of benefiting both kin and non-kin.

The second form of reciprocity, balanced reciprocity, involves direct and equal exchanges (Sahlins, 1965). This means that there is quid pro quo relationship from which both parties knowingly benefit. An example of balanced reciprocity was evident when Toni asserted
that there is a tacit societal agreement that respect is supposed to be reciprocated. “I think we generally assume that…other people are respecting us until it is identified that they are not respecting us. It is just one of those things that we are taught while we are growing up: to respect people” (second focus group, line 29). If one gives another respect, he/she assumes the other will offer him/her respect in return. If the proffered respect is not reciprocated, however, then according to a couple of participants, the disrespectful other deserves disrespect in return.

Ella told of an incident in which a classmate publicly disrespected her in class for a reason unknown to Ella. Ella’s response was to treat her in the same manner: “I would say I haven’t been intentionally disrespectful to her, but I don’t treat her like I treat everyone else. So I’m not saying that’s right. I’m saying she does the exact same thing, so in my mind, I justify myself” (second focus group, line 51). Toni’s example reflects positive balance and Ella’s reflects negative balance.

Based on Fry’s (2006) observation, balanced reciprocity involves a two-way exchange, whereas the two other forms of reciprocity are unidirectional. He illustrates that the idea of a two-way interaction can involve the passage of time between the exchange of benefits. When Jasmine spoke about having to participate in the Halaqa activity, she admitted that the grade, not the event itself, was the expected reward for her. Earning a semester grade takes many weeks of work and is therefore a longer-term process. During her individual interview, she acknowledged nonetheless that an unforeseen short-term side benefit resulted from the Halaqa activity. She felt good about learning something new. She realized the value of learning for its own sake. “As cliché as it sounds, it’s kind of cool to learn for
no reason. It took me a while to learn that….Now I have gained from it. Yeah, it was personal satisfaction. It happened, I guess” (line 316). It seems that Jasmine’s recognition of this important side benefit took place during the process of working toward the initial goal of earning a good grade. Both positive and negative balanced reciprocity can be influenced by factors such as the passage of time (Sahlins, 1965) and the occurrence of side benefits.

The third form of reciprocity, negative reciprocity, was not evident in the interviews, at least not in Sahlins’ terms. In essence it is the act of taking without giving. To Sahlins, negative reciprocity entails an attempt to receive something for nothing through actions such as theft, deceit, or haggling, with the possible involvement of aggression (1965). Based on his cross-cultural studies, this kind of reciprocity tends to appear in the largest social distances, that is, among people who are in no way related or connected. When I considered a less extreme interpretation of negative reciprocity, however, I found a few examples that showed participants receiving self-benefit or being ostensibly selfish without hurting others in the process. Incidentally, this questioning of who receives benefit from a given action connects nicely to the consequentiality category. The most extensive example of a participant contemplating her selfish motives occurred when Jasmine, in her individual interview, talked about the necessity of learning from others in order to “get where you want to go” (line 304). She judged it a selfish action, but realized that she can personally benefit and grow if she is more accepting of other people.

Before I thought, ‘Now what am I really going to get from that? Nothing.’ So I didn’t need to try and change or try and learn about others….It’s selfish but that’s what happened, I guess. I’m learning from that and getting something for it, and it’s helping with a lot of different things, too.” (line 304)
The behavior she judges as selfish is arguably not selfish at all. Or if so, it certainly gives a positive spin to the notion of selfishness. Jasmine’s personal revelation is striking and noteworthy. She might be taking without giving directly, but her increased self-awareness and the resulting acceptance of others is certainly beneficial to society.

As I contemplated the concept of reciprocity, I began to question why in the generalized form one would give a benefit with no conditional payback. I wondered about the nature of such a benefit. Does it affect an individual or a group? How much time does the process of providing the benefit take? Do benefit givers reveal uncertainty about what to do? How does emotional attachment influence the benefit giver? Answering these questions requires more data and is clearly beyond the scope of this research; however, posing them led me to conceptualize a new understanding through the critical science lens, and this was important to me due to the prominent role critical science plays in FCS teacher education programs.

My criticism of generalized reciprocity hinges on the notion of unconditionality. What really motivates a person to give unconditionally? Is there a point when one is giving too much? I believe that understanding the reasons behind a person’s actions is important. Some people give generously, religiously, and seemingly unconditionally to their fellow humans. But is it really unconditional? Can it be deemed unconditional if their motive for giving is that they expect to receive a reward from Allah (God) in the afterlife for their good works during their earthly life?

**Critical and Empty Benefits**

Other-based interest as a core concept in generalized reciprocity appeared to be related to participants’ feeling and rationality about what is good and right. However, being willing
and/or able to reciprocate benefits unconditionally is one thing, but providing critical benefits is something else entirely. Critical benefit is reciprocating benefits with critical awareness. Critical benefits in the sense of offering benefits in the form of services, goods, definitions, and prospective teaching strategies was accompanied by questioning the context in which generalized reciprocity was deemed needed. For example, we might question social and political factors that influence an offering-and-receiving-benefit situation. We might question whether there are better ways to help, whether the benefit receiver can be involved, and why and how. Are there pre- and post-benefit procedures? Why and what might they look like? Providing critical benefit entails not only questioning but behaving accordingly. These questions are examples that would characterize critical benefit as opposed to empty benefit, in which the giver simply gets influenced by the easily seen consequences or symptoms (e.g. unquestioned perception of what is just and unjust, others’ uncomfortable feelings) with little or no (empty) associative and critical thinking. This is not to say that empty benefit is not significant but rather to entertain the thought that generalized benefits can have deeper understanding reflected in the concept of critical benefit. It is beyond the scope of this research to examine factors that contribute to practicing critical or empty benefit. On the other hand, the notion of the self is important in shedding light on the nature of moral agency.

**Unitary and Nonunitary Self**

The notion of self is a significant element not only in the development of a person’s moral agency but also as a contributing factor in adult development. Adults throughout the centuries have managed to learn on their own. This research-supported phenomenon led to the development of self-directed learning (Merriam & Clark, 2006). Thus, the notion of self
and how it contributes to meaning making in terms of moral agency was very important to the developing framework, especially the socio-psychological dimension. Both the communicative and socio-psychological dimensions recognize the continual interaction between the self and its environment.

According to Merriam and Clark (2006), the notion of the self has no fixed understanding across time or cultures. Self is understood in either a unitary or nonunitary way. They explain that a modern understanding of the self entails the existence of an authentic self that needs to be discovered; they assume that the individual has the power to indeed make this discovery. The self is viewed as a unitary entity, with harmony in its core, and “conflict comes from outside or from efforts to be other than the authentic self” (Merriam & Clark, 2006, p. 34). This unitary self recognizes the power inside an individual over outside socio-cultural influences (Merriam & Clark, 2006). Self, according to this perspective, needs to be discovered rather than constructed. All that it is already exists within itself; it simply needs to uncover this. Due to its dependency on rationality, it has no uncertainty about its boundaries, which are fixed. Therefore, it seems to be both more limited and less creative than the nonunitary self. According to Merriam and Clark, the unitary self is naturally at peace with itself and does not acknowledge the possibility of self-conflict. However, I believe it is possible for the unitary self to experience conflict within itself, even in the absence of external influences, due to the ongoing negotiation and tension that may occur between a person’s values.

This rendering of the unitary and nonunitary self might shed light on participants’ moral agency. For a moral agent, self might represent in some point or other a unitary or
nonunitary self. These broad categories of self are not mutually exclusive in an individual’s life. For example, a person might reflect a unitary self in certain situations, at certain times of life, and/or with a certain group of people but reflect a nonunitary self otherwise.

Validating such observations in the realm of participants’ responses, I interpreted Ella reflecting a unitary self when she declared her confidence in her religion and voiced a strong desire to raise her future children according to Christian tradition, with little consideration for her husband’s religious orientation. Another example of her unitary self is apparent in her unquestioning confidence that it is unacceptable to denounce homosexuality based on religious beliefs. Even though she acknowledges the existence of other meanings regarding religious-based perspectives on homosexuality, it is through her unitary self that she appeared confident in dismissing others’ perspectives as wrong. It is inferred that such a unitary self has the tendency to be less desired to search for alternative meanings and thus less open to consider socio-cultural influences (including religious beliefs). Ella’s perspectives have the tendency to be associated with the notion of the unitary self, in the sense that her ready and confident judgment involves more certainty and generalizability and is thus less open to alternative ways of knowing. In other words, Ella seems to be positive about her perspective as well as her future practice in regard to the discussed issue.

On the other hand, her nonunitary self was reflected when I asked her about her readiness to bring the language of oppression to her future classes. She expressed uneasiness at the prospect of teaching a lesson on oppression and justified her feeling by saying, “Oppression is ever-changing in subtle and not subtle ways. Unless you research it, up to the date you talk about it, it’s always going to change” (individual interview, line 119). It
was hard for her to define or even understand what oppression is due to her expectation of an ever-changing reality. In this sense, she seems to be more open to information coming from various socio-cultural factors. Such openness is an essential component for critical science approach with which FCS teacher education programs’ experts communicate via their theoretical conceptualization and professional practices.

**Conclusion**

In summary, the emerged Moral Agency Framework and its imbedded elements acknowledge the complex nature of individuals’ moral agency. This framework accounts for the multidimensional aspects that influence participants’ sense of moral agency. Communication mainly through sharing perspectives and experiences, and less frequently through definitions and strategies, showed the participants’ understanding of their moral agency as they brought the past into the present and drew conclusions for the future. The interaction between the self and the world is recognized in the socio-psychological dimension and highlights the concept of moral understanding, in which the individual’s value commitment to the good and right is triggered by social cues and influences. This dimension also brings to light the concept of consequentiality, in which the consequences to self and others of what is “good or bad” and “right or wrong” are considered.

As I revisited the framework, in an effort to understand participants’ moral agency, I realized that reciprocity—in its three forms—seemed to be an integral part of the participants’ moral functioning. Reciprocity as the foundation for moral affairs was important to view in light of the critical science approach and led me to see critical benefit as opposed to empty benefit. And because the notion of self is so important to a person’s
sense of moral agency, making a connection to the idea of the unitary and nonunitary self was helpful.

Now that I shared relevant literature as well as reflected on the research process, I will summarize my research in the following chapter and confer future implications for FCS teacher education programs as well as for scholarly studies.
CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

This research revealed the understanding of FCSTCs’ moral agency via responses to semi-structured individual and focus group interview questions. Narrative and constructivist approaches, which are inherent to the grounded theory method, were instrumental in revealing the resulting Moral Agency Framework. This last chapter provides a brief summary of the current research and suggests implications for FCS teacher education and for future research on this subject.

Research Summary

According to Fenstermacher (1990), “[w]hat makes teaching a moral endeavor is that it is, quite centrally, human action undertaken in regard to other human beings. Thus, matters of what is fair, right, just, and virtuous are always present….The teacher's conduct at all times and in all ways, is a moral matter” (p. 133). However, Fullan (2001) asserts that although emphasis is placed on teacher quality, moral knowledge is one of the most neglected aspects of teacher education and educational policies. Toombs (1993) found that literature of higher education on ethics is inclined to deal with the micro-dimensions of ethical situations because it is a safer way to deal with this sensitive topic. It seems that this inattentiveness to ethics has contributed to the scarcity of preservice moral education research. Although concerns about the moral domain of teaching have been raised for the past 20 years, little attention has been given to the implementation of scientific approaches to study the moral reasoning and behaviors of preservice and in-service teachers (Cummings, Dyas, Maddux, & Kockman, 2001).
Because I recognize the importance of morality in the preparation and personal
development of teachers, and the lack of practical and scholarly attention given to teacher
candidates’ moral agency, this research attempted to give the relevant topic of moral
agency the attention it deserves in FCS. Furthermore, I believe the process was likewise
helpful to the FCSTCs because it gave them an outlet for contemplating and expressing
their opinions on a subject relevant to their future pursuits.

Family and consumer sciences teacher education programs are a fertile ground for
exploring students’ moral agency. These programs provide a moral base for pedagogical
practices and increasingly must address the moral issues faced by people living in a fast-
paced, complicated world. A person’s moral agency can affect his or her involvement in
countless moral issues that relate to the individual, the family, the community, and even the
world; therefore, the field of FCS is obligated to address it. Because teacher candidates in
the discipline will play an instrumental role in facilitating moral responsibility in learners,
it is important for us to explore their personal views on moral agency.

FCSTCs are introduced to critical science as a suggested mode of inquiry, and through this
it is assumed that they are prepared to address moral issues. According to this mode of
inquiry, moral issues are subject to rational reasoning guided by common agreement as a
moral principle. However, little is known about FCSTCs’ understanding of such morality.
In regard to methodology, there is a dearth of qualitative studies that explore the moral
agency of teachers, especially that of FCSTCs. This lack of information caused me to
question whether FCS teacher educators have a clear understanding of their teacher
candidates’ moral agency. I was further led to wonder about the factors that shape FCSTCs
moral agency. Thus, the overarching question of my research was: What factors influence FCSTCs’ understanding of their moral agency? Specifically, the research addressed the following detailed questions:

1. What is the FCSTCs’ perspective on and experience with moral functioning for themselves and others?
2. How do FCSTCs construct meaning about their moral agency?
3. How do FCSTCs justify their responses? Under what conditions?
4. How do FCSTCs view selected values (i.e. the golden rule, honesty, responsibility, respect, freedom from oppression)?
5. How do FCSTCs anticipate applying their understanding of moral concepts as FCS teachers?

To gain insight into FCSTCs’ understanding and perception of themselves as moral agents, it is imperative to address how they go about constructing their meaning. Under what conditions does this understanding occur? What factors have influenced their understanding? To explore these questions, I used grounded theory method to avoid the influence of preconceived notions and existing theories that might skew the horizon of the study. For example, although moral development research is dominated by moral reasoning, this research, through use of grounded theory method, allowed for the emergence of other dimensions in the process of exploring the aforementioned questions. After receiving the Human Subjects Research Committee approval, I invited all 13 students enrolled in the Curriculum Planning for Family Life and Vocational Family and Consumer Sciences course at I.S.U. to participate in this research, and all of them accepted the invitation.
Fallona (2000) agrees with others that one’s moral values can be visible to us through inferences from expressing these values via various kinds of activities, decisions, and behavior. In order to make the participants’ understanding of their moral agency visible to me and the reader, I examined the research questions through various interviewing activities, such as a metaphoric game, abstract and concrete questions, pedagogical choice questions, and narrative-based questions. Moreover, to make it visible, I focused on their individual and collective construction and reconstruction of moral values, moral experience, and moral pedagogy.

FCSTCs’ understanding of their moral agency was revealed through data collected from individual and focus group interviews. The first focus group interview helped me identify key concepts, such as global values, oppression, emotional involvement, and justification; from there I narrowed and refined the focus of subsequent interviews. Based on the apparent relevance of these concepts to certain members of the first focus group interview, I invited two participants to take part in individual interviews so that I could gain a deeper meaning of these concepts, discover how they came to understand them, and learn what factors motivated their thoughts and actions. They constructed and reconstructed this information by answering open-ended questions regarding moral values, moral experience and perspective, and moral education. After the two individual interviews, I went back to the whole group and conducted a second focus group interview in order to search for new meaning, if any, and to fill some of the gaps in the developing grounded theory.

To address the issue of public self-disclosure and to account for various ranges of data, the participant with little involvement either in terms of the quality or the quantity of her
responses was re-invited to participate in an individual interview. This method, called negative case analysis, added depth to the emerging categories.

Grounded theory, as an inductive method, was used to reveal FCSTCs’ understanding of their moral agency as an integral aspect of their professional development. Grounded theory refers to a set of systematic inductive methods that fulfill qualitative research goals in order to produce a general, middle-range theory. I used a constant comparative method to congruently collect, code, and analyze data in order to provide constant examination of theoretical relationships. When using constant comparative methods, in order to find new ideas, data are compared to data, data are compared to theoretical category, and finally theoretical category is compared to theoretical category (Glaser, 1992, 2005). For data interpretation, I utilized three levels of coding systems (i.e. open, axial, and selective). These coding systems were instrumental for the construction of Moral Agency Framework.

According to Glaser (2005), we cannot preconceive the categories into which the data are stored. Throughout data collection processes, which rely on inductive analysis, categories are arranged and rearranged in order to develop a grounded theory. Unlike the random sampling technique, theoretical sampling is a strategy used in grounded theory by which samples are selected based on the emerging gap in the data. That is, participants were selected based on their relevance to the field of study and the emerging theory, not on their representation of the population.

Data collection and analysis continue until we reach data saturation, where no new core categories are found (Glaser, 2001). Accordingly, a beginning substantive theory, which
was referred to as Moral Agency Framework, is generated that conceptualizes the key factors in the FCSTCs’ understanding of their moral agency. This emerging framework represented two dimensions of moral agency: communicative and socio-psychological dimensions. The communicative dimension integrated four categories: definition, perspective, experience, and strategy. The socio-psychological dimension of FCSTCs moral agency highlights the importance of two categories, consequentiality and moral understanding. The former considers the consequences of the participants’ thoughts and actions and the latter, moral understanding, acknowledges the intersection between participants’ perception of what is “good or bad” and “right or wrong” and their personal moral commitment to uphold a value or belief. This framework emerged from and was grounded in the data.

I evaluated the trustworthiness of this research via credibility, transferability, and confirmability criteria. Credibility, which refers to the degree to which the participants’ realities are reflected in the developing theory, was accomplished by the implication of member checking and the semi-structured interview format. Transferability, the ability to explain what might happen in a given situation, was approached by using thick description, total sampling technique, theoretical sampling technique, and constant comparative method. Confirmability was another criterion that was fulfilled through external validators and negative case analysis. Confirmability refers to the extent to which the research findings can be confirmed or corroborated by others, mainly for the purpose of ensuring the exclusion of the researcher’s biases, motivations, interests, and perspectives at the interpretation process.
Future Implications

The inductive exploration of FCSTCs’ understanding of their moral agency is a vital component of the design and implication of FCS teacher education programs. Current research provides different opportunities for future research. As a reminder, this research is descriptive in nature. Thus, the resulting framework does not prescribe any hierarchal or linear development in the studied phenomenon.

Implication for FCS Teacher Education Programs

The task of teacher educators in preservice teacher programs is to encourage preservice teachers to be moral agents in the way they think and behave with others as well as with themselves. Toward this goal, preservice teacher educators need to be, in the first place, aware of their teacher candidates’ understanding of their moral agency for which this research was conducted. Emerging dimensions of participants’ understanding, as exemplified in the framework, along with relevant analysis and discussion suggest several implications for FCS teacher educators. The dynamic of the communicative dimension provides a valuable suggestion for facilitating a learning environment where teacher candidates would have the opportunity to be able to move freely among the four categories to construct and reconstruct meaning. Thus, although teacher educators cannot ensure a candidate teacher’s reaction to issues of good and right (just as they cannot ensure whether she will implement what she is taught), they can ask teacher candidates to narrate, reflect, and interpret the way they understand their role as moral agents that might be indicative of their moral conduct and what they will be as a teacher and how they will interact with their students.
More specifically, the communicative dimension would suggest allowing teacher candidates to construct meaning as they discuss and reflect on what is “good or bad” and “right or wrong” via open communication with the present, past and future. Another implication is to encourage teacher candidates to develop meaning as they move back and forth between abstract and experiential-based and perspective-based understanding. In addition, the communicative dimension of FCSTCs’ understanding reveals the integration between participants’ descriptive and prescriptive moral understanding as a vital role of their moral agency. Situational morality, where different situations are possible regarding an issue, implicitly introduces teacher candidates to the concept of ambiguity if not contradiction embedded in our lives.

Even though the FCS teacher education program, from which participants were selected, does not integrate moral philosophies and theories in its curriculum, the resulting socio-psychological dimension of the framework, provides glimpses of participants’ practical moral philosophy. It is suggested here that integrating moral philosophies and theories across relevant courses would provide an opportunity for teacher candidates to construct and reconstruct deep understanding of their moral agency. Beyond offering philosophical introduction, the students should be introduced to the major approaches to moral education in public schools with an emphasis of consensus among the most dominant approaches, such as character education, moral reasoning, values clarification, and the morality of care.

Considering the complex and dynamic interaction between the socio-psychological dimension categories: consequentiality and moral understanding, the notion of reciprocity
along with the unitary and nonunitary self has added to the present literature of moral agency.

This research also highlights the power of narration, reflection, and interpretation as construction tools from which the resulting framework emerged. To help teacher candidates construct meanings regarding the program’s moral-related activities, such as service learning, donations for specific causes, and morally-based research papers, I suggest that they revisit the meanings of these activities along with their self-reported moral experience using the framework components as a tool to facilitate narration, reflection, and interpretation that is assumed to further their understanding of their moral agency.

**Implication For Future Research**

Among the various possible future inquiries that spring from conducting this research, I, a future Home Economics teacher educator in Saudi Arabia, found the following two research areas to be instrumental for my professionalism.

Living through the process of this research, I noticed how most of the participants reveal a relative definition in regard to key moral concepts, such as respect, truth, oppression. It would be informative to uncover my future learners’ conceptualization of key values where the door between religious beliefs and learners’ moral identity has the potential to remain open. Specifically, it would be educational to increase my awareness of how Saudi home economics teacher candidates understand moral relativism through their religious identities.
Another area that captures my attention is the broadness of what is “good or bad” and “right or wrong” as a foundational concept for moral agency. As appeared from this research, this foundational concept was highly understood through a unique dimension, interpersonal relationships. However, in addition to interpersonal relationships, I believe that the foundational concept is highly interrelated with another dimension, that is intrapersonal relationship through contemplation on one’s own thoughts, beliefs, and personal practices even when they seem as personal affairs. The homogenous religious orientation between my future learners and me introduces a third dimension of what is “good or bad” and “right or wrong”. It is the individual-to-God relationship. The interrelatedness among these dimensions, in addition to relationships with the environment, is expected to shape and reshape my future learners’ moral agency. Thus it would be instrumental to explore how these various dimensions integrate in their theoretical understanding. Further study might follow to investigate the new meaning that bridges their theoretical understanding and practical lives as Home Economics teachers, on whom the quality of Saudi pupils’ life and ultimately their families and communities partially rely.

Further to the aforementioned research implications, future research might replicate a grounded theory study with another FCSTCs cohort at the same or at similar institutions for the purpose of revealing the understanding of their moral agency. Different data resources, such as academic documents, data collection methods, such as observation, and data analysis methods, such as non-verbal analysis might be used as triangulation techniques to further the research trustworthiness. Conducting hermeneutic studies in relation to the emerging dimension of the framework is another suggestion for FCS future researchers.
APPENDIX A

THE PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES OF FAMILY AND CONSUMER
SCIENCES EDUCATION TEACHER LICENSURE
UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM
The performance outcomes of FCS Teacher Licensure option are as follows:

1) Human Development and Learning. The graduate understands how individuals learn and develop, and provides learning opportunities that support intellectual, career, social, and personal development.
2) Diversity. The graduate understands how individuals develop in their approaches to learning and creates opportunities that are equitable and are adaptable to diverse learners.
3) Instructional Planning. The graduate plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter and individual and community goals.
4) Instructional Strategies. The graduate understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage individuals' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
5) Learning Environment. The graduate uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
6) Communication. The graduate uses knowledge of effective verbal, non-verbal, and media communication techniques, and other forms of symbolic representation, to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and support interaction.
7) Assessment. The graduate understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner or client.
8) Foundations, Reflection and Professional Development. The graduate continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on individuals, families, and other professionals in the community, and actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
9) Collaboration, Ethics, and Relationships. The graduate fosters relationships with individuals, families and organizations in the larger community to support learning and development.
10) Subject Matter Specialization. The practitioner understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structure of family and consumer sciences and can apply them in the community.
APPENDIX B

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES ORGANIZATION CODE OF ETHICS
Code of Ethics

Preamble
These principles are intended to aid members of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences individually and collectively in maintaining a high level of ethical conduct. They are guidelines by which a member may determine the propriety of conduct in relationships with clients, with colleagues, with members of allied professions and with various publics.

A member of the family and consumer sciences profession and of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences shall:

- Maintain the highest responsible standard of professional performance, upholding confidentiality and acting with intelligence, commitment, and enthusiasm.
- Fulfill the obligation to continually upgrade and broaden personal professional competence.
- Share professional competence with colleagues and clients, to enlarge and continue development of the profession.
- Support the objectives of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences and contribute to its development through informed, active participation in its programs.
- Advance public awareness and understanding of the profession.
- Maintain a dedication of enhancing individual and family potential as a focus for professional efforts.

Principles of Professional Conduct
The following Statement of Principles are intended to aid members of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences individually and collectively.

Statement of Principles for Professional Practice

Preamble
The mission of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences is to effect the optimal well-being of families and individuals by:

- empowering members to act on continuing and emerging concerns;
- focusing the expertise of members for action on critical issues;
- assuming leadership among organizations with mutual purposes.

These Principles of Professional Practice guide American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences members in all categories; those Certified in Family and Consumer Sciences; applicants for membership in the Association; and applicants for the Certified in Family and Consumer Sciences designation. The Principles also provide members of the Association with guidelines and with descriptions of the actions required for ethical professional practice.

Professional Competence
AAFCS members base their competence on educational degrees earned from regionally accredited institutions and from training, experience, and certification programs recognized by AAFCS.

AAFCS members seek continuing education reflecting new expectations, procedures, and values.

AAFCS members assure accurate presentation of their work by organizations with whom they are affiliated.

AAFCS members identify themselves as Certified in Family and Consumer Sciences in cases in which this designation is consistent with the procedures and guidelines of the AAFCS Council for Certification. They may use the CFCS acronym in this identification and designation.

AAFCS members claim competence only in an area or areas for which
they have education, training, and experience.  
**AAFCS** members accurately present competencies of students, supervisors, colleagues, and others with whom they work.  
**AAFCS** members practice within the law and within the recognized boundaries of their education, training, and experience.  
**AAFCS** members verify the credentials of their employees and supervisors.  
**AAFCS** members refrain from professional practice when impairment due to mental or physical causes, including chemical and alcohol abuse, affects professional competence. Members seek appropriate professional help for such impairments.

**Respect for Diversity**  
**AAFCS** members respect differences in the abilities and needs of the people with whom they work.  
**AAFCS** members recognize that differences exist among individuals and families and do not discriminate against or patronize others.  
**AAFCS** members obtain education, training, and experience to provide competent services to persons of diverse backgrounds or persuasions.  
**AAFCS** members conduct research relating to the uniqueness of individuals and families.  
**AAFCS** members utilize and present subject matter in such a way as to recognize and develop appreciation of diversity.

**Scholarship and Research**  
**AAFCS** members conduct, utilize, and report research using recognized research procedures and facilitate professional standards for the respective research foci.  
**AAFCS** members secure review and approval of research designs by knowledgeable professionals consistent with standards used by institutional review boards.  
**AAFCS** members, as part of research efforts, secure review of research designs by knowledgeable professionals not directly involved in the investigation.  
**AAFCS** members secure the informed consent of research participants based on disclosure of the research design and potentially harmful effects of participation. Investigators are especially sensitive to consent among at-risk and protected populations.  
**AAFCS** members honor individuals' choice to decline participation or withdraw at any time from research studies.  
**AAFCS** members acknowledge through publication credit and other avenues the efforts and contributions of others to research activities.  
**AAFCS** members are obliged to take steps to ensure that their research findings are accurately and clearly understood by consumers.

**Confidentiality**  
**AAFCS** members maintain and guard the confidentiality of persons with whom they have professional relationships.

**Conflict of Interest**  
**AAFCS** members avoid conflicting roles and take active steps to prevent and avoid exploitation of the individuals with whom they work.  
**AAFCS** members assume responsibility for fair treatment of consumers, other professionals, and individuals and/or families.  
**AAFCS** members make financial arrangements with clients, third-party payers, and supervisors that conform to commonly accept professional practices and that are easily understood by all populations served.  
**AAFCS** members report truthfully all professional services rendered.

**Responsibility to the Profession**  
**AAFCS** members support the objectives of the American Association of Family and Consumer
Sciences and contribute to Association roles and development through active, informed participation.  
**AAFCS** members advance public awareness and understanding of the Association and its mission.  
**AAFCS** members respect the rights and responsibilities of peers.  
**AAFCS** members devote time and energy to public policy issues and to the public good.  
**AAFCS** members speak on behalf of the Association in ways consistent with the directives and policies of the Association Board of Directors.  
**AAFCS** members utilize the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences logo only in ways approved by the Association Board of Directors.
APPENDIX C

HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH COMMITTEE APPROVAL
DATE: January 26, 2006

TO: Enas Sarour

FROM: Dianne Anderson, IRB Co-Chair

RE: IRB ID # 06-006
STUDY REVIEW DATE: January 26, 2006

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed the project, "Understanding Critical Science Approach Through Moral Development: Grounded Theory" requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). The applicable exemption category is provided below for your information. Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review by the IRB. Only the IRB may make the determination of exemption, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.

The IRB determination of exemption means that this project does not need to meet the requirements from the Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS) regulations for the protection of human subjects, unless required by the IRB. We do, however, urge you to protect the rights of your participants in the same ways that you would if your project was required to follow the regulations. This includes providing relevant information about the research to the participants.

Because your project is exempt, you do not need to submit an application for continuing review. However, you must carry out the research as proposed in the IRB application, including obtaining and documenting (signed) informed consent if you have stated in your application that you will do so or required by the IRB.

Any modification of this research must be submitted to the IRB on a Continuation and/or Modification form, prior to making any changes, to determine if the project still meets the Federal criteria for exemption. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an IRB proposal will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

cc: Cheryl Hausafus
AESHM

Applicable exemption category(s):
ORC 04-21-04
(1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

(3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, if: (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) Federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

(4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

(5) Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of Department or Agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i) Public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.

(6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
ISU NEW HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH FORM

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Principal Investigator (PI): Enas O. Sarour
Phone: 515-572-4555  Fax: 515-572-4555

Degrees: PhD

Department: Apparel, Educational Studies and Hospitality Management

Center/Institute: Iowa State University
College: Human Science

PI Level: [ ] Faculty  [ ] Staff  [ ] Postdoctoral  [x] Graduate Student  [ ] Undergraduate Student

English Language: [x] English  [ ] Spanish  [ ] Chinese  [ ] Other

Title of Project: Understanding critical science approach through moral development: Grounded theory

Project Period (Include Start and End Date): [01/15/2006] to [06/01/2007]

FOR STUDENT PROJECTS

Name of Major Professor/Supervising Faculty:
Dr. Cheryl Hausafus
Phone: (515) 294-5307

Department: Apparel, Educational Studies and Hospitality Management

Campus Address: 31 MacKay Hall, Ames, IA 50011-1120
Email Address: haus@iastate.edu

Signature & Title: [ ] Professor [ ] Co-Principal Investigator

Type of Project: (check all that apply)
[ ] Research  [ ] Thesis  [x] Dissertation  [ ] Class project

[ ] Independent Study (490, 590, Honors project)  [ ] Other. Please specify:

KEY PERSONNEL

List all members and relevant experience of the project personnel. This information is intended to inform the committee of the training and background related to the specific procedures that the each person will perform on the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME &amp; DEGREE(S)</th>
<th>SPECIFIC DUTIES ON PROJECT</th>
<th>TRAINING &amp; EXPERIENCE RELATED TO PROCEDURES PERFORMED, DATE OF TRAINING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enas Sarour</td>
<td>Principal Investigator</td>
<td>Hum. Subj: 09/04/2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl Hausafus</td>
<td>Major Professor</td>
<td>Hum. Subj: 09/19/2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FUNDING INFORMATION

Research Compliance 04/10/03
APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
(Date), 2006

Dear Family and Consumer Sciences Education students,

As a family and consumer science education major planning to become a classroom teacher, you are invited to participate in my doctoral research. This research will focus on teacher candidates’ descriptions and interpretations of the lived experience in regard to social action as a key component in critical science.

This study attempts to take a step toward formulating a substantive theory that would disclose how teacher candidates learn in a critical science based environment. The specific objectives are to: determine teacher candidates’ preexisting knowledge/beliefs of social injustice, describe ways teacher candidates construct their understanding of social injustice, explore relationships teacher candidates form between their moral self-understanding and their perception of the critical science approach as a teaching/learning process. Data will be collected through group and individual interviews, document analysis (i.e. journals and portfolios) and selective field observation.

You are invited to participate because your insights are assumed to be a rich source of data for the above mentioned goals. I encourage you to be open and honest and to freely share your experiences. Any information obtained from you or about you in connection with this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission, as permitted by law. You are not obligated to participate in this study, and your decision will not affect your relationship with your program. Furthermore, if you decide to participate, you may stop at any time without penalty or prejudice.

I believe your identity as a professional family and consumer sciences soon-to-be teacher will be enhanced by participating in this study. There is no personal benefit to you, there are no risks of participating in this study because you have the right not to answer a question that you do not feel comfortable sharing and you will not be exposed to any treatment methods.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided on this form, it has been explained to you, you have been offered a copy of this form to keep, you have been given an opportunity to ask questions about this form, your questions have been answered, and you agree to participate in this research.

Thank you very much for your consideration. Please, sign if you decide to participate and return this form in the provided envelope by (date) 2006. I appreciate your cooperation and willingness to participate in this study.

Sincerely,

Enas Sarour

_____________________________     ________________
Signature of participant                    Date
APPENDIX E

FIRST FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
Iowa State University
Family and Consumer Sciences Education
College of Human Sciences

The moral agency of family and consumer sciences teacher candidates:
A grounded theory
Enas Sarour

Agenda for first focus group interview

Interviewees: 13 students from FCEDS 413 class
Date: February 21st, 2006
Approximate length of time: Time allotted to each individual session. See below.
Supervisor: Dr. Cheryl Hausafus

Purpose of first focus group interview: Through the description and interpretation of the lived experience and the constructed meaning of Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher Candidates (FCSTCs) in regard to morality and social justice as key components in the critical science approach, this study attempts to initiate a substantive theory (a level of possible reality), that would disclose how FCSTCs learn critical science approach.

The nature of the interview: Open-ended questions, story telling, reflection.

Ground rules: No judgment yes for clarification, comfortable sharing, equal sharing opportunity, respect other opinions, no two individuals are allowed to speak at the same time

Introduction (10 minutes): Serve food, consent form, purpose of the study, purpose of pilot study interview, pseudo student list, concern about self public disclosure, check if they have any question, honesty, Gretchen as a note taker

Interview Questions:
First session (20-25 minutes):
Metaphoric game (Bubbles): Each pair of participants will be provided with a bottle of bubble blower and will be asked to blow few bubbles in the air and then allow her partner to do the same. Then the following reflective questions will be administered:
How do you feel when playing this game?
How would this game be similar to how you view social justice?
How would this game be different to how you view social justice?
What makes something a moral issue?
How would you define good moral behavior?
How would you define bad moral behavior?
Do you remember an occasion where you experienced an unjust situation? What happened?
What did you feel/think/do then?
How, why, where, who, when, and what if questions would be used to follow-up the participants’ responses.
**Second session** (15-20 minutes)
Suppose you are asked to develop a unit on “Child Development”/“Healthy Food”, how would you see justice, truth, and responsibility relate to your work?

Suppose you are asked to teach a unit on moral education, which of the following models would you choose? Why?

**Model one:** Teacher would help students clarify their values and develop their own value system. Students are exposed to discuss theoretical moral problems so each can share his/her opinion about what is right and wrong without transition of societal values and ethics. The teacher expresses no preference toward specific values to avoid any bias in the students’ value reasoning.

**Model two:** Teacher would help students understand specific ethics such as justice, self-control, honesty, practicing charity, obeying lawful authority, etc. through memorable example from history and current life. The teacher expresses strong attitude regarding the significance of these virtues and encourage the students to implement these values in their lives.

**Session three** (30 minutes):
What were some of the ideas and events that had a profound moral impact on your sense of yourself?
Describe an instance of moral change.
What prompted the change?
How did you change?
In what other ways could you have responded to the event that promoted the change? Why did you change in the way in which you did and not in some other way?
How did the change affect your other moral beliefs?
Was the change a morally positive one? Why?

Divide the group randomly into two groups to discuss the above questions for 10 minutes (each group would be audio recoded)
Then the group would come together to share their discussion. (20 minutes)

**More possible questions:**
Ought values to be rationally justified?
Is it possible to deal with FCS related problems without value transition? How?
Ought FCS teachers to intentionally model good value/character?
In a pluralistic society, ought FCS teacher to refrain from emphasizing societal values?

**Closure** (7-10 minute):
Before we close up our interview do you have any further comments or events to share.
Going back to the bubble blowing activity do you see new insights?
Based on the emerged gap in the data, some students would be selected for individual interview for further detailed data.
Express gratitude to the participants and Gretchen.
APPENDIX F

NOTE TAKER FORM: FIRST FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW
The moral agency of family and consumer sciences teacher candidates:

A grounded theory

Enas Sarour

First focus group

Interviewees: 13 students from FCEDS 413 class

Date:

Approximate length of time: Time allotted to each individual session. See below.

First session (20 minutes):

Metaphoric game – Bubble blowing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Unique non-verbal reactions and identify students pseudo names</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel when playing this game?</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Do you remember an occasion where you experienced an unjust situation?</td>
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<td>Question</td>
<td>Response</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>How, why, where, who, when, and what if questions would be used to follow-up the participants’ responses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra question</td>
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</table>
### Second session (20 minutes)

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<tr>
<th>Extra question</th>
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Suppose you are asked to develop a unit on “Child Development”/“Healthy Food”, how would you see justice, truth, and responsibility relate to your work?

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<tr>
<th>Extra questions</th>
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Suppose you are asked to teach a unit on moral education, which of the following models would you choose? Why?

**Model one:** ....

**Model two:** .....
**Session three** (30 minutes):

<table>
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<th>Extra question</th>
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What were some of the ideas and events that had a profound moral impact on your sense of yourself?

Describe an instance of moral change.

What prompted the change?
How did you change?

In what other ways could you have responded to the event that promoted the change?

Why did you change in the way in which you did and not in some other way?

How did the change affect your other moral beliefs?

Was the change a morally positive one? Why?
### More possible questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ought values to be rationally justified?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it possible to deal with FCS related problems without value transition? How?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ought FCS teachers to intentionally model good value/character?</td>
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<tr>
<td>In a pluralistic society, ought FCS teacher to refrain from emphasizing societal values?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra question</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Closure** (7-10 minute):

Before we close up our interview do you have any further comments or events to share?

Going back to the bubble blowing activity do you see new insights?

Extra question
First and Second Focus Group
Interview
Seating Arrangement

Supervisor

Participants

Researcher

Note taker
APPENDIX G

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW
Iowa State University
Family and Consumer Sciences Education
College of Human Sciences

The moral agency of family and consumer sciences teacher candidates:

A grounded theory

Enas Sarour

Agenda for individual interview

Interviewees: Ella and Jasmine
Date: April 10, 2006
Approximate length of time: 50-60 minutes

Purpose of individual interview: In depth data regarding the major themes that emerged from analyzing the first focus group interview.

Purpose of selecting the interviewee: Significant contribution and thoughtful ideas in the first focus group interview

Nature of the interview: Open-ended questions, story telling, reflection.

Interview Questions:
Universal values:
Analyzing the data of the first focus group interview, the concept of universal/global values have emerged. So when you hear the word universal/global values, what comes to your mind?
How do you see these universal values related to your life? Share story or examples.
How would you articulate these values in your classes?
Do you think your universal values affect the way your students learn? How?

Oppression:
Speaking about universal values, do you see the elimination of oppression as one of the universal values? why?
Could you share a story in which you felt oppressed? Or if you do not have one, you can share a story/observation about others who are suffering from oppression.
What do think about those who take the role of an oppressor?
What do think about those who take the role of a victim of oppression?
Could the oppressor be a victim too, how?
How is the language of oppression related to your practicing professional career?
As a FCS candidate teacher, how willing are you to deal with oppression-related issues? and how competent do you think you are to deal with oppression-related issues?
**Justification:**
As I reviewed the information from the first group discussion, I realized that most of the participants agree that value play part in FCS issues? Do you agree?
Share some examples of these values. Do these values need justification? Why? How?
What are the factors that influence value justification?
Do you think values ought to be rationally justified when dealing with FCS related issue?
Why?
Whose justification would be considered? Why?

**Emotional involvement:**
Would you share an incident in which you were emotionally involved?
How do you feel retelling this story? Why?
What factors played role in you emotional involvement?
What factors hinder your emotional involvement?
Could you justify/objectify your emotional attachment? How?
What are some other effect the side effects of your emotional involvement?

**Closure:**
Are there any final comments that you would like to add?
Thanks for your participation, thoughtful ideas, and stories.
I will share my analysis and interpretation with you later.
APPENDIX H

INITIAL CODES
Initial Codes

Ability to collect oppression related information yet not necessarily be able to deliver it
Absence of face value oppression
Accept and acquire a definition of values in dialogue
Acceptance and personal values
Accepting differences is important
Action says more than language
All of what I have learned about oppression is through college
Allows relevant contact leading to a change to be emotionally involved and care about it
Amazed how teacher had not responded to disrespectful student
Approach an oppression situation by classroom discussion
Assumptions and myths uncovered: changes perspectives through communication
At the beginning: self-rejection for new ideas, change, and international perspective
At the beginning: settled with not having to accept ideas just to pass
At the beginning: surprised and overwhelmed by international perspective
Based on maturity level, student needs experience with debating and communicating their beliefs
Became passionate about topic and research tied to LGBT
Beginning stages of understanding and accepting of other perspectives
Being critical is a value
Being grouped makes FCS women oppressed
Believing with no feeling is less powerful than believing and feeling
Blending background and new experiences & exposures towards accepting new ideas/perspectives
Bring to class someone who has past experience with oppression
Bubbles connected represent family
Bubbles connected represent teamwork
Calling foster mother "real" mother -- ok lie
Careful not to persuade students just help them express ideas
Caring is a continuous act regardless the feeling towards the people

Caring person: able to judge how you feel

Certain religions are oppressed

Characteristic of respect: demanding

Characteristic of respect: maturity

Choose to accept family role viewed as oppression by other and some FCS people

Classroom should not have any biases or slang language

Close relationship is the starting point for involvement

Cognitive processing and talking about what is going on help the oppressor to see what they have done

Consider others’ feeling influences own feeling for interaction

Could be passive/quiet about racism, but choose to defend my stance

Could not always follow the golden rule: it is not that simple

Culture indicate how people interact

Cycle of oppression; oppressor can be a victim

Decision to change values learned from parents

Definition of acceptance: value with a degree of gains and losses for the greater

Definition of oppression depends on who is looking at it

Developed a LGBT written guide for high school students

Different views of oppression exist

Discrimination against age, nationality and beliefs as bad moral behavior

Discrimination against major

Discrimination against major as bad moral behavior

Discrimination based on how much money one makes

Discussing issue-related articles would help us be prepared for oppression-related issues

Do not agree about the existence of global value

Do not know if golden rule is universal; women as economic value

Do not know where wanting to learn come from

Educate through awareness: cannot force people to accept
Education is hard, requires time and creativity

Elicit honest responses

Elimination of oppression helps solving other problems

Emotional attachment conditioned by personal involvement

Emotional involvement has a limit

Emotional involvement leads to biases

Emotional person hard to reconcile with contradicting fact

Emotional ties to oppression; both believing and feeling something leads to having a passion about it

Emotions vary among people

Ever-changing oppression

Example given for exceptional situation for lying

Example of bad moral behavior: judging people by making assumptions

Example of bad moral behavior: religious jokes and comments not intended to hurt, Vandalism, involving unjust situation, conscious decision to intentionally hurting someone else

Example of being tolerant: working with younger people

Example of connection or relationship with one who is oppressed; OE: 4th grade friend who was teased about size

Example of disrespect in the Unites States: slavery.

Example of effect of limited thinking: inappropriate use of language

Example of effect of limited thinking: inconsiderate and discriminatory in action towards non-athletes

Example of factors that affect teacher choices: student rolling their eyes

Example of global values: not stealing, helping, being nice and smile

Example of golden rule:

Example of grandmother's experience of oppression

Example of personal experience of exposure to diversity

Examples of how prejudgment hinder finding common things with others

Examples of leading by example

Examples of ok lie and not ok lie

Examples of parents as role model for self-respect
Expectation for respect based on gender
Exposure to diversity and acceptance are important
Factors that affect teacher choice: the impact of misbehavior/disrespect on others
Faculty act as role models leaving their social lives out of the classroom
Faculty benefit from hearing students talking about oppression
Family members pass down personal prejudices
Family related to global value
FCS students are oppressed by those who reject or don't accept our potential
FCS as a fall-back option
FCS educators can be seen as being oppressed
FCS teachers are not smart because of FCS major
Feeling discriminated against because of her gender
Feels bad if parents disappointed in behavior
First reaction to oppression is with disgust
Female can hurt female with words
Female cannot hurt a male with words
Female end up suffering from male disrespect
Female fighting female is fun and like a sport
Female have more tolerance for male disrespecting them
Freedom related to global value
Frustrated because of a racist friend
Frustration because people's limited thinking affects others
Fun is not necessary in classroom
Fun is relative
Give respect to get it
Global values as common/general themes that would be found everywhere
Global values difficult to define because different cultures
Golden rule as global value but necessarily happened globally
Golden rule hard to follow: many factors influence
Golden rule is good to follow yet not always followed
Golden rule is not a conscious effort
Good moral behavior is not insulting others personal beliefs
Good moral behavior is not intentionally causing harm to another
Good moral behavior is standing by your beliefs
Good reason for not being honest: disclosing personal information
Grades as benefit from involving in diversity-related activity
Gradually incorporate more information and be a role model
Grandmother lacks self confidence because of past treatment
Involved emotional attachment
Habit vs. conscious choice: from attending charge w/ family to discovering your own value
Halaqa: initially motivated by grades but gained personal satisfaction
Having students work with the side they do not believe in to help them understand how these beliefs originate
Having the intention to respect allows you to assume respect is given to the receiver
Hearing the other side shows that we were not given all the information
Helping someone is an example of good moral behavior
Helping the less fortunate is an example of good moral behavior
Helping victims using coping mechanism
Hitting someone and denying it -- it is bad.
Holding against because just part of being a women (personal identity)
Hollow feeling or helpless feeling about the victim of oppression as in FCEDS 421 \ the intention to do something for the victim
I do not think my college experience has prepared me enough to deal w/oppression
I need to understand and research more about oppression
If you make fun of me, I should, too
Important to have students think about oppression-related issues and offer examples
Important to teach about inappropriate behavior, hurting another's feelings
In some places values equal laws
Inability of the oppressed to reconcile negative past experience and thus becomes oppressor
Injustice has greater effects
Interested in effects on students because of how personally affected
Introduce differences in classroom setting
Introducing diversity example: pictures in classroom in first day
It is a shame that we have only 2 international-based courses
It is easier to be tolerant than to react
It is hard for everyone to have the same view
It is hard to justify feeling so they believe it
It is hard to respect those who did not respect me
It is hard to think from another person's perspective
It is not fair to judge other's feeling
It is smart not to start something with a guy
Just person: able to make fair judgment
Justice in classroom: be current and up to date with different terminology, speak w/ students personally and find out their feeling, find their preferences instead of assuming something
Justice in classroom: do not ignore their beliefs
Justice in classroom: do not judge their opinions and beliefs
Justice in classroom: do not play favoritism
Justice in classroom: encourage students to share their beliefs and don't smash their ideas into yours
Justice in the classroom: it is hard to have non-biased curriculum
Justice in classroom: no discrimination against race, gender, SES
Justice in classroom: providing different options and the same opportunities for performance, And make sure the students understand things before assessment
Justice in classroom: set ground rule, respect
Justice in classroom: teach students and others about different ideas regardless personal choices
Justice in classroom: understand the students' various backgrounds, refraining from using terminology that is not widely known
Justify myself to disrespect using eye by eye reasoning
Know that we can learn a lot from others but personally do not care
Lack of human quality (sympathy, empathy) as factor within the oppressor
Lack of trust in FCS professionals as a source of oppression
Language use can be oppressive from a stranger but not from friend
Laws exist; not ones who decide about yourself
Learn from dialogue
Learn from others for self benefit
Learning about oppression is nothing if I do not see it and communicate back
Learning to be accepting of others for the sake of learning
Learning self respect: respect starts at home, young age
Learning self-respect: start at home
LGBT topics of oppression researched not found in antidiscrimination handbook in particular high schools
Limit of emotional involvement depends on handling and comfortable levels
Little diversity in FCS Faculty
Looking at values from a different perspective
Looks at family as a system like employee roles, not oppressive role
Making students feel that it's ok to choose their careers, including homemaking and going back to their homes
Male on male not defined as disrespect
Males are more intimidated than female
Many ways to be tolerant
Maturity as it relates to moral education
Men receive more respect in classroom
Model 1 for high school: confrontation is not always bad
Model 1: develop tolerance as they listen to each other
Model 1: need to mediate so it doesn't get out of hand
Model 1: sharing opinions back and forth may change some views and help understand better
Model 1: start a confrontation between two different believers, out of hand very fast
Coach discriminatory behavior is justified by limited exposure to differences
Model 2: allows saying personal opinion so students can do the same

Model 2 for middle school students

Moral and personal change: based on the reaction of a stigmatized friend, attitude and behavior change

Moral and personal change: family experience helps see the purpose of driving law

Moral and personal change: friend's horrible experience lead to awareness and attitude and behavior change

Moral and personal change: look at things differently as a consequence of moral experience

Moral and personal change: sharing issues with a friend lead to awareness, acceptance and behavioral change

Moral and personal change: think about and question the past | moral reflection

Moral and personal change: watching racism experience of others in community change attitude and behavior

Moral change perceived as positive while acknowledging that other might view it differently

Moral influenced by siblings, teachers, and friends

Moral influenced by parents, friends and own experience

Moral issues are facts and something that is debated

Morals and values influenced by parents

Morals are lessons learned from doing things

Morals influenced by challenges

More emotions lead to more argument about the issue

More information change perspective

More stereotyping than oppression especially in the media for American women

Naive, do not know enough to speak for others

Need diversity to survive, express ideas, and be able to go anywhere with own beliefs

Need vocabulary of oppression

Never fight back with a guy

No definite answer with moral issue, people feel different about different things

No diversity in my future class so no need to teach diversity

No diversity in past school experience: small town, farm, Christian white background

No global experience except from college

No individual country knows universal values
No need to lie about trivial things
No personal experience with being oppressed
No universal definition of oppression
Non-caring person: has no regard for receiver feeling or well-being
Not all educated people can understand and be sympathetic
Not possible to get agreement on one definition
Not sure of current stage for teaching and accepting
Normally something happens that changes the way we think
Offers story of boyfriend and differences in religion and passions
Oppression by doing traditional work
Oppression factor
Oppression in football and volleyball teams exist
Oppression is something that is against their will, and clearly not happy with
Oppression issue is not written in most curriculum; only touched in history
Oppression not always what it seems
Oppression perspective and views change as we learn to ask questions
Oppressor can be a victim
Oppressors have a lot of prejudice, hurt, pain and trauma somewhere
Oppressors lack knowledge, understanding, and empathy
Others follow the lead of the oppressor
Others follow the lead of oppressor, i.e. people who is making fun of others
Parents once received letters about sex education in class; similar should exist for moral behavior
Pedagogy and classroom
People are diverse
People come from different places but all want the same thing
People have different color yet have the same thing in them
People’s opinions vary about what a lie is
Person making fun of others is made fun of by others
Personal choice kills others even if you value life
Personal choice you can value it but choose not to follow it
Personal example of relationship by the oppressed: 4th grade friend who was considered bigger
Personal support from family helps
Personal traits as a cause of oppression
Personally learned to increase actions each day
Personally hate change and my family too
Perspective and believes change over time
Perspective change after watching a video
Perspective related to oppression change as you learn
Popular kids start making fun of others
Questioning the disrespectful behavior
Reaction after the first disrespect: lose trust from the receiver
Reaction after the first disrespect: negative image constructed, perceive future behavior as similar
Reaction depends on situation and place and gender: intoxicated affect how we react
Reaction depends on situation and place: intoxicated more courageous, alone more fearful/ careful
Reaction to guy disrespect: there is no cattiness behind it
Reaction to disrespect: feel irritated
Reaction to disrespect: is disrespectful too
Reaction to disrespect: reacts more to male disrespect
Reaction to disrespect depends on situation: put up with disrespectful group
Reaction to disrespected reflect/ search for reason
Reaction to disrespecting: close yourself off, just stop talking, or get aside
Reacts more to male disrespect
Regardless the efforts to make everything equal, reality is not always equal
Relates farm life and FCS major as something others might see as oppression, can sometimes be oppressive
Religion as an example of moral issue
Religion: people value it differently based on culture
Respect definition varies among cultures

Respect feels good and makes you feel comfortable

Respect has to be natural

Respect in classroom: choose your battles

Respect in classroom: how to choose your battle and approach/response to a situation

Respect in classroom: setting boundaries, boundaries accepted by the teacher and students

Respect is a broad category; anything can fit into respect

Respect is an absolute value

Respect is assumed and disrespect changes/impacts feeling

Respect is global value, yet at least ones we did not respect others

Respect related to global value

Respected in sheltered experience

Respond/react based on other's behavior

Responsible characteristics: very defined about what should and should not do, conducting the self at work and doing the expectation of others and self

Responsibility depends on own values: self expectation probably the highest value

Responsibility examples: ensuring kids safety

Responsibility examples: meeting self-expectation, caring and fairness

Responsibility in classroom: offer students opportunities to respond

Responsibility in classroom: teacher not necessarily agree with but support the minority, it is ok to express their opinions with no ramification

Responsibility in classroom: teachers need to continually research and learn about other possibilities

Responsibility: honest about the information one shares; not sugar coating truth

Rules of respect: listen, recognize others opinion and not judging them, tolerance and respect

Scary to teach students who have no idea about issues of oppression

Search for age related information

Seeing accomplishable actions: become discouraged for not doing the action in a good way

Seeing accomplishable actions: more willing to try

Seeing actions from an individual can impact others: change comes from individuals
Seeing not experiencing oppression
Selfishness is a human nature; can be helpful in the long run
Setting a good example as a preventive way of inappropriate behavior
Share concrete example with name
Share examples sweat shops in Egypt
Shared feeling helps to relate to others
Shares story about group member’s sister and own uncle who were gay
Sharing duties lead to conflicting ideas
Sharing opinions is beneficial
Significance of parents talking to children about moral behavior
Small town people not receptive of new ideas
Smiling as a global experience; receiving smile has a positive feeling
Social justice changes are predictable
Social justice is not easy task and not always a pleasant
Social justice offers equality, patience, and being gentle
Some people are just mean. You just have to be ok with yourself
Some people tolerate to avoid confrontation
Sometimes people will let you know if you are disrespectful or if they feel disrespected
Start to be aware of oppression by acknowledging not seeing oppression
Story about BMB; shocked by comment from elderly couple
Story of BMB; female factory worker
Student impression of teachers
Students are happy because they know what they need to know
Students are not mature enough to make their rules
Students should feel safe and respected at school
Students unaware locally and globally
Teacher responsibility: know all what is going in the world, teachers can’t teach everything because of time
Teacher responsibility: to know when they are not the right person to teach a specific lesson
Teacher value should show through behavior/action in and outside the school

Teachers have to continue carrying authoritative manner

Teachers should take care in the language they use

Teachers should teach students how to think of their action in relation to others' action

Teaching respect is difficult for young teachers

Tendency to believe what we hear at the beginning

Tendency to think our way is the right way

The care giver reaction to the receiver is hopefully beneficial

The language of oppression is not something that passes the mind of high school students

The need to learn about diversity before accepting it

Time to teach about rules is at the beginning

To offend someone disrespecting me, it will be double

To protect the feeling of a friend from racism, I am being racist

Tolerance as related to respect

Tolerance: make decision about how and when to react

Tolerance toward people who know they are upsetting you and they do not quit

Too much emotional involvement consumes your life

Tradition and men sometimes take the role of oppressors

Truth defined as having an option

Truth defined: facts and feeling

Truth defined: more scientific fact, more reality, correct, can be supported, something not subject to opinion

Truth defined: some believe in individual truth others in absolutism

Truth example: different truth about the ones of god

Truth example: religion is a gray area in truth

Truth example: viewing abortion differently

Truth in the classroom: not everyone has same definition

Truth in the classroom: talk about all aspects of as situation not hide things

Truth/ honesty can be controversial
Twelfth graders cannot handle too much info about oppression-related information

Understanding others because of shared experience

Universal value might exist but not followed by everyone

Unintended oppression: person becomes oppressor subconsciously

Using both models: start with presenting the basic ethics then allow students to reflect on them

Using emotion and feeling and imagination technique to help the oppressor see action

Using personal experience as example of oppression

Value but not follow: family

Value but not follow: religion

Value justification through the way of living

Volunteerism is a good example of caring but better ex. is caring for friends

Ways to teach: videos, passing out information

We are not a faultless country by any means

We are not taught values/views, rather we make our choices

We facilitate oppression by the way we deal with teenage pregnancy, divorce and LGBT issues

We lack faculty who question and challenge us

We prejudice in our society so it is hard to find something in common

We value freedom because we have it

When student is respectful it is hard to present unbiased information because of personal disagreement

Whether we choose our traditional work at home, we are oppressed by some FCS women with feminist views

Who should have the value is different among people

With high school students start w/ tolerance then move to respect and showing respect

With justice sometimes you work hard but fail

Without self-respect you disrespect others

Women as oppressed; men and those who are accepting are the oppressors

Work from the ground level to minimize disrespect

Young teachers have to be tough to get respect

Your values are impacted by people you trust
APPENDIX I

CATEGORIES
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APPENDIX J

SECOND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW AGENDA
The moral agency of family and consumer sciences teacher candidates:

A grounded theory

Enas Sarour

Agenda for the second focus group interview

Interviewee: 13 students from FCEDS 413 class
Date: April 20, 2006
Note taker: Gretchen
Supervisor: Dr. Cheryl Hausafus

Purpose: This second focus group interview is built on the emerged themes from the first focus group interview as well as the selected individual interviews. Open and selected coding was used to determine the focus our discussion today.

Nature of the interview: Open-ended questions, story telling, and reflection will be the focus of the interview methodology.

Direction: Since this is a semi-structured interview, I will start with the questions I prepared at the same time I will go with the flow of your discussion to a certain degree.

Ground rules: No judgment yes for clarification, comfortable sharing, equal sharing opportunity, respect other opinions, no two speak at the same time.

Interview Questions:

Respect:
Respect is found to be one of the common themes that emerged from my analysis and today I would like to investigate it more in detail.

How does it feel like when you are respecting others (individual or group)?
What are something that comes to mind when you are respecting others? Stories, examples
How do you know when you are respecting others?

Let’s switch gears now
How does it feel like when you are respected by others?
What are something that comes to mind when you are respected by others? Stories, examples?
How do you know when you are respected by others?

Now I would like to speak about respect in the educational setting
So what comes to mind when you hear respect, teaching and learning?
Universal values:
Analyzing the data, the concept of universal/global values has emerged by few. So when you hear the word universal/global values, what comes to your mind? So would you agree with the existence of universal values? What do you think of when it comes to a common definition of these universal values? Why? Examples Would different definition of these values affect its universality? How?

Oppression:
Our last concept today will be related to injustice… Does injustice touch your life? How, when and where? Could you describe a situation where you as a FCS candidate teacher would be able to deal with an oppression-related issue? Examples, experience, stories …

Closure:
Before we close up our interview do you have any further comments or relative events to share?

I might need to contact some of you and have a phone interview for about 30 minutes during the summer. So if you would be willing and available for phone interview in this summer, please put your contact information in the provided sheet. Use the comment area for specific consideration.

Express gratitude to the participants’ thoughtful ideas and honesty. Special thank to Gretchen and Dr. Hausafus.
APPENDIX K

NOTE TAKER FORM: SECOND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW
The moral agency of family and consumer sciences teacher candidates:

A grounded theory

Enas Sarour

Second Focus Group

Note taker: Gretchen
Supervisor: Dr. Cheryl Hausafus
Interview Questions:

Respect: Respect is found to be one of the common themes that emerged from my analysis and today I would like to investigate it more in detail.

How does it feel like when you are respecting others (individual or group)?

What are something that comes to mind when you are respecting others? Stories, examples

How do you know when you are respecting others?

Let’s switch gears now
How does it feel like when you are respected by others?
What are something that comes to mind when you are respected by others? Stories, examples

How do you know when you are respected by others?

*Now I would like to speak about respect in the educational setting.*

So what comes to mind when you hear respect, teaching and learning?

*Universal values:* Analyzing the data, the concept of universal/global values has emerged by few.

So when you hear the word universal/global values, what comes to your mind?
So would you agree with the existence of universal values?

What do you think of when it comes to a common definition of these universal values? Why? Examples

Would different definition of these values affect its universality? How?

**Oppression:** Our last concept today will be related to injustice…
Does injustice touch your life? How, when and where?

Could you describe a situation where you as a FCS candidate teacher would be able to deal with an oppression-related issue? Examples, experience, stories …
Closure:
Before we close up our interview do you have any further comments or relative events to share?

I might need to contact some of you and have a phone interview for about 30 minutes during the summer. So if you would be willing and available for phone interview in this summer, please put your contact information in the provided sheet. Use the comment area for specific consideration.

Express gratitude to the participants’ thoughtful ideas and honesty. Special thank to Gretchen and Dr. Hausafus.
APPENDIX L

SECOND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW
The moral agency of family and consumer sciences teacher candidates:

A grounded theory

Enas Sarour

Agenda for second set of individual interview

Interviewee: Belle
Date: August 3, 2006
Approximate length of time: 50-60 minutes

Purpose of second set of individual interview: To bridge the gap between the discrepancies of past research and current discrepancies, to construct meaning regarding the emergent themes as they appear in the possible question section.

Reason for selecting the interviewee: Participates the least in the focus group interview, brought the idea of not following what we value.

The nature of the interview: Using open ended questions to foster reflective and story-telling environment.

Interview Questions:
Reciprocity:
In terms of your interpersonal relationship, what does reciprocity mean to you? Example or story.

Golden rule: do to others as you want them to do to you
What do you think about it? Or what does it mean to you? Do you have any stories related to this?

Tolerance:
What does tolerance mean to you? Tell me a time when you had to offer tolerance or be tolerant or even find yourself not being tolerant?

Oppression
From your experience how do you know that he/she/a certain group is being oppressed? Can you remember a time when you felt like the oppressed? From your experience how do you know that he/she/a certain group is the oppressor? Can you remember a time when you felt like the oppressor?

Justice:
How do you recognize justice or someone being just?
How do you recognize injustice or someone being unjust?

**Care about others:**
How would you describe someone who is caring about others? Examples or stories
How would you describe someone who is not caring about others? Examples or stories
Can you remember a time when you really felt that you doing something because you are caring about others? Or can you recall a story in which you find yourself involved in caring about others?
Can you share with me a situation in which you find yourself not caring about others?

**Responsibility:**
How would you describe someone who is responsible?
How would you describe someone who is not responsible?
Can you share a story where you felt that you are responsible? Irresponsible?

**Modeling/Model behavior:**
What do you consider to be model behavior for teacher?
Would you be willing to share a story about a teacher you had that was a good role model? And why?

**Closure:**
Ask the interviewee for final comments; answer any questions she might have.
Thank Katie; send her an appreciation email letter.

**Belle’s quotes:**
“Even though there may be universal values, not everyone follows them. You can value something, but still choose not follow it.”
“You could value something but still choose not to…I don’t know, it’s just personal choice.”
REFERENCES


