MORAL IDENTITY, IMPLICIT THEORY, AND MORAL BEHAVIOR: UNTANGLING THE WEB OF CONNECTED CHARACTERISTICS IN STUDENT CONDUCT

by

Jessica L. Ledbetter

Bachelor of Arts Economics, 2001
Hillsdale College
Hillsdale, Michigan

Juris Doctor, 2004
University of Kansas School of Law
Lawrence, Kansas

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

College of Education

Texas Christian University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Education

May 2021

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2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart" (Deuteronomy 6:6, English Standard Version).

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he mediates day and night" (Psalm 1:1-2, English Standard Version).

I am blessed to have a solid and firm foundation in the Lord which is the source of my own internalized and symbolized moral identity. Through my relationship with Christ and as I have read and studied God's word, I have come to understand that my own moral identity is inherently tied to the Lord. His commandments are written on my heart, and as I continue to study scripture and grow in my faith, my moral identity is strengthened by my desire to serve Him and fulfill those commands.

Over the years, I have often wondered about the development of the moral identity of college students. What characteristics and external forces impact who they see themselves to be morally? And how does that influence the behavior choices they make, especially as those actions impact others? Why do they make the moral choices they do? It is this curiosity and my own journey which inspired this project and my research interests in student conduct and moral identity.

I would like to recognize the following individuals for their contributions to, and support of, this dissertation project:

❖ **My dissertation committee –** I am grateful for the assistance of my dissertation committee, who, despite the pandemic and the busyness it generated, carved out time to read and provide feedback as I moved through the dissertation process. **Dr. Kathy Cavins-Tull:** Thank you for providing a living example of the importance of prioritizing and staying connected to the students we serve, no matter the level of administrative position held. I love how you continue to take students to lunch, support their interests, and push them to grow and development each day. **Dr. Angie Taylor:** I am grateful for your willingness early on, to meet and talk about dissertation ideas, and then to serve on my committee as my survey and methods expert. I learned so much from you about the development of a strong survey sample and the use of technology to help with the research/assessment process. I appreciate that our time together was never without humor, which made working with you so fun. **Dr. Don Mills:** I will never forget our first meeting in your office in the fall of 2016, when I was considering an application to the doctoral program. Even then you were encouraging and supportive, helping me draw connections between my experiences and my academic abilities and interests. Since then, you have challenged my thinking through deep theoretical conversations, helped grow my practical experience, and participated in many shared memories during our unforgettable trip abroad. Thank you for giving so much of yourself to this program and its students, and for helping shape the professional I have become. **Dr. Brandy Quinn:** From my experience in your introductory methods class in the spring of 2018, I knew that you would have much to teach me about academic research. Your ability to connect theory to my research ideas has been an invaluable asset during this dissertation process, and I know that this project is stronger because of your contributions. I appreciate how you have empowered me to shape and complete my own project while providing direction and support when I needed it most. And I am grateful that through this

dissertation, we have had the pleasure of developing a friendship. I will miss getting routine Micah updates during our advising meetings. Thank you for your support, service, and encouragement as my dissertation advisor.

❖ **My doctoral "cohort" – Chris, Danyelle, Eric, Kyle, Lori, Mel, Mike, and Sara:** Thank you for always providing me with the encouragement to keep going, often humorously. My writing days were much more bearable and productive knowing you were all just a click or call away. I hope we can keep the happy hours going, but perhaps, meeting face-to-face more regularly again soon.

❖ **Higher Ed Study Abroad 2019 friends:** What an incredible and profound experience! Thank you for contributing to such an extraordinary trip; I will forever cherish the lessons learned and the memories we shared together.

❖ **Sara Sorenson and Danyelle Ackall:** I am grateful for the two weeks we spent together in Europe– so many laughs, so much beauty, so many memories! I will never think of a carpet (or hotel) party the same way again. Thank you both for your unwavering support and care over the past four years; it has been such a blessing.

❖ **Dr. Mike Russel:** Thank you for always showing such immense confidence in my abilities and allowing me to try new things, taking on bigger and bigger projects. I have learned so much by observing your work firsthand over the past few years and grown from our many academic and practice-focused conversations. Your passion to support and grow our college students is both inspirational and aspirational. I am blessed that you have not only been my supervisor, but also my good friend.

❖ **Crystal Page:** Our friendship came into my life at a time when I did not even realize how much I needed it. Your endless and consistent encouragement over the past few years has

provided much-needed empathy, motivation, care, joy, and laughter. Thank you, dear friend, for walking this journey with me.

- ❖ **Dr. Karen Bell-Morgan:** From our first meeting, I knew without a doubt that you would have a profound impact on me and on the completion of this degree. Working with you has grown my skills and understanding of how we can and should, care for our students. Our time working together has been a joy and blessing, while challenging and sharpening my thinking. Your dedication and kindness are an enduring legacy that will have a lasting impact on not only our students, but on my professional career. Thank you for teaching me the importance of balancing care and concern with challenge and empowerment; you strike that difficult balance beautifully.
- ❖ **Dr. Jamie Dulle:** Thank you for inspiring me to reach new heights in the work I do and to know that even when faced with the impossible, we can still make an impact. Though you are not physically here to celebrate this accomplishment with me, you will forever live in my memory as one of the most dedicated, loving, kind, and mission-focused student affairs professionals I have ever known. I miss you so much, sweet friend.
- ❖ **My Pi Beta Phi sisters:** I am so grateful to have the support of many Pi Phi sisters, near and far, who have faithfully inquired about my doctoral studies and dissertation project over the past several years. So many have sent encouraging messages and celebrated with me during this journey. Specifically, I would like to thank the entire **Region 3 Pi Phi Team** who has been a continual source of support, even offering to take on a few extra tasks on my behalf so I could carve out space to finish my comprehensive exams and/or dissertation. I am forever grateful for their encouragement. And I am especially thankful for my dear sister and long-time friend, **Melissa Colvin**, for her ongoing words of affirmation, and willingness to provide encouragement

when I was tired and ready to give up; thank you for seeing me through this program and so many other phases of my life. Your friendship is a source of joy and stability.

❖ **My parents, Zdeněk and Janice Donda:** I am so grateful that I was raised by parents who consistently instilled within me the importance of education and lifelong learning. You sacrificed and worked tirelessly to provide for my education and my interests through the years, helping me to become a well-rounded woman with a deep appreciation for the liberal arts. Thank you, too, for your practical support, always being willing to watch the girls while I was in class and serving as their taxi driver for their many activities. I greatly appreciate your continual support and care no matter my age.

❖ **My sweet girls – Sydney and Kira:** You have continually served as my cheerleaders throughout this doctoral process. You have given me space to read and write when needed, offered words and hugs of encouragement, asked about my progress, and shared in my incremental successes, even when you did not fully understand what we were celebrating. I appreciate that, despite your ages, you strived to understand the importance of this project and degree, and willingly sacrificed so I could achieve this goal. Though I missed many family dinners, a few concerts, and several other kiddo events along the way, you never made me feel guilty; instead, you recognized the importance of what I was working toward. Neither of you will ever know how much your cards, pictures, and words of affirmation and praise pushed me onward, especially in my darkest and most stressful moments when I felt like giving up. I am grateful that the Lord chose me to be your mommy. I love you both so much and am so proud of the women you are becoming!

❖ **My incredible husband, Andrew:** I do not know how I even begin to recognize all that you have done to contribute to this degree and to this dissertation project. From the practical –

running kids here and there and everywhere; cooking and cleaning up from dinners in my absence on myriad evenings; taking on countless extra household chores and tasks to give me room to work; and the list goes on – to the academic – discussing theoretical ideas which helped shape the research questions of this dissertation; taking the time and effort to teaching me the statistical methods required to complete the data analysis; providing me with your interaction effect spreadsheet to create some of the figures for this project; proofreading and providing essential feedback on my chapter drafts; and so much more, you have been essential every step of the way. But even more than contributing those important pieces of the dissertation puzzle, I have been blessed by your unwavering love and support. From day one, you have affirmed your belief in my abilities to successfully earn this degree and write this dissertation, even when I doubted myself. Your words of encouragement and acts of service have truly been a physical manifestation of Christ in my life over these past several years, just as you continue to love me as Christ loved the church throughout our marriage of 16 years. You truly are a good and perfect gift from the Lord. I love you, Andrew!

In Hebrews 12:1-3, the Lord reminds us of the great cloud of witnesses who surround and encourage us to run the race the Lord has set before us, while looking to Jesus who triumphed over sin and death. Throughout this doctoral and dissertation process, I have continued to find reassurance from that great cloud of Christian witnesses that has gone before. I have also felt the Lord's continual love, support, and encouragement to continue moving forward in the Lord's perfect will from the many friends and family He has placed in my life.

Lord, you consistently provide for my needs beyond what I could ever ask or think, giving me the power, grace, and strength to run the race you have marked out for me. This

project is yours, just as my life is yours. In Philippians 2:3-4, you remind us: "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others" (English Standard Version). Thank you for regularly laying this verse on my heart. It is this verse that has spurned me onward to complete this project and ultimately, this doctorate. As a professional, may I never forget the importance of counting others more significant than myself.

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ABSTRACT

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Jessica L. Ledbetter

Doctor of Education, 2021
Texas Christian University
Fort Worth, Texas

Brandy Quinn, Ph.D., Associate Professor

Student misconduct continues to trouble institutions, negatively affecting institutional mission fulfillment. Although student codes of conduct and related processes exist to establish standards and address behavioral concerns, little research has proactively explored what characteristics impact student moral behavior intentions and understanding, and how these characteristics influence student perceptions of these code practices.

This dissertation investigates the extent to which student moral mindset, moral identity internalization and symbolization, and the interaction of internalization and symbolization predict (a) moral behavior intentions toward common areas of student misconduct, (b) communal consciousness in making moral behavior decisions, and (c) student code of conduct perspectives. Through a conditional process model analysis (Hayes, 2013), the findings of this study indicate that moral identity internalization is a key mediator between student moral mindset and both moral behavior intentionality and communal consciousness outcomes. In some cases, moral identity symbolization moderated the impact of internalization on the moral behavior outcomes investigated. Patterns for intended substance use outcomes differed substantially from those

found for the other behavioral intent variables explored. Similarly, moral identity internalization mediated the relationship between student moral mindset and student consideration of code of conduct policies in behavior decisions, yet no such association emerged for how students evaluate the code of conduct. These findings provide a foundation for further research and theory in this area. Practically, higher education administrators can use these results to engage creative solutions and programming across the curriculum, both inside and outside the classroom, to help prevent student misconduct before it begins.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Although inappropriate student conduct is certainly disruptive to the learning environment on college campuses, these incidents present unique opportunities for higher education administrators to connect personally and directly with students. Research has found that student-administrator interactions can open the door to moral development when there is appropriate planning and conduct administrator engagement (Mullane, 1999). In fact, when properly constructed, the student conduct process (SCP) has the power to nurture and facilitate student learning (Stimpson & Janosik, 2015); to reduce recidivism (Fitch & Murry, 2001); to help cultivate an institutional culture that increases the effectiveness of the conduct process (Janosik & Stimpson, 2017); and improve future behavioral choices of conduct participants (Dahl et al., 2014; Howell, 2005; King, 2012). Despite these important findings about the power and potential of the SCP, scholarly literature is still in its infancy. And even more notable, the limited research that has been conducted is responsive, rather than proactive, in nature.

In 2008, Stimpson and Stimpson conducted a comprehensive SCP literature review, examining 27 years of scholarship. These researchers found eight "themes" among the available SCP scholarship including: "administrative, assessment, characteristics of student offenders, history, mediation, sanctioning, student development, and training" (Stimpson & Stimpson, 2008, p. 16). Namely, previous research primarily focused on student perceptions regarding the fairness and effectiveness of the SCP, how to ensure student due process, how higher education institutions (HEIs) developed their current methods for adjudicating student conduct violations, and some, albeit limited, studies on the learning outcomes of conduct offenders (Stimpson & Stimpson, 2008). Thus, much of this research is responsive and primarily focused on how to

improve the SCP itself. In other words, current SCP literature examines students who have already committed a violation and are currently engaged in the SCP or those who have recently concluded their conduct process. Little has been done to proactively address conduct by striving to better understand the relationship between student moral identity, moral behavior intentions, and moral behavior evaluations in the conduct context.

Clearly, understanding student perceptions about institutional codes of conduct and resulting processes is important; however, more deliberate research is needed to provide depth and context for those student views. Stimpson and Stimpson (2008) found extensive affirmation regarding the need for more "focused scholarship," arguing that the SCP literature lacks a systematic agenda wherein studies build upon previous research, while informing current practice (p. 24). This research needs to include quantitative and qualitative studies to extend both basic and applied research (Stimpson & Stimpson, 2008). Basic studies will aid in the development of models and theories on how students learn from the SCP; applied research will examine student offender characteristics and perspectives, assist in assessing SCPs, and advance practitioners' understanding of their role and impact on the process (Stimpson & Stimpson, 2008).

The aim of this study was to make contributions to both basic and applied research. Higher education administrators need avenues to more proactively approach student moral behavior to try and prevent students from entering the conduct process at all. Therefore, scholars need to develop a better appreciation for what influences student moral behavior through purposeful research. How do students evaluate their own moral behavior? Why do they behave as they do? How salient is their moral identity? And how does student mindset impact their

moral identity and behavior? Although these questions cannot be fully explored in just one study, it is vital to begin this important line of research.

Statement of the Problem

With minimal research that acknowledges the impact of student moral identity, what influences student behavior, how students evaluate their own moral behavior, and the level of student awareness about their behavior, conduct administrators are principally focused on countering misconduct after the inappropriate behavior has already taken place through the SCP. By engaging creative solutions founded on sound research, higher education administrators can endeavor to proactively address student misconduct before it becomes overly problematic or escalates.

Purpose of the Research

Student misconduct continues to increase (Lucas, 2009), disrupting higher education institutions, especially as technology advances and the world evolves and complexifies. As a result, the means and measures college students use to carry out academic and behavioral misconduct progresses and develops. Consequently, students face even more challenging and complicated moral dilemmas daily. Therefore, it is crucial for institutions to help improve the moral consciousness and behavioral intentionality of their students.

To meaningfully address student misconduct, administrators need to move beyond merely treating the symptoms of this misconduct after the fact through SCP disciplinary and educational sanctions. Instead, institutions must find proven ways to prevent this behavior well before it starts. And when students do falter and violate their institution's code of conduct, administrators need confirmation that their SCP is properly crafted to help guard against student recidivism. But, this means that higher education administrators must have a deep understanding

of how and why students behave the way they do. Although there is considerable empirical and theoretical research related to college student moral identity and prosocial behavior (Jennings et al., 2015), as I will illustrate in Chapter Two, research and practice connecting this literature to student conduct perspectives and exploring relevant immoral behaviors is missing.

Additionally, although college students must clearly procure needed disciplinary and academic skills while enrolled, many find their defining college experience within the co-curriculum because they inevitably spend far more time outside the classroom than in (Rutter & Mintz, 2016). Therefore, scholars would also benefit by using empirical research to close the known gap between academic and student affairs, bridging these two silos (O'Connor, 2012), by tying student learning dispositions and moral attitudes to what happens outside the classroom within the co-curriculum. When armed with this knowledge, administrators can intentionally lead the way, proactively crafting policy and a co-curricular education aimed at preventing student misconduct while developing the moral identity and motivation of today's college students. However, this will only be successful if scholars concentrate their research efforts on variables which impact both sides of the higher education equation – academic and student affairs.

Self-theory, often referred to as "mindset," is an individual's implicit beliefs about their own personality traits and characteristics (Dweck, 2008; Dweck et al., 1995). For student affairs administrators, understanding student mindset can be particularly important because of the potential effects of a student's self-theory, both inside and outside the classroom. A student's mindset integrates tacitly held beliefs about their own their morality – impacting their social and emotional identity – and their temperament toward growth and development – impacting their academic work. Thus, administrators should be cognizant of how student self-theories play a role

in student moral behavior and conduct perceptions. Consequently, the purpose of this study was to understand the link between a student's moral mindset, moral identity, and subsequent moral decisions, particularly as they pertain to student perspectives about the code of conduct. Specifically, I empirically addressed how students' mindset impacts their moral behavior intentions and awareness. Further, this study explored how students' self-theories influence their perspectives about the code of conduct and its related processes.

Research Questions

To meet the objectives of this study, the following questions guided this project:

1. To what extent, if any, does student moral identity explain the relationship between student moral mindset and moral behavior intentionality and consciousness?
    i. To what extent, if any, does student moral mindset and moral identity influence intended student moral behavior?
    ii. To what extent, if any, does student moral mindset and moral identity influence the manner in which students evaluate how to behave?
2. To what extent, if any, does student moral identity explain the relationship between student moral mindset and code of conduct perspectives?
    i. To what extent, if any, does student moral mindset and moral identity impact how students evaluate code of conduct policies?
    ii. To what extent, if any, does student moral mindset and moral identity influence the degree to which students know and reference code of conduct policies in deciding how to behave?

Significance of the Study

Student misconduct is not a new problem, “College administrators have been concerned with student misbehavior for as long as students have been coming to college” (Stimpson & Stimpson, 2008, p. 15). Thus, addressing student misconduct to maintain an institution’s academic environment, create a safe campus community, and most importantly, enable institutional mission fulfillment, has been an integral part of higher education since the founding of Harvard University in 1636 (Howell, 2005). In fact, all institutions utilize codes of conduct to regulate student decision-making and behavior. However, despite these efforts to curb misconduct, institutional judicial officers are busier than ever handling everything from littering to assault and battery (Lucas, 2009).

All universities and colleges set forth lofty institutional missions, including objectives like educating for the common good, developing citizenship, teaching students how to live in community, and integrating morality and ethics into the learning experience. In fact, based on the mission statements of most institutions, graduating students capable and practiced at putting their moral identity into action is a predominant desire of the academy (Katzner & Nieman, 2006). However, with mounting financial pressures, escalating governmental and accreditation standards, and growing institutional competition, it is easy to lose sight of these noble objectives. Consequently, it is critical for student affairs divisions to not only distinguish themselves, but more importantly, to make their divisions essential. By intentionally elevating the moral development of college students to a core, first principle for all programs and initiatives to ensure they have a proven record of providing developmental opportunities, student affairs will be an indispensable component for mission fulfillment. In other words, students must be given abundant opportunities to dynamically and significantly place their moral identity into action,

which should begin alleviating pressure on the SCP. Yet, this is only possible by knowing more about student moral behavior. This study is the first step of many in this important exploration.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms will be defined as follows when referenced:

Classification – a student's year in school (i.e., first-year, sophomore, etc.).

Disciplinary Sanctions – restrictions and penalties used in the SCP to punish behavior in violation of the student code of conduct, including probation, suspension, expulsion, fines, restitution, resident hall or university-owned housing suspension or expulsion, etc.

Due Process (also referred to as Fundamental or Procedural Fairness) – the SCP standard implemented to ensure that students are granted impartiality, reasonableness, and process equity; this includes notice of an alleged student code of conduct violation(s) and the opportunity to respond and provide a defense (Gehring, 2001; Stoner & Lowery, 2004).

Educational Sanctions – assessments and affirmative assignments, including community service, campus work assignments, letters of apology, mental health assessments, academic counseling, research and reflection papers, drug or alcohol treatment, etc. used to enhance the educational impact of the SCP.

Educational Value – the benefit provided to students from their involvement in the SCP as a mechanism to facilitate student understanding and appreciation of the institution's behavioral expectations, the perspective of others, the consequences of their actions, and the importance of living in community to avoid future student code of conduct violations (Heafitz, 2008; King, 2012; Mullane, 1999).

Fairness – the extent to which students believe they are provided a SCP in which they have the opportunity to share their personal narrative about alleged student code of conduct violations in a respectful and tolerant dialogue (Heafitz, 2008; King, 2012; Mullane, 1999).

First-Generation College Student – a student's self-disclosed status as the child of parents, neither of which graduated from college.

Formal Conduct Hearing – the standard process used to adjudicate a student code of conduct violation(s) wherein a student confronts charges through the exploration of presented evidence and the questioning of witnesses before a panel of decision-makers, including institutional faculty and staff members.

Informal Administrative Hearing – an alternative to the formal conduct hearing process used to resolve a student code of conduct violation(s), which engages the student in a one-on-one meeting with an institutional conduct administrator (Howell, 2002).

Mindset – the term commonly used outside of academic circles to refer to an individual's self-theory (see below) (Dweck, 2008).

Moral Behavior – behaviors consistent with the moral traits "empirically shown to be associated with what it means to be a moral person," including caring, compassionate, fair, friendly, generous, helpful, hardworking, honest, and kind (Aquino & Reed, 2002, p. 1425).

Moral Behavior Consciousness and Intentionality – "the manner in which students evaluate how to behave" and anticipated future moral behavior (Nelson, 2017, p. 1275).

Moral Identity – an individual's self-definition or sense of moral self comprised of (a) moral emotions, (b) moral strength or motivation, and (c) moral engagement (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Blasi, 1983; Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018; Walker, 2004).

Moral Identity Internalization – the “having side of the moral self or the extent to which morality is included in an individual’s internalized and “socially constructed” self-identity (Bandura, 1991; Harter, 1999; Jennings et al., 2015, p. S105).

Moral Identity Symbolization – the “doing” side of the moral self or the extent to which an individual is committed and willing to take action to exercise their moral self-identity in external, observable, consistent action (Baumeister, 1998; Jennings et al., 2015).

Residential Status – a student's living assignment categorized as “on-campus" in a residence hall or university-owned apartment or residing "off-campus" in private housing either within or farther than five miles from campus.

Self-Theory (also referred to as Implicit Theory) – implicit or tacit beliefs or assumptions individuals hold about themselves regarding personality attributes and characteristics like morality (Dweck et al., 1995).

Student Code of Conduct (also referred to as the Code) – the formalized standards of student behavior and conduct expectations of an institution.

Student Conduct Perceptions – how students evaluate code of conduct policies and the degree to which students know and reference code of conduct polices in deciding how to behave (Campus Labs, 2017; Nelson, 2017).

Student Conduct Process (SCP) – a process or set of procedures established by HEIs to receive, investigate, arbitrate, and resolve alleged violations of an institution’s student code of conduct and expected behavioral standards (Howell, 2002).

Summary

The college years are a time in life when the social identities of the American college student, including moral identity, begin to crystalize (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018). Between

the ages of 18 to 25, the years when most Americans attend college, students experience a specific period of development which Arnett (2000) termed "emerging adulthood" (p. 470). This period of life, Arnett (2000) believed, was characterized by "identity exploration" and change (p. 473). Arnett's (2000) theory of emerging adulthood suggests that those in this unique life stage are striving to figure who they are; they are no longer adolescents, but also not yet adults (Arnett, 2000). This life subjectivity leads these individuals to explore their own identities, especially around issues related to "love, work, and worldviews" (Arnett, 2000, p. 473). However, this exploration also has moral development implications, as it often includes pervasive and risky behaviors while these individuals strive to discover who they are (Arnett, 2000). The prevalence of the emerging adulthood stage among college students may indicate why student code of conduct violations can frequently occur. Therefore, given the importance of this period from a developmental perspective, it is crucial that HEIs expand and deepen their understanding of student moral behavior. The next chapter will expand on this developmental journey, providing a deeper theoretical context, further establishing the value of this study.

The effects of student misconduct can be considerable. When students fail to uphold institutional standards of behavior – violating the student code of conduct – it threatens the safety of the campus community, it disrupts the learning and living environment, the risk of legal liability increases, and ultimately, HEIs may struggle to fulfill their institutional mission. All of this can certainly lead to negative publicity for any HEI. And yet, the impact on the students themselves can be much more significant. Students may suffer from diminished well-being, anxiety, and other mental health challenges or engage in self-destructive behaviors like alcohol and drug abuse or self-harm. Moreover, students may fail to internalize the missional objectives of their institution, constraining their own moral identity development and the recognition of

their broader communal role and related responsibilities. If institutions continue to use the SCP as merely a responsive process to address student misconduct, it may be too late – missing crucial and persuasive opportunities to impress the importance of moral and ethical citizenship upon the student. Instead, the focus may shift to punishing the misconduct, leaving the student's education and moral identity hanging in the balance, especially when the student's story makes national headlines. With more research like this study into how and why students behave as they do, including what may influence those behavioral choices, HEIs can proactively impact student behavior, helping to focus student energy on placing their moral identity into principled action and growing student capacity to serve and contribute to their communities.

After providing a thorough explanation of the significance and value of this project, Chapter Two situates this dissertation research among relevant theoretical and empirical literature. In the next chapter, I both summarize and synthesize the scholarship which served as the groundwork for this study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Administrators currently have little scholarship to consult when endeavoring to proactively address student misconduct. Minimal empirical work has sought to disentangle and appreciate the complex relationships among student moral identity, what influences student behavior and behavior awareness, and how students evaluate their own moral behavior. However, when armed with a broader understanding of these connections and impacts, HEI administrators can strive to address misconduct before it begins; they would possess the power to reinforce student moral development through creative programming and could view the SCP as just one tool at their disposal, primarily designed to assist with educating to prevent recidivism. With deeper insights about student moral behavior consciousness and intentionality, HEIs can more effectively strive to prevent misconduct before it begins, a decisive step toward institutional mission fulfillment.

In this chapter, I provide the context and background for this study. Namely, this chapter describes, explains, and connects relevant theoretical scholarship which grounds this study, but also sheds light on the results and discussion of the study's findings. Moreover, this chapter summarizes notable empirical literature. However, to ensure that there is appreciation for how the theoretical and empirical research fit together, this chapter concludes with a synthesis of the presented scholarship in the form of a conceptual framework. This conceptual structure is enumerated both narratively and visually to facilitate consideration of the relationships and connections among the scholarly literature. The framework presented at the end of this chapter served as the foundation for this study and supported the research design of this project.

Student Development Theory

A primary goal of the SCP is to help facilitate college student growth through moral development and moral action – for students to learn from their mistakes. When the SCP is intentionally developed with appropriate administrator engagement, the process has the power to foster student learning and moral development (Mullane, 1999; Stimpson & Janosik, 2015). However, to ensure that this is more than merely a cognitive exercise (i.e., only growing students' intellectual understanding of morality), practitioners should also focus on influencing student decision-making so that it translates into moral action as well. But, this requires a crucial consideration – student behaviors which lead to conduct violations do not happen in isolation. For broader success in achieving student moral growth, it is imperative that administrators understand and contemplate more than theories of moral reasoning.

For today's college student, there are any number of pressures and contributing factors which exert influence on student behavioral choices, as most administrators can attest. These pressures can exercise a negative impact on student development, including moral identity development, but also present unique opportunities to intentionally utilize the campus environment, culture, programming, and even the SCP as a training ground for students to practice their emerging moral ideals, while sustaining an ongoing awareness of relevant student identity progression. Thus, student affairs professionals would benefit from a more developed and broader view of how students take meaning and make moral decisions, as well as what drives and influences their moral consciousness and intentionality and conduct perspectives; essentially, it is imperative to consider the entire student by looking at the various parts that make up that whole. That was the central aim of this study – to begin the heuristic journey toward appreciating how and why students behave as they do. Therefore, to begin this chapter, I will provide a succinct review of the central scholarship on student development, campus culture

and environment, and organizational theories to help elaborate the complex relationships between the SCP, moral development, campus culture, and student moral behavior.

Cognitive Development

Perry (1968) provides student affairs professionals with a crucial theory in understanding the cognitive learning process of college students. Discussing development in "positions" rather than stages unlike many student development theories, Perry's (1968) theory demonstrates that, depending on a student's cognitive and intellectual position, students process information in very different ways (p. viii). To help students advance in their cognitive reasoning, which may include deep thinking about values and moral beliefs, it is important to ask students open-ended questions, helping them see greater spheres of cognitive complexity. Specifically, practitioners must challenge students to move beyond dualistic perspectives; students must synthesize new information with old beliefs, while determining and assigning relative importance to their thoughts (Perry, 1968). This cognitive process squarely affects the development of a student's moral self-identity (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Blasi, 1983; Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018; Walker, 2004).

Moral Cognitive Development

Building upon the moral ideals initially outlined by Jean Piaget in the 1930s, Lawrence Kohlberg developed a stage theory of moral development (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). According to Kohlberg, moral development is a cognitive, psychological process wherein individuals seek to independently understand consistent, universal principles like justice and equality (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). His theory detailed that this developmental process toward moral growth occurs over a period of six stages, two stages per level, across many years (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). Individuals move through these stages as they encounter new experiences and forge new

relationships. When an individual reaches the final stage in the post-conventional level, the "universal-ethical-principle orientation" stage, the individual has moved beyond temporal moral standards; instead, the individual has the capacity to accept and understand abstract moral concepts consistently and rationally (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977, p. 55). However, simply because students have this capacity, does not necessarily mean they reliably exercise that competence.

James Rest (1986) advanced Kohlberg's moral development ideals through his own Four Component Model. Rest expanded Kohlberg's theory by creating a model that he believed would "represent a synthesis of processes that individuals use for moral behavior" (Cooper & Schwartz, 2007). In Rest's model, he explained that the moral decision-making process breaks down into four parts (Rest, 1986). Rest's Four Component Model includes the following: (a) "moral sensitivity," an individual's ability to understand that a situation includes ethical dimensions; (b) "moral judgment or reasoning," the component which subsumes Kohlberg's cognitive stage theory, expressing an individual's ability to make ethical choices, discriminating between right and wrong; (c) "moral integrity or motivation" to make moral decisions despite competing interests; and (d) "moral action or courage," conveying an individual's willingness to boldly step forward to realize the correct, moral choice (Cooper & Schwartz, 2007; Rest, 1986).

When contemplating Kohlberg and Rest's theories, it is clear student moral development does not just occur. There must be a means to drive development, to help move students through the stages of Kohlberg's theory. According to Rest's model, students must possess not only the ability to reason through moral choices, as Kohlberg suggested, they must also possess the ability to comprehend that there is a moral choice to be made, the motivation and desire to make that right decision, and the courage to follow through (Rest, 1986). All these skills require practice,

and this most often happens through behavioral choices made when encountering new experiences and moral dilemmas.

Social Domain Theory

Elliott Turiel (2008), who studied under Kohlberg at Yale University in the 1960s, developed a theory of social-cognitive understanding – social domain theory – built upon Kohlberg's stage theory of moral development (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). Instead of seeing moral development in a strictly linear fashion, Turiel (2008) developed his theory within Kohlberg's "general developmental, structural, and moral framework," but instead of stages, advanced the notion that individuals possess three distinct domains of thought and experience, beginning at a young age and maturing throughout one's lifetime (p. 25).

Social domain theory is an "interactional model of thought and development" that addresses what Turiel (1989) and others like Blasi (1980, 1983), Hudson and Díaz Pearson (2018), and Walker (2004), as outlined below, perceived as a critical flaw in Kohlberg's stage theory (p. 89). Specifically, Turiel (1989) recognized that even when individuals are seemingly in Kohlberg's final stage of moral development, their actions often do not reflect their moral judgments. Through a succession of studies (Nucci & Turiel, 1978; Turiel 1975, 1978, 1979), Turiel (1983) found that as individuals encounter new experiences and interact with their environment, they construct and reinforce three different social-cognitive domains. These three "conceptual frameworks…account for qualitatively differing aspects of social and psychological experience" (Nucci & Powers, 2014, p. 122). According to Turiel's (1989) theory, individuals categorize their thoughts from "individual-environment interactions" into three domains – moral, societal or social, and psychological or personal (p. 91).

In social domain theory, the moral domain is primarily concerned with concepts and judgments that are "generalizable," "obligatory," "inalterable," and "independent" of specific rules or forms of authority (Smetana et al., 2014, p. 24) and consequently, directly relates to Rest's (1986) "moral sensitivity" ideal. By consulting these concepts and principles, an individual determines if a particular situation is one that includes an ethical dimension and resides within the moral domain. Through the development of the moral domain, Turiel (1983) proposed that morality is fundamentally structured upon notions of "welfare, justice, and rights" (Turiel, 1989, p. 94). Therefore, it is most important to note that the moral domain focuses on those actions which directly impact the well-being of others (Smetana et al., 2014). Social conventions, or social knowledge, are distinctive from moral understanding (Nucci & Powers, 2014). This type of thought is developed through social experience, wherein the individual learns the social norms that provide structure and guide the interactions of a particular social group (Nucci & Powers, 2014; Turiel, 1983). Essentially, social knowledge builds a distinctive conceptual framework or domain throughout an individual's ongoing development (Nucci & Powers, 2014); this often occurs through authoritative rules and punishment, experienced cultural norms, and the need for social stability (Smetana et al., 2014). Finally, the psychological or personal domain centers on "private aspects of one's life" which typically involve matters of personal inclination and not what are deemed to be morally or socially right or wrong (Nucci & Powers, 2014, p. 124). This domain develops from a sense of "personal autonomy and individual identity" (Nucci & Powers, 2014, p. 124).

As individuals age and grow, they encounter increasingly complex situations that mandate consultation from more than one domain; in these intersecting circumstances, the moral domain does not automatically prevail due to valid exceptions from appropriate social

considerations and personal objectives (Smetana et al., 2014). This need to balance, harmonize, and sometimes even prioritize the inclinations of each domain, is required even when an individual has reached Kohlberg's sixth stage of moral development (Smetana et al., 2014); it is this need to systematize social-cognitive experience that may lead some students to take actions which are outwardly inconsistent with their own stage of moral development, seemingly violating what Rest (1986) deems "moral integrity or motivation." Therefore, social domain theory suggests that resulting moral behavior is a complex amalgamation of social-cognitive understanding in a given circumstance.

Stirring the Moral Domain and Building Moral Motivation

Building on the work of Turiel, Walker and Frimer (2007) studied Canadian national award winners for exceptional caring and bravery to derive a deeper understanding of their personality characteristics. These researchers sought to determine what distinguished these "moral exemplars" or those who prioritized the moral domain, driven by moral motivation, from the comparison participants. In their initial study, Walker and Frimer (2007) found that these moral exemplars typically had a moral identity formed from a life-story filled with stronger agency and communion motivations that the comparison participants. Agency motivations are those that advance and enrich the self; communion motivations, however, are focused on promoting the needs of others and striving for social betterment (Walker, 2013). Thus, Walker and Frimer (2007) found that these exemplars are self-aware, while at the same time, maintain "an unequivocal other-orientation" (p. 857). Prior to this study, these two motivational structures were viewed as adversarial and antagonistic (Walker, 2013). This study raised the question of whether these two motivations within the moral domain could, in fact, work in tandem, synergistically (Walker, 2013).

Frimer et al. (2011) tackled this key motivational question to determine if moral exemplars overpowered the inherent conflict between serving the self and serving others. Interestingly, Frimer et al. (2011) found that these individuals with extraordinary moral courage, who actively engaged in noteworthy moral action, reliably "coordinated" agency and communion (p. 161). The agency of these individuals served to galvanize and activate the "ideals of communion into action" (Frimer et al., 2011). Thus, moral motivation is most ideal when self-interest is aligned with the interest of others; in other words, moral action is most likely when individuals successfully synthesize agency and communion (Frimer et al., 2011). Practically, this means that serving the interests and needs of others is inherently tied to personal success and "fundamentally enhancing the self" (Walker, 2013, p. 210).

Social Identity Theories

Emerging Adulthood and Brain Development

Jeffrey Jensen Arnett's (2000) emerging adulthood theory describes how traditionally aged college students, those between the ages of 18 and 25, are in a period characterized by "identity exploration" and change (Arnett, 2000, p. 473). Although they are not yet adults, they are also no longer adolescents (Arnett, 2000). This ambiguity often leads to risky behaviors as students explore their own identity (Arnett, 2000). And to further complicate this development, emerging adult exploration is conducted while students also undergo an extensive amount of brain development. Research in neurobiology reveals that during this life stage, the prefrontal cortex of the brain "undergoes dramatic changes" and that the brain is not fully developed "structurally or functionally until about the age of 25" with full maturity unlikely until 30 (Blimling, 2013, p. 11). This region of the brain specifically controls an individual's ability to proactively consider consequences for actions, their "understanding of other people's

perspectives," how to manage their time and make decisions, and "risk taking" and "sensation seeking" behaviors (Blimling, 2013, p. 11). Clearly, this physiological development impacts a student's ability to reconcile moral cognition and moral actions.

Personal Identity, Values, and Background

College students each come from unique backgrounds with different values and identify themselves based upon their own individual characteristics. As they experience life in college and immerse themselves in a new environment, students continue to socially construct and adjust their identity.

Psychosocial Development. Although it is a longstanding and older theory, I would be remiss if I failed to summarize Arthur Chickering's (1969) seven vectors of psychosocial development among college students. Updated in 1993 with the assistance of Linda Reisser, Chickering and Reisser (1993) posited that students must first begin by "developing competence" before they can move to more complex developmental tasks like "establishing identity" and "developing purpose" (as cited in Reisser, 1995, p. 506). According to Reisser (1995), the final vector, "developing identity," was highly relevant to a student's emerging moral identity and moral self (Reisser, 1995, p. 510). This vector pushes students to complexify and personalize their values system through contextual and situational understanding, while respecting others' beliefs; students in this phase strive to institute "congruence by aligning their behavior with those personal values in socially responsible ways" (Reisser, 1995, p. 510). This final vector is indicative of Kohlberg and Hersh's (1977) final stage of moral development and the self-consistency component of Blasi's (1983) moral self model, as discussed below. Similarly, there is also consistency between Walker's (2013) research and this final "identity"

vector by integrating and tying personal needs with the interests of others developed through "individual-environment interactions" (Turiel, 1989, p. 91).

Race and Ethnicity. Among other developmental processes, college students of color must wrestle with the meaning their own race and ethnicity play in their emerging social identity. Phinney (1988) discussed how despite the number of theories related to ethnic identity, all tend to share some key commonalities, including the importance of attaining a personal identity through crisis; this crisis is typically resolved through ethnicity exploration and culminates with commitment. Both Thomas (1970) and Cross (1978) articulated stage theories which illustrate the broad process Phinney (1988) condensed. Their theories suggest that much like moral development, students of color advance through specific stages, as they come to understand, accept, and integrate race as a piece of their identity.

Gender and Sexuality. Professionals must also continually bear in mind the role that gender plays in student moral identity development. In conduct proceedings alone, gender is significantly correlated with student learning (Stimpson & Janosik, 2011). Females tend to learn more from the conduct process, which Stimpson and Janosik (2011) suggested may be due to cultural and gender expectations within the college environment. King (2012) argued that females may have greater perceived moral learning because the conduct process strives to build empathy and help students learn to live in community, goals which more closely emulate female gender norms articulated by Gilligan (1982). Gilligan (1982), a noted critic of Kohlberg and Hersh's (1977), argued that their theory overvalued justice when facing a moral dilemma and failed to integrate the female perspective, which she argued emphasized an ethic of care and empathy over justice. Additionally, some students struggle with their own sexual identity, which

Cass (1984) and D'Augelli (1994) addressed, providing supplementary tools to help support and guide students through this process of self-discovery.

Supplementary Considerations. For many students, college is their very first time living away from their home and family, which may impose geographic and cultural disparities, depending on the distance traveled. Schlossberg (2011) provided a systematic framework to realize the impact and challenge presented by change which mandates transition, according to Schlossberg. Schlossberg's (2011) theory of change includes four key precepts: (a) acknowledging the entirety of the situation that generated the transition; (b) recognizing the demographics and characteristics that make up the student self; (c) determining what supports and resources the student possesses; and (d) identifying strategies to cope with the transition. Moreover, a student's psychosocial identity is also influenced by their socio-economic upbringing. Clearly, first-generation college students have a different perspective on resources, values, and even education than a student raised in a household in the top one percent of U.S. income earners. Student emotional and social needs will differ, depending upon their family's financial background. However, with appropriate planning and scholarly understanding, administrators can engage a student's background and this time of change to facilitate moral identity growth.

Peer Influence and Feelings

Peer Pressure

Hudson and Díaz Pearson (2018) empirically determined that after "vices and temptations," "social influences" caused the greatest obstacle to moral living among college students (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018, p. 193). Respondents in their study cited fear of "social exclusion" from peers for doing the right thing and "the social influence of technology and

materialism" as significant moral barriers (p. 194). These factors may best be summed up as external social pressure, which undoubtedly affect moral identity development. By swaying students from their personal, moral self-conception, these external social stresses influence students' moral action and motivation, leading to a violation of the students' self-consistency or integrity (Blasi, 1983; Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018). This research is consistent with social domain theory in that in some circumstances, personal objectives and/or social considerations may prevail, despite clear moral implications (Smetana et al., 2014).

Emotions

Hudson and Díaz Pearson's (2018) study also revealed that several students found it "discouraging" to see friends make bad choices without consequence when they worked hard to make ethical choices (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018). Thus, for many students, it was easier to make immoral choices or choices which would lead to "instant [feelings of] gratification" (p. 194). Antonio Damasio's (1994) research on neurological systems affirms this connection between emotion and action. While studying brain injury patients, Damasio (1994) determined that feelings and emotions influence our social behavior. When the brain's center for emotions is damaged, Damasio (1994) found that patients struggled with improper social behaviors and following ethical and moral rules. Fundamentally, emotions assist in the decision-making process by narrowing options and outcomes, which over time, create a sense of social wisdom that can be relied upon for future decisions (Bechara et al., 2000). Thus, emotions are plainly entwined with student moral action and must be part of the equation when working directly with students to foster moral growth.

Environmental, Organizational, and Cultural Impacts

Many key moral theorists maintain that culture impacts moral self-development (Jennings et al., 2015). Hudson and Díaz Pearson's (2018) empirical scholarship affirms this perspective with findings which suggest that despite students' cognitive moral development, they still make poor moral choices because of the influence of vices and pressures present in their social, campus environment. Hoekema (1994) summarized this idea, stating "[m]orality on campus . . . is formed and shaped in dialogue . . . We are moral beings because we are beings who live in community and who shape our ideals in dialogue" (p. 164).

Janosik and Stimpson (2017) identified relevant "institutional influences" on students to include overarching structures like "mission and policy statements," but also "a variety of contextual factors" (p. 30). Strange and Banning (2015), the leading theorists on how to create campus environments which generate student success, asserted that there are four layers impacting campus environments in higher education. When intentionally addressed, these layers can help shape an environment which facilitates student moral identity development, which is certainly one type of student success.

Physical Structures

Campus physical spaces convey "symbolic nonverbal messages" read, interpreted, and internalized by students (Strange & Banning, 2015, p. 16). These messages are communicated "either intentionally or inadvertently" through "behavior settings, artifacts of material culture, and behavioral traces" (Strange & Banning, 2015, p. 17). Behavior settings, the physical and social sites where students interact, share "encoded" messages, prompting students to be mindful of acceptable behavior (Strange & Banning, 2015, p. 18). Campus artifacts tend to be those items found around campus that depict the "material culture" of the institution, which are typically constructed or adapted by students to fulfill a set purpose; these artifacts not only communicate

expectations, they can also “inspire” and “warn” campus residents (Strange & Banning, 2015, p. 19). Finally, behavioral traces are those belongings, objects, and signs left by campus inhabitants, which tell stories about how the campus is used and understood (Strange & Banning, 2015). If institutions desire to prioritize moral identity development and provide opportunities to practice taking moral action, they need to ensure that the messages these physical “conduits” communicate are deliberately crafted (Strange & Banning, 2015, p. 17).

Human Characteristics

Strange and Banning (2015) described the importance of acknowledging the influence human occupants have on the campus environment. Prominent environmental qualities are fashioned and shaped by student attributes and “subcultures” (Strange & Banning, 2015, p. 53). This includes everything from student talents and strengths to learning styles and personality traits (Strange & Banning, 2015). Presumably, this can both positively and negatively influence the campus and can help build an environment that is amenable and supportive or could detract from student moral behavior. Hudson and Díaz Pearson’s (2018) research reveals this impact, finding that students are easily swayed from their held moral beliefs and cognitive understanding by social influences like peer pressure. Specifically, students empirically affirmed that moral action is all too often the socially “unpopular” decision and that when seeking friendship, students can more easily be persuaded to make surprising choices (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018, p. 194). Thus, Hudson and Díaz Pearson’s (2018) study affirms the power of the human aggregate on college campuses. If ignored in meaningful ways, negative peer characteristics and pressure can lead students morally astray.

Organizational Structures

When striving to understand how organizational structure impacts student behavior, it is important to consider several organizational pieces. First, it is valuable to reflect upon the level of institutional "complexity" and power "centralization" (Strange & Banning, 2015, p. 88, 89); if an institution is overly complex or bureaucratic, students may struggle to wade through the institutional layers to find moral guidance. Second, institutions should contemplate "routinization" or the extent to which a student's social role is recurrent (Strange & Banning, 2015, p. 95). If students are not forced to encounter new and increasingly complex moral dilemmas, their moral reasoning and behavior may become routine, limiting their moral growth. Finally, "formalization refers to the importance of rules and regulations (whether formally written or customarily understood)" (Strange & Banning, 2015, p. 91). This organizational element is crucial, as it provides a venue to set affirmative guidelines, directing moral consciousness and action, and is a mechanism to enforce those rules. By holding students accountable and facilitating moral dialogue, institutions can create a known and predicable ethos of accountability to reinforce the importance of moral action (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018; Lancaster, 2012).

Social Structures

Campus environments, in addition to physically constructed spaces, are also socially created based upon a "consensus" of perceptions of the campus inhabitants; this consensus measures an institution's environmental press and campus culture (Strange & Banning, 2015, p. 115). Essentially, the social construction of an organization accounts for the subjective, collective view of the campus and the experiences of its campus participants (Strange & Banning, 2015). Thus, campus environments "are a function of how members perceive and evaluate them" (Dannells, 1997, p. 83).

Environmental Press. Characteristically, environments compel and demand behaviors of their participants, which are subjectively determined based upon the perceptions of their inhabitants (Strange & Banning, 2015). At the same time, those residents have specific needs that the environment may or may not satisfy. The "correspondence (or congruence) between individual need and environmental press" determines whether the environment is ripe for producing growth (Strange & Banning, 2015, p. 118). Dannells (1997) specifically addressed this potential for growth, stating that campus environments place pressure on students by "exert[ing] a conforming influence through the collective, dominant characteristics of those who inhabit them" with the power to "enable and restrict behavior" (p. 83). Therefore, by acknowledging and nurturing the power of environmental press, setting high behavioral expectations while using missteps educationally, institutions can convey the importance of ethical behavior and foster moral identity development.

Campus Culture. It is crucial for institutions to try to conceptualize how students perceive their campus culture. Schein (1992) defined culture as "patterns of basic assumptions—invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaption and internal integration" (p. 9). Thus, culture includes campus history and rituals, as well as expectations and beliefs that create an institution's persona and identity (Strange & Banning, 2015). And because the campus culture is socially constructed, it is a contextual concept primarily built through the perceptions of campus participants. However, through proper planning, institutions can purposefully engage students, helping to shape their judgments. For example, institutional leaders can hold students, faculty, staff, and administrators accountable to the same high moral standards grounded in the institution's mission to influence perceived values. Thus, with mindful and consistent creation, facilitation, and cultivation,

institutions can use campus culture to positively influence student moral understanding and action.

Why Focus on Mindset and Moral Identity?

After completing this broad review of the student development theoretical landscape, it is important to shift the focus of this chapter to the precise theoretical framework of this study. Clearly, morality is a challenging piece of student development to study empirically primarily because of the many influences on the moral behavior of college students – and the inability to consider all variables in a single study makes it that much more difficult. Fortunately, this complexity does provide an ongoing avenue for meaningful future research, continuing to improve and expand practitioner knowledge, understanding, and insight. With so many potential constructs that exert influence on student moral behavior, what sets student mindset and moral identity apart? Why were these variables the focus of this study?

First, it was not my aim to take the student development theories described above to task through this experimental research or to fight against them. Instead, it was my both intent and great hope that this study would serve to complement these established theories heuristically. And because it is not possible to be like the Apostle Paul who purposefully "be[came] all things to all people" (1 Corinthians 9:22, English Standard Version), I made the deliberate choice to focus on student mindset and moral identity. These two student characteristics are not only potent and powerful directors of student moral behavior; they also integrate and unite many of the central themes of the theories described above.

Mindset

Student mindset, discussed in much greater detail below, is a pivotal variable when exploring moral behavior and conduct perspectives. Unlike many other constructs, it distinctly

bridges the noticeable gap between student and academic affairs in higher education. Specifically, when academic affairs administrators appreciate the influence of mindset on a student's implicit beliefs about their temperament toward growth, development, and ability to change, academic administrators can have a more potent impact on student academics in the classroom. This markedly complements the cognitive development process advanced by Perry (1968). Likewise, and pertinent to the concerns of student affairs professionals, mindset prompts tacitly held student moral beliefs, shaping a student's social identity, which augments the many social identity theories summarized above. By researching more holistic, inclusive variables like student moral mindset, and not simply concentrating on just one side of the higher education divide (i.e., student versus academic affairs), this study offers HEIs an ability to make a more profound mark on student moral behavior.

Moral Identity

This study could have focused on investigating a student's cognitive moral development or moral reasoning, as established by Kohlberg and Hersh (1977) and Rest (1986); however, the decision to concentrate on Blasi's (1983, 1984, 1993, 1995) moral self model, as represented by the moral identity construct, was deliberate. Whereas moral reasoning and cognition is arguably an important piece of the puzzle (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977), it does not fully explain how and why students make the decisions they do. When focusing on moral cognition, there is often a gap between what students intellectually know and how they actually behave. This known gap between moral cognition and action is thoroughly discussed across the moral self literature (Blasi, 1980, 1983; Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018; Walker, 2004) and in Turiel's (1989) social domain theory. Blasi (1980) constructed an extensive literature review of this scholarship and determined that it offers "considerable support" for the premise that moral reasoning and action

are related, but that the strength of this correlation "varies from area to area" (p. 37). Most interestingly, Blasi (1980) noted that individuals in the postconventional level, Kohlberg's highest level of cognitive moral development, tend to be just as susceptible to giving into social pressure as those in lower levels of development. In fact, only 10% of the variance in moral action is explained by moral reasoning (Blasi, 1980). Walker (2004) likely summarized this relationship best when he wrote, "[i]n other words, there is more to morality than mere cognition" (p. 2).

More recently, Hudson and Díaz Pearson's (2018) study, discussed above, suggests the reality of this judgment-action gap. Their research determined that although most students know the difference between right and wrong and are not morally confused, they often make inconsistent behavioral choices. In other words, students are more than capable of making the right ethical choice through moral reasoning, as articulated in cognitive moral development theory, but they fail to do so in real life settings (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018). Higher education administrators need to understand why this would be, which is the primary reason this study looked beyond cognition to moral identity. A focus on institutional mission fulfillment demands a focus on developing ethical leaders. Consequently, by measuring moral identity – including the extent to which ethical principles are central to a student's sense of self and how that student symbolizes that identity through outward action – I was able to integrate and complement several facets of accepted social identity theories and social domain theory, incorporate some of the influence created by peer pressure and emotion, and even encompass aspects of environmental, organizational, and cultural demands.

Student Conduct

Before I describe the relevant moral identity and mindset literature, it is imperative to provide the situational venue of this study – student conduct. To recognize and appreciate the significance of this project requires an exploration of what constitutes the SCP, a summary of the findings from previous empirical conduct literature, and a discussion of how this research has been responsive to student misconduct.

The SCP and Student Code of Conduct

Although struggles with student conduct have been a widespread concern in higher education since the 1600s (Howell, 2005), during Thomas Jefferson's tenure as Rector of the University of Virginia in the early 1800s, there was still hope that students would have the ability to regulate their own behavior and make suitable choices (Brodie, 1974). Unfortunately, student riots in the 1830s quickly taught Jefferson "one lesson that all college and university administrators know: We cannot hope that all students will behave themselves simply because they are adults" (Stoner & Lowery, 2004, p. 3). Instead, students require a formalized set of behavioral expectations which guide and limit student conduct – a student code of conduct and a related adjudication process.

Although several conduct structures and processes are used by HEIs in the United States – formal, informal, restorative justice, mixed systems, honor codes, and more – the central aim remains to protect the academic living, learning community while providing student accountability with educational opportunities that facilitate and promote behavior change (Dannells, 1990; Howell, 2005; Mullane, 1999; Pavela, 1996). Most often, the specific, adopted process reflects an institution's mission and core values (Krapfl, 2011). Interestingly, over the past several years, student codes of conduct, which define expected student standards of behavior, have swung from more legalistic models and processes to a more developmental focus

(Martin & Janosik, 2004; Lucas, 2009; Stimpson & Stimpson, 2008). This change was clearly articulated by Peter Lake (2013) who advocated for a more balanced approach between predetermined conduct parameters, including due process and risk management policies, while giving students the freedom to make and learn from their own choices.

Key SCP Empirical Findings

There is a significant amount of scholarship that thoroughly discusses and analyzes institutional judicial affairs; however, it principally emphasizes due process requirements, structural and legal considerations, and code of conduct configurations and practices (Howell, 2005; Stimpson & Stimpson, 2008). Most student conduct research falls into three main categories, including (a) required legal and due process components and procedures, (b) application-based literature focused on the conduct administrator's practice, and (c) so-called "hybrid reviews," which tend to be written by practitioners who include basic legal components, but operate from a moral development perspective (Swinton & Director, 2008, p. 49). And yet, as the field continually shifts more and more in the direction of this developmentally focused process perspective, true investigative research on the learning outcomes of the SCP is still very limited, especially peer-reviewed scholarship (Howell, 2005; Stimpson & Stimpson, 2008). Thus, the ongoing trust placed in this readily established HEI practice seems paradoxical when viewed in light of this relative lack of empirical research. Dannells (1997) encapsulated this irony best when he wrote, "Although institutions of higher education in the United States have been engaged in the practice of student discipline for more than 300 years, we know surprisingly little about the effectiveness of our efforts" (p. v). And though administrators do have more scholarship to consult now than in 1997, this general condition remains a concern: heuristic student conduct research is still limited.

Behavioral and Developmentally Focused Findings

Moral Development. The extant studies of process effectiveness have provided some theoretic foundation to the perspectives advocated within the hybrid reviews identified by Swinton and Director (2008). Generally, this literature suggests that conduct matters are best handled from an educational and developmental point of view, which should be used to inform the procedural and policy components of the SCP. Mullane (1999) determined that the higher the stage of measured student moral development through Rest et al.'s (1974) established measure, the *Defining Issues Test*, the more perceived learning the student received from the SCP. Therefore, Mullane (1999) encouraged conduct administrators to begin proceedings by assessing a student's moral development stage because of this empirical association.

Building on the ideological underpinnings of Mullane's (1999) findings, Fueglein, et al. (2012) constructed a conduct model which assesses components of a student's engagement, personal development (including moral development), interpersonal development, and community membership at the onset of the SCP; this information is then used to establish personalized sanctions that address the student's developmental needs in hopes of restructuring the student's future ethical decisions (Fueglein et al., 2012). Nelson (2017) took an additional step, creating an empirical measure which assesses student development, including moral development, from the student's participation in the SCP. But unlike previous measures, Nelson's (2017) instrument is designed to provide developmental comparisons between SCP participants and a control group; this contrast should theoretically help build practitioner understanding about student behavior intentions and awareness, as well as their conduct perspectives. Therefore, this type of measure is an important step in supplementing the scant research on student development, including moral identity development, in the SCP.

Student Conduct Administrator Influence. SCP scholarship affirms the power of conduct administrators to influence student learning and future behavior intentions. Because students learn and grow more from a conduct process they perceive as positive and fair, it is crucial that professionals receive ongoing training and maintain an intentional approach, fixed on fostering student moral learning (Fueglein et al., 2012; Janosik & Stimpson, 2017; Neumeister, 2017). Throughout the students' interactions with conduct professionals, motivational interviewing and open-ended questioning should be utilized to provide students with opportunities for moral identity reflection and internalization to generate moral motivation through self-identified inconsistencies; this will also help raise student understanding of their own moral deficiencies, generating self-motivation toward future behavior realignment (Fueglein et al., 2012; Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018; Neumeister, 2017). Neumeister's (2017) research affirmed this theme, encouraging administrators to maintain prolonged periods of "dissonance" and a sense of "disequilibrium" (p. 102, 103) to take students on a developmental journey (Fueglein et al., 2012). Through guided self-reflection and "mastery experiences" (Neumeister, 2017, p. 106), administrators can help students to internalize their moral identity and symbolize this identity through changed future moral action during deliberately offered experiential opportunities. And finally, to ensure that this learning is sustained, these professionals should recognize that student learning must be an ongoing process to maintain this message internalization. Thus, administrator follow up with conduct participants is critical to help ensure continued learning outcomes (King, 2012).

Alcohol Violations. Lastly, it is important to note that although students learn to refrain from making the same future behavioral choices after engaging in the SCP, alcohol violations are an anomaly (Howell, 2005). Although this finding was determined from a small case study,

Howell (2005) discovered that even though students learned to forgo repeating the specific behavior which led to their conduct proceeding, they also acknowledged their commitment to continue drinking alcohol, even when underage. Although this study is not generalizable, it does provide anecdotal evidence of a novel finding in the literature related to one of the most prevalent student conduct violations adjudicated (Howell, 2005). The literature suggests that students are learning to make positive behavioral changes from the SCP, but not when proceedings are related to student alcohol decisions.

Structural and Process Considerations

Restorative Justice Practices. SCP empirical literature affirms that restorative justice practices are most effective at generating student moral learning (Karp & Sacks, 2014). This appears to be true even when simply infusing some select elements of restorative justice practices into more traditional model code structures (Karp & Sacks, 2014). Karp and Sacks (2014) identified that the greatest student learning related to "active accountability" or taking personal responsibility for decisions was generated through restorative justice practices (p. 158). Additionally, Karp and Sacks (2014) found that restorative justice conduct practices help reinforce notions of the importance and value of a "just community" by sharing in the process of establishing community standards (p. 157). With this shared responsibility through active participation in the SCP, students are much more likely to internalize and personalize moral standards and build empathy (Dahl et al., 2014; Karp & Sacks, 2014). This restorative-orientation focused on repairing the harm and rebuilding trust between parties creates identity development opportunities for the responding student, while building their community ties and campus investment (Karp & Sacks, 2014). Similarly, the SCP literature confirms the importance of involving peers in the process, especially the harmed party, to increase learning outcomes and

behavioral change (O'Reilly & Evans, 2007). By creating a community framework within the SCP, student offenders can take the next step toward externalizing their moral identity when interacting with their peers, including the harmed party.

Impact of Student Perceptions. Student perceptions of both the campus culture and the conduct environment also impact student moral learning. Janosik and Stimpson (2017) found that when students identify a campus as "ethical" and supportive of the SCP through clearly and consistently communicated expectations, more perceived learning is found from conduct participation. In fact, Janosik and Stimpson (2017) found that perceptions related to the campus environment have a considerable effect on students' reported learning. Therefore, by developing a culture of accountability and creating consistent direct and indirect messages about the significance of an ethical institutional mission, HEIs can convey and reinforce the importance of integrity and ethics (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018; Janosik & Stimpson, 2017).

In-as-much as student perceptions of the campus culture influence SCP learning, so too do perceptions of the SCP environment (Janosik & Stimpson, 2017). Student perceptions about an institution's conduct system have a dramatic influence on how much and what a student learns from their proceeding participation (King, 2012; Stimpson & Janosik, 2015). And when the conduct process is founded on notions of fairness, professionalism, and kindness, that student learning is further enhanced through "cues" students receive from the conduct environment (Janosik & Stimpson, 2017, p. 40). Thus, administrators need to make intentional decisions that foster student perceptions of process fairness and consistency; it is these perceptions of the established process environment which ultimately provide the framework for student learning (Stimpson & Janosik, 2015).

Responsive SCP Research

Given the importance of (and potential repercussions to) college campuses for failing to appropriately handle disciplinary issues as outlined in Chapter One, more SCP research is needed. Scholars have started the empirical journey to develop a deeper understanding of the SCP from the end, investigating outcomes after student code of conduct violations – what can practitioners discern about student moral learning and behavior change from process participation and how can we improve the SCP based on that understanding? Thus, current SCP literature focuses on investigating students after they violate the student code of conduct and during or just after their SCP participation. From these inquiries, researchers have learned that the SCP can have a notable impact on student moral development when the process is intentionally crafted and embraces "a shift in focus from expediency to effectiveness and from past behavior to future growth" (Neumeister, 2017, p. 107).

Clearly, understanding student learning and perceptions from the SCP is beneficial – the SCP is an important space for student growth and education for students who fail to make the right moral choices – but how much better if HEIs understood where students start before they even enter the SCP? This means that more research is needed on student attributes and how these characteristics influence moral behavior. For example, researchers need to use measures like Nelson's (2017) scale to compare SCP participants with those who have not violated the student code of conduct to discern differences in student traits and code of conduct perspectives, much like I did in this study.

This remarkable need for additional research is strongly advocated within the limited SCP scholarship (Howell, 2005; Janosik & Stimpson, 2017; Stimpson & Stimpson, 2008). King (2012) stated that researchers need to start conducting studies that will help shape a theoretical framework which outlines what conduct professionals desire students to learn from process

participation and student beliefs regarding important learning outcomes. However, this type of research will only matter if this new model includes a systematic understanding of how students learn and what internal and external factors are correlated with this learning process (Stimpson & Janosik, 2011). This means that SCP research would benefit from taking a step backwards in the student behavior timeline. Through more research into key psychological and identity characteristics, administrators can think even more broadly, appreciating the extent to which student characteristics like moral mindset and moral identity are connected to moral behavior and how that impacts student conduct perceptions.

Moral Identity and Behavior

College students arrive for their first day of college with a moral identity, albeit still in the process of forming, which researchers believe plays "a central role in motivating moral action" (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018, p. 186). Moral identity is how students perceive their own morality and whether that morality is a predominant part of how students view themselves (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018). Moral identity is an important component of a student's moral self, which includes moral characteristics like values, beliefs, and temperaments, including ethical inclinations, and moral reasoning abilities used to make behavioral decisions (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018). Thus, to develop an understanding of student moral development also requires an appreciation of the moral self, which integrates a student's background and the values system and ethical perspective they consult when making moral choices.

Students use their moral self as a tool when they encounter increasingly challenging ethical questions. As students enter higher education, they will undoubtedly encounter new ethical dilemmas, presenting opportunities to expand their social and cultural horizons, while developing new moral tools and perspectives. However, practitioners can only be successful in

supporting this developmental process by looking beyond moral reasoning to understand the interaction between the moral self and other student characteristics in constructing student behavior.

The Moral Self Model

Augusto Blasi (1983, 1984, 1993, 1995) developed the leading theory for understanding the moral self after his own research demonstrated that moral cognition explained only a small piece of the variance in human moral action (Blasi, 1980). According to Blasi (1983, 1984, 1993, 1995), the moral self is comprised of three pieces. The first component is the moral self, which is "conceptually similar to moral identity," as described above (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018, p. 186); Blasi (1994) stated that it is the "role of morality in one's identity . . . [as] a developmental and individual difference" (p. 168). When considering the moral self, it is crucial to recognize that "morality seems to have differing degrees of centrality in people's awareness and lives;" accordingly, some students inherently value morality and ethics more than others (Walker, 2004, p. 3). Secondly, the moral self includes a sense of "moral engagement" – how responsible an individual feels to act morally (Walker, 2004, p. 4). Effectively, this sense of personal responsibility demonstrates the distinction between moral reasoning and moral action; Blasi (1983, 1984, 1993, 1995) uses this piece to show that inherently knowing what constitutes the morally right action is separate from a realization that one has a moral obligation to act in a particular way. In other words, simply knowing right from wrong is not enough, a student must incorporate moral reasoning with their personality through a sense of responsibility (Bergman, 2004). The final piece of Blasi's (1983, 1984, 1993, 1995) moral self model is moral self-consistency or integrity, which refers to one's moral motivation to act, derived from a desire to be perceived as morally consistent (Blasi, 1994).

Blasi (1983, 1984, 1993, 1995) believed in the importance of moral motivation to help explain why there is often a gap between moral reasoning and action. In fact, Blasi (1983, 1984, 1993, 1995) thought that that this gap can be narrowed by helping individuals progress in their own moral cognitive development, but even more, by affixing morality as "central to their self-definition" (Walker, 2004, p. 4). Walker's (2013) own research indicates as much by suggesting that those who take moral action tend to be motivated to do so because their own success is inherently connected to the interest of others, which falls within the moral domain of social domain theory (Smetana et al., 2014).

Additional research has confirmed the prominence of "moral identity in motivating moral action" (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018, p. 187). In fact, there appears to be a "bidirectional" path between moral identity and moral action; an individual's moral identity motivates their actions, while their actions reinforce their identity (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018, p. 187). Therefore, moral reasoning is not without merit in understanding student moral development, but it must be considered in tandem with moral motivation that drives students to act consistently with the values and beliefs that comprise student moral identity (Walker, 2004). Blasi's (1983) "[m]odel of moral action assumes that different motives may be simultaneously present and that reasons may be defeated by the power of [those] other motives" (p. 184). Social domain theory research supports this model, suggesting that increasingly complex circumstances prompt the intersection of more than one social domain (Smetana et al., 2014). This may suggest that some sort of mediation takes place among student motives that research needs to elaborate more fully.

Two Sides of the Moral Self

According to Blasi (1983, 1984, 1993, 1995), the moral self is comprised of three elements, as described above, which depict two theoretical "sides." The literature has fleshed

out this distinction, categorizing the "having" side of the moral self as the extent to which morality is included in an individual's internalized and "socially constructed" self-identity (Bandura, 1991; Harter, 1999; Jennings et al., 2015, p. S105). Turiel (1983) categorized this concept as the moral domain within social domain theory. The formation of this "having" side of the moral self, known as internalization, transpires through the collective consideration of personal self-beliefs and the social experiences that provide context for those convictions (Harter, 1999). When this reconciliation of beliefs and experiences is "based on morality," the scholarship deems this "as 'having' a moral self" (Jennings et al., 2015, p. S105). In other words, the "having" side or internalization of the moral self focuses on the salience and importance of moral principles to one's sense of self (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Walker, 2004).

By contrast, symbolization, or the "doing" side of the moral self, is the "side" which incorporates the notion that individuals have agency and responsibility to make their own choices and to take action (Baumeister, 1998; Jennings et al., 2015). Although an individual may hold strong moral values central to their sense of self, this does not always result in moral behavior (Walker, 2004). Thus, the "doing" side of the moral self depicts the commitment and willingness of the individual to take action such that their moral self is more than a "mere helpless spectator of events, of minimal use or importance" (Baumeister, 1998, p. 680). In other words, did the individual actually exercise their moral self-identity in observable, consistent action? Was their desire for self-consistency strong enough to motivate moral action (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Blasi, 1984)? Walker et al. (2011) expanded on Turiel's moral domain theory to address this motivational question, finding that those who exercised their moral self-identity tended to be those who were able to synthesize their individual moral agency with their communal desires to promote the needs of others. Walker and Frimer (2007) summed up this

fusion, stating that moral actions mandate agency, including "control and awareness of the self, [and] a willingness to assume responsibility," and communion, including a "focus on helping others" (p. 857). Thus, it is important to note that the moral self is not one single variable, but is a "complex amalgam of moral constructs and processes," which Aquino and Reed (2002), through a progression of six studies, condensed into an established instrument that measures and assesses both moral self internalization and symbolization (Jennings et al., 2015, p. S105).

From Moral Self to Moral Identity

If Blasi (1983, 1984, 1993, 1995) was primarily focused on the study of the moral self, why did this research project concentrate on moral identity? Identity, which began with Erik Erikson's (1964) concept of fidelity, Blasi (1994) described as "rooted in the very core of one's being" which necessitates "being true to oneself in action" (p. 170); identity focuses on the importance of self-consistency and conformity. Thus, for Blasi (1994), "identity is considered equivalent to the essential self" and is a composition and reconciliation of the idealized and the actual self (p. 170).

With Blasi conceding that moral self and moral identity are essentially the same theoretical concept, I made the deliberate decision to focus on measuring moral identity in this study. Aquino and Reed's (2002) Self-Importance of Moral Identity Scale (MIS), the most prominent measure in the moral self literature and a primary instrument in this study, measures both sides of the moral self – moral identity internalization and symbolization – as separate variables. Therefore, although this research project was directed at measuring moral identity, this study investigated the entire moral self by examining each component part. Blasi's (1994) own study affirmed the importance of understanding moral identity because of its "role" in mediating the relationship between moral cognition and behavior (p. 168). More recently, Aoki (2015) also

encouraged additional empirical study to investigate variance in moral motivations and how those motivations influence moral reasoning and action. In the context of higher education, this is especially crucial so administrators can effectively guide student moral behavior and ethical development, an essential component of institutional mission fulfillment. However, to provide this guidance, administrators would benefit from possessing an empirical appreciation for why some students strive to dynamically manage their own morality while others do not (Blasi, 2013).

Aquino and Reed's (2002) moral identity scale was constructed to measure an individual's universal moral ideals and principles. This instrument quantifies the extent to which an individual's "self-importance" is "organized around specific traits that have been empirically shown to be associated with what it means to be a moral person" (Aquino & Reed, 2002, p. 1425). And although not perfectly synonymous with a student's ethical perspective, both morality and ethics directly relate to the consideration of principled conduct and good character. Thus, utilizing Aquino and Reed's (2002) scale in this study, provides a mechanism to measure where students are at on their ethical journey and how that piece of their identity (i.e., moral identity) is shaped and influenced by the other variables investigated in this study.

The MIS is the most widely cited and accepted instrument in the moral self literature because it was developed through a rigorous empirical process, including two pilot studies in addition to six primary studies, to ensure instrument reliability and validity (Aquino & Reed, 2002). These eight studies involved hundreds of participants from vastly different states to affirm broad scale applicability and accuracy (Aquino & Reed, 2002). The two pilot studies sought to identify key traits that define a "moral person" (Aquino & Reed, 2002, p. 1426). Ultimately, these two studies generated a list of nine moral traits – caring, compassionate, fair, friendly,

generous, helpful, hardworking, honest, and kind – which serve as the foundation of the MIS (Aquino & Reed, 2002); several of these traits incorporate the ethical ideals at the heart of many institutional missions. At the conclusion of the pilot study process, Aquino and Reed (2002) conducted both an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to examine and validate the factor structure of the items created for the MIS; this process resulted in identifying the two components of moral identity – internalization and symbolization – each of which are quantified through five distinct MIS items (Aquino & Reed, 2002). The next two empirical studies established MIS construct validity, addressing convergent, nomological, and discriminant validity (Aquino & Reed, 2002). This investigative piece of the scale development process also integrated survey items to assess social desirability response bias, finding that the MIS items may be "somewhat sensitive" to this bias, but only "weakly related to impression management" (Aquino & Reed, 2002, p. 1431). The final three studies successfully explored the validity of the MIS in predicting behavior outcomes (Aquino & Reed, 2002).

Aquino and Reed (2002) acknowledged that the self-importance of moral identity measured by the MIS is likely to intersect with other social identities, recognizing that an individual's self-concept is an amalgamation of many different facets. However, it is precisely for this reason why Aquino and Reed's (2002) MIS was chosen for this research project. As previously discussed, moral identity, measured by the MIS, is a means of working within established and extant identity theories, while recognizing social identity overlap. Thus, use of the MIS not only achieves the goal of assessing student moral identity, a practical and reasonable representation of student ethical development, but also addresses the overlapping nature of social identity theories as a more inclusive and holistic variable.

Moral Identity and Moral Behavior

Many studies in the moral self literature address the empirical link between moral identity and moral behavior. Jennings et al. (2015), who conducted a thorough review of the salient moral self literature over the past 25 years, determined that moral identity "plays a vital role in individuals' moral agency," which represents the "having" side of the moral self or moral identity internalization (p. S148). In Hertz and Krettenauer's (2016) meta-analysis of 111 studies from across the academic landscape – psychology, education, business, sociology, marketing, etc. – they determined that moral identity was significantly correlated with moral behavior ($r = .22$, $p < .01$). Effect sizes across the studies differed, though, based upon whether the variables were implicitly measured or founded upon participant self-reports (Hertz & Krettenauer, 2016). Interestingly, though, there was no difference found when analyzing the effect sizes across various behaviors, including moral behaviors and steering clear of "antisocial" behavior (p. 134). Overall, Hertz and Krettenauer (2016) affirmed that an individual's moral identity bolsters their willingness and ability to act morally.

When examining several of the studies reviewed and investigated by these scholars, the positive relationship between moral identity and moral behavior becomes even more defined. Aquino et al. (2009) determined that moral identity internalization is positively associated with moral behavior intentionality because that internalization helped individuals to readily consult their own sense of morality. Hardy and Carlo (2005) also found that moral action, including a prolonged dedication to morality, is shaped by an individual's moral self. Krettenauer (2013) stated that the moral self produces a sense of moral responsibility as it develops, encouraging the individual to act ethically. In other words, the more an individual identifies as ethical, uniting their moral self-identity and ethics, the more they grow their own "moral responsibility" which "proactively" motivates moral behavior (Krettenauer, 2013, p. 215). Similarly, Stets and Carter

(2012) found that those with “high moral identity” scores were much more likely to engage in moral behavior than those with “low moral identity” scores (p. 135). However, Stets and Carter (2012) also affirmed that moral behavior is not just a product of “internal meanings about morality” – moral identity – but is also a consequence of an individual’s “situational meanings” (p. 137). This suggests more is implicated than merely moral identity in formulating moral behavior intentionality and consciousness despite the established heuristic connection between these constructs.

Hertz and Krettenauer (2016) summarized their meta-analysis stating that moral identity does not necessarily predict moral action better than other constructs in psychology. However, Jennings et al.’s (2015) literature review may provide a reason for this skepticism, suggesting that the studies which offer the greatest insight into the consequences of the moral self like behavior intentionality were those which included mediating and moderating variables. For example, Narvaez et al. (2006) established that moral identity, which is empirically linked to behavior, is essentially mediated by “moral chronicity” or the “automaticity” with which an individual contemplates moral information (p. 969). Consequently, it is important when statistically investigating moral identity to explore it through a framework which places moral identity within some type of mediation model. Moreover, moral identity research also needs to look beyond pro-social behavior objectives and avoiding anti-social behaviors to consider intentionality and consciousness related to specific immoral behaviors common in the higher education context. Previously, there was no such study.

Mindset and Moral Identity

Student affairs professionals would be shortsighted to assume that a student’s moral self operates in a vacuum (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018); practitioners should ask, what other

factors impact the connection between moral behavior and identity? Several researchers have empirically explored the extent to which personality and individual attributes impact moral self, including gender, cultural characteristics, religiosity, and social factors like the behavior of leaders (Jennings et al., 2015). However, no previous study directly considered the relationship between mindset and moral identity even though this scholarship would suggest the merit of such study.

Jennings et al. (2015), when summarizing the moral self literature, stressed that "factors critical to one's self-definition shape how morality becomes embedded into the self-concept . . . thereby engaging motivation for self-consistency" and action (p. S152). Mindset, or one's inherent self-theory, described in greater detail below, creates similar motivations which shape how an individual engages with the academic, moral, and social world. Further, Bergman (2004) articulated that "moral understanding" only becomes "motivational" toward action when it is imprinted onto one's self-concept – their moral identity – and not because morality itself has motivational power (p. 237). Kurpis et al. (2008) found that individuals with high levels of "commitment to moral self-improvement" – moral identity growth – had greater moral behavior intentionality than those with low levels of commitment (p. 447). Similarly, mindset can either motivate a desire to grow and change through effort and strategy, or prompt maintenance of the status quo for the sake of retaining appearances. With this seemly embedded and heuristic connection between mindset and moral identity motivations, this study explored the extent to which this relationship impacts moral behavior and student code of conduct perspectives.

Student Mindset

To ensure that students are well positioned to take advantage of proactive opportunities which facilitate moral behavior intentionality and consciousness, administrators should be

mindful of student self-theories; these theories "can create different psychological worlds, leading them to think, feel, and act differently in identical situations" (Dweck, 2000, p. xi). Consequently, the exploration of student mindset and how it influences student growth and development is imperative.

Fixed vs. Incremental Mindset

According to the psychological research of Carol Dweck, individuals maintain their own implicit self-theory which essentially describes how they view their own intelligence and abilities (VanDeVelde, 2007). Dweck (2000) divided self-theories into two categories –a theory of fixed intelligence and that of malleable intelligence. Fundamentally, the distinction between these theories is one's belief in the ability to increase intelligence (Dweck, 2000). Those with a fixed theory of intelligence believe that how smart you are is an unchangeable "entity" that each person possesses, leading to the term "entity theorist" (Dweck, 2000). Entity theorists believe that when effort is required, it indicates that they lack ability in that area or are not as capable; yet, when something is easy without effort, the individual is highly gifted (Dweck & Sorich, 1999). In fact, for the fixed mindset student, having to show effort to complete a task or assignment puts them at "risk" because they are forced to demonstrate their lack of ability, leading to feelings of inadequacy (Dweck & Sorich, 1999, p. 239). This creates a precarious entity mindset pattern wherein the student will actively avoid new challenges to protect themselves from appearing incapable and unintelligent (Diener & Dweck, 1978, 1980).

By contrast, those with an incremental theory, trusting in their ability to cultivate intelligence, believe they can increase how smart they are through effort and strategy (Dweck, 2000). Those with a growth theory of intelligence see effort as a means to build their own competence and proficiency; for the incremental theorists, effort is not a measure of intelligence

(Dweck & Sorich, 1999). Instead, incremental theorists believe that "effort is what supports and creates" intellectual abilities (Dweck & Sorich, 1999, p. 239). Therefore, when faced with difficulty and even failure, most were often unfazed and, instead, sought solutions to their failings (Diener & Dweck, 1978, 1980).

Dweck (2000) believed that there may be several reasons individuals hold a fixed, entity theory of intelligence. Namely, Dweck (2000) articulated that entity theorists have a strong desire for security and predictability in the complex world, especially the social world. This includes maintaining their own persona of ability in society. Further, the fixed self-theory is easily transferred and reinforced simply by praising intelligence over effort and learning strategies (Dweck, 2000). And although Dweck (2000) never argued that everyone is capable of becoming a genius simply by holding a growth, incremental mindset, she did articulate that those with a malleable self-theory of intelligence possess the potential to change because they have not internalized their intelligence "label;" instead, incremental theorists recognize their own potential for growth.

Mindset Response Patterns

Why is it so important for HEI administrators to consider the relationship between mindset, moral identity, and moral behavior? According to Dweck's extensive research, student mindset does not operate in isolation, but instead influences several psychological components. Depending upon their mindset, students often develop learning responses in the face of challenge (Diener & Dweck, 1978, 1980; Dweck, 2000). Those students who hold an entity mindset tend to display what Dweck and Sorich (1999) referred to as a "helpless" response to challenge or a sense that the students could no longer improve their situation, citing their inability to succeed because they lacked the intellectual capacity (p. 234). In contrast, those students with a growth

mindset did not believe that they were in fact, failing; instead, these students responded with a "mastery-orientation" (Diener & Dweck, 1978, pg. 456), understanding that the work was difficult and demanded new strategies and effort to conquer (Diener & Dweck, 1980; Dweck & Sorich, 1999).

Dweck and Sorich (1999) also determined that mindset impacts student goals. In fact, it is those goals which lead to the helpless versus mastery-oriented behavior responses (Dweck & Sorich, 1999). Those students who hold an entity theory of intelligence and helpless response patterns when facing challenge most commonly hold performance-oriented goals, wherein the "student's aim is to gain favorable judgments of his or her competence . . . to look smart" (Dweck & Sorich, 1999, p. 237). Students who display the mastery-orientation and a growth mindset work to increase their aptitude by setting a learning goal – "to get smarter" (Dweck & Sorich, 1999, p. 237). These results only compound when students have low levels of confidence in their own abilities; when a student concentrates on learning goals and the mastery-orientated response it generates, the student is focused on developing and improving their ability, not confirming it, even when their self-confidence is low (Dweck & Sorich, 1999). Performance goals, on the other hand, drive students to assess their own ability based on their performance, increasing their susceptibility "to a helpless pattern in the face of failure" (Dweck & Sorich, 1999, p. 238). Notably, for purposes of this study, these empirical findings and response patterns continued beyond childhood into college, impacting higher education student development and self-esteem (Robins & Pals, 2002).

Mindset and Personality Characteristics

Psychological self-theories do not just influence our responses amid challenge and goal setting; these theories also impact how individuals view character traits and moral beliefs (Chiu

et al., 1997; Dweck et al., 1995). Dweck et al. (1995) determined that entity theorists make sense of social outcomes and behaviors based on a person's fixed traits, while those with a growth mindset understand these things more contextually, looking at mediators like emotions, needs, goals, etc. Entity theorists tend to judge their own social and moral traits more rigidly, as well as those of others, based on limited evidence, focusing on seeking punishment for negative character and moral perceptions with little room for judgment revision (Dweck et al., 1995; Erdley & Dweck, 1993). With a focus on education and reform consistent with their contextual analysis, incremental theorists will instead look for ways to change and/or strengthen personal attributes (Dweck et al., 1995). And when considering the traits of others, growth mindset students will more readily welcome "new information" and revise "social judgments" (Erdley & Dweck, 1993, p. 864).

Chiu et al. (1997) continued exploring the impact of implicit mindsets, establishing that entity theorists tend to "believe in a more static, stable social-moral order" wherein the primary sources of moral action are fixed, and they engage in a duty-based analysis of morality (p. 937); entity theorists have little tolerance for nonconformity and seek punishment to maintain order. Incremental theorists, by contrast, believe that the moral-social order is continually evolving and malleable; under this implicit self-theory, social outcomes and behavior are determined by moral ideals like "individual rights and liberty" and not absolute, duty-based morality (Chiu et al., 1997, p. 938). Therefore, there is clearly a connection between mindset and inherent student beliefs regarding morality; this study strived to begin disentangling this relationship and how it impacts student moral behavior.

Connections to Moral Identity

As Dweck and Sorich (1999) determined, student mindset influences a student's goal orientation and response pattern, which is particularly pronounced when facing trial. For those students with an entity mindset, the goal is to maintain their social status and an appearance of intelligence (Dweck & Sorich, 1999). In other words, the student is often not focused on actual learning or improving their ability, but instead desires to continue receiving praise for being "smart" (Dweck & Sorich, 1999). Growth mindset students are less concerned with their intelligence "label" and much more focused on actual learning goals and a mastery-orientation. This is not to say that being praised for intelligence is not desired by incremental theorists – it is just not their primary aim (Dweck, 2000). Based on the research of Dweck et al. (1995), Erdley and Dweck (1993), and Chiu et al. (1997), self-theories also similarly impact how students view their own character traits and moral beliefs, and their related response and goal-orientation patterns. Therefore, with this clear empirical connection established, the value of this study is clear; administrators would benefit from understanding the impact of mindset on student morality.

Moral identity, however, is measured by considering two variables, internalization, the "having" side, and symbolization, the "doing" side (Aquino & Reed, 2002). The mindset scholarship summarized above suggests that incremental theorists are focused on learning, change, growth, and development, intellectually and morally; these students desire to improve themselves (Dweck, 2000). This is suggestive of a learning or mastery-orientation to improve and to take this instruction and imprint it upon their own internal, moral identity – to learn from their experiences and mistakes. Entity theorists, it would seem, are more likely to be focused on performance-oriented goals, or simply maintaining their own moral, public appearance, than focusing on what they see as a fixed, internal moral identity.

Moreover, this distinction is arguably bolstered by the moral identity scholarship. This literature indicates that when individuals think of past behavior, there is a much stronger impact on their symbolized moral identity than on their internal moral identity (Jennings et al., 2015). This is not to say that there is no impact on the "having" side of moral identity (Pratt et al., 2003); it is just not as dramatic as the influence on the "doing" side. Jordan et al.'s (2011) research found that when considering past acts, both moral and immoral, there was no impact on moral identity internalization, but symbolization changed. These researchers believed that this distinction exists because individuals are concerned with maintaining their appearance or their own self-perception (Jordan et al., 2011). This seems remarkably like the influence mindset has on a student's desire to maintain the appearance of self-consistency and even status preservation, both intellectual and moral, through performance goals. Consequently, to flesh out this relational complexity among the components of moral identity, this study investigated the relationship between moral mindset and each piece of moral identity as separate mediating factors.

Mindset Intervention

Lastly, it is important to articulate that student mindset can be shaped through intervention. Dweck (2000) affirmed that while the influence may be "limited and temporary," it is possible to alter an individual's messages about themselves (p. 143). And although we become more invested in our belief systems as we age, VanDeVelde (2007) affirmed that mindsets are malleable through appropriate intervention. In 2007, Blackwell et al. conducted a longitudinal study among adolescents which found that by providing a simple "workshop" on intelligence growth potential and that "learning changes the brain," not only were student mindsets affected, the workshop also positively influenced student behavior, as observed by participant teachers, due to the links between mindset and behavioral responses (p. 254). Yeager et al. (2013) built

upon these findings by conducting a study which affirmed the capacity of a short series of implicit self-theory workshops to influence adolescent aggression and isolation; through this intervention, the students exhibited more prosocial behavior within one month and fewer conduct problems within three months. This research suggests that if we dive deeper to more fully understand the relationships at play between the personality characteristics of student moral mindset and moral identity, administrators may have the capacity through purposeful student interactions and programming, to affect not only positive changes in student mindset toward character and morality, but also constructive behavioral change.

Interestingly, it is also important to note, that even beyond the traditional mindset literature, empirical scholarship in business suggests that the ethical orientation of an individual must be considered when assessing the relationship between goal orientation and behavior (Luzadis & Gerhardt, 2012). This research strongly indicates that there is a need to consider moral identity, a measurable representation of a student's ethical orientation, when examining the association between mindset – a student's goal orientation – and moral behavior. This probable mediating effect was the central research question of this study.

Conceptual Framework

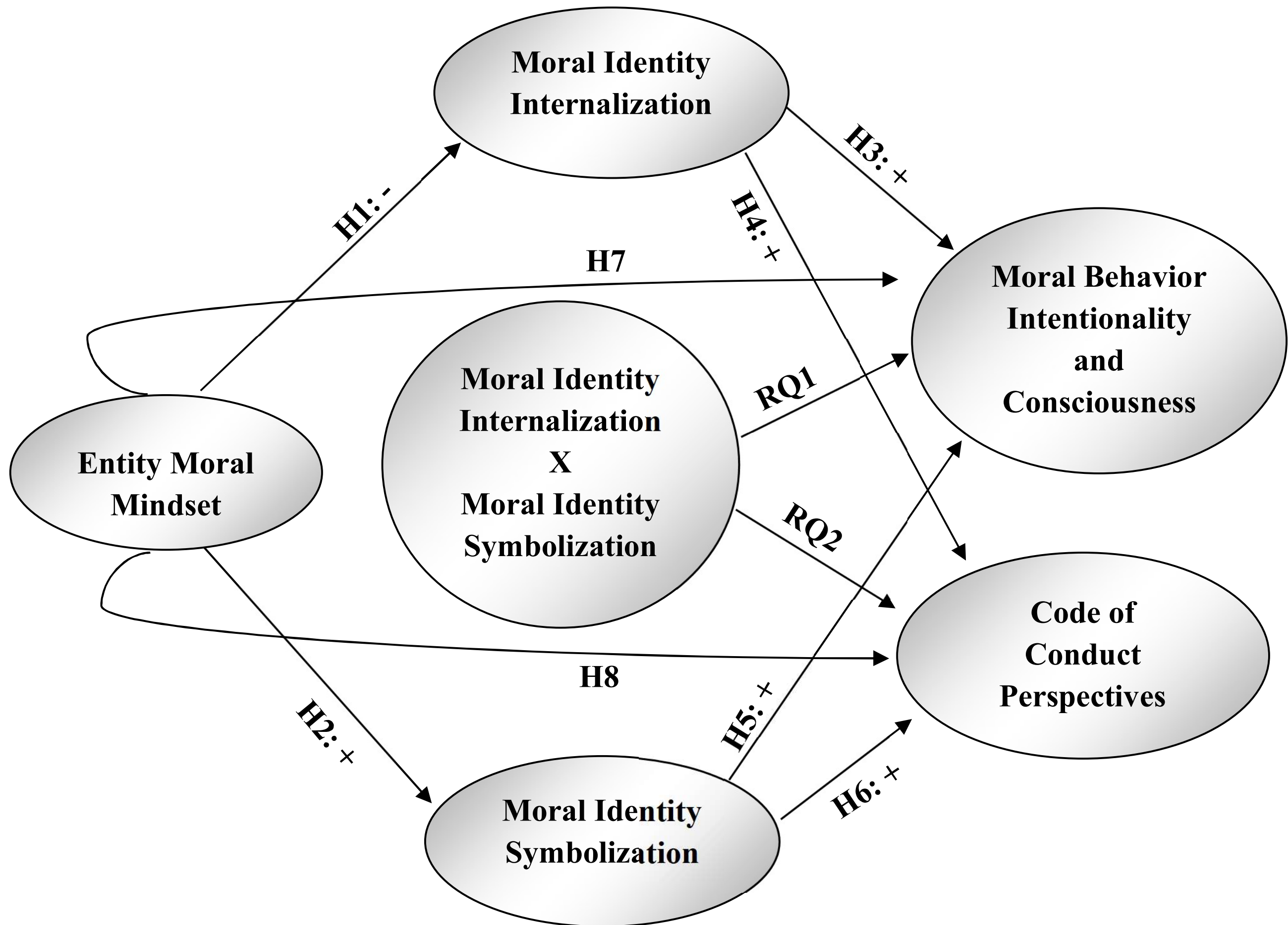
To address student misconduct more proactively, higher education administrators would greatly benefit from developing a better understanding of how and why college students behave as they do. Specifically, what drives student moral behavior intentions and awareness? What influences their attitudes toward conduct rules and processes? And how do student self-theories impact moral action and conduct perspectives?

The theoretical and empirical literature, described above, provided considerable support to suggest a positive relationship between the moral identity of college students and their moral

behavior. Additionally, there was also empirical evidence to suggest that student moral mindset is correlated with moral beliefs. However, no previous research directly connected these motivational and identity constructs to those immoral behaviors commonly encountered in the higher education context nor their influence on student conduct perspectives. Consequently, it was important to take a step forward, striving to build a systematic framework which synthesizes several decades of literature, crossing multiple disciplines, with a more inclusive description of the reality of student moral behavior. With this more holistic conception, administrators can confidently craft institutional policies and develop co-curricular programs that prioritize moral behavior beyond moral cognition and reasoning, incorporating moral growth dispositions and moral identity development elements. For example, this could include educationally focused conduct codes that more deliberately address student rule perspectives. And when students do inevitability violate institutional conduct codes, SCPs could then incorporate these behaviorally proactive components while ensuring fairness, efficiency, and the learning outcomes already adopted within the student conduct literature. But again, the development of these policies and programs, intently focused on student moral growth, can only be possible if there is extant scholarly research illustrating these theoretical relationships. Therefore, the aim of this study was to take the first step in this important line of research, contributing to the literature by testing a conditional process model (see Figure 2.1) which outlined hypothesized relationships between student moral mindset, moral identity, moral behavior, and code of conduct perspectives predicated on available theoretical literature.

Figure 2.1

Hypothesized Conditional Process Model for the Relationship Between Moral Mindset, Moral Identity, Moral Behavior, and Code of Conduct Perspectives



Entity Moral Mindset

Based on the implicit self-theories research (Chiu et al., 1997; Dweck et al., 1995; Erdley et al., 1997), it was reasonable to believe that student moral mindset was associated with moral identity. Dweck et al. (1995) affirmed that those with an entity or fixed mindset believe character attributes, including morality, are fixed, while those with an incremental or growth mindset believe in malleability and that, through effort, personal development is possible. Dweck (2000) articulated that those with an incremental self-theory possess the potential to change because they have not internalized their own fixed quantity and degree of a particular character trait. Incremental theorists recognize their own potential for growth, while those who hold a fixed theory often have a strong desire for protection and certainty (Dweck, 2000). Thus, it was reasonable to presume that students with an entity moral mindset were much more concerned with publicly appearing moral to maintain their social and academic standing, rather than striving to develop a rigorous, internalized moral identity, which they believed to be fixed. Therefore, I hypothesized the following relationships among the modeled variables:

H1: Entity moral mindset is negatively associated with high levels of moral identity internalization.

H2: Entity moral mindset is positively associated with high levels of moral identity symbolization.

Although the objective of this study was to offer theoretical insights about the relationships between the investigated variables to aid in the future development of programs and other HEI mechanisms to support student moral growth, the implicit morality scale developed by Dweck et al. (1995) is structured to directly measure entity moral mindset. Consequently, these hypotheses were phrased with entity mindset as the independent variable instead of incremental

mindset. The conceptual framework and hypotheses simply mirrored the original coding of the mindset instruments used in this study.

Moral Identity

The moral self, as initially theorized by Blasi (1983, 1984, 1993, 1995), is the means by which an individual categorizes “self-related information” to develop a personal conception of the self that is “psychologically consistent” (Blasi, 1994, p. 171). When measuring the moral self, Aquino and Reed (2002) developed a scale that incorporates both the “having” and “doing” side of the moral self, which they collectively reference as an individual’s moral identity. This widely accepted scale measures “having” as the moral identity internalization factor, while symbolization quantifies the “doing” element of moral identity (Aquino & Reed, 2002). Given the potential for moral mindset to influence internalization and symbolization differently, I believed it was important to examine the relationships between moral identity internalization, moral identity symbolization, and the model’s dependent variables separately.

Moral Identity Internalization

The literature consistently and affirmatively supports the positive association between moral identity internalization and moral action and intentions (Jennings et al., 2015). The reverse is also supported in the literature; immoral behavior and intentions have a negative association with moral identity internalization (Aquino et al., 2009). Thus, it was sound to hypothesize the following associations:

H3: Moral identity internalization is positively associated with high moral behavior intentionality and consciousness.

H4: Moral identity internalization is positively associated with positive evaluations, awareness, consultation, and interactions with student code of conduct policies and processes.

Moral Identity Symbolization

Interestingly, the empirical scholarship is inconsistent when evaluating the relationship between the “doing” or symbolization element of moral identity and ethical behavior (Jennings et al., 2015). Several studies combined internalization and symbolization when measuring moral identity only to discover that without mediator variables, no significant findings emerged (Jennings et al., 2015). And in some cases, when examined separately, moral identity symbolization did not always generate moral behavior (Jennings et al., 2015). In fact, symbolized moral identity may even engender moral licensing when an individual has a high moral self-perception (Conway & Peetz, 2012); moral licensing suggests that an individual is justified in engaging in immoral acts because they believe they are such a “good” person already (Conway & Peetz, 2012). By contrast, however, more recent scholarship by Gotowiec and van Mastrigt (2019) found that moral identity symbolization was the significant predictor across three of the four prosocial behavior categories studied.

Jennings et al. (2015) argued that this inconsistency in the findings is more likely an artifact of Aquino and Reed’s (2002) predominant moral identity measure than a true indication that moral identity symbolization is not positively associated with moral behavior. Further, Jennings et al. (2015) asserted that in addition to the “having” side of moral identity – internalization – symbolization “should also be influential,” primarily because the “doing” side involves personal agency or autonomy, which is strengthened and reinforced by moral motivation, a piece of moral identity internalization (p. S150). Thus, it was logical to presume the following hypotheses:

H5: Moral identity symbolization is positively associated with high moral behavior intentionality and consciousness.

H6: Moral identity symbolization is positively associated with positive evaluations, awareness, consultation, and interactions with student code of conduct policies and processes.

Interaction of Moral Identity Internalization and Moral Identity Symbolization

Most moral self empirical scholarship either singly focuses on internalization or symbolization, or a combination of the two, when exploring the relationships between moral behavior, moral identity, and other mediating factors. Scholars have completed little research that investigates the potential interaction effect between internalization and symbolization in generating moral behavior and intentions, and the available literature is contradictory in its findings (Gotowiec & van Mastrigt, 2019; Winterich, Mittal, et al., 2013; Winterich, Aquino, et al., 2013). Thus, there was insufficient evidence to affirmatively hypothesize how an interaction effect between internalization and symbolization would impact moral behavior intentionality and consciousness and code of conduct perspectives; yet, the extant literature suggested that internalization and symbolization might function together to produce moral behavior outcomes. Consequently, I presented the following research questions related to the hypothesized conditional model (see Figure 2.1) for exploration while conducting this study:

RQ1: Does the interaction between moral identity internalization and moral identity symbolization predict high moral behavior intentionality and consciousness?

RQ2: Does the interaction between moral identity internalization and moral identity symbolization predict positive student code of conduct perspectives?

The Mediating Role of Moral Identity

If student moral mindset is correlated with moral identity and moral identity is correlated with moral behavior, it was logical to presume that moral identity is a common, influential factor

shared between student moral mindset and moral behavior intentions and awareness. Thus, I hypothesized that:

H7: Student moral identity explains the relationship between student entity moral mindset and moral behavior intentionality and consciousness.

Similarly, based on the relationships previously outlined, it was quite plausible that moral identity was also the common denominator between student moral mindset and code of conduct perspectives. Therefore, I further hypothesized that:

H8: Student moral identity explains the relationship between student entity moral mindset and code of conduct perspectives.

Summary

This study has the potential to make meaningful theoretical and practical contributions to the moral identity and student conduct literature. Theoretically, this study developed and investigated a model depicting the extent to which significant student characteristics – student moral mindset and moral identity – are associated with one another in the context of moral behavior. Student self-theory was crucially important to include because of its capacity to impact student behavior and its inherent link to a student's learning inclination, impacting the curriculum inside and the co-curriculum outside the classroom. Moreover, exploring a student's moral identity provided a way to account for the salience of morality, both internally and symbolically, in student behavior and in their conduct views.

Practically, this study examined college students, both student code of conduct offenders and those who had not been through the SCP, to understand key, shared characteristics and conduct perspectives to advance practitioner knowledge. This can help administrators enhance co-curricular education and ensure that this education and the SCP closely align to meet the

needs of their students. This should increase the impact of developmental training by creating spaces for students to place their moral identity into action. And with greater cognizance of the impact a student's moral mindset has upon their moral behavior, student affairs practitioners can more effectively team with academic affairs when striving toward institutional mission fulfillment.

Now that I have summarized the theoretical and empirical context of this study, which served as the foundation for the conceptual model outlined in Figure 2.1, I will explain the process by which this study was conducted. This next chapter will include a description of the research design, procedures, and analysis of this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

As students enter higher education, they undoubtedly encounter new moral dilemmas, which present unique opportunities to expand social and cultural horizons, while developing new moral tools and perspectives. Higher education professionals enjoy a unique position to support this developmental journey through strategically designed institutional rules, conduct processes, and programmatic efforts. However, to fully capitalize on this opportunity, HEIs should appreciate the scope and depth of how and why college students take the moral actions they do. This necessitates the development of a more comprehensive view of student behavior, which can only be accomplished through an exploration and consideration of influential factors -- a herculean task, but an important one.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to help equip higher education administrators to tackle the difficult challenge of proactively addressing college student misconduct by focusing on some of the influential factors, as outlined in the scholarly literature summarized in Chapter Two. By contributing to the theoretical and empirical scholarship, this project provides administrators with a better understanding of why and how students behave as they do. Through an investigation of the connections between student mindset, moral identity, moral behavior, and student conduct perspectives, HEIs can more knowledgeably and intentionally create mechanisms to help students apply their moral identity, while navigating the complex social and ethical world of higher education.

To achieve the purpose of this study, the following research questions focused this project:

1. To what extent, if any, does student moral identity explain the relationship between student moral mindset and moral behavior intentionality and consciousness?
    i. To what extent, if any, does student moral mindset and moral identity influence intended student moral behavior?
    ii. To what extent, if any, does student moral mindset and moral identity influence the manner in which students evaluate how to behave?
2. To what extent, if any, does student moral identity explain the relationship between student moral mindset and code of conduct perspectives?
    i. To what extent, if any, does student moral mindset and moral identity impact how students evaluate code of conduct policies?
    ii. To what extent, if any, does student moral mindset and moral identity influence the degree to which students know and reference code of conduct policies in deciding how to behave?

To ensure that this study was appropriately conducted, a firm commitment to ethical and accepted research methods was required. The remainder of this chapter describes the research paradigm and design chosen for the study, how the sample of undergraduate students were selected, how the data was collected and analyzed, and limitations for this study.

Paradigmatic Framework

This research project used a postpositivist paradigmatic framework. Lincoln et al. (2011) described the ontological and epistemological foundations of this framework as one in which the researcher acknowledges that there is a single reality, but that this single reality cannot be fully known or understood; because of the number and scope of potential, hidden variables, perfect

knowledge about this single reality is impossible. Nonetheless, postpositivist research aims to "approximate nature" through inquiry that will "create new knowledge, seek scientific discovery" (Lincoln et al., 2011, pp. 103-104). Most commonly, postpositivist research utilizes quantitative, statistical methods to "get as close as possible to reality" (Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 108). In fact, the vast majority of mindset, moral identity, and student conduct literature has been performed utilizing a postpositivist framework and statistical research methods, as discussed in Chapter Two. Similarly, I elected to use a postpositivist perspective for this quantitative study in hopes of finding results which approximate, as close as possible, to what extent the variables investigated impact moral behavior outcomes and code of conduct perspectives. This research project was merely the first step in what will likely be a lengthy course of scientific study to develop a more expansive picture of how and why students behave as they do. With this quantitative foundation, it is now possible to move from the "what" question, which helped provide evidence for existence of these relationships, to the "why" question. Through qualitative study, including participant interviews, these associations can be probed for greater understanding of why these relationships exist. This added depth will strengthen institutional efforts to proactively address student misconduct, striving to cultivate student ethics and citizenship and to teach students how to live in community.

Research Design

This research project was conducted utilizing survey data in a cross-sectional research design because it was the most appropriate method for completing this study. The primary purpose of survey research is to quantify intangible constructs like shared participant characteristics, attitudes, and perspectives (Ary et al., 2014). Additionally, these types of studies operate under the assumption that it is impossible to sample an entire population (Gall et al.,

2014). Instead, survey research is limited to the study of a representative sample of the population which is a much more efficient means of understanding characteristics and trends among the whole population (Gall et al., 2014). Because it is not possible to sample all undergraduate college students nationally, using a representative sample was the best way to accomplish the important purpose of this study.

Unlike a longitudinal design which permits comparison across several points in time for a single participant, a cross-sectional design generates data more efficiently by simply measuring and analyzing a population sample at one single point in time (Ary et al., 2014). A longitudinal study certainly has benefits but is often exceedingly time consuming and expensive while mandating that the researcher continually retain participant collaboration and involvement over a span of multiple years (Ary et al., 2014). This may be especially complicated among the transitional undergraduate student population. And although purely experimental design like randomized control trials is often deemed the "gold standard" among social science researchers due to their conceptual rigor and "strong cause-and-effect conclusions" (Gall et al., 2014, p. 297), it is not a research design that can be used for all studies. Some variables cannot be studied in an experimental setting (Ary et al., 2014); such was the case for this study. Characteristics like student mindset and moral identity cannot be randomly assigned to study participants, a fundamental requirement of experimental design (Gall et al., 2014). Moreover, observing immoral behaviors commonly encountered in the higher education context would prove difficult in a laboratory setting. Therefore, using a cross-sectional survey design was the judicious choice to generate the data necessary to successfully conduct this study.

Participants

This research project focused on providing a richer understanding of the extent to which mindset, moral identity, student behavior, and conduct perceptions are related. To ensure this study met this important objective, the following conditions were used to invite undergraduate students to participate.

Research Setting

The research for this study was conducted at a single, private four-year university in the southwestern United States. This HEI enrolls about 11,400 students, including approximately 9,700 undergraduate students, which is 85% of the student population. Average student expenses for attendance are approximately $70,428 for the 2020-2021 academic year. Among the undergraduate students, 59% are reported as female, 28% are minority students, and 51% originate from out-of-state. Most undergraduates, both residential and off-campus, attend this institution immediately after high school graduation with 95.7% under 25 years of age, many of whom originate from affluent families. The six-year graduation rate for the university's 2014 cohort, the most recent year available, was 82.0% and just over a quarter (26%) of the institution's student population concentrates on some form of business study. This institution was founded to focus on the acquisition of a liberal arts education and on character development. To that end, the campus conduct office strives to ensure campus safety and maintain University standards through the administration of the SCP, while at the same time, addressing student concerns, which may impede academic and personal success, promoting student learning, and assisting students with the resolution of personal issues.

This selected institution utilizes an institutional code of student conduct that is patterned after Stoner and Cerminara's (1990) predominant model code from the 1990s with some modification. The introduction to this code informs students that as institutional citizens, they

consent to social and academic responsibilities that align with the university's mission, vision, and core values. Moreover, the code outlines an inexhaustive list of prohibited conduct, which all students must know and abide by, or face sanctions like those outlined in Stoner and Cerminara's (1990) Model Student Code. Procedures used to resolve university code violations include an informal administrative hearing – one-on-one meetings between students and conduct administrations – or a formal conduct hearing – a full hearing before a panel of university faculty and staff. Most student misconduct is handled informally and is resolved through educational meetings and a mixture of educational and punitive sanctions.

This institutional code is available for students to view electronically on the university's website as part of the student handbook. Formal education about the code and its expectations is initially provided during first-year orientation and is reinforced through formal and informal institutional communication. For example, the Dean of Students electronically disseminates an annual hazing reminder, reiterating the application of the code to all student behavior both on and off-campus. Additionally, housing resident assistants continually provide verbal and posted reminders to student residents of conduct expectations, among many other forms of institutional communication.

The survey for this research study was conducted in the fall of 2020 in the midst of the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (COVID-19) pandemic. During the semester immediately prior to collecting data, as nearly all other HEIs, the institution selected for this study was forced to move all curricular instruction to remote, virtual learning. Academic classes and related support services, including student conduct proceedings, academic accommodations, counseling services and related student support groups, student organization meetings, and

several social events, were held online through Zoom© video conferencing technology and other mediated platforms.

With the threat of the pandemic still looming, temporary campus policies were devised as the fall term commenced, which required students to wear face coverings, wash and sanitize their hands frequently, stay home if experiencing any illness or COVID-related symptoms, and refrain from gathering in groups of 10 or more; most social and co-curricular events and activities remained virtual or were conducted in a modified hybrid format. Further, the selected institution gave both instructors and students the option to teach and attend classes in person or remotely during the fall 2020 academic term. As a result, more than half of the institution's undergraduate instruction was provided virtually with students accessing their courses from several different geographic locations – on-campus residence halls, off-campus housing, parents' residences across the U.S., and foreign nations. For many students, this option meant that they had very little, if any, in-person instruction, spending much less time on campus than in past semesters. Due to this diversity of direct experience and interaction with the physical campus and related conduct rules, two questions were added to the research survey to inquire (a) about what course delivery modality the students were using – online, in-person, or both – and (b) if accessing any courses remotely, the geographic location of their virtual point of access. These two questions were added to provide awareness and appreciation for the educational, social, and cultural context of the study's results.

Population

A population is a complete group of people who all share a defined, common characteristic or experience (Gall et al., 2014). Because it would be impossible to study an entire population, Ary et al. (2014) articulate that researchers are responsible for defining the target

population of a given research study. Target populations are comprised of those individuals to whom the researcher wishes to apply their findings (Ary et al., 2014). Ideally, the target population of this study would include all undergraduate students at residential, four-year HEIs in the United States. However, due to time and resource constraints, it is unrealistic to conduct a study with a target population of that magnitude accurately and ethically. Instead, I was mindful of what constituted the accessible student population. Therefore, it was appropriate to define the target population of this study as all traditionally aged undergraduate students (i.e., 18-25 years of year) at the institution described in the research setting section above. From within this target population, I surveyed a representative sample of reasonable size.

This study produced generalizable findings for the target population. Moreover, with an institutional code and SCP which closely mirrors that found at most public and private HEIs in the United States, as determined through extensive SCP policy and process benchmarking, this research project also produced theoretical and practical guidance that will assist other institutions in the United States. However, it is important to acknowledge that because the undergraduate student population of the selected institution is predominantly white, affluent, and of traditional college age, public and private HEIs with distinctly different populations should exercise caution when reviewing and/or using the results and recommendations of this study to ensure relevancy and applicability to their students' demographics.

Sample

To ensure that the results obtained from this study closely resemble the results the entire population would generate, it was crucial to select a sample of undergraduate student participants that were representative of the target population outlined above. Probability sampling is the best method to produce a representative sample because it uses random selection (Ary et al, 2014).

Random sampling means that every member of a given population has "an equal and independent chance of being included" in the sample (Ary et al., 2014, p. 163). When studying undergraduate students, it is important to account for the fact that the target population is divided into "a number of subgroups, or strata that may differ in the characteristics being studied" (Ary et al., 2014, p. 166). Specifically, undergraduate students are identified by their classification or year in school (i.e., first year, sophomore, junior, and senior). Thus, stratified sampling was the most appropriate method to account for this identifiable distinction.

To create the stratified random sample for this study, with the permission and assistance of the selected institution, the institution's Office of Quality Enhancement (OQE) downloaded a spreadsheet of all enrolled students, including 11,169 students, into Microsoft® Excel®. Enrolled graduate students were removed for a total of 9,654 undergraduate students, including full and part-time students. The OQE then divided the undergraduate students into four subgroups, based upon their classification, into separate Excel® sheets. Students who were minors or over the age of 25 on the date of the online survey launch were removed from each stratum to yield a total of 9,258 undergraduate students. Because this study explored the mindset, moral identity, and behavior intentionality and consciousness of American undergraduate college students, it was important to ensure that the sample was comprised of students of appropriate age (i.e., traditionally aged students, 18 to 25). Therefore, all undergraduate students over the age of 25 were eliminated from the sample, helping to ensure that the study results were not skewed should the random number draw generate a sample with a disproportionately high number of students of non-traditional age. Next, the OQE utilized the random number draw function in Excel® and sorted the students within each classification into descending order by their random number; the top one-third of each classification was selected to constitute one quarter of the

target population sample and moved into a separate Excel® sheet. This process yielded a total of 3,088 undergraduate students (i.e., 688 first-year, 737 sophomore, 772 junior, and 891 senior students) who were eligible and invited to participate in this study.

A total of 619 of the 3,088 invited students responded to the survey (20.0% response rate). After removing participants who only provided consent with no other item responses, only completed the demographic questions, or did not complete at least one variable scale, as outlined below, the sample contained 487 participants (29.4% male; n = 143). This is a usable survey response rate of 78.7%. Only 5 participants (1.02%) identified beyond the gender binary. All participants were between the ages of 18 and 25 (M = 19.5, SD = 1.38). The sample included 146 participants (30.0%) who identified as part of a minority ethnicity. Only 63 participants (12.9%) self-identified as first-generation college students (i.e., neither parent graduated from college). The sample contained 153 first-year students (31.4%), 106 sophomores (21.8%), 107 juniors (22.0%), and 121 seniors (24.8%), which included fifth-year seniors. 53.6% of the participants (n = 261) resided on-campus. The sample was almost exclusively comprised of full-time undergraduate students (n = 479; 98.4%) and only contained 52 transfer students (10.7%). 87 participants (17.9%) identified as non-religious, which included those who selected “agnostic,” “atheist,” “spiritual but not religious,” and “not religious.”

I conducted one-sample chi-squared tests and a one-sample t-test to investigate the extent to which the sample for this study differed from the research setting population. Men were significantly underrepresented in the sample ($\chi^2(1) = 26.26, p < .001$). There was no statistically significant difference between the number of minority participants in the study and the number of minority students enrolled in the research setting institution ($\chi^2(1) = 1.00, p = .32$). The average participant age (M = 19.5, SD = 1.38) was significantly younger than the average student

age at the research setting ($t(468) = 16.10$, $p < .001$), however, this may be partially attributed to the fact that this study disallowed participation by students under the age of 18 and over the age of 25. This age dissimilarity may partially explain the significant difference in participant classifications from student classification at the research setting ($\chi^2(3) = 26.34$, $p < .001$). Specifically, the sample data included significantly more first-year participants and significantly fewer senior participants.

Research Procedures

As a cross-sectional research design, this study collected data from student participants at a single point in time. The procedures for data collection and the established instruments used to construct the survey measure for this study are detailed below.

Data Collection

The survey for this study was designed for electronic distribution. Those students selected as part of the stratified random sample received an email invitation to participate (see Appendix A). This email invitation included a personalized link to the online survey. The survey was offered to participants through the Campus Labs® online survey platform. Campus Labs® is an established company that not only provides web-based survey opportunities, but also "integrated software and cloud-based assessment tools for higher education" for over fifteen years to "more than 1,400 Member Campuses" (Campus Labs, 2020). This Campus Labs® online survey for this study remained open to receive responses for three weeks. Students could have received up to three reminder emails beyond the initial invitation, though reminder emails ceased when a participant started the survey. Participant completion of the survey took approximately 20 minutes, though this length may have varied from student-to-student.

Instruments

Given the number of variables that were examined during this study, several established measures were used to construct the Campus Labs® online survey, which is provided in its entirety in Appendix B. These instruments are described below.

Demographic Questions

The initial section of the survey for this study was composed of fairly common academic questions, including student classification (i.e., year in school), residential status, age, enrollment and first-generation student status, cumulative grade point average (GPA), and an approximation of the number of hours spent studying by the participant in a typical week (see Appendix B, Section 2). Additionally, standard demographic questions like race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation concluded this section. Although many surveys close with demographic questions, I made the conscious decision to begin the survey with these items. I offered these routine yet important questions first because I believe it may have helped ease a participant into the main focus of the survey; given the potentially sensitive subject of this study, I believed this was especially important when asking undergraduate students weighty, moral questions. The text for most of the questions in this section were taken directly from the selected research site's set of standard demographic survey questions. Minor adjustments and additions were made as required.

Moral Identity

Moral identity, including internalization and symbolization, was measured using Aquino and Reed's (2002) Self-Importance of Moral Identity Scale (MIS). This is the most widely accepted instrument as outlined in Jennings et al.'s (2015) extensive literature review. The MIS is comprised of 10 items, five of which explicitly measure moral identity internalization with the remaining five quantifying symbolization. The MIS uses a Likert scale with response options

ranging from one (*strongly disagree*) to five (*strongly agree*); two questions are reverse scored. Aquino and Reed's (2002) scale has shown strong reliability for both moral identity internalization (Cronbach's $\alpha = .83$) and symbolization (Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$). In this study, reliability was slightly lower, which may be due to the use of reverse scored items, yet still within acceptable limits ($\alpha_{internalization} = .69$, $\alpha_{symbolization} = .77$). This instrument was included as section three in this study's survey (see Appendix B).

Entity Moral Mindset

Next, the survey measured a student's moral self-theory (see Appendix B). Entity moral mindset was measured using the Implicit Theories of Morality – Self Form for Adults (ITM) scale developed by Dweck et al. (1995). Although very short, the ITM scale has been extensively confirmed in the mindset literature, as outlined in Chapter Two. As was the case for moral identity, the entity moral mindset instrument also uses a Likert scale, but this measure is based on a six-point scale (1 = *strongly agree* to 6 = *strongly disagree*). The ITM instrument includes just three items, none of which are reverse scored. The reliability for the ITM scale is quite strong with a Cronbach's α range of .85 to .94 (Dweck et al., 1995). In this study, the reliability was at the bottom end of this range, but still quite strong ($\alpha = .85$).

Student Moral Behavior Intentionality and Consciousness

Student moral behavior intentionality and consciousness was operationalized through two specific dependent variables: (a) intended student moral behavior and (b) the manner in which students evaluate how to behave. There is no single instrument which measures both of these variables. Consequently, I used items from two established measures that explicitly focus on quantifying these dependent variables.

Intended Student Moral Behavior. Intended student moral behavior was measured using seven academic integrity items from the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA) Assessment and Knowledge Consortium: Student Conduct Benchmark (SCB) (see Appendix B, Section 7, Items 62-68) (Campus Labs, 2017). The SCB was designed by a working group appointed by NASPA and Association for Student Conduct Administration (Campus Labs, 2017). It covers a range of topics, including "[a]wareness of student conduct policies," student experiences with the SCP, outcomes related to the SCP, and student perceptions of academic integrity (Campus Labs, 2017). The SCB is just one of nine instruments created by the Consortium to "provide colleges and universities with actionable campus-specific and benchmarking data to shape and enhance programming inside and outside the classroom" (Campus Labs, 2017). Reliability statistics are not readily available for the SCB; however, it is well-vetted and consistently used by hundreds of campuses that actively participate in the Consortium (Campus Labs, 2017).

The SCB uses yes/no questions and a variety of Likert-type scales. When measuring intended student moral behavior, the seven items used for this study ask how likely a student is to take an action in the future, with response options ranging from one (*very unlikely*) to four (*very likely*) (Campus Labs, 2017). To ensure that my study appropriately analyzed common immoral behaviors and conduct violations in higher education, seven questions were added to the original, seven SCB academic integrity items, yielding a total of 14 items to measure intended student moral behavior; to maintain the instrument's consistency, these added questions mirrored the exact format of the original academic integrity items (See Appendix B, Section 7, Items 69-75). For example, item 73 of the survey asked participants how likely they were to "Use

marijuana for recreational purposes" in the future. These seven additional questions were developed from a review of the student code of conduct at the selected institution for this study.

Because no reliability or validity data is easily accessible for the SCB and items were added to this instrument to measure intended student moral behavior, I submitted the 14 items to an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to examine the dimensionality of the measure. Items were submitted to the EFA with principal axis factoring and varimax (i.e., non-orthogonal) rotation. Iteratively using a loading criterion of >= .50 on the primary factor and secondary loadings < .40, I determined that four items should be dropped from the intended student moral behavior measure. Three factors of intended moral behavior were represented by the remaining 10 questions. This rule was accepted even though one item (i.e., likelihood to facilitate or encourage underage alcohol consumption) did not perfectly fit within the conditions this rule with a primary factor loading equal to 0.46, slightly lower than the >=.50 rule. Still, the three dimensions generated by the EFA were practically and theoretically sensible and the remaining items, including this item, fit well together and within each corresponding factor. In the final solution, 63.3% of the variance was explained among the items. See Table 3.1 for the items and loadings for the final factor solution.

Table 3.1

Loadings for Common Factors and Principal Axis Factoring Using Varimax Rotation: Intended Student Behavior

Variables	1	2	3
Factor 1 – Intended Harmful Behavior			
1. Take another student's property.	**.73**		
2. Engage in physical behavior that harms others.	**.66**		
3. Engage in verbal behavior that harms others.	**.58**		
4. Take institutional property that does not belong to you.	**.50**		
Factor 2 – Intended Academic Misconduct			
5. Copy from another student during an exam.		**.69**	
6. Buy a paper online to submit.		**.63**	
7. Get a copy of the questions for an exam ahead of time.		**.62**	
Factor 3 – Intended Substance Use			
8. Use marijuana for recreational purposes.			**.77**
9. Use tobacco products on the institution's premises.			**.66**
10. Facilitate or encourage underage alcohol consumption.			**.46**

Note. Only primary loadings shown above.

The first factor, *intended harmful behavior*, consisted of four items (α = .75) and explained 38.5% of the variance among the items. This factor included items developed based upon commonly observed code of conduct violations at the researched institution, including a participant's likelihood to engage in institutional or peer property theft (e.g., likelihood to "Take another student's property") or emotional or physical harm to others (e.g., likelihood to "Engage in verbal behavior that harms others"). When developing these items, the nine moral traits that serve as the foundation of Aquino and Reed's (2002) moral identity scale, which incorporate the ethical ideals of many institutional missions, were kept in view. These items primarily focused on honesty, fairness, friendliness, and kindness. Factor two, *intended academic misconduct*, included three items (α = .71), all of which were taken directly from the SCB with no alteration, and accounted for an additional 13.7% of the variance. These questions centered on common forms of academic misconduct, including cheating from another student's exam, and submitting a paper purchased from the internet. These items strived to incorporate the moral traits of honesty, fairness, and hardworking from Aquino and Reed's (2002) moral identity scale. The final factor, which accounted for 11.1% of the variance, *intended substance use*, was comprised of three items developed for this study, which had a slightly lower reliability than the other factors (α = .66), though still acceptable. These items assessed a participant's anticipated illegal use of marijuana for recreational purposes and tobacco use on the institution's premises (which is prohibited by the institution's code of conduct). One final item asked participants about their intentions regarding underage drinking (e.g., likelihood to "Facilitate or encourage underage alcohol consumption"). Given the social acceptance of underage alcohol consumption by American college students, it is probable that this question accounts for the lower Cronbach's α reliability score.

Upon completion of the EFA statistical assessment, I reviewed the score distributions for each of the three factors. All three were significantly skewed toward moral (rather than immoral) behavior intentionality with mean scores ranging from 3.54 to 3.85 on a four-point scale. Given the directness of these behavior intentionality items, it is unsurprising that this scale introduced some self-reporting bias, especially when viewed in light of the sensitivity of the subject under investigation. Therefore, to help provide a more holistic and accurate picture across all behavior intentionality, a final variable, *overall moral behavior intentions*, was added to the study as an additional measure of the moral behavior intentionality and consciousness construct based upon the mean of all three factor variables for each participant ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.35$). Although still skewed, the addition of this variable provides greater variance in participant responses; this variable also provides an opportunity to discuss not only the associations between the three factors identified through the EFA, but also compare it to a broader picture of student behavioral intent.

The Manner in Which Students Evaluate How to Behave. The manner in which students evaluate how to behave was measured using the recently developed Multi-Factor Quasi-Experimental Student Conduct Assessment of Learning & Evaluation scale (MFQE-SCALE) (Nelson, 2017). Although this scale is not available for public use, Nelson (2017) gave permission for its use in this study (see Appendix C). The MFQE-SCALE includes 31 items (see Appendix B, Section 6) which measure at least one of six salient student development and attitude constructs (Nelson, 2017). The MFQE-SCALE uses a five-point Likert-like scale, which includes the following response options: one (*Describes me greatly*), two (*Describes me well*), three (*Describes me somewhat*), four (*Describes me very little*), and five (*Does not describe me at all*) (Nelson, 2017). The reliability of the entire MFQE-SCALE ranges from moderately

strong to strong (Cronbach's α = .72 to .82) (Nelson, 2017). Five questions of the MFQE-SCALE explicitly measure the manner in which students evaluate how to behave (see Appendix B, Section 6, Items 50-54) (Nelson, 2017). As an example, item 52 of the survey asked how descriptive the following statement was of the participant, "I do things that will have a positive effect on others, even if it inconveniences me" (Nelson, 2017, p. 1276). The reliability for the five-question subscale used to measure the manner in which students evaluate how to behave was quite strong in this study (α = .83).

Student Code of Conduct Perspectives

Student code of conduct perspectives were operationalized through two specific dependent variables: (a) how students evaluate code of conduct policies and (b) the degree to which students know and reference code of conduct policies in deciding how to behave. How students evaluate code of conduct policies was measured using the SCB (Campus Labs, 2017), while the degree to which students know and reference code of conduct policies in deciding how to behave was measured using the MFQE-SCALE (Nelson, 2017). Both instruments include several questions directly related to code of conduct evaluations, awareness, and consultation which are applicable to all students, including those who have and have not participated in the SCP. Moreover, these measures seek data regarding student expectations, perceptions, and attitudes toward campus conduct policies and process. To ensure that my study was focused within the student conduct context, all references to the "rules" in the MFQE-SCALE were modified to inquire about the student code of conduct rules specifically (Nelson, 2017).

How Students Evaluate Code of Conduct Policies. How students evaluate code of conduct policies was quantified through four SCB items (see Appendix B, Section 7, Items 55-57 and 59) (Campus Labs, 2017). The four SCB items were measured using a Likert scale (1 =

strongly disagree to 5 = *strongly agree*) (Campus Labs, 2017). For example, question 56 asked the participant's "level of agreement" with the following statement, "I believe that the process for addressing issues of potential student misconduct at this institution is fair" (Campus Labs, 2017).

As with intended student moral behavior, there was no reliability or validity data available for the items used to measure how students evaluate code of conduct policies. Consequently, I conducted an EFA for the four items used to measure this variable to ensure it was appropriately measured. Items were submitted to the EFA with principal axis factoring and promax (i.e., non-orthogonal) rotation. Interestingly, only one factor emerged from this analysis which alone accounted for 60.8% of the variance explained among the four items ($\alpha = .78$). Therefore, there is strong statistical evidence to suggest that the measure used to quantify how students evaluate code of conduct policies was well constructed and sensible.

The Degree to Which Students Know and Reference Code of Conduct Policies in Deciding How to Behave. Similarly, seven items from the MFQE-SCALE specifically measured the degree to which students know and reference code of conduct policies in deciding how to behave (see Appendix B, Section 6, Items 43-49) (Nelson, 2017). As an example, item 45 questioned participants about how well the following statement described them, "I believe following the student code of conduct rules can avoid causing trouble" (Nelson, 2017, p. 1276). In this study, the reliability of the seven items used from the MFQE-SCALE to measure this variable was strong ($\alpha = .79$)

Data Analysis

The data collected from the online survey was analyzed using the SPSS 27 software package and the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013). All participants who (a) did not give consent,

(b) only provided consent with no other survey responses, (c) answered only demographic questions, or (d) did not complete at least one entire variable scale or subscale were removed from the data set. The remaining data, which included 487 participants, was then imputed for missing item responses. Data imputation is a common statistical practice which uses the data provided by individual participants to predict missing responses (Little et al., 2016). For this project, Amelia II for R was used to complete this statistical process (Amelia, n.d.). Amelia II for R "multiply imputes" missing data, which means the software used an algorithm that proceeded through iterative steps of expectation and maximization to impute the missing survey data for all participants (Amelia, n.d.).

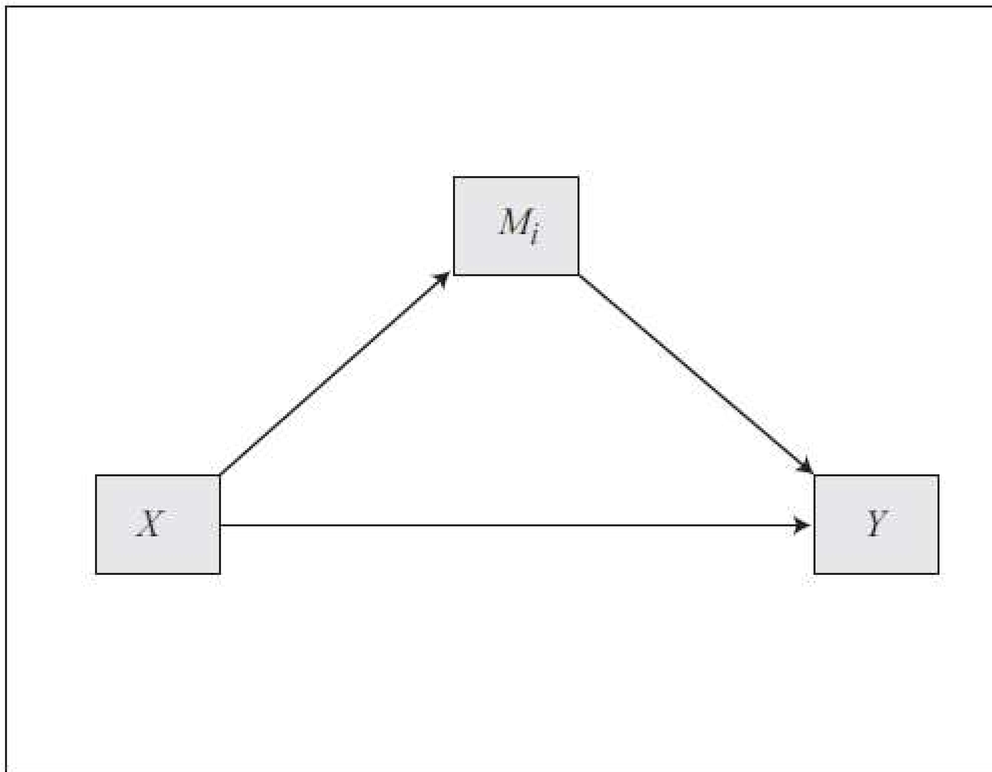
To help interpret the findings for this study, I used descriptive statistics and Pearson product-moment correlations, as summarized in Chapter Four. The research questions and conceptual hypotheses laid out in Chapter Two (see Figure 2.1) were evaluated using the conditional process analyses Model 4 and Model 14 in the PROCESS package for SPSS (Hayes, 2013).

With seven dependent variables, it was necessary to run separate conditional process analyses for each of the seven dependent variables (Hayes, 2013). For the conditional process Model 4 (see Figure 3.1), the independent variable was entity moral mindset, and the mediator variables were the two components of moral identity (i.e., moral identity internalization and moral identity symbolization). Four dependent variables measured intended student moral behavior to partially operationalize the moral behavior intentionality and consciousness construct, including all three identified EFA factors: (a) positive behavior intent – harm, (b) positive behavior intent – academic misconduct, and (c) positive behavior intent – substance use, as well as the added comprehensive behavior intent factor, (d) positive behavior intent – overall.

One additional dependent variable, measuring (e) the manner in which students evaluate how to behave, completed the operationalization of moral behavior intentionality and consciousness. The code of conduct perspectives construct was operationalized through two dependent variables, including (a) how students evaluate code of conduct policies and (b) the degree to which students know and reference code of conduct policies in deciding how to behave.

Figure 3.1

Conditional Process Model 4



Hayes (2013), p. 445.

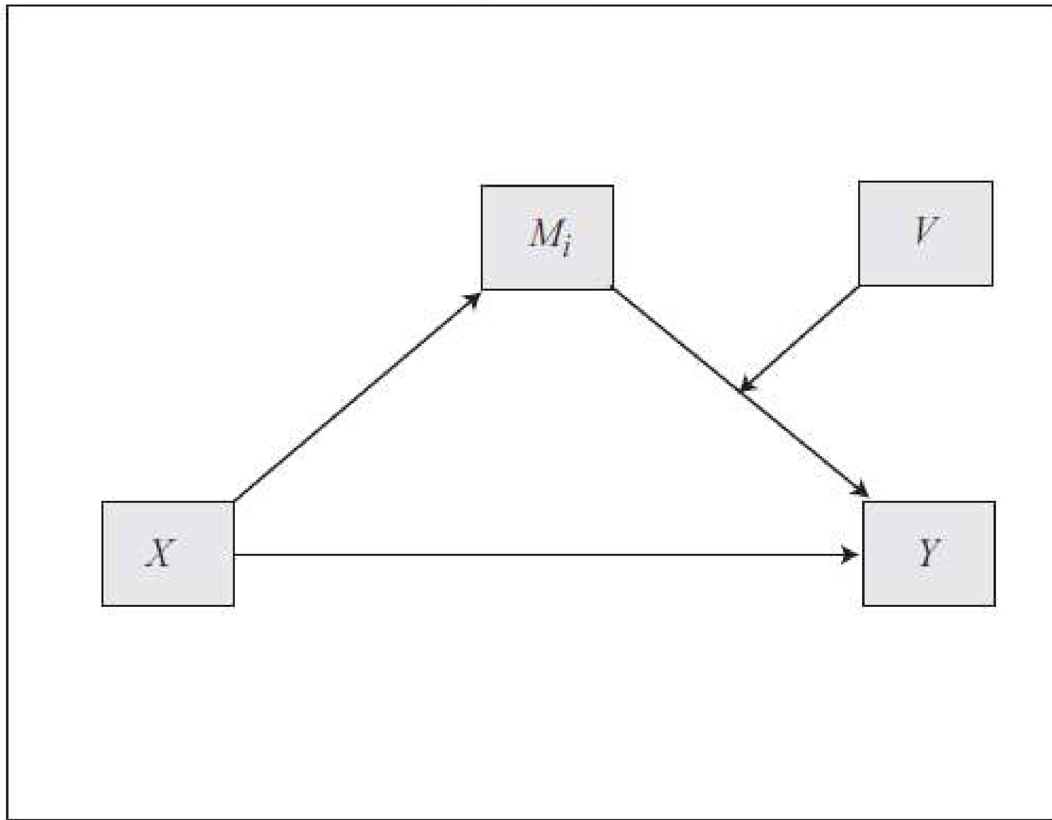
Each conditional process Model 4 included several covariates to discern which demographic groups were significant predictors in explaining the variance observed among the tested variables. These demographic covariates included age, sex, race, residential status (e.g., living on or off campus), classification, religious affiliation, and SCP participation. It is important to note that race compared self-identified white participants against all other participants. Given the small number of participants who identified as beyond the gender binary (n = 5, 1.02%), the analysis was conducted comparing men (n = 143, 29.4%) versus other gender identifications (n = 344, 70.6%), which included both female participants and the five participants outside the gender binary. Fifth-year seniors (n = 17; 3.5%) were collapsed into the senior classification, and all students living off-campus, both within (n = 167; 34.3%) and beyond five miles from campus (n = 59; 12.1%), were combined as off-campus residents. Finally, those participants who identified as agnostic (n = 36; 7.4%), atheist (n = 11; 2.3%), spiritual but not religious (n = 16; 3.3%), or not religious (n = 24; 4.9%) were analyzed as non-religious in contrast to those who identified with an organized faith group; those participants who chose not to answer this question (n = 7, 1.4%) were included with those participants who identified as religious.

When running each conditional process Model 4 without any interaction effect between the mediating variables, moral identity internalization and moral identity symbolization, I only found that internalization was a significant mediator for five of the seven dependent variables. In other words, the primary mediator in the model was moral identity internalization. Thus, it was necessary to explore how the two mediators interacted with each dependent variable to ensure a richer understanding of the relationships among the variables within the conditional process model. This was accomplished by using conditional process analyses Model 14 (see Figure 3.2)

(Hayes, 2013). This conditional process analysis considered (a) how moral identity symbolization moderates the association between the mediator (i.e., moral identity internalization) and the dependent variable (i.e., the direct effect) and (b) how moral identity symbolization moderates the indirect association between the independent variable (i.e., entity moral mindset) and the dependent variable via the mediator (i.e., moral identity internalization). As with the Model 4 investigation, I conducted the Model 14 conditional process analyses seven times, once for each dependent variable.

Figure 3.2

Conditional Process Model 14



Hayes (2013), p. 450.

Finally, to account for the nonnormality of the indirect effect in each conditional process model, I conducted all conditional process analyses using nonparametric bootstrapping (Hayes, 2013). Bootstrapping within PROCESS included 10,000 iterations of the analysis at a 95% confidence interval.

Ethical Considerations

When conducting research on human subjects, it is important to ensure that studies are conducted in an ethical manner. For this study, no deception occurred at any time to ensure participant safety and maintain study integrity.

Risks and Benefits

Human subject researchers must continually consider any potential risks or harm their research may present to participants. Survey research typically involves minimal risk because there is no direct contact between the researcher and the participants. However, because of the sensitive nature of the topic of this study, some students could have felt uncomfortable answering some survey questions, particularly those that inquire about immoral behaviors or those that constitute a violation of the institution's code of student conduct. To combat potential discomfort, study participation was completely voluntary, and students had the option to skip any question that they did not wish to answer or to withdraw entirely at any time. Moreover, participants were encouraged in the survey invitation to contact the institutional counseling center if they experienced any uneasiness or discomfort while completing the online survey.

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the empirical literature to help higher education administrators develop a deeper understanding of how and why students behave as they do. Additionally, by exploring some factors that influence student conduct perceptions, this study will aid administrators in crafting more proactive policies and developing enhanced

programming to prevent student misconduct. Therefore, student participants may receive direct, future benefit from study participation in the form of enhanced institutional programming and more effective conduct codes and proceedings.

No compensation was offered for study participation. However, a participant incentive was used. Students who complete the survey in its entirety were eligible for entry to win one of five $25 Amazon gift cards. This amount was enough to incentivize participation but was not great enough in value to create a sense of coercion to participate.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

No report from this study does or will ever include responses that identify individual participants. Instead, all data is or will be reported in the aggregate. Yet, it is important to note that because reminder emails to participate were only sent to those who had not yet responded, this study was not conducted anonymously. Participants were emailed unique survey links which were tied to their email address, though only the email server processed the identifying information to ensure reminders were appropriately disseminated to non-respondents. If students chose to enter the incentive drawing, as outlined above, their email address were captured to complete the incentive notification process if they were selected to win, further reducing anonymity. This identifying information was removed from the data set and destroyed immediately after completing the incentive drawing and informing student winners.

To assure participant confidentiality, study data was initially stored within the Campus Labs® servers. Accessibility was only granted though a unique username and password. Campus Labs® (2020) "has implemented various security measures at the application, network, and physical level to ensure that data will not be compromised;" this includes the use of a "Class A Data Center" to maintain their company servers, which are consistently monitored, both

manually and electronically (Campus Labs, 2020). All data collected through this survey remains the exclusive property of the researcher and at no time will "student email addresses and/or identification numbers…[be] shared, sold, or disseminated to any third-party" (Campus Labs, 2020). Finally, I electronically downloaded the data collected through and stored on the Campus Labs® servers to complete the data analysis for this study. The data collected for this study will be retained indefinitely on password-protected computers to which only I and members of my dissertation committee have access.

Informed Consent

The email invitation for this study (see Appendix A) provided an initial, short affirmation of the student's voluntary agreement to participate. Upon opening the individual survey link, the first page of the online survey required the student to provide age confirmation to ensure that the student was 18 years of age or older (see Appendix B). After affirming that the student is not a minor, the second page of the online survey provided the full Institutional Review Board (IRB) Consent to Participate in Research form (see Appendix D). This page of the survey required participants to affirm that they have not only read and understood the information provided to them, but by checking a box and proceeding with the survey, the students were providing their informed consent (see Appendix D). This consent form also provided contact information should the student wish to inquire about their participant rights.

Summary

This chapter provided a thorough description of the research methods used to conduct this study, including ethical considerations and the informed consent process. It highlighted the postpositivist paradigmatic framework, which grounded the procedures of this study; the directive of this framework is to get as close as possible to reality through research.

I used an online survey to complete this cross-sectional study. The sample was collected from a private, four-year university in the U.S. southwest in the fall of 2020 and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this unprecedented context, 20.0% of students invited to participate responded to the online survey (n = 619), and of those that responded, nearly 80% of the responses yielded functional data (n = 487). The survey for this project included demographic items and several established scales to measure study variables. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS and the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013). Missing data was imputed using Amelia II for R (Amelia, n.d.). I analyzed the findings for this study using descriptive statistics, Personal product-moment correlations, and conditional process analyses (Hayes, 2013); each process model was assessed for significant interaction effects between the two components of the mediator variable, moral identity (i.e., internalization and symbolization). The results of this research study are provided in Chapter Four below.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This chapter summarizes the findings of this study. This research project utilized Hayes' (2013) conditional process analysis (specifically, Model 4 and Model 14) to explore the relationships among the variables. Table 4.1 reports descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients for all study variables.

With seven dependent variables, I investigated distinct conditional process models for each outcome variable using Model 4, which examined moral identity internalization and moral identity symbolization as mediators but did not evaluate the interaction between them (see Figure 3.1) (Hayes, 2013). Moral identity symbolization was not a significant mediator for any dependent variables. However, analysis of moral identity internalization as a mediator yielded significant effects for five of the seven dependent variables examined. Thus, conditional process Model 14, a mediated moderation model, was used to conduct the remaining analyses (see Figure 3.2) (Hayes, 2013). Model 14 provided results to understand the associations more clearly among the variables when taking into consideration the mediation of moral identity internalization, as moderated by a participant's moral identity symbolization (Hayes, 2013). In other words, Model 14 considered (a) how moral identity symbolization moderates the direct association between moral identity internalization and the dependent variable and (b) how moral identity symbolization moderates the indirect association between the independent variable (entity moral mindset), the mediator (moral identity internalization), and the dependent variable (Hayes, 2013).

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Variables

Variables	*M (SD)*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Mindset	2.65 (1.13)	--								
2. Internalization	4.67 (0.41)	-.10*	--							
3. Symbolization	3.58 (0.66)	.08	.36**	--						
4. Behavior evaluation	4.39 (0.59)	-.06	.37**	.31**	--					
5. Positive intent - harm	3.85 (0.33)	-.08	.31**	.12**	.28**	--				
6. Positive intent – academic	3.85 (0.38)	-.09*	.21**	.01	.11*	.47**	--			
7. Positive intent – substance	3.54 (0.66)	-.01	.17**	.16**	.15**	.40**	.32**	--		
8. Positive intent - overall	3.75 (0.35)	-.06	.28**	.14**	.22**	.72**	.70**	.85**	--	
9. Code evaluation	3.49 (0.88)	.07	.06	-.01	.01	.16**	.07	.11*	.14**	--
10. Code reference	3.78 (0.65)	.01	.33**	.32**	.39**	.26**	.14**	.32**	.33**	.28**

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

Note. For behavior intent and code perception variables, higher scores indicate higher moral behavior and more positive code perceptions.

Entity Moral Mindset and Moral Identity

Across all models, the association between entity moral mindset and moral identity (i.e., internalization and symbolization) remained the same. However, the findings for each component of moral identity were quite distinct. A significant multiple correlation coefficient emerged for the model predicting moral identity internalization, $R^2 = .12$, $F(8, 478) = 8.01$, $p < .001$. Entity moral mindset emerged as a significant and negative predictor for moral identity internalization, $B = -0.04$, $SE = 0.02$, $\beta = -.11$, $p = .009$. This model, as was done for each model tested, was examined while controlling for possible confounding variables (i.e., age, classification, race, religious affiliation, residential status, sex, and SPC participation). As described in Chapter Three, sex was measured using a binary variable that compared participants who identified as men versus all other participants, including women and five participants that identified beyond the gender binary (1.02%). Religious affiliation contrasted those who identified as non-religious with religious participants. Only male ($B = -0.26$, $SE = 0.04$, $\beta = -.29$, $p < .001$) and non-religious ($B = -0.11$, $SE = 0.05$, $\beta = -.10$, $p = .020$) emerged as significant negative predictors. Table 4.2 summarizes these results.

Table 4.2

Coefficients of Conditional Process Analyses Predicting Moral Identity

Predictor	Moral Identity Internalization B (β)	Moral Identity Symbolization B (β)
	ΔR^2 = .12**	**ΔR^2 = .07****
Mindset	-0.04 (-.11)**	0.04 (.07)
On-campus[a]	0.07 (.09)	-0.08 (-.06)
Classification[b]	0.04 (.10)	0.04 (.07)
Age	-0.001 (-.001)	-0.02 (-.04)
Male[c]	-0.26 (-.29)**	-0.16 (-.11)*
White[d]	0.09 (.07)	0.04 (.02)
Non-religious[e]	-0.11 (-.10)*	-0.33 (-.19)**
SCP participation[f]	0.01 (.01)	0.03 (.02)

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

[a]On-campus coded 1 = on-campus residence, 0 = off-campus residence.

[b]Classification coded 1 = first year, 2 = sophomore, 3 = junior, 4 = senior and fifth year senior.

[c]Male coded 1 = male, 0 = other.

[d]White coded 1 = white, 0 = other.

[e]Non-religious coded 1 = non-religious, 0 = other.

[f]SCP participation coded 1 = prior SCP participation, 0 = no prior SCP participation.

Interestingly, by contrast, entity moral mindset was not a significant predictor for moral identity symbolization, *B* = 0.04, *SE* = 0.03, β = .07, *p* = .127, yet a significant multiple correlation coefficient emerged for the model predicting moral identity symbolization, $R^2 = .07$, $F(8, 478) = 4.15$, $p < .001$. Again, only male (*B* = -0.16, *SE* = 0.06, β = -.11, *p* = .013) and non-religious (*B* = -0.33, *SE* = 0.08, β = -.19, $p < .001$) emerged as significant negative predictors. These results are summarized in Table 4.2.

Moral Behavior Intentionality and Consciousness

The first outcome construct considered in this study was student moral behavior intentionality and consciousness. To investigate this construct, it was operationalized with five distinct dependent variables: (a) the manner in which students evaluate how to behave, (b) positive behavior intent – harm, (c) positive behavior intent – academic misconduct, (d) positive behavior intent – substance use, and (e) positive behavior intent – overall.

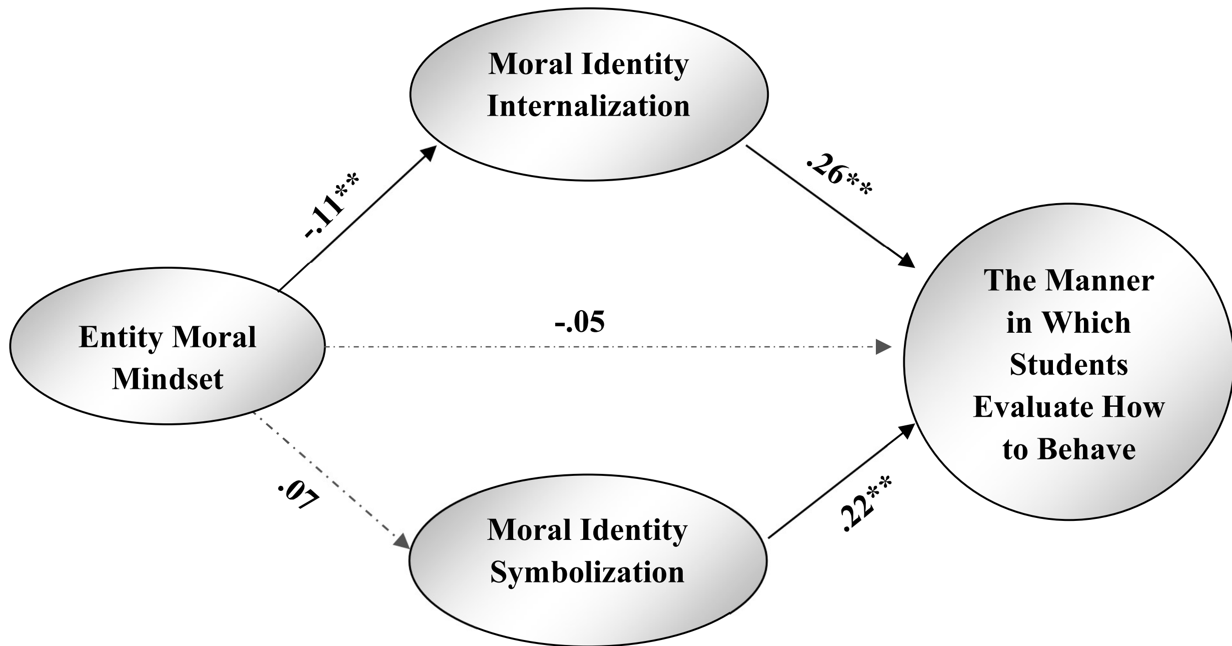
I conducted the analyses for each dependent variable in two steps. The initial step examined the relationship between both components of moral identity (i.e., internalization and symbolization) and the criterion variable, including the same covariates outlined above. The second step repeated the analysis, but this time, examined the interaction effect of the mediator variables. With entity moral mindset emerging as a significant predictor of moral identity internalization and not moral identity symbolization, conditional process Model 14 was selected to complete the analysis (Hayes, 2013). Model 14 considers the relationships among the model's variables with moral identity internalization as the mediating variable and with moral identity symbolization as a potential moderator of its association with the dependent variable (Hayes, 2013).

The Manner in Which Students Evaluate How to Behave

A significant multiple correlation coefficient emerged for the model predicting the manner in which students evaluate how to behave, $R^2 = .19$, $F(10, 476) = 11.25$, $p < .001$, where higher Likert scale values measured high moral behavior intentionality and consciousness. Figure 4.1 depicts this model. Entity moral mindset was not a significant predictor of this criterion variable, $B = -0.03$, $SE = 0.02$, $\beta = -.05$, $p = .201$. Conversely, moral identity internalization ($B = 0.37$, $SE = 0.07$, $\beta = .26$, $p < .001$) and symbolization ($B = 0.20$, $SE = 0.04$, $\beta = .22$, $p < .001$) did emerge as significant and positive predictors of the manner in which students evaluate how to behave. Only participant classification and being male were significant predictors within this model. Classification had a significant and positive effect on the dependent variable ($B = 0.09$, $SE = 0.04$, $\beta = .18$, $p = .034$) whereas male had a negative effect, $B = -0.11$, $SE = 0.06$, $\beta = -.87$, $p = .048$. Table 4.3 summarizes these results. A negative, significant indirect effect emerged for the association between entity moral mindset, moral identity internalization, and the manner in which students evaluate how to behave; there was no such significant indirect effect for moral identity symbolization. Thus, Table 4.4 provides the only significant results for the indirect effect wherein moral identity internalization serves as the mediator variable. In step two of the analysis for the manner in which students evaluate how to behave, I examined the model considering the interaction of the two components of moral identity to determine if moral identity symbolization moderates internalization. There was no significant interaction effect found between the two components of moral identity.

Figure 4.1

Conditional Process Model Predicting the Manner in Which Students Evaluate How to Behave



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

Note. All results are reported as the standardized beta (β).

Table 4.3

Coefficients of Conditional Process Analyses Predicting Moral Behavior Intentionality and Consciousness

Predictor	Behavior evaluation *B* (β)	Positive intent – harm *B* (β)	Positive intent – academic *B* (β)	Positive intent – substance *B* (β)	Positive intent – overall *B* (β)
Step One	**ΔR^2 = .19****	**ΔR^2 = .13****	**ΔR^2 = .08****	**ΔR^2 = .08****	**ΔR^2 = .12****
Mindset	-0.03 (-.05)	-0.02 (-.07)	-0.02 (-.07)	-0.01 (-.01)	-0.02 (-.05)
Internalization	0.37 (.26)**	0.20 (.25)**	0.21 (.23)**	0.15 (.09)	0.19 (.21)**
Symbolization	0.20 (.22)**	0.01 (.01)	-0.04 (-.06)	0.10 (.10)*	0.02 (.04)
On-campus	0.06 (.05)	0.02 (.03)	0.01 (.02)	0.09 (.07)	0.04 (.06)
Classification	0.09 (.18)*	0.01 (.02)	-0.03 (-.09)	-0.01 (-.01)	-0.01 (-.03)
Age	-0.06 (-.14)	-0.01 (-.02)	-0.02 (-.05)	-0.03 (-.06)	-0.02 (-.06)
Male	-0.11 (-.09)*	-0.11 (-.15)**	-0.03 (-.03)	-0.14 (-.10)*	-0.09 (-.12)**
White	-0.01 (-.01)	0.07 (.07)	0.04 (.04)	-0.02 (-.01)	0.03 (.03)
Non-religious	0.09 (.06)	0.01 (.01)	-0.01 (-.01)	-0.23 (-.13)**	-0.08 (-.08)
SCP participation	-0.01 (-.01)	0.09 (.10)*	0.03 (.03)	-0.04 (-.02)	0.03 (.03)
Step Two	**ΔR^2 = .001**	**ΔR^2 = .02****	**ΔR^2 = .01****	**ΔR^2 = .01***	**ΔR^2 = .02****
Interaction effect[a]	0.04	0.13**	0.13**	0.20*	0.15**

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

[a]Interaction effect between moral identity internalization and symbolization.

Note. See Table 4.2 for variable coding information.

Table 4.4

Summary of Indirect Effects for Conditional Process Models

Path	$B_{[95\% CI]}$ (β)	SE
Mindset → Internalization → Behavior evaluation	$-0.02_{[-0.03:-0.01]}$ (-.03)*	0.01
Mindset → Internalization → Positive intent – harm	$-0.01_{[-0.02:-0.001]}$ (-0.03)*	0.01
Mindset → Internalization → Positive intent – academic	$-0.01_{[-0.02:-0.001]}$ (-.03)*	0.01
Mindset → Internalization → Positive intent – overall	$-0.01_{[-0.02:-0.001]}$ (-.02)*	0.01
Mindset → Internalization → Code reference	$-0.02_{[-0.03:-0.01]}$ (-.03)*	0.01

* $p < .05$

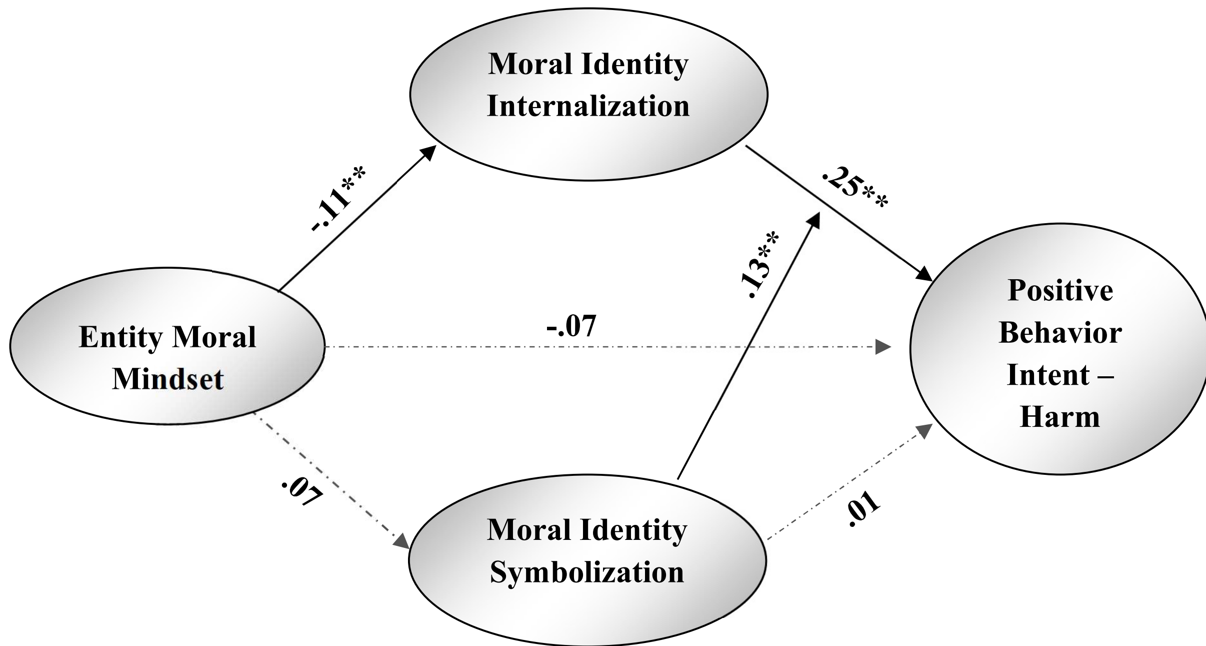
Intended Student Moral Behavior

Positive Behavior Intent – Harm

For this analysis, higher Likert scale values depicted better intended moral behavior (and lower values indicated intended harmful behavior). A significant multiple correlation coefficient emerged for the model predicting positive moral behavior – harm, $R^2 = .13$, $F(10, 476) = 7.09$, $p < .001$. Figure 4.2 illustrates this model. Entity moral mindset was not a significant predictor of this criterion variable, $B = -0.02$, $SE = 0.01$, $\beta = -.07$, $p = .125$. Only moral identity internalization ($B = 0.20$, $SE = 0.04$, $\beta = .25$, $p < .001$) emerged as significant and positive predictor of positive behavior intent – harm; moral identity symbolization did not, $B = 0.01$, $SE = 0.02$, $\beta = .01$, $p = .770$. Unlike previous models, in addition to male ($B = -0.11$, $SE = 0.03$, $\beta = -.15$, $p < .001$), previous participation in the SCP operated as a positive and significant predictor within the positive behavior intent – harm model, $B = 0.09$, $SE = 0.04$, $\beta = .10$, $p = .022$. Table 4.3 summarizes these results. As was found in the model evaluating the manner in which students evaluate how to behave, a significant, negative indirect effect emerged for the association between entity moral mindset, moral identity internalization, and positive behavior intent – harm; similarly, no significant indirect effect was found for moral identity symbolization. Table 4.4 provides only significant results for the indirect effect in this model.

Figure 4.2

Conditional Process Model Predicting Positive Behavior Intent – Harm



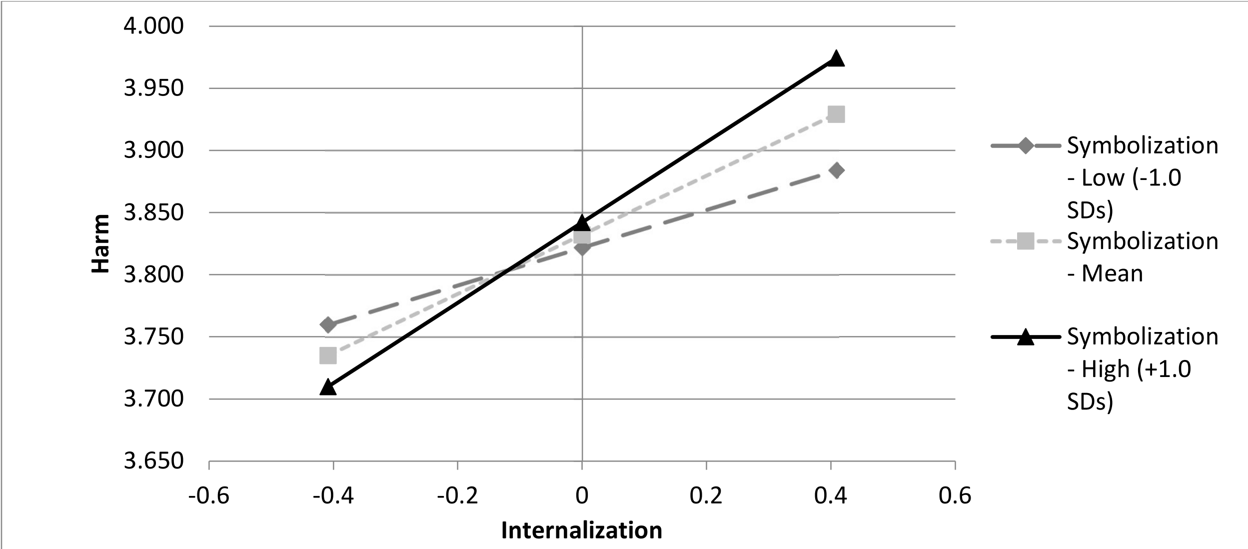
* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Note. All results are reported as the standardized beta (β) except the interaction effect, which is reported as the unstandardized coefficient (*B*).

A positive significant interaction effect emerged between moral identity internalization and symbolization for the positive behavior intent – harm variable (B = 0.13, SE = 0.04, p = .001). Adding this interaction effect produced a significant increase in the variance explained within the model, $\Delta R^2 = .02$, $F(1, 475) = 10.47$, $p = .001$. This interaction effect was decomposed using the pick-a-point approach (i.e., at the mean and +/-1.0 standard deviations for predictor variables) described by Hayes (2013); Figure 4.3 depicts this decomposition. Moral identity internalization emerged as a positive significant predictor of positive behavior intent – harm across all levels of moral identity symbolization. However, the strength of the effect of moral identity internalization varied. The strength of the effect of moral identity internalization was strongest when moral identity symbolization was high (i.e., 1.0 standard deviations above the mean), $B = 0.32$, $SE = 0.05$, $\beta = .40$, $p < .05$, and weaker when moral identity symbolization was low (i.e., 1.0 standard deviations below the mean), $B = 0.15$, $SE = 0.05$, $\beta = .19$, $p < .05$. Specifically, when moral identity internalization and symbolization were at their highest, positive behavior intent – harm was also at its highest. By contrast, when internalization was at its lowest level and symbolization was at its highest, this dependent variable was at its lowest point. Likewise, when reviewing the impact of the moderated mediation on the indirect effect, I found that the influence of entity moral mindset on positive behavior intent – harm via moral identity internalization had a stronger influence at increasingly higher levels of moral identity symbolization.

Figure 4.3

Decomposition of the Interaction Between Moral Identity Internalization and Moral Identity Symbolization Predicting Positive Behavior Intent – Harm

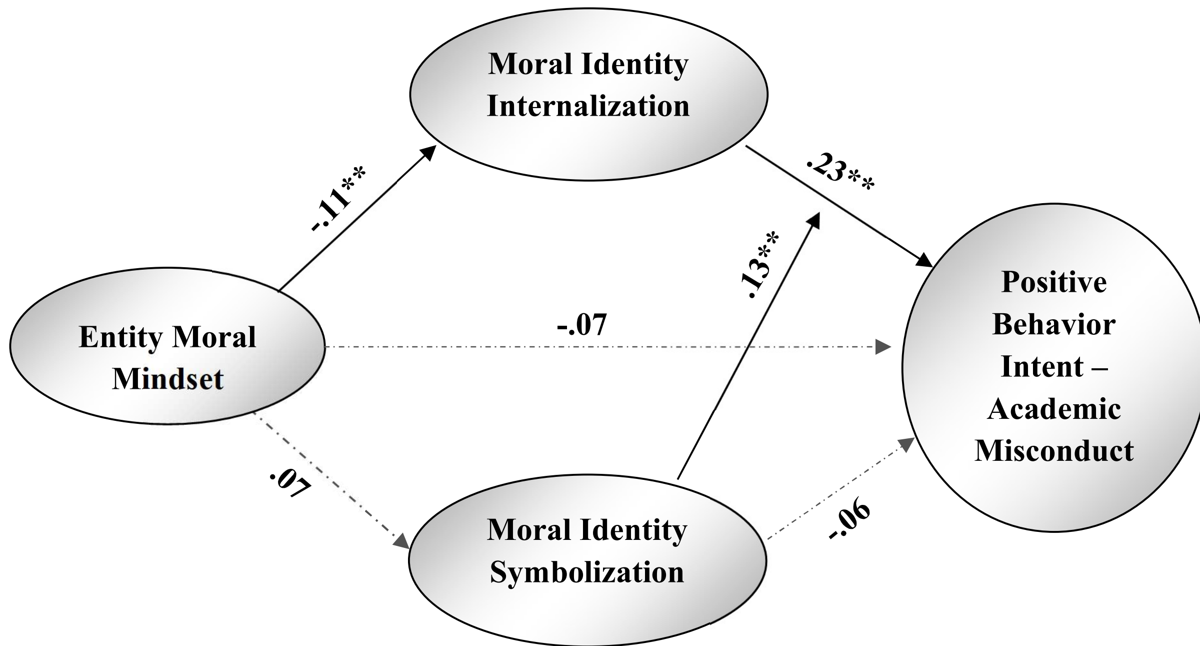


Positive Behavior Intent – Academic Misconduct

Higher scale scores represented higher moral behavior intentionality related to acts of academic misconduct (and lower values indicated intended academic misconduct behavior). Entity moral mindset was not a significant predictor of a participant's positive behavior intent – academic misconduct, B = -0.02, SE = 0.02, β = -.07, p = .139. A significant multiple correlation coefficient emerged for the model predicting this criterion variable, $R^2 = .08$, $F(10, 476) = 4.03$, $p < .001$. Figure 4.4 illustrates this model. As was found with harmful behavior intent, only moral identity internalization (B = 0.21, SE = 0.05, β = .23, $p < .001$) emerged as significant and positive predictor of positive behavior intent – academic misconduct; moral identity symbolization did not, B = -0.04, SE = 0.03, β = -.06, p = .211. Remarkably, there were no other significant predictors found in the positive behavior intent – academic misconduct model. These results are summarized in Table 4.3. A significant and negative indirect effect emerged among the variables for this model with moral identity internalization as the mediator. Table 4.4 provides only significant results for the indirect effect in this model.

Figure 4.4

Conditional Process Model Predicting Positive Behavior Intent – Academic Misconduct



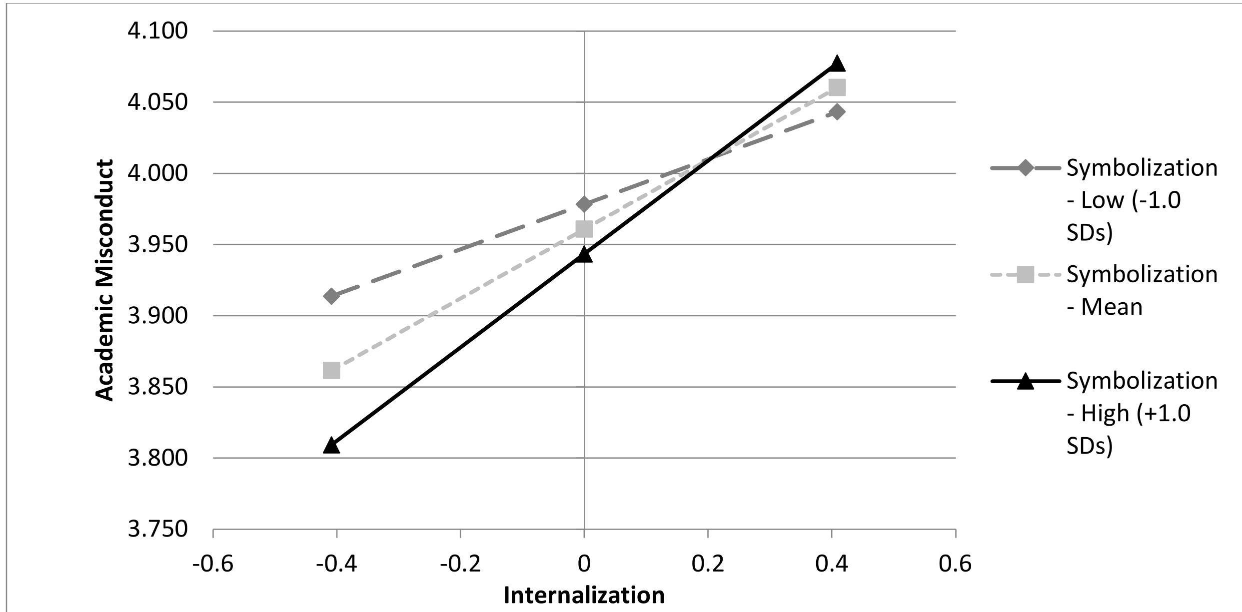
* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Note. All results are reported as the standardized beta (β) except the interaction effect, which is reported as the unstandardized coefficient (*B*).

When testing if there is an interaction effect between moral identity internalization and moral identity symbolization as the second step in the analysis, a significant interaction (B = 0.13, SE = 0.05, p = .007) emerged in the positive behavior intent – academic misconduct model. Adding this interaction effect yielded a significant increase in the variance explained, $\Delta R^2 = .01$, $F(1, 475) = 7.23$, p = .007. This interaction effect was also decomposed using the same pick-a-point approach explained above; Figure 4.5 depicts this decomposition. Similar to the interaction effect results for positive behavior intent – harm above, moral identity internalization emerged as a positive significant predictor of positive behavior intent – academic misconduct across all levels of moral identity symbolization; the effect of moral identity internalization was strongest on this dependent variable when moral identity symbolization was high (i.e., 1.0 standard deviations above the mean), B = 0.33, SE = 0.06, β = .35, p < .05, and weaker when moral identity symbolization was low (i.e., 1.0 standard deviations below the mean), B = 0.16, SE = 0.06, β = .17, p < .05. Just as I found for positive behavior intent – harm, when moral identity internalization and symbolization were at their highest, positive behavior intent – academic misconduct was also at its highest; when internalization was at its lowest and symbolization was at its highest level, this dependent variable was at its lowest point. Further, when analyzing the indirect effect, I found that the influence of entity moral mindset on positive behavior intent – academic misconduct, as mediated by moral identity internalization, had a stronger effect when a student had higher levels of moral identity symbolization.

Figure 4.5

Decomposition of the Interaction Between Moral Identity Internalization and Moral Identity Symbolization Predicting Positive Behavior Intent – Academic Misconduct

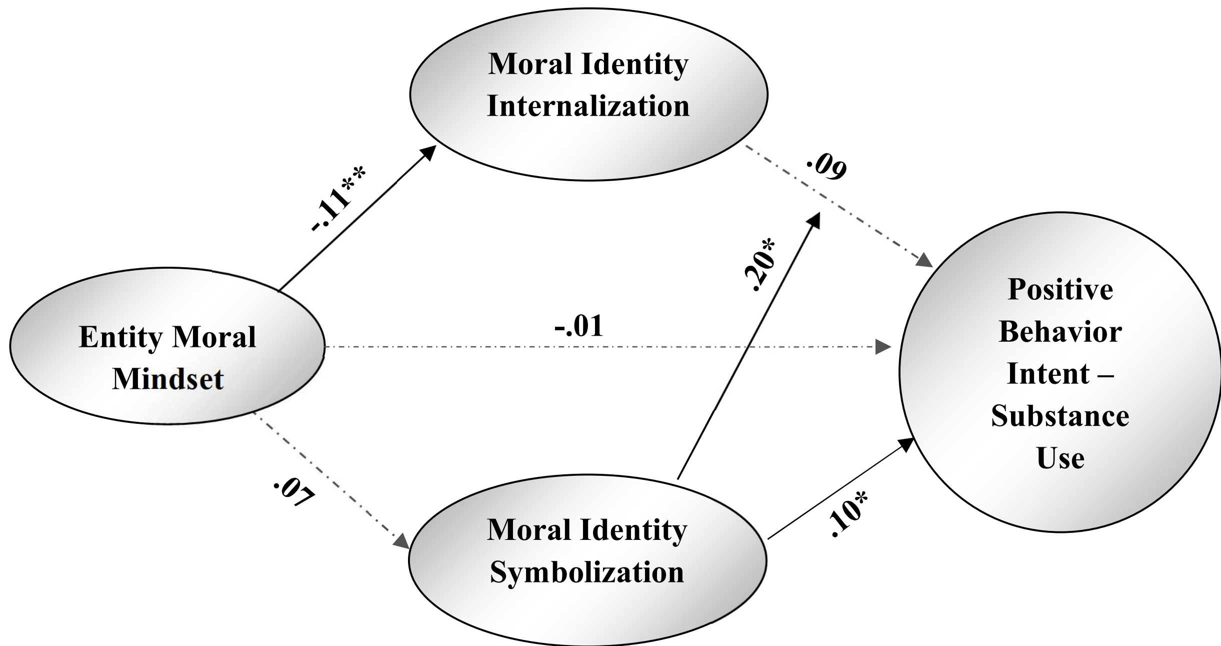


Positive Behavior Intent – Substance Use

As with the other criterion variables, higher Likert scale scores represented more positive substance use behavior intentionality (and lower scores indicated more negative substance use intentionality). A significant multiple correlation coefficient emerged for the model predicting this criterion variable, $R^2 = .08$, $F(10, 476) = 4.16$, $p < .001$. Figure 4.6 illustrates this model. Interestingly, unlike in the analysis for previous models, moral identity symbolization ($B = 0.10$, $SE = 0.05$, $\beta = .10$, $p = .041$) emerged as significant and positive predictor of positive behavior intent – substance use, whereas moral identity internalization only tended toward significance, $B = 0.15$, $SE = 0.08$, $\beta = .09$, $p = .067$. Entity moral mindset was not a significant predictor of a participant's positive behavior intent – substance use, $B = -0.01$, $SE = 0.03$, $\beta = -.01$, $p = .812$. Like the results found for the association between entity moral mindset and both components of moral identity, male ($B = -0.14$, $SE = 0.07$, $\beta = -.01$, $p = .033$) and non-religious ($B = -0.23$, $SE = 0.08$, $\beta = -.13$, $p = .003$) were inverse predictors of this dependent variable. Table 4.3 summarizes these results. This investigation produced no significant indirect effects.

Figure 4.6

Conditional Process Model Predicting Positive Behavior Intent – Substance Use



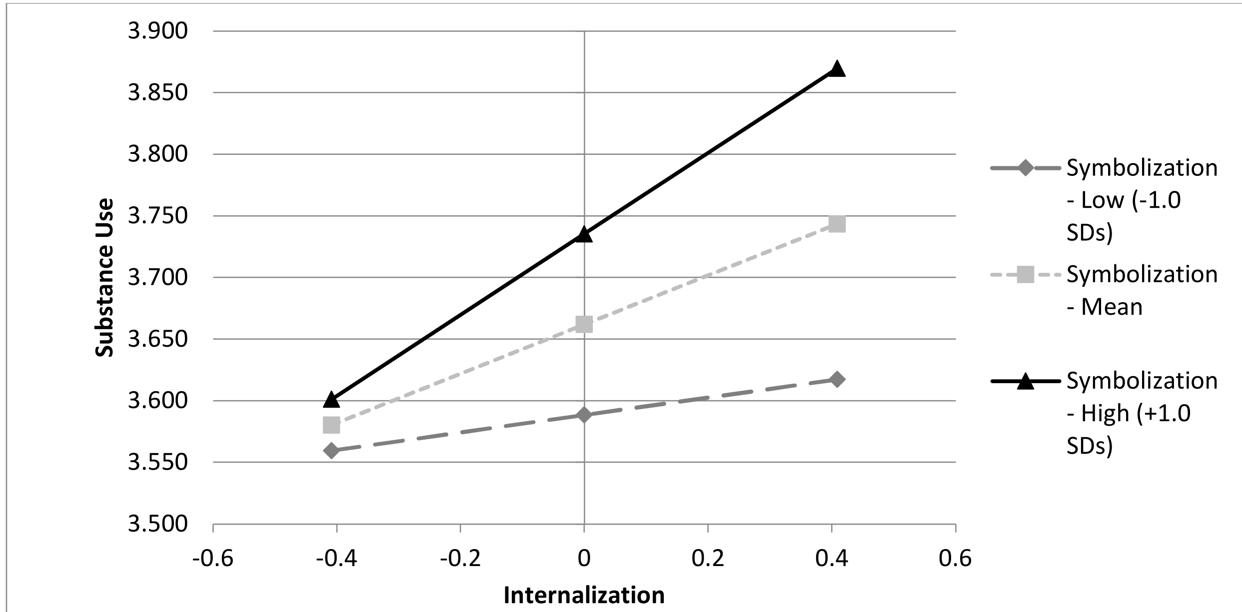
* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Note. All results are reported as the standardized beta (β) except the interaction effect, which is reported as the unstandardized coefficient (*B*).

During step two of the analysis for positive behavior intent – substance use, a significant interaction effect (B = 0.20, SE = 0.08, p = .019) emerged when investigating how moral identity symbolization moderates moral identity internalization. The addition of this interaction effect increased the variance explained significantly, $\Delta R^2 = .01$, $F(1, 475) = 5.59$, $p = .019$. This interaction effect was also decomposed using the same pick-a-point approach; Figure 4.7 depicts this decomposition. Both moral identity internalization (B = 0.20, SE = 0.08, p = .016) and symbolization (B = 0.11, SE = 0.05, p = .021) emerged as positive and significant predictors of this criterion variable in the interaction model. The strength of the effect of moral identity internalization was strongest when moral identity symbolization was high (i.e., 1.0 standard deviations above the mean), B = 0.33, SE = 0.10, β = .21, $p < .05$. However, when moral identity symbolization was low, the strength of the effect of moral identity internalization weakened to the point of non-significance, B = 0.07, SE = 0.10, β = .04 $p > .05$. This means that when moral identity internalization and symbolization were at their highest, so was intended positive behavior intent – substance use. Interestingly, though, unlike the previous behavior intent variables, when moral identity internalization was low, there was no significant difference in the participant's positive behavior intent – substance use, regardless of their level of moral identity symbolization; the participant was still just as likely to make poor substance use choices with low moral identity symbolization as with high. Unlike the results for both positive behavior intent – harm and academic misconduct, I found that the influence of entity moral mindset on positive behavior intent – substance use, as mediated by moral identity internalization, was only significant when symbolization was at its highest level (i.e., 1.0 standard deviations above the mean) or its mean level.

Figure 4.7

Decomposition of the Interaction Between Moral Identity Internalization and Moral Identity Symbolization Predicting Positive Behavior Intent – Substance Use

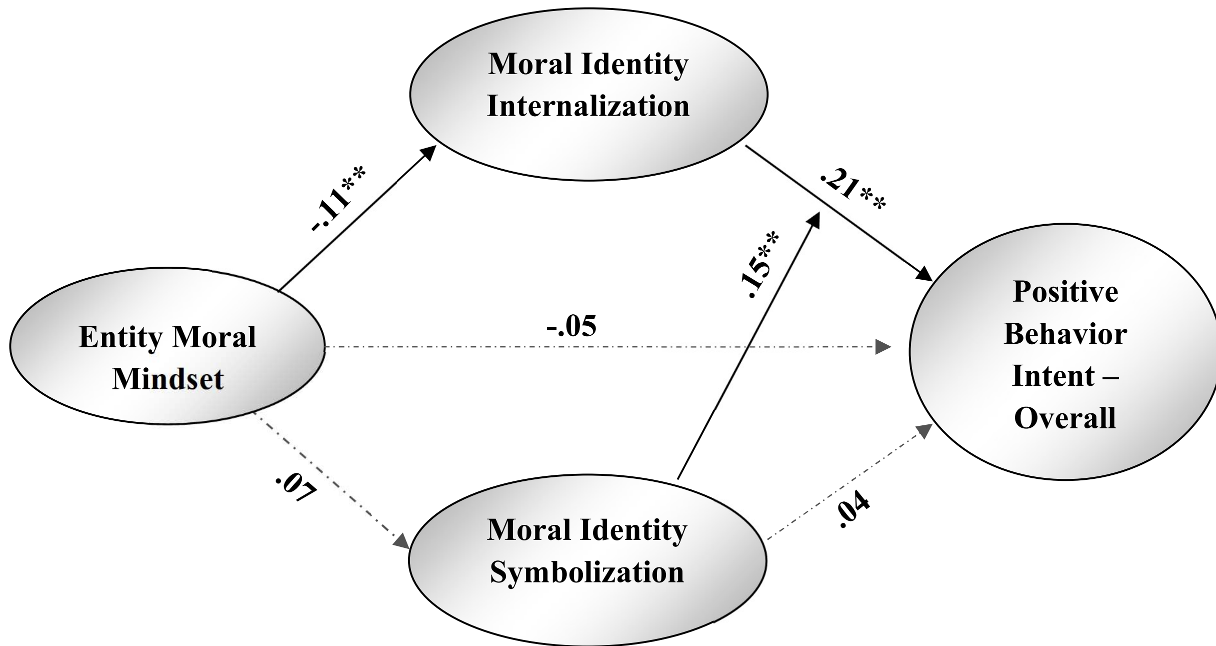


Positive Behavior Intent – Overall

The positive behavior intent – overall variable, the last outcome variable measuring the moral behavior intentionality and consciousness construct, calculated each participant's intended moral behavior by taking the mean of their variable scores for each of the positive behavior intent factors previously discussed. Higher scale scores indicated a higher overall moral behavior intent. Only moral identity internalization emerged as a significant and positive predictor of positive behavior intent – overall, $B = 0.19$, $SE = 0.04$, $\beta = .21$, $p < .001$; moral identity symbolization was not ($B = 0.02$, $SE = 0.03$, $\beta = .04$, $p = .357$). A significant multiple correlation coefficient emerged for the model predicting this dependent variable, $R^2 = .12$, $F(10, 476) = 6.24$, $p < .001$. Figure 4.8 depicts this model. Entity moral mindset was not a significant predictor of a participant's positive behavior intent – overall, $B = -0.02$, $SE = 0.01$, $\beta = -.05$, $p = .246$. Male was an inverse predictor ($B = -0.09$, $SE = 0.04$, $\beta = -.12$, $p = .009$) and the non-religious covariate tended toward significance ($B = -0.08$, $SE = 0.04$, $\beta = -.08$, $p = .064$). Table 4.3 summarizes these results. This analysis yielded a significant, negative indirect effect within the positive behavior intent – overall model for moral identity internalization. Table 4.4 only offers these significant results for the indirect effect.

Figure 4.8

Conditional Process Model Predicting Positive Behavior Intent – Overall



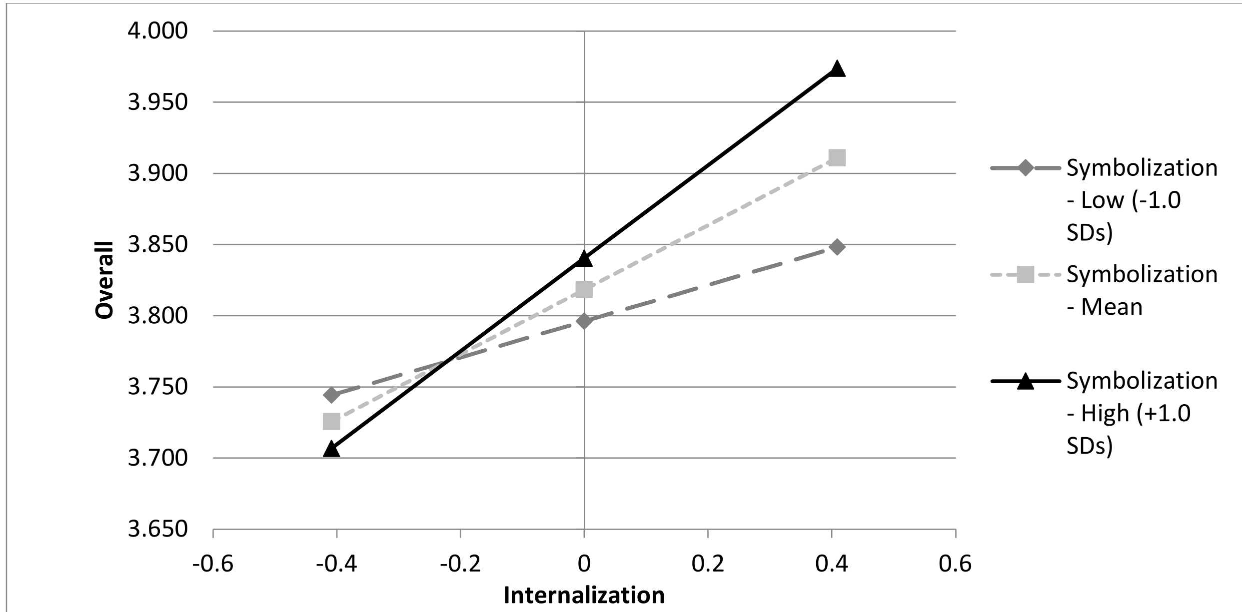
* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Note. All results are reported as the standardized beta (β) except the interaction effect, which is reported as the unstandardized coefficient (*B*).

I found a significant interaction effect during the second part of the analysis of intended moral behavior – overall, (B = 0.15, SE = 0.04, p < .001). By adding this interaction to the model for positive behavior intent – overall, the variance in the model increased significantly, ΔR^2 = .02, F(1, 475) = 12.10, p < .001. Figure 4.9 depicts the decomposition of this interaction effect. Although moral identity internalization emerged as a positive significant predictor of this criterion variable across all levels of moral identity symbolization, the strength of the effect of moral identity internalization was strongest when moral identity symbolization was high (i.e., 1.0 standard deviations above the mean), B = 0.33, SE = 0.05, β = .38, p < .05, and weaker when moral identity symbolization was low (i.e., 1.0 standard deviations below the mean), B = 0.13, SE = 0.05, β = .15, p < .05. For the impact of the moderated mediation on the indirect effect (i.e., entity moral mindset on positive intended behavior – all via moral identity internalization), I found that moral identity internalization had a stronger influence on the association the higher the participant's level of moral identity symbolization.

Figure 4.9

Decomposition of the Interaction Between Moral Identity Internalization and Moral Identity Symbolization Predicting Positive Behavior Intent – Overall



Code of Conduct Perspectives

In addition to considering how moral identity mediates the relationship between moral entity mindset and moral behavior intentionality and consciousness construct, I also explored the student code of conduct perspectives construct to gather insight about current SCP practices and policies at HEIs. This construct was operationalized through two variables: (a) how students evaluate code of conduct policies and (b) the degree to which students know and reference the code of conduct policies in deciding how to behave. I used the same two step process to complete the analysis for both criterion variables, including an exploration of the interaction effect between the mediator variables as a second step.

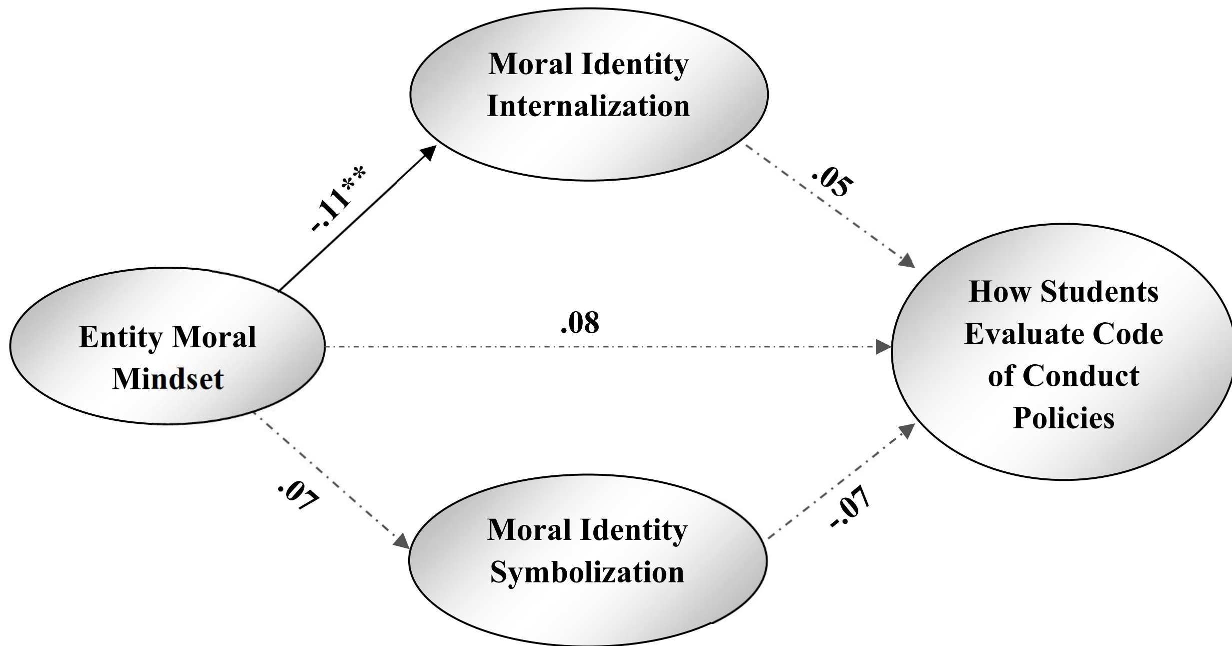
How Students Evaluate Code of Conduct Policies

This outcome variable measured participant impressions and evaluations though items asking students about the appropriateness, fairness, consistency, and general understanding of the code of conduct at the research setting itself. High variable scores signify a positive code of conduct perspective. As with all other conditional process models studied, a significant multiple correlation coefficient emerged for this model, $R^2 = .05$, $F(10, 476) = 2.25$, $p = .014$. Figure 4.10 illustrates this model. Neither moral identity internalization ($B = 0.12$, $SE = 0.11$, $\beta = .05$, $p = .295$) and symbolization ($B = -0.09$, $SE = 0.07$, $\beta = -.07$, $p = .182$) were significant predictors of student code assessments. Likewise, entity moral mindset was also not a significant predictor of participant code impressions, $B = 0.06$, $SE = 0.04$, $\beta = .08$, $p = .103$. Student classification ($B = -0.14$, $SE = 0.07$, $\beta = -.19$, $p = .040$) and being male ($B = -0.28$, $SE = 0.09$, $\beta = -.14$, $p = .003$) were significant inverse predictors of student views of code of conduct policies. These results are summarized in Table 4.5. This model generated no significant indirect effects. There was also no

interaction effect found between the two components of moral identity (i.e., internalization and symbolization) during the second part of the analysis.

Figure 4.10

Conditional Process Model Predicting How Students Evaluate Code of Conduct Policies



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

Note. All results are reported as the standardized beta (β).

Table 4.5

Coefficients of Conditional Process Analyses Predicting Code of Conduct Perspectives

Predictor	Code evaluation *B* (β)	Code reference *B* (β)
Step One	**ΔR^2 = .05***	**ΔR^2 = .17****
Mindset	0.06 (.08)	0.01 (.01)
Internalization	0.12 (.05)	0.36 (.23)**
Symbolization	-0.09 (-.07)	0.23 (.24)**
On-campus	-0.15 (-.09)	0.16 (.12)*
Classification	-0.14 (-.19)*	-0.04 (-.08)
Age	0.05 (.08)	0.05 (.11)
Male	-0.28 (-.14)**	-0.06 (-.04)
White	0.01 (.01)	-0.08 (-.04)
Non-religious	-0.15 (-.07)	-0.07 (-.04)
SCP participation	0.01 (.01)	-0.02 (-.01)
Step Two	**ΔR^2 = .001**	**ΔR^2 = .01**
Interaction effect[a]	0.04	0.08

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

[a]Interaction effect between moral identity internalization and symbolization.

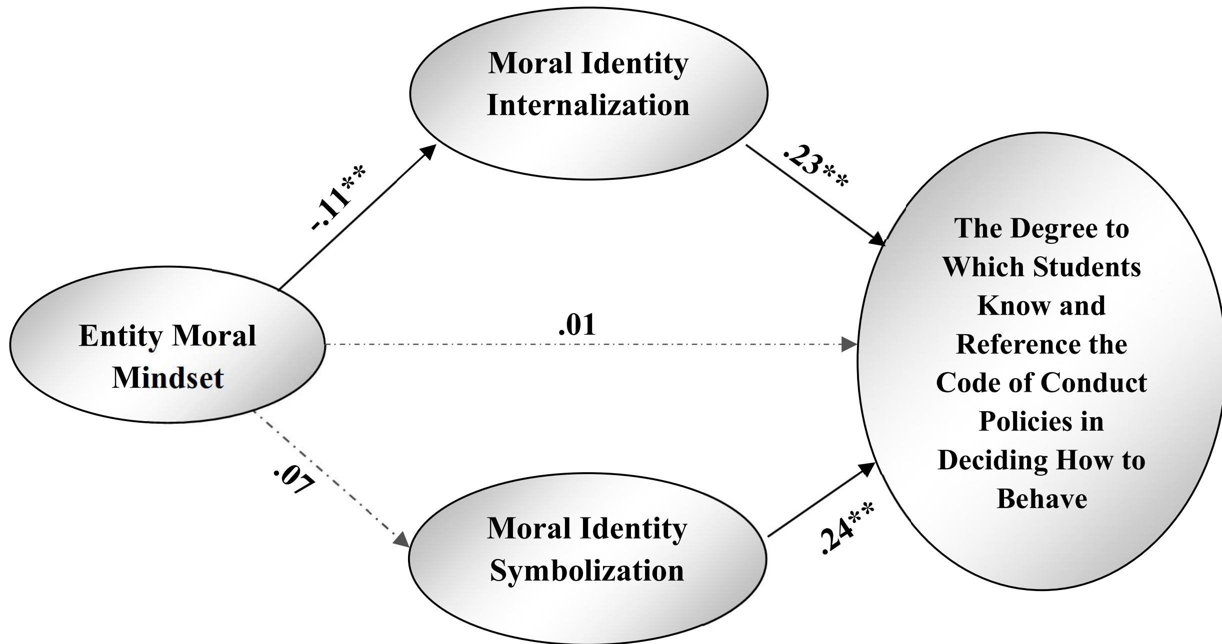
Note. See Table 4.2 for variable coding information.

The Degree to Which Students Know and Reference the Code of Conduct Policies in Deciding How to Behave

Items for this dependent variable measured the level of importance a participant placed on code of conduct rule awareness and compliance. Higher Likert scores indicated a positive perspective to follow code policies. Both components of moral identity were significant predictors of this criterion variable (i.e., internalization: $B = 0.36$, $SE = 0.08$, $\beta = .23$, $p < .001$; symbolization: $B = 0.23$, $SE = 0.05$, $\beta = .24$, $p < .001$). A significant multiple correlation coefficient emerged for this model predicting the degree to which students know and reference code of conduct policies in deciding how to behave, $R^2 = .18$, $F(10, 476) = 10.18$, $p < .001$, and yet entity moral mindset was not a significant predictor, $B = 0.01$, $SE = 0.02$, $\beta = .01$, $p = .816$. Figure 4.11 depicts this model. On-campus residency was the only significant predictor found among the covariates, $B = 0.16$, $SE = 0.07$, $\beta = .12$, $p = .026$. See Table 4.5 for a summary. There was a significant and negative indirect effect found for the association between moral entity mindset and this outcome variable via moral identity internalization. No indirect effect was found for the path exploring moral identity symbolization as the mediator. Table 4.4 only includes significant results for the indirect effect. In step two of the analysis, I found no interaction effect between moral identity internalization and symbolization for this dependent variable.

Figure 4.11

Conditional Process Model Predicting the Degree to Which Students Know and Reference Code of Conduct Policies in Deciding How to Behave



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

Note. All results are reported as the standardized beta (β).

Research Hypotheses

To contextualize and ground the statistical results of this study as presented above, it is imperative to compare these results with the research hypotheses presented in the conceptual framework at the end of Chapter Two (see Figure 2.1).

The Relationship Between Entity Moral Mindset and Moral Identity

The first hypothesis predicted that entity mindset is inversely associated with high levels of moral identity internalization (H1), whereas the second hypothesis projected a positive association between entity mindset and high moral identity symbolization (H2). Only the moral identity internalization hypothesis (H1) was supported by the study findings across all conditional process models analyzed, as shown in Figure 4.1. Both male and non-religious emerged as significant and negative predictors of moral identity internalization. There was no significant relationship between entity moral mindset and moral identity symbolization in any model investigated (H2), yet male and non-religious were significant, negative predictors of moral identity symbolization.

Moral Behavior Intentionality and Consciousness Construct

The Manner in Which Students Evaluate How to Behave

Hypotheses three and five predicted that moral identity internalization (H3) and symbolization (H5) have positive associations with high moral behavior intentionality and consciousness. The findings in this study supported both H3 and H5 (see Figure 4.1). Student classification was a positive predictor of the manner in which students evaluate how to behave, whereas being male was inversely related to this criterion variable. Moral identity internalization significantly explained the negative relationship between moral entity mindset and this dependent variable, as predicted in hypothesis seven (H7) and explained in Table 4.4. However,

the results do not support this hypothesis when moral identity symbolization is the mediator variable (H7). To answer research question one (RQ1), I observed that moral identity internalization and symbolization did not interact to predict the manner in which students evaluate how to behave.

Positive Behavior Intent – Harm

For the analysis of positive behavior intent – harm, the study findings supported hypothesis three with moral identity internalization positively associated with this dependent variable used to measure moral behavior intentionality and consciousness (H3), as illustrated in Figure 4.2. Yet, the fifth hypothesis was not supported by the study findings (H5); moral identity symbolization was not positively associated with positive behavior intent – harm (H5). Being male emerged as an inverse predictor, whereas previous SCP participation was positively associated with this variable. It is important to underscore that this was the only outcome variable explored that had a significant association of any kind with participation in the SCP. The results partially supported hypothesis seven (H7), discovering that moral identity internalization, but not symbolization, explained the inverse relationship between moral entity mindset and positive behavior intent – harm, as shown in Table 4.4. The interaction between the two components of moral identity positively predicted this dependent variable (RQ1). In this model, as depicted in Figure 4.3, when moral identity symbolization was highest, so too, was the strength of moral identity internalization on the positive behavior intent – harm variable.

Positive Behavior Intent – Academic Misconduct

The findings for this study supported hypothesis three – moral identity internalization is positively associated with high moral behavior intentionality and consciousness, as operationalized by the positive behavior intent – academic misconduct variable (H3) (see Figure

4.4). As was observed with positive behavior intent – harm, moral identity symbolization did not emerge as a significant positive predictor of this criterion variable (H5). Hypothesis seven predicted that moral identity explains the relationships between moral entity mindset and high moral behavior intentionality and consciousness (H7). For positive behavior intent – academic misconduct, only the results for moral identity internalization supported this hypothesis (H7), as explained in Table 4.4; moral identity symbolization was not a significant mediator between the model variables. Therefore, H7 is only partially supported by the study findings. I found no confounding variables were significant predictors for this dependent variable. Finally, the study results revealed that moral identity internalization and symbolization significantly interacted to predict positive behavior intent – academic misconduct, queried in research question one (RQ1). As I found for positive behavior intent – harm, the strength of the effect of moral identity internalization was strongest when moral identity symbolization was at its highest for this dependent variable (see Figure 4.5).

Positive Behavior Intent – Substance Use

For this dependent variable measuring high moral behavior intentionality and consciousness, I found that moral identity symbolization is positively associated with positive behavior intent – substance use, as predicted in hypothesis five (H5) and depicted in Figure 4.6. However, the results did not support hypothesis three (H3); moral identity internalization did not emerge as a positive predictor of this criterion variable unlike the previous two behavior intent variables. Both the male and non-religious covariates emerged as inverse predictors of positive behavior intent – substance use. Interestingly, neither component of student moral identity explained the indirect effects between moral entity mindset and this dependent variable. Therefore, the prediction for hypothesis seven (H7) was not supported by the research findings.

Nevertheless, the interaction between moral identity internalization and symbolization did predict positive behavior intent – substance use to answer research question one (RQ1). For this variable, the strength of the effect of moral identity symbolization differed from positive behavior intent – harm and academic misconduct, as shown in Figure 4.7. Although the strength of the effect of moral identity internalization was strongest when moral identity symbolization was high, the effect weakened to the point of non-significance when symbolization was low. Therefore, I found no significant difference in positive behavior intent – substance use, regardless of the participant's level of moral identity internalization.

Positive Behavior Intent – Overall

The results of this study supported hypothesis three (H3) for this outcome variable; I found that moral identity internalization was positively associated with positive behavior intent – overall (see Figure 4.8). Hypothesis five (H5), however, was unsupported; moral identity symbolization did not emerge as a significant predictor of this dependent variable. Parallel to the results for positive behavior intent – substance use, the male control variable was an inverse predictor of this criterion variable. Student moral identity internalization explained the relationship between moral entity mindset and positive behavior intent – overall, as predicted in hypothesis seven (H7) and explained in Table 4.4. Yet, as in all but the substance use behavior intent models, moral identity symbolization was not a significant predictor of the indirect effect between the model variables. Thus, the results revealed that H7 was only partly supported. A significant interaction effect was observed between moral identity internalization and symbolization to predict this criterion variable, as probed in research question one (RQ1) (see Figure 4.9). For this final behavior intent model, I found that when moral identity symbolization

was highest, so was the strength of the effect of moral identity internalization on positive behavior intent – overall.

Code of Conduct Perspectives Construct

How Students Evaluate Code of Conduct Policies

Hypothesis four (H4) predicted that moral identity internalization is positively associated with positive evaluations, awareness, consultation, and interactions with student code of conduct policies and processes, while hypothesis six also predicted a similar positive relationship with moral identity symbolization (H6). Figure 4.10 illustrates that neither hypothesis (H4 & H6) was supported by the results for this variable which measured participant code of conduct impressions and evaluations. Similarly, the results for this variable did not support hypothesis eight (H8) which predicted that moral identity explains the relationship between moral entity mindset and code of conduct perspectives; I found no significant indirect effect for moral identity internalization or symbolization in this model (H8). Further, to answer the question posed by research question two (RQ2), there was no interaction effect between the two components of moral identity for student evaluations of code of conduct policies. A student's classification and being male were both inverse predictors of student code of conduct evaluations.

The Degree to Which Students Know and Reference the Code of Conduct Policies in Deciding How to Behave

Remarkably, the results for this variable measuring student evaluations, awareness, consultation, and interactions with student code of conduct policies and processes were quite different than the previous criterion variable. Both moral identity internalization and symbolization were significant positive predictors of the level of importance students place on following and understanding the code of conduct rules, as shown in Figure 4.11. Thus,

hypotheses four and six were supported by the study findings (H4 & H6). Living on-campus was the only controlling variable to emerge as a significant positive predictor for this dependent variable. The study results also revealed that moral identity internalization explains the inverse relationship between moral entity mindset and students knowing and referencing the code in their behavior decisions, as predicted in hypothesis eight (H8) and explained in Table 4.4. Conversely, H8 was not supported when exploring moral identity symbolization as the mediating variable. Despite these divergent findings, I found no interaction effect between the components of moral identity for this student code of conduct perspectives variable to answer research question two (RQ2).

Summary

This chapter included a detailed analysis of the results of this study. It outlined the significant relationships and predictors among the variables investigated. Moreover, it included a comprehensive assessment of the accuracy of the hypotheses predicted and research questions queried within the project's conceptual framework (see Figure 2.1).

Now that I have reported the findings of this dissertation, the next and final chapter of this study contextualizes these results by discussing the findings in light of relevant theory and empirical research. The final chapter also explains the limitations of this research study due to the research design and statistical constraints, the social and environmental circumstances of the study, and the implications of the sample's composition. I will conclude this project with an examination of the study's theoretical and practical implications.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Student misconduct is not a new problem; it has been around since the dawn of higher education in the United States in the 1600s (Howell, 2005). Despite initial hopes that adulthood would dictate student self-regulation, even Thomas Jefferson recognized the need for an official and formalized set of behavioral expectations to guide student conduct (Brodie, 1974; Stoner & Lowrey, 2004). It was this need which led to the rise of student codes of conduct as a mechanism to maintain campus safety and the integrity of the academic environment. And yet, the faith placed in these behavioral codes and their related resolution processes seems enigmatic when reflecting on the relative lack of empirical research on their efficacy (Dannells, 1997).

In more recent years, a few scholars have tried to develop a better understanding of the learning and behavioral outcomes engendered within the SCP through some empirical research. These studies, however, are primarily focused on investigating these outcomes at the end of the process – after a student has already violated the code of conduct and participated in the SCP – and are seeking to improve the SCP process and generate more consequential effects. Clearly, this is important research, as it provides conduct administrators with the power and knowledge to use this widely accepted process as a space to shape and impact student moral growth. Nevertheless, this also means that many student conduct administrators are concentrating their efforts on countering misconduct after the poor behavior has already taken place.

Despite these efforts to curb student misconduct, poor student behavior continues to rise (Lucas, 2009), and with these disruptions to the learning and social environments of HEIs, institutional mission fulfillment becomes more tenuous. This trend is likely to continue, if not escalate, as the ethical choices students face daily becomes increasingly complicated. Thus, HEI

administrators, including those who work in conduct, need to do more than treat the symptoms of student choices – their misconduct – but discern and address common, underlying origins before the poor behavior even begins. Yet, this requires a theoretical and heuristic understanding of how and why students behave as they do. Complementarily, exploring if participation in the SCP generates notable outcomes, which can provide guidance to refine this process and prevent recidivism, is at the same time, quite important.

Specifically, HEIs would benefit from research that looks forward toward improved learning and behavioral outcomes, but does so by retrospectively, examining the impact of key psychological and identity characteristics like student moral mindset and moral identity before students ever enter the SCP. By considering variables like moral mindset, a variable which measures moral learning and growth disposition, HEIs can develop a stronger connection and shared purpose between academic and student affairs. Common programs, policies, and educational opportunities can then strive to not only prevent student misconduct, easing the burden on the SCP, but also build moral identity – drive the development of a student's ethical compass – supporting the institutional mission both inside and outside the classroom. However, it is only possible to create this strategic and disciplined focus if there is a deeper understanding about student moral behavior. This dissertation project sought to begin closing this gap in the empirical literature, embarking upon what is certain to be a lengthy research journey.

Theoretical Implications

The aim of this study was to contribute to both basic and applied student conduct research. According to Stimpson and Stimpson (2008), basic studies are those that aid in the development of models about and a theoretical understanding of student conduct. This section will highlight and discuss the notable, theoretical implications indicated by the results of this

study.

The Relationship Between Entity Moral Mindset and Moral Identity

The results of this study supported the first hypothesis (H1) examined, which predicted that entity moral mindset is a significant negative predictor of moral identity internalization, whereas hypothesis two (H2), predicting a positive association between entity moral mindset and moral identity symbolization, was not supported. In fact, mindset and symbolization were not even significantly correlated with one another. And yet, 12% of moral identity internalization was explained by the entire model investigating internalization, suggesting the value of the findings from this study and the need for further research.

Internalization

According to Jennings et al. (2015), "factors critical to . . . self-definition shape how morality becomes embedded into the self-concept" which creates "motivation for self-consistency" (p. S152). This description matches closely with Blasi's (1983, 1984, 1993, 1995) moral self model, which he acknowledged to be conceptually like the moral identity theoretical concept (Blasi, 1994). Previous research determined that when individuals have a strong desire to refine and nurture their own morality, they had greater motivation to behave in a moral manner (Kurpis et al., 2008). This study affirms that moral mindset does appear to be a "factor critical to . . . self-definition" or one's moral identity (Jennings et al., 2015). When an individual holds an entity moral mindset, there is less commitment to cultivating a deeper, internalized moral understanding. For those with an incremental mindset approach, there appears to be a desire to grow their own internalized moral identity, meaning these incrementalists are more focused on their relationship to, and the importance of, moral principles to their sense of self (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Walker 2004). Interestingly, however, no relationship was found for the

"doing" side of moral identity or moral identity symbolization. What might explain this unexpected result?

Moral identity internalization or the "having" side of moral identity is an individual's internalized and "socially constructed" self-identity (Bandura, 1991; Harter, 1999; Jennings et al., 2015, p. S105). This study may indicate that moral identity internalization encapsulates the conceptual idea of one's "self-definition" or what is imprinted upon the individual as their own self-concept (Jennings et al., 2015, p. S152). Harter (1999) stated that moral identity internalization emerges as individuals reflect on their lived, social experiences and personal beliefs about themselves; this includes contemplating the prominence of moral principles to their sense of self (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Walker, 2004). This description appears remarkably like how individuals construct their moral domain within Turiel's (1983) social domain theory – the integration of the external with the personal. Therefore, it may be that moral identity internalization is a clearer and cleaner measure of someone's moral self-identity or self-conception than symbolization.

Symbolization

Moral identity symbolization, or the "doing" side of one's moral identity, illustrates the idea that despite the centrality of one's moral values, individuals have the personal agency to make and take their own actions (Baumeister, 1998; Jennings et al., 2015). Was their moral self-consistency or integrity, the final piece of Blasi's (1983, 1984, 1993, 1995) moral self model, potent enough to motivate moral action consistent with those internalized values (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Blasi, 1984, 1994)? Given its inherent, theoretical tie to the external and outward, it makes sense that moral mindset and symbolization might not be linked in the same way as with internalization, which is much more theoretically focused on self-definition. Mindset is a self-

theory, and as such, it does not appear to have the nature and magnitude necessary to impact moral identity symbolization in the same way that it does for one's internalized moral self-identity.

Further exploring this distinction in the results, it is notable to recognize that for moral identity symbolization, the primarily focus is on an individual's personal autonomy and responsibility to make their own choices about their actions (Baumeister, 1998; Jennings et al., 2015); there is less concern on this side of moral identity about who you are or your own self-concept. Symbolization is less focused on self-definition than internalization, which can be impacted by moral mindset, but instead, places greater emphasis on other motivation factors. Thus, it is fair to summarize the "doing" side of moral identity as a measure of one's willingness to exercise their own moral self-identity and it may signify less about personal growth.

Based upon social domain theory, when considering what action to take, the crux of moral identity symbolization, individuals must reconcile situations in the external world that cross multiple domains; one's moral domain is not the automatic victor (Smetana et al., 2014). In fact, when balancing social conventions and personal ambitions, an individual's social or personal domain may emerge as the priority given the circumstances of the moment (Smetana et al., 2014). This may lead to seemingly inconsistent moral identity and actions, prioritizing inclinations of the social or personal domain and not the moral domain in one's "doing" moral identity, which is part of the external, social world and not the internal, personal world.

Finally, it is important to note, as previously discussed in the literature review chapter, the lack of association found between entity moral mindset and moral identity symbolization may be due to the Aquino and Reed (2002) moral identity measure itself (Jennings et al., 2015). Aquino and Reed's (2002) instrument measures symbolization through items which focus on

how individuals represent themselves and their moral values to the world through the clothes they wear, the organizations they join, the books they read, and the activities they prioritize; this may be out of date and not resonate as cleanly with current college students as it once did.

Moral Behavior Intentionality and Consciousness Construct

Through this study, I sought to determine to what extent, if at all, moral identity explains the relationships between student moral mindset and moral behavior intentionality and consciousness, as well as exploring the direct relationships between moral mindset and all behavior outcome variables, and moral identity and all behavior outcome variables. I operationalized moral behavior intentionality and consciousness through a measurement of intended future moral behaviors and the manner in which students evaluate how to behave. The intended future moral behavior variables included an investigation of (a) harmful behavior, including harmful physical and verbal behavior and theft; (b) academic misconduct, including cheating from another's exam, obtaining a copy of an exam ahead of time, and purchasing a paper online; (c) substance use, including recreational marijuana use, prohibited tobacco use on institutional property, and facilitating or encouraging underage alcohol consumption; and (d) overall intended future moral behaviors, which utilized participant mean scores across all future intended behavior items (Campus Labs, 2017). The manner in which students evaluate how to behave included items that sought to measure a participant's cognizance of others and their community when deciding how to behave (Nelson, 2017). Specific items for this final moral behavior variable asked students if: (a) they consider how their "actions affect others;" (b) they control their "behavior to avoid harming others;" (c) take actions which positively impact others even when inconvenienced; (d) an other-orientation is used when making behavior decisions; and (e) living in community necessitates setting aside personal desires for the good of all

(Nelson, 2017, p. 1276).

For this study, moral behavior was defined in the introduction chapter as those "behaviors consistent with moral traits 'empirically shown to be associated with what it means to be a moral person,' including caring, compassionate, fair, friendly, generous, helpful, hardworking, honest, and kind (Aquino & Reed, 2002, p. 1425). The five variables selected to measure moral behavior intentionality and consciousness described above derive directly from and embody the traits which Aquino and Reed (2002) demonstrated were empirically associated with being a moral person through a robust series of studies, as outlined in the literature review. For example, intended future harmful behavior measured student fairness, honesty, and kindness, whereas intended future academic misconduct only focused on fairness and honesty. The manner in which students evaluate how to behave, however, assessed several Aquino and Reed (2002) moral traits, including a student's compassion, kindness, care, helpfulness, generosity, friendliness, and work ethic. Therefore, by using all five moral behavior intentionality and consciousness variables, this study incorporated a broad moral behavior evaluation of each participant, including all nine moral traits identified by Aquino and Reed (2002).

The findings of this study indicate that entity moral mindset was not found to be a significant predictor of any of the moral behavior intentionality and consciousness outcomes investigated. Thus, based on these results, I conclude that moral mindset does not predict moral behavior intentionality and consciousness. Interestingly, however, when including moral identity as a mediator between a student's entity moral mindset and the behavior outcome variables outlined above, significant indirect effects emerge. Namely, moral identity internalization mediated or explained the relationship between moral mindset and all behavior outcomes, except substance use. The conditional process models investigating moral behavior intentionality and

consciousness explained between 8% and 19% of the variance observed, depending upon the outcome variable investigated, certainly suggesting the need for additional research in this area. To distill the implications of these results, it is valuable to first examine and discuss the direct effects I found within the five moral behavior intentionality and consciousness models studied.

Direct Effects

The results of this study generally support the third hypothesis (H3), which theorized that moral identity internalization is positively associated with high moral behavior intentionality and consciousness; future intended substance use was the only exception among the five variables researched. Hypothesis five (H5), however, was not generally supported, as moral identity symbolization was only positively associated with two of the five behavior outcomes investigated, including the manner in which students evaluate how to behave and future intended substance use. The idiosyncratic findings in the results for future intended substance use are discussed in greater detail below.

Moral Identity Internalization and Moral Behavior Intentionality and Consciousness. The findings from this study, which support a positive association between moral identity internalization and the moral behavior outcomes, are unsurprising based upon the moral identity literature. Numerous empirical studies have reliably affirmed the positive association between internalization and moral action and intentions (Jennings et al., 2015). Alternatively, the inverse is also supported in the scholarship wherein moral identity internalization and immoral behavior and intentions are negatively associated (Aquino et al., 2009). This is reasonable given the conceptual meaning of internalization or the “having” side of moral identity; this piece of moral identity is one’s self-concept which appears as they reflect upon their own life experiences and the importance of moral principles to who they are and how

they self-identify (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Harter, 1999; Jennings et al., 2015; Walker, 2004). With the emergence of their internalized moral identity, individuals will evaluate and propose moral behavior that aligns with that imprinted identity.

Moral Identity Symbolization and Moral Behavior Intentionality and Consciousness. Yet, when isolating moral identity symbolization – the "doing" side or the external appearance of moral identity – simply wanting to have the appearance of being moral is not enough to engender positive future behavior intentionality and to forego immoral behavior. Some empirical studies that focused on the impact of moral identity symbolization found that it does not always generate moral behavior (Jennings et al., 2015). This could be because future intended moral behavior is primarily driven by moral identity internalization and not symbolization, or it may even suggest the need to have both aspects of moral identity working in tandem through an interaction effect. Scholars have noted this possibility and argued that moral integrity or the moral motivation piece of moral identity internalization (Blasi, 1983, 1984, 1993, 1995) should bolster the autonomy aspect of symbolization, so both sides of moral identity synergistically reinforce one another (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018; Jennings et al., 2015). It could also be that when individuals have a high internalized moral identity, it triggers moral licensing by the student; moral licensing proposes that holding a highly moral self-impression justifies immoral symbolized action (Conway & Peetz, 2012). Finally, it could simply be a vestige of Aquino and Reed's (2002) moral identity instrument used in this study to measure symbolization (Jennings et al., 2015).

The Manner in Which Students Evaluate How to Behave. For the manner in which students evaluate how to behave, 19% of the variance observed in the outcome variable was explained by the model investigated. Both moral identity internalization and symbolization were

positive predictors of the manner in which students evaluate how to behave, supporting hypotheses three (H3) and five (H5), unlike the intended future moral behavior variables. What might make this variable distinctive? This dissimilarity could be explained by the items included within this measure. Instead of asking participants to conjecture about future moral action, largely without context to others or their community, this outcome variable pushed participants to consider their moral behavior as it impacts others in their community. Items included thoughtful questions like "I think about how my actions affect others" and "I consider others in my community when making decisions about my behavior" (Nelson, 2017). Thus, it may be that these items sparked not only the participant's sense of their internalized self-identity, as seen for intended future moral behavior, but prompted the student to include others within their sense of self. In other words, these questions compelled students to evaluate their behavior in light of more than just themselves.

Hudson and Díaz Pearson (2018) presumed there to be a "bidirectional" path between moral identity and moral action (p. 187). When reflecting on the communal impact of their actions, it could be that it activated the "moral engagement" component of their moral self, or how responsible they feel to act morally (Walker, 2004, p. 4), inducing both sides of the student's moral identity to work cooperatively. Further, the student may simply feel more responsible to act morally when they actively consider the direct effect their actions would impose upon others in their community. Symbolization focuses on the external – the "doing" side of moral identity" – and this behavior outcome measured participant thoughts about moral action related to external impacts. Therefore, it is sensible that there would be a positive link between both symbolization and internalization, and the manner in which students evaluate how to behave outcome.

In more recent scholarship, Gotowiec and van Mastrigt (2019) found that moral identity symbolization significantly predicted prosocial behavior in three of the four categories studied. Prosocial behaviors are those which "benefit both individuals and society at large" (Gotowiec & van Mastrigt, 2019, p. 75). Consequently, it is highly plausible that the manner in which students evaluate how to behave may actually have measured a prosocial behavior in the context of this study. The items for this scale sought to identify how appreciably students consider the needs of, and impacts upon, others and their community from their behaviors, which is by definition, prosocial in nature. This could be why I found that moral identity symbolization was not positively associated with intended future behavior outcomes, as those variables were solely measurements of immoral and not prosocial behaviors. When behaviors are phrased in a positive and more proactive manner, it appears to trigger both moral identity internalization and symbolization, leading to more beneficial, prosocial behaviors. It is also worth noting that symbolization may not be linked to future intended moral behaviors because those outcomes were focused on action intentions, which do not necessarily surface in the external world through observable action; there is no public accountability attached and no link to how this impacts others and their community directly. Consequently, the results of this study suggest that to affect moral behavior intentionality and consciousness meaningfully and holistically, administrators must deliberately address moral identity internalization and symbolization by building a student's community connections. Additional research is needed to continue disentangling these important predictive relationships in greater depth.

Indirect Effects

Student moral identity internalization significantly explained the inverse relationship between student entity moral mindset and moral behavior intentionality and consciousness,

partially supporting the seventh hypothesis (H7) of this study. However, I found no indirect effects for any of the five models testing moral identity symbolization as the mediator between entity moral mindset and the behavior variables (H7).

Moral identity internalization mediated the relationship between student moral mindset and all behavior outcomes investigated except for substance use, which is discussed below. Symbolization, however, provided no mediation for any behavior variable explored. It is plausible that these symbolization findings are merely a product of the measure used for moral identity symbolization, which included items that may not resonate with current college students in the same way as they did when the measure was originally created (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Jennings et al., 2015).

However, I believe the difference in the indirect effect results is more likely due to the distinction in focus between the two sides of moral identity. As previously discussed, internalization conceptualizes how morality is imprinted upon individuals – upon their identity – and the salience of moral principles to that self-concept (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Walker, 2004). Symbolization emphasizes the external – how individuals represent their moral identity and how they appear to others; this means that symbolization places greater emphasis on other motivational factors. These motivational factors could be explained by social domain theory, as discussed above. The student may prioritize their personal domain, seeing the situation as a private matter wherein personal goals prevail. Alternatively, the student may determine that social conventions are the appropriate focus based on their present circumstances and previous interactions with the involved group.

The influence of peers may also be a motivational factor swaying a student's symbolized moral identity. Hudson and Díaz Pearson (2018) empirically determined that college student

moral action can be negatively impacted by the external social influence of peers. These researchers asserted that a student's moral identity does not operate in isolation (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018). Many moral behaviors are often viewed as socially "unpopular," leading to unanticipated behavioral choices (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018, p. 194). Because of the potential to be socially ostracized by their social circle, the sway that peers have on the symbolized moral identity of students can be substantial; empirically, it creates one of the greatest obstacles to moral living faced by college students (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018). Therefore, peers have the power to overcome the moral motivation generated by a student's internalized moral self-identity, often resulting in inconsistent moral behavior in violation of their internalized moral integrity (Blasi, 1983; Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018). Yet, in many cases, this means the student is accepted within their social sphere and their inconsistent behavior satisfies the social conventions of their peers. Thus, peer influence may in fact be how a college student shifts from operating within the moral domain into the social domain in a given set of circumstances; however, more empirical research would be required to confirm this conjecture.

Peculiarity of Intended Future Substance Use

The distinctiveness of the findings for the future intended substance use model is one of the most curious results of this study. I found that there was no relationship between moral identity internalization and future intended substance use, contrary to hypothesis three (H3), whereas there was a significant direct effect between symbolization and substance use in support of the fifth hypothesis (H5) of this study. Unlike the other behavior variables investigated, the relationship between entity moral mindset and future intended substance use was not explained by internalization; this relationship also was not explained by symbolization like the other

behavior outcomes. Consequently, for future intended substance use, hypothesis seven (H7) was fully unsupported.

It is interesting to consider what may have led to these unique findings for this moral behavior outcome. As previously suggested, internalization is an individual's idealized self-concept or how centrally moral principles play a role in their own personal identity (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Walker, 2004). Given the ongoing challenges with, and messages conveyed by the recent legalization of cannabis products and recreational marijuana in many states (Gomez, 2020; Menchaca, 2020), the federal Tobacco 21 law (U.S. Food & Drug Administration, n.d.), and the persistence of drinking, including binge drinking, on many college campuses (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2020), it is plausible that for many students, substance use is not a moral behavior. This would suggest that students could have a high internalized moral identity, but still make poor behavioral choices related to substances, never seeing the choice as inconsistent. For these students, it seems that their substance use behaviors are not impacted by their idealized moral self, perhaps because there is no moral engagement – no sense of responsibility to act in a moral manner – or motivation to act consistently with their internalized moral self (Blasi, 1983, 1984, 1993, 1995; Walker, 2004). Instead, these students may not view substance use as a moral issue, period; to the contrary, they may regard the circumstances surrounding their substance behaviors as outside the moral realm and, thus, not a question of morality at all. In the language of Turiel's (1983) social domain theory, students may see substance use as solely a question of social convention, norms, and expectations. For some, these behavioral choices may even be a matter of cultural upbringing and the customs of their childhood. Likewise, students may believe that substance use choices are purely a personal question about autonomy and one's sense of personal freedom (Nucci & Powers, 2014). Given

the potential impact of these outward motivational factors on future intended substance use, it is not difficult to understand why moral identity symbolization, and not internalization, is a significant predictor of this behavior outcome.

Beyond social domain theory, it is crucial to consider what else may motivate and influence substance use behaviors in college students. As previously addressed, peer pressure may play a sizable role. Hudson and Díaz Pearson (2018) found that college students will make surprising behavior choices to seek peer acceptance out of fear of “social exclusion” (p. 194). With no significant direct association between internalization and future substance use, a student’s symbolized moral identity may provoke moral licensing (Conway & Peetz, 2012). Theoretically, the student could have high moral identity symbolization, while at the same time presuming that this symbolized identity validates their behavior, even when seemingly immoral in nature (Conway & Peetz, 2012). In other words, a student with high symbolization in most other circumstances may believe they have earned the right to engage in poor substance use behavior (Conway & Peetz, 2012). Finally, the unusual results related to future intended substance use may stem from the public perception that substance use choices only impact the user (Miller, 2016). For example, illegal drug use and public drunkenness are categorized as public order crimes, which are commonly referred to as victimless crimes, because they are only seen as harmful to the participant (Miller, 2016). Therefore, substance use behaviors do not impact others in the same way that the other investigated future intended behavior outcomes might.

The results of this study indicate that different motivating factors influence substance use choices in college students. Conceivably, based upon the findings for the manner in which students evaluate how to behave variable – where both internalization and symbolization

significantly predicted moral behavior – it may be that to fully engage moral identity internalization and shore up the "bidirectional" and motivational path between moral action and moral identity (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018), it is necessary to ensure the student's inclusion of others in their sense of self. Further, the results of this study may theoretically suggest that to meaningfully impact student substance use choices, students must have high levels of both moral identity internalization and symbolization; they must have concern for not only how they symbolize their moral identity, but also have a high internalized moral self-identity. The high internalization could empower the student to forgo the potential impact of moral licensing and the high symbolization may strengthen a student's resolve against the sway of peer influence.

Interaction Effect Between Moral Identity Internalization and Symbolization. The results of the interaction effect in this study between moral identity internalization and symbolization signal the close connection between internalization and symbolization in predicting positive behavior intentions in college students, especially for substance use choices. Due to conflicting empirical scholarship, I was unable to hypothesize whether the interaction effect between internalization and symbolization would predict high moral behavior intentionality and consciousness, denoted as research question one (RQ1) in the conceptual framework (see Figure 2.1). I found that moral identity symbolization moderates the influence of moral identity internalization on all four intended future behavior outcomes – harmful behavior, academic misconduct, substance use, and the composite overall behavior variable. However, the interaction effect for substance use (see Figure 4.7) was markedly different than the effect for the other three behavior intention variables, which were all statistically similar (see Figures 4.3, 4.5, and 4.9).

For harmful behavior, academic misconduct, and the moral behavior overall composite

variable, moral identity internalization emerged as a positive predictor across all levels of moral identity symbolization. The strength of internalization's effect was strongest when symbolization was high and weakened as symbolization decreased. When moral identity internalization and symbolization were both at their highest level, the intended moral behavior outcome was also at its highest; yet, when internalization was at its lowest level and symbolization was at its highest, the behavior outcome was at its lowest point. Therefore, the impact of the moderated mediation of the indirect effect – the effect of entity moral mindset on the outcome variable, as mediated by moral identity internalization – had a stronger effect when a participant had higher levels of moral identity symbolization. As previously emphasized, these results suggest the general importance of moral internalization in producing positive future moral behavior intentions. Further, these findings signal the value of possessing high levels on both sides of the moral identity theoretical construct to generate the best future intended moral behavior outcomes.

The interaction effect between moral identity internalization and symbolization for future intended substance use was quite different than the other moral behavior variables (see Figure 4.7). Like the other three future intended behavior outcomes, I found that both moral identity internalization and symbolization were significant, positive predictors of future intended substance use and that the strength of internalization's effect was greatest when symbolization was high. However, this is where the similarities in the findings end. Two characteristics distinguish the substance use interaction. The first is the magnitude of the moderation – for substance use, it was much stronger. When symbolization was at its lowest level, the strength of internalization's effect weakened to the point of non-significance. From a behavioral standpoint, this means that student intentions toward substance use are significantly better when students have high levels on both sides of the moral identity construct. Second, the interaction effect

revealed that either low internalization or low symbolization was sufficient to predict inferior intended substance use behavior. In other words, when symbolization was low, there was no significant difference in substance use choices by the student, regardless of the student's level of moral identity internalization, which is strikingly different from other behavior variables investigated. Likewise, a student with low internalization was just as likely to intend poor substance use behaviors with low symbolization as with high symbolization. Therefore, from a statistical and a behavioral perspective, students must possess both high internalization and symbolization to intend positive future substance use choices, again affirming the importance of both sides of the moral construct, especially related to substance use behaviors. This is most likely due to peer and social pressures, moral licensing, and the impact of social domain theory, though additional research is necessary to provide greater insight.

Code of Conduct Perspectives Construct

This study also sought to determine to what extent, if at all, moral identity explains the relationships between student moral mindset and code of conduct perspectives, as well as exploring the direct relationships between moral mindset and two code of conduct perspective variables, and moral identity and two code of conduct perspective variables. I operationalized the student code of conduct perspectives construct through an instrument which measured how students evaluate code of conduct policies and the degree to which students know and reference the code of conduct policies in deciding how to behave. How students evaluate code of conduct policies included items seeking the student's beliefs about the appropriateness, fairness, consistency, and educational purposes of the institution's code process (Campus Labs, 2017). The manner in which students know and reference the code of conduct policies in deciding how to behave included an exploration of the importance a student places on following code policies,

both personally and by other students, and their understanding of, and ability to communicate about, code of conduct rules (Nelson, 2017).

As I found for all moral behavior intentionality and consciousness variables, entity moral mindset was not a significant predictor of either code of conduct perspectives outcome variable investigated. Therefore, I conclude that moral mindset does not predict code of conduct perspectives based upon the results of this study. However, there was a significant indirect effect present when including moral identity as a mediator between a student's entity moral mindset and the degree to which students know and reference the code of conduct policies in deciding how to behave. Moral identity internalization, but not symbolization, mediated or explained the relationship between moral mindset and the degree to which students know and reference the code of conduct policies in deciding how to behave. The conditional process model investigating this code variable explained 17% of the variance observed, indicating the need for further research. Neither moral identity internalization nor symbolization explained the relationship between moral mindset and how students evaluate code of conduct policies. To help disentangle the results of this study and better understand its code policy implications, I will begin by examining the direct effects within the two code of conduct perspectives models.

Direct Effects

The results of this study were mixed on whether moral identity internalization (H4) and symbolization (H6) were associated with positive evaluations, awareness, consultation, and interactions with student code of conduct policies and processes. Moral identity internalization (H4) and symbolization (H6) were not associated with how students evaluate code of conduct policies. However, study results supported both hypothesis four (H4) and six (H6) – moral identity internalization and symbolization are positively associated with the degree to which

students know and reference the code of conduct policies in deciding how to behave.

These findings suggest that moral identity has little to do with how students evaluate the appropriateness, fairness, consistency, and educational value of an institution's code of conduct. This is somewhat surprising; the way a student sees their own moral identity and how they express it externally does not predict their opinions and viewpoint on code of conduct policies. On the other hand, moral identity, both internalization and symbolization, does appear to impact the degree to which students know and reference the code of conduct policies in deciding how to behave; in other words, moral identity impacts the importance students place on integrating code policies into their behavior calculus as they determine how to interact with their campus community and fellow community members.

This distinction regarding the impact of moral identity upon the code perspective variables explored may best be observed in the effect size differences between the models – 5% of the variance observed within the entire model for the variable measuring how students evaluate code of conduct policies versus 17% for the degree to which students know and reference the code of conduct policies in deciding how to behave. This distinction in the magnitude of the results could indicate that student opinions about, or evaluations of, code policies are more directly linked to social conventions than with concepts of "welfare, justice, and rights," all parts of the moral domain structure (Turiel, 1989, p. 94). Social conventions and social knowledge are built internally by an individual over time through their social experiences; individuals learn social norms appropriate within a given community group (Nucci & Powers, 2014; Turiel, 1983). This social framework often develops as individuals experience cultural norms, including interacting with the rules and punishments of authority, and desire a sense of social stability (Smetana et al., 2014). Perhaps as students discuss conduct rules and processes

with their peers, hear presentations and receive educational materials, and even participate in the SCP, they begin integrating and internalizing these social norms, but not before considering the personal impact of these rules in light of their own beliefs within the personal domain (Nucci & Powers, 2014; Turiel, 1989). Therefore, these internalized evaluations may not derive from the moral realm, but from the social and personal, which may explain the absence of a direct effect between moral identity and this code variable.

Interestingly, the results of this study further suggest that student moral identity, both internalization and symbolization, drives the integration of code directives when deciding how to behave. Many of these code policies affect student behaviors which specifically impact others or their community. This directly relates to Turiel's (1983) concept of the moral domain which underscores those actions which directly impact the well-being of others (Smetana et al., 2014). It may also connect to Walker and Frimer's (2007) determination of the importance of integrating agency (or self-interest) with communion (or an other-orientation) for success in the moral domain; this integration of others into the self builds moral motivation because serving the interests and needs of others becomes intrinsically tied to one's own personal success (Frimer et al., 2011; Walker, 2013). An amalgamation of agency and communion – recognizing that code policies impact both the student and their community – could also prompt the student's ability to discern when a situation includes ethical dimensions or what Rest (1986) deems their "moral sensitivity," a related component to Turiel's (1983) moral domain. Thus, the findings for this code variable, like the results for the moral behavior intentionality and consciousness construct, support the importance of building student ties to their campus community and developing an internalized and symbolized moral identity which strives to integrate student agency and communion to naturally encourage the importance of knowing and referencing code policies in

behavior decisions.

Indirect Effects

I found no indirect effects for either model testing moral identity symbolization as the mediator between entity moral mindset and code of conduct perspectives variables (H7). However, I also determined that student moral identity internalization significantly explained the relationship between student entity moral mindset and the degree to which students know and reference the code of conduct policies when deciding how to behave, partially supporting the seventh hypothesis (H7) of this study. Moral identity internalization did not mediate the relationship between student moral mindset and how students evaluate code of conduct policies, which is further discussed below.

The absence of a symbolization indirect effect for either code outcome may partially be due to the age of the measure used to measure moral identity symbolization, as previously discussed. Although Aquino and Reed's (2002) scale is the most widely accepted instrument, the items are nearly 20 years old and may not connect with current college students (Jennings et al., 2015). Although the symbolization measure could have influenced the results, I believe it is more likely due to the distinctions between internalization and symbolization. Symbolization focuses on an individual's external representation of their moral identity and how it appears to others. This focus may draw upon other outward motivational factors including the prioritization of the social or personal domain over the moral and/or peer pressure (Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018; Turiel, 1989). Internalization, conversely, conceptualizes the inscription of moral principles into an individual's self-concept (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Walker, 2004). Thus, it is reasonable to presume that internalization would mediate the relationship between moral mindset and the degree to which students know and reference the code of conduct policies when deciding how to

behave. Students who view moral principles as highly salient to their sense of self are likely to prioritize the importance of knowing, understanding, and following code rules when deciding how to behave, regardless of whether they maintain an entity or incremental mindset. Therefore, logically, moral identity internalization mediated the relationship between student moral mindset and the degree to which students know and reference the code of conduct policies in deciding how to behave.

How Students Evaluate Code of Conduct Policies

It is important to note that moral identity internalization did not mediate the relationship between student moral mindset and how students evaluate code of conduct policies. This finding indicates that other variables undergird and motivate student views, opinions, and evaluations on the appropriateness, fairness, consistency, and educational purposes of code policies. Student conduct literature proposes that evaluations about the SCP tend to develop based upon the professionalism, training, kindness, and fairness of the process itself and the involved administrators, and that behavioral learning from the SCP is enriched through these "cues" received within the conduct environment (Janosik & Stimpson, 2017, p. 40). Empirically, students respond to the SCP best when they not only perceive the process as positive and fair, but interact with conduct professionals who are well-trained, practiced, and intentional in their approach; these administrators walk with students on their developmental journey, asking open-ended questions and exercising motivational interviewing to provide students with opportunities for moral identity reflection and internalization (Fueglein et al., 2012; Hudson & Díaz Pearson, 2018; Janosik & Stimpson, 2017; Neumeister, 2017). Outcomes are further enhanced when administrators complete post-process follow up, prolonging the reflective learning journey (King, 2012).

Clearly, those students who personally participate in the SCP can develop first-hand impressions from their own experiences within the conduct environment. Yet, many students never directly engage with the process. It is likely that social conventions and social knowledge play a role in the code evaluations of such students, as suggested above. These students familiarize themselves with the campus conduct culture as they listen to the SCP stories of their peers; they receive “symbolic nonverbal messages” about the conduct process conveyed by campus physical spaces; and they personally experience the level of rule “formalization” present on campus through posted and disseminated institutional messaging (Strange & Banning, 2015, p. 16, 91). It is these social norms that non-participants likely integrate as they develop their own code of conduct policy evaluations. Yet, further research is necessary to continue this work to isolate what underlying factors motive student evaluations of code policies and mediate student moral learning dispositions.

Other Significant Outcome Predictors

Males

Male students tend to have lower moral identity internalization and symbolization, according to the findings of this study. Additionally, being a male student significantly predicted lower moral behavior intentionality and consciousness, as well as more negative code of conduct policy evaluations. In fact, males tended to have more negative behavior intentions for all variables considered apart from academic misconduct. Unfortunately, this was an unsurprising result given some of the available academic literature. The SCP scholarship affirms that most repeat offenders within the conduct process tend to be male (Stimpson & Janosik, 2011). Stimpson and Janosik (2011) speculated that this predominance of repeat male offenders may be due to differing cultural and gender expectations between men and women present within

today's college environment, which may develop from acceptable behavior signals encountered at a much earlier age. Further, Stimpson and Janosik (2011) added that perhaps men struggle with understanding the consequences of their behavior choices, leading to higher numbers within the SCP overall.

It is also notable that gender is significantly associated with student moral learning from the SCP itself (Stimpson & Janosik, 2011). King (2012) reasoned that this may be because the SCP, much like most institutional missions, strives to build empathy and help students learn to live in community; these are goals which closely emulate female gender norms – an ethic of care and empathy over justice – originally articulated by Gilligan (1982) (King, 2012). This connection to the gender norms espoused by Gilligan (1982) may also indicate the strong pull of the social domain upon male moral behavior intentionality and consciousness. It is possible that male students simply desire to fit in and be perceived as strong in stark contrast with the female norm of care and empathy, which could be viewed as weak. Hudson and Díaz Pearson's (2018) research heuristically affirms the sway of social pressure and longing for acceptance. In such cases, inconsistent moral behavior may satisfy the predominant social conventions present, shifting the student from the operating within the moral domain into the social. Further research is warranted to distill these gendered results.

Non-religious

Students who identified as non-religious, or those who identified as "agnostic," "atheist," "spiritual but not religious," and "not religious," were significantly more likely to have lower moral identity internalization and symbolization. Being non-religious also significantly predicted more negative substance use behavior intentionality. Across the moral self literature, as outlined by Jennings et al. (2015), scholars have found that religiosity does appear to impact both sides of

the moral self. When diving into the specifics, religiosity may affect moral identity internalization differently than symbolization depending on whether investigating the tenets of a particular faith or more extrinsic religiosity like utilitarianism (Jennings et al., 2015). This level of specificity could not be detected in the results of this study based on how non-religious was categorized. Although this research project lacked this level of specificity, it makes sense that those who hold to the tenets of a particular faith or self-identify as religious would place greater value on the centrality of moral identity to the self and how that identity is symbolized externally.

Classification and On-Campus Residency

The more credits a student has completed (or the higher their classification), the more likely they are to significantly consider the needs of others and their community in evaluating how to behave. Yet, these students are also significantly less likely to view the code of conduct as fair, appropriate, consistent, and educational. Interestingly, students who reside on-campus are much more likely to know and reference the code of conduct policies in deciding how to behave than those students who live off-campus. When assessing these results, it is important to remember that the research setting for this project requires students to live on-campus for their first two years of study. Consequently, those students who live on campus tend to have earned fewer credits and are of a lower classification than off-campus students.

These findings based on student classification and residency status make logical sense given the other results of this study. Students who have earned more credits and are of a higher classification have had more time to buy into the institutional community and to integrate the importance of that community into their own identity. However, these students of higher classification often do not live on campus. This typically means that they do not have the same

type or depth of contact with code policies through the residence halls and institutional staff as on-campus students. To a significant extent, their own personal lives are separate and away from campus. Therefore, they may view code policies as no longer applicable or appropriate to guide their day-to-day behavior. And with less contact with the code and the institutional staff educating and enforcing code policies, these students are left with their own perceptions about its applicability and a sense of frustration about its fairness from stories they hear from disciplined off-campus peers.

Students with less credits and lower in classification, who tend to live on-campus, have more routine contact with the code and the staff charged with enforcing it. Thus, it is reasonable to presume that they are more cognizant of code policies and that those policies would be a more central piece of their behavioral calculus. However, they have not yet had as much time to grow into a campus, communal mindset, which could help explain why they are not as likely as students of higher classifications to consider the needs of others and their community in evaluating how to behave. It is probable that they are still in the early stages of working toward integrating their agency and communion in the moral domain (Frimer et al., 2011), so their personal domain may emerge as the dominant domain more easily in their behavior decisions.

The empirical and theoretical literature supports these findings. Stimpson and Janosik (2015) and Janosik and Stimpson (2017) previously showed that classification and residential status are both significant predictors of student learning from the SCP, though the variance was low, showing the inherent importance of these student categories within the conduct realm. Further, Hoekema (1994) stated that our moral ideals are formed through discourse as we live and operate within our communities; the same is true for our campus communities.

Within organizational theory, Strange and Banning (2015) asserted that the physical

spaces of campus convey “symbolic nonverbal messages,” “intentionally or inadvertently,” which students read, interpret, and internalize (p. 16, 17). Likewise, student “subcultures” and attributes like talents, learning styles, and personality traits help shape prominent campus environmental qualities (Strange & Banning, 2015, p. 53). Campus environments are also created socially through a “consensus” of student perceptions (Strange & Banning, 2015, p. 115). And finally, students internalize the importance placed on conduct policies based on rule “formalization” (Strange & Banning, 2015, p. 91). Therefore, students who live on-campus and are more immersed within the constructed campus environment appear much more likely to internalize and reference code policies in their behavior decisions than off-campus students. Off-campus students who typically have earned more credit hours and been part of the campus community for a greater length of time, however, seem more likely to consider the needs of others and their broader campus community when deciding how to behave.

Student Conduct Process Participation

This study examined what impact participation in the SCP, either once or on multiple occasions, had on the outcomes explored. Previous involvement with the SCP was only a significant predictor for intended future harmful behavior. The items used to measure this variable included seeking student intentions toward theft and verbal and physical abuse that harms others. Those students who had previously participated in the SCP were significantly more likely to have positive intentions toward these harmful behaviors than those who had not participated in the SCP. It is critical to underscore that this was the sole outcome variable explored that had a significant association of any kind with participation in the SCP.

These results corroborate previous empirical SCP research which proposes that participation in the SCP process garners student moral development and learning when the

process is intentional about future student growth (Neumeister, 2017). However, this study suggests that there may be some limitations in the scope of that learning. What about enhancing student moral learning related to integrity through academic misconduct matters? Or assisting students in making safer and smarter substance use choices? Or what about increasing the importance of contemplating others and their campus community when evaluating how to behave? Thus, these findings seem to necessitate a shift toward more restorative SCP practices and an approach which integrates the peers of the offender, including the victim, within the process.

The SCP empirical literature affirms that restorative justice practices are most effective at generating student moral learning (Karp & Sacks, 2014). This effectiveness is even present when more traditional SCP structures only contain some elements of restorative practices (Karp & Sacks, 2014). Karp and Sacks (2014) concluded that restorative justice practices are most successful at teaching students to take personal responsibility or "active accountability" for their actions (p. 158). At the same time, these restorative processes serve to strengthen the importance and value of maintaining a fair and "just community" by giving students a role in establishing and enforcing community standards (Karp & Sacks, 2014, p. 157).

Given the minimal impact that SCP participation had on the variables investigated in this project, it also highlights the importance of reflecting upon the impact of student code perceptions. If the SCP was a positive growth experience for its participants, it should have positively predicted how students evaluate code of conduct policies, which it did not. The absence of this association may indicate some problems in the process which additional research could confirm. Perhaps conduct administrators need more training to maintain an intentional focus on efficacy over "expediency" and fostering perceptions of fairness, positivity,

professionalism, and kindness while fostering student moral learning (Fueglein et al., 2012; Janosik & Stimpson, 2017; Neumeister, 2017, p. 107). As King (2012) determined, student perceptions about an institution's SCP dramatically influence how much and what students learn from their conduct participation; it is these evaluations which create a framework for student learning (Stimpson & Janosik, 2015). Additionally, the results reveal that conduct administrators may also need to concentrate their efforts on developing a campus environment motivated by ethical values to drive student learning from the SCP. Janosik and Stimpson (2017) determined that reported SCP learning is significantly enhanced when students identify the presence of an ethical campus culture with clear expectations and supportive of the SCP.

Finally, it is worth noting that the SCP results of this study provide quantitative support for Howell's (2005) qualitative alcohol findings. Howell (2005) determined that although students generally learn to refrain from making the same poor behavioral choices in the future from engaging in the SCP, they also acknowledge their commitment to continue drinking alcohol, even when underage. This dissertation study explored substance use more holistically than solely focusing on alcohol use, however, the results support Howell's (2005) findings by suggesting that student substance use behavior intentions are not associated with prior SCP involvement. In other words, students are not learning to change their substance use behavior through process participation.

Practical Implications

After reviewing the theoretical implications of this research project, this section will distill how those implications can be applied practically by student affairs professionals in their day-to-day work with students.

Classification and Campus Residency Programming

This study signals that students with less credits (or of lower classification) have more difficulty making behavioral decisions that factor in the needs of others and their campus community. This is likely because they have not yet had the opportunity to fully assimilate the culture, traditions, and value of their institutional community into their personal identity. Yet, these students, who also tend to live on-campus (often due to residency requirements, as is the case at the institution researched), are much more likely to know and reference the code of conduct policies when deciding how to behave. Thus, for these on-campus students, there is more code awareness, but this mindfulness and code consultation has not yet integrated with a desire to promote the needs of the campus community. For off-campus students who tend to be much farther along in their academic journey, there is a more unified view between personal and communal interests; these students not only identify with the institution, but value its role within their personal identity. Interestingly, however, these off-campus students view code policies much more negatively and are less likely to reference the code specifically in deciding how to behave.

These findings suggest the continued importance of student classification and residential status in programmatic development by HEI administrators. Although many institutions already have strategic plans and specific programs and trainings in place which are based on these student categories, more can be done to address moral behavior intentionality and consciousness and code of conduct perspectives in light of student moral identity and moral learning dispositions. These results imply that there is great developmental value in pouring time and energy into building a student's connection to the campus community as early as possible; the sooner a student's identity is naturally entwined with their institutional community, the better they understand the importance of living in community and prioritize that consideration in their

moral behavior calculus. Institutions will also see a long-term, beneficial impact among off-campus students by developing more casual, positive, and proactive points of contact with an institution's core values and mission, which undergird code of conduct policies. This is likely best accomplished by ensuring that institutional conduct policies, processes, and personnel engage in proactive and positive communal messaging. These off-campus students need to be regularly reminded through administrative action and rhetoric that the code of conduct, and those charged with enforcing it, are striving to enrich the campus community which they value so highly. They need to see and hear that code policies are much more focused on safeguarding the campus community and maintain their unique campus culture so students can learn, grow, and socialize, than on punishment and discipline. Though subtle, this shift in conduct emphasis and messaging is likely to effect lasting reform.

Proactive and Positive SCPs

Building upon the practical implications related to student classification and residency status, the findings of this study also affirm the need to utilize the SCP to engage communal reasoning and an other-orientation by student participants. HEI administrators need to revise their educational conduct philosophy and current practices from one of negativity to positivity and from retroactive to proactive. When behaviors are phrased in a more positive and proactive manner, it appears to spark a student's internalized and symbolized moral identity to generate more prosocial and positive future behavior intentions. And to help ensure that those behavior intentions become externally symbolized, administrators must strive to place student moral behavior in the context of others and the broader campus community within code policies and the SCP.

Student affairs professionals should consider how to modify traditional conduct practices

with more restorative approaches, so students can actively share in the process of establishing and enforcing community standards (Karp & Sacks, 2014). This active participation in the SCP will help drive moral identity development and build student empathy (Dahl et al., 2014; Karp & Sacks, 2014). It will also serve to repair the harm, rebuild trust, and construct lasting community connections which are much more likely to enter a student's future behavior analysis than when the SCP lacks communal context and disciplines the student in isolation. Moreover, to enhance this restorative approach, student affairs professionals need to utilize more positive rhetoric in all settings – conduct proceedings, formal co-curricular programming sessions, and casual student conversations. These professionals should build "positive code talk" into the institutional DNA; they must be ever ready to respond to these crucial questions and help encourage students to dynamically engage with the implications of each answer: why is the code of conduct important? What positive purposes does it serve? How does the code prepare students to live in community after they complete their education? How specifically does it help fulfill the institutional mission? The code must operate outside the SCP space; students must actively and routinely engage with the code of conduct because it is an integral part of the institution's mission and curriculum, both inside and outside the classroom. By normalizing and contextualizing the code of conduct, faculty and staff may improve how students perceive and evaluate code of conduct policies.

Impacting Male Students

The results of this study make plain that HEI administrators need to be doing more to reach male students who generally tend to have lower moral identity internalization and symbolization. They also are significantly more likely to have lower moral behavior intentionality and consciousness, and more negative opinions about the code of conduct policies.

With these findings in mind, the development of targeted programming to build male moral identity, behavior awareness, and the comprehension of behavioral consequences in male students is more crucial than ever for the explicit benefit of those male students individually and to continue prioritizing institutional mission fulfillment. This programming is needed regardless of the male student's moral learning disposition, as moral identity internalization mediates the relationship between moral mindset and moral behavior intentionality and consciousness. Additionally, moral identity symbolization moderates the impact of internalization for all future behavior intention variables explored in this study. Accordingly, the focus must be on not only the salience of moral and ethical ideals to male students – the "having" side of moral identity – but also on how male students symbolize those ideals externally – the "doing" side of moral identity.

Developing this type of effective programming will certainly be no small feat. However, we can glean some helpful considerations from the academic literature. Stimpson and Janosik (2011) speculated, based on their empirical research, that males end up as more frequent repeat offenders in the SCP because they do not appreciate and internalize the consequences of their behavioral choices, which can lead to similar behavior patterns in the future. This conjecture aligns with the results of this study, which underscores the value of integrating communal impacts and an other-orientation when discussing and educating about moral behavior; this is needed in the SCP, the academic curriculum, and the co-curriculum, including first-year experience, residential, and orientation programming. These male students need context to understand why their behavior is harmful to their peers and to their community, in addition to understanding how it personally affects them. In other words, to materially change male moral behavior, administrators must target moral identity internalization and symbolization. Likewise,

this programming must be informed by gender norms which dictate perceptions about what classifies as appropriate male behavior, as previously discussed.

Lastly, these targeted programs, including the SCP, must be expressed and messaged in a positive and proactive manner. In this study, when participants were asked about their future intended behavior, there was no link to moral identity symbolization; this may have been because those four behavioral outcomes were inquiring about private intentions and not outward and external, symbolized moral action. Moreover, these variables asked students about their intentions to undertake immoral behavior, communicating those choices negatively. Yet, both moral identity internalization and symbolization were associated with the extent to which students considered others and their community in their behavior decisions; this suggests that when framed in a proactive, positive, and communal manner, it engages both sides of the moral identity construct. Within the SCP specifically, the results strongly hint at the value of restorative practices for male offenders. Therefore, for programming to be most effective in promoting the moral identity development of male students, it must change the conversation from "that is a bad choice" to "how can you make choices that benefit and encourage your peers and your beloved campus community."

Substance Use Education

Tackling unhealthy, destructive, and illegal substance use in higher education is a difficult and daunting, yet important, task. The findings of this study suggest that prevalent programmatic work, especially as it relates to alcohol use, is just not working; it appears that this educational programming fails to meet students where they are, regardless of the demographic category they fall within. As Howell (2005) qualitatively discovered, students have no intention to change their alcohol use behavior, regardless of age, even when disciplined through the SCP.

Moral identity internalization was not associated with intended future substance use; however, symbolization was a significant intended substance use predictor. Those students with higher moral identity symbolization were much more inclined to intend positive substance use behavior. Given this outcome, it suggests that many students do not associate substance use choices with the moral domain and do not believe those choices are even a question of morality or ethics. Instead, it is likely that these students heavily rely on their social domain, often constructed from the social conventions, knowledge, and the norms of college life. For many, this includes engaging in the unfortunate and stereotypical vision of college – house parties and alcohol use. Or perhaps, these students draw from their own familial and cultural experiences in making substance use choices, especially as it relates to alcohol. Undoubtedly, some of these students simply see substance use choices as a matter of personal freedom and autonomy. Interestingly, the interaction effect between moral identity internalization and symbolization for substance use reveals that to consistently generate the best substance use behavior, overpowering the strong pull of collegiate social norms, students might benefit from possessing both high internalization and symbolization. Therefore, when modifying current substance use programs, administrators should be mindful of the need to grow both sides of the moral identity equation within the moral domain, but direct the bulk of their efforts toward addressing campus cultural and social norms related to substance use. Though difficult, there needs to be a more concerted effort, drawing on the assistance of experts and educators beyond higher education, to fight the cultural stereotype.

Student Moral Mindset

The results of this study indicate that student moral mindset is not directly associated with moral behavior outcomes; however, moral identity internalization explains the relationship

between a student's moral learning disposition and moral behavior outcomes. The mindset literature affirms that it is possible to shape a student's mindset through intervention, although it may be "limited and temporary," because mindsets are malleable (Dweck, 2000, p. 143; VanDeVelde, 2007). With moral identity internalization as a mediator between mindset and moral behavior, it may be possible to affect a student's moral learning disposition by providing proactive training, programming, and messaging that focuses not only on building a student's moral identity, but continually affirms the student's potential for moral growth and character change. By helping students understand that their moral character is not fixed while assisting them with developing an internalized moral identity founded on ethical principles, HEIs may see more positive moral behavior outcomes, though future research is certainly required.

Inclusion of Others in One's Moral Self-Identity

The findings of this study indicate the importance of helping students see beyond themselves, integrating others and their community into their internalized moral sense of self. When students consider the needs of others and the impact of their behavior on the community, they are significantly more likely to maintain positive, future moral behavior intentions. Moreover, by building this communal consideration into the student's sense of self, it fundamentally changes the behavioral decision-making process; students are significantly more likely to consider the needs of others and their community when they decide how they will behave and to follow through on those decisions externally through consistent symbolized moral behavior.

The findings for the manner in which students evaluate how to behave variable suggest a strong rationale to powerfully build a student's sense of community on campus and even beyond, to affect their internalized, intended, and externalized, symbolic, moral behavior. By linking a

student's moral self-identity to others and to their campus community, there is a much greater prospect of impacting their moral behavior for purposes of acts done in private and public, based on the results of this study. According to Walker (2013), by synthesizing agency – motivations that advance and enrich the self – with communion – concentrating on promoting the needs of others and striving for social betterment, students intrinsically tie personal success to the interest of others. By enriching others, they ensure their own success (Walker, 2013). This is when moral action is most likely to occur (Frimer et al., 2011). Perhaps this is part of the reason restorative justice practices generate stronger student learning outcomes from the SCP than more traditional model code methods; students are confronted by those who were directly affected by their actions. Restorative justice may allow students to internalize that communal impact while fostering stronger connections with their peers and the campus community.

Fundamentally, encouraging students to develop a community-minded ethical framework is an objective at the heart of most institutional mission statements. Colleges and universities desire to integrate morality and ethics into the learning environment, educate for the common good, develop citizenship, and teach students how to live in community. Therefore, by focusing institutional efforts across the curriculum and co-curriculum to help students integrate others into their internalized moral self-identity, which will thereby motivate their symbolized moral identity into action, HEIs will take a decisive step toward institutional mission fulfillment while building a bridge between academic and student affairs through this shared goal.

Study Limitations

The generalizability of the findings from this study may be constrained by the following limitations:

1. This study only included student participants from a single, private four-year university

in the southwestern United States. The student body at this institution is principally homogenous and comprised of traditionally aged (i.e., 18-25 years), predominantly white undergraduate students. With this limitation, the survey results may not represent the full account of all student perspectives and behavioral intentions and awareness. Specifically, this limitation may pose a geographic bias to the sample, excluding student conduct attitudes which may differ at public institutions or those with more diverse student bodies within the United States. Further, this study was not focused on investigating student conduct and moral behavior at two-year community colleges, which tend to include student populations that can significantly differ from those found within traditional four-year higher education settings.

2. As a cross-sectional research project, this study only measured moral behavior attitudes and student conduct perspectives at a single point in time; thus, this was not a longitudinal study. Utilizing a cross-sectional research design limited my ability to test causation and, likewise, to assess the causal direction of any relationships found among the investigated variables (Gotowiec & van Mastrigt, 2019). Although longitudinal and experimental designs may provide a better assessment of both causation and directionality and have been advocated by some scholars as a potentially more informative approach (Gotowiec & van Mastrigt, 2019; Mulder & Aquino, 2013), these designs posed significant, if not insurmountable challenges for the topic of this study. Student mindset and moral identity cannot be randomly assigned, as required in a pure experimental design, while observing moral behavior directly mandates the impossible task of continually shadowing a research subject over an extended period to conduct a longitudinal study. These conditions were not realistic constraints within which to

conduct research. As Hayes (2013) articulates, scholars can never fully claim causation, always reckoning with an unending string of potentially intervening variables. Therefore, it is important for researchers to examine what we can, in an attempt "to discern order in apparent chaos" (Hayes, 2013, p. 17); statistical methods simply give us the tools needed to make interpretations based upon our observations, even in cross-sectional studies (Hayes, 2013).

3. As mentioned above, this study measured moral behavior intentions and evaluations; however, it is not an experimental design. Consequently, I did not have the opportunity to observe actual participant behavior. Researchers have warned about this concern and its potential impact on the validity of a study's findings (Gotowiec & van Mastrigt, 2019; Teper et al., 2015). Individuals may desire to take an action, as reported, but not willingly complete the task, often due to their own personal cost (Batson et al., 1999; Gotowiec & van Mastrigt, 2019). By extending this study and considering participant behavior more broadly, I believe this study reduced the effect of this limitation by integrating an analysis of how students evaluate their own moral behavior and their awareness and evaluations toward conduct rules. Moreover, as advised by several researchers, this study examined more than one specific type of moral behavior to provide a broader understanding of construct associations (Caprara et al., 2005; Carlo & Randall, 2002; Gotowiec & van Mastrigt, 2019). Therefore, I believe this project provides a more holistic understanding of how students relate to moral behavior and student conduct codes and processes.
4. As is characteristic of survey research, the validity of this study's results is limited due to my reliance on self-reported data. Student participants may report what they believe others would want or expect to hear, or even how they want to behave, which may not

equate with how those students actually behave. Additionally, the validity of the results could be impacted by participants who answered mindset-related survey questions according to their own perceived beliefs about themselves or the perceptions others have communicated to them, which may not match their true implicit self-theory.

5. Students voluntarily self-selected their own participation in this research project; this may have caused a non-response bias, which could impact the validity and generalizability of the study findings. Students who chose not to participate may have a meaningful perspective to share that could differ from student participants which may not have been accounted for within the results of this study. Specifically, some, or even many students who previously violated the student code of conduct may have decided to forgo survey participation because of formidable discomfort and/or embarrassment exploring and scrutinizing their own previous misconduct. Theoretically, having the power to compare developmental distinctions between SCP participants and those who have not violated the code of conduct is fundamental to understand student behavior intentionality and awareness more fully, as well as their conduct perspectives.
6. The generalizability of the findings from this study are, to some extent, reliant on the match between the research setting population and the sample demographics. Although this study includes a robust size which assists with improving study generalizability and reducing the impact of demographic mismatch, there are some differences between the sample and the population demographics worth noting. Men were significantly unrepresented in the study sample (29.4%; n = 143), a common problem with survey research generally, whereas the number of minority students (30.0%; n = 146) was statistically equivalent to the number enrolled in the researched institution (28.0%).

Additionally, the average participant age (*M* = 19.5, *SD* = 1.38) skewed appreciably younger than the institutional population and there were significantly more first-year participants represented than seniors in the sample. This incongruency may be partially explained by the research design itself, which excluded anyone under 18 and over 26 years of age, to ensure the study focused on traditionally aged college students. Regardless, it is important to mention that these demographic differences may influence the generalizability of the study results.

7. This study was conducted utilizing Amelia II for R statistical data imputation to predict missing item responses (Amelia, n.d.). Although this process is a readily accepted statistical method (Little et al., 2016), it does present a limitation for the results of this study. Data imputation uses an algorithm that predicts participant answers for each missing item response. Consequently, the offered results rely upon not only self-reported participant data, a limitation previously addressed above, but also imputed responses, which may impact the reported findings.
8. Most of this research project was completed during the COVID-19 pandemic. With nearly all students learning either entirely online or through a mix of online and in-person classes, participants could have had fewer personal experiences and encounters with the physical and cultural spaces of the selected research institution than during a "normal" academic term. Due to this change in their academic and social experience, participants may have had distinctive and different interactions with the institutional code of conduct than might be ordinarily expected. Yet, the potential impact of this remarkable event on the results of this study is likely tempered by the demographics of the sample. Although only 0.8% (*n* = 8) of the sample had entirely in-person classes, 53.2% (*n* = 259) of the

participants accessed their online courses from an on-campus location, 31.8% (n = 155) logged in from within five miles of campus, and another 7% (n = 34) accessed classes within the broader metropolitan area. Only 8% (n = 39) of the participants accessed their online courses from outside the institution's metro. Similarly, 53.6% (n = 261) of the participants resided on-campus during data collection with another 34.3% (n = 167) living within five miles of campus. Thus, it seems plausible that the course access modality and residential demographics of the sample may help mitigate some of the impact of the pandemic on the study results. However, despite any moderating effects of the sample demographics, it is important to note the potential impact of this extraordinary time and the limitation it may have on the results of this project, especially given the unprecedented nature of the fall 2020 academic semester and the influence of a pandemic on the academic and social environments of modern HEIs.

Future Research

This study sought to provide higher education administrators with a deeper understanding of how and why college students behave as they do so administrators can move beyond merely disciplining poor student behavior through the SCP to exercise empirically proven methods to proactively prevent poor behavior before it begins. Moreover, when students do falter and make choices which violate the institutional code of conduct, administrators can have greater confidence that their SCP is appropriately and effectively addressing student characteristics and decision-making attributes that impact student moral behavior. This study is just a beginning, a first step in the research required to untangle the complex web of characteristics and motivations that impact student moral behavior.

In light of the findings from this study, next steps could include an empirical investigation into what institutional programming – residence hall, orientation, first-year experience, or even a new style of co-curricular education – is most influential in helping students integrate the campus community into their own personal identity. The quicker students consider the needs of others and their community in evaluating how to behave, the more likely they are to engage both sides of their moral identity, regardless of their moral learning disposition. Thus, HEI administrators would greatly benefit by learning how to grow student communal identity as early as possible during a student's college career.

Additional research is imperative to gain a deeper understanding of why male college students tend to have lower moral identity internalization and symbolization, lower moral behavior intentionality and consciousness, and more negative views of institutional codes of conduct. Could these results indicate the predominance of the social over the moral domain for these students, perhaps due to the influence of peer pressure? Or could it be that institutional messaging, both implicit and explicit, resonate more closely with female gender norms? Further research may provide practical insights to enrich male moral identity development and behavior intentions more deliberately and proactively.

To assist with the difficult task of continually improving and evolving the SCP, more research is needed to identity what factors most significantly impact how students evaluate code of conduct policies. Both King (2012) and Stimpson and Janosik (2015) empirically affirmed the importance of student perceptions and evaluations of the code of conduct in fostering student moral learning from the SCP. Thus, maintaining student confidence and positive affirmation of the SCP is at the heart of combating recidivism. Also, within the SCP sphere, administrators would benefit from future research which explores empirical connections between the success of

restorative conduct practices and the research of Frimer et al. (2011) and Walker (2013). Are restorative justice practices more effective at nurturing student moral learning than traditional model code methods because those restorative approaches help students merge agency and community, encouraging an other-orientation? Through this research, greater clarity on how to strengthen SCPs, both restorative and traditional, may be achievable, while at the same time focusing on and emphasizing a key missional tenet – citizenship development.

Given the predominance of substance use issues in higher education, especially related to alcohol, future research is needed to determine what primarily drives college students to engage in substance use. Howell's (2005) research was limited to students involved in the SCP; broader quantitative and qualitative studies may help answer what motivates and pressures students to participate in these behaviors. Specifically, as it relates to this study, future research could explore whether there is an empirical link between moral identity symbolization and moral licensing. Do students truly believe that because they have such a strong moral identity, it gives them the permission or moral license to intend (and engage in) future substance use? In addition, researching whether substance use choices are significantly associated with the social domain, including peer pressure, would provide direction for the development of new and hopefully more effective educational programming.

Along the same theoretical line, further study is warranted into the relationship between moral mindset and social domain theory. Dweck et al. (1995) determined that entity theorists make sense of social behaviors based on a person's fixed traits; conversely, those with a growth mindset make sense of the social world contextually, including mediating traits like emotions and needs. Thus, it seems probable that a student's moral mindset may influence how the student categorizes the domain of any given situation. Further, Turiel's (1983) social domain theory is

constructed upon the idea that domains develop as we interact with our environment and assimilate that experience. Those with an entity moral mindset tend to see the social world in a more fixed and linear fashion, and thus, may struggle to integrate across the domains. Incremental theorists believe that the “moral-social order is continually evolving and malleable,” which may tap into the theoretical concept that incremental theorists have learned to bridge between the domains more effectively (Chiu et al., 1997, p. 938). Or it may also be, in the language of Frimer et al. (2011), individuals with a growth moral mindset have successfully synthesized agency and communion to produce moral action, operating across multiple domains.

Lastly, conducting empirical research to determine what routinely utilized co-curricular programming has the greatest impact on student moral identity internalization and symbolization growth as they relate to specific immoral and unethical behaviors among college students would be greatly beneficial. Utilizing a longitudinal research design, a series of pre- and post-program surveys and interviews could be used to gauge student growth and perceptions from each program, as well as tracking overall student moral identity development. This research could help provide guidance and direction on how to allocate finite co-curricular funding to ensure the greatest impact on institutional mission fulfillment.

Summary

This dissertation project embarked upon what is likely to be a long and ongoing research program – how and why college students behave as they do. When students fail to make moral choices, violating the institutional code of conduct, it threatens campus safety, may increase legal liability, risks student mental health, and interrupts student learning and moral identity development, all of which negatively impact institutional mission fulfillment. If administrators only address these immoral and unethical behaviors responsively through the SCP, they miss

proactive, influential, and decisive opportunities to encourage and underscore the significance of moral and ethical citizenship.

With a deeper understanding of moral behavior intentions and awareness, HEI administrators will have the power to craft institutional programming and curriculum, both inside and outside the classroom, to address student moral identity development despite a student's moral learning temperament. With lofty institutional mission statements which strive toward admirable goals, including citizenship development, educating for the common good, and teaching students to live in community, most institutions are founded with the desire to integrate morality and ethics into the everyday living and learning experience. With this mission infused into academic curriculum and co-curricular programming, HEIs aspire to graduate students who can take this experience and use it to place their moral identity into action in their community for the betterment of society (Katzner & Nieman, 2006).

This study provided some key insights into student moral identity development, the impact of student code of conduct perspectives, and resulting behavioral outcomes which will guide future research. If administrators wish to impact moral behavior outcomes, they could recognize that student moral learning dispositions may be mediated by moral identity internalization, but not symbolization. The same is true for the degree to which students know and reference the code of conduct policies – a means of establishing moral and ethical standards for the campus community – in deciding how to behave. Thus, to proactively confront student immoral behavior, administrators should focus on creating programs and curriculum to help students more readily integrate and prioritize moral and ethical principles into their sense of self, both in and out of the classroom. This study suggests that this may be effective in generating proactive and thoughtful moral decision-making when students incorporate an other- and

community-orientation into their self-identity; this communal perspective helps students to engage their moral identity symbolization, which assists in motivating the student to make and take moral action. These students are heavily invested in their campus community and it shows in their moral behavior. Similarly, students are more apt to include institutional code of conduct standards into their behavioral calculus when they positively encounter the code and those tasked with enforcing code policies as part of their ordinary, daily routine. For on-campus residents, this is more easily achieved, but proactive thought and effort must be expended to reach off-campus students, many of whom tend to be closer to graduation and more separated from the physical campus community.

There is still much to learn about the moral behavior of American college students. Yet, this study gives key insight and direction to HEI administrators for potential next steps that can be taken now as additional research progresses. As Lake and Buelow (2021) stated, "A strictly utilitarian approach will backfire. Our [institutional] efforts must be visibly and deeply normative." Specifically, validating the findings of this study, Lake and Buelow (2021) argued that HEIs must "[e]volve to a preventative, not reactive, mind-set;" ensure "[p]revention…is woven into all facets of the student experience," engaging a "curricular perspective;" and striving to establish institutional "alignment . . . properly focused on core values." It is only through this proactive mindset across the entire curriculum, both inside and outside the classroom, that institutions can achieve their institutional missions, truly cultivating ethical citizens who are unhesitatingly equipped to live in, and meaningfully contribute to, their own communities.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Research Survey Email Invitation

Sender: Jessica Ledbetter, Doctoral Candidate
Subject line: Dissertation Research Survey

Dear student,

My name is Jessica Ledbetter and I am doctoral candidate working on my dissertation research under the direction of Dr. Brandy Quinn at Texas Christian University (TCU).

You have been randomly selected to complete a dissertation research survey regarding student conduct perspectives. This online survey is designed to better understand to what extent undergraduate student beliefs about their own intelligence and moral identity influence student moral awareness and behavior, and whether those beliefs impact student perceptions of conduct policies and processes. Data collected from this survey will be used to complete my dissertation research project.

Participation in this survey is voluntary and will take you **approximately 20 minutes to complete**. If you **complete the survey by INSERT DATE**, you can choose to enter a drawing for one of five $25 Amazon gift cards. Please note that all your responses will be kept completely confidential and all resulting data will only be reported in the aggregate. By clicking on the link below you are indicating your voluntary willingness to participate in the survey.

To participate in the survey, please go to: INSERT WEB LINK

Thank you in advance for your participation! If you have any specific questions about this survey, please contact me (j.ledbetter@tcu.edu) or Dr. Brandy Quinn (b.quinn@tcu.edu).

Best Regards,

Jessica Ledbetter, J.D.
Doctoral Candidate, Higher Education Leadership
College of Education
j.ledbetter@tcu.edu

APPENDIX B

Dissertation Survey

Age Confirmation

Are you 18 years of age or older?

- Yes – will continue to Section 1
- No – will exit and conclude the survey with the following message:
  - "Thank you for your interest in this research project. However, to participate you must be 18 years of age or older."

Section 1

Consent to Participate in Research (see Appendix D)

Section 2

Please indicate your response to the following questions:

1. What is your classification?
   - First Year
   - Sophomore
   - Junior
   - Senior
   - Fifth-Year Senior
   - Graduate/Professional student

2. What is your residential status?
   - On-campus
   - Off-campus (within 5 miles of campus)
   - Off-campus (farther than 5 miles from campus)

3. What is your age?
   - 18
   - 19
   - 20
   - 21
   - 22
   - 23
   - 24
   - 25

- 26+

4. Are you a transfer student?
   - Yes
   - No

5. What is your enrollment status?
   - Part-time
   - Full-time

6. Are you a first-generation college student?
   - Yes, neither of my parents graduated from college
   - No, one of my parents graduated from college
   - No, both of my parents graduated from college

7. Please indicate your cumulative grade point average (GPA) at this institution.
   - 3.76-4.00
   - 3.51-3.75
   - 3.26-3.50
   - 3.01-3.25
   - 2.76-3.00
   - 2.51-2.75
   - 2.26-2.50
   - 2.01-2.25
   - 2.00 or under
   - Not Sure
   - Have not yet completed a full academic semester at this institution

8. How many hours do you typically spend a week studying?
   - 0 hours
   - 1-5 hours
   - 6-10 hours
   - 11-15 hours
   - 16-20 hours
   - 21-25 hours
   - 26-30 hours
   - More than 30 hours

9. How do you describe your gender identity? (Check all that apply.)
   - Man
   - Woman
   - Transgender
   - Gender Non-Conforming
   - Self-identify: _____________

- Prefer not to say

10. What is your Sexual Orientation?
    - Bisexual
    - Gay
    - Lesbian
    - Straight/Heterosexual
    - Queer
    - Questioning
    - Self-identify: _____________
    - Prefer not to respond

11. Which best describes your ethnicity?
    - Hispanic or Latino
    - Not Hispanic or Latino

12. With which race(s) do you identify? (Check all that apply.)
    - American Indian or Alaska Native
    - Asian
    - Black or African American
    - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
    - White
    - Other (please specify): _____________

13. What is your religious affiliation?
    - Agnostic
    - Atheist
    - Buddhist/Taoist
    - Christian/Catholic
    - Christian/Protestant
    - Christian/Other
    - Hindu
    - Jewish
    - LDS/The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
    - Muslim
    - Zoroastrian
    - Spiritual but not religious
    - Not religious
    - Other (please specify): _____________
    - I prefer not to respond to this question.

Section 3

Listed below are some characteristics that might describe a person:
Caring, Compassionate, Fair, Friendly, Generous, Helpful, Hardworking, Honest, Kind

The person with these characteristics could be you or it could be someone else. For a moment, visualize in your mind the kind of person who has these characteristics. Imagine how that person would think, feel, and act. When you have a clear image of what this person would be like, using the scale below, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by selecting the number that corresponds to your opinion.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

14. It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics.
15. Being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am.
16. I often wear clothes that identify me as having these characteristics.
17. I would be ashamed to be a person who had these characteristics.
18. The types of things I do in my spare time (e.g., hobbies) clearly identify me as having these characteristics.
19. The kinds of books and magazines that I read identify me as having these characteristics.
20. Having these characteristics is not really important to me.
21. The fact that I have these characteristics is communicated to others by my membership in certain organizations.
22. I am actively involved in activities that communicate to others that I have these characteristics.
23. I strongly desire to have these characteristics.

[This survey section includes the Self-Importance of Moral Identity Scale taken from Aquino and Reed (2002).]

Section 4

This section is designed to investigate ideas about intelligence. These are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your ideas.

Using the scale below, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by selecting the number that corresponds to your opinion.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Agree	Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

24. You have a certain amount of intelligence, and you can’t really do much to change it.
25. Your intelligence is something about you that you can’t change very much.

26. No matter who you are, you can significantly change your intelligence level.
27. To be honest, you can't really change how intelligent you are.
28. You can always substantially change how intelligent you are.
29. You can learn new things, but you can't really change your basic intelligence.
30. No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit.
31. You can change even your basic intelligence level considerably.

[This survey section includes the Implicit Theories of Intelligence – Self Form for Adults measure from Dweck, Chiu, and Hong (1995).]

Section 5

This section is designed to investigate ideas about morality. These are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your ideas.

Using the scale below, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by selecting the number that corresponds to your opinion.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Agree	Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

32. Your moral character is something basic about you and you can't change it much.
33. Whether you are responsible and sincere or not is deeply ingrained in your personality. It cannot be changed very much.
34. There is not much that can be done to change your moral traits (e.g., conscientiousness, uprightness, and honesty).

[This survey section includes the Implicit Theories of Morality – Self Form for Adults measure from Dweck, Chiu, and Hong (1995).]

Section 6

Using the scale below, please indicate the extent to which each of the following statements describes or does not describe you by selecting the number that corresponds to your opinion.

1	2	3	4	5
Describes me greatly.	Describes me well.	Describes me somewhat.	Describes me very little.	Does not describe me at all.

35. I believe a student code of conduct rule only matters to me if there is a reason for the rule.
36. To realize a greater good, I sometimes disregard the student code of conduct rules.

37. I don’t follow student code of conduct rules that conflict with my own personal value system.
38. I will break the student code of conduct rules when it feels right for me to do so.
39. In my opinion, being popular is more important than doing the right thing.
40. I would break the student code of conduct rules if it helped me make friends.
41. I sometimes have to break the student code of conduct rules to keep my friends.
42. It is harder for me to follow the student code of conduct rules when I am with my friends.
43. I try to follow the student code of conduct rules.
44. It is my responsibility to follow the student code of conduct rules.
45. I believe following the student code of conduct rules can avoid causing trouble.
46. I expect others to follow the student code of conduct rules.
47. If I violate the student code of conduct rules I would be honest about it.
48. I have an understanding of what the student code of conduct rules are at my school.
49. I know how to communicate with others about the student code of conduct rules.
50. I think about how my actions affect others.
51. I manage my behavior to avoid harming others.
52. I do things that will have a positive effect on others, even if it inconveniences me.
53. I consider others in my community when making decisions about my behavior.
54. I feel living in a community means sometimes putting aside what I might want for the good of everyone.

[This survey section includes the Student Conduct Administration Measure with from Nelson (2017) with slight modifications.]

Section 7

Using the scale below, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

55. The policies related to student conduct are appropriate for students attending this institution.
56. I believe that the process for addressing issues of potential student misconduct at this institution is fair.
57. I believe that the process for addressing issues of potential student misconduct at this institution serves an educational purpose.
58. I understand the steps in the student conduct process at this institution.
59. I believe that the enforcement of the student code of conduct is consistent.

Please indicate your response to the following questions:

60. Have you ever been through this institution's student code of conduct process?
- Yes, once
- Yes, multiple times
- No

61. Were you ever found responsible for violating one or more policies of this institution?
- Yes
- No

Using the scale below, please indicate how likely are you to do the following in the future?

1	2	3	4
Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely

62. Copy from another student during an exam.
63. Get a copy of the questions for an exam ahead of time.
64. Use old, unauthorized exams to study for an exam.
65. Give a fake excuse for missing an exam.
66. Buy a paper online to submit.
67. Copy directly from a source (word for word) without citing.
68. Summarize from a source without citing.
69. Take institutional property that does not belong to you.
70. Take another student's property.
71. Engage in verbal behavior that harms others.
72. Engage in physical behavior that harms others.
73. Use marijuana for recreational purposes.
74. Use tobacco products on the institution's premises.
75. Facilitate or encourage underage alcohol consumption.

Using the scale below, please indicate how serious you think each type of behavior is:

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all Serious	Slightly Serious	Moderately Serious	Very Serious	Extremely Serious

76. Copying from another student during an exam.
77. Getting a copy of the questions for an exam ahead of time.
78. Using old, unauthorized exams to study for an exam.
79. Giving a fake excuse for missing an exam.
80. Buying a paper online to submit.
81. Copying directly from a source (word for word) without citing.
82. Summarizing from a source without citing.
83. Taking institutional property that does not belong to you.

84. Taking another student's property.
85. Engaging in verbal behavior that harms others.
86. Engaging in physical behavior that harms others.
87. Using marijuana for recreational purposes.
88. Using tobacco products on the institution's premises.
89. Facilitating or encouraging underage alcohol consumption.
90. Engaging in underage alcohol consumption.

[This survey section includes selected and added items from the Student Conduct Benchmark developed by the NASPA Assessment and Knowledge Consortium.]

Section 8

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

If you would like to be entered to win one of five $25.00 Amazon gift cards, please click "ENTER" below. Otherwise, please click "EXIT" to conclude this survey.

APPENDIX C

Permission Letter to Use the MFQE-SCALE

March 19, 2020

Jessica Ledbetter, J.D.
Doctoral Candidate, Higher Education Leadership
Graduate Assistant, Campus Life – Dean's Office
Sadler Hall 2006 TCU Box 297010 j.ledbetter@tcu.edu
Fort Worth, Texas 76109

Dear Atty/Ms Ledbetter,

I write to provide written permission for you to use the MFQE-SCALE in the course of your doctoral dissertation research. A copy of the scale and a description of the work related to its development can be found at:

Nelson, A. R. (2017). Measure of Development for Student Conduct Administration. *Journal of College Student Development*, *58*(8), 1274-1280.

Additional information about the MFQE-SCALE can be found at www.StudentConductAssessment.com.

I wish you the best as you proceed with your work.

Sincerely
Adam Ross Nelson, J.D. Ph.D.
Twitter: @adamrossnelson
adamrossnelson@gmail.com

APPENDIX D

Research Survey Informed Consent Document

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Research: "Moral Identity, Implicit Theory, and Moral Behavior: Untangling the Web of Connected Characteristics in Student Conduct"

Funding Agency/Sponsor: N/A

Principal Investigator: Dr. Brandy Quinn

Co-investigators: Ms. Jessica Ledbetter

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be at least 18 years of age, but no more than 25 years of age, and currently enrolled as an undergraduate student. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

What is the purpose of the research?
The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the relationship between your beliefs about your intelligence and moral identity, and how that may impact your awareness of moral issues and future behavior. Further, this study seeks to understand if your moral identity and intelligence beliefs influence how you view the student code of conduct process.

How many people will participate in this study?
If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be one of approximately 570 participants.

What is my involvement for participating in this study?
If you agree to participate in the study, we will ask you to do the following things: After providing consent to participate in this study, you will complete an online questionnaire. With your consent, we will use your responses as part of the data collection for this study. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you retain the right to withdraw at any time while completing the survey without penalty.

We expect your participation will only take a single interaction, which will be conducted exclusively through electronic means. At no time will you be required to meet with a researcher in person.

How long am I expected to be in this study for and how much of my time is required?
The online questionnaire should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

What are the risks to me for participating in this study and how will they be minimized?
There are some minimal risks you might experience from being in this study. Some participants might feel uncomfortable or feel upset while completing the online questionnaire because of the sensitive nature of the research topic. This may be particularly true for questions which directly inquire about unethical behavior and conduct which constitutes code of student conduct violations. Please note that should you reveal knowledge of, or participation in conduct that violates the code of student conduct, no action will be taken against you. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you feel the need to skip a question or withdraw entirely from the study, you may do so at any time while completing the survey without penalty. To skip a question, simply leave it blank and move to the next question. If you wish to withdraw, just close the survey's browser window at any time.

What are the benefits for participating in this study?
Because this current study will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on how and why students behave as they do, you might benefit from being in this study through enhanced institutional programming and more effective conduct codes and proceedings.

Will I be compensated for participating in this study?
No compensation will be offered for your participation in this study. However, after completing the online survey, you will be given the option to enter a drawing for one of five $25 Amazon gift cards.

What is an alternative procedure(s) that I can choose instead of participating in this study?
There are no alternative procedures for study participation.

How will my confidentiality be protected?
We plan to publish the results of this study. However, no individual response to this survey will ever be identified in any report. Rather, all resulting data will be reported in the aggregate. Please note that responses are not entirely anonymous to ensure that reminder emails are only sent to non-respondents. Yet, all identifiable information to send reminder emails will be exclusively processed by the email server to ensure reminders are appropriately disseminated to just the non-respondents. This identifying information will be blocked from viewing by all others.

This consent form will be retained electronically and the data you provide will be kept in a locked cabinet and/or password-protected confidential electronic file. We will be the only individuals with the ability to access this information.

What will happen to the information collected about me after the study is over?
We will keep your research data to use for possible future research. Your name and other information that can directly identify you will be deleted and/or removed from the research data collected as part of this project.

Is my participation voluntary?
It is totally up to you to decide to participate in this research study. Participating in this study is voluntary. Even if you decide to be part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. If you decide to

withdraw before you complete the survey, you may exit the online survey at any time by closing the survey's browser window. Incomplete survey responses will still be used as part of this research project.

Who should I contact if I have questions regarding the study?
You can contact Dr. Brandy Quinn at b.quinn@tcu.edu, (817) 257-5408, with any questions that you may have about the study.

Should you feel any discomfort or uneasiness while completing this study, please contact the TCU Counseling and Mental Health Center, (817) 257-7863 (during regular business hours) or (817) 257-SAFE (7233) (to reach the 24/7 Phone Counseling Helpline).

Who should I contact if I have concerns regarding my rights as a study participant?
Dr. Dru Riddle, Chair, TCU Institutional Review Board, (817) 257-6811, d.riddle@tcu.edu; or Dr. Floyd Wormley, Associate Provost of Research, www.research.tcu.edu

Prior to proceeding, please be advised that this page constitutes your consent to participate in research. Therefore, the investigators recommend either printing or taking a screenshot of this page for your ongoing reference.

By clicking "Yes" below and proceeding to the first page of the survey, you indicate that you have read or been read the information provided above, you have received answers to all of your questions and been told who to call if you have any more questions, you have freely decided to participate in this research, and you understand that you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

VITA

Personal Background	Jessica L. Ledbetter Fort Worth, Texas
Education	Diploma, Olympia High School, Olympia, Washington, 1997 Bachelor of Arts, Economics, Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, Michigan, 2001 Juris Doctor, Law, University of Kansas School of Law, Lawrence, Kansas, 2004 Doctor of Education, Higher Education Leadership, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, 2021
Experience	Associate Health Care Attorney, Baird Holm LLP, Omaha, Nebraska, 2004-2005 Associate Attorney, Thompson-Hall, P.A., Lawrence, Kansas, 2005-2007 Adjunct Faculty, College of Business, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, 2008-2010 Adjunct Faculty, M.J. Neeley School of Business, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas, 2011-2017 Graduate Assistant, Office of Institutional Equity, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas 2017-2018 Graduate Intern, Campus Life – Dean's Office, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas, Summer 2018 Graduate Intern, Dean of Students Office, University of North Texas, Denton, Texas, Summer 2019 Graduate Assistant, Campus Life – Dean's Office, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas, 2018-2020 Assistant Dean, Campus Life – Dean's Office, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas, 2021-present
Professional Memberships	Kansas State Bar Nebraska State Bar NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education TACUSPA – Texas Association of College and University Student Personnel Administrators ASCA – Association for Student Conduct Administration