



# The effect of child's attitude towards parents on critical thinking with the mediating role of moral foundations

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#### Abstract

**Aim:** The present research was conducted with the aim of investigating the effect of the child's attitude towards parents on critical thinking with the mediating role of moral foundations. **Method:** in the form of a predictive correlation design, 404 people (girls and boys) from young people about to get married were selected by available sampling method and using Klein's sample size formula (formula 1 to 20). The research tool included standard questionnaires of child's attitude towards father (CAF) and mother (CAM), critical thinking (CTDI), moral foundations (MFQ-30). SPSS19 and Smart-PLS software were used for data analysis. **Results:** The results showed that 30.4% of the changes in critical thinking are variables of the child's attitude towards the mother and the child's attitude towards the father ( $P < 0.001$ ). Also, the results related to the mediating role of moral foundations showed that the child's attitude towards parents through moral foundations does not have an indirect effect on critical thinking, respectively  $-0.005$  ( $p = 0.285$ ) and  $-0.003$  ( $p = 0.214$ ) ( $P > 0.05$ ). **Conclusion:** Based on the findings of the research, it can be concluded that the child's attitude towards parents has an effect on the critical thinking of young people. Therefore, paying attention to these mechanisms can be useful in formulating effective preventive and therapeutic interventions for teenagers about to get married.

**Keywords:** Child's attitude towards parents, critical thinking, moral foundations.

## Introduction

Critical thinking is considered as a justified scientific method for decision-making, analysis and problem solving, which can be defined as a systematic and organized process for explaining the problem, evaluating various sources and solutions to solve the problem. There is a belief that critical thinking is an important factor in self-direction, self-regulation, self-control and self-correction (Kim & Hwang, 2016).

Parents play a vital role in their children's lives and act as the first and most important role model. Children tend to pay attention to their parents' behavior from a very young age. Parents' behavior is one of the factors affecting young people's marriage. In families where the parents are hot-tempered and autocratic, the girl child may adjust herself to the mother, but due to observing the father's behavior, she finds a wrong image of men in her mind and does not give in to marriage easily. A male child may also consider women and girls to be like him after observing the incorrect behavior of the mother and become obsessed with choosing a wife for himself and become pessimistic about the future and formation of life; The result of these types of attitudes can be a factor in delaying marriage (Stan, Schrodt, & Hutchinson, 2009). Research results show that children's attitude towards parents has an impact on the child's identity development, thinking and worldview and his actions such as family formation in the future (Batoool, Ashraf, and Khan, 2019).

With this description and considering that family and community are the two basic structures that determine moral beliefs and values, it is not far from mind that these changes will affect the moral foundations of young people about to get married. Ethical foundations include a wide range of judgments, values and moral behaviors of humans in terms of intuition and moral feelings. Moral foundations state that moral judgment is primarily made by at least five specific areas of intuition, which together constitute moral foundations and are used unconsciously by a person before reasoning and thinking (Simpson, 2017).

This research sought to find out whether the attitude of young people about to get married can predict the critical thinking of young people based on the child's attitude towards parents with regard to the mediating role of moral foundations.

## Method

The implementation method of this research was descriptive (non-experimental) and the research design was structural equation correlation. The statistical population of this study was young people about to get married in Tehran in the period of 2020. For the sample volume, the number of 400 tons has been done based on Klein's sample volume determination formula (formula 1 to 20). In order to enter as a research sample, the following criteria were included: 1- Consent to participate in the research, 2- Age range of 20 to 35 years, 3- Absence of physical and psychological illness in the form of self-report (according to the comments of the research participants). Exclusion criteria from the research include: 1- Failure to properly complete the research questionnaires, 2- The person's refusal to continue cooperation, 3- Suffering from physical and mental illnesses.

## Results

The results showed that 30.4% of the changes in critical thinking are variables of the child's attitude towards the mother and the child's attitude towards the father ( $P < 0.001$ ). Also, the results related to the mediating role of moral foundations showed that the child's attitude towards parents through moral foundations does not

have an indirect effect on critical thinking, respectively -0.005 ( $p=0.285$ ) and -0.003 ( $p=0.214$ ) ( $P > 0.05$ ).

### **Conclusion**

According to the findings of the research, modifying the attitude in the relationship between parents and children through teaching interpersonal relationships to parents in order to reduce the negative attitude towards parents is a practical proposal that can be proposed for the present research. It can be said that parents, as a source of emotional nutrition for a child, play a fundamental role in the formation, continuation and prevention of his maladaptive behaviors. If parents fail to provide their children with the constructive and nurturing love that healthy adolescent development requires, it may lead to the lack of moral development and antisocial behavior of adolescents. By improving the attitude of children towards their parents, the family space is prepared for the development of the tendency to think critically, which is the need of all people, especially young people, in today's society. According to the important findings of this research, the present research has only examined the mediating role of moral foundations in the relationship between the child's attitude towards parents and critical thinking in young people who are about to get married. It is possible that other mediating factors are effective with critical thinking in young people. Therefore, it is suggested that future researches investigate the mediating role of other variables such as personality traits. Also, survey methods, simultaneous interviews to collect data in order to improve the quality of the obtained results and in a long period of time should be discussed.

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