

From Human Nature Belief to Parenting Behavior: Mediation Process Hypothesis

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What we know about parenting cuts across two areas: parenting belief and parenting behavior. However, it has been difficult to construct an account of parental behavior based on parenting belief. The present research proposes a “mediation process hypothesis” to sketch the process from cognitive foundation to everyday parenting practice. The main arguments of this hypothesis are: (a) Human nature belief has different origin from parenting belief and is a better index of parenting behavior. (b) Human nature belief has impact both on parent’s attribution of children’s misbehavior and the practical meaning of attribution, which mediate parenting behavior. (c) Human nature belief has impact on parents’ efficacy judgment in parenting which also mediates the parenting behavior. Two measurements of human nature belief and parenting belief and five vignettes were designed to test this hypothesis.

2011 parents and teachers responded to 18 statements as well as to the misbehavior of five story characters as if they were parents of the characters. The subjects were asked to attribute the possible cause of story characters’ misbehavior and to evaluate the effectiveness of parenting in each case. The manipulation of the parenting situations is the consistency of behavior development of the story characters. As predicted, results supported almost all of the argument of the hypothesis proposed. Implications for the current findings are discussed and some suggestions are offered for researchers in the future to overcome the methodological hurdles.

Keywords: *human nature belief, parenting belief, parenting behavior, mediation process hypothesis, attribution process*

