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Facilitating and preventing factors in moral and immoral behaviors based on the implicit theories of the Iranian people: The role of benefit and costs

Arezou Delfan Beiranvand¹; *Khosro Rashid²; Abolghasem Yaghoobi³; Rasool Kordnoghi²

¹Ph.D. student in educational psychology, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Bu-Ali Sina University, Hamadan, Iran.

²Associate professor, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Bu-Ali Sina University, Hamadan, Iran.

³Professor, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Bu-Ali Sina University, Hamadan, Iran.

Abstract

Introduction: In the present study, the factors that facilitate and prevent moral and immoral behaviors were examined according to the role of benefits and costs of each of these behaviors.

Materials and Methods: This study was phenomenological qualitative research. Structured interviews were used to collect data. Then, the information obtained from the interview was analyzed by explicit content analysis method during three stages of the process of implementation open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Participants in the study included 222 people (121 high school students aged 16 to 19 years and 101 adults aged 20 to 52 years) from Khuzestan, Lorestan, Hamadan, Mazandaran, Tehran, Arak, Fars, Isfahan, Khorasan Razavi, Ilam, Kermanshah, and Kurdistan provinces that were selected using the convenient sampling method.

Results: The results of the content analysis of the interviews showed that according to the implicit theories of the Iranian people, the benefits factor (psychological benefit and situational benefit) has an important role in facilitating and preventing the performance of any moral and immoral behaviors. Based on the findings, it can be said that the benefit factor (psychological-situational) and cost (psychological-situational) play important roles in the likelihood of the formation, occurrence, and inhibition of moral and immoral behaviors by preventing them in various work, study, social, and life situations.

Conclusion: Overall, the research findings give new insights into the role of benefit and cost as factors that control the occurrence or non-occurrence of moral and immoral behaviors in various situations.

Keywords: Behavior, Cost-benefit analysis, Morality

Post script: This research paper is an extraction from the Ph. D thesis of Arezou Delfan Beiranvand.

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*Corresponding Author:

Department of Psychology, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Bu-Ali Sina University, Hamadan, Iran.

khosrorashid@yahoo.com

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Introduction

In psychology, morals refer to a situation in which a wide range of social considerations are formed in order to decide concerning social concerns about group functioning, rituals (traditions), and norms as well as psychological concerns about self-regulation, individual selection, and individual rights to maintain respect, fairness, welfare, equality and fulfillment of rights in our relations with others (1). Morality includes behavioral rules based on conscience or the distinction between appropriate versus inappropriate (2) and it is an inseparable part of our social rules and policies (3). Moral rules are implemented by the people who live in the society in order to prevent immoral behaviors, such as selfishness, lying, cheating, or theft (4).

Immoral behaviors are considered any form of action violating the accepted moral (social) norms (5). Immoral behaviors harm others by ignoring the rules, policies, regulations, and norms indicating the major legal indices necessary for a society to survive. The consequences of these behaviors are destroying human relationships in workspaces and causing high financial, credential, and emotional costs, which can be realized in human and social relations as well (6). Therefore, identification, prediction and prevention, and restraining of immoral behaviors are the serious challenge confronting groups and societies (7). A similar challenge can be found when it comes to nurturing and developing moral behaviors.

On the other hand, moral or ethical behaviors encompass a wide range of moral norms of accepted behavior which occur in the greater social texture. Moral behavior, as Eisenberg (8) suggests, is at the prosocial level and originates from the wishes not only beneficial to us, but also in line with the interests of others. Moral behavior is referred to as a set of socially accepted actions and behaviors that are acquired through rewards and punishment (9). Also, moral behavior in organizations points to moral behaviors and decisions within a texture, especially in the working environment (10). Organizational moral behaviors begin with a set of psychosocial traits and affect cognitive skills, such as analytical capacity and decision-making skills (11).

However, what source of power makes people behave morally? What factor prevents moral

behavior? Is there a force beyond rationality and judgment to make morality insecure? Despite being highly knowledgeable, why do not people behave morally? What factors cause their immoral behavior (12)?

To answer these questions, various theoreticians have elaborated on moral and immoral behaviors from different points of view. A number of them, including Kohlberg, look at behavior from the viewpoint of development. They believe that people will show a greater tendency to moral behavior if moral reasoning is developed. According to this point of view, moral reasoning is a key factor in moral judgment and decisions concerning moral action (13). Nevertheless, other theorists review the problem from the viewpoint of social influence (situational forces) (14).

As Trevino (15) suggests, although moral awareness and moral judgment as cognitive processes are considered the preludes of moral and behavioral purposes, these theories and studies mainly focus on reflection-based moral judgment processes (conscious thinking processes through which humans determine morality/immorality of any special action) and have less focus on moral action antecedents (16). On the other hand, the link between cognition and moral behavior has been theorized and investigated for a long time and an average relationship is also found (17). Theorists such as Blasi (18) found that the relationship between moral judgment and moral action is relatively weak and Colby and Damon (19) indicated that people with a higher level of morality do not have an advanced moral reasoning capacity. Weber and Gillespie (20) examined the relationship between moral beliefs, purpose, and behaviors and found significant differences between beliefs or purposes and actual behaviors. Inerson (21) also believes that the relationship between moral reasoning and moral behavior in children is slight. Based on what has been said, the concerning problem is: "Despite believing that morality and moral behavior are precious, why do people fail in behaving (action and behavior) based on morality?" In other words, why do those who value morality behave immorally (22)? We read and hear every day on the news about violent behavior, crime, sexual abuse, terrorism, racism, gender discrimination, and various types of

violence. Immoral behaviors have become a pervasive matter and now more than ever organizations are witnessing actual misbehaviors, such as impoliteness, insult, social destruction, theft, vandalism, and so on. We hear about bank loan interests, structural injustice for immigrants, and significant vanity about respecting plants and animal rights, and in many of these cases, people who show this peculiar behavior are those who have a high awareness of moral values (23).

Authors believe that it may be the benefit or cost which is the core of the matter. Immoral behaviors can be beneficial or costly to the individual or his/her group (24). Similarly, moral behaviors can be conducted under the influence of individual or group benefits or costs. The benefits and costs can facilitate or prevent any moral or immoral behaviors.

To be exact, as stated by Lowry and Peterson (25), a structure having the potential to play its facilitative or preventive role in different situations to induce a moral or immoral behavior is the cost-benefit structure. From their viewpoint, according to Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA), the surplus benefits can be estimated about costs and, therefore, the existing options can be scaled prior to decision making. The systematic benefit/cost analysis is an effective decision-making strategy that can be applied in moral judgment (26); it is compatible with moral decision-making and presents a greater set of values as well as an evaluation approach accommodating moral considerations (27).

According to the expectancy-value theory of motivation, utility value means being involved in something in order to achieve a short- or long-term goal (28), i. e. the belief that a subject, an action, or a lesson is beneficial in achieving future goals (29). Costs, on the other hand, point to the negative aspects of being involved in some activity (30), i. e. what we lose as a consequence of doing something (29). Generally speaking, cost/benefit analysis demonstrates an evaluation of the cost/benefit followed by doing or not doing a moral/immoral behavior.

Therefore, this study explicates moral and immoral behaviors according to the role of cost and benefit as probable reinforcing or punishing factors. The main problem in the present study is to investigate the factors which facilitate and prevent moral and immoral behaviors based on

implicit theories of Iranian people highlighting the role of costs and benefits.

Materials and Methods

The current research is phenomenological (i.e. describing life experiences of people as they occurred; i.e. people's experiences, understandings, and feelings are studied in phenomenology) qualitative-descriptive study and the data obtained from the structured interview was examined using explicit content analysis. The population of the study included all 16-year-olds and above. Since the sample volume is not identified by a certain rate or number in qualitative studies, the number of samples is determined based on the obtained information and data saturation. According to a definition, when all information sources give similar information, data saturation has occurred. A criterion for discovering saturation is the repetition of previous data; i.e. the researcher constantly faces repeated data. For instance, when the researcher hears similar words and comments during an ongoing interview, he/she can guess that data saturation is about to occur (31). Therefore, using the convenient sampling method, 222 people (121 second high school students aged 16 to 19 and 101 adults aged 20 to 52) were selected from Khuzestan, Lorestan, Hamadan, Mazandaran, Tehran, Arak, Fars, Isfahan, Khorasan Razavi, Ilam, Kermanshah, and Kurdistan provinces as the study participants. The age average and the standard deviation of the population were 25.08 and 10.14 years, respectively. The age range of the population was between 16 and 52 years.

An approach to examining morality, moral and immoral behaviors is implicit (tacit and implied) and explicit (specific) theories. Implicit theories are rational structures in an individual's mind which can be tracked through questioning and deduction and become clear in one's behavior. They are used in daily judgments about people and their surroundings. The purpose of these points of view is to present a description of concepts that are correct according to public opinion. However, their authenticity is not psychologically examined (32).

The implicit theories of the Iranian people were, therefore, investigated in the current study. This was because the implicit theories of people

regarding why we still have major problems concerning moral behavior despite believing in the value of morality and moral behavior and the implausibility of immoral behavior have not been well examined. On the other hand, a great number of psychological explicit or specific theories (structures which are presented by expert theoreticians and researchers and that are based on a set of data by which they are tested at least in "psychology").

This data is gathered from the function of an individual in tasks that are supposed to measure psychological performance) regarding morality and moral behavior based on various structures, such as moral reasoning, moral attitude, moral identification, moral sensitivity, etc. have been provided. In society, however, we face the challenge of moral functioning (moral action and behavior) and the gap between recognition and behavior based on the idea that there is a clear

distinction between our beliefs and cognitions and actual moral behavior. The present study, therefore, investigated the implicit theories of Iranian people using the phenomenology method to determine people's viewpoints in this regard, so that perhaps the factors explaining part of the gap between beliefs and actions or behavior would be achieved. Informed consent, voluntary participation in the interview, the right to relinquish the research, non-disclosure of information, and privacy rights were taken into consideration in the present study.

Research instruments

Structured cost/benefit interview forms were used in order to gather data in the current study. The face validity of the questions was examined and confirmed with the help of three psychology professors at Bu-Ali Sina University. The interview form is as follows:

Interview Guidelines																							
We express our gratitude for your kind participation.																							
1. At first, please tell me about yourself....																							
Gender:																							
Age:																							
Education:																							
Field of Study:																							
Marital Status:																							
Occupation:																							
Ethnic Group:																							
Lor <input type="checkbox"/> Kurd <input type="checkbox"/> Lak <input type="checkbox"/> Fars <input type="checkbox"/> Turk <input type="checkbox"/> Arab <input type="checkbox"/>																							
Other ethnic groups:																							
Province of residence:																							
2. Please take a look at this list.																							
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>1. Responsiveness/ Dutifulness</td></tr> <tr><td>2. Patience and self-control</td></tr> <tr><td>3. Respect</td></tr> <tr><td>4. Humanism/altruism</td></tr> <tr><td>5. Empathy</td></tr> <tr><td>6. Conscience</td></tr> <tr><td>7. Rectitude</td></tr> <tr><td>8. Bravery</td></tr> <tr><td>9. Prudency</td></tr> <tr><td>10. Justice</td></tr> <tr><td>11. Benevolence</td></tr> </table>	1. Responsiveness/ Dutifulness	2. Patience and self-control	3. Respect	4. Humanism/altruism	5. Empathy	6. Conscience	7. Rectitude	8. Bravery	9. Prudency	10. Justice	11. Benevolence	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>12. Lying</td></tr> <tr><td>13. Truthfulness</td></tr> <tr><td>14. Cheating</td></tr> <tr><td>15. Flattery</td></tr> <tr><td>16. Affection/Tenderness</td></tr> <tr><td>17. Trickery</td></tr> <tr><td>18. Kindness</td></tr> <tr><td>19. Selfishness and pride</td></tr> <tr><td>20. Modesty</td></tr> <tr><td>21. Loyalty/Trustworthiness</td></tr> <tr><td>22. Spying on the lives of others</td></tr> </table>	12. Lying	13. Truthfulness	14. Cheating	15. Flattery	16. Affection/Tenderness	17. Trickery	18. Kindness	19. Selfishness and pride	20. Modesty	21. Loyalty/Trustworthiness	22. Spying on the lives of others
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As you can see, the list includes both moral and immoral behaviors. For instance, suppose a situation when you go to the baker's to buy some bread, but the shop is so crowded and there is a long waiting line. At the moment, you may take the bread without standing in line and waiting for your turn (give reasons) or you may stand in line and wait for your turn (give reasons). In another instance, suppose you are about to take a school exam. It is been stated clearly that cheating is prohibited (you may/may not cheat (give reasons). Think of a situation where you work at a company, a university, an office or any other given place and your colleague is about to get promoted because of their success. The person in charge of selection has a conversation with you about this (Here, you and others may do him/her in and misinform the person in charge (give reasons) instead of supporting and telling the truth (give reasons)). Suppose a situation where you are driving and get into a route where the speed limit reads "Maximum speed 50 mph" (Here, you and others drive based on what the sign says (give reasons) or drive as fast as you please (give reasons). Suppose the situation where your parents clarify that you should not touch each other's possessions without permission (you or others may do as what you have been told (give reasons) or behave in contrast to what has been made clear and suddenly break a possession of a family member and lie about it (give reasons).

A) Could you please explain what causes us to behave morally? What prevents this moral behavior?

B) Could you please explain what causes us to behave immorally? What prevents this immoral behavior?

3. Now, please take one minute to think of a person in your life who has shown moral behaviors (honesty, respect...) in different life situations (work environment, place of education, society, home environment, dormitory ...).

A) Who is that person? (You do not need to tell the name of that person, but you can mention him/her as your friend, professor, teacher, father, mother, a scientific figure, a political figure, etc.)

B) If possible, please point out one situation in which he/she has conducted a moral behavior (at work, home, education, society, etc.)

C) Please explain what benefit, achievement or advantage this moral behavior would give him/her?

D) Please explain what he/she would lose or what costs he/she would pay if he/she did not conduct this moral behavior? What cost would he pay if he told a lie instead of the truth?

4. Now, please think of a person in your life who has conducted immoral behaviors (lying, pretension, cheating, etc.) in different situations.

A) Who is that person? (You do not need to tell the name of that person, but you can mention him/her as your friend, professor, teacher, father, mother, a scientific figure, a political figure, etc.)

B) If possible, please point out one situation in which he/she has conducted a moral behavior (at work, home, education, society, etc.)

C) Please explain what benefit, achievement or advantage this moral behavior would give him/her?

D) Please explain what he/she would lose or what costs he/she would pay if he/she did not conduct this moral behavior? What cost would he pay if he told the truth instead of lying?

5. What about yourself? Please think of the life situations where you showed a moral behavior.

A) What are those situations?

B) In which situation did you show the most moral behavior?

C) What kind of moral behavior did you conduct?

D) When you did this, what benefits, advantages and positive outcomes did you gain?

E) If you did not behave morally, what would you lose? Or what costs and harms might occur to you? What would you lose if you told a lie instead of telling the truth?

6. Now, please think of the life situations where you showed an immoral behavior.

A) What are those situations?

B) In which situation did you show the most immoral behavior?

C) What kind of immoral behavior did you conduct?

D) When you did this, what benefits, advantages and positive outcomes did you gain?

E) If you did not behave immorally, what would you lose? Or what costs and harms might occur to you? What would you lose if you told the truth instead of telling a lie?

7. As the last interview question,

What is moral behavior?

A) Please explain generally what benefits facilitate conducting moral behavior?

B) What costs and harms follow conducting moral behavior?

What is immoral behavior?

A) Please explain generally what benefits facilitate conducting immoral behavior?

B) What costs and harms follow conducting immoral behavior?

Procedure

In the current study, the required information regarding the research method, procedure, and interview time was given to the participants prior to conducting each interview. They were then interviewed if they tended to. At first, we tried to communicate with the available people (aged 16 and above) through text messages and phone calls to make sure of their participation in the study. Then, we determined a time for the interview to be conducted whether in person or online. The interview duration was determined by the participant agreement and each interview was recorded and then it was written out. The duration of the interview varied between one and two hours. Some participants were interviewed face to face and, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some others were interviewed indirectly via WhatsApp application video/voice call. The interviews were then saved in a file named 'Interview' and they were all written out at the end of the interview.

The number of participants was not previously clarified and the interviews continued until data saturation occurred. Sampling was conducted on 9 April 2021 through the convenient sampling method. The interviews were conducted from 9 a.m. till 11 p.m. every day in May 2021 and ended in August 2021. The information gathered from each interview was written down on the information record page. In the end, the data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using the explicit content analysis method. In this regard, the interview scripts were firstly read and examined several times and data coding was done in three stages (open coding, axial coding, and selective coding). The interview scripts were at first read line by line and the concepts and main sentences were extracted. Then, the concepts extracted from the interview scripts were given labels and a high number of open and raw codes appeared according to the properties and dimensions of each concept (open coding). The obtained concepts were categorized in the next stage and the sub-categories were then clarified. Each number of codes that were conceptually related was organized in one concept or category (axial coding stage). In the final stage, concepts and categorizations were integrated to form the theory. The purpose of this stage is to integrate and refine the data to reach the main and

theoretical concepts so that it covers the main concepts clarified in the previous stages (selective coding stage).

For instance, the first stage (open coding): In this stage, codes such as (feeling of inward satisfaction, reaching inward peace, reaching a clear conscience, feeling of being valuable and efficient, feeling human, feeling proud and exalted, feeling truly well by heart, feeling honored, feeling of bravery and self-esteem, making others happy, developing psychological security in society, being affectionate to others, having a good end of life, being paid attention, feeling of self-actualization, feeling of being important, God's satisfaction, the reward of the hereafter) were extracted from the interview scripts focusing on moral behaviors based on the implicit theories of people. The second stage (axial coding): In this stage, the codes obtained in the previous stage (open coding) which were conceptually related were put in a single category and identified with the label "psychological benefit". Following that, in order to reach a theoretical structure in the selective coding stage, the category and concept of "psychological benefit" was sub-categorized under the main title "factors facilitating moral behavior". To display the analyzed information more clearly, the results were presented in tables. Several measures have been taken to ascertain the validity of the analysis of the results. In this regard, coding the analyses were performed after primary deployment and the extracted components were examined by each coder. In order to achieve validity, coding was done by ten researchers (5 professors and 5 Ph.D. students) at Bu-Ali Sina University, and their correlation coefficient was measured through Cohen's Kappa coefficient. The Kappa agreement value obtained 75% at a significance level of $P < 0.001$.

Results

In the present study, 222 cases participated, 121 of them (54.5%) were second high school students aged 16 to 19 years old (60 female students and 61 male students) and 101 people (45.5%) were adults aged 20 to 52 years old (64 males and 37 females). The average age of the population was 25.08 and the standard deviation was calculated to be 10.14 with an age range of 16 to 52 years. Regarding the occupational status

of the population, none of the students participating in the study (121 people) had a job; 40 people (62.5%) of the female adults aged 20 to 52 years old, however, had a job and 24 people (37.5) had no job. In addition, 31 male adults (83.8%) had a job while 6 people (16.2%) did not have a job. Taking marital status into consideration, only one female student was married and all male students were single.

24 people (37.5%) of the female adults were single whereas 40 people (62.5%) were married. Additionally, 16 male adults (43.2) were married while 21 (56.8%) of them were single. The rest of the demographic findings of the population participating in the current study about their education, ethnicity, and the province of residence are reported in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Frequency and percent of the sample population on the basis of gender and educational level

Groups	Gender	Education level	Frequency	Percent
Second high school students	Female	10 th grade	33	55
		11 th grade	12	20
		12 th grade	15	25
	Male	10 th grade	6	9.8
		11 th grade	28	45.9
		12 th grade	27	44.3
Adults	Female	High school diploma	5	7.8
		Associate's Degree	2	3.1
		Bachelor's degree	24	37.5
		Master's degree	18	28.1
		Ph.D.	15	23.4
	Male	High school diploma	-	-
		Associate's degree	1	2.7
		Bachelor's degree	14	37.8
		Master's degree	12	32.4
		Ph.D.	10	27

Table 2. Frequency and percent of the sample population on the basis of ethnic group and province of residence

Groups	Frequency	Percent
Ethnic group	Lor	11.7
	Kurd	13.1
	Lak	5.4
	Fars	41.9
	Turk	18
	Arab	1.4
	Other ethnic groups	8.6
Province of residence	Tehran	51.4
	Lorestan	6.8
	Khouzestan	5
	Hamadan	18
	Mazandaran	6.3
	Ilam	1.4
	Isfahan	1.8
	Kermanshah	4.5
	Kurdistan	2.3
	Arak	0.5
	Khorasan Razavi	0.9
	Fars	1.4

Table 3. Facilitating and preventing factors of moral behavior on the basis of the implicit theories

Implicit theories of people	Factors facilitating moral behaviors	Benefits	Psychological benefit	Feeling of inward satisfaction, reaching inward peace, reaching a clear conscience, feeling of being valuable and efficient, feeling human, feeling proud and exalted, feeling truly well by heart, feeling honored, feeling of bravery and self-esteem, making others happy, developing psychological security in society, being affectionate to others, having a good end of life, being paid attention, feeling of self-actualization, feeling of being important, God's satisfaction, and the reward of the hereafter
			Situational benefit	Acquiring the benevolence of others, making the family and society satisfied, making friends, gaining respect and kindness of others, enhancement of friendship and trust among people, achieving a higher social stance, increasing and developing goodness and righteousness, gaining the encouragement and confirmation of others, making progress in jobs, education and life in general, making a role model for others, developing humanity and goodness in the society, having better children, development of humanity, achieving a better life, and building a safe and sound life environment
	Factors preventing moral behavior	Costs	Psychological cost	Fear of losing opportunities, fear of punishment, fear of loneliness and being isolated, worrying about things not going well, fear of losing friends and relatives, worrying about being embarrassed, worrying about my own or others' personality being crushed, fear of losing social stance, worrying about the relationships being ruined, psychological pressure and difficulties, fear of social isolation, fear of losing money or properties, fear of losing fame, fear of me or people close to me getting hurt, fear of uncovering bitter truths, pertinacity, fear of losing life opportunities, anger and violence, fear of my true face being revealed, and fear of chastisement
			Situational cost	Financial need, conforming with others, poverty and economic burdens, the burden imposed by friends and relatives, fear of future dangers, others' too high expectations, because I see immorality, life burdens, hurting social relations, saving time and money, losing exam scores and failing them

As can be observed in Table 3, the factors that facilitate moral behavior (reasons to conduct moral behaviors) based on the implicit theories of Iranian people include psychological and situational benefits, and the factors which prevent moral behavior (reasons for not behaving morally) based on the implicit theories of Iranian people are of two types of costs, i.e. psychological and situational costs which are as follows:

A) Factors facilitating moral behavior

Based on the implicit theories of Iranian people, a key factor in the facilitation of moral behavior and which causes individuals to conduct a moral behavior in a various occupational, educational, and social situations is the benefit which, per se, includes two types of benefits, i.e. psychological and situational benefits (Table 3).

1. Psychological benefit. One dimension of benefit which facilitates moral behavior is the psychological benefit. Psychological benefit

refers to the inward satisfaction one finds when behaving morally which, by itself, acts as a reinforcing factor and brings inward peace and happiness. Psychological benefit fulfills the psychological need for inward peace. According to the implicit theories of Iranian people, moral behavior brings short- and long-term psychological benefits, such as the feeling of inward satisfaction, reaching inward peace, reaching a clear conscience, feeling of being valuable and efficient, feeling human, feeling proud and exalted, feeling truly well by heart, feeling honored, feeling of bravery and self-esteem, making others happy, developing psychological security in society, being affectionate to others, having a good end of life, being paid attention, feeling of self-actualization, feeling of being important, God's satisfaction, and the reward of the hereafter. Following, the comments given by some people regarding the dimension of psychological benefit which

facilitates moral behavior are mentioned as examples.

- When I help others and when I try to protect others' rights and not sell others out, I feel the peace in my heart, which is, of course, a good feeling. I felt inward peace and a clear conscience when I could do others a favor. (Gender: Female; Age: 38 years; Education: master's degree; Field of study: Clinical psychology; Occupation: School principal; Ethnic group: Fars; Province of residence: Tehran; Marital status: Single)

- I am so lucky to have everything from my father. My father is a farmer who has raised us through hard work. He has taught us two precious things: one is not stealing and the other is to say our prayers on time. I say my prayers for the sake of God and I fear God. For my father's honor, I never postpone saying prayers and I never steal anything. These are the things that make me feel satisfied. (Gender: Male; Age: 48 years; Education: Bachelor's degree; Field of study: Elementary education; Occupation: Teacher; Ethnic group: Lor; Province of residence: Lorestan; Marital status: Married)

- I feel relieved when I help others and when I am honest. (Gender: Male; Age: 18; Education: 12th grade; Field of study: Human sciences; Occupation: School student; Ethnic group: Kurd; Province of residence: Tehran; Marital status: Single)

- When we do the right thing like altruism or respecting others, we will have a clear conscience and we feel good. (Gender: Female; Age: 18 years; Education: 10th grade; Field of study: Human sciences; Occupation: School student; Ethnic group: Fars; Province of residence: Hamadan; Marital status: Married)

- We behave morally because we need to be relieved inside ourselves and to feel proud of ourselves. We conduct a moral behavior to be elated by ourselves, not by others. We are more important than other people. It is right that others will also understand our moral behavior and that we are so brave to behave morally rather than conduct an immoral behavior, but as I mentioned, we behave morally for ourselves. (Gender: Female; Age: 16 years; Education: 10th grade; Field of study: biology; Occupation: School student; Ethnic group: Turk; Province of residence: Hamadan; Marital status: Single)

- When we do something good, like when we see some labor children who are, in fact, underprivileged and provide them with food and clothes despite our financial problems, it makes us feel satisfied and happy. This is because you have caused those children to see affection and humanity which are two kinds of moral behavior. Instead of standing against each other, it is great to support each other in hard times. (Gender: Female; Age: 29 years; Education: Master's degree; Field of study: Psychology; Occupation: No job; Ethnic group: Fars; Province of residence: Arak; Marital status: Divorced)

- Speaking about myself, I can give the example of helping others. If someone in my family or relatives had a problem with school lessons, I tried to help them. If a friend of mine had an emotional problem, I tried to support them and help them find a way to keep on. If I feel I am skilled in something, I would surely use it in order to help others. There is a quote carved in my mind that says: "I am not feeling well today; so, I need to help someone". This is the heart of the matter. Feeling of being helpful to others gave me a good feeling, the feeling of being secure, the feeling of inward peace and a clear conscience; positive energy among all the negative ones which might have been around me. (Gender: Female; Age: 32 years; Education: Ph.D.; Field of study: Chemistry; Occupation: University student; Ethnic group: Fars; Province of residence: Mazandaran; Marital status: Married)

- I get a good feeling of satisfaction from helping and aiding others. I mean it. I swear to God, when I help others, I find it so satisfying, even if it is not really significant; what I do can be so great to the person I help. To be honest, I would not exchange this feeling for anything. I swear to God, I would not take this feeling away from me because it is really satisfying. It resembles a good vacation. It is like mountain climbing. I love mountain climbing. When I reach the mountain peak, I feel greatly satisfied. I do not want to exaggerate, but this is the same feeling I get when I help others and I will not ever take this feeling away from me. (Gender: Male; Age: 50 years; Education: Master's degree; Field of study: Educational sciences; Occupation: School principal; Ethnic group: Lak; Province of residence: Lorestan; Marital Status: Married)

2. *Situational benefit.* According to the implicit theories of the Iranian people, another benefit dimension that raises the likelihood of the occurrence of moral behaviors in various situations is a situational benefit. Situational benefit refers to the amount of benefit, advantage, and privilege which follows conducting a moral behavior. Performing moral behavior can bring material or social situational benefits and it can also have no connection with psychological states, such as gaining a social stance, a suitable job, having a lot of friends, wealth, power, and fame. To the implicit theories of Iranian people, situational benefits which follow performing moral behaviors include acquiring the benevolence of others, making the family and society satisfied, making friends, gaining respect and kindness of others, enhancement of friendship and trust among people, achieving a higher social stance, increasing and developing goodness and righteousness, gaining the encouragement and confirmation of others, making progress in jobs, education, and life in general, making a role model for others, developing humanity and goodness in the society, having better children, development of humanity, achieving a better life, building a safe and sound living environment. Following, the comments given by some people regarding the dimension of situational benefits which facilitate performing moral behaviors are mentioned as examples.

- When I respect everyone, no matter older or younger than me, I make a role model for others and, also, people will respect me more. In addition, I will be a more credible person and my behavior will be the reason for people to trust me. (Gender: Male; Age: 48 years; Education: Bachelor's degree; Field of study: elementary education; Occupation: School principal; Ethnic group: Lor; Province of residence: Lorestan; Marital status: Married)

- Speaking about myself, when I was purely honest in work and life, my boss would be more supportive both in ethical and financial terms. Added to that, I would feel more progressive in life and I was more relaxed. (Gender: Male; Age: 34 years; Education: Bachelor's degree; Field of study: Safety engineering; Occupation: Petrochemical engineer; Ethnic group: Lor; Province of residence: Khuzestan; Marital status: Married)

- My dear and honorable father was a righteous and honest man in his job and living environment and he was very helpful to others. This made my father a trustworthy man among people and gave him a high stance and credit. He was also a role model for others and affected us, too, as his children. (Gender: Male; Age: 46 years; Education: Bachelor's degree; Field of study: Educational management; Occupation: School principal; Ethnic group: Fars; Province of residence: Tehran; Marital status: Married)

- My husband keeps others' rights in various work and social situations and relations with friends and relatives. He is rarely late for work or an appointment. He never violates someone's right for his benefit. He tries to be honest in his judgments. He would never violate one's rights because of his close relation to someone else. The best achievement he has made through these behaviors is gaining the trust of the people around him and making them feel secure. For example, these behaviors are a credit to him in his job and can help him progress. Trust will be the base of his relationships with the people around him and, in response, he can use their support, especially at hard times of life. (Gender: Female; Age: 32 years; Education: Ph.D.; Field of study: Chemistry; Occupation: University student; Ethnic group: Fars; Province of residence: Mazandaran; Marital status: Married)

B) Factors that prevent moral behavior

According to the implicit theories of the Iranian people, one of the factors which play an important role in the prevention of performing a moral behavior and causes the non-occurrence of moral behaviors in various work, educational and social situations is the cost factor which includes psychological and situational costs (Table 3).

1. *Psychological cost.* One of the dimensions of cost which prevents the likelihood of moral behavior occurrence in different life situations is the psychological cost. It refers to the amount of loss and the psychological cost that an individual endures following the likelihood of performing a moral behavior. Based on the implicit theories of the Iranian people, the psychological costs which prevent the performance of moral behavior (reasons for not behaving morally) include fear of losing opportunities, fear of punishment, fear of loneliness and being isolated, worrying about things not going well, fear of losing friends and

relatives, worrying about being embarrassed, worrying about my own or others' personality being crushed, fear of losing social stance, worrying about the relationships being ruined, psychological pressure and difficulties, fear of social isolation, fear of losing money or properties, fear of losing fame, fear of me or people close to me getting hurt, fear of uncovering bitter truths, pertinacity, fear of losing life opportunities, anger and violence, fear of my true face being revealed and the fear of chastisement. Following, the comments given by some people regarding the dimension of psychological cost which prevents the occurrence of moral behaviors are mentioned as examples.

- To be honest, when I was a teenager, I used to tell lies mostly at home to achieve what I wanted. That was because telling the truth had instant undesirable consequences and the benefit of lying was that I was relieved of the annoying consequences of being responsible for what I had done or being questioned by others. (Gender: Male; Age: 25 years; Education: Master's degree; Field of study: Psychology; Occupation: Soldier; Ethnic group: Turk; Province of residence: Tehran; Marital status: Single)

- When I tell the truth about something, my family puts all the blame on me. They really pick on me so much and this makes me so stressed. I am afraid of making chaos and this is the reason why I have to tell a lot of lies to my family to prevent chaos and to get rid of their questions. (Gender: Male; Age: 18 years; Education: 12th grade; Field of study: Biology; Occupation: High school student; Ethnic group: Kurd; Province of residence: Kermanshah; Marital status: Single)

- In my opinion, if people find themselves in a situation where performing a moral behavior will make them feel unsafe, they will behave immorally; or if they feel that others are not capable of accepting what they have done wrong and if they feel the unsafety around, they will tell lies. (Gender: Female; Age: 32 years; Education: Ph.D.; Field of study: Chemistry; Occupation: University student; Ethnic group: Fars; Province of residence: Mazandaran; Marital status: Married)

- The only immoral behavior that I sometimes perform is backbiting. I do this when I am really angry. In this state, I start talking about that person so quickly and I grumble. This behavior

makes my mother warned me, but I really cannot stand such behaviors and I am not patient enough. The only benefit this behavior brings me is the feeling of inward peace and being released from the anger. Because I feel at unease inside which is difficult for me to handle. (Gender: Female; Age: 17 years; Education: 11th grade; Field of study: Biology; Occupation: High school student; Ethnic group: Fars; Province of residence: Tehran; Marital status: Single)

- I used to steal things for a long time. I did not need those things in many cases and I stole things for fun. I did that because I wanted to see how it felt when I possessed that thing that others had. Because others had something, I wanted to have it, too. I had the experience of stealing things so many times and this was the reason that I never got caught. I just got satisfied with the feeling of possession. That was a pretty feeling for me and I felt really satisfied. This was because if I did not do that, I mean if I did not steal that thing, it became a mind business for me and I felt that I was not successful in achieving that thing which made me feel uncomfortable. (Gender: Male; Age: 18 years; Education: 10th grade; Field of study: Biology; Occupation: High school student; Ethnic group: Fars; Province of residence: Tehran; Marital status: Single)

2. *Situational cost.* Another dimension of cost which has a preventive role in performing moral behaviors in individuals is the situational cost. It refers to the amount of loss and cost someone endures in terms of social position and stance by performing a right and moral behavior. This type of cost brings material and social harm to people. To the implicit theories of Iranian people, behaving morally brings situational costs including financial need, conforming with others, poverty, and economic burdens, the burden imposed by friends and relatives, fear of future dangers, others' too high expectations, because I see immorality, life burdens, hurting social relations, saving time and money and losing exam scores and failing them. Following, the comments given by some people regarding the dimension of situational cost which prevents the occurrence of moral behaviors are mentioned as examples.

- You see, let me tell you an example. One of our relatives got a promotion resulting from the wrong way. Well, if he had behaved morally, if he had been honest and had not committed theft,

he would have lost that position; he would have lost himself; he would have lost his social position and, also, his personality, manners, and ethics; he would have lost even those of his students who admire him; he would have lost the professors around him and he had to pay a lot of financial, spiritual and human costs to reach his previous position. (Gender: Male; Age: 33 years; Education: Ph.D.; Field of study: Economy; Occupation: University professor; Ethnic group: Kurd; Province of residence: Kurdistan; Marital status: Single)

- I cheated in my exams. I did this because it made things run smoothly. It protected me from financial loss because I had to pay the university tuition. Well, if I had not passed the exams, I would have had to pay the tuition again and it would have made me lose a lot of money. If I had behaved morally, I would have lost all of them. (Gender: Female; Age: 40 years; Education: Bachelor's degree; Field of study: Mathematics; Occupation: Deputy school principal; Ethnic group: Fars; Province of residence: Tehran; Marital status: Married)

- My friend was under a lot of pressure from her family for getting good and acceptable exam scores. So, instead of studying hard and getting the score she deserved, she chose the easier way 'cheating'. She did that to somehow make her family proud of her and not pick on her anymore. If she had chosen the right way, her family might

have rejected her and even attacked her physically and she would have been left behind in her lessons. (Gender: Female; Age: 16 years; Education: 10th grade; Field of study: Biology; Occupation: High school student; Ethnic group: Fars; Province of residence: Tehran; Marital status: Single)

- Sometimes, we have to tell lies in order to cover the truth, because if we tell the truth, people around us might feel offended and end their relationship with us. (Gender: Male; Age: 18 years; Education: 12th grade; Field of study: Human sciences; Occupation: High school student; Ethnic group: Fars; Province of residence: Tehran; Marital status: Single)

As is shown in Table 4, the factors that facilitate immoral behaviors (reasons for the occurrence of immoral behaviors) include psychological and situational benefits, and the factors which prevent people from performing an immoral behavior (reasons for not behaving immorally) include psychological and situational costs according to the implicit theories of Iranian people. Following, you will find the factors explained.

A) The factors facilitating immoral behaviors
Based on the implicit theories of the Iranian people, the benefit is one of the factors that facilitates the performance of immoral behaviors in various work, educational and social situations. This factor includes the two types of psychological and situational benefits (Table 4).

Table 4. Facilitating and preventing factors of immoral behavior on the basis of the implicit theories

Implicit theories of people	Factors facilitating immoral behaviors	Benefits	Psychological benefit	Reaching goals, surpassing others, being superior to others, drawing attention, being happy, fulfilling physical needs, experiencing excitement, escaping family and society punishments, being confirmed, feeling brave, satisfaction, feeling the power, anger reduction and reaching tranquility, feeling proud and honored, fulfillment of psycho-emotional needs, and feeling to be always correct
			Situational benefit	Earning more money, properties and income, making advancement, passing difficult situations (such as work, education, etc.), reaching a position or stance, saving time, reaching a better educational or occupational position, becoming famous, facilitation, reaching a goal in the shortest time, protection of interests, leaving competitors behind, dominance over the surroundings or others
	Factors preventing immoral behaviors	Costs	Psychological cost	Preventing mental disorderliness, reaching inward peace and satisfaction, fear of being punished, feeling happy and satisfied, fear of losing self-esteem and feeling proud, fear of being rejected and being lonely, fear of being dishonored, fear of being blamed, fear of causing chaos, fear of feeling empty and humiliated, prevention of feeling guilty and self-condemnation, fear of God and the Judgment day, fear being rejected by friends and relatives
			Situational cost	Prevention of family tensions and fights, preventing social insecurity, tendency to keep up appearances, losing the social position and stance, fear of being isolated by friends, fear of losing job, losing educational opportunities, and making efforts to maintain social trust

1. Psychological benefit. It refers to the feeling of satisfaction one finds when performing immoral behaviors which helps that person reach a goal in a short time and without having to spend time or making a greater effort. This type of benefit raises the likelihood of the occurrence of immoral behaviors in different life situations. According to the implicit theories of Iranian people, the psychological benefits which encourage people to behave immorally include reaching goals, surpassing others, being superior to others, drawing attention, being happy, fulfilling physical needs, experiencing excitement, escaping family and society punishments, being confirmed, feeling brave, satisfaction, feeling the power, anger reduction and reaching tranquility, feeling proud and honored, fulfillment of psycho-emotional needs and the feeling to be always correct. Following, the comments given by some people regarding the dimension of psychological benefit which has a facilitative role in the occurrence of immoral behaviors are mentioned as examples.

- One of the reasons that draw us to immoral behaviors is that most people in our society nowadays think that there is more correctness and righteousness in immoral behaviors rather than in morality. "It is the routine fashion", as they put it. They think one of the reasons for behaving immorally is that others think the person (who has performed an immoral behavior) has had the courage and that they have been so brave to behave like that.

On the contrary, this is not the case; this is the mindset that the person who behaves immorally holds on to and it is not how others really think. That person is changing how other people think about them in his/her mind. Those who perform immoral behaviors suppose that other people think that they have been so courageous to cheat or, for example, they have been so brave to fight the people who were standing in line at the baker's and went ahead.

These are the reasons for the occurrence of immoral behaviors and the very reasons which spread immoral behaviors and attract us to perform them. (Gender: Female; Age: 16 years; Education: 10th grade; Field of study: Biology; Occupation: High school student; Ethnic group: Turk; Province of residence: Hamadan; Marital status: Single)

- Some of my friends smoke cigarettes out of their parents' sight. I do not like their behavior, but I think this behavior makes them feel excited and gives them a thrill. I also think they do this to show off. (Gender: Male; Age: 18 years; Education: 12th grade; Field of study: Human sciences; Occupation: High school student; Ethnic group: Lak; Province of residence: Khuzestan; Marital status: Single)

- What I think about moral behaviors is that a person performs such behavior because, by this behavior, they suppose they can take a shortcut to their goals. They try to reach their destination faster because moral behaviors take time and do not get you close to your goals. For example, when you tell the truth about something, this honesty will put you in trouble and you will get far from your goal. This is the reason why we choose to tell lies instead. (Gender: Male; Age: 52 years; Education: Bachelor's degree; Field of study: geographical economy; Occupation: School principal; Ethnic group: Fars; Province of residence: Tehran; Marital status: Married)

- One of our relatives violated other people's rights to reach his own goals. When he was a soldier, he used to receive bribes and he did a lot of illegal things. He wanted to achieve his goals in the shortest possible time and effortlessly because the right ways are time-taking and stressful. In addition, in order to compensate for the feeling of violence imposed on us due to injustice during our lifetime, performing immoral behaviors is a way to run away from tension. (Gender: Female; Age: 32 years; Education: Ph.D.; Field of study: Chemistry; Occupation: University student; Ethnic group: Fars; Province of residence: Mazandaran; Marital status: Married)

2. Situational benefit. It refers to the amount of privilege and benefits one can find in terms of position (power and stance) in a short time by performing an immoral behavior. Because this type of benefit brings people positional and opportunity privileges and profits in a short time, it can quicken and facilitate the occurrence of immoral behaviors in work, educational and social situations. According to the implicit theories of Iranian people, the situational benefits which cause people to behave immorally include earning more money, property, and income, making advancement, passing difficult situations

(such as work, education, etc.), reaching a position or stance, saving time, reaching a better educational or occupational position, becoming famous, facilitation, reaching a goal in the shortest time, protection of interests, leaving competitors behind and dominance over the surroundings or others. Following, the comments given by some people regarding the dimension of situational benefit which has a facilitative role in the occurrence of immoral behaviors are mentioned as examples.

- In my opinion, our parents are the first ones who have an impact on us. Our close family, I mean. For example, someone calls and has something to do with the father of the family. Then, one of the children in the family goes to take the call and says: "Dad, someone wants to talk to you on the phone". Dad replies: "Tell them dad is not home. Tell anyone who is on the phone that dad is not home at the moment". So, the child learns how to tell lies. Therefore, we can say that our parents and family are the first ones who make us follow some rules. These are the people who have the main role in our upbringing. After them, it is our friends. When a friend of ours cheats on an exam and gets good exam scores, I would say: "I get lower scores although I study hard". So, I am also drawn to cheating. When my friend tells a lie, I learn from them. So, we can say that our friends, also, have an effective role. Then, we go into society. It is not different if we take the university or school or any other place into account. For example, when someone in the work environment is telling a lie to their boss in front of you, you will also learn from him/her. When he/she tells a lie and sells others out and gets promoted for this, well, you can sell out someone else and get a promotion, too. (Gender: Female; Age: 16 years; Education: 10th grade; Field of study: Biology; Occupation: High school student; Ethnic group: Kurd; Province of residence: Hamadan; Marital status: Single)

- The fact that we are witnessing the repeated performance of immoral behaviors in various jobs and occupations is partly because of a lack of financial support, i.e. you cannot stand the limits forever and from a time then on, you cannot respond to your family needs. So, it comes back again to the economic security of the society. Sometimes, you feel that you deserve more than what you are paid, i.e. you are financially

supported enough but you feel a shortage about your surroundings. It is again the discrimination that causes the ignorance of morality. The greatest benefit of the immoral behavior 'lying' is that it gives you a very high financial position. Anyone on their level takes their share based on the lie they tell. (Gender: Male; Age: 36 years; Education: Bachelor's degree; Field of study: Civil engineering; Occupation: Self-employed; Ethnic group: Lor; Province of residence: Lorestan; Marital status: Single)

- Well, you know, the fact is that many people are getting promoted with these immoral behaviors in our very own society. A lot of office and organization employees sell each other out to get promoted and make economic rents to get financially raised. Well, they pursue higher positions in these situations. (Gender: Male; Age: 33 years; Education: Ph.D.; Field of study: Economy; Occupation: University professor; Ethnic group: Kurd; Province of residence: Kurdistan; Marital status: Single)

B) Factors preventing immoral behavior

Based on the implicit theories of Iranian people, one of the factors that have a key role in the prevention of performing immoral behaviors and prevents people from behaving immorally in various work, educational and social situations are the costs which include psychological and situational costs (Table 4).

1. Psychological cost. It refers to the amount of cost and harm one psychologically endures following the performance of immoral behaviors. This type of cost gives psychological pain to people and causes them a kind of psychological chaos and unease and, therefore, prevents the likelihood of the occurrence of immoral behavior in them. According to the implicit theories of Iranian people, the psychological costs which cause people not to show a tendency to behave immorally include preventing mental disorderliness, reaching inward peace and satisfaction, fear of being punished, feeling happy and satisfied, fear of losing self-esteem and feeling proud, fear of being rejected and being lonely, fear of being dishonored, fear of being blamed, fear of causing chaos, fear of feeling empty and humiliated, prevention of feeling guilty and self-condemnation, fear of God and the Judgment day and the fear being rejected by friends and relatives. Following, the comments

given by some people regarding the dimension of psychological cost which has a preventive role in the occurrence of immoral behaviors are mentioned as examples.

- Performing immoral behaviors like selling other people out at work and many other inappropriate behaviors will cause conscience torment, lack of peace, and safety. These are the reasons why I do not like these behaviors. (Gender: Male; Age: 27 years; Education: Master's degree; Field of study: Political sciences; Occupation: Army; Ethnic group: Lak; Province of residence: Khouzestan; Marital status: Single)

- I believe that the performance of immoral behaviors will cause moral behaviors to decline and inappropriate behaviors will substitute for good and positive ones. For example, telling lies would replace honesty. In addition, injustice, cruelty, duplicity, etc. will form and cause a lack of peace and conscience pain. So, performing immoral behaviors will have bitter consequences and their non-occurrence is way better. (Gender: Female; Age: 46 years; Education: Bachelor's degree; Field of study: Educational management; Occupation: School principal; Ethnic group: Fars; Province of residence: Tehran; Marital status: Married)

- I tell a lie to reach something, I may lose my clear conscience and it will make mental chaos. But when I tell the truth, I feel relieved and I feel proud of myself for not being a liar. Also, others will not remember me as a liar. (Gender: Female; Age: 16 years; Education: 10th grade; Field of study: Vocational studies; Occupation: High school student; Ethnic group: Fars; Province of residence: Mazandaran; Marital status: Single)

- First of all, the very person who performs immoral behaviors will take the costs. Something very important is the due that person has to pay to others which are greatly bothering and is a huge burden. It is not something to be ignored or less important. So, I suppose if someone does not follow these rules, they will have no peace. It is how I feel and understand the matter and as I am telling you to know. It is like we are like a whiteboard on which we draw black lines by doing these immoral things or a lot of other things we have not yet spoken of. It is a pity. I pity the precious being of humans. The person who performs an immoral behavior will lose their natural and personal values. In addition, it will

hinder their spiritual development. Spiritual development helps a lot of things including our tolerance and growth and it also helps us find meaning in life. The more we get detached from moralities, the further we get from all these spiritual parameters. Added to that, we will not feel satisfied and at peace. Finally, if a person is ashamed of God and people, it is a great burden for them to bear. (Gender: Female; Age: 29 years; Education: Master's degree; Field of study: Consultation; Occupation: Instructor; Ethnic group: Fars; Province of residence: Tehran; Marital status: Married)

2. *Situational cost*. It refers to the amount of cost and harm one endures in terms of position, stance, and credit by performing an immoral behavior. This type of cost reduces the likelihood of the occurrence of immoral behaviors because it harms people in terms of social and situational stance and position. To the implicit theories of Iranian people, the situational cost led by performing immoral behaviors includes prevention of family tensions and fights, preventing social insecurity, tendency to keep up appearances, losing the social position and stance, fear of being isolated by friends, fear of losing a job, losing educational opportunities and making efforts to maintain social trust. Following, the comments given by some people regarding the dimension of situational cost which has a preventive role in the occurrence of immoral behaviors are mentioned as examples.

- In my opinion, the first and the most important cost is that when you are violating God's orders in your life when you lie and thief, God will not consider you as he takes an honest person into special consideration. We can also say that other people will lose their trust in you. When they see you are a thief, they will not give you anything to keep. When they see you tell lies, they will not trust you even if you tell the truth and they will say that you are telling lies again, just like what happened in the Lying Shepherd story. (Gender: Female; Age: 16 years; Education: 10th grade; Field of study: Biology; Occupation: High school student; Ethnic group: Kurd; Province of residence: Hamadan; Marital status: Single)

- Anyone who truly believes in Karma rules and the saying "what goes around, comes around" will have very useful tools to prevent the costly consequences of immoral behaviors and will try

to behave morally. (Gender: Male; Age: 25 years; Education: Master's degree; Field of study: General psychology; Occupation: Soldier; Ethnic group: Turk; Province of residence: Tehran; Marital status: Single)

- I have a friend who tells a lot of lies and who is a duplicitous figure. In my opinion, these behaviors will have no use to her and their consequences will get back to her. She may tell herself that she is so clever and no one was able to catch her. But, according to elderlies, nothing can hide forever and will be found one day. I also think that all that she has done and all of her lies will be uncovered one day. (Gender: Female; Age: 16 years; Education: 10th grade; Field of study: Biology; Occupation: High school student; Ethnic group: Arab; Province of residence: Khuzestan; Marital status: Single)

- In my opinion, those who perform immoral behaviors have no social position and are of very low social stature. They may have some people around them, but this does not mean that they are liked by all people. There is no doubt that honesty and righteousness will always find their way. For example, they say all lies will be uncovered one day in society. This is the same as honesty. A true saying is always true, the way of truth is always the same and honesty will never change. (Gender: Male; Age: 33 years; Education: Ph.D.; Field of study: Economy; Occupation: University professor; Ethnic Group: Kurd; Province of residence: Kurdistan; Marital status: Single)

Discussion

The current study was conducted aiming to examine the factors facilitating and preventing moral and immoral behaviors according to the implicit theories of the Iranian people focusing on the role of benefit and costs. The results of content analysis in this study revealed that the two factors psychological benefit (feeling of inward satisfaction) and situational benefit (gaining privilege and social position among people) facilitate moral behavior in various work, educational, social, and family life situations. This finding is illustrative of the fact that when performing moral behaviors (such as responsiveness/dutifulness, patience, and self-control, respect, humanism/altruism, empathy, being conscientious, rectitude, bravery, prudence, justice, benevolence) brings the highest benefit

(psychological and situational) to people in various life situations, the likelihood of the occurrence of these behaviors will grow in the next situations. Of course, taking the results of the content analysis of the implicit theories of Iranian people into account, one type of benefit can be more prominent for each individual. The psychological benefit may be of more prominence to someone and the situational benefit might be of more importance to another. Both types of benefits can be prominent and important to some people.

The results obtained from the content analysis of the implicit theories of the Iranian people revealed that one of the factors which prevent the occurrence of moral behaviors in different situations is costs, which includes psychological costs (the feeling of psychological pain and the feeling of fearing the probable consequences) and situational costs (losing position). This finding casts light on the fact that if the performance of moral behaviors in various circumstances brings costs and harm to people, whether psychological or situational, it will prevent the likelihood of the formation of moral behaviors in the next situations. This is because costs put people in trouble in both psychological and situational terms.

Considering immoral behaviors, the results of the content analysis demonstrated that the two factors psychological benefit and situational benefit facilitate the performance of immoral behaviors. The results show that the higher the benefit resulting from conducting immoral behaviors (such as theft, lying, treason, and cheating) people find in terms of gaining a higher psychological and situational position, the more the likelihood of repeating immoral behaviors in the next situations. The results displayed in addition that the two types of cost i.e. psychological and situational costs, prevent the likelihood of performing immoral behaviors in various situations. The more prominent the costs and the more costs follow performing the immoral behavior, the less the likelihood of the occurrence of immoral behaviors by people. When conducting an immoral behavior such as thieving or lying has consequences (costs and benefits) for a person in a way that encompasses their life, the possibility of them being performed is prevented or facilitated.

In order to elaborate on the results gained from the content analysis of the implicit theories of the Iranian people regarding the factors facilitating and preventing moral and immoral behaviors, it can be said that the factors 'benefit' and 'costs' as probable consequences of an action, facilitate or prevent the performance of the behavior, whether moral or immoral. Performing a behavior (moral or immoral) depends on the fact which dimension of benefits and costs is prominent and powerful. Regarding the performance of moral behavior, if the amount of psychological and situational benefit is higher, the likelihood of forming moral behavior will be higher in the society and if the amount of psychological and situational costs are higher, the possibility of forming the right and appropriate behaviors will be lower in the society. This is the same concerning immoral behaviors i.e. if an immoral behavior has psychological and situational benefits, the likelihood of forming those behaviors will be higher in people and if the number of costs brought by conducting immoral behaviors is higher and if their consequences are more bothering, the possibility of performing them will be lower in people. As it is stated by Lowry and Peterson (25), the systematic analysis of costs/benefit allows people to estimate the time of the occurrence of a behavior (right or wrong, or moral or immoral) and they can decide about conducting that behavior. On the other hand, according to the motivation theory of expectancy-value (28), utility value means to be involved in some action in order to reach other short- or long-term goals; the belief that a subject, action, or a lesson is beneficial in reaching future goals (29). This occurs while costs point to the negative aspects of involving in action (30); what we lose as a consequence of getting engaged in action (9).

Based on the results of the previous research regarding the long distance between believing in moral values and actual moral behavior, the current study showed based on the implicit theories of people that the benefit and costs are moral and immoral behavior control factors despite the belief in the value of moral behavior

and implausibility of immoral behavior. Since examining the implicit theories of people can unveil some facts which may be ignored in explicit theories or may be put out of consideration, it is recommended that the future studies investigate the implicit theories of people regarding the subject that despite benefits and costs which are brought by the performance of moral and immoral behaviors to people, what can be done when performing a moral behavior brings us costs and we conduct them again? What is their solution in this regard? In addition, if performing immoral behaviors bring us short-term benefits, what can be done to prevent them despite being beneficial? The current study can have applications in various work, educational, social, and family situations.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the content analysis of the implicit theories of Iranian people regarding the facilitating and preventing factors of moral and immoral behaviors, it can be said that benefit (psychological and situational) and costs (psychological and situational) are the control factors. When people are in various work, educational, family environments, and social situations, they evaluate the consequences of performing a behavior (moral or immoral) based on the factors 'benefit' and 'costs' and they take the prominence of one of the factors into consideration when performing the behavior in the next stage.

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