

عنوان مقاله:

The Impact of Critical Thinking Education on Perceived Threat, Misinformation Belief, and Conspiracy Thinking: A Quasi-experimental Study

محل انتشار:

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خلاصه مقاله:

The proliferation of misinformation and the rise of conspiracy beliefs pose significant challenges in the digital age. This study investigated the impact of critical thinking education on individuals' perceived threat, susceptibility to misinformation, and belief in conspiracy theories. A quasi-experimental design was employed, with an experimental group ( $n=30$ ) receiving a comprehensive two-month critical thinking education program and a control group ( $n=30$ ) receiving no intervention. Participants were university students aged 18-65 recruited through online platforms. The intervention was based on the well-established Paul-Elder model of critical thinking and aimed to enhance participants' analytical skills, source evaluation abilities, and media literacy competencies. Validated measures were used to assess threat perception, misinformation belief, and conspiracy thinking. The within-subjects contrasts analysis revealed significant decreases in the experimental group's scores on threat perception ( $F(1, 58) = 41.89, p = .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .419$ ), misinformation belief ( $F(1, 58) = 24.3, p = .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .221$ ), and conspiracy thinking ( $F(1, 58) = 34.94, p = .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .376$ ) compared to the control group. The between-subjects analysis further corroborated these findings, showing significant main effects of the intervention on the outcome variables. This study provides compelling evidence that critical thinking can be an effective intervention for reducing perceived threats, susceptibility to misinformation, and belief in conspiracy theories. By equipping individuals with the necessary skills to navigate the complex information landscape, such educational programs may contribute to more informed decision-making and a more resilient society in the face of emerging challenges.

کلمات کلیدی:

Critical thinking education, Misinformation, Conspiracy theories, Threat perception

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