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### Investigating The Relationship Between Thinking Styles and Emotional Intelligence with The Public School Teachers' Job Performance in Bandar Anzali

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#### ABSTRACT

The overall objective of the present research is to investigate the relationship between public school teachers' thinking styles and emotional intelligence with their job performance in Bandar Anzali. This study is of applied descriptive research, and field data collection was applied using the questionnaire. The statistical population included public secondary school teachers. According to the report of the statistics unit of the Education Department of Bandar Anzali city, the number of teachers working at the secondary schools was reported 309. The sample size was selected from among the statistical population using Cochran's formula based on which 309 teachers were selected as the statistical population. Therefore, in this research, 172 teachers were included in the statistical sample which represents properly the statistical population. Patterson's Job Performance Questionnaire, Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire, and Sternberg-Wagner Thinking Styles inventory were used for data collection. 180 questionnaires were distributed among the teachers and, ultimately, 173 questionnaires were received and analyzed. Data analysis revealed that there is a relationship between the teachers' thinking styles and their emotional intelligence at the 95% confidence level. Further, there observed a relationship between their emotional intelligence and job performance. Moreover, a relationship was revealed between teachers' thinking styles and their job performance with the mediating role of emotional intelligence.

**Keywords:** Thinking styles, Cultural intelligence, Job performance, Public school teachers

#### INTRODUCTION

In most countries around the world, investment in training and providing human resources is of the important issues that have always occupied the thoughts of education officials and managers in societies. Education and learning are always considered one of the most significant subject matters in various fields of science and education should be regarded as the most valuable national capital of human beings. The execution of various pre-training activities, from course objectives to the level and type of learning required by students, is all for the teacher to reveal the maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and success when beginning teaching and understanding the subjects and learning predetermined skills. All these depend on the implementation of appropriate training methods. An important issue that should be taken into account by the teacher in choosing the teaching method is the individual's personality and personal abilities. The teacher should apply teaching methods and behave concerning the students' characteristics and their personal properties as much as possible. There has never existed an integrated and

comprehensive method for educational goals and characteristics of students in the educational system. The best strategy for a teacher in his educational work is to act flexibly in all situations and to implement the appropriate method concerning the subject, goal, and student at any time (Rahimnia et al., 2013). The fulfillment of such consistency requires the examination of various components effective in teachers' job performance.

Another noteworthy point is that, nowadays, science has revealed the power and influence of human beings' mental emotions and is discovering and explaining the status of emotions and feelings in activities, behaviors, movements, and human personality. In the field of intelligence studies, the course of studies is moving from logical intelligence, which is based on cognition, to emotional intelligence. The concept of emotional intelligence has been included in the psychology literature since 1990, and it is the ability to understand and control one's emotions and feelings to improve intellectual, decision-making, and communication activities (Taghavi, 2014). Indeed, emotional intelligence involves the recognition of one's own and others' feelings and using them to make appropriate decisions in life. In other words, emotional intelligence is a factor that motivates the individual when s/he fails and leads to the development of good relationships with people through high social skills. The concept of emotional intelligence, which is rooted in social intelligence, was first proposed by Salovey and Mayer (1990), who defined it "as the ability to monitor one's own and other's emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions". They argued that emotional intelligence includes a person's ability to perceive, evaluate, understand, use, and regulate their own and others' emotions (Sobhani, 2017).

On the other hand, Robert Sternberg (1994) has entitled the people's different ways of thinking in processing the information as thinking styles as a preference in the use of one's thinking. Thinking style is not an ability, but a method of expression or application of one or more abilities. Ability refers to the efficient performance of a task, while style indicates the manner a person likes to do the task (Jaryanpour, 2015).

Studying the theories of experts in individual psychology and human resources management about job performance reveals that job performance is a multi-dimensional concept and involves several factors. In other words, job performance is achieved through the realization of a set of factors which can include the nature and conditions of work, salaries and wages, opportunities for job promotion, manner of supervision, relations with colleagues, etc. Of course, job performance is somewhat subject to individual characteristics. In general, it can be said that job performance is one of the most challenging organizational concepts and the basis of many management policies to improve organizational productivity and efficiency (Bordbar, 2011). Meanwhile, teachers, the educational system leaders, should be able to establish a relationship between thinking style and emotional intelligence to improve job performance as well as to communicate with students properly. To this end, the present research investigates the relationship between the mentioned indicators and the teachers' job performance.

### **Thinking styles**

According to Sternberg, two individuals with the same ability may enjoy different thinking styles which are neither good nor bad, but different. Individuals have a part of styles, that is, they enjoy a different level of each style. Understanding thinking styles helps an individual to perceive why



some activities are appropriate for him and others are inappropriate. Therefore, different educational levels and curriculums require different thinking styles. This is the subject that can cause better or weaker performance during educational or occupational periods. Thinking styles are not indicative of a set of abilities, but they can express priorities to some extent. This distinction is of utmost importance since the abilities and priorities may or may not correspond. Failures and successes attributed to abilities are often caused by styles. Sternberg argues that life choices require a balance between thinking styles and abilities. People don't enjoy only one style of thinking, but their thinking styles vary in different situations, and this subject changes during their life. He believes that factors such as gender, age, culture, and educational periods affect thinking styles (Tahvili, 2018).

Various factors influence the development and evolution of thinking styles. It seems that hereditary factors play an essential role in determining people's thinking styles; But undoubtedly, these factors are not merely effective in this field; and other factors including the socialization process considerably influence the determination of these styles. In addition, the individual's environment is also effective in the development and evolution of thinking styles. People do not have only one thinking style, but they enjoy multiple thinking styles in the form of a pattern. One or two thinking styles may be more prominent in each person. The prominence of a particular thinking style in a person depends on some factors, the most important of which are mentioned as follows (Zhang, 2006):

The spatial valuation of thinking styles is relative. A person whose work is considered valuable in one organization may not be so in another organization. This principle also prevails in interpersonal communication. Most of the actions of individuals who have close relationships with others are evaluated positively by those who communicate with them, while the same actions are not evaluated positively by other people. The accuracy or inaccuracy of thinking styles is a relative matter. When it comes to ability, you can talk and judge about the best or worst ability; but it is not the case with thinking styles, and one can comment only on a specific issue. A thinking style that is appropriate in one context may be inappropriate in another context. The consistency between thinking styles and different ability levels is a complex issue. People and organizations intend to evaluate other people and organizations like themselves. Accordingly, we recognize more potential in those who think like us. We are considered a member of these two groups in our judgments of others. Some individuals judge others in comparison to themselves and those who evaluate the quality of other people's work irrespective of their way of thinking; therefore, we can discover the individuals' talents better and help them develop them if we evaluate these people based on their thinking styles and not based on what we want.

#### Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence indicates what action is appropriate and which is inappropriate in social relationships as well as psychological and emotional exchanges in special conditions. It means that an individual can keep hope alive in different situations, empathize with others, consider other people's feelings, ignore small rewards to get a bigger reward, don't let worrying disturb his/her power of thinking and reasoning, persist against the problems and keep his/her motivation all the times. Emotional intelligence is a type of emotional talent that determines how to use our skills in the best possible way and even give the right direction to our thoughts. Emotional intelligence entails recognizing and controlling emotions (Tabatabaei, 2015).



Evaluating emotional intelligence as one of the effective factors is of special importance. People need communicative and social skills to establish interactions with others and enjoy life. Moreover, emotional intelligence is the other factor that recently attracted the most scientists' attention. Anyway, it is simplistic to say that cognitive skills are not important in people's success, but they will be more effective and efficient if they are taken into account along with emotional skills (Jang, 2017). People with high emotional intelligence show more tolerance of environmental pressures, identify hopelessness better, and then control their feelings to reduce pressure and, as a result, improve the levels of their entrepreneurial behaviors (Mousavi, 2014). The significant point is that emotional intelligence seems to be effective in developing entrepreneurial behavior, and individuals with higher emotional intelligence are more successful in the creation of new businesses in such a way that the more people are entrepreneurs, the more prominent would be the role of emotional intelligence. However, no noticeable study has been done in the case of the identification of characteristics of emotional intelligence and its effectiveness in the entrepreneurial process (Zampetakis, 2013).

Bar-On (1997), has defined emotional intelligence as some social-emotional competencies, skills, and facilitators that determine how well we understand and express ourselves, the extent to which we understand others and can communicate with them, as well as the extent to which we can face daily demands, challenges, and pressures. These competencies, skills, and facilitators, which are included in this comprehensive definition of emotional intelligence structure, are based on five meta-factors.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) coined the term emotional intelligence for the first time, describing it as "a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action."

Later, these scholars revised their definition of emotional intelligence, which is now widely accepted. Therefore, emotional intelligence is defined as follows:

"The ability to perceive emotion, integrate emotion to facilitate thought, understand emotions and to regulate emotions to promote personal growth." Mayer's and Salovey's model suggests two areas of emotional intelligence: experiential (the ability to perceive and respond to emotional information without understanding that), and strategic (the ability to understand and manage emotions without perceiving the emotions or experiencing them). Furthermore, each area is further divided into two branches. Its first branch, emotional perception, is the ability to be self-aware of emotions and to express emotions and emotional needs accurately to others. The second branch, emotional assimilation, is the ability to distinguish among the different emotions one is feeling and to identify those that are influencing their thought processes. The third branch, emotional understanding, is the ability to understand complex emotions (such as experiencing two feelings at the same time) and the ability to recognize the transition from one to another. The last one, emotional management, is the ability to establish a connection with emotion or disconnect it depending on its usefulness in a given situation.

### **Job Performance**

Job performance is defined as the organizational value of the employee's job behaviors in different occupational situations. The organizational value is the organization's estimation of its



employees' activities and services such as doing an occupational task or having a good working relationship with other employees. The important point of this definition is that job performance is defined as a specific behavioral characteristic or feature, especially since job performance is a characteristic of separate and distinct behaviors that occurred in a period. The second point of this definition is that the behavioral characteristic of job performance depends on the expected value of the organization. Regarding this definition, job performance can be considered as a variable between a set of behaviors performed by different people and behaviors performed by the same people at different times (Song et al., 2018).

Job performance is the people's output concerning the legal and prescribed tasks and it is the outcome of manpower's performance regarding the execution of tasks assigned to him/her, and it is indicative of the employee's effort and success in the execution of expected occupational duties and behavioral tasks. Furthermore, job performance means the manner and extent of performing tasks and responsibilities assigned by the expert (Lee, 2017).

Performance issues can be examined from different perspectives. There are two basic traditional and new viewpoints in this field. The traditional viewpoint aims to judge and remember the evaluatee's performance and control and has a prescriptive style. This viewpoint is merely focused on the performance of the past time and has been formed based on past requirements. The new viewpoint aims to train, grow and develop the evaluatee's capacities, improve the people and organization and its performance, provide consulting services and public participation of stakeholders, create motivation and responsibility to improve quality, and optimize activities and operations. Further, it is based on the recognition of strengths and weaknesses and organizational excellence. This viewpoint derives from the contemporary requirements and it is developed for systematic evaluation of performance using modern techniques and methods. The area considered in performance measurement can be an organization, a unit, a process, and employees. If the performance is evaluated only at an individual level, as is common in today's human resource management departments, the employees' competence of the organizations is evaluated based on different criteria.

Although the organization, people, or organizational unit seem to execute the task, they are only a part of the whole system, and the conditions of its other components should also be taken into account. Paying attention to the organization's comprehensive criteria, strategies, and ideals is one of the requirements of a comprehensive performance management system. Such an approach in performance evaluation will be a real, justice-oriented, reliable, progressive, and dynamic evaluation. In today's highly competitive environment, organizations can continue their activities if they can use their resources, the most important of which is human resources. Evaluation is one of the important and effective tools of management to obtain the required information in terms of individuals' and organizations' performance (Soleimanpour, 2014).

### **Research Methodology**

The present study is applied descriptive research. The statistical population included public secondary school teachers. According to the report of the statistics unit of the Education Department of Bandar Anzali city, the number of teachers working at the secondary schools was reported 309. So, 309 teachers were considered as the statistical population. After legal procedures and obtaining the required statistics from the relevant authorities, the sample was selected from among the statistical population using Cochran's formula based on which 309



teachers were selected as the statistical population. Therefore, in this research, 172 teachers were included in the statistical sample which represents properly the statistical population. Random sampling method has been applied in this research and the questionnaires including Patterson's Job Performance Questionnaire, Gelman's Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire, and Sternberg-Wagner Thinking Styles inventory were used for data collection.

In this research, the reliability coefficient of the thinking style questionnaire was estimated greater than 0.7. Further, it was estimated 0.85 for both the emotional intelligence questionnaire and the job performance questionnaire. The obtained coefficients reveal that these questionnaires enjoy the required validity and reliability. The standard questionnaires applied in previous research and the connoisseurs' opinions have been used to increase the validity of the mentioned questionnaires in this research. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied to test the normality of the data distribution. Further, SPSS and PLS software were used for data analysis.

### Findings

172 public secondary school teachers of Bandar Anzali participated in this research. 56% of the population was male and 44% was female. 5.7%, 13.4%, 53.7%, and 27.2% of the population have diplomas, associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees, respectively. The highest frequency percentage is related to bachelor's degrees, which means that most teachers have a bachelor's education. Further, 13.8%, 35.8%, 43.4%, and 7% of the population aged 25-30, 31-40, 41-50, and over 50 years old, respectively. The highest percentage is related to the 41-50 age group. It means that most teachers are aged 41-50 years old.

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics of research variables**

		Job performance	Emotional intelligence	Thinking style
Number	Existing	173	173	173
	Lost data	0	0	0
Mean		3.3946	3.8004	5.6485
Standard deviation		0.36480	0.23126	0.43001
Skewness		-0.399	-0.637	-0.514
Kurtosis		0.074	-0.219	0.553

As is observable in the obtained results (Table 1), the variable of job performance has a mean of 3.39, a standard deviation of 0.36, a skewness of -0.39, and a kurtosis of 0.07. Further, it was observed that emotional intelligence has a mean of 3.80, a standard deviation of 0.23, a skewness of -0.63, and a kurtosis of -0.21. Moreover, the variable of thinking style has a mean of 5.64, a standard deviation of 0.43, a skewness of -0.51, and a kurtosis of 0.55.

**Table 2. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test**

	Job performance	Emotional intelligence	Thinking style
Number	173	173	173
Test statistics	0.221	0.234	0.872
Significance level	0.000	0.000	0.000

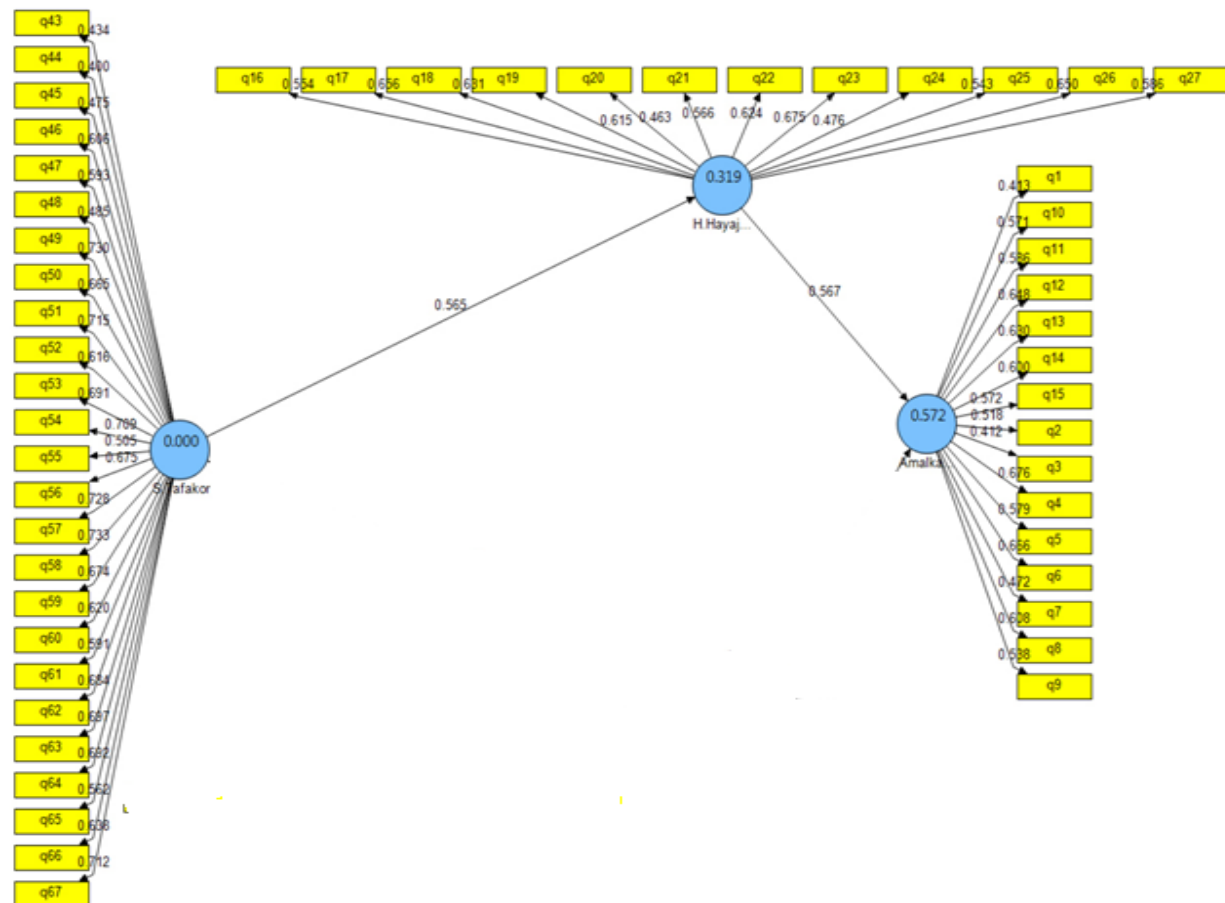
Result	Unnormal	Unnormal	Normal
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Applying the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed that most of the research variables are unnormal (Table 2).

**Table 3: Primary data inserted in Excel software**

	1	2	4
1. Job performance	1.000		
2. Emotional intelligence	0.3354	1.000	
4. Thinking style	0.4476	0.3521	1.000

In the case of comparing the correlation of a structure to its indicators with its correlation to other structures, as it is observable in Table 3, all the indicators (questions) related to the structures have more correlation with their structure compared to the other structures. This indicates adequate divergent validity of the model using the first criterion.



**Figure 1. Designed model with standardized factor loading values**

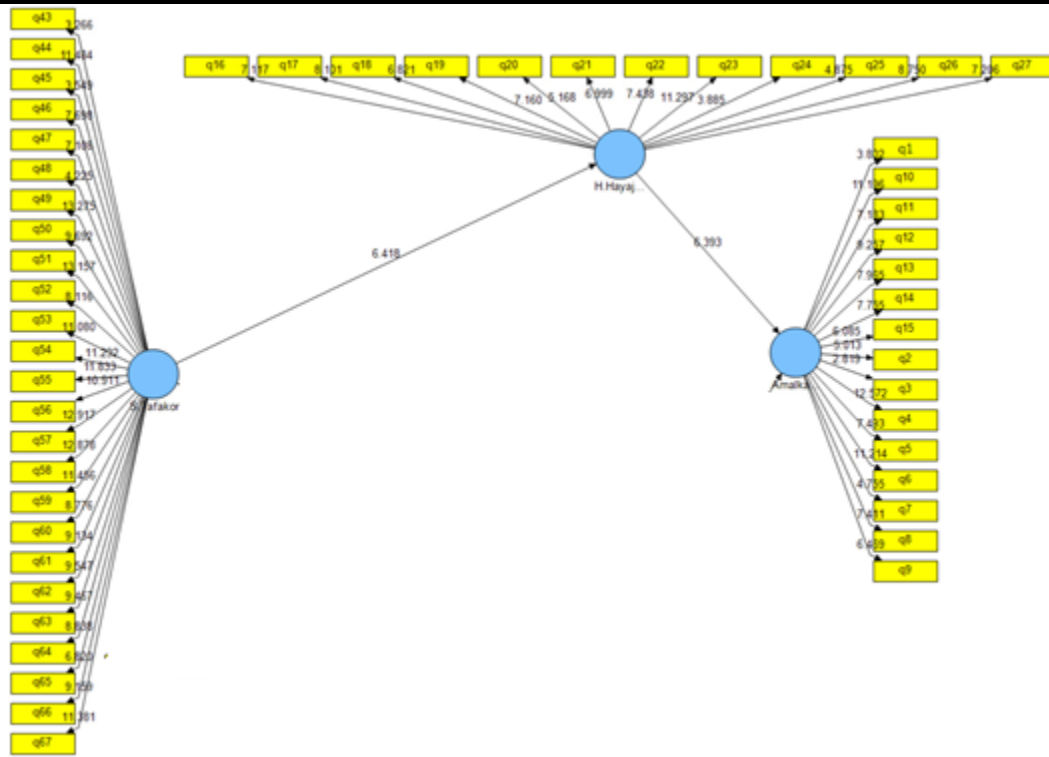


Figure 2. Designed model with t-value significance coefficients

As is observable in Figure 2, all the coefficients related to the paths existing between the variables of the present research are greater than 1.96 and this reveals the significance of all the paths and the fitness of the structural model.

Table 4: Results of the relationship between the variables

	Relationship between variables	Path coefficient	t statistics	Result
1.	Thinking style → emotional intelligence	0.411	4.134	Confirmed
3.	Emotional intelligence → job performance	0.445	5.845	Confirmed

Table 4 reveals that the path coefficient of public school teachers' thinking styles and emotional intelligence is equal to 0.411. Further, regarding the t statistics (4.134) at a 95% confidence level, it can be said that there is a relationship between the thinking styles and emotional intelligence of public school teachers in Bandar Anzali City.

The results showed that the path coefficient of public school teachers' emotional intelligence and job performance is equal to 0.445. Moreover, regarding the t statistic (5.845) at a 95% confidence level, it can be argued that there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and the job performance of public school teachers in Bandar Anzali City.

**Table 5. Results of the relationship between the variables**

Hypotheses	a	b	S <sub>a</sub>	S <sub>b</sub>	Sobel test z-value	Result
5. thinking → style emotional intelligence job performance	0.577	0.714	0.081209	0.072956	5.74965879	Confirmed

a: Value of the path coefficient between the independent and mediating variables

b: Value of path coefficient between mediating and dependent variables

S<sub>a</sub>: standard error of the path of the independent and mediating variables

S<sub>b</sub>: standard error of the path of the mediating and dependent variables

The Sobel test was applied to determine the significance of the influence of mediating variables in the relationship between two variables. Accordingly, regarding the Sobel test formula:

$$z\text{-value} = \frac{a*b}{\sqrt{(b^2*s_a^2 + a^2*s_b^2)}}$$

The Sobel test results revealed that the value obtained for the mediating variable of attitudes toward advertisements was equal to 5.74965879 which is greater than 1.96. Accordingly, it can be said that the impact of the mediating variable of emotional intelligence in the relationship between thinking style and Job performance is significant at a 95% confidence level (Table 5).

**Table 6: R<sup>2</sup> determination coefficient and predictive quality (Q<sup>2</sup>)**

Variable	R <sup>2</sup> value	SSO	SSE	1-SSE/SSO
Emotional intelligence	0.319	1560.0000	735.346962	0.528624
Job performance	0.572	780.0000	138.275909	0.822723

According to Table 6, it can be said that the values of R<sup>2</sup> for most of the indicators are noticeable. Furthermore, the Q<sup>2</sup> value for all structures is considerable and indicates that the model has a high predictive capacity in the case of the indicator.

The overall model of the research is examined using the GOF criterion which is determined by the geometric mean of the average commonality and average R<sup>2</sup> value.

$$GOF = \sqrt{\overline{Communality} \times \overline{R^2}} = 0.767346 \times 0.3616 = 0.526756$$

### Conclusion

The present research aimed at investigating the relationship between the public school teachers' thinking styles and emotional intelligence with their job performance in Bandar Anzali City. The path coefficient of public school teachers' thinking styles and emotional intelligence is equal to

0.411. Further, regarding the t statistics (4.134) at a 95% confidence level, it can be said that there is a relationship between the thinking styles and emotional intelligence of public school teachers in Bandar Anzali City. The path coefficient of public school teachers' emotional intelligence and job performance is equal to 0.445. Moreover, regarding the t statistic (5.845) at 95% confidence level, it can be argued that there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and the job performance of public school teachers in Bandar Anzali City. The Sobel test results revealed that the value obtained for the mediating variable of attitudes toward advertisements was equal to 5.74965879 which is greater than 1.96. Accordingly, it can be said that the impact of the mediating variable of emotional intelligence in the relationship between thinking style and Job performance is significant at a 95% confidence level.

The findings of this research revealed the relationship between the public school teachers' thinking styles and their emotional intelligence in Anzali City. Therefore, it is possible to improve the teachers' emotional intelligence by using appropriate thinking styles in various situations. In this respect, organization managers can increase the teachers' emotional intelligence by holding in-service training courses and workshops as well as familiarizing them with the concept of thinking styles.

The results of the present research showed that there is a relationship between public school teachers' emotional intelligence and their job performance in Anzali City. Teachers' inability to understand the reason for students' actions leads to their poor performance. Therefore, management skills or expertise in the specific field is not merely sufficient; rather, they should attract teachers with high social and emotional skills (including the perception of non-verbal messages and people's viewpoints). Whereas job applicants usually enjoy a similar level of cognitive intelligence and their emotional intelligence fluctuates, so the human resources management can organize courses concerning the people's emotional and communication skills to improve the teachers' job performance.

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### **Conflict of Interest:**

I declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. I, corresponding author on behalf of all contributing authors, hereby declare that the information given in this disclosure is true and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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### Ethical statements:

All subjects gave their informed consent for inclusion before they participated in the study. This study in part or in full has not been submitted or published anywhere.

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