**Personality Traits and Thinking Styles of Arab Educators as a Minority Group in Israel**

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**Abstract**

This study analyzes the relationship between personality characteristics and thinking styles among Arab educators in the Israeli-Arab educational system, insofar as they are a minority group in Israel.

One of the primary goals of a school is to design an educational and learning atmosphere that supports optimal cognitive, social and emotional development. Being an educator necessitates certain personal character traits, talents and abilities, as well as professional knowledge, thinking skills and appropriate perceptions. A teacher plays a critical role in developing their students’ skills, as well as their viewpoints, perceptions and personality traits. A teacher’s personality characteristics and thinking style play an important role and are reflected in his professional performance as an educator.

Studies that assessed the relationship between personality traits and thinking styles found that personality traits account for a high percentage of variance in thinking styles. Personality traits and thinking styles are extremely important in predicting a person’s conduct in a variety of different situations, and they are helpful in understanding his professional behaviors. Researchers believe that though personality traits and thinking styles overlap somewhat, each one has unique characteristics and clear parameters (Roodenburg, Roodenburg and Rayner, 2012). As far as the malleability of personality traits and thinking styles is concerned, researchers state that thinking styles are more prone to change than personality traits (Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham, 2009).

The Arab minority in Israel is undergoing rapid social, economic, political and cultural change, and lives in a society that is considered modern, while bearing the hallmarks of traditionalism. Yet, to the best of my knowledge, the correlation between personality traits and thinking styles among Arab educators in the Israeli-Arab education system, insofar as they are a minority population, has not yet been studied. In light of this, it is imperative to study this issue, and analyze the relationship between personality characteristics and thinking styles among Arab teachers in the Israeli-Arab educational system.

This study is a correlational study. 205 Arab teachers who work for the Ministry of Education participated. The teachers responded to two questionnaires: a personality assessment questionnaire (Costa and McCare, 1992), and Sternberg’s thinking skills questionnaire (1997). In order to test the hypotheses, descriptive statistics and the Pearson correlation coefficient were used in conjunction with the SSPS statistical analysis program.

The study found primarily positive relationships between teachers’ personality characteristics and thinking styles. Research findings demonstrated a positive correlation between extraversion and type 1 thinking skills: the judicial thinker, the global individual and the liberal individual and extravertive thinking skills, and a negative correlation with the local individual; a positive correlation between agreeableness and type 1 thinking skills: the global individual and extravertive thinking, and a negative correlation with introvertive thinking; a positive correlation between conscientiousness and type 1 thinking skills: the legislative individual, the judicial thinker, the hierarchical individual, the liberal individual and operational, conservative, localized and anarchist thinking styles; a positive correlation between openness to experience and type 1 thinking styles: the legislative thinker, the judicial thinker, the global individual and the liberal thinker and extravertive and operational thinking styles; and a negative correlation to conservative, localized and introvertive thinking styles; and a positive correlation between neuroticism and type 1 thinking styles: the hierarchal thinker, the liberal thinker and operational, conservative, localized and extravertive thinking styles.

It is suggested that additional studies be conducted, that will include a larger number of participants, including Muslim Arab educators, Christian Arab educators and Jewish educators. Given the different personality characteristics and thinking styles that are present in different societies around the world, research findings should be compared to other societies (traditional, developing and modern). Similarly, the relationship between personality characteristics, thinking styles and other variables should be examined. It is recommended to conduct studies that will incorporate quantitative and qualitative research paradigms.

Teacher training institutes that train educators in the Israeli-Arab educational system should consider the relationship between personality characteristics and thinking styles among their pool of potential teachers. Policy makers in the Ministry of Education should consider the relationship between teachers’ personality characteristics and thinking skills when offering teaching positions to these teachers.

**Key Words:** Teachers, minorities, personality characteristics, thinking styles

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