





Crafting success: How Cognitive Styles Moderate Emotional Intelligence for Project Outcomes

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<p>Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Project success, Cognitive styles</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ABSTRACT</p> <p><i>This study uses cognitive style as a moderator to investigate the correlation between emotional intelligence and project success in the telecommunications industry. A quantitative study design employed convenient sampling to examine the role of emotional intelligence. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 150 managers participating in PTCL projects in the twin cities of Pakistan. The characteristics related to the questions were scrutinized and evaluated using Likert scales. The results confirmed the hypothesis and showed that emotional intelligence has a favorable and significant impact on project success, mediated by cognitive styles. The study enhances our comprehension of emotional intelligence from both a theoretical and practical standpoint. Additionally, the literature review acknowledges the study's limitations and suggests potential future directions.</i></p>
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1 Introduction

In the rapidly growing and highly competitive telecom industry in Pakistan, project success is of utmost importance for the industry's sustainability and development. The expansion of mobile and internet services has transformed the telecom sector, making the success of telecom projects crucial for the country's economy. Meeting the increasing demand for telecommunication services requires telecom companies to undertake projects

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that expand their network infrastructure, introduce new services, and upgrade technology. Failing to meet customer expectations can negatively impact a company's reputation and revenue. Therefore, telecom companies must ensure that their projects are well-planned, efficiently executed, and achieve desired outcomes to meet customer expectations (Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, 2019; Rasheed et al., 2016; Shabbir et al., 2020).

Emotional intelligence (EI) plays a vital role in project success, including in the telecom industry. Project managers with high EI are better at managing project stakeholders, which positively influences project success. In the telecom industry, teamwork, collaboration, and effective communication are essential, and high EI enables project managers to manage project risks, and conflicts, and motivate team members effectively. EI also helps project managers manage stress and adapt to change, which are critical skills in the dynamic telecom industry. Building trust with stakeholders is crucial for project success, and project managers with high EI excel at developing trust, leading to improved project performance. Additionally, EI helps project managers develop empathy, active listening, and conflict resolution skills, enhancing stakeholder relationships (Ashar & Afsar, 2017; Banas & Lindsay, 2016). Investing in the development of EI skills for project managers in the telecom industry can significantly impact project success. By possessing the necessary skills to manage complex projects, communicate effectively with stakeholders, and adapt to changes, project managers can deliver high-quality and reliable services, leading to increased customer satisfaction, loyalty, and business growth for telecom companies in Pakistan.

1.1 Emotional intelligence (IV)

Emotional intelligence (EI) has been a subject of research in business literature since 1989, with the first publication by Salovey and Mayer. EI involves recognizing and utilizing emotions to guide actions, a concept further developed by Bar-On (2006) and others. Various models, such as Salovey and Mayer's Ability Model (1997), Petrides Trait EI Model (2007), Bar-On Model (2006), Goleman Model (1998), and Jordan and Lawrence Emotional Intelligence model (2009), highlight different aspects and skills related to EI (Bar-On, 2006; Jordan & Lawrence, 2009; Petrides et al., 2007). The importance of EI in personal and professional growth is emphasized, influencing behavior and human functioning. Project managers with high EI are better equipped for the complexities of project management, leading to improved outcomes (Cavazotte et al., 2012). Effective communication, stress management, and maintaining a positive mindset contribute to a productive work environment. Despite diverse definitions and models, EI remains a crucial competency for project managers in the dynamic business world. Incorporating EI principles can enhance project outcomes, optimize resources, and foster a positive work atmosphere (Cavazotte et al., 2012).

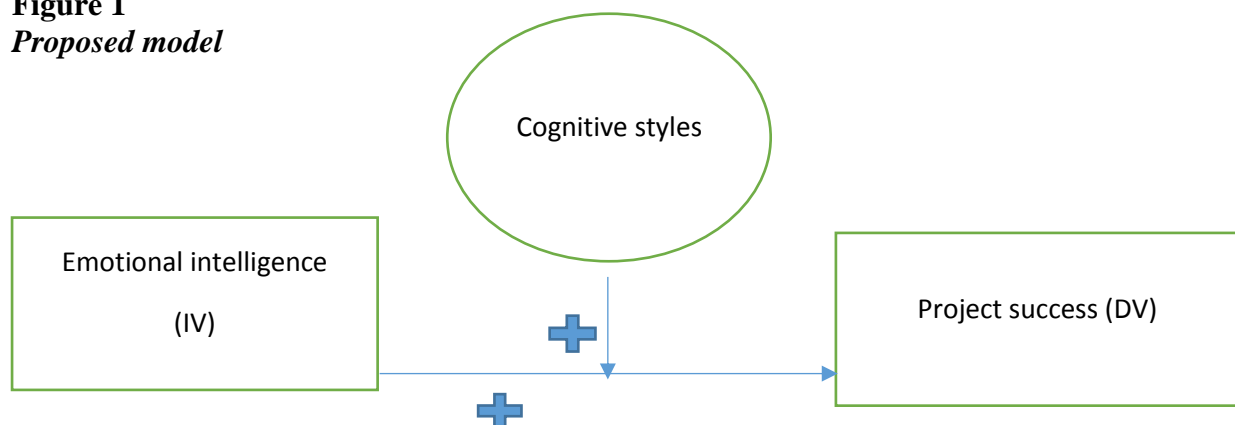
1.2 Project Success (DV)

Project success, a multifaceted concept, varies in definition among researchers and stakeholders, leading to disparities in assessments (Lim & Mohamed, 1999). Criteria for success depend on industry, project size, and complexity. Alignment with organizational strategic planning is vital, requiring a multifaceted strategy for measurement. In the telecommunications industry, project success is crucial, with criteria including client expectations, cost-effectiveness, technical soundness, and timeliness (Al-Mudimigh & Khan, 2003). Zeb and Mahmood (2015) study in Pakistan underscores project planning, risk, and stakeholder management, while Kamal and Hossain (2019) research in Bangladesh emphasizes stakeholder, project, and resource management. These findings collectively stress the importance of effective stakeholder management, project planning, and continuous assessment for achieving project success in the dynamic telecom industry.

1.3 Rational of Study

By examining the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and project success, this study aims to improve our comprehension of the telecom sector. The study intends to investigate moderating mechanisms by delving into the complex dynamics and focusing on how cognitive styles affect the complex relationship between emotional intelligence and project success. The results apply to project managers in Pakistan and similar contexts, providing insightful information about the importance of emotional intelligence and the moderating function of cognitive styles. The telecom industry and its many stakeholders stand to gain from the study's findings, which may help shape the creation of more successful project success strategies. Three main goals are the focus of the study. In the first place, it seeks to explain how cognitive styles affect people's emotional intelligence levels in the telecom sector by establishing the relationship between cognitive kinds and emotional intelligence. To provide a more nuanced view of the cognitive and emotional traits common to this managerial cohort, the study also includes a thorough assessment of the cognitive styles and emotional intelligence levels among telecom managers. Lastly, the study will look into how cognitive styles influence the relationship between emotional intelligence and project outcomes, providing useful information for project managers looking to improve their success rates in the telecom industry. Essentially, by addressing these particular goals, the study hopes to make a significant contribution to the field and promote a thorough knowledge of the relationship that exists between cognitive types, emotional intelligence, and project success within the particular context of the telecom business.

Figure 1
Proposed model



2 Literature on the Relationship between EI and Project Success

Several studies underscore the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) in project performance. Khan and Akhtar (2021) investigated its impact on project success in construction projects, finding a significant positive influence. The study suggests that organizations should consider emotional intelligence, cognitive intelligence, and management skills when hiring project managers to enhance project success.

Despite increased attention, the precise mechanisms linking EI to project success remain less explored. Mediating and moderating factors in this relationship have been studied extensively. Nsour (2016) discovered that emotional capability moderates the EI-project success link in pharmaceutical businesses. Task dependency affects the association between emotional intelligence and team performance in IT projects (Aziz et al., 2019), while collectivism moderates the link in construction projects (Tassadaq, 2019), with corroborating findings in other investigations (Ahmad et al., 2022; Aswin & Nursanti, 2022; Batool, 2020; Doan et al., 2020; Siddiq et al., 2021). The reviewed research highlights the importance of considering cognitive styles as a mediating factor in the EI-project success relationship. In the telecom industry, managers with a balanced cognitive style are better equipped for intense competition and ever-changing dynamics. A balanced cognitive style enhances a manager's

ability to implement innovative techniques, understand and engage with stakeholders, and complete projects. Therefore, the current study incorporates cognitive styles as a moderator to better understand the association between EI and project success in the telecom industry.

2.1 Cognitive Styles (Moderator)

Cognitive styles, introduced by Klein and Schlesinger (1951), encompass individual differences in perception and personality, representing preferred ways of cognitive regulation (Holzman & Klein, 1954). Riding's Cognitive Styles Analysis (CSA), Kirton's Adaption-Innovation Theory, and Sternberg's Thinking Styles are among the various models categorizing cognitive styles in literature (Holzman & Klein, 1954). Understanding one's own and others' cognitive styles enhances learning, communication, and adaptation in diverse environments.

Several studies highlight the significance of cognitive styles in project managers' ability to achieve successful project outcomes. Holistic and intuitive thinking styles positively correlate with project success, while analytical thinking shows a negative correlation. Cognitive styles operate as mediators/moderators in the relationship between project outcomes and management techniques (Almutairi & Pervez, 2019; Kim et al., 2017; Pundt & Van der Weijden, 2018; Zhang et al., 2021). Usman et al. (2021) reveal that cognitive styles positively influence project success but weaken as project complexity increases.

3 Methodology

3.1 Hypotheses

1. The project manager's emotional intelligence is significantly related to project success in the Telecom sector.
2. Manager's cognitive styles (knowing style, planning style, and creating styles) are significantly related to the success of the project in the telecom sector.
3. Cognitive styles will moderate the positive association between EI and success on projects among managers from the telecom sector.

3.2 Sample

For the present study, 150 managers were selected through a purposive sampling technique from PTCL working in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The participants include male and female managers of middle and lower management. The participant's age ranged from 22 -40 years. Moreover, the inclusion criteria also include a minimum work experience of two years with a bachelor's degree and no psychological or mental health issues.

However, the Exclusion criteria include individuals with less than two years of experience, those in high management positions, individuals with less than a bachelor's degree, and those suffering from physical or psychological health issues.

3.3 Instruments

3.2.1 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is measured on four distinct aspects by the Jordan and Lawrence (2009) 16-item scale, which uses a 5-point Likert scale: self-awareness (AWE), self-management (MWE), awareness of others' emotions (ATE), and management of others' emotions (MTE). The alpha reliability of the scale is ≥ 70 .

3.2.2 Project Success

We used the Aga et al. (2016) five-point Likert scale to evaluate the project's success. The alpha dependability of the scale is higher than 70.

3.2.3 Cognitive Style Indicator (COSI)

Cools and Van den Broeck (2007) developed the 5-point rating tool of 18 items to assess managerial and professional group cognitive styles in an organizational context. The instrument's alpha reliability ranged from 70 to 80.

3.3 Procedure

In this study, 150 managers from Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) in Rawalpindi and Islamabad were chosen solely using a purposive sample technique. Within the age range of 22 to 40, the participant cohort consisted of managers who were both male and female and held positions in middle and lower management. Securing participants' assent and receiving permission from higher authorities were necessary for the initiation. After signing consent papers, participants received a series of questionnaires emphasizing open communication and confidentiality guarantees. With a sincere effort, each participant filled out the questionnaire, ending with a note of appreciation. The following statistical processes were conducted using SPSS-22 and carefully addressed the research objectives that were described.

4 Results

Hayes et al. (2017) created MACRO PROCESS: Model 1 to test the moderation analysis. The moderating of cognitive styles between project success and emotional intelligence is displayed in Table 4. With $F(2, 97) = 95.60, P < .001$, model 1's R^2 value of .60 indicated that predictors accounted for 60% of the variance in the result. The results showed that cognitive styles ($\beta = .24, P < .001$) and emotional intelligence ($\beta = .71, P < .001$) strongly predicted project success. With $F(3, 96) = 88.40, p < .001$, model 2's R^2 value of .68 indicated that predictors accounted for 68% of the outcome's variance. The results showed that project success was positively predicted by emotional intelligence ($\beta = .77, p < .001$), cognitive styles ($\beta = .18, p < .001$), and emotional intelligence \times cognitive styles ($\beta = .12, p < .001$). Models 1 and 2's

Variance changed by 8%, as indicated by the ΔR^2 value of .08 ($\Delta F(1, 96) = 48.72, p < .001$). Results indicate that the association between project success and emotional intelligence was mediated by cognitive styles. The results of Table 4 supported Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3.

Table 1.
Sociodemographic characteristics of sample (N=150)

#	Demographic variables	n	%	
1	Age	22-25	25	16.6
		26-30	85	56.6
		31-35	30	20
		36-40	10	.06
2	Qualification	Bachelor	62	41.3
		Master	75	50
		MS/MPhil	12	.08
		PhD	1	.006
3	Marital status	Unmarried	80	53
		Married	60	40
		Divorce/widower	10	.06
4	Work experiences	2-3	25	16
		4-5	45	30
		6-10	56	37
		11-15	20	15.9

Table 1 show the demographic detail of the sample. Results shows that findings indicates the highest percentage of participants was between age 26-30 (56.6 %). The majority of sample qualification was Bachelor (n=62, 41.3%) and master (n=75, 50%). The marital status of majority sample was unmarried (n=80, 53 %) as compared to married (n=60, 43%) and single (n=10, .06%). Moreover, the participants' work experience of was in the range of 6- 10 years

Table 2
Psychometric properties of the scales (n=150)

	M	SD	No. of items	Range	Cronbach's α
EI	3.45	1.20	16	16-80	.82
PS	3.605	0.48	14	14-70	.80
CSI	3.336	1.07	18	18-90	.93

Note: EI=emotional intelligence scale; PS=Project Success; CSI= cognitive style indicator (n=56, 37%); 4-5 (n=45, 30%); 2-3(n=25, 16 %); 11-15 (n=24, 15.9%).

Table 2 show the psychometric properties of the scales used in the present study. The Cronbach's alpha values of all the scales are (>.80), which indicates that all the scales are highly reliable and appropriate for current sample.

Table 3
Correlations for the study variables (N= 100)

Variable	EI	PS	CSI
EI	-----	.78**	.82**
PS		----	.75**
CSI			-----

**P<.001

Table 3 shows the inter-scale correlation among all the study variables. The finding shows that the Emotional intelligence scale has a significant positive correlation with the project success scale ($r=.78$, $P<0.01$) and with the cognitive styles indicator scale ($r=.82 < .01$). Moreover, findings also revealed that project success has a significant positive correlation with cognitive style indicator scale ($r=.75$, $P<.01$). So, all the scale are significantly positively correlated with each other. It means that managers scoring high emotional intelligence scale also score on the project success scale and cognitive style indicator.

Table 4
Moderation of cognitive style between emotional intelligence and project success (N=150)

Variables	<u>Model 1</u>			<u>Model 2</u>		
	B		SE	B	β	SE
Constant	22.92***		.19	21.20***		.29
Ei	8.49***	.71***	.44	9.10***	.77***	.42
Cognitive styles	2.17***	.24***	.44	2.13***	.18***	.42
EI× Cognitive style				1.92****	.12***	.25
R ²	.60				.68	
ΔR^2					.08	

***P<.001

4.1 Discussion

With an emphasis on project managers, this research aims to investigate the impact of emotional intelligence on project success in the telecom sector. All scales were found to be significantly reliable based on the results of the descriptive and reliability analysis (Table 1), which is in line with other studies. According to the first hypothesis, the emotional intelligence of project managers and project success in the telecom sector are significantly correlated. The results corroborated this theory since emotional intelligence (as demonstrated in Table 2) was positively correlated with project success. This is in line with other findings by Wang et al. (2020), Tabassi and Bakar (2018), Aga et al. (2016), and Uca and Guner (2019). According to these studies, emotional intelligence improved project performance and communication quality and was a strong predictor of project success across a range of businesses and circumstances. This study adds to the body of knowledge already available on emotional intelligence and project success, while also pointing out certain limitations and practical implications and outlining potential avenues for future investigation.

The second hypothesis—that a manager's cognitive style has a major impact on project success in the telecom industry—is supported by the data in Table 2. This result is in line with other research, including a study by Aga et al. (2016) that discovered a favorable correlation between project success and cognitive styles as determined by the Cognitive Style Indicator (COSI). The authors discovered that people with higher scores on the "creating style" were more successful in their projects than those with lower scores on this style. This shows that people who have a creative style are more likely to be creative and imaginative, which can help them succeed more in project-based work. In a similar vein, managers with a higher degree of "planning" cognitive style tended to have better project outcomes, according to Lee and Kang (2017) study on cognitive styles and project performance in engineering projects. This was explained by pointing out that the "planning" style is typified by an ordered and methodical approach to problem-solving, which is necessary for complicated engineering projects to be successful. Furthermore, Wu et al. (2019) studied the connection between information systems development project success and cognitive styles. They discovered that managers who exhibited a stronger "knowing" cognitive style also typically produced better project results. This was explained by the observation that the "knowing" style is marked by a strong capacity for analysis and problem-solving.

According to the third hypothesis of the study, among managers in the telecom industry, cognitive styles would mitigate the positive link between emotional intelligence (EI) and project success (Table 4). Consistent with earlier studies, the results showed that cognitive styles did attenuate this association. For example, Khosravi and Asgari (2018) discovered that among project managers, cognitive flexibility—a part of cognitive style—was positively correlated with emotional intelligence and project success. Similarly, Othman et al. (2021) discovered that among construction project managers, emotional intelligence and the creative type of cognitive style were positively connected with project success. Khan et al. (2021) performed the only study on the subject in Pakistani culture. The association between EI and project success was found to be positively moderated by cognitive styles that are analytical and intuitive.

Epstein (1998) presented the Cognitive-Experiential Self-Theory (CEST) as a theoretical explanation for these findings. According to this view, people have two distinct cognitive systems: the experiencing system and the rational system. The way these two systems interact gives rise to cognitive styles. Individuals with different cognitive styles may process emotional information differently. For example, people with a rational style may use more logical analysis, while others with an experienced style may depend more on empathy and intuition. Thus, the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and project success may be impacted by the fact that people with different cognitive types may employ different techniques for controlling emotions in project management. For instance, a person with a

reasonable cognitive style might be better at evaluating the emotional dynamics within the project team and resolving disputes with reasoned tactics. Conversely, a person with an experiential cognitive style might be better at recognizing the emotional needs of their teammates and utilizing intuition and empathy to foster connection and teamwork. Since the efficiency of EI may depend on how well it aligns with an individual's cognitive style in the context of project management, the moderating function of cognitive styles may explain why some studies have identified a stronger relationship between EI and project success than others.

5 Conclusion

The significant influence of emotional intelligence on project success in the telecom sector is highlighted by this study, which also reveals that cognitive style moderates this link. 150 managers involved in PTCL projects in Pakistan's twin cities participated using a quantitative research methodology, and they contributed insightful information. The results demonstrate how important emotional intelligence is to project success, and the moderating effect of cognitive style further clarifies this point. This conclusion goes beyond just summarising the important findings to suggest directions for further study to improve the scholarly conversation. Future studies could examine the complex characteristics of cognitive styles and their unique influence on many facets of project success to further theoretical understanding. Furthermore, for a more thorough examination, a wider range of telecom firms and administrative levels might be included. Longitudinal research may also shed light on the dynamic character of emotional intelligence and its enduring impacts on project outcomes. These recommendations, which acknowledge the limits of the study, are meant to advance the field and further our understanding of the relationship between cognitive types, emotional intelligence, and project success in the telecommunications industry.

5.1 Limitations and Suggestions

First off, given the possible diversity within organizations, researchers ought to think about collecting data from a wide range of telecom companies to improve the generalizability of the findings. Second, a more thorough study would result from a larger sample size that included managers at all levels, guaranteeing a significant representation. Furthermore, future research should use a longitudinal research design and examine different aspects of cognitive styles for increased reliability. Furthermore, the study recognizes the limitations imposed by the survey research design and self-report measures used. These constraints naturally limit the breadth of data collected and the level of control over the variables under investigation. To tackle this issue, scholars may want to contemplate using supplementary study approaches or employing substitute assessment instruments to enhance the gathered data. This would support the findings' robustness and offer a more sophisticated comprehension of the complex interactions that are being studied. If these recommendations are implemented, research projects in the future will be able to surpass the limitations that are in place, which will allow for a more thorough and perceptive investigation of the dynamics in the telecom sector.

5.2 Implications of the Study

The implications of the current study extend far beyond the immediate findings, presenting crucial considerations for project managers and the telecom sector as a whole.

1. The study highlights the necessity for data collection from a varied array of telecom operators and recommends a more expansive research agenda. Adopting longitudinal research methodologies, together with encouraging bigger sample numbers and exploring different characteristics of cognitive styles, can improve the generalizability of findings. A more thorough knowledge of the complex interactions between cognitive types, emotional intelligence, and project performance is promised by this multimodal approach.

2. The study emphasizes how crucial emotionally intelligent leaders and project managers are to improving project success. A crucial tactic is to recognize and modify management techniques by team members' cognitive preferences. The results offer project managers a road map for maximizing project results through the use of emotional intelligence and matching their leadership philosophies to the cognitive diversity of their teams.
3. The study emphasizes how cognitive kinds and emotional intelligence are related to one another and how project managers perform in the telecom sector. This realization pushes project managers to take into account both aspects, realizing that a well-rounded approach to emotional intelligence and knowledge of cognitive preferences can greatly enhance their efficacy. This comprehensive viewpoint provides a way forward for ongoing development and flexibility in the quick-changing telecom industry.
4. It is advantageous for telecom companies to develop emotionally aware executives and to create a culture that accepts and accommodates a range of cognitive processes. Organizations can consciously invest in leadership development programs that emphasize emotional intelligence by realizing the influence of these elements on project performance. In addition, creating a welcoming atmosphere that takes into account different types of thinking helps improve teamwork and creativity in project groups.

The study's ramifications, in short, go beyond specific practices and into the domains of organizational strategies and more general research priorities. By accepting these findings, the telecom industry and project managers can better negotiate the challenges of project management by knowing the complicated relationships between cognitive types, emotional intelligence, and project success.

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