



Emotional Intelligence as a Mediator in the Relationship Between Cognitive Style and Leadership Effectiveness: Insights from Multinational Corporations

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Abstract – Cognitive style and emotional intelligence (EI) are increasingly recognised as complementary, rather than competing, determinants of managerial success, yet the mechanism through which cognitive preferences translate into leadership outcomes remains under-theorised, particularly in multinational corporations (MNCs) where leaders must reconcile analytical rigour with cross-cultural sensitivity. This paper synthesises secondary evidence drawn from peer-reviewed journals, systematic reviews, and industry reports to examine whether emotional intelligence mediates the relationship between cognitive style conceptualised through the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI) whole-brain model and leadership effectiveness in MNC settings. Using a structured narrative-review methodology informed by PRISMA principles, findings from more than two decades of empirical and conceptual literature are integrated to propose a testable conceptual model in which analytical, practical, relational, and experimental thinking preferences influence leadership effectiveness both directly and indirectly through the four EI competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. The synthesis suggests that whole-brained leaders those who integrate cognitive and affective processing rather than relying on a single dominant quadrant consistently emerge as more effective across the reviewed studies, and that EI substantially, though not universally, mediates this relationship. The paper contributes a consolidated theoretical framework and a set of falsifiable hypotheses for future primary research in the Indian and global MNC context, and offers implications for leadership development, expatriate selection, and cross-cultural training design.

Keywords – Cognitive style; Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument; emotional intelligence; leadership effectiveness; mediation; multinational corporations.

I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership effectiveness in multinational corporations (MNCs) is shaped by an unusually demanding combination of analytical, relational, and adaptive competencies. MNC leaders are routinely required to process complex financial and strategic data, coordinate geographically dispersed teams, and navigate cultural value systems that differ markedly across subsidiaries (Çuhadar & Rudnák, 2022; Lofquist & Matthiesen, 2018). Two constructs have dominated the leadership literature as explanations for why some managers succeed in this environment while others do not: cognitive style, the relatively stable manner in which individuals prefer to perceive, process, and organise information; and emotional intelligence (EI), the capacity to perceive, understand, and regulate emotion in oneself and others. Historically these two literatures developed largely in isolation, with cognitive style research rooted in psychometrics and neuroscience-informed models such as the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI), and EI research rooted in the ability and mixed-model traditions associated with Mayer and Salovey and with Goleman respectively.

A growing body of secondary evidence, however, suggests that cognitive style and EI are not independent predictors of leadership outcomes but are causally connected. Leaders with strong analytical or practical cognitive

preferences may possess the technical capability to formulate sound strategy, yet without the emotional competencies required to communicate that strategy, build trust, and manage conflict, their effectiveness as perceived by followers is frequently diminished (Hur et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2023). Conversely, purely relational or affect-driven leaders who lack structured, analytical thinking may struggle with the decision rigor that MNC operations demand. This suggests that emotional intelligence may function as a mediating mechanism: cognitive style shapes the raw material of how a leader thinks, while EI determines how effectively that thinking is translated into interpersonal influence and, ultimately, into perceived leadership effectiveness.

This paper addresses three questions. First, how is cognitive style, operationalised through the HBDI whole-brain framework, theoretically and empirically linked to leadership effectiveness? Second, how does emotional intelligence independently relate to leadership effectiveness in MNC contexts? Third, and centrally, does the secondary literature support emotional intelligence as a mediating mechanism between cognitive style and leadership effectiveness, and under what boundary conditions does this mediation strengthen or weaken? Because primary data collection using the HBDI and validated EI and leadership-effectiveness instruments was not undertaken for this paper, the study adopts a



secondary-data, structured-review methodology, drawing on empirical findings, meta-analyses, and conceptual reviews published in Scopus- and Web of Science-indexed outlets. The objective is to consolidate a fragmented evidence base into a single, falsifiable conceptual model that can subsequently be tested empirically, including in the Indian MNC context that motivates the authors' broader research programme.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Cognitive Style and the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument

Cognitive style refers to an individual's habitual and preferred approach to organising and processing information, and is generally treated in the literature as a stable trait distinct from cognitive ability or intelligence (Allinson & Hayes, 1996). Among the various instruments developed to measure cognitive style, the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI), developed by Ned Herrmann at General Electric's management education centre, has been among the most widely applied in corporate and leadership-development settings. The HBDI operationalises thinking preference through a Whole Brain Model comprising four quadrants: an analytical (A) quadrant associated with logical, fact-based, quantitative reasoning; a practical or sequential (B) quadrant associated with organised, procedural, and detail-oriented processing; a relational (C) quadrant associated with interpersonal, emotionally expressive, and collaborative processing; and an experimental (D) quadrant associated with holistic, imaginative, and strategic thinking. Individuals typically show a graded profile of preference across all four quadrants rather than an exclusive reliance on one, and the model's central proposition 'whole-brained' thinking holds that leaders who can flexibly draw on multiple quadrants outperform those confined to a single dominant style (Herrmann, 1996).

The HBDI has attracted methodological scrutiny. Allinson and Hayes (1996), introducing a competing bipolar intuition-analysis measure, noted the comparative lack of independent psychometric validation for several self-report cognitive-style tools used in management training, including the HBDI. Subsequent reviews by Hodgkinson and Sadler-Smith (2003) were more favourable toward the practical utility of cognitive-style indicators for organisational research generally, while cautioning that the field has been hampered by a proliferation of loosely related constructs and instruments. Despite these debates, HBDI-based research and practitioner literature converge on the proposition that cognitive style differentiates how leaders approach problem-solving, communication, and decision-making, and that integrative or whole-brained profiles are associated with stronger leadership and change-management outcomes than single-quadrant dominance.

In cross-cultural and MNC contexts specifically, cognitive processing has been shown to interact with cultural background. Regional and cross-cultural studies conducted in the Indian context suggest that holistic versus analytical cognitive tendencies vary systematically across cultural groups and shape decision-making style, risk tolerance, and preference for individual versus consultative decision processes in organisational settings (see the discussion of regional decision-making differences and their implications for MNC leadership approaches). Neuroeconomic research on MNC executives similarly argues that cultural diversity within multinational leadership teams introduces measurable cognitive variation that has direct implications for corporate decision-making and, by extension, for how cognitive style should be understood and managed in global leadership roles.

2. Emotional Intelligence: Conceptual Foundations

Emotional intelligence is most commonly defined through two competing but overlapping traditions. The ability model, associated with Mayer and Salovey, conceptualises EI as a set of interrelated cognitive abilities involving the perception, use, understanding, and management of emotion, typically measured through performance-based instruments such as the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT). The mixed model, associated with Goleman and with Bar-On, broadens the construct to include self-regulation, motivation, social skill, and personal and social competencies, typically measured through self-report instruments. Despite their conceptual differences, both traditions converge on four broad competency clusters relevant to leadership: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.

The relationship between EI and leadership outcomes has produced a mixed but predominantly positive empirical record. Several studies report that emotionally intelligent leaders demonstrate superior communication, decision-making, and conflict-resolution capability, and that these competencies translate into measurably higher leadership effectiveness ratings from subordinates and peers. A recent large-sample study using structural equation modelling on 217 organisational leaders found that emotional intelligence significantly enhanced leadership effectiveness, with employee engagement operating as a further mediating mechanism linking EI to downstream performance and satisfaction outcomes. Other work frames EI as central to authentic and transformational leadership: authentic leadership has been shown to fully mediate the relationship between a leader's EI and organisational citizenship behaviour among followers, while systematic reviews of the EI-transformational leadership literature argue that leaders combining high EI with developed cognitive skill are disproportionately likely to achieve sustained organisational effectiveness.

Not all findings are consistent, however. Using the MSCEIT and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire



with a sample of 151 managers and their direct reports, Weinberger's widely cited study found no significant relationship between managers' emotional intelligence and either their leadership style or their perceived effectiveness, a result that has been used to challenge overly deterministic claims about EI's role in leadership. Dabke's subsequent work similarly found that observable transformational leadership behaviours predicted leadership perceptions more strongly than innate EI ability. This inconsistency in the direct-effects literature is one of the principal motivations for examining EI as a mediating rather than a purely direct predictor: if EI's effect on leadership effectiveness operates chiefly by converting cognitive and dispositional strengths into interpersonally effective behaviour, then studies measuring only the bivariate EI-effectiveness relationship, without accounting for the antecedent cognitive style or process variables, may understate or obscure EI's true functional role.

3. Leadership Effectiveness in Multinational Corporations

Leadership effectiveness in the MNC context is frequently theorised as a function of cultural intelligence (CQ) and adaptive leadership capacity in addition to the domestic-context competencies of communication, decision-making, and team performance. Ang, Van Dyne, and Koh's four-factor model of cultural intelligence meta cognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioural has been used extensively to demonstrate positive relationships between CQ and job performance, adaptability, and leadership effectiveness in multicultural settings.

Comparative literature reviews of cross-cultural leadership in MNCs further show that dimensions such as power distance and uncertainty avoidance systematically shape which leadership behaviours are perceived as effective within a given cultural context: directive, hierarchical leadership tends to be more effective, and more expected, in high power-distance cultures, while participative and egalitarian leadership tends to be favoured in low power-distance cultures (Walumbwa et al., 2007). Leaders who fail to adapt their style to local cultural expectations, or who exhibit ethnocentric bias in decision-making, have been shown to undermine both team cohesion and perceived effectiveness within multicultural teams.

Within this literature, cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence are frequently treated as complementary rather than substitutable constructs: EI governs a leader's capacity to read and regulate emotion generally, while CQ governs the capacity to interpret and adapt to culturally variable emotional and behavioural norms. Because MNC leadership effectiveness depends on both capacities operating together, cognitive style in so far as it shapes a leader's default orientation toward analytical, structured, relational, or exploratory problem solving provides an important but incomplete account of MNC leadership success. The literature therefore points toward EI (and, by extension, CQ) as the connective mechanism through

which a leader's underlying cognitive orientation is converted into behaviour that followers across diverse cultural settings actually perceive as effective.

4. Emotional Intelligence as a Mediating Mechanism

Direct empirical evidence for EI as a mediator between cognitive-style constructs and leadership effectiveness remains limited, but closely related mediation evidence is well established. Hur, van den Berg, and Wilderom's frequently cited study found that transformational leadership behaviour mediated the relationship between a leader's emotional intelligence and both leader effectiveness and service climate, although not team effectiveness, suggesting that mediation pathways from EI to effectiveness outcomes are behaviourally specific rather than uniform.

Lee, Yeh, Yu, and Lin's more recent work similarly demonstrates that the relationship between leader emotional intelligence and follower job performance operates through transformational and transactional leadership behaviour, with trust functioning as a further mediating variable in that pathway. Taken together, this literature establishes a well-supported chain in which a leader's underlying psychological resource (whether EI, cognitive style, or a combination) exerts its effect on hard outcomes largely through observable leadership behaviour and interpersonal process variables, rather than through a direct, unmediated path.

Applying this logic to cognitive style specifically: a leader's HBDI profile shapes how information is processed and how decisions are formulated, but it does not, on its own, guarantee that this cognitive processing will be expressed in ways that followers experience as trustworthy, empathetic, or motivating. Emotional intelligence, particularly the self-management and relationship-management competencies, plausibly governs whether an analytically dominant leader tempers rigid, fact-driven communication with empathy, or whether a relationally dominant leader channels interpersonal warmth into disciplined follow-through.

This reasoning is consistent with practitioner and conceptual literature on the HBDI, which explicitly frames the developmental purpose of whole-brain thinking as improving leadership communication, team building, and organisational culture management (Hare Consulting; Herrmann International practitioner literature) outcomes that overlap substantially with the behavioural competencies captured by EI's social-awareness and relationship-management dimensions.

**Empirical Evidence Supporting Emotional Intelligence as a Mediator**

Study	Independent Variable	Mediating Variable	Outcome Variable	Major Finding
Hur, van den Berg & Wilderom	Leader Emotional Intelligence	Transformational Leadership Behaviour	Leader Effectiveness, Service Climate	Leadership behaviour significantly mediated EI and effectiveness relationships; mediation was not significant for team effectiveness.
Lee, Yeh, Yu & Lin	Leader Emotional Intelligence	Transformational & Transactional Leadership Behaviour; Trust	Follower Job Performance	EI improved employee performance indirectly through leadership behaviour and trust.
Herrmann International (Conceptual)	Whole-Brain (HBDI) Cognitive Style	Communication, Collaboration, Relationship Management	Leadership Development	Whole-brain thinking enhances leadership communication, team building and organisational culture.
Present Research Framework	HBDI Cognitive Style	Emotional Intelligence	Leadership Effectiveness	EI is proposed as the psychological mechanism translating cognitive preferences into effective leadership behaviours.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Building on the reviewed literature, this paper proposes a mediation model in which cognitive style (measured through the four HBDI quadrants: Analytical, Practical, Relational, and Experimental) is the independent variable, emotional intelligence (measured through the four competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) is the mediating variable, and leadership effectiveness (measured through follower-rated dimensions such as decision-making quality, communication effectiveness, trust, and team performance) is the dependent variable. The relationship is theorised to be moderated by organisational cultural context, consistent with the cross-cultural leadership and cultural-intelligence literature reviewed in Section 2.3, although moderation is treated here as a boundary condition for future empirical testing rather than a formally hypothesised path.

On this basis, the paper proposes the following hypotheses for future empirical validation:

- H1: Cognitive style is significantly associated with leadership effectiveness in MNC settings, with whole-brained (multi-quadrant) profiles associated with higher effectiveness than single-quadrant-dominant profiles.

- H2: Cognitive style is significantly associated with emotional intelligence, such that relational (C-quadrant) and experimental (D-quadrant) preferences are positively associated with EI, while a narrowly analytical (A-quadrant) preference, uncompensated by other quadrants, is negatively or non-significantly associated with EI.
- H3: Emotional intelligence is significantly and positively associated with leadership effectiveness in MNC settings.
- H4: Emotional intelligence significantly mediates the relationship between cognitive style and leadership effectiveness, such that the direct effect of cognitive style on leadership effectiveness is reduced when EI is included in the model.
- H5: The strength of the mediated (indirect) effect in H4 is moderated by the cultural intelligence of the leader and by the cultural distance between the leader's home and host operating environment, such that the indirect effect is stronger in high cultural-distance MNC assignments.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Research Design

Given that primary data collection using validated HBDI, EI, and leadership-effectiveness instruments was outside the scope of this paper, a secondary-data, structured narrative-review methodology was adopted, informed by the general principles of the Preferred Reporting Items for



Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework. This approach is appropriate for consolidating a theoretically fragmented but empirically active literature into a single testable model, and is consistent with prior conceptual and review-based contributions in the cognitive-style and EI-leadership literature (see, for example, the systematic review methodology applied to the EI-transformational leadership relationship).

2. Data Sources and Search Strategy

Secondary sources were identified through structured searches of academic databases and indexing platforms, including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Science Direct, SpringerLink, and MDPI, supplemented by targeted searches of practitioner and institutional sources for the HBDI instrument specifically. Search terms combined the constructs of interest, including combinations such as "cognitive style AND leadership effectiveness", "Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument AND leadership", "emotional intelligence AND leadership effectiveness", "emotional intelligence AND mediator AND leadership", and "cultural intelligence AND multinational corporations AND leadership". Searches were restricted to English-language, peer-reviewed journal articles, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses published from 1996 to 2025, a window selected to capture both the foundational psychometric literature on cognitive style (from Allinson and Hayes' 1996 introduction of a competing cognitive-style measure onward) and the most recent EI-mediation studies.

3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Sources were included if they (a) empirically or conceptually examined cognitive style, EI, or leadership effectiveness, individually or in combination; (b) were published in a peer-reviewed journal, an indexed conference proceeding, or a recognised institutional/practitioner source for instrument-specific background (e.g., HBDI methodology); and (c) reported findings relevant to the direction, strength, or mechanism of the relationships under review. Sources were excluded if they addressed EI or leadership in contexts with no plausible relevance to managerial or organisational settings (e.g., purely clinical or paediatric EI research), were not available in English, or consisted of non-peer-reviewed opinion content without an underlying empirical or scholarly basis.

4. Data Synthesis Approach

Because the retrieved literature spans multiple methodologies (correlational surveys, structural equation modelling, systematic reviews, and neuroeconomic/experimental studies), a narrative thematic synthesis was used rather than a quantitative meta-analysis. Findings were organised around the three constructs and the proposed mediation pathway (cognitive style → EI → leadership effectiveness), with particular attention to (a) the direction and consistency of reported relationships, (b) the behavioural or process mechanisms proposed to

explain those relationships, and (c) contextual or cultural moderators reported in the MNC-specific literature. This thematic synthesis directly informed the hypotheses in Section 3 and the discussion in Section 5.

V. SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Cognitive Style and Leadership Effectiveness

The secondary literature consistently supports a positive relationship between integrative, whole-brained cognitive style and leadership effectiveness, though direct quantitative effect sizes specific to the HBDI in MNC leadership samples are scarce, representing a genuine gap that primary research including the authors' planned survey-based work is well positioned to address. Practitioner and institutional literature on the HBDI reports that the instrument has informed a substantial body of doctoral research and organisational application particularly in the areas of leadership style, team building, and organisational culture, lending indirect but repeated support to the proposition that cognitive-style diversity and integration matter for leadership outcomes. The cross-cultural cognitive-style literature further indicates that cognitive processing preferences are not culturally neutral: holistic versus analytical tendencies vary across regional and national groups in ways that plausibly interact with the HBDI quadrant structure, reinforcing the need to treat cognitive style as a culturally embedded rather than universal construct when applied to MNC leadership.

2. Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Effectiveness

The evidence for a direct EI-leadership effectiveness relationship is stronger and more consistent than for cognitive style alone, though not unanimous. Multiple recent studies, including large-sample SEM-based research, report significant positive relationships between EI and leadership effectiveness, frequently channelled through communication quality, decision-making, and conflict resolution. Systematic reviews of the EI-transformational leadership literature converge on the conclusion that EI and cognitive skill operate jointly, rather than as substitutes, in producing effective leadership, with several sources attributing the substantial majority of leadership success to affective and relational competencies rather than technical or cognitive ability alone. Countervailing evidence, notably studies finding no significant EI-effectiveness relationship when leadership style is entered as an intervening variable, is important not because it disproves the EI-effectiveness link but because it strengthens the case for a mediated rather than purely direct model: EI's effect appears contingent on its translation into observable leadership behaviour.

3. Emotional Intelligence as the Connective Mechanism

The clearest support for the paper's central proposition comes from mediation studies examining EI's indirect effects through leadership-style variables. Evidence that transformational leadership mediates the relationship



between a leader's EI and both leader effectiveness and service climate, and that trust mediates the relationship between EI and follower job performance, together support a general pattern in which EI's influence on hard outcomes operates through intervening relational and behavioural mechanisms rather than as a direct main effect. Extending this logic to cognitive style is theoretically well justified: if EI mediates the effect of a leader's emotional resources on effectiveness via leadership behaviour, it is a natural and testable extension to hypothesise that EI similarly mediates the effect of a leader's cognitive resources (their HBDI profile) on effectiveness, since both cognitive style and raw emotional capacity are dispositional inputs that must be behaviourally expressed to influence followers.

4. The Multinational Corporation as Boundary Condition

The cross-cultural and cultural-intelligence literature indicates that this mediation pathway is unlikely to operate uniformly across cultural contexts. High power-distance and high uncertainty-avoidance cultures reward directive, structured leadership behaviour, which may be more readily produced by analytically or procedurally dominant cognitive styles; low power-distance, individualist cultures reward participative and relationally expressive leadership, which may be more readily produced by relationally or experimentally dominant styles. Because EI (and its cross-cultural counterpart, CQ) governs a leader's capacity to adapt behaviour appropriately to these varying cultural expectations, the mediating role of EI is theorised to be strongest precisely where the cultural distance between a leader's home orientation and host operating environment is greatest—that is, in the MNC contexts that motivate this paper. This is consistent with neuroeconomic evidence that cultural diversity among MNC executives introduces measurable cognitive variation with direct implications for corporate decision-making, and with comparative leadership reviews showing that cultural adaptability, not any single fixed leadership style, predicts effectiveness across MNC subsidiaries.

VI. THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Theoretical Implications

This paper makes three principal theoretical contributions. First, it integrates two historically separate literatures: cognitive style research grounded in the HBDI whole-brain model, and emotional intelligence research grounded in the ability and mixed-model traditions into a single mediation framework, addressing calls in the cognitive-style literature for greater integration with affective and social constructs. Second, by reframing inconsistent direct-effect findings in the EI-leadership literature (for example, Weinberger's null result) as evidence consistent with a mediated rather than direct model, the paper offers a parsimonious explanation for an empirical inconsistency that has persisted in the literature for over a decade. Third, by situating the

mediation model within the MNC and cross-cultural leadership literature, the paper proposes cultural distance and cultural intelligence as boundary conditions, extending the mediation model into a moderated-mediation framework suitable for cross-cultural leadership research more broadly.

2. Managerial and Practical Implications

For MNC human resource and leadership-development functions, the synthesis suggests that cognitive-style assessment (via HBDI or comparable instruments) is most useful for leadership selection and development when paired with, rather than substituted for, emotional intelligence development. Leadership-development programmes that focus exclusively on building analytical or strategic capability, without corresponding investment in self-management and relationship-management competencies, are likely to produce leaders who are cognitively well-equipped but behaviourally under-prepared for the interpersonal and cross-cultural demands of MNC leadership roles. For expatriate selection and international assignment planning specifically, the moderating role proposed for cultural distance suggests that EI and CQ assessment should receive proportionally greater weight as the cultural distance of an assignment increases. Finally, the paper suggests that organisations already administering HBDI-based leadership-development programmes have a natural opportunity to layer validated EI assessment onto existing development pathways, rather than treating the two as parallel, unconnected interventions.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This paper is based entirely on secondary data and a narrative synthesis methodology; it does not report new primary quantitative or qualitative findings, and the hypotheses proposed in Section 3 remain theoretically derived rather than empirically tested. The literature reviewed is also unevenly distributed across the three focal constructs: while EI-leadership and cross-cultural leadership research is comparatively abundant, direct empirical research connecting the HBDI specifically (as opposed to cognitive style more broadly) to leadership effectiveness and to EI is limited, and much of the available HBDI evidence is practitioner-oriented rather than peer-reviewed. The search strategy, while structured, was not a full systematic review with dual independent screening, and formal risk-of-bias or quality appraisal of included sources was not conducted; the synthesis should therefore be read as an integrative conceptual review rather than a systematic review in the strict PRISMA sense.

Future research should prioritise primary, survey-based testing of the proposed model using validated instruments, including the HBDI or a comparable open-access cognitive-style measure, an established EI instrument (such as the MSCEIT, EQ-i, or a validated trait-EI scale), and a multi-source (self- and follower-rated) leadership-effectiveness measure, within MNC samples such as public



and private sector organisations operating in Rajasthan and other Indian business hubs. Such research would allow formal testing of H1 through H5 using mediation and moderated-mediation analysis (e.g., PROCESS macro or structural equation modelling), and would substantially extend the largely Western-sample EI-leadership literature synthesised here into an Indian and emerging-market MNC context. Longitudinal designs would additionally help clarify whether EI competencies can be developed to compensate for narrow cognitive-style profiles over time, a question the cross-sectional secondary literature reviewed here cannot resolve.

VII. CONCLUSION

This paper synthesised secondary evidence to examine whether emotional intelligence mediates the relationship between cognitive style and leadership effectiveness in multinational corporations. The reviewed literature supports three conclusions. First, cognitive style, as conceptualised through the HBDI whole-brain model, is associated with leadership effectiveness, with integrative, multi-quadrant profiles generally outperforming single-quadrant dominance. Second, emotional intelligence is associated with leadership effectiveness, though the strength and consistency of this relationship varies depending on whether intervening leadership-behaviour variables are modelled. Third, and most importantly, the pattern of mediation evidence in closely related EI-leadership-behaviour research provides strong theoretical justification for treating emotional intelligence as the mechanism through which cognitive style is converted into effective leadership behaviour, particularly in culturally diverse MNC settings where the demands on both cognitive and emotional competence are heightened. The conceptual model and hypotheses proposed here are offered as a foundation for the primary, survey-based research needed to test this mediation empirically in Indian and other emerging-market MNC contexts.

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