



FACTORS OF PROJECT SUCCESS IN IT INDUSTRY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EU AND NON-EU IT COMPANIES' DECISION-MAKING STYLES

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Abstract

The primary objective of this study was to examine the relationship between decision-making styles and project success in the IT industry. The literature research led to the development of eight hypotheses, which were then evaluated using inferential statistics with the help of SPSS. A total of 342 people participated by completing the structured questionnaire. The data was checked for validity and reliability using item loadings and Cronbach's Alpha values before the hypotheses could be tested. The results showed that in both the EU and non-EU IT industry, the Rational decision-making style has a direct positive effect on project success. In addition, the success of a project in the IT industry of either the EU or a non-EU country is unaffected by the intuitive or spontaneous decision-making styles. In terms of Avoidant decision-making, the EU sample differs from the non-EU sample. Companies outside of the EU saw a statistically significant negative effect of the Avoidant decision-making style on project success, even though it had no discernible influence on success in the EU. Success with projects appears to be directly related to the use of a rational decision-making style in both EU and non-EU countries. Avoidant style, on the other hand, should be approached warily due to its drawbacks.

Keywords: decision-making, decision-making styles, project management, project success, IT industry

INTRODUCTION

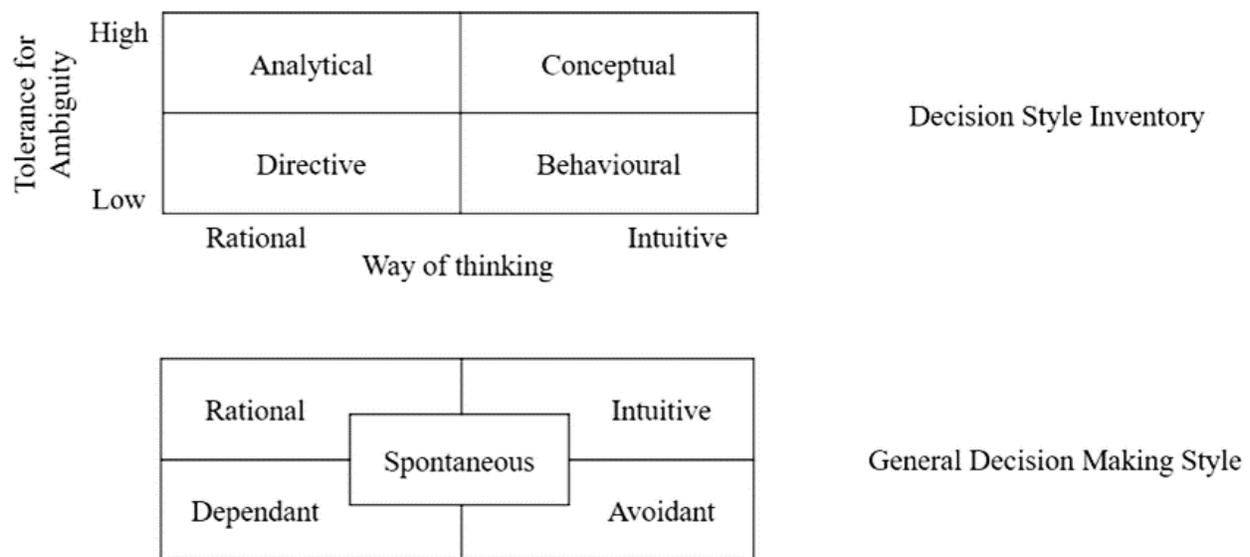
In business, making decisions is a key part of the manager's duties and responsibilities so that the business can reach its goals. Decision-making is a continuous flow, a set of actions that start from a certain place and lead to different jobs, activities, or ideas, which lead to a choice at the end (Döner, 2020). The first functional model of decision-making styles was developed at the tail end of the 1970s, and it focused on how people processed information and their capacity to overcome obstacles in the decision-making process (Vroom & Yetton, 1973). The idea is based on the notion that leaders should be skilled at utilizing all decision-making styles, but across multiple decision-making scenarios. In contrast, scholars believe that the use of a decision-making style depends on how complex is the decision-making situation. (Remeňová & Jankelová, 2019). Decision-making is defined as a process that involves both internal and external aspects and actions. It begins with identifying the key elements required for advancement and ends with the creation of an execution strategy (Frishammar, 2003). Making a choice is a combination of mental, physical, and emotional processes. It involves choosing between different goals, ways to reach them, and means (Eren, 2009). According to Grant et al. (2011), making decisions is a key managerial task that reflects both the manager's and owner's performance triumphs and failures.

The Decision Style Inventory (DSI) assesses the direction and intensity of correlation between directive, analytical, conceptual, and behavioral styles, whereas the General Decision-Making Style Assessment (GDMS) assesses rational, intuitive, reliant, avoidant, and spontaneous styles (GDMS) (Berisha et al., 2018). Using factors such as a person's cognitive complexity and the importance they place on various values, the Decision Style Inventory divides people into four distinct styles. The face validity of the DSI has been established with a high level of agreement among test takers, exceeding 90% (Rowe & Mason, 1987). Researchers including Boulgarides, Rowe, Mason, Cohen, Shackleton, Pitt, Marks, Connor, Becker, Fox, and Wayne have found the Decision Style Inventory (DSI) to be a dependable instrument for evaluating decision-making styles.

GDMS was developed by Scott and Bruce (1995) to address the lack of a psychometrically valid decision style instrument. Based on theory and data, they established five decision-making styles: logical, intuitive, reliant, spontaneous, and avoidant. The GDMS has been tested for validity by numerous researchers, all of whom have concluded that it is one of the most reliable decision-making instruments (Russ, McNeilly, & Comer, 1996; Sager & Gastil, 1999; Loo, 2000; Spicer & Sadler-Smith, 2005; Galotti et al., 2006; Sylvie & Huang, 2008; Allwood & Salo, 2012; Curşeu & Schruijer, 2012).

The way DSI and GDMS work is very different. DSI items are based on situations and measure how likely someone is to use one of four decision-making styles (Martinsons & Davison, 2007). On the other hand, GDMS statements describe how people make important decisions (Thunholm, 2004). Researchers Scott and Bruce (1995) examined relationships between styles and concluded that the GDMS's five scales are conceptually distinct due to the pattern of connections they found. The relationships between the GDMS subscales show that people have different ways of making decisions, and that these ways do not always contradict each other (Scott & Bruce, 1995). In order to pass the DSI, participants must rank four possible responses, even if they all appear to be equally good or awful (Rowe & Mason, 1987). In addition to having different nomenclature, these two instruments also have completely different styles (see Figure 1). The DSI combines many styles to create unique designs (Berisha et al., 2018).

Figure 1: Decision Style Inventory and General Decision-Making Style.



Source: Rowe et al. (1984); Scott & Bruce (1995)

After careful analysis and research of both instruments, this study will be focused on General Decision-Making Style (GDMS). The study aims to compare IT firms based in the EU and those based outside of it in order to determine whether or not there is a significant difference in project outcomes based on the decision-maker's decision-making style (GDMS).

Since there isn't a specific study on this topic being done in non-EU and EU right now, the gap in the literature is clear. This research is significant because it addresses the previously

identified gap in the theoretical literature. Even though it can't fill the gap in the literature on its own, it is meant to be a starting point and a door for more research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Decision-making styles

According to the Project Management Institute, poor decision making is the root cause of failure in 47% of projects. Therefore, projects and organizational performance may suffer if the decision-making process is overlooked (Project Management Institute, 2015). In agile development, three obstacles stand in the way of collective decision making: aligning strategic product strategies with iteration plans; assigning development resources; and team-based development and maintenance. Decision-making style is a predictor of an individual's receptivity, processing, and response to stimuli (Santamaria et al., 2018). Entrepreneurs' decision-making styles are heavily influenced by the local culture in which their businesses operate (Weerasekara & Bhanugopan, 2022).

Rowe and Mason (1987) say that a person's decision-making style is how they organize the information and data they have to make a decision. The way someone makes decisions shows their personality, values, and how they see the world. Harren (1979) says that how a person sees, thinks about, and acts during the decision-making process shows what kind of person they are. Driver et al. (1993) also say that a business owner or manager's decision-making style is affected by how they have made decisions in the past and how they have learned from those decisions. How business owners and managers make decisions in the face of uncertainty has been the subject of study by a number of academics (Hammond, 1996; Hastie and Dawes, 2009; Tversky and Kahneman, 1974). Many scholars are interested in recognizing and taking advantage of opportunities in uncertain situations, which has made decision-making in uncertain situations a hot topic (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000).

When defining the decision-making style, the writers focus on two factors. Some people believe that a person's decision-making style is a rather consistent quality that determines their assessment of a given scenario and subsequent progress in the decision-making process (Harren, 1979). People employ it as a reaction strategy when faced with a decision, and it depends on the particular scenario, task, and person (Thunholm, 2004). Others, however, argue that one's decision-making style is nothing more than a habitual pattern of behavior applied in a decision-making circumstance and not a fundamental aspect of one's character (Scott & Bruce, 1995). A lack of consensus exists in the literature on how to define and categorize different approaches to making decisions. Scott and Bruce (1995), drawing on past theoretical and empirical studies, established five basic decision-making styles: The rational style is defined by

its logical and sensible characteristics, such as a thorough search for information and an evaluation of available options. People that operate in this manner understand the consequences of their choices. What sets it distinct is the individual's level of internal control, which is reflected in their belief that they are ultimately in charge of their own destinies and their propensity to find solutions to challenges. Intuitive thinkers are perceptive of subtleties, receptive to new perspectives, and make decisions in accordance with their gut instincts, personal experiences, and creative faculties. They act quickly and without hesitation when making decisions. People with a dependent style are those who consistently look to others for answers and direction, indicating that they lack trust in their own decision-making abilities and believe that their fate is determined by forces beyond their control. With an avoidant mentality, one is more likely to reject or put off making decisions, denying personal responsibility for doing so. Those who use this method to make choices consider themselves to have little control over their lives. People who prefer to make decisions on the fly do so because they value efficiency more than anything else (opková & Christenková, 2021). This might lead to hasty, rash judgments.

Another study links rationality and indecisiveness in decision-making to the five decision types (rational, avoidant, intuitive, spontaneous, and dependent). An avoidant decision-making style predicts indecisiveness, while a rational style predicts rationality (Curşeu & Schruijer, 2012). Thunholm investigated how stress affects decision-making style (Thunholm, 2008) and whether it indicates depression (Leykin & Derubeis, 2010). Depression has been linked to indecisiveness. Different cognitive processing types underlie the logical and intuitive approaches, but it is unclear where the avoidant, dependent, and impulsive approaches come from conceptually. Negative tension increases with these styles. The study also found that procrastinators were more stressed (University of Economics in Bratislava et al., 2019).

Self-report questionnaires are typically used to evaluate decision-making styles because they allow respondents to reflect on how they carry out certain activities, examine personal routines or preferences, or affirmations about how they see themselves (Raffaldi, Iannello, Vittani, & Antonietti, 2012). Over 160 strategies of decision-making are described as distinct by Gati, Landman, Davidovitch, Asulin-Peretz, and Gadassi (2010). They conclude that leaders, to be effective throughout their careers, need to make adjustments to their attitudes and methods of leading.

Project success

The importance of project success to the project's stakeholders is growing as more research is conducted into the factors that influence project outcomes. Although there are

numerous aspects that influence project success, project managers' contributions are critical (Ashfaq & Iqbal, n.d.). The project success requirements are objective, acceptable, and quantifiable, often known as "quality." Project management, on the other hand, is commonly used in the service sector, as well as in fields such as resource development and social work projects (Diallo & Thuillier, 2005).

Over the past few decades, businesses have made significant strides toward successfully completing their tasks in the shortest amount of time possible. To increase the frequency with which a project is completed successfully, they are consistently developing novel approaches to enhancing existing methods. There has been a steady rise in the importance of the term "project success" in the field of project management. Organizations are shifting to project-based structures due to the high likelihood of project problems. Many companies and projects are ineffective due to a lack of information and project management skills. There are many factors that contribute to a project's success, including the character of the project manager, the size of the undertaking, the structure of the team and the organization, the state of the external environment, the depth of available knowledge, and the accessibility of necessary resources (Hussain et al., 2021).

An even more thorough framework for project success was created by Pinto and Slevin in 1988. They argued that for a project to succeed, both internal (project) and external (customer) factors should be taken into account. The project manager has control over internal project elements like time, cost, and performance. The usefulness, satisfaction, and effectiveness of the project outcome are external client factors; however, these external success factors cannot be measured until the project is finished; the only way to partially ensure them while the project is being executed is to fully understand client needs and translate them into project deliverable specifications (2013) Creasy & Anantatmula.

By focusing on three different sets of attributes—the client view, which is concerned with the deliverables (as measured by scope, quality, and client satisfaction), the team perspective, which is concerned with the methods used to produce the deliverables, and the enterprise perspective, which is concerned with financial and commercial considerations—Rad and Anantatmula (2010) developed a method for measuring project success. They claim that the perception of success and failure is mostly reliant on unstated and individual indicators, which explains why two individuals may perceive the success of the same business differently. According to Rad and Anantatmula (2010), three criteria should be used to determine whether a project was successful: whether it met its own cost and duration goals, whether the deliverable met enterprise strategic goals, and whether it met company financial goals.

The definition of project success changes during the course of a project's and a product's life cycle. Project management is about controlling expectations, and expectations are correlated with views of success, claim Jugdev and Müller (2005). They say that project success requires more than just a shared goal, top management backing for resources, and the authority and power to properly finish the project. According to Ojiako, Johansen, and Greenwood (2007), there are two types of success criteria: those related to the project's progress and those related to the project's performance. They differ from project to project. These results suggest that projects should strive to achieve both strategic goals (macro metrics of project success) and traditional time, cost, and quality indicators (micro measurements of project progress) (Creasy & Anantatmula, 2013).

Project managers and end users have greater agreement on success criteria for successful initiatives than for unsuccessful projects, according to Wateridge (1998). Also, successful projects were more likely to focus on product success (a longer-term goal), while failed ones focused on time, cost, and scope. Success in project management, as defined by Cooke-Davies (2002), is measured in terms of traditional KPIs like cost, schedule, and quality, while the success of a project is evaluated against its stated goals.

Shenhar and Dvir (2007) underline the need of project managers paying close attention to the business environment. A successful project, according to them: (1) promotes efficiency; (2) has a favorable influence on clients; (3) provides business success; (4) prepares the company for future undertakings; and (5) has a beneficial impact on the project team (Shenhar & Dvir 2007).

Decision-making styles and project success

In volatile situations, like the worldwide COVID-19 health and economic crisis, it is crucial to be able to make decisions on the fly through action-oriented means, such as improvisation (Lloyd-Smith, 2020). This is due to the fact that it enables decision-makers to creatively handle current existential concerns by going beyond conventional decision-making processes. (Certo, Lester, Dalton, & Dalton, 2006). According to Mintzberg and Westley (2001) and Mendonca and Wallace (2004), improvisation is crucial in crisis management, which is defined as a situation requiring immediate managerial interventions to create innovative solutions for navigating events that have never occurred before and ensuring survival.

In the face of unanticipated events or crises, senior managers assume the role of first responders. They are tasked with making improvised decisions that are prompt and decisive in order to not only address immediate challenges faced by the organization, but also to ensure the organization's long-term survival and well-being (Pearson & Clair, 1998). According to

Cunha (2007), the rational (also known as comprehensive), intuitive, and improvisational processes are the three most important for entrepreneurial decision-making.

Assumptions made by Russ et al. (1996) include that dependent, participatory decision-making will improve performance while avoidant, irrational decision-making will hinder it, and that rational decision-making leads to higher quality decisions while intuitive, spontaneous decision-making leads to lower quality decisions. They came to the conclusion that while one's decision-making style can affect performance, the intuitive, dependent, and spontaneous styles have no effect, while the rational style can have a positive effect and the avoidant style can have a negative one. Vroom (2003) argues that leadership and decision-making go hand in hand. It is crucial to comprehend how leaders perceive a decision through the prism of its future execution since good decision-making truly demands efficient implementation. Leaders need training to make better decisions, and as long as the world around them is in a constant state of flux, bad habits are best avoided at all costs. To lower the rate of failure, leadership education is necessary (Verma et al., 2015).

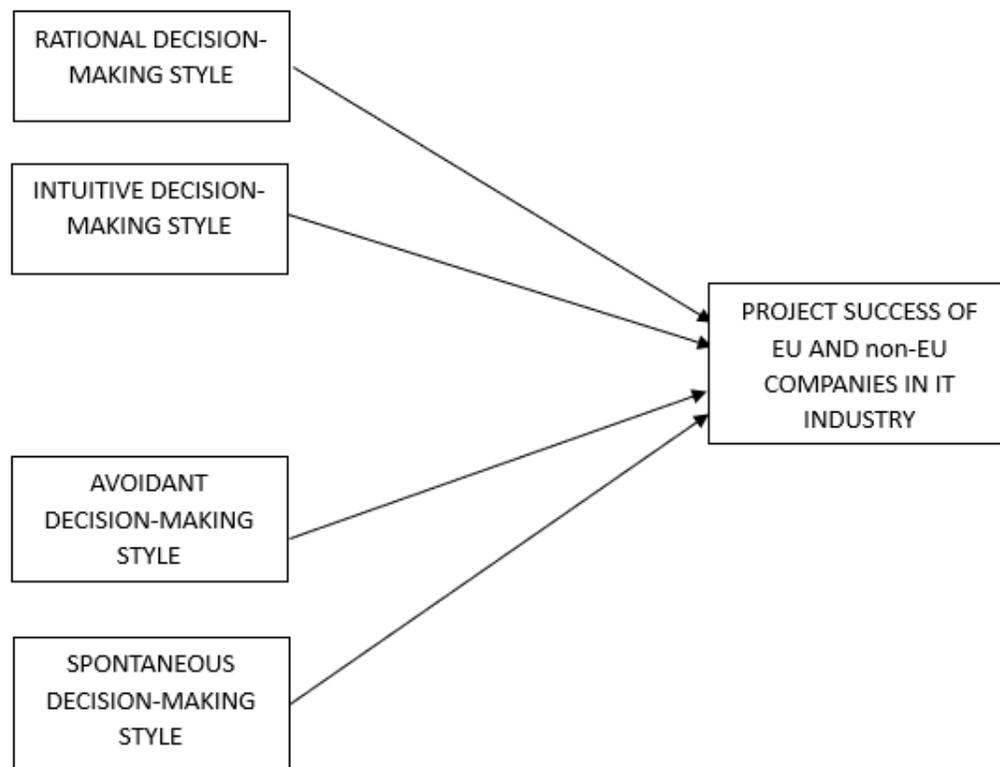
People who tend to make decisions on the fly (spontaneous decision-makers) tend to have a negative correlation between the decision-making style they employ and the quality of the decision they make (Sari, 2022). Those who put the most emphasis on the decision-making process, according to research by Parker, Bruine de Bruin, and Fischhoff (2007), tend to be dissatisfied with the results. A rational decision-maker is one who can think through potential outcomes and gather all the knowledge they need to make an informed call. In addition, rational decision-makers have a more accurate assessment of their own talents, which helps them produce better outcomes. This further demonstrates the success rate of reasonable goal-setters (Bruine De Bruin et al., 2007). Rational decision-making is similar in younger and older age executives; however, it differs from middle-aged executives. There is also a notable distinction between the rational decision makers in the intermediate and high experience groups. Middle-aged leaders may have a different manner of weighing and choosing options than their more inexperienced younger counterparts and their more jaded older counterparts, thanks to their past experiences and future aspirations. Both younger and older CEOs may adhere to the rational decision-making model's (McShane et al., 2006) procedures when no new opportunities for success present themselves. Furthermore, because of multiple future opportunities and extensive prior experience, middle-aged executives devise and implement various transformational initiatives for the benefit of their subordinates and organization (Verma et al., 2015).

RESEARCH MODEL, HYPOTHESES, AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research model

In this study, we will use project success as the dependent variable and four distinct decision-making styles as independent variables. Both independent and dependent variables will be further compared between EU and non-EU countries, therefore resulting in eight instead of four hypotheses.

Figure 2: Research Model Proposition



Hypotheses

H1: Rational decision-making style affects project success in IT industry in EU countries.

H2: Intuitive decision-making style affects project success in IT industry in EU countries.

H3: Avoidant decision-making style affects project success in IT industry in EU countries.

H4: Spontaneous decision-making style affects project success in IT industry in EU countries.

H5: Rational decision-making style affects project success in IT industry in non-EU countries.

H6: Intuitive decision-making style affects project success in IT industry in non-EU countries.

H7: Avoidant decision-making style affects project success in IT industry in non-EU countries.

H8: Spontaneous decision-making style affects project success in IT industry in non-EU countries.

Research questions

- Which decision-making style positively influences project success in IT industry?
- What is the difference between successful decision-making style in non-EU and successful decision-making style in EU in a sense of a successful project?
- What is the impact of decision-making style on project success?

METHODOLOGY

Population and sample

There are no preferable population characteristics for this research aside from two:

- That person is working in IT company on a project.
- That they are in either EU or non-EU country.

Sample size is rather small (342 responses) given the number of IT companies and their employees in both EU and non-EU countries. However, given it was spread across different companies with similar rate of employees' response, it is still valid and valuable sample to be discussed. Around 1/3 of all respondents are females in both EU and non-EU, while the rest of the respondents are males.

Data collection instrument

The data used in the analysis has been collected through two structured surveys distributed to employees in IT companies in both EU and non-EU countries. Separate survey links have been used for EU and non-EU countries, but surveys themselves were not changed. The scales used in survey construction were already used and proven valid and reliable by researchers. The work of Alacreu-Crespo et al. (2019) was used to measure decision-making styles, while the work of TURNER and MÜLLER (2005) was used to measure project success. A five-point semantic difference scale was used to score all of the questionnaire items. The questions in the questionnaire were divided into five categories, as follows:

- Questions 1-5: general information about respondents
- Questions 6-19: decision-making styles
- Questions 20-26: project success

Questionnaires were distributed to employees in IT companies, both EU and non-EU, in form of online surveys using SurveyMonkey. Companies selection was random, ranging from small companies that employ 10 people, to companies with 1000+ employees. Respondents were approached directly through email, LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Questionnaire had 342 respondents, 172 from non-EU IT companies, and 170 from EU IT companies. Detailed review of sample characteristics will be given and discussed later on.

Statistical methods used for analysis

The data was statistically analyzed using Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to do relevant validity, reliability, descriptive statistics, and regression analysis.

Validity, reliability and model fit

Factor analysis was conducted in order to show the validity of the instrument and in order to check reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was observed. Factor loadings and Cronbach's alpha were not satisfactory for all items, so they had to be removed. Updated scales are presented in the table below.

Table 1: Factor analysis

CODE	ITEM	Cronbach's Alpha	Factor loading
DMR1	Manager makes important decisions carefully.	0.859	0.871
DMR2	Manager double-checks information sources to be sure they have the right facts before making decisions.		0.814
DMR3	Manager makes decisions in a logical and systematic way.		0.865
DMR4	When making a decision, manager considers various options in terms of a specific goal.		0.803
DMI1	When making decisions, manager relies upon instincts and intuition.	0.732	0.817
DMI3	When making a decision, manager believes it is more important for them to feel the decision is right than to have a rational reason for it.		0.778
DMI4	When making a decision, manager trusts their inner feelings and reactions.		0.841
DMA1	Manager avoids making important decisions until the pressure is on.	0.863	0.805
DMA2	Manager postpones decision-making whenever possible.		0.887
DMA3	Manager often procrastinates when it comes to making important decisions.		0.863
DMA4	Manager makes important decisions at the last minute.		0.818
DMS1	Manager makes snap decisions.	0.767	0.886
DMS2	Manager often makes decisions on the spur of the moment.		0.879
DMS3	Manager makes quick decisions.		0.708

The Cronbach's alpha is >0.7 for all variables, meaning the reliability is good. Factor analysis showed good validity for all of the remaining items.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics

Questionnaires were distributed to employees in IT companies, both EU and non-EU. Questionnaire had 342 respondents, 172 from non-EU IT companies, and 170 from EU IT companies. There is similar male/female ratio in both EU and non-Eu countries. Most of the respondents in both EU and non-EU countries were in range 25-30 years, 41.8%. Majority of the respondents in non-EU had bachelor's degree, 50.6%, while in EU, majority had Master degree, 47.6%. The distribution of roles, managerial positions, and years of experience was quite consistent between EU and non-EU countries.

Table 2: Sample characteristics

Variable	Demographics	Number	Valid percent (%)	
Participants	EU	170	49.7	
	nonEU	172	50.3	
	TOTAL	342	100	
Gender	Male	EU	116	68.2
		nonEU	103	59.9
		TOTAL	219	64
	Female	EU	54	31.8
		nonEU	69	40.1
		TOTAL	123	36
Age	18-24	EU	14	8.2
		nonEU	19	11
		TOTAL	33	9.6
	25-30	EU	62	36.5
		nonEU	81	47.1
		TOTAL	143	41.8
	31-35	EU	41	24.1
		nonEU	38	22.1
		TOTAL	79	23.1
	36-40	EU	26	15.3
		nonEU	20	11.6
		TOTAL	46	13.5
41+	EU	27	15.9	
	nonEU	14	18.1	
	TOTAL	41	12	
Education	High school	EU	22	12.9
		nonEU	20	11.6
		TOTAL	42	12.3

Bachelor's degree	EU	64	37.6
	nonEU	87	50.6
	TOTAL	151	44.2
Master's degree	EU	81	47.6
	nonEU	62	36
	TOTAL	143	41.8
PhD degree	EU	3	1.8
	nonEU	3	1.7
	TOTAL	6	1.8

Table 2...

Empirical findings

The information needed to forecast project success based on decision-making style can be found in the Coefficients table, and the Sig column may be used to establish whether or not decision-making style makes a statistically significant contribution to the model.

Table 3: Hypotheses testing

EU/ non-EU	Independent variable	Standardized Coefficients - Beta	t	Sig.	Hypothesis	Hypothesis status
EU	DMR	.345	4.011	.000	H1	Supported
	DMI	-.076	-1.036	.302	H2	Not Supported
	DMA	-.042	-.495	.621	H3	Not Supported
	DMS	-.065	-.834	.405	H4	Not Supported
Non-EU	DMR	.479	6.378	.000	H5	Supported
	DMI	.064	.920	.359	H6	Not Supported
	DMA	-.202	-2.124	.035	H7	Supported
	DMS	.045	.563	.574	H8	Not Supported

Dependent variable: PS

With a p-value of 0.000, DMR (Rational decision-making style) is the only variable associated with successful IT projects in both EU and non-EU countries. H1 and H4 have been confirmed with a p-value less than 0.05. In all EU and non-EU countries, the p-value for H2 and H6 was over 0.05, which means they cannot be sustained. Thus, DMI (Intuitive decision-making style) has little bearing on IT project outcomes. Table 3 shows that H3 was not supported with a p-value > 0.05, hence DMA (Avoidant decision-making style) had no major effect on project success in the IT industry in EU countries. Additionally, a p-value of 0.035 indicated that, contrary to the EU, the Avoidant decision-making style does influence the success of IT projects in non-EU nations. It is strongly discouraged to use an Avoidant decision-making style non-EU country due to the negative impact it will have on the project's success.

CONCLUSION

This study's primary objective was to examine the relationship between decision-making styles and project success in the IT industry. The literature research led to the development of 8 hypotheses, which were then evaluated using SPSS. A total of 342 people participated by completing the structured questionnaire. The data from the factory was checked for validity and reliability using item loadings and Cronbach's Alpha values before the hypotheses could be tested. The results showed that in both the EU and non-EU IT industry, the Rational decision-making style has a direct positive effect on project success. In addition, the success of a project in the IT industry of either the EU or a non-EU country is unaffected by the intuitive or spontaneous decision-making styles. In terms of Avoidant decision-making, the EU sample differs from the non-EU sample. Companies outside of the EU saw a statistically significant negative effect of the Avoidant decision-making style on project success, even though it had no discernible influence on success in the EU. Success with projects appears to be directly related to the use of a rational decision-making style in both EU and non-EU countries. Avoidant style, on the other hand, should be approached warily due to its drawbacks.

These results pave the way for future research as there was no current study that compares effect of decision-making to project success, that is conducted in both EU and non-EU, so theoretical contribution of this study is significant. The limitation of the study is comparing small sample size of both non-EU countries and EU countries, and it is recommended for future research to replicate the study on a bigger sample.

In terms of decision-making styles, it is recommended to utilize a rational decision-making style, which has been shown to positively impact project success in both EU and non-EU IT companies. It is also encouraged to steer clear of avoidant decision-making style, even though it had a negative impact on project success solely in non-EU IT companies and had no substantial impact on project success in EU IT companies.

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