# The Role of Intuition in Strategic Decision-Making: Exploring the Moderating Impact of Complex Work Environments in the Indian Hospitality Sector

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Abstract: This study explores the influence of inferential and affective intuition on decision-making quality within complex organizational settings, focusing on the Indian hospitality industry. Using a quantitative research approach, data were collected through a structured survey of experienced hospitality professionals and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) via Smart PLS 4. Findings reveal that both types of intuition significantly enhance decision quality. Furthermore, complex work environments positively moderate the relationship between inferential intuition and decision quality, while no significant moderation is observed for affective intuition. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of how intuition operates in dynamic business contexts and highlight the importance of intuitive skill development for strategic effectiveness.

Keywords: Intuition, Decision Quality, Complex Work Environment, Hospitality Sector, Structural Equation Modeling.

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#### I. INTRODUCTION

Organizations today operate in volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environments. Traditional rational decision-making models often fall short in such contexts, prompting scholars and practitioners to revisit intuition as a viable alternative. Intuition, defined as rapid, non-conscious, and emotionally influenced cognition, offers a potential edge in fast-paced decision-making.

This paper explores whether and how contextual factors—specifically, complex work environments—affect the link between intuition and decision quality. It builds on existing literature to assess how inferential (expertise-based) and affective (emotion-based) intuition contribute to strategic decision-making.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Intuition has historically been elusive in empirical study due to its abstract and subjective nature. Pretz and Totz (2007) categorize it into inferential (based on learned patterns) and affective (driven by emotional reactions) types. Inferential intuition is often tied to expertise, while affective intuition reflects gut-level responses without clear rationale.

Studies show that intuition plays a crucial role in unstructured decision contexts (Burke & Miller, 1999; Simon, 1987). Inferential intuition is particularly reliable when derived from extensive domain experience. Affective intuition, although less tangible, is increasingly recognized for its relevance in high-stakes, emotionally charged decisions. Volume 10, Issue 5, May – 2025

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Gigerenzer (2007) emphasized that intuition is not irrational but rather a form of fast and frugal heuristic developed through experience. Dane and Pratt (2007) further argue that intuition is a domain-specific capability enhanced by experience, emotional intelligence, and reflective thinking. These findings suggest that intuition is both learned and contextual.

In organizational settings, Khatri and Ng (2000) found that intuitive strategic decisions can outperform analytical ones, particularly when timely decisions are required under uncertainty. Sadler-Smith and Shefy (2004) emphasized the role of intuition in leadership, noting that effective leaders blend analysis with intuition to navigate complex environments.

Moreover, environmental complexity is a key situational variable affecting intuitive judgment. Dijksterhuis et al. (2006) found that when individuals are overwhelmed by information, intuitive processing can yield better outcomes than prolonged analysis. However, Hodgkinson et al. (2009) caution that intuition may be vulnerable to cognitive biases if not grounded in expertise.

Taken together, this literature supports a dual-process perspective of decision-making, where intuition and analysis coexist and interact. Understanding when to rely on each depends largely on the context, such as environmental complexity and decision-maker experience.

#### > Hypotheses Development

H1: Inferential intuition positively influences decisionmaking quality.

H2: Affective intuition positively influences decisionmaking quality.

H3: Complex work environments influence decision-making quality.

H4: Complex work environments moderate the relationship between inferential intuition and decision-making quality.

H5: Complex work environments moderate the relationship between affective intuition and decision-making quality.

#### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A purposive sampling technique was undertaken to collect the required data from employees working in the hospitality and tourism sector from North India. The research included employees with at least five years of work experience. Respondents were also informed that their identities and responses would be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. They were also instructed to be as truthful as possible in their responses. A standardized and structured questionnaire developed by Carlson n.d., (2008) With 12 items of affective intuition and five items of inferential intuition, a 20 items scale was used to measure the quality of decision-making, i.e., developed by Al-mehsin (2017). To combat the issue of common method variance, the data was checked using Harman's single-factor test. (Podsakoff et al. 2008). According to the findings of exploratory factor analysis, the first factor explained a cumulative variance of 41.80%, which fell short of the 50% threshold. This implied that CMV might not be the primary factor causing the data's variation (Podsakoff et al. 2003).

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#### > Demographics

In the present study, the proportion of male respondents (60.4 percent) was higher as compared to female respondents (39.6 percent). 57 % fall in the age group of 21-30 years. Regarding educational qualifications, respondents with graduate degrees constituted 52.2 percent of the sample. All had work experience equal to or greater than five years in the industry.

#### IV. RESULTS

We used Smart PLS 4 to analyze the proposed research model using the structural equation modeling (SEM) technique. There were several reasons behind the selection of this technique for the present study. First, as a component-based method, it imposes a smaller sample size and residual distribution constraints to acquire appropriate statistical power. (Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2012; Lohmöller 1989; Reinartz, Haenlein, and Henseler 2009). Second, it enables researchers to test measurement and structural models concurrently; third this technique is highly recommended for mediation/moderation analysis (Richter et al. 2016). Last, the statistical power of this technique is also very high (Hair et al. 2017). Initially, the measurement model was assessed, which involves the determination of the reliability along with the constructs' validity.

# Measurement Model Assessment

In the PLS analysis, for assessing constructs' reliability, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were computed to evaluate the psychometric properties of the scales. Results revealed acceptable Cronbach's alpha value for each construct, i.e., greater than 0.7 (Nunnally 1978). Also, the CR values, which ranged from 0.756 to 0.892, were found to be higher than the required value of 0.7, which confirms the reliability of the constructs (Hair et al. 2017) (refer to Table 1). Further, average variance extracted, i.e., AVE was assessed to check convergent validity criteria with the value being either 0.50 or above (Hair et al. 2019). Table 1 shows that the value of AVE in the case of all the constructs exceeded the threshold limit. Thus, convergent validity was established. Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion method was employed to examine the discriminant validity. The former method is based on the comparison between AVE's square root and inter-construct correlations. Table 2 indicated that the square root value of AVE was greater than the correlations among the constructs. Thus, it can be deduced that the data ensured the existence of discriminant validity. So, this ensured a good measurement model.

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1 able 1: Kenability and Validity Assessment						
	Cronbach's	Composite reliability	Composite reliability	AVE	Results	
	α	(rho_a)	(rho_c)			
Inferential Intuition	.888	.892	0.923	0.749	Acceptable	
Affective Intuition	0.732	0.756	0.851	0.657	Acceptable	
Quality of Decision- Making	0.835	0.876	0.879	0.594	Acceptable	
Complex environment	0.847	0.864	0.908	0.767	Acceptable	

# Table 1: Reliability and Validity Assessment

## Table 2: Discriminant Validity using Fornell-Lacker Criterion

	Inferential	Affective Intuition	Quality of Decision	Complex	Result
	Intuition		Making	environment	
Inferential Intuition	0.866				Acceptable
Affective Intuition	0.770	0.811			Acceptable
Quality of Decision Making	0.513	0.618	0.762		Acceptable
Complex work	0.703	0.709	0.522	0.876	
environment					Acceptable

### Structural Model Assessment

We evaluated our model by executing it in Smart PLS to validate our proposed hypotheses. Initially, collinearity was checked by computing the collinearity statistic, i.e., VIF (variance inflation factor) for each predictor in the structural model. The VIF values were found to be not more than the acceptable threshold of 3 (Hair et al. 2019), indicating that the issue of collinearity did not exist in the present study (table 3).

#### Table 3: Collinearity Statistics

	VIF
Inferential Intuition	2.35
Affective Intuition	1.604
Quality of Decision Making	2.128
Complex work environment	1.729

#### Table 4: PLS path modelling analysis

		Mean of	ST.DE		Result
	<b>Original sample (O)</b>	Sample	V	<b>P-values</b>	
Inferential Intuition -> Quality of Decision					Sign. Effect
Making	0.66	0.658	0.078	0	
Affective Intuition -> Quality of Decision					Sign. Effect
Making	0.572	0.568	0.106	0	
Complex work environment -> Quality of					Sign. Effect
Decision Making	0.288	0.286	0.081	0	
Inferential Intuition x Complex work					Moderation
environment -> Quality of Decision Making	0.196	0.206	0.06	0.001	exists
Affective Intuition x Complex work					No
environment -> Quality of Decision Making	-0.086	-0.064	0.087	0.321	Moderation

The above table shows the p-value for the impact of the Inferential Intuition approach on the Quality of Decision Making, Affective Intuition on the Quality of Decision Making, and Complex environment on the Quality of Decision-Making is p=0.00, i.e., less than 0.05 and the t value being greater than 1.96 at 95% confidence interval level. P value being .66 in the relationship between inferential intuitive approach and quality of the decision made showed a significant positive relationship. Making the best choice or judgment under the current conditions requires inferential intuition, drawing the proper conclusion without all pertinent information. It includes organizing specialized knowledge into patterns that make predictions based on vast information stored in relevant situations, improving the quality of decisions. The data analysis reveals a correlation between an affective, intuitive approach and

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decision quality of 56.2 percent. Affirming the results (Hogarth 2001) said, "Individuals should recognize that our emotions are core elements of our intuitive mechanism and can be used as data." This confirms the literature that affects characteristics have a role in intuitive decision-making, supporting H1 and H2. We also discovered a moderately significant relationship (p-value =.288) when we looked into the impact and relationship between the complex nature of the workplace. Confirming that the nature of the current circumstances plays a significant role when making strategic judgments and hinders the caliber of the decision, supporting H3. The Baron and Kenny (1986) moderation test was used to check the moderating effect of complex organizational environment structure on the relationship between inferential intuition and quality of decision-making, followed by the effective intuition and quality of decisionmaking investigation.

The fact that the beta value decreased from 0.660 to 0.196, with a p-value of 0.001 (less than 0.05), when examining the moderating impact of the complex environment on the relationship between inferential intuition and quality of decision-making, suggests that the complex organizational environment modifies the relationship between employees' inferential intuition and quality of decision making but in a positive way. Additionally, when examining the potential moderating role of a complex organizational environment on the relationship between affective intuition and the quality of decision-making, beta value -0.086, p-value = 0.321, or greater than 0.05, interprets that the relationship between affective intuition and the quality of decision making is negative in nature, indicating that the complexity of the work environment had no moderating effect. Understanding how the mind works cannot be used to extrapolate experiences and emotions. Emotions involve more fundamental processes, such as experiencing fear when fleeing a harmful situation. In light of the moderator role of the complex organizational environment, hypothesis 4 is validated but not hypothesis 5.

# V. DISCUSSIONS

The findings showed a substantial relationship between intuition and the participants' quality of decision-making. It can be concluded that decisions made by employees based on intuition affect the final decision's quality. The requirement produces strong perceived value for the intuitive approach for quick judgments, the pressure to meet complex market demands, and the benefits of using deeply held information. The inferential and affective types of intuition positively correlated with the quality of the individual's decisions. To determine whether the complicated business environment has any bearing on the relationship between the intuition approach and quality of decision outcome, organizational characteristics in the form of the complexity of the business environment were introduced as a moderating variable. As the results showed, the p value showing a relationship between employees' use of inferential intuition when making decisions and the quality of their final decision outcomes was significantly lowered when the working environment was complex. This

suggests that making decisions based solely on inference or experience is difficult when the environment is complex and practical considerations are present. Although the complexity of work surrounding the relationship did not demonstrate such intervention when the affective intuition approach was used, one potential explanation can be the predominance of emotions during decision-making. Understanding how the mind works cannot be used to extrapolate experiences and feelings. Emotions involve more fundamental processes, such as experiencing fear when fleeing a harmful situation. However, this also holds for more advanced moral and cognitive abilities, such as critical thinking and ethical reasoning (Bechara et al. 1997; Gaudine and Thorne 2001). Affective/emotional intuitive responses establish a link with the quality of the chosen course of action. Emotions and feelings stimulate the link between tacit knowledge and the intuitive decision-making process. In other words, this energy enables the manager to identify internal memory, experiences, and implicit and explicit knowledge about the prevailing situation. The manager can then apply this information to the intuitive decision process, ultimately leading to a generally advantageous decision for the organization. How well inferential and holistic intuition are combined to capitalize on their complementary traits may determine how much intuitive disturbances enhance the quality of decisions. When making decisions, the intuition model mainly relies on experience and collected wisdom, but it increases the likelihood of success when there is a time crunch and limited information. However, with such high risk comes a higher probability of success. Decisions involving sizeable resource allocations that take time to implement and impact the firm's chosen competitive space are frequently regarded as having significant strategic implications. However, depending on the circumstances surrounding an intuitive decision, the decision's quality may vary. So why would managers use intuition in strategic decision-making if it poses many dangers and issues? The solution is straightforward: intuition does have that allure. The heroic gambler comes to mind when considering a holistic hunch, but the experienced traveler comes to mind when considering automated competence. Folk stories continue to portray power, elegance, and at least occasional success in intuitive decisions, which adds to their attractiveness in the media and elsewhere. In addition, intuition can hasten decision-making, which is useful in a complicated, dynamic world. Finally, and perhaps most critically, when limited resources, such as managerial time and money for decision support, intuition may be the only strategy available. What is proposed is that, especially when making strategic decisions, executives and managers will employ intuition sparingly and wisely. The situation's practicalities show that intuition has a strong pull. We also understand that intuition can be a useful tool in some decision-making situations.

# > Managerial Implications

Rapid transitions and crises have both positive and negative effects on organizations. We argue that a manager who handles a crisis effectively will succeed more often than fail, but will also be better able to learn from mistakes, move on, and ultimately ensure the survival and viability of the business and its employees. Consider the manager in a situation where they must choose between several options. He or she vaguely "sees" and simultaneously considers all options' key elements and potential outcomes. However, before engaging in any rational decision analysis, they feel bad when a potential downside associated with a particular response option briefly crosses their mind. These frequently unintentional inference- or emotion-based responses support the decision-maker by offering an automated detection system that limits the decision scenario's most crucial elements. Here, we can see the connection between decision-making and intuition. Additionally, the manager's knowledge and their emotional reaction to its applicability in a particular decision situation work together to produce that "gut feeling" about the "right" decision, or what we typically refer to as "intuition." As a result, intuition plays a crucial role in sound decision-making and is essential for survival. A crisis-related decision-making circumstance (for a person or an organization). A complex work environment could further expand intuition's role in decision-making, as we have tried to demonstrate in this article. We contend that emotion is a crucial component when making decisions in a crisis. The result of an intuitive decision-making process will be recorded in a manager's experience and emotional memory. The results of intuitive decision-making processes are important building blocks for creating tacit knowledge, which helps the manager respond appropriately to the next decision event. This study has some applications because decision-makers can be taught to make better intuitive choices (Hogarth 2001). Initially, such intervention could aid decision-makers in comprehending intuition and embracing it as a legitimate brain function, which can be extremely useful in specific situations. Many businesspeople try to hide that they rely on their intuition, while others, posing as lawyers, look for facts to support their decisions and offer a post-hoc justification (Reynolds 2006). This demonstrates the lack of confidence among executive leadership in intuition as a useful method of decisionmaking, which may result from the idea that intuition is not scientific and the paucity of empirical study on the topic (Sadler-Smith 2004). Managers need to become more conscious of how they view the crisis event as a key element of exercising smart decision-making in a crisis. Do people view it as a threat, difficulty, or setback? How does their view affect the decisions they make in the future? If the human resource management is conscious of his or her process, it might be able to reframe (i.e., reinterpret) an incident with a more positive meaning. The existing limitations of management theories and decision-making models should be widened to include these ideas. A more modern theoretical framework is required to explain how decisions should be made in today's rapidly unsteady business settings.

# VI. LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations. Only hospitalitysector employees made up our sample. As a result, caution should be used when generalizing the conclusions. Only one variable that plays an intervening function in the IDV and DV was investigated for the current study. More consideration should be given to the possible relevance of other criteria for relying on intuition, such as the personality of the person making decisions, decision-specific qualities, components of the external business environment that could operate as moderators, and context. Any strategic decision intuition analysis that does not consider these contextual aspects and speculate on its potential effects is likely to present a partial and possibly erroneous picture. This is due to the potential for intuition to be influenced by various circumstances, including decision motive and business performance.

#### VII. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Based on the current study, we propose several areas for future study. First, it would be important to add more predictors of intuition to the theoretical underpinning for intuition. Limitations have suggested that these factors may include, among other things: affect or emotions, gender roles, experience, organisational culture (Hensman and Sadler-Smith 2011), decision complexity (Papadakis, Lioukas, and Chambers 1998), decision type, sense of trust (Sadler-Smith 2004)), cognitive style, mood states, decision structure (Dane and Pratt 2007). For instance, environmental unrest or instability can be considered moderators (Dayan and Elbanna 2011; Fredrickson and Iaquinto 1989; Khatri and Ng 2000). Second, while examining the relationship between intuition and performance, researchers need to take a variety of factors into consideration at different levels. The effectiveness of decisions as they are executed at the organizational, industry, and national or regional levels, as well as the size of organizations and the types of industries at each level, would also be included. In order to determine the exact causal relationships between antecedents and decision intuition, a longitudinal research design must be adopted (Dean Jr and Sharfman 1996). For example, our cross-sectional/survey study would be less confined by its reliance on management's responses and its use of post-hoc reasoning to support its intuitions with a longitudinal design.

#### ➢ Declaration

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