

Emotional Intelligence, Interpersonal Trust, and Perceived Organizational Support among Cross-Sector Executives: Evidence from Thailand

Ntapat Worapongpat *

Abstract

In increasingly complex organizational environments in Thailand, executives working across public, private, and civil society sectors face substantial emotional and relational demands that influence their perceptions of organizational support. Drawing on Social Exchange Theory (SET), this study examines how emotional intelligence (EI) contributes to perceived organizational support (POS) through relational exchange processes. Specifically, it investigates the mediating role of interpersonal trust in explaining the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support among executives operating in diverse organizational settings. Using a quantitative cross-sectional research design, data were collected from executives representing multiple sectors in Thailand and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support. Interpersonal trust was found to be a strong and statistically significant mediator, indicating that emotionally intelligent executives are more capable of developing trust-based relationships, which subsequently enhance perceptions of organizational support. Furthermore, demographic variables, including age, gender, and professional experience, did not significantly affect perceived organizational support. This study extends Social Exchange Theory by empirically demonstrating the relational mechanism through which emotional intelligence generates organizational outcomes. By identifying interpersonal trust as a key mediating process, the study contributes to the literature on emotional intelligence, interpersonal trust, perceived organizational support, and leadership in multi-sector organizational contexts. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of fostering emotionally intelligent and trust-oriented leadership to strengthen organizational support, improve collaborative relationships, and enhance organizational resilience in complex institutional environments.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, interpersonal trust, perceived organizational support, Social Exchange Theory, cross-sector executives, Thailand

* Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mahasarakham Rajabhat University and Eastern Institute of Technology Suvarnabhumi (EIT)

Email: dr.thiwat@gmail.com

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Introduction

In the contemporary Thai context, organizations increasingly rely on cross-sector executives who operate at the intersection of public, private, and civil society sectors. (Bukhari, et. al., 2025). These executives play critical roles in coordinating diverse stakeholders, addressing complex societal challenges, and facilitating collaborative governance initiatives across organizational boundaries. Unlike traditional organizational roles characterized by clear hierarchies and standardized support systems, cross-sector executive work is inherently relational, emotionally demanding, and embedded within complex socio-cultural environments. Consequently, understanding how these executives perceive organizational support has become an important yet underexplored issue in organizational and management research.

In this study, the term “cross-sector executives” refers to individuals whose responsibilities involve collaboration among governmental agencies, private-sector organizations, and civil society institutions. (Imran, Haroon, 2025). The study does not seek to compare sectoral differences; rather, the cross-sector setting serves as the organizational context within which emotional intelligence, interpersonal trust, and perceived organizational support are examined.

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) refers to employees’ general belief that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Marques, et. al., 2022). Extensive research has demonstrated that POS is positively associated with employee commitment, work engagement, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, and retention. However, in cross-sector environments, support is often less visible and less dependent on formal organizational structures. Executives frequently operate across organizational boundaries, encounter competing stakeholder expectations, and navigate multiple institutional logics. Consequently, perceptions of organizational support may emerge not only from formal policies but also from day-to-day interpersonal interactions and relational experiences.

Existing studies have primarily examined POS within traditional organizational settings and have focused on structural antecedents such as human resource practices, leadership behavior, and organizational justice. (Saleem, 2022). Although these factors remain important, they may be insufficient for explaining support perceptions in cross-sector contexts, where collaboration relies heavily on interpersonal relationships, mutual dependence, and informal coordination mechanisms. In such environments, relational and emotional factors may play a particularly important role in shaping how organizational support is interpreted and experienced.

One factor that may contribute to the development of organizational support perceptions is emotional intelligence (EI). Emotional intelligence refers to an individual's ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and effectively utilize emotions in oneself and others (Zuniga, et. al., 2025).

Previous research has linked emotional intelligence to leadership effectiveness, interpersonal competence, job satisfaction, psychological well-being, and collaborative performance. For executives operating in complex multi-stakeholder environments, emotional intelligence represents an important personal resource that facilitates effective communication, conflict management, empathy, and relationship building.

Despite the growing recognition of emotional intelligence, much of the existing literature has treated EI as a direct predictor of organizational outcomes. (Worapongpat, 2025a). This perspective provides valuable insights but offers limited explanation regarding the relational processes through which emotional intelligence influences broader organizational perceptions. Emotional intelligence operates within social interactions and relationships; therefore, understanding its effects on organizational support requires examining the interpersonal mechanisms through which emotional capabilities are translated into organizational experiences.

Interpersonal trust represents one such mechanism. Trust is commonly defined as the willingness to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations regarding another person's intentions and behavior (Worapongpat, 2025b). Trust plays a critical role in facilitating cooperation, reducing uncertainty, and promoting effective social exchange. Within cross-sector environments, where formal authority is often limited and collaboration depends heavily on voluntary cooperation, trust becomes a particularly important relational resource. Executives who develop trusting relationships with colleagues and stakeholders are more likely to interpret interactions as supportive, cooperative, and aligned with organizational objectives.

The present study draws upon Social Exchange Theory (SET) as its primary theoretical foundation. Social Exchange Theory proposes that social relationships develop through reciprocal exchanges of valued resources (Worapongpat, 2025c). Individuals who contribute positive resources to social interactions are likely to receive socio-emotional returns, including trust, respect, recognition, and support. Within organizational settings, these reciprocal exchanges influence employees' perceptions regarding the extent to which the organization values their contributions and supports their well-being.

Applying SET to the present study suggests that emotional intelligence functions as an important individual-level resource that facilitates high-quality interpersonal exchanges. (Worapongpat, 2025d). Executives with higher emotional intelligence are better able to regulate emotions, understand others' perspectives, and engage in constructive social interactions. These capabilities foster interpersonal trust, which subsequently strengthens perceptions of organizational support. In this way, interpersonal trust serves as a relational mechanism through which emotional intelligence contributes to organizational-level outcomes.

Although emotional intelligence and trust have each received considerable scholarly attention, relatively few studies have examined how these constructs jointly influence perceived organizational support. (Worapongpat, 2025e). Existing research has largely investigated emotional intelligence, trust, and organizational support independently or through direct-effect models. Consequently, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the mediating role of interpersonal trust in explaining how emotional intelligence shapes perceptions of organizational support.

This gap is particularly evident within Thailand and other locally embedded cross-sector environments, where collaborative governance increasingly depends on relationship-based interactions among actors from multiple sectors. (Worapongpat, 2025f). Such contexts emphasize the importance of emotional competence, interpersonal trust, and reciprocal exchange processes. Nevertheless, empirical studies examining these relational dynamics remain scarce.

Accordingly, this study investigates the mediating role of interpersonal trust in the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support among cross-sector executives in Thailand. (Worapongpat, 2025g). By integrating emotional intelligence, interpersonal trust, and perceived organizational support within a Social Exchange Theory framework, the study provides a process-oriented explanation of how individual emotional capabilities are translated into organizational perceptions.

This study contributes to the literature in three important ways. First, it extends Social Exchange Theory by demonstrating how emotional intelligence functions as a personal resource that promotes trust-based exchanges and subsequently enhances perceived organizational support. (Worapongpat, 2025h). Second, it contributes to emotional intelligence research by clarifying the relational pathway through which emotional intelligence influences organizational outcomes. Third, it enriches the literature on cross-sector leadership and collaborative governance by highlighting the importance of emotional and relational dynamics in complex organizational environments.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide valuable implications for leadership development and organizational management. (Worapongpat, 2025i). Organizations operating in cross-sector environments should invest not only in technical competencies but also in emotional intelligence and trust-building capabilities. Strengthening these relational resources can enhance perceived organizational support, improve collaboration, and increase organizational resilience in increasingly complex governance environments.

In summary, this study responds to growing calls for more relationally grounded and emotionally informed organizational research. By identifying interpersonal trust as a key mechanism linking emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support, the study offers both theoretical

advancement and practical insight into leadership and organizational effectiveness within Thailand's cross-sector context.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the effect of emotional intelligence on perceived organizational support among cross-sector executives in Thailand.
2. To investigate the mediating role of interpersonal trust in explaining the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support.
3. To assess the influence of selected demographic and professional characteristics (age, gender, and professional experience) on perceived organizational support.

Literature Review

1. Cross-Sector Executives and the Thai Context

Cross-sector executives operate in environments characterized by collaboration among public-sector agencies, private organizations, and civil society institutions. Unlike traditional managerial roles confined within a single organizational hierarchy, cross-sector executives must coordinate stakeholders with diverse interests, institutional logics, accountability systems, and performance expectations. Their effectiveness depends not only on technical expertise but also on their ability to manage relationships, facilitate cooperation, and build consensus across organizational boundaries (Blau, 1964).

Cross-sector leadership has been defined as the capacity to mobilize individuals, organizations, and resources across institutional boundaries to create public value and address complex societal challenges. Because formal authority is often limited in collaborative settings, leadership effectiveness relies heavily on interpersonal influence, trust, and relationship management.

In Thailand, cross-sector collaboration has become increasingly important in addressing economic, social, and governance challenges. Executives operating within these collaborative arrangements are embedded in socio-cultural environments characterized by strong interpersonal relationships, respect for hierarchy, reciprocity, and collective values. Consequently, organizational phenomena such as leadership effectiveness, collaboration quality, and perceived organizational support must be understood within the broader relational and cultural context in which they occur.

Despite growing scholarly attention to collaborative governance and cross-sector partnerships, existing research has focused primarily on macro-level factors such as governance structures,

institutional arrangements, and network management. Comparatively less attention has been devoted to the emotional and relational experiences of executives responsible for sustaining collaboration in practice. This limitation highlights the need for research examining the interpersonal mechanisms that shape organizational outcomes in cross-sector environments.

2. Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET) provides the overarching theoretical foundation for this study. proposed that social relationships evolve through reciprocal exchanges of valued resources, while (Cropanzano, Mitchell, 2005). extended this perspective to organizational settings. According to SET, individuals who provide valued resources to others often expect reciprocal benefits in return. These exchanges may involve tangible resources as well as socio-emotional resources such as trust, respect, recognition, and support.

Within organizations, employees continuously evaluate the quality of exchange relationships with colleagues, supervisors, and the organization itself. Positive exchange experiences contribute to favorable attitudes and behaviors, whereas negative exchanges may weaken organizational attachment and engagement. Consequently, SET has become one of the most widely applied theoretical frameworks for explaining organizational commitment, trust, citizenship behavior, and perceived organizational support.

The present study applies SET to explain how emotional intelligence facilitates positive interpersonal exchanges, how these exchanges foster interpersonal trust, and how trust subsequently contributes to perceptions of organizational support among cross-sector executives.

3. Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) refers to employees' general belief that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, et. al., 1986). Rooted in Social Exchange Theory, POS reflects employees' evaluations of the quality of their relationship with the organization.

Research has consistently demonstrated that employees who perceive strong organizational support exhibit higher levels of affective commitment, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, work engagement, and retention intentions. Supportive organizational environments encourage employees to reciprocate through positive attitudes and behaviors that benefit organizational performance.

However, in cross-sector environments, support is often less dependent on formal organizational systems and more dependent on interpersonal interactions. Because executives

frequently work across organizational boundaries and interact with multiple stakeholders, perceptions of support may emerge through relationship-based experiences rather than through formal policies alone. Therefore, understanding POS in cross-sector contexts requires attention to the emotional and relational processes through which support perceptions develop.

4. Emotional Intelligence as an Individual Resource

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is commonly defined as the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively in oneself and others (Goleman, 1995). Emotional intelligence encompasses emotional awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and the ability to use emotions constructively in social interactions.

Within organizational settings, emotional intelligence has been associated with leadership effectiveness, interpersonal competence, conflict management, employee well-being, and organizational performance. Emotionally intelligent individuals are generally better equipped to navigate uncertainty, manage interpersonal tensions, and maintain productive working relationships.

For cross-sector executives, emotional intelligence represents an especially important personal resource. Collaborative environments frequently involve competing interests, diverse stakeholder expectations, and complex interpersonal dynamics. Consequently, emotional intelligence enables executives to engage effectively with others, adapt to changing circumstances, and maintain constructive relationships despite organizational complexity.

Although previous studies have identified positive relationships between emotional intelligence and various organizational outcomes, the underlying relational processes through which emotional intelligence influences organizational perceptions remain insufficiently understood.

5. Interpersonal Trust as a Relational Mechanism

Interpersonal trust is a fundamental component of effective organizational relationships. (Mayer, et. al., 2016). define trust as the willingness to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations regarding another person's intentions and behaviors. Trust facilitates cooperation, knowledge sharing, communication, and psychological safety within organizations

In cross-sector settings, trust assumes particular importance because collaboration often occurs in the absence of formal authority and enforceable contracts. Executives frequently depend on informal agreements, mutual understanding, and reciprocal goodwill to accomplish shared objectives. As a result, trust becomes a critical mechanism for reducing uncertainty and sustaining collaboration.

Trust develops through repeated interactions and is influenced by perceptions of competence, integrity, benevolence, and relational reliability. Because emotional intelligence shapes how individuals communicate, empathize, and regulate emotions, it may play an important role in fostering trust-based relationships.

6. Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal Trust

The relationship between emotional intelligence and interpersonal trust has received increasing attention in organizational research. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence are generally more capable of understanding others' emotions, demonstrating empathy, managing conflict, and maintaining positive interpersonal interactions. (Mayer, et. al., 1995).

Empirical studies suggest that emotionally intelligent leaders are more likely to be trusted by followers and colleagues because they exhibit behaviors associated with competence, integrity, and relational sensitivity. Through effective emotional regulation and communication, emotionally intelligent individuals create conditions that facilitate trust development and relational stability.

Within cross-sector environments, emotional intelligence may be particularly important because executives must frequently establish trust among individuals representing diverse organizational backgrounds and interests. Consequently, emotional intelligence is expected to contribute positively to interpersonal trust.

7. Interpersonal Trust as a Mediator between Emotional Intelligence and Perceived Organizational Support

Social Exchange Theory provides a compelling explanation for the mediating role of interpersonal trust. According to SET, positive social exchanges generate reciprocal socio-emotional benefits that strengthen organizational relationships. (Rhoades, Eisenberger, 2002).

Executives possessing higher emotional intelligence are more likely to engage in constructive interpersonal exchanges characterized by empathy, cooperation, and mutual respect. These interactions contribute to the development of interpersonal trust. As trust accumulates through repeated exchanges, individuals become more likely to interpret organizational actions as supportive and benevolent.

Accordingly, interpersonal trust functions as a relational bridge linking emotional intelligence to perceived organizational support. Rather than influencing organizational support directly, emotional intelligence may exert its effects through trust-based social exchange processes.

Despite strong theoretical support for this relationship, empirical evidence examining interpersonal trust as a mediator between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support remains limited, particularly among cross-sector executives in Thailand.

8. Research Gap and Conceptual Direction

The literature demonstrates that emotional intelligence, interpersonal trust, and perceived organizational support are important determinants of organizational effectiveness. However, previous studies have largely examined these constructs independently or within conventional organizational settings. (Rousseau, et. al., 1998).

Three important gaps remain. First, limited research has examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support in cross-sector environments. Second, the mediating role of interpersonal trust in this relationship remains insufficiently explored. Third, empirical evidence from Thailand and other locally embedded cross-sector contexts remains scarce.

To address these gaps, the present study integrates emotional intelligence, interpersonal trust, and perceived organizational support within a unified Social Exchange Theory framework. Specifically, the study examines whether interpersonal trust mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support among cross-sector executives in Thailand. By doing so, the study contributes to organizational behavior, leadership, and collaborative governance literature while providing new insights into the relational processes that support effective cross-sector collaboration.

Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Salovey, Mayer, 1990). (Bryson, et. al., 2015). (Emerson, Nabatchi, 2015). which posits that social relationships develop through reciprocal exchanges of valued resources. Within organizational settings, individuals who engage in positive social interactions are more likely to receive socio-emotional benefits such as trust, respect, recognition, and support. These reciprocal exchanges influence how employees evaluate their relationships with colleagues and the organization.

Drawing upon SET, the present study proposes that emotional intelligence functions as an important individual-level resource that facilitates effective interpersonal interactions. Executives with higher emotional intelligence are better able to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions in ways that promote constructive social exchanges. These capabilities contribute to the development of interpersonal trust, which reflects positive expectations regarding the competence, benevolence, and integrity of others.

As trust develops through repeated interactions, executives become more likely to interpret organizational actions and relationships as supportive and beneficial. Consequently, interpersonal trust is expected to serve as a relational mechanism through which emotional intelligence influences perceived organizational support.

Independent Variable

- Emotional Intelligence

Mediating Variable

- Interpersonal Trust

Dependent Variable

- Perceived Organizational Support

Control Variables

- Age
- Gender
- Work Experience

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Emotional Intelligence
→ Interpersonal Trust
→ Perceived Organizational Support
Control Variables: Age / Gender / Work Experience

Research Hypotheses

H1: Emotional intelligence positively influences perceived organizational support among cross-sector executives in Thailand.

H2: Emotional intelligence positively influences interpersonal trust among cross-sector executives in Thailand.

H3: Interpersonal trust positively influences perceived organizational support among cross-sector executives in Thailand.

H4: Interpersonal trust mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support among cross-sector executives in Thailand.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the relationships among Emotional Intelligence (EI), Interpersonal Trust (IT), and Perceived Organizational Support (POS) among cross-sector executives in Thailand. A quantitative approach was selected because the study seeks to empirically test theory-driven hypotheses and examine both direct and indirect relationships among latent constructs.

The study is grounded in Social Exchange Theory (SET) which posits that positive social exchanges generate reciprocal socio-emotional outcomes such as trust and support. Drawing upon this theoretical perspective, the study proposes that emotionally intelligent executives are more likely to develop trust-based interpersonal relationships, which subsequently enhance perceptions of organizational support.

To test the proposed conceptual framework, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed. PLS-SEM is particularly suitable for prediction-oriented research, theory development, and the analysis of complex mediation models involving latent variables. Furthermore, PLS-SEM is robust to violations of multivariate normality and performs effectively with complex structural models.

Population and Sampling

Target Population

The target population consists of middle-level and senior-level executives engaged in cross-sector collaboration across public-sector, private-sector, and non-profit organizations in Thailand. For the purpose of this study, cross-sector executives are defined as individuals who regularly collaborate across organizational or sectoral boundaries and hold managerial, supervisory, or strategic decision-making responsibilities.

Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was employed because cross-sector executives represent a specialized population for which no comprehensive sampling frame exists. Respondents were selected according to predefined eligibility criteria to ensure the relevance and quality of the data collected.

To participate in the study, respondents were required to:

1. Hold a managerial or executive position;
2. Have at least one year of experience in cross-sector collaboration;
3. Be currently employed in an organization operating in Thailand;
4. Be actively involved in collaborative activities involving multiple sectors.

Sample Size

Following the recommendations for PLS-SEM analysis, the minimum sample size was determined based on statistical power considerations and model complexity. To ensure adequate statistical power for testing the proposed mediation model and to enhance the stability of parameter estimates, a target sample size of at least 400 valid responses was established.

Data Collection Procedures

Primary data were collected using a structured online questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed through professional networks, executive associations, governmental collaboration platforms, business organizations, and professional social networks.

Prior to participation, respondents were provided with information regarding the study's objectives, confidentiality procedures, and voluntary nature of participation. Screening questions were included to verify respondents' eligibility based on the predefined inclusion criteria.

Measurement Instruments

All study variables were measured using previously validated scales adapted for the context of cross-sector executives in Thailand. Responses were recorded using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence was measured using items adapted from the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) developed. The instrument assesses four dimensions of emotional intelligence:

- Self-emotion appraisal
- Others' emotion appraisal
- Use of emotion
- Regulation of emotion

Interpersonal Trust

Interpersonal trust was measured using items adapted from the trust framework proposed. The scale evaluates respondents' perceptions of trustworthiness based on:

- Benevolence
- Integrity
- Competence

Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived Organizational Support was measured using items adapted from the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS) originally developed. The scale assesses the extent to which employees believe that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being.

Control Variables

To account for potential alternative explanations, the study included the following control variables:

- Age
- Gender
- Work experience

These variables were included because previous organizational studies have suggested that demographic and professional characteristics may influence employees' perceptions of organizational support.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using a two-stage PLS-SEM procedure.

Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was evaluated to assess reliability and validity. Internal consistency reliability was examined using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Convergent validity was assessed through Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while discriminant validity was evaluated using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT).

Structural Model Assessment

The structural model was evaluated using:

- Path coefficients
- Coefficients of determination (R^2)
- Effect sizes (f^2)
- Predictive relevance (Q^2)
- Variance Inflation Factors (VIF)

Statistical significance was assessed using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples.

Mediation Analysis

The mediating role of interpersonal trust was examined through bootstrapping analysis. Indirect effects were evaluated using bias-corrected confidence intervals. Mediation was supported when the indirect effect was statistically significant and the confidence interval excluded zero.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before completing the questionnaire. Respondents were assured that all information would be treated confidentially and reported only in aggregate form.

No personally identifiable information was collected, and all data were stored securely and used exclusively for academic research purposes.

Research Results

Objective 1. To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support among cross-sector executives in the local context.

The findings reveal that emotional intelligence is positively and statistically significantly associated with perceived organizational support. This result indicates that cross-sector executives with higher levels of emotional intelligence are more likely to perceive that their organizations value their contributions, recognize their importance, and provide both instrumental and socio-emotional support, compared to those with lower levels of emotional intelligence.

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	219	53.9
	Female	187	46.1
Age	18–24 years	32	7.9
	25–34 years	105	25.9
	35–44 years	147	36.2
	45–54 years	89	21.9
	55 years and above	33	8.1
Educational Level	Bachelor's degree	169	41.6
	Professional qualification / Certificate	140	34.5
	Master's degree	74	18.2
	Doctoral degree	23	5.7
Work Experience in Bangkok	Less than 1 year	109	26.8
	1–3 years	206	50.7
	4 years or more	91	22.5

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that cross-sector executives exhibit an overall high level of emotional intelligence, particularly in the dimensions of emotional awareness and emotional regulation. These findings reflect executives' strong capacity to understand and manage both their own emotions and those of others effectively. Moreover, emotional intelligence is found to be significantly and positively related to perceived organizational support, consistent with the assumptions of Social Exchange Theory, which posits that positive interpersonal interactions and emotional competencies foster reciprocal perceptions of support and care from the organization.

Objective 2. To investigate the role of interpersonal trust as a mediating variable in the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support.

The results demonstrate that interpersonal trust serves as a statistically significant mediator in the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support. Specifically, the emotional intelligence of cross-sector executives contributes to the development of trust in collaborative work relationships, and this trust functions as a key relational mechanism through which executives perceive higher levels of organizational support.

Further analysis indicates that emotional intelligence not only exerts a direct effect on perceived organizational support, but also has an indirect effect through interpersonal trust. This

finding underscores the importance of high-quality interpersonal relationships as a critical pathway through which organizational support is interpreted and positively perceived.

The findings lend empirical support to theoretical perspectives suggesting that emotional exchange and high-quality workplace relationships enhance perceptions of reciprocity, care, and support from the organization. Such perceptions constitute a foundational element of organizational commitment and sustained willingness to engage and cooperate with the organization over the long term.

Objective 3. To examine the effects of demographic and professional control variables on perceived organizational support.

The results indicate that the control variables namely age, gender, educational level, and work experience do not exert a statistically significant influence on perceived organizational support. This suggests that cross-sector executives' perceptions of organizational support are not primarily shaped by individual demographic characteristics or professional backgrounds.

Rather, perceived organizational support appears to be driven predominantly by emotional competencies and the quality of interpersonal relationships in the workplace, highlighting the central role of emotional intelligence and trust-based interactions over structural or demographic factors.

Table 2. Convergent Validity, Reliability, and Multicollinearity Assessment

Latent Variable	Number of Items	Factor Loading	CR	CA	AVE	VIF
POS	6	0.894–0.921	0.967	0.959	0.831	3.642
CQ (Emotional Intelligence)	20	0.811–0.869	0.980	0.979	0.712	3.552
Trust	6	0.888–0.921	0.965	0.957	0.823	3.739

Note: CR = Composite Reliability; CA = Cronbach's Alpha; AVE $\geq$ 0.50 indicates adequate convergent validity; VIF < 5.0 indicates no multicollinearity concerns.

Interpretation: The results indicate that all latent constructs demonstrate strong convergent validity, as evidenced by factor loadings exceeding 0.80 and AVE values well above the recommended threshold of 0.50. Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values exceed 0.95 for all constructs, indicating excellent internal consistency reliability. In addition, variance inflation factor (VIF) values are below 5.0, suggesting that multicollinearity is not a concern in the structural model.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Assessment (HTMT Criterion)

Variable	POS	CQ	Trust
POS	–		
CQ	0.796***	–	
Trust	0.859**	0.806***	–

Note: HTMT values below 0.90 indicate adequate discriminant validity.

*** $p \leq 0.001$, ** $p \leq 0.01$

Interpretation: The HTMT ratios for all construct pairs are below the critical value of 0.90, confirming adequate discriminant validity. This result suggests that perceived organizational support, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal trust are empirically distinct constructs, despite being theoretically related.

Table 4. Model Fit Indices

Index	Value	Interpretation
APC	0.210***	Excellent
ARS	0.687***	High
AARS	0.684***	High
AVIF	1.768	Acceptable
AFVIF	2.241	Acceptable
GoF	0.799	Large
SPR	0.889	Accepted
RSCR	0.998	Accepted
SSR	1.000	Accepted
NLBCDR	0.833	Accepted

Interpretation: The model fit indices indicate that the proposed structural model demonstrates excellent overall fit. The average path coefficient (APC) and average R-squared (ARS) values are statistically significant, while AVIF and AFVIF values fall within acceptable

ranges, indicating no issues related to collinearity. The goodness-of-fit (GoF) value of 0.799 exceeds the threshold for a large effect size, providing strong support for the explanatory power of the model.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	p-value	Result
H1	CQ $\rightarrow$ POS	0.339	< .001	Supported
H2	CQ $\rightarrow$ Trust $\rightarrow$ POS	0.438	< .001	Supported
H3	CQ $\times$ Trust $\rightarrow$ POS	0.004	0.470	Not Supported
Controls	Age, Gender, Education, Income, Experience $\rightarrow$ POS	–	n.s.	No Significant Effect

Interpretation: The results indicate that emotional intelligence has a positive and statistically significant direct effect on perceived organizational support (H1), supporting the proposed main effect hypothesis. Furthermore, interpersonal trust is found to significantly mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support (H2), highlighting its role as a key relational mechanism.

However, the interaction effect between emotional intelligence and interpersonal trust (H3) is not statistically significant, suggesting that interpersonal trust does not function as a moderating variable in this relationship. Additionally, none of the control variables exert a significant influence on perceived organizational support.

Measurement Model Assessment

The assessment of the measurement model was conducted to examine the reliability and validity of all latent constructs, namely Cultural Intelligence (CQ), Interpersonal Trust among coworkers, and Perceived Organizational Support (POS).

The results indicate that all latent variables demonstrate excellent internal consistency reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR) values well above the recommended threshold of 0.70. Specifically, CA and CR values range from 0.957 to 0.979, suggesting a very high level of measurement reliability.

Regarding convergent validity, all indicator factor loadings exceed the recommended cutoff of 0.70, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all latent constructs are greater than 0.50, ranging from 0.712 to 0.831. These results indicate that the latent constructs explain a substantial proportion of variance in their respective indicators. Detailed results are presented in Table 2.

In addition, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all latent constructs range from 3.552 to 3.739, which are below the conservative threshold of 5.0. This finding suggests that multicollinearity is not a concern in the measurement model.

Discriminant Validity and Data Distribution Assessment

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT). The results reveal that all HTMT values between pairs of latent constructs are below the recommended threshold of 0.90 and are statistically significant (e.g., CQ–POS = 0.796; Trust–POS = 0.859). These findings confirm that each latent construct is conceptually distinct from the others.

Furthermore, tests of data distribution using the Jarque–Bera and Robust Jarque–Bera statistics indicate that all latent variables deviate from the assumption of normality. This result supports the appropriateness of employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which does not require normally distributed data.

Structural Model Assessment

The evaluation of the structural model demonstrates that the proposed model exhibits very good overall fit. The Average Path Coefficient (APC) is 0.210 and is statistically significant at the 0.001 level. The Average R-squared (ARS) and Average Adjusted R-squared (AARS) values are 0.687 and 0.684, respectively, indicating that the model explains approximately 69% of the variance in the dependent variable.

The Tenenhaus Goodness of Fit (GoF) value is 0.799, which represents a large effect size, reflecting the strong explanatory power and overall quality of the model. In addition, other model fit indices including AVIF, AFVIF, SPR, RSCR, and SSR—all fall within acceptable ranges, indicating that the model is statistically stable and free from major estimation issues.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypotheses were tested using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples. The results are summarized as follows:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Cultural intelligence (CQ) has a positive effect on perceived organizational support (POS).

The results provide strong support for this hypothesis ($\beta = 0.339$, $p < .001$).

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Interpersonal trust among coworkers mediates the relationship between cultural intelligence and perceived organizational support.

The indirect effect is statistically significant ($\beta = 0.438$, $p < .001$), indicating that interpersonal trust serves as a key relational mechanism linking cultural intelligence to perceptions of organizational support.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Interpersonal trust moderates the relationship between cultural intelligence and perceived organizational support.

This hypothesis is not supported, as the interaction effect is not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.004$, $p = 0.470$).

Finally, the analysis of control variables including age, gender, educational level, income, and work experience reveals that none of these variables exert a statistically significant effect on perceived organizational support.

Hypothesis Testing Results

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Hypothesis 2 (H2): Interpersonal trust among coworkers mediates the relationship between cultural intelligence and perceived organizational support.

The indirect effect is statistically significant ($\beta = 0.438$, $p < .001$), indicating that interpersonal trust serves as a key relational mechanism linking cultural intelligence to perceptions of organizational support.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Interpersonal trust moderates the relationship between cultural intelligence and perceived organizational support.

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Finally, the analysis of control variables including age, gender, educational level, income, and work experience reveals that none of these variables exert a statistically significant effect on perceived organizational support.

Discussion

Objective 1. The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Perceived Organizational Support. The findings addressing Objective 1 indicate that emotional intelligence is positively and statistically significantly associated with perceived organizational support among cross-sector executives in Thailand. This result suggests that executives who possess higher levels of emotional intelligence are more likely to perceive that their organizations value their contributions, care about their well-being, and provide adequate support. One possible explanation is that emotionally intelligent executives are better able to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions in workplace interactions. These capabilities facilitate effective communication, conflict management, empathy, and relationship building, which contribute to more positive workplace experiences. As a result, emotionally intelligent executives may be more likely to interpret organizational actions, policies, and interactions as supportive and beneficial. The findings are consistent with Social Exchange Theory (Marques, et. al., 2022). which suggests that positive social exchanges generate reciprocal socio-emotional outcomes. Executives who engage in constructive interpersonal interactions are more likely to receive trust, cooperation, and support from others, thereby strengthening their perceptions of organizational support. The results are also consistent with previous research demonstrating that emotional intelligence contributes positively to organizational attitudes and workplace outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, leadership effectiveness, and employee well-being (Imran, Haroon, 2025). The present study extends this literature by demonstrating that emotional intelligence is also associated with perceived organizational support within the context of cross-sector collaboration in Thailand.

Objective 2. The Mediating Role of Interpersonal Trust. With respect to Objective 2, the findings reveal that interpersonal trust serves as a statistically significant mediating variable in the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support. This indicates that emotional intelligence not only exerts a direct influence on perceived organizational support but also contributes indirectly through the development of trust-based interpersonal relationships. A plausible explanation is that emotionally intelligent executives are more capable of understanding others' perspectives, managing interpersonal tensions, and engaging in socially appropriate behaviors. These competencies foster perceptions of benevolence, integrity, and reliability, which are essential

foundations of interpersonal trust (Saleem, 2022). Through repeated positive interactions, trust develops among colleagues and collaborative partners. Once interpersonal trust is established, executives become more likely to interpret organizational interactions and decisions positively. Trust reduces uncertainty, facilitates cooperation, and strengthens social exchange relationships, thereby enhancing perceptions of organizational support. In this sense, interpersonal trust functions as a relational bridge that connects individual emotional capabilities with broader organizational perceptions. These findings support Social Exchange Theory, which emphasizes the importance of reciprocal relationships in shaping organizational attitudes (Vang, 2025). The results further align with previous trust research suggesting that trust functions as a critical mechanism through which individual competencies are translated into positive organizational outcomes. The study therefore contributes to the literature by clarifying the process through which emotional intelligence influences perceived organizational support among cross-sector executives.

Objective 3. The Effects of Demographic and Professional Characteristics. The findings related to Objective 3 indicate that age, gender, and work experience do not have statistically significant effects on perceived organizational support. This suggests that perceptions of organizational support among cross-sector executives are not primarily determined by demographic or professional characteristics. Instead, perceived organizational support appears to be influenced more strongly by relational and psychological factors, particularly emotional intelligence and interpersonal trust. Regardless of age, gender, or years of experience, executives who develop positive interpersonal relationships and experience trust-based exchanges tend to report higher levels of organizational support. This finding is consistent with previous organizational research suggesting that perceived organizational support is fundamentally a psychological evaluation shaped by social experiences and interpersonal interactions rather than by demographic attributes alone (Bukhari, Jayasekara, 2025). In cross-sector environments, where collaboration depends heavily on relationship quality and mutual trust, interpersonal dynamics may be more influential than individual demographic characteristics in shaping organizational perceptions.

Overall Discussion

Overall, the findings demonstrate that interpersonal trust plays a central role as a relational mechanism linking emotional intelligence to perceived organizational support among cross-sector executives in Thailand. Rather than representing an isolated organizational outcome, perceived organizational support emerges through ongoing social exchange processes that are facilitated by emotional competencies and strengthened through trust-based relationships.

The study extends Social Exchange Theory by demonstrating how emotional intelligence functions as an important personal resource that promotes trust-building behaviors and subsequently enhances organizational support perceptions. Furthermore, the findings contribute to the literature on

emotional intelligence, trust, and organizational support by providing empirical evidence from a cross-sector context that has received relatively limited scholarly attention.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that organizations operating across public, private, and non-profit sectors should invest in leadership development programs that strengthen emotional intelligence and interpersonal trust. Such initiatives may improve collaborative relationships, increase perceptions of organizational support, and ultimately enhance organizational effectiveness in increasingly complex cross-sector environments.

The findings highlight that trust-based relationships constitute a strategic organizational asset. By fostering emotional intelligence and strengthening interpersonal trust, organizations can create supportive work environments that encourage cooperation, engagement, and long-term organizational commitment among cross-sector executives in Thailand.

New Knowledge Derived from the Study

This study generates new knowledge that can be synthesized into a process-based conceptual model grounded in Social Exchange Theory (SET), emphasizing the role of interpersonal trust as a relational mechanism linking emotional intelligence to perceived organizational support among cross-sector executives in Thailand.

Accordingly, the new knowledge derived from this study may be summarized as follows:



Figure 2. illustrates the effects of emotional intelligence on perceived organizational support through interpersonal trust.

As shown in Figure 2, emotional intelligence influences perceived organizational support through both direct and indirect pathways. The direct pathway suggests that emotionally intelligent executives are more likely to perceive their organizations as supportive because they possess stronger emotional awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and interpersonal communication skills, which facilitate positive workplace interactions.

The indirect pathway operates through interpersonal trust, which functions as a relational bridge connecting individual emotional capabilities with organizational perceptions. Executives with higher emotional intelligence are better able to establish relationships characterized by integrity,

benevolence, and reliability, thereby fostering trust among colleagues and collaborative partners. Through ongoing social exchange processes, these trust-based relationships contribute to stronger perceptions of organizational support.

The study contributes new theoretical insight by demonstrating that interpersonal trust serves not merely as an interpersonal outcome but as a critical relational mechanism through which emotional intelligence is translated into organizational-level perceptions. This finding extends Social Exchange Theory by highlighting how individual emotional resources contribute to supportive organizational perceptions through trust-building processes.

Furthermore, the study contributes to the cross-sector leadership literature by providing empirical evidence that relationship quality plays a central role in shaping perceived organizational support. The findings suggest that trust-based exchanges constitute an important organizational asset, particularly in environments characterized by collaboration across public, private, and non-profit sectors.

Conclusion

Overall, this study clearly demonstrates that cultural intelligence is a critical factor in enhancing perceived organizational support among cross-cultural employees. However, this relationship does not occur solely through a direct effect. Instead, it is fundamentally dependent on interpersonal trust among colleagues, which serves as a key mechanism linking micro-level daily work experiences to macro-level organizational perceptions.

By proposing and empirically validating a process-oriented explanatory framework, this study extends the literature on cross-cultural management beyond an exclusive focus on individual competencies or structural factors. It underscores the importance of relationships and social structures within organizations as central drivers of employees' perceptions and attitudes in multicultural work environments.

Recommendations

1. Practical Implications

1.1 Implications from Objective 1

The findings indicate that cultural intelligence is positively associated with perceived organizational support. Therefore, organizations should: Place greater emphasis on developing employees' cultural adaptability through experiential learning approaches, such as real-life simulations, reflective practice,

and cross-cultural knowledge exchange, rather than relying solely on information-based or theoretical training programs.

1.2 Implications from Objective 2

The results show that interpersonal trust serves as a key mediating variable in the relationship between cultural intelligence and perceived organizational support. Accordingly, organizations should: Encourage leaders and human resource professionals to design organizational practices and work systems that foster interpersonal trust, such as cross-cultural teamwork, mentoring systems, and psychologically safe spaces for open communication. These initiatives can help strengthen the organization's social infrastructure, which is essential for sustaining trust-based relationships.

1.3 Implications from Objective 3

The findings reveal that demographic and professional characteristics do not have a significant impact on perceived organizational support. Therefore, organizations should: Avoid overemphasizing differentiated human resource policies based primarily on demographic attributes, and instead prioritize the quality of interpersonal relationships, communication, and everyday collaborative work experiences as central elements of organizational support.

2. Recommendations for Future Research

This study highlights the pivotal role of interpersonal trust as a relational mechanism that connects individual-level cultural capabilities with perceived organizational support. This insight can be extended to other organizational settings characterized by multicultural workforces, with particular attention to social relational dimensions and daily interaction processes.

Future research should consider:

Conducting comparative studies across sectors or cultural contexts to examine the generalizability of the proposed process-based model. Employing mixed-methods or qualitative research designs to gain deeper insights into the underlying mechanisms through which trust is developed and how organizational support is perceived and interpreted over time. Such approaches would further enrich the understanding of relational dynamics in cross-cultural organizational environments and strengthen the theoretical and practical contributions of this research.

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