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## Article

# The impact of leadership, communication, and teamwork practices on employee trust in the workplace

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# The Impact of Leadership, Communication, and Teamwork Practices on Employee Trust in the Workplace

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**Abstract:** Soft skill practices play an extensive role in creating sustainable and trustworthy relationships between employees and employers in the service sector. Organizational success largely depends on attracting and retaining a talented workforce for which soft skill practices are essential. The banking sector in Bangladesh emphasizes practicing leadership, communication, and teamwork as the most prevalent soft skills for gaining employees' trust and enhancing the efficient performance of the employees. This study aims to identify the impact of managers' practising these three pivotal soft skills on attaining employees' trust in the workplace. This study has been conducted by administering a structured questionnaire survey using a convenient sample of 104 employees from different private commercial banks in Bangladesh. Collected data were examined by using Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analysis to test the hypotheses. The results of the analysis reveal that practising leadership, communication, and teamwork skills create a significant and positive impact on employee trust in the workplace. This paper noticeably contributes by creating awareness among bank managers regarding the selected three skills practices to create employee trust in the workplace, which is considered to be bridging the gap of current managerial practices in the private bank organization of Bangladesh. The findings of this study help practitioners realize the intensive utilization of leadership, communication, and teamwork skills to gain greater employee trust in the workplace.

**Keywords:** soft skills; leadership; communication; teamwork; employee trust.

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## Introduction

Soft skills along with technical skills are equally emphasized to enhance organizational competence in generating revenue and improving sustainability in a competitive global market. Soft skills practices have been acknowledged and addressed to persuade overall organizational productivity for several years. Acquiring various soft skills is seemingly considered not only as a weapon to get employment opportunities for graduates but also as an armor to sustain in a job for incumbents (Afroze et al., 2019). Attaining a set of soft skills, for instance, communication, teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, and interpersonal skills, is beneficial for graduates to enhance their employment opportunities to entry-level positions in various organizations (Rao et al., 2011; Wesley et al., 2017). Moreover, along with these soft skills, having skillsets of analytical ability, positive attitude (Seetha, 2014), team spirit, strong work ethic (Anitha, 2014; Taylor, 2016), creativity, and critical thinking (Mumford et al., 2017) are crucial to enhance professional competency as well as job commitment in the workplace which in return ensure organizational productivity. Among these soft skills, leadership, communication, and teamwork have played significant roles in building employees' reliance on managers and the organization as a whole (Ibrahim et al., 2017; Sarker et al., 2019; Zaman et al., 2018). In addition to these, employee trust has meaningfully displayed a great impact on overall organizational performance (Jabeen & Rahim, 2021; Sarker et al., 2021). Hence, there is a need for further investigation of the relationship between soft skills and trust.

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Trust means the level of employees' perception of the actions of their organization, which will ensure that the promise given by the employer is maintained during the execution of any decisions (Brown et al., 2015). Researchers have defined the term trust and its importance in the workplace by considering several industry sectors in their studies. It is the reflection of employees' belief in their managers' competency and actions to achieve organizational goals, along with meeting the benefits of employees (Roberts & David, 2020). A higher degree of employee trust can positively influence employees' satisfaction (Yang, 2014), job engagement (Buckley, 2011; Liu, 2009), and citizenship behavior (Liu et al., 2013), which as a result, increases employee job performance (Brown et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2010; Sarker et al., 2021) in the workplace and stimulate successful corporate practices (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011) for further growth and progress of the organization. Leadership is essential to gaining employee trust, along with an effective managerial communication system during strategic change and improving the productivity of an organization (Hossan et al., 2012; Komodromos et al., 2019). Therefore, employee trust is the form of reliable, mutual understanding, favourable, and trustworthy relationships with managers for which employees feel free, confident, and enthusiastic about sharing their opinions and following instructions.

Building employee trust largely depends on interpersonal relationships between employees and their supervisors. Supervisors or managers must have a set of personal traits to develop a certain level of employee trust that can improve individual performance and employee engagement and reduce turnover, which is common nowadays (Ibrahim, 2017; Jabeen & Rahim, 2021). Various soft skills practices influence managerial job performance to gain employee trust. Moreover, trust plays a crucial role in changing employee attitudes (Williamson & Williams, 2011) to stimulate communication between employees and managers and teamwork among them (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011; Krot & Lewicka, 2012). Having trust in immediate supervisors enables employees to be risk-takers, assertive, and perform creatively (Costigan et al., 2006; Ibrahim et al., 2017; Zaman et al., 2018). From another point of view, trust can be generated and grown if managers exercise professionalism, supportiveness, positive attitude, and interpersonal communication towards their subordinates (Robertson et al., 2013). Employee trust in management is very crucial to increasing job satisfaction, positive behavior, and involvement that improves employee-employer relationships, ensures a better communicative environment, changes employee attitudes, fosters team spirit, and creates a leadership atmosphere, risk-taking tendency, creative thinking, and productivity. Trust can act as a driving force to motivate employees to work for the effective operation of an organization.

Hence, this study has focused on three widely practised soft skills (leadership, communication, and teamwork) and their association with building employee trust in the service sector, such as private commercial banks in Bangladesh. Data have been collected through convenient sampling from 104 respondents between January and March 2024. The survey was self-administered to collect data from 75% male and 25% female respondents from 20 different private commercial banks across various geographical locations in Bangladesh. Moreover, the questionnaire was translated back and forth from English to Bengali and Bengali to English to ensure the content was valid and easy for the respondents to understand. The regression model of the study has revealed the correlations between leadership, communication, teamwork, and employee trust. The findings of the study have been followed by interpretations of the results and critical discussions. Finally, the paper ended with concluding remarks, limitations, and implications (both theoretical and practical).

## Literature review

Having a set of non-technical skills or soft skills along with technical expertise can enhance individual professional qualifications. Soft skills are an integral part of personal abilities (Truong & Laura, 2015), which comprise a bunch of personality attributes, social approaches along with individual lifestyle and optimistic nature to make one unique from others (Pereira & Costa, 2017; Tang, 2018). These are recognized as a set of personal attributes such as communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork (Ellis et al., 2014; Greiff et al., 2013; Robles, 2012), creativity (Chan, 2013), self-confidence, adaptability, taking responsibility (Clarke, 2017; Moore & Morton, 2017), leadership, agreeableness, motivation, trust (Ellis et al., 2014; Robles, 2012; Truong & Laura, 2015), maintaining ethical standard (Jolly, 2012; Mitchell et al., 2010), information management and entrepreneurship skills (Remedios, 2012) that help an individual to achieve the career success by performing effectively in the workplace. Soft skills can be defined as a set of individual traits that consists of the ability to communicate, solve a problem, examine a situation, think creatively, agree with others' opinions, work in a team, lead a group of people, self-inspiring, follow ethical standard and be trustworthy which can be proved as milestones for getting an employment opportunity as well as advancing the career to the next level.

The value of soft skills has been recognized in several industries worldwide. Graduates can enhance their competitive advantage to get employment in the competent job market by acquiring a set of soft skills along with technical skills (Clarke, 2017; Cobo, 2013; Zhang, 2012) that is very beneficial for them to adapt to the changed technology, productivity pattern, globalization and organizational modifications (Pitan, 2017). Effective utilization of soft skills is highly beneficial for an individual to increase productivity and career achievement (Sangamitra & Priya, 2015). Moreover, practicing soft skills helps managerial personnel and customer service providers exercise their critical thinking ability to make prompt and effective decisions (Szilard et al., 2018). Accessibilities of soft skills have proved to be a prioritized factor for different levels of employees and managerial personnel to get better employment opportunities, sustain in their current positions, and advance their careers.

Soft skills practices have become prevalent in customer service-based industries, engineering sectors, and production-based organizations. In the retail industry, practices of employee soft skills like communication, attitude, teamwork, adaptability, and creativity have a great impact on attracting more customers and increasing profitability (Nedry, 2016). Though engineers and IT professionals are technical skills-oriented personnel, they also need to acquire communication, creative thinking, analytical ability, teamwork, integrity, adaptability, motivation, work ethics, and problem-solving skills to perform effectively in the workplace (Zhang, 2012). To increase the value of human capital and organizational success rate, communication, creative thinking, leadership, conflict management, decision-making, negotiation, and organizing skills must be practised in the workplace (Tang, 2018; Wesley et al., 2017).

Moreover, organizational sustainability largely depends on financial ability, employee well-being, and competitive advantage (Symons & Lamberton, 2014) whereas, this competitive advantage and profitability can be gained by practising soft skills that act as complementary to technical expertise, teamwork, and productivity to enhance organizational achievement rate (Bancino & Zevalkink, 2007). Additionally, teamwork practices enhance employees' interpersonal trust and work engagement (Mughal, 2020) to generate innovative ideas and creative solutions to perform in the workplace (Gunawan et al., 2024; May et al., 2004). Noticeably, the impact of communication, leadership, and teamwork skill practices in the organization has proven multifaceted. Employers are showing their concern for practising required soft skills in the workplace to increase productivity, profitability, market sustainability, and competitive advantage.

Trust is the perception of belief by employees that their employers will act upon their words (Innocenti et al., 2011). It is a pattern of belief, or an extent of expectation based on individual experience for which a person can rely on others and be susceptible to them (Paxton & Glanville, 2015). According to the social exchange approach, trust is voluntary, more flexible, rare explicit bargaining, and individualized (Stafford, 2008). Trust is the mental condition of the tendency to accept vulnerability based on optimistic thinking or positive reactions to others' behavior (Rousseau et al., 1998), regardless of the ability to monitor or control by the other party (Mayer et al., 1995). There are some dimensions of managerial trust. These are availability, competence, consistency, discreetness, fairness, integrity, loyalty, openness, promise fulfilment, receptivity, concern, and reliability (Butler, 1991; Mishra, 1996). Two attributes, namely, telling the truth and keeping promises, affect employees' trust in managers (Dasgupta, 1998; Rotter, 1971).

Trust is a critical variable that affects effectiveness, efficiency, and performance and fosters desirable work-related behavior in the organization. If employees trust their organization, they stay longer hours, put in more effort, and work cooperatively hard for high performance, which is a competitive advantage for the organization (Searle et al., 2011). Employee trust in the immediate supervisor increases employees' creativity, risk-taking behavior, and assertiveness (Costigan et al., 2006; Ibrahim et al., 2017). Employees' performance and behaviour are influenced by employee trust. If managers treat employees fairly, that increases employees' trust towards their managers, job engagement (Kurtulus et al., 2011), and citizenship behaviour (Wong et al., 2003), whereas the decline of trust in managers reduces job commitment (Albrecht & Travaglione, 2003). Empirical findings revealed a positive relationship between financial performance, labour productivity, product or service quality, and employee trust (Brown et al., 2015).

Furthermore, trust is a mediating variable in the relationship between HPWS (High-Performance Work System) (Kundu & Gahlawat, 2016; Searle et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2016), employee outcomes, job satisfaction, productivity (Zhang et al., 2016) and affective commitment (Ang et al., 2013; Macky & Boxall, 2007). Increased general trust also increases worker's autonomy. There is a correlation between HR practices and employee trust in management (Blunsdon & Reed, 2003; Grund & Harbring, 2009). For organizational success, employee goodwill, motivation, and cooperation are important. These attitudes and organizational behaviors are influenced by employee trust (Chang et al., 2016; Farndale et al., 2011; Tyler, 2003). Trust focuses on interpersonal aspects, especially the relationships between employees and management at various levels of the organization (Searle et al., 2011). Interpersonal trust reduces risk and uncertainty and increases organizational efficiency, cooperation, information exchange, and pro-social behavior (Schoorman et al., 2007; Yang & Mossholder 2010). Therefore, soft skills are a good way to build employee trust at work.

Previous research papers explored the importance of acquiring soft skills among graduates for getting employment and practising soft skills by managers and organizations that recognize the value of soft skills application to create employee trust in the workplace are presented in Table 1. Preceding research guides that most of the empirical studies were accompanied to acknowledge solely the importance of acquiring and practicing soft skills in both manufacturing and service organizations or the necessity of developing employee trust and the impact of trust in the organization. Moreover, in the context of Bangladesh, several studies found that the job turnover rate among private commercial bank employees is high mainly due to job stress, dissatisfaction regarding improper compensation, and an unsupported working environment (Faroque et al., 2020; Hossain et al., 2017; Islam et al., 2019; Rahman, 2020). Noteworthy, recent research papers explore those three soft skills consisting of leadership, teamwork, and communication only, are commonly practised skills in the banking industry to enhance organizational performance (Ahlawat et al., 2013; Costantino & Rodzinka, 2022). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of leadership, communication, and teamwork skills practices on gaining employee trust at private commercial banks in Bangladesh.

**Table 1. Most contemporary and relevant literature review**

Author (Year)	Scope of research	Aiming issues and research results
Wesley et al. (2017)	Employers from the tourism industry, graduates, and academic personnel in the USA	A similar set of soft skills is important among all groups variedly.
Brown et al. (2015)	Data collected from the Workplace Employment Relations Survey (WERS) in Britain	The empirical study acknowledged a positive connection between employee trust and firms' performance in terms of product quality, fiscal performance, and worker productivity.
Kloutsiniotis and Mihail (2018)	Greek Banking Sector	High-Performance Work System (HPWS), from employees' perspectives, is positively related to their trust in their supervisors, job satisfaction, service quality, and organizational commitment.
Jiang and Luo (2018)	Different sectors in the USA	Employee trust is related to three organizational factors: supervisors' genuine leadership approach, transparent communication system, and employee engagement.
Kumendong et al. (2018)	Employees from Government banks in Manado	They found that the most prioritized soft skills in the banking organization are communication, leadership, problem-solving, and teamwork to improve organizational performance.
Abun et al. (2023)	Employees and faculties in a college at Ilocos Norte	Results showed that managers' ethical leadership creates a strong level of employee trust in management.
Shillie and Nchang (2023)	Employees of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the Bamenda Metropolis of Cameroon	The study found that employees' communication skills, teamwork, work ethics, and emotional intelligence practices in SMEs create a great positive impact on their job performance in the workplace.
Baquero (2023)	Employees of the hotel industry in Dubai	A mediated model displays that three dimensions of authentic leadership: relational transparency, internalized moral perspectives, and balanced processing positively influence employee work engagement and employees' trust in leaders, which in turn moderate the effect of workplace well-being.
Bano et al. (2023)	Employees of private banks in Pakistan	The findings of this study are that the transformational leadership style and teamwork practices significantly influence employee trust in the organization, while trust strongly mediates the impact of both on employee loyalty.
Nusrat and Sultana (2019)	Employers from manufacturing and service sectors and Faculties from business schools in Bangladesh	Employers are demanding soft skills from graduates to give employment opportunities, ensure skilled performance, and maintain sustainable career success at the workplace.

Source: own processing

## Links between the variables and hypothesis development

### *The link between leadership skills and employee trust*

This study investigates the relationships between three commonly needed soft skills (leadership, communication, and teamwork) and employee trust. Ethical leadership is a considerably required issue to maintain business ethics by both researchers and

managers (Brown et al., 2005; Rahaman et al., 2019), which creates a positive impact on employee performances in terms of productivity, organizational citizenship behavior, trust, and loyalty (Engelbrecht et al., 2017; Thiel et al., 2018; Tseng & Wu, 2017; Yang & Wei, 2018). Followers' loyalty to the organization is influenced by the climate of trust (Casimir et al., 2006; Nisar et al., 2013). Managers need to act as leaders, and they should hold employees' trust to maintain faith, fulfil their hopes, dedicate themselves to them, and finally act as role models for them (Torlak & Kuzey, 2019). Relationship-oriented leadership behavior increases mutual trust, cooperation, job satisfaction, and identification with the team or organization (Roberts & David, 2020). When employees perceive the support, trust, and fairness from their leaders, they craft positive emotions and experience pleasant and happy feelings which finally lead to cooperative behavior (Bartunek et al., 2011). Empowering leadership has a positive impact on employee creativity through trust in leadership and motivation to learn new skills and competencies (Chow, 2018). Trust among colleagues facilitates the connection between employees' cross-team knowledge sharing and ethical leadership (Tu et al., 2020). Interpersonal trust is very important through which leadership affects employees' attitudes and behavior. Ethical leadership promotes employees' trust, which refers to performance-related cognitive evaluations of qualities such as responsibility, reliability, and dependability. Thus, managers' dynamic leadership qualities of being supportive, friendly, ethical, sensitive to employees' opinions, reward-provider, and mentor influence employees to keep trust in their managers. That is why the following hypothesis can be developed:

*H1: Leadership skills practised by managers have a positive impact on building employee trust.*

### ***The link between communication skills and employee trust***

The second soft skill considered for this study is communication skills practised by managers. Informal communications among management teams play an important role in facilitating trust and competent communication practices (Hedman & Valo, 2014). Informal communication is related to the relaxed atmosphere outside the meeting room and the work context. It is remarkable to spend time together and do something not work-related that can establish relationships and develop trust among management team members. Some factors like distance, time, and cultural differences within geographically distributed teams can lead to mistrust and conflict (Janssens & Brett, 2006). The communication process builds collective communication competence. Communication, trust, good relationships, and respect for everyone encourage participation among management team members. The positive perspective of top-down communication is to boost employee job satisfaction, increase trust in the workplace, and make employees supportive of the objectives of the organization (Raina & Roebuck, 2016). If an organization develops a strong communication culture, it will help managers to build trust and increase engagement and productivity.

Satisfactory workplace communications are considered positive, whereas miscommunications are considered negative for resolving conflicts and disagreements. Moreover, time and space are not enough to resolve conflicts, and trust between employees is important for resolving conflict (Balliet & Van Lange, 2013). Social interaction, which can fulfil employees needs for relatedness, may also create an atmosphere of trust (Price, 2012; Reis et al., 2000). Organizational leaders need to be open to creating a trustworthy atmosphere and actively involve employees in the decision-making process (Neill et al., 2019). Openness increases trust, which refers to candour in communication happening at all levels of organizational communication, vertically or horizontally. Openness is also related to sincerity, credibility, truthfulness, consistency, and candour (Rawlins, 2009; Smidts et al., 2001). An open, trusting work environment can

facilitate information flow, increase employees' confidence in management, create a sense of belonging and ownership, and involve employees in the change management process (Men & Bowen, 2017). However, poor communication about change from management reduced trust and created negative emotions among employees (Proctor & Doukakis, 2003). A transparent organizational communication process increases employee trust across individuals, groups, and organizations (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012; Men & Stacks, 2014; Rawlins, 2009) and credibility, which drives employee engagement (Rawlins, 2009). Hence, managerial communication skills include maintaining formal and informal communication techniques, giving regular feedback, clarifying policies, providing consistent and accurate information, creating a friendly environment, and encouraging negotiation to generate employee trust in the workplace. Therefore, the second hypothesis of this study is as follows:

*H2: Communication skills practised by managers have a positive impact on building employee trust.*

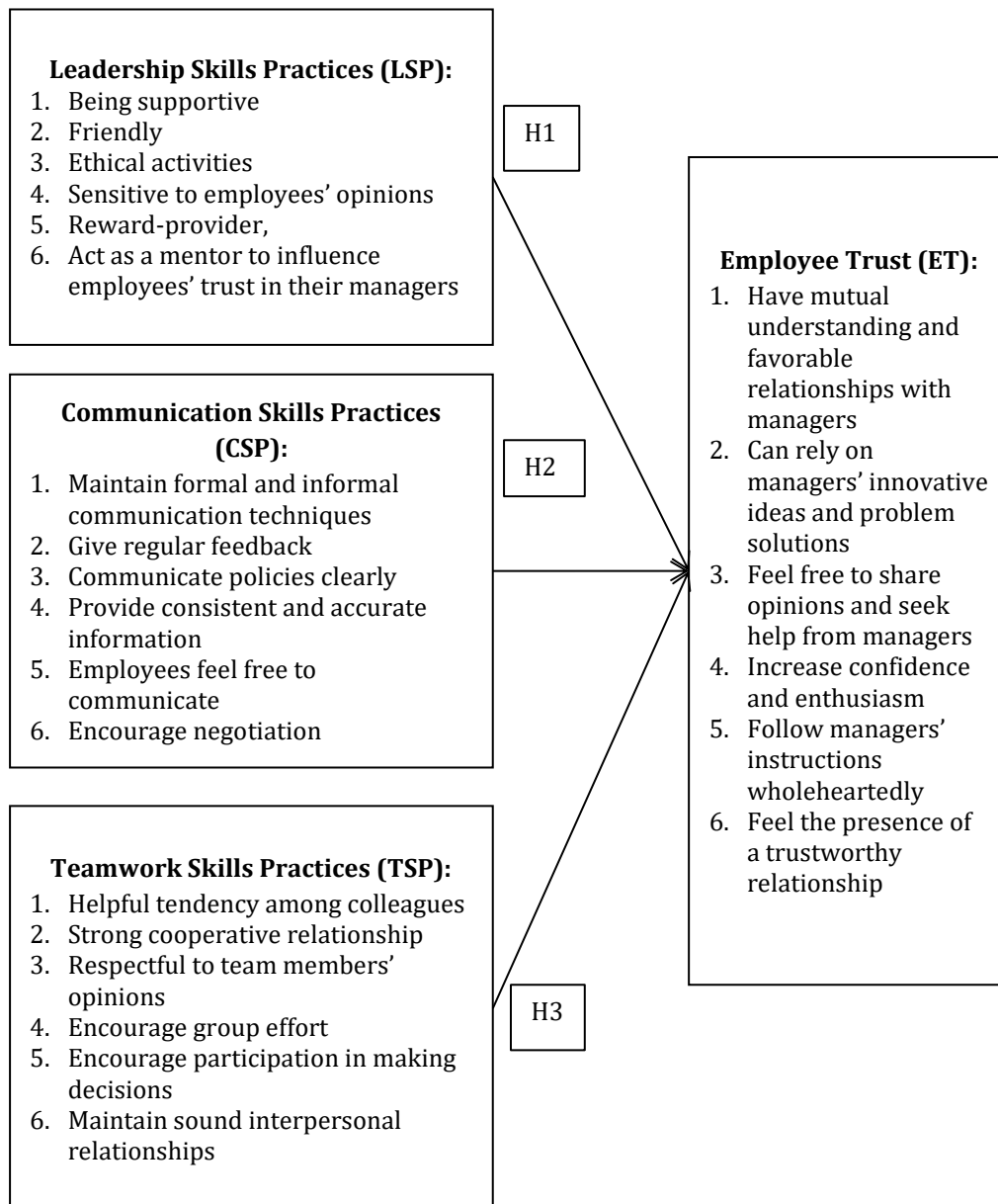
### ***The link between teamwork skills and employee trust***

Teamwork is another soft skill that is considered for this study to investigate its impact on building employees' trust. To make an effective virtual team, trust needs to be created first among team members (Wilson et al., 2006). Trust is very important for a team and organization, especially in the case of a virtual team. As virtual team members are geographically dispersed to work, trust is necessary for achieving organizational goals and for holding the group together. Interpersonal trust and group cohesion must be developed within team members to contribute to team members' satisfaction and performance (Lu, 2015). Factors for an ineffective team are lack of trust, lack of direction, and lack of responsibility (Gabris et al., 1998; Hersey & Blanchard, 1977). Mutual trust, mutual respect, shared goals, leadership, friendship, team spirit, etc., are properties of a successful team (Goffee & Jones, 2006; Parker, 2012). To eliminate demarcation, team expertise and a high degree of trust are required (Russell 2001). Psychological safety in a work team is a very important factor in influencing learning activities. Psychological safety refers to interpersonal trust, mutual respect, feeling safe, and interpersonal risk-taking (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). A safe team climate refers to trust, and the trustworthiness of the team refers to getting support from team members and discussing critical problems (Bauer & Mulder, 2011). Both trust and cohesion reduce conflict, and then reducing conflict increases trust and cohesion (Marks et al., 2001). Organizations can create a fun work environment that can promote interpersonal trust among team members (Georganta, 2012). A study by Han et al. (2016) also found that fun workplace activities enhance team performance by promoting interpersonal trust and group cohesion and then reducing intra-group conflict. Hence, managers' teamwork skills of being helpful, cooperative, and respectful to team members' opinions, encouraging group effort and participation, and maintaining sound interpersonal relationships can enhance employee trust in the workplace. Thus, the next hypothesis is developed:

*H3: Teamwork skills practised by managers have a positive impact on building employee trust.*

Therefore, the proposed research model on developed hypotheses of the relationship between independent and dependent variables is presented in Figure 1.





**Figure 1. Proposed conceptual research model**

Source: own processing

## Research methodology

A quantitative study has been conducted to find out the impact of soft skills on employee trust in private commercial banks in Bangladesh. This study has followed a non-probability convenient sampling method due to convenient accessibility and proximity (Hair et al., 2010; Kothari, 2015). There are 43 local private commercial banks in Bangladesh, out of which 20 have been selected to collect data based on availability and accessibility of information. This study targeted the minimum sample size of 100 respondents from 20 local commercial banks, with a set of 5 respondents from each. The research paper has followed the non-probability sampling technique to complete the survey as most bank managers and employees are busy and reluctant to provide detailed information regarding behavioural issues in their organizations, which are common and practical problems around the world (Memon et al., 2017; Polit & Beck, 2010). According to Mooi et al. (2018), respondents can be selected based on their availability, willingness to participate, and the possibility of getting accurate information from them. The sample

size was determined by following the sample-to-variable ratio of 20:1 as the most preferable condition to apply, which means 20 respondents must be selected for one independent variable (Hair et al., 2018). Deciding the minimum sample size of 100 is acceptable for any parametric tests like ANOVA, linear regression, and Pearson Correlation in most research conditions (Hair et al., 2018; Ross, 2004).

The contents of the questionnaire were developed by focusing on various components of employee trust and three widely practised soft skills: leadership, communication, and teamwork. The questionnaire of this study followed the dimensions used by Pritchard (2013) for soft skills and Robertson et al. (2013) for employee trust. Items of the research questionnaire were respondents' profiles, perceptions on the importance of using several categories of soft skills, level of agreement on practising different constructs of leadership skills, communication skills, teamwork skills, as well as building employee trust at the workplace which have been considered for accumulating information to identify the impact of soft skills practices on building employee trust at the workplace. The respondents rated the importance of soft skills practices in gaining employee trust, as they perceived it on a 5-point Likert scale, with content ranging from "Not important" (1) to "Very important" (5). They have also expressed their perception of the association of leadership, communication, and teamwork skill practices with gaining employee trust on a 5-point scale of "Strongly disagree" (1) to "Strongly agree" (5) for each item.

The questionnaire was generated using Google Forms, and the link was sent to the respondents through email and various social media platforms (Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp). Data are then imported into an SPSS file from an MS Excel file. To explore the connection between three skills (predictors or independent variables) consisting of leadership skills, communication skills, and teamwork skills with building employee trust (dependent variable) in the workplace, collected data have been analyzed by using the statistical package SPSS version 27. Quantitative techniques of descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and multiple regression analysis have been conducted to prepare this research paper. Descriptive statistics have been used to assess the respondents' profile and their perceptions of the importance of practising soft skills in gaining employee trust. Before applying any statistical tools to surveyed data, a reliability test was conducted to measure the internal consistency and accuracy of the data collected in the questionnaire.

Pearson's correlation analysis was implemented to explore the association between independent variables and dependent variables, and the coefficient values were revealed to clarify the strength of the association between variables. Obilor and Amadi (2018) acknowledged that correlation analysis detects the extent of association or connection between two variables to determine their positive or negative relationship or no relationship. They also mentioned that the coefficient ( $r$ ) value less than 0.40 dictates a low positive relationship, between 0.40 and 0.60 defines a moderate positive relationship, and more than 0.60 indicates a high positive relationship. Moreover, a statistically significant correlation can exist between two variables if the Sig. (2-tailed) score is equal to or less than 0.05 (Siegle, 2009). Additionally, linear regression analysis is beneficial for calculating the forecasted impact of independent variables on dependent variables and displaying them in a model (Lim, 2019). In this research paper, both correlation and multiple linear regression analysis have been accompanied to identify the causal impact of managers' practising leadership, communication, and teamwork skills on building employee trust.

## Findings and discussions

The questionnaire was distributed to selected 20 commercial banks by using the Google form link and other social media. A total of 110 respondents out of the possible 120 filled the given questionnaire, and six responses among those were incomplete. Hence, 104 responses have been acknowledged from those replies with no missing values. Thus,

N=104, who held different levels of positions in several departments of those bank organizations, were used for analysis. Table 2 demonstrates the respondents' basic profiles.

**Table 2. Respondents' profile**

Considerations	Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Respondent's Age	Under 25 years	5	4.80%
	25 to 34 years	37	35.60%
	35 to 44 years	51	49.0%
	45 to 54 years	11	10.60%
	Above 55 years	0	0
Length of service in the current organization	One year to 10 years	77	74.0%
	11 years to 20 years	25	24.0%
	21 years to above	2	1.9%
Gender	Male	75	72.1%
	Female	29	27.9%
Educational Qualifications	BBA/BA/Honors	14	13.5%
	MBA /Masters	89	85.6%
	Others	1	1.0%

Source: own processing

The composite reliability test score of constructs of data is 0.937, which is between the acceptable ranges. Cronbach's Alpha values of the selected patterns of questionnaire contents are provided in Table 3, which has exceeded the recommended minimum cutoff point of 0.70 (Pallant, 2000) from the acceptable range of 0.70 to 0.95 for running the quantitative analysis (Bland & Altman, 1997; Nunally & Berstein, 1994). Hence, by observing the given result, it is resolved that the questionnaire variables have strong reliability.

**Table 3. Reliability score**

Measuring Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
Perception of the importance of soft skills	0.951	15
Leadership skills practices	0.821	6
Communication skill practices	0.799	6
Teamwork skill practices	0.836	6
Building employee trust	0.829	6

Source: own processing

### ***Perception of the importance of practising soft skills in building employee trust***

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the respondents' opinions regarding the importance of the fifteen soft skills practices listed to cultivate employee trust in the workplace. The frequency distribution and the respective percentages for each item with no missing value are presented in Table 4. The total percentages of very important, important, and moderately important are more than 85% for each item that have been recognized to assess the respondents' perception levels on the importance of practising soft skills to generate employee trust at work. It is noticeable from the table that all respondents have realized the importance of practising soft skills that substantially create an impact on building employee trust in the workplace.

**Table 4. Descriptive statistics**

Soft skills	Not important		Less important		Moderately important		Important		Very important	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Leadership	1	1	3	2.9	12	11.5	37	35.6	51	49
Professionalism	2	1.9	3	2.9	4	3.8	26	25	69	66.3
Supportiveness	1	1	4	3.8	8	7.7	36	34.6	55	52.9
Positive attitude	2	1.9	3	2.9	5	4.8	32	30.8	62	59.6
Interpersonal Communication	2	1.9	3	2.9	7	6.7	32	30.8	60	57.7

Soft skills	Not important		Less important		Moderately important		Important		Very important	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Creativity	3	2.9	9	8.7	21	20.2	37	35.6	34	32.7
Decision Making	1	1.0	6	5.8	7	6.7	32	30.8	58	55.8
Conflict management	4	3.8	8	7.7	20	19.2	36	34.6	36	34.6
Strong work ethics	2	1.9	5	4.8	9	8.7	33	31.7	55	52.9
Teamwork	1	1.0	4	3.8	10	9.6	40	38.5	49	47.1
Analytical Ability	2	1.9	4	3.8	20	19.2	42	40.4	36	34.6
Problem-solving	2	1.9	3	2.9	10	9.6	35	33.7	54	51.9
Adaptability	1	1.0	6	5.8	9	8.7	46	44.2	42	40.4
Negotiation	3	2.9	4	3.8	14	13.5	50	48.1	33	31.7
Arrangement	4	3.8	5	4.8	14	13.5	44	42.3	37	35.6

Source: own processing

### *Impact of leadership, communication, and teamwork practices on employee trust*

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the impact of practising leadership, communication, and teamwork skills on building employee trust in the workplace. Table 5 revealed the Pearson's correlation analysis result which illustrates the significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) high positive relationship between variables as the coefficient ( $r$ ) values for all variable pairs are more than 0.60.

**Table 5. The Pearson's correlation**

		Correlations			
		Building Employee Trust	Leadership skills practices	Communication skills practices	Teamwork skills practices
Building Employee Trust (ET)	Pearson Correlation	1	.644**	.671**	.688**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	104	104	104	104
Leadership Skills Practices (LSP)	Pearson Correlation	.644**	1	.764**	.628**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	104	104	104	104
Communication Skills Practices (CSP)	Pearson Correlation	.671**	.764**	1	.638**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001
	N	104	104	104	104
Teamwork Skills Practices (TSP)	Pearson Correlation	.688**	.628**	.638**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	104	104	104	104

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: own processing

The investigated result displayed that employee trust at the workplace is significantly and positively influenced by leadership skills practices ( $r = 0.644$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), communication skills practices ( $r = 0.671$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and teamwork skills practices ( $r = 0.688$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), thus accepting H1, H2, and H3 respectively. It is also noticeable from the correlation analysis that leadership skills, communication skills, and teamwork skills practices are highly positively connected.

Along with the correlation, multiple regression analysis has also been employed in this research paper to investigate the proposed hypotheses. The regression analysis result in Table 7 illustrates that independent variables can significantly predict the dependent

variable,  $F(3, 100) = 45.381$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , which indicates that three skills (leadership, communication, and teamwork skill) practiced by managers have a positive impact on building employee trust at work. Moreover, the value of 0.577 reveals that predictors independent variables explain 57.7% variance in the dependent variable (Table 6).

**Table 6. Regression model summary**

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.759 <sup>a</sup>	.577	.564	.39114	1.956

a. Predictors: (Constant), Teamwork skills practices, Leadership skills practices, Communication skills practices  
b. Dependent Variable: Employee Trust

Source: own processing

**Table 7. ANOVA**

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.829	3	6.943	45.381	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	15.299	100	.153		
	Total	36.128	103			

a. Dependent Variable: ET (Employee Trust)  
b. Predictors: (Constant), LSP (Leadership skill practices), TSP (Teamwork skill practices), CSP (Communication skill practices)

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$

Source: own processing

**Table 8. Regression coefficients**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.214	.241		5.041	.000
	LSP	.154	.089	.182	1.726	.087
	CSP	.247	.094	.279	2.629	.010
	TSP	.348	.077	.396	4.492	.000

\* $p < 0.10$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$

Source: own processing

Minimum thresholds of significance levels at 0.001, 0.05, and 0.10 have been considered to determine the impact of individual independent variables on dependent variables (Gelman, 2012; Kwak, 2023). Table 8 indicates the coefficients that have been considered to ascertain the influence of individual factors on employee trust. Coefficient scores clarify that, individually, the leadership skills practices have a significant impact on employee trust ( $B = 0.154$ ,  $t = 1.726$ ,  $p = 0.087 < 0.10$ ), which confirms H1. Moreover, the coefficient result reveals that the communication skills practices have a positive and significant impact on employee trust ( $B = 0.247$ ,  $t = 2.629$ ,  $p = 0.010 < 0.05$ ) and the teamwork skills practices have a positive and significant impact on employee trust ( $B = 0.348$ ,  $t = 4.492$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.001$ ). Hence, proposed hypotheses H2 and H3 are also accepted. The regression summary results are presented in Table 9.

**Table 9. Hypotheses testing results summary**

Hypotheses and Variables (IV→ DV)	Model Summary		ANOVA		Regression Coefficients			Results		
	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	P	β	t	P			
	H1; LSP → ET	0.759	0.577	45.381	<0.001	0.154	1.726		0.087	Accepted
	H2; CSP → ET					0.247	2.629		0.010	Accepted
H3; TSP → ET	0.348					4.492	<0.001	Accepted		
*p < 0.10; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01										

Source: own processing

Hence, the regression equation can be developed based on the Table 8 as follows:

$$ET = 1.214 + 0.154LSP + 0.247CSP + 0.348TSP$$

The regression model reveals that the developed constructs positively and significantly influence employee trust in the workplace. The regression equation demonstrates that a single unit increase in leadership skills, communication skills, and teamwork skills practices will increase employee trust by 0.154, 0.247, and 0.348 units, respectively. Noteworthy, the teamwork skill practices have the strongest influence on building employee trust among all independent variables as it ensures the highest beta value of 0.348. The result of the hypothesized model suggests that all independent variables significantly influence the dependent variable. Hence, all alternative hypotheses are accepted.

This study aims to detect the impact of managers' leadership, communication, and teamwork skill practices on building employee trust in the private commercial banks of Bangladesh. Three alternative hypotheses have been tested: managers' leadership skills have a positive impact on employee trust (H1), managers' communication skills have a positive impact on employees' trust (H2), and managers' teamwork skills have a positive impact on employee trust (H3) to comply with the aim of the study. The reliability test scores greater than 0.70 in each measuring construct of the questionnaire (Table 3) confirm that the surveyed data were intensely reliable in testing those developed hypotheses.

Noteworthy, the quantitative analysis has been conducted in three parts to meet the objectives of the research paper. Firstly, descriptive statistics were measured to extract the respondents' perceptions of the importance of practising various soft skills to gain employee trust. Results in Table 4 indicate that practising soft skills is crucial to developing employee trust in the workplace. Secondly, Pearson's correlation has been conducted to see the association between independent variables (leadership, communication, and teamwork skills) and the dependent variable (employee trust). Table 5 exhibits the result that leadership skills ( $r = 0.644$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), communication skills ( $r = 0.671$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and teamwork skills practices ( $r = 0.688$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) are strongly associated with employee trust. Moreover, the correlation results also reveal that leadership, communication, and teamwork skill practices are positively and significantly connected. Thirdly, multiple regression analysis was administered to discover how much each independent variable can influence employees' trust. The regression results in Tables 5, 6, and 7 demonstrate that each independent variable positively and significantly creates an impact on gaining employee trust. Hence, the regression model has been drawn with the conclusion that a single unit increase in leadership, communication, and teamwork skill practices will increase employee trust by 0.154, 0.247, and 0.348 units correspondingly. Thus, the overall findings confirm that all tested alternative hypotheses are accepted to conclude that the selected three soft skills- leadership, communication, and teamwork practised by managers have a great impact on employee trust in the workplace.

## Conclusions and implications

This research paper has explored the relationship between three soft skills practised by managers and gaining employee trust. The result reported that leadership, communication, and teamwork skills practised by managers could positively and significantly influence employees to trust them at the workplace. Moreover, these three soft skills are positively and significantly correlated with each other and have a boundless impression on employee trust. The findings suggest that superior employee trust in managers and organizations heavily relies on an increased level of these three soft skills practised by their managers at the workplace. Hence, employee trust in the organization can increase employees' job performance in terms of productivity, quality, and financial performance (Afroze et al., 2019; Brown et al., 2015; Sarker et al., 2019; Zaman et al., 2018). The Practical implication of this research indicates that managers should give enforcement on intensely practising leadership, communication, and teamwork skills to achieve greater employee trust in the workplace.

The findings of this study can also be considered by policymakers, top management of the organization, and government through intervention for further application and awareness development in both the service and manufacturing sectors. Theoretically, the research result contributes to the areas of human resource management and organizational behavior study. Moreover, the suggested issues of this paper could be beneficial to follow in the working environment of the banking industries and financial sectors of different countries as the operational activities of these industries are quite similar worldwide. Despite the insightful investigation of this study, some limitations could be addressed for future research. Firstly, more experiential and comprehensive research can take place to explore the relationship between different types of leadership styles, communication systems, and types of teamwork adept by managers and building employee trust. Secondly, a rigorous investigation can be conducted to examine the impact of other various soft skills practised by managers such as professionalism, supportiveness, positive attitude, creativity, decision-making, conflict management, strong work ethics, analytical ability, problem-solving, adaptability, negotiation and arrangement on including but not restricted to enhance employee trust, job engagement, productivity, quality, and financial performance of the organization. Finally, this research sample only includes 104 employees and managers from 20 private commercial banks in Bangladesh, which can be extended by considering greater population and sample size, other business sectors of Bangladesh, and cross-cultural socio-economic contexts for future research work.

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