# Organizational Justice and Quality of Work Life in Hotel Industry: The Mediating Effect of Trust Climate

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Research Article

## Abstract

*The study aimed to investigate the impact of hotels' organizational justice (OJ) on the quality of employees' work life (QWL), with the mediation effect of teams' climate of trust (CT). Social Exchange Theory was employed to support the research framework. Data were collected using 281 questionnaires from the operational employees of 3-star hotels in Bangladesh and assessed by SPSS version 21 and SmartPLS 3.0 software. Data were validated by a measurement model and hypotheses were tested by a structural model using the PLS-SEM approach. The study discovered significant effects of hotels' organizational justice ($\beta=0.271$) and team's climate of trust ($\beta=0.362$) on employees' quality of work life ($R^2=27.7\%$). It also reveals the effect of the hotel's OJ ($\beta=0.369$) on teams' CT ($R^2=13.6\%$), and a partial mediation effect of team's CT ($\beta=0.134$) in the relationship between the hotel's OJ and employees' QWL. Results indicate that hotels' organizational justice practices enrich employees' quality of work life and nurture mutual trust among the team members, while a team's climate of trust can convert hotels' organizational justice into employees' quality of work life. These findings would inspire the hotel authorities in practicing organizational justice to develop a trusting climate in the working teams, and designing QWL programs for attaining employee satisfaction. The study was limited to the Bangladesh hotel industry which restricts the generalizability of its results.*

**Keywords:** Quality of work life, Organizational justice, Climate of trust, Hotel industry

## 1. Introduction

A healthy and caring working (professional) life facilitates an individual's overall life and fulfills his/her different needs (Sirgy et al., 2001). At work, an improved work-life stimulates employee attitude and performance (Adisa & Gbadamosi, 2018; Jabeen et al., 2018; Wahlberg et al., 2017; Sari et al., 2019). That is why, in recent times, firms have been considering the quality of work life (QWL) as a vital corporate strategy for attaining a sustainable competitive position in the global market (Alown et al., 2021; Gordon et al., 2019; Jabeen et al., 2018). QWL is "a behavioral concept that focuses on an individual's perception of and attitudes towards his or her work and the total working environment" (David et al., 2001; Nickson, 2009). Based on the early studies surrounding employee happiness, QWL refers to satisfaction with the working, non-working and overall life, personal happiness, and subjective well-being caused by the workplace (Sirgy et al., 2001). However, recent studies indicate that employees engaged in the hotel businesses are not happy with their working life which adversely affects their personal lives too (Akter et

al., 2021; Arefin et al., 2020; Domínguez Albiter et al., 2021; Gordon et al., 2019). On the other hand, hoteliers encounter high employee turnover, their involvement in organizational politics, and so on (Arefin et al., 2020; Eom et al., 2019). These conditions have resulted in reduced individual and business unit performance, which eventually affects hotels' competitiveness (González et al., 2016; Lillo-Bañuls et al., 2018). Despite the significant contribution of the hotel industry to many economies, researchers have paid very little attention to explaining hotel employees' QWL and discovering its antecedents. Therefore, it is essential to determine the influencing factors of individuals' QWL and the mechanisms by which these factors impact employees' working lives in the hotel industry.

It has been found that hotel employees frequently experience biased and inconsistent organizational and/or managerial practices regarding employee matters, e.g., resource allocation and employee treatment (Demir, 2011; Luo et al., 2017; Russen et al., 2021). They suffer from discriminatory and inequitable treatment at the workplace for remuneration and benefits, employee placement and promotion, training and development opportunities, and so on. Sometimes, they get harassed by managerial people which causes bad employer-employee relations and organizational distrust. Therefore, this study envisioned that organizational factors, that can solve these issues and satisfy the working people, are likely to play a vital role in enriching their working life.

Organizational justice has emerged as a new consideration for fair employee treatment in the hotel industry (Luo et al., 2017). It can also remove the disagreement between the employer and employee (Sahoo & Sahoo, 2019). Researchers found that when employees are treated fairly and justly, they can confidently rely on the organizational people (Gaudencio et al., 2017; Vanhala & Ahteela, 2011) and feel comfortable with their job (Rai, 2015). Fairness in organizational practices and employee treatment enrich employees' QWL (Malik et al., 2019; Rai, 2015). From another perspective, in the hotel industry, researchers observed the absence of trust among organizational members that restrict mutual respect, knowledge sharing, open communication, collaboration, and creative performance (Jia et al., 2019; Oh, 2022; Qiu et al., 2019), which eventually hampers the peace of employees' working life (Akter et al., 2021, 2023; Van der Berg & Martins, 2013). Besides, during times of uncertainty, economic or political unrest, natural disasters, and pandemics (e.g., COVID-19), the shared trust would even help all the stakeholders of the hotels (Guzzo et al., 2021). Considering the nature of hotel jobs, researchers claimed that no variable can affect an individual's attitude and behavior as much as trust does (Tan & Tan, 2000). Research revealed that an atmosphere with mutual trust in the working team can enrich people's working life (Akter et al., 2021, 2023; Van der Berg & Martins, 2013). Thus, this study suggests that hotels' organizational justice and working teams' climate of mutual trust can improve employees' QWL, which is yet to be explored.

Research also revealed that organizational justice nurtures a climate of trust in the working team(s) (Sahoo & Sahoo, 2019; Top & Tekingunduz, 2018). Other researchers also found the mediating effect of trust climate between the organizational factors and employee and organizational outcomes, e.g., quality of work life, employee relations, and so on (Akter et al., 2021, 2023; Lin et al., 2016; Sahoo & Sahoo, 2019). However, previously, much research was conducted on the constructs of employees' QWL (Akter et al., 2021; Gordon et al., 2019; Jabeen et al., 2018), firm's OJ (Kim et al., 2017b; Malik et al., 2019; Rai, 2015), and team's CT (Akter et al., 2021; Fainshmidt & Frazier, 2017; Lin et al., 2016; Sahoo & Sahoo, 2019), although no studies have examined these three factors simultaneously. Furthermore, research frequently overlooks the antecedents of employees' QWL in the context of the hotel industry.

The hospitality and tourism industries have been recognized as major contributors to the world economy in terms of GDP and job creation (Sheehan et al., 2018). In addition, the industry, directly and indirectly, contributes to the development of many economies; and in some nations, it acts as a major source of foreign currency earnings (Sheehan et al., 2018). Globally, in 2021, the travel and tourism sector supported 6.7 percent of jobs and contributed 5.8 percent of GDP (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2022). At the same

time, in Bangladesh, this sector supported 2.6 percent of jobs, contributed 2.2 percent to GDP, and generated 0.4 percent of total export income (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2022). That is how, the sector acts as one of the major economic drivers in Bangladesh (GOB, 2022). In addition to the economic contribution, the sector impacts different aspects of the environment and society (Jones et al., 2017).

Therefore, this research intends to examine the direct effect of hotels' OJ on employees' QWL and the mediating effect of teams' CT in the relationship between firms' OJ and employees' QWL in the hotel industry in Bangladesh. Hence, a conceptual model is proposed to supplement the development of a theoretical and empirical foundation in the area of QWL. It will contribute to QWL research by emphasizing firms' OJ as a predictor of teams' CT and employees' QWL. Moreover, this study will contribute to the hotel industry's understanding of how to improve the quality of employees' working life by showing that firms' organizational justice and teams' climate of trust can be important determinants of employees' QWL.

## 2. Literature review and hypotheses development

### 2.1 Quality of work life

Quality of work life is regarded as an organizational process that fulfills employee needs and humanizes the work environment. Walton (1975) formalized the term 'quality of work life' with the aims of humanizing the working environment, cherishing employer-employee relations, and improving product quality. In his definition, Walton (1975) referred to QWL as "a process by which an organization responds to employees' needs by developing mechanisms to allow them to share fully in making the decisions that design their lives at work". An improved QWL program at a firm can resolve issues relating to their work settings. Consequently, when employees are provided with a healthy and caring life at work, a sense of obligation toward the organization is developed in them (Dechawatanapaisal, 2017). Furthermore, by improving the overall working environment (Adhikari & Gautam, 2010), QWL provides a quality experience and a comfortable feeling at work (Hermawati et al., 2019; Nayak & Sahoo, 2015; Srivastava & Pathak, 2016).

QWL is "employee satisfaction with a variety of needs through resources, activities, and outcomes stemming from participation in the workplace" (Sirgy et al., 2001). They emphasize the significance of the individuals' QWL on their overall (professional and personal) life (Akter et al., 2021). As stated by Razak et al. (2016), the continuous implementation of QWL approaches can balance people's personal and professional life, thereby, making them feel happy with their overall life (Sirgy et al., 2001). From the employee perspective, QWL is defined as an employee's perceptions of the work-life-related amenities and support that a company provides to make their working life more enjoyable (Kwahar & Iyortsuun, 2018). When they are provided with these amenities and benefits, they are inclined to be more dedicated to delivering high-quality performance to achieve organizational success (Dechawatanapaisal, 2017; Kwahar & Iyortsuun, 2018).

### 2.2 Organizational justice

To understand workplace behaviors, organizational justice is a dominant concept in organizational life. It is emphasized by scholars as critical to understanding human attitudes and behaviors (Cropanzano et al., 2001). Beugre (1998) defined OJ as "the perception of social and economic exchange among workers and their work organizations". It refers to perceived fairness in organizational treatment regarding working procedures, rewarding systems, information sharing, and interpersonal relations (Colquitt, 2001). Corporate OJ practices improve employees' ability to fulfill their professional obligations, which results in employee commitment, and retention (Chen et al., 2015; Kang & Sung, 2019; Kim et al., 2017a). It is so important that the desire for justice even plays a role in the workplace (Otto et al., 2009). Besides, corporate sustainability depends on ethical and fair treatment (Schuler & Jackson, 2005). On the other hand, OJ is the employee perception that their organizational relationships are treated fairly, equally, and ethically (Cropanzano et al., 2007), thus, employees feel respected and appreciated, if their organization treats them fairly and if its policies and practices are just and equitable. Researchers revealed that firms' OJ develops

employee trust in their organization/managers, and improves employer-employee relations (Fein et al., 2013; Sahoo & Sahoo, 2019). Otto et al. (2009) demonstrated that employee belief in companies' OJ maintains their mental fitness. Hence, justice and its effective implementation are fundamental human needs at work (Bidarian & Jafari, 2012).

There are four forms of organizational justice, e.g., procedural justice: the fair process and procedures followed to make allocation decisions; distributive justice: the fair allocation of resources and rewards based on the efforts made; informational justice: the fair exchange of knowledge and information; and interpersonal justice: fair and respectful employee treatment. According to the Justice Theory, for improving work settings and people's working life, the contributions of distributive, procedural, and interactional (interpersonal and informational) justice are necessary (Cobb et al., 1995). Thus, in explaining employees' QWL, researchers used all four forms of organizational justice but chose OJ as a unidimensional measure (Brunault et al., 2014; Hsu et al., 2019). Besides, Hsu et al. (2019) employed OJ as a unidimensional measure in investigating the employees' QWL, particularly in the hotel industry. Therefore, the current study decided to choose OJ as a unidimensional measure that would contain the measurements of all four forms of OJ (e.g., distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice) for a complete understanding.

## 2.3 Organizational justice and quality of work life

Previously, firms' organizational justice and employees' quality of work life were viewed as tools for working people to achieve goals, form groups, and serve society (Rai, 2015). Later, firms' OJ and employees' QWL were analyzed in the field of human resource management and organizational development for achieving corporate sustainability (Moghimi et al., 2013). Scholars have defined OJ as "fairness of social and economic exchange" (Beugre, 1998), and QWL as "exchange relationships" (Davis, 1977). They concentrate on both individuals and organizations as a whole (Rai, 2015). The fair practices of resource allocation and compensation, and justice in organizational procedures and policies result in employee well-being, job satisfaction, and enhanced QWL (Brunault et al., 2014; Gillet et al., 2013; Malik et al., 2019; Moghimi et al., 2013; Rai, 2015). Furthermore, the availability of fair treatment in the organization fosters employee-organizational trust and limits the adoption of work-deviant behaviors (Malik et al., 2019; Rai, 2015; Sahoo & Sahoo, 2019). According to the social exchange theory, institutional OJ usually stimulates a sense of harmony and impacts employee outcomes, which is likely to strengthen the exchange relationship (Rai, 2015). Therefore, considering the positive employee outcomes of organizational justice, it is assumed that hotels' OJ practices can facilitate employees' QWL. So, the study hypothesizes as follows:

*H1: Hotel's organizational justice positively influences the quality of employees' work life.*

## 2.4 Organizational justice, climate of trust, and quality of work life

The notion behind social exchange theory is that humans are drawn to reciprocate and engage in social exchange relationships. An efficient social exchange generates mutual trust among the parties (Rai, 2015; Sahoo & Sahoo, 2019). In institutions, when people are treated fairly and justly, a high level of mutual trust takes place (Gaudencio et al., 2017; Sahoo & Sahoo, 2019), which helps both managers and employees achieve firm success in a shorter time and more effectively (Akter et al., 2021, 2023). A trustworthy working environment helps people be trusted by others; thus, it improves the values and qualities of employees' work and working life (Akter et al., 2021; Van der Berg & Martins, 2013). Besides, a trusting climate acts as a crucial factor in improving the level of employee satisfaction (Blömeke et al., 2015; Jiang & Probst, 2015).

Organizational fairness reduces occupational stress, builds people's confidence, fosters a sense of belonging, and thus increases organizational trust among employees (Barekat & Gilavand, 2018; Oosthuizen et al., 2018; Bidarian & Jafari, 2012; Top & Tekingunduz, 2018). Sahoo and Sahoo (2019) argued that organizational justice can develop and nurture a team's trusting climate in the organization. Thus, researchers empirically found that the team's climate of trust is a great consequence of the practices of organizational justice (Aryee et al., 2002; Katou, 2013; Sahoo & Sahoo, 2019). A team climate based on mutual trust stimulates social connections, maximizes resource utilization, and synthesizes multiple views that facilitate converting the managers' considerations into improved firm outcomes (Carmeli et al., 2012; Shih et al., 2012). A team's climate of trust promotes adaptability and coordination among the team members (Collins & Smith, 2006), and thereby it affects the firm's competitive advantage by improving its sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring capacities (Fainshmidt & Frazier, 2017). Moreover, a trust climate of a team fosters cognitive exchanges and knowledge-sharing behavior that may encourage social persuasion (Shih et al., 2012), thus the team's climate boosts members' confidence (Carmeli et al., 2012) and improves employee-focused outcomes in the organization (Blomeke et al., 2015; Jiang & Probst, 2015), e.g. employee well-being (Celma et al., 2018; Di Stefano et al., 2018; Poulsen & Ipsen, 2017), and quality of their work life (Akter et al., 2021; Van Der Berg & Martins, 2013). Accordingly, when employees see that all the people related to their jobs) act in a way that makes them feel secure and proud, since other people also feel the same about them, they can enjoy their life at work. Thus, the present study assumes that teams' climate of trust can play a mediating role in the relationship between hotels' OJ and employees' QWL. Therefore, the following hypotheses can be developed:

*H2: Hotels' organizational justice positively influences teams' climate of trust.*
*H3: Teams' climate of trust positively influences the quality of employees' work life.*
*H4: Teams' climate of trust mediates the relationship between hotels' organizational justice and the quality of employees' work life.*

## 2.5 Theoretical framework of the study

Blau's (1964) social exchange theory (SET) is the basis of the proposed theoretical framework of this study to explain the impact of hotels' organizational justice on teams' climate of trust and the quality of employees' work life. Employee perceptions of the quality of their work life are commonly described in terms of social exchange (Rai, 2015). Social interaction is fostered by corporate practices that treat employees fairly and equally (Aryee et al., 2002). Importantly, trust is found as the central feature of the social exchange theory, which states that when people are favorably treated by their managers, mutual respect and dependence are developed; thereby, the development of a trusting climate in a working team is the consequence (Kramer, 1999). The theoretical framework is presented through a model (Figure 1), including the hypotheses of the study, which will be tested through empirical analysis.
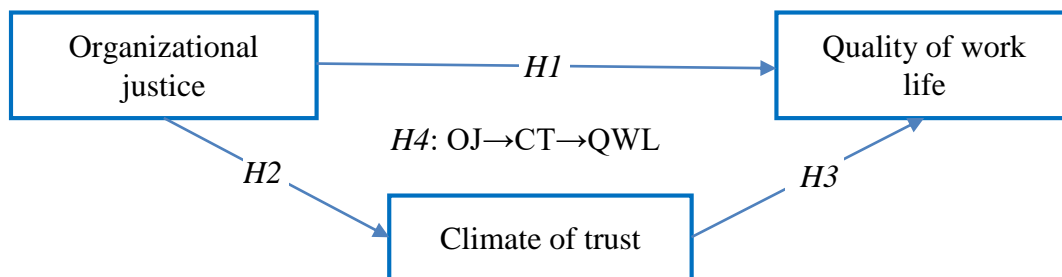


**Fig.1. Research model**

## 3.  Method

### 3.1 Data collection
A cross-sectional field survey was conducted to collect data from the full-time employees of the operational divisions of twelve 3-star hotels in Bangladesh. Hotels' operational divisions are the front office, cooking and serving food and beverages, housekeeping, spa, laundry, and security. There are twenty 3-star hotels in Bangladesh (List of Hotels, 2020). The investigators contacted the head of HRD at all these hotels to seek permission for conducting the research. Upon their positive responses, the HRD was requested to supply the list of their full-time operational employees. Finally, twelve 3-star hotels sent the required employee list. The study selected the target respondents through a systematic random sampling technique. Employee involvement was entirely voluntary, and they knew about the privacy maintenance of their responses.
A self-administered questionnaire was used, which had two sections: the first section contained questions relating to the respondent's demographic and background information (e.g., age, gender, length of service, division/department, etc.), and the second section contained questions about the study variables. 400 questionnaires were distributed to the target respondents, of which 294 were returned. After eliminating the useless and incomplete responses (n = 13), 281 responses were kept for analysis.

### 3.2 Measures
The study variables were measured using items from the validated scale developed by scholars. Organizational justice measurement items were adapted from Elovainio et al. (2010). Measurement items for the climate of trust were adopted from Huff and Kelley (2003). Finally, the study adapted Kwahar and Iyortsuun's (2018) QWL scale, which contains thirty-four items. The responses were gathered using a five-point Likert scale (1 indicates 'strongly disagree', 5 indicates 'strongly agree'). The instrument was prepared in English and then translated into the native language (Bengali); it was then finished via the back-translation technique (Brislin, 1980).

### 3.3 Data analysis
It is an exploratory study, as the relationships between hotels' organizational justice, teams' trust climate, and quality of employees' work life were not directly taken from prior research. For analyzing the proposed research model, the application of structural equation modeling using partial least squares (PLS-SEM) was employed as a preferred approach, in terms of exploratory research (Hair et al., 2017). Data were prepared and analyzed by SPSS version 21 and SmartPLS 3.0 software. Respondents' demographic information and the variables' descriptive statistics were examined by SPSS. After that, this study assessed the validity and reliability of the measures by analyzing a reflective measurement model. Further, the hypotheses were tested by analyzing a structural model. A bootstrapping function (of 2000 sub-samples) was generated in SmartPLS to test the hypotheses.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Respondents' characteristics
Most of the survey participants were men, accounting for 199 respondents (70.8 percent), with females accounting for the remaining 82 respondents (29.2 percent). The most common age group was 35 to 44, constituting 128 respondents (45.6 percent), followed by 25 to 34 years, which accounted for 75 respondents (26.7 percent), 18 to 24 years, which accounted for 49 respondents (17.4 percent), and over 44 years old respondents, which accounted for 29 (10.3 percent). In terms of marital status, married people constituted the greatest number of responses (192 respondents, representing 68.3 percent), followed by unmarried people (69 respondents, representing 24.6 percent), and separated, divorced, and widowed people (8, 7, and

5 respondents, representing 2.8 percent, 2.5 percent, and 1.8 percent, respectively). Respondents who had bachelor's and master's degrees constituted the highest responses of 140 (49.8 percent), followed by 67 respondents (23.9 percent) with secondary school certificates, 38 respondents (13.5 percent) with professional certifications (programs), and 36 respondents (12.8 percent) with higher secondary certificates. About one-third were serving in the housekeeping department representing 84 (29.9 percent) respondents, while 63 (22.4 percent) respondents were involved in the food and beverage service department, 53 (18.9 percent) respondents were engaged in the front office department, 45 (16 percent) respondents were employed in the food and beverage production department, and 36 (12.8 percent) respondents participated from the entertainment/leisure and lifestyle department. In terms of the tenure of service, a majority of the respondents had an experience of 1 to 5 years, representing 115 participants (40.9 percent), followed by the participants with 6 to 10 years of experience, constituting 100 respondents (35.6 percent). Further, 41 respondents (14.6 percent) had 11 to 15 years of experience, and 25 (8.9 percent) had more than 15 years of experience.

## 4.2 Descriptive and correlation analysis

This study carried out a descriptive analysis of all the study variables (quality of work life, organizational justice, and trust climate) to examine the respondents' general perceptions. The mean score of a variable closer to 5 is considered "strong agreement," while a score closer to 1 is considered "poor agreement" on that variable, as the responses were gathered using a 5-point scale. Findings demonstrate that the mean score of all the constructs was above 3, which indicates the consistency of the results. In addition, the values of standard deviation in the cases of all the constructs were lower than 1, indicating the achievement of the desired result of the study.

Further, a correlation analysis was conducted to test the inter-relations between the variables. Results confirmed the existence of significant correlations between the variables (quality of work life, organizational justice, and climate of trust) at $p<0.01$. The results of descriptive and correlation analysis are displayed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients**

| Construct | Mean | SD | Organizational justice | Climate of trust | Quality of work life |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Organizational justice | 3.219 | 0.679 | 1 | | |
| Climate of trust | 3.287 | 0.709 | 0.360** | 1 | |
| Quality of work life | 3.039 | 0.771 | 0.354** | 0.414** | 1 |

Note: **$p<0.01$ (1-tailed)

## 4.3 Measurement model assessment

This research assessed the reliability and validity of the measurement scales. The results of the assessment of the measurement model are presented in Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4.

## 4.3.1 Convergent validity

The reliability and convergent validity of the measurement model were assessed using the factor loadings, *Cronbach's Alpha* (α), composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and Dijkstra Henseler's rho values (*rho_A*). The results are exhibited in Table 2 (Figure 2). The loadings greater than 0.6 were taken, as Byrne (2016) suggested. Seven items (OJ1, QWL2, QWL4, QWL21, QWL27, QWL30, and QWL33) were removed from the model due to their lower loadings. All alpha values, Dijkstra Henseler's rho values, and composite reliability scores were above 0.70, indicating sufficient consistency reliability. Further, the AVE of all the constructs met the threshold values of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017). Therefore, the reliability and convergent validity of the constructs were achieved.

**Table 2: Results of reliability and convergent validity**

| Construct | Item | Outer Loadings | α | CR | AVE | rho_A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Organizational justice | OJ2 | 0.804 | 0.876 | 0.905 | 0.614 | 0.898 |
| | OJ3 | 0.840 | | | | |
| | OJ4 | 0.837 | | | | |
| | OJ5 | 0.662 | | | | |
| | OJ6 | 0.802 | | | | |
| | OJ7 | 0.742 | | | | |
| Climate of trust | CT1 | 0.761 | 0.848 | 0.896 | 0.683 | 0.881 |
| | CT2 | 0.827 | | | | |
| | CT3 | 0.880 | | | | |
| | CT4 | 0.835 | | | | |
| Quality of work life | QWL1 | 0.750 | 0.972 | 0.974 | 0.575 | 0.976 |
| | QWL3 | 0.720 | | | | |
| | QWL5 | 0.826 | | | | |
| | QWL6 | 0.812 | | | | |
| | QWL7 | 0.745 | | | | |
| | QWL8 | 0.824 | | | | |
| | QWL9 | 0.700 | | | | |
| | QWL10 | 0.820 | | | | |
| | QWL11 | 0.769 | | | | |
| | QWL12 | 0.678 | | | | |
| | QWL13 | 0.801 | | | | |
| | QWL14 | 0.825 | | | | |
| | QWL15 | 0.831 | | | | |
| | QWL16 | 0.766 | | | | |
| | QWL17 | 0.738 | | | | |
| | QWL18 | 0.846 | | | | |
| | QWL19 | 0.864 | | | | |
| | QWL20 | 0.775 | | | | |
| | QWL22 | 0.723 | | | | |
| | QWL23 | 0.747 | | | | |
| | QWL24 | 0.760 | | | | |
| | QWL25 | 0.789 | | | | |
| | QWL26 | 0.602 | | | | |
| | QWL28 | 0.740 | | | | |
| | QWL29 | 0.629 | | | | |
| | QWL31 | 0.665 | | | | |
| | QWL32 | 0.686 | | | | |
| | QWL34 | 0.721 | | | | |
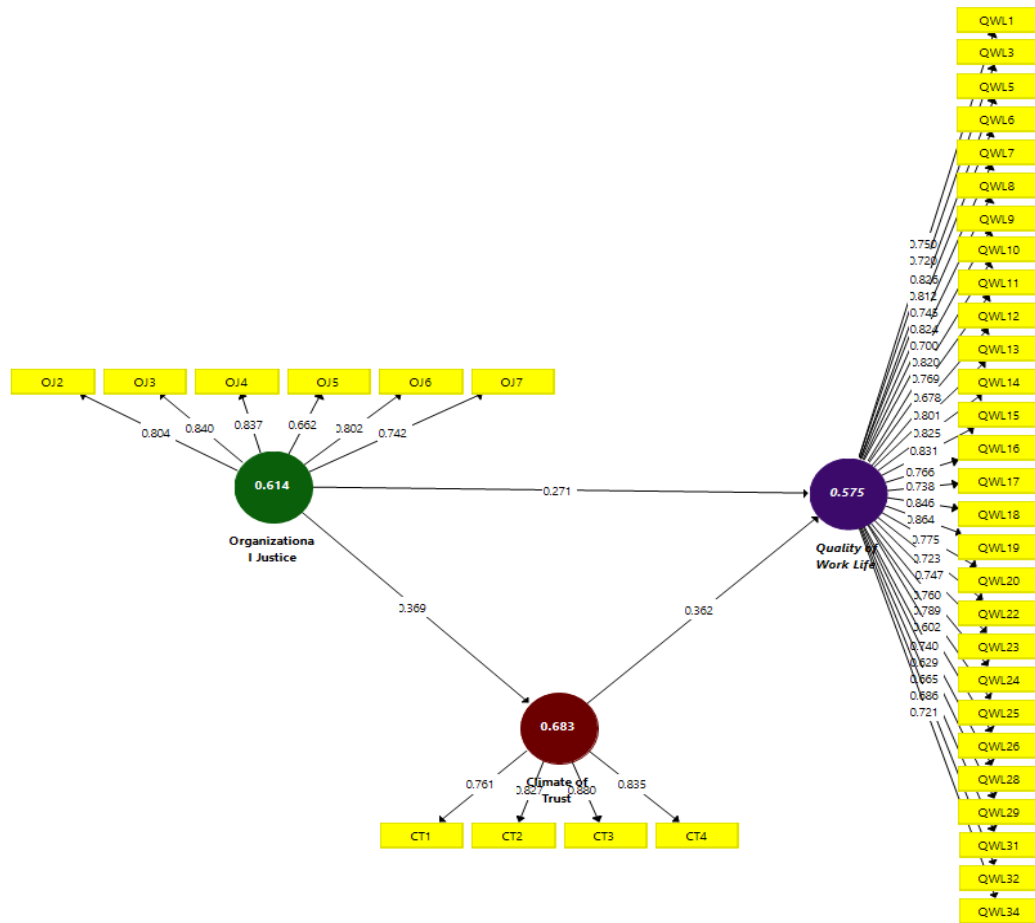
**Fig.2: Measurement model**

### 4.3.2 Discriminant validity

This discriminant validity of the model was observed using the cross-loading criterion, Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion, and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). The cross-loading results exposed that the indicators' outer loadings with the corresponding constructs were higher than the cross-loadings with other constructs. Therefore, the measurement model is considered satisfactory (Hair et al., 2017).

In terms of the Fornell and Larcker criterion, the correlations between the variables and the square root of the AVE of each variable were compared. As seen in the (Table 3) results, the square root of AVE (diagonals, in parentheses) was greater than the correlation (off-diagonal) of each variable, indicating the satisfactory discriminant validity of the variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

**Table 3: Discriminant validity using Fornell and Larcker criterion**

| Construct | Climate of trust | Organizational justice | Quality of work life |
|---|---|---|---|
| Climate of trust | (0.827) | | |
| Organizational justice | 0.369 | (0.784) | |
| Quality of work life | 0.462 | 0.405 | (0.758) |

In the evaluation of the HTMT inference, results demonstrate that the confidence interval does not have a value of one (1) in any of the constructs (Henseler et al., 2015), indicating that all of the values meet the HTMT criterion. This result also confirmed the discriminant validity of the measurement model (Table 4).

**Table 4: Discriminant validity using HTMT criterion**

| Construct | Climate of trust | Organizational justice | Quality of work life |
|---|---|---|---|
| Climate of trust | | | |
| Organizational justice | 0.422 | | |
| Quality of work life | 0.448 | 0.397 | |

## 4.4 Structural equation model analysis

In this stage, this research analyzed the hypothesized relationships using a bootstrapping function. Results of the path coefficient assessment pointed out that all three hypothesized relationships (e.g., H1: OJ→QWL, H2: OJ→CT, and H3: CT→QWL) have t-values higher than the cut-off value of 1.645 (one-tailed), which indicates that all the paths are significant (at 0.05) (Hair et al., 2017). The result of the first hypothesized relationship (H1) (β = 0.271, t = 4.432), indicated that hotels' organizational justice has a significant impact on the employees' quality of work life. Thus, hypothesis 1 is supported. Likewise, a significant impact of teams' trust climate on the quality of employees' work life is found in the result of (H3) hypothesized relationship 3 (β = 0.362, t = 6.222). So, hypothesis 3 is supported. Both the exogenous constructs (hotels' organizational justice and teams' trust climate) explained 27.7% of the variance in the quality of employees' work life indicating a substantial model, as Cohen's (1988) recommendation.

Furthermore, the results supported the hypothesized relationship 2 (H2) by demonstrating that hotels' organizational justice (β = 0.369, t = 6.166) has a significant effect on the team's climate of trust. So, hypothesis 2 is also supported. Besides, hotels' organizational justice explained 13.6% of the variance in teams' climate of trust, indicating a moderate model (Cohen, 1988). Lastly, the result of hypothesized relationship 4 (H4) showed the indirect effect of hotels' organizational justice on the quality of employees' work life (OJ→CT→QWL), which is significant at 0.05 (with β = 0.134, t = 4.181). Hence, hypothesized relationship 4 (H4) is supported. The results of the path coefficient assessment are exhibited in Table 5 (referring to Figure 3).

**Table 5: Results of hypothesis testing**

| Hypothesized Relationship | Std. Beta | Std. Error | t-value | Decision | $R^2$ | $f^2$ | $Q^2$ | 95% Confidence Interval (BC) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | LL | UL |
| H1: OJ→QWL | 0.271 | 0.061 | 4.432 | Supported | 0.277 | 0.088 | 0.139 | 0.309 | 0.479 |
| H2: OJ→CT | 0.369 | 0.060 | 6.166 | Supported | 0.136 | 0.158 | 0.085 | 0.266 | 0.462 |
| H3: CT→QWL | 0.362 | 0.058 | 6.222 | Supported | | 0.157 | | 0.257 | 0.451 |
| H4: OJ→CT→QWL | 0.134 | 0.032 | 4.181 | Supported | | | | 0.087 | 0.190 |

Note: Level of significance p<0.05**
Note: Hypothesis is supported when there is no zero between LL and UL

Moreover, this study examined the effect size ($f^2$) to measure the contribution of an exogenous variable to the value of $R^2$ of the endogenous variable. As shown in Table 5, the effect size of OJ on QWL (0.088) was small, whereas the effect size of OJ on CT (0.158) and CT on QWL (0.157) were medium (Cohen, 1988). Following a blindfolding procedure, the study also reported the Stone–Geisser index ($Q^2$) which indicates predictive relevance (out-of-sample) and should be greater than zero (0). Since the two $Q^2$ values (QWL = 0.139, CT = 0.085) of this study were greater than zero, the model has predictive relevance.
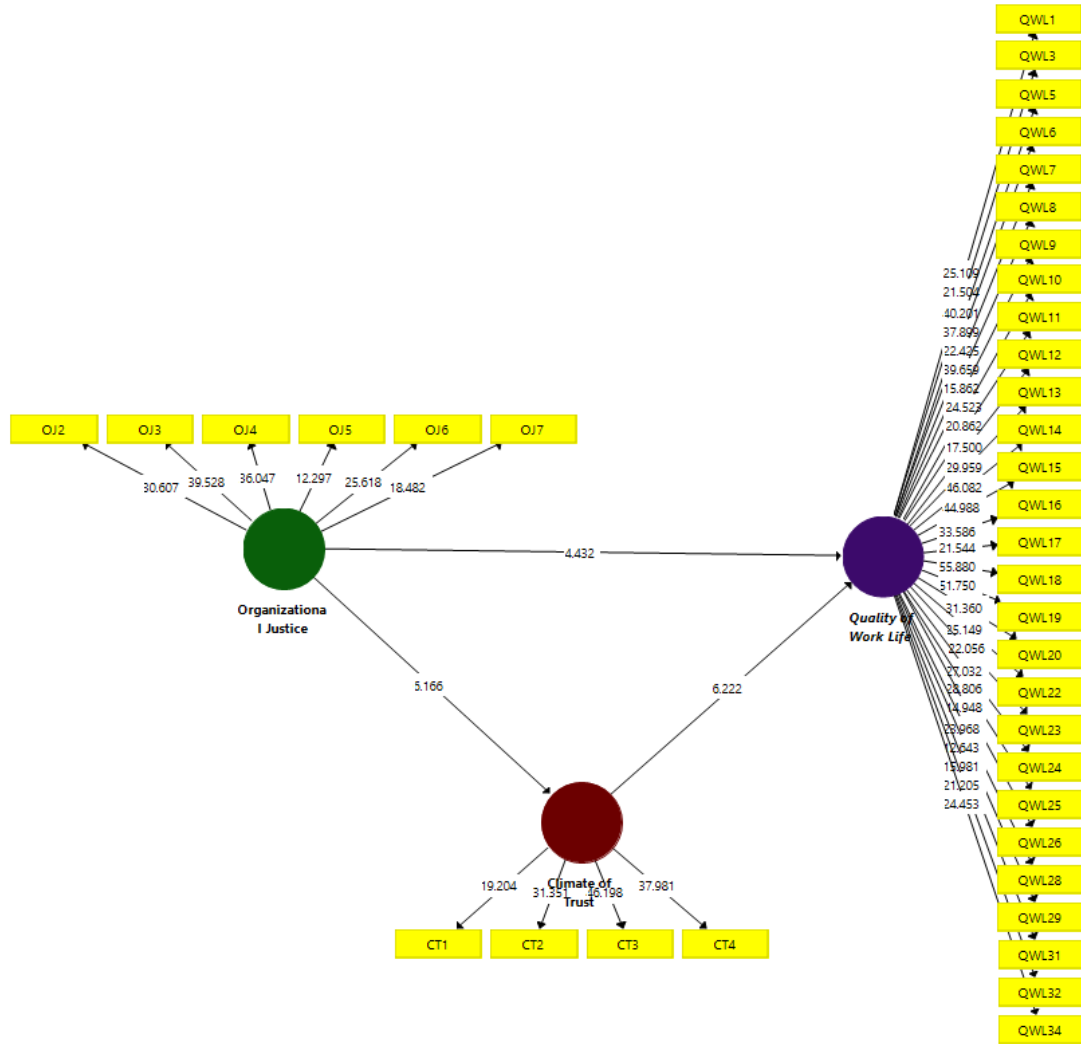
**Fig.3. Bootstrapping results**

### 4.5 Mediation effect analysis

To assess the mediating role of teams' trust climate, the indirect effect of hotels' organizational justice on the quality of employees' work life (in Table 5, hypothesis 4) was checked. Also, the confidence intervals of the indirect path (OJ→CT→QWL) were observed in Table 5 (Hair et al., 2017). Results show no zero between the confidence intervals, i.e., the lower and upper limit in terms of the indirect relationship (OJ→CT→QWL) based on the t-value indicating that the hypothesis (H4) is supported. Moreover, both the indirect and direct effects of hotels' organizational justice on employees' work-life quality are found significant, implying that teams' trust climate partially mediates the aforementioned relationship (Ramayah et al., 2018).

### 5. Discussion

This study surveyed the operational employees of the hotel industry in Bangladesh and revealed four major findings. First, the results confirm that hotels' organizational justice has a significant influence on the quality of operational employees' work life in Bangladeshi hotels. This result is in line with the results of prior research that exhibited the positive association between firms' organizational justice and employees' work-life quality (Gillet et al., 2013; Malik et al., 2019; Rai, 2015). These studies demonstrated how an organization's justice practices promote employees' peaceful lives at work. Second, a significant effect of

hotels' organizational justice on the team's trust climate was found in the hotel industry. The finding is consistent with previous research, which found that hotels' organizational justice is both a result of managers' trust in employees and a cause of employees' trust in the managers or corporation, and thus hotel's organizational justice predicts mutual trust at the workplace (Sahoo & Sahoo, 2019). Third, this study found a substantial impact of teams' climate of trust on the hotel operational employees' quality of work life. This finding corroborates the results of prior studies revealing that a workplace with an atmosphere of shared and mutual trust can improve the peace and happiness of people's work lives (Akter et al., 2021; Blomeke et al., 2015; Jiang & Probst, 2015).

Finally, the findings revealed a mediation effect of the team's trust climate in the relationship between hotels' organizational justice and the quality of operational employees' work life in the Bangladeshi hotel industry. The findings confirmed that both the direct and indirect effects of hotels' organizational justice on operational employees' work-life quality were significant. It indicates the partial absorption of the direct effects of hotels' organizational justice by the team's trust climate; consequently, the mediation is partial (Ramayah et al., 2018). Thus, it can be confirmed that a team's trust climate partially mediates the relationship between its justice practices and the operational employees' quality of work life. These results are in line with the results of some prior studies that investigated the mediation effect of teams' trust climate. For example, Akter et al. (2021) revealed the mediation effect of teams' trust climate in the influence of managers' transformational leadership practices on the quality of operational employees' work life. Similarly, Lin et al. (2016) showed teams' trust climate as a mediating factor between leadership and corporate success. Furthermore, Sahoo and Sahoo (2019) found the mediating effect of the working team's trust climate in the influence of companies' organizational justice and conflict management on employee relations.

## 6. **Theoretical and practical contributions**

The findings of this study have several theoretical and practical implications. First, this research adds new knowledge to the QWL literature by adopting hotels' organizational justice as its antecedent. Second, it contributes to the OJ literature by illustrating the influence of hotels' organizational justice on the quality of operational employees' work life. Third, the findings of the research confirm the implementation of the principle of reciprocity of the social exchange theory in elucidating the association between hotels' organizational justice and the quality of operational employees' work life. Fourth, the study contributes new knowledge by introducing the mediating role of a team's climate of trust in the relationship between hotels' organizational justice and the quality of operational employees' work life, which was overlooked in the past literature. Moreover, this research enriches employee-outcome literature in the context of the hotel industry. Aside from the theoretical contribution, this research has some other implications for practitioners and policymakers. First, the findings of the study indicate that the quality of operational employees' working life is critically important in the Bangladeshi hotel industry. Second, since the justice practices of the hotels influence teams' climate of trust that further affects the quality of operational employees' work life, the managers need to formulate effective strategies for the implementation of hotels' organizational justice that will improve operational employees' perceptions about their working life. Third, the significant influence of teams' climate of trust on operational employees' quality of work life suggests that hotel authorities/managers should design a QWL program to enrich operational employees' working life, personal life, and overall life. Fourth, while establishing strategies for practicing organizational justice, hoteliers/managers in developing and under-developed countries could prioritize those measures that have the most potential to positively affect their operational employees' work-life quality. This is especially essential because firms (e.g., hotels) and systems in underdeveloped nations have fewer resources. Therefore, it may be useful for these firms to begin with the most critical areas of hotels' organizational

justice and then adopt additional measures depending on the performance results. This strategy would assist the hoteliers/managers in striking a balance between the firm's success and employee-focused results.

## 7. Limitations and directions for future research

The study has several limitations that can stimulate probable directions for future research. The use of data collected by a cross-sectional study is the first limitation of this research. So, future investigators may concentrate on longitudinal studies that can analyze the changes in knowledge over time. Further, this study was undertaken in a specific national context (Bangladesh). Thus, the research findings have limited validity and generalizability. The findings of this research are to be interpreted carefully when applying them to diverse cultures and economies. Besides, this research recommends that future researchers consider the model's acceptance in the hospitality firms of other (developing and developed) countries. Moreover, this study only considered the operational employees of the hotels. As a result, this limitation highlights the complication in generalizing the research findings to all levels of employees in the hotel industry. Therefore, the study suggests future researchers focus on all levels of employees engaged in similar firms.

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