

EMPLOYEE AWARENESS OF LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS UNDER
BANGLADESH LABOUR LAW AND ITS IMPACT ON PSYCHOLOGICAL
CONTRACT FULFILLMENT: A QUALITATIVE STUDY AT SQUARE
TOILETRIES LTD.

Square Toiletries Ltd.

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Business Administration



30 August, 2025

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Letter of Transmittal

30 August, 2025

Dr. SK Tashtekur Hossain Kowshik
Assistant Professor
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Subject: Submission of Internship Report

Dear Sir,

I am writing this letter with great pleasure to submit my internship report on “Employee Awareness of Leave Entitlements under Bangladesh Labour Law and Its Impact on Psychological Contract Fulfillment: A Qualitative Study at Square Toiletries Ltd.”

During my internship tenure (3 Months), I got the opportunity to directly work with employees of Square Toiletries Ltd. from the Human Resource Department. This report has been prepared based on the primary data which I collected through interviewing the employees. To start from one of the leading companies of the country, I consider myself incredibly fortunate and worthy for this opportunity.

I extend my earnest gratitude to you for your relentless support, guidance and insightful feedback throughout the process. It is one of the greatest experiences of my academic life for completing my internship. Despite having the limitations, I really hope you find this report insightful and valuable.

Thank you for your generous consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

Nurunnahar

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Acknowledgement

This has been both an honor and significantly rewarding part of my academic journey for getting the chance to submit this internship report after acquiring the practical experience at Square Toiletries Ltd. This magnificent experience has given me the exposure to enhance my prequipped academic knowledge along with the chance of professional and personal growth.

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List of Acronyms

Acronym	Full Form
FMCG	Fast-Moving Consumer Goods
HR	Human Resource
HRD	Human Resource Department
HRIS	Human Resource Information System
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IT	Information Technology
MIS	Management Information System
STL	Square Toiletries Ltd.
TNA	Training Needs Assessment

Part- A

Chapter-1: Internship Preparation

1.1 Motivation and Learning Objectives

For effective transition from academic life to practical workplace experience preparation for an internship is the first and foremost element of a student's life. As I personally believe that internship is an opportunity to combine theory and practical worklife so for me the preparation process began long ago the official internship placement. Being an undergrad student whose major was Human Resource Management with a minor in Sustainable Development, I knew my first internship would give me the opportunity to connect my classroom learning and organizational realities practically. Therefore, I prepared myself meticulously by doing planning from my earlier days of final year by focusing both on technical knowledge and personal readiness for the corporate environment.

During the early days of final year, I did self assessment to reflect on my strength, achievements, communication abilities, and adaptability along with the weakness to prepare myself for the corporate environment. I was determined that I would do an internship in that organization whose department gave me the opportunity to do the tasks aligned with my major. In addition to that I also wanted to observe how decision making and team dynamics work in a highly performed organization like Square Toiletries Ltd. I was highly passionate about getting engaged with that kind of team where HR professionals create systems for recruitment, training, and performance management that align with corporate objectives. I also want to witness how organizations manage employee welfare with the business performance. This makes me passionate to get joined in a broader team which could be a learning milestone in my career journey.

1.2 Internship Search and Application Process

I started focusing on my academic knowledge more attentively with the industry after setting my objective. I started revising the core elements of HRM from my previous courses to prepare myself more effectively in terms of theoretical frameworks such as recruitment and selection, training and development, and performance management. I also solved a few cases online to enhance my analytical ability along with remaining updated with the current HR practices in fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies.

I started working on my CV by updating it according to the industry requirement by highlighting my interest in HR. The internship search process began with ULAB Career Service. I sent my CV to the ULAB Career Service. They started to send my CV to different organizations where vacancies were available for the HR internship. Among all the organizations, Square Toiletries

was one of them where ULAB Career Service shared my CV for the internship in their Human Resource Department.

1.3 Internship Interview Experience

On the 14th April, 2025 I got a call from Square Toiletries Ltd. that I was shortlisted for the interview on the 17th April, 2025. I got really excited for that interview. I started doing my research for that interview like updating myself with the organization's background to mission, vision, goals everything.

On the interview day, I reached the head office of Square Toiletries 30 minutes before the interview. I was waiting for the interview with the other candidates as well. Then we were informed that the interview had been delayed for 2 hours due to unavoidable circumstances. After 2 hours the interview started, there were two rounds in the interview. There was an HR manager and a Senior Executive in the interview board. They were highly impressed with my academic and professional profile. They had asked me how I would combine the sustainable development with the HRM. They were asking me again and again whether I would actually join the local company or not. After that they told me to wait for the next round. In the second round I was asked questions about my technical expertise such as MS Office, Canva etc. After 3 days of my interview, I received the confirmation of placement at HRD of Square Toiletries Ltd. After the confirmation, I need to prepare myself to join the office right after my semester final from 7th May, 2025.

1.4 Overview of Square Toiletries Limited

Square Toiletries Limited (STL) the one of the leading Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) companies in our country which is being operated under the diversified Square Group. The company was actually established in 1988 as a division of Square Pharmaceuticals but in 1994 it became an autonomous entity. From the beginning STL has consistently aligned its business strategies with consumer needs by producing high-quality products across multiple segments. STL has become one of prominent names in the hygiene sector. STL has divided its manufacturing plants across the country into Rupshi and Pabna plants with a head office in Dhaka.



Under the umbrella of Square Group, STL has been successfully functioning over the decades in Bangladesh with around 20 brands. The brands cover various categories such as skincare, oral care, baby care, feminine hygiene, hair care, and household products. STL has a diverse workforce consisting of thousands of employees along with advanced automated manufacturing plants. STL is currently exporting its products to more than 13 countries across Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and beyond.

STL has diversified product portfolio under some renowned brands over the past three decades such as Jui, Meril, Senora, Magic, Sepnil, Kool, Revive, and Chaka. Delivering quality, affordable, and innovative products to the consumer is STL's core business policy. Some brands have earned strong loyalty and recognition across the country such as Senora (feminine hygiene), Supermom (baby care), Kool (male grooming), Jui (hair oil) and Chaka (laundry products). This organization always emphasizes on its research and development by keeping compliance with international quality (ISO 9001:2008 certification)



To understand and satisfy consumer needs through high quality products is the vision of STL. Extending to continuous innovation, maintaining product quality and upholding ethical responsibility toward society and the government. STL holds a competitive edge by ensuring brand trust, smooth distribution network and rural market penetration in BDT 25,000 crore valued market.

Chapter-2: About the Internship

2.1 Position, Office Environment, and Responsibilities

I was placed as an HR intern at Square Toiletries limited during my internship. I was assigned to the recruitment sections of the HRD. The work environment was really supportive, well-organized and professional. The HR department is equipped with modern tools and accessories to function smoothly. I was provided with my workspace and necessary resources to work smoothly.

Since I was directly involved in the recruitment process I needed to do all the tasks from preparing job advertisements to assisting in preparing the recruitment proposal. For example, when employee recruitment requisition used to come to the HRD, I needed to work on the job advertisement firstly. Then I need to post that advertisement in various sources such as their official website, Facebook groups, Bdjobs etc. Then after receiving the CVs, I needed to sort the CVs for who were fulfilling the requirements for the written test. After that, I need to do documentation on the details of candidates. Later on, the candidates who had cleared the written exam I was assigned to arrange the interview of those people. To conduct the interview session, I need to prepare the “ Candidate Summary”. Finally, with the preparation of the proposal, this process used to end. All these tasks have made me more confident about taking the responsibilities by ensuring smooth execution.

Other responsibilities included:

- Creating and updating attendance sheets for interviews
- Preparing interview evaluation summaries
- Assisting with recruitment proposal drafts
- Preparing Training Needs Assessment (TNA)
- Auditing office stationery and maintaining HR records
- Assisting in result preparation of written test
- Assisting in the trainings of field force
- Assisting in the documentation of resignation process

All these tasks provided me direct exposure to strategic HR functions and administrative support

2.2 Skills Applied, Skills Learned, and Contributions

I applied various skills throughout my internship journey which I have learnt for the years. For organizing and managing candidates data, I could show my expertise in MS office which I learnt previously. Apart from that, to do formal interactions with various stakeholders of STL through email writing, telephone communication or other ways I exhibited my expertise. Moreover, to handle confidential HR records which is one the major concerns of HRM, I demonstrated my ethical considerations within human resource management. To design various training module, job advertisements, I demonstrated my expertise in Canva.

This internship experience has given me the exposure of learning newer things mostly. Previously I used to know only the basic MS excel. But when I was assigned with Training Need Analysis tasks that time I learnt huge about the advanced MS Excel. It has enhanced my advanced MS excel. Additionally, I did not have any ideas about ISO audit in the documentation process. This was the first time I experienced that. I learnt about the international standard of preparing and maintaining the files in this regard I learnt some newer policies as well

The HR team remarkably acknowledged my contributions to their team during my internship. The TNA was one of the major files in their ISO audit and this analysis was done not only on the head office but also across the whole STL. I worked on this for 1.5 months single handedly and in the ISO audit they marked it one of the well organised files according to the ISO standard. Apart from that they highly acknowledged my contribution in their smooth recruitment and administrative process.

2.3 Linking Internship with Academic Learning

During my undergrad life, I learnt about the recruitment process which started with the requisition. When I was directly involved in this process, I explored this process more deeply. Previously I just knew about the steps, later on I understand why we need to follow these processes. While doing the Training and Development course, I learnt about the methods of TNA. During my internship, I was directly involved in this rigorous analysis where I started exploring the importance and the methods in depth. This hands-on experience has taught me why documentation is important.

Beyond tasks I have learnt how to present my ideas to the team formally. We were taught about the organizational culture in the university. During my internship I have learned how to adapt those culture and how make myself heard, seen in the team meetings

This internship has given me real life experience. At STL, I get the chance to implement my learnings practically

Chapter-3: Self-Reflection

Self reflection allows me to think during my internship tenure what I have learned, which new things have challenged me and where I could have done better in the future as well. This is why it is one of the important parts for me. The internship at Square Toiletries Ltd. has actually sharpened up my personal career skills which are required to be relevant in the corporate sector apart from getting used to by the terms and techniques. Initially I faced difficulties with the newer things, it took time to get used to various things. Sometimes I feel like I am lagging behind compared to today's workforce. The other day, I used to feel happy when I could do a task according to the instructions. This boosts my confidence that I also can do better in the future

3.1 Things I Liked and Disliked

At Square Toiletries Ltd., I always felt welcoming and belonging to the team. They never made me feel that I do not belong here. I felt included in the team due to their organizational culture. I clearly remember when I joined the company, just two days after joining there was a Mother's Day event at HRD. I was doing my task when this was scheduled to happen. The HR Director personally came to fetch me to participate in that event. They follow a flat culture and their seating arrangement is done according to that. I used to do the office with senior management people of HRD. They never made me feel even once that I am a newly joined employee. During work whenever I used to face problems I could have directly approached them even for a minor issue. This boosts my confidence by diminishing all the negative feelings while working in a new environment.

Secondly, what has actually impressed me was their diverse way of doing work. My supervisor or the team had never limited me to a specific one task solely. Before assigning any tasks to me, I was given an in depth brief about every task like what is it, why are we doing this, what will be the impact of that task, everything which used to make me more excited to do the task with full energy. Everyday I used to be given new tasks. I do not remember any specific day where I did only one task. I also like doing newer things that actually gives me the opportunity to learn so many newer things in just a 3 month internship tenure. For example, in the recruitment process I need to screen a huge number of CVs everyday. Firstly, I was taught how to screen CVs manually, what are the things that make a CV able to match the preset standard of STL. Just on the next of CV screening, they taught me how to screen CV by using software and it made my task so easier that within two days I screen 4600 CVs along with my other tasks of those days

I really enjoyed working there. There are not any specific things from the list of tasks which made me feel why I am doing this. I always felt every task is giving me newer opportunities doing those tasks along with opening the door for the newer opportunities as well. One thing which has actually bothered me is their excessive wastage of papers. Since it is the Human Resource Department, we had an enormous amount of paperwork. In this regard they tend to use

a huge amount of papers everyday. Along with recruitment, I get the chance to work from the Training & Development and Resignation section of their department. There everyday we used to need various kinds of documents. To complete any tasks of each day, I observed they are wasting two pages for completing a task related to one page. This was something which actually bothered me.

However, there were challenges as well during the first one month of the internship. At HRD, people always remain in a rush to complete the various types of tasks at a time. A person was assigned with the tasks of different sections as there were not specific sub-departments at HRD. Their core sub sections were corporate and field force teams. Due to that it is expected that an employee plays different roles at a time. I clearly remember about a day from my initial month. I was coordinating an interview along with working on four resignation files and making phone calls to candidates for next day's interview at the same time. I was really perplexed at that time about where I should start. That has actually challenged me at that time but with the time I become efficient in managing different types of tasks at a time

3.2 How I Could Do Better

If I look back at my journey, I realized that to gain expertise in any tasks currently I need work on some technical skills. Initially I used to take a bit of time to complete the tech related tasks. Though with the time, I was able to do the tasks at a faster speed. Still there is a huge room for improvement. If I gain expertise in few tools Power BI, HR Analytics, MS office in advanced level, I think I can do well

3.3 How the Organization Could Utilize Me Better

I had a really wonderful experience in this 3 month internship. When I joined I was clear that for internship research perspective, I would work on one of the major issues to address the problem analytically as I have expertise in this. I observed there were a remarkable number of employees resigning consistently everyday. I wanted to explore the reason but due to their extreme confidentiality barrier, they prevented me from working on that topic. If they would have allowed me to work on that, I strongly believe I could have delivered something useful and relevant.

3.4 Insights for Future Positions

I learnt two things that are really important for efficient technical skills and building stronger confidence in communication.. For my future journey I will work on that more cautiously. For Square Toiletries Ltd. I would say they need to give liberty to the interns to work on some actual issues which will add more value in their smooth journey

It was a wonderful journey of learning and growth. This experience has helped to plan the next stage of my life with more strategically

Chapter 4: Personal Development Plan

This internship experience has given me clearer strategic goals of my life, specifically what I want in my professional life. Square Toiletries Ltd. has given me hands-on experience by finding strengths and weaknesses. My development is the combination of my academic goals, career steps, and skill-building based on my reflection.

4.1 Next Course of Action and Career Plan

My first and foremost plan is to secure a master's degree in Sustainable Development in an international university with a full funded scholarship. While working in HR, I realized that organizations have a crucial role towards the society to sustain in the market for the longer period. During my internship journey, I have observed STL's small initiatives for environmental friendly things in completing their tasks from the HR department as well.

I also want to contribute positively to society for the long run. For doing that I need to make myself educated with the newer things. At STL, I have seen how they are trying to integrate HR functions with the environment. My research also suggests that there is a major global scope of integrating HR with sustainability. I really hope I can contribute to the society meaning fully

4.2 Technical and Interpersonal Skills to Develop

I need to achieve technical and interpersonal skills for being relevant in the corporate:

- **Technical Skills:** During my internship I have seen the importance of various tools. To manage HR data, make evidence based decisions, employees need to have expertise in certain tools. That is why I planned to do advanced courses on Power BI, SPSS, HR Analytics and MS office.
- **Interpersonal Skills:** Effective communication is the key to meaningful corporate life. I am planning to strengthen my communication for better team collaboration.

The journey of pursuing higher education in Sustainable Development, gaining more experience in HR will improve all the required skills and make me a responsible corporate personnel. From where I can contribute to society with higher commitment, effort and accountability.

Part- B

Executive Summary

This study investigates the awareness level of the employees legal leave entitlements of Bangladesh and how this awareness plays a role in shaping the relationship between employees and employers through the lens of psychological contract theory. The research paper is prepared completely stemming from my internship experience which is supported by the qualitative data gathered from interviewing the employees and analyzing by using thematic methods

This study presents that awareness plays a vital role in building trust and motivation of the employees. The employees are supposed to feel greater fairness, support and trust toward the organization when they are well informed about annual leave, sick leave, festival holidays and maternity leave (Bangladesh Labour Act, 2023). On the contrary, employees remain unaware about the entitlements when it is communicated poorly. This may create frustration, lower motivation, disengagement among the employees which gives a sense of broken promises. These broken promises are described as breach according to the psychological theory

This research highlights a great number of employees, specifically younger and less experienced ones are unaware about their leave entitlements despite the legal reformation of their entitlements for example maternity leave has been extended to 120 days. Employee well-being gets negatively affected due to the awareness gap. In this study, it has also found that awareness of entitlements directly influences the employees motivation level. In achieving the psychological contract fulfillment of employees transparent HR practices, trust building communication and supportive supervision are important elements. On the contrary, employees start doubting the organisational fairness due to inconsistent communication and lack of clarity.

The report presents that for building stronger psychological contracts the organization needs to maintain clear communication, working on employee supportive facilities, arranging continuous awareness and training programs. This report also presents that employee awareness of leave rights is the foundation of a healthy workplace. This study emphasizes that psychological fulfillment depends on the combination of awareness, clarity, fairness, and reliability

Chapter-1

Introduction

Employee Awareness of Leave Entitlements under Bangladesh Labour Law and Its Impact on Psychological Contract Fulfillment: A Qualitative Study at Square Toiletries Ltd.

1.1 The Purpose of Research

The management of organizations' work policies plays a vital role in shaping the perception of employees' well-being (Kossek & Lautsch, 2023). The employees' trust in their workplace combinely depends on the formal contracts and the perceptions of feeling supported in accessing their rights (Conway & Briner, 2005). The leave management plays a vital role in the perception of a supportive environment because rest and recovery are necessary for both productivity and fairness (Guest, 2017). The employees tend to perceive greater fairness and organizational support when they are well informed about workplace policies (Topa et al., 2022). On the contrary, when the communication is unclear and policies are not explained clearly the employees consider this as a breach of trust (Robinson & Morrison, 1997).

In Bangladesh, the Labour Act of 2006 which was amended in 2018 and 2023 there is mentioned about the different kinds of rights regarding leaves such as annual leave, sick leave, festival holidays and maternity leave (Bangladesh Labour Act, 2023). In amendment of 2023, the maternity leave has been extended to 120 days for strengthening the workers welfare (Rahman & Sultana, 2022). In spite of that, a study has highlighted that many employees in the country are unaware about their entitlements (ILO, 2022). Among the young and the less experienced workers the lack of awareness has prevailed highly which makes them vulnerable to the unfair treatments (Jangra, 2018). Another study in South Asia highlights that due to the organizational culture, fear of retaliation and poor communication the workers hesitate to claim their leaves (ILO, 2023).

Psychological Contract Theory emphasizes awareness of entitlements is required for the employees trust and motivation (Rousseau, 1989). The unwritten expectations between employees and employers regarding fairness, support and reciprocity is known as psychological contract (Conway & Briner, 2022). When these expectations are met, the employees feel the fulfillment of their contract which leads them to higher satisfaction and commitment (Yu, 2022). On the contrary, when these expectations are not met such denial or unclear communication etc. the employees feel breach of their contract which lead them to dissatisfaction, burnout and turnover intentions (Robinson & Morrison, 1997). The role of awareness has become more

important in developing countries like Bangladesh where laws exist but practice differs from organization to organization (Guest, 2017).

There has been growing research on HRM practices in South Asia but there are very few research works where it has connected awareness of leave entitlements with psychological contract fulfillment in Bangladesh's private sector (Rahman & Sultana, 2022). Most of the research is conducted by focusing either on labour law compliance (ILO, 2023) or on psychological contracts in Western settings (Conway & Briner, 2005). This highlights the gap in understanding how awareness of leave entitlements influences trust and fairness in the context of Bangladeshi workplaces. This study investigates the employee experiences in Square Toiletries Ltd. which is one of leading corporate organizations of Bangladesh to address the gap.

1.2 Background of the Study:

1.2.1 Psychological Contract Theory: Fulfillment and Violation

The Psychological Contract Theory represents the sets of presumptions between the employees and the employers beyond the stated contract where employees have certain perceived facilities and demands from the organisation (Rousseau, 1989). The psychological contract theory can be categorized in four sections which are transactional, relational, transitional and balanced (Rousseau, 1995; Rousseau, 2000). Firstly, in the **transactional contract** that employees expect fair pay-roll, specified activities etc. where the expectations of the employees are confined till short term fulfillment (Rousseau, 1995). On the other hand, in the **relational contract** employees feel belongingness in the organization where both the parties think about long term career growth aligned with organisations' goals which derive from the trust, loyalty and mutual commitment (Rousseau, 1995). In the **transitional contract** employees face constant uncertainty, insecurity related to the job and rights due to the changes (Rousseau, 2000). On the contrary, the balanced contract represents the combination of both of the commitments of transactional and relational contracts where fairness, flexibility and career opportunities are provided with the expectation of adaptability and strong performance (Rousseau, 2000).

According to the theory, employees tend to believe that their hard work will be rewarded as fair treatment, career growth opportunities along with various welfare benefits. When all these expectations are being fulfilled by the organisations that is described as psychological contract fulfillment which increases the trust, satisfaction and commitment of the employees towards the organizations (Conway & Briner, 2022). Fulfillment of psychological contract supports employee well-being and organizational growth by reducing stress and increasing job satisfaction which has a connection with intrinsic motivation (Conway & Briner, 2005). Companies have seen effective commitment of employees because of psychological contract fulfillment during COVID-19 (Yu, 2022).

On the contrary, when the employees' expectations are not met despite their hard work that is known as breach or violation that creates negative emotions among the employees (Robinson &

Morrison, 1997). Psychological contract breach has continuous adverse outcomes which negatively impacts the companies' growth (Topa et al., 2022). A study has shown that continuous violation leads to disengagement, burnout, lower job satisfactions and turnover intentions (Topa, 2022). To ensure the employee morale and uphold the longer organizational sustainability, psychological contract theory should be included in sustainable HRM practices (Laulié, 2024)

1.2.2. Employee Awareness

Employee Awareness refers to the understanding level of employees that they are equipped with regarding the workplaces' rights, policies and procedures which they are legally entitled (Carey, 2023). Existing policies solely do not ensure organizational justice towards the employees. The organizational justice is ensured by combining these three types of fairness: distributive fairness (equal access to employee well-being facilities), procedural fairness (transparent approval processes) and informational fairness (clear HR communication) (Colquitt, 2001).

A study, conducted on physicians, has revealed employee awareness is one of the major components in increasing employees' job satisfaction (Medina-Garrido et al., 2023). Global studies revealed that policies about which employees are unaware are not effective. A study has shown that in Spain having workplace support policies did not increase the employees' productivity as the employees did not utilize those (Guest, 20217).

In South Asia, the awareness gap is more acute. A study in Northern India has revealed that a significant number of young and less experienced industry workers are unaware of major policies from the labour law (Jangra, 2018). When employees are not properly communicated about the fair rights, that is also considered a breach of a psychological contract (Kossek & Lautsch, 2023)

1.2.3. Leave Entitlements under Bangladesh Labour Law

Every country has different sets of labour laws according to their circumstances. To ensure fairness and justice, Bangladesh also has its set of labour laws. In the **Bangladesh Labour Act (2006, amended 2013, 2018, and 2023)**, different kinds of leaves have been explained.

Table-1: Leave Entitlements

Type of Leave	Entitlement	Conditions/ Notes
Casual Leave	10 days annually	This cannot be carried over
Sick Leave	14 days annually	These leaves are paid leave for the permanent employees
Annual (Earned) Leave	1 day for every 18 days of work	This can be earned up to 60 days in shops/ commercial/ industrial establishments and up to 40 days in factories/ road transport
Festival Holidays	Minimum of 11 days annually	These are paid holidays
Maternity Leave	120 days (4 months)	This has been extended in 2023, 8 weeks before and 8 weeks after childbirth + additional 8 days

Globally almost 58% of workers are properly unaware about their paid leave rights specifically in the developing countries (ILO, 2023).

1.2.4. Awareness and the Psychological Contract Fulfillment Pathway

Awareness may play a significant role in bridging the link between the leave entitlements and psychological contract fulfillment. When an organization clearly communicates the policies to the employees, they feel a sense of clarity and fairness(Zito et al., 2024). Transparent and clear communication is one of the major components of gaining the employees trust (Zhang & Jiang, 2025). When employees feel the workplace environment is supportive this is directly addressing one of the core elements of psychological contract fulfillment (Ahmed & Jaffar, 2022). The increased rate of psychological contract fulfillment ensures higher intrinsic commitment and effective communication (Zhang et al., 2022).

On the contrary, unawareness may create breach or violation as sometimes awareness regarding policies can be salient during the critical phase of the employees lives. For instance, female managers of multinational subsidiaries in Dhaka showed reluctance in claiming full maternity leave due to slowed promotional progress (ILO, 2023) . In developing countries breach or violation reduces loyalty of employees which increases the rate of exit (Guest, 2017) . Another study has revealed, 36% of females from the private sector of Bangladesh have proper ideas

about maternity leave (Rahman & Sultana, 2022). In South Asia almost 40% of workers are unaware of the leave policy which had increased the presentism despite sickness (ILO, 2022)

1.3 Knowledge Gap:

Previous studies highlighted the awareness level of employees regarding their leave entitlements and rights. Along with few studies regarding fulfillment of psychological contract. But the correlation of how employees' awareness of leave entitlements under Bangladesh Labour Law directly shapes their perception at the workplace with the connection of Psychological Contract Theory specifically in Bangladesh still remains unexplored. We need to investigate to understand how awareness of leave rights influences psychological contract fulfillment is critical for improving employee well-being and building trust between employers and employees in Bangladesh's evolving private sector.

1.4 Problem Statement:

Due to workplace culture, fear of retaliation and poor communication many employees from corporate sector Bangladesh remain unaware about the leave entitlements despite having clearly outlined Bangladesh Labour Law. Due to the lack of this awareness, dissatisfaction, perceived breaches of psychological contracts, decreased motivation and decreased productivity can be seen among the employees. For fostering employee well-being and strengthening employees trust in the context of Bangladesh, investigating how employees' awareness of leave rights influences psychological contract fulfillment is necessary

1.5 Research Questions:

- ☐ How does employee awareness of leave entitlements under Bangladesh Labour Law influence the fulfillment of psychological contracts in the workplace?

1.6 Research Objectives:

This study focuses on get the below described objectives-

- 1.To examine the level of employee awareness regarding leave entitlements under Bangladesh Labour Law.
- 2.To explore how awareness of leave entitlements influences employees' perceptions of psychological contract fulfillment in their workplace.

Chapter-2

Methodology

The methodology section of this study explains how the study was conducted, which method had been used to collect data, how the data had been collected and analyzed to find the answer of the research question. Through this study we have tried to find the answer of “How does employee awareness of leave entitlements under Bangladesh Labour Law affect the fulfillment of psychological contract in the workplace?” this research question. To find the answer of this research question a qualitative approach based on the one to one interviews had been chosen. The answer of this research question requires employees’ perception and real life experience, that is why a qualitative approach was chosen.

To make the research process transparent and help the readers to trust the findings this methodology is important (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). This chapter includes the details of research design, sampling strategy, data collection, interview guide, data analysis and ethical considerations.

2.1 Type of Research

Qualitative research is being used in this study. The qualitative type of research is being used when the study’s aim is to explore and understand perceptions and experiences of the participants on some issue (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Qualitative research focuses on in depth narratives, meanings and processes unlike the quantitative research which focuses on numbers and statistics.

This method is chosen for the purpose of exploring how employees view their leave rights and how this awareness affects their perception of fairness and psychological contract fulfillment. These experiences and the perceptions can not be measured with scales or surveys as these are subjective issues (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Other researchers had also used qualitative methods previously in human resource management to explore the issues of employees' rights, fairness and contract fulfillment (Guest, 2017).

2.2 Research Design

For this study the exploratory research design had been used to explore the relationship between employee awareness of leave entitlements and psychological contract fulfillment. Exploratory research design is used when a topic is not thoroughly researched within a given setting and aimed to generate new perspectives (Stebbins, 2001). This design is completely relevant to do the study because in the context of Bangladesh there are very few studies which have connected employee awareness of leave rights and psychological contract theory in Bangladesh.

The research was conducted at Square Toiletries Ltd.(STL) which is one of the leading FMCG organizations of Bangladesh. As STL's head office represents the structured professional corporate setting and leave policies are in place there formally that is why this office has been chosen as a research site. Conducting research in a single organization can give the chance to get in depth and subjective contextual insights (Yin, 2018).

2.3 Method of Sampling:

To conduct the study, a convenience sampling method has been applied. Here, the participants were chosen by focusing on their accessibility and the eagerness to take part in the research rather than random selection. In qualitative research, the non-probability sampling technique is being used where the access is limited and the focus is in getting in-depth insights rather than statistical representatives (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

There were a total 19 employees from various departments of the STL's head office who had participated in the study.

Table-2: Interviewees' Profile

Interviewee No.	Education Level	Position & Department	Years of Experience (Industry)	Years of Experience (Company)
P1	Bachelor's	Executive, Marketing	3 years	2 years
P2	Bachelor's	Officer, MIS	2 years	1.5 years
P3	Bachelor's	Officers, Sales	6 Months	6 Months
P4	Master's	Executive, HR	6 Years	4 Years
P5	Bachelor's	Officer, TSD	1 Year	6 Months
P6	Master's	Executive, IT	5 Years	3 Years
P7	Master's	Executive, Commercial	7 Years	5 Years
P8	Bachelor's	Officer, Accounts & Finance	3 Years	2 Years
P9	Master's	Executive, Product Development	6 Years	4 Years
P10	Bachelor's	Officer, Marketing	2 Years	1 Year
P11	Master's	Executive, MIS	7.5 Years	7 Years
P12	Master's	Executive, Sales	2 Years	1.5 Years
P13	Master's	Senior Executive, TSD	6 Years	4 Years
P14	Bachelor's	Officer, Commercial	4 Years	2.5 Years
P15	Master's	Senior Executive, Sales	9 Years	7.5 Years

P16	CA	Executive, Accounts & Finance	10 Years	3 Years
P17	Bachelor's	Officer, IT	2 Years	8 Months
P18	Bachelor's	Officer, Product Development	2.5 Years	1 Year
P19	Master's	Researcher, Marketing	8 Years	4 Years

The advantage of this sampling technique was it enabled the researcher, an HR intern, to access employees from different departments and get a diverse perspective. The limitation of this study is the results can be generalized to all the organizations, though it provides deeper insights in the chosen context.

2.4 Method of Collecting Data:

For collecting the data for this research semi- structured one-to-one interviews had been organised. Semi- Structured interviews are widely being used to conduct organizational research as it gives balance between structured (predefined questions) and flexibility to explore deeper insights through probes and follow-up questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

Each interview session was around 15-20 minutes and all the interviews were face to face. Before starting the interview, the research purpose was clearly described to all the participants. After the interviews it was transcribed word-for-word.

This method was chosen for getting detailed perspective and experience from the participants. For example, one of the participants shared about the rejection of their leave applications or why they hesitated to apply for maternity leave. These are one of the prime elements to study psychological contract fulfillment and violation (Rousseau, 1995).

2.5 Interview Guide

The interview section was divided into 6 sections with 16 questions to get both factual awareness and deeper understanding on expectation and trust.

Section 1: Background and Work Context (e.g., job role, workload)

Section 2: Awareness of Leave Entitlements (e.g., knowledge of types of leave, sources of information)

Section 3: Experiences with Leave (e.g., challenges in requesting leave, feelings about approvals/denials)

Section 4: Psychological Contract and Leave Expectations (e.g., expectations beyond formal contracts, experiences of breach)

Section 5: Impact on Motivation, Trust, and Productivity (e.g., effect of awareness on well-being and commitment)

Section 6: Suggestions for Improvement (e.g., recommendations for HR and management)

This is structured with flexibility and is widely used in HRM research because it covers the things systematically along with getting newer insights from the participants.

2.6 Method of Data Analysis

To do the data analysis of this study thematic analysis techniques have been used. Thematic analysis refers to identifying, analyzing, and reporting themes within qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This method is widely being used for its flexibility and clarity Psychology, Sociology and HRM (Nowell et al., 2017).

The process followed six steps:

1. Familiarization with the transcripts by repeated reading.
2. Generating initial codes (e.g., awareness, communication gaps, fear of retaliation).
3. Searching for themes (e.g., “partial awareness,” “cultural hesitation,” “perceived fairness,” “breach of trust”).
4. Reviewing themes to refine overlaps.
5. Defining and naming themes to ensure clarity.
6. Producing the final report with representative quotes.

As data set (19) was manageable that is why the coding was done manually. The themes were interpreted by using Psychological Contract Theory as the guiding framework. Then a linkage has been drawn from awareness to perception of fulfillment and breach.

2.7 Trustworthiness and Rigor

Rather than statistical validity, rigor is evaluated through trustworthiness in qualitative research. This study ensures the trustworthiness through this following

Credibility: By interviewing multiple numbers of employees from the different departments different types of perspectives have been seen. To support findings direct participants quotes have been used.

Dependability: The process of research was documented in detail so that others can trace.

Confirmability: As the researcher was both intern and researcher that’s why reflexive notes were kept to reduce personal bias.

Transferability: Brief description of context (STL corporate office) allows readers to judge applicable similar organizations

2.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues were managed carefully. Confidentiality was maintained through pseudonyms along with that informed consent was provided by the employees. The study followed the university's research ethics guidelines and ensured the principle of do no harm (Saunders et al., 2019).

Chapter-3

Finding & Analysis:

The results of the study are found by conducting semi-structured interviews on the 19 employees of Square Toiletries Ltd. To investigate employee awareness of leave entitlements under Bangladesh Labour Law and how the awareness level impacts the fulfillment of psychological contracts. Analysing the interviewees' opinion the whole finding has been framed into four core themes by using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis along with various sub themes which are (1) Awareness of Leave Entitlements (2) Experiences with Leave (3) Psychological Contract Expectations and (4) Impact on Motivation, Trust and Productivity.

To present the findings in a systematic manner, this section is being started with the tables summarizing the themes and subthemes followed by the themes discussed during the interview

Table-3: Themes & Subthemes

Themes & Subthemes	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14	P15	P16	P17	P18	P19	Total
Awareness of Leave Entitlements																				
HR-Driven Awareness Initiatives	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	13
Partial Understanding & Knowledge Gap	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	15
Clarity in Communication		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	14
Experience with Leave																				
Simplified Leave Application Process	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	17
Systematic and Technical Challenges	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	15
Low Incidence of Leave Denials	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	18
Psychological Contract Expectations																				
Uninterrupted Leave Utilization	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	13
Holiday- Linked Leave Adjustments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	17
Maternity Leave Coordination Issues								✓			✓		✓		✓		✓			5
Impact on Motivation, Trust & Productivity																				
Leave as Burnout Prevention Tool	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		16
Uncertainty in Leave Balances	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			17
Varied Impact on Employee Motivation	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	18

3.1- Theme-1: Awareness of Leave Entitlements

HR Driven Awareness Initiatives:

In the study, it has been revealed that a significant number of employees from the Square Toiletries Ltd. are aware of their basic leave (sick leave, casual leave, festival leave etc.) policies under Bangladesh Labour Law. The Human Resource Department plays a significant role in their awareness process while their onboarding phase. Regarding this participant-8 has stated the following

“I clearly remember when I had come to receive my joining letter at the head office. The onboarding team had given me the idea about sick, casual and festival leave”

[Participant 08]

This is portraying the active role of the Human Resource Department. According to (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004), a strong HR system exhibits through visibility and clarity which has moderately been seen here.

Partial Understanding and Knowledge Gaps:

A significant number of employees have generalised ideas about a few commonly discussed leave. But a shallow knowledge about the annual leave, sandwich leave or any other special provisions have prevailed. One of the participants stated

“Sometimes we are told out the leaves but on a very surface level. I do not remember any where detailed discussion regarding leaves has happened. I have clear knowledge about casual and sick leaves only.” [Participant 05]

This presents a gap which highlights that the employee well-being facilities remain unutilized if there remains limited knowledge (Medina-Garrido et al., 2023). Employees ability to use leave entitlements can be hindered due to limited understanding.

Clarity in Policy Communication:

Mixed perceptions regarding the clarity of communication has prevailed. A few participants believe the communication channels are sufficient for having clarity. One of the participants remarked

“The policy communication is clear enough if employees read the notices. But many ignore them and later feel uninformed” [Participant 11].

On the contrary, others have expressed they either found the information was shallow or confusing. Two of them stated following

“Sometimes HR sends us updates but those are not in detail. We have to ask again to make sure we are following the rules correctly.” [Participant 13]

“We often hear about changes in the leave policy from colleagues or heads of departments. It is not directly from HR. By the time we get the official notice, there is already confusion about what applies.” [Participant 04]

Employees may feel doubt about informational fairness and organizational justice due to this inconsistent communication (Colquitt, 2001).

3.2-Theme 2: Experiences with Leave

Simplified Leave Application Process:

A significant number of participants expressed that the process of applying for leaves is relatively easier. It does not consume that much time. A participant said the following

“The process is easy, not that hard. Normally my leave gets approved quickly.”
[Participant 17]

Since the approvals were predictable and transparent, it resonates with the procedural fairness (Colquitt, 2001).

Systemic and Technical Challenges:

A few people highlighted the technical problems they sometimes face while applying for the leaves through HR software. One of participants recalled an incident

“Once my leave request was stuck because of a software issue. It was not denied but it caused a delay. For that reason I had to follow up several times with HR to get it approved. It made me feel uncertain whether my leave would be granted on time”

[Participant 13]

This represents that employees may feel a frustration due to the technical issue in availing their well-being facilities. To gain employee trust, transparent HR processes are required (Zito et al., 2024)

Low Incidence of Leave Denials:

Employees significantly expressed the supportive attitude of the organization regarding availing the leaves. A participant highly emphasized by stating

“STL is usually supportive about leave. If there is any denial, it has happened because of system confusion. It is not because my boss wants to say no. Most of the time my leave gets approved without any issue. I can not recall anyone in my team being directly refused except the the system error” [Participant 15]

This finding is one of the important elements which shows the organization is quite supportive. As consistent denial in employee well-being can lead to psychological contract violation (Robinson & Morrison, 1997).

3.3-Theme 3: Psychological Contract Expectations

Employees have certain set of expectations beyond the formal contract according to the Psychological Contract (Rousseau, 1995)

Uninterrupted Leave Utilization

A thing which has been strongly expressed by the significant number of participants that leave should mean the complete break from the official responsibilities. Regarding this some of them stated following

“When I take leave, my expectation is complete rest and to disconnect from office matters. But even during my leave days, I receive calls from colleagues or supervisors. It feels like I am not fully free. Because I have to answer work-related questions instead of focusing on myself or my family.” [Participant 13]

“When I apply for leave, I expect a full break from HR duties. But even then, I sometimes get calls asking about attendance records or candidate schedules. It feels frustrating because the whole point of leave is to switch off. Instead, my personal time gets mixed with office tasks” [Participant 07]

This highlights how the latent expectations which remain unfilled can lead to psychological contract breaches. Employees’ trust and commitment can be reduced even due to the smallest breaches (Conway & Briner, 2005).

Holiday-Linked Leave Adjustments:

One of the major concerns among the participants has been explicitly expressed about the Eid holiday and “Sandwich” leave (The day between government holidays). The participants highlighted sometimes the weekends get adjusted with the Eid holidays which make them feel deprived of leave entitlements. They also mentioned in the “Sandwich” leave they are supposed to take leave between two government holidays which will be considered as absent or will be adjusted with the annual leave. The participants stated following

“The sandwich leave system is very confusing and feels unfair. For example, if Sunday is a government holiday and I take leave on Monday. Then that Monday will be adjusted from my annual leave. In this way, the company counts it as my own leave, not as part of the holiday. So even though I am just extending the holiday by one day, I end up losing my leave balance. For us, it feels like the organization is taking away our earned benefit in a technical way. When it happens during Eid time, it feels even more frustrating. Because instead of enjoying time with family, I feel deprived of my entitlements.” [Participant-9]

“During Eid time, if the holiday is from Sunday to Wednesday. To get the leave on Thursday also, we have to come to the office on Saturday. They say Saturday will be compensated for Thursday. That feels like we are being forced to work on our weekend to get the full break. Sometimes the company also gives us extra leave for Eid which sounds generous. But later they adjust it by making us work on another government holiday like Muharram. In the end, it doesn’t feel like we are actually getting more. It is just shifting our holidays around. For us, it creates a sense that the company controls our leave in a way that does not always respect our expectations.” [Participant-14]

This exhibits the technically legitimate organizational practices may also create a sense of unfairness.

Maternity Leave Coordination Issues:

Very few participants highlighted the overlapping issue of maternity leave. They experienced their maternity leave getting adjusted with the special holidays. One of the participants said

“If maternity leave coincides with Eid, those days are counted inside the leave rather than given separately. This shortens the actual benefit and limits the time mothers have for recovery and childcare. It feels unfair, as maternity leave should remain distinct from public holidays, yet in practice it gets reduced.” [Participant 15]

This insight resonates with findings which argued that the corporate female employees face inconsistencies with their maternity leave (Rahman & Sultana, 2022). This may create dissatisfaction among the employees.

3.4-Theme 4: Impact on Motivation, Trust, and Productivity

Leave as a Burnout Prevention Tool

Several people positively expressed that leave helps to reduce their stress and enhance their productivity level. One of the participants mentioned

“Taking leave helps me avoid burnout. When I get a proper break I can rest & recharge myself. When I return to the office after break, I feel more focused and energized. Without such breaks, the environment can be pressurized due to the workload and eventually reduces my productivity.” [Participant-17]

This experience reflects organizational support for employee well-being play a vital role in increasing the employees intrinsic motivation (Ahmed & Jaffar, 2022)

Uncertainty in Leave Balances:

A significant number of employees have raised a concern that they sometimes remain in a situation where they are not sure about the leave balances. To know about the balances they need to either go to the HR department or they need to count it by themselves. One of the participants said

“Sometimes I hesitate to apply for leave because I don’t know exactly how many days are left. In the app it doesn’t clearly show my balance.” [Participant-3]

This observation presents a lack of informational fairness which can hinder the efficient utilization process of employee benefits (Colquitt, 2001).

Varied Impact on Employee Motivation

Some of the participants expressed their mixed opinion regarding the connection between leave and motivation. They stated they did not think about this before. On the other hand, other sections of people emphasize that leave is one of their basic rights which is not the component of their motivation. They stated the following

“I never really thought that leave policies could motivate me. For me, it just feels like a basic right. It is not something that affects my commitment.” [Participant 6]

“To be honest, I never considered that leave could influence my motivation. It’s something I have taken for granted with the job. I did not think about it in that way.”
[Participant 11]

These mixed reactions expressed only awareness can not ensure motivation unless it is combined with supportive culture and trust.

The findings highlighted that employees from Square Toiletries Ltd. are aware about their rights, policies through the Human Resource Department. Along with this, there are some of the expectations of the employees from the organization which are beyond the formally mentioned facilities. Lastly, this finding has revealed only awareness regarding the leave and policies is not enough to achieve psychological contract fulfillment. The unfulfilled expectation can lead to the psychological breach which may hamper the employees trust and commitment towards the organization.

3.5 Discussion:

The purpose of this section is to enlighten about the research question that How does employee awareness of leave entitlements under Bangladesh Labour Law affect the fulfillment of psychological contracts in the workplace(Square Toiletries Ltd)? Through the combination of four core themes (awareness of leave entitlements, experiences with leave, psychological contract expectation, and impact on motivation, trust and productivity) of this study along with the existing studies and theories the answer will be found. This discussion will be primarily based on Rousseau’s (1989, 1995, 2000) Psychological Contract Theory, organizational justice concepts (Colquitt, 2001), and HRM system perspectives (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Nishii et al., 2008). It will also consider the gaps between the labour law policies and its implementations in the context of Bangladesh (ILO, 2022; Rahman & Sultana, 2022).

Awareness of Leave Entitlements

The results have explored that the employees from Square Toiletries Ltd. are mostly aware of their basic leave entitlements(sick leave, casual leave, various festival leave) through the HR departments but lack detailed awareness. This finding resonates with HRM system strength (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004) which says the HR practices should be visible, consistent and easy to understand the shape of the employees perception. When the communication is clear with the employees there remain no awareness gaps. On the contrary, when the communication about HR policies from the HRD is unclear and inconsistent, there remains an awareness gap.

This also aligns with the informational justice from Colquitt’s (2001) model of organizational justice. Informational justice advocates about the quality and the clarity of information provided to the employees. In this study we have seen, the employees were expressing their knowledge of awareness as “partial” or “not in detail”. This has a connection with the findings of Medina-Garrido et al. (2023) where it has been shown that employee supportive policies remain ineffective due to their lack of awareness. Similarly, the unclear and unreported policies are also considered as the psychological contact breach by employees even if those existed for their betterment (Kossek & Lautsch, 2023).

A study in India has revealed that among the young and less experienced workers in South Asia the lack of awareness about the policies or rights has prevailed significantly (Jangra, 2018). It is relevant to the context of Bangladesh which shows only the awareness of the entitlements do not ensure the efficiency of having policies rather than effective communication. Absence of effective communication can make the employees feel excluded from their rights.

Proper awareness supports the psychological contract fulfillment by fostering the perceptions of fairness and reciprocity. On the contrary, the gaps in communication can create the perception of breaches.

Experiences with Leave

In the study it has been revealed that a significant number of employees find the leave application process straightforward and easy. There are not any such cases where their approval gets rejected. This resonates with the perception of procedural fairness (Colquitt, 2001) because the leave application process is transparent with the predictable outcome. Since a significant number of people agreed about not facing any denial while applying for leave that exhibits STL is being able to fulfill the expectation of employees. Being able to fulfill employees' expectations is required to sustain the psychological contract (Conway & Briner, 2005).

Though there was not any formal or intentional denial in the leave application process, some of the employees faced delays in the approval of leaves due to technical glitch in the HRIS software. These unprecedented delays created momentary frustration and uncertainty. To maintain the employees' trust clarity and transparency in the HR processes are required (Zito et al., 2024). Due to the minor technical issues, employees may have the perception that their rights is being neglected

This theme exhibits the importance of a supportive leave system along with efficient operational reliability. Despite having the entitlements and approval process, sometimes minor technical issues can lead to the micro breaches of contract which will gradually reduce the employees trust (Robinson & Morrison, 1997).

Psychological Contract Expectations

A remarkably significant number of employees expressed their opinions in the fulfillment of their unwritten expectations beyond their formal contract. The Relational and the Balanced contract elements from Rousseau's (1995, 2000) Psychological theory have emphasized on employees' expectation of fairness, support, respect in the return of commitment and performance.

A significant number of employees have expressed that leave should be a break from their workplace responsibilities. But a maximum number of people highlighted that they get official calls from their workplace on their off day as well. This represents the violation of relational psychological contract where the organization fails to maintain the boundary of employees' personal and professional life. This sort of violation can create negative emotions among the employees which may create disengagement (Conway and Briner, 2022).

A significant number of employees raised concern over their "Sandwich" and Eid leaves. In the sandwich leave, their annual leaves get adjusted or marked absent if they took leave between the two government holidays. Some of them stated negatively on the adjustments of their weekend before Eid. They stated these as unfair reductions of their entitlements. These reactions have a connection with the concept of disruptive justice (Colquitt, 2001) where employees compare their expected entitlements with the received entitlements.

The same pattern has been explored in South Asia as well where 40% of employees are unaware about the leave rules along with the process and other things (ILO (2022)). Specifically in Bangladesh, the corporate employees lose their leave days due to adjustments during festivals (Rahman and Sultana, 2022).

Moreover, some of the female participants mentioned that they faced their maternity leave overlapping with the Eid holiday. Their maternity leave was being counted inside the Eid leave which reduced their effective benefit. In Bangladesh, corporate females hesitate to avail their maternity leave due to the fear of adverse after effects (slow career growth, less benefit etc) (Rahman & Sultana, 2022). This is a direct violation of the psychological contract.

These findings represent how psychological contract breach can happen even if in the presence of formal entitlements. Because the employees consider the "adjustments", "overlaps" and "interruptions" can be considered as broken promises. This resonates with the claim that employees react to the breaches not only because of the formal contract breach but also because of the breach of their unsaid expectations as well.

Impact on Motivation, Trust, and Productivity

The last theme explored how employees' motivation, trust and productivity gets shaped based on the leave awareness and experiences.

Several employees highlighted how the leave system has helped them to avoid the burnout because of the organizational burnout. This finding supports how organizational support helped the employees to increase their intrinsic motivation and to ensure psychological well-being (Ahmed & Jaffar, 2022). Leaves help the employees to recover from the excessive workloads which aligns with Guest's (2017) claim that psychological contract fulfillment enhances psychological well-being.

A significant number of employees highlighted their confusion regarding the balance of leave days. To apply for the leave, they use the "Square HRIS" app. The app does not give them the exact number of leave days they can avail. To know the total balance of leave days they need to communicate with the HR department or they need to count it by themselves. This represents the lack of informational fairness (Colquitt, 2001). Here, transparent and timely updates about the entitlements are not provided to the employees which may create confusion and lead to the weakening of trust in the HR system. A study has revealed that employees' trust and motivation get influenced by the supportive or controlling HR system (Nishii et al., 2008). In this study, it has been revealed that improper ways of knowing the leave balances create a sense of weakening trust in the management.

Interestingly, a significant number of employees said that they had not thought about whether their motivation is getting affected by the awareness or not. This shows only awareness is not enough to motivate the employees. Rather awareness needs to be combined with the consistent fulfillment of their entitlements which will influence their trust and will lead to the increased motivation. Zhang and Jiang (2025) argue that to sustain employees' commitment the perception of support needs to be beyond solely awareness.

This study highlights access to leave facilities to create a supportive work environment. On the other hand, uncertainty and perceived unfairness may hinder the employees' motivation. Psychological contract fulfillment requires a combination of awareness, reliability and fairness in practice.

Integrating Findings with Psychological Contract Theory

This study reveals that there is a dynamic relationship between awareness of leave entitlements and psychological contract fulfillment. When the employees are aware about their entitlements they feel they are being treated fairly which gives them the sense of psychological contract fulfillment. This sense of psychological fulfillment creates positive emotions among the employees which influence their trust, productivity and well-being. On the other hand, when information is “partial”, “unclear” and the leave is “adjusted” or “interrupted” employees perceive these as breach of the psychological contracts.

Rousseau (1989, 1995) highlights psychological contracts are sensitive in terms of perceived fairness and reciprocity. This study shows minor technical issues can create the sense of breaches among the employees. Such breaches over the time can create disengagement and disloyalty among the employees (Topa et al., 2022).

This study highlights psychological contracts are not shaped by only one formal element but also it gets influenced by the organizational culture and practices. For instance, getting work calls during the day off does not violate the labour law rather it has affected the employees unwritten expectations. This emphasizes Laulié's (2024) argument that for ensuring employees' morale and organizational resilience the psychological contract theory should be included in the sustainable HRM practices

This study also illustrates that like other countries, Bangladesh has its labour law (Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006; amendments 2013, 2018, 2023) where every entitlements have been mentioned. But there are significant gaps in labor law and practice (ILO, 2022). This study highlights in Bangladeshi corporate settings how awareness shaped the feeling of psychological contract fulfillment. On the contrary, the partial information, adjusted or interrupted leaves develop the sense of psychological contract breach. This study emphasizes that psychological fulfillment depends on the combination of awareness, clarity, fairness, and reliability. Absence of any elements from these can create psychological contract breach among the employees.

Chapter-4

Recommendation

This section is presenting recommendations for improving the awareness and the management of leave entitlements within the Square Toiletries Ltd. based on the findings and its analysis. The purpose of these recommendations would be to strengthen employee trust, motivation and productivity by ensuring psychological contract fulfillment. The recommendations are aligned with Rousseau's (1989, 1995) Psychological Contract Theory, Colquitt's (2001) organizational justice framework and Bowen and Ostroff's (2004) HRM system strength model.

4.1 Strengthening Awareness through Clear HR Communication

This study has highlighted that the employees of STL are mostly aware about their basic leave entitlements. But the communication was unclear or partial due to that a sense of confusion or uncertainty has developed among them regarding the HR systems. Here, the HR department can develop structured awareness programs where the department will describe the leave entitlements. The department also can provide accessible written guides (booklets, FAQs etc) from the employees' onboarding stage where leave policies will be summarized in simple language. Through these transparent communication will be ensured as informational justice gets enhanced by transparent communication (Colquitt, 2001). This will give the clarity dimension of HRM system strength (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). When the employees are well informed, they will trust the organization which will lead to the psychological contract fulfillment.

4.2 Ensuring Transparency in Leave Balances through HRIS Upgrades

A significant number of employees had expressed a concern over the effective use of the "Square HRIS" app to apply or check out the balance for leave. Their negative experiences present a lack of informational fairness as they felt critical information is incomplete or not timely (Colquitt, 2001). The organization upgraded their HRIS software where it will display the real time and accurate leave balances. Along with that they can provide quarterly leave statements automatically through email or the HR portal. They can also provide advanced training to the managers and HR staff for assisting the employees in navigating the system smoothly. For building employee trust and ensuring psychological contract fulfillment, the reliable HRIS systems are essential. Recent studies on e-HRM highlights that transparency and accuracy in the HR system influence the employees confidence and engagement (Bondarouk & Ruël, 2009; Parry & Strohmeier, 2014). A transparent HRIS reduces uncertainty and enhances fairness perceptions (Strohmeier & Kabst, 2009).

4.3 Respecting Uninterrupted Leave

In this study, it has been explored that among the employees there is a strong expectation that they should remain free from work-related interruptions during leave. Receiving calls or any other official interruption during leave is considered a psychological breach. To prevent this STL design a “N0-Disturbance” which will prevent the work calls or emails during approved leave except emergencies. The managers and the teams should provide training on redistributing responsibilities in advance which will create leave boundaries. The organization also can introduce a “Handover Protocol” so that employees can delegate pending tasks before taking leave. Relational psychological contracts are built on trust and respect (Rousseau, 1995). The leave boundaries will ensure employees’ perceive fairness that will enhance employees loyalty and commitment (Conway & Briner, 2022)

4.4 Revising Holiday and Maternity Leave Policies

A significant number of employees expressed their dissatisfaction over the adjustments of weekends, the sandwich leave and the maternity leaves’ adjustment with festival holidays. The HR department can redesign the Eid and the Sandwich leave policies so that weekends and the single working days between holidays are not adjusted from the annual leave. Then, the organization should review their maternity policy for not merging with the festival holidays as maternity leave is recognized as a separate entitlement under Bangladesh Labour Act (amended 2023). The organization also can communicate clear HR guidelines along with including the employees in focus group discussion to know about expectations regarding the policies. Employees involvement in the discussion before making any policy will help the organization to address the employees’ expectations. Due to unclear or unfair policies the distributive injustice can be prevailed which lead to the contract breaches (Colquitt, 2001). In a gender sensitive context, ensuring the entitlements separately by compliance with labour law strengthen employees’ perceptions of fairness (Rahman & Sultana, 2022)

Chapter-5

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore how employee awareness of leave entitlements under the Bangladesh Labour Law that shapes the fulfillment of psychological contracts in the workplace. To do the study, Square Toiletries Ltd was chosen as a case study. The whole study was guided by Rousseau's (1989, 1995, 2000) Psychological Contract Theory. After doing the interviews of 19 employees from STL, we got four main themes which are awareness of leave, experiences with leave, expectations of fairness, and the impact on motivation, trust, and productivity.

The findings present awareness about the entitlements is not solely enough. The maximum number of employees knew about their entitlements but lacked details on some major points such as annual leave calculations, sandwich leave, or maternity leave. This highlighted the weakness in ensuring informational fairness (Colquitt, 2001). Though leave applications were mostly approved, technical glitches in HR systems or any other interruptions during leave were considered as minor breaches of trust (Robinson & Morrison, 1997). Employees expected uninterrupted leaves, ensuring fairness in maternity leave and festival holiday adjustments when these expectations remain unfulfilled the employees get a sense of broken promises.

Previous research supported that leave entitlements reduced burnout and supported employee well-being (Ahmed & Jaffar, 2022). So, unclear communication and confusion about leave balances limited these perceptions of employees. This represents that trust and motivation is not limited to only the legal rights but also on how clearly and fairly these are being practised

Theoretically this study is extending the psychological contract research to Bangladesh by exploring how cultural practices affect the employees perception of fairness. This supports Conway and Briner's (2005, 2022) claims which are saying that contracts are not fulfilled through formal policies solely rather than everyday experiences This study has presented that HR must as a trust builder by ensuring clarity, transparency, and respect in managing leave entitlements.

To conduct the study, there were few limitations. Firstly, the convenience sampling which is based on the availability of employees may create a bias. Secondly, the time constraints of a three month internship that limits the chance of various rounds of interviews. Finally, the study was limited to only one organization of Bangladesh so the findings may not represent the actual scenario of Bangladesh. For the broader aspect future research could compare industries by using larger samples or do gender specific leave issues.

Despite the limitations, the methodology provides deep and contextual insights to explore how awareness of leave entitlements shapes psychological contract fulfillment in a major Bangladeshi corporate office. The methodology of this research was outlined to explore the deeper understanding regarding leave entitlements and psychological contract fulfillment. A qualitative exploratory design, semi-structured interviews, convenience sampling and thematic analysis were combined to ensure depth and rigor. The methodology provided a strong way for answering the research question by aligning the interview guide with the research objective along with interpreting the findings through Psychological Contract Theory,

This study highlights that awareness of leave entitlements should be combined with fairness, reliability, and cultural sensitivity in practice for the psychological contract fulfillment. To improve employee well-being, loyalty and organizational sustainability, strengthening trust around leave entitlements is one of the core elements in the context of Bangladesh's private sector.

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Appendix:

CS003



INTERNSHIP PROPOSAL FORM

Name:	Nurunnahar
ID:	213011088
Department:	USB, BBA Program
Supervisor's Name (Faculty):	Dr. SK Tasthekur Hossain Kowshik
Organization Name:	Square Toiletries Ltd.
Internship Title:	Employee Awareness of Leave Entitlements under Labour Law and Its Impact on Psychological Contract Fulfillment: A Qualitative Study at STL

Nurunnahar

05.08.2025

Student's signature & date

Kowshik

05.08.2025

Supervisor's signature & date

(Submit your Research Proposal to your Supervisor for approval)

 SQUARE TOILETRIES LIMITED

STL/HRD/0981/2025
May 22, 2025

Ms. Jennifer Hossain
Director, International Affairs, Alumni Affairs & In-Charge, Career Services Officer
University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB)

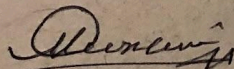
Subject: Internship Program in Square Toiletries Limited

Dear Ms. Hossain,

With reference to your letter of introduction dated April 27, 2025 regarding the internship program for BBA student, we are pleased to inform you that we have provided opportunity for **Ms. Nurunnahar** (ID# 213011088) to perform an Internship Program in our Human Resource Department.

The Internship period will be for 03 (three) months with retrospective effect from May 07, 2025. Ms. Nurunnahar is doing her project work under the guidance of Ms. Tamanna Mahmuda, Senior Executive, Human Resource Department.

Best Regards



Monami Haque
Director
Human Resources

Cc:

1. Managing Director
2. Ms. Jennifer Hossain, Director, International Affairs, Alumni Affairs & In-Charge, Career Services Officer, ULAB
3. Ms. Nurunnahar (Student of University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB))
4. Office Copy



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Corporate Headquarter: Square Centre, 48 Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka-1212, Tel: (+880-2) 222295007, (+880-2) 222295804, (+880-2) 222285902,
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Tel: (+880-731) 2588843387, (+880-731) 2588843084, (+880-731) 2588842579.



Interview Questions

1. For how long have you been working in this company? Can you elaborate your current duties and responsibilities?
2. For you in terms of working hours and workload, What does a typical workweek look like
3. Do you know about the different kinds of leave which you are entitled to under Bangladesh Labour Law (Annual leave, Sick leave, Casual leave, Maternity/Paternity leave)?
4. How did you get updated about these leave entitlements? (e.g., from your employer, co-workers, official documents, training, or personal research)?
5. Has your organization communicated your leave rights and policies clearly? If Yes then how?
6. For requesting or taking leave, can you share your experiences? Was the process straightforward or challenging?
7. Have you ever faced any denial situations when you applied to take leave? What factors have influenced that?
8. How do you feel when your leave requests are approved or denied? How does it leave an impact on your attitude toward the employer?
9. What expectations do you have from your employer connected to leave and time off beyond your formal contract?
10. What's your thought on your employer's role regarding the fulfillment of these expectations regarding leave? Why or why not?
11. Can you recall any specific situation where your expectations around leave remain unfulfilled? Did that leave any impact on your trust or loyalty to the organization? If, Yes-How?
12. Have you ever thought that awareness regarding your leave entitlements can somehow influence your motivation and commitment to your work? How?
13. Have you ever realised or thought that being able to utilize your leave entitlements may affect your productivity or well-being level?
14. Despite knowing your rights, have you ever hesitated to request for leave? If yes, which factors have prevented you?
15. To improve employees' awareness and use of leave entitlements, What could your organization do?
16. For strengthening employee-employer relationships and workplace productivity, what would be your suggestion for the better management of leave policies ?

Final-Nurunnahar.docx

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