

Institutional Trust and Satisfaction with Democracy in Bangladesh: Evidence from World Values Survey

Babar Ali ^{1*} Muhammad Mushtaq ² Amina Saif ³ Adil Zaman ⁴

¹ M.Phil. Scholar in Political Science, Department of Political Science & International Relations, University of Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: babar_cr@yahoo.com

² Associate Professor, Department of Political Science & International Relations, University of Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: muhammad.mushtaq@uog.edu.pk

³ M.Phil. Scholar in Political Science, Department of Political Science & International Relations, University of Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: amina.saif345@gmail.com

⁴ Lecturer, Department of Political Science & International Relations, University of Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: adil.zaman@uog.edu.pk

ABSTRACT: Higher levels of institutional trust are usually associated with more positive evaluations of democratic performance. In this context, the current study examines how confidence in public institutions shapes democratic satisfaction in Bangladesh. This quantitative study draws on survey data from the World Values Survey (Wave-7), collected in 2018 using multistage stratified sampling (N = 1200). In addition to descriptive analysis, we used linear regression and random forest regression for data analysis. The regression analysis indicates a close association between citizens' institutional trust and satisfaction with democracy. The linear regression model demonstrates a very strong fit, as indicated by an R value of 0.955, an R² of 0.912, and an adjusted R² of 0.911. Trust in government is the strongest predictor of democratic satisfaction, followed by trust in Parliament. Trust in political parties and police is also significantly associated with democratic satisfaction. Although trust in the justice system has a positive relationship, it is not statistically significant. These outcomes indicate that citizens' evaluations of institutions are directly connected with political representation, governance, and public administration, which are particularly important in shaping their democratic satisfaction. The Random Forest regression was performed for a more meaningful analysis; however, its predictive performance remained limited. The findings of this research modestly contribute to the existing literature and provide some useful insights to policymakers.

KEYWORDS: Public Institutions, Democratic Satisfaction, South Asia, Democracy, World Values Survey ⁷

Introduction

Democratic satisfaction is an essential element of democratic legitimacy because it represents citizens' assessments of how well the political system functions and meets their expectations (Norris, 2017). Traditional democratic orders, constitutional provisions, elections, and political rights do not ensure that citizens will be content with how democracy functions (Norris, 2019). Instead, evaluation of democratic performance by citizens is influenced not only by their experiences with political institutions but also by whether those institutions function effectively, justly, and responsively. This means that Democratic satisfaction can be used as an important indicator of how citizens

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Corresponding Author

Adil Zaman

✉ adil.zaman@uog.edu.pk

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perceive the state of democracy in their country, independent of formal features of a political system (Linde & Ekman, 2003). Trust in public institutions matters as it affects how satisfied citizens are with democracy. Institutional trust demonstrates that people have a positive perception and believe that public institutions would perform fairly and reliably and serve the public interests effectively (Levi & Stoker, 2000). People are more likely to participate in electoral politics when they have trust in the whole system. They think that the governing system is only working well if institutions are answerable, competent, responsive, and accountable. In comparison, low public trust in institutions can create an overly negative perception about the efficiency of the governance and political system. This may boost political dissatisfaction and slowly weaken democratic legitimacy (Foa et al., 2020).

Institutional trust is not just about the relationship between the state and citizens. It also shapes how people judge the performance of democracy as a whole. There is a strong link between institutional trust and democratic satisfaction because public institutions each have a distinct role in a democratic system (Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012). The government itself is always linked with public policies, governance, and public administration, and handles service delivery and puts public decisions into action. As parliament is a body representative of citizens with legislative and oversight functions, confidence in it is relevant to attitudes toward representation and accountability. The judiciary and courts are very important to protect the rule of law, justice, and people's rights (Tyler, 2007). The police, on the other hand, are responsible for public order and safety. They are also one of the few state institutions that citizens interact with directly. Political parties play another role. They link citizens to political engagements through electoral competitions, participation, and representation. This is because each institution works differently, and trust in them may not relate to democratic satisfaction in a similar manner (Levi & Stoker, 2000). So, it makes sense to check them separately, which can help to explain which institutional factors are most strongly linked with citizens' assessments of democratic effectiveness.

Trust in institutions is essential in developing and emerging democracies. This is because institutional trust in these states is often still reforming, consolidating, and adapting. In these cases, public perceptions about accountability and effectiveness become a way to check how democracy is working overall (Mahmud, 2024). Previous research indicates that trust in public institutions is shaped by many factors. These include institutional performance, government responsiveness, accountability, electoral transparency, stability in politics, and the involvement of people in public institutions (Mishler & Rose, 2001).

In Bangladesh, issues such as corruption, weak governance, and political instability have made citizens' trust a core issue. Institutional efficiency and citizens' confidence are now key to democratic satisfaction (Khan, 2010). Moreover, many studies on Bangladesh indicate that individuals may still have high levels of institutional trust even when researchers and analysts show weaknesses in institutional efficiency and responsibility. This variation makes Bangladesh essential for exploring the relationship between institutional trust and democratic satisfaction. Bangladesh provides especially relevant settings for this study. Bangladesh has experienced important economic and social development along with the continuing challenges of democratic governance and institutional trust. The democratic revival in 1991 marked a significant turning point (Riaz, 2016). It indicated how important democratic institutions are for any country's political growth. Furthermore, political polarization, governance effectiveness, accountability of institutions, and institutional effectiveness continue to shape citizens' perceptions.

These circumstances give rise to significant questions, such as how far citizens' confidence in major public institutions connects to how satisfied people are with the system of government in Bangladesh? Why is this question very important? Stability in democracy does not depend only on formal institutional functioning. It depends on something deeper underlying issues, such as whether the public sees those institutions as effective, credible, legitimate, and responsive (Marien & Hooghe, 2011). The connection between trust in politics and democratic satisfaction has drawn a lot of research attention for the future. Moreover, most of the research studies focus on

established Western democracies or largely on cross-national analysis. These strategies are useful to identify general patterns, but sometimes they miss something essential, such as how institutions actually work inside individual emerging democracies. Cross-national comparisons can also hide important differences that exist between different institutions within the respective state.

For instance, citizens might have relatively high confidence in the police and political parties but lower confidence in the parliament, the judicial system, and government. So, understanding institutional trust as a single-dimensional construct might hide essential distinctions in how different institutions relate to satisfaction in democracy. This is particularly essential for the case of Bangladesh. Comparatively little empirical research has directly studied how trust in specific public institutions relates to democratic satisfaction, especially through the use of nationally representative survey data (Ariely, 2013). Some studies exist on governance, political trust, and institutional confidence in Bangladesh, but there is a need for structured empirical analysis that clearly separates the major institutions through which citizens form perceptions and judgments of the effectiveness of the political system.

Specifically, attention has been given to the relative contribution of trust in the judicial system, the police, political parties, government, and parliament to citizens' satisfaction with how the political system works overall (Bouckaert et al., 2002). Evaluating these institutions particularly could help determine whether democratic satisfaction is more powerfully associated with confidence in governmental institutions, or whether it depends more on confidence in institutions responsible for the implementation of law and justice.

To deal with this gap, the current research study uses data from the World Values Survey, Wave 7 (Haerpfer et al., 2022) and investigates how democratic satisfaction has an impact on and relates to trust in public institutions in Bangladesh. The work mainly focuses on five specific aspects of trust in institutions. These comprise trust in the police, the government, political parties, parliament, and judiciary/courts. Participants' assessments of the political system's effectiveness on a ten-point scale are used to measure democratic satisfaction.

The dataset of Bangladesh WVS wave 7 is based on a nationally representative survey that comprises information on people's political views, their institutional trust, and how they see the overall political system. This survey was performed in Bangladesh in 2018, covering 1200 respondents, and provides a strong empirical foundation for testing the connection between institutional trust and democratic satisfaction. This work enhances the current and existing literature in three key ways. First of all, it supports the primarily cross-national character of earlier research on trust in political institutions and democratic satisfaction by providing evidence from Bangladesh. Secondly, instead of treating trust in institutions as one single thing, the research work observes five public institutions one by one separately. This method makes it feasible to assess which institutions matter more than how citizens evaluate democratic performance inside the country.

Thirdly, this paper uses empirical data, enabling the use of national-level representative survey evidence to check the connection between trust in institutions and democratic satisfaction. Thus, the examination advances in-depth knowledge of how citizens' views about democratic satisfaction in Bangladesh may be formed by their experiences with specific government institutions. In view of this, the study investigates the connection between democratic satisfaction and trust in public institutions in Bangladesh. Specifically, it examines how much trust in the police, government, courts, political parties, and parliament influences how satisfied people are with the political system of a state. This work aims to investigate the relative importance of several types of institutional trust in influencing democratic ratings by analyzing each of these institutional aspects separately.

The results are expected to strengthen the existing literature on institutional trust and democratic satisfaction. They also provide evidence that can help policymakers and institutional stakeholders in recognizing the importance of public confidence for strengthening democratic legitimacy and enhancing citizens' perceptions of political performance in Bangladesh.

Literature Review

Democratic satisfaction has become a central concept in political science literature as it captures citizens' assessments of the functioning of democratic institutions and processes (Aarts & Thomassen, 2008). Usually, Democratic performance is measured in terms of institutional arrangements such as elections, constitutional agendas, and political rights. But how people actually feel about democracy matters just as much. Democratic satisfaction is a measure of democratic legitimacy that reflects the degree to which people feel that democratic governance fulfills their expectations (Diamond & Morlino, 2005). For years, Scholars have argued that when people view democratic performance positively, they tend to trust politics more, take part more, and support democratic institutions. Institutional trust means that citizens' trust in public institutions and their belief that these institutions are fair, work well, and serve the public interest. When people trust in institutions, it reduces uncertainty in political life and makes governance feel more legitimate (Braithwaite & Levi, 1998). Citizens with faith in public institutions are more likely to accept governmental decisions. They follow laws, and they also support democratic processes.

On the other hand, when trust is low, people can become cynical about politics, pull away from it, and feel unhappy with democracy (Citrin & Stoker, 2018). Therefore, political trust has been identified as a key element to keep democracy stable and make governance work better. Emerging research shows that political trust plays an important role in making democracy seem legitimate and encourages people to cooperate in politics (Sullivan & Transue, 1999).

The article, '*Trust in Governance in Bangladesh: Ideas, Issues and Solutions*' (2015), by Islam and Mahmud, highlights the crucial role of the people's trust in governance that is needed in Bangladesh. The authors state that trust is the only source of fostering acceptability of matters related to governance. It also reduces the chances of corruption and facilitates the formulation of policy and its implementation. They further examine various facets of governance, such as political leadership, public institutions, and administrative structures, and also delineate how distrust blocks both democratic and economic development. There are some key challenges, such as widespread corruption, political instability, and inefficiency, which are crucial factors in eroding public trust in governance. Thereafter, the authors suggest some remedies for restoring the confidence of the people in the government: remedies like institutional reforms, transparency initiatives, and collaborative decision-making procedures (Rosenfeld, 2000).

A substantial body of literature has examined the relationship between institutional trust and democratic satisfaction. Studies conducted in both established and emerging democracies generally demonstrate that citizens who express greater trust in public institutions tend to report higher levels of satisfaction with democracy (Torney-Purta et al., 2004). Trust indicates belief in the ability of institutions to deliver public services, maintain accountability, and follow democratic rules. Citizens who see institutions as honest and responsive tend to rate democracy more positively and evaluate the performance of democracy. When people lose trust in their governments, they start to question whether democracy truly works and if it is a fair way to govern. Research shows that the level of trust people have in different institutions directly influences how satisfied they feel with democracy. Trust in government usually grows when policies are effective and public services are delivered properly to the people (Van de Walle & Bouckaert, 2003). People believe in parliament when they feel that politicians truly represent them and take responsibility for their actions. Trust in the justice system depends on fairness. Having trust in the police is important because it gives people a sense of security and helps keep society peaceful and stable.

Trust in political parties plays an important role in shaping how people understand politics and how they feel about democracy. When institutions perform well, people feel more positive about democracy (Bowler & Donovan,

2002). Since democracies are constantly evolving through the process of institutionalization and change, institutional credibility is also much higher for developing democracies. During the evaluation of a democracy, people usually look at whether institutions are working properly in real life (Miller & Listhaug, 1999). Research on developing countries shows that institutional credibility depends not only on efficiency, but also on social, cultural, and historical background. That is why it is now important to study what builds institutional trust and how it affects politics and governance.

Bangladesh is a useful case for understanding how institutional trust is linked to satisfaction with democracy (Ferdous, 2023). There is a lot of discussion about good governance, political division, and whether institutions are actually working well. While experts often question the effectiveness and accountability of public institutions, citizens still show a high level of trust in them (Askvik & Jamil, 2013). In some cases, these cultural and social factors are even more important than how well institutions are really performing.

Backgrounds have also been considered by researchers to explain institutional trust in Bangladesh. Trust is not only about performance, but also about how responsive the government is. Social norms and cultural values also have a strong influence on how much people trust public institutions (Braithwaite & Levi, 1998). Studies find that when citizens feel the government is responsive and when social norms and cultural views align, trust in public institutions goes up (Kumagai & Iorio, 2020). Research on the issue of political trust among Bangladeshis has shown that despite governance problems, people may still trust government institutions if they feel that the government is becoming more responsive and working on social welfare (Jamil & Askvik, 2015). From these results, it can be inferred that there is something different in institutional trust in Bangladesh compared to many Western democracies.

In this study, trust in public institutions is an important factor because it has a direct influence on democratic satisfaction. Stronger institutions of parliament, police, courts, etc., help a democracy gain more credibility by being seen as trustworthy (Zmerli & Newton, 2007). The other causes of political discontent and disengagement are corrupt institutions or failures. Electoral integrity is also important because then the voters' political preferences are adhered to and democratic transitions are peaceful and open (Anderson & Guillory, 1997). For nations such as India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, where accusations of vote tampering and electoral disputes are common, ensuring election integrity is important to promote democratic stability. Examining some key results on how voters' trust in institutions governing electoral processes is affected could perhaps shed light on sources of satisfaction (or lack thereof) in electoral processes in different countries.

This literature explores how declining trust in political institutions, perceived corruption, and failures in governance contribute to citizens' dissatisfaction across diverse political systems in the world. Researchers have investigated the multiple causes of democratic dissatisfaction that include public trust in institutions, economic inequality, perceived corruption, lack of electoral integrity, and ineffective governance (Norris, 2011). Recent events have exposed the flaws, but in principle, Western democracies generally have high democratic satisfaction. Germany often comes across as an example of stable democracy due to high public trust in institutions such as the government, the ruling political parties, and the courts. The election system in the nation is working well, further strengthening this trust (Armingeon & Guthmann, 2014). Also, the Netherlands has an inclusive political system and transparent government, leading to high democratic satisfaction (Lijphart, 1999).

A lot of research already exists on political trust and satisfaction, but important gaps are still there. First, most studies are based on cross-national analysis, which focuses on the similarities and differences between countries. Because of this, they pay less attention to the institutional work inside one country (Singh & Mayne, 2023). Second, there are few studies that have focused directly on the link between trust in public institutions and democratic satisfaction in Bangladesh based on national surveys. Third, most research treats institutional trust as one general

idea rather than examining the impacts of trust in specific institutions like the police, courts, government, parliaments, and political parties. So overall, little is known about how citizens' trust in these different institutions shapes their view of how well democracy is working in Bangladesh.

Methodology

Research design and Instrument

Data from the WVS Wave 7 (2017-2022) have been acquired online in SPSS file formats (Haerpfer et al., 2020). The data for Bangladesh have been collected in 2018 via pen-and-paper interviews and computer-assisted personal interviews, respectively. The number of respondents from Bangladesh was 1200. The original files consisted of 103 variables for Bangladesh. All questions of trust in public institutions, which are from no. 69 to 73 are negative questions, so the values of these questions have been reversed in the SPSS dataset file for all three countries. Questions no. 69 to 73 describe people's trust in the following five public institutions: (1) the police; (2) the judicial system; (3) the government; (4) political parties; and (5) the parliament.

This was measured using a four-degree scale where the values of the sequence of one to four correspond to 'a great deal', 'quite a lot', 'not very much', and 'none at all', respectively. These five negative questions constitute one of the independent variables of the research, i.e., trust in public institutions. Furthermore, question 252 describes the level of satisfaction of the public with their government on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means "not satisfied at all" and 10 means "completely satisfied". This serves as the dependent variable for the research, i.e., "democratic satisfaction". This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between trust in public institutions and democratic satisfaction in Bangladesh. A cross-sectional analytical approach is adopted to investigate how citizens' trust in key public institutions influences their evaluations of democratic performance.

Results and Discussion

This section describes the results obtained from the proposed methodology and discusses their significance in light of relevant literature. The section starts with the results of the reliability analysis, followed by the descriptive analysis, and ends with the regression analysis, where significant predictors of democratic satisfaction have been revealed from the variables of trust in public institutions and electoral integrity.

Reliability Analysis

The five items measuring trust in public institutions in Bangladesh have good internal consistency. The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.780 indicates that the items form a reliable scale for measuring the underlying construct of institutional trust. Similarly, the standardized Cronbach's Alpha of 0.785 produces a very similar result, confirming the consistency of the measurement scale even after standardizing the items. Overall, these values demonstrate that the five institutional-trust items have an acceptable and reliable level of internal consistency and can therefore be used together for further statistical analysis.

Descriptive Analysis

a. Perception of Trust in Public Institutions

There is substantial variation in public trust across the five major institutions studied in Bangladesh, as shown in the frequency distribution. According to Table 1, the police (T1), as one of the most trusted institutions, has 17.8% (n = 213) reported to have "a great deal" of trust and 36.5% (n = 438) reported to have "quite a lot". In total, 54.3% of respondents report a relatively high level of confidence in the police, 29.8 % (n=357) reported "not very much trust, and 15.4 % (n=185) reported "none at all". By comparison, trust in judiciary or courts is much lower. Only in 5.3 % (n=64) reported "a great deal" of trust, and 15.8 % (n=189) said "quite a lot". But half of the respondent, 50.3

%(n=603), said “not very much and 27.4 %(n=329) said they had “none at all”. The results indicate that confidence in the judicial system among the people surveyed is quite low (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Likewise, there is a low level of confidence in the government (T3). Only 4.3% (n=52) of people said they have “a great deal” of trust, and 13.4% (n=161) said “quite a lot”. But most people were not that positive; only 48.3% (n=579) said “not very much” and 32.9% (n=395) said “none at all”. However, political parties (T4) scored relatively high in public confidence. 19.5% (n=234) said they trust political parties “a great deal” and 34.3% (n=411) said “quite a lot”. That means 53.8% had at least some level of trust. Still, 33.0% reported “not very much”, and 10.9% reported “none at all”. Parliament (T5) scored relatively low in public confidence. Just 6.2% (n=74) said they trust it “a great deal”, and 16.3% (n=195) said “quite a lot”.

By contrast, 45.4% (n=545) said “not very much” trust and 29.3% (n=352) said “not at all. So overall, the result showed that the police and political parties are the most trusted institutions compared to the government, judicial system, courts, and parliament, where public confidence is significantly lower. This gap in trust actually matters a lot to explain the citizens’ satisfaction with democracy in Bangladesh. There are differences between overall satisfaction with the political system and citizens' satisfaction with specific public institutions.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution of the Level of Trust in Public Institutions in Bangladesh.

Sr No.	Level of Trust in Public Institutions	n (%)
1	The police	
	A great deal	213 (17.8)
	Quite a lot	438 (36.5)
	Not very much	357 (29.8)
	None at all	185 (15.4)
2	The judicial system	
	A great deal	64 (5.3)
	Quite a lot	189 (15.8)
	Not very much	603 (50.3)
	None at all	329 (27.4)
3	The Government	
	A great deal	52 (4.3)
	Quite a lot	161 (13.4)
	Not very much	579 (48.3)
	None at all	395 (32.9)
4	Political parties	
	A great deal	234 (19.5)
	Quite a lot	411 (34.3)
	Not very much	396 (33.0)
	None at all	131 (10.9)
5	The Parliament	
	A great deal	74 (6.2)
	Quite a lot	195 (16.3)
	Not very much	545 (45.4)
	None at all	352 (29.3)

b. Perception of Democratic Satisfaction

Table 2 shows a frequency distribution indicating that democratic satisfaction among survey respondents in Bangladesh was usually high. The largest proportion of participants, 19.7% ($n = 236$), were somewhat satisfied with the performance of the political system and governance, followed by those who were very satisfied at 18.8% ($n = 225$), and in third place, slightly satisfied at 17.7% ($n = 212$). Furthermore, participants were extremely satisfied at 14.9% ($n = 179$), while 7.5% ($n = 90$) reported being completely satisfied. Taken as a whole, 78.6% of respondents gave a satisfaction score between 6 and 10, which shows that nearly four-fifths of the surveyed population showed some degree of satisfaction with the effectiveness of the political institutions and systems. This comparatively high level of satisfaction among the respondents gives an important overview for understanding the further analysis of trust in institutions and democratic satisfaction.

On the other hand, only 13.8% of the participants expressed some degree of dissatisfaction, including somewhat dissatisfied at 4.6% ($n = 55$), slightly dissatisfied at 3.0% ($n = 36$), very dissatisfied at 3.4% ($n = 41$), and those who were not satisfied at all at 2.8% ($n = 34$). Moreover, the respondents were neutral at the midpoint with 57.7% ($n = 92$). So, the distribution is clearly focused toward the satisfaction end of the scale, with relatively few participants reporting strong dissatisfaction. In general, the results indicate that respondents in Bangladesh held a mainly positive evaluation of the performance of the political system and institutions during the period covered by the WVS data. This descriptive pattern is particularly relevant to the study because it establishes the overall level of democratic satisfaction before examining whether and to what extent confidence in specific public institutions is associated with these evaluations.

Table 2

Frequency Distribution of Level of Satisfaction with the Performance of the Political System

S. No.	Levels of Satisfaction with the political system (scale: 1- 10)	n (%)
1	Completely Satisfied (10)	90 (7.5)
2	Extremely Satisfied (9)	179 (14.9)
3	Very Satisfied (8)	225 (18.8)
4	Slightly Satisfied (7)	212 (17.7)
5	Somewhat Satisfied (6)	236 (19.7)
6	Neutral (5)	92 (7.7)
7	Somewhat Dissatisfied (4)	55 (4.6)
8	Slightly Dissatisfied (3)	36 (3.0)
9	Very Dissatisfied (2)	41 (3.4)
10	Not satisfied at all (1)	34 (2.8)

Regression Analysis

a. Linear Regression

According to Table 3, the linear regression for Bangladesh shows the strongest relationship between all five selected independent variables and democratic satisfaction (Su et al., 2012). The model shows a correlation coefficient of $R = 0.955$, which shows a very strong positive association between the predictors and democratic satisfaction. The value of R^2 (0.912) shows that around 91.2% of the variation in democratic satisfaction is described by the variables that are in the model. The adjusted value of R^2 (0.911) shows that the model retains a high power of explanation after adjusting for the number of predictors. Moreover, the value of the standard error of the estimate is 2.129, which shows the average magnitude of prediction error around the regression

line. All these results indicate that the linear regression model gives a very strong fit to the data of Bangladesh and has substantially greater explanatory power than the model of Random Forest.

Table 3

Result Summaries for the Linear Regression Models Developed for Bangladesh.

Correlation Coefficient (R)	Coefficient of Determination (R ²)	Adjusted R ²	Standard Error of the Estimate
0.955	0.912	0.911	2.129

b. Random Forest Regression

This has been done in Google Colab using the programming language Python, version 3.10 (McKinney, 2022). The results in Table 4, Random Forest regression for Bangladesh, show that this model has limited predictive performance in predicting democratic satisfaction. The model gives a value of Mean Squared Error (MSE) of 3.801 and also the Mean Absolute Error (MAE) of 1.497, showing a comparatively substantial prediction error. Furthermore, the value of R² (0.157) indicates that the Random Forest model explains around 15.7% of the variation in democratic satisfaction. These results indicate that the Random Forest model performs relatively weakly for the data of Bangladesh and gives considerably less explanatory power compared to the linear regression model reported in this study (Segal, 2004).

Table 4

Result Summaries for the Random Forest Regression Models Developed for Bangladesh.

Mean Squared Error (MSE)	Mean Absolute Error (MAE)	R-squared (R ²)
3.801	1.497	0.157

Table 5

Feature Importance and Significance for Bangladesh:

S. No	Variables	P values
1	Trust in the Government (T3)	0.336 (0.000*)
2	Trust in the Parliament (T5)	0.207 (0.000*)
3	Trust in Police (T1)	0.169 (0.000*)
4	Trust in Political Parties (T4)	0.085 (0.005*)
5	Trust in Justice System / Courts (T2)	0.063 (0.167)

Table 5 shows that in Bangladesh, trust in government (T3) is the strongest predictor of democratic satisfaction, with a standardized beta coefficient value of 0.336 ($p < 0.001$). This is followed by trust in Parliament (T5) ($\beta = 0.207$, $p < 0.001$) and trust in police (T1) ($\beta = 0.169$, $p < 0.001$). These results, which are positive and statistically significant coefficients, indicate that high levels of confidence in all institutions are linked with higher democratic satisfaction (Pedregosa et al., 2011). Furthermore, Trust in political parties (T4) also has a positive and significant relationship with values, $\beta = 0.085$, $p = 0.005$; however, its effect is relatively smaller.

On the other hand, the variable trust in the justice system has a positive but statistically not significant relationship with democratic satisfaction ($p = 0.167$, $\beta = 0.063$). However, the findings show a clear hierarchy in the

relative importance of trust in institutions, with the government, Police, and Parliament making very strong contributions to democratic satisfaction. This indicates that satisfaction of people with democracy in Bangladesh is mostly linked with their confidence in institutions directly involved in public administration, representation, and governance. However, rather than representing causal effects, these coefficients represent associations.

Conclusion

This work shows the relationship between trust in public institutions and democratic satisfaction in Bangladesh through nationally representative data from the World Values Survey wave 7. The basic focus of this study is to check the effects of 5 major institutions on citizens' satisfaction along with the performance of the political system. The results provide important evidence on the role of people's institutional confidence in making democratic evaluations across Bangladesh. The descriptive findings show that the levels of people's trust vary among different institutions; for example, higher levels of trust are reported for the political parties and police, while trust in Parliament, government, and the justice system is comparatively weaker. Moreover, a substantial majority of participants showed some level of satisfaction with the performance of the political system, showing that democratic satisfaction remains positive despite variation in institutional confidence by the people of Bangladesh (Birch, 2008).

The findings of regression analysis provided further evidence that citizen institutional trust is closely linked with democratic satisfaction. Moreover, the linear regression model for Bangladesh indicated a very strong relationship, with values such as $R = 0.955$, $R^2 = 0.912$, and adjusted $R^2 = 0.911$, showing that the items included in the model provide a substantial proportion of the observed variation in citizens' democratic satisfaction. Among the individual institutions, trust in government came as the strongest predictor with values ($\beta = 0.336$, $p < 0.001$), followed by trust in Parliament with values ($\beta = 0.207$, $p < 0.001$), and trust in the police ($\beta = 0.169$, $p < 0.001$). Trust in political parties also indicated a positive and statistically significant relationship with democratic satisfaction ($\beta = 0.085$, $p = 0.005$), but on the other hand, trust in the justice system was also positive but not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.063$, $p = 0.167$). These outcomes indicate that citizens' evaluations of institutions directly connected with political representation, governance, and public administration are particularly important in shaping their democratic satisfaction.

The predominance of trust in government suggests that citizens' perceptions of government performance and responsiveness may be central to their overall assessment of democratic satisfaction. Likewise, the important contribution of trust in Parliament shows that confidence in representative institutions matters for citizens' evaluations of democratic satisfaction. Trust in the police also indicates a valuable positive association, showing that confidence in public institutions extends beyond political organizations to institutions responsible for maintaining security and public order. Even the effect of trust in political parties is comparatively low, but its statistical significance shows that political bodies remain relevant and active in citizens' democratic growth. On the other hand, the non-significant effect of trust in the justice system indicates that confidence in judicial institutions or systems does not independently explain democratic satisfaction and evolution in the same way as confidence in Parliament, government, political parties, and police inside the model. These results support the argument that trust in institutions is not a consistent phenomenon, and these different institutions can make different contributions to citizens' evaluations of democratic performance and the political system.

The Random Forest analysis provides an additional perspective on the predictive structure of the data. However, its performance for Bangladesh was considerably weaker than that of the linear regression model, with $MSE = 3.801$, $MAE = 1.497$, and $R^2 = 0.157$. The substantially lower R^2 compared with the linear model suggests that the linear specification provides a better representation of the relationships examined in this study. This result may indicate

that the relationships between institutional trust and democratic satisfaction are predominantly linear rather than strongly nonlinear or interaction-dependent. Accordingly, the OLS results provide a more useful basis for interpreting the relative statistical contribution of the institutional trust variables in this study.

Taken together, the findings make an important contribution to the literature on political trust and democratic satisfaction by providing country-specific evidence from Bangladesh. Much of the existing literature has relied on cross-national comparisons or has treated institutional trust as a broad and undifferentiated concept. This study instead examines the individual contributions of several important public institutions using WVS Wave 7 data, thereby addressing an important gap identified in the existing literature. The findings demonstrate that democratic satisfaction in Bangladesh is particularly associated with citizens' confidence in institutions that directly shape governance and political representation. This supports the broader theoretical argument that individuals' evaluations of democracy are impacted not only by the formal existence of democratic institutions but also by how much confidence individuals place in these five institutions.

The findings of this study also have important policy implications. Strengthening democratic satisfaction in Bangladesh requires maintaining formal democratic structures, and it also requires growing public confidence in the different institutions through which democracy evolves. Increasing government responsiveness, accountability, transparency, and service delivery may contribute to greater citizens' confidence in government and the political system. Likewise, strengthening accountability and parliamentary representation may increase citizens' confidence in different institutions. Broader institutional confidence may also be contributed to by improvements in effectiveness and professionalism in the police, and fairness in the electoral process (Lühiste, 2006). Democratic legitimacy can be strengthened by political parties through promoting internal accountability, fairness, and significant political representation. Although trust in the justice system was not a statistically important predictor in the recent model, improving or maintaining judicial independence, fair checks and balances, accessibility for all, and public confidence always remains essential for the broader quality of democratic satisfaction.

Lastly, the results are described with appropriate caution. This work used cross-sectional survey data, indicating that the observed connections demonstrate associations rather than showing causal effects. Even so, higher institutional trust is linked with higher democratic satisfaction; the analysis is unable to establish whether institutional trust causes satisfaction, whether satisfaction boosts institutional trust, or whether both are impacted by other factors. Moreover, the analysis is based on the Bangladesh WVS wave 7 dataset collected in 2018, so the results represent individuals' attitudes during that period instead of providing a direct measure of current public perception. In the years ahead, more research could build on this study's results by using longitudinal or repeated cross-sectional data, adding more socio-economic and political items, and assessing whether changes in institutional performance and political conditions affect the relationship between trust in institutions and democratic satisfaction. Therefore, this study concludes that institutional trust is an essential correlate of democratic satisfaction in Bangladesh, with trust in government emerging as the most essential institutional determinant, followed by the police and Parliament, though trust in political parties has a lesser but significant influence and trust in the justice system does not reach statistical significance. The results show the significance of effective, accountable, responsible, and trusted public institutions in Bangladesh for building people's confidence in democratic governance.

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