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# Impact of Benevolence Trust on Knowledge Transfer: An Empirical Study on NGOs With Reference to Critical Incident Technique (CIT)

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## ABSTRACT

The impact of benevolence-based trust on knowledge transfer is understudied in Bangladesh's NGO sector, which is home to more NGOs than any other nation in the world (with a comparable geographic size). The study aims to examine the effects of benevolence-based trust, a significant component of trust antecedent, on knowledge transfer between NGO staff and their beneficiaries in Bangladesh's NGO sector. Semi-structured interviews with a total of 54 NGO personnel were conducted using multi-staged and purposeful sampling procedures. Content analysis is used to process Critical Incidents (CIs) collected from semi-structured interviews. Findings imply that knowledge transfer to beneficiaries is influenced by the benevolence- trust of NGO staff. The results may be useful for beneficiaries and NGO workers in expanding knowledge transfer activities. Given that the experiment was conducted in a specific country, such as Bangladesh, it could be challenging to generalize the results. Similar studies may be conducted in the future in a different setting or country.

## KEYWORDS

Bangladesh, Benevolence Trust, Critical Incident Technique (CIT), Knowledge Transfer, NGOs

## INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is a crucial resource for an organization in the world of today (Rahman et al., 2022); it provides competitive advantages (Argote & Ingram, 2000) and also helps to achieve the socio-economic development of a country (Hasnain, 2014; Islam et al., 2018). It has become essential to manage and transfer this invaluable resource across organizations and people (Ashehhi and Jasimuddin, 2016; Hasnain et al., 2016; Zhang & Jasimuddin, 2015). The contributions of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to modern society is well acknowledged by all (Rahman & Tasnim, 2023; Shah, 2021). Bangladesh has a higher number of NGOs than any other country in the world with a comparable size of its territory (Devine, 2003; Hasnain et al., 2016). Currently, 2,666 NGOs are formally qualified to accept financing from foreign countries (NGO-Affairs Bureau, 2019). The

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NGOs (workers), funders, and recipients are the three key players in the NGO industry (Najam, 1996). Employees of NGOs often transfer knowledge to the beneficiaries for their socio-economic growth, while recipients transfer their experience to the former (Hasnain & Jasimuddin, 2012).

Trust among team members serves as the lubricant for people to work together to develop new plans and actions (Bijlsma, & Koopman, 2003; Hughes et al., 2018). When people have confidence in one another, knowledge transfer is accelerated (Hung et al., 2023; Jasimuddin, et al., 2013). A close study of the literature (Holste & Fields, 2010; Ko, 2010; Levin & Cross, 2004; Lucas, 2005; Singh & Premarajan, 2007) reveals that the influence of benevolence trust on the knowledge transfer in NGO sector has not been adequately study. Ko (2010) examines how knowledge transfer occurs between consultants and functional specialists in IT firms in a study based on quantitative research. Furthermore, in earlier research, critical incidents (CIs) were not employed as the major data gathering strategy. With the aforementioned concerns in mind, this research seeks to address the following research question: *What influence does the benevolence-based trust antecedents of NGO employees exert on knowledge transfer to the beneficiaries in Bangladesh NGO settings?* The major goal of this research is to learn how the benevolence trust antecedent affects knowledge transfer. The benevolence-based trust variable is borrowed from Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman's (1995) integrative generic-trust model. In order to improve the socio-economic circumstances of the beneficiaries, the research's objective is to foster knowledge transfer between NGOs and beneficiaries in Bangladesh.

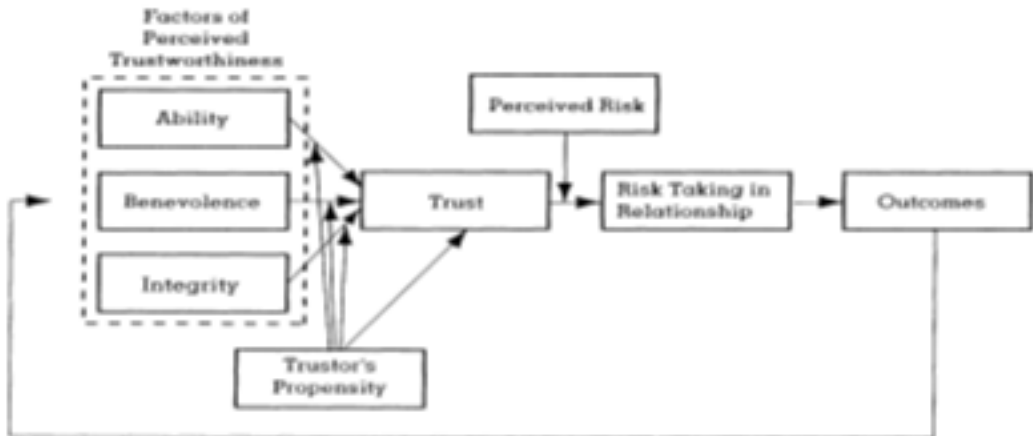
The layout of this paper is in the following order: It presents the introduction first. Second, the literature review section reviews the key research on NGOs, trust, and the effects of trust on knowledge transfer. The methodology of this study is described in the third section. Fourth, the paper's findings section presents the findings of the content analysis and the significant episodes. Fifth, the paper discusses the findings and demonstrates how they relate to the previous studies, with a reference to implications for theory and practice. Finally, it brings the study to a conclusion.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Knowledge Management and Knowledge Transfer

With the advent of humans on the globe, the history of knowledge began. At the outset of their formation, people began using their intelligence and minds to kill animals for food. God gave people instruction by transferring His knowledge in the form of divine texts (knowledge production and storage). The ancient Egyptians used their brains to build pyramids and mummified human and animal remains (knowledge application). Knowledge management is therefore not a brand-new phenomenon in human history. This priceless gift was eventually formalized by the great philosopher Aristotle, who defined knowledge as "justified true belief." Gettier (1966) canceled Aristotle's definition, claiming that justified true belief cannot be knowledge without context. Zhang and Jasimuddin (2008a) revealed that knowledge is primarily associated with tacitness, location, and mobility. The definition of "knowledge" continues to be a source of heated controversy. Whatever the case, managing and using knowledge in the context of organizations for greater productivity (Firestone & McElroy, 2005; Hasnain & Jasimuddin, 2012) is currently an ongoing area of study and research. It is worth noting that, following 1995, knowledge management's dominance in the academic and corporate worlds experienced explosive growth (Edvardsson & Roos, 2006; Jasimuddin & Zhang, 2014). The key elements in the knowledge management process include recognizing, capturing, storing, retrieving, transferring, and applying (Gamble & Blackwell, 2001; Zhang & Jasimuddin, 2008b). Transfer of knowledge has the capacity to get people power and prestige (Argote et al., 2000; Hasnain, 2016), as it strengthens trust and ties (Mu et al., 2008), assists in increasing customer happiness (Goh, 2002), prevents productivity losses (Argote & Ingram, 2000), and aids in the formulation of strategies (Argote & Ingram, 2000; van Wijk et al., 2008). Knowledge transfer is the process by which knowledge acquired by one organization has an impact on another, either positively or negatively (Argote, 1999; Argote et al., 2003; Argote & Ingram, 2000). Knowledge transfer can be compared to the competition between

Figure 1. Trust model



Note. Source: Mayer et al. (1995, p. 715).

two players/parties to move the ball between the two courts in a game of lawn tennis (Jasimuddin, 2014; Jasimuddin & Zhang, 2011). Additionally, the Shannon and Weaver (1949) communication model performs better when both the sender and the receiver are actively participating in the message exchange process.

Knowledge transfer is intended to increase an organization's value by enhancing its ability to fulfil tasks. New knowledge is useless unless it results in a change in behavior or the development of a new concept that results in new behavior, even when transmission and absorption are coupled. (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). In the context of NGOs, all parties (beneficiaries and NGO personnel) should have a clear grasp of the kind of knowledge that is transferred and how it is applied in their respective fields (Hasnain et al., 2016).

### Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman's (1995) Trust Model

Mayer et al. (1995) created a model, as shown in Figure 1, based on the causes and effects of trust. They list "ability," "benevolence," and "integrity" as the crucial trust antecedents. Regardless of the trustor's ability to observe or exert control over the other party, trust is the willingness of one party to be vulnerable to the actions of another based on the expectation that the latter will perform particular actions that are important to the former (Mayer et al., 1995). Additionally, everyone offers a unique perception of the trustee, and the collection as a whole offers a solid and scarce foundation for empirical research on trust for a third party. The ability, benevolence, and integrity of the trustee are what lead the trustor to place their trust in them.

The trustee's area of expertise is specialized because he or she might possess a high level of expertise in a technical area, making it possible for that person to be trusted with work in that area. On the other side, the trustee might not have the necessary skills, education, or background in another area.

The definition of a party's ability is a grouping of skills, talents, and characteristics that provide them with control over a certain subject of knowledge or profession as well as access to resources. The essential concept of benevolence, aside from an egocentric profit motive, is the extent to which a trustee is regarded to want to do good for the trustor. It represents the trustee's love or commitment to the trustor. Along with the trustor-trustee connection, it is a positive feeling. An real example of an act of benevolence may be, an NGO worker shot, robbed of taka 1 lakh (2015, March 24) Daily Observer, p.8, and later on the victim was initially treated and evacuated to the hospital by the NGO-beneficiaries spontaneously in Jessore, Bangladesh. Mayer et al. (1995) used the example

of a mentor or trustee and a protégé or trustor to demonstrate their point, claiming that there is no extrinsic motive for the mentor and that the mentor wants to be helpful to the protégé even if they are not given any extrinsic compensations.

## Literature and Gap Identified

Budzanowska-Drzewiecka and Teczke, (2022) studied the impact of trust on knowledge transfer among 434 students at three Polish universities. The results show that respondents' opinions toward knowledge sharing among students have a favorable association with trust (integrity, benevolence, and ability). Further, they revealed, this relationship depends mostly on integrity-based trust.

Ko (2010) looked at the effects of competency and benevolence trust on the sharing of knowledge between functional experts and consultants in 80 projects involving 71 clients and 36 consulting firms. Ko (2010) found that competency-based trust has no appreciable influence on knowledge transfer between consultants and functional specialists, while benevolence-based trust does.

Holste and Fields (2010) investigated the association between tacit knowledge sharing and two forms of trust (affect-based and cognitive-based trust). The investigation was conducted on a nonprofit service organization with 5,000 administrative and professional employees spread over 185 countries. According to Holste and Fields's (2010) findings, managers and professionals must have acceptable degrees of affective and cognitive trust in order to communicate and apply tacit knowledge.

In the context of virtual Communities of Practice, Usoro et al. (2007) investigated the influence of trust on knowledge transfer. On knowledge transfer, they engaged the three aspects of trust (competence, kindness, and integrity). They discovered that all three aspects of trust had a favorable influence on knowledge transfer, with integrity-based trust having a greater impact on knowledge transfer than competency- and benevolence-based trust.

Levin and Cross (2004) polled 127 respondents, including 42 from pharmaceutical companies, 41 from banks, and 44 from oil companies, to propose and analyze a model two-party, or dyadic, information exchange. The results demonstrate that the relationship is strong and getting helpful knowledge is moderated by competence and benevolence-based trust. According to Levin and Cross (2004), competence and benevolence-based trust have positive effects on knowledge transfer.

Data from Fortune 500 respondents at an energy production company were gathered by Lucas (2005). The results showed that trust and reputation had a positive and significant impact on knowledge transfer in an electrical firm.

Renzl (2008) demonstrated that trust has a good impact on knowledge transfer in utilities and software companies. The impact of management trust in lowering anxiety and enhancing knowledge sharing was thoroughly investigated by the author. Two businesses offered data. One of the businesses was in the utility sector, and the other offered software consulting services. He disseminated surveys and conducted in-depth interviews with project managers and engineers. According to the study, confidence in management decreases concern about losing one's distinctive value and boosts readiness to document knowledge during the knowledge-sharing process.

Singh and Premarajan (2007) examined the effects of culture and trust on knowledge sharing among 125 employees from 11 software companies. They learned that trust and culture have a positive impact on the dissemination of knowledge.

In a Bangladeshi NGO setting, Hasnain (2019) examined the impact of competency-based trust on knowledge transfer. He focused on two issues: knowledge transfer and competency-based trust. The first is connected to the NGO staff's credibility and how it affects the sharing of knowledge. The second discusses the impact of knowledge transfer on the recipients' competence-based trust. The study shows that while competency-based trust among NGO personnel has an impact on knowledge transfer, it has no such effect on knowledge transfer among recipients.

Table 1 depicts a bird's eye perspective of the literature gap identification process. All of the literature (Hasnain, 2019; Holste & Fields, 2010; Ko, 2010; Levin & Cross, 2004; Lucas, 2005; Renzl, 2008; Singh & Premarajan 2007; Usoro et al., 2007) is focused on knowledge transfer, as

**Table 1. Knowledge transfer and trust literature gap identified**

Sources	Knowledge Transfer	Benevolence-Based Trust	NGOs	Methodology: CI Technique	Country: Bangladesh	Qualitative Research
Hasnain (2019)	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Usoro, et al. (2007)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Lucas (2005)	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Singh and Premarajan (2007)	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Holste and Fields (2010)	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Renzl (2008)	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes (both)
Ko (2010)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Levin and Cross (2004)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No

*Note.* Source: This study.

seen in Table 1. The influence of competence-based trust on knowledge transfer has been studied by Usoro et al. (2007), Ko (2010), and Levin and Cross (2004). Renzl (2008) investigated the influence of trust on knowledge transmission using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Hasnain (2019) investigated the influence of competency-based trust in Bangladeshi NGOs. Content analysis was the basis of his experiment.

### Bangladesh and NGOs

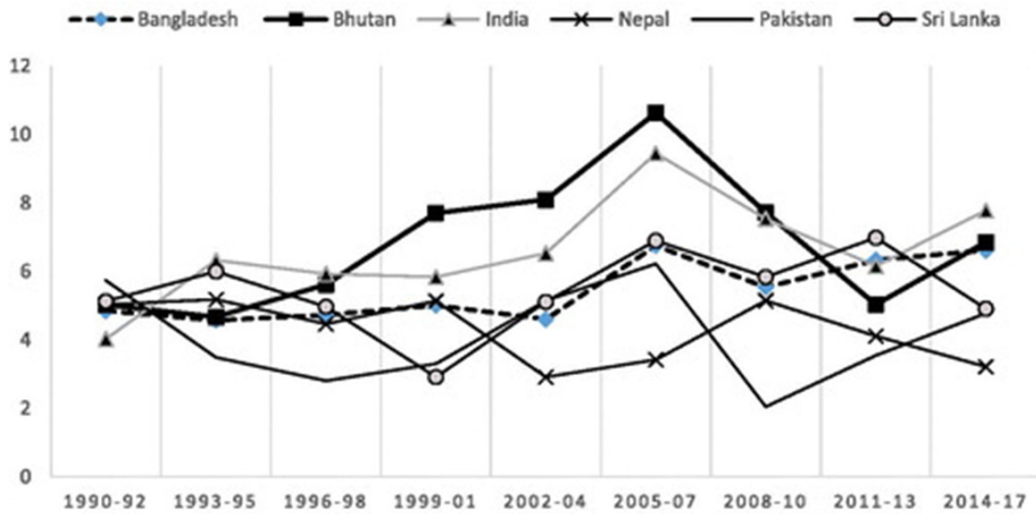
Previously, many authors (e.g., Ahmad, 2002; Karim, 2002) believed that Bangladesh was plagued by poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, political unrest, and a lack of infrastructural development. However, the situation has significantly changed. The construction of Bangladesh's infrastructure is moving forward swiftly. Borrowing the data from World Bank, As shown in Figure 2, Asadullah & Chkoaravorty (2019, p. 949) found that Bangladesh's average gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates from 1990 to 2017, 1990 to 2003, and 2004 to 2017 were 5.49, 4.7, and 6.16%, respectively, while Pakistan's numbers for the corresponding periods were 4.14, 3.86, and 4.45%, and South Asian averages were 6.27, 5.28, and 7.27%, respectively.

According to Devine (2003), there are about 22,000 active NGOs in Bangladesh, with a range of objectives (Begum, 2008). Their activities can be classified into two groups: development NGOs, which focus on Bangladesh's socio-economic development, and advocacy NGOs, which promote human rights. Development NGOs are naturally adaptive, are more in tune with the underprivileged, and are creative problem solvers (Lewis & Madon, 2004).

The first NGO to start up in 1949 in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) was CARE, a U.S.-based organization. Following the November 1970 cyclone disaster, NGO activity developed in this region. The country's socio-economic situation was devastated by a storm and by the independence war of 1971.

Many local and international NGOs stepped up to help the country recover from its social and economic hardships. The key priorities at the time were relief supplies, medical distribution, healthcare, shelter building, and rehabilitation. In the 1980s, the number of NGOs grew rapidly as a result of multi-faceted operations such as rural education, health and medicine, poverty alleviation, and family planning (Nawaz, 2011).

Figure 2. GDP growth rate of South Asian countries, 1990–2017



Note. Source: The World Bank's World Bank Development Indicators, published in 2017. GDP growth (annual%) is the annual percentage growth rate of the GDP based on market pricing and constant local currency in 2010 U.S. dollars. (Source: Asadullah & Chkoaravorty, 2019, p. 950).

Owing to their consistent growth, NGOs in Bangladesh have gained influence and strength. They have assimilated into the culture as a result of their efforts in human resource development.

In recent years, more attention and resources have been given to microcredit, employment and income generation, formal and informal education of children and adults, health, nutrition, and family planning, as well as to women's rights, the environment, poultry and livestock, water supply and sanitation, human rights, and legal aid (Asian Development Bank, 1999). They have therefore given fresh hope to millions of people in regions where government initiatives have not yet started (Ahmad & Townsend, 1998). NGOs are currently Bangladesh's most significant development supporters (Devine, 2003). NGOs must first gain the trust and confidence of uneducated, underpowered populations in remote, inhospitable locations in order to carry out successful activities (Panda, 2007).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of gathering data, Bangladesh was divided into seven administrative regions. One district was selected randomly from each division. Based on the concentration of NGOs, one thana was carefully selected from each district (multi-stage selection approaches), for example. A total of 54 semi-structured interviews with NGO employees were performed throughout Bangladesh, with 18 of each level being conducted at the top, middle, and lower pay grades, as shown in Table 2.

For critical incident technique (CIT) there are various techniques of data collection available, including focus group interviews, observations, and personal interviews (Edvardsson, 2006). CIs integrated with interviews bring better intuition and insight (Viergever, 2019). Bengali was used for the semi-structured interviews for this study. Next, an English translation was made of the interview transcripts. "Can you think of any instances when knowledge transfer to the receivers was sped up or slowed down?" was the main question posed to the responders (workers from NGOs). According to Edvardsson and Roos (2001), the question is connected to consequence occurrences. The researchers were looking for occurrences with known outcomes. There may be both good and bad events.

Table 2. Sampling (n=54)

Administrative Divisions	Levels of NGO-Employees			Total (n=54)
	Top	Middle	Lower	
Dhaka	03	03	03	09
Chittagong	02	02	02	06
Rajshahi	03	03	03	09
Khulna	02	02	02	06
Sylhet	03	03	03	09
Rangpur	03	03	03	09
Barisal	02	02	02	06
Total	18	18	18	54

Note. Source: This study.

An event is considered bad if it could potentially have or actually has a negative effect on the person. As a result, the term includes both episodes that have yet to occur but are judged to be potentially dangerous, as well as those that have already occurred but are thought to be damaging (Taylor, 1991). A poor CI between two parties might result in a win-win situation for the victim and any concerned third parties. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data, and CIT was used to collect several CIs from the NGO staff.

To investigate pilot errors in fighter planes during World War II, Flanagan (1954) created the adaptable qualitative data collection technique known as CIT.

Today, many social scientists (Edvardsson & Roos, 2001; Keaveney, 1995; Papouli, 2016) use CIT in their research.

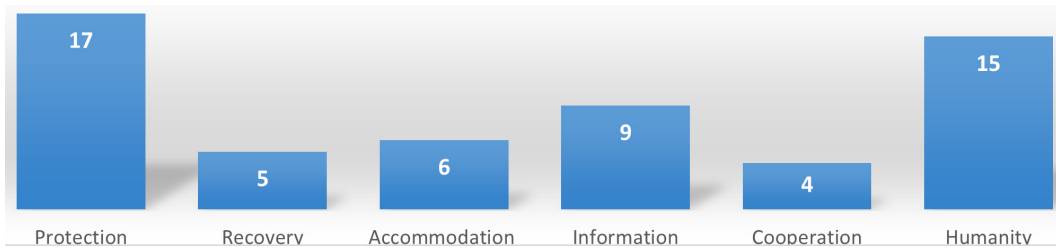
To be critical, an incident must take place in a circumstance where the spectator can clearly understand the act's goal or intention and where the results are sufficiently evident to remove most uncertainty about how it will affect the situation. (Flanagan, 1954). However, the majority of key incidents are straightforward accounts of rather routine occurrences in professional practice that are given significance through analysis (Tripp, 1993). Following Papolui (2016), this study adheres to the following four fundamental procedures for qualitative content analysis: A CI has a unique serial number (e.g., CI01, CI02, etc.) because (a) every critical event is a data point and (b) the raw data are organized in this way (c) Positive or negative CIs were classified, and (d) categories (sub-categories that included all CIs) were developed from the data. Content analysis is the most common technique used in semi-structured interviews data analysis (Jankowicz, 2005). Academics, business researchers, and communication practitioners all use content analysis currently (Neuendorf, 2002).

Three copies of the code sheet were printed. The coding was to be double-checked by two coders. They received tangible copies of the coding sheets. To begin, Coder-A used the symbol star/cross (\* / X), Coder-B used the symbol circle (o), and the researchers used the sign tick ( ). Coders A and B's coding sheets were gathered. The discrepancies of this researcher's coder-A are now copied to this researcher's sheet. The discrepancies of this researcher's coder-B are also copied to these researchers' sheet.

As stated by Neuendorf (2002), at this stage, the percentages of agreement between the coders and the researchers are independently determined. Divide the total number of cases by the number of occurrences that were coded in the same way by two coders. There are 50 cases in total, 40 of which were agreed cases. Thus, 80% of those who responded [40/50] agreed. They were successful in matching with these researchers with a high rate (e.g., above 90%). Typically, a level of 80% minimum is regarded as normal (e.g., Riffe et al., 1998).



Figure 3. Number of CIs per category/theme (total CIs=56)



Note. Source: This study.

## FINDINGS

As shown in Figure 3, a total of 56 critical occurrences were discovered. All the major occurrences occurred outside of the NGOs. Bad events have negative consequences (Taylor, 1991). The majority of critical situations in this study occurred between NGO staff (first party) and outsiders (third party), with beneficiaries being the second party engaged. The conduct of the second party (e.g. the beneficiaries) with the first party determines whether a key occurrence is positive (+) or negative (-). (e.g. NGO employees). An occurrence may appear to be terrible, yet the positive features and results conceal its true significance. The data analysis produced the categories/themes.

Detail description for each category/theme wise tables are also exhibited in the following paragraphs and tables (Table 3 describes the CI related to protection, while Tables 4, 5, 6, & 7 describes Recovery, Accommodation Information, Cooperation & Humanity respectively).

### Protection

According to Ahmad (2002), NGO employees in Bangladesh are at risk. Working in places where dacoits/thieves are active or carrying money without adequate security puts field workers in danger, he warns.

According to Shehabuddin (1999), the villagers damaged the mulberry plants that the NGOs had planted. The conclusions of this investigation are supported by earlier research. Regarding the physical safety and security of NGO employees, this study identified 16 positive CIs and one negative CI (see Table 3). Among the CIs mentioned are theft (CI-12), robbery (CI-47), and protecting NGO projects (CI-32, CI-51). As a result, it is crucial to protect NGO employees working in Bangladesh to guarantee effective knowledge transfer between beneficiaries and field workers.

### Recovery

Five examples of recovery were discovered, as shown in Table 4. There were no bad incidents recorded. Employees of microcredit NGOs transport money for the beneficiaries as well as from the recipients to their offices. Field workers typically commute to work on bicycles. Some field workers take public transportation. The presence of pickpockets and other risky situations make them targets. Field workers must be extremely vigilant against robbers and thieves. On Sunday, the March 24, 2015, at the Baolia crossing in Sadar Upazila (in Jessore, Bangladesh), thieves shot a member of an NGO and seized roughly one million Taka from him (Daily Observer, 2015). However, the beneficiaries always retrieve the missing money and the goods of the field workers, since they are locals who are familiar with the neighborhood's thieves.

### Accommodation

A total of six CIs linked to lodging have been recorded, as shown in Table 5. Ahmad (2002) has discussed the lack of accommodation for NGO field employees in Bangladesh. If a home is

Table 3. Total CIs=17 (protection)

Category/ Theme	CI/Description	(+)/ (-)
	CI-04: The beneficiary oversaw the NGO employee's security and safety while they were on the field duty.	(+)
	CI-08: The beneficiary was employed as a security guard for the aid items.	(+)
	CI-11: At night, the beneficiary gave the female field worker security.	(+)
	CI-12: The beneficiary watched over the NGO employee's motorbike.	(+)
	CI-20: The NGO employee was being physically assaulted by the criminals, and the beneficiaries stepped up to assist him.	(+)
	CI-21: The NGO employee was in danger, and the beneficiary came to help him.	(+)
	CI-25: The beneficiary went with the NGO staff as he performed his night shift duties.	(+)
	CI-31: A beneficiary displayed negative attitudes and denied a loan or repayment from the NGO.	(-)
<b>Protection</b>	CI-32: The project's protection against local damage, road planting, and fisheries protection were guaranteed by the beneficiaries.	(+)
	CI-35: When the NGO worker was on duty, the beneficiary provided security.	(+)
	CI-37: The NGO staff used to bring the beneficiary along when he went home at night.	(+)
	CI-40: When the NGO field worker came to the office with the microcredit funds, the beneficiary provided protection.	(+)
	CI-45: The beneficiary went on the fieldworker's nighttime return trip.	(+)
	CI-47: The beneficiary protects the field worker's money from robbers.	(+)
	CI-49: The field worker was attacked by the wicked individuals. The beneficiary saved him.	(+)
	CI-51: The beneficiaries saved the NGO workers from the robbers in Cox's Bazar's hilly region.	(+)
	CI-55: The beneficiary provided the female NGO employee with security.	(+)

Note. Source: This study.

available, cost must be considered; for example, fieldworkers must spend, on average, 10–25% of their salary on housing. Ahmad also emphasized the importance of locating housing for female field

Table 4. Total CIs= 05 (recovery)

Category/Theme	CI/Description	(+)/ (-)
	CI-26: The local beneficiaries of a microcredit NGO were able to recover the stolen funds of an NGO employee from the criminals.	(+)
	CI-31a: The loan from one beneficiary who refused to return it was recovered with the assistance of the beneficiaries by the NGO employee. -	(+)
<b>Recovery</b>	CI-41: A beneficiary recovered the NGO employee's stolen moneybag.	(+)
	CI-50: The beneficiaries received the stolen money that the NGO employees had retrieved.	(+)
	CI-53: The beneficiaries discovered the NGO employee's stolen motorbike.	(+)

Note. Source: This study.

Table 5. Total CIs=06 (accommodation)

Category/Theme	CI/Description	(+)/(-)
	CI-02: The beneficiary assisted the NGO employee in choosing a rental house close to her place of employment.	(+)
	CI-03: The beneficiary rented a home for the NGO employee at a fair price.	(+)
	CI-07: The beneficiary offered a free warehouse to keep the aid supplies.	(+)
<b>Accommodation</b>	CI-09: The beneficiaries set up housing (in their homes and a school) for the female NGO employees of “Mobile Training School.”	(+)
	CI-10: The NGO staff in Chittagong Hill Tracts received their own temporary housing from the beneficiaries.	(+)
	CI-16: Accommodations were arranged by community members and NGO beneficiaries.	(+)

Note. Source: This study.

workers. This research backs up Ahmad’s (2002) results. The field workers’ housing concerns were emphasized, and in many cases, the beneficiaries handled them as well (CI-02, 03, 09, 10) and so knowledge transfer was accelerated.

### Information

There are nine information-related CIs in all, of which CI-43, CI-44, CI-46, and CI-54 are concerned with project proposal information (see Table 6). Without involving the community/beneficiaries, it is nearly impossible to make any NGO project successful. The beneficiary involvement should be present for the sustainability of the NGOs and their initiatives, particularly in the need assessment and planning stages (Aga et al., 2018). Further, Hasnain (2019), in the context of Bangladeshi NGOs, reveals that field workers are tasked with bridging the gap between NGOs and the target communities to deliver services to the beneficiaries. NGOs initially speak with beneficiaries while project proposals are being drafted or before operations start, and then again when project activities or plans are being carried out. The results of this study lend support to Hasnain (2019) and Aga et al. (2018). Beneficiaries provide the NGOs with preliminary information about the region, people, culture, location of amenities, community, etc. that the NGOs use to draught project proposals (CI-15, 29, 33, 34, 43, 44, 54) and later during the implementation stage.

### Cooperation

There are four CIs identified as cooperation related, as shown in Table 7. The NGO personnel received the recipients’ spontaneous cooperation in a variety of ways and in various tasks. The beneficiaries organized and took part in several training programs (CI-14, 15), as well as created a variety of teaching aids (CI-05).

### Humanity

The beneficiaries of the NGO staff reported a total of 15 humanitarian acts, of which 14 positive and one unfavorable incident are shown in Table 8.

The beneficiary evacuated an NGO worker to the hospital (CI 02), offered free utility services (CI 17), fed NGO workers (CIs 19 and 39), crossed a river (CI 23), set up return transportation (CIs 27 and 30) and evacuated the NGO employee's child to the hospital (CI 42). The compassionate nature of the recipients is reflected in these CIs. The recipient compared the NGO fieldworker to a dog, which is bad, because CI-24 is highly negative. While telling this researcher about the occurrence, the

**Table 6. Total CIs= 09 (information)**

Category/Theme	CI/Description	(+)/ (-)
	CI-13: On the basis of information obtained from previous beneficiaries, the beneficiaries voluntarily apply to join the NGOs.	(+)
	CI-15: The beneficiary provides the NGO workers in the area with unidentified information.	(+)
	CI-29: The beneficiary and his family provided useful information on which the NGOs may make their decisions.	(+)
<b>Information</b>	CI-33: The beneficiary made the NGO staff aware of the harm caused to the NGO projects.	(+)
	CI-34: The beneficiary provided information about the recipient's new location's geography, culture, and attitudes.	(+)
	CI-43: The beneficiary provided project-related suggestions.	(+)
	CI-44: The beneficiary made suggestions regarding the project plan based on his prior encounters and experiences.	(+)
	CI-46: The beneficiary made suggestions regarding the new project plan based on his prior experiences.	(+)
	CI-54: The project beneficiary described prior events in project submissions.	(+)

*Note.* Source: This study.

**Table 7. Total CIs= 04 (cooperation)**

Category/Theme	CI/Description	(+)/ (-)
	CI-05: Because of a lack of NGO personnel, beneficiaries assist the NGOs on a whim when they are carrying out their (NGOs') duties during catastrophe rescue and relief activities.	(+)
<b>Cooperation</b>	CI-06: The beneficiaries improvised the local training aids (ropes, life jackets from water bottles, and other things from everyday materials) and saved money for the NGOs in the process.	(+)
	CI-14: The beneficiary traveled at his own expense to the NGO training sessions.	(+)
	CI-36: The beneficiary organized a nighttime meeting for "Participatory Action Research" and training because the beneficiaries are often busy during the day.	(+)

*Note.* Source: This study.

fieldworker was very upset! Probably, this specific recipient was dissatisfied with the NGO personnel, who are particularly strict with the beneficiaries when it comes to loan payback.

## DISCUSSION

For any firm and its stakeholders, knowledge is the most valuable asset. "Knowledge is justified true belief in a context" (Gettier, 1966). As a result, it is critical for businesses to carefully manage this important asset. Knowledge management is a discipline that deals with and keeps track of knowledge in businesses. Identification, acquisition, storage, transfer, and application are all phases in the knowledge management process (Zhang & Jasimuddin, 2015). One of the most crucial of these might be knowledge transfer. Even if knowledge transfer and absorption do not result in any

Table 8. Total CIs=15 (humanity)

Category/Theme	CI/Description	(+)/ (-)
	CI-02: An NGO employee who had been injured in a motorbike accident received first attention from the beneficiary, who then transported him to a nearby hospital.	(+)
	CI-17: The beneficiaries and residents of the neighborhood offered the NGO employee's housing free utility services.	(+)
	CI-18: The beneficiary extended hospitality by inviting the NGO employee to a cultural event.	(+)
	CI-19: The beneficiary provided the NGO field worker with food and fruits.	(+)
	CI-22: After watching a football game, the beneficiary permitted the NGO employee to spend the night at his house.	(+)
	CI-23: The beneficiary used an indigenous boat to transport the NGO employee and his bicycle across a river while swimming in the water to pull the boat.	(+)
	CI-24: The beneficiary and his wife compared the NGO field worker to a dog when they saw him wandering in the road while it was raining.	(-)
<b>Humanity</b>	CI-27: In order to get the NGO employee home when it got dark at night on a remote island, the beneficiaries organized a return boat.	(+)
	CI-28: The beneficiaries permitted the female field workers to spend the night at their house when there were no boat services available in the evening.	(+)
	CI-30: The last bus back home was missed by the NGO field staff who were on duty. A beneficiary showed up with a van to pick them up and took them home.	(+)
	CI-38: The NGO personnel were given free housing by the beneficiaries.	(+)
	CI-39: The beneficiaries cooked and served food to the NGO staff.	(+)
	CI-42: The local beneficiaries rescued the sick child from the NGO employee's private day out and transported him or her to the hospital.	(+)
	CI-48: The beneficiaries gave the NGO field staff lodging and hospitality during the nationwide political strikes.	(+)
	CI-52: Following a cultural event, the beneficiary arranged accommodation for the NGO employee to spend the night at his house.	(+)

Note. Source: This study.

changes in the knowledge recipient's behavior, we might conclude that knowledge transfer did not occur (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Trust serves as a lubricant between the knowledge transmitters and the knowledge recipients (Hasnain & Jasimuddin, 2012).

The transmitter's decision to transfer knowledge is largely influenced by trust antecedents such as the knowledge recipients' capacity, benign dispositions (benevolence), and honesty. The "benevolence" trust antecedent is the degree to which a trustee is regarded as wanting to do good to the trustor, aside from egocentric incentives (Mayer et al., 1995). It embodies a certain goodwill (Smyth et al., 2010); it is a kind of moral accountability and considerate behavior toward others (Blomqvist, 1997), and a kind of unofficial relationship.

The unofficial relationship is not included in any of the office's charters of responsibilities. This is a connection that goes beyond the scope of official authority. It functions in the same way as a non-formal organization. For example, rather than being formed or mandated by a formal organization, a network of personal and social interactions forms spontaneously as individuals become familiar with one another (Abdou & Jasimuddin, 2020; Davis & Newstrom, 1985).

Across organizational borders, people build informal contacts and exchanges that operate as a conduit for knowledge transmission, and important knowledge is disseminated through these unofficial routes (Dahl & Pedersen, 2004).

In this study, the informal relationship between NGO personnel and recipients is found to expand as a result of acts of benevolence. This investigation discovered 56 CIs, the majority of which are connected to NGO personnel and outsiders, with beneficiaries stepping forward to assist the NGO staff. The occurrences are grouped into six themes according to data and content analysis, such as protection, recovery, accommodation, information, cooperation, humanism, and so on.

Firstly “protection” refers to beneficiaries’ shielding of NGO staff. These findings are in line with Ahmad (2002) and Shehabuddin’s (1999) viewpoints.

Second, there are five crucial instances connected to recovery that have been revealed. The NGO staff were robbed in these situations, and the beneficiaries were able to reclaim the plundered or stolen items from the muggers. The findings are similar to a story published in a daily newspaper (Daily Observer, 2015).

Third, six cases involving accommodations were documented. The beneficiaries, in many cases, permitted field NGO staff to stay overnight at their (beneficiaries’) homes. The beneficiaries also assisted the NGO staff in locating rental properties in the area. Ahmad (2002) supports the findings.

Fourth, nine events involving information were reported. Local beneficiaries assist NGO employees with reconnaissance, data and information collecting, and project proposal difficulties for NGO deployments. Aga et al. (2017) and Hasnain (2019) have the similar findings.

Fifth, there are four occurrences involving collaboration. These are unscheduled contributions by beneficiaries, such as personnel and material assistance to NGOs during times of crisis. In a different context, the findings are in line with a report in *The Times of India* (March 22, 2022) titled “Sivaganga Villagers Dig Oorani with the Help of NGOs.”

Sixth, there were 15 incidences that were linked to humanity. These are mostly unscheduled services provided by beneficiaries to NGO staff, such as hospital care, meals, and river crossing.

The CI text analysis and interview data also show that NGO personnel place a high priority on benevolence-based trust prior to transferring knowledge to the beneficiaries. The results are supported by current literature (Ko, 2010; Bakker et al., 2006).

The findings about the influence of NGO-employees’ benevolence-based trust on knowledge transfer of this study are supported by several authors (Holste & Fields, 2010; Ko, 2010; Levin & Cross, 2004; Renzl, 2008; Usoro et al., 2007).

This research supports Ko’s (2010) findings, which describe how benevolence-based trust has a positive impact on knowledge transfer. The ability, benevolence, and integrity of all three antecedents of trust have a strong impact on how knowledge is transferred, according to Usoro et al. (2007). The findings of this study are somewhat similar to those of this investigation.

It is consistent with the results of this study that emotion and cognitive-based trust have an impact on transferring, as stated by Holste and Fields (2010). Levin and Cross (2004), as well as Bakker et al. (2006), agree with the conclusions of this study.

## Implications for Theory and Practice

It is critical to understand how benevolence-based trust affects knowledge transfer. This research has produced a variety of theoretical, practical, and methodological contributions. This study investigates the impact of benevolence-based trust on knowledge transfer in the Bangladeshi NGO sector. This contributes to the body of knowledge management philosophy literature. Furthermore, trust literature in Bangladesh could not analyze its antecedents in the context of the NGO sector. As a result, this research fills in the gaps.

Intra-organizational knowledge transfer has been studied by many academics and theorists, whereas inter-organizational knowledge transfer has been studied by only a few. According to Becker and Knudsen (2003), from 1996 to 2006, 60% and 40% of articles about intra-organizational knowledge

transfer and inter-organizational knowledge transfer, respectively, were published in important and high-impact journals (*Academy of Management Review*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Strategic Management Journal*, *Organization Science*, and *Administrative Science Quarterly*). There is a huge literature gap between these two types of knowledge transfer. This study focuses on knowledge transfer between organizations, or knowledge transfer between NGO personnel and beneficiaries. As a result, this study fills in certain gaps in previous research on intra- and inter-organizational knowledge transfers.

### Implications for the NGOs

This study provides NGO staff with a chance to learn about benevolence-based trust in their beneficiaries for the goal of knowledge transfer.

### Implications for the Beneficiaries

The empirical results of this study demonstrate that beneficiaries are trusted by NGOs and their employees on the basis of their good deeds, which significantly enhances knowledge transmission to them (beneficiaries). The beneficiaries may have more altruistic intentions while receiving knowledge transfer from NGOs. The respondents mentioned multiple incidences in which the beneficiaries caused difficult and humiliating circumstances for the NGO staff. This study may assist beneficiaries in acting responsibly so that NGO staff may preserve the current benevolence-based trust in beneficiaries in order to sustain a continuous flow of knowledge and services.

*Methodological contributions:* In the field of knowledge management, the application of CIT is unique.

## CONCLUSION

The concept of “knowledge” continues to be a point of contention. Justified true belief in a context is accepted as knowledge. Recognizing, collecting, storing, retrieving, transferring, and using knowledge are all important aspects of the knowledge management process. The highest and most obvious level of knowledge transfer is possible. One of the key components of the knowledge management process is knowledge transfer. Knowledge transfer is a two-way process in which experiences, ideas, and knowledge may influence one another in a positive or bad way.

Trust serves as a lubricant between the knowledge transmitters and the recipients (Hasnain, 2017). Many academics have identified various trust-related traits and preconditions. The general integrative trust model developed by Mayer et al. (1995) stands out among them. They acknowledge that ability (capacity), benevolence, and integrity are important trust antecedents in their methodology. Apart from an egocentric financial motive, benevolence is the extent to which a trustee is seen to want to do good by the trustor.

Numerous studies have examined how trust affects the transfer of knowledge. However, there are still some ambiguous points that require clarification. Table 1 reveals a clear gap in the body of literature. The table includes information on knowledge transfer, benevolence-based trust, NGOs, Bangladesh, kind of research (quantitative/qualitative techniques), CIT, and other variables.

It is found that no body of literature existed that could handle every variable of the investigation. Furthermore, the previous researchers were unable to use any qualitative primary data collecting approach or CIT in their studies. The key participants in this sector are beneficiaries, NGOs, and donors (Ahmad, 1999). Bangladesh has the highest number of NGOs functioning with multi-dimensional functional coverage. Employees of non-profit organizations and beneficiaries share knowledge with their each other. Their knowledge transmission is influenced by the benevolence-based trust antecedent.

For this study, a total of 54 semi-structured interviews with NGO staff from all around Bangladesh were conducted using multi-staged and purposive sampling procedures. The data were analyzed using

CIT and content analysis methods. To assess the validity of the analysis, coders were used. Over 90% of coders can be reliably identified.

From the interview data and content analysis, a total of 56 CIs were identified. Protection (CIs-17), Recovery (CIs-5), Accommodation (CIs-6), Information (CIs-9), Cooperation (CIs-4) and Humanity (CIs-15) are the categories and themes used to categorize CIs. The findings of this study also show that knowledge transfer is significantly impacted by the benevolence-based trust of NGO staff. The findings of this inquiry agree with a wide range of earlier works of literature.

The outcomes of this study may be valuable for both NGO staff and the beneficiaries in extending benevolence-based activities and transferring knowledge to each other. Because this study was conducted in Bangladesh's NGO sector, it may be difficult to generalize the findings to other contexts.

Future researchers may use a mixed method approach with larger sample size to investigate the effects of the benevolent trust antecedent on knowledge transfer in different industries and countries.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

We wish to confirm that there are no known conflicts of interest associated with this publication and there has been no significant financial support for this work that could have influenced its outcome.

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