The Problems of Contemporary Education

How Teacher Educators Develop Trust in Educational Systems

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify teacher educators' trust levels in four cross-national educational systems, namely the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), the Arab world (AW), and the Gulf Countries (GC). In addition to identifying the trust levels, the factors involved in trust building in these systems were also investigated. A two-phase explanatory sequential mixed methods design was developed in which a survey and focus group interviews were utilized to collect the quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data analysis showed that the highest level of trust for most study participants was directed toward the American educational system. The analysis and interpretation of qualitative phase participants inputs yielded 26 factors that affected trust in educational systems. The overall conclusion of this study indicates that teacher educators develop trust in educational systems by being influenced by a number of integrated cognitive and emotional factors.

Keywords*: cross-national educational systems, US, UK, Arab world, Gulf countries, trust building, trust factors, teacher educators.

1. Introduction

A literature review of the concept of trust reveals different meanings regarding varying factors. These factors can be affected by different places, occasions, individuals, philosophies, entities, and study disciplines that benefit from this concept of trust. McKnight and Chervany's (2001) analysis of research across disciplines on the nature of the trust concept concluded that trust is used as a different factor in different studies—namely, as an attitude, behavior, belief, disposition, expectation, structure, or intention. Additionally, trust is recognized as a moral value

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(D'Olimpio, 2016; Uslaner, 2002) or an ideal that rests on human values (Morselli et al., 2012). It is difficult, therefore, to establish a single definition of trust. However, context can be used as a guiding factor to select from the various alternatives. The context, time and place, and actual use of this concept will lead to selection of the appropriate meaning and definition of trust for any situation or study.

Trust also takes different forms or types. One method of categorizing these forms is by identifying the agent or party that receives the trust (trustee) and labeling trust as individual, social, or institutional, according to the nature of that agent (Carr, 2014). The present study mainly concerns institutional trust. Institutional trust involves businesses that offer products or services, and government bodies such as a police force, healthcare facility, judicial system, or educational system (ES) (Carr, 2014).

2. Literature review
2.1. Trust Research in Education
In the last 10 years, several studies have investigated trust in educational institutions. These studies can be organized into four categories: the educational institution level; the geographical location of the institution; the degree/level of trust each institution receives; and the nature of the trustor. Trust studies have mainly been conducted at middle and secondary schools (McMorran, 2012; Resh, Sabbagh, 2014; Saglam, 2016) and higher-education institutions (Gray, Weir, 2014; Martins, Baptista Nunes, 2016; Siefkes-Andrew, 2017; Wilson, 2011). Other studies on trust in educational institutions at different levels have been conducted in various countries, including the US and Canada (Ament, 2013; Mann, 2012; Shelden et al., 2010; Simmons, 2012a; Simmons, 2012b), the UK (Bates, 2012; Schoon, Cheng, 2011; Simpson, Baird, 2013), Belgium, Germany, and Ukraine (Claes, Hooghe, 2017; Landwehr, Weisseno, 2016; OECD, 2017), Hong Kong and Confucian Asian countries (Carless, 2009; Tan, Tambyah, 2011), Ghana (Addai et al., 2013), and New Zealand (Shephard, 2017).

Furthermore, several studies have focused on low/negative or high/positive degrees/levels of trust (trust amount) in educational institutions (Bowman, 2012; Saglam, 2016). Additionally, studies on educational institutions have explored the derivation of trust types/forms from interconnected components of beliefs, intentions, behaviors, and dispositions (Vidotto et al., 2012), which are different in political-manipulation-oriented (Lewis, 2005) and accountability-oriented studies (Beaulieu, 2006; Carless, 2009).

Finally, studies have focused on different trustors who granted trust decisions to educational institutions, including the general public (Goepel, 2012; Gray, Weir, 2014), parents (Eng et al., 2014; Santiago et al., 2016), students (Carvalho, de Oliveira Mota, 2010; Romero, 2015), instructors (Hoppes, Holley, 2013; Wilson, 2011; Zayim, Kondakci, 2015), and administrators and non-academic staff (Rahman et al., 2015).

2.2. Trust-building Factors
Different studies have identified the various factors that contribute to building trust in educational institutions or systems. For example, White-Cooper et al., (2009) found that building interpersonal relationships is an important factor for forming educational trust. Stensaker and Harvey (2013), in studying higher education in 19 countries, concluded that the tight relationship between accountability and quality assurance and accreditation is a major factor in building educational trust. Claes and Hooghe's (2017) study on Belgium demonstrated that citizenship education contributes to building trust in general and political trust in particular. Simpson and Baird (2013) showed that the credibility of public examinations (e.g., A-level examinations in England), as perceived by key stakeholders, is another factor in forming educational trust.

Cross-national studies of trust in ESs or institutions are rare. Czerniawski (2011) examined trust in accountability and teaching by focusing on the experiences of 32 new teachers in Norway, Germany, and England. Stensaker and Maassen (2015) investigated quality assurance as a mechanism for creating more trust in cross-national higher educational institutions.

2.3. Literature Gaps in Relation to the Present Study
Previous studies have examined trust within one area or part of an educational institution at a time. It is concluded that "few studies ... explicitly address trust in the education system"

(Bormann, John, 2014: 2). The present study expands the approach to cover most components or parts of an ES. Previous studies used one stage to collect data and one research method, either qualitative or quantitative, whereas the present study uses two data-collection stages and a mixed-methods approach to deepen understanding of trust in educational institutions. Finally, teacher educators have not been previously been studied as trustors or participants in relation to the phenomenon under investigation.

3. Research Problem

Trust in any ES can exist from the perspective of either the beneficiaries (e.g., public, parents, students, job market officials) or the providers (e.g., educational policymakers, administrators, curriculum designers, teachers, teacher educators). One area that requires investigation is what trust in an ES looks like from a teacher educator's perspective. It is assumed that implicit (internal) beliefs or attitudes (factors) plays a significant role in establishing trust in any ES, but these factors need to be described and explored because they have not been examined before. Furthermore, it is important to understand why some ESs generate a higher level of trust than others.

This study selected four cross-national ESs: the US, UK, the Arab world (AW), and the Gulf countries (GC). It aimed to determine the location (place) of teacher educators' highest trust (first choice of trust) toward any of the four ESs, and the unidentified factors (reasons) that played a significant role in establishing this trust.

Why these four systems?

These educational systems were selected because the participants have lived, studied, trained, and developed in them. Furthermore, participants are familiar with them and have been exposed to their different educational policies and practices, and various entities, groups, associations, and individuals therein. Participants have attended these systems' conferences, workshops, and other educational activities. They are members of educational associations within the systems, and continually use their educational resources for teaching, research, and professional development. Finally, many participants' graduate students continue their education in the UK or US; no other African, Asian, Australian, Canadian, or European systems were selected because the participants lack familiarity with them.

3.1. Significance of the Study

Tschannen-Moran (2014) indicated the importance of studying trust in schools and ESs by acknowledging that trust enhances relationships, facilitates communication, and expands work energy. It thereby enhances productivity, performance, and goal accomplishment; prevents disagreements; and fosters student achievement.

To our knowledge, this study is the first to measure participants' degree/level of trust in Western (US and UK) and Arabic (AW and GC) ESs. Therefore, this study augments the literature on trust in ESs. Policymakers and leaders in the educational field, organizations, and institutions will benefit from better understanding factors that shape trust and applying them to their ES components to ensure stakeholders' trust. Additionally, they can encourage students to further their studies in trustworthy system(s). Finally, this study's results will help identify which ES(s) mainly affect, inspire, or guide Kuwaiti teacher educators' educational thinking and practice.

3.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this cross-national, two-phase, sequential mixed-methods study is to identify the trust level of teacher educators of the College of Education at Kuwait University toward the ES and to identify the factors involved in building or developing trust in an ES. The purpose here is not to measure the quality of any educational system presented in this study, but to identify how and why participants build their educational trust towards these systems.

3.3. Operational Definitions of the Study Terms

• Educational System: A set of connected components of professions, types, resources, schools, institutions, departments, and associations of education that form a complex whole.

• Trust: A positive attitude and belief in the quality, effectiveness, integrity, and fairness of an ES or one of its components.

• Arab World: All Arab countries in Asia and Africa, excluding the GC.
• Gulf Countries: The six countries of the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf — namely, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

3.4. Research Questions

Phase One: Quantitative Research Questions
The main question of the quantitative phase is: Among the given ESs (US, UK, AW, GC), in which one do study participants place their highest trust? Four research questions were derived from the main question:

In which ES do participants place their highest trust regarding (1) education professionals, (2) educational departments, institutions, and associations, (3) educational types, and (4) educational knowledge resources?

Q5. Is the selection of the most trusted educational system related to whether the teacher educator is male or female? This question will be answered by testing the following null hypothesis: there is no association (relation) between selection of the most trusted educational system and the teacher educator's gender.

Q6. Is the selection of the most trusted educational system related to whether the teacher educator received his/her high education degree from US, UK, or other location? This question will be answered by testing the following null hypothesis: there is no association (relation) between selection of the most trusted educational system and the teacher educator's degree location.

Q7. Is the selection of the most trusted educational system related to whether the teacher educator is a professor, associate professor, assistant professor, or teacher assistant? This question will be answered by testing the following null hypothesis: there is no association (relation) between selection of the most trusted educational system and the teacher educator's academic rank.

Phase Two: Qualitative Research Question
The qualitative phase was intended to follow up participants' responses to explain and interpret the quantitative-phase results. Therefore, one research question directed the qualitative phase: "What factors influence the level of trust in any ES?"

Mixed-methods Question
How does the information obtained from participants assist in explaining the factors that influence the establishment and level of trust?

4. Methodology
4.1. Research Design

An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was used to address the difficulty of measuring trust. In a two-phase project, "the researcher collects quantitative data in the first phase, analyzes the results, and then uses the results to plan (or build on) the second, qualitative phase" (Creswell, 2014: 224). In this study, therefore, we purposively selected the participants and constructed the question types from the quantitative survey results to conduct follow-up qualitative focus-group interviews, which were analyzed to help understand the initial quantitative results. In this study design, the emphasis was on the second (qualitative) phase.

In the Results and Discussion sections, we integrate and explain the findings of both phases, and extend the qualitative findings to enhance understanding of the study.

4.2. Phase One: Quantitative Methods
4.2.1. Population.

The study population consisted of all faculty members of the College of Education (i.e., teacher educators) at Kuwait University who were present during the first semester of the 2017–2018 academic year, resulting in 95 participants. No sampling procedures were used due to the small population number. Therefore, the study was conducted on the entire population.

Teacher educators were selected as a target population for several reasons. First, teacher educators usually hold doctorate degrees and are considered highly educated. According to Hollis (1998), highly educated individuals probably have more access to diverse networks, which assists them in making appropriate trust decisions. Second, Borgonovi and Burns (2015) indicated that

highly educated individuals have a greater sense of autonomy and self-efficacy, which can enable them to express their objective judgments freely and without pressure. Finally, teacher educators are experienced specialists in education, making them the most qualified and suitable participants for this study's purpose.

4.2.2. Quantitative instrument.

After reviewing the literature and theoretical framework of ES components, and relating them to the current study's purpose, we designed and built a questionnaire comprising 24 items organized into four sections: (a) education professionals (seven items); (b) educational departments, institutions, and associations (four items); (c) educational types (nine items); and (d) educational knowledge resources (four items). A nominal scale of four alternatives was used to record participants' responses. Each participant selected one ES (US, UK, AW, or GC) that he/she perceived as the most trusted alternative system.

4.2.3. Validity and reliability of the quantitative instrument.

Instrument validity was established by utilizing an expert panel. Five faculty members from the College of Education reviewed the questionnaire content and format in light of the study's purpose. Minor changes were made to the instrument based on panel members' suggestions.

Reliability was determined by using the test–retest reliability coefficients. Ten people from this study's actual population participated in the pilot study. The survey was applied twice, with a two-week gap between the two applications. The scores were collected and analyzed, and Pearson's correlation for all instrument items was $r = .97$, indicating high reliability.

4.2.4. Quantitative data collection and analysis.

All population members (n = 95) received a copy of the questionnaire during the first semester of the 2017–2018 academic year. The return rate was 85 instruments (89.5 %). Returned instruments were classified according to the independent variables (see Table 1). Descriptive statistics, frequencies, and percentages were used to analyze and rank the data. Also, the Freeman –Halton extension of Fisher Exact probability Test was used to test the current research hypotheses.

Table 1. Study participants

Variable	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	47	55.3
	Female	38	44.7
Total		85	100
Degree Place	UK	19	22.4
	US	53	62.4
	Other	13	15.3
Total		85	100
Rank	Professor	14	16.5
	Associate professor	24	28.2
	Assistant professor	34	40.0
	Teacher assistant	13	15.3
Total		85	100

4.3. Phase Two: Qualitative Methods

4.3.1. Selection and profile of participants. Considering the similarities and differences in results produced during the first phase, and the study's aim, we divided the participants into three main groups:

Group 1. Six participants (four male and two female teacher educators who graduated from American universities) placed 100 % of their highest trust in the US ES. They included one professor, one associate professor, and four assistant professors.

Group 2. Six participants (three male and three female teacher educators who had graduated from UK universities) placed more than 50 % of their highest trust in the UK ES, with the rest of their highest trust distributed among other systems (US, AW, and GC). This group comprised two associate professors and four assistant professors.

Group 3. Six participants (one male and five female teacher educators) granted their highest trust to a range of 6–15 research instrument items linked to the GC ES. The group comprised one associate and two assistant professors who had graduated from UK universities, and three teacher assistants who had graduated from Kuwait University.

4.3.2. Qualitative data collection: Focus-group interviews (FGIs). Three focus-group interviews were held to collect data and insights to interpret the previously gathered quantitative findings. Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003) emphasized that what makes focus-group interviews are valuable for their reflection of participants' experiences, attitudes, perspectives, and assumptions, and their encouragement of interaction among participants during each interview, which provides opportunities to generate rich descriptive data and more insights.

4.3.3. Qualitative data analysis. Data collected from the three groups were analyzed separately, and further analysis identified similarities and differences among the three groups. The same analysis steps were used for all groups:

• Reading all data to get a sense thereof.

• Analyzing data and dividing it into segments, with each representing similar thoughts, attitudes, and experiences of participants.

• Organizing segments into topics.

• Compiling topics into themes.

• Reporting themes.

• Conducting further analysis of stated themes to identify similarities and differences among the three groups and remove any redundancies.

4.3.4. Validity and trustworthiness of results. Member checking was used as a validity strategy to check the accuracy of the findings and our interpretation. Two members of each group were contacted and presented with a written summary of our understanding of their inputs during FGIs to verify the credibility of data and seek participants' agreement with our interpretation.

5. Results
5.1. Phase One: Quantitative Results

Overall results for all survey items showed that most participants (average of 71.7 %, n = 61 out of the total n = 85) placed their highest trust in the US ES, followed by the UK ES (average of 21.1 %, n = 18), GC ES (average of 4.7 %, n = 4), and AW ES (average of 2.5 %, n = 2). The results are organized, ranked, and presented in Tables 2−5 (each table represents one research question). Notable results only are briefly described.

Q1. In which ES do participants place their highest trust regarding education professionals?

Table 2. Teacher educators' trust in education professionals

	US		UK		AW		GC	
Items	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
I place my highest trust in instructional designers from	69	81.2	11	12.9	2	2.4	3	3.5
I place my highest trust in curriculum developers from	67	78.8	12	14.1	4	4.7	2	2.4
I place my highest trust in university professors from	59	69.4	13	15.3	7	8.2	6	7.1
I place my highest trust in educational researchers from	57	67.1	19	22.4	6	7.1	3	3.5
I place my highest trust in teachers from	52	61.2	17	20.0	9	10.6	7	8.2
I place my highest trust in school counselors from	51	60.0	11	12.9	11	12.9	12	14.1
I place my highest trust in school managers from	48	56.5	24	28.2	5	5.9	8	9.4

As shown in Table 2, most participants placed their highest trust in education professionals from the US ES. The highest and lowest trust within the US system went to instructional designers (81.2 %) and school managers (56.5 %), respectively.

Q2. In which ES do participants place their highest trust regarding educational departments, institutions, and associations?

Table 3. Teacher educators' trust in educational departments, institutions, and associations

	US		UK		AW		GC	
Items	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
I place my highest trust in universities from	71	83.5	13	15.3	0	0.0	1	1.2
I place my highest trust in educational associations from	69	81.2	14	16.5	2	2.4	0	0.0
I place my highest trust in teacher educational institutions from	66	77.6	13	15.3	3	3.5	3	3.5
I place my highest trust in departments of education from	51	60.0	28	32.9	2	2.4	4	4.7

Table 3 shows that universities from the US ES received highest trust (83.5 %), whereas universities from AW did not attract any participants' highest trust (0 %). The US educational associations were also most participants' first choice for trust (81.2 %), and this element in the GC ES received 0 % of participants' choice of trust.

Q3. In which ES do participants place their highest trust regarding educational types?

Table 4. Teacher educators' trust in educational types

	US		UK		AW		GC	
Items	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
I place my highest trust in technology education from	78	91.8	7	8.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
I place my highest trust in special education from	69	81.2	15	17.6	1	1.2	0	0.0
I place my highest trust in physical education from	69	81.2	14	16.5	2	2.4	0	0.0
I place my highest trust in vocational education from	69	81.2	13	15.3	2	2.4	1	1.2
I place my highest trust in health education from	65	76.5	20	23.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
I place my highest trust in art education from	63	74.1	19	22.4	3	3.5	0	0.0
I place my highest trust in business education from	63	74.1	20	23.5	1	1.2	1	1.2
I place my highest trust in politics education from	56	65.9	22	25.9	4	4.7	3	3.5
I place my highest trust in citizenship education from	45	52.9	11	12.9	4	4.7	25	29.5

As seen in Table 4, the AW and GC ESs did not attract any participants' highest trust for their technology and health education. Instead, the technology education of the US ES attracted the highest trust of most participants (91.8 %, n = 78). The UK ES received highest trust from a moderate number of participants (23.5 %, n = 20) in health education and business education.

Q4. In which ES do participants place their highest trust regarding educational knowledge resources?

Table 5. Teacher educators' trust in educational knowledge resources

	US		UK		AW		GC	
Items	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
I place my highest trust in educational conferences from	78	91.8	7	8.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
I place my highest trust in educational websites from	78	91.8	5	5.9	2	2.4	0	0.0
I place my highest trust in educational journals from	75	88.2	8	9.4	2	2.4	0	0.0
I place my highest trust in educational books from	70	82.4	13	15.3	2	2.4	0	0.0

As shown in Table 5, the US ES garnered 91.8 % of participants' highest trust for its educational conferences as a source of educational knowledge. Meanwhile, the GC ES attracted 0 % of participants' highest trust for educational knowledge resources, such as educational conferences, websites, journals, and books.

Analysis for research questions five to seven done by using Freeman –Halton extension of the Fisher Exact probability Test instead of the Chi Squair Test because it is more suitable for analyzing current research data of using contingency (crosstabs) tables larger than 2X2 and more than one cell in these tables have small expected frequency count of five or less (see Cochran's Rule).

<u>Findings Related to the Fifth Research Question</u>

A two-way Freeman–Halton extension of the Fisher exact probability test for four-rows by a two-column contingency table was conducted to evaluate the null hypothesis that the variable of selection of the most trusted educational system was independent of the variable of the teacher educator's gender. Findings showed that the test was statistically significant, p value = 005 at Alpha level .05. The null hypothesis was rejected and concludes that at the 5 % level, there is a significant association between the two variables, and they are not independent. Because the test result was significant, standardized residuals were calculated to know more about the association between the two variables. Table 6 presents a summary of the results for question five.

Table 6. Trusted System and Gender Crosstabulation*

			Sex		
			Male	*Female*	*Total*
Trusted System	USA	Count	40	21	61
		Expected Count	33.7	27.3	61.0
		Standardized Residual	1.1	-1.2	
	UK	Count	5	13	18
		Expected Count	10.0	8.0	18.0
		Standardized Residual	-1.6	1.7	
	AW	Count	0	2	2
		Expected Count	1.1	.9	2.0
		Standardized Residual	-1.1	1.2	
	GC	Count	2	2	4
		Expected Count	2.2	1.8	4.0
		Standardized Residual	-.1	.2	
Total		Count	47	38	85
		Expected Count	47.0	38.0	85.0
*Fisher's Exact Test: Exact Sig. (2-sided) = .005. p < .05, two-tailed					

As shown in Table 6, none of the residuals are significant because they are not greater than 2 or less than -2. However, there were four positive and four negative values. This means that if we assume that there is no association between the two variables, the male teacher educators are more likely to select the US educational system as their first trusted system, but the significance is low (residual = 1.1). On the other hand, they are less likely to select the UK, AW, or GC educational systems as their first trusted system because the residuals values are negative and small (-1.6, -1.1, -.1, respectively). Alternatively, the female teacher educators are more likely to select the UK, AW, GC, and GC educational systems as their trusted educational systems because residuals were positive (1.7, 1.2, .2) respectively, but the significance is low. On the other hand, they are less likely to select the US education system as their first choice because the residual is negative (-1.2), but the significance is small (less than -2).

Findings Related to the Sixth Research Question

A two-way Freeman–Halton extension of the Fisher exact probability test for four-rows by a three-column contingency table was conducted to evaluate the null hypothesis that the variable of selection of the most trusted educational system was independent of the variable of the teacher educator's degree location. Findings showed that the test was statistically significant, probability value = .0004 at Alpha level .05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that the two variables were not independent. Because the test result was significant, standardized residuals were calculated to understand the association between the two variables. Table 7 presents a summary of results for question five.

Table 7. Trusted System and Degree Place Crosstabulation*

			Degree Place			
			US	*UK*	*Other*	*Total*
Trusted System	USA	Count	46	10	5	61
		Expected Count	38.0	13.6	9.3	61.0
		Standardized Residual	1.3	-1.0	-1.4	
	UK	Count	5	8	5	18
		Expected Count	11.2	4.0	2.8	18.0
		Standardized Residual	-1.9	2.0	1.4	
	AW	Count	1	0	1	2
		Expected Count	1.2	.4	.3	2.0
		Standardized Residual	-.2	-.7	1.3	
	GC	Count	1	1	2	4
		Expected Count	2.5	.9	.6	4.0
		Standardized Residual	-.9	.1	1.8	
Total		Count	53	19	13	85
		Expected Count	53.0	19.0	13.0	85.0

*Fisher's Exact Test: Exact Sig. (2-sided) = .0004. p < .05, two-tailed.

It can be concluded from the residuals values in Table 7 that if there was no association between the two variables (trusted educational system and degree place), then:

Teacher educators who received their degree from the US were more likely to select the US educational system as their first trusted system (residual = 1.3) and less likely to select the UK, AW, and GC systems (residuals = -1.9, -.2, -.9, respectively).

Teacher educators who are UK degree holders were more likely to select the UK (residual = 2) and GC (residual = .1) educational systems as their first trusted systems and less likely to select the US (residual = -1.0) and AW (residual = -.7) educational systems.

Teacher educators who received their degrees from other places (other than the US and UK) were more likely to select UK, AW, and GC as their first trusted educational systems (residuals = 1.4, 1.3, 1.8, respectively) and less likely to select the US educational system (residual = -1.4).

<u>Findings Related to the Seventh Research Question</u>
A two-way Freeman–Halton extension of the Fisher exact probability test for four-rows by a four-column contingency table was conducted to evaluate the null hypothesis that the variable of selection of the most trusted educational system was independent of the variable of the teacher educator's rank. The findings showed that the test was not statistically significant, p value = .307 at Alpha level .05. Therefore, the test didn't provide evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Because the test result was not significant, no standardized residuals were calculated. Table 8 presents a summary of the results for question five.

Table 8. Trusted System and Rank Crosstabulation*

| | | | Teacher Educator Rank | | | | |
			Professor	*Associate*	*Assistant*	*T.A.*	*Total*
Trusted System	USA	Count	10	16	28	7	61
		Expected Count	10.0	17.2	24.4	9.3	61.0
	UK	Count	2	7	5	4	18
		Expected Count	3.0	5.1	7.2	2.8	18.0
	AW	Count	1	0	0	1	2
		Expected Count	.3	.6	.8	.3	2.0
	GC	Count	1	1	1	1	4
		Expected Count	.7	1.1	1.6	.6	4.0
Total		Count	14	24	34	13	85
		Expected Count	14.0	24.0	34.0	13.0	85.0

*Fisher's Exact Test: Exact Sig. (2-sided) = .307. p > .05, two-tailed.

5.2.Phase Two – Qualitative Results
The qualitative phase of the study revealed 15 themes for Group 1, six themes for Group 2, and two themes for Group 3. Quotations from participants are shown in italics.

5.2.1. Group 1
1) Based on standards. When participants were asked about the factors that encouraged them to select the US ES as their first choice to trust, two members referred to it as being organized around standards, which made the system trustworthy in their view. The remaining group members agreed with this view.
"The American [ES] is built around actual standards, not like the [AW ESs] where standards—if any—are pretended or only written on documents but not applied to actual situations."
2) Richness and high-quality educational resources. The focus-group members declared that their trust in the American ES was shaped largely by the quality and quantity of educational journals, books, conferences, and websites in the US.
"I rely on American academic books and journals due to the big effort used to write them, the up-to-date information, the direct language, the documentation, topic variation, and good organization."
"I attended many educational conferences in different countries—I never found better than American conferences." A third interviewee stated: "If you are looking for rich, well-organized, and up-to-date educational information, documentation, and video/audio clips from the Internet, you should go first to the American sites."

3) Advancement of the country. During the interview, participants discussed how a country's advancement leads to advancement of its ES.

"Advancements in the US economy, industry, technology, health, communication, democratic practice, business, public services, and social organization work provide a solid ground for advancements in the American [ES], which in turn has led to it becoming a trustworthy system."

4) Reputation. The good reputation of US education, especially in higher-education and graduate-level studies, is evident to other countries' publics, as noted by the interviewees. They also noted that people and many governments send students to the US at their own expense or on scholarships to continue their education. Likewise, the participants claimed that the strong media machine of the US pushed this reputation locally and internationally.

"I know people who plan to send their children to a US university after finishing secondary school never travel to the US—they depend only on the university's reputation."

5) Advancement of higher-education institutions and universities. The participants expressed this advancement through their discussion, attitudes, and agreement.

"American higher-education institutions and universities exist in a large number, offer multiple and diverse majors and specializations, initiate genuine and scientific ideas, lead as a major source of change, and provide lots of variety in counseling and guidance for their national and international students."

6) Adaptability and flexibility. The participants believed that although the US ES is based on principles and rules, it is flexible, especially with exceptional individual cases. This adaptability is evident in public schools and universities.

"The [American elementary school] evaluated my child's level of English and put him in a special class with attentive teaching and activities. After a few months, my boy was placed with his American classmates in the same grade."

"With the assistance of my advisor, I was able to tailor a special master's and doctorate program that fulfills my goals and needs."

7) Technology.

"If you really want to learn about technology in general and educational technology, you should go to the US."

When a participant made this statement, the remainder nodded in agreement. The participants also explained how special conferences in the US updated their awareness of technology uses in education and teaching.

"A colleague and I attended two conferences recently in the US, and we learned about utilizing educational applications and other programs, which benefited us in our teaching and interaction with our students."

The availability of many distance and online educational programs at secondary, undergraduate, and graduate levels was another reason participants trusted the American ES first.

8) Graduates. The participants believed that quality graduates are essential for determining the trust level of any ES. They described the graduate characteristics of the American ES, especially at the higher-education level, as follows: knowledgeable, skillful, adaptable to new situations, lifelong learner, ready for the job market, researcher, critical and creative thinker, up to date, open minded, responsible, self-confidant, open to other cultures, daring, possessing positive values, own practical and social experiences, and trustworthy.

"A graduate from a US college usually owns the ability to deal with how questions."

"If I have a choice to choose teachers for my children, I will choose those who graduated from an American university."

9) Respecting cultural diversity. The participants reflected on their experiences by indicating that they were treated with equality and respect from the faculty, staff, administrators, and other national and international students in American colleges and universities, regardless of their different cultures, races, languages, customs, and religions.

"I felt at the beginning when I attended classes that I was different, and I would be alienated; a few months later this feeling dissolved and I immersed myself in college and community life without any negative feelings or thoughts."

Some participants with children in American public schools reported that their children were not exposed to any bias or mistreatment due to their names, traditions, or origins.

10) Developing individual responsibility. Participants indicated that most faculty members during their study in the US encouraged them to develop their individuality and take initiative and present their points of view even if they were unusual or different.

"Whenever new ideas or a theory of learning is presented, the professor always asks me for my opinion. This type of interaction made me a critical reader and implanted confidence in me."

"The American way of education did not aim to dissolve me into a predefined entity or feed me ideas that I am not convinced of."

11) Accreditation. Another main reason for participants identifying trust in the American ES is the accreditation system used for post-secondary institutions and grade schools.

"[Before joining a US graduate school] I was told to get an acceptance from an accredited university and the accreditations needed to be valid and from a reliable accreditor."

In general, participants felt that trust in any school, college, or program of study is strongly associated with accreditation by a reputable agency.

"It, in short, means that American schools and universities are held accountable for offering a quality education and are under continuous evaluation."

12) Specialized professional associations. The participants acknowledged that the American ES owes its high quality and trustworthiness to the availability of an enormous number of non-governmental, non-profit, educational associations and organizations for every field of study, category of education professional, educational level, and educational type.

"Standards and goals for each area of study and profession are created and developed in these professional associations and sent to whom it may concern to improve education in the US."

"I joined a professional association in my field to broaden my contacts with international colleagues, to be aware of new research and updated practice, and to advance my teaching skills."

13) Mutual respect and trust. Participants expressed their admiration for and trust in the US ES because of the widespread mutual respect and trust between teachers and parents, professors and their students, and administrators and their staff. Interviewees cited parent–teacher associations in American schools as an example. Participants also identified this phenomenon in higher-education institutions.

"Professors leave the classroom and students continue the work due to mutual trust."

14) Fair assessment. Participants regarded the US ES as trustworthy due to its objectivity and performance-based assessment practices. They commented that the assessment used in American schools and colleges is not limited to written summative exams, and that, unlike other ESs where the focus is on standardized testing or on perceiving exams and tests as synonymous to assessment, the US ES uses a variety of approaches and opportunities for learners to be assessed more accurately and objectively.

"In our local system, the fate of the student depends on one or two midterm tests and a final exam."

15) Insignificant effects of politics. Participants stated that any ES not influenced largely or directly by politics is worthy of their first choice of trust. They believed that American politics only minimally effects its ES; therefore, the US ES received their trust. One participant identified a contrary case:

"The Arab world's ES is not independent politically to build its educational policies, programs, and curriculum. Consequently, it will receive my lower level of trust."

5.2.2. Group 2

1) Discipline. The second group of participants regarded discipline as one of the strongest features of the UK ES. They illustrated that punctuality, respecting assigned dates, abiding by rules and regulations, respecting school dress codes, and acting respectfully are common outcomes of the UK's schools and colleges.

2) Learner-based education. According to the participants, UK post-secondary education develops learning ability and makes acquiring knowledge the students' business.

"Our professor provides us with main outlines and some guiding steps. It is our duty to search for detailed knowledge and application examples."

3) Bachelor's degrees. Participants referred to UK bachelor studies as a sign of the system's strength. They explained that UK bachelor education includes early emphasis on subject

specialization, making the program more related to a student's field of study, providing graduates with more relevant and applicable knowledge, and preparing them for the workplace. One interviewee with an English major said:

"I was an admirer of my professor's deep knowledge of English linguistics, and in one informal meeting I asked him about his ability. He smiled and said it is the foundation of the bachelor program."

4) Examination. Participants commented that tests and exams in UK schools are organized, well-constructed, and based on curriculum standards.

"Two of my children are in a British secondary school in Kuwait, and they are tested every month on the curriculum materials that they actually study."

Participants added that the UK ES's use of well-constructed tests and standardized entrance and exit exams at secondary and college levels is reflected in students' improved learning, and that these tests and exams provide reliable assessment means, leading to better education that can be trusted.

5) Multiculturalism. Participants noted that the widespread participation of international students, staff, teacher assistants, and faculty members is a clear feature in UK schools and universities. They specified that UK grade schools always welcomed and treated all new students from other countries equally. A participant revealed:

"When I moved with my family to the UK to continue my postgraduate study, my daughter, who was in third grade, came to me one day and told me, 'Everyone in my school is nice, and no one stares at me.'"

Participants added that when international students attend UK schools or higher-education institutions they do not feel alienated, and their customs, traditions, and religious beliefs are respected.

6) Advisement. As noted by participants, advisement is everywhere in UK educational institutions. It occurs in schools through teachers and counselors.

"My son's secondary-school teachers step out of their comfort zone and offer extra help and advice to build students' knowledge and self-esteem to reach their goals."

"Special staff are usually available in my college library from 8 am to 4 pm daily to offer their advice in how to use appropriate academic English language in research papers and dissertations." Participants also remarked on the availability of many free workshops for secondary and college students focusing on various abilities and skills.

5.2.3. Group 3

1) National instructors for certain subjects. The participants clarified that faculty members and teachers of subjects like Arabic language, social studies, and Islamic philosophy and education from GC ES are more trustworthy. They explained that these national teachers and professors are usually more aware of the course content and materials, more attached emotionally, and more eager to teach these subjects because they reflect their own cultural elements.

"My son was taught social studies in the seventh grade by a foreign teacher, and by a national teacher in the eighth grade; the difference was clear in my son's attitude and knowledge in favor of the national teacher."

2) Citizenship education. The focus-group participants specified that when it came to implanting citizenship principles in students, they trusted the local or national curriculum and programs first. They perceived the GC ES as the most appropriate to educate nationals about citizenship because it is the most related to them. One participant elaborated:

"Even if we can borrow some methods and techniques from other advanced educational systems for many types of our educational programs, we cannot, and we should not, import citizenship education from other educational systems."

Furthermore, participants declared that the formal curriculum in social studies and civic classes, and extracurricular activities related to public and national occasions such as presentations, theatrical shows, drawings, national songs, video displays, and exhibitions, are used to develop and enhance citizenship in GC students.

6. Discussion

In regard to the first phase of this study, it can be concluded from the quantitative data, statistical values, and hypotheses testing that the current study participants have a tendency to more positively rate the educational systems in which they received their higher academic studies. This phenomenon was more noticeable in the graduates of the US educational system more than other participants. This may be because they are affected by the influence of the capacity of the US system and its spread. Another study may be required to discover other reasons. Also, from the statistical results, it can be implied that female participants are more likely than males to place their trust in other educational systems - in addition to the US system. Moreover, it is noticeable that male teacher educators placed their trust in the US educational system more than the females. A research study is required to determine the reasons for this finding. Furthermore, statistically, the factor of academic rank (e.g., professors, associate professors, assistant professors, or assistant teachers) of the participants in this study did not have any effect on their trust selection toward any educational system as indicated by the non-significance of the test result used to explore this matter.

The rest of this section addresses the mixed-methods approach of the study. We discuss the results from surveys regarding the themes elicited from the focus groups to enhance understanding of where and why teacher educators give a certain ES their priority trust. Our approach involves integrating phase one results with corresponding phase two results. We then provide explanations for the integrated results, while also relating our results to the findings of previous research.

6.1. Factors of Trust in Education Professions

Our findings indicate that several direct factors play a role in forming trust in instructional designers, curriculum developers, university professors, educational researchers, school teachers, school counselors, and school managers.

First, when these professions rely on high standards, they have the foundation needed to produce well-qualified education professionals. This result agrees with Stensaker and Maassen's (2015) general findings that quality assurance is used as a mechanism for creating trust in higher-education institutions.

Second, accreditation processes and accredited institutions produce better graduates or education professionals, consistent with Stensaker and Harvey's (2013) finding of a strong relationship between accreditation and building educational trust in higher education. Third, the availability of a high quantity and quality of educational resources provides better preparation for education professionals. Fourth, various professional education associations contribute to developing and improving these professions. Fifth, mutual respect and trust among education professionals and their students, staff, or beneficiaries positively impacts earning someone's highest trust in education professionals. Similarly, White-Cooper et al. (2009) demonstrated that forming interpersonal relationships is a major factor for constructing educational trust.

All these factors, according to participants, were available in the US ES. This explains why these professions within the US system received 68 % (n = 58) of participants' highest trust, on average. Among educational professions, teaching stands out in the process of trusting any ES. This observation concurs with Czerniawski's (2011) finding that qualified teachers are needed to build trust. In the UK, school managers received some participants' highest trust (average of 28 %; n = 24) due to the belief that these managers are well qualified and their administrative performance is outstanding. Furthermore, national teachers for subjects like Arabic language, social studies, and religious education received the highest trust from several AW and GC participants (9.4 %; n = 16), who commented that these subjects require national teachers who share the local culture. The remaining participants perceived trust in teachers from the angle of teachers' quality preparation and teaching skills.

6.2. Factors of Trust in Institutions and Associations of Education

Probably one reason behind trust in educational institutions is the country's advancement, which positively reflects on these institutions. Another reason is the advancement of higher-education universities and colleges, which are characterized by their large scale, multiple majors, good reputation and publicity, integrity, role as change agents, and embodiment of genuine scientific ideas. Additionally, instructors' and administrators' humane, just, and caring behavior

toward students enhances trust in these institutions. Indeed, 83 % of participants agreed on these factors and selected the US ES to represent them. Teacher-education institutions in the US are integral parts of these universities and share similar characteristics. Therefore, 77.6 % of participants felt reassured by their present studies in these colleges or schools of education.

Universities in the AW ES received none of the participants' highest trust. This is likely due to the use of traditional methods and policies. This cause supported by studies conducted by Shaaban (2017) and Khaled (2014). Further studies needed to identify other causes.

Professional educational associations or organizations actively cover most educational fields, professions, types, and levels of education, suggesting why they are trusted. These bodies and their activities are likely to encourage individuals to construct their trust in any ES. However, once again, GC educational associations received 0 % of participants' highest trust; this could be due to the low number of these associations.

Regarding departments of education, participants gave their highest trust to the US or UK ESs but did not elaborate on their experiences with these departments—perhaps because they are not in direct contact with them.

6.3. Factors of Trust in Types of Education

More than half of participants showed their highest trust in nine types of education in the US system: technology, special, physical, vocational, health, art, business, politics, and citizenship education. Trust in these education types in the UK ES ranked second, except citizenship education, which ranked third. The greater trust in these types of education in the US and UK systems referred generally to most of the factors presented by participants in the second phase of this study. However, more specific reasons for this phenomenon are: the advancement of the US and UK, where these education types are perceived as essential; use of scientific method and thinking; advanced technology; development of individual responsibility; and a focus on learner-based education. Furthermore, their accountability and accreditation processes lead to educational quality. The latter result matched the findings of Stensaker and Harvey (2013) and Stensaker and Maassen (2015), who emphasized the importance of accountability and accreditation processes in educational trust construction.

Worth noting here is trust in the GC ES toward citizenship education, which ranked second after the US system: 29.4 % (n = 25) of participants gave their highest trust to the GC system. This result matched similar findings in a study on Belgium (Claes, Hooghe, 2017), which indicated that local citizenship education plays a significant role in trust. Participants in our study seemed to perceive citizenship education as a special kind of education connected to their country and region. Osler and Starky (2005) discussed how citizenship is experienced as a feeling of belonging to a community. Most participants in our study were Gulf citizens living in Kuwait. Some might have perceived citizenship education from the content angle, believing this content should be delivered by national teachers and reflect the local culture. However, other Kuwaiti participants who selected the US ES (52.9 %; n = 45) for their highest trust probably considered citizenship education from the angle of teaching and learning methods, techniques, activities, and strategies.

6.4. Factors of Trust in Educational Knowledge Resources

Educational knowledge resources in this study consisted of educational conferences, websites, journals, and books. None of the participants gave the GC their highest trust for all items, and only two gave the AW their highest trust. This can be explained by comparing the four educational knowledge resources of the US/UK systems to GC/AW systems.

The limitations of educational conferences in the GC/AW systems are due to only a very few conferences being held annually. This observation is in line with Alnaif's (2014) study. Current study participants also indicated that most US higher-education institutions or universities likely consider their websites as instruments of education that reflect the state and advancement of education. Conversely, these participants have a different view of the websites of GC/AW higher-education institutions or universities. The previous assumption is consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Al-Salem (2012). In addition, further studies are needed to determine the underlying causes of this difference.

Most educational journals and research periodicals in the GC/AW ESs are general in nature, with few specializing in a level or type of education. Unlike Western journals, periodicals in the

GC/AW that focus on one topic are few. These reasons may have contributed to the fact that no participants in our study selected GC/AW journals as their first choice. Geagea's (2014) study provided agreement for the preceding discussion.

Furthermore, there is a clear difference between the quality of US/UK college textbooks and many textbooks (especially humanities and social sciences) used in GC/AW universities. This could be due to a failure to apply the criteria for quality of authorship and production for these books. Both Khalifa (2008) and Albaredi (2012) supported this explanation.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, our findings indicate that teacher educators' development of trust in ESs is a multi-factor, multi-step process. First, this trust building is affected by the location or country of their high education as inferred by the qualitative and quantitative data as well as the hypotheses testing in the current study. Second, this trust development is largely based on two integrated factors: cognitive and emotional. This finding concurs with similar results in earlier studies on organizational and institutional trust (Bachmann et al., 2015; Lamsa, Pucetaite, 2006; Schoorman et al., 2007).

This study finds that developing teacher educators' trust in ESs consists of the following integrated steps (mechanism):

Teacher educators:

1. generate thoughts and rationales of certain criteria or features associated with trustworthy ESs (cognitive factors);

2. affirm the existence and application of prior criteria or features in the ESs under examination (cognitive factors); and

3. establish positive emotions or attitudes toward the ES due to their positive interaction with different individuals and components of that system (emotional factors).

Some criteria might be categorized under more than one factor.

This study's findings are limited by the sample—namely, teacher educators (trustor). Other studies may reveal different factors of trust development in ESs. Additionally, as trust development in this study is directed toward ESs, the trust-formation process might differ for other systems (or trustees).

7.1. Implications

Teacher educators, educational leaders, policymakers, administrators, and especially those in charge of different public sectors of any ES should consider the following actions:

• Work toward obtaining the trust of beneficiaries and providers by applying the factors of trust revealed in this study.

• Enhance the trust degree in education professions by building high-standard preparation and development programs for education professionals, as well as trusting them and marketing their quality transparently in different media to reach the public and special groups within society. Additionally, connect each profession to a well-established and active specialized association to improve that profession.

• Connect different types of education with accountability, high standards of performance, and quality assurance, and adopt successful international standards and practices of well-developed countries, with appropriate adjustments to suit each country's ES.

• Involve all stakeholders in planning, application, and evaluation processes of all components of the country's ES.

• Establish — especially in developing countries — specialized educational associations like those in developed countries, and connect them with similar international associations to enhance the ES's quality and generate the necessary trust.

• Build and develop educational knowledge resources (e.g., books, journals, conferences, and websites), in a scientific, objective, reliable, and modern manner, based on advanced planning, constructing, reviewing, and evaluating mechanisms to raise trust in these resources.

• Govern and administer educational institutions to provide stakeholders with credible information, establish sound plans and applications, welcome opinions and innovative ideas from concerned and specialist individuals, use evidence-based designs, be open to new developments,

and make required changes based on research, logic, and practical wisdom. It has been noted (Morselli et al., 2012: 53) that "a strong association was found between well governance and trust in institutions."

• In each country, develop independent non-profit unit(s) or center(s) to measure (e.g., biennially) trust judgments of all stakeholders toward the ES and its sectors and components. Additionally, follow up on reports from similar international centers about trust in education and ESs. Increase awareness of the importance of trust and trust studies for society. As the nature and factors of trust change over time, such a unit or center is needed to follow up on these changes.

7.2. Implications for Future Research

A follow-up investigation could examine what it means to trust an ES, or define the effects of this trust on teacher educators' performance in their academic and teaching work. Further research should also explore other ESs in different countries or regions to locate and compare trust-building factors.

Future research should investigate and measure the degree of trust in ES components and include different groups of participants (e.g., students, teachers, the public, and/or businesses). Outputs of these groups can be further examined to discover the causes of high, middle, or low degrees of trust in any ES element.

Finally, future investigations could compare trust judgments toward government and non-government educational bodies, or between public and private universities or grade schools within the same country or across cultures.

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