Author’s response to reviews

Title: Trust in Group Decisions: A Scoping Review

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Author’s response to reviews:

June 26, 2019

Dear Dr. Peters,

Thank you for your review of our manuscript “Trust in Group Decisions: A Scoping Review” (MEED-D-19-00110R1). My co-authors and I are pleased to resubmit our manuscript based on the helpful feedback of the reviewers. Below we provide a description of how we addressed the reviewer comments and the location of the revisions.

Daniel J. Schumacher (Reviewer 1)

1) The introduction and results sections now read much more clearly, and your purpose and aims are clear. Great work!

1) Response: Thank you very much.

1) Location: N/A
2) Page 5, line 33: I would be careful not to conflate independent practice (i.e., practicing alone without any person or resource to aid you) and unsupervised practice (i.e., practicing with nurses, other physicians, the internet, etc without a supervisor).

2) Response: We removed the wording “trainee independence” and revised the sentence to read: “Health professions education has examined trust in the context of Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs), which include decisions that supervisors make about the appropriate level of trainee supervision for different clinical responsibilities.”

2) Location: Background section, second paragraph, first sentence.

3) Page 6, line 43: Relationship between trust and what else?

3) Response: The relationship implied here is between individual level and group level trust. In conjunction with one of the comments from Reviewer 2 below, we clarified this sentence to read: “Additionally, we examine what factors may influence group trust through a proposed model to illustrate the relationship between individual level and group level trust.”

3) Location: Background section, sentence immediately prior to Theoretical Framework.

4) Page 6, line 52-Page 7, line 13: When you say the most common theoretical framework for articles cited in this review, do you mean articles in the scoping review or articles in the introduction up to that point? If it is the former, it would not be conventional to develop a theoretical framework after completing the study. Rather, this is something done before conducting the study.

4) Response: We agree that this point might be a bit confusing. Based upon your comment here and the one below, we elected to delete this sentence and instead focus on situated cognition as our theoretical framework.

4) Location: Background section, Theoretical Framework, first sentence (deleted).
5) Page 7, line 20: I think this is where the theoretical framework section should perhaps begin and that what comes before this could perhaps be deleted because it is not helpful and actually makes the logical flow of the paper harder for me to follow and understand.

5) Response: We concur with your recommendation and have deleted the sentences that you suggest.

5) Location: Background section, Theoretical Framework, first sentence (beginning with your recommended sentence).

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6) Page 7, line 30-31: I do not believe it is important to know whether situated cognition came from your literature review. It is only important to know why you are choosing to use it.

6) Response: We concur with your recommendation and have deleted this statement.

6) Location: Background section, Theoretical Framework, second sentence (revised with above statement deleted).

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Ylva Holzhausen (Reviewer 2)

1) I thank for the opportunity to review the revised manuscript, which I have read with great interest. The revised version of the manuscript provides a definition of group trust, explores factors influencing group trust and proposes a model linking the factors together.

In my eyes, the manuscript still needs a better structure and argumentation line, especially in the result section. This aligns with the suggestion by Reviewer 3 of the previous review round, to better structure the article around it aims.

Please see further comments below:

1) Response: Thank you. We’ve made revisions to the manuscript based upon your comments below (along with those of Reviewer 1) and feel that this helps to improve the structure and argumentation line in the Results section and the whole paper itself.

1) Location: See comments above and below.
Background

2) I would suggest deleting the sentence in line 48-50, page 4. It provides extra information that is not necessary for the rest of the article.

2) Response: We concur with your recommendation and deleted this sentence from the manuscript.

2) Location: Background section, second paragraph, last sentence (deleted).

3) I would suggest to move the sentence "Additionally, although some recent studies describe data sources that competency committees use and how they weigh this information in their collective decisions, health professions education research has not studied trust within these committees and trust in committee decisions from individuals either within or outside the group." (p 5, line 27-34) to line 10 on the same page.

Thus right before the sentence "Scholars outside…"

3) Response: We concur with this recommendation and moved the sentence to the location that you suggest.

3) Location: Background section, third paragraph, first sentence (moved to its current location).

4) The section about theoretical frameworks needs a better introduction. Why do you need a framework? What will it add?

4) Response: To better clarify this section, we deleted the first two sentences of this section (including the one you recommend below). We felt that the sentence starting with “For decision-making groups to reach a consensus…” provides a better introduction to this section. We also changed the second sentence to read: “We therefore chose situated cognition as our theoretical framework to support the development of a model and interpretation of the literature, helping to advance our understanding of group processes in the context of competency committees.”

4) Location: Background section, Theoretical Framework, first and second sentences.
5) I would also suggest to delete the paragraph about social exchange theory and social information theory (p 6, Line 52 & p 7, line 11-16). It provides extra information that is not necessary for the rest of the article.

5) Response: We concur with this recommendation and deleted the sentences that you suggest.

5) Location: Background section, Theoretical Framework, first sentence (deleted).

Results

6) You provide in the abstract and the discussion section your definition of trust, but not in the result section. I would exclude the definition of trust on the individual level (p.10 , line 44-50) from the text, as it is already provided in table 2. Instead, I would provide here your definition of group trust.

6) Response: Thank you for this suggestion. We concur with your recommendation to include our proposed definition of group trust in the Results section. However, we elected to also keep the most often cited definition of trust (p. 10, line 44-50) in the Results section for several reasons. We wanted to emphasize that most papers in our review cited this specific definition. We wanted to explain some components of this definition before proposing our definition. Finally, we wanted to show how our proposed definition evolved from this definition of trust. To better structure the article around our aims, we created a new “Group Trust Definition” subheading in the Results section where we provide our proposed definition and link the definition to Figure 2. As a result, we also deleted the paragraph about trust asymmetry (page 12, line 48 through page 13, line 15) because we felt that it added little to the reader’s understanding of this concept or perhaps made the definition more confusing.

6) Location: Results section, Group Trust Definition (new subheading), first sentence.

7) The title of Figure 2 is confusing. You provide a definition of group trust in the abstract and discussion. In my eyes, the figure itself does not represent a definition. Also, the introduction to Figure 2 (p.11, line 40-45) does not state that this is a definition of group trust.
7) Response: Please see above. We provided our proposed definition of group trust in the Results section under the new “Group Trust Definition” subheading and changed some of the wording in this section to better link the proposed definition to Figure 2.

7) Location: Results section, Group Trust Definition (new subheading).

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8) I would exclude the paragraph about cognitive and affective foundations (p. 11, line 22-31). It provides extra information that is not necessary for the rest of the article.

8) Response: We concur with this recommendation and deleted this paragraph.

8) Location: Results section, Definitions of Trust subheading, second paragraph (deleted).

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9) I miss a headline in the result section for the second aim of the article: examining factors influencing group trust. I understand that this aim is closely connected to the proposition of the model of group trust. However, I had difficulty to relocate the aims of the article in the result section.

9) Response: Thank you for pointing this out. We modified the Background section to better articulate the aims of our study: “The purpose of this scoping review is to examine the definition of trust in the context of group decisions and propose a definition of group trust. Additionally, we examine what factors may influence group trust through a proposed model to illustrate the relationship between individual level and group level trust.”

We changed the introductory sentences under the Results section, Proposed Model subheading to read: “The second aim of our study is to explore specific components of groups that may influence how trust can be conceived to work in health professions education group settings, such as competency committees. We propose a preliminary model (Figure 3) for various elements of trust pertaining to group decisions.”

9) Location: Background section, paragraph immediately prior to Theoretical Framework.

Results section, Proposed Model subheading, first and second sentences.

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We greatly appreciate your further review of our manuscript and hope that the revisions we made to the paper as described above meet your expectations. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or for further information.

Sincerely,

Jason Sapp, MD, MHPE
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences