

Review of: "Conceptualising and building trust to enhance engagement, achievement and feedback-seeking behavior of under-served students: exploring instructor antecedents in online tertiary education"

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A promising article with golden nuggets, piquing readers' interest but yet to deliver in full

This promising article contributes to online higher education discourse, highlighting the importance of building trust to create conditions for under-served students' learning in the digital space. As I read the abstract, it piqued my interest because the authors claimed to focus on the importance of trust between teachers and students and several influencing factors in building such trust. In so doing, they wanted to examine the role of trust in shaping students' engagement, feedback-seeking behavior, and academic achievement.

Undoubtedly, this article is full of golden nuggets. It addresses **critical issues** of centering the under-served students, conceptualizing trust in online education, identifying different influencing factors to build trust between teachers and students, and offering thoughts on addressing the pronounced digital divide in higher education.

Despite having various strengths, this article has a few writing issues. These include the absence of study aims, inadequate signposts for readers to follow the authors' thoughts, incoherent presentation of different sections, and a weak synthesis of conceptualization of trust that lies at the heart of this article. Additionally, contrary to what has been indicated in the abstract and unlike the depiction of feedback-seeking behavior, the role of trust in influencing students' engagement and academic goal achievement was not highlighted. The authors might consider these issues to improve the transparency of their work in the future.

Study aims. Readers usually want to know the study aims to navigate a paper and appreciate that the authors have met their study aims, which were not articulated in the body of the text.

Signposts. For a lengthy write-up, it is always helpful for readers to know how the text has been organized to understand what to expect as they move from one section to another.

Coherence. The abstract outlined five factors of trust-building: performativity, casualization of teaching staff, neoliberalism, non-traditional student identities, and the digital divide. In the body of the text, these factors have appeared under different headings and in a separate order, making them difficult to follow. Additionally, without knowing the authors' intent and organization of the paper, one might expect to learn about the definition of 'trust' early in the article. Therefore, it would have been helpful to let the readers know that the authors would present a conceptualization of trust after discussing different trust-building factors. In the future, the authors might consider drawing a reverse outline (creating an outline from the already written paper) and checking that outline with the abstract and introduction sections to identify

incoherence in the paragraph and section levels.

Conceptualization of trust. The authors have presented their conceptualization of trust using a constellation of direct and indirect quotes from the literature. However, the readers would have benefited from a robust synthesis of the conceptualization of trust in the authors' voice. On another note, the authors might think about a more appropriate example for cognitive-based trust. They have suggested that "cognitive trust in a student-instructor relationship may be built through the timely response to student queries." In contrast, the thrust of cognitive trust lies in students' belief in teachers' knowledge, skills, and competence, not merely how timely they respond to student inquiries.

Students' engagement and academic achievements. In the abstract, the authors indicated that they would examine the role of trust in shaping students' engagement, feedback-seeking behavior, and academic achievement. This makes absolute sense because building trust might encourage student engagement and feedback-seeking behavior, which might then lead to higher academic achievement for students. However, only a section on feedback-seeking behavior appears in the text, while the other two critical outcomes remain absent.