




THE IMPACT OF HOFSTEDE'S NATIONAL CULTURAL DIMENSIONS ON TRUST: A RESEARCH IN GAZZA STRIP SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN PALASTINE

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of Hofstede's (1980) four national cultural dimensions (collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity) on trust between school teachers and their principals in secondary schools in the Gaza Strip in Palestine using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Using qualitative data from eight informants and drawing on our review of cross-cultural trust literature, we define interpersonal trust and derive a model of Hofstede's national cultural dimensions on interpersonal trust between school teachers and their principals in Gaza Strip in Palestine. Regression analysis results indicate that three of Hofstede's national cultural dimensions namely collectivism, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity are positively related to trust, however, power distance is negatively related to trust between teachers and principals.

Keyword

Culture, Trust, Hofstede's national cultural dimensions, Employee-manager trust relationship, Gaza Strip, Palestine, Education Industry

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent changes in the global modern organization presents new and unstoping challenges for effective relationship building. This has brought about changes in the organizational behaviors of individuals working at these organizations and as a response, organizations have begun to implement strategies to enhance, protect and maintain the quality of the relationships between individuals working at these organizations. Managing such relationships demands trust.

Trust is important in social interactions inside and outside organizations. It is found to have to positively influence both cooperation ([Dirks & Ferrin, 2002](#); [Kramer, 1999](#); [Malhotra & Lumineau, 2011](#)); and efficiency ([Granovetter, 1985](#)) and help managers to practice an effective leadership ([Dirks & Ferrin,](#)

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2002). For long, it has been argued that no variable effects interpersonal and group relationship the way trust does ([Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975, p.131](#)).

Despite the substantial advantages of trust mentioned above, we surprisingly know very little about how peoples' national culture affects trust ([Noorderhaven, 1999](#); & [Gibson, Maznevski, & Kirkman, 2009](#)). Our argument is that since trust has been shown to be an important variable; it is very important to be in harmonization with the culture of society to be perceived and interpreted correctly among individuals of the same cultural group. In this study, we explore the effect that culture have on trust using Hofstede's (1980) four dimensions of culture (e.g., Collectivism, Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Masculinity).

Our choice for Hofstede's cultural dimensions is not arbitrary. First of all, Hofstede's cultural dimensions are dominant and cover major conceptualizations of culture developed earlier ([Clark, 1990](#)). As such, Hofstede's national cultural dimension is widely accepted and until now it is the most recognized measure of culture worldwide.

Secondly, Hofstede's (1980) dimensions were empirically developed. While many other cultural constructs remained at the conceptualization stage. As such, Hofstede's framework of culture provides a useful analysis of the effect of well-established dimensions of culture. To clarify, Hofstede (1980) identified all of collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, & masculinity using a survey of more than 100,000 IBM employees in 66 countries.

Third, Hofstede's (1980) dimensions of culture are well known and cited in almost every piece of research on culture. It has been globally verified and used by various scholars at different levels of analysis including the individual and country level in studies across cultures. Triandis (2004) dictates a passage to Hofstede for the influence of his dimensions on his work demonstrating his deep recognition and thanks to Hofstede's contributions in the field. According to Triandis (2004), Hofstede is the basis for the greater majority of modern research into national cultures.

This study will be conducted using a large sample of employee-manager relationships between teachers and school principals in Palestine. Our research fills three related research gaps. First, we add to the existing literature on trust by adopting an emic approach that studies trust as a local phenomenon in a developing country locating in the east such as Palestine. Until now, the majority of studies in trust have adopted an etic perspective ([Zaheer & Zaheer, 2006](#)) using models, measures and concepts of trust developed in the West to study samples from the east without applying the necessary modifications that reflect the real meaning of trust in the new contexts. Noorderhaven (1999), criticized this approach by arguing that "it is much more productive to explore and compare the meaning of trust and its antecedents and consequences as perceived in various cultures". Still there is limited research of perceptions of trust between teachers and principals ([Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998](#)). Also, in the Palestinian context we could find one single study on the effect of Hofstede national cultural dimensions on accounting practices, ([Darwish, 2014](#)), but we could not find any in relation to trust. This study is an attempt to fill this gap.

Second, our research is an important contribution to the stream of research on culture. To demonstrate, using Hofstede's cultural dimensions in a country like Palestine is considered unique. Hofstede in his research on the national cultural differences between countries, does not include Palestine in the group of countries he studied. Consequently, studying Hofstede's cultural dimensions in a country like Palestine will contribute to the field literature on culture, and will add to the importance of this study.

Third, this study adds an important contribution to the stream of literature linking national culture to trust. As far as we know, only a few existing studies include more than two dimensions of national culture in one study to empirically investigate its relationship with trust. In the current study, we are empirically investigating the impact of Hofstede's (1980) four cultural dimensions on trust, We believe measuring all the four dimensions in one model provides a more complete picture of the phenomena.

The current study uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to study the impact of culture on trust. Qualitative investigation is conducted first at the initial stage. The purpose is to understand the details in the relationship between teachers and school principals in Palestine, to get close to the context and to identify the components of trust and their meanings in this particular context. The results of the qualitative analysis are essential for the operationalization of trust measure and for the customization of study hypotheses to the current study context. On the other hand, quantitative investigation is used to collect data as well. A questionnaire is developed by the researcher based on the qualitative analysis and on our review of related literature. Data are collected from schoolteachers working at state secondary schools of Palestine/Gaza. Trust is treated as the dependent variable and all of collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity are treated as independent variables.

In summary, in this current study, we explore the effect of Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions on trust in a large sample of employee-manager relationships between teachers and school principals in the Gaza Strip in Palestine using both quantitative & qualitative methods. By doing so, we seek to answer the following questions: 1) What impact does culture have on employee-manager trust? 2) What trust dimensions are relevant in a study of culture and trust in an educational institution in Palestine?

2. THEORETICAL MODEL AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

In the current study, we investigate the impact of four of Hofstede's, cultural dimensions on trust. More specifically, we are interested to study the impact of all of collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity on trust. Below, we talk about each relationship in separate based on our review of related literature and the results of our qualitative analysis.

2.1. Collectivism and Trust

The Collectivism dimension refers to the degree of interdependence between individuals. It relates to how people see the others in relation to the self in terms of "I" or "We". The argument is that collectivists are more interdependent and nurture relationships with care more than individualists ([Triandis, 1989, 1995](#); [Chen et al. 1998](#); [Hofstede, 1980](#)).

In the relationship between collectivism and trust, a common theme between scholars implies that trust is high in collectivist cultures who are interdependent and nurture relationships with care ([Triandis, 1989, 1995](#); [Chen et al. 1998](#); [Hofstede, 1980](#)). This indicates a positive relationship between collectivism and trust which means the higher the level of collectivism, the more likely that trust will exist.

For integrating collectivism with trust, Doney et al. (1998) proposed some prepositions in the relationship between Hofstede's collectivism dimension and trust demonstrating how collectivism as a cultural value is related to a group of trust building processes presented in the literature. According to Doney et al., trust is more dependent on prediction –(i.e. based on confidence that the target behavior can be predicted), intentionality –(i.e. based on an assessment of the target's motives) and transference –(i.e. based on third party or proof sources from which trust is transferred to a target). However, these prepositions are needed to be tested to give profound evidence of the relationship between collectivism as a cultural value and trust. This study is an attempt to study the impact of Hofstede's collectivism as a cultural value on trust in the relationship between teachers and school principals in Palestine. It is argued that subordinates with collectivist cultural orientation show a higher willingness to maintain high quality relationship compared to subordinates with individualist cultural orientation due to their perception of the benevolent practices of their superiors which signals a positive relationship to exist between superiors and subordinates at work in collectivist societies ([Triandis, 1989, 1995](#); [Chen et al. 1998](#); [Hofstede, 1980](#)).

In addition to the above support from the literature, results from our content analysis suggested a positive relationship between collectivism and trust. Participants from our qualitative sample demonstrates a tightly knit social framework between individuals and a willingness to share problems with the ones they trust. Also, participants from our qualitative sample demonstrate a willingness to take care of each other in order to solve problems. This is purely collectivists and done only with the ones they trust. This reflects the high degree of interdependence between individuals and gives the feeling that they are complementing each other. The higher the degree of interdependence between them, the more likely they trust. This reflects a positive relationship between collectivism and trust. As put by one of the participants from individual interviews:

"Sharing their feelings together, yes gets us closer to each other. Work will be done, it has to be done, but about relationships, about for example whenever I have a problem at work, you have others to consult, to refer to, and to share your feelings. You discuss it with other colleagues that you trust. I think it creates a relaxing atmosphere among us. It is not just work that controls our relationships." (Participant 3).

Based on the above findings, we expect a positive relationship to exist between collectivism and trust in that the higher an employee is on the on collectivism, the more likely he/she will trust in his/her direct manager at work. Therefore, we posit the following hypothesis:

HYPOTHESIS 1: *There is a positive relationship between collectivism and trust.*

2.2. Power Distance and Trust

Another dimension of Hofstede's framework of culture is power distance. This dimension refers to the tendency to accept hierarchy in a relationship. Literature reveals that in high power distance societies, people accept hierarchy in their relationships and accept that power will be translated into visible differences in status ([Hofstede, 1980](#)).

In all cultures, models of behavior are carried out over from one domain of life to the other ([Hofstede, 1980](#)). Reflecting this to the organizations, the same pattern is expected to appear in the relationship between superiors and their subordinates. Superiors in countries high in power distance exercise autocratic or paternalistic leadership and hardly invite employees in a lower status to take a decision with them ([Smith et al., 2002](#)). On the other hand, superiors in countries low in power distance exercise participative/democratic styles of leadership and expect employees from a lower status/position to freely express their opinions over a decision ([Botero et al., 2009](#)). As a result, employees in low power distance countries are fortunate enough to develop better relationships with superiors than their counterparts in high power distance countries, because in such cultures subordinates presume a safe distance from superiors.

Another thing is that, previous research on management trust has found out that it has long been related to empowerment (e.g., [McCauly et al., 1992](#)), autonomy (e.g., [Hart et al., 1986](#)), feedback (e.g., [Ilgen et al., 1979](#)), supervisory supportiveness (e.g., [Roberts et al., 1974 b](#)), and communication (e.g., [Roberts et al., 1974 a, b](#)). These attributes could be reflected in low power distance organizations.

For integrating power distance with trust, Doney et al. (1998) proposed some prepositions in the relationship between Hofstede's power distance dimension and trust demonstrating how high perception of power distance as a cultural value is related to three of trust building processes presented in the literature. For example, they proposed that in high power distance cultures, trust is more likely to form through a calculative –(i.e. based on the cost versus rewards of a target acting in an untrustworthy manner) prediction

–(i.e. based on confidence that the target behavior can be predicted), and capability —(i.e. based on an assessment of the target's ability).

Ji et al. (2015) empirically investigated the relationship between power distance and two types of trust namely cognitive based trust and affective based trust, using a large sample of subordinates and supervisors working in different types of firms including telecommunications, electronics, real estate, manufacturing, and service. Results revealed that power distance orientation is negatively associated with cognitive-based trust and affect-based trust.

In similar attempts, Islamoğlu et al. (2005) investigated the relationship between power distance and trust using a sample of professional employees who were working regularly in an office environment of different corporations in Turkey including service, manufacturing and education. Findings reveal that power distance has significant negative effect on total organizational trust and a significant negative effect on trust towards immediate supervisor. As power distance increases, total organizational trust and trust towards immediate supervisor decreases.

It is also argued that subordinates with high power distance cultural orientation are hesitant to maintain high quality relationship compared to subordinates with lower power distance cultural orientation due to their perception of the power distance gap between them and their superiors at work ([Ji et al., 2015](#) & [Islamoğlu et al., 2005](#)). We believe that this type of argument has to be analyzed further as part of this study.

In addition to the above support from the literature, participants from our qualitative sample demonstrate a keen awareness of the reality of power distribution at work. Teachers at schools identify the principal as occupying a higher position in the hierarchical social structure. As a result of this, they described in details the hierarchal steps employees take before they can reach to the manager. To demonstrate, all participants showed preferences to control and overcome their work-related problems by themselves. If they failed to do so, they might refer to other employees around them (e.g., colleagues, educational guide etc.). Finally, if the problem is too complex and it is too hard to be solved, they may go to their manager by the end! Here, there is an evidence of some hierarchy while solving problems, which we can think alludes to power distance. This indicates a negative relationship between power distance and trust in that the higher the power distance between employees and managers, the less likely they will solve problems and trust. As put by one of the participants from individual interview:

"First I don't go to the manager, if it is related to the students, sometimes we have naughty students, we go to the school counselor, or the educational guide who is the mean between the students and the teacher and he can solve these problems. If it is not related to the students, we can go to the deputy, if the deputy cannot do anything, we can go to the manager. Not directly, sometimes we can solve the problem, not everything goes to the manager, no, and he has lots to do. But finally, if it is a complicated one, we will go to him." (Participant 6).

All these findings provide us with a profound evidence of the negative relationship between power distance and trust in that the higher an employee in power distance, the less likely he/she will trust in his/her direct manager. Therefore, we posit the following hypothesis:

HYPOTHESIS 2: *There is a negative relationship between power distance and trust.*

2.3. Uncertainty Avoidance and Trust

The third dimension of Hofstede's framework of culture is the uncertainty avoidance dimension. This dimension refers to the degree to which individuals feel unrelaxed with deviant ideas which generates an uncomfortable status of uncertainty. In the current study, we attempt to test the relationship between uncertainty avoidance and trust. We ask the question that if trust is the willingness to take risk in a relationship, then how does uncertainty avoidance as a cultural value affects trust. We believe that much work must be done to address this question. The current study is an attempt to further our understanding on the relationship between uncertainty avoidance and trust.

For integrating uncertainty avoidance with trust, Doney et al. (1998) showed that Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance dimension of culture is related to four of trust building processes presented in the literature. To demonstrate, they proposed that individuals in high uncertainty avoidance cultures are more likely to form trust via a prediction process – (i.e. based on confidence that the target behavior can be predicted), intentionality process, – (i.e. based on an assessment of the target's motives), capability process – (i.e. based on an assessment of the target's ability) and transference process – (i.e. based on third party).

Further, Hwang Yujong (2009) empirically investigated the relationship between uncertainty avoidance and three dimensions of online trust (integrity, benevolence, and ability) of undergraduate students. Results of the data analysis revealed that uncertainty avoidance positively influences the benevolence and ability dimensions of trust respectively. In the same vein, Ferrin et al., (2010) reviewed the literature of trust differences across national–societal cultures to understand the role of risk taking in trust building (Cook et al., 2005). Findings reveal that in high uncertainty avoidance cultures, like Japan, people show a higher willingness to trust. The author concluded that risk taking is a critical element of trust building for the Japanese. They explained the results by the high uncertainty avoidance exhibited in the Japanese culture. And concluded that in high uncertainty avoidance cultures, individuals are more willing to put trust in their partners which signals a positive relationship between the two variables.

It is also argued in the literature that subordinates with high uncertainty avoidance cultural orientation show a higher willingness to maintain high quality relationships and thereby high trust which signals a positive relationship between superiors and subordinates at work (Hwang Yujong, 2009 & Cook et al., 2005). We believe that this type of argument has to be analyzed further as part of this study.

Moreover, quotes obtained from our qualitative sample participants show that the preferred style of the respondents in dealing with uncertainty and conflict was very much like keeping away from it. Evidence from our qualitative analysis shows that there was almost uniform response to the question about the sanctity of rules, and instructions at work in that they were guidelines to behaviors. One of the respondents had addressed this issue directly by devising a code of conduct in place of the way he manages work related situations. This creates a relaxing atmosphere among them, as they believe that uncertainty is prejudicial and should be reduced. This suggests a positive relationship between the Uncertainty Avoidance dimension and trust. According to them, that the higher the level of uncertainty, the higher the need to trust. As put by one of the participants from individual interviews:

"When we want for example to perform a competition, to make sure it is fair, to make sure it is confidential, and to make sure it is well organized, we give instructions like the time should be accurate, all questions should be designed objectively and the deadline should be stated clearly. Instructions are very necessary because without them, this will lead to disruption and confusion in the work. Instructions not only have to be accurate and clear, but they have to be followed up and should be always reminded with ..." (Participant 2).

Basing on all the above, we see that the uncertainty avoidance dimension can be a predictor of trust in relationships and we expect a positive relationship to exist between uncertainty avoidance and trust in that the higher an employee in uncertainty avoidance, the more likely he/she will trust in his/her direct manager. Therefore, we posit the following hypothesis:

HYPOTHESIS 3: *There is a positive relationship between uncertainty avoidance and trust.*

2.4. Masculinity and Trust

Another dimension of Hofstede's framework of culture is Masculinity vs. Femininity. According to Hofstede (2001), masculine cultures respect achievement, success and rigidity. As such, masculinity is associated with a "performance society". For example, in their model, Schoorman et al. (2007) argued that culture can affect the perception of ability, benevolence, and integrity and the importance given to each of these variables. For example, they argued that "more action-oriented, competitive, performance-oriented cultures—what Hofstede has called "masculine" cultures—tend to place a higher value on the ability component of trust" ([Schoorman et al., 2007](#)).

In addition, Ferrin et al. (2010) studied trust differences across national—cultures and found some prepositions in the literature in the relationship between masculinity and trust. To demonstrate, scholars proposed that in high masculine societies, individuals trust each other based on calculative processes – (i.e. based on perception of rewards vs. costs of a target actor) and on capability processes – (i.e. based on the assessment of the target's ability) ([Doney et al., 1998](#)).

Further, respondents from the qualitative sample do not see their gender as an issue, nor did they perceive themselves to behave differently in their relationship role toward men or women. When asked about how being a male affects their relationship, some of the participants used the word 'professional' to describe the manner in which they managed the relationship between themselves and other staff. However, looking closely at their quotes revealed a high level of masculinity demonstrated by the inequality between females and males. While talking, participants argued that gender effects on one's ability to perform his/her work related tasks well. According to them, it is easier for males to do some work related tasks compared to females because females have a very limited time due to their out of the job responsibilities (e.g., raising children, housework etc.). In addition, females could not impose authority compared to males which effects on their ability to perform as required. This suggest a positive relationship to exist between masculinity and trust in that males are considered more capable and thereby more trustable compared to females. As put by one of the participants from individual interviews:

"Sometimes in some cases it's easier for a male to do some tasks, like you know for example females sometimes they are more absent in work places than male. In this case, they need someone to take their role and it is almost colleagues in the same place. When I take my colleague's female place, because she is pregnant, or she is taking a sick leave two or three months off because of her pregnancy and she is delivering a baby, expecting a baby, this means she is going to be absent from the work place three or four months. It would lead sometimes to a burden in the job, so it becomes harder for us to work in two areas... okay... to take her role or totally work instead of her or taking all of her duties. That is why sometimes doing tasks for the job for males are easier than females." (Participant 2).

Basing on all above, we argue that there is a relationship between masculinity and trust and we expect this relationship to be positive in that the higher an employee in masculinity, the more likely that he/she will trust in his direct manager at work. Therefore, we posit the following hypothesis:

HYPOTHESIS 4: *There is a positive relationship between masculinity and trust.*

The hypothesized model of culture-trust relationships is shown in (Figur 1 below). These hypotheses will be tested on the teacher-principal relationship in Palestine based on a sample of English teachers working at State Secondary Schools in the Gaza Strip. In the section that follows, the methodology of the research will be discussed.



Figure 1. Hypothetical model of the relationship between Hofstede's four national cultural dimensions and trust

3. METHODS

This study consists of two consecutive phases, beginning with a qualitative analysis and continuing with a quantitative analysis.

3.1. Qualitative methods

The qualitative part allowed us to understand the context, which is new, compared to other contexts in the literature (i.e., an educational sector in a developing country such as Palestine, the Gaza Strip) and to identify the components of trust and its meanings in this particular context. Also, this qualitative analysis is essential for the operationalization of the trust measure and for the customization of hypotheses to the current context under study. As a result, we use qualitative methods to assist our development of quantitative instrument in order to record meanings in a more accurate and nuanced manner.

In the current study, an adequate number of semi-structured interviews is conducted with all key informants. In such type of interview, the outline of the broad categories relevant to the research topic is identified as a framework for the main questions and the rest of the dialogue is determined in the course of the interview (Fontana et al., 1998).

During the qualitative investigation, we tried to understand the meaning of trust and its components without directly asking questions about trust. Consequently, individual interviews were based on indirect inquiry, and we used semi-structured questions in order to uncover what trust means from the social relations that relate to it.

Table 1.1. Qualitative Sample Structure

| No. | Name | Sex/Age | Profession | Time in Hours | Years of Experience |
|-------|----------------|---------|----------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. | Participant 1 | F / 40 | University Professor | 2 | 16 |
| 2. | Participant 2 | M / 40 | English Supervisor | 3 | 15 |
| 3. | Participant 3 | F / 37 | English Supervisor | 3 | 15 |
| 4. | Participant 4 | M / 47 | School Principal | 3 | 22 |
| 5. | Participant 5 | F / 45 | School Principal | 3 | 20 |
| 6. | Participant 6 | M / 28 | English Teacher | 3 | 6 |
| 7. | Participant 7 | F / 35 | English Teacher | 3 | 8 |
| 8. | Participant 8 | M / 33 | English Teacher | 3 | 10 |
| Total | 8 Participants | - | - | 23 Hours | - |

3.1.1. Content Analysis of Trust

Before starting our content analysis, we made sure all individual interviews were transformed into text. As such, eight transcripts were ready for our analysis. The results of the qualitative study were analyzed using open coding and axial coding. According to Berg (1998), open coding involves categorization of what is said in the transcripts without much constraint aside from the research topic under study. Consequently, we simply started by reading and re-reading of the transcripts. We gave phrasal descriptions to the sentences and expressions in the transcribed material. We tried to do it with an open mind without imposing an interpretation based on pre-existing theory (Gibbs, 2007). Codes created in this way were our own creations, in that we identified and selected them ourselves. Some of these more detailed codes came from the informant's words, and others were our summary glosses of what the informant referred to or described at a particular point in the text. These codes were expanded and changed as our ideas developed through repeated interactions with the data. We stopped the process of open coding at a point in which we felt that the repetition allowed us to move rapidly through the transcripts (Berg, 1998). As a result of open coding, around two hundred codes were identified. Coding at such a very general level helped us to organize our data. It was our first stage in our analysis. Once completed, we moved to the second stage of coding referred to as the axial coding.

During axial coding, the phrasal descriptions identified during open coding were moved to a more abstract level (Berg, 1998). The attention in this phase was given to the larger narrative to form broader categories (Coffey et al., 1996). As such, all data bits that relate to a particular code were retrieved to combine quotes that are all examples of the same idea. After closely reading all the resulting quotes, we combined them into categories in order to display our data in such a way that can be read easily. As a result of our content analysis, categories were derived inductively from patterns emerged from the data (Coffey et al., 1996). Each data set or category that we made contained quotes that exemplify the same descriptive idea that were identified and they were linked with a name for that idea—the code to develop categories. As such, we relied on an emic approach during the qualitative stage of content analysis, which means that the categories used were based on the data obtained from the local informants rather than theory driven categories (Coffey et al., 1996). This level of abstraction resulted in twenty one antecedents related to meanings/components of trust. Iterations between the transcripts, comparisons, contrasts, induction, deduction, and verification combined the below twenty one antecedents into four components/meanings of trust related to a higher level of abstraction. These are: "Competence, Benevolence, Openness, and Fairness". Afterwards, we saw that the "Benevolence" component of trust subsume the "Openness" component in the analysis, which ended up with our three main components of trust: Competence, Benevolence, and Fairness. The majority of the antecedents are classified under the category of 'Benevolence' with a total of ten antecedents, followed by that of 'Competence' with a total number of seven antecedents, and finally 'Fairness' with four antecedent only.

3.1.2. Content Analysis Findings

In the principal–teacher dyadic relationship in Palestinian secondary schools, trust between the two parties is important for the accomplishment of work related tasks through interpersonal interaction. In this particular relationship, trust is composed of three components.

In the principal-teacher dyadic relationship benevolence has two meanings. It means that one's well-being or something one cares about will be protected and not harmed by the trusted party (e.g., Mayer et. al. 1995; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran 2003; & Wasti et. el., 2007). It also means confidence that the information shared will not be exploited.

Our qualitative analysis also revealed that competence is also important for the formation of trust between the parties. In the relationship between teachers and school principals, competence means being capable to perform as expected. In the context of schools, teachers are dependent on the competence of their principals if the former view the latter as having the group of skills, knowledge, experience, decision

making, and success for task accomplishments. A teacher may believe that his/her principal is benevolent and wants to help, but if the principal lacks the knowledge, skills and experience of the job related tasks, and can't adequately communicate them, then the teachers' trust in their principals may be limited.

Fairness also appears as another component of trust in the teacher-principal relationship. Fairness means trustee is just, objective, and treats everyone in the same way. For example, teachers perceive that fairness in assessment is strongly associated with beliefs about supervisor trustworthiness.

From the above findings, we argue that in the context of schools in Palestine, interpersonal trust between teachers and school principals has three distinct components namely: benevolence, competence & fairness. These insights into trustor's perceptions help identify how trust arises in the minds of employees working in schools and guide school principals to reflect on their practices because they have the majority impact on building trust and they are responsible for initiating trust while working with other employees at schools

In view of the above discussion, it can be concluded that the qualitative study of the dyadic relationship between teachers and school principals in the state secondary school in Palestine provides support for the generic hypotheses outlined above. In the next section the quantitative methods used for testing the hypotheses of the study are outlined.

3.2. Quantitative methods

This part describes the quantitative methodology that was used for this thesis study. Information about the quantitative data collection procedures including (a) research design, (b) sampling plan, (c) survey distribution and data collection method, (d) and measure development of the study will be explained.

3.2.1. Research Design

To test the relationship between Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions and employee-manager trust, a multiple regression analyses were used. Trust is treated as the dependent variable while all of collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and musicality are treated as the independent variables. In addition, factors identified by previous researchers ([Mayer and Gavin, 2005](#); [Chua et al., 2008](#); [Brower et al., 2008](#); [Dirks and Skarlicki, 2008](#); [Colquitt et al., 2011](#); [Schaubroeck et al., 2013](#) and [Hernandez et al., 2014](#)) as possible determinants of trust were employed as control variables. Thus, all of age, gender, and tenure of employment at the organization in years, educational level and nationality were included in the model. Regression analyses were used to test hypothesis one as follows: In the first step, all control variables were entered into the model. In the second step, control variables, the independent and the dependent variable were entered to test hypothesis one. Regression analyses were also used to test hypothesis two, three and four using the same statistical steps mentioned above.

3.2.2. Sampling

The target population for this study is all the English Teachers who work at the State Secondary Schools of the Gaza Strip in Palestine. This currently constitutes around 730 teachers working in 149 secondary schools all over Gaza. The sampling frame is the list of all English teachers who currently work at state secondary schools all over Gaza. The list is organized with respect to the locations of schools in seven districts in Gaza. The sampling procedure is a cluster sampling: "A random sample which uses multiple stages of clusters to cover wide geographical areas" ([Neuman, 2006](#)). Consequently, instead of using a single sampling frame, we used a sampling design that involves multiple stages and clusters. This has a significant practical advantage especially when it becomes very costly to reach the sample elements who are geographically spread out all over the Gaza Strip.

To demonstrate, all state secondary schools all over the Gaza Strip were divided into separate clusters. Then a simple random sample of schools was drawn from each cluster. School principals were kindly asked to share the questionnaire with English teachers inside the schools. In order to increase accuracy and sample correctly, we will rely on probability proportionate to size (PPS). In other words, we will allow the sample to contain a representative proportion of sample elements from each cluster, then each final sampling element will have an equal probability of being selected. As such, an adjustment in cluster sampling will be made if we discover that the clusters will not have the same number of sampling elements.

The sample size is determined to be above 252 since this is the minimum number required for a population of 730 based on the statistical measurement equation. As a result of quantitative data collection method, a total number 276 responses were retained and included in the study sample which is considered good enough as it is above the required number.

3.2.3. Survey Distribution & Data Collection Methods

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing recently all over the Gaza Strip, it becomes very difficult and dangerous for us to travel all over the locations of the schools for the purpose of collecting the study data. However, we thought about a remote distribution and data collection method. The procedure is that we thought about sending questionnaires to a simple random sample of teachers in each cluster electronically through an email as an alternative way for a safer survey distribution and data collection method. We contacted the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in the Gaza Strip to facilitate the distribution of survey instrument and to provide the necessary assistance in this regard, they indicated that they are not able to directly provide us with a listing of emails for all teachers. However, they are able to send emails on my behalf free of charge to a representative random sample of schools from each cluster upon their approval of my research. Given permission to contact, principals were sought to help administering the survey, each principle would share the survey with teachers inside the school through the Whatsapp group dedicated for principal-teacher communication. English supervisors were personally contacted to facilitate the data collection process. The Questionnaire was designed using Google Form and consists of four parts: **Part (1):** It includes questions about culture. **Part (2):** It includes questions about trust. **Part (3):** It includes the demographic information about respondents: Gender, Age, Education, Years of Experience and Location of School (See Appendix 1). A link was used to connect the responses to a data base to record answers.

Upon completion and testing of the survey instrument, three e-mails were sent to a representative proportion of schools in each cluster at different intervals. The first email invitation was sent directly after appropriate completion and testing of the survey instrument. The second email invitation was sent approximately two weeks after sending the first email. The final email was sent later on with the hope that many participants would complete the survey. In addition, school principals in the sample clusters were personally contacted by phone kindly asking for their support and help. All questionnaires were accompanied with an email invitation letter kindly asking for teachers' participation. For confidentiality purposes the names of the respondents will not be asked. Since English was used as the language of the quantitative investigation, teachers were randomly chosen based on their ability to communicate effectively in English. Teachers who demonstrate a sufficient level of spoken and written English were randomly chosen. Schools will be offered a copy of a summary report upon completion of the study to motivate the completion of the questionnaires.

3.2.4. Pre-testing

Before doing the pilot study, the questionnaire items were reviewed by professionals/experts from diverse backgrounds. After the revision of the items, a pilot test of the study tool was conducted between the middle and end of May 2021. As part of this pilot testing, the questionnaire was designed using Google Forms and a link was transmitted via Whatsapp to a none-random sample of English secondary school

teachers (n=35) from all regions of the Gaza Strip including: North Gaza, East Gaza, West Gaza, Middle Area, Khan Younis, East Khan Younis, and Rafah regions in the Gaza Strip.

As a result, a total of twenty-eight responses were retained. Respondents (n=28) were asked to write down their comments on the study tool in a separate file and kindly asked to send them electronically via Whatsapp. Comments made by respondents in the pilot study regarding the questionnaire were considered and some items were revised once more in light of these comments.

After these changes, three colleagues (i.e., teachers) evaluated the measures for comprehensibility. On the basis of these reviews, the questions were revised once more. By the end of this stage, we were able to apply the necessary modifications which do accord with these changes. No translation and back translation was conducted as the questionnaire was administered in English language and only respondents who work as English language teachers at state secondary schools and consequently demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing, in English were selected and included in the study sample. These steps took place between the middle and end of May 2021.

3.2.5. Measure Development

From the analysis of the qualitative data set, the following three components of trust emerged: (a) competence (b) benevolent and (c) fairness. Also, results from the qualitative analysis showed evidence of a relationship between Hofstede's (1980) four cultural values (i.e. collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance & masculinity) and trust. Moreover, the in-group favoritism appeared as a context specific variable and it was included to the model as a moderator between collectivism and trust. All the above categories served as headings for the large-scale sections within the instrument. However, a major question remained was how to operationalize these categories. We consider the following scales as relevant for the current study: [Schoorman et al. \(1996\)](#); [Hoy et al. \(2003\)](#); [Gillespie \(2003\)](#) & [Ovaice \(2001\)](#).

First of all, Schoorman et al. (1996) measure of trust, is a twenty-one item scale developed to reflect the ability, benevolence, and integrity of the Mayer et al. (1995) model of trust. Later on, the complete items of Schoorman et al. (1996) measure was adapted, and published in Mayer and Davis (1999). The fact that Schoorman's et al. (1996) operationalization was based on Mayer et al. (1995) model is considered an advantage in itself. The reason is that the Meyer et al. (1995) model is generally applicable and is used across multiple disciplines. To demonstrate, Meyer et al. (1995) model has been cited over three thousand one hundred and thirteen (n: 3,113) times (Google Scholar, Aug. 2020). Meyer et al. model has been cited in such diverse areas (i.e., law, health, engineering, agriculture etc.). In their article, Schoorman's et al. mentioned that over 20 percent of studies that cited Mayer et al. (1995) were written in a language other than English. In addition, our review of Schoorman's et al. (1996) scale revealed a match between the items the researchers used and the trust definition we adopt. Based on what is mentioned above, we consider that Schoorman's et al. (1996) scale appropriate to be used in the current study.

Secondly, the trust scale developed by Hoy & Tschannen-Moran (2003) and referred to as the Omnibus T-Scale will be adopted too. The Hoy & Tschannen-Moran (2003) attempts to operationalize trust in a school setting resulted in the development of the Omnibus Trust Scale that can be used in both elementary and secondary schools. However, the Omnibus T-Scale empirically explored four referents of trust in schools: faculty trust in principal, faculty trust in colleagues, and faculty trust in clients (students and parents). Each of the three referents of faculty trust was measured by a sub-scale. As long as we are investigating trust between teachers and principals in a school setting, only the items related to the faculty trust in the principals will be adopted. Consequently, a sub scale of the Omnibus T-scale measure was chosen. This constitutes an eight-item scale that measure trust in principals working at schools. Trust was conceptualized as a concept with multiple facets (i.e., benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open."

([Hoy et al., 2003](#)). The Hoy and Moran items are considered as convenient to the current study context not only for the match between the items the researchers used and the trust definition that we adopt, but also for the match between Hoy's et al. context and the current study's context (i.e., trust between teachers and principal in a school setting).

Thirdly, the trust scale developed by Gillespie (2003) and referred to as the Behavioral Trust Inventory (BTI) was adopted too. The BTI has congruence with the most widely accepted definition of trust provided by Mayer et al. (1995). Also, there is a match between the items used by the BTI and the trust definitions we adopt for the current study. All the above mentioned reasons provide evidence that the BTI of Gillespie (2003) promises to be a useful tool that can be used in combination with the other measures to operationalize trust in the current study.

Finally, a modified five-point scale version of Ovaice (2001) trust instrument was adopted too. The relevance of trust definition used in Ovaice (2001) to the trust definition that is used in the current study is obvious. Ovaice (2001) definition of trust is multidimensional and the items used in Ovaice's scale captured the definition of trust we adopt in this thesis study. Moreover, the context in Ovaice's study totally fits the current study context. To demonstrate, Ovaice (2001) explored the relationship between national culture and interpersonal trust in work-place relationships. In their operationalization of interpersonal trust they defined trust as consisting of Reliability, Openness, Concern, and Competence. For these reasons we see that the items used by Ovaice (2001) as appropriate to be used for this thesis study in combination with other relevant scales mentioned earlier.

Apart from our operationalization of trust measure, the questionnaire will contain items that reflect Hofstede's four dimensions of culture namely: Collectivism; Power Distance; Uncertainty Avoidance; and Masculinity. However, before we arrive at our adopted scale that reflects Hofstede's cultural dimensions, it is very important to direct your attention to the fact that Hofstede's dimensions of culture cannot be applied to individuals. Consequently, we choose not to ask questions designed primarily by Hofstede (e.g., the Value Survey Module 2013: VSM 2013).

In order to operationalize Hofstede's four dimensions of culture namely: Collectivism; Power Distance; Uncertainty Avoidance; and Masculinity, we choose the Cultural Value Scale CVSCALE developed by Yoo et al. (2011) to measure Hofstede's cultural dimensions at the individual level.

Some of the items of the above-mentioned measures were eliminated due to irrelevancy for the constructs we study (i.e., Long term vs. short term orientation). To clarify, participants in our qualitative sample demonstrated the need to long term planning to gain future rewards, however, they do not mention trust as an ingredient to or outcome of this. Based on this, we concluded that there is no relationship between time orientation and trust from our qualitative analysis, therefore we don't consider the long vs. short term orientation dimension developed in Yoo et al. (2011) as part of our quantitative analysis and thereby all items related to it will be eliminated from our quantitative analysis. Other items from the above mentioned measures will also be eliminated due to redundancy (i.e., only one of the items is chosen among those having the same meaning). Some items will also be adjusted based on our knowledge of the context and the relationships in Palestine, and few items will be created to capture the indigenous meanings created by respondents from the qualitative sample interviews conducted earlier.

All scales were measured on five-point Likert-type scales (ranging from 1= 'Strongly Disagree' to 5 = 'Strongly Agree'), and respondents were asked to think of their direct manager and answer the questions with that particular manager in mind. It was thought that having the same scale for all questions would increase the uniformity of the overall questionnaire. (See Appendix-1. for a copy of this study questionnaire).

4. RESULTS

4.1. Characteristic of the Sample

Sample characteristics were sought in questions 50-57 in the questionnaire. The main characteristics of sample's members, of (276) teachers working in state secondary schools of the Gaza Strip are shown in (Table 7.1.) below. According to **Gender** the results showed that the females represent 68.8% of the sample where males represent 31.2% and the **Age** of the most of respondents are between 36-45 with percentage 46.7%, and 30.1% of them are between 25-35 years , while 8.7% of them are between 46-55 years (See Table 7.1. below).

According to **educational qualifications** 81.5% of respondents have Bachelor degree and 16.3% of them have Master degree, only 1.8% have PhD. According to their **position**, 94.6% are teachers, and 5.1% are supervisors. According to **work experience**, the analysis showed that 59.8% of the respondents have 10 – 19 years' experience, 19.2% have experience with more than 29 years, and 8.7% have 5 – 9 years' experience. (See Table 7.1. below).

The sample includes teachers and supervisor from different cities in Gaza Strip, 24.6% of respondents work in Middle Area, 15.9% in North Gaza, 14.9% are in East Khan Younis, 10.9% in Khan Younis, 13.4% in East Gaza, others are distributed in each of Rafah and West Gaza with a percentage of 10.1% for each of them.

Table 1.2. Characteristics of Samples' respondents

| Variable | Classifications | Frequency N= 120 | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Gender | Male | 86 | 31.2% |
| | Female | 190 | 68.8% |
| Total | | 276 | 100.0% |
| Age | Less than 25 | 2 | 0.7% |
| | 25-35 | 83 | 30.1% |
| | 36-45 | 129 | 46.7% |
| | 46-55 | 56 | 20.3% |
| | 55+ years old | 6 | 2.2% |
| Total | | 276 | 100.0% |
| Position | Teacher | 261 | 94.6% |
| | Supervisor | 14 | 5.1% |
| | School Principle | 1 | 0.4% |
| Total | | 276 | 100.0% |
| Educational Level | Bachelor degree | 255 | 81.5% |
| | Master degree. | 45 | 16.3% |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|------------|---------------|
| | PhD degree | 5 | 1.8% |
| | Other | 1 | 0.4% |
| Total | | 276 | 100.0% |
| Years of experience | Less than 1 year | 11 | 4.0% |
| | 1 – 4 years | 18 | 6.5% |
| | 5 – 9 years | 24 | 8.7% |
| | 10 – 19 years | 165 | 59.8% |
| | 20 – 29 years | 53 | 19.2% |
| | 30 + years | 5 | 1.8% |
| Total | | 276 | 100.0% |
| Location of School? | East Gaza | 37 | 13.4% |
| | East KhanYounis | 41 | 14.9% |
| | Khan Younis | 30 | 10.9% |
| | Middle Area | 68 | 24.6% |
| | North Gaza | 44 | 15.9% |
| | Rafah | 28 | 10.1% |
| | West Gaza | 28 | 10.1% |
| Total | | 276 | 100.0% |

4.2. Measure Validity & Reliability

Pearson correlation is conducted to check the correlation between main constructs. Results show that the different components indicating different traits are smaller than 0.90, which indicates discriminant validity between constructs measures.

Table 1.3. Correlation between main construct measures

| | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|------------|-----------|----------|-------|---------------|
| | Collectivism | Power Dis. | Unc. Avo. | Masculi. | Trust | In-group Fav. |
|--|--------------|------------|-----------|----------|-------|---------------|

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|------|------|------|------|---|--|
| Collectivism | 1 | | | | | |
| Power Dist. | .281 | 1 | | | | |
| Unce. Avo. | .283 | .311 | 1 | | | |
| Masculinity | .289 | .345 | .583 | 1 | | |
| Trust | .289 | .280 | .434 | .443 | 1 | |

The reliability of the questionnaire was checked by calculating Cronbach's alpha for the three measures. Results show that the reliability coefficient is high for each construct, so it is considered acceptable for the current study.

Table 1.4. Reliability statistics of questionnaire's items

| Measure | Cronbach's Alpha |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Culture | 0.818 |
| Collectivism | 0.754 |
| Power Distance | 0.613 |
| Uncertainty Avoidance | 0.844 |
| Masculinity | 0.684 |
| Trust | 0.953 |

4.3. Suitability for Factor Analysis

Before doing exploratory factor analysis, all the indicator variables for the Collectivism, Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Masculinity, Trust and In-group Favoritism constructs were checked to understand whether they were suitable for factor analysis or not. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) was tested too for all indicator variables and results show that Bartlett's Test is significant. After determining the suitability of each construct for factor analysis, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis of the construct measures were done.

Exploratory factor analysis of the culture measure (21 items; questions 1-21 in the questionnaire) was done using SPSS 19 and yielded four factor solutions. This four factor solution was then tested using SPSS AMOS 21 through confirmatory factor analysis. The results showed relatively good fit of the four-factor model to the data where the model's goodness-of-fit indexes were satisfactory (RMR= 0.04, GFI = 0.71, NFI = 0.74, CFI = 0.81, IFI= 0.80). Therefore these components of the Culture measure could be named as: Masculinity, Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance and , Power Distant respectively.

Then, exploratory factor analysis of the trust measure (22 items; questions 22-43 in the questionnaire) yielded three-factor solution. This three-factor solution was then tested using SPSS AMOS 21 through confirmatory factor analysis. The results showed relatively good fit of the three-factor model to the

data where the model's goodness-of-fit indexes were satisfactory (RMR= 0.74, GFI = 0.69, NFI = 0.78, CFI = 0.79, IFI= 0.77). A second factor analysis was run to test the fit of the data to a four factor model that incorporates four dimensions of trust. The results of this four factor model showed that a better fit of the three-factor model to the data (RMR= 0.81, GFI = 0.54, NFI = 0.62, CFI = 0.51, IFI= 0.51). Therefore, the ultimate components of the Trustmeasure could be named as: Competence, Fairness and Benevolence respectively.

Table 1.5. Factor loadings of culture measure

| | Factor | Factor | Factor | Factor |
|------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Culture_1 | | 0.636 | | |
| Culture_2 | | 0.653 | | |
| Culture_3 | | 0.75 | | |
| Culture_4 | | 0.743 | | |
| Culture_5 | | 0.559 | | |
| Culture_6 | | 0.575 | | |
| Culture_7 | | | | 0.722 |
| Culture_8 | | | | 0.783 |
| Culture_9 | | | | 0.527 |
| Culture_10 | | | | 0.763 |
| Culture_11 | | | | 0.689 |
| Culture_12 | | | 0.69 | |
| Culture_13 | | | 0.714 | |
| Culture_14 | | | 0.712 | |
| Culture_15 | | | 0.764 | |
| Culture_16 | | | 0.792 | |
| Culture_17 | 0.684 | | | |
| Culture_18 | 0.389 | | | |
| Culture_19 | 0.255 | | | |
| Culture_20 | 0.594 | | | |
| Culture_21 | 0.405 | | | |

Extraction method: Principal component / Rotation method: Varimax

4.4. Hypotheses Testing

In this part firstly, the main effect of collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity on trust is assessed, then the moderator effect of in-group favoritism in the relationship between collectivism and trust is sought. Finally, a further analysis is done to analyze the effect of collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity on the components of Trust (i.e., competence trust, benevolent trust, and fairness trust). Moreover, further analysis was conducted to find out the moderating effect of in-group favoritism in the relationship between the other three dimensions of culture (i.e., power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity) on Trust.

4.4.1. Main Effect

The regression analysis of the relationship between national culture (i.e., collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity) on trust was performed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 19. Results indicate the following:

The first hypothesis sought a positive relationship between Collectivism and Trust and the expectation was a positive relationship between the two constructs. To test the first hypothesis, regression analysis is used, and results show that p-value < 0.05, which indicates that there is a positive relationship between collectivism as a cultural value and employees trust in their direct manager at work. Thus H1 is supported. (See table 1.6. below).

The second hypothesis suggests a negative relationship between Power Distance and Trust. To test hypothesis two, regression analysis is used, and results show that p-value <0.05, which indicates that there is a negative relationship between power distance as a cultural value and employees trust in their direct manager at work. Thus H2 is supported. (See table 1.7. below).

Hypothesis three suggests a positive relationship between Uncertainty Avoidance and Trust. To test hypothesis three, regression analysis is used, and results show that p-value <0.05, which indicates that there is a positive relationship between uncertainty avoidance as a cultural value and employees trust in their direct manager at work. Thus H3 is also supported. (See table 1.8. below).

Hypothesis four denotes a positive relationship between Masculinity and Trust. To test hypothesis four, regression analysis is used, and results show that p-value <0.05, which indicates that there is a positive relationship between Masculinity as a cultural value and employees trust in their direct manager at work. Thus H4 is also supported. (See table 1.9. below).

Table 1.6. Collectivism - trust Coefficients^a

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|-------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|---|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---------------|--------|-------|------|--------|------|
| 1. (Constant) | 57.903 | 4.178 | | 13.857 | .000 |
| collectivism | .937 | .189 | .287 | 4.953 | .000 |

Dependent Variable: Trust

Table 1.7. Power distance – trust Coefficients^a

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|----------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 (Constant) | 54.076 | 5.108 | | 10.587 | .000 |
| Power distance | -1.402 | .293 | -.278 | 4.782 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Trust

Table 1.8. Uncertainty avoidance – trust Coefficients

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 (Constant) | 42.055 | 4.667 | | 9.011 | .000 |
| Uncertainty Avoidance | 1.726 | .220 | .429 | 7.855 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Trust

Table 1.9. Masculinity – trust Coefficients

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|--------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 (Constant) | 40.193 | 4.724 | | 8.507 | .000 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------|-------|------|------|-------|------|
| Masculinity | 2.024 | .248 | .442 | 8.155 | .000 |
|-------------|-------|------|------|-------|------|

a. Dependent Variable: Trust

5. DISCUSSION

In this study, the relationship between Hofstede's (1980) national cultural dimensions and trust were examined. The unit of analysis was the teacher-principal dyadic relationship. The results of this study are decomposed into qualitative and quantitative parts.

The qualitative findings of the study comply with the findings in the literature with respect to the fact that trust is composed of different components ([Schoorman et al. 1996](#); [Hoy & Tschannen-Moran 2003](#); [Gillespie 2003](#); [Ovaice 2001](#)). These findings revealed that in the context of schooling in Palestine, specifically in the relationship between teachers and principals at schools, trust between the two parties is composed of three components which conform to those reported in the literature: competence ([Schoorman et al. 1996](#); [Ovaice, 2001](#); [Gillespie 2003](#)), benevolence ([Schoorman et al. 1996](#); [Ovaice, 2001](#); [Hoy & Tschannen-Moran 2003](#) & [Gillespie 2003](#)), and fairness ([Schoorman et al. 1996](#); [Ovaice, 2001](#); [Hoy & Tschannen-Moran 2003](#); [Gillespie 2003](#)).

An interesting finding from our qualitative analysis is that in the context of schooling in Palestine, specifically in the relationship between teachers and principals at schools, the benevolent component of trust subsumes the openness component in the analysis. To demonstrate, our qualitative findings revealed that benevolence means two things. First it means that “one's well-being or something one cares about will be protected and not harmed by the trusted party” (e.g., [Mayer et. al. 1995](#); [Hoy & Tschannen-Moran 2003](#); & [Wasti et. el., 2007](#)). Second, benevolence also means confidence that the information shared will not be exploited. ([Hoy & Tschannen-Moran 2003](#); [Athos & Gabarro, 1978](#); [Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999 etc.](#)). This finding is considered unique and is an important contribution to trust literature.

Results from quantitative analysis suggest the following components for the trust measure: competence, benevolence and fairness. Quantitative findings also revealed that the highest mean score for trust formation was in the benevolent component of trust followed by the competent component and the fairness component respectively. This finding indicates that in the teacher-principal dyadic relationship in Palestine, employees are placing more emphasis on the benevolent component of trust while rating the relationship. That is benevolent is likely the factor that employees pay attention to the most when determining how much trust they have in their direct managers. Therefore, it is beneficial for managers to focus on the benevolent practices in their interaction with their employees. This finding confirms arguments in the literature where researchers argued that in collectivist cultures they observed several incidents where benevolence was primarily in a relationship – a finding in line with [Ng et al. \(2006\)](#) and [Wasti et al. \(2011\)](#). In addition, this finding confirms arguments in the literature by [Şengün \(2010\)](#) and [Şengün and Önder \(2011\)](#) who investigated trust in collectivist cultures and their findings reveals that in collectivist societies and in the lack of strong legal systems, it is benevolent trust that counts the most in business exchanges. Their findings also revealed that in the prevalence of collectivist values, the perception of benevolent trust effectively initiates trust more than the perception of competence trust.

Besides identifying the components of trust, the current study contributes to the awareness of the importance of cultural dimensions for school managers in terms of teacher-manager interactions. For example, results draw managers' attention into the linkages between culture and trust which might help them to increase the quality of their annual plans in terms of teacher-principal interactions in the context of schools in Palestine. In addition, Quantitative results indicate that 24.5% of the variance in an individual's trust in their direct manager is explained by culture. These cultural effects appear to derive mainly from collectivism

followed by uncertainty avoidance and masculinity respectively, while the effect of power distance was not so overt.

To demonstrate, in the relationship between culture and trust, quantitative analysis provided support for the possible impact of culture on trust. First of all, results from our quantitative analysis find support for H1 which indicates that collectivism cultural dimension is found to be positively affecting interpersonal relationship by increasing trust significantly. This can be explained by the tightly knit social framework between teachers in the context of schools and a willingness to share problems with the ones they trust. This is purely collectivist and done only with the ones they trust. Also, teachers and principals working at secondary schools in Palestine demonstrate a willingness to take care of each other to solve problems. This reflects the high degree of interdependence between them and gives the feeling that they are complementing each other. This finding confirms with findings from the previous literature that proposes and confirms a positive relationship between collectivism and trust ([Doney et al., 1998](#); [Yamagishi et al., 1994](#); [Fukuyama, 1995](#) & [Huff and Kelley, 2003](#)).

Second, our quantitative analysis provided support for the negative impact of power distance on employee-manager trust. A good explanation for this finding is that teachers at secondary schools in Palestine demonstrate a keen awareness of the reality of power distribution at work. As a result, they identify the principal as occupying a higher position in the hierarchical social structure. As a result of this, they described in detail the hierarchal steps they take before they can reach to the manager (i.e., principal). For example, results from our qualitative analysis show that teachers prefer to control and overcome their work-related problems by themselves. If they fail to do so, they may refer to other employees around them (e.g., colleagues, educational guide etc.). Finally, if the problem is too complex and it is too hard to be solved, they may go to their direct managers by the end. Here, there is evidence of some hierarchy while solving problems which alludes to power distance. This finding confirms findings from the previous literature that propose/confirm a negative relationship between power distance and trust ([Doney et al., 1998](#); [Ji et al., 2015](#); [Islamoglu et al., 2005](#)). However, findings from our quantitative analysis revealed that the negative impact of power distance is not so strong, it is only a mild impact (not so overt).

Third, results from our quantitative analysis provided support for a positive relationship between uncertainty avoidance and trust. A good explanation for this is that teachers show that the preferred style for them in dealing with uncertainty and conflict was very much like keeping away from it. This creates a relaxing atmosphere among them, as they believe that uncertainty experiences during schoolwork are harmful and should be minimized. As a result, they emphasize the need to feel secure and to talk freely without fear with the manager they have something confidential with. According to them, the higher the level of uncertainty, the higher the need to share information and trust. This justifies the positive relationship between the uncertainty avoidance dimension of culture and trust found in our quantitative analysis results. This finding also goes with findings from the previous literature that suggest a positive relationship between uncertainty avoidance and trust in the sense that uncertainty avoidance breeds trust ([Doney et al., 1998](#); e.g., [Hwang Yujung, 2009](#); & [Cook et al., 2005](#)).

Fourth, results from our quantitative analysis revealed a positive relationship between masculinity and trust. A good explanation for this result is the high level of masculinity demonstrated by the inequality between females and males. For example, teachers see that gender effects on one's ability to perform their work-related tasks well. For example, it is more difficult for female teachers to perform their work-related tasks well compared to male teachers because females have a very limited time due to their out of the job responsibilities (e.g., raising children, housework etc.). In addition, female teachers could not impose authority compared to male teachers which effects on their ability to perform as required. As a result of this, males are considered more capable and thereby more trustable compared to females. This justifies the positive relationship between the masculinity dimension of culture and trust found in our quantitative analysis results. This finding also confirms arguments from the previous literature that suggests a positive relationship between masculinity and trust ([Doney et al., 1998](#); [Schoorman et al., 2007](#)).

Fifth, results from our quantitative analysis revealed the existence of common cultural norms that Palestinian employees demonstrated preferences to work in groups and consequently more group oriented. Findings from this study also comply with arguments in the literature which indicate that collectivist cultures rely on group memberships for developing trust as individuals sacrifice self interest for the group where group welfare is more important than individual success ([Doney et al., 1998](#); [Hofstede et al., 1984](#)) and that the perception of in-group-out-group biases between individuals influences the formation of trust between them and thereby at the core of trust foundation process ([Yamagishi et al., 1994](#); [Yamagishi, 1998a,b](#); [Fukuyama, 1995](#); [Triandis et al., 1988](#); [Yamagishi et al., 1994](#); [Huff et al., 2003](#)).

In view of the above discussion, it can be concluded that results from our quantitative analysis of the dyadic relationship between teachers and school principals in the State Secondary Schools in Palestine provide support for the main hypotheses outlined above. Also, findings from this study are in accordance with most of the existing theoretical views on the relationship between national cultural dimensions and trust.

Results from our qualitative analysis revealed that in the context of a school in Palestine, there is a strong reliance on experts and expertise. For example, principals seek to mitigate uncertainty by establishing trust based on evidence of a targets' expertise, ability, or competence. These findings confirm the arguments found in the literature that people with high uncertainty avoidance seek to mitigate uncertainty and be likely to establish trust based on evidence of a target's expertise, ability, or competence ([Doney et al., 1998](#)). Thirdly, results from our quantitative analysis revealed that the fairness component of trust has a significant effect on the uncertainty avoidance dimension of culture. A good justification for this finding, based on my eleven years of experience as an English teacher is that school principals in their assessment of their employees at work try to mitigate uncertainty by engaging in highly standardized assessment procedures that is fair enough to avoid the fearful consequences. For example, if an employee expresses his/her dissatisfaction about the assessment process by complaining to an upper authority, an investigation by the area head-officer may take place. As such, school principals are very cautious in this regard and thereby engage in a fair assessment process for all.

Our quantitative analysis also revealed that the competence component of trust is significantly related to the masculinity dimension of culture. Schoorman et al., (2007) provided some propositions in the relationship between masculinity and the ability component of trust, and findings from the current study give support to their proposition that in masculine cultures, the assessment of an individuals' trust in his direct manager at work is evaluated based on an assessment of the manager's ability ([Schoorman et al., 2007](#); [Hallikainen et al., 2018](#)).

In addition, Doney et al. provided some propositions in the relationship between masculinity and trust. To demonstrate, they proposed that "In masculine cultures, trust is more likely to form through calculative – (i.e. based on the cost versus rewards of a target acting in an untrustworthy manner) and capability – (i.e. based on the assessment of the target's ability) processes". And findings from the current study give support to their proposition that in masculine cultures, trust is more likely to form via capability processes. That is the assessment of an individuals' trust in his direct manager at work is evaluated based on an assessment of the manager's ability ([Schoorman et al., 2007](#); [Hallikainen et al., 2018](#); [Doney et al., 1998](#)).

5.1. Generalizability of the Findings

The results of the study should be approached cautiously with respect to generalization to other research contexts. The fact that the study was done in a single case study context of a single country, brings about the usual reservations about the generalizability of the findings.

Also, the current study is limited to study the relationships between the variables in a specific regional area: the "Gaza Strip" only. One difficulty that we faced in the current study is manifested in the

absence of statehood and the separation between Palestinian territories (e.g., Gaza and West Bank). The limitation is that travelling between Gaza and West Bank is limited due to the recurring denial of access from Gaza to the West Bank and vice versa which is often rejected by Israeli authorities. This geographical separation is a big obstacle in collecting data and affects on the generalization to other research contexts.

5.2. Implications for Managers / Practitioners

This study has important implications for both managers and practitioners in the educational institutions in general and in the contexts of schools in Palestine in particular. Based on qualitative results, trust was found to be comprised of three distinct components of trust. These are: competence trust, benevolence trust and fairness trust. These findings provide insights for managers into examined attributes that have the power to explain how to foster trust between individuals and employees in the context of schooling in Palestine.

To demonstrate, trust has long been proven as context specific ([Kramer, 1999](#)). Therefore, it is the responsibility for managers to initiate and to breed trust between individuals working at organizations. For example, managers need to consider re-assessing the way they forge relationships with their subordinates. First of all, they need to continually develop their own knowledge, skills, and competences and foster that continuous learning and development with their work force exist. Second, manager need to encourage a dialogue within workplace around trust issues by simply showing employees that they "care" about their workplace relationships that tend to enhance more opportunities for building trust. Third, managers need to work towards fostering an open culture within their work setting through sharing information, maintaining an open and approachable rapport with all (i.e. peers, managers, and subordinates) which will more likely foster mutual trust. Fourth, managers need to understand that fairness in assessment is key for trust to exist.

Thus, based on all above, we argue that the leadership practices matter for building trust and thereby it is the responsibility of management to foster trust. Moreover, findings from this study give insight to school managers into the importance of culture in their interaction with employees at work setting. As such, managers should learn the cultural values for progression in the context of a school. In addition, findings from this study help to inform managers about the nature of culture-trust interchange. Considering these findings, managers are advised to adapt to changes in the society by developing adaptive capacities to follow those cultural values.

Similarly, understanding the linkages between culture and trust in schools is considered important because this will hopefully lead to better communication between employees and managers and will benefit schools in decision-making process. For example, understanding the impact of culture on trust between teachers and principals at schools may help managers in educational institutions to draw conclusions, based on the results of this study, in the linkages between national culture and trust. This may hopefully lead to a high level of trust to exist between teachers and school principals which may result in a higher quality of education and overall improvements at schools.

Practically speaking, Palestinian managers should be aware of the role that power distance plays in their interaction with their employees. Therefore, to foster employee-manager trust in the context of schooling in Palestine, Palestinian managers should mitigate this power distance cultural gap between them and their employees. This can be done by developing benevolent practices and creating a safe platform for all employees to share their problems, ideas and hidden conflict ([Yin et al., 2018](#)). By following those cultural values, they can develop adaptive capacities to act out accordingly. For example, the negative effect of power distance on trust may be mitigated by evaluating, for example, how individual practices mitigate this power via the benevolent practices and the perception of an individual's ability.

This study may also give insights to the major question of what can Palestinian managers do to overcome a cultural tendency to distrust outsiders? Finally, the results might be useful for the ministry of

education in Palestine to better predict the culture-trust intertwining that may be of help in putting their annual strategies for education in Palestine.

Based on all above, trust is foundational to relationship building and managers who understand the dimensions of trust especially how they relate to culture will then be able to better serve their employees. As such we argue that it is important for managers to understand the culture of their societies and the nature of the connection between culture and trust. At the same vein, it is important for managers to understand how trust is developed in the mindset of employees with whom they are interacting.

5.3. Limitations and Implications for Future Research

While this study provides important contributions to literature linking national culture to trust, future research is needed to fully understand different impact of the findings of culture on trust across cultures. The fact that the study was done in a single case study context of a single country, brings about the usual reservations about the generalizability. Further studies should be conducted in other contexts and organizational settings before broad generalizations can be made.

Moreover, given that understanding the effect of individual personality and organizational culture on the formation of trust are not included as part of this current study, further studies are needed to understand the interplay between national culture and these variables and how they influence the formation of trust in organizations ([Doney et al., 1998](#)). Further research should also explore the impact of the different components of trust on national culture in other academic disciplines and professions. This is needed for a better interpretive analysis between these variables

In addition, levels of trust may vary across the same culture whether collectivist or individualist. More research should study the different variations of collectivism and individualism, and then determine how they would influence trust for organizations ([Huff et al., 2003](#)).

Also, this current study is limited to understand the relationship between culture and trust at the individual level. Scholars are encouraged to conduct further multi-level studies to understand this relationship at other levels of analysis (i.e., group and organizational levels).

Another avenue for future research maybe directing scholars' attention to include more than four of cultural dimensions in one model to understand culture-trust relationship. This research is limited to study the impact of four of Hofstede's cultural dimensions on trust. Further studies are needed to measure other cultural dimensions in one model to provide a more holistic picture of the phenomena.

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Appendix 1 (Questionnaire Items)

A. Collectivism (6 items, Cronbach's alpha = 0.754)

1. Individuals should sacrifice self-interest for the group.
2. Individuals should only pursue their goals after considering the welfare of the group.
3. Group loyalty should be encouraged even if individual goals suffer.
4. Individuals should stick with the group even through difficulties.
5. Group welfare is more important than individual rewards.
6. Group success is more important than individual success.

B. Power Distance (5 items, Cronbach's alpha = 0.613)

1. People in lower positions should participate with people in higher positions in most decisions.
2. People in lower positions are willing to share work-related problems with people in higher positions too frequently.
3. People in higher position should encourage social interaction with people in lower positions.
4. People in lower positions should not disagree with decisions by people in higher positions.
5. People in higher positions should not delegate important tasks to people in lower positions.

C. Uncertainty Avoidance (5 items, Cronbach's alpha = 0.844)

1. It is important to have instructions spelled out in detail so that I always know what I'm expected to do.

2. It is important to closely follow instructions and procedures.
3. Rules and regulations are important because they inform me of what is expected of me.
4. Standardized work procedures are helpful.
5. Instructions for operations are important to get the work done.

D. Masculinity (5 items, Cronbach's alpha = 0.684)

1. Men and women have an equal right to have a professional career.
2. Men usually solve problems with logical analysis.
3. Women usually solve problems with intuition.
4. Solving difficult problems usually requires an active, forcible approach.
5. Men and women perform their tasks equally well in professions.

E. Trust (22 items, Cronbach's alpha = 0.953)

1. My principal is very capable of performing his/her job.
2. My principal is known to be successful at the things he/she tries to do.
3. My principal has specialized capabilities that can increase our performance.
4. I'm willing to rely on my principal's task –related skills and abilities.
5. The principal in this school is competent in doing his or her job.
6. I trust that my principal can help solve important problems in our organization.
7. I trust that my principal can help our organization succeed in the next decade.
8. My needs and desires are very important to my principal.
9. My principal would not knowingly do anything to hurt me.
10. My principal will go out of his/her way to help me.
11. I'm willing to share my personal feeling with my principal.
12. I'm willing to discuss how I honestly feel about my work, even negative feelings and frustrations.
13. I'm willing to share my personal beliefs with my principal.
14. The principal in this school typically acts in the best needs of the teachers.
15. I trust that my principal places our school's interest above his/her own concern.
16. I trust that my principal expresses his/her true feelings about important issues.
17. I trust that my principal cares about the future of our school.

18. My principal has a strong sense of justice.
19. I trust that my principal treats us equally.
20. The teachers in this school have faith in the fairness of the principle.
21. I'm willing to depend on the fairness of my principal at this school.
22. I like fairness as principal's value.