Predictors of Limited Quantitative Methodology Use in Clinical Social Work Research: A Survey of Zimbabwean Social Work Students

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Abstract

The study investigates factors contributing to the low level of skill in the adoption of quantitative approaches in clinical social work aligned students' thesis. We collected the data over a five-year period, spanning from 2019 to 2023. The data was collected from a sample of (n = 264) social work students who had completed a Bachelor of Social Work with Honors Degree or a Master of Social Work, all with research topics related to clinical social work. A self-administered questionnaire was used as a research instrument to measure the influence of four major items: attitudes and beliefs, knowledge and skills, institutional factors, and confidence, in predicting the adoption of quantitative approaches in clinical social work aligned students' thesis. A bivariate Pearson's correlation analysis showed that knowledge and skills had a moderately negative correlation at $\rho < 0.05$ with the use of quantitative approaches in social work students' thesis, while attitudes and beliefs, institutional factors, and confidence had a strong positive correlation ($\rho < 0.01$). A regression analysis showed that all major dimensions-attitudes and beliefs and knowledge and skills were both statistically significant at ($\rho < 0.05$), while institutional factors and confidence at $\rho < 0.01$. The 5th regression model combined all four factors, and the model was statistically significant at $\rho < 0.01$. The study called for clinical social work education and training to empower students to adopt a positive attitude towards quantitative research, foster a culture of institutional support and collaboration, and enhance students' confidence in conducting quantitative research.