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Key drivers of Egyptian social work researchers' low preference for using qualitative research methods in social work studies

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ABSTRACT

Social work has a long history in applying qualitative research methods. Although the use of the qualitative approach in social work research helps enrich the research, many researchers in social work disciplines in Egypt still avoid using this method when implementing scientific studies in professional social work settings. This study investigates the key drivers of Egyptian social work researchers' low preferences for using qualitative research methods. An online survey was conducted using a non-probability snowball sampling technique scale. A total of 67 responses were received: 25 males and 42 females with ages ranging from 30 years old to more than 49 years old. Findings show that many factors are preventing the use of this type of method, such as the researchers' lack of skills in using the qualitative method, the researchers' lack of sufficient knowledge about this method in the different educational stages, the fear of not being able to do this type of research, and their preference for quantitative research. This study provides strategies for helping social work researchers apply qualitative research methods in their studies.

KEY TERMS: qualitative research methods, social work studies, Egypt, social work research

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INTRODUCTION

There are various benefits and reasons why qualitative research is appealing and relevant to social work. Despite the fact that qualitative research is gaining traction and gaining widespread recognition around the world, a significant number of social work researchers in Egypt are yet to receive knowledge of qualitative research, so they hardly be involved in that method of research. This may be because the Egyptian academic institutions in social work are still far from applying this type of research, especially with the dominance of quantitative research in all research activities in social work. This dominance results in low preference by social work researchers in Egypt to use qualitative research methods. In this paper, the authors discuss the main reasons and motives for the low preference of Egyptian researchers to use qualitative research methods in social work studies.

BACKGROUND

At the beginning of the twenties of the last century, scientific research in humanities and social sciences was dominated by research methods based on field quantitative data. The competition of gaining scientific status focused on the degree of complexity and detailed data, methods, and way of analyzing the quantitative data. These are analyzing and collection of these data have achieved widespread a way that suggests that those who do not use these complex methods are not well prepared for scientific research methods (Al-Elwany, 2006).

Despite the importance of quantitative research methods in human research regarding their reliance on statistical data and quantitative analyzes interpretations that can be generalized in understanding human phenomena, these quantitative approaches take from the natural sciences approach as the only approach when researching human phenomena without taking into account the unique specificity of those phenomena and the social researcher's relationship with them. The results of scientific studies and research confirm the dominance of quantitative research in humanities and social sciences. Due to its frequent uses in natural research, quantitative research methodology is considered more scientific and accurate than qualitative research methodology. It has become dominant in the human sciences in general. As a result, the quantitative approach became associated with the positivist model (Al-Harby, 2021).

If the quantitative approach seeks to predict and test hypotheses, and apply and apply the theory to reality, the qualitative approach is not limited to merely describing the phenomenon but building scientific theories through observations and experiences as well that the researcher goes through in his study El-Kandarī states that when quantitative research provides an explanation based on inference, it does not provide a thorough, analytical and realistic understanding of that behavior. Qualitative research seeks to explain human phenomena by understanding reality and its multiple aspects, in order to deeply depict the complex pattern of what is being studied in building models through the analysis of its component parts and their composition, the interpretation of the social meaning of events, and the analysis of the relationships between events and external factors (AL-Kandarī, 2006).

Quantitative research is based on numbers and statistics and focuses on numerical measurement of certain features of a problem or phenomenon. Because quantitative research often collects a large and representative sample of data from a large number of respondents, statistics help quantitative research in the processing of large amounts of detailed data.

Quantitative research is most useful when the phenomenon is well-understood to determine which precise categories and types of data are required to gain a better understanding (Sheafor, Horejsi, 2015).

The impact of quantitative methodologies on social work research has sometimes been limited due to the sensitive and confidential nature of the social work activity (Malcome, 2013). There are also schools of thought (particularly feminism) that believe quantitative research fails to effectively explore and hence fully understand research participants. In qualitative research, non-numerical data is collected and analyzed in order to better comprehend concepts, opinions, or experiences. It is interpretivist, looking for a deeper understanding of a phenomenon in its context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Morrow, 2007).

The goal of qualitative research is to describe the factors being investigated. It is expressed using the words for the given data sets. When the underlying characteristics of the phenomenon being examined are still uncertain and difficult to define, qualitative research is the best option.

In general, qualitative research differs from quantitative research in that it is inductive rather than deductive, and it takes into account experiences in context rather than controlling for factors as in an experiment (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

THE RELEVANCE OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH TO AFRICA

Despite the fact that qualitative and quantitative research approaches are on opposite ends of the spectrum, they are all geared at detecting and identifying social problems in different ways. Qualitative research used many methods in collecting data (see Table 1) from the participants in their natural settings. The collected data (for example through in-depth interview) give a detailed explanation of the studied problem or phenomenon. As for the other type, quantitative research has been seen as a "researcher detachment" method (Eyisi, D, 2016). When it comes to "researcher detachment," quantitative research has a distinct advantage. Research bias will be eliminated as there is no effect of data collection. When the researcher collects the data by telephone, internet, or even a pencil-and-paper questionnaire, the risk of bias in data collection or analysis is greatly reduced.

Table 1: Examples of quantitative and qualitative approaches used in Africa

<i>Qualitative research methods</i>	<i>Quantitative research methods</i>
Interviews	Experiments
Focus groups	Questionnaires
Content Analysis	Surveys such as KAP (Abdullahi, et al., 2012)
Observation	
Case study	Database reports
Story- telling	Observations expressed in numbers

THE PROBLEM

The importance of qualitative research methodology in the social sciences comes from the fact that it focuses on describing phenomena and a deeper understanding of them. It is also based on the philosophy that the truth is not one but rather multiple and changing and is formed and built according to the understanding of a group of people or individuals. Accordingly, the problem of this study focuses on identifying the main reasons and motives for the low preference of Egyptian researchers to use qualitative research methods in social work studies. Moreover, this study also attempts to determine the relationship between some demographic variables such as gender, residence, number of experience years and nature of work and their relationship to the low preference of qualitative research in social work in Egypt. The significance of this study comes from the importance of the qualitative approach to social work studies and research, as qualitative research methods allow for more deep investigation and questioning of the subjects based on their responses, as the researcher tries to understand their motives and feelings along with their thoughts, information and opinions. This cross-sectional study seeks to understand the Key drivers of Egyptian social work researchers' low preferences for using qualitative research methods in social work studies. The primary research question for this study is the following: what are the main motives for Egyptian social work researchers' low preferences for using qualitative research methods in social work studies? Addressing this question will provide empirical evidence as to what are the factors associated with the low ability of social work researchers in Egypt to integrate qualitative methods into their scientific research in a way that sheds light on some recommendations that would enhance the use of qualitative research methods in social work research in Egypt.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Research methods, in the field of human and social studies, were at first obtained from the research methods in natural science subjects, and their main concern was focused on research and verification of things that could be observed and measured. Therefore, researchers called this method the quantitative research method. For a long time, researchers in sociology and psychology concentrate on studying the human behavior. They found it very difficult to explain using quantitative measurement. Quantitative measurement often shows that a group of people behave in a certain way, but it does not give us an adequate answer about how they behave in this way. Since that, many researchers have adopted qualitative research methods (Al-Jeddy, 2014). From this point of view, the qualitative approach comes with unique features and characteristics that take into account the characteristics of human phenomena characterized by continuous change, multiple reality and circular causality to give new horizons for the social researcher enabling him to integrate with the human phenomenon and interact with it in order to understand the social reality associated with it (Al-Britthen, 2012). The qualitative approach refers to research strategies such as observation and participation, in-depth interview, field research, comprehensive coexistence of social activity, among others. Such strategies allow the researcher to obtain direct knowledge from

the real world that he/she deals with by research and study (Zeitoun, 2004).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Goldman (1989) indicated that practitioners in the humanitarian professions should reduce reliance on quantitative research and move towards more realistic methods in dealing with human phenomena such as case study, naturalistic investigation and content analysis, because of the importance of these methods in helping the professional practitioner to efficiently and effectively provide the assistance process, as it contributes to an in-depth understanding of the dimensions of the problems faced by those seeking assistance.

Few Egyptian studies have been conducted researchers' disfavor to use the qualitative approach in social studies, such as the study of Al-Harby (2021), which reveals the obstacles to using qualitative approach in sociology research. That study recommended the necessity of getting rid of unidirectionality in sociology research and using methodological pluralism in line with the studied phenomena, training staff members, post-graduate students and researchers to use qualitative methodologies, initiating an independent course for teaching qualitative methods in undergraduate and post-graduate programs, and publishing cultural programs that enhance the use of qualitative methods.

El-Sherbiny's study (2020) aimed determining the attitudes of faculty members towards the use of the qualitative approach in social work research. The results of his study displayed a decrease in the tendency of Egyptian faculty members to use qualitative research in social work. The study emphasized the necessity to increase the knowledge of faculty members with the techniques and advantages of the qualitative approach in social work research. The study also recommended the necessity of conducting more future studies concerned with strengthening the attitudes of faculty members towards the use of the qualitative approach in social work research.

Abdel Hamid's study (2009) indicated that the reliance on quantitative research in the Arab environment in general and the Egyptian environment, in particular, is due to several reasons such as the conservative tendency that dominates Arab societies and the resulting tendency of adapting to the existing conditions, and even their fierce resistance to any attempts of change or renewal, The scientific upbringing of successive generations of Arab researchers was based on the data of the functional constructivist school and its intellectual perceptions which have dominated and continues to dominate on the activities and events of social research in the education and preparation of Arab researchers. Moreover, the culture of distance from the clash, which was formed by many researchers and left by the colonial tendency, established among researchers the notion that their security and the security of their families is linked to the distance from dealing with social issues and problems in an analytical and critical manner. Hence, it became the safest alternative for them to adopt the quantitative approach, because it allows for a kind of political and social neutrality in dealing with these issues, as it presents a superficial vision that is separated from the political and social context. Social researchers realized that their economic security is largely related to what they accumulate of cultural capital, and they achieve that from their ability to adopt a research thesis that allows them not to disagree with the orientation of states and systems of government and to provide acceptable solutions from the ruling elite to the problems of society.

METHODOLOGY

Data collection

The current study is considered a cross-sectional study using descriptive method designed to assess the key motives of Egyptian social work researchers' low preferences for using qualitative research methods in social work studies. An online measurement has been developed using Google examples with an annex of informed consent form attached. The survey link was sent through emails, WhatsApp, and other social media (Facebook and Twitter) to the participants' contacts. Participants were encouraged to publish the survey to as many social work researchers as possible. When the participants receive the link and click on it, they automatically obtain information about the study and the informed consent. After they accepted the survey, they filled out demographic details, and then a set of questions, which participants had to answer, appeared consecutively. The study was done online. Participants could access the internet to participate in the study. Participants over the age of 18, who are able to read Arabic, and are ready to give informed consent, were included.

Study instrument

The survey instrument was adopted as a main key instrument for collecting data from the Egyptian researchers. The authors designed the instrument in accordance with the aims and the study questions. The study instruments were verified through refereeing the survey by ten specialized professors in social work in Egypt. The process of the instrument's validity was represented after calculating the internal consistency according to Cronbach equation. The total value of the instrument was 0.95 which is considered as the highest rates that are acceptable for the purposes of the study. Response options were presented on a five-point Likert-scale assessing agreement with the stem: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

Characteristics of the study sample

Most participants 44(65.67%) reported being between 30 years or less of age; 42(62.7%) reported being between 30 years or less of age, 21(31.33%) reported being between 30-39 years of age; and 4 (5.97 %) reported being between 40-49 years of age (M 30.36, SD 6.98). Twenty five participants were male (37.3%) and 42 (62.7%) were female. Most of the participants, 40(59.7%) reported holding a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) as their highest level of education, while 16 participants (23.8%) reported holding a Master's in Social Work (MSW), and 11 (16.5 %) reported completing their Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Most of the participants, 40 (59.7%) reported a postgraduate student as their current position, while 9 participants (13.4%) reported working as a demonstrator, 7 (10.4 %) reported working as a teaching assistant, 6 (9.0 %) reported working as an assistant professor, 3 (4.5 %) reported working as a professor, and 2 (3.0 %) reported working as an Associate Professor. Thirty seven participants (55.22%) reported having five years or less of professional experience, 19 (28.36%) reported having 5>10 years, 7 (10.45 %) reported having 10>15 years, and only 4 respondents (5.97%) reported having 15> years of experience (M 5.582, SD 6.86). Twenty three participants (34.3%) reported fields of social work as their specialization, while 22 participants (32.8%) reported micro social work, 13 (19.4 %) reported social policy and planning, 7 (10.4 %) reported macro social work, and 2 (3.0 %) reported mezzo social work as their specialization.

RESULTS

The key drivers of Egyptian social work researchers' low preferences for using qualitative research methods

The results of the current study indicated that there are three main factors that drive Egyptian social work researchers to the low preferences for using qualitative research methods. These factors are personal factors, academic institution Factors, and environment and research climate factors that drive Egyptian social work researchers to the low preferences for using qualitative research methods. In the following tables, we will refer to these factors.

Personal factors that drive Egyptian social work researchers to the low preferences for using qualitative research methods

Table 2: The responses of the study sample toward low preference for qualitative research according to the researcher's personal factors n=67

No.	Item	Mean	SD	Rank	Level
1	I am convinced of the futility of qualitative research in addressing research phenomena and problems.	2.299	1.02	22	Disagree
2	I prefer the quantitative research style to qualitative research for its ease.	3.045	0.944	9	Neither agree nor disagree
3	I do not know the steps of qualitative research and the mechanisms for its implementation.	2.791	0.993	20	Neither agree nor disagree
4	I do not favour the use of qualitative research in social work research due to its long implementation time.	2.761	0.971	21	Neither agree nor disagree
5	I do not have sufficient knowledge of how to conduct qualitative research and its applications.	3.030	1.044	11	Neither agree nor disagree
6	I am afraid that I will not be able to do this type of research.	2.881	1.038	17	Neither agree nor disagree
7	I miss the ability to form the research question in qualitative studies.	3.045	0.960	10	Neither agree nor disagree
8	I am afraid of the difficulty of finding the appropriate statistical analysis in the qualitative study.	3.209	0.978	5	Neither agree nor disagree
9	I do not have sufficient knowledge of the ethics of qualitative research.	2.925	1.049	16	Neither agree nor disagree
10	I lack the ability to understand and perceive deep qualitative research problems and phenomena.	2.866	0.968	18	Neither agree nor disagree
11	I am afraid of the difficulty of applying research interviews related to qualitative research.	2.866	1.013	19	Neither agree nor disagree
12	Lack of financial resources prevents me from using the qualitative approach.	2.940	1.071	14	Neither agree nor disagree
13	I lack the knowledge, experience and skills to conduct qualitative research.	3.030	1.10	12	Neither agree nor disagree
14	I do not prefer using qualitative research because its results cannot be generalized.	2.940	0.833	15	Neither agree nor disagree
15	I do not have sufficient research depth to analyze and interpret qualitative research data.	3.194	1.062	6	Neither agree nor disagree
16	I prefer to use quantitative research rather than qualitative because that's what I know.	3.030	1.015	13	Neither agree nor disagree
17	I lack awareness of the relationships between events, external factors research phenomena.	3.493	0.823	2	Agree
18	I am having difficulty applying Statistical validity and reliability in qualitative research.	3.239	0.889	4	Neither agree nor disagree
19	I cannot obtain and represent the sample in the research community when applying qualitative research.	3.164	0.963	7	Neither agree nor disagree
20	I did not participate in any funded researches concerned with the qualitative approach in social work.	3.582	0.972	1	Agree
21	Qualitative research methods drain a lot of researchers' time and effort.	3.119	1.066	8	Neither agree nor disagree
22	I do not know how to deal with statistical programs related to qualitative analysis.	3.343	0.993	3	Neither agree nor disagree
Average		3.036	0.603		Neither agree nor disagree

Table 2 shows that the researchers' responses to the phrases of the first axis concerned with the motives of the low preference of Egyptian researchers for qualitative research due to the personality of the researchers came with an average rate of (3.036) and a standard deviation of (0.603) with a degree of neutral approval. The table also shows the averages and the standard deviations regarding the responses of the sample members. The order of the phrases according to their average displays that the phrases (17-20) came in a high degree. These phrases indicated that one of the most important reasons for researchers not preferring to use the qualitative approach is the lack of funded research projects concerned with qualitative research in social work, as well as the researchers' lack of ability to perceive correlations between the events and the external factors of research phenomena when using the qualitative method. Most of the phrases in this table show a neutral response, which indicates the low preference of Egyptian researchers to use qualitative research methods according to personal factors that the Egyptian researchers lack the knowledge of how to use statistical programs concerned with qualitative approach. Other factors are the unavailability of an appropriate statistical test for qualitative research and finding difficulty in applying validity and statistical stability in qualitative research.

Academic institution factors that drive Egyptian social work researchers to the low preferences for using qualitative research methods

Table 3: The responses of the study sample towards the low preference for qualitative research according to the factors associated with the academic institution n=67

No.	Item	Mean	SD	Rank	Level
1	I did not receive sufficient theoretical knowledge of qualitative research.	3.194	1.08	6	Neither agree nor disagree
2	Arab scientific journals refuse to publish research papers that use qualitative research as a research methodology.	2.970	0.921	8	Neither agree nor disagree
3	There is a lack of Arabic, and non-Arabic sources and references specialized in qualitative research.	2.985	0.929	7	Neither agree nor disagree
4	I have no desire to contradict the general trend in my organization, which tends to use quantitative research in social work.	3.224	0.867	5	Neither agree nor disagree
5	Academic culture promotes the use of the quantitative method in social work research.	3.388	0.797	3	Neither agree nor disagree
6	The focus of the faculty staff who taught me about quantitative studies	3.522	0.911	1	Agree
7	The university does not provide the necessary statistical software to analyze qualitative data.	3.254	0.990	4	Neither agree nor disagree
8	The lack of conferences and workshops that encourage the dissemination of a culture of qualitative research in social work.	3.493	1.04	2	Agree
Average		3.254	0.644		Neither agree nor disagree

Table (3) shows that the researchers' responses to the second axis phrases of the factors associated with the low preference of Egyptian researchers for the use of qualitative research represented in the academic institutions in which they work came with an average of (3.254) and a standard deviation of (0.644) with a degree of neutral approval. The table also shows the average and the standard deviations of the responses of the sample members. Regarding the order of the phrases according to their averages, the phrases (7,8) display a high degree, while the rest of the phrases in the table indicate a medium degree. The low preference of the Egyptian researchers to use the qualitative approach may be because researchers do not receive any courses related to qualitative research, as well as the lack of scientific events that encourage the integration of qualitative research into their scientific research, in addition to the academic culture that enhances the importance of using the quantitative approach over the qualitative approach in social work studies. Moreover, the lack of qualitative statistical programs that the university provides to the researchers reduces their interest in using qualitative research in their studies.

Environment and research climate factors that drive Egyptian social work researchers to the low preferences for using qualitative research methods

Table 4: The responses of the study sample towards the low preference for qualitative research according to the factors related to the environment and research climate (n=67)

No.	Item	Mean	SD	Rank	Level
1	I think qualitative research is not suitable for theses and scientific research.	2.910	0.981	5	Neither agree nor disagree
2	I think that qualitative research is not suitable for scientific promotion.	2.552	0.875	7	Disagree
3	I have doubts about the importance and nature of qualitative research.	2.433	0.891	8	Disagree
4	I believe that qualitative research is dominated by subjectivity and the researcher's personality more than scientific methodology.	2.806	0.941	6	Neither agree nor disagree
5	I am convinced that the scientific strength and rigor of quantitative research prevent my resort to qualitative research.	2.985	0.913	4	Neither agree nor disagree
6	I think that quantitative research methods are the way to achieve scientific research in terms of their ability to control the dimensions of the study.	3.105	0.873	3	Neither agree nor disagree
7	I have not received enough encouragement from the research community to use qualitative research in social work.	3.418	0.924	1	Agree
8	The academic community does not interact well with the tools used by qualitative research methods.	3.254	0.927	2	Neither agree nor disagree
Average		2.933	0.587		Neither agree nor disagree

Table 4 shows the researchers' responses to the phrases of the third axis regarding the factors of Egyptian researchers' low preference for qualitative research represented in the research environment and the cultural climate. The third axis shows an average of (2.933) and a standard deviation of (0.587) with a degree of neutral approval. The table also shows the averages and the deviations of the responses of the sample members. Regarding the order of the phrases according to their average, phrase (7) comes in a high degree. One of the most critical factors of the researchers' low preference to use the qualitative approach is that they do not receive sufficient encouragement to use it in the research environment. On the other hand, phrases (2&3) come in a low degree, as the researchers of the study sample disagree on the inadequacy of qualitative research for scientific promotion. They doubt the lack of importance and nature of qualitative research. Displaying the phrases in the table in a medium degree indicates the low preference of Egyptian researchers to use qualitative research methods in their scientific studies. This may be because the researchers have indicated that the academic community does not care about research tools designed for a qualitative approach, and believes in the efficiency of the quantitative research tools for the implementation of scientific research because of their capabilities to control the dimensions of the study, and convinces the researchers with the knowledgeable strength of quantitative research, that is not available in qualitative research from its point of view.

Table 5: Mean, standard deviation, dimensions arrangement, and degree of agreement for the three research dimensions arranged in descending order according to the averages (n=67)

Survey dimensions	Mean	SD	Rank	Level
The second dimension is the academic institution	3.254	0.644	1	Neither agree nor disagree
The First dimension is the researcher's personal factors	3.036	0.603	2	Neither agree nor disagree
The Third dimension is the environment and research climate	2.933	0.587	3	Neither agree nor disagree
Overall average of the tool	3.060	0.544		

Table 5 shows the average, the standard deviation, the order of the axes, and the degree of approval of the three research axes arranged in descending order according to the averages. The averages arranged from the first to the third are (3.254, 3.036, 2.933), respectively. The total average of the research tool is (3.060) with a standard deviation of (0.544), which indicates that the preference of Egyptian researchers to use qualitative research methods in their scientific research is neutral. This may back to some factors indicated by the researchers of the study sample themselves, such as receiving academic learning focused on quantitative studies only and lacking scientific activities related to qualitative research such as conferences, training courses and workshops. They also refer to other factors such as the academic culture of the institution where they work that enhances the use of the quantitative approach and discourages using the qualitative approach in their scientific research. Other factors may be the lack of interaction with qualitative research tools and the lack of proficiency in using qualitative statistical programs. The researchers of the study samples also illustrate that the funded research they worked on was dependent only on quantitative research rather than a qualitative one.

Table 6: The differences between the study sample toward qualitative research preferences according to the variable of years of experience (n=67)

Survey Dimensions		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
The researcher's personal factors	Between Groups	925.599	3	308.533	1.818	.153
	Within Groups	10693.475	63	169.738		
	Total	11619.075	66			
The academic institution	Between Groups	51.448	3	17.149	.636	.595
	Within Groups	1698.493	63	26.960		
	Total	1749.940	66			
The environment and research climate	Between Groups	51.346	3	17.115	.767	.517
	Within Groups	1405.311	63	22.307		
	Total	1456.657	66			
The whole survey	Between Groups	1086.241	3	362.080	.840	.477
	Within Groups	27157.371	63	431.069		
	Total	28243.612	66			

Table 6 shows that there are no statistically significant differences regarding the variable number of years of experience between the study sample in the first, the second and the third axes and the questionnaire as a whole. This indicates that all the study samples, regardless of their years of experience, whether these years of experience

are few or many, do not affect their preference for using qualitative research, which confirms the low preference by Egyptian researchers of different ages and years of experience.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study attempts to clarify The Key drivers of Egyptian social work researchers' low preferences for using Qualitative Research methods in Social Work Studies. Our study tried to fill the gap associated with carrying out studies on the issue of low preferences for using Qualitative Research Methods in Social Work Studies in Egypt—a need we identified in a previous study (El-Sherbiny, 2020).

The results of the current study indicate that the factors of the low preference by Egyptian researchers to use qualitative research in social work are either due to subjective factors related to the personality, skills and knowledge of the researchers themselves in social work studies, factors related to the academic institution in which they work or graduate, or factors related to the research culture in the Egyptian environment towards qualitative research.

The results of the current study explain that the low preference of the Egyptian researchers in using qualitative research in their scientific research is also due to several academic factors, such as the researchers do not receive any courses related to qualitative research and the lack of scientific activities that encourage the integration of qualitative research into their scientific research. Moreover, the academic culture enhances the importance of using the quantitative approach over the qualitative approach in social work research. A lack of qualitative statistical programs provided by the university decreases the researchers' interest in qualitative research in their scientific studies. It is necessary to spread the culture of the qualitative approach and its importance in Egyptian social work studies by holding seminars, conferences and workshops on qualitative research, its philosophy, importance, analysis of its data, and encouraging researchers to attend these events.

The participants explain that there are several factors that prevent them from adopting the qualitative approach in their scientific research. Among these factors is the lack of funded research projects concerned with qualitative research in social work and the researchers' lack of ability to understand the relationships between the events and the external factors of research phenomena when using a qualitative approach. The Egyptian researchers' lack of knowledge of how to use the statistical programs for the qualitative approach, and their fear of not having an appropriate statistical test for qualitative research represent some of these factors, as well as the difficulty that they can find in applying validity and statistical stability in qualitative research. It is also essential to provide some statistical programs for qualitative research, training faculty members, post-graduate students and researchers to use it in analyzing qualitative data, which helps develop their concepts, skills and attitudes towards qualitative research as one of the important approaches in social work.

This study also shows several factors related to Egypt's environment and research climate regarding qualitative research and its incorporation into Egyptian social work studies. The participants of the study sample indicate that they do not receive sufficient encouragement from the surrounding research environment to use the qualitative method, as well as the academic community's lack of interest in research tools designed for qualitative methods; and the belief that quantitative research methods confirm the achievement of scientific research for their capabilities to control the dimensions of the study. In addition to this, the researchers' belief in the strength of the quantitative research methods; is not available in qualitative research from their point of view.

Moreover, this study indicates that all of the researchers in the study sample, according to the years of experience they have, whether less than 5 years or more than 15 years, do not prefer qualitative research which means that the years of experience variable is not significant in preferring the study sample to use qualitative research in Egyptian social work studies. Accordingly, the researchers' low preference for integrating qualitative research methods into social work is not the result of the moment but rather the result of successive years of time periods with the dominance of quantitative methods in Egyptian social work studies. This confirms the need to prepare continuous learning programs concerned with training junior and senior researchers to encourage the integration of qualitative research into their scientific studies. It is also necessary to imply specialized curricula on qualitative research in social work within the programs of preparing social workers in the undergraduate and postgraduate. Providing scientific references dealing with qualitative research in libraries and making them available to researchers in paper and electronic form to benefit from them and refer to them when needed is also a crucial matter.

CONCLUSION

This study explores the key motives of Egyptian social work researchers' low preference for using qualitative research methods in social work studies. The authors have found that three main factors prevent Egyptian researchers from preferring to use qualitative research methods in social work studies. The first factor is the subjective reasons related to the researchers' personality, skills, and knowledge when they use qualitative research in social work studies. The second factor comes back to the academic institution where the researchers work or graduate. Finally, the third factor is the research culture in general in the Egyptian environment towards qualitative research. There is a need to conduct further studies exploring the barriers that prevent using the qualitative method in social work research in Egypt and a need to incorporate findings and recommendations for professional practice in all social work educational programs.

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