

# The Use of Peer-Reviewed Journals on Finnish Social Work Research

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Background and purpose: Knowledge production in social work is partly based on empirical research. While there are other forms of knowledge (professional experiences, tacit knowledge and so on), the scientific empirical research is still considered very important part of professional knowledge. Although there is a growing literature about social work research in USA, there is actually very little empirical research about European social work research. The sociology of science and bibliometric studies are both established and growing research fields, but their impact on European social work studies are still quite limited. My interest is in published PhD:s, especially on the question of empirical articles in the bibliographies.\* Research question What is the proportion of peer reviewed journals in the bibliographies of Finnish social work dissertations. Which journals are being read in Finland, and what is the proportion of original research of all used research in Finnish PhD dissertations? My hypothesis is that the proportion of research articles in bibliographies gives us an estimate about the empirical orientation of the research.

Methods: To answer these questions, a bibliometric analysis of used literature was conducted about all Finnish social work dissertations from 2000 to 2010 (N=85). There were a total number of 1558 references to different journal articles.

Results: The results show that proportion of sources coming from referee-based publications is rather limited, although there is variation between research topics, traditions, and even universities. The variety of used journals is large which is understandable because the topics of PhD dissertations are so different. There is a slight tendency of increase in the use of original research articles.

Conclusions and implications The results of this research are important because there is a research-policy change happening in Finland. The starting PhD students are encouraged to report the findings in scientific journals and publish their PhD theses in article-collections and discouraged to use traditional monographs as publishing format. Reading and publishing go together – reading original research articles supports the idea of publishing research results in article format. This might have a negative effect on theoretically-oriented analysis. On the other hand, the limited use of research articles might indicate about problems in the supervision in PhD research process.

Keywords research on research, knowledge production, dissertations