



The Evidence-based Practice among Social Work Students

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Never forget who you are.

Abstract

Title: The Evidence-based Practice among Social Work Students

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Key words: Evidence-based Practice; Social Work students; Knowledge; Attitudes; Use.

The aim of this study was to describe the knowledge, attitudes and use of the Evidence-based Practice process by the fourth year undergraduate social work students of the University of West Attica, in Greece and to explore the possible relationships between them. The study design was quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional survey. A total of 98 students participated in the study, through an anonymous, self-reported questionnaire. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the University Institute of Lisbon. Data were analyzed using descriptive and correlation statistics. The results indicated that the students had a good level of knowledge of the EBP, although resistance to depart from the authority-based practice was detected. Moreover, the participants reported moderately positive attitudes towards the EBP, recognizing its value and being available to learn more about it. However, most of them did not declare themselves as practitioners of the EBP. The most common barriers to the implementation of the EBP were revealed to be the lack of knowledge and the limited access to the best available evidence. Although students believe that the future will be in the EBP, this is hardly reflected in the current university training and organizational culture. Furthermore, it was found that the students with higher levels of knowledge and more positive attitudes towards the EBP are more likely to use it in the future. The choice of conducting a Dissertation was related with higher levels of EBP use, but no statistically significant relation was found with the knowledge and the attitudes. Finally, the legal status and the domain of the internship Organizations were not found to significantly affect the knowledge, attitudes and use of the EBP by the students. The present study was the first one to uncover knowledge concerning the concept of EBP in the Greek context. Further studies about the EBP are recommended, in order to promote the effective use of research evidence in the social work training and practice in the country.

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List of Abbreviations

EBM: Evidence-based Medicine

EBP: Evidence-based Practice

KAB questionnaire: Knowledge Attitudes Behavior questionnaire

P.L.E.: Practical Laboratory Exercises

SCT: Social Cognitive Theory

UNIWA: University of West Attica

Chapter One: Introduction

The present study emerged primarily from the researcher's personal interest in comprehending the concept of the Evidence-based Practice (EBP) and its current position in the context of her own country. Past experiences in the field of child protection led the researcher to the same conclusion with several other social scientists that a large number of social workers keep basing their practice on the guidelines of authoritative texts and figures, such as supervisors and colleagues, or their own personal experiences and intuition, besides the remarkable outspread of the research base and technologies, which exists to develop and improve the social service interventions (Howard, McMillen, & Pollio, 2003). Additional to that, are the results of other studies, which show that, compared to other disciplines, such as medicine or psychology, social work interventions are less likely to rely on research evidence (Edmond et al., 2006).

The Evidence-based Practice consists the most recent attempt of integrating research evidence into social work practice and was introduced in the field in the 1990s (Gray, Midgley, & Webb, 2012). Besides the fact that, during the past years, similar efforts and earlier models for closing the research-practice gap did exist, EBP is being received as a new paradigm shift (Satterfield et al., 2009). The definition that has been adopted for the present study was presented by Rubin (2008) and states that "the EBP is a process for making practice decisions in which practitioners integrate the best research evidence available with their professional expertise and with client attributes, values, preferences and circumstances" (Drisko & Grady, 2015, p.274).

Despite the great attention that has been given to the EBP process and its potential of improving the quality and the efficacy of the human services' interventions, the schools of social work are only in the beginning of integrating it into their curricula (Mathiesen & Hohman, 2013). The multiple barriers that have been identified to contribute in this delay and make it difficult for the EBP process to be properly disseminated and adopted, highlight the necessity and the importance of exploring and deeply understanding the standpoints of the potential users (Mathiesen & Hohman, 2013).

In the Greek context this need becomes even more essential, mainly because of the static nature of the social work profession in the country, which insists in the traditional individualistic casework, has no significant impact on the improvement of the continuously increasing levels of social problems and exercises no pressure upon the state to deal with them (Karagkounis, 2017). The Greek culture is said to be characterized by "unenthusiastic attitudes toward merit and professionalism, preference for polychromic life and short time horizons, disinclination toward planning and future orientation, reluctance to change, and weak capacity to formulate strategies to meet future challenges", as well as a high degree of in-group or individual collectivism (Danopoulos, 2017, p.235). In other words, social issues are dealt by informal networks with family-based strategies of welfare provision, while the public social care services are considered as "the last resort" and remain poorly developed, making social work a bureaucratic profession (Koukoulis et al., 2008). The country's low-trust society, which according to Fukuyama (2004) is deeply rooted in the politics, has become a cultural habit, which, in combination with the fact that the majority of the social workers are working in the public sector, strengthen further this tradition, making social work look like a synonym of the weak welfare state and thus complicating its action (Koukoulis et al., 2008).

What is more, concerning the EBP process, which in this case can be perceived as one more proof of the Greek social care system's lack of efficiency, an extended literature review has

revealed that there is a lack of knowledge concerning the situation and the level of its support within the field of social work. No relevant studies were able to be detected, neither regarding social work professionals, nor social work students in Greece. Consequently, taking all the above as a starting point, the researcher sought to explore the area of social work education in the University of West Attica in Greece, in relation to the EBP process. This was reflected through the understanding of the undergraduate students' knowledge, attitudes and current use of the EBP process, in correlation with their intention to adopt it in their future practice as professionals.

Structure of the Dissertation

The present dissertation is organized into five chapters: introduction; literature review and theoretical framework; methodology; research findings and analysis; and conclusions and recommendations.

The introduction is concerned with the background, the aim and objectives of the study, the research questions and the significance of the study. The second chapter entails a review of the literature on the concept of Evidence-based Practice. The history of the EBP, its adoption and definition in the social work field, as well as some of the main debates around it are being presented and special attention is being given in the process in relation with the social work education in general and specifically in Greece. Moreover, in this section, an elaboration of the theoretical framework that was used to address the research questions and analyze the data collected is also presented.

In the following chapter, the dissertation focuses on the research methodology, the research design and techniques, as well as the ethical considerations and principles that this study was committed to follow. The fourth chapter presents the data analysis and an extensive discussion of the research findings in relation to relative theories and previous researches. Finally, the last chapter entails the conclusions drawn from the study, some recommendations for future developments and future research and also the challenges faced by the researcher during the conduction of the dissertation and the limitations of the study.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to **describe** the knowledge, attitudes and use of the EBP by the fourth year undergraduate social work students at the University of West Attica (UNIWA) and **explore** the possible relationships between them.

The related objectives of the study are:

1. To determine the self-perceived knowledge of the fourth year undergraduate social work students with respect to Evidence-based Practice.
2. To determine the fourth year social work students' self-perceived attitudes towards the Evidence-based Practice.
3. To determine the self-perceived use of the Evidence-based Practice by the fourth year social work students.
4. To explore the possible relationships between the knowledge, attitudes and current use with the intention of using the Evidence-based Practice in the future.

5. To explore possible relationships between the choice of the curriculum and the legal status and domain of the internship organizations with the knowledge, attitudes and current use of the Evidence-based Practice by the fourth year students.

The overall purpose is to uncover knowledge of the present situation concerning the self-perceived knowledge, attitudes and use of the Evidence-based Practice and how they are related with the intention of using the process in the future, in order to generate implications for the social work education and training and enhance the use of research evidence in the social work practice.

Research Questions

The research question, as resulted from the literature review, is: “What is the knowledge, attitudes and use of the Evidence-based Practice by the social work students?”

Consequently the hypotheses, formed from the research question, are:

1. Those respondents with higher levels of EBP knowledge are more likely to utilize the EBP in the future.
2. Those respondents with more positive attitudes towards the EBP are more likely to utilize the EBP in the future.
3. There will be a difference in the knowledge, attitudes and use of the EBP among the students, who will choose to conduct a Dissertation and those, who will not.
4. There will be a difference in the knowledge, attitudes and use of the EBP among the students, depending on the legal status and domain of the organization, in which they are doing their internship.

Significance of the Study

The present dissertation is driven by the ambition to introduce the Evidence-based Practice in the Greek social work field and education. The generated outcome is expected to inform social work students, academics and field instructors about the knowledge, attitudes and use of the EBP process among the students, as well as about their intention to use it in the future. In this way, identified shortcomings concerning the teaching and application of the EBP process by the social work students are possible to be further explored; eventually leading to a readjustment of the social work curriculum with regard to the EBP or a potential improvement of the way the process is taught in the universities.

Improving the knowledge, attitudes and use of the EBP by the future professionals of the country, could enhance the production of a greater amount of professional knowledge in the Greek context, which lacks in research, as well as to the significant improvement of the future practice of social work in the country.

Since there is not an adequate number of studies published concerning the EBP in relation to undergraduate students in social work programs in the European context, it is of utmost importance to contribute to research in this topic (Mathiesen & Hohman, 2013). Moreover, the present study is considered as relevant and up-to-date, as it coincides with the revision of the curriculum by the Department of Social Work in UNIWA, which took place in 2018.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter covers the main body of published work concerning the Evidence-based Practice process in Social Work. Existing knowledge about the origins of the EBP, its adaptation in the Social Work practice, its definition, as well as debates and controversial opinions about its use are being presented. Furthermore, the chapter is concerned with the EBP in the context of Social Work education and previous studies in the educational settings. Finally, a brief presentation of the history of the Social Work education in Greece and its current relationship with the EBP are being mentioned.

Brief history of Evidence-based Practice

The origins of the evidence-based concept can be traced in the area of epidemiology and the medical profession. In the 1970s and 1980s, the field of medicine faced a crisis caused by the conclusion of several studies, which were supporting that there was a lack of research and proper evidence in the decision-making process (Okpych & Yu, 2014). Among them, of critical importance was Archie Cochrane's book "Effectiveness and Efficiency: Random Reflections on Health Services" (1972), in which he first raised the question of quality in the provision of medical care and highlighted the usefulness of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) on the assessment of the effectiveness of treatments (Okpych & Yu, 2014; Shah & Chung, 2009).

In the years to follow, rigorous empirical research began to govern the procedures of more and more medical organizations and in 1992 the term "Evidence-based Medicine" (EBM) appeared for the first time in the medical literature (Okpych & Yu, 2014). Dr. Gordon Guyatt was the one to coin that term and presented it in an article in "The Rational Clinical Examination" series in the Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA) (Swanson, Schmitz, & Chung, 2010). However, the first definition was given a few years later by Sackett et al. (1996) and it was suggesting that Evidence-based Medicine is the "conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individuals patients" (p. 71).

By 2000, the term "Evidence-based Medicine" had appeared in the journals almost 60 times more compared to 1995 and many evidence-based foundations, such as the Cochrane Collaboration (1993), the Evidence-Based Practice Centers (1997) and the National Guideline Clearinghouse (1999) had been established to support that complex movement (Okpych & Yu, 2014). The widespread dissemination of the Evidence-based Medicine was followed by the extension of its definition by Sackett et al. (2000), as an integrative process of clinical decision making that entails: "the integration of best research evidence with clinical expertise and patient values" (Drisko & Grady, 2015, p.274).

Apart from the field of medicine, EBM was quickly embraced by other professions, such as nursing, psychology, social work and many others, who also strived to tackle the research - practice gap. Consequently, the concept of EBM was broadened with the help of the Sicily Statement, a statement created for the Evidence-based Health Care Teachers and Developers conference in 2003, and became widely known as "Evidence-based Practice" (Dawes et al., 2005).

To sum up, EBM served as a "new paradigm", whose purpose was to shift the emphasis from the intuition and the unsystematic clinical expertise to a scientific and rational clinical

decision making process, which will make good use of the relevant research (Satterfield et al., 2009). It was disseminated in a plethora of professions, who adopted it as “Evidence-based Practice” and provoked controversial views over the years.

Brief history of Evidence-based Social Work Practice

Social work constitutes one of those professions, who welcomed Evidence-based Practice as a new paradigm. Following Okpych & Yu’s (2014) framework, the history of social work has been gone through three main “practice paradigms”: the paradigm grounded in moral imperatives, the paradigm based on the authority of expert consensus and tradition, and the paradigm grounded in empirical research. Those “practice paradigms” were developed based on Thomas Kuhn’s (1970) identification of the “scientific paradigms” concept, in order to answer the question of what makes a practice legitimate (Okpych & Yu, 2014).

Social work has its roots in the organized philanthropy that began in the United States of America in the 1800s. This period was marked by the emergence of two main models of practice, the settlement house movement and the charity organization society (COS), who aimed in tackling urban poverty and were driven by the moral paradigm (Okpych & Yu, 2014). The first attempts to professionalize the provided services of the previously mentioned organizations took place in the 1890s and in combination with the catalytic speech of Abraham Flexner at the National Conference of Social Welfare in 1915, provoked the first paradigm crisis and the shift from the morally based to the authority-based practice (Okpych & Yu, 2014).

The paradigm crisis was followed by almost 20 years of professional instability. As a response, the practice model based on authority was born and sealed by the formalization of social work practice methods and the importation of psychoanalytic theory (Okpych & Yu, 2014).

Finally, the period of normal practice (1920-1960) was interrupted by another crisis, the so-called “effectiveness crisis”, which in turn caused the second shift from the authority-based to the empirically based practice paradigm (Okpych & Yu, 2014). The later contains both the Empirical Clinical Practice movement (ECP) and the Evidence-based Practice (EBP) movement.

The ECP movement has its roots in the direction of the social work’s interventions in efficacy, a need that was initially highlighted by many studies and conferences (Okpych & Yu, 2014). One of the main precursors of ECP was Siri’s Jayaratne and Rona’s Levy (1979) homonymous book “Empirical Clinical Practice”, which first described the components of the ECP model and suggested practices of integrating social and behavioral science into social work (Gray et al., 2012; Thyer, 2010). However, that first attempt of revolution did not have the desired results and the research – practice gap remained. Barriers, such as the lack of time, support, relevant publications and evaluation research, as well as focus on different factors in the decision-making process, contributed to that outcome (Okpych & Yu, 2014).

After the fall of the ECP movement, the baton was taken over by the emerging Evidence-based Practice movement, which has undertaken the last few years the task to complete the shift to empirically grounded social work practice (Okpych & Yu, 2014). As a relatively new embodiment in social work’s quest to improve the effectiveness of interventions and outcomes, EBP guides the human service professionals towards practices that are based on research informed evidence (Gray et al., 2013; Shdaimah, 2009). In this respect, EBP displays a more positivistic epistemology, which comes in accordance with our contemporary technocratic societies (Petersén & Olsson, 2015; Webb, 2001). The notion that professional authority figures,

such as supervisors and other colleagues or personal beliefs and experience should not be the main criterion for the decision making process, is at the core of EBP (Shdaimah, 2009). Some of the most influential writings about EBP have been identified to be those of Gambrill's (1999, 2003a, 2003b), Macdonald's (1999), Sheldon's (2002), Gibbs' (2003a), Sheldon and Chilvers' (2000) and Rosen and Proctor's (2003) (Mullen et al., 2005).

Evidence-based Practice Definition in Social Work

Social work, in contrast with the health professions, lacks in a clear and consistent definition of EBP. The fact that EBP is very often presented in the literature as a synonymous term of the empirically supported treatments (ESTs) and the empirically supported interventions (ESIs) leaves a lot of space for misunderstandings and contradictions (Drisko, 2014). However, it is clear that ESTs and ESIs address certain treatments, whose effectiveness has been tested and supported by research and for whom specific manuals have been created (Gray et al., 2013). On the other hand, EBP is a process, which aims to address specific needs by using or not ESTs and ESIs, according to the decision taken (Drisko & Grady, 2015).

In the effort to unravel this confusion, a multitude of different definitions have been given during the years. For instance, Webb (2001) mentions that EBP is “the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions regarding the welfare of service-users and carers” and Gibbs & Gambrill (2002) state that “Evidence-based practice is the conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of the current best evidence in making decisions about the care of clients (Maynard, 2007, p.5; Nevo & Slonim-Nevo, 2011, p. 1177). Additionally, Gray and McDonald (2006) explain that “Evidence-based practice means basing intervention on proven effectiveness derived from empirical research” and Jenson (2007) says that “EBP is a process that requires practitioners to identify, evaluate, and apply evidence pertaining to a client’s problem to subsequent practice decisions” (Maynard, 2007, p. 5; Nevo & Slonim-Nevo, 2011, p.1177). Lastly, another similar definition is given by Rubin (2008), who states that “EBP is a process for making practice decisions in which practitioners integrate the best research evidence available with their professional expertise and with client attributes, values, preferences and circumstances” (Drisko & Grady, 2015, p.274). However, the extended version of Sackett’s et al. (2000) definition remains the dominant one among the literature (Gray et al., 2013).

Based on Sackett’s et al. (2000) definition of EBP as an integrative process of clinical decision making that entails: “the integration of best research evidence with clinical expertise and patient values”, Haynes et al. (2002) described the four parts of the EBP process, which have equivalent importance (Drisko, 2014). More specifically, the EBP process consists of “(1) the clinical state and circumstances of the client, (2) the best available relevant research evidence, (3) the client’s own values and preferences, and (4) the clinical expertise of the clinician (Drisko, 2014, p. 124). The best available relevant research evidence refer to service user-centered research, which derives from evidence coming in order of priority from reviews and meta-analyses or randomized controlled trials (RCTs), quasi-experimental studies, case-control and cohort studies, pre-experimental group studies, surveys, and lastly qualitative studies (van de Luitgaarden, 2007). However, research is only one component of the EBP process and is valued equally with the clinical state and circumstances of the service user and his own values and preferences under the professional expertise, which unifies all of them (Drisko, 2014).

To continue, the EBP process involves five distinct steps. Those are: “formulating an answerable practice question; searching for the best research evidence; critically appraising the

research evidence for its validity and applicability; implementing a practice decision after integrating the research evidence with client characteristics, preferences, and values; and evaluating the outcome” (Parrish, 2018, p. 407). According to Gibbs and Gambrill (2002) the first step entails the conversion of the information or problem posed by the service-user into empirically answerable questions, most of the times with the professional’s help and guidance, which will benefit his wellbeing (Nevo & Slonim-Nevo, 2011). For the second and third step, the practitioner has to locate the best research evidence, using his critical skills and not based on an “authoritarian” evaluation. Evidence gathered from the most prestigious researchers and universities does not always coincide with evidence gathered with the normative way as EBP suggests (Nevo & Slonim-Nevo, 2011). Concerning the application of the results, elements such as the relevance of the retrieved research with the service user’s situation, the accessibility of the suggested interventions, other practical issues, as well as the service user’s preferences and values should be first evaluated in order to come in accordance with the evidence (Nevo & Slonim-Nevo, 2011). Lastly, the final step comes to confirm the effectiveness of the decisions taken by the professional and record the proven valid and accountable procedure that was followed (Nevo & Slonim-Nevo, 2011).

Evidence-based Social Work Practice Debates

During the past years, the advantages and feasibility of the EBP has been questioned many times by several social scientists and researchers (Gray et al., 2013; Maynard, 2007). Among others, mistrust, skepticism and even rejection are the most common attitudes of the critics of the EBP (Maynard, 2007).

To begin with, some of the main arguments against the EBP process have been presented by Rubin & Parrish (2007). According to them, EBP ignores the clients’ and practitioners’ unique characteristics by being too mechanistic, as well as the weaknesses of the research evidence. Moreover, it is claimed that the EBP is not clear enough, has many limitations, such as requiring too much time and resources and thus is difficult to be implemented. What is more, an additional argument concerns the fact that empirical findings being constantly outdated cannot be avoided due to the nature of the scientific process (Maynard, 2007; Rubin & Parrish, 2007).

Furthermore, Straus and McAlister (2000) have also added their own arguments against the EBM, which can be expanded and address also other fields of application of the process (Mullen & Streiner, 2004). The classification of the criticism that they created, separates the limitations of the process from its misperceptions. More specifically, the limitations concern the practice in general, for instance the lack of consistent research evidence, barriers in the application of them in the individual care and obstacles in the high-quality service, or especially the EBP, such as the requirements for acquiring new skills, the limited time and resources and the scarcity of the research evidence in the field (Mullen & Streiner, 2004). Moreover, the disparagement of the clinical expertise, the disregard of the service users’ values and preferences and the treatment of the approach as a fixed “guidebook” or just a cost-cutting tool have been categorized under the misperceptions of the process (Mullen & Streiner, 2004). Additional to those are the arguments that EBP consists an “ivory-tower concept”, is occupied only with clinical research and randomized clinical trials are the only precondition to avoid therapeutic nihilism (Mullen & Streiner, 2004).

To continue, Webb (2001), contributing to the critique of the EBP, added more arguments regarding the philosophical grounds of the process. He argues that EBP does not fit

the nature and the research tradition of the profession of social work, which is individualized and complex and focuses more on qualitative and non-experimental designs, as it promotes a deterministic, rational model of decision-making (Webb, 2001). Instead, he presents the cognitive heuristic devices as the main determinant factors for the decision-making process of the social workers, and not the objective evidence. According to Webb (2001), the professional discretion and judgment are undermined by the attempt to transform a complex concept, such as the decision-making process, into a completely mechanistic and rational process based on positivism, which treats the facts and the values independently and promotes a managerialistic, performance culture that leaves narrow space of freedom and initiative to the professionals.

On the other hand, proponents of the EBP, even though they recognize the existence of some of the above mentioned defects, support that a number of modifications and adaptations are enough to make their elimination attainable (Nevo & Slonim-Nevo, 2011). Nevo & Slonim-Nevo (2011) argue that if the evidence will be seen in a more encompassing and interpretive way without underestimating the qualitative research and evidence, then we will be led in a more inclusive model of Evidence-informed Practice (EIP), which will give space to the practitioners to both move away from the non-scientific prejudices and superstitions, but also to trust and follow their experience.

What is more, EBP is presented by many as compatible with the social work values and promising in bridging the research-practice gap (Mullen et al., 2005). More specifically, some of the advantages that are underlined are the possibility to contribute in the improvement of the quality of the social services interventions in relation to the decision-making process and the inclusion of the individual values and expectations of each service user, as well as to better organize and disseminate the new research evidence (Mullen et al., 2005). Moreover, the EBP appears to be a good way to promote the self-directed life-long learning and also develop further the already existent educational frameworks (Mullen et al., 2005).

All in all, despite the fact that undoubtedly the theory of EBP can be significantly improved, it has to be recognized that the process is aligned with the long lasting appreciation of research evidence by the social work practice (Shdaimah, 2009). As can be seen from the above, most of the critiques focus on issues of definition, implementation of the process, classification of evidence and attention to the context. However, few of them oppose to the usefulness and the ethics of the empirically tested interventions, as well as to the fact that the EBP practice supports the human diversity, equality, and self-determination (Shdaimah, 2009).

Evidence-based Practice in Social Work Education

Beside the multiple debates and conflicts about the EBP process, the majority of social work educators and academics support its use and are in favor of its dissemination among social work practitioners (Bender et al., 2014). They argue that teaching EBP is essential, if schools of social work wish to remain in the forefront of developments and potentially create a new generation of social workers, focused on integrating research into their practice and enhancing, in this way, the profession's competency (Grady, 2010). The number of publications, conferences and professional meetings that have been held for this reason can easily confirm the size of the support towards integrating EBP in the curriculum (Bender et al., 2014).

As the traditional means of disseminating knowledge are proven to be increasingly defective and education continues to strive to close the research – practice gap, EBP is presented as a process particularly suitable for upholding this task (Bender et al., 2014; Okpych & Yu,

2014). The fact that EBP includes many forms of knowledge and its principles come in accordance with core values of the profession, reveal its relevance with the social work curriculum (Drisko & Grady, 2015; Gambrill, 2007). More specifically, the EBP process is a philosophy dedicated to promote effective decision-making, which will integrate the research findings with the uniqueness of the service-users and will also promote lifelong learning and competence, respect of the individual's autonomy and right to participation, social justice and accountability, while minimizing the possibility of harm (Gambrill, 2007). Moreover, it entails a way of taking part in policy making and improvement of strategies and services, who aims efficacy (Gambrill, 2007).

Moving on to the actual teaching of EBP, notable is Teatera and Chonody's (2018) reference that: "The process of learning to engage in EBP begins in social work education where students are expected to engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice" (p. 442). The teaching of EBP process aims to guide students on the way of learning, of thinking and of combining the above with their practice and important policy implications and it begins by introducing them to the five-steps that were presented above (Rubin, 2007). Furthermore, it includes informing the students about the current sources for searching, helping them acquire the skills of critical thinking and decision making, in order to explain and evaluate the researches' findings more effectively and in this way learn to question the status quo or authority of other professionals (Bender et al., 2014; Parrish, 2018).

Concerning the five-step process of EBP, if taught effectively, it can provide students with invaluable skills (Drisko & Grady, 2015). For instance, the first step, "formulating an answerable practice question", can train the students in making a multifaceted and complete assessment, which will be taking into consideration the service user's needs, the context, as well as their personal limitations and by placing all these into a broader political framework, they will be led to the final searchable question (Drisko & Grady, 2015; Parrish, 2018, p. 407). The second and third step, "searching for the best research evidence; and critically appraising the research evidence for its validity and applicability", can train them into how and where to find, how to evaluate and how to explain different kind of research, in order to recognize the "best available evidence" that EBP suggests (Drisko & Grady, 2015; Parrish, 2018, p. 407). To continue, the fourth step, "implementing a practice decision after integrating the research evidence with client characteristics, preferences, and values", can teach students to create genuine relationships with their service-users, based on respect and continuous adjustment in the situation from both sides, in order to attain absolute trust and transparency and lastly "evaluate the outcome", the fifth step, as a successful and effective one (Drisko & Grady, 2015; Parrish, 2018, p. 407).

The above mentioned process might be perceived as clear and simple, however it entails a great deal of difficulty and complexity, when it comes to its adoption (Grady, 2010). Drisko & Grady (2015) report that, according to various researches, academics of social work still do not include the EBP in their teaching. One of the most recent studies that was conducted by Grady et al. (2010) demonstrated that EBP process still remains out of most of the social work curricula and academics do not base their decisions about them on the contemporary research outcomes. What is more, the level of implementation of EBP in the practice field of multiple health professions remains low, according to other studies (Bender et al., 2014).

The main reason why this is happening is the confusion that is diffused within the academic community about the EBP definition and the way it is understood (Rubin, 2007). Avby's et al. (2014) empirical study revealed that there are many qualitatively different ways of perceiving EBP. They categorized those ways into five descriptive categories; fragmented,

discursive, instrumental, multifaceted and critical, in an effort to better describe how professionals in Sweden understand the concept of EBP in social work practice based on the phenomenographic approach (Avby, Nilsen, & Dahlgren, 2014). Additionally, EBP has been criticized for requiring too much time and resources from both academics and students and does not provide all the necessary skills for future professionals to adequately use empirically supported interventions (Rubin, 2007). Other identified obstacles are the culture of the organization, the research environment, the prevailing attitudes that include mainly suspicion and resistance and finally the lack of supervision (Teater & Chonody, 2018).

Proctor (2007) proposes five criteria that the schools' of social work strategies and other related agencies' interventions should follow in order to successfully transmit the above components of EBP process to the students. Those criteria are: "They must be deliberate and strategic, they should be knowledge based, they should reflect the complexity of social work practice, they should capitalize on school resources and core activities, and they should build on natural partnerships inherent in professional education" (Proctor, 2007). More specifically, Proctor (2007) suggests that in order to advance EBP, there should be an active knowledge implementation from the schools of social work, which will be based on evidence-based literature and not just a passive knowledge dissemination. This requires schools to concentrate on multiple levels, besides the individual, and reclaim all the resources and activities they own, in order to forge strong partnerships between their main four areas of investment: their curricula, research, affiliated agencies, and information infrastructure (Proctor, 2007).

Additionally, Rubin (2007), whose article synthesizes the propositions and conclusions of the Nation Symposium on Improving the Teaching of EBP in Austin, Texas, presents more specific and analytic suggestions on advancing EBP. Those suggestions concern the role of EBP in the curriculum, the field placements, the agencies and the supervision, as well as in education in general. More specifically, the integration of EBP throughout the whole curriculum with the potential guidance from agency providers and not as a distinguished course, the introduction of students in more specialized information acquisition methods and the transmission of the significance of transparency through being able to provide a complete explanation of the intervention choice are some of the most highlighted propositions (Rubin, 2007). Moreover, other recommendations are the mutual training in EBP between the academic and the agency staff, the facilitation of the access in databases and current research evidence for the field instructors and the creation of new, more innovative ways of making students familiar with the real practice settings and its complexities than the traditional lectures (Proctor, 2007). Finally, as Walker et. Al (2007) mention, a balance between encouraging students to carry out researches and encouraging them to understand and critically evaluate the existed evidence should be achieved in the educational setting.

Social Work Education and Evidence-based Practice in Greece

The history of social work in Greece is relatively recent, as the systematic appliance of it as a profession and its recognition as a scientific method began in 1950. The Hellenic Association of Social Workers (SKLE) was founded in 1954 and since 1956 has been a member of the International Confederation of Social Workers. In 1959, the legal definition of social work was enshrined in the Law Decree 4018, FEK 247/12.11.1959. However, the education of social workers was remained in the responsibility of the private sector during the 1960s, until the state undertook a more regulatory role towards it. Some years later, in 1973, the first public schools of

social work were established in Patras and Crete within the Centres of Higher Technological Education (KATEE) and offered post-secondary education. The Establishment of the Department of Social Work in the Ministry of Social Services took place in 1977 and one year later the objectives of social work (social welfare, health, social insurance, education, community organization and development, criminality, occupational guidance) were defined in the Law Decree 891/7.12.78. In the years to follow social work education became exclusively public (1984), the KATEE were replaced by the Technological Educational Institutes (TEIs) and the professional rights of the graduates were defined in the Law Decree 23/26.1.89. Finally, the Law Decree 23/30.1.92, which is valid until today defined the preconditions for obtaining the social workers' professional license, as well as issues of ethics, sectors of social work practice, duties to users and employers-organizations (Dedoussi et al., 2004; Koukouli et al., 2008).

Today, there are four state Higher Education Institutes offering social work training in Greece; the University of West Attica (UNIWA), the TEI of Patras, the TEI of Crete and the Democritus University of Thrace. They offer four year full-time studies (eight semesters), during which students attend multiple courses, in order to acquire the "Ptyhion in Social Work" (the Bachelor in Social Work) and be eligible to registering as Certified Social Workers to the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity (Department of Social Work, 2018).

The content of studies of the Department of Social Work of UNIWA was determined by the Ministerial Decision (34397/E5/4.4.06/ΦΕΚ463/13.4.2006), which also describes its responsibility to "educate high-level social workers by providing modern knowledge that will ensure them successful scientific and professional activity in the context of changing social needs of the developing science and technology. At the same time, the mission of the Department is to promote and conduct research that contributes to the advancement of Social Work as an applied social science but also in the country's development process" (Department of Social Work, 2018).

The revised curriculum of undergraduate studies of the Social Work Department of the School of Administrative, Economic and Social Sciences of the UNIWA was based on the guidelines of the European Federation of Social Schools (EASSW) and the "Strategic Plan for the year 2016-2020" and the directions for education in the Social Work of the World Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the "Global Standards for the Education and Training of Social Work"(Department of Social Work, 2018).

Among the learning outcomes that are mentioned in the revised curriculum, great importance is given to the acquisition of knowledge and skills to conduct research and abilities to assess the professional practice, as well as to the proper exploitation of the research results.

The total duration of the new Curriculum is eight (8) semesters. A total of 52 courses are offered, of which 34 are obligatory and 18 are optional. Of these, students have to choose 8 or 6 and the dissertation thesis (Department of Social Work, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

The fundamental premise for the development of the present study and the analysis of the material was Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (Bandura, 1986, 1997, 1999, 2012). SCT has its origins in the paradigm shift that took place in the 1970s and transposed the interest from behavior to cognitions (Conner & Norman, 2007). Bandura fully developed this theory in his 1986 book, "Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory", and expanded it even more in 1997 in his book, "Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control" (Conner &

Norman, 2007). A learning theory, which aims to organize what and how to teach something, was deemed to be the most suitable for the present study since, one of its main purposes is to generate implications for social work education and training (Ormrod, 2011). In order for students to understand and appreciate better the Evidence-based Practice, the latter has to be taught more effectively.

To begin with, SCT emphasizes that human functioning is the result of a combination of three main factors; the personal, the social/environmental and the behavioral factor. Bandura introduced that framework of triadic reciprocity or reciprocal interactions to better understand, predict and change the human behavior (Schunk, 2012). More specifically, using perceived self-efficacy (personal factor) to demonstrate this interaction, it is proved that the latter influences the behavior (behavioral factor), such as the use of effective learning strategies, and vice versa, as well as the individual social environments and vice versa (Ryan, 2012). What is more, the same applies for the interactions between the behavior and the social environments. It is important to mention that the influences between the factors are not always equal and it is possible for any of them to predominate at any point (Schunk, 2012).

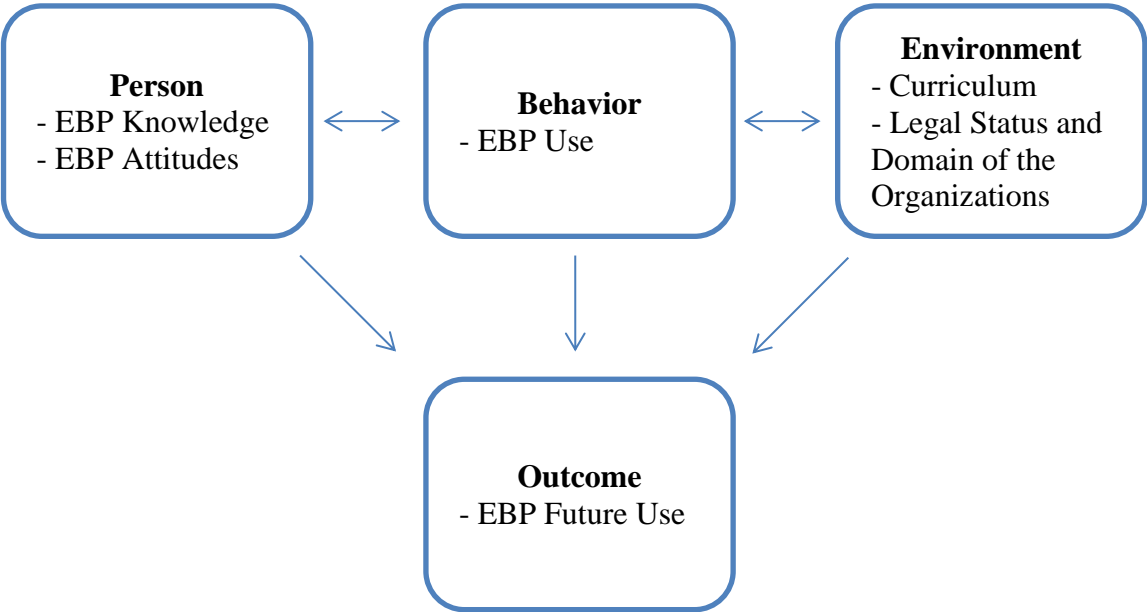
In this study, independent variables for inclusions comprised all the three main factors presented above. Self-perceived knowledge and attitudes towards EBP represent the personal factor, self-perceived use of EBP represents the behavioral factor and the choice of the curriculum and the legal status and domain of the organization of the P.L.E.s represent the social/environmental factor. Those variables were hypothesized to affect each other.

To continue, according to Bandura's SCT, there are several cognitive motivational processes that influence learning. The present study was occupied with two of them: the values and the self-efficacy (Schunk, 2012). Values are defined as "individuals' perceptions of the importance and utility of learning and acting in given ways" and constitute a determining factor in individuals' decisions to act or not in a specific way, in order to achieve a specific outcome (Ryan, 2012, p.19). There is a multitude of researches, which support that values are significant predictors for students' intentions to choose or not a course of action in the future. Therefore, the under examination self-perceived attitudes of the social work students towards EBP represent the cognitive motivational process of values and function as an independent variable, which was hypothesized to affect the outcome, in other words the future use of EBP.

Moreover, "self-efficacy (efficacy expectations) refers to personal beliefs about one's capabilities to learn or perform actions at designated levels" (Schunk, 2012, p. 146). In achievement contexts, self-efficacy can affect numerous motivational outcomes, such as the choice of tasks, as well as influence effort expenditure, persistence, and learning (Ryan, 2012). Based on that, the independent variable of self-perceived knowledge of EBP was also hypothesized to affect the future use of EBP.

The initial hypothesized model can be seen in the Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Hypothesized model



Chapter Three: Methodology

This dissertation is driven by the ambition of enhancing the use of scientific evidence in the social work practice and decision-making in Greece. For this reason, the literature was focus on the Evidence-based Practice (EBP), a process that emerged as a response to the contemporary demand for improvement of the quality and the efficacy of the human services' interventions and constitutes one of the most discussed and complex social movement of our time (Drisko, 2014). Specifically, the literature gave attention to the teaching of the EBP in the undergraduate level, since it was believed that today's students and tomorrow's professionals were the most appropriate sample to serve the purpose of this research. Consequently, through the examination of their self-perceived knowledge, attitudes and use of the EBP, the study aimed to identified the situation of the process in the current reality, as well as the student's intention of using that process in the future professionals.

This chapter presents the methodology that was implemented in this dissertation, describes the chosen research strategies and explains the reasoning behind those choices. The first part of this section introduces the reader to the research design, which constitutes the basis of the methodology and supports the designing of the whole dissertation. Subsequently, the description of the study setting and population are presents, alongside with the sample selection strategy, in order for the reader to be aware of the context, the target group and the way that was chosen. Moreover, the description of the data collection, processing and analysis, provide the reader with a full picture of how the information was gathered and how the findings were produced. Lastly, the chapter is concerned with the ethical principles that were followed throughout the study.

Research Design

The strategy that was chosen for the present study is quantitative research. Quantitative research is often referred to as a research strategy that describes the relationship between theory and research through the natural science approach of positivism and deductive theory, uses numeric data and is characterized by its objectivity towards the social reality (Bryman, 2012). It is mostly suitable for research that involves sets, group attributes and general trends and studies the relationship between the collected facts and for answering descriptive and comparative research questions, as well as relationship-based research questions. In other words, it is suited for questions that need a quantitative answer (i.e. "What is?", "How much?", "How often?"), that study a numeric change or/and that aim to explain phenomena and test hypotheses (Muijs, 2004; Robson, 2002). Consequently, since the aim of the study is to determine the self-perceived knowledge, attitudes and use of the evidence-based practice by the fourth year undergraduate social work students at the University of West Attica, quantitative research strategy was deemed to be the most appropriate one to use.

To continue, the choice of the research strategy was followed by the choice of the research design, which determines the way data is collected and analyzed and. The research design that best suited the purpose of the present study was the cross-sectional survey. The main characteristic of a survey is that the information it gathers is standard and concerns the same

variables for the entire sample. Common variables of a survey can be, among others, attributes, behavior, beliefs and attitudes (Aldridge & Levine, 2001). According to Bryman (2012):

Survey research comprises a cross-sectional design in relation to which data are collected predominantly by questionnaire or by structured interview on more than one case (usually quite a lot more than one) and at a single point in time in order to collect a body of quantitative or quantifiable data in connection with two or more variables (usually many more than two), which are then examined to detect patterns of association (p. 60).

Surveys fall into the category of non-experimental predetermined designs because the researcher does not deliberately manipulate or alters the phenomena studied (Robson, 2002).

The main asset offered by the choice of this research design is the ability to measure, even remotely, a large number of various data that cannot be observed such as factual information, attitudes, beliefs and behavior. A large sample provides the possibility of discovering small effects during the analysis. Additionally, a survey research usually requires less time and effort from the researcher and the cost is significantly lower compared to other methods and designs (Bryman, 2012).

To conclude, a non-experimental cross-sectional survey was used to describe the knowledge, attitudes and application of EBP by fourth year social work students and to explore possible relationships between them.

Description of the Study Setting

The study was conducted at the University of West Attica (UNIWA), in Athens, Greece. The Department of Social Work falls under the faculty of Administrative, Economic and Social Sciences. The Department of Social Work of UNIWA was established in 1985, under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and it constitutes one of the four state Higher Education Institutes offering social work training in Greece. During the same year, all the former social work schools (the Diaconisson School, the School of the Children Protection Committee and the Institute of Social Work School) were embodied in the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Health and Caring Professions of the Technological Educational Institution (TEI) of Athens, offering undergraduate training in social work. Finally, in 2018 it was integrated in the newly established University of Western Attica as an autonomous Department (Department of Social Work, 2018).

Study Population and Sample Selection

The target group of the present study was the students of the Department of Social Work in the University of UNIWA. Purposive sampling methods were used. More specifically, since the target group consists of candidates with specific characteristics, homogeneous sampling was applied (Etikan, 2016). Therefore, from the total number of the social work students, all the fourth year undergraduate students were selected, because of their knowledge and their experiences in the field of social work through the completion of the majority of the university courses and the conduction of the Practical Laboratory Exercises (P.L.Es.).

Consequently, inclusion criteria were the completion of the third year of social work training at the UNIWA and the completion of at least the first Practical Laboratory Exercise (P.L.E.I). Students, who have completed one or more of the previous training years in other

universities and schools, were excluded from the study, because of the probability of having different levels of exposure to teaching on the EBP.

Data Collection

Instrument design

In surveys the most preferred way to collect the data is through questionnaires. Questionnaires can be self-completion or postal/e-mail/online. For this research self-completion face to face questionnaires were used, since they were given by the researcher in the campus between March 19 and April 3 and they were collected back immediately after completion. This way of data collection was chosen because its administration is quicker and relatively cheaper and at the same time more convenient for the respondents. A self-completion questionnaire can be distributed in large quantities in a short time and the respondents can take their own time to complete it. Moreover, one of the major advantages is that the researcher's effect is limited compared to other methods, such as interviews and there is no variability in the questions (Bryman, 2012; Muijs, 2004).

The questionnaire that was used to collect the data of the present survey was a knowledge, attitudes and behavior (KAB) questionnaire for EBP. It was developed in 2003 by Johnston and colleagues for the purpose of assessing undergraduate EBP teaching and learning for medical students and consists of 43 items with four subscales. The subscales are: knowledge which contains five items, attitudes with six items, use of EBP including personal application which consists of six items and future use of EBP with four items. The remaining 22 items include questions about sources of evidence, time used to search for evidence, and reasons for not applying evidence. Each subscale uses a Likert scale. Specifically, a six-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6) is used for knowledge and attitudes. A five-point scale from 1 (never) to 5 (everyday) is used to rate the use of EBP. The future use of EBP is rated on a subscale from not at all (1) to completely (6).

It is a reliable and valid questionnaire, with a Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.70 for the overall questionnaire, as well as for each factor. Correlation of the factors with other measures of EBP were used to measure the construct validity and paired t-tests of the pre-factor and post factor mean scores to examine the responsiveness of the questionnaire (Johnston et al., 2003).

Permission was obtained from the authors to use, translate to Greek and slightly modify the wording of some items on the instrument. The modifications mainly concerned terminology and adaptation to social work; for example, evidence based medicine was replaced by evidence based practice and medical students by social work students. Particular care was taken in order not to change the meaning of the questions.

Pilot study

According to Bryman (2012), some of the advantages of using existing questionnaires are the knowledge of the measurement qualities, in case reliability and validity tests have been already employed, as well as the possibility of making comparisons with other studies.

However, since, in this case, the questionnaire was modified and translated, in order to address social work students in Greece and not medical ones, a pilot study was considered necessary. In this way, the researcher ensured that no problems will occur during the main study and that all the corrective actions had been taken prior to it, in order to maximize the likelihood

of success and the validity of the questionnaire within social work and the Greek context (Salkind, 2010).

The pilot study was conducted with eight voluntary respondents, graduates of previous years (2016-2019) of the same Department of Social Work, between March 4 and March 15. The probability of them contacting the study participants during the study period was very small. The respondents were asked, upon completion, to provide comments regarding the clarity of the questions, instructions and length of the questionnaire. They were recruited through social media with snowball sampling, a form of convenience sample.

The final implementation of the survey was facilitated in many ways by the information obtained by the pilot study. For instance, it was confirmed that the questions were understandable and relevant to the social work training and the Greek context. Additionally, the average time required for the completion of the questionnaire was calculated and was found to be approximately 15 minutes.

Data Processing and Analysis

After receiving all the necessary approvals and permission, the data collection began by sending an invitation for participation to all fourth year social work students. The invitation was sent through social media, specifically the official Facebook page of the Social Work Department of UNIWA, and was including information about the study, the dates and possible hours for the data collection, as well as, the contact information and the expected time required for the participation.

Subsequently, the researcher came in contact with the head of the Department of Social Work and all the responsible for the fourth year social work students lecturers, informing them about the study and the dates and hours of the data collection and asking them for their kind collaboration and help. The contact was made through email. Then, the researcher travelled to Greece and distributed the questionnaires in the campus, after the lectures, between March 19 and April 3.

During the data collection process, the students were informed, orally and in writing that the participation is voluntary and a written informed consent has to be obtained by those who agree to participate. Moreover, it was asked by the students to separate the signed consent from the questionnaire and to not write their name or any other personal information on it, in order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. All questionnaires were hand-distributed, completed individually and returned in an unmarked sealed envelope on the same day, which was collected in person by the researcher.

For analyzing the collected data from the questionnaires and according to the methodology, descriptive statistics, bivariate statistics and numeral outcome prediction (linear regression) were used. The collected answers were coded and converted into computer readable information and then inserted to the chosen statistical software. Finally, the data was analyzed using the IBM SPSS Statistics version 25, a statistical software package for the social sciences, whose license was granted by the University of Gothenburg.

Ethical Considerations

The term “ethics” is nowadays used to answer questions, like “what should I/we do?” or “how should I/we live?” and contains reflections upon which traits of character are good or bad, which actions are right or wrong and how people should behave to each other and the ecosystem (Banks & Williams, 2005). Moreover, within its interests it includes subjects like rights, responsibilities, well-being and harm (Banks, 2015). Concerning the professional field, ethics began to be formulated, having as a focal point the professionals’ behavior towards their service users and their protection from harm, exploitation or inappropriate influence from a potential misuse of power from the professionals, as well as the respect for their dignity and their right to decision making (Banks, 2015). In research, following the dictated ethics is equally vital, given the fact that many times people have unethically altered and used science, in order to achieve personal gain and enhance their professional status (Bhattacharjee, 2012). For this reason the present study was committed to be ethically responsible and to contribute to the production of knowledge.

To begin with, before conducting the survey all the necessary permissions and ethical approvals were obtained from the parties involved. The research was initially approved by the University Institute of Lisbon (ISCTE-IUL), with the purpose of fulfilling the MFamily Dissertation, a course given within the framework of the European Master's Program in Social Work with Families and Children. Subsequently, the study received the favorable opinion and approval of the Ethics Committee with the no. 40/2019 decision. Finally, the research received permission to be carried out in the Department of Social Work of the University of West Attica (UNIWA), in Athens, Greece, from the General Assembly of the Department with the no. 2/29-01-19 protocol number.

What is more, this study was committed to follow the ethical principles and standards described in the Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles that was approved at the General Meetings of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the General Assembly of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) in Dublin, Ireland, in July 2018.

More specifically, it paid particular attention and importance in the four key areas of ethical principles, as described by Diener and Crandall (1978) (Bryman, 2012).

The first key area of ethical principles refers to the possibility of causing harm to the participants (Bryman, 2012). It is of utmost significance that no harm will be caused to the participants, such as pain, danger or any kind of unfavorable consequence, as a result of their participation (Vanclay, Baines, & Taylor, 2013). It is ensured that for the present study the participants were informed that in case of stress, anxiety, distress or any other feeling of discomfort, they can withdraw from the research and the process of data collection at any time without any consequence. Great importance was given to the clarification that the choice of no participation or withdrawal from the study will not affect in any way their academic progress and grades. No inconvenience or disturbance was intended to be caused to them by the research process or the results produced.

To continue, an issue of great importance is the informed consent (Bryman, 2012). It is widely accepted that the participation to a study should be voluntary and not the result of any threat or compulsion and that this should be decided after the participants have adequately understood the main objectives and consequences of the study (Vanclay et al., 2013). The informed consent of this study included all the necessary information, such as the nature of the

research and the expected duration of the requested participation, a summary of the expected benefits and risks, as well as, contact information. The document was printed and distributed in Greek to ensure that all participants fully comprehend it and feel safe about it. The printed forms were signed and given voluntarily by the students, who chose to participate, and were collected directly from the researcher, who reassured them that there would be no penalty in case of withdrawal, even after signing the form. All the above mentioned information, besides being included in the written form of informed consent, was also mentioned orally in person. The participants' autonomy was respected to the fullest.

Moreover, the third key area of ethical principles discusses the issue of privacy (Bryman, 2012). The researcher is obligated to ensure the preservation of anonymity and confidentiality, unless there is permission from the participant that allows the opposite, as well as of the data protection (Vanclay et al., 2013). The data was collected for the present study using anonymous coded self-administered questionnaires, was not discussed with people without professional concern, was protected with passwords and will be kept secured until the end of the study and for the prescribed period of six months. After the end of that period, the records will be discarded.

Finally, there was no intention of any kind of deception. Covert methods and deception are against the professional integrity and respect and can be used only with the approval of the ethics committee and only in very particular cases (Vanclay et al., 2013). For this study, there was an honest treatment of the participants, who were fully informed about the aim and the objectives of the study and the research findings were reported accurately without any falsification.

Chapter Four: Research Findings and Analysis

This chapter is concerned with a detailed description of the data analysis and the results. Descriptive analysis and cross tabulations are presented for all the sections. The response rate to the questionnaire was 81,6% with 98 questionnaires returned from 120 fourth-year undergraduate social work students at the Department of Social Work in the University of West Attica (UNIWA). Subsequently, the hypotheses' testing is being conducted using the Pearson's correlation test, the T-TEST and the ANOVA test. In the end, a summary of the findings, as well as an extensive discussion of them are being presented.

Descriptive Analysis

Demographics

This survey involved a total of 98 fourth year social work students, of which 91.84% are women, aged between 22-25 years (53.06%) or 18-21years (25.51%).

For the majority of the students, who participated in the survey, the Department of Social Work was their first (44.9%) or second (39.8%) choice, where they are attending the lectures every day (54.08%) or weekly (24.49%). Only 1.02% of the participants stated that they never attend the lectures. What is more, the average number of courses that the students owe this year was found to be 6.

To continue, the study revealed that 88.76% of the participants have chosen not to conduct a Dissertation and therefore receive their degree based on the new curriculum, which includes 40 courses, the P.L.E. I, the P.L.E. II. Only 11.22% of the students chose to receive their degree by writing a Dissertation and passing 38 courses, the P.L.E. I and the P.L.E. II.

Moreover, concerning the legal status of the internships' Organizations, the survey revealed that in both the P.L.E.I and P.L.E.II, the majority of the students claimed to have conducted them in an Organization with a Legal Entity of Public Law (68.37% and 76.34% respectively). The Non-profit Organizations of a Legal Entity of Private Law were found to follow with 27.55% and 19.35% for the two internships, leaving in the place the Private Law Organizations of a profit-making nature.

The most often selected category of Organization, where the students chose to carry out the P.L.E.I, was found to be the field of Mental Health with a percentage of 21.88%. Subsequently, with a percentage of 19.79%, was found to be the Health sector, with a percentage of 13.54% the Local Authorities and with a percentage of 11.46%, the Family – Child Protection domain. Furthermore, 9.38% of the students stated that they chose to work with Disability, 7.29% with Immigrants – Refugees, 6.25% in the field of Education, 6.25% with Delinquency, and 4.17% with Addiction.

Finally, in the case of the P.L.E.II, the majority of the students (25.84%) chose to work for the Local Authorities. Subsequently, 16.85% of the participants preferred the Health sector, 14.61% the Family – Child Protection domain and 13.48% the Disability one. The Mental Health sector came fifth in the students' choices, with a percentage of 10.11%, while 5.62% preferred to work with Addiction, another 5.62% with Delinquency and 4.49% with Immigrants – Refugees. Finally, 3.37% of the students stated that the field of Education was the category of their desired Organization for the P.L.E.II.

Self-reported knowledge of EBP

To begin with, concerning the students' self-reported knowledge of EBP, the highest percentage was detected in the statement that effective searching skills/easy access to bibliographic databases and evidence sources are essential to practicing evidence-based practice, with 46.9% of the students strongly agreeing with that. Additionally, the majority of students moderately agreed that they have a clear understanding of what evidence-based practice is (N = 30, 30.6%). The statement that the Evidence-based Practice process requires the appropriate identification and formulation of answerable questions received an equal number of students, who moderately agreed and of students, who agreed with that (N = 31, 31.6%). Moreover, most participants agreed that the Evidence-based Practice requires the use of critical appraisal skills to ensure the quality of all the research papers retrieved (N = 39, 39.8%), while the majority of students moderately disagreed that research evidence is generally a more reliable criterion for the decision making than the personal or the supervisors' and other colleagues' beliefs and experience. (N = 34, 34.7%).

Table 4.1 Self-reported Knowledge of EBP

	Strongly Agree		Moderately Agree		Agree		Disagree		Moderately Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I have a clear understanding of what evidence-based practice is.	12	12.2%	30	30.6%	26	26.5%	12	12.2%	13	13.3%	5	5.1%
Research evidence is generally a more reliable criterion for the decision making than the personal or the supervisors' and other colleagues' beliefs and experience.	1	1%	9	9.2%	13	13.3%	25	25.5%	34	34.7%	15	15.3%
Evidence-based practice requires the use of critical appraisal skills to ensure the quality of all the research papers retrieved.	30	30.6%	25	25.5%	39	39.8%	1	1%	3	3.1%	0	0%
Effective searching skills/easy access to bibliographic databases and evidence sources are essential to practicing evidence-based practice.	46	46.9%	22	22.4%	28	28.6%	2	2%	0	0%	0	0%

The evidence-based practice process requires the appropriate identification and formulation of answerable questions.	29	29.6%	31	31.6%	31	31.6%	6	6.1%	1	1%	0	0%
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Self-reported attitudes towards EBP

The following table displays the self-reported attitudes of the fourth year social work students towards the EBP. As it appears, the majority of the students disagree that the Evidence-based Practice ignores the “art” of social work (N = 52, 53.1%), that there is no reason for them personally to adopt it because it is just a “fad” (or “fashion”) that will pass with time (N = 51.52%) and that it is “cook-book” social work that disregards professional experience (N = 49, 50%). Moreover, the highest percentage of the students also disagree that the social workers, in general, should not practice the Evidence-based Practice because social work is about people and service users, not statistics (N = 42, 42.9%) and that previous work experience is more important than research findings in choosing the best intervention available for a service user (N = 35, 35.7%). Finally, the statement that if evidence-based social work is valid, then anyone can see service users and do what social workers do, found most of the responders strongly disagreeing (N = 38, 38.8%).

Table 4.2 Self-reported Attitudes towards EBP

	Strongly Agree		Moderately Agree		Agree		Disagree		Moderately Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Evidence-based practice is “cook-book” social work that disregards professional experience.	0	0%	15	15.3%	11	11.2%	49	50%	14	14.3%	9	9.2%
There is no reason for me personally to adopt evidence-based practice because it is just a “fad” (or “fashion”) that will pass with time.	0	0%	3	3.1%	3	3.1%	51	52%	23	23.5%	18	18.4%

If evidence-based social work is valid, then anyone can see service users and do what social workers do.	2	2%	8	8.2%	15	15.3%	30	30.6%	5	5.1%	38	38.8%
Evidence-based practice ignores the “art” of social work.	1	1%	5	5.1%	12	12.2%	52	53.1%	15	15.3%	13	13.3%
Social workers, in general, should not practice evidence-based practice because social work is about people and service users, not statistics.	7	7.1%	16	16.3%	10	10.2%	42	42.9%	15	15.3%	8	8.2%
Previous work experience is more important than research findings in choosing the best intervention available for a service user.	4	4.1%	13	13.3%	29	29.6%	35	35.7%	13	13.3%	4	4.1%

As regards to their overall appreciation of the EBP, this seems to be high enough, since 55.21% of the students stated that they agree and 29.2% that they moderately agree on the advantages practicing evidence-based social work. However, most of them (34.7%) disagree that it is easy to find the evidence in order to practice it.

Overall, the majority of the students feel moderately confident with their decision-making skills (46.94%). Another 40.82% of them feel some confidence with the decision-making process, while only 7.14% feel that they have a lot of confidence with it. Less confidence was found in 3.06% of the students, who stated that they have little confidence in their decision-making abilities and 2.04%, who stated that they have no confidence at all in them.

Self-reported use of EBP

The results presented in the following table concern the current use of the EBP from the participants. More specifically, it shows how often students access research evidence from different sources. The results indicate that the most students every month have access to research evidence in general (N = 45, 45.9%), on the internet (N = 36, 36.7%) and from a textbook (N = 37, 37.8%). However, the majority of the participants stated that they never have access to research evidence from original research papers (N = 57, 58.2%), from the Campbell Collaboration database (N = 89, 90.8%) or from the Cochrane, Medline or other databases (N = 76, 77.6%).

Table 4.3 Self-reported Use of EBP

	Every day		Every other day		Every week		Every month		Never	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
How frequently do you access research evidence <u>in general</u>?	7	7.1%	7	7.1%	22	22.4%	45	45.9%	13	13.3%
How frequently do you access research evidence <u>on the internet</u>?	12	12.2%	15	15.0%	29	29.6%	36	36.7%	6	6.1%
How frequently do you access research evidence <u>from a textbook</u>?	5	5.1%	5	5.1%	24	24.5%	37	37.8%	21	21.4%
How frequently do you access research evidence <u>from original research papers</u>?	2	2%	3	3.1%	6	6.1%	29	29.6%	57	58.2%
How frequently do you access research evidence <u>from the Campbell database</u>?	0	0%	3	3.1%	1	1%	3	3.1%	89	90.8%
How frequently do you access research evidence <u>from the Cochrane database, the Medline database or some other database</u>?	0	0%	2	2%	8	8.2%	8	8.2%	76	77.6%

On average, the students stated that they spend 33 minutes daily, in order to find or search for that evidence and that they practice the EBP every month (40.82%). On the other hand, 33.67% of the students said they never practice EBP and only 3.06% practice it daily.

Overall, the findings indicated that (70.41%) of the fourth year social work students do not consider themselves practitioners of EBP. According to the following table, the main reason that the students indicated as responsible for this is the fact that they do not know how to practice EBP.

Table 4.4 Reasons of not practicing EBP

	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
I don't practice evidence-based social work because my consultants and professors don't.	34	34.7%	37	37.8%
I don't practice evidence-based social work because I don't know how.	45	45.9%	26	26.5%
I don't practice evidence-based social work because I don't believe in it.	10	10.2%	61	62.2%
I don't practice evidence-based social work because my colleagues don't	22	22.4%	47	48%
I don't practice evidence-based social work because I don't have time.	18	18.4%	53	54.1%
I don't practice evidence-based social work because of personal procrastination in changing old habits.	18	18.4%	53	54.1%

Future use of EBP

In order to explore the students' intention of using the EBP in the future, they were asked to rate the usefulness of EBP in their future practice and their willingness to practice EBP in the future, as well as to state their views about the place of EBP in the future of social work and their preferred sources of finding evidence in the future.

The following three bar charts indicate that most students believe that EBP is very useful in their future practice as a social worker (44.9%) and that they are very willing to practice it in the future (52.04%). What is more, 50% of the participants agree that EBP is the future of social work and will become the standard of care.

Figure 2. Usefulness of the EBP for the future practice

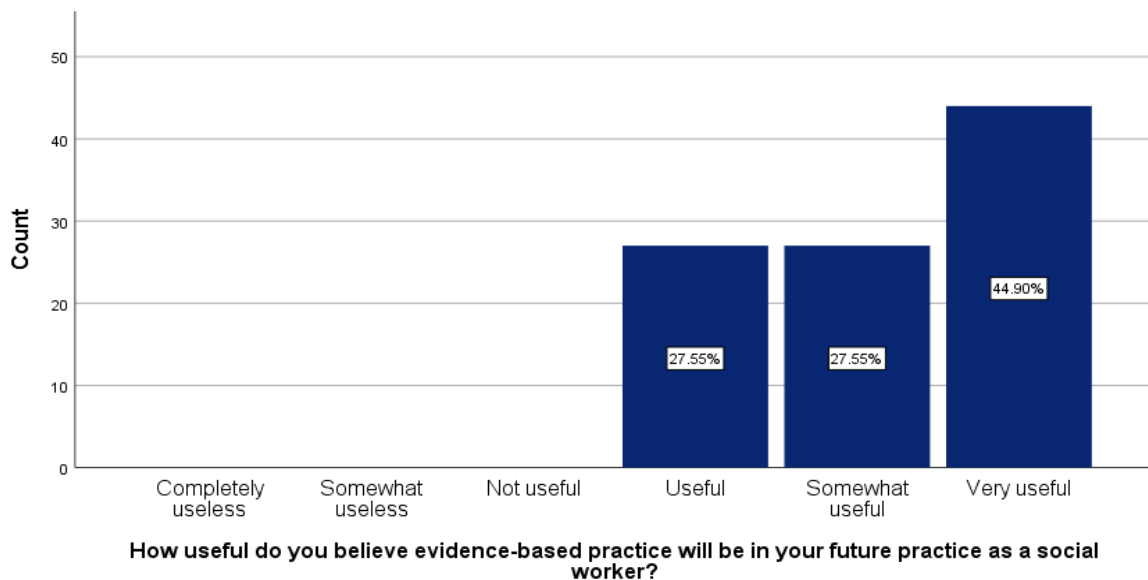


Figure 3. Willingness to practice EBP in the future



Moreover, according to the findings, the students’ most preferred way to be given research evidence is via the library (N = 44). The second way to follow is via a desktop computer in the patient care environment (N = 32), with a small difference with the third preferred way, which is via a mobile, handheld computer (N = 30). Last preferred way for the students is revealed to be via a desktop computer at home (N = 28).

EBP in relation with the Department of Social Work

The last part of this chapter presents the findings that concern the students’ answer to questions related to the Department of Social Work of UNIWA and the activities provided by it, such as the lectures, the internships and the curriculum.

To begin with, the first question that students were asked to rely was how frequently current best evidence about the particular problem at hand is discussed, during the university lectures. The majority of the students believe that current best evidence is discussed moderately during the lectures (49%), while 19.39% believe that it is discussed a lot. Moreover, only 12.24% and 1.08% of the students believe that evidence is being discussed a little or not at all accordingly.

Additionally, concerning the frequency that the role of current best evidence has been raised at these lectures, 36.46% of the students stated that is being discussed sometimes, while 29.17% said that is being discussed occasionally. Another 20.83% believes that the role of current best evidence has been raised often and only 9.38% and 3.13% stated that this happens rarely or never accordingly.

To continue, the research revealed that the majority of the students, who participated in the survey, stated that they were moderately prepared for their P.L.E. during the last semester (40.21%). 32.99% of students think they have been somewhat prepared for it and 13.40% moderately unprepared. Only 7.22% of the students think they have been very prepared for their

internship, while 3.09 % of the participants think they were either completely or somewhat unprepared for it.

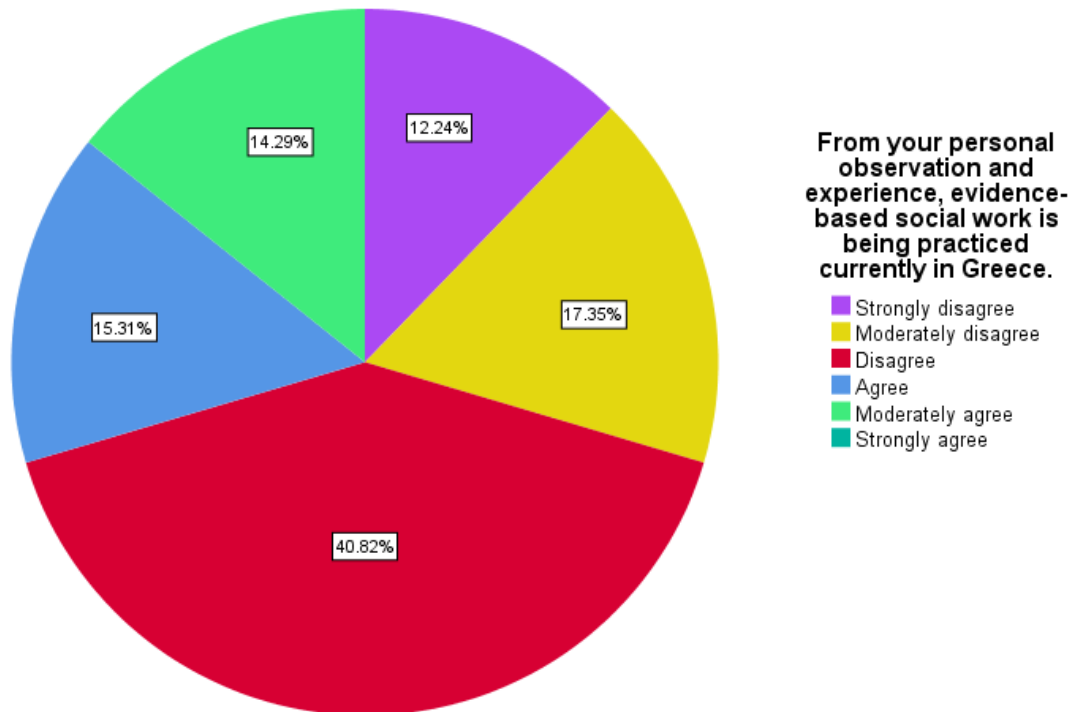
Moreover, the majority of the students, who participated in the research, found it difficult to practice EBP as social work students in the last semester (41.84%) and agree that it takes too much time (42.71%). The percentages of the students that believe that it was moderately easy and moderately difficult to practice the EBP was 18.37% for both of the opinions, while the percentage of the students that moderately agreed that EBP takes too much time in almost double (28.13%) from the percentage of those who disagreed with the statement (13.54%).

However, in total, 86.46% of the participants are in favor of integrating the EBP in the undergraduate social work curriculum (54.17% agree, 20.83% moderately agree, 11.46% strongly agree). The percentages of students that do not believe that EBP should be an integral part of the curriculum are considerably lower, with 9.38% who stated that they disagree and 4.17% who moderately disagree. No student strongly disagrees with the integration of EBP in the social work curriculum.

Finally, as a general conclusion, 40.82% of the students from their personal observation disagreed that EBP is currently being practiced in Greece. Another 17.35% and 12.24% moderately disagree and strongly disagree accordingly with the same statement. On the other hand, some of the participants (15.31%) agree that EBP is currently being practiced in Greece or moderately agree with that (14.29%). All in all, none of the students strongly agreed with the statement.

Figure 4. EBP in Greece

From your personal observation and experience, evidence-based social work is being practiced currently in Greece.



Hypotheses testing

This section will address the research hypotheses presented above.

1. Are respondents with higher levels of EBP knowledge more likely to utilize it in the future?

To answer this question, Pearson's correlation test was used. A moderate positive correlation, which was statistically significant was found ($r = 0.404$, $p - \text{value} = 0.000 < 0.001$). Therefore, the hypothesis that the respondents with higher levels of EBP knowledge are more likely to utilize the EBP in the future was confirmed.

2. Are respondents with more positive attitudes towards the EBP likely to utilize it in the future?

In order to answer this research question, correlation test was used. A moderate positive correlation, which was statistically significant was found once more ($r = 0.368$, $p - \text{value} = 0.000 < 0.001$). Therefore, the hypothesis that the respondents with a more positive attitude towards the EBP are more likely to use EBP in the future is confirmed.

3. Will there be a difference in the knowledge, attitudes and use of the EBP among the students who will choose to conduct a Dissertation from those who will not?

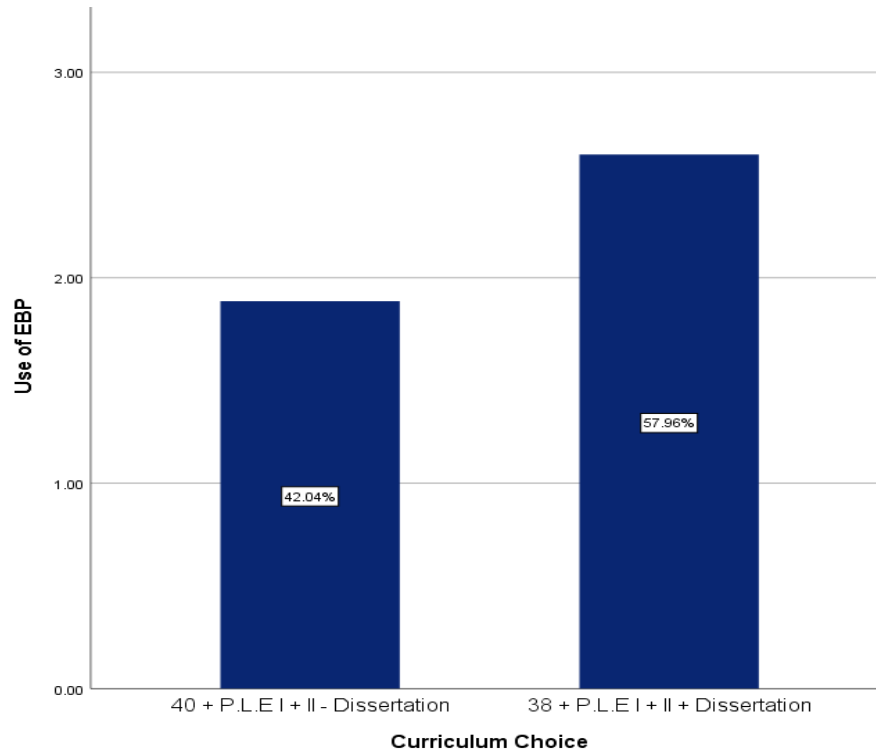
The T-TEST test for independent samples was used to answer this question.

Concerning the knowledge variable, the results indicated that there is no statistically significant relation among the students, who will choose to conduct a Dissertation and those, who will not [$t(95) = -0,590$, $p = 0,556$].

Similarly, the attitudes of the students were not proven to be significantly affected by the choice of conducting a Dissertation or not [$t(96) = 0,632$, $p = 0,529$].

However, it was revealed that there is a statistically significant difference in the use of the EBP among the students, depending on the choice or not of conducting a Dissertation [$t(81) = -3.402$, $p = 0,001$]. More specifically, as it can be seen by the figure below, the students, who chose to conduct a Dissertation, make greater use of the EBP process.

Figure 5. Mean of EBP Use by Curriculum



4. Will there be a difference in the knowledge, attitudes and use of the EBP among the students, depending on the legal status and the domain of the Organization, where they conducted their P.L.E.I and of the Organization, where they conducted their P.L.E.II?

The ANOVA test was used to answer the fourth research question.

The results revealed that there is no statistical significant difference in the knowledge [F (2) = 0,684, p = 0,507], attitudes [F (2) = 0,169, p = 0,845] and use [F (2) = 0,079, p = 0,924] among the students, depending on the Legal Status of the Organization, where they conducted their P.L.E.I.

Similarly, for the P.L.E.I, the difference in the knowledge [F (2) = 0,465, p = 0,630], attitudes [F (2) = 0,866, p = 0,424] and use [F (2) = 0,180, p = 0,836] was also found to be no statistically significant, depending on the Domain of the Organization.

Concerning the P.L.E.II, the results were not different. A statistically significant difference was not found neither depending on the Legal Status of the Organizations, nor depending on their Domain. More specifically, depending on the Legal Status the knowledge was found to be [F (8) = 0,646, p = 0,737], the attitudes [F (8) = 0,997, p = 0,444] and the use [F (8) = 0,273, p = 0,973].

Finally, depending on the Domain of the Organizations the knowledge was found to be [F (8) = 0,760, p = 0,639], the attitudes [F (8) = 0,550, p = 0,815] and the use [F (8) = 0,681, p = 0,706].

In an effort explore further and in depth the relationship between the use of the EBP and the Domain of the Organizations for the two internships and detect possible differences between them, descriptive statistics of cross tabulation were applied. As it can be seen from the bar charts below, the highest mean score of the EBP use in all the domains of both internships was 3.67 out of 5.

More specifically, in the case of the P.L.E.I, the domains with higher levels of the EBP use (> 3) were detected to be the domain of Addiction (25%) and the domains of Health (20%) and Delinquency (20%). What is more, concerning the P.L.E.II, the domains of Education (33,3%), Addiction (20%) and Family-Child Protection (20%) had the highest percentages of EBP use compared to the rest.

Figure 6. Mean of EBP Use by Domain for P.L.E.I

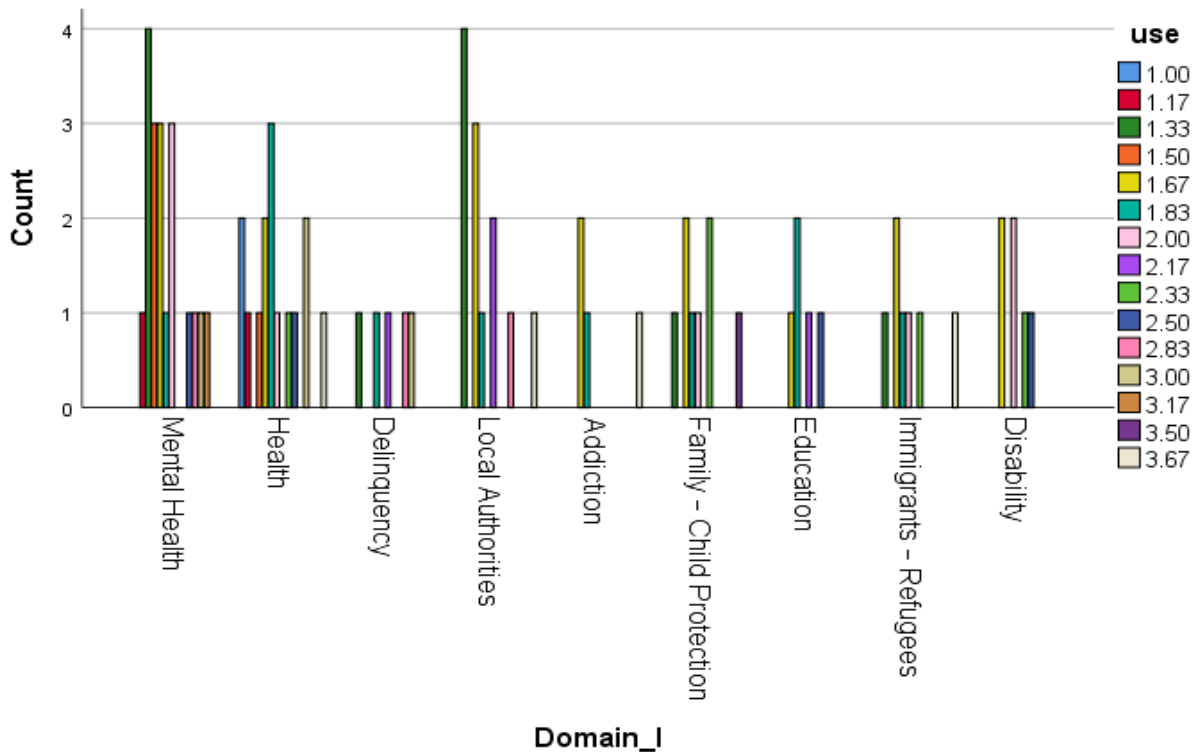
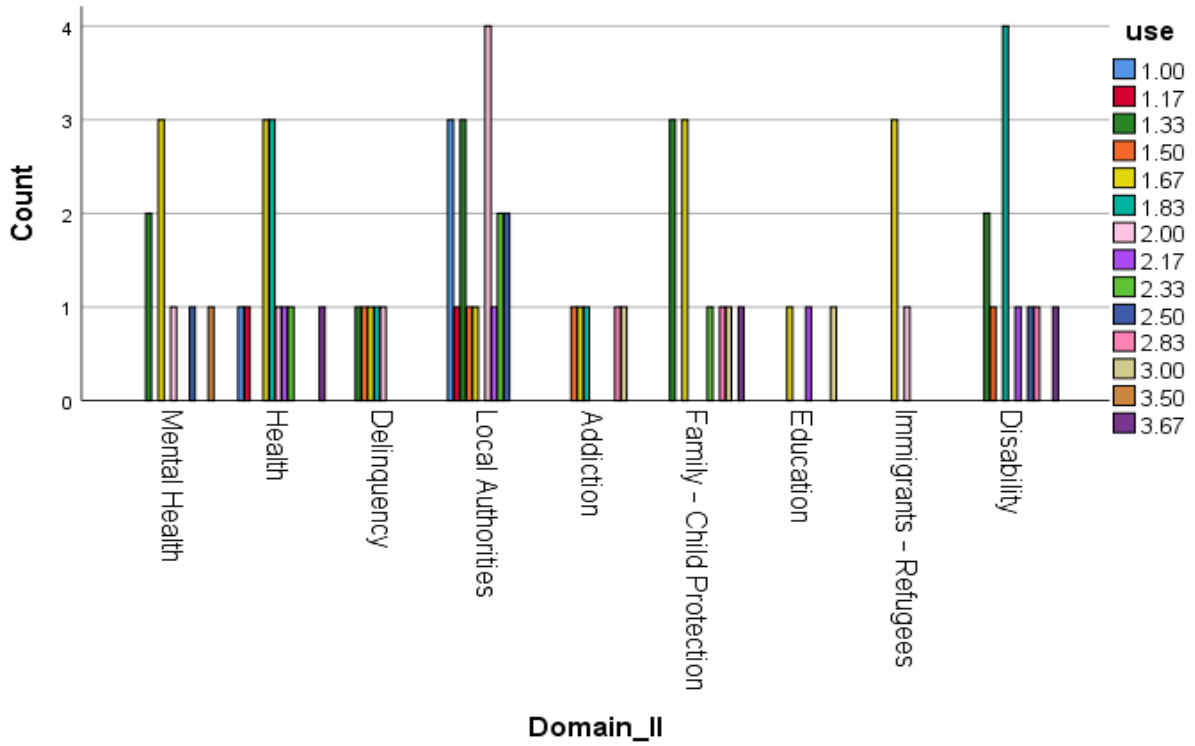


Figure 7. Mean of EBP Use by by Domain for P.L.E.II



Discussion and Summary of the Findings

In the above survey, 98 fourth year students participated. Most of the participants were women aged between 22 and 25 years and the Department of Social Work was on average their first choice. The survey also revealed that most participants will receive their degree based on the new program with 40 courses, P.L.E.I, P.L.E.II, but without conducting a Dissertation.

To continue, the majority of the students in this research stated that the Organization that they carried out their P.L.E.I was a Legal Entity of Public Law and was in the field of mental health. Regarding the P.L.E.II, most students stated that the Organization they chose was once more a Legal Entity of Public Law and was in the field of Local Authorities.

Furthermore, the survey revealed that most students claimed to attend lectures every day, and that they owe an average of 6 courses in the current semester.

The results of this descriptive study, concerning the self-perceived knowledge, show that students fully agree that effective searching skills/easy access to bibliographic databases and evidence sources are essential to practicing EBP, moderately agree that they have a clear understanding of what EBP is and agree that EBP requires the use of critical appraisal skills to ensure the quality of all the research papers retrieved. Moreover, the percentage of students that moderately agrees and agrees that the EBP process requires the appropriate identification and formulation of answerable questions, was found to be the same. The above mentioned outcomes can be considered as surprising, since the EBP process is not an explicitly part of the university's revised curriculum, although the acquisition of knowledge and skills to conduct research and abilities to assess the professional practice, as well as to the proper exploitation of the research results, are emphasized in it. However, the students moderately disagreed that research evidence is generally a more reliable criterion for the decision making than the personal or the supervisors' and other colleagues' beliefs and experience. This finding reflects a resistance to depart from the authority-based practice, which is guiding the field of social work for several decades, and insist on basing their interventions on intuition or the guidance, experiences and suggestions of authority figures, such as colleagues and supervisors (Mathiesen & Hohman, 2013).

Regarding the self-reported attitudes, most of the students disagree that EBP ignores the “art” of social work, that there is no reason for them to personally adopt it because it is just a “fad” (or “fashion”) that will pass with time, that it is “cook-book” social work that disregards professional experience, that social workers, in general, should not practice it because social work is about people and service users, not statistics, and that previous work experience is more important than research findings in choosing the best intervention available for a service user. What is more, the majority of the participants strongly disagrees with the statement that if evidence-based social work is valid, then anyone can see service users and do what social workers do. These findings are aligned with the findings of several studies about the implementation of EBP, who highlight the importance of the positive attitudes in the future uptake of the process (van der Zwet et al., 2017). Finally, students have a moderate amount of confidence in their decision-making skills and they agree on the advantages of practicing evidence-based social work. However, they disagree that it is easy to find the evidence, in order to practice it. Limited access to evidence has been identified to be one of the most important barriers to implementing EBP by numerous studies, such as Bellamy, Bledsoe, & Traube's (2006), Bledsoe-Mansori's et al. (2013), Gray, Joy, Plath, & Webb's (2013, 2015) and Morago's (2010) (Teater & Chonody, 2018).

The results, concerning the self-reported use of EBP, also indicated that students have access to research data in general every month. They access these data on the Internet and/or from a textbook. However, they never have access to research data from original research papers, from the Campbell Collaboration, the Cochrane, the Medline, or any other database. Disseminating new knowledge and evidence has also been one of the obstacles to implementing EBP. The creation of the above mentioned databases reflects an effort to provide social scientists with Internet libraries that collect a great amount of research findings summaries and are easy to access and use (Edmond et al., 2006). The fact that the participants of the present study stated that they never access those databases could be explained by them not knowing their existence or them not really knowing how to use them. Furthermore, students stated that they spend on average 33 minutes daily to find or search for evidence, that they practice EBP on average each month, but do not consider themselves as practitioners of EBP. The most common reason why students do not practice EBP was detected to be that they do not know how. The latter outcome comes in contrast with the outcome of the knowledge scale, which revealed that the students have an adequate level of knowledge, concerning the EBP process. A possible explanation might be given by the conclusion of numerous scientists that besides the “simplicity” of the EBP process seems to contain, the actual implementation in the practice setting is much more difficult and complex (Grady, 2010). Thus, the participants might indeed be aware of what EBP is, but they are still not capable of actively adopting it in their practice possibly because they do not receive the proper training and guidance. Worth mentioning is also the fact that the students, who reported that they do not use the EBP process because their consultants and professors do not, they were numerically almost the same as those who disagreed with that statement. This finding adds to the previously mentioned conclusion that there is a resistance to depart from the authority-based practice and can also explain part of the reason why the students consider that they do not know how to use the EBP. What is more, it reflects that the EBP has not found a particular deepening in the university or in the organizational culture.

With regard to future use of EBP, the research shows that the majority of the students believe that EBP will be very useful in their future practice as social workers and they are very willing to practice it. Also, most students agree that EBP is the future of social work and will become the standard of care. These results demonstrate that students recognize and value EBP and they would be welcoming to a more systematic training of the process and are aligned with other studies that found positive changes in response to the introduction of EBP (Mathiesen, 2016). Furthermore, they also stated that if they were going to use EBP, they would prefer to be given the evidence either via the library, or a desktop computer in the care environment, rather than via a desktop computer at home, or via a mobile, handheld computer.

To continue, the survey found that, according to the opinion of the majority of the students, the current best evidence about the particular problem at hand is moderately discussed during the university lectures and the role of current best evidence is sometimes raised during these lectures. These findings indicate that the students are not being adequately exposed to the current research evidence and enhancing their familiarity with them should be a priority in the future. Several studies demonstrate that EBP is often not included in the social work training. One of them is the national survey on social work programs, along with psychology and psychiatry training programs, conducted by Weissman et al. (2006), revealed that social work academics were the ones to offer the least training in research based interventions (Drisko & Grady, 2015). Also, despite the fact that most participants found it difficult to practice EBP as social work students during the last semester, they perceived themselves as moderately prepared

for their internships. What is more, they also moderately agree that EBP takes too much time, but it should be an integral part of the undergraduate curriculum of social work. Finally, according to their personal observation and experience, the students disagreed that EBP is currently being implemented in Greece, something that can be easily proven by the enormous lack of references and studies about EBP in the country.

To conclude, the research questions revealed that the respondents with higher levels of EBP knowledge are more likely to use EBP in the future. Moreover, the respondents with more positive attitudes towards EBP are, also, more likely to use EBP in the future. Those outcomes are aligned with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (Bandura, 1986, 1997, 1999, 2012) that was presented in the theoretical framework.

Additionally, it was found that there was not a statistically significant difference in the knowledge and attitudes towards the EBP among the students, who will choose to conduct a dissertation and those, who will not. However, a statistically significant difference was found in the use of the EBP in relation with the conduction or not of a Dissertation. More specifically, students, who chose to receive their degrees based on the new curriculum with 38 courses, P.L.E.I, P.L.E. II and Dissertation, make greater use of the EBP. This result can be explained by the fact that a Dissertation, whether bibliographic or research, consists an invaluable scientific and systematic approach and analysis of an issue, whose aim is to improve the students' academic and professional qualifications through getting familiar with bibliographical or empirical research, as well as digital and print databases, developing analytical and critical thinking and using scientific writing skills (Department of Social Work, 2018). Consequently, when the students chose to conduct a Dissertation, they inevitably devote more time on finding, evaluating and using research evidence, something that can potentially enhance their competences and motivation in doing the same in their future practice.

Finally, there was no statistically significant difference in the knowledge, attitudes and use of EBP among the students, depending on the legal status and the domain of the Organizations, where they conducted their Practical Laboratory Exercises. Consequently, the hypothesized environmental factors of legal status and domain of the Organizations do not belong in the factors that significantly affect the outcome. However, worth mentioning is the fact that the levels of the EBP use by the students was considerably low in all the domains of the Organizations in both internships. That finding can be used to support the previous mentioned conclusion that the organizational culture in the Greek social work field have not fully appreciated or adopted the EBP.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

The present study was the first one to uncover knowledge concerning the concept of EBP in the Greek context. The main purpose was to describe the self-reported knowledge, attitudes and use of the EBP by the fourth year undergraduate social work students at the University of West Attica (UNIWA) and explore the possible relationships between them, as well as the students' intention to use the EBP in the future. As part of the motivation for this research was my desire to better understand if and how this new paradigm shift has influenced the country, what is the current role of evidence in the social work practice and education and how willing the future professionals of the country are to integrate research evidence in their practice.

The data obtained through this quantitative research provided invaluable information about a topic that had not been studied so far. More specifically, it was revealed that the social work students that participated in the study have a good level of knowledge concerning the EBP process, although persistence in the authority-based practice of social work is still apparent. Additionally, it was found that the attitudes towards the EBP are also positive, besides the fact that students find it difficult to find the evidence required to practice it. This difficulty was reflected also in the fact that students never have access to research data from original research papers, from the Campbell Collaboration, the Cochrane, the Medline, or any other database. All in all, the high levels of EBP knowledge and the positive attitudes towards the process were positively correlated with the students' intention to use it in the future.

Moreover, the participants stated that they do not consider themselves as practitioners of the EBP, but they believe that its usefulness for their future practice as social workers and they are very willing to practice it. The most common reason why they do not currently practice it was detected to be that they do not know how. What is more, it was revealed that evidence is not discussed very often during the university lectures, although students believe that EBP should be an integral part of the undergraduate curriculum of social work. Furthermore, the knowledge, attitudes and use of EBP among students did not seem to be affected by the legal status and domain of the Organizations, where they complete their Practical Laboratory Exercises, or their choice to conduct or not a dissertation. Finally, without surprise came the conclusion that according to the participants EBP is not currently being implemented in Greece.

The above mentioned findings can be implicated primarily in the field of education, but also in the policy-making and the general practice of social work. To begin with, integrating EBP in the social work curriculum, not as a distinct course, but as an integrated part of all the university courses throughout the four years of training, could help the students understand the process as a general approach of decision-making and problem-solving and potentially benefit them in many ways. For instance, students will become more competent in critically evaluating research evidence and applying structured interventions, based on them, as well as the service users' participation. A proposed way that this could happen is for the social work professors to give assignments to the students asking them to find the relevant evidence for every new presented course material during the university lectures (Rubin, 2007). In this way, the time devoted to the discussion of the current best evidence will be significantly increased and students will learn to rely more on their skills than the authority figures' directions.

Moreover, it is important that students become familiar with information literacy (Walker et al., 2007). Training in information acquisition methods, such as computerized bibliographic database searching, will result in greater access to and use of research evidence (Rubin, 2007).

This will potentially boost the confidence of the students in both incorporating evidence in their practice and conducting research on their own before and after graduation and orient them towards adopting a transparent and ethical way of practicing social work.

What is more, EBP should also be enhanced in relation with the Practical Laboratory Exercises. Involving the field instructors in the EBP training of the students is a key component of them understanding the connection of the evidence in the direct practice and change the organizational culture of the field. This could become feasible by motivating the field instructors to be trained, adopt and adequately support the use of EBP in the Organizations, providing in this way a suitable learning environment for the future professionals. Sharing resources, bibliographic databases and access to material about EBP between academics and trainers would considerably enhance their motivation to collaborate having in mind the best interest of the students (Rubin, 2007).

Finally, the advantages of the EBP training in the macro level should not be overlooked. On the contrary, social policy should be more clearly connected with the university courses, as well as with the decision-making processes. According to Walker et al. (2007), “the steps of EBP are consistent with the steps of most policy analysis schemas” (p.371). For that reason, a greater emphasis and a possible readjustment of the social policy course in relation to the rest of the curriculum and the EBP is suggested.

It is also important to mention that a number of challenges and limitations were encountered by the researcher during the process of conducting this study. To begin with, gaining access to the desired target group was one of the challenges encountered at the first stage of the research. Taking into consideration that the time for completing the dissertation was particularly limited and the bureaucratic procedures plenty, the researcher had to adapt to the circumstances and be very careful and precise with the documents required and the dates of the data collection, since there was no space for any mistake. Moreover, due to the revision of the university’s curriculum that took place last year, only a few students participated in the compulsory laboratory courses, in which the researcher relied on in order to find the students and collect the necessary number of questionnaires. As a result, time was an obstacle that had to be overcome by the researcher, since her presence was required in the campus almost all day for the total of the two weeks of the data collection, when she was entering all the theoretical courses, some of which did not have a preset room and hour of teaching, trying to detect the fourth year students. What is more, the cost for travelling in Greece and for printing approximately 150 questionnaires was quite high. However, it should be mentioned that the support received by the majority of the professors in the Department of Social Work was invaluable.

To continue, getting permission to use a pre-existing questionnaire, which would be already tested for its validity and reliability was proven to be more difficult than expected. The researcher contacted many authors in order to ask access and permission to use their developed questionnaires, with a focus on questionnaires that concern social work professionals, particularly in the domain of child protection. However, permission was granted only for the knowledge, attitudes and behavior (KAB) questionnaire for EBP from Johnston and colleagues (2003). Consequently, the research plan focused on students and the questionnaire had to be adapted from the medical to the social work field and be translated in Greek. In this case, time was again a challenge, since the translation was demanding and the questionnaire had to be pilot tested to avoid any problems during the data collection.

Furthermore, there are limitations due to the nature of the study. The study was conducted only in one out of the four Social Work Departments in Greece and the sample can be

considered as bias, due to the lack of random selection. What is more, the answers of the students were assumed to be valid and accurate, since direct observation in the setting was not possible. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized. The present study was the first attempt to apply the specific KAB questionnaire for EBP in the Greek context, so further validity studies are necessary to be conducted in a larger and more diverse sample. Future efforts with longitudinal approach with larger samples in different locations, to explore the knowledge, attitudes and use of the EBP among students, but also with different populations, such as academics and professionals would also significantly contribute to the deeper understanding of EBP in Greece.

All in all, it should be kept in mind that the EBP process, in a broader sense, is not exclusively focused on the evidence. The EBP process should be seen as a way to make sure that the interventions are indeed ethical and effective and make good use of the best available research findings and not be adopted in a mechanistic way disregarding the human factor.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Ethical Approval



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "H. Trivyza", with a stylized flourish below it.

COMISSÃO DE ÉTICA

PARECER 40/2019

Project "Knowledge, Attitudes and Use of Evidence-based Practice by Social Work Students at the University of West Attica"

The project "Knowledge, Attitudes and Use of Evidence-based Practice by Social Work Students at the University of West Attica", submitted by the researcher Iliana Trivyza, was appreciated on the 22nd May 2019 by the members of the Ethics Committee.

The information provided, in accordance with the Ethical Approval Submission Form in use at ISCTE-IUL, satisfies the ethical requirements applicable to this type of research projects, including:

- a) The research problem and its scientific relevance were raised by an extended literature review, focused in the Greek context, that has revealed a lack of knowledge concerning the situation and the level of support of Evidence-based Practice (EBP) within the field of social work, while at the same time, there is a general view that the majority of social workers continue to rely more on an intuitive way of thinking when making decision rather than on research and actual evidence;
- b) The present research is expected to reveal potential shortcomings concerning the teaching and application of the evidence-based practice by the social work students. This could lead in a readjustment of the social work curriculum or a potential improvement of the way EBP is taught in the university, to improve the knowledge of, attitudes towards, and application of it by the future professionals of the country.

In the longer term, this could lead to the production of a greater amount of professional knowledge in the Greek context, which lacks in research, as well as to the significant improvement of the future practice of social work in the country.

The aim of the study is to describe the knowledge, attitudes and use of EBP by the fourth-year undergraduate social work students at the University of West Attica (UNIWA) and explore the possible relationships between them. The study will address the following research question and hypothesis.

"What is the knowledge, attitudes and use of evidence-based practice by the social work students?"

Hypothesis:

1. Those respondents with higher levels of EBP knowledge are more likely to utilize EBP in the future;

2. Those respondents with more positive attitudes about EBP are more likely to utilize EBP in the future;
 3. There will be a difference in the knowledge, attitudes and use of EBP between the students, who will choose to conduct a Dissertation and those, who will not;
 4. There will be a difference in the knowledge, attitudes and use of EBP between the students, depending on the legal status and category of the organization in which they are doing their internship;
- c) A non-experimental cross-sectional survey will be used to describe the knowledge, attitudes and application of EBP by fourth-year social work students and to explore possible relationships between them.

The sampling method will be purposive, homogenous sampling, since the target group consists of candidates with specific characteristics.

The exact size of the study population are approximately 120 participants that will be accessible after the approval of the research from the General Assembly of the Department of Social Work. The expected age of the participants is between 21 and 30 years old.

Inclusion criteria are the completion of the third year of social work training at the UNIWA and the completion of the first Practical Laboratory Exercise (PLE I). Students, who have completed one or more of the previous training years in other universities and schools, are excluded from the study, because of the probability of having different levels of exposure to teaching on EBP;

- d) The researcher will approach the participants after the university lectures in collaboration with the professors of the social work department of the University of West Attica. Participants will be informed, orally and in text that the participation is voluntary and free to withdraw from the study at any time, even after signing the statement, without giving any explanation or reason for their withdrawal, without affecting the level of service to them (i.e. grades) and with the obligation to destroy the data. A written informed consent will be obtained by those who agree to participate.

Moreover, it will be asked to the students to separate the signed consent from the questionnaire and to not write their name or any other personal information on it, to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. All questionnaires will be hand-distributed, completed individually and returned in an unmarked sealed envelope on the same day, which will be collected in person by the researcher;

- e) Participants will be asked to complete a self-completion face to face questionnaire that will be administrated by the researcher in the campus and will be collected back immediately after completion. The duration for completing the questionnaire is estimated to be around 15-20 minutes. Data collection was expected to take place in the

campus between 18-29/03/19 and permission has already been obtained by the General Assembly of the Department of Social Work.

The questionnaire that will be used to collect the data of the present survey will be an adjusted version of the reliable and valid knowledge, attitudes and behavior (KAB) questionnaire of Johnston and colleagues (2003). Permission was obtained from the authors to use, translate to Greek and slightly modify the wording of some items on the instrument to better fit to social work students and not medical students;

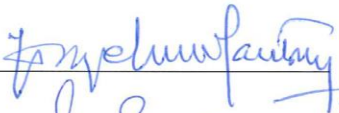
- f) The collected data will not be discussed with people without a professional concern, will be protected with passwords and will be kept secured until the end of the study and for a period of seven months. After the end of this period, the records will be discarded.

For analyzing the collected data and according to the methodology, descriptive statistics, bivariate statistics and numeral outcome prediction (linear regression) will be used. Data will be analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 25, a statistical software package for the social sciences;


- d) The text of the informed consent contains a brief explanation of the objectives and procedures of the investigation, the voluntary nature of the study, the possibility of non-response to any question and free withdrawal at any time, the guarantee of anonymity of the participants and the confidentiality of the data collected, as well as the identification and contact of the principal investigator;
- e) There are no significant expected risks associated with the participation in this study;
- f) The measures related to the debriefing and feedback, as well as the declaration of responsibility and ethical conduct of the researcher, obey the provisions contained in the Code of Ethical Conduct in Research - ISCTE-IUL.

In short, ensuring the volunteering of participation, the privacy and anonymity of the participants, and the confidentiality of the information collected, the project received the favorable opinion and approval of the Commission.

O Presidente da Comissão, *Prof. Doutor Jorge Costa Santos*



A Vogal, *Prof.ª Doutora Sónia Bernardes*



O Vogal, *Prof. Doutor Vítor Basto Fernandes*



Appendix II: Changes in the KAB-EBP Questionnaire

Change made to the Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviors Questionnaire	
Wording in KABQ	Changes made
Questions 1, 3-5, definition, 18, 20-24, 26, 28, 29, 32 “Evidence-based medicine”	“Evidence-based medicine” is replaced by “Evidence-based practice”
Questions 14, 25, 27, 31, 33-42 “Evidence-based medicine”	“Evidence-based medicine” is replaced by “Evidence-based social work”
Question 2 “Research using clinical trials is generally more reliable than research using the observational method.”	“Research using clinical trials is generally more reliable than research using the observational method.” is replaced by “Research evidence is generally a more reliable criterion for the decision making than the personal or the supervisors' and other colleagues' beliefs and experience.”
6-11 “Medical evidence”	“Medical evidence” is replaced by “Research evidence”
Question 12-20-21 “Compared to one year ago”	Removed
Question 7, 13 ii) “(excluding MEDLINE and Cochrane Reviews)”	Removed
Question 10 “Cochrane”	“Cochrane” is replaced by “Cambell”
Question 11 “from secondary sources such as ACP Journal Club, the journal Evidence-Based Medicine, POEMs (Patient-oriented evidence that matters) or CATs (Critically appraised topics)”	“from secondary sources such as ACP Journal Club, the journal Evidence-Based Medicine, POEMs (Patient-oriented evidence that matters) or CATs (Critically appraised topics)” is replaced by “from the Cochrane database, the Medline database or some other database”
Question 13 i) “patient”, “clerked”, “illness”	“patient” is replaced by “service user”, “clerked” is replaced by “cared for”, “illness” is replaced by “situation”
Question 13 ii) “secondary sources such as ACP Journal Club, the journal Evidence-Based Medicine, POEMs (Patient-oriented evidence that matters) or CATs (Critically appraised topics)”	“secondary sources such as ACP Journal Club, the journal Evidence-Based Medicine, POEMs (Patient-oriented evidence that matters) or CATs (Critically appraised topics)” is replaced by “other databases such as <i>Medline, Cochrane etc.</i> ”
Question 13 ii) “From InfoRetriever on your iPAQ”	Removed

Question 13 iii) “disease/condition”	“disease/condition” is replaced by “situation”
Question 13 iv) “morbidity or mortality”	Removed
Question 14 “patients”, “clerked”	“patients” is replaced by “service-users”, “clerked” is replaced by “worked with”
Question 15 “teaching rounds or bedside teaching”	“teaching rounds or bedside teaching” is replaced by “university lectures”
Question 16 “rounds/sessions”	“rounds/sessions” is replaced by “lectures”
Question 17 “clinical”	Removed
Question 18 “medical student”	“medical student” is replaced by “social work student”
Question 19 “How prepared have you been”, “clinical teaching sessions in the last month”	“How prepared have you been” is replaced by “How prepared do you think you were”, “clinical teaching sessions in the last month” is replaced by “your internship in the semester”
Question 20,21 “doctor”	“doctor” is replaced by “social worker”
Question 22, 24, 28 “medicine”	“medicine” is replaced by “social work”
Question 26, 32 “medical”	“medical” is replaced by “social work”
Question 27, 29 “patients”, “doctors”	“patients”, “doctors” is replaced by “service users”, “social workers”
Question 30 “treatment”, “patient”	“treatment” is replaced by “intervention”, “patient” is replaced by “service user”
Question 33 “Hong Kong”	“Hong Kong” is replaced by “Greece”

Appendix III: KAB-EBP Questionnaire in English

INFORMED CONSENT

Dear participant,

This research is being conducted under the supervision of the Assistant Professors of the University Institute of Lisbon (ISCTE-IUL) Maria João Pena and Ana Margarida Barroso, within the framework of the European Master's Program in Social Work with Families and Children. Its purpose is to investigate the knowledge, attitudes and use of Evidence-Based Practice by the Social Work Students in the University of West Attica (UNIWA).

The study is carried out by Iliana Trivyza (hliana.fox@hotmail.com), who can be contacted in case of any questions or should you wish to share comments.

Your participation, which is highly valued, consists of completing the following questionnaire and could take around 15-20 minutes. There are no expected significant risks associated to participation in the study. Although you may not benefit directly from your participation in the study, your answers will contribute to improvement of the way Evidence-based Practice is taught in the University and in the long term to the production of a greater amount of professional knowledge in the Greek context, which lacks in research, as well as to the significant development of the future practice of social work in the country.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary: you can choose to participate or not to participate. If you choose to participate, you can stop your participation at any time, even after signing this statement, without having to provide any justification, without affecting the level of service to me and with the obligation to destroy the data.

In addition to being voluntary, your participation is also **anonymous** and **confidential**. The data are intended merely for statistical processing and no answer will be analysed or reported individually. The results of the research can be used in future in conferences and/or publications in scientific journals. The survey data will not be shared with anyone other than the researcher and you will never be asked to identify yourself at any time during the study.

In view of this information, please indicate if you accept participating in the study:

I ACCEPT

I DO NOT ACCEPT

Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Demographics:

Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Age: <input type="checkbox"/> 18-21 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 22-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 35+ <input type="checkbox"/> 26-29
Year of studies: _____
Is the department you are studying among the ones you chose? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it was the _____ choice (i.e.. 1 st , 2 nd ...choice) <input type="checkbox"/> No, I had not chosen the department I am studying
I will receive my degree based on: <input type="checkbox"/> the new curriculum (40 courses + P.L.E.. I + P.L.E. II – without Dissertation) <input type="checkbox"/> the new curriculum (38 courses + P.L.E. I + P.L.E. II + Dissertation)
The Organization I completed the Practical Laboratory Exercise I (P.L.E.I) was: <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Entity of Public Law <input type="checkbox"/> Private Law Legal Entity of a profit-making nature <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit legal entity of Private Law
The Organization I am doing the Practical Laboratory Exercise II (P.L.E.II) was: <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Entity of Public Law <input type="checkbox"/> Private Law Legal Entity of a profit-making nature <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit legal entity of Private Law
The Organization I completed the Practical Laboratory Exercise I (P.L.E.I) was in the domain of: <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/> Family – Child Protection <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Social Protection <input type="checkbox"/> Delinquency <input type="checkbox"/> Immigrants – Refugees <input type="checkbox"/> Local Authorities <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Addiction <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
The Organization I am doing the Practical Laboratory Exercise II (P.L.E.II) is in the domain of: <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/> Family – Child Protection <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Social Protection <input type="checkbox"/> Delinquency <input type="checkbox"/> Immigrants – Refugees <input type="checkbox"/> Local Authorities <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Addiction <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
I attend the lectures regularly. <input type="checkbox"/> Every day <input type="checkbox"/> Every other day <input type="checkbox"/> Every week <input type="checkbox"/> Every month <input type="checkbox"/> Never
Number of courses you owe until the current semester : _____

This is a survey designed to evaluate various aspects of Evidence-based Social Work Practice. Please answer truthfully (i.e. Do not tell us what you THINK we want to hear, rather tell us what YOU really believe) and complete all the questions.

All responses will be treated in strict confidence and seen only by the independent researcher. All individual identities will be masked and the analysis of the data will be blinded. Only the aggregate results will be published.

Thank you for your participation.

Please circle the most appropriate response:

Please indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements.						
	Strongly Agree	Mod-erately Agree	Agree	Disagree	Mod-erately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I have a clear understanding of what evidence-based practice is.	6	5	4	3	2	1
2. Research evidence is generally a more reliable criterion for the decision making than the personal or the supervisors' and other colleagues' beliefs and experience.	6	5	4	3	2	1
3. Evidence-based practice requires the use of critical appraisal skills to ensure the quality of all the research papers retrieved.	6	5	4	3	2	1
4. Effective searching skills/easy access to bibliographic databases and evidence sources are essential to practicing evidence-based practice.	6	5	4	3	2	1
5. The evidence-based practice process requires the appropriate identification and formulation of answerable questions.	6	5	4	3	2	1

For the purposes of the rest of this questionnaire, we define Evidence-Based Practice as follows:

“EBP is a process for making practice decisions in which practitioners integrate the best research evidence available with their professional expertise and with client attributes, values, preferences and circumstances.” (Rubin, 2008)

	Every day	Every other day	Every week	Every month	Never	Other (please specify)
6. How frequently do you access research evidence <i>in general</i> ?	5	4	3	2	1	___
7. How frequently do you access research evidence <i>on the internet</i> ?	5	4	3	2	1	___
8. How frequently do you access research evidence <i>from a textbook</i> ?	5	4	3	2	1	___
9. How frequently do you access research evidence <i>from original research papers</i> ?	5	4	3	2	1	___
10. How frequently do you access research evidence <i>from the Campbell database</i> ?	5	4	3	2	1	___
11. How frequently do you access research evidence <i>from the Cochrane database, the Medline database or some other database</i> ?	5	4	3	2	1	___
12. How much time do you now spend every day finding or looking up evidence (or content material)? [This does <u>NOT</u> include your study time - <u>ONLY</u> the time it takes you to retrieve the material]						___ mins

13. This is a 4-part question.

i) ***FOR THE MOST RECENT SERVICE USER*** you cared for, how much time did you spend looking up the evidence (or content material) relating to his/her situation? [This does NOT include your study time -- ONLY the time it took you to retrieve the material]
 _____mins

ii) Where (what specific sources) did you find this evidence? (you can choose more than one option)

- On the internet (*excluding Campbell Collaboration, Medline και Cochrane databases*)
- From a textbook
- From original research papers
- From the *Campbell Collaboration*
- From other databases such as *Medline, Cochrane etc.*

iii) How much, in terms of percentage, did the evidence contribute to your understanding of the situation?

> 80%	61-80%	41-60%	21-40%	0-20%
5	4	3	2	1

iv) How much, in terms of percentage, did the evidence relate to service user oriented outcomes (i.e. quality of life etc.)?

> 80%	61-80%	41-60%	21-40%	0-20%
5	4	3	2	1

14.	In your opinion and judgment, how much has the practice of evidence-based social work, on average, affected the management or outcome of the service users you have worked with?					
	Completely	A lot	Moderately	Somewhat	A little	Not at all
	6	5	4	3	2	1
15.	During the university lectures, how frequently is current best evidence about the particular problem at hand discussed?					
	Completely	A lot	Moderately	Somewhat	A little	Not at all
	6	5	4	3	2	1
16.	How frequently have you raised the role of current best evidence at these lectures?					
	All the time	Often	Sometimes	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
	6	5	4	3	2	1
17.	How much confidence do you have in your decision-making?					
	A lot	A moderate amount	Some	A little	None at all	
	5	4	3	2	1	
18.	How easy or difficult has it been for you to practice evidence-based practice as a social work student in the last semester?					
	Very easy	Moderately easy	Easy	Difficult	Moderately difficult	Very difficult
19.	How prepared do you think you were for your internship in the semester?					
	Well prepared	Moderately prepared	Somewhat prepared	Somewhat unprepared	Moderately unprepared	Completely unprepared
	6	5	4	3	2	1
20.	How useful do you believe evidence-based practice will be in your future practice as a social worker?					
	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Useful	Not useful	Somewhat useless	Completely useless
	6	5	4	3	2	1

21. How willing are you to practice evidence-based practice as a social worker in the future?					
Very willing	Somewhat willing	Willing	Not willing	Somewhat unwilling	Completely unwilling
6	5	4	3	2	1

Please indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Mod-erately Agree	Agree	Disag-ree	Mod-erately Disag-ree	Stron-gly Disag-ree
22. Evidence-based practice is “cook-book” social work that disregards professional experience.	6	5	4	3	2	1
23. There is no reason for me personally to adopt evidence-based practice because it is just a “fad” (or “fashion”) that will pass with time.	6	5	4	3	2	1
24. Evidence-based practice is the future of social work and will become the standard of care.	6	5	4	3	2	1
25. It is easy to find the evidence in order to practice evidence-based social work.	6	5	4	3	2	1
26. Evidence-based practice takes too much time for busy social work students.	6	5	4	3	2	1
27. If evidence-based social work is valid, then anyone can see service users and do what social workers do.	6	5	4	3	2	1
28. Evidence-based practice ignores the “art” of social work.	6	5	4	3	2	1
29. Social workers, in general, should not practice evidence-based practice because social work is about people and service users, not statistics.	6	5	4	3	2	1
30. Previous work experience is more important than research findings in choosing the best intervention available for a service user.	6	5	4	3	2	1
31. You personally appreciate the advantages of practicing evidence-based social work.	6	5	4	3	2	1

32.	Evidence-based practice should be an integral part of the undergraduate social work curriculum.	6	5	4	3	2	1
33.	From your personal observation and experience, evidence-based social work is being practiced currently in Greece.	6	5	4	3	2	1

If you were to use evidence-based social work, how would you prefer to be given the evidence (or content material)?											
34.	<input type="checkbox"/> Via the library <input type="checkbox"/> Via a desktop computer at home <input type="checkbox"/> Via a desktop computer in the patient care environment <input type="checkbox"/> Via a mobile, handheld computer										
35.	Overall, how frequently (on average) do you practice evidence-based social work?										
	<table border="0" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td>Every day</td> <td>Every other day</td> <td>Every week</td> <td>Every month</td> <td>Never</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>4</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table>	Every day	Every other day	Every week	Every month	Never	5	4	3	2	1
Every day	Every other day	Every week	Every month	Never							
5	4	3	2	1							
Do you consider yourself a practitioner of evidence-based social work currently?											
36.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Stop Here!) <input type="checkbox"/> No (Proceed with the following questions 37-43)										

		Yes	No
37.	I don't practice evidence-based social work because my consultants and professors don't.	1	2
38.	I don't practice evidence-based social work because I don't know how.	1	2
39.	I don't practice evidence-based social work because I don't believe in it.	1	2
40.	I don't practice evidence-based social work because my colleagues don't	1	2
41.	I don't practice evidence-based social work because I don't have time.	1	2
42.	I don't practice evidence-based social work because of personal procrastination in changing old habits.	1	2
43.	Other reason(s): (please specify) _____		

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.
Used with permission by Johnston et al. (2003).**

Έντυπο Συγκατάθεσης

Αγαπητέ συμμετέχοντα/ αγαπητή συμμετέχουσα,

Η παρούσα έρευνα διενεργείται υπό την εποπτεία των Επίκουρων Καθηγητριών του Πανεπιστημιακού Ινστιτούτου της Λισαβόνας [University Institute of Lisbon (ISCTE-IUL)] Maria João Pena και Ana Margarida Barrosο, στα πλαίσια του Ευρωπαϊκού Μεταπτυχιακού Προγράμματος στην Κοινωνική Εργασία με Οικογένεια και Παιδιά (European Master in Social Work with Families and Children). Σκοπός της είναι η διερεύνηση των γνώσεων, των στάσεων και της χρήσης της Τεκμηριωμένης Πρακτικής (Evidence-based Practice) από τους τεταρτοετείς σπουδαστές Κοινωνικής Εργασίας του Πανεπιστημίου της Δυτικής Αττικής (ΠΑ.Δ.Α.).

Η μελέτη διεξάγεται από την Ηλιάννα Τριβυζά (hliana.fox@hotmail.com), με την οποία μπορείτε να επικοινωνήσετε σε περίπτωση οποιωνδήποτε ερωτήσεων ή εάν θέλετε να μοιραστείτε σχόλια.

Η συμμετοχή σας, η οποία εκτιμάται ιδιαίτερα, συνίσταται στην συμπλήρωση του παρακάτω ερωτηματολογίου και θα διαρκέσει περίπου 15-20 λεπτά. Δεν αναμένεται να υπάρξουν κίνδυνοι που να σχετίζονται με τη συμμετοχή σας στη μελέτη. Παρόλο που μπορεί να μην επωφεληθείτε άμεσα από τη συμμετοχή σας στη μελέτη, οι απαντήσεις σας θα συμβάλλουν στη βελτίωση του τρόπου, με τον οποίο διδάσκεται η Τεκμηριωμένη Πρακτική στο Πανεπιστήμιο Δυτικής Αττικής και μακροπρόθεσμα στην παραγωγή περισσότερων επαγγελματικών γνώσεων στο ελληνικό πλαίσιο, το οποίο στερείται της έρευνας, καθώς και στη σημαντική εξέλιξη της μελλοντικής πρακτικής της κοινωνικής εργασίας στη χώρα.

Η συμμετοχή σε αυτή τη μελέτη είναι αυστηρά εθελοντική: μπορείτε να επιλέξετε εάν θα συμμετάσχετε ή όχι. Εάν επιλέξετε να συμμετάσχετε, μπορείτε να διακόψετε τη συμμετοχή σας ανά πάσα στιγμή, ακόμη και μετά την υπογραφή αυτής της δήλωσης, χωρίς να χρειάζεται να αιτιολογήσετε, χωρίς αυτό να επηρεάσει το επίπεδο εξυπηρέτησης προς εσάς και με την υποχρέωση να καταστραφούν τα δεδομένα.

Εκτός του ότι είναι εθελοντική, η συμμετοχή σας είναι επίσης **ανώνυμη** και **εμπιστευτική**. Τα δεδομένα προορίζονται μόνο για στατιστική επεξεργασία και καμία απάντηση δεν θα αναλυθεί ή θα αναφερθεί μεμονωμένα. Τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας μπορούν να χρησιμοποιηθούν μελλοντικά σε συνέδρια ή/και δημοσιεύσεις σε επιστημονικά περιοδικά. Τα δεδομένα της έρευνας δεν θα μοιραστούν με κανένα άλλο εκτός από την ερευνήτρια και ποτέ δεν θα σας ζητηθεί να αναγνωρίσετε τον εαυτό σας οποιαδήποτε στιγμή κατά τη διάρκεια της μελέτης.

Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη αυτές τις πληροφορίες, παρακαλείσθε να αναφέρετε εάν αποδέχεστε τη συμμετοχή σας στη μελέτη:

ΔΕΧΟΜΑΙ

ΔΕΝ ΔΕΧΟΜΑΙ

Όνομα: _____ Ημερομηνία: _____

Υπογραφή: _____

Δημογραφικά στοιχεία:

Φύλο: <input type="checkbox"/> Άνδρας <input type="checkbox"/> Γυναίκα <input type="checkbox"/> Άλλο
Ηλικία: <input type="checkbox"/> 18-21 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 22-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 35+ <input type="checkbox"/> 26-29
Έτος σπουδών: _____
Η σχολή που φοιτάτε ήταν ανάμεσα σε αυτές που είχατε επιλέξει; <input type="checkbox"/> Ναι, ήταν η _____ Προτίμηση (π.χ. 1 ^η , 2 ^η ...προτίμηση) <input type="checkbox"/> Όχι, δεν είχα επιλέξει την σχολή που φοιτώ
Θα λάβω το πτυχίο μου με βάση: <input type="checkbox"/> το νέο πρόγραμμα σπουδών (40 μαθήματα + Π.Ε.Α. I + Π.Ε.Α. II - χωρίς Πτυχιακή) <input type="checkbox"/> το νέο πρόγραμμα σπουδών (38 μαθήματα + Π.Ε.Α. I + Π.Ε.Α. II + Πτυχιακή)
Η Οργάνωση που πραγματοποίησα την Πρακτική Εργαστηριακή Άσκηση I (Π.Ε.Α.I) ήταν: <input type="checkbox"/> Νομικό Πρόσωπο Δημοσίου Δικαίου (ΝΠΔΔ) <input type="checkbox"/> Νομικό Πρόσωπο Ιδιωτικού Δικαίου (ΝΠΙΔ) κερδοσκοπικού χαρακτήρα <input type="checkbox"/> Νομικό Πρόσωπο Ιδιωτικού Δικαίου (ΝΠΙΔ) μη κερδοσκοπικού χαρακτήρα
Η Οργάνωση που πραγματοποίησα την Πρακτική Εργαστηριακή Άσκηση II (Π.Ε.Α.II) ήταν: <input type="checkbox"/> Νομικό Πρόσωπο Δημοσίου Δικαίου (ΝΠΔΔ) <input type="checkbox"/> Νομικό Πρόσωπο Ιδιωτικού Δικαίου (ΝΠΙΔ) κερδοσκοπικού χαρακτήρα <input type="checkbox"/> Νομικό Πρόσωπο Ιδιωτικού Δικαίου (ΝΠΙΔ) μη κερδοσκοπικού χαρακτήρα
Η Οργάνωση που πραγματοποίησα την Πρακτική Εργαστηριακή Άσκηση I (Π.Ε.Α.I) ήταν στον τομέα: <input type="checkbox"/> της Ψυχικής Υγείας <input type="checkbox"/> της Οικογένειας – Παιδικής Προστασίας <input type="checkbox"/> της Υγείας <input type="checkbox"/> της Εκπαίδευσης <input type="checkbox"/> της Παραβατικότητας και Εγκληματικότητας <input type="checkbox"/> των Μεταναστών – Προσφύγων <input type="checkbox"/> της Κοινωνικής Οργάνωσης και Ανάπτυξης (Ο.Τ.Α.) <input type="checkbox"/> της Αναπηρίας <input type="checkbox"/> των Εξαρτήσεων <input type="checkbox"/> Άλλο _____
Η Οργάνωση που πραγματοποίησα την Πρακτική Εργαστηριακή Άσκηση II (Π.Ε.Α.II) είναι στον τομέα: <input type="checkbox"/> της Ψυχικής Υγείας <input type="checkbox"/> της Οικογένειας – Παιδικής Προστασίας <input type="checkbox"/> της Υγείας <input type="checkbox"/> της Εκπαίδευσης <input type="checkbox"/> της Παραβατικότητας και Εγκληματικότητας <input type="checkbox"/> των Μεταναστών – Προσφύγων <input type="checkbox"/> της Κοινωνικής Οργάνωσης και Ανάπτυξης (Ο.Τ.Α.) <input type="checkbox"/> της Αναπηρίας <input type="checkbox"/> των Εξαρτήσεων <input type="checkbox"/> Άλλο _____
Παρακολουθώ τακτικά τις διαλέξεις. <input type="checkbox"/> Κάθε μέρα <input type="checkbox"/> Μέρα παρά μέρα <input type="checkbox"/> Κάθε βδομάδα <input type="checkbox"/> Κάθε μήνα <input type="checkbox"/> Ποτέ
Αριθμός μαθημάτων που χρωστάτε κατά το τρέχον εξάμηνο: _____

Αυτή είναι μια έρευνα που αποσκοπεί στην αξιολόγηση διαφόρων πτυχών της Τεκμηριωμένης Πρακτικής στην κοινωνική εργασία. Απαντήστε με ειλικρίνεια (δηλ. Μη μας πείτε ότι ΝΟΜΙΖΕΤΕ ότι θέλουμε να ακούσουμε, πείτε τι πραγματικά ΕΣΕΙΣ πιστεύετε) και συμπληρώστε όλες τις ερωτήσεις.

Σας ευχαριστώ πολύ για τη συμμετοχή σας.

Παρακαλώ κυκλώστε την πιο κατάλληλη απάντηση:

Παρακαλώ προσδιορίστε πόσο συμφωνείτε/διαφωνείτε με τις ακόλουθες δηλώσεις.

	Συμφωνώ Απόλυτα	Συμφωνώ Μετρίως	Συμφωνώ	Διαφωνώ	Διαφωνώ Μετρίως	Διαφωνώ Απόλυτα
1. Έχω μια σαφή κατανόηση του τι είναι η τεκμηριωμένη πρακτική.	6	5	4	3	2	1
2. Τα ερευνητικά στοιχεία είναι κατά κανόνα ένα πιο αξιόπιστο κριτήριο για τη λήψη αποφάσεων από ότι οι προσωπικές πεποιθήσεις και εμπειρίες ή αυτές των εποπτών και των συναδέλφων.	6	5	4	3	2	1
3. Η τεκμηριωμένη πρακτική απαιτεί τη χρήση κριτικών δεξιοτήτων αξιολόγησης για να διασφαλιστεί η ποιότητα όλων των ερευνητικών εγγράφων που ανακτώνται.	6	5	4	3	2	1
4. Οι αποτελεσματικές δεξιότητες αναζήτησης/εύκολη πρόσβαση σε βιβλιογραφικές βάσεις δεδομένων και πηγές αποδεικτικών στοιχείων είναι απαραίτητες για την άσκηση της τεκμηριωμένης πρακτικής.	6	5	4	3	2	1
5. Η διαδικασία της τεκμηριωμένης πρακτικής απαιτεί την κατάλληλη αναγνώριση και διατύπωση απαντήσιμων ερωτήσεων.	6	5	4	3	2	1

Για τους σκοπούς του υπολοίπου ερωτηματολογίου, ορίζουμε την Τεκμηριωμένη Πρακτική στην κοινωνική ως εξής:

Η Τεκμηριωμένη Πρακτική είναι μια διαδικασία λήψης πρακτικών αποφάσεων, κατά την οποία οι επαγγελματίες ενσωματώνουν τα καλύτερα διαθέσιμα ερευνητικά στοιχεία με την επαγγελματική τους εμπειρία και τα χαρακτηριστικά, αξίες, προτιμήσεις και κατάσταση του εξυπηρετουμένου» (Rubin, 2008)

	Κάθε μέρα	Μέρα παρά μέρα	Κάθε βδομάδα	Κάθε μήνα	Ποτέ	Άλλο (Παρακαλώ διευκρινίστε)
6. Πόσο συχνά έχετε πρόσβαση σε στοιχεία ερευνών <u>γενικά</u> ;	5	4	3	2	1	___
7. Πόσο συχνά έχετε πρόσβαση σε στοιχεία ερευνών <u>στο διαδίκτυο</u> ;	5	4	3	2	1	___
8. Πόσο συχνά έχετε πρόσβαση σε στοιχεία ερευνών <u>από κάποιο βιβλίο</u> ;	5	4	3	2	1	___
9. Πόσο συχνά έχετε πρόσβαση σε στοιχεία ερευνών <u>από πρωτότυπα ερευνητικά έγγραφα</u> ;	5	4	3	2	1	___
10. Πόσο συχνά έχετε πρόσβαση σε στοιχεία ερευνών από <u>τη βάση δεδομένων Campbell Collaboration</u> ;	5	4	3	2	1	___
11. Πόσο συχνά έχετε πρόσβαση σε στοιχεία ερευνών από <u>τη βάση δεδομένων Cochrane, Medline</u> ή κάποια άλλη βάση δεδομένων;	5	4	3	2	1	___
12. Πόσο χρόνο ξοδεύετε καθημερινά για την εύρεση ή αναζήτηση στοιχείων; [Αυτό ΔΕΝ συμπεριλαμβάνει το χρόνο μελέτης σας - ΜΟΝΟ το χρόνο που σας χρειάζεστε για να ανακτήσετε το υλικό]						_____ λεπτά

13. Αυτή είναι μια ερώτηση τεσσάρων μερών.

i) Για τον πιο πρόσφατο εξυπηρετούμενο που συνεργαστήκατε, πόσο χρόνο ξοδέψατε ψάχνοντας τα αποδεικτικά στοιχεία που σχετίζονται με την κατάστασή του; [Αυτό ΔΕΝ περιλαμβάνει το χρόνο μελέτης σας - ΜΟΝΟ το χρόνο που χρειάστηκε για να ανακτήσετε το υλικό]
_____ λεπτά

ii) Πού (σε ποιές συγκεκριμένες πηγές) βρήκατε αυτά τα στοιχεία; (μπορείτε να επιλέξετε περισσότερες από μια επιλογές)

- Στο διαδίκτυο (εξαιρούνται οι βάσεις δεδομένων *Campbell Collaboration*, *Medline* και *Cochrane*)
- Σε βιβλίο
- Από πρωτότυπα ερευνητικά έγγραφα
- Από τη βάση δεδομένων *Campbell Collaboration*
- Από άλλες βάσεις δεδομένων όπως, *Medline*, *Cochrane* κ.ά

iii) Σε ποίο ποσοστό, συνέβαλαν αυτά τα αποδεικτικά στοιχεία στο να κατανοήσετε την κατάστασή του;

> 80%	61-80%	41-60%	21-40%	0-20%
-------	--------	--------	--------	-------

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

iv) Σε ποίο ποσοστό, αυτά τα αποδεικτικά στοιχεία σχετίζονταν με αποτελέσματα προσανατολισμένα προς τον εξυπηρετούμενο (δηλ. ποιότητα ζωής κ.α.);

> 80%	61-80%	41-60%	21-40%	0-20%
-------	--------	--------	--------	-------

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

14.	Κατά τη γνώμη και κρίση σας, πόσο έχει επηρεάσει, κατά μέσο όρο, η Τεκμηριωμένη Πρακτική τη διαχείριση ή την έκβαση των εξυπηρετούμενων, με τους οποίους έχετε συνεργαστεί;					
	Εντελώς	Πολύ	Μέτρια	Κάπως	Λίγο	Καθόλου
	6	5	4	3	2	1
15.	Κατά τη διάρκεια των διαλέξεων του πανεπιστημίου, πόσο συχνά συζητούνται τα τρέχοντα καλύτερα αποδεικτικά στοιχεία σχετικά με κάποιο συγκεκριμένο πρόβλημα;					
	Εντελώς	Πολύ	Μέτρια	Κάπως	Λίγο	Καθόλου
	6	5	4	3	2	1
16.	Πόσο συχνά συζητάτε τον ρόλο των σημερινών καλύτερων αποδεικτικών στοιχείων κατά τη διάρκεια των διαλέξεων;					
	Όλη την ώρα	Συχνά	Μερικές φορές	Περιστασιακά	Σπάνια	Ποτέ
	6	5	4	3	2	1
17.	Πόση εμπιστοσύνη έχετε στην ικανότητά σας για τη λήψη αποφάσεων;					
	Πολύ	Αρκετή	Μερική	Λίγο	Καθόλου	
	5	4	3	2	1	
18.	Πόσο εύκολο ή δύσκολο ήταν για εσάς να ασκήσετε την Τεκμηριωμένη Πρακτική ως φοιτητής κοινωνικής εργασίας το τελευταίο εξάμηνο;					
	Πολύ εύκολο	Μέτρια εύκολο	Εύκολο	Δύσκολο	Μέτρια δύσκολο	Πολύ δύσκολο
	6	5	4	3	2	1
19.	Πόσο προετοιμασμένος θεωρείτε ότι ήσασταν για την Πρακτική Εργαστηριακή σας Άσκηση το τελευταίο εξάμηνο;					
	Πολύ προετοιμασμένος	Μέτρια προετοιμασμένος	Κάπως προετοιμασμένος	Κάπως απροετοίμαστος	Μέτρια απροετοίμαστος	Εντελώς απροετοίμαστος
	6	5	4	3	2	1
20.	Πόσο χρήσιμη πιστεύετε ότι θα είναι η Τεκμηριωμένη Πρακτική στη μελλοντική σας πρακτική ως κοινωνικός λειτουργός;					
	Πολύ χρήσιμη	Κάπως χρήσιμη	Χρήσιμη	Άχρηστη	Κάπως άχρηστη	Εντελώς άχρηστη

	6	5	4	3	2	1
21.	Πόσο πρόθυμος είστε να ασκήσετε στο μέλλον την Τεκμηριωμένη Πρακτική ως κοινωνικός λειτουργός;					
	Πολύ πρόθυμος	Κάπως πρόθυμος	Πρόθυμος	Απρόθυμος	Κάπως απρόθυμος	Εντελώς απρόθυμος
	6	5	4	3	2	1

Παρακαλώ προσδιορίστε πόσο συμφωνείτε/διαφωνείτε με τις ακόλουθες δηλώσεις.

	Συμφωνώ Απόλυτα	Συμφωνώ Μετρίως	Συμφωνώ	Διαφωνώ	Διαφωνώ Μετρίως	Διαφωνώ Απόλυτα
22.						
	6	5	4	3	2	1
23.						
	6	5	4	3	2	1
24.						
	6	5	4	3	2	1
25.						
	6	5	4	3	2	1
26.						
	6	5	4	3	2	1
27.						
	6	5	4	3	2	1

28.	Η Τεκμηριωμένη Πρακτική στην κοινωνική εργασία αγνοεί την «τέχνη» του επαγγέλματος.	6	5	4	3	2	1
29.	Οι κοινωνικοί λειτουργοί, γενικά, δεν πρέπει να ασκούν την Τεκμηριωμένη Πρακτική, επειδή η κοινωνική εργασία σχετίζεται με ανθρώπους και εξυπηρετούμενους και όχι με στατιστικά στοιχεία.	6	5	4	3	2	1
30.	Η προηγούμενη εργασιακή εμπειρία είναι πιο σημαντική από τα ευρήματα της έρευνας στην επιλογή της καλύτερης παρέμβασης που είναι διαθέσιμη για έναν εξυπηρετούμενο.	6	5	4	3	2	1
31.	Εσείς προσωπικά εκτιμάτε τα πλεονεκτήματα της Τεκμηριωμένης Πρακτικής στην κοινωνική εργασία.	6	5	4	3	2	1
32.	Η Τεκμηριωμένη Πρακτική θα πρέπει να αποτελεί αναπόσπαστο μέρος του προπτυχιακού προγράμματος σπουδών κοινωνικής εργασίας.	6	5	4	3	2	1
33.	Από την προσωπική σας παρατήρηση και εμπειρία, η Τεκμηριωμένη Πρακτική εφαρμόζεται αυτή την περίοδο στην Ελλάδα.	6	5	4	3	2	1

Εάν επρόκειτο να χρησιμοποιήσετε την Τεκμηριωμένη Πρακτική, πώς θα προτιμούσατε να λάβετε τα αποδεικτικά στοιχεία					
34.	<input type="checkbox"/> Μέσω της βιβλιοθήκης <input type="checkbox"/> Μέσω ενός επιτραπέζιου υπολογιστή στο σπίτι <input type="checkbox"/> Μέσω ενός επιτραπέζιου υπολογιστή στο περιβάλλον φροντίδας των εξυπηρετούμενων <input type="checkbox"/> Μέσω ενός φορητού υπολογιστή χειρός				
35.	Συνολικά, πόσο συχνά (κατά μέσο όρο) ασκείτε την Τεκμηριωμένη Πρακτική;				
	Κάθε μέρα	Μέρα παρά μέρα	Κάθε βδομάδα	Κάθε μήνα	Ποτέ
	5	4	3	2	1

Θεωρείτε τον εαυτό σας ως χρήστη της Τεκμηριωμένης Πρακτικής στην κοινωνική εργασία αυτό το διάστημα;

36.

- Ναι (Σταματήστε τη συμπλήρωση του ερωτηματολογίου σε αυτό το σημείο)
 Όχι (Συνεχίστε στις ερωτήσεις 37-43)

		Ναι	Όχι
37.	Δεν ασκώ την Τεκμηριωμένη Πρακτική διότι οι επόπτες και οι καθηγητές μου δεν το κάνουν.	1	2
38.	Δεν ασκώ την Τεκμηριωμένη Πρακτική επειδή δεν ξέρω πώς.	1	2
39.	Δεν ασκώ την Τεκμηριωμένη Πρακτική διότι δεν πιστεύω σε αυτήν.	1	2
40.	Δεν ασκώ την Τεκμηριωμένη Πρακτική επειδή οι συνάδελφοί μου δεν τη χρησιμοποιούν.	1	2
41.	Δεν ασκώ την Τεκμηριωμένη Πρακτική επειδή δεν έχω χρόνο.	1	2
42.	Δεν ασκώ την Τεκμηριωμένη Πρακτική εξαιτίας της προσωπικής μου αναβλητικότητας στο να αλλάζω παλιές συνήθειες.	1	2
43.	Άλλος λόγος (παρακαλώ διευκρινίστε): _____		

Σας ευχαριστώ για το χρόνο που αφιερώσατε για να ολοκληρώσετε αυτή την έρευνα.

Χρησιμοποιείται με άδεια από τους Johnston et al. (2003)