AFRICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL WORK (AJSW)

Call for papers for a research methodology special issue to be published in August 2022

The gap that we want to cover

The process to decolonize social work has produced significant outcomes, including, but not limited to a crop of African social workers who are clear about what decolonization is and why it is necessary. This has increased understanding and appreciation of indigenization, as already being reflected in research, teaching and practice of social work in Africa. Social work publications that challenge dominance of non-African literature are increasing. However, social work research methodology remains one area that still lags and is yet to be fully decolonized and indigenized. Research methods refer to the way research is done and the study of the way research is done. The research materials that we read are often based on and grounded in non-African research settings, the research that we do is also largely driven by non-African methods, models, frameworks or theories. A good example is when writers and students use western writers in their methodology section and use ideas of western writers to shape their methods without use of African literature at all. The same applies to discussion and interpretation of research findings. Another example, teachers of research methods courses in Africa use western textbooks to teach and librarians stock their libraries with these books. The problem is not merely caused by lecturers and librarians, at times the literature that speaks to unique African contexts is missing or inadequate. This special issue seeks to address this knowledge hegemony. We strongly feel that as a leading social work publication on the continent, the AJSW has a key role to play in the decolonisation of social science research methods in Africa.

The special issue

The August 2022 issue of the AJSW will contain approximately 10-16 articles that focus on research methodology. With this special issue, we are focusing on how to do research in ways that are sensitive to the unique contexts of Africa. To be accepted, a manuscript has to meet these requirements:

1. The manuscript is based on original experiences of the writer/s as researchers. What do we mean? We mean that you should look back at the research that you have done before, and share lessons from those researches. We do not want you to rely on textbooks or other journal articles but on your voice and experiences.
2. The writers use African literature with very minimal reference or no reference to non-African literature. This is necessary because African literature is rarely prioritized, even by Africans themselves.
3. Manuscripts written from an African perspective, African philosophy, theories, knowledge, models and frameworks, both long-existing and emerging.
4. Adhere to the AJSW manuscript guidelines, including AJSW citing and reference guide.

5. Authors are willing, if requested, to write an abstract and or summary of their manuscript in an indigenous African language.
6. Authors are willing to use African language for some of the key concepts used in the manuscript.
7. Collaboration of multiple authors from different African countries will be an added advantage.

Suggested topic areas

Your manuscript must fit into one or more of the areas listed below:

1. How was research or knowledge generation understood and done before colonization? What were the ethics and methods? How was knowledge disseminated? What can we learn from the past for contemporary research?
2. What aspects of African philosophy can we use for research? How?
3. What African theories can we use for research? How?
4. How do we identify and define the research problem? Who does this?
5. How and why do we use or review existing knowledge and literature? What knowledge and literature do we review? What are the different sources of knowledge in Africa?
6. How do we create aims, objectives and research questions? What are aims, objectives and research questions?
7. What research designs are used, or work in Africa, why?
8. How do we identify people, communities or populations to participate in our research? How do we sample?
9. What processes do we follow to get people or communities to consent, participate, collaborate and support our research? What are the potential challenges?
10. How do we collect data in the African setting? What tools do we use to collect data?
11. When it comes to data, how do we manage (store and secure data) and organize it? How do we do data analysis to generate a summary of meanings?
12. How do we report findings? What strategies work to disseminate research in Africa?
13. How do we make use of findings? How do governments, organisations, communities and educational institutions make use of evidence in planning and policy?
14. What are the important ethics in African settings? How do we adhere to these ethics? What is the role of ethics committees and their capacity? What are the alternatives to ethics committees? How do we work with different populations including White, Arabic, Asian and Mixed Races (WAAMR) groups, refugees and migrant groups and hard-to-reach populations?
15. Generally, what has been your experience as an African researcher?

Please note that we are not expecting literature reviews of the above issues, we are looking at original ideas from yourself, your community or institution. These ideas should be based on your experience as an African researcher.

Instructions

A two-step screening process will be followed: screening of abstracts followed by screening of full manuscripts. We recommend that you do the following:

- Read the call for papers and understand it
- Decide a topic and create a suitable title
- Find co-authors (you can do it alone)
- Draft your abstract and agree with co-authors, if applicable
- Format your abstract as follows: maximum of 200 words, write in Times New Roman, font size 10 and single line spaced.
- Put key words
- Put names of authors and their contact details, each in a single line
- Put all the details on one page in this order: Title, Author Details, Abstract and Key words
- Make sure your abstract adheres to AJSW author guidelines that are available here: https://africasocialwork.net/aswnet-guide-to-writing-journals/
- Make sure all authors agree to the final abstract
- Email your abstract to asw@africasocialwork.net before the due date stated below.
- Wait for feedback, and if accepted, submit a full manuscript (maximum 5000 words including references and cover page) using the email above. The full manuscript will contain a revised abstract page as above, introduction, suitable sections making the body, conclusion and list of references that adheres to the AJSW citing and reference guide.

Important dates

- Opening of abstracts: 01 November 2021
- Deadline for abstracts: 01 December 2021
- Responses to contributors: 30 December 2021
- Submission of full of papers: 30 March 2022
- Editorial and peer review process from: April - July 2022
- Publication of journal articles from: August 2022