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Science and Technology**

Think in Other Terms



FACULTY OF MEDICINE

DIVISION OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

SPECIAL COLLECTION
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**CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS AND CLINICAL DECISION MAKING IN
NURSING AND MIDWIFERY STUDENTS AT MASVINGO PROVINCIAL
HOSPITAL IN ZIMBABWE.**

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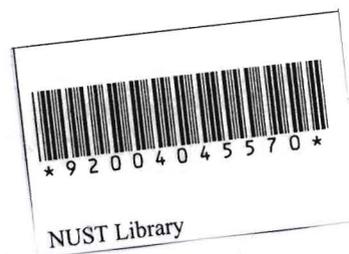
MSC DEGREE IN MIDWIFERY EDUCATION

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE AWARD OF THE MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN MIDWIFERY
EDUCATION.**

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Abstract

Critical thinking is an important attribute in making sound professional clinical decisions. The purpose of the study was to examine the level of critical thinking skills of student nurses and student midwives at Masvingo Provincial Hospital in Zimbabwe. Nurse/midwifery graduates do not correlate theory into practice. This trend has raised concerns within the local nursing/midwifery profession regarding the critical thinking skills and clinical decision making abilities of students. Therefore this study focused on the level of critical thinking skills of nursing/ midwifery students in relation to clinical decision making. A descriptive correlation quantitative research was employed as the design. Stratified and convenience sampling method was used to recruit 125 study participants. Questionnaires were used to collect data. A Pearson's correlation coefficient matrix was used to explore the relationship between critical thinking and clinical decision-making. The Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric was used to rate responses to the case-study based questionnaire. Analysis of data was conducted using SPSS-20 software. Results showed a positive significant relationship between critical thinking and clinical decision-making ($r = 0.207$, $p = < .01$) $r = 0.207$ implies that as critical thinking increase clinical decision-making marginally improves and ($p = < .01$) explains 10% variance in Critical Thinking and Clinical Decision-Making. ($F = 5.501$) implies that the linear relationship between critical thinking and clinical decision-making is significant. $R^2 = 0.035$, the co-efficient of determinant 0.035 implies that critical thinking is responsible for 3-5% of changes in clinical decision-making. $\beta = 0.207$ implies that when critical thinking changes by one unit clinical decision-making improves by 0-20 times. The findings of the study indicated that if student nurses and student midwives are given knowledge of critical thinking skills their clinical decision-making would improve by 3-5%. This shows that there are other factors determining critical thinking skills which should be identified and addressed. Major recommendations are that Nurse/midwifery leaders should advocate for inclusion of critical thinking skills in the curriculum through influencing policy by increasing classroom time or decreasing content.

Key words: Critical thinking, Clinical decision-making, Holistic Critical Thinking Score Rubric, Clinical judgement, Student nurse, and Student midwife, Clinical reasoning, Nursing/Midwifery process.