**Assignment 2: How to Read a Research Report**

**Part 1 and Part 2**

**Objectives:**

* Identify and interpret the objectives and research question in research reports
* Identify and interpret the author’s theoretical or research hypothesis
* Analyze how the variables in the specific study relate to the constructs and linkages in the theoretical framework
* Evaluate the degree to which the research contributes to theoretical understanding and to solving problems, issues or needs

Select any one of the articles listed in this [Article List](Articles_Assignments_2_and_3.docx). There is NO direct link at Canvas or the course website to the reports. You have to look them up using the UF library system. You do **NOT** have to pay to get the article if you get it through the UF library system. If you fail to use the library system, you may have to pay for the article. If you are working from off-campus, make sure you have VPN activated.

***Please take care to make sure that you do not misstate the author’s objectives, research question, and theoretical hypotheses.*** If you get these wrong, everything else in Assignments 2 and 3 is likely to be wrong. For example, your assessment of the adequacy of the sample in Assignment 3 will depend on whether the sample was “good enough” to answer the research question. If you misunderstand or misstate the research question, you will not be able to assess the adequacy of the sample. You may not like the author’s objectives or question. You may think s/he should have asked a different or broader question. However, the researcher determines the question and objectives – not the reader. One very common error is to confuse the problem the author wants to address or the potential uses of the new knowledge s/he creates with the research question and objectives. An article that I read provides an example. It was a quasi-experiment about a workplace program for stress management for nurses. In previous class exercises some students said that the author’s objectives are to *improve people’s stress management skills or to improve women’s stress management skills*. It is true that the author of this article does want to improve workplace stress management for employees, and he is specifically concerned about stress management for women because of the dual family & workplace stress women experience. However, research deals with creating knowledge that we can then use to solve problems. The author’s objective in this study was *not* to implement some training or “fix” the problem through some program. He had two main objectives: (1) determine if training actually does improve stress management and (2) if gender affects response to training. A training program is his ***intervention or treatment*** in a quasi-experimental study. It is NOT the objective of his research.

**Instructions**

***Answer the questions in your own words****.* Do not copy and paste from the article. I have no indication of how well you understand something if you just copy and paste.

***Be brief and respect the word limits.*** One or two sentences are sufficient for each point you want to make in most cases. For example, you would write one sentence for each objective that you identify in Part 1. **This paragraph contains 44 words.**

***Make a single-spaced Word document that includes my questions with your responses.***

You will **post this document twice**, once after you complete Part 1 and once after you complete Part 2. I want to be able to look quickly at Part 1 to make sure you are on the right track.

**Title the document** like this: YourLastName\_Assignment\_2

**Components**

1. Your full name
2. Full citation for the article

**Part 1: Research Questions and Objectives**

1. State the author’s research question(s) *in your own words.* *If more than one, make a numbered list of a., b., c., etc.*Authors often do not state a question, but rather saythings like “This research explores…” If you read carefully, you can often see that this statement does constitute the research question. However, do NOT invent a question for the author. You must judge the article based on what the author wanted to know – not what you *think s/he should want to know.* (50 words)
2. What does the author want to add to what we know about the *phenomenon under study* in the research? (50 words)
3. How does the author justify the *importance of the research*? Provide two or three key justifications. (50 words)
4. What are the author’s objectives? (100 words)
5. What, if any, theoretical basis for the research does the author state? If there is no mention of theory in the introduction, respond “No theory”. (50 words)
6. *IF* the author uses a theoretical framework, state the key constructs (concepts) in the theory that are used in the study. If there is no mention of theory in the introduction, respond “No theory”. (50 words)
7. Does the author state research (sometimes called working) hypotheses? Make a numbered list of the hypotheses (a, b, c,). These are *NOT* *statistical hypotheses.* They are often statements of *relationships between theoretical constructs that the authors expect to observe* -- like “We hypothesized that resilience [a theoretical construct] would be greater in families with dense social networks [another theoretical construct]. These broad or research hypotheses are typically stated in the introduction while statistical hypotheses are usually stated in the methodology section of a publication. (100 words)

**Part 2: Conclusions (NOTE: This is NOT results or findings)**

1. What type of conclusions does the author draw – theoretical, topical, etc.? (50 words)
2. What specific conclusions does the author draw? Examples are changes in public policy, changes in practice by practitioners, further research about some component in the research. (100 words)
3. Are the conclusions drawn relevant to the author’s stated objectives? Why or why not? (100 words)
4. Overall, do you think the author responded adequately to the research question – answered the question and added to the body of knowledge? Why or why not? (100 words)