6.3 Assignment Instructions:

Journal - Sampling, Variables, and Measurements

**Getting Started**

What are validity and reliability? Well, these important attributes of measurement have specific applications in research studies and, to a large degree, can make or break the confidence level you and others have in your research outcomes.

Validity has to do with measurement—that is, how well an instrument or measure (such as a depression scale) measures the variable it is meant to measure. Validity has two areas of measure, or two types of validity: internal and external. Internal validity determines whether or not the independent variable in a study is the only possible explanation for the outcomes of the dependent variable. External validity is specifically concerned with the ability to generalize the findings of a study to a larger population. There are threats to internal and external validity, or issues that can reduce the validity of a study.

Reliability has to do with consistency. Are the results obtained by a measure or instrument that's consistent in different settings, at different times, and across different populations? We will examine all of these in more detail in this workshop. This assignment will help you develop your methodology of your research project in the SWK-662 course. More specifically, during the SWK662 course you will need to measure program and practice outcomes. So, you want to make sure that your measures are both reliable and valid.

**Upon successful completion of this assignment, you will be able to:**

* Analyze quantitative and qualitative research methods and findings. (PO 13; ILO 5)



**Background Information**

Validity and reliability are two of the most important concepts to understand in research for several reasons. It helps to have a firm grasp of these two concepts. Validity asks whether or not we are really measuring what we intend to measure. For example, consider depression and self-esteem. These two concepts are closely related in the human psyche. Researchers need to be sure that, if they conduct a study on treating depression, their tools actually measure depression and not low self-esteem. Another example is cognitive behavioral treatment and rational emotive therapy. These two therapeutic modalities are closely related, but different. If a researcher tries to measure the difference between the effects of these two treatments, they have to be sure that the therapists are actually conducting one or the other therapeutic modality and that there is no overlap. Internal validity has to do with how much confidence a researcher has that his or her independent variable is the only variable that caused the outcomes (the dependent variable) of the study. To prove causality, internal validity must be strong (or high). There are many ways to test for validity, as described in Chapter 6 of the textbook, as well as many threats to validity.

External validity is the extent to which the outcomes or findings of a research study can be generalized or applied to other populations. Depending on how well the threats to external validity were reduced (or eliminated, in some cases), some findings can be generalized to many populations across many settings. However, some research studies are not meant to be generalizable, so it is not always researchers' desire or goal to have their findings generalized to other groups or settings (for example, a qualitative study where a researcher is exploring preliminary information).

Reliability, on the other hand, is strongly associated with consistency. If we use a certain scale or instrument, we need to be sure that we will get similar results each time we use it (in different populations, different settings, or different times, for example).

In the following assignment, we will dig into these concepts



**Instructions**

1. Write a one-page summary of the abstract. In paragraph form, discuss what you learned from the research article regarding
   1. Identify & Examine Variables used in the study
   2. Define and explore the Measurements used in the study
   3. Point out and describe the Sampling procedures used in the study.
2. Your paper should align with APA style, including in-text citations, and a reference page.