# Dissecting Research Articles – Quantitative – Public Service Leadership

In the Dissecting a Quantitative Article courseroom activity, you read a research article referred to as Sample Article 1. Sample Article 1 is an example of a quantitative research study. After reading the article, please answer the questions posed in each section of this form. If you do not know the answer, circle *Neutral*.

**Note:** You may refer to the [Dissecting Research Articles](http://campustools.capella.edu/BBCourse_Production/PhD_Colloquia_CR3/Track_1/phd_t1_u05s1_h01_dissect.html) handout as you complete this activity.

### Section 1: Abstract, Introduction, Hypothesis, Research Question, and the Literature Review

The first step to dissecting and evaluating a research article is the review for clarity and consistency. The abstract, the introduction, the problem statement, and the research hypothesis or research question should not only be clearly stated, they should be consistent. The reader should be able to understand the relationship between each component. These components set the stage for the rest of the document.

**Directions***:* After reading Sample Article 1, please answer the following questions.

Oburu, P.O., & Palmérus, K. (2003). Parenting stress and self-reported discipline strategies of Kenyan caregiving grandmothers. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 27*(6), 505–512.

1. “An abstract is a brief, comprehensive summary of the contents of the article; it allows the readers to survey the contents of an article quickly and, like a title, it enables the persons interested in the document to retrieve it from abstracting and indexing databases” (APA, 2010, p. 25).

The abstract clearly and accurately summarizes the content of the study.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

1. The introduction describes the research topic and depicts the problem statement. The introduction should inform the reader regarding the potential of the research to provide important and relevant answers.

The introduction explains why this problem is important and why this topic is worth researching.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

1. Leed and Ormrod (2005) state that the research problem is the heart of the research process, “To see the problem with unwavering clarity and to state it in precise and unmistakable terms is the first requirement in the research process” (p. 43). The research problem clarifies the goals and the direction of the research.

The problem statement is clearly articulated, specific, and comprehensive.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

1. The key terms should be defined so that the reader understands exactly what the writer is saying.

Theresearch questions are clearly stated and the key terms are defined.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

1. The literature review outlines the theory and past findings that are relevant to the research goals. The literature review should document the importance of the research problem. The literature review supports the necessity to study the specific research topic.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

1. The introduction, statement of the problem, and the literature review are appropriate and consistent with the research question.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

### Section 2: Methodology – Research Design, Methods and Procedures, and Sampling

1. If you wish to review the handout’s section on Methodology, research design, methods and procedures, and sampling, please do so now.   
     
   The research design is stated and there is a detailed description of how the study will be conducted.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

1. The methods and procedures regarding how data with be collected are clearly described.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

1. The research design is suitable to answer the research questions.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

1. The instruments used to measure the outcomes are described; the reasons why they were chosen are discussed; and the validity and reliability of the instruments is established.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

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| --- |
| To evaluate the research evidence, it is important to know who the participants are and how they were chosen. The sampling strategy refers to the process of obtaining the research participants to be included in the study. The sampling section should clearly indicate the specific procedures used to recruit the participants. It should also indicate the sample size and the eligibility criteria. |

1. The participants were properly selected.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

1. The sampling strategy was clearly explained.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

### Section 3: Variables

You can review the section on variables in the handout if you wish.

**Directions**: From your review of Sample Article 1, answer the questions below.

1. In reviewing Sample Article 1, identify the variables in the study. Which is (are) the independent variable(s)? Which is (are) the dependent variable(s)?
   1. Independent variables(s)
   2. Dependent variable(s)
2. An extraneous variable can create problems for the researcher. Extraneous variables are undesired variables that can influence the dependent variable and change or invalidate the results of an experiment. Can you identify any extraneous variables in Sample Article 1?

### Section 4: Analysis, Findings, Discussion, and Ethics

If you wish to review the handout’s section on “Analysis, Findings, Discussion, and Ethics,” please do so now.

**Directions**: Having read the results presented in Sample Article 1, answer the following questions:

1. The results are presented in enough detail to allow the reader to evaluate the results.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

1. The conclusions and generalizations are valid and justified by the data analysis.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

1. The researcher has considered other possible interpretations of the results.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

1. The discussion is reasonable in view of the data collected and analyzed.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

1. The research questions were answered.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

1. There is no evidence of ethical violations in this research.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

|  |
| --- |
| After presenting the results, the researcher interprets the implications of the research findings. This includes recommendations for further research and suggestions for relevant application of the research findings. Please answer these questions about that section of the Sample Article. |

1. The researcher clearly states the implications and applications of the research.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

1. This research has contributed relevant information to the field of study in your school.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

1. The researcher offers a reflection on the limitations of the study including the research design.

**Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree**

Please keep this list of questions and train yourself to use them to dissect all the articles in your literature review on the research topic. After using it frequently, you will not need the list, because the questions will come more naturally. Using the questions to train yourself will also allow you to keep deepening your knowledge of the elements of a well constructed research article.

References

Craig, E. (1978). *The heart of the teacher*. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International.

Creswell, J. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2005). *Practical research: Planning and design* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall. ISBN 0131108956.