**Research Methods in Criminal Justice**

Article Critique Response Paper

This submission is designed to illustrate your mastery of concepts relating to research methods by analyzing and critiquing two articles of your choice based on their methodology. To demonstrate your understanding of core research principles, you will apply concepts discussed throughout the semester as the basis for your analysis. For this assignment, you will write a 6-8 page critique of ***two peer-reviewed journal articles with a methods section*** on the topic of your choice (ideally this should be the same topic that you selected for your APA bibliography assignment but if you wish to change topics, please let me know).

* All submissions should be double-spaced, 12 point times roman font, and in APA format. Submissions should be in .doc or .docx format only.
* Cover pages and reference pages do not count towards the required page limit.
* Your chosen articles must be based on original scientific research and must have a devoted methods section.
* Please do not provide an abstract with the assignment.

**Suggested Outline of Response Paper**

The main purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate an ability to dissect, analyze, and explain the methodology used in each of your articles. In other words, you are going to be breaking down and critiquing the research methods used in each article. Taken as a whole, your paper should address the following subjects:

* What methods did the authors utilize when conducting their research?
* Were the methods the authors used appropriate?
* In terms of the research design, what did the authors do well? What could the authors have done better?

**1) Introduction/Summary of Articles**

Provide a brief overview of your chosen topic (name the topic and why it is important in a few sentences or a short paragraph). Then, summarize your peer-reviewed articles, including their background (i.e., what is the research question, why is the topic being investigated), methodology, and findings.

* This section should be no more than 2 pages.

**2) Methodology Critiques**

In the remainder of your response paper, using the knowledge that has been built over the course of the semester, critically analyze the methods selected by the authors of your peer-reviewed articles by discussing their strengths and limitations. Address the following issues in your analysis as appropriate:

* **Sampling:**
  + Name and describe the specific chosen sampling strategy for each article (i.e., random, non-random, make sure to be specific).
    - What are the strengths and/or limitations of the sampling strategy chosen by the authors?
  + Were there are any issues with their sample, such as size, representativeness, generalizability, or other potential sources of bias? If not, what did the authors do well?
* **Research Technique:**
  + Name and describe the specific technique the authors used to investigate their research question.
    - Was the method used quantitative or qualitative?
      * Did they use a survey, conduct an experiment or quasi-experiment, engage in direct observation, conduct an ethnography, focus groups, or perform one-on-one interviews, etc.?
    - What are some strengths and limitations associated with this methodology?
    - Do you think that this method was appropriate to investigate the research question posed in each article? If not, what might have been a better way to go about this research?
  + What did the authors do well? What could the authors have done better?
    - For example, did the authors use questions that were exhaustive and/or mutually exclusive and asked in a neutral way? Did they use double-barreled questions? Did they use an appropriate setting to conduct their research? Were there any potential ethical problems associated with their technique? Using your text and the powerpoints presented throughout the semester, there are many areas in which you could discuss the flaws and strengths of this research if you feel stuck.
* **Findings/Conclusions:**
  + Do you think that the findings and conclusions from the studies are generalizable, reliable, and/or valid (internal and external)? Why or why not?
  + Do you think that the studies are *substantively* important (i.e., do they truly make a significant contribution to the field of criminal justice and provide us with important knowledge to aid the field)? If so, how?
    - Do you think the studies give knowledge that would be helpful for shaping criminal justice policies and criminal justice practices?
  + Does the study add any knowledge to the field of criminology and criminal justice with respect to theory (e.g., social disorganization theory, environmental theories, and so on)? If so, how?

To aid with clarity and writing, the suggested structure for the paper is to separate and independently discuss each article as follows:

* Article 1 (pages 1 to 4)
  + Article 1 Introduction
  + Article 1 Methodology Critiques
  + Article 1 Summary/Conclusions
* Article 2 (pages 4 to 8)
  + Article 2 Introduction
  + Article 2 Methodology Critiques
  + Article 2 Summary/Conclusions

**3) References**

Please include at least 2 scholarly references in APA format (no other formats will be accepted for this paper). Two of these should be the articles you chose to summarize, but if you feel citing something else would help strengthen your paper, it is okay to do so as long as it is cited properly.