Empirical Research Papers

Research Vs Review

A research paper is a primary source, it reports the methods and results of an original study performed by the authors. The type of study may vary (experiment, survey, interview, etc.), in all cases, raw data has been collected and analyzed by the authors, and conclusions drawn from the results.

A review article is a secondary source, it is written about other articles, and does not report original research of its own. Review articles draw upon the articles that they review to suggest new research directions, to strengthen support for existing theories and/or identify patterns among existing research studies. Review articles provide a great overview of the existing literature on a topic.

Anatomy of a Empirical Research Article

Most research articles will contain the following five sections, or variations thereof:

- **Introduction**: sometimes called "literature review" -- what is currently known about the topic -- usually includes a theoretical framework and/or discussion of previous studies
- **Methodology**: sometimes called "research design" -- how to recreate the study -- usually describes the population, research process, and analytical tools
- **Results**: sometimes called "findings" -- what was learned through the study -- usually appears as statistical data or as substantial quotations from research participants
- **Discussion**: sometimes called "conclusion" or "implications" -- why the study is important -- usually describes how the research results influence professional practices or future studies
- **References**: sometimes seen as “works cited” —these are the sources where the authors got there background information. This section may also include references to similar or previous studies

Questions to Ask?

- Is the article published in an academic, scholarly, or professional journal?
- Does the abstract of the article mention a study, an observation, an analysis or a number of participants or subjects?
- Does the paper include a methodology section that includes a description of the process used in the study?