

Finding Empirical Research Articles on Media Audiences

What is an empirical research article?

The Reference Databases available at the USF Library give citations, abstracts, and sometimes full text to a wide variety of sources: popular magazines, trade journals, academic journals, newspapers, etc.

Often people look for a specific type of article: ***an empirical research article***. *Empirical studies use data derived from actual observation or experiment*. Original research papers that describe empirical studies and their results are published in academic journals.

Many academic journals are *peer-reviewed*. Peer-reviewed journals have a peer-review board (panel of experts from the field) that selects and approves articles for publication. Peer reviewed journals often contain empirical research articles.

To determine if an article is an empirical research article, use these guidelines:

- **What is the name of the journal?**
Popular magazines like *Newsweek* or *Life Magazine* don't publish empirical research articles; publications like the *Journal of Educational Research* or the *Journal of Educational Psychology* do.
- **How long is the article?**
An empirical research article is usually substantial, not 1 or 2 pages.
- **Does the article contain references to other works?**
Serious researchers always cite their sources.
- **Does the abstract of the article contain variations of the words *study, measure, subjects, data, survey, or statistical* to describe the empirical research?**

How can I find empirical research articles?

Databases have a broader definition of “research” than strictly empirical studies. Some databases are better than others for finding empirical research articles. Each has techniques that let you search for empirical research articles more effectively.

All of these databases let you limit to “peer reviewed” or “scholarly.” To determine if they are actual empirical research, be sure and read the abstracts.

Communication and Mass Media Complete and Communication Abstracts

- Limit your search to **Peer Reviewed** journals by checking the appropriate box on the search screen, then read the abstract to determine if it is research.

Sport Discus

If you are looking for articles specifically on sports fans or audiences

- You can limit your results to **Peer Reviewed**

Academic Search Premier

Academic Search Premier covers a wide range of topics in the humanities, social sciences, business, and general sciences.

- Limit your search to **Scholarly (peer-reviewed) Journals**.

ProQuest

ProQuest includes several different subject databases. It includes articles from popular business magazines, trade publications, and scholarly academic journals.

- Limit your search to **scholarly journals, including peer-reviewed** on the main search screen.