



# What is an Empirical Article?

*What is an empirical article?*

 *For the most part, I define an empirical article as a study that includes a brief review of the literature, a research question or hypothesis, hard (numbers) data from a group of participants in a study, a statistical results section, and discussion section of the results. Some articles might appear to be empirical, but they are not. Articles that argue for study on a given topic, followed by a research question, and then literature to answer the research question is NOT an empirical article. However, if hard (number) data was gathered, statistically analyzed, and reported, it is likely an empirical article.*

*How can I detect if an article is empirical?*

 *First I look at the title. If the study is titled “The effects of...” or “The relationship between...” it is most likely an empirical study. However, do not hold to that assumption alone. In the abstract, the author(s) would have probably described his/her/their hypothesis, the research sample, and basic results (and possibly statistical techniques used to assess data). If you are still hesitant, wondering if the article is empirical, then skim through the article itself and see if it is divided into an Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion sections. This is the basic structure for an empirical research study in psychology.*

**Note:** Courtesy of Dr. Sharon Glazer is an Assistant Professor in the [Department of Psychology](#) at [San Jose State University](#). The web address is [http://cfds.sjsu.edu/Workshop/june-04-01/Sharon\\_Glazer/what\\_are\\_empirical\\_articles.html](http://cfds.sjsu.edu/Workshop/june-04-01/Sharon_Glazer/what_are_empirical_articles.html)