

## Finding Empirical Research Articles

### Introduction

Hello and welcome to the Grand Canyon University Library Tutorial on finding Empirical Research Articles. This tutorial will help you define what an empirical article is and show you some tips on locating these articles in the GCU library.

This tutorial covers specifically how to locate empirical articles. If you would like more general information on navigating the GCU library and article databases please view the Library Walk-Through Tutorial or one of the tutorials available for each database.

An empirical, also known as a primary research article, describes the methods and presents the results of an original study carried out by the author or authors. The study is considered “empirical” because it is based on observation or experiment.

Examples of empirical research include a chemical experiment in a laboratory, a clinical trial of a new drug, an assessment of the effectiveness of a teaching or counseling technique, and a survey of employee satisfaction under various managerial styles.

Please proceed to part one of this tutorial: Searching

### [Part One] Searching Empirical Articles

To search for empirical research articles in the GCU Library, first open an article database relevant to your topic. For instance, if you’re looking for empirical research articles on women and transformational leadership, then use a business article database such as Business Source Complete

If you are unsure which database is the strongest for your topic, the GCU librarians are happy to assist. Email [library@gcu.edu](mailto:library@gcu.edu) or call 800.800.9776 extension 6396641.

Type the keywords for your topic in the search boxes.

IN a separate search box type “method” followed by an asterisk then, “or”, “results.” The asterisk at the end of “method” will command the database to retrieve variant endings such as “methods” or “methodology” as well as the root word “method.”

It is essential to search the full text in order to bring back the best results. Since all empirical research articles have sections in the text on the method and the results of the study, searching for the words “method” and “results” in the full text of the article will help you narrow down your results to these articles.

To do this in EBSCO Databases select TX All Text in the Select a Field drop down menu. This option may be phrased differently in different databases. For instance, you might see the words “document text,” “entire document,” “Full Text,” or just “Text”. Finally, check the Scholarly or Peer Reviewed Journals

box. Although not all peer reviewed articles are empirical research articles, all empirical research articles are peer reviewed and so this limiter will be useful.

Now click Search. You will retrieve a list of all articles matching your search criteria. Many of the results should be empirical research articles. However, not all articles containing the words Method and Result will be empirical. When you find an article that is relevant to your topic be sure to confirm that it is an empirical research article. Click on the Full Text link for the article.

Scroll through the article to determine if it has the characteristics of an empirical research article. In particular, look for a methods section, which we find on page 233, and a results section, which we find on page 235. Notice that the Results section presents and analyzes the data generated by the study. This is definitely an empirical research article.

A few databases provide an easy and reliable research article limiter which can help to target empirical research. In the CINAHL Plus with Full Text nursing database there is a "Research Article" box you can check to limit your results to empirical research articles.

In the Emerald Management database you can click on "Advanced Search" then click on Journals. In the "Article Type" menu select "Research Paper."

When you search your topic with these two databases, you do not need to type "method and results" in the search box, but you are able to use the research article limiter instead.

This concludes the tutorial on Finding Empirical Research Articles. If you have further questions or would like research assistance, please contact the library. You can call us at 1-800-800-9776 extension 6396641 or send an email to [library@gcu.edu](mailto:library@gcu.edu). We look forward to hearing from you.