Assignment Instructions:

Empirical and General Studies

**Getting Started**

As you navigate through the plethora of articles in the databases, you may notice differences between the various types of articles. Some articles are considered empirical studies, while others are more informational. By the end of this workshop, you will be able to differentiate between the two types and understand why empirical studies are used for research studies. This assignment will help you develop your methodology of your program or practice evaluation in the SWK-662 course.

**Upon successful completion of this discussion, you will be able to:**

* Analyze quantitative and qualitative research methods and findings. (PO 13; ILO 5)



**Background Information**

**Empirical Research**

An empirical research article is one that reports research that is based on actual observations, interviews, or experiments. The research may be quantitative, which, as you recall, is generated through numerical data. Empirical research articles also may use qualitative research methods, which objectively and critically analyze behaviors, beliefs, feelings, or values with few or no numerical data.

Ways to determine if you have an empirical study:

First, ask yourself if the article is published in an academic, scholarly journal. Popular magazines, such as *Business Week* or *Newsweek,* do not publish empirical articles. Academic journals such as *Child and Family Social Work*or the *Journal of Psychology*publish empirical articles.

Second, you want to ask if the abstract mentions information about data collections, the use of a survey or questionnaire, or data analysis techniques, such as a statistical test used.

Empirical articles are considered “primary sources” and include the following sections:

1. Abstract
2. Introduction
3. Literature Review
4. Methodology
5. Results
6. Discussion
7. Conclusions
8. References

**Informational Articles**

In contrast to empirical articles are numerous informational articles. With these types of articles, the author does not conduct a primary research study. Although data can be discussed in an informational article, it is not considered a *primary source*; this type of information is considered a *secondary source* because it analyzes and interprets primary sources.

The significant key differences between the two types of articles:

* “Empirical articles” are primary sources that report factual information.
* “Informational articles” are secondary sources that analyze and interpret the factual information from the primary sources.

**Relationship between Empirical Articles and a Literature Review**

Why are empirical articles used for a literature review and not informational articles?

Although informational articles have merit, the goal of a literature review is to inform the researcher and future readers about what has been done in relation to the topic. Given that empirical articles outline the studies conducted, they are the most appropriate for a literature review.



**Instructions**

1. Review the rubric to make sure you understand the criteria for earning your grade.
2. **Review the following from the textbook *Research Methods for Social Workers: A Practice-Based Approach.***
   1. Chapter 6, “Variables & Measurements”
   2. Chapter 8, “Survey Research”
3. Respond to the following prompts:
   1. Discuss in writing the differences between empirical articles and informational articles.
   2. Discuss why empirical articles are used with a literature review.
4. Your initial post of at least 250 words is due by the end of the third day of the workshop.