

Identifying Different Types of Academic Articles

Not all articles in scholarly journals are “research”. The types of articles will vary depending upon the purposes of the author. Here are the major types of articles you will find:

1. Research or Empirical Studies

These articles are reports of original research. They present hypotheses or research questions, as well as objectives, a literature review to provide context and background information, and results. The format is based on a logical structure presented in distinct sections, usually in this sequence:

- *Introduction*: development of the problem under investigation and statement of the purpose of the article;
- *Method*: description of the procedures to conduct the investigation;
- *Results*: report the findings;
- *Discussion and conclusion*: summary, interpretation, and implications of the results.
- *References*: list of works cited in the article

2. Literature Reviews

Literature reviews (different from book review) are critical evaluations of materials that have been already published. They contain a summary, discussion, or assessment of works on a specific area, and will clarify a problem related to the topic under discussion. Literature reviews are useful to summarize previous investigations, identify relations and inconsistencies in the literature, and suggest solutions to solve the problem. They are not, however, original research.

When evaluating a literature review, consider the authority of the author (good literature reviews are written by experts in the field). Check also the bibliography included in the article, which may contain suggestions for other sources and ideas.

3. Systematic Reviews

A systematic review is a type of literature review commonly seen in fields such as health sciences. Systematic reviews are more structured than literature reviews, as they tend to use more systematic methods for collection and analysis of literature. For example, systematic reviews usually describe as part of their methodology which databases were used in a search, which and why certain keywords were used, how many results were found, and what methods were used to choose and analyze a set of results. Those elements are usually not included in general literature reviews.

3. Case Studies

Case studies are reports describing aspects concerning to a specific individual, group, community, or an organization. These articles illustrate a specific problem and indicate possible solutions for it.

4. Book Reviews

Book reviews are articles that describe and evaluate a book. It is focused on book's authority, purposes, and content. Depending on the journal, there may be a specific section for this kind of article.

5. Editorial, Commentary, or Reply

Editorials, commentaries, or replies are brief articles that contain opinions on an issue, topic, or study previously published. The writing style is persuasive, intending to convince the reader to adopt a certain perspective. In general, it doesn't include references.

6. Discussion

Discussions are full-length articles used by authors to discuss opinions, issues, and ideas. It may sometimes look like a research study, but it doesn't have the same formal structure and it is not always based on existing literature. The focus of this kind of study is to explore new areas, suggest topics for future research, and share opinions.

Sources used for this handout:

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<http://kscinfolit.wordpress.com/2011/07/12/types-of-articles-and-research-methods-handout/>