



## THE BOOK REVIEW OF "EMPIRICAL LEGAL RESEARCH: A PRIMER"

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**ABSTRACT**

This book can be used for basic and advanced courses on empirical legal research and empirical legal studies. It examines interviews, surveys, and experiments as important methods of empirical research, and explains how to interpret and report qualitative and quantitative data. Exercises and suggested further reading are included in every chapter to help readers become actively engaged in empirical legal research.

**KEYWORDS :** Empirical, Legal Research, Quantitative, Law

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Kees van den Bos, a Professor of Empirical Legal Science at Utrecht University's School of Law and a Professor of Social Psychology including the Social Psychology of Organizations at the Psychology Department of Utrecht University, has authored this book.

Being trained in different research methods and various statistical techniques, he has employed in-depth qualitative interviews, quantitative survey studies, and various experimental methods within different courts of law and in other important contexts. An editor of various scientific journals, Kees has received several research grants from various funding agencies, conducting empirical legal research projects on issues such as trust in government and how people's disdain for the rule of law and constitutional democracy might contribute to radicalization into violent extremism and terrorism.

Van den Bos has taught many introductory courses, including Psychology and Law for law undergraduates, Quantitative Empirical Research for legal research master students, Empirical Research Methods for PhD law students, Social Psychological Research Methods for psychology undergraduates and graduates, Introduction to Social Psychology to first-year undergraduates, and radicalization and the rule of law to practitioners of law and policy decision makers. Over 15 years, he has coached dozens of law students, law faculty members, and practitioners of law on the subject of empirical research. He has drawn on this experience for the current book to explain what is needed to set up empirical legal research projects, so that readers will be able to understand and reflect on these kinds of projects in their studies and work.

**SUMMARY OF THE BOOK:**

This book presents the fundamental ideas and procedures of empirical legal research. Kees van den Bos offers a lively and trustworthy introduction for students and professionals wishing to actively participate in legal research by outlining how to start and carry out empirical research projects, how to assess the techniques employed, and how to evaluate and interact with the findings. Some of the key features of the book are enumerated below:

- A simple, approachable, and non-technical approach to introducing novice researchers to empirical legal research.
- A comprehensive manual on empirical research that walks students through the entire process, from planning and developing a project to analyzing and summarizing empirical data.
- An exploration of an array of methodologies offering a wealth of study opportunities.
- Exercises to allow students to put new skills into practice and suggested further reading to deepen students' understanding of new topics.

This book conveys the basics of empirical legal research to

law students, law faculty members, and practitioners of law. It does so in a solid yet non-technical way. No statistical formulas are used in the book, and no computer programs or statistical software are needed to understand the essence of empirical legal research that is being taught here. In a brief and accessible manner, the book helps students, scholars, and practitioners to set up their own empirical legal research projects and to evaluate the methods and results of other empirical projects.

It can also be used for introductory courses on society and law, and courses for lawyers and policy decision makers. Teachers can use the book as a standalone resource or in combination with more detailed books on statistics and research methods, or articles and book chapters describing specific instances of relevant empirical legal research methods. The book can be used by practitioners of law for their own private study of empirical legal research, to help them learn how to evaluate research projects they might encounter in their daily work or in newspaper articles. The basic knowledge contained in this book will enable them to understand the strengths and weaknesses of empirical legal research projects.

This book is divided into 3 Parts which are further divided into chapters. Tantamounting to a total of eight chapters.

Where, Part I deals with moving from content to Empirical Research Questions and 2 chapters.

Chapter 1: This chapter encompasses the meaning and importance of empirical legal research. Chapter 2: on the other hand deals with Research goals, problems and questions.

Part II deals with studying the Empirical Questions and contains 3 chapters.

Chapter 3: This chapter encompasses Interviews as a tool of Empirical Research, whereas, Chapter 4 encompasses Surveys and Chapter 5 encompasses Experiments as tools of Empirical Research.

Part III, the last 3 chapters, deal with conversion of Data into conclusions, leading to newer conceptualizations.

Chapter 6: This chapter encompasses Data Analyses, Chapter 7 encompasses reporting the results and Chapter 8 encompasses conclusions, reflections and limitations.

**Critical Evaluation Of The Book:**

Each chapter ends with Exercises and Suggested readings leading to a holistic learning. Researchers can, not only learn theory, but can also put that learning to test with the help of Exercises. Researchers can further enhance their learnings thru suggested readings. After all, as Bert Marseille from University of Groningen, Netherlands, notes ".....It [this book] makes clear that doing empirical research is important,

enriching and fun. It explains in a very simple, clear and effective way how to set up and carry out such research and what part of empirical research you can carry out yourself and when you need the help of an expert. If I had never done any empirical legal research myself, I'm sure that I would want to start immediately after reading this book."

#### **RESEARCHER'S VIEW:**

The Researcher feels that the book offers a fervent introduction to a valuable subject. This book is a key reading for advanced law students hoping to pursue their own Non - Doctrinal legal research. Its insights into trailblazing research methodologies will also be of benefit to students with a deep interest in the sociology of law. After all, Law and Society do not exist in mutual exclusivity. This book, thereby, provides a holistic learning experience for students, academicians and professionals alike. It not only encompasses overviews, but also deals with research nuances like *split-half technique*, Cronbach's Alpha, HARKing, Sandglass model and more. In addition, the author has been honest about the ever changing Conventions of how to perform empirical legal research, thereby recommending, relevant, 'up-to-date' expert advice.

Moreover, ending the book on a lingering thought about grounding the empirical legal research in theory, awakens the researchers about importance of Doctrinal Research as well.

#### **REFERENCES**

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2. Hypotheses After the Results are Known.