

Empirical Legal Research: A Guidance Book for Lawyers, Legislators and Regulators

By Frans L. Leeuw & Hans Schmeets. (2016), 319 pages, ISBN: 9781782549390. \$145

Subject: Subject-Area Legal Research

Useful for: Useful for anyone who wants to understand how to design an empirical legal research study.

Format: Chapters with bibliography and index.

Reviewer's Comments:

Beginning with an analysis of the uses of empirical legal research and the empirical cycle, this book provides a clear path for anyone wanting to design an effective empirical legal research project. The book covers how to formulate an appropriate question for empirical legal research and then moves on to the various types of research design. The authors continue through the empirical cycle by providing information on collecting and evaluating data. The book explains both quantitative and qualitative analysis, both of which are required with empirical legal research. Empirical Legal Research wraps up the process by discussing methods of spreading the results and encouraging others to use the knowledge gleaned from the project. It includes a discussion of breaking down the information into more palatable pieces using data visualization and other methods. Finally, the authors examine the growth and future of empirical legal research in general.

The intended audience for Empirical Legal Research is not just scholars or students. It focuses on a wider audience that includes lawyers, regulators, and policy makers. The authors provide many concrete examples throughout the book, valuable for any type of legal professional. A separate text box clearly highlights most examples. This makes it easier for the reader to understand the concept. Both authors are from the Netherlands, so the examples encompass common and civil law conditions. Each chapter has endnotes, and there is an extensive list of all references at the end of the book. Even though it is not written for empiricists, the terminology used throughout can be dense. The authors do a good job of explaining the specialized terms used, but this is not an easy-to-read text.

Reviewed by: Robin Schard, University of Miami, in 2019