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**Book Details:**

De Vos, A.S. (ed), Strydom, H., Fouche, C.B. & Delpont, C.S.L. (2002).

Research at Grass Roots: For the social sciences and human services professions.

Published by Van Schaik Publishers, Pretoria

The contributors to this text have produced a volume of almost staggering scope given the relatively small size of the text. The text covers most of the content of an advanced course in research design, and deals with both qualitative and quantitative approaches to research in a reasonably equivalent manner.

The examples, content and style of the text suggest that it would be most appropriate for individuals in Social Work, Allied Medical and other helping professions. The content is, however, sufficiently broad to be of relevance to most researchers in the social sciences. The level of the text would suggest that it is most appropriate for post-graduate students, although undergraduate material is also covered in reasonable detail.

The most impressive aspect of the text is its scope and most researchers in the social sciences will find areas of relevance to their work. In addition the layout is such that a researcher can find guidance on his/her research method from the point of choosing a topic right through to information on how to write the research report. In particular it is very helpful to have sections on the preparation of a research proposal and developing of a literature review. From the perspective of the field of psychology, the text does not provide adequate coverage

of psychometrics and statistics and these issues would require additional support material.

In addition to the general research theory presented, there are also a number of chapters highlighting some common (and less common) research and analysis techniques. These include programme evaluation, participatory action research and grounded theory.

The breadth and scope of the text does have some negative consequences and the obvious consequence is that several topics are not covered in a great deal of depth. In some cases the choice of content does not seem entirely coherent with the rest of the text. For example the first chapter on the nature and status of professions has little obvious impact on research methodology.

There are also unfortunately some lapses in rigour – such as the incorrect description of the meaning of a p-value in frequentist statistical theory and the use of (R) to denote both random assignment and random selection in the section on quantitative designs. This section would also have been more helpful if the authors had focussed on general principles rather than cataloguing a whole range of designs.

The style of writing is at times turgid and often relies on secondary quotes to define and introduce new concepts. While this approach allows the reader to link with other texts, the continual changes in style and language make the book difficult to read.

On the whole the text provides a broad overview of the research field and the organisation of the chapters is helpful in guiding a researcher through the process of research, while allowing the reader aiming for specific knowledge to easily identify the relevant sections.

### AVIATION PSYCHOLOGY

During the course of 2003 a number of people involved in aviation in general and others engaged in human wellness specifically, met to discuss Aviation Psychology and the way forward.

It was agreed to meet during the conference of PsySSA in October to discuss matters.

At the end of this meeting a working group/project team was nominated and mandated to take matters forward, to meet, deliberate and report to all interested parties and persons.

This first work meeting took place 12 November at Rand Airport. In attendance were:

- Prof. Johann Coetzee, Practising Industrial and Aviation Psychologist, Professor at Business School, University of the Free State
- Lt Col Greta Bath (M.A. Psychology) – Counseling Psychologist
- Lt Col Lex Rock Heemstra (B.Comm Industrial Psychology) – Senior Staff Officer Aviation Safety Training, SA Air Force
- Johan de Beer (M.A. Psychology) – Psychologist – Executive – Aerospace Chamber: Transport seta.
- Trevor Reynolds, (M.A. Clinical Psychology) – Senior Staff Officer, Doctrine Development: Health, SA Air Force.

The first draft agenda focused on matters, *inter alia*:

- Purpose, focus and definition
- Terms of reference
- Professional boundaries
- Contact, consultation and communication.

After much deliberation it was agreed to now communicate to all stakeholders as well as any other interested or involved persons or organisations affected by Aviation Psychology.

This memorandum invites participation and contributions on matters as reflected above, all of which ultimately focus on Human Factor Proficiency and Wellness as they contribute to flight safety.

At this stage there are no pre-conceived nor finite definitions, practices or recommendations. This is a consultative phase during which the *committee* will receive all contributions, process such data and then only commence to formulate draft definitions, terms of reference and the dynamic of expansive and specific consultation.

For some organisations and individuals this phase will be of interest only. We wish not to exclude anybody and hence this expansive strategy. Those who wish to participate must please communicate in writing to: profjilc@mweb.co.za, who will receive such contributions on behalf of the committee.

We thank you for your assistance in defining and potentially formalising Aviation Psychology in South Africa.

JOHANN COETZEE

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