

Merits and limits of respondent recruitment through social media

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The demand for high-quality data from surveys – especially from web surveys – is at an all-time peak and continues to grow. At the same time, (web) surveys struggle with low response rates and researchers constantly look for innovative and cost-efficient ways to sample, contact, and interview respondents. One promising approach makes use of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, for respondent recruitment. Utilizing sophisticated advertisement and target systems offered by these platforms, research has shown that social media recruitment provides an easy, quick, and inexpensive access to an unprecedented and diverse respondent pool (including rare and hard-to-reach populations). Nonetheless, many open questions remain with respect to sample representation, recruitment and advertisement strategies, and data quality and integrity.

In this session, we welcome contributions that are based on empirical studies as well as methodological and theoretical considerations dealing with respondent recruitment through social media platforms. This includes the following research areas (but not limited to):

- Comparing social media platforms for respondent recruitment in terms of costs, quality, and field phase management
- Ad design, invitation wording, and participation metrics
- Strategies for incentivizing respondents and payout
- Targeting designs and sample compositions
- Strategies to cope with user comments and undesired user interactions with ads
- Approaches to deal with missing data in the form of nonresponse and dropouts
- Measurement quality in terms of reliability and validity
- Threat of bots and fake interviews for data integrity
- Comparing social media, nonprobability, and probability-based samples
- Weighting procedures to increase representation and generalizability
- Replications of empirical studies and findings

Keywords: Social media recruitment, Data quality, Data integrity, Representation, Sample comparisons