



University of Wales
Trinity Saint David



SOCIAL MEDIA AND RECRUITMENT

Digital Skills

ABSTRACT.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the factors that determine the response of potential candidates to the screening of private (represented by Facebook) and professional (LinkedIn) social networking sites (SNS) for personnel selection purposes, and to examine how SNS screening in the personnel selection process is perceived innovative candidates.

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Table of Content

1. Introduction.....	p.1
2. Advantages of Using social media for Recruitment	p.2
3. Recruitment.....	p.3
4. Engagement/Reduced cost.....	p.4
5. Disadvantages of Using social media for Recruitment.....	p.5
6. Restricted Concerns and Limited Control.....	p.6
7. Limited Access.....	p.7
8. Conclusion.....	p.8
9. Reference.....	p.9

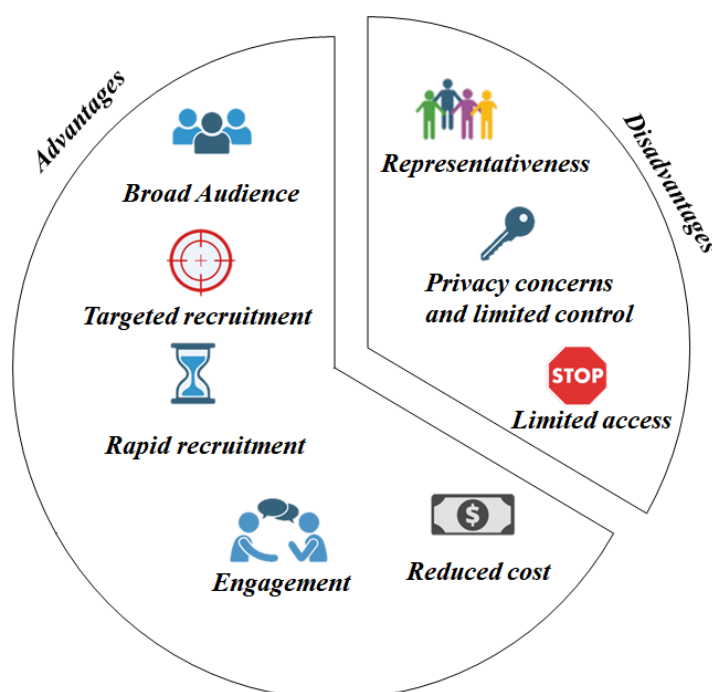
Introduction

Effective and efficient approaches to participant recruitment in research have historically been fraught with difficulties. The ease of recruiting participants has been revolutionized by the unprecedented rise of social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, in contrast to more conventional methods like radio or newspaper advertisements. Even though these recent developments appear to improve recruitment success, they are not without drawbacks and shortcomings of their own. The purpose of this paper is to analyse the benefits and drawbacks of using social media platforms for participant recruitment. We will go over the benefits of targeted and quick recruitment, engagement, and cost savings, as well as the drawbacks of representativeness, privacy issues, restricted control, and restricted access.

Advantages of Using social media for Recruitment

Overview

Using social media as a recruitment platform, as illustrated in [Figure 1](#), offers numerous benefits, including (1) broad audience, (2) targeted recruitment, (3) rapid recruitment, (4) engagement, and (5) reduced cost.



Broad Audience

The use of social media for research participant recruitment is frequently disregarded, even though social media advertising has the potential to reach millions of people worldwide. A wide variety of communities representing a wide range of geographic locations, cultures, languages, religions, ages, and socioeconomic statuses can be reached through social media. Conventional approaches to participant recruitment, meaning those that do not involve social media, usually focus on community recruitment locations. Numerous studies' ability to be broadly applied has been hampered by these techniques, which may lead to selection bias. Due to their reliance on precise cohort representation, studies pertaining to population health and epidemiology are especially vulnerable to selection bias.

Recruitment

Targeted Recruitment

Social media offers the best way to target an audience because it can exclude or include various parameters and groups. By focusing on organizations, clubs, areas, and demographics that were relevant to the study, researchers were able to find more participants who fit the study's requirements. Conventional recruitment techniques, which intimidatingly target the "public" audience many of whom are neither eligible nor interested in the study can be difficult. Moreover, determining a participant's eligibility through traditional recruitment methods may take a significant amount of time, money, and effort.

Rapid Recruitment

Social Media platform greatly facilitates the recruitment process and should not be underestimated, even though much of the success depends on the participants' willingness to click on the ad, sufficient Social media platforms greatly reduce the time required to recruit a suitable cohort of participants because of how simple it is to generate, post, and collect surveys. The ease of having an advertisement on one's phone or laptop interest, and willingness to follow through with the directions to unroll in the study. The number of participants in a study is significantly increased when they can sign up from the comfort of their homes, regardless of the time of day or day of the study It has been demonstrated that traditional methods were notorious for taking longer than expected for the study recruitment team and the participant.

Engagement

The ability to design advertisements to entertain and even stimulate interaction among potential study participants is another alluring feature of using social media platforms. Vibrant, elaborate animations, endearing sounds, and other strategies can be employed to raise interest in reading about the study and, ultimately, the possibility that participants will sign up. This phenomenon is especially intriguing because traditional recruitment techniques are typically extremely constrained in this regard. Newspaper or radio advertisements, for instance, lack this luxury and instead depend primarily on attention-grabbing phraseology or enthusiastic wording to draw in listeners with little to no participation from the audience.

Reduced Cost

Comparing social media to traditional methods has resulted in a significant decrease in advertising costs. The cost of creating the advertisement as well as reaching out to participants and getting their feedback is reduced. Study coordinators can allocate more funds to other aspects of the study, like participant compensation, data analysis, and additional tools for data collection, because of this lower cost. For instance, it was demonstrated that Facebook's cost per participant was lower than that of conventional techniques. In comparison to US \$1094.27 per participant for television recruitment, US \$811.99 for printed media, US \$635.92 for radio, and US \$37.77 for email, a typical Facebook advertisement's median value of US \$14.41 performs admirably. Similarly, Carlini et al.

Disadvantages of Using social media for Recruitment

It is important to approach this topic from a broad standpoint as we delve into the complex world of using social media as a recruiting tool. As important as the benefits are, it is also important to be aware of the possible obstacles and disadvantages that could arise from using this approach to find possible participants (see Figure 1). The following are the main drawbacks of using social media as a recruiting tool: (1) limited access, (2) privacy concerns and lack of control, and (3) representativeness.

Representativeness

Active social media users are typically younger people; the average age of a Facebook user is 38 years old. Therefore, research focused on children, adolescents, or older adults is often underrepresented on social media. Furthermore, it is discovered that some racial and ethnic groups tend to use social media more frequently than others, which significantly introduces selection bias into research. When combined, these variables pose a threat to the quality of data collection because representation-related factors have a significant impact on the study population. Furthermore, social media users might not be representative of the general public, which could bias the sample and reduce how broadly the study's findings can be applied.

Restricted Concerns and Limited Control

The problem of privacy violation is one of the main drawbacks of using social media to find research participants. According to several studies, many participants are reluctant to share any personal information on social media platforms for fear that it will be misused or leaked to third parties. This worry is justified because there are a few fraudulent websites that collect personal data, including social security numbers and bank account numbers, by pretending to be research surveys. Participants are less likely to experience this issue when using traditional methods of gathering information, and research has shown that people are more likely to trust traditional methods because they are linked to lower levels of dishonest behaviour. Even though researchers make every effort to maintain participant privacy and focus on their specific participant groups, social media is less regulated than more conventional techniques. Surveys may be filled out by people who do not fit the requirements, and it can be difficult to confirm their identity. This introduces a lot of variability into research and jeopardizes the quality of the data. The deception that occurs when recruiting research subjects through social media, especially when financial incentives are involved, is another crucial topic to cover. It is becoming more and more common to see robots being used to repeatedly complete surveys and demand payment for each completion. This has become a very serious issue, especially when recruiting from certain platforms. Nevertheless, this problem has been solved in many studies by having participants check a box to confirm that they are human and most standard computer software can identify this issue and prevent the participant from continuing.

Limited Access

The fact that not everyone has access to social media platforms is a significant drawback of using them. Over 10% of Americans do not have access to the internet due to either financial constraints or a deliberate decision to live in a society without it. For this reason alone, people and communities falling into this category might be left out of significant research; this phenomenon would introduce a clear sampling bias into any study that uses social media. On the other hand, traditional methods like radio and newspapers do not require the internet, making them potentially more accessible to this demographic.

Conclusion

While there are many benefits to recruiting through social media, researchers should carefully weigh any potential drawbacks and determine if this is the best recruitment strategy for their study. In the end, the research question, the target population, and the resources available will determine which recruitment strategy is used. For the purpose of reducing bias and boosting sample representativeness, researchers ought to think about integrating social media recruitment with alternative techniques.

Reference

Oudat, Q. and Bakas, T., 2023. Merits and pitfalls of social media as a platform for recruitment of study participants. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 25, p.e47705.