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Challenges in Participant Recruitment and Data Collection - A Multi-national Perspective

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Jef I. Richards, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

Gayle Kerr, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

Nicolas Pontes, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

Introduction

With the rapid evolution of digital advertising, social media, and online research tools, our world continues to shrink. As academics and researchers, we explore phenomena that cross national borders. But the intellectual questions we seek to answer bring their own set of practical challenges, some new and some variations on an old theme. In this new environment, we can no longer rely on student samples, or even single country non-student convenience samples. In this special session, researchers from several countries shared their experiences and provided suggestions for planning and implementing effective research that spans the globe.

The extensive international experience of the panelists allowed provision of practical tips to increase chances for success in multi-national research. Some of the specific areas that were discussed included:

- Dealing with one or more ethical review boards, or having no institutional review board process at all
- Recruiting student & non-student samples in different environments
- Different approaches to participant incentives across cultures
- Managing differing participant expectations, including language considerations
- Timing considerations for research plans and proposals

The interactive panel discussion provided the opportunity to attendees to learn from past mistakes and current successes, along with offering a forum to help initiate discussions between potential cross-national collaborators.

Collecting Data Across International Borders: Cultural And Institutional Challenges

Elizabeth Taylor Quilliam, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

Advances in technology have facilitated international collaborations, with online survey tools and videoconferencing erasing barriers. Still, institutional and cultural differences confront researchers: varying time zones, language and translation issues, policies regarding incentives and protection of human subjects. This presentation reviewed suggestions for how to plan and

implement studies when researchers and study participants span the globe, using recent collaborations on social media studies in the US and Korea as examples.

If You Pay Them They Will Come: Establishing Non-Student Research Participant Pools In Australia Vs. US

Anna R. McAlister, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

In this session, McAlister reviewed the methods used to establish a participant pool consisting of adults (primarily non-students) recruited from the local community, drawing on experience establishing community member participant pools in Australia and the United States. Specific topics addressed included where to recruit, how to word advertisements, who to target, and how much to reimburse participants for their time spent participating in studies. The primary tool reviewed was the SONA Systems software, which is an online tool used to advertise studies and to track participation of research volunteers. As such, it may be of interest to anyone who is interested in establishing either a community pool for paid research participation or a student pool that offers course credit to reimburse research participation.

Shopping Is Our National Pastime: Recruiting In Retail Settings / Mall Intercepts, Working With Managers

Patricia Huddleston, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

With more than 25 years of experience collecting data in a variety of settings, including post-communist and 2nd world countries where data collection can pose unique challenges, Huddleston offered an overview of methods used to gain access to retail settings from decision makers. The presentation also reviewed participant recruitment using a mall intercept approach in a variety of nations and settings.

Case Studies In Cross-Border Research & Data Collection

Jef I. Richards, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI
Gayle Kerr, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

Researchers spanning multiple nations and cultures can encounter a number of problems, as well as some unique opportunities. Richards and Kerr, drawing upon their recent experience with actual studies as well as discussions with other researchers, illustrated some of the unique practical issues that arise when researchers in multiple countries collaborate. This session encompassed issues of culture, communication, regulation, and data collection.

Facilitator Or Inhibitor? The Influence Of Academic Structure On International Collaborations

Nicolas Pontes, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

In the final panel presentation, Pontes discussed the differences in academic structures between Australia and Latin America. He elaborated on the challenges imposed by local policies on international collaboration and opportunities derived from specific research grant agreements. Pontes drew on his experience establishing research collaborations between Australia and Latin America, and Australia and North America, to elaborate and illustrate his perspective on both challenges and best practices.