BG Research Online

SAGE Research Methods: Doing Research Online

What are *SAGE Research Methods* Case Studies?

SAGE Research Methods Cases are used for teaching and learning social science research methods in more than 350 institutions worldwide. Cases are peer-reviewed and are . . .

- **Short** and **accessible** accounts of **research methods** in the context of **real research projects**

- **Pedagogically focused** to help students understand the practicalities of doing research

- **Introductory in tone**: explanatory and jargon-free

- **Engaging**: using examples and writing devices that reach out to the student reader and make research feel relevant, meaningful and useful

What is the focus of Doing Research Online Cases?

Main types of cases in the Doing Research Online collection include:

- Cases **highlighting challenges of specific steps of research** e.g. data collection from Twitter; recruiting participants online; getting ethics committee approval for an innovative methodology; creating, managing and storing digital data effectively;

- Cases about using **innovative digital methods** e.g. the use of gaming techniques for social research, virtual ethnography

- Cases highlighting **challenges of redesigning research studies/adapting research plans** for online and what methodological implications this presents

- Cases **highlighting challenges of online data analysis**, including qual, quant and big data

Please discuss the focus of your case study with your editorial contact before you start writing. If your case study deviates from the above topics this must be made clear to your editorial contact, who will be able to advice as to whether the focus is within the scope of this resource.

Each case study should include a brief overview of the entire project, but focus in-depth on just one or two stages or aspects of the research, for example data collection or data analysis.

Whilst each case study will be drawn from a specific research project, authors should seek to draw out lessons that are widely applicable. The aim of these case studies is to introduce the reader to the topic at hand and to provide **methodological guidance** and **practical insights** which can be **employed in their own research.**

Authors: Please complete only the white fields below.

Case Study Title	Recruiting participants via social media: Like, Share, Block, Report
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1	Name	*Dr. Aimee Quickfall*
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Author bio. *Please include a separate biography for each author. Maximum of 200 words per author.*		Dr. Aimee Quickfall is Head of Programmes for Primary and Early Years Initial Teacher Education at Bishop Grosseteste University. She was a primary and early years teacher for 15 years and loves helping others to achieve their dream of being a life-changing teacher; her trainees are some of the loveliest people on Earth. Aimee's current research interests are the experiences of teachers who are also mothers, well-being and workload for teachers and teacher trainees and the experiences of students on her programmes. Her most frequently used methodologies/methods are narrative and feminist approaches, life-history interviews and discourse analysis.
Discipline *Alert your editorial contact if your field is not included prior to writing your entry.*		*Education [D2]*
Academic Level of intended readership		**Advanced Undergraduate**
Published articles		Lawrence, C., Rimmer, J. and Quickfall, A. (2021) Using an arts-based design to explore the experience of shared reading: a pilot study. *The Journal of Arts and Communities.* ISSN 1757-1936 (In Press) Thompson, S., Clarke, E., Quickfall, A. & Glazzard, J. (2020) Averting the crisis in trainee teacher well-being – learning lessons across European contexts: A comparative study. Journal of Comparative & *International Higher Education*. 12(Fall), 38-56, 2020. https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v12iFall.1439 Quickfall, A. (2018). Insiderness in my Pilot Study Research. *Hillary Place Papers*, Vol. 4, April 2018.
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Word count of blank case study template: 1500.
Abstract

The abstract should be a concise summary of your case study. What aspect of the research process, or specific methodological and practical challenges, will your case study address? It should be succinct and enticing, and should incorporate key words and concepts discussed in the body of the text. Please do not *cite references within the abstract.*

Social media is a popular method for recruiting research participants and especially during the current pandemic. Researchers are increasingly using platforms like Facebook and Twitter to engage with participant groups, either to collect data directly; for example by posting links to online surveys, or to recruit participants for further research activity; for example to inform them of interviews or focus groups. Whilst use of social media to gather data and recruit participants is increasing rapidly, development of guidance for this activity has not kept up with engagement.

For my doctoral main study I recruited participants for face to face interviews using social media (Twitter). Little has been written about the ethical implications of this method of recruitment and my experiences have taught me a lot – from potential participants 'outing' themselves publicly as being involved, to over 11,500 people engaging in my tweet when I only needed 6 participants! What had seemed a very easy way to attract participants became a bit of a minefield, which hopefully I can help you negotiate successfully for your study as there are benefits to social media participant recruitment. I have included some extracts from my research journal (labelled Fourth Shift Stories, as they were written after teaching, parenting and studying were completed) so you can see what I was thinking at the time, as well as my reflections looking back on the study.

Learning Outcomes
Please refer back to these learning outcomes when writing your case study. Your case study must satisfy each proposed outcome. It is vital that you provide achievable and measurable learning outcomes. Please see the links below for guidance on writing effective learning outcomes:

- *Writing learning outcomes*
- *Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs*

[Insert 3–5 learning outcomes under the following statement: "By the end of this case, students should be able to . . ."].

By the end of this guide, students should be able to . . .

- Understand potential ethical issues in recruiting participants via social media

- Reflect on potential risks to the researcher from recruiting participants via social media

- Consider the benefits and strategies for using recruitment via social media

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Case Study

[Insert your case study here. The main body of the text should be between 2,000 and 5,000 words.]

Headings and sub-headings add structure to the body of your case, enhance online discoverability and make your case easier to read on screen. This template includes suggested headings, you should also add your own according to the focus of your case study.

Each main section with a heading must be followed by a Section Summary. *Each Section Summary should consist of 2-3 bullet points, written out as full sentences, succinctly encapsulating the preceding section.*

Suggested headings:

Project Overview and Context

Includes information about the substantive focus of your research project. Why were you interested in studying this topic, particularly using the methods you chose? Are the methods you chose typical for researching your topic? If not, explain your choice of methods. This section should not read as a literature review, but should be a reflective exploration of your research interests.

My research project involved interviewing teachers in Early Years and Primary education about their experiences of being mothers and educators of young children at the same time. This was a highly personal project for me, as a teacher and a mother at the time and now a lecturer and a mother, and meant that I was working as an 'insider researcher'; researching my own group. The interviews were designed to be unstructured, with no list of questions planned in advance. The method of interviewing I chose is called 'life-history interview' because it asks the participant to describe what has happened over their lifetime. Life story interviews are unstructured, ask the participant to tell the story of their life, or a particular event or period (Cole & Knowles, 2001). The analysis can vary widely, but the content of the life story is the source of the data and 'truth' for the study.

Life stories, then, are intimately connected to cultural locations, to social position and even social privilege as well as to historical periods, which provide different opportunities for 'the construction and expression of selfhood' (Goodson, 2013, p.25).

Life-history and other forms of unstructured interview are common in the sort of qualitative study I did, although recruiting participants via social media is less common and was not the initial plan.

Section summary
- *The study was highly personal and involved me researching people in my own situation – insider research.*
- *The study was a qualitative and main method was a face to face unstructured 'life history' interview*

Research Design

*Includes an investigation into how you designed your study, taking into account any fundamental decisions you had to make. **This section should emphasize the aspects of the research project – specific methods or challenges - that you will focus on in this case study**. You should ensure that you define and explain any key terms for student readers.*

I piloted my project with one participant, to check that the interview method would work in the main study. The pilot project participant, pseudonym 'Sian', was a friend and colleague of mine who I recruited just by talking about my doctorate a lot! I felt that having insider research relationships of the close nature that Sian and I had would perhaps not be ideal for the main study. Sian's interview was difficult to analyse because of previous knowledge that ethically, should not be included; researcher assumptions about what participants mean or about their previous experiences are often cited as a major drawback in trying to conduct insider research (Couture, Zaidi & Maticka-Tyndall, 2012). Because there were lots of ethical issues around the 'insider' research relationship (see Quickfall, 2018, for further ethical anguish) I decided to use social media recruitment for the main study, so that the participants would not be known to me, and there would be no complications with mentions of shared friendships or experiences…little did I know that using social media would throw up all sorts of other ethical issues!

For my main study, participants were recruited through social media. I made a decision to use a personal Twitter account for this purpose rather than a project account, so that potential participants could 'see' the researcher in advance. I had to think carefully about the posts that I made on this account before and during the recruitment, so that the participant sample was not skewed by strong political views – although I found this regime very difficult to keep up and a scroll through my timeline would give you a good idea of what I am like in real life! A single advert was posted on Twitter with email contact information and brief information about the study. Recruitment via social media can engage potential participants who are hard to reach and unlikely to take part through other recruitment methods (Khatri et al., 2015; Sikkens et al., 2017). Through a single advert posted on Twitter, subsequent 're-tweets' (forwarded posts on other user's accounts), particularly from networks of individuals (such as WomenEd and the MTPT Project, 2019) engaged a large group of people in the tweet by an 'organic growth' (Khatri et al,. 2015, p.4). This method of recruitment may introduce demographic selection bias (Khatri et al., 2015), particularly when the researcher's profile gives a strong indication of political beliefs and key indicators, such as motherhood.

26 individuals responded to this advertisement by email and many Twitter users responded directly to the message in Twitter. Only email responses were taken forward, due to a concern that anyone responding directly (and publically) to the 'tweet' expressing an intention to participate had reduced or eliminated the chance of their data remaining anonymous. Fortunately, people who had publicly responded tended not to send an email requesting further details. This was an interesting 'side-finding'; I wondered if this group of people wanted others to think they were participating, had dissuaded themselves from taking participation further because of the public messages, or perhaps they expected me to respond publicly too, rather than the 'please email for further details' which became my standard response.

The email respondees were contacted within two days with the approved information sheet and a short questionnaire to ascertain suitability for the study:
- Year group currently/most recently taught
- Number of children and ages

- First half of postcode/nearest town

Social media recruitment techniques can present issues for the researcher, as it is difficult to confirm the age, status and location of the potential participants and they may misrepresent or misunderstand the criteria for participation (Samuel, 2017). Requesting this information before organizing an interview date and venue was generally successful in identifying suitable participants.

Section summary

- *Insider researcher ethical issues during the pilot study led me to considering online participant recruitment*

  - *Social media recruitment provided the participant numbers required for the study*
  - *There are practical considerations in social media recruitment, such as confirming the criteria for participation (age, gender, status, etc).*

Research Practicalities

*This should include a discussion of the **primary aspects of focus** for this case study.*

Which aspects of the process you had to navigate when conducting your research will hold the most value for the student reader? For example, how did you recruit participants of your study, or access secondary data? What method was employed for data collection or data analysis? How did you work within a wider research team? What ethical considerations were essential? You might choose to rename this section, or to include a subsequent section (or sections) with a sub-heading that directly relates to the primary focus of the case study.

Recruitment via social media was successful, in terms of attracting the number of participants I had hoped for, and proved to be easy in terms of collecting responses, contacting prospective participants and quick recruitment – six participants were recruited, initial information collected and shared and interviews set up within a week of the advert going out on Twitter. This was a really positive aspect of the recruitment method. However, there were ethical dilemmas to be resolved:

Anonymity

It is suggested that it is impossible to anonymise insider data (Murphy & Dingwall, 2001), because members of the community will identify themselves and others. Breaches of privacy are a real possibility in this sort of qualitative research, even when pseudonyms are employed (Etter-Lewis, 1996) and so as a researcher it is important to protect participants from harm that may come from them telling their stories (Smythe and Murray, 2000). An example of negotiating issues around anonymity comes from Welch, Happell & Edwards, (2010), who simply do not promise anonymity, but in their findings do not give any details about participants or verbatim quotes.

Part of the decision to recruit participants via social media came from reflections on the pilot study and how my insider relationship with Sian had increased the risk of her story being identified. I had also considered that being an outsider researcher might be preferable to

participants (Blythe et al, 2013), who might feel more assured of anonymity because there is no perceived link between them and the researcher; the reported responses could be 'anyone'.

Use of social media for recruitment adds to the issue of anonymity (Henderson et al.,, 2013). Many potential participants responded on Twitter directly, disclosing to a potential audience of millions that they were intending to take part in the study. Henderson et al. (2013) suggest that researchers using social media for recruitment share their ethical dilemmas and issues, to better inform the research community in this expanding and little investigated area.

Informed Consent
There are identifiable ethical dilemmas around informed consent (Humphrey 2012), for example, informed consent rituals may become a formality, not a real consideration of whether to take part or not (Juritzen et al., 2011). However, consent could be considered a renegotiated situation, throughout the research process, rather than a fixed, summative point (Miller & Bell, 2002). Fully informing participants, particularly in this type of qualitative study might not be possible or desirable, as the research methodology and methods may benefit from revision throughout the process (Juritzen et al., 2011). I also made a decision not to look at participant Twitter timelines, so that the consent they had given just applied to the information shared in their interviews, and not data that I had subconsciously absorbed from their Twitter accounts.

Following advice from my supervisors, participants were sent the information sheet in advance of the interview and given opportunities to withdraw, or to not respond and this was made explicit to them in email communications. Before interviews began, the information sheet was shared in person and the consent form explained verbally.

Do No Harm
Insider research is difficult and emotional (Cooper & Rogers, 2015; Coy, 2006) making the researcher question their own place in the research process. This can be 'painful, emotional and provocative' (Cooper & Rogers, 2015, p.6.). The emotional effects can persist, and use of social media exacerbated this for me.

I found that I was not able to disentangle myself from the research and the stories of the women (Moore, 2007), and seeing them on social media did not help with detachment from their stories. Detachment can be difficult for insider researchers (Sikes & Potts, 2008). At times, the ethical principle of 'do no harm' was not an idea I was applying to my own well-being and emotional load. As Sikes and Hall (2020) attest, there is 'no shame in looking after our own well-being as we would that of participants when the personal costs do become too harmful' (p.169), however as they acknowledge, our passion as researchers to complete our work and improve conditions for the groups we are working with means that often as researchers we see the emotional pain as part of the work and a price that is well worth paying.

Section summary
- *Ethical considerations such as anonymity, consent and harm are just as important when considering participant recruitment via social media*
- *Considering your own well-being as a researcher is often overlooked, but vital.*

Method in Action

This should be a "warts and all" description and evaluation of how your chosen research method/approach actually worked in practice. What went well? What did not go to plan? What challenges did you face? How did you respond? What would you do differently?

There were lots of research highs and lows associated with use of social media for participant recruitment, which I will expand on here, using the language of Twitter for the headings.

Like
If you click 'like' on a Twitter post (a message), it can mean a confusing range of things, from approving of the comment made, to liking the person who posted it, to acknowledging that you have read it. In my recruitment process there were some interesting uses of the 'like' function.

One issue that I had not foreseen, but came up several times was of potential participants going through my Twitter timeline and 'liking' previous posts. In one example, 'liking' all of my previous posts, going back over a year.

4th Shift Story: like, retweet
More twitter issues – one of the prospective participants has been through my timeline, going back over a year, and 'liked' or 'retweeted' lots of my tweets. Some of these do relate to teacher mothers, schools, Ofsted, etc…but some are related to my political views, family, personal interests. Should I have kept the account strictly research related? I started it for research purposes, but it quickly became 'my own' and now it could be influencing my participants to story their experiences in certain ways…either to affiliate with my views, or to draw distinctions between us.

Another issue was that of potential participants 'liking' themselves into a zero anonymity position. As soon as the advert was posted on Twitter, prospective participants began replying to the advert publicly, to communicate their intent to participate and to 'tag in' others who might be interested. This presented me with an immediate dilemma, in terms of whether it would be ethical to include these women. Clearly as adults, they had a right to communicate this, and a level of understanding in the waiver of anonymity could be assumed. However, concerns emerged that participants had announced to the world via twitter that their stories would likely be part of the work, before they had an understanding of what their data may look like in the finished work.

Follow

If you follow someone on Twitter, you will see their posts in your timeline. I made a conscious decision not to 'follow' my participants on social media, however most of them did follow me, and because of shared networks I often saw their posts. This was at times quite difficult for me as a researcher:

4th Shift Story: Twitter
I have taken the twitter app off my phone for a while, as one of my interview participants keeps popping up in my timeline and it looks like she is having a tough time at work. I feel like I need to keep my distance, but would find it hard not to engage if I read the tweets. The ethics here are complex. I have a relationship with her now, but the agreement was a **research relationship**.

Block

If you block someone on Twitter, you cannot see each other's posts or send each other messages.I did not block any of my participants on Twitter, but I did have to 'block' some of the activity associated with participant recuitment and found myself facing the prospect of a lot more 'blocking' becoming necessary. The initial advert for my project attracted an enormous amount of attention – I needed six participants, yet within a few days, 11,615 people had seen the advert, and 1,172 people had engaged with it.

4th Shift Story: twitter

The interest in the twitter ad was amazing – retweets by WomenEd meant that I had a lot of interest, quickly. I am quickly feeling like the recruitment process is out of my control, as potential participants publicly announce that they are going to take part, some even put their personal email addresses in the public responses to the advert. This is making me feel so uncomfortable, and also makes me realise how my carefully thought-out ethics proposal doesn't account for some of the social media issues.

Report

Making a 'report' on Twitter means flagging up a post to the platform administrators for breaching the law or the agreed terms of conduct on Twitter. I did not have to 'report' any of my participants in the Twitter sense, however, there were aspects of the ethics for the study which I did report to my supervisors when they became too much for me to handle on my own. For example, because of the large interest in the study, I had to quickly start thinking about how to select participants from a potentially huge field, and the ethical issues in asking people to get in touch and then not include them. My supervisors were fantastic at helping me find a way through examples such as this:

4th Shift Story: Picking your team

One issue with selecting participants by asking some criteria questions is that I feel like the kid picking the team in PE at school. It is a position of power, where I decide who gets in and who doesn't. Now, I need parameters and I don't have the resources to interview everyone who is interested in the study…but taking the approach I have, I don't have the same justification for strict selection of a group to match a hypothesis. I am already saying that stories are unique and that my analysis looks for discourses and positions towards them…perhaps any story from any teacher mother could provide the material for this.

Sometimes issues would arise that did not at first seem problematic, but reporting these to my supervisors and talking them through with the ethics committee at my university and other researchers really helped. Another example where this happened is when I found that potential participants, perhaps because of the 'open' nature of social media, began asking me questions about my situation and status:

4th Shift Story: question

The first email response I got from a potential participant asked a simple question: are you a teacher mother, too? I replied honestly – yes, but if you choose to participate, I want to know about your story.

Section summary

- *Whilst the social media recruitment method was chosen to dodge some ethical issues, others quickly arose, with limited literature in this area to draw upon.*
- *Using Twitter produced some alternative 'like, follow, block, report' experiences.*

Practical Lessons Learned

This is perhaps the most important section of your research methods case study. This should be an in-depth reflection on the specific methods/approaches used in the research project, detailing the important lessons you learned from this experience. Student readers must be able to learn from these lessons in order to inform their own research projects.

Whilst use of Twitter for participant recruitment was successful in terms of speed and ease of communication with the target group, who can be considered 'hard to reach', there were many ethical issues that this method raised, and the lack of guidance on the nuances of this method in the main ethics literature was troubling. I have written this section in two parts; considerations for thinking about your participants, and considerations when thinking about yourself as a researcher.

An Ethic of Care for Participants and Prospective Participants
Anonymity and 'outing' on Twitter

After lengthy discussions with my supervisors, and reflections on the ethics of excluding interested women from the study, I decided to request email contact from prospective participants and inform people who had declared their intent to participate publically that their anonymity could not be assured. Interestingly, none of the prospective participants who communicated their intent to participate on Twitter did make contact via email, which raises questions for future study in terms of what these announcements of participation really mean, and what might have dissuaded them. It is important to stress to participants how they can anonymously express an interest in participating in your study and I would recommend never asking them to comment in a thread that others can read. Have a back up plan for what you will do, if they do!

Pressure to participate

My advert, once posted, was re-tweeted by several influential education groups on Twitter. Initially, I was grateful for this, as it meant the advertisement would be seen by their thousands of followers and reach women that I had no contact with through ordinary channels. However, this threw up several issues that I had not anticipated. Some prospective participants assumed that the research was being done in conjunction with, or funded by these groups, which once identified, could be clarified but I wondered whether some participants had decided to get involved because they assumed a trusted organisation had validated the project. Some participants expressed great loyalties to the groups during their interviews, which again made me question whether they would have taken part without the additional 'sway' of a group who had promoted the study without any details about what the research entailed. Again, if you are ready for this happening, you can address this in your information sheet and in any responses to participants.

Numbers and Reach

One benefit of social media recruitment in this case, which is not always the outcome, is that a large number of women responded to the advert and I recruited beyond the sample size I had initially planned. This also brought some dilemmas, and raised potential issues for future work. In the advert, benefits of taking part were briefly outlined, and together with the endorsement by re-tweet of several groups, the study appeared to be an attractive opportunity to talk about experiences with a researcher who shared teaching and motherhood with the participants. Because of the nature of social media and the potential for participants to gain a sense of 'knowing' the researcher or research team before the research activity, selection and rejection of participants is not as straightforward as the traditional email or letter to say they have not been shortlisted this time. Rejected prospective participants can continue to follow the research on social media and through other linked channels. They may read the posts of participants who have found the research project useful or otherwise. They may decide to engage with outputs from the project. In the short word limit allowed for posts on some platforms, and the limited opportunity to grab the attention of prospective participants on all platforms, explaining the process for selection from a large group may not be possible, or the researcher may not have anticipated the level of interest.

Relationships following the research
Participants recruited via social media not only have access to previous posts, 'likes' and follower lists on the recruiter's account, they also have access to social media interaction following their involvement in the research, unless the researcher closes down the account, or blocks participants. Likewise, the researcher often has access to the social media timelines and interactions of their participants, from before the research relationship begins, and afterwards. Ethics guidelines do not cover this complex relationship, where information about the participant and researcher is readily available and is often blurred by the research activity (for example, one of my participants mentioned something they had posted on Twitter, assuming that I would have read it and seen replies to the post).

An Ethic of Care for the self as Researcher
Anonymity of the Researcher
As a researcher in search of participants, I set up my twitter social media account with the express intention to use it for my doctoral work, both in terms of recruitment but also for dissemination of findings and connecting with relevant groups and individuals that the research is relevant to. I posted and interacted on Twitter with this in mind, trying to maintain a professional feel to my profile and posts. However, this was not as easy as it sounds! When commenting on new items and reposting articles and posts (for example, regarding the gender pay gap and maternity rights) my political views would have been apparent to prospective participants. The accounts that I chose to follow, including feminist education groups, would also be visible and give an indication of my affiliations. As a researcher, anonymity is compromised in this respect, as unless a sterile account is set up, participants will know about you before the research begins. Social media accounts also give the potential to link to other platforms, such as university websites, academic profiles and previous work that is online, where prospective participants can access further information about the researcher. Whilst this has benefits in terms of transparency and some assurance for the participant that the researcher is involved in approved research, there are also issues raised about control of what information is available to participants and whether this information creates further power and bias challenges for the research. For example, a participant could easily take details from my Twitter account and link me to my place of work or study, then find out that I work with many local schools, potentially

including their own; this could exert pressure on them to participate. However, it could be argued that having access to this information gives the prospective participant a more informed choice about participation.

Relationships following the research
In my study, participants shared personal experiences and challenges that were emotionally charged. I had not anticipated the unique nature of social media in terms of the continuation of the relationship after this emotionally charged interview. In a traditional study, participants recruited via mailshot or poster would potentially never cross paths with the researcher again. Social media meant that participants could 'follow' or 'friend' my account, and through shared networks, their posts would appear on my own timeline, sometimes with reference to experiences or situations that they had shared with me during the interview. Luckily, I had my supervisors to support me with this and to remind me that what had been agreed was a research relationship, and nothing more – but it still caused some anxiety around future relationships with participants on social media.

In a traditional recruitment activity, participants would have very little information about the researcher, apart from contact details. Using social media means that participants potentially have increased access to information about the researcher/team, which has advantages in terms of informed consent. However, this can also lead to a blurring of the lines within the research relationship. My participants, having been recruited via Twitter, often tag my twitter handle in posts that are related to the research project, which to me as a researcher feels like an appropriate thing to do. But sometimes the boundaries are not so easily defined. After carrying out interviews with my participants, I met one of them at an education event when we were both with colleagues from our respective organisations. My participant negotiated this brilliantly, introducing me to colleagues and explaining that we knew each other from social media interactions, but this highlighted to me the difficulty in negotiating these relationships and the floundering I probably would have engaged in, had my participant not taken the lead. The feeling of meeting her again, knowing some of her story and having gone through a very personal and emotional two hour interview with her, was a similar feeling to meeting an old friend, and my initial reaction would have been to give her a hug if the research relationship had not created a barrier there. The meeting prompted some reflection about how the research relationship, whilst necessary and part of the ethical assurance and protection of participant and researcher, needs to be negotiated properly, not left to chance or the quick wits of a participant.

Section summary
- *Whilst recruitment via social media has many benefits, it is very helpful to consider some of the practical and ethical situations that can arise*
- *With careful thought and help from supervisors/ethics advisors, it is possible to negotiate this recruitment method*
- *As a researcher, you must focus on your own well-being and safety as well.*

Conclusion
Includes a round-up of the issues discussed in your case study. This should not *be a discussion of conclusions drawn from the research findings, but should focus reflectively on the research methodology. Include just enough detail of your findings to enable the reader to understand how the method/approach you used could be utilized by others. Would you recommend using this*

method/approach or, on reflection, would you make difference choices in the future? **What can readers learn from your experience and apply to their own research?**

The use of social media for recruitment of participants has many strengths, including the number of people you can advertise to, and access to 'hard to reach' groups. Social media recruitment is quick, cheap to roll out and gives participants the initial freedom to scroll past if they are not interested. Some of the power issues involved in other recruitment techniques are sidestepped by using social media platforms. Whilst my study was with teacher mothers, social media recruitment can be used for a wide range of participant groups. Again, whilst my study was qualitative and based in the field of education, social media recruitment can be very effective for quantitative studies in other fields, too.

Whilst social media recruitment did quickly yield a participant group for my main study, it has raised many issues, which warrant further discussion and consideration by the wider research community, particularly amongst those of us who work with or seek to include hard to reach and vulnerable groups of participants.

In the previous sections, I outlined some of the specific issues that occurred in my own study. In this section, a 'sketchlist' is outlined that if used, may pre-empt some of the issues that can occur using social media for recruitment. Please feel free to 'like and share'!

Sketchlist for using Social Media for Participant Recruitment

- **Consider risks to yourself, as researcher, before embarking on social media recruitment:**
  1. Are you using your own social media account?
  2. Are your activities on this account going to present any obvious problems? E.g. affiliation with groups, views expressed.
  3. If your social media account is linked to others, or makes it easier to identify you on other platforms, are you happy for prospective participants to have access to this information?
  4. How will you tackle interactions on this account, for example, participants making friend requests, responding to future posts?
  5. Have you got support in place for yourself?
  6. Are you happy for participants to comment on the project on social media, during and after participation? Consider discussing this with them as part of the information sharing process.
- **Consider risks to your prospective participants:**
  1. If prospective participants respond publicly to your advert, will you still include them? Will you need to include this in your brief/debrief to participants, in terms of how identifiable they will be in your work?
  2. You may have many more prospective participants than you require for the study – have a procedure in place for selection and communication.
  3. Have you communicated clearly to participants what your future relationship will be on the social media platform?
  4. If you are asking other organisations/individuals to promote your advert on social media, consider the pressure to participate this may bring about, including moral and political imperatives.

Discussion Questions

[Insert three to five discussion questions on the methods described in your case study]

Discussion questions should be suitable for eliciting debate and critical thinking. Avoid questions which require only a single-word answer such as "yes" or "no."

1. If you were using social media for participant recruitment, how would you protect yourself as a researcher?
2. Consider how these ethical dilemmas may have appeared differently to the participants; might they have had other dilemmas in choosing to take part?
3. Have you come up with creative methods for avoiding the like, follow, block, report dilemmas that I encountered? If so, please share these with me @DrAimeeQuicks on Twitter (if you are comfortable with that!)

Multiple Choice Quiz Questions

[Insert three to five multiple choice quiz questions here. Each question should have only three possible answers (A, B, or C). Please indicate the correct answer by writing CORRECT after the relevant answer.]

Multiple Choice Quiz Questions should test readers' understanding of your case study, and should not require any previous knowledge. They should relate to the research methodology, rather that the research findings.

1. Which of these is a major ethical dilemma when using social media for recruitment?
   a) Advertising campaigns that clash with your recruitment
   b) Protecting the anonymity of your participants CORRECT
   c) Skewed sample of participants who all use social media
2. Why is it important to consider the needs of the researcher when planning a project?
   a) So that everyone involved has a fair amount of attention
   b) Because without the researcher, there would be no research
   c) For a project to be ethical, it must also be safe and ethical for the researcher CORRECT
3. Why do you need a plan for over-recruitment of prospective participants via social media recruitment?

a) Because as a researcher you should deal with prospective participants fairly and have a plan in place for selecting the required number CORRECT

b) Because participants may ask to see this once they are part of the study

c) You won't get ethical approval without a plan

Further Reading

Please ensure content is inclusive and represents diverse voices. In your references, further readings and web resources you should aim to represent a diversity of people. We have a global readership and we want students of a wide range of perspectives to see themselves reflected in our pedagogical materials.

[Insert list of up to six further readings here]

- Iphofen, R., & Tolich, M. (2018). The sage handbook of qualitative research ethics. SAGE Publications Ltd https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781526435446

- Miller, T., Birch, M., Mauthner, M., & Jessop, J. (Eds.) (2012). Ethics in qualitative research (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications Ltd https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781473913912

- Henderson, M., Johnson, N. & Auld, G. (2013). Silences of ethical practice: dilemmas for researchers using social media. *Education Research and Education*, 19:6, pp.546 – 560.

- Khatri, C., Chapman, S. J., Glasbey, J., Kelly, M., Nepogodiev, D., Bhangu, A., Fitzgerald, J. & STARSurg Committee. (2015). Social media and internet driven study recruitment: evaluating a new model for promoting collaborator engagement and participation. *PloS one*, 10(3).

- Sikkens, E., van San, M., Sieckelinck, S., Boeije, H., & De Winter, M. (2017). Participant recruitment through social media: Lessons learned from a qualitative radicalization study using Facebook. *Field Methods*, 29(2), 130-139.

Web Resources

[Insert links to up to six relevant web resources here]

- SAGE Research Ethics Map (links to connected areas and resources):

  https://methods.sagepub.com/methods-map/research-ethics

- American Psychological Society ethics advice:

  https://www.apa.org/monitor/jan03/principles

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[Insert bibliography of references cited in text here]

References should conform to American Psychological Association (APA) style, 7th edition, and should contain the digital object identifier (DOI) where available. SAGE will not accept cases that are incorrectly referenced. Please ensure accuracy before submission. For help on reference styling see https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines*.*

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Khatri, C., Chapman, S. J., Glasbey, J., Kelly, M., Nepogodiev, D., Bhangu, A., Fitzgerald, J. & STARSurg Committee. (2015). Social media and internet driven study recruitment: evaluating a new model for promoting collaborator engagement and participation. PloS one, 10(3).

Maternity Teacher Paternity Teacher Project (2019). Survey of maternity/paternity leave. Accessed via: https://www.mtpt.org.uk/

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