



Recruiting Hard-to-Reach Populations in KnowledgePanel Europe: Strategies and Challenges

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Introduction

The Challenge: We often talk about "**hard-to-reach**" populations – individuals who are difficult to include in research due to various factors.

Today, we'll explore the strategies we use to effectively recruit hard-to-reach populations for **Ipsos' probability panel in Europe**. We share 2 cases covering:

- **Diverse Data Collection Methods:** From postal and face-to-face to telephone recruitment.
- **Tailored Approaches:** Adapting our materials to attract different target groups.
- **Challenges and Opportunities:** Discussing the hurdles and possibilities in building a high-quality representative probability-based panel.

What is KnowledgePanel?

Ipsos **KnowledgePanel**[®] is Ipsos' probability-based panel, a premium source of statistically-valid, nationally representative data at speed.

- 1999** ■ Launch of KnowledgePanel US
- 2020** ■ Launch of KnowledgePanel UK
- 2022** ■ Launch of KnowledgePanel Europe

Eight core principles of KnowledgePanel

1) Random probability sampling

2) High coverage of the population

3) Inclusion of hard-to-reach and digitally excluded

4) Minimizing mode effects

5) Fast data collection

6) Extensive panellist profiling

7) Minimizing respondent fatigue, burden and attrition

8) Evidence-based approach

Background

"Hard-to-reach" is a broad term encompassing groups who are **consistently under-represented** in research. This can include:

- Young people
- The elderly
- Individuals with low income or low education levels
- Other groups facing barriers to participation (digitally-excluded).

Challenges:

- Lack of readily available contact information
- Geographic dispersion
- Reluctance or hesitation to participate in research
- Varying levels of digital literacy and accessibility.

Goal: Identify effective recruitment strategies and materials to enhance recruitment rates among hard-to-reach groups.

Method

Methodology – CASE 1

Country: Poland

Sample: Pilot results for ABS and F2F

Telephone Recruitment	Random-Digit Dialling(RDD) with national representative sample including dual mobile and landline frame.
Address-based Sampling (ABS)	National representative sample from National Register (PESEL) – Region X Settlement Size.
Face-To-Face Recruitment (F2F)	National clustered 55+ sample from National Register (PESEL) focussing on rural areas and towns & cities up to 100 000 inhabitants.

Analysis: Hard-to-reach profile by recruitment strategy.

Methodology – CASE 2

Country: Spain

Sample: National representative samples stratified by province. Samples included one invitation and one reminder.

Sample Frame: El Catastro Inmobiliario - Real Estate Register

Fieldwork: September 2023 – September 2024.

Materials: Variation in:

- Standard materials (standard letter, reminder letter, brochure 4 pages, registration incentive)
- Formal letter & postcard reminder
- Adapted brochures (shortened – 2 pages, no brochure).
- Lower registration incentive
- Paper registration form.

Analysis: Hard-to-reach profile by recruitment materials.

Results

CASE 1 – Diverse Recruitment Methods

	All recruits	RECRUITMENT STRATEGY		
		RDD (n=1873)	ABS (n=158)	F2F (55+) (n=79)
Education level	Low education	2% ^b	11% ^a	20% ^a
	Medium education	36% ^b	56% ^a	63% ^a
	High education	62% ^c	32% ^a	17% ^b
Digital exclusion	Digitally-excluded	7% ^b	0%	57% ^a
	Young (16-24) (N ABS = 1500, pop prop = 10%)	4% ^a	56% ^b	
Age groups	Middle aged group (25-54) (N ABS = 752, pop prop = 51%)	68% ^a	29% ^b	
	Older age group (55+) (N ABS = 1248, pop prop = 39%)	28% ^a	15% ^b	

Values in same row not sharing same subscript are significantly different at $p < .05$.

CASE 1 – Diverse Recruitment Methods

	55+ recruits	RECRUITMENT STRATEGY		
		RDD (n=528)	ABS (n=24)	F2F (n=79)
Education level	Low education	2% ^b	0%	20% ^a
	Medium education	45% ^b	50% ^{a,b}	63% ^a
	High education	53% ^a	50% ^a	17% ^b
Digital exclusion	Digitally-excluded	18% ^b	0%	57% ^a
Age groups 55+	55-64	50% ^c	4% ^a	34% ^b
	65-74	36% ^b	67% ^a	44% ^{a,b}
	75-84	12% ^b	29% ^a	20% ^{a,b}
	85+	2% ^a	0%	1% ^a

Values in same row not sharing same subscript are significantly different at $p < .05$.

CASE 2 –Diverse Recruitment Materials

	All recruits	RECRUITMENT MATERIAL								
		Postcard reminder & Formal letter		Paper registration form		Brochure		Incentive		
		Yes (N=800)	Standard* (N=1074)	Yes (N=1528)	No (N = 346)	Standard (N=1074)	Short (N=550)	No (N=250)	Lower (N=454)	Higher (N=1420)
Education level	Low education	7%	9%	7%	8%	8%	8%	4%	6%	8%
	Medium education	31%	32%	32%	32%	32%	31%	31%	30%	32%
	High education	62%	60%	61%	60%	60%	61%	64%	63%	60%
Digital exclusion	Digitally-excluded	0%	5%	4%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Age groups	Young (16-24)	10%	12%	11%	12%	12%	10%	11%	9% ^a	12% ^b
	Middle aged group (25-54)	65%	64%	65%	63%	64%	65%	66%	67%	64%
	Older age group (55+)	25%	24%	24%	26%	24%	26%	23%	24%	24%

Note: Samples are not mutually exclusive.

Values in same row *not* sharing same subscript are significantly different at $p < .05$.

Standard: Standard non-formal invitation letter, standard reminder letter.

Conclusion & Discussion

Conclusions

Recruitment Strategy:

- **Lower Educated & Digitally-Excluded:** F2F and RDD methods prove effective, especially with interviewer involvement to address concerns and explain benefits, overcoming digital and educational barriers.
- **Young Individuals:** ABS effectively reaches younger participants by targeting their physical addresses, bypassing the challenges posed by their diverse (and often digital) communication preferences.
 - A physical letter sent to their address can be perceived as more formal, enhancing engagement by conveying credibility.
- **Older Age Groups:** Combination of RDD and F2F enhances personal connections that are crucial in overcoming skepticism and facilitating a trust-building process that is essential for this age group.

Recruitment Materials:

- **Lower Educated & Digitally-Excluded:** This group benefits from materials that are rich in information yet presented in a straightforward, less formal manner. By simplifying content and providing clear, easy-to-follow instructions (QR-codes, images), these materials bridge the gap in understanding.
- **Young Participants:** Higher incentives motivate this group.

Discussion

Diverse Recruitment Strategy: Implementing mixed methods in recruitment and material design enhances participant diversity and overall representativeness.

Remaining Challenges:

- **Cost Considerations:** Financial constraints continue to influence the choice of recruitment methods.
- **Trust Issues:** Pervasive concerns about fraud and scam heighten skepticism among potential participants, complicating trust-building efforts.
 - **Face-to-Face Interactions:** Although costly, these interactions are highly effective in overcoming trust barriers.
 - **Personalized Materials:** Develop materials that mimic a personal conversation, fostering a sense of connection and trust.

Thank you!

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