

Using Social Media Data Donations to Study Health Effects of Social Media Exposure: A Systematic Scoping Review

Nezihe Naz Moralogil
Christina Ristl
Alena Oxenham
Laura M. König

Universität Wien
Universitätsring 1,
1010 Vienna

a12423297@unet.univie.ac.at
christina.ristl@univie.ac.at
alena.oxenham@univie.ac.at
laura.koenig@univie.ac.at

1 Introduction

As a novel approach, social media data donation involves users sharing their social media data for research. So far, it has been used primarily in the field of communication science to explore users' content exposure in daily life. Previous research has examined data donation from conceptual, feasibility, and descriptive perspectives, as well as factors that influence people's willingness to donate their data (Asensio et al., 2025; Strycharz et al., 2024). However, the use of social media data donation to study psychological constructs and health behavior remains underexplored in the literature, despite being potentially insightful for studying effects and underlying mechanisms of social media exposure in the context of health and health behaviors.

Our project addresses how the method of social media data donation has been used to study the influences of social media exposure on health behaviors (including, but not limited to, diet, physical activity and sleep) or their underlying psychological predictors (such as self-esteem or stress). While it aims to cover a broader range of health behaviors and outcomes, it also supports our work within the EU FOOD-FRAMES consortium, which will build upon the findings of this review to build a study platform for investigating the psychological and health-related influences of food-related misinformation and marketing on social media.

2 Methods

This systematic scoping review will follow the JBI methodology for scoping review (Peters et al., 2022). Specifically, a review question, eligibility criteria, and search strategy will be defined. Relevant databases will be searched and records will be screened. Finally, data will be extracted using a standardized data extraction form and synthesized narratively in a final paper.

3 Results

Our theoretical project will result in a scoping review protocol and a review paper that examines the empirical evidence on the use of data donation method to study the health effects of social media exposure. The review will be conducted according to the protocol established throughout this project.

4 Discussion

This project will provide a broad understanding of the potentials and pitfalls of the data donation method in combination with survey and behavioral data. The growing interest and use of data donation across disciplines highlights the need to map the available evidence in the context of social media and health. The findings may offer valuable insights across interdisciplinary fields, facilitating the planning of future high-quality empirical studies.

References

- Asensio, M., Bosch, O. J. and Roberts, C. (2025). What is the best way of collecting data donations? an experiment assessing the feasibility of different data donation approaches to measure mobile and app usage. *Information, Communications Society*, pp. 1–26.
- Peters, M. D., Godfrey, C., McInerney, P., Khalil, H., Larsen, P., Marnie, C., Pollock, D., Tricco, A. C. and Munn, Z. (2022). Best practice guidance and reporting items for the development of scoping review protocols. *JBI Evidence Synthesis*, 20(4):953–968.
- Strycharz, J., Meppelink, C., Araujo, B. and Voorveld, H. (2024). The blind spot in data donations: who is (not) willing to donate digital data in social scientific research. *Computational Communication Research*, 6(2):1.