Utilizing TikTok for Survey Participant Recruitment

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DEMED Webinar Series 2023
November 21st, 2023
Online
Introduction
Worldwide Social Media usage

The world’s most used social platforms in millions (October 2023)

- Facebook: 3,030
- YouTube: 2,491
- Instagram: 2,000
- WhatsApp: 2,000
- WeChat: 1,327
- TikTok: 1,218
- FB Messenger: 1,036
- Telegram: 800
- Snapchat: 750
- Douyin: 743

Exploring TikTok

Company information:
- Short-form video app
- Founded in 2012, owned by ByteDance

User base:
- Over a billion active users globally (1,218 million)
- Appeals to younger demographics, but gaining popularity across all age groups

Features & Impact:
- AI-driven algorithm for personalized content
- High engagement rates, e.g., through challenges and trends
- Influence on pop culture, music, and internet trends
### Social Media Audience Overlaps

Percentage of active users of each platform aged 16 to 64 (October 2023)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unique to platform</th>
<th>Using Facebook</th>
<th>Using Instagram</th>
<th>Using TikTok</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facebook users</strong></td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>78.5%</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instagram users</strong></td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>81.4%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TikTok users</strong></td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>81.9%</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Does not include data for China. TikTok is blocked in India, which may result in lower values in TikTok column. Source: Kepios et al. October 2023.
Recruiting Research Participants through Social Media
Number of publications that refer to Social Media recruitment in the abstract

Source: Web of Science search as of July 2023; using Boolean operator, narrowed to years 2010-2023 and journal articles in English only.
Recruiting Research Participants through Social Media

Publications Over Time

Number of publications that refer to Social Media recruitment in the abstract

Source: Web of Science search as of July 2023; using Boolean operator, narrowed to years 2010-2023 and journal articles in English only.

Articles about TikTok as a recruiting tool:

0

Source: TikTok ads for web surveys

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(Potential) Advantages of Social Media Recruitment

- **Costs:** Comparatively inexpensive compared to other strategies (online and offline) 
  (Ali et al. 2020; Webler et al. 2020)

- **Reach:** Direct and easy access to hundreds of millions of individuals worldwide 
  (Bennetts et al. 2019; Admon et al. 2016)

- **Fast Turnaround:** Virtually no setup time; Able to start recruiting in less than 48 hours 
  (Zhang et al. 2020; Reuter et al. 2019)

- **Targeting options:** Vast amount of auxiliary information available, allowing for targeted recruiting 
  (Harfield et al. 2021; Pötzschke & Braun 2017)

- **Ease of use/Conversion:** Almost exclusive access via mobile devices eases the transition from ad to online survey - just a thumb-click away
Setting Up a TikTok Campaign
Steps in Creating an Ad Campaign

1. Preparation
   ▶ Account setup
   ▶ Host online survey externally

2. Campaign Creation
   ▶ Overall campaign settings
   ▶ Define target groups and create ad groups
   ▶ Select images/videos and create ad texts
   ▶ Create Ads

3. Monitoring
   ▶ Monitor costs, ad(-set) performance, and subgroup sizes
   ▶ Moderate, hide or delete comments
1. Preparation
Preparation - Account Setup

- Set up a TikTok for Business account (https://www.tiktok.com/business/).
- You must provide the company name, industry, country, and some contact information.
- Read and accept the Anti-Discrimination Ads Policy: "Ads that deny opportunities based on personal characteristics such as race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, age, sexual orientation or other protected classes are considered unlawfully discriminatory and are in violation of this policy."
- Compared to Meta: You don’t need a page or specific profile to run ads.
Preparation - External Online Survey

- The online survey must be hosted externally i.e. via a platform independent of TikTok.
- TikTok does not have access to the survey data at any time - it only serves as a provider for advertisements (Exception: Use of tracking pixels)
- A simple click on an ad will forward a user to your externally hosted online survey
2. Campaign Creation
Campaign Creation - Hierarchical Campaign Structure

Campaign level

Ad group level

Ad A1.1
Ad A1.2

Ad group A1

Ad group level

Ad A2.1

Campaign A

Ad group A2
Setting Up a TikTok Campaign

Campaign Creation - Campaign Level I

Advertising objective

- **Awareness**
  - Reach
    - Show your ad to the maximum number of people.
  - Video views
    - Get more views and engagement for your video ad.
  - Community interaction
    - Get more followers or profile visits.

- **Consideration**
  - Traffic
    - Send more people to a destination on your website or app.

- **Conversion**
  - App promotion
    - Get more users to install and engage with your app.
  - Lead generation
    - Collect leads for your business.
  - Website conversions
    - Drive valuable actions on your website.
  - Product sales (Beta)
    - Sell products from your TikTok Shop, website, and app.
Campaign Creation - Campaign Level II

- Choose an overall campaign objective: Reach, Traffic, Video views, Community interaction, App promotion, Lead generation, or Website conversions

  - **Recommendation:** Traffic → send more people to a destination, i.e., the online survey website.

  - **Recommendation:** Set an upper limit for campaign budget.
Defining the placements of ads - here you can choose from the family of services: TikTok, Global App Bundle, Pangle.

**Note:** Availability depends on the ad type, targeting, ad creation, and country of delivery.

**Recommendation:** Use only TikTok, as specific targeting options are only available for TikTok.
Setting Up a TikTok Campaign

Campaign Creation - Ad Group Level II

- Customizing the ad settings to control the level of user activity.
  - **Compared to Meta**: (De)activation of user comments, video downloads, and video sharing is possible.

  - **User comment**
    We recommend keeping user comments on to help your ads achieve more impressions and conversions. You can hide, pin, and reply to comments using our comment management tools. [How to manage comments]

  - **Video download**

  - **Video sharing**
Campaign Creation - Ad Group Level III

- Setting the target group for the ads based on targeting parameters available, such as:
  - location, gender, age group, languages, spending power, device, and specific interests (e.g., sports, games) or behavior on the platform (e.g., video, hashtag, and creator interactions)
  - **Note:** The countries/regions you can target depend on the country/region you specified at registration of the TikTok For Business account. For a comprehensive list of all available locations per country, see [https://ads.tiktok.com/help/article/placements-available-locations](https://ads.tiktok.com/help/article/placements-available-locations). For example, the USA can currently only be targeted with ads from the USA or Canada.
  - **Compared to Meta:** Meta offers very granular regional targeting. TikTok currently only allows targeting certain larger regions or major cities per country.
Setting Up a TikTok Campaign

Campaign Creation - Ad Group Level IV

- Setting the budget for the ad group, i.e. for all ads within an ad group
  - **Note:** The link clicks to budget ratio is not linear, but depends on various factors, such as target audience and time of day

- Setting the ad group schedule, i.e. the start and end dates of the ad campaign
  - **Note:** An ad group should run for at least 24 hours to ensure the best possible delivery of ads.

- **Recommendation:** TikTok provides an estimate of the potential reach of an ad group based on the targeting options selected. This estimate can help determine an appropriate budget for your campaign.
Selecting an optimization goal, i.e., the event for which ad delivery should be improved - either optimization for clicks or landing page views.

- **Recommendation:** Clicks

Selecting the bid strategy, i.e., how your budget is spent

- **Recommendation:** Maximum delivery

Billing event is defined automatically, depending on the optimization goal. For Clicks → Link Click
Setting Up a TikTok Campaign

Campaign Creation

Campaign Creation - Ad Level I

- Selection of video, images, and texts should always be based on whether they appeal to the target audience
  → Ads as a tailored survey invitation letter following the Leverage Saliency Theory \((Groves \textit{et al.} 2000)\)

- Please make sure to not violate the guidelines on ad content, see https://ads.tiktok.com/help/article/tiktok-advertising-policies-ad-creatives-landing-page-prohibited-content
TikTok is all about the visual! Choose captivating ads that effectively convey the purpose of the survey.

The ad format can be a single image, an image carousel, or a video.

**Recommendation:** Video or at least some dynamic elements.

**Compared to Meta:** Ads are not linked to a specific account. You can create a new, ad-specific identity for each ad.
Campaign Creation - Ad Level III

TikTok Creative Center (https://ads.tiktok.com/business/creativecenter)
Campaign Creation - Ad Level IV

TikTok Ad Library (https://library.tiktok.com/)

Find ads on TikTok

Search results
Total ads: 9,904,368

Ad Lubetzky Family Foundation
First shown: 10/01/2022
Last shown: 11/19/2023
Unique users seen: 200K-300K

Ad Pikoya Ltd.
First shown: 10/06/2022
Last shown: 11/19/2023
Unique users seen: 1K-10K
3. Monitoring
Monitoring - Costs, Performance, and Subgroup Sizes

- Evaluating the cost per click (CPC) and costs per completed interview
- Monitoring the performance of ad sets and ads (removing or strengthening certain ad sets/ads)
- Reviewing the actual survey data and net sample composition:
  - Do ads with high performance (thus, higher costs) also recruit the desired target groups?
  - Are target sub-populations represented in sufficient size in the survey data?

Based on this: Adjust the distribution of daily campaign budgets across ad sets.
Monitoring - Moderation of Interactions

If comments are enabled:

- Answer questions regarding your ads or your study.
- Moderate comments and discussions OR even hide or delete certain undesirable comments (e.g., hate speech).

**Recommendation I:** As little intervention as possible but taking action in the case of serious insults or inhuman statements.

**Recommendation II:** It may be a little more work, but comments are engagement. And engagement leads to better ad performance. So it is a good idea to keep comments on.
Example Study
Refugee & youth crime 2022

- Online survey on refugees and juvenile delinquency
- Target group: General population in Germany and the UK
- Field phase: August 06-09, 2022 (4 days)
- Campaign budget: 390 € across 3 ad groups (130 € each)
- Targeting parameters:
  - Language: German & English
  - Country: Germany & UK
  - Age range: 18-55+ years
  - Gender: all

Joint project with Simon Lüttkewitte (Bielefeld University). For more information, see Zindel & Lüttkewitte, 2023
Refugee & youth crime 2022

▶ Costs for ads: 387.48 €
▶ 205,071 impressions and 117,626 individuals reached
▶ 3,603 link-clicks (1.76% CTR)
▶ 1,846 started the questionnaire (51.23% of all clicks)
▶ 500 complete interviews (13.88% of all clicks; 27.09% of all started interviews)
▶ **Compared to Meta:** A higher dropout rate than any of our meta-recruited surveys in recent year → Indicates lower participant engagement.
▶ Average net cost for a complete interview: 0.77 €
▶ **Compared to Meta:** Significantly less expensive than recent Meta-recruited surveys
Refugee & youth crime 2022

Age distribution in overall sample
## Refugee & youth crime 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>German</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group</td>
<td>Sample in %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>11.41</td>
<td>70.31</td>
<td>80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>20.31</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>17.11</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>30.42</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+</td>
<td>34.60</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Refugee & youth crime 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>German</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Sample in %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>69.42</td>
<td>52.63</td>
<td>52.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>28.42</td>
<td>27.82</td>
<td>23.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other gender</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>19.55</td>
<td>24.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Refugee & youth crime 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Germany German Sample in %</th>
<th>UK English Sample in %</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only German/British</td>
<td>91.32</td>
<td>66.15</td>
<td>78.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German/British + other</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>15.38</td>
<td>16.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other citizenship</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>16.92</td>
<td>5.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ethic Considerations
TikTok is owned by ByteDance, a Chinese company with strong connections to the Chinese state → Concerns: Cybersecurity, privacy, misinformation

- Official device bans by government agencies (European Commission, European Council)
- Complete prohibitions in some countries

Utilizing TikTok for advertisements contributes to its financial revenue → Strengthening its market position.
Ethics Considerations

Data Protection Measures:

- Ensuring survey data remains inaccessible to TikTok
  → Don’t use TikTok’s tracking tools (e.g., Pixel)

Recommendation:

- Consultation with institutions, employers, and ethics committees
- Determine feasibility within ethical frameworks
- Guidelines for financial collaborations with TikTok
Summary
Research Potential

TikTok offers unique potential for recruiting people for survey research:

- It is a fast-growing platform that will become even more relevant in the coming years.
- It does what Facebook can no longer do easily: It reaches young people in particular.
- It is very cost-effective (maybe even more cost-effective than Meta?)

Research Gaps:

- TikTok has not been used much as a recruiting tool. There is an opportunity to be a pioneer in this space.
- There is still a lack of empirical studies that compare TikTok with other providers such as Meta.


References II


Thank you.

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