



Deutsche Gesellschaft für Publizistik- und  
Kommunikationswissenschaft  
Fachgruppe Methoden

18<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Methods Division of the German Communication Association  
(DGPuK)

## **Opportunities and Challenges in the Measurement of Media Use and Exposure**

Wednesday to Friday, September 21-23 2016 in Amsterdam

Hosting institution:

Amsterdam School of Communication Research, University of Amsterdam

The precise measurement of media use and exposure to media content posits currently one of the main methodological challenges in communication research. Against this background, new communication technologies have been gaining particular importance because they change existing patterns of media use and create new types of media use. At the same time, new communication technologies do not only present a challenge for communication research, but they also provide new opportunities for the assessment of media use. The conference focuses on current developments and trends in the measurement of media use and exposure. We invite submission on five focal topics. Please note that the proposed topics present examples, and that the list is not meant to restrict the spectrum of potential submissions. Submissions can employ a **qualitative** and/or **quantitative** approach.

### **1) Development, Validation, and Optimization of Survey-Based Instruments for the Assessment of Media Use and Exposure**

Media use and exposure to media content are often measured with surveys. For this focal topic, we invite submissions that focus on the development, validation, and optimization of survey-based measurement instruments. Submission on the following aspects are possible:

- Which options exist to measure media use and exposure to media content with survey-based measurement instruments (e.g., assessment of frequency or intensity of use, assessment of favorite program, media diaries, etc.)?
- How can the use of and exposure to specific media content be measured and how can existing measures be improved or refined (e.g., the measurement of exposure to sensitive or rarely occurring media content)?
- How can we increase the reliability and validity of survey-based measurements of media use and exposure (e.g., reduction of over/under-reporting and socially desirable answers)?

- How adequate are measurement instruments for the assessment of media use in specific populations (e.g., among children or adolescents) and in different contexts (e.g., in comparative studies)?

## **2) Combination of Content Analyses and Surveys for the Measurement of Media Exposure**

The combination of content analysis and survey constitutes the state of the art in the measurement of media exposure. However, the approach is also complex and its implementation requires the researcher to make numerous methodological decisions, which are rarely discussed. Submissions on this focal topic can address questions such as:

- Which decisions have to be made when selecting and coding media content? Which decisions have to be made when designing the survey? How do these decisions affect the quality of the matching between content analytic and survey data?
- How should content analytic data be aggregated before they are combined with survey data? For instance, how can the appropriate level (e.g., the single media product or media genre) and time interval (e.g., days, weeks, or months) for aggregation be selected?
- How can the use of media contents be measured in surveys and how do different procedures affect the quality of the data matching and the results?

## **3) New Challenges to the Measurement of Media Use and Exposure Due to Social and Technological Change**

Social and technological change has substantial implications for how people use media. For instance, portable devices such as tablets and smartphones have spread considerably and innumerable applications have been developed for these devices. These technological changes provide individuals with new opportunities to receive media content and to communicate with others, and, thus, create new patterns of media use. This raises the question of whether classical instruments for the measurement of media use and exposure can still be used to validly assess media use. Submissions can focus on questions such as:

- How has media use changed due to social and technological change and to what extent do existing measurement instruments have to be adapted to accommodate this change?
- What new types of media use have risen and how can these types be measured (e.g., media multitasking, use of interactive media)?

## **4) Employing New Technologies and Tools for the Measurement of Media Use and Exposure**

New communication technologies pose not only a challenge to communication research, but also provide the researcher with new tools to assess media use. For instance, smartphones

and tablets make surveys possible basically always and everywhere. Wearables facilitate automatic measurement without any conscious effort by the recipient. Finally, a plethora of new applications and tools exists which can be utilized for the measurement of media use. For the fourth focal topic, we invite submissions that focus on the utilization of new technologies in the measurement process.

- How can new technologies be used to measure media use and exposure to media content (e.g. experience sampling, automated measurements)?
- How can new applications and tools be used to assess media use and exposure?

### **5) Comparison and Combination of Approaches to the Measurement of Media Use**

Given the numerous possibilities to measure media use, the question arises which methodological approaches are most suitable and perform best with regard to reliability, validity, and efficiency. Furthermore, we have to think about how multiple approaches can be combined to achieve optimal results. For the fifth focal topic, we invite submissions that compare different approaches to the measurement of media use and exposure and examine how different approaches can be combined.

- How do different approaches to the measurement of media use and exposure perform with regard to reliability, validity, and efficiency?
- How can different measurement approaches and instruments be combined to increase reliability, validity, and efficiency?

### **6) Open Panel**

Abstracts which do not address the main conference topic may be submitted to the open panel. However, submissions should be methodologically relevant to communication and media research. We invite all colleagues, non-members of the methods division as well as members, to submit abstracts which focus on any methodological issue, qualitative or quantitative, relevant to communication research. Submissions for the open panel will be reviewed separately. Please clearly indicate in your submission that it is for the open panel.

### **Short Presentations**

In addition to regular presentations (20 minutes), short presentations can be submitted (about 8 minutes). The short presentations are suited for the discussion of specific methodological questions that arise in the research process and smaller, but methodologically relevant problems. Short presentations can be submitted for the open panel as well as the main conference topic.

## **Paul Lazarsfeld-Scholarships**

The conference will include a panel for the presentation of sophisticated and innovative methods research by three Bachelor's and Master's students / graduates. The "German Paul Lazarsfeld Society" supports the panel with awarding three scholarships (1000 Euro per scholarship). Further information on the scholarship and the submission are available in the attachment below.

## **Formal Criteria**

Extended abstracts (max. 5 pages excl. references, figures, and tables) for regular presentations (20 minutes) and short presentations (8 minutes) should be sent to Michael Schar-kow ([michael.scharkow@uni-hohenheim.de](mailto:michael.scharkow@uni-hohenheim.de)). Abstracts can be submitted in German or English. Please indicate clearly whether your submission is for the main conference topic or the open panel, and whether it is for a regular presentation or a short presentation. The same formal criteria apply for the different submission types. Note that submissions must focus on a methodological topic.

**Submission deadline: 30.06.2016**

A submission must not report previously published research. This fact must be confirmed on the cover sheet of the submission. Submissions will be evaluated in a double-blind review process. Thus, the title of the presentation and contact information of the authors must be provided on a separate cover sheet. Please submit your abstract as MS Word file.

Please note: The conference will be held in English (however, abstracts can be submitted in German or English). We kindly ask you to consider this when preparing the presentation.

## **Conference**

The conference begins in the evening of September 21 (Wednesday) with a Get-Together and ends on September 23 (Friday). Detailed information about the conference will be communicated on our conference website in due time.

*For the Division:*

Teresa Naab, Augsburg  
Michael Schar-kow, Stuttgart

*For the hosting institution:*

Rinaldo Kühne, Amsterdam  
Jochen Peter, Amsterdam

## **Enclosure: Paul Lazarsfeld-Scholarships 2016**

### **General Information**

The Paul Lazarsfeld Society supports the Methods Division of the German Communication Association (DGPK) in the promotion of young scholars. The Paul Lazarsfeld Society awards up to three scholarships in 2016 to excellent students and graduates in communication research, who have conducted a methodologically challenging and innovative research project. The Paul Lazarsfeld-Scholarship aims at bringing the awarded persons closer to the academic occupation. The maximum amount per scholarship is 1000 Euro, which shall enable students to participate at the Annual Conference of the Methods Division of the German Communication Association (DGPK) and to present their excellent thesis in a student panel. The scholarship is an award for excellent scientific research. In addition, the scholarship shall cover the expenses for the conference participation, travelling, accommodation, and additional costs. Professor Dr. Lutz Erbring is the patron of the Paul Lazarsfeld-Scholarship.

### **Application for Scholarship**

Members of the German Communication Association can recommend excellent research by students or graduates for the Paul Lazarsfeld-Scholarship. Students and graduates may not apply for the scholarship themselves. Recommendations should be sent in until

**30.06.2016**

per email to Jens Vogelgesang (j.vogelgesang@uni-hohenheim.de). Recommendations should be handed in as a PDF and include: (1) the first review of the Bachelor's or Master's thesis (or a letter of recommendation for seminar theses), (2) an abstract of the thesis, (3) and copy of the thesis. A committee consisting of current and previous division chairs will award the scholarship.