Review for: Investigating the barriers and enablers to data sharing behaviour

Henderson et al. Review by Libby Bishop 24 Sep. 23

This is a registered report for a proposed study of the barriers and enablers of data sharing through a focus on researcher behaviour. Overall, the proposal is clear, well-presented, with broad and in-depth knowledge of the domain demonstrated. As the specific methodology has been addressed by other (more expert) reviewers, these comments focus on the general approach. My points are minor or suggestions – my recommendation is for this research to be supported.

**Method**

My personal view is somewhat critical of narrowly construed behavioral studies. I tend to see behavior and context/structure deeply inter-connected. That said, the authors defend their approach and are aware of wider causal factors – sharing policies, funder/journal requirements, etc.

I agree with another reviewer that the UK context should be made clear. I am now more familiar with data sharing in both Germany and Switzerland, and the strong effect of the ESRC’s adoption of mandatory data sharing dramatically accelerated the practice in the UK.

Coding: I agree with another review about coding. I always find collaboration in coding to be superior. This is not about inter-rater reliability, just multiple views into the data. If there is something very specific about expertise of the co-authors that makes this inadvisable, perhaps this could be (diplomatically?) clarified.

**Sample**

Why only those with sharing experience? The authors explain that the total sample will be a max of 20, stratified by career stage, etc. Two people without data sharing experience will be included. This is small, but I believe that more is known about those who do not share at all, whereas the specific barriers in those who have shared (or tried to) might yield more informative results. I would not object to more non-sharers, but I think the proposed sample is adequately defended.

Like another reviewer, I question the narrowing of the sample to one university. I believe the justification is to enable specific recommendations for this institution. That does make sense, but for the field more generally, a broader sample would be better. In fact, I suspect that the findings from a more general sample would likely still be relevant to the home institution.

**Interview schedule**

I appreciate this is probably a guide and not to be used verbatim, however, some of the questions (table 2, Psych Capability, Knowledge) are very, very long. I think reading a list and asking if anything is missing is not likely to yield a useful response.

**Future use of data**

I agree with the idea of pseudonymizing the data (and indeed this seems to be the plan, 20:475). To my knowledge, no longitudinal study has been done, and a chance to look at changes in behavior over time would definitely be a contribution. This could be mentioned in the consent form as a possibility, and see if participants would agree to be contacted later (with no obligation to participate of course).

**Other comments**

I was especially pleased to see on 5:68 that data that are not public/open but available through other access criteria are included. This acknowledges legitimate restrictions on some data.

**Additional references that might be useful**

Akdeniz, Esra, Kerrin Borschewski, Johannes Breuer, and Yevhen Voronin. 2023. "Sharing social media data: The role of past experiences, attitudes, norms, and perceived behavioral control." Frontiers in Big Data 5 (16 January 2023): 971974. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fdata.2022.971974>.

This study does focus only on social media data; however, it uses a behavioral approach and might be helpful for the authors.

With a colleague, I did a study on data sharing behaviours across domains. Here is the project report.

<https://repository.jisc.ac.uk/5662/1/KE_report-incentives-for-sharing-researchdata.pdf>

This is explicitly the “practical version” intended for different stakeholder groups. It might be helpful if the authors are looking for how to translate their more research output into actionable recommendations.