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Methodological Issues Related to Radio Measurement and Ratings in Romania: Solutions and Perspectives

Abstract: The aim of this article is to address the issue of measuring radio audience from a methodological perspective. Although our approach is contextualized, the case study of radio audience measurement in Romania is relevant to a large number of EU countries, in which scholars and practitioners use Day-After-Recall technique. Considering the size of the radio advertising market, as well as the number of radio listeners (about 90% in EU), it is crucial for both radio broadcasters and advertisers to measure radio audience with high accuracy. First, we briefly review the main definitions of key concepts used in radio audience evaluation: audience, listener, rating, market share, daily-reach, or time spent listening. Next, we discuss two paradigms of audience and two theoretical models of mass communication used as a framework for measuring radio audience. Further, we briefly approach the issue of potential sources of error in rating data, by focusing on response error. Next, we emphasize the advantages and disadvantages of each quantitative method utilized in radio audience measurement, and present the case study of radio audience measurement in Romania. Based on a methodological critical review, we outline challenges and potential solutions for assessing more accurately radio audience. Finally, we reflect on the future of radio in digital era, and refer to new perspectives of upgrading existing research techniques.

Keywords: audience measurement, quantitative research techniques, error sources, day after recall, radio rating, Romania