Are Grid Questions Reliable for Mobile Surveys?

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Poster # 59

Background

Grid questions have been a popular way to collect opinions in survey research because…

(1) Efficient way for researchers to ask the same question on a large number of attributes
(2) Relatively easy for respondents to understand
(3) Respondents only have to read the scale once and then can simply go row-by-row answering each question on the same page.

In Dec. 2014, Quirks reported that grids are raising data quality concerns when completed on small-screened devices because respondents have to scroll horizontally and vertically, which has resulted in higher abandonment rates and lack of discrimination in responses. L&E Research reported in a recent webinar that >30% of surveys are started on mobile devices, yet only 25% of surveys are mobile suitable.

Objectives & Study Design

Objective of this research was to understand the impact of grid questions on data quality, exploring abandonment rates, completion times, and survey satisfaction.

3 separate online studies were fielded of varying length and complexity in March 2016 (each with ~295 completes/survey)

- To reduce consumer engagement, a neutral survey subject was selected and a low incentive was offered.

	"Short"	"Medium"	"Long"
Scale Points	2 pt.	5 pt.	7 pt.
# of Responses	45	70	132
# completes by computer	168	141	172
# completes by phone	134	138	132

Results

- As expected, abandonment rates were highest when completed via a smart phone (16% vs. 4% with computer for longest survey).
- The impact on completion times of using a phone vs. a computer grew larger as the length of survey increased (22% difference with short survey vs. 38% with the long survey).
- Survey satisfaction is higher with phones vs. computers.

Figure 1: Abandonment Rates

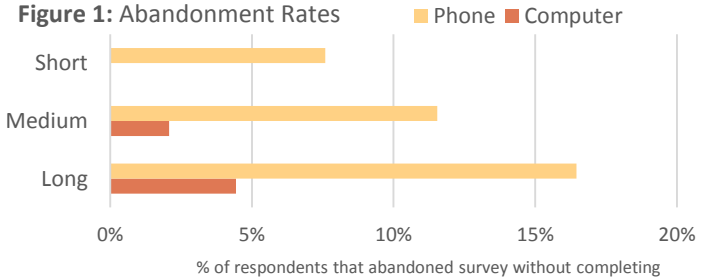


Figure 2: Completion Times

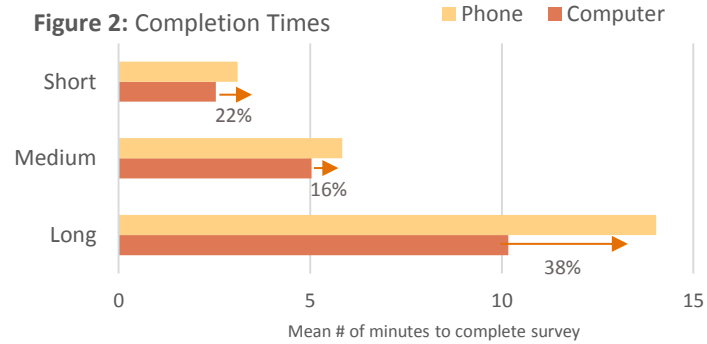
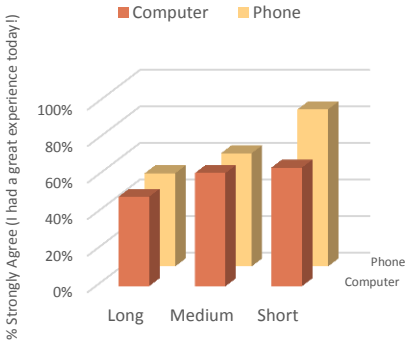


Figure 3: Survey Satisfication



Conclusions

With mobile technology expanding and cost of usage trending down, mobile devices being used for surveys will be increasing.

Acknowledging that consumers will complete our surveys on their device of choice (which for millennials will likely be mobile), we should design these surveys for mobile first, which means questionnaire length, question size, size of and number of images, grids, etc. must all be taken into consideration.

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