

Gamified surveys for **game-changing** data

A research-on-research paper, demonstrating how using games in a typical survey delivered **better data** and more **engaged respondents**.



The use of game mechanics in a non-leisure activity can improve the quality and utility of consumer research; this is what we mean by gamification in insights and market research. So, where does research gamification add value?

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01 Introduction

What is gamification and why is it a game-changer?

Engaged and entertained respondents mean reliable, actionable data. Long and repetitive surveys, such as best-worst scaling studies (or as it is known in the research profession, MaxDiff), make this hard to achieve. Don't get us wrong, the MaxDiff methodology is robust, as it can handle upwards of 100 concepts or attributes and allows researchers to rank many concepts through just a handful of questions. But...there's a but. MaxDiff can be long and repetitive, delivering lower response rates, lower completion rates, and poorer quality data as respondents fatigue of the exercise.

In this paper we demonstrate the added value of gamification in research, drawing from the study that we conducted at Datagame to compare the results from a traditional MaxDiff study to those from a MaxDiff game. Findings showed that gamified research indeed does improve completion rates, satisfaction and enjoyability. And overall, gamified surveys satisfy our dreams of being able to collect more and better data.

How does a gamified survey work?

Datagame's Rankifier game works similarly to solitaire or other choice-based games. The user has to pick their favorite and least favorite card from the hand, and then pick their absolute favorite amongst the final deck of favorites. The gamified survey addressed each of the MaxDiff's limitations of evaluating attribute ranks while still collecting valid data. Card dealing and shuffling animations make the game feel more interactive, resulting in higher engagement; while the card-based game mechanics are intuitive and easy to understand. All activity takes place on a single, animated screen, which reduces the perceived repetitiveness of progressing through a dozen or more nearly identical screens.



02 Research Methodology

We conducted two A-B studies to compare the results obtained from a traditional MaxDiff survey to the results obtained from a MaxDiff game.

The first A-B test which was conducted amongst 20,000 global¹ respondents showed very positive results, with people enjoying the survey and not finding it time consuming. However, the sample in this case was comprised entirely of video game players, which potentially hindered validity of the satisfaction metrics.

To remedy this nagging concern, we then ran a second A-B test amongst 700 US-based respondents with the gamified survey and the traditional MaxDiff exercise, but this time the sample was the general population and not only gamers. Datagame was positively surprised to find out that the general population perceives the gamified survey as more favorable than gamers, enjoying the experience as well as the duration of the exercise.

The findings below include both tests.

¹ North America, Latin America, Australia, UK, France, Nordic States, Germany, Spain, Italy, Korea, Taiwan, Poland and Russia

03 Results and benefits

Respondents' consistent engagement is the number one benefit that you can experience if you go for a gamified survey. But there's more.

What are the benefits for researchers?

Thanks to gamification researchers get access to better quality data. According to our study, data from the gamified method was nearly identical to data from the traditional MaxDiff, and more closely matched historical data. No demographic biases were detected.

In addition to the enjoyable experience for the end user, with all that this implies, survey gamification also provides several benefits to the research designer. Ease of use being one of them. Rankifier provides a flexible, fully customizable and scalable solution for research designers looking to implement or improve a MaxDiff study. It is easy to publish and deploy as a standalone game or integrate it with a survey platform such as Qualtrics or Confront. Datagame provides a web-based dashboard that makes it easy to summarize and visualize the results. Raw data can be exported to a Microsoft Excel file for further analysis.

Researchers can also benefit from the Datagame algorithm which generates the sample sets, leaving the designer to focus more of their efforts on making sure that the right items are included without having to spend too much time programming the survey.

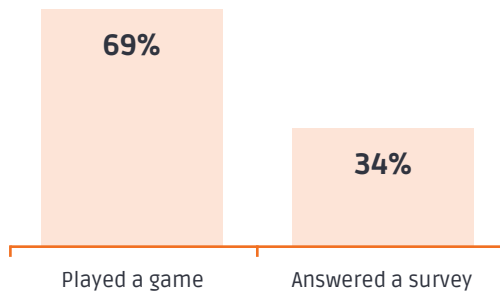
Flexibility and customization are also key benefits. The design can accommodate many attributes or just a few (anywhere from 3 to 500). Attributes can be text based or images; they are made to work with a wide variety of studies, including feature preference, message testing, logo testing, and concept testing. Our games are customizable in several significant ways, and we now offer a fully bespoke service. Game rules can be set up to either maximize satisfaction by playing fewer rounds for shorter game times; or maximize data collection by playing more rounds with more decision points without impacting satisfaction.

What are the benefits for respondents?

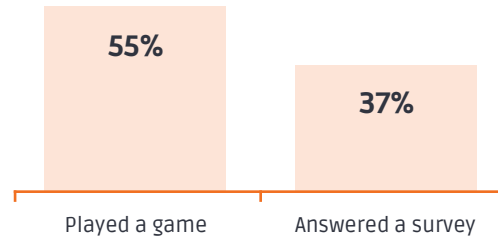
When choosing a survey tool, it's important to not only think about researchers but also about respondents. To consider a research exercise successful, respondent satisfaction is key. In our study, respondents were particularly satisfied with the survey length and enjoyed the exercise overall, resulting in more people completing all the questions.

55% of participants that completed the gamified survey were satisfied or very satisfied with the length of the study, while only 37% were satisfied with the length of the traditional MaxDiff survey. And guess what? The completion time was not any shorter! European respondents taking the gamified survey were more likely than participants from other countries to be satisfied by the survey length.

How enjoyable was this study? (top 2 box)



Satisfaction with survey length (top 2 box)



Satisfaction Metrics by Country:
Differences between the Traditional and Game Methods

Country / Region	Length of Survey Satisfaction	Enjoyment of Survey
Overall Sample	Yes	Yes
North America	No	Yes
ANZ	No	Yes
Latin America	No	No
UK	Yes	Yes
France	Yes	Yes
Nordic States	Yes	Yes
Germany	No	Yes
Spain	No	Yes
Italy	No	Yes (marginal)
Korea	No	No
Taiwan	No	Yes
Poland	Yes	Yes (marginal)
Russia	No	Yes

Note: "No" implies there was not a difference between the two groups in the correct direction, while "yes" indicates a significant difference in the correct direction.

Participants that played the game were also twice as likely to say that they "enjoyed" or "really enjoyed" the study, defining it "fun", "interesting", and "unique/different,". On the other hand, the recurring themes from the traditional MaxDiff survey included "too long" and "repetitive."

With participants being satisfied both with the length and the overall experience, the number of completions was about 15% higher for the game group than it was for the respondents that completed the traditional MaxDiff survey.

04 Summary and recommendations

Why should you gamify your survey?

The insights industry needs better data, but too often we forget that this data come from real people who are sitting in front of your survey. They don't want to feel bored or unengaged (who does?!). With gamification, researchers can not only gather high- and better-quality data but also deliver an enjoyable experience for respondents. So, let's go back to our first question: where does research gamification add value?

1

The Rankifier MaxDiff game works exceptionally well for everyone: both gamers and the general population enjoy this type of survey and its duration. In Europe, participants were particularly satisfied with the survey length. For other countries the differences for enjoyment were moderate and most of the effect sizes were robust.

2

Data collected using Rankifier is equivalent to or better than data collected using the traditional MaxDiff method.

3

The satisfaction metrics obtained by both A-B tests show that gamification is a more effective alternative to the traditional method.

4

Significantly higher completion rates were experienced when using the game compared to the traditional MaxDiff method.

5

Both the standardized scores of each feature and the feature ranks were largely similar between the two methods.

6

Datagame provides benefits for researchers. It's an easy to use, flexible, fully customizable and scalable solution for research designers looking to implement or improve a MaxDiff study.

7

Datagame can be published stand-alone or integrated into a larger survey with Qualtrics or Confront.

8

Datagame has robust reporting tools for easy visualization and enabling deep analysis.

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