

A Review of Issues in Gamified Survey Design

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Reports about declining response rates and increasing satisficing behaviors among Web survey respondents have brought researchers to propose making the survey experience more game-like. Although some researchers/companies claim to use gamified survey design successfully to engage respondents more in the survey process, research on gamification in surveys suffers from two weaknesses. First, survey researchers and practitioners broadly use the term ‘gamification’ for a variety of techniques thought to increase respondent engagement while filling out surveys. Approaches range from relatively simple suggestions such as rephrasing questions to sound more game-like to embedding the entire survey experience into a game where respondents are assigned to avatars and adventure through a fantasy land as they answer survey questions. Second, only a few studies analyzing the influence of gamified survey design on respondent behavior have been published in academic journals. Conclusions about how gamified survey design influences nonresponse and data quality mainly rely on isolated and anecdotal reports in whitepapers and conference presentations. To address these issues, this paper will take a structured approach in reviewing the current research on gamified survey design. We will first answer the question as to what a gamified design entails in the context of surveys by identifying relevant gamification elements. We will then discuss how these elements could influence data quality and nonresponse using the Total Survey Error framework. Additionally, we will provide a systematic review of empirical evidence of gamified survey designs from published and unpublished studies. This paper will inform survey researchers and practitioners of the current state of research on gamified survey design and identify potential areas for future research.