

Localization Checklist for Online Research in Japan



GMO
RESEARCH & AI

Introduction

Japan is a highly attractive research market with strong purchasing power and sophisticated consumers. However, its unique cultural norms and respondent behaviors require careful attention. Without understanding these differences, surveys can suffer from low reliability and poor response efficiency.

This checklist is designed specifically for conducting research in Japan. Try to apply these best practices to better engage respondents, increase motivation, and collect high-quality, reliable data.

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Checklist Summary

Language

- The translation is localized into natural Japanese.
- Eliminated words or expressions that may be considered inappropriate due to cultural context.
- Honorifics are used appropriately.
- There are no ambiguous or unclear expressions.

Sampling

- Target criteria such as age, gender, and region are clearly defined.
- Taken Japan's demographic structure into account. (e.g. High proportion of older adults)
- Confirmed the quality management standards.
- Verified panel provider's personal data protection framework and compliance with local regulations.

Japanese Cultural Adaptation

- Selected an appropriate number of scale points or include moderate expressions.
- Negative questions are rephrased.
- Currencies, price ranges, measurement units are localized to Japanese standards
- A "Prefer not to answer" option is provided for sensitive questions.

B2B Projects

- Included screening questions to double-check respondent attributes.
- Survey length and question load are suitable for business professionals with limited time.
- The research purpose and data handling is clearly explained at the beginning of the survey.
- Incentives are appropriate and relevant for the target audience.

1. Localization (Language)



The translation is localized into natural Japanese rather than just a literal translation.

Use simple, clear language and avoid technical terms or foreign words, especially when targeting senior respondents.



Words or expressions that may be considered inappropriate due to cultural context are avoided.

Conduct a local QC to avoid words or expressions that may feel inappropriate due to cultural background.



Honorifics are used appropriately.

Honorific culture is valued in Japan. Use polite and respectful language to build trust and encourage cooperation.



There are no ambiguous or unclear expressions.

Avoid vague terms like “sometimes” or “recently”; use specific time frames such as “once a week” or “within the past three months” to improve data reliability.

1. Localization (Japanese Cultural Adaptation)



Selected an appropriate number of scale points or include moderate expressions based on the research objective.

Japanese respondents tend to choose moderate or neutral options to **avoid expressing strong opinions**. When designing evaluation questions, consider adjusting the **number of scale points (e.g. even vs. odd)** to capture balanced responses.



Negative questions are rephrased in a positive way.

Japanese respondents often avoid negative answers, using **positive wording** such as “**areas for improvement**” can help reveal their true opinions.



1. Localization (Japanese Cultural Adaptation)



Currencies, price ranges, measurement units are localized to Japanese standards

Ensure currency is displayed in **Japanese yen** with familiar price ranges, such as **¥1,000 or ¥5,000 units**. For measurement units, Japanese are more familiar to formats like **kilograms, kilometers** and **Celsius**.



A “Prefer not to answer” option is provided for sensitive questions.

Due to strong privacy awareness, questions related to **income, political orientation, religion** or **medical condition** could be regarded as sensitive. It is also recommended to confirm with the panel provider whether sensitive questions can be included in the survey.





2. Sampling Considerations in Japan

- ✓ Target criteria such as age, gender, and region are clearly defined.
- ✓ Taken Japan's demographic structure into account, including the high proportion of older adults.

👉 [Click to learn more about *Japan's demographic structure*](#)

- ✓ Confirmed the quality management standards of the panel provider.

It is important to confirm in advance that the panel provider has a reliable quality management system, including **duplicate response prevention**, **exclusion of speeding or fraudulent answers**, and **regular panel updates**.

For more information, please refer to our [quality management measures](#).

- ✓ Verified the panel provider's personal data protection framework and compliance with local regulations.

Check if the provider complies with **Japan's Act on Protection of Personal Information (APPI)**, holds a **Privacy Mark (P-Mark)**, and has clear policies for handling personal data responsibly.

3. B2B Projects – Niche Targets Sampling in Japan



Included screening questions to double-check respondent attributes.

Verify job title, department, and decision-making authority through multiple screening questions to exclude ineligible respondents and improve data quality.



Survey length and question load are suitable for business professionals with limited time.

As business professionals have limited availability, survey length should be kept short. *GMO Research & AI's study** on B2B respondents' preference in Japan found that **42.8%** prefer B2B surveys completed **within 10 minutes**.



3. B2B Projects – Niche Targets Sampling in Japan

- ✓ The research purpose and data handling is clearly explained at the beginning of the survey.
- ✓ Incentives are appropriate and relevant for the target audience.

According to *GMO Research & AI's study**, Japanese B2B respondents value **anonymity (22.6%)**, **fair compensation (18.4%)**, and **a clear explanation of research objectives (14.9%)**. Communicating these points at the beginning of the survey and setting appropriate incentives helps build trust and increase response motivation.



*Access our full study on B2B respondents in Japan, revealing their key motivations and actionable strategies for B2B survey participation enhancement.

[Learn More](#)



Our Panel in Japan

[Get Panel Book](#)

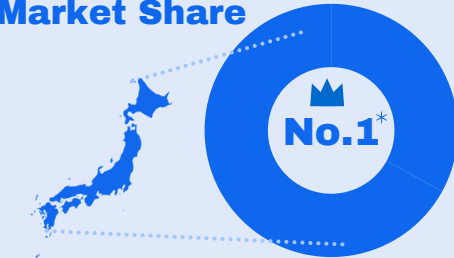
Panel Size

Over
37M



Japan Market Share

80%



*Data source: "JMRA 49th Actual Business Conditions Report", "GMO Research 23th Annual Securities Report for the fiscal year ending December 2024"

Specialty Panels



B2B



Health Care



Game



Automotive

...and more!

Data Security Standard



ESOMAR²⁴
Corporate



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