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Title: Comparison of 3-point, 5-point, and 7-point Scales from the CATI experiment

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Abstract

Lake makes two types of comparisons in assessing the impact of branching from 3-point to 5-point and 7-point scales. First, Lake finds little increase in the incidence of "don't know" responses as the survey moves from 3-point to 5-point branching scales. She then looks at differences in the predictive power of the scales, using the Reagan feeling thermometer and Reagan approval ratings as dependent variables. Lake finds that, in both cases, the predicative power of the scales increases significantly as the survey moves from 3-point to 5-point versions of the issue scales. On the other hand, while the 7-point version of the scales across issues and objects is always a stronger predictor than the 3-point version, the seven-point scale is not always superior to the 5-point scale. Furthermore, in those cases where the 7-point scale is superior, the increase in predictive power is frequently small.