By **Amanda Jones** on Apr 4th 2022, 15:49.

Therapy Doll Faces Preference test RESULTS

Story Link: https://app.enjoyhq.com/stories/e5869896-1981-49b7-8af8-1cc1892c8b88

Introduction

Amanda Jones, a Designer Maker, specialising in fibre arts, and researcher conducted the preference test to determine a new design for therapy dolls. Software used was - Typeform to create the survey questions, Canva for design, YouTube to create the video, and Facebook to recruit the participants.

Executive Summary

The preference test took place as a remote un-moderated task in December 2021 and January 2022. The purpose of the test was to determine whether the new design for a therapy doll face was preferable to established designs, or not.

There were 11 respondents to the test, which took an average of 7 minutes to complete the 9 questions. All of the respondents identified as female, aged between late 20's and 60's.

The survey appears to have been clear to respondents as they all answered the all questions in a way that showed an understanding.

- The new design was the most popular design with respondents.

- It could have been clearer that the images used of the mock-up doll faces were not the final design and that more detail such as hair and variety of colours and body shapes would be added later.

- The most preferred design appears easy to use, but would require simple instructions for first time users.

- 'Ability to personalise the doll' was given as an answer by majority of respondents on how to improve the design.

This document includes methodology, participants, evaluation, results, recommendations, and conclusion.

Methodology

Preference Test Survey

The participants were recruited through a call out on Facebook. The participants were given a link to the survey and information explaining the purpose of it.

The survey began with a scenario video and accompanying text. The scenario featured the persona of Isobel, a nurse with a history of trauma who was attending psychotherapy as her mental health was affecting her work. Isobel found

verbal communication difficult when discussing her past with her therapist Jill (persona 2) . The therapist suggests using therapy dolls to help Isobel communicate.

The participants were then shown 3 images of mock up crochet doll faces, one with just eyes, one with eyes and smiling mouth and one with eyes and a mouth that can be manipulated into expressions such as smile, frown and indifference. Participants were asked to choose which design they thought would be best for Isobel to use in her therapy sessions. They were then asked to explain the reason for their answer.

They were asked a control question to ensure that they had watched and understood the video and task. The remaining questions covered participants opinions on their preferred design including the success of functionality, usability, appearance, creativity, reliability and proficiency. The final question asked participants their thoughts on ways to improve the design.

Participants

Participants completed the survey anonymously, however some demographic information was collected.

The average from each category fit with the demographic the Therapist works with, except gender. The Therapist works with a mixture of all genders not just female. It may be worth running the test again with non female participants.

Name	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Creative Person
Respondent 1	38	F	White Irish	Yes
Respondent 2	34	F	White British	Yes
Respondent 3	58	F	White Irish	Yes
Respondent 4	60	F	White British	Yes
Respondent 5	42	F	Asian American	?
Respondent 6	35	F	White British	?
Respondent 7	38	F	White British	No
Respondent 8	55	F	White British	Yes
Respondent 9	61	F	White British	Yes
Respondent 10	36	F	White Polish	Yes
Respondent 11	39	F	White British Italian	No
SUMMARY	**45 Average age**	**All Female**	**10/11 White Europeans**	**7/11 Creative**

The persona of the respondents would be a 45 year old white female from the UK who considers herself to be a creative person.

Evaluation: Scenario

Amanda Jones created the survey questions and scenario:

Q1. I am a textile designer currently making a range of crochet dolls for a psychotherapist to use with her clients who have difficulty with verbal communication due to childhood trauma.

Please watch the video, then read the following scenario and then answer the question at the end.

Isobel is a 28-year-old Nurse who has been coming to therapy for a couple of months as part of her treatment for Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Isobel wants to be as effective as she can be in her job as she enjoys helping people.

She has not been happy with her progress in therapy as she is still struggling at work with dissociation and panic attacks. Isobel finds verbally communicating her problems and painful memories from her childhood extremely difficult.

She has disclosed to Jill; her therapist; that her father was violent towards her. Isobel has been unable to tell Jill how she felt as child and how she feels now as an adult.

They both agree that another approach should be taken to allow Isobel to process her past, understand and express her emotions. Jill suggests therapy dolls as something to try so that Isobel can show rather than tell. She presents Isobel with a small range of dolls and asks her to choose one to represent her younger self and the members of her family.

> *Isobel.mp4*

(▷) Dec 16th 2022, 15:51

The persona and scenario were developed with verbal data from the psychotherapist during an interview with the design researcher. She communicated that her clients come from a wide range of backgrounds, however many have achieved higher education and either have a secure career or are married to someone who does. This gives them the financial benefit to access private therapy. Many of her clients have experienced relational trauma, which is impacting their adult lives. The persona and scenario of Isobel was built on this information, which participants accepted, understood and engaged with.

Results

Question Success

Amanda Jones recorded the participant's ability to complete the survey with Question 1. - the control question, which asked a comprehension question that could be answered correctly if the participant had watched and understood the video.

Q1. What is one of the mental health issues that Isobel struggles with at work?

All respondents showed an understanding. The most chosen condition was panic attacks. This is also the most understood in wider society. Less of the general public will have knowledge of issues such as dissociation. The respondents answered as expected.

Q2. Imagine you are choosing a doll type for Isobel, which doll face design do you think is best suited to her?

- Eyes, and mouth that can be changed to different expressions - 9 resp. 81.8% [EMC]

- Eyes and smile - 1 resp. 9.1% [ES]

- Eyes only - 1 resp. 9.1% [E]

It is clear from the picture test that the *Eyes, and mouth that can be changed to different expressions [EMC]* was preferred with over 81% of the vote.

Q3. Please choose all that you agree with about that design?

Effective - 10 resp. 90.9%

simple - 9 resp. 81.8%

creative - 8 resp. 72.7%

Understandable - 8 resp. 72.7%

Appealing - 6 resp. 54.5%

Confusing - 0 resp. 0%

Intimidating - 0 resp. 0%

Other - 0 resp. 0%

With 90% of respondents agreeing that their chosen design is effective, it can be seen as a successful result for the [EMC] design. However, as at least 2 respondents chose the other designs, it can be seen as all the designs are effective.

None of the designs were described as confusing or intimidating, which again is a successful result.

All the positive attributes were chosen for the respondents preferred design. However, the attributes were less chosen in descending order shown to the respondents, indicating that even though they were told they could pick as many as they wanted, they may have experienced fatigue with the list. This could be amended in future surveys by randomising the attributes for each respondent.

The *appealing* attribute only scored 54% of agreement. This is later explained more in the last question, as respondents possibly didn't take into account that the design was a draft basic mock up. There may have been more done to explain that the designs were not in the final stage.

Q4. Considering the 3 doll face designs, please rank them in order of preference (1 most preferred, 3 least preferred)

Eyes only

1. 9.1% 1

2. 45.5% 5

3. 45.5% 5

Eyes and Smile

1. 18.2% 2

2. 36.4% 4

3. 45.5% 5

Eyes and changeable mouth

1. 72.7% 8

2. 18.2% 2

3. 9.1% 1

8 out of the 11 respondents chose [EMC] as the most preferred. This contradicts the earlier question when they were asked to choose a preferred design, in which 9 out of the 11 respondents answered [EMC].

Previously 1 respondent had preferred [ES] and 1 had preferred [E]. However, in this question, 1 of the respondents has changed their preference to [ES] from [E] and another respondent changed from [EMC] to [E]. There could be a variety of reasons for this including the 2 respondents misunderstood the questions, misread the questions, or clicked their answers in error. (8)

Q6. Without instruction, I DON'T think it's clear how the doll works.

3 said - don't agree

3 said - mostly don't agree

4 said – somewhat agree

An average 36.4% of respondents said somewhat agree, implying that the design will need to come with some simple instructions. Only one respondent thought it was clear how the doll works, whilst the other two weren't fully clear.

Q7. I think the design would be easy to use.

2 said 4 (mostly agree)

9 said 5 (completely agree)

An average 81.8% completely agreed the design would be easy to use. 18.2% said they mostly agree it would be easy to use.

This is a positive outcome for the usability. However, considering how respondents answered to Q6., it appears that although respondents thought it would be easy to use, they would need some simple instruction to be confident using it.

Q8. I think the design is unpleasant to look at.

10 said 1 – don't agree

1 said 2 - mostly don't agree

90% of respondents thought the design was pleasant to look at with only one respondent saying they mostly think it is pleasant to look at. This is a positive result for the design, implying the aesthetic is on the right track.

Q9. Finally, in your own words, what are the things that you think could improve the design?

I don't know how possible or beneficial it may be to personalise the dolls for each client but that is all I can think of at the moment.

Choice of outfits, posable, different materials, design reflective of the person using it

The only thing I could suggest is making sure on using strong thread/yarn to make sure the changeable mouth will withstand movement and not break.

Skin/hair colour should match the colour of the person using the doll so they can easily identify with it

Adding hair and maybe changing the colour

I think it is fine, plain, simple and non-intimidating

Facial expressions are often only a v small part of how we express emotions - for folk who have experienced trauma a lot of it is stored in their bodies, and expressed through the whole body. So the capacity of the doll to have a movable and shapable body is important i think (e.g. curled up, sat/stood up straight, arms crossed).

Perhaps the option of hats/hair that can cover or hide behind

Add some hair.

Maybe dolls that are both male and female.

Eyelashes for women.

Maybe older looking or younger looking to accommodate age.

Summary of responses to Q9.:

APPERANCE: Add hair, colour options, outfit options. Ability to personalise, the design needs to reflect the user so that they can easily identify with it.

USABILITY: Ability to pose the doll, moveable limbs.

RELIABILITY: Strength and security of materials needs to be high quality to ensure longevity and heavy use.

Take Aways:

- Survey appears to be clear to respondents as they all answered the questions that showed an understanding.

- EMC was the most popular design with respondents.

- It could have been made clearer that the images used of the mock-up doll faces were not the final design and that more detail such as hair and variety of colour and body shape would be added later.

- The most preferred EMC design appears easy to use, but would require simple instructions for first time users.

- Ability to personalise the doll was given as an answer by majority of respondents on how to improve the design.

OUTCOME:

The experimental version was successful in that it was most preferred by respondents with an average 80% choosing it over the control versions.

The respondents understood how the experimental version functions.

Confirmation Bias:

Although respondents engaged well with the scenario, the preference test focused on what would be best for the Isobel persona and not on the respondent personally. It did not ask if they would find the doll design helpful as the test was sent out to the general public, not aimed at people who are in therapy for childhood trauma. The answers may have been different if only the target consumer was asked to participate. The psychotherapist interview also revealed that using dolls and objects in therapy sessions was not something she did with all her clients. She explained that some said that they would "feel silly and childish" using these tools. People with this view may also have had different answers to the preference test. There is also the possibility that the new design was the 'best of a bad bunch'. Other designs for the dolls face were not considered, and therefore may have been more successful than the malleable mouth design.

Recommendations

Improve doll design prototype from feedback:

Priority 1: Offer personalisation options for clothes and hair

Priority 2: Use pipe cleaner frame to make body shapable

Priority 3: Ensure all materials used are durable and of high quality

Next Stage:

Conduct Usability test – moderated remote test focusing on: Will the [EMC] be the best?

Create questions for 2 types of users - Therapists and their clients.

Conduct this test with **real** users for more accurate feedback.

Focus on:

Functionality- Can it be manipulated to change expression (Key Q from stakeholder)

Reliability – is it sturdy/well manufactured / high quality

Usability - It is easy to use by everyone

Proficiency – Does it have the ability to allow a user to become skilled in using the design in intended context

Creativity – Could it be used for more than its primary indented use?

Conclusion

Participants found that of the 3 designs shown to them, they preferred the design with the face that had a malleable mouth. They wanted to see the doll developed with personalisable options such as clothes and hair. It is recommended that the next prototype be more detailed with the recommendations above. The next stage of the project should be to test the improved doll by conducting a usability test with real users. Evaluate the responses and feedback the conclusion to the psychotherapist, so that she can decide how to move forward with the project.