Select All That Apply Lessons in Text Message Surveys

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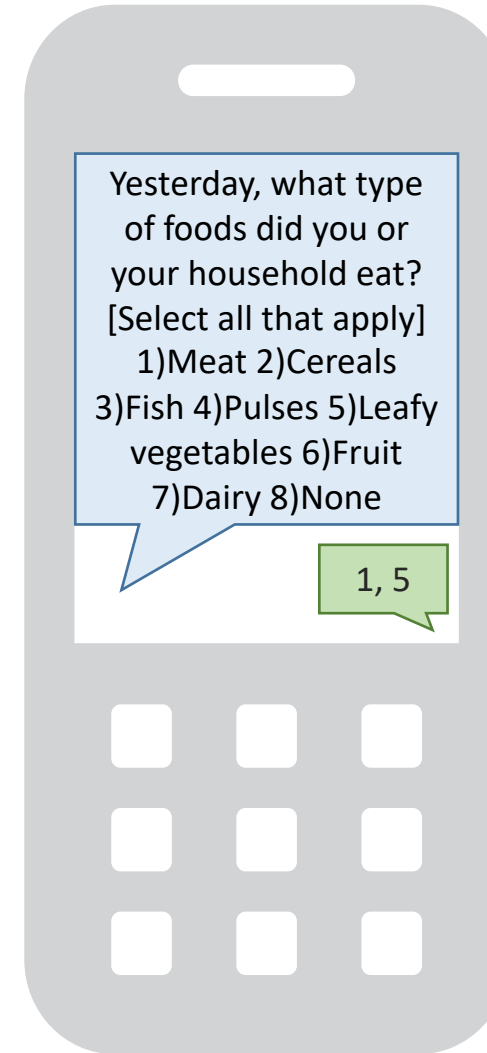
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Presentation Outline

1) The research question
2) Background
3) The study: 3 experiments
4) Results
5) Questions

The Question: What Biases Appear when using "Select All That Apply" Questions in Text Message Surveys?

Background: Select All That Apply

The Methodology:
- Collect data on a larger number of items by asking about them all at once.

The Benefits:
- Faster data collection, shorter survey process for respondent

The Downfalls:
- Studies on web-based surveys have found respondents do not process select all that apply questions as thoroughly.*

- More options are chosen with forced response questions.

*Smyth, J. D., Dillman, D. A., Christian, L. M., & Stern, M. J. (2006)

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Background: GeoPoll

GeoPoll partners with mobile network operators to conduct mobile surveys. GeoPoll's platform supports:

Location Targeting:

Geo-referencing based on location of cell tower/Self Reporting

Two-way Communication:

Near real-time communication through SMS, voice, or mobile web.

Billing System Integration:

Ability to credit a user's airtime or mobile money account.

Background: GeoPoll

GeoPoll conducts surveys for commercial, social, and academic partners on a wide range of issues:

The Study: 3 Experiments with Select All That Apply

1 Respondents were presented with questions on **food groups** either in Select All that Apply or Forced Choice format on Day 1, then the opposite format on Day 2.

2 Respondents were given Select All That Apply questions with **varying instructions** on how to complete the question.

3 Respondents were presented with questions on **soft drinks** and **TV watching** to see if subject matter influenced results.

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Results: Major findings

In **food group** question, "leafy vegetables" was top category picked for both Select All That Apply and Forced Choice questions....

...but results showed differences in number of options picked

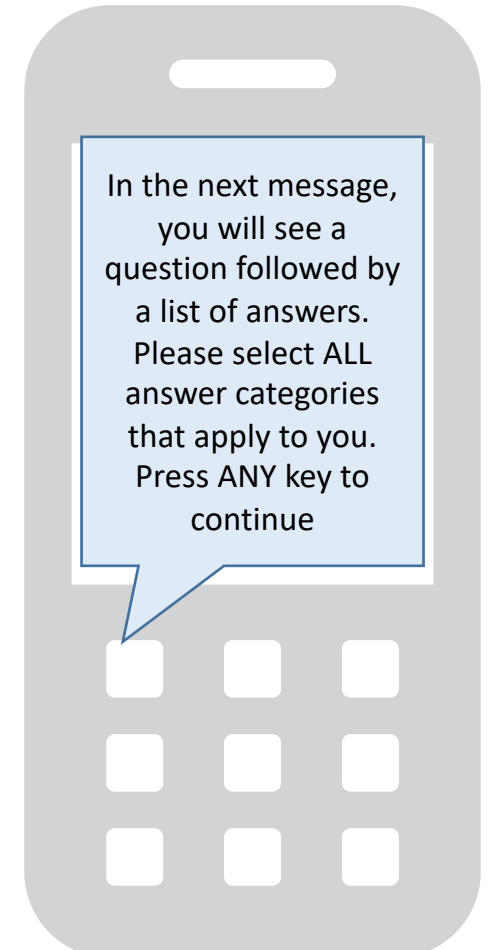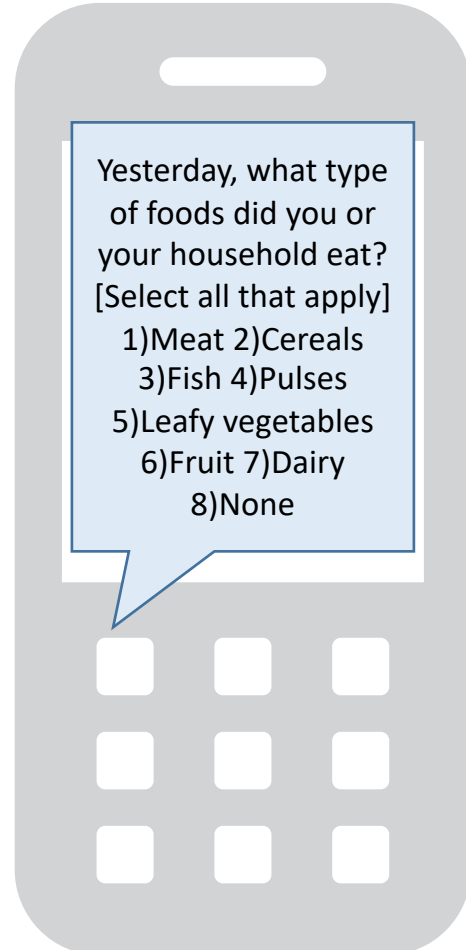**Select All That Apply**

1.36

Forced Choice

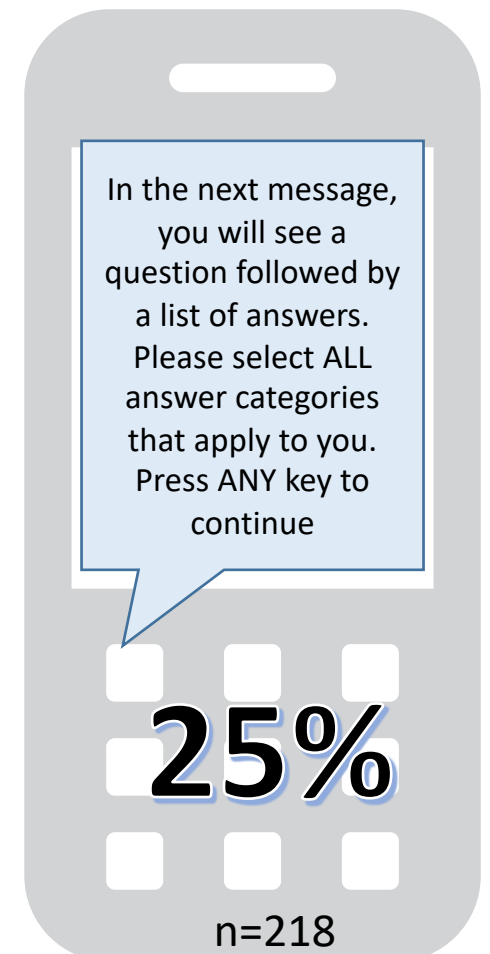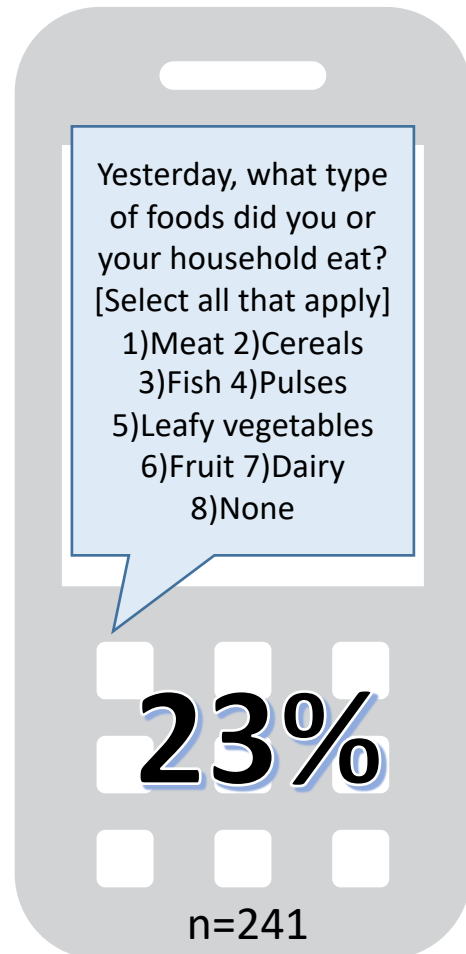# 3.38

n=1,024

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Results: Major findings

Instruction wording vs # of options chosen

Results: Major findings

Percent who responded with more than one option:

No significant difference in number of options chosen

Yesterday, what type of foods did you or your household eat? [Select all that apply] 1)Meat 2)Cereals 3)Fish 4)Pulses 5)Leafy vegetables 6)Fruit 7)Dairy 8)None

23%

n=241

Please choose ALL numbers that apply. Yesterday, what type of foods did you or your household eat? 1)Meat 2)Cereals 3)Fish 4)Pulses 5)Leafy vegetables 6)Fruit 7)Dairy 8)None

26%

n=228

In the next message, you will see a question followed by a list of answers. Please select ALL answer categories that apply to you. Press ANY key to continue

25%

n=218

Results: Major findings

Does subject matter and option ordering make a difference?

Soft Drinks

TV Stations

4.46 vs. 1.36 options selected
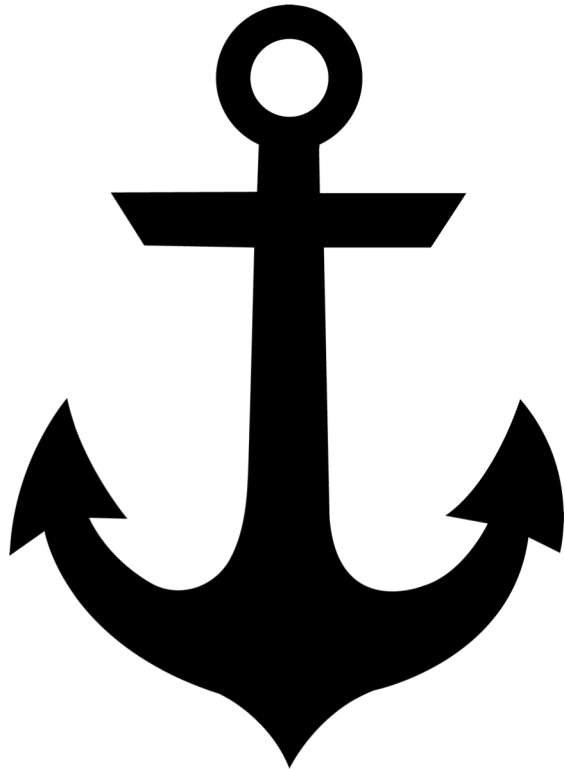
n=407, n=255

1.91 vs. 1.12 options selected

n=219, n=257

Results: Major findings

Does subject matter and option ordering make a difference?

Anchoring Bias:

Options 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 less likely to be picked

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Lessons Learned

- There is a need to understand how question formats (select all that apply vs individual questions) affect outcomes

- Results seen in SMS surveys are similar to those seen in other mediums, including web and other self-completion modes

- Bias may vary based on the type of question being asked (brands, food groups, TV watched)

- Randomization of option ordering can mitigate anchoring bias

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