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Sustaining Engagement in a Probability-Based Panel:

Early Evidence and Panelist Preferences for SMS Survey Reminders

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Gallup Panel and SMS

Cellphone/smartphone ownership is extremely prevalent in the U.S., 91% of the U.S. public owns a smartphone, compared to just 68% in 2015.¹

Gallup Panelists' potential mobile preference: 58% of all surveys completed by Gallup Panel members are completed on a mobile device, such as a smartphone or tablet.

Over half of Gallup Panelists are currently consented to receiving SMS (62%). Younger panelists, Black and Hispanic panelists, and new panelists (<1 yr) are most likely to consent to receive SMS.

Can sending survey invites/reminders via **SMS messaging** boost response rates?

While Gallup has used SMS before on a project-by-project basis, starting in 2025, SMS became added to our standard methodology for survey recruitment, meaning projects now send survey recruitment or reminders via SMS.

Past Findings: SMS Invitations and Reminders

SMS survey invitations and reminders are both **effective** in increasing response rates, using both the Gallup Panel ^{2, 3, 4, 5} and with listed samples.⁴

Effects hold consistent across **all** demographic groups tested, including hard-to-reach groups.

Evidence suggest that respondents who consent to SMS are **high-responders**, being more likely to respond to any given survey, regardless if SMS is used.

In recent experimentation, response rates were **increased** among SMS recipients, **regardless** of when in the fielding protocol the SMS is sent (i.e., invite, reminder, final reminder).⁵

² Rivera, Marlar, & Schriener, 2024; ³ Rivera, Marlar, & Schriener, 2025a; ⁴ Rivera, Marlar, & Schriener, 2025b; ⁵ Rivera, 2025

Research Questions

Are SMS consenters more likely to respond to any given survey, regardless of how they are contacted?

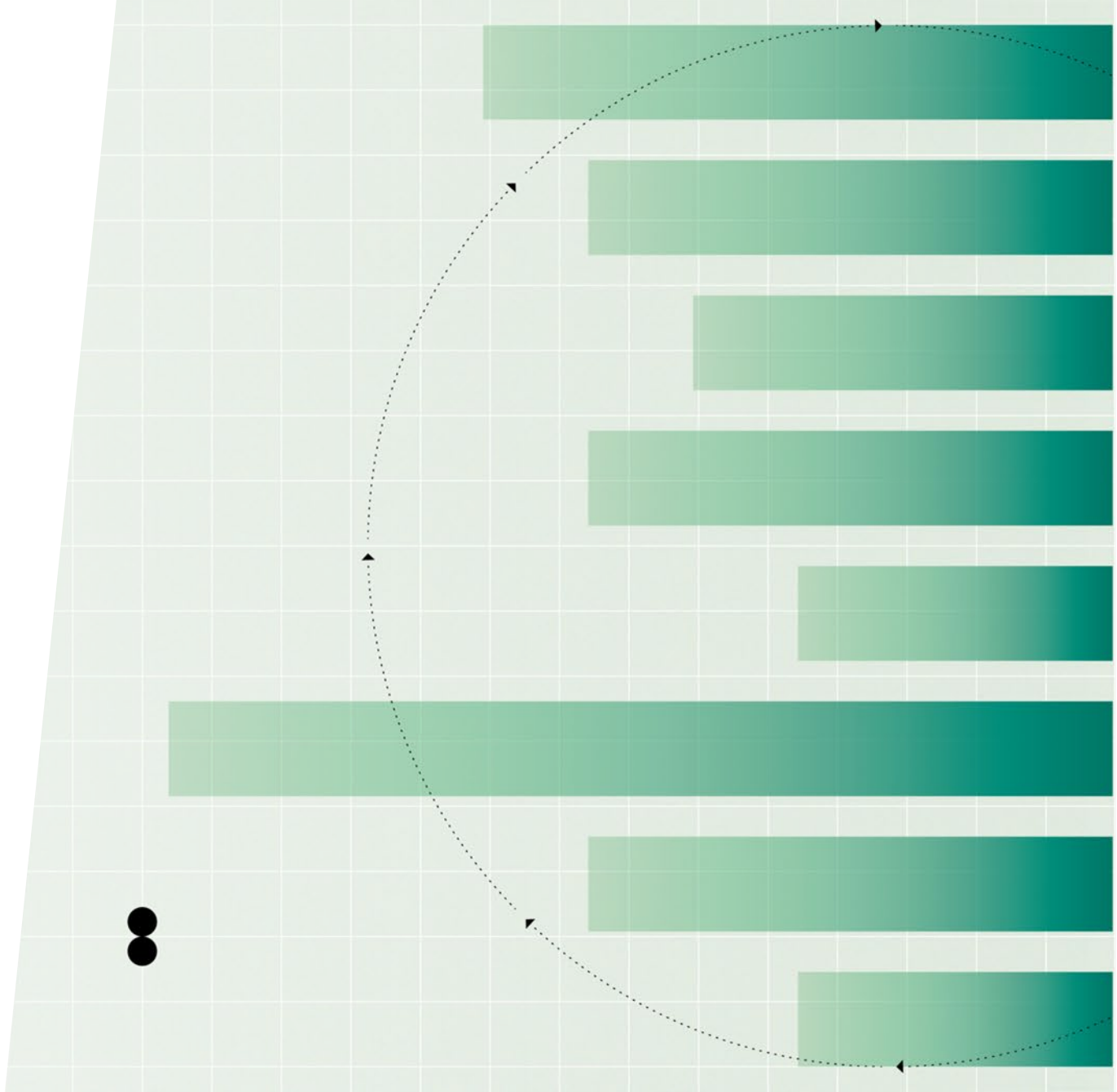
How do Gallup panelists *feel* about getting SMS reminder and/or invitations?

How do Gallup Panelists prefer to receive their survey communications?

Among those who receive SMS survey communications, when do they prefer to receive their SMS survey communications?

2025 Gallup Panel Online Response Trends:

By SMS Consenting Type

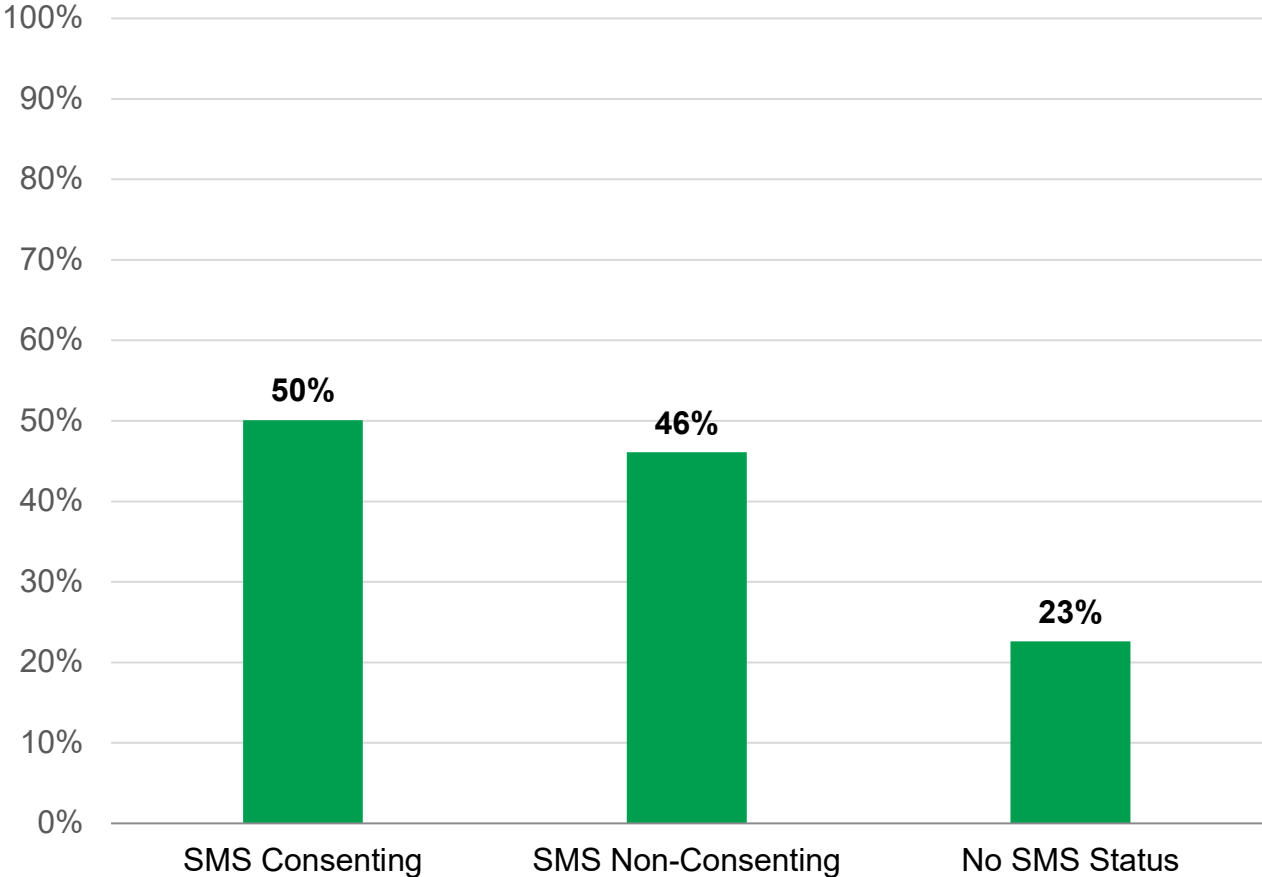


Response Rates Gallup Panelist

In 2025, the first year of Gallup’s renewed focus on sending SMS for every survey, panelists who were consented to receiving SMS responded at significantly higher rates than those who weren’t consented to receiving SMS.

This finding supports previous reported findings in which SMS consenting panelists responded at higher rates, regardless of if or when the SMS is sent.^{2, 3, 4, 5}

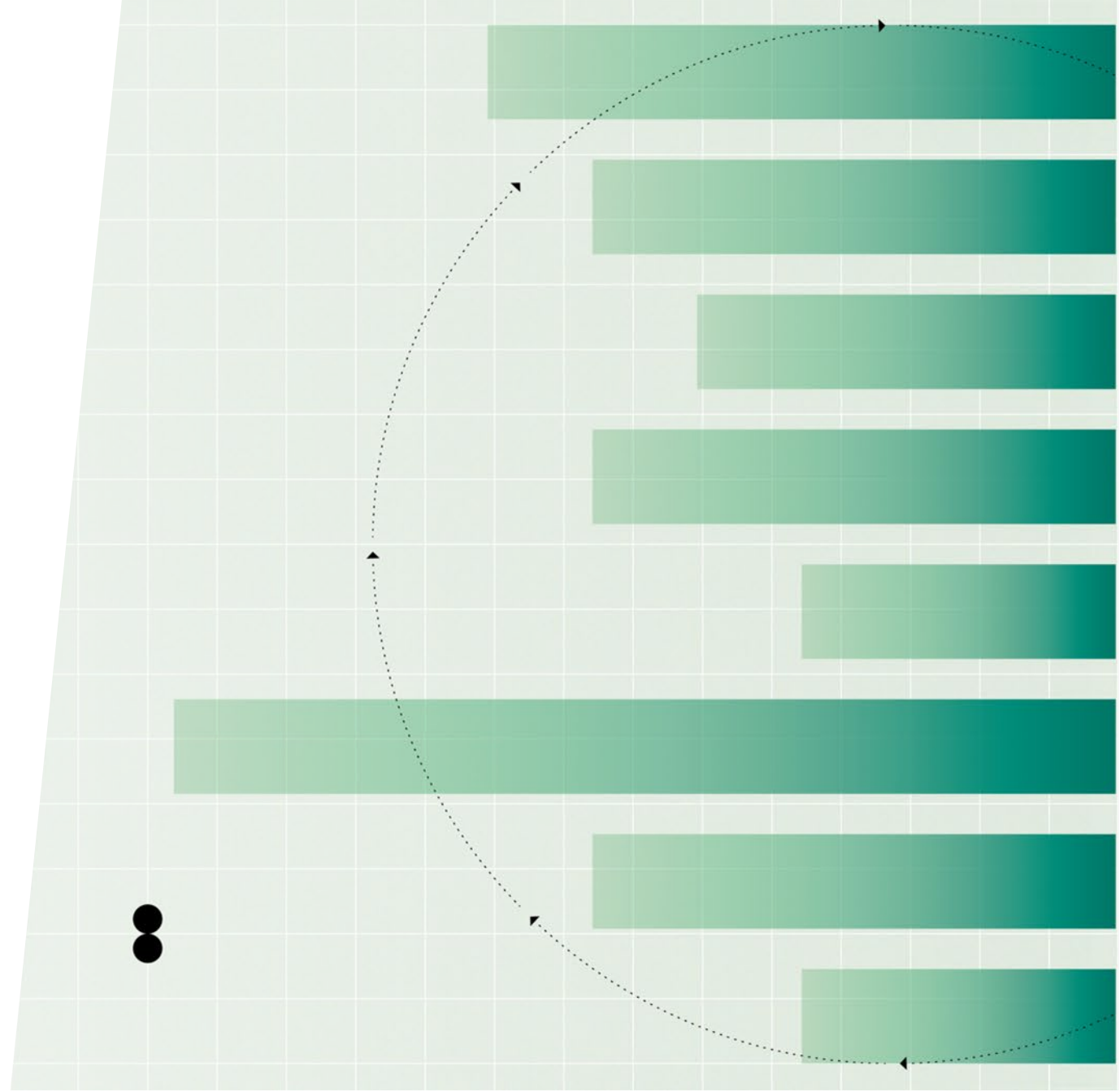
2025 Aggregated Response Rate, by Consenting Status



² Rivera, Marlar, & Schriener, 2024; ³ Rivera, Marlar, & Schriener, 2025a; ⁴ Rivera, Marlar, & Schriener, 2025b; ⁵ Rivera, 2025

SMS Communication Preferences

Survey Fielding



Gallup Panel Experiences Survey

FIELDDED: Feb. 2026

To measure Gallup Panelists preferences, we invited over 100,000 Gallup Panel members to complete an online survey focused on understanding their experiences as a Gallup Panelist.

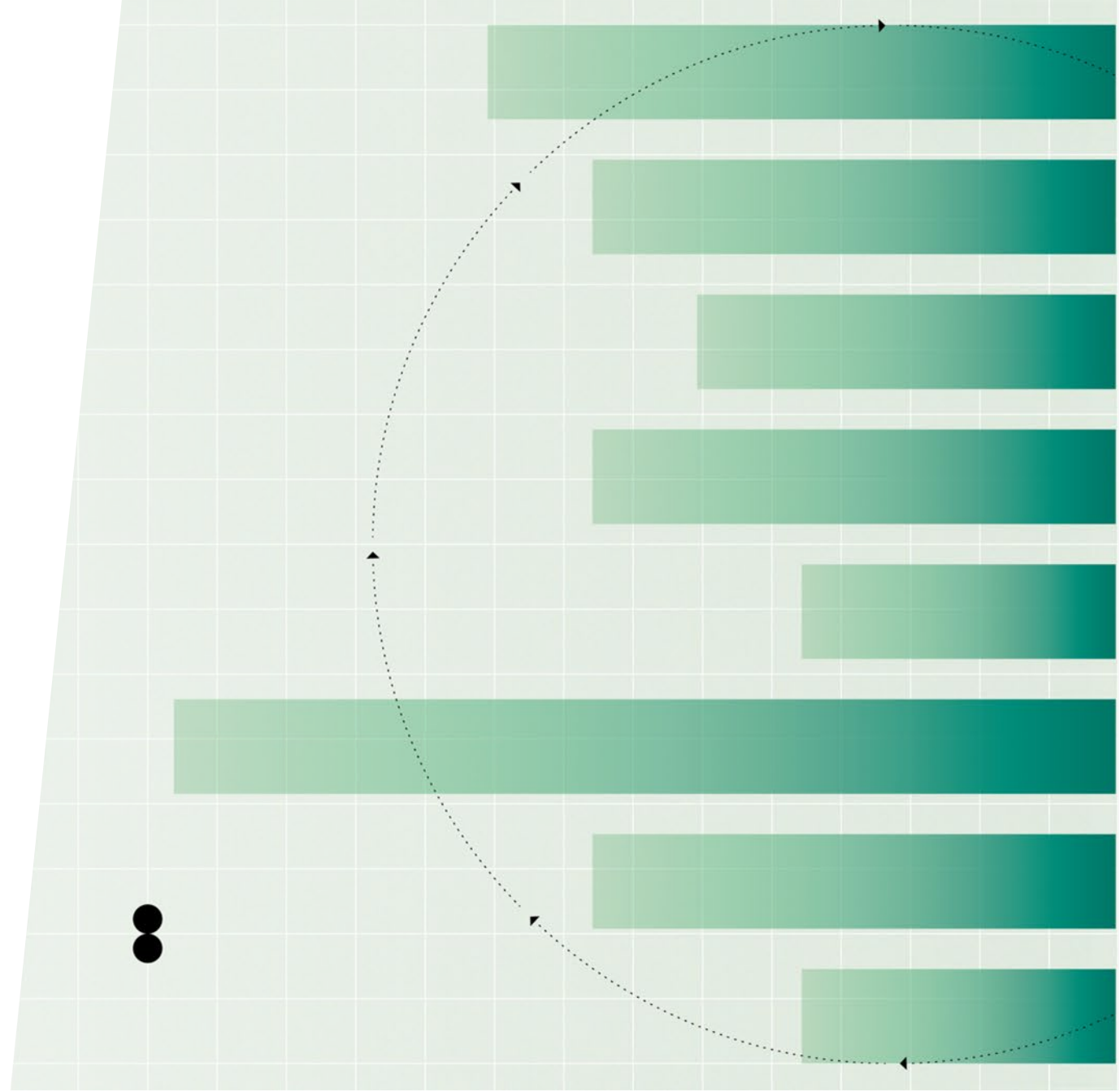
In the survey, we asked existing Gallup Panelists a variety of questions surrounding their experiences as a panelist, including items on their preferences for survey communications, such as emails, SMS, and app notifications.

We also allowed members to indicate that they wanted to retract their SMS consent (previously consented panelists) or give new SMS consent (previously unconsented panelists).

As of February 18, 2026, 45,397 Gallup Panelists had responded to the survey.

SMS Communication Preferences

Preferences for Receiving SMS

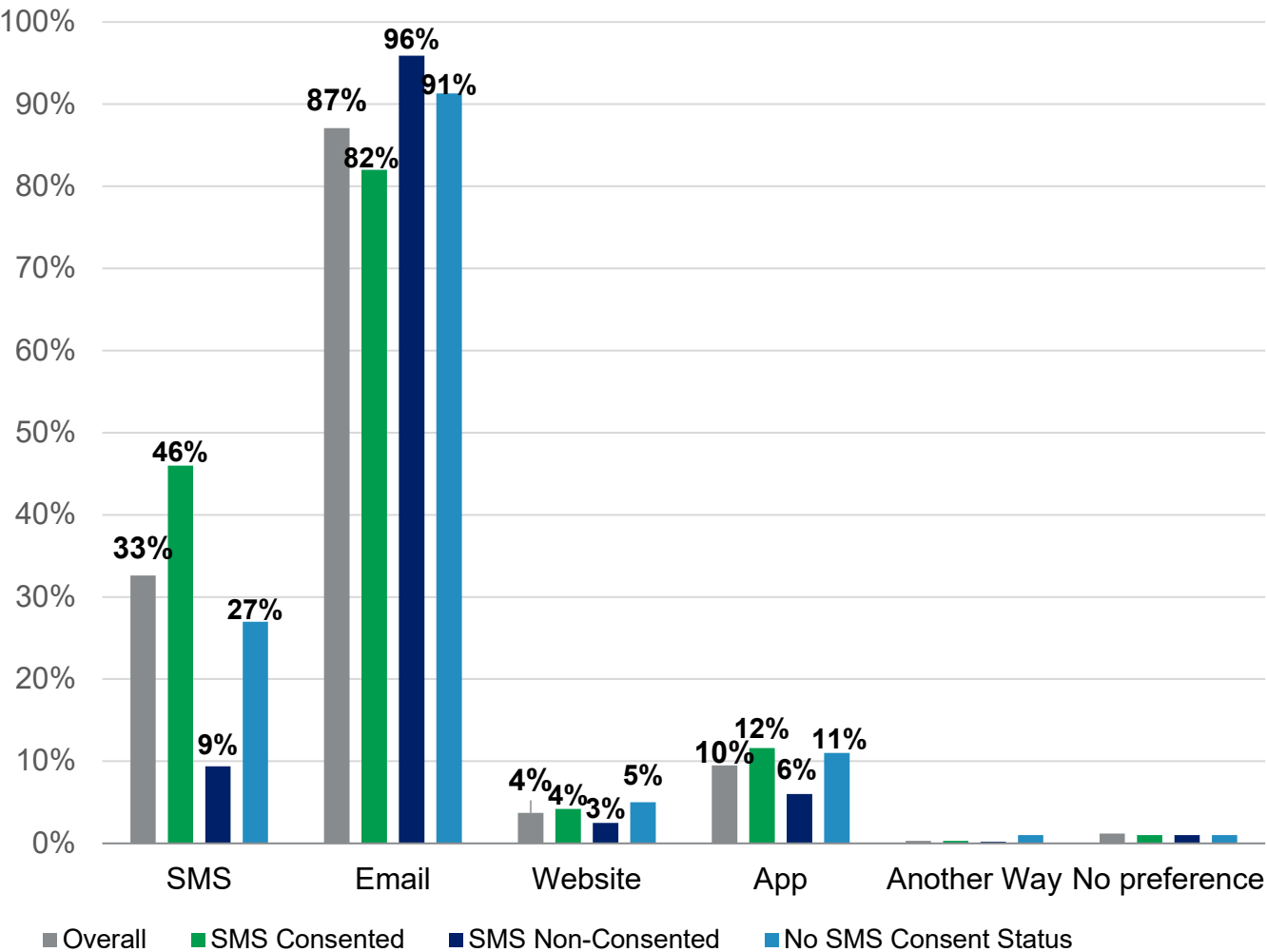


Panelists Preferences for Communication Type

A large majority (87%) of the panelists who responded prefer receiving emails, regardless if they prefer other communication types. Only one-in-three preferred SMS (33%).

No differences emerged in response and completion rates by preferred contact method.

Survey Communication Preferences, by Type



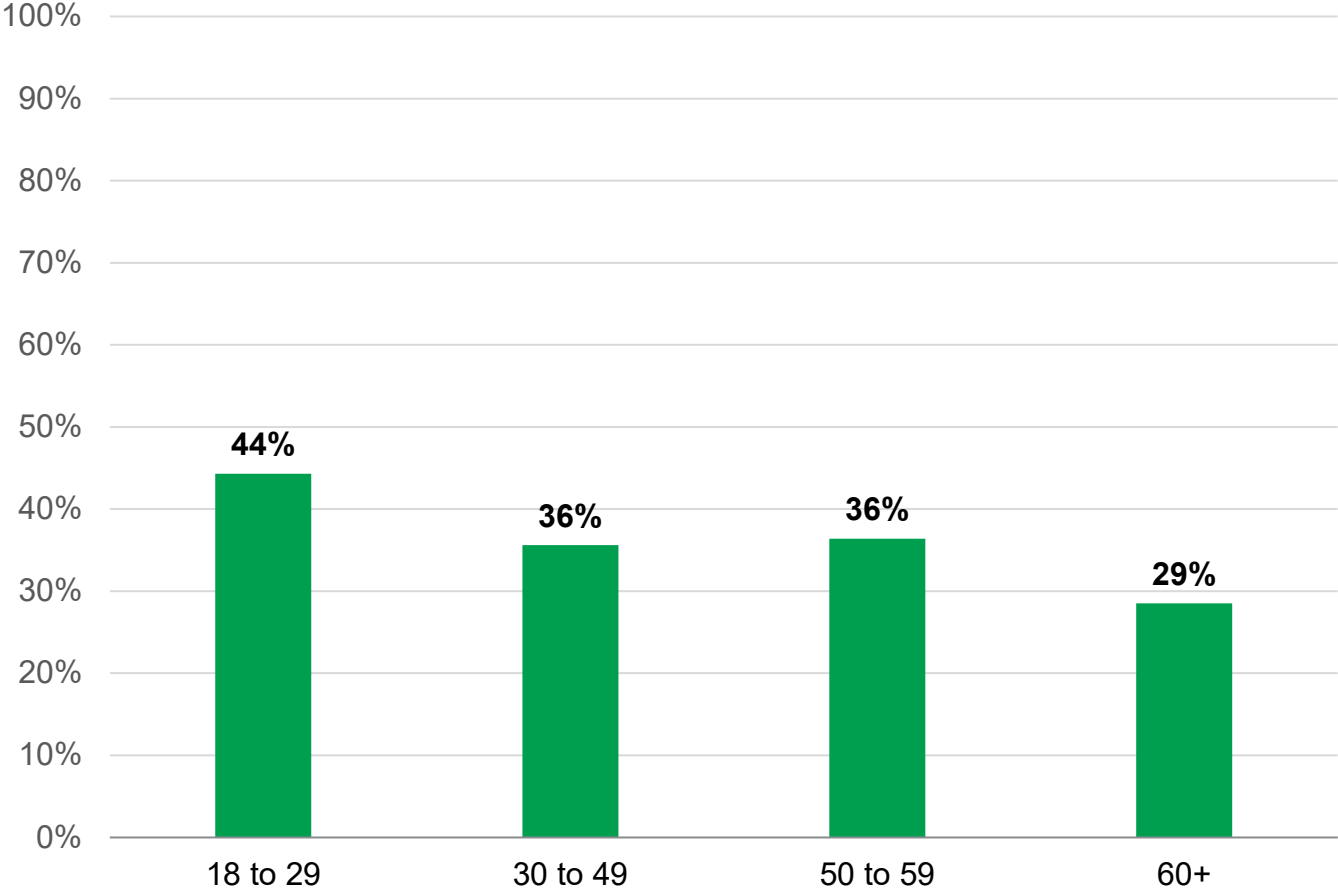
Preference for SMS Communications Across Age

Significant differences in panelists' preference to receive SMS emerged between age groups.

Panelists aged 18-29 were more likely than all other age groups to prefer receiving SMS.

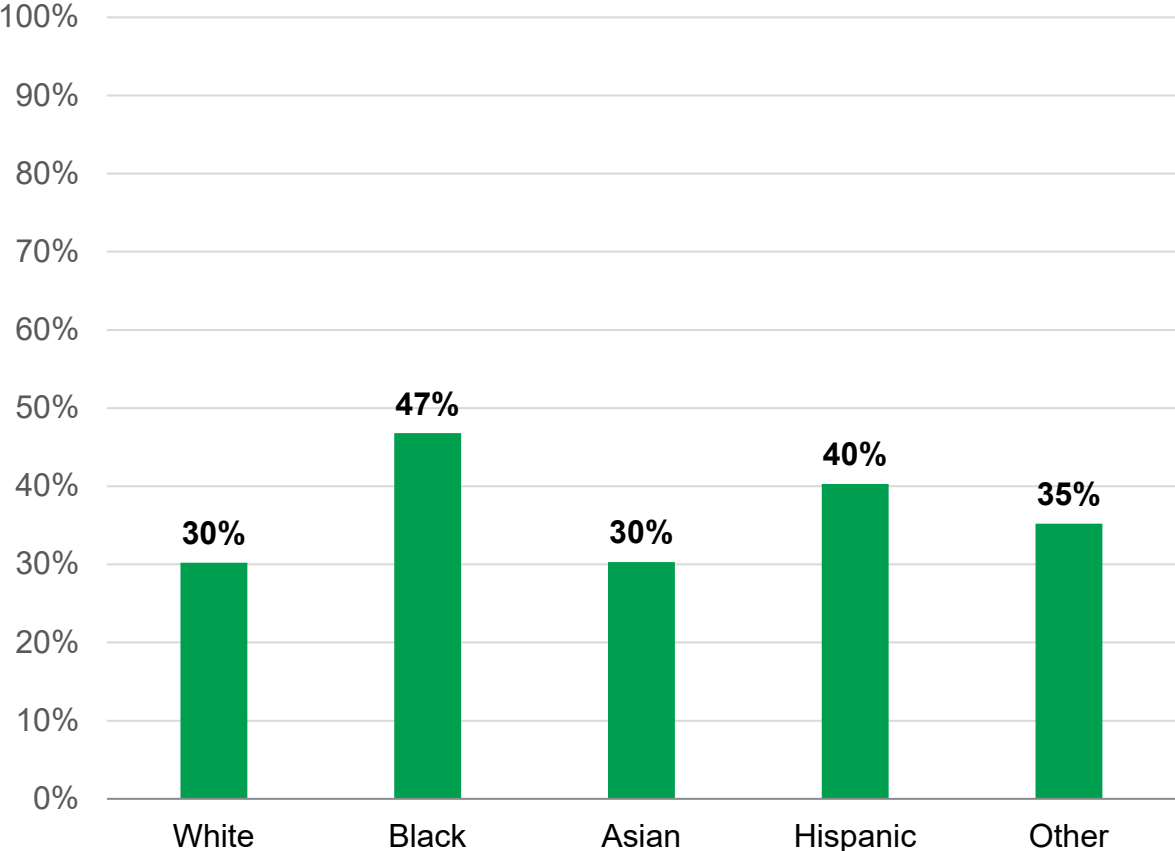
Panelists aged 30-49 and 50-59 were more likely than those 60+ to prefer receiving SMS.

Preferences for SMS, by Age

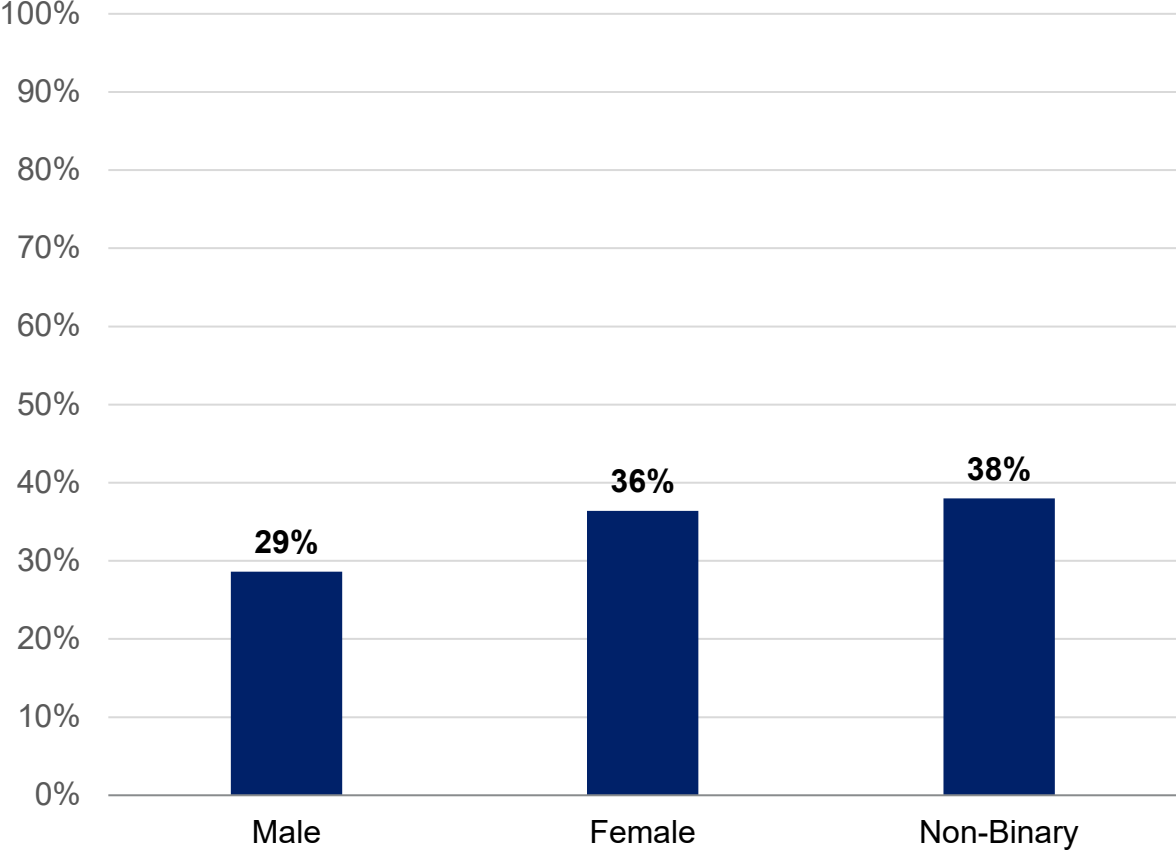


Preference for SMS Communications – Race/Ethnicity and Gender

Preferences for SMS, by Race and Ethnicity

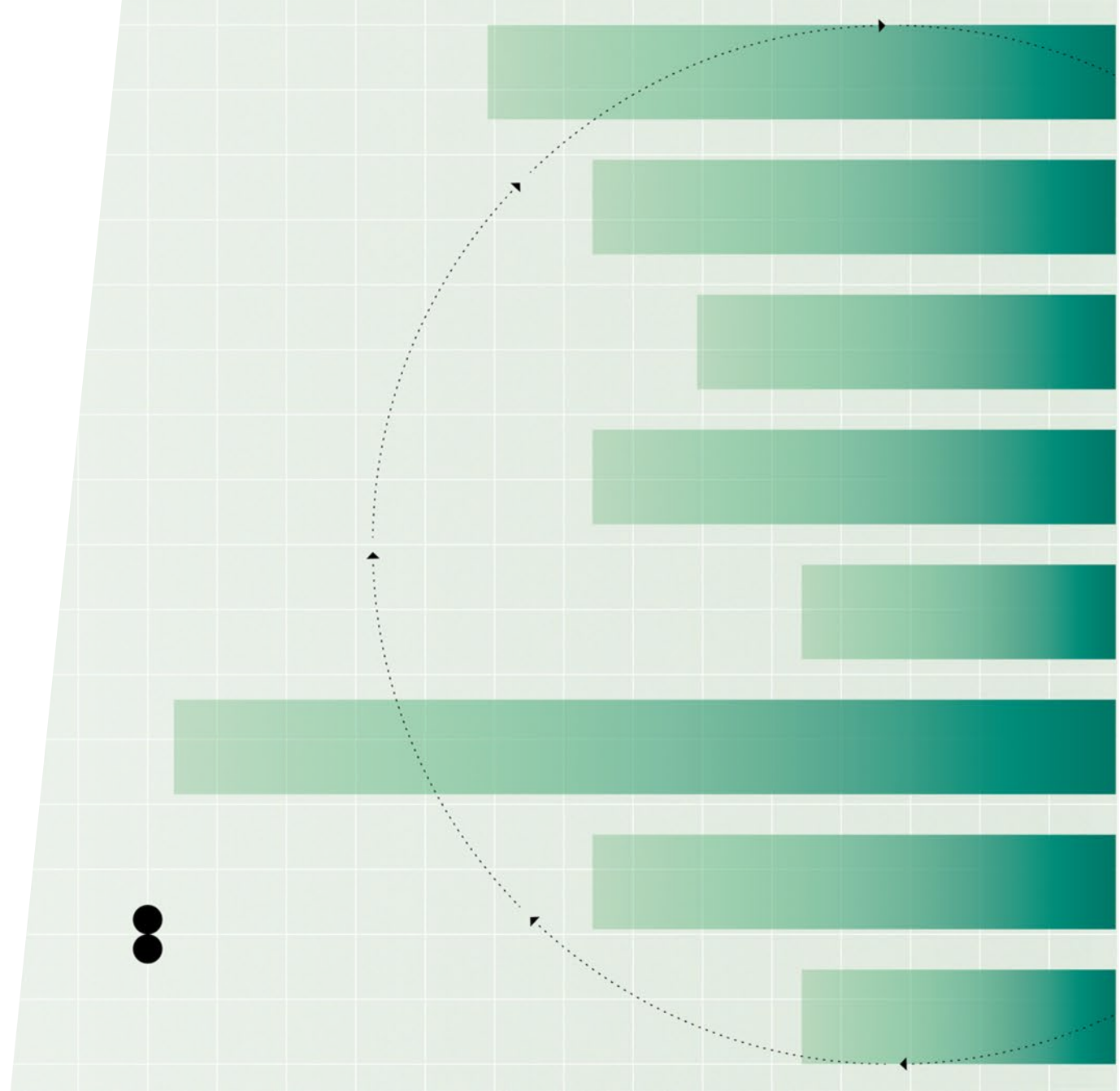


Preferences for SMS, by Gender



SMS Communication Preferences

Preferences for When SMS is Sent

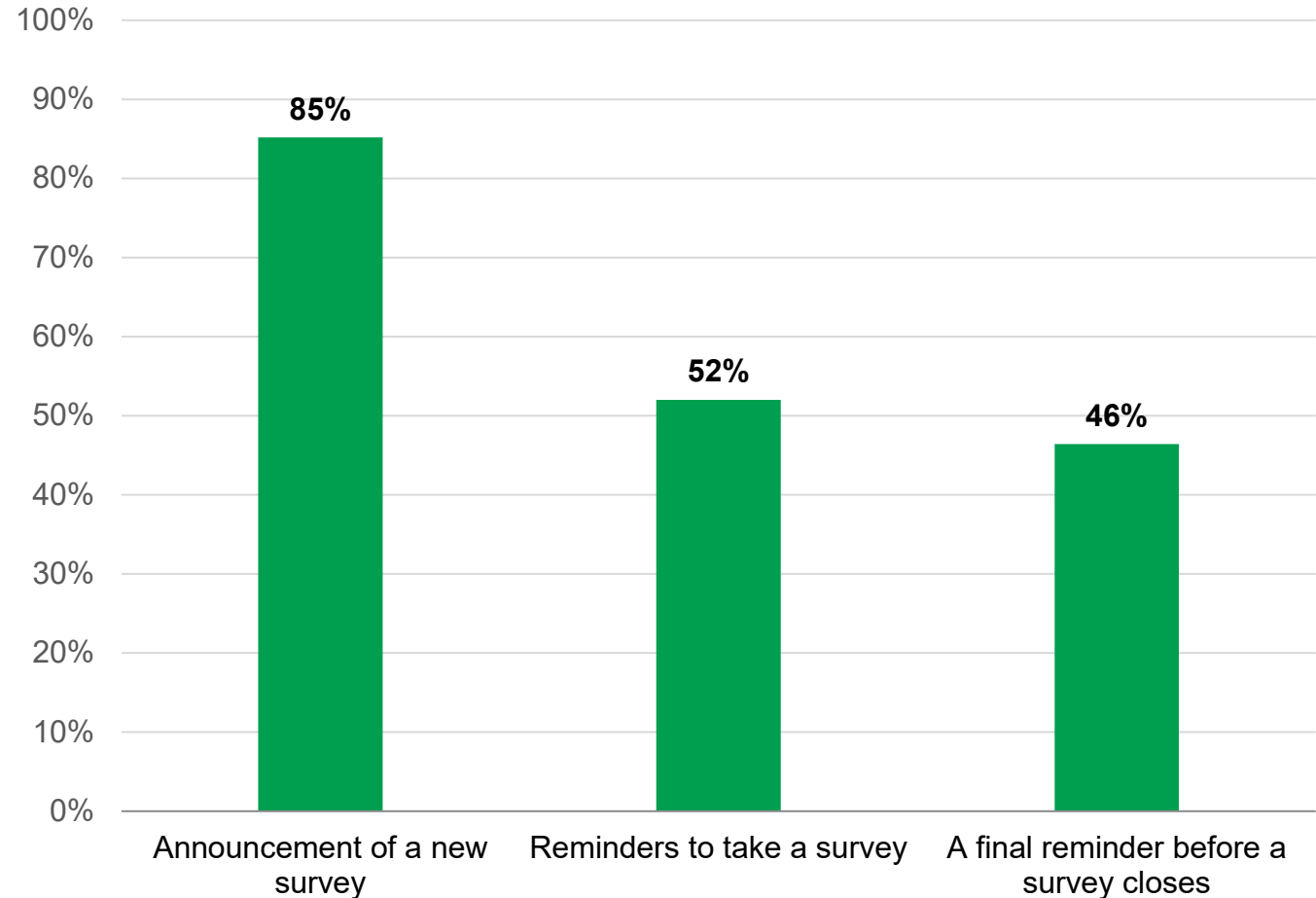


Preferences For Specific Types of SMS Communications

A large majority (85%) of panelists prefer receiving SMS survey invitations. Just over half (52%) preferred SMS survey reminders.

Past experimental research has found that there are no significant response rate tradeoffs for sending an SMS at these different time points.⁵

**Preferences for Type of SMS,
of those who receive or want to receive SMS**

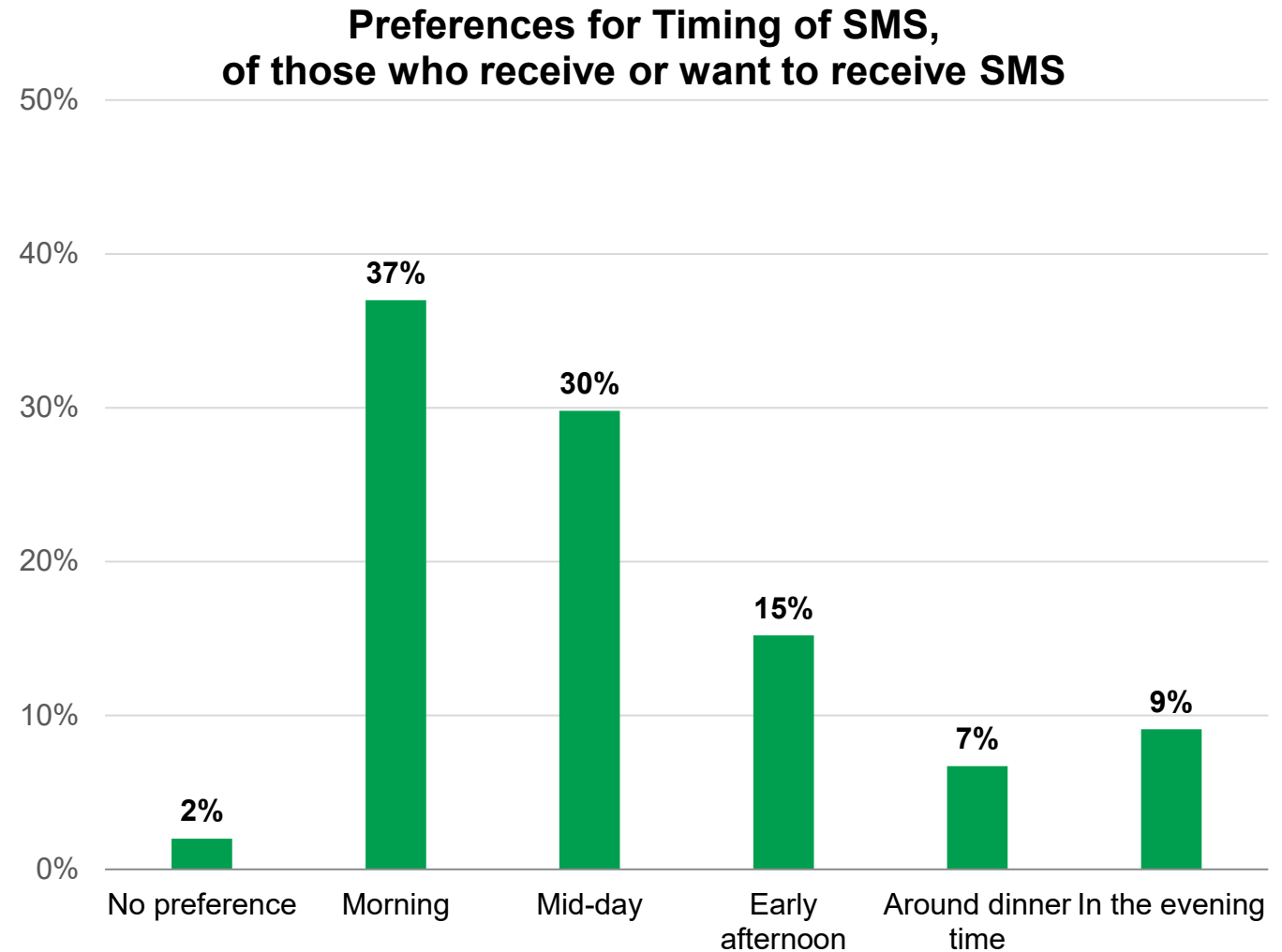


⁵ Rivera, 2025

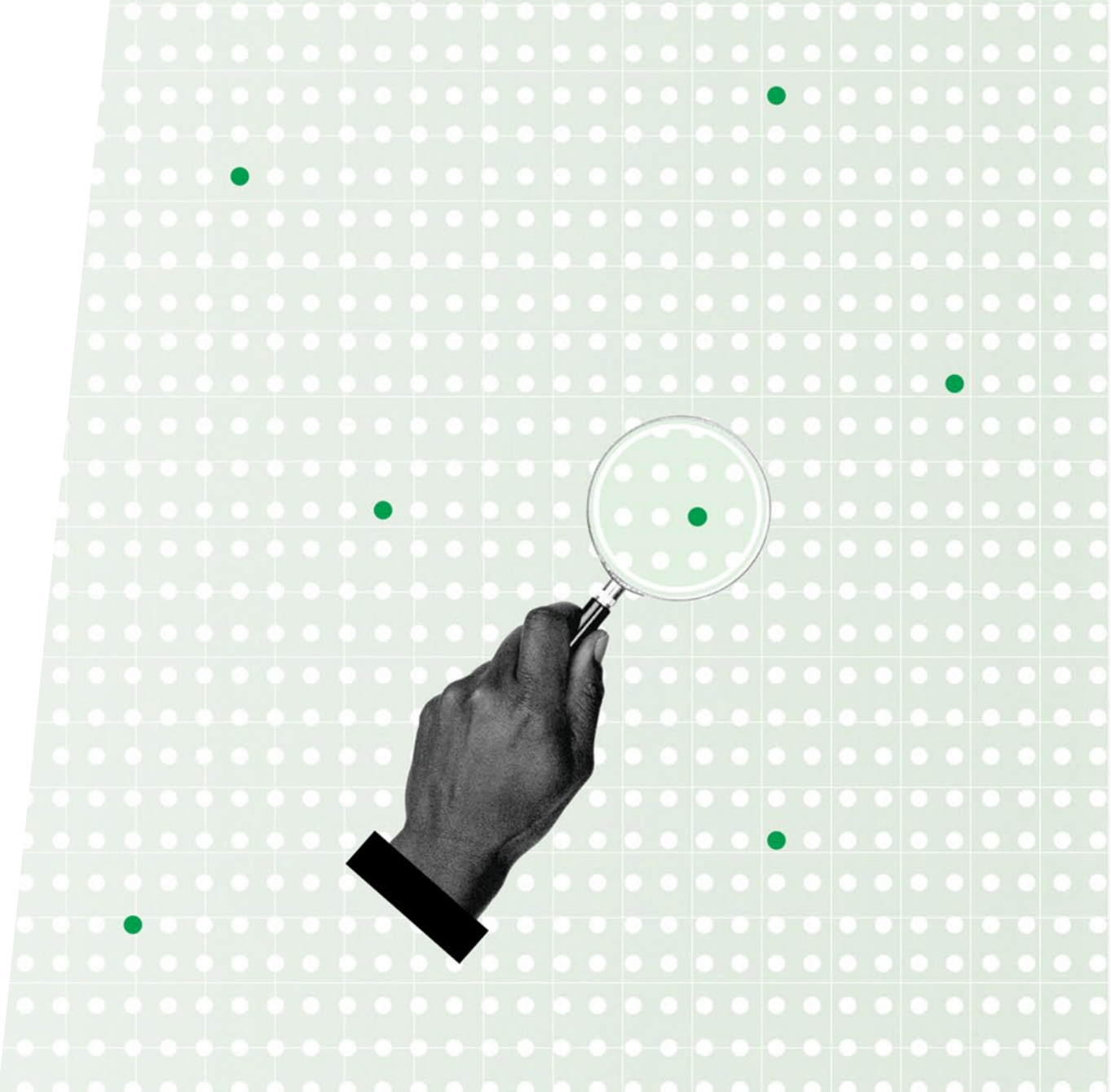
Preferences For Timing of SMS Communications

Panelists indicating preferring SMS communications being sent either in the morning (37%) or mid-day (30%).

Few panelists indicated preferring SMS communications around dinner (7%) or in the evening (10%).



Findings and Limitations



General Findings

Results from Gallup's panelists preferences survey indicated that while a third (33%) of Gallup Panelists preferred receiving SMS survey communications, the vast majority **preferred the traditional email communications** (87%).

Across age groups, respondents aged 18-29 (44%) were **most likely** to prefer SMS.

Across racial groups, Black (47%) and Hispanic (40%) were **most likely** to prefer SMS.

Women (36%) were **more likely** than men (29%) to prefer SMS.

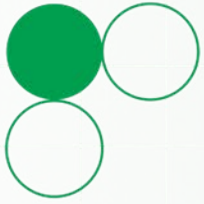
Overall, Gallup Panelist preferred being sent an SMS early in the survey protocol as an **invitation** (85%), while preferring to receive SMS either **in the morning** (37%) or **at mid-day** (30%).

Limitations

The results reported herein represent partial data to a survey that is currently still fielding.

Gallup is continuing to ramp up its research surrounding the effective use of SMS/MMS. As technology and preferences continue to change, ongoing research of methodological practices, including the use of SMS, is needed.

Our results are limited to the designs tested. Effects may differ with more significant design changes.



Questions?

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Citations

¹**Pew Research Center.** (2025, November 20). Mobile fact sheet. Pew Research Center.
<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/mobile/>

²**Rivera, E., Marlar, J., & Schreiner, J.** (2024). Assessing the Efficacy of SMS Survey Recruitment Methods on Members of a Probability-Based Panel. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research (MAPOR), Chicago, IL.

³**Rivera, E., Marlar, J., & Schreiner, J.** (2025a). SMS Survey Recruitment Methods: Assessing a Decade of SMS Research Using the Gallup Panel. Paper presented at the Current Innovations in Probability-Based Household Internet Panel Research (CIPHER) Conference, Washington, DC.

⁴**Rivera, E., Marlar, J., & Schreiner, J.** (2025b). Assessing the Utility of SMS Survey Invitation Methods Across Probability & Listed Samples: Results from Recent Experimentation. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR), Atlanta, GA.

⁵**Rivera, E.** (2025). Right Message, Right Time: Optimizing SMS Survey Recruitment in a Probability-Based Panel. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research (MAPOR), Chicago, IL.

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