

Description of Omnibus Survey Used for Humane League Labs Study E005

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Abstract

This report synthesizes our knowledge of the survey methods used for Humane League Labs study E005. While this study used a single survey instrument, it was comprised of five relatively distinct parts examining a range of topics in animal advocacy, including the effects of different messaging strategies, reactions to photos of farm animals and interest in vegan meals. Prior to this report, each part of the study was described separately and the full survey instrument was not clearly described. This report serves to describe the survey instrument, its administration and the data collection to the best of our knowledge. By consolidating this information, we hope to facilitate a more thorough understanding of this study.

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1 Introduction

This document synthesizes our knowledge of the survey instrument used for Humane League Labs study E005. While this study used a single survey instrument, it was comprised of five relatively distinct parts, each described and analyzed in separate reports [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]. Previously, no single document described the entire survey in detail and information was spread across several sources, including: the aforementioned reports; the blog posts released alongside the reports [6, 7, 8, 9, 10]; the data files used for producing the reports; metadata describing the columns of the data and labels for the values therein; and miscellaneous internal documents. Unfortunately, even in synthesis these sources leave gaps in our understanding of the survey instrument and how it was deployed. Humane League Labs of course regrets this loss of institutional knowledge and has since implemented policies to protect against such losses in the future. While we strove for accuracy in this synthesis, the limitations of our knowledge necessitated some guesswork and inaccuracies may be present. That said, this is a living document and we hope to update it as our understanding improves.

2 Survey administration

Survey participants were recruited from the crowdsourced online marketplace Mechanical Turk, the social media website Reddit, and the classified advertisement website Craigslist. The survey itself was administered on another web-based platform, although we do not know which platform, and ran from approximately July 22 to August 8, 2014. At least some respondents were given a code to redeem on Mechanical Turk, presumably to collect an incentive of some sort.¹

3 Survey instrument

Since respondents could leave the survey at any time, all questions were effectively optional. In the following, each question is bulleted and followed by the possible responses, marked with dashes. The question numbers are not sequential so as to correspond to the question numbers provided with the data, where some “questions” are in fact records of randomized assignments. Both the question numbers and the formatting herein are not known to reflect the presentation of the original survey. However, the text after the colon in each question and the responses are verbatim, except where square brackets indicate otherwise. For example, square brackets are used to indicate instances where the questions was inferred from the responses, where responses are extrapolated from truncated data, when noting transcribed typos, and occasionally to note redundancy in the survey. The ordering of questions and responses reflects our best knowledge of ordering in the survey. We believe the survey began:

- Question 1: [Are you from the USA or Canada or another country?]
 - USA or Canada
 - Other

¹This is based on a comment left in response to Question 110, which asked for a phone number. As such, it does not appear in the anonymized public data, but reads: “My code failed to copy to mturk when I submitted! :(”.

3.1 Part 1: What cover photos make people most interested in reading pro-veg literature?

Next, respondents were shown three covers of leaflets promoting reduced consumption of animal products. The covers were randomly selected from three sets of four covers, one cover drawn from each set, for a total of 12 possible covers. Each cover had the text “SOMETHING BETTER Why Millions of People are Changing What They Eat” overlaid on a photo. All covers are available in the report [5]. After viewing the covers, respondents were asked:

- Question 5: [Which of the three leaflets would you like to read right now, based on the cover?]
 - [Letter labels corresponding to the three leaflets]

3.2 Part 2: Is one message or multiple messages more effective?

After thanking the respondent, the next part of the survey randomly presents one of four pages ostensibly from the booklet selected in the previous part. Each page contains text and pictures intended to motivate the respondent to eat less animal products. All pages are available in the report [4]. The respondent is asked to read the page and answer a few questions about it:

- Question 7: Based on the information you just read, would you be likely to change the way you eat?
 - Yes
 - No
- Question 8: Think about your red meat (beef and pork) consumption. Given the information you have just read, in the next month do you think you will:
 - Eat more red meat
 - Eat the same amount of red meat
 - Eat a little less red meat
 - Eat a lot less red meat
 - Stop eating red meat
 - I already do not eat red meat
- Question 9: Think about your poultry (chicken and turkey) consumption. Given the information you have just read, in the next month do you think you will:
 - Eat more poultry
 - Eat the same amount of poultry
 - Eat a little less poultry
 - Eat a lot less poultry
 - Stop eating poultry
 - I already do not eat poultry
- Question 10: Think about your fish consumption. Given the information you have just read, in the next month do you think you will:
 - Eat more fish

- Eat the same amount of fish
 - Eat a little less fish
 - Eat a lot less fish
 - Stop eating fish
 - I already do not eat fish
- Question 11: Think about your consumption of eggs. Given the information you have just read, in the next month do you think you will:
 - Eat more eggs
 - Eat the same amount of eggs
 - Eat a little less eggs
 - Eat a lot less eggs
 - Stop eating eggs
 - I already do not eat eggs
 - Question 12: Think about your dairy consumption (examples: milk, cheese.[sic] yogurt, ice cream). Given the information you have just read, in the next month do you think you will:
 - Eat more dairy
 - Eat the same amount of dairy
 - Eat a little less dairy
 - Eat a lot less dairy
 - Stop eating dairy
 - I already do not eat dairy
 - Question 13: [Would you like to receive a free Vegetarian Starter Guide that will be emailed to you?]
 - Yes (Please provide your email address below, and the Vegeta[rian Starter Guide will be emailed to you.]
 - No

An email address is possibly requested three times throughout the survey (Questions 13, 90 and 109), but appears only once in a column labeled for Question 109. It is therefore unclear exactly how email addresses were collected.

3.3 Part 3: Which vegan meals do omnivores find most appetizing and accessible?

Next, respondents were shown seven photographs of vegan meals and asked their opinion. The photographs were randomly selected from seven sets of three photographs, one photograph drawn from each set, for a total of 21 possible photographs. All photographs are available in the report [3]. After viewing each photograph, respondents were asked three questions about the vegan dishes depicted:

- Questions 16, 20, 24, 28, 32, 36, 40: How likely is it that you would order this dish at a restaurant?
 - Very unlikely
 - Unlikely

- Neutral
- Likely
- Very likely
- Questions 17, 21, 25, 29, 33, 37, 41: How likely is it that you would cook this dish at home?
 - Very unlikely
 - Unlikely
 - Neutral
 - Likely
 - Very likely
- Questions 18, 22, 26, 30, 34, 38, 42: How appetizing does this dish look to you?
 - Very unappetizing
 - Unappetizing
 - Neutral
 - Appetizing
 - Extremely appetizing

Note that the response categories given correspond to those of the report; in the SPSS file’s metadata (see `omnibus_data_value_labels.json` in Section 4) all instances of “very” are replaced with “extremely”.

3.4 Part 4: Which farm animal photos are most likely to inspire people to eat vegan?

Next, respondents were shown ten photographs depicting farm animals in a range of conditions from happy, idyllic, grassy settings to injured or deceased animals confined to a factory farm. Photographs were selected to be representative of animal advocacy literature and included photographs from Mercy for Animals, Animal Equality, The Humane Society of the United States and Compassion Over Killing as well as generic stock photographs. The photographs were randomly selected from ten sets of three photographs, one photograph drawn from each set, for a total of 30 possible photographs. Respondents were asked three questions about each photograph and the animals depicted therein:

- Questions 44, 48, 52, 56, 60, 64, 68, 72, 76, 80: How much does this photo make you want to STOP eating animal products like poultry, red meat, fish, and eggs?
 - 1 Not at all
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5 Somewhat
 - 6
 - 7
 - 8
 - 9
 - 10 Extremely

- Questions 45, 49, 53, 57, 61, 65, 69, 73, 77, 81: How much do you think the animal(s) in this picture suffered?
 - 1 Did not suffer at all
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5 Suffered somewhat
 - 6
 - 7
 - 8
 - 9
 - 10 Suffered extremely
- Questions 46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 70, 74, 78, 82: How human-like do you think the animal(s) in this picture is (are)?
 - 1 Not at all human-like
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5 Somewhat human-like
 - 6
 - 7
 - 8
 - 9
 - 10 Extremely human-like

3.5 Part 5: Is animal cruelty, environmental or purity (“Abolitionist”) messaging more effective at inspiring people to change their diet?

Next, respondents were presented with what was ostensibly one additional page from the booklet they selected at the beginning of the survey. The page was randomly selected from a set of three pages presenting either animal cruelty, environmental or moral consistency arguments for reduced consumption of animal products. Each page can be found in the report [1]. After viewing the page, respondents were asked:

- Question 84: Based on the information you just read, would you be likely to change the foods you eat?
 - Yes
 - No

Note Question 84 reads “the foods” while Question 7 reads “the way”.

- Question 85–89: [Identical to Questions 8–12, respectively.]
- Question 90: Would you like to receive a free PDF booklet of vegetarian and vegan recipes that will be emailed to you?
 - Yes (Please provide your email address below, and the booklet will be emailed to you.)

- No

See the note after Question 13 on email addresses.

3.6 Demographic questions

Lastly, respondents were asked a series of demographic questions:

- Question 92: What is your age?
 - Under 18 years
 - 18 to 24 years
 - 25 to 34 years
 - 35 to 44 years
 - 45 to 54 years
 - 55 to 64 years
 - Age 65 or older
 - Prefer not to answer
- Question 93: What is your sex?
 - Female
 - Male
 - Other
 - Prefer not to answer
- Question 94: Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Prefer not to answer
- Question 95: What is your race? For purposes of this question persons of Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origin may be of any race. Check all that apply.
 - White
 - Black or African American
 - American Indian and Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
 - Other race
 - Prefer not to answer
- Question 96: What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?
 - Less than high school
 - High school graduate (includes equivalency)
 - Some college, no degree
 - Associate's degree
 - Bachelor's degree

- Ph.D.
 - Graduate or professional degree
 - Prefer not to answer
- Question 97: Where do you live?
 - New England - Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont]
 - Middle Atlantic - New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania
 - East North Central - Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin]
 - West North Central - Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota]
 - South Atlantic - Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia]
 - East South Central - Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee]
 - West South Central - Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas
 - Mountain - Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming]
 - Pacific - Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington
 - Prefer not to answer

Note the truncated responses are extrapolated from the United States Census Bureau’s defined divisions of the United States.

- Question 98: What is your annual household income?
 - Less than \$10,000
 - \$10,000 to \$25,000
 - \$25,000 to \$35,000
 - \$35,000 to \$50,000
 - \$50,000 to \$75,000
 - More than \$75,000
 - Prefer not to answer
- Question 99: How would you describe your current diet?
 - I am an omnivore - I eat most types of animal products
 - I am a meat reducer - I eat most types of animal products but attempt to eat relatively less of them]
 - I am a semi-vegetarian - I don’t eat red meat
 - I am a vegetarian - I don’t eat red meat, poultry or fish
 - I am a vegan - I don’t eat red meat, poultry, fish, eggs or [dairy]

The original column names suggest the final question had ten parts labeled: “Name”, “Company”, “Address”, “Address 2”, “City/Town”, “State/Province”, “ZIP/Postal”, “Country”, “Email” and “Phone Number”. However, we found no version of the data containing values for the first eight parts, while the non-anonymized data does include the latter two, suggesting only those two were actually asked. Further supporting this view, questions on “Country” or “State/Province” would be redundant to Questions 1 and 97, respectively. As noted after Question 13, the collection of email addresses is unclear. Given this information, the survey may have ended with:

- Question 110: “Phone Number”
 - [Free response]

4 Response data

The responses to this survey were recorded in an SPSS file on the Humane League Labs website. The exact provenance of this data file is unclear; it is not likely the data exactly as returned by the survey administration platform as it appears to contain values subsequently calculated from other columns (eg, column `Q8_IntentChgRedMeat_DOS`). Alongside this report, we have re-released the data in a non-proprietary format as well as the code used to derive this data from the original SPSS file. These materials are available at the Open Science Framework repository <https://osf.io/ryn7m/>.

In that repository, the Python and R code in `clean_data.ipynb` is used extract the original SPSS file (not provided for privacy purposes) and then clean and anonymize the extracted data. This process produces three files in the directory `data/final/`:

- `omnibus_data_anon.csv` contains the anonymized response data, but with the responses coded as numbers rather than the original text. The column labels are numbered “Q1”, “Q2”, “Q3”, etc, in correspondence with the questions described above.
- `omnibus_data_value_labels.json` contains the labels corresponding to the codes for each column in `omnibus_data_anon.csv`. The file is structured as a nested dictionary, with the column names keyed to dictionaries, themselves keying the codes to labels for that column.
- `omnibus_data_column_labels.csv` contains descriptions associated with each column of `omnibus_data_anon.csv`.

Using these file in conjunction, the data can be related to the survey instrument described here.

References

- [1] Sabine Doebel, Susan Gabriel, and The Humane League. *Report: Is Animal Cruelty, Environmental or Purity (“Abolitionist”) Messaging More Effective At Inspiring People To Change Their Diet?* Humane League Labs, Aug. 2015.
- [2] Sabine Doebel, Susan Gabriel, and The Humane League. *Report: Which Farm Animal Photos Are Most Likely To Inspire People To Eat Vegan?* Humane League Labs, Jan. 2015. URL: <http://www.humaneleaguelabs.org/static/reports/2015/01/compelling-farm-animal-pictures-study-results1.pdf> (visited on 03/21/2018).
- [3] Sabine Doebel, Susan Gabriel, and The Humane League. *Report: Which Vegan Meals Do Omnivores Find Most Appetizing and Accessible?* Humane League Labs, Jan. 2015. URL: <http://www.humaneleaguelabs.org/static/reports/2015/01/appetizing-vegan-food-photos-study-results1.pdf> (visited on 03/21/2018).
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- [9] Nick Cooney. *Report: Which Vegan Meals Do Omnivores Find Most Appetizing and Accessible?* Jan. 24, 2015. URL: <http://www.humaneleaguelabs.org/blog/2015-01-24-which-vegan-meals-do-omnivores-find-most-appetizing-and-accessible/>.
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