



Australian
National
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Thanks to: 寿懿贊 (Shou Yiyun)

Comparative engagement with text messaging across age groups

Mobile telephone ownership is very common

- Australia (ACMA, 2013)
- China (Chu, Fortunati, Law, & Yang, 2012)
- Worldwide (Kuntsche & Robert, 2009)

One of the most widely used data services worldwide, text messaging (SMS) is a ubiquitous form of discourse in both countries

(ACMA, 2011; Leung, 2007)

In 2013:

- 891 billion (650/head) sent in China
- 13.7 billion (590/head) sent in Australia (ACMA, 2013; statistica)



SMS history differs across countries



Enormous growth in both Australia, and China (ACMA, 2011; Sangwan & Pau, 2005).

Different paths of growth

- **Australia:** smooth increase since 1998
- **China:** SARS outbreak in 2003
 - Gave rise to “thumb culture” (Yu, 2004; Latham, 2007)

SMS usage differs by age

People of differing ages
engage with technology
in different ways

(Venkatesh, Thong, & Xu, 2012).

Cross-sectional research
in European countries
has found the frequency
and purpose of SMS use
differs by age

(Devitt & Roker, 2009;
Ling, 2002, 2010)



Commonly cited reasons for elderly using SMS:

- Personal safety
- Telecare (Abascal & Civit, 2001; Eardley et al., 2009; Barlow, Singh, & Bayer, 2007)



Increasing social element

(Mallenius, Rossi, & Tuunainen, 2007)

Many elderly prefer
voice calls

(But still use SMS)

(Lobet-maris & Henin, 2002;
Mallenius et al., 2007)

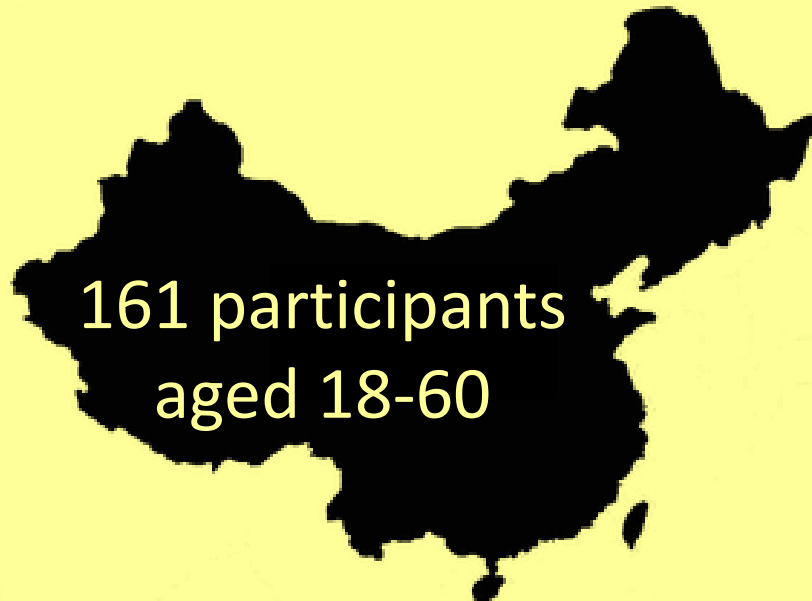
SMS history differs across countries:
SMS usage also differs?

SMS usage differs by age:
Does this differ by country?



- Two online surveys asking about everyday mobile usage, and attitudes toward mobile technology

SMS attitudes and usage



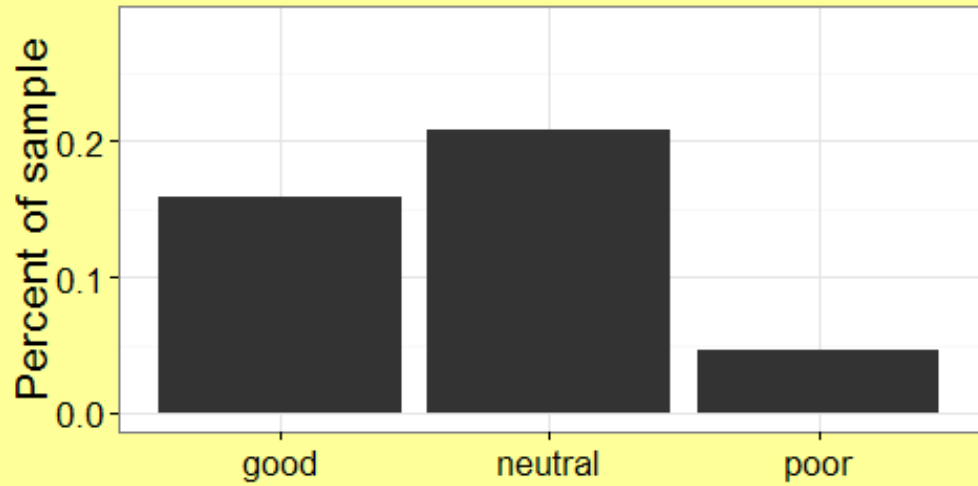
All participants owned a mobile phone.

Attitude: SMS privacy

Chinese sample

Australian sample

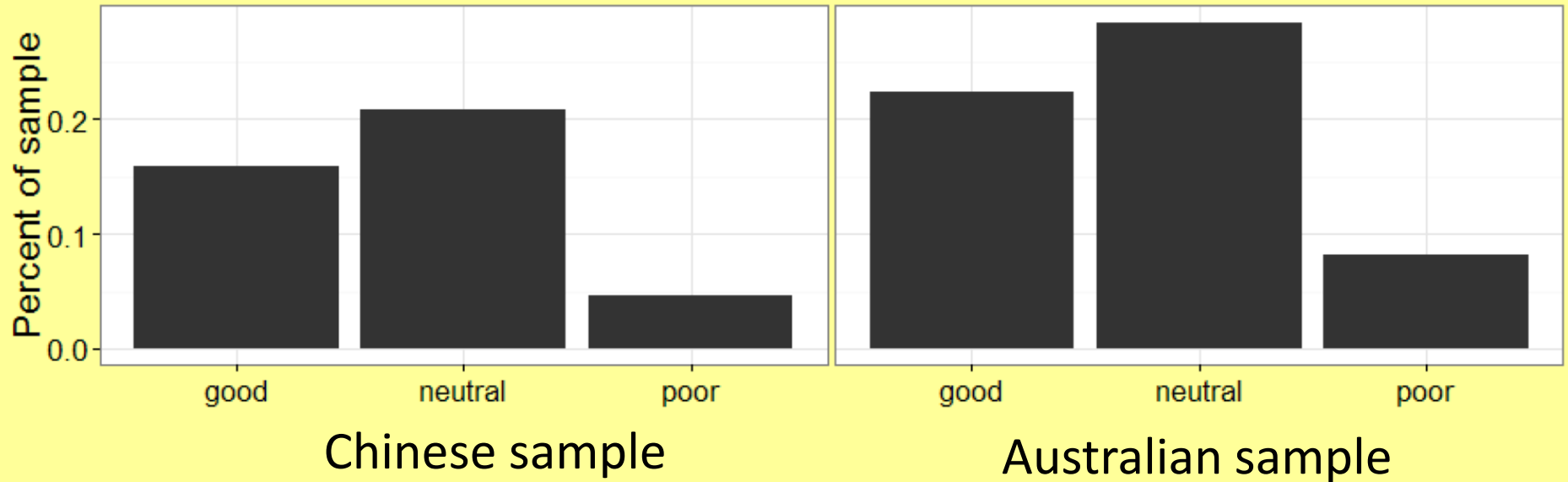
Attitude: SMS privacy



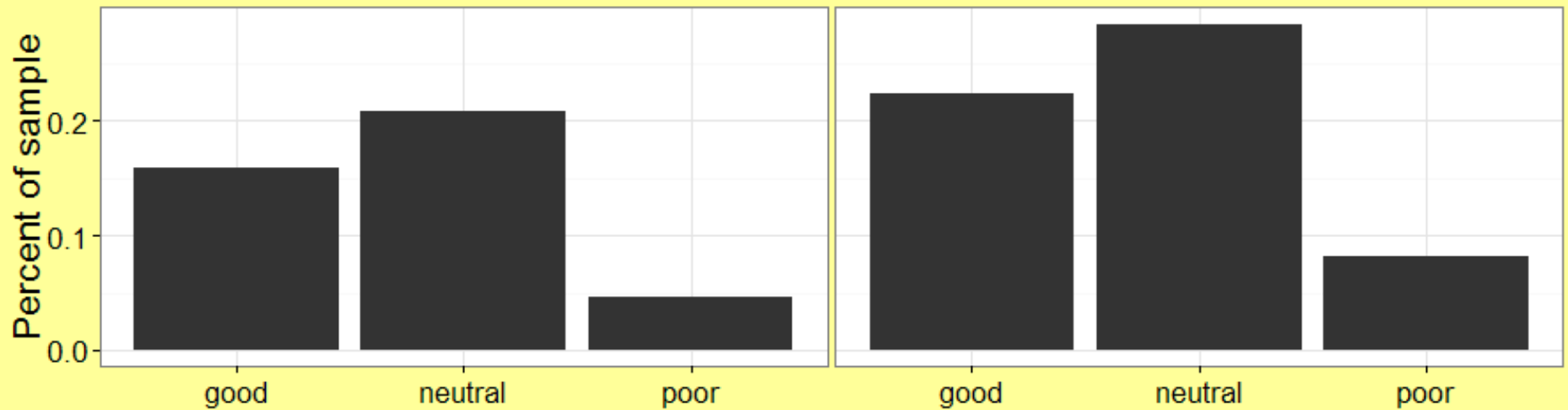
Chinese sample

Australian sample

Attitude: SMS privacy



Attitude: SMS privacy

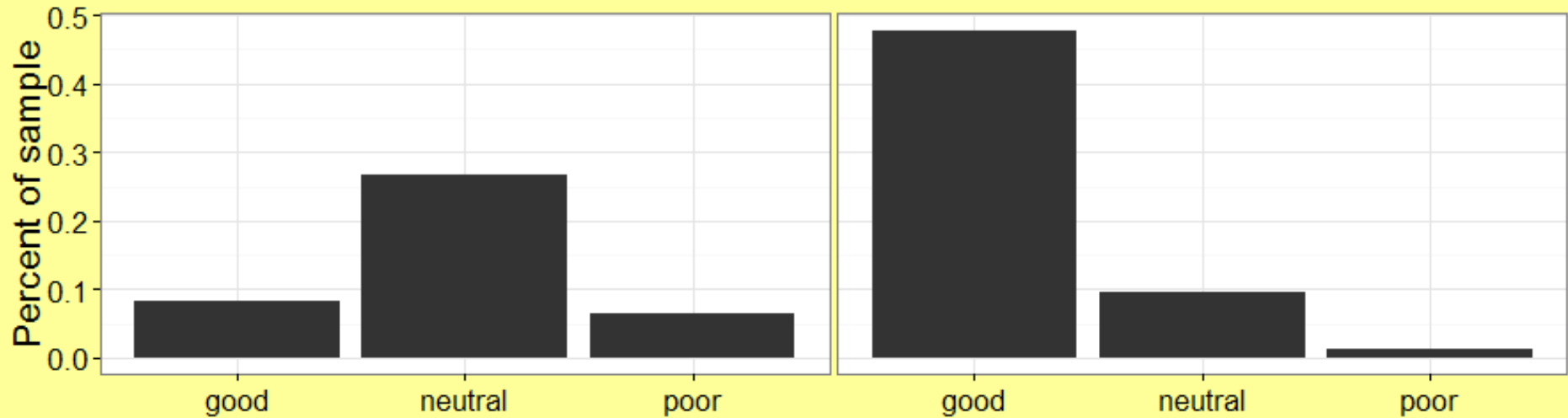


Chinese sample

Australian sample

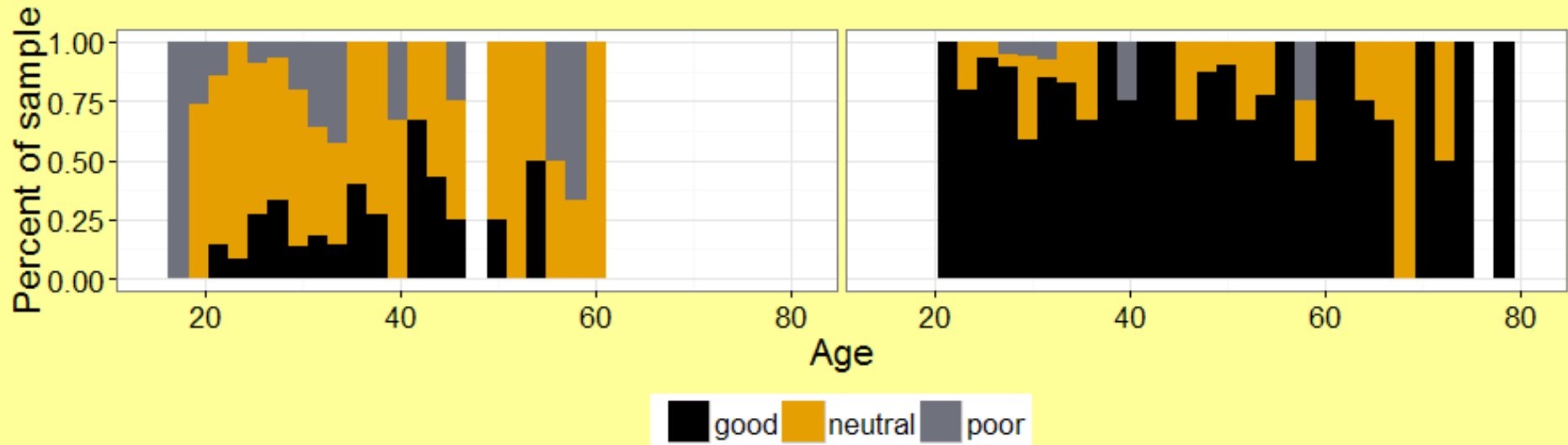


Attitude: SMS convenience

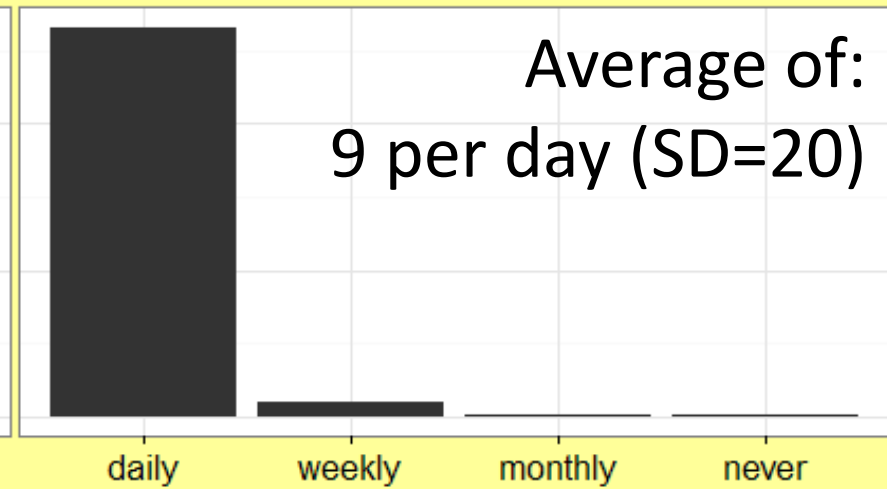
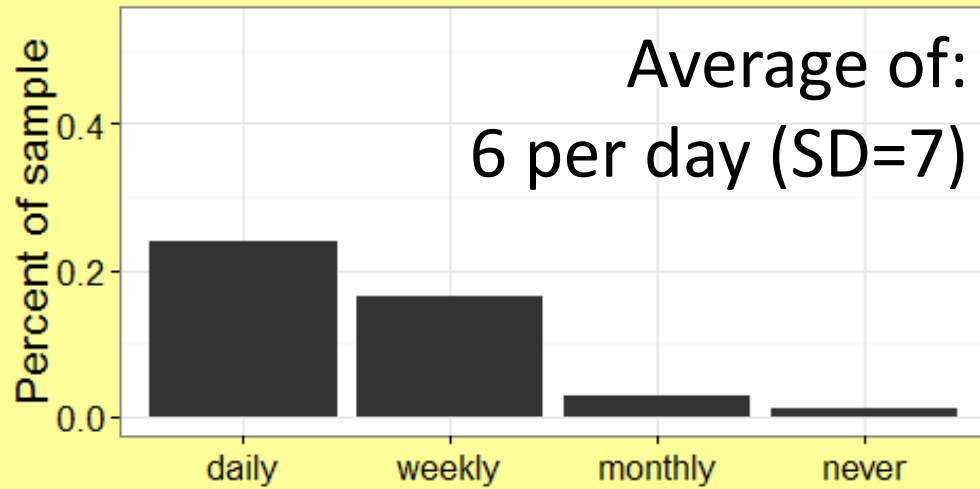


Chinese sample

Australian sample

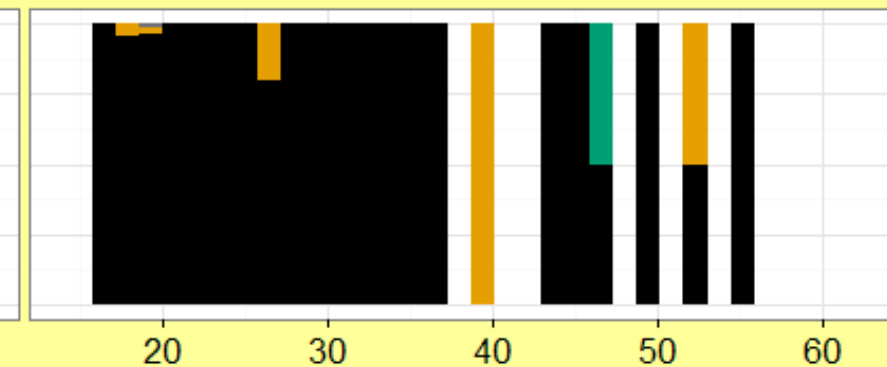
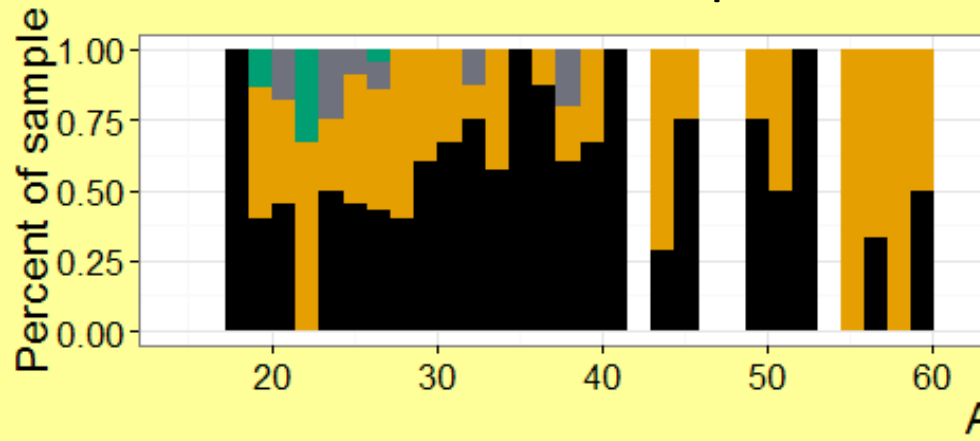


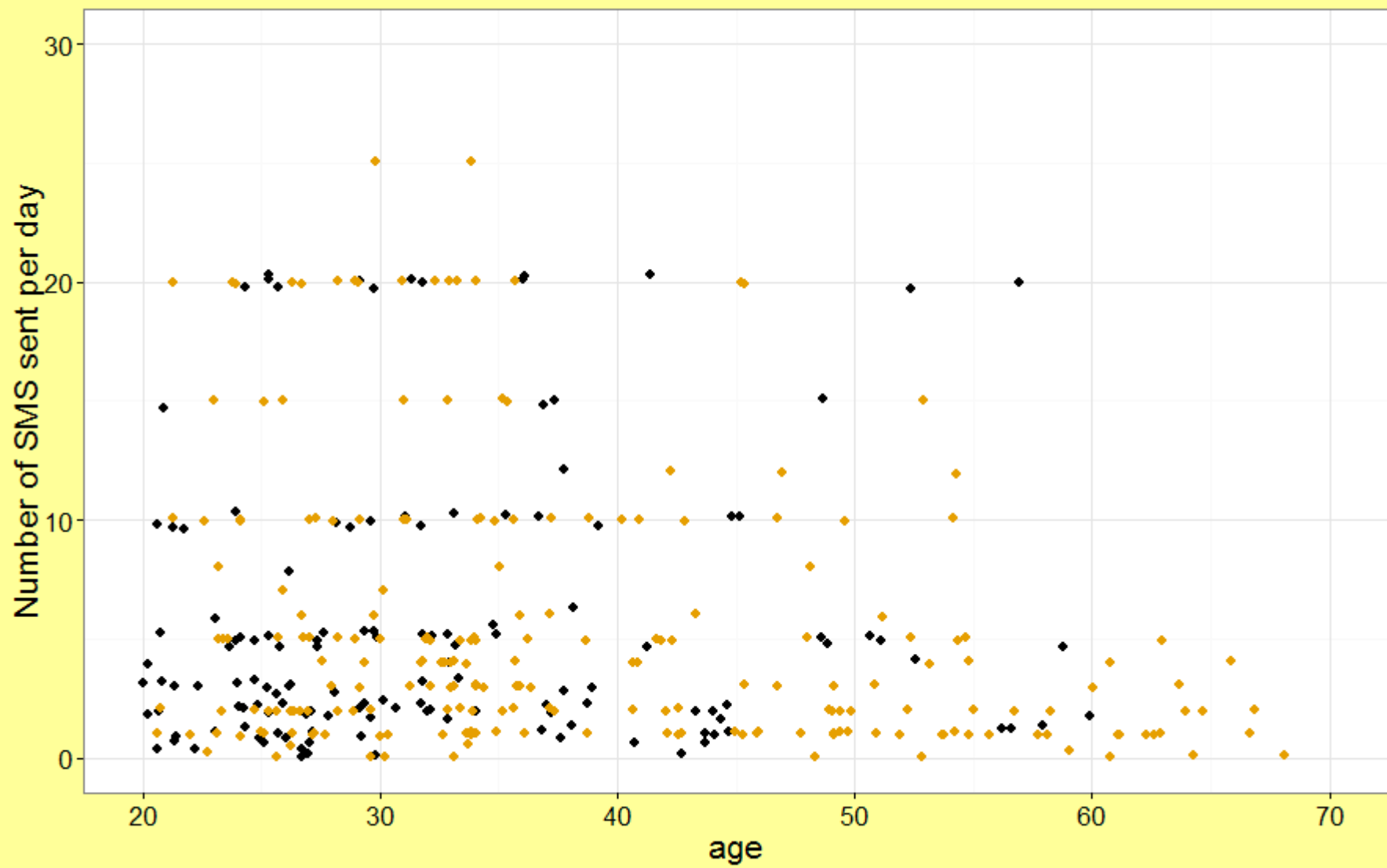
SMS usage

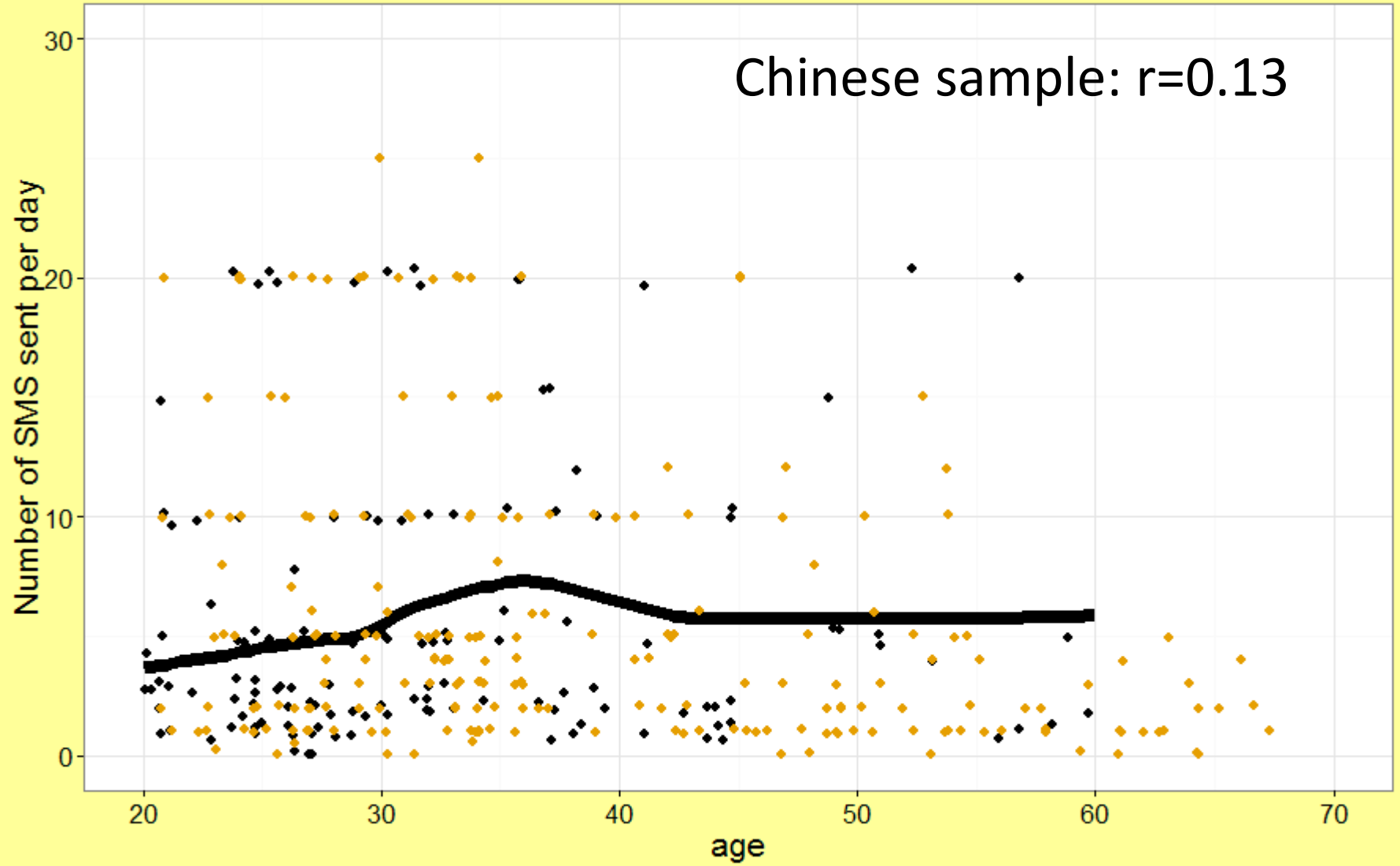


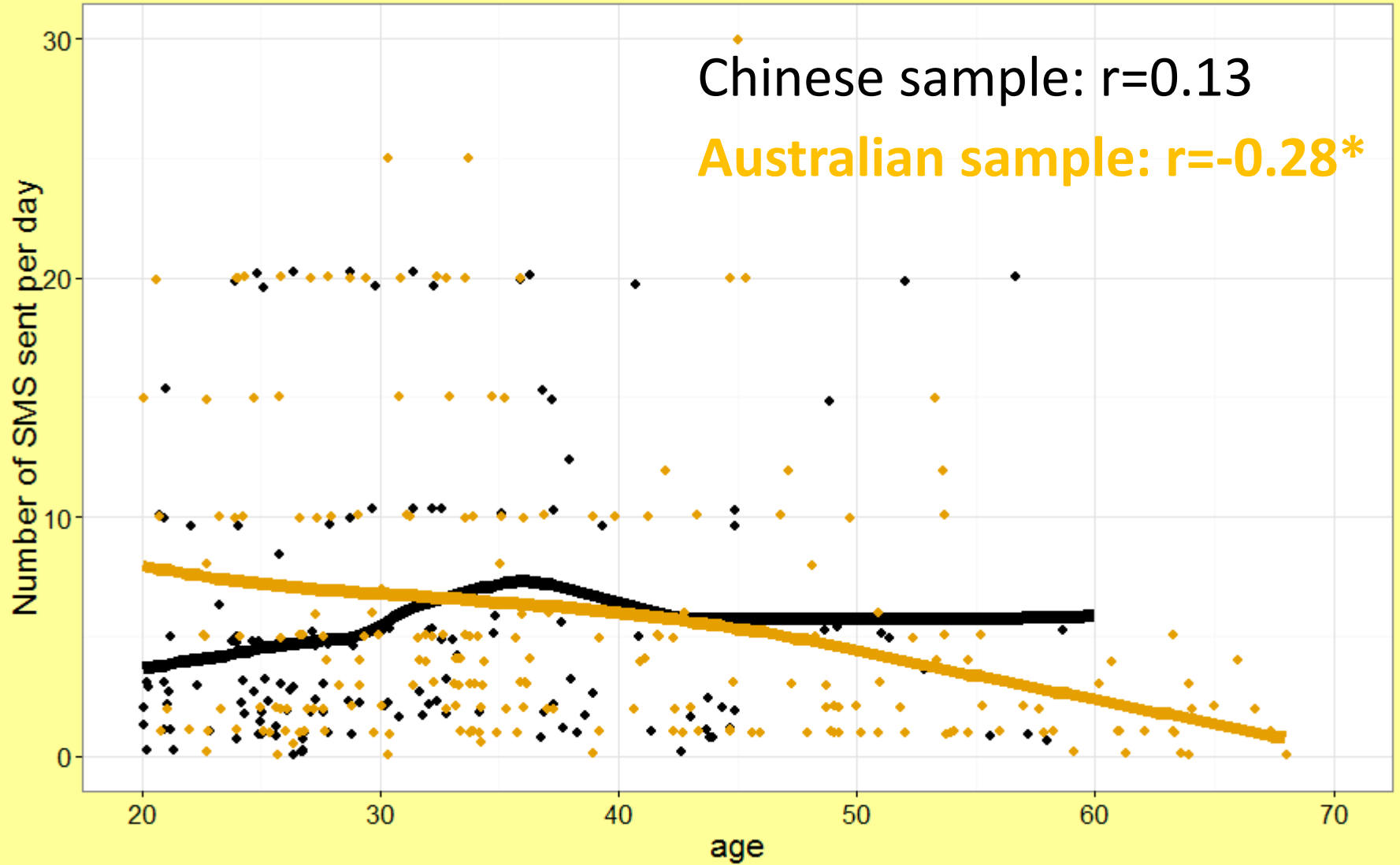
Chinese sample

Australian sample



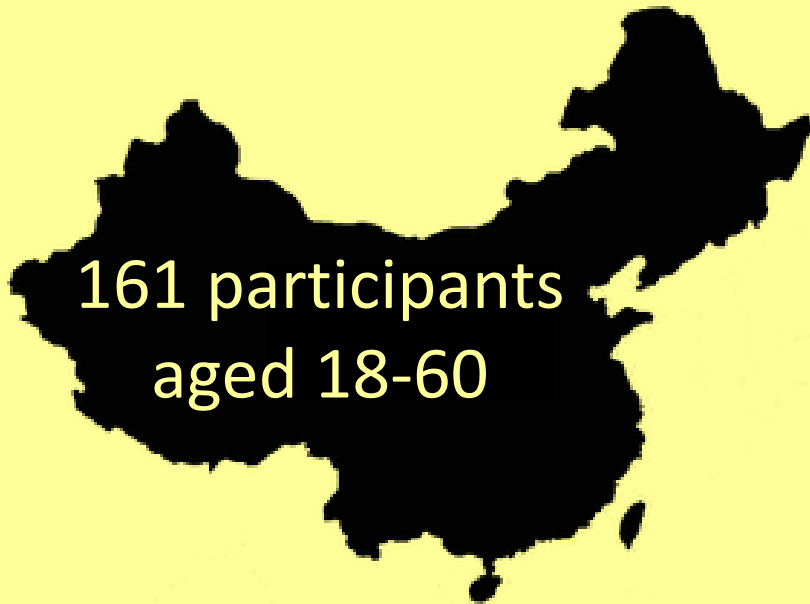




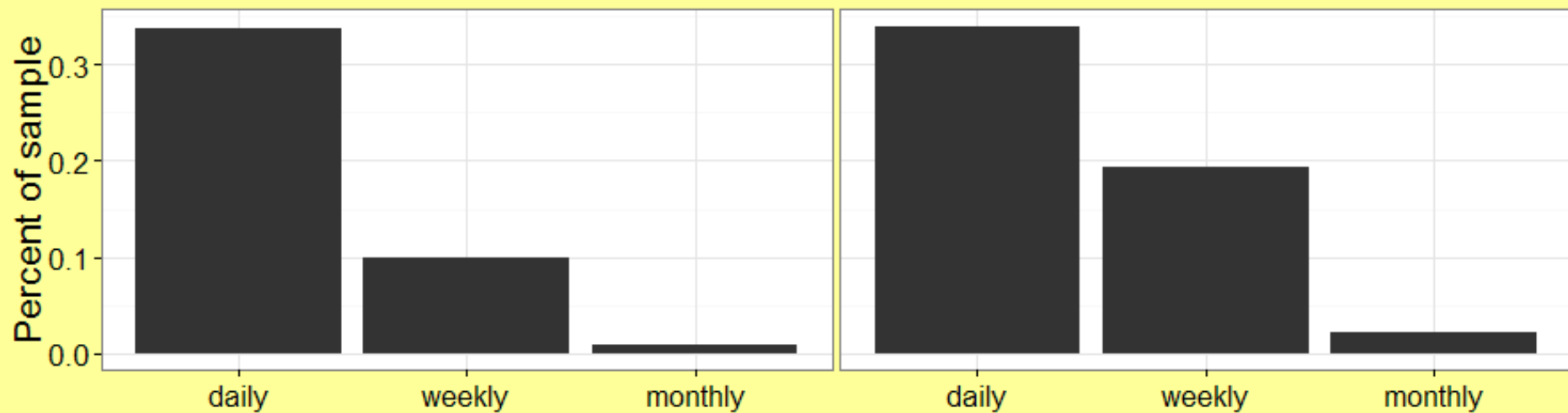


- Australians seem to be using SMS more
 - Rate the convenience more highly
 - Have a clear decline in use with age

What else are mobiles being used for?

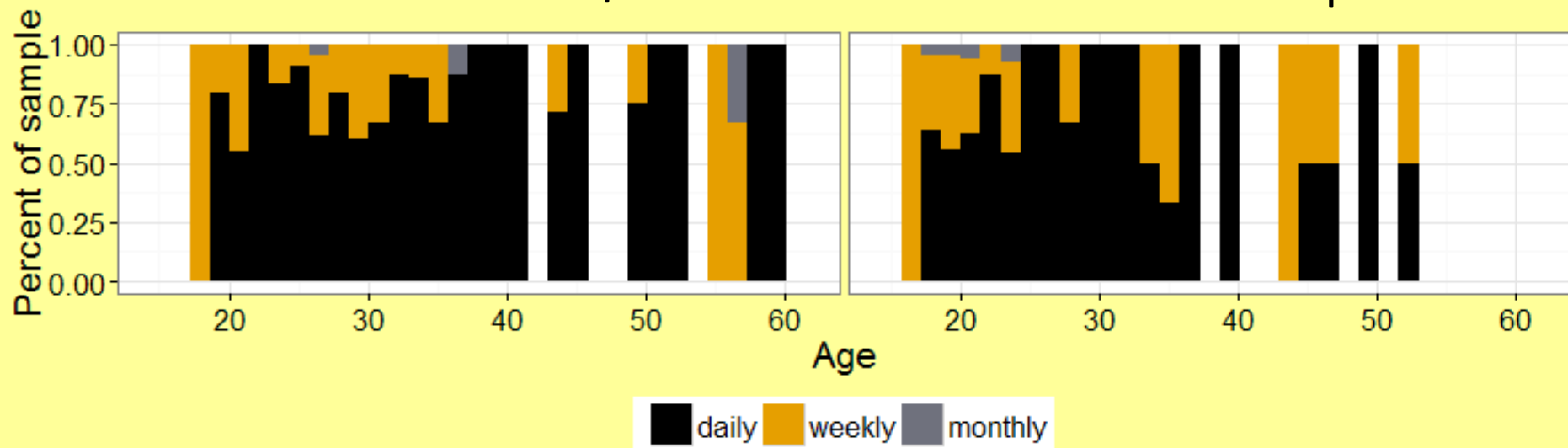


Voice calls

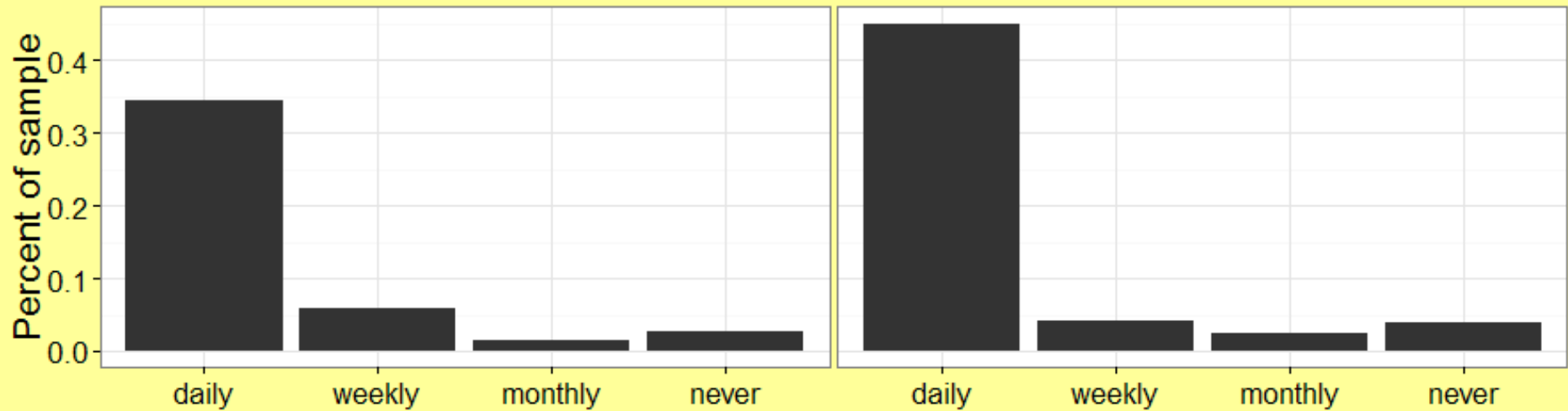


Chinese sample

Australian sample

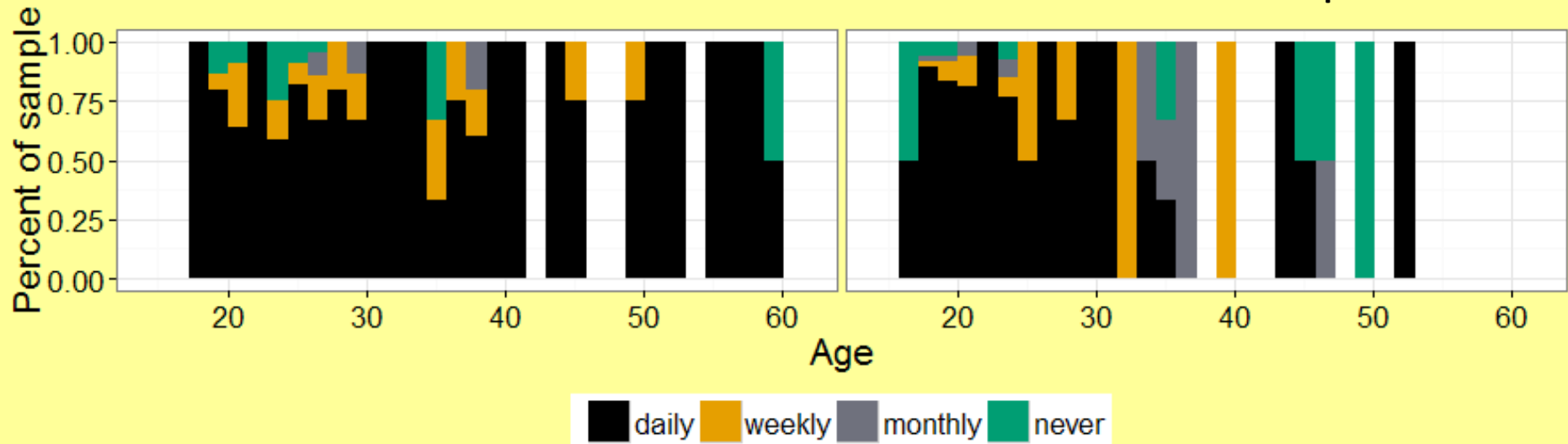


Browsing the internet

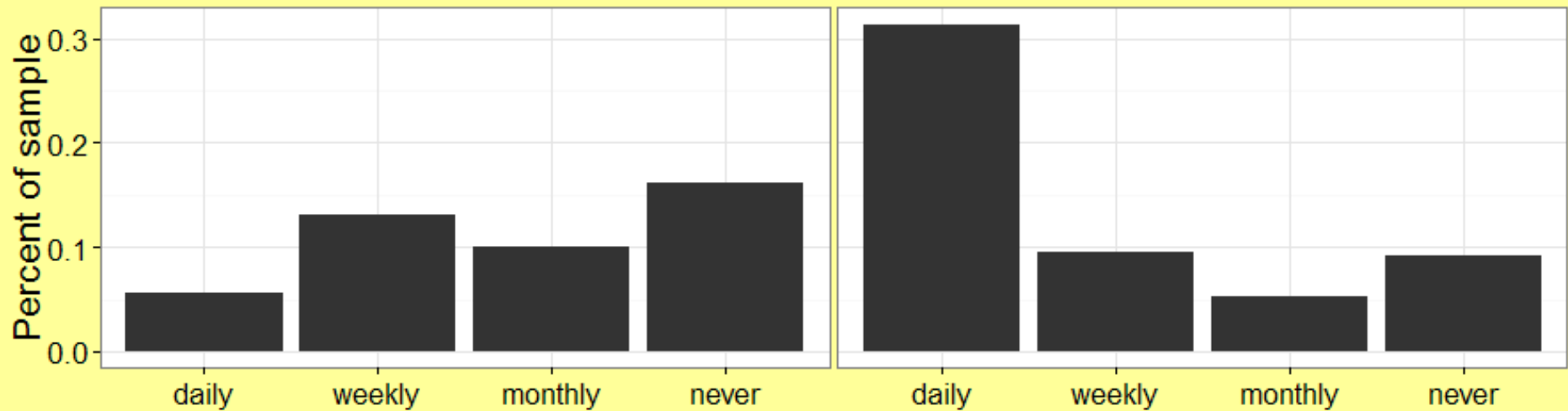


Chinese sample

Australian sample

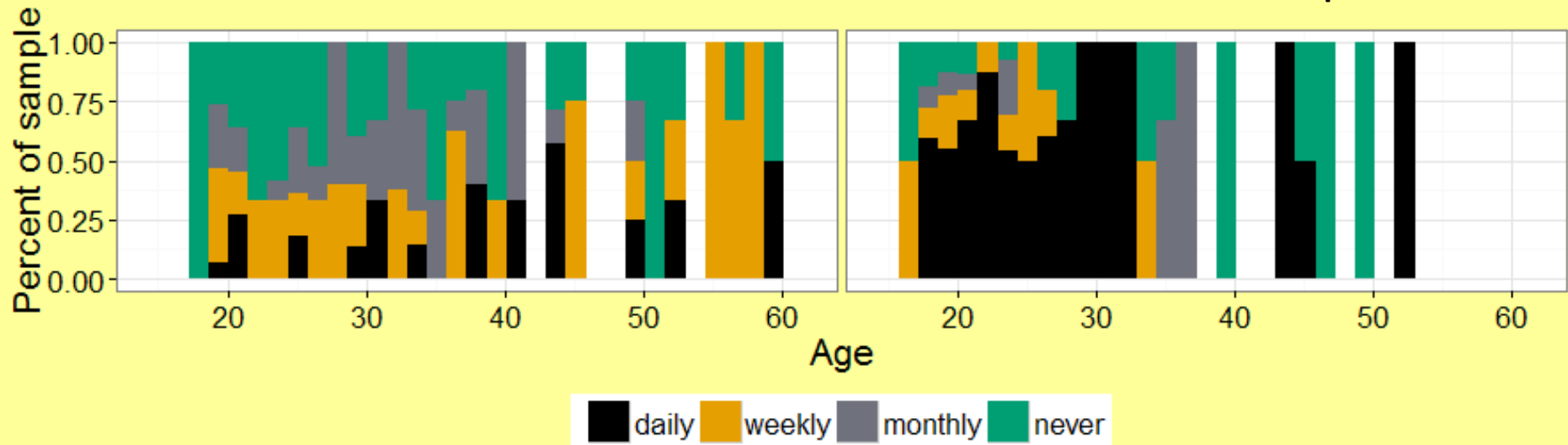


Checking email

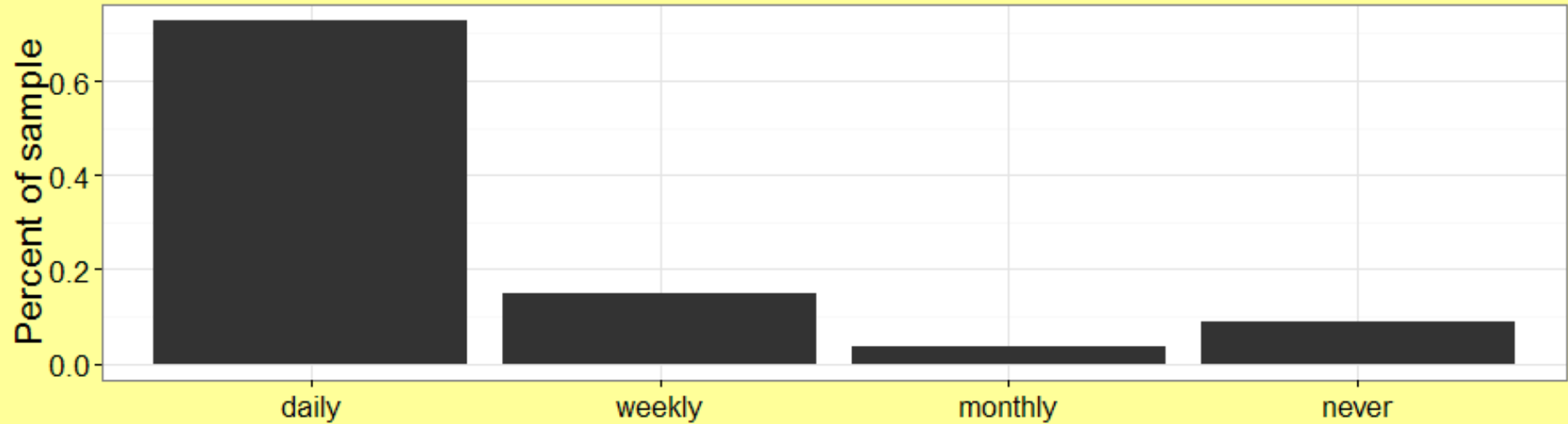


Chinese sample

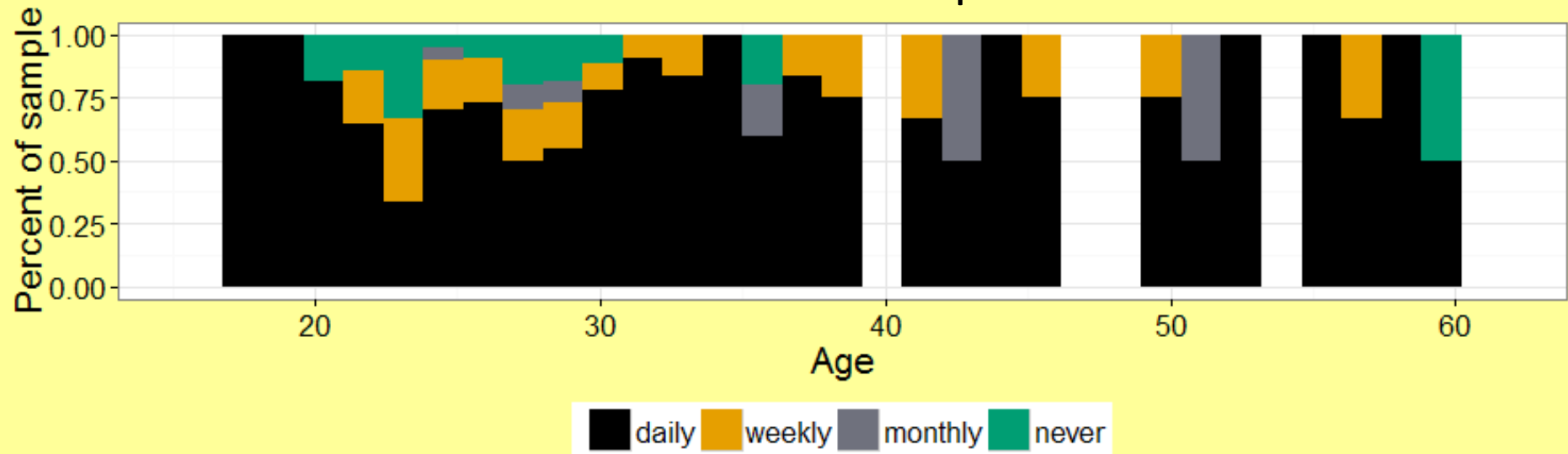
Australian sample



Instant messaging



Chinese sample



SMS history differs across countries: SMS usage also differs?

Yes. Australians in this study use SMS more heavily, and find it more convenient.

- Likely due to lack of widespread alternative services (like IMS).
- Adaptation of “thumb culture” to a more cost effective framework
- Contrary to literature – stats may have included IMS use within the banner of ‘text messaging’

SMS usage differs by age: Does this differ by country?

Yes. “Classic” decline in usage of SMS with age was present in the Australian sample, but not the Chinese sample.

- Lower SMS use in younger Chinese sample to begin with (so less scope for decline)
- Australian elderly could have missed the gradual rise of SMS usage, but entire cross-sections of the Chinese population began to use SMS around the same time



What we have learned?

- Daily SMS usage is still very common
- Research into SMS engagement in Western countries may not be generalizable to a Chinese population
 - Different historical context
 - SMS alternatives in use
- Age appears to impact on SMS engagement in an Australian, but not Chinese sample

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