

A Study on Impact of Political Advertisements on Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

Ever since a decade, political advertisements are having a huge influence on voting behavior of younger and older people across the globe. These political advertisements through various mediums focus on persuading people in making their preferences (in choosing their representatives). This paper examines the impact of political advertisements on youth, with a sample size of 40 respondents, consisting Under-Graduate and Post-Graduate students (age group 19-25), and their susceptibility to various political advertisements with respect to the voting behavior. The study area is Bangalore and the data is collected from the students pursuing their graduation and post-graduation in Jain University and the students for the sample study are chosen using simple random sampling method. Our findings extend the understanding of the effects of political advertisements on the voting behavior of Under-Graduate and Post-Graduate students with the help of cognitive and behavioral psychology. The results are mixed with respect to the influence made by political advertisements on youth. But specifically, with the emergence of political advertisements through new media, the impact has increased significantly. This study gives new direction for future studies in order to understand the psychology of youngsters.

Keywords

Advertisements, Media, Politics, Voting behavior, Young adults.

1. INTRODUCTION

Advertising is a form of marketing; it is a non- personal message to sell ideas, products and services. Advertising usually sponsors of advertisements are organizations who want to sell their products and services. Advertising has a history of its own. As McDonald and Scott claim, the first type of advertising was what we now know by the name of. Various papers state that advertisements through various mediums affect the consumer behavior by playing with their minds in making their preferences [1-4]. Political advertising is a type of campaigning that politicians use to reach out to and influence people. During the course of a political campaign, it may use a variety of mediums and last for several months [5-8]. Dwight D. Eisenhower's presidential campaign used television political advertising to promote his presidency to voters in 1952. Over the last five decades, presidential contenders have spent an increasing percentage of their campaign funds on producing and broadcasting political advertisements.

Political advertisements are of two types: Positive advertisements promote a candidate or party; Negative advertisements oppose a party or a candidate. Political advertising varies from commercial advertising in that the product is a person or a philosophy rather than goods and services, and the advertising goals must be accomplished

within a certain timeframe. Political advertisements have been influential in influencing people's voting behavior for over a decade, and their concept, shape, and size have grown exponentially in the twenty-first century. Whether it's a national or regional political party, all are using this mechanism to increase their reach among the voting population..

In India, political advertisements has been prominently observed since 2004, and recently in 2014 parliamentary elections, Bharatiya Janata Party has widely promoted Mr.Narendra Modi with various slogans (Ab ki baar Modi sarkaar... etc), through various mediums. Today, keeping in view of 2014 election results, we see political advertisements of all the parties and candidates across all the states of India. Though, the results of various elections across the globe show the influence of political advertisements in voting behavior, the impact of these advertisements on voting behavior of youth is unaware [9-13].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ronald Paul Hill in his study he designed to investigate the reactions of voters to political advertisements. Advertisements for both the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates were created with the 1988 presidential campaign in mind. When compared to sponsor-positive commercials, the results show that comparative (sponsor-positive and opponent-negative) or simply opponent-negative political ads elicit unfavorable responses from voters, reflect badly on the ad sponsor, and have no influence on the opposing candidate. Furthermore, results from the attitude toward ad measures show that comparison and opponent-negative advertisements may portray a political process that is congruent with voters' unfavorable opinions, and may be regarded as amusing [14].

Henry et al. discussed the implications for future political advertising campaigns and research. In his research, he conducts a pretest-posttest causal analysis of advertising impacts for a set of commercials that aired in early October of 2000. For the 93 participants in the study, political image assessments, emotion, and cynicism were connected in effects. Emotional responses to advertisements were found to be substantial predictors of posttest candidate image judgments. Ads that provoke frightened feelings are also strong indicators of overall cynicism, according to participant answers. Moment-by-moment reactions to the ads reveal that the polarity of the message approach and the emotional content appearing at various moments in the advertising were highly related with respondents' opinion of the ads [15].

Amy et al. conducted a research on political advertising effects and American Racially diverse newest voting generation, say minority groups in previous studies have been characterized as less participatory, less efficacious and more cynical than racial and ethnic majority voters because of their historical, structural barriers to their participation [16].

Jaeho Cho explores the role of political advertisements in democracy by examining how political advertisements influence citizens to discuss about those ads and participate in political campaigns actively. This research is based on the combination of political advertisements tracking data with national daily survey collected during 2000 election campaigning [17].

Tinkham et al. investigate whether older individuals are more receptive to various sorts of political ads (positive versus negative and ambiguous versus unambiguous) than their younger counterparts in an experimental study including samples of young and elderly voters. Our findings expand cognitive psychology research into political advertising and demonstrate age-related inequalities in favor of the younger generation. When it comes to the persuasive power of political ads, the results are varied. Younger individuals, in particular, have more attitudinal vulnerability, whereas the oldest voters exhibit the highest behavioral vulnerability [18].

Wahyu Prasetyawan in this research note analyses the rising importance of political advertisements on television in Indonesian electoral politics. It examines how presidential candidates presented themselves to the public during the 2009 elections, as well as the candidates' efforts to cultivate a mass-appealing image. This paper finds that political advertising outperformed print and radio media, and that in order to attract voters, candidates were more inclined to build public pictures of themselves that included qualities such as nationalism and concern for the poor [19].

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Design

The design for the investigation is descriptive. Descriptive research investigations are aimed at the description of individual or group characteristics. The research study aims at understanding the impact of political advertisements on young adults and their susceptibility to various political advertisements with respect to the voting behavior [20-24]. Data for this research has been gathered through both, primary (data collected from survey) and secondary methods (research articles, books, journals and other sources on internet), as shown in the Figure 1.

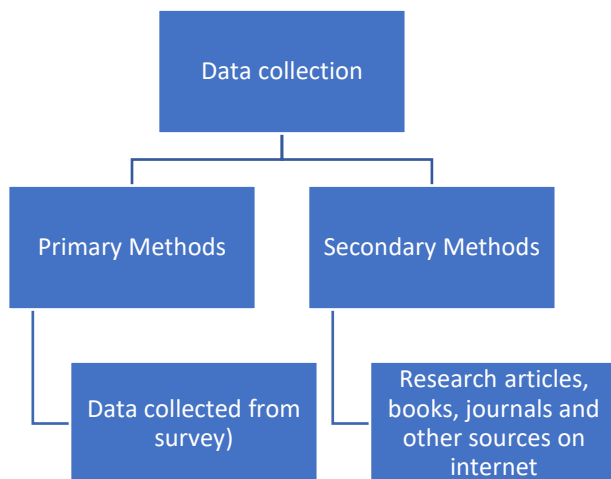


Figure 1: The Above Figure Shows the Methods of Data Collection i.e. Primary and Secondary

3.2. Sample Size

A fifteen item questionnaire is administered on 40 respondents, consisting Under-Graduate and Post-Graduate students of a specific age group response is collected using google form. The study area is Bangalore and the data is

collected from the students pursuing their graduation and post-graduation in Jain University and the students for the sample study are chosen using simple random sampling method. Simple statistical method is been used to analyze the data.

3.3. Data Collection

The above pie diagram shows the percentage of young adults who actively follow political advertisements and percentage of sample population who doesn't follow. The data collected from google form shows that 53.7% i.e., 22 out of 40 respondents (young adults) follow political advertisements actively and 46.3% i.e., 18 out of 40 respondents don't follow political advertisements most of the times, as shown in the Figure 2. The percentage of young adults who follow political advertisements and relatively high and this can be attributed to the emergence of political advertisements in new media and increase in access to the internet across the country.

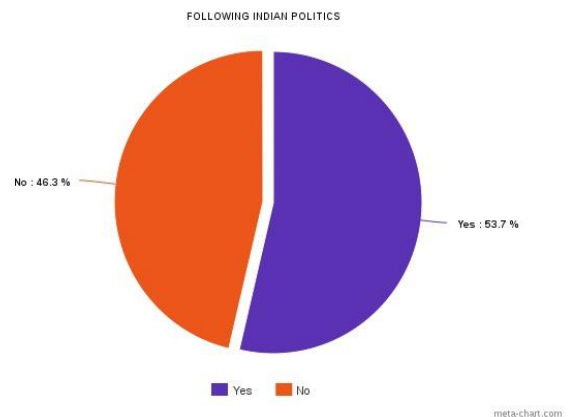


Figure 2: The Above Figure Shows the Young Adults Who Follow Political Advertisements

3.4. Data Analysis

As we know there are many sources to view political advertisements in India, the prominent means to access political advertisements are television, radio, newspaper and internet & social media. The above pie-chart shows the distribution of viewership among the above mentioned sources. The sample population of young adults show that 14.6% view political advertisements through television, 31.6% view political advertisements through Internet & social media, 9.8% view through newspapers and 43.9% population say that they mostly view political advertisements from all, as shown in the Figure 3.

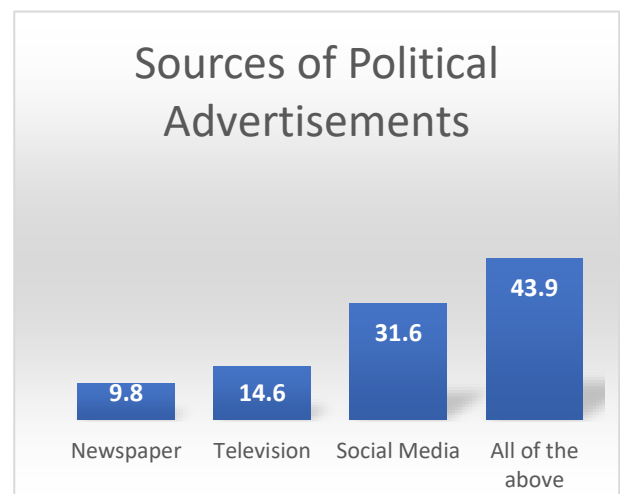


Figure 3: This Data Shows the Widespread of Political Advertisements in India Across the Mediums

3.4.1. Classification on the Basis of Effectiveness of Political Science

Since a decade we observed drastic increase in the quantity & quality of political advertisements in India. With years, across the mediums, political advertisements improved in terms of addressing the interests of public and also in terms of their effectiveness. The above chart shows the percentage of young adults who find political advertisements interesting and effective. Percentage of who doesn't find them interesting and effective. The data shows that 29.3% of sample population found political advertisements interesting and effective, whereas, 26.8% of them didn't find the political ads interesting and effective at all and 43.9% of the sample population found political ads interesting and effective sometimes.

The Figure 4 shows the different kind of political advertisements and their effectiveness. 41.5% of young adults consider social media messaging as effective medium for political advertisements, 19.5% consider digital ads as an effective medium, and 29.3% consider video messages as an effective way or medium for political advertisements and 9.8% consider print advertising as effective medium. By this, it can be deduced that political advertisements through social media has increased the effectiveness and reach of political advertisements.

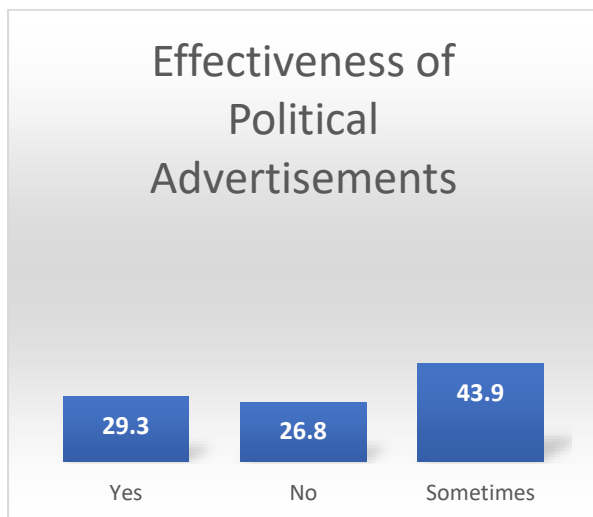


Figure 4: The Above Graph Shows the Political Advertisements You Watch Interesting & Effective

3.4.2. Classification on the Basis of Exit-poll Services on Voting Behavior

Exit poll survey done by media is very commonly seen before elections in India. Though these exit poll surveys are completely different from political advertisements, these days political parties use results from exit poll survey as a strategy to promote their party or candidate and how thus they are used in political advertisements. The data collected shows that 51.2% that is 21 out of 40 respondents do not consider exit poll surveys before voting, 17.1% consider it before voting and 31.7% consider it sometimes, as illustrated in the Figure 5.

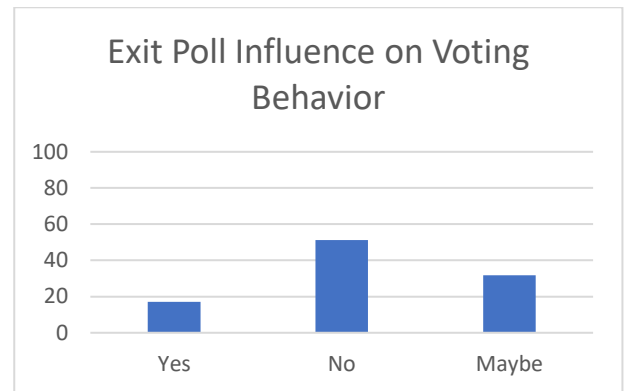


Figure 5: The Above Figure Illustrate the Influence of Exit Poll Service On Voting Behavior

3.4.3. Influence of political ads in voting behavior

Political campaign, advertisement or any other promotional activity is to propagate their ideas, influence their perceptions and preferences of the people and gain votes from public. The above pie chart shows (Figure 6) the percentage of young adults who consider that political advertisements influence the voting behavior and percentage of young adults who consider that it doesn't. 58.5% of young adults consider that political advertisements influence the voting behavior and 41.5% of young adults consider that political advertisements have no influence on voting behavior. This data says it all about the objectives of this research, that majority of the young adults have impact of political advertisement on their voting behavior.

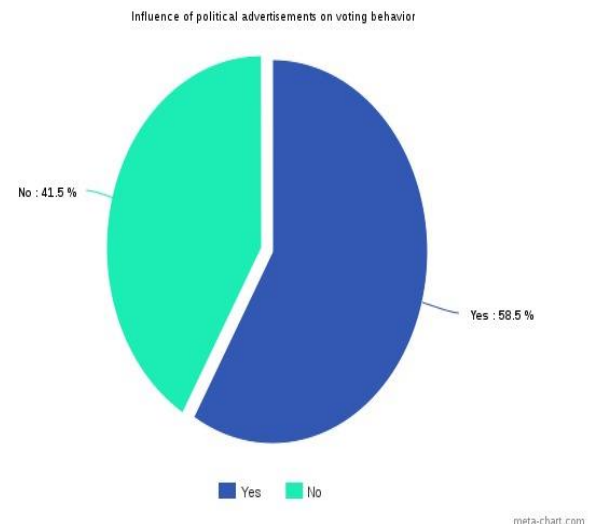


Figure 6: The Above Graph Illustrate the Influence of Political Ads in Voting Behavior.

4. RESULT & DISCUSSION

Young adults in general discuss the advertisements among themselves and with their family members either to pass the message about a product or a service or to mock the advertisements. But this discussion, be it for any reason will eventually increase the impact of the advertisements on people and their preferences. The above chart shows the percentage of young adults who discuss political advertisements with their family and friends. The data shows 80.5% of young adults discuss the political advertisements with their family and friends, whereas 19.5% don't, as shown in the Figure 7.

This clearly shows the importance as well as the impact of political advertisements on young adults.

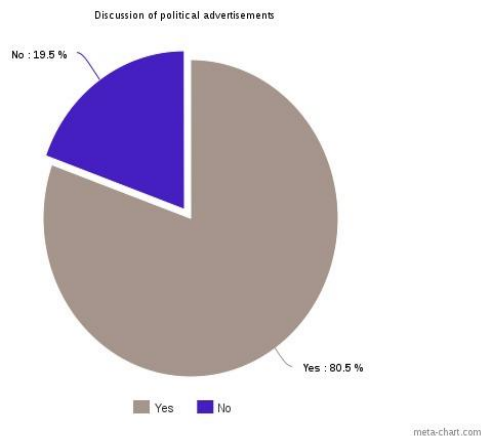


Figure 7: The Above Graph Illustrate the Discussion of Political Advertisements with Family and Friends

4.1. The major findings of the study are as follows

- Majority of the sample population actively follows political advertisements, showing that young adults in our country are aware of and view political advertisements.
- Out of the various sources to view political advertisements, political advertisements through television has more viewership and are more popular.
- The majority of young adults consider political advertisements to be interesting and effective. In all kinds of political advertisements, social media messaging is considered as most effective medium.
- Majority of the young adults discuss the political advertisements with their family and friends.
- Majority of the young adults are influenced by political advertisements in choosing their representatives.
- On a scale of 1-5 in rating the impact of political advertisements, 87.8% of sample population rated above 3. This shows that there is an impact of political advertisements on young adults.

5. CONCLUSION

The present research made an attempt to study the impact of political advertisements on young adults and their susceptibility to these ads with respect of voting behavior. The study shows that political advertisements influence the young adults and with the evolution of political advertisements and their emergence in to new media, the impact and importance increased. The present research also found out that the young adults are susceptible to political advertisements and their voting behavior is influenced by these ads. However, there are mixed results observed with level of impact and effectiveness of these advertisements.

The exposure or impression of political ads was not substantially connected to political self-efficacy and situational political participation. Political self-efficacy had a negative correlation with people who disregarded social media political advertising. Implications regarding the influence of political publicity on the political conduct and views of young adults are explored. Political ad information may act as a subsidiary to other information among the most knowledgeable. This finding is in keeping with the idea of citizens as cognitive misers who keep demand for political knowledge generally and limitedly. This desire is highest among the most conscious, such that in the absence of political advertising, they seek further information on the

candidates. However, exposure to advertising presents this group with considerable volumes of knowledge and makes less valuable information. However, this research shows that greater focus should be put on understanding whether, how and when political advisory services on social networking sites affect voting behavior.

Online behavioral and social orientation has not yet completely appreciated its implications in the political spectrum. Increased study is also required to explain why more publicity exposure gives these commercials more favorable impressions. In order to compete in future elections, campaign managers and marketers will have to use those advances completely to develop marketing and target advertising in politics.

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