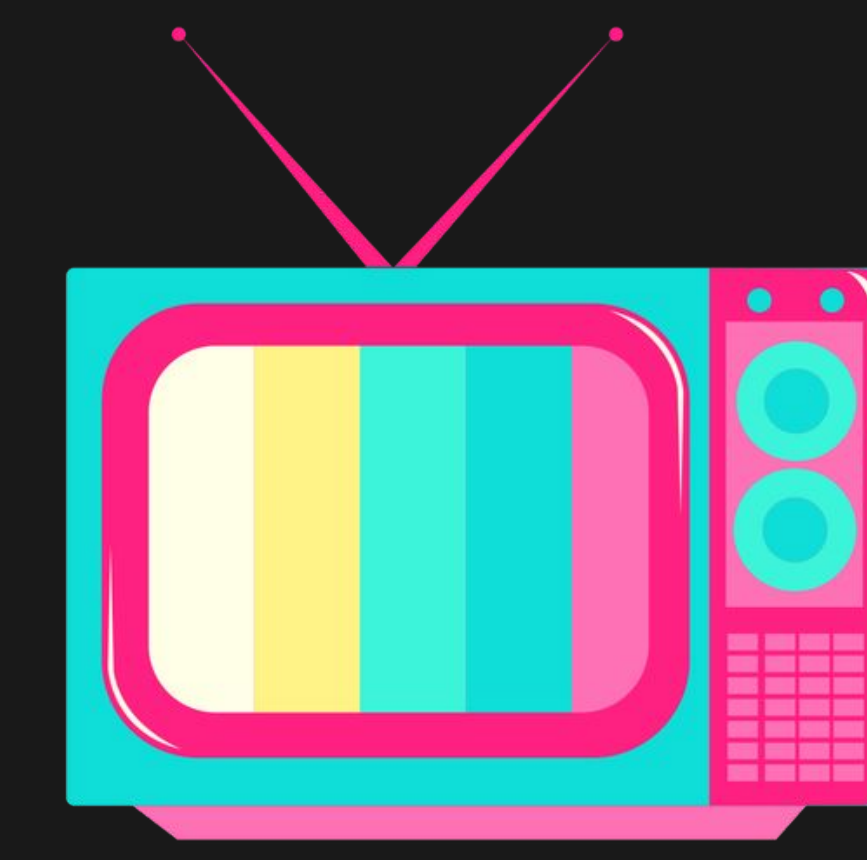




DOES “THE DAILY SHOW” PUT YOU IN THE KNOW?



Comparing the political engagement of late-night audiences and cable news audiences

INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH QUESTION

How does political information learned from late night talk shows impact political involvement compared to political information learned from cable news?

LITERATURE REVIEW

After reviewing the literature on our topic, we spotted a gap in the research. While others have focused on specific mediums, we sought to correlate multiple variables of the previous research to consider the relationship between the two audience groups (late night television and cable news) and how their political engagement compares and contrasts from each other to determine what the more effective medium is, and by extension, if the medium is the important factor in this research rather than the type of political information.

Mediums

- Late night television shows listed on the research questionnaire include: Late Night with Jimmy Fallon, Late Show with David Letterman, The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, The Daily Show, and The Colbert Report.
- Cable news channels include: ABC, CBS, & NBC

RESEARCH

HYPOTHESES

- H1a: People who learn political information from late night television are more likely to identify as a Democrat than those who identify as Republican or Independent
- H1b: People who learn political information from cable television are more likely to identify as a Republican than those who identify as Democrat or Independent
- H2: People who learn political information from network television news will vote at higher rates than people who learn political information from late night television.
- H3: People who learn political information from late night television are more likely to talk politics with friends than those who never watch late night television

METHODOLOGY

Using survey data of social media use in relation to young people’s political engagement conducted by Vromen et al. (2013), we conducted three statistical tests to compare the differences between mediums, audiences, and political engagement levels. We used SPSS to run two chi-square tests and a two-sample t-test.

RESULTS

- H1a: Reject the null, $p = .009$
Those who learn a great deal of political information from late night television were more likely to be Democrat (43.1%) than Republican (18.1%) or Independent (31.9%)
- H1b: Accept the null, $p = .002$
It was found that those who learn a great deal of political information from cable television are more likely to identify as Democrat (41.9%) than Republican (22%) and Independent (26%)
- H2: Accept the null, $p < .001$ & $p = .002$
The data found that those that learn a great deal of political information from cable news will vote at lower rates (72.9%) than those that learn a great deal of information from late night television (73%)
- H3: Reject the null, $p < .001$
The data found that people who learn a great deal of political information from late night television were more likely to engage in political discourse with friends ($M = 3.26$) than those who never watched late night television ($M = 4.56$) (*the questionnaire utilized a Likert-scale from 1.0 - 6.0 with 1.0 referencing as daily discourse and 6.0 referencing never discussing*)

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

The research conducted found that there was statistical significance in all the research hypotheses. The research emphasized the political information medium on a variety of factors. The findings can be beneficial to politicians or agencies attempting to send a message or ignite a behavior within the scope of young political activism. A limitation of this study is that the data utilized isn’t representative of the population as the sample participants’ ages ranged from 16-29 years old. Moving forward, future researchers could divide people into consumption categories rather than rates of learning within each medium. Future researchers can expand upon the theoretical impact of Medium Theory within this topic.

REFERENCES

Vromen et al. (2013). Young people, social media, and collective action: From organizational maintenance to everyday political talk. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 18(1), 80-100

PRESENTATION CREDITS

Presentation by Katie Dawson and Zoë Hill
Advisor: Dr. Jee-Hee Han
Department of Communication,
University of Dayton