PRESUMED INFLUENCE, PLANNED BEHAVIORS, AND POLITICAL ADVERTISING: UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT OF THE YOUNG ELECTORATE

by

ELIZABETH A. JOHNSON

(Under the direction of Ruthann Weaver Lariscy)

Low numbers of young voters heading to the polls each election cycle and decreased levels of political involvement among voters between the ages of 18 and 24 are disturbing trends demanding increased scholarly attention. Research has garnered a strong level of support for the perceptual component of the third-person effect, which posits there will be a greater perceived influence of a message on the other than on the self. Less documented is the behavioral component of the third-person effect, which predicts the self will act to control or mitigate the effects of the message on the other. Given its behavioral predictions, the third-person effect seems to have a logical union with the Theory of Planned Behavior. This study tests both theories independently and jointly to reveal their power in predicting voting behaviors and responses to political advertising of the young electorate. A factorial experiment design was employed for this study (n=270) in which participants in randomly assigned conditions viewed Presidential campaign advertisements one week prior to the 2004 general election. During the week following the election, a follow-up survey was distributed to measure
self-reported voting behaviors. The results of this study yield strong support for the perceptual component of the third-person effect. This study also provides support for the behavioral component of the third-person effect; intensity of third-person effect significantly and positively correlated with intention to vote in the 2004 Presidential election. Perhaps most interestingly, significant interactions of message sponsorship and tone as well as of message tone and strategy predicted strength of perceptual bias. Results of structural equation modeling revealed that the perceived behavioral control component of the Theory of Planned Behavior was an extremely strong predictor of voting behaviors; however, the third-person perceptual bias did not increase the variance explained in behavioral intentions to vote among the young electorate. Overall, in addition to their theoretical contributions, the results of this study have important applied value to inform message strategy in both voting enhancement campaigns and political advertising to ultimately increase the political involvement of the young electorate.

INDEX WORDS: Political advertising, Third-person effect, Theory of Planned Behavior, Young electorate, Voting behaviors, Presidential campaign advertising, Voting enhancement campaigns
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A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2006
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May 2006
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As I reflect on this incredible academic journey, I realize that to properly acknowledge all of those who have made this possible may indeed require as many pages as the dissertation itself. There are some that I could not go without mentioning in a page or so… there are many, many others to whom I am infinitely grateful.

First, I thank my advisor, friend, mentor, and surrogate mother, Dr. Lariscy. There are no words to express my gratitude for your love and support; I will be forever motivated in my work by an intense desire to make you proud. Over the past eight years you have been a role model and inspiration to me; the strength, dedication and perseverance you have demonstrated throughout the past year leave me full of awe. You so selflessly give yourself to all of those lucky enough to be in your life; I hope to be one of those people forever!

I am extremely blessed to have the fortune of working with four other amazing committee members. Dr. Sallot, you took me under your wing very early on and have provided so much guidance. I am honored to have gotten to work so closely with you throughout my time here; you have truly gone the extra 100 miles to help me. You gave me your office, you gave me sunscreen, and you gave me a lot of love and support. I will miss you dearly but know you will be a special, lifelong friend.
Dr. Tinkham, your great brilliance is only matched by your radiant demeanor. Somehow you made countless hours of regression, ANOVA, t-tests—pretty much the gamut of multivariate analysis—far less daunting than they sound. You so selflessly worked with me throughout it all; I hope the “cold chills” made at least some of that time as enjoyable for you as it was for me!

Dr. Springston, you have been such an important part of my time here. I have always taken great comfort in your advice and guidance. I have tremendous respect for both your scholarship and your approach to the profession. You are a wonderful friend and mentor, and the graduate students of Grady are truly lucky to have you as their director.

Last but not least, Dr. Hale...you hung in there “even though I was in the wrong department” and fostered my passion for persuasion theory. Your wit and constant anecdotes made the persuasion theory I learned with you as an undergraduate somehow seem cool. It has truly been an honor and pleasure to get to work with you.

Thank you to Donna for taking care of me; to Jarrod for not letting me quit; to Peggy for providing whatever I need, be it a snack or smile; to Chris for pumping my ego and making me smile; to Heidi for lots of good advice; to Lisa for a lot of laughs; to Debbie for your support; to Dr. Louden for getting me through step one; to Dr. Jones for lots and lots of help; and to my whole other family at Grady for always caring.
To my wonderful family at home, there are no words to express my love and gratitude. You have given me a lifetime of unwavering love and support, all too often in the form of hearing me out for hours on the phone. I am truly blessed, and I dedicate this accomplishment to you.

Last, I thank my best friend on this earth. Rob, your name should also be on this dissertation. You are my rock and my heart, and just one of your many smiles or words of encouragement made every day of this challenging year more enjoyable. You inspire me, love me, support me, comfort me, and amaze me. I was quite lucky to snag someone with not only a beautiful heart but also a brilliant mind to head up to Rocky Top with me.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Voting Behaviors and the Young Electorate

A review of popular press literature in the fall of 2004 reveals the expected pre-election surge of articles stressing the importance of voting in what promised to be a tight Presidential race between major party candidates John Kerry and George W. Bush. Such a review also yields many articles featuring the efforts of voting enhancement campaigns targeting the young electorate, traditionally recognized as voters between the ages of 18 and 24 (Smith & McGarrigle, 2004) and, less frequently, those between the ages of 18 and 29 (Conan, 2004).

Such emphasis on the importance of the young electorate’s vote is certainly not unique to this election cycle. Rosenberg (2004) notes that every four years candidates recognize the importance of young voters and of engaging them in the political process, and activists devise elaborate campaigns to drive young people to the polls. However, every four years Election Day poll data brings the same disappointing news: a vast majority of young Americans do not vote.

Since 1956, the voter turnout for American Presidential elections has declined steadily among all racial, social, and demographic groups, the decline sharpest among young voters ages 18-24 (Tindell & Medhurst, 1998). The passing of the 26th
Amendment in 1971 lowered the legal voting age from 21 to 18 and was in part a response to activist attitudes during the Vietnam War. The intention of the 26th Amendment was to give young adults more “voice” in the government.

Yet, historically, a majority of young people do not utilize this “voice” and exercise their right to vote. In the 1972 general election 49.6 percent of young adults voted, but by 1996 the number of young electorate voters had fallen to 32.4 percent (Reichert, Mueller & Nitz, 2003). In the 2000 general election, only 36 percent of eligible members of the young electorate voted, the lowest percentage to turn out from any age group (Nieves, 2004). Traditionally, young voters between ages 18 and 24 are the portion of the electorate with the largest disparity between rates that register to vote and actually vote (Osegueda, 2004).

One voice from the popular press, however, believes this trend is changing. MTV President Van Toffler asserted “the political and social environment of the past three years has created an amazingly active and informed group of young voters with issues ranging from the war on terror and the US involvement in Iraq to education and the economy.” Similarly, a 2004 Business Week feature (Magnusson & Drew, 2004) argues “Election 2004 could get the attention of 18-to-24-year-olds historically too uninterested to bother with the hassles of registering, boning up on candidates, and finding the polling place.” Reflecting comparable hopes, a vast range of organizations, from the World Wrestling Entertainment to the Harvard University’s Institute of
Politics, sponsored high-budget voting enhancement campaigns to increase the young adult vote in 2004 (Magnusson & Drew, 2004).

A 1992 surge was one break in the historically dismal trend of declining numbers of young voters heading to the polls. That year, for the first time in more than 20 years, young voter turnout increased, from 36.2 percent in 1988 to 42.8 percent in 1992 (Jennings, 1992). This marked the largest percentage increase in voter turnout of any demographic group. Tindell and Medhurst (1998) speculate several causes for the 1992 spike, including a young Democratic nominee, increased use of the Internet and other new technologies, and, for the first time in electoral history, a television channel catering to young people that engaged in a massive “get out the vote” campaign.

That campaign, sponsored by MTV, was “Rock the Vote,” which aired exclusively on MTV and targeted young voters. The campaign featured public service announcements produced in rock video style to capture the attention of its young target audience. The campaign was awarded a Peabody Award in 1992 for “tackling a persistent problem and finding an effective remedy” (Peabody Archives). Its persuasive appeals have become much more sophisticated, and in 2004 Rock the Vote partnered with Motorola to use text messaging to tell people how, when, and where to vote (Nieves, 2004).

The Rock the Vote campaign was the first voting enhancement campaign to use celebrity endorsements, but many youth voting enhancement campaigns followed suit
and have used celebrity spokespeople to get the message out. Sean “P. Diddy” Coombs started a non-partisan campaign organization, Citizen Change, which launched the Vote or Die campaign and garnered much attention as it targeted young voters of the “hip-hop” generation (Osegueda, 2004).

Hip-hop mogul Russell Simmons claims to have registered more than 12 million voters between the ages of 18 and 35 since 2001 with his Hip-Hop Action Summit campaign, and he hopes to increase that number to 20 million by 2008. WWE’s Smackdown the Vote campaign has celebrity wrestlers encouraging fans to vote and a Web link to voter registration deadlines and polling locations (Ives, 2004). Ben & Jerry’s, a Rock the Vote partner, began selling a new flavor of ice cream this year named “Primary Berry Graham.” On April 27, 2004, the company’s “free scoop” promotion day, Ben & Jerry’s stores set up voter registration tables (Ives, 2004).

In addition to the influence of these campaigns, Rosenberg (2004) speculated that several other motivations, including a post-September 11 surge of patriotism, an increase in candidate targets on the young electorate, and, following the closely contested 2000 Presidential election, what promises to be a tight 2004 election would drive even more young adults to the polls in 2004.

Other evidence suggests the tight job market and rising college/healthcare costs could motivate young voters (Christian Science Monitor, 2004). An early indicator of the potential for increased turnout among the young electorate was that the number of
Iowa Caucus youthful voters (under the age of 30) quadrupled in the 2004 election from the 2000 turnout (Magnusson & Drew, 2004). In the Iowa primary voters under age 30 accounted for 17 percent of caucus goers, a 6 percent increase from the 9 percent who voted in the Iowa primary in 2000 (Rosenberg, 2004).

More than 1 in 8 eligible voters in 2004 was between the ages of 18 and 24. Campaign strategists speculated that, if mobilized, the 24 million young adults who are eligible to vote could have tipped the election either way that year. However, polling data show that 56 percent of the 4.5 million young voters in 2004 preferred John Kerry for President, which indicates that the young vote may not have exerted its full, expected potential (Maude, 2004).

Yet, in the months following the 2004 Presidential election, scholars and polling data disagreed on the status of the number of young voters visiting the polls. As Neal Conan of NPR reported, the week after the election the extent of turnout of young voters at the polls “depends on who you talk to” (Conan, 2004). According to the Fact Sheet of the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, the reported 11.6 million voters between the ages of 18 and 24 in 2004 represented an increase of 3 million voters since the 2000 election when 8.6 million young voters made their way to the polls (Lopex, Kirby, & Sagoff, 2005). Kelly Cobiella reported on CBS evening news that young voters should celebrate, as their 2004 turnout was the highest it had been since 1972 (Cobiella, 2004).
According to the Associated Press, although the actual number of voters in the 18- to 24-year-old demographic increased, the proportion of total represented voters from that demographic was no greater than that of the 2000 election (Smith & McGarrigle, 2004). According to the Associated Press, in both the 2000 and 2004 general election, voters under the age of 30 constituted 18 percent of the voting population; yet, on election night an earlier Associated Press story reported that exit polls indicated fewer than one in 10 voters were between the ages of 18 and 24.

Consistent with historical trends, education is a strong predictor of voting among the young electorate; voters who have at least some college education are twice as likely to vote as members of the electorate with no education beyond high school. The gap between voting rates among those more and less educated continues to widen; between the 2000 and 2004 election cycles members voting rates of the college-educated young electorate increased two percentage points more than voting rates among the lesser-educated. A gender gap in voting rates also continues to widen; in 2004, 50 percent of young female voters cast votes compared to only 44 percent of young males heading to the polls (Lopez et al., 2005).

Not surprisingly, young voters in “battleground” state such as Florida, Pennsylvania, Iowa, and Wisconsin voted at the highest rates in the general election. In the 10 most contested states in the 2004 Presidential election, 64 percent of young voters cast their ballots compared to the 47 percent who voted in non-battleground states.
Voting rates of the young electorate in these battleground states represent a 13 percent increase from the 51 percent who cast ballots in 2000 in the same states.

Further, young voters comprised 19 percent of the total electorate in battleground states (Business Wire, 2004) compared to 18 percent of the total electorate in traditionally “red” or “blue” states according to the Associated Press (2004). Such indicates that young voters may be increasingly aware of the importance of each vote in closely contested states. A key issue on the agenda of voting enhancement campaigns targeting young voters is how to convince voters in traditionally “red” and “blue” states that their votes matter (Maude, 2004). What remains to be seen, however, is if the sharp increase in young voters this year predicts a rising trend or mirrors the short-lived spike in young-voting rates during the 1992 election (Lopez et al., 2005).

**Theoretical Motivations to Vote**

Scholarly research has revealed several theoretical motivators for youth to vote. One such example is a Burgess, Haney, Snyder, Sullivan, and Transue (2000) study that examined a nationwide effort to motivate the young electorate to vote in the 1996 U.S. Presidential election. Individuals in the study signed and self-addressed pledge cards to vote in the next election; some cards prompted participants to write their reasons for voting while other cards did not. Pledge cards with the personal prompt had a stronger influence on voting than those that did not. Several theories of attitudinal advocacy and consistency may support this finding.
Voting behaviors of the young electorate and voting enhancement campaigns targeting the young electorate continue to capture much scholarly attention (Tindell & Medhurst, 1998; McDonald & Popkin, 2001; Burgess, Haney, Snyder, Sullivan & Transue, 2000; Reichert, Mueller & Nitz, 2003; Dermody & Scullion, 2003; Fetto, 1999). However, studies in this area usually focus on young voters’ awareness of political advertising (Dermody & Scullion, 2003) and more descriptive analyses of such messages (Reichert et al., 2003; Tindell & Medhurst, 1998). Less visible yet important are studies exploring cognitive and behavioral responses to these messages such as the effectiveness of persuasive appeals with respect to both voting behaviors and candidate selection.

Young voters tend to have weaker partisan and candidate loyalties, making their potential swing votes attractive targets for campaigns (Rosenberg, 2004). In 2000 the young electorate vote was split almost equally between Democrats and Republican candidates. With 20 million registered (and more than 48 million eligible) youth (often swing) votes up for grabs in 2004, there were more organizations working to register and engage these young voters than ever (Nieves, 2004).

Advocates, most not giving explicit candidate endorsements and claiming to be “apartisan,” fought to capitalize on this young voting market. Blumler and Kavanagh (1999) stress that advertising is the only relatively unmediated form of communication between candidates and the electorate, and young people are particularly dependent on
advertising when forming attitudes and opinions (Nava & Nava, 1990). With increasing numbers of registered young voters and more political advertising targeting this group, it seems both salient and timely to reveal the persuasive, cognitive, and behavioral impact of political advertising messages on young voters.

Furthermore, Dermody and Scullion (2003) reject the notion that young voters are not interested in or unaware of political advertising. In fact, they found that political advertising was significantly valued when young adults make political decisions. Political advertising may also stimulate voting behaviors, as political advertising was a major reference point in voting decision making in the Dermody and Scullion (2003) study.

Theoretical Justification for Study

Dermody and Scullion (2003) assert four ways that political advertising motivates young voters: (1) in deciding at a broad level to vote or not vote; (2) in choosing between parties; (3) by reinforcing party loyalty; and (4) in making sense of the media coverage surrounding the election. However, there seems to be one hole in these assumptions and a dearth in scholarly research studying young adults’ voting behaviors and attitudes toward political ads. Absent from the literature are studies investigating how the often very socially impressionable young adults think their peers are affected by political advertising and if these impressions are important predictors of their own voting behaviors. Furthermore, little attention has been paid to how the
persuasive impact of different types of message strategy-- issue, image, positive and negative-- in political advertisements affect voting behaviors or how persuasive (or not) young adults think these different message strategies are to their peers. Johnston and Kaid (2001) assert no topic has been more dominant across the five decades of research on political advertising that the discussion of whether or not campaign commercials are dominated by image information or by issue information” (p. 16).

Thus, as the majority of scholarly attention in political advertising may focus on the content of political advertising, this study extends that focus to reveal differing effects of message strategy on the young electorate. The well-grounded perceptual component of the third-person effect posits that message recipients believe others are more easily influenced by persuasive messages than they are. To reveal young voters’ perceptions of the persuasive impact of political advertising on their peers, this study tests the perceptual and behavior components of the third-person effect model and isolates image, issue, negative, and positive advertisements to identify unique persuasive impacts of these message strategies.

Less documented in third-person effect literature is its behavioral component, which builds on the perceptual component and predicts that biased perceptions will result in action to mitigate the impact of the message on others (Eveland, 2002). For example, a person supporting the smoking ban may see a brochure explaining why smoking should not be banned in restaurants and subsequently believe it will be very
persuasive to others. Therefore, he or she may then feel compelled to create a brochure supporting the ban in order to balance the effects of the other brochure.

This study examines whether viewing advertisements for the opposing candidates induces stronger intentions to vote in order to offset votes for the competition or support for restrictions or bans on political advertising. The study also extends this behavioral component of the third-person effect by looking at how different message strategies may have different persuasive impact on individual behavior and the *perceived* behaviors of others.

Additionally, this study marks the first scholarly attempt to theoretically link the third person effect with the Theory of Planned Behavior in order to study voting behaviors and extend the current theoretical predictions the models offer. Ajzen’s (1985) Theory of Planned Behavior posits that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control account for variance in behavioral intention, and, ultimately behavior. Given that young voters are particularly socially impressionable, the behavioral component of the third-person effect may exert a unique normative influence on behavioral intentions not explained by the current Theory of Planned Behavior model.

As one of the major cognitive explanatory theories advanced in the mid-20th century, the Theory of Planned Behavior remains strongly grounded and currently is experiencing somewhat of a revitalization, which is particularly visible in health
communication literature. The Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behavior have been recently used to study organizational attraction and ethics (Highhouse, Lievens, & Sinar, 2003; VanSandt & Neck, 2003), alcohol abuse in college students (Codd & Cohen, 2003), gender differences in sunscreen use (Abroms, Jorgensen, Southwell, Geller, & Emmons, 2003), verbal and physical aggression (Roberto, Meyer, Boster, & Roberto, 2003), television viewing and crime (Nabi & Sullivan, 2001), and AIDS public service announcements and condom use (Treise & Weigold, 2001).

Yet, the Theory of Planned Behavior has yet to be tested to determine its strength in predicting voting behaviors of the young electorate. This study uses the Theory of Planned Behavior as the theoretical framework from which to study the young electorate’s intentions to vote and self-reported voting behaviors and reveal possible differences between the young electorate and older voters.

This theoretical avenue seems particularly salient to explore given the large disparity among young voters who are registered to vote and those who actually vote. Therefore, the proposed study investigates the persuasive impact of 2004 Presidential advertising on the young electorate and how this impact predicts both behavioral intentions and voting behaviors. It will also reveal which component of the Theory of Planned Behavior is the strongest predictor of behavioral intention to vote.
Following the election, a post-test survey reveals how strongly intentions to vote among the young electorate predicted voting behaviors. A control group is used to reveal whether exposure to the experimental treatment ads predicted stronger behavioral adherence to intentions than those not exposed to the ads.

Ideally, results of this study may enable the multitude of high-budget voting enhancement campaigns to more effectively target the young electorate. Results of this study may make the millions of dollars spent on young electorate voting campaigns yield inarguably increased numbers of voters at the polls. Furthermore, by testing the effects of different message strategies and subsequent third-person effect for each, this study could inform televised Presidential campaign advertisements by identifying which message strategy is actually perceived to be most persuasive and which ones actually are the most persuasive.

Thus, this study unites the Theory of Planned Behavior with the third-person effect in order to test and extend the strength of behavioral predictions of both models while examining the third-person effect’s perceptual component’s influence on these behaviors. Persuasive impact of televised Presidential campaign spot ads is measured with regard to perceptions of their effects on others in candidate selection, perceptions of their effects on others’ voting behaviors, and how these perceptions (or the lack thereof) may affect a young voter’s decision to vote. Ultimately, this research seeks to
extend current theoretical models and to inform voting enhancement campaigns as they continue their efforts to “rock the vote.”
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

“In our day, it would seem as if knowledge of political communication and policy is incomplete without some consideration of the role played by perceptions and conceptions of political communication effects.”
- Perloff, 1999, p. 197

As the centerpiece for a political electoral campaign, consultants believe political advertisements set the agenda for news, debate, and interpersonal discussion. Political advertisements, along with news and debates, are one of the three strongest influences on voting behavior (Rucinski & Salmon, 1990). Televised political campaign spots are a Presidential candidate’s most visible and direct form of communication with voters. It is estimated that more than half of the budget of a Presidential candidate is allocated toward the production and purchase of television spots (Ballotti & Kaid, 2000), and television remains the primary medium for the modern United States political candidate to persuade and mobilize the electorate (Goldstein & Ridout, 2004).

As political advertising is a major reference point in voting behavior (Dermody & Scullion, 2003), televised political advertisements play a central and critical role in garnering candidate support. The young electorate’s dependence on advertising for political decision-making (Nava & Nava, 1990) underscores the importance of further scholarly research investigating their cognitive response to persuasive appeals in political ads. A wide body of scholarly literature analyzes these persuasive appeals in
political messages; review of this research reveals many conclusions about the nature and implications of message strategy on the political behaviors of the electorate.

**Issue and Image in Political Advertising**

Johnston and Kaid (2002) assert “among all of the functions of political advertising…two of the most important functions are helping the candidate define or redefine his or her image and providing a forum where campaign issues can be explained and developed” (p. 281). Thus, it follows that issue discussion and image construction are central to political advertising.

Image ads may produce greater information recall for lesser-known candidates, and issue advertising can be an effective way to boost a candidate’s ratings (Johnston & Kaid, 2002). Issue discussion and image construction have dominated the content of presidential candidate televised political advertising for fifty years (Johnston & Kaid, 2002) and differing effects of these message strategies are central to this study’s analysis of the young electorate’s responses to televised ads.

Kaid and Johnston (2002) argue that the issue and image message strategy distinction is important given the considerable evidence that issue and image messages have differing effects on candidate recall and evaluation. Researchers have grappled for years as they struggle to define what constitutes image ads and issue ads.

Although it is difficult to parse ads out exclusively to belong in the issue or image category, researchers have traditionally operationalized issue ads as “dealing
with specific policy stands, policies tied to concerns of citizenry, topics and concerns linked to the national interest, statement[s] of candidate positions on policy issues, or preferences on issues or problems of public concern” (Johnston & Kaid, 2002, p. 282). This whereas issue discussion may invite the message recipient to make attributions about the candidate’s image, the dominant, overall message will center on one of the above topical issue areas.

Conversely, Johnston and Kaid (2002) report that image ads are traditionally coded as focusing on the characteristics or qualifications of the candidate; however, although coded as dominantly one type or the other, both issue and image ads may serve several different functions for the sponsoring candidate. For example, an advertisement focusing on the disparity between a candidate’s campaign promises and what he or she actually accomplished may have an overall focus on issues but a secondary, more latent function of the ad may be to invite the electorate to assume that candidate is unreliable, an image attribution.

First, issue advertising used the traditional “talking-head” style more, in which the candidate is dominant is the frame and speaking directly to the viewer, often using emotional language to heighten the persuasiveness of the appeal. Image ads most frequently use appeals of source credibility and are more often narrated by an anonymous source. A final major difference between issue and image advertising revealed by Johnston and Kaid (2002) was that negative messages were more prevalent in issue advertising than in image advertising.

Candidates may tend to rely more heavily on image advertising in televised political advertising. Gilboa and Katz (1999) argue “American-style campaigning is closely associated with heavy emphasis on the personality and character of candidates at the expense of parties and political ideologies, giving priority to images over issues, extensive use of television, sound bites and sloganeering, effective political commercials, negative campaigning, television debates among the main candidates, and the entire carnival atmosphere preceding election day” (p. 11).

Explanation for such a focus on image in televised political advertising may lie in the fact that, with an average time of 30 seconds, televised spots do not provide a forum adequate for discussion of complex issues. Such has elicited criticism of televised political ads due to their focus on image-constructing messages (Johnston & Kaid, 2002).

Further, in an analysis of political use of the media in the 1999 Israeli election, Gilboa and Katz (1999) analyze American “video-politics” as the internationally
dominant model for political campaigning. As radio and television stations were not widespread in Israel until the 1990s, Israel was slow to utilize modern methods of political campaigns; yet, Giboa and Katz (1999) argue that, just like many American social and cultural trends, Israel soon went through “Americanization” and adopted the campaign style of the United States (p. 11).

Gilboa and Katz (1999) posit that televised political advertising is the “essence” of the American media campaign model. As political consultant James Carville once stated, “In this business, you haven’t said anything until you’ve said it on television” (in Smith & Kidder, 1996). Citing the work of Bennett (1996) and Bowler and Farreell (1992), Gilboa and Katz (1999) argue that this model is “based on the assumption that ‘selling’ candidates and ideas is similar to ‘selling’ products or services” (p. 11).

Johnston and Kaid (2002) acknowledge, given that average televised political ads are 30-seconds long, the commercials’ brevity does not enable them to provide a forum for engaged discussion. Therefore, many televised ads focus on image and often go negative, given the growing importance of negativity in television advertising (Basil, Schooler, & Reeves, 1991). Indeed, Smith and Kidder (1996) recognize television as the most prominent medium for negative campaigning.

Thus, the “carnival”-like atmosphere of political campaigning and advertising (Gilboa & Katz, 1999) features a glut of negative advertising. Negativity in political campaigning has captured scholarly attention and triggered a vibrant topic of debate.
over the nature and effects of negativity for decades. Thus, in addition to the issue and image distinction, the nature and differing effects of positive and negative advertising are critical to this study.

**Negativity in Campaigns**

Both the nature and extent of negative campaigning has fluctuated over the years, but overall the use of negativity in campaigning has increased since 1970, when political action committees began to target congressional incumbents (Lau & Sigelman, 2000). Since then, the amount of negative campaigning in televised political advertising has increased (Rahn & Hirshorn, 1999). In 1964, the Johnson/Goldwater campaign advertising was perhaps the first to heavily engage in negative advertising, with a particularly famous example being the "Daisy Commercial" (Jamieson, 1992).

The Presidential election of 1988 marked an all-time high in the use of negative campaigning, which was ultimately credited with tipping the balance from Dukakis to Bush in the election (Basil, Schooler, & Reeves, 1991). The infamous "Willie Horton" and “Revolving Door” commercials are widely credited with reviving George Bush’s presidential bid. Whereas a popular political campaigning strategy in the 1980s was to “take the high road” and not respond to a negative attack, Dukakis’ lack of response to Bush’s attacks was a campaign strategy credited with costing Dukakis the election (in Weaver-Lariscy & Tinkham, 1999, p. 13).
Although Bush’s 1988 campaign demonstrates the power of negative advertising, the nature of and average effects of negative campaigning on the electorate remain a vibrant topic for scholarly debate.

**Nature of Negative Political Advertising**

Politically engaged campaigning typically entails some discussion of the opponent, which is not always “negative.” Jamieson (1992) notes “engaged discourse takes a position, provides evidence to justify that position, and differentiates that position from that of the opponent” (p. 223). However, this “engaged discourse” often extends beyond a discussion of the differentiation of candidates’ positions to make negative attacks on the opposition.

Political ads are often parsed into two groups, the positive and the negative; however, scholars (Jamieson, Waldman, & Sherr 2000) assert such simplistic categorization of political advertising does not capture different types of negative attacks or the nature of the attack. Pfau and Kenski (1990) and Basil, Schooler, and Reeves (1991) observe that the nature of the negative attack may be personal or issue based. Pfau & Kenski (1990) made one of the earliest calls for an extension of categorization of attack advertising to include two further distinctions of negative messages: attack messages and comparative messages.

Attack messages are image ads that focus on an opponent’s personal characteristics; comparative messages, or negative issue advertising, attack the
opposition’s issues or prior voting record (Pfau & Kenski, 1990). Attack messages and comparative messages may elicit different effects on the electorate; comparative messages with issue discussion may be perceived as fair and valid while attack messages centered on image are considered to be more unfair and thus trigger disapproval (Budesheim, Houson, & DePaola, 1996). Thus, the nature of negativity may certainly moderate its effects on the electorate; decades of scholarly research have identified several additional factors moderating the reception of positive and negative message strategies.

**Effects of Negativity – Political Advertising**

Three assumptions are widely accepted by those who write about negativity in political advertising. The first supposition is that negative ads are more memorable than positive ads. Voters tend to remember negative advertising more than positive advertising, especially when the negative advertising is repeated or dramatic (Smith & Kidder, 1996, Pfau & Kenski, 1990); a 1996 phone survey revealed that two-thirds of 1900 participants at least one negative political advertisement from the last election in detail (in Smith & Kidder, 1996).

Negative advertising may be more memorable than positive advertising because people are more motivated to avoid costs than to achieve gains (Garramone, 1984). Lau (1982) offers another explanation for why negativity is memorable, a figure-ground hypothesis, which posits that, as a majority of people live in a positive world the
majority of the time, “negative information stands out because of its relative infrequency” and “is figural against a positive background” (p. 372).

Further, a positive rebuttal message may not offset the original negative message. While the positive response may improve the evaluation of the attacked candidate, the positive message remains less powerful than the negative ad. Consistent with the reasons enumerated above, “numerous information processing and judgmental decision-making studies indicate that individuals weigh negative information more heavily than positive information and are more likely to remember it,” thus indicating the presence of a “negativity bias” (Weaver-Lariscy & Tinkham, 1999, p. 14).

Weaver-Lariscy and Tinkham (1999) demonstrate the power of this negativity bias and reveal theoretical explanations of the “sleeper effect” phenomenon. The sleeper effect explains the residual, even increasing, effects of negative political messages over time. Almost 350 participants in the Weaver-Lariscy and Tinkham study viewed televised negative attack messages; some treatment groups viewed a defensive ad prior to the attack ad and others watched the defensive advertisement following the attack ad. Participants indicated the candidate who would receive their vote both immediately after the experiment and in a later telephone survey.

The study yielded strong evidence that both low source credibility and order of exposure to the defensive message (prior to or following the negative attack) may
induce a sleeper effect. Although the initial effectiveness of a message sponsored by a source perceived to have low credibility may be suppressed, with time, the message may be disassociated from its source; thus effectiveness is not compromised by a low-credibility source and may become more powerful as the message is separated from its source (Weaver-Lariscy & Tinkham, 1999).

Further, Weaver-Lariscy and Tinkham (1999) give evidence of an order-driven sleeper effect, in which defensive messages following an attack may be initially effective, yet the impact of the rebuttal decreases over time. It seems that negative advertising not only is more memorable than positive advertising but also may have stronger initial and delayed effects than positive advertising.

The second assumption regarding negativity that scholars generally agree with is that negativity has the potential to backlash against the sponsor of the ad; however, such backlash is certainly not inevitable. Whereas negative ads perceived as truthful improve evaluations of the sponsor and are detrimental to the reputation of the sponsor’s opponent, ads perceived as untruthful may have a strong adverse effect.

Garramone (1984) documented the existence of backlash from negative political advertising with the results of a telephone survey with 267 Michigan voters. Garramone (1984) found that voters are quick to criticize candidate who engage in negative advertising that is perceived as untruthful, resulting in a backlash against the candidate. This backlash theory states “a strong attack on a candidate, if perceived by
the audience as untruthful, undocumented, or in any way unjustified, may create more negative feelings toward the sponsor, rather than the target” (Garramone, 1984, p. 251); thus, an attack ad perceived as false or unjustified may ultimately generate positive feelings toward its target.

Age and education were important moderators of credibility assigned to negative political advertisements and subsequent evaluation of the sponsor. Age is the strongest predictors; older voters perceived ads to be less credible, were less approving, and were more favorable toward the target of negativity than young voters. Education also plays an important role in reception of negativity; voters with higher education levels were more likely to be negatively influenced by the sponsor than were less educated voters (Garramone, 1984).

Not surprisingly, Garramone’s (1984) work revealed candidate preference to be the best predictor of perception and reception of negativity. Voters who favored the sponsor of the negativity assigned the most credibility to the ads, were more positively disposed to the sponsor, and were more negatively influenced toward the target of the negative attack.

However, interestingly, responses of voters who did not favor the sponsor or the target of the negative attack were more similar to those participants favoring the target of the attack. Thus, participants in a “neutral” position with regard to sponsorship
were more likely to support the target than the sponsor of the negativity (Garramone, 1984).

The third assumption regarding negativity in political advertising that generally garners scholarly agreement is that, although the electorate dislikes an excess of negative ads, negative political advertising works (Smith & Kidder, 1996). Garramone (1984) found that almost three-fourths of voters expressed disapproval of negative advertising. Louden (1990) posits “heavy dependence on negative advertising is somewhat of an anomaly, in that voters generally do not like negative ads, finding them contrived and distorted... yet they are effective” (p. 236-237). The continued, even increasing, use of negativity in political campaigning at all levels is further evidence of this effectiveness (Weaver-Lariscy & Tinkham, 1999).

Beyond these assumptions, scholars continue to explore opposing hypotheses for the electorate’s response to negative campaigning, particularly regarding voting behaviors. Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) posit a demobilization hypothesis; supporters of this hypothesis assert negative political advertisement compromises the sense of efficacy in the electorate and reduces their likelihood of voting (Freedman & Goldstein, 1999).

In the strongest experimental support for the demobilization hypothesis, Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) found that attack advertising demobilizes the electorate, leading to a decrease in political efficacy, in one’s level of involvement with
and trust in the election process and candidates once in office, and in probability of voting. In addition to a decrease in efficacy, Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) posit negative messages alienate nonpartisans and discourage their participation in the political process.

However, a review of opposing scholarly research on negative advertising yields evidence of a stimulation hypothesis, which holds negative campaigning mobilizes voters and increases turnout at the polls (Bartels, 1997; Finkel & Geer, 1998; Garramone, Atkin, Pinkleton, & Cole, 1990). Negativity in political campaigning may induce stronger affective responses in the electorate, such as increased enthusiasm for the candidate, heightened levels of engagement with the campaign, and the desire to learn more about the sponsoring candidate (Finkel & Geer, 1998). Scholars who support the stimulation hypothesis argue these heightened responses may ultimately mobilize voters.

Freedman and Goldstein (1999) offer strong support for the mobilization hypothesis with a pre-election telephone survey with 637 randomly selected Virginian voters. Freedman and Goldstein also collected post-election data with a second wave of follow-up interviews with 350 out of the initial 637 respondents; later this survey data was combines with data distribution of campaign ads and content analyses of the aired spots to calculate actual estimate of ad exposure of participants. Freedman and Goldstein (1999) found that exposure to negative advertising actually stimulated voting
behaviors. Further, participants who considered candidates’ advertising to be particularly negative were more likely to vote than those who considered the advertising to be more neutral in tone.

Eddie Mahe, a Congressional campaign coordinator for several candidates, advised that while many claim that negative advertising does not work, everywhere that he has been on the attack he has been successful and turnout has been good (in Budesheim et al., 1996). Thurber, Nelson, and Dulio (2000) concur, asserting they “cannot confidently conclude that negative political advertisements are harmful to the electoral process.”

Several factors may moderate how, when, and why a negative political advertisement works or backfires. Tinkham and Weaver-Lariscy (1993) utilized a quasi-experimental design with 201 participants to measure participant reactions to political advertising and reveal when, how, and why negativity works or does not work.

Negative messages reap their impact from a wider range of intervening variables than do positive messages; therefore, explanation for the successful impact of negativity may lie in the fact that exclusive use of positive message strategies may limit voters to fewer evaluative criteria, and subsequently the available avenues of impact (Tinkham & Weaver-Lariscy, 1993).
Further, Tinkham and Weaver-Lariscy (1993) found that, regardless of positive or negative message tone, the viewer must like the ad. Credibility and stimulation of the ad are more salient to the evaluation than issue or current topical discussion.

**Moderators of the Influence of Negativity**

Beyond the nature of the advertisement itself, there are several theoretical determinants that may influence the individual response to negativity.

**In-group and Out-group Sponsorship**

One predictor of acceptance or rejection of candidate-sponsored negativity is whether the source of a negative message is a member of one’s political in-group. Research indicates that people are more likely to accept a message if they can identify with its source, if the source is similar to them, or if the source belongs to the same social group (Budesheim et al., 1996). Therefore, if the source of a negative political message belongs to the same political party as the participant, it may follow that the participant is less likely to reject that negative information.

To test this hypothesis, Budesheim et al. (1996) assessed the impact of in-group and out-group sponsored negative messages and offer experimental evidence of and theoretical explanations for a moderating role of sponsor status in a study with 117 participants. Budesheim et al. (1996) draw several conclusions regarding differing effects negative messages sponsored by the in-group and out-group candidate.
First, content of negative messages affected the evaluation of the in-group candidate but not of an out-group candidate. Messages were not effective simply because were sponsored by the in-group candidate; character attacks were only favorably persuasive for their sponsors when justified by a clear issue-based justification for the attack. Messages sponsored by the in-group candidate that were not supported by such justification were not persuasive.

Second, participants systematically evaluated messages sponsored by the out-group candidate. The attack message of the source was not discounted based on its sponsor’s status alone; in fact, even a vague justification heightened the message’s persuasiveness.

Third, Budesheim et al. (1996) conclude that a more justified reason for character attacks was demanded of in-group than out-group candidates. Character attacks sponsored by the out-group candidate may consistently have a persuasive impact unless the message is unacceptably justified. Conversely negative character attacks sponsored by the in-group candidate were only persuasive if an acceptable justification was provided.

**Party Affiliation**

Perceived differences in Republican and Democrat responses to negativity have also triggered scholarly debate. Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) found that negative ads depress turnout least among Republicans. Conversely, positive commercials may be
more persuasive to Democratic audiences. Yet, according to Lemert, Wanta, and Lee (1999), Republicans voters are more demobilized by attack advertising than Democratic voters. As evidence, they offer results of a 1999 study measuring the electorate’s response to the 1996 campaigns of Oregon United States Senate candidates Republican Gordon Smith and Democrat Ron Wyden. Smith’s negative campaigning suppressed Republican voter turnout whereas Wyden’s negative campaigning had no effect on Democratic turnout. Lamert, Wanta, and Lee (1999) also found that negative ad backlash is more likely to occur among Republican voters.

**Negative Images and Issues**

Message strategy may also moderate the persuasiveness of a negative message; negative image advertising may be more likely to trigger backlash than negative issue advertising. Engaging the opponent’s issues in advertising is expected, fair, and justified within political discourse. Louden (1990) argues “compared to a direct attack on the character of an opponent, issue ads provide at least the veneer of respectability…not only are issue based spots more palatable to voters, fulfilling their self-definition as an ‘informed voter,’ they are perceived as more fair and informative.” Thus, voters may be more tolerant of issue commercials because they "seem justified," and backlash is therefore more likely to occur with a direct personal attack (Garramone, 1984).
Combinations of image, issue, negative, and positive message strategies induce varying and significant persuasive impacts on the electorate. However, scholarly research has yet to parcel out and compare the actual differences in perceived effects of message strategies the electorate is inundated with each campaign cycle. Following review of the ongoing scholarly debate about the effects of negative advertising on voters and turnout, Min (2004) concludes “to settle this disagreement, further investigations on whether and how the tone of campaigning (i.e. negative versus positive) produces a difference in voters’ participatory attitudes are essential” (p. 98).

This study responds to Min’s (2004) call by measuring the extent of perceptual bias of young voters, specifically the third-person effect, resulting from exposure to different message strategies and how this bias influences candidate selection and voting behavior. Perloff (1996, p. 611) posits, “it is likely that there are numerous third-person perceptions going on [in political ads]- tendencies to assume that political ads exert a stronger (and more negative) impact on the average voter than on the self.” Herein lies the practical significance of political third-person effect research, as voters’ conceptions of political meaning and participation in the electoral process may be affected by the anticipation of the reactions of others (Perloff, 1996).

However, Perloff (1996) also acknowledges the difficulty in judging the strength and impact of such an effect due a shortcoming in research. Since this acknowledgment in 1996, only two studies (Paek, Pan, Sun, Abisaid, & Houden, 2005, Banning, Golan, &
Lundy, 2005) have used the third-person perception to study the effects of political advertising. Paek et al. (2005) concur with Perloff; “suffice it to say that [political advertising] effect studies have not paid enough attention to perceived effects of [positive and negative] ads and their implications” (p. 144-145).

Paek et al. (2005) use telephone interview data from surveys with more than 365 adults to examine how perceived message effects of political attack ads influence political decisions and participation. Although that study proffers strong support for the perceptual component of the third-person perception, Paek et al. (2005) do not identify any differences in perceived effects among various types of political messages.

Furthermore, Paek et al. limit their theoretical focus to the perceptual component of the third-person effect; contemporary research is needed to explore the behavioral predictions of the third-person effect, particularly in a political context. Banning, Golan, and Lundy (2005) test the behavioral component of the third-person effect in a 2004 judgment task experiment. Results showed that likelihood to vote increased with intensity of the third-person effect, which was a firm predictor of likelihood to vote (Banning et al., 2005).

Thus, the perceived effects of issue, image, positive, and negative Presidential televised spots will be analyzed in this study. The perceptual component and lesser-supported behavioral component of the third-person effect will be used to analyze
perceptual bias and subsequent behaviors in the young electorate’s consumption of political advertising.

The Third-Person Effect in Communication

In his 1983 seminal work on the third-person effect, Davison (1983) articulated its perceptual component as follows:

“In its broadest formulation, this hypothesis predicts that people will tend to overestimate the influence that mass communications have on the attitudes and behaviors of others….more specifically, individuals who are members of an audience that is exposed to a persuasive communication (whether or not this communication is intended to be persuasive) will expect the communication to have a greater effect on others than on themselves (p. 3)”

Davison (1983) recognizes two different involvement roles of the “third-person” in this phenomenon from different observational standpoints. First, from the perspective of a person evaluating the persuasiveness of a message, the greatest impact is not on him or her (“me”) but instead on others (“them”). Second, from a persuasive communicator’s standpoint, those concerned with the attitude or behavior of the ostensible audience are the third persons (Davison, 1983).

Paek et al. (2005) provide a useful framework and tentative support for one explanation of the third-person perception, conceptualizing it as a cognitive fallacy in
social judgment resulting from uncertainty in completing a judgment task. Paek et al. (2005) argue that when a message recipient makes a message-effect judgment, he or she integrates two types of information, the message’s effectiveness and the orientation of the target toward the message. If either type of information is unclear or ambiguous, the likelihood and magnitude of message effect is unpredictable.

Under this uncertainty, individuals will “resort to less-than-optimal cognitive strategies, resulting in the [third-person perception] and increased self-other disparity with social distance” (Paek et al., 2005, p. 144). Paek et al.’s (2005) experimental and survey data yield tentative support for this cognitive explanation for the third-person effect; further research is necessary, however, to provide a useful explanatory framework from which to understand the psychological mechanisms of third-person effect. Although not the focus of this research, the results of this study may inform future research testing of cognitive explanations of the third-person effect.

Davison’s (1983) seminal work on the third-person effect extends the perceptual component in order to make behavioral predictions. Regardless of whether individuals are members of the ostensible audience for the message, the perceived effects of a message on others may induce mitigating action. Therefore, the behavioral component of the third-person effect predicts a message receiver will take some action to control for the perceived effects of a message on some other group when a perceptual bias occurs.
To illustrate, Davison (1983) gives the example of a 1978 Maryland gubernatorial challenger who had the support of about 4 percent of the electorate prior to editorial endorsement by local papers and about 11 percent after. Subsequent polls showed his popularity climbing, and the virtually unknown candidate actually won the seat by a narrow margin. Davison offers this as practical support for the third-person effect hypothesis; the newspaper endorsement did not change the attitude of people toward the little-known candidate but instead changed expectations of the support he would receive from others.

As a more contemporary demonstration of the third-person effect behavioral component, Paek et al. (2005) discuss of the role of anecdotal observations during the rise and fall of Howard Dean’s candidacy in the 2004 Democratic primary. John Kerry’s surge to front-runner for the nomination illustrates the power of political perception. Perloff (1996) contends that people construct political meaning and behave in different ways based on anticipations of other’s reactions. Others anticipated the fall of Dean, especially following the “Dean Scream” incident after the Iowa primary, and shifted their support to Kerry based on the anticipated actions of others.

The third-person effect has generated a vast amount of research since 1983 (Paul, Salwen, & Dupagne, 2000). Perloff’s (1996) review of third-person literature reveals strong support for the third-person effect’s perceptual component, which has “robust empirical findings” and support (Paul et al., 2000, p. 58). A more recent 2000 meta-


analysis of 62 empirical studies of the third-person effect’s perceptual component revealed a strong effect size ($r = .50$) (Paul et al., 2000).

Conversely, scholarly research has also revealed strong support for a first-person perception. First-person effects, or reverse-third-person effects, presume more influence of a message on the self than on others. First-person perceptual bias may result from exposure to stimuli with a desirable consequence or message (Banning et al., 2005; Cohen & Davis, 1991). Scholars have used positive and negative messages to document third-person and first-person perceptual bias (Banning et al., 2005; Paek et al., 2004); this study, however, seeks to explore how message sponsorship influences third-person perception in the young electorate.

This study operationalizes “undesirable” messages as those sponsored by an out-group candidate and promoting a negative outcome (that candidate’s victory) through advertising with positive and negative message strategies. Such conceptualization seems to better capture the theoretical motivations used to explain first- and third-person perceptual gaps. It is logical to conceive of positive stimuli as those messages promoting a favorable outcome. So, any message supporting the in-group candidate may be conceptualized as having a positive outcome, regardless of positive or negative message valence.

Perhaps valence is not as salient as sponsorship, in that those messages sponsored by the out-group are perceived to be more “positive,” thus triggering a first-
person effect, and messages sponsored by the out-group candidate may promote a negative outcome and induce a third-person effect. Thus, this study explores first- and third-person effects by conceptualizing them as responses to perceived positive and negative outcomes.

Rucinski and Salmon (1990) argue that age, education, political interest, and engagement with media content are central factors to understanding the different dimensions of the third-person effect. Although age is unrelated to the propositions of the third-person effect, age does affect perceived influence on the self and others. Young people are more likely to perceive a strong media influence on voting behavior than older people (Rucinski & Salmon, 1990).

Given young voters’ increased propensity to attribute voting behavior to media influence as well as the strong support for the perceptual component of the third-person effect, the following hypotheses are proposed predicting both third- and first-person effects:

**H1:** Young voters will perceive greater effects of political advertising on others than themselves.

**H1a:** Young voters will perceive greater effects of political advertising on others than themselves for messages sponsored by the out-group candidate.

**H1b:** Young voters will perceive greater effects of political advertising on themselves than others for messages sponsored by the in-group candidate.
In 1996, Erich Lamp, managing editor of the *International Journal of Public Opinion*, asked Davison to reflect on the third-person effect and its evolvement since 1983. In his response, “The Third-Person Effect Revisited,” Davison (1996) recognizes that his “original evaluation of the phenomenon had been quite wrong: the third-person effect was not a manifestation of a single psychological tendency, but was a complex reaction that varied with the *type* of communication, the *characteristics* of the individual, and the situation” (p. 114, emphasis added). This acknowledgment invites further research documenting how intensity of the third-person effect be moderated by message characteristics (type of communication) and age (characteristics of the individual).

Perloff (1996) asserts the extent of perceived influence of political messages on others may also be moderated by message strategy, personal involvement, salience of issues, source characteristics, and demographic characteristics of the self and other. Perloff reviews his own 1989 study that revealed the impact of ego involvement on third-person perceptions. After showing videotapes of televised news coverage of the 1982 War in Lebanon, Perloff (1996) found stronger perceptual bias among those with the strongest attitudes toward either side in the Middle East conflict than among participants in the control group who did not hold strong attitudes toward either side.

In a similar vein, a Price, Tewksbury, and Huang (2002) experiment revealed that Jewish students were the most likely to oppose publication of a advertisement printed in campus newspapers that claimed the Nazi campaign against the Jews in World War
II was exaggerated. These students were also significantly more likely to exhibit high levels of third-person effect; thus, those students with the most personal involvement with the topic were also the most likely to oppose publication of the incendiary advertisement.

Taken together, the results of these studies demonstrate the power of ego involvement and personal investment in third-person perceptual bias; as personal involvement with a topic increases, so does extent of perceptual bias (Perloff, 1996). It follows then, that, like personal, political involvement may also be correlated with the extent of the third-person effect. Political involvement may grant the message receiver immunity to the effects of the message and therefore make him or her more likely to overestimate the effects of the political message on the less-involved other. Therefore, this study investigates how various types of communication, specifically political message strategy, and individual characteristics such as political involvement moderate the third-person effect.

Although no studies to date have examined the influence of political involvement on the perceptions of self and others, a related construct—importance—has been shown to positively correlate with the strength of third-person effect, such that the more important an issue is to the message recipient, the greater the third-person effect (Perloff, 1996). Thus, it is expected that involvement will moderate the
relationship between message exposure and third-person effect in a positive linear relationship.

H2: Political involvement will predict the magnitude of third-person effect, such that young voters with high political involvement will exhibit a greater TPE than those with low political involvement.

Prior research (Cohen & Davis, 1991, Paek et al., 2005) has demonstrated the presence of third-person effect following exposure to negative messages. Less documented in scholarly research is how perceived effects of messages on the “other” may differ depending on message strategy; thus, this study isolates and measures perceptual bias resulting from positive issue, positive image, negative issue, and negative image advertisements in order to compare the strength and intensity of the third-person perception in response to each.

RQ1: Does political advertising message strategy (positive issue, positive image, negative issue, negative image) influence the strength of the third-person effect?

In addition to the perceptual hypotheses, this study advances several hypotheses testing the behavioral component of the third-person effect. The first- and third-person bias behavioral components are certainly ripe for future testing; Banning et al. (2005) posit “missing from the literature on the behavioral consequences of the third-person effect is knowledge on the real life consequences of the first-person effect…[researchers
have failed to take into account the real like consequences of more socially desirable stimuli such as public service announcements of positive message advertising” (p. 9).

Although scholars have repeatedly found strong evidence for the perceptual component of the third-person effect (for a meta-analytic review, see Paul et al., 2000), most third-person effect studies have limited their focus to the perceptual component and have not proffered comparable support for the behavioral component. Recent evidence has provided some support for the behavioral predictions of the third-person effect (Eveland, 2002), but the behavioral component of the third-person effect has not received the scholarly attention and support the perceptual component has.

Thus, this study measures the third-person effect’s behavioral component and its subsequent influence on intention to vote. As Perloff (1996) asserts, the practical value of the third-person effect is that attitudes and behaviors are often guided by the perceptions of what others are doing. People may perceive political advertising to be more persuasive to others than to themselves; however, a more pressing issue with regard to political involvement is the subsequent behavior this perceptual bias induces.

The power of a political advertisement to stimulate support for a candidate or to induce voting behaviors may increase as its perceived effect on other audience members increases. The message recipient may be motivated to vote and support a candidate in order to mitigate or control for the effects of that advertisement on other voters who support the opponent. Thus, voting behaviors may be more likely if young voters
believe that the political message convinced some “other” to support a rival candidate. This study investigates whether strength of third-person perception is positively related to reported intention to vote.

The message triggering such mitigating behavior may be a positive advertisement sponsored by the rival, out-group candidate or a negative advertisement sponsored by the out-group candidate that attacks the in-group candidate. Although Griswold (1992, in Perloff 1996) found a negative correlation between third-person effect and voting intentions, Perloff (1996) argues that Griswold’s study did not control for relative demographics or political partisanship and that “his findings are open to serious question” (p. 182). It is expected that, based on the propositions of the third-person effect’s behavioral component, the strength of the third-person effect will be positively correlated with intention to vote in order to mitigate the effects of a political advertisement on others to support an out-group candidate.

Perloff (1996) also notes that the majority of the studies testing the behavioral component of the third-person effect have not measured actual behaviors and are limited to behavioral intentions. This study measures both intention to vote prior to the election and self-reported voting behaviors with a survey after the 2004 Presidential election; No research to date has tested the behavioral component of the third-person effect and then actually measured voting behaviors.
This study also extends third-person effect literature by analyzing whether attribution biases exist for others’ cognitive and behavioral responses to political advertising. Specifically, intensity of the perceptual bias may positively correlate with reported intention to vote following exposure to political advertisements. Scholarly research has not tapped this dimension of the third-person effect; therefore, the following research questions are proposed:

RQ2a: **Does magnitude of perceptual bias significantly and positively predict reported intention to vote?**

RQ2b: **Does magnitude of perceptual bias significantly and positively predict support for restrictions on political advertising?**

RQ2c: **Does magnitude of perceptual bias significantly and positively predict support for bans on political advertising?**

Early third-person effect literature (Davison, 1983) suggests a link between the third-person effect and disposition toward a message, and studies have found the third-person effect to be the strongest when one recognized source bias, thus rejecting the message. Meirick (2004) showed 2000 Presidential primary campaign ads sponsored by Al Gore and George W. Bush to research participants and found that participants perceived greater effects on the out-group (those supporting the opposing candidate) and the general public than on themselves for ads from the out-group candidate. A
third-person effect was present also for ads from the supported, in-group candidate and self in-group/self-public comparisons (Meirick, 2004).

Although the presence of third-person effects resulting from in-group and out-group sponsored ads is well-documented, research must isolate the magnitude of the effects to determine whether advertising for the in-group or out-group candidate elicits a greater third-person effect. Typically, third-person effect studies use messages with negative outcomes, such as pornography and defamatory news coverage, as treatment materials (Perloff, 1996).

However, a review of studies comparing the emergence of third-person effect following exposure to positive- and negative-outcome messages led Perloff (1996) to conclude that a third-person effect is more likely to emerge if the outcomes of the message are perceived as detrimental to the self or if the messages does not seem reasonable or influential. In the context of this study, a message with potential positive outcome would be one that supports the in-group candidate or attacks the out-group candidate. A message with a possible negative outcome would be a positive advertisement for the out-group candidate or an attack on the in-group candidate.

Given Perloff’s (1996) finding, advertisements supporting the out-group candidate (whose victory would be a negative outcome) would likely trigger a greater third-person effect than an advertisement for the in-group candidate. Therefore, evidence is expected in support of the following hypothesis:
Cohen and Davis (1991) and Paek et al. (2005) tested for the presence of a third-person effect using negative political attack advertisements as experimental treatments. Cohen and Davis (1991) found evidence of a third-person effect among supporters of the attacked candidate. Interestingly, Cohen and Davis (1991) did not find support for a “reverse third-person effect,” such that no third-person perception was present in those who opposed the attacked candidate and those who did not support either candidate. Although Paek et al. (2005) documented the presence of a third-person perception using attack ads as stimulus materials, no study has directly measured and compared actual differences in the perceived effects of negative and positive messages.

Scholars generally agree that the electorate tends to remember negative political advertising messages significantly more than positive messages (Lau, 1982; Pfau & Kenski, 1990; Tinkham & Weaver-Lariscy, 1993; Smith & Kidder, 1996; Bartels, 1997; Finkel & Geer, 1998; Garramone, 1984; Garramone, Atkin, Pinkleton, & Cole, 1990; Louden, 1990).

Furthermore, there is support that negative information is inherently more complex thus requires greater cognitive effort to process than does positive information (Weaver-Lariscy & Tinkham, 1999). As negative messages generate increased cognitive processing and leave a lasting effect on recipients, they may similarly inflate the perceived effects of negativity on others; thus, the following hypothesis is proposed.
H3: Negative messages sponsored by the out-group candidate will produce a stronger third-person effect than positive messages or message sponsored by the in-group candidate.

This study tests the perceptual component of the third-person effect in a previously unexplored context, the young electorate’s consumption of political advertising. Furthermore, it will correlate extent of third-person effect to different message strategies. In order to extend existing literature on the behavioral component of the third-person effect, the proposed study will examine what, if any, effect the perceptual bias has on voting behaviors.

A more expansive theoretical framework for testing the behavioral component of the third-person effect seems to be within Ajzen’s (1985) Theory of Planned Behavior. The Theory of Planned Behavior model posits that three components-- attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control-- significantly predict behavioral intentions, which in turn explain the most variance in actual voting behavior. As third-person effect may also influence behavioral intentions, the two models have a logical union.

Further, young voters are particularly socially impressionable and significantly value political advertising in political decision-making and to guide voting behaviors (Dermody & Scullion, 2003). It follows that the perceived influence of political advertising on their peers may be a significant predictor of the young electorate’s
behavior intention to vote. Therefore, the third-person effect may exert a unique influence on behavioral intention not accounted for by the current Theory of Planned Behavior model. This study unites the third-person effect and theory of Planned Behavior models as a theoretical framework from which to explore young adults’ voting behaviors.

Furthermore, it is important to identify and isolate which components of the Theory of Planned Behavior, specifically attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, significantly predict behavioral intentions and, ultimately, voting behaviors of the young electorate. Several Theory of Planned Behavior studies have measured behavioral intentions yet stop short of measuring the actual behaviors these intentions are expected to present; therefore, this study measures both intentions to vote and self-reported voting behaviors of young adults in the 2004 Presidential elections.

A review of the literature on Fishbein and Ajzen’s (1975, 1980) Theory of Reasoned Action and Ajzen’s (1985) Theory of Planned Behavior provides the conceptual framework for linking the third-person effect and the Theory of Planned Behavior. Following this review, specific models linking the theories are posited.

Theory of Planned Behavior

As one of the major cognitive theories advanced in the mid-20th century, the Theory of Planned Behavior remains strongly grounded in research and is experiencing a revitalization that is visible in health communication literature. The Theory of
Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behavior have been recently used to study organizational attraction and ethics (Highhouse, Lievens, & Sinar, 2003; VanSandt & Neck, 2003), alcohol abuse in college students (Codd & Cohen, 2003), gender differences in sunscreen use (Abroms, Jorgensen, Southwell, Geller, & Emmons, 2003), verbal and physical aggression (Roberto, Meyer, Boster, & Roberto, 2003), television viewing and crime (Nabi & Sullivan, 2001), and the effects of AIDS public service announcements on condom use (Treise & Weigold, 2001).

However, a review of the literature also reveals that the last use of the Theory of Reasoned Action in a political behavior context, specifically voting in an election, was in 1995 (Singh, Leong, Tan, & Wong, 1995); Theory of Planned Behavior has not been used to explain voting behaviors of the electorate in a general election since a 2001 Netemeyer, Burton, and Johnson study. Netemeyer et al. (2001) argue, although “most attitudinal studies have focused on determinants for whom an individual will vote, an equally important question deals with the determinants of whether an individual will vote at all” (p. 90), as overall attitude and interpersonal influence may determine whether an individual will vote or not.

Also, as current research has disclosed new variables moderating its components, its criticisms are addressed, and its measurement evolves, the Theory of Planned Behavior is ripe for testing in a political voting context. This study extends current literature on the Theory of Planned Behavior in the political arena and
investigates whether the addition of a new variable, specifically the third-person effect, increases explained variance in behavioral intentions. This study also investigates whether attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral intentions are significant predictors of actual voting behaviors in young adults. This paper now turns to a review of the Theory of Reasoned Action, the earlier articulation of the Theory of Planned Behavior, and its behavioral intention, attitude, and subjective norm components.

**Theory of Reasoned Action**

Fishbein and Ajzen’s (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980) Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) predicts behavior based on attitudinal, normative influence, and behavioral intention variables. A basic proposition of TRA is that behavioral intentions are the strongest predictors of volitional behavior, and several meta-analyses support this claim. Hale, Householder, and Greene (2001) review six meta-analyses in which the mean uncorrected correlations between behavioral intentions and actual behavior range from .44 to .53. Armitage and Christian (2003) assert Ajzen and Fishbein’s (1975) positioning of the behavioral intention element as a mediator between attitudes and behaviors represented a “significant move away from the traditional view of attitudes; rather than attitudes being directly related to behavior, attitudes only serve to direct behavior to the extent they influence intentions” (p. 190).

TRA predicts that behavioral intentions are the only direct antecedents of behavior. Netemeyer, Burton, and Johnson (1991, p. 88) summarize Ajzen & Fishbeins’s
three boundary conditions that must hold for behavioral intentions to predict behavior as follows:

1.) “the intention and behavior measures correspond in specificity of action, target, context, and time frame;

2.) intention does not change in the interval between assessment of behavioral intentions and the assessment of behavior; and

3.) the behavior in question is under the actor’s volitional control.”

There is extensive support for the predictive validity of TRA within these boundary conditions, but several scholars argue that alternatives, past behavior, individual difference, situational variables, and intention/expectation affect TRA’s ability to predict behavior (Netemeyer et al., 1991).

The Theory of Reasoned Action is most simply articulated with the following formula,

\[ BI = (A_b)W_1 + (SN)W_2 \]

In the above formula, behavioral intentions (BI) are the function of one’s attitude toward performing the behavior (A_b) and the subjective norm surrounding performance of that behavior (SN). The “W” in the formula represents the empirically derived weights of attitude and subjective norm (Hale et al., 2001). Figure 2.1 provides a conceptual model of TRA. In TRA, behavioral intention is determined by attitude and subjective norm components, which will be discussed in turn.
Figure 2.1 The Theory of Reasoned Action Model

**Attitudes**

In the Theory of Reasoned Action, attitudes are conceptualized as valenced responses toward performance of a specific behavior and not toward a generalized attitude object (Hale et. al, 2001). Fishbein’s (1967) Summative Model of Attitude predicts that attitude toward performing a behavior can be expressed with the following equation:

$$A_B = \sum b_i e_i.$$  

In the summative model, attitudes toward a behavior ($A_B$) are the sum of belief strength ($b_i$) and belief evaluation ($e_i$). Belief strength reflects the degree of certainty to which a belief is held, and belief evaluation refers to how positively or negatively the belief is judged to be (Hale et al., 2001). Regarding voting behaviors, one may hold the behavioral belief that it is important to vote in Presidential elections. The extent to which the person believes that each vote in Presidential elections affects the outcome
reflects his or her belief strength. Finally, in this case the person likely view voting in Presidential elections very favorably, which reflects the belief evaluation.

In TRA, the attitudes measured must closely align with the behavior under investigation. In the early 1900s, despite Gordon Allport’s (1935) assertion that attitudes are “probably the most indispensable concept in contemporary American social psychology” (p. 798), the attitude concept was being questioned for its utility in predicting behavior. One impetus for doubt about the relevance of attitudes in behavioral predictions was the classic LaPiere (1934) study that found that reported attitudes were poor predictors of actual behavior. In a 42 study meta-analysis, Wicker (1969) found low attitude-behavior correlations, usually falling around $r = .15$ and rarely exceeding $r = .30$, and concluded attitudes are only slightly, if at all, related to behaviors (in Armitage & Christian, 2003).

Armitage and Christian (2003) posits Wicker’s (1969) review was “the point at which social psychologists lost interest in simply noting the relationship between attitudes and behavior, and began examining in depth the circumstances under which attitudes were predictive of behavior” (p. 188); therefore researchers started investigating potential moderators and mediators of the attitude-behavior relationship. One such notable moderating variable was Fishbein and Ajzen’s (1975) principle of correspondence.
Fishbein and Ajzen assert the LaPiere (1934) findings were due to poor attitude object and behavioral measure correspondence. Fishbein and Ajzen argue that attitude and behavior objects must align in action, target, context, and time. Returning to the example above, measurement of attitude and behavior must correspond with regard to action (voting), target (the election), time (2004), and context (U.S. election). Davidson and Jaccard (1979) found that specific measures of attitude toward contraception were much better predictors of birth control use ($r = .57$) than more general attitudes measures ($r = .08$).

Kim and Hunter (1993) obtained similar results with a meta-analysis of more than 100 studies. Weak attitude-behavior relationship findings were often due to conceptual ambiguity in measuring the attitudes and behaviors. They found the relationship between attitudes and behavior to be strong ($r = .69$) in high match studies, slightly lower in moderate match studies ($r = .62$), and weakest, yet still fairly strong, in low match studies ($r = .46$). The Kim and Hunter (1993) meta-analysis reveals that the most important corresponding elements in attitude-behavior relationship studies are action and target.

The Kim and Hunter (1993) meta-analysis also found a .65 uncorrected mean correlation for the attitude-behavioral intention relationship; other meta-analyses have found correlations at .45 (Sheeran & Taylor, 1999) and .46 (Godin & Kok, 1996). Clearly, attitudes are a strong predictor of behavioral intentions. However, attitudes are only
one component predicting behavioral intention as asserted in the TRA; social pressure may also influence behavioral intentions.

**Subjective Norms**

The subjective norm component of the TRA reflects “the overall perception of what relevant others think the individual should or should not do” (Netemeyer, Burton, & Johnson, 1991, p. 87-88) and is a function of normative beliefs multiplied by the motivation to comply with others. Normative beliefs are the perceived expectations of important others regarding engaging in some volitional behavior, and motivation to comply reflects the extent to which one feels pressured to comply with the expectations of others (Hale et al., 2001). Subjective norms are expressed as follows,

\[ SN = \sum b_i m_i \]

where \( b_i \) is the normative beliefs and \( m_i \) represents motivation to comply with others.

To illustrate, a young adult may hold the normative belief that “my friends and family think it is very important for me to vote in Presidential elections.” If the young person feels very compelled to comply with his or her friends wish of him or her (a high motivation to comply), then it is likely this person will hold a strong behavioral intention to vote in the Presidential election. However, the young person may not feel motivated to do what important others think that he or she should do; thus, behavioral intentions to vote may be low regardless of the normative belief.
For behaviors more strongly based on personal, or attitudinal, influence, such as purchasing a new car, the attitude toward that behavior will be a dominant predictor of behavioral intentions. Conversely, for behaviors with strong normative implications, such as voting for new city policy, subjective norms may be more significant predictors of behavioral intentions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Zaller (1987) asserts exposure to mass media and interpersonal communication are key contributors to political norms; thus, subjective norms may be more influential on young adults’ behavioral intentions to vote than attitudes, especially given the known effect of the influence of close interpersonal relationships on voting behavior (see Singh et al., 1995).

Hale et al. (2001) recognize that, although scholarly research has obtained strong evidence of the impact of beliefs on attitudes, the normative belief and motivation to comply constructs have not garnered such support as explanations of the subjective norm component. Although correlations between normative beliefs, motivation to comply, and subjective norms range from .50 to .70, there are several criticisms of the subjective norm component of TRA.

Compared to attitudes, subjective norms contribute relatively little explained variance in behavioral intentions (Hale et al., 2001). Armitage and Conner’s (2001) meta-analysis revealed that the subjective norm-intention relationship is significantly lower than both the attitude-intention and intention-behavior relationships.
One criticism of the subjective norm component is that measurement of motivation to comply usually entails a general desire to comply with some other group, such as “it is important for me to do what my friends think I should do.” O’Keefe (1990) argues that to enhance the power of motivation to comply in predicting subjective norms, it is important to specify a specific act; for example, “regarding voting in the Presidential election, it is important for me to vote if my friends think I should.” Further, the behaviorally relevant person or group to which the subjective norm surrounds should also be specified when testing TRA; for example “my parents think that I should vote in the Presidential election” may exert a stronger or differing influence than the perception that “my friends think I should vote in the Presidential election.”

Some scholars suggest that the subjective norm-intention relationship is attenuated by a narrow conceptualization of the normative component (Rivis & Sheeran, 2003). The subjective norm component of TRA is an injunctive norm component because it reflects the pressure derived from perceptions of what important others think one should do. Conversely, descriptive norms reflect the perception of others’ actual attitudes toward a behavior (Rivis & Sheeran, 2003). Several researchers argue that including descriptive norms in the subjective norm component improves the subjective norm and behavioral intention relationship (Wong, 2004).
To test such assertions, Rivis and Sheeran (2003) conducted a meta-analysis to quantify the relationship and determine the increment in variance attributable to descriptive norms after controlling for the affects of attitudes and perceived behavioral controls, a component of the Theory of Planned Behavior that is reviewed below. With a sample size of $N = 8,097$, the analysis revealed a fairly strong sample-weighted average correlation between descriptive norms and intentions ($r = .44$).

Further, after controlling for attitude, injunctive norms, and perceived behavioral control, regression analysis revealed a 5 percent increase in the variance explained in intention by descriptive norms (Rivis & Sheeran, 2003). Thus, Rivis and Sheeran (2003) conclude that expanding the subjective norm component of TRA to include both descriptive and injunctive norms would enhance its power to predict behavioral intentions and, ultimately, behaviors.

However, with pro-social behaviors such as voting, it seems that descriptive norms would do little to enhance the variance in intention explained by subjective norms. It is unlikely that many people would report that friends or family view voting unfavorably or think that it is a bad idea for them to vote. Thus, the descriptive norm may contribute more to intentions toward behaviors that do not have strong pro-social consequences.

As previously mentioned, the subjective norm component is frequently criticized for the little variance it explains in intentions relative to that explained by attitudes. As
Wong (2004) indicates, it seems likely that the influence of subjective norms on behavioral intentions is being moderated by other variables. Wong (2004) tested the impact of several relational and cultural moderating variables, and yielded evidence for moderating effects of social identification, self-construal, and relational commitment variables on subjective norms. With regard to voting behaviors, it is well-documented that the effects of the interpersonal transmission of ideas from friends, families, and colleagues, along with mass media, may affect voting intentions (see Singh et al., 1995). Therefore, the subjective norm component may be an especially important predictor of intentions to vote in the young electorate.

Hale et. al (2001) reveal that primary studies and meta-analyses have reported multiple correlation values of the combined effects of attitudes and subjective norms on behavioral intentions ranging from .63 to .71. However, TRA is criticized for its inability to explain behaviors that are not volitional. Therefore, Ajzen (1985) added a new component, perceived behavioral control, to TRA and proposed the Theory of Planned Behavior to expand the range of behaviors to those not under the complete control of the actor (Hale et al., 2001).

Theory of Planned Behavior

Ajzen (1985) extended TRA with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by incorporating the component of perceived behavioral control. Figure 2.2 presents a conceptual model of TPB.
Figure 2.2 The Theory of Planned Behavior

TPB posits that all behaviors are subject to uncertainty and that performance of a behavior relies on both intention and possible external interference (Ajzen, 1985). TPB assumes it is possible to measure perceived behavioral controls, which are conceived as “a determinant of intention (because people are unlikely to intend to do impossible things) and behavior (when perceptions of control accurately reflect actual control over the behavior)” (Abraham & Sheeran, 2003).

Thus, perceived behavioral control is a function of control belief and perceived power. Control beliefs are those “related to presence or absence of the resources and opportunities required for performance of the behavior,” and perceived power is “the ability of the control attribute to facilitate or inhibit the performance of behavior” (Hale et al., 2001). Mathematically, perceived behavioral control is illustrated with the following equation,

\[ PBC = \sum c_i p_i, \]
such that perceived behavioral control is the function of strength of control belief ($c_i$) and perceived power ($p_i$) (Ajzen, 1991).

In a review of meta-analyses on the perceived behavioral control-behavioral intention relationship, Hale et al. (2001) report correlations ranging from .35 to .53. Sheeran & Taylor’s (1999) meta-analysis revealed, overall, that the perceived behavioral control component explained 5 percent more variance in intention to use condoms than the attitudes and subjective norm components alone.

Unlike the attitude and subjective components of TPB, perceived behavioral control may have a statistically significant and direct impact on behavior in addition to its effect on behavioral intentions. Perceived behavioral control-behavior relationship correlations have ranged from .39-.45 in several meta-analyses (Hale et al, 2001). Perceived behavioral control may predict behavioral intention for behaviors that are more volitional (such as voting) or more goal-oriented (such as weight loss). Volitional and goal-directed behaviors can be placed along a continuum from internal to external control factors, respectively, that may inhibit a certain behavior (Ajzen, 1985; Netemeyer et al., 1991; Hale et al., 2001).

![Volitional and Goal-Directed Behaviors](image)

Figure 2.3 Volitional and Goal-Directed Behaviors
Netemeyer et al. (1991) assert regardless of a behavior’s position on the above continuum, TPB predicts intention better than TRA because the added path from perceived behavioral control to behavioral intentions makes a significant contribution to the model’s overall explained variance in intention to perform less volitional behaviors. Even for more volitional behaviors such as voting, measurement of perceived behavioral control adds little measurement effort yet may yield increased explained variance in the behavioral intention component or actual behaviors.

The ability of both perceived behavioral control and behavioral intentions to predict behavior will vary across situations; while both components may make significant contributions to the prediction of goal-directed action, “one predictor may be more important than the other, and only one of the two may be significant” (Netemeyer et al., 1991, p. 89). Netemeyer et al. (1991) found that the path between perceived behavioral control and intentions may make TPB a useful model for predicting behavioral intention to vote; thus, TPB will be the theoretical framework complementing the third-person effect in this study.

The Theory of Planned Behavior and Voting Behaviors

Although a review of relevant literature reveals that TRA and TPB are most frequently tested in health behavior contexts, at least three studies have documented the successful application of TRA as a theory for predicting voting behaviors for a
particular candidate (Singh et al., 1995; Davidson, Yantis, Norwood, & Montano, 1985; Jaccard, Knox, & Brinberg, 1979). As such, Singh et al. (1995) recognize the Theory of Reasoned Action’s utility for development of theories of voting behavior. Most recently testing the theory in a political voting behavior context, Singh et al. (1995) demonstrated TRA’s utility and generalizeability in geographical contexts beyond the United States by using it to predict voting behaviors in Singapore. Thus, although the Theory of Planned Behavior has not been used to predict voting behaviors of the young electorate, it is expected the behavioral intention component of TPB will significantly predict actual voting behaviors of the young electorate.

**H4: Intention to vote will significantly predict voting behaviors.**

In contextualizing the Theory of Reasoned Action to explain voting intentions, Singh et al. (1995) report the following major findings obtained through interviews with 547 respondents just before the 1988 Singapore general elections: the model generally predicted voting intentions, attitudinal components explained more variance in voting intention than subject norms, and attitudinal components were weakly and negatively related to normative components.

However, a couple situational factors may underlie the inability of subjective norms to explain significant variance in intention to vote in the Singh et al. (1995) study. First, the candidate in the race did not have a credible opposing candidate; thus people were perhaps less likely to turn to others for information or influence because there
were no candidate selection decisions to be made. Also, Singh et al. (1995) recognize that “the rising affluence of Singaporeans may explain the unimportance of social influences on voting intentions” (p. 46).

This study uses the Theory of Planned Behavior to explain and predict the voting behaviors of the young electorate. Relative to older voters, a more socially impressionable young electorate may rely more on pressure from peer groups and hold subjective norms as valuable determinants of whether or not to vote in an upcoming election. Therefore, this study seeks to identify whether attitudes, subjective norms, or perceived behavioral control are the strongest predictors of behavioral intention to vote and, ultimately, actual voting behaviors.

RQ3: Do subjective norms, attitudes, or perceived behavioral control explain the most variance in young adults’ intentions to vote?

Uniting the third-person effect model with the Theory of Planned Behavior may increase the level of explained variance offered by TPB. In order to identify the possible normative influence exerted by the third-person effect on TPB, this study asked the following research question:

RQ4: Does the third-person effect exert a unique normative influence on behavioral intentions not explained by the attitude, subjective norm, or perceived behavioral control components?
Identification of further theoretical motivations of the young electorate to vote makes several important practical contributions as voting enhancement campaigns can more effectively target young voters. Theoretically, this study extends both third-person effect and Theory of Planned Behavior literature in several directions. It also tests the models in a unique and previously unexplored context, the voting behaviors of the young electorate. Having reviewed the literature, hypotheses, and research questions that guide this study, this paper now turns to a discussion of the methods employed for this analysis.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Some issues can best be examined in an experimental design setting with strong internal control; the cognitive processes in the evaluation of political advertising seem to be one such issue. Although external validity may be somewhat compromised in an experimental setting, the internal control this method provides is critical in this study to its analysis of the cognitive processes of young voters. Given that this study analyzes the effects of different advertising message strategies, methods such as survey research that would depend on a respondent’s accurate recall and categorization of issue, image and negative ads would be insufficient to adequately and accurately tap the theoretical domain of the research questions and hypotheses.

The suitability of an experimental method to study the effects of advertising on candidate selection and voting behaviors is illustrated by its use in several recent studies. Meirick (2004) used an experimental setting to examine political advertising and the third-person effect. Weaver-Lariscy and Tinkham (1999) conducted an experiment to study the impact of negative advertising over time. Tewksbury (2002) used an experimental method to examine the role of comparison group size in the third-person effect. Paek et al. (2005) utilized an experimental design setting to study responses to attack advertising within a third-person effect theoretical framework.
First, this chapter will discuss the recruitment and composition of participants in this study. Next, the experimental design is reviewed, and the within- and between-subject treatments are discussed. The next sections detail three waves of manipulation check procedure, and the set of stimulus materials selected and used in experimental treatment.

Two questionnaires were crafted for use in the experimental sessions (see Appendix A and Appendix B); questions are discussed with indication as to what variables each question measured. Next, this chapter reviews the stringent moderator training of five graduate students and details the experimental procedure. The follow-up behavioral measure survey administration is outlined, and, lastly, this chapter reviews all independent and dependent variables.

Participants

As voting behaviors of the young electorate are the focus of this study, the undergraduate student population at a large, public Southeastern university made the ideal pool for recruitment. Recruitment took place two weeks prior to the experimental sessions. With the permission of each instructor, the experimenter visited four classes and gave a brief description of the nature of the study and the anticipated length of time for participation (less than one hour). Students were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary but that they would receive compensation in the form of extra credit points as designated by the professor.
Those choosing to participate signed up for one of five experimental sessions to be held the week before the 2004 Presidential election. Participants provided their names and e-mail addresses on the sign-up sheet; the experimenter contacted each participant twice via e-mail with reminders of experiment session location and time. Students not in class on recruitment days contacted the experimenter via e-mail and received options for attending available experiment sessions. These students selected a date for participation, which was confirmed by the researcher. Students who participated in the manipulation check experiment were not eligible for participation. All participants were handled in accordance with the provisions set by the University of Georgia’s Institutional Review Board Human Subjects Office guidelines.

The \( n \) for this study is 270. The median and mean age of the participants is 20 years, and the ages ranged from 18 to 24 years. One participant, age 31, was not considered a “young” voter and excluded from the sample. Just over 80 percent of participants were female (\( N=225 \)). Participants in the study were from 28 different states across the United States and represent all four geographic quartiles (North, South, East, and West).

The mean and median for the participants’ year in school was 3\textsuperscript{rd} year, but the sample’s year in school ranged from 1\textsuperscript{st} year to graduate. Approximately 90 percent of participants reported their race to be “white/Caucasian.” The remaining 10 percent of the sample was of African-American, Asian, and Spanish/Latino origin.
Factorial Design

This experiment employed a 2 x 2 x 2 factorial design with two-thirds of participants randomly assigned to two treatment conditions and one-third of participants assigned to a control group. Between-group factors are sponsoring candidate (Bush or Kerry) and message tone (positive or negative). The within-group factor is message strategy (issue or image ad).

Each treatment group viewed one issue and one image advertisement, and order of exposure to the within-group treatment was systematically rotated. Table 3.1 presents a visual representation of the experiment between-subjects design. Table 3.2 presents a visual representation of the experiment within-group design.

Table 3.1. A visual representation of the 2x2x2 between-subjects design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bush Positive Ad Condition</th>
<th>Bush Negative Ad Condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kerry Positive Ad Condition</td>
<td>Kerry Negative Ad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group 1</td>
<td>Control Group 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2. A visual representation of the within-subjects design

Image

Issue

Positive- Bush/Kerry

Negative- Bush/Kerry
Manipulation Check

The objective of the manipulation check was to obtain a set of ads sponsored by the Bush and Kerry campaigns unobtrusively categorized as positive or negative and issue or image and not significantly different on affective measures. On October 1, 2004, a manipulation check was conducted in which 116 students evaluated and classified televised 30-second political television advertisements (see Appendix A).

Political advertising experts had previously screened an initial pool of 42 ads and selected sixteen test ads, picking two advertisements to represent each of the eight treatment categories (Bush positive issue, Bush positive image, Bush negative issue, Bush negative image, Kerry positive issue, Kerry positive image, Kerry negative issue, and Kerry negative image). Political spots were acquired from Stanford University’s political Web site (http://pcl.stanford.edu/campaigns/campaign2004/archive.html) and were sponsored by the official campaigns of both Presidential candidates.

On October 1, 2004, the researcher, along with an assistant, visited a large lecture class and presented a brief overview of campaign advertising and political message strategies. In accordance with the specified procedure of the Institutional Review Board, participants were first asked to read a cover letter that guaranteed the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality of response, and the participant’s right to withdraw from participation at any time.
Participants in the course viewed the sixteen 30-second Presidential campaign advertisements and answered a brief questionnaire after viewing each one. The questionnaire used semantic differential scales to categorize the ads as dominantly positive issue, positive image, negative issue, or negative image oriented.

The collected data were analyzed, and the 30-second televised advertisements were categorized as one of four message strategy treatments. Pair-wise t-test comparisons revealed samples of advertisements that were significantly different in their message strategy with respect to issue or image orientation. Similarly, pair-wise t-test comparisons revealed a sample of negative and positive advertisements significantly different with respect to their negative or positive tone at a .01 significance level.

Ads in each category (positive image, negative image, positive issue, and negative issue) were also analyzed to ensure none of the messages was significantly different from the others in that category; for example, no ads were perceived as significantly more negative than other negative ads.

A second manipulation check was conducted with 30 Advertising majors to verify the proper categorization of the final sample of eight advertisements. Following a similar lecture on political advertising and message strategy, participants completed the same questionnaire used in the first phase of the manipulation check. Results of this study with student “experts” confirmed that all ads were placed in proper categories.
All issue ads were significantly different from all image ads at $p<.01$, and all negative ads were significantly different from positive ads at $p<.01$. No ads were categorized as significantly more positive, negative, issue-oriented, or image-oriented than others in their respective categories.

**Stimulus Materials**

Four, 30-second televised political advertisements (positive-image, positive-issue, negative-image, negative-issue) were selected based on the three waves of manipulation checks for major party Presidential candidates George W. Bush and John Kerry, resulting in a final sample of eight advertisements. After confirming the categorization of the ads, the 30-second spots were converted from digital to VHS format and copied to tapes in varying orders (issue/image or image/issue) to control for viewing order effects within that treatment cell. Ads were converted from digital to VHS format to create an exact simulation of the medium in which participants would view the commercials (on the television) in an external setting. Such simulation enhances the generalizeability of the study.

The televised ads for Bush and Kerry were not significantly different with respect to their likeability, perceived persuasiveness, entertainment value, and other primarily affective dimensions of each ad’s evaluation. A description of each ad and its content follows.
Bush Positive Image and Issue Ad Manipulations

The Bush positive image ad, "Solemn Duty," features George W. Bush speaking to the left of the camera while sitting by Laura Bush in a living room setting. Both are dressed in casual attire. George W. Bush says the following in the spot:

"My most solemn duty is to lead our nation, to protect ourselves," Bush says. "I can't imagine the great agony of a mom or a dad having to make the decision about which child to pick up first on September the 11th. We cannot hesitate, we cannot yield, we must do everything in our power to bring an enemy to justice before they hurt us again" (Solemn Duty, 2004).

The Bush positive issue ad used as treatment, “Agenda,” has the following script read by Bush:

“We have come through a lot together. During the next four years, we'll spread ownership and opportunity. We need to make our economy more job friendly to keep American jobs here in America. We must allow small employers to join together to purchase insurance. We must end the junk lawsuits and enact tort reform. We gotta make sure our workers have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the twenty first century” (Agenda, 2004).

Bush Negative Image and Issue Manipulations

The negative Bush image ad selected for treatment is entitled “Yakuza.” The visual images vary throughout, and the ad has an announcer voice-over:

"John Kerry says he's 'Author of a strategy to win the war on terror?'...Against the Japanese yakuza. Never mentions Al-Qaeda. Says nothing about Osama Bin Laden. Calls Yasser Arafat a "statesman." The New Republic says Kerry’s plan "misses the mark." And Kerry’s focus? Global crime, not terrorism. How can John Kerry win a war if he doesn't know the enemy?” (Yakuza, 2004).
“Medicare Hypocrisy” was the Bush-sponsored ad placed in the negative issue treatment cell. Following are on-screen visuals and voice-over:

(On screen: www.georgewbush.com)
Announcer [v/o]: John Kerry, attacking the president on Medicare.
(On screen: September 5, 2004; “Kerry Slams Bush Over Medicare Premiums”) But it was Sen. Kerry who voted five times to raise Medicare premiums.
(On screen: CQ Votes: 379: 12/19/85; #419: 12/21/87, #243: 10/13/89, #247: 8/6/93, #209: 7/31/97)
Kerry voted to require premium increases -- calling the passage of the bill "a day of vindication."
(On screen: John Kerry; July 31, 1987)
The same John Kerry who was absent for 36 of 38 Medicare votes last year, even one giving seniors prescription drug coverage.
(On screen: CQ Sen. Votes, 108th Cong.)
John Kerry. He actually voted for higher Medicare premiums before he came out against them (Medicare Hypocrisy, 2004).

Kerry Positive Image and Issue Manipulations

The Kerry positive image advertisement, “Pilot,” features various clips of Kerry with the following announcer voice-over:

“He's a husband and a father. A pilot, a hunter, a hockey player. Tough prosecutor, advocate for kids. Nineteen years, Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Author of a strategy to win the war on terror. A combat veteran who has been praised by former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under both Presidents Reagan and Clinton. Stronger at home. Respected in the world. John Kerry for President” (Pilot, 2004).

“Freedom” was selected as the Kerry positive issue treatment. Kerry’s voice reads the following transcript throughout the 30-second television advertisement.
“There’s nothing we value more in America than our freedom and independence. And yet here we are today a nation more dependent than ever on Mideast oil. I’ve proposed a plan that will make us energy independent of Mideast oil in the next 10 years. Energy independence isn’t just about better gas mileage and a cleaner environment; it’s about protecting our national security and our freedom. I’m John Kerry and I approved this message because a strong America is an independent America” (Freedom and Independence, 2004).

Kerry Negative Image and Issue Manipulations

“Issues” was the televised Kerry negative image advertisement chosen for experimental treatment. A narrator says the following as various clips are displayed on the screen.

Narrator: “American soldiers are fighting in Iraq.”
Narrator: “Families struggle to afford health care.”
Narrator: “Jobs heading overseas.”
Narrator: “Bush smeared John McCain four years ago. Now, he’s doing it to John Kerry.”

The Kerry negative issue manipulation is entitled “Immediate Help.” The content is as follows, using a clip of Bush speaking and a voice-over by an announcer:

George Bush touting his Medicare bill to the nation.
George Bush: I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor America's seniors. Now, seniors are getting immediate help.
Narrator: The very next day, Bush imposes the biggest Medicare premium increase in history. Bush's Medicare increase? Seventeen percent, the biggest ever. The wrong direction for America.
Narrator: John Kerry. A plan to lower the cost health care and take America in a new direction” (Immediate Help, 2004).

Questionnaires

Two versions of a questionnaire were crafted for use in the experimental treatment and control sessions (see Appendix B and Appendix C for complete copies of treatment and control session questionnaires, respectively). There were two waves of pilot-testing of the questionnaires; a small sample of doctoral and undergraduate students completed the questionnaire and alerted the researcher to any confusing questions or ambiguous language. Revisions were made to the questionnaires prior to the second wave of pilot testing.

Both questionnaire packets contained two copies of the consent form, which was approved by the Institutional Review Board. Participants signed both copies, turned one in to the moderator, and kept one copy for their personal records.

The first section of the treatment and control group questionnaires is identical with respect to content and form. The first six questions measured basic demographic variables of the participant including sex, age, hometown/state, year in school, and race.

The next set of questions on both questionnaires was used to measure political involvement. Participants first indicated political party affiliation. A 7-point semantic differential scale was used to ascertain where the participant fell on an ideological spectrum ranging from “very conservative” to “very liberal.” The next set of questions
measured voting behaviors; participants were asked if they were currently registered to vote and if they had voted in the previous 2000 Presidential election.

Next, the components of the Theory of Planned Behavior were measured, including attitude toward voting generally and a candidate specifically, subjective norms surrounding voting, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intention to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. All questions in this section were developed following the guidelines on “Constructing a TPB Questionnaire” link on Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behavior Web site (http://www.people.umass.edu/aizen/).

Attitude toward voting was measured by asking the respondent questions such as “how important do you think it is to vote in the 2004 election?”; other questions asked how the respondent felt about voting for a particular candidate (Bush or Kerry). Attitudes toward the candidates themselves were also measured by asking the respondent to “characterize your feelings for George W. Bush for President” on a semantic differential scale anchored by “strongly support” and “strongly oppose.”

Subjective norms were measured by asking the respondent how important voting in the 2004 Presidential election is to other young voters. Other questions measuring the subjective norm component of the Theory of Planned Behavior asked how likely other young adults were to vote in the upcoming Presidential election.

Behavioral intention was measured by asking the likelihood of voting in the next election. Perceived behavioral control was measured by asking participants to review
external factors that may prevent voting in the election, including registration
deadlines, failure to obtain an absentee ballot, lack of transportation to polling location,
and not registering to vote, and to indicate which applies to them.

The next set of questions measured additional components of political
communication involvement; participants indicated how much attention they pay to
political news, how much attention they pay to televised political advertising, and their
interest in national and political affairs. The political involvement scale utilized was
tested and validated by Tinkham, Weaver-Larsicy, Soh, and Park (2004).

Questions 24-27 included additional measures of subjective norms, specifically
injunctive norms. These questions measured the expectations of others regarding the
respondent’s voting in the upcoming election and whether others would agree or
disagree with the decision to vote for either George W. Bush or John Kerry. After
controlling for attitude, injunctive norms, and perceived behavioral control, a Rivis and
Sheeran (2003) meta-analysis revealed a 5 percent increase in the variance explained by
descriptive norms in behavioral intention. Therefore, the next two questions were used
to measure descriptive norms, asking the respondents questions regarding the extent to
which others perform the target behavior (voting in the 2004 Presidential election)
themseleves.

Questions 28 and 29 included additional measures of perceived behavioral
control, asking the respondents, for example, whether “it is mostly up to me whether I
vote in the 2004 Presidential election” and having them rank the answer on a semantic
differential scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.”

Question 30 was another measure of motivation to comply with the expectations
of others for the respondent to vote in the 2004 election. Finally, attitude toward voting
was reassessed; it asked the respondent “for me to vote in the 2004 Presidential election
is...” and then used “good/bad, beneficial/harmful, valuable/worthless,
enjoyable/unenjoyable” as anchor points for the scale items.

A final question in the opening section of both questionnaires asked the
respondent why or why not he or she thought it was important to vote. The question
was open-ended, calling for a qualitative response. Data garnered from this question
will be used for interpretation of quantitative results as well as future analyses.

The next section of the questionnaire, which was only included in the treatment
questionnaire, measured third-person effect following viewing one issue and one image
advertisement. To measure the effects of the advertisement on self, respondents were
first asked about the effects on the political commercial on them and indicated the level
of likeability, power, believability, and persuasiveness of the ad on them on semantic
differential scales.

Another set of questions measured attitude toward the candidate who sponsored
the ad, with regard to level of support or opposition and like or dislike. The next two
questions measured how motivating the ad was on the viewer for him or her to vote for the sponsoring candidate.

The next two sets of questions asked the same questions as above (effect of ad, attitude toward sponsoring candidate, motivating power of commercial to vote for the sponsoring candidate) first with respect to general others and then with respect to the respondents friends.

Participants in the treatment condition completed the set of questions described above after viewing the first advertisement. Then, participants viewed a second televised political commercial and completed an identical set of questions with respect to content; however, the order of the questions measuring effects of the commercial on “self,” “general others,” and “friends” was varied to control for third-person effect measurement order effect as suggested by Dupagne, Salwen, and Paul (1999).

The final section of the questionnaire packet was completed by both the treatment and control groups. These questions re-measured intention to vote, attitude toward voting and the candidates, and subjective norms, including intention of others to vote for a particular candidate. These variables were re-measured to analyze whether changes in them in the treatment condition can be attributed to viewing political commercials and/or the third-person effect.

Four questions also measured whether the respondent believes televised political advertising should be restricted and whether he or she would support such restriction.
Additional analyses may reveal whether intensity of the third-person effect, or possibly viewing televised advertisements sponsored by the out-group candidate, predicts stronger motivation for political advertising regulation.

The last two questions of both questionnaires measured the most important factors in candidate selection and the most motivating factors for the respondent to vote in the upcoming Presidential election.

**Moderator Training**

Five graduate students volunteered to serve as moderators for the experimental sessions. One week before the experiments began, all moderators attended an intense, three-hour training session. Moderators were assigned to treatment or control conditions and assigned room numbers. At different times each moderator was accompanied by the researcher to his or her assigned room and received detailed instruction for operation of the VCR equipment and playing the commercials to ensure that they did it in an identical manner.

The experimenter also prepared a black binder for each of the moderators that thoroughly outlined the procedure he or she was to follow (see Appendix E). Moderators were asked to study the manual in the following week and to contact the researcher should they have any questions regarding the experimental procedure. Moderators were instructed to bring their binders to each session for guidance.
Experimental Procedure

Participants attended one of the one-hour experimental sessions. Experiments ran from October 20, 2004, to October 26, 2004. Participants were instructed to report to a common room for condition assignment. Once everyone was seated, the researcher welcomed the students and told them they would be assigned to report to one of three different rooms for participation.

Using a random start, participants counted off a number (1, 2, or 3) that corresponded to a randomly selected room number (two of which were treatment conditions and one control condition). As participants counted off, the moderator for each room stood in front of the room with a sign that indicated group 1, 2, or 3 followed by the number of the room to which participants were to report.

After all participants were assigned a number, they were told to follow the moderator with their group’s number to a designated room. As students reported to rooms, the researcher counted to ensure an approximately equal number of students was in each condition.

Once in the treatment room, the moderators passed out questionnaire packets and made certain each participant had a writing utensil. After all participants received a packet, the moderator stressed the importance of silence throughout the experiment and asked that all questions be held until the end of the session. Then, participants were asked to read the consent form attached to the front of their packets. Pending
their consent, students signed two copies of the form and passed one to the front of the room to the moderator.

The procedure began with participants in both treatment and control conditions completing the first section of the questionnaire with measures of: demographics, political involvement, political ideology, party identification, voter registration status, voting participation/history, presidential candidate preferences, perceptions of why it is important to vote, perceptions of how they view the voting behaviors of their peers, and their perceptions of how they believe their peers will vote. The treatment groups were instructed to stop after completing the initial part of the questionnaire and not to turn the page until further instructed.

Following this pre-treatment questionnaire, the control group proceeded directly to answer the same post-treatment questionnaire that the treatment groups completed following exposure to the advertisements. The treatment groups viewed two, 30-second televised political ads (one issue and one image) that were either positive or negative and sponsored by either Bush or Kerry.

Moderators played the commercials on television/VCR equipment. All treatment rooms contained identical equipment for viewing, and the televisions were in the same corner location in each treatment room. After viewing the first ad, participants evaluated the ad, its sponsor, the opponent, its perceived impact on self, and its perceived effect on others and friends using seven-unit semantic differential scales.
After completing the section of the questionnaire pertaining to the first advertisement, participants were instructed not to flip the page.

Treatment groups then viewed the second ad and completed a post-ad questionnaire with identical content. However, question order was reversed for “self,” “friend,” and “other” questions to control for order effects. Again, participants were instructed to stop at the end of the “Ad 2” section until instructed to turn the page to complete the final section of the questionnaire.

Following completion of questionnaires and evaluation of the ads, subjects in the treatment condition completed the post-test instrument. After completing the post-treatment instrument, moderators answered any questions, thanked the participants, and reminded them that they would be contacted for a brief follow-up questionnaire during the week following the election in order to receive credit for their participation.

Follow-up Behavioral Measure

During the week following the election, brief follow-up behavioral questionnaires were distributed in the classes from which participants were recruited (see Appendix D). This questionnaire measured self-reported voting behaviors, the cities/states participants voted in, and for whom the participant voted. Questionnaires were distributed only to those who raised hands indicating their participation in the experiment. After placing their questionnaires in a stack at the front of the room,
participants told the researcher their names, and the completion of their participation in the study was noted on a master list.

To control for voting social desirability reporting errors, the participant was also asked for which offices he or she voted. Thus, if a Georgia voter indicates he or she voted in the Gubernatorial race (or other office not up for election this cycle), the participant may be responding with the socially desirable, not actual, reply. These questionnaires were collected and matched to their appropriate experimental questionnaires using the mother’s date-of-birth and maternal grandmother’s first name to preserve confidentiality.

Discussion of the operationalization of all independent and dependent variables follows; Appendix F contains a codebook with all variables and their values indicated.

Independent Variables

Message Strategy

Message strategy was operationalized as a message strategy focus on issue or image in televised Presidential advertisements. The manipulation check ensured that treatment ads are properly categorized as issue or image ads according to their overall, dominant impression.

Message Tone

Message tone is operationalized by showing participants political advertisements with either negative or positive message tone. In order to isolate and identify any
unique effects of negative or positive messages, message tone was not varied for within-group treatment cells. The manipulation check was used to properly classify advertisements as positive or negative.

**Sponsoring Candidate**

Participants in the experiment viewed either two Bush or two Kerry ads. Sponsorship of treatment was not varied within-group treatment cells in order to isolate any unique effects of in-group or out-group sponsored messages. Only advertisements sponsored by official campaigns, “George W. Bush for President” or “John Kerry for President” were used.

**General Effect of Ad on Self/Others/Friends**

The effect of the ad on self was measured by asking the respondent to indicate the power, believability, and persuasiveness of the ad with respect to self, others, and friends. This variable was also operationalized by having the respondent rate the level of like/dislike and support/opposition of the sponsoring candidate of the ad with respect to self, others, and friends and how motivating the ad was for each group to vote for the sponsoring candidate.

**Political Involvement**

Political involvement was operationalized by measures of level of political affiliation, support for candidate, attention to political news and advertising, and voting behaviors.
Subjective norms

The measures of the subjective norm component were operationalized by measuring injunctive norms, descriptive norms, and motivation to comply.

Attitude

General attitude toward voting was measured and specific attitudes toward voting for a particular candidate were measured to operationalize attitude toward the behavior, which, in this study, is voting in the 2004 Presidential campaign. The measurement variables for attitude were based on a scale used and validated by Netemeyer et al. (2001) in study using Theory of Planned Behavior as the framework for studying voting behaviors.

Perceived Behavioral Control

According to Ajzen’s TPB Web site, the perceived behavioral control component can be operationalized by measures of controllability of the behavior. Thus, participants were asked to indicate any external factors that may prevent their voting in the upcoming Presidential election. They were also asked to what extent voting in the election was completely under their control.

Dependent Measures

Third-Person Effect

The third-person effect’s perceptual component will be analyzed using t-tests to compare the general effect of ad on self to the general effect of ad on others and on
friends. The third-person effect’s behavioral component will be analyzed by using t-tests to reveal changes in voting intentions of self and others. The behavioral component of the third-person effect will also be analyzed by looking levels of support for restrictions on political advertising following treatment.

**Behavioral Intentions**

Behavioral intentions were assessed by asking the likelihood of voting behaviors, both generally, in the 2004 Presidential election, and specifically, for George W. Bush or John Kerry. A strong third-person effect would predict stronger intentions to vote. The strength of the third-person effect from exposure to the ads may also positively correlate with the estimated number of other young adults who will vote in the 2004 Presidential election.

**Voting Behaviors**

Voting behaviors will be measured in the follow-up behavioral questionnaire. The behavioral intentions reported in the first questionnaire will be used to analyze the strength of these intentions in predicting voting behavior.

**Data Entry, Screening, and Analysis**

This chapter concludes with a discussion of preliminary analyses, including data entry, cleaning/screening and recoding, followed by a review of the methods employed for analysis. Finally, reliability estimates are revealed for all scales and observed measures of latent variables.
Preliminary Analyses

Data Entry

All data were entered into SPSS. Control for order effects within the experimental design and within the questionnaire imposed special considerations with regard to data entry, as the researcher had to decide whether to standardize variable order regardless of order on the actual questionnaire. To ensure consistency and accuracy in data analysis, the researcher entered all variables in the same order regardless of how they may have been manipulated during treatment to control for order effects.

For example, irrespective of whether a treatment group viewed the issue or image advertisement first, questions measuring response to the issue ad treatment were entered before questions measuring response to image ads. Further, although order of self, other, and friend perceptual questions was reversed to control for order effects, data were consistently entered in a self, friends, others order. To indicate the order in which each participant actually watched the ads, a new variable [issimfirst] was created; participants who actually watched an issue ad first were assigned a value of one. Participants who watched image ads first were given a value of two. This variable was used in later analysis to reveal presence of order effects.

Due to the complexity of order in data entry, the researcher selected a random sample of survey instruments and re-entered the data on those questionnaires after all
Data had been entered. This procedure was conducted to reveal data entry error; perfect reliability alphas (1.0) for all variables from matching questionnaires indicated that all data had been entered properly. Data were then screened for missing variables and outliers.

**Data Screening**

Insuring accuracy of data and handling missing data are two critical steps that must be conducted prior to conducting multivariate data analysis. Screening and cleaning of this data are discussed in turn to satisfy both purposes.

*Step One: Accuracy of Data*

First, given that results of analysis are only as good as the data set from which they were obtained, data must be checked for accuracy. Therefore, examination of missing data was first conducted by running frequencies on all independent variables to examine the range of values to insure no variables outside of their ranges, to assess plausibility of means and standard deviations, and to insure all cases within categorical variables have values that fall in possibly categories.

Among the 232 variables, there were seven individual cases in which a case value fell outside of the range or not within a possible value of a categorical variable. These seven cases were distributed among different variables; no one variable had more than one inaccurate case value entered. All of these cases were instances of entry error; for example, a “2” was entered as a “22.” All cases with unacceptable were values were
checked against the original questionnaire and cleaned. All means and standard
deviations appeared reasonable.

*Step 2: Missing Data*

The variables with the highest amount of missing data had approximately 2
percent missing cases; the vast majority of variables had no missing cases. The only
other variables with missing data were missing no more than two cases. Mertler and
Vannatta (2002) recommend 5 percent as the minimum level before missing data needs
transformation; missing data were concluded not to be a problem in this data set.

*Data Recoding*

Questions for dependent measures were initially entered on a seven-point scale,
with a values of “1” indicating a very positive or favorable position and a value of “7”
assigned to negative values. Following data entry, variables measuring perceptual
components of the third-person effect and Theory of Planned Behavior were recoded
into the same variables, instead of recoding into different variables, using a scale of -3
(not at all persuasive, not favorable, etc.) to +3 (very persuasive, very favorable, etc.).
This scaling method follows the recommendations of Ajzen for testing the Theory of
Planned Behavior and is used in other recent third-person effect studies (Meirick, 2004;
Banning, Golan, & Lundy, 2005).

Next, each participant in treatment conditions was coded as viewing an “in-
group,” “neutral,” or “out-group” sponsored ad. In-group status may be
conceptualized simply as shared party affiliation/ideology or support for the
spending candidate. However, to develop a more rigorous and thorough in-
group/out-group classification schema, participants in this study were classified in out-
or in-group conditions based on their ideologies, party affiliations, and support for
candidates.

Multiple series of “select cases” commands were run on the data to determine in-
group or out-group status of participants. For example, if a participant in the Kerry
treatment condition indicated conservative ideology, Republican party affiliation, and
support for Bush, that participant was assigned a value of “three” indicating that he or
she was in an out-group condition. In-group participants were assigned a value of
“one,” and participants in neutral conditions (no support for either candidate and
neutral ideology) were assigned a “two.” All participants fell cleanly into one of the
three categories.

Data Analysis

Several multivariate data analysis methods were employed in data analysis,
including paired sample t-tests, hierarchical regression, ANOVA, MANOVA, and
structural equation modeling. Data were entered into SPSS; AMOS software was used
for structural equation modeling to test the Theory of Planned Behavior model and the
proposed model adding third-person effect as a component of the Theory of Planned
Behavior.
Paired sample t-tests were used to compare perceived differences between self and others and to examine the presence of third-person perceptual biases. Hierarchical regression analyses were used to test the behavioral component of the third-person effect and reveal whether strength of perceptual bias significantly predicts a range of behaviors. ANOVA was utilized to test the relationship between involvement and third-person effect as well as to identify the interaction effects of message tone, sponsorship, and strategy on extent of third-person perceptual bias.

Reliability Estimates

Reliability estimates were obtained for all scales and observed variables of latent components; alphas for each measure as well as the observed variables measuring each latent construct are reported in Table 3.3. Cronbach’s alphas fell in a satisfactory range, from .710 to .953, indicating strong reliability among items measuring each unique scale or construct.

Reliability of Difference Scores

Four individual items were used to measure the impact of televised political ads; these items measured likeability, power, believability, and persuasiveness of the issue and image ads with respect to self, friends, and other. To ascertain the reliability of using difference scores in this analysis, each individual item difference score was first calculated.
For example, the other “like/dislike” score was subtracted from the self “like/dislike” score in order to obtain a difference score for the self-other “like/dislike” variable and to capture the gap between perceived effects on self and perceived effects on the other. Individual item difference scores were calculated for all four variables measuring the perceptual component of the third-person effect (likeability, persuasiveness, believability, and power) to capture differences with respect to those items between self and others, self and friends, and others and friends.

Reliability estimates were calculated to determine the reliability of the four individual difference scores (like, persuade, believe, and power) as composite measures of perceptual gap between self and others, self and friends, and others and friends. Standardized Cronbach’s alphas for each difference score for self, other, and friends are reported in Table 3.4.

Strong reliability scores (reported in Table 3.3) all greater than .8, indicate high reliability of the individual items used in composite measures to capture self, others, and friends difference scores measuring perceptual gap. This high reliability of the measures of third-person perception documents their suitability for further data analysis.

After computing individual item difference scores for each of the four variables measuring third-person effect and verifying their reliability, composite indices from the four scaled items measuring both issue and image ad likeability, power, believability,
and persuasiveness, were created for self, other, and friends ([SELFCOMPISSUE], [OTHERCOMPISSUE], [FRIENDCOMPISSUE], [SELFCOMPIIMAGE], [OTHERCOMPIMAGE], [FRIENDCOMPIMAGE]).

Table 3.3 Reliability estimates for scales and composite scored items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component/Scale</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>Number of Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Involvement</td>
<td>.710</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[attnnews], [attnads], [overallintl],</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[attndebates], [attnlit]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward Voting</td>
<td>.838</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ImpVote], [votegoodbad], [votebeneficial], [votevaluabl], [voteenjoya]</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Injunctive Norms</td>
<td>.718</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>[imppeoplee], [imppeoplev]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Behavioral Control</td>
<td>.726</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[canvoteifwant], [uptomeifwant]</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Intentions</td>
<td>.937</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[votenext], [likevote]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPE Measures-Self</td>
<td>.927 (issue)/.958(image)</td>
<td>4/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[youlikea1], [youbela1], [youpowa1],</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[youpera1], [youlikea2], [youbela2],</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[youpowa2], [youpera2]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPE Measures-Other</td>
<td>.810 (issue)/.945 (image)</td>
<td>4/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[olikea1], [opowera1], [opowera1],</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>[opera1], [olikea2], [opela2], [opowa2], [oper2]</td>
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<tr>
<td>TPE Measures- Friends</td>
<td>.953 (issue)/.974 (image)</td>
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<tr>
<td>[flikea2], [fbela2], [fpowera2], [fpera2]</td>
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<td>Descriptive Norms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Injunctive/Descriptive Norms</td>
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<td>2/4</td>
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</table>
Table 3.4- Cronbach’s Alphas for Third-Person Effect Scaled Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Alpha</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Other Issue Ad</td>
<td>.813</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Friends Issue Ad</td>
<td>.860</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends-Other Issue Ad</td>
<td>.868</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Other Image Ad</td>
<td>.902</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Friends Image Ad</td>
<td>.894</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends-Other Image Ad</td>
<td>.923</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having reviewed the participants, experimental design/procedure, stimulus materials, variables, preliminary data analysis, and reliability estimates, the results of data analysis are reported next.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Chapter 4 reviews the results of data analysis testing hypotheses and answering research questions. Results were obtained using a range of multivariate data analysis methods, including ANOVA, MANOVA, Multiple Regression, t-tests, and Structural Equation Modeling. First, reliability estimates were obtained for all measures used in data analysis; then, research questions and hypotheses are analyzed and discussed in the order in which they were presented in the literature review.

Hypotheses Tests- Third-Person Effect

Hypothesis One

Hypothesis one predicted the presence of third-person perceptual bias, that young voters will perceive stronger effects of political advertising on others than themselves. To illustrate, the hypothesis predicted that participants exposed to political advertising will perceive strong effects of the ads on the other than the self. To test this hypothesis, a series of paired-sample t-tests were conducted.

First, using a “compute” statement in SPSS, the composite “self-issue” and “self-image” composite scores were averaged in order to create an overall “self impact” score ([SELFIMPACT]). The same procedure was followed to create overall, composite scores for both others and friends ([OTHERIMPACT, FRIENDIMPACT]).
Next, mean overall difference scores were created between self/others, self/friends, and friends/others by subtracting composite “others” and “friends” scores from the self score. A negative difference scores indicates the presence of a third-person effect. A new variable ([SOOVERALL]) was computed to capture difference in the self-other overall difference scores and to reveal any perceptual bias in the self-other relationship. The mean for SOOVERALL was -.155, indicating the presence of a third-person effect. Then, “other” scores were subtracted from “friend” scores; a negative score indicates the presence of a second-person effect, in which those closer to the self are less affected by a message than general others.

After the presence of the effect was documented, paired-sample t-tests were conducted to verify whether the difference was significant. As shown in Table 4.1, means for all three groups (self-other, self-friends, friends-other) were significantly different, thus providing overall support for Hypothesis One. Young voters found televised political advertisements to have significantly more impact on others than themselves ($F(1, 179)= .320, p<.05$).
Table 4.1. Reliability estimates for scales and composite scored items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Error Mean</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Other</td>
<td>-.16458</td>
<td>.69005</td>
<td>.05143</td>
<td>-3.20</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Friend</td>
<td>.21823</td>
<td>1.08655</td>
<td>.08076</td>
<td>2.702</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-Friend</td>
<td>.36522</td>
<td>1.08926</td>
<td>.08142</td>
<td>4.486</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, the mean for the overall self/friends difference score was .2182. This indicates that, although there was a significant difference between self and friends, the relationship was significant in the reverse direction of the self-others score. The positive mean indicates that participants perceived political advertisements to have a significantly greater impact on themselves than their friends ($F(1, 180) = 2.702, p<.05)$.

Finally, the other-friend relationship was examined to determine which group was perceived to be more affected by political advertising. The mean of the other-friend difference score, created by subtracted the “overall other” from the “overall friends” score was -.3567. This indicates that participants perceived others to be significantly more impacted by political advertisements than their friends ($F(1, 178) = 4.486, p<.05$) and supports the notion that the third-person perceptual bias increases as social distance increases. Overall, results of data analysis yield support for Hypothesis One,
as young voters perceived greater effects of political advertising on others than themselves.

**Hypothesis 1.A**

Hypothesis 1.A stated young voters will perceive a greater impact of televised political advertisements on others than themselves for ads sponsored by the out-group candidate. To test this hypothesis, participants in the out-group treatment condition were selected using a “select cases” command in SPSS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Error Mean</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Other</td>
<td>-.55694</td>
<td>.52939</td>
<td>.05580</td>
<td>-9.981</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Friend</td>
<td>-.02361</td>
<td>.92861</td>
<td>.09788</td>
<td>-.241</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>.810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-Friend</td>
<td>-.52669</td>
<td>.95949</td>
<td>.10171</td>
<td>5.179</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A series of paired-sample t-tests were used to test the hypothesis (see results in Table 4.2). The negative mean (-.5569) for the self-other relationship indicates a third-person perceptual bias, in that participants thought others were affected significantly more than themselves by messages sponsored by the out-group candidates ($F(1, 89)= -9.981, p<.05$). These results provide support for Hypothesis 1a, as a strong perceptual bias exists between self and others when participants were exposed to messages sponsored by the out-group candidate.
Another interesting, secondary finding emerged in this analysis with respect to the *other-friend* difference scores measuring perceptual bias of ads sponsored by the out-group candidate. The negative mean (-.5267) indicates stronger perceived effects of the ad on others than on friends \( F(1, 88= 5.179, \ p< .05) \).

**Hypothesis 1.B**

Hypothesis 1.B predicted young voters will perceive greater effects of political advertising on themselves than on others for messages sponsored by the in-group candidate, or a first-person perceptual bias. To test this hypothesis, a “select cases” command was used to capture all participants in in-group treatment conditions; these participants viewed ads sponsored only by their in-group candidate.

Means were analyzed for each difference score. The mean of the *self-other* difference was positive (.3021), indicating self was perceived to be more impacted than other. Further, as Table 4.3 indicates, the relationship was significant \( F(1, 71)= 6.157, \ p<.05 \). This finding supports Hypothesis 1.B.

Table 4.3. Significance of relationships for overall self, other, and friends scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Error Mean</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Other</td>
<td>.30208</td>
<td>.41630</td>
<td>.04906</td>
<td>6.157</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Friend</td>
<td>.44692</td>
<td>1.21173</td>
<td>.14182</td>
<td>3.151</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-Friend</td>
<td>.11456</td>
<td>1.08319</td>
<td>.12766</td>
<td>.898</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>.372</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further, for participants in in-group treatment conditions, the self was perceived to be impacted more by televised political advertisement than friends. Table 4.5 demonstrates the significance of the difference in perceived impact ($F(1, 72)= 3.151, p<.05$); the positive mean (.44692) indicates that in this case self was more impacted than the friends.

Finally, in the in-group participant analysis, there was no significant difference between others and friends. This finding was surprising given the significant difference perceived in others and friends when both in- and out-group participants were included. The mean (.11456) was positive, indicating that friends were perceived as slightly more affected by political advertisements sponsored by the in-group candidate. However, this relationship was not significant ($F(1, 71)=.898, p=.372$.

Taken together, the results of testing Hypothesis 1.A. and Hypothesis 1.B. document third-person effects for participants in out-group treatment conditions and first-person effects for participants in in-group treatment conditions.

**Hypothesis Two**

Hypothesis Two stated that political involvement will predict the magnitude of third-person effect, such that strength of perceptual bias will increase as levels of political involvement among participants increase. To test this hypothesis, a series of ANOVAs were conducted to reveal the influence of involvement on the dependent variable, third-person effect. Prior to running the ANOVA, the five measures of
involvement were reverse coded, such that a “1” indicated “almost no attention” or “almost no interest” and a “7” indicated “a lot of attention” or “a lot of interest.”

Reliability analyses revealed the five measures of political involvement (attention to political ads, attention to televised debates, attention to political news, attention to campaign materials, and overall interest in politics and national affairs) were strongly related (.71). Next, using a “compute” statement, a new involvement variable was created by taking the means of the five variables.

Descriptive analysis determined cut points to divide participants into three equal groups (low, medium, and high) for levels of involvement. Using a “recode into a different variable” command in SPSS, participants were placed into one of three categorical involvement variable groups [involvecat].

Participants with mean scores of 0 to 4.4 were assigned a “1” for the categorical involvement variable, indicating they were in the low involvement group. Participants with a mean involvement score of 4.41 to 5.2 were given a “2,” which represents the moderate involvement group. Participants were involvement scores ranging from 5.21 to 7 were assigned a “3” to place them in the high involvement category.

For the most conservative post hoc test to identify group differences and identify which, if any, group differences are significant within involvement, the Bonferroni post hoc test was utilized (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002). A univariate ANOVA was run to analyze the independent effects of involvement on extent of third-person effect. Main
effect results reveals that the interaction between categorical involvement and third-person effect was not statistically significant $F(2, 177)=1.197, \ p=.305$ (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 ANOVA Results: No main effect of categorical involvement on third-person effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>1.137(a)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.569</td>
<td>1.197</td>
<td>.305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>4.852</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.852</td>
<td>10.212</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>involvecat</td>
<td>1.137</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.569</td>
<td>1.197</td>
<td>.305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>84.096</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>.475</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90.109</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>85.234</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R Squared = .013 (Adjusted R Squared = .002)

Increased levels of categorical involvement had no main effect on third-person effect. However, for a more sensitive test of political involvement on extent of perceptual bias following exposure to political advertisements, a second univariate ANOVA was conducted using the Involvement composite scores as a continuous variable, not broken up into categories. As initially conceptualized, categorical measures of involvement may not have been sensitive enough to capture the range of individual differences within involvement measures.

As presented in Table 4.5, ANOVA results show a significant main effect for involvement on perceptual bias, such that third-person effect increases as involvement increases $[F(24,155) =1.650, \ p=.037]$. There was no support for hypothesis two when involvement was used in ANOVA as a categorical variable. Yet, the main effect for involvement on intensity of third-person effect was significant when involvement was
entered into the equation as a continuous variable. The discrepancy in the first two
ANOVA equations used to test hypothesis two complicated the decision to either accept
or reject it.

However, further analysis revealed two Involvement groups in the ANOVA
equation had fewer than two cases when involvement was treated as a continuous
variable in the ANOVA equation. Thus, given that means were computed for groups
with only one case, treating involvement as a continuous variable in the equation was
not acceptable for analysis of Hypothesis 2.

Therefore, it was concluded that a finer categorical breakdown of involvement
scores was necessary for analysis of Hypothesis Two. Thus, a six-group categorical
variable was computed, with cut-points at three, four, five, six and seven for the
involvement variable scores. The third ANOVA equation provides a more sensitive test
than treating involvement as a three-group category (low, medium, and high) yet has
adequate group sizes such that no one category had only one case. Further, allowing
group sizes to be unequal made the means for each particular group more meaningful.

Table 4.5 ANOVA Results: Main Effect of Involvement on Third-Person Effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>17.345(a)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.723</td>
<td>1.650</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>4.023</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.023</td>
<td>9.185</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>involvement</td>
<td>17.345</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.723</td>
<td>1.650</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>67.888</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>.438</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90.109</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>85.234</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R Squared = .204 (Adjusted R Squared = .080)
A third univariate ANOVA was conducted to reveal the effects of involvement on extent of third-person effect perceptual bias using the 6-category involvement variable [involve6cat] as the fixed factor and third-person effect scores as the dependent variable. Main effect results revealed that the interaction between the six-category involvement variable and third-person effect was not statistically significant $F(5, 174) = .723, p = .607$ (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6.ANOVA Results: Main Effect of 6-Category Involvement on Third-Person Effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>1.734(a)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.347</td>
<td>.723</td>
<td>.607</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>.239</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.239</td>
<td>.498</td>
<td>.481</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve6Cat</td>
<td>1.734</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.347</td>
<td>.723</td>
<td>.607</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>83.499</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>.480</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90.109</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>85.234</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a R Squared = .020 (Adjusted R Squared = -.008)

Taken together, the results of the previous three analyses do not support Hypothesis 2; therefore, political involvement does not seem to predict the magnitude of the third-person effect.

**Hypothesis Three**

The third hypothesis predicted negative messages sponsored by the out-group candidate will induce stronger third-person perceptual bias than positive messages and messages sponsored by an in-group candidate. Hypothesis Three added a prediction of
interaction between sponsorship (in-group, out-group, or neutral) and message tone (positive or negative) to those presented in Hypothesis One.

Several new variables were computed for this analysis using a series of “select cases” commands. First, a new variable [InGroupPositive] was created by selecting all participants in an “in-group” treatment condition who also viewed a positive advertisement. The same procedure was followed to compute three other variables {[InGroupNegative], [OutGroupPositive], [OutGroupNegative]} to place all participants in new categorical variables by parsing them into in- and out-group conditions and by positive or negative treatment ad conditions. Table 4.7 presents descriptive statistics for each of the four new variables.

First, the means for each group should be noted. The means for the self-other difference scores for both in-group conditions ([InGroupPositive] and [InGroupNegative]) are positive, and the means for the overall third-person effect scores for participants in out-group conditions ([OutGroupNegative] and [OutGroupNegative]) are negative.

Table 4.7. Descriptive Statistics for each In- and Out-, Positive and Negative Treatment Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>InGroupPositive</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-.88</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>.3844</td>
<td>.42308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OutGroupPositive</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>-1.88</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>-.4904</td>
<td>.51330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InGroupNegative</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>-.38</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>.1992</td>
<td>.38997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OutGroupNegative</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>-1.75</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>-.6078</td>
<td>.54084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As previously discussed in results from hypothesis one, testing a negative mean for this variable indicates the presence of a third-person effect, and a positive mean indicates the presence of a first-person effect. The two out-group conditions had negative means; as predicted, the strongest third-person effect was present for participants in the out-group, negative treatment condition (-.6078). Further analysis is necessary, however, to reveal effects from this combination of sponsorship and tone is significantly stronger than others.

ANOVA was used to analyze the independent effects of sponsorship (in-group, out-group, or neutral) and message strategy (positive or negative) on extent of perceptual bias and to reveal interaction effects among sponsorship and message strategy.

Using a “compute new variable” command, third-person effect scores were multiplied by negative one to reverse the signs; therefore, in this equation, a positive score indicates the presence of a third-person effect whereas negative scores indicate a first-person effect. This sign reversal was done to facilitate interpretation of plots and interaction effects; a positive trend on interaction plots indicates stronger third-person effect, making charts easier to interpret and analyze. Table 4.8 presents between-subject factors and group sizes, and Table 4.9 gives descriptive statistics for the equation.
Table 4.8 Between-Subjects Factors- ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Label</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>InGroup</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outgroup</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9 Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable: ReverseSOOverall</th>
<th>InGroup, Outgroup, or Neutral</th>
<th>PositiveNegative</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>InGroup</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>-.3844</td>
<td>.42308</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>-.1992</td>
<td>.38997</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-.3021</td>
<td>.41630</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>-.4545</td>
<td>.52818</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>.7292</td>
<td>1.14950</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-.0368</td>
<td>.96295</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outgroup</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>.4904</td>
<td>.51330</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>.6078</td>
<td>.54084</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.5569</td>
<td>.52939</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>-.0139</td>
<td>.64761</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>.3258</td>
<td>.67252</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.1550</td>
<td>.67994</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Estimated marginal means are presented for the Ingroup, Outgroup, or Neutral variable (Table 4.10) and Positive/Negative variable (Table 4.11). As presented in Table 4.12, ANOVA main effect results show a significant main effect for in-group/out-group sponsorship on third-person effect \([F(2,173) 52.750, p=.000]\). Furthermore, there is a significant main effect for message strategy (positive or negative) on third-person effect \([F(2,173) 23.275, p< .000]\).

Finally, and most interestingly, main effect results reveal that the interaction between sponsorship and message strategy on third-person effect is statistically significant \(F(2, 17)= 7.269, p=.001\) (see Table 4.12).
Next, plots were analyzed to reveal patterns of and interactions between group sponsorship (in-group, out-group, neutral) and message strategy (positive or negative) and subsequent influence on the strength of the third-person effect.

Table 4.10 Estimated Marginal Means- InGroup, Outgroup, or Neutral

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>InGroup, Outgroup, or Neutral</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>InGroup</td>
<td>-.292</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>-.412</td>
<td>-.171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>.130</td>
<td>-.120</td>
<td>.395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outgroup</td>
<td>.549</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>.441</td>
<td>.657</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11. Estimated Marginal Means- Positive/Negative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PositiveNegative</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>-.116</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>-.243</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>.379</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.222</td>
<td>.537</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12. Estimated Marginal Means- InGroup, Outgroup, or Neutral * PositiveNegative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>36.562(a)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.312</td>
<td>27.664</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>1.735</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.735</td>
<td>6.563</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in/outgroup</td>
<td>27.887</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.943</td>
<td>52.750</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PositiveNegative</td>
<td>6.152</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.152</td>
<td>23.275</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in/outgroup *</td>
<td>3.843</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.921</td>
<td>7.269</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>45.729</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>.264</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86.594</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>82.292</td>
<td>178</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent Variable: ReverseSOOverall
R Squared = .444 (Adjusted R Squared = .428)
Figure 4.1 presents an interaction plot charting the effects of positive and negative messages among participants in in-group, out-group, and neutral conditions. The plot for positive messages is almost the exact inverse of the plot for negative messages. As depicted, the strongest third-person effect was present for the negative, neutral condition, and the strongest first-person effect was present among participants in the positive, neutral condition. A strong third-person effect was present
among participants in the negative out-group condition, while a weaker third-person effect emerged among out-group participants in positive treatment conditions.

The size of this difference was roughly equal to, but in the opposite direction of, the gap between participants in the in-group positive and negative conditions. Participants in the in-group positive condition had a stronger first-person effect than those in the in-group negative condition.

Figure 4.2 graphically presents estimated marginal means for message strategy, sponsorship, and their impacts on third-person effect. Figure 4.3 isolates the estimated marginal means for sponsorship on third-person effect, and indicates a positive linear relationship, such that strength of third-person effect increases among in-group, out-group, and neutral candidate sponsored messages, respectively. Figure 4.4 presents another positive linear relationship between message strategy and third-person effect, as third-person effect is stronger with negative messages. In sum, data analysis yields strong support for hypothesis three, in that negative messages sponsored by the out-group candidate produced the stronger third-person effects than positive messages or those sponsored by the in-group candidate. Although negative messages with “neutral” sponsorship yielded a slighter stronger effect than negative messages sponsored by the out-group candidate, the difference was not significant. Further, although neutral condition participants were included in the analysis, participants in in- and out-group conditions were the focus of the hypothesis.
Figure 4.2. Estimated Marginal Means: Sponsorship, Message Strategy, and Third-Person Effect

Figure 4.3. Estimated Marginal Means. Sponsorship and Third-Person Effect
Research Questions- Third Person Effect

Research Question One

Research question one was written to explore the unique effects of different political advertising message strategies (positive issue, positive image, negative issue, negative image) on the extent of perceptual bias. Message strategy is a within-group variable in this analysis, and message tone is a between-group variables. Thus, analysis utilized a mixed factor design ANOVA with within-subject and between-subject factors. The within-group variable, message strategy, was entered into the equation by using a “repeated measures” statement within the ANOVA.

All predictors were entered simultaneously into the full model to identify any interactions between message strategy and message tone. The in-group/out-group
variable was also entered into the equation to determine whether individual effects of message tone and strategy or the interaction thereof were moderated by sponsorship of the message.

As presented in Table 4.13, ANOVA main effect results do not show a significant main effect for the message strategy alone on third-person effect \([F(1,173)=.535, p=.466]\). The interaction of the two between-subjects variables, message tone and in-/out-group membership was not significant in the overall model \([F(2,173)=.040, p=.961]\) nor was the interaction between strategy, tone, and in-/out-group significant \([F(1,173)=1.270, p=.284]\).

However, and most salient to answering this research question, the interaction between message strategy (issue or image) and message tone (positive or negative) was significant \([F(1,173)=7.742, p=.006]\). Having established the significance of the interaction, means (see Table 4.14) were analyzed in order to reveal which combination of message tone and message strategy created the largest perceptual gap.
Table 4.13. Multivariate Tests. Message Strategy*Message Tone*In-/Out-Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Hypothsis df</th>
<th>Error df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>message</td>
<td>Pillai’s Trace</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.535(a)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>173.000</td>
<td>.466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
<td>.997</td>
<td>.535(a)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>173.000</td>
<td>.466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hotelling’s Trace</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.535(a)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>173.000</td>
<td>.466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roy’s Largest Root</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.535(a)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>173.000</td>
<td>.466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>message * PositiveNegative</td>
<td>Pillai’s Trace</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>7.742(a)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>173.000</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
<td>.957</td>
<td>7.742(a)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>173.000</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hotelling’s Trace</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>7.742(a)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>173.000</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roy’s Largest Root</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>7.742(a)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>173.000</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>message * inoutgroup</td>
<td>Pillai’s Trace</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.040(a)</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>173.000</td>
<td>.961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.040(a)</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>173.000</td>
<td>.961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hotelling’s Trace</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.040(a)</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>173.000</td>
<td>.961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roy’s Largest Root</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.040(a)</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>173.000</td>
<td>.961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>message * PositiveNegative * inoutgroup</td>
<td>Pillai’s Trace</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>1.270(a)</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>173.000</td>
<td>.284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
<td>.986</td>
<td>1.270(a)</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>173.000</td>
<td>.284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hotelling’s Trace</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>1.270(a)</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>173.000</td>
<td>.284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roy’s Largest Root</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>1.270(a)</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>173.000</td>
<td>.284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Exact statistic
b Design: Intercept+PositiveNegative+inoutgroup+PositiveNegative * inoutgroup

Within Subjects Design: message

Negative numbers indicate a third-person effect score for the scale used in this equation, and positive numbers signify a first-person effect. The more negative the mean, the stronger the third-person perceptual bias. Therefore, the combination of message strategy (issue or image) and message tone (positive or negative) with the most negative mean is that which induces the strongest perceptual bias; as revealed above, this interaction was statistically significant.
As indicated in Table 4.14, the political advertisements creating the strongest third-person effect, as indicated by the most negative mean (-.6517), were the negative issue advertisements. Negative image advertisement treatments had the next lowest mean (-.5028), followed by the positive image advertisement (-.3194). The positive issue advertisement resulted in a first-person effect, with a positive mean of .0278. Overall, a stronger perceptual bias resulted from exposure to image advertisements (-.4106) than issue advertisements (-.3101).

Table 4.14. Descriptive Statistics without Sponsorship Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive/Negative</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>diffscoreSIssue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>.0278</td>
<td>1.29522</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>-.6517</td>
<td>1.34503</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-.3101</td>
<td>1.35987</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diffscoreSImage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>-.3194</td>
<td>1.45920</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>-.5028</td>
<td>1.34127</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-.4106</td>
<td>1.40088</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.15 presents descriptive statistics for the ANOVA including sponsorship (in-group, out-group, neutral) as a between-subjects variable in addition to message tone (positive or negative). The strongest presence of the third-person effect was among participants in a neutral (neither in-group nor out-group) condition who viewed a negative issue advertisement (-1.4583), followed by participants in an out-group condition who viewed a positive image advertisement. Other notable third-person effects were found among participants in a negative issue out-group condition (-1.2157), and participants in a negative image out-group condition (-1.1029). Overall, in positive
and negative condition “totals,” the strongest third-person effects were found in out-group participants in a image treatment condition (-1.1833) and issue treatment condition (-1.1139).

Strong first-person effect scores emerged from participants in a neutral, positive issue condition (.9091), participants in an in-group positive issue condition (.7688), participants in an in-group positive image condition (.5438), participants in a negative image in-group condition (.5156), and those in a negative issue in-group condition.

Therefore, to answer research question 1, given the results of the mixed factor ANOVA and subsequent analysis of means, the combination of message strategy and message tone yielding the strongest third-person effect in participants is the negative issue advertisement.

Research Question 2.A

Research question 2.A was developed to reveal whether magnitude of perceptual bias significantly and positively predicts reported intention to vote.

After viewing each of the two ads in the treatment condition, participants were asked “after seeing this commercial, would you vote for the sponsoring candidate?”

First, a new variable was created [voteafterad] by averaging the scores from the responses to the question above that participants answered after viewing each ad. The new variables represented the extent to which the ad would make participants vote for
the sponsoring candidate, with a score of “7” representing “yes, definitely,” and a value of “1” indicating “no, definitely not.”

Table 4.15. Descriptive Statistics with Sponsorship Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.Dev.</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>diffscoreSOissue</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>InGroup</td>
<td>.7688</td>
<td>.84616</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>.9091</td>
<td>1.05637</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outgroup</td>
<td>-.9808</td>
<td>1.02659</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.0278</td>
<td>1.29522</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>InGroup</td>
<td>.3984</td>
<td>.77994</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>-1.4583</td>
<td>2.29900</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outgroup</td>
<td>-1.2157</td>
<td>1.08169</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-.6517</td>
<td>1.34503</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>InGroup</td>
<td>.6042</td>
<td>.83260</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>.0735</td>
<td>1.92590</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outgroup</td>
<td>-1.1139</td>
<td>1.05878</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-.3101</td>
<td>1.35987</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>diffscoreSOimage</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>InGroup</td>
<td>.5438</td>
<td>1.13070</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>-.0227</td>
<td>1.45540</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outgroup</td>
<td>-1.2885</td>
<td>1.15926</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-.3194</td>
<td>1.45920</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>InGroup</td>
<td>.5156</td>
<td>1.11792</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>-.8333</td>
<td>.58452</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outgroup</td>
<td>-1.1029</td>
<td>1.14584</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-.5028</td>
<td>1.34127</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>InGroup</td>
<td>.5313</td>
<td>1.11720</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
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<td>1.26098</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outgroup</td>
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<td>1.14889</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-.4106</td>
<td>1.40088</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Linear regression was conducted to determine the extent to which the independent variable, third-person effect, predicted the desire to vote for the candidate who sponsored the advertisement. As reported in the model summary (Table 4.16), the adjusted R square for the model is .253; given that the model uses a single predictor
variable, the explained percentage is acceptable, as a completely specified model explaining behavior was not anticipated. Regression results (reported in Table 4.16) indicate that the intensity of the third-person effect significantly predicted desire to vote for the sponsoring candidate, $R^2=.257$, $R^2_{adj}=.253$, $F(1,178)= 61.512$, $p<.001$.

Table 4.16. Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Change Statistics</th>
<th>Durbin-Watson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.507(a)</td>
<td>.257</td>
<td>.253</td>
<td>2.15369</td>
<td>.257</td>
<td>61.512</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Predictors: (Constant), ReverseSOOverall
b Dependent Variable: Voteafterad

However, the beta weight for the equation is .507. Thus, the significant relationship predicted by the model is in the opposite direction of that predicted by the hypothesis. As extent of third-person effect perceptual bias increases, the likelihood of voting for the sponsor of the ad decreases. Given the results of the regression equation, the answer to RQ2 seems to be that the intensity of third-person effect significantly, but negatively, predicts voting behaviors.

Earlier analyses revealed that the intensity of the third-person effect is strongest after viewing a message sponsored by the out-group candidate. It follows, then, that if the out-group message induces the strongest third-person effect, that bias would be negatively correlated for desire to vote for the sponsoring candidate. Therefore, another
regression equation was conducted to determine the effects of third-person effect after controlling for the effects of in- or out-group sponsorship of the message.

The “in-group/out-group” variable was entered in the first block of the regression equation followed by the third-person effect variable. As presented in Table 4.17, the effects of the third-person perceptual bias in voting behavior were completely mediated by the sponsorship of the message (in-group or out-group).

Table 4.17. Model Summary. RQ2.C.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Change Statistics</th>
<th>F Change</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig. F Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>.576</td>
<td>.573</td>
<td>1.63063</td>
<td>.576</td>
<td>240.159</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.762(b)</td>
<td>.580</td>
<td>.575</td>
<td>1.62703</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>1.784</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>.183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Predictors: (Constant), InGroup, Outgroup, or Neutral
b Predictors: (Constant), InGroup, Outgroup, or Neutral, SOoverall

For a more sophisticated test of the above model, the in-group/out-group variable was recoded into two dummy variables. An in-group dummy variable [indummy] was created by leaving in-group membership with a value of 1, and assigning those in the out-group and neutral condition a 0. The same procedure was followed to create the out-group dummy variable [outdummy], by recoding those in the out-group to have a 1 value while those in neutral and in-group conditions were assigned a “0.” A second linear regression was conducted with the “outdummy” and “indummy” variables entered together with perceptual bias scores.
The dummy out-group variable, the dummy in-group variable, and the third-person effect variables were entered in the model as the first, second, and third blocks, respectively. As presented in Table 4.18, both in-group ($R^2 = .527, R^2_{adj} = .524, F(1,177) = 196.837, p < .001$) and out-group membership ($R^2 = .576, R^2_{adj} = .571, F(1,176) = 20.396, p < .001$) in treatment conditions significantly predicted intention to vote. However, in the overall model, third-person effect did not significantly predict intention to vote for the sponsoring candidate ($R^2 = .580, R^2_{adj} = .573, F(1,175) = 1.785, p = .183$).

Table 4.18. Model Summary RQ 2.A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Change Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.726(a)</td>
<td>.527</td>
<td>.524</td>
<td>1.72252</td>
<td>R Square Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.759(b)</td>
<td>.576</td>
<td>.571</td>
<td>1.63526</td>
<td>F Change</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>.762(c)</td>
<td>.580</td>
<td>.573</td>
<td>1.63162</td>
<td>df1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Predictors: (Constant), outdummy  
b Predictors: (Constant), outdummy, indummy  
c Predictors: (Constant), outdummy, indummy, SOoverall

The beta weights for the out-group, in-group, and third-person effect blocks, respectively, were -.726, .392, and .086 at each particular step. As it had the strongest beta weight, membership in an out-group treatment condition has the greatest, negative impact on likelihood to vote for sponsoring candidate. In-group membership had a significant, positive relationship with intention to vote for sponsoring candidate. In-group member did not load as strongly into the model as out-group membership did, however. Interestingly, the power of out-group sponsored messages is greater in a
negative direction than the power of in-group sponsored messages is in a positive direction on intention to vote for sponsoring candidate.

Next, follow-up analyses were conducted by selecting only those participants with in-group membership to determine if, among those voters, intensity of third-person effect significantly predicts intentions to vote for the sponsoring candidate. A regression equation was utilized and revealed that, for those participants in in-group treatment conditions, third-person effect significantly predicted desire to vote for the sponsoring candidate ($R^2=.124$, $R_{adj}^2=.111$, $F(1,70)= 9.871$, $p=.002$). The beta weight for the equation was .352, indicating a positive linear relationship (see Table 4.19).

Table 4.19. Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode 1</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>R Square Change</th>
<th>F Change</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig. F Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.352(a)</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>.93428</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>9.871</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>.002</td>
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</table>

(a) Predictors: (Constant), SOoverall

**Research Question 2.B**

Research Question 2.B was developed to reveal whether magnitude of perceptual bias significantly and positively predicts support for restrictions on political advertising. Standard linear regression was conducted to determine the accuracy of the independent variable, third-person effect scores in predicting support for restrictions on political advertising. Regression results indicate that the overall model does not significantly predict support for restrictions on political advertising, ($R^2 = .000$, $R_{adj}^2 = -$.
.005, \( F(1,178)= .027, p>.001 \); the model only accounted for .5 percent of variance explained in support for restrictions on political advertising (see Table 4.20).

Table 4.20. Model Summary RQ2(b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
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<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Change Statistics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.012(a)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>1.73310</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 2.C

Research Question 2.C investigates whether magnitude of perceptual bias significantly and positively predicts support for bans on political advertising. Standard linear regression was utilized to reveal if intensity of third-person effect predicts support for banning political advertising. Regression results indicate that the overall model does not significantly predict support for restrictions on political advertising, \( R^2 = .000, R^2_{adj} = -.005, F(1,178)= .027, p>.001 \); the model only accounted for 1.2 percent of variance explained in support for restrictions on political advertising (see Table 4.21).

Table 4.21. Model Summary. RQ 2(c)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Change Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.066(a)</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>1.91463</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Predictors: (Constant), ReverseSOOverall  
b Dependent Variable: Would you support banning negative political ads
Theory of Planned Behavior Research Questions

Research Question Three

Research Question 3 asked whether subjective norms, attitudes, or perceived behavioral control explain the most variance in young adults’ intentions to vote. Structural equation modeling was conducted to explore this research question; first, however, assumptions were checked, reliability and validity were established, and confirmatory factor analysis was performed.

Assumption Check

Several underlying assumptions for Structural Equation Modeling, similar to those in Factor Analysis, were checked prior to analysis. The variable-to-sample for the study satisfied the recommended minimum, at 1/9 (29/270). Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin’s measure of sampling adequacy was .818, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity index was significant at the .000 level, which justifies the factoring of the 12 items used in the study. Extracted communalities fell in satisfactory ranges across measurement items, indicating no extreme multicollinearity or strong linear combinations among the 13 items. Normality assumption was not satisfied (Mardia's coefficient =185.13). Because of the multivariate non-normality, Maximum Likelihood Estimation procedure was employed (Byrne, 2001).
Validity and Reliability

Reliability estimates for all scales used in Structural Equation Modeling are reported earlier in this chapter. However, convergent and discriminant validity for the variables must also be established. Discriminant validity was evaluated using chi-square difference tests on the values obtained for the constrained (assumption of perfect correlation, at 1) and unconstrained models (free estimate of correlation), following the recommendation of Joreskog (1971). Significant difference between unconstrained and constrained models’ chi-square values establishes discriminant validity.

When df=1, the critical chi-square value for significance testing is 3.84; all but one pair of variables within the model had significant discriminant validity, with chi-square values ranging from 28.9 to 109.6 (see Table 4.22). The perceived behavioral control and behavioral intention score was 2.5; this difference was significant at the .10 level, which is sufficient for establishing discriminant validity. Item loadings between constructs and items were significant and ranged from .56 to .98, which indicates convergent validity.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on items for all of the constructs with all combined data in the overall model. All goodness-of-fit indices were satisfactory ($x^2=149.947$, SRMR=.05, TLI=.922, CFI=.945, NFI=.922, IFI=.945, RMSEA=.090), indicating the plausibility and stability of the model.
Table 4.22. Reports of Discriminant Validity Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>r=1</th>
<th>r=?</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>&gt;3.84</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(constrained)</td>
<td>(unconstrained)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATT ↔ SN</td>
<td>252.1 (df=48)</td>
<td>149.9 (df=47)</td>
<td>102.2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATT ↔ BI</td>
<td>178.8 (df=48)</td>
<td>149.9 (df=47)</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATT ↔ PBC</td>
<td>259.5 (df=48)</td>
<td>149.9 (df=47)</td>
<td>109.6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SN ↔ BI</td>
<td>181.7 (df=48)</td>
<td>149.9 (df=47)</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SN ↔ PBC</td>
<td>248.8 (df=48)</td>
<td>149.9 (df=47)</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBC ↔ BI</td>
<td>152.4</td>
<td>149.9 (df=47)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This value is significant at the .10 level, acceptable for establishing discriminant validity.

**Structural Equation Modeling**

Structural equation modeling was performed to test the Theory of Planned Behavior Model and to reveal the relationships between its components as well as to test the fit of third-person effect within the model. The first model tested with Structural Equation Modeling in this analysis was the traditional Theory of Planned Behavior Model, with four latent variables, including attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intentions.

The model included three paths, from attitudes to behavioral intentions, from subjective norms to behavioral intentions, and from perceived behavioral control to behavioral intentions. Linear regression revealed behavioral intentions were a strong and significant predictor of self-reported behaviors ($F(1, 261)=.0285.057, p<.000$). See Table 4.23 for model summary and Table 4.24 for ANOVA results.
Table 4.23. Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.723(a)</td>
<td>.522</td>
<td>.520</td>
<td>1.56816</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Predictors: (Constant), BehavioralIntention

Table 4.24. ANOVA(b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>700.986</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>700.986</td>
<td>285.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>641.828</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>2.459</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1342.814</td>
<td>262</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Predictors: (Constant), BehavioralIntention
b Dependent Variable: Vote Pres

Behavioral intentions were incredibly strong predictors of behaviors; thus, to increase the parsimony of the model, the behavioral component was not included in the final model. Further, consistent with the findings of Netemeyer et al. (1991), the path from perceived behavioral control to behavior was not significant; the failure to support this path further justified exclusion of the behavioral component from the final model.

Examination of Modification Fit Indices revealed two observed variables measuring descriptive norms in the model that needed to be allowed to co-vary in the model. Given that the two variables were tapping the same theoretical domain, such covariance between exogenous constructs was justifiable. The model was re-specified by adding a covariance path between the two descriptive norm constructs, which significantly improved the chi-square and overall model fit.
Each path had a significant path coefficient at the .05 level, and overall model fit was very good ($x^2=149.947$, SRMR=.05, TLI=.922, CFI=.945, NFI=.922, IFI=.945, RMSEA=.090). Figure 4.4 presents all path coefficients.

Figure 4.5. Theory of Planned Behavior Model

As indicated by the model presented in Chart 4.1, 75 percent of the variance in behavioral intentions was explained by the Theory of Planned Behavior model.

Although all paths from the exogenous, latent constructs made significant contributions to the variance explained in behavioral intentions, the perceived behavioral
control component accounted for a vast majority of the variance in behavioral intentions ($\Gamma = .68$).

The paths from both the attitude and subjective norms components to behavioral intentions component were significant yet, surprisingly, quite weak. The path coefficient for attitudes and behavioral intentions was low ($\Gamma = .21$), and the path coefficient from subjective norms to behavioral intentions even lower ($\Gamma = .18$). Therefore, this model yields great support to answer to research question three, in that Perceived Behavioral Control explains the most variance in young voters’ voting intentions.

**Research Question 4**

Research Question 4 was asked to reveal whether the perceptual third-person effect gap exerts a unique normative influence on behavioral intentions not explained by the attitude, subjective norm, or perceived behavioral control components. This question is asked to reveal whether strength of third-person perceptual gap influences desire to vote.

A second extended Theory of Planned Behavior model was tested using Structural Equation Modeling to reveal whether the addition of third-person effect into the model increases variance explained in behavioral intentions. This model adds the “third-person effect” as an exogenous variable to the four latent variables tested in the first model.
The second model includes four paths, from attitudes to behavioral intentions, from subjective norms to behavioral intentions, from perceived behavioral control to behavioral intentions, and from third-person effect to behavioral intentions. With the addition of the third-person effect variable, the model was not significant (p=.539). The path from third-person effect to behavioral intentions was both incredibly weak and negative (Γ = -.02), and the addition of the third-person effect weakened the path from attitudes to behavioral intentions (from [Γ = .21] to [Γ = .17]. Examination of model fit indices revealed the model was not acceptable.

Therefore, structural equation modeling yielded no support for the following model proposed in Research Question 4. Path coefficients for the unspecified model are indicated (see Figure 4.2). Having tested all hypotheses and answered all the research questions, this chapter concludes with a review of the analysis conducted to detect the presence of any order effects.

Control for Order Effects

Control for Message Strategy Order Effects

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to reveal any order effect differences in third-person effect with respect to both issue ads and image ads. Participants in randomly assigned conditions watched issue and image ads in systematically rotated order; some watched an issue ad first, others watched an image ad first. For the “issue or image first” variable, [issimagefirst], participants who
watched an issue ad first were given a value of 1 and students who watched an image ad first were given a value of 2.

Figure 4.6. Theory of Planned Behavior Model with Third-Person Effect

MANOVA results revealed no significant order effects on perceptual bias resulting from first exposure to issue or image advertising, Wilks’ $\Lambda$.986, $F(2, 177)$=1.223, $p$.297. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on each independent variable as a follow-up test to MANOVA. Order did not have a significant individual effect of perceptual bias whether participants were first exposed to issue advertising,
**F(1, 178)= 1.548, p=.216** (see Table 4.25), or image advertising **F(1, 180)= 1.724, p=.191** (see Table 4.26).

Table 4.25. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects- Order and Issue Advertising Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>2.925(a)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.925</td>
<td>1.540</td>
<td>.216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>21.525</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21.525</td>
<td>11.335</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IssImageFirst</td>
<td>2.925</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.925</td>
<td>1.540</td>
<td>.216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>338.009</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>1.899</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>360.438</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>340.934</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R Squared = .009 (Adjusted R Squared = .003)

Table 4.26. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects- Order and Image Advertising Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>3.346(a)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.346</td>
<td>1.724</td>
<td>.191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>32.506</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32.506</td>
<td>16.750</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IssImageFirst</td>
<td>3.346</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.346</td>
<td>1.724</td>
<td>.191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>349.316</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>1.941</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>382.750</td>
<td>182</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>352.662</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R Squared = .009 (Adjusted R Squared = .004)

**Control for Question Order Effects Measuring Third-Person Effect**

Several scholars have tested for effects of question order in third-person research by counterbalancing question order. The results of these studies indicate that question order had no effect on third-person perceptions (Perloff, 1999). Although, given the results of these studies, the threat of order effects seemed minimal, this study built in a control for question order effects.
Question order of items measuring the self, other, and friend in response to each political ad was also systematically rotated. After viewing one type of political advertisement, the participant may have been asked questions about the self, then other, then friends, and after viewing another ad, questions order may have been friends, other, self.

MANOVA was conducted in order to reveal whether question order had significant effect on magnitude of perceptual bias, or third-person effect. The issue/image first variable [issimagefirst] is used as the fixed factor in the equation, as participants who watched an image advertisement first answered the third-person effect measurement questions in a different order than participants who watched image advertisement second. Therefore, any differences in bias resulting from question order would be captured by using the issue/image first variable as a predictor of perceptual bias. MANOVA results reveal no significant order effect on perceptual bias resulting from question order Wilks’ Λ=.984, F(2, 176)=1.397, p=.250.

Table 4.27 reveals individual tests of question order effects on self-other, self-friend, and other-friend scores; individual results were F(1, 177)=1.682, p=.196, F(1, 177)=1.955, p=.164, F(1, 177)=.311, p=.578, respectively. Thus, question order had no impact on any measure of third-person effect among any reference groups.
Table 4.27. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects. Question Order Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>SOoverall</td>
<td>.799(a)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.799</td>
<td>1.682</td>
<td>.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SFoverall</td>
<td>2.258(b)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.258</td>
<td>1.955</td>
<td>.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OFoverall</td>
<td>.370(c)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.370</td>
<td>.311</td>
<td>.578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>SOoverall</td>
<td>5.174</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.174</td>
<td>10.890</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SFoverall</td>
<td>5.996</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.996</td>
<td>5.192</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OFoverall</td>
<td>22.309</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22.309</td>
<td>18.729</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IssImageFirst</td>
<td>SOoverall</td>
<td>.799</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.799</td>
<td>1.682</td>
<td>.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SFoverall</td>
<td>2.258</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.258</td>
<td>1.955</td>
<td>.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OFoverall</td>
<td>.370</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.370</td>
<td>.311</td>
<td>.578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>SOoverall</td>
<td>84.090</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>.475</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SFoverall</td>
<td>204.393</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>1.155</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OFoverall</td>
<td>210.831</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>1.191</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>SOoverall</td>
<td>89.547</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SFoverall</td>
<td>214.094</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OFoverall</td>
<td>235.078</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>SOoverall</td>
<td>84.889</td>
<td>178</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SFoverall</td>
<td>206.651</td>
<td>178</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OFoverall</td>
<td>211.202</td>
<td>178</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a R Squared = .009 (Adjusted R Squared = .004)
b R Squared = .011 (Adjusted R Squared = .005)
c R Squared = .002 (Adjusted R Squared = -.004)

**Prior Exposure to Treatment Materials**

Actual advertisements sponsored by the official Bush and Kerry campaigns were used as treatment materials in this study; thus, participants were asked questions to insure that prior exposure to the advertisements did not contaminate the results of the study. After viewing each ad, participants were asked to rank their familiarity with the ad, with a score of 1 indicating “very familiar” and a score of 7 indicating “not at all familiar.”
A new variable [familiar] was computed by averaging the values of the responses to the two questions measuring familiarity with the ads. A frequency report was analyzed to reveal the level of prior familiarity participants reported with the advertisements they viewed. Overall, only one participant in the entire sample (less than 1 percent) reported that he or she was “very familiar” with one of the ads. Overall, less than 4 percent of participants reported any level of prior exposure to the treatment ads they viewed. Almost 70 percent (69.8) of participants reported they were “not at all familiar” with either of the ads they viewed. Therefore, prior exposure to the political advertisements selected as treatment materials did not seem to pose a significant threat to the validity of these results.

Having analyzed data and reviewed the results of hypothesis and research question testing, the next chapter turns to a discussion of the results obtained in this chapter.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Relevant academic studies are used to ground this discussion of these exciting results obtained from data analysis; a review of hypotheses and research questions as well as a synopsis of their findings and results are presented in Table 5.1. All research questions and hypotheses are discussed in the order in which they were originally presented and tested along with suggestions for important future research. This chapter concludes with a discussion of limitations of this study and suggestions for future research.

Discussion of Results

Perceptual Component of the Third-Person Effect

Hypothesis One stated that young voters will perceive greater effects of political advertising on others than on themselves. Results of data analysis yielded strong support for this hypothesis, which resonates with other scholarly research in the theoretical area. This result was not particularly surprising given the extensive support for the perceptual component of the third-person effect in scholarly literature (for a review, see Perloff, 1999; also see Park & Salmon, 2005; Reid & Hogg, 2005; Paul et al., 2000; Perloff, 1996; Paul, Salwen, & Dupagne, 2000; Banning et al. 2005; Rucinski & Salmon, 1990; Cohen & Davis, 1991; Paek et al. 2005; Meirick, 2004).
Table 5.1. Presentation of Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses and Research Questions</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1: Young voters will perceive greater effects of political advertising on others than themselves.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>((F(1, 179)= .320, \ p&lt;.05))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1a: Young voters will perceive greater effects of political advertising on themselves than others for messages sponsored by the out-group candidate.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>((F(1, 180)= 2.702, \ p&lt;.05))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1b: Young voters will perceive greater effects of political advertising themselves than others for messages sponsored by the in-group candidate.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>((F(1, 71)= 6.157, \ p&lt;.05))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2: Political involvement will predict the magnitude of third-person effect, such that young voters with high political involvement will exhibit a greater TPE than those with low political involvement.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>((F(5, 174)= .723, \ p= .607))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3: Negative messages sponsored by the out-group candidate will produce a stronger third-person effect than positive messages or message sponsored by the in-group candidate.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>((F(2, 173)= 7.629, \ p&lt;.000))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ1: Does political advertising message strategy (positive issue, positive image, negative issue, negative image) influence the strength of the third-person effect?</td>
<td>Negative issue ads exert strongest influence</td>
<td>((F(1, 173)= 7.742, \ p&lt;.05))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2a: Does magnitude of perceptual bias significantly and positively predict reported intention to vote?</td>
<td>Only among in-group participants</td>
<td>((R^2 = .124, \ R^2_{adj} = .111, F(1,70)= 9.871, \ p=.002))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2b: Does magnitude of perceptual bias significantly and positively predict support for restrictions on political advertising?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>((R^2 = .000, \ R^2_{adj} = -.005, F(1,178)= .027, \ p&gt;.001))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2c: Does magnitude of perceptual bias significantly and positively predict support for bans on political advertising?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>((R^2 = .000, \ R^2_{adj} = -.005, F(1,178)= .027, \ p&gt;.001))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ3: Do subjective norms, attitudes, or perceived behavioral control explain the most variance in young adults’ intentions to vote?</td>
<td>PBC</td>
<td>(R= .68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ4: Does the third-person effect exert a unique normative influence on behavioral intentions not explained by the attitude, subjective norm, or PBC?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Model not explained.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, support for a third-person perceptual bias is extended to a new population seemingly neglected by third-person effect research, the young electorate. Age is a central factor to understanding the various dimensions of the third-person effect (Rucinski & Salmon, 1999). Although not included specifically in predictions made by the third-person effect, age of message recipient does affect the level of perceived influence on the other. Thus, it is surprising that scholars have yet to identify the actual influence of age on third-person effect. This study documents strong third-person effects among young voters; future research must tap into how this perceptual phenomenon may vary across different age groups in the electorate.

Rucinski and Salmon (1990) assert young voters are more likely to perceive strong media influence on voting behaviors than are older members of the electorate. It follows, then, that young voters are more likely to report higher levels of perceptual bias than older voters. This study lends evidence of a strong third-person effect among the young electorate, and, due to the emergence of third-person perception in surveys and experiments employing a variety of message types ranging from television drama to political advertising, confidence in its generality is increasing (Perloff, 1996). Useful future studies could compare third-person effect in older and younger populations to draw specific conclusions regarding exactly how age affects third-person perceptual bias. Such would have interesting implications for message design as the theory is utilized to inform pro-social messages such as those in voting enhancement campaigns.
Young voters are generally more socially impressionable and more influenced by media (Rucinski & Salmon, 1990). Identifying perceived effects of political advertising and subsequent behaviors enables the message strategist to target more effectively the young electorate both with campaign advertising and voting enhancement campaigns. Specific prescriptions and recommendations for such strategy are presented later in the chapter.

Given that within-group treatment design of this study exposed all participants to either in-group or out-group sponsored messages, the potentially differing effects of messages sponsored by an in-group or out-group candidate merited further examination. Thus, Hypothesis 1.A and Hypothesis 1.B were written to predict differences in perceptual bias based on message sponsorship.

Hypothesis 1.A predicted young voters will perceive greater effects of political advertising on others than themselves for messages sponsored by the out-group candidate. Consistent with the literature that predicts presence of a third-person effect when a media stimulus may induce an undesirable consequence or behavior (David et al., 2004), young voters perceived others to be more influenced than themselves by messages sponsored by the out-group candidate.

This finding yields interesting implications far beyond the fact that young voters believe others are more affected by an out-group sponsored messages. This finding on its face is novel in that it reveals that it may be very hard for out-group candidates to
actually persuade young voters and ultimately procure their voters. Given the strength of the perceptual bias for messages sponsored by the out-group candidate, it is alarming that young voters may enter the election season with their minds made up, ready to reject out-group sponsored messages that may influence the other but certainly not the self.

This state would be alarming in that it would leave little room for education on the issues and informed discussion in the young electorate. If young voters are dismissing the effects of out-group sponsored messages, they limiting their potential for informed political debate. They may or may not know one side of the issues (the one they already support), but the strength of this perceptual bias may indicate they are unwilling to know the other one. Extending this finding to other contexts beyond a political realm, this finding may indicate that young message recipients may give little credence to messages advocating actions not in line with their current thinking. Such would be troublesome for messages advocating pro-social or healthy behaviors; if message recipients immediately discount personal effects of messages not in line with their current thinking then persuasive efforts would rarely lead to a desired end.

Conversely, Hypothesis 1.B predicted young voters will perceive greater effects of political advertising on themselves than others for messages sponsored by the in-group candidate. Media messages with pro-social or desirable consequences may induce this first-person, or reverse third-person, effect (Meirick, 2005b). Banning et al.
(2005) documented the presence of first- and third-person effects induced by exposure to positive and negative political advertisements, respectively.

However, if desirable or undesirable consequences are key predictors of the first- or third-person effect, then it seems more likely that in- or out-group sponsored messages are more accurate treatments to tap into these perceptual biases. In the Banning et al. (2005) study, even a negative message would seem to have desirable consequences as long if it were sponsored by the in-group candidate. Thus, given the current state of the literature with respect to first-person effects and political advertising, further exploration of the area seemed pressing.

First-person effects have been documented in many scholarly studies (see Perloff 1996 for an earlier review; Meirick 2005b; Banning et al., 2005, Reid & Hogg, 2005; David, Lie, & Myser, 2004). Yet, Meirick (2005b) argues, “first-person effects are somewhat controversial; some studies have failed to find them (p. 838).” In fact, David, Liu, and Myser (2004) recognize somewhat of a “malleability” in the demonstration of a first-person effect (p. 230).

However, this study reveals surprisingly strong evidence of a first-person effect and demonstrates that Meirick’s (2005) above conclusion may be premature; certainly scholars cannot abandon first-person effect studies. This study yields encouraging potential for a vibrant stream of first-person effect research, and the applied value of such research underscores the importance of this line of research.
Tapping into and using first-person effects may be quite valuable in political and health contexts, for voting enhancement and health promotion campaigns. Perloff (1996) claimed “on the pro-social front, it would be interesting to explore whether the third-person effect can be used for socially useful purposes” (p. 197). This study documents the potential for such as it identifies a strong first-person effect that may indeed inform message strategy for pro-social campaigns. Davison (1983) argued compellingly that perceptual bias will affect behavior. If the self is perceived to be more affected than the other for messages with desirable consequences, this perceptual bias may enhance and even foster adherence or adaptation of pro-health or political behaviors such as voting and other forms of political involvement.

Research has focused on the behavioral consequences of third-person effects but must extend it line of scholarly reasoning to behaviors induced by first-person effects. The first-person effect documented in this study of young voters and political advertising holds powerful implications for message design in a political context; voting enhancement campaigns must consider the results of this and similar future studies and tap into the first-person effect to increase the likelihood of positive behavioral outcomes.

Given that first-person effects in this study were found for in-group sponsored messages, then get-out-and-vote messages sponsored or delivered by other “desireable” or supported sponsors in the young electorate may be quite persuasive. One may
surmise that utilizing popular icons of the young electorate as spokespeople may yield a first-person effect and, ultimately, increase behavioral adherence to pro-social messages.

Further, Banning et al. (2005) argue that there is a dearth in scholarly literature in knowledge of the behavioral consequences of first-person effects, and attention to more socially desirable stimuli. For example, messages promoting civic engagement and voting that focus on the positive benefits of such involvement on society may induce a first-person perceptual bias, in that the self thinks that he or she is most influenced by the message. However, a message promoting the same outcome that focuses on the disastrous consequences of low voting rates among the young electorate may trigger a third-person effect, in which the message recipient believes others are more affected than he or she is.

If this presumed influence translates into actual influence, then it would follow that the positive message triggering the first-person effect would be more likely to encourage pro-social or pro-health behaviors. So, it seems that positive messages with desirable sponsorship may ultimately be the most persuasive; this proposition will be further grounded later in this discussion. Given the still low voting rates among the young electorate, the applied value of this finding cannot be neglected, and these results lay a very important theoretical foundation for future research informing voting enhancement campaigns.
As Perloff (1996) argues, the third-person effects that matter in the real world are those that are tinged by political ideologies...these are the third-person perceptions that influence action” (p. 191). Results of this study document the presence of the first-person effect; future studies must continue to test both first- and third-person effect to reveals if the power of the perceptual bias can be used to induce positive behaviors in an overall campaign context. If so, the message strategist may realize the value of focus on desirable outcome. This is not to neglect, however, the power of negativity in political advertising or the powerful interaction of message tone and sponsorship, which will be reviewed later in this chapter.

Involvement and the Third-Person Effect

Age, education, and political involvement are important moderating factors of the dimensions of the third-person effect (Rucinski & Salmon, 1990). Price et al. (1998) argue that “available evidence suggests that third-person effects are most common among highly involved audience members” (p. 4). This line of thought, along with Perloff’s (1999) reasoning surrounding the moderating role of personal involvement and third-person effect led to Hypothesis Two, which predicted that extent of third-person perceptual bias would increase as political involvement increases. As Davison (1983) argued and Price et al. (1998) note research has confirmed, strong partisans with high personal stakes in the situation are the most likely to perceive strong media effects on others.
Yet, surprisingly the results of this study did not support this hypothesis, as level of political involvement did not moderate third-person effect. One theoretical explanation may enhance understanding of the failure to support Hypothesis Two. Price et al. (1998) exposed students to advertising claiming the torture of Jews by Nazi Germany was exaggerated then measured its perceived suitability for publication. Results of the study showed that third-person effects and decisions on whether or not to publish the advertisements were largely based on the perceived personal impact of the message (Price et al., 1998).

Thus, ego and personal involvement with the message were not the strong moderators of third-person effect they were initially conceived to be. Price et al. (1998) posit “to the extent that perceptions of the ad’s impact altered people’s support for or opposition to its publication, it was perceived impact on the self- not on the others- that proved influential” (emphasis added, p. 22).

These results provide a possible theoretical explanation for the failure to support Hypothesis 2. Perhaps highly-involved participants in this study judged themselves to be their own best barometer of the effects of the message; as they rejected the message, perhaps they assumed others did as well. Therefore, neither the self nor the other was presumed to be affected by the message, as high involvement levels may have essentially neutralized the third-person perceptual bias. This conclusion is consistent
with Price et al.’s (1998) finding that perceived impact on self was ultimately the strongest predictor of third-person effect.

Garramone (1984) argues, “voters highly involved in politics are more likely to be negatively influenced regarding the commercial’s target than less involved voters” (p. 259). Such suggests more of a positive effect of involvement on first-person than third-person perceptual bias. Although the involvement hypothesis was not supported in this study, this conclusion provides intriguing areas for future research.

Research should identify the effects of involvement on first-person effect; it seems that highly involved voters may be more likely to report that certain messages affect themselves more than others. Perhaps more involved voters believe their involvement and political savvy grants them a more privileged position in message consumption than less involved voters. If highly politically involved message recipients are indeed their own best barometer of message strength and if the message is accepted, involvement subsequently seems to predict greater latitude for persuasion.

The Price et al. (1998) finding also lends support for the applied value of first-person effect research reviewed above in that perceived personal impact can be quite influential with regard to behavior, as perceived impact on self was the most powerful predictor of supports for restrictions on advertising in their study. Such reiterates the value of inducing first-person perceptual biases; perceived influence on the self may translate into persuasion and, ultimately, performance of the desired behavior.
Message Tone and Sponsorship: Implications for Perceptual Bias

Hypothesis Three predicted negative messages sponsored by the out-group candidate would yield stronger perceived effects on others than positive messages or messages sponsored by the in-group candidate. Results of this study proffer strong support of Hypothesis Three; the interaction between message tone (positive and negative) and sponsorship (in-group or out-group) was significant and revealed a fascinating interaction plot.

The combination of negative message tone and out-group candidate sponsorship produced the strongest third-person effect. In addition, the two independent variables, message tone and sponsorship, also had individual significant main effects on third-person perceptual bias.

Earlier in this discussion, it was revealed that out-group sponsored messages induced the strongest third-person perceptual biases in this study. As discussed, the Banning et al. (2005) and the Paek et al. (2005) studies found exposure to negative messages resulted in stronger third-person effects than exposure to positive messages. Although these findings have unique individual implications, as discussed earlier, identifying the effects of different combinations of message tone and sponsorship offers much more theoretical “meat” to understanding political advertising effects.

The finding that the combination of message tone and message sponsor interact significantly has many exciting implications for political message design. First,
exposure to positive messages sponsored by the in-group candidate resulted in the strongest first-person effects in this study. Such suggests that candidate loyalty may be strengthened not by attacks on the opposition but instead by exposure to positive messages sponsored by the in-group candidate. Negativity may be a powerful message tool, but perhaps positive messages are ultimately have the most potential to inform the electorate and reaffirm existing candidate loyalties.

Such would suggest that a popular incumbent would best be served by focusing on positive messages that induce first-person perceptual biases in the electorate. Although negative, in-group sponsored messages also induced a first-person effect, the effect size was significantly stronger for positive, in-group sponsored messages. This finding offers thrilling new evidence from a novel theoretical standpoint; incumbents who have enjoyed long tenure and electoral success may be better served by positive message strategy.

If these positive messages are inducing—and significantly so—strong first-person effects, then the behavioral effects of the first-person perceptual bias could be extremely important for the candidate. Instead of dismissing message effects as more powerful to the other than to oneself, first-person effects may ultimately lead to stronger, and more informed, persuasion.

Conversely, negative, out-group messages induced the strongest third-person effects in this study, followed by positive out-group sponsored messages. Hernnson
(2000) asserts “attack ads can be an important component of challenger campaigns because they can help break voters of the habit of casting their ballots for the incumbent” (p. 200). Therefore, often challengers, who are more likely to lag in the polls and have less existing popularity than incumbents, may feel a stronger need to attack.

Yet, these out-group sponsored messages resulted in a significantly strong third-person perceptual bias in this study. Perhaps the little-known candidate trying to exert more of a voice in the political arena should decrease his or her reliance on negative messages, as voters may dismiss the persuasive impact of the message to others but not to the self. This is where the behavioral component of third-person effect with respect to voting behaviors becomes incredibly important.

Perhaps exposure to negative, out-group sponsored messages does result in a third-person perceptual bias; what ultimately matters to the candidate is whether this bias translates into voting behaviors. Yet, the behavioral component of the third-person effect states that behaviors are taken to control for perceived effects of a message on others. So, a voter exposed to a message sponsored by the out-group candidate may perceive it to be more powerful on others than on him- or herself; this perceptual bias would make that person more likely to vote for a supported candidate to control for the effects of the ad that may make others vote for the opposition.
Therefore, even negative messages in political advertising sponsored by the out-group candidate may do little to garner new votes for the sponsoring candidate. Behavioral effects of political advertising on voting behaviors are discussed later in this chapter, though, and suggest the behavioral component is far more complicated than reducing it to a simple “if... then” relationship.

Theoretically, this specific area of academic inquiry appears to be relatively untapped. Other conclusions drawn from understanding of the psychological mechanisms of the third-person effect may enlighten further discussion of this fascinating finding.

Perceptual bias resulting from exposure to negative political messages has been well-documented in scholarly literature (Banning et al., 2005, Paek et al., 2005, Cohen & Davis, 1991). Scholars (see Meirick, 2004) have also identified that messages from trusted sources, such as the favored political candidate, induce significant first-person effects; this perceptual bias reversal seemingly supports self-enhancement and ego motivation explanations of first- and third-person effects. Yet, given the results of this study, conceptualizing and understanding first-person effects as simply resulting from desirable, positive message or undesirable and third-person effects the results of undesirable or negative messages seems inadequate and much too simplistic.

Although both message valence and sponsorship credibility have sound support as explanations of perceptual bias, third-person research has yet to identify the joint
effects of tone and sponsorship. These results reveal that even negative messages may induce first-person perceptual biases as long as they are sponsored by the in-group candidate. Yet, positive messages sponsored by the out-group candidate still resulted in third-person perceptual biases.

Thus, it seems that testing the two independent variables, message tone and sponsorship, in isolation is inadequate for getting to the “heart” of the third-person perceptual bias. The fact that the two variables work significantly in concert suggests the picture is much more complicated than positing third-person effects result only from negative messages or messages with opposition sponsorship. In a similar vein, the significant main interaction effect of sponsorship and tone illustrates the simplicity of arguing that first-person effects are the result of positive messages or messages sponsored by the favored candidate.

Thus, as third-person research continues its active and productive itinerary, the results of this study reveal that attention to and identification of interactions among a variety of factors are crucial to the vitality of future research. The interaction between sponsorship and tone holds many important implications for message design; analysis of the impact of message tone and message strategy on strength of third-person effect revealed equally important findings.
Message Strategy and the Third-Person Effect

Research Question One was asked to reveal if and how political advertising message strategy (positive issue, positive image, negative issue, negative image) influences the strength of the third-person effect. Interestingly, in this equation neither message strategy (issue or image) nor message tone (positive or negative) exerted independent significant main effects on third-person perceptual bias. However, the interaction of message strategy and tone was significant, even when controlling for message sponsorship by the in-group or out-group candidate.

Exposure to negative issue advertisements resulted in the strongest third-person perceptual bias, followed by negative image then positive image advertising message strategies. Positive, issue advertisements were the only combination of tone and strategy with a positive mean, indicating the presence of a first-person effect. Overall, stronger third-person perceptual biases were present in image conditions than in issue advertising conditions.

Research in political advertising research provides several theoretical foundations from which to interpret and understand these fascinating results. Roddy and Garramone (1988) revealed a message strategy differential in their negative advertising research; issue advertisements were more positively evaluated than image advertisements. As reviewed earlier, explanation for this may lay in the fact that engaging the opponent’s issues in advertising is expected, fair, and justified within
political discourse, especially given their informative value and veneer of respect (Louden, 1990); similar arguments could logically be made for issue and image discussion in positive messages as well.

Therefore, it follows that positive issue advertisements would induce the strongest first-person effect. As stated the in the review of results of Hypothesis Three above, it is well-documented that messages with desirable outcomes are more likely to induce first-person effects. Those findings, coupled with those of Roddy and Garramone (1988) and Louden (1990) revealing the informative power of issue advertising, provide substantial theoretical support for this novel finding.

Issue advertising is perceived as fair and informative, and positive messages are more likely to result in first-person perceptual biases. Participants in positive issue advertising conditions had the strongest and only first-person effect when testing influence of the interaction between message tone and message strategy on perceptual bias.

This finding seems logical and quite intuitive given prior research on negative message strategies and makes interesting contributions to third-person effect research with strong heuristic value. However, the surprising finding that exposure to positive image advertising produced third-person perceptions required a more challenging explanation.
Given that informative value (Louden, 1990) and credibility (Meirick, 2004) of a message positively correlate with perceived effectiveness of the message on the self, message recipients may be more hesitant to report strong effects on self for image advertising, even if the message is positive. Such perceived lack of informative value and fairness in image advertising seems to trump the desirability of the positive message tone, thus resulting in a third-person effect.

So, the results of this study indicate that message credibility and information may be a better predictor of first-person perceptual bias than positive or negative tone. This compelling conclusion illustrates the importance of scholarly research testing not only message tone but also message strategy. Third-person effect political advertising research has been limited to focus on differing effects of positive and negative advertisements (Banning et al., 2005; Paek et al., 2005). In fact, in general, scholarly research in political advertising seems so focused on the effects of positive and negative advertising that message strategy effects become relatively neglected.

With respect to first-person perceptual bias, message strategy seems to be a more important predictor than even message tone; future research in this area should be conducted to provide further evidence and more sophisticated support for this claim, however. The potential power of first-person effects triggering pro-social and pro-health behaviors further illustrates the importance of this research.
Garramone (1990) found experimental evidence that negative commercials may be more informative than positive advertisements. In fact, the results of the Garramone (1990) study indicated that positive messages may have little or no informational value. Interestingly, the results of this study initially seem inconsistent with the conclusions of Garramone (1990) and third-person research that posits informational value may reverse third-person perceptual biases.

In this study, participants in negative issue message conditions demonstrated the strongest third-person perceptual biases; conversely, positive issue messages induced the strongest first-person effect. Price et al. (1988) found that perceived personal impact was the strongest predictor of third-person perceptual bias; perhaps the informational power of the issue message gives the message strong perceived power while the negative tone transfers this persuasive power from the self to others. With respect to negative messages, it was concluded that something else was at work with message effects in this third-person perceptual phenomenon; positive or negative message tone seemed more important than informational value with respect to perceived effects on the other.

Although message credibility (Louden, 1990) and informational value (Meirick, 2004) may be the strongest predictors of first-person perceptual bias, negative messages induced third-person perceptual biases regardless of message strategy. Even more
fascinating, positive image messages induced third-person effects; only exposure to positive issue advertisements resulted in first-person perceptual bias.

It seems that people believe we are indeed our own best barometers for message effects and that we are much more cautious when acknowledging what exerts strong personal influence. Positive issue messages may be both fair and informative, thus passing the litmus test for strong personal effects. Image messages, which may be perceived as unfair or less mindful, may not pass muster for perceived effects on self whether they are positive or negative.

This conclusion illustrates an exciting difference in first- and third-person perceptual biases with respect to message strategy and tone, in that first-person perceptual biases may emerge less frequently and under more careful deliberation. Further, message tone alone may induce third-person effects while careful attention to message strategy is given prior to reports of first-person perceptual bias.

Perhaps negative message tone may be somewhat of a heuristic cue or information processing shortcut to the recipient who processes a message as more influential to others than to the self. Such is reminiscent of the components of Petty and Cacioppo’s (1991) theorizing on the Elaboration Likelihood Model as well as Eagly and Chaiken’s (1993) work on the Heuristic-Systematic Model.

Elaboration is conceptualized as cognitive effort or extent of willingness to engage message relevant thinking (Petty & Cacioppo, 1991). There are two routes to
persuasion recognized by Petty and Cacioppo (1991), the central route, in which message elaboration and argument scrutiny is high, and the peripheral route, which results in low elaboration and dependence on cognitive shortcuts or heuristic cues such as impression management and source characteristics.

Eagly and Chaiken (1993) conceptualize a comparable process as a validity-seeking model, in which we seek to attain attitudes that are consistent with certain facts. In this theory there are two routes of processing similar to those of Petty and Cacioppo (1991): systematic, which is comprehensive and more analytical, and heuristic, which relies on simple rules such as reliance on source credibility. Capacity and motivation are the major predictors of elaboration in the Heuristic-Systematic Model; similarly, involvement and vested interest are two strong predictors of central route processing (Petty & Cacioppo, 1991) in the Elaboration Likelihood Model.

These predictors may also inform the conclusions drawn in discussion of Hypothesis Three above. Regardless of positive or negative message tone, in-group sponsored messages resulted in first-person effects. Given that involvement is a strong predictor of central route processing (Petty & Cacioppo, 1991), perhaps message recipients are more motivated to elaborate and thus likely to attribute stronger effects on themselves when the message is one sponsored by a candidate that they are both highly involved with and have vested interest in.
Once the energy to process the message is expended, the first-person effect becomes its own cue that, given the expended effort, the self is more influenced than the other. Thus, first-person effect may be a form of justification for increased cognitive expenditure.

A possible explanation for this conclusion lies in Eagly and Chaiken’s (1993) work on the Heuristic-Systematic Processing Model. Unlike Petty and Cacioppo, Eagley and Chaiken (1993) argue that heuristic and systematic processing may be concurrent; in fact, they argue heuristic cues are attended to depending on the processing of systematic cues. For example, if one believes that opinions of experts are credible, he or she will process arguments based on the perceived credibility of the source. Therefore, in-group candidates are initially perceived as credible (a heuristic cue), thus making systematic processing more likely.

A message elaboration explanation has yet to be posited and tested in third-person effect research. Shifting discussion back to message tone and message strategy, perhaps low elaboration motivation may underlie the third-person effects for negative issue and negative image advertising. Although the power of the negative message cannot be overstated, people may be more likely to report greater effects of negativity on others as negative tone may provide an initial processing cue.

Psychological mechanisms triggering first-person effects seem to be much richer. Given that issue but not image ad conditions had significant first-person effects, the
filter that people apply to what affects themselves may be much more involved and reliant on a more advanced cue such as informative value and trustworthiness of a message. Yet, message recipients exposed to negative messages may rely on more on initial, more simplistic cues to attribute stronger effects on others than on the self.

As reviewed earlier and evidenced by Garramone’s (1984) finding that almost three-fourths of voters expressed disapproval of negative advertising, scholars generally agree that, although negativity works, the electorate dislikes an excess of negative ads works (Smith & Kidder, 1996). Louden (1990) argues that heavy dependence on negative advertising may seem contrived and distorted to the electorate. Therefore, regardless of the effectiveness of negativity, the fact that people generally do not admit to liking negativity makes negative message tone a shortcut people can take to attribute greater effects of negativity on others than themselves.

If increased information value and credibility lead to first-person effects, then the strong third-person effects may be the result of an initial cue from message tone. Although a negative message sponsored by the in-group may initially lead to elaboration under the assumptions of Eagly and Chaiken’s Heuristic Systematic Processing Model (1993), the initial reaction is perceptual bias; the self does not like the message so it affects others more. Further research should continue to tease this relationship out and further directly test information processing routes to provide enhanced understanding of third-person effect. Subsequent research should also test
for a three-way interaction between message tone, strategy and sponsorship in order to identify the most powerful message combination on perceptual bias.

It is interesting that negative issue messages produced stronger third-person effects than did negative image messages. If issue discussion is perceived as more informative and fair, it seems that negative issue messages would yield less third-person perceptual biases than negative image advertising unless perceived personal impact made the third-person perceptual bias stronger indeed for issue messages, which may demand more attention and respect with regard to perceived message effects. Although further conclusions and discussion of this differential impact are not within the scope of this study, yet certainly appealing in that the finding certainly merits further exploration.

**Behavioral Predictions of the Third-Person Effect**

Perloff (1996) argued a decade ago that only mild support had been provided for the behavioral component of the third-person effect. A review of current literature indicates that, more than ten years later, the behavioral component has received very modest additional support; Price et al. (2002) concur, and argue that the question of behavioral effects of third-person perceptual bias is still largely unanswered and thus “little progress has been made in linking third-person effect to behavioral outcomes” (p. 6). Yet, as Perloff (1999) acknowledges, few studies have measured actual behavior, leaving the behavioral component of the third-person effect unsubstantiated.
This study asked three research questions to test the behavioral component of the third-person effect; first, Research Question 2.A asked if magnitude of perceptual bias significantly and positively predicted reported intention to vote for the sponsoring candidate of the ad. Quite complex on their face, the results of data analysis in answering this question reveal that the behavioral component of the third-person effect may very well be moderated by a variety of factors—indeed, and intuitively, group membership.

First, intensity of third-person effect significantly, but negatively, predicted intention to vote, such that voting intentions decreased as third-person perceptual bias increased. Given that earlier analyses revealed that the strongest perceptual bias was present among participants who viewed advertisements sponsored by the out-group candidate, it would follow that those participants would be quite unlikely to express any desire to vote for the candidate they do not support.

Further, in-group/out-group membership completely mediated the relationship of third-person effect and intention to vote. Yet, these results fell short of capturing the heart of the question, which sought to reveal the behavioral effects of third-person perceptual bias. Participants in in-group treatment conditions would likely report desire to vote for the sponsoring candidate; given that, the most telling way to answer the proposed research question seemed to be identification of a third-person effect on behavior within that group.
Results of this study reveal strength of third-person effect significantly and positively predicts reported intention to vote within participants in in-group conditions. Although Banning et al. (2005) hypothesized to the contrary, they too found that third-person effect was a significant and positive predictor of intention to vote for the sponsoring candidate of a political advertisement with a negative message strategy.

Yet, this study’s overall results were not entirely consistent with those of Banning et al. (2005); strength of third-person effect only positively correlated with reported intention to vote among in-group membership participants. Banning et al. (2005) did not control for in- or out-group membership by limiting their focus to message strategy.

Further, Banning et al.’s (2005) results raise questions with regard to their purported support for the behavioral component of third-person effect. They argue that “people are more likely to say they are going to vote if an ad carries an attack” and that respondents “felt others would be more affected by political attack ads and yet said those same attack ads were more likely to make them want to vote” (p. 18).

Yet, close review of Banning et al.’s methods reveals that the ANOVA equation they used to support this claim includes only message type (positive or negative) and reported intention to vote. They make a spurious conclusion that negative messages produced the strongest third-person effect, which predicted voting behaviors.
However, based on the results Banning et al. (2005) report, actual extent of third-person effect was not even tested in that particular model.

Some methodological considerations arise upon review of the Banning et al. (2005) study that demonstrated the importance of re-testing the behavioral component of third-person effect with regard to voting behaviors; the results of this study are not consistent with that study. In sum, it appears that extent of perceptual bias positively predicts intention to vote for the sponsoring candidate only among members of his or her in-group.

This finding is exciting documentation of the behavioral component of the third-person effect. When watching ads sponsored by the in-group candidate, participants with stronger perceptual biases were more likely to report intention to vote for the sponsoring candidate. Thus, perceptual bias had powerful consequences on behavioral intentions to vote in this study.

This stirring finding may be quite important for message design encouraging voting behaviors; support of the electorate means little to a candidate if his or her constituents do not make their way to the polls. Thus, as the above discussion reveals the different message strategies that induce strong third-person effects, candidates very well may tap into and utilize these findings to realize the potential of the bias in mobilizing their voters.
Research Question 2.B asked if magnitude of perceptual bias predicted support for restrictions on negative political advertising, and, in a more extreme measure of the behavioral control component, Research Question 2.C asked whether magnitude of perceptual bias predicted support for bans of political advertising. The answer to both questions was a firm no; interestingly, extent of perceptual bias in this study did not predict support for restrictions or support for bans on political advertising.

This finding is inconsistent with those of other studies that have found support for the behavioral component of third-person effect with respect to censorship of advertising (Shah, Faber, & Youn, 1999), of pornography (Gunther, 1995), of television violence (Hoffner & Buchanen, 2002), and even of political advertising (Salwen & Dupagne, 1999).

In his seminal article on the third-person effect, Davison (1983; also quoted in Salwen & Dupagne, 1999) argued:

“the phenomenon of censorship offers what is perhaps the most interesting field for speculation about the role of the third-person effect. Insofar as faith and morals are concerned, at least, it is difficult to find a censor who will admit to having been adversely affected by the information whose dissemination is to be prohibited. Even the censor’s friends are usually safe from pollution. It is the general members of the public that must be protected. Or else, it is youthful members of the general public, or those with impressionable minds. (p. 14, emphasis added).
Thus, Davison (1983) notes the particular vulnerability of the young mind with respect to the “other,” whom the censor must protect. Yet, in this first third-person effect research testing the behavioral component specifically on the young members of the electorate, there was no correlation between third-person effect and support for any censorship of political advertising, in the form of restrictions or bans on negative advertising.

These findings may inform the scholarly debate on the effects of negative political advertising on the electorate through a novel theoretical lens, measuring perceived effects of negativity on others. In the strongest and most classic experimental support for the demobilization hypothesis, Ansolabehere & Iyengar (1995) found that attack advertising demobilizes the electorate and decreases political efficacy, trust in the election process and candidates, and probability of voting.

Davison (1983) asserts, given our own perceived personal immunity to media influence, we assume the role of censor to protect others, particularly young minds. Although the results of this study demonstrated that the other was perceived to be more influenced by political advertising than the self, this perceptual bias was not compelling enough to trigger support for restriction of negative advertising. If negative attack advertising decreased efficacy and political involvement in the self, this effect would certainly be strong enough to trigger protection of the vulnerable other. Salwen
and Dupagne (1999) found that perceived general media influence was the key predictor in support of restriction on negative political advertising.

Perhaps the classic scholarly debates on negativity and political involvement may be further informed by shifting some attention from self-reports to reports of perceived effects of negativity on others. Scholars advancing a mobilization hypothesis of negativity, such as Finkel and Geer (1988), argue negativity in political advertising may increase enthusiastic support for the candidate, heighten political involvement, and motivate the electorate to learn more about the sponsoring candidate. If negativity is perceived as strong enough to affect others but not detrimental enough to the political process to censor, then it may actually be an important part of young voters’ political participation.

This finding is quite interesting in that political advertising, be it positive or negative, is consumed by young voters unwilling to support its censorship, even if it does encourage others to support an out-group candidate. Such illustrates the perceived importance of political advertising among young voters who do not support its censorship or bans imposed on it.

Rucinkski and Salmon (1990) argued that people “have long been concerned with the potentially powerful effects of mass media content-on others… this concern, in turn, has been translated into paternalistic efforts to ‘protect’ audience members or the system from dangerous or disruptive communication” (p. 361). It seems that, if young
voters found negative advertising to persuasive yet also “dangerous” or “disruptive” to
the political process and their peers’ involvement in it, they would less reticent to
restrict or ban it.

**Linking TPE and TPB**

Neuwirth and Frederick (2002) argue research attempting to document third-
person behavioral effects, has “all but ignored widely used and obvious behavioral
theories” which include Health Belief Model, Protection Motivation Theory, and Theory
of Planned Behavior (p. 120). This study answers the call proffered by Neuwirth and
Frederick (2002) and, in Research Question Four, asks if third-person effect fits within
the Theory of Planned Behavior theoretical framework, exerting a normative influence
on behavioral intentions not accounted for by the model in its current form.

Before testing the expanded model, Research Question Three was asked to test
the traditional components of the Theory of Planned Behavior Model sans the Third-
Person Effect component in order to reveal if attitudes, subjective norms, or perceived
behavioral control exerts the most influence on young adults’ intentions to vote in the
2004 Presidential election.

The last study using the Theory of Reasoned Action to predict voting behaviors
was more than ten years ago (Singh et al., 1995); given that a review of scholarly
literature yielded no research using Theory of Planned to predict voting behaviors of
the electorate since Netemeyer et al. (1991), the time was ripe for application of TPB in that context.

Structural equation modeling revealed that, overall, the Theory of Planned Behavior Model was a significant predictor of behavioral intentions to vote in the young electorate. Other scholars have likewise found that the perceived behavioral control component often negates the significance of paths between the attitude and subjective norms components (see Netemeyer et al., 2001). Further, the significant path coefficient between perceived behavioral control and behavioral intentions was overwhelmingly strong in the overall model.

Although the attitude and subjective norms were significant predictors of behavioral intentions, the path coefficients between the two components and behavioral intentions were quite weak ($\Gamma = .21$ and $\Gamma = .18$, respectively). Ultimately, these behavioral intentions were strong, significant predictors of voting behaviors. Thus, given the incredibly strong relationship between perceived behavioral control and behavioral intentions, the perceived behavioral control component may hold tremendous potential as an area for inducing voting behaviors in the young electorate if they can be made to realize and maximize their own control over their voting behaviors.

The weak relationships between attitudes/behavioral intentions and subjective norms/behavioral intentions were particularly surprising given the results of the Kim and Hunter (1993) meta-analysis, which revealed a very strong relationship between
attitudes and behavior \((r = .69)\) in high match between attitude and behavior studies, slightly lower in moderate match studies \((r=.62)\), and weakest, yet still fairly strong, in low match studies \((r=.46)\). Kim and Hunter (1993) also posit the most important corresponding elements in attitude-behavior relationship studies are action and target.

The attitude-behavior measure in this study could certainly be considered “high-match”; participants were asked to specify their feelings toward voting for President of the United States in the 2004 election. Thus, the attitude matched the behavior with respect to time (2004), action (voting), context (election), and target (for President of the United States). As such, it is incredibly interesting that attitudes were such weak predictors of voting behaviors.

Singh et al. (1995) found that direct measurement of attitudes explained significantly more variance in voting intentions than did using a summative model of belief strength and belief importance. Thus, this study measured attitudes directly, which likely increased the value of the attitudinal component in the overall model but certainly not to an impressive level.

In the overall model, the subjective norm/behavioral intention path was also significant although had an even weaker path coefficient \((\Gamma = .18)\). This finding was also intriguing, given Zaller’s (1987) assertion that exposure to mass media and interpersonal communication are key contributors to political norms. As voting is certainly a political norm, it follows that subjective norms may quite influential on
young adults’ behavioral intentions to; but indeed they were not. Making this finding even more perplexing, many scholars have acknowledged the effect of important interpersonal groups including family and friends on voting intentions (see Singh et al., 1995).

Yet, Singh et al. (1995) found that the subjective norm component was not a significant predictor of voting intentions. The attitudinal component of the model significantly predicted voting intentions in the Singh et al. (1995) study although it explained a still rather limited amount of variance in behavioral intentions to vote \( (r^2 = .27) \). However, Singh et al. (1995) did not measure or use the perceived behavioral control component in their Theory of Reasoned Action model, underscoring the importance of using the Theory of Planned Behavior in this study, which ultimately demonstrated the overwhelming power of perceived behavioral control in predicting voting behaviors.

Further, literature on voting behaviors through 1988 states that voting behaviors should be relatively free of control problems, which supports use of Theory of Reasoned Action as the framework for analyzing voting behaviors (Netemeyer, 1995). The results of this study, however, indicate that perceived behavioral control may be a very important component of voting behavior research. Netemeyer et al. (1991) offer further support for this notion with their acknowledgment that “less variation in
intention has been explained by attitudes and subjective norms; this observation suggests that additional determinants of intention (i.e. PBC) may exist” (p. 90).

Perceived behavioral control was indeed a significant and strong predictor of voting behaviors of the young electorate in this study. Several explanations of this finding are offered; yet, given the dearth of scholarly literature using Theory of Planned Behavior to predict voting behaviors of the electorate, particularly the young electorate, future research is needed to expand and enhance further discussion.

Results of this study suggest perhaps the attitudinal and subjective norm components may lose some of their significance in TPB models studying positive or pro-social behaviors. First, for behaviors such as voting, it is unlikely that young adults would hold negative attitudes toward voting. In a similar vein, young adults would likely rarely believe important others do not expect them to vote or that these others would not vote themselves. Few would deny voting in Presidential elections is an important act of civic engagement. These pervasive positive attitudes and subjective norms would also likely surround other behaviors such as smoking cessation or condom use.

So, for very pro-social behaviors such as voting, attitudinal and subjective norm components may explain little variance in behavioral intentions as they are likely to be more universally positive. Thus, it seems quite logical that lack or presence of external factors predicting voting would the best predictor of voting intentions. This finding is
exciting for message design in voting enhancement campaigns; increasing control beliefs in young voters is likely much more feasible than changing attitudes or the subjective norms surrounding voting behaviors. Thus, these results offer great and encouraging potential for campaigns tapping into what really matters with regard to behavioral intentions to vote—perceived behavioral control.

Ajzen (1990) recommends research measurement to reveal possible control factors that might inhibit the behavior under investigation. Thus, in addition to measuring control beliefs, this study also asked participants whether any of the following six external factors may be prevent their voting in the 2004 Presidential election as well as a general “other” category: failure to meet registration deadlines, failure to obtain absentee ballot, lack of transportation to poll, unknown polling location, and no time to vote.

For each six of the factors, including the “other” category, less than 10 percent of participants indicated that it would prevent their voting in the election. However, almost 30 percent (28.9) percent of participants indicated that the inability to get an absentee ballot or travel home may prevent their voting in the 2004 Presidential election.

In addition to the theoretical implications drawn about the importance of the perceived behavioral control component in a model predicting pro-social behaviors such as voting, this finding also offers unique applied contribution to inform message
design in voting enhancement campaigns. Given that young adults’ perceived behavioral control was an extremely strong predictor of behavioral intentions, which were in turn a strong predictor of self-reported behaviors, campaigns may want to direct attention in public information campaigns to the process of voting via absentee ballot.

Regardless of attitude or normative influence, if a voter does not have a ballot he or she is unable to vote. Therefore, young voters must be educated on how to receive absentee ballots as well as salient deadlines. Voting enhancement campaigns seem to spend disturbingly little time building control beliefs and reducing perceived obstacles preventing voting behaviors. Instead of a myriad of celebrity voices telling young voters why they should vote or why voting is important, these campaign dollars may be better spent by voices telling young voters how, when, and where to vote.

In the Theory of Planned Behavior model, perceived behavioral control may have a statistically significant and direct impact on behavior in addition to its effect on behavioral intentions; yet, for a more volitional behavior such as voting, PBC may enhance prediction of intention but not of actual behavior (Netemeyer et al., 1991). Such was the case in this study; a direct path between PBC and intentions in the model reduced the significance of model fit. Thus, young voters in this study based their intentions on the extent to which voting was in their control, and behavioral intention reflected perceived lack of voting efficacy.
This study answers Neuwirth and Frederick’s (2002) call for research unifying the third-person effect with behavioral theories. The results of this study revealed that there were no significant paths between the third-person perceptual component and behavioral intentions. Thus, third-person effect did not account for any increased explained variance in behavioral intentions whether it was placed as its own unique component within the subjective norm or attitudinal components.

The behavioral component of the third-person effect predicts message recipients will engage in behavior to control for the perceived media influence on others. This line of reasoning informed this study’s exploration of a possible link between third-person effect and Theory of Planned Behavior, as both models are useful predictors of human behavior. Yet, path coefficients between third-person perceptions and behavioral intention were very low; there was no direct influence of third-person effect on actual behavior.

Indeed, this study garnered support for the behavioral component of third-person effect, in that, among participants in in-group conditions, extent of third-person effect predicted desire to vote for the sponsoring candidate. Yet, in the overall model, third-person perceptual bias did not account for any significant variance in voting intentions not explained by the current components of the model.

Understanding of the failure to find a significant path between third-person effect and voting intentions may follow similar logic used to explain the weak
relationships between the attitudinal and subjective norms components with behavioral intentions. Perceptual bias, in the overall picture, seems to take a theoretical “backseat” to control over voting behaviors.

This finding was certainly very disappointing in that there was no support for a new model predicting voting behaviors in the young electorate; however, these results should not discourage future research uniting third-person effect with behavioral theories. Perhaps third-person perceptual bias may be a much earlier predictor of voting intention, one based on personality traits. Characteristics such as competitiveness or media skepticism may translate into perceptual bias; with time, people who demonstrate these traits may be more likely to engage in behaviors to control for perceptual bias.

Thus, this model, measuring voting behaviors just before an election, may have been measured too “late” in the formation of political involvement behaviors. With time, the behavioral effects of perceptual bias may be erased or ameliorated by control beliefs over voting behaviors. Although not in the scope of this study, future research should identify character traits of those demonstrating high levels of perceptual bias.

The time for scholarly research to fully explore the intuitive and potentially powerful link between theories of public opinion and persuasion is upon us. Despite Singh et al.’s (1995) recognition that “particularly needed are theories that facilitate an enhanced understanding of voter behavior” (p. 38), their study was the most recent to
test the Theory of Reasoned Action or Theory of Planned Behavior as a predictor of voting behaviors. Given the strength of the perceived behavioral control component as a predictor of voting intentions in this study, it seems pressing to further explore voting behaviors from a Theory of Planned Behavior context. Future research should be conducted to test for influence of third-person perceptual bias on behaviors within the framework of other behavioral theories.

**Reliability and Validity**

The factorial experimental design with random assignment employed in this study allowed the researcher to control the who, what, when, where, and how, which is critical to the establishment of internal validity and to substantiate claims of causation (Gray, 2004). Although the design enables achievement of strong internal validity, experimental design imposes additional considerations on the researcher with regard to enhancing external validity. As Campbell and Stanley (1963) acknowledge, “the selection of designs strong in both types of validity is obviously [the] ideal” (p. 5).

Several measures were taken by the researcher to achieve strong external validity, which Gray (2004) recognizes as “the extent to which it is possible to generalize from the data to a larger population” (p. 91). Gray (2004) posits the researcher can make a case to enhance generalization by constructing reasoned arguments that demonstrate the generalizeability of the results; this section will make this case through a review of several strengths of this study.
First, participants in this study closely matched the demographic under investigation—young voters between the ages of 18 and 24. However, the participants were enrolled in a university, and education may very well co-vary with involvement. Although the voting rates among this sample were actually quite consistent with those nationally, actual differences in the population may be revealed through subsequent research, illustrating the importance of replication.

Furthermore, participants in this study were from more than 28 different states across the United States and represented all major geographic regions (North, South, Midwest, West). Thus, the generalizeability of the data from this sample to the young electorate is strengthened, as the sample closely reflects the population under investigation—young voters—and represents great geographic.

Another threat to the external validity of this data is the fact that it depended on self-reports of voting behaviors. Social desirability bias may compromise the accuracy of these reported behaviors; however, the researcher incorporated an important control for social desirability in the follow-up survey instrument. As discussed in Chapter 3, if participants indicate they voted for Governor in a state with no Gubernatorial race in 2004, this may signify that they were giving a socially desirable—not accurate—reply. However, analysis of the data indicated that very few students reported voting in elections that did not exist. This control measure and failure to document strong social desirability bias in the responses further enhance the external validity of this data.
Establishing construct validity is also very important, as the researcher must demonstrate that he or she accurately tapped the theoretical domains under investigation. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to test the discriminant and convergent validity of the variables used in the structural equation model. Results indicated strong convergent validity (observed measures that should be related to each other were) and discriminant validity (observed measures of different latent constructs were not related). The discriminant and convergent validity achieved establish evidence of strong construct validity, indicating the instrument accurately measured the investigated constructs (Gray, 2004).

Taken together, these built in measures enhance the internal and external validity of this study and demonstrate its strength in methodological rigor. Further, very strong consistency coefficients were obtained for all scaled items, which builds a compelling case for the reliability of its measures. Although the above review documents strong validity and reliability, this study is certainly not without limitations. Thus, this chapter concludes with a review of possible limitations and a call for future research.

**Limitations and Conclusion**

To enhance the external validity of these findings, this study should be replicated employing survey or interview designs. These designs, respectively, may strengthen the external validity of the findings and enhance the understanding of why this
perceptual bias occurs. Furthermore, as previously reviewed, the participants in this study were college students; replication in populations beyond an educational context could build an even stronger case for generalizing these results to the young electorate.

Cognitive perceptual biases were revealed in this study that could inform subsequent research to identify their applicability in “real-world” political involvement. Such would add applied value of these results and further document the implications of this study; the joint value of such research could be fully realized in campaign message design.

This study provides important documentation of cognitive processes and support for the behavioral component of the third-person effect in a new topical area—voting behaviors of the young electorate. It makes important theoretical contributions toward understanding the multiplier of psychological mechanisms underlying the third-person effect.

This study also reveals the power of persuasion theories such as the Theory of Planned Behavior in studying voting behavior. The strong relationship between perceived behavioral control and behavioral intentions may inform message design in order to reach the young electorate more effectively. Finally, although this study did not support a model linking third-person effect with Theory of Planned Behavior, future research should cease to neglect the power of behavioral theories as potential for better understanding the behavioral component of third-person effect.
Given the dependence of the young electorate on political advertising in political decision-making and evidence of some political apathy among this portion of the electorate, scholars must initiate an active and vibrant stream of research to reveal motivators of members of the young electorate to the polls on Election Day. In addition to theoretical contributions, the results of such research would hold tremendous applied value for voting enhancement campaigns encouraging young voters to “rock the vote.” Given the dismal numbers of young adults exercising their rights to vote, scholarly research must not neglect the theoretical and applied value of this research.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
Appendix A
Manipulation Check Questionnaire
(completed for each of the 16 televised Presidential Advertisements viewed)

This page should be used to express your opinions about the political advertisement you just viewed.

Please place a check in the space that best describes your opinion about...

The political commercial I just saw was...

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In terms of your support for a 2004 Presidential candidate, please check one space below to indicate how strongly you consider your support for Bush or Kerry.

___ I strongly support Bush for President.
___ I support Bush, but not very strongly.
___ I strongly support Kerry for President.
___ I support Kerry, but not very strongly.
___ I do not support Bush or Kerry.
___ I am undecided/do not know yet which candidate I support.

STOP! Please do not turn the page until you are told to do so!
Appendix B
Treatment Session Questionnaire

First, please fill in the personal data below. All of your responses throughout this questionnaire are completely confidential. Also, your participation in this study is voluntary; you may withdraw at any time. Thank you so much in advance for your time and cooperation. I hope you enjoy participating in this study. Please feel free to contact me at eaj@uga.edu if you have any questions.

1. Mother’s Birthday: Month ________________/ Day __________
   Maternal Grandmother’s First Name (for matching purposes only)______________________

2. Sex: Male______ Female______

3. Age (years): _________

4. Hometown/State ________________________________

5. Year in School: 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th Graduate Other (describe)___________

6. Race: White/Caucasian ________
   Black/African American ________
   Hispanic/Spanish Origin ________
   Asian ________
   Native American ________
   Other (specify) __________________________________________

7. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a strong or not very strong Republican or Democrat, or an Independent (no party affiliation). Please check one.

   Strong Republican ________
   Not very strong Republican ________
   Strong Democrat ________
   Not very strong Democrat ________
   Independent ________
8. In terms of your political outlook, please check one space below to indicate how politically liberal or conservative you consider yourself to be.

Very Conservative _____: _____: _____: _____: _____: _____ Very Liberal

9. Are you presently registered to vote? Yes_____ No_____ 

10. Did you vote in the last Presidential election in November 2000? Yes_____ No_____ 

11. How important do you think it is to vote?

Very Important _____: _____: _____: _____: _____: _____ Not At All Important 

12. How important, on average, do you think voting is to other young adults between ages 18 and 24?

Very Important _____: _____: _____: _____: _____: _____ Not At All Important 

13. Will you vote in the 2004 Presidential election?

Very Likely _____: _____: _____: _____: _____: _____ Not At All Likely 

14. How likely, on average, are other young adults between age 18 and 24 to vote this election?

Very Likely _____: _____: _____: _____: _____: _____ Not At All Likely 

15. In terms of your support for a 2004 Presidential candidate, please check one space below to indicate how strongly you consider your support for Bush or Kerry.

_____ I strongly support Bush for President.
_____ I support Bush, but not very strongly.
_____ I strongly support Kerry for President.
_____ I support Kerry, but not very strongly.
_____ I do not support Bush or Kerry.
_____ I am undecided/do not know yet which candidate I support.
16. How do you feel about voting for George W. Bush for President?


17. How do you feel about voting for John Kerry for President?


18. How would you characterize your feelings about George W. Bush for President?

   Strongly Like _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Strongly Dislike

19. How would you characterize your feelings about John Kerry for President?

   Strongly Like _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Strongly Dislike

20. What external factors might prevent your voting in the 2004 election? Please check all (if any) that apply.

    _____ I cannot meet registration deadlines.
    _____ I am unable to travel home and didn’t get an absentee ballot.
    _____ I do not have transportation to get to the polling location.
    _____ I do not know where to go to vote.
    _____ I do not know how to register to vote.
    _____ I do not have time to vote.
    _____ Other (please explain)_______________________________

21. Overall, during a PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN, how much attention do you generally pay to NEWS about the candidates?

    A lot of attention _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Almost no attention
22. Overall, during a PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN, how much attention do you generally pay to televised political advertisements?

A lot of attention _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Almost no attention

23. Overall, how interested are you in politics and national affairs?

Very Interested _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Not at all Interested

24. Overall, during a PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN, how much attention do you generally pay to televised Presidential debates?

A lot of attention _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Almost no attention

25. Overall, during a PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN, how much attention do you generally pay to campaign literature, such as yard signs, brochures, and bumper stickers?

A lot of attention _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Almost no attention

26. Most people who are important to me think that I

Should _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Should Not vote in the 2004 Presidential election.

27. It is expected of me to vote in the 2004 Presidential election.

Very Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Very Unlikely

28. Most people think that I should vote for President Bush.

Strongly Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Disagree

29. Most people think that I should vote for John Kerry.

Strongly Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Disagree

30. Most of the people important to me will vote in the 2004 Presidential election.
Very Likely ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Very Unlikely

31. The people in my life whose opinions I value
   Vote ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Do not vote
   in Presidential elections.

32. If I wanted to I could vote in the 2004 Presidential election.
   Definitely True ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Definitely False

33. It is mostly up to me whether or not I vote in the 2004 Presidential election.
   Strongly Agree ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Strongly Disagree

34. Generally, it is important to me to do what my family and friends think I should do.
   Strongly Agree ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Strongly Disagree

35. For me to vote in the 2004 Presidential election is:
   Good ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Bad
   Beneficial ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Harmful
   Valuable ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Worthless
   Enjoyable ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Unenjoyable

36. Do you feel it is important to vote? Why/why not? Please explain in the space below.

Please stop here; do not turn the page until you are instructed to do so.
This page should be used to express your opinions about the commercial you just saw and its sponsoring candidate (the candidate who approves the ad). It will also be used to measure how you think that others perceived the ad. Please place a check mark in the space that best describes your feelings.

37. Overall, how do you feel about the political commercial you just saw and its effects on you?

38. Overall, how would you evaluate the sponsoring candidate who ran the ad?

39. Overall, how would you evaluate the opponent of the sponsoring candidate?

40. If you were voting in this election, after seeing this commercial, would you vote for the sponsoring candidate?

41. How motivating is this ad to make you want to vote for the sponsoring candidate?

42. Overall, how do you think other people would feel about the political commercial you just saw and its effects on them?

43. Overall, how do you think other people would evaluate the sponsoring candidate who ran the ad?

44. Overall, how do you think *other people* would evaluate the opponent of the sponsoring candidate?
   Like ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Dislike
   Good ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Bad

45. For *other people* voting in this election, after they see this commercial, would they vote for the sponsoring candidate?
   Yes, Definitely ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____: ____ No, Definitely Not

46. How motivating do you think this ad is to *other people* to vote for the sponsoring candidate?
   Not at all motivating ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Very motivating

47. Overall, how do you think that *your friends* would feel about the political commercial you just saw and how would it affect them?
   Like ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Dislike
   Very Powerful ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Not at all Powerful
   Very Believable ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Not at all Believable
   Very Persuasive ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Not at all Persuasive

48. Overall, how do think *your friends* would evaluate the sponsoring candidate who ran the ad?
   Like ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Dislike
   Good ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Bad

49. Overall, how do you think *your friends* would evaluate the opponent of the sponsoring candidate?
   Like ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Dislike
   Good ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Bad

50. For *your friends* voting in this election, after they see this commercial, would they vote for the sponsoring candidate?
   Yes, Definitely ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ No, Definitely Not
51. How motivating do you think this ad is to your friends to vote for the sponsoring candidate?

Not at all motivating _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Very motivating

52. Will others who saw these ads vote in the 2004 general election?
   Very Likely _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Not at all Likely

53. How familiar are you with this ad?
   Very Familiar _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Not at all Familiar

STOP! Please do not turn the page until you have received further instructions.
This page should be used to express your opinions about the commercial you just saw and its sponsoring candidate (the person who paid for the ad). It will also be used to measure how you think that others perceived the ad. Please place a check mark in the space that best describes your feelings.

54. Overall, how do you think other people would feel about the political commercial you just saw and its effects on them?
   Like _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Dislike
   Very Powerful _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Not at all Powerful

55. Overall, how do you think other people would evaluate the sponsoring candidate who ran the ad?
   Like _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Dislike
   Good _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Bad

56. Overall, how do you think other people would evaluate the opponent of the sponsoring candidate?
   Like _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Dislike
   Good _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Bad

57. For other people voting in this election, after they see this commercial, would they vote for the sponsoring candidate?
   Yes, Definitely _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ No, Definitely Not

58. How motivating do you think this ad is to other people to vote for the sponsoring candidate?
   Not at all motivating _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Very motivating

59. Overall, how do you think that your friends would feel about the political commercial you just saw and how would it affect them?
   Like _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Dislike
   Very Powerful _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Not at all Powerful
Very Persuasive ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Not at all Persuasive

60. Overall, how do you think your friends would evaluate the sponsoring candidate who ran the ad?
   Like ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Dislike
   Good ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Bad

61. Overall, how do you think your friends would evaluate the opponent of the sponsoring candidate?
   Like ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Dislike
   Good ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Bad

62. For your friends voting in this election, after they see this commercial, would they vote for the sponsoring candidate?
   Yes, Definitely ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ No, Definitely Not

63. How motivating do you think this ad is to your friends to vote for the sponsoring candidate?
   Not at all motivating ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Very motivating

64. Will others who saw these ads vote in the 2004 general election?
   Very Likely ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Not at all Likely

65. Overall, how do you feel about the political commercial you just saw and its effects on you?
   Like ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Dislike
   Very Powerful ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Not at all Powerful
   Very Believable ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Not at all Believable
   Very Persuasive ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Not at all Persuasive

66. Overall, how would you evaluate the sponsoring candidate who ran the ad?
   Like ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Dislike
   Good ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Bad

67. Overall, how would you evaluate the opponent of the sponsoring candidate?
   Like ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ Dislike
Good ______:______:______:______:______:______: Bad
Support ______:______:______:______:______:______: Oppose

68. If you were voting in this election, after seeing this commercial, would you vote for the sponsoring candidate?
   Yes, Definitely ______:______:______:______:______:______: No, Definitely Not

69. How motivating is this ad to make you want to vote for the sponsoring candidate?
   Not at all motivating ______:______:______:______:______:______: Very motivating

70. How familiar are you with this ad?
   Very Familiar ______:______:______:______:______:______: Not at all Familiar

STOP! Please do not turn the page until you have received further instructions.
Please indicate your responses to the following questions with a check-mark.
71. How likely are you to vote in the 2004 Presidential election?


72. How likely, on average, are other young adults between age 18 and 24 to vote this election?

Very Likely _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Not At All Likely

73. How do you feel about voting for George W. Bush for President?

Very Favorable _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Not At All Favorable

74. How do you feel about voting for John Kerry for President?

Very Favorable _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Not At All Favorable

75. Do you support George W. Bush for President?

Strongly Support _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Strongly Oppose

76. Do you support John Kerry for President?

Strongly Support _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Strongly Oppose

77. Will a majority of your peers vote in the 2004 general election?

Very Likely _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Not at all Likely

78. Will a majority of the general public vote in the 2004 general election?

Very Likely _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Not at all Likely

79. Will you vote for George W. Bush in the general election?

Very Likely _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Not at all Likely

80. Will you vote for John Kerry in the general election?

Very Likely _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Not at all Likely
81. Will other people vote for George W. Bush in the general election?

Very Likely _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Not at all Likely

82. Will other people vote for John Kerry in the general election?

Very Likely _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Not at all Likely

83. Political advertising should be restricted.

Strongly Agree _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Strongly Disagree

84. Political advertising should be banned.

Strongly Agree _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Strongly Disagree

85. Would you support restrictions on negative political advertising?


86. Would you support banning negative political advertising?


87. What is the most important factor(s) in your deciding which candidate to support this election? If more than one factor applies, please rank them in order of importance, with 1 being the most important factor.

_____ His position on the issues.
_____ His image/how I feel about him as a person.
_____ Who my friends and peers are voting for.
_____ Who members of my family are voting for.
_____ All of these things are equally important to me.
_____ Other ____________________________________________________________
88. In thinking about whether or not to vote in this election, what would most likely to motivate you to vote? If more than one factor applies, please rank them in order of importance, with 1 being the most important factor.

_____ My friends are voting and encourage me to vote.
_____ My family votes and encourages me to vote.
_____ I know the importance of each vote and making my vote count.
_____ Voting campaigns such as MTV’s “Rock the Vote”
_____ Celebrity endorsements encourage me to vote.
_____ I am nervous about the closeness of the election and worried that if I do not vote my
     candidate will be defeated.
_____ Other

Thank you so much for your participation in this study. During the week after the election, please be aware that for the second part of this study you will be given a follow-up questionnaire. The questionnaire will be very short but will also be very important to this study. This part of the study is complete; please feel free to address any questions to the research assistant before you leave.
Appendix C. Control Session Questionnaire

First, please fill in the personal data below. All of your responses throughout this questionnaire are completely confidential. Also, your participation in this study is voluntary; you may withdraw at any time. Thank you so much in advance for your time and cooperation. I hope you enjoy participating in this study. Please feel free to contact me at eaj@uga.edu if you have any questions.

1. Mother’s Birthday: Month __________ / Day _______

   Maternal Grandmother’s First Name (for matching purposes only)____________________

2. Sex: Male____ Female____

3. Age (years): __________

4. Hometown/State ________________________________

5. Year in School: 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th Graduate Other (describe)____________

6. Race: White/Caucasian ______
           Black/African American ______
           Hispanic/Spanish Origin ______
           Asian ______
           Native American ______
           Other (specify) __________________________________________

7. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a strong or not very strong Republican or Democrat, or an Independent (no party affiliation). Please check one.

   Strong Republican ______
   Not very strong Republican ______
   Strong Democrat ______
   Not very strong Democrat ______
   Independent ______

8. In terms of your political outlook, please check one space below to indicate how politically
liberal or conservative you consider yourself to be.


9. Are you presently registered to vote? Yes_____ No_____

10. Did you vote in the last Presidential election in November 2000? Yes_____ No_____

11. How important do you think it is to vote?

Very Important _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Not At All Important

12. How important, on average, do you think voting is to other young adults between ages 18 and 24?

Very Important _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Not At All Important

13. Will you vote in the 2004 Presidential election?

Very Likely _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Not At All Likely

14. How likely, on average, are other young adults between age 18 and 24 to vote this election?

Very Likely _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Not At All Likely

15. In terms of your support for a 2004 Presidential candidate, please check one space below to indicate how strongly you consider your support for Bush or Kerry.

_____ I strongly support Bush for President.
_____ I support Bush, but not very strongly.
_____ I strongly support Kerry for President.
_____ I support Kerry, but not very strongly.
_____ I do not support Bush or Kerry.
_____ I am undecided/do not know yet which candidate I support.
16. How do you feel about voting for George W. Bush for President?


17. How do you feel about voting for John Kerry for President?


18. How would you characterize your feelings about George W. Bush for President?

Strongly Like _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Strongly Dislike

19. How would you characterize your feelings about John Kerry for President?

Strongly Like _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Strongly Dislike

20. What external factors might prevent your voting in the 2004 election? Please check all (if ny) that apply.

_____ I cannot meet registration deadlines.
_____ I am unable to travel home and didn’t get an absentee ballot.
_____ I do not have transportation to get to the polling location.
_____ I do not know where to go to vote.
_____ I do not know how to register to vote.
_____ I do not have time to vote.
_____ Other (please explain)____________________________

21. Overall, during a PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN, how much attention do you generally pay to NEWS about the candidates?

A lot of attention _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Almost no attention

22. Overall, during a PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN, how much attention do you generally pay to televised political advertisements?

A lot of attention _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Almost no attention
23. Overall, how interested are you in politics and national affairs?

Very Interested _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Not at all Interested

24. Overall, during a PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN, how much attention do you generally pay to televised Presidential debates?

A lot of attention _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Almost no attention

25. Overall, during a PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN, how much attention do you generally pay to campaign literature, such as yard signs, brochures, and bumper stickers?

A lot of attention _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Almost no attention

26. Most people who are important to me think that I

Should _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Should Not vote in the 2004 Presidential election.

27. It is expected of me to vote in the 2004 Presidential election.

Very Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Very Unlikely

28. Most people think that I should vote for President Bush.

Strongly Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Disagree

29. Most people think that I should vote for John Kerry.

Strongly Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Disagree

30. Most of the people important to me will vote in the 2004 Presidential election.

Very Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Very Unlikely

31. The people in my life whose opinions I value

Vote _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Do not vote in Presidential elections.
32. If I wanted to I could vote in the 2004 Presidential election.

   Definitely True _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Definitely False

33. It is mostly up to me whether or not I vote in the 2004 Presidential election.

   Strongly Agree _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Strongly Disagree

34. Generally, it is important to me to do what my family and friends think I should do.

   Strongly Agree _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Strongly Disagree

35. For me to vote in the 2004 Presidential election is:

   Good _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Bad
   Beneficial _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Harmful
   Valuable _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Worthless
   Enjoyable _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Unenjoyable

36. Do you feel it is important to vote? Why/why not? Please explain in the space below.

Please continue on to the next page.
37. How likely are you to vote in the 2004 Presidential election?

   Definitely Will _____: _____: _____: _____: _____: _____ Definitely Will Not

38. How likely, on average, are other young adults between age 18 and 24 to vote this election?

   Very Likely _____: _____: _____: _____: _____: _____ Not At All Likely

39. How do you feel about voting for George W. Bush for President?

   Very Favorable _____: _____: _____: _____: _____: _____ Not At All Favorable

40. How do you feel about voting for John Kerry for President?

   Very Favorable _____: _____: _____: _____: _____: _____ Not At All Favorable

41. Do you support George W. Bush for President?

   Strongly Support _____: _____: _____: _____: _____: _____ Strongly Oppose

42. Do you support John Kerry for President?

   Strongly Support _____: _____: _____: _____: _____: _____ Strongly Oppose

43. Will a majority of your peers vote in the 2004 general election?

   Very Likely _____: _____: _____: _____: _____: _____ Not at all Likely

44. Will a majority of the general public vote in the 2004 general election?

   Very Likely _____: _____: _____: _____: _____: _____ Not at all Likely

45. Will you vote for George W. Bush in the general election?

   Very Likely _____: _____: _____: _____: _____: _____ Not at all Likely

46. Will you vote for John Kerry in the general election?

   Very Likely _____: _____: _____: _____: _____: _____ Not at all Likely
47. Will *other people* vote for George W. Bush in the general election?

   Not at all Likely

48. Will *other people* vote for John Kerry in the general election?

   Not at all Likely

49. Political advertising should be restricted.

   Strongly Agree ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____
   Strongly Disagree

50. Political advertising should be banned.

   Strongly Agree ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____
   Strongly Disagree

51. Would you support restrictions on negative political advertising?

   Definitely Support ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____
   Definitely Not Support

52. Would you support banning negative political advertising?

   Definitely Support ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____ : ____
   Definitely Not Support

53. What is the most important factor(s) in your deciding which candidate to support this election? If more than one factor applies, please rank them in order of importance, with 1 being the most important factor.

   _____ His position on the issues.
   _____ His image/how I feel about him as a person.
   _____ Who my friends and peers are voting for.
   _____ Who members of my family are voting for.
   _____ All of these things are equally important to me.
   _____ Other ____________________________________________
54. In thinking about whether or not to vote in this election, what would most likely to motivate you to vote? If more than one factor applies, please rank them in order of importance, with 1 being the most important factor.

_____ My friends are voting and encourage me to vote.
_____ My family votes and encourages me to vote.
_____ I know the importance of each vote and making my vote count.
_____ Voting campaigns such as MTV’s “Rock the Vote”
_____ Celebrity endorsements encourage me to vote.
_____ I am nervous about the closeness of the election and worried that if I do not vote my candidate will be defeated.
_____ Other

Thank you so much for your participation in this study. During the week after the election, please be aware that for the second part of this study you will be given a follow-up questionnaire. The questionnaire will be very short but will also be very important to this study. This part of the study is complete; please feel free to address any questions to the research assistant before you leave.
Appendix D. Follow-up Questionnaire

Young Adult Voting Behaviors in the 2004 Election

1. Did you participate in the first round of this research? (circle one)  Yes  No

2. Mother’s Birthday: Month ______  Day ______

   Maternal Grandmother’s First Name (for matching purposes only)________________

3. Your Hometown/State ______________________________________________________

4. If you are registered to vote, in what state are you registered? __________________

5. Please check the statement that best describes your voting in the 2004 Presidential election.

   _____ I voted early at the poll (approximate date)______________________________
   _____ I voted at the poll on November 2, 2004.
   _____ I voted via absentee ballot.
   _____ I did not vote.
   _____ I was not eligible to vote.

6. Did you vote for the office of President of the United States? Yes_____ No_____

7. For whom did you vote for the office of President of the United States? ________________

Please circle yes, no, or NA (not applicable) for the following questions.

8. Did you vote for the Governor of your state?  Yes  No  NA

9. Did you vote for a U.S. Senate seat for your state?  Yes  No  NA

10. Did you vote for a U.S. Representative for your state?  Yes  No  NA

Thank you so much for your participation in this study. This part of the study is complete; please feel free to address any questions to the research assistant before you leave.
Appendix E. Moderator Protocol

Moderator Procedure

The Consent Form

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study on responses to televised Presidential campaign advertisements. I hope you enjoy it and assure you that it will produce no discomfort or stress and that you will be at no risk. Your answers are completely anonymous, and your names will not be identified in any report of the results. You will watch several 30-second political television advertisements, and answer a questionnaire about each ad. You will also complete a questionnaire before and after viewing the ads. Please read the cover letter attached to your questionnaire at this time. Do not participate in this study until you have read, understood, and agree to all of the terms in that letter.

Random Assignment to Treatments

Please start in the back corner of the room to my left and count off from 1 to 4. Please remember your number, which corresponds to the room that you will go to for testing. Each of my research assistants will be holding a card labeled “1,2,3,4” followed by a room number. Please follow the person whose number corresponds to your own to your testing room.

Group 1 and 3 will be the control groups that will only complete the pretest/posttest. Groups 2 and 4 will report to testing rooms with proper A/V equipment.
The Questionnaire

Once participants are assembled and seated, begin administering the pretreatment questionnaire.

First, be sure not to write your name on the questionnaire. You will be asked to provide your mother’s birthday. That information alone will be used to match this questionnaire to the follow-up questionnaire. No information identifying you personally will be used. I will be unable to answer any questions while you are completing the questionnaires today. However, please be assured that there are not right or wrong answers; just answer each question to the best of your ability. Please answer the first three pages of this questionnaire, then stop and wait for further instructions.

Some of these questions ask for your opinion on a scale. For example, if you are asked whether the study is “interesting” or “boring,” you will be given seven spaces to tell us your opinion. *(write a sample scale on the board).* The closer you choose the put your checkmark to the “interesting” side of the scale indicates that you are highly interested’ the closer to the boring side of the scale indicates how boring you think that ad is. A mark in the middle of the scale indicates that you find the ad neither boring nor interesting, or that you do not know.

*When it is clear that everyone has completed the questionnaire, proceed with the following.*

In a few moments, you will view some television commercials. After each ad is finished, we will ask you to complete a simple questionnaire asking about your
attitudes and impressions about what you saw. When answering the questionnaire items, take as much time as you need. I think you will enjoy seeing these political advertisements, and I thank you again for your participation in this study. Are there any questions at this time?

If not/if there are no more, then let’s proceed. We will now watch ad number 1.

*Play first ad. Stop tape after first ad and instruct:*

Now please turn the page in your questionnaire and complete the “Ad 1” questionnaire. Answer each scaled question about the commercial you just saw. After completing the two “Ad 1” pages, please put down your pencils and wait to view the next ad.

*Watch for completion.*

Now we’ll go to the second ad. Here is ad number 2.

*Repeat this procedure until all ads have been shown.*

**The Post-Treatment Questions**

*After viewing all of the ads, say the following:*

Please turn the page to the “Post-Treatment” questionnaire and answer the next two pages of questions. When you finish, please turn your questionnaire over, and it will be picked up.
After all questionnaires have been turned over, read the following:

Elizabeth Johnson, the principle investigator, and I want to thank you again for your help and participation in this study. Please be aware that you will receive a brief follow-up questionnaire during the week after the election that will measure voting behaviors. Completion of these questionnaires is a critical part of this research, and we really appreciate your completion of this questionnaire that will be administered in the class from which you were recruited for this study.

This research is investigating the effects of political advertising on both candidate selection and voting behaviors in the young electorate, which is considered to be made up of voters between the ages of 18 and 24. The study is also analyzing how persuasive and effective you perceive these advertisements to be on other young adults as they select which candidate to support and choose whether or not they will vote.

Please feel free to contact Elizabeth if you have any questions regarding this research or would like further information about it. Her email address is eaj@uga.edu. She will also be in the hall if you want to direct any questions to her on your way out.

Thank you again! We really appreciate your participation in this important research.
## Appendix F. Code Book

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<td>2= Image First</td>
</tr>
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<td>Treatment Cell</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3= Kerry Positive</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6= Other</td>
</tr>
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<td>3= Strong Democrat</td>
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<td>Vote in the 2004 Election: 1 = Very Likely, 7 = Not at all Likely</td>
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<td>Vote in the Election-Others: 1 = Very Likely, 7 = Not at all Likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Support for Bush of Kerry: 1 = Strongly Support Bush, 2 = Not Strongly Support Bush, 3 = Strongly Support Kerry, 4 = Not Strongly Support Kerry, 5 = Neither Bush nor Kerry, 6 = Undecided</td>
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<td>VoteBush</td>
<td>Feel about voting for Bush: 1 = Very Positive, 7 = Very Negative</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>VoteKerry</td>
<td>Feel about voting for Kerry: 1 = Very Positive, 7 = Very Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>FeelBush</td>
<td>Feelings about Bush/Pres: 1 = Strongly Like, 7 = Strongly Dislike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>FeelKerry</td>
<td>Feeling about Kerry/Pres: 1 = Strongly Like, 7 = Strongly Dislike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>Ex. Factor- Registration: 0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>NoAbsente</td>
<td>Ex. Factor- No Absentee: 0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NoTranspor Ex. Factor- No Trans. to Poll</td>
<td>0= No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1= Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't knoww Ex. Factor- don’t know where to go vote</td>
<td>0= No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1= Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't knowwre Ex. Factor- don’t know how to register to vote</td>
<td>0= No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1= Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notime to Vo Ex. Factor- No time to vote</td>
<td>0= No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1= Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Reas Ex. Factor- Other external factors</td>
<td>0= No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1= Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attn news Attention to news on cand.</td>
<td>1= A lot of attention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7= Almost no attention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attn ads Attention to televised ads</td>
<td>1= A lot of attention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7= Almost no attention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall inter Interest in Politics/Affairs</td>
<td>1= Very interested</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7= Not at all interested</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attn debates Attention to Pres. Debates</td>
<td>1= A lot of attention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7= Almost no attention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attn campai Attention to campaign lit.</td>
<td>1= A lot of attention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7= Almost no attention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imp peoplev Imp. People think I should vote.</td>
<td>1= Should</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7= Should Not</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imp peoplelee Imp. People expect me to vote.</td>
<td>1= Very Likely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7= Very Unlikely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should vote Bush Imp. People think I should vote for Bush.</td>
<td>1= Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7= Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should vote K Imp. People think I should vote for Kerry</td>
<td>1= Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7= Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most will vote Imp. Others will vote in the 2004 election.</td>
<td>1= Very Likley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7= Very Unlikely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others vote People whose opinions I value do/do not vote.</td>
<td>1= Vote</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7= Do Not Vote</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can vote if want If I wanted to I could vote in the 2004 election.</td>
<td>1= Definitely True</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7= Definitely False</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uptome if vote If is mostly up to me if I vote in the 2004 elec.</td>
<td>1= Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7= Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imp do other</td>
<td>1= Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Scale</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important for me to do what fam/friends think.</td>
<td>2= Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Votegoodbad</td>
<td>1= Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For me to vote in 2004 is good/bad.</td>
<td>7= Bad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Votebeneficial</td>
<td>1= Beneficial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For me to vote in 2004 is beneficial/not beneficial.</td>
<td>7= Not beneficial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Votevaluabl</td>
<td>1= Valuable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For me to vote in 2004 is valuable/not valuable.</td>
<td>7= Not valuable.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voteenjoya</td>
<td>1= Enjoyable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For me to vote in 2004 is enjoyable/not enjoyable.</td>
<td>7= Not enjoyable.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouLikeA1</td>
<td>1= Like</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects of issue ad- YOU like/dislike</td>
<td>7= Dislike</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouPowA1</td>
<td>1= Very Powerful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects of issue ad- YOU very/not at all power</td>
<td>7= Not at all Powerful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouBelA1</td>
<td>1= Very Believable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects of issue ad- YOU very/not at all believable</td>
<td>7= Not at all Believable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouPerA1</td>
<td>1= Very Persuasive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects of issue ad- YOU very/not at all persuaded</td>
<td>7= Not at all Persuasive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ULikeSA1</td>
<td>1= Like</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate sponsoring candidate- YOU like/dislike</td>
<td>7= Dislike</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGoodSA1</td>
<td>1= Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate sponsoring candidate- YOU good/bad</td>
<td>7= Bad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USuppSA1</td>
<td>1= Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate sponsoring candidateYOU support/oppose</td>
<td>7= Oppose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ULikeOA1</td>
<td>1= Like</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate opposition- YOU like/dislike</td>
<td>7= Dislike</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGoodOA1</td>
<td>1= Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate opposition- YOU good/bad</td>
<td>7= Bad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USuppOA1</td>
<td>1= Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate opposition- YOU support/oppose</td>
<td>7= Oppose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAd1votefors</td>
<td>1= Yes, Definitely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial makes you want to vote for sponsor</td>
<td>7= No, Definitely Not</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAd1motivat</td>
<td>1= Not at all Motivating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Commercial motivates you to vote for sponsor</td>
<td>7= Very Motivating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>OlikeA1 Effects of issue ad- OTHERS like/dislike</td>
<td>1= Like 7= Dislike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>OpowerA1 Effects of issue ad- OTHERS very/not at all powerf</td>
<td>1= Very Powerful 7= Not at all Powerful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>ObelieveA1 Effects of issue ad- OTHERS very/not at all believe</td>
<td>1= Very Believable 7= Not at all Believable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>OperA1 Effects of issue ad- OTHERS very/not at all persuas</td>
<td>1= Very Persuasive 7= Not at all Persuasive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>OLikeSA1 Evaluate sponsor- OTHERS like/dislike sponsor</td>
<td>1= Like 7= Dislike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>OGoodSA1 Evaluate sponsor- OTHERS good/bad</td>
<td>1= Good 7= Bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>OSuppSA1 Evaluate sponsor- OTHERS support/oppose</td>
<td>1= Support 7= Oppose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>OLikeOA1 Evaluate opposition- OTHERS like/dislike</td>
<td>1= Like 7= Dislike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>OGoodOA1 Evaluate opposition- OTHERS good/bad</td>
<td>1= Good 7= Bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Oad1vote Commercial makes others want to vote for sponsor</td>
<td>1= Yes, Definitely 7= No, Definitely Not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Oad1motivate Commercial motivates others to vote for sponsor</td>
<td>1= Not at all motivating 7= Very motivating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>FlikeAd1 Effects of issue ad- FRIENDS like/dislike</td>
<td>1= Like 7= Dislike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>FpowerAd1 Effects of issue ad- FRIENDS powerful/not at all</td>
<td>1= Very Powerful 7= Not at all Powerful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>FbelAd1 Effects of issue ad- FRIENDS believe/don’t</td>
<td>1= Very Believable 7= Not at all Believable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>FperAd1</td>
<td>1= Very Persuasive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effects of issue ad- FRIENDS persuaded/not</td>
<td>7= Not at all Persuasive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>FlikeSAd1</td>
<td>1= Like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate sponsor- FRIENDS like/dislike</td>
<td>7= Dislike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>FgoodSAd1</td>
<td>1= Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate sponsor- FRIENDS good/bad</td>
<td>7= Bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>FsuppSAd1</td>
<td>1= Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate sponsor- FRIENDS support/oppose</td>
<td>7= Oppose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>FlikeOAd1</td>
<td>1= Like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate opponent- FRIENDS like/dislike</td>
<td>7= Dislike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>FgoodOAd1</td>
<td>1= Good</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Evaluate opponent- FRIENDS good/bad</td>
<td>7= Bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>FsuppOAd1</td>
<td>1= Support</td>
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<td>Evaluate opponent- FRIENDS support/oppose</td>
<td>7= Oppose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Fad1vote</td>
<td>1= Yes, Definitely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commercial makes friends want to vote for</td>
<td>7= No, Definitely Not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sponsor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Fad1motivate</td>
<td>1= Not at all Motivating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commercial motivates friends to vote for</td>
<td>7= Very motivating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sponsor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>Othervote</td>
<td>1= Very Likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others who saw this commercial will vote.</td>
<td>7= Not at all Likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Familiarad1</td>
<td>1= Very Familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Familiarity with ad prior to today.</td>
<td>7= Not at all Familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>YouLikeAd2</td>
<td>1= Like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effects of image ad- YOU like/dislike</td>
<td>7= Dislike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>YouPowAd2</td>
<td>1= Very Powerful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effects of image ad- YOU powerful/not at</td>
<td>7= Not at all Familiar</td>
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<td></td>
<td>all</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>YouBelAd2</td>
<td>1= Very Believable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effects of image ad- YOU believe/not at</td>
<td>7= Not at all Believable</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>all</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>YouPerAd2</td>
<td>1= Very Persuasive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effects of image ad- YOU persuaded/not</td>
<td>7= Not at all Persuasive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>all</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>ULikeSAd2</td>
<td>1= Like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate sponsor- YOU like/dislike</td>
<td>7= Dislike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>UGoodSAd2</td>
<td>1= Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate sponsor- YOU good/bad</td>
<td>7= Bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>USuppSAd2</td>
<td>1= Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate sponsor- YOU support/oppose</td>
<td>7= Oppose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>ULikeSAd2</td>
<td>1= Like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate opponent- YOU like/dislike</td>
<td>7= Dislike</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 94 | **UGoodOA2** | Evaluate opponent- YOU good/bad | 1= Good  
7= Bad |
| 95 | **USuppOA2** | Evaluate opponent- YOU support/oppose | 1= Support  
7= Oppose |
| 96 | **UAd2vote** | Commercial makes you want to vote for sponsor. | 1= Yes, definitely  
7= No, definitely not |
| 97 | **UAd2motiv** | Commercial motivates you to vote for sponsor. | 1= Not at all motivating.  
7= Very motivating |
| 98 | **OLikeAd2** | Effects of image ad- OTHERS like/dislike | 1= Like  
7= Dislike |
| 99 | **OPowAd2** | Effects of image ad- OTHERS powerful/not | 1= Very Powerful  
7= Not at all powerful |
| 100 | **OBe1Ad2** | Effects of image ad- OTHERS believe/not | 1= Very Believable  
7= Not at all Believable. |
| 101 | **OPerAd2** | Effects of image ad- OTHERS persuasive/not | 1= Very Persuasive  
7= Not at all Persuasive |
| 102 | **OLikeSA2** | Evaluate sponsor- OTHERS like/dislike | 1= Like  
7= Dislike |
| 103 | **OGoodSA2** | Evaluate sponsor- OTHERS good/bad | 1= Good  
7= Bad |
| 104 | **OSuppSA2** | Evaluate sponsor- OTHERS support/oppose | 1= Support  
7= Oppose |
| 105 | **OlikeOA2** | Evaluate opponent- OTHERS like/dislike | 1= Like  
7= Dislike |
| 106 | **OGoodOA2** | Evaluate opponent- OTHERS good/bad | 1= Good  
7= Bad |
| 107 | **OSuppOA2** | Evaluate opponent- OTHERS support/oppose | 1= Support  
7= Oppose |
| 108 | **OA2votespon** | Commercial makes others want to vote for sponsor | 1= Yes, definitely.  
7= No, definitely not. |
| 109 | **OA2motiv** | Commercial motivates others to vote for sponsor | 1= Yes, definitely  
7= No, definitely not |
| 110 | **FlikeAd2** | Effects of image ad- FRIENDS like/dislike | 1= Like  
7= Dislike |
| 111 | **FpowAd2** | Effects of image ad- FRIENDS powerful/not | 1= Very Powerful  
7= Not at all powerful |
<p>| | | | |</p>
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<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td><strong>FbelAd2</strong></td>
<td>Effects of image ad- FRIENDS believable/not</td>
<td>1= Very Believable 7= Not at all Believable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td><strong>FperAd2</strong></td>
<td>Effects of image ad- FRIENDS persuasive/not</td>
<td>1= Very Persuasive 7= Not at all Persuasive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td><strong>FlikeAd2</strong></td>
<td>Evaluate sponsor- FRIENDS like/dislike</td>
<td>1= Like 7= Dislike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td><strong>FgoodSA2</strong></td>
<td>Evaluate sponsor- FRIENDS good/bad</td>
<td>1= Good 7= Bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td><strong>FsuppSA2</strong></td>
<td>Evaluate sponsor- FRIENDS support/oppose</td>
<td>1= support 7= Oppose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td><strong>FlikeOA2</strong></td>
<td>Evaluate opposition- FRIENDS like/dislike</td>
<td>1= Like 7= Dislike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td><strong>FgoodOA2</strong></td>
<td>Evaluate opposition- FRIENDS good/bad</td>
<td>1= Good 7= Bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td><strong>FsuppOA2</strong></td>
<td>Evaluate opposition- FRIENDS support/oppose</td>
<td>1= Support 7= Oppose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td><strong>FA2vote</strong></td>
<td>Commercial makes friends want to vote for sponsor</td>
<td>1= Yes, Definitely 7= No, Definitely Not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td><strong>FA2motiv</strong></td>
<td>Commercial motivates friends to vote for sponsor</td>
<td>1= Very motivating 7= Not at all motivating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122</td>
<td><strong>Osawvote</strong></td>
<td>Others who saw this ad will vote in the election</td>
<td>1= Very Likely 7= Not at all likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td><strong>Familiarad2</strong></td>
<td>Familiarity with this ad prior to today.</td>
<td>1= Very Familiar 7= Not at all familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124</td>
<td><strong>Likevote</strong></td>
<td>Likelihood of voting in the 2004 Presidential elec.</td>
<td>1= Definitely Will 7= Definitely will not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td><strong>Likeovote</strong></td>
<td>Likelihood of other young adults to vote in election</td>
<td>1= Very Likely 7= Not at all likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td><strong>feelvotingB</strong></td>
<td>Feel about voting for Bush for President</td>
<td>1= Very Favorable 7= Not at all Favorable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td><strong>feelvotingK</strong></td>
<td>Feel about voting for Kerry for President</td>
<td>1= Very Favorable 7= Not at all Favorable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td><strong>SupportBus</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1= Strongly Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Scale</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>Support Bush for President</td>
<td>1= Strongly Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>supportKerr Support Kerry for President</td>
<td>7= Strongly Oppose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>Peersvote Majority of peers will vote in the 2004 general elec</td>
<td>1= Very Likely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7= Not at all Likely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131</td>
<td>Generalpub Majority of general public vote in the 2004 general</td>
<td>1= Very Likely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7= Not at all Likely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132</td>
<td>VoteBushel Will you vote for Bush for President</td>
<td>1= Very Likely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7= Not at all Likely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>voteKerryel Will you vote for Kerry for President</td>
<td>1= Very Likely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7= Not at all Likely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134</td>
<td>Othersvote Others will vote for Bush for President</td>
<td>1= Very Likely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7= Not at all Likely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>Othersvote Others will vote for Kerry for President</td>
<td>1= Very Likely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7= Not at all Likely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136</td>
<td>Restrictad Political advertising should be restricted</td>
<td>1= Strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7= Strongly disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td>Banadvertis Political advertising should be banned</td>
<td>1= Strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7= Strongly disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td>Supportrest Support restrictions on negative advertising</td>
<td>1= Definitely support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7= Definitely not support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139</td>
<td>Supportbad Support bans on negative political advertising</td>
<td>1= Definitely support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7= Definitely not support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>Impfacissu Candidate support- issues</td>
<td>1= Most Important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6= Least Important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7= Not ranked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td>Impfacima Candidate support- images</td>
<td>1= Most Important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6= Least Important</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7= Not ranked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>Impfacfri Candidate support- Friends and peer influence</td>
<td>1= Most Important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6= Least Important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7= Not ranked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>impFacFam Candidate support- Members of family</td>
<td>1= Most Important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6= Least Important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7= Not ranked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td>Allequal Candidate support- All equal</td>
<td>1= Most Important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6= Least Important</td>
<td></td>
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<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>145</td>
<td><strong>Other</strong>&lt;br&gt;Candidate support- Other</td>
<td>7= Not ranked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146</td>
<td><strong>MotivFr</strong>&lt;br&gt;Vote Motivation- Friends encourage me</td>
<td>8= Not ranked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147</td>
<td><strong>MotivFam</strong>&lt;br&gt;Vote Motivation- Family encourages me to vote</td>
<td>8= Not ranked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148</td>
<td><strong>MotivImp</strong>&lt;br&gt;Vote Motivation- Importance of each Vote</td>
<td>8= Not ranked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>149</td>
<td><strong>MotivVoteC</strong>&lt;br&gt;Vote Motivation- Voting Campaigns</td>
<td>8= Not ranked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td><strong>MotivCeleb</strong>&lt;br&gt;Vote Motivation- Celebrity endorsements</td>
<td>8= Not ranked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151</td>
<td><strong>MotivClose</strong>&lt;br&gt;Vote Motivation- Nervous about closeness of race</td>
<td>8= Not ranked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>152</td>
<td><strong>MotivVoteO</strong>&lt;br&gt;Vote Motivation- Other</td>
<td>8= Not ranked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>153</td>
<td><strong>PartFirst</strong>&lt;br&gt;Participated in first round</td>
<td>1= Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>154</td>
<td><strong>HomeState</strong>&lt;br&gt;Home state of participant</td>
<td>2= No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155</td>
<td><strong>StRegis</strong>&lt;br&gt;State participant registered to vote</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td><strong>VoteMeth</strong>&lt;br&gt;Voting method in 2004 Presidential election</td>
<td>1= Voted early at poll</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2= Voted election day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3= Voted via absentee ballo</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4= Did not vote</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5= Not eligible to vote</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>157</td>
<td><strong>VotePres</strong>&lt;br&gt;Voted for President of United States</td>
<td>1= Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2= No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Response Options</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>158</td>
<td><strong>VoteForW</strong> Voted for whom for President of United States</td>
<td>1= Bush</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2= Kerry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0= Did not vote</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>159</td>
<td><strong>VoteGovernor</strong> Voted for Governor for your state.</td>
<td>1= Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2= No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3= NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160</td>
<td><strong>VoteSenate</strong> Voted for Senate seat for your state.</td>
<td>1= Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2= No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3= NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161</td>
<td><strong>VoteUSRep</strong> Voted for US Representative for your state.</td>
<td>1= Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2= No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3= NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>