

A series of persuasive events. Sequencing effects of negative and positive messages on party evaluations and perceptions of negativity

Manuscript ID: RJMC-2017-0120.R1

Memorandum

January 8, 2018

Dear Prof. Sheehan,

Dear RJMC Editors,

Dear anonymous evaluators,

Thank you for your careful consideration of our revised manuscript, and for providing additional comments aimed at improving it. We are very pleased with the positive reception of our article, and are happy to now provide a newly revised version that takes into account these additional comments as well. We believe that this new version improves again on the previous draft and provides more information where needed.

At a glance, this newly revised manuscript presents the following improvements:

- The appendix now includes the full questionnaire and presents the wording for the questions and treatments
- We provide more precise information about the survey, in terms of recruitment of participants, sample composition, and data collection (see footnote iv), as suggested by Reviewer #1
- Following the suggestion of Reviewer#2, we now refer to “perceptions of negativity” instead of “negativism” throughout the text
- We corrected a few typos and adopted the suggestions of reviewer#2 about the wording of some sentences
- Please note the revised title

We detail our revision in the following pages. Reviewers' comments are presented in boxes and numbered sequentially; our answers follow below each comment.

Thank you again for your careful reading of our article and excellent suggestions. Please do not hesitate to get back to us should have any further question or comment about our manuscript.

Best wishes,
The authors, January 2018

Reviewer #1

(1.0)

The authors do some good work here in revising the manuscript. I like the addition of Figures 3 and 4, which find some interesting results that add to the depth of the paper. The paper is stronger with that additional analysis. I'm still not entirely convinced that the results add much clarity to the literature, but the design is novel, the analysis rich, and the setting unique (compared to most studies of negativity in American campaigns). The authors also responded clearly and directly to both reviewers' sets of comments, and so I believe now the paper meets my expectations for publication. Its novel design will also be utilized by others, I suspect, in further studies of campaign ad and message effects.

We are very pleased by the positive reaction to our revised manuscript. We feel that the manuscript can indeed bring something new to the existing research, and we are grateful to the reviewer for her/his pointed suggestions and careful reading.

(1.1)

My only remaining hang-up is that the two sentences added about Epinion are not sufficient. I think the authors need to say more about how respondents are solicited. A longer footnote on the methodology of the poll is important to have. I know nothing about the survey, and I'd like some more authoritative discussion of the survey and its implementation.

We now provide more detailed information regarding sample selection and composition, recruitment, and data gathering (see footnote iv).

Reviewer #2

(2.0)

This manuscript is noteworthy for exploring the impact of the sequencing of negative and positive messages. It examines two specific outcomes: parties' performance on policies and perceptions of negativity. I find the theory section to be much improved over the earlier version of the manuscript, and I am now favorably disposed to its publication. That said, I do have a few thoughts/suggestions for improvement, some of them quite minor.

We are very pleased about the favourable feedback provided by the reviewer. During the previous revision, and following her/his suggestions, we put much effort in revising the theoretical part to provide a more convincing and integrated story, and we are happy that the reviewer sees these improvements favourably. We thank again the reviewer for the suggestions provided, which were instrumental in providing a better manuscript. We also thank her/him for this additional set of suggestions, which we took into account in this new revision.

(2.1)

I can't seem to find the actual text of the negative and positive treatments. That strikes me as something that should be included in the manuscript or its appendix.

Likewise, I can't find the wording of the questions that were used, information that also would be useful for the reader in evaluating the manuscript.

Following the suggestion of the reviewer we present in a new appendix (Appendix B) the whole questionnaire, translated in English. For the sake of clarity, we highlighted the experimental components (treatments) using boxes.

(2.2)

The authors use the term negativism, but that's not very precise. I'm wondering if the phrase "perceptions of negativity" might be more descriptive.

This is a good suggestion. We changed the manuscript accordingly, and now refer to (perceptions of) negativity throughout.

(2.3)

The authors speak at one point about the issues that respondents are “confronted to.” I would suggest using “exposed to” instead. Likewise, the authors write about “repeated exposition.” Again, “repeated exposure” would be a better term.

We corrected the manuscript according to these two suggestions, and thank the reviewer for her/his very attentive reading of our article.