

# Topic: the survey

Psychology



The Survey In an article about an online study—"Candi Visual Appearance as a Shortcut for Both Sophisticated and Unsophisticated Voters: Evidence from a Spanish Online Study" by Lorenzo Brusattin (2012), the tendency of political sophistication to assist the voters in placing their attention toward the information available to them regarding the candidates' ideology in comparison to drawing inferences about the personality of candidates as suggested by their photos was ascertained with the help of a specially designed experiment. In order to achieve this, the researchers asked a total of 937 research participants of a web questionnaire to cast their vote for either of two unknown hypothetical candidates. The researchers presented the information about the candidates to the research participants and later manipulated through electoral posters in such a way that the research participants saw the pictures of candidates along with a compilation of policy statements. Findings of the research suggest that a candidate's photograph has a significant effect on the behavior of the voters at the ballot box. In addition to that, the researchers found that the possibility of effect of such visual information on the electoral success of a candidate is neither prevented nor reduced by a greater level of political sophistication. The question that Brusattin (2012) asked was evident at the outset of the study rather than revealed after the fact. However, the researcher's methodology was somewhat questionable. He was trying to determine whether political sophistication would make a difference in voters' decision to vote on a particular candidate based on his photo, but the criteria for political sophistication were not provided. The researcher used a four-question quiz asking questions about how central banks prevent the rise of inflation, who the current president of the European Commission is, whether

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the Spanish Senate has more or less power than the Congreso de los Diputados, and who the Spanish minister of foreign affairs is. This is not a comprehensive measure of political sophistication, and it is entirely possible that someone could be otherwise politically sophisticated and yet not know the answers to any of these questions. Thus, it is not clear whether the researcher actually tested the premise he intended to test in the study.

Potential ethical concerns of the study include the lack of informed consent, the potential for deception, the absence of clear boundaries between public and private spaces online, and the possibility of “lurking,” where other online users can view the responses of participants (Griffiths & Whitty, 2010). The researcher did not discuss any of these issues in the article, so it may be assumed that these concerns were not addressed in the design of the study.

The fact that the study was conducted online affects issues of validity and reliability. Riva, Teruzzi, and Anolli (2003) note that there can be problems with validity of online assessment tools versus paper-based ones, particularly in terms of the fact that there is a lack of control in the testing situation, the potential for temporary or other factors that influence responses, differences in language and culture, and problems with the testing medium interacting with what is being measured. In their comparison of Internet-based and paper-based assessment tools, Riva, Teruzzi, and Anolli (2003) found that the tools were comparable in terms of reliability. However, they acknowledge that problems with sampling control can affect the results and note that in the online environment it is difficult to control the sample (Riva, Teruzzi, & Anolli, 2003). The results of their study suggest that the validity and sampling associated with online studies remain a problem because of the

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difficulty in controlling who will take the survey and how authentically participants try to answer the questions. My final analysis is that I personally, would not use online survey in completing my research project. The use of online-survey it is certainly convenient above all costly effective if I was to choose

#### References

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