2011

The Fox News Effect: Does Polarized News-Media Fill Traditional News Roles?

Braden W Johnson
Professor Richard Davis

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/bradenwj/7/
The Fox News Effect
Does Polarized News-Media Fill Traditional News Roles?

A Research Project Conducted by Braden Wayne Johnson
With Special Help from Professor Richard Davis of Brigham Young University

Consumers of Polarized News: Those who describe their viewing habits of one of the following shows as frequent.
- The Sean Hannity Show
- The Rush Limbaugh Show
- The O’Reilly Factor
- The Glenn Beck Program
- Countdown with Keith Olbermann
- Hardball with Chris Matthews
- The Rachel Maddow Show
- The Daily Show with John Stewart

Non-Consumers of Polarized News: Those who describe their viewing habits of all of the previous shows as rarely.

How do media consumers who view polarized media compare with those who don’t?

Current Events Knowledge

Mean Current Events Index Score - 95% Confidence Interval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Few Correct Responses</th>
<th>Many Correct Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Survey Average (2.82, 3.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumers of Polarized Media (2.60, 3.80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Consumers of Polarized Media (1.90, 2.60)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WINNER: Consumers of Polarized Media
LOSER: Non-Consumers of Polarized Media

- Consumers of Polarized Media are the most likely to score well on a current events test, by a significant margin.
- All means are statistically different at a 95% confidence level which gives us reason to believe that the average Consumer will always score higher than the average Non-Consumer.

Newspaper Readership

Mean Newspaper Score - 95% Confidence Interval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rarely Reads the Newspaper</th>
<th>Frequently Reads the Newspaper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Survey Average (2.96, 3.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumers of Polarized Media (2.60, 3.70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Consumers of Polarized Media (1.80, 3.10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WINNER: Consumers of Polarized Media (Tie) & Survey Average
LOSER: Non-Consumers of Polarized Media

- Consumers of Polarized Media are the most likely likely to read a newspaper daily, by a moderate margin.
- Consumers of Polarized Media and the Survey average are not statistically different at a 95% confidence level which gives us reason to doubt that the average Consumer will always score higher than the survey average.

Voter Registration Status

Mean Voter Registration Score - 95% Confidence Interval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Registered to Vote</th>
<th>Certain Registered to Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Survey Average (3.40, 3.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumers of Polarized Media (3.60, 3.79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Consumers of Polarized Media (2.80, 3.40)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WINNER: Consumers of Polarized Media
LOSER: Non-Consumers of Polarized Media

- Consumers of Polarized Media are the most likely likely to be registered to vote, by a significant margin.
- All means are statistically different at a 95% confidence level which gives us reason to believe that the average Consumer will always score higher than the average Non-Consumer.