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Title: Media Questions on the 1996 Election Study and Related Content Analysis of Media Coverage of the Presidential Campaign

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Dataset(s): 1995 Pilot Study

Abstract

Buhr, Crigler, and Just evaluate the media exposure items tested in the 1995 Pilot Study. The authors find that the new general television news exposure question does not reduce over-reporting of media exposure relative to the traditional NES item. However, a summary television news exposure variable -- created by scaling the new program-specific exposure variables -- reduces over-report relative to the general news exposure question. The authors then gauge the predictive validity of the new exposure items by testing how well those items predict voter information levels. To measure these information levels, Buhr, Crigler, and Just use three variables: (1) general information, (2) knowledge of the anchor of the news program most often watched by the respondent, and (3) general anchor knowledge. The authors find that, overall, the new television news measures outperform the traditional NES measures in that they more successfully predict anchor and general political information. The authors also find that the new item which measures exposure to network news is the best predictor of political information. The authors conclude by recommending that the traditional NES media items be replaced by the Pilot Study items. The authors also recommend that the NES include items measuring newspaper exposure, knowledge of specific campaign advertisements, and knowledge of candidate issue emphasis. Finally, Buhr, Crigler, and Just recommend including questions designed to assess which media market the respondent is in, to link the NES to contextual data which will be gathered during the 1996 campaign season by the consortium for campaign media analysis in conjunction with ICPSR.