The Election of 2000: Study of the Media and the Presidential Candidates

How Entertainment Television Affected Youth Political Votes

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Introduction

Political candidates running for office design campaigns in order to reach the electorate and win their votes. A well planned campaign should reach voters and send out the message of who the candidates is, what issues the candidate stands for and what the candidate will do for their constituents once t elected into o office. However, this process is not as simple or straightforward as it sounds. Candidates need to hire many employees to work on their campaigns. Most campaigns consist of a team of people, led by a campaign consultant. The campaign team is equipped with people like a media consultant, volunteers, a fundraising staff, speechwriters, an advertising executive and pollsters (Maisel, 1999). Collectively, these people work together in order to come up with a campaign strategy, which will allow the candidate to reach the most people in the best light (Cummings & Wise, 1997). The most effective campaigns are those that reach the citizens, convince them to vote on Election Day and most importantly, inform the citizens who the candidates are (Shea, 1996).

Most political information comes from media (Bennett, 1988; Maisel, 1999). Since its invention, media have been used in races because they allow candidates the opportunity to reach a vast number of people. When a candidate creates one pamphlet, makes one television or radio appearance, or interviews with newspaper reporters that are educating constituents about the upcoming race and why they are the better candidate (Wayne, 2000). Media are simple and easy ways to reach millions of viewers. In fact, "campaigns are expressly arranged for the best media exposure before the largest suitable audience" (Graber, 1993). Considering all of this, media make it easier for the candidate to inform the public, because the candidate is not required to spend as much time

interacting with constituents through face-to-face contact, town hall meetings, door knocking, and other events to get out their message (Jamieson, 1988). In recent time, candidates have relied more on media than any other source to get out their message to voters (Maisel, 1999). Since candidates can reach a vast number of people with one appearance, media serve an important role in elections.

Due to the fact that most political information comes from media sources, we must now discuss the two types of media that candidates can use: paid media and earned media (Bennett, 1992; Maisel, 1999; Shea, 1996). Simply put, if a candidate is going to use media, they have to earn it or pay for it. Paid media, and more specifically, in television, are where most candidates spend all of their campaign funds, because the cost of acquiring a spot to run your ad, as well as the cost of creating ads is tremendous; in different terminology, paid media is advertising (Lewis, 2000; Maisel, 1999; Ranney, 1983; Shea, 1996). In contrast, earned media is the television time a candidate receives without paying for it; because candidates cannot just buy this time it is harder to acquire (Maisel, 1999; Ranney, 1983; Shea, 1996). In the past, earned media has mostly come from news sources. However, in recent elections "local and national news organizations are providing less and less news coverage of political campaigns" (Lewis, 2000). Because earned media is vital to the election, candidates have to turn to other "free" sources to reach viewers (Bennett, 1992; Maisel, 1999). In the 2000 election, Presidential Candidates George W. Bush and Al Gore reached citizens by appearing on television talk shows such as *Oprah, Saturday Night Live, Rosie O'Donnell, The Tonight Show,* and *Live with Regis* (Pomper, 2001).

Since the use of television talk shows is generally new to elections, this study is going to look at the effects entertainment media has on voters. This paper will begin by researching who votes, and why youth turnout rates are lower than other age groups. Next, the paper will examine what factors influence voting behavior, and what role television has in all of this. For more explanation, past elections and studies will be examined and related to these topics. Then, the focus will be put on the 2000 election and what the Presidential candidates did to persuade and influence votes. Finally, the paper will conclude with a survey taken on the Bemidji State University campus to determine how BSU students ages 18-24 are influenced by political candidates on entertainment television.

Hypotheses

1) College-educated students are likely to have a higher turnout rate than their non-college peers.

2) Young voters in my study will have a higher turnout rate if they get their political information from informational sources than if they get it from entertainment sources.

3) Young voters are most likely to vote for the Presidential Candidate that has the characteristics they deem are most important for a President to have.

4) Young voters frequently do not understand the political issues or the candidates' stances on them; therefore, voters often do not vote for the candidate that has the most similar stances to them on issues.

5) When consulting entertainment sources, young adults are influenced by the source and feel better informed about the candidates' stances on issues.

6) Young voters will have different impressions of the candidates before and after watching their appearances on entertainment television.

7) Young voters are likely to change their vote based on the information they get while consulting entertainment media sources.

Literature Review

The American Citizenry—Voters and Nonvoters

Voting is a two-part process: first, the citizen chooses to participate in a given election; secondly, the citizen has to select the candidate worthy of their votes (Campbell et all, 1980). Looking at recent Presidential elections, we find that on average, half of the American citizenry does not turn out to vote—from 1948 to 1996, voter turnout has been mostly around fifty-percent, with the lowest rate of 49% in 1996, and the highest rate of 62.8% in 1960 (Abramson et al., 1994; Cooper, 2000; Cummings & Wise, 1997; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; "Voter turnout in the twentieth century," 2000). Since this study will focus on the 2000 Presidential election, it is important to note that the 2000 turnout rate went up slightly from the 49% that turned out in 1996, to 51.2 % (Ushkow, 2001). The national turnout rate for younger voters was half of the national turnout rate in 2000 or at 25% (Roberts, 2001).

When looking at the declining voter participation in America, it is known that citizens do not turn out to vote for many reasons: they are too busy, uninterested, do not know the information, do not like the candidates, do not have transportation, chose not to,

the weather is bad, they are ill, or they forget (Cooper, 2000; Cummings & Wise, 1997). Similarly, many nonvoters are turned away because they think that their vote will not make a difference (Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980). Then, there is about one-third of the population that fails to register (Lang & Lang, 1968; Rogers, 1990). Obviously, you have to be registered to vote to participate, and since this segment of the population is not registered, they are eliminated from taking part in the process.

On the contrary, citizens who turn out to vote tend to be persuaded by the party, the candidate's issues, or the candidate's personality (Maisel, 1999). On election day, these people choose to turnout on their own, are persuaded by the campaign drives to get out and vote, feel it is their civic duty, are concerned about the outcome of the election, or are persuaded by media (Cummings & Wise, 1997; Lang & Lang, 1968; Wayne, 2000). Citizens who choose to vote and citizens who choose not to vote have different reasons for their choices, but many reasons revolve around how much information they received or sought out about the election—including who the candidates were in the election, and what their stances were on the issues (Campbell et al. 1980).

Methods to Determine Voting Behavior

To determine specifically who will or will not vote, two models have been developed. These two theories are 1) the sociological method and 2) the psychological method (Campbell et al., 1980; Cummings & Wise, 1997). The sociological method focuses on how the demographics of the citizenry- education, income, and class, etc.- affect the likeliness of citizens turning out to vote (Maisel, 1999). In contrast, the psychological method states that voters are influenced by the information they receive,

whether it is from the party, about the candidate, or about the issues the candidate supports (Cummings & Wise, 1997). By using these two theories, some conclusions can be drawn about how likely citizens are to vote.

The sociological method

Using the sociological method, I will examine the demographic of age and how it affects turnout. I am interested in finding out which age categories vote, particularly how youth vote. Next, because our study was done of college-aged students, I will look at how education levels affect turnout rates.

Age is one of the most important demographics to discuss when determining voter turnout. Many studies and research show that the younger voters, ages 18-24, have the lowest turnout rate of any other age group (Maisel, 1999; Rogers, 1990; Wayne, 2000; Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980). Some of these studies indicate that voter turnout increases with age, until you get to age 65, when turnout trends decrease (Campbell et al., 1980; Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980). For our study, we are most interested in how youth turnout in the 2000 Presidential election and how the age group of 18-24 year olds compare with other age groups.

Research has shown that youth voting records are lower than other age groups, and have varied from 30-55% in the presidential elections of 1966 to 1996, with the lowest rate of 30% in 1966. When talking about the 1966 election, it is important to note that 18 year olds did not have the right to vote at this time and so the young voters in this age group are 21 and above. On the flip side, the highest turnout rate of 55% came in 1972; right after 18 year olds gained the right to vote (Abramson et al., 1994; Depledge,

1996; Maisel, 1999; Patrick, 1972; Simpson, 1992; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The youth turnout rate was also high in 1992, when 49% turned out to vote when Presidential Candidate Bill Clinton heavily targeted the youth vote (Abramson et al., 1994; Schwartz and Kurtz, 1992). Some of the factors that youth cite for not being involved in the process is that they are not informed about the process or the election, they haven't identified with a political party, and they haven't gotten into the habit of voting since they are new to the process (Teixeira, 1987; Wayne, 2000).

When looking at the correlation between education level and voting, we find that there is a positive correlation. As a person's education level rises, so does his or her likeliness to turn out to vote. In fact, between 1960 and 1976, the most unlikely citizen to turn out to vote had a low education level (Rogers, 1990). In 1984, citizens who had a college degree turned out at a rate 36% higher than those who have received 8 years of schooling or less (Rogers, 1990). These statistics still hold true. Research has shown that education is the strongest demographic predictor of voter turnout—if a person has a high level of education, they are more likely to turn out, if a person has a lower level of education, they are not as likely to turn out (Teixeira, 1987; Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980).

To determine why education effects voter turnout, I utilized research conducted by Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980). They determined that education affects voter turnout for three different reasons: 1) if a citizen is better educated, they are able to acquire the information necessary to be informed 2) better educated people get more gratification from participating in elections because they understand the importance of it

and 3) education better prepares citizens to understand and have the patience for the registration process (Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980).

In summary, age and education both have a positive correlation with voter turnout. This means that the older a person is the more likely they are to turnout. It also identifies that citizens with higher education levels are more likely to participate in elections.

The psychological method

The psychological method ascertains that voters are influenced by the information they receive, whether it is from the party, the candidate, or about the issues they support (Cummings & Wise, 1997; Hinich& Munger, 1994). The rationale behind this theory is that citizens who seek out political information have an interest in the election and will turn out to vote. In past elections, this theory has had validity, especially when looking at the influences on how citizens cast their votes. According to Cummings and Wise, three influences on citizens' votes are the political party, the political issues in the election and the candidates themselves (1997). At the beginning of the century, the most important influence in elections was the power of the political party (Alger, 1989; Graber, 1993; Saldich, 1979; Pomper, 2001). Today, a much more important influence is the campaign content or what the candidates are saying to the public (Cialdini, 2001; Shea, 1996). When looking at political information today, most of it is centered on who the candidate is as a person. There is less time devoted to the candidate's stances on issues, and an even lesser amount of time is focused on the political parties (Alger, 1989; Hart, 1994; MacNeil, 1968; Wayne, 2000).

Another factor of this method is the influences that information can have on a citizen. Alvarez stated that the information that citizens receive might persuade them to vote for a particular candidate—around 14 percent of voters change their vote during an election period due to the information they are receiving (1997). Because votes decide the winner and loser in elections, candidates want to inform the public in order to win votes (Shea, 1996). As we will see, political candidates will try many techniques to influence votes. In order to discuss this point further, we will now turn to how political candidates use media in their campaigns.

Campaigns and Media

Looking to previous campaigns, different media venues have been used at different times throughout history. Television is the most persuasive medium in politics, because of its ability to capture sight and sound and reach vast audience (Cummings & Wise, 1997; Graber, 1993). Because of this, the focus of my research will be on television.

The first recorded use of TV in elections was in 1948 campaign, when the Democratic National Convention, which nominated Harry Truman, was televised (Cummings & Wise, 1997). Even when television was new to the campaigns, candidates understood the importance of appearance—Truman wore a "white suit and a dark tie, which a reporter from the *New York Times* termed 'the best masculine garb for the video cameras'" (Jamieson, 1988).

The first political television advertising campaign was between Dwight Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson in 1952. In this race, Eisenhower hired an advertising

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executive to help him produce commercials "that took advantage of America's growing curiosity about television" (Shea, 1996). Stevenson, on the other hand, renounced the use of television and gave his speeches first hand to the public (Seib, 1987). The importance of televisions' reach was learned in this election. Eisenhower was able to connect with voters throughout the nation who would elect him into office. Then, when these same two candidates competed again in 1956, Stevenson would use television in his campaign because he realized the importance of its reach and appeal to so many citizens (Seib, 1987).

In 1960, the first televised debate took place between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. In the debate, "sweaty razor-stubbled Richard Nixon learned a painful lesson in the politics of image at the hands of handsome, charismatic JFK" (Munching, 2000). This debate changed the life of campaigns as candidates learned the importance of image and what image can do for a campaign (Cialdini, 2001; Ranney, 1983; Munching, 2000).

In recent elections, we are able to see how candidates have continued to use their skills in developing images to appeal to voters. Candidates create images that they think the public will like and then they take these images to media outlets in attempts to reach and persuade voters (Cialdini, 2001; Jamieson, 1988; Maisel, 1999; Patterson, 1980). In the 1992 election, Clinton showed the nation that he was a likable guy to whom everyone could relate. He used television in his campaign to show the nation that he was friendly and outgoing. Clinton put images on television that showed him "touring a racially mixed section of Washington, D.C., visiting a shopping mall in California or stopping to

chat with people during a morning jog" (Schmuhl, 1992). From these images, voters perceived that Clinton really cared about each individual citizen in the United States.

Clinton then took these likeable images to voters by going to where they were. He played saxophone on the *Arsenio Hall Show* (Maisel, 1999; Patterson, 1994) and told MTV he preferred briefs to boxers (Reinert, 2000). These appearances allowed Clinton to reach viewers on a more personal level; additionally, he received access to different audiences. For instance, with his MTV appearance, Clinton appealed to "15 million younger viewers, many of them uninterested in politics" (Schwartz & Kurtz, 1992).

These techniques worked for Clinton as he reached more voters. More specifically, Clinton was able to reach young voters, most of who were not involved in politics. Forty-three percent of young voters turned out to help vote Clinton into office, which was much more than the 29% of 18-24 year olds that turned out in 1988 (Depledge, 1996). If a candidate energizes young adults about politics, they are more likely to turn out and vote.

Another example of a candidate who energized youth voters was Jesse Ventura in the 1998 governor's race in Minnesota. Ventura energized youth voters by relying on his WWF background. Furthermore, Ventura appealed to youth as a political outsider who would speak his mind. Many voters across the spectrum, youth included, liked Ventura's willingness to say whatever he wanted and not just what the people wanted to hear, which was what the other two political candidates in this race did. At one conference, Ventura told the audience why he targeted the youth vote—because one thing he learned from wrestling was "convince the children and the adults will follow" ("Minnesota youth news reporters," 1999). Ventura's strategy worked for him as he received "nearly half of those

votes" cast by young adults under 30 and got constituents who "either hadn't voted in years or had never voted at all" out to polls (Von Sternberg, 1998). By doing this, Ventura showed the nation that political candidates are able to be themselves and win on their personal images. Ventura's popularity also demonstrated that voters "ha[ve] an enduring appetite for the political sideshow, for campaigns as entertainment" ("Jesse's national splash," 1998).

The 2000 Presidential Election and Entertainment Media

When looking at the 2000 Presidential Election, it is obvious that the candidates, George Bush and Al Gore, realized the importance of image. Each candidate tried to mimic Clinton's ideas about using television to reach voters on all levels. They attempted to do this by appearing on various television shows. Both candidates appeared on many talk shows during their campaigns including: *Oprah, Live with Regis, Late Night with David Letterman*, and *Saturday Night Live*. The candidates pursued these venues because they were given the chance to reach millions of viewers without having to pay; hence the appearances were earned media. It has been argued by some that this type of media "is one of the most important areas of new style campaigning" (Shea, 1996).

The candidates also went on these shows to "[go] where the voters are" (Fineman, 2000). By appearing on entertainment television shows, candidates are able to reach many voters who do not watch political news or follow the election. Political analyst Charlie Cook said "there is an important slice of swing voters who don't watch the news, they don't read the newspapers, they don't pay attention to politics on a day-to-day basis,

and you have to reach them any way you can" (Robertson, 2000). The candidates realized that they could reach these voters through television talk shows and late night TV.

The leading show that both candidates appeared on was *Oprah*, because it had the largest audience. By appearing on *Oprah*, Gore and Bush had access to 7.3 million viewers (Fineman, 2000). While on the show, candidates attempted to gain the support of undecided voters, most of whom were women. Oprah's audience, "three-fourths of them female- - [was] a great vehicle to reach women unfiltered by probing questions from political reporters" ("Kissing up to women," 2000). While on the show, candidates answered questions from Oprah that were focused on who the candidates were as people and not as politicians. The candidates competed to be the "more romantic (happily married variety), more sensitive… and more family-oriented candidate" because this is what would appeal most to Oprah's viewers ("Kissing up to women," 2000).

Audiences of the show told Oprah that they would decide which candidate to vote for after they saw both of them on her program (Falsani, 2000). While watching her show, viewers learned about the candidates' personalities and very little about the candidates' stances on political issues since most of the questioning was geared toward learning about the candidates. When Gore was on the program a few weeks before Bush, the audience learned about an important time in Gore's life—a car hit Gore's son, during a time in his life when he was a workaholic. This situation made Gore realize that "family is first—family is first. Nothing goes onto the schedule until after all of the family time and personal time" (Carlson, 2000). Gore also told Oprah's audience that his "favorite cereal is Wheaties" (Babington, 2000). A few weeks later, when Bush was on

the program, he won points by giving Oprah a kiss. Bush noted that the most memorable time in his life was "the birth of his twin girls in 1981" (Alter, 2000). Then, Bush said that the things he knows for sure is "That there is a God… That I'm sitting here talking to you. That I love my wife" ("Bush talks to Oprah about drinking, forgiveness," 2000). We can see how these comments carried an emotional charm to appeal to Oprah's audience.

Bush and Gore also appeared on *Live with Regis*. When Gore was on the show, he showed "Regis how to hypnotize a chicken" (Borger, 2000). When it was Bush's turn, he showed up dressed like Regis, prompting Regis to say, "He gave Oprah a kiss, but he wore my shirt and tie" ("Bush: Campaign is like his own 'Survivor,'" 2000). On the *Live with Regis* program, the candidates reached 5 million viewers (Fineman, 2000). After the *Regis* and *Oprah* appearances, Bush went up in the tracking polls "among people who attended no college, people over 50 years of age, independents and women" (Wizda, 2000).

The candidates also appeared on late night television, including the show *Late Night with David Letterman*. By appearing on *Letterman*, the candidates reached 4 million viewers (Fineman, 2000). While on the show, both candidates read a top ten list, which is known on *Letterman*. Gore's list was about rejected campaign themes including, "Remember America—I gave you the Internet, and I can take it away. Think about it" (Sella, 2000). In contrast, Bush's top ten list was changes he would make in the White House. One of his changes was to "give the Oval Office one heck of a scrubbing" (Borger, 2000).

Finally, Bush and Gore caricatures appeared on *Saturday Night Live*. Many times the candidates were portrayed by actors on the show. Darrell Hammond was Al Gore, while Will Ferrell stood in as George W. The two got to play the candidates in the debates, which showed the candidates' shifting debate techniques. The first sketch highlighted how Gore wanted to take up all of the airtime—"Jim, can I make two closing statements?" (Peyser, 2000). Conversely, the second sketch showed how the candidates changed their techniques, "from Gore's new-found deference ("You go ahead. I insist. I was rude") to Bush's using foreign names apparently to prove he can pronounce them" (Peyser, 2000). The candidates also appeared as themselves, when they opened the "'Presidential Bash 2000,' a celebration of the best political satire from the first 25 years of 'Saturday Night Live'" (Lonergan, 2000). When they did this they each appeared separately and mocked some of their own personality blunders. George Bush said he "felt, frankly, *ambilivent*" to be on the show (Lonergan, 2000); and while Bush spoke about how his father was President, Gore interjected with one of his long sighs "he was criticized for doing too often on the first of this year's three presidential debates" (Shales, 2000). Later, the candidates' campaign staffs would use the *Saturday Night Live* show to help each individual candidate realize where they went wrong in the debates (Shales, 2000).

From these appearances listed above, it is shown that the candidates appear on these shows and talk about themselves. This was reflective of what the press releases said about the candidates' ' appearances on these programs. Collectively, this information shows that entertainment media appearances are all about the image and allowing the candidates "to demonstrate their most winning personal qualities and tell

their most appealing personal stories" (Pomper, 2001).   This directs us to why candidates use entertainment media.

<div align="center">Why political candidates use entertainment media</div>

The many examples listed above show how candidates use entertainment media to get their message out to voters. Some political analysts say the candidates' uses of entertainment media is good because they can be themselves, and they have a chance to relate to the average citizens (Maisel, 1999; Patterson, 1994; Wayne, 2000). Some citizens think that it is good for candidates to use any venue they need to reach the voters because an informed public is better than an uninformed public. Others take this a step further and argue that it is absolutely necessary for the candidates to use entertainment media because news stations aren't giving candidates the airtime that they deserve.

Candidates must use entertainment media in their political campaigns, if they want media coverage. In the 2000 election, the news stations and programs were not covering the election. This drove candidates to entertainment media as an alternative form of earned media. In fact, a study done by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center found that "network news spent 36 paltry seconds a night on substantive campaign coverage" ("Dead Air," 2000). By comparing this to the amount of time candidates received on the entertainment programs, it becomes obvious why candidates turn to the entertainment venue. Through one appearance on Letterman, Bush got 13 minutes of airtime. This is a lot more coverage than 30 seconds. In a similar nature, Gore received more time by appearing on Letterman in September than he "received from the three networks' evening newscasts during that entire month" ("TV or

Not TV," 2000). In addition to the free exposure, candidates can usually "generate weeks of coverage in other media" after an appearance (Getlin, 2000). Since the news media were not covering the election and getting information to citizens, the candidates must take it upon themselves to get airtime.

Most convincingly, candidates have to use entertainment media because this is where many voters get their political information. Different studies done by the Pew Research Center for People and the Press found that many people get their political information strictly from entertainment sources. The findings indicate that 51% of adults and 79% of those under 30 "regularly or sometimes pick up information from late-night programs and other "nontraditional" outlets (Downey & Earle, 2000). Furthermore, the study showed that "47% of the 18-to-29-year old public says it gets news about the presidential campaign from late-night television show monologues" (Getlin, 2000). When the voters are tuned into entertainment media, candidates must go there in order to reach the voters.

Pre-Study Research

Before analyzing the data that I collected by my study, I will analyze some general information about the voting public. This research will use data from the 2000 General Social Survey to determine where respondents got their political information before the 2000 election.

The GSS (NORC) consisted of 2,817 respondents, ages 18-89 that lived throughout the nation and answered questions about political information and age. The 2000 General Social Survey sample was chosen using a multi-stage probability

technique, and asked questions of respondents in face-to-face interviews. The variables that will be used for this pre-study analysis will be age and political information.

Variables

The independent variable in this analysis is age. Age refers to how old the respondents were at the time they were interviewed in 2000. The dependent variable is if respondents sought out political information and the sources they used. For example respondents were asked, "In the past two years, that is between (May) 1998 and (May) 2000--have you looked for information about the views or backgrounds of a candidate for political office?" Respondents had the option of answering no, 1 or 2 times, or 3 or more times. If a respondent answered no, they were done with this part of the survey. If respondents indicated that they had looked up political information, they were asked which sources they used to get political information. A seven part question broke political information sources down into these categories: a) articles in daily newspapers, b) articles in a general news magazine like TIME, NEWSWEEK, or US NEWS, c) special magazines or newsletters with particular policy interest or perspective, d) radio or television programs, e) friends or relatives, f) campaign material from campaign worker or candidate, and g) the Internet or World Wide Web. For these questions, respondents could answer that they sought out information from this source not at all, or yes, 1 or more times.

Univariate Analysis

In order to define these variables, we will first look at each variable separately before cross-tabulating them. First of all, we had age, which was categorized into 5 categories: those who were 18-25, 26-40, 41-55, 56-70 and 71 and older.

Table 1: Individual Variables by Categories, listed in percentages

Variables	Categories	Percentages of respondents in each category
Age	18-25	11.4%
	26-40	31.6%
	41-55	29.6%
	56-70	15.2%
	71 and older	12.2%
	Total	(N=2817)
Looked Up Political Information	No	73.1%
	1 or 2 times	12.0%
	3 or more times	14.9%
	Total	(N=922)
From articles in a daily newspaper	Not at all	17.2%
	Yes, 1 or more times	82.8%
	Total	(N=244)
From articles in a general news magazine	Not at all	38.9%
	Yes, 1 or more times	61.1%
	Total	(N=244)
From articles in a political news magazine or newsletter	Not at all	61.9%
	Yes, 1 or more times	38.1%
	Total	(N=244)
From radio or television	Not at all	18.7%
	Yes, 1 or more times	81.3%
	Total	(N=245)
From friends or relatives	Not at all	49.8%
	Yes, 1 or more times	50.2%
	Total	(N=245)
From campaign material	Not at all	55.5%
	Yes, 1 or more times	45.5%
	Total	(N=245)
From the Internet	Not at all	61.2%
	Yes, 1 or more times	38.8%
	Total	(N=245)

Looking at Table 1, we can see that the plurality of this survey was 26-40 years old with 31.6% falling into this category. The category of 18-24 year olds was the smallest category in this study at 11.4%.

This table also gives us information about the dependent variable, political information. By looking at the variable political information, we find that 73.1% of the GSS respondents did not look up political information on a candidate in two years. This data shows that a vast majority of respondents did not look up political information. Then, the table breaks political information down into the seven categories that were defined by the GSS. Remember, since this was a contingency question, only the 245 respondents who answered that had sought out political information in the last two years answered this question. Therefore, we only have 244 or 245 people in each of these categories. Looking at the results, we see that respondents are most likely to get their political information from newspapers (82.8%), and radio or television (81.3%). Respondents were least likely to get their political information from articles in a political news magazine or newsletter (38.1%) and the Internet (38.8%).

Bivariate Analysis

Consulting Political Information from 1998-2000	Table 2: Effect of Age on seeking political information from 1998-2000				
	18-25	26-40	41-55	56-70	71 and older
Not at all	81.6%	78.5%	68.2%	68.7%	69.7%
1 or 2 times	10.2%	10.1%	16.4%	9.5%	11.0%
3 or more times	8.2%	11.5%	15.4%	21.8%	19.3%
Total	100% (N=98)	100% (N=288)	100% (N=280)	100% (N=147)	100% (N=109)

When we cross tabulate the variables age and political information, we find some correlations. First, we see that 18-25 year olds are the least likely to look up political information as 81.6% said they do not seek out political information (Table 2). We also

see that across the board, the numbers are pretty consistent in how many people seek out political information. However, the chart shows that respondents above 56 are most likely to seek out political information 3 or more times—21.8% for the 56-70 year-olds and 19.3% for those older than 71. The findings indicated that there is a relationship between age and political information (X^2= 21.530, p= .006) but this relationship is weak (Cramer's V=. 108, p= .006).

The specific and individual mediums or sources of information were compared with age, and no significant relationships were found between the age and the particular sources of information; except between age and the Internet. We can deduct that has something to do with the fact that older people are less computer literate or don't use the Internet as much as younger people (Baran, 2001). Since there were no relationships between age and sources used, these graphs and relationships will not be shown. Because of the lack of relationships between these variables, we can conclude that most people, no matter the age, get their political information from newspapers (48.8%), and radio or television (48.2%) (Table 1).

Study Research

Methodology

Participants

To find out how much earned media affects young adults, a survey was taken of 111 18-to-24-year-olds at Bemidji State University. These respondents were asked to watch a short video of both presidential candidates on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno.* The information was collected in April 2002, in two courses: Mass Media and Society

and Intro to America Politics; because of time restraints, an availability sample had to be used in this study.

The Survey

Drew and Weaver's method of surveying audiences was used to determine how much media influences the respondents' votes (1998). The general purpose of the survey was to find out how much entertainment media influences young adults. Does it contribute to their understanding of the election through the candidates' stances on issues, by their knowledge of the candidates' personalities, or by influencing the respondents' votes?

In order to construct the survey entitled "Election 2000: Study of Media and the Presidential Candidates," (Appendix 1) books, articles, and previous research were consulted. Three of the survey's questions, numbers 12, 15 and 20 were drawn from Lisa St. Clair Harvey's study of political perceptions (1994). The responses listed in these questions were taken from Harvey's study, but were modified to better reflect the 2000 election. Similarly, the responses listed in question 10 about the political issues in the 2000 election, were taken from the book, The Election of 2000. They were identified as "emphasized issues," that both candidates equally addressed (Pomper, 2001).

When choosing the segment that respondents would watch, I wanted to make sure that both candidates were equally represented. The candidates appearances on the *Leno* show seemed somewhat equal, as they were both about ten minute clips and the candidates seemed equally represented. I wanted to make sure that the clip was very entertainment oriented because so many youth use entertainment media for political

information (Downey & Earle, 2000; Getlin, 2000). The purpose of using these clips was to see how much this information influences youth votes. The respondents were asked to identify their year in school, age, if they voted in 2000, who they voted for, and how involved they were with politics.

Next, in order to determine what influenced their votes, respondents were asked to reflect on the 2000 election to see what they remembered about the issues and policies, and which candidate they preferred on issues and on character. After these questions, participants were asked to view a segment of both Presidential Candidates' appearances on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. Presidential Candidate Al Gore appeared on the show before the primaries while candidate George W. Bush made his appearance a few weeks before the general election.

After respondents viewed this clip, they were asked follow up questions related specifically to the segments and respondents' views after watching it. This allowed conclusions to be drawn on what information respondents took away from the entertainment media source. The data was recorded and tabulated using the SPSS program.

Demographics of participants

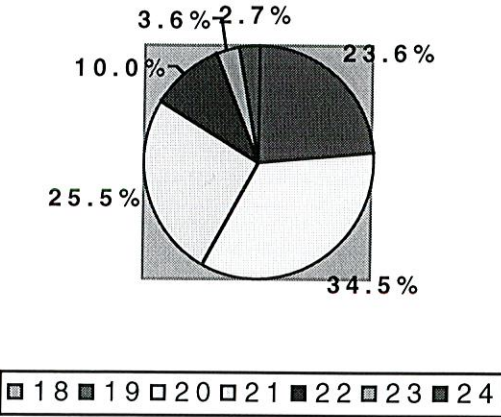To identify who the participants in this sample were, the demographics of the sample will be identified.
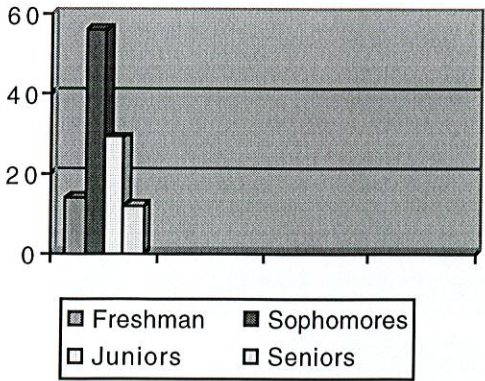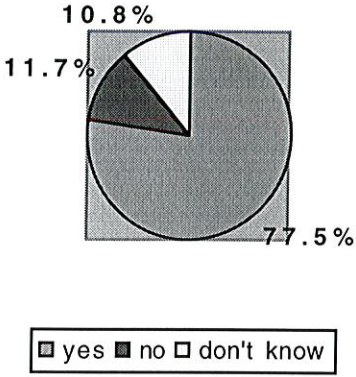
Table 3: Demographics of Survey Participants--Age

Variables	*Categories*	*Percentages of respondents in each category*
Age	18	0%
	19	23.6%
	20	34.5%
	21	25.5%
	22	10.0%
	23	3.6%
	24	2.7%

Pie chart:
3.6% 2.7%
10.0%
23.6%
25.5%
34.5%
□18 ■19 □20 □21 ■22 □23 ■24

Table 3 shows that the plurality of respondents were 20 years old (34.5%) followed by 21 (25.5%) and 19 (23.6%). There were no 18-year-old participants in this survey as they were unable to vote in 2000.

Table 4: Demographics of Survey Participants—Year in School

Year in School	Freshman	12.6%
	Sophomores	50.5%
	Juniors	26.1%
	Seniors	10.8%

Bar chart:
60
40
20
0
□ Freshman ■ Sophomores
□ Juniors □ Seniors

24

In Table 4, we find that the majority of respondents in this survey were sophomores, making up 50.5%. Seniors made up the smallest portion of our survey with 10.8%.

Table 5: Background information of Participants-Registered to vote			
Registered to vote	Yes	77.5%	
	No	11.7%	
	Don't know	10.8%	

10.8%
11.7%
77.5%

yes ■ no □ don't know

The majority of our respondents (77.5%) were registered to vote, refer to table 5. 11.7% of the sample respondents were not registered and 10.8% did not know if they were registered or not.

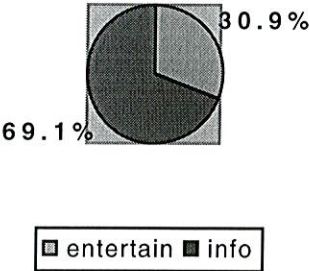| Table 6: Background Information, Presidential Vote—Which candidate won the respondents' votes		
Who respondents voted for	George W. Bush	43.0%
	Al Gore	25.2%
	Other	7.5%
	None	24.3%

Pie chart:
- 24.3%
- 7.5%
- 25.2%
- 43.0%
- Legend: □ George W. Bush ▣ Al Gore □ Other □ None

In table 6, we can see who respondents voted for in the 2000 Presidential election. Many of our respondents supported George W. Bush (43.0%). There were 25.2% of our sample that voted for Gore, while another portion (7.5%) voted for other candidates—most of these respondents indicated that they were Nader supporters. Finally, 24.3% of the respondents did not vote in this election.

Table 7: Background Information—How politically involved respondents were		
How politically involved respondents were	Very Involved	2.7%
	Somewhat Involved	30.9%
	Neither involved nor uninvolved	33.6%
	Somewhat Uninvolved	9.1%
	Not Involved	23.6%

Bar chart legend:
- □ Very involved
- ▣ Somewhat involved
- □ Neither (neutral)
- □ Somewhat uninvolved
- ▣ Not Involved

In Table 7, we find than most of the respondents in this survey claimed that they were neither involved nor uninvolved with politics (33.6%), followed by those that were somewhat involved (30.9%) and those not involved (23.6%). The least amount of respondents, only 2.7%, indicated that they were very involved with politics.

Table 8: Background Information—Where respondents got their political information		
Where respondents get their political information	Entertainment sources	30.9%
	Informational sources	69.1%
30.9% 69.1% ☐ entertain ■ info		

Many of our respondents indicated that they got their political information from informational sources (69.1%), which were defined as talk radio, evening news, newspapers (refer to Table 8). On the other hand, 30.9% of our respondents indicated they received their political information from entertainment sources such as: TV talk shows, entertainment magazines, and MTV.
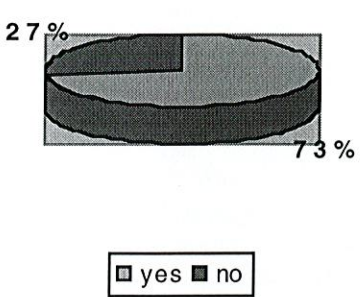
<u>Variables</u>

This study looks at how the respondents' impressions changed after watching the television segment. Specifically through better understanding the candidates' stances on

issues, having different opinions on the candidates before and after the segments, or by causing the respondents to change their vote. It will also analyze many different variables including voter turnout, where respondents got their political information, what characteristic respondent preferred candidates to have, what issue(s) respondents thought were most important to the campaign, which Presidential candidate that respondents preferred in issues and character and which candidate they voted for. Some of these variables are looked at independently while others are cross tabulated to see how one affects another.

<u>Analysis</u>

To begin with, the variable "turnout" will be used to determine how many of our respondents participated in the 2000 Presidential Election. The nominal definition of turnout was if respondents voted in the 2000 election. The operational definition was asking each respondent if they voted in 2000, respondents could check 1= yes, 2= no.

Table 9: Turnout Rate of Respondents Vote in the 2000 presidential election		
Did respondents vote in the 2000 election	Yes	73.0%
	No	27.0%

By looking at Chart 1, we find that 73 % of our sample participated in the 2000

Presidential Election, while 27% did not.

Respondents Turnout Rate in the 2000 Presidential Election	Table 10: Effects of political information sources on respondents turnout rate	
	Entertainment Sources	Informational Sources
Voted	63.6%	77.6%
Did not vote	36.4%	22.4%
Total	100% (N=33)	100% (N=76)

By looking at Table 10, we can see that there is some difference in voter turnout

by respondents who get their political information from entertainment sources and

informational sources. There is a relationship between political information sources and

voter turnout (X^2= 112.329, df=4, p= .00) and the relationship is strong (Cramer's V=

.715, p=. 00). This means that those respondents that rely on informational sources for

political information are more likely to turnout to vote.

In order to determine how respondents cast their ballots, and if they are influenced

more by the candidates images, or the candidates stances on issues, we are first going to

define what characteristics respondents thought a President should have. Then, we will

look at the issues that respondents felt were most important in the 2000 election. First,

we turn to the characteristics that respondents identified being important in a president.

In order to measure this, respondents were given a list of 20 characteristics and were

asked to write down the top three that were most important to them.

Table 11: The top characteristic that respondents felt a President should have
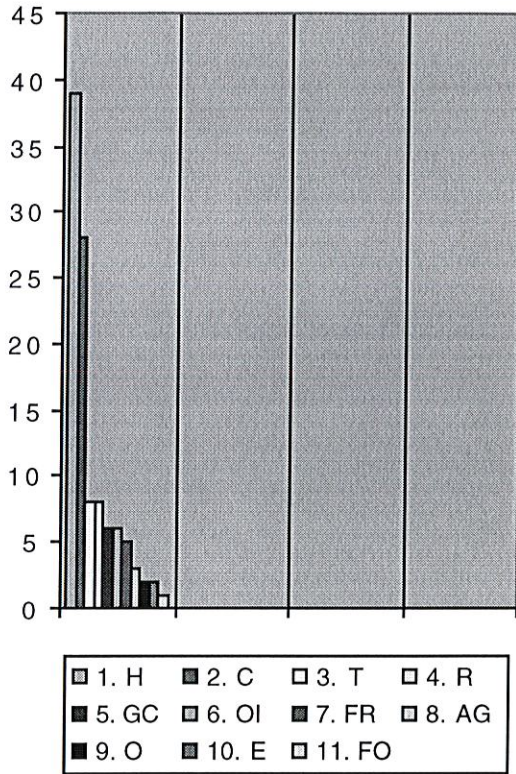
Top Characteristic that respondents thought a President should have	1. Honest	35.8%
	2. Competent	25.0%
	3. Tough	7.3%
	4. Realistic	7.3%
	5. A good communicator	5.5%
	6. Open to new ideas	5.5%
	7. Firm religious beliefs	4.6%
	8. An average guy	2.8%
	9. Optimistic	1.8%
	10. Experienced	1.8%
	11. Family Oriented	0.9%

Chart legend:
1. H   2. C   3. T   4. R
5. GC   6. OI   7. FR   8. AG
9. O   10. E   11. FO

When referring to Table 11, we see the most important characteristic that respondents felt a President should possess was honesty (35.8%). They also thought a President should be competent (25.0%), tough (7.3%), and realistic (7.3%). The least important characteristic identified by the respondents were optimistic (1.8%), experienced (1.8%) and family oriented (0.9%).

Table 12: Issues that respondents felt were important in the 2000 election

Issues that respondents deemed important to them in the 2000 Presidential election	Education	88.3% (N=98)
	Taxes and Budget	60.4% (N= 67)
	Environment	47.7% (N= 53)
	Gun Control	45.9% (N= 51)
	Health Care	40.5% (N= 45)
	Social Security	35.1% (N= 39)
	Military Defense	33.3% (N= 37)
	Foreign Policy	17.1% (N= 19)

educ ■ bud □ envi □ gun
■ heal □ socse ■ mili □ for
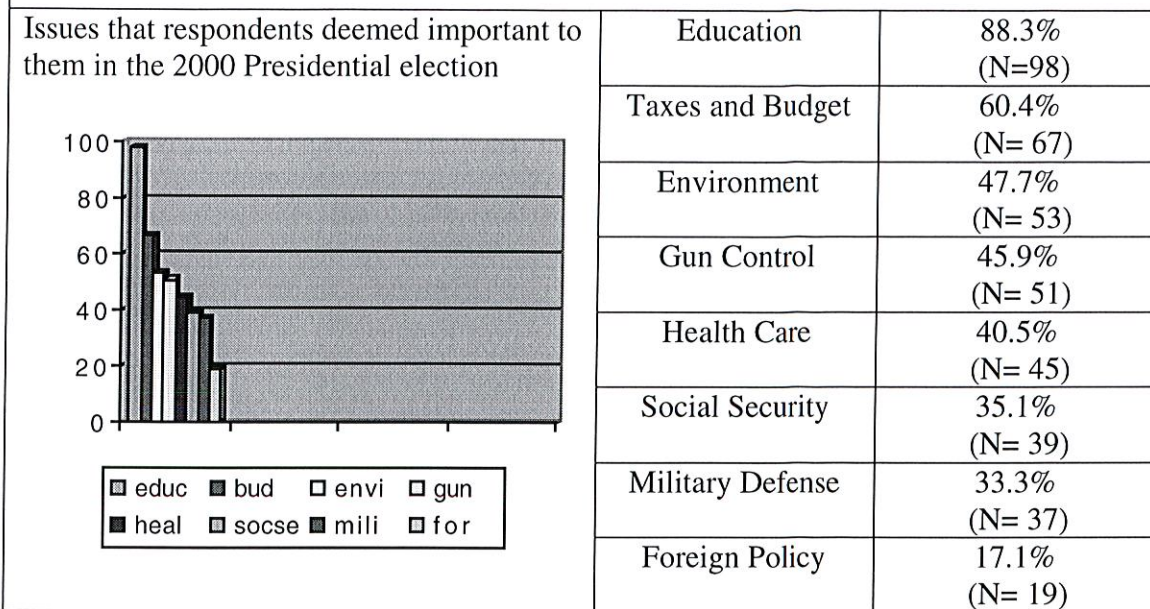
Next, respondents were asked to identify which of these eight issues that they felt were important to them. They had the options of selecting as many or as few as they wanted. Looking at Table 12, we see respondents felt the most important issue in the 2000 election was education, as identified by an overwhelming 88.3% percent of our survey. The next important issues were taxes and budget (60.4%), environment (47.7%), and gun control (45.9%). The least important issues to respondents were military defense (33.3%) and foreign policy (17.1%).

Table 13: The effects of which candidate respondents preferred on character and which candidate they voted for

Who respondents voted for in 2000	Al Gore	George W. Bush	Other	Don't know	None
Al Gore	86.4%	4.2%		16.0%	25.0%
George W. Bush		81.3%		16.0%	25.0%
Other	4.5%	2.1%	66.7%	8.0%	25.0%
None	9.1%	12.5%	33.3%	60.0%	25.0%
Total	100% (N=22)	100% (N=48)	100% (N=3)	100% (N=25)	100% (N=8)

The findings in Table 13 indicate that there is a relationship between who respondents voted for in the election and which candidate the respondents preferred on character ($X^2 = 111.729$, df= 12, $p = .00$). The respondents that preferred Gore on character, voted for him in 2000 (86.4%). Similarly, those that favored Bush's character in the election voted for Bush in the election (81.3%). Then, the respondents who did not know which candidate they preferred on character were the people who did not vote in the election (60.0%). The relationship that exists between which candidate respondents favored on character and whom they voted for is moderate to strong (Cramer's V= .593, $p= .00$).

Who respondents voted for in 2000	Table 14: The effects of which candidate respondents preferred on issues and which candidate they voted for				
	Al Gore	George W. Bush	Other	Don't know	None
Al Gore	85.0%	2.6%	14.3%	20.6%	25.0%
George W. Bush	5.0%	84.6%	28.6%	20.6%	50.0%
Other	5.0%	2.6%	57.1%	5.9%	
None	5.0%	10.3%		52.9%	25.0%
Total	100% (N=20)	100% (N=39)	100% (N=7)	100% (N=34)	100% (N=4)

When we look at which candidate respondents favored on issues and who they voted for, we determine that there is a relationship ($X^2 = 107.033$, df= 12, $p= .00$), refer to Table 14. Again, respondents who favored Gore's stance on issues voted for him in 2000 (85.0%). The respondents who felt Bush had similar stances on issues voted for Bush in 2000 (84.6%). Finally, the majority of respondents that didn't know which candidate
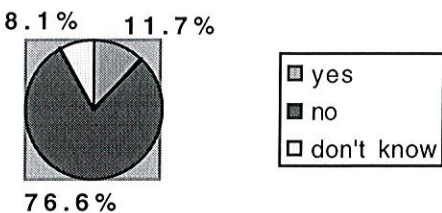
they favored on issues did not vote in 2000 (52.9%). The relationship between these variables is also moderate to strong (Cramer's V=. 586 and p= .00).

Finally, this study will conclude with how respondents' opinions changed after they watched both presidential candidates on *Jay Leno*. First we will look at if the respondents' opinions of the candidates changed. In order to determine this, respondents were given a list of eighteen characteristics. They were asked to identify which characteristics represented Bush, Gore, or both of them in the 2000 election. This was done both before and after the respondents watched the *Leno* clip.

We will first look at how respondents viewed Presidential Candidate George W. Bush (Appendix 2). In most of the areas, the respondents felt the same about Bush. However, Bush lost points in the following areas: 3. unintelligent (n_1=45 to n_2=30). This meant that respondents felt Bush was more intelligent after watching the clip. He also lost many points in 5. sensitive (n_1=37 to n_2=31), 9. emotional (n_1=45 to n_2= 26), and 16. moral (n_1=52 to n_2= 46). Meaning respondents saw him as more intelligent, less sensitive, less emotional, and less moral after viewing the clip. Bush gained points in categories like 1. self confident (n_1=76 to n_2= 84), 4. entertaining (n_1=53 to n_2= 71), 6. humorous (n_1=51 to n_2= 68), 8. honest (n_1=52 to n_2= 58), 14. experienced (n_1=59 to n_2=65), 17. true to himself (n_1=45 to n_2=53) and 18. someone you can relate to (n_1=38 to n_2=43). These numbers show that respondents thought Bush was more intelligent, funnier, more entertaining, more confident, honest, experienced, true to himself and someone they could relate to after watching the clip of Bush. Overall, respondents ranked him better in six categories, and lower in four.

When we look at how respondents viewed Gore before and after the clips, we find some differences (Appendix 3). Gore lost points in the following categories, 2. stiff (n_1=58 to n_2=40), 3. unintelligent (n_1=24 to n_2=16), 5. sensitive (n_1=39 to n_2=34), 9. emotional (n_1=25 to n_2=19), 10. "Compassionate Conservative (n_1=24 to n_2=16), 13. has what it takes to be President (n_1=22 to n_2=17), 14. experienced (n_1=34 to n_2=22), 15. "Fighter for Working Families" (n_1=35 to n_2=22), and 16. moral (n_1=42 to n_2= 32). This means that respondents felt Gore was more relaxed, and intelligent. Respondents also thought he was less sensitive, less emotional, and fewer thought of him as a Compassionate Conservative or a Fighter for working families. He also lost points in the categories of experienced, has what it takes to be president and moral. Referring back to the table, we see that respondents gave more points to Gore in 1. self confident (n_1=65 to n_2=69), 4. entertaining (n_1=28 to n_2=67), 6. humor (n_1=29 to n_2=70), 17. true to himself (n_1=30 to n_2=38), and 18 someone you can relate to (n_1=23 to n_2=35). Respondents had higher opinions on Gore as being self confident, entertaining, humorous, true to himself and someone in which they could relate. Overall, we find that Gore lost point in more categories than gained points.

The *Leno* segment changed the respondents' views on the candidates' personalities, and now we are going to look at if the segment had any influence on the respondents' understanding of the political issues in 2000, or the candidate's stances on issues. In order to figure this out, respondents were simply asked "after watching the segments, do you better understand the candidates' stance on issues?" The respondents had the options of answering 1=yes, 2= no or 3= don't know.

Table 15: Respondents understanding of the candidates stances on political issues after viewing the clip		
	Yes	11.7%
	No	76.6%
	Don't know	8.1%

8.1%　11.7%

☐ yes
■ no
☐ don't know

76.6%

According to the percentages listed in Table 15, most respondents felt that they did not better understand the candidates' stances on issues after watching the *Jay Leno* segments (76.6%). There were 11.7% of respondents who felt that they did and 8.1% did not know if they better understood the candidates' stances on issues after watching this segment.

The final analysis conducted by this study will be to determine if the segment would have caused respondents to change their political vote in the 2000 Presidential election. This question was asked as a follow up question to "would you use this program or others like it to get your political information?" If respondents answered yes to this question, they answered if this program "would have changed their vote?" Only 55 respondents answered yes to using this clip, and therefore, were the only ones to answer this follow up question. The respondents could answer 1= yes, 2= no, 3=don't know or 4=not applicable.

Table 16: Would the program have changed respondents' votes?		
Did respondents vote in the 2000 election	Yes	3.6%
	No	54.5%
	Don't know	30.9%
	Not Applicable	10.9%

Table 17 shows that the majority of respondents would not have changed their vote based on the candidates' appearances on the *Tonight Show with Jay Leno* (54.5%). The smallest portion of our sample said that this segments would have changed their vote (3.6%), while another 30.9% said they did not know if it would or would not change their 2000 Presidential vote. The 10.9% of the sample in the not applicable category did not vote in the 2000 election.

Conclusion

This study set out to determine what impact entertainment television has on youth political votes. More specifically, the purpose was broken down into seven parts, each one written as a hypothesis. The conclusion will begin by looking at each of these hypotheses and determining if the study results support or refute them.

First, the analysis was started by looking at the voter turnout rate of our respondents. If we compare these to the national turnout rate of youth, 24 years old or younger, we find that our respondents voted at a much higher rate than youth in our

nation. The respondents' turnout rate was at 73% (Table 9). This rate is higher than the national turnout rate of to 51.2 % (Ushkow, 2001); and is about three times higher than the reported national youth turnout rate of 25% (Roberts, 2001). Referring back to the literature review section, we can conclude because our respondents have more education than their peers that have not finished high school, or attended college, they are more likely to vote (Teixeira 1987, Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). However, this number still seems high, so we may also have had some over reporting—where respondents felt the pressure of needing to answer yes to this question in order to seem like a civic minded or politically active citizen. Either way, this information supports hypothesis 1) College-educated students are likely to have a higher turnout rate than their non-college peers (by comparing to the national turnout rate), because they are college educated.

From the pre-study research and previous studies, it was shown that television is an important source of political information. Similarly, the use of an entertainment source was justified in the literature review as we see how in recent years, politicians are turning to entertainment media to reach voters (Maisel, 1999; Patterson, 1994; Wayne, 2000. The use of an entertainment source, particularly *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno,* was further justified by these facts—51% of adults and 79% of those under 30 "regularly or sometimes pick up information from late-night programs and other "nontraditional" outlets (Downey & Earle, 2000); and "47% of the 18-to-29-year old public says it gets news about the presidential campaign from late-night television show monologues" (Getlin, 2000). From these statistics, I realized that youth are being informed about politics through entertainment media. I wanted to find out what percent of BSU students used entertainment sources to receive political information and if youth had a higher or

lower turnout rate if they got their political information from entertainment sources. This comparison was done in Table 10 and it showed that there was a strong relationship between where respondents received their political information and if they turned out to vote in 2000. The strength of this relationship shows that people who use entertainment sources are less likely to vote than those that use informational sources, because 77.6% of respondents who got their political information from informational sources voted, whereas 14% less, or 63.6% of respondents using entertainment sources for political information voted. Therefore, hypothesis 2) Young voters in our study will have a higher turnout rate if they get their political information from informational sources, is supported.

Another concentration of this study was locating the influences of young adults' political votes. According to previous research, political votes are influenced by the party, the candidate's issues, or the candidate's personality/character (Maisel, 1999). Of these three influences, this study looked specifically at candidates' images and the stances that they took on political issues. First, the study attempted to unveil the importance of character to voters in the 2000 election. In this process, the respondents first identified the characteristics that they felt a President should possess. Most respondents felt the number one characteristic that a president should have is to be honest (35.8%) and competent (25.0%), refer to Table 11. The respondents were also asked to determine which candidate they felt had more characteristics that they deemed important for the office. These results were compared to whom the respondents voted for in 2000. In table 13, the cross tabulation showed that there was a moderate to strong relationship between who the respondents preferred on character and who they voted for in 2000.

Because the majority of respondents who felt Bush had the more characteristics they wanted in a president voted for him, and the respondents that felt Gore had a better character voted for him, we can show hypothesis three is supported. The third hypothesis, which states that young voters are most likely to vote for the Presidential Candidate that they feel has the better characteristics.

The next focal point of this study was to see how much a candidate's stances on issues affected youth political votes. Table 12 indicated that the top three political issues most important to respondents were education (88.3%), taxes and budget (60.4%), and environment (47.7%). After signifying the political issues that respondents felt most strongly about in the 2000 election, they were asked to identify which candidate had the most similar stances on issues to themselves. In this section, it was shown that the relationship between the preferred candidate on issues and the candidate that respondents voted for in 2000 also had a moderate to strong relationship (Table 14). These findings do not support hypothesis 4) young voters do not understand the political issues or the candidates' stances on them; therefore, young voters do not vote for the candidate that has the most similar stances to them on issues. This hypothesis is not supported because respondents did vote for the candidate they felt had similar stances on issues. Looking at the results, we can say that respondents in this sample were equally influenced by the candidate's stances on issues and their characteristics when casting their political votes since both of these variables had moderate to strong relationships when compared with voter turnout in 2000.

Next, I wanted to determine how much entertainment media influenced respondents. According to previous research and studies, it was shown that the most

important influence of the election is the campaign content or what the candidates are saying to the public (Cialdini, 2001; Shea, 1996). In recent elections, it has become apparent that more of the campaign is centered on who the candidate is (Alger, 1989; Hart, 1994; MacNeil, 1968; Wayne, 2000). This information leads us to believe that respondents will be influenced about the candidate while watching the entertainment segment. Hypothesis 5 predicted, "Young voters will have different impressions of the candidates before and after watching their appearances on entertainment television.." When analyzing the respondents' opinions on the candidates before and after they watched the entertainment clip, by referring to Appendix 2, we found that the respondents felt better about Bush in the areas of seven of the eighteen categories listed in the survey. Similarly, Gore received more points in five categories (Appendix 3). This data shows that the opinions of the respondents changed on the candidates after they watched the entertainment segment; hence, hypothesis 5 is supported.

My study then turned to determining the influence that entertainment media have on the respondents in the understanding of Presidential candidates' stances on political issues. In order to determine this, respondents were simply asked if they were better informed of the stances candidates took on political issues after watching the clip. Results indicated that respondents did not better understand the issues of the candidates (76.6%) after watching the *Leno* segment (Table 15). This data refutes hypothesis number six which states, "when consulting entertainment sources, young adults are influenced by the source and feel better informed about the candidates' stances on issues."

The final area that this study looked at was finding out how much impact entertainment media has on political votes cast by young adults. In the literature review, it was shown that the political information that citizen receives may persuade them to vote for a particular candidate; and about 14 percent of voters change their vote during an election period due to the information they are receiving (Alvarez ,1997). Since this is a very complicated psychological process, it is not easy to understand the exact effects entertainment media has on voters. However, this study found that Bemidji State students are not likely to change their vote after consulting entertainment media. In fact, table 16 shows that only 3.6% of respondents indicated that their vote would change after watching this segment; but, there were also 30.9% of the sample that indicated they did not know if this information would change their vote. While these numbers seem small, they are significant when you look at the bigger picture. If 3.6% of our national voters would have changed their vote due to entertainment television appearances in 2000, the outcome of the race could have been changed. It is also important to note that this question asked respondents if they would change their vote based only on this one television segment. This leads us to believe that the persuasion of entertainment media may be higher than this, especially if a person watches it consistently. Either way, this data still refutes hypothesis 7 "young voters are likely to change their vote based on the information they get while consulting entertainment media sources."

Post study analysis

Overall, I am pleased with the results of this survey. The topic has been an interest of mine because there is very little research done on the subject. I found it

fascinating to delve into this area and find out more on how youth votes are affected by entertainment media.

While conducting this survey, I ended up collecting more information than I needed for this study and I was somewhat disappointed that I didn't use all of the data that was collected. However, as you can see, this study was lengthy enough without more data and the extra data would have lost the focus of the study. If I do more research in this area, I would be tempted to use this data and see what findings the data would reveal.

If I were to do this study again, I would like to do more of a qualitative study on the influence of different entertainment sources. I think that this would allow me to find out why individuals use entertainment television for political information and it would also let me see exactly how people are affected by it. I would also like to research more in this area to see if the findings are the same. Another change I would make would be to conduct my study during a national election. Obviously, studies that are done during the election would be more accurate since you get the true respondents opinions and a better measure the influence during the actual election.

Because the broadness and relative newness of this topic to politics, the possibilities of research in this area seem to be endless. However, slowly, we are finding out that entertainment media has an effect on political elections and on the voters in these elections. I am sure that there will be more studies done into his area over the next few presidential elections so American will know exactly how entertainment media affects political votes. For now, we will have to rely on smaller studies that are being conducted in order to determine the affects that entertainment media can have on our nation.

If other studies find that entertainment media does influence votes the way that this study found, we may be in for some interesting elections over the next few years. If we continually elect the best "actor" to be our political representatives, what is our nation saying to the world? What if we elect the best actor and find out that our new President cannot lead our nation, or worse yet, we find out that our President is acting as if everything is ok when really our nation is falling apart. The findings yielded about the importance of character to voters are somewhat frightening to think about, especially when we consider that someday these youth voters will be running our nation. By that point, we can only hope that these people will better understand the importance of being involved with politics. In turn, we hope that they will elect the best candidate for office, not the best actor/image.

However, on the flip side of this, we found that issues still play an important role in the election, as respondents indicated they voted for the candidate with the best character and the most similar stances to them on issues. Overall, this study shows that effects of entertainment media are wide in scope. A viewer of these programs may be influenced by the character of the candidate or by the stances he takes on issues. Either way, this study has shown that entertainment television has influence on voters. This influence may lead to some interesting results considering how many people watch the program and how close this last election was to electing Gore as our new President. As we get to future elections, we may better understand the effects that entertainment media have on political campaigns, particularly if entertainment media end up being the driving force behind a political candidate winning the Presidency.

Name of RA: Andy McBride
Name of ARHD: Candi Walz
Name of AD: Brian Manly

_2_ 1) Community Development
- Andy does a great job with his floor. He is a great role model for his residents and he and Paul work well to keep their floor in order. It is great to see.
- Paul and Andy talk a lot about the relationships that they have with their residents, their residents respect them, can have fun with them, and can hang out with them. It is great to see, it shows the maturity of these guys and it shows that they both understand the importance of their job.
- Andy seems to be a peer helper when needed as he confronts many problems.
- Andy has informed his residents about the campus and community. He is very knowledgeable in this area as he has been an RA for 2 years.
- Andy has promoted an atmosphere conducive to sleep and study, although he seems to have lost a lot of enthusiasm for this job.
- Andy has offered some programs for his floor-ice fishing and intramurals. It seems like he and Paul could offer more of a variety of programming.
- Andy and Paul have somewhat involved their residents in floor programming as many of the ideas come from residents.
- Andy seems to be a big supporter of hall council and getting residents involved with the campus.

_2_ 2) Self Growth and Modeling

- I think that Andy is really confident as a person. He will go far in life because of this. He understands why he needs to role model and he is a great one for his residents. Andy can balance work, life and school. It is great to see!
- Andy seems to follow all policies, guidelines and laws. More importantly, he fairly and consistently confronts people who are breaking these.
- Andy has set personal and professional goals for himself. He seems to be very successful in accomplishing them as well. However, I think that Andy has lost a lot of his enthusiasm for this job because he set the goal of being an ARHD and he did not get it. I think that Andy has handled this in stride, but his work ethics lack because of it.
- Andy has made progress in accomplishing his educational goals. Great to see his dedication to his studies and it has paid off for him!

_3_ 3) Staff Cooperation and Leadership

- Andy is a team player, at the beginning of the year, he was our staff leader. I think that he has lost his motivation as the year has gone on and he values his role in staff less now than he used to.

- Andy used to help develop our staff on a personal level by talking with individual RAs and encouraging them. He has done a great job with this, but his effort has been failing in this area, as he doesn't speak out as much.
- Andy seems to have forgotten about many meetings this semester, which makes me think that he has lost interest in this job.
- Andy is very willing to work with me, and I respect hearing his feelings and opinions and I appreciate that he is willing to bring these all to me.
- Andy used to be one of our biggest hall council supporters, however, he seems to have lost his dedication in this area too.

__3_ 4) Administrative Duties

- Andy seems to push a lot of the 4A paperwork onto Paul. This seems too be unfair and it seems that Andy should try to do more of this.
- Andy doesn't always get his paperwork in. When I get it, it is usually not complete and I have to ask him to do it again.
- Andy has maintained his working relationship with Jeannie; they really seem to respect one another. Great to see!
- As far as I know, Andy still consistently and fairly confronts and enforces policies violations. He seems to be natural in this area.

__3_ 5) Attitude Toward Position

- Again, it seems that Andy has lost all enthusiasm for this job. This is hard to see, as Andy was our staff leader. I think that it was very hard for him not to get an ARHD position, especially knowing how great he would have been in this position and how hard he has worked for res life. I was also really sad to see him not getting one of these positions, as he would have been amazing in FYRE and/or in leadership.
- Andy had the most positive outlook of all of our staff members on this job. However, this has been lost.
- Andy still is self-motivated to fulfill the duties of this position, but he has less enthusiasm to do them tasks well.
- Andy acts in a manner consistent with res life goals and objectives, but he has lost interests in them as he feels they have lost interest in him.
- Andy displays ownership for his role and regarding res life. He has remained upbeat about res life, as much as he can, even though he didn't get his ARHD position. I think that Andy has handled this disappointment in stride, but I think he feels that res life has failed him since he has given them so much of his dedication, time and effort. Sad to see res life lose this great person.

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Election 2000: Study of Media and the Presidential Candidates

Directions: Please fill out the following information.

1) Year in School:
   __ 1) Freshman   __ 2) Sophomore   __ 3) Junior   __ 4) Senior

2) Age: _____

3) Please indicate the following Presidential elections you have been able to participate in (meaning you were 18 or older).

   ___ 1) 2000   ___ 2) 1996   ___ 3) 1992   ___ 4) 1988

4) Did you vote in the 2000 election?

   ___ 1) Yes   ___ 2) No   ___ 3) Don't know

5) What influenced you to vote or not to vote? (please list as many answers that apply).

6) Who did you vote for?

   ___ 1) George W. Bush   ___ 3) Other: _____
   ___ 2) Al Gore   ___ 4) None

7) Currently, are you registered to vote?

   ___ 1) Yes   ___ 2) No   ___ 3) Don't know

8) Rank how politically involved you are:

   ___ 1) Very involved
   ___ 2) Somewhat involved
   ___ 3) Neither involved or uninvolved
   ___ 4) Somewhat Uninvolved
   ___ 5) Not Involved

9) Where do you get most of your political information? (check just one)

       ___ 1) Entertainment Media (i.e. TV talk shows, entertainment magazines, MTV)
       ___ 2) Informational/News Media (i.e. evening news, newspapers, talk radio)

10) On a scale of 1 to 7, rank how much of your political information you get from **entertainment sources.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
All	Most	Some	Neutral	Little	Hardly any	None

11) On a scale of 1 to 7, rank how much of your political information you get from **informational sources.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
All	Most	Some	Neutral	Little	Hardly any	None

12) On the average day, how many hours of television do you watch? ____ hours

13) Please state the extent to which you typically watch each of the following television shows/channels (check one for each).

	Watch often	Watch somewhat	Not often	Not at all
Oprah				
MTV				
Nightly news				
C-SPAN				
The Tonight Show with Jay Leno				
60 minutes				
Late Night with David Letterman				
20/20				
Saturday Night Live				
Dateline				
Live with Regis and Kelly				
CNN				

14) Listed below are some of the political issues that played a role in the 2000 election. Please check all of the issues that you feel strongly about.

___ 1) Gun control   ___ 6) Foreign policy
___ 2) Education   ___ 7) Social Security
___ 3) Taxes and budget   ___ 8) Military defense
___ 4) Environment   ___ 9) None
___ 5) Health care   ___ 10) Other: _____

15) Based on the issues that you support, which candidate do you think had the most similar stances to yours?

____ 1) Al Gore
____ 2) George Bush
____ 3) Other: _____
____ 4) Don't Know
____ 5) None

16) Which of the following characteristics do you think that a president should have (check all that apply)?

___ 1) Tough   ___ 11) Firm religious beliefs
___ 2) A "Washington insider"   ___ 12) Humorous
___ 3) Competent   ___ 13) Experienced
___ 4) Honest   ___ 14) Someone you can relate to
___ 5) Kind   ___ 15) A "Washington outsider"
___ 6) A good communicator   ___ 16) Family- oriented
___ 7) Good-looking   ___ 17) An average guy
___ 8) Inspirational   ___ 18) Optimistic
___ 9) Entertaining   ___ 19) Open to new ideas
___ 10) Realistic   ___ 20) Other_____

17) Of the characteristics listed above, please rank the top three that are most important to you.

1) _____
2)_____ and
3)_____

18) Which presidential candidate do you feel had the most qualities you deem to be important in a President?

　　　____ 1) Al Gore
　　　____ 2) George Bush
　　　____ 3) Other: _____
　　　____ 4) Don't Know
　　　____ 5) None

19) Please put a "B" for Bush and a "G" for Gore next to any words that you feel describes either of them. Please put both a "B" and "G" next to any words you feel describes them both. Please print the letters clearly.

_____	1) Self-confident	_____	10) "Compassionate conservative"
_____	2) Stiff	_____	11) Able to work with both parties
_____	3) Unintelligent	_____	12) Qualified
_____	4) Entertaining	_____	13) Has what it takes to be President
_____	5) Sensitive	_____	14) Experienced
_____	6) Humorous	_____	15) "Fighter for working families"
_____	7) Intelligent	_____	16) Moral
_____	8) Honest	_____	17) True to themselves
_____	9) Emotional	_____	18) Someone you can relate to

****

Please respond to the following questions after you have viewed the segment of the 2000 presidential candidates.

20) How likely would you have been to a watch a clip like this during the 2000 election?
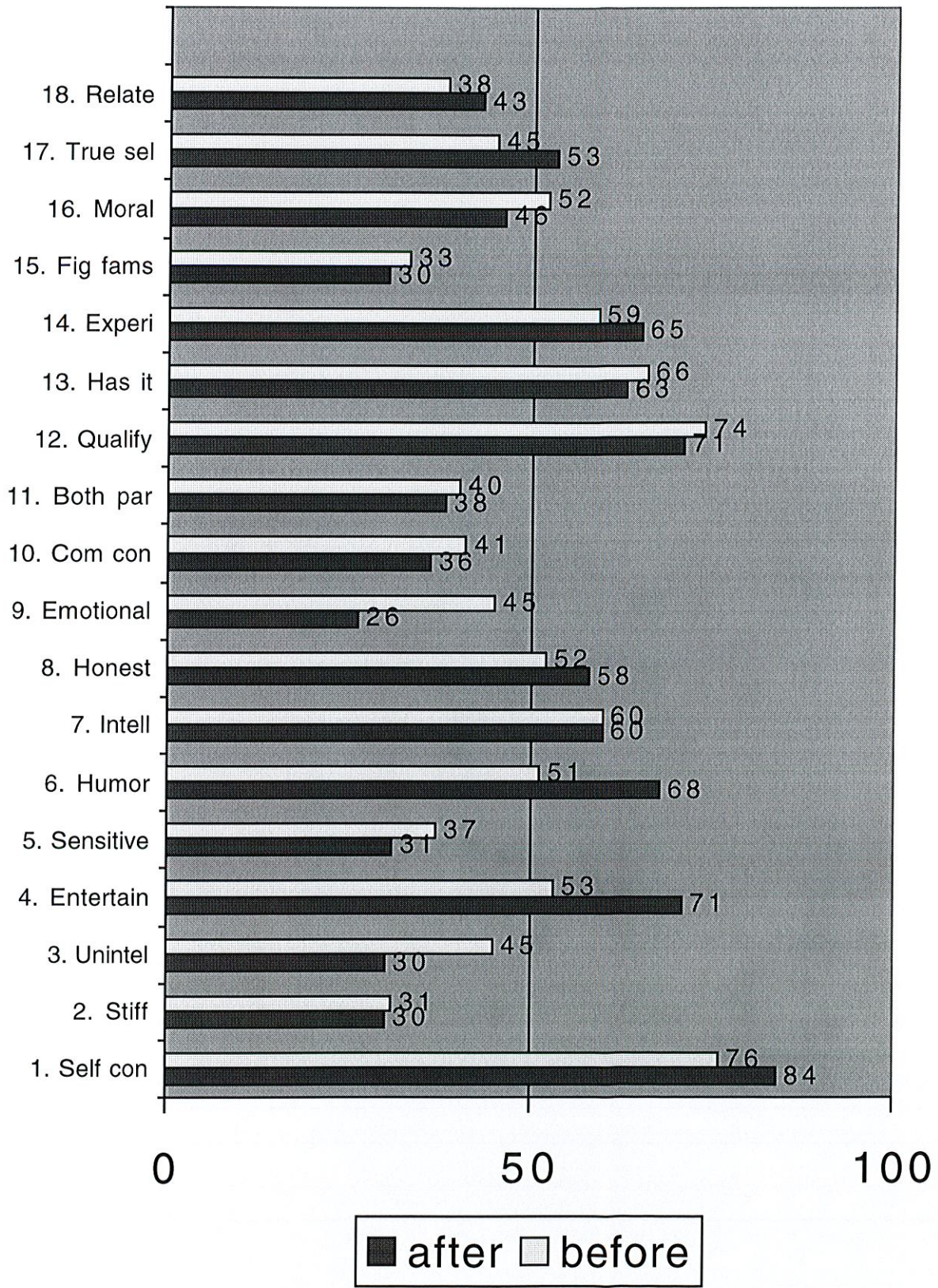
　　　___ 1) Very likely
　　　___ 2) Likely
　　　___ 3) Neither likely nor unlikely
　　　___ 4) Unlikely
　　　___ 5) Very unlikely

21) Rate the segment you have just watched. Would you say that the information provided was more educational or entertaining? (check one)

　　　___ 1) Educational　　　___ 2) Entertaining　　　___ 3) Both　　　　　___ 4) Neither

How respondents viewed Bush before and after watching him on Leno

Category	before	after
18. Relate	38	43
17. True sel	45	53
16. Moral	52	46
15. Fig fams	33	30
14. Experi	59	65
13. Has it	66	63
12. Qualify	74	71
11. Both par	40	38
10. Com con	41	36
9. Emotional	45	26
8. Honest	52	58
7. Intell	60	60
6. Humor	51	68
5. Sensitive	37	31
4. Entertain	53	71
3. Unintel	45	30
2. Stiff	31	30
1. Self con	76	84

0   50   100

■ after □ before

How repsondents viewed Gore before and after watching him on Leno

Category	before	after
18. Relate	23	35
17. True sel	30	38
16. Moral	42	32
15. Fig fams	35	22
14. Experi	34	22
13. Has it	22	17
12. Qualify	77	75
11. Both par	40	36
10. Com con	24	16
9. Emotional	25	19
8. Honest	31	33
7. Intell	73	72
6. Humor	29	70
5. Sensitive	39	34
4. Entertain	28	67
3. Unintel	24	16
2. Stiff	58	40
1. Self con	65	69

□ after ■ before