

# **FREQUENCY OF WATCHING POLITICAL NEWS PROGRAM ON TELEVISION, POLITICAL NEWS BIAS, AND POLITICAL NEWS DELIVERY SATISFACTION**

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## **Abstract**

This descriptive-correlation study determined the frequency of watching political news program on television, extent of political news bias, and level of satisfaction with political news delivery among 102 AB Communication students at the College of Arts and Sciences of University of Perpetual Help System Laguna, Philippines. Based on the careful analysis of the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that majority of the respondents watched political news program on television 3-6 times a week and that they believed that political news contained bias to a moderate extent. On the other hand, the respondents rated their level of satisfaction with political news delivery as high. As to test of relationship, the respondents' frequency of watching political news program on television had no bearing on their rated extent of bias for it and the respondents' frequency of watching political news program had no bearing on their level of satisfaction with political news delivery. Future researchers may look into specific news program to rate in terms of its political news bias. This may include local news programs like TV Patrol and 24 Oras or international ones like CNN and BBC, among others. The respondents to consider may also be professionals or households. Multiple research locales may also be looked into so better generalization can be drawn.

**Keywords:** political news program, news bias, news satisfaction

## **Introduction**

Media plays an important role and powerful part in our society. Millions of citizens rely on television, radio, newspaper, and social media platforms for the news in business, government, and education to name a few, thus forming various opinions on certain issues based on what they have seen, heard and read in the media. Sometimes, these media avenues persuade our own point of view on certain issues such as abortion, homosexuality, racism and politics. Numerous times throughout the history of media has downplayed bias, which simply means prejudiced. Media bias dates back to the early days of the newspaper and continues to this present day.

There are examples throughout the history showing how bias the media can be. In politics, the media's role in political affairs is especially important. They have the power to make or break a politician. They can say harsh things about the candidate or make them likable. In the area of news media, the public's interest to politics is affected by showing the people what they want to see. Even if there are many issues in a particular campaign, the media will focus on the one they consider to be the most important, and other issues or angles of the story can be completely ignored. Given that the general public cannot make clued-up decisions on public policy issues if the news on which they rely is deformed.

Obviously, the TV news broadcast and other media ought to be just and impartial in delivering news every day to the people, but apparently it seems to be the otherwise. It is worth noting that conveying inaccurate information or important stories that show only one side of it, or as we call it biased news only causes us, the Filipino people and the worldwide community adverse and unfavorable consciousness about our country, the Philippines.

In view of the foregoing, this study determined the frequency of watching political news program on television, extent of political news bias, and level of political news delivery satisfaction among 102 AB Communication Students at University of Perpetual Help System Laguna, Philippines. The study was deemed significant because as prospect future practitioners in the field of journalism, the respondents need to know how important media bias has to be addressed because it affects the judgment of their target audience. It is also their cardinal ethics to present balances, unbiased, and impartial news report at all cost. Additionally, the results of the study could shed light as to how communication students rate the extent of media bias on political news program and if it affects their satisfaction with news delivery.

Media bias is the bias or perceived bias of journalists and news producers within the mass media whether broadcast, print, or social platforms, in the selection of events and stories that are reported and how they are covered. The term "media bias" implies a pervasive or widespread bias contravening the standards of journalism, rather than the perspective of an individual journalist or article. The direction and degree of media bias in various countries is widely disputed.

Media bias is the evident bias of the news on media like television by the news anchors, reporters, and journalists who exert effort in different means of compiling stories and differ in how these stories are reported. All these signify the diversity in values and beliefs of the journalists in their field. Biases in the mainstream media happen every so often due to a few of the journalists who fall flat in delivering all the existing details of the stories to the audience. However, the media is not always full of bias and may be neutral to an extent that the governments have impact on some social media networks, which differ in other countries. Practical limitations to media neutrality include the inability of journalists to report all available stories and facts, and the requirement that selected facts be linked into a coherent narrative.

Studies reporting perceptions of bias in the media are not limited to studies of print media. A joint study by the Shorenstein (2007) Center on Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University and the Project for Excellence in Journalism found that people see media bias in television news media such as CNN. Although both CNN and Fox were perceived in the study as not being centrist, CNN was perceived as being more liberal than Fox. Moreover, the study's findings concerning CNN's perceived bias are echoed in other studies (Weatherly, 2007). There is also a growing economics literature on mass media bias, both on the theoretical and the empirical side. On the theoretical side the focus is on understanding to what extent the political positioning of mass media outlets is mainly driven by demand or supply factors (Pratt & Stromberg, 2011).

## **Methods**

This study used descriptive-correlational method of research to determine the relationship between the respondents' frequency of watching political news program on television, extent of political news bias, and level of satisfaction with political news delivery. The respondents were one hundred two (102) AB Communication students from the College of Arts and Sciences of University of Perpetual Help System Laguna. Total enumeration was employed by the researcher in selecting the respondents considering the small number of their enrollment for the second semester of the Academic Year 2016-2017.

A self-made questionnaire with three parts was utilized in the study. To test the validity of the questionnaire, the researcher presented it to the panel of experts in the fields of political science, communication, research and statistics. Their corrections were incorporated in the final draft of the research instrument prior to its distribution to the respondents.

In preparation for data gathering, the researcher presented a letter addressed to the Dean of College of Arts and Sciences of University of Perpetual Help System Laguna to obtain permission to conduct the study among the students of the college. Before personally floating the survey to the selected respondents, the researcher mentioned the instructions and explained the importance of the study to the respondents. After they answered, the questionnaires were retrieved, tallied, tabulated, and subjected to statistical treatment for analysis and interpretation.

The researcher used following statistical tools: Frequency and Percentage distribution were used to describe the respondents' frequency of watching political news program on television. Weighted Mean was used to determine the respondents' (a) rated extent of political news bias, and (b) level of satisfaction with political news delivery. Pearson r was utilized to determine the significant relationship between the respondents' frequency of watching political news program on television and their rated extent of political news bias as well as their frequency of watching political news program on television and their level of satisfaction with its delivery.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1**  
**Respondents' Frequency of Watching Political News Program on Television**

<b>Frequency of Watching Political News Program</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Always (7 times a week)	13	12.7
Almost always (5-6 times a week)	35	34.3
Often (3-4 times a week)	39	38.2
Seldom (twice a week)	8	7.8
Rare (once a week)	7	6.9
Total	102	100.0

As shown in table 1, thirty-nine (39) respondents or 38.2 percent often watched political news program on television followed by thirty-five (35) or 34.3 percent who

almost always watched it. Only thirteen (13) or 12.7 percent always watch political news program on television followed by eight (8) or 7.8 percent and seven (7) or 6.9 percent who watched it on a seldom and rare basis respectively. It can be inferred from the findings that when combined together, majority of the respondents watched political news program on television 3-6 times a week.

**Table 2**  
**Extent of Bias of Political News Program as Rated by the Respondents**

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Journalists twist political news stories to mislead viewers.	3.04	To a moderate extent	2
2. Political news materials contain subjectivity that alters truth.	2.99	To a moderate extent	3
3. News reporters are injecting their biases on their political reports. <sup>3</sup>	2.95	To a moderate extent	4
4. Political news stories are not balanced in terms of covering the sides of the issue.	2.89	To a moderate extent	7.5
5. Political news contents are not comprehensive due to network's discretion.	2.93	To a moderate extent	5
6. News presenters inject their own opinion without evidence.	2.77	To a moderate extent	10
7. Political news objectivity is compromised due to network's biases.	3.06	To a moderate extent	1
8. News anchors inject irrelevant accounts to political issues.	2.89	To a moderate extent	7.5
9. Political issues lack fairness due to news presenters subjectivity.	2.87	To a moderate extent	9
10. Political news look partial and one-sided.	2.90	To a moderate extent	6
Average Weighted Mean	2.93	To a moderate extent	

As presented in table 2, indicator 7 stating that “political news objectivity is compromised due to network’s biases” obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.06 interpreted as “to a moderate extent.” This is followed by indicator 1 which states “journalists twist political news stories to mislead viewers” yielding a weighted mean of 3.04 verbally interpreted as “to a moderate extent.” The rest of the indicators got a weighted mean ranging from 2.77 to 2.99 which were all verbally interpreted as “to a moderate extent.” To sum up, an average weighted mean of 2.93 revealed that the respondents believed that political news contain bias to a moderate extent.

**Table 3**  
**Respondents' Level of Satisfaction with Political News Delivery**

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Political news credibility	3.25	High	1
2. Political news objectivity	3.13	High	4
3. Political news balance (determining the two sides of a political story)	3.14	High	2
4. Political news ethics and professionalism	3.13	High	4
5. Political news accuracy	3.13	High	4
Average Weighted Mean	3.16	High	

Table 3 shows that indicator 1 “political news credibility” obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.25 and interpreted as “high” followed by indicator 3 “political news

balance” having a 3.14 weighted mean which is also verbally interpreted as “high”. On the other hand, indicators 2, 4 and 5 got similar weighted mean of 3.13 and are all verbally interpreted as “high.” To sum up, an average weighted mean of 3.16 showed that the respondents rated their level of satisfaction with political news delivery as high.

**Table 4**  
**Relationship between the Respondents’ Frequency of Watching Political News Program on Television and their Extent of Bias for Political News Program**

Variables	Pearson r	p- value	Interpretation
Frequency of watching political news program and extent of bias for political news program	0.174	0.080	Not Significant

0.05 level of significance

As shown in Table 4, there was no significant relationship between the respondents’ frequency of watching political news program and their extent of bias for political news program as revealed by the p-value of 0.080 which was higher than the 0.05 level of significance. This means that the respondents’ frequency of watching political news program has no bearing on their extent of bias for political news program.

**Table 5**  
**Relationship Between the Respondents’ Frequency of Watching Political News Program on Television and their Level of Satisfaction with Political News Delivery**

Variables	Pearson r	p- value	Interpretation
Frequency of watching political news program and level of satisfaction with political news delivery	0.111	0.266	Not Significant

0.05 level of significance

As shown in Table 5, there was no significant relationship between the respondents’ frequency of watching political news program and their extent level of satisfaction with political news delivery as revealed by the p-value of 0.111 which was higher than the 0.05 level of significance. This means that the respondents’ frequency of watching political news program has no bearing on their level of satisfaction with political news delivery.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the careful analysis of the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that majority of the respondents watched political news program on television 3-6 times a week and that they believed that political news contained bias to a moderate extent. On the other hand, the respondents rated their level of satisfaction with political news delivery as high. As to test of relationship, the respondents’ frequency of watching political news program on television had no bearing on their rated extent of bias for it and the respondents’ frequency of watching political news program had no bearing on their level of satisfaction with political news delivery.

## **Future Directions**

The respondents are encouraged to continuously watch political news program because in so doing they get to be exposed to various political platforms which they can use to form their informed opinion and judgment as citizens of the country. Although they rated political news program to have contained bias to a moderate extent, they are exhorted to practice journalism with utmost professionalism and objectivity as its prospect future practitioners. Journalism professors need to keep on instilling among their students the cardinal ethics of journalism which accentuates impartiality, balance, and absence of prejudice in reporting. Future researchers may look into specific news program to rate in terms of political bias. This may include local news programs like TV Patrol and 24 Oras or international ones like CNN and BBC, among others. The respondents to consider may also be professionals or households and may cover multiple locales so better generalization can be made.

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