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**“Truthiness” and Second-Level Agenda Setting:
Satire News and Its Influence on Perceptions of Television News Credibility**

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of satire news programs on perceptions of media credibility. Using second-level agenda setting as a theoretical framework, the results of this mixed-methods study show that negative portrayals of television news on these satire news shows makes salient certain negative attributes that match viewers’ perceptions of credibility. A survey (n=650) found that *Daily Show/Colbert Report* viewers had less positive views about the credibility of television news programs, while content analysis (N=401) of four weeks of episodes of *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* reflected the results of the survey, showing that television news programs, particularly those on cable, were more frequently portrayed negatively and made the target of jokes. The analysis shows television news is a frequent target of these satire shows’ criticisms and these shows’ negative attributes are made salient, which is reflected in the survey respondents’ low credibility scores for this medium.

KEYWORDS: Second-Level Agenda Setting, Satire News, Credibility

INTRODUCTION

Comedy Central’s flagship “satire news” programs, *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*, have been the focus of studies that examine the shows’ effect on political empowerment among viewers or perceptions of the political process. In particular, high viewership corresponds to increased knowledge about politics (Cao & Brewer, 2008) and sense of ability to understand political news even as they become more cynical about politics (Baumgartner & Morris, 2006). The shows also have played the role of media critic, often unabashedly so. It was *The Daily Show* host Jon Stewart, after all, who famously went on CNN’s *Crossfire* in October 2004 and told the hosts, “It’s not so much that (*Crossfire*) is bad as it’s hurting America” (Crouch, 2013).

Beyond the scrutiny of government and current affairs, much of *The Daily Show*’s allure “lies in its brutal satire of the media” (Smolkin, 2007). In particular, *The Daily Show* criticizes television news for its “construction of televisual spectacle at the expense of understanding” (Baym, 2005). Television news has seen a shift from “hard” to “soft” news approaches as ratings pressures have increased, and critics say news media are distracted from their traditional role of providing independent oversight of those in power (Baum, 2003; Bennett, 2003). Stephen Colbert, the host of *The Colbert Report*, mocks this move toward what he calls “truthiness” – the idea that the truth is what the news media, as parodied by him in particular, believe it to be regardless of evidence to the contrary and with little self-awareness of how journalism-as-spectacle affects the industry’s credibility (Peyser, Bailey, Darman, & Chebatoris, 2006).

These two Comedy Central channel programs attract young viewers – 43% of the audience is less than 30 years old, and less than a quarter is over 50 (Pew Research Center, 2012) – as they skewer politicians and pundits alike in a format that parodies television newscasts. This could prove troublesome for news media because amidst the heavy criticism of news. Both

shows offer serious commentary in an entertaining package that is attractive to young viewers, in turn shaping perceptions about news and what news ought to be like (Graber, 2006).

What impact could this stream of ridicule aimed at the news media have on perceptions of news media among these young viewers? This study explores the relationship between the modern phenomenon of satire news programs and media credibility attitudes. In particular, the study considers the portrayal of news media by *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* and whether similar perceptions of channel credibility are reflected in the young viewers who largely make up these shows' audience. This study also is an attempt to extend theory, as the mixed method employed in this research examines whether a second-level agenda setting relationship, as suggested by McCombs (2003), exists in arenas other than traditional news.

Review of the Literature

“Soft News” and “Satire News”

Exploring *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* requires placing these shows within a firm conceptualization. Much of the literature has typically viewed *The Daily Show* as “soft news” (Baumgartner & Morris, 2006; Fox, Koloen, & Sahin, 2007). Baum (2003) described soft news as information embedded within programs whose chief goal is to entertain, whereas “hard news” has a primary goal of informing the audience. Placing these Comedy Central programs in this hard-soft dichotomy is problematic, and a more realistic definition treats “satire news” shows as a hybrid of hard and soft news. Stewart and Colbert function as mock anchors and deliver information on topics similar to what is found in the day's news, and they serve as a source of news for some even as the shows tend to frame information in more moralistic terms than traditional news media (Fox et al., 2007; Williams & Delli Carpini, 2011; Zukas, 2012). Comedy, in this case, is a vehicle for reporting information. There is historical precedent for

these hybrid satire news programs that possess characteristics of hard and soft news programs. Such programs can be traced back almost half a century, from the “satire boom” in Britain including shows such as *That Was the Week That Was* in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Wagg, 2002) to the Weekend Update segments on *Saturday Night Live* (Reinhold, 2006). Young & Tisinger (2006) noted satire news programs straddle the line between professional news and soft news, representing something new. They are programs that are political in nature but designed to entertain, often indistinguishable from professional news.

Baym (2005) interpreted *The Daily Show* as satire that evidences a “new form of critical journalism” aiming to scrutinize both politicians and the press, with the latter being a discussion about the role of news in society. Baym’s approach, which combined these current shows with the historical predecessors to *The Daily Show* and the *Colbert Report*, suggests at least four elements that characterize satire news: (1) a format representative of mainstream news programs, with an anchor at a desk reading news items; (2) a humorous approach to presentation of these news items; (3) a focus more on politicians and public affairs than entertainment and spectacle; and (4) scrutiny of behavior of individuals and institutions that make up traditional news media.

Four variables tend to predict viewership of satire news shows: age, exposure to satirical sitcoms, exposure to liberal cable television news, and an affinity for political humor (Hmielowski, Holbert, & Lee, 2011). These programs have shown to be an aid in teaching viewers about what is going on in politics (Beavers, 2011), although studies have found viewers can sympathize with politicians targeted in these shows or tend to wrongly think their ideology is not the target of the joke (Baumgartner & Morris, 2008; LaMarre, Landreville, & Beam, 2009).

News Credibility

News media often are targets in satire news, and previous research suggests that *Daily*

Show viewing correlates with lower levels of trust in the news media (Baumgartner & Morris, 2006). News credibility offers potential insight on this relationship. Scholars have conceptually defined news credibility in various ways such as accuracy, measures of bias, fairness, or completeness (Johnson & Kaye, 2002), but consensus has focused credibility as a source's believability (Kiousis, 2001). Credibility measures the trust people have in sources in terms of either the honesty of the reporting method or approach, or in terms of the accuracy of the information (Carter & Greenberg, 1965). Frequency of use of a particular form of media does not correlate with credibility ratings; consumers judge individual messages in light of the perceived quality of the reporting effort as well as past experiences with a source (Rimmer & Weaver, 1987; Slater & Rouner, 1996). While the attitudes a user brings to media consumption seems to have some impact on how they judge the source's credibility (Gunther, 1988), research in credibility tends to focus on aspects a channel's trustworthiness such as the institution or the person delivering the message rather than particular stories (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000).

While individual stories are important, these consist of information-delivery moments and are less useful in determining the overall assessment of a media channel's believability (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000; Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Tseng & Fogg, 1999). The concept of credibility in terms of information delivery is studied at two different levels: the source delivering the information such as a news brand like CNN, or an entire channel such as television or newspapers (Rimmer & Weaver, 1987; Slater & Rouner, 1996). Various studies have compared channels such as print media, television, radio, and online sources and have found differing levels of credibility depending on the information context (Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Kimber, 1997; Newhagen, 1997; Sundar, 1999). Still, mere channel differences are not enough; Sundar (1999) found, that evaluating credibility is a complex navigation of global

variables that users take into account. For example, viewers judge television news by the personality delivering the news report, and thus likeability was a factor; on the other hand, newspapers were judged as institutions because they are faceless and users don't often see the reporter (Newhagen & Nass, 1989). Reliance on traditional media was the best predictor for how a user will judge a source's credibility, and for both *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*, audiences tend to be strong users of other types of media (Young & Tisinger, 2006).

Although past research already has shown a negative relationship between news credibility and *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* viewership, those studies examined news in general and did not differentiate by channel. This study is interested in a cross-channel credibility comparison. These shows' viewers judge news negatively on the whole, but when examining it by channel does this relationship stay the same across channels or are there significant differences between them?

H₁: There will be a negative correlation between perceptions of television news credibility and satire news viewership.

Theoretical Framework: Agenda setting

Previous findings in an experimental setting noted a relationship between viewing *The Daily Show* and increased cynicism in the news media (Baumgartner & Morris, 2006). Second-level agenda setting offers a way to explore this relationship via a theoretical framework. If the metaphor of traditional agenda setting theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) is that news media do not tell us what to think, but instead what to think about, the metaphor for second-level agenda setting is that news media may also tell the audience how to think about certain issues, people or events (McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, & Rey, 1997). Second-level agenda setting suggests that news media transmit salience of certain attributes about people, issues and events to the

audience at both cognitive and affective levels (Ghanem, 1997), with cognitive attributes including the attachment of facts or details about the subjects of coverage and affective attributes reflecting positive and negative feelings about the subjects of coverage.

Several studies have found support for second-level agenda setting in news media (Becker & McCombs, 1978; Golan & Wanta, 2001; Kiouisis, Bantimaroudis, & Ban, 1999; Weaver, Graber, McCombs, & Eyal, 1981), though these have traditionally approached the theory in the context of political communication. McCombs (2005) has suggested that second-level agenda setting may, as has been the case for traditional agenda setting, be due for expansion into other areas, such as “corporate reputations, professional sports, classroom teaching and religious beliefs.” For example, the theory has been applied to business news, with correlation between attributes about environmental concern linked to oil companies in business stories and the salience of those issues in public perception (Meijer & Kleinnijenhuis, 2006).

Some research on *The Daily Show* has examined this from the perspective of framing theory (Zukas, 2012), which posits that media generate organizing ideas that help people turn information into understanding (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987). Scholars continue to debate whether framing and second-level agenda setting are essentially the same theory (Borah, 2011). This study approaches from the closely related area of second-level agenda setting not in order to weigh in on this debate but rather to explore suggested areas of research following the guidance of McCombs (2005). Given that past research has shown a negative view toward news among satire news users, second-level agenda setting would predict the portrayal of television news would be negative if the content consists of heavy negative references to television news.

H₂: Television news will be portrayed negatively more than other forms of news media.

H₃: Television news will be made the target of a joke more than other media.

Both *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* routinely use clips from news broadcasts as a basis for setting up jokes during their shows, but that does not exclude journalists who make the news from being targets of criticism. Intertextual interplay between source material and joke is a common phenomenon in satire news. Cable news in particular would seem to be a likely target given that it is on the air 24 hours a day compared to its network counterparts, meaning there is more material to work with (Fox et al., 2007; Williams & Delli Carpini, 2011).

H₄: Cable TV news will be portrayed negatively more often than non-cable TV news.

Method

The first part of this study employed a survey to gather data for the first hypothesis, which sought to gauge satire news audience attitudes about news credibility. Because this study concerns consumption of satire news and attitudes about channel credibility in two programs that are largely aimed at and viewed by younger audiences (Hmielowski et al., 2011), students at a large Midwestern state university were recruited to participate in the survey. Respondents were students in introductory-level courses in topics such as sociology, philosophy, anthropology, political science and economics. Journalism students were not recruited due to potential confounds such as preconceptions of the news industry, though some students considering journalism as a major and who were taking one of the above courses were able to participate. The students were either given extra credit or entered into a drawing for \$100 as inducement to participate in the survey, which was administered via the Internet. Participants took the survey over a three-week period, and 650 valid surveys were used in the analysis.

The survey asked how many days in a typical week participants watched humor-based news shows such as *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*. Because these shows air four new episodes with numerous repeats each week, the sample was broken into five groups: Those

watching zero days ($N = 216$); those watching once ($N = 93$); those watching twice ($N = 85$); those watching three days ($N = 91$); and those watching four or more days ($N = 161$).

Participants who did not answer this question ($N = 4$) were not considered in the analysis. This measure does not account for repeated viewing, as it is based on frequency of days watched in a given 7-day week only, nor did it ask on which device the participant watches the shows.

Participants were also asked a series of questions intended to measure their attitudes about credibility of four different news media channels: daily newspapers, television news programs, online news sites and radio news programs. Four scales developed and found to be reliable in a study on channel credibility (Kiouisis, 2001) were employed in this study and cleared the minimum reliability threshold, with Cronbach's scores above 0.70. Participants were instructed to consider the news source in each category that he or she was most familiar with. Then, they answered (using a 5-point scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) five statements about each news source's credibility, such as “the TV news program I most regularly watch is factual” or “the TV news program I most regularly watch cannot be trusted.” To examine the relationship between *Daily Show/Colbert Report* viewing and channel credibility attitudes, a series of ANOVA tests were run. Days viewed in a typical week served as the independent variable and the mean score for the channel scale was the dependent variable, with the high part of the range denoting positive feelings about credibility.

The second part of this study used content analysis to examine the portrayal and use of news media sources across different types of news media on both *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*. Sixteen episodes of each show were randomly selected from within a calendar year period, while ensuring an equal number for each of the four days each week that the shows air (Monday to Thursday). The result was a constructed month of viewing, with four episodes of

each show being coded for each day of the week. The coder watched for moments in which news media were referenced as a source during the episode. The coder logged the show type (*Daily Show* or *Colbert*), Segment number (there are four segments in each show, separated by commercial breaks), Bit number (the topic being discussed, although a shift away to a fake standup reporter for commentary or expansion of the topic was considered a new Bit) and then coded four categories: News Medium, Cable TV, Media Portrayal, and News Media Source Use.

The News Medium category examined the type of news media being portrayed, with the choices being: television, radio, Internet news source, newspaper/newspaper Web site. Newspapers and their Web sites were grouped together because in most cases the Web product is an extension of the print product; the content is the same and the Web source is drawing upon the newspaper's institutional credibility. If a Web site referenced was a Web-only source or had a TV or radio counterpart, it was coded under Internet news source unless it could be determined that it had material that had been broadcast on the television platform. During certain segments or bits within the show, sometimes more than one media source was referenced, and these were coded as separate instances even if they were being used for the same purpose.

The Cable TV category was coded for whether the news outlet referenced is from cable television. Cable television outlets were coded by network (e.g. Fox News, CNN, MSNBC, Other) or as Not Cable TV if it was something besides a cable television news outlet.

The third category coded was Media Portrayal, defined as how the referenced news media source is being portrayed. The coding choices were Positive, Negative, Mixed, and Unknown. “Positive” refers to the media source being complimented or the information being presented as factual, a sign that the source got the information right. “Negative” refers to the media source getting the facts wrong, obvious flaws in reporting or logic, or otherwise not doing

their job correctly. “Mixed” refers to some elements of Positive and Negative being present in the same reference. “Unknown” means it is unclear how the referenced media is being portrayed, an appropriate category for unrelated items such as stock video footage where content is being used as filler for visual rather than information purposes. Positive or negative mentions were calculated as percentages of total references for each channel. This method doesn’t code for shades of positivity or negativity (e.g. how positive a reference is) because a reliable scale would be difficult to construct. In addition, using percentages allows for comparisons across channels.

The final coding category was News Media Source Use, defined as how the news media referenced was being used in the larger scheme of the bit itself. The choices were Joke, Information, and Both. “Joke” refers to a reference where the show is making a joke about the source itself, not the material presented by the source. “Information” refers to the source being used for information or to provide the information needed to make a joke, but the joke must be targeted at someone or something referenced in the news story and not the media outlet itself. “Both” was used if the show mocked the referenced news media outlet but also used the outlet for information purposes for the sake of a separate joke.

The content analysis portion of the study examined 401 news media references within 32 total episodes (16 for *Daily Show* and 16 for *Colbert*). Two researchers coded eight of the same episodes to achieve the 20% threshold needed for intercoder reliability, and the scores for the content categories News Medium, Cable TV, Media Portrayal, and News Media Source Use was greater than 0.83 on all four categories, which is above the 0.80 threshold considered valid when using Scott’s Pi for content analysis (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002). The content analysis revealed no references to radio and thus there were no results for this medium.

Results

A total of 650 survey participants were analyzed for this study. The mean score for *Daily Show/Colbert Report* viewing per week was 2.09 days, and when compared with different news channels this viewing ranked behind only online news ($M = 2.96$) in terms of number of days used per week. Network evening news ($M = 2.00$) and cable news ($M = 1.89$) were somewhat close to viewing these satire news programs, while participants reported low viewership of morning news ($M = 1.19$), local evening news ($M = 1.26$), and radio news ($M = 0.54$). Network and cable news use was high enough to know the participants were aware enough of what is on these channels the *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* are critiquing.

H₁ predicted a negative relationship between perceptions of television news credibility and participants' viewing of satire news. This hypothesis was supported. Viewership of the satire news programs had a mild but strongly significant negative relationship with attitudes of media credibility regarding television news programs in general ($r(648) = -.15, p < .01$). An ANOVA that examined the relationship by channel type showed that *Daily Show/Colbert Report* viewing only had a significant correlation with television news viewing ($F(3,11) = 4.52, p < .01$), but not the other channels. Thus this negative relationship between *Daily Show/Colbert Report* exposure and negative perceptions of news credibility was isolated to television news.

H₂ predicted television news would be portrayed negatively more than other media. This hypothesis was supported. Chi-square analysis found significant differences in the crosstabs for news medium and portrayal ($\chi^2 = 139.4, df = 6, N = 401, p < .01$). While there were more positive references overall to news media (134) than negative (70), the differences were stark between newspapers and television. These channels had roughly the same positive reference count (newspapers accounted for 46.3% of the positive news media references vs. 37.3% for TV) but television accounted for 88.6% of the negative references (Table 1). Thus while the results

show newspapers are portrayed positively slightly more often than television news, the bigger gap was seen in television news being portrayed negatively far more often. It should be noted that Unknown portrayal accounted for 40.1% of the references, but it was coded this way for television because there were numerous instances where stock footage was used while the host was talking, more for visual support than a direct reference. This choice for coding was specifically created for situations like this, as media use on these shows can be ambiguous.

H₃ predicted television news would be made the target of a joke more than other media. This hypothesis was also supported. Chi-square analysis found significant differences in the crosstabs for news medium and news media source Use ($\chi^2 = 14.06$, $df = 4$, $N = 401$, $p < .01$). Of the information used as jokes, television garnered 91.3% of those references. Considering that television accounted for 72.5% of portrayals where material was used as both information and a joke, this shows that television was mocked more than other channels. The high scores for the Both category also indicate that even when television news is being used for information purposes, it still is often the target of jokes, and thus its value as a news source is degraded.

H₄ predicted cable television news would be portrayed negatively more often than non-cable TV news. This hypothesis was also supported. Chi-square analysis found significant differences in the crosstabs for cable TV and portrayal ($\chi^2 = 197.57$, $df = 12$, $N = 401$, $p < .01$). Cable television accounted for 78.5% of all negative portrayals compared to other channels. On the other hand, 72.4% of positive portrayals were of a source other than cable TV.

A secondary analysis of the negative television portrayals split out the different cable news channels (Fox News, CNN, MSNBC) and compared them individually to network television news. Fox News (32.8%) and CNN (38.6%) accounted for most of the negative portrayals, but that is only part of the story. Fox News had 5.4% of its 37 references as positive

compared to 62.2% negative, a net difference of 56.8%. CNN, on the other hand, had 42.5% of its 73 references as positive compared to 37.0% negative; even though CNN garnered the second-highest negative mention total, its net difference between positive and negative was +5.5%. Thus even while cable news is portrayed negatively more often than other news media, by looking at positive mentions as a source of target references it's clear that Fox News is the most frequently targeted.

Discussion

The results from this study extend our understanding of second-level agenda setting theory by demonstrating that, as McCombs suggested, this effect is not the domain of traditional news formats alone. Recall that second level agenda setting is a process by which media tell us how to think about certain things by elevating certain features or characteristics of that thing. This study demonstrates the second-level agenda setting effect these satire news shows have on perceptions of credibility by replicating the process found in other agenda setting studies. The content analysis shows that in comparison to other news channels, television news (and in particular cable television news) is the main target of jokes on these shows as it pertains to their competence or ability to do their job correctly. These negative characteristics of television news are amplified for *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* viewers, suggesting a salience transfer. The survey portion examines viewers of these satire shows and finds perceptions of television and cable television news credibility are lower than other channels. Second-level agenda setting offers a theoretical explanation that bridges the content analysis and survey results.

That this relationship exists in the realm of satire news is a worthwhile addition to theory, but understanding how this process works is an area worthy of further thought. One issue to examine is why television dominated the number of references and what that might mean about

the total negative or positive references relative to other media. More than 75% of the negative references were about cable news. This may be explained by the fact that cable television is on 24 hours a day, and thus provides satire news shows with more material. Cable news’ omnipresence certainly might offer more fodder for satire news show joke writers, particularly because television news is a more visual medium. While it is possible that cable television’s 24-hour presence might be a factor in the negative reactions, it is similarly possible to imagine a scenario in which cable television news is produced in a way that leads to more positive or unknown (use as visual stock filler) references. This is a critical point for industry to consider given the importance of credibility to journalists. Perhaps there are different modes of production, styles of news delivery, or formats that would lend themselves better to not being criticized as regularly on satire news because they focus more on reporting information than expressing a point of view. Colbert’s character, which savages “truthiness” in the form of journalism as agenda or spectacle, has become a microcosm for the types of programming seen on cable television that detracts from journalistic credibility. The shows, then, provide a persistent type of education to viewers about what news is and where television news falls short.

The content analysis portion of this study noted the emphasis of *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* on ridiculing cable news programs, particularly those Fox News and CNN. If audience perceptions of credibility are influenced by satire news portrayals, the perceived credibility issues may be the most acute for cable news programs. MSNBC had only four total references, with three negative and no unknown. The data gathered in this study offer no insights as to why these satire shows don’t make use of MSNBC footage, but future research could examine such factors as show staff ideology compared to that of the cable networks especially given earlier notation that these satire news shows tend to attract more liberal audiences.

It should be acknowledged that *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* may be drawing audiences dissatisfied with more traditional television news programs while also attracting an audience that is regularly informed by such programs, but they also could both inspire contempt toward television news programs and reinforce existing attitudes about credibility. Similar to most agenda-setting research, the method used here offers an implied form of causality, but a direct causal relationship is worth testing in future research in order to discover whether this is an effect based on migrating viewers or the content of these satire shows. Previous findings in an experimental setting noted a relationship between viewing of *The Daily Show* and increased cynicism in the news media (Baumgartner & Morris, 2006). If satire news programs are behaving as a hybrid of hard news and soft news, representing a form of politically focused news media that both informs and entertains as conceptualized for this study, second-level agenda setting provides a lens for understanding the role that these kinds of programs may play in audience attitudes regarding both politics and the news media.

Considering the attractiveness of these satire news programs to young audiences, who are exposed to the constant ridicule of more traditional “hard news” television programs, television news programs face a challenge in building credibility even as they face declines in both viewership and perceptions of credibility. Of concern for future research is the issue of exposure over time. As generations of these shows’ viewers grow up on a constant diet of media criticism of television news, will they as a group be open to viewing news on television even as these satire shows fade, or are they preconditioned by heavy exposure to resist the format altogether? This is a key question as *The Colbert Report* bows in late 2014 even as replacements rise; the reputation damage with this young group of viewers might be difficult to reverse.

A benefit of these findings is that it is arguable *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*

are helping to educate audiences about what news is and about the proper role of the journalist in public discourse. Many of the negative references to news sources in this study were linked to commentary about journalists not doing their job correctly, and it is plausible that the low credibility ratings that viewers give television news in this context might be linked to a more sophisticated appetite for well-crafted journalism. Thus, it is not necessary to view a potential link between *Daily Show/Colbert Report* viewing and low television news credibility ratings as negative. It is possible the shows are raising awareness about and desire for quality journalism, and in that sense these results might contain both the diagnosis as well as the cure.

Future research should examine the growing trend of “cord-cutting,” that is people who are canceling satellite or cable service to watch television via streaming services. Though this trend still is fairly low in the U.S., it is higher among younger viewers and analysts predict it will continue to grow (Kafka, 2013), and further shifts could potentially alter the effect seen here. In addition, while satire news is being studied on television and even growing with the debut of John Oliver’s weekly satire news show on HBO in 2014, satire news is growing in other formats as well, such as with the launch of *Clickhole* to pair with its parent satire news publication *The Onion* (Zinoman, 2014). Perhaps those who read online satire news might come to see online news more negatively, similar to the television effect seen in this research.

One limitation of this study is that it does not suggest that viewership of all satire news causes more negative attitudes about the credibility of television news because the object of study was two satire shows framed in TV news style. Additionally, because data were collected through a cross-sectional survey, only correlations between viewership and attitudes can be validly reported. Further, although the sample in this study specifically targeted the group that watches these shows most, a wider study on the general population might yield different results.

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