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Public Opinion & U.S. Foreign Policy: Investigating the Impact of Political Television Dramas on Audience Perceptions of Current U.S. Foreign Policy Engagement and Effectiveness

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PUBLIC OPINION & U.S. FOREIGN POLICY:

INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL TELEVISION DRAMAS ON AUDIENCE PERCEPTIONS OF CURRENT U.S. FOREIGN POLICY ENGAGEMENT AND EFFECTIVENESS

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MY RESEARCH: POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

- Definition:

- Role of communication in the political process (Christian. 2016)

- Personal Interests:

- U.S. Foreign Policy and Diplomacy
- Political Television Dramas

- Research Importance:

- Media affects on government policy and the individual



WHAT ARE MEDIA EFFECTS?

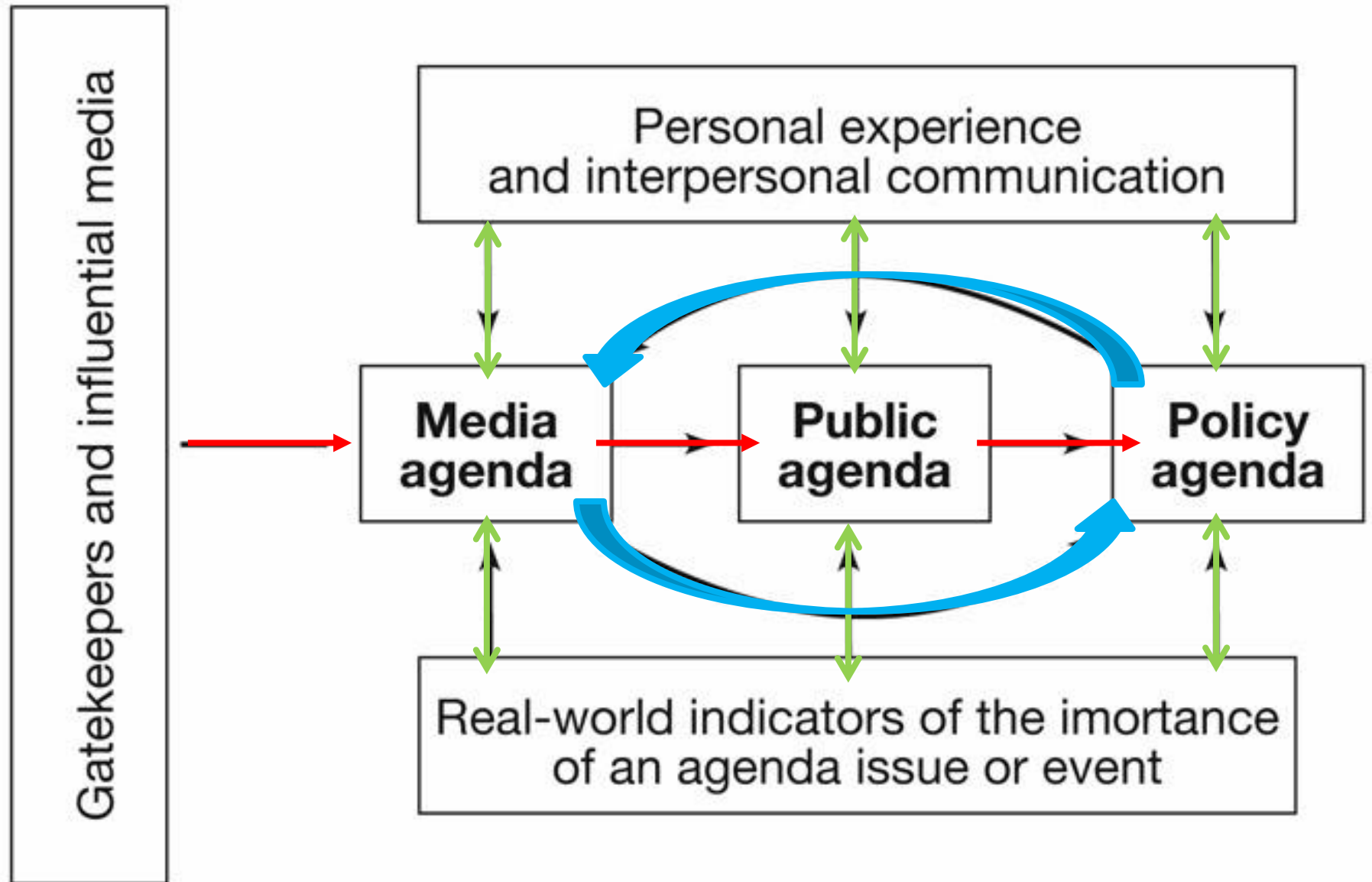
- Studies show media could be an effective persuasion and learning tool
 - Ball-Rokeach and DeFluer (1976): “Audiences depend on media information to meet needs and reach goals.”



AGENDA SETTING: A COMMUNICATION THEORY

1972: Donald Shaw & Maxwell McCombs, “Mass media have the ability to transfer the salience of items on their news agendas to the public agenda.”

THE AGENDAS



SOFT NEWS VS. HARD NEWS

- AKA: Non-traditional and Traditional News sources

Soft News:

- Infotainment
- Primary focus is entertainment but has factual components
- Human interest themes
- Examples:
 - *Late Night with Seth Meyers*
 - *Entertainment Tonight*



Hard News

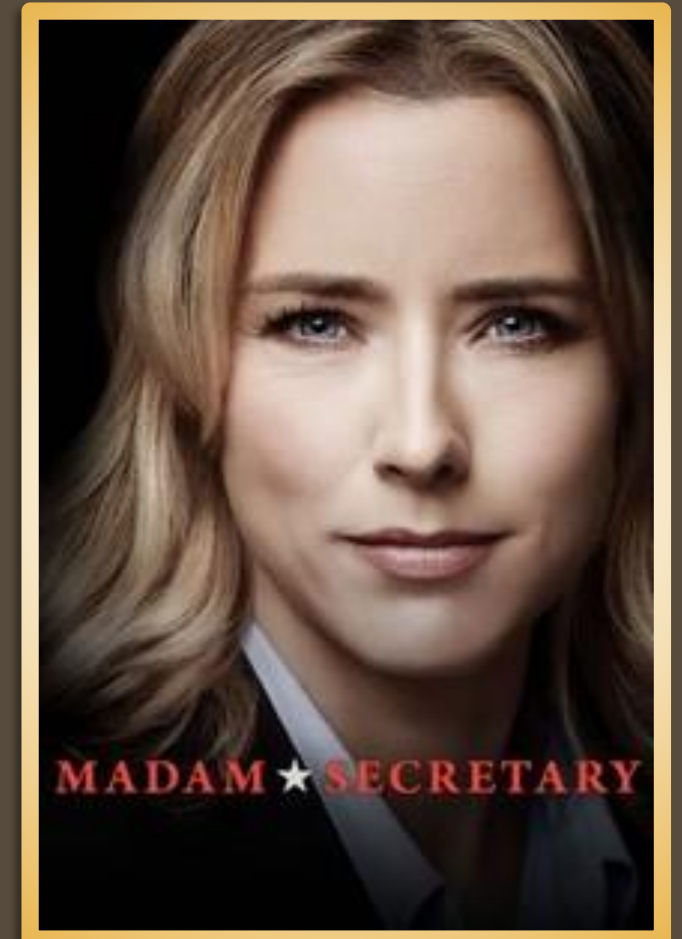
- News Reports
- Primary focus is educational and informational
- Political and public affairs themes
- Examples:
 - *NYT*
 - *Cable News*

The New York Times



POLITICAL TELEVISION DRAMAS

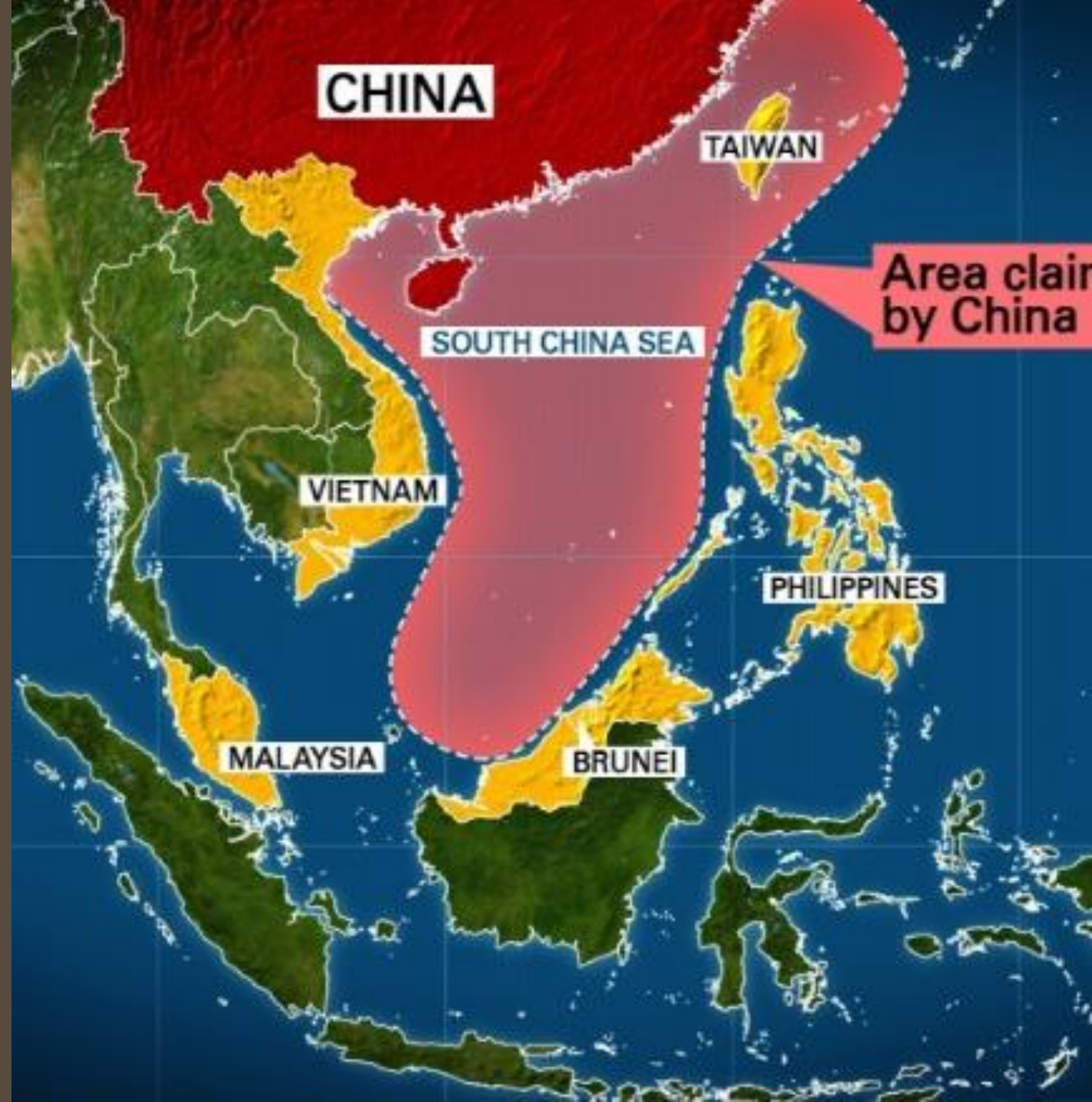
- One of America's most popular genre of television series



- Top 5 most watched political dramas of 2016 - (24/50)

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY : THE SOUTH CHINA SEA CONFLICT

- Prominent through out media news cycle in past 5 years
- Specifically featured in the Season 3, Episode 3 of Madam Secretary



INTRODUCTION TO STUDY



Purpose of Research :

Political Television Dramas
and/or
Cable News Reports + U.S.
Foreign Policy = Change of Public Opinion

HYPOTHESIS

Participants who view the political television drama video will report higher intentions to seek and share information about the South China Sea Conflict than participants who view cable news reports.

METHODS

- 4 part Survey
 1. Demographic information
 2. Perceived Issue Importance/issues familiarity & likelihood of sharing & seeking information
 3. Viewing of experimental video
 4. Post measurements of section 2
- 12 day data collection period
 - February 26, 2018- March 9, 2018



METHODS CONTINUED

- Question Format

How likely are you to share information about the South China Sea Conflict on social media?

Not at all likely					Neutral					Extremely likely
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Information Seeking:

- 5 item, 10 point Likelihood Likert Scale

- Listening to News programs/ podcast and Subject Matter Expert

- Information Sharing:

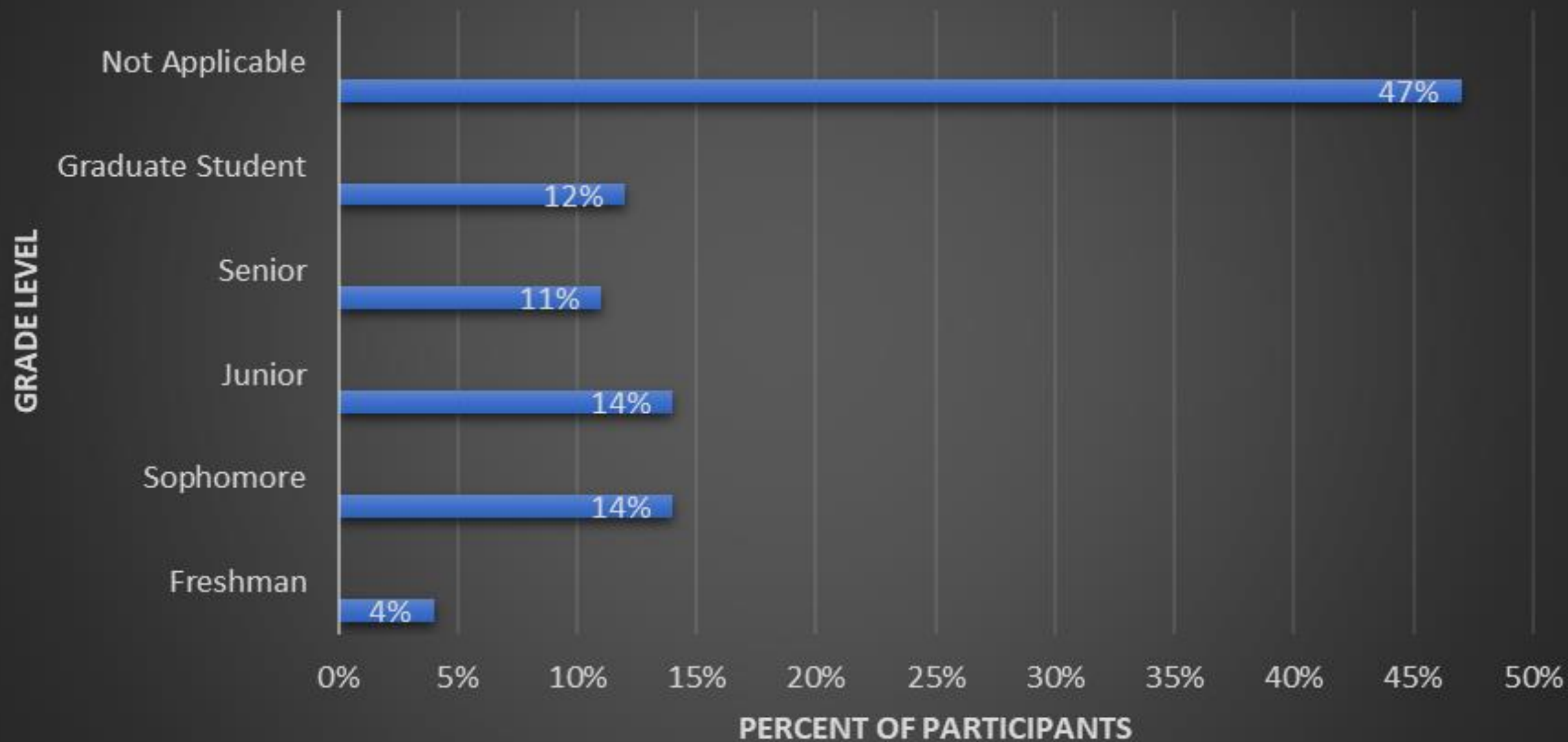
- 3 item, 10 point Likelihood Likert Scale

- Social Media, Word of Mouth, Written Materials

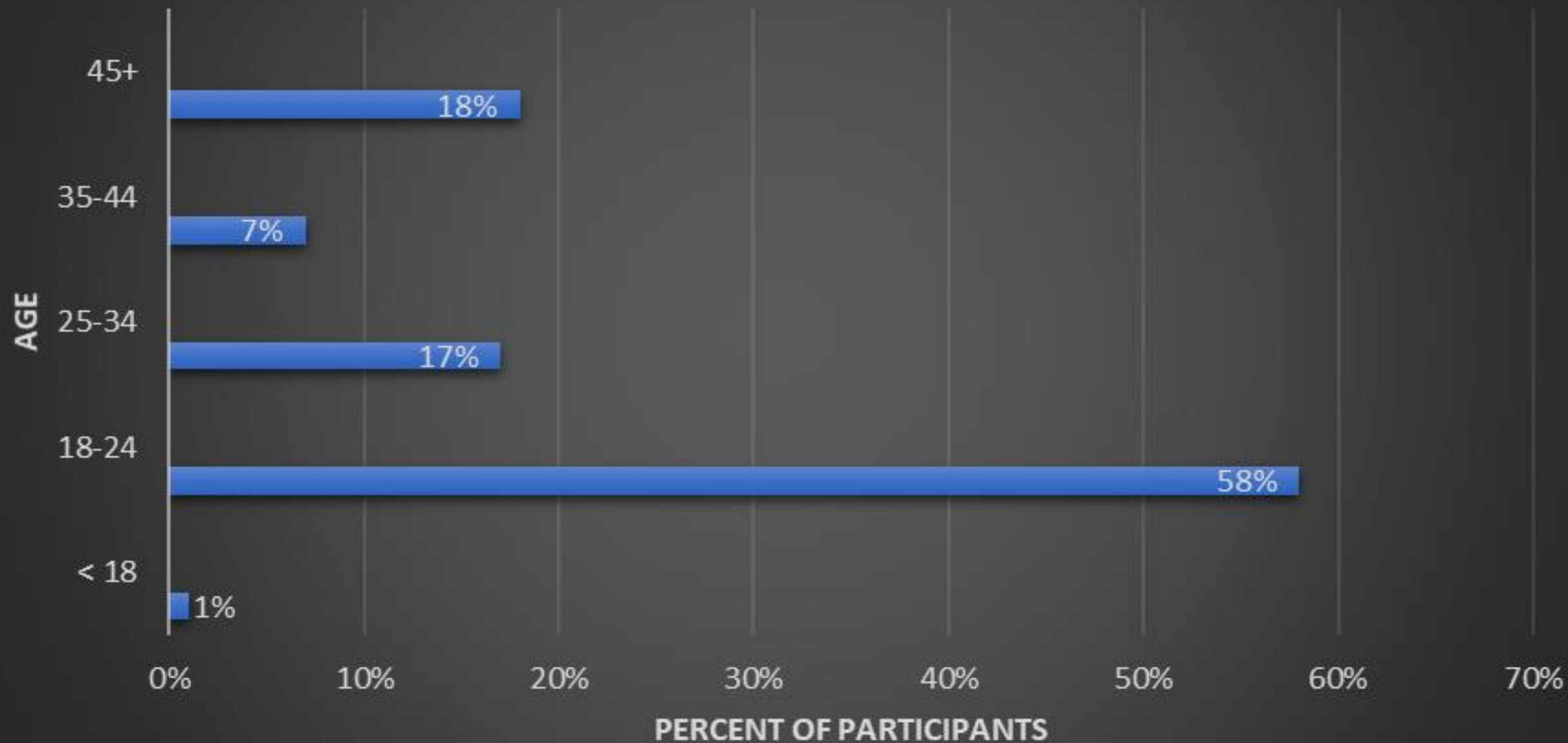
REPORT OF FINDINGS: THE RESULTS

Sample Size=110
N=88

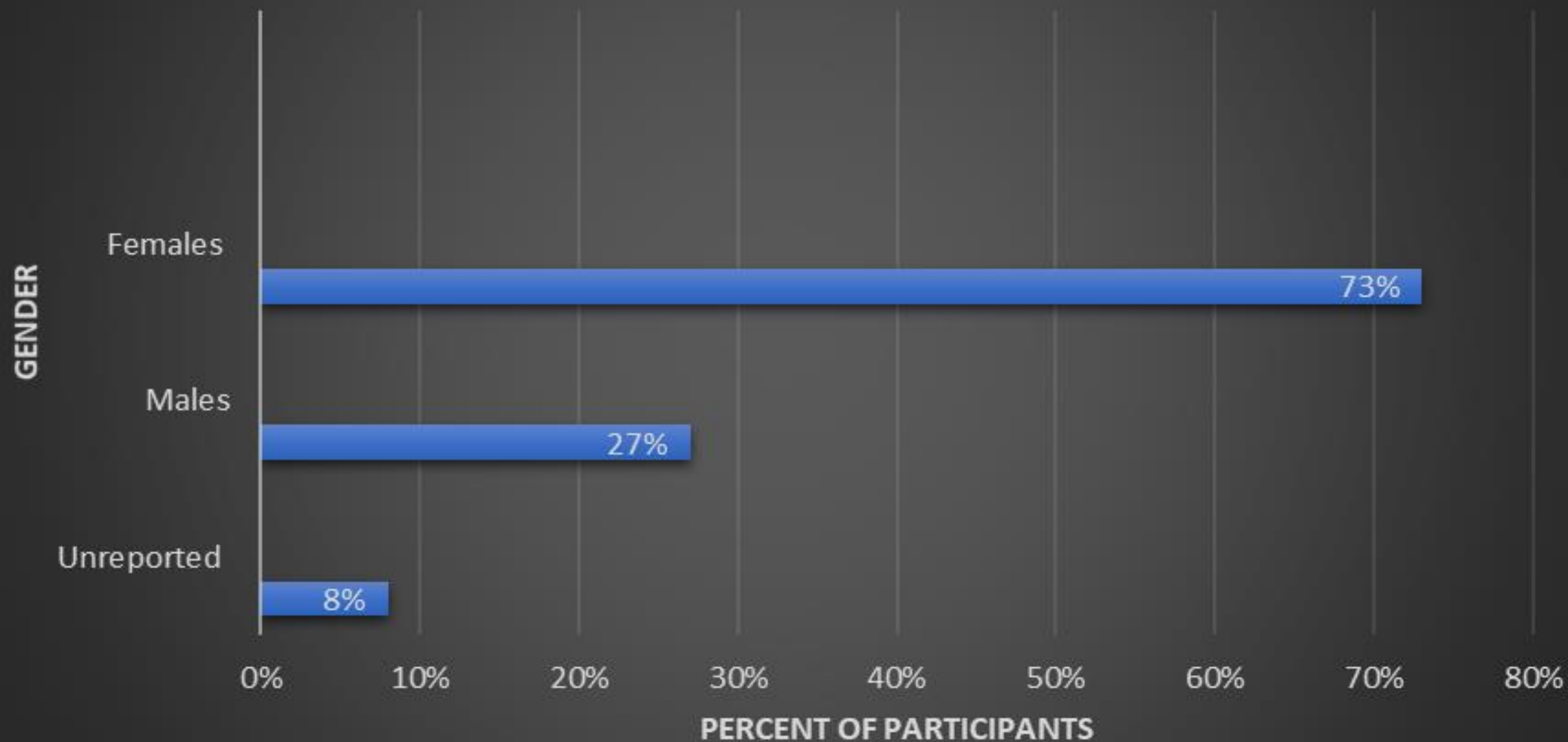
School Levels of Participants



Age of Participants



Gender of Participants



RESULTS: SEEKING INFORMATION

Paired Samples t-Test Results

Social Media :	No Difference
Word of Mouth:	$t(87) = 2.15, p < .05$
Written Materials:	No Significant Difference
News Program/Podcast:	No Significant Difference
Subject Matter Experts:	No Significant Difference

Significance Levels:

$p = 0.05$

$p = 0.01$

$p = 0.00$

PRE VIDEO

POST VIDEO

Univariate of Variance Analysis (ANOVA)

Social Media :	No Significant Difference	No Significant Difference
Word of Mouth:	No Significant Difference	No Significant Difference
Written Materials:	No Significant Difference	$F(2,87) = 9.94, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .19$
News Program/Podcast:	No Significant Difference	$F(2,84) = 4.30, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .08$
Subject Matter Experts:	No Significant Difference	No Difference

RESULTS: SHARING INFORMATION

Paired Samples t-Test Results

Social Media :	$t(88) = -2.45, p = .02$
Word of Mouth:	$t(86) = -2.07, p = .04$
Written Materials:	$t(88) = -2.45, p = .02$

Significance Levels:

$p = 0.05$

$p = 0.01$

$p = 0.00$

Univariate of Variance Analysis (ANOVA)

PRE VIDEO

POST VIDEO

Social Media :	No Significant Difference	No Significant Difference
Word of Mouth:	No Significant Difference	$F(2, 87) = 5.63, p < .005$
Written Materials:	No Significant Difference	$F(2, 87) = 3.69, p < .02$

SO WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN?

- Hypothesis was not fully supported
 - The inverse of H1 was proven to be true:
 - Cable news reports = higher intentions of seeking information about foreign policy
 - Written Materials and News Programs or Podcasts
 - Potential Causes:
 - Better General Understanding
 - Lack Issue Salience and Resolution
- Likelihood of information sharing post media exposure was supported
 - Word of Mouth

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO THE POLITICAL COMMUNICATION FIELD?

- Provides academic research
- Establishes new findings for future research
- Progressive to the changes of societal norms

LIMITATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH

- Small sample size
- Control elicitation video was short
- Differences between, gender, age, education level and other populations

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THANK YOU!