

Negative Political Advertising: It's Impact on Voters

Ernest Cyril de Run
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

Jee Teck Weng
Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak

Lau Wee Ming
SEGi College Sarawak

Abstract

This study looks at a one of the many use of a direct negative advertisement in Malaysian politics. Negative advertising has been constantly used by political parties in Malaysia. This paper looks specifically at one of such advertisements and its effect on voters where it was specifically aimed at (Batang Ai, Sarawak). The study measures attitude towards the advertisement, advertisement likeability, advertisement believability, positive emotional quotient towards the advertisement and its affect on actual behavior. Response was obtained from Batang Ai voters and divided into two groups, Barisan Nasional and non-Barisan Nasional voters. A total of 150 respondents were used in this study and the data were analyzed using descriptive analysis, Independent Sample t-test, Correlation and Regression. The findings indicate significant difference between Barisan Nasional and non-Barisan Nasional for all variables except for attitude towards the advertisement. It also shows that advertising believability is the only variable that impacts actual behavior.

Keywords: Political Advertising, Advertisement, Malaysia

Introduction

Social and political advertisements studies have increased over the years (Greening & Gray, 1994). Much of such studies were mainly developed and carried out in the United States and some parts of Europe (Jasanoff, 2005). However, little attention has been placed on the development of political advertisements studies, especially negative political advertisements in Malaysia. This may be due to the fact that most political advertisements in Malaysia were about a particular candidate or the political party aspirations and promises. There were some indirect negative advertisements too. Hence, the focus here is the use of a direct political advertisement in the previous by-election in Malaysia, particularly the Batang Ai by-election.

The 2008 general election have shown a tremendous transformation in Malaysia's political and governing policies. It has brought about significant changes to the Malaysian political landscape, such as governance innovations and transformations (Ramesh & Fritzen, 2009).