ONE'S LOSS IS ANOTHER'S GAIN?
THE ROLE OF MESSAGE FRAMING, INFORMATION TYPE, AND POLITICAL IDEOLOGY IN POLITICAL ADVERTISING

BY

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Abstract

Many political advertisements emphasise the benefits on offer if you vote, or the possible consequences if you don't. The abstractness (i.e., presentation in a vague way) and concreteness (i.e., presentation in a specific way) also varies across political advertisements. To date, minimal research has examined the effectiveness of gain versus loss framed messages and abstract versus concrete appeals in political advertising. Moreover, little is known about how these effects differ between liberal (i.e., left-wing) and conservative (i.e., right-wing) political ideologies.

Building upon message framing and construal level theory, this paper examines the interplay of message framing (gain versus loss) and information type (abstract versus concrete) on attitude towards the ad, message persuasiveness, and ad-brand congruence. It also investigates the moderating role of political ideology (liberal versus conservative) on these main effects. A 2 (message framing: gain versus loss) × 2 (information type: abstract versus concrete) between-subjects experiment (n = 809) was conducted, in which individual differences in political ideology were measured.

Findings from this research offer valuable contributions through the extension of message framing and construal level theory to the nascent but influential field of political advertising. Contrary to expectations, the results revealed that gain (versus loss) framed advertisements are more effective in political advertising. Concrete (versus abstract) appeals also resulted in more positive attitudes towards the ad and greater message persuasiveness, but no difference in ad-brand congruence. This indicated that concrete appeals were more effective, but not perceived to be better suited to participants' preferred political party. Additionally, political ideology moderated the effects of message framing. That is, despite gain frames being more effective overall, loss frames were more effective among conservatives than liberals.

These findings contribute to message framing research and construal level theory. Findings also provide practical implications; gain (versus loss) frames and concrete (versus abstract) appeals are independently more effective in political advertising. However, if an advertiser were to use a loss frame, it would be better received among conservatives rather than among liberals.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Political advertising is increasingly relevant in contemporary society. It provides a fundamental means for political parties and candidates to communicate their brand positioning and political products to voters. Political advertising spends have also increased in many countries. For example, US$14.4 billion was reportedly spent during the 2020 United States presidential election, an increase of 172.5% from the 2008 election (Evers-Hillstrom, 2021). Anecdotal evidence also indicates that political advertising is an increasingly salient issue for voters. For instance, in the year of the 2020 New Zealand general election, the Advertising Standards Authority received 311 advocacy advertising complaints, an increase of 364% from the previous 2017 election year (Advertising Standards Authority, 2021).

The academic fields of political marketing and political advertising have also expanded in recent years. Based on the notion of adapting marketing concepts and theory to political contexts, political marketing has grown to become a bona fide sub-field of the marketing literature (Lees-Marshment, 2019; Perannagari & Chakrabarti, 2020). A substantial research effort has expanded political marketing theory (e.g., Harris & Lock, 2010; Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2007; Hughes & Dann, 2009; Lees-Marshment, 2001a; Winchester, Hall, & Binney, 2016), and a particular focus has examined attack-style advertising (e.g., Bradley, Angelini, & Lee, 2007; Meirick, 2002). Despite this, limited research has addressed the effectiveness of specific political advertising interventions. Moreover, past research has insufficiently examined how advertising interventions influence different political audiences. Consequently, a better understanding of political advertising interventions has been identified as a direction for future research (Taylor, 2010; Taylor & Carlson, 2021; Van Steenburg, 2015). With little research outside of attack-style advertising, Van Steenburg (2015) summarises the need to "determine whether other types of affective advertising strategies resonate with the target audience" (p. 219). In light of this research gap, this study examines message framing (gain versus loss), its effects on liberals and conservatives, and information type (abstract versus concrete) to political advertising.

1.1 Background

Despite many similarities, there are also many differences between commercial and political marketing fields (Lock & Harris, 1996). These differences include the 'political

product' (Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2007; Lees-Marshment, 2001a), differences between voters and consumers (Peng & Hackley, 2009; Winchester et al., 2016), and structural differences to the marketplace in which political marketing occurs (Lock & Harris, 1996; Waller, Fam, Erdogan, 2005). Therefore, in order to confidently understand how tried and tested marketing interventions apply in political advertising, it is necessary to apply them through political advertising research (Van Steenburg, 2015).

Based on Kahneman and Tversky's (1979) prospect theory, goal framing (Levin, Schneider, & Gaeth, 1998) is a type of message framing intervention wherein messages are framed in terms of gains or losses. Gain frames present the prospective gains obtained (i.e., positive consequences) from adopting a desired behaviour, whereas loss frames present the prospective losses incurred (i.e., negative consequences) from not adopting that behaviour (Levin et al., 1998). Motivated by loss aversion, loss frames are generally more effective than gain frames (Krishnamurthy, Carter, & Blair, 2001; Piñon & Gambara, 2005). However, there are instances in which gain frames display greater effectiveness than loss frames. These includes individual characteristics such as political ideology (e.g., Septianto, Northey, & Dolan, 2019), and contextual circumstances such as temporal distance (i.e., timeframe) between viewing an advertisement and decision making (e.g., Chandran & Menon, 2004). Despite many previous goal framing studies, it is seemingly yet to be addressed in political advertising research.

Additionally, information type is a persuasive technique in which messages are presented using either abstract or concrete information. Abstract appeals are vague and lack detail, while concrete appeals often use specific and detailed information (Hur, Lee, & Stoel, 2020; Kisielius & Sternthal, 1986; Yang, Lu, Zhu, & Su, 2015). Information type is grounded in Construal Level Theory (CLT). Put simply, CLT posits that psychologically high-level (i.e., high-distance) objects or concepts are better communicated using high-level (e.g., abstract) appeals, and that low-level (i.e., low-distance) objects or concepts are better communicated using low-level (e.g., concrete) appeals (Chandran & Menon, 2004; White, MacDonnell, & Dahl, 2011; Pounders et al., 2015). Information type and CLT appeals generally interact with message framing effects, wherein high-level (abstract) appeals are congruent with gain frames, and low-level (concrete) appeals are congruent with loss frames (Chandran & Menon, 2004; Chang, Zhang, & Xie, 2015; Pounders, Lee, & Mackert, 2015; White et al., 2011). However, little research has applied CLT in political advertising (Kim, Rao, & Lee, 2009), and seemingly no research has applied information type to political contexts.

Political ideology encapsulates individuals' set of views and beliefs about social and political systems, which are conceptualised in a liberal (i.e., left-wing) versus conservative (i.e., right-wing) spectrum (Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009; Jung & Mittal, 2020). Political ideology has displayed merit in explaining both political behaviour, and behaviour outside of political settings (Carney, Jost, Gosling, & Potter, 2008), including consumer behaviour (e.g., Septianto et al., 2019; Jung & Mittal, 2020). A notable feature of political ideology is conservatives' aversion to loss, risk, and related negative stimuli (Gründl & Aichholzer, 2020; Hibbing et al., 2014; Janoff-Bulman, 2009; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). Consequently, loss frames are observed to be more effective with conservatives, and gain frames with liberals (Septianto et al., 2019).

1.2 Research problem and objectives

Advertising interventions need to be tested in political advertising to be confidently understood within the field (Van Steenburg, 2015). Both message framing and information type have proven to be effective advertising interventions, but they are yet to be applied to electoral political advertising. Moreover, political ideology offers a promising means to understand how message framing effects differ between political audiences. In terms of influencing voter behaviour and decision making, the role of these concepts is currently unknown. Therefore, in consideration of suggested directions for future research (Taylor, 2010; Taylor & Carlson, 2021; Van Steenburg, 2015; Lee, 2019), this research gap is addressed by investigating this study's guiding research question:

What effect does message framing and information type within political advertising have on voters' attitude towards the ad, perceived message persuasiveness, and ad-brand congruence?

Specifically, the objectives of this study are to determine the individual and combined effects of message framing and information type in political advertising. This study also identifies how message framing effects in political advertising differ across liberal and conservative political ideologies. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to:

1. Examine the effects of (gain versus loss) message framing.
2. Examine the effects of (abstract versus concrete) information type.
3. Examine the interaction effect of message framing and information type.
4. Test the moderating effect of political ideology on message framing.

1.3 Research contributions

Despite increasing research efforts in recent years, the political marketing and advertising fields remain nascent and underdeveloped compared to other marketing sub-fields (Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2007; Lees-Marshment, 2019; Van Steenburg, 2015). In particular, few advertising interventions and appeal types have been empirically studied in political advertising contexts or examined across different political audiences.

By studying the effects of message framing and information type in political advertising, this research contributes to the theoretical understanding of these advertising interventions, but also to the broader political advertising literature. Findings from this research indicated that message framing effects do not necessarily behave as expected (see Krishnamurthy, et al., 2001; Levin et al., 1998; Piñon & Gambara, 2005) in political advertising contexts, thereby adding to the theoretical understanding of message framing effects. Moreover, differences in message framing effects between liberals and conservatives support the theoretical understanding of political ideology in explaining behaviour in political advertising. Information type appeals also extended the theoretical applicability of CLT to political advertising and prompted fascinating directions for future research.

Message framing and information type appeals are both highly applicable to political advertising practice. Therefore, the findings from this research yield practical insights as to how message framing and information type could be used in political advertising. In particular, differences between liberals and conservative target audiences offer implications to optimise advertising effectiveness.

1.4 Thesis outline

This thesis is comprised of seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter, chapter two conducts a literature review of political marketing and advertising, message framing, information type and construal level theory, and other related concepts. Chapter three combines key concepts identified in the literature review to present a conceptual model and develop hypotheses. Chapter four details the method adopted in this research, including the measurement apparatus, pre-testing, sample selection, and data collection approach used. Chapter five then presents the results of data analysis. Chapter six discusses research findings in relation to tested hypotheses. Finally, chapter seven concludes research findings, discusses theoretical and managerial contributions, and presents directions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Advertising is a central area of marketing research (Dahlen & Rosengren, 2016). Advertising is also a ubiquitous and influential feature of the political domain (Kaid, 2004; Franz & Ridout, 2007). Political advertisements inform voters' evaluations of political policies, parties, and candidates. Consequently, political advertising has immense electoral and societal implications. Political advertising has been subject to considerable research efforts within political science (e.g., Druckman, 2007a), and psychology (e.g., Jost et al., 2009). However, despite its importance, marketing scholars have largely abstained from political advertising research (Van Steenburg, 2015). Therefore, extending marketing literature to the political domain is likely to yield substantial theoretical and practical contributions, particularly in explaining voter behaviour.

One specific area ripe for further research is the study of specific interventional advertising appeals within political contexts and across different political audiences (Van Steenburg, 2015). Message framing (gains versus losses) and information type (abstract versus concrete) are two such appeal types that are yet to be studied in political advertising. To understand the effects of message framing and information type, this chapter synthesises and critically examines literatures relating to political marketing, message framing, information type, political ideology, and other related concepts. And in doing so, it draws upon literature from marketing, political science, and psychology, as recommended in political marketing research (Harris, 2001; Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2007).

2.2 The nature and scope of political marketing

Over the past three decades, political marketing has grown to become a recognised sub-discipline of marketing. However, the field remains nascent with multiple calls to extend marketing concepts and theories to the political marketplace (Lees-Marshment, 2019; Perannagari & Chakrabarti, 2020; Van Steenburg, 2015). Political advertising spends have also grown. Most notably, US $14.4 billion was reportedly spent during the 2020 United States presidential election, an increase of 172.5% from 2008 (Evers-Hillstrom, 2021).

Despite its seemingly growing presence, political marketing lacks a widely accepted definition and scope (Winchester et al., 2016). For example, some view political marketing as a loose term to describe spin doctoring or political communication (O'Shaughnessy, 2001). Historically, political marketers viewed the field as being largely focused on the concept of

exchange (Lock & Harris, 1996). However, more recently, scholars have tended to view the field as being centred on value creation (Harris & Lock, 2010; Hughes & Dann, 2009; Winchester et al., 2016). For example, the concept of the permanent campaign reflects political marketing's scope for continuous value creation as compared to cyclical campaigning (Sparrow & Turner, 2001). This is consistent with marketing's shift toward a new dominant logic centred on intangible resources, the co-creation of value, and relationships (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). While there is no universally accepted definition of political marketing, Hughes and Dann's (2009) definition is indicative of how many scholars view the field. They define political marketing as:

> "*a set of activities, processes or political institutions used by political organisations, candidates and individuals to create, communicate, deliver and exchange promises of value with voter-consumers, political party stakeholders and society at large*" (Hughes & Dann, 2009, p. 244).

Political marketing applies marketing concepts to political contexts. For example, the concept of market-orientation is applied, wherein political parties strategically position themselves within the 'political marketplace' to create value for their target voters (Lees-Marshment, 2001b). Additionally, the concept of the 'political product' is notably important to advertising research. Wring (1997) describes the traditional view of the political product as a triad consisting of policy commitments, party image, and candidate image. Although this traditional view is commonly accepted within the literature (Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2007; Smith & French, 2009; Speed, Butler, & Collins, 2015), the political product can also be defined to include "the leadership, MPs (and candidates), membership, staff, symbols, constitution, activities such as party conferences and policies" (Lees-Marshment, 2001b, p.693). Notwithstanding its debated theoretical boundaries, the political product is important to political advertising research, as it represents the value offering being advertised.

Another adaptation from mainstream marketing is the assumption of the voter-consumer. The voter-consumer assumption broadly posits that the conceptual boundaries of consumer behaviour also apply to voter behaviour (Hughes & Dann, 2009; Peng & Hackley, 2009; Winchester et al., 2016). That is, voters (consumers) are conceptualised to make voting decisions (purchase decisions) within an electoral cycle (marketplace). Notwithstanding the differences between political and commercial marketing, scholars generally accept the voter-consumer analogy (Hughes & Dann, 2009; Lock & Harris, 1996; O'Cass, 2002; O'Shaughnessy, 2001; Peng & Hackley, 2009; Van Steenburg, 2015; Winchester et al., 2016). Despite this, further research is necessary to confirm similarities and identify

differences between voter behaviour and consumer behaviour so as to more confidently accept or reject the voter-consumer assumption (Van Steenburg, 2015).

Despite their similarities, there are also defining differences between political and commercial marketing (O'Shaughnessy, 2001; Harris & Lock, 2010). Differences vary across electoral systems and so are not universally defined. However, Lock and Harris's (1996) seminal paper outlined several key differences. These included timing, cost, complex political product, and the tendency for brand leaders to fall behind competition (Lock & Harris, 1996). For example, timing is different. In commercial marketing, products are generally available for purchase when they are marketed to consumers. However, in political marketing, a political product can be permanently marketed (Sparrow & Turner, 2001), but is only purchasable (electable) for a brief period per electoral cycle (Lock & Harris, 1996). Moreover, unlike consumer decision making, in voter decision making there is generally limited choice between political products or brands, which are elected collectively (Winchester et al., 2016). Additionally, political advertising is typically less regulated than in commercial settings (Waller et al., 2005), enabling a broader number of advertising interventions such as attack-style advertising.

2.2.1 Political advertising research

Political advertising is a central element of political marketing (Kaid, 2004; Lees-Marshment, 2012), with demonstrated effectiveness (Franz & Ridout, 2010). However, relatively few advertising studies have addressed political persuasion. This is possibly because many scholars prefer qualitative or conceptual research (e.g., Lees-Marshment, 2001b), or because political advertising is yet to generate mainstream research appeal. Van Steenburg's (2015) review and research agenda highlighted the limited research that had previously been conducted. Notably, Van Steenburg's (2015) review identified key themes of prior research.

Firstly, Van Steenburg's (2015) identified cognitive response as a theme of past political advertising research, which refers to studies examining individuals' responses to different advertising intervention types (e.g., Jung, Garbarino, Briley, & Wynhausen, 2017; Kim et al., 2009; Krishen, Raschke, Kachroo, LaTour, & Verma, 2014; O'Cass, 2002). This research typically draws on persuasive mechanisms and appeals from mainstream advertising research and applies them in political contexts. For example, Kim et al. (2009) supported that abstract (versus concrete) appeals were more persuasive in distant (versus imminent) political

decision making. There is particular value in this research stream because it extends the theoretical boundaries of the advertising field to new contexts and to explaining voter behaviour. Van Steenburg (2015) identified an additional further six research areas; technological mediums, branding, ethics and policy (Harris & Lock, 2010), cross-cultural research (Waller et al., 2005), marketing mix and strategy (e.g., Lees-Marshment, 2001), and voters as consumers (e.g., Winchester et al., 2016). These research areas are important to the broader field of political advertising and marketing, although they are not critical to the present study.

A research area that has arguably achieved sufficient academic attention is negative advertising, wherein the effectiveness of attack-style political advertising is examined (e.g., Banda & Windett, 2016; Bradley et al., 2007; Jasperson & Fan, 2002; Meirick, 2002; Pinkleton, 1997; Sonner, 1998; Stevens, 2012). Attack-style advertising generally takes a rough cost-benefit approach, emphasising a candidate's overall strengths and opponent's weaknesses (Benoit, 2001). However, messages that emphasise the benefits of a candidate are not logically equivalent to the weaknesses of an opponent, and therefore differ from message (i.e., gain versus loss) framing effects. Attack-style research tends to examine the advertising message, but not necessarily the persuasive mechanisms that underlie the message (Benoit, 2001; see Van Steenburg, 2015). For example, Jasperson and Fan (2002) supported that attack advertisements can either harm voters' perceptions of targets, or perceptions of the advertisement's source. These studies are a common area of research, likely due to the underapplication of attack advertisements elsewhere in advertising research. Despite this, little prior research has examined non-attack style valenced advertising interventions (Van Steenburg, 2015), such as message framing.

Prior political advertising research has used various research methods. For instance, case studies are common (e.g., Jasperson & Fan, 2002; Sonner, 1998). Previous studies have also employed databases to measure the effects of political advertising (e.g., Franz & Ridout, 2010; Jasperson & Fan, 2002; Jung et al., 2017). Where data is available, these studies support the effectiveness of political advertising in real-world contexts. Studies have also employed experimental research to effectively show causality between constructs (e.g., Banda & Windett, 2016; Kim et al., 2009; Pinkleton, 1997; Stevens, 2012).

Despite the research efforts mentioned above, the political marketing and advertising literatures remains nascent. Consequently, scholars have called for further research in political marketing (Henneberg & O'shaughnessy, 2007; Lees-Marshment, 2001a; 2019) and specifically in political advertising (Taylor, 2010; Taylor & Carlson, 2021), culminating in

Van Steenburg's (2015) description of the political advertising field being "wide open" (p. 224) for future research.

2.2.2 Political marketing and political science

When applying marketing concepts to politics, political marketing scholars often draw on existing political research fields, namely political science (e.g., Druckman, 2004; Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2007). Political science is grounded in understanding political systems and the state (Dryzek, 2006), and typically considers the implications on a large population (Rogers, 2004). As such, political science research tends to focus on macro- or meso-level phenomena (Butler & Harris, 2009; Cacciatore, Scheufele, & Iyengar, 2016; Rogers, 2004; Scheufele & Iyengar, 2012; Slothuus 2008). In contrast, advertising and consumer (and voter) behaviour research tends to consist of empirical support for individual (i.e., low-level) phenomena. Therefore, given different focuses, political science and political marketing literatures can produce contradictory findings. For example, the political science discipline views framing effects as a broad range of media effects that influence decision making, as compared to rigidly defined effects that individually persuade (Cacciatore et al., 2016; Scheufele & Iyengar, 2012). Therefore, when drawing upon political science research, it is important for political marketing and advertising research to remain cognisant of the differences between the two fields (Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2007).

2.3 Message framing

Message framing is a fundamental advertising technique, in which information is intentionally 'framed' to enhance persuasive outcomes. Many types of framing phenomena exist (Cacciatore et al., 2016). However, the focus of this research is on message framing, also known as goal framing, which is a specific type of valence framing effect. The term valence refers to an item's intrinsic affective level of positivity or negativity. Therefore, valence framing is the practice of framing the same critical information in positive or negative affective terms (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). For example, Meyerowitz and Chaiken (1987) supported that emphasising the negative consequences of not getting screened for breast cancer was more persuasive than emphasising the positive consequences of getting screened. Message framing effects are generally understood, however interactions with other variables in nascent fields such as political advertising provide scope for future research.

Message framing has its foundation in Kahneman and Tversky's (1979) seminal prospect theory. Prospect theory describes people as risk-averse when approaching financial gains but more risk-seeking in avoiding financial losses. Seeing its persuasive potential, Thaler (1980) hypothesised that prospect theory could be used to frame choices to influence and improve consumer decision making. Through their Asian disease problem, Tversky and Kahneman (1981) demonstrated that prospect theory could be applied to influence individuals' decision making through their preference for risk. With negative frames (relating to lives lost), participants preferred risky choices, but with positive frames (relating to lives saved), participants displayed greater risk aversion (Kahneman & Tversky, 1981).

However, Rothman and Salovey's (1997) review of framing effects in health communications highlighted that valence framing studies supported conflicting results, with neither positive nor negative framing conditions being prevailingly more effective. Rothman and Salovey (1997) discussed the possible relevance of individuals' perceptions towards gains, losses, and risk; concluding that (the risk-orientated) prospect theory insufficiently explained these mixed results. Levin et al.'s (1998) seminal typology of valence framing effects explained these conflicts within the literature by illustrated that not all framing manipulations included an element of risk. To explain inconsistencies in previous research findings, Levin et al.'s (1998) typology categorised three types of framing effects: risky choice framing, attribute framing, and goal framing. Each framing effect has differing motivational mechanisms, and differs across what is framed, what is influenced by framing, and how the effect is measured.

2.3.1 Risky choice framing

Risky choice framing presents options with different levels of risk (Levin et al., 1998). Participants' risk preference (aversion/acceptance) is influenced by whether information is framed with positive or negative valence. Risky choice framing is explained through Kahneman and Tversky's (1979) prospect theory; in that people are risk-averse when approaching gains but more risk-seeking in avoiding losses (Levin et al., 1998). For example, in the 'Asian disease problem' participants displayed risk aversion when solutions were presented in a positive frame, but they displayed risk taking when solutions were presented in a negative frame (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981).

2.3.2 Attribute framing

Attribute framing (or emphasis framing) occurs when the descriptive valence of a specific attribute is manipulated (Levin et al., 1998). That is, a key attribute of an object is framed either positively or negatively to evoke different responses (Krishnamurthy et al., 2001). For example, participants reported ground beef tasted better when it was positively labelled "75% lean" compared to being negatively labelled "25% fat", despite being objectively identical (Levin & Gaeth, 1988). Positive framing conditions generally evoke positive associations whereas negative frames evoke negative associations. Levin et al. (1998) argued that attribute framing occurs due to the encoding of information relating to the descriptive valence of the framed object.

2.3.3 Goal framing

Thirdly is goal framing, which is the type of message framing explored in this study. Goal framing frames messages in terms of gains or losses (Levin & Gaeth, 1998). Gain frames describe the gains obtained (i.e., positive consequences) from performing a behaviour, whereas loss frames describe the losses suffered (i.e., negative consequences) from not performing that same behaviour (see Figure 1). Unlike other valence framing effects, both gain and loss framing conditions advocate for the same outcome or 'goal'. For example, in advocating early cancer detection, Rothman and Salovey (1997) used a gain frame "If you get a mammogram, you take advantage of the best method for early detection of breast cancer" (p.4) and a loss frame "If you don't get a mammogram, you fail to take advantage of the best method for early detection of breast cancer" (p.4). Both gain and loss frames enhance message evaluations (Levin et al., 1998), however loss frames are typically observed to have a greater motivational power than gains (Krishnamurthy, et al., 2001; Levin et al., 1998; Piñon & Gambara, 2005).

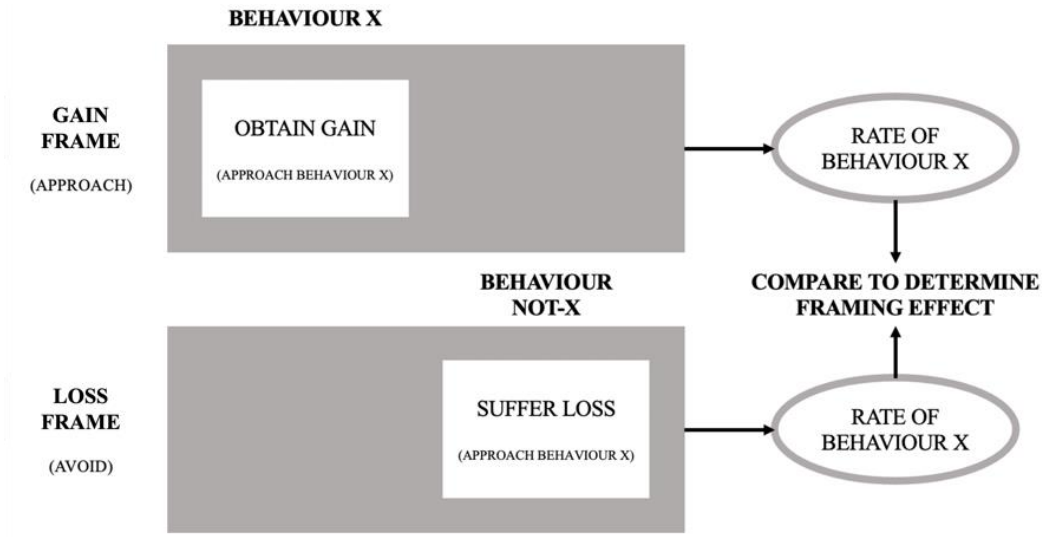
Loss aversion is the explained motivational mechanism underlying goal framing effects (Levin et al., 1998). However, prior to Levin et al.'s (1998) typology of framing effects, Kahneman and Tversky's (1979) prospect theory was used to explain valence framing effects. Prospect theory was posited to explain individuals' risk appetite in the face of gains and losses. However, framing interventions can occur in the absence of risk, which led to unexplained inconsistent findings across studies (see Rothman & Salovey, 1997; Levin et al., 1998). Notably, loss aversion has wider parameters than risk aversion (e.g., Novemsky, & Kahneman, 2005). Therefore, where risk aversion underlies risky choice framing, loss

aversion underlies goal framing, as loss aversion occurs in the absence of risk (Tversky & Kahneman, 1991).

Prior goal framing research generally concludes that loss goal frames are more effective than gain frames (Levin et al., 1998; Piñon & Gambara, 2005; e.g., Baek & Yoon, 2017; Gamliel & Herstein, 2012; Rothman & Salovey, 1997). This finding has been shared across health promotion (Rothman & Salovey, 1997) and public policy promotion (Krishen et al., 2014). However, recent research has explored instances wherein the effectiveness of gain versus loss goal frames depends on external variables. For example, when viewed at high (versus low) psychological distances, gain frames display greater effectiveness (Chang et al., 2015; White et al., 2011; Pounders et al., 2015). Similarly, gain frames can be more effective with low (versus high) consumer involvement (Tsai, 2007), low (versus high) elaboration (Krishnamurthy et al., 2001), and for long-term (versus short-term) decision making (Chang & Lee, 2009).

Goal framing has been examined in product and brand advertising (e.g., Gamliel, & Herstein, 2012; Tsai, 2007), however its focus on advocating a desired behaviour makes it highly applicable to advertising behaviour change. As such, goal framing research spans social marketing (e.g., Chang & Lee, 2009; Hur et al., 2020), health promotion (e.g., Krishnamurthy et al., 2001; McCormick & Seta, 2016; Rothman & Salovey, 1997), environmental advertising (e.g., Baek & Yoon, 2017; Chang et al., 2015), and advertising public policy issues (Krishen et al., 2014). Despite this, goal framing remains absent from electoral political advertising research.

Figure 1 Goal framing effects



Adapted from Levin et al. (1998).

2.3.3.1 Goal framing, not goal-framing theory

To avoid confusion, Lindenberg and Steg (2007) introduced goal-framing theory, wherein information is framed by the *type of goal* used in an intervention. Goal-framing theory uses hedonic, gain, and normative goal types (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007). For example, Onel and Mukherjee (2017) supported that gain motives (protecting resources) had greater explanatory power than hedonic (feeling better) or normative (behaving properly) frames. Goal-framing theory employs salience-based framing appeals which place emphasis on qualitatively different goal types. Conversely, Levin et al.'s (1998) goal framing is valence-based. Therefore, goal-framing theory can be categorised as a 'media framing effect' rather than a valence framing effect (see Cacciatore et al., 2016). This is an important distinction so as not to confuse goal-framing theory with message framing as used in this study.

2.3.4 Framing effects in the political sciences

Kahneman and Tversky's (1979) prospect theory and Levin et al.'s (1998) typology of framing effects are broadly accepted in business research and acknowledged within political science literatures. However, political science developed a broader body of framing literature which includes message framing but is mostly comprised of salience-based framing effects (Amsalem & Zoizne, 2020; Brugman & Burgers, 2018; Druckman, 2007a; Entman, 1993; e.g., Krosnick & Kinder, 1990; Weaver, 1986). Entman's (1993) seminal paper broadly defined framing effects as to "highlight some bits of information about an item that is the subject of a communication, thereby elevating them in salience" (p.53). Salience can be enhanced through placement, frequency, or association in order to 'frame' an issue (Entman, 1993). Chong and Druckman (2007a) give the example that a Ku Klux Klan rally can be framed as either a freedom of speech issue or a public safety issue.

Although thoroughly researched, framing effects in political science do not share an underlying explanatory mechanism (Cacciatore et al., 2016). Rather, these framing effects refer to a patchwork of effects with blurred and often overlapping conceptual boundaries (Cacciatore et al., 2016; Falkowski & Jabłońska, 2020; Scheufele & Iyengar, 2012). Therefore, it is difficult to reconcile the broad body of political science framing effects with effects observed in marketing research. Cacciatore et al. (2016) summarise this challenge:

> "*conceptual overlap has left scholars with an incomplete understanding of the framing both in terms of its theoretical boundaries and, again, methods of*

operationalization. The result has been movement away from a rigid conceptualization of framing toward one that captures a wide range of media effects, which has little to no actual explanatory power and which provides little understanding of the mechanisms that distinguish it from other media effects concepts." (pp.8-9).

For example, priming falls within the conceptual confines of salience-based framing effects (Cacciatore et al., 2016; Chong & Druckman, 2007b; Oxley, 2020). Priming relates to peripheral information increasing the salience of an object or concept (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Although priming is classed as a 'framing effect' it is conceptually different to other framing effects such as valence-based message framing effects (Cacciatore et al., 2016; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Falkowski & Jabłońska, 2020; Oxley, 2020).

Without a common theoretical underpinning it is difficult to generalise media framing effects to new contexts (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2012). Consequently, Cacciatore et al. (2016) proposes a new paradigm in which "emphasis framing" is abandoned, instead focusing on more precise *media effects* mechanisms. This differentiates media framing from the message framing effects observed in this study. Rather than viewing framing effects at an individual intervention level, Brüggemann and D'Angelo (2018) negate any paradigm shift, arguing that "the full media framing process has many moving parts"(p.91). Amsalem and Zoizne (2020) also partially negate Cacciatore et al.'s (2016) call for a paradigm shift. They acknowledged the differences between message framing and media framing effects but did not support different effect sizes between the two framing categorisations (Amsalem & Zoizne, 2020).

Cacciatore et al.'s (2016) stance is arguably aligned with marketing literature as it conceptually separates persuasive interventions (e.g., goal framing) from external media effects (e.g., priming). Irrespective of the present debate within political science, it remains important to acknowledge the presence of media framing effects, and not confuse them with the valence-based message framing effects examined in the present study.

2.3.4.1 (The lack of) message framing research in political literatures

In addition to salience-based framing effects (Brugman & Burgers, 2018), gain versus loss message framing is also acknowledged in political science research. In political science, Druckman's (2004) influential article supported message framing effects in political contexts. Despite this, limited message framing research has taken place within the political sciences, resulting in calls for future research (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2012; Cacciatore et al., 2016).

Oxley (2020) attempted to explain the lack of message framing research in political science, suggesting that message framing may be less common in actual political communication. Conversely, Scheufele and Iyengar (2012) present that political message framing may be understudied due to political science's tendency to examine effects as macro- or meso-level phenomena (e.g., Brüggemann & D'Angelo, 2018), rather than individual-level interventions (Rogers, 2004; Butler & Harris, 2009; Scheufele & Iyengar, 2012). That is, political scientists generally study effects on populations at a systemic level (Rogers, 2004; Scheufele & Iyengar, 2012; Slothuus 2008), likely originating from the field's epistemological grounding in understanding the state and political systems (Dryzek, 2006) In contrast, consumer research frequently examines normative individual-level persuasive interventions such as goal framing (e.g., Chang & Lee, 2009; Kim et al., 2009; Tsai, 2007 Hur et al., 2020).

An alternative explanation for the lack of framing and advertising studies in political science is the field's grounding in rational choice models. That is, rational choice models broadly describe voter decision making as being driven by stable preferences and attitudes that are not influenced by descriptive differences (Druckman, 2004). As such, logically equivalent descriptions (e.g., message framing effects) should not influence electoral outcomes (Druckman, 2004), and so may be unjustified to study.

2.3.4.2 Message framing research in political literatures

Of the political message framing research that does exist, Kahneman and Tversky's (1979) prospect theory is typically used to explain effects (e.g., Druckman, 2004). Therefore, attribute framing, risky choice framing, and goal framing (see Levin et al., 1998) are rarely differentiated in the political sciences. Nelson (2019) explains this, positing that political scientists perceive conceptual overlap between risky choice, attribute, goal, and other media framing effects. Consequently, goal framing (i.e., message framing; motivated by loss aversion) is often undifferentiated form other message framing effects (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2012), such as risky choice framing (motivated by risk aversion).

2.3.5 Message framing in political advertising

Attack-style advertisements are a common feature of political advertising literature (O'Cass, 2002; Van Steenburg, 2015; e.g., Banda & Windett, 2016; Bradley et al., 2007; Jasperson & Fan, 2002; Meirick, 2002). However, non-attack-style advertising interventions

such as message framing are largely absent from political advertising research. Only Krishen et al. (2014) appear to have examined message framing in public policy marketing, a sub-discipline of political marketing. Krishen et al. (2014) explored gain versus loss message framing interventions across collective good and self-interest individuals in communicating a 'vehicle miles travelled tax' public policy issue. They supported that loss frames highlighting collective losses improved attitudes towards the policy. This is in line with other message framing research in finding loss frames to be more persuasive. However, Krishen and colleagues' (2014) study was not focused on electoral advertising. That is, it influenced attitudes towards policy, rather than towards a policy commitment or value offering from a political party or candidate. Message framing has also been applied to political concepts in non-political contexts. Notably, in anti-counterfeit advertising, Septianto et al. (2019) supported that gain (versus loss) message framing was more effective in liberals (versus conservatives). However, this remains outside of political marketing research.

As previously discussed, goal framing is seemingly unexamined in electoral political advertising and political science literatures. This is likely because the nascent political advertising literature is yet to develop the breadth of other advertising sub-fields (Lees-Marshment, 2019; Perannagari & Chakrabarti, 2020; Van Steenburg, 2015). Consequently, individuals' responses to different political advertising intervention types, and non-attack-style advertising are labelled as areas for future research (Van Steenburg, 2015). Given displayed effectiveness of goal framing in other advertising fields (Levin et al., 1998; Piñon & Gambara, 2005), this represents a substantial research gap in political literatures.

2.4 Information type

Advertisers can market products using either concrete or abstract information (Bülbül & Menon, 2010). These concepts occupy opposing ends of a spectrum. Concrete messages are specific, objective, and information rich (MacKenzie, 1986; Yang et al., 2015; Hur, et al., 2020). In contrast, abstract messages are vague, subjective, and provide more abstract information (MacKenzie, 1986; Yang et al., 2015; Hur et al., 2020). Hur et al. (2020) give the example that a concrete advertisement for instant noodles may claim 'cooks in only 3 min' whereas an abstract advertisement may claim 'cooks quickly'.

Stemming from research in psychology, concrete messages have generally been believed to be more effective than abstract messages (Schwanenflugel & Shoben, 1983). Similarly, in earlier advertising research, Wright (1979) found that concrete television

advertisements produced more compliant behavioural outcomes than 'general' advertisements. Contemporary research has also observed instances of concrete messages being more persuasive relative to abstract messages (e.g., Hur et al., 2020; Schuetz, Lowry, Pienta, & Thatcher, 2020). The effect of concrete messages on individuals' attitudinal judgements has historically been explained through the availability valence hypothesis (Kisielius & Sternthal, 1986). The availability valence hypothesis explains that vivid information (e.g., concrete messages) increases cognitive elaboration. That is, vivid (versus pallid) messages are more likely to increase the number of message-relevant associations in memory, resulting in greater message effectiveness (Kisielius & Sternthal, 1986).

While there is empirical support for the availability valence hypothesis and greater persuasiveness with concrete messages, several studies have supported abstract messages as displaying greater effectiveness in certain instances (d'Astous & Mathieu, 2008; Kim et al., 2009; Yang et al., 2015; Hur et al., 2020). For example, inattentive consumers were observed to spend more on fair trade products after seeing an abstract advertisement compared to a concrete one (d'Astous & Mathieu, 2008). Rather than the availability valence hypothesis, these studies generally use construal level theory (Liberman & Trope, 1998) to explain their results.

2.4.1 Construal level theory

Most contemporary marketing research uses construal level theory (CLT) to explain the role of information type (Lee, 2019; Adler & Sarstedt, 2021). Grounded in psychology, CLT (Liberman & Trope, 1998; Liberman, Trope, & Wakslak, 2007; Trope & Liberman, 2010) explains that individuals transcend different (high versus low) psychological distances to perceive and comprehend information – known as mental construals. Psychological distance is the subjective degree of how close or far an object is from oneself in terms of time, space, social distance, and hypotheticality (Trope & Liberman, 2010). In broad terms, temporal distance refers to differences in time; spatial distance refers to differences in physical distance; social distance refers to differences between oneself and others; and hypotheticality refers to distances between reality and hypotheticality/fiction. Psychological distance types are cognitively related to (high versus low) mental construals, and similarly affect decision making (Trope & Liberman, 2010).

CLT posits that people form higher-level (i.e., abstract) mental construals of objects or concepts that have higher psychological distance (Trope & Liberman, 2010; e.g., Hur et

al., 2020; Reczek, Trudel, & White, 2018; White et al., 2011). Whereas lower-level (i.e., concrete) mental construals can be formed of objects with lower psychological distance. CLT explains this is because higher-level (abstract) construals are less likely to change when distance changes compared to low-level (concrete) construals. Trope and Liberman (2010) give the example that the abstract goal of 'contacting a friend' is more stable over large psychological distances compared to the more concrete goal of sending an email, as email may not be accessible or may be less convenient at a different period. CLT posits that objects or concepts with high psychological distance are better represented with high-level (abstract) construals. Equally, objects with low psychological distance are better represented with low-level (concrete) construals (Chandran and Menon 2004; Trope & Liberman, 2010).

Construal levels can also influence the psychological distance associated with an object (Trope and Liberman, 2010). High-level construals are more general and are more likely to make an object appear more psychologically distant. While lower-level construals are more likely to render an object psychologically close. Therefore, CLT provides marketers a persuasive tool to influence consumer decision making for objects of differing psychological distances in time, space, social distance, and hypotheticality (Liberman et al., 2007; Alder & Sarstedt, 2021). For example, Yang et al. (2015) found abstract appeals produced greater efficacy in environmental advertisements that benefited other people – which have a greater psychologically distance than oneself.

2.4.2 Information type, CLT, and message framing

The intersection of message framing and information type (concrete versus abstract) offers a promising line of inquiry. CLT has a growing presence in marketing and consumer research (Chang et al., 2015; Pounders et al., 2015; Reczek et al., 2018; Schuetz et al., 2020; Septianto, Lee, & Putra, 2021), with calls also being made for its application in political attitude research (Adler & Sarstedt, 2021). Little prior research has purposefully explored the relationship between information type (concrete versus abstract) and message (gain versus loss) framing. However, past research has examined the interaction of CLT and message framing.

Prior research generally affirms the effective pairing of high-level construals with gain message frames and low-level construals with loss message frames (Chandran & Menon, 2004; Chang et al., 2015; Pounders et al., 2015; White et al., 2011). In health promotion, Chandran and Menon (2004) supported a significant interaction of construal level

appeals and message framing. Low-level construal (concrete) loss frames were perceived with greater proximity and severity, resulting in significantly greater attitude towards the ad and persuasiveness than low-level gain frames. High-level construal (abstract) appeals were also more effective with gain frames compared to loss frames (Chandran & Menon, 2004). These findings were further affirmed in studies from Chang et al.'s (2015) research in green advertising and Pounders et al.'s (2015) research in health advertising; both studies supported the effective pairing of low-level (concrete) construal appeals with loss frames, and the pairing of high-level (abstract) construal appeals and gain frames.

In environmental advertising White et al. (2011) used a field study to support congruity between loss frames with low-level (concrete) marketing appeals, and gain frames with high-level (abstract) appeals to result in greater behavioural outcomes. Through a subsequent laboratory study, the pairing of loss (versus gain) frames with concrete (versus abstract) appeals was due to greater processing fluency (White et al., 2011). In examining the affective consequences of temporal distance, Williams, Stein, and Galguera (2014) argued that abstract (versus concrete) construal appeals increase the perceived positive affective valence of a message. While not pertaining directly to message framing, this may support the notion that high-level appeals are more effective when interacting with gain (i.e., positive) message frames. If more broadly supported, this affective valence of CLT construals may also explain prior message framing research (see Chandran & Menon, 2004; Pounders et al., 2015).

2.4.2.1 Information type. CLT, and emotive appeals

In addition to prior message framing research, information type has been examined in relation to positive (i.e., gain-related) and negative (i.e., loss-related) emotional appeals. For example, Bülbül and Menon (2010) supported that positive abstract appeals were more effective in longer-term (high-level construal) decision making than positive concrete appeals. In eco-friendly product advertising, positive abstract information resulted in more favourable associations than positive concrete information (Reczek et al., 2018). In fair trade advertising, Hur et al. (2020) concluded that advertisements with a negative image and negative message were more effective when concrete, and that advertisements with a negative image but positive message were more effective when abstract. Finally, in information security promotion, Schuetz et al. (2020) supported greater security compliance with concrete fear appeals versus abstract fear appeals (Schuetz et al., 2020).

Hur et al. (2020) draw on the availability valence hypothesis, while Reczek et al. (2018) and Schuetz et al. (2020) refer to CLT to explain their findings. However, all authors appear to support, at least in part, the effective pairing of positive abstract appeals and negative concrete appeals.

2.4.3 Information type and CLT in political contexts

Seemingly no information type research has been grounded in political advertising, although limited CLT research has been conducted. Only Kim et al. (2009) appears to have examined CLT in political advertising. The authors supported congruence between the psychological distance of advertising appeals and the temporal distance of electoral decision making. That is, (abstract) 'why' appeals were more effective for high temporal distance (i.e., longer-term) decisions compared to (concrete) 'how' appeals, and the inverse to be true in imminent decisions (Kim et al., 2009). Notably, these effects were strongest in the politically uninformed (Kim et al., 2009).

Neither information type nor CLT appear to have been addressed in political science research. However, the related concept of candidate ambiguity has been examined with issue statements. Campbell (1983) supported that winning candidates were more likely to hold clearer (more concrete) issue positions than losing candidates. But, Tomz and Van Houweling (2009) did not find a negative effect of candidate ambiguity. Rather, they supported that ambiguity was more effective for individuals with uncertain policy preferences and neutral or positive attitudes toward risk (Tomz & Van Houweling, 2009).

In addition to empirical support for CLT in political advertising (Kim et al., 2009), information type is also arguably highly relevant in practice. That is, political advertisements and policies can be presented either abstractly (e.g., with rhetoric value) or concretely (e.g., with specific promises; Tomz & Van Houweling, 2009). For example, specific (concrete) policy commitments played a role in New Zealand's 2017 general election, displayed through detailed policy packages on key issues. Notably, the National Party's $10.5 billion 'Roads of National Significance' policy and the Labour Party's policy to build 100,000 state houses, amongst other policies, appeared influential to the electoral outcome (Shaw, 2020). In contrast, New Zealand's 2020 election was arguably characterised by a generally more abstract focus on the COVID-19 recovery and leadership, not concrete policy commitments (Shaw, 2020). Given its practical relevance and calls for future empirical CLT research

(Adler & Sarstedt, 2021; Lee, 2019), information type and CLT offer a fruitful line of inquiry.

Given the applicability of CLT to political advertising both in research (Kim et al., 2009) and practice, CLT has been identified as a direction for further research. Notably, in her CLT review and research agenda, Lee (2019) identified political persuasion as a direction for future CLT research. Exploring the role of CLT across political ideologies was also specifically intensified (Lee, 2019). This sentiment was reiterated by Adler and Sarstedt (2021) who also called for application of CLT research in political contexts and across different political attitudes.

2.5 Political ideology

Political ideology has been identified as a driver of both political behaviour (Jost et al., 2008) and consumer behaviour (Jung & Mittal, 2020; Carney et al., 2008; e.g., Septianto et al., 2019). Although there is no universally accepted definition, political ideology can be thought of as a classification of a generally interrelated system of beliefs, ideas, and attitudes about social and political systems (Jost, et al., 2009; Jung & Mittal, 2020). The literature typically designates political ideology across liberal (i.e., left-wing) and conservative (i.e., right-wing) dimensions (Jost et al., 2009; Jung & Mittal, 2020). It can be argued that a simple left-right spectrum fails to encompass all political beliefs. For example, one may be socially liberal but economically conservative. However, for the purposes of examining behaviour in political and marketing contexts, the conservative-liberal (left-right) spectrum is generally accepted (Jost et al., 2009; Hibbing, Smith, & Alford, 2014; Jung & Mittal, 2020). Sociology literatures have revisited political ideology over the past two decades, largely to explore the role of ideology as an organising devise of personality, cognitive processing, and motivational significance in human behaviour (Jost et al., 2009; Janoff-Bulman, 2009; Hibbing et al., 2014).

Contemporary consumer behaviour and marketing research has recognised political ideology as a motivated reasoning capable of explaining behaviour (Jost, 2017; Jung et al., 2017; Jung & Mittal, 2020; Korschun, Martin, & Vadakkepatt et al., 2020). For example, Sibley, Osborne, and Duckitt's (2012) meta-analysis linked political ideology to 'Big Five' personality dimensions, supporting conservatives to be more conscientious than liberals, and liberals to have greater openness. These findings were consistent across North America, Europe, and New Zealand, and produced "nearly identical correlations between each of the

Big-Five personality dimensions and political orientation" (Sibley et al., 2012, p.673) across student and adult samples. Critically, these elements of political ideology are likely to influence individuals' responses in message framing interventions.

2.5.1 Rigidity of the right

An argued feature of political ideology is the 'rigidity of the right' in that conservative (right wing) individuals are more rigidly defined by concepts such as specific personality traits than by cognitive motives (Jost et al., 2003). While not without criticism (e.g., Greenberg & Jonas, 2003), the rigidity of the right is frequently observed in the literature. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that the literature generally presents more concise descriptions of conservatives versus looser descriptions of liberals (Malka, Lelkes, & Holzer, 2017).

2.5.2 Cognitive differences

Cognitive differences can identify individuals' political orientation. In their seminal meta-analysis of conservatism, Jost et al. (2003) presented a framework of three underlying motives of political conservatism; epistemic, existential, and relational. Firstly, epistemic motives seek cognitive closure rather than ambiguity. Therefore, conservatives are likely to display greater uncertainty avoidance (Gründl & Aichholzer, 2020), versus liberals who are more comfortable with uncertainty. Secondly, existential motivators demand certainty and security compared to change (Buck, 2014). Existential motives reflect conservatives' need to mitigate or avoid threats, dissonance, and loss. Thirdly, relational motives involve the rationalisation of important systems such as family or community versus the rationalisation of out-groups. Relational motives explain that conservatives act in self-interest and in the interest of in-groups, in contrast to liberals whose behaviours are more likely to uphold the interests of people outside of in-groups. However, Jost et al.'s (2003) framework is not ubiquitous in subsequent influential research (e.g., Hibbing et al., 2014). Moreover, the framework is criticised for being a measure of one's ideological rigidity and in-group favouritism (Greenberg & Jonas, 2003). Despite this, cognitive motivators have proven a useful framework in prior political ideology research (Carney et al., 2008; Eidelman & Crandall, 2014), including in political marketing (Jung & Mittal, 2020).

2.5.3 System justification theory

System justification theory further supports the role of fear, uncertainty, and loss avoidance (and other related concepts) as a differentiator between conservatives and liberals (Jost et al., 2008). That is, system justification theory presents that individuals generally tend to justify and defend existing systems (Eidelman & Crandall, 2014), including social, economic, and political systems. While, many people can justify systems in times of crisis, conservatives generally display a greater tendency to justify the current social and economic institutions (Jost et al., 2013). This acts to reduce uncertainty and mitigate the prospect of losses by rejecting changes from the status quo. Conservatives are therefore more likely to reject a change in existing systems, even if doing so is not utility maximising (Jung & Mittal, 2020).

2.5.4 Conservatives' aversion to loss and uncertainty

A common theme across political ideology literatures is conservatives' aversion to negative and uncertain stimuli. Janoff-Bulman (2009) stated that conservatives are defined by an avoidance of negative outcomes, while liberals are defined by an approach to positive outcomes. Epistemic, existential, and relational motives respectively display conservatives' aversion towards ambiguity, uncertainty, and out-groups (Jost et al., 2003; Gründl & Aichholzer, 2020). Moreover, system justification theory stipulates that conservatives are driven by a preference for certainty over change (Jost et al., 2013; Eidelman & Crandall, 2014). Additionally, Hibbing et al. (2014) argue the role of negativity bias in defining conservatives. Specifically, the authors suggest that negative stimuli increase conservatives' level of processing.

Empirical research further supports an asymmetry of responses to negative stimuli between conservatives and liberals. Oxley et al. (2008) supported that conservatives display greater physiological responses to threats than liberals. Similarly, conservatives have been found to display a selective attentiveness to negatively valanced stimuli (Carraro, Castelli, & Macchiella, 2011). Additionally, conservatives (versus liberals) have been observed to displayed more avoidant strategies to negative stimuli in in-game settings (Shook & Fazio, 2009).

Notably, in anti-counterfeit advertising research, Septianto et al. (2019) supported the role of political ideology in moderating the effect of message framing. The authors supported that liberals were more willing to comply with anti-counterfeit advertisements with gain

frames and that conservatives were more willing to comply with loss frames (Septianto et al., 2019). In particular, the authors hypothesised that conservatives' aversion of negative consequences, as an underlying driver of this effect. Apart from Septianto et al.'s (2019) study, political ideology appears unexamined in message framing research.

2.6 Political knowledge

One's political knowledge is likely to influence how they respond to political communications. People with greater political knowledge tend to experience enhanced evaluations of media framing effects (Chong & Druckman, 2007b; Miller & Krosnick, 2000). The politically knowledgeable can also more efficiently process new political information and are therefore more likely to interpret and use new information to inform their political judgements, resulting in a greater persuasive effect (Slothuus, 2008; Druckman, 2007).

However, some media framing effects have also been found less effective in influencing the politically knowledgeable (Krosnick & Kinder, 1990). That is, knowledgeable individuals are supposedly better equipped to resist media framing effects (Krosnick & Kinder, 1990). Druckman and Nelson (2003) interpret these conflicting findings in prior political knowledge research as a failure to control for existing attitudes. For example, when framing gun control, Haider-Markel and Joslyn (2001) only supported media framing effects in people with low political knowledge. Slothuus (2008) further affirmed that high political awareness enhances framing effects in the absence of strong prior attitude towards issues.

Political knowledge literature relates to media framing and priming effects, but not to message framing effects. As discussed, *both* gain and loss message framing conditions enhance evaluations of a message. It is therefore possible that political knowledge enhances both gain and loss message frames through more efficient processing of political information.

2.7 Issue importance

The importance of one's attitude towards a political issue is a relevant consideration in the marketing of political policies. There is limited research pertaining to issue importance on message framing or information type, however the concept is more established in political science. For example, prior attitudes towards issues can influence the persuasiveness of media framing effects in political decision making (Slothuus, 2008). In psychology, Ajzen (2001) describes the role of relative attitudes and beliefs in decision making which are often explained using the expectancy-value model. That is, important attitudes and beliefs are more

accessible and more heavily used when evaluating objects or attributes (Ajzen, 2001). This is particularly relevant in a political context where advertising often centres on key policy issues (Lock & Harris, 1996), to which individuals may have strong or weak attitudes towards. Therefore, individuals are less likely to be persuaded by messaging that is inconsistent with strong prior attitudes (Fransen, Smit, & Verlegh, 2015). Therefore, issue importance may influence the effectiveness of political advertising interventions.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

The literature review examined gain versus loss message framing and its underlying mechanism of loss aversion (Levin et al., 1998; Krishnamurthy, et al., 2001; Tversky & Kahneman, 1991), information type and CLT (Bülbül & Menon, 2010, Yang et al., 2015; Hur et al., 2020), and how these concepts can influence behaviour. The role of political ideology (Jost, 2008; Jung & Mittal, 2020) was also examined in respect to their implications on message framing and information type interventions. From this foundation, this chapter describes the research problem and objectives of the study and presents the conceptual framework and hypotheses to be tested.

3.1 Problem identification and objectives

Despite the immense societal implications that political advertising can have, the research field remains nascent (Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2007; Lees-Marshment, 2019; Perannagari & Chakrabarti, 2020). Given the many differences between political and commercial marketing (O'Shaughnessy, 2001; Harris & Lock, 2010; Lock & Harris, 1996), it is unclear how different types of advertising interventions such as message framing and information type influence voter behaviour (Van Steenburg, 2015). By conducting political advertising research, theoretical understandings of advertising concepts can be extended to include their influence on voter decision making and behaviour. Political advertising research can also yield immense practical implications. Therefore, there is a need to understand how advertising interventions apply in political advertising contexts and their influence on voter decision making across different political target audiences (Van Steenburg, 2015). As aptly described by Kim et al. (2009); "studying consumers' choice of political candidate is arguably at least as important as studying which brand of carbonated soft drink they prefer" (p.887).

Gain versus loss message framing, explained by loss aversion (Levin et al., 1998), is a persuasive intervention in other advertising subfields including health promotion and social marketing (e.g., McCormick & Seta, 2016; Yang et al., 2015; Hur et al., 2020). Although Krishen et al. (2014) studied public policy frames, message framing appears unresearched in electoral political advertising. Information type, explained by CLT, also displays noteworthy persuasive effects in other advertising subfields (e.g., Bülbül & Menon, 2010; Yang et al., 2015; Hur et al., 2020). However, only Kim et al. (2009) examined CLT in political advertising, linking it to temporal decision-making distance. Past research has linked information type to message framing, generally supporting the persuasive pairing of gain

frames with abstract appeals and loss frames with concrete appeals (Chandran & Menon, 2004; White et al., 2011; Pounders et al., 2015). However, no interaction effect of message framing and information type appears to have been supported in political advertising.

Political ideology is a critical determent of voter behaviour (Jost et al., 2009). Compared to liberals, conservatives tend to display greater aversion to loss and negative stimuli (Jost et al., 2009, Jung et al., 2017; Jung & Mittal, 2020; Korschun et al., 2020). This makes political ideology highly applicable to message framing, which is motivated by loss aversion. Political ideology has been observed to moderate message framing effects in anti-counterfeit advertising (Septianto et al., 2019), however its influence on message framing in voter behaviour research appears to be so far unexamined.

Examining message framing, information type, and their interaction in political advertising is likely to yield theoretical insights about these effects in political settings. That is, the role of these concepts is not understood in political advertising or on voter behaviour. Moreover, examining the effect of political ideology on message framing will also specifically address demands to understand how advertising effects differ across different audiences. Given the practical applicability of message framing, information type, and political ideology to political advertising, understanding these concepts is also of immense practical importance.

Therefore, this research intends to understand the advertising effectiveness of message framing and information type, and how message framing effects differ between political ideologies in political advertising. Specifically, the objectives of this research are:

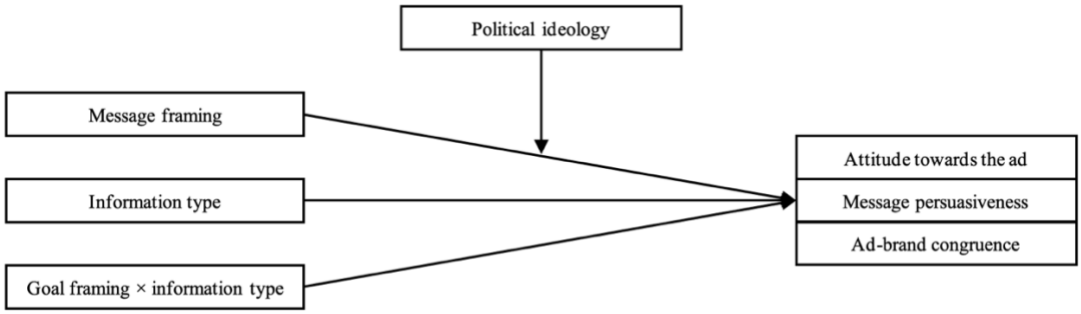
1. Examine the effects of (gain versus loss) message framing.
2. Examine the effects of (abstract versus concrete) information type.
3. Examine the interaction effect of message framing and information type.
4. Test the moderating effect of political ideology on message framing.

Through examining these objectives, this research will extend the message framing and information type literatures to political advertising and voter behaviour, including between liberal and conservative groups. In doing so, this study will, at least in part, address multiple calls for further research (Adler & Sarstedt, 2021; Cacciatore et al., 2016; Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2007; Korschun et al., 2020; Lee, 2019; Van Steenburg, 2015). Finally, this research will yield actionable findings for practitioners, particularly in tailoring advertising to voters of different political ideologies.

3.1.1 Conceptual model

The conceptual model consists of message framing (gain versus loss) and information type (abstract versus concrete) and the hypothesised effect these concepts will have on dependant variables; attitude towards the ad, message persuasiveness, and ad-brand congruence (Figure 2). Additionally, political ideology (liberal versus conservative) is proposed to moderate message framing effects on dependant variables.

Figure 2 Conceptual model



3.2 Hypothesis development

To explore whether the relationships proposed in the conceptual model exist, hypotheses are developed throughout the remainder of this chapter.

3.2.1 Message framing hypothesis

Message framing advocates a desired behaviour through 'framing' the same critical information in terms of obtaining gains or avoiding losses (Levin et al., 1998). Although message framing effects are not always observed (e.g., Krishnamurthy et al., 2001), research generally supports greater persuasive effectiveness in loss frames than gain frames (Meyerowitz & Chaiken, 1987; Levin et al., 1998; Piñon, & Gambara, 2005). For example, Rothman and Salovey (1997) found the losses incurred from not getting a mammogram were more persuasive than the gains obtained from getting a mammogram. Loss aversion (Novemsky & Kahneman, 2005) is generally cited to explain these message framing effects. Therefore, it is hypothesised:

H1: *Gain frames will result in more favourable attitude towards the ad (1a), higher message persuasiveness (1b), and higher ad-brand congruence (1c) than loss frames.*

3.2.2 Information type hypothesis

Information type interventions present information through either concrete or abstract information. Abstract messages are vaguer and more subjective (MacKenzie, 1986; Yang et al., 2015; Hur et al., 2020), and are posited to be felt with greater uncertainty and ambiguity (Bülbül & Menon, 2010). In contrast, concrete messages are more specific and objective (MacKenzie, 1986; Yang et al., 2015; Hur et al., 2020). Information type effects are typically explained through the availability valence hypothesis or CLT. The availability valence hypothesis stipulates that vivid information (e.g., concrete messages) increases the degree of cognitive elaboration, and therefore effectiveness (Kisielius & Sternthal, 1986). Meanwhile, CLT posits that high-level (abstract) mental construals of objects have high psychological distance whereas low-level (concrete) mental construals have low psychological distance (Liberman et al., 2007; Trope & Liberman, 2010). Either high-level or low-level construals may be more persuasive depending on the psychological distance of relevant objects or concepts (Adler & Sarstedt, 2021; Trope & Liberman, 2010; Kim et al., 2009; Lee, 2019). In the context of electoral advertising where the arguably low psychological distance action of voting is advocated for, higher effectiveness should be expected with concrete appeals according to CLT. Therefore, in consideration of the availability valence hypothesis and CLT, it is hypothesised:

H2: *Concrete appeals will result in more favourable attitude towards the ad (2a), higher message persuasiveness (2b), and higher ad-brand congruence (2c) than abstract appeals.*

3.2.3 Interaction of message framing and information type hypothesis

As previously discussed, message framing interventions persuade individuals through emphasising the gains obtained or losses avoided from performing a desired behaviour. Loss frames (versus gain frames) are often more effective (Levin et al., 1998; Piñon & Gambara, 2005), due to loss aversion. Additionally, in relation to information type, CLT explains that either high-level (abstract) or low-level (concrete) construal levels may be more appropriate depending on the psychological distance of relevant objects or concepts in a message (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Gain or loss framed messages may therefore be more effective at different psychological distances.

Abstract construals are understood to enhance the perceived positivity of a message, thereby improving evaluations of positive (i.e., gain) messages (Williams et al., 2014). In

contrast, negative (i.e., loss) messages are expected to be more effective when perceived at a low-psychological distance. Moreover, at close psychological proximity, losses are generally perceived with greater severity, and therefore resulting in a greater persuasive effect (Chandran & Menon, 2004; White et al., 2011; Lee, 2019). Similarly, gain frames are expected to be more effective with high-level (abstract) information and loss frames are generally more effectively paired with low-level (concrete) information (Chandran & Menon, 2004; White et al., 2011; Pounders et al., 2015). Scholars in peripheral fields to message framing have also yielded findings that support either abstract gain or concrete loss advertising conditions (Bülbül & Menon, 2010; Reczek et al., 2018; Hur et al., 2020; Schuetz et al., 2020).

Therefore, to investigate the pairing of message framing and information type conditions it is hypothesised:

H3: *Message framing and information type will interact so that gain frames are congruent with abstract appeals and loss frames are congruent with concrete appeals. Specifically:*

H3a: Gain frames will result in more favourable attitudes towards the ad with abstract appeals than concrete appeals. In contrast, loss frames will result in more favourable attitudes towards the ad with concrete appeals than abstract appeals.

H3b: Gain frames will result in higher message persuasiveness with abstract appeals than concrete appeals. In contrast, loss frames will result in higher message persuasiveness with concrete appeals than abstract appeals.

H3c: Gain frames will result in higher ad-brand congruence with abstract appeals than concrete appeals. In contrast, loss frames will result in higher ad-brand congruence with concrete appeals than abstract appeals.

3.2.4 Political ideology hypothesis

Political ideology represents one's beliefs as to how society ought to be organised and how that should be achieved (Jost et al., 2009). Differences between conservatives and liberals can be explained through epistemic, existential, and relational social cognitive motives (Hennes et al., 2012; Janoff-Bulman, 2009; Jost et al., 2003; Jost et al., 2009). Epistemic (seeking closure), existential (need to avoid threats, dissonance, loss, and uncertainty), and relational motives (rationalisation of existing systems and in-groups rather than change) define conservatives, while liberals generally display opposite motives.

Aversion to negative stimuli such as uncertainty, loss, fear, and threats is central to conservatism (Gründl & Aichholzer, 2020; Hibbing et al., 2014; Jost et al., 2003). System justification theory supports conservatives' aversion to change, positing that conservatives justify existing social, economic, or political systems (Eidelman & Crandall, 2014; Hennes et al., 2012). In contrast, liberals are typically open-minded, creative, curious, and seekers of gains, change, progress, and novelty (Carney et al., 2008; Hennes et al., 2012; Hibbing et al., 2014; Janoff-Bulman, 2009; Jost et al., 2009).

Because loss aversion underlies gain versus loss message framing effects (Levin et al., 1998), it is likely that conservatives are more greatly influenced by loss frames compared to liberals who display lower loss aversion. Septianto et al. (2019) supported this in anti-counterfeit advertising, finding that conservatives were more greatly persuaded by loss frames and that liberals were more persuaded by gain frames. However, similar findings are yet to be applied in political advertising. Therefore, it is hypothesised:

H4: *Message framing effects will be moderated by political ideology. Specifically:*

*H4a**:** With gain frames attitudes towards the ad will be more favourable among liberals compared with conservatives. With loss frames attitudes towards the ad will be more favourable among conservatives compared with liberals.*

*H4b**:** With gain frames message persuasiveness will be higher among liberals compared with conservatives. With loss frames message persuasiveness will be higher among conservatives compared with liberals.*

H4c: With gain frames ad-brand congruence will be higher among liberals compared with conservatives. With loss frames ad-brand congruence will be higher among conservatives compared with liberals.

Chapter 4: Method

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced hypotheses to test the causal and interaction effects of message framing and information type in addition to the moderating effect of political ideology on message framing. To test these hypotheses, this chapter describes and justifies the adopted post-positivist paradigm, experimental methodology, sampling frame, measurement constructs and instruments, and the statistical analysis selected.

4.2 Research approach

To achieve the present study's research objectives an appropriate research paradigm, or set of underlying philosophical assumptions, was required (Deshpande, 1983). Advertising research often adopts a positivist world view (Chang, 2017a). Positivism theorises measurable objective reality in which relationships between defined concepts which can be tested through quantitative research methods (Creswell, 2009; Chang, 2017a; Deshpande, 1983; McGregor & Murnane, 2010). However, positivism is criticised for its inability to make objective or definitive conclusions about human behaviour, as humans are naturally biased and do not always act rationally (McGregor & Murnane, 2010). For example, voter decision making is unlikely to be purely rational in complex and nuanced political environments. Alternatively, the constructivist paradigm views reality as co-constructed from individuals' subjective experiences to achieve a holistic understanding of situations (Lincoln et al., 2011). However, positivism is better suited to determining causality between defined measurable concepts, which is often the objective of advertising and consumer research (Deshpande, 1983; McGregor & Murnane, 2010; Chang, 2017a).

To achieve the research objectives and address the limitations of positivist research, the present study adopted a post-positivist paradigm. From an ontological perspective, post-positivism acknowledges that reality exists, but accepts that it is socially constructed and therefore cannot be purely objective (McGregor & Murnane, 2010). Post-positivism applies scientific methods to social science while acknowledging that humans (including the researcher) are central to research (Lincoln et al., 2011). Post-positivism therefore advocates for the systemic minimisation of associated bias (McGregor & Murnane, 2010). Additionally, it emphasises a deductive approach of testing hypothesised theoretical advancements through controlled observations (Lincoln et al., 2011; McGregor & Murnane, 2010). Therefore, post-positivism has been adopted to achieve this study's research objectives.

4.3 Research methodology

Post-positivist research should adopt an appropriate methodology to achieve the research objectives (Creswell, 2009; Edmondson & McManus, 2007). This study's research objectives to identify causality from political advertising interventions supported a deductive quantitative approach. That is, a deductive approach was appropriate to test hypothesised causal relationships between existing measurable concepts, thereby extending the existing knowledge base (Creswell, 2009; Edmondson & McManus, 2007).

Quantitative experimental design has also been adopted in prior message framing research (e.g., Krishen et al., 2014; Septianto et al., 2019), information type (and CLT) research (e.g., Bülbül & Menon, 2010; Hur et al., 2020), and political advertising research (e.g., Kim et al., 2009). Additionally, scholars have called for further quantitative research in political marketing (Henneberg & O'shaughnessy, 2007; Van Steenburg, 2015). Moreover, quantitative research is generally an appropriate methodological fit to extend the mature literatures of message framing and information type (including CLT) to political advertising (Edmondson & McManus, 2007).

4.3.1 Experiment

Experiments are effective for testing causal relationships between variables, and so are commonplace in advertising research (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017). Experiments identify causality within relationships as researchers can manipulate independent variables within otherwise mostly controlled settings. Dependant variables can therefore be measured to determine the effect of the manipulated independent variables (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017). Therefore, an experiment was deemed appropriate to achieve the objectives of this research to identify the effects of message frames and information type appeals on attitude towards the ad, message persuasiveness, and ad-brand congruence.

Given the suitability of experiments in determining causal relationships, experiments feature heavily in prior research on message framing (Arbuthnott & Scerbe, 2016; Krishen et al., 2014; Septianto et al., 2019; see Levin et al., 1998 for literature review), information type (Bülbül & Menon, 2010; Chandran & Menon, 2004; Hur et al., 2020; Reczek et al., 2018; Schuetz et al., 2020), and have been used in political advertising (Kim et al., 2009). As compared to laboratory experiments, online experiments often lose some control over experimental settings, such as display size and quality (Reips, 2002). Online experiments can also be subject to inattentive participants (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017). However, online

experiments arguably result in highly generalisable findings, external validity, highly consistent settings with reduced experimenter effects, and are faster and cheaper to conduct than other questionnaire methods (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017; Reips, 2002). Online experiments have also been used in prior message framing and information type research (Bülbül & Menon, 2010; Pounders et al., 2015; Septianto et al., 2019). Therefore, an online questionnaire-based 2 (message framing: gain versus loss) × 2 (information type: abstract versus concrete) between-subjects experimental design was adopted (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Experimental conditions

		Information type:	
		Abstract	Concrete
Message framing:	Gain	*Condition 1*	*Condition 2*
	Loss	*Condition 3*	*Condition 4*

4.3.2 Stimuli

Experimental advertising stimuli should appear realistic (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017). To appear realistic, the experimental stimuli employed design elements of typical New Zealand political advertisements. These design elements included a generic background image of a New Zealand suburb with overlying text. Branding is not central to this study but is generally needed to produce realistic advertising stimuli (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017). Assuming that voters rarely vote for new political brands, and assuming that many voters have pre-existing political brand associations, neither existing nor fictional brands were considered appropriate. Therefore, participants were asked to imagine the advertisements were from their preferred political party, and a blank logo and fictional disclaimer was included in the advertising stimuli (Appendix B).

It is important evoke a strong effect size in experimental research (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017). Therefore, advertising stimuli was developed with a focus on the non-partisan political issue of the cost of living. In Consumer NZ's (2022) nationally representative quarterly Sentiment Tracker survey, the cost of living was reported as the top concern for New Zealanders. In a subsequent Consumer NZ (2022) poll (with over 1000

participants), “98% are said they are worried about the cost of groceries in New Zealand and were making changes to their weekly shop as a result” (para. 8).

Experimental stimuli were qualitatively tested with eleven people including three academic professionals, an advertising and market research professional, and an Advertising Standards Authority Complaints Board member. Experimental stimuli were also subject to two pre-tests to ensure stimuli was sufficient (see 4.6 Pre-testing and pilot study). See Appendix B for experimental stimuli.

4.3.3 Manipulations

Two variables were manipulated within the experiment: message framing (gain versus loss) and information type (abstract versus concrete). Message framing was manipulated by framing advertisements in terms of obtaining a gain for gain frames or avoiding a loss for loss frames. In all conditions, the promoted behaviour was voting for the participants’ preferred political party. This was achieved through “Much lower cost of living if you vote for us” in gain frames and “Much higher cost of living if you do not vote for us” in loss frames. For concrete appeals, policy interventions were framed in terms of “if you vote [policy]” for gain frames, and “if you don’t vote, no [policy]” (Appendix B). These manipulations represent goal message framing in its purest form, as described by Levin et al. (1998). Therefore, in gain frames, participants could obtain a cheaper cost of living if they vote. In loss frames, participants could suffer a higher cost of living if they do not vote.

Information type was manipulated by changing the amount of detail contained in abstract versus concrete advertisements. A similar approach to Hur et al. (2020) was taken, where supporting information was manipulated to include greater detail in concrete frames. That is, in concrete advertisements, the advertised message was substantiated with five hypothetical policies that would address the cost of living issue. These included specific figures “50 cents/litre cheaper fuel”, “half price public transport”, “0% GST on fruit and veg”, “extra $500 in your pocket”, and “$30 per week saving on food”. In contrast, abstract frames omitted this level of detail, and relied on just the main advertising message. This manipulation was informed from prior literature that describe abstract appeals as vague and subjective, and concrete appeals as specific, objective, and information rich (Bülbül & Menon, 2010; Hur et al., 2020; MacKenzie, 1986; Yang et al., 2015).

4.4 Procedure

An online questionnaire-based experiment was facilitated using Qualtrics software. The questionnaire was distributed via a web link and QR code with a $100 supermarket prize draw to incentivise participation. Participants viewed an information page that guaranteed anonymity and confirmed their consent to participate in the study. Qualifying questions confirmed eligibility to vote. A political ideology question was asked to allow for stratified random sampling, but was not used in later analysis. Mood (positive versus negative) was asked as a control variable.

Participants were then briefed, wherein they were instructed to imagine that there is an upcoming general election, and that they needed to think which party they wanted to vote for. Additionally, they were told that the following advertisement was from their preferred political party, and that they needed to imagine their preferred political party's name and logo were in the ad. This briefing aimed to emulate reality, which is considered best practice in advertising research (De Pelsmacker, 2021). A random stratified sampling method was then used to allocate participants to one of four experimental conditions. Random stratified sampling was appropriate to evenly distribute both liberal and conservative participants across experimental conditions, thus mitigating noncoverage error (Oppermann, 1995).

Upon confirmation of viewing the ad, dependent variables of attitude towards the ad, message persuasiveness, and ad-brand congruence were asked. An attention check and open-text suspicious probe was also asked. Subsequently, participants responded to manipulation checks for message frame and information type and independent variable questions recording political ideology and uncertainty avoidance. Control variables items for issue importance and political knowledge were then asked. Finally, participants were thanked for their participation and directed to enter the optional prise draw.

4.5 Questionnaire design

Data was collected through an online questionnaire which hosted the between-subjects online experiment. Questionnaire design was informed by prior message framing and information type advertising research (Arbuthnott & Scerbe, 2016; Chandran & Menon, 2004; Krishen et al., 2014; Septianto et al., 2019; White et al., 2011; Yang et al., 2015), and generally accepted best practices (Couper, 2008; Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017). Online questionnaires can be influenced by participants' browser, computer settings, and screen size which may impact responses (Couper, 2008). To mitigate these issues, the questionnaire was

pretested using different browsers and different computer and mobile screen sizes. See Appendix A for the full questionnaire.

4.5.1 Manipulated variables

Message frame (gain versus loss) and information type (abstract versus concrete) were manipulated, as previously described in sections 4.4.2 Stimuli and 4.4.3 Manipulations. Gain frames presented the positive consequences of voting (lower cost of living), while loss frames presented the negative consequences of not voting (higher cost of living). Abstract appeals were presented with less specificity and detail. However concrete appeals were presented using greater specificity and detail, through the presentation of 5 hypothetical nonpartisan policies.

4.5.2 Construct measures

The questionnaire consisted of previously validated measures which were adapted where necessary. For all dependent, independent, and control variable constructs, questionnaire item order was randomised. This section identifies the scales that were used, their original stated internal consistency, and how question wording was adapted. Original scales and their adaptations are also detailed in Appendix C.

4.5.2.1 Attitude towards the ad

To measure attitude towards the ad, Lee and Mason's (1999) five-item construct was used. This used a seven-point scale to measure the following five statements; I think the ad is bad (reverse coded), the ad is appealing to me, the ad is attractive to me, the ad is interesting to me, I dislike the ad (reverse coded) (1 = strongly agree; 7 = strongly disagree; α =.93).

4.5.2.2 Message persuasiveness

Message persuasiveness was measured using a four-item construct (Chang, 2017b). This used a seven-point scale to measure the four statements; the ad was persuasive/ effective/compelling/convincing (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree; α = .91). Chang (2017b) used these items to measure how compelling and convincing advertisements were.

4.5.2.3 Ad-brand congruence

Ad-brand congruence was measured through a three-item seven-point semantic differential scale (1 = not compatible, not a good fit, not congruent; 7 = compatible, good fit, congruent; $\alpha = .97$) adapted from Arbouw et al. (2019). Scales were not adapted; however question wording was modified from "brand" to "my preferred political party" to suit the political context of the present study.

4.5.2.4 Message frame (gain versus loss)

To perform a manipulation check for gains versus loss message framing, two items from Chang et al. (2015) were used. Seven-point scales measured responses across two statements; "The advertisement focused on what would be gained (lost) if I vote (do not vote) for my preferred political party" (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The original Cronbach's alpha was not reported.

4.5.2.5 Advertisement information type (abstract versus concrete)

To perform a manipulation check for perceived information type, participants were asked to respond to two statements from Yang et al. (2015) about the extent the advertisement focused on the cost of living in a "general and vague way" and a "specific and detailed way" (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The original Cronbach's alpha was not reported.

4.5.2.6 Political ideology

To measure participants' political ideology (liberal versus conservative), Mehrabian's (1996) seven item construct was used. This used seven-point scales to measure participants' level of agreement to seven statements such as "I am politically more left-wing than right-wing" (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree; $\alpha = .77$). All scale items are detailed in Appendix C. This scale was selected for its adaptability to a New Zealand sample. That is, other issue-based political ideology scales tend to measure 'liberal' and 'conservative' policy stances (see Jung & Mittal, 2020) of questionable applicability to a New Zealand context. Political ideology check questions were also asked at the end of the questionnaire, which confirmed the accuracy of the scale.

4.5.2.7 Issue importance

To measure the perceived importance of the cost of living issue, Robin et al.'s (1996) four-item seven-point semantic differential scale (1 = unimportant issue, insignificant issue, issue of no concern, trivial issue; 7 = extremely important issue, highly significant issue, issue is of considerable concern, fundamental issue; α = .94 – .95).

4.5.2.8 Political knowledge

To measure self-perceived political knowledge, O'Cass' (2002) four-item construct was used. This used a six-point scale to measure self-reported political knowledge across the following four statements; "I know a lot about politics"; "I classify myself as an expert on politics"; "Compared to most people I know more about politics"; and "I am knowledgeable about politics" (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree; α = .91). Following prior political marketing research, this construct tests perceived political knowledge rather than factual political knowledge (O'Cass, 2002).

4.5.2.9 Mood

Mood was measured through Keller, Lipkus, & Rimer's (2003) three-item construct. This used an eleven-point scale to measure participants' positive or negative mood (1 = "very bad, sad, unpleasant"; 11 = "very good, happy, pleasant"; α = .86). This scale measures mood on a positive versus negative continuum, which is appropriate for controlling any effect on message framing.

4.6 Pre-testing and pilot study

Pre-testing is important for questionnaire development. Pre-tests act to identify and mitigate potential issues to improve questionnaire functionality (Reynolds, Diamantopoulos, & Schlegelmilch, 1993). Two pre-tests and a pilot study were conducted before launching the full questionnaire using mostly student-based convenience samples.

The first pre-test consisted of 103 usable responses and tested the four experimental stimuli conditions and the measurement apparatus pertaining to dependent variables and the moderating variable. Participants did not perceive significantly different abstractness or concreteness between information type conditions. Experimental stimuli were subsequently modified. A second pre-test of 62 useable responses confirmed significant differences in

abstractness (versus concreteness) between information type conditions. Remaining measurement constructs were also tested.

As experimental stimuli and measurement apparatus were confirmed to be appropriate, a final pilot study or 'dry-run' of the full questionnaire (n = 11) was also conducted to test the data collection and analysis instruments functioned appropriately. No issues were identified and therefore no further modifications were made to the questionnaire.

4.7 Sampling frame

The sample was drawn from internet-using New Zealand citizens or residents aged 18 or older. This ensured that participants were eligible to vote. An estimated 3.90 million New Zealanders are eligible to vote (Electoral Commission New Zealand, 2021). As the present study pertains to electoral political advertising, the sample was drawn from the population of New Zealand eligible voters.

4.7.1 Sample selection

Given the context of political marketing in New Zealand, a sample of eligible New Zealand voters was used. Screening questions eliminated ineligible participants. Convenience sampling was adopted due to financial constraints. Participants were recruited via university intranet traffic and online community pages. To support a diversity of political opinion within the sample, social media community pages relating to typically left-wing-voting areas (e.g., Wellington, Dunedin), typically right-wing-voting areas (e.g., Epsom, Rangitīkei), and typically swing-voting areas (e.g., Christchurch, Auckland) were targeted.

This sampling method was limited as it may be nonrepresentative of the population, mostly due to sampling and self-selection biases (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2018). However, nonrepresentative samples are generally considered appropriate for experimental advertising research (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017). Moreover, while predominantly non-student samples are preferable (De Pelsmacker, 2021), student samples are considered appropriate for testing causal mechanisms in both consumer and political research (Sibley et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2009). To incentivise participation, a lottery was offered to win one of three $100 supermarket vouchers.

4.7.2 Sample size

In experimental advertising research, around 30 participants per experiment condition is generally considered acceptable to provide sufficient statistical power (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017). However, because differences between liberal and conservative groups were tested, a sample of *at least* 240 usable responses were required to provide 30 liberal and 30 conservative participants in each of the four experimental conditions (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017). This criterion was comfortably met with a total of 809 usable responses and between 53 and 68 conservative and 111 and 122 liberal participants per condition.

4.8 Ethics approval

In planning this research, due care and consideration was taken to mitigate any possibilities of negative ethical implications on participants or any other stakeholders or groups. This research was conducted in accordance with Victoria University of Wellington's ethics guidelines and was approved Human Ethics Committee (application number 0000029977).

Chapter 5: Results

This chapter addresses how data was prepared for analysis and the procedure adopted to analyse the data. It also details the results of hypothesis testing and further analysis to understand identified relationships. Control variables were tested for influences on identified relationships. Finally, post-hoc analysis uncovered a significant moderating effect of political knowledge on message framing effects. Despite prior political science research (e.g., Druckman, 2007; Druckman & Nelson, 2003; Krosnick & Kinder, 1990; Miller & Krosnick, 2000; Slothuus, 2008), post-hoc analysis extended political knowledge to message framing for the first time.

5.1 Response analysis and data cleaning

Data was collected between the 16th and 22nd of July 2022, which yielded 1137 attempted questionnaire responses. The data was cleaned by removing incomplete responses (n=253), responses that failed the attention check (n=33), and subsequent multiple responses from the same IP address (n=48). This left 809 useable responses. This yielded between 192 and 208 (n=53-68 conservative and n=111-122 liberal) participants per experimental condition, therefore exceeding the 30 participants per group per condition recommended by Geuens and De Pelsmacker (2017).

5.1.1 Sample characteristics

Table 1 provides demographic descriptive statistics for the sample and compares them to the eligible voting population (where data is available) and 2018 New Zealand census data. Younger participants (aged 35 and younger), females, NZ Europeans/Pākehā, 'other' ethnicities, highly educated, and high-income individuals were overrepresented within the sample. Older (36 and older) participants, males, Māori, Asian, Pacific peoples, lower education level, and lower income individuals were underrepresented. Although the sample was not representative of the New Zealand voting population, this was not a concern for this research as nonrepresentative samples are appropriate to identify causal relationships (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017).

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of sample demographics

	Frequency	Percent	Percentage of population*[1]	Percentage of voting population[2]
Age				
18 - 24	212	26.2%	12.2%	11.0%
25 – 29	170	21.0%	9.6%	8.6%
30 – 34	116	14.3%	8.8%	9.3%
35 – 39	85	10.5%	8.2%	8.6%
40 – 44	64	7.9%	8.1%	8.0%
45 – 49	49	6.1%	8.9%	8.4%
50 – 54	40	4.9%	8.6%	8.6%
55 – 59	29	3.6%	8.4%	8.5%
60 – 64	22	2.7%	7.2%	7.8%
65+	22	2.7%	20.0%	21.2%
Total	809	100%	100%	100%
Gender				
Female	528	65.3%	50.6%	
Male	269	33.3%	49.4%	
Another gender	4	0.5%	-	
Prefer not to say	8	1.0%	-	
Total	809	100%	100%	
Ethnicity				
NZ European / Pākehā	624	77.1%	71.8%	
Māori	40	4.9%	16.5%	
Asian	45	5.6%	15.3%	
Pacific peoples	28	3.5%	9.0%	
Latin American	16	2.0%	0.6%	
Middle Eastern	10	1.2%	0.6%	
African	1	0.1%	0.3%	
Other:	45	5.6%	1.2%	
Total	809	100%	115.3%**	
Education* **				
No qualification	5	0.6%	18.2%	
Secondary school	140	17.3%	38.3%	
Higher education diploma or certificate	150	18.5%	18.7%	
Bachelor's degree	340	42.0%	14.6%	
Honours degree	69	8.5%	5.7%	
Master's degree	91	11.2%	3.7%	
Doctorate degree	14	1.7%	0.8%	

Total	809	100.0%	100.0%
Personal income* **			
Under $15,000	113	14.0%	24.6%
$15,000 - $29,999	91	11.2%	23.6%
$30,000 - $49,999	114	14.1%	20.2%
$50,000 - $69,999	174	21.5%	14.4%
$70,000 – $99,999	137	16.9%	9.6%
Over $100,000	124	15.3%	7.6%
Prefer not to say	56	6.9%	-
Total	809	100%	100%

Note. * Age data was adjusted to exclude people aged under 18. ** Total adds to over 100% due to multiple responses. ***Census education and income data pertains to people aged 15 and over. [1] Statistics New Zealand (2020). [2] Electoral Commission New Zealand (2021).

5.2 Common method bias

Common method bias occurs from collecting independent and dependant variables through a common response method such as self-report questionnaires (Chang, Witteloostuijn, & Edin, 2010; Kock, Berbekova, & Assaf, 2021). This can inflate or deflate observed relationship between constructs, resulting in type I or type II errors (Kock et al., 2021; MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012). Common method bias can occur in instances with high task difficulty, low ability to answer accurately, or low motivation to answer accurately (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012), including in experimental advertising research (Malhotra, Schaller, & Patil, 2017). In following of best practice (see Kock et al., 2021), Chapter 4 described several procedural controls that were implemented to limit any potential effect of common method bias. To support low task difficulty and ease of answering accurately, experimental stimuli and questionnaire items were optimised through a qualitative assessment and two pre-tests (n = 103; n = 62). Moreover, reassurances of participant anonymity and an incentivising prize draw acted to motivate accurate responses.

Harman's (1967) single factor test was used to test for common method variance, which is a fundamental component of common method bias pertaining to "the measurement method rather than to the constructs the measures represent" (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003, p. 879). Harman's (1967) single-factor test is frequently used to test for common method variance (Chang et al., 2010; Kock et al., 2021; MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012; Malhotra et al., 2017). To administer Harman's test, an Exploratory Factor Analysis was run for all questionnaire items. Common method variance is assumed if a single factor emerges from un-rotated factor solutions, or if the first factor explains most (>50%) of the

covariance between measures (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Table 2 shows Harman's single-factor test results for this study. Eight factors reported Eigenvalues greater than 1, which accounted for 71.346% of total variance. Factor 1 explained the highest percentage of variance at 22.51%. Therefore, method variance is not expected to have heavily influenced the results of this study because no single factor explained more the 50% of variance.

Because of the measures undertaken to prevent common method bias, and reported low common method variance, it is reasonable to conclude that common method bias was unlikely to influence the results of this study.

Table 2 Harman's single-factor test

Component	Extraction sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	7.653	22.510	22.510
2	3.972	11.684	34.194
3	3.322	9.769	43.963
4	2.999	8.822	52.785
5	2.212	6.506	59.292
6	1.601	4.707	63.999
7	1.298	3.817	67.816
8	1.200	3.530	71.346

5.3 Validity and reliability tests

Validity and reliability were assessed to confirm that measurement apparatuses were measuring their intended concepts.

5.3.1 Assumptions of multivariate variance

Three key assumptions underpin multivariate statistics; that the data has been assessed for outliers, normality, and multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2018).

To check for outliers, data values for items were converted to standardised scores with a mean 0 and a standard deviation of 1. Hair et al. (2018) recommends that standard scores above 4 should be identified as outliers for samples sizes above 80 (current study N=809). Appendix D details that standardised scores greater than 4 occurred in three variables, all of which corresponded to the issue importance construct. Between these variables, fifteen participants were identified with standardised scores greater than 4 relating to at least one variable.

Hair et al. (2018) suggests to retain outliers within data "unless demonstrable proof indicates that they are truly aberrant and not representative of any observations in the

population" (p.67). All outliers in the present study corresponded to participants' (low) perceived importance of a political cost of living issue. It is conceivable that diverse viewpoints exist within New Zealand's voting population towards the cost of living issue. This is somewhat reflected by Consumer NZ (2022) sentiment tracker. Therefore, given no substantial justification for their deletion, outliers were retained in the data.

5.3.2 Normality

Multivariate data analysis assumes normal distributions within data to draw valid conclusions from the data. A common method to test for normality is to check skewness and kurtosis which assesses the degree to which distributions vary from a normal distribution (Hair et al., 2006). Skewness relates to the symmetry of data distribution and kurtosis relates to how peaked the distribution is.

Skewness and kurtosis values between -2 and 2 are generally considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2018), although more liberal upper kurtosis values of 7 are also suggested (Mueller & Hancock, 2018). Appendix E details skewness and kurtosis values for the present study. All skewness values were between -1.805 and .209. Kurtosis values were between 1.180 and .506 for all dependent, moderator and independent variables used in the study. However, the uppermost kurtosis value for control variable items, was 4.052. Therefore, skewness and kurtosis values fall with Hair et al.'s (2018) recommended acceptable range for variables pertaining to hypothesised relationships, and remaining control variable items fall within Mueller and Hancock's (2018) more liberal acceptable kurtosis tolerance of 7. As such, the normality assumption was acceptably met.

5.3.3 Multicollinearity

Multivariate data analysis also assumes that there is no multicollinearity between variables. Multicollinearity refers to the degree that constructs explain other constructs within the same analysed data. Multicollinearity reduces the ability to observe an individual construct's effect given its interrelationships with other analysed constructs (Hair et al., 2018). To examine multicollinearity, a correlation matrix was used, and the Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) were calculated.

Using a correlation matrix between variables, correlation coefficients of .90 or greater indicate multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2018), therefore indicating that individual variables are unsuitable for data analysis. Appendix F details that correlations between variables in the

present study ranged between -.138 and .699, indicating acceptable levels of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2018).

Tolerance pertains to the variability of an independent variable not explained by other independent variables within the study (Hair et al., 2018). Whereas VIF is the inverse of Tolerance. Therefore, high Tolerance values and low VIF values are desirable as they indicate sufficiently low levels of multicollinearity. Hair et al. (2018) proposes a minimum Tolerance value of .10 and a maximum VIF value of 10. For the present study, Table 3 reports Tolerance values between .503 and .986 and VIF values between 1.015 and 1.989, all of which within Hair et al.'s (2018) suggested thresholds. This further supports that multicollinearity is not present within the data.

Table 3 Tolerance and VIF scores for dependent variables

Dependant variable	Construct	Tolerance	VIF
Attitude towards the ad	Mood	.972	1.029
	Message persuasiveness	.713	1.402
	Ad-brand congruence	.716	1.397
	Political ideology	.948	1.055
	Issue importance	.931	1.074
	Political knowledge	.986	1.015
Message persuasiveness	Mood	.972	1.029
	Attitude towards the ad	.740	1.351
	Ad-brand congruence	.739	1.354
	Political ideology	.959	1.045
	Issue importance	.918	1.089
	Political knowledge	.983	1.017
Ad-brand congruence	Mood	.976	1.025
	Message persuasiveness	.503	1.989
	Attitude towards the ad	.506	1.978
	Political ideology	.948	1.055
	Issue importance	.953	1.049
	Political knowledge	.983	1.018

5.4 Measurement model

To determine relationships between latent variables, individually observed items are used to measure latent variables. Therefore, it is important to measure the ability of individual items at measuring the latent variables they represent. Convergent validity, discriminant validity, and scale reliability were therefore examined.

5.4.1 Construct validity and reliability

Construct validity refers to the extent that a measure accurately assesses the theoretical concept that a construct purports to measure (Hair et al., 2006). Construct validity is comprised of convergent validity and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2018), both of which are described below.

5.4.1.1 Face validity

Face validity pertains to the intrinsic appropriateness of items used to measure an intended latent variable (Hair et al., 2018). Prior to data collection, face validity was assessed by the author and qualitatively reviewed by three professional academics and a market research professional. Establishing face validity was important so that scale adaptations to political contexts were appropriate.

5.4.1.2 Convergent validity

Convergent validity pertains to the extent that theoretically related measures within a construct correspond with one another (Hair et al., 2018). The following methods were used to evaluate convergent validity within the study.

Firstly, to assess the factorability of the data, the Kaiser-Meyer-Okin (KMO) test and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were conducted. To test sufficient sampling adequacy, KMO scores above .6 are generally considered adequate, however scores above .7 are preferable (Kaiser, 1974). The data yielded an overall KMO score of .867, and acceptable KMO scores between .718 and .845 for all constructs, shown in Table 3. The data also generated a Bartlett's Test of Sphericity value <.001, which indicated sufficient factorability in the data.

Total variance statistic and Eigenvalues were subsequently examined. Eigenvalues greater than one indicate that items loaded on an underlying latent factor (Hair et al., 2006). Seven factors were identified, reflected by Eigenvalues above one. All items contributing towards each construct loaded on a common factor. This indicates that items within each construct likely related to common underlying latent factors, as should be expected.

To test the common variance explained by individual items, communalities were assessed. One item failed Hair et al.'s (2018) recommended minimum communality value of .5. The item political ideology 6 "Socialism has proven to be a failed political ideology" reported a communality value of .453 and so was removed from later analysis. All remaining items in the present study reported sufficient communality values between .544 and .909.

Lastly, Exploratory Factor Analysis was used to assess standardised varimax rotated factor loadings (Tinsley & Tinsley, 1987). This determined the degree that observed items related to underlying latent factors. The minimum acceptable threshold for factor loadings is .5 (Hair et al., 2018). Factor loadings of above .7 are often preferable, but Hair et al. (2018) recommend using the lower .5 threshold with large samples. All items, except for Attitude towards the ad 1 "I dislike the ad", loaded onto their respective constructs with factor loadings above .5, as shown in Table 4.

5.4.1.3 Removal of underperforming items

As stated above, the item Political ideology 6 "Socialism has proven to be a failed political ideology" reported a communality value of .453, below the .5 threshold. This item was removed from later analysis. Additionally, the item *Attitude towards the ad 1* "I dislike the ad" reported a factor loading below the .5 minimum threshold and so was removed from later analysis. While factor loadings above .7 are preferable, Hair et al. (2018) recommends applying the practical significance threshold for studies with large samples. Therefore, all factors with loadings above .5 were retained for later data analysis.

Table 4 Convergent validity and reliability

Construct and item number	KMO adequacy	Loading	Communality
Mood 1	.770	.938	.889
Mood 2		.943	.897
Mood 3		.935	.883
Message persuasiveness 1	.845	.817	.688
Message persuasiveness 2		.848	.741
Message persuasiveness 3		.850	.735
Message persuasiveness 4		.813	.729
Attitude towards the ad 1 (R)*	.939	.446	.648
Attitude towards the ad 2		.805	.723
Attitude towards the ad 3		.819	.736
Attitude towards the ad 4		.791	.652
Attitude towards the ad 5 (R)		.638	.722
Ad-brand congruence 1	.776	.867	.901
Ad-brand congruence 2		.873	.909
Ad-brand congruence 3		.875	.909
Political ideology 1 (R)	.845	.855	.752
Political ideology 2		.689	.695
Political ideology 3		.514	.613
Political ideology 4 (R)		.727	.544
Political ideology 5		.593	.623
Political ideology 6 (R)*		.658	.453
Political ideology 7 (R)		.866	.772
Issue importance 1	.824	.859	.754
Issue importance 2		.855	.746
Issue importance 3		.879	.784
Issue importance 4		.843	.727
Political knowledge 1	.718	.839	.735
Political knowledge 2		.734	.639
Political knowledge 3		.852	.746
Political knowledge 4		.872	.775

Note. R = reverse coded. *Underperforming items were removed from later analysis.

5.4.2 Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity is the degree that a construct is distinct from other constructs (Hair et al., 2006). High discriminant validity indicates that respective constructs measure different phenomena. VIF scores, which were previously used to measure multicollinearity, are a suitable proxy measure for discriminant validity (Field, 2009). Discriminant validity is indicated by VIF figures below 10 (Field, 2009). As shown in Table 3, VIF figures for all

constructs in this study ranged between 1.015 and 2.989, indicating sufficiently high levels of discriminant validity.

5.4.3 Scale reliability

Construct reliability refers to the level of consistency between multiple observed items within a variable construct (Hair et al., 2018). A common means to determine sufficient scale reliability is by assessing the reliability coefficient using Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha scores above .7 are generally considered to indicate sufficient internal consistency (Hair et al., 2018; Robinson, Shaver, & Wrightsman, 2013). Table 5 shows that all constructs within this study reported Cronbach's alphas between .845 and .950, indicating high levels of internal consistency.

Table 5 Construct reliability

Construct	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Mood	3	.939
Message persuasiveness	4	.908
Attitude towards the ad	4	.875
Ad-brand congruence	3	.950
Political ideology	6	.845
Issue importance	4	.889
Political knowledge	4	.851

5.5 Manipulation checks

Before hypothesis testing, manipulation checks were conducted to ensure that manipulated stimuli were perceived by participants as intended.

5.5.1 Message frame manipulation check

To check how participants perceived how advertisements focused on gains and losses, two manipulation check questions were asked. For both variables, a one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was undertaken to compare the variance across the four experimental conditions: abstract gain (n = 192), concrete gain (n = 208), abstract loss (*n* = 207), and concrete loss (n = 202). The ANOVAs indicated significant differences in gains (*p* = <.001) and losses (*p* = <.001) across experimental conditions. However, the Levene's test of homogeneity of variance were significant for all experimental conditions (*p* = <.001), thus

equal variances could not be assumed, violating the assumption of equal variance required to conduct ANOVA.

Because equal variances could not be assumed, Kruskal-Wallis H tests were conducted. The Kruskal-Wallis H test, also known as the Kruskal-Wallis one-way ANOVA, is a nonparametric method to measure differences between samples, thereby not requiring equal variances. The Kruskal-Wallis H can be thought of as a nonparametric equivalent to one-way ANOVA, and was therefore the most appropriate test given that variances could not be assumed. Kruskal-Wallis H tests were significant for gains (p = <.001) and losses (p = <.001), indicating significant differences between experimental conditions. Mean rank scores, shown in Table 6, display the dominance between distributions, further indicating perceived differences between experimental conditions as expected.

5.5.2 Information type manipulation check

Two questions were asked to determine how experimental conditions were presented in an abstract or concrete way. Like the message frame manipulation check, ANOVAs indicated significant perceived difference between abstract (p = <.001) and concrete conditions (p = <.001). However, Levene's tests were also significant for abstract (p = <.001) and concrete (p = <.001) conditions, thus violating the assumption of equal variance required for ANOVA. Kruskal-Wallis H tests were significant for abstract (p = <.001) and concrete (p = <.001) questions, indicating significant differences between experimental conditions. Mean rank scores (Table 6) also show perceived differences between experimental conditions.

Table 6 Mean rank scores from Kruskal-Wallis H test

Question	Experimental condition	Mean rank	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.
The advertisement focused on what would be gained if I vote for my preferred political party	1 – Abstract gain	424.72	22.459	<.001
	2 – Concrete gain	492.76		
	3 – Abstract loss	329.50		
	4 – Concrete loss	373.26		
The advertisement focused on what would be lost if I do not vote for my preferred political party	1 – Abstract gain	309.23	109.760	<.001
	2 – Concrete gain	299.62		
	3 – Abstract loss	461.39		
	4 – Concrete loss	546.75		
The advertisement focused on the cost of living in a specific and detailed way	1 – Abstract gain	319.60	44.129	<.001
	2 – Concrete gain	508.06		
	3 – Abstract loss	306.80		
	4 – Concrete loss	480.68		
The advertisement focused on the cost of living in a general and vague way	1 – Abstract gain	498.28	73.652	<.001
	2 – Concrete gain	330.19		
	3 – Abstract loss	476.66		
	4 – Concrete loss	319.95		

5.6 Hypothesis testing

Having satisfied required assumptions, hypothesis testing was undertaken. Firstly, Levene's tests were performed to measure the equality of variance of dependent variables (attitude towards the ad, message persuasiveness, and ad-brand congruence) across gain (versus loss) and abstract (versus concrete) experimental conditions. All Levene's tests were significant at a p = <.000 level. The removal of extreme outliers was attempted (Field, 2013; Hair et al., 2018), but this failed to produce insignificant Levene's tests results. Consequently, all responses were retained, and the assumption of homogeneity of variance required to perform ANOVAs was not satisfied. Therefore, to test the effects of message framing (H1) and information type (H2) on dependent variables, Kruskal-Wallis H tests were used (Field, 2013). As described in section 5.5.1, Kruskal-Wallis H tests are a nonparametric equivalent to one-way ANOVAs, meaning that they are appropriate and commonly used in experimental research when equal variances cannot be assumed.

Hayes' (2012; 2017) PROCESS macro method was used to test the interaction effect of message framing and information type on dependent variables (H3) and the moderating

effect of political ideology (H4). PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2012; 2017) is a modelling tool that can be used in conjunction with SPSS statistics software. PROCESS macro can perform the same function as a 2 × 2 factorial ANOVA with either categorical or continuous independent variables, and is robust in instances where homoskedasticity cannot be assumed (Hayes, 2012). Moreover, PROCESS macro is widely accepted method in contemporary consumer and advertising research (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017; Vargas, Duff, & Faber, 2017; Hayes, Montoya, & Rockwood, 2017; e.g., Septianto et al., 2019).

PROCESS macro is particularly resilient to heteroscedasticity (i.e., instances when equal variances are not assumed). Notably, a heteroscedasticity consistent standard error estimator known as "HC3" (Davidson & MacKinnon, 1993; see Hayes & Cai, 2007) was applied to analysis using PROCESS macro in this research. Unlike many other standard error estimators, HC3 does not assume homoskedasticity, and "its bias in the presence of heteroscedasticity quickly decreases with sample size and it is consistent" (Hayes, 2012; p. 22). Bootstrapping was also used to additionally mitigate any potential bias from failing to satisfy assumptions of homoscedasticity (Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007; Hayes & Cai, 2007). Bootstrapping uses random sampling with replacement to more accurately estimate standard errors and confidence intervals and does not assume homoskedasticity. Therefore, 5000 resamples were used for each analysis using PROCESS macro in this study.

5.6.1 Hypothesis one: Message framing effects

Kruskal-Wallis tests were conducted to examine if message framing produced an effect on participants' attitude towards the ad (H1a), message persuasiveness (H1b), and ad-brand congruence (H1c). Using adjusted H-values, ε^2 values were calculated as a measure of effect size for the identified relationships.

Results for H1a were significant ($H(1) = 88.832$, $p = <.001$) with more positive attitude towards the ad in gain frames ($Mdn = 4.25$) than in loss frames ($Mdn = 3.25$). A post-hoc Mann-Whitney test showed that this difference was significant $U(N_{gain} = 400, N_{loss} = 409) = 50538.500$, $Z = -9.425$, $p = <.001$. This relationship yielded a moderate effect size of $\varepsilon^2 = .110$, indicating that message frames explained 10.1% of the variance in attitude towards the ad. Results for H1b were also significant ($H(1) = 55.617$, $p = <.001$), with higher message persuasiveness in gain frames ($Mdn = 4.50$) than in loss frames ($Mdn = 3.50$). A Mann-Whitney test showed that this difference was significant $U(N_{gain} = 400, N_{loss} = 409) = 57055.000$, $Z = -7.458$, $p = <.001$. This produced a small effect size of $\varepsilon^2 = .069$, indicating

that message frame explained 6.9% of the variance in message persuasiveness. Results for H1c were also significant ($H(1) = 54.130$, $p = <.001$) with higher ad-brand congruence in gain frames ($Mdn = 5.00$) than in loss frames ($Mdn = 4.00$). A Mann-Whitney test supported this difference was significant $U(N_{gain} = 400, N_{loss} = 409) = 57437.500$, $Z = -7.357$, $p = <.001$. An effect size of $\varepsilon^2 = .067$ was reported, indicating that message frames explained 6.7% of the variance in ad-brand congruence. Consequently, H1a and H1b and H1c were supported.

5.6.2 Hypothesis two: Information type effects

Kruskal-Wallis tests were also undertaken to examine if information type produced an effect on participants' attitude towards the ad (H2a), message persuasiveness (H2b), and ad-brand congruence (H2c). Results for H2a were significant ($H(1) = 11.915$, $p = <.001$), with more positive attitude towards the ad with concrete appeals ($Mdn = 4.00$) than with abstract appeals ($Mdn = 3.75$). A post-hoc Mann-Whitney test showed that this difference was significant $U(N_{concrete} = 410, N_{abstract} = 399) = 70346.000$, $Z = -3.452$, $p = <.001$. A small effect size of $\varepsilon^2 = .044$ was produced, indicating that information type explained 4.4% of the variance in attitude towards the ad. Results for H2b were also significant ($H(1) = 35.773$, $p = <.001$), with higher message persuasiveness with concrete appeals ($Mdn = 4.50$) than abstract appeals ($Mdn = 3.75$). A Mann-Whitney test showed that this difference was significant $U(N_{concrete} = 410, N_{abstract} = 399) = 61950.000$, $Z = -5.981$, $p = <.001$. A very small effect size of $\varepsilon^2 = .015$ was produced, indicating that information type explained 1.5% of the variance in message persuasiveness. However ad-brand congruence (H2c) was not significantly different between abstract and concrete appeals ($H(1) = 3.275$, $p = .070$). Therefore, H2a and H2b were supported, but not H2c.

5.6.3 Hypothesis three: Interaction effects of message frame and information type

Hayes (2017) PROCESS Model 1 was used to examine the interaction effect of message framing and information type. Message framing and information type conditions were coded so that the interaction effect could be examined (gain = .5, loss = -.5; abstract = .5, concrete = -.5), as recommended by Hayes (2017). PROCESS macro was then run for each dependant variable using message frame as the 'X variable' (predictor) and information type as the 'W variable' (moderator), thereby producing a similar analytical output as a 2 × 2 factorial ANOVA. As recommended by Preacher et al. (2007), PROCESS macro was administered using 5000 bootstrap samples. The change in R-squared (ΔR^2) between full

model and the reduced model of main effects was also calculated to determine the interaction effect size (Hayes, 2017).

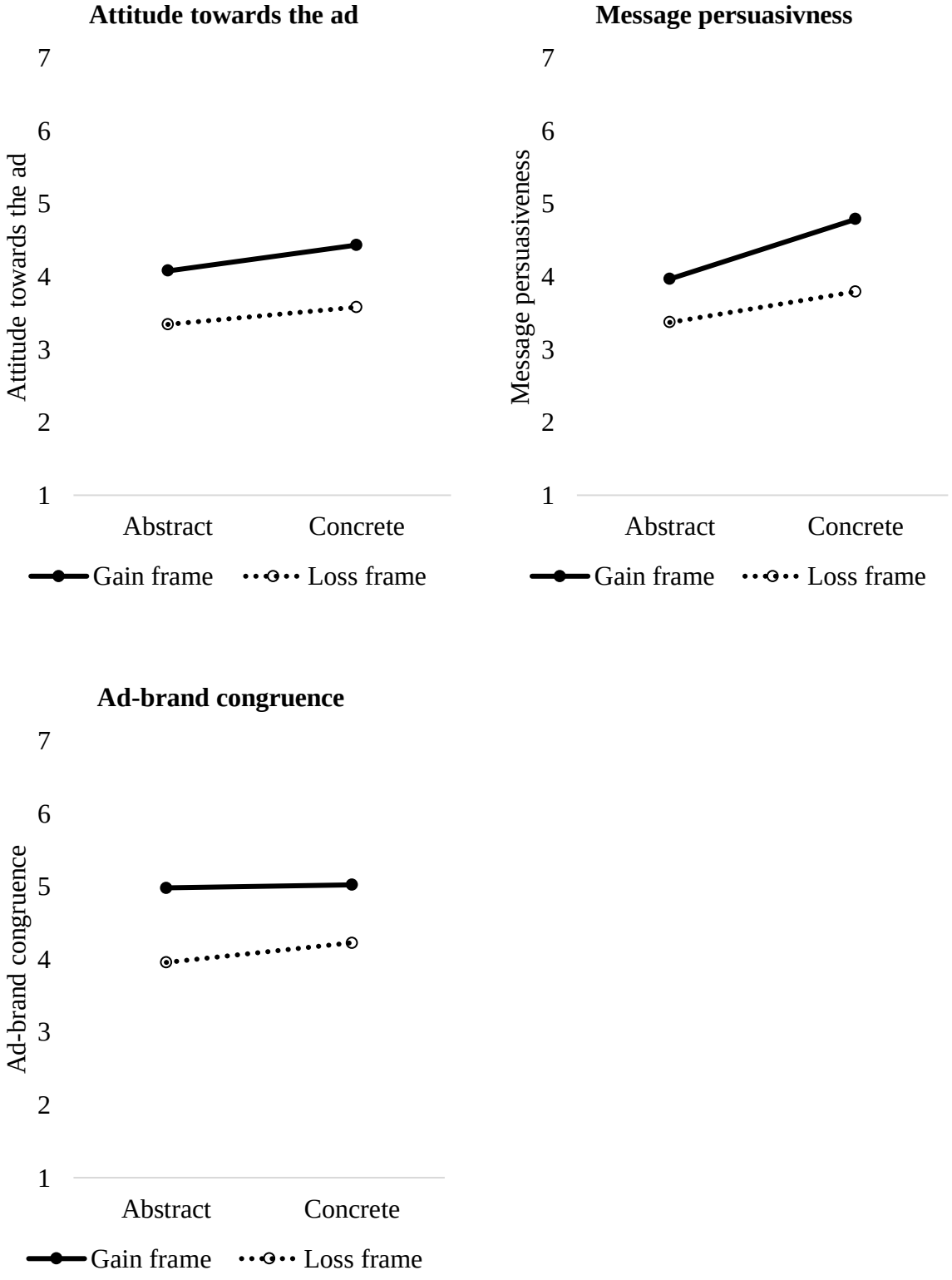
Table 7 summarises the model R^2 values, mean square error values (MSE), coefficients, standard errors, t-statistics, p-values, and 95% confidence intervals for message frame, information type, and the interaction of message frame and information type. In relation to attitude towards the ad (H3a), the interaction of message framing and information type was not significant (B = -.118, SE = .149, *t*(800) = -.788, *p* = .431, 95% CI: -.441, -.175). In relation to message persuasiveness (H3b), the interaction effect of message frame and information type was significant (B = -.396, SE = .193, *t*(800) = -2.051, *p* = .041, 95% CI: -.775, -.017). Finally, for ad-brand congruence (H3c) the interaction effect of message frame and information type was not significant (B = .228, SE = .214, *t*(800) = 1.066, *p* = .287, 95% CI: -.191, .647). Therefore, H3a and H3c were rejected, and H3b was tentatively supported. The interaction effect of message frame and information type yielded an effect size of ΔR^2 = .004, thus explaining .4% of the variance in message persuasiveness, which is extremely small and is therefore unlikely to yield any substantial theoretical or practical implications (Funder & Ozer, 2019). To test the direction of the interaction effect, simple slopes analysis showed that gain frames (versus loss frames) resulted in greater message persuasiveness with concrete information (B = .992, SE = .133, *t*(800) =7.436, *p* = < .001, 95% CI: .730, 1.254), than with abstract information (B = .596, SE = .140, *t*(800) = 4.267, *p* = <.001, 95% CI: .322, .870). These results are also shown in Figure 4. Therefore, the interaction effect of message frame and information type was not in the hypothesised direction, and so H3b was rejected.

Table 7 Summary of results

	Coeff.	*SE* (HC3)	*t*	*P*	*LLCI*	*ULCI*
Attitude towards the ad						
R^2 = .205, *MSE* = 1.120						
Message frame	.794	.075	10.636	<.001	.647	.940
Information type	-.297	.075	-3.936	<.001	-.444	-.149
Message frame × information type	-.118	.149	-.788	.431	-.441	.175
Message persuasiveness						
R^2 = .161, *MSE* = 1.854						
Message frame	.794	.097	8.215	<.001	.604	.984
Information type	-.621	.097	-6.410	<.001	-.811	-.431
Message frame × information type	-.396	.193	-2.051	.041	-.775	-.017
Ad-brand congruence						
R^2 = .135, *MSE* = 2.282						
Message frame	.909	.107	8.528	<.001	.700	1.119
Information type	-.155	.107	-1.454	.146	-.365	.054
Message frame × information type	.228	.214	1.066	.287	-.191	.647

Note. Observed power calculated at $\alpha = .05$. R^2 values calculated including control variables gender, age, income, issue importance, and political knowledge.

Figure 4 Results: Message frame and information type



Note. Figures produced from Hayes' (2017) PROCESS macro output.

5.6.4 Hypothesis four: Moderating effects of political ideology on message framing

Hayes (2017) PROCESS Model 1 was used to test the relationships between message framing (gain = 1; loss = 0), dependent variables, and moderating effect of political ideology (liberal = 1, conservative = 7, M = 3.575, SD = 1.343). As recommended by Preacher et al. (2007), 5000 bootstrapped standard errors were used to mitigate any potential issues from failing to assume homoskedasticity. Table 8 summarises the model R^2 values, mean square error values (MSE), coefficients, standard errors, *t*-statistics, *p*-values, and 95% confidence intervals for message frame, political ideology, and their intercept upon dependant variables. As expected, the interaction effects between message framing and political ideology were significant in terms of attitude towards the ad (B = -.093, SE = .29, $t(800) = -3.158$, $p = .002$, 95% CI: -.150, -.035), message persuasiveness (B = -.121, SE = .36, $t(800) = -3.369$, $p = .001$, 95% CI: -.197, -.046), and ad-brand congruence (B = -.257, SE = .39, $t(800) = -6.652$, $p = <.001$, 95% CI: -.338, -.175). Therefore, H4a, H4b, and H4c were tentatively supported.

The combined model effect sizes (R^2 values) for main effects of message framing, political ideology, and their interaction on each dependant variable are stated in Table 8. The effect sizes of each moderating effect of political ideology on message framing (ΔR^2) was also calculated (Hayes, 2017). For the moderating effect of political ideology on message framing relating to attitude towards the ad (H3a) produced a small effect size of $\Delta R^2 = .012$, explaining 1.2% of variance. The moderating effect of political ideology relating to message persuasiveness (H3b) was also small at $\Delta R^2 = .011$, explaining 1.1% of the variance. Finally, the moderating effect relating to ad-brand congruence produced a small effect size of $\Delta R^2 = .045$, explaining 4.5% of variance.

Table 8 Summary of results

	Coeff.	*SE* (HC3)	*t*	*P*	*LLCI*	*ULCI*
Attitude towards the ad						
R^2 = .221, *MSE* = 1.112						
Message frame	.404	.037	10.888	<.001	.331	.476
Political ideology	.096	.031	3.094	.002	.035	.157
Message frame × political ideology	-.093	.029	-3.158	.002	-.150	-.035
Message persuasiveness						
R^2 = .151, *MSE* = 1.878						
Message frame	.411	.048	8.517	<.001	.316	.507
Political ideology	.179	.037	4.796	<.001	.100	.258
Message frame × political ideology	-.121	.036	-3.369	.001	-.197	-.046
Ad-brand congruence						
R^2 = .184, *MSE* = 2.152						
Message frame	.459	.052	8.873	<.001	.357	.561
Political ideology	.106	.040	2.656	<.001	.019	.193
Message frame × political ideology	-.257	.039	-6.652	<.001	-.338	-.175

Note. Observed power calculated at α = .05. R^2 values calculated including control variables gender, age, income, issue importance, and political knowledge.

5.6.4.1 Simple slopes analysis

Having confirmed moderation effects, the direction of moderation must be determined. To examine the direction of moderation effects, simple slopes analysis was undertaken to identify the conditional effect of message framing on dependant variables at different values of political ideology values. These effects were assessed at one standard deviation below the mean of political ideology (for liberals; = 2.232), at the mean value of political ideology (= 3.575), and at one standard deviation above the mean (for conservatives; = 4.918).

Simple slope analysis showed that gain frames (versus loss frames) resulted in more favourable attitudes towards the ad within liberals (B = .528, SE = .053, *t*(800) = 10.041, *p* = < .001, 95% CI: .425, .631), at the mean level of political ideology, (B = .404, SE = .037, *t*(800) = 10.863, *p* = < .001, 95% CI: .331, .477), and within conservatives (B = .279, SE = .053, *t*(800) = 5.307, *p* = <.001, 95% CI: .176, .382). Additionally, gain frames (versus loss frames) also displayed greater message persuasiveness within liberals (B = .574, SE = .071, *t*(800) = 8.119, *p* = < .001, 95% CI: .440, .709), at the mean level of political

ideology, (B = .411, SE = .049, $t(800) = 8.480$, $p = < .001$, 95% CI: .317, .506), and within conservatives, although to a lesser extent (B = .248, SE = .071, $t(800) = 3.494$, $p = .001$, 95% CI: .114, .383). Finally, simple slope analysis showed that gain frames (versus loss frames) resulted in higher ad-brand congruence in liberals (B = .803, SE = .079, $t(800) = 10.107$, $p = < .001$, 95% CI: .660, .947) and at the mean level of political ideology (B = .459, SE = .052, $t(800) = 8.845$, $p = < .001$, 95% CI: .357, .560). However, in conservatives, there was no significant difference between gain and loss frames in terms of ad-brand congruence (B = .114, SE = .073, $t(800) = 1.561$, $p = .119$, 95% CI: -.029, .258).

In all observed effects, among liberals (political ideology = 2.232), gain frames (versus loss frames) had a positive influence on attitude towards the ad (H4a), message persuasiveness (H4b), and ad-brand congruence (H4c), therefore supporting moderation in the hypothesised direction. However, among conservatives (political ideology = .4.918), gain frames (versus loss frames) also displayed a positive effect on attitude towards the ad (H4a) and message persuasiveness (H4b). This indicated that while moderation was present, gain frames remained more effective than loss frames for conservatives. There was no significant effect of message framing on ad-brand congruence (H4c) in conservatives at one standard deviation above the mean Therefore, while the hypothesis was supported overall, the direction of moderation was not significant for all conservatives. However, the purpose of simple slopes is to determine the direction of moderation, and this was significant, thereby supporting H4c. These results are illustrated in Figure 5.

5.6.4.2 Johnson-Neyman analysis

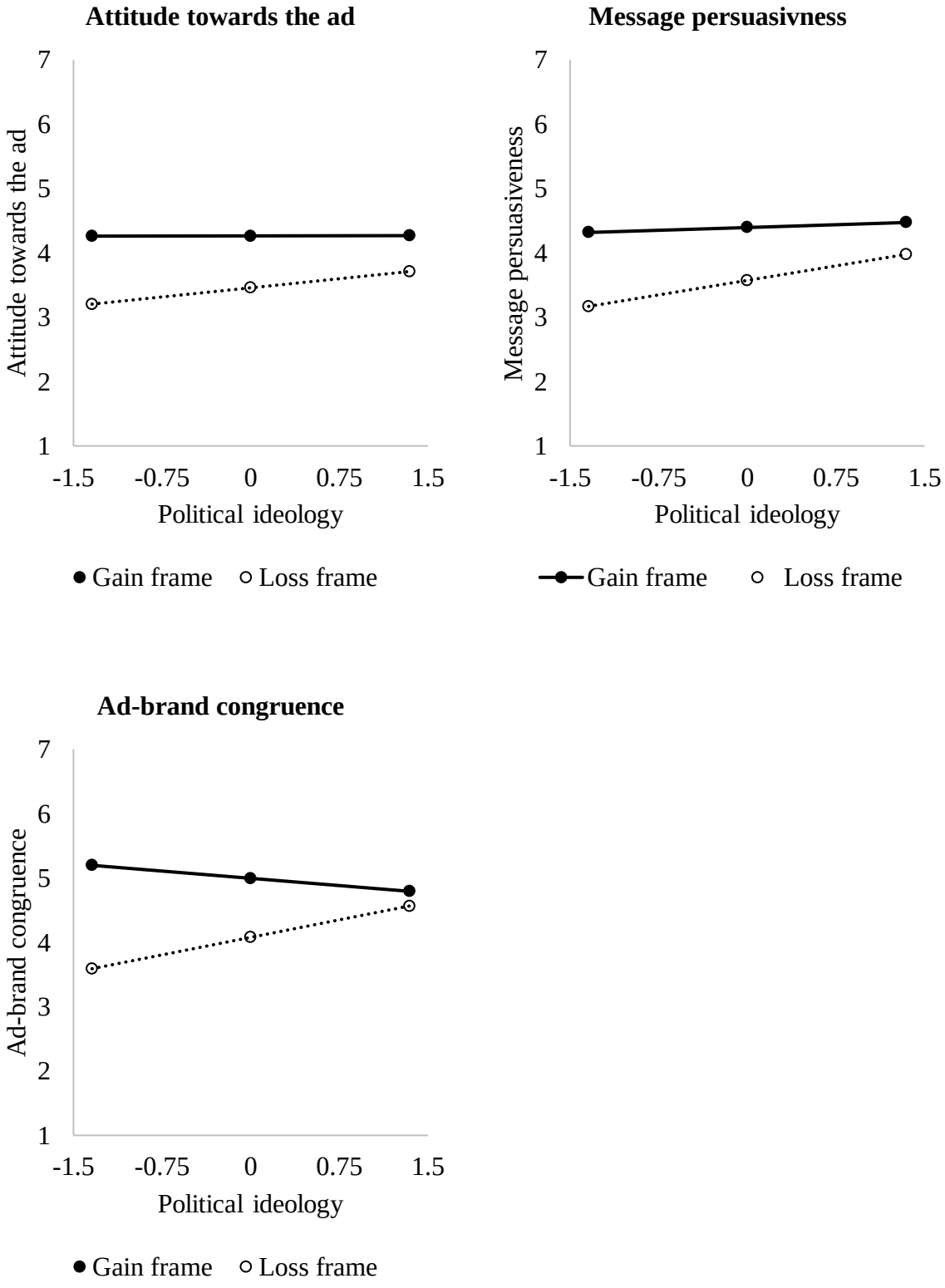
To identify the point at which political ideology no longer significantly impacts the relationship between message framing and the dependant variables, the Johnson-Neyman (N-J) technique (Johnson & Fay, 1950) was applied. That is, N-J significance regions show the percentage of political ideology values at which hypotheses are supported. The N-J significance region included 95.18% of political ideology values for attitude towards the ad (H4a), 92.21% for message persuasiveness (H4b), and 88.628% for ad-brand congruence (H4c). Table 9 shows the upper and lower bounds of political ideology at which hypothesised relationships H4a, H4b, and H4c were significant.

Table 9 Johnson-Neyman technique results

	Political ideology	Effect	*SE* (HC3)	*t*	*P*	*LLCI*	*ULCI*
Attitude towards the ad							
J-N-low	1.000	.642	.082	7.787	.000	.480	.804
J-N-high	6.125	.167	.085	1.963	.050	.000	.335
Message persuasiveness							
J-N-low	1.000	.724	.110	6.571	.000	.508	940
J-N-high	5.519	.175	.089	1.963	.050	.000	.351
Ad-brand congruence*							
J-N-low$_1$	1.000	1.119	.123	9.088	.000	.878	1.361
J-N-high$_1$	4.825	.138	.070	1.963	.050	.000	.276
J-N-low$_2$	6.285	-.236	.120	-1.963	.050	-.473	.000
J-N-high$_2$	7.000	-.420	.148	-2.837	.005	-.710	-.129

Note. *Two J-N significance ranges were observed for ad-brand congruence, noted as J-N-low/high$_1$ and J-N-low/high$_2$.

Figure 5 Results: Message frame and political ideology



Note. Political ideology M = 3.575, SD = 1.343.

5.7 Control variables

To support the validity of identified findings, gender, age, income, issue importance, and political knowledge variables were controlled for during hypothesis testing. The persuasive effectiveness of advertising interventions was lower in females (versus males) and participants with higher levels of age, income, and issue importance. However, no further analysis was conducted in relation to these control variables as they were peripheral to the intended research objectives and did not offer substantial contributions to the literature. Findings from political knowledge are discussed below. Education level and ethnicity were not controlled for as they did not significantly influence or interact with any hypothesised relationships.

5.8 Post-hoc analysis

Post hoc analysis was undertaken to identify the power of the study and identify potential relationships of interest within this study. Namely, the moderating effect of political knowledge on message framing was examined. This relationship was examined due to the significance of political knowledge within political research literatures (Chong & Druckman, 2007b; Druckman, 2007; Miller & Krosnick, 2000; Slothuus, 2008), in addition to the relevance to advertisers as a variable on which to segment different voter groups.

5.8.1 Retrospective power calculations

The estimated power of the study was calculated post-hoc to identify the likelihood of false negative results (type II errors) occurring within the analysis. Because the assumption of homogeneity was not satisfied, a 2 × 2 factorial ANOVA was not appropriate for determining power calculations. Therefore, for significant interaction effects, G*Power (Faul et al., 2007), a statistical tool designed for power computations, was used. Table 10 details the sample size required to satisfy Hair et al.'s (2006) recommended minimum power threshold of .8 for each significant hypothesised relationship in the present study. Therefore, the presence of Type II errors in the present study were not assumed as all calculated required sample sizes were below the actual sample size of the present study (= 809).

Table 10 Power calculations: Required sample size for power threshold of .8

Hypothesis	Required sample size
H1a	74
H1b	116
H1c	120
H2a	181
H2b	526
H4a	656
H4b	716
H4c	177

Note. Calculated for all significant tested hypotheses using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007) using an α error probability = .05 and minimum power threshold of .8.

5.8.2 Moderation effect of political knowledge on message framing

Of particular interest, political knowledge was found to moderate the relationship between message framing and attitude towards the ad and message persuasiveness. This provides a valuable contribution to the literature, as political knowledge had not previously been examined in message framing or political advertising studies, despite is strong presence in prior political science research (e.g., Druckman, 2007; Druckman & Nelson, 2003; Krosnick & Kinder, 1990; Miller & Krosnick, 2000; Slothuus, 2008). This moderation effect is examined below.

Using Hayes (2017) PROCESS Model 1, relationships between dependent variables and message framing (gain = 1; loss = 0), political knowledge (low = 1, high = 7, M = 4.141, SD = 1.305), and the interaction of these variables (Table 11). Results indicated significant but small moderation effects of political knowledge on message framing for attitude towards the ad (B = -.150, SE = .58, $t(801) = -2.602$, $p = .009$, 95% CI: -.132, -.018; $\Delta R^2 = .007$), and for message persuasiveness (B = -.168, SE = .58, $t(801) = -2.227$, $p = .026$, 95% CI: -.158, -.010; $\Delta R^2 = .005$). For attitude towards the ad, simple slopes analysis determined that this relationship was significant within low- (B = .499, SE = .53, $t(801) = 9.391$, $p = < .001$, 95% CI: .395, .603), mean- (B = .401, SE = .037, $t(801) = 10.704$, $p = < .001$, 95% CI: .328, .475), and high- (B = .303, SE = .053, $t(801) = 5.722$, $p = <.001$, 95% CI: .199, .408) levels of political knowledge. For message persuasiveness, this moderation effect was also significant at low- (B = .517, SE = .070, $t(800) = 7.415$, $p = < .001$, 95% CI: .380, .653), mean- (B = .407, SE = .049, $t(800) = 8.279$, $p = < .001$, 95% CI: .310, .503), and high- (B = .297, SE = .070,

$t(800) = 4.273$, $p = <.001$, 95% CI: .161, .434) levels of political knowledge. N-J significance regions were also calculated. The moderating effect of political knowledge on message framing was significant for 100% of political knowledge values for attitude towards the ad, and at 98.02% of values for message persuasiveness (Table 12). Therefore, the more politically knowledgeable one is, the more effective loss frames are (Figure 6).

Table 11 Summary of results

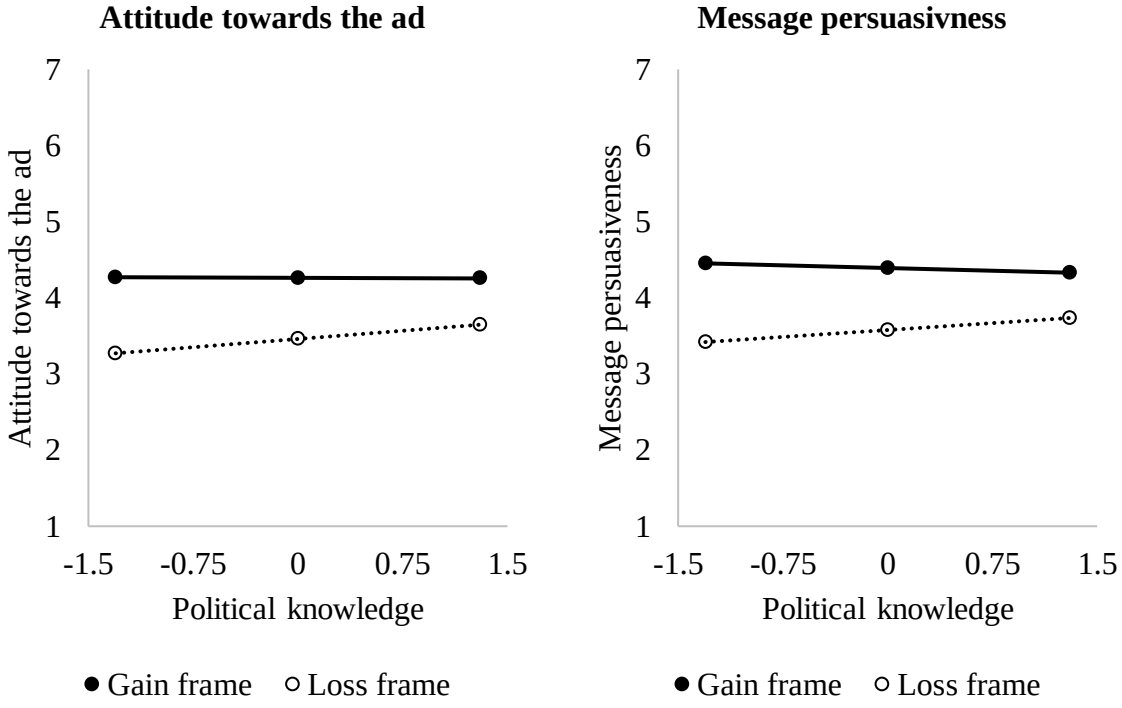
	Coeff.	***SE* (HC3)**	***t***	***p***	***LLCI***	***ULCI***
Attitude towards the ad						
R^2 = .196, *MSE* = 1.132						
Message framing	.803	.075	10.704	<.001	.328	.475
Political knowledge	.144	.043	3.372	.001	.010	.128
Message framing × political knowledge	-.150	.058	-2.602	.009	-.133	-.017
Message persuasiveness						
R^2 = .345, *MSE* = 1.945						
Message framing	.814	.098	8.279	<.001	.310	.504
Political knowledge	.121	.056	2.168	.030	-.041	.115
Message framing × political knowledge	-.168	.076	-2.227	.026	-.161	-.007
Ad-brand congruence						
R^2 = .134, *MSE* = 2.283						
Message framing	.912	.106	8.566	<.001	.351	.561
Political knowledge	.116	.061	1.911	.056	-.023	.141
Message framing × political knowledge	-.114	.082	-1.387	.166	-.137	.023

Note. Political knowledge M = 4.141, SD = 1.305. R^2 values calculated including control variables gender, age, income, and issue importance.

Table 12 Johnson-Neyman results

	Political knowledge	**Effect**	***SE* (HC3)**	***t***	***P***	***LLCI***	***ULCI***
Attitude towards the ad							
J-N-low	1.000	.637	.098	6.483	.000	.444	.829
J-N-high	7.000	.187	.093	2.005	.045	.004	.370
Message persuasiveness							
J-N-low	1.000	.671	.128	5.259	.000	.421	.921
J-N-high	6.459	.212	.108	1.963	.050	.000	.424

Figure 6 Results: Message frame and political knowledge



Note. Political knowledge mean = 4.141, SD = 1.305

5.9 Chapter summary

In this chapter, data was cleaned then construct validity and reliability were tested so that constructs represent their latent variables. Manipulation checks were also performed to ensure sufficient variance between intended manipulated variables. Hypothesis testing was then conducted using Kruskal-Wallis H tests and PROCESS macro.

Results from this study are summarised in Table 13. H1 was not supported, finding a significant effect in the opposite direction as hypothesised. H2 was partially supported, finding that concrete advertisements produced more favourable attitudes towards the ad (H2a) and higher message persuasiveness (H2b), however there was no significant effect on ad-brand congruence (H2c). H3 was rejected, finding no combined interaction effect of message framing and information type in terms of attitude towards the ad (H3a) or ad-brand congruence (H3c). Although there was a significant effect of message framing and information type on message persuasiveness (H3b), it was negligibly small and not in the hypothesised direction. Finally, H4 was supported, finding a significant interaction effect of message framing and political ideology on all dependant variables.

Table 13 Summary of hypotheses

	Dependant variable	*p*	Support
H1a	Attitude towards the ad	<.001	Not supported*
H1b	Message persuasiveness	<.001	Not supported*
H1c	Ad-brand congruence	<.001	Not supported*
H2a	Attitude towards the ad	<.001	Supported
H2b	Message persuasiveness	<.001	Supported
H2c	Ad-brand congruence	.070	Not supported
H3a	Attitude towards the ad	.431	Not supported
H3b	Message persuasiveness	.041	Not supported*
H3c	Ad-brand congruence	.287	Not supported
H4a	Attitude towards the ad	.002	Supported
H4b	Message persuasiveness	.043	Supported
H4c	Ad-brand congruence	<.001	Supported

Note. *Hypotheses not supported because relationship was not in the hypothesised direction.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This study yielded several fascinating findings; gain (versus loss) message frames, and concrete (versus abstract) advertising appeals displayed greater effectiveness, however message framing and information type shared no significant interaction. Additionally, political ideology and political knowledge moderated the effect of message framing interventions. This chapter discusses these findings in relation to prior research.

6.1 Message framing

In rejection of hypothesis one, this study found that gain frames were significantly more effective than loss frames in terms of attitude towards the ad (H1a), message persuasiveness (H1b), and ad-brand congruence (H1c). Also, message framing yielded small effect sizes of $\varepsilon^2 = .110$ on attitude towards the ad, $\varepsilon^2 = .069$ on message persuasiveness, and $\varepsilon^2 = .067$ on ad-brand congruence (Funder & Ozer, 2019). Although relationships were significant, the direction of the observed effects was in the opposite direction to what was hypothesized. This indicates that participants found gain frames more effective and more congruent with their preferred political party than loss frames.

This finding is contrary to most previous message framing research. Although gain (versus loss) frames are occasionally supported to be more effective (e.g., Lee et al., 2018), message framing research commonly supports that loss frames are more effective than gain frames (Levin et al., 1998; Piñon & Gambara, 2005; e.g., Arbuthnott & Scerbe, 2016; Baek & Yoon, 2017; Gamliel & Herstein, 2012; Krishen et al., 2014). Past studies generally cite loss aversion as an underlying effect, resulting in losses being perceived greater than gains, thus lending greater persuasive effectiveness with loss frames as compared to gain frames.

Previous research identified circumstances and variables that influence the effectiveness of gain versus loss message frames. For example, gain frames are considered more effective when paired with high-level temporal construals (Chang et al., 2015; Pounders et al., 2015; White et al., 2011). Therefore, a possible explanation for this finding is the timing of the present study. That is, data collection took place in July 2022, approximately halfway between the October 2020 general election and the next general election scheduled for no later than January 2024. Because this timeframe is greater than it would be for typical electoral advertising, advertisements could have been perceived at a high temporal distance. If true, this finding would be consistent with prior research in explaining the greater efficacy of gain (versus loss) frames (Chang & Lee, 2009; Chang et al., 2015; Pounders et al., 2015;

White et al., 2011). That is, temporally distant (versus close) gains are understood to be more persuasive due to greater processing fluency (White et al., 2011), and arguably due to the positive affective valance of high-level construals (Williams et al., 2014). Similarly, temporally close (versus distant) losses are posited to be perceived more proximately, thereby resulting in greater loss aversion, and so greater effectiveness (Chandran & Menon, 2004; Pounders et al., 2015). However, because perceived temporal distance was not controlled for in the present study, further research would be justified to examine the possible effects of temporal distance on political message framing.

6.2 Information type

In support of hypothesis two, concrete appeals resulted in greater attitude towards the ad (H2a) and message persuasiveness (H2b) than abstract appeals, indicating that concrete appeals were more effective than abstract appeals. Although significant, these relationships only yielded small effect sizes of $\varepsilon^2 = .044$ on attitude towards the ad and $\varepsilon^2 = .015$ on message persuasiveness. And in rejection of H2c, there was no significant effect between information type and ad-brand congruence, indicating no difference between how people perceived concrete and abstract appeals as being congruent with their preferred political party.

The greater effectiveness of concrete information type is consistent with the availability valence hypothesis (Kisielius & Sternthal, 1986). That is, information in concrete appeals could have been perceived more vividly, thereby increasing cognitive elaboration towards the message. Greater cognitive elaboration could therefore explain the more positive attitudes towards the ad and greater message persuasiveness, resulting in concrete appeals being effective within the examined political advertising context.

The greater effectiveness of concrete appeals is also consistent with CLT if the act of voting was perceived at a low psychological distance (Adler & Sarstedt, 2021; Trope & Liberman, 2010; Kim et al., 2009; Lee, 2019). Before being exposed to experimental stimuli, participants in this study were asked to imagine they needed to vote in an upcoming general election. If the action of voting in the fictional “upcoming” election was indeed perceived at a low psychological distance, given its low temporal distance, then concrete appeals should be more effective according to CLT. That is, advertising the upcoming (low-psychological-distance) act of voting should be better represented by a low-distance (e.g., concrete)

advertisement than a high-distance (e.g., abstract) advertisement (Chandran & Menon, 2004; Kim et al., 2009; Liberman & Trope, 1998; Liberman, et al., 2007; Pounders et al., 2015).

If it is true that low temporal distance explained the greater effectiveness of concrete (versus abstract) appeals, this would contradict the proposed reasoning for greater effectiveness in gain (versus loss) frames as previously discussed. Controlling for perceived temporal distance or conducting similar research at different temporal distances, such as immediately before a general election, may explain this potential discrepancy.

6.3 Message framing and information type

In rejection of hypothesis three, no significant interaction between message framing and information type was identified in relation to attitude towards the ad (H3a) or ad-brand congruence (H3c). The interaction effect of message framing and information type on message persuasiveness (H3b) was significant, but not in the hypothesised direction. That is, gain frames were more persuasive when used in combination with concrete appeals. However, the size of this interaction effect was extremely small ($\Delta R^2 = .004$), explaining only .04% of the variance in message persuasiveness. This negligible effect size indicates that the associated relationship is unlikely to yield any substantial theoretical or practical implications (Cohen, 1988; Funder & Ozer, 2019), despite being statistically significant. Overall results indicate that the effects of message framing on dependent variables was not determined by information type, with the effects of information type also not influenced by message framing. Therefore, the effects of message framing and information type on dependent variables identified in hypotheses one and two appear to be independent effects, at least in terms of consequential effectiveness.

This finding is contrary to prior research. That is, gain frames are generally more effective when processed at high-level construals, and that loss frames are generally more effective when processed at low-level construals (Chandran & Menon, 2004; Chang et al., 2015; Pounders et al., 2015; White et al., 2011). Congruency between high-level (versus low-level) and gain (versus loss) frames is explained through greater processing fluency (White et al., 2011), and through the positive (versus negative) affective valence associated with abstract (versus concrete) thinking (Williams et al., 2014). Additionally, low-level threats of loss are posited to be perceived more proximately and therefore have greater persuasive effect (Chandran & Menon, 2004; Pounders et al., 2015).

6.4 Political ideology

Possibly the most interesting finding of this study was the identified moderating effect of political ideology on the relationship between message framing and all dependent variables. That is, political ideology significantly moderated the effect of message framing on attitude towards the ad, message persuasiveness, and ad-brand congruence. Simple slopes identified the direction of moderation for hypothesised moderation relationships; the more conservative (or less liberal) one is, the more effective loss frames are expected to be. However, conservatism also had a positive effect on attitude towards the ad and message persuasiveness. This indicated that despite moderation being present, gain frames remained more effective in terms of attitude towards the ad and message persuasiveness at the mean value of political ideology and one standard deviation either side of the mean. Interestingly, this is consistent with the findings from hypothesis one; that gain (versus loss) frames resulted in greater message persuasiveness, attitude towards the ad, and ad-brand congruence than negative frames. Therefore, while loss frames are more effective among conservatives than liberals, gain frames are more effective overall.

Findings from this research are consistent with previous research associating conservatism with aversion to loss and related negative stimuli (Gründl & Aichholzer, 2020; Hibbing et al., 2014; Jost et al., 2003), and to a lesser extent consistent with research associating liberalism with gain-seeking (Carney et al., 2008; Hibbing et al., 2014; Janoff-Bulman, 2009; Jost et al., 2009). Additionally, the moderating effect of political ideology was partly consistent with Septianto et al.'s (2019) finding in anti-counterfeit advertising, which is the only other study to assess message framing with political ideology. However, in contrast to this study, Septianto et al. (2019) supported that loss (versus gain) frames were more persuasive with conservatives *and* that gain (versus loss) frames were more persuasive in liberals.

A possible reason for differing findings between the present study and Septianto et al.'s (2019) research was the political context. That is, individuals may be more gain seeking rather than loss avoiding in their assessments of advertisements pertaining to political products. If true, this would support notions that political product advertising differs from commercial product advertising (Lock & Harris, 1996), and support calls for further research to better understand these differences (Lees-Marshment, 2019). Another possible reason for the heightened effectiveness of gain frames in conservatives is temporal distance. As previously discussed, if research was conducted temporally closer to a general election, gain

frames (versus loss frames) may be comparatively less effective, and thereby yield greater consistency with Septianto et al.'s (2019) findings.

The finding of this research also yielded fascinating practical implications. That is, when advertising political policies (and possibly political products more generally), it is better to refer to them in terms of the gains that voters could obtain, especially when targeting liberals. However, if an advertisement were to be published in terms of avoiding losses, it would be better received among conservatives than among liberals.

6.5 Political knowledge

Given the stated importance of individuals' political knowledge in political science research (e.g., Druckman, 2007; Druckman & Nelson, 2003; Krosnick & Kinder, 1990; Miller & Krosnick, 2000; Slothuus, 2008), self-reported political knowledge was measured as a control variable. Post-hoc analysis revealed that political knowledge moderated the relationships of message framing on attitude towards the ad and message persuasiveness. That is, the greater one's self-reported political knowledge, the more effective loss frames were. However, like the moderating effect of political ideology, the model predicted gain frames to be overall more effective. That is, simple slopes explained gain (versus loss) frames to be more effective at the mean value of political knowledge and one standard deviation either side of the mean.

Previous political science papers, albeit in media framing effects, generally explain that higher (versus lower) political knowledge enhances evaluations of *all* message frames (Druckman, 2007; Slothuus, 2008). Therefore, it is possible that participants with higher political knowledge more thoroughly evaluated advertisements, thereby resulting in greater loss aversion from loss frames. If true, this would be consistent with prior message framing research supporting that greater evaluations result in greater efficacy with loss frames (Maheswaran & Meyers-Levy, 1990). However, given the absence of political knowledge and message framing from past political advertising research, further examination is needed to confidently understand the effect of political knowledge.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Implications

In considering directions for future research (Taylor, 2010; Van Steenburg, 2015), the present study set out to extend message framing, information type, and political ideology to political advertising. That is, the objective of this study was to examine the individual and combined effects of message framing and information type in political advertising. It also intended to identify how message framing effects in political advertising differ across liberal and conservative political ideologies. Specifically, the objectives of this study were to:

1. Examine the effects of (gain versus loss) message framing.
2. Examine the effects of (abstract versus concrete) information type.
3. Examine the interaction effects of message framing and information type.
4. Test the moderating effects of political ideology on message framing.

This study used a 2×2 between-subjects experimental design to address the objectives of this research. Research objective one was met, finding that gain frames (versus loss frames) resulted in greater attitude towards the ad, message persuasiveness, and ad-brand congruence. Research objective two was also achieved, finding that concrete (versus abstract) appeals resulted in greater attitude towards the ad, message persuasiveness, and ad-brand congruence. Regarding research objective three, no interaction effect between message framing and information type was observed in terms of attitude towards the ad or ad-brand congruence. However, a negligibly small interaction effect observed gain frames to be more persuasive when paired with concrete appeals. Therefore, research objective three produced an inconclusive result. Finally, a moderation effect of political ideology was identified, finding that loss frames resulted in greater attitude towards the ad, message persuasiveness, and ad-brand congruence in conservatives as compared to liberals.

Following these findings, this study produced notable theoretical and managerial contributions. These are discussed in the remainder of this chapter in addition to limitations and directions for future research.

7.1 Theoretical contributions

The present research makes three key theoretical contributions. Firstly, it identifies the causal role of message framing, and secondly, the causal role of information type in political advertising. Thirdly, the current study supports a model to predict differences in message framing effects across liberal and conservative political ideologies.

Message framing is a common advertising intervention which has been thoroughly examined in marketing literature and the broader social sciences (Krishnamurthy et al., 2001; Levin et al., 1998; Piñon & Gambara, 2005). Despite its utility in explaining consumer behaviour, message framing is seemingly unexamined in electoral political advertising research. Rather, most valence-based political advertising research has examined attack-style political advertising phenomena (O'Cass, 2002; e.g., Banda & Windett, 2016; Bradley et al., 2007; Jasperson & Fan, 2002; Meirick, 2002), opposed to other valenced advertising interventions (Van Steenburg, 2015). Therefore, a major contribution of this study has been to address this gap in the literature relating to how message framing influences voter behaviour. Contrary to expectations (Levin et al., 1998; Piñon & Gambara, 2005), gain frames were more effective than loss frames. This may have been the result of high temporal distance from the next general election. That is, positive gain frames are more effective at high-level temporal construals (Chang et al., 2015; Pounders et al., 2015; White et al., 2011). Therefore, it is possible that the high temporal distance between this study and the next general election caused greater effectiveness in gain frames. This unexpected finding highlights the need for caution when adapting previously understood advertising interventions to political contexts and contributes to the rationale for future political advertising research (e.g., Lees-Marshment, 2019).

Secondly, the addition of information type to political advertising also contributes to prior literature. Despite the applicability of information type to political advertising, little previous research has examined its effects on voter behaviour. Although Kim et al. (2009) examined CLT in political advertising, the present study appeared to be the first to specifically apply information type in a political advertising context. In doing so, it addressed Lee's (2019) recommendation for further CLT research in political contexts. In support of previous findings, concrete information type appeals displayed greater effectiveness. This contribution is important because it supports findings in previous information type and CLT advertising research but does so in the context of voter behaviour.

Additionally, differences between liberals and conservatives prompted a fascinating contribution through understanding the role of messaging framing and political ideology in political advertising. Political ideology has gained salience in recent marketing and consumer behaviour research but remains underdeveloped as a concept (Jost, 2017; Jung & Mittal, 2020; Jung et al., 2017; Korschun et al., 2020). Drawing on past research that has supported the role aversion to loss and negatively valenced stimuli as a defining facet of conservatism (Janoff-Bulman, 2009; Gründl & Aichholzer, 2020; Hibbing et al., 2014; Jost, 2017; Oxley et

al., 2008), the present study applied political ideology to message framing. This research affirmed Septianto et al.'s (2019) finding that political ideology moderated message framing effects, but in a political context. These findings also addressed previous directions for research (Jost, 2017; Jung & Mittal, 2020; Van Steenburg, 2015) by identifying differences in voter behaviour across liberal and conservative groups.

The significance of the present study's theoretical contributions are amplified given the nascent state of the political advertising field. Political marketing and advertising literatures are underdeveloped compared to other marketing sub-disciplines (Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2007; Lees-Marshment, 2019; Perannagari & Chakrabarti, 2020), leading to several directions for future empirical political advertising and communication research (Henneberg & O'shaughnessy, 2007; Lees-Marshment, 2019; Perannagari & Chakrabarti, 2020; Taylor, 2010; Taylor & Carlson, 2021; Van Steenburg, 2015), including from within the political sciences (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2012; Cacciatore et al., 2016). Therefore, the present study contributed to broad demands from within the literature for further empirical political advertising and voter behaviour research.

The significance of the discussed theoretical contributions are further elevated given the immense importance of political systems in providing value to society at large. That is, the study of advertising effects on voters' behaviour "is arguably at least as important as studying which brand of carbonated soft drink they prefer" (p.887).

7.2 Managerial contributions

Findings from this research provide valuable practical implications. The findings from this study are likely to be of greatest utility to political advertisers. However, findings are also applicable to other policy-based advertisers. Namely, findings may benefit government agencies when advertising policy programmes.

Firstly, the results showed that gain frames were more effective than loss frames. Therefore, political advertisers should generally frame advertisements in terms obtaining gains rather than in terms of avoiding losses. That is, voters are expected to respond more positively to advertisements that present the benefits on offer if they vote, rather than what they will miss out on if they don't vote. As such, gain framed advertisements are likely more appropriate for practitioners targeting a broad target market. Additionally, concrete appeals were more effective than abstract appeals. Therefore, advertisers should generally use more concrete advertisements with greater detail and specificity. This could be implemented

through specific policy propositions, statistics, figures, and graphs. The present study failed to identify any sizable interaction effects of message framing and information type. For practitioners, this indicates that gain frames will not necessarily be more effective if they are also concrete. Equally, concrete advertisements may not be more effective if framed in terms of gains. Therefore, while political advertisers should generally use gain (versus loss) frames, and concrete (versus abstract) appeals, they should not expect significantly greater effectiveness through employing concrete gain frames. However, while this was the case in this study, using stronger advertising stimuli or advertising a different policy issue may result in greater effectiveness from concrete gain frames in other instances.

Furthermore, this research found that the effectiveness of message framing differed between liberals and conservatives. Political ideology moderated message framing effects, finding loss frames were more effective in conservatives. Therefore, if practitioners intend to use loss framed messages (i.e., emphasising on what could be lost by not voting), loss frames should be more effective among conservatives than liberals. In contrast, gain frames resulted in similar attitudes towards the ad and message persuasiveness between liberal and gain framed advertisements, indicating that practitioners should expect similar results in terms of advertising effectiveness from gain frames.

Notwithstanding these implications, it is important to note that there are likely instances in which gain frames and concrete appeals are not suited to a political brand's marketing strategy or brand positioning. For instance, an incumbent party or candidate with a 'low-risk' or 'safe pair of hands' value proposition may benefit from using loss frames, as voters may perceive that they have more to lose or risk by voting for the opposition candidate or brand. As such, greater perceived losses should result in greater loss message framing effectiveness. For example, a New Zealand National Party (2014) television advertisement stated "This election the choice is simple. Stay on course to prosperity, or risk it all on who knows what direction" with visual cues to further communicate the prospective losses of not voting National. Alternatively, abstract advertisements may be more appropriate for political brands that cannot make concrete policy commitments, or for political brands with unpopular policy commitments. Therefore, practitioners should consider these circumstances when interpreting the findings of this research.

7.3 Limitations and directions for future research

Although every practical effort was made to ensure the robustness of this research, it was not without its limitations. However, the limitations of this research identify fertile ground for future research efforts.

Firstly, this research identified the 'cost of living' policy issue on which to develop experimental stimuli. As all advertising interventions pertained to the cost of living issue, it is possible that prior attitudes towards this issue may have influenced research findings. At the time of research, the cost of living issue was reportedly perceived to be the most important political issue in New Zealand (Consumer NZ, 2022). Important attitudes are typically more accessible in memory and more salient in evaluations of objects or attributes (Ajzen, 2001; Slothuus, 2008). In political media framing effects, people with low-importance or uncertain policy preferences are more easily persuaded (Tomz & Van Houweling, 2009). Future research could therefore examine low-importance issues to understand the effect of issue importance.

A second limitation of this research was the narrow focus on the policy commitments element of the political product. The 'political product' consists of a triad of policy commitments, political parties, and political candidates (Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2007; Smith & French, 2009; Wring, 1997), but can also include a broader range of political marketing activities (Lees-Marshment, 2001a). The importance of political parties and candidates to political marketing is well stated in prior literature, particularly in terms of electoral success (Lees-Marshment et al., 2018; Speed et al., 2015; Zavattaro, 2010). The advertisements used in the present study only focused on policy commitments, and so findings may differ for how voters perceive political party and candidate brands. Therefore, future research could investigate the role of message framing and information type interventions on other elements of the political product.

Additionally, the present study identified that ad-brand congruence differed across message frames between liberals and conservatives (H4c). This indicated that conservatives (versus liberals) perceived loss frames to be congruent with their preferred political parties. Therefore, to better understand the role of the broader political product, future research could assess how of message framing and information type interventions vary for existing political candidates and party brands.

A third limitation was the constrained temporal frame in which this research was conducted. That is, primary research was conducted in July 2022, approximately halfway

between New Zealand's 2020 general election and the next election general election scheduled no later than January 2024. Therefore, advertising interventions may have been perceived at a high temporal distance. High temporal distance is known to increase the effectiveness of gain message frames (e.g., Chandran & Menon, 2004; White et al., 2011; Pounders et al., 2015) and high-level (e.g., abstract) CLT interventions (e.g., Kim et al., 2009). This was a notable limitation because the perceived temporal distance to the next general election was not controlled for in the present study. However, this presents a fruitful avenue for future research. That is, re-examining the effectiveness of message framing and information type at a low temporal distance (i.e., at a closer date to the next general election) may provide a fascinating insight into how message framing and information type interventions are perceived throughout an electoral cycle.

The present research employed a 'banner ad' advertising style, like those typically disseminated in social media and many out of home contexts. However past CLT research has often used more detailed advertisements (e.g., White et al., 2011), including the more detailed advertisements used by Kim et al. (2009) in a political setting. While the present study used realistic banner-style advertisements, future research into alternative advertising mediums would be beneficial. Replicating findings from the present study in political-specific mediums such as temporary billboards would increase the generalisability of the present study.

Due to financial constraints, a convenience sampling method was used, which can be subject to sampling and self-selection biases and may not behave in the same way as representative samples (Hair et al., 2018), particularly when there is a large student presence (De Pelsmacker, 2021). Younger participants (aged 35 and younger), females, NZ Europeans/Pākehā, highly educated, and high-income individuals were overrepresented within the sample. This may increase the generalizability of findings pertaining to these groups, but equally may reduce the applicability of findings to older, non-European/Pākehā, and less educated, and lower-income groups. Additionally, the sample comprised entirely of voting-eligible New Zealanders. This somewhat reduces the generalizability of findings, as New Zealand participants may be impacted by latent cultural factors that could not be controlled for. Finally, based off the stratification question in the questionnaire, there were a greater number of liberal participants (n = 377) than conservatives (n = 308) or neutral (n = 124) participants. This may have reduced the generalisability of findings relating to conservatives relative to those relating to liberals. Alternatively, it is possible that social desirability bias or the anecdotally dubbed 'Shy Tory Factor' may have influenced

conservative participants to self-report lower levels of conservatism (see Brownback & Novotny, 2018). If true, this may have reduced the observed moderating effect of political ideology on message framing. To improve the validity and generalisability of findings, future research could replicate this study using a different sampling technique and with a culturally different sample.

7.4 Final reflection

To conclude, this research endeavoured to understand the effects and interplay of message framing, information type, and political ideology in a political advertising context. Using a 2 × 2 between-subjects experimental design, participants were exposed to a gain or loss framed message paired with either an abstract or concrete appeal. Gain (versus loss) frames and concrete (versus abstract) appeals individually displayed greater persuasive effects. Political ideology moderated message framing effects, finding that loss frames were more effective in conservatives (versus liberals). These findings yielded both theoretical and managerial implications and identified fertile ground for future research. Therefore, this study succeeded in its research objectives to identify the role of message framing, information type, and political ideology in political advertising.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Info sheet

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS
If you are 18 years or older, you are invited to take part in this research. If you participate, you can decide to enter a prize draw to win one of three $100 supermarket vouchers. Please read this information before deciding whether or not to take part.

What is the aim of the project?
You've probably seen politicians or political parties post online, or you may have seen political ads. This research aims to better understand this area. This research has been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee [0000029977].

Who am I?
My name is Lachlan Grimwade, and I am a Master's student in the School of Marketing and International Business at Victoria University of Wellington. This research project is work towards my thesis.

How can you help?
If you're eligible to vote, I invite you to participate in this study! You will be asked to complete an online survey which will take around 5 minutes. There are no right or wrong answers, as I am interested in your personal opinions.

What will happen to the information you give?
This research is completely anonymous. This means nobody, including the researchers, will be aware of your identity. Once you submit the survey, your answers will be impossible to retract. Your answers will remain completely anonymous and unidentifiable.

If you wish to enter the prize draw to win one of three $100 supermarket vouchers, personal details will be collected separately. Personal details will be received separately via a separate survey link and will be held in confidence. This ensures that your answers to the survey questions cannot be linked to your identity.

Only the research team will have access to the data provided in the survey. The data from this survey will be held securely on University servers, and it will be password protected. Data will destroyed five years after the conclusion of this research (01/11/2027). Data relating to the prize draw will be deleted by 01/09/2022.

What will the project produce?
The information from this research will be used towards my Master's thesis. The results may also be published in academic journals or conference papers, however the published results would not contain any information that is traceable to you.

If you have any questions or problems, who can you contact?
If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either Lachlan Grimwade or Micael-Lee Johnstone.

Thank you for considering this invitation. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. By clicking '**NEXT**' below, you are affirming that you have read this information and consent to participating in this study.

Warm regards,
Lachlan Grimwade

Student Researcher
Lachlan Grimwade
University Email address: [redacted]

Supervisor
Dr Micael-Lee Johnstone
Senior Lecturer
School of Marketing & International Business
Victoria University of Wellington
University Email address: [redacted]
University Phone: [redacted]

This research has been reviewed and approved by Victoria University's Human Ethics Committee (0000029977).

Human Ethics Committee information
If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Victoria University HEC Convenor: Associate Professor Rhonda Shaw. Email [redacted] or telephone [redacted]

Screening questions

1 Age screen Are you aged 18 or over?

- Yes
- No

2 Residency screen Are you a citizen or resident of New Zealand?

- Yes
- No

Disqualifying block

Disqualifying block Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey.

Unfortunately, you do not qualify for this study because we are looking for people who are aged 18 years or older and who are citizens or residents of New Zealand.

Mood

3 Mood How do you feel right now?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Very bad	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	Very good
Sad	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	Happy
Unpleasant	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	Pleasant

Political Ideology screen

In any election, given a choice between a right-wing (e.g. National Party) and a left-wing (e.g. Labour Party) candidate, I will select the right-wing candidate over the left-wing candidate.

- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Somewhat disagree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Somewhat agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Strongly agree

Ad briefing

Ad briefing Imagine there is an upcoming general election. You need to think which political party you will allocate your party vote to.

You are about to see an ad from your preferred political party. When you view the ad, please imagine that your preferred political party's name and logo are in the ad.

Ad manipulation: Abstract gain frame (1/4)

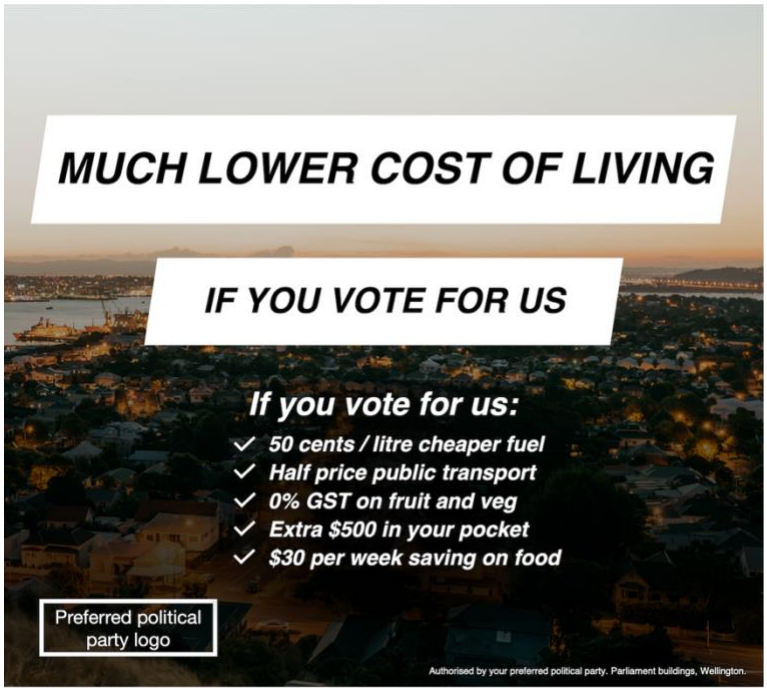
Imagine this ad is from your preferred political party. Please evaluate the ad.

Have you viewed the ad?

- ◯ Yes, I've viewed the ad

Ad manipulation: Concrete gain frame (2/4)

Imagine this ad is from your preferred political party. Please evaluate the ad.



Have you viewed the ad?

- ◯ Yes, I've viewed the ad

Ad manipulation: Abstract loss frame (3/4)

Imagine this ad is from your preferred political party. Please evaluate the ad.

Have you viewed the ad?

- ○ Yes, I've viewed the ad

Ad manipulation: Concrete loss frame (4/4)

Imagine this ad is from your preferred political party. Please evaluate the ad.

Have you viewed the ad?

- ○ Yes, I've viewed the ad

Dependent variables

Having viewed the ad, how much do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The message was persuasive	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The message was effective	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The message was compelling	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The message was convincing	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

How much do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I dislike the ad	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The ad is appealing to me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The ad is attractive to me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The ad is interesting to me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I think the ad is bad	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Page Break

The advertised message shown and my preferred political party are

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Somewhat disagree 3	Neither agree nor disagree 4	Somewhat agree 5	Agree 6	Strongly agree 7	
Not compatible	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Compatible
Not a good fit	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	A good fit
Not congruent	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Congruent

Attention check and suspicious probe

You are now half way through the survey. Please select number 3 below.

○ 1

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

What do you think this study is about?

_____

Manipulation Checks

The advertisement focused on the cost of living in a specific and detailed way.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Disagree (2)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ○ Somewhat agree (5)
- ○ Agree (6)
- ○ Strongly agree (7)

The advertisement focused on the cost of living in a general and vague way.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Disagree (2)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ○ Somewhat agree (5)
- ○ Agree (6)
- ○ Strongly agree (7)

The advertisement focused on what would be gained if I vote for my preferred political party.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Disagree (2)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ○ Somewhat agree (5)
- ○ Agree (6)
- ○ Strongly agree (7)

The advertisement focused on what would be lost if I do not vote for my preferred political party.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Disagree (2)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ○ Somewhat agree (5)
- ○ Agree (6)
- ○ Strongly agree (7)

Independent variables

How much do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am politically more left-wing than right-wing	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
In any election, given a choice between a National Party and Labour Party candidate, I will select the National candidate over the Labour candidate	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Socialism has proven to be a failed political ideology	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I cannot see myself ever voting to elect National Party candidates	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The media is too left-wing for my taste	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Socialism has many advantages over capitalism	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
On balance, I lean politically more to the left than to the right	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

How do you perceive the cost of living issue?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Unimportant issue	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely important issue
Insignificant issue	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Highly significant issue
Issue is of no concern	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Issue is of considerable concern
Trivial issue	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Fundamental issue

How much do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I know a lot about politics	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I classify myself as an expert on politics	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Compared to most people I know more about politics	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am knowledgeable about politics	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Political ideology check

Who is currently your most preferred New Zealand political party?

- ○ Labour (1)
- ○ National (2)
- ○ Green (3)
- ○ ACT (4)
- ○ Māori Party (Te Pāti Māori) (5)
- ○ New Zealand First (6)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (7)

Which New Zealand political parties would you NEVER consider voting for? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Labour (1)
- [ ] National (2)
- [ ] Green (3)
- [ ] ACT (4)
- [ ] Māori Party (Te Pāti Māori) (5)
- [ ] New Zealand First (6)
- [ ] Prefer not to answer (7)

Demographics

19 Gender What gender do you most identify with?

- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Another gender: _____
- ○ Prefer not to say

What is your age?

- ○ 18 - 24
- ○ 25 - 29
- ○ 30 - 34
- ○ 35 - 39
- ○ 40 - 44
- ○ 45 - 49
- ○ 50 - 54
- ○ 55 - 59
- ○ 60 - 64
- ○ 65 - 69
- ○ 70 - 74
- ○ 75 - 79
- ○ 80 - 84
- ○ 85 years and over

What is your highest level of education?

- ○ No qualification
- ○ Secondary school education
- ○ Higher education diploma or certificate
- ○ Bachelor's degree
- ○ Honours degree
- ○ Master's degree
- ○ Doctorate degree

What is your personal income?

- ○ Under $15,000
- ○ $15,000 - $29,999
- ○ $30,000 - $49,999
- ○ $50,000 - $69,999
- ○ $70,000 – $99,999
- ○ Over $100,000
- ○ Prefer not to say

---

23 Ethnicity What ethnicity do you most identify with?

- ○ NZ European / Pākehā
- ○ Māori
- ○ Asian
- ○ Pacific peoples
- ○ Middle Eastern
- ○ Latin American
- ○ African
- ○ Other: _____

Automatically rerouted to new survey link: Debrief and prize draw entry

You have now completed the survey. Thank you for your participation.

Your answers will remain anonymous and unidentifiable. This means nobody, including the researchers, will be aware of your identity. Data will be deleted within the next five years.

Please note this was a fictitious scenario and the claims made in the ad are not those of actual political parties. The purpose of this research is to explore people's responses to political advertising. This study is in no way connected to any political party.

To enter the draw to win one of three $100 New World supermarket vouchers, please enter your name and email address below. Your name and email will be stored separately, and cannot be linked to your previous responses in any way. Winners of the draw will be emailed before 01/09/2022.

2 Name Please enter your full name

_____

3 Email Please enter your email address

_____

End of Block: Block 1

Appendix B: Experimental stimuli

Abstract gain condition:

Concrete gain condition:

Abstract loss condition:

Concrete loss condition:

Appendix C: Original scales and scale adaptations

Construct	Original items	Adapted items
Mood (Keller et al., 2003)	• 1 = Very bad – 11 = Very good • 1 = Sad – 11 = Happy • 1 = Unpleasant – 11 = Pleasant	
Attitude towards the ad (Lee & Mason, 1999)	• I dislike the ad (R)* • The ad is appealing to me • The ad is attractive to me • The ad is interesting to me • I think the ad is bad (R) (1 = strongly agree; 7 = strongly disagree)	
Message persuasiveness (Chang, 2017b)	• The message was persuasive • The message was effective • The message was compelling • The message was convincing (1 = strongly agree; 7 = strongly disagree)	
Ad-brand congruence (Arbouw et al., 2019)	• 1 = Not compatible – 7 = Compatible • 1 = Not a good fit – 7 = Good fit • 1 = Not congruent – 7 = Congruent	
Information type check (Yang et al., 2015)	• To what extent did the advertisement describe the features of the drink in a specific and detailed way • To what extent did the advertisement describe the features of the drink in a general and vague way (R) (1 = strongly agree; 7 = strongly disagree)	• The advertisement focused on the cost of living in a specific and detailed way • The advertisement focused on the cost of living in a general and vague way (R) (1 = strongly agree; 7 = strongly disagree)

Message frame check (gain versus loss) (Chang et al., 2015)	• The advertisement focused on what would be gained if I recycle • The advertisement focused on what would be lost if I do not recycle (R) (1 = strongly agree; 7 = strongly disagree)	• The advertisement focused on what would be gained if I vote for my preferred political party • The advertisement focused on what would be lost if I do not vote for my preferred political party (R) (1 = strongly agree; 7 = strongly disagree)
Political ideology (Mehrabian, 1996)	• I am politically more left-wing than right-wing (R) • In any election, given a choice between a Republican and Democratic candidate, I will select the Republican over the Democrat • Socialism has proven to be a failed political ideology • I cannot see myself ever voting to elect conservative candidates (R) • The major national media are too left-wing for my taste • Socialism has many advantages over capitalism (R)* • On balance, I lean politically more to the left than to the right (R) (1 = strongly agree; 7 = strongly disagree)	• I am politically more left-wing than right-wing (R) • In any election, given a choice between a National Party and Labour Party candidate, I will select the National candidate over the Labour candidate • Socialism has proven to be a failed political ideology • I cannot see myself ever voting to elect National Party candidates (R) • The media is too left-wing for my taste • Socialism has many advantages over capitalism (R)* • On balance, I lean politically more to the left than to the right (R) (1 = strongly agree; 7 = strongly disagree)
Issue importance (Price et al., 2006)	• 1 = Unimportant issue – 7 = Extremely important issue • 1 = Insignificant issue – 7 = Highly significant issue • 1 = Issue is of no concern – 7 = Issue is of considerable concern • 1 = Trivial issue – 7 = Fundamental issue	
Political knowledge (O'Cass, 2002)	• I know a lot about politics • I classify myself as an expert on politics • Compared to most people I know more about politics • I am knowledgeable about politics (1 = strongly agree; 7 = strongly disagree)	

Note. R = reverse coded. *Item was removed from analysis.

Appendix D: Identification of outliers

Minimum and maximum Z scores (standardised scores)			
Item	N	Minimum	Maximum
Mood_1	809	-2.79929	1.49384
Mood_2	809	-2.75582	1.44991
Mood_3	809	-2.79419	1.35276
M_persuasiveness_1	809	-1.76759	1.70605
M_persuasiveness_2	809	-1.89146	1.74752
M_persuasiveness_3	809	-1.83793	1.83944
M_persuasiveness_4	809	-1.64684	1.92819
Aad_1 (R)*	809	-1.83380	1.57404
Aad_2	809	-1.75076	1.81841
Aad_3	809	-1.62034	1.93212
Aad_4	809	-1.91714	1.75524
Aad_5 (R)	809	-1.51551	1.94627
A_B_congruence_1	809	-2.10827	1.39877
A_B_congruence_2	809	-2.05824	1.45838
A_B_congruence_3	809	-2.10214	1.49962
Pol_ideo_1 (R)	809	-1.24472	1.84733
Pol_ideo_2	809	-1.86284	2.02629
Pol_ideo_3	809	-1.64075	1.46905
Pol_ideo_4 (R)	809	-1.65113	1.93964
Pol_ideo_5	809	-2.55727	1.85545
Pol_ideo_6 (R)*	809	-2.14195	1.28038
Pol_ideo_7 (R)	809	-1.24472	1.84733
I_importance_1	809	-5.03639	.71441
I_importance_2	809	-4.56739	.75301
I_importance_3	809	-4.44035	.73455
I_importance_4	809	-3.99662	.73499
Pol_know_1	809	-2.2502	1.89968
Pol_know_2	809	-1.83713	2.00659
Pol_know_3	809	-2.22862	1.82296

Note. R = reverse coded. *Items were removed from later analysis.

Appendix E: Skewness and kurtosis of items

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Mood_1	7.52	2.329	-.762	.086	.506	.172
Mood_2	7.55	2.378	-.798	.086	.362	.172
Mood_3	7.74	2.411	-.84	.086	.394	.172
M_persuasiveness_1	4.05	1.727	-.204	.086	-1.091	.172
M_persuasiveness_2	4.12	1.649	-.285	.086	-.954	.172
M_persuasiveness_3	4.00	1.632	-.243	.086	-.963	.172
M_persuasiveness_4	3.76	1.678	-.007	.086	-1.056	.172
Aad_1 (R)*	4.23	1.761	-.180	.086	-1.074	.172
Aad_2	3.94	1.681	-.133	.086	-1.087	.172
Aad_3	3.74	1.689	.041	.086	-1.058	.172
Aad_4	4.13	1.634	-.287	.086	-.887	.172
Aad_5 (R)	4.37	1.733	-.164	.086	-1.071	.172
A_B_congruence_1	4.61	1.711	-.513	.086	-.550	.172
A_B_congruence_2	4.51	1.706	-.466	.086	-.615	.172
A_B_congruence_3	4.50	1.666	-.436	.086	-.493	.172
Pol_ideo_1 (R)	4.68	1.868	-.487	.086	-.873	.172
Pol_ideo_2	3.42	1.940	.209	.086	-1.180	.172
Pol_ideo_3	3.87	1.543	-.021	.086	-.496	.172
Pol_ideo_4 (R)	4.17	1.929	-.067	.086	-1.142	.172
Pol_ideo_5	3.76	1.671	.047	.086	-.819	.172
Pol_ideo_6 (R)*	4.48	1.360	-.405	.086	.249	.172
Pol_ideo_7 (R)	4.76	1.753	-.557	.086	-.612	.172
I_importance_1	6.25	1.043	-1.716	.086	3.558	.172
I_importance_2	6.15	1.128	-1.737	.086	3.791	.172
I_importance_3	6.15	1.159	-1.805	.086	4.052	.172
I_importance_4	6.07	1.268	-1.753	.086	3.319	.172
Pol_know_1	4.25	1.446	-.416	.086	-.48	.172
Pol_know_2	3.87	1.561	-.081	.086	-.796	.172
Pol_know_3	4.3	1.481	-.542	.086	-.379	.172

Note. r = reverse coded. *Items were removed from later analysis.

Appendix F: Inter-construct correlations

	Mood	Message persuasiveness	Attitude towards the ad	Ad-brand congruence	Political ideology	Issue importance	Political knowledge
Mood	1.000						
Message persuasiveness	.068*	1.000					
Attitude towards the ad	.044	.699**	1.000				
Ad-brand congruence	.109**	.506**	.474**	1.000			
Political ideology	.051	.170**	.123**	.080*	1.000		
Issue importance	.104*	-.073*	-.114**	.117**	-.138**	1.000	
Political knowledge	.059*	.026	.069*	.037	-.049	-.064*	1.000

Note. * Correlation is significant at the .05 level. ** Correlation is significant at the .001 level.