

Marketing Research Brief: Young voters and their perception of politics, Australian Labor Party

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Palabras clave (escriba solo un término por palabra clave): Young Voters, Perceptions, Australian labor party

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Abstract

The following research brief was written by the Australian Labor Party and commissioned to provide Fitz & Morgan Research Agency with an overview of the proposed research plan to study the young voters and their perceptions of politics in Australia. The Australian Labor Party is the oldest political party in Australia; it was founded in 1891, and it is currently the party with more elected first ministers

Keyword: Young Voters, Perceptions, Australian labor party

Introduction

Since 1924 every Australian citizen has not only the right but the obligation to participate on every election process. However, the country has been facing a democratic deficit," one in five Australians are not voting, and the absent voters are more concentrated among the young ones" (McGrath 2013).

Previous researches showed a strong association between age and political involvement. The Australian Electoral Commission (2009) suggests that the youngest the population is, the less attracted to participate on political and civic groups they will be. Young adults are an important and influence voting force; they represent more than 11% of the country's population (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2014). Considering that "Federal elections are won or lost by a percentage point or two, understanding what factors influence low-involvement decision making may be crucial to future elections" (Winchester et al. 2014, p. 153).

Political parties have now realized the magnitude of the young voters' impact. The following research brief was written by the Australian Labor Party to provide Fitz & Morgan Research Agency with an overview of the proposed research plan to study the young voters and their perceptions of politics in Australia. The Australian Labor Party is the oldest political party in Australia; it was founded in 1891, although it was official until 1901 when the first Australian Federal Parliament was elected. It is the currently the party with more elected first ministers (12) and can be define as "a democratic socialist party that has the objective of the democratic socialization of industry, production, distribution and exchange, to the extent necessary to eliminate exploitation and other anti-social features in these fields" (Carlisle 2005, p. 41).

As one of the most influential political parties, the Australian Labor Party recognizes the importance of young adults' participation therefore, the purpose of this research is to analyse their behaviour, understand their perception of politics, with the aim of apply the research's results to determine mechanisms to encourage young adults to have a greater involvement in politics. Youth participation in the electoral process is of great concern," one in five Australians are not voting, and the absent voters are more concentrated among the young ones" (McGrath 2013).

Young adults represent more than 11% of the country's population (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2014), considering that "federal elections are won or lost by a percentage point or two, understanding what factors influence low-involvement decision making may be crucial to future elections" (Winchester et al. 2014, p. 153).

O'cass, Zvonovskii, Dermody, Hanmer-Lloyd and Scullion and other authors agree on the establishment of a close relationship between age and political involvement, but further research is needed to understand the reasons of Australian young adult's low engagement with politics. The purpose is: to analyse young adults voters' behaviour, involvement and perception of politics.

Research problem and objectives; this research is attempting to analyse the low level of participation and interest in politics among Australian young adults through the following objectives:

- To understand young adults' perception about politics and the Australian Labor Party.
- To determine how important young adults consider their participation in politics and elections.
- To define the level of importance that politics have among young adults' fields of interest.
- To determine the most important factors why Australian young adults show disengagement with politics.

Scope of the project; this study will be process state wide on Victoria, Australia and concerns the relationship between political involvement and variables such as age, environmental influences and access to information.

Proposed Research Design; the course of action has been designed to be completed on eight weeks. It is recommended to start with qualitative research (exploratory/focus groups) in order to understand young adults' attitudes, subsequently concentrate on the quantitative (descriptive/online surveys) research with the aim of provide systematic results.

Background

Youth participation in the electoral process is of great concern in Western democracies today. This research is attempting to concentrate on the general problem, the low level of young involvement and interest in politics. Involvement in this particular context can be defined as the overall level of interest on a specific object or issue (Rothschild & Houston 1980). Multiples studies about the relationship between the consumer behaviour involvement and the decision making process have been done, however there are not many studies that apply the involvement theory on the political marketing.

O'cass et al. (2005, p. 407) highlighted involvement as an important factor in voter decision-making. In his study model, it is stated that the dynamics of the voters' behaviour is related to their level of involvement, perceived risk and information. Therefore, once the voters are more involved in politics, they are more likely to reduce the risk and seek for information about the topic.

Similarly, Zvonovskii et al. (2014, p. 63) conducted a study in Russia that suggests there is a strong tendency when young people grow older to increase their interest of politics, and to feel more identified with the topic during election times. This concept was also developed in the UK by Dermody, Hanmer-Lloyd and Scullion et al. (2010, p.424), in their study it is suggested that young adults are disinterested in politics

because they consider their vote has not a big impact on the political process, therefore their electoral civic-mindedness is less strong than it is in older people. The referred authors agree on the establishment of a close relationship between age and political involvement, but further research is needed to understand the reasons of young adult's low engagement with politics.

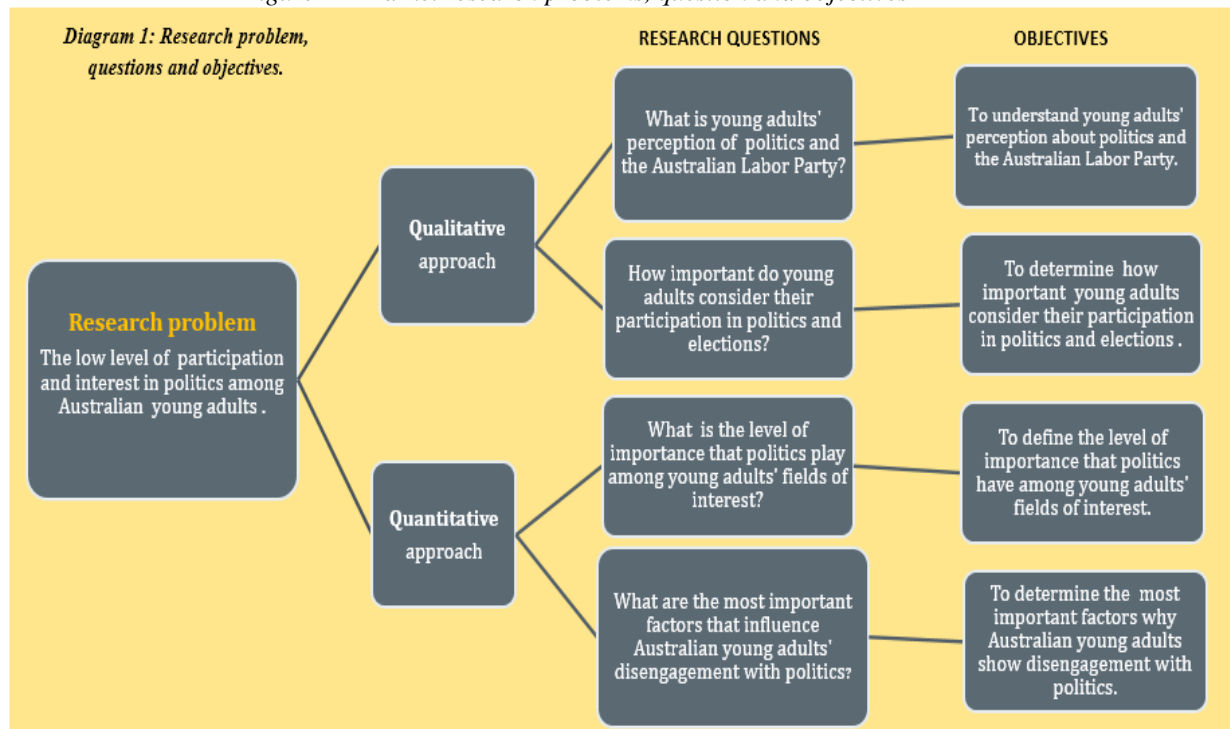
Research purpose

The purpose of this research is to analyse young adults voters' behaviour, involvement and perception of politics. To understand the reasons why they have a lack of interest and are showing a high level of disengagement with politics. With the aim, the results serve as guide to the Australian Labor Party to determine mechanisms to encourage young adults' greater participation.

Market research problems, questions and objectives

On the following diagram the overall research problem, the research questions and objectives are establishing.

Figure 1 – Market research problems, question and objectives

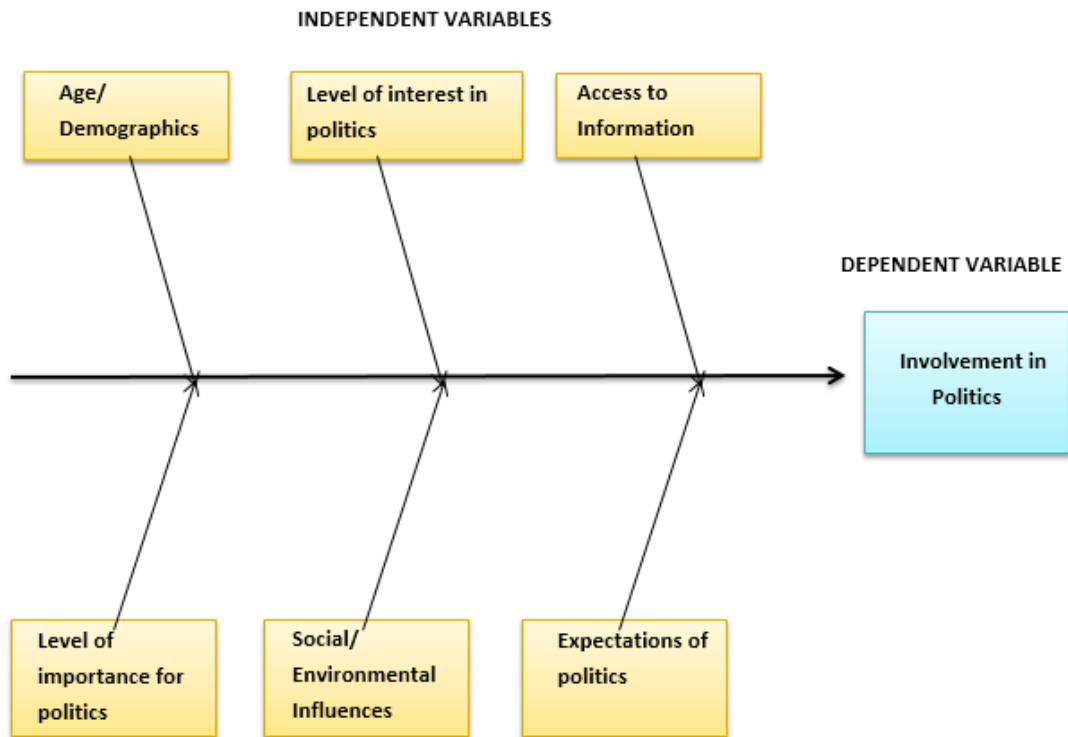


Source: own source, 2016

Scope of the project

The proposed model to be developed in this study concerns the relationship between the different research variables that are stated on Diagram 2. The dependant variable of this research is young adults' political involvement, as the main criteria to be study. The independent variables such as age, environmental influences, access to information and young adults' fields of interest, are factors that directly influence the dependant variable.

Figure 2 – Research variables, fishbone diagram



Source: own source, 2016

Research operational definitions

- The research will be process state wide on Victoria, Australia
- The participants have to be on the category:
- Persons 18-25 years, living in Victoria, Australia.
- Reasonable/ limited Budget

Proposed research design

The proposed course of action involves Qualitative and Quantitative approaches (Diagram 3). It is recommended to start with qualitative research (exploratory) in order to understand young adults' attitudes, subsequently concentrate on the quantitative (descriptive) research with the aim of provide systematic results.

Qualitative Research

“Qualitative research is particularly useful for understanding complex situations” (Zikmund, D’Alessandro, Winsar, Lowe, & Babin 2014, p. 97). This particular research problem requires a deeper analysis about young adults’ emotional reasons and perceptions about politics and democracy. The qualitative approach will be conducted under the parameters of exploratory research, in order to collect “preliminary insights into key issues to help to shape the research” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011, p. 10).

The qualitative phase will consider the following elements:

- What do they think about politics?
- The perception about the Australian Labor Party
- How important do young adults consider is their participation in politics?

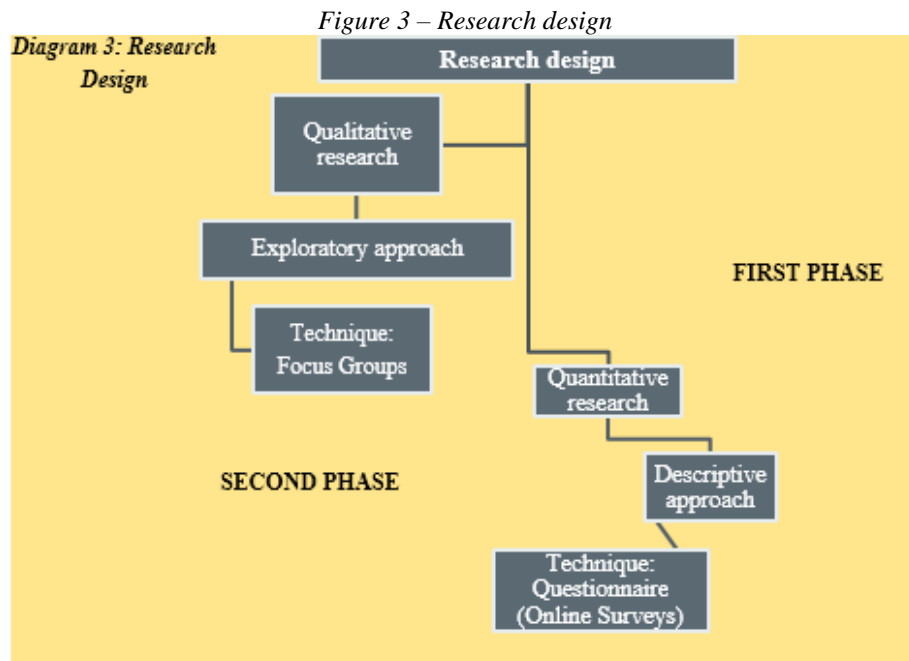
The most viable procedure to answer these questions is to directly ask the young adults' for their opinions. Focus groups offer the advantage of obtaining a vivid interaction with the reactions and perspectives of the consumers. By organizing 4 focus groups, where multiple young adults are interviewed simultaneously and through the dynamic of the conversation the participants will express their perceptions, ideas and emotions about the topic.

Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is "the explanation of different phenomena through collecting numerical data" (Mujis 2011, p. 1). It is recommended to select a descriptive approach to uncover new population's facts, and provide systematic information to define:

- A description of the young adults' political habits and participation.
- A description about the reasons of young adults' political disengagement.
- A description of the level of importance politics have among young adults' fields of interest.

Since is a young audience, is highly recommended to apply a Questionnaire (Online Survey). The use of online tools increases the chances of reaching a larger sampler, it is also a cost effective method that offers the advantage of fast response and easy processing of the collected data.



Source: own source, 2016

Timing

The proposed research program has been designed to be successfully complete on eight weeks.

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