**Election Facebook’s Ad Metrics 2024: Trump vs. Harris**

*Data Analysis Personal Project*

*By Nguyen Hoang Tuan (VNonTOP)*

Abstract: This analysis explores the advertising strategies employed by Donald Trump and Kamala Harris during the 2024 U.S. presidential campaign, focusing on six key flipped states: Michigan, Nevada, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Arizona. By examining data on ad spend, impressions, and message effectiveness, we identify significant contrasts in their approaches. Trump’s campaign prioritized precision targeting, leveraging tailored messages to flip critical states with relatively lower ad spend. Harris, on the other hand, concentrated on high-impression strategies in select battlegrounds, achieving higher cost-efficiency in Michigan and Nevada. The study highlights the role of advertising in shaping voter sentiment and influencing electoral outcomes, emphasizing the importance of message alignment with local concerns.

Contents

[**I.** **Introduction** 3](#_Toc186924473)

[1. Context 3](#_Toc186924474)

[2. Objective 3](#_Toc186924475)

[3. Research Questions 3](#_Toc186924476)

[**II.** **Methodology** 4](#_Toc186924477)

[1. Data Sources 4](#_Toc186924478)

[2. Analysis Methods 4](#_Toc186924479)

[3. Key Metrics 5](#_Toc186924480)

[4. Software and Tools Used 6](#_Toc186924481)

[5. Conclusion 7](#_Toc186924482)

[**III.** **Analysis** 8](#_Toc186924483)

[1. Overview 8](#_Toc186924484)

[2. Demographic Analysis 8](#_Toc186924485)

[3. Region Analysis 9](#_Toc186924486)

[4. Key battlegrounds Analysis 12](#_Toc186924487)

[5. Effective Meassages Analysis 13](#_Toc186924488)

[**IV.** **Findings** 17](#_Toc186924489)

[**V.** **Conclusion** 19](#_Toc186924490)

[1. Summary 19](#_Toc186924491)

[2. Limitations 19](#_Toc186924492)

[3. Recommendations 19](#_Toc186924493)

Figures

[Figure 1: Trump and Harris Ad Campaign Overview 8](#_Toc186924494)

[Figure 2: Demographic Target by Harris Figure 3: Demographic Target by Trump 8](#_Toc186924495)

[Figure 4: Amount of Spend by State 9](#_Toc186924496)

[Figure 5: Amount spend by Trump (ads that targeted specific states) 10](#_Toc186924497)

[Figure 6: Amount spend by Harris (ads that targeted specific states) 11](#_Toc186924498)

[Figure 8: Total impressions on flipped seat State 12](#_Toc186924499)

[Figure 7: Total spend on flipped seat State 12](#_Toc186924500)

[Figure 9: Scatter Plot between Average Spend and Average Impressions by Trump 13](#_Toc186924501)

[Figure 10: Scatter Plot between Average Spend and Average Impressions by Harris 13](#_Toc186924502)

## **Introduction**

### Context

The United States presidential election is one of the most impactful political events globally, shaping not only domestic policies but also international relations, trade, and diplomacy. With the increasing prominence of social media, platforms like Facebook have become pivotal tools in influencing voter behavior and shaping electoral outcomes. This research stems from the need to explore the interplay between digital advertising and election dynamics, focusing on how candidates leverage Facebook to connect with voters and deliver their messages. By examining the campaigns of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris, this analysis sheds light on the strategies and effectiveness of digital advertising in one of the most consequential elections of our time.

### Objective

The primary goal of this analysis is to evaluate the advertising strategies and performance metrics of the Trump and Harris campaigns on Facebook. By leveraging data from the Facebook Ads Library, the **Election Facebook’s Ad Metrics 2024: Trump vs. Harris** aims to uncover patterns in ad spending, audience targeting, and cultural and regional influences. This study is designed to provide valuable insights for campaign strategists, businesses exploring digital advertising, researchers studying electoral behavior, and future candidates planning their campaigns.

### Research Questions

This project is guided by the following key questions:

1. How effective are Trump’s and Harris’s Facebook campaigns in reaching and engaging their target audiences?
2. What strategies do they employ to engage distinct demographic groups, such as by age or political leanings?
3. Are there noticeable patterns in their messaging or ad timing in response to key political events?
4. Are there data or patterns suggesting that Facebook’s algorithms or policies may have favored one candidate over the other?
5. What broader implications do their strategies hold for future elections and digital advertising practices?

## **Methodology**

### Data Sources

The data used in this analysis is sourced from the **Facebook Ads Library**, which provides comprehensive records of all political advertisements run on Facebook. This dataset includes information on the number of ads, ad spend, impressions, and audience targeting characteristics. Additionally, the dataset allows for demographic segmentation, including age, gender, and geographic data (such as state-specific targeting).

The primary tool used to process and visualize this data is **Power BI**, which integrates slicers for filtering and generating interactive dashboards. These slicers allow users to focus on specific subsets of data, such as individual candidates (Trump or Harris), dates, states, and ad messaging. The dashboards display metrics and visualizations to compare ad performance across various dimensions.

### Analysis Methods

The analysis conducted in this research focuses on comparing the Facebook ad campaigns of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris, using several key techniques to gain insights into their respective strategies and effectiveness. The methods used include:

#### 1. **Descriptive Analytics**

Descriptive analytics techniques were employed to summarize key campaign metrics, providing insights into ad performance. The following metrics were calculated and analyzed:

* Total ad spend
* Impressions
* Audience reach
* Ad performance over time

These metrics were processed using Python, which handled the cleaning, transformation, and aggregation of data before it was imported into Power BI for visualization.

#### 2. **Visual Dashboards**

Two primary dashboards were created to facilitate the comparison between Trump and Harris’s ad campaigns:

* **Dashboard 1**: Offers an overview of total ads, ad spend, impressions, and audience reach. Key visualizations include:
  + **Bubble Map**: Illustrates the targeting of ads by state, with the size of the bubbles representing the number of ads.
  + **Line Chart**: Depicts trends in ad run times over different dates.
  + **Performance Overview**: Displays performance ratios (impressions/estimated audience).
* **Dashboard 2**: Focuses on comparing ad reach, spend, performance (impressions/estimated audience), and demographic targeting. It includes:
  + **Funnel Chart**: Visualizes the breakdown of impressions by age and gender demographics.
  + **Scatter Plot**: Shows the relationship between average impressions and average ad spend.
  + **State-Specific Bubble Map**: Represents total ad spend by state, with the bubble size indicating the magnitude of spend.

#### 3. **Slicer Integration**

Slicers were integrated into both dashboards to allow dynamic exploration of the data. This enabled filtering by specific variables such as:

* Candidate name (Trump or Harris)
* Date range
* State
* Ad messaging type (byline, link caption, link title, link description)

These slicers provide an easy way to isolate trends, analyze performance variations, and examine the impact of specific campaign strategies.

### Key Metrics

The analysis focused on several key metrics to evaluate and compare the ad campaigns of Trump and Harris:

* 1. **Ad Reach and Impressions**  
     The total number of impressions (the number of times an ad is shown) and reach (the number of unique users who have seen the ad) were calculated. These metrics help measure the visibility and effectiveness of the ads in reaching the target audience.
  2. **Ad Spend**  
     Total ad spend is measured for both Trump and Harris. This metric offers insights into how much each candidate invested in Facebook ads and how it correlates to their reach and performance.
  3. **Performance Overview (Impressions/Estimated Audience)**  
     The performance of each ad is evaluated by calculating the ratio of impressions to the estimated audience size. This metric helps assess how effectively the ads reached and engaged their target demographic.
  4. **Average Start Lag and Ad Duration**  
     The average start lag (the time between ad creation and launch) and average ad duration (the time between ad start and end) were calculated to understand the timing and efficiency of ad deployment.
  5. **State-Specific Ad Targeting**  
     The number of ads targeting each state was analyzed and visualized using a bubble map. The bubble size corresponds to the number of ads in each state, allowing for regional comparisons in ad targeting efforts.
  6. **Demographic Targeting**  
     A funnel chart is used to visualize demographic targeting, breaking down ad impressions by gender and age groups. This chart helps compare how Trump and Harris targeted different voter segments and which segments received more attention.
  7. **Scatter Plot of Average Impressions vs. Average Spend**  
     This scatter plot compares the relationship between the average number of impressions and average ad spend, helping to assess the cost-effectiveness of each candidate’s campaign.
  8. **Ad Messaging**  
     Slicers are used to analyze the byline, link caption, link title, and link description, allowing for insight into the messaging strategies of each campaign. This helps identify which messages resonated most with different demographics or regions.

### Software and Tools Used

* **Python**: Python was employed for data preprocessing, including the cleaning, transformation, and aggregation of the data to ensure consistency and accuracy. The data was combined, unnecessary columns were removed, and any issues with null values or data format inconsistencies were addressed. Python also helped in handling business-specific data transformations such as calculating spend differences and reformatting demographic and region data.
* **PostgreSQL**: PostgreSQL was used to manipulate and query the data for deeper analysis. Complex queries were crafted to aggregate data based on various campaign metrics, enabling comparisons across key performance indicators such as ad impressions, spend, and audience targeting. PostgreSQL's ability to handle large datasets efficiently facilitated the extraction of meaningful insights from the raw data.
* **Power BI**: Power BI was utilized to create interactive dashboards and visualizations, allowing for dynamic exploration of the campaign data. The tool enabled the integration of various metrics, and interactive slicers were implemented to filter data by date, state, and other variables. This provided an intuitive interface to visualize key performance indicators and compare campaign performance, offering a clear, comprehensive view of the analysis.

### Conclusion

The methodology presented in this research offers a comprehensive approach to analyzing Facebook ad campaigns within the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election context. By utilizing Python for data preprocessing, PostgreSQL for querying, and Power BI for data visualization, we were able to effectively compare the advertising strategies of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris. The use of interactive dashboards and slicers allowed us to explore key performance metrics, providing valuable insights into their digital campaigning efforts. This analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of how modern political campaigns leverage digital platforms like Facebook to engage voters, optimize advertising spend, and shape electoral outcomes.

## **Analysis**

### Overview

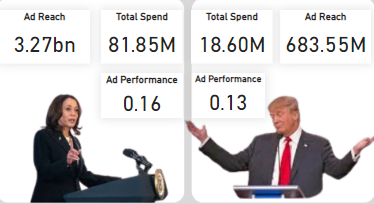


Figure 1: Trump and Harris Ad Campaign Overview

From March 17, 2023, to October 28, 2024, a total of $100.45M was spent on advertisements for the Trump vs. Harris campaign. Kamala Harris’s campaign contributed the majority, with $81.85M (81.5%) in ad spend, while Donald Trump’s campaign accounted for $18.6M (18.5%). This significant disparity in spending highlights Harris’s aggressive strategy to dominate the digital space. The impact of this investment is evident in the total impressions generated: Harris’s ads garnered 3.27 billion impressions (83% of total impressions), while Trump’s ads accounted for 683.55 million (17%).

### Demographic Analysis

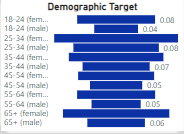
 Demographic Target by Trump


Figure 2: Demographic Target by Harris Figure 3: Demographic Target by Trump

In terms of demographic targeting, the campaigns of Trump and Harris adopted contrasting strategies. Trump's campaign showed a clear emphasis on older age groups, with the highest engagement seen among females aged 65+. Within these groups, Trump's target was consistently higher among females as the age increased. Specifically, for the age groups 18-24, 25-34, and 35-44, male targets slightly outpaced females. However, in the age groups 55-64 and 65+, Trump targeted females more heavily, particularly females aged 65+, where the target was higher than for males in the same age group.

On the other hand, Harris’s campaign primarily focused on younger age groups, particularly females aged 18-34, where her ad targeting was notably higher than Trump’s. For example, Harris targeted females aged 18-24 (0.08) and 25-34 (0.12), outpacing males in these age brackets.

These demographic differences underscore the contrasting strategies of the two campaigns: Trump aimed to secure support among older voters, particularly women aged 65+, while Harris concentrated on mobilizing younger, progressive voters, especially females aged 18–34.

### Region Analysis

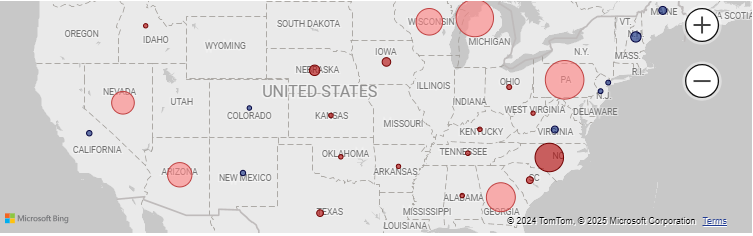


Figure 4: Amount of Spend by State

*This map shows the total ad spend for each state, based on ads that targeted specific states. Ads that did not specify a state or targeted too many states were excluded from the analysis.*

The map reveals critical patterns in ad spending and electoral competition during the 2024 U.S. presidential election. The **blue states** represent those won by Harris, while **red states** indicate Trump’s victories. Notably, **pastel red states** signify flipped seats—states that shifted from Harris to Trump, often with narrow voting percent (e.g., 48%-49% or 49%-50%).

Among the states with the highest campaign spending (as indicated by bubble size), six out of seven—Nevada, Arizona, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin—are flipped seats. This concentration of resources highlights the strategic importance of these battlegrounds. Both campaigns seemingly recognized their pivotal role, as these states were not only closely contested but also critical in determining the final electoral outcome.

This pattern underscores the intense competition between Trump and Harris, particularly in flipped states. The high spending in these areas suggests that both campaigns were actively vying to sway voters in regions where small shifts could alter the electoral landscape. This strategic focus aligns with broader trends observed in recent elections, where campaigns prioritize swing states with volatile voting histories to maximize their impact.

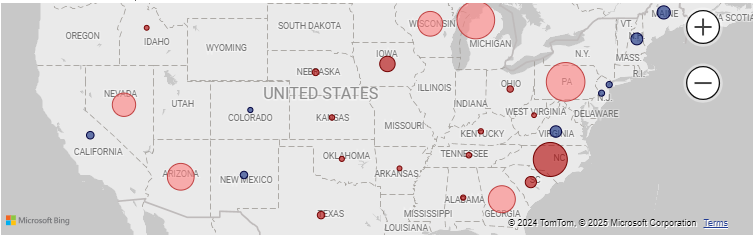


Figure 5: Amount spend by Trump (ads that targeted specific states)

The analysis shows a notable contrast in strategies. Trump invested heavily in a broad range of specific states, focusing particularly on battleground states with tailored messages. His approach successfully targeted six key flipped states (Nevada, Arizona, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin), ultimately helping him secure narrow victories in these regions. This precision targeting allowed Trump to maximize his return on ad spend, efficiently flipping critical electoral votes.

The effectiveness of Trump’s strategy lies in its precision. By targeting specific states with customized messaging, he was able to optimize ad performance and secure flipped seats despite a smaller overall share of ad spend. This approach may have allowed his campaign to resonate more deeply with voters in these critical regions, tipping the scales in his favor.

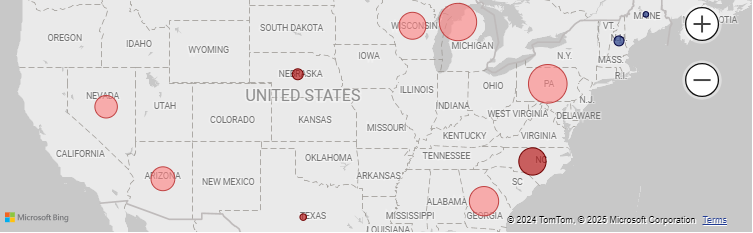


Figure 6: Amount spend by Harris (ads that targeted specific states)

Harris, on the other hand, concentrated her ad spend on a few big-race states, six of which turned out to be flipped seats. This indicates that Harris had a strong influence in these battlegrounds, making them highly competitive and pushing the margins close. While her strategy fell short of securing wins in these states, her heavy targeting likely played a significant role in making these races extremely tight, forcing Trump’s campaign to spend more to flip them.

In essence, Harris’s concentrated focus on these high-stakes states created intense competition, narrowing the margins significantly and making it harder for Trump to achieve decisive victories. While the result was ultimately a flipped seat, Harris’s efforts likely impacted voter engagement and turnout, shaping the final outcomes in these critical areas. Thus, her strategy, although not as widely spread as Trump’s, had a strong influence on the overall dynamics of the race.

### Key battlegrounds Analysis

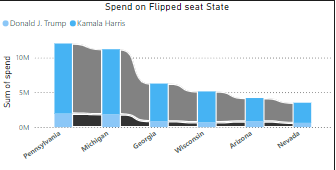
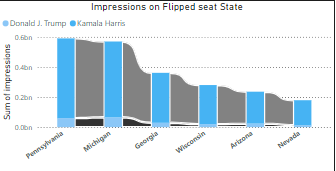
  


Figure 8: Total impressions on flipped seat State

Figure 7: Total spend on flipped seat State

The chart on impressions and ad spend in the six flipped states (Pennsylvania, Michigan, Georgia, Wisconsin, Arizona, and Nevada) reveals a striking similarity in strategy between Trump and Harris. Both candidates invested heavily in Pennsylvania and Michigan, with these states receiving the highest level of ad spend and impressions. Following these two key battlegrounds, the investment drops significantly for Georgia, Wisconsin, Arizona, and Nevada, with a gradual decline between these states.

This alignment in strategy underscores the recognition by both campaigns of the importance of Pennsylvania and Michigan as pivotal battlegrounds with a high potential to sway the election outcome. By prioritizing these states, both Trump and Harris aimed to maximize voter reach and influence in regions with historically competitive voting patterns. The significant drop in investment in the other four states reflects a calculated approach to allocating resources where the impact was likely to be most decisive.

However, the ultimate results show that Trump’s messaging and precision targeting in these states yielded better returns. Despite Harris spending four times more than Trump—and achieving even higher levels of impressions—Trump still managed to flip all six states. This suggests that his campaign was more effective in crafting messages that resonated with voters. It could indicate that Trump’s ads were better tailored to local concerns and sentiments or that his campaign succeeded in mobilizing specific voter groups more efficiently.

For Harris, the heavy investment in Pennsylvania and Michigan likely narrowed the margins, making these states highly competitive and forcing Trump to increase his efforts to secure wins. Her strategy in the remaining states also contributed to creating tight races, indicating that her campaign effectively identified the key battlegrounds but may have lacked the precision or message resonance that gave Trump the edge.

In conclusion, while both campaigns shared similar strategies in terms of prioritizing specific states, Trump’s approach proved more effective in converting ad spend and impressions into electoral victories. This analysis highlights the importance of not just where resources are allocated, but how effectively the message is tailored to the target audience.

### Effective Meassages Analysis

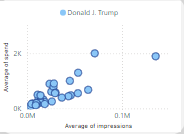


Figure 9: Scatter Plot between Average Spend and Average Impressions by Trump

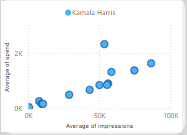


Figure 10: Scatter Plot between Average Spend and Average Impressions by Harris

An analysis of six heavily contested flipped states revealed that while both Trump and Harris generally adhered to the trend of higher spending yielding more impressions, Trump demonstrated remarkable effectiveness by securing victories in all six. Despite his lower overall ad volume and spend, his strategy proved impactful in these key battlegrounds. In states with minimal electoral competition, where voters were already strongly aligned with one candidate, the influence of advertising strategies is less pronounced. Focusing on these closely contested flipped states—where margins were razor-thin and external factors likely shaped the outcomes—provides a clearer understanding of the effectiveness of Trump’s targeted advertising in influencing voter behavior and securing pivotal electoral victories.

According to Trump’s impression-to-spend rate in these six flipped states, the most effective ad was in Georgia, achieving a rate of 175. With just $200 spent, the ad garnered an impressive 35,000 impressions. This specific ad featured the byline: “TRUMP SAVE AMERICA JOIN FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE”, with the link title “DONATE TODAY”, and the link description “STAND WITH PRESIDENT TRUMP”. The ad creative body read:

"DO NOT DONATE IF YOU CAN’T AFFORD TO! Joe Biden has destroyed our country, so if you can’t afford to chip in, don’t even think about it! But if you can, even $1 will go a long way in helping us win back the White House. I know with your support, we will Make America Great Again 🇺🇸."

The link caption was: donate.donaldjtrump.com.

**Why This Strategy Was Effective**

#### 1. **Efficient Targeting**

The campaign likely employed precise audience targeting to ensure that its message resonated with a specific demographic—Trump’s loyal base. This focus maximized impressions while keeping costs minimal, effectively delivering the message to those most likely to engage and act.

#### 2. **Emotional Resonance**

The ad’s content tapped into voter frustrations by directly blaming Joe Biden for perceived national challenges and positioning Trump as the solution. This emotional framing increased the likelihood of engagement and heightened the ad’s impact on its audience.

#### 3. **Clear and Accessible Call to Action**

The ad featured an urgent yet inclusive call to action by highlighting that contributions as small as $1 could make a difference. This approach widened the campaign’s reach, making participation accessible to a larger audience. Additionally, the phrase "DO NOT DONATE IF YOU CAN’T AFFORD TO" conveyed a sense of sincerity and trust, helping to establish a deeper emotional connection with voters. This combination of inclusivity and authenticity likely fostered stronger loyalty and increased engagement.

#### 4. **Brand Reinforcement**

By using consistent branding phrases such as “Stand with President Trump” and “Make America Great Again”, the ad reinforced the core messaging of Trump’s campaign. This alignment with the overall brand strategy ensured familiarity and deepened voter connection.

**Analysis of Effectiveness**

The ad’s exceptional impression-to-spend ratio demonstrates the effectiveness of Trump’s targeted approach. By delivering a high number of impressions with a modest budget, the campaign successfully amplified its message in key regions. This strategy allowed Trump to efficiently mobilize his voter base and drive engagement without overspending.

Furthermore, the emotional appeal and trust-building elements in the ad likely contributed to its high engagement rates. The directness of the messaging resonated strongly with supporters, creating a sense of urgency and solidarity that motivated action. This highly strategic and cost-effective method highlights the power of precision targeting and tailored messaging in modern political campaigns.

In Michigan and Nevada, Harris’s campaign demonstrated notably higher ad efficiency compared to Trump’s, achieving superior impression-to-spend ratios. These two states highlight the importance of targeted messaging in highly competitive environments, where subtle shifts in voter engagement can influence outcomes. In contrast, the impact of advertising is less discernible in states with strong partisan leanings, where voters are already aligned with one candidate. By isolating these six pivotal flipped states—where results were exceptionally close—we gain a clearer perspective on how advertising strategies shaped voter behavior and played a crucial role in determining electoral outcomes. According to scatter plot data comparing the sum of impressions to ad spend:

* **Michigan**: Harris achieved an average of 74,630 impressions at an average spend of $1,388, while Trump obtained 71,107 impressions at a significantly higher average spend of $2,007.
* **Nevada**: Harris recorded an average of 28,693 impressions at a spend of $502, whereas Trump only reached 10,779 impressions for an almost identical spend of $503.

These findings suggest that Harris’s ads were more impactful and cost-effective in these two states compared to Trump’s.

**Most Effective Ads by Harris**

To further investigate Harris’s strategy, a detailed review of her most effective ads in Michigan and Nevada was conducted. The analysis revealed the following:

* **Nevada**: The most effective ad had an impression-to-spend rate of 206. The ad creative body read: “Trump’s vision sets us back, making things harder for ordinary Americans – while Vice President Harris has consistently fought for us. This decision is easy.” The link caption was: kamalaharris.com, with no link title or description provided.
* **Michigan**: The highest-performing ad in Michigan had an impressive rate of 240. Its link title was: “Kamala Harris will keep us safe”, with the link caption kamalaharris.com. The ad creative body stated: “Homicides and anti-Asian hate crimes skyrocketed during Trump’s presidency. Kamala Harris’ record as a prosecutor and attorney general speaks for itself – she will protect our communities.”

The second-highest ad in Michigan, with a rate of 220, repeated the creative body from Nevada, emphasizing the negative portrayal of Trump’s vision.

**Why These Messages Were Effective**

#### 1. **Contrast and Criticism of Trump**

These ads effectively highlighted perceived failures of Trump’s leadership, particularly focusing on increased homicides, anti-Asian hate crimes, and hardships faced by ordinary Americans. By drawing a stark contrast between Trump’s record and Harris’s vision, the ads resonated strongly with voters who were disillusioned with Trump’s presidency.

#### 2. **Focus on Harris’s Leadership**

The messages reinforced Harris’s qualifications by emphasizing her record as a prosecutor and attorney general, positioning her as a protector of community safety and justice. This built trust and credibility, appealing to voters concerned about security and equality.

#### 3. **Simplified and Direct Messaging**

The ads avoided excessive details, presenting clear, emotionally charged messages. This simplicity made them more accessible and impactful, increasing their appeal to a broad audience.

#### 4. **Repetition of Effective Themes**

The repetition of successful messaging, such as criticizing Trump’s vision and promoting Harris’s leadership, reinforced key points and solidified their effectiveness. The consistent use of kamalaharris.com as the link caption further strengthened her campaign’s branding and call to action.

**Conclusion**

Harris’s success in achieving high impression rates with relatively low ad spend in Michigan and Nevada underscores the effectiveness of her targeted messaging strategy. The data reveals that ads critiquing Trump’s leadership were particularly impactful, resonating with voters in these critical states. This demonstrates that highlighting Trump’s perceived shortcomings, while positioning Harris as a capable leader, was a key factor in driving engagement and influencing voter sentiment in these battleground regions.

## **Findings**

Based on the analysis of demographic targeting, messaging strategies, and campaign engagement, several key findings have emerged from the comparison of Trump’s and Harris’s Facebook ad campaigns:

1. **Effectiveness in Reaching and Engaging Target Audiences** Trump’s campaign demonstrated a strong focus on older age groups, with the highest engagement observed among females aged 65+. This suggests that his campaign effectively targeted traditionally conservative demographics. Harris’s campaign, on the other hand, concentrated on younger audiences, particularly females aged 18-34, where her engagement levels surpassed Trump’s. Both campaigns achieved notable engagement within their respective priority demographics, showcasing their effectiveness in reaching distinct voter bases.
2. **Demographic Targeting Strategies** Trump’s strategy revealed a pattern of increasing targeting with age, with a slight preference for males in younger age groups (18-44). However, this shifted in the 55-64 and 65+ groups, where females became the primary focus. Harris’s campaign showed a different approach, prioritizing females across all age groups, particularly younger ones, but also targeting females aged 65+ with a value of 0.1. These contrasting strategies reflect a deliberate effort to consolidate support among their respective core demographics: older, traditionally Republican voters for Trump and younger, potentially progressive voters for Harris.
3. **State-Level Precision Targeting** The analysis shows a notable contrast in strategies. Trump invested heavily in a broad range of specific states, focusing particularly on battleground states with tailored messages. His approach successfully targeted six key flipped states (Nevada, Arizona, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin), ultimately helping him secure narrow victories in these regions. This precision targeting allowed Trump to maximize his return on ad spend, efficiently flipping critical electoral votes. Conversely, Harris concentrated her ad spend on a few big-race states, six of which turned out to be flipped seats. This indicates that her efforts created intense competition, narrowing the margins and forcing Trump’s campaign to invest more to secure these states. Harris’s focus, while not yielding wins, likely contributed to heightened voter engagement and tighter race dynamics.
4. **Optimizing Ad Performance Through Start Lag** A significant finding in the analysis relates to the average start lag of ads. Trump’s campaign demonstrated a markedly lower average start lag of 3.36 hours (0.14 days), compared to Harris’s 9.12 hours (0.38 days). This suggests that Trump’s campaign was more adept at optimizing ad performance and responsiveness, potentially benefiting from the experience gained during the 2020 campaign. This efficiency likely contributed to Trump’s stronger ad engagement and reach.
5. **Patterns in Messaging and Ad Timing** The highest-performing ads from both campaigns highlight their strategic use of messaging and timing. Trump’s best-performing ad achieved a remarkable impression-to-spend ratio, reflecting his campaign’s efficiency in mobilizing voters and amplifying messages in key regions. The emotional appeal and directness of the messaging resonated strongly, fostering trust and urgency among supporters. Similarly, Harris’s top-performing ads demonstrated her ability to connect with voters in battleground states like Michigan and Nevada, with ads critiquing Trump’s leadership proving particularly impactful. Both campaigns relied on their official websites, donaldjtrump.com and kamalaharris.com, to boost ad credibility and awareness. On average, ad run times were five days, with a start lag of 7.5 hours, though there was no clear correlation between ad duration and start lag. However, despite the effectiveness of these top-performing ads, their number was too small, with each message repeating only twice among the total 94.1k ads run. This indicates significant untapped potential for both campaigns to enhance their outreach and engagement further. These insights underscore the significance of precision targeting and tailored messaging in maximizing ad performance.
6. **Algorithmic or Policy Influence** The analysis did not find conclusive evidence that Facebook’s algorithms or policies systematically favored one candidate over the other. However, the distinct targeting patterns indicate that each campaign likely leveraged algorithmic tools to optimize their ad reach and engagement. Further research is needed to determine if algorithmic factors had an unintended impact on the visibility or performance of ads from either campaign.
7. **Broader Implications for Future Elections and Digital Advertising** These findings highlight the growing importance of precise demographic targeting in digital political campaigns. Trump’s and Harris’s strategies underscore how campaigns can effectively mobilize different voter segments by tailoring their messaging and focusing on age and gender dynamics. For future elections, candidates may need to further refine their use of digital platforms to address evolving voter preferences and leverage emerging technologies. Additionally, the role of platform algorithms and transparency in ad policies will remain critical in ensuring fair and effective campaign practices.

Overall, the contrasting approaches of the Trump and Harris campaigns offer valuable insights into the evolving landscape of digital political advertising and its impact on voter engagement.

## **Conclusion**

### ****Summary****

This analysis highlights key distinctions in the Facebook campaign strategies of Trump and Harris, revealing how each candidate targeted distinct demographic groups to optimize engagement. Trump’s focus on older, traditionally conservative voters, and Harris’s emphasis on younger, progressive audiences, underscore their tailored approaches. State-level precision targeting further reinforced Trump’s success in securing flipped states, while Harris’s concentrated ad spend heightened competition in key battlegrounds. Additionally, Trump’s lower ad start lag points to a more efficient optimization strategy, likely influenced by experience from prior campaigns.

### ****Limitations****

While this analysis provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The data is limited to Facebook campaigns, excluding other digital platforms that may have influenced voter behavior. Furthermore, the data on spend, estimated audience, and impressions are approximate due to Facebook’s use of ranges rather than precise figures. Additionally, to derive insights from ads with specific strategies targeting particular demographic groups or states, complex data was simplified, and overly generic ads were excluded. The analysis also cannot fully account for external factors such as offline campaign efforts or broader socio-political events that may have impacted ad performance. Lastly, potential biases in data collection and interpretation should be acknowledged, as they could affect the findings.

### ****Recommendations****

To enhance future campaign effectiveness, candidates should consider investing in advanced data analytics to refine demographic targeting and ad optimization. Emphasizing a balance between emotional and policy-driven messaging could also broaden appeal across diverse voter segments. Additionally, increased transparency in algorithmic processes and ad policies will be crucial to ensure fair competition and maintain public trust. Both campaigns’ strategies offer a roadmap for leveraging digital platforms in future elections, emphasizing the need for continuous adaptation to evolving voter dynamics.