

Combating Misinformation with a Humorous Audio Ad: Extending a Mixed Methods Analysis

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BACKGROUND

- Dr. Daley & Kainan developed a humorous audio ad with the goal of making a listener more skeptical about misinformation and information literacy
- The ad was split into an audio and visual-audio format for a test group, while a random ad was presented in the same formats for a control group
- 99 college students participated in the study and were randomly assigned 1 of the 4 ads
- Participants took tests before and after the ad that measured their tendency to believe misinformation: Generic Conspiracist Beliefs Scale and two Misinformation Susceptibility Tests (MIST-20 and IT-MIST)
- Comparison of test results found that audio-visual ads led to improved information literacy while audio-only ads produced mixed results

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

- The researchers asked the several open-ended questions before and after the ad about misinformation, but did not have time to thoroughly analyze all of this data when study was published
- Graduate researcher performed thematic and content analysis on this data and developed a composite score that measured the percentage change in a participant's responses after viewing an ad
- Results found that the format and content of ad may have subtly influenced the change in responses, but not consistently across all questions
- Gender differences also revealed contrasting viewpoints in responses



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RESULTS

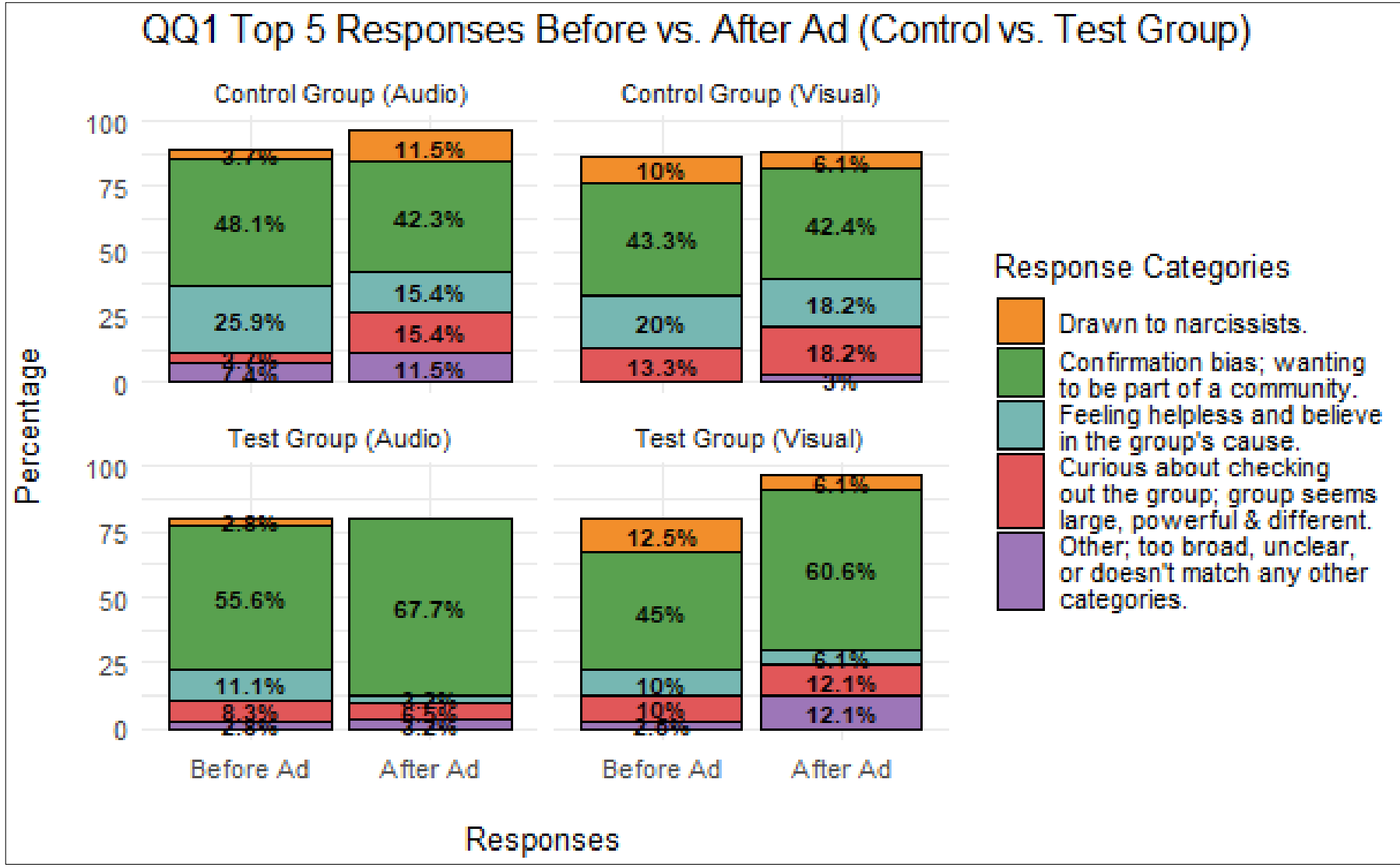


Figure 1.
QQ1 Top 5 responses
(out of 9) by ad
group, before and
after ad

Figure 2.
QQ2 responses
with all ad groups,
before and after
ad

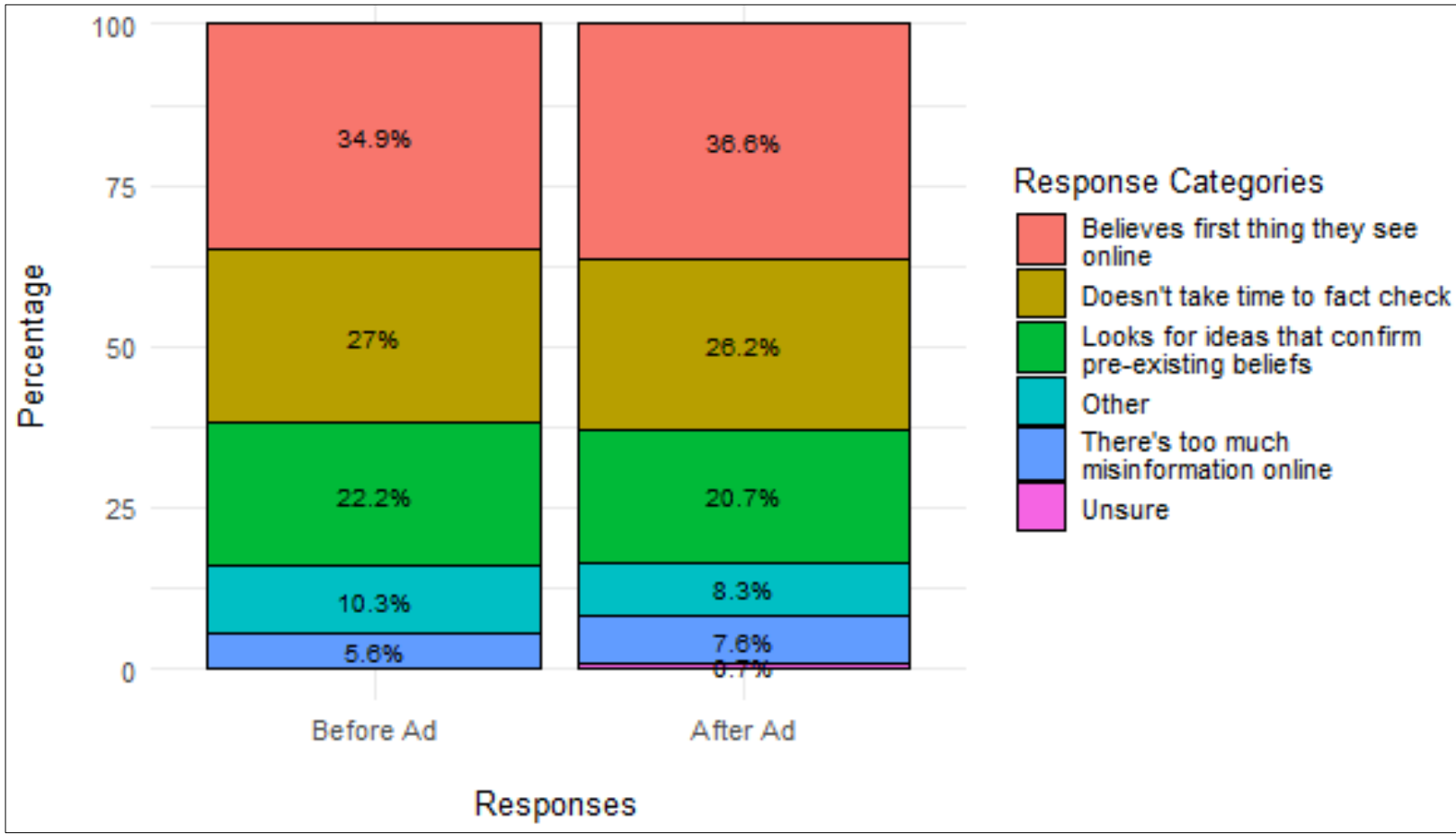


Figure 3.
QQ3 responses split by
female and male, before
and after ad

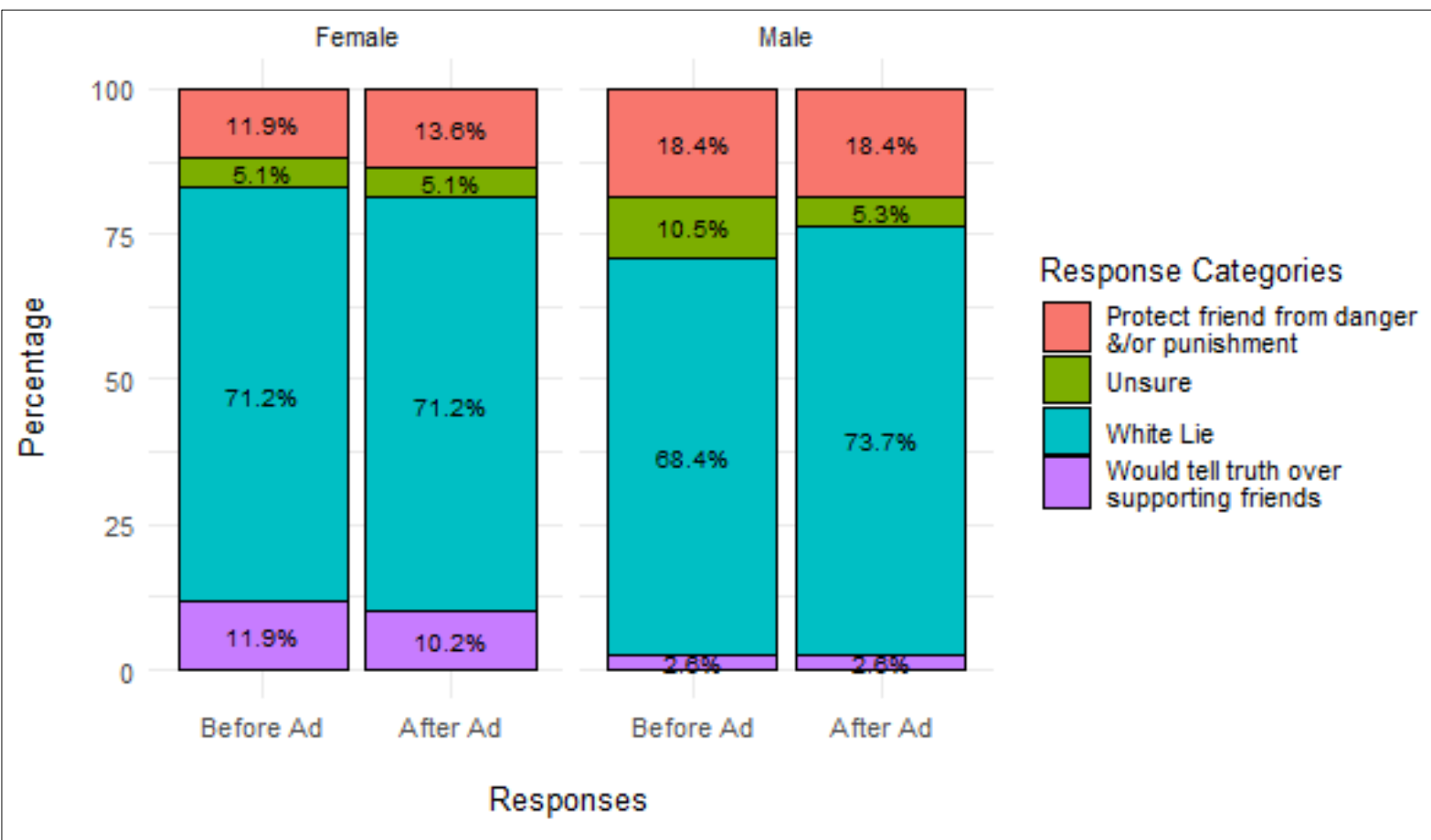


Figure 4.
Sentiment towards
ad by ad group

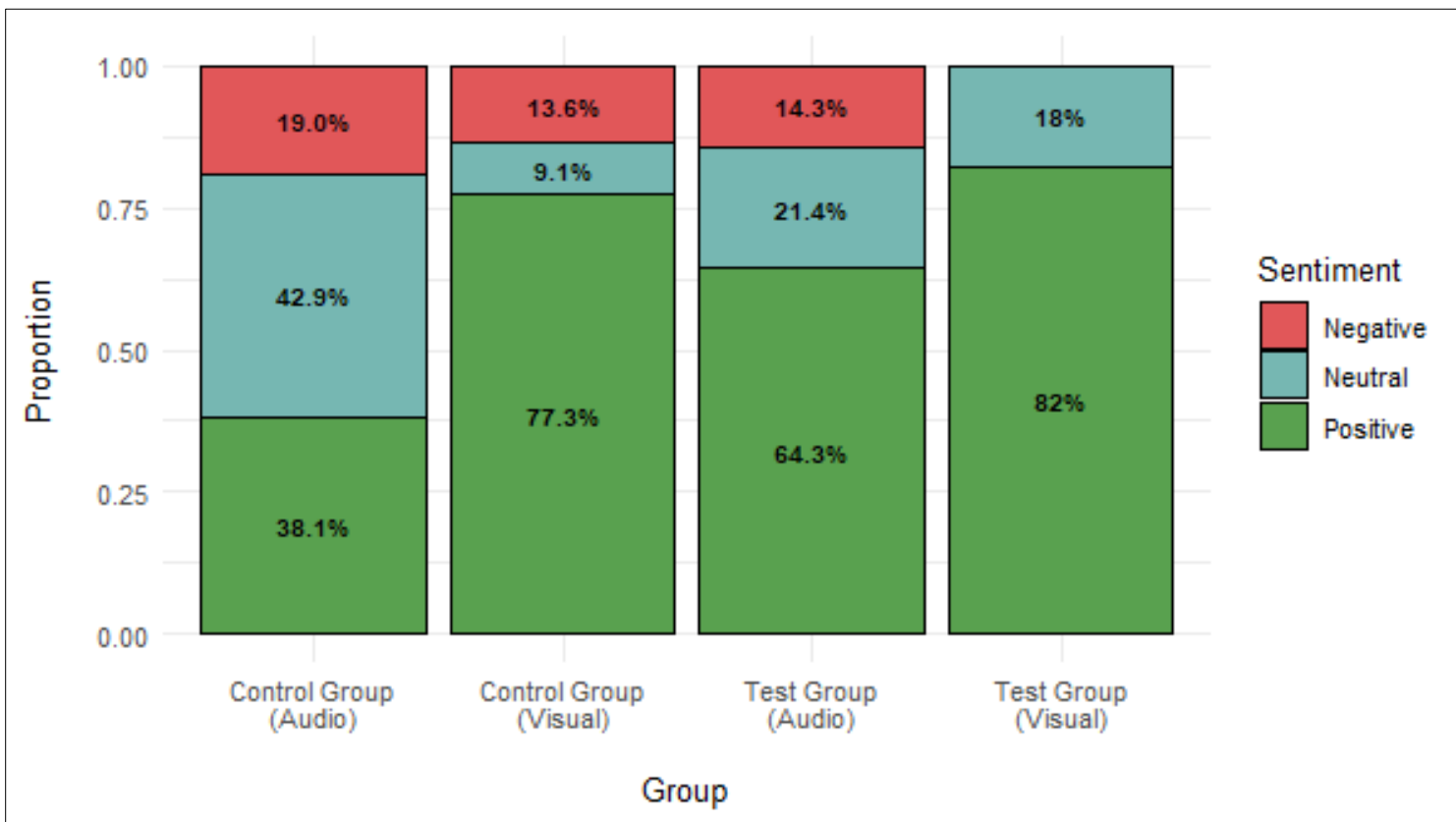


Table 1.
Composite score of written
responses for QQ1-QQ3,
with a difference of $\pm 50\%$ in
amount of words and
sentences

GROUP	< -50%.QQ1	>= 50%.QQ1	< -50%.QQ2	>= 50%.QQ2	< -50%.QQ3	>= 50%.QQ3
Control Group (Audio)	14.3	4.8	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5
Control Group (Visual)	0.0	36.4	9.1	13.6	4.5	9.1
Test Group (Audio)	21.4	14.3	10.7	7.1	10.7	21.4
Test Group (Visual)	10.7	14.3	14.3	21.4	3.6	10.7

PARTICIPANTS

- **Gender**
 - Female: 59.6%
 - Male: 46%
 - Prefer not to say: 2%
- **Ages**
 - 18-19 years old: 24.2%
 - 20-29 years old: 69.7%
 - 30+ years old: 6.1%
- **Podcast habits**
 - Listens to at least 1 podcast: 47.5%
 - Does not listen to any podcasts: 52.5%
- **Ad Skipping Behavior of Podcast Listeners:**
 - Always skips ads: 71.8%
 - Sometimes skips ads: 26.8%
 - Never skips ads: 1.4%

QUESTIONS

- **Qualitative Questions (QQ)**
 - **QQ1:** What are some reasons you think people are attracted to radical groups?
 - **QQ2:** What are some reasons you think people believe false ideas circulating online?
 - **QQ3:** Describe a situation in which supporting friends would be more important than telling the truth.
- **Questions About Ad**
 - What did you like most about the ad?
 - What did you like least about the ad?
 - Please tell us any other thoughts you have about the ad.

DISCUSSION

- **QQ1:** 9 main categories were discovered, where the category of “wanting to be part of a community” increased at least 21% for the test group whose ads portray a female character becoming friends with an online radical group (Fig. 1)
- **QQ2:** 6 common answers that remained about the same before and after ad (Fig. 2)
- **QQ3:** Females had a significantly higher tendency (325%) than men to “tell the truth over supporting friends”, while males were 44% more likely to “protect their friends” than females (Fig. 3)
- **Sentiment analysis:** Participants had a the largest negative feeling towards audio-only ads (19.0% and 14.3% for the control and test ad, respectively), while the test audio-visual ad had the largest positive sentiment of 82%, with no negative sentiment, indicating that people prefer this format the most (Fig. 4)
- **Composite score:** The largest increase in written responses increasing $\geq 50\%$ was the visual-audio control ad for QQ1, at 36.4% (Table 1)