

## Please Vote! Exploring Celebrities' Effect on Mobilising Young Voters in Japan

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### Introduction

- Celebrity Effect = A marketing strategy: Draw attentions, transfer credibility, induce affects ("cognition → affect → behaviour") [3]
- Male endorsers perform better than female endorsers [3]
- Draw public interests in elections to boost engagement [1]
- Other studies: limited effects on actual voting [2]
- Many focus on Western democracies, rarely on Asian democracies

### Current Study

- Youth participation in politics in JP remains at low level (~35% voted)
- JP govt: hiring celebrities (1 female + 1 male) as image ambassadors on election materials to promote electoral engagement
- Previous studies rarely examine celebrity effects, particularly gender-based effects, on young voter mobilisation (e.g., [4])
- 2022 Election: Erika Ikuta (Female; 25), Ennosuke Ichikawa IV (Male; 47)
- 2024 Election: Hikaru Takahashi (Female; 23), Takao Osawa (Male; 56)
- Research Questions: Does celebrity use in election campaigns increase political engagement? To what extent does celebrity gender matter?

### Data & Methodology

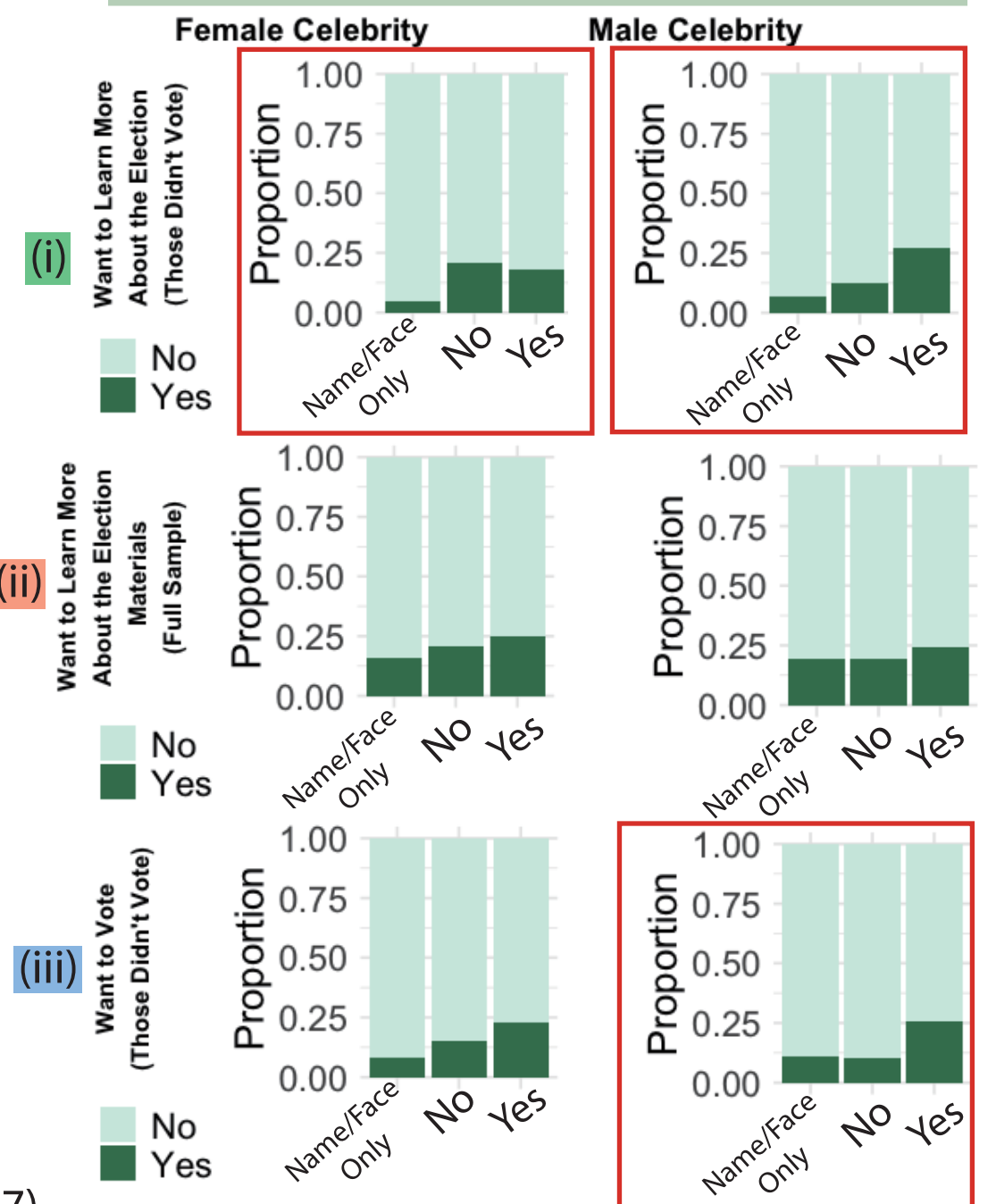
- Offline Survey with university students in Tokyo, JP
- N = 424 (2022: n = 217; 2024: n = 207)
- Age (M = 19.6), Uni Year (M = Yr 2)
- ~50% Male, ~30% Female, ~20% Others/NA
- IVs: If they know the (a) female and the (b) male celebrities on the election materials — (0) No, (1) Name/Face Only, (2) Yes
- DVs: Among non-voters:
  - (i) Interest in learning more about the election (0 = No, 1 = Yes)
  - (ii) Interest in learning more about election materials after acknowledging the celebrities and the election posters (0 = No, 1 = Yes)
  - (iii) Motivation to vote (0 = No, 1 = Yes)
- Cross-Tabulations & Chi-Square Tests & Binary Logistic Regressions

### Discussion & Implications

- Partially confirmed preceding studies
- Among non-voters:
  - Female Celebrities → Insignificant on voting & **lower** interest in the election
  - Male Celebrities → **Greater** interest in voting & the election
- All respondents:
  - Male Celebrities → **Greater** interest in the election promotion materials
- Effect size on mobilising non-voters to vote is relatively **small**
- The JP govt should reconsider its selection of female celebrities in public campaigns & Reassess the effectiveness of the overall policy on non-voters
- Future studies should (1) expand to national-level data, (2) consider celebrity types, characteristics, and demographics, (3) include both university and non-university youths, and (4) run experiments on when gender-based celebrity effects occur to understand their casual effects

### Findings

#### Visualising Cross-Tabulations and Chi-Square Tests



□  $\chi^2$  test p-value < 0.05

#### Binary Logistic Regressions

