

Americans more concerned with viability rather than electability in primary races

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With Super Tuesday tomorrow, candidates are warned to know that it's the viability they show as a leader, rather than their image or electability that may be the most important attribute in garnering the Republican nomination.

A recent study by ICA members Mitchell S. McKinney, PhD, and J. Brian Houston, Phd, of the University of Missouri, found in multiple surveys that viewers are more likely to see a candidate's [viability](#) –their position as the strongest representative of the [party](#) or champion of party principles - from a primary debate as a key marker in making a decision in voter choice. However, it is the pre-debate choice that remains the highest marker for voter selection.

"This finding seems to go against some past research, and also some of the current political punditry, that suggests what party voters are looking for is the strongest candidate to go up against the other party's nominee," said McKinney. "In the current Republican race, this focus on party viability may explain why the Republicans throughout their long nominating contest seem to keep trying to find some other candidate as an alternative to Mitt Romney.

McKinney added, it appears that Romney, with his debate performances, has not satisfied the party faithful that he's the strongest, most viable, party leader. While he has stressed his electability against Barack Obama as one of his strongest points, he's not yet convinced some in his own party that's he's the strongest [Republican](#)."

More information: McKinney's paper will appear at the ICA Annual Conference, in May 2012 in Phoenix, Arizona.

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