



A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF PARTY LEADERSHIP INFLUENCING VOTING BEHAVIOR IN TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA DISTRICT DIR UPPER

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: Voting Behavior is the combination of social, psychological, and attitudinal factors leading to a vote in an election. Thus, the central aim of the current research study was to analyze the influence of party leadership on voting behavior.

Methodology: Due to the diverse picture of the study area, a multistage stratified sampling technique was used to get more reliable information from 317 sample respondents including (212 males and 105 females). Data was collected through a pre-tested interview schedule; to determine the association between the dependent variable (voting behavior) and independent variable (party leadership) chi-square test was applied.

Main findings: The association of voting behavior was significant between voting behavior and preference of local leaders in the election ($P=0.024$), leader's inspiration in voters' constituency is counted in the electoral process ($P=0.011$), those leaders who work for public welfare ($P=0.000$), past performance of the leaders is your major concern ($P=0.001$), to influence voters by all means ($P=0.048$), commitment and devotion of the leaders ($P=0.040$) and dynamic leaders are symbols of development for society ($P=0.554$).

Applications of this study: Results as a whole indicate a significant role of party leadership in influencing voters. People generally cast vote to candidates who are local, have influence in the constituencies and did public welfare schemes in past and shows commitment and devotion. The findings of the study will be helpful in policymaking.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study attempts to explore new factors that contributed to individual voting behavior. Further, the present paper is unique in the sense that it is based on opinions and responses collected directly from the voters in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Keywords: Political Party, Leadership, Voting Behavior, Association, Chi-square, Constituencies, Devotion.

INTRODUCTION

Voting Behavior in fact is the combination of social, psychological, and attitudinal factors leading to a vote in an election (Anil, 2018). Attitudinal factors during this process, assess and analyze the individual characters and qualities of the candidates along with the assessment of government efficiency, party identifications; orientations of specific policy regarding issues and ideology for choosing a candidate from different political parties. Social factors on the other hand cover the role of region, race, religion, and social class in voting behavior, whereas the emotion and feelings come under psychological influences (Durotoye, 2014). Leadership traits play a vital role in voter's inclination to a particular political party. Different individual features are predicted by voters from the candidates which might impact for voter's voting choice (Costa & Ferreira da Silva, 2015; Macapagal, 2006). The other factors include a person's leadership, the personal inspiration of a candidate in a community and constituency, his/her previous performance, and position of their political parties in the national political scenario. Positive response in all these factors enhances the chance of success of a candidate in the election. Leaders generally stress several policies, planning, approaches, and practices during election campaigns. During this process gatherings and rallies are arranged, charming and delightful slogans are chanted and corner and street-based meetings are organized to maximize the involvement of baradari members and their heads. It is further supplemented by the door to door campaigns to attract voters. Use of print and electronic media, distribution, and circulation of party vision, mission, and manifestoes, issuance of party cards to voters, designing different party posters, distribution of handbills, leaflets, pamphlets, and party symbols are the other means to support their leaders and parties. To get the voter's support against the opponent candidate negative campaign is also propagated to influence the voting behavior (Anil, 2018; Usman, 2011; Zhou et al., 2020).



The capability, character, and charisma of leadership are significant traits in attracting, influencing, and determining voting behavior. Economic status and party affiliation have emerged as the new traits of leaders in modern politics (Miller et al., 1986). Moreover, House and Shamir (1993) hold the view that charming, transformational, and visionary leadership's approach enhances motivational mechanism which in turn influences the supporter's perception to make a dedicated decision in favor of the political party. For influencing voters, party workers usually organize rallies under the instructions of their leaders to show that they are supporting and promoting the party vision, plan and manifesto. During this process, they prefer to work under charismatic leaders to influence more voters. In addition, the recent work of Kachii (2018) stated that experts and anchorpersons have suggested that the political campaign is based to generate trust in voters to a large extent. Value resemblance further plays a significant role in the transformation of the party slogans. The voters are mainly interested in the welfare of the common man. This has been further proved as a key mechanism in motivating the voters in the elections. Likewise, voting behavior is almost directed towards the selection of those leaders who work for the public welfare and development. Voters check candidate's pro-social performance as well as their achievement in a cognitive capability test earlier to the election. Consequently, self-directed candidates have the motivation to act in a pro-social attitude, to visualize it as being public-spirited or charismatic leaders (Markussen & Tyran, 2017). Furthermore, Adeyemi and Gbadeyan (2010) stated that popular advertisements have become the most commonly applicable practice in order to develop a more constructive picture for the candidate and a more negative picture for the opposition. Moreover, Sauter and Bruns (2013) viewed that in the current scenario political parties and their candidates throughout the world consume their economic resources on the advertisement and political campaigns to make themselves more favorite brands to the general electorates. In general elections the questions which are associated with the voting behavior of the electorates that why the voters cast votes in favor of a particular candidate.

This research paper is unique in the sense that it is based on opinions and responses collected directly from the voters in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Also, this study proceeded with the following objectives.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the influence of party leadership on voting behavior.
2. To measure the association between party leadership and voting behavior based on gender.

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional study was carried out at District Upper Dir, KP, Pakistan. This kind of study is usually carried out in social science (Ullah & Muhammad, 2020). Being the major area, Upper Dir has a number of characteristics and features regarding voting behavior. It is one of the regions of KP, which is traditional in many ways particularly in connection with voting behavior. The topography of the district, following of *Pakhtunwali* (unwritten codes of life), and deep religious connection makes a strong impact on voting behavior in the study area. A very large majority of the people belong to a single tribe, namely, Yousaf Zai followed by Maliks, Khans, Sahaibzadas, Gujars, Mians, Vardaghs, Roghanies, sheikhs, and katanies, etc. Biradarim and dynastic politics were also common features of the area. Religion, political socialization, and the existence of political parties also play an important role (Khan et al., 2018).

Table 1: Proportional allocation of sample size in various villages of selected UCs in the study area

S.No	Tehsil	UC	Villages within UC	Households	Sample size
1	Dir	Qulandai	Panakot Payeen	134	24
			Nargah	90	16
2	Wari	Kotkay	Mira No. 1	134	24
			Kasono	98	17
3	Barawal	Sundrawal	Tanai	105	18
			Topikarkot	194	34
4	Sheringal	Sawnai	Achar payeen	279	49
			Jatkool	103	18
5	Kalkot	Doog Dara	Batawar	114	20
			Pitaw Kateer	152	27
6	Larjam	Bibyawar	Amlook Nar	273	48
			Loi BABA	127	22
Total				1803	317

Description and Analysis of Table 1: District Upper Dir consisted of 120228 households. It comprised of six (06) tehsils namely, Dir, Wari, Barawal, Sheringal, Kalkot, and Larjam with a total number of thirty-two (32) union councils (Statistics,



2017). Presently, the political leadership belongs to all the tehsils in the district. In order to get the overall picture of the community's perception about voting behavior, one union council from every tehsil had been selected randomly. Union councils named Qulandai, Kotkay, Sundrawal, Sawnai, Doog Dara, and Bibyawar respectively. Furthermore, two villages each selected randomly from each of the sampled union councils to get the community's perception about voting behavior at the village level. That describes the total households and sample size as well (Ullah, Liqat Ali, et al., 2020). A sample size of 317 Households was selected based on Sekaran (2003) criteria.

Furthermore, the sample size is proportionally allocated to each union council and respective villages. Data was collected from both genders however, due to the prevalence of socio-cultural norms three females were first briefed and collected the data from female respondents particularly. The collected data was analyzed at three levels (univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis). At bi-variate and multivariate analysis, the Chi-Square test was applied. At the uni-variate level frequency and percentage were presented, at bivariate analysis association between political socialization and voting behavior was analyzed and at multi-variate level analysis, respondents' gender was kept as control variables to find the association between independent and dependent variables. see (Ullah et al., 2021; Ullah, Muhammad, et al., 2020)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 2: Perception of the sampled respondents about party leadership

S. No.	Statements	Response			Total
		Yes	No	Uncertain	
1	You prefer local leaders in the election.	283 (89.3%)	31 (9.8%)	03 (.9%)	317 (100%)
2	Leaders' personal inspiration in your constituency is counted in electoral process.	251 (79.2%)	55 (17.4%)	11 (3.5%)	317 (100%)
3	You cast your vote to those leaders who work for public welfare.	285 (89.9%)	30 (9.5%)	02 (.6%)	317 (100%)
4	Past performance of the leaders is your major concern in casting vote to a candidate.	267 (84.2%)	46 (14.5%)	04 (1.3%)	317 (100%)
5	Leadership has a great impact in propagating the party mission through a proper advertisement.	276 (87.1%)	32 (10.1%)	09 (2.8%)	317 (100%)
6	Majority of the leaders try to influence voters by all means.	262 (82.6%)	48 (15.1%)	07 (2.2%)	317 (100%)
7	You are more concerned about commitment and devotion of the leaders.	268 (84.5%)	46 (14.5%)	03 (.9%)	317 (100%)
8	Dynamic leaders are symbols of development for the society.	287 (90.5%)	23 (7.3%)	07 (2.2%)	317 (100%)

Values in the table present frequency while values in the parenthesis indicate percentage.

Description and Analysis of Table 2: Results in table 2 reveal that 89.3% of the sampled respondents had the view that they prefer local leaders in the election, where 9.8% answered no and .9% optioned uncertainly (Montiel, 2002). Similarly, stated that politics in the Philippines is a personal, familiar, and cultural phenomenon. A candidate's commands in the local language not only connect him/her but also establishes interaction with the followers at a personal level. Additionally, a candidate belonging to a political clan, voters presume that the position of the candidate is running for their welfare. Because of this belief, the voters prefer him/her personally rather than politically. Results further show 79.2% of the sampled respondents had the opinion that leaders' personal inspiration in the constituency, is counted in the electoral process, 17.4% did not agree while 3.5% were uncertain. Similarly, Usman (2011) called leadership personal inspiration such as candidate belonging to the community and constituency his/her previous performance and position of political parties in national political scenario enhances the chance of success of a candidate in the election. Leaders generally stress a number of policies, planning, approaches, and practices during election campaigns. Additionally, 89.9% of the sampled respondents optioned that they cast their vote to leaders, who work for public welfare, 9.5% were against this statement while .6% were uncertain. Kachii (2018) in this regard stated that when the political campaign is based on enhancing the living standard of the voters through similar slogans generates trust in voters. The same value further plays a significant role in the transformation of the party slogans and focusing on the welfare of common people. 84.2% of the sampled respondents viewed that past performance of the leaders is their major concern while casting vote to a candidate, 14.5% answered no while, 1.3% answered uncertainly. Markussen and Tyran (2017) in this regard stated that voters check the candidate's pro-social performance and their achievements before the election. Consequently, self-directed candidates have the motivation to act in a pro-social attitude, i.e. to visualize being public-spirited or charismatic leaders. Results further show that 87.1% of the sampled respondents agreed with the statement that leadership had a great impact in propagating the party mission through a

proper advertisement, 10.1% disagreed and 2.8% were not sure about the statement. Similarly, [Adeyemi and Gbadeyan \(2010\)](#) stated that popular advertisement has become the most commonly applicable practice in order to develop a more constructive picture of the candidate and a more negative picture of the opponents. In response to another statement that majority of the leaders try to influence voters, by all means, 82.6% of the sampled respondents were in favor of it, 15.1% were against while, 2.2% replied uncertainly. [Opeibi \(2004\)](#) found that the majority of the political leaders use their energy in political rallies and special speeches delivered to attract the public in the elections. This is further supported by [Baines et al. \(2003\)](#) who found that political leaders are using social websites such as Twitter, Facebook, and youtube to hold up their political manifesto to engage with other stakeholders in the political matters of public importance. Further, 84.5% of the sampled respondents responded yes to the statement that they are more concerned about the commitment and devotion of the leaders, 14.5% replied no while, .9% responded uncertainly. Similar results are presented by [House and Shamir \(1993\)](#) in which they argued that charming, transformational, and visionary leadership attitudes enhance motivational mechanisms which in turn influence the supporter perception to make a dedicated decision in favor of the political party they belong. Furthermore, 90.5% of the sampled respondents affirmed that dynamic leaders are symbols of development for society, 7.3% did not think so while 2.2% were uncertain. Findings were supported by [Kitschelt \(1995\)](#) who believed that leadership also plays a central role in shaping voting behavior in a political system, where a strong and effective leader has been the symbol of success in modern democracies and party-based politics.

Table as a whole reports that a leader’s constituency, his/her personal inspiration, belief in public welfare, his/her commitment, and devotion were the major motivational points for the respondents. The leaders on their part also tried to influence their voters by using all means to get elected.

Table 3: Association between party leadership and voting behavior

S.No.	Statement	Voting behavior			Total	Chi-square P= value
		Yes	No	Uncertain		
1.	You prefer local leaders in the election.					
	Yes	206 (65.0%)	66 (20.8%)	11 (3.5%)	283 (89.3%)	$\chi^2 = 11.250$ (0.024)
	No	18 (5.7%)	9 (2.8%)	4 (1.3%)	31 (9.8%)	
	Uncertain	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)	3 (0.9%)	
A leader’s personal inspiration in your constituency is counted in the electoral process.						
2.	Yes	176 (55.5%)	64 (20.2%)	11 (3.5%)	251 (79.2%)	$\chi^2 = 13.158$ (0.011)
	No	42 (13.2%)	11 (3.5%)	2 (0.6%)	55 (17.4%)	
	Uncertain	7 (2.2%)	3 (0.9%)	1 (0.3%)	11 (3.5%)	
	You cast your vote on those leaders who work for public welfare.					
3.	Yes	209 (65.9%)	66 (20.8%)	10 (3.2%)	285 (89.9%)	$\chi^2 = 21.230$ (0.000)
	No	15 (4.7%)	10 (3.2%)	5 (1.6%)	30 (9.5%)	
	Uncertain	1 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.3%)	2 (0.6%)	
	Past performance of the leaders is your major concern in casting vote for a candidate.					
4.	Yes	188 (59.3%)	67 (21.1%)	12 (3.8%)	267(84.2%)	$\chi^2 = 18.121$ (0.001)
	No	35 (11.0%)	9 (2.8%)	2 (0.6%)	46 (14.5%)	
	Uncertain	2 (0.6%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.6%)	4 (1.3%)	
	Leadership has a great impact in propagating the party mission through a proper advertisement.					
5.	Yes	199 (62.8%)	64 (20.2%)	13 (4.1%)	276 (87.1%)	$\chi^2 = 3.432$ (0.488)
	No	22 (6.9%)	8 (2.5%)	2 (0.6%)	32 (10.1%)	
	Uncertain	4 (1.3%)	4 (1.3%)	1 (0.3%)	9 (2.8%)	
	The majority of the leaders try to influence voters by all means.					
6.	Yes	185 (58.4%)	65 (20.5%)	12 (3.8%)	262 (82.6%)	$\chi^2 = 9.583$ (0.048)
	No	37 (11.7%)	9 (2.8%)	2 (0.6%)	48 (15.1%)	
	Uncertain	3 (0.9%)	2 (0.6%)	2 (0.6%)	7 (2.2%)	
	You are more concerned about the commitment and devotion of the leaders.					
7.	Yes	185 (58.4%)	68 (21.5%)	15 (4.7%)	268 (84.5%)	$\chi^2 = 10.035$ (0.040)
	No	38 (12.0%)	8 (2.5%)	0 (0.0%)	46 (14.5%)	
	Uncertain	2 (0.6%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.3%)	3 (0.9%)	
	Dynamic leaders are symbols of development for the society.					
8.	Yes	204 (64.4%)	67 (21.1%)	16 (5.0%)	287 (90.5%)	$\chi^2 = 3.021$
	No	17 (5.4%)	6 (1.9%)	0 (0.0%)	23 (7.3%)	



Uncertain	4 (1.3%)	3 (0.9%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (2.2%)	(0.554)
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Level of Significant= 0.5

Description and Analysis of Table 3: It shows a significant association between voting behavior and a statement that you prefer local leaders in the election (P=0.024). [Montiel \(2002\)](#) in this regard noted that politics in the Philippines is counted personal, familiar, and cultural phenomenon. People usually are more comfortable with a candidate who speaks the local language easily and is known to the voters on a personal level. Moreover, if one belongs to a political clan, voters presume the candidate running for a position as their birthright. Because of this, the voters prefer such persons rather than those who are more qualified. A significant association was also found between voting behavior and a statement that a leader’s personal inspiration in your constituency is counted in the electoral process (P=0.011). Leadership also plays a central role in shaping voting behavior in a political system. Strong and effective leaders have been the symbol of success in modern democracies and party-based politics ([Kitschelt, 1995](#)). Results in the mentioned table further report a highly significant association between voting behavior and a statement that the voters cast their vote to those leaders who work for public welfare (P=0.000). Leadership and their previous performance, rational inspiration, individualized support, strengthening common targets, role modeling, and way of communication influence voting judgments. Most of the voters have no direct reporting associated with the candidate. They have to draw conclusions regarding the individuals' qualities of the leadership based on various factors such as; staged media coverage except for individual skills ([Gardner & Avolio, 1998](#)).

Results also show another significant association between voting behavior and the statement that past performance of the leaders is your major concern in casting vote to a candidate (P=0.001). The results are endorsed by [Markussen and Tyran \(2017\)](#) who indicate that voters observe pro-social performance, as well as their achievements earlier to the election and this, is a well-known reality to the candidates and consequently, self-directed candidates have the motivation to act in a pro-social attitude, i.e. to visualize being public-spirited or charismatic leaders.

A non-significant association was also found between voting behavior and the statement that leadership has a great impact in propagating the party mission through a proper advertisement (P=0.488). Results did not verify the findings of the study of [Sauter and Bruns \(2013\)](#) who argued that currently the political parties and their candidates throughout the world utilize their economic resources on the advertisement and political campaigns. [Opeibi \(2004\)](#) in this regard stated that the majority of the political leaders use resources in political rallies and special speeches to attract the public in the elections. Results further report a significant association between voting behavior and a statement that the majority of the leaders try to influence voters by all means (P=0.048). The same was the findings of [Adeyemi and Gbadeyan \(2010\)](#) who stated that nowadays advertisements have become the most common practice in order to develop a more positive picture for their own candidates and a more negative picture for the opponents. Moreover, results indicate that commitment and devotion of the leaders have a significant association with voting behavior (P=0.040). [Galeotti and Zizzo \(2015\)](#) in this regard stated that voters are informed regarding the capability and honesty of candidates in public. Most of the voters prioritize truthfulness over the ability, skill, and vote to the most trustworthy candidate even if the candidate may not be expected to convey the maximum financial payoff to the voters. On the other hand, a non-significant association was found with the statement that dynamic leaders are symbols of development for society (P=0.554). The results did not endorse the findings of [Kitschelt \(1995\)](#) who stated that leadership also plays a central role in shaping voting behavior in a political system. Strong and effective leaders have been the symbol of success in modern democracies.

Results as a whole indicate a significant role of party leadership in influencing voters. People generally cast vote to candidates who are local, have influence in the constituencies and did public welfare schemes in past and shows commitment and devotion.

Table 4: Association between voting behavior and party leadership (controlling gender)

Gender	Independent variable	Dependent variable			Statistics Chi-Square (P-Value)
		Voting behavior			
	Party leadership	Yes	No	Total	
Male	Yes	125 (74.4%)	43 (25.6%)	168 (100.0%)	$\chi^2 = 2.922 (0.087)$
	No	27 (61.4%)	17 (38.6%)	44 (100.0%)	
Female	Yes	58 (73.4%)	21 (26.6%)	79 (100.0%)	$\chi^2 = 2.283 (0.131)$
	No	15 (57.7%)	11 (42.3%)	26 (100.0%)	

Description and Analysis of Table 4: Association between party leadership and voting behavior (controlling gender)

Results for males in table 4 describing a significant association of party leadership with voting behavior (P=0.087). In the context of females a non-significant association of party leadership with voting behavior was found (P=0.147). Based on



results, the relationship between party leadership and voting behavior was non-spurious for the male while the relationship in the above variables was spurious for females. In the majority of cases, voters check candidates' pro-social performance as well as their achievement in a cognitive capability. Consequently, self-directed candidates have the motivation to act in a pro-social attitude, to visualize it as being public-spirited or charismatic leaders (Markussen & Tyran, 2017).

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

By the study, it was observed that voting behavior has always been a major concern of the people in democratic societies. It becomes more important when one perceives it in the traditional societies and communities, where democratic norms have been introduced newly. Moreover, elections have a significant role in the political system. Through the electoral process, voters make their political judgments and elect the representatives they like. However, in the electoral process, the voting behavior of voters is influenced by several factors including party leaders winning the battle of the ballot box.

In order to ensure creditable elections, the following recommendations were made based on current findings; Special focus must be given on improvement of the educational system because education is the important influencing factor that brings positive change in the behavior, manners, and other physical activities of the individuals to think broadly and act perfectly. Education also boosts up the decisive power of voters to elect honest, committed, devoted and dynamic leadership in the right political direction for the development of human society.

LIMITATIONS AND STUDY FORWARDS

The present study was confined to only Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which certainly limited the generalization of the study at the international level. Further, the future study must be conducted on the Pakistan level. Some unanswered area has been exposed in the present study for example association between voting behavior and ethnic relation.

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AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Najib Khan and Muhammad Jawad conceived of the presented idea and developed the paper. Mussawar Shah, Saima Sarir, and Naushad Khan are the members of the advisory board and approved this study.

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