

## **Factors Affecting Voting Behavior in Darya Khan A Case Study of General Elections 2018**

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### **Abstract**

This research examines the complex factors shaping voter decisions in Darya Khan during the 2018 general election, including leadership, religion, political campaigns, and demographics. By employing a survey technique with a self-structured questionnaire and rigorous data analytic methodologies, this study reveals noteworthy associations between voting patterns and other independent variables, it reveals that leadership skills and party manifestos significantly influence voter preferences, while religion has a subtler but large impact. Demographic factors, such as gender, age, urban-rural divide, income, and occupation, show notable variations in voting behavior. Urban voters differ from rural ones, and gender plays a substantial role. This study contributes valuable insights into electoral dynamics, helping scholars, policymakers, and the public better understand the complexities of voting behavior.

**Keywords:** Voting Behavior, Darya Khan, Democracy, Political Participation, Social Identity, Electoral Process, Political Influence, Socioeconomic Factors.

### **Introduction;**

Voting behavior is a critical aspect of democratic governance, reflecting the preferences, beliefs, and influences that shape how individuals and groups make electoral choices. In countries like Pakistan, where socio-cultural factors play a significant role in shaping voting patterns, understanding these dynamics is essential for strengthening democratic institutions and promoting fair, transparent, and inclusive electoral processes. By studying voting behavior at both the national and local levels, such as in regions like Darya Khan, we can gain valuable

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insights into the factors that drive electoral outcomes and inform future political strategies and policies aimed at enhancing democratic participation.

## **Voting Behavior**

Voting behavior refers to how individuals or groups vote in elections, influenced by a variety of factors, including political beliefs socioeconomic status, personal experiences, and education. It encompasses the preferences, patterns, and decisions that voters exhibit when selecting candidates or supporting specific policies. Voting trends help us understand how people wish to shape society through their participation in elections at local, provincial, or national levels. This behavior is a critical component of political participation in democratic societies (Leighley & Nagler, 1992; Anderson & Stephenson, 2010).

## **The Role of Voting Behavior in Democracy**

Voting is fundamental to democracy, allowing citizens to connect with elected officials and participate in shaping government policies that affect their daily lives. It influences the makeup of the legislative and executive branches, determining the direction of public policy. By studying voting behavior, scholars, policymakers, and strategists gain insights into the principles guiding democratic systems, which is essential for ensuring that governance remains accountable and reflective of the public's will (Campbell & David, 2008; Sides et al., 2011). Voting behavior is crucial in democratic systems because it reflects public opinion and serves as a catalyst for policy changes. Democracy thrives when citizens participate actively, and voting is one of the most direct ways to engage in the political process. Voters' decisions are shaped by various factors, including economic background, education, political ideology, and personal values. Understanding these motivations helps us appreciate how individuals make complex political choices, especially in democracies where voter participation ensures the legitimacy of elected officials (Anglin, 1998; Lednum, 2006).

## **Voting Trends on the National Level**

Pakistan has a complex social structure having a variety of cultures, people differ culturally, socially, and religiously so in other words it is not one nation which creates distance between the ruler and the ruled. So, the voting trends in Pakistan differ from area to area and culture to culture. Pakistan depends on foreign resources for its economic and defense challenges. This results in foreign influence in the domestic matters of Pakistan (Ziring, 2005). In countries like Pakistan, where the political landscape is complex and diverse, understanding voting behavior at a national level is vital. Pakistan has held multiple elections since its creation, with various political parties competing for power. Voters in Pakistan often base their decisions on factors such as issue-based voting, candidate personality, and performance. Additionally, socio-cultural influences like the biraderi system and religion significantly impact voting choices in certain regions (Askari & Shafi, 2013).

### **Voting Behavior in Punjab, Pakistan**

Punjab, the most populous province in Pakistan, plays a pivotal role in the nation's elections. The voting patterns in Punjab, influenced by local political culture and socio-economic factors, are crucial for any party looking to form a government. Biraderism, caste clusters, and personal loyalty to political leaders are significant influences on voting behavior in the region. The province has a long history of biraderi-based politics, where voters align with candidates based on clan and caste affiliations (Tariq & Alamgir, 2013). The 2013 general elections in Punjab revealed that many voters supported candidates based on their biraderi connections rather than party policies. In District Layyah, for example, the biraderi system played a significant role in determining electoral outcomes, with voters more inclined to support candidates from their biraderi (Yusufzai, 2016).

### **Voting Behavior and the Global Agenda**

Voting behavior research aligns closely with the United Nations' Agenda 2030, particularly with Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16), which aims to promote peace, justice, and strong institutions. Understanding how people vote helps identify barriers to political

participation, such as social inequality and lack of access to information. By studying voting behavior, policymakers can design more inclusive electoral systems that reflect diverse societal voices, thus fostering a more just and equitable political landscape (Akhtar, 2016; Ahmed, 2017). In countries like Pakistan, where elections are often influenced by socio-cultural factors, strengthening democratic institutions through voter education and political accountability is essential for achieving SDG 16. The 2018 general elections in Pakistan, for instance, were influenced by factors like religion, leadership attributes, and socio-cultural dynamics, underscoring the need for issue-based politics to reduce clientelism and enhance electoral accountability (Shah & Majeed, 2022).

## **Historical Evolution of the Electoral System in Pakistan**

Pakistan's electoral system has undergone significant changes since its independence in 1947. The country has experienced periods of both civilian rule and military dictatorship, each leaving its mark on the political landscape. The democratic transitions in 2013 and 2018, marked by peaceful transfers of power through elections, were important milestones in strengthening the country's democratic institutions. However, understanding current voting patterns and electoral behaviors requires acknowledging the historical legacies that continue to shape voter preferences (Ahmed, 2002).

## **Traditional Voting Methods in Pakistan**

Traditional voting methods, such as in-person voting at polling stations, have long been the backbone of Pakistan's electoral process. Despite the challenges of rigging accusations and logistical issues in rural areas, traditional voting continues to play a vital role in democratic participation. However, these methods also highlight the need for reforms to ensure transparency, reduce voter manipulation, and improve access for all citizens, especially in remote regions like Punjab (Yusufzai, 2016).

## **Political Landscape of Darya Khan**

Darya Khan, a tehsil in District Bhakkar, Darya Khan is an ideal illustration of Pakistan's broader political landscape. Punjab serves as a microcosm of Pakistan's broader political environment. Its population is 360,427, 280006 in rural areas, and 80421 in urban areas. Its area is 1719 km<sup>2</sup> (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics Census, 2017). Darya Khan is in Sargodha Division, which is situated in western Punjab. Darya Khan is on the boundary wall of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, so its culture has a variety of Punjabi Saraiki and Pakhtun culture remixes. Various political parties are competing to control the electorate in Tehsil Darya Khan. There are both local and national politicians in the mix, establishing a complex political environment that makes voting decisions more challenging. Civil society and community organizations are essential in fostering transformative change and generating public conversation. Issues that reflect the needs and ideals of the community, such as healthcare, education, infrastructure development, and environmental protection, are at the top of politics in Darya Khan.

One national assembly seat and one provincial assembly seat are present in the Darya Khan region. In the General elections, 2018 on the national assembly seat (NA 97) Sana Ullah Khan Masti Khail got 121019 votes and succeeded as an independent candidate. While runner-up was Majeed Khan Khanan Khail who got 91821 votes, he was a candidate for Pakistan Muslim League N (PML N). On the Provincial level (PP 90) Saeed Akbar Khan Niwani got 59490 votes and succeeded as an independent leader. Irfan Ullah Khan Niazi of (PML N) was in 2nd number scoring 45026 votes. Both National and provincial candidates joined PTI later on.

## **Literature Review**

While everyone agrees that elections are vital, there is specific significance in elections in Pakistan. Elections were responsible for either Pakistan's government creation or dissolution. A key concept in democracies is voting behavior. It explains the motivations underlying voters' ballot casting and the method by which they make choices about their votes (Nadeem & Bashir, 2020).

## **Factors Affecting Voting Behavior**

## **Biraderism**

Biraderism denotes a social and political phenomenon found in South Asia including Pakistan, where clan tribal or kinship connections called 'biraderis' dominate sociopolitical existence. The term "biraderi" means extended family or clans with similar genealogy (Fatima & Akhtar, 2022). In Pakistan, the social structure of kinship and brotherhood, referred to as "biraderism," greatly influences voting patterns. Political allegiances, familial connections, and economic situations are all interconnected. The politics of individuals are involved in Pakistan, and the democratic government process is shaped by fundamental social structures such as familial linkage, group, biraderies, and cast. These groups shape a person's behavior and opinion, mainly in elections while electing a representative (Ahmad, 2020). In Pakistan, the tradition of close familial bonds significantly influences voting behavior. In households with a hierarchical structure, elders often wield significant power, leading to the passing down of political views to younger generations. Elderly individuals' political decisions create a chain reaction that influences younger generations, fostering a shared commitment to politics (Nadeem & Bashir, 2020).

In a survey done in Multan City, about 30.8% of respondents were compelled to vote for a certain candidate or party by their families, which means that family has a significant influence in deciding voting preferences (Ahmad 2020). Furthermore, a study of the 2013 elections in District Layyah discovered that 34.4% of respondents voted for a party chosen by their biraderi and family members. Their own voting decision was thus impacted by their parents' choices. Voting behavior in Punjabi groups in Pakistan is mostly influenced by a person's family history and connection with large extended clan groups, or "biradaris." A further significant element is the "quom," which is a wider collection of people with common ancestors. These organizations often impact voters' preferences by encouraging the support of particular political parties and politicians (Anwar, 2016).

## **Mass Media**

Mass media means communication through different channels that can impact the masses. (Green et al., 2009). A systematized form of communication that quickly covers a large audience is commonly referred to as mass media. These include newspapers, radio, television, and the internet, it can be an avenue for political discourse during elections, debates among party members or candidates, and discussions among citizens about public issues (McQuail, 2005). In democratic societies, media is seen as a representative of the public, and it plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion, providing awareness about government strategies, and highlighting important public issues (Masood & Hassan, 2020). Electronic media is widely regarded as the foremost instrument for political campaigns in America. Hence, political parties in the nation frequently commit over fifty percent of their campaign funds to electronic media for election campaigns. Europe experiences a similar situation (Biswas & Roy, 2014). The proliferation of social media has also been witnessed in rural areas of Punjab, and it is also affecting voting behavior in rural areas (Gul & Khan, 2017). These days, political advertisements seek to educate, inspire, and spark voters' interest in establishing a sense of ownership, especially for participation in the democratic process on Election Day (Kamran, 2009).

## **Religion**

Using faith and religious attachments as a voting determinant is referred to as the religious factor that determines how people vote. Political candidates or parties may choose to work closely with certain religious organizations or promote policies that support those beliefs to attract votes from those communities. In Pakistan, as well as in other countries of the world, people's voting choices are significantly influenced by their religious beliefs. This essay examines how religious institutions, values, and beliefs influence voters' political decisions. (Gul & Khan, 2017). The confluence of politics and religion within Pakistan is profoundly embedded in the nation's socio-cultural framework, influencing electoral conduct, candidate nomination, and policy agendas. Religions influence political views; they affect political attitudes as a result of the value system (Butt & Awan, 2017). Religious preferences are significant for the masses, particularly in rural areas and regions where religion holds sway in socioeconomic activities. In these areas, leaders often present themselves as representatives of religion, making it an

attractive aspect of their appeal. Furthermore, religious affiliation and political campaigns influence individuals' voting decisions. In South Asia, for example, most voters support political candidates who share their language and adhere to the same religious practices (Waseem, 2006). Religion and religious views have consistently motivated individuals to support specific politicians, groups, ideologies, or parties (Lawrence 2002)

### **Money Politics, Patronage and Clientelism**

Clientelism can be described as a form of instrumental friendship where a person of higher socioeconomic status (the patron) provides protection and various benefits to a person of lower status (the client) in exchange for general support or personal services from the client. In Pakistan, clientelism is a significant determinant of voting behavior (Farmanullah et al., 2015). Another critical component is patronage, which is when political leaders give jobs, resources, or favors to people or organizations in return for their support. Establishing patronage networks serves as a means for politicians to solidify their influence and guarantee a devoted voter (Gul & Khan, 2017). In Pakistan, the prevalence of patronage politics and clientelism manifests in the provision of employment opportunities and development projects in both urban and rural areas. (Farmanullah, 2014).

The voting behavior of an average voter in Punjab tends to focus more on local and personal issues rather than national and global concerns. Prosperous candidates or political parties can take advantage of this necessity, use their financial power to control the political discourse and establish a positive perception among the voting population (Ahmad, 2020). Public sector positions, contracts, or perks may be allocated based on political loyalty rather than qualifications, promoting a system where adherence to a specific leader or party is incentivized (Waseem 2006). In Punjab and other regions, local issues mainly revolve around infrastructure and development concerns, including the lack of essential services like healthcare, education, and social welfare, as well as various matters related to government institutions (Shah & Majeed 2022)

### **Electoral campaigns**



Electoral campaigns are defined as when concurrent elections occur, political parties or candidates have to attempt to convince people to vote for them, by including advertising, public speaking, debates, and canvassing among others (Bike 2012). The political campaign utilizes a range of channels, such as rallies, member meetings, press releases, and pamphlets, to connect with citizens, persuade them, and mobilize their support (Shah & Majeed 2022). Door-to-door vote-gaining rallies enhance the magnificence of jalsas by facilitating a more individualized and close encounter between candidates and voters. This grassroots strategy entails political campaigners conducting door-to-door outreach in communities, engaging in individualized talks with locals, and addressing their concerns (Karim, 2014). Political campaigns are strategized to secure a maximum vote bank, with each political party aiming to win voters' favor through effective election campaigns, the outcomes of which are evident during elections (Masood & Hassan, 2020).

The most preferred techniques for campaigning involve door-to-door canvassing and establishing personal connections with the voters. Besides these, various other techniques are commonly employed in rural and urban areas of Punjab. With significant advancements in media, television advertisements, addresses, and talk shows will hold a crucial role in the upcoming electoral campaign (Bike 2012). Voting behavior is significantly influenced by the use of digital and traditional media platforms during campaigns. Campaign messages are spread to a bulk of the audience by the use of social media, radio, television, and newspapers in prominent cities as well as villages in Punjab (Kamran, 2009).

## **Party Identification**

Party identification is referred to as if someone feels psychologically attached or loyal to a particular political party (Ahmad, 2017). Party affiliation is a crucial factor in determining voting preferences in Pakistan. It creates an intricate network of connections, beliefs, and past associations that impact voters' choices in elections. This tendency is strongly rooted in the political culture of the region, where individuals frequently associate themselves with specific parties based on a variety of criteria, including philosophy and family traditions (Akhtar, 2016).

Party loyalty has a significant impact that goes beyond simply having similar values. It affects how we think and influences the way we perceive things. Individuals who demonstrate loyalty to a political party frequently display cognitive biases, which means they tend to perceive information in a way that supports their party's positions (Ahmad & Shakeel 2020).

In Punjab, party identification is a long-term and enduring process, as once individuals align themselves with a particular party, they tend to remain loyal and vote for that party in subsequent elections. This identification is persistent and requires substantial time to change (Masood & Hassan, 2020). Some voters often prefer voting for a political party rather than being driven solely by biradriism (clan or ethnic affiliation) because a political party with a strong and positive image can effectively influence the public's voting decisions (Ahmad & Shakeel 2020).

## **Leadership**

Leadership refers to the capacity of an individual or a collective to motivate, direct, and rally the supporters or constituents of an institution or community. Leadership is a crucial factor in influencing voting behavior within a political system. Leaders who are strong and successful have been seen as a representation of success in contemporary democracies and politics based on party affiliations (Ahmad, 2017). The personal qualities and attributes of a leader hold substantial influence in shaping the voting behavior of the public, and characteristics like effective communication skills, dedication to serving the community, and economic status are crucial factors that sway the voting tendencies of the people (Shawar & Asim, 2011). Results of elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa indicate that a considerable proportion of independent candidates are consistently elected to both provincial and national assemblies from the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The majority of these autonomous candidates originate from the northern territories and districts of the KPK. The prevalence of notable people, tribal leaders, and powerful elites in the region is the cause. They possess their sphere of impact and can be chosen autonomously Far (Farmanullah & Rahman 2015).

Leaders are more likely to win support at the polls if they can establish cogent ideological platforms and connect with the electorate's existing attitudes. (Ahmad, 2017).

Ultimately, the traits and qualities of political leaders have a substantial impact on voting decisions in Punjab and Pakistan. Leaders who demonstrate these characteristics effectively connect with the public, fostering trust, allegiance, and backing (Kamran, 2009).

## **Waderaism**

Feudalism or Waderaism is explained as a hierarchical structure where rulers serve as benefactors, offering security, assets, and assistance to their subjects in return for allegiance (Ahmad, 2002). The politics of Pakistan revolves around the influence of financial resources. Individuals who are impoverished and lacking in resources are unlikely to be elected to political assemblies. Election campaigning necessitates substantial expenditures that are beyond the financial means of individuals with typical incomes (Anwar, 2016). Due to productive deliberation and mutual agreement, zamindars typically a politician who comes to their hujra, or place of residency, win over biradari members to a candidate. During this gathering, they engage in dua-e-khair, a prayer aimed at ensuring the success of the candidates. (Askari 2002). A small number of feudal lords have power over about two-thirds of the parliament. While the prevalence of feudalism in Pakistan is gradually diminishing, it continues to be a significant aspect of the social framework of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in many manifestations. Impoverished individuals without access to resources still rely on landlords for their basic needs and survival (Farmanullah & Rahman 2015).

The historical inheritance of feudalism in Punjab has deeply embedded a series of characteristics that greatly influence the way individuals associate themselves with political organizations during elections (Ahmad, 2002). Feudalism or Waderaism has a big effect on how people vote in Punjab. It's part of a complicated social and political situation where land ownership, past power structures, and patronage networks are very important. The historical inheritance of feudalism in Punjab has deeply embedded a series of characteristics that greatly influence the way individuals associate themselves with political organizations during elections (Ahmad, 2002).

## **Issue politics**

Issue politics is referred as to voting for a candidate or party based on their specific opinions or preferences for particular factors, like the economy, health care, educational standards, and environmental concerns before they make any ballot decisions (Akhtar, 2016). Issue politics is a crucial tactic used by political candidates in Punjab to get votes. It involves addressing the specific issues and ambitions of the voter in a detailed and meaningful way. The significance of politics centered on specific issues in this region can be comprehended by examining various fundamental dynamics (Masood & Hassan 2020). Policy positions about a particular local or national issue are key factors in making voting decisions. When deciding whom to vote in elections, voters frequently take into account the policies about dominant issues in their area of the candidates. The degree to which a politician's policy fits with the values and preferences of voters can greatly influence their choice to vote for that candidate. Based on their positions on important issues such the national security, social issues, healthcare, education, environment, and economics, voters assess (Akhtar, 2016).

Explaining how national policies will be customized to tackle the specific difficulties encountered by the province enables candidates to showcase a sophisticated strategy that is in line with the local circumstances. Political issues are essential for garnering votes in Punjab. (Askari 2002). Candidates who approach the political scene by prioritizing the resolution of specific concerns are more likely to establish a stronger bond with the electorate. Politically successful individuals in Punjab skillfully integrate their political methods with practical solutions, utilizing issue-oriented politics to establish a personal and community-oriented connection with voters (Shawar & Asim, 2012).

### **Analysis and Literature of General Elections 2018**

The 2018 Pakistani general election represented a major shift in the country's political landscape, influenced by a complex mix of social, economic, and cultural factors. Voter behavior was deeply affected by kinship (biraderi) and familial ties, particularly in regions like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, where voters often chose candidates based on clan loyalties (Nazir et al., 2020; Nizamani et al., 2019). Rural areas of Punjab, like District Bahawalpur, were more

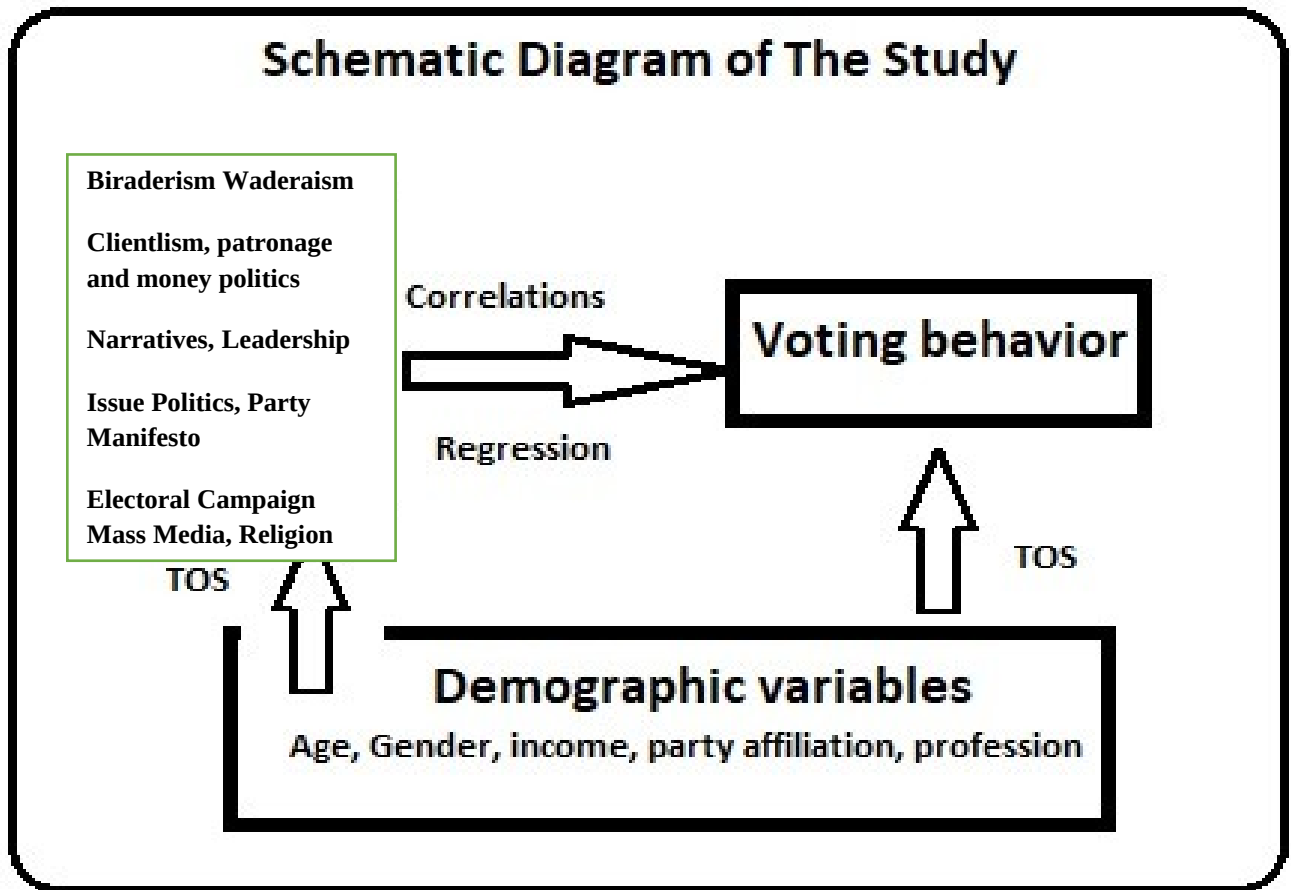
influenced by caste and baradari systems than urban regions (Shah & Bakht, 2019). Additionally, younger and more educated voters in places like District Buner prioritized leadership qualities over family ties (Shah & Majeed 2022).

The election also saw increased participation from women and youth, particularly in traditionally conservative regions like Dir and Bajaur, where women ran for office for the first time (Nizamani et al., 2019). The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) gained significant traction, driven by its anti-corruption slogan and a focus on leadership, particularly in urban Ahmad & Shakeel 2020). Religious votes also played a significant role, especially with the rise of parties like the TLP ((Nazir et al., 2020). The widespread use of social media further shaped electoral outcomes, influencing public opinion and party visibility (Masood & Hassan 2020).

### **Conceptual Framework**

In light of the literature review, key informant interviews were conducted to highlight the most prominent factors that affect voting behavior in Darya Khan Punjab. (Ahmad, 2020; Sadiq et al., 2014; McQuail, 2005; Farmanullah & Islam, 2019; Butt & Awan, 2017; Antunes, 2010; Masood & Hassan, 2020; Shawar & Asim, 2012; Kanwal et al., 2014; Usman 2011 )

As a result of both of these, it is concluded that the following factors (variables) mostly affect voting behavior in Darya Khan, hence following framework helped to test the impact of factors affecting voting behavior in Darya Khan.



## Research Gap

Given the literature review, was observed that though there exists a lot of research on voting behavior in Pakistan, electoral politics, and voting trends, however, this research is generally theoretical. On the other hand, empirical research is generally focused at the national level. Similarly, empirical studies on electoral behavior have also been conducted in some of the prominent cities of Punjab and Pakistan level as well. Like (Ahmad 2002), (Ahmad 2017), (Akhtar 2016), (Anwar 2016), (Askari 2002), and some other scholars have researched prominent cities of Punjab. Same as (Azeez et al., 2016), (Anwar 2016), (Ahmed & Shakeel 2020), (Ali 2021), and some other scholars have done work on the Pakistani level. However, there exist no studies on electoral behavior in rural areas of Pakistan particularly Darya Khan, a historical city. Therefore, this study bridges this gap by exploring the factors affecting voting behavior in a historical and strategically important city i.e. Darya Khan.

## Research Methodology

The research methodology chapter outlines the study’s approach and techniques. The study employs a quantitative design to analyze voting behavior and other variables, utilizing statistical tools for testing associations. A survey approach was chosen, employing a self-structured questionnaire to gather data from both rural and urban areas of Darya Khan. Primary data was collected through this survey and census data, while secondary data was sourced from books, journal articles, and newspapers.

The study’s population is Darya Khan’s total population of 360,427. A sample of 400 was determined using the Yamane formula, which considers the total population and desired precision. Random sampling was applied to ensure representation across various demographics, including residence, education level, age, gender, and profession. Data analysis included both descriptive statistics (such as frequency, mean, and mode) and inferential statistics (like correlations, regression, and tests of significance) to explore relationships and impacts among variables. This methodology ensures a comprehensive and representative analysis of voting behavior in the target area.

## Findings and Analysis

The correlation analysis between the independent variables (Biraderism, Waderaism, Religion, Leadership, Money Politics Patronage, and Clientism affect voting Behavior in General Elections 2018.

		Biraderism	Waderaism	Religion	Leadership	Money Politics Patronage and Clientism	Voting Behavior
Biraderism	Pearson Correlation	1	.484**	.214**	.061	.063	.202*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.007	.445	.428	.010
	N	400	400	400	400	400	400

Waderaism	Pearson Correlation	.484**	1	.138	-.032	.258**	.139
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.082	.689	.001	.081
	N	400	400	400	400	400	400
Religion	Pearson Correlation	.214**	.138	1	-.147	.156*	-.250**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.082		.065	.050	.001
	N	400	400	400	400	400	400
Leadership	Pearson Correlation	.061	-.032	-.147	1	-.009	.393**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.445	.689	.065		.912	.000
	N	400	400	400	400	400	400
Money Politic Patronage and Clientism	Pearson Correlation	.063	.258**	.156*	-.009	1	-.062
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.428	.001	.050	.912		.435
	N	400	400	400	400	400	400

The correlation between *Biraderism* and voting behavior is present but weak, with an  $r$  value of 0.202 and a  $p$  value of 0.010, indicating that while family or clan ties may influence voting decisions, other factors are likely more significant. In contrast, no significant correlation exists between *Waderaism* (landowner influence) and voting behavior, as shown by the  $r$ -value of 0.139 and a  $p$  value of 0.081, which is above the 0.05 threshold. Religion shows an inverse correlation with voting behavior, as the  $r$  value is -0.250 and the  $p$  value is 0.001. This suggests that as religious influence increases, voting behavior shifts, with religious people being less likely to vote in the 2018 general election. Leadership qualities have a moderate correlation with voting behavior, evidenced by an  $r$  value of 0.393 and a  $p$  value of 0.000, indicating that leadership plays a significant role in shaping voter decisions. Lastly, there is no correlation between *money politics*, *patronage*, *clientelism*, and voting behavior.



### **Key findings include:**

1. **Biraderism** significantly impacts voting behavior, as familial and clan ties strongly influence voter decisions. Waderaism also affects voting but to a lesser extent than Biraderism.
2. **Religion** has a negative impact, with more religious individuals being less likely to vote. Increased religiosity correlates with lower voter turnout.
3. **Leadership and election campaigns** play a major role in shaping voting behavior, with voters responding strongly to the qualities of political leaders and campaign strategies.
4. **Mass media** shows a minimal correlation with voting behavior, suggesting its influence is limited compared to other factors.
5. **Issue politics** did not have a statistically significant effect on voting decisions, indicating specific policy issues were less influential in this election.
6. **Party manifestos** had a strong positive impact, suggesting that voters considered party platforms when making their choices.
7. **Socio-demographic factors** such as gender, age, income, and urban-rural divide show significant variations in voting behavior. For instance, younger and urban voters were more influenced by leadership and media, whereas income levels and profession also affected political attitudes.

### **Conclusion:**

The study on voting behavior in Darya Khan, District Bhakkar, during the 2018 general elections in Pakistan highlights several influential factors. These include biraderism (clan loyalty), waderaism (landowner influence), religion, leadership, media, party manifestos, and socio-economic conditions. The research shows that biraderism significantly impacted voter choices, while waderaism had a slightly lesser but still notable influence. Interestingly, religion had a negative impact, as more religious individuals were less likely to vote. Leadership qualities

and election campaigns positively correlated with voting behavior, showing their importance in shaping voter decisions.

The media's impact was found to be negligible, and issue-based politics had minimal influence. However, party manifestos played a significant role in guiding voter preferences. Gender disparities, urban-rural differences, and socio-economic class also influenced voting patterns. Urban residents and younger voters were more influenced by leadership and media, while rural areas leaned more towards traditional factors like biraderism and waderaism. Professional background also shaped political attitudes, with some occupations affecting political preferences more than others.

In conclusion, voting behavior in Darya Khan was shaped by a complex interaction of socio-demographic factors, with leadership, party manifestos, and traditional influences playing key roles.

## **Recommendations**

**Recommendations for Political Parties and Candidates** include focusing on leadership and community ties, tailoring messages to religious sentiments, investing in targeted electoral campaigns, improving media strategies, addressing urban and rural concerns separately, and considering age and income variations.

**Recommendations for Researchers** suggest further exploration of Biraderism, electoral campaigns, and leadership influences, as well as the role of media and sociocultural factors. Qualitative research and comparative studies are encouraged.

**Recommendations for policymakers** involve enhancing the effectiveness of party platforms, promoting civic education, ensuring unbiased media coverage, addressing socioeconomic disparities, engaging with diverse professions, and increasing female political participation to foster a more inclusive democratic process.

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