

Influence of Interpersonal Communication Sources on Voting Behaviour of Youth

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Abstract

A study was conducted in General Election 2013 Campaign" conducted to determine the influence of interpersonal communication such as (Parents, Siblings, friend, religious leader, celebrities teachers and others identifying which source is more significant in shaping voting behavior of Pakistani youth. For this study, the survey method was used, in which self-reported questionnaire distributed among 1000 respondents in public sectors universities of Punjab and Islamabad to find out results. SPSS was used for data analysis and statistical testing of the variables. The results proved that Parents are the most significant predictor of the voting behavior of youth, but their level of significance gradually decreases when compared to prior studies, because of change in the source of information of youth. This study supports the theoretical framework of interpersonal discussion' that emphasized on the importance of interpersonal discussion in shaping behaviors attitudes and emotional reactions of youth.

Key Words

Interpersonal
Communication,
Interpersonal Sources,
Voting Behaviour, General
Election 2013, Election
Campaign, Interpersonal
Influences

Introduction

Elections are integral to democracy and considered as the main stage on which democratic society can be developed. Elections palpable latent aspects of human behavior and help to identify the factors and considerations that shape their political dispositions and voting penchant. Through elections by using political will, public decide who will rule the country and how the resources and capitals are allocated.

Elections serve as a form of nationwide mobilization of people by competing political parties and promotes vertical and horizontal (round the clock) political and social networking all over the country. Pakistan is the young and pliable nation and it was for the first time in Pakistan during election 2013 that the "right to vote" was viewed as "Social Obligation". In Pakistan, there is a multiparty system and history shows that people always preferred two main parties "Pakistan People's Party "and "Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz ".But After a huge rally in October 2011, Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf has emerged in the country as the third-largest party of Pakistan. Which changed the scenario in political dynamics and youth becomes an electoral target for all parties and media placed a full-fledged coverage as the election activity takes place simultaneously in the different parts of the country.

There are numerous factors that influence voting behavior. Voting is a collective action to show political behavior and help to strengthen the political system. It is a significant instrument providing opportunities for the voters to become active citizens instead of inactive subjects. Among family, friends, peers, significant others, the media, campaign networks, and the Internet, party, religion, and family are numerous sources of an influence attempt to persuade voters during election season.

While some predictors of voter decision, such as party affiliation, Party manifesto, Leader Charisma, income, and education, have been established among older, more experienced voters, the opportunity for outside influence is considerably greater among younger, less experienced voters (Lau & Redlawsk, 2006). This model is named as party identification model. Youth can get impressed by the factionalism of their family or Bradri and it shows the influence on the voting behaviors of youth and those who cast their votes for the first time to become a part of the electoral

process. It also reflects longstanding Psychological bonding to specific political party and relationship on the level of trust and confidence among family Or Bradri that direct youth to vote. Michigan Model of electoral choices (1950) states that party identification is a long-term influence and issues, party image and candidate image works as a short-term influence which leads voters to make a choice.

A general consensus among political researchers holds that "parents, schools, peers, religious institutions, and the news media influence the political socialization of children, and roughly in that order of importance" (Jackson, 2002, p. 2). But even parents, at the front of the list, are no longer considered as powerful an influence as they once were. Traditionally, research on political socialization has viewed family as the most influential on the political behavior of young voters. Family system theory introduced by Dr. Murry Bowen says a family is as an emotional unit. Parents were seen as the intermediary between child and society and had a powerful influence on the lasting values of their children (Hyman, 1959; LeVine, 1963). The family considered as the core group in different sociological researches that shapes the interest and preferences that the individual has in the electoral system of voting. However, even half a century ago, questions were raised as to why parents' and children's political ideologies were not more highly correlated. In Substantive term Studies have explored this relationship (Atkin, 1981; Connell, 1972; Jennings & Niemi, 1968; Powell & Cowart, 2003), and although studies suggest that the power has diminished parental political influence still exists. This study is an additional link in the long chain of political communication studies since the 1950s that have disentangled the factors that influence the young voter's decision. Specifically, this study examines the extent to which first-time voters in the 2013 General Election in Pakistan are influenced by interpersonal communication from various sources around them and what are the sources which affect their parents voting behaviors.

In this vein, the paper examines what psychological factors influenced and determined in voting decisions. In this highly politicized world of abundant media coverage, celebrity endorsements, and endless Internet commentary, the question raised is whether interpersonal communication with parents, teachers, peers, and religious leaders is still of significant importance to a voter's decision as in the past. In this context, a study will explore how far these factors influenced voting decisions of youth and those who cast their votes for the first time under the 10th general Election of Pakistan. To answer these questions, first of all, the researcher tried to explain the major term of a research topic.

Influences

"The capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something, or the effect itself. The power to shape policy or ensure favorable treatment from someone, especially through status, contacts, or wealth."

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is defined as a communication process whereby an individual sends and receives the message from another mostly in a face-to-face interaction involving verbal and non-verbal modes of communication with immediate feedback has further been extended beyond face-to-face context with current communication studies.

Interpersonal Communication and Politics

Interpersonal communication has been identified as a major channel of communication in the process of social mobilization of the grassroots people in the many developmental and political projects of the country. Social mobilization must be seen in terms of involving the people in taking part actively and freely in discussions affecting their general welfare. In other words, social mobilization and political education should aim at increasing people's level of awareness of cognition of political and other issues so that they can apply social energies positively and participate actively in social and political lives of the country (Oso, 2002:131).

Voting Behavior

Voting behavior is a form of electoral behavior. Understanding voters' behavior can explain how and why decisions were made either by public decision-makers, which has been a central concern for political scientists or by the electorate.

The Role of Interpersonal Discussion

These theories and research findings point to the importance, not only of media sources but also of interpersonal communication in determining political views, thoughts and motivations. In addition to the mass media,

interpersonal discussion has been found to be important in learning about political and campaign issues (deBoer & Velthuisen, 2001; Cho, 2008; Eveland, Hays, Shah & Kwak, 2005; Feldman & Price, 2008; Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995; McLeod, Scheufele, & Moy, 1999; Scheufele, 2000).

Statement of the Problem

The problem which has given rise to a curiosity of the researcher is that in the presence of powerful media exposure, interpersonal communication still very influencing on young adults voting behavior. The problem, which we investigate, is whether interpersonal communication affects the voting behavior of young adults who cast their vote first time and which interpersonal source affect more.

The Objective of the Study

The major object of this study is to identify and examine the effectiveness of interpersonal communication and media exposure in shaping the voting behavior of young adults. To explore which factor of interpersonal communication (parents, family or peers) is more influencing on young adults voting behavior.

The Rational of the Study

This study is important for shaping voting behavior in the general election of Pakistan following reasons. First, the results are of benefit to the candidates and their political parties. In practical terms, the results will provide information to candidates and political parties about the most effective type of interpersonal factor for the election campaign. These study results provide evidence that interpersonal discussion of political issues is critical to voters' decision processes. As long suspected by communication scholars, the media may affect knowledge levels and actions taken by voters, similarly as interpersonal communication and discussion between citizens dose. This discussion obviously adds to the level of knowledge about political parties, candidates' stand on issues, and their background and increases the likelihood of voting. As research deals with a better understanding of public voting habits, how information is viewed, collected and shared with others, and how that information is used to gain knowledge and make decisions has far-reaching implications to political campaigns and other political endeavors, and also develop an understanding of how voter demographics play a role in their political socialization and casting vote. In last but not least this research also educate voter about the role of media and interpersonal communication on their political process of casting vote.

Hypothesis

All the literature research studies; helped in building certain hypothesis and research questions.

H1: Youth's party affiliation will be positively associated with parents' party affiliation.

H2: Parents are more significant as compare to peer/other in the interpersonal source.

Methodology

Descriptive Survey Research Method was used to investigate this phenomenon. As for as population concerns both male and female been selected by cluster sampling from public sector universities of the capital of Islamabad and Province Punjab, of Pakistan. 1000 respondent was selected from universities 500 from each gender.

In this research, the researcher used a field survey technique. Keeping in view the importance of phenomena under investigation, it was appropriate to approach the target a sample of the population through well-designed research questionnaire to inquire the study

Survey used to explore the consumption patterns of youth for information on political issues.

Results

Out of whole sample size respondents, 52.8 percent were male respondents and 47.2 were female participants. The sample represented a range of political ideologies, with 41.50 percent reporting liberal or slightly liberal beliefs, 32.2 percent moderate, and 26.30 percent reporting conservative or slightly conservative beliefs. Nearly 50 percent respondents reported that their primary source of political news is television, while internet/social media stood second with 24.50 percent as the primary source of respondents, newspaper 11.30 percent, family member 7.50 percent, radio 5.70 percent and 1.90 respondents reported other media for political news. In response to the question, was that your first time voting in a general election 2013? 68 percent reported yes while 32 percent said it was not there first time voting experience. 43.30 percent respondents reported they frequently talk about politic with their family, while 39.60 percent reported that they are more likely to talk about politic with friends, 16.90

responses show respondents are more likely to discuss politics with their teacher's religious leaders or significant others. The statistic shows an interesting result that television, the internet, and social media network have equal weight for the likelihood of interpersonal political discussion.

According to statistic television is a prime source of information seeking of youth. Social media, newspaper and internet news are near to each other in the accession of information, while blogs and radio are least important for political information sources.

Hypothesis # 1: Youth's Party Affiliation will be Positively Associated to Parents' Party Affiliation

Stepwise multiple regression was used to determine the association between youth political party's affiliation and their parent's political party affiliation. Mother and father party affiliation are independents variable while youth party affiliation is the dependent variable. Multicollinearity was checked by the tolerance value of each independent variable. A tolerance value of each variable exceeded from 0.1. The highest tolerance value is .993 and the lowest value is .717. The result indicates that "Mother" and "Father" were significantly associated predictor of youth party affiliation, $R^2=.236$, $R^2_{adj}=.234$, $F(1,710) = 138.42$, $p= .000$. This model accounts for 23.6% of the variance for youth party affiliation associated with parent's party affiliation.

Table 1. The Summary Regression Coefficient for Youth Party Affiliation Associated with their Parent's Party Affiliation

Model Summary				ANOVA		
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	St. The error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.400 ^a	.160	.159	1.212	171.037	.000 ^a
2	.485 ^b	.236	.234	1.157	138.424	.000 ^b

A. predictors: (constant), what political party does your mother prefer?

B. predictors: (constant), what political party does your mother prefer? What political party your father prefer, please indicate the name?

Mother and father reflect positive association among their party affiliation and their children, in final model these two included "mother" $\beta= .206$, $t(901) = 5783$, $p= .000$ and "control" $\beta= .337$, $t(901) = 9437$, $p=.000$

Table 2. Regression Coefficient for Youth Party Affiliation Associated with their Parent's Party Affiliation.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.662	.084		19.842	.000
What political party dose your mother prefer?	.369	.028	.400	13.078	.000
2 (Constant)	1.334	.087		15.291	.000
What political party does your mother prefer?	.190	.033	.206	5.783	.000
What political party dose your father prefer?	.342	.036	.337	9.437	.000

a. Dependent Variable: What political party are you associated with?

The result indicates that there is a signification relation or positive association between youth party affiliation and their parent's political party affiliation.

Hypothesis 2: Parents are more Significant as Compare to Peer/Other in Interpersonal Source

Paired-samples t-tests were used to measure Parents are more important as compared to peer/other in the interpersonal source. In light of the test, parents are highly influential among all interpersonal source of communication. All source has limited influence expect teacher which having a moderate influence against parents according to respondents reported data. These finding showed the same results as prior researchers. The difference in the means of the interpersonal source was presented below table which was measure by paired-samples t-test.

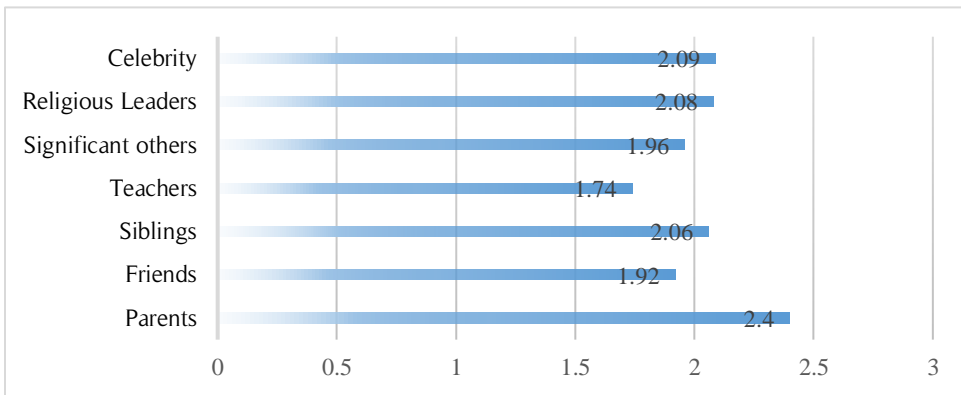


Figure 1: The Difference in Means of Interpersonal Source for Change in Youth's Voting Behaviours

In the above bar chart means of different interpersonal sources showed parents kept more influence on youth's voting behavior, followed by celebrity, religious leader, and siblings. While friend teacher and significant other enlist in the least important in changing voting behaviors.

Table 3: Frequency of Political Discussion with their Interpersonal Communication Sources

	0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days	5 Days	6 Days	7 Days	M
Family	23.1	13.2	17.0	7.5	7.5	5.7	3.4	22.6	3.87
Friend	12.2	19.9	11.2	4.8	4.3	6.2	4.8	36.6	4.42
Significant Others	39.1	5.7	18.9	7.5	5.7	1.9	7.5	13.2	3.36
Social Media	50.9	9.4	5.7	7.5	0.00	3.8	1.9	20.8	3.85

Above data reflect the interesting fact that respondent more frequently discusses political matters with their friend, while family, parent, and sibling stood at second position with slightly above the social media, but when talking about influence statistic showed that parent is more influential.

Analysis and Discussion

This study reflects a number of interesting facts into the voting behavior and attitudes of young voters in the 2013 general election of Pakistan. The first hypothesis revealed high consistency with prior studies that Youth party's affiliations are likely more positive due to parents' party affiliation. The researcher found that young voters believe that they have similar political beliefs as their parents. There is another fact that respondents reported that they are more frequently do their political discussion with friends, but in casting vote the role of parents is most influential as compared to any other interpersonal communication source. This may reflect that university students (many of whom live away from home) are spend more time with their friends and discuss their political beliefs. But contemporary research findings are similar to previous studies that indicate parents are the prime source of influence on younger voters (Achen, 2002; Alexander, 1978; Austin, & Pinkleton, 2001; Atkin, 1981; Beak, 1977; Bengtson, 1986; Chaffee, Jackson-Beck, Dhrall, & Wilson, 1977; Connel 1971; Cowart, 2003; Connell, 1972; Easton, & Dennis, 1969; Greenstein Fridkin, & Kenney, 2007; Hess, & Torney, 1967; Hyman, 1959; Langton & Jennings, 1969; Jennings & Niemi, 1968; Jennings, & Niemi, 1974; McDevitt, & Kiousis, 2007; McDevitt, & Chaffee, 2002; Sapiro 2004; Tolley, 1973; Torney-Purta, 1995).

The findings of all aforementioned researcher matched with the current research. Above-cited researches indicate that parental mediation plays an important role in shaping the political orientation of their children.

The second hypothesis "Parents are more important as compare to peer/other in interpersonal source" was tested by Paired-samples t-tests. In the light of all tabulated data research found that parents are highly influential among all interpersonal source of communication. All source has limited influence expect teacher which having a moderate influence against parents according to respondents reported data. These finding showed the same results as prior researchers. The interpersonal communication sources of youth except parents are like siblings, friends, teacher, religious leaders, and significant others, but they have not heavy influential like parents. Definitely, their sources keep some influence in the political socialization of youth, and respondents reported that they involved

with these interpersonal sources or conduct a political discussion with them but they have less impressed of influenced through this source, even in this research found that youth mostly conduct the political discussion with their friend. Interpersonal communication sources influence political learning and it is important and might possibly constitute the one factor in voting behavior that is more to change and modification than other influences such a traditional media or new media. (Kenny 1994). This research is doubly important inasmuch as it will further suggest a causal link between siblings, friend, teachers, religious leaders, and significant others, but parents are more influential than any other interpersonal influence. Like above-quoted studies, current research showed the same result that parents are more influential as compared to any other source, here researcher indicates that friends are on if we see the table of frequency of political discussion with their interpersonal communication sources.

Conclusion

This study was based on a self-reported survey to shed some light on the Influence of Interpersonal Communication and Media Exposure on Voting Behavior of Youth. This study found that interpersonal communication and media exposure has a different level of influence on youth's voting behavior during election days. Interpersonal communication does increase youth's political socialization and facilitate to develop party affiliation. Data from this study showed that there is a significant association between the respondent party and their parent party, and it seemed slightly variation between their political beliefs. Youth's political view tilt moderately to liberal while their parent moderate to conservative, due to the majority of respondent reported their political views alike to their parents, so the researcher can say that still parent is a primary influential factor in shaping the political view of youth in the modern era. And this assumption validate by a current study by showing that in 2013 election respondents and their parents mostly voted to the same party. Other interpersonal sources kept certain influence with limitation, but parents have an edge on their mending youth's views from childhood. Parents influence factor rate high not only in interpersonal means of communication but also in media source as well.

Interpersonal communication sources especially parents seem to be more powerful than media exposure either traditional media or new media in influencing the voting behavior of youth. This study advocate that political parties, their candidates, media organizations and especially election campaign organizers should number of time while developing election campaign, this study suggests such media campaign and political content has only indirectly influence on youth voting behavior of youth. In other word, media content develops mediated interpersonal communication or increase the likelihood of youth to discuss political content with other interpersonal sources, which such communication they might be influenced. Because interpersonal and media exposure jointly plays their part in influencing the voting behavior of youth, so we cannot underestimate any source, but highlight fact to develop better election campaign for forthcoming elections.

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