

# Governance and Society Review (GSR)

Volume 2 Issue 2, Fall 2023


ISSN(P): 2959-1619 ISSN(E):2959-1627

Homepage: <https://journals.umt.edu.pk/index.php/gsr>



Article QR



- Title:** **Opening the Black Box of Voter Behavior: Role of Political Opinion Leadership and Caste**
- Author (s):** Azhar Manzoor<sup>1</sup>, Tayyaba Iftikhar<sup>2</sup>
- Affiliation (s):** <sup>1</sup>University of Lahore, Lahore, Pakistan  
<sup>2</sup>University of Law, United Kingdom
- DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.32350/gsr.22.01>
- History:** Received: July 2, 2023, Revised: October 4, 2023, Accepted: October 5, 2023,  
Published: December 8, 2023
- Citation:** Manzoor, A., & Iftikhar, T. (2023). Opening the black box of voter behavior: Role of political opinion leadership and caste. *Governance and Society Review*, 2(2), 01–21. <https://doi.org/10.32350/gsr.22.01>
- Copyright:** © The Authors
- Licensing:**  This article is open access and is distributed under the terms of [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)
- Conflict of Interest:** Author(s) declared no conflict of interest



A publication of The School of Governance and Society  
University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

# Opening the Black Box of Voter Behavior: Role of Political Opinion Leadership and Caste

Azhar Manzoor<sup>1\*</sup> and Tayyaba Iftikhar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lahore Business School, University of Lahore, Lahore, Pakistan.

<sup>2</sup>University of Law, United Kingdom

## Abstract

Elections are resource intensive and high-stake events. They are hard to finance, expensive to conduct, and remain an administrative challenge for any developing country. It is a curious situation when after all the efforts of major stakeholders, voter turnout remains low. Politicians, political parties, and regulating bodies top the list of those stakeholders who are most interested and consequently affected by such voter behavior during elections. Being part of a social group also plays an important role in raising awareness about voting and encourages voters to know more about the process, mostly for the benefit of the group at large. This study focused on the role of political opinion leadership and caste as two of the main factors that may inform voter satisfaction according to the Behavioral Reasoning Theory (BRT). The results about group association or the caste of respondents exhibited by this study remain typical of the Pakistani society. The role of political opinion leadership in informing and encouraging voters becomes important to fill the information gap and save the time of voters. Based on the data gathered from registered voters, this study revealed that political opinion leadership and caste significantly influence voter satisfaction, particularly in the context of a close-knit developing country.

**Keywords:** elections, political opinion leadership, voter caste, voter involvement, voter satisfaction, voter turnout

## Introduction

“The death of democracy is not likely to be an assassination from ambush. It will be a slow extinction from apathy, indifference, and undernourishment” (Robert Maynard Hutchins) (Paskert, [2014](#)). One of the true and proven ways to nourish democracy is through voting, which is only possible when citizens are satisfied with their decision to vote. Moreover, this behavior must be strengthened through consistent action to vote as in voter stability (Hooghe & Kern, [2017](#)). There is no concept of a democratic

---

\*Corresponding Author: [70110789@student.uol.edu.pk](mailto:70110789@student.uol.edu.pk)

system of government without active participation of the citizens, however, any such participation is meaningful only when citizens execute their right to vote. Therefore, democracies tend to perform better when more citizens opt to cast their votes (Bonica & McFaul, [2018](#)). Consequently, to reap maximum advantage from the democratic form of government, it is essential to explore ways to increase voter turnout by enhancing overall voter satisfaction with the electoral process.

Furthermore, efforts must be made to engage voters in such a way that leads to satisfaction through the voting process. It is through voter satisfaction that we can expect to increase voter turnout that provides the necessary boost to strengthen our democracy. Key determinants in studying voter behavior in the context of countries such as Pakistan include political knowledge, voter involvement with emphasis on political opinion leadership and the membership of broader social group such as caste (O’Cass, [2000](#); Shawar & Asim, [2012](#); Zeib et al., [2022](#)).

Since Wattenberg ([2002](#)) equated voting with liberty by questioning “where have all the voters gone”, all factors associated with voter behavior, such as, voter satisfaction have gained renewed interest. Such center stage attention also leads to the notion that citizen must vote if they seek justice, equal rights, accountability, and a governance system that benefits the citizens. Voting becomes a fundamental right of every eligible citizen in any democratic society. Despite the fact that voter registration increased for the last general election in Pakistan, there was no corresponding increase in voter turnout (Free and Fair Election Network [FAFEN], [2018](#)). Ironically, for 2018 general elections, Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) reported an increase in voter registration by approximately 23 percent with an approximate drop of 3 percent in voter turnout compared to 2013 elections. Based on studies that focus on such voters in Pakistan (Chaudhry et al., [2018](#); Mangi et al., [2019](#)), there is a great need to investigate the factors influencing voter behavior beyond political factors. This paper aims to address ECP concerns, contributing to a better understanding and identification of factors contributing to low voter turnout in Pakistan.

Voter behavior has been studied through the lens of consumer behavior, equating voter satisfaction to customer satisfaction (O’Shaughnessy, [2001](#)). In this context, voter involvement and voter satisfaction are interconnected (Hadjar & Beck, [2010](#)). Thus, it is integral for all concerned to have a comprehensive understanding of the elements that enhance voter

satisfaction in the voting process (Banerjee & Chaudhuri, [2016](#); O' Cass & Pecotich, [2005](#)).

Voters of a particular caste flock together, where voters of a particular caste tend to vote together, which reflects the influence of group dynamics, even when individuals may wish to vote according to their conscience. The Michigan Psychosocial Model (Campbell et al., [1960](#)) argues that group benefits and family influence play significant roles in voting decisions. Similarly, scholars have found that psychosocial factors, rather than purely political factors affect voting behavior in different provinces of Pakistan. These factors include but are not limited to race, caste, and membership in a village faction, traditional group, and loyalties of family (Shawar & Asim, [2012](#); Zeib et al., [2022](#)).

Political opinion leadership has a dynamic role in the political process, as argued multiple times that the potential for opinion leaders to shape public opinion is significant (Choi & Kim, [2012](#)). Communication, especially interpersonal communication, remains at the heart of political information sharing process. It helps create awareness to influence voters about the different aspects of the process, thereby making meaningful choices to involve and engage in political behavior, such as voter satisfaction. Lazarsfeld et al. ([1948](#)) proposed that opinion leadership politically intrigued, engaged and confided in wellsprings of data inside their proximal informal organizations who played the role of active information disseminators in their network of contacts.

The broader social network of any citizen is a key factor in participation in political process. Individuals may be asked or encouraged to participate in political process under the influence of someone with close connection or someone with better information (Lim, [2013](#)). Political discussions among citizens have been beneficial in strengthening and improving the quality of democracy. Such discussions and exchanges enhance political engagement and participation (Masiha et al., [2018](#)).

Hence, these group dynamics may also give opportunities for voters to involve with the process (O'Cass, [2000](#); Jamal et al., [2019](#)) which in turn, help in voter behavior such as voter satisfaction (Kirmani et al., [2019](#)). Thus, gaining a deeper understanding of the reasons for voter satisfaction may reduce volatility and help in more than one way to move towards a

system where voter not only understand the consequences of their vote but also become more satisfied with their choices.

This paper has practical as well as theoretical implications. Practically this paper would contribute to a better understanding of the voting behavior for ECP, political parties and other institutions. Political parties may capitalize on the modern tools in spreading their election message through opinion leaders, as successfully demonstrated by Bush (2004) and Obama (2008) in US presidential elections. Theoretically, this study attempts to opening the black box of voter behavior, as per call for research by ECP (2021), Kirmani et al., (2019) and Lago, (2019) establish a path for further investigation of the role of caste and political opinion leadership on voter behavior.

Most studies on voter behavior have explored satisfaction, involvement, and political orientation using models based on the theory of reasoned action (TRA) and the theory of planned behavior (TPB), alongside quantitative techniques. In light of these theories, scholars have examined various aspects including values, knowledge, attitudes, and social and moral norms influencing the goal of casting a ballot (Mohanachandran & Govindarajo, 2020; Sihombing & Pramono, 2021). However, this paper employs the Behavioral Reasoning Theory (BRT) (Westaby, 2005) that recognizes attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control as globally shared thought processes that comprehensively influence intentions in various behavioral contexts. It also addresses the intention behavior gap left unaddressed by TRA and TPB.

In this context, some key elements that come to attention include the need for the formation and use of collective groups to raise awareness that casting a vote is an honor and a privilege as well a civic duty. Public spaces, government, NGO and civil society educational and motivational campaigns may boost the voter turnout. Increased participation signifies the interest and commitment of the citizens to exercise their rights to choose their government representatives.

The arguments presented in the preceding paragraphs underscore the need for an immediate and serious action, especially when comparing Pakistan to its regional neighbors in terms of voter behavior. In Nepal, Sri Lanka and India the voter turnout is 78, 77 and 66 percent respectively. This

situation is no different when compared to British or Australian democratic nations (FAFEN, [2018](#)).

The paper commences by discussing in greater depth existing arguments regarding the factors influencing behavior of voters including the potential effects of caste, political opinion leadership and voter involvement. After giving a brief description of perceived political opinion leadership and voter's caste, the survey is described. The subsequent sections cover the definitions of measures, data collection and statistical analysis that explores the reasons behind voter satisfaction. The results of the statistical analysis provide the ground to examine the quality of the relationships as proposed in the model. The paper concludes with theoretical and practical implications, followed by directions for future research and a final conclusion.

## Literature Review

### Political Opinion Leadership

Since 1940s, researchers have recognized the profound significance of opinion leadership in forming public proclivities, disseminating information among masses, and influencing behaviors. Tracking the information spread and publicizing the messages inside adjacent societies, Lazarsfeld et al. ([1948](#)) recognized certain people, called opinion leaders, who gave close consideration to matter of a subject, consistently examined the issue, and viewed themselves as more influential in persuading others to embrace an opinion or game-plan. It is argued that opinion leaders didn't really hold authoritative position or distinction in society yet rather filled in as the connective correspondence tissue that made their peers aware of what made a difference among political occurrences, social issues or buyer decisions.

Opinion leaders play a crucial role in both casting votes and disseminating information related to elections. Political opinion leader performs a significant role in casting vote, and it can be argued that prospects for political opinion leaders to form popular views are extraordinary. O'Casey and Pecotich ([2005](#)) found that political opinion leadership played an important part in voting behavior. Abou-Khalil et al. ([2020](#)) compared satisfaction in politics to consumer satisfaction and highlighted the importance of perceived performance meeting expectations,

especially with better information and guidance provided by someone knowledgeable.

An educated and a definite democratic choice is made by a voter who believes, "I did all that could be expected and am in this manner more joyful whatever the result of the political election."

H1: Political opinion leadership has a positive relationship with voter satisfaction.

## **POL, Voter Involvement and Voter Satisfaction**

Over the past decade, there have been numerous hypothetical recommendations with respect to voter involvement and its types and impacts. The benefit of comprehending the voter involvement with voting decisions, political groups, and legislators have been perceived crucial by governmental experts (Burton & Netemeyer, [1992](#)). Furthermore, O' Cass ([2003](#)) argued that involvement suggests to the degree to which the shopper sees the focal article as crucial, significant and connecting piece of their life and imperative to them. These arguments when taken into account, make it a hypothetically valuable construct to be used in a wide variety of settings such as political marketing, etc. Parallels can be drawn between the impact of voter involvement on satisfaction and the perception that buyer satisfaction depends upon the assessment made after buying experience.

Political involvement and voting decisions will abet exceptionally involved citizens to achieve political satisfaction quickly. Hence, O' Cass ([2003](#)) posits that electors who display higher involvement in legislative issues report more association with governmental issue, legislators and their decisions. A portion of the more significant research regarding this phenomenon was added by Venkatraman ([1990](#)), that examined the connection between political opinion leadership, involvement, and behavior such as voter satisfaction. Hence, it is vital for government officials to have profound comprehension of the components that lead to higher elector satisfaction and subsequently, contribute in strong participation of electors in the political voting procedures (Banerjee & Chaudhuri, [2016](#); O' Cass & Pecotich, [2005](#)).

H2: Political opinion leadership has a positive relationship with voter involvement.

H3: Political opinion leadership has a positive relationship with voter satisfaction through voter involvement.

## Caste

Social segment such as caste have long been of interest in voter behavior studies for a long time. It is still a very strong indicator of “voter hawa” (Yadev, [2015](#)) that sets the political direction or the voting interest of a group of people who share same norms or cultural backgrounds (Cody, [2020](#)). Strong feeling of association, specially related to religion or caste with others can encourage voters to play their due role in in the voting process (Cwalina et al., [2010](#)). Such associations also expose them to relevant information and the voting process. It has been argued that voters may be more inclined to vote for a candidate belonging to their own caste and religion. The concerns of voters related to caste are of significant importance in the context of Pakistan where it remains the focus in voter decision making (Shah & Majeed, [2022](#)). While studying voters and voter behavior, Verma ([2012](#)) points out that in such social setting, voters vote their caste rather than cast their votes.

The impact of caste in voting can be heard reverberating in India, United Kingdom and Sri Lanka. In a heterogeneous society such as India, voter behavior is predominantly studied through caste, class, region and religion. Political parties in India often use caste as a call to mobilize voters during elections and the concept of “caste-based vote bank” is studied as a major factor in election related studies and analysis. Caste provides a good indication of initial affiliations of social groups. In UK, Dharmic voters are referred to collective pool of voters that include, Hindus and Sikhs. Peiris and Lecamwam ([2020](#)) posit that it would be difficult to find any study that focuses on politics in Sri Lanka that does not factor in caste. Furthermore, they also point out that how the caste-based group votes overshadow the impact of individual vote in democracy. Caste is not only the norms of a group of people but also a public sphere (Pandian, [2002](#)) where various groups, minorities, and disadvantaged people may come together to raise voice for common issues.

Harris et al. ([2010](#)) argued that understanding the voter is important because of changing demographics across the globe and their relative voting power. Furthermore, according to the sociological approach the main reason for voting is one’s sense of belonging to a social community. These



communities may be based on ethnicity, religion, social class or local groups where all of these reflect the collective dimension of voting behavior. In essence, the voting preferences of individual group member are determined by the group they belong to (Bittner & Goodyear, [2020](#)). In Indian context, the factors related to caste and religion in voting behavior are usually studied as Religious and Caste Considerations. Voter decision making in India is predominantly influenced by the religious affiliations and caste groupings (Beg, [2017](#); Huber & Suryanarayan, [2016](#)).

The social characteristics of a group leads to strong member identification to the group as well as such linkage develops group consciousness that results in increase in voter turnout. In caste system, the lives of a particular group members are interconnected that may also influence the voting behavior of that group. Such a group bonding may be stronger for members of a disadvantaged group (Miller et al., [1981](#)). Belonging to a particular caste like any social group may bring together members of that caste for issues that are specific to their group. Furthermore, the connection to the group may give them knowledge and skills to participate in the political process and engage in voting behavior (Harder & Krosnick, [2008](#)).

### **Caste and Voter Involvement**

Voter involvement with reference to voter behavior has been studied as a crucial factor in voter decision making (Burton & Netemeyer, [1992](#); Sharma, [2020](#)). O’Cass ([2003](#)) defined it as ‘the extent to which a voter views the focal object (an election and voting) as a central part of their life, a meaningful and engaging object in their life, and important to them’. Involvement has been studied as a mediator leading to voter intentions (Jamal et al., [2019](#)).

Scholars have studied involvement as a precursor to a person’s interest in engaging in a particular action, however, its extent is dependent upon the importance, interest, values or needs that drive them towards the objective of involvement (Jamal et al., [2019](#)). The depth of involvement may depend upon the interest of the individual who may regard it as worthy of pursuance that reflects the accomplishment of certain individual or group goals (Astuti, [2023](#)).

O’Cass ([2000](#)) posits that voter involvement is context dependent and reflects the importance of vote in individual’s lives. Furthermore, involved

voter are more likely to make wise political decisions. Similarly, researchers such as Huber and Suryanarayan (2016) and Auerbach et al. (2021) studied the role of caste as a significant influence on voter involvement in the political process. Vaishnav (2017) also emphasized the importance of religious and caste identity of politicians in Indian elections.

H4: Caste has a direct positive relationship with voter involvement.

### **Caste and Voter Satisfaction**

Voter satisfaction is akin to the feeling about the consequence or result of consumption process, often viewed as outcome of post purchase or comparison processes (O’Cass & Pecotich, 2005). Scholars have studied that voter satisfaction is based on the extent of involvement of voters in the election process (Banerjee & Chaudhuri, 2016; Ben-Ur, 2007).

Voter gets satisfaction from voting, specifically if any such voting action is in line with the sentiments of the group or community because that sense of satisfaction outweighs any hurdles faced in the voting process (Harder & Krosnick, 2008).

H5: Caste has a direct positive relationship with voter satisfaction.

The caste system has created spaces for power politics that brings a particular dynamic to the social behavior. It has given voters an opportunity to express their political will to play a strong legitimate role in politics (Pandian, 2002) such that caste members are usually more loyal to their respective group (Beg, 2017). Kirmani (2019) argued that caste and social consideration are indicators of voter satisfaction and these factors must be kept in mind for any meaningful political initiative. Schofield and Reeves (2015) view voters as consumers who seek to get satisfaction through involvement.

Voters remain engaged with the system, feel satisfied with their behavior to vote and tend to re-engage in this voting process. Farrer and Zingher (2019) have conducted a global comparison and found that voters remain satisfied with the system even when their favorite candidate loses.

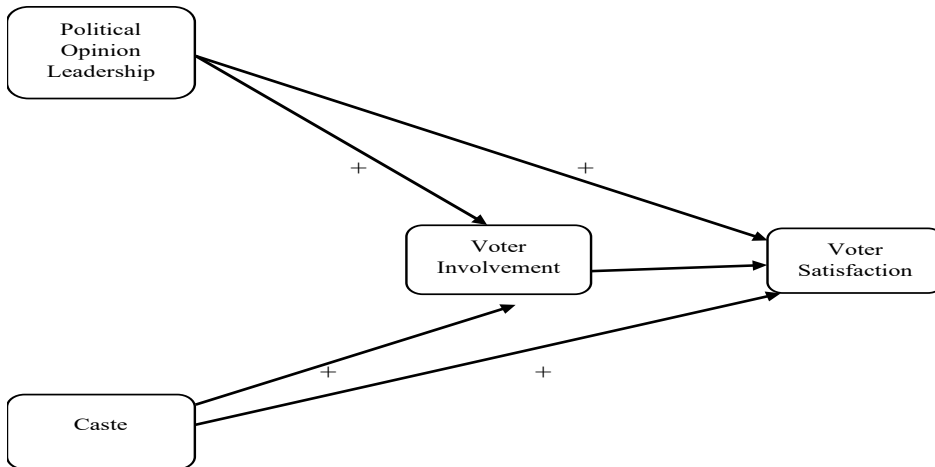
H6: Caste has a positive relationship with voter satisfaction through voter involvement.

## Method

This study investigates the factors influencing voter satisfaction. Quantitative analysis using SPSS 21 and Hayes process Macro model were used to test the hypotheses for this empirical research study.

**Figure 1**

*The Conceptual Model*



The dependent variable for the study is voter satisfaction (VSA), the independent variables are political opinion leadership (POL), voter involvement (VINV), and voter caste (VC). Where, VINV mediate the relationships between IVs and DV.

## Sample Size and Data Collection

The target population of this study comprised the eligible voters in Pakistan. Purposive sampling technique was adopted for data collection. Self-administered survey questionnaire was used to collect data for cross sectional study. Total 360 respondents filled out the survey, however, 301 were complete and usable for subsequent analysis. The respondents represented diverse age groups, education level and experience.

## Measures

The scales used for measures in this study were adopted from several sources. All the items were measured on five-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*).

POL was measured with six-item scale developed by O’Cass (2000). One example is “I sometimes influence who my friends vote for”. VINV was measured with seven-item scale adopted from O’Cass (2000). One example is “Politics is personally important to me”. Caste was evaluated with two-item scale adopted from Kirmani et al. (2019). One example is “I prefer to vote for a candidate who is also from my own caste.” VSA was evaluated with four-item scale adopted from Kirmani et al. (2019). One example is “I am satisfied with the party I voted for in the last election.”

### Demographics

After data cleaning, of the 301 respondents, 101 (35.5 percent) were female and 200 (66.4 percent) were male. According to descriptive results, 196 (65.1 percent) of the respondents were in 21 to 30 years age group, 42 (13.9 percent) of the respondents were in the 31 to 40 years age group, and only 56 (18.6 percent) were more than 50 years of age. The majority of the respondents 116 (38.5 percent) had between 6 to 10 years of job experience. Some 53 (17.6 percent) were matriculate, 62 (20.6 percent) were intermediate, 159 (52.8 percent) were graduates, 27 (8.9 percent) had Masters’ degrees (table 1).

### Statistical Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Process Macro model 4 with 5000 bootstrap samples were selected for mediation with multiple independent variables. Herman single factor test was applied to check for CMB. In Herman’s single factor test, single construct was mined from all variables resulted in explaining 32.62% variation showing that there is no serious concern for CMB.

Demographic variables such as gender, age, location, religion, education and experience are used as control variables to avoid the unsolicited relationship among constructs and any contamination in the results.

**Table 1**

*Demographics*

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	200	66.4
Female	101	33.5

	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 20 years	7	2.3
21-30 years	196	65.1
31-40 years	42	13.9
Above 50 years	56	18.6
<b>Location</b>		
Rural	83	27.6
Urban	218	72.4
<b>Religion</b>		
Islam	162	53.8
Christian	125	41.5
Sikh	14	4.6
<b>Education</b>		
Matric	53	17.6
Intermediate	62	20.6
Graduation	159	52.8
Masters	27	8.9
<b>Experience(years)</b>		
Less than 5	54	17.9
6 to 10	116	38.5
11-15	111	36.9
More than 15	20	6.6

The coefficient of determination or R-square was 0.62, it is the variation in dependent variable explained by the model. Means, standard deviations and correlation matrix of all the variables used in the study are in table 2. Average value extracted is greater than the threshold value. The Cronbach's alpha, ranging from 0.68 to 0.88, indicated the reliability of all items in the study.

**Table 2**  
*Correlations*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	POL	VINV	VSA	VC	AVE	Alpha
POL	3.73	0.93	.78				.61	.88
VINV	3.70	0.81	.71**	.80			.64	.86
VSA	3.49	0.80	.66**	.74**	.77		.59	.68
VC	3.21	1.13	.73**	.72**	.71**	.79	.62	.84

### Hypothesized Model Testing

H1 proposed that political opinion leadership has a positive relationship with voter satisfaction, and to test this relationship SPSS process macro model 4 was used. This hypothesis is supported with significant results (coefficient 0.164, 95CI: 0.06-0.27). For H2, political opinion leadership has a positive relationship with voter involvement, and is supported by results of this study (0.69, 95CI: 0.63-0.75). To test hypothesis H3, the results found a significant positive indirect effect of POL on voter satisfaction through voter involvement (0.40, 95CI: 0.31-0.51).

The direct effects of voter cast on voter involvement and voter satisfaction are proved by this study (0.57, 95CI: 0.52-0.62; 0.38, 95CI: 0.30-0.46) respectively, based on this H4 and H5 are supported. The results further found that voter involvement mediates the relationship between voter cast and voter satisfaction (0.18, 95CI: 0.11-0.24) for H6. Therefore, the results for all proposed hypotheses are statistically significant and positive. Direct, indirect and total effects are given in table 3.

**Table 3**

*Direct, Indirect and Total Effects*

Independent Variable	Voter Involvement	Voter satisfaction			Mediation
	Direct effects	Direct effects	Indirect effects	Total effects	
POL	0.69 (95CI:0.63-0.75)	0.16 (95CI:0.06-0.27)	0.40 (95CI:0.31-0.51)	0.57	71.9%
Voter caste	0.57 (95CI:0.52-0.62)	0.38 (95CI:0.30-0.46)	0.18 (95CI:0.11-0.24)	0.56	32.1%

*Note.* n = 301. The values are standardized regression weights. Significance is proved by ULCI and LLCI values

### Discussion

Although the association between POL and voter behavior has been widely studied, there has been limited investigation into the specific relationships between POL, VC, and VSA through VINV within the context of Pakistan. This study adds to the existing body of knowledge in the domain of human behavior by empirically investigating the influence of POL and VC on voter

behavior and the mechanisms underlying this relationship. These relationships are examined through the lens of voters in Pakistan. H1 predicted a direct positive relationship between POL and VSA. The prediction was supported by the findings of the current study.

The findings indicate that POL positively influences VINV (H2). When it comes to explaining the relationships between POL and VSA through VINV (H3), it is argued that involvement may provide impetus for engaging in particular behavior along with satisfaction (O’Cass, [2005](#)). This study found statistically significant support for H3.

The direct effects of VC on VINV and VSA (H4, H5) were significant, direct and in line with the earlier works by scholars (Beg, [2017](#); Cwalina et al., [2010](#)). Moreover, VINV mediates the relationship between VC and VSA significantly (H6) (Jamal et al., [2019](#)). The study also provides support for partial mediation for the proposed relationships.

Based on these findings, this paper concludes that, in the context of Pakistan, political opinion leadership tends to increase voter satisfaction with voting and it also increases voter involvement in this process. Furthermore, voters’ caste remains a very important factor that increases the satisfaction of voter with the action and decision to vote. Where, being member of the same caste also increases interest and encourage involvement in voting decision.

### **Theoretical and Managerial Implications**

This study has implications for political managers, political influencers as well as the Election Commission of Pakistan as a regulatory body. Effective use of political opinion leaders can not only increase voter involvement but also contribute to the perception of voting as a satisfying activity. The findings suggest to engage political opinion leaders to shape voter behavior, ultimately leading to an increase in voter turnout.

Interestingly and in line with previous research, VC plays a vital and significant role in VINV and VSA. This remains under explored in the context of Pakistan. Therefore, the strength of social clusters based on norms and beliefs along with social segmentation remain important in voter behavior. This trend is in line with the voter dynamics in Asian or collectivist societies (Mohanachandran & Govindarajo, [2020](#); Yadav, [2015](#)) and in Pakistan (Haider, [2014](#); Shawar & Asim, [2012](#)). Hence, it will be beneficial for regulators and managers to design campaigns that not only

attract individuals but also different clusters in the society (Verma, [2012](#)) considering the collective benefit of the group as postulated in Michigan Psycho social model for voting.

Furthermore, this is one of the first studies that test the behavioral reasoning theory (Westaby, [2005](#)) to study voter behavior. Under its tenets this study tested the relationships within a specific context. However, in contrast to the conclusions drawn by Kirmani et al. ([2019](#)), this study finds support for the influence of caste on voter behavior, albeit in a different country within the same geographical region.

### **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

Proper strategies can be formulated to increase voter behavior based on the results of this study. However, some areas need improvements. Present study was conducted primarily in urban settings, neglecting the fact that about 63 percent population resides in rural areas of Pakistan as indicated by the United Nations Population Division's World Urbanization Prospects report. Hence, future studies should address this gap by conducting studies on rural voters. In fact, a comparative study on urban and rural voters will also provide useful insights. Present study used a cross sectional design that fails to capture changes over time, therefore, future studies may use a longitudinal design to study changes over a period of time. Furthermore, some other relevant variables can be used as moderators and mediators, for example, voter political knowledge, voter intention, etc. in future studies. Finally, specific studies for local, provincial or general elections may be useful to investigate different orientations of voter across different levels of government.

### **Conclusion**

This study extends our knowledge about voter behavior within a specific context. The findings suggest that political opinion leadership plays a direct role in encouraging the involvement of voters and contributing to voter satisfaction.

Role of caste is a universal reality in the working of a society. The study highlights the significant role of caste in the functioning of society, especially in collectivistic societies. Caste appears to serve as a unifying factor, bringing members together to influence election outcomes. This provides caste members with a platform to get acquainted and involved in a way that helps them express their political will through the exercise of



their voting right. Hence, caste maybe considered as the backbone of voting behavior in Pakistan.

### References

- Abou-Khalil, W. J., & Aoun, G. M. (2020). Does the political candidate's quality lead to satisfaction? Transposition of the SERVQUAL model to Politics (VOTQUAL): Case of the loyal Lebanese voter. *Journal of Political Marketing*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15377857.2020.1724419>
- Astuti, P. A. A. (2023). Elevate voter knowledge to win election. *Recent Trends in Arts and Social Studies*, 2, 86–104. <https://doi.org/10.9734/bpi/rtass/v2/5427E>
- Auerbach, A. M., Bussell, J., Chauchard, S., Jensenius, F. R., Nellis, G., Schneider, M., & Ziegfeld, A. (2022). Rethinking the study of electoral politics in the developing world: Reflections on the Indian case. *Perspectives on Politics*, 20(1), 250–264. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592721000062>
- Banerjee, S., & Chaudhuri, B. R. (2016). Factors responsible behind political brand preference: an empirical study on Indian voters. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 34(4), 559–582. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-05-2015-0095>
- Beg, A. M. (2017). The 2014 parliamentary elections in India: A study of the voting preferences of Muslims in Uttar Pradesh. *The Round Table*, 106(5), 567–576. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00358533.2017.1368917>
- Ben-Ur, J. (2007). Communication strategy to target low-involved voters in a US presidential election. *Journal of Business & Society*, 20(1), 217–231.
- Bittner, A., & Goodyear-Grant, E. (2020). Public opinion, political behaviour, and voting: Exploring diversity. In M. Tremblay & J. Everitt (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Gender, Sexuality, and Canadian Politics* (pp. 319–339). Palgrave Macmillan. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-49240-3\\_16](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-49240-3_16)
- Bonica, A., & McFaul, M. (2018, October 10). Want Americans to vote? Give them the day off. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/want-americans-to-vote->

[give-them-the-day-off/2018/10/10/5bde4b1a-ccae-11e8-920f-dd52e1ae4570\\_story.html](https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.4220090205).

- Burton, S., & Netemeyer, R. G. (1992). The effect of enduring, situational, and response involvement on preference stability in the context of voting behavior. *Psychology & Marketing*, 9(2), 143–156. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.4220090205>
- Campbell, A., Converse, P. E., Miller, W. E., & Stokes, D. E. (1960). *The American voter*. Wiley Publishers.
- Chaudhry, A., Mazher, U., & Khan, M. H. (2018). *How socio-economic conditions affect voting turnouts in Pakistan? A district-level analysis*. PIDE. <https://www.pide.org.pk/psde/pdf/AGM34/papers/Ahmed-Chaudhry.pdf>
- Choi, S. O., & Kim, B. C. (2012). Voter intention to use e-voting technologies: security, technology acceptance, election type, and political ideology. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 9(4), 433–452. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2012.710042>
- Cody, F. (2020). Wave theory: Cash, crowds, and caste in Indian elections. *American Ethnologist*, 47(4), 402–416. <https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.12986>
- Cwalina, W., Falkowski, A., & Newman, B. I. (2012). The macro and micro views of political marketing: The underpinnings of a theory of political marketing. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 12(4), 254–269. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.1421>
- Farrer, B., & Zingher, J. N. (2019). A global analysis of how losing an election affects voter satisfaction with democracy. *International Political Science Review*, 40(4), 518–534. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512118779213>
- Free and Fair Election Network. (2018). *Election observation report: voter turnout in GE-2018*. <https://fafen.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/FAFEN%E2%80%99S-Analysis-of-Voter-Turnout-in-GE-2018.pdf>
- Hadjar, A., & Beck, M. (2010). Who does not participate in elections in Europe and why is this? A multilevel analysis of social mechanisms behind non-voting. *European Societies*, 12(4), 521–542. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2010.483007>

- Haider, S. K. (2014). Punjab caste-system and voting behaviour. *Pakistan Vision*, 15(1), 143–179.
- Harder, J., & Krosnick, J. A. (2008). Why do people vote? A psychological analysis of the causes of voter turnout. *Journal of Social Issues*, 64(3), 525–549. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2008.00576.x>
- Harriss, J. (2015). Hindu nationalism in action: The Bharatiya Janata Party and Indian politics. *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 38(4), 712–718. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2015.1089826>
- Hooghe, M., & Kern, A. (2017). The tipping point between stability and decline: Trends in voter turnout, 1950–1980–2012. *European Political Science*, 16, 535–552. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41304-016-0021-7>
- Huber, J. D., & Suryanarayan, P. (2016). Ethnic inequality and the ethnification of political parties: Evidence from India. *World Politics*, 68(1), 149–188. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887115000349>
- Jamal, A., Kizgin, H., Rana, N. P., Laroche, M., & Dwivedi, Y. K. (2019). Impact of acculturation, online participation and involvement on voting intentions. *Government Information Quarterly*, 36(3), 510–519. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2019.04.001>
- Kirmani, M. D., Lakshmi, N., Hasan, F., & Bhardwaj, Y. P. (2019). Dynamics of voter satisfaction: Empirical investigation of young Indian voters. *Colombo Business Journal*, 10(2) 75–102. <http://doi.org/10.4038/cbj.v10i2.51>
- Lago, I. (2019). A research agenda in elections and voting behavior in a global and changing world. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 1, Article e1. <http://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2019.00001>
- Lazarsfeld, P. F., Berelson, B. R., & Gaudet, H. (1948). *The people's choice: How the voter makes up his mind in a presidential campaign*. Sloan & Pierce.
- Lim, M. (2013). Many clicks but little sticks: Social media activism in Indonesia. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 43(4), 636–657. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2013.769386>
- Mangi, S. N., Shah, N., & Soomro, B. A. (2019). A scientific approach to measure public political participation in Pakistan. *Asian Journal of*

*Political Science*, 27(1), 88–107.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02185377.2019.1576056>

- Masiha, S., Habiba, U., Abbas, Z., Saud, M., & Ariadi, S. (2018). Exploring the link between the use of facebook and political participation among youth in Pakistan. *Journal of Political Sciences & Public Affairs*, 6(1), Article e1000315. <https://doi.org/10.4172/2332-0761.1000315>
- Miller, A., & Listhaug, O. (1999). Political performance and institutional trust. In P. Norris (Ed.) *Critical citizens. global support for democratic government* (pp. 204–216.). Oxford University Press.
- Mohanachandran, D. K., & Govindarajo, N. S. (2020). Theory of reasoned action and citizen's voting behaviour. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 28(1) 695–715.
- O’Cass, A. (2000). An assessment of consumer’s product, purchase decision, advertising and consumption involvement in fashion clothing. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 21(5), 545–576. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-4870\(00\)00018-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-4870(00)00018-0)
- O’Shaughnessy, N. (2001). The marketing of political marketing. *European Journal of Marketing*, 35(9–10), 1047–1057. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560110401956>
- O’ Cass, A. (2003). Electoral choice. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 3(1), 61–85. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J199v03n01\\_04](https://doi.org/10.1300/J199v03n01_04)
- O’ Cass, A., & Pecotich, A. (2005). The dynamics of voter behavior and influence processes in electoral markets: A consumer behavior perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 58(4), 406–413.
- Pandian, M. (2002). One step outside modernity: Caste, identity politics and public sphere. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37(18), 1735–1741.
- Paskert, M. (2014). *Effects of voting behavior and voter turnout*. Caroll Collected. <https://collected.jcu.edu/honorspapers/44/>
- Peiris, P., & Lecamwasam, H. (2020). Caste-based differentiation in Sinhalese society. *Economic & Political*, 55(32–33), 64–71.
- Schofield, P., & Reeves, P. (2015). Does the factor theory of satisfaction explain political voting behaviour? *European Journal of Marketing*, 49(5/6), 968–992. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/EJM-08-2014-0524v>

- Shah, Y. H., & Majeed, G. (2022). Electoral trends and political dynamics of Punjab province. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 6(2), 146–156. [http://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2022\(6-II\)14](http://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2022(6-II)14)
- Sharma, S. (2020). Can't change my political disaffection! The role of political disaffection, trust, and resistance to change in internet voting. *Digital Policy, Regulation and Governance*, 22(2), 71–91.
- Shawar, D. E., & Asim, M. (2012). Voting behavior of people towards different political parties in district Faisalabad, Pakistan. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(2), 85–85.
- Sihombing, S. O., & Pramono, R. (2021). The integration of social media to the theory of planned behavior: A case study in Indonesia. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 8(5), 445–454. <https://doi.org/10.13106/jafeb.2021.vol8.no5.0445>
- Vaishnav, M. (2017). Ethnic identifiability in India: Evidence from a voter survey. *Asian Survey*, 57(4), 738–763.
- Venkatraman, M. P. (1990). Opinion leadership, enduring involvement and characteristics of opinion leaders: A moderating or mediating relationship. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 17(1), 60–67.
- Verma, R. (2012). What determines electoral outcomes in India? Caste, class, or voters' satisfaction with government performance? *Asian Survey*, 52(2), 270–297.
- Wattenberg, M. P. (2002). *Where have all the voters gone?* Harvard University Press.
- Westaby, J. D. (2005). Behavioral reasoning theory: Identifying new linkages underlying intentions and behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 98(2), 97–120. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2005.07.003>
- Yadav, V. (2015). *The electoral Hawa*. Baraza. <https://wayback.archive-it.org/1914/20171223000944/https://baraza.cdrs.columbia.edu/author/vivek/>
- Zeib, F., Zubair, M. H., & Razaq, K. A. (2022). Determinants of voting behavior in Pakistan: A theoretical perspective. *Psychology and Education*, 59(1), 176–191.