

Operationalisation of the Floating Voters Hypothesis in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

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Abstract

Vote bank of almost all the political parties in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is fluctuating in every general election. It is believed that a significant ratio of floating voters exists in KP. These voters play a significant role as key deciders in every general election. But the basic question is "who are the floating voters and how do they influence the outcomes of the general elections in KP? This study is an attempt to test the floating voters' hypothesis in KP. For testing this hypothesis, a four variable scale that includes, decision to vote; political awareness; satisfaction from the performance of the political party and interest in political and/or party affairs is used. Data collection is done through a closed-ended survey questionnaire and a multi-stage sampling technique is used for this purpose. Data is collected from three geographical regions of KP i.e., North, Centre, and South. The study population is total voters of KP, and a representative sample of 1200 respondents is determined through a statistical formula. Chi-Square test is used for the correlations of independent and dependent variables. The analysis of data confirmed the "floating voters' hypothesis" and identified a significant ratio of floating voters in the KP.

Keywords: Vote, Voter, Floating Voter, Voting Behaviour, Elections, Decision to Vote

1. Introduction

Who are the floating voters? Why do they change their loyalties from one political party to another in every election? How can a floating voter be identified from the partisan voter? Collins Dictionary defined floating voters as, "those voters who are not firm supporters of any political party, and whose vote in an election is difficult to be predicted." The floating voters move from one political party to another political party in different elections. This phenomenon of floating voter has thus a paramount importance in the study of elections and voting behaviour. A poorly informed electorate is more likely to shift back and forth between the parties during election campaigns. The "ideological innocence of the voters" provides the impression that they cast their ballots irregularly to different parties. Therefore, those voters who are politically less aware and "ideologically innocent," cannot remain loyal to a single political party (Stokes, 1961; Badshah, Rehman, & Muhammad, 2018). The loyalties of such voters keep on changing in every election. Due to their non-ideological commitments and

fluctuating nature, many scholars call them “the know-nothing voters” (Claassen, 2007; Rapoport & Stone, 1994).

2. Literature Review

The level of ‘political sophistication’ is a key factor to explain constancy and change in voters’ preferences in elections. There are two different opinions about the influence of political sophistication on electoral volatility. One opinion proposes that political sophistication increases electoral volatility while the other opinion is against and opposite to it. The proponents of Columbian School argue that electoral volatility will be higher among those voters who had a low level of political awareness (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1968). That assumption was proved in the 1940s and 1950s studies which identified that a large number of politically less aware voters switched from one party to another. However, since 1980s, many political scientists challenged the previous traditional floating voter theory (that was presented by Colombian School) and introduced a new floating voter theory (Dalton, 2013; Dalton, McAllister, & Wattenberg, 2000; Habert & Lancelot, 1988).

Dalton (2000) introduced Cognitive Mobilisation Theory (CMT) which suggests that electoral volatility is larger among politically aware and sophisticated voters. The proponents of the CMT believed that the appearance of a politically sophisticated voter can be seen because of the process of cognitive mobilisation. The cognitive mobilisation process covers two distinct aspects; first, the rising education ratio that increases voters’ cognitive skills, and second, the technological development and access to political information. Those voters who have the necessary political skills of political sophistication can independently make their electoral choices. Dalton *et al.* (2000) argues that less politically aware voters would depend on their “long-term” party affiliation. While politically aware voters are more susceptible to “short-term” forces such as personality, issues, and performance when choosing what party to vote for. Therefore, it is believed that highly political sophisticated voters’ electoral volatility and instability is greater than less politically sophisticated voter (Habert & Lancelot, 1988; Dalton *et al.*, 2000; Dalton, 2007; Dalton, 2013). The CMT puts forward a rational voting choice model. This model demonstrates that issues and performance influence the voter’s choice. On the other hand, the proponents of the CMT argue that political awareness and sophistication strengthen party loyal voters (Tiberj, 2015; Albright, 2009; Muxel, 2009). These findings strongly support the traditional floating voter hypothesis. Converse, (1962) rejected Colombian School’s traditional model and Dalton’s CMT of floating voters. Converse, (1962) argued that moderate voters are more volatile than highly politically aware and less political aware voters. Whereas Dassonneville & Dejaeghere (2014), Kuhn (2009), Lachat (2007), and Van-der-Meer, Elsas, Lubbe, & Brug (2015) have different results regarding what effect the political awareness may have on the strong party preferences and electoral volatility.

The political disaffection is also a significant factor that influences instability and volatility in the partisan voters. It is assumed that the political dissatisfaction and floating voters have a strong relationship. Zelle (1995) has presented the ‘frustrated floating voter model’. This model demonstrates about the preservation of a strong relationship between a voter and a political party. According to this model, the “good performance” of a political party strengthens its membership among the common masses. But frustration starts among the supporters against the political party when it does not achieve its targets and perform in a better way. Political disaffection stimulates the frustrated voter preferences in the coming election. Consequently, the frustrated voters express their dissatisfaction and switch to other political parties. He also

figured out that, unstable voters distrust democracy, political processes, and political parties. In Dalton & Weldon (2005), opinion distrust in political parties can thus be termed as the main reason of electoral volatility.

Muxel (2009) on the other hand opined that political satisfaction is playing the role of a catalyst in party loyalty of the affiliates. The study highlighted the impact of political satisfaction on electoral volatility. Whereas Soderlund (2008) focused on the relationship between party performance and party affiliation. He argues that after the evaluation of party performance a voter decides to remain a member or voter of the same political party or switch over to another political party. Due to poor performance, political party does not secure the support of the retrospective voters in succeeding election. Soderlund challenged the Zelle (1995) theory of frustrated voters which connects political frustration with electoral volatility. In similar lines Dassonneville, Blais, & Dejaeghere (2015) pointed out that politically frustrated voters change their political affiliations and voting preferences when they are dissatisfied from political party they voted in the previous election.

Crow, (2005) and Van-der-Meer et al., (2015) identified the influence of ideology on electoral volatility. They classified ideological voters into radical and moderate. Radical ideological voters are those voters who are extremists in their thoughts, understanding and loyalty to the party. Van-der-Meer et al., (2015) found that ideological extremeness is a strong bond between a voter and a political party. The probability of party switching for a voter is unusual in such a case in the coming elections. On the other hand, moderate ideological voters can easily change their political parties in each election. Moderate voters are unstable as compared to radical voters. Willocq (2016) argued that in multi-party systems ideologically moderate voters have more opportunities and chances to switch over to new political parties. In multi-party system there is the possibility of several political parties emerged from the same ideological background with the similar political goals. Therefore, moderate voters have many political choices in the coming elections.

Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee (1963) argued that “voters with a low level of political sophistication are more likely than highly sophisticated voters to change their mind in the weeks preceding the electoral contest”. Political interest of an individual is an important feature for involvement in active politics. Langton (1969) and Massialas (1971) have identified importance of political interest and political attachment. Political knowledge and political awareness are interconnected. Verba, Schlozman & Brady (1995) pointed out that, “political knowledge, measured by asking respondents the names of public officials, representatives, ministers and indigenous politics is a significant predictor of time-based political activity, voting, and political discussion” (p. 46). Various research also emphasised that political information and political activity are interdependent on each other in a society (Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Junn, 1991; Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001) and growing political culture.

There are different parameters of the political participation, like awareness about the voters list, importance of vote, eligibility age for vote, manifesto of a political party etc. It seems that political awareness in a society has direct impact on the political participation. It is also observed that voting behaviour of the politically aware electorates is different from the politically unaware electorates. Political awareness has profound and significant impacts on voters' preferences. Regular elections are one of the fundamental principles of democratisation process. In fact, it is an effective and convenient way by which citizens can participate in the political processes. To measure the level of political awareness Campbell & Kwak (2010)

asked three types of questions primarily to identify political participation i.e., attending political meetings, rallies, or speeches; circulating petitions for candidates or an issue; and contacting public officials or political parties.

The political system of Pakistan is based on multi-party system. Political parties can be categorised into ethnic, nationalist, and religious clusters. Ethnic and nationalist clusters include Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP), Awami National Party (ANP), Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMP), Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). While religious political parties are Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazal (JUI-F), Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam Sami-ul-Haq (JUI-S), Jamaat-i-Islami Pakistan (JIP), Jamiat Ulema-i-Pakistan-Noorani (JUP), Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) etc. The voters thus have multiple choices during the elections (Usman & Asghar, 1988; Naazer, Mahmood, & Ashfaq, 2017). They can easily switch to any political party or group according to their own sweet will during elections. The case is, however, not always easy for every voter to decide about political parties or independent candidates as many of these have very similar political objectives, programs and ideologies (as in case of religious political parties).

The voters in such a situation are primarily motivated by the personality of the party leader or the contesting candidate. This paves the way for independent candidates to contest and secure a handsome chunk of votes primarily because of their personal influence in their constituencies (Ahmad, Bano, & Rehman, 2017). For example, in general election 2002 independent candidates secured the second largest polled votes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. While in general elections 2008, the independent candidates bagged the largest polled votes in the province. However, in general election 2013 the independent candidates' political support dropped down to fourth position (Gallup, 2013). It demonstrates that personality politics is an important determinant of electoral politics and electoral outcomes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The charisma and personal influence of some independent candidates and political figures have more weight than political parties in their respective constituencies (Bilal, Rehman, & Ahmad, 2018).

During election campaign, the political parties in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa use different strategies and techniques to attract the voters. For example, local and international issues are highlighted. The religious sentiments of the common people are exploited (particularly) by the religious political parties (Shah, Yaqoob, Kausar, & Kumar, 2016; Trent & Friedenberg, 2004; Dorussen & Taylor, 2001; Carmines & Stimson, 1980). Moreover, the ethno-nationalist political parties try to give a nationalistic and ethnic colour to the election campaign. It is also observed that the ratio of 'retrospective voters' in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is declining and the people are trying to test new political party in every coming general election (this pattern of voting a new party is however, changed in the recent general election of 2018). Alliance making and seat adjustment is frequent in this province. Sometimes an alliance is made between such political parties, groups and individuals which are ideologically opposite to each other. Such alliances if on one hand increases their vote bank on the other hand proves harmful to the parties and leadership in terms of losing the confidence of ideological workers and voters. A large number of ideological voters switch to other political parties during such "un-natural" alliances. For example, due to the alliance and seat adjustment between JUI-F, ANP and PPP in different areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the general elections 2013, many of the ideological affiliates and voters left their parties. Due to the multi-party system such "switch over" or floating voters have many options during elections. It is assumed that the ratio of floating voters is high in the multi-party systems as compared to bi-party systems.

3. Research Methodology

The population of the study is total voters of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A representative sample (1200 respondents) is determined through a statistical formula. After the determination of sample size, a multi-stage sampling method technique is used for data collection. In the first stage the whole province is geographically distributed into three regions i.e., North, Centre and South. In each geographical region two constituencies are randomly selected. After the selection of constituencies two union councils are randomly selected in each constituency. In the final stage fifty male and fifty female respondents are selected through scientific sampling from each union council. Nonetheless, it is based on the findings and assumptions of the above discussed literature, that we first tried to identify the floating voters in the selected regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. We asked the respondents about the political parties they supported in the 2002, 2008 and 2013 general elections. We are thus able to identify the percentage of voters who are constantly supporting a single political party during the given three general elections. A sharp variation is observed in the political parties' vote bank in the province.

4. Analysis and Discussion

The survey results show the position of political parties for 2002, 2008 and 2013 general elections. The data shows the support of different respondents for political parties during these general elections. Among the respondents, many have different choices in every proceeding general election. The vote bank of each political party is different for each general election. We also assessed the characteristics of floating voters like, late vote decision and the level political awareness. To measure the level of political awareness of the respondents and to identify the floating voters in the selected areas, we asked the respondents about their knowledge on manifesto of the political party, their satisfaction from the party performance and their participation in the party meetings.

4.1. Voters' Support to Political Parties in Elections

A question has been asked from the respondents as, "which political party you voted" in the general elections of 2002, 2008 and 2013. The data in Table-1 presents fluctuations in the position and vote bank of different political parties in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. For example, in general election 2002, MMA got 5.2% votes among the respondents but in general election 2008, MMA's position went down to 1.3%. In the general election 2013 the MMA however, disintegrated into different political parties. The vote bank of MMA constituent parties can be counted independently for the 2013 general elections. Among the total respondents 3.5% voted to ANP in general election 2002 which is significantly increased to 8.6% in general elections 2008 but declined again to 7% in general elections 2013. PML-N however, increased its vote bank in every preceding general election i.e., 3.1% in 2002, 4.9% in 2008 and 9.3% in 2013. Similarly, QWP secured 1.3% support in 2002, 2.8% in 2008 and 4.5% in 2013 general election. The PPP support in general election 2002 is 5.3%, while in 2008 it reached to 10.6% and in general election 2013 it dropped down to 7.7%. In the case of PTI, only 0.9% respondents voted for PTI in general elections 2002, which dropped to zero in general election 2008 because of its boycott. Its vote bank and support significantly increased to 26.5% in the general election 2013. The independent candidates have also got a major share of the vote bank and support of the people in these three general elections i.e., 9.2% in 2002, 8.4% in 2008 and 5% in 2013 general election (see Table-1).

Table No. 1: Political Parties' Position for 2002, 2008 and 2013 General Elections

Year	MM A	ANP	PML-N	PPP-S/QWP	JI	JUI-F	PTI	PPP	Indp.	Don't Remem.
2002	5.2%	3.5%	3.1%	1.3%	3.9%	5.1%	0.9%	5.3%	9.2%	11.1%
2008	1.3%	8.6%	4.9%	2.8%	0.0%	2.8%	0.0%	10.6%	8.4%	20.9%
2013	0.0%	7.0%	9.3%	4.5%	12.2%	11.4%	26.5%	7.7%	5.0%	3.4%

Source: Field data from the selected areas.

The Table-2 shows that a Paired Samples test is applied for the better understanding of the differences in each pair of general elections. In first pair the value of $T=1.68$ with $p\text{-value}=0.100 > 0.05$ which shows insignificant difference between general election 2002 and 2008. However, in the second pair $T=19.47$ with $p\text{-value}=0.0001 < 0.05$ which shows that there is highly significant difference between 2008 and 2013 general elections. In the last pair $T=-21.73$ with $p\text{-value}=0.0001 < 0.05$ shows the significantly high difference between 2013 and 2002 general elections. The data shows a significant difference among the respondents about each general election that considers floating voters (see Table-2).

Table No. 2: Paired Samples Test

General Elections	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair-1: 2002 VS. 2008	0.23173	4.70975	0.14061	-0.04415	0.50761	1.648	1121	0.10
Pair-2: 2008 VS. 2013	2.67	4.5945	0.13716	2.402	2.94025	19.5	1121	0.00
Pair-3: 2013 VS. 2002	-2.90	4.47537	0.13361	-3.165	-2.6407	-21.73	1121	0.00

Source: Field data

The Table-3 shows fluctuations in the vote bank of different political parties in three consecutive general elections of 2002, 2008 and 2013 in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This fluctuation in the vote bank of different political parties proves that a significant ratio of the floating voters or undecided voters exists in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Table No. 3: Political Parties Position in Three General Elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Political Parties	% of Votes General Election 2002	% of Votes General Election 2008	% of Votes General Election 2013
MMA/JI & JUI	42%	12%	23%
ANP	8%	16%	7%
PTI	0.5	00	27%
PPP	9%	17%	7%
PML-N	12%	12%	15%
PML-Q	12.76%	14%	0.18
Independent	17%	24%	13%

Source: Election Commission of Pakistan

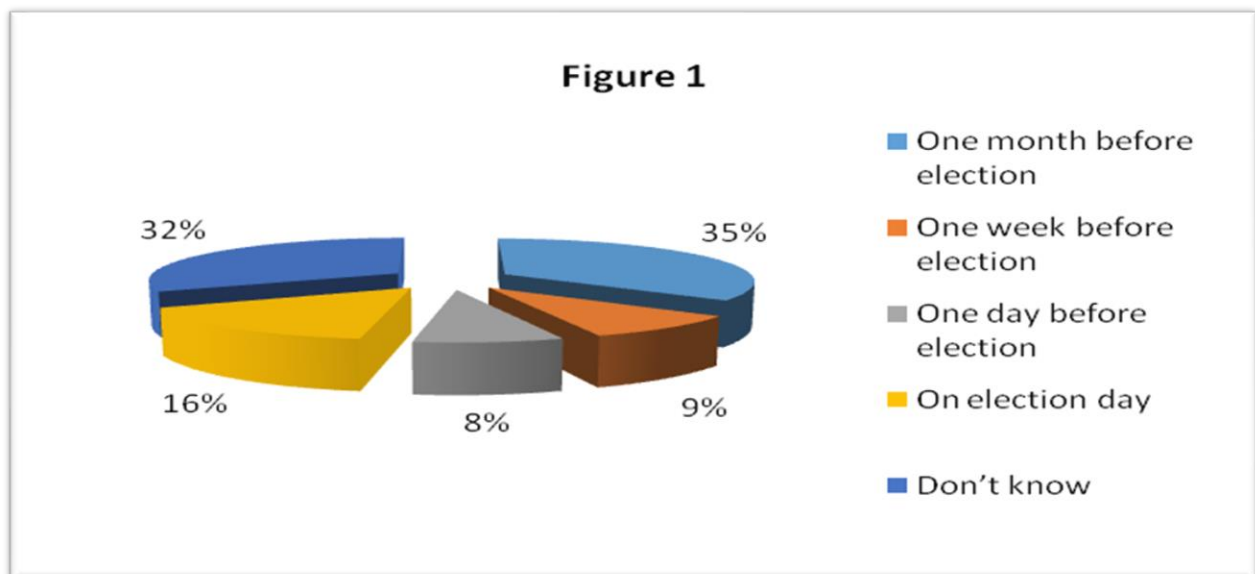
4.2. Characteristics of Floating Voters

There are different variables through which we can determine and measure the floating voters for this study. Like, late vote decision, political awareness about party manifesto, satisfaction on previous vote decision and issue voting.

4.2.1. Late Vote Decision

Gopoian & Sissie (1994) argued that during elections late deciders are not party loyal voters. It is believed that late deciders are unpredictable in their vote choice. The candidate preferences of late deciders are not determined by the conventional political forces that motivate other voters in elections. On the other hand, early deciders are those electorates who already chose the party they wanted to support in election. The voting behaviour of those voters who decide late in the election is unpredictable. Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, (1960: 82-83) figured out that the voters who decide earlier are distinguished from those who decide late, primarily in the degree to which they experience in their evaluation of the candidate and party. Whereas voters who decide to vote a political party one month before the polling day are considered partisan voter and those voters who are undecided to vote a particular party till the last day or one day before the election are considered floating voters or undecided voters.

Figure-1 shows that among the total respondents, 35.1% decided to vote a party candidate one month ahead of the general election, while 9.2% respondents decided to vote one week earlier than general election. On the other hand, 8.1% decided to vote a candidate one day before general election and 15.6% respondents decided to vote a candidate on the polling day. Among the total respondents, 32.1% are confused about the timing to decide about their vote. Among the total respondents, 25% decided to vote a candidate one day before or on polling day that may be deemed as floating voters. For further details, the association of the different independent variables like gender, age, educational level or qualification, income, geographical regions, and the timing of decision to vote depict a detail picture. We suppose that those voters who decide one day prior or on the polling day are late deciders. While those voters who decided one month before the general election are early deciders.



Source: Field data

a. Gender Consideration

The correlation of the data illustrates that there is a clear difference between the responses of the male and female respondents about the timing to decide vote preferences. Table-4 shows that among the total respondents, a small number of male and female respondents decided to vote one day earlier from polling day. However, some of the male and female respondents decided to vote on election day. Many male and female respondents on the other hand had no clear idea of their decision of vote. The P-value<0.05 of the Chi-Square test is significant which shows association between decision to vote and gender.

Table No. 4: When you decide to vote in election?

Gender	One month before election	One week before election	One day before election	On election day	Don't know	Total
Male	253(22.5%)	56(5%)	47(4.2%)	93(8.3%)	177(15.8%)	626(55.8%)
Female	141(12.6%)	47(4.2%)	44(3.9%)	82(7.3%)	182(16.2%)	496(44.2%)
Total	394(35.1%)	103(9.2%)	91(8.1%)	175(15.6%)	359(32%)	1122(100%)

Pearson Chi-Square=18.672^a, p-value=0.001

b. Economic Consideration

As far as the monthly income is concerned, Table-5 shows that a small number of lower income class respondents decided to vote one day before the polling and a significant number of the same income class decided to vote on the election day. While a considerable number of middle and lower middle-income class respondents decided one day before the election with a few on the election day. Moreover, some of the respondents who did not mention their monthly income decided one day before the general election to cast vote. While a large number of respondents who did not mention their monthly income decided to vote on the election day. The P-value<0.05 of the Chi-Square test is significant which shows an association between the decision to vote and the level of income.

Table No. 5: When you decide you vote in election?

Monthly income	One month before election	One week before election	One day before election	On election day	Don't know	Total
Below 10,000	83(7.4%)	33(2.9%)	22(2%)	53(4.7%)	54(4.8%)	245(21.8%)
10000-20000	58(5.2%)	16(1.4%)	15(1.3%)	31(2.8%)	45(4%)	165(14.7%)
20000-30000	51(4.5%)	21(1.9%)	12(1.1%)	17(1.5%)	48(4.3%)	149(13.3%)
30000-40000	32(2.9%)	3(0.3%)	7(0.6%)	7(0.6%)	24(2.1%)	73(6.5%)
40000-50000	20(1.8%)	7(0.6%)	8(0.7%)	6(0.5%)	10(0.9%)	51(4.5%)
Above 50000	31(2.8%)	2(0.2%)	0(0.0%)	8(0.7%)	11(1%)	52(4.6%)
Don't know	119(10.6%)	21(1.9%)	27(2.4%)	53(4.7%)	167(14.9%)	387(34.5%)
Total	394(35.1%)	103(9.2%)	91(8.1%)	175(15.6%)	359(32%)	1122(100%)

Pearson Chi-Square= 81.350^a, p-value=.000

c. Educational Consideration

In terms of education, Table-6 shows that a small number of the total respondents who have primary level education have decided to vote one day before the general election or on the very day of the election. While a minimal ratio of secondary school, higher secondary level and college graduate respondents decided to vote one day before the general election and on polling day. On the other hand, among the total respondents, some of the illiterate respondents decided to vote one day before general election and majority decide to vote on polling day. The P-value<0.05 of the Chi-Square test is insignificant which shows an association between decision to vote and educational qualification.

Table No. 6: When you decide you vote in election?

Educational Qualification	Month before election (%)	Week before election (%)	A day before election (%)	On election day (%)	Don't know (%)	Total (%)
Primary	26 (2.3)	9(.8)	9(0.8)	12(1.1)	23(2)	79(7)
Middle	27(2.4)	10(.9)	13(1.2)	19(1.7)	20(1.8)	89(7.9)
Matric	61(5.4)	28(2.5)	22(2)	27(2.4)	58(5.2)	196(17.5)
Intermediate	42(3.7)	7(0.6)	12(1.1)	16(1.4)	26(2.3)	103(9.2)
BA/BSc	78(7)	15(1.3)	5(0.4)	28(2.5)	55(4.9)	181(16.1)
MA/MSc	115(10.2)	15(1.3)	12(1.1)	49(4.4)	77(6.9)	268(23.9)
MPhil	9(0.8)	3(0.3)	2(0.2)	2(.2)	7(0.6)	23(2)
Illiterate	36(3.2)	16(1.4)	16(1.4)	22(2)	93(8.3)	183(16.3)
Total	394(35.1)	103(9.2)	91(8.1)	175(15.6)	359(32)	1122(100)

Pearson Chi-Square= 86.411^a, p-value=.000

4.2.2. Information about the Party Manifesto

Political party manifesto is one of the best sources to know about the party politics and its future policies about the local, regional, national and international politics (Willocq, 2016, September). Those who are interested in politics and are affiliated to any of the political parties regularly read their respective political parties manifestoes, their policies and programs. However, those voters who are not interested in practical politics or affiliated to political parties do not bother to read the parties manifestoes. Information about political party manifesto is a key indicator of political awareness. To know the level of the political awareness, the researchers asked the basic question from the respondents as “do you know the party manifestos.” The response of the people is correlated with the independent variables (gender, age, education, monthly income, and geographical regions) was recorded.

a. Gender Consideration

Among the total respondents' majority of the female responded that they did not read the manifestoes of the political party before casting their votes. Their level of political awareness was found less than their male counterparts in the selected regions. Table-7 draws a clear picture of the political awareness (reading manifesto of the party) of the respondents in relation to gender. The P-value<0.05 of the Chi-Square test is significant which shows an association between the gender and reading of the manifesto of a political party.

Table No. 7: Have you gone through the Manifesto of the Political Party; you have been supporting?

Gender	Not at all	No	Don't know	To some extent	To a large extent	Total
Male	67(6%)	121(10.8%)	67(6%)	248(22.1%)	123(11%)	626(55.8%)
Female	132(11.8%)	174(15.5%)	142(12.7%)	37(3.3%)	11(1%)	496(44.2%)
Total	199(17.7%)	295(26.3%)	209(18.6%)	285(25.4%)	134(11.9%)	1122(100%)

Chi-Square Test=2.964E2^a, p-value=.000

b. Economic Consideration

As far as monthly income is concerned the Table-8 shows that there are a significant number of respondents who did not mention their monthly income, and they also denied reading the manifesto of a political party. Similarly, a large number of the respondents from the lower income class affirmed that they did not read the manifesto of a political party which they support. The respondents from the middle class and upper income class on the other hand affirmed that they read party' manifesto and program. The P-value<0.05 of the Chi-Square test is significant which shows an association between the income and reading of the manifesto of a political party.

Table No. 8: Have you gone through the Manifesto of Political Party; you have been supporting?

Monthly income	Not at all	No	Don't know	To some extent	To a large extent	Total
Below 10,000	40(3.6%)	60(5.3%)	33(2.9%)	70(6.2%)	42(3.7%)	245(21.8%)
10000-20000	29(2.6%)	48(4.3%)	20(1.8%)	46(4.1%)	22(2%)	165(14.7%)
20000-30000	21(1.9%)	25(2.2%)	38(3.4%)	44(3.9%)	21(1.9%)	149(13.3%)
30000-40000	9(0.8%)	22(2%)	15(1.3%)	21(1.9%)	6(0.5%)	73(6.5%)
40000-50000	10(0.9%)	9(0.8%)	8(0.7%)	19(1.7%)	5(0.4%)	51(4.5%)
Above 50000	5(0.4%)	5(0.4%)	9(0.8%)	17(1.5%)	16(1.4%)	52(4.6%)
Don't know	85(7.6%)	126(11.2%)	86(7.7%)	68(6.1%)	22(2%)	387(34.5%)
Total	199(17.7%)	295(26.3%)	209(18.6%)	285(25.4%)	134(11.9%)	1122(100%)

Chi-Square Test=93.239^a, p-value=.000

c. Educational Consideration

As far as education is concerned, among the total respondents (see Table-9) the highest number of illiterate respondents accepted that they did not go through the manifesto of a political party. On the other hand, a significant number of graduate and post-graduate participants negated to read the manifestoes of a political party. The P-value<0.05 of the Chi-Square test is significant which shows an association between the educational qualification and reading of the manifesto of a political party.

Table No. 9: Have you gone through the Manifesto of Political Party; you have been supporting?

Educational	Not at all	No	Don't know	To some extent	To a large extent	Total
Primary	27(2.4%)	22(2%)	9(.8%)	11(1%)	10(.9%)	79(7%)
Middle	15(1.3%)	30(2.7%)	16(1.4%)	22(2%)	6(.5%)	89(7.9%)
Matric	28(2.5%)	45(4%)	39(3.5%)	57(5.1%)	27(2.4%)	196(17.5%)
Intermediate	20(1.8%)	23(2%)	24(2.1%)	25(2.2%)	11(1%)	103(9.2%)
BA/BSc	30(2.7%)	45(4%)	39(3.5%)	45(4%)	22(2%)	181(16.1%)
MA/MSc	34(3%)	58(5.2%)	42(3.7%)	90(8%)	44(3.9%)	268(23.9%)
MPhil	2(0.2%)	4(0.4%)	2(0.2%)	8(0.7%)	7(0.6%)	23(2%)
Illiterate	43(3.8%)	68(6.1%)	38(3.4%)	27(2.4%)	7(0.6%)	183(16.3%)
Total	199(17.7%)	295(26.3%)	209(18.6%)	285(25.4%)	134(11.9%)	1122(100%)

Chi-Square Test=89.216^a, p-value=.000

4.2.3. Satisfaction from the Performance of Political Party

The third important parameter to identify the floating voter is satisfaction from the party voted in the previous election. Soderlund (2008) in his research clearly pointed out that trust on political party strengthens the number of loyal voters. He argued that the possibility of voter switching was strongly influenced by the evaluations of the performance of the party voted in the previous elections. Some voters are disposed to the party they had previously voted if they thought that it had done a good job and performed well. On the other hand, voters switch off that political party if they considered that its performance is poor and not up to their expectation. The correlation of the different independent variables (age, gender, income, education) with the dependent variable (i.e., satisfaction from the performance of the party voted in 2013 general election) is identified and Chi-Square test is applied for analysis.

a. Gender Consideration

As far as gender is concerned (Table-10), a small number of the male respondents said that they are not satisfied with the party they voted in general election 2013. While a considerable number of (male) respondents are uncertain about the satisfaction of the party they voted. However, a large number of male respondents said that they are satisfied from the political parties they voted in general election 2013. Among the female respondents, a small quantity of female affirmed that they are satisfied with the political parties they voted in general election 2013. A small number of females are undecided about their satisfaction with the political parties they voted for. The P-value<0.05 of the Chi-Square test is significant which shows an association between gender and satisfaction of the party performance in general election 2013.

Table No. 10: Are you satisfied with the party you voted in 2013 general elections?

Gender	Not at all	Not satisfied	Don't know	To some extent	To a large extent	Total
Male	90 (8%)	70(6.2%)	104(9.3%)	201(17.9%)	161(14.3%)	626(55.8%)
Female	74(6.6%)	62(5.5%)	109(9.7%)	162(14.4%)	89(7.9%)	496(44.2%)
Total	164(14.6%)	132(11.8%)	213(19%)	363(32.4%)	250(22.3%)	1122(100%)

Pearson Chi-Square=12.191^a, p-value=.016

b. Economic Consideration

A considerable number of lower income class along with those who did not mention their monthly income said that they are unsatisfied with the party they voted in 2013. It is assumed that most of the lower income class people are politically less aware, and their expectations are high, therefore, they are (always) unsatisfied from the political parties they voted. It is also observed that lower income class have weak political affiliation and they can easily change their loyalties. Although, a small quantity of respondents from the lower middle, middle and upper classes stated that they did not satisfy from the party they voted in general election 2013. The $P\text{-value} > 0.05$ of the Chi-Square test is significant which shows an association between the income and satisfaction of the party performance in general election 2013 (See Table-11).

Table No. 11: Are you satisfied from the party which you voted in 2013 general elections?

Monthly Income	Not at all	Not satisfied	Don't know	To some extent	To a large extent	Total
Below 10,000	43 (3.8%)	30 (2.7%)	45 (4%)	66 (5.9%)	61 (5.4%)	245 (21.8%)
10000-20000	20 (1.8%)	15 (1.3%)	21 (1.9%)	66 (5.9%)	43 (3.8%)	165 (14.7%)
20000-30000	28 (2.5%)	19 (1.7%)	18 (1.6%)	55 (4.9%)	29 (2.6%)	149 (13.3%)
30000-40000	10 (0.9%)	10 (0.9%)	14 (1.2%)	26 (2.3%)	13 (1.2%)	73 (6.5%)
40000-50000	8 (0.7%)	5 (0.4%)	8 (0.7%)	18 (1.6%)	12 (1.1%)	51 (4.5%)
Above 50000	5 (0.4%)	6 (0.5%)	13 (1.2%)	13 (1.2%)	15 (1.3%)	52 (4.6%)
Don't know	50 (4.5%)	47 (4.2%)	94 (8.4%)	119 (10.6%)	77 (6.9%)	387 (34.5%)
Total	164 (14.6%)	132 (11.8%)	213 (19%)	363 (32.4%)	250 (22.3%)	1122 (100%)

Pearson Chi-Square=34.234^a, p-value=.081

c. Educational Consideration

Table-12 shows that a major share of graduate and post-graduate respondents is not satisfied with the party they voted in general election 2013. Some of the primary, secondary and higher secondary school level respondents and a meagre portion of illiterate respondents are not satisfied from the party they voted in 2013 polls. Nonetheless, a significant number of primary, secondary, higher secondary, graduate, and post-graduate and illiterate respondents showed their satisfaction for the party they voted in 2013 general elections. The $P\text{-value} > 0.05$ of the Chi-Square test is insignificant which shows no association between educational qualification and dissatisfaction of the party performance in general election 2013.

Table No. 12: Are you satisfied from the party which you voted in 2013 general elections?

Educational qualification	Not at all	Not satisfied	Don't know	To some extent	To a large extent	Total
Primary	18 (1.6%)	9 (.8%)	13 (1.2%)	25 (2.2%)	14 (1.2%)	79 (7%)
Middle	16 (1.4%)	10 (.9%)	19 (1.7%)	20 (1.8%)	24 (2.1%)	89 (7.9%)
Matric	22 (2%)	26 (2.3%)	36 (3.2%)	63 (5.6%)	49 (4.4%)	196 (17.5%)
Intermediate	19 (1.7%)	14 (1.2%)	22 (2%)	36 (3.2%)	12 (1.1%)	103 (9.2%)
BA/BSc	25 (2.2%)	27 (2.4%)	35 (3.1%)	58 (5.2%)	36 (3.2%)	181 (16.1%)
MA/MSc	37 (3.3%)	25 (2.2%)	41 (3.7%)	94 (8.4%)	71 (6.3%)	268 (23.9%)
MPhil	6 (0.5%)	1 (0.1%)	2 (0.2%)	10 (0.9%)	4 (0.4%)	23 (2%)
Illiterate	21 (1.9%)	20 (1.8%)	45 (4%)	57 (5.1%)	40 (3.6%)	183 (16.3%)
Total	164 (14.6%)	132 (11.8%)	213 (19%)	363 (32.4%)	250 (22.3%)	1122 (100%)

Pearson Chi-Square=37.099^a, p-value=.117

4.2.4. Lack of Interest in Party Politics

Edward C. Dreyer (1971) argued that political information is an important determinant for a voter to decide about the vote choice. Political parties use different tools for the political information of the voter during the election campaign. Dreyer found that in the US media specialists of political parties have been involved in the election campaign. Modern technological innovations in the communication industry have brought new developments in the character and contents of the mass communication. It is difficult for a candidate to communicate with all the voters of the constituency; therefore, media specialists use the platform of media as a source of political information (Dreyer, 1971).

The contesting candidates in their speeches during election campaign on print, electronic and social media inform their voters about the local and international politics and issues. Thus, those people who are more in touch with (such kind of) media are comparatively more politically aware and informed than those who are avoiding the use of media (Graham, 1974). In developing societies, majority of the people belong to lower or lower middle class and do not have any access to media especially social media that i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp etc. So, if any of the candidates is using social media for his/her election campaign, it may not provide much support in their campaign.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a small number of voters are found using media for political nourishment and information. Therefore, the contesting candidates must focus more or less on public speeches in election meeting and other gatherings. Through these speeches they infiltrate and propagate the party message, manifesto, and program to the common masses. For the measurement of the level of political awareness of the voters a question about their participation in the party meetings has been asked from the respondents. This variable is correlated with gender, profession, education, marital status, and income level. The Chi-square test results of different variables are given below.

a. Gender Consideration

In terms of gender among the total respondents, the majority of female responded that they did not participate in party meetings. Some of male respondents also did not participate in the party meetings. On the other hand, majority of the male respondents and a small number of female respondents stated that they participated in party meetings. The Pakhtun society is a male dominant society. There is a common perception that only men can actively participate in politics and women handle household (family) affairs. Therefore, we can rarely see participation of any female political activists in election campaigns. The P-value<0.05 of the Chi-Square test is significant which shows an association between the gender and participation in party meetings (See Table-13).

Table No. 13: Participation in Party Meetings

Gender	Not at all	No	Don't know	To some extent	To a large extent	Total
Male	113 (10.1%)	144(12.8%)	34(3%)	223(19.9%)	112(10%)	626(55.8%)
Female	176(15.7%)	179(16%)	22(2%)	78(7%)	41(3.7%)	496(44.2%)
Total	289(25.8%)	323(28.8%)	56(5%)	301(26.8%)	153(13.6%)	1122(100%)

Pearson Chi-Square=1.093E², p-value=.000

b. Economic Consideration

As far as income is concerned, among the total respondents, majority of the respondents who did not know or did not mention their monthly income said that they do not participate in the party meetings. Some of the lower and lower middle, middle class respondents refuse to participate in the party meetings. Although a small portion of upper class among the total respondents expressed disengagement to the party meetings. Whereas some of the lower, middle, and upper-class respondents said that they regularly participate in the party meetings. The P-value<0.05 of the Chi-Square test is significant which shows an association between the income and participation in party meetings (See Table No. 14).

Table No. 14: Participation in Party Meetings

Monthly income	Not at all	No	Don't know	To some extent	To a large extent	Total
Below 10,000	46 (4.1%)	81(7.2%)	12(1.1%)	63(5.6%)	43(3.8%)	245(21.8%)
10000-20,000	39(3.5%)	43(3.8%)	5(0.4%)	51(4.5%)	27(2.4%)	165(14.7%)
20000-30,000	36(3.2%)	36(3.2%)	15(1.3%)	47(4.2%)	15(1.3%)	149(13.3%)
30000-40,000	22(2%)	22(2%)	4(0.4%)	18(1.6%)	7(0.6%)	73(6.5%)
40000-50,000	19(1.7%)	11(1%)	1(0.1%)	14(1.2%)	6(0.5%)	51(4.5%)
Above 50,000	6(0.5%)	13(1.2%)	4(0.4%)	20(1.8%)	9(0.8%)	52(4.6%)
Don't know	121(10.8%)	117(10.4%)	15(1.3%)	88(7.8%)	46(4.1%)	387(34.5%)
Total	289(25.8%)	323(28.8%)	56(5%)	301(26.8%)	153(13.6%)	1122(100%)

Pearson Chi-Square= 48.117^a, p-value=.002

c. Educational Consideration

In respect to education the Table-15 shows that among the total respondents a large number of graduate and post-graduate level participants showed their disengagement with the political parties' meetings. Likewise, some of the primary, secondary and higher secondary school level respondents and a large number of illiterate respondents also said that they did not participate in the political party meetings. On the other hand, some of the primary, secondary, higher secondary, graduate, and post-graduate level respondents and a meagre portion of illiterate respondents affirmed involvement in the political parties' meetings. The P-value<0.05 of the Chi-Square test is significant which shows an association between the educational qualification and participation in party meetings.

Table No. 15: Participation in Party Meetings

Educational qualification	Not at all	No	Don't know	To some extent	To a large extent	Total
Primary	31(2.8%)	18(1.6%)	5(.4%)	14(1.2%)	11(1%)	79(7%)
Middle	19(1.7%)	32(2.9%)	4(.4%)	20(1.8%)	14(1.2%)	89(7.9%)
Matric	30(2.7%)	43(3.8%)	16(1.4%)	67(6%)	40(3.6%)	196(17.5%)
Intermediate	28(2.5%)	26(2.3%)	9(0.8%)	26(2.3%)	14(1.2%)	103(9.2%)
BA/BSc	44(3.9%)	57(5.1%)	4(0.4%)	54(4.8%)	22(2%)	181(16.1%)
MA/MSc	67(6%)	73(6.5%)	7(0.6%)	89(7.9%)	32(2.9%)	268(23.9%)
MPhil	8(0.7%)	8(0.7%)	3(0.3%)	3(0.3%)	1(0.1%)	23(2%)
Illiterate	62(5.5%)	66(5.9%)	8(0.7%)	28(2.5%)	19(1.7%)	183(16.3%)
Total	289(25.8%)	323(28.8%)	56(5.0%)	301(26.8%)	153(13.6%)	1122(100%)

Pearson Chi-Square=80.076^a, p-value=.000

5. Conclusion and Findings

Results of general elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa since the last decade have been fluctuating. This trend has primarily been accounted by the presence of floating voters in the province. A four variables scale is adopted for this study for the identification of the floating voters. Findings from these variables estimate that there is considerable ratio of floating voters in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which have a significant impact on the polling result of every general election. The key findings against each of the variable are as follows:

- a. From the analysis of the first variable, it is found that a considerable number of voters decide to vote one day prior or even on the polling day. They are assumed as late deciders and are much prone to change their political loyalties and affiliations. Whereas those respondents who decide to vote one month earlier from elections day are considered as sturdy party voters.
- b. In respect to the second variable the finding shows that a major portion of the voters do not read the manifesto of the political party. It is assumed that those voters who read and have knowledge about the party manifesto are politically aware and informed in comparison to those who do not read the party manifesto. The reader and informed voters were found to be committed party members and affiliates.
- c. The third variable established a relationship between satisfactions of the voters with their political parties and their voting preferences. The results show that a considerable number of respondents are not satisfied from the party they voted in general election 2013. Satisfaction from the party policies provide strength to the party affiliation of an individual. It also establishes trust of the individuals on the political system and party processes. The satisfied voters are assumed to support the same political parties in the coming election(s). Conversely, the unsatisfied respondents can easily switch to any other political party in the next general election.
- d. Attending the party meetings is another important variable which showed an association of the voters with their affiliation to a political party or the voting preferences. Data from the fieldwork identified that majority of the respondents did not attend and participate in the party meetings. It is assumed that those voters who participate in the party meeting have a high level of political interest, awareness, and information. Political participation or involvement and political interest have a decisive role in the individual political decision making and voting preferences. It can be generalised that those citizens who have interest in politics be supporting a political party. While those who lack interest in politics will not have any political affiliation with a party. Such citizens can easily switch to any political party or personality in every coming general election.

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