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## PSYCHOSOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF VOTERS ON INTENTION TO VOTE IN PAKISTAN’S 2018 GENERAL ELECTION

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Voting Intention, Demographic Determinants, Candidate Characteristics, Voter, Political Candidate, Voting in Pakistan	<p>The study focused on studying factors that influence who voters would vote for in Pakistan’s 2018 General Election. It was examined whether personal characteristics of candidate matter for the voters or not, and it was also hypothesized there was a difference in choosing candidate’s personal characteristics among the gender, education and voting state (voter &amp; elector) of the voters. The research-based on between-group research design on a sample of 250 Pakistani voters and electors, and Urdu adapted version of voting behavior scale was used. Results based on the chi-square and binary logistic regression indicated participants intended to vote to candidates who would show humanity, have sound educational background and vision for country development, and can fight for corruption but they did not give importance to the sex of the candidate. The gender differences were observed as women were more intended to vote on basis of ethnicity in comparison to men. The study helps to understand psychological and social factors that may affect voters voting decisions.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: right; color: red;"><i>2020 Gomal University Journal of Research</i></p>
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### INTRODUCTION

The politicians have an important role to play in the betterment of their country, as they are supposed to give vision, understand citizens, and to make a country a better place to live (Taj & Rehman, 2015). To elect the politicians in democratic societies, voting is considered to be important tool. The democracy is political system in which voters participate, and candidates compete with each other based on votes (Minier, 1998). Democracy provides citizens with a sense of responsibility to cast votes (Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009). The citizen of Pakistan who has a national identity card is eligible to cast his or her vote (Ahmed & Aborizka, 2011). Voting was defined by the universal declaration of human rights as it is considered to be the basic right of almost all the citizens as it shows their will which is preserved (Usman, 2009). Voting shows political preferences and likeliness for political candidate/ group of candidates on one political party over the other which ultimately determines who runs the government in country (Blais, Huang, Wallraff, Girvin, & Schoelkopf, 2004). Thus, in elections, citizens

decide who they want to elect to represent them in an official capacity for state (Annenberg, 2017).

The participation of voters is considered to be very important in a democracy because the act of casting a vote is duty of every citizen and their participation can bring about real change. That is why, before General Election of Pakistan 2018 this research was conducted so as to learn voters voting intentions. Voting intention reflects how people tend to vote in elections. It reflects whom the voters want to elect, voters demand, likeliness and preferences (Blais, et al., 2004). If it looks from a social psychological perspective the study of voting intentions explains who is voting and the reasons behind voting (Blais, et al., 2004). Candidates are judged by the voters through their personal and relevant characteristics which are included as their experience, ability, honesty, humanity, compassion, leadership and other abilities of the candidate (Prysbý 2008). When the voters intend to vote or their attention is towards the personalities of candidates then this is called personalization of the politics (Karvonen, 2011; McAllister & Bean, 2004). Therefore, present study was also conducted to understand that which personality characteristics of the candidate weighted for the voters in Pakistan. In every election, it is an interesting question who will win and why people voted the way they did.

To understand this about Pakistan looking at campaign events and incidents is not sufficient because the unique aspects of election must be blended with a more general understanding of voting intention to create a full explanation. The purpose of this research is to investigate which personal characteristics of a candidate were considered important by voters and it was studied whether there is a difference between gender, education level and voter state (voter, elector) on their voting intentions to whom to vote or not. So, examining the psychosocial determinants of voting intention is important because a well-functioning society rests rarely upon the rational choice of the voter. According to social psychologists, candidate ethnicity plays a role in voter's decision which is one of the personal characteristics (Martin, 2015). Some of the voters do consider ethnicity when they cast a vote like some of them only choose leaders of their ethnicity. Still, others choose a candidate and see the ethnic cues when they wanted to elect the candidate from the other party or another group (Gibson & Long, 2009). Somehow ethnicity is playing a vital role in Pakistan. Ethnicity is considered very vital when it comes to voting people need their leaders to be elected rather than focusing on other major characteristics.

In this reference, Herald survey shows that all of the political parties having the main idea of ethnicity and ethnic constituency, while two parties one is PPP and the other is MQM vote 50% based on the ethnicity, and voters in Karachi prefer their ethnic groups (Anderson, & Jaffrelot, 2018). Ethnicity is not far from only variable shaping the vote of Pakistani. Besides, there are various other candidate's personal characteristics (e.g. gender) which may play an important role in this debate. For example, gender plays a significant role in voting intention that how many voters consider the competence of candidate on the basis of gender (Barelli, Bhattachary, & Siga, 2017). Likewise, voters give importance on basis of education because giving the leadership in hands of illiterate who tries to win votes on basis of Biradari systems and likeliness rather than his or her contribution to the nation is unacceptable (Chaudhry, Ahmad, Khan & Hussain, 2014). Candidate area and regional background, prior knowledge to work, and political experience influence voters who intend to vote at election time (Evans,

2017). Voters usually vote for educational policy the candidate present in campaign (Duncan, 2007).

Some of voters' vote based on the health policy of party because they know the importance of health, they also consider the performance of the party and evaluate their performance too (Purtle, Goldstein, Edson & Hand, 2017). On the other hand, voter demographics also played an important role in their intention to cast the vote. There is a difference in voters thinking as married ones have different opinions and singles have their own opinion. Married couples usually cast vote according to their shared beliefs or they are either influenced each other. They vote the same way as their partner does (Burden, Canon, Mayer, & Moynihan, 2014). The educated people understand national and international voting intentions and they are connected with the realities more than uneducated ones. They discuss political issues and are more engaged in politics and are more aware of the country's situation and form their own opinions (Ceaser, 2011). Similarly, the women consider other factors from men when it comes to voting (Rauf & Shah, 2015). Some of the voters even vote in the name of the caste (Carpenter & Johari, 2001). Some voters vote based on localness and they look for gender and occupation of the candidate as voters prefer their ministers to be local (Evans, 2017). Most of the voters' vote for that group with whom they feel most associated (Leigh, & Susilo, 2009).

The above discussion suggests that not only the personal characteristics of the candidate but the voter's demographic characteristics may influence voter's intentions to whom he/she would vote. Therefore, it is important to study which factors influence who voters would vote for in Pakistan's 2018 General Election. Hence, the present study has two objectives. First, to assess the personal characteristics of the candidate on which he/she considered the most important by the voters. Second, to find out the differences of gender, education and voting state (voter & elector) of the participants on their intention to whom to vote. The following literature would highlight the some of the researches in this specific domain of the political psychology.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

A wide variety of research has been conducted on personal characteristics of the candidate and demographic determinants of voters on intention to vote. For example, Horiuchi, Smith and Yamamoto (2020) studied which personal attribute of politicians can shape the voters' choice to whom to vote in Japan. They found that voter prefer to vote those politicians whose party manifesto based on chances of the availability of employment. Uslu (2017) conducted a study to analyze the factors affecting voter intention in Turkey. Anar survey was used for data collection of 8594 voters. Results showed that characteristics of the candidate had an effect on voter's intentions to vote a particular candidate for example voters considered the following factors effective to cast vote likewise candidate honesty (85%), public contact (81%), experience (80%), party (80%), and campaign (33%). Likewise, Alsamydai and Khasawneh (2013) studied the most important basic components that influence voter's choice decisions. The model study was divided into five major dimensions which are the (candidate's personal attributes, political background, candidate credibility, communications and contact means used by the candidates and campaign management) and how they influence voters' selection decisions.

The design and development of this study were based on initial pre-tested survey distributed to a sample consisting of 60 individuals who are eligible to participate in Jordanian election. The initial survey was also pre-tested and evaluated by a panel of experts in marketing and the political specialists to assess the items within each construct. The questionnaire was then distributed to Jordanian citizens in Amman. The results declared that there is a significant correlation between the candidate's personal attributes, the political background, candidate's credibility, communication, and contact means of candidates. In reference to demographic characteristics of the voters, Ogdogu and Olaye (2017) conducted a research in which they explored the determinants of voting intentions in general elections in Oyo State, Nigeria. It was explored whether gender, age, and ideology affect voting intention or not. The sample was 640 electorates which were randomly selected. The results showed that the age was not a direct determinant of the voting intention of electorates. There was no gender difference between electorates in the elections. The conclusion of the study was to put efforts into the educating every citizen regarding voting as a civic duty that should not be affected by age or gender.

Likewise, Banerjee and Chaudhuri (2018) carried out the study in India to understand which demographic characteristics of voters can determine their political preferences. They found that gender, marital status, and socioeconomic status did not affect their choices to whom to vote; however, age, voter's occupation and their newspaper choices predicted their political choices. Similarly, Akhter & Sheikh (2014) conducted the research to determine the factors behind voting intention of voters in India. A survey was conducted on 156 voters. Reported factors which influence the voting intention included religious and communal factors. This means that vote was cast based on belonging to a particular religious party and communal factors e.g., the influence of money and personality of the candidate. Alike, Lee, Chen, Tsai, Yen, Chen and Lin (2016) investigated the extent to which people in a democratic society can be rational when making serious decisions e.g. voting or choosing a candidate for a country. The sample was comprised of 124 voters of the district Taipei, Taiwan who participated in the study. In this study predictors of voting intention and choices were examined in elections of 2014. Results showed that explicit political party preferences had largest impact on voting intentions.

Voters were engaged in explicit, controlled processes of the voting decision but findings of perceived voting intention and ethnicity of predictors may suggest otherwise. In relation to indigenous research, Gallup exit poll election day survey in 2008, conducted on 5338 voters, and results showed 24 % voters were intended to vote to their party out of party loyalty, 21% were intended to vote to the party with the manifesto of developmental work and 12 % were intended to vote their Bridari. Similarly, before 2013 General election of Pakistan, Sheikh, Bukhari and Naseer (2012) explored the criteria which were set for the elections and the conditions in which voters participate. Voter's intention was illustrated from different means of media, television, and newspaper. The sample included 600 registered voters from urban and rural areas of Taxila and Wah Cant. The findings suggest that most of the voters' vote because of social pressure. It was further analyzed and revealed that voting intention can be influenced by external factors e.g., media, television, and newspaper. Tariq, Usman, Sajjad, and Amjad (2013) conducted a survey in Rawalpindi to study personal impact of candidate. They collect data from 256 voters and found that political experience and election campaign were the important factors for determining voter intentions to vote for the candidates of the Rawalpindi.

From the above theoretical framework and literature review, it can understand that there are different reasons why people vote for specific candidates. This simply means voting intention to whom to vote is vary from person to person. Moreover, when we look at the voting trends in South Asia, we find that Pakistan lags behind all other countries in relation to the voter participation.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

### **Research Design/Sample**

In the present research, between-group research design was used in order to compare two separate groups based on gender (men and women), education (literate and illiterate) and voting state (voters and electors) to investigate difference of determinants of voting intention (Howell, 2009). An a priori power analysis was conducted using G\*Power3 (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) using chi-square for large effect size ( $d = .50$ ), and alpha of 0.05. The result showed that a total sample of 80 participants was required to attain a power of 0.95. The sample size was 250 Pakistani citizens. Purposive sampling was used to recruit research participants.

### **Scale of Voting Intention**

Voting intentions was measured over voting behavior scale developed by Adams and Agomor (2015). It consisted of two sections: Section A which consists of demographics determinants of voter and Section B which consists of rating factors of a candidate from least important to most important. Scale consist of 10 items while item no 11 has 17 key factors e.g. (personality of the candidate, educational background, sex of the candidate, etc.). As data was collected from a political population of Pakistan that's why it was translated into Urdu by using Mapi procedure so that they all can understand it properly. Cronbach's alpha reliability of tool was 0.85.

### **Procedure**

First, the topic was approved by ethical board committee and after that, permission from the author of the scale was taken to translate scale into Urdu. Participants were provided with an information sheet that highlights the purpose of research, and they were asked to sign the consent form in which it was mentioned that they had a right to withdraw from participation at any time. All the participants were asked to read the directions carefully and fill out the demographic sheet as well as the questionnaire. Data were collected from voters and electors (who could cast vote in the upcoming elections). The researcher read the items for those participants who were uneducated. After completing the questionnaire, participants were again reassured about the anonymity of their responses. The collected data were analyzed over SPSS version 22. In addition to descriptive and chi square analysis, the binary logistic regression was also used to examine psychosocial determinants of voting intentions. As the dependent variable of the study is the intention to vote had a categorical response coded 1 for yes and 0 for no. The odds ratio (OR) with 95% Confidence interval (CI), and P-values were reported.

## **RESULTS OF STUDY**

The results of the study have been presented in this section as obtained through statistical procedures in order to attain the desired objectives systematically.

Table 1 Table of Frequency of Research Participants Demographics

Variable	Frequencies (%)	Variable	Frequencies (%)
Age		Group Identification	
(18-30)	159(63.6)	Islam	228 (91.2)
(31-40)	31(12.4)	Christianity	19 (7.6)
(41-50)	44 (17.6)	Other	3 (1.2)
(50 +)	16 (6.4)	Marital Status	
Gender		Married	84 (33.6)
Male	84 (33.6)	Unmarried	166 (66.4)
Female	166(66.4)	Location of Constituency	
Education Level		Rural	33(13.2)
Educated	206 (82.4)	Urban	217(86.8)
Uneducated	44 (17.6)	Do you ever cast Vote	
Employment Status		Yes	30 (12)
Unemployed	133 (53.2)	No	220 (88)
Private Job	80 (32.0)	Public Job	37 (14.8)

Note: f= Frequency, % = Percentage

The frequency table 1 showed the majority of research participants were fall in the age range of (18-30). Out of 250 participants, 66.4% were female, 82.4% were educated, and 53.2% were unemployed. Most of research participants identified with group Islam as 92.2%. Most of them were unmarried 66.4% and located in urban 86.8%, participants were reported to feel associated with religious group as 47.6% with other social groups i.e. family, ethnic and political. The percentage of participants who were not active member of any political party was 88%.

Table 2 Table of Frequency for Personal Characteristics of a Political Candidate

Variables	Frequency f (%)				
	L- Important	S- Important	Neutral	Important	Most Important
Personality	36(14.4)	11(4.4)	29 (11.6)	46 (18.4)	128 (51.2)
Ethnic Background	46 (18.4)	31 (12.4)	52 (20.8)	58 (23.2)	63 (25.2)
Sex of the Candidate	89 (35.6)	23 (9.2)	56 (22.4)	24 (9.6)	58 (23.2)
Educational Background	18 (7.2)	11 (4.4)	13 (5.2)	44 (17.6)	164 (65.6)
Human Relation	20 (8.0)	12 (4.8)	12 (4.8)	29(11.6)	177 (70.8)
Regional Background	55 (22.0)	31 (12.4)	51 (20.4)	50 (20.0)	63 (25.2)
Religious Affiliation	25 (10.0)	22 (8.8)	43 (17.2)	48 (19.2)	112 (44.8)
Political Experience	15 (6.0)	12 (4.8)	45 (18.0)	54 (21.6)	124 (49.6)
Campaign Message	20 (8.0)	17 (6.8)	48 (19.2)	51 (20.4)	114 (45.6)
Standard of Living	28 (11.2)	27 (10.8)	50 (20.0)	51 (20.4)	94 (37.6)
Provide employment	14 (5.6)	22 (8.8)	27 (10.8)	45 (18.0)	142 (56.8)
Fight corruption	11 (4.4)	17 (6.8)	20 (8.0)	38 (15.2)	164 (65.6)
Education Policy	17 (6.8)	17 (6.8)	24 (9.6)	39 (15.6)	153 (61.2)
Health Policy	11 (4.4)	20 (8.0)	28 (11.2)	39 (15.6)	152 (60.8)
Gifts from Candidate	58 (23.2)	33 (13.2)	65 (26.0)	35 (14.0)	59 (23.6)
Develop locality	19 (7.6)	15 (6.0)	16 (6.4)	53 (21.2)	147 (58.8)
Performance of Party	22 (8.8)	12 (4.8)	26 (10.4)	38 (15.2)	152 (60.8)

The frequency table 2 showed those factors which were considered most important by voters in the selection of political candidate included; personality, educational background, human relations, religious affiliation, political experience, provision of the employment, can fight against corruption, improve education and health policy, and who can develop locality and the overall performance of the candidate's party. Moreover, regional background and ethnic background and gifts from the candidate also played the role in the selection of a candidate. However, the gender of the candidate showed the least important factors in selection of the candidate.

Table 3 Binary Logistic Regression for Demographics related with Intention to Vote

Variable	Category	OR	95% CI	P-value
Age (years)	Young (18-30)	1.000	-	-
	Young Adults (30+)	2.25*	1.12-4.53	0.02
Gender	Male	1.000	-	-
	Female	0.45*	0.23-0.91	0.02
Marital status	Married	1.000	-	-
	Unmarried	0.19***	0.09-0.42	0.000
Education	Educated	1.000	-	-
	Uneducated	0.72	0.29-1.75	0.47
Employment status	Unemployed	1.000	-	-
	Employed	1.35	0.71-2.59	0.35
Religious group	Muslims	1.000	-	-
	Non-Muslims	0.72	0.19-2.15	0.47
Location	Rural	1.000	-	-
	Urban	0.51	0.18-1.40	0.19

Note: \* $p < 0.05$  \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

The binary logistic regression was applied as shown in table 3 to examine the relationship between selected demographic characteristics of research participants and their intention to cast vote. The results revealed young adults, females, and unmarried voters were more likely to go out to cast their vote. Above 30 years old were two times more likely to cast vote with a multiplicative factor of 2.25. Females were 43% and unmarried were 19% more likely to cast vote.

Table 4 BLR for Political Candidates' Characteristics Associated with Intention to Vote

No.	Variable	Category	OR	95% CI	P-value
1.	Personality	Not important	1.000	-	-
		Important	.93	0.44-2.20	0.87
2.	Ethnic background	Not important	1.000	-	-
		Important	1.29	0.67- 2.47	0.42
3.	Sex of candidate	Not important	1.000	-	-
		Important	1.73	0.90-3.32	0.90
4.	Educational background	Not important	1.000	-	-
		Important	3.35*	1.18-9.48	0.02

5.	Human relation	Not important	1.000	-	-
		Important	.65	0.23-1.83	0.42
6.	Regional background	Not important	1.000	-	-
		Important	0.25***	0.13-0.51	0.000
7.	Religious background	Not important	1.000	-	-
		Important	1.15	0.58-2.26	0.68
8.	Political experience	Not important	1.000	-	-
		Important	0.59	0.28-1.23	0.16
9.	Campaign message	Not important	1.000	-	-
		Important	2.63**	1.25-5.54	0.01
10.	Standard of living	Not important	1.000	-	-
		Important	0.89	0.47-1.69	0.73
11.	Provide employment	Not important	1.000	-	-
		Important	1.38	0.63-3.04	0.41
12.	Fight corruption	Not important	1.000	-	-
		Important	1.57	0.59-4.21	0.36
13.	Educational policy	Not important	1.000	-	-
		Important	.321**	0.12-0.81	0.01
14.	Health policy	Not important	1.000	-	-
		Important	1.27	0.50-3.23	0.68
15.	Gifts from candidate	Not important	1.000	-	-
		Important	0.74	0.39-1.41	0.37
16.	Develop my locality	Not important	1.000	-	-
		Important	1.41	0.54-3.62	0.47
17.	Performance of party	Not important	1.000	-	-
		Important	1.11	0.50-2.48	0.78

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

The binary logistic regression in table 4 showed educational background of the politician, regional background, campaign message and education policy were those key determinants that influence who voters would vote for in the general election of Pakistan 2018. The table provide the significant information as there is near by 3.3- and 2.6-times advantage to the politicians who have sound educational background and the convincing campaign message respectively.

Table 5 Result of Chi-Square on Gender Differences in Demographic Determinants

Variable	Males	Females	Chi-Square	P-value
Ethnic Background			11.06	.02
Least Important	22.6 %	16.3%		
Somehow Important	10.7%	13.3%		
Not Important	29.8%	16.3%		
Important	14.3%	27.7%		
Most Important	22.6%	26.5%		
Standard of Living				

Least Important	14.3%	9.6%	10.564	.03
Somehow Important	16.7%	7.8%		
Not Important	16.7%	21.7%		
Important	11.9%	24.7%		
Most Important	40.5%	36.1%		
Candidate/locality			14.124	.00
Least Important	13.1%	4.8%		
Somehow Important	8.3%	4.8%		
Not Important	10.7%	4.2%		
Important	13.1%	25.3%		
Most Important	54.8%	60.8%		
Performance of Party			9.631	.04
Least Important	9.5%	8.4%		
Somehow Important	7.1%	3.6%		
Not Important	7.1%	12.0%		
Important	7.1%	19.3%		
Most Important	69.0%	56.6%		

Note: df = 4.

Table 5 showed that there was a significant gender difference in the ethnic background of the candidate as women preferred more the ethnic background and locality of the candidate in comparison to men in the elections. However, men gave more importance to the standard of living, the performance of the ruling party of the candidate in comparison to women in the elections.

Table 6 Result of Chi-Square on Education Level in the Demographic Determinants

Variable	Literates	Illiterates	Chi-Square	P-value
Educational Background			12.76	.01
Least Important	7.3 %	6.8%		
Somehow Important	4.9 %	2.3%		
Not Important	2.9%	15.9%		
Important	18.0%	15.9%		
Most Important	67.0%	59.1%		
Human Relations			22.83	.00
Least Important	8.7%	4.5%		
Somehow Important	1.9%	18.2%		
Not Important	4.4%	6.8%		
Important	11.2%	13.6%		
Most Important	73.8%	56.8%		
Regional background			11.99	.01
Least Important	24.3%	11.4%		
Somehow Important	13.1%	9.1%		
Not Important	22.3%	11.4%		
Important	18.4%	27.3%		
Most Important	21.8%	40.9%		

In table 6 results were observed in reference to the literacy level of the participant, and it was found that literate voters preferred the educational background of the candidate and human relation as compared to illiterate voters in the general elections. However, illiterate voters preferred the regional background of the candidate as compared to literate voters in general elections.

Table 7 Result of Chi-Square on Electors and Voters in the Demographic Determinants

Variable	Voters	Electors	Chi-Square	P-value
Educational Background			13.67	.00
Least Important	12.3%	2.9%		
Somehow Important	4.4%	4.4%		
Not Important	7.0%	3.7%		
Important	21.1%	14.7%		
Most Important	55.3%	74.3%		
Regional Background			11.58	.02
Least Important	15.8%	27.2%		
Somehow Important	8.8%	15.4%		
Not Important	19.3%	21.3%		
Important	24.6%	16.2%		
Most Important	31.6%	19.9%		
Campaign message			11.99	.01
Least Important	13.2%	3.7%		
Somehow Important	8.8%	5.1%		
Not Important	21.9%	16.9%		
Important	15.8%	24.3%		
Most Important	40.4%	50.0%		
Standard of living			10.31	.03
Least Important	8.8%	13.2%		
Somehow Important	15.8%	6.6%		
Not Important	14.0%	25.0%		
Important	22.8%	18.4%		
Most Important	38.0%	36.8%		
Fighting corruption			10.47	.02
Least Important	6.1%	2.9%		
Somehow Important	11.4%	2.9%		
Not Important	8.8%	7.4%		
Important	16.7%	14.0%		
Most Important	57.0%	72.8%		

Note: df = 4. Numbers in parentheses indicate column percentages; LI=Least Important, S.I = Somehow Important, N= Neutral, I=Important, M.I =Most Important;  $p < .05$ .

When data were investigated to find out the preferences of voters and electors. It was found electors preferred the educational background of the candidate, the campaign message of the candidate, and fighting against corruption as compared to voters. However, the standard of

the living and regional background was more important for voters as compared to electors in elections.

## **DISCUSSION**

In democratic mature countries, research has been conducted on psychosocial determinants of voters and who they vote for. However, in Pakistan such research is limited. Therefore, the aim of this research was to explore which that personal characteristics of the candidate are considered most important by voters, and how this may differ depending on the voter's own personal characteristics. Specifically, we sought to conduct this research prior to Pakistan's 2018 General Election. As politics has become individualized because political choices are becoming increasingly dependent upon voters' likes and dislike and on judgmental heuristics (Popkin & Dimock, 1999). Although, ideology continues to play important role in political choices people make (Miller & Shanks, 1996) ideological divisions appear to be less salient than they were in past (Roccatò, & Ricolfi, 2005). As opposing political parties and coalitions move toward more centrist positions, the personal characteristics of candidates may come to play increasingly important role in political choice (Caprara & Zimbardo, 2004). Therefore, the first objective of the study was to assess the personal characteristics of the candidate in the context of general elections on which he/she considered the most important concerning voters.

The results showed those factors which were considered most important by the voters in the selection of candidate were included; personality, educational background, human relations, religious affiliation, political experience of the candidate, who can provide employment and can fight against corruption, improve education and health policy, and a candidate who can develop locality and performance of the party. Ethnic background also played a role in the selection of a candidate. Results of the study are consistent with the findings of Uslu (2018) that personality, campaign message and human relation of the candidate were considered important by the voters. Similarly, Bilecen (2015) found that the ethnic background and the religious affiliation considered the most important factors in the selection of the candidate. Moreover, the results of the present study are also consistent with Ahmed and Rafiq (2016) who found that voters cast vote on the basis of the performance of the candidate. Likewise, educational background is also affecting voting intention (Coffe, 2016), and the candidate's locality was also an important factor in the selection of the candidate (Singh & Roy, 2014). Also, candidate's political experience played a role in shaping voting intentions (Alsamydai, 2013).

Similarly, providing employment, fighting corruption, education, developing locality, health policy and performance of the candidate had a significant impact on voter's voting intention (Vasile, 2006). The results of the Pakistan general election 2018 confirmed the finding of the present study that politician characteristics preferred by voters are consistent with the actual politicians in the assembly. The second objective of the study was to find out the differences between gender, education, and voting state of the participants on their intention to whom to vote. Results showed that men preferred the standard of living and the performance of the ruling party. However, women gave more importance to ethnic background and the locality of the candidate. The results are consistent with study of Coffe (2016) which revealed that gender was affecting the voting intention of candidate. The results were also similar to study of Giger (2009) showed that gender differences were important for participant intention to

whom to vote. Educated voters preferred educational background and human relationships of candidate. Moreover, uneducated voters gave more standing to the regional background of candidate.

The results are in line to Boudreau, Elmendorf & MacKenzie (2019) which show uneducated voters mostly vote on the basis of the regional background of the candidate. There was the significant difference in the voting state of the voters. The electors preferred the educational background of the candidate, regional background, campaign message, and fighting against corruption. The results of the study similar to Usman (2009) which suggested that campaign messages can affect the voting intentions of the voters. However, the standard of living was more important for voters as compared to electors. The results are similar to the study of Vasile (2006) which showed that the standard of living of the candidate matters for the voter and it affects their voting intentions to vote. Overall, this study helped to understand those psychological and social factors which could influence voters voting decisions in the general election of Pakistan 2018. Though the results of the general election were declared and much in line with the findings of the study. Pakistan Tahreek Insaf (PTI) is a ruling party that has a manifesto to fight against corruption and provide employment along with the better health policies.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study was conducted before the general election of Pakistan 2018 with the objective to explore which personal characteristics of politicians weighted by voters and how voters vote differently on account of their different demographical characteristics. The results informed voters have various expectations and demands from political candidates which include their impressive personality, sound educational background, friendly human relations, religious affiliation, political experience and sound party manifesto based on to provide employment and fight with corruption, improve education and health policy. Furthermore, men preferred ethnic background and standard of living of the political candidate as compared to women. These findings may serve as guide to politician in Pakistan to design their political campaign in future. The research suggested that voters should know the importance of their vote and should consider it basic right to elect candidate in choosing. As democratic societies suggest that more public participation, more pressure there is on state to fulfill their basic needs and provide services (Dawood, 2012). However, data for this study was collected from Lahore city in future data that should be collected from other cities and provinces of Pakistan. A qualitative approach may be used to explore underline factors of a candidate's personality in-depth in future research. Those individuals who took part in this study may inform political candidates, that what personal characteristics they need to focus in attracting voters to vote them.

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