

## Development of the Decision to Vote Scale

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This research aimed to construct a scale to identify the psychosocial factors which influence vote decision making of Pakistanis. For development of Decision to Vote Scale (DVS), items were empirically generated and were presented on a 4-point Likert scale. A sample of 115 voters, with an age range of 18-65 years, was collected from urban and rural areas of Punjab. The construct validity of DVS consisting of 23 items was established through factor analysis. The principal component factor analysis resulted into five factors i.e., reasons to vote, political identity of candidate, personal identity of candidate, voter motive and voter perception. Moreover, Decision to Vote Scale (DVS) has high internal consistency i.e., .78 which indicates that this is a valid and reliable indigenous scale to assess voting decision making of Pakistani society. This research gives an insight about the Pakistani voting decision making phenomenon and uncover the factors which influence the Pakistanis decision to vote. This study makes a significant contribution in the area of the political psychology.

*Keywords:* voting decisions, Pakistani voters, urban and rural, indigenous scale

Voting is an expression of an individual choice for a political candidate, and specific political structure (Balis, Gidengil & Nevitte, 2004). Democracy ensures dynamic citizenship so that people can vote to reflect their will and choice (Jost, 2006). Universal Declaration of Human Right defines "Voting is fundamental right of almost all citizens over the age of eighteen. It ensures that will of the people is preserved" (HRC, 2008, p.144). Abiding by this declaration, Pakistanis of age 18 years or above, have the right to vote after getting registered through Election Commission of Pakistan to cast their vote (Ecp.gov.pk, 2011) whenever national elections are held.

Michigan Psycho social Model uses a voting equation that reduces voting to a socialization process, where a social context nudges an individual psychological predisposition towards a certain political party (Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes, 1960). The socialization process bends voter's predisposition into three components *attitudes towards candidates* defined by personalities of candidates and voter perception. Second, *attitudes towards the policies* reflect an individual's opinion about the manifesto of the political party or ideological baggage and lastly, *attitudes towards group benefits* concerns the effect the party will have upon politically relevant groups, for instance trade unions, employers, associations, and ethnic, religious, linguistic, or other social groups.

It is widely believed that psychosocial rather than political factors affect voting decisions in rural areas like Punjab. Factions, race, traditional group, loyalties of family, are effective factors in voting decisions than other rational and educated factors such as party manifesto, patronage, issuing orientation and party loyalty. Kinship, caste, membership in a village faction, and family, play a major role in determining voting decision than voters' choice (Haider, 2014; Shawar & Asim, 2012; Wilder, 1999).

Wright (1991) commenting on "Races in Punjab Elections" endorsed significance of race especially when political parties choose provincial and national assembly candidates on the basis of a "clan".

Western Punjab where traditional tribal system still has a stronghold, voters' decisions are by and large coerced by the race for feudal or tribal leaders rather than for political parties, that is why in this region independent candidates survive who may shift their political affiliations back and forth. On the other hand Wilder (1999) reported that formation of constituency in urban areas are based on candidate's loyalty to the political party or manifesto. Party identification is more powerful in urban compared to rural areas.

Political parties vigilantly consider the relative weaknesses and strength of candidates for giving them party tickets or nominations by ascertaining candidates' race (how large is the voter representation), amount of money they have for a campaign, and political legacy or history. Thus it is difficult to establish how many votes go to a political party or to a single individual based on his feudal lineage, political influence and heritage. In Pakistan, like other countries, few votes are cast on the basis of eliminating local and national problems, thus voter's perception about the candidate may be the determining factor of casting votes (Evans, 2004). All political parties devotedly guard their manifestos and make grandiose promises to bring solutions to problems, however manifestos and claims are hardly taken seriously and do not determine voting decisions of many voters (Wilder, 1999). Shawar and Asim (2012) add, among other factors, uneducated people of Pakistan are influenced by the party's campaigns and slogans. In addition, many voters expect tangible rewards (pocket votes, food and transportation) before (Malhi, 1994) and after the success of their candidates affecting results of the elections in undemocratic ways (Wilder, 1999).

Muhammad (2013) investigated the possible psychological and social factors behind the voting decision made by Pakistani voters. The study revealed the psychosocial factors such as political party of candidate, party integrity, party leadership, party manifesto and party previous performance, candidate's integrity, candidate's election campaign, candidate's previous performance, candidate's education, candidate personality, candidate's race, candidate's socioeconomic status, family head decision and good governance. Secondly this study indicated the reasons to cast the vote included national duty, basic rights, wanting change, source of opinion and betterment of country while the reasons not to vote included election duty, non-availability of good leadership, poor integrity of

candidate, and long distance to the polling station from the house. The study also highlighted the attitudes of people toward governing systems indicating people showed little favor towards these systems i.e. democracy, dictatorship, other and khilafat.

Another indigenous research by Muhammad (2013) indicated no significant gender differences in vote decision making. This result showed that both men and women took interest in their own vote decision making but similarly, the study also revealed no significant differences in newly registered and previous voters in vote decisions, suggesting that young voters were influenced by older voters. However a significant difference in decision of voters in rural and urban areas was observed, which indicated different factors were involved in rural and urban areas in voting choice. If these results are taken together a clear picture emerges which suggests that vote decisions are starkly different in cities and villages in terms of age and gender.

### Rationale of the Study

Voting has an important function in any democratic society, where vote becomes a fundamental right of every citizen. Based on studies above for the people of Pakistan, there is a great need to identify the psychosocial factors that influence the voting decisions more than political factors. This study therefore carries out factor analysis and reliability of a Decision to Vote Scale (DVS) so that an empirical instrument can be developed to measure such factors. The intention of carrying out this analysis is to reckon, in quantitative terms, magnitude of these psychosocial factors.

### Method

We carried out this study in two phases. In the first phase, items for the scale were generated followed by a second phase in which factor analysis and reliability of the DVS was determined.

#### Item Generation

Items for DVS were derived from three main sources i.e., literature review on voting decisions, interviews with voters to identify the psychological and social factors involved in voting decision making, and an open-ended set of questions based on the literature review and psychosocial factors that encompass items for the scale. The open-ended questions included queries like: Why do you cast vote in the election? Do you consider political party while making a decision to vote and why? What are the psychosocial factors that influence your voting decision? This procedure resulted in 23 items, which were handed-down to the experts for analysis with the following criteria in mind, i.e. were the items clear, relevant to the construct, redundancy, readability and comprehension. This exercise retained all 23 items. We chose 4-point Likert-type scale as response format comprising of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), agree (3), and strongly agree (4).

#### Sample

In the second phase we analyzed the factor structure of DVS and its internal consistency. A convenient sample solicited 58 men and 57 women with informed consent. All participants were at least 18 (range 18-65) years of age, had a Pakistani national identity (ID) card, and were registered voters of the Election Commission of

Pakistan (see Table 1). We selected this age range to represent largest group of voters in the country as a measure of external validity. Sample was drawn from Lahore and Jahanian, hic represented urban and rural locales in these two cities of Punjab.

Table 1  
*Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N = 115)*

Variables		N (%)
Gender	Men	58 (50.4)
	Women	57 (49.6)
Area	Urban	54 (47.0)
	Rural	61 (53.0)

#### Instrument

Decision to Vote Scale (DVS) developed by Muhammad (2013) in Urdu was a multidimensional measure to assess the factors affecting the decision to vote of the general population. This scale consisted of 23 items and had five subscales, viz., reasons to vote (6items), political identity of a candidate (5items), personal identity of a candidate (4items), voter's motive (4items) and voter's perception (4items). Responses were recorded on 4-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (Strongly agree). The internal consistency of these items was .78

#### Procedure

The first author of the study contacted the participants and explained the purpose of the study, followed by signing a formal consent if participants choose to take part in the study. After that each participant completed DVS individually, sometimes alone and sometimes in small groups. At any juncture if confusion arose about an item it was clarified by paraphrasing it. This happened rarely during the administration of the scale. All participants were thanked at the end of each session, debriefed further about the study, and told that if a publication resulted from the collected data all personal information would be kept confidential and anonymous for this purpose.

### Results

#### Factor Structure and Internal Consistency

Data from the DVS was subjected to Principal Component Analysis (PCA), using Varimax Rotation to increase the interpretability and orthogonality of factors. The scale structure was reviewed on the following criteria that included a simple structure with distinctive factors, with items that have high loading on single factor, an Eigen value equal or greater than 1, a factor loading of .30 or above, and meaningfulness of the factor in relation to the underlying construct (Zeller & Carmines, 1980; Norman & Streiner, 1994).

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was applied to test the assumption of distribution of participant responses (Bartlett, 1954). The significant value ( $p < .001$ ) showed that the responses were distributed adequately to analyze a potential factor structure. Moreover, Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) test for adequacy of sampling was applied to evaluate whether the number of participants was in accordance with the total number of items on DVS (Kaiser, 1974). The value of

KMO test was adequate (i.e. 0.72) which indicated that the sample was good enough for DVS.

The interpretable factors were further explored by the criterion given by Kaiser (1974) that explained percentage of the total variance, which resulted in seven factors. Since these initial seven factors lacked meaningfulness and comprehensibility, PCA was again carried out for five and six factor solutions. The five-factor solution resulted in a simple factor structure with few cross loadings and factors meaningfulness.

All of the 23 items loaded significantly (range from 0.34 to 0.85) on five factors (see Norman & Streiner, 1994), and resulted in a multidimensional measure of voting decisions. Table 2 reveals Eigen values for factors extracted with a total explained variance of 56% (approximately). An Eigen value of 4.67 (explained variance 20%) was obtained on factor I, whereas an Eigen values for factors II, III ,IV and V resulted 3.64 (explained variance 16%),

1.70(explained variance 7%), 1.43 (explained variance 6%) and 1.32 (explained variance 6%) respectively.

Five factors were finalized. Each factor was observed on the basis of relevance to content and theme of items. Factor I (Reason to Vote) consisted of 6 items, which included vote is basic right, vote is way of opinion, vote is responsibility, vote is national duty, vote bring change and vote brings real representative. Factor II (Political Identity of the Candidate) comprised 5 items including political party, manifesto, sign, political background and election campaign of the candidate. Factor III (Personal Identity of Candidate) comprised of 4 items including gender, religion, race and socioeconomic status of the candidate. Factor IV(Voter Motive) consisted of 4 items which include economic help given by candidate to voter, personal work of voter done by the candidate, family head decision and voter’s own voting decision. Lastly, Factor V (Voter Perception) comprised of 4 items, which include

Table 2  
The Factor Loading of the 23 Items of DVS on First Five Factors in the Factor Solution Obtained through Varimax Rotation.

No	Item	Factor					M	SD
		I	II	III	IV	V		
		Reason to Vote	Political Identity of Candidate	Personal Identity of Candidate	Voter Motive	Voter Perception		
1	Vote is basic right	<b>.92</b>	-.041	-.104	-.096	.122	3.88	.328
2	Vote is way of opinion	<b>.89</b>	.134	-.065	-.093	-.017	3.80	.463
3	Vote is responsibility	<b>.81</b>	-.038	.077	.021	.008	3.74	.579
4	Vote is national duty	<b>.74</b>	-.043	.073	.045	-.019	3.75	.560
5	Vote bring change	<b>.71</b>	-.034	.185	.130	.126	3.50	.777
6	Vote brings real representative	<b>.67</b>	.109	.153	.184	.045	3.37	.853
7	Race of candidate	-.002	.099	<b>.65</b>	.20	-.145	1.73	.921
8	Gender of candidate	.039	.278	<b>.74</b>	-.119	-.050	1.90	1.029
9	Religion of candidate	.115	.132	<b>.56</b>	-.029	.329	2.63	1.157
10	Education of candidate	-.072	.140	-.104	-.063	<b>.54</b>	3.36	.819
11	Socioeconomic status of candidate	.016	.631	<b>.35</b>	.018	.004	2.06	.939
12	Political experience of candidate	-.046	.220	.251	.332	<b>.48</b>	2.89	1.015
13	Political background of the candidate	.020	<b>.53</b>	.278	.27	.201	2.17	1.011
14	Sign of candidate	.021	<b>.51</b>	.296	.108	-.289	1.93	1.015
15	Election campaign of candidate	-.055	<b>.69</b>	.079	.090	.046	2.45	1.078
16	Political party of candidate	.137	<b>.64</b>	-.011	.067	.115	3.08	.919
17	Integrity of candidate	.287	-.200	-.115	-.121	<b>.59</b>	3.51	.776
18	Progressive work of candidate	.150	.008	.068	.019	<b>.64</b>	3.43	.715
19	Economic help given by candidate	.045	.328	-.071	<b>.72</b>	.038	2.10	1.068
20	Personal work done by candidate to voter	.152	.297	.081	<b>.80</b>	-.038	1.97	.898
21	Manifesto of the political party/candidate	.498	<b>.34</b>	-.154	-.120	.207	3.46	.729
22	Parents decision	.046	.091	.660	<b>.47</b>	-.055	1.78	.944
23	Decision oneself	-.126	-.248	.201	<b>.60</b>	-.087	1.21	.487
Eigen values		4.67	3.64	1.70	1.43	1.32		
Variance (%)		20.29	15.83	7.41	6.23	5.74		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy						.72		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, Approx. Chi-Square						1029.72*		

\*p< .001

progressive work of candidate, education, integrity, and political experience of candidate. It was noticed that few cross loadings were examined on certain items. However, keeping in view the relevance of theme and content of items, items were grouped into the relevant factors.

Table 2 shows that overall reliability index of DVS is high. The reliability index of sub-scale *reasons to vote is significantly high while political identity of candidate, personal identity of candidate, and voter motive* are moderate. The reliability index of voter perception is acceptable.

Table 3  
*Reliability Analysis of DVS*

Sub-Scale/Scale	Items	$\alpha$
Reasons To Vote (Sub-Scale)	6	.86
Political Identity of Candidate (Sub-Scale)	5	.63
Personal Identity of Candidate (Sub-Scale)	4	.61
Voter Motive (Sub-Scale)	4	.69
Voter Perception (Sub-Scale)	4	.50
Decision to Vote Scale	23	.78

### Discussion

The aim of study was the development of a scale to evaluate and assess factors that might identify psychosocial reasons behind the voting decision in Pakistan. Factor analysis of DVS (Muhammad, 2013) indicated that thinking of the voter in deciding to cast his or her vote is multidimensional in nature. The items of DVS are divided into five factors. Items loading on factor I represented reasons and importance to cast the vote in the election, which included vote is basic right, vote is way of opinion, vote is responsibility, vote is national duty, vote bring change and vote brings real representative. This dimension was named as *Reason to Vote*. This factor supports Haider (2014) study that voting decision reflects one's thoughts, beliefs and actions.

The items on factor II lie under the theme and content of political profile of candidate who contested the election i.e. political party, manifesto, sign and election campaign of the candidate, which influenced the voting decision of the voter in the election. Therefore, it was labeled as *Political Identity of Candidate*. It partially supports the Michigan Psychosocial Model of voting (Campbell et al., 1960; Shawar & Asim, 2012) that party identification and party manifesto influence voting decisions of the people in the election, at least in the urban areas of Pakistan.

Factor III was labeled as *Personal Identity of Candidate*. Items included in this factor were relevant to the theme of personal demographics of candidate (i.e., gender, race, socioeconomic status and religion of the candidate) which affect the decision of voter in casting the vote in the election. Michigan Psychosocial Model (Campbell et al., 1960) demonstrated that the personalities of candidates play an important role in voting decision of the voter.

A close observation of the items of factor IV *Voter Motive* uncovers the motives of the voter (i.e., economic help given by candidate to voter, personal work of voter done by candidate, family head decision and voter own voting decision which affect the motivation of the voter to cast his/her own vote in election). The findings are in line with Michigan Psychosocial Model (Campbell et al., 1960) which depicts that group benefits, and family influence are vital factors in taking voting decision of own vote in the election.

Items included in the factor V indicate the *Perceptions of Voter* about candidate who contests the election. Items of this domain revealed the perception of the voter i.e. progressive work of candidate, education, integrity, and political experience of candidate which affects the motivation of the voter to cast his/her votes in the election. Evans (2004) also reported that voter's perception about the candidates influence the vote decision making of the individual in the election.

### Conclusion

The Decision to Vote Scale is a reliable and valid measure for assessing voting decisions of Pakistani people. This scale fulfills the psychometric standards and identifies the psychosocial factors involved in vote decision making.

### Implications

The study will be beneficial for literature on political psychology and for future studies to explain psycho-political phenomena of vote decision making. Future studies can elaborate upon the factors identified in this scale which are kept in mind by the Pakistani voters while making a decision to vote. Furthermore this study can help voters in understanding the decision making of their own vote.

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