

The Role Of Soft Skills In Effective Leadership In District Bajaur (Pk-22): A Case Study Of 2024 Election

Asghar Ullah

PhD. Scholar Qurtuba University of Science & Information Technology
Peshawar, zanjabeelone333@gmail.com

Abstract: *This research study primarily explores to analyze the role of soft skills in effective leadership preferences in district Bajaur (pk-22) as a case study of 2024 election. The central objective of this research study is to explicitly analyze the role of soft skills in effective leadership and individual candidacy, shaping changes in voting behavior. This research employ quantitative research approach with its survey through questions air of five-point likert scale and descriptive designs for collection and analysis of data. 389 participants were involved data was analyzed via SPSS. The findings of this research study explicitly indicate that, how soft skills are significant in effective leadership as well as follow by the candidate's personality. While some of the voters had factored in the position of political parties and their resources, the finding indicate that the qualities of soft skills which shape leadership style of the candidate were the primary reasons to why they shifted their vote from one political leader to another political leader during the elections. Furthermore, candidate personality which made by soft skills and played role in leadership abilities have much stronger influence in deciding voters' choice. Most of the voters' choice was influenced by the candidate personal abilities not the role of political party.*

Keywords: Voting behavior, leadership preferences, by-election, Linguism, Biradari

Introduction

Democracy is a system of government where citizens exercise power by voting. Democracy is interlinked with elections, and voting behaviors, refer to the observable patterns and shifts in how different demographics and regions vote during elections (Cee, 2015). The nature of democracy is evolutionary and not achieved at once. Its history goes back to the 17th century, in which Britain played an important role in developing democratic concepts and revolutions to bring democracy earlier in the 18th century. When Pakistan gained independence on 14 August 1947, its initial years were encircled by multitudes of crises. The failure of democracy in Pakistan can be attributed to various factors: overdeveloped state structure, Political instability, military intervention, massive corruption, lack of accountability, weak infrastructure, Feudal dispensation, Institutional crisis, extremism, constitutional crisis, and absence of mature leadership. Achieving true democracy in Pakistan is a daunting task; this situation is reflected in certain areas, such as the Tribal areas, where District Bajaur is significant. Bajaur Agency is the smallest of the seven tribal regions, which are now designated as districts, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It was a princely state run by Abdul Subhan Nawab Khar, in 1990. He was the last Nawab of Bajaur. Since 1973, District Bajaur has been part of Malakand division in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Before 31st May 2018, the Ex-FATA was under the control of Federal Government. On May 31st, president of Pakistan Mamnoon Hussain gave his approval of the 25th constitutional amendment, and FATA merged with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It remained an agency of the erstwhile FATA till 31st May

2018. It was legislated with a crime regulation system in the British Colonial era in 1901, which was amended in 2011 and is called FCR-1901. The FCR was a set of laws specific to FATA. Before 1901, some parts of NWFP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) were part of the Punjab province. These areas were Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, and Dhera Ghazi Khan. Before 1901, there was no proper law under this system; entire tribe communities could be held responsible for the actions of individual members. If one person from a tribe committed an offence, the entire tribe could face punishment, such as fines or property confiscation. But with the passage of time, the law was updated and brought some changes. The British wanted to keep Tribal Areas semi-independent because of poor revenues. In 1867, the murderous outrages Regulations were enacted in British India to prosecute serious crimes, such as murder. The main purpose of the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) was to enable British control over tribal areas. It was again amended in 1873 and 1877. The border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, which is called the Durand Line, was demarcated by the British in 1893 to divide Pashtun tribes through it. This action brought animosity among Pashtuns. The region was used as a "Buffer Zone" between British India and Russia. The British wanted to suppress opposition from Pashtuns and protect their interests. They used elites as proxy rulers. The British made some infrastructure improvements, such as roads and hospitals, to gain local trust. Political Agents were granted the authority to confiscate property, detain individuals, deny access to British India, and impose fines and punishments under the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR). The real power of the council of elders (Sarkari Jirga) remained with British officials. After the independence of Pakistan, the FCR continued with few amendments. The Pakistani state also ignored economic, social, and political developments in the Tribal area. Political agents still had the power to organize Jirgas and punish people without a proper legal system. Political agents played a dual role in civil and military affairs. The FCR gave extensive powers to the political agents, including the authority to arrest and punish individuals without conventional legal procedure. It had very limited legal rights, such as arrests without a warrant, detention without a trial, and limited access to the formal legal system (Rehman, 2018). In the 21st constitutional amendment, Bajaur became a tribal District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to the 2023 census, the population of the Bajaur District is 12, 87,960, along with a total area of Bajaur of 1,290 sq. km. It has a 52 KM long border with Afghanistan, which is called the Durand Line (Rehman, 2008).

District Bajaur shares boundaries with Lower Dir to the North, Malakand to the East, and Mohmand Agency to the South, while its western border adjoins the Kunar Valley in Afghanistan (Ahmed, 2023). The prominent language spoken in Bajaur District is Pashto. The inhabitants of the district are mostly Sunni Muslims. Their code of conduct, known as Pakhtunwali, encompasses three main aspects. One of the primary characteristics of this code is Badal (revenge). However, the people of Bajaur are also renowned for their hospitality and the district's natural beauty. Another vital aspect of their code of conduct is the Jirga system, which makes decisions on disputes, criminal cases, and governance matters, and plays a crucial role in resolving conflicts and reducing crime in society (Daniel, 2008). The coordinates of Bajaur District are 34°49'60"N and 71°00' in DMS. It is situated in close proximity to the Himalayan range. Due to its geographical location, climate changes occur, resulting in unpredictable rainfall throughout the year. However, due to its unique location, the different valleys in District Bajaur get about 800 mm of rainfall. The District has a cold climate due to its mountainous terrain. Winter spans from December to February, but the climate remains cold from November to March. In addition, (Shahid, 1993). The political history of Bajaur has remained crucial. Historically, FATA has been a strategic region, especially at the time of the Great Game between Britain and Russia in the 19th century. After 1893, the Durand Line agreement between the British and the Ameer of Afghanistan resulted in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) becoming part of British India, where they were governed under the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR). The British Appointed Political agents to maintain relations with the tribal leaders (Maliks). These agents and Tribal elders (Maliks) acted as intermediaries between the British administration and the tribal communities. The political agents and

tribal elders (Maliks) in the area wielded significant power over judicial, financial, and executive matters. As a result of these circumstances, the area experienced poverty, poor infrastructure, a lack of education, and widespread violence (Ahmed, 2021). Development in tribal areas was not satisfactory until 2002. Tribal elders (Maliks) and political agents were supported by tribal militants and paramilitary forces. No one could appeal against the political agent. Political participation was limited due to their semi-autonomous status. Only tribal elders had the right to vote and select representatives for the national assembly till 1997. Political parties were not allowed to work. A reform plan was introduced in 2002 to set up the local government institutions. However, nothing has been done and implemented due to the lack of tribal representation. It continued until 2018; after that, a big change occurred, and FATA became part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Sadeeq, 2021). In District Bajaur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the PK-22 provincial assembly seat had a strong political status. General election 2024 was held on 08-Feb-2024 in Pakistan; however, the election was postponed in the later constituency due to the assassination of independent candidate Rehan Zeb. Afterwards, the first by-election was held on 21 April 2024. Shah Naseer ANP candidate, was against Mubarak Zeb got only 5% of the vote, and Mubarak Zeb won both National and Provincial seats. He resigned from the provincial seat. Second by-election was held on 11 July 2024, and Muhammad Nisar Baaz won the election against PTI and secured 11926 votes. In this context understanding voting behavior and leadership preferences stands as a critical step in the dynamic tapestry of the political landscape, which shapes the trajectory of nations and defines the essence of democracy. This study aims to explore the factors that shaped changes in voting behavior and to elaborate on the democratic principles that reveal voter preferences while ensuring that elected officials represent various interests. It also helps identify factors that influence voter turnout, promoting a more inclusive voting system. Moreover, election forecasting's comprehension of voting patterns permits analysts to predict outcomes and identify key swing voters, helping political parties strategize better. It is also beneficial for policymakers. Politicians can craft policies based on voters' desires, while arguments for groups use voting patterns to force relevant social changes. Additionally, it explores the psychological aspects of voting, including party identity, social influence, and personal experiences that contribute to decision-making. A comprehensive study of voting behavior strengthens democracy, improves accountability, and ensures it meets public needs.

Research Questions

- What was the role of soft skills to influence the voters' behavior to switch their vote from one candidate to another?
- What was the role of the individual candidate in shaping changes in voting behavior?

Research Objectives

- To explore the role of soft-skills to influenced the voters' behavior to switch their vote from one candidate to another.
- To explore the role of soft-skills an individual candidate in shaping changes in voting behavior.

Literature Review

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the existing literature related to the topic of the role of soft skills in effective leadership in District Bajaur (pk-22): a case study of 2024 election. The aim is to explore the role of soft-skills within the local electorate, offering significant perspectives for future advancement. Leadership skills help a person guide, motivate and support other effectively. A good leader knows how to make decisions and take responsibilities. Leadership skills are significant in education, workplace and every walk of life. They help build trust and teamwork. Many people hesitate to become leaders because of fear or lack of confidence. Fear of failure, or criticism can stop people can stop from taking initiatives. With practice and experience, leadership confidence can grow.

Leadership skills can be developed via learning practice and patience. This chapter will examine the qualities of effective leadership that truly serve the people's interests while promoting genuine leaders who prioritize the masses' needs. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the role of soft-skills influenced voters' decisions to vote and ultimately led to voting for an individual candidate. The chapter considering various aspects of soft skills linked with effective leadership derived from data analysis, which include identifying gaps in the existing literature and providing recommendations for further research. A plethora of literature is available on voting behavior. The matter has been discussed by scholars, columnists, and authors in Pakistan and abroad. Adnan (2021) says in his research work have analyzed that voting behavior refers to the temporary actions of voters when deciding their choice in an election, or it can be understood as the specific choice a person makes when selecting a candidate or political party during that election. The decision of choosing a candidate through a vote is crucial because it shows the voters' preferences, notions, and beliefs. To study voting behavior, researchers can learn the reasons behind people's choices and the factors that influence them. Social and political scientists examine voting behavior from different angles. They attempt to discover why people choose to vote the way they do and what effect their decisions have. By examining voting behavior, researchers and scholars can identify patterns and, such as why a specific group of people favors one political party over another. It is important to understand the number of the factors which influence voters' decisions (Adnan, 2021). There is a significant role of education system, because education encourages critical thinking, which reduces the influence of propaganda and manipulation during elections education brought positive change in behavior which played in important role in understanding leadership qualities. A quality education system helps people understand their rights, responsibilities, and the importance of their vote. As a result, a strong education system leads to wiser voting behavior and the emergence of responsible and leadership qualities, such as devotion, commitment and dynamic leadership in the development of human society (Khan N, 2021). Social media is another tool used in current era to influence voting behavior. There are many flaws in social media use such as fake news, and propaganda use for own purposes. On the other hand social media used as a democratic tool. People shared their own opinions about politics. Masses communicate their views on a worldwide scale. It has more outspoken in country like India due to technological reach and access. It offers virtual political discussions. Public share their opinions freely which enrich democratic values (Alam, 2021). Lal Badshah (2018), in his research work has analyzed that religion also played a significant role in rural areas to influence voting behavior (Badshaha, 2018). Yadav Parvel(2024) in his research work has analyzed that literacy rate played s important role in voting behavior. They can analyze political promises and the action of political leaders (Parvel, 2024). ChattarJee (2024) in his research work have explored that social Media playing a vital role in voting behavior. Politician build their image promotes their policies and engages in debate (Jee, 2024). GherghnaSergiu (2025) in his research work have analyzed that transformational leadership of a candidate. They have strong vision, think logically, and build trust (Sergiu, 2025). KanwalLubna (2024) in his research work have analyzed that personality playing a vital role in shaping masses voting behavior (Lubna, 2024).

Findings Discussion and Analysis

The findings of this study indicate that not only do political parties' traditional worldwide factors decide voting choices, but also they are decided by the candidate's personality. While some of the voters had factored in the position of political parties and their resources, more than 90% of the interviewees concurred that the personal qualities and leadership style of the candidate were the primary reasons why they shifted their vote from one party to another party during the by-election. In a first general election, voters vote for the other candidate who belongs to another political party. But later on in the by-election, they switch their vote to another candidate. There were different factors that affected their voting decision. However, we can divide these factors into three main parts. One belongs to general factors, others belong to the role of political party, and another belongs to the role of the candidate's personality. If we look at this modern era, many things have changed. Traditional things not working in this modern

era, such as dynastic politics, nepotism, favoritism, lack of meritocracy, concentration of power, and resistance to reforms, reduced accountability, and corruption. Traditional social factors are also gradually losing their influence in political decision-making. There are some factors such as media coverage, financial resources, biradari (clan affinity), friendship, linguism, and the ideology of the party. Some of them are still working, such as the ideology of the party and social media use at the time of the election. However, modernization is increasing literacy rates and media exposure, while individualism has changed voter preferences from class loyalty to a performance standard-based analysis of candidates. District Bajaur shows that a candidate's personality and leadership abilities have a much stronger influence in deciding voters' choice. More than 90% of the respondents strongly agreed that specific Soft skills linked leadership ability. These are skills that are more subjective and harder to quantify, and are often grouped together by what we know as "people skills. The most important soft-skills for leadership such as Courage, Higher Education, political awareness, Accountability - Active listening, Adaptability, Agility, Analyzing, Brainstorming, Collaboration, Good Communication skills, resilience, Compassion, Confidence, Conflict resolution, strong public connection, Creativity, Critical thinking, Decision making, Dedication, Delegation, Diligence, Emotional intelligence, Empathy, Flexibility, Goal-setting, Handling pressure, Influencing, Innovating, Insightfulness, Interpreting, Logic, Mediation, Motivation, Negotiation, Networking, Open-mindedness, Organization, Patience, Persuasion, Planning, Prioritization, Problem solving, Relationship building, Reliability, Resource management, Responsibility, Self-confidence, Strategic thinking, Strong work ethic, Teamwork, Time management and were the strongest reasons for voting for a certain candidate, particularly in the by-election where voters shifted their vote from PTI to ANP. The boldness of a candidate is considered a symbol of courage and the ability to resist in hard situations. In areas such as Bajaur, where local problems usually require decisive action and courageous leadership, citizens elect candidates that can understand their issues with certainty and strength. The qualities bring a feeling of security and dependability, particularly in regions with a tribal or conflict background. Another main characteristic is resilience. A resilient candidate can recover from difficult times, remain consistent in service, and remain committed to the public good even in spite of personal or political shifts. Consistency brings long-term confidence among the voters. Education in a candidate is often linked with vision, modern thinking, and a better understanding of politics and social dynamics. Educated politicians are likely to create practical solutions to grassroots issues, voice improved policies, and represent their constituency properly at higher levels. Bajaur voters are increasingly becoming politically aware and would rather vote for such candidates who are educated and know about the in-progress political currents and legal landscape. Political awareness during election time also has a significant role. A candidate who is aware of election dynamics, explains party policies clearly, and campaigns on issue-based topics earns the respect of the people. Political awareness not only gives a boost to the image of the candidate but also invites effective political participation from the public. Strategic decision-making is the great quality of a mature politician. A candidate who make informed and timely decisions, whether in selecting alliances or in addressing people's concerns, is likely to be regarded as wise and able to withstand pressure. In Bajaur too, strategic decisions during the by-election campaign played an important role in building people's confidence. Lastly, public interaction is the connecting link between a candidate and the populace. Voters in the region desire that their representatives directly interact with them, visit local gatherings, and hear their complaints, as well as provide prompt assistance when necessary. A candidate who remains close to the people both during the pre-election and post-election periods unavoidably receives more support. Ultimately, the shift from PTI to ANP in the District Bajaur by-election find out that voters are no longer solely influenced by party tickets or traditional allegiances. Rather, they are interested in the candidate's personal attributes. Leadership qualities such as boldness, determination, education, and a connection with the masses are now important factors in voter decision-making. Strong work ethic is a must for strong and effective leadership. It played a vital role in this win. Teamwork is also significant for strong leadership, as well as open-mindedness is indispensable for good leadership. This shift symbolizes progress toward democratic maturity in the region. This shift reflects a positive

change toward a more issue-based and informed democratic culture in PK-22.

Conclusion

This study explored soft-skills played an important role which belong to both interpersonal and intrapersonal skills in shifting voting behavior and leadership preferences in District Bajaur PK-22 constituency during 2024 election, focusing on the shift from PTI to ANP. Via a quantitative survey in five tehsils of Pk-22, the findings revealed that soft skills of an individual candidate played the most significant role in influencing voter decisions. Such as, Good Communication. A good leader is able to communicate his/her ideas well so that everyone understands. Active Listening. A good leader is able to listen to other people carefully without interrupting. Empathy a good leader understands how other people feel. Emotional Intelligence a good leader is able to manage his/her emotions and also understands how other people feel. Decision-Making a good leader is able to take decisions confidently. Problem-Solving a good leader is able to solve problems when faced with one. Teamwork a good leader is a team player. Adaptability a good leader is flexible. Time Management a good leader is able to manage his/her time well. Conflict Resolution a good leader is able to solve conflicts between people. Motivation a good leader is able to motivate other people. Accountability a good leader is responsible for his/her actions. Delegation, a good leader is able to delegate duties. Creativity, a good leader is creative. Critical thinking, a good leader is able to think carefully before doing anything. Resilience, a leader can persevere through difficult times. Patience a leader can be patient even in situations where things take time. Confidence, a leader believes in himself / herself and his/her decisions. Integrity, a leader is honest and does the right thing. Respectfulness, a leader treats everyone with kindness and respect. Open-Mindedness a leader can listen to new ideas and opinions. Vision, a leader can see the bigger picture. Goal setting, a leader sets clear and achievable goals for his/her team. Inspiration, a leader inspires others through his/her actions and attitude. Negotiation, a leader can find solutions where everyone wins. Influence a leader can positively affect others' thoughts and actions. Coaching, a leader can help others learn and grow. Mentoring a leader can use his/her experience to guide others. Self-Awareness, a leader knows his/her weaknesses and strengths. Stress Management, a leader can handle stress well. Organization, a leader can keep things well-organized. Initiative, a leader can take initiatives without being told. Reliability, the leader can be trusted to deliver what he or she promises. Flexibility, the leader is willing to make changes if necessary. Fairness the leader treats every person equally and justly. Optimism, the leader remains optimistic even when things go wrong. Collaboration, the leader brings people together to work as a team. Persuasion, the leader uses reasoning to convince others. Feedback Giving, the leader gives feedback to others to improve performance. Feedback Receiving, the leader receives feedback and learns from it. Cultural Awareness, the leader respects differences and cultures, trust Building, the leader builds relationships through honesty and trust. Strategic Thinking, the leader thinks of the future and how to succeed. Humility, the leader remains humble and admits errors. Enthusiasm, the leader shows enthusiasm and this encourages others. Supportiveness, the leader helps others when they need it. Clarity, the leader is able to communicate clearly and avoid confusion. Responsiveness, the leader responds quickly to things. These insights highlight the growing importance of local leadership, soft skills and personal credibility. While the study was limited to the geographical area of PK-22, it offers valuable implications for political parties and candidates aiming to better understand and engage with voters in similar constituencies. Future research could expand to other districts for comparative analysis and deeper insight into regional political behavior.

References

- Adnan, M. (2021). Impacts of Traditional leadership on Voting behavior on General Election.
- Ahmed, S. (2021). The changing political trend in Erstwhile FATA: A study of last three election. *International Area Studies Review*, 15.
- Badshah, L. (2013). Political Determinent of Voting Behavior in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Liberal Arts and Social Science International Journal, 10.

Badshah, L. (2018). Political determinants of Voting Behaviors in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, Pakistan. *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal*, 10.

C, H. (2015). *The rise of democracy: Revolution War and Transformation and International politics since 1976*. Edn Burge: Edin Burgh University Press .

Daniel, M. (2008). The land of people of Pakistan'tribal belt. *Council on Foreign Relation*, 18.

Hannan, Y. (2021). Study of Radioactivity of Bajaur Norite expose in hummalian Tectonic zone of Nothern Pakistan. *Atmosphere Journal*, 11.

Jee, C. (2024). A systematic literature review to understand the difference between Critical factors effecting the national election and state election in India. *Frontiers and Political Science Journal*, 10.

Lubna, K. (2024). Voting Behavior of Educated Youth in Pakistan: A study of Multan city. *Research gate*, 16.

Muhammad, R. (2010). Benefication study of Bajaur Meganaze Ore by different process technique . *Pakistan Journal of Science* , 5.

Parvel, Y. (2024). Indian Voters attitude and Behavior toward a political Brand for producing green products: A Mediation Model. *Future Business Journal*, 14.

PPAF. (2025, January 15). *Pakistan Powerty Evaluation Fund*. Retrieved from Pakistan Powerty Evaluation Fund: www.paf.org.pk

Rehman, F. (2008). Significance of 1945 & 1946 election and the creation of Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of history and culture*, 21.

Rehman, M. U. (2018). Journal Perception about FCR and Proposed reforms. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 1-25.

Robina, B. (2014). Menralogical characterisation and evaluation of Meganaze Ore from Bajaur Agency Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa Pakistan . *Journal of Himalian Earth Sciences*, 8.

Sadeeq, N. (2021). Historical and systemic Overview of Federally Administered Tribal Area: Cultural landscape. *Journal of Historical Studies*, 24.

Sergiu, G. (2025). Transformational Party Leaders: Determinents of Leaderships Style Assessement and central and Eastern Europe. *Journal of Politics and Governance*, 15.

Shahid, H. (1993). Mineralization of Barang, Bajaur Agency, Pakistan. *The Journal of Gemology*, 7.

ZaheerAhmed. (2023). A comprehensive of Toxic metals in the water of FATA (Pakistan). *Journal of Chemical review*, 32.

Zeb, K. (2020). *Shta Mana Pakhtunkhwa*. Peshawar: Elaye Chapchari Jangi Muhallah Peshawar.