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Analyzing Party Identification Dynamics Using SmartPLS in the Peshawar Valley, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan

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Abstract: *The political landscape in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan, has seen a significant transformation since the 2013 elections, marked by the unprecedented dominance of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) across three consecutive elections. This study explores the dynamics of party identification with specific relevance to the Peshawar Valley of KP, focusing on the role of family socialization, peer group interactions, political party performance, leadership, and political campaigns. Data from 1196 respondents in the Peshawar Valley were analyzed using multiple regression with SmartPLS. The findings indicate that traditional familial and peer influences on party identification are weakening, while instrumental factors like political leadership and campaigns have a substantial impact. PTI's success is attributed to its effective use of social media and charismatic leadership, emphasizing the shift towards leader-centric and campaign-driven party support. This shift reflects a weakening of traditional partisan alignments and a growing reliance on dynamic political factors in shaping voter behavior.*

Key Words: Party Identification Dynamics, SmartPLS, Peshawar, Pakistan, Election, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Political Campaigns

Introduction

The Individual's political behavior is strongly affected by the social context. Family and social networks or peer groups are the most important socializing agents in the political behavior of individuals. However, the instrumental factors related to a political party's performance, the leadership role and personality, the political campaign, and propaganda equally influence political behavior. Party identification is an individual's political behavior characterized by their attachment to a specific political party. Various factors influence this attachment.

The expressive and instrumental models thoroughly explain party identification's social and recurrent political dynamics (Huddy et al., 2018). Besides many other factors, these are socio-economic (age, gender, education, social status, income level) and socialization agents like family and peer group interaction and networking, which affect party identification towards political parties. Besides, political dynamics like political party performance, political campaigns and propaganda, and political leadership are other factors that shape, construct, and maintain the political behavior of partisanship.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is one of the smallest provinces in terms of geography in Pakistan. Peshawar Valley is one of the central regions of the four regions of KP province. The region dominates provincial politics and is unique in that most political parties compete to influence general elections. While historically, regional politics had remained dominated by the Nationalist Awami National Party (ANP) with mainstream political parties competing, since the 2013 election, the newly popularized Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI), has dominated the electoral victories in Peshawar Valley, as well as in other regions of KP province. The data indicates (the political parties' vote share and seat share) lower electoral volatility since the 2013 election in Peshawar Valley (Zaman & Mushtaq, 2023a). In a region where voters had a history of penalizing the incumbent political party, the successive three times winning the election of the PTI is

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unique. The recurrent victory and the relative strength and stability in the identification of individuals in the party are important and need to be investigated.

Based on the public opinion survey conducted in Peshawar Valley by the researcher in 2021 for their research work, this study seeks to investigate and evaluate the direct and indirect effects and influence of family socializing factor, peer group, political party factor, political leadership, and political campaign and propaganda on party identification. To analyze the data, the study employed SmartPLS's latest edition to statistically investigate the relationship.

The study brings interesting findings where political party leadership and political campaign and propaganda directly contribute to the strength and stability of the party identification while family, peer groups, and political party factors affect it indirectly.

Party Identification: The Dependent Variable

Party identification refers to long-term attachment that is initially shaped by parental affiliations and childhood socialization (Bartel [2003](#)). It is just like the identification of people with a religious group, class, race, or ethnic group as a long-term identification and is a potent cue for its direct effects on vote choice as well as indirect influence on attitudes associated with the vote (Dalton, [2016](#)). The Michigan model emphasizes party identification as a strong determinant of voting behavior, whereas the psychological model emphasizes the individual as a primary voting unit for the analysis of electoral behavior (Zeib et al., [2022](#)). This study also takes the lead from the Michigan model, which assumes party identification as a psychological association of an individual with the political party. In line with the Michigan Model, the expressive model hypothesizes party identification mainly as an affective attachment to a party. It mainly develops in childhood with parents' political affiliation, and the family as an institution of early political socialization plays an important role (Holmberg, [2007](#); Kroh & Selb, [2009](#)).

Yet the instrumental model approaches the party identification as a running tally of political events (Bartels, [2002](#)). It is changeable and responsive to events and individual attitudes on contemporary political and economic issues, but it is also relatively unstable (Niemi & Jennings, [1991](#)). The prospective and retrospective evaluations of the leaders and political parties significantly affect the political attitudes and behavior of the voters. Party identification as an instrumental approach relies mainly upon situational and environmental factors where party performance, ideological beliefs, personal preferences, and leaders' performance and evaluation play significant roles (Huddy & Bankert, [2017](#)). From this perspective, the approach stresses the viable, sloganeering, active, and assertive political parties and leaders that induce the voters to think otherwise (Huddy & Bankert, [2017](#)).

Studies have developed a mixed approach that upholds that “fully half of the variation in political party identification is attributable to genetic influences, with the other half coming about through unique experiences (environmental factors) (Bell & Kandler, [2015](#)). In line with the mixed model approach, an important study on the Peshawar valley of KP province also denotes that party identification is the outcome of multiple sociological as well as instrumental political factors in a varying combination (Zaman & Mushtaq, [2023b](#)).

There is, however, a dearth of literature on party identification in Pakistan. However, party identification is suggested as one of the strong determinants of voting behavior. Although the sociological (family members, peer group, caste, class, religion, landlords, tribal heads, ties to the clan, and Baradarism) and other rational choice determinants of voting behaviors are equally important (Zeib et al., [2022](#)). This study, while taking party identification as a dependent variable, investigates the influence of independent variables from the perspective of expressive and instrumental models.

Taking party identification as a strong determinant of voting behavior and keeping in view the standard partisanship questions in the literature (Dalton, [2016](#)), this study assesses the perspective of the individual about their level of partisanship through a survey. The indicators include

- Hi) You are supporting the party continuously
- Hii) You are a strong adherent of the party
- Hiii) You are a moderate adherent of the party
- Hiv) You are a supporter of the party



Hv) You are reluctant to change party

The Dynamics of Party Identification as the Independent Variable

From the perspective of the expressive approach, family is one of the most established socializing factors in shaping political alignment. The scholars contend that it is one of the first nurturing institutes for adults' political behavior, including party identification (Furman et al., [2022](#)). Party identification is inherited from parents and the social environment, and it is further characterized by stability and resistance to opposing influences (Bakker et al., [2015](#); Bankert et al., [2017](#)). In a Pakistani context, Javaid and their colleague have emphasized the role of Baradari (nearby family) (Javaid & Elahi, [2014](#)), while others have directly related the strong role of family relations (Shah et al., [2018](#)) or family tradition (Khan et al., [2018](#)) in electoral behavior in a rural context.

As a strong independent variable of the party identification, this study measures and gauges the influence of family socialization (FASF) by asking the following six-item questions, i.e.

- Ci) The head of the family advice to support the party
- Cii) Your parents discuss politics or political parties at home
- Ciii) Family members participate in party activities
- Civ) Family members participate in an electoral campaign
- Cv) Family members participate in political rallies
- Cvi) Family members participate in corner meetings of the party

Peer group interaction and networking equally affect political behavior in early childhood and adulthood. The various studies, like that of Brown and Colleague (MacKuen & Brown, 1987), Kenny (Kenny, [2015](#)), and Beck (Beck, [2002](#)), argue that peer group networks significantly affect political party identification. In the Pakistani context, Memon and colleagues investigated the role of socializing agents (family and peer group) on Pakistani Youth's Political Participation and concluded that "peer norms were found to be more significant for youth's media consumption and political behavior" than family direct influence (Memon et al., [2018a](#)).

While taking peer group (PEGR) as another important independent variable affecting party identification, this study assesses it by asking the following seven-item questions. These are:

- Di) You participate in political discussions with your colleagues
- Dii) Your colleagues participate in political activities
- Diii) Your colleagues are members of the political party
- Div) You always socialize and interact with your friends and colleagues
- Dv) You always join friends and colleagues in political campaigns
- Dvi) You join friends and colleagues in political rallies
- Dvii) You join friends and colleagues in political protests

As an alternative model, the instrumental model signifies various other factors that affect party identification. These include the political party's past performances, its current agendas, its approach toward developmental work (Tucker et al., [2018](#)), the political leadership role and performance (Takens et al., [2015](#)), and the political campaigns and propaganda for disseminating the information (Takens et al., [2015](#)).

Evaluating the influence of the performance of a political party (POPF) on the stability or continuity of the party identification of the individual, this study specified the following four-item questions to collect public opinion. These are

- Ei) People generally support a party for its previous performance
- Eii) People generally support a party for its developmental work
- Eiii) People generally support a party for unemployment and its poverty policy
- Eiv) People support a party that addresses poor people's issues and problems

Similarly, for Evaluating the influence of the political party leadership role (ROOL) and personality on the stability or continuity of the party identification of the individual, this study specified the following five-item question to collect public opinion. The questions are

- Fi) Your party leader be an eloquent orator
- Fii) Your party leader is a qualified person

- Fiii) The leader addresses public demands
- Fiv) The leader possesses strong communication skills
- Fv) Your party leader possesses an honorable character

Likewise, for Evaluating the influence of political campaigns and propaganda (POCP) on the stability or continuity of the party identification of the individual, this study specified the following seven-item question to collect public opinion. These are:

- Gi) In a political campaign, you hosted a flag
- Gii) You participated in corner meetings
- Giii) You have raised slogans in rallies
- Giv) Political leaders provide developmental work in your area
- Gv) You used social media for a political campaign
- Gvi) You Participated in propaganda campaigns in the elections
- Gvii) Political leader contacted you or your family during elections

Based on the premise of expressive and instrumental models, this study endeavors to determine the relationship of these variables with party identification using Smartpls4 as a statistical tool.

Based on the theoretical debate, the study evaluates the following positive hypothesis.

H1: Family socializing factors significantly affect the party identification among individuals in the Peshawar valley of KP province of Pakistan

H2: Peer group interaction and networking significantly affect party identification among individuals in the Peshawar Valley of KP province of Pakistan.

H3: The political party performance significantly affects the party identification among individuals in the Peshawar valley of KP province of Pakistan

H4: The political party leadership significantly affects the party identification among individuals in the Peshawar valley of KP province of Pakistan

H5: The political campaign and propaganda significantly affect the party identification among individuals in the Peshawar valley of KP province of Pakistan

The Polity of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan

KP is one of the smallest provinces in terms of geography and the second smallest in terms of population in Pakistan. The researcher, who is working on the electoral aspect of the province, has divided the province into four distinct regions. Peshawar Valley (Mardan and Peshawar divisions) is one of the important regions of the KP province (Zaman & Mushtaq, 2022). Being the central zone of the province, the Peshawar Valley has the smallest proportion of poverty, is mostly urbanized, and has a considerable industry with productive agricultural lands (N. Ahmad et al., 2022).

Since the 1988 elections in Pakistan, two clusters of mainstream political parties dominated the political arena in Pakistan. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN), headed by Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and his family, and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), headed by the Bhutto family. In Punjab, there had been a stronghold of PML-N, while Sindh remained dominated by PPP. The provinces of Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were unique as there was no single political party dominating the election results. Randomly, the two provinces showed the presence of Nationalist, religious, and mainstream political parties since the initial days.

After the 1970 elections, due to the lack of majority seats (Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam), JUI and ANP formed the government in the province. Similarly, in 1988, the PPP formed the government with other coalitions. In the aftermath of the 1990, 1993, and 1997 elections, it was again either PML-N or PPP that formed the government with other coalition partners, especially ANP in the province. Surprisingly, In the 2002 election, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), a new electoral alliance of the nine religious political parties, formed the government after sweeping the whole province. In 2008, ANP once again formed a coalition government in alliance with PPP.

However, Since the 2013 general elections in Pakistan, the voters in the KP province have consecutively voted for PTI for the third term in a row. In a volatile country like Pakistan, where election results fluctuate,



and in a province with an electorally volatile political landscape (Zaman & Mushtaq, 2023a), this stability of the political behavior concerning vote, party identification, or affiliation is unique.

While little data is available on the provincial political behavior pattern, voting behavior is extensively studied in the province. Ahmad covered electoral behavior in four elections from 1988 to 1997 and upheld that in urban areas, political determinants strongly affect the voting pattern, while in rural areas, these are the patron-client patterns that dominate. He argues that social factors have lost their ground to political factors like political party affiliation and party leadership affiliation, especially in central KP, i.e., Peshawar Valley (M. S. Ahmad, 2010). Badshah's study on political determinants also upheld that candidate affiliation, political party affiliation, party leadership affiliation, and party ideology are significantly associated with voting behavior in KP province (Badshah et al., 2018). Azmat Ullah's study in one of the far districts of KP province also upheld that voting behavior is strongly influenced by political determinants and issues (Ullah et al., 2023). FarmanUllah (FarmanUllah & Islam, 2019) studies also pointed towards the political determinants of voting behavior.

These and other such studies upheld that in KP province, the political determinants mostly influence the pattern of voting behavior. Party identification is one of the strongest political determinants of voting behavior in the literature and an equally important determinant of voting behavior in KP province (Shah et al., 2016). Keeping in view the relative importance of political factors in the province, this study endeavors to understand the political and socialization factors that determine the party identification of the individuals in the Peshawar Valley of the province.

Research Design and Data

The data for this study was collected through a survey administered in Peshawar Valley of KP province of Pakistan. This region is ethnolinguistically homogeneous, predominantly composed of Pashto-speaking individuals. To ensure the representativeness of the sample, stratification was conducted based on various socio-demographic factors, including area of residence, gender, age, profession, etc.

In the first stage of data collection, eight national assembly constituencies were randomly selected (two from each of the districts of Peshawar, Charsadda, Mardan, and Swabi) to gather data from approximately 1400 voters, targeting 175 responses per constituency. Subsequently, seven polling stations were randomly chosen from each constituency, and 25 voters were interviewed per polling station. A convenience sampling strategy was employed to reach the target respondents.

Following a pilot survey, to verify the effectiveness and clarity, a survey was conducted with the help of field enumerators. The demographic information of the respondents is summarized in the following table.

Table 1

Respondents' region, residential area, gender, and age

District	Region	Residential Area		Gender		Age	
	Sample size f (%)	Rural f (%)	Urban f (%)	Male f (%)	Female f (%)	< 40 years f (%)	≥ 40 years f (%)
Swabi	310(25.9)	230(19.2)	80(6.7)	195(16.3)	115 (9.6)	143(12.0)	167(14.0)
Mardan	294(24.6)	219(18.3)	75(6.3)	165(13.8)	129(10.8)	161(13.5)	133(11.1)
Charsadda	299(25.0)	257(21.5)	42(3.5)	191(16.0)	108(09.0)	131(11.0)	168(14.0)
Peshawar	293(24.5)	127(10.6)	166(13.9)	205 (17.1)	88(07.4)	117(9.8)	176(14.7)
Total	1196(100)	833(69.6)	363(30.4)	756(63.2)	440 (36.8)	552(46.1)	644(53.9)

The study explored the dynamics of party identification by investigating the sociological and political variables using the most advanced statistical tool, SmartPLS's latest version. A similar study was conducted earlier with a different combination of variables with structural equation modeling (SEM) techniques through AMOS. This study has selected more specific variables and factors to calculate the multivariate

regression analysis using the SmartPLS statistical tool. The SmartPLS is a more advanced tool that presents the effect in a graphical way.

Results, Analysis, and Discussion

Factor analysis was conducted to validate the variables. The metrics for assessing the reliability and validity of six constructs (FASF, PAID, PEGR, POCP, POPF, and Rool) were calculated. The constructs are evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (rho_a and rho_c), and average variance extracted (AVE). Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.776 to 0.881, indicating acceptable to good internal consistency. Composite reliability (rho_a) values range from 0.845 to 0.888, and (rho_c) values range from 0.852 to 0.909, suggesting high reliability. AVE values range from 0.555 to 0.686, indicating the constructs explain a moderate to high proportion of variance. Overall, the constructs demonstrate good reliability and validity.

Table 2

Construct reliability and validity.

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
FASF	0.880	0.888	0.909	0.625
PAID	0.776	0.845	0.852	0.555
PEGR	0.881	0.883	0.907	0.584
POCP	0.871	0.872	0.901	0.565
POPF	0.849	0.879	0.897	0.686
ROOL	0.850	0.859	0.894	0.629

The Regression Analysis

Hypothesis 1: Family socializing factors significantly affect the party identification among individuals in the Peshawar valley of KP province of Pakistan

The literature takes family as one of the foremost agents in political socialization (Alesina & Giuliano, 2011; Furman et al., 2022; Turan & Tiras, 2017). Rahman and colleagues' study contends that family socialization is the vital determinant of casting votes (Rahman et al., 2021). An important pillar of the social network of individuals, the family structure, as well as the social and political activities of the family are assumed to be exceptionally important mainstays in the political training of young individuals (Mehmood & Rauf, 2018; Rauf & Shah, 2015).

The statistical analysis of the dataset provides robust evidence supporting the hypothesis, which posits that family socializing factors significantly affect party identification among individuals in the Peshawar Valley of KP province, Pakistan. Despite the lack of a direct significant effect, the indirect pathways reveal substantial mediating effects through several variables, emphasizing the complexity of political socialization in this context.

The significant indirect effect of FASF on PAID (0.291, $t = 11.390$, $p < 0.001$) underscores that family socialization shapes political identification through intermediary influences such as peer groups, political campaigns, and propaganda (0.455, $t = 18.073$, $p < 0.001$), political party performance, and the role of political leadership (0.163, $t = 5.529$, $p < 0.001$).

It is confirmed that family socializing factors significantly affect party identification among individuals in the Peshawar Valley of KP province of Pakistan. This significant effect is largely mediated through other variables such as peer groups, political campaigns and propaganda, political party performance, and the role of political leadership.

The analysis provides additional insight into the political and social context of the Peshawar Valley. The region, characterized by its unique socio-political dynamics, has a deeply ingrained culture of familial



and tribal affiliations that significantly shape political orientations and behaviors (Ali, 2024). However, the family socializing factors significantly affect party identification among individuals in the Peshawar Valley, predominantly through indirect pathways involving peer groups, political campaigns and propaganda, political party performance, and the role of political leadership. The trend indicates the important role of mediating factors while also signifying the insignificant direct role of family socialization in the strength and continuity of party identification among individuals. The findings further strengthened the findings of other such studies (Badshah et al., 2018; Zaman & Mushtaq, 2023b) in the context of the KP province of Pakistan that find social factors as less significant while political factors are more influential.

Hypothesis 2: Peer group interaction and networking significantly affect the party identification among individuals in the Peshawar Valley of KP province of Pakistan

Peer group interaction and networking are other important mediators that influence human behavior (Al-Challabi, 2021; Wilkenfeld, 2009). Informal networks of friends and acquaintances are important for the distribution of information and political mobilization. However, formal institutions, like schools, colleges, universities, and Madrassa, also provide a more effective environment for peer influence (Kataria & Javaid, 2017; Memon et al., 2018b).

The analysis indicates no direct effect of peer-group interaction for party identification; however, an indirect effect exists. The indirect value of 0.657 with a significant P-value (0.000) indicates that peer group interaction and networking strongly affect party identification. However, the peer group's direct effect on the mediating variables (PEGR → POCP: 0.805, PEGR → POPF: 0.636, PEGR → ROOL: 0.312) is also significant. The results indicate that the individual's political behavior towards the political party's performance, the leaders, and the political campaign are largely affected by the peer group interaction and networking that play a crucial role in shaping party identification.

The social and political landscape of the Peshawar Valley provides a rich context for understanding these dynamics (Nichols, 2001). The region is marked by strong communal ties and a collectivist culture where social networks and peer influence are paramount. Peer groups in the Peshawar Valley often consist of extended family members, friends, and community members, all of whom play a significant role in disseminating political information and shaping political attitudes.

This analysis indicates that the political environment in the Peshawar Valley is characterized by peer group deliberations recurrently revolving around political activities related to political campaigns, which critically assess political party performances and the roles of political leaders. In such a context, the findings highlight the critical role of peer groups as channels of political information and as influential agents in political socialization. However, this peer group interaction role is less significant for party identification strength, which denotes the waning of social bases of political behavior as well as partisan dealignment.

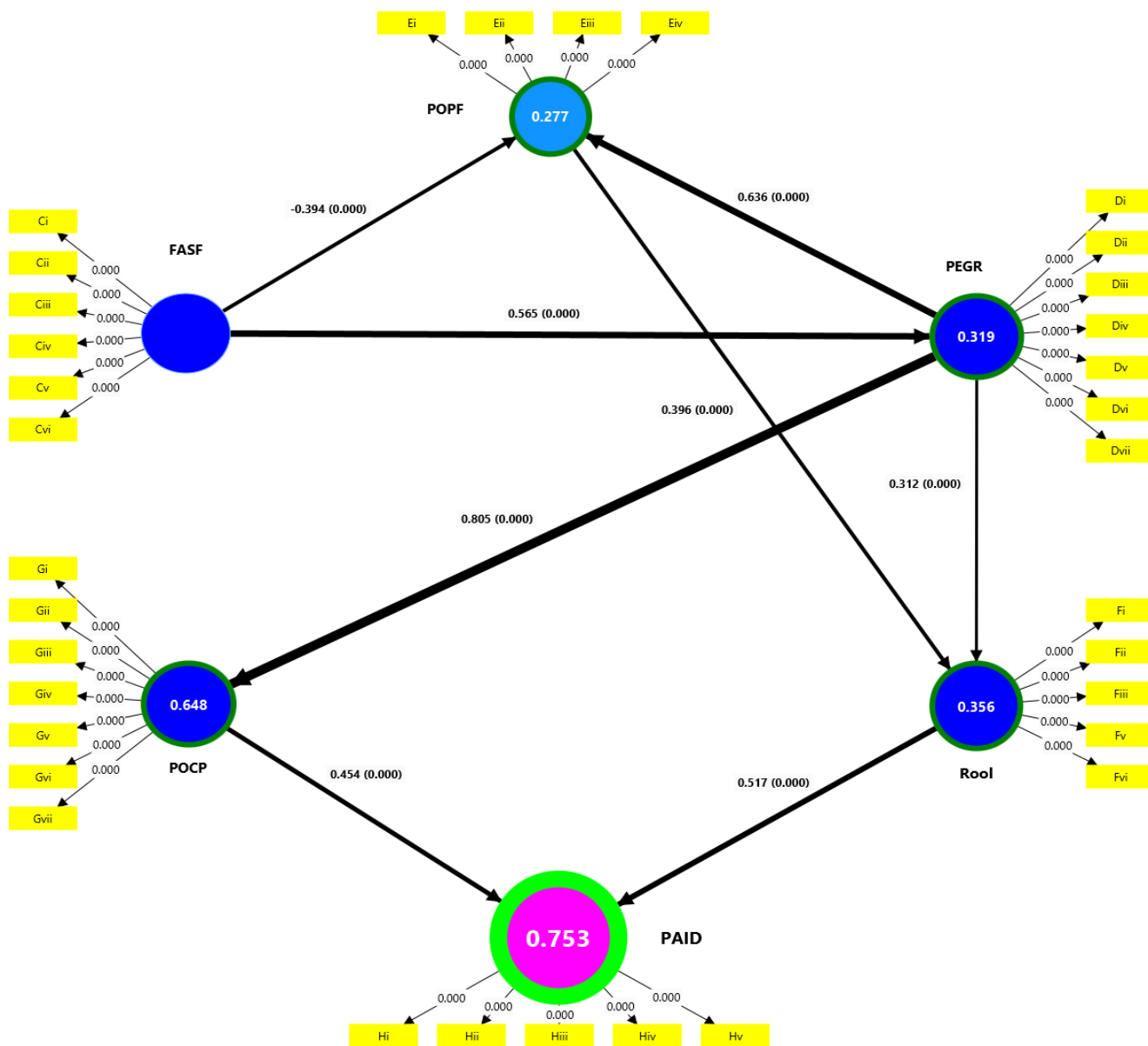
Hypothesis 3: The political party performance significantly affects the party identification among individuals in the Peshawar valley of KP province of Pakistan

Taking partisanship from a rational choice approach, political party performance plays a crucial role in determining the political party's choice as well as the vote decision (Dowding, 2017). Various studies assert that supporters assess the performance of political parties based on various criteria, such as economic management, policy implementation, and overall governance effectiveness (Lynch et al., 2006).

The performance of the political parties in terms of agendas and developmental works lacks any direct effect on party identification. However, an indirect effect (0.205) is exerted through the mediating role of the political leadership. The political party's performance also significantly and directly influences the image of the leadership in society, with a moderate value of 0.396. As a result, we conclude that any performance of the political party in terms of the provisions of jobs, previous performance, and developmental work is evaluated by the supporters, which directly affects the political party leadership image and further contributes towards party identification.

Model 1

Path Coefficients (T Values, P Values)



Hypothesis 4: The political party leadership significantly affects the party identification among individuals in the Peshawar valley of KP province of Pakistan

Aardal and Binder argue that leadership evaluation affects the propensity to vote for a given party” (Aardal & Binder, 2013). Accepting the importance of party leaders, other such studies also suggest that leader-motivated voting is mostly prevalent among nonpartisan or weak partisans, and they are most likely to switch their votes between elections (Quinlan & McAllister, 2022).

The direct effect of political party leadership on party identification is substantial and statistically significant. The path coefficient of 0.517 indicates a strong direct relationship, and the high T-statistics (12.776), along with a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.001$), confirms that this effect is highly significant.

In the socio-political context of the Peshawar Valley, political leadership plays an imperative role in shaping political allegiance. The region, although used to be characterized by strong community ties and collective decision-making (Spain, 1954), places considerable importance on the charisma, integrity, and effectiveness of political leaders. The substantial direct effect of political leadership on party identification suggests that individuals in the Peshawar Valley are significantly influenced by their perceptions of

political leaders. It is also added that the leadership’s personal qualities, such as eloquence and communication skills, honorable character, and appearance in public meetings and addresses, are strongly weighed by the voters when they decide to support a specific political party or its leader. While Effective leadership can enhance trust and loyalty to a political party, fostering stronger party identification, the literature (Quinlan & McAllister, 2022) denotes the presence of leaders motivated voters as an indicator of non-partisans voters, weak partisans, and partisans tending to switch the loyalty between the elections. While giving prominence to political leadership, the results denote relatively unstable partisanship among the individuals in the Peshawar Valley of KP province.

Hypothesis 5: The political campaign and propaganda significantly affect the party identification among individuals in the Peshawar valley of KP province of Pakistan.

Political campaigns and propaganda are important mechanisms that increase the amount of information and alter the political orientation and predisposition (Grant et al., 2010). The campaign “enhances the intrinsic development of the individual and integrates the citizen into the political culture” and alleviates the alienation among citizens towards the political system and parties (Freie, 1997).

The hypothesis evaluates the influence of political campaigns and propaganda on the individual identification of the party in Peshawar Valley of KP province. The table indicates that political campaigns and propaganda proved to be one of the most effective tools with political parties to influence supporters (POCP -> PAID=0.454) party identification. The effect is direct and depicts the instrumental role of political campaigns and propaganda in the political system of Pakistan.

The political campaign in terms of participation in corner meetings, joining rallies and protests, supporting the party through social media and propaganda campaigns during elections, and the personal visits of local political leaders are highly appreciated by the voters when supporting the party. In the age of high-tech and mass media in the forms of electronic, print, and social media, the direct and significant association between political campaigns and propaganda and party identification denotes that the mass campaigns and propaganda, thereby increasing the flow of information have a significant effect on political orientation as well as political predisposition among individuals in Peshawar Valley.

Table 3
Path coefficients Mean, STDEV, T values, p values

Direct effect					
Variables	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P-values
FASF -> PEGR	0.565	0.565	0.027	20.872	0.000
FASF -> POPF	-0.394	-0.396	0.039	10.193	0.000
PEGR -> POCP	0.805	0.805	0.020	41.205	0.000
PEGR -> POPF	0.636	0.637	0.037	17.010	0.000
PEGR -> ROOL	0.312	0.312	0.040	7.860	0.000
POCP -> PAID	0.454	0.455	0.042	10.780	0.000
POPF -> ROOL	0.396	0.396	0.040	9.786	0.000
ROOL -> PAID	0.517	0.517	0.040	12.776	0.000
Indirect Effects					
Variables	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P-values
FASF -> PAID	0.291	0.291	0.026	11.390	0.000
FASF -> POCP	0.455	0.455	0.025	18.073	0.000
FASF -> POPF	0.359	0.361	0.031	11.462	0.000
FASF -> ROOL	0.163	0.163	0.029	5.529	0.000
PEGR -> PAID	0.657	0.658	0.026	25.703	0.000
PEGR -> ROOL	0.252	0.253	0.030	8.292	0.000
POPF -> PAID	0.205	0.205	0.026	7.854	0.000

Variables	Total Effects				
	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P-values
FASF -> PAID	0.291	0.291	0.026	11.390	0.000
FASF -> PEGR	0.565	0.565	0.027	20.872	0.000
FASF -> POCP	0.455	0.455	0.025	18.073	0.000
FASF -> POPF	-0.035	-0.035	0.032	1.080	0.280
FASF -> ROOL	0.163	0.163	0.029	5.529	0.000
PEGR -> PAID	0.657	0.658	0.026	25.703	0.000
PEGR -> POCP	0.805	0.805	0.020	41.205	0.000
PEGR -> POPF	0.636	0.637	0.037	17.010	0.000
PEGR -> ROOL	0.564	0.565	0.035	16.297	0.000
POCP -> PAID	0.454	0.455	0.042	10.780	0.000
POPF -> PAID	0.205	0.205	0.026	7.854	0.000
POPF -> ROOL	0.396	0.396	0.040	9.786	0.000
ROOL -> PAID	0.517	0.517	0.040	12.776	0.000

Conclusion

Since the 2013 elections, the political landscape in the KP province of Pakistan has undergone significant transformation. The province had witnessed the ups and downs of various political parties and alliances. However, against this backdrop, the political landscape has swung radically with the emergence and dominance of the PTI as a main stakeholder since the 2013 elections. Remarkably, PTI has won three consecutive general elections (National Assembly election as well as Provincial Assembly election) up to 2024 in a province known for its tendency to change political mandates with each election cycle.

While many reasons and explanations can be accounted for this electoral shift, this study takes the nature and dynamics of Party identification as an important concept to understand this phenomenon. The study has investigated the various dynamics of party identification and its relationship with party identification. A sample of 1196 respondents was collected through stratified random sampling from the Peshawar Valley of KP province, a central region of the province. Multiple regression analysis is conducted by employing the SmartPLS statistical tool to ascertain the effect of family socialization factor, peer group interaction and networking, political party performance, political party leadership, and political campaign and propaganda on Party identification.

The results concerning hypotheses one and two confirmed that family socializing factors and peer group have no direct effect on party identification. However, it affects party identification moderately and indirectly through other variables such as political campaigns and propaganda, political party performance, and the role of political leadership. This indicates that the role of family and peer groups in establishing and strengthening partisanship has diminished or decreased in Peshawar Valley. However, as per the socio-cultural environment of the province, the families and peer groups focus on the political parties, political campaigns, and party leaders. It is deduced that family and peer groups are important channels of political information and are influential agents in political socialization. However, the indirect effect of party identification indicates a weak social base of partisanship among the supporters. In a traditional political culture, the waning of social bases indicates partisan dealignment.

Similarly, the performance of the political parties lacks any direct effect on party identification. However, an indirect effect exists through the mediating role of the political leadership. Owing to the indirect effect on party identification and the direct effect on political party leadership, supporters' positive prospective and retrospective evaluation of the performance of the party exists, which strengthens the bond of supporters with party leaders and vice versa. The positive image of leaders further affects the strength of the party's identification.



The substantial direct effect of political leadership on party identification implies that individuals in the Peshawar Valley are expressively influenced by the personalities and perceptions of political leaders. The leadership's personal qualities, such as eloquence and communication skills, honorable character, and appearance in public meetings and addresses, are strongly weighed by the voters when they decide to support a specific political party or its leader. However, based on these findings, it is also deduced that partisanship in Peshawar Valley is relatively unstable and weak owing to leaders' motivated voters. In the words of Quinlan & McAllister (2022), the trend denotes the partisans tending to switch their loyalty between the elections. Leader-motivated voting is most prevalent among non-partisans and older voters and in elections where ideological polarization is low.

Likewise, the study indicates a significant direct influence of political campaigns and propaganda on party identification. Political campaigns and propaganda are highly significant in gathering support for the parties. It is thus deduced that in the age of high-tech and mass media, instead of grassroots citizen mobilization, the role of social media platforms is significant for an effective flow of information and affecting political orientation and political predisposition.

The study finds meager support for the expressive model and Michigan approach, which mainly focuses on familial sources of political party identification. The instrumental factors, mainly the political party leadership and the political campaign and propaganda, are found to be highly significant for the strength and stability of party identification.

The consistent and strong support for PTI in the successive three elections in KP could be interpreted in terms of the model discussed. It appears that the partisans supported the party for its eloquent and communicative leadership as well as for its effective political campaign and propaganda. It has already been established that the PTI introduced a strong social media campaign to gain support. Just like the previous elections (2013 and 2018), in 2024, they have effectively used social media, including Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. They spared no platform to affect the voters and supporters. Likewise, the PTI ex-chairman Imran Khan's popularity roused before and during the election campaign, which benefitted the party in winning the elections. Conversely, it is also assumed that these are not mainly the socialization agents, especially family and peer groups that directly contribute to party support, but the more influential instrumental factors in terms of party leadership and political campaigns and propaganda that have gathered support for the PTI as a political party. The trend denotes the weak social bases of the party identification while the influential role of political factors.

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