

Psychosocial Factors Influencing Voting Behavior

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Abstract: *This study delves into the voting behaviour in the context of Indian electorate, shedding light on understanding it in the relatively new dimension, where the focus is primarily on psychological factors and social factors (demography) influencing the voting behaviour, which further sheds light on understanding the broader issues, like low voter turnout in India compared to other democracies worldwide, understanding of opinion polls and exit surveys and other evolving unethical Influences which are centred around mental process of voters cognition, which could create a new dimension of understanding the need for neuro rights of the voters, where the motive of free and fair elections can be achieved. This pioneering attempt to comprehend the psycho - social factors influencing voting behaviour in the Indian electoral system is groundbreaking as it has never been attempted before. In an election scenario, voters are exposed to a myriad of stimuli related to political candidates, parties, promises, and discussions, prompting selective exposure, perception, and integration processes to form the basis for their voting decisions. The study also draws on the voter turnout theory, highlighting the role of social reference groups and their impact on voter behaviour. Furthermore, it emphasizes the under explored domain of psychological and social factors in explaining political attitudes and voting behaviour among the mass public from relative unexplored dimensions, asserting that psychological traits directly influence the voting behaviour. With the Indian electoral system becoming increasingly dynamic due to diverse societal participation and steadily growing influential factors the need for study arises strongly, This research attempt is being carried forward by examining personality through the DISC personality assessment tool and quantifying the voting behaviour through the theory of planned behaviour questionnaire, the study seeks to discern the connections between demographic variables, personality traits and voting behaviour (intention). The components of voting behaviour were formed on the pivots of theory of planned behaviour (TBH) such as behaviour beliefs, control beliefs and normative beliefs which more precisely create assessment area of voting behaviour intention. The study employs questionnaire with a five - point Likert scale to measure respondents' agreement with statements related to voting behaviour. The research's objectives include exploring the influence of a voter's personality and demographic variables on their voting behaviour and the influence of specific personality types on various facets of voting behaviour. The study's hypotheses posit that voting behaviour is influenced by psycho - social factors, particularly personality and demographic variables, and that different personality types may alternatively influence the voting behaviour intention. In conclusion, this study aims to elevate our comprehension of this context to a higher standard.*

Keywords: voting behavior, Indian electorate, psycho-social factors, personality traits, electoral participation

1. Objectives

The objectives of the research are:

- 1) To quantify voting behaviour using Theory of planned behaviour questionnaire.
- 2) To explore whether the personality of the voters influence their voting behaviour.
- 3) To explore whether the demographic variables and personality types of the voters influence their voting behaviour.
- 4) To study the influence of gender on the voting behaviour of the voters.
- 5) To study the influence of age on the voting behaviour of the voters.
- 6) To study the influence of socio - economic status on the voting behaviour of the voters.
- 7) To study the influence of educational qualification on the voting behaviour of the voters.
- 8) To study the influence of Demographic location on the voting behaviour of the voters.

2. Hypothesis

To realize the objective of studying the psycho - social factors influencing voting behaviour: We hypothesize as follows:

- 1) Gender of the voters influences the voting behaviour of the voters.

- 2) Age of the voters influences the voting behaviour of the voters.
- 3) Socio - economic status of the voters influences the voting behaviour.
- 4) Educational qualification of the voters influences the voting behaviour.
- 5) Home state of the voters influences the voting behaviour.
- 6) Personality of the voters influences the Voting behaviour.
- 7) The demographic variables and personality types of the voters variably influence their voting behaviour.

3. Population

This study enrolled a total of 429 participants aged 18 years and above who have registered as voters and participated in the elections. The calculations for sample size using power analysis gave the ideal sample size to be 384 to achieve statistical significance. The sample size was fixed at 429. The minimum age of the respondents was 18 and the maximum was 62. The gender of the respondents 215 of them were females and 214 were males. the educational status of the respondents are 243 respondents were Post - Graduates & Above, 145 respondents completed their Graduation, 34 respondents completed their Intermediate\ +2\ Diploma, 5 respondents completed either 10th\ ITI \ others, and 2 respondents underwent just Basic Schooling. The Socio - Economic Status of the respondents. Approximately two -

third of them belonged to middle class background i.e., 66.7% (286), followed by 21.4% (92) from upper middle class, 10.7% (46) from lower middle class and meagre 1.2% (5) of them were Rich\ Affluent. the home state (demography) of 429 respondents spread across eight states of the country. Out of them, two - third belonged to Andhra Pradesh i. e., 66.0% (283), followed by 12.8% (55) from Tamil Nadu and 7% (30) from the state of Telangana. The rest were spread across 4.4 % (19) from New Delhi, 3.5% (15) from Uttar Pradesh, 2.6% (11) from Kerala and negligible proportion of respondents from West Bengal with 2.1% (9) and Karnataka with 1.6% (7).

Variables

- 1) Dependent variable: Voting behaviour
- 2) Independent variable: Psycho - Social Factors
Influencing voting behaviour: Personality, Demographic Variables: Age, Gender, Home state, educational qualification, Socio - economic status.

Data Collection

Survey method (Questionnaires, Online and Offline modes of data collection).

4. Method

The questionnaire was employed and administered online through google forms. The data collection was done through survey method by employing questionnaire, The questionnaire consisted of 16 items for everything disc personality profile and 5 items for TBH questionnaire (for Voting behaviour intention) and respondents were asked to rate each on a five - point Likert scale format which resulted in a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 5. The consent of the respondents was obtained online through the consent form, upon providing the consent the respondent could further proceed to the questionnaire, if consent wasn't provided by the respondent, they would be exit from the google form.

5. Procedure

The Data collection was performed using the survey method by employing the online questionnaires, The questionnaire was employed and administered through google forms. The questionnaire was administered to a sample population of 50 respondents to obtain feedback of the respondents before proceeding for data collection with the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to be translated into preferred language of choice of the respondents using the google chrome browser. The prior consent of the respondents was obtained online through the informed consent form, which is accompanied with the questionnaire, upon receiving the consent, the respondent could further proceed to the questionnaire, if consent isn't provided by the respondent, the respondent would be exited from the google form. The questionnaire consisted of 16 items for everything disc personality profile and 5 items for TBH questionnaire (for Voting behaviour) and respondents were asked to rate each on a five - point Likert scale format which resulted in a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 5. The data was collected completely online (Intenet) by circulating the questionnaire through Email, WhatsApp, and Social Media.

6. Research Methodology

The sample characteristics will be examined using frequency and percentage analysis for qualitative variables, and mean and standard deviation analysis for quantitative variables, normality of data distribution, Bivariate analyses will be conducted using Chi - Square tests, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Multinomial logistic regression analysis.

7. Results and Discussions

1) Gender and Voting Behaviour Intention (F=7.377, p<0.05)

There is significant association between Gender of the respondents and their behaviour intention to wards voting, which further indicates that the Male respondents have higher behaviour intention compared to female respondents. It can be further concluded that Male respondents have higher behaviour intention towards voting compared to female respondents.

2) Age and Voting Behaviour Intention (F=8.444, p<0.05)

There is significant association between age of the respondents and their Behaviour intention towards voting, which further indicates that the respondents of age group of 36 years and above have higher behavior intention compared to the respondents of age group 35 years and less than 35 years. It can be further concluded that with increase in age the behaviour intention towards voting becomes higher.

3) Educational Qualification and Voting Behaviour Intention

There is no association between educational qualifications of the respondents and their voting behaviour.

4) Socio - Economic Status and Voting Behaviour Intention

There is no association between Socio - Economic status of the respondents and their voting behaviour.

5) Home State and Voting Behaviour Intention

There is no association between Home state of the respondents and their voting behaviour.

6) Personality and Voting Behaviour Intention

There is no association between Personality of the respondents and their voting behaviour.

7) Demographic Variables and Voting Behaviour and Personality

a) Age and voting behaviour intention and personality type – CD (X²= 7.27, p< 0.05), DI (X²=9.16, p<0.01)

There is significant association between Age and Voting behaviour and personality types CD and DI. It can be further concluded that the Voting behaviour is significantly influenced by Age and Personality types CD and DI. The Age of Respondents and Personality types are CD and DI will influence their Voting behaviour.

Dominance/ influence type (DI)

- People whose DiSC® profile shows a Di style display both the dominance of the D style and the influence of the i style. They are persuasive, bold, and results - oriented. They like to move fast and are always looking for new opportunities. People with Di styles are often viewed as dynamic and outspoken.
- Traits: Active, results - oriented, vocal, enthusiastic, assertive, quick, dynamic, inquisitive, persuasive, rebellious, restless, colorful, charming, intimidating, bold, driven, entrepreneurial.

Conscientiousness and Dominance type (CD)

- People whose DiSC® profile shows a CD style display a blend of the C style's conscientiousness and the D style's dominance. They are strong critical thinkers who push through obstacles. They have a fundamental skepticism that can make them world - wary at times. CD types hold high standards for themselves and others. They value competence, control, and independence.
- Traits: Skeptical, determined, questioning, critical thinker, analytical, stubborn, impatient, blunt, cold, cynical, objective, independent, disciplined, systematic, high standards.

b) Gender and Voting Behaviour Intention and Personality Type – DI ($X^2= 9.92, p<0.01$)

There is significant association between Gender and Voting behaviour and personality type DI. It can be further concluded that the Voting behaviour is significantly influenced by Gender and Personality type (DI), that is Respondents Gender and Personality type DI will influence their Voting behaviour.

Dominance/ influence type (DI)

- People whose DiSC® profile shows a Di style display both the dominance of the D style and the influence of the i style. They are persuasive, bold, and results oriented. They like to move fast and are always looking for new opportunities. People with Di styles are often viewed as dynamic and outspoken.
- Traits: Active, results - oriented, vocal, enthusiastic, assertive, quick, dynamic, inquisitive, persuasive, rebellious, restless, colourful, charming, intimidating, bold, driven, entrepreneurial.

c) Educational Qualification and Voting Behaviour Intention and Personality Type – CD ($X^2= 6.09, p< 0.05$)

There is significant association between educational qualification and Voting behaviour and personality type CD. It can be further concluded that the Voting behaviour is significantly influenced by educational qualification and Personality type that is Respondents Educational qualification and Personality type CD will influence their Voting behaviour.

Conscientiousness and Dominance type (CD)

- People whose DiSC® profile shows a CD style display a blend of the C style's conscientiousness and the D style's dominance. They are strong critical thinkers who push through obstacles. They have a fundamental skepticism that can make them world - wary at times. CD types hold

high standards for themselves and others. They value competence, control, and independence.

- Traits: Skeptical, determined, questioning, critical thinker, analytical, stubborn, impatient, blunt, cold, cynical, objective, independent, disciplined, systematic, high standards.
- d) The demographic variables and personality types of the voters variably influence their voting behaviour. ($X^2= 32.480, p<0.01$).**
- Females respondents have low voting behaviour intention compared to males respondents, Gender influences voting behaviour. (coefficient=0.730, $p<0.05$).
 - The Respondents aged 35 years or below have low voting behaviour intention compared to respondents aged 35 years and above. With age the voting behaviour intention increases. (coefficient=0.842, $p<0.05$).
 - There is no Influence of Educational qualifications of the respondents on their voting behaviour intention.
 - There is no Influence of the Home state of the respondents on their voting behaviour intention.
 - The respondents with DI and CS personality types have low voting behaviour intention compared to personality types IS and CD.

Dominance/ influence type (DI) (coefficient=1.022, $p<0.05$).

- People whose DiSC® profile shows a Di style display both the dominance of the D style and the influence of the i style. They are persuasive, bold, and results oriented. They like to move fast and are always looking for new opportunities. People with Di styles are often viewed as dynamic and outspoken.
- Traits: Active, results - oriented, vocal, enthusiastic, assertive, quick, dynamic, inquisitive, persuasive, rebellious, restless, colourful, charming, intimidating, bold, driven, entrepreneurial.

Conscientiousness and Steadiness type (CS) (coefficient=1.087, $p<0.05$).

- People with a DiSC® style of CS value stability and minimizing risk. They display both the C style's conscientiousness and the S style's steadiness. CS - style people tend to be self - controlled, modest, and soft - spoken. They tend to be precise and dependable, and typically prefer working behind the scenes than being in the spotlight.
- Traits: Perfectionist, cautious, reflective, stable, reliable, orderly, even - tempered, fair - minded, precise, well - prepared, careful, patient, conventional, self - controlled.

Influence and Steadiness type (IS)

- People whose DiSC® profile shows an iS style display both the influence of the i style and the steadiness of the S style. They are welcoming, trusting, and easy - going. People with iS styles value friendship and collaboration, and often have a strong need for connection. They are patient and empathetic, always ready to offer their support to others. They tend to have a generally positive attitude and to see the good in others.

- Traits: Warm, friendly, approachable, enthusiastic, cheerful, sociable, encouraging, cooperative, upbeat, conflict - averse.

Conscientiousness and Dominance type

- People whose DiSC® profile shows a CD style display a blend of the C style's conscientiousness and the D style's dominance. They are strong critical thinkers who push through obstacles. They have a fundamental scepticism that can make them world - wary at times. CD types hold high standards for themselves and others. They value competence, control, and independence.
- Traits: Sceptical, determined, questioning, critical thinker, analytical, stubborn, impatient, blunt, cold, cynical, objective, independent, disciplined, systematic, high standards.

The respondents of Andhra Pradesh state have higher voting behaviour Intention compared to respondents from other 7 states namely Tamil Nadu, Telangana, New Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, West Bengal, Karnataka. (coefficient= -0.444, $p < 0.05$).

This study unveils a compelling narrative in the realm of voting behavior. Rigorous analysis showcases that age, gender, educational qualifications and the diverse spectrum of personality types significantly impact how individuals voting behaviour. With the rejection of the null hypothesis, our findings embrace the hypothesis that underscores the profound influence of psycho - social factors on voting behaviour. This discovery reshapes our understanding of the intricate dance between personal attributes and civic engagement. It not only contributes to academic discourse but also holds practical implications for comprehending the dynamics of voter choices. Our study invites further exploration into the multifaceted landscape of psycho - social factors, shedding light on the nuanced influences that shape the essence of voting behavior in democratic processes.

8. Conclusion

This research aims to explore the psycho social factors mainly focused around personality of the voter. It can be assumed that personality of population participating in the electoral process reflects the quality of the political system a study in this area will help in understanding this context in higher standards.

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Glossary

- Attitude: A psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular behaviour with some degree of favour or disfavour.
- Behaviour: An action that is carried out at a specified time and is described in terms of the action itself, its target and the context.
- Behavioural beliefs: The perceived consequences of an action.
- Control beliefs: Beliefs about the likelihood that one possesses the resources and opportunities thought necessary to execute the behaviour.
- Normative beliefs: Perceptions of significant others' preferences about whether one should perform a behaviour.
- Perceived behavioural control: Perceptions about how easy or difficult it is to perform the behaviour.
- Intention: A person's motivation in the senses of his or her conscious plan to exert effort to carry out a behaviour.
- Subjective norm: Perceived social pressure to perform a behaviour.