

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN POLITICAL TOLERANCE: EVIDENCE FROM A TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

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Abstract

According to the toleration theory presented by John Locke (Cholakov, 2015), political tolerance (PT) is the only democratic trait that brings civility, peace, and development to a country. Currently, Pakistan is lacking PT generally and the research area particularly. According to the existing literature, scholars profess that there are variations of political tolerance among different age groups. Therefore, the current study has been designed to find out the level of PT in different generations (i.e., children, parents, and grandparents). The fieldwork for the study is carried out in the Pakhtun Community, i.e. Lower Dir, a northern district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The total number of respondents consisting of both genders, is 1200, has been calculated by Yamane's formula (1973) through a simple random sampling technique. To collect the data, the researchers used an interview schedule. A simple linear regression test has been applied to analyze the collected data. The findings reveal that the generation plays a significant role in influencing PT ($P < 0.001$). Further, all the three generations showed different results on the level of PT. The children showed lower PT than their parents and grandparents respectively. Moreover, the $R^2 = .024$ indicates that the model explains about 2 % of the variance in PT. The higher political tolerance among grandparents is due to long life experiences and the informal socialization process.

Keywords: Generation, Political Tolerance, Traditional Society, *Pakhtunwali*, Regression

1. Introduction, Review of Literature and Theoretical Debate:

All human beings do not have the same characteristics and features. Every individual has unique personal traits and characteristics that are different from others. These individual characteristics may be devotion, love, brotherhood, honesty, or appreciation (Afriadi, 2020). Tolerance is one of those characteristics that leads to a peaceful and stable society (Bourne, 2022; Gibson, 2013). Unfortunately, Pakistan has political instability generally and the research area (*Lower Dir*) particularly. The researchers argue that in this modern world, people who belong to different cultures, nations, ethnicities, religions, and lifestyles work together and live in the same society. They have different people with different minds in their neighborhood. The benefits of this sort of society is; they know how to deal with people who have different opinions and thoughts and resultantly, they show high political tolerance (Cigler & Joslyn, 2002; McCabe, 2010). To build a pluralistic society the Political, cultural, and religious institutes play a significant role. These institutions socialize their members

according to their visions and ideologies which affect the level of political tolerance of the people differently (Gibson, 2013).

On the other side, in homogenous societies, people are getting their socialization in their local traditional setup (Din et al., 2024; Dimitrova et al., 2018). Therefore, it is almost difficult for the local people to bear and accept a contrast and different opinion. According to democratic theory, democratic socialization is very necessary, particularly for people who are living in traditional and homogenous societies (Horton, 2011), where individuals can learn the democratic principles, norms, and values and predominantly the importance of tolerance (Gibson, 2013). A number of research studies have reported that tolerance has many dimensions such as religious, social, cultural, and ethnic, etc. (see e.g., Al Jabouri & Al-Yasiri, 2022; McCabe, 2010; Sullivan et al., 1981). However, in this modern era, political tolerance is the most important one because it provides a base for a stable democracy (Gibson, 2013). In this context, other scholars reveal that high political tolerance among citizens leads to unwavering democracies (Stoeckel & Ceka, 2023; Sullivan et al., 1982). There is a question, why did we conduct this study? These days Pakistan has a high level of political instability and on the basis of practical observations political instability destroys a country's socio-cultural and economic development. There are various factors such as gender, religion, education, socio economic status, self-esteem, democratic norms, political ideology etc. that influence political tolerance (see e.g., McCabe, 2010; Peterson, 2020). However, generation has been considered one the prominent factors that may affect the level of political tolerance. Keeping into view, the researchers intended to measure the level of political tolerance among different generations (i.e., children, parents and grandparents).

Political tolerance is defined as the willingness to extend civil liberties to political out-groups (McCabe, 2010; Peterson, 2020). However, Avery (2002) reveals that political tolerance is the preparedness to lengthen civil liberties and basic rights to those with whom one disagrees. Others defined that political tolerance as the willingness to 'put up with' those things one opposes or rejects (Sullivan et al., 1979). While Gibson (2006) said, political tolerance is permitting one's political enemies to strive openly for political power central to liberal democracy (Peterson, 2020).

On the importance of political tolerance, various researchers reported that flourishing democracies rely on the existence of civil liberties and political tolerance of citizens (Gibson 2013; McCabe, 2010; Zaman, 2018). In simple words, we can say that political tolerance is the most important trait of democracy. On the existence of political tolerance and its proper practicing, every citizen is fully free to express and claim his/her legal rights without any pressure. This is political tolerance that promotes coexistence among individuals and various political groups and their self-actualization. On the other side intolerant attitudes lead toward violence and aggression that could result in conflicts and disputes among the citizens (Brown et al., 2015; Corneo & Jeanne, 2009; Eisenstein, 2008; Zaman, 2018).

In the light of above discussion, it is concluded that political tolerance is the basic trait of a democratic system, where, everyone can live with independent freedom and can raise voice for their legal rights. Political tolerance allows an individual to develop his personality with different thinking as well as surfaces the way for peaceful cohabitation. To measure political tolerance, the Sullivan et al. (1982) scale was utilized that is a valid and reliable tool as reported by McCabe (2010) and Gibson (2013).

In the connection (association) of age to political tolerance, McCabe (2010) elucidated that the original tolerance study for the first time was conducted by Stouffer in 1955, where he said that "Age" is an important factor of political tolerance. Stouffer argued that younger people are considerably more tolerant than older people. He attributed this result to education. He further explained that normally younger people have a higher level of

education than older ones and educated people have more knowledge about the political norms and values. However, McCabe (2010) showed different results for age groups. She professed that in some cases the younger people depicted lower political tolerant attitudes or even intolerant. While Schafer and Shaw (2009) revealed that education plays a very strong role in shaping political tolerance. Educated people know the norms and democratic values, and more importantly, this prediction is very crucial in countries where there are stable democracies (Gibson, 2013; Moroni & Weberman, 2016).

A careful study of the literature reveals that variations in political tolerance have not been thoroughly investigated therefore a clear understanding of age diversity and its effect on political tolerance is very indispensable for this research study. As McCabe (2010) gave a gap for the upcoming researchers. She reported different results for different age groups on the level of political tolerance. Therefore, it is an opportunity to conduct research and fill that gap while we have categorized the sample population into three generations (i.e., children, parents, and grandparents) within the same family.

According to the Oxford Language Dictionary (2022), a generation is a group of people who are about the same age. Generation denotes a class of people who are mostly born in the same time cycle. It refers to an average period, generally considered to be the age between 20 to 30 years, in the given period the children are born, grow up, become adults, get married, and then start with the next generation while producing their offspring and so on. Here, in this study, the researchers have divided the family into three categories i.e., children, parents, and grandparents. They are titled; the 1st generation (children), 2nd (parents), and 3rd generation (grandparents).

All three generations i.e. children, parents, and grandparents, may reveal different results on the level of political tolerance. The different results may be due to their historical, political and cultural set-up (see e.g., Gibson, 2006; Miranda et al., 2018; Neuner & Ramirez, 2023).

2. Research Methodology:

A quantitative research design, considered appropriate, is utilized for the current study. The methodology consists of sub-headings i.e., universe of the study, sampling procedure, collection, and analysis of data.

The study is conducted in Lower Dir, a district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. District Lower Dir is located in the North-Western part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The major valleys of Lower Dir include *Timergara*, *Jandool*, *Maidan*, *Samarbagh*, and *Asbanr*. Lower Dir is the lower part of the old District Dir (Development Profile Lower Dir, 2015; Ullah et al., 2013). The area is dominantly inhabited by the *Pakhtun* ethnic group majority are *Yousafzi*. The *Pakhtun* has its way of life under a permanent social structure that is called, "*Pakhtunwali*" (Afridi et al., 2016; Orakzai, 2011). This *Pakhtunwali* is integral to *Pakhtun* identity (Ali et al., 2021; Kakar, 2004). *Paktunwali* is the code of conduct encompassing every aspect of their life (Afridi et al., 2016; Johnson & Mason, 2008). Based on historical records, the people of the research area have faced numerous socio-political, religious and cultural conflicts, and undergone various experiences (Ullah et al., 2013; Ali et al., 2021). Keeping into view the above discussion, the older people will have more experiences than their younger generations. They know how to deal in challenging and difficult situations. The sort of long life experiences, lead them toward a tolerant and accepting attitude.

The study population comprises of the residents of the three selected tehsils i.e., Tehsil Lal *Qila*, *Timergara*, and *Tehsil Adenzai*. The total households of in these tehsils are 113,858 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Population below the age of 18 is not part of the current study. The sample size for each tehsil is statistically calculated through Yamane's formula (1973), which came in the range of 394 to 399. For convenience, the researchers selected 400

respondents from each tehsil. The total sample size for all the three tehsils is 1200 respondents.

Yamane's statistical formula for sample size:

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

Where, n = corrected sample size N = Population size

e = Margin of error (MoE), $e = 0.05$ based on the research condition

A well-thought-out interview schedule, comprised of closed-ended questions, developed by Sullivan et al. (1982) on political tolerance, is used for data collection. The reliability of the questionnaire is checked and the alpha value is recorded as more than .7, which is acceptable in social sciences research (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992). Educated respondents filled out the questionnaire by themselves while illiterate were interviewed.

Data is analyzed through the application of a simple linear regression test to find out if there is a relationship between the independent variable (explanatory) i.e., generation, and dependent variable (response) i.e., political tolerance (Hanif et al., 2014).

3. Results and Discussion:

Hypothesis

H_1 = There is a significant impact of generation on political tolerance.

Generation (children, parents and grandparents) significantly predicts political tolerance (PT), $F(2, 1197) = 14.995$, $P < 0.001$, which indicates that generation plays a significant role in influencing PT. Further, all the three generations showed different results on the level of PT. According to the following table the children show low PT ($\beta = -1.840$, $P < 0.001$) comparatively than their parents ($\beta = -1.585$, $P < 0.001$). The results clearly reveal that grandparents depict high PT than younger generations (parents and children) respectively. Moreover, the $R^2 = .024$ indicates that model explains about 2 % of the variance in PT. The following table depicts summary of the findings where constant is a reference category for grandparents.

Table 1 Relationship of Generation and Political Tolerance

Hypothesis	Regression Weights	B	R^2	F	T	P-value	Hypothesis Supported
H_1	Constant (Ref Cat)	20.310	.024	14.995	78.892	0.000	Yes
	Parents→PT	-1.585			-4.353	0.000	
	Children→PT	-1.840			-5.054	0.000	

Note: $N=1200$, *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .01$, Ref Cat: Reference Category (grandparents), PT: Political Tolerance

The empirical findings of the study reveal that generation has a positive and significant result on political tolerance. Further, the researcher categorized the sample data into three generations i.e., children (1st generation), parents (2nd generation), and grandparents (3rd generation). With the application of regression test, the 3rd generation (grandparents) showed a higher result on the level of political tolerance than the 2nd and 1st generations (parents and children) respectively. These different results among different generations may be due to various factors such as formal and traditional education, living environment, political information (see e.g., Gibson, 2013; McCabe, 2010; Nunn et al., 1978; Schafer and Shaw 2009; Stouffer, 1955). The locality has a traditional code of life that is called *Pakhtunwali*, which guides the local people towards patience and tolerance as reported by Naz (2011).

They have a deep-rooted system that has been practiced under the umbrella of *Pakhtunwali*. By following the code of *Pakhtunwali* the local people bear and accept one another opinions even if they are belonging to different political parties and political affiliations. The more a person has been socialized the more he/she will learn the code of conduct of *Pakhtunwali*. Therefore, the higher political tolerance among older people might be due to long life experiences and practices they have learned in their traditional setup.

A very interesting thing in this study is; the empirical findings have challenged the existing literature, where the scholars revealed that young people show higher political tolerance than the older ones (see e.g., Din et al., 2024; Gibson, 2013; McCabe, 2010). They attribute their results for high political tolerance among younger people with other factors i.e., education, political information and civic knowledge. Due to higher education, they have learned, when and why to tolerate the people with contrast opinions? They reported that educated people know that in a democratic country every citizen has an equal right to express his/her thoughts without any restrictions. However, most of the previous research studies have been conducted in advanced and heterogeneous societies, while this study has been carried out in traditional and homogenous society. Based on the research findings of this study, it is suggested that other studies may explore the level of political tolerance in simple and homogenous societies. In case of our research findings the hypothesis is approved i.e., *H1 = There is a significant impact of "generation" on "political tolerance"*.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations:

The findings of this study concluded that older generation has a higher political tolerance than the younger generations. This higher political tolerance among older people could be due to long life experiences and practices they have learned and adopted in their local community. It is professed that (traditional) cultures might have norms and values that have been internalized by the people through their informal socialization process. In this context, the younger generations (children and parents) revealed lower political tolerance than their older generation (grandparents). In light of the study findings, it is recommended that the government should provide opportunities for learning the democratic norms, particularly in educational institutions where the younger generations could be able to learn the traits of democracy, democratic rights and the importance of political tolerance. In addition, the community people and particularly elders should provide the type of learning environments such as *Hujra* (large setting area/community house), *Betak* (generally refers to a small room where guests and community people gathered), *Daag/Dagaray* (an open area where Pashtuns get together for general gossip and also solve their disputes and conflicts through *Jarga*). These are actually the places of Pashtuns' cultural identity where the older generations transfer their cultural traits (i.e., *Ororwali* (brotherhood), *Gham Khadi* (sorrow and happiness), *Bardasht* (tolerance), *Sabar* (patience) etc. to their younger generations through the informal socialization process.

➤ Author Contributions:

Conceptualization and methodology:	Sharif Ud Din
Supervision and research design:	Syed Rashid Ali
Literature review:	Sharif Ud Din and Habibur Rahman
Validation of the research instruments:	Syed Rashid Ali and Yaseen Sahar
Data collection:	Sharif Ud Din and Yaseen Sahar
Statistical analysis:	Sharif Ud Din
Coordination of the field work:	Habibur Rahman
Editing and correction:	Syed Rashid Ali
Final draft writing:	Sharif Ud Din

➤ **Disclosure:**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest in this research study

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