



GALLUP PAKISTAN HISTORY PROJECT'S WEEKEND READ

*Analysing Obedience, religious faith
and good manners*

Some trends from Gallup Pakistan History Project
Polls data by Xenia Rasul, non-resident researcher
at Gallup Pakistan



2017
2016
2015
2014
2013
2012
2011
2010
2009
2008
2007
2006
2005
2004
2003
2002
2001
2000
1999
1998
1997
1996
1995
1994

Synopsis:

In Pakistan, a proclivity towards obedience is cultivated through early socialisation, the education system, and religio-political forces that disseminate knowledge and shape public perception. Critical thinking is perceived as a deviation from the norm and in conflict with the values considered necessary and acceptable by society at large. This nurtures a society that is opposed to change and vigorous progress, and susceptible to stagnation.

© 2020 Gallup Pakistan – all rights reserved. The contents of this report constitute the sole and exclusive property of Gallup Pakistan. Gallup Pakistan retains all right, title and interest, including without limitation copyright, in or to any Gallup Pakistan trademarks, technologies, methodologies, products, analyses, software and know-how included or arising out of this report or used in connection with the preparation of this report. No license under any copyright is hereby granted or implied. The contents of this report are of a commercially sensitive and confidential nature and intended solely for the review and consideration of the person or entity to which it is addressed.

According to a survey conducted by Gallup between 2017-2019, 49% Pakistanis believed obedience to be an important quality for children to possess in comparison to 32% believing the same between 1994-1998. On the other hand, the global average has seen a decline from 36% in 1994-1998 down to 27% between 2017-2019. When this data is broken down according to social class, there isn't a stark difference between the lower class, and the lower and upper middle class; a significant variation can be seen between the upper class and the working class, with the former valuing obedience at 36%, and the latter at 55%.

In another opinion poll conducted by World Values Survey in collaboration with Gallup, 'good manners' and 'religious faith' were considered as the most vital quality for children to learn at home, 61% and 59% respectively, with 'obedience' following both at 49%. Here, it is interesting to note that imagination and independence were ranked lowest.

This data can be analysed from several perspectives.

Early Socialisation: The Authority Figure and the Moral Compass

Role of Family in Nurturing Obedience

Collectivist culture is predominantly found across different groups in Pakistan. It is carried forward by close knit social frameworks in which individuals expect community support and companionship from relatives, clan, or other in group members in exchange for uncritical devotion.

Since the family unit in Pakistan often relies on group cohesiveness and collectivism for its survival, individuals are willing to give up their independence, individuality, and subordinate their personal goals for what is considered the greater good. Groupthink replaces critical thinking, whereby the ideology of a group is considered necessary for harmony and survival, but in effect results in irrational decision making on the basis of group ideology. Because the family unit is the primary socialiser, the idea that loyalty and obedience is necessary for survival is ingrained in how children perceive their relations with their peers, society, and eventually the state. As we can see in Figure 1, family is held in high regard by children and adults both. Meaning, that the role of the institution in an individual's life is central in terms of self-identification and self-assurance. In exchange, individuals offer obedience and conformity to set structures.

Figure 1:

IMPORTANT IN LIFE : FAMILY

	AGE				
	TOTAL	Up to 29	30-49	50 and more	No answer
Very Important	92.6	89.5	94.1	93.4	100.0
Rather Important	6.0	8.3	4.7	6.1	-
Not Very Important	0.9	1.3	0.8	0.4	-
Not Important at all	0.5	0.6	0.4	-	-
Don't Know	0.1	0.2	-	-	-
No Answer	0.1	0.2	-	-	-
(N)	1,995	628	1,114	244	9

Role of Schools in Developing Conformity

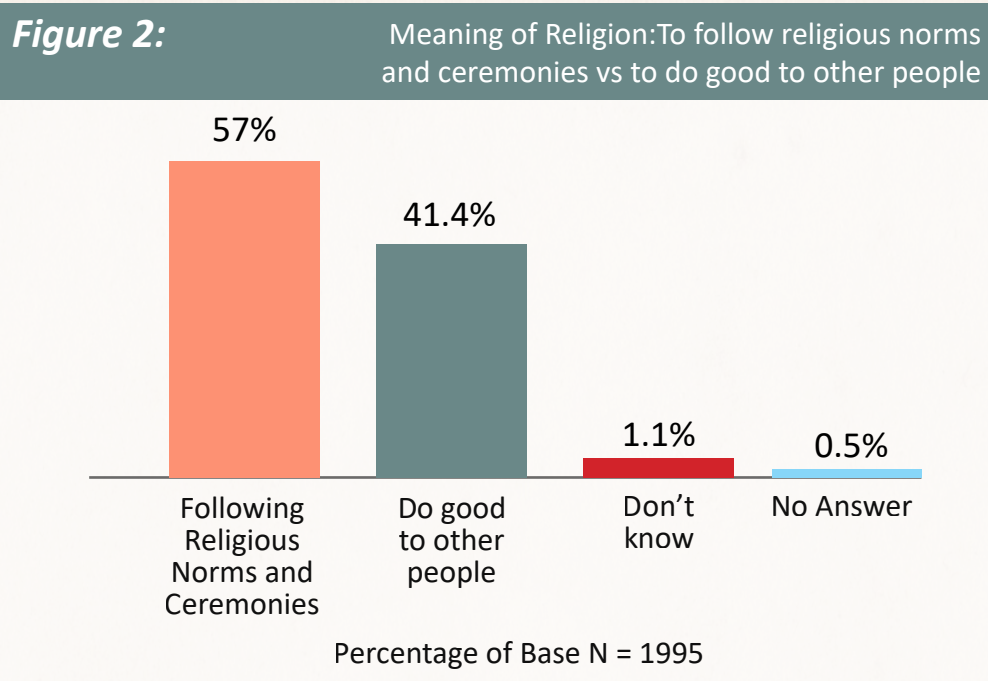
The idea that morality is linked to obedience and submission to authority is further strengthened once children come in contact with the secondary agents of socialisation, i.e. the school. Paulo Freire talks about education as a practice of domination whereby students are treated as passive objects or receivers of history through which the oppressor or coloniser imparts his own version of knowledge and reality. He further emphasises the significance of raising the consciousness of the oppressed by transforming education to a practice of freedom as opposed to domination, whereby the oppressed study their own culture along with that of dominant groups in society, and be able to critique both. He believes that it is only through a practice of critical engagement that they can set themselves free.

In Pakistan we see an espousal of a similar model of domination. The version of history that children study is grossly misrepresented; notions of masculinity/femininity and morality often adopt religious undertones, and religious dogma is overrepresented in the curriculum especially in public schools. Through these notions children are taught a single way of being, a particular understanding of what it means to be a good citizen or patriot. Obedience and conformity to the strict order qualifies one as a good citizen while criticising and questioning it is perceived as a lack of loyalty. The recent announcement of the federal government to introduce a single national curriculum demonstrates how obedience to a strict order is condoned by the state itself. It sustains the idea that there is only a single 'nation', and therefore, a single way of being and identifying oneself in Pakistan. Difference, dynamism and variance is erased on the pretext of introducing uniformity to the education system, but in effect it papers over the variety of experiences, opinions and reflections of communities that don't conform to, and solely identify with, the state's linear understanding of identity.

On the other hand, the hidden curriculum which informally transmits values, norms and beliefs is also opposed to critical thinking and individuality. Social expectations of behaviour, morals, gender, and language are all examples of ideas included in the hidden curriculum. Since the school is a manifestation of what society looks like, the hidden curriculum and the figures of authority that teach it derive their norms and beliefs primarily from culture and religion. As a result, their perception of obedience and authority is translated into their actions towards their students, who subsequently respond to their authority with conformity and uncritical loyalty. Since schools impose control and authority on learners instead of critical thinking, they contribute to the development of their civic character as one with an inclination towards obedience.

Role of Religion in Cementing Groupthink

The role of religion in Pakistan's context has also been an impediment to critical thinking. Characteristic of populist majoritarianism, religious clerics and torchbearers have continued to suppress open dialogue and discussion regarding religion, and have simultaneously laid claim on politics and society. The space given to bigotry on national television as well as the political domain has only exacerbated the situation. Clerics have incited hatred against other groups on television, labelled them as traitors and have also encouraged violence against them. This has contributed to a culture of fear and obedience without question, and an end to any discussion that could lead to an individual's personal relationship with religion. On the contrary, religious values have also been characterised under groupthink and group consciousness. It is no coincidence that the preference for 'religious faith' in children is followed by 'obedience', and an adherence to prescriptive aspects of religion as opposed to spiritual questions that necessitate discussions and critical thinking. Figure 2 illustrates how people define religion, and 57% people believe that it entails following religious norms as opposed to doing good to people.



Legitimate Authority and Civic Burden

The state plays a great part in knowledge dissemination and in deciding what kind of information can and cannot be shared. Meaning, that it has power over how reality and the truth is perceived. The weaker the democratic structures and the more authoritarian the state is, the greater the chance of the state's involvement in narrative formation. The state uses the curriculum, media machinery, and other forms of control to manufacture support for and obedience towards the system. People begin equating democracy with obeying rules as opposed to a participatory process where inputs by citizens enrich the system. This is illustrated through data provided by the World Systems Survey (2019-2020) in Figure 3 below, revealing that 40.6% people believe that obedience is central to democracy.

We see that regimes in Pakistan have historically manipulated the masses through injections of ideology in order to retain the political system, and through legislative measures barring resistance and forcing obedience. Banning student unions, harassing academics and journalists, targeting dissidents, weaponising the law against protestors, are all examples of how the state has promoted a preference for obedience and a culture of silence. It's noteworthy that obedience in Pakistan is not necessarily to a just system but to authority regardless of whether it is fair or not. Political sterilisation of citizens means that obedience comes naturally to them especially when faced with a direct threat to their lives. Some may develop the agency to revolt against the dominant mindset but are likely to be silenced by the majority.

In such a socio-economic and political climate, it is important to understand that the working class suffers the most at the hands of the state's inadequacy and oppression. The working class's preference for obedience at 55% is not representative of their political consciousness, rather, it is a result of a culture of obedience created by the state and its machinery. Simultaneously, the disenchantment of the working class towards the idea of a change in the system, lack of resources in order to revolt (including time), and the fear of having the most to lose, pushes them into conformity despite the glaring failure of the system.

On the other hand, it is likely that the upper class has little preference for obedience to the set order, measured at 39%, because it has the resources, including social and political capital, to create its own subculture within a larger culture where it doesn't have to obey the larger values set by the system. Individuals belonging to the upper class possess the resources to break off from community and opt for individuality. They also do not have to express loyalty to figures of authority to gain their favour as they possess enough socio-economic power themselves.

Figure 3:
Democracy: People
obey their rulers

Not an essential characteristic of democracy	2.4
2	1.1
3	1.9
4	2.8
5	11.0
6	7.9
7	10.0
8	12.0
9	8.4
An essential characteristic of Democracy	40.6
Don't Know	1.4
No Answer	0.7
(N)	1,995
Mean	7.87
Std Dev.	2.38

Conclusion

According to the poll, 'good manners', 'religious faith', and 'obedience', were all ranked as the most important qualities for a child to possess. Interestingly, as discussed, morality and 'goodness', religious faith, and conformity are all interlinked through the way they interact with each other. In countries like Pakistan where religion is a public matter and entangled with societal values, good manners are often correlated with one's religiosity. Similarly, one's obedience towards authority figures, including institutions and the status quo, is seen as testament to one's good manners in collectivist cultures. Therefore, conformity equates to a morally upright citizen.

In Pakistan, religion and politics interact in a simple way; Pakistan was formed on the pretext of a Muslim identity. While this idea should have evolved with time as a multitude of identities emerged, the religion card was used by clerics and politicians who had access to corridors of power to solidify a 'Pakistani identity' that suited their interests. While a discussion on national identity making and its exclusive nature is for another time, it is vital to understand that political forces in Pakistan have used arguments pertaining to religiosity, morality, corruption and virtue to silence those who don't conform to the dominant narrative. These arguments are seeped in religious imagery and language, therefore, are meant to shame and ostracise those who opt for critical thinking as opposed to unquestioned loyalty.

On the other hand, both political and religious forces have a significant say in the kind of curriculum taught in schools. The patriarchal education system and the government-endorsed curriculum rides on a notion of an Islamic identity and the nation where one is not separated from another. Meaning, one must conform to an identity created as a consequence of the unholy alliance between religious institutions and the state machinery. Moreover, both forces also dominate print and online media and the information it churns out. Added to these socialising agents is the authoritarian nature of the state whereby it doesn't shy away from using its resources to silence dissidents. In such an atmosphere, independent thinking comes with many risks. Obedience, then, is a natural consequence of the social conditions created for citizens to survive.

Moreover, the construct of childhood in society sees children's capacity and role in terms of education as that of passive recipients rather than active participants. Critical engagement with the adult world is seen as culturally inappropriate and children are discouraged from behaviours that might pose a challenge or curtail the authority of elders or male figures. Behaviour is regulated and obedience expected, especially in the case of girls and women with their mobility being affected, in accordance with the norms set by familial and community structures.

In this way, religion, good manners and obedience interact on a daily basis in both public and private spheres through institutions of family, education, religion, and state, to produce a preference for a certain kind of person; a person with a proclivity for obedience and a penchant for conformity.

Gallup Pakistan is not related to Gallup Inc. headquartered in Washington D.C. USA. We require that our surveys be credited fully as Gallup Pakistan (not Gallup or Gallup Poll). We disclaim any responsibility for surveys pertaining to Pakistani public opinion except those carried out by Gallup Pakistan, the Pakistani affiliate of Gallup International Association.



Contact Details:

Islamabad : +92 51 2655630

Email: isb@gallup.com.pk

www.gallup-international.com



2017
2016
2015
2014
2013
2012
2011
2010
2009
2008
2007
2006
2005
2004
2003
2002
2001
2000
1999
1998
1997
1996
1995
1994