

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Thlologelo Promise Rampa, hereby declare that this research report is my own original, unaided work and I have fully acknowledged the sources used. This research report has not been submitted previously for any degree or examination.

Promise Thlologelo Rampa

Date

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my loving family, my husband Lentswe, and my beautiful daughters Marang and Tlholo. What a year it has been. I am just grateful to have you in my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank the following people who have made this research project to be what it is:

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To my daughters. Having you was a constant reminder to why I am doing this.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of democracy in South Africa is being brought into question because there is a very high percentage of youth who decide not to exercise their right to vote by participating in national and municipal elections. It is important that youth are engaged in the voting process because they will be responsible for determining whether countries achieve their goals, such as sustained economic growth and poverty reduction, and to address the long-standing socio-political divisions. The youth in the Siyabuswa community of Mpumalanga, also appeared to have a negative attitude toward voting. This was evidenced in social media and the researcher's personal observations. This research study explored the perspectives of youth in the Siyabuswa community regarding why youth are deciding not to cast their votes in elections. The study adopted a constructivist research design and a phenomenological research method. The Social Cognitive Theory was used as theoretical frameworks to guide and strengthen the study. The population selected for the study consisted of youth of Siyabuswa in the Former KwaNdebele Homeland of Mpumalanga Province. Fifteen youth participants were purposively selected; data was gathered by conducting face-to-face interviews with participants, using a semi-structured interview schedule as research tool to guide discussion. The data gathered was analysed using the thematic analysis process. The main findings of the study indicated that youth become aware of elections taking place as they are well advertised. However, the youth of Siyabuswa purposively decide not to vote because they are frustrated and despondent with the quality of services being rendered on a municipal and national level and evidence of corrupt political leaders. They insisted that government deliver on their promises address socio-economic issues, such as poverty and unemployment, otherwise they would not have incentive to vote. It was recommended that one possible way of capturing youth voters, is that government implement online systems for youth to register and vote, rather than going to poll stations to cast their votes. Furthermore, government and municipalities of Siyabuswa must prioritise taking cognizance of the concerns being voiced by youth so that they can consider their votes as making meaningful contribution.

Keywords: Youth, elections, vote/voting, perspective

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