

https://dspace.org/

Why youth make a decision not to vote in elections: perspectives of youth in the Siyabuswa community of Mpumalanga

Rampa, Thlologelo Promise

2017

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/26158

Rampa, Thlologelo Promise (2017) Why youth make a decision not to vote in elections: perspectives of youth in the Siyabuswa community of Mpumalanga, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, <http://hdl.handle.net/10539/26158>

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

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**

…… **…….**

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:

My supervisor, Priscilla Gerrand for her support, guidance and encouragement in hard times.

To all those who participated in the study. This research would have not been what it is if it was not for their willingness to participate.

Much appreciation to my family for their undying love and support. For babysitting when I needed help to focus on my studies. You have played a major role in the success of my studies and I will be forever grateful.

To my husband. Thank you for being my number one supporter; my hope when I had given up, and my strength when I had run out. Thank you for the nights you spent trying to put our newborn baby to sleep while I typed my work. Thank you for cooking supper and feeding Marang when I could not. You are truly heaven sent papa. #BORONTO

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration……i

Dedication……..ii

Acknowledgment……...…iii

Abstract……..iv

Table of contents…….. …….v

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction……1

1.2 Background of the study……1

1.3 Statement of the problem and rationale for the study…….……...2

1.4 Research question……..4

1.5 Aims and objectives……...4

1.6 Theoretical Framework: Social Cognitive Theory…….5

1.7 Brief overview of the methodology……...6

1.8 Definition of key concepts…….7

1.8.1 Youth……..7

1.8.2 Elections……..7

1.8.3 Vote/voting…….…….7

1.8.4 Perspectives…….……8

1.9 Organization of the report……..8

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction……..……..……9

2.2 History of Siyabuswa in KwaNdebele and its Political Background……..…9

2.3 Challenges faced by youth of Siyabuswa in the Former KwaNdebele homeland in Mpumalanga ……..……10

2.4 National and Municipal Elections……..…..……12

2.5 The mobilisation of voters …….……..14

2.6 Youth apathy toward voting.……...……..15

2.6.1 Youth apathy towards voting on a globally scale ….……15

2.6.2 Youth apathy towards elections in South Africa.……..….17

2.7 Contributing factors to youth apathy towards voting.…….……18

2.7.1 Frustration of their current socio-economic status ….…….……19

2.7.2 Crime and Corruption……..…….…….20

2.7.3 Dissatisfaction in service delivery ……..……..….21

2.7.4 No accountability taken by party members……22

2.7.5 Born frees not born free? ……..……22

2.8 Chapter summary……..……24

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction……...……25

3.2 Research approach …….……..25

3.3 Population and sample……..……26

3.3.1 Population……..……26

3.3.2 Sampling Procedure……..……27

3.4 Research instrument……...……...27

3.5 Pilot-testing of the research instrument……28

3.6 Data collection……..……28

3.7 Data analysis……..……...29

3.8 Ethical considerations……...……31

3.8.1 Voluntary participation and informed consent…….……31

3.8.2 Anonymity and Confidentiality…….32

3.8.3 Non-maleficence……..…….32

3.9 Trustworthiness……33

3.10 Limitations of the study…….…….……34

3.11 Chapter Summary …….…….34

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction …….….……35

4.2 Demographic profile of participants……..……...35

4.3 Themes that emerged from the study……....37

4.3.1 Knowledge of registration and voting process……..38

4.3.1.1 Maximal……..38

4.3.1.2 Minimal……..39

4.3.2 Influence to vote due to the advertising of election……..40

4.3.2.1 Marketing strategies ineffective……...40

4.3.2.2 Marketing strategies effective……44

4.3.3 Voting history of participants……44

4.3.3.1 Never registered, never voted……45

4.3.3.2 Voting not Consistant……46

4.3.4 The main reasons behind their decision not to vote……..46

4.3.4.1 Corruption……47

4.3.4.2 Not satisfied with party management and the party system as a whole……..48

4.3.4.3 Unnecessary spending by government……49

4.3.4.4 Empty Promises……51

4.3.4.5 Not satisfied with service delivery……52

4.3.4.6 Political parties' conflict displayed on media platforms……54

4.3.4.7 Current election system found not convenient for youth……55

4.3.4.8 Want youth leadership……56

4.3.4.9 Elections not personally beneficial……57

4.3.4.10 Lost confidence in the current president of the country……59

4.3.4.11 Government is not listening to the voices of youth ……60

4.3.5 Voting behaviour of participants' friends……...60

4.3.5.1 Non-voter friends……61

4.3.5.2 Most voter friends……62

4.3.5.3 A mixture of voter and non-voter friends……62

4.3.6 Perspective on what would encourage youth to vote……..62

4.3.6.1 Personal growth and Knowledge……63

4.3.6.2 Delivery of promises by the government……64

4.3.6.3 Change from a party system to voting for an individual……64

4.3.6.4 Implementation of an online system for elections……65

4.3.6.5 Youth Leadership within parties……66

4.3.6.6 Addressing of greed and power issues in political parties……67

4.3.6.7 Change in campaign strategies……..68

4.6 Chapter summary…….68

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction……..70

5.2 Summary of findings……70

5.2.1 To investigate how informed the youth in the Siyabuswa community are on the registration and voting process……..70

5.2.2 Explore the viewpoints on youth in the Siyabuswa community regarding what are the main reasons that demotivate youth from being active participants in local/municipal and national elections…….70

5.2.2.1 Participant voting history……70

5.2.2.2 Effectiveness of election campaign marketing strategies……..70

5.2.2.3 Main reasons not to vote……..71

5.2.3 To explore what youth think can be done in the Siyabuswa community to encourage youth to participate in elections…….……72

5.3 Recommendations…….……72

5.4 Conclusion…….72

REFERENCE ……...74

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Participant information sheet…….83

Appendix B: Consent form: For interview and audio recording ……....84

Appendix C: Semi-structured interview schedule ……..85

Appendix D: Ethics clearance certificate…….86

Appendix E: Faculty approval letter……..87

TABLES

Table 4.1: Profile of participants……36

Table 4.2: Table of themes that emerged from the study……..37