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**A QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF LEVEL OF
EDUCATION ON VOTING: A STUDY OF A SELECT GROUP OF
UNIVERSITY GRADUATES IN HARARE.**

**A Dissertation Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of a Master
of Science degree in Sociology and Social Anthropology.**

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Dedications

This dissertation is dedicated to my sister (PlaxcedesMagwegwe) and uncle (F.Makwanya) who encouraged me to enrol for the Masters programme. Also important to mention is my brother from another mother, Dylan Mpame who helped financially, without his consistent support I would not have completed the programme.

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of education on voting. The study aims to test relevance of education-voting link and better understand the impact of education on voting behaviour. Qualitative methodology was adopted in the study and semi structured interviews were used to investigate the aim of the study. The researcher interviewed fourteen male and female university graduates. These participants were recruited through judgemental and snow-balling sampling techniques. The interactionist theory was used as the theoretical frame-work in this study. Its major assumption is that individuals are active beings whose action is based on how they define situations. Thus human action is seen as meaningful and purposeful driven by the subjective interpretations of circumstances by the actors. These assumptions were seen as very important in studying and understanding the research problem. Analysis of the responses confirms that education-voting link is less relevant among university graduates studied. Mores so, level of education impact on voting is not always positive and is dependant of various interacting factors. This contradicts with the widely held view that education always has a positive impact on voting. Therefore, emphasised in the study is that education does not influence voter turnout on its own it interact with other set of factors to either positively or negatively influence voting behaviour. The study concludes that the impact of education on voting is relative to context, time, perceptions and status of the educated in relation to age, gender, income, marriage and affiliation to trade union.

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled, Impact of education on voting: A study of how education can discourage voting among people with university education. A case study of Glen-Norah “A” as a partial fulfilment of Master of Science degree in Sociology and Social Anthropology and complies with the University of Zimbabwe regulations and meet the accepted standards of originality and quality.

Signature.....Date.....

Supervisor

Signature.....Date.....

CHAPTER 1

1.0. Introduction

The impact of education on voting is a contested terrain, conflicting and divergent evidence has been provided by various researchers. On one hand, education is seen as having a positive impact on voting. Lewis-Beck et al (2008) pointed out that high level of formal education makes one have interest in politics, elections and greater commitment to one's role as a good citizen. Education equips one with the knowledge and skills resulting in political interest and efficacy, factors that all in turn trigger participation (Persson, 2013). Studies in the US mainly and some parts of Africa corroborate this notion.

However, studies in Europe and some parts of Africa (Zimbabwe, Zambia and Egypt) shows that education has little or no impact on voting. For instance, a recent quantitative research by Croke et al. (2014) in Zimbabwe provides conflicting evidence which contradict the widely held view. The study concluded education discourages rather than encourage electoral participation. The study concluded that the educated disengage from voting in authoritarian regimes.

Building on this conflicting literature, the quest of this study is to test the impact of education from a different dimension than the previous study. The current study targets University graduates in Harare. Graduates were mainly chosen because they possess high level of education which likely enlightens them about importance of voting. Male and females between the ages of 21-45 were both included in the study. The scope of the study is to understand the perceptions and attitudes of university graduates towards elections as well as their electoral participation status. The central aim is to test relevance of education-voting link and better understanding of the impact of education on voting. Thus the research has theoretical rather than practical importance.

The findings of this study are based on data obtained through qualitative research methods and the discussions in this study are based on fourteen participants chosen using snowballing and purposive sampling. Though the sample of the study is too small to generalise the findings, however, the results make significant contribution in understanding the impact of education on

voting. Hammersley (1992) also argues that generalization is not always the purpose of social science research.

1.1. Definition of Key Concepts

Voting

Voting is a key element of political participation in which individuals or citizens of a country influence the selection of governmental personnel (Putnam, 1993). Bachner (2011) defined voting as a method by which the electorate appoints its representatives in its government. Voting involves citizens (electorate) choosing or selecting a candidate or political party over another. Voting in many countries or democracies is done via a secret ballot in order to prevent voters from being intimidated as well as to protect their political privacy (Birch, 2010).

1.2. BACKGROUND

A plethora of studies and theories in the field voting behaviour largely concur that education is the major factor that influence participation in elections compared to other factors. In other words, the educated population is seen as participating more in election compared to the less educated. A number of researchers have advanced different concurring views supporting education as a key factor in determining whether one is likely to vote or not. In support of the relationship between education and voting La Due Lake and Huckfeldt (1998) argue that the positive relationship between education and political participation is “one of the most reliable results in empirical social science.” Hillygus (2005, 25) states that the idea that education is a primary driver of increased political participation is “largely uncontested,” while Putnam (1995, 68) posits that education “is the best individual level predictor of participation.” Wolfinger and Rosenstone studies from the 1970’s have shown the “transcendent power of education” (1980, 102). Verba et al (1978) noted that, while several attitudinal and demographic variables influenced the likelihood of voting, the most influential was education. This view has been corroborated by studies in different parts of the world.

In the United States, education is strongly associated with electoral participation. As numerous scholars point out, education endows individuals with the skills they need to grapple with the

logistical demands of voting. Higher levels of education are also associated with higher levels of interest in politics. In addition, the highly educated are likely to come from families with educated and politically aware parents (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980). Impact of education on voter turnout in America has been conceptualised differently by numerous scholars. In an analysis of National Educational Longitudinal Studies of 1988 and 2002, Bachner (2011) finds that a year of American government coursework in high school cultivated voting behaviour for a decade after graduation, with the biggest effects (7-11 percentage points) found on students whose parents are not politically active.

Lochner and Moretti (2004) noted that a number of low educated individuals cannot vote in the U.S because of the complexity of the U.S electoral system which makes it difficult for less educated people to participate, while easier for those with high levels of education. Moretti and Oreopoulos (2004) thus concluded that education allows Americans go through the barriers of registration. For example, the 2008 elections in America showed the impact of education on voting behaviour. According to Solis (2013), 40.2% of the voters were university graduates followed by 25.4% were high school graduate; 18% were primary school graduate; 8.5% the illiterate were only 5.1%.

Studies in European countries have shown that education has minimal influence on electoral participation. Norris (2002) has shown that Denmark is one of the few countries in Europe where education had a greater impact on voter turnout just like in the US. However, in Europe the impact of education on voting is weak. Borgonovi et al (2010) European social survey which made use of compulsory schooling laws within each country as instruments found that education does have an effect on political informational acquisition, yet no effect on voter turnout. Studies in other European countries seemed to substantiate this view. A comparison of U.S and U.K by Milligan et al (2004) showed that graduating from high school increases the probability of voting by 20 to 30 percentage points in the U.S, while no significant effect of age left school is found in the U.K. Studies in Sweden also showed that education had no effect on political participation (Green-Pedersen and Odmalm 2008). Studies by Di Pietro and Delprato 2009; Milligan et al. 2004; Pelkonen 2012; Siedler 2010; Touya 2006 in the Western Europe have also authenticated the weak relationship between education and voter turnout.

This difference has been explained by various researchers as being rooted in the differences in the electoral registration process being less burdensome in the U.K and that also voter are given assistance (Solis, 2013). This differs from the U.S where registration is voluntary and citizen-initiated; the impact of education on voter participation is larger (Solis, 2013). Moreover, unlike in America where there is lack of a significant socialist party to mobilize labour, political mobilization in Western Europe has been organized around clearly defined socio structural cleavages such as class and religion (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), thus lessening the impact of education on voter turnout. Also, in Scandinavian countries, political mobilization is largely class based thus downplaying the influence of education on voter turnout. Evidence in Europe has shown that the impact of education on electoral participation has been highly exaggerated. More so, this also shows that the impact of education on voter turnout should not be generalised but should be understood based on specific contexts and its' unique political and social dynamics.

Just like in Europe, the influence of education on electoral participation is conflicting in Africa. Few studies in Africa have shown a positive relationship between education and voting. One such example is in Nigeria, Larreguy and Marshall (2014) noted that Nigeria's 1976 Universal Primary Education reform increased educational attainment as well as more political participation in the form of voting, contacting local officials, attending community meetings, and devoting attention to and gaining knowledge about political events.

However, a bulk of studies has shown that education does not have a huge impact in most African countries. For example, Bratton (1999) observes that in Zambia, education has no impact on overall voter turnout. Blaydes (2006) finds a negative relationship between voting and education in Egypt, and argues that this relationship holds since the poor are more prone to vote-buying. This is consistent with other works that found that vote-buying is more prevalent among the poor and less educated (Brusco et al. 2004; Finan and Shechter 2010; Stokes 2005). Another study in Kenya observed that formal education had less influence on voter turnout; the findings demonstrate that Kenyans who have formal education are not necessarily better prepared for adult political responsibilities than those who do not have formal education (Kamau, 2016). In Kenya, just like in most African countries, factors such as ethnicity, poor political campaigns, proximity to ballot

boxes largely influence voting than education. Education in Africa has largely been designed by colonialist and post independence government inherited colonial education which had little emphasis on political socialisation. This partly explains why education plays second fiddle to other forms of political mobilisation in Africa which include ethnicity.

Studies that interrogate the relationship between education and voting in Zimbabwe are very few and were conducted by Croke *et al* in (2014) and Afro-barometer in 2010 using quantitative methods. Both studies concur that education does not encourage electoral participation. Croke *et al* (2014) concluded that in Zimbabwe educated people disengaged from voting as passive resistance against oppressive authoritarian regime.

Vast literature discussed has shown that the relationship between education and voter turnout is controversial and debatable amongst different researchers. However, despite these competing views the widely held position is that education positively influences electoral participation. This view is supported by competing and contrasting models which are discussed in detail in literature review chapter. These models include the education absolute model (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes (1960); Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980); Nie, Junn and Stehlik-Barry, 1996) which postulates that education has a direct impact on political participation. Secondly, pre-adult socialization model which is hinged on the view that education is nothing but just a proxy for other underlying factors, such as the socio-economic status of the family, political socialization as a child, or individual traits like innate cognitive ability (Palmer and Kam, 2008). Lastly, the relative education model or the sorting model contends that education has an indirect effect on political participation via social status Nie, Junn and Stehlik-Barry (1996).

The gap in literature

The education-participation nexus has sparked controversy leading to a division amongst researchers. Research in different countries from different continents has provided conflicting evidence. Nevertheless, in spite of these contrasting views generated by studies in other countries it is clear that there has been very few studies exploring the impact of education on voting in Zimbabwe. Therefore, this gap in literature is the focus of this study.

1.3. Statement of the problem

Vast literature in the study of voting behaviour produced conflicting and contradictory evidence. Studies in the US have shown that education is the major predictor of voter turnout. For example, the 2008 elections in America showed the impact of education on voting behaviour. According to Solis (2013), 40.2% of the voters were university graduates followed by 25.4% were high school graduate; 18% were primary school graduate; 8.5% the illiterate were only 5.1%. This means that, the highly educated people are the ones who participate in voting more compared to those who are less educated.

Conversely, studies in Europe and some in Africa have shown that education has less influence on voter turnout. Studies by Di Pietro and Delprato 2009; Milligan et al. 2004; Pelkonen 2012; Siedler 2010; Touya 2006 in the Western Europe have also authenticated the weak relationship between education and voter turnout. In Africa, Bratton (1999) observes that in Zambia, education has no impact on overall voter turnout. Blaydes (2006) finds a negative relationship between voting and education in Egypt, whilst Kamau, (2016) study in Kenya observed that formal education had less influence on voter turnout.

Whilst there have been studies conducted in other countries testing the relevance of education voting link, there has been a dearth of studies in Zimbabwe focusing on this area with an exception of recent study in Zimbabwe by Croke et al (2014) has observed that education has a negative impact on voting. Thus the impact of education on voting is both under studied and little known. Thereby, this study attempts to close this gap by contributing in growing literature and also better understanding of impact of education in Zimbabwe. The study targets university graduates (male and female) since it is assumed that university education enlightens people making them more conscious of political issues and democracy. The current study makes use of a qualitative research to get an in-depth understanding of the impact of education on voting.

1.4. Aim of the study

- The aim of the study is to test the relevance of education-voting link and better understand the impact of education on voting.

1.5. Objectives of the study

General objective

- To find out whether university graduates in Glen Norah A are voting in national elections in Zimbabwe.

Specific objectives

1. To find out how university graduates in Glen Norah A perceive politics and elections in Zimbabwe.
2. To find out whether university graduates in Glen Norah A vote in national elections in Zimbabwe.
3. To find out whether university graduates in Glen Norah A believe that education influence voting behaviour.

Research questions

1. How do university graduates in Glen Norah A perceive politics and elections in Zimbabwe?
2. Do university graduates in Glen Norah A vote in national elections in Zimbabwe?
3. Do university graduates in Glen Norah A believe that education influence voting behaviour?

1.6. Significance of the study

The current study is of outmost significance in two major ways. Firstly, it contributes growing literature on the impact of voting in Zimbabwe where there are very few studies focusing on that area. Secondly, the research is also significant as it will better understanding of the impact of education in Zimbabwe. The research makes use of qualitative methodology. This makes the study unique since most studies dwelled much on quantitative methodology. The methodology adopted allows the study to unravel the perception and attitudes of university graduates towards voting. Although the study is a small scale one focusing on Zimbabwean university graduates in Harare suburb of Glen Norah A, it is assumed that the findings will contribute in understanding the impact

of education on voting. Therefore, the scientific relevance articulated above makes the study a worth-while endeavour

1.7. Chapter Summary

The preceding chapter introduces the current study. The purpose of this chapter has been mainly to give the rationale of carrying out this study. It has been highlighted herein that studies in countries such as the US, Nigeria, Benin have shown that people who are educated participate more than the less educated. However, in Zimbabwe there are very few studies (Afro-barometer, 2010, Croke et al, 2014) examining the impact that education has on voting. Therefore, this study attempts to test impact of level of education on voting and university graduates were chosen as participants as they possess high level of education. This study is worthwhile since it attempt to close the existing gap in literature.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE-REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

This chapter is a review of literature or previous studies that analysed the nexus between education and voting. Out of the many types of literature reviews which include the argumentative-review, integrative-review, historical-review, methodological-review, the researcher chose to make use of the theoretical review because it allows researcher to follow development in the in an area of interest. This type of review examines a number of theories that have emerged in regard to an issue or phenomenon. Therefore, the chapter summarises, analyse and evaluate several key theories that explain the education- voter turnout link. The chapter will also take a cross country interrogation of the education- voter turnout nexus in order to assess the impact of education on voter turnout in different contexts.

2.1. The conventional view: the absolute education model

The Absolute education model assumes that, the more education individuals have, the high the chances they are likely to participate in politics. The model is referred to as the absolute education model since the effects of education are not dependent on the level of education in the environment a point emphasized by the relative model. Subscribers to this model contend that education is the major factor that causes and predict voter turnout since it arouses and impart skills that make participation easier. A number of researchers view education as equipping citizens with resources which makes it easier to vote. Carpini and Keeter (1996) argue that education leads directly to increased levels of political knowledge, a resource that reduces much of the information costs associated with political participation. Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) suggested that education inculcates the civic skills that are necessary and useful for civic voluntarism and political engagement. Hillygus (2005), also echo the same sentiments as he views education as a source of civic skills, but adds that the language skills acquired from higher levels of education also result in higher levels of participation as potential voters will develop the ability to understand political dialogue. Persson (2013) argue that according to the absolute education model, civic skills and political knowledge imparted by education function as the causal mechanisms which triggers participation. This is also sometimes referred to as the “cognitive pathway”, meaning that what

individuals learn at school has positive effects on their cognitive ability, which in turn affects participation Persson (2013).

This model also contends that, with increased political knowledge, one will have a better understanding of the political system. People who understand how the political system works will also understand the importance of participating in the system. Aside from skills and knowledge, education triggers political efficacy. Jackson (1995, 280) espouse this notion: “Schooling enhances both the belief that the potential voter can influence what the government does (external efficacy) and the belief that the potential voter has the competence to understand and participate in politics (internal efficacy)”. Thus, education supposedly increases citizens’ beliefs that they can effectively play a role in the political process. Moreover, college life is rich in activities that give individuals the opportunity to understand better the importance of politics and highlight the values of democracy, allowing the emergence of interest for participation (Galston, 2001). It is conceivable that education does have an impact on voter turnout, however, the model over emphasized the role of education.

The model focused primarily on skills and knowledge imparted by education however the model can be criticised for being too vague. The level and type of education that triggers participation was not specified. Different tertiary level education does have different impact on voter turnout. For instance, Persson (2013) noted that, social science programs have more influence on political engagement than sciences. The decrease in voter turnout in countries such as U.S where the education-participation link was strong also makes one doubt the positive link between education and political participation (Gomez, 2000). Also, studies in other countries such as United Kingdom show a weak link between education and voter turnout (Solis, 2013).

2.2. The additive model

The additive model view education as influencing voter turnout, subscribers to this model argue that, the more one proceeds with education the more likely he or she will be politically engaged. Unlike the first model, the strength of the additive model is that it specified the level of education that triggers likelihood of voting. The model emphasized that it is higher education that causes greater political participation. Schooling has been shown to positively influence voter turnout and

voter registration since individuals are trained to be politically involved (Tenn, 2007). Burden (2009) investigated respondents who had not completed high school, the study reviewed that they had a 50 per cent chance of voting. Their likelihood to vote increased to 80 per cent if they completed college education or attended college courses. Burden (2009) also studied respondents whose education level was below high school and had 50 per cent chance of voting. Their likelihood to vote increased to 70 per cent if they received high school education. These explanations make a common assumption that education contributes to political participation in a simple, additive fashion: each unit of education adds to the propensity to participate.

This model gave a simplistic positive relationship between education and voter turnout. Studies in Kenya by (Kamau, 2016) clearly showed that people with little education voted more than those who were highly educated. The theory ignored the fact that some education systems do not actually arouse political interest since the curriculum may not be offering any courses that develops interest in political participation. For example, the Zimbabwean curriculum since independence never had stand-alone courses meant to teach students about civic duties and political participation. This is opposed to countries such as U.S where the education system offers civic and government courses which arouse political interest and participation. According to Bachner, (2011) such courses also have considerable, positive effects on voting after graduation. Therefore, failure to have a system of education that stimulates political interest would result in having educated people who care less about voting. Lastly, the type of high education which influences voting was not mentioned.

2.3. The pre-adult socialization model

The pre-adult socialization model is another model which discusses the relationship between education and voting. This model is premised on the idea that education is nothing but just a proxy for other underlying factors, such as the socio-economic status of the family, political socialization as a child, or individual traits like innate cognitive ability (Palmer and Kam, 2008). From this model, these other factors could affect both the education level of the individual and his/her likelihood of participating in elections hence education is not the cause of political participation. The two argue that the education absolute model failed to consider the fact that the people who attain high education differ from those who do not in numerous unobserved ways. Such unobserved confounders include early-life socialization within the family, people who complete

college are more likely to vote and are more likely to have parents who are well off. Wealthy families can afford to buy reading materials such as newspapers, books, and magazines, which increase the likelihood to read and discuss politics at home. Children, who grow up in such families and who pursue education, are introduced to politics early in life and they learn how to handle political information (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980). Thus, from this model education does not cause political participation, but it is correlated to other factors that influence participation. Studies of within-twin pair in the United States, Denmark and Sweden showed that the relationship between education and political participation is highly confounded by genes and familial environment in all three countries (Dawes, 2016). Therefore, the role of education as a cause should not be overstated since interest in political participation is cultivated within the family at an early age. This means that one may be highly educated but may not have interest in participating in politics because of lack of exposure to an environment that arouse interest in politics during pre-adult socialization. This idea of the impact of early socialization influence on political participation is also echoed by the partisanship model. Tenn (2007) put more emphasis on an educational environment, rather than years in school, as having a huge impact on voter turnout. Sears and Funk (1999) state that some attitudes developed before adulthood serve as “predispositions” to greater political socialization. This may then influence political participation during adulthood therefore, the relationship between education and political participation is slight (Pelkonen, 2012).

This model can be critiqued for totally ignoring the impact of level as well as type of education on voting. Emphasis was mainly given to early socialisation and this portrays individual adult life as largely determined by early socialization and this may not be the case. For instance, preference changes over time as noted by the interactionists such as Mead in his concept of definition of situation. Thus individuals are not prisoners of their early childhood experiences.

2.4. The relative education model

The relative education model or the sorting model by Nie, Junn and Stehlik-Barry (1996) contend that education has an indirect effect on political participation via social status. From this view it is the social status and not the educational content received that increases participation. Hollis (1982) noted that education should be seen as a “positional good”, something which gives people status on condition that others do not have it. According to this model individuals with a high social

status have exposure to networks that encourage participation and they are also more likely to be recruited into political activities. Conversely, individuals with lower levels of education are outside recruitment networks (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). Therefore, individuals in networks are forced to vote since non-voting is associated with cost since other members of their group care whether they vote or not. According to Franklin (2004) there are more benefits of voting as well as costs of nonvoting for socially connected people than those who are not connected.

However, Franklin puts a caveat by pointing out that it is not only the “social status” of the networks that matter but also which particular people who make up the networks and to what extent these people might trigger participation. This model concurs with the sociological voting models which emphasise that voting is not an individual act but a collective act influenced by the people within the individual circles. The weakness associated with this model is that it portrays individuals who are not members of a status group as less likely to vote, yet a number of studies in Africa (Kenya) have shown that the less educated people tend to vote more than the educated masses. More so, the model down played the role of education, especially the level of education in influencing voting behaviour. This gap in literature makes this study a worthwhile endeavour.

2.5. EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION NEXUS: CROSS-COUNTRY SURVEY

This sub-section takes a cross country over view to assess the impact of education on electoral participation in different countries. This is meant to provide concrete empirical evidence to the arguments that are for and against the education-voter turnout nexus. Case studies of different countries in different continents are to be discussed.

2.6. Education-participation link: United States of America Case

In the United States (US), education is strongly associated with electoral participation. As numerous scholars point out, education endows individuals with the skills they need to grapple with the logistical demands of voting. Higher levels of education are also associated with higher levels of interest in politics. In addition, those highly educated are likely to come from homes with educated, politically conscious parents (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). Impact of education on voter turnout in America has been conceptualised differently by numerous scholars. In an analyses of National Educational Longitudinal Studies of 1988 and 2002, Bachner (2010; 2011) noted that

a year of American government coursework in high school cultivated voting behaviour for a decade after graduation, with the biggest effects (7-11 percentage points) found on students whose parents are not politically active. Niemi and Junn (2005) also observed that coursework has positive effects on knowledge. In this instance, one can note that education in general may not have strong impact on voting, it is the nature of education that is important.

Other researchers have pointed out that lack of a significant socialist party in the US to mobilize people of the working class with lower levels of education inevitably inhibit them from having interest in politics and voting (Chevalier and Doyle, 2012). Verba et al. (1978) adds that lack of well-structured political cleavages that represents the diverse groups in the US give room for education to have huge impact on voter turnout. Disenfranchisement laws have also been cited as key in understanding the strong education – voter turnout link in the US. The law denies prisoners and felons who have served their sentences of their voting rights (Rottinghaus, 2003). This means that, since lower education is associated with greater criminal activity and greater incarceration rates (Lochner and Moretti, 2004), a number of low educated individuals cannot vote in the U.S. The complexity of the U.S electoral system also makes it difficult for less educated people to participate, while easier for those with high levels of education. Moretti and Oreopoulos (2004) thus concluded that education allows Americans go through the barriers of registration. Evidence in the US shows that it is not education alone per se that influence political participation, but the electoral system as well as the ideologies of political parties and their targeted groups that makes education have an impact on voter-participation.

2.7. Education - voter turnout link: European case

A number of studies have shown that, unlike in the U.S where education has a strong influence on voter turnout, in Europe the relationship is weak. Norris (2002) has shown that Denmark is one of the few countries in Europe where education had a greater impact on voter turnout just like in the US. She concluded that education's impact is clearer in some countries than in others. Studies in other European countries seemed to substantiate this view. Milligan et al (2004) comparison of the US and the U.K identified a strong causal effect of education on voter turnout. He observed that graduating from high school increases the probability of voting by 20 to 30 percentage points in the U.S., while no significant effect of age left school is found in the U.K. Studies in Sweden also showed that education had no effect on political participation (Green-Pedersen and Odmalm

2008). Studies by Di Pietro and Delprato 2009; Milligan et al. 2004; Pelkonen 2012; Siedler 2010; Touya 2006 in the Western Europe has also authenticated the weak relationship between education and voter turnout.

However, Borgonovi et al. (2010) European social survey which made use of compulsory schooling laws within each country as instruments found that education does have an effect on political informational acquisition, yet no effect on voter turnout. This difference has been explained by various researchers as being rooted in the differences in the electoral registration process being less burdensome in the U.K and that also voter are given assistance (Solis, 2013). This differs from the U.S where registration is voluntary and citizen-initiated; the impact of education on voter participation is larger (Solis, 2013). Moreover, unlike in America where there is lack of a significant socialist party to mobilize labour, political mobilization in Western Europe has been organized around clearly defined socio structural cleavages such as class and religion (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), thus lessening the impact of education on voter turnout. Also, in Scandinavian countries, political mobilization is largely class based thus downplaying the influence of education on voter turnout.

2.8. Education – voter turnout link: African case

Just like in Europe, education does not have a huge impact in most African countries. For example, Bratton (1999) observes that in Zambia, education has no impact on overall voter turnout. Blaydes (2006) finds a negative relationship between voting and education in Egypt, and argues that this relationship holds since the poor are more prone to vote-buying. This is consistent with other works that found that vote-buying is more prevalent among the poor and less educated (Brusco et al. 2004; Finan and Shechter 2010; Stokes 2005). Another study in Kenya observed that formal education had less influence on voter turnout; the findings demonstrate that Kenyans who have formal education are not necessarily better prepared for adult political responsibilities than those who do not have formal education (Kamau, 2016). In Kenya, just like in most African countries, factors such as ethnicity, poor political campaigns, proximity to ballot boxes, voter registration requirements or lack of emphasis on political participation in the school curriculum.

Friedman et al. (2011) use a field experiment in Western Kenya to study the effect of increase in education induced by a secondary school girls' scholarship program. They find that secondary education made young women more politically knowledgeable, less deferential to political authority, and more likely to reject gender biased violence. They did not find, however, that secondary education increases support for democracy, political efficacy, or voting. A clear limitation of this paper is that it examines the effect of secondary education over a relatively short time-frame (4-5 years after initial enrolment), and on a small number of beneficiaries that are not representatives in terms of sex and age. However, few studies in Africa have shown a positive relationship between education and voting. One such example is in Nigeria, Larreguy and Marshall (2014) noted that Nigeria's 1976 Universal Primary Education reform increased educational attainment as well as more political participation in the form of voting, contacting local officials, attending community meetings, and devoting attention to and gaining knowledge about political events.

2.9. Education - voter turnout link: Zimbabwean case

Studies that interrogate the relationship between education and voting in Zimbabwe were conducted by Croke et al. (2014) using quantitative methods. The research concluded that educated people in an authoritarian regime do not vote since doing so for them will be legitimising the regime. Therefore, the more educated citizens according to Croke et al (2014) deliberately disengage from all forms of political participation, voting included.

The literature discussed above on the impact of education on voting form different countries from different contents has produced conflicting evidence as shown. In one context education has a positive on impact on voting, whilst on the other it does not have. However, despite sharp divergence in the literature pertaining to the role of education in influencing voting behaviour, it is glaring that literature testing the relevance of education voting link is very little in Zimbabwe. This gap in literature in this regard point to the need for study aimed at testing the impact of education on voting albeit from a unique dimension. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap.

2.9.1. Chapter summary

Vast literature discussed has shown that the relationship between education and voter turnout is controversial and debatable amongst different researchers. On one hand, as shown, education influence electoral participation in some countries. Conversely, some studies have also shown that education does not influence electoral participation in other countries. However, there has been scarcity of studies focusing on testing the relevance of the education voter link. And this study seeks to explore this research gap and build a better understanding of the relationship between education and voting.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAME-WORK

3.0. Introduction

This chapter is a discussion of the theory adopted in the study to understand the problem under investigation. The theory used is interactionism it was developed by ideas of thinkers such as Thomas, Dewey, Cooley as well as Mead who is credited to have had a major impact in the development of the theory. The theory is mainly used to study micro-level social phenomenon where researchers' interest is to have an in-depth understanding of that phenomenon from the perspective of individual actors. This theory indicates that individuals are active beings whose action is based on meaning they attach to things (events or situations). As applied to my study this theory is very appropriate as its assumption is in sync with the aims and objectives of the study. The chapter is organised as follows, the first part is a brief discussion of the theory, assumption, justification of theory, relevance of theory and conceptual frame work derived from the theory, the last part will highlight the flaws of the theory.

3.1. Brief background of Interactionist theory

According to Carter and Fuller (2015) the philosophical thoughts that undergird interactionism can be traced to the Scottish Moral Philosophers. Bryson (1945) pointed out that those thinkers such as Adam Smith, David Hume, Adam Ferguson, Frances Hutcheson, held diverse views of what was fundamental about the human mind. They concurred that the facts of human interaction had to be taken into account if a science of man was to be achieved. These Scottish moral philosophers also emphasized the importance of communication, sympathy, imitation, habit, and custom in their attempts to develop principles of human behaviour (Fuller and Carter, 2015). David Hume as well as Smith believed that "sympathy" is key attribute through which humans develop a sense of belonging to the society. Carter and Fuller (2015) observed that these Scotsmen conceived sympathy as allowing or enabling persons to put themselves in the place of others, to see the world as these others do. This line of thinking is today represented by the concept of role-taking which was articulated by Mead. Moreover, sympathy is seen as making possible the communication that initially forms and subsequently reshapes who and what we are. From this view, society is seen as a web of interpersonal communication, connecting persons organically. Carter and Fuller (2015)

concluded that the Scottish moral philosophers foreshadowed the symbolic interactionist view of the basic nature of society and of the source of self in society.

Denzin (1992) observed that Scottish moral philosophers laid the foundation on which American pragmatic philosophers such as C. S. Pierce, Josiah Royce, William James, John Dewey, and-of special import-George Herbert Mead built on to come up with contemporary symbolic interactionism. However, despite having long roots and influenced by a number of thinkers, modern interactionist theory is largely shaped by the ideas of George Herbert Mead. This is mainly because Mead gave a more systematic treatment than did anyone preceding him to the ideas that shaped the theory (Low, 2008).

Though Mead is credited as the father of Symbolic interactionism it is interesting to note that he never actually put his perspective into writing and much of his work was published posthumously by his students Carter and Fuller (2015). The ideas of Mead have been interpreted differently and divergently by his followers and this has led to three different strands of Symbolic interactionism. These strands are the work of Herbert Blumer (the Chicago School), Manford Kuhn (the Iowa School), and Sheldon Stryker (the Indiana School). These different brands also differ in both theory and research (Hewitt, 2002). However, the dominant variant of symbolic interactionism is the Chicago school which was advanced by Herbert Blumer (1969) at the University of Chicago in the 1950s.

3.2. Reasons for emergence

Symbolic interactionism emerged as a direct response to the mainstream perspectives on society that dominated sociology at the time (such as Talcott Parsons's structural functionalism). These conventional, positivist approaches tended to study society from the 'top down,' focusing on the impact of macro-level institutions and social structures and how they coerce individuals. Deviating from this tradition, symbolic interactionism was developed to conceptualise the functioning of society from the 'bottom up,' shifting the focus to micro-level processes that emerge during face-to-face encounters in order to explain the operation of society.

3.3. Assumption

There are a number of assumptions made by interactionist theorist; however there are two major assumptions of the theory that are relevant to this research made by Blumer, (1969). Firstly, interactionists argue that individuals are not passive, but rather are active and have capacity to create their own society. Secondly, the interactionist view individual behaviour/action as based on the meanings they attach or give to events and situations. These key assumptions of Symbolic interactionist theory are traced back to the ideas of 18th century Scottish thinkers once mentioned above. Thinkers such as Adam Smith, David Hume, Adam Ferguson, and Frances Hutcheson emphasized the importance of human mind in the study of the society. According to Carter and Fuller (2015) they appreciated the mind as they approached human behaviour from the standpoint of society rather than biology. This idea was also upheld by key thinkers such as Dewey, Cooley, Mead and Thomas. Departing from the dominant and conventional view that common social institutions define and impact individuals held by Functionalism and Marxism, symbolic Interactionist shift their focus to the interpretation of subjective perspective and how individuals make sense of their world from their unique perspective (Stryker, 2008). Behaviour is simply an actor's idiosyncratic way of reacting to an interpretation of a situation (House, 1977). Carter and Fuller (2015) concluded that Symbolic Interactionists conceive the individual as agentic, autonomous, and integral in creating their social world.

3.4. Justification of theory

There are many theories that explain voting behaviour from different angles some of these theories are sociological (macro-theories) whilst others are from political science and economics. However, most of the theories fell far short in terms of understanding the problem at hand as well as informing the methodological approach which is relevant in studying the problem. For example, theories from economics such as the rational choice theory, Pocket book voter, and Socio-tropic and theories from political science such as the Michigan model, loyalty model, and media/dominant ideology all emphasise the reasons why people vote for certain political parties and not others. As a result these theories are not appropriate in understanding why individuals at times completely do not participate in the voting process. In the same vein, macro sociological theories such as the Functionalism and Marxism contend that human behaviour is a product of social forces. This assumption implies that individuals are not conscious beings who determine

their action. Therefore, the philosophical premise of these theories makes them unfit and inadequate in understanding the problem at hand. However, the interactionist theory which is a micro sociological theory seem be best suited to address the problem under investigation. This is mainly because of its assumption which is rooted in acknowledging individual ability to influence their actions and able to give meaning to those actions. This tenets of interactionism in pertinent to the aim of the study which is about finding out why people with university education are not voting. Unlike other theories once pointed out, interactionism acknowledges that people with university education are conscious beings who can account for their actions. Therefore, it is on these grounds that this researcher decided to make use of this theory as a basis for investigating and understanding the problem at hand.

3.5. Relevance of the theory

Interactionism is very relevant to the study as its assumption informs various aspects of the study. According to Osanloo and Grant (2014) theoretical frame-work serves as the structure and support for the rationale for the study, the problem statement, the purpose, the significance, and the research questions. From this view, a theory is relevant once it is able to be used a basis for structuring various elements of the research. In this study interactionism is inextricably related to all the above mentioned aspects. For example, the rationale for this study is to understand how education discourage university graduates from voting, thus the study is aimed at understanding why a particular group is behaving or acting in a particular way. Interactionism provides a basis for understanding this problem since the theory argues that action is only meaningful to those involved. Hence the role of research is to seek what Weber termed *verstehen* which is seeking understanding of an action from the actors themselves. Interactionism is also closely related to the significance of the study as it brings a new understanding in the relationship between education and voting. The relevance of the theory is also seen in its ability to inform the nature of research objectives of the study which are aimed at understanding how university graduates view politics and voting. This is all in line with interactionism which also purports that how one views something influences his or her action. Lastly, the qualitative methodology adopted in this study is also in congruence with interactionist, qualitative methods allow the research to have a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. This view goes hand in glove with interactionist emphasis that explanation of action should be based on a deeper understanding of that action from the actor.

3.6. Conceptual Frame work

According to According to Osanloo and Grant (2014) theoretical framework consists of the selected theory (or theories) that undergirds your thinking in relation to how you conceptualise and plan to research your topic, as well as the concepts and definitions from that theory that are relevant to your topic. Borrowing the above mentioned idea, this research shall adopt the concept of definition of situation from the interactionist theory. The concept of “Definition of situation” according to Collins (1994) is heavily borrowed by Mead from WI Thomas’s (1931). This concept emphasizes that people act in situation on the basis of how they are defined ((Tezcan, 2005). Definitions, even when at variance with objective reality have real consequences for people’s actions. LaRossa and Reitzes (1993, 140) adds that, “if people defines situations as real, they are real in their consequences”. Thomas (1928) opines that, “it is not important whether interpretation is accurate or not”. He believes that fact is grounded on individual perceptions and changes in time (Berg, 2000).

This means that how individuals define situations determines how they are going to structure their behaviour or how one is going to act. Thus unlike the structural theories, here the individual is seen as an active being that determines own action based on the definition of situation. Blumer (1969) also adds that individuals act on the basis of the meanings they attach to social situations. Hewitt (2002) pointed out that individuals construct meaning by analysing gestures, language, appearance and context in which the interaction takes place. According to Carter and Fuller (2015), for Blumer, the meaning of things emanates from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one engages with others.

This concept is very applicable in our understanding of the problem under investigation. The concept of definition of situation allows the researcher to understand from the respondent’s point of view, how they define elections and that definition explains why they do not vote. Thus in Weberian view this concept allows *verstehen*, this means understanding of something from the view or perspective of the actor (Ritzer, 2008). The concept is also strongly linked to the objectives of the study which are all about an attempt to have insight from the respondents about their views

on politics and elections. Their views about politics and elections are of paramount importance since they are the ones that influence them not to participate in voting.

3.7. Flaws of the theory

However, there is no theory that is uncritically accepted, thus the theory has its own weaknesses, and according to Fine (1993) interactionism has been criticized for being unscientific, apolitical, and too micro. Slattery (2007) pointed that symbolic interactionism is largely deprived of a real social envision. This means that, symbolic interactionism doesn't put forward a society picture or theory. This is because it sometimes describes society as a thing only in the minds of people.

Aside from these general weaknesses there are also weaknesses related to the study at hand. First, Interactionist theory only perceive voting behaviour as solely determined by one's definition perception of and politics election yet there are social factors such as affiliation to trade union, ethnicity, loyalty which propel voting behaviour as argued by the sociological model. More so, perceptions of individuals are not individually formed but can also be shaped by the mass media as argued by the Dominant media model. Thus excessive exposure to media may result in individual opinions being shaped by media resulting in participation in voting. In summation, perceptions and individuals choices may not be the only factor that may influence individual behaviour, but a set of different factors interplay to cause individual to act in one way or the other.

3.8. Chapter summary

In this chapter, the theory to be used to understand the problem in the study has been discussed. The origins of the theory was given first it was followed by the conceptual frame-work adopted in the study, which is the concept of definition of situation. Lastly, the flaws of the theory were highlighted.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the research process by providing detailed information pertaining to the methodology in which the study is grounded, the method as well the rationale for that approach. Also in this chapter, various stages of the research which include the research design (inclusive of its evaluation and risks), data collection, sampling procedure, participants and data analysis are described. Since the research is qualitative in nature, the role of the researcher in qualitative research in relation to reflexivity will be discussed. The Chapter also pays attention to the ethics that were upheld in the study. Lastly, the chapter ends by giving a summary of the topic.

4.1. Research design

A research design identifies specific procedures to be undertaken when conducting research and also ensures that the study is of sufficiently high quality that makes it valid, reliable and objective (Kumar, 2011). It further set guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem (Flick, 2012). In this study, the researcher adopted a case study which is an in-depth study of a particular research problem. A case study is used to narrow down a very broad research area into one or few researchable example Borg and Gall (1983). A case study research design is important for testing the applicability of a specific theory and model in a specific context. A case study was suited for this study because the aim of the study was to interrogate the applicability of the education-participation model in the high density suburb of Glen-Norah A. Higson-Smith and Kagee (2014) argue that case study research study design can make use of variety of methodologies, however, this study adopted the qualitative methodology. Qualitative research is an approach that studies phenomenon in their natural settings aiming to make sense or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people attach to them (Merriam (2010). Therefore, by adopting qualitative methodology, the study was exploratory and descriptive as noted by Higson-Smith and Kagee (2014) who argue that in qualitative research the objective is exploratory and descriptive rather than explanatory. The study, hence, sought to explore and describe how education can discourage people from voting.

4.2. Methodology

A qualitative research approach was adopted as the methodology because this approach reinforces an understanding and interpretation of meaning as well as intentions underlying human interaction. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe qualitative research as a multifaceted method of research that involves the interpretative and naturalistic approach to subject matter. Qualitative research was deemed suitable for this research project as it allowed the researcher to achieve the purpose of the purpose of the study which was to understand voting behaviour of a group of people. Moreover, this study considered this approach mainly because most studies in the area of voting behaviour used quantitative methods.

Qualitative research entails a process of understanding the meaning people have constructed that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in their world (Merriam, 2010). The qualitative approach refers to an inquiry into a phenomenon in an in-depth and holistic fashion, through the collection of rich, thick narrative materials using a flexible research design. The study achieved this through one on one interview, wherein residents with university education shared about their voting behaviour with the researcher. Through qualitative approach, the researcher was able to gain insight about the study and also had the opportunity to probe and observe non-verbal language from the participants during the course of the interviews some difficult to get through quantitative approach. Burns and Groove (2014) define qualitative research as a systematic, interactive and subjective method used to describe life experiences and give meaning to them. Its goal is to understand behaviour or actions within their natural occurring context. It focuses on behavioural or meaningful action variables only. It has a tendency to focus on smaller samples. It has preference for open- ended, non- standardized, reactive data collection procedures. It is oriented towards completeness of the description and it is open- ended to inquiry.

Qualitative research further emphasizes the uniqueness of individuals or special population groups preferring narrative summaries or descriptions to measurements. These characteristics were appropriate for the study because they demonstrate the relevant strategies for understanding voting behaviour of people with university education. However, Stommel and Wills (2014) concluded that although qualitative research is indispensable, it can be criticized for placing too much trust in the credibility and integrity of the individual researcher and research methods that produces

results that cannot be replicated by other researchers under similar circumstances, and might not meet the standards of objectivity. However, the concept of reflexivity in can be seen as important in enhancing objectivity in a qualitative research.

Qualitative research is fundamentally different from quantitative in that in qualitative the researcher plays a fundamental role as an instrument of data collection (Creswell, 1994) and data interpretation. Parker (1994) pointed out that any piece of research is undertaken by subjective individuals. Therefore, qualitative research process cannot be value-free and the orthodox idea that interviews should be neutral is not possible (Seroka 1999). Parker (1994) concluded that subjectivity needs to be acknowledged. When researcher acknowledges this subjectivity he or she is able to account for what has led him or her to investigate the subject. This is because researcher's outlook on life, his/her life experiences and observations have a high likelihood of influencing the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting data (Gee, 1999). Seroka (1999) states that the ideal qualitative researcher becomes immersed in the phenomenon of interest and his or her bias should be made transparent (Parker, 1994).

In respect of the dictates of reflexivity, the researcher herein unburdens his subjectivity in relation to the issue under investigation. The researcher is single and in his late twenties, and he is also a holder of a university degree. The researcher is not a member of any political party and has never voted before nor participates in any political activities. Since completing university undergraduate studies, the researcher only worked as a relief teacher for a year. The condition of being unemployed has led him to survive through conducting extra lessons to Advanced level Sociology students. Lack of formal employment has generally made the researcher to have a strong dissatisfaction with the government for failing to provide employment opportunities for educated. Having witnessed all elections that took place since the turn of the new millennium in Zimbabwe and the disgruntlement of family members and other residents with the outcome, the researcher just lost interest in wanting to participate voting. This stance was further entrenched when the researcher attained university education as he was able to give a rational justification for his lack of participation.

This background of the researcher made it easy to really understand the participant who were also largely of the same generation and had the same experience of certain national event. However, although the researcher could identify with the participants he made sure that he did not impose his values and opinions on the participants during interviews. Thus the researcher had to put aside his own understanding of the subject of investigation and open his mind to understand and listen to what is told to him by the participants.

4.3. Study site

The setting is the location in which a study is conducted, as defined by Burns and Grove (2011), supported by Polit and Beck (2014), who defined setting as the physical location and conditions in which data collection takes place in the study. The study was conducted in Harare in the high density suburb of Glen-Norah where the researcher resides. This small high density suburb is surrounded by other old high density suburbs of High-fields and Glen-view. Glen-Norah is divided into three areas that is, Glen-Norah A, where the researcher lives and where the study was conducted. There is Glen-Norah B and C as well. The researcher chose to conduct this study in his home area mainly because of the sensitivity of the area of study. The researcher assumed that it may be difficult to find respondents in neighbourhoods where he is foreign since the targeted population may refuse to cooperate suspecting that the researcher may be a spy of some sought. Moreover, investigating about their voting behaviour especially with the country heading for elections as well as the political violence associated with elections in the country, some respondents may refuse to participate fearing political victimisation. Therefore, the researcher thought that conducting the research in the neighbourhood where he is known would it easy for respondents to cooperate as well as to open up on the issue under the “microscope”. However, far from being easy as expected by the researcher researching in own community had its own challenges as shall be shown.

4.4. Sampling Procedure

The researcher used two sampling techniques to create a sample. This was necessitated by the difficulty in having a sample using one sampling technique. Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants for the one on one interview. Patton(1990) argue that purposive sampling involves using one's common sense and judgment in choosing the right habitations, and meeting the right number of right people for the purpose of the study. In view of that, a purposive sample is subjectively selected by the researcher. The researcher initially approached potential participants that were known to him. This was done on the basis that the participants met the criteria for inclusion in the study. The first three participants were known to the researcher, and all fulfilled the following criteria:

- Holder of university degree from a local university.
- Within an age range of 21 to 45.

The sample was then expanded by asking the identified participants to refer other university graduates known to them who might be willing to provide relevant input on the research topic. This is known as snowball sampling (Craswel, 2012). This strategy was used for recruiting participants who then filled up the male and female quotas. In building the quotas, the researcher at first was referred by a participant to a potential participant and approached them alone. But this did not work, all the referred participants refused to cooperate due to suspicion that the researcher was a spy of some sought despite producing all documents that the study was only an academic research. The researcher had to persuade the participant he knew to accompany him to the referred would be participant and introduced the researcher. This worked as people began to cooperate after given a brief background of the researcher. Their acceptance can be understood in the context of insider-outsider dichotomy. Kanuha, (2000) argue that insider research is when researchers study populations which they are also part of. Asselin (2003) adds that the researcher has the same identity, language, and experiential base with the study participants. Thus in this study when the researcher was introduced, the each individual participant was told that he (researcher) born and bred in the neighbourhood, hold a university degree, is not married, and that he is not formally employed. These personal characteristics of the researcher were largely similar with those of most participants hence creating a common ground for acceptance. Dwyer (2009) concluded that this insider role status allows researchers to be easily accepted by their participants.

In qualitative research the actual number of participants cannot be specified before the study is conducted. In qualitative research the number of respondents is determined by the extent to which the research question has been addressed (Marshall, 1996; McLeod, 2002). When new themes stop emerging, when data reaches a point of saturation, the researcher can conclude that there is no need for more interviews (Hutchinson and Wilson, 1991; Marshall, 1996; Orbele, 2002).

The number of respondents interviewed in this study was determined by the information gained during the various interviews, therefore it was not pre-determined. Interviews were conducted until the data reached an acceptable saturation point and the researcher judged that the research question could be answered adequately. In total fourteen (14) interviews were conducted and it was found that by the seventh interview little new information was being gained. However, additional interviews were conducted to test whether the saturation point had indeed been reached. The information gained in the last interviews confirmed information gathered from the previous interview thus showing a point of saturation. It was at this stage that the researcher decided to conclude the interviewing process and proceed to analysis.

4.5. Participants

Fourteen (14) participants participated in the study, seven of them were males and the other seven were females. Unlike in quantitative research, the number of respondents is informed by the extent to which the research question has been adequately addressed (Marshall, 1996; McLeod, 2002). According to Orbele, (2002) when data reaches a point of saturation, i.e. when no new themes are emerging, the researcher can conclude that there is no need for more interviews. Informed by this position, interviews were conducted up to the point of saturation. In total fourteen interviews were conducted, interestingly by the seventh interview previously gathered information was recurring. Despite that, other interviews were done to ensure that saturation point was achieved. The researcher decided to conclude the study after the fourteenth interview having been convinced that the point of saturation was reached.

4.6. The demographic features of the participants are as follows:

Males

Majority of men in the study were between the ages of 25-35 (n=5), only two were above this age group. Four males in the study had degrees in commercial studies (n=4). Two had social science degrees (n=2) and one was a holder of a Law degree. Most men in the study were not formally employed (n=5) and three of them were involved in buying selling imported clothes, of the other two, one offered extra-lessons to O and A level students, the other one was a teacher at a private college. Of the two employed participants, one was a Lawyer and the other one worked for Zimbabwe revenue authority. In terms of marriage, five of the participants were not married (n=5) and two (n=2) were married.

Females

Majority of women in the study were in their 30s (n=5) and only two were in their mid-20s (n=2). In terms of education, two were holders of social science degrees (n=2). Other participants were holders of commercial and science degrees (n=5). The majority of the participants were informally employed (n=4). One was running a family tuck-shop; the other was running a printing business. The other two were running local crèche in the neighbourhood. Of the formally employed, one was a pharmacist, the other one worked for the city council, and last one worked as a till operator. In the study there were also five married women (n=5) and two were single (n=2).

4.7. Data collection methods

This research made use of interviews as a method to collect data. An interview is a purposeful discussion that can help the researcher to gather valid and reliable data that is relevant to your research objectives (Burns and Groove, 2014). According to Barbie (1988) an interview is a research method that takes the form of a conversation between the researcher and the respondent.

Interviews come in different types, for instance, group interview, one on one, in depth and telephone interview. Interviews can also take the structured, semi-structured or unstructured form. This study was conducted using one on one semi-structured interviews. The researcher decided to choose this type and form of interview because unstructured interviewing is best suited to

investigating sensitive topics (Elam and Fenton 2003). It also allows respondents give thick description in their own words as well as room for respondents to ask where they do not understand. Moreover, semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to probe further and ensure that questions were answered. These benefits actually allowed the researcher to really understand the problem under investigation. This is opposed to fixed-questionnaires and structured interviews where a set of questions with prescribed answers are administered. This would limit respondents to what the researcher thinks is important. Also, this prevents the researcher from obtaining valid data. Semi structured interviews were carried out and the semi-structured interview guide was used.

4.8. Issues and challenges

However, this method posed some challenges especially deciding on the venue of the interviews. McCosker et al (2001) argue that environmental considerations and appropriateness of venue need to be considered carefully since it is pertinent for both the participants and the researcher to feel safe. The researcher had to ask the respondents to choose the venue they were comfortable with, and they chose their respective homes.

Another challenge associated interviews has to do with establishing rapport. Dickson-Swift et al (2007) are of the view that developing rapport with participants in qualitative interviews improves the researcher's access to the interviewees' lives. Building rapport in an interview is a challenge since the researcher only has short contact with participants. However, in this study it was not very difficult since the researcher was seen by participants as more of an insider. The researcher also followed Becker's (1970) style of talking informally by the respondents before the interview starts. This enabled the interviewee to feel that they are not going to be judged or criticised this made them feel comfortable. Karnieli-Miller et al (2009) noted that researcher can tell whether rapport has been built by the depth and quality of information revealed by participants during interviews. This was shown by some male participants' who talked negatively about certain politicians and political parties in the neighbourhood by name without fear or reservations. This showed that they were comfortable and had built a good rapport and trust toward the researcher such that they could say anything.

However, this was mainly experienced with male participants. Interviews with women were different, they were not that open and the researcher could tell as they seemed to filter certain information. They also raised same issues as men, but they withheld names of individuals and political parties as men did. When responding to questions most of them would pause for seconds and then continue, they lacked vibrancy in their responses. This made the researcher to conclude that they were not really comfortable about the subject. However, the researcher was convinced that their response were sincere since they tallied with those made by men, theirs' only lacked vigorous elaboration.

Another classic challenge of doing interviews on sensitive topics as an insider is that researcher's perceptions might end up influencing the interviewee's responses (Dwyer, 2009). The enthusiasm and passion that characterised most interviews with male participants could have easily reduced the interviews to an ordinary conversation of ordinary citizens lambasting political parties and figures. Lee (1993) warned that conducting research into sensitive topics can result in the researcher becoming too close to the participants and that confuses the roles of friend and researcher. Despite these challenges, the researcher kept his stance as a researcher and guarded against being caught up in the passion and emotion in the moment which might have led researcher influencing respondents unconsciously. The researcher constantly reminded himself to remain in control and maintain some distance. This dovetail with Dwyer (2009) who opines that what is important is not insider or outsider status but the ability to be open, authentic, honest, deeply interested in the experience of one's research respondents. The researcher also refused to answer questions asked by respondents seeking researchers' views on the subject being discussed. The researcher responded to such question by a question to the respondent. And this would throw back the discussion to the respondent.

Recording of data also posed another challenge, all respondents refused to have interviews recorded digitally. Instead of trying to persuade the participants, the researcher realised that in might make respondents feel unease leading to responses being filtered. This problem was resolved by recording the field notes by hand in a note book. The researcher realized that adopting a method that participants are comfortable with, makes them feel comfortable during the interview hence high chance of getting valid, unfiltered data.

4.9. Instruments

In the current study, the researcher designed and used an interview guide. In most studies that involve local people most researchers translate research guide to the local language to build rapport and make communication easier. After the study, back translation is used; back translation involves translating the guides that had already been translated into Shona language back to the original English language to ensure that the Shona versions were very close in meaning to the English versions Adler (1990). However, in this study, all the participants were local but with university education. This saved the researcher from the burden of translating research guide since the study was conducted in English. This ensured that meaning of responses and question was not lost during translation.

4.9.1. Data Collection Procedures

This section chronicles the steps taken by the researcher during data collection. Marimba and Moyo (1995) asserts that the data collection plan encompasses the sequential steps taken in data collection. The participants required in the study were university graduates in Glen Norah A. The researcher approached the potential respondents whom he knew and debriefed them about the research and they consented to participate. An appointment was set for the interviews which were then conducted three days later. The first three participants referred (provided names and home addresses) the researcher to other potential participants they knew. The researcher then approached these participants, debriefed them about the research and provided document (letter from the department and college identity card) but all refused to participate. The researcher had to hatch an idea whereby the participants he knew had to accompany him to the potential participant. And this worked and through more referrals more participants were identified.

During data collection phase, the participants were able to decide on the venue for their interviews. Most interviews were conducted at the respective homes of the participants. The interviews were conducted by the researcher and were all conducted in English, although there were times when participants would use Shona language. The participants had a strong command of the language due to their educational background. Conducting the interviews in English allowed the researcher to transcribe the interviews as presented by the participants without translating the interviews.

However, in instances where the participants expressed themselves in a language other than English this information was translated during the transcription stage. The fact that interviews were conducted at the residences of participants made them feel comfortable and safe hence able to air out their views.

The social location of the research and the participants in terms of their race, social status, age played a pivotal role in shaping the research process (Edwards, 1990; Orbele, 2002). It improved the rapport between the researcher and respondents especially with male respondents. The researcher was convinced so since some male respondents even mentioned their discontent with certain politicians and political parties in the neighbourhood by name. This could be taken as evidence for a strong rapport and sense of confidence in confidentiality guaranteed by the researcher.

The interviews were conducted over a period of four weeks, from mid-October to mid-September. By the time of the seventh interview there were little new ideas emerging and the other seven interviews were conducted to check whether the saturation point had indeed been reached. The average length of the interviews was approximately one hour.

Data recording and storage

As noted above, the respondents declined that the researcher digitally records the interview. For this researcher this refusal was not taken as lack of trust of the researcher by participants, but the participants feared that if the recording got lost somehow they may be vulnerable to victimisation especially if the information gets into the ears of politicians they were castigating. Consequently, the researcher resorted manually record the data. Field notes of each interview were captured in a small notebook. Rather than writing the actual names of the respondents the researcher made use of respondents' degree programs gender and age as key identification aspects. This was shown in the presentation of findings chapter where direct verbatim from respondents were presented. This at least ensured that the identity of the respondent would remain anonymous even if the data from field note gets lost. In the process of recording the researcher did not take every word uttered by the respondents but only recorded key ideas and phrases which summarised thoughts of respondents.

The storage of interview recording was easy, the researcher stays alone and this provided some degree of security for the data. However, to ensure extra security since the researcher at times during research received visitors, all the interview recordings were kept in an unmarked envelope. The envelope was kept in a metal trunk with a lock where the researcher keeps his important documents like books, academic certificates and other related stuff. After each and every interview the researcher would pluck pages with interview recordings and place it in the envelope and lock the metal trunk. The keys to the metal trunk were always with the researcher along together with keys to his apartment.

In summation, the recorded data was kept safe and was only accessible to the researcher himself. This ensured that the data was managed in a way that respects confidentiality and anonymity the researcher promised the participants.

4.9.2. Data Analysis: Thematic Content Analysis

Data from one on one interview was analysed using thematic content analysis. This method was chosen because unlike interpretive phenomenological analysis or grounded theory, thematic content analysis is not wedded to any pre-existing theoretical framework, and it can be used within different theoretical frameworks, and can be used to do different things within them (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Moreover, thematic content analysis can be a method that works both to reflect reality and to unpack or unravel the surface of reality (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This data analysis method is particularly a useful method when investigating an under-researched area, or when working with participants whose views on the topic are not known (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This method resonates well with the study topic since it is not a well researched area more so the research seeks to understand the views of university graduates on political participation which is fairly unknown. It is on this premise this data analysis method was adopted.

4.9.3. Procedure for Thematic Content Analysis

Phase 1: Acquainting Oneself with the Data

Initially the researcher obtained familiarity with the data by engrossing himself in the data till he was acquainted with the depth and breadth as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). The

researcher familiarised himself with the data through continual reading of the data. The researcher actively read the data by searching for nuances and patterns. Notes were taken and recorded in a book from which ideas for coding were taken.

Phase 2: Spawning Initial Codes

Preliminary codes were compiled after the researcher familiarized himself with the data as encouraged by Braun and Clarke (2006). Spawning initial codes is done using codes elicited in the first phase. The researcher coded the data by writing notes on the texts. The researcher matched each code with data extracts that demonstrated that code. All the data extracts were coded, and then pooled together within each code as indicated by Braun and Clark. This involved copying extracts of data from individual transcripts.

Phase 3: Exploring for Themes

After all data had been coded and collated, the researcher had to transform the codes into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At this phase various codes was arranged into themes and collating all the related coded data extracts within the given themes as suggested by Braun & Clarke. Some of the preliminary codes were used to form central themes while others were used to form sub-themes. This phase was finished with a collation of core themes, and sub-themes, and all extracts of data that had been coded in relation to them.

Phase 4: Re-examining the Themes

According to Braun & Clarke, (2006) the fourth stage involve the fine tuning of themes which have been developed the in previous phase. During this phase, the researcher ensured that some themes which had close affinities were combined into a single main theme.

Phase 5: Delineating and Designating Themes

The fifth phase began when the researcher had a fitting thematic map of his data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher defined and further refined the themes. Defining and refining themes involved identifying the salience of what each theme was about and determining what aspect of the data each theme represented (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher did this by reverting to

collated data extracts for each theme, and organising them into a coherent and internally consistent description.

4.9.4. Ethical Considerations

Research ethics are guide lines that the researcher is expected to adhere to when conducting a research. The researcher has a moral and professional obligation to be ethical even when the respondents are not aware or are unconcerned about ethics. Borg and Gall (1983) defines ethics as the do's and don'ts when conducting a study. Resnik (2011) describe ethics as norms for conduct that informs the researcher about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Ethical consideration is the principle of respect for person, beneficence, and justice (Burns & Grove, 2014). Polit and Beck (2014) define ethics as a system of moral values that is concerned with the degree to which research procedures adhere to professional, legal and social obligations of the study. The correct and wrong procedure of research should conform to finally accepted norms and values. The conduct with regard to research activities should normally acceptable (Brynard&Hanekom, 2013). The researcher will take the following principles in to consideration for the purpose of this study, debriefing, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity and withdrawal of participation.

4.9.5. Debriefing

According to Mokore-Rukuni (2001) debrief is a situation whereby the researcher explains to the participants the full nature of the research to be undertaken. Adhering to the ethics, the researcher debriefed the participants so as to allay any fears that participants might have. The researcher made it clear to the participants that the research was purely for academic purposes. This was critical since the nature of the study might have scared potential participants away in fear that they may be under investigation and may become victims of political violence. Dooley (1990) argue that researcher must provide written information about the study, which covers the study's purpose, subject identification or confidentiality procedures, risk and benefits. Following Dooley's idea, the researcher wrote a brief paragraph about what the study entails as part of the preamble on the questionnaire and before interviewing people, the researcher debriefed them about the study.

4.9.6. Informed consent

According to Polit and Beck (2014), informed consent is an ethical guide that implores researchers to obtain the voluntary participation of subjects, after informing them of possible risks and benefits. The researcher considered the following:

- All participants were clearly informed verbally and in writing of what the research entails and what was expected of them.
- All participants were to sign consent form and were given a copy of the information sheet stipulating the research project and their signed consent form.
- Consent forms contained the contact details of the student and supervisor in the event that the participant needs to ask any questions.

However, all the participants were not comfortable to append their signatures due to the nature of the study. The researcher then orally sought informed consent from the participants instead of asking them to fill informed consent forms. The researcher realized that insisting on signing the consent forms would have induced fear in respondents since signed documents can be traced. Hence they may feel that they may be traced and be victimized, this would have also made some respondents withdraw from the study.

4.9.7. Confidentiality

Confidentiality and anonymity are also crucial ethical issues considered in this research. Singer et al (1995) noted that assuring confidentiality modestly improves responses when researchers ask about highly sensitive topics. Anonymity, confidentiality and the right to withdraw from the study were spelt out at the onset of the study. The researcher determined that no harm came to the individual participants after participating in the research. The researcher ensured that the resulting research and publications. On anonymity, the researcher did not use the participants names in the final write up but used the respondent's gender, age and degree program when pointing out their views. Nachmias and Nachmias (1996, 88) emphasised the above stated idea when they indicated that the researcher must not identify or associate the name with the data and should not acquire names on research.

4.9.8. Right to self determination

The researcher also informed every participant about his or her right to withdraw from the research at any given time of the study. By so doing, the researcher took into consideration Wieger (2007) view that participants should understand that they have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without any repercussion. In the study participants were told that they can also withdraw retrospectively, that is after they have been debriefed and they ask for their own data and recordings to be destroyed.

4.9.9. Summary of Chapter

The chapter focused on research methodology used to collect data from the field in this study. The section described the plan for the study which is a case study. It also raised the population to be used and the required sample which the researcher thought was representative. The researcher identified the relevant instruments for the study, data collection procedure, data analysis method, ethical considerations. In the next chapter, the researcher describes the findings from data collected using this methodology.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

5.0. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the results from the current study in consistence with the research objectives. The objectives of this study were to find out how university graduates view politics and elections in Zimbabwe, find out whether university graduates vote in elections and to assess how they perceive education and voting behaviour. The data is presented in four categories is line with the research objectives. The categories are organised in terms of themes and sub-themes originating from data analysis. In line with the first and second objective the researcher observed that the informant had a negative view of politics and elections in the country. The researcher presents the findings on whether education as a stimulating interest in politics in consistence with the third objective. All the respondents felt that education did not stimulate political interest in them. Lastly, the researcher also noted that most responded had never voted whilst a few who had before had also disengaged from voting.

5.1. Presentation of findings

The researcher will first present the socio-demographic information of the participants. Socio-demographic information of females is presented first then followed by that of men. Various themes to be presented were generated by the thematic content analysis method. Thematic content analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

5.2. Participants' socio-demographic information

Female participants' information

All the seven women were the residents of Glen-Norah A and five were married with children, two were not married. The ages of the participants ranged from 24 years to 38 years, wherein the majority were between ages 30– 38 years (n=5). All participants were holders of different university degrees and all of them were employed, both formally and informally.

The majority of the respondents were women in their 30s (n=5) and only two were in their mid-20s (n=2). In terms of education, two were holders of social science degrees (n=2). Other participants were holders of commercial and science degrees (n=5). The majority of the participants were self-employed (n=4). One was running a family tuck-shop; the other was running a printing business. The other two were self-employed as ECD teachers at a home crèche they own. Of the formally employed, one was a pharmacist and the other one worked for the city council. In the study there were also five married women (n=5) and two were single (n=2) as shown above.

Male participants' information

Majority of men in the study were between the ages 25-35 (n=5) and unlike women participants, most men in the study had degrees in commercial studies (n=4). Others participants had social science degrees (n=2) and one was a holder of a Law degree. Most men in the study were not formally employed (n=5) and three of them were involved in buying selling imported clothes, of the other two, one offered extra-lessons to O and A level students. Of the three employed participants, one was a Lawyer, the other one worked for ZIMRA and the other one was a teacher at a private college. In terms of marriage, five of the participants were not married (n=5) and two (n=2) were married.

5.3. Political disillusionment among graduates

One of the major factors that led to respondents being disappointed by Zimbabwean politics is the dominance of one political in the country. This has been seen by both male and female respondents as unhealthy for the development of the country since there are no fresh ideas that will drive country forward. It was further pointed out that this dominance is mainly spearheaded by the media, especially television and radio. Other political parties do not enjoy media coverage; this has reduced them to a phantom existence. A disappointed male respondent said

“Our country is a de facto one party state disguised as a democracy”

(Man, 28, holder of law degree)

Both male and female respondents complained that the dominant party in the country is mostly dominated by the elderly and there is very little room for young people to participate effectively. This makes politics unattractive for the young people whose interests and concerns run diametrical from the old political leaders. The few young people in politics are seen as used to serve the interest of the senior politicians.

“Politics in the country is led by the elderly who participated in the liberation struggle and the young are seen as leaders of tomorrow, meaning that today there is little room for them”.

(Female, 29, sociology degree)

Also, the respondents echoed their disappointment in Zimbabwean politics which they described as violent politics. Case reference given was the 2008 pre and post-election period where there was massive political victimisation. This according to the respondents makes politics a dangerous terrain. Political violence led the females to have a strong dislike for politics and political participation because they fear victimisation which might lead to them losing their lives and leave their young children as orphans. Some males pointed out that some close people they know who were politically active lost their lives to politically motivated violence. One participant remarked that

“Politics in Zimbabwe is dangerous because you might lose your life if you became too involved especially when you are a known member of a party”

(Male, 30, economics degree)

Participants in the study argued that politics in the country is a disappointment because most politicians are selfish. They all highlighted that instead of being servants of the masses, politicians use the masses as servants to enrich themselves. All the participants agreed that politics has become one of the most lucrative “professions” where greedy people can quickly amass a lot of wealth. They were despondent and view politicians and political leaders, who, they believe, ‘use people to get to the top’ and ‘only think of themselves’ while they ‘eat the money’ as shameless and selfish.

“Politics in Zimbabwe only benefit leaders while those who voted them languish in poverty”

(Female, 34, Psychology degree)

For the respondents, once politics ceases to benefit the electorate it ceases to serve its purpose and the electorate will cease to have interest in it for there is no incentive to be in it. Respondents believe that politics has become an arena where greedy and selfish individuals can easily deceive the masses to acquire political offices which they would use to illegitimately enrich themselves. This makes the respondent feel that politics in the country is not health as it becomes a cancer that cause numerous problems for the society instead of solving them.

5.4. Residents were disillusioned by elections

One of the research questions asked is about the respondent's views on elections in the country and the response given clearly showed disappointment in the election. One of the main causes of this disillusionment is the violence which often characterise elections in the country both before and after elections. The worst part is that the violence is at times indiscriminate as pointed by participants. Reference was given to 2008 run-off elections and those experiences have led all the respondents in the study to view elections negatively. Also both males and females felt that elections have become a national manifestation of hypocrisy, for them, elections have ceased serving their purpose of reflecting the will of the people and the power of the people in deciding their leaders. Elections are seen as serving those in power only at the cost of the masses. This realisation has actually made this group of people to become disillusioned and apathetic towards elections held in the country.

5.5. Graduates viewed elections as a formality

Respondents in the study viewed elections in the country as a mere formality done to create a mirage or façade to the masses that the country is democratic and that the leaders are democratically chosen. The real truth as the interviewees pointed out is that the electoral system is biased towards the party in power since the body that run elections is headed by an individual chosen by the president. Therefore, this makes the elections lose their credibility making them a formality in which the winner is already known.

“Participating in elections is a waste of time since the ruling party is always the winning party”

(Man, 28, holder of law degree)

Despite lacking confidence in the electoral system, research subjects also felt that the prevailing conditions during elections such as violence and intimidation worked in favour of ruling party. This would result in a number of opposition members' relinquish their right to vote resulting in the ruling party winning the election.

“People especially in rural areas are physically and psychologically intimidated such that they fear casting there ballot”

(Woman, 34, sociology degree)

The respondents had an awareness of the various tactics used to win elections and for them participating is like fighting a lost cause.

5.6. Education does not stimulate political interest

Participants were asked whether they view education as a key factor in stimulating political interest and both quotas did not see education arousing interest specifically to themselves. The groups reasoned that it might be a stimulant to some people, but to themselves education never aroused interest in politics. This is simply because education at different levels never really had an emphasis on politics and importance of participation.

“The education I got has nothing do with politics at all”

(Female, 24, Rural Urban Planning degree)

One female student noted that for many it is not the educational contents that stimulate interest but it is the college environment and the student politics that may motivate others to start liking politics in general. The male quota highlighted that education for them was about earning good grades and get a degree then ultimately a good job. One male participant had the following to say....

“Education in the country was meant to create workers since it was largely inherited from the colonialists. Therefore, the curriculum at all levels focused more on grooming future labour force with little emphasis grooming active citizens”.

(Man, 33, Sociology degree)

Education was therefore seen as hugely divorced from politics making the students careless about politics for they lacked political socialisation at school.

5.7. Voter apathy amongst the university graduates

In answering whether they have participated in elections, all the participants in the female quota professed that they had never voted simply because they lacked interest in politics and the process involved. The women also noted that they did not see a positive impact of politics in their lives.

“Whether you vote or not your life will remain the same”

(Woman, 32, economics degree)

Married women with children saw the registration process being tedious as well the actual voting as it is often characterised with long queues. The self-employed also noted that the nature of their jobs makes it hard for them to go about the long and tiresome process involved in voting. However, the major factors leading to apathy are political violence, lack of confidence in the electoral system and selfishness of politicians. In the man’s quota at least two participants once participated in two elections, but did not do so in 2013 and vowed not to vote in the 2018 elections. They saw voting as a waste of time since it brought no change in their lives, other five participants never voted due to the nature of politics in which a “losing” party will always win because of a broken electoral system.

“Even if we vote by all our limbs the party in power will always win”

(Man, 42, marketing degree)

The respondent's views resulted in them developing a negative view towards participating in elections. This led others to completely participate while others who once did so disengaged themselves.

5.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the major finding of the research; the data was presented in its raw form, without being interpreted. The presentation was done in thematic form; the themes emerged from the response made by the respondents. The results have shown that people the views that are harboured by the respondents were the major factors that inhibited from voting. The next chapter will zero in on the interpretation and discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.0. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher presented the results of the current study. The study interrogated whether education discouraged voting. This chapter is aimed at discussing the major findings made in the study. In this chapter, the results will be summarised and interpreted. The meaning and significance of the study will be highlighted. Literal control will be done also to determine how the study support or deviate from the existing literature. The findings will be discussed in form of different themes that emerged from the researcher's interpretation of the findings.

Results from the study confirm that high level of education has a negative impact on voting especially in an undemocratic environment which is mainly characterised by political violence and victimisation. Thus results are consistent with findings by Croke et al (2014) quantitative study in Zimbabwe. However, the study also discovered that there are other demographic factors other than education that also discourage university graduates from voting which include socio-economic status, employment status, membership to trade unions, age as well as marital status. These findings are to be presented below in various themes.

6.1. Perceptions hugely influence voting behaviour

Results in this study shows that people with university education do not vote generally because of the negative views that they have towards politics and elections in the country. Thus Blumer (1969) a key interactionist argue that human beings structure their behaviour in relation to the meanings that the things have for them. Both men and women in the study viewed politics as characterised by violence, selfishness. This all made them to be highly disillusioned by politics and voting. Association of politics and violence develops fear of political victimization hence disengagement. This observation runs diametrical to the view held by the sociological model that individuals vote due to influence by sociological factors such marriage, gender, race, language and class. This finding tallies with Croke et al (2014) observation that educated people participate in election based on perceptions towards elections. Results of the study showed that university graduates had a negative perception towards politics. They viewed it as dominated by selfish political figures

that are corrupt and only care for their welfare. For this group of people, is a waste of time since it does not benefit them at all.

These negative views ultimately lead to the development of voter apathy. More so, it emerged in the research that university graduates lack confidence in the electoral system in the country. They view it as biased as such it is the system that decides who win or lose in spite of the votes, thus it is not the votes cast that decides who win the election, but it is the biased official who decide. However, verification of the authenticity of these perceptions is very difficult but if people harbour such negative view about the electoral processes they become less convinced to participate in an election in which their vote does not count. Thus the Interactionists argue that individuals do not simply act passively, but individuals are active beings whose action is based on meaning they attach to situations. This tally with Birch (2010) who noted that if voters fear that polls are corrupt, they have less incentive to bother casting a vote; participating in a process in which they do not have confidence will be less attractive, and they may well perceive the outcome of the election to be a foregone conclusion.

However, perceptions do not have to do whether the government is authoritarian or not, negative perception may emerge simply because people may be against certain government policies. Studies in the United States of America by Gomez (2009) showed that there was in decrease in voter turnout despite increase in university graduates. This observation makes this researcher treat with caution Croke et al conclusion that it is only in autocratic countries where the most educated disengage from voting. This study holds that the key issue is about perceptions that the most educated have towards politics and elections in their country and not whether the government is democratic or not.

6.2. Education develops voter's intellect

The results from this study contradicts the conventional view held by (Campbell et al. 1960; Nie et al. 1996; Schlozman 2002; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980) which portrays education as conditioning people who then passively participate in elections in the name of fulfilling their civic duty. In this study, it has been proved that level of education can discourage people from voting

since it empowers citizens such that they become analytical and scan the environment in which they are in and decide whether it is worth it to vote or not. Generally, university education sharpens one's intellect such that one becomes evaluative and one's action will be based on cost and benefit analysis (Persson, 2013). Therefore, in an environment characterised by violence during elections and selfish politicians who only serve their interests, university graduates are less likely to vote. University graduates are calculative, they weigh the costs and benefits of voting, and if costs in terms of victimisation, lack of benefits in terms of their life being improved then it is logical for them not to vote. This corroborates the rational action theory as well as the interactionist theory, participants in the study, as these theories assist, analyse and interpret the likely benefits or costs of their actions before deciding to vote. This is clearly captured by Downs (1957) who argued that the costs and benefits of voting are central to understanding why some groups in society fail to vote. Kamau (2016) study proved that educated Kenyans were less likely to vote and this is also due to the violence that usually characterise elections in that country. Therefore, this study is important in that it proves that the linear approach adopted by most researchers, Converse (1972, 324) that education is everywhere the universal solvent, and the relationship is always in the same direction only paints a half picture of the relationship between education and voting.

6.3. Education arouse belief in democracy

The research shows that education arouses belief in democratic values. The study has shown that the respondents complained about violence during elections, political victimisation, and bias in the electoral system. All the above mentioned complains shows that university graduates believe in a democratic political environment without which they will be discouraged to participate in elections. This is in sync with Dee's (2004) view that education increases cognitive ability and understanding of democracy. This shows that educated people largely vote in elections where the people are free to express themselves without victimization, where the electoral system is seen as fair and represents the will of the people. This dovetail with the interactionist concept of definition of situation articulated by Blumer (1969) which denote that individuals are active beings whose action is based on how they define situations. This explains why in the US more educated people vote since they interpret the political environment as more democratic hence vote in huge numbers. Therefore, lack of a democratic political environment in most emerging democracies and

authoritarian regimes discourage some university graduates to vote. This also shows the interactionist perspective that reality is subjective, whilst the graduates have their own reality of believing in democracy, other ordinary and lesser educated people have their own reality.

6.4. Influence of education on voting is contingent

The study has discovered that the positive influence of education on voting is relative or contingent on the political environment. It is the nature of politics and elections in a country that may also encourage university graduates to participate. The quality of politics is crucial as it develops interest and inspires university graduates to want to vote as they feel that their input counts. Jackson (1995) noted that education supposedly increases citizens' beliefs that they can effectively play a role in the political process. However, what is equally important is to understand that there are certain conditions under which the "Belief" emerge or die down. Education therefore, encourages people to vote in a more democrat environment where the educated feel that their input count. Conversely, in a politically unstable environment level of education discourages voting since the educated would feel that their vote does not count. Thus one's level of education is not the sole factor that encourages people to vote, but also the existing political environment can also encourage or discourage university graduates to vote. This shows that education on its own is not enough to influence people to vote in elections, equally important as noted by Croke et al. (2014) is whether the country is a democracy or an authoritarian regime. In an authoritarian regime education can discourage university graduates to participate as shown in the study. Croke et al. (2014) concluded that in countries with authoritarian regimes educated people do not vote as a sign of disgruntlement with the system in place.

6.5. Nature of education develops interest in politics

The findings also showed that it is not education per se that develop political interest, but it is nature of education that counts. All participants in the study were university graduates but lacked interest in voting. This contradicts the conventional view that education develops interest in politics. For instance, Rosenstone and Hansen (1993, 136) opines that education "imparts the knowledge and skills most critical to a citizen's task ,because of their schooling, the well-educated have the knowledge people require to understand the abstract subject of politics, to follow the

political campaign, and to research and evaluate the issues and candidates''. One cannot deny that education can develop interest in politics however; this should not be taken as a law (Croke et al. 2014). In some contexts as shown, education does not encourage people to vote. This is because the nature of education will be lacking strong political or civic education.

The same conclusion was drawn in Kenya by Kamau (2016) who noted that the curriculum was centred on producing skilled labourers and workforce to develop the economy, without helping Kenyans develop moral obligation or interest to participate in politics. This differs from America where civic courses are offered and education thus has an impact on participation. This tallies with Hillygus (2005) observation that curriculums that develop civic skills are those which have the strongest impact on voting. Findings in the study show that education does not always cultivate political interest and participation because the education may be lacking in developing civic skills. Thus besides disillusionment by politics and elections, respondents do not vote simply because they lacked interest in politics and political participation. Here the interactionist concept of definition of situation emerges because education did not enlighten participants about the importance of voting hence they define voting as of little importance to them.

This acted as a discouragement for them to participate in elections. Studies in the United States of America by Gomez (2009) showed that there was a decrease in voter turnout despite an increase in university graduates. This observation makes this researcher treat with caution Croke et al. (2014) conclusion that it is only in autocratic countries where the most educated disengage from voting. This study holds that the key issue is about perceptions that the most educated have towards politics and elections in their country and not whether the government is democratic or not.

6.6. Demographic factors influence on voting

The researcher made an interesting finding which influenced the voting behaviour of the studied university graduates. The researcher also observed that other demographic factors besides level of education were also essential in influencing voting behaviour of the cohort. Widfeldt (1995) notes that membership in trade unions is a strong mobilising factor in voting since members have exposure to the activists' efforts to make them cast their vote for or against the organization. This

develops a culture of voting even in national elections; however in the study the majority of participants were informally, employed for example,

One was running a family tuck-shop; the other was running a printing business. The other two were self-employed as an early childhood development teachers at a home crèche they own.

Hence were not members of trade unions as a result lacked a key mobilizing factor. This could also explain their lack of participation.

The Standard model of political participation argues that higher socioeconomic status has positive effect on electoral participation because higher-income citizens also have a higher material interest in the system (Leighly, 1995). In the study, the majority of the participants both male and female had a low economic status because they were not formally employed and most survived on low income informal activities.

Most men in the study were not formally employed (n=5) and three of them were involved in buying selling imported clothes, of the other two, one offered extra-lessons to Ordinary and Advanced level students.

Thus basing on this model, the participants' low economic status could have resulted in them not to develop interest in for they lacked the economic stake in the system. In other words the participants were not benefiting from the existing political system such that they would want to participate in voting to either defend their benefits as rich people would.

Another demographic factor which could explain the group lack of voting is marital status. The majority of males and some females in the study were not married.

In terms of marriage, five of the male participants were not married (n=5) and two (n=2) were married

Gehring and Wagner (1999) argue that, living with a partner increases the chance of voting because the partner is another potential mobilising source. Moreover, Children enhance one's personal interest in public provision. The study confirms this observation since few respondents were

married (two females and one male). Therefore, it can be that majority of respondents both males and female lacked a close partner to encourage them to vote.

Age is another demographic factor which influences voting behaviour. The life circle effect model by Verba and Nie (1972) and Nie et al. (1974) seem to be confirmed in this study, the theory states that political participation is low in youth. Young people lack of a stable basis for concern with politics and such a basis only comes with long-term residence, full involvement in the work force, marriage and a family Nie et al (1974). In the study, most respondents from both gender were not married, lacked a formal stable employment and no children hence the age of the participants could also explain why they were not voting.

From the analysis of these demographic factors it is apparent that though the participants' level of education had a negative impact in their voting behaviour the impact should not be over exaggerated. Unlike Croke et al. (2014) study which emphasised the role of education in developing democratic values which if missing in the country educated will not vote, the above observation shows that the role of education alone should not be over emphasised. Other demographic factors pointed out above also have a considerable impact in encouraging or discouraging people participate in voting including university graduates.

6.7. Gender and voting

Generally women are seen as participating less in politics and voting compared to men and a number of explanation have been proffered which include lack of time due to caring for children at home as well fear of labelled as immoral (Research and advocate unit, 2016). However, unlike other studies, this research has shown that there is no difference in voting between female and male university graduates. Most of them had never voted and their reasons were the same, disillusionment by politics and elections because of the violence that comes with it. This tally with the view given by WAD (2016), that generalising the difference between men and women in voting is misleading since women are not a homogeneous group.

6.8. Chapter summary

This chapter discussed of findings of the study and it reviewed that education generally inculcates democratic values and principles as evidenced in the existing literature. However, deviating from existing literature, the discussion shows that rather than participating in voting, university graduates disengaged themselves from voting. This was due to their negative perception of the politics and elections in the country. The discussion also discovered that disengagement of the graduates could also have been influenced by other demographic factors such as income, marital status, and affiliation to trade union among other factors noted in the discussion.

6.9. Conclusion

The foregone study interrogated the education participation link among university graduates in Harare, Zimbabwe. The research triggered by a dearth in research aimed at testing the education voting link in Zimbabwe. The study sought to test the impact of level of education on voting using the qualitative methodology.

The main research objective the study sought to achieve is whether university graduates in Harare vote in national elections. Analysis of results obtained from the qualitative research conducted it can be concluded that the electoral participation of university graduates is very low. The findings suggest that education has a negative (weak) rather than positive (strong) impact on voting among the university graduates studied. More so, indicate that the education-voting link is less relevant among the group studied, in other words education does not always encourage or positively influence voting as some researcher purport. High level of education (university education) in a politically unstable environment makes individuals decide to disengage from voting. From these findings the impact of education on voting is not always positive and it is also dependent on the political environment in a country and perception of individuals with university education of the prevailing environment.

Aside from the perceptions and the politically unstable environment, the nature of education in Zimbabwe since independence has very little emphasise on civic education meant to prepare

citizens for political participation. This differs from the US education which has that education from lower up to higher education. The system of education in Zimbabwe is too academic and is largely meant to produce white collar workers with very little or no political socialisation. This partly explains why education-voting link is less relevant among university graduates studied.

Also to note is that education interacts with some demographic factors to impact voting positively as shown in the study. Majority of the respondents in the research did not have other key mobilising factors such as high income, affiliation to trade unions, being married and have children. And this partly explains their poor electoral participation. Overall, this means that the impact of education on voting is also influenced by a positive association with demographic factors. A negative association means that one may be highly educated as a graduate but chances of voting may be low if one lacks other key mobilising factors.

This research has thus made some key contributions as it has better the understanding of the impact of education on voting. The study major contribution is that the impact of education on voting is no linear and simplistic as portrayed by the absolute education model. The relationship is relative; it depends on factors such as type of education, level of education, political environment and demographic factors (affiliation to trade union, marriage and family and high income). This study is also significant in that it has contributed to the growing literature that challenges the conventional assumption that over exaggerate how education is always positively linked to voting. The view is over exaggerated as it ignores other factors that interact with education to positively influence voting as noted above.

Conclusively, it is plausible to argue that education encourage voting under conditions which include positive perception of the political, electoral environment, decent formal employment, and education system that cultivate civic responsibility. Without these conditions, education would have less impact on voting as noted in the study.

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Appendices

Informed consent form

I volunteer to participate in a research conducted by **Mr Sylvester Magwegwe** a student at the University of Zimbabwe. I understand that the research is designed to gather information about the impact of education on voting behaviour. I will be one of approximately 16 people being interviewed for this research.

1. My participation in this research is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.
2. If however, I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.
3. The interview will last approximately 25minutes. Notes or voice recording will be done during interview.
4. I understand that the researcher will not identify my name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protects the anonymity of individuals and institutions.
5. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntary agreed to participate in this study.
6. I have been given a copy of consent form.

My Signature

Date.....

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS GUIDE

- What are your views on Zimbabwean politics?
- Do you consider yourself as having interest in politics?
- Does your level of education influence your interest or disinterest in politics?
- Have you ever voted before and why?
- Did you register to vote in the forthcoming elections?
- How do you view elections in the country?
- What encourages you to vote/discourages you from voting?
- Do you think university education develops interest in politics especially voting?