BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH IN DECISION MAKING IN ZIMBABWE, WARD 35, MAZOWE DISTRICT

BY

(B200392B)

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Peace and Governance in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Peace and Governance
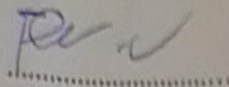
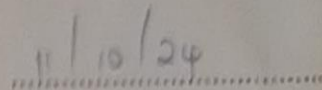Supervisor: DR C MUCHEMWA

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ABSRACT

The participation of youth in decision-making processes at the local level, particularly in Ward 35 of Mazowe District, is a critical aspect of community governance and development. This research aims to explore the current level of involvement of young people in decision-making within the ward and to identify potential barriers and opportunities for their increased participation. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, including surveys and interviews, to gather insights from both youth and community leaders. Findings indicate that there are significant challenges hindering the active involvement of youth in decision-making processes within the ward. These challenges include limited access to information, insufficient representation in local governance structures, and cultural norms that may marginalize the voices of young people. Furthermore, the research reveals that there is a growing awareness among youth regarding the importance of their participation in decision-making, particularly in matters that directly affect their lives and future prospects. The of this research extend to the broader discourse on democratic governance and community development, emphasizing the need to create inclusive platforms that amplify the voices of young people in shaping the future of their communities. By addressing the identified barriers and leveraging the existing enthusiasm among youth, local authorities and community organizations can foster a more participatory and representative decision-making environment within Ward 35, Mazowe District.
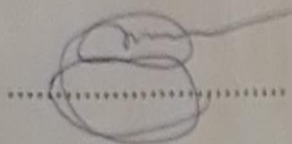
APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned relevant authorities certify that they have read and recommended to the Bindura University of Science Education for acceptance of a research project titled, 'THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH IN DECISION MAKING IN WARD 35, MAZOWE DISTRICT submitted by FORTUNATE CHIDINDI in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN PEACE AND GOVERNANCE STUDIES
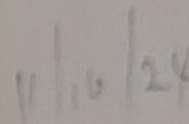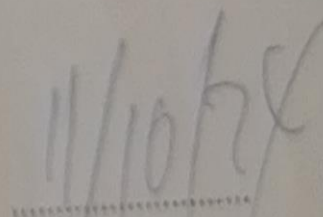
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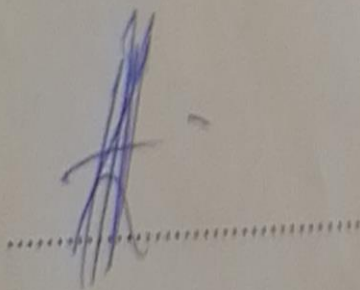
DECLARATION FORM

I, CHIDINDI FORTUNATE registration number (B200392B), declare that the content of this dissertation is my own original work with the exception of such quotations or references which have been attributed to their sources and has not been previously submitted to any other university.

SIGNATURE……………………………………….DATE…………./………………../…………

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my beloved parents Mr and Mrs Chidindi, together with my siblings

Faith ,Febby, Florence and Floret . Not forgetting wonderful friends. Your love, encouragement

and support will forever be appreciated.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BUSE – BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

NGO – NON GOVERMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

NYP – NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

RDC – RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Young people are the future of today, but they represent a critical portion of the population suffering from poverty, discrimination, marginalization, conflict and violence, as well as the adverse consequences of migration, demographic shifts, and climate change. Voices from around the world have highlighted the need to address the under representation of youth in decision-making processes. Youth are particularly vocal around the critical issues of governance, voice, and accountability. Their awareness of these challenges, and their vision for solutions are opportunities to shape innovative responses that leverage new technologies, partnerships and revisited strategies for the future.

According to the United Nations (2020), Youth participation in decision making has become a global trend. The young people have been used as tools of violence instead of being developers of

their countries due to lack of education, unrealized leadership skills and lack of political will. Reports on the International Human Rights Day, 2019, young people were recognized as a major human resource for development key agents for social change and innovation of the world. The youth are included in the Sustainable Development Goals aiming to promote the participation of youth in decision making around the globe, also aiming to improve the number of youths taking part in decision making processes.

In addition, the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (2010) said there are limited opportunities for youth to engage in decision-making. Therefore, youth feel themselves excluded and marginalized in society and in the community. This statement is supported by Fleming's (2012) study that there is too much adult control in the process of participation in activities involving youth. Young people are disappointed about the rate of change and the lack of accountability and feedback from adults. In comparison to other countries in Africa, youth in Zimbabwe have faced similar challenges (Campbell, 2007; Gibson, 2012; Makau, 2014). For example, in South Africa, young people have struggled to find jobs and have a say in the political process (Campbell, 2007; Gibson, 2012). In Kenya, youth have also struggled to have their voices heard and to participate meaningfully in society (Makau, 2014). Based on these arguments, African youths still needs to rise up and participate in decision making so that opportunities are directed at them directly, if they represented equally.

Youth participation in Zimbabwe has a long and complex history (Mlambo, 2009) from the struggle for independence to the present day. Young people have played an important role in shaping the country's political, economic, and social landscape (Dzimiri, 2014; Choto, 2015). However, youth unemployment is a serious problem, with estimates ranging from 60% to 80%. This high rate of unemployment makes it difficult for young people to participate in the political

and economic life of the country. The lack of job opportunities also leads to a range of other problems, such as poverty, crime, and social unrest. Despite significant challenges, including a lack of resources and political will, initiatives such as the National Youth Policy (NYP) was launched in 2014. This policy aims to provide a framework for youth participation in all areas of life, including education, employment, and politics and the National Youth Development Trust have made important strides in promoting the active participation of young people in Zimbabwean society. While much remains to be done, the future of youth participation in Zimbabwe looks promising.

The young people are yet to realize that they are the backborn of development in their communities. Through empowerment and innovation, the youths can work to improve societies, this can only be done if they are represented in the decision-making process, In Ward 35, Mazowe district, and the youths are underrepresented. Looking at the community board members only one youth have a sit to represent the young people and being one there is lack of support ending up being overpowered by the adults in decision making processes. Some are not even aware of their rights and this has led to adults heading the developments processes in their favour, the youths being forced to follow behind.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem is the lack of participation of youth in decision making. There was a significant underrepresentation of young people in decision making processes resulting in a lack of youth perspectives and ideas being considered in community matters. This exclusionary trend hinders the holistic development of the community, as the valuable insights and innovative solutions that youth can contribute are not effectively integrated into decision making forums. Consequently, the

lack of participation of youths in Ward 15 has led to an increase rate of poverty, underdevelopment of the communities and a high rate of drug and substance abuse.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To assess the challenges that hinder their participation in the decision-making process of the community.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the barriers, challenges and factors that limit or discourage youth from actively engaging in decision making.

2. To assess the level of youth participation in decision making in Ward 35, Mazowe

3. To understand the perspectives, needs, and aspiration of young people in ward 35 in Mazowe regarding their involvement in community matters and decision making.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the barriers, challenges and factors that limit or discourage youth from actively**?**

2. What is the level of youth participation in decision making in ward 35.

3. What are the perspectives, needs and aspiration of young people in ward 35 in Mazowe regarding their involvement in community matters?

1.6 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

➢ Youth are not currently well-represented in decision making processes in the community. This assumption suggest that youth lack awareness among about how to get involved and lack of opportunities to get involved.

- Youth feel disengaged from the community. This assumption suggests that young people feel that they are not listened to by community leaders, they may feel that their needs are not meet by the community

- Youth participation in decision-making can have positive impacts at both the individual and societal levels. This includes assumptions that involving young people can lead to better policies, increased civic engagement, improved youth well-being, and stronger communities.

- The assumption that there are challenges and barriers that hinder meaningful youth participation. This includes recognizing factors such as power imbalances, limited resources, lack of awareness or understanding, and societal attitudes that may limit youth engagement in decision-making processes.

- The assumption that youth participation can empower young people by giving them a sense of ownership, agency, and responsibility. This assumption suggests that involving young people in decision-making can contribute to their personal growth, skill development, and self-confidence.

1.7 SIGINIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will provide insight into the factors that influence youth participation in decision making and inform policy decisions about youth participation in decision making. The study will also improve youth outcomes such as educational attainment, career prospects and health and wellbeing so as to improve community relations and reduce conflict.

1.8 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Youth participation typically focuses on individuals within a specific age range of 15 to 35 years, this delimitation excludes children and older adults from direct participation, although their perspectives may still be considered indirectly. The study covers ward 35 in Mazowe which consist of four compounds namely Pearson, Moyo, Mlambo and Selby. The study spread from 2000 to 2023. The decision making is based on community leadership, developmental projects, land distribution and empowerment of youth.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following limitations may affect the quality of the research findings:

- Respondents might not want to be politically connoted therefore they might hold information in the fear of being misunderstood, the researcher will try by all means to justify herself and to show the respondents that the research is strictly about the academics not politics.

- The possibility of selection bias in study, this is when the participants in the study are not representatives of the whole population, which can affect the generalization old findings, and therefore the researcher must in interview more youths so as to cover more parts of the population.

1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

a) **Youth**–According to the constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013; Article 266 defines youth as people between the age of 15-35 years old.

b) Youth Empowerment – According to the International Youth policy Foundation (2003), it is a process of increasing young people`s sense of agency and control over their lives and helping them gain the skills and resources they need to succeed.

c) Decision making – The process selecting a course of action from a range of possible option (Robinson. 2011).

 d) Community Development – it is a process of collective action aimed at improving the quality of life for a particular community through empowering and enabling local residents to make decisions about their own lives (Bolten. 2006).

1.11 DISSERTATION OUTLINE

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the research will be introduced as well as background of the study, statement of the problem, aim and objectives, research questions, justification of the study, limitations of the study and definition of terms.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will clearly provide major literature that supports and validates the topic. Applying theories that are applicable, useful to the research problem and analysing different opinions by different scholars.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter will discuss the research methodology as well as the research design. It also describes the research plan.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In this chapter the results will be presented as well as data analysis. Research findings will be presented in themes and in relation to available literature.

CHAPTER FIVE SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

This chapter is about the summary of the research problem and the findings will be presented. Conclusions will be presented about the data and also noting the recommendations. Areas of further researched will be proposed.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This study is guided by one theory, the empowerment theory. Theory suggests that, young people need empowerment to increase their participation in decision making processes. This chapter will also review the literature work of different scholars on the challenges that are limiting youth participation, the level of youth participation as well as the perspectives, needs and aspirations regarding the involvement of youth in decision making.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

The study is guided one theory which is the empowerment theory. The empowerment theory of youth participation was first developed by Albert Bandura in 1995, in his book "Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies." Since then, the theory has been widely used to understand and improve youth

empowerment initiatives. Bandura's theory has been particularly influential in the field of youth development. The empowerment theory focuses on the process through which individual and communities gain control over their lives and decision-making processes. Applying this theory can help understand how empowering young people with knowledge, skills, resources and supportive environments can enhance their participation in decision making.

The empowerment theory suggests that young people are empowered when they have four key resources, a sense of self-efficacy, social support, opportunities to participate, and the ability to control their lives. Bandura defines self-efficacy as the belief that one can successfully perform a task or achieve a goal, it can play a significant role in a young person's ability to participate in decision-making. When a young person has a strong sense of self-efficacy, they are more likely to believe that their input is valuable and that they can make a difference. Social support can come from a variety of sources, including family, friends, and the broader community. To expand on the concept of social support, it's important to note that there are two different types of social support, emotional support and instrumental support. Emotional support refers to the emotional and psychological support that young people receive from others. Instrumental support refers to the tangible, material support that young people receive, such as financial support. Young people need to feel that they are genuinely valued and supported by the people in their lives. Moving on to the third resource, opportunities to participate can take many forms, such as involvement in extracurricular activities, civic engagement, or community service. When young people have opportunities to participate, they can gain valuable skills and knowledge that can help them become more engaged and empowered. The fourth resourc is control over one's life. This refers to the degree to which young people feel like they have agency and control over their lives. Without control over one's life, it can be difficult to feel motivated to participate in decision-making

processes. If young people feel like they have no control over their lives, they may feel like their voices don't matter and that they have no impact on the decisions that affect them.

The empowerment theory suggests that there are three key conditions that need to be met in order to promote youth empowerment: support, opportunities, and control, According to Bandura, the three conditions of support, opportunities, and control need to be balanced in order for empowerment to occur. If any one of these conditions is lacking, then empowerment will be difficult to achieve. For example, if a young person has access to opportunities but lacks the necessary support, they may not be able to take advantage of those opportunities.

According to the empowerment theory, there are three main outcomes: improved well-being, increased personal agency, and better community involvement. In other words, the theory is only saying, when young people are empowered and become more involved in their communities, they can have a significant impact on the world around them. They can bring about positive change in areas such as social justice, environmental sustainability, and economic development.

Bandura also identified three basic human needs that are essential for empowerment, recognition, meaningfulness, and self-determination. Recognition refers to a young person's need to feel respected and valued. Meaningfulness refers to a young person's need to feel that their actions have purpose and make a difference. And self-determination refers to a young person's need to feel in control of their own life. In order to meet these needs, it's important to create a supportive environment for young people. This environment should be one that is safe, trusting, and non-judgmental.

Bandura identified three key obstacles to youth empowerment: environmental impediments, personal inhibitions, and personal doubts. Environmental impediments refer to factors such as

poverty and discrimination that can limit a young person's opportunities. Personal inhibitions refer to negative thoughts and beliefs that can hold a young person back from taking action. And personal doubts refer to a lack of confidence in one's abilities. However, it is possible to overcome these obstacles by cultivating hope, efficacy, and resilience. The empowerment went on to portray the benefits of youth empowerment which are improved mental health, increased self-efficacy, improved academic achievement, and reduced delinquency.

Based on the theories and research of Albert Bandura, it's clear that youth empowerment is an important goal for society. The benefits of youth empowerment include improved mental health, increased self-efficacy, improved academic achievement, and reduced delinquency. It's important to remember that youth empowerment is a process, not a one-time event. Do you think society is doing enough to promote youth empowerment Bandura believed that society can do more to promote youth empowerment? He called for a greater focus on young people's strengths and capabilities, rather than their problems and deficits.

2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.3.1 THE CHALLENGES AND FACTORS THAT LIMIT OR DISCOURAGE YOUTH FROM ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN DECISION MAKING.

Different scholars have pointed out challenges that limits the participation of youth in decision making. The challenges are lack of authority, lack of resources. And lack of knowledge (Fischer & Lieber, 2002). Gastil (2010) posits that there is a need for more deliberative processes at the local level. Gastil believes that local governments can play a crucial role in implementing ideas developed through deliberation. He also argues that there is a need for more education and training in deliberation skills. Gastil believes that if citizens are better equipped to participate in deliberative processes, the chances of implementing their ideas will be higher. Hartmann (2005)

added that youth lack opportunities for meaningful engagement, she argues that youth are often excluded from decision making processes because theye are seen as not ready or not able. However, Dean opposed Gastil and Hartmann's arguments stating that the deliberative approach is flawed because it fails to take into account the power imbalances that exist in society. Sheldon (2010) argues that many of the challenges that Hartmann and Gastil identify are not specific to youth. For example, he argues that the lack of trust in government is not unique to young people. From the above analysis, therefore deliberation is often seen as a key part of the decision-making process. Without deliberation, decisions can be made based on biases, personal interests, or a lack of understanding of the options available. By deliberating on an issue, participants can be sure that all relevant factors have been considered and that the best decision has been made. So, deliberation can be seen as a way to ensure that decision-making is done in a fair and thoughtful way.

2.4 THE LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

Moving on, the other theme from the study is the level of participation of youth in decision making. One of the main arguments is that youth are less likely to be involved in decision-making because they are not seen as legitimate decision-makers. Many people believe that youth lack the experience, knowledge, and maturity to make important decisions. This argument often comes from adults who hold positions of power and who may feel threatened by the inclusion of young people in decision-making.

The argument by Craig Hart (2008) suggests that youth should be involved in decision-making processes, not only for their own sake, but also for the sake of future generations. He argues that it is important to give youth a voice so that they can help shape the world they will inherit. According to Hart, the level of youth participation in decision-making is often very low. He cites a number of studies that show that youth are rarely involved in decision-making processes, even

when the decisions directly affect them. This can lead to a lack of trust and a feeling of powerlessness among young people. Hart argues that there is need to increase the level of youth participation in order to create a more just and democratic society. One of the ways that Hart suggests we can increase the level of youth participation is by creating more opportunities for youth to have a voice. This could include things like creating youth advisory councils, providing opportunities for youth to give input on policies that affect them, and involving youth in the design of programs and services This is also confirmed by Levine (2007), who says that the level of youth participation is often low because they lack the resources and support, they need to participate effectively. He also produced a number of studies that show that when youth are given access to resources, such as mentors, training, and information, they are more likely to participate in decision-making processes. He argues that it is not enough to just give youth a voice, we need to give them the tools they need to make a difference.

2.4.1 THE INFORMAL APPROACH ON THE LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING.

One of the main critics of both Hart and Levine is Peter Levine's colleague, Harry Boyte (2004). He argues that both of these approaches place too much emphasis on formal structures and processes, and not enough on the informal ways that young people participate in society. He argues that young people are already participating in a variety of ways outside of formal channels, and that these forms of participation should be valued and supported. Boyte's critique is based on the idea that Hart and Levine's approaches are too limited in scope. They focus on formal structures and processes, such as government institutions, community organizations, and programs. Boyte argues that these approaches fail to recognize the informal ways that young people participate in society, such as through their families, peer groups, and online communities. He argues that these informal forms of participation are just as important as the formal ones, and should be valued and

supported. From the above analysis, it seems that the level youth participation in decision making is mainly measured from a formal perspective only, there is need to balance all sectors and consider them as equal.

2.4.2 LADDER OF PARTICIPATION MODEL

Ladder of participation is a model of participation which was developed by Roger Hart in (1992) with the aim of enabling young people takes an active part in decision making and gets an opportunity to have a voice in society. The model shows that, in different activities seemingly involving young people but they have nothing in common with the true participation. It is a model with eight levels aiming at helping adults establish conditions and environment for youth participation. The level of manipulation, decoration, participation for show, assigned and informed, another level is adults make decision, the level of adult initiative, the level of young people initiative and leadership and the last one is the level of young people initiative and the decision made in partnership with adults (Roger Hart, 1992).The model IS useful to the study because it helps the researcher to understand level of participation that establishes conditions and environment for youth participation.

2.5 THE PERSPECTIVES, NEEDS AND ASPIRATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE REGARDING THEIR INVOVEMENT IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

The youth are a very vibrant group that has less patience and more hope, they are mainly focused on the future. So, if they are to be engaged in decision making and development of their communities, they first consider the benefits and positive outcomes. Tarrow (1994) argues that social movements are key to understanding youth participation. He suggests that young people are more likely to participate in movements that they feel are important and meaningful to them. He also argues that social movements can provide a sense of community and belonging for young

people. The work of Jessica Taft (2013), suggests that young people need to be seen as equal partners in decision-making, rather than simply as "future leaders." She argues that this perspective can lead to a more empowering and participatory environment for young people

2.5.1 PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE INVOVEMENT OF YOUTH IN DECISION MAKING.

There are different perspectives on youth participation. The first perspective is the rational choice perspective, which suggests that youth participation is driven by self-interest and the pursuit of personal goals. The second perspective is the political socialization perspective, which suggests that youth participation is influenced by their political environment and social interactions. The third perspective is the social capital perspective, which suggests that youth participation is influenced by their social networks and resources. A contribution on perspectives is from Mancur Olson (1965), who argued that individuals decide whether or not to participate in a group based on the costs and benefits of doing so. According to Olson, individuals will only participate if the benefits outweigh the costs. This perspective suggests that youth participation can be increased by increasing the perceived benefits and reducing the perceived costs. Some scholars have suggested a more relational or social perspective on youth participation. One such scholar is Elisabeth Clemens, who has argued that individuals' decisions to participate are not just based on their individual costs and benefits, but also on their social relationships and their sense of obligation to others. Therefore, from the above analysis, it is clearly shown that youth participation is based on different perspectives and is directed mainly on meaningful benefits.

2.5.2 THE NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE REGARDING THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING.

William Sholaty. He suggests that young people have a number of needs and aspirations when it comes to decision-making. Firstly, they need to feel a sense of agency and empowerment.

Secondly, they need to have access to resources and opportunities. Thirdly, they need to have a voice in the decision-making process. Finally, they need to feel connected to the community and supported by their peers. He suggests that, in order to meet the needs and aspirations of young people in decision-making, we should create spaces where they can have a voice and be heard, while also providing access to resources and opportunities. At the same time, we should foster a sense of community and connection, and value the input of young people. Additionally, we need to address the power imbalances that exist in society, and empower young people to be agents of change. However, (Garcia, 2020), argues that Sholaty's recommendations are not universally applicable, and don't take into account the unique experiences and needs of young people from different backgrounds. Therefore, it seems that the needs of the young people are important to consider as it is the main factor that determine the level of engagement in decision making processes, youths need to feel that they are valued.

2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter is having summarised the main issues that are discussed by different scholars regarding the participation of youth in decision. The main points that emerged in the chapter are the level of participation, factors influencing the participation, challenges and needs and aspirations of youth engagement in decision making processes. Additionally, the study is guided by the empowerment theory which gives more insight on the participation of youth in decision making.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the data collection method used and includes issues such as sampling design plan, ethical issues that will be taken into account through the research process, administration of the data gathering tools response data achieved and an analysis plan of the information gathered. The information will later be analysed in chapter four and the data will be collected from different sources. Generally, this chapter serves to justify the method by the researcher to reach the stated research objectives in chapter one. Selection of one particular method over others was considered with the view of ensuring reliability, soundness and effectiveness off the research findings in addressing the research questions.

3.1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Research philosophy is considered the foundation of the research process, which helps researchers in gathering and analysing data to arrive at conclusions (Mauthner, 2020). It deals with the epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions underlying the research process. Research philosophy is essential in distinguishing the research approach to be adopted by the researcher while executing research work. Interpretivism is considered one of the research philosophies in social science research. It involves understanding and interpreting social reality through the subjective understanding of individuals. Interpretivism relies on qualitative research methods to explain behaviour, attitudes and experiences in the social and cultural world. Interpretivism relies on qualitative research methods that are designed to explore subjective experiences, attitudes and emotions of individuals. These methods are better

suited to capture experience and meaning because of their sensitivity to the social and cultural context (Pham, 2018).

This study used interpretivism as a research philosophy because there are various advantages of the qualitative research methods as it is application to interpretivism. First, qualitative research methods provide valid and reliable data as they have the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances and situations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Second, qualitative research enables researchers to generate hypotheses and test them in an exploratory manner (Creswell, 2014). Third, qualitative research allows researchers to collect rich and detailed data that can capture the richness of social life and culture (Maxwell, 2013). Although qualitative research methods have a couple of demerits, it has been suggested that qualitative research methods have the potential for researcher bias and the generalizability of its finding is questionable. The validity and reliability of the findings may be in question, and hence, the researcher needs to take care to reduce researcher bias by using objective data collection measures (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Welman et al (2008) stipulate that methodology is the viewpoint of a research process that comprises of the assumptions and values that save as basis of research and standards that a researcher uses in interpreting data and reaching conclusion. The researcher shall use the qualitative data collection tools. The researcher chose the qualitative research methodology as it is suitable for the type of study carried out. De vaus (2014) argue that qualitative data instruments such as open-ended questions and observations are used in the collection of data form participants in their settings. Berg (2009) points out that qualitative research examines how social experiences give meaning to relationships. Qualitative research illustrates the socially constructed nature of reality and in this case the divergent views of respondents help to give a clear picture of the degree

of youth participation in the decision -making process. Qualitative research methods facilitate the understanding of behaviours, interactions and activities of youths when it comes to the issue of participating in decision making.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Creswell (2009) a research design refers to the overall strategy that one chooses to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring one will effectively address the research problem, it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. Chiromo (2006) notes that there are many types of research designs and these include case study design, causal design, cohort design, cross-sectional design, experimental design and descriptive research design. In this research, the researcher used the case study design. The case study was intended to answer in most cases the "how, "what" and "why" questions which were quite significant in this study. The distinctive need for a case study arose out of the desire to assess the level of participation of youth in decision making process in Ward 35, Mazowe.

3.4 THE TARGETED POPULATION AND SAMPLE

A targeted group refers to a specific subset of people who share common characteristics, needs, or behaviors that make them the focus of a particular effort, initiative, or intervention.In this study, because of the impossibilities for the researcher to study on the whole population, the researcher used a sample. According to Ott and Longnecker (2010) a sample as any subset of measurements selected from the population. It can also be defined as a selection of a number of study units from a defined population. Sample comprises of the particular group of people within a society that are amongst the targeted population in the study. Since it was impossible for the researcher to collect data from the entire population of the community, the researcher targeted 8 youths, 2 youth leaders

and 2 community leaders within Ward 35. Sampling helps to reduce expenses and time by allowing information about the whole population to be estimated without having to survey each member of the population.

3.4.1 PURPOSIVE SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Purposive sampling was the main sampling strategy used in this study. Purposive Sampling is defined by Rubin and Babbie (2001) as a non-probability sampling method in which the researcher uses their judgement in selection of sample members. With purposive sampling, the process takes place with a specific goal in mind and it usually happen that specific predetermined groups are targeted in advance. (Patton, 2002:43). Key informants consist of ordinary citizens. These key informants are targeted for their knowledge on the research subject matter emanating from the positions that they occupy. The purposive sampling was chosen because it sought to identify people who, because of their experience or contacts had special insights into the research question.

However, a weakness of purposive sampling is that there is an element of subjectivity since the researcher forms a view to the preferred characteristics of the responds. It may also not be possible to extent the research findings to different research. Despite these shortcomings, purposive sampling remained the most suitable for the case study.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data collection is defined as the systematic gathering of observations or measurements (Coster, 2017). To gather dynamic and in-depth data the researcher made use of semi structured interviews. Information was obtained from a primary source of data. The use of this method will enable the researcher to have diverse sources of data which made it easy to avoid generalisation. The

researcher relied heavily on in-depth one on one interviews to the targeted individuals and other participants. Full anonymity was granted to those who participated.

3.5.1 INTERVIEWS

Interviews were also conducted between the researcher and the participants. Chiromo (2006) defines an interview as a planned and guided conversation. In this regard, the researcher drew out questions that solicited for appropriate responses on perceptions towards political participation. Patton (2002) notes that interviews offer both the interviewer and the interviewee the chance to clarify their questions and answers. The researcher observed that the interview method was a flexible technique since he was able to expose some underlying facts, perceptions and opinion of respondents.

The interviewer was skilful and made follow up of ideas, probing responses and investigates motives and feelings, which the questionnaire could not do. The way in which the response was made that is the tone of the voice, facial expression and hesitation provided information that a written response would conceal. Responses in an interview were developed and clarified. But however, interviews have limitation of that the presence of the researcher might make the interviewee feel reluctant to deal with matters of ethical controversy as well as those of a delicate nature. Leedy and Omrod (2010) point out that an interview requires a great deal of paying attention to ethical considerations.

3.6 DATA VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

3.6.1 VALIDITY

Validity in this case referred to the accuracy with which the test fulfilled the function that it was designed to achieve. The idea of validity is centred on methodological reflexivity primarily

because, "every aspect of research is both empirical and theoretical. (Patton, 2002:245). Validity also entails ensuring quality control through the knowledge production process as opposed to emphasizing the inspection of the end product (Kvale 1996: 236). The important aim of checking validity of research is to have "defensible knowledge claims" that stand competitions from other claims. (Kvale 1996). Following this brief discussion on validity, the importance of this study subjected to validity becomes self-evident.

3.6.2   RELIABILITY

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010) reliability is "the extent to which a specified procedure such as a measure yields consistent observation of the same facts from one tune to another". The researcher formulated questions that covered the content of each objective. Questionnaires were pretested in an effort to reveal ambiguities, conflicting items that were not relevant to the purpose of the study. Straightforward questions were asked to avoid ambiguity. Related questions followed each other in sequence. The aim was to ensure coordinated responses.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The students visited three compounds and conducted interviews with the selected participants. The main targeted individuals were the youths and youth leaders.

3.8 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The researcher used charts and graphs to present and analyse data collected. Data sourced from various sources was presented in graphs. Tables were used to represent information solicited from the secondary sources.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERARTIONS

Ethical considerations are defined as the norms of conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. (Resnik 2015). Ethical considerations are of significant importance in research. Ethical standards prevent falsifying or fabrication of data.

3.9.1 INFORMED CONSENT

The researcher used informed consent which is a process of ensuring that participants understand what it means to participate in interviews for their experiences so that they can consciously decide if they would want to participate or not informed consent can be achieved through the signing of a consent form or simply by talking to the participant. Informed consent assures the participant the respect they deserve for the study.

3.9.2 INTERVIEW ETHICS

During the interview, the researcher clearly explained that she would be writing down the issues emanating from the discussion. This was done to remove the suspicions that usually emerged when a respondent discovers that his/ her contributions are being recorded.

3.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter focused on different data gathering and analysis methods. The study's research design was a case study based on a qualitative paradigm whilst purposive sampling procedures were utilized to generate a sample from the ward 35, Mazowe population. Journals, textbooks served as secondary data sources and data gathering methods and all other procedures were employed to guarantee that the information used was reliable and capable of demonstrating the level of youth participation in decision making. The chapter also considered some ethical considerations that were observed during data collection. Chapter 4, gives a detailed analysis of the research findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSION OF FINDINGS

4.1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks at the findings of the research. The outcome from interviews and secondary documents will be analysed following the research objectives and research questions. Secondary sources are compared with the research conclusions from the interviews. The data is presented using graphs and tables to facilitate interpretation and analysis. The responses from the residents of Ward 35, Mazowe district played a part in filling the gaps on the problems and challenges faced by youth as well as the level of youth participation in decision making towards community development .Despite some limitations in the data collection and analysis methods, the findings provided valuable insights that contribute to the existing body of knowledge on youth participation.

4.2 THE BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF PARTICIPANTS

4.2.1 GENDER

FIGURE. 4.1
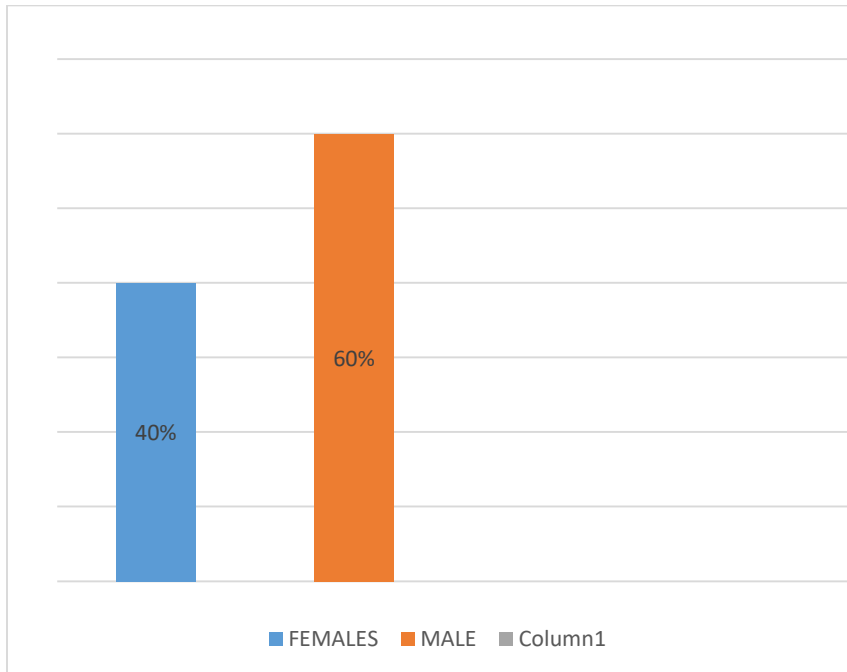
From the study findings, the highest number of participants were males with 60% while females were 40%, which shows that males are more active in participation, leadership as well as in decision making towards community development.

4.2.2 AGE

FIGURE: 4.2

AGE
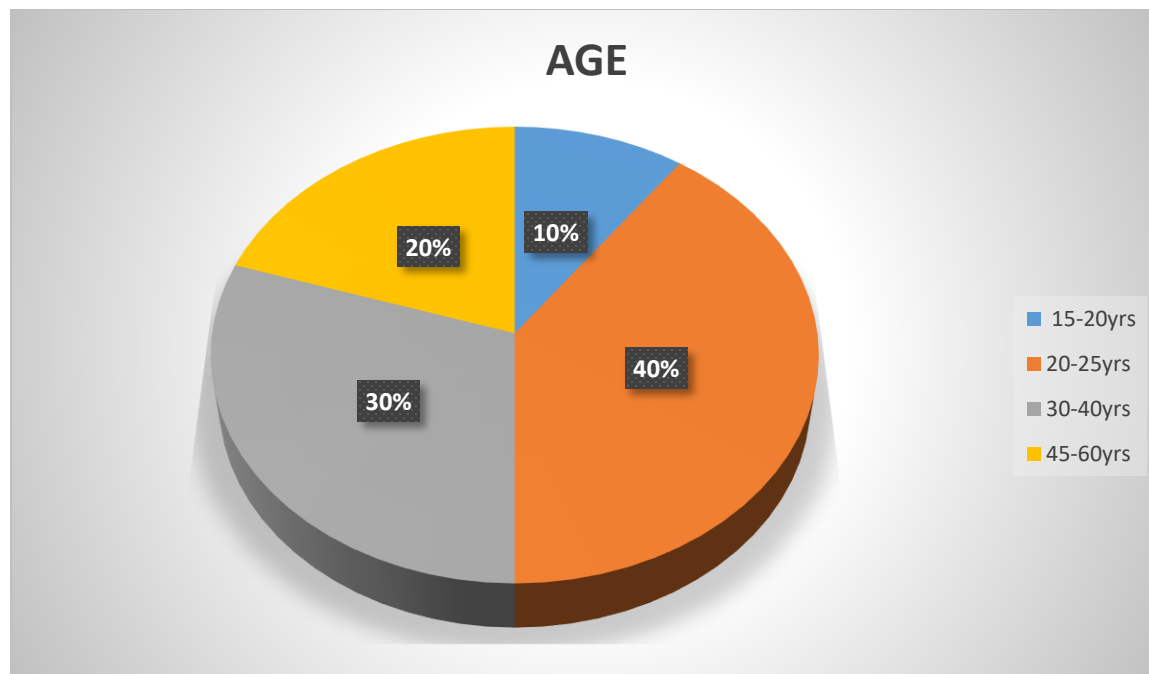
The highest percentage of participants was 40% ranging from 20 to 25 years followed by 30% of 30 to 40 years, followed by 20 % of 45 to 60 years and lastly was 10 % of 15 to 20 years of age. The above analysis shows that youth were more active in the research as they participated more in giving response during the exercise.

4.2.3 Marital status.

TABLE 4.1

STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
SINGLE	4	40%
MARRIED	5	50%
DIVORCED	1	10%
WIDOWED	0	0%
TOTAL	10	100%

40% of the participants whilst 50% are married and 10 % is divorced, this analysis shows that the research was mainly conducted by the youth.

4.2.4 Level of education

TABLE 4.2

Level of Education	No of Participants	Percentage
Non-schooling	0	0%
Primary	1	10%
Secondary	5	50%0
Tertiary	4	40%
Total	10	100%

The highest level of education of the participants was the secondary level which consisted of 40% followed by tertiary level with 40 % and 10% with only primary level .This shows that the level of understanding of the participants was high as most of them had expected education level especially the youth.

4.3 RESPONSE RATE

The researcher targeted 12 participants, 8 youths, 2 community leaders and 2 youth leaders and managed to get 10 interviews done which consisted of 6 youths 1 youth leader and 3 community leaders. The other 2 respondents .The other 2 respondents were absent due to work and personal reasons therefore the researcher failed to conduct interviews with them. Therefore, response rate was 83, 3 % out of the expected 100%.

4.4 DATA PRESANTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.4.1 UNDERSTING ON THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH IN DECISION MAKING

60% of participants showed an understanding of the effects of the participation of youth in decision making and 10% of the participants showed a low understanding of the participation of youth in decision making as they failed to define the key word which is decision making . One participant indicated that

Decision making is the process of coming up with one main idea extracted from different approaches towards the development of the community .During the course, youth should take part in the process and they should be included in every step of decision making.

The study attempted to review the participation of youth in decision making. The participants understood the importance of youth inclusion in all the processes that are made towards the development of the community. Youth participation in decision making continues to be important

for both individuals and communities, (Mc Ginnis 2019). This study reviews that the benefits of youth participation are not limited to one specific setting or time but rather remain relevant today. The more young minds are involved, the more new ideas emerge thus leading to improved living standards of communities.

4.5 THE VALUE OF YOUTH IN COMMUNITIES

The study attempted to find out whether the youth are valued or not in their communities. Both the adults and the youth agreed that youth are valued in the community because of so many reasons pointed out such as low levels of education, drug and substance abuse as well as youth isolating themselves from community matters.

One youth indicated that

The reason why youth are not valued in the community is because of our own negligence, among us a higher number is involved in drug and substance abuse and due to that the adults will view us as useless for there is no contribution you can give whilst under the influence of drugs.

 Another participant pointed out that

The youths in this community are not well educated, some of their highest level of education is grade 7 and from there they are just roaming about doing nothing that benefits the community, therefore even if us the adults try to value them, they will find a way to isolate themselves from the community affairs.

Other participants noted that the level of education and age are the conditions for youth to be valued in the community, if you are well educated or in the 30`s the chances of recognition on the community are very high. In general , it seems that youth are valued in their community , but the extent to which they are valued can vary .In some cases youth are seen as a valuable source of

energy and creativity and are given opportunities to participate in decision making processes whilst in other cases , youth are seen as a nuisance or a burden and they are not given the same opportunities ,(Haste and Cabraal ,2009) .Therefore the value of youth in the community is determined by how they portray themselves in the community , if you one is a drug addict they will be seen as nuisance but if a youth is well composed and willing to learn more than the community value such youth in the community to take part in decision making processes .

4.6 LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

The study aimed to find out the level of youth participation in the decision making processes. At least all participants concurred that the level of youth in the decision making in ward 35 is very low due to a cultural syndrome that says a man is able to be in leadership when he is older, in the late 30s or early 40s.

One participant said that

The level of youth participation is very low in ward 35, the main reason is age limit as adults are the most active leaders in making decision therefore to boost up the participation of youth as leaders we should start by valuing the youth and include them in all activities regardless of age but consider skills.

The study attempted to measure the level of youth participation in decision making in ward 35. One participant believed that the participation of youth is a process which is still at its lowest levels, he went on to say that the level can be rates to 2 as to 10 individuals in community leadership. This is supported by Rodger Hart`s` ladder of youth participation which shows that, in different activities seemingly involving young people but they have nothing in common with the true participation. It is a model with eight levels aiming at helping adults establish conditions and

environment for youth participation. The level of manipulation, decoration, participation for show, assigned and informed, another level is adults make decision, the level of adult initiative, the level of young people initiative and leadership and the last one is the level of young people initiative and the decision made in partnership with adults (Roger Hart, 1992). Therefore, the level of youth participation is still at a lower level from the research`s findings, the process is of up grading the youth to participate is low that on two or one youth is involved in the decision making processes therefore youths needs to step up to the next level and be more active in matters that requires their representation.

4.7 CHALLENGES THAT HINDERS THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH IN DECISION MAKING

Youth are facing a handful number of challenges that hinders their participation in the decision making processes. These challenges were also the main objective to be addressed during the researcher. Some of the challenges includes lack of awareness among adults about the benefits of youth participation, lack of support for youth who wants to participate and adults making decision, making decision without even considering the views of the young people.

One youth indicated that

Youth faces a challenge of age limit in participating in decision making, for example me I am nineteen finishing my O levels, according to the adults I am not old enough to be involved in community affairs despite the fact that my level of education may be higher than some of the adults in that committee, therefore we are facing a challenge of being rated by age not by abilities.

The youth leader stated that

Youth are only lacking support from the adults. The skills and abilities are there within so many youths but only a little push and support is required for the youth to participate in the decision making processes.

The research was able to fish out some challenges that are discouraging youth from participating in the decision making in ward 35 , Mazowe district .This is supported by Vromen and Robinson, (2017) who argues that there are a number of barriers that prevent young people from engaging in decision making processes, these includes a lack of opportunities for youth participation, a lack of support from adults and lack of training and capacity building .One participant added that in order to overcome these challenges , there should be youth programs where they are able to lead each other gaining skills as well as the advisory board for youth in the community which will guide the youth and giving them opportunities to speak their minds out . Therefore the youth are not just aware that they should participate but they are barriers that are limiting their willingness to participate and from these challenges it is shown that youths requires support , guidance and directions towards their engagement in the decision making process .

4.8 GROUPS THAT ARE NOT REPRESENTED IN DECISION MAKING

The study also pointed out a very pressing issue of unrepresented groups in the youth population. Although the youth's level of participation is low a higher number involved in community affairs are men .This can also be shown from the respondent's rate whereby only 4 young females took part in the exercise.

One participants indicated that

There is a big gap that needs to be addressed on gender balance, yes, the youth participating may be 2 or 3 in the division making process but if we pay much attention to gender all of them are

males. Therefore young women and teenagers are not represented in the youth population and this issue should be addressed within the community.

The study showed that there is need to involve all groups whilst encouraging the youth to participate in decision making .This is supported by Toni Schmander (2014) , who argues that the gender gap in leadership roles is not due to lack of talent or interest among women, but rather to the existence of implicit gender biases. These biases can lead people to view female leaders as less competent or effective, and this can result in fewer opportunities for women to advance in leadership roles. However, Dolan (2019) argues that despite the challenges facing young women, there are signs of progress and empowerment. She highlights the stories of young women who have taken initiative and created their own paths to success. She suggests that these women can serve as role models for other young women who want to make a difference in the world. From the above analysis it is shown that young women are not represented in the youth population for they lack motivation and opportunities also they are affected but the old beliefs that men are better leaders than women.

4.9 THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE YOUTH REGARDING THEIR PARTICIPATION

The study attempted to find out the wishes and aspirations of the youth towards their engagement in decision-making processes. The perspectives pointed but the youths included being valued, addressing issues faced by youths, mending the relationship between the adults and the youth.

One youth indicated that

As youth we wish to be heard and our views to be valued. If our voices are heard, it can encourage us to participate more as we know that our views will be put into account .Adding on, the adults need to recognize the youth in everything that they do. If they are able to notice that the youth are

not present today and reach out to us then we are able to work together in the development of the community

The study reviewed that, the youth have different perspectives that they look up to regarding their participation in decision making. Many pointed the issue of recognition and valuing opinions. One youth leader also said that the youth needs motivation and empowerment in order to feel important. This is supported by Karen Scott (2020) who argues that young people need to be supported to develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence to become effective decision makers. She also highlights the importance of providing opportunities for young people to participate in meaningful decision-making processes. In addition , when young people are given opportunities to participate in decision making, they can develop a sense of agency and become more engaged in their communities (Holt, 2004, p. 3).From the above analysis it is essential to note that the experience s of young people are different from those of adults especially in this 20th century. Therefore, the perspectives of youth regarding their participation in decision-making highlight the importance of listening to and involving young people in shaping the future. By creating inclusive and participatory spaces for youth engagement, decision-makers can benefit from diverse perspectives and innovative solutions to complex challenge.

4.10 HOW TO PROMOTE YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

The research provided insights on how to promote the participation of youths in decision-making .It shows that it important to create a safe and supportive environment where young people feel comfortable sharing their opinions and ideas also to encourage open dialogue and active listening to ensure that the perspectives of youth are valued and taken into consideration.

One participant indicated that

It is important to include youths in all activities that involves the development of the community. There should be an advisory board that trains the youth some leadership skills and takes time to understand how the youth operate, this way we can promote the participation of youth in decision-making.

Another participant said that

There should be more youth habilitation centres in communities like ours so that the youth can have time to interact alone and be able to lead their fellows. By doing so, youth can be more active in the decision making processes.

It is essential to ensure that the youth are represented in anything that contribute to community development .This can help empower young people to take action and make a difference in their communities. Adding on, Gökler et al., (2019) supported the promotion of youth participation in decision-making as he said that, they are a number of ways to promote youth participation which includes providing opportunities for young people to have a voice, offering support and training and ensuring that decision-making processes are inclusive and transparent. Therefore, the research reviewed different way that communities can engage in promoting the youth participation in decision-making as stated above. However, the young generation can be more comfortable in following behind the adult's leadership if there is no one to give a positive push for them to take part in community activities. It is important to provide support and training to help young people develop the skills they need to participate effectively.

4.11 YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

The study reviewed the importance of youth empowerment as one of the factors that affect the participation of youths in decision-making as it is the process of increasing the capacity of young

people to make decisions to improve their lives and the lives of others in their Therefore youth empowerment is all about is giving young people the ability to influence their own lives and the world around them.

One participant said that

The youth can be empowered through provision of funding to different projects or resources to enable them to do something meaningful their lives which also benefits to the community .This can install direction in young people's lives as many are doing nothing with their lives.

One community leader also said

There should be projects that are only directed to the youth for example in the agriculture sector there should be something like "Pfumvudza for youth". This can give youths room to have something that requires their attention as well as they can lead themselves in sharing ideas and motivating each other.

Empowering youth in decision-making is essential for promoting democracy, inclusivity, and sustainable development. By investing in the capacities and potential of young people, we can create a more equitable and participatory society. Additionally, it is not just about giving young people a voice, but also about fostering the capacities and skills necessary for voice to be meaningful and effective, (Dillabough, 2018, p. 7). This highlights the importance of not only providing opportunities for youth to be heard, but also of providing them with the tools and skills they need to effectively participate in decision-making. Therefore, youth empowerment can promote youth participation in decision-making as capacity to improve lives as well as providing a platform for community development by the young people.

4.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The study findings were presented, analysed, and discussed in this chapter. The majority of the data was given through conversations and analysis. The key findings of the study are the perspectives of the youth regarding their engagement in decision making , the barriers that hinders the participation of youth in decision making , the need to empower the young people , the need to value and appreciate youths` ideas, and inclusiveness of youth in the decision making process .the research was a success as it resulted in more than 80% in responds rate .In addition , the research also reviewed some issues that are affecting the young generation besides participation in decision making .These issues includes drug and substance abuse as well as unrepresented groups in the youth population .

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the summary of the whole project or research, draws up the conclusions, recommendations and also states the areas that need further research. The chapter represents the culmination of a comprehensive study focused on the participation of youth in decision-making processes within Ward 35, Mazowe. This pivotal chapter serves as the platform for interpreting the research findings, exploring their implications, and drawing conclusions that contribute to the advancement of inclusive governance and community development.

5.2. SUMMARY

The introduction was the first chapter of this study, which provided context for the study and highlighted how the participation of youth in decision making continues to interfere in community development from the global context, African context down to the Zimbabwean context. It offered the problem statement, the research objectives, the research questions, the purpose of the study, and the importance of the study. The study sought to analyse the level of youth participation in decision-making processes and the limitations.

Chapter 2 was devoted to a comprehensive review of the existing literature on the topic of the participation of youth in decision making. The chapter included a review of scholarly articles, books, and reports that covered the challenges and limitations in community engagement and its

impacts on the individual, family and community .The chapter also discussed one key theory. Empowerment theory which has been particularly influential in the field of youth development. The empowerment theory focuses on the process through which individual and communities gain control over their lives and decision making processes. Applying this theory can help understand how empowering young people with knowledge , skills , resources and supportive environments can enhance their participation in decision making .

The third chapter focused on the research methodology and strategy used in the study. Qualitative research methods were used to collect and analyse data. The general respondents were randomly selected from the four compounds amongst the community of ward 35, Mazowe district, while the key informants were purposively selected. A total of 10 participants were included in the study. Data was collected through key interviews and participant observation. The research design, data collection, and data analysis methods were all carefully chosen to ensure the reliability and validity of the study. Ethical considerations were also taken into account, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the research institution. The results of the study are presented in Chapter 4.

The fourth chapter of the research focused on the study's findings and analysed the results. The findings showed the factors limiting the participation of youth in decision making such as lack of knowledge, drug and substance abuse as well as lack of empowerment. The study also reviewed that youth inclusion and empowerment are the key to improve the levels of youth participation in decision making. The chapter also highlighted the gender that is under represented in the youth population which are teenagers and young women. The data was presented in the form of pie charts, bar graphs, and tables, to help visualize the findings and make them easier to understand.

Chapter 5 focused on summarizing the research findings, making recommendations, and identifying opportunities for further investigation. In terms of the findings, the study showed that the young people need to be valued and listened to, by doing so they feel motivated to be part of community affairs. In terms of recommendations, the study recommended a multi-faceted approach that includes empowerment programs and skills training. In terms of opportunities for additional investigation, the study suggested a number of areas that could benefit from further research .The study also recommended that future research should consider the role of culture and religion in developing communities.

5.3. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were drawn from research objectives.

1. To identify the barriers, challenges and factors that limit or discourage youth from actively engaging in decision making.

After conducting a thorough literature review and interviews with key stakeholders .The research identified several factors that limit or discourage youth from actively engaging in decision making in Ward 35 The study reviewed factors such as lack of knowledge , lack of information and lack of adult support on young people .UNICEF (2018) ,highlighted the importance of youth participation in governance and decision-making processes, and identified key barriers to youth engagement, including lack of knowledge about decision-making processes, negative perceptions of decision-making, limited opportunities for participation, low civic engagement, and lack of support from parents and other adults. These barriers can create a significant gap between young people's aspirations and their ability to participate in local decision-making processes. Addressing these barriers will require a multifaceted approach that empowers youth and promotes their meaningful involvement in community affairs.

There are several potential strategies for overcoming the barriers to youth participation in decision-making .For example, providing civic education and training for young people can increase their knowledge and understanding of decision-making processes (Smith et al., 2023), and creating opportunities for meaningful youth engagement in decision-making processes, such as youth councils or advisory committees, can empower young people and promote their active involvement. Adding on , Collaborating with parents, teachers, and community leaders to promote youth participation and support their efforts to engage in decision-making , Using technology and social media to increase youth engagement in decision-making processes and facilitate communication between young people and decision-makers and recognizing and celebrating young people's contributions to the community, to encourage more participation and increase their sense of ownership over local decision-making processes can also be implemented as ways to overcome challenges that limits the participation of youth in decision making .

The findings of this research highlight the complex challenges that young people face in actively engaging in decision-making processes. To increase youth participation and overcome these barriers, it is important to provide opportunities for meaningful engagement, promote civic education and training, and foster support from parents and community leaders. By addressing these issues, we can create more inclusive and sustainable communities that value the perspectives and contributions of young people.

2. To assess the level of youth participation in decision making in Ward 35, Mazowe

The survey results indicated that the level of youth participation in decision-making in Ward 35 is low. While some young people reported being involved in decision-making processes, the majority reported feeling excluded from these processes. This suggests that there is significant room for improvement in terms of promoting youth participation in decision-making in Ward 35.

By implementing strategies to address the barriers identified in the research, it may be possible to increase youth engagement and create a more inclusive and participatory decision-making process.

To improve the level of youth participation in decision making, a number of strategies could be implemented, including, providing training and support for young people, including leadership development and decision-making skills, can help to increase their confidence and ability to participate in decision-making processes (Green, 2021). And creating opportunities for young people to participate in high-profile decision-making processes, such as participatory budgeting, in order to build their confidence and increase their sense of ownership over local decisions.

The findings of this research suggest that there is significant room for improvement in terms of youth participation in decision making in Ward 35. However, by implementing strategies to create more inclusive and supportive environments for young people, and by providing opportunities for youth engagement and leadership development, it may be possible to increase youth participation and create more equitable decision-making processes.

3. To understand the perspectives, needs, and aspiration of young people in ward 35 in Mazowe regarding their involvement in community matters and decision making.

Through focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with youth in Ward 35, it was found that young people have diverse perspectives on their involvement in community matters and decision making. They identified a range of needs and aspirations, including greater access to information, more opportunities for engagement, and a voice in shaping policies and programs that affect them. The research also showed that young people want to be involved in decision-making processes, but they feel that their voices are not being heard, they feel that their perspectives and needs are

not always taken into account by decision-makers and have a strong desire to be involved in community affairs and to make a positive impact on their community.

The lack of youth participation and representation in decision-making processes could lead to a disconnect between young people and local government, which could have a negative impact on the community. However, Yunus (2022), suggests that increasing youth participation in decision-making processes can help to build more just and equitable communities, as it gives young people a voice and a sense of ownership over local affairs. Therefore, increasing youth participation in decision-making processes could lead to more informed and effective decision-making and improve the overall quality of life for young people in Ward 35.

The findings of this research highlight the need for greater youth participation and representation in decision-making processes in Ward 35. By understanding the perspectives and needs of young people, and by increasing opportunities for youth involvement, it may be possible to create a more inclusive and responsive decision-making process that better serves the needs of young people and the community as a whole.

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations to the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training, The Ministry of Information, Publicity and broadcasting and the local authority, Mazowe Rural District Council are crucial for ensuring cooperation and improvement on the participation of youth in decision making based on the findings of this research.

i) The Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training

The Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training can play a key role in improving youth participation in decision making by establishing a Youth Advisory Council or

other youth-led initiative to provide young people with a direct avenue for engagement in government decision-making ,Providing training and support for young people to develop leadership and decision-making skills and establishing partnerships with NGOs and other organizations that work with young people, in order to support youth-led initiatives and advocacy efforts.

ii) The Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting

 The Ministry of Information, Publicity and broadcasting can develop and implement communication strategies that raise awareness of the importance of youth participation in decision making and engage young people in the development of these strategies. Use social media and other digital technologies to engage young people in decision-making processes and to provide them with information about government policies and initiatives.

iii) Mazowe Rural district council

The local authority should also shift attention to the young people and try to empower youth in rural communities. This can be done by providing funding and resources to support local government efforts to increase youth participation in decision-making processes, building youth interact centres and engaging civil societies that works with the young people to work in various communities all over Mazowe districts.

5.5. AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

This study reviewed the need for further research as some pressing issues arises that need to be addressed. Some scholars must research on the role of gender, race, and socio-economic status in shaping young people's experiences and perspectives on decision-making processes.

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RESEARCH TOOLS

Interview guide: for the Community leaders

My name is Fortunate Chidindi, and my registration number is B200392B. I am a final year student at Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE). I am carrying out research of my choice on the participation of youth in decision making in Ward 35, Mazowe as part of the fulfilment of the Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Peace and Governance. I kindly ask you to participate in the interview questions that are relevant to my study as part of the fieldwork. Please note that the findings will be strictly used for academic and research purposes. Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. Your participation and cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

1. What is your position in ward 35?

2. What are your duties and responsibilities?

3. What is your general understanding of youth participation in decision making?

4. What is the level of youth participation in decision making in ward 3?

5. What are the barriers, challenges and factors that limit or discourage youth from participating in community affairs?

6. Are there any specific groups within the youth population that are underrepresented in decision-making?

7. How could youth participation be better promoted and supported in Mazowe?

Interview guide: Youths

My name is Fortunate Chidindi, and my registration number is B200392B. I am a final year student at Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE). I am carrying out research of my choice on the participation of youth in decision making in Ward 35 as part of the fulfilment of the Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Peace and Governance. I kindly ask you to participate in the interview questions that are relevant to my study as part of the fieldwork. Please note that the findings will be strictly used for academic and research purposes. Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. Your participation and cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

1. Which area or compound do you represent?

2. What is your understanding on decision making?

3. Does the local community recognize the value of youth participation?

4. What is the level of youth participation in decision making in ward 35?

5. What challenges are you facing as youths that hinders participation in the decision-making process?

6. What are the perspectives of young people in ward 35 in Mazowe regarding their involvement in community matters?

7. How could youth participation be better promoted and supported in Mazowe?