

**Midlands State University**  
**Faculty of Social Sciences**  
**Department of Politics and Public Management**



*AN ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE VOTING BEHAVIOR IN  
ZIMBABWE. THE CASE OF ZVISHAVANE DISTRICT.*

By

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**RELEASE FORM**

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2. I certify to the best of my knowledge that the required procedures have been followed and the preparation criteria have been met for the dissertation.

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Omar N. Satiya (R144509F), do hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigation and research, except to the extent indicated in the acknowledgements, references and comments included in the body of the dissertation, and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or to any other university.

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Omar N. Satiya(R144509F) Date

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents Mr. and Mrs. Satiya, Mr. and Mrs. Jaidi, Mr. and Mrs. Wailesi as well as Mr. and Mrs. Mbela. It was because of their unconditional love, support and sacrifice that led me to the accomplishment of this masterpiece and my studies.

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## **List of Acronyms**

- FDI** - **Foreign Direct Investment**
- MDC-T** - **Movement for Democratic Change Tsvangirai**
- NGO** - **Non-Governmental Organization**
- ZANU-PF** - **Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front**
- ZEC** - **Zimbabwe Electoral Commission**
- ZESN** - **Zimbabwe Election Support Network**
- ZCA** - **Zimbabwe Christian Alliance**

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## **Abstract**

*Zimbabwe's economy is nose diving, deteriorating living standards, sky rocketing inflation, unemployment to mention but a few and electorates make their choices based on the policy and economic preferences. Despite these prevailing uncertainties with regards to Zimbabweans, the government and state has been under the guardianship of ZANU PF since independence in 1980. Therefore, this research seeks to investigate and analyze on the factors that influence voter behavior, as this has implications towards the outcomes of the elections in Zimbabwe. The researcher also took the liberty of looking at the recommendations to government, other political and academics. The study made use of a descriptive research design in which various instruments were used to gather data in the form of Interviews, questionnaires and observations. Using descriptive statistics, the outcome of the research highlighted that various factors influence voting behavior in Zvishavane which is the case study and these factors includes economic issues, party message or policies, candidates' personality, party identification or affiliation to mention but a few. Ethical considerations were observed to preserve the integrity and authenticity of the study. The study also looked at the nature of elections in Zimbabwe which has been described as not free and fair and characterized with various mechanism of electoral fraud. Therefore, the research findings led to the conclusion that indeed there are various genuine factors that influence voting behavior, but the stay of Zanu Pf on power was due to electoral fraud at most. In this regard, the researcher recommends that the government must take concrete steps towards creating an environment for credible elections engaging with all relevant stakeholders and come up with actionable areas for the election roadmap with voters' behavior being at the epicenter of the election outcomes.*

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **1.1 Introduction**

The research is aimed at highlighting and giving an analysis on the factors that influence voter behavior during the elections in Zimbabwe, drawing specifically at the case of Zvishavane District. The engrossing issues regarding to elections are related to the reasons the electorates casted the ballot in the manner they did not the victorious candidate or party, hence voter behavior plays a significant role during the elections. Voter behavior can be simplified and defined as the actions of the people in deference of partaking in elections that occur for the affiliates of their community, provincial or national government. There are various factors that can influence voter behavior during the elections and these factors has resulted into several implications towards the elections outcomes in Zimbabwe since independence. These factors include the general evaluation of government or party performance, evaluations of candidate's physiognomies, the nature of the economies, existence of other political parties, personal party identification and ideological orientation, intimidation to mention but a few. Therefore, this research seeks to explain the election outcomes by recognizing the bases of personal elective behavior during elections as well as the challenges experienced by the voters and their implications towards election outcomes in Zimbabwe basing with the case of Zvishavane.

This chapter is also the introductory point of the topic being researched, giving context of the study, statement of the problem, study purposes, study questions, justification, scope of the study, limitations and structure of the dissertation to mention but a few.

## **1.2 Background of the study**

Voting was used from as early as prehistoric Greece also Ancient Rome, and through the primitive period as a means of selecting rulers like the Holy Roman Emperor. Exploration on the elections in Africa has meaningfully progressed in the previous fifteen years, and plentiful is recognized about the state, the established frameworks and the historical situations of elections in Africa. However, from most researches it is outward that a vigilant contextualization of balloting phenomena is needed as to make intellect of electoral behavior. According to Mbugua (2006), a wave of remonstrations arose in Africa in early 1990s, reflecting the universal enthusiasm for democratic liable leadership and archetypal political systems. It is in the stir of this wave of

protests amongst African people a contributing factor to the emergence of elections and this went hand in hand with voter behavior.

According to Lindberg (2006), relatively competitive elections were held in most of African states in the 1990s and these elections were regularly heralded by a “national conference” of the numerous participants for instance incumbent governments, civil organizations and other political groups or parties to influence the electoral or voting behavior of most of the citizens. In racially and religiously alienated states for example Nigeria, votes were endlessly fraught with glitches, hence the voting behavior of the citizens was influenced or affected by ethnicity and religious inclinations. The study of voting behavior begun in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century with many aspects having influenced Africans to vote the way they did in their respective countries. According to Visser (1996), voter behavior in an election has serious social consequences, but due to strong mentalist effects, elections has rarely been studied from behavior perspective. Of the thinkable actions a person emits in life, few may have consequences as voting behavior during elections.

According to Leonard (2009), through balloting, the electorate incomprehensibly places down a progression for legislatures and administrations, and consequently for the social, political also economic association of the state they inhabit. Elections have led to the rise to power of leaders and regimes that contributed intensely in world politics and reformed the arrangement of universal politics and prompted guidelines upsetting the international system. Examples of such leaders R.G Mugabe, N. Mandela, K. Kaunda and according to Mbugua (2006), it was through the voter behavior that most of the African states rose autocratic regimes and stayism amongst leaders, government and political parties. Nevertheless, elections have been and still the most acceptable means of changing leadership in any given political system in most African states even though there are elements which affected the voter behavior. According to Wahlke (2014) the elements that has been influencing voter behavior amongst most African citizens differs and depends upon the economical, socio-cultural and political organization of the state as well as the citizen’s desire to partake in the elections. This can be evidently noted as the case of Zimbabwe, were by the deterioration of the economy was amongst the factors that influenced the voting behavior of most of Zimbabweans at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> C.

According to Eckstein (1988), the emergence of trustworthy as well as unacceptable leaders, regimes or government can be attributed to the voting behavior of the citizens, that is, balloting behavior have got both positive and negative implications in the outcome of elections. In most African states, voting circumstances provide a range of provocations to the electorates, signaling a precise action of voting behavior may be adopted. This provides an array of events that include facilitated inducements directed to the electorates through media for instance campaigning news, propaganda and political strategy discussions, party jingles and as well as proximal stimuli like intimidation and violence instilled through various mechanisms usually by incumbent government as they would be having enough reinforcement through state instruments like the army or police force at their disposal. This has been characterizing any electoral process in several African states and this have had and is still affecting the voting behavior of electorates during the elections.

In Zimbabwe, elections have been held since independence and ZANU PF has been woven through the intricate fabric Zimbabwe's electoral history for being the solitary ruling party since independence in 1980 to date. Despite ZANU PF being a solitary ruling in 2002, ZANU PF tested its ever first elections defeat to MDC followed by losing its majority seats in parliament during 2008 elections and this resulted in the formation of the G.N.U. Nevertheless in 2013 ZANU PF won the general elections with a land slide victory, claiming back most of the seats in the parliament. Most international observers condemned the elections in Zimbabwe as seriously flawed, pre-elections environment as neither free nor fair, and the election itself as marred by significant fraud and rigging – but regional opinions would be different, hence the need for this inquiry to analyze voter's behavior when it comes to these elections as it can contribute to the way the electorates had been voting and the elections outcomes in Zimbabwe taking Zvishavane as a typical case study.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

Zimbabwe's economy is nose diving, deteriorating living standards, sky rocketing inflation, unemployment to mention but a few. According to Dendere (2013) electorates make their choices based on the policy and economic preferences. Despite these prevailing uncertainties with regards to Zimbabweans, the government and state has been under the guardianship of

ZANU PF since independence in 1980. Therefore, this research seeks to investigate and analyze on the factors that influence voter behavior, as this has implications towards the outcomes of the elections in Zimbabwe. The researcher also took the liberty of looking at the remedies towards the challenges being faced by voters in Zvishavane.

#### **1.4 Study purposes**

It aims to pacify the following objectives: -

1. Determine factors that influence voting behavior during the elections.
2. To examine the challenges facing the electorates during the elections.
3. To investigate the credibility of election results in Zvishavane.
4. Determining the way forward in dealing with the factors that influence voting behavior.

#### **1.5 Study questions**

The research aims at asking questions to follow:

1. Which factors influence voting behavior of the electorates during the elections?
2. What are the challenges being faced by the electorates in exercising their right to vote?
3. Are the elections in Zvishavane credible?
4. What are the recommendations in dealing with factors that influence voting behavior negatively during elections?

##### **1.5.1 Significance of the study**

The research was carried out to give a complete analysis on the factors that influence voting behavior in Zimbabwe with the case study of Zvishavane. It was conducted in pursuit to present the current position on the credibility of elections in Zimbabwean context. In the same manner, the research is to help by proffering solutions to the identified factors. The study will also help in providing knowledge to the implications of voter's behavior during the electoral processes. The study will also help in providing factors and ways on how to address the factors affecting voter behavior.

The research will be carried out because of the:



1. The need to provide the government, political parties and party policy makers with the understanding of the psychology behind voting behavior of the electorates and as well as the expectations of the citizens when voting.
2. The study will fill the research void by focusing on the factors that influence one to vote the way they did and this will also benefit the academics when carrying out research in the same field.
3. Need to add value to the policy making machinery, fellow academics and professional peers.

### **1.5.2 Study expectations**

The researcher expects the following: -

- a. That the respondents involved give precise data and stood truthful upon their replies.
- b. That respondents' individuality be preserved.
- c. That sample drawn from the target population represents a true and fair view of the whole population

### **1.6 Research Limits**

According to Simon and Goes (2013), research limits refers to resources as well as things that transpires during the study and are too advanced for the scholar's power, this generally distorts the anticipated outcomes of the study. During the study, the respondents were possibly going to give prejudiced data owing various issues which may include party-political attachment as well as the nature that is within the subject matter and the individuals will be possibly be afraid of contributing to the study. Nevertheless, the researcher ensured the partakers' understanding of the rationality behind the study. In this context the rationale behind this study is for academic purposes as a requirement for the completion of the researcher's studies. Detailed consultations were required to accomplish meaning of the research, regrettably, owing to time confines this was not likely accomplished.

Hence, the researcher had to rely upon the weekends only to conduct his interviews for greater convenience. In this research, the researcher was likely to come across the respondents who would be unwilling to co-operate due to various circumstances and backgrounds. Therefore, to

mitigate this the researcher ensured that he acquired all necessary information from the co-operating respondents since the unwilling respondents can neither be forced nor coerced for they still have their rights.

### **1.7 Research Demarcations**

According to Wiersma (2000), study demarcations refers to delineations of the research geographical boundaries. That is, delimitations include the parameters within which the study is carried out and this would help the researcher maintain objectivity in a study (De Vaus, 2001). Therefore, the delimitation of the study will be geographical location of Zimbabwe using the case study of Zvishavane District looking both urban and rural areas, focusing on the factors that influence voting behavior.

### **1.8.0 Ethical Considerations**

In this research, quite a lot of requirements had to be upheld as per the requirements of the ethical standards in Social Sciences Research when conducting, presenting or reporting of research outcomes. The research upheld numerous values that ensured the success of the research as it dealt with the public consists of multiple cultures and considering the nature of the study which is politics, there was need to uphold certain values to ensure security and anonymity as well as greater degree of privacy and confidentiality.

### **1.8.1 Confidentiality**

The researcher guaranteed strict confidentiality to the research subjects or respondents for all the information they were to give. The participants who responded on the questionnaires were instructed by the researcher not to include their individual details on the questionnaires which included their names, addresses to mention but a few also interviewees were instructed not to disclose their details as well. This was a major step in ensuring that the researcher acquired correct and unbiased findings during the research.

### **1.8.2 Anonymity**

To guarantee these, the researcher used mostly some questionnaires to be filled in by the respondents anonymously and without including their personal information to enhance anonymity to avoid harm of injury through political victimization.

### **1.8.3 Informed consent**

The researcher ensured that the research subjects and respondents have been adequately informed about the rationale of the study as well as the probable consequences. Hence this ensures that the participants were entirely aware of the purposes, risks, anticipated benefits of the research, the person responsible for the research and were participating according to their own consent. In addition, the subjects were to be given a statement offering him or her the opportunity to ask questions and to withdraw from the research anytime.

### **1.8.4 Plagiarism**

Plagiarism refers to stealing and passing off another's production and ideas without acknowledging them thereby presenting their ideas as new or your own (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Therefore, in this research the researcher used quotations, citations and a reference list as a way of acknowledging and appreciation of all the secondary sources and the already existing sources used in the research.

### **1.9.0 Research Methodology**

The dissertation intends to analyze the factors that impact the voting behavior of the people in Zvishavane District. Research methodology entails a guiding principle for regulating a given research and these includes research design, data gathering, presentation, data analysis as well as the study population amongst others. The research focused both on secondary information and primary data to accomplish favorable outcomes. That is, the research methodology is also outlines a complete account of the means the research was carried out.

### **1.9.1 Research design**

Research design refers to a strategy that describes the procedures for acquiring data in relation to a specific study and as well as data analysis (Parahoo, 1997). That is, research design entails the objectives of the research, identification of suitable data collection techniques, chosen methods of data analysis thereby ensuring that the research has appropriately addressed the research objectives. It becomes superficial that the research design also turns out to be the all-encompassing researching structure as the research heavily relies on it. Hence the researcher adopted the qualitative explanatory research design which made use of numerous methods of acquiring the data relevant for the study and these included interviews, questionnaires and the researcher's personal sentiments.

### **1.9.2 Sampling Technique**

A sample is a proportion representing the entire population (Pilot et al, 2001), thus sampling refers to the criteria that entails the obtaining of a sample from the targeted population to estimate the physiognomies of the entire population. The researcher used non-probability sampling technique and this was preferred since it provides the researcher with the freedom and power to decide what should be in a situation and more specifically the researcher used purposive sampling which falls under non-probability sampling. The researcher used purposive sampling as it gives the researcher the liberty of selecting the sample subjects for a specific purpose.

### **1.9.3 Research population**

This refers to the target population which comprises of all the fundamentals that are possible members of the sample, Hungler and Polit (1999:37), hence the research population of this study, consist of samples pinched out from Zvishavane rural and urban areas. In this research, the researcher assumes that, the outcome of the research represents the entire population in Zimbabwe. The targeted population included the all age groups starting from 18 years going above, both males and females, formal and informal sector business personnel, the unemployed, political activists from all political parties, to mention but a few. In this research a total number of twenty (20) respondents were drawn from Zvishavane district, that is ten (10) from

Zvishavane urban area and the remain ten (10) from Zvishavane rural area. The researcher assumed that the population drawn for the research represented the views of the whole district with the entire population ranging at 45 230 (Zimbabwe Population Census National Report, 2012).

#### **1.9.4.0 Sources of data collection**

The researcher relied on both, the secondary and primary sources of information and these methods were employed as they complement each other in the conduct of the study. The sources used are detailed below: -

##### **1.9.4.1 Secondary Data**

This precisely refers to the already published, prepared and analyzed information by other scholars. The researcher found data as being useful especially on the literature review section as well as the theories used to elucidate on the subject matter. The sources of secondary data the researcher made use of includes journals, articles, newspapers, textbooks and any available data relating to the phenomena under study.

##### **1.9.4.2 Primary Data**

It entails the fresh information obtained for the first time by the researcher (Duval, 2005). Therefore, the researcher obtained fresh and firsthand information through interviews and questionnaires.

#### **1.9.5.0 Research Instruments**

These are the tools or mechanisms used to accumulate the data in line with the subject matter (Saunders et al, 2009) that is, the instrumentals used to gather equitable information usually primary data. The researcher used interviews, questionnaires solicit the data needed for the research.

### **1.9.5.1 Interviews**

In this research, the researcher used interviews to obtain primary data during the study. Interviews are face to face discussions with the respondents and asking them on a subject matter and the researcher was in a position of asking very accurate and straight forward questions to the research subjects thereby getting first-hand information advantageous for the attainment of informed assumptions. In addition, flexible interview guides were also used to avoid limiting the interviewees in case they want to raise other issues pertaining to the study. The population that eligible to vote was interviewed to get the first-hand information on the factors influencing their voting decision in the ballot booth.

### **1.9.5.2 Questionnaires**

The researcher also made use of questionnaires in obtaining or soliciting the relevant information pertaining to the study. Questionnaire is a set of questions that are distributed to the respondents for the researcher to get their points of view (De Vaus, 1996). The questionnaires were of greater much importance as the research was able to blowout a very broader audience. In addition to this both the closed and open-ended questions were used and explained below -:

- a. Open ended questions: These are unstructured, free-response questions allowing respondents to state what they know or think. The respondents are not forced to choose between fixed responses that do not apply (Johnson and Reynolds, 2012). Hence, the researcher will be in a position of to solicit diversified opinions concerning the subject matter understudy.
- b. Closed ended questions: These provides a list of responses from which to choose and the questions are often phrased so that the respondent must choose between alternatives or state which one is preferred.

### **1.9.5.3 Observations**

During this research, the research also made use of observations and personal experiences since the research was also the resident of the area of study. According to Dawson and Catherine (2012), observations are a direct way of soliciting first-hand information or data, which one assesses in their own thinking. The research took time to observe the lifestyle of the population

understudy and it was also through these observations that the researcher got to understand the factors influencing voting behavior in Zvishavane.

## **1.10 Conclusion**

The chapter provided a thorough summary of the study focusing on the research design, sources of data, research instruments, data collection procedures and data presentation and analysis tools. The different techniques used to facilitate a critical analysis, evaluation and presentation of data, which will be dealt with in the following chapter.

### **1.10.1 Structure of the study**

The Structure Shall Be as Follows-:

*Chapter One* introduction of the topic is being researched, giving the study background, problem statement, study objectives, research enquiries, study justification, study demarcations as well as the study methodology which included research instruments.

*Chapter Two* reviews literature of published and unpublished works on voting behavior and its contents in Zimbabwe and other countries' experiences and it also gives the overall idea global level.

*Chapter Three* provides illustrates Data presentation and analysis of the data obtained from the case study for in this chapter.

*Finally, Chapter Four* gives the summary of the study and give suggestions on how best to implement credible electoral system and give recommendations on how best to minimize the challenges affecting vote behavior.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Elections have widely been recognized for being essential towards the development of democracy, also the most interesting questions about elections is not usually about which contestant has won, but rather why the voters had voted the way they did. This chapter gives a literature appreciation of what has already been done in the concept of voter or voting behavior. This chapter will also encompass the theories of voting behavior, this give the researcher the ability to cover the gap of knowledge regarding the concept under study. The chapter seeks to review the literature which is relevant to the study the main aim being to bring out the link between literature and the objectives as well as the research questions of the study. Definition of major key terms shall be included in this chapter and as well as the frameworks about the research.

#### **2.2 Voting defined**

According to Oriavwote.et.al (2000) defined voting as method used at amassing individual predilections into collective verdict during elections or an act of legally signifying the electorate's ideal contender otherwise party during elections. Therefore, voting has been regarded to be a method of behavior, and this points the way in which the electorates behave in making up their choices during the elections that is, the rousing as well as defining issues informing ultimate decision for voting a precise candidate or political party. Hence, it's a straightforward procedure of decision-making in a democratic state, by which the electorates or a native coherently and collectively chooses a suitable candidate for a public office whom they perceived as benefiting them the most.



### **2.3 Electorate defined**

Electorate can be defined as people or citizens who are eligible to vote in an election. Tamboyarika (2009) elucidated that, in some democracy electorates are supreme for their vote as well as their voices confers legality on administration, government and state control.

### **2.4 Voting behavior defined**

Voting behavior can be defined as individual's psychosomatic progressions which includes perceptions, sentiments and enthusiasm with their connection to electoral actions (Elderveld, 1964). This implies to the way in which an individual or batch of electorates cast their votes for a specific candidate or political party, that is the motive behind their voting decision. Butler and Stokes (1974) explained voting behavior as system of political comportment, which at its basic level the citizens use the ballot to accomplish things they care about. Bratton (2008), also postulated that voting behavior is a set of individual actions and activities during electoral processes especially during polls, that is electing who to ballot for. According to Kini (1974), defined voting behavior as aspects determining the way a group of people and individuals cast their vote for a specific candidate or political party in an election. Electoral behavior is immensely related to democratic principles and individualism hence, according to Goldman (1966), the behavior of voters determined by the level of individual freedom to vote in their respective societies.

Many scholars and researchers have defined voter behavior over the years and this had revealed that voting behavior is a complimentary of both individual thing as well as non-individual dimensions, that is internal and external or psychological and sociological factors respectively.

### **2.5 Elections in Zimbabwe**

It is recognized in greater circles that elections have been held in Zimbabwe, with first election being held out in 1980 and has been held whenever they were due as evidenced in 1985, 1990, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2008 and 2013. According to Guzura et al (2010), after independence Zimbabwe's political environment contained divergent of political parties contrary to the well-advanced country of a one-party state system. This led to the development of opposing political parties which included MDC which became the main opposition political party in Zimbabwe and

was formed in 1999, this marked a turning point in Zimbabwe electoral process as this led to the shift or division of electoral preference from and between ZANU PF and MDC.

According to Goredema and Chigora (2008), history has it that the ruling ZANUPF has always had a sweet and easy victory during the elections in Zimbabwe. That is, ZANU PF dominated the elections in Zimbabwe using the holding of electoral processes as autonomous means of upholding its grip of authority (Goredema and Chigora, 2009). The emergence of MDC in the political spectrum of Zimbabwe there has always been gruesome election battles as the political parties struggled for power and leadership. In the electoral history of Zimbabwe, the March 2008 harmonized elections marked a turning in political situation of Zimbabwe as they were unique for being the first elections that failed to produce a winner for presidential office and led for the first time to a rerun or runoff since 1980. The 2008 harmonized elections led to ZANU PF being unpopular at the expense of MDC as evidenced by March results which highlighted that MDC led in elections by 47,9% of the votes against ZANU PF's 43,2% (ZESN, 2008). However, ZANU PF employed systematic oppression, violence and intimidation and participated in one man's race thereby reclaiming the popularity it has lost during in March 2008 elections.

According to Sithole and Makumbe (1997), although the elections have been always characterized with multiple parties, the incumbent Zanu Pf has always been triumphant from the past three decades. In contrary to that, there are many doubts pertaining to the credibility and quality of elections outcome in Zimbabwe. Elections in Zimbabwe agonize from feebleness of electoral regulatory bodies like Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) which has been prone to manipulation and is under direct control of the incumbent party and government. The elections are characterized with many electoral fraud mechanisms which include vote rigging also this has kindled post-elections skirmishes. Nevertheless, Zamchiya (2013), explained the outcome presented by the 2013 harmonized polls which he considered as free and fair, with several observers also agreeing that they were free and fair due to the absence of violence and intimidation, but, evidently there was widespread defilements of the Electoral Act as well as the Constitution.

### **2.5.1 Credibility of elections in Zimbabwe**

Chapter 7.1 of the constitution of Zimbabwe entails that elections be held whenever due, according to Makumbe (2006) electoral fraud has been common in the Zimbabwe's electoral processes with the polls being steered in a way that have not been free and unfair. That is, elections in Zimbabwe have been grossly characterized by malpractices which includes lack of transparency on information on electoral regulations among both voters and the aspirant, fraudulent tallying of the votes at counting amongst others (Makumbe, 2006). Also vote rigging, vote buying, gruesome battles of violence and intimidation have also been the major characterization of the elections in Zimbabwe and this have had a negative impact on the credibility of elections in Zimbabwe. To add on, elections in Zimbabwe have always been deadly for the opposing parties with Zanu Pf's electoral hegemony being aided by massive electoral fraudulent mechanisms and monopolization of the electoral systems in Zimbabwe.

According to Makumbe (2006), violence and intimidation has played a significant part during elections in Zimbabwe with the topmost culprits of political violence being elements inside the reigning Zanu Pf. Human Rights NGOs, have reported on the lack of credibility of elections in Zimbabwe pointing out that opposition political party members are mostly the victims of electoral skirmishes during elections. In 2008 during the March harmonized elections, there was overwhelmingly evidence that there were organized pattern of violence, coercion and intimidations that have been replicated throughout the country's provinces. According to Human Rights Watch report (2008, April), torture camps were established to thoroughly target and torment people alleged of supporting opposition and voted for MDC during first round of the March harmonized elections. This have succumbed to Zimbabwe's electoral processes being deemed as incredible as they fell to meet legal and internationally accepted standards.

Electoral politics in Zimbabwe carries high stakes which hinders the credibility of elections in Zimbabwe at the end. Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), a local election observer group carried out a research and listed a litany of offenses by incumbent party during the 2013 harmonized elections. According to ZESN (2013), there was massive bias on the access of state media, campaigns of intimidation were unleashed especially in rural areas by ZANU PF, and there was also rushed electoral processes before the key reforms to the security were in place, with the most atrocity being that of tempering with the electoral rolls that were held back by

ZANU PF government until the day before elections. Hence forth, the question on the credibility of elections in Zimbabwe can be answered pointing out to gruesome evidence reviewed which makes Zimbabwe's elections deemed incredible. Even though the elections in Zimbabwe have been labelled as implausible by most of the Zimbabwean and the international society, the electorates are still actively participating in the elections whenever they are due and voting the way they do or want.

## **2.6 Factors influencing voting behavior in Zimbabwe**

In Zimbabwe elections have been held, with the first elections being held out in 1980 and elections have been held whenever they were due as evidenced in 1985, 1990, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2008 and 2013. According to Chigora and Goredema (2009), the elections that were held in Zimbabwe for the past three decades acted as an autonomous way of sustaining Zanu Pf grip on power for 37 years. This saw Zanu Pf being woven through the intricate fabric of Zimbabwe's electoral history as the party retained power making it the solitary ruling party since 1980. Attempts have been made by various contemporary scholars on the factors that influence voting behavior in Zimbabwe, with Goredema and Chigora (2009) and Dewa (2009) publishing a paper entitled Factors Affecting Voting Behavior and Voting Patterns in Zimbabwe's 2008 Harmonized Elections. The papers by these scholars made a reflection on the 2008 harmonized elections which were characterized with a change in voting behavior and pattern that has existed since 1980. Their findings were based on state level basing with the outcomes of the 2008 harmonized elections and they found out that ethnicity, race, economic status, party affiliation, social class, region or demographic location, and propaganda were amongst the main factors influencing voting behavior.

According to Dewa (2009), understanding the factors that contribute to balloting behavior in Zimbabwe, the factors can be categorized into external as well as internal contributors. That is, the external factors are those issues to do with the country's interaction and engagement in the international system and the possible results or the outcomes vis-à-vis the electorates perception and nations interest. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the relations and interactions of Zimbabwe in the international system soured and this resulted in Zimbabwe being served with sanctions, suspended from the IMF, exiting the Commonwealth amongst other issues and this

affected the voters socially and economically (Dewa, 2009), hence this suffering shaped the voting behavior of the Zimbabweans during elections as evidenced by the implications of 2008 harmonized elections.

To add on, the internal issues are those factors pertaining to the political, social and economic organization and development within Zimbabwe. These factors include the role of media (propaganda), the role of political parties, performance of the incumbent government, economic status in general, ethnicity, regionalism amongst others and all these have contributed immensely towards the voting behavior of the electorates in Zimbabwe as evidenced in both 2008 and 2013 harmonized elections which also revealed the change in voting patterns that existed since 1980 (Goredema and Chigora, 2009). Considering these factors, the researcher shall carry out a study in determining the factors that influence voting behavior of the electorates in Zvishavane District, Zimbabwe.

### **2.7.0 Factors that influence voting behavior from a global perspective**

What influences voter behavior have been deliberated on for some decades and these studies have publicized very comparable results. Election results can be described as a relationship between diverse factors and these include candidate's personality, activities and message of the party, the method of communiqué as well as stimulus relating mass media as well as the individual voters social and psychological characteristics. (Cutright and Rossi 1958)

The relevant issues influencing voting behavior have been tested during the elections in Brazil and the outcomes indicated that they were more common factors and these included electorate's religion, political party attachment, the evaluation of the incumbent party or candidate performance and candidate's characteristics (Carreirao, 2007). Against this background, it points out that factors influencing voting behavior varies from place to place or country. For instance, experience over the years have revealed that in United States of America citizens have a habit of voting along classes, cultural split as well as spiritual attachment. To add on the republican party fundamentally comprised those who control the means of production and usually these are the industrialist, were as democratic party is usually for the middle class and peasants. Lazarfeld (1986), contributed about balloting behavior for his studies the author tried to review on whether voting behavior amongst electorates around the universe is similar. Due to the variances in country's political, social, cultural and economic organization voting behavior also becomes

diverse. For example, in the case of Zimbabwe, the electorates made their decisions to vote for a certain candidate or party basing on the economic and political preferred policies even though that has never been real case due to intimidation and coercion (Dendere, 2013). To add on, countries like Nigeria, Sudan, Kenya to mention but a few are known for their societal divisions because of diversity in ethnic, culture, religion and socialization henceforth, electoral behavior in these countries can be influenced by their societal differences. Therefore, electoral behavior varies from country to country around the globe although there can be other similar factors.

Moving on, issues influencing voting behavior can be grouped into two classes for the purpose deeply understanding the concept of voting behavior and these are exterior factors and interior factors. ANES conference of 2006 reviewed that, the internal factors are those issues that come from within or inside an individual and these include feelings, emotions, attachment, individual mental physiognomies and cognitive reaction. Whereas, the exterior issues can be identified in three classes as follows -:

- Dissemination of party message, policies or manifesto through mass media, canvassing, posters, billboards among others. This will be aimed at influencing and assisting the electorates make their voting choices.
- The political, social and economic issues prevailing in the country.
- The behaviors of people close to the voters. ANES conference (2006)

In addition, several authoritative texts, literature and studies exist on the factors influencing balloting behavior and these are to be analyzed below.

### **2.7.1 Affect factor**

In a study carried out by Winkelman and Knuson (2007) of post war Japan, findings showed that, voting behavior was significantly determined by 'affect' factor. It was also discovered that people in urban areas favored socialist parties while people in rural areas chose conservative parties. This shows that, rural people are likely not to take political ideology, campaigns and party programs, but psychologically deals with emotional ties especially of what affects them. Scholars such as Healy et al (2010) are of the view that, voters may use affect because of political sophistication and have political stimuli that may result in an emotional political bias. Some of the mechanisms of affect as it relates to voting behavior may include: surprise, anger,

anxiety, fear and pride as postulated by Gomez et al (2007). Researchers such as Miller (2011), Gomez et al (2007) have emphasized on affect as a determinant of voting behavior, believing that, anger may not allow people to vote for, especially the government in power whose policies or actions could not make them happy and take them out of anger. Anxiety would determine voting behavior in a manner making the voters vote for a candidate whose policy they prefer (Miller, 2011).

### **2.7.2 Candidate charisma**

In India a study was conducted on the factors that influence voting behavior and amongst them there was the factor of candidate's personal charisma. According to Hazarika (2015), charisma influences voting behavior for it is an exceptional quality factor that some candidates must have to attract and impress the electorates on their behavior and candidates of towering charisma usually attract huge attendances at their meetings or mass rallies. Therefore, charisma can be viewed as a determinant on voting behavior, as it would in turn make the candidate to win the hearts of the electorates in an electoral contest. According to an Online article, charisma enables political leaders to entice many electorates hence, having influence on the electorate voting behavior. The role of candidate's charisma cannot be refuted in influencing voting behavior.

### **2.7.3 Religion**

Religion is also seen as a strong indicator of voting behavior and there has been robust emphasis in the understanding of election behavior in relation to religion. According to Gibbs (2005), religion has an impact in how the voters are going to behave when voting. Throughout studies, it turns out to be seeming that religion effect is a strong factor that also determines electorate's voting behavior. Religious influence can be of greater importance looking at specific issues such as abortion, homosexuality to mention but a few. In Zimbabwe religion shapes the way in which the citizens socialize, hence the candidate's or party's position on religious issues also determines the way the electorates are to vote. For instance, the main opposition party MDC lost popularity after its former leader Tsvangirai advocated for gay rights in Zimbabwe and this determined the voting behavior of the Zimbabweans. Therefore, according to Gibbs (2005), the

voter uses the candidate's position pertaining these matters as a measure in determining which candidate or party to ballot for.

To add on, Fastnaw et.al (1999) emphasized that religion factor is of greater significance in determining the aspirant to vote and voting behavior, for it stands up to the variety of other predictors of voting behavior because if a candidate is identified with a certain religion they are likely to attract support from within their religion denominations thereby influencing voting behavior. Religion also influences other frontline factors towards voting behavior like party affiliation, party ideology to mention but a few. For instance, a party's ideology can be in line with a religion to gain popular support or to influence voting behavior. Esmer and Petterson (2007) postulates that, religion factor has greater influence on voting behavior worldwide, and is regarded by candidates and political parties as an instrument to rally multitudes for partisan and political motives such as when religion becomes a symbol of resistance against perceived oppression, exploitation. Due to morals that encompass the concept of religion, a pious electorate is most probably going to vote for incumbent party, government or a religious candidate hence influencing the citizen's voting behavior.

#### **2.7.4 Political campaigns**

According to Ojokwe (2015), political parties and candidates should adequately communicate their policies, agendas or visions to the electorates to enable them to make informed decisions during elections. This entails the issue of political communication were by the politicians must embark on political campaigns which a way of communication between the aspirant and the electorates and this have greater impact on voting behavior. Political campaigns provide a platform for the political party or candidates to market their policies and convincing the electorates to vote for them According to Curran (2015), political campaigns assist the electorates in determining their voting behavior basing on their understanding of the candidates' or party and these political campaigns can be through canvassing, mobilizing the voters, mass media platforms, posters, billboards to mention but a few. The use of political campaigns has become pivotal during electoral process all over as these campaigns are used as reach outs and as a mechanism of understanding between the electorate and the candidate or party thereby influencing voting.



According to Ojokwe (2015), political campaigns have a greater effect on voting behavior during elections as evidenced in Nigerian elections of 2011, for political campaigns raised cognizance on voting decisions and their consequences. According to Dewa (2009), media played a significant role during the election in Zimbabwe. Usually in Zimbabwe the contesting or opposing parties do not get equal access to use media as compared to ZANU PF. ZANU PF uses media to air out its propaganda and communicate its manifesto to the millions and millions of people. Taylor (1998), postulated that various political campaign strategies can be employed and these strategies are not universal, but the political parties can develop and modify their strategies to suit the nature of their environment and election contest.

### **2.7.5 Party affiliation or partisanship**

According to Timbancaya (2014), partisanship is a psychological effect that influences voting behavior, partisanship is an emotional empathy with a candidate or political party and is determined by the electorate's attachment to the party or the candidate they felt closer to. Showing too much support for a candidate, party or an idea can significantly influence voting behavior amongst the electorates as this would result to the biasness of the election outcomes. Party affiliation or partisanship has been viewed as influential factor in determining voting behavior as this alone can contribute to electoral hegemony of political parties or candidates due to strong attachment towards a political party and the emotional band of loyalty between the electorates and their party always play a pivotal role in influencing voting behavior. Around the globe most of the citizens in their respective countries are divided in line with their political affiliation due to various reasons (Autunes, 2010). In Africa most electorates are attached to political parties due to their liberation history, that is, most of the parties existing in most of African states like Zimbabwe and South Africa played a pivotal role in the attainment of their independence and sovereignty. Therefore, as way of safeguarding and appreciating their gains most of the citizens has developed a strong attachment to the party and this have greater impact on voting behavior of the electorates.

### **2.7.6 Attitude towards the candidate or party**

To add on, most people view political activities as dirty endeavors characterized with aggressiveness, dishonest and shrouded in mystery (Dermody and Lloyd, 2004) hence, people view political activities as irrelevant and their attitudes towards politics becomes questionable. This explains the reason why political behavior differs from an individual to another or why some do not vote at all. So instead of the electorates being involved into much of politics they would rather focus or look closely into party's or candidate's appearance or image and from this they will develop a certain attitude. The electorate's attitude towards the candidate can be attributed to the candidates' appearance, sex of the candidate, personality of candidate, according to Rosenberg et al. (1986) candidates' physical appearance have stronger as well as unswerving influence pertaining to voting behavior by causing the electorates to make implications about their individual abilities as well as suitability. Todorov et al (2005), conducted research in U.S senate race of 2004, the candidate was perceived as more competent based solely on his physical appearance and won the 71,6% of the Senate race. Therefore, this shows that the electorates voting behavior can be influenced by their attitude towards the candidate due to factors like candidates' physical appearance.

### **2.7.7 Economic status**

The economic status of the voter is also another significant predictor of voting behavior for it plays a pivotal role in shaping voting behavior of an electorate. According to Virmani (2014), economic issues are of greater importance in determining the electorates' voting behavior and the economics influence voting behavior in various ways, an enhancement or deteriorating of the country's economy can upsurge or decrease respectively the likelihood of voting for the incumbent party or candidate. Also, electorates are likely to vote for the candidate or the party that would be in line with addressing their economic doldrums that is job creation, improvement or economic growth, improvement of the living standards to mention but a few. The economic factor can influence voting behavior of an electorate in that it leaves the poor voters vulnerable at the expense of the rich, who would in turn manipulate the poor to vote buying for the rich to be on power. The electorates tend to look at issues and values of the political parties or the candidates they are voting for i.e. the main agenda of the party at the expense of the prevailing grievances or situation and usually that is the economic performance. According to Dewa (2009),

the sanctions had a negative effect on Zimbabwe's economy which led to acute shortage of goods on Zimbabwe's shelves and inflation skyrocketed. The 2008 elections came amidst these challenges, the economy was nose diving and the electorates were crushed by the economy to an extent of thinking and voting for change. According to Dewa (2009), some voters did not care the name and capabilities of those contesters but just voted for change. Therefore, clear evidence on the fact that the economic status plays a pivotal role in determining whom the electorates are to vote for.

### **2.7.8 Social influence or kinship**

The whole election procedure has also been influenced by connections of those people who are around and those we socialize with and these include families, fellow citizen, friends and co-workers (Nickerson, 2008). Social influence or kinship influences voting behavior in that possible electorates encourages each other to participate in the electoral processes and they can as well influence each other on their voting choices or decisions and social kinship forms and shape the actions of persons staying together. This can also be understood as kinship, which is the relationship between people that share the same origin either biological or cultural, or historical descent, hence influencing the electing behavior of the potential electorates during the election period. Ethnicity is also another central and major aspect of social influence or kinship around the world as most of party supporters are mobilized along racial personalities and ethnicity and most political organizations are subjugated by a certain group (Horowitz, 1985). Ethnicity has been pivotal and also contributes immensely towards decision making during the elections in Zimbabwe thus, one cannot afford giving a blind eye to this issue. Zimbabwe have a diversity of tribes Shona and Ndebele tribes being at the fore front, characterized with favoritism, dominance and marginalization respectively. This resulted in Zimbabwe being divided along ethnicity lines, with Zanu Pf becoming an enemy of the Ndebele the tribe due to other reasons which are not part of this study like Gukurahundi of 1983-87 and at the other end MDC became a darling of Ndebele tribe. This was evidenced by the MDC's hegemony in most of Matabeleland constituencies at the expense of Zanu Pf during the 2008 harmonized elections (Chigora and Goredema, 2009). Therefore, the issue of ethnicity influences voting behavior in Zimbabwe.

Understanding voting behavior can explain how and why decisions were made, the researcher attempted to unveil the information available pertaining to the subject matter. Voting behavior is a rather a complex and multi-faceted subject, thus there are several factors influencing voting behavior. From the above some of the selected predictors of voting behavior were discussed.

### **2.8.0 Factors influencing voting behavior in other countries: Case studies**

The researcher used a descriptive research design using a case study therefore, considering the above discussed factors, the researcher shall discuss the determinants that influence voting of the electorates using the selected case studies.

#### **2.8.1 South Africa**

In South Africa a study on voting behavior was conducted in three different areas in determining factors that influence voting behavior. During the process different factors were unveiled and according to Patel et.al (2014), not surprisingly multiple factors influence how people vote in South Africa. To begin with, there were sociological factors based on the social determinants on voting behavior which are age, gender, race and ethnicity, personal income, employment status, education and geography or area.

Secondly, party identification model was also used in trying to determine the other factors that influence voting behavior and the model explains on the electorates having their loyalty and affiliation to a certain political party and the electorates show their faithfulness through insistently electing the party during elections (Kovernck, 2008). The main measures of party identification were discovered as being the factors that influence voting behavior in South Africa and these are emotional state towards party, belief towards party as well as the party's role towards the liberation struggle and liberation of South Africa. This have seen the incumbent South African government being headed by African National Congress (ANC) since independence and this indicate that citizens of South Africa have belief and they are affiliated to the party hence this affects their voting behavior as they would show their loyalty through voting for ANC.

To add on, other factors that influence voting behavior in South Africa are policies of the party in relation to the prevailing issues in the country as well as the performances of the incumbent government or administration and record of the party in government, personality of the party candidates and voter's perceptions of the direction of the economy. According to Patel (2014), in South Africa favors are provided for groups and individuals for political backing in return and these favors included social grants, distribution of food parcels and these were also described as forms of voting buying.

The lesson that can be drawn from the South African case study is that, there are multiple factors that influence voting behavior and most of these factors are generally the factors that had been studied back then by different political scientists and psychologists. The case study was also vital as it managed to highlight the largest contributing factor in influencing voting behavior in South Africa using three communities and leaving out the gap to be filled up the study.

### **2.8.2 Nigeria**

Nigeria had in the past been truncated of its democracy due to armed intrusions, nevertheless stability has been restored and elections being held whenever necessary and the year 2015 marked a turning point on the electoral processes in Nigeria as the elections were held all over the country and the year was termed election year. Therefore, a study was conducted in Nigeria, using a random sampling technique three states were picked for the study representing the entire population in determining the factors that influence voting behavior with reference to 2015 elections.

To begin with, the findings of the research have it that, in Nigeria voting behavior is influenced by politics of patronage as evidenced in states that were randomly picked. This was referred to as clientelist balloting determined by individual thought and emotional bonds and this has been bulging in many political organizations and systems in Africa, thus the patron-clientelistic networks of patronage and personal loyalty shaped the personal ideology of voters and the leadership they reproduced in Nigerian 2015 election. This can also be evidenced in Zimbabwe, as the electorates exchange backing to be granted individual favors as candidates provides food stuffs, agricultural inputs and many other items in exchange for votes.

During the study, time of life is also a contributing pivotal issue which influences voting behavior amongst the electorates in Nigeria and according to Gill (2003), general studies indicates that elderly citizens participate more in polls as compared to young counterparts. In Nigeria, older people vote for the political party or the candidate whom they feel and trust protect their gains or interest and usually these are conservatist or republicans. This can be noted in most of African states like Zimbabwe were by, the older people tend to vote the party which would guarantee the protection of the revolutionary gains like land and sovereignty and this party is Zanu Pf which has been on power since 1980 to date. To add on, the study in Nigeria also reviewed that personal ideology basing on race, ethnicity and religion influences voting behavior and also with the higher percentage of electorates agreeing to the fact that materials and other methods of vote buying influences their voting behavior during elections (Ogbogu and Olaoye, 2017) and in contrary, some vote for the candidates basing on their performances and their ideologies.

In a nutshell, Nigerian case examined the factors that mostly predict polling choices basing with the 2015 elections and evidently reviewed that age and personal ideology being shaped by issues like race and religion, politics of patronage or patron-clientelistic networks of patronage are prominent factors influencing voting behavior in Nigeria.

## **2.9.0 Theoretical Framework**

According to De Vaus (1996), to adequately present and explain on the finding of the study or research and having detailed conclusions the findings must be tested for their relevance and applicability. Various theories have been drawn in trying to understand voting behavior (Patel et.al, 2014), therefore this section provides an overview of the theories used in the understanding of the possible determinants of voting behavior. This research will incorporate theories that seeks to explain why the Zimbabweans electorate vote the way they do. This research shall encompass theories such as party identification theory, rational choice theory amongst others.

### **2.9.1 Rational choice theory (R.C.T)**

This theory attempts to explain on the factors that influence voting behavior as based on the electoral choices on rational considerations. The electoral choice can be created from appraisal

done on candidates' or party plans, the performance of the incumbent government, candidates' acceptance as well as electorate's acuity pertaining to the performance of country's economics (Sanders, 2003). The model explains the factors that influence voting behavior as based on electoral reasoning or rational analysis rather than emotions. Therefore, the theory or model can also be used to provide explanations on the factors that influence voting behavior in Zimbabwe. With voter's being confidence with the performance of their economy they tend to use elections as a good platform to express their appreciation or discontentment through voting for or against the responsible candidate, or part respectively.

This would help in understanding of the upshots of March 2008 harmonized polls in Zimbabwe, whereby for the first time ZANU PF's R.G Mugabe lost to MDC-T's M. R Tsvangirai with 43.2% to 47,9% respectively (ZESN, 2008). According to Harrop (1987), the electorates compare the possible outcomes as presented by the parties or candidates and they elect aspirant basing on his or her position pertaining to the economic organization of the country and other issues and significances, hence the electorates make cogent decisions.

### **2.9.2 Party identification or affiliation theory**

The theory explains voting behavior basing on the reasons affiliating to a political party hence the electorates do possess a logic of affiliation to a party or candidate. For example, one would vote or affiliate to a party for he or she recognized the candidate or party, he or she have confidence towards the political organization to mention but a few, hence, Harop and Miller (1987) described this as an expressive means were by electorates or citizens demonstrate their entrenched affiliation and allegiance towards the party.

Citizens are found aligned or identified with a party and this is grounded upon their convictions the political organization will better serve their political, social and economic interest (Nma, 2015). Green et.al (2002), conceptualized the theory as individual, sentimental affiliation with the party entrenched upon emotional state of nearness to the political organization, candidate and other forums. The concept aids in elucidating on domination of a single political organization in Zimbabwe which is Zanu Pf and its dominance can be seriously accredited to its abundant loyal party supporters from all age groups and different walks of life. This can also be evidenced in opposition parties like the opposition party in Zimbabwe in the

name of MDC which has died hard supporters who very loyal to the party regardless of all the brutalities being encountered by the opposition.

### **2.9.3 Sociological theory**

It is evident that the electorates cast their votes basing on their sociological setup, hence the sociological model is used to describe on the social determinants of voting behavior. Sociological factors such as gender, race, income levels, ethnicity, media are amongst the influencers of voting behavior. According to Antunes (2010) and Rosema (2004), electoral behavior is influenced by the social groups from which the electorates belonged to.

The sociological model is of great important as it ameliorate on the understanding of the factors that influence voting behavior. This theory helps explain the events occurring in Zimbabwe's electoral landscape whereby, electoral outcomes are usually characterized by ZANU PF being unpopular in Matabeleland region and very popular and dominating in Shona speaking regions like Mashonaland provinces. This shows that the voting behavior is also determined by region and ethnicity hence the importance of this theory.

### **2.10 Conclusion and research gap**

Researches, studies and literatures reviewed above pertaining to voting behavior points to the fact that, there are different reasons influencing voting behavior of the electorates in elections. Much of the references and studies cited above were largely done through desktop inquiries and the use other secondary sources in line with the study. The information reviewed mainly focused on Zimbabwe in general as well as other countries like South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana to mention but a few. Thus, the research is focusing exclusively with Zvishavane District analyzing what influences voting behavior at a district level.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

##### **An analysis of the factors that influence voting behavior in Zimbabwe: The Case of Zvishavane District.**

The government of Zimbabwe has been under the stewardship of ZANU PF ever since the country gained its sovereignty in 1980. Elections have been held whenever they were due until to date with ZANU PF being the solely winner of the harmonized elections in Zimbabwe and this can also be backed by the voting patterns from various districts in Zimbabwe which reveal that ZANU PF has been dominating in the electoral processes. In the turn of the new millennium due to overabundance of reasons, Zimbabwe's situation under the stewardship of ZANU PF started to manifest in various forms which included economy doldrums, sky rocketing of unemployment rate, deterioration of the living standards with the majority living under the poverty datum line, shortage of basic commodities which included fuel to mention but a few. This being the case, did not see ZANU PF government dominance and hegemony being curbed completely, but rather ZANU PF's hegemony was further buttressed through the 2002, 2005, 2008 and 2013 harmonized elections. It is against all this background that, the researcher seeks to research on the factors that influence voting behavior of the electorates in Zimbabwe, but the researcher will be focusing exclusively to Zvishavane District focusing on both rural and urban areas.

The following segment shall be focusing on the presentation and analysis of the primary data gathered by the researcher through questionnaires and interviews during the research. According to Blaxter (2006), data presentation and analysis provides logic out of unprocessed data, in this research the data was accumulated in accordance with the research questions to be answered. The data collected was useful in determining the factors behind voting behavior in Zimbabwe.

#### **3.2.0 Research Findings**

The research findings were presented using tables, pie charts and graphs.

*Pic 1: Showing the researcher interacting with the electorates and members of various electoral bodies in Zvishavane.*

### 3.2.1 Presentation of Responses from Questionnaires

**Table 1: Responds rate**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Questionnaires dispatched</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Number of non-respondents</b>	<b>Responds rate %</b>
General electorates or voters	30	27	3	90
ZANU PF officials	5	5	-	100
MDC-T officials	5	5	-	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>90</b>

*Source: Primary data (2018)*

As illustrated on table 1, totality of 40 questionnaires were dispatched to illustrated category of respondents and 37 were adequately answered whilst 3 were not answered. The responds rate of general voters was at 90% and of the Zanu Pf and MDC-T officials were both at 100% giving the researcher an overall responds rate of 90% for the study and the questionnaire returned implies that the results to larger extent reflect the true results.

### 3.2.2 Responds rate by gender

*Fig. 1 showing response rate by gender (source: primary data;2018)*

As illustrated in *Fig. 1*, more responses came from males as compared to females' counterparts. Males responses accumulated to a totality of 25 responses that is 68% response rate were as, their female responses accumulated to 12 responses that is 32% response rate. This can be explained by the fact that politics and political participation has traditionally been a male domain that many females have found unwelcoming or even hostile. The researcher also noticed that most females were not willing to participate as some of them could not read or write and could not understand the subject matter.

### **3.2.3 Responds rate by age**

*Fig.2 showing responds rate according to age groups (source: primary data;2018)*

In order for the researcher to check on the reliability and maturity of responses an analysis of ages of the respondents was significant. As encapsulated in *Fig.2*.the highest percentage (41%) of respondents was obtained from ages 41 and above, this showed that the majority of the respondents were adults. Ages 18-30 had responds rate of 32 % and ages 31-40 had a responds rate of 27%. This was an indication that the maturity of respondents stood as a reliable measure of the reliability of the results.

### **3.2.4 Responds information by occupation status**

*Fig 3. Showing responds rate by occupation status (source: primary data;2018)*

To further up the reliability of the results obtained by the returned questionnaires, an analysis of occupation status of the respondents was also significant. As indicated from *Fig 3*. A large number of respondents is unemployed making up 59% with the percentage almost tallying with that of the country. Unemployment can be attributed to the harsh economic conditions prevailing in Zimbabwe due to closure of industries, companies, mines and very low Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). 27% of the respondents are self-employed and lastly 14% of the respondents are employed either in the public sector or private sector. The findings from above shows that the levels of unemployment in Zimbabwe are high with a greater percentage of respondents being unemployed.

### 3.2.5 Voting history of the respondents

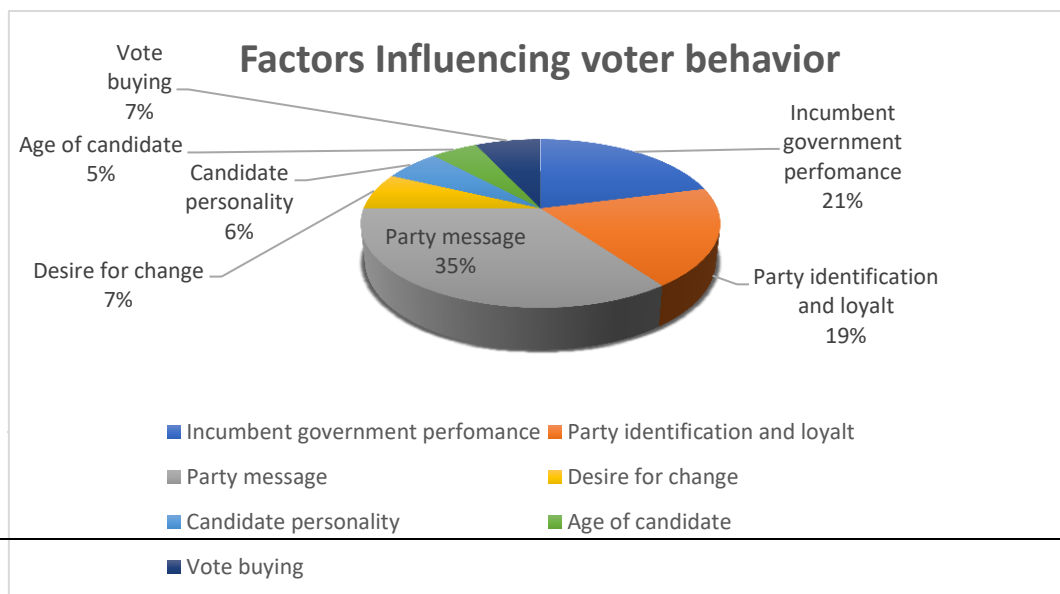
The reason behind this question was to establish the factors behind voting behavior of the electorates in Zimbabwe. Therefore, it was important for the researcher to understand whether the targeted population have ever voted and understanding if those who had voted before and those who had not voted intended to vote in the coming elections. As illustrated from *Fig 4* below, the majority of the respondents 49% had voted in the previous elections held in Zimbabwe, whilst 27% had not voted. The researcher noticed that, of those who had not voted were either too young to vote by then, not interested in politics or not registered. *Fig 4* also shows that 24% of those who had voted before and those who had not voted before intends to vote in the coming elections.

*Fig 4. Showing the voting history of the respondents*

*source: primary data (2018)*

### 3.3.0 Factors that influence voting behavior in Zvishavane District

The majority of the respondents were aware of the concept of voting behavior even though there were a number of contradicting responses and actions towards the subject matter. The researcher noticed that the voting choice of electorate is the result of various interactions or factors that operates in a conjunctional and cumulative fashion. Nevertheless, the respondents were also in a position to share their perceived understanding of the factors that influence voting behavior during the electoral processes. While the question of common issues of election behavior can best studied in the context of recognizable facts over previous elections it is a very complex task to bring together the respondents' personal judgement while casting his vote. Therefore, the approach that the researcher has put into consideration is to depend on the data presented by the



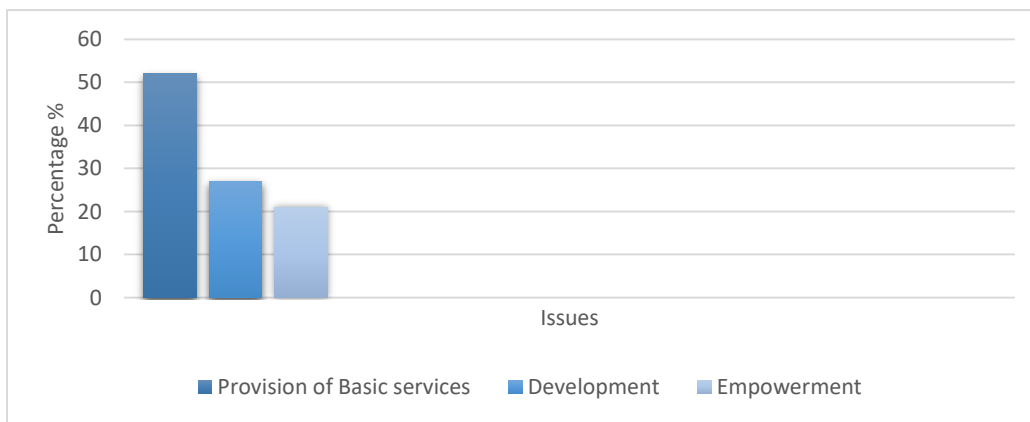
electorates to questions put to them.

*Fig 6. Showing Factors influencing*

*voter behavior*

Source: *Primary data (2018)*

As illustrated in *fig.6*, a higher percentage (35%) of respondents implies that party campaigning message has been pivotal factor that influences voting behavior in Zvishavane District and this also tallies with Zimbabwe at large. The researcher noticed that the campaign message should consists of major issues which include development, empowerment of the local people, job opportunities and several talking points usually about policy issues. With the majority of the respondents from rural areas postulating that the campaign message should mainly evolving on these 3 issues as illustrated in *fig 7*. These issues included the provision or improvement of basic services in rural areas (such as health, education, water and sanitation), rural development (such as infrastructural development, transport, communication networks) and issues to do with local empowerment. *Fig 7 below. Showing issues encompass campaign message in rural areas*



Source: *Primary data (2018)*

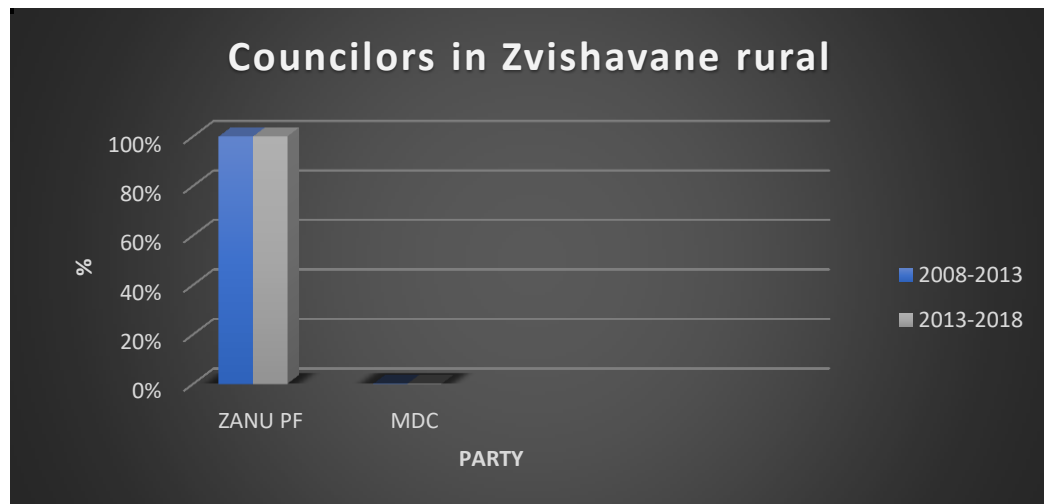
As shown in *Fig 7*, 52% of the respondents mentioned provision or improvement of basic services as being a pivotal factor influencing their voting behavior and they expect that issue in the campaign message as well. Were as 27% talked of rural development and 21 % empowerment. This was an indication that explains the dominance of Zanu Pf in the rural areas of Zvishavane as the party and its candidates has embarked on various developmental projects, partnering with several entities in an effort to improve and provide basic services as well as the

popular empowerment project which saw off many people benefiting. This have also aided in the explanation of Zanu Pf in most of rural areas and the rural areas are said to be amongst Zanu Pf strongholds.

From *Fig 6* above, 21% of the respondents were of the perception that the performance of the incumbent government, party or candidate influences their voting behavior. The issues that were considered under the performance of the incumbent government were, usually the voters perception of the direction of the economy in most cases which supposed to be improving or positive, voters' perception on incumbent performance on providing a range of basic services and delivery. According to Schmitter (2004), voters perceptions of the incumbent government, party or candidate's performance relates to the extent to which the electorate trusts their leaders. 19% of the respondents implied that party identification and loyalty also influence their voting behavior as shown in *Fig 6*. This entails that there are those citizens who are identified by a certain party and they prone to express their long-term loyalty to the party. The researcher also discovered that the people in rural areas are identified by Zanu Pf and express loyalty to Zanu Pf, were as those in urban areas are identified by MDC as illustrated in the graphs below.

### 3.3.1 Councilors in Zvishavane Rural 2008-2013 and 2013-2018

*Fig 8.2 below Showing 2008-2013 and 2013-2018 Councilors in Zvishavane rural*



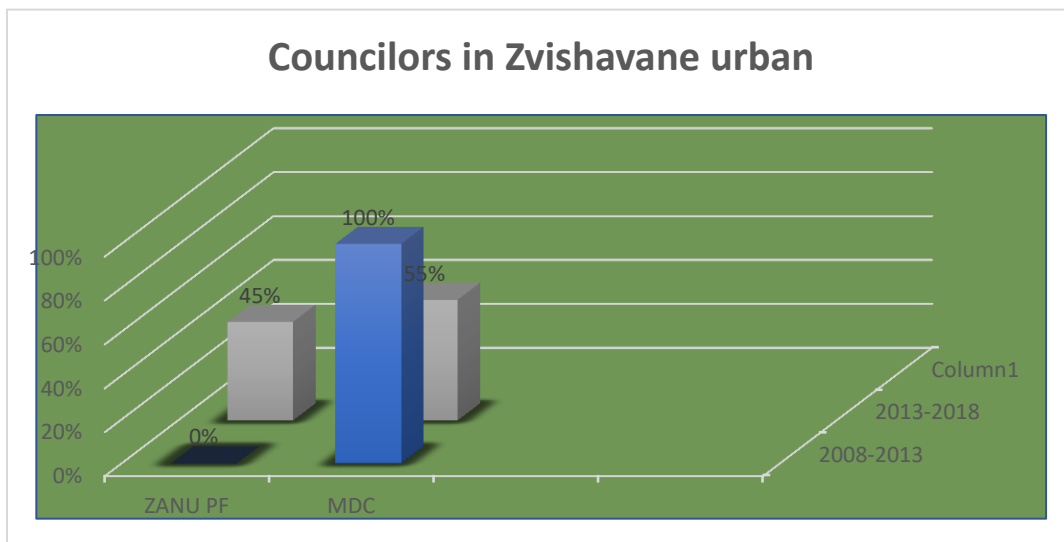
source: Wikipedia (2017)

The above graph illustrates that in Zvishavane rural there is 100% record of Zanu Pf councilors in all the 19 wards in the constituency for both terms that is 2008-2013 and 2013-2018, with the opposition MDC at 0%. This implies that in rural areas people express their long-term loyalty to Zanu Pf which dated back during the liberation struggle. The findings in *Fig 8.2* also tallies with other results from all over Zimbabwe’s rural areas.

### 3.3.2 Councilors in Zvishavane urban 2008-2013 and 2013-2018

The below presentation shows that 100% of the councilors in Zvishavane urban came from opposition MDC for the term 2008-2013 and 2013-2018, 55% of the councilors came from MDC were as 45% were Zanu Pf. This implies that the people from urban areas are mostly identified by the opposition MDC as evidenced by the party’s dominance in urban areas in 2 previous elections held as illustrated in *fig 8.3*. The researcher also discovered that the majority of the respondents in Zvishavane urban favored most the opposition MDC as compared to their counterparts in rural areas and the details obtained also tally with that of most urban areas.

*Fig 8.3 Showing 2008-2013 and 2013-2018 Councilors in Zvishavane urban*



source: Wikipedia (2017)



From Fig 6, 7% of the respondents postulated the desire for change is also another factor influencing their voting behavior, that is one vote for a party because they want new leadership or guardianship. Were as 6% of the respondents insinuated that candidate’s personality also contributes to voter behavior, electorates’ cognizance of a candidate’s personality affects whether or not they vote for the candidate. According to Vasile (2006), the electorates are likely to vote for a candidate they associate with positive personality traits than negative personality traits. Also, it is of greater significance to note that negative discernment of the candidate’s personality has implications on vote choice of the electorates. To add on from Fig 6, 5% of the respondents highlighted on the issue of the age candidate as amongst the factors that influence voting behavior, whilst 7% of the respondents mentioned vote buying as also another factor predicting voting behavior. According to Chiremba (2016), voters in areas that receive items during political campaigns or government funded inputs or where more households participate in the subsidy programme tends to reward the incumbent or the party or candidate at the ballot box.

A look at the recently held harmonized 2013 elections the ruling Zanu Pf triumphed a resounding victory with the victory emanating from of its commanding distribution of funds or resources based on politics of patronage and vote buying (Chiremba, 2016). Hence, its success electoral victories though they were shrouded with other irregularities.

### 3.4.0 Rating on the credibility of elections in Zvishavane

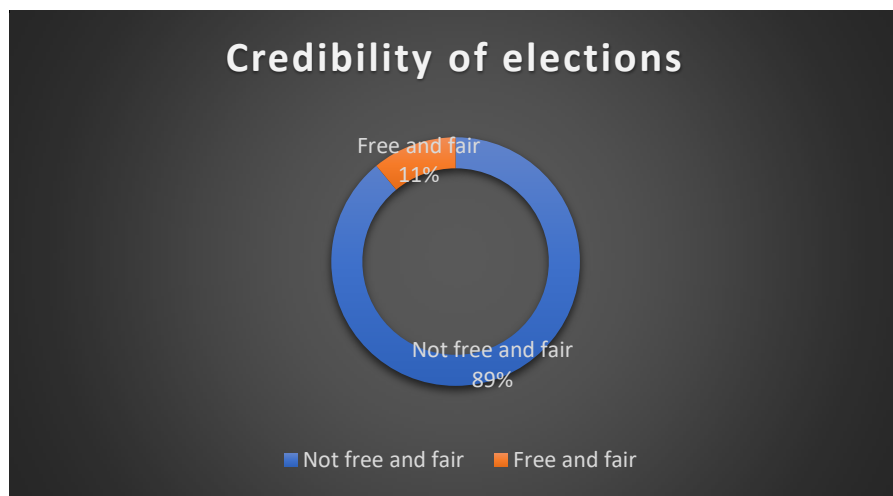
**Table 2. Shows response to the credibility of elections**

Category of respondents	Number of targeted respondents	Free and Fair	Not Free and Fair	Response %
General electorates	27	3	24	90

As shown in table 2 above, of the targeted 27 respondents who managed to return the questionnaire, 24 rated the elections as not free and fair whilst 3 rated them as free and fair.

### 3.4.1 Credibility of elections in Zvishavane

Fig 5. Showing ratings on the credibility of elections



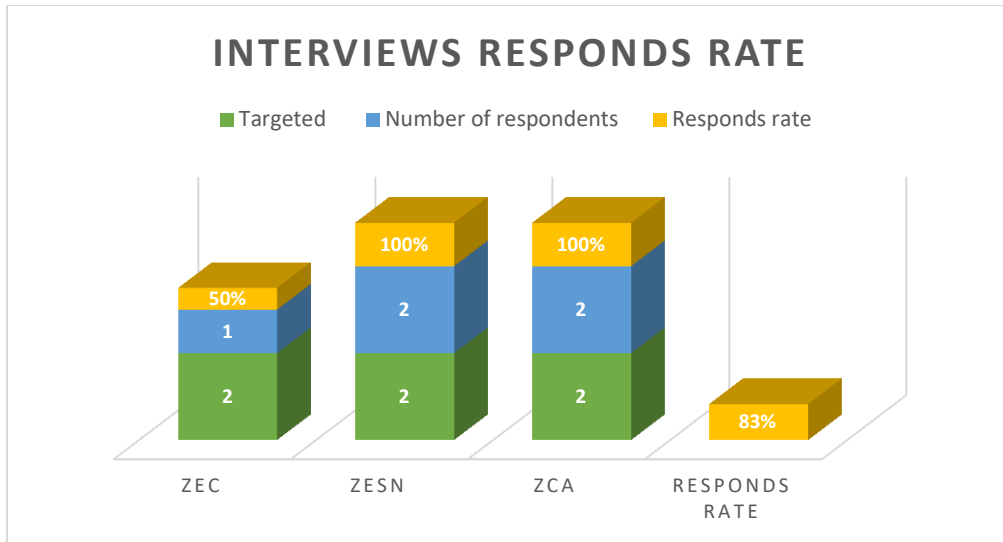
source: primary data (2018)

According to the results obtained from the returned questionnaires, 89% of the respondents rated the elections as being not free and fair as according to country's constitution. Fig 5 above also illustrates that only 11% of respondents rated the elections as being free and fair. The researcher noticed that those respondents who rated Zimbabwe's elections as being free and fair were either politically affiliated to the incumbent part (Zanu Pf) or benefited directly or indirectly from incumbent party.

### 3.5 Interview responses from various electoral bodies

The researcher was able to interview some of the representatives from 3 electoral boards in Zimbabwe and these included Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) and Zimbabwe Christian Alliance (ZCA). These interviews were done so as to solicit diversified information pertaining to the subject matter so as to reach an informed conclusion and forward valuable recommendations as well as to avoid biasness by proffering fair views through the acquiring of relevant views from selected electoral boards as shown Fig 6 below.

Fig 6 below. Showing interviews respond rate



*source: primary data (2018)*

The researcher targeted to interview six interviewees from three major electoral boards in the country as shown in *Fig 6* and five made it for the interview making the interview responds rate 83% of the targeted sample. It is also of greater significance to note that, the researcher will not reveal the names and office positions held by the interviewees in their organizations so as to protect their identity as per their request.

During the interviews with the Zimbabwe electoral bodies, most outcomes pointed out to the fact that the credibility of elections in Zimbabwe is questionable. With Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) representatives pointing out on the negative issues that characterize the Zimbabwe’s electoral processes. The ZESN representatives reflected on various issues and these included incomprehensive voter registration, inaccessibility of the voter’s roll to political parties on time that is the incumbent party Zanu Pf will be monopolizing the voter’s role and also, they have reflected on the absence of accountability and transparency of political parties funding, elections are shrouded in violence and intimidation, vote buying to mention but a few.

The interviewees also highlighted on their understanding of the subject matter that is the factors influencing voter behavior. All organizations interviewed indicated the factors they thought influence voter behavior with ZESN postulating that the performance of the incumbent government or party in terms of service provision, creation of employment and economic performance. Based on the results of the interview it turned out that voting is a complex phenomenon with interviewees admitting that various factors influence voting in Zimbabwe at

large. The factors were social pressures, economic performances and above all the prevalence of violence and intimidation during elections was overabundantly pointed out by almost all of the interviewees.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter the researcher presented, interpreted and analyzed the findings from the research through the use of questionnaires and interviews. The data accumulated was then analyzed using various tools like pie charts, bar graphs and tables.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter gives a summary and conclusions based on the findings that were presented in the previous chapter, it presents the major findings of the research thereby answering the research questions. This chapter also seeks to proffer recommendations on factors influencing voter behavior: A case of Zvishavane District.

#### **4.2.0 Summary of Findings**

The entire research was based on three research questions and objectives and these shall be summarized as follows: -

#### **4.2.1 Voting Behavior**

The opening objective fixated on the examination of the connotation of voting behavior and the study exhumed the meaning as the way an individual or a certain group of electorates vote for a

specific candidate or political party in an election (Kini, 1974). This has been linked to the election outcomes in Zimbabwe where ZANU PF regime has been dominating for the past three decades and the regime has managed to stay in power for so long through its electioneering ability.

#### **4.2.2 Factors Influencing Voting Behavior**

The next objective pursued to address on the issues that influence voting behavior in Zimbabwe using a case study of Zvishavane District and the research succeeded to address this by recognizing various factors as presented in the previous chapter. The identified issues also accounted for ZANU PF's regime elongated stay on authority for the past three decades. The research also was able to establish on the dominating areas by ZANU PF, that is ZANU PF mainly subjugated and was prevalent in rural areas of Zimbabwe as represented by the case study, were as the opposition dominates in the urban areas. It has also been noted that much of the population in Zimbabwe resides in rural areas hence Zanu Pf engineered a strategic campaign method were by it focused on the demands of the electorates in rural areas, hence its political hegemony.

#### **4.2.3 Credibility of the Elections in Zvishavane**

The third objective focused on the integrity of elections, the study reviewed that most of the citizens never trusted the outcomes of all the elections previously held. The elections have been rated as not free and fair as expected, but rather characterized by various mechanism of electoral fraud which included vote buying, violence, voting buying among other issues. In support of this Tsvangirai (2013) postulated that, in 2000, 2002, 2005, and 2008 elections former President Mugabe has showed that he had no concern about the lack of legitimacy of the elections outcomes in Zimbabwe. This evidenced that the elections in Zimbabwe has not been credible and at the other end the ZANU PF government would therefore not have any legitimacy.

### **4.3 Conclusions**

Although various authoritative accounts have been written on the electoral hegemony of ZANU PF, the gist of this research was on the factors influencing electoral behavior in relation to ZANU PF's longevity stay on power. During the research various issues that influence voter behavior were unearthed and the bulky of these factors in some way accounted for the electoral supremacy of the ZANU PF government for the past thirty-seven years. Correspondingly, if not more, important is the fact that elections in Zimbabwe have been held whenever they were due for the past three decades.

The research mainly focused on Zvishavane as the case study and the findings have noted that there are specific factors that influence the voting behavior of the electorates in Zvishavane District constituting both rural and urban area. There are several factors related to individual voting behavior which included the personal character of the candidates, evaluation of incumbent government performance, orientation of specific policy issues or campaign message, party identification and loyalty are the primary determinants of electoral behavior in Zvishavane.

The research reviewed that most of the factors that were presented during the research contributed to the electoral hegemony of ZANU PF for the past three decades and these have seen the party surviving against all the odds. From all the previously held elections ZANU PF's campaign message was dexterously expressed with populist policies on issues like land, employment, indigenization of the economy and rural development, these all guaranteed the electoral hegemony of ZANU PF as this influenced electoral behavior. The research also unearthed that the permanence of Zanu Pf government on power can be attributed to its popularity in rural areas where the bulky of the Zvishavane population resides (ZimStats, 2012).

Lastly the verdicts of this study reviewed that, amalgamation of individual voting behavior and Zanu Pf's electioneering which has been characterized with the alleged electoral fraud had contributed immensely to the electoral hegemony of the party or candidates for the past decades.

#### **4.3.0 Recommendations**

After partaking an analysis on the factors influencing voting behavior, few recommendations were specifically directed to the governments and ambitious political parties on what conducts should be done to legitimately win the elections by effectively garnering support from the electorates and restore credibility in the electoral processes of Zimbabwe.

### **4.3.1 The Government**

- a. As evidenced during the research, the performance of the incumbent government towards implementing and fulfilling its promises also determines voting behavior of the electorates and usually the electorates are more concerned on the incumbent position pertaining to the economic and social organization of the country during the reigning period. Therefore, the researcher recommends that the incumbent government be able to fulfill the promises they make during their political campaigns and incumbent should spend more time on advancing the economic position of the country as this would have a greater positive influence on voting behavior this could genuinely guarantee votes for them for the next election.
- b. The researcher recommends that, the government should create, allow elections observers from all over the world during the electoral period and promote a conducive environment that would promote peaceful, free and fair elections, to enhance that as well, there should be a clear demarcation between the government and electoral regulatory board ZEC and the board should be autonomous and this would improve the credibility of election outcomes in Zimbabwe

### **4.3.2 Opposition Political Parties**

- a. The opposition political parties should thoroughly design a campaigning strategy based on the understanding and identifying the potential electorates and this would enable them to identify the exact situations need to be addressed and plan ways to improve the existing situations to impact voting behavior to their advantage and solid planning will guarantee them votes genuinely.
- b. The researcher recommends that oppositional political parties should create a strategic plan and objectives which focuses on influencing voting behavior and their objectives should be SMART that is, **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**imeous to influence a wider support base.
- c. The opposition political parties should also collectively push for electoral reforms which include the amendment of various electoral legal frameworks, they should also advocate

for the allowing of electoral observers from all interested countries and organizations for the promotion of free and fair and the credibility of elections in Zimbabwe.

### **4.3.3 Academics**

The researcher also recommends the academics to further study and research on voting behavior as it is a broader phenomenon which needs to be tackled from different perspectives and this would also fill the gaps within the research and add more literature and knowledge to the subject matter.

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## **Appendix 1: Research Questionnaire**

### **MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY**

#### **UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATION RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**

My name is OMAR N. SATIYA (*R144509f*) and I am currently studying for BSc in Politics and Public Management at Midlands State University. I am conducting a research on the factors that influence voting behavior during elections in Zimbabwe with the case study of Zvishavane District. The research is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Science in Politics and Public Management Honors Degree. The questionnaire consists of 8 questions and will take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. All responses will be kept anonymous as no names shall be required and no one will be identifiable in the research.

**SECTION A.** *tick appropriate choice ✓*

1. **Gender**                                      **Male**                                       **Female**
2. **Age**    **18-30**                                       **31-40**                                       **40+**
3. **Occupation Status**                                      ..... **3.1 Student**   
.....  
.....

**NB. Indicate if unemployed**                                      .....

**SECTION B.**

1. **Have you ever voted?**                                      **Yes**                                       **No**                                       **Not interested**
2. **If yes indicate the year**                                      **2002**                                       **2005**                                       **2008**                                       **2013**
3. **If no or not interested state your reasons** .....  
.....
4. **Do you intend to vote in the coming elections**                                      **Yes**                                       **No**
5. **What factors influence your voting decision for a party/candidate during elections?**
- i. ....  
.....

- ii. ....
- .....
- iii. ....
- .....
- iv. ....
- .....

6. How do you rate the credibility of elections?    Free and Fair  Not free and Fair

**Thank you!!!**

**Appendix 2: Interview guides for electoral stakeholders**

**Introduction**

My name is OMAR N. SATIYA (*r144509f*), undertaking BSc in Politics and Public Management Honours Degree at Midlands State University. I am carrying out a research doing **an analysis on the factors that influence voting behavior in Zimbabwe: The Case of Zvishavane District**, in partial fulfilment of the requirements of BSc in Politics and Public Management Honours Degree. Therefore, I am kindly seeking your assistance by responding to the questions below. Your views and opinions on the subject matter will be greatly appreciated. Please note that the information provided will be used for academic purposes only and confidentiality is guaranteed before, during and after the study.



Instructions.

- a) Please respond to all questions.
- b) There are no right or wrong answers, hence please give the response that is closest to your opinion.
- c) Please note that all your responses will be treated with strict confidence and the study will be used for academic purposes only.

**CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS.**

I volunteer to be interviewed as part of the research project conducted by Omar N. Satiya, a student at the Midlands State University. I understand that the project is designed to gather information on the factors that influence voting behavior of the electorate and other information relating to electoral process in Zvishavane.

I understand that:

- 1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.
- 2. If 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 be tape recorded.
- 4. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.
- 5. I have read and understand the clarification provided to me and I voluntarily agree to participate.
- 6. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Signature-----

Date-----/-----/-----

Stamp



**Interview Questions**

1. Can you please explain on the role your organization in relation to elections?
2. What are the objectives of the organisation?
3. Are the guiding policies or legal frameworks to allow the organisation to meet its objectives?
4. What do you understand by the term voting / voter behavior?
5. According to your understanding of the previous question, what do you think are the factors that influence voter behavior?
6. Basing on all previous elections held, can you comment on the credibility of elections in Zimbabwe or Zvishavane?
7. Are there any challenges that are being faced by the electorates in Zvishavane district?
8. How do you intend or what measures are there to mitigate these challenges?

9. What are the implications of elections in Zimbabwe / Zvishavane?

**END OF INTERVIEW**

**Thank you for your time.**