



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BUSINESS, SOCIAL SCIENCES & EDUCATION

*Representative politics and Democracy in Higher institutions of learning:
extricating the actors' intentions.*

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CITATION: Barifaijo M. K. & Namara R.B, November (2015), *Representative politics and Democracy in Higher institutions of learning: extricating the actors' intentions: International journal of Social Sciences & Education (IJSSE) Volume 1 (4), 302 -326. ISSN 2105 6008.*

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the influence of representative politics on democracy in higher education institutions. It discusses the dynamics of staff representation on different organs and its presumption of “democracy” by revealing the intentions of the executives, the aspirants, and the electorates. The research attempted to answer three main questions: (1) What are the intentions of the aspirants in their struggle to represent their constituents? (2) Why do electorates decide to or not to vote for the competing aspirants? (3) How has representative politics promoted democracy in these institutions? The findings are a result of a qualitative approach, guided by a longitudinal design, conducted in two higher education institutions; Makerere University and Uganda Management Institute - from November, 2009 to April, 2014. Interviews were conducted with current representatives, unsuccessful aspirants, electorates and executives. Observations and documentary reviews were employed to collect data. Results revealed that aspirants had both personal and constituent related desires as pushing factors for them to stand for elective positions. Further, numerous reasons ranging from ideological pursuits, academic achievements, personal gains and friendship with aspirants were identified as having influence to electorate’s choices. The study revealed that majorly, communication flowed from top to bottom without giving the constituents a chance for their views to be heard. This has left constituents extremely frustrated and doubted the intention of representation. In a discussion guided by the Theory of Rational Choice, The Theory of Planned Behavior, and the Theory of Reasoned Action and Bandura's Model of Self-efficacy, the paper concludes that representative politics in higher education institutions did not enhance ideals of accountability and responsiveness as desired in democratic institutions, but rather, served personal interests of representatives.

Key words: aspirants, constituents, democracy, election, higher education, representation.

Introduction

The history of employee representation or participation dates back in the 18th century and it arose due to the need for employees to get involved in the decision-making process of institutions having recognized that individuals need a common voice to bargain employment matters (Wilkinson, Dundon, Marchington & Ackers, 2004). To achieve representation, elections have been the usual mechanism by which democracy operates since the 17th century (Vieira, Brito and Runciman, 2008). Elections have been for long used to fill offices in the legislature, the executive and judiciary (Mathieson & Pendleton, 2007). At the turn of 19th century this process was adopted by other organizations, including higher education institutions. This development has led to different organs having representatives of different categories of

staff to ease communication between employers and employees on a regular basis. Hence there was a need for organizations to embrace workers' unions at the beginning of the last century to facilitate communication for both employers and employees (Butler, 2005); Lupia, McCubbins and Popkin, 2000). Given its importance, employee representation has become a mandatory requirement (Bewley, 2006) in higher education institutions which requires effective leadership if these unions or associations are to gainfully benefit staff and organizations. Bewley, (2006) finds a strong justification for employee representation which is founded on strong formal system to elect staff representatives. For example, representation makes employees' views known to management; strengthen both management's and employees' understanding of workplace issues and other matters affecting the institution. Hence, formal systems would help create an atmosphere of mutual trust between employees and management and therefore improve workplace relations (Dickens and Hall, 2006). It is important to note that employee representation is not uniform across organizations, categories of staff and across countries. Wood, 2008; Brogan, 2001) explains how employee representation takes many forms that range from full workers' union recognition to ad hoc groups.

Not surprising however, the existing literature did not provide satisfactory explanations of the intentions of both the aspirants as well as the voters, although research on staff representation has basically concentrated on the usefulness of employee representation, processes of electing staff representatives, roles of staff representatives and on a larger scale, political representation and the decisions to vote for those representatives (Dundon and Wilkinson, 2006 Dundon and Wilkinson, 2006). This research took a different paradigm to attempt to unravel hidden intentions of the actors which in their view was extremely critical. Although Ackers, Marchington, Wilkinson and Dundon (2006) found employee representation to be an important and a mandatory requirement in most organizations to bridge the gap between the management and staff, this research found that HEIs have their peculiar demands given their diversified categories of staff, and different organs that require different representation. For example, University Council or Institute Council will have representatives for; academic staff, administrative staff, people with disabilities and students' representatives. Senate in these institutions also follow the same trend. Hence, these dynamisms in HEIs, sought to answer questions such as; do these processes for electing staff representatives necessarily lead to democracy? Why do staff offer to represent others? what does it mean to be represented? what informs our decisions to vote or not to vote? are our expectations always achieved through those representations? are such promises legally binding? These are heavy laden questions, that the researchers set out to answer.

Although this paper examines the role of staff representation in enhancing democracy in higher institutions of learning, it at the same time explores the politics that surround election processes by extricating the actors' intentions in these processes. The paper discusses the dynamics involved in staff representation processes that have become more despicable than anticipated

(Ladd & Lenz, 2011). The candidates themselves and their supporters have been seen engaging in all sorts of backstabbing, squabbling, assaults, character assassination, intrigue, sabotage, deceit, lies, blackmail and all sorts of politicking that result in damaging colleagues permanently. This has left many wondering whether this kind of politics can truly yield democracy. Hence, the research was motivated by the circus, drama, acting, during the election processes of staff representation in these institutions. Explaining these dynamics, Dickens and Hall (2006) found these campaigns marred with revulsion, hatred and trickery. They expressed their shock how even the presumed respectable aspirants sometimes make physical attacks. In the same line, Brader (2006) found that these aspirants many times make empty promises and too much exaggerations, presented unrealistic manifestos and falsely raised expectations of their constituents. They found that actually, some even change their positions “over-night” depending on who they are trying to convince. They wondered, why this was so, yet they all claim to represent their colleagues. Such dynamism in employee representation led to this research. This paper was sparked off by representative political motives in institutions of higher learning especially during campaigns. This is because, researchers (e.g Marchington, 2005; Marsden, 2007; Mathieson, Pendleton, 2007) have explained the hiccups during presidential and parliamentary campaigns which is understandable, given the numerous benefits. However, competition during staff representation in HEIs, could not be clearly understood. An attempt was made by Dundon, Curran, Ryan and Maloney (2006), to conceptualize the dynamics of information and consultations; which actually could be closest to the concerns of the current authors. However, they were mainly concerned with how information is often transmitted from the representatives to the constituents and from the constituents to the management. Further, research on representation in higher education has often times been anecdotal and inconclusive.

The interplay of Formal Systems, Election Campaigns and Politics

There are different categories of associations in these institutions, and formal system to elect employee representatives in Uganda. There are different categories of employees who are either represented through their unions, associations or not represented at all. At the same time, there are different organs that require representation of staff in HEIs in Uganda. These formal structures guide the election process to enable representatives participate in various decision-making processes, information and consultation which are part of a general framework of employee participation. The current primacy of trade unions and staff associations as the channel for employee representation is outlined in the Uganda’s Constitution (1995). The Constitution specifically defines and stipulates this mandate as a specific workers’ right under Article 29(1)(e) and Article 40(1). Other enabling statutes exist under that major source of laws, to promote and regulate the enjoyment of those basic workers’ rights and the trade union rights. For example, Trade Unions are registered under the Trade Union Decree 20 of 1976 and under the Miscellaneous Amendments statute 1996, the existence of the existence of the Trade Union Check off statute. Both Trade Union and Staff Associations are expected to develop strategies in

the workplace and at the macro level (Ivancevich, 1995), to influence production and distribution because workers have a keen economic interest in work and would like to benefit equitably from the proceeds of their labour. However, individual workers do not have the capacity to negotiate with the management. Therefore, the need for a common voice through employee representation. Associations involved included Makerere University Academic Staff Association (MUASA), Makerere University Non-Academic Staff Association (MUNASA) and Workers' Union for Group Employees at Makerere University. Other associations include; Uganda Management Institute Academic Staff Associations (UMISA) and Uganda Management Institute Non-Academic Staff (UMINASA). There are other bodies in these institutions such as Councils the supreme body, Senate which is supreme Academic body, and other related Committees. All these organs and associations are represented by the different categories of staff and are guided by institutional structures. These positions have term limits that are not uniform.

All these representatives in these institutions are elected by their colleagues in the same category in line with the rules and practices provided by the regulations of these institutions Human Resource Manuals and Schemes of Service. These elected representatives are often called staff representatives, union representatives or office representatives – depending on the institution. While employees have a constitutional right to join and participate in these associations/union and manage their business, employers often times have a keen interest to ensure that institutions are on course. The procedures for the election of staff representatives are regulated in the handbook and in the agreements reached between the institutions and the representatives (UMI HR Manual, 2010). The rules of UMI provide either for election and the manual recommends that employee representatives should normally have a minimum of one year's service with their employer before being elected through voting. All employees with at least one year's service qualify to become eligible candidates, and candidates must be nominated either by a recognized member of the association or at least two employees (UMI HR Manual, 2010). Although there is no provision or entitlement to a set amount of time off for any representative to undertake their duties, they are allowed time off necessary for carrying out their functions as staff representatives with reasonable limits of absence.

Table One: Composition of the respondents in two institutions

Institution	Female	%	Male	%	Total
Makerere University	7	20%	28	80%	35
Uganda Management Institute	12	23%	42	77%	54
Total	19		70		89

Methodology

Ethnographic design was used to understudy the trend, where the researchers were part of the system. This was supplemented by a Longitudinal design, given that elections occur after a period of 2-5years. The procedure consisted of indepth interviews, review of relevant documents, participant observation. In-depth interviews were intended to ascertain the motives that influence aspirants to want to lead others as well as those to be led to establish factors that influence employees' voting choices in Makerere University and Uganda Management Institute. Non-random sampling that included purposive and convenience were employed. Council and Senate minutes were reviewed to establish the trend, and HR manuals were examined for policy guidelines. Thematic and content analyses were adopted to enable the researcher draw logical conclusions on the issue of representation. Literature search was also used to collaborate empirical findings. A total of nineteen (19) aspirants (former and current), three (3) heads of institutions and 49 electorates were interviewed.

The Conceptual Orientation

Employee representation has been defined differently by different scholars (Bewley, 2006). However, the meaning is often determined by the context. However, there is a consensus among various scholars (e.g. Butler, 2005; Dundon, Wilkinson, Marchington, Ackers, 2005; Inman, 2006). They affirm that employee representation is the right of employees to seek a union or an association or individual to represent them for the purpose of negotiating with management on such issues as wages, hours, benefits and working conditions. In the workplace, workers may be represented by trade union or other representatives; on disciplinary and grievance matters; on works councils or other consultative bodies; for the collective bargaining of terms and conditions; for making workforce agreements and sometimes on joint working groups. Employee representatives may be chosen by their fellow employees or appointed by management (Gollan and Wilkinson, 2007a). Their roles vary but most; receive information from and give information to management; pass on information more widely within the workforce; are consulted by management over certain workplace matters. More succinctly employee representation has been defined as the right of employees to seek an individual to represent them for the purpose of negotiating with management on such issues as wages, hours, benefits and working conditions and work life balance (Wilkinson, Dundon, Marchington, Ackers, 2004). Representation usually refers to representative democracies where elected officials nominally speak for their constituents. Sometimes, workers may be represented by trade union or other representatives; on disciplinary and grievance matters; on councils or other consultative bodies; for the collective bargaining of terms and conditions; for making workforce agreements or on joint working groups (Blyton &Turnbull, 2004).

However, in politics much as in other organizations, representation describes how some individuals stand in for others or a group of others, for a certain time period (Cox, Zagelmeyer, Marchington, 2006; Dundon & Wilkinson, 2006). Employee representatives may be chosen by

their fellow employees or appointed by management and their roles vary but most of them; receive information from and give information to management pass on information more widely within the workforce are consulted by management over certain workplace matters. The role of employee representatives may be chosen by their fellow employees or appointed by management and their roles vary but most of them; receive information from and give information to management pass on information more widely within the workforce are consulted by management over certain workplace matters (Kersley, Alpin, Forth, Bryson, Bewley, Dix and Oxenbridge, 2006).

On the other hand, representative politics has been described by Gonzales & Tyler, 2008 and Harder & Krosnick, 2008) as self serving and manipulative behaviour of individuals and groups to promote their self interests at the expense of others, and some times even organizational goals as well. They explain how representative politics manifests itself through struggle for resources, personal conflicts, competition for power and leadership and tactical influence executed by individuals and groups to attain power, building personal stature, controlling access to information, not revealing real intents and building coalitions (Stein, Leighley & Owens, 2005). It is common to see aspirants behaving like hunters or fishermen as they use so many irresistible baits to catch the attention and support of their constituents during the campaigns. They become men and women of the people, it becomes a time for them to obtain poached eggs under false pretenses (Marchington, 2005). During this period, a lot of promises are made just to buy the votes of unsuspecting constituents. Aspirants resort to the trick lies which often end as soon as they are voted into those positions. Krueger & Acevedo (2008) explains how this drama has affected election processes for representatives.

Although the term election has been used in literature to mean different things, election is a formal decision-making process by which a population chooses an individual to hold an office and have been the usual mechanism by which modern representation exercise democracy (Bewley, 2006). To elect means "to choose or make a decision" (Krueger & Acevedo, 2008). Surprisingly, although the phenomenon of representation and its process dates way back in the 17th century, the motives and intentions of the contestants for leadership positions have not been fully explored. Funny enough, research has found that even those in the race may not be clear about the intention although the goals most times are known. This controversy has led to various researches (Ackers, Marchington, Wilkinson & Dundon, 2006). Elections may fill offices in the legislature, sometimes in the executive, judiciary, and institutions. This process is also used in many other private and business organizations, from clubs to voluntary associations and corporations. The universal use of elections as a tool for selecting representatives in modern democracies is in contrast with the practice in the democratic archetype, ancient Athens (Fishbein and Cappella, 2006). To elect means to choose or make a decision using numerous forms such as ballot, show of hands or queuing behind one's candidate. Election involves identifying and selecting aspirants who will influence policy or institutional decisions. Scholars

such as Ackers, Marchington, Wilkinson & Dundon (2006) describes how the election process involves competition for the votes of the constituents through campaigns. It also involves supporters for a campaign to be either formally organized or loosely affiliated, and frequently utilize campaign advertisements, office to office, door to door or individual to individual (Kersley, Alpin, Forth, Bryson, Bewley, Dix and Oxenbridge, 2006), soliciting for votes. All this is in search of democracy. However, scholars (e.g. Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Gerrig, & Zimbardo, 2010; Ladd & Lenz, 2011) have found that although democracy requires commonality, accountability, effective representation, the process has become more rhetoric than reality – a challenge that has crippled democracy. Yet, elections are considered as a defining and unavoidable element of any peace building process.

During this period, aspirants spend huge sums of money to organize private sessions or meetings, they gossip on who is doing what, and why (Hall, 2005). Aspirants promise to step up employee welfare and deal with unresolved conflicts. Once they have been voted by the unsuspecting constituents, the promises die away. This is a cancer that stagnates and slowly kills people's motivation in taking part in the electoral processes. Thus, many are affected by the wrong which torment them for a long period. The aftermath of it has always been very disastrous to the electorate. The aspirants are also supposed to produce comprehensive manifestos and before casting the ballots, the electorate will know if and how a particular aspirant will address certain employment related issues once in power. It is a waste of an opportunity to vote for a contestant simply because you received some favours during the campaign period. How will your other everyday needs be met? You need to identify issues that need to be addressed in your institution and then find out whether your aspirants will address them (and how) or not. Vote for contenders whose manifestos are clear and in accordance to the needs of the employees. Many organisations have formal processes for establishing employee representation. Many however, may require single representation. However, HEIs are more complex due to the composition of staff in such institutions as well as the multifaceted organs. The different categories include; academic staff, administrative staff, support staff. On the other hand, the different organs include both formal and informal. The formal ones include; Councils or Board of Directors, Senate, Committees of Council and Committees of Senate. There are also Ad Hoc Committees. Although the processes for the establishment and election of such representatives (i.e. The Council, Appointments' Board, The Senate, Academic Staff Associations, Non-Academic staff Associations, Workers' Union etc..) is clear, the intentions of the aspiring representatives and decisions of the voters remain unravelled. This research therefore was intended to uncover the dynamism in the aspirants decisions to contest and decisions of voters to elect those representatives.

Theoretical explanations and Literature Review

This research was guided by The Theory of Rational Choice by Downs (1957), The Theory of

Planned Behavior and Bandura's concept of self-efficacy. According to Brogan (2001), Downs' (1957, rational choice has been an influential paradigm in electoral decision making. Rational choice theory supposes that individuals make their decisions. On the other hand, the theory of planned behavior, postulates that that knowledge of the role of perceived behavioral control came from Bandura's concept of self-efficacy (Ajzen, 1991). The theory of planned behavior holds that only specific attitudes toward the behavior in question can be expected to predict that behavior. In addition to measuring attitudes toward the behavior, we also need to measure people's subjective norms – their beliefs about how people they care about will view the behavior in question. Lately, Fishbein and Cappella (2006) stated that self-efficacy is the same as perceived behavioral control in his integrative model, which is also measured by items of self-efficacy in a previous study (Ajzen, 2002a). The best predictor of behavior is intention. Consequently, intention is the cognitive representation of a person's readiness to perform a given behavior, and it is considered to be the immediate antecedent of behavior (Dundon and Wilkinson, 2006). This intention is determined by three things: their attitude toward the specific behavior, their subjective norms and their perceived behavioral control. To predict someone's intentions, knowing these beliefs can be as important as knowing the person's attitudes. Finally, perceived behavioral control influences intentions. Perceived behavioral control refers to people's perceptions of their ability to perform a given behavior. These predictors lead to intention. A general rule, the more favorable the attitude and the subjective norm, and the greater the perceived control the stronger should the person's intention to perform the behavior in question. Given the purpose of this research therefore, the researcher adopted The Rational Choice theory, the Theory of Planned Choice and the Theory of Reasoned Action to be able to answer the three main questions. The theory of planned behavior is a theory about the link between beliefs and behavior. A high correlation of attitudes and subjective norms to behavioral intention, and subsequently to behavior, has been confirmed in many studies (e.g. Sniehotta, 2009; Vieira, Brito & Runciman, 2008) and Williamson, 2002)

The concept was proposed by Icek Ajzen to improve on the predictive power of the theory of reasoned action by including perceived behavioural control. It is one of the most predictive persuasion theories. It has been applied to studies of the relations among beliefs, attitudes, behavioral intentions and behaviors in various fields such as advertising, public relations, advertising campaigns and healthcare. The theory states that attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, together shape an individual's behavioral intentions and behaviors. The theory was developed from the theory of reasoned action, which was proposed by Martin Fishbein together with Icek Ajzen in 1975. The theory of reasoned action was in turn grounded in various theories of attitude such as learning theories, expectancy-value theories, consistency theories, and attribution theory. According to the theory of reasoned action, if people evaluate the suggested behavior as positive (attitude), and if they think their significant others want them to perform the behavior (subjective norm), this results in a higher intention (motivations) and they are more likely to do so

Yet, voters have to take notice of politicians and collect information to make reasonable decisions based on their own self-interest, and information searching is a costly affair. The

concept of self-efficacy is rooted in Bandura's social cognitive theory. It refers to the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcome. The concept of self-efficacy is used as perceived behavioral control, which means the perception of the ease or difficulty of the particular behavior. It is linked to control beliefs, which refers to beliefs about the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of the behavior. In the workplace, workers may be represented by trade union or other representatives; on disciplinary and grievance matters; on works councils or other consultative bodies; for the collective bargaining of terms and conditions; for making workforce agreements or on joint working groups. In particular, perceived behavioral control is presumed to not only affect actual behavior directly, but also affect it indirectly through behavioral intention (Zimmerman et al., 2005). As a general rule, the more favorable the attitude toward behavior and subjective norm, and the greater the perceived behavioral control, the stronger the person's intention to perform the behavior in question should be. Finally, given a sufficient degree of actual control over the behavior, people are expected to carry out their intentions when the opportunity arises (Ajzen, 2002b). Voting behavior is a form of political behavior and gives a chance in understanding voters' behavior that explains how and why decisions were made either by public decision-makers or by the electorate. Political psychology researchers study ways in which affective influence may help voters make more informed voting choices, with some proposing that affect may explain how the electorate makes informed choices in spite of low overall levels of political attentiveness and sophistication (Sniehotta, 2009).

A counter-argument against the high relationship between behavioral intention and actual behavior has also been proposed, as the results of some studies show that, because of circumstantial limitations, behavioral intention does not always lead to actual behavior. Namely, since behavioral intention cannot be the exclusive determinant of behavior where an individual's control over the behavior is incomplete, Ajzen introduced the theory of planned behavior by adding a new component, "perceived behavioral control." By this, he extended the theory of reasoned action to cover non-volitional behaviors for predicting behavioral intention and actual behavior. In addition to attitudes and subjective norms (which make the theory of reasoned action), the theory of planned behavior adds the concept of perceived behavioral control, which originates from Self-Efficacy Theory (SET). Self-efficacy was proposed by Bandura in 1977, which came from social cognitive theory. To establish intentions of the actors, therefore, Bandura's Theory of Self-Efficacy provides an explanation. Intentions have been defined as the amount of effort one is willing to exert to attain a goal (Ajzen, 1991), behavioral plans that...enable attainment of a behavioral goal (Kersley, Alpin, Forth, Bryson, Bewley, Dix, & Oxenbridge, 2006), or simply proximal goals. In essence, intentions can be conceived of as goal states in the expectancy value tradition that are the result of a conscious process that takes time, requires some deliberation, and focuses on consequences (Marchington, 2006). Lane suggests there is more information than ever available to the voter, even more so during election time, and that's what makes voters decide. But it is irrational for voters to examine all the information

that comes their way on a daily basis, as Miller, Brickman, and Bolen (1986) noted. How voters search and order available information has been the focus of a number of studies (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2005). More specifically, Marsden (2007) examined how perceptions of issues affected voting intentions, while Mathieson & Pendleton (2007) and Gomez and Wilson (2001) explored the concept of sophistication and how the level of political sophistication can impact the search and evaluation aspect of processing that leads to the voting decision. However, the decision does not reveal the intentions.

There are numerous reasons why people vote the ways they do. Many may go to the polls and select the most familiar sounding names (Sniehotta, 2009 and Vieira, Brito & Runciman, 2008), while others could have undertaken significant research to arrive at their decisions. First, the early representation studies focused on the link between a constituency and its representative (Cox, 2003). If representation leads to democracy, then it is important to note that democracy is not a single event, but an ongoing process. Hence, once elected, people judge their representatives not just by what they said in the campaign, but by how they actually govern and by the decisions they take that affect their representatives' lives. Sometimes the gap between campaign rhetoric and the reality of leadership can be large. This research examined the intentions of the contestant, what they undertook to offer to their constituents at the time of campaigns and what they actually offered after a period of two years. Quite possibly people may be influenced without being aware of it. According to Lau (2007) incumbents may play a role in the way one votes or does not vote, are they voting what they believe, the way their idols vote or are they voting against the way their friends vote? What influence does the existing leadership has on one's view, or do people simply make up their mind when a candidate "looks" the part? According to Lau (2007), electorates are most likely to be influenced by two things; to maintain the status quo or change to restore justice in the institution. On the other hand, Longley (2008) found that most decisions were influenced by grapevine information when it comes to making voting decisions. Since it would be expected that each voter would indeed vote the issues that would be most important to them, then does the voter vote in their own self interest or what is best for the whole. It would be nice to think that voters see the big picture and vote for what might be in the best interest of the institution rather than vote a single issue, or even vote for the person that is more attractive. The use of emotional appeals in political campaigns to increase support for a candidate or decrease support for a challenger is a widely recognized practice and a common element of any campaign strategy. Campaigns often seek to instill positive emotions such as enthusiasm and hopefulness about their candidate among party bases to improve turnout and political activism while seeking to raise fear and anxiety about the challenger (Wilkinson, Dundon, Marchington, & Ackers, 2004). Enthusiasm tends to reinforce preferences, whereas fear and anxiety tends to interrupt behavioral patterns and leads individuals to look for new sources of information.

The theory of evidential decision making developed by Krueger and Acevedo (2008) was

adopted to explain issues of intentions. The theory of evidential decision making recognizes that no individual voter has a detectable causal effect on the outcome of a large-scale election. They argue that voters' belief in a difference in the outcome is negligible, and truly has no significant impact. Citizens know and understand that their votes build one upon the other as snowflakes and recognize that although it takes only one vote to win a race, in their mind that one vote could be theirs. According to Gonzales & Tyler, and Harder & Krosnick (2008), there are two prevalent justifications that include expressive voting (voting feels good and it contributes to one's reputation as a responsible citizen) and civic-duty voting (to vote is to pay the price for living in a democracy (Krueger & Acevedo, 2008)). These are two probable reasons why anyone would want to vote and would consider it worth their time and effort to do so. Also, people believe it may be in their own best interest to vote, they feel if they do not vote, they do not have the right to voice any disapproval of the outcomes of elections. Opp (2001) boldly claimed that participation in an election makes a difference, and that difference to by clearing ones conscience about participation. In other words, constituents more or less assume that they can influence the outcome of an election. People do believe that when their individual vote is combined with other likeminded individuals then their vote does indeed make a difference.

Results and Discussion

Representation in higher education institutions (HEIs) is an important part of - and play an important role in –society, much like any other organization. It becomes more critical in this kind of organization given the diverse categories of the actors. Therefore, effective representation is believed to create stability (Gollan & Wilkinson, 2007), trust and confidence. These institutions are societies unto themselves, but they are also part of the larger society. For example, if they remained only societies unto themselves, they would be locked up in the proverbial ivory tower and their future would most likely be considerably shorter than their past. On the other hand, HEIs without some distance from society at large would run a serious risk of losing their capacity to reason in terms of principle, to take a long term view somewhat detached from the immediate issues of the day and to identify sustainable solutions to the most serious and long term challenges facing our society (Blyton & Turnbull, 2004). The sets of issues in which higher education institutions have a role to play, as institution and through their individual members, such as the academic community of scholars and students; institutional decision making; institutional life in a wider sense, including the study process; and higher education institutions as multicultural societies. Therefore, politics is part of higher education institutions.

This study took on two higher education institutions to (1) compare notes and (2) to explore challenges in two institutions by attempting to establish intentions of actors, the employers, aspirants and constituents in their struggle to achieve representation.

Figure one: Respondents in the two higher educational institutions

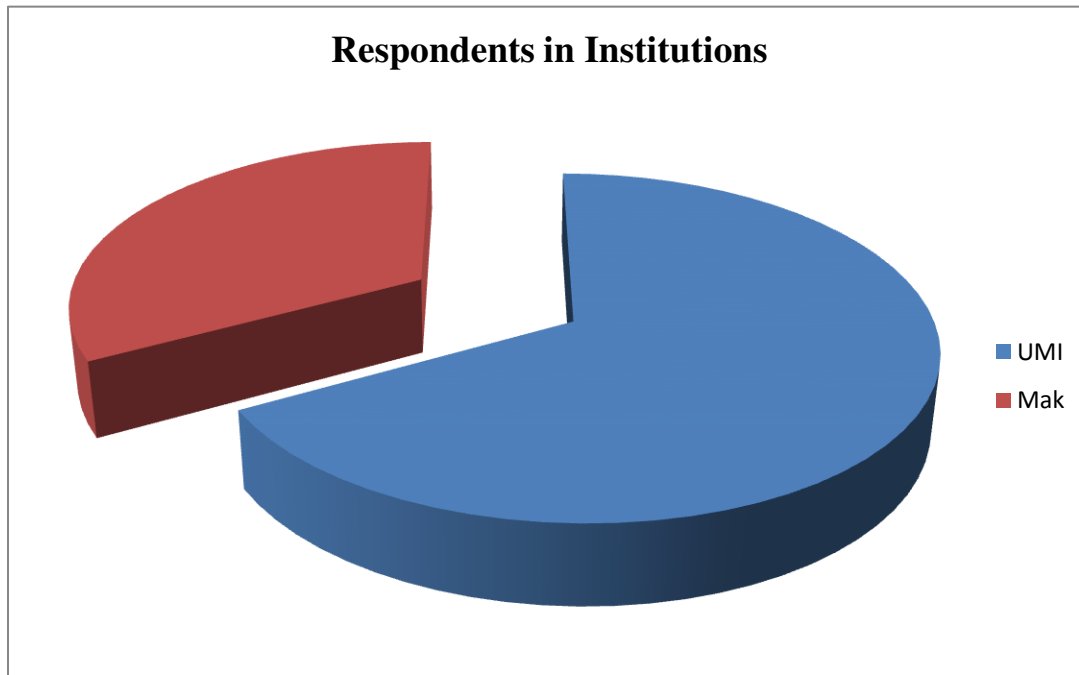


Table one displays the number of respondents in the two higher education institutions. The study showed that there were more respondents from Uganda Management Institute with 65% than Makerere University which had 35%.

Figure Two: Respondents by Gender

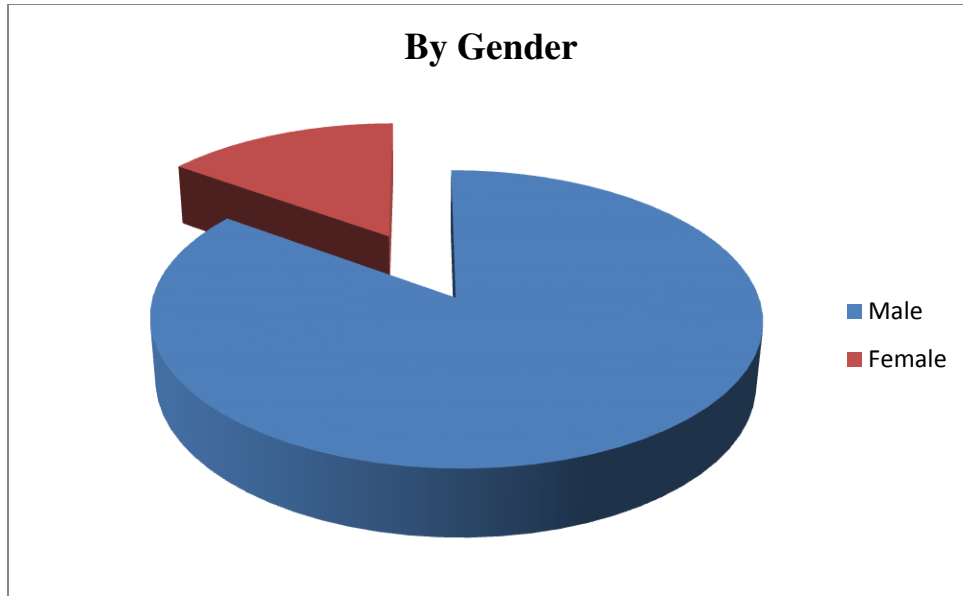


Table two displays respondents by gender which indicates that there were more male than female that participated in this study (85% Male as opposed to 15% Female).

This finding showed that males were more active in representation politics than female given the results above. Elections of employee representatives has been a dramatic process and has often times led to uncertainty and mistrust among voters according to Wilkinson, Dundon, Marchington and Ackers (2004). Whereas previous studies found mistrust and uncertainty, the current study found these politics to breed hatred, intrigue and divisions among staff, yet this is intended for all staff. Indeed like Hall (2005), while much scholarship has sought to explain this dynamism in the voting process of employee representation, intentions of voters and aspirants have received comparatively little attention (Meyers, 2008). Not surprising though, the current study found that even heads of these institutions had preferred candidates and went out of their way to campaign for them directly or indirectly. The same finding was found e.g. in Andreadis, Chadjipadelis, 2005; Annesi, 2005; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Parker; and Isbell, 2010; where leaders in many organizations world over have involved themselves in staff campaigns. Yet, although top management or central administration is only supposed to seek advice and counsel on employment related policies and issues, it is in their interest to maintain harmony and coherence in these institutions (Bewley, 2006). Although numerous researchers (e.g Butler, 2005 and Blyton & Turnbull, 2004 and Price, 2002); have been conducted, especially on the processes and outcomes of elections, Bewley (2006) found considerable tension among policy makers during election period that was difficult to explain. The question is, “what is it that causes this tension among policy makers, if the representatives are only conveyors of information? True, employers and employees find this representation critical since employment related issues cannot be negotiated directly with employees, either individually or

in any other forums. But on the other hand, employers have been found to prefer softer counterparts to negotiate with, and for this matter, Butler (2005) explain how the governing bodies and heads of institutions alike sometimes feel nervous and uncomfortable working with 'radical' employees. "...some staff struggle to bring down institutions so they can discredit the one's leadership..." Although, higher education institutions (HEIs) like other organization, need this shared governance for its activities, it does not guarantee harmony or agreement with employee representatives. For this matter, Cox, Marchington and Suter, (2007) provide a more convincing explanation for the involvement of the top management in the election processes of these representatives. They alluded thus leaders feel more comfortable working with those they can trust and those who can embrace change for the good of the institution. Vieira, Brito and Runciman, 2008 and Williamson, 2002 found how competition for such positions have left institutions in a state of quagmire, where the actors intentions have remained a mystery since, management unswervingly signal their preference, the staff aggressively front their candidates and the contestants employ all the trickery to win elections.

Results on research question one were conflicting because different aspirants advanced different reasons for their drive to lead their constituents. Available literature too, does not provide one single model, that can explain why people wish to represent their constituents. Whereas staff representation would be a well intentioned intervention, the campaign process is often marred with so much acting, fragrant lies and pretence (Brogan, 2001; Bewley, 2006; Blyton & Turnbull, 2004). This normally involves the aspirants visiting potential electorates whom they may have shunned some years ago (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2005). While they are looking for votes, they pretend to be trying to share and catch-up. Yet, results from the current research found that as soon as these aspirants go through, the rest becomes history.

Gregory (2004) describes these vote seekers as "hunters" or "fishermen" as they use so many irresistible baits to catch the unsuspecting fish or wild delicacies. Blyton and Turnbull (2004) describes how this period turns the most principled and trusted people change over night and the unscrupulous staff become men and women of the people. Since the beginning, voting has been the cornerstone of democracy worldwide (Lau, 2007) and many researches have attempted to unravel intentions of voters with little attention paid to the concept of social influence (Manstead & Parker, 1995). Yet, the concept of social influence has been assessed by social norm and normative belief in both the theory of reasoned action and theory of planned behavior (Gregory, 2004). Individuals' elaborative thoughts on subjective norms are perceptions on whether they are expected by their friends, family and the society to perform the recommended behavior. On the other hand (Notani, 1998), found how social influence is measured by evaluation of various social groups. For example, different constituents might have different views about different candidates, social influence might lead to a common ground on who to vote regardless of reasons. While most models are conceptualized within individual cognitive space, Ajzen & Fishbein (2005) explains that the theory of planned behavior considers social influence such as

social norm and normative belief, based on collectivistic culture-related variables. Given that an individual's behavior might very well be located in and dependent on the social networks and organization, social influence has been a welcomed addition (Annesi, 2005). Schopenhauer (2002), for example discovered, that many contestants declare their goals without really thinking about their intention. *One contestant had this to say “..I just want to prove my worth... I don't just like the candidate who is standing, but I do not have any specific reason why I want to stand..”* On the same note, Annesi (2005) argues that intentions change at various moments as needs change. Hence, most aspirants don't think a lot about their intentions before acting. Although goals and intentions are different, Schopenhauer (2002) explains how a goal is what we want to accomplish whereas an intention is the way in which we want to meet that goal or the “why” of an action. Therefore, that lack of knowing the actual intention could mark the difference between success and failure in any situation. Scholars have established the different types of motives, but Kegan and Lahey (2010) explains how hidden commitments have as much power as our conscious and “more noble” aspirations. They found that those with hidden commitment were more likely to meet their constituents expectations, but quickly adds that such people do not usually make appealing manifestos. One aspirant had this to say “ *.....if society was stable and our leaders not corrupt, I would not botherbut I want to make a difference, I want to represent my people, I want to talk for the voiceless..*” The allude that there are different motives of voters and they provide two prevalent justifications which include expressive voting (i.e., voting feels good and it contributes to one's reputation as a responsible citizen) and civic-duty voting (i.e., to vote is to pay the price for living in a democratic environment environment”. These are two probable reasons why anyone would want to vote and would consider it worth their time and effort to do so. Also, people believe it may be in their own best interest to vote, they feel if they do not vote, they do not have the right to voice any disapproval of politics or the outcomes of elections. According to Joachim and Acevedo (2008), The question is whether people overclaim their own effect even in a large-scale election. Sniehotta (2009) thought that they do, and Opp (2001) boldly claimed that there is a widespread cognitive illusion among ordinary people that participation in an election makes a difference. In other words, citizens more or less assume that they can influence the outcome of an election.

On research question two still, no conclusive evidence on why electorates make their electoral decisions. However, there is some indication of personal choice, attempt to resist dictatorial leadership, denying a chance aspirants who are vindictive and many other issues (Ajzen, 2002; Andreadis & Chadjipadelis, 2005; Sniehotta, 2009; Stern, 2005; and Winkielman & Knutson, 2007). This research found no conclusive explanation either since different voters provided different reasons for their candidates. However, rather than reject the notion of rational choice outright, this paper emphasizes Downs (1957) attempts to justify how a lack of involvement in the political process can be perceived as rational in terms of the belief that the voter has made a conscious decision that he or she has enough information to make a voting, or nonvoting, decision. This research however, found similar finding as one of the constituents had this to say:

“..after all, I even do not understand the candidate so well...he is every complaining about everything, so what makes me trust his representation? Although Downs argues how there are a number of ways to gain information with little effort, this research found that often people come out to reveal the “filth” of their candidate after she/he has failed to deliver. Some voters are processing more information, as Lane would suggest, in the knowledge society, but this is only a partial explanation, as others are avoiding media coverage of politics. As the message sources increase in an attempt to reach the voter from every possible angle, other voters are switching off the traditional methods of communication. A wealth of studies (e.g. Aldrich, 1993; Blais, 2000; and Brogan, 2001) have identified motivation and commitment to the institution to affect decisions to vote. This study confirmed this when one respondents had this to say: “..whether I vote or not, there isn’t much to gain from the exercise.....was our representative going to negotiate our pay raise..? Although this finding suggests that representatives do not add value, this study found that some electorates would do anything to block those closest to the management – explaining that this category is much easier to manipulate or compromise. However, the study further found that some electorates consider ethnicity to be very important when making a decision to vote or note to vote. This finding supports the view of Gomez and Wilson (2001), who claim that there is far greater heterogeneity in electoral behavior than the literature suggests.

There are numerous reasons why electorates decide to vote or not to vote. Ajzen (2002a) explains why individuals decide to or not to participate. He explains that human behavior is guided by three kinds of consideration, behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs. In their respective aggregates, behavioral beliefs produce a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the behavior; normative beliefs result in subjective norm; and control beliefs gives rise to perceived behavioral control. In combination, attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, lead to the formation of a behavioral intention (Ajzen, 2002b). To make inferences and predictions about behavior concerning a voting decision, certain factors such as gender, race, culture or religion must be considered. On why constituents decided to vote certain candidates, one respondent had this to say *“..I will give my vote to someone who gives me something....”* Indeed, the study found that some aspirants move around distributing material handouts, and simple gifts. Others have been promised promotions, better incentives, jobs for relatives and most shockingly, some promised to deal with the electorate’s “enemy”. However, this was found to be more common for administrative staff competition than for the teaching staff. *“...I believe if the current leadership changes, shall have an opportunity for upward mobility..”*

Moreover, Stern (2005) found that key public influences include the role of emotions, political socialization, tolerance of diversity of political views and the media. Although the study had been limited to higher education institutions, the researchers found that elections and voting no matter which are or which office will always involve some level of politics. The effect of these

influences on voting behavior is best understood through theories on the formation of attitudes, beliefs, schema, knowledge structures and the practice of information processing (Andreadis and Chadjipadelis, 2005). For example, this study indicated that people are generally happier in identifying with people they share culture with and believed they could always have these representatives as fall back positions when employment hardships arise. However, Blair, 2000; Cox, Marchington & Suter, 2007; disagrees with the above finding and affirm that voting decision is affected by internal processing systems of political information and external influences which often alters the quality of making truly democratic decisions. The study found that most constituents decline to participate in voting is sharpest among the elderly electorates (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2005; Mathieson & Pendleton, 2007; and Sniehotta, 2009). On failure to vote, one respondent had this to say “...*I have been in this institution for more than two decades but this representation business is bogus! ... during campaigns these aspirants promise heaven on earth but when there, they become passive... I must say...we do not know what happens to the fascinating manifestos.*” According to Bandura (1986), expectations such as motivation, performance, and feelings of frustration associated with repeated failures determine effect and behavioral reactions. He separated expectations into two distinct types: self-efficacy and outcome expectancy. He defined self-efficacy as the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcomes. Hence, like in this study, if the constituents do not foresee any usefulness in voting if it is not going to benefit those who put those representatives into the office. According to Bandura, self-efficacy is the most important precondition for behavioral change, since it determines the initiation of coping behavior. Hence, the studies (e.g. (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005; Lupia, McCubbins, & Popkin, 2000; and Williamson, 2002), have shown that peoples' behavior is strongly influenced by their confidence in their ability to perform that behavior.

Stein, Leighley, & Owens (2005) examined countless reasons why people vote or not. Reasons may range from the inconvenience of voting at a designated time and place, to their being required to register well in advance of election day. They explain how for some people the expected benefit from casting their vote was far greater than the inconvenience of election hassle. According to Cox, 2003; Holbrook, Krosnick, Visser, Gardner, & Cacioppo, 2001, people who are especially trusting of others are more likely to vote. Perhaps distrustful people think of the entire system as corrupt, which might sap their motivation to participate. But low levels of interpersonal trust might also sometimes inspire higher turnout if lack of trust motivates people to take action to minimize the damage they might fear others might inflict (Harder and Krosnick, 2008). One of the findings in this study, was that one reason a person is more likely to vote is the difference between the candidates. If they have a definite preference for one candidate over the other, the more likely they will be to see their vote as having value. One respondent had this to say “...*I was supposed to travel but have postponed because the candidate of my enemy is a contestant....I have to stay and cast my vote.. I know it will make a difference..*” This means therefore that the more motivated the voter, the more influence he or

she may have on friends or contemporaries. The study also found that if the candidates appear too similar they may have little influence with the voters to motivate them to make a choice. This was also found in Lupia, & Popkin (2000) where motivation to vote or not to vote for a particular candidate is derived from how much you know about a particular candidate and the closeness they have with the management. This was also confirmed by Ladd & Lenz (2011) who found that once some staff have very strong personalities or differed opinions from the management, they have strong pulling effects.

On question three, results indicate that actually representative politics to some extent, do not yield democracy. This is because, recent research by Crockett and Wallendorf (2004), for example, demonstrate how the normative political ideologies can provide explanations for behaviors in areas as diverse as decision to vote but may not necessarily bring about democracy. The theory of planned behavior explains this because it holds that only specific attitudes toward the behavior in question can be expected to predict that behavior which in the long run will be accepted by majority. Sniehotta (2009) explains how understanding the decision making process in voting may help uncover truths in other important fields where theory derived from the exchange process and where rationality has previously been forced to fit. Hence, according to Harder & Krosnick (2008), politics and democracy have remained a paradox. Whereas democracy is meant to leave parties involved contented, politics will cause disunity and conflicts among members of the same institution. According to research, (e.g. Kersley, Alpin, Forth, Bryson, Bewley, Dix and Oxenbridge, 2006), The theory of planned behavior specifies the nature of relationships between beliefs and attitudes. Hence, people's evaluations of, or attitudes toward behavior are determined by their accessible beliefs about the behavior, where a belief is defined as the subjective probability that the behavior will produce a certain outcome. Specifically (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011), explains that although these politics do not necessarily lead to satisfaction, the process is in itself democratic because of the direct participation of every constituent that produces the outcome in question. The study found that actually, the challenge was on how people feel after the election period but the exercise is democratic.

Conclusions

As with any study there may be more questions raised than answers found, one study may contradict another. However, the significance of representative politics and their role in democracy in higher education institutions is one area that has been under looked. Even those who have attempted, results are inconsistent and sometimes conflicting. Several variables have been proposed that may moderate emotions, intentions of actors and actual voting. There are different explanations of several specific emotions which have had an impact on voting behavior. Affective theory was found to predict that anger increases the use of generalized knowledge and reliance upon stereotypes and other heuristics. Affective intelligence theory identifies anxiety as an emotion that increases political attentiveness while decreasing reliance

on aspirants' identification when deciding between candidates, thus improving decision-making capabilities. Voters who report anxiety regarding an election are more likely to vote for candidates whose manifestos they prefer. Studies in psychology has shown that people experiencing fear rely on more detailed processing when making choices, for spending more time seeking information on the less preferred candidate to use that information against that candidate. The bad choices that people make in an election stay and torment them for a period of time. This is a move away from a scenario whereby people were voting for contestants who were giving them handouts to voting for a contender who shows that he/she has the welfare of people at heart. Voting for a candidate who was offering money and other small gifts during the election period has always been the norm, this cannot work at higher education institutions. Constituents always await manifestos that address critical issues in these institutions. The constituents make judgment on whether to vote for a contestant simply because he or she provided some gifts during the campaign period without considering how the institution's critical needs will be addressed. Of course one of the reasons a person is more likely to vote is the difference between the candidates. If they have a definite preference for one candidate over the other, the more likely they will be to see their vote as having value. The more motivated the voter, the more influence he or she may have on family and friends. Especially if said family and friends have no interest of their own in learning about the candidates or issues. If the candidates appear too similar they may have little influence with the voters to motivate them to make a choice. Similarly in recent years the use of negative campaigning may have caused many voters to become disenchanted with the whole system, while with others it may have spurred them to the polls. The paper therefore concludes that representative politics in higher education institutions did not enhance ideals of accountability and responsiveness as desired in democratic institutions, but rather, served personal interests of representatives.

Recommendations

Identify issues that need to be addressed in your area and then find out whether your aspirants will address them (and how) or not. Vote for contenders whose manifestos are clear and in accordance to the needs of the people! In addition to the mandatory requirements for employee representation, there are several strong reasons why a business should have a formal system of employee representation. For example, make employees' views known to management; help strengthen both management's and employees' understanding of workplace issues and other matters affecting the institution; help create an atmosphere of mutual trust between employees and management and therefore improve workplace relations. Basically, we should remember that we elect our representatives to perform a service for us. So we should be very clear on what we expect from our staff representatives. If it is a policy issue that affects a whole group, we would wish them to put the problem to representative, which should take the

matter up at a higher level. In the case of an individual problem, we would expect them to take the matter up directly with the other party concerned and mediate to reach a solution before it is too late and the problem degenerates irrevocably.

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