



MASTER THESIS

What drives you to vote?

A study of the predictors of voting intention of young adults from Hengelo during local elections.

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Abstract

To have a well-functioning democracy it is important that the population is represented by those elected. One of the most effective ways to do is by getting the highest possible number of residents to vote during municipal elections. However, the turnout at these elections is very low. Experience shows that it is not possible to motivate everyone to vote. Political parties and municipalities have invested a lot of effort in motivating and informing people about elections and its importance. However, tempting people to vote during the election for the local council is a difficult task for all municipalities, especially when it concerns young adults. It remains unclear what drives young adults and how municipalities can pursue them to vote for the local elections. Therefore, the current study was designed to investigate the voting intention of young adults according to the Information, Motivation and Behaviour (IMB) model.

Aim

To achieve this goal the following research question was formulated:

“What are the predictors of the voting intention of young people between 18 and 24 years old in elections for the local council?”

Method

A questionnaire with 39 questions has been executed among 167 young adults (age 18-24 years old) who live in Hengelo (o). Prior to filling out the questionnaire, a preliminary study and two pre-tests were executed to compose the questionnaire. The base of this research was the information, motivation and behavioural skills model (IMB model). The IMB model state that individuals who are well informed, motivated and have behavioural skills (high efficacy) will execute a certain behaviour and maintain this behaviour (Fisher and Fisher, 1992). This model explains that the performance of a specific behaviour is based on the information, motivation and behavioural skills related to that behaviour. in addition, political and social trust has been measured as predictor of voting intention.

Results

Voting intention can be explained for 60 percent by personal motivation, political knowledge and political trust together. Political knowledge, behavioural skills, personal motivation, social motivation and political trust all had an individual positive relation to voting intention. Social trust has no individual relation to voting intention.

Conclusion

Political knowledge, personal motivation and political trust all have an impact on voting intention. Social trust, behavioural skills and social motivation have no impact on voting intention. Additionally, behavioural skills, political knowledge, personal motivation, social motivation and political trust all have a single positive impact on voting intention. Social trust has no impact, individually or together with the other predictors, on voting intention. Next to that, political knowledge has a positive impact on behavioural skills and on personal motivation of young adults. Secondly, personal motivation has a positive impact on behavioural skill and political knowledge of young

adults. Lastly, social motivation has a positive impact on behavioural skills and political knowledge of young adults.

Implications

To increase the voting intention of young adults it is important to invest in political knowledge, political trust and personal motivation. The results show that personal motivation has the strongest relation to voting intention. A platform where young adults could discuss about different topics might also increase the insight in which topics they are interested in and motivated to talk about. A platform called Synthetron can be a useful platform to get an online discussion going and to get insight in topics young adults are motivated to talk about. Also, the use of famous influencers can have an effect on the personal motivation of young adults. By engaging influencers that appeal to young people (liking), they can identify with the influencers and learn from them faster (Cialdini, 2016).

The second biggest predictor of voting intention is personal knowledge. To increase personal knowledge different tools and methods can be used. The municipality could invest in different, so called, masterclasses on schools such as high schools but also the ROC van Twente.

Lastly, according to the results of the study political trust is a big predictor of voting intention. The target group needs to have a high trust, to be likely to have the intention to vote. The municipality could bring an alderman to the masterclasses as stated above. This could result in a relationship with the young adults, an increase of motivation and an increase of the trust they have in politics. Besides, social media can be of great influence for the trustworthiness of parties. Also, going live in groups on Facebook can increase the knowledge of young adults because it is a medium which could be used to send information to the target group, it can increase personal motivation when they are interested in the topic and it could increase trust of politicians.

Preface

- The end of the road -

Last year, February 2019, I started my master thesis next to my new job at the municipality of Hengelo. Today, I graduate, and I am also proud to say that I have found the nicest job in the world. It was a lot doing my study next to my job, but in the end, it was all worth it. Again, I found out that hard working pays off. Next to that, I again found out that it is a blessing to have good people around you.

In this preface I would like to thank some people who supported me during this period of graduation. First, I would like to thank Jordy Gosselt and Joris van Hoof for giving their feedback on my thesis and support me during this whole journey. They helped me a lot to make me a better and more competent researcher/student.

Secondly, I would like to thank all my colleagues the municipality of Hengelo. They always asked about my thesis and try to help me if possible.

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Introduction

In 2019, the highest electoral turnout in twenty years has been measured (NOS, 2019). The turnout of this election was 50.5 percentage of the eligible voters in the EU countries, which is way higher than four years ago when the voter turnout was 42.6 percentage. In the Netherlands, the turnout was 41.8 percentage representing the highest turnout in 25 years. Although this number represents a good turnout, it is questionable whether half of the eligible voters is enough to have a representative council. Of particular concern is the turnout among young adults, as voting intention and turnout among young adults is very low (Rosema, 2007). Also, municipalities try to promote the attendance at local- and European elections and face the issue of informing young adults about politics and getting them to the polls (Piersma, 2017).

For young adults, it is important to vote because the decisions made in politics can have a significant impact on their lives, Cammaers, Bruter, Banaji, Harrison, and Anstead (2016) state that voting gives young adults positive feelings, they feel interested, part of the community, part of an important moment of a country/town, responsible, excited and even happy. Previous research has established that young adults who are allowed to vote are less likely to vote than adults (DostieGoulet, 2009).

Recently, a couple of initiatives have been started to reach this difficult target group. Tim Hofman, a presenter of a Dutch TV Network called BNN, introduced 'De Stembus'. 'De Stembus' is a bus which drives to schools, to reach as much potential young voters as possible and inform them in a creative way. Another initiative is the voting party hosted in the Tolhuistuin. This is an initiative of a Dutch rapper called Massih Hutak to reach young voters and get them to the polls. Despite these initiatives targeted at young adults, still a substantial number of young adults fail to vote.

Much uncertainty still exists on why young people do not vote. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the voting intention of young adults. The social relevance can mainly be found in the aim of both nationwide and regional politics to represent citizens. Therefore, it is vital to have the highest possible turnout to reflect the opinion of inhabitants, including young adults who are often underrepresented (Edwards, 2009). Previous research on youth and politics from the last decade shows increasing detachment of younger people from politics (Bakker, Claes & de Vreese, 2011). For practical implication, municipalities could target these young adults more effectively based on the outcomes of this study. For science, it is interesting to know what variables result in the voting intention of young adults, which can create a better understanding of the voting behaviour of young adults. Secondly, little research has been done on a local level. Most research that has been done on political participation among young adults was focussed on a national level or included a wider research population, not only young adults. However, it remains unclear what the predictors of voting intention are for young adults. Therefore, the current study was designed to investigate the voting intention of young adults living in Hengelo.

The following research question will be central to this study:

RQ1: *"What are the predictors of the voting intention of young people between 18 and 24 years old in elections for the local council?"*

Theoretical framework

Information – Motivation – Behavioural Skills Model

A lot of research has been done with different behavioural models. In this research the Information, Motivation, Behavioural skills model (IMB model) will stand central. The Information, Motivation, Behavioural skills model (IMB model) is extensively used in the field of social and health psychology. In the health context, the IMB model has been used extensively to determine and influence the behaviour of people on the intention to execute a specific behaviour. The IMB model state that individuals who are well informed, motivated and have behavioural skills (high self-efficacy) will execute a certain behaviour and maintain this behaviour (Fisher & Fisher, 1992). The model conceptualizes the psychological determinants needed to promote behaviour such as social motivation and provides a framework on how to increase the specific activity within a particular population (Fisher & Fisher, 2000).

The importance of all three individual variables (information, motivation and behavioural skills) have been shown in different studies related to voting behaviour. For example, individuals who are more informed about politics (Teixeira, 1992), who are more personally invested (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993), and who have a higher number of resources and skills, skills to actually vote (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995) are more likely to vote. In the Information – Motivation – Behavioural Skills Model (IMB), these factors have been combined (Fisher & Fisher, 2000).

According to the IMB model, information is the first important factor (Fischer & Fischer, 2000). To vote in an election, it is necessary to possess the right information about the process of voting. Thus, how to vote, as well as information about candidates (Glasford, 2008). Secondly, the motivation factor is an essential factor to perform a specific behaviour. Motivation includes personal motivation (the attitude towards performing the behaviour), as well as social motivation (the perceived social support for implementing the behaviour) (Glasford, 2008). Lastly, the importance of behavioural skills is stretched out in the IMB model. An individual need to perceive that he or she is capable of performing the behaviour. In this case, he or she is determined to be able to vote. Based on previous studies, the variable 'trust' can be seen as equally important as the IMB model (Glasford, 2008; Plutzer, 2002). Therefore, a modified IMB model was used in the current study, including the variable 'trust'. A schematic overview of the IMB model is displayed in figure 1. Glasford (2008) showed that the IMB model is also applicable to voting intention. He used this model for the first time in the political context to examine the utility of the IMB model to predict voting behaviour among young adults. However, in the study of Glasford (2008), the focus was on voting intention in the national election context.

In this chapter the IMB model will be discussed and the concept of trust in relation to voting intention. Also, different hypotheses will be stated which will be investigated in this research to answer the research question.

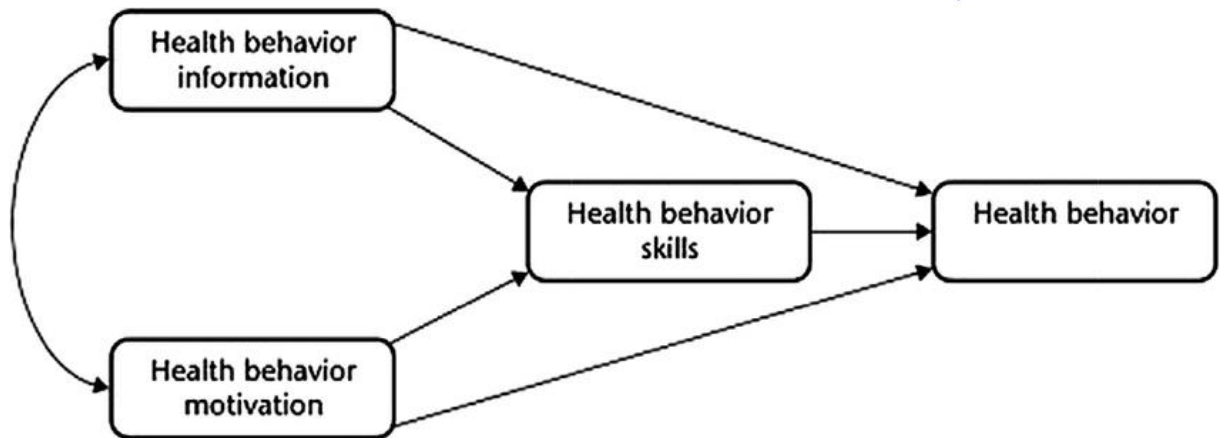


Figure 1: Schematic overview of the IMB model. Adapted from Fisher and Fisher (1992).

IMB model; Behavioural

Behavioural skills

The IMB model formulates that people who are well informed, are motivated to act and perceive that they have the behavioural skills necessary to vote will actually perform the behaviour (voting behaviour) and in order to vote, it is necessary that the individual possesses the behavioural skills to perform the behaviour (Fisher & Fisher, 1992). Behavioural skills for the performance of voting behaviour may include the research one has to do before making a decision which party they will vote for (contextual knowledge). According to the IMB model, the levels of information and motivation work through behavioural skills to impact the voting behaviour (Seacat & Northrup, 2010). They add up when the desired behaviour does not involve complex behaviour skills to accomplish the behaviour, information and motivational skills may have a direct impact on the behaviour. In the case of voting, one has to do plenty research to know on which party to vote. Therefore, behavioural skills have an influence on the intention of the behaviour.

So, being able to enact the (complicated) steps to perform the behaviour and a sense of self-efficacy for doing so.

H1: *"The perceived behavioural skills of young adults have a positive impact on voting intention".*

IMB model; Information

Political knowledge

According to the IMB model, knowledge is an import variable when looking at the behavioural intention. Literature defines political knowledge as holding the correct information on a political issue (Young & Hoffman, 2012) and often defines two types of political knowledge: contextual political knowledge and factual knowledge. Contextual political knowledge describes the understanding of the political processes as a behavioural skill, such as knowing how the political system works. However, the IMB model sees contextual knowledge as a behavioural skill. Pomeroy and Brézillon (2002) add that it is always evoked by a task or an event but does not focus on a task or on the achievement of a goal. Aspers (2006) describes the contextual knowledge as the capacity to do what it takes in a situation. So, contextual knowledge is the knowledge that is needed to know how to perform in a certain situation, such as voting.

According to Grummich, Ganslandt, Buchfelder and Roessler (2017), factual knowledge is solely constituted from written or spoken input independent on undertaken experience, but the temporal structures involved are not well defined. The factual knowledge describes the political facts that citizens could know, such as the different parties or information about the ideas of the parties. It determines if people have the information to vote. This accurate knowledge can be knowledge about the parties and their statements, but also political actors of a party (Grummich, Ganslandt, Buchfelder & Roessler, 2017). In other words, the information that makes them capable of voting on a particular party which they can relate to base on their beliefs.

Political knowledge is an essential element in voting decision-making (Converse, 2006; O'Cass & Pecotich, 2005). In a well-functioning democracy, a well-informed public is a must (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1997). Jerit (2009) confirms this statement and adds that it is not possible to vote in a carefully and well-founded way without knowledge. Not voting in a carefully and well-founded way is a threat for a representative democracy (Jerit, 2009). Henn and Foard (2012) showed that low political knowledge is often related to young adults. Little interest in politics is not explicitly associated with this target group, but profound knowledge is. It is assumed that high political knowledge influences the participation of young adults in politics (Galston, 2001). Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, and Schulz (2001) indeed show that young adults who have sufficient political knowledge are more engaged in political voting.

H2: *"The amount of political knowledge of young adults has a positive impact on voting intention."*

When young adults possess more political knowledge (contextual and factual knowledge), they are likely to increase the attitude towards performance and thus, the overall performance increases. For example, this has been shown with the IMB model in a study of Rafsanjani, Raveri and Nasab (2011) where they created awareness (expanding of knowledge) among non-medical students to prevent HIV transmission. In this study the students expanded their knowledge which lead to prevention (behavioural skills) in their behaviour.

Therefore, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H3: *"The amount of political knowledge has a positive impact on the higher behavioural skills of young adults".*

Finally, when young adults have sufficient political knowledge, they are likely to have more personal motivation (Torney-Purta, Lehman, Oswald & Schulz, 2001). Furthermore, when people focus on the low- versus high-level construal of actions, for example obtaining knowledge, this increases their motivation to pursue goal-related actions (Touré-Tillery and Fishbach, 2011). For example, when reading or obtaining knowledge about the different political parties, the motivation to actually vote or maybe even be active in politics can increase.

H4: *" The amount of political knowledge has a positive impact on the personal motivation of young adults".*

IMB model; Motivation

Political motivation

Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) showed that two factors determine behavioural intention: individual's attitude and subjective norms. The first is an individual's attitude towards performing the behaviour; How negative or positive the individual feels towards performing the behaviour. When having a positive attitude towards the behaviour, the individual feels more positive performing the behaviour. The second factor, subjective norms, will be discussed in the chapter about social motivation.

Personal motivation

Motivation is required to perform a specific behaviour according to IMB model. Glasford (2008) defines it as the **attitude** towards performing the behaviour. Rongkavilit et al., (2010) add that personal motivation includes positive or negative attitudes towards the behaviour and one's beliefs about the consequences of voting (one vote can change the system). Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) explain that personal motivation includes the outcomes of the behaviour. For example, if the party they voted on gained more votes than four years ago, that could result in a more positive attitude towards performing such a behaviour because it makes a difference. Additionally, it shows that the outcome will be beneficial for the person itself (Seacat & Northrup, 2010). Glasford (2008) confirms that personal motivation is an individual's attitude and belief about the behaviour. Practically, this can be the thought that their vote contributes to the bigger picture, or that they feel like they make a difference, or that their vote matters. Besides, the individual needs to believe that the results associated with the behaviour outweighs the effort (costs).

Campbell, Gurin and Miller (1954), define personal motivation as self-efficacy. The feeling of the individual that political behaviour has an impact on the whole process. A number of studies confirm the finding that people think that their vote has little or no effect to the entire process (Henn & Weinstein, 2002; Hill & Louth, 2006; Ødegård & Berglund, 2008). This lack of self-efficacy can contribute to a lack of interest for the political system and politics in general. Internal political self-efficacy is individual-oriented. It is a reflection about the capacity of an individual to participate in the political domain (Ødegård & Berglund, 2008). This attitude could be compared to the behavioural intention from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). In this TRA, behavioural intention is the intention of the person executing the behaviour. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) state that two factors determine behavioural intention: individual's attitude and subjective norms. Individual's attitude toward performing the behaviour, how negative or positive the individual feels towards performing the behaviour. When having a positive attitude about the behaviour, the individual feels more positive showing the behaviour.

The following hypotheses can be formulated:

H5: *"Personal motivation of young adults has a positive impact on voting intention"*

High personal motivation is also necessary when wanting to perform a specific behaviour. When one is personally motivated to perform a particular act, the required behaviour skills to perform this behaviour will also be more likely to be present (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). If they are personally motivated to vote and they have a positive

attitude toward the behaviour, they are more likely to do research about the subject. For example, about parties to gain knowledge. This process, gaining knowledge by doing research, is a behavioural skill. Thus, when one is more motivated to perform the behaviour eventually, they have more perceived behavioural skills, because they feel like they are able to get the information they need by doing research.

H6: *"Personal motivation of young adults has a positive impact on the perceived behavioural skills".*

Lastly, high personal motivation relates to political knowledge. When one is motivated to perform certain behaviour in the end, they want to possess the means to end up performing this behaviour. People learn about issues if they are interested in these issues, when they are able to do so and motivated. This so called 'triad of learning' according to (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1997). When one is interested in politics, they are motivated to know more about this topic. They are motivated to actively search for information which will increase their own political knowledge. In the case of voting intention, highly motivated people will have more knowledge to be able to perform the behaviour of voting. They are motivated to know everything about the subject and are interested in the subject which results in an eager to find information to expand their knowledge.

H7: *"Personal motivation has a positive impact on political knowledge of young adults".*

Social motivation

Social motivation is the social support for enactment of behaviour (Fisher, Fisher & Harman, 2003). Motivation is an additional factor and is expected to influence, even well-informed, individuals (Fisher et al., 2001). At the social level, motivation is based upon individuals' perceptions of social norms as well as social support for engaging in a desired behaviour. Fisher et al. (2001) note that perceived social support is dictated by the perceived provision of such support from referent others (e.g., friends and family members) and individuals' motivation to comply with these referent others. Social motivation happens when there is social support for the performance of the behaviour. For example, individuals' attitudes towards voting and perceptions of social support influence whether individuals go vote. Osborn, Amico, Fisher, Egede, and Fisher (2010) explain that social motivation includes understanding about support from significant others in performing a certain behaviour. Also, whether they are willing to comply with the wishes of these others or not. For example, if someone knows that important others such as family or friends believe that voting is unimportant and a waste of time, the perception will be that the (social) norm is not to vote. Social motivation relates to the perceived social influences/pressures to indulge or not to indulge in a given behaviour (Ajzen, 1991).

Social motivation agrees with the so-called subjective norm of the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Theory of Reasoned Action (Glasford, 2008). These norms reveal the beliefs of individuals about how they are viewed by significant others who are important to the individual when performing the behaviour (voting). Finally, McClelland (1987) suggests that individuals tend to show behaviours that are admired by others because they seek relationships and group associations. This is being confirmed with Asch's conformity experiments showing that how peer pressure to conform would influence the judgment and individuality of a test subject whereby 50 male students from a college participated in a 'vision test.' In this test a line judgment task was used, and a naive

participant was set in a room with seven confederates. The confederates responded the same with the line task. The real participant thought the other people were also participants like him. There were 18 rounds in total, and the confederates gave the wrong answer 12 times (called the critical trials). Asch was interested to see if the real participant would conform to the majority view, and he did (Asch, 1951).

Therefore, the following hypothesis can be formulated.

H8: *"Social motivation of young adults has a positive impact on voting intention".*

High social motivation is also necessary when wanting to perform a specific behaviour. When one's environment is motivated to perform a particular behaviour, the required behaviour skills to complete this behaviour will also be more likely to be present. As stated above, Fisher et al. (2001) state that motivation can influence, even well-informed, individuals when performing the behaviour. When people form the social environment of one-person vote, performing that behaviour becomes the norm. Because of the social pressure, one wants to vote. They start searching for the information he or she needs to perform the behaviour, which is a behavioural skill for performing the behaviour. So, the following hypothesis can be formulated.

H9: *"Social motivation has a positive impact on the behavioural skills of young adults".*

Osborn, Amico, Fisher, Egede, and Fisher (2010) explain that social motivation includes perceptions of support from significant others in performing a behaviour. But also, whether they are willing to comply with the wishes of these others or not. When family and friend vote each election of the local council, they are likely to vote also. This is a sort of group pressure to fulfil the norm of the group. When people in the group are more likely to vote, you tend to seek the information to fulfil the group norm. this can also relate to the peer pressure Asch (1951) explained in his experiments. When everyone chooses to perform the behaviour and has knowledge about the topic, you want to fulfil the group norm and have knowledge about the topic as well.

H10: *"Social motivation has a positive impact on the amount political knowledge of young adults".*

Trust

According to Plutzer (2002), trust in government is another explanation for the low voting intention among citizens. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) have shown that trust has indeed a strong relationship with the voting intention of young adults. Therefore, this variable is included in the present study. To have a well functioning democracy, it is essential to provide citizens with knowledge, but also to have mutual trust. The variable trust is being divided into two aspects of trust, social trust and political trust (Uslaner, 2018). These two aspects will be discussed below.

Social trust

Social trust stems from one's socialization through one's parents (Uslaner, 2018). Social trust is trust in people like yourself, mainly consists of trust towards strangers, and not because of trust in a small circle. Social trust can

be defined as the belief that others will not intentionally hurt us, avoid it and look after our interests if that is possible (Newton, Stolle & Zmerli, 2018). Most academic works divide social trust in generalised and particularised social trust.

Particularised trust is found in close social proximity. This is extended toward individuals known from everyday interactions such as family, friends and co-workers (Freitag & Traunmüller, 2009).

Particularised trust is based on first-hand knowledge of individuals, which means trust in people we are personally familiar with (Allum, Patulny & Sturgis 2007). This type of trust can often be seen together with the distrust of people outside of these groups. Particularised trust can intensify conflicts among different groups of people because of the belief others do not share similar values. Generalised trust is a so-called abstract attitude toward people in general encompassing immediate familiarity. This includes strangers who one passes on the streets, fellow inhabitants and foreigners (Freitag & Traunmüller, 2009). Rothstein and Stolle (2002) define generalised trust as trust that indicates potential readiness of citizens to cooperate and to engage in civic endeavours with each other. Uslaner (2018) adds that generalised trust is not merely as a summary of experiences one has had earlier on his life, but as a world view.

The scientific interest in social trust has increased due to the alarming decline in citizens' confidence in politics and public institutions in some European countries. Distrust, cynicism and indifference lead to one increasing uncertainty in established democracies. About two-thirds of the population have faith in judges, the police and the House of Representatives in 1998. The average institutional trust in the Netherlands is relatively high. The higher educated have more faith in institutions. Men are more inclined to trust the army and large companies, the elderly prefer churches, while young people trust more appear to have in the Lower House and large companies (SCP, 1999). Trust in institutions can be seen as a further generalization of trust in others (Freitag & Traunmüller, 2009). Democracy requires trust amongst citizens, but the concept of a democracy rests on the notion that sovereign power cannot be trusted (Sztompka 1999). According to Boesten (2015) democracies have the effect that citizens spread their trust more openly and not just to their in-groups. The assumption is that people who trust other people each other and others are more collective take action. The higher the social trust, the higher the voting intention will be.

H11: *"Social trust has a positive impact on the voting intention of young adults"*

Political trust

According to Dohmen, Verbakel and Kraaykamp, (2010) it is crucial that citizens trust each other but also the **political** institutions, for example, the municipality. There are a lot of ways to define trust. Trust could be established as the satisfaction people have in the way the democracy works (Catterberg & Moreno, 2006), and if it is hampered by corruption and political radicalism. The confidence that citizens have in political institutions is declining in most countries. This decrease is part of a trend of political scepticism and involvement. According to Dalton (2006) citizens have gained less confidence over the years in politics, this is confirmed by Apospori, Avlonitis and Zisouli (2010) and they add that young adults have lower trust in the political system because of their beliefs of a failing system.

According to Michelson (2003), political trust is an essential determinant of this

individual political behaviour and the effectiveness of the government. Chanley, Rudolph and Rahn., (2000) add that the degree of confidence is influenced by the performance of the national economy and the evaluation of citizens of this economy; negative perceptions lead to greater dissatisfaction. Distrust in politics can be explained by the perception of voters that politicians unfair or not honest. Another point for mistrust in the government is the idea that the government acts inefficiently (Gershtenson, Ladewig, Plane, 2006). By creating a more excellent continuity between citizens' policy preferences and the government policy pursued will lead to a higher degree of confidence (Hetherington, 1998; Citrin, 1974). Finally, the distance that exists between the political the opinion of the population and the government lead to alienation from politics and cynicism (Erber & Lau, 1990; Henn & Foard, 2012). This can be associated with the rejection of conventional ways of political participation, such as voting.

Dermody and Hanmer-Lloyd (2008) add that young adults see politicians as unfair and inefficient. Therefore, they see voting as something useless and will not vote (Henn & Foard, 2012). This could be viewed to the difficulty to dissociate negative connotations from politics and the main parties within, according to Dermody, Hanmer-Lloyd, & Scullion (2010). This view gives the idea that one has expectations of politics and the parties, which does not sum up with the idea that young adults are in a downward spiral about politics. Miller (1974) states that low trust, high cynicism and low effectivity makes the restraining from politics among young adults more visible.

In conclusion, it can be said that the political form of trust, in particular, can explain voting behaviour (Michelson, 2003). Therefore, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H12: "Trust in politics has a positive impact on voting intention of young adults"

The following research model will stand central in this research:

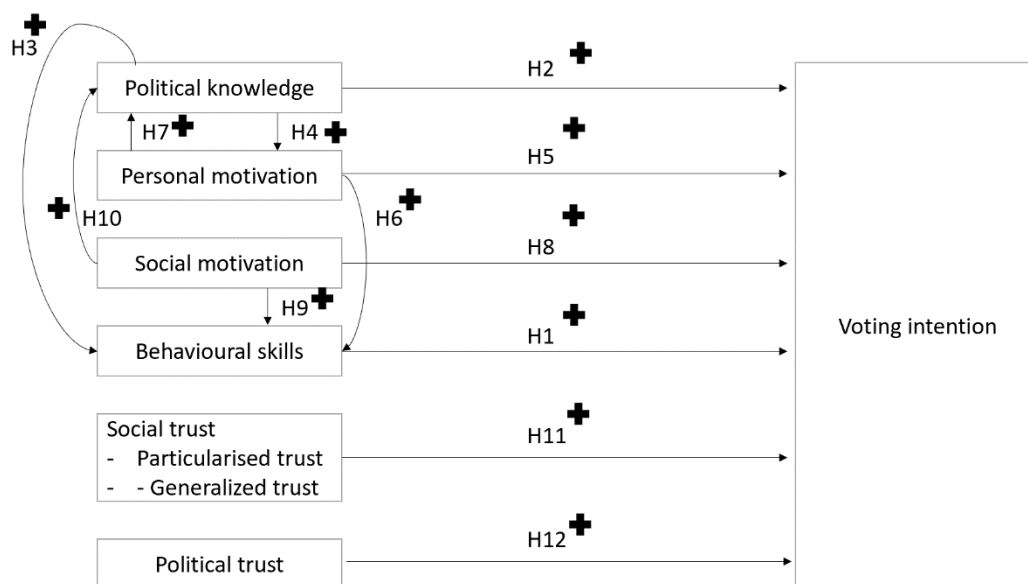


Figure 2: Research model

Method

Design

This research aims to answer the following question: “*What are the predictors of voting intention of young people between 18 and 24 years old?*” and to test the hypotheses stated above in this research, a survey has been held among the targeted population of the study. This study was a descriptive and explanatory study and demanded a quantitative research design, therefore, a survey was the most suitable instrument. The design made it also possible to collect data on a large scale. In this research, a cross-sectional study has been carried out.

The survey has been conducted in one specific point in time because the purpose was to identify the relationship of the independent variables with the dependent variable among young adults, the goal was not to identify any change over time.

This research was a within-group design. This means that every participant had been exposed to all conditions of the study. Every participant of the study has seen the questions about political knowledge, political interest and trust.

Procedure

For this research, young citizens of Hengelo were asked to participate in the study. A preliminary investigation was executed among eight participants to test if the chosen variables were correct. In the preliminary investigation people on the streets of Hengelo if they went voting in 2018 and what the three main reasons were to (not) vote. After the preliminary investigation, the first pretest was held among seven participants of the target group to see if the questionnaire was clear and understandable. This was done with the think-out loud-method to see if they understood the asked questions. After this first pretest different changes have been made in the questionnaire and a second pretest was held among seven participants. After the two pretests, a reliability test was executed to see if the questions measured the right variables.

For the main study, participants between 18 and 24 years old were recruited via social media (Facebook and Twitter) using a convenience sample, to reach many participants in a small amount of time. Besides that, some participants were asked face-to-face to participate in the study. They were randomly selected in this study. For this research, about 240 (40 participants per condition) participants were asked to fill out the survey.

Preliminary study

To see if the chosen variables were correct, a preliminary study was executed. This preliminary study was held among the target group. Different young adults were asked on a Saturday if they voted for the local council in 2018 and what the reasons were to (not) vote. They also were asked if they voted for the European elections. These reasons were written down and coded in the variables, these results can be found in appendix 1. This preliminary study had the goals to see if the variables were correct and complete.

Results preliminary study

Eight persons were asked to participate in this preliminary study and were all citizens of Hengelo. The participants were 22 ($n=2$), 23 ($n=2$) and 24 ($n=4$) years old, two of them were male and six were female. The participants had followed an MBO ($n=3$) education or HBO ($n=5$). The full results of the preliminary study can be found in appendix 1. The results were written down and coded in the variables, the results showed if the survey was complete and understandable. The preliminary study showed that one statement was mentioned a lot and was not mentioned in the survey. This statement was the following "*I find it important to use my right to vote*". Because of this result, a question was added to measure how important the participants think voting is.

Pre-test

After the preliminary study, a pre-test was held among ten young adults. These young adults between 18 and 24 had to fill out the questionnaire and think out loud. The outcomes of this pre-test were caused to revise the existing questionnaire to make it more understandable. The questions about personal motivation have been revised. The question 'voting for the local elections in 2022 would be ...' good/bad, harmful/favourable, rewarding/punished was changed because the participants thought it was an unclear question. According to the respondents these questions were quite similar, and they didn't know what to answer.

Main study

The participants were first informed about the research and asked for their permission. It was made clear that they could stop the questionnaire at any given time without reason. The introduction to the study informed the participants also about the topic of the study.

After the introduction, participants got to see the questionnaire. The first questions were the demographic questions such as age, gender, education and nationality, to gain insight in the population. Next, they were asked to fill out the questions regarding information, motivation, behavioural skills and trust. They were thanked and asked to fill out their email if they wanted to win a price.

Measures

A questionnaire was used to investigate the constructs of the research model as proposed in figure 2.

Measurements were derived from former studies and adapted towards the context of this study. The questionnaire consists of eight sections: voting intention, political knowledge, personal motivation, social motivation, behavioural skills, social trust, political trust and demographics. All statements were measured on a Likert five-point scale. The questionnaire with all items is attached in Appendix 3.

The questionnaire began with an introduction to the questionnaire and explained the purpose of the study. Also, the introduction explained that the participants could quit filling out the questionnaire without any given reason. After the introduction the first question was if the participant lived in Hengelo. After that different demographic questions were asked such as age, gender and education. After that question were asked about voting intention, political knowledge, personal motivation, social motivation, behavioural skills, social trust, political trust.

Voting Intention

Voting intention was measured by the following items from the scale of Bowman and Fishbein (1978): “As far as I know, I expect to vote in the local election in 2022,” “I plan to vote in the 2022 local election,” and “I intend to vote in the 2022 local election.” In the research these questions were measured on a Likert five-point scale ($\alpha=.98$).

Political knowledge

This variable was measured with a six-item scale of Burton and Netemeyer (1992). It included the following statements : ‘*I know a lot about politics*’, ‘*I classify myself an expert on politics*’, ‘*Compared to most people, I know more about politics*’, ‘*I am knowledgeable about politics*’, ‘*When it comes to politics, I really don’t know a lot*’, ‘*In general, I am the last in my circle of friends to know what’s going on in politics*’. After deleting the question ‘*In general, I am the last in my circle of friends to know what’s going on in politics*’ the alpha was .90.

Personal motivation

Is conceptualized as personal attitudes and is measured with the following scale ($\alpha=.79$). A couple of examples of question were ‘*I think voting is important*’. ‘*I think voting is important for the Hengelo city council*’. ‘*It is my duty to vote*’.

Social motivation

Social motivation was measured using the following items (Osborn, 2006): “*Most people who are important to me think I should vote*”; “*Most people who are important to me think I should vote in the local election*”; and “*My friends and family think I should vote in the local election*.” In this study, the items were measures on a Likert five-point scale ($\alpha=.88$). Two original items were used. Two items were added. The four items that have been used to test social motivation were:

Behavioural skills

Behavioural skills were measured on a Likert five-point scale with three items. These items measured the perceived hardness and the self-efficacy of performing voting behaviour (Glasford, 2008). “*How hard would it be for you to keep track of where politicians stand on issues relevant to you?*”; “*How hard would it be for you to find out where to vote on Election Day?*”; and “*How hard would it be for you to learn the skills needed to vote in a voting booth?*” In this research, after deleting one item, the scale had an alpha of .67.

Social trust

Particularized trust

The scale consists of 3 items. In this study, questions were measured on a Likert five-point scale. The question that was asked, “*Can you tell me if you trust people from this group? (Very much, many, neutral, few, very few)*”

1. Family
2. Friends

3. Colleagues
4. The Neighbourhood

Generalized trust

Generalized Social Trust consisted of 3 items scored on a Likert five-point scale. The following question was asked for generalized trust. "*Can you tell me how much you trust people from this group? (Very much, many, neutral, little, very little)*"

5. People you meet for the first time
6. People with a different religion
7. People with different nationalities

These seven questions together formed the scale of social trust and was reliable with an alpha of ($\alpha=.72$)

Political trust

Political trust was measured by means of the trust scale of the EES survey (2008) and focused on trust in parliament, the legal system, the police and political parties. This scale has been altered to fit the purpose of this study. The following question was asked for political trust. "*Can you tell me how much you trust people from this group? (Very much, many, neutral, little, very little)*"

8. The local council of Hengelo
9. The municipality
10. The College of Mayor & Aldermen

These questions together formed the scale of political trust and was reliable with an alpha of ($\alpha=.92$).

Demographics

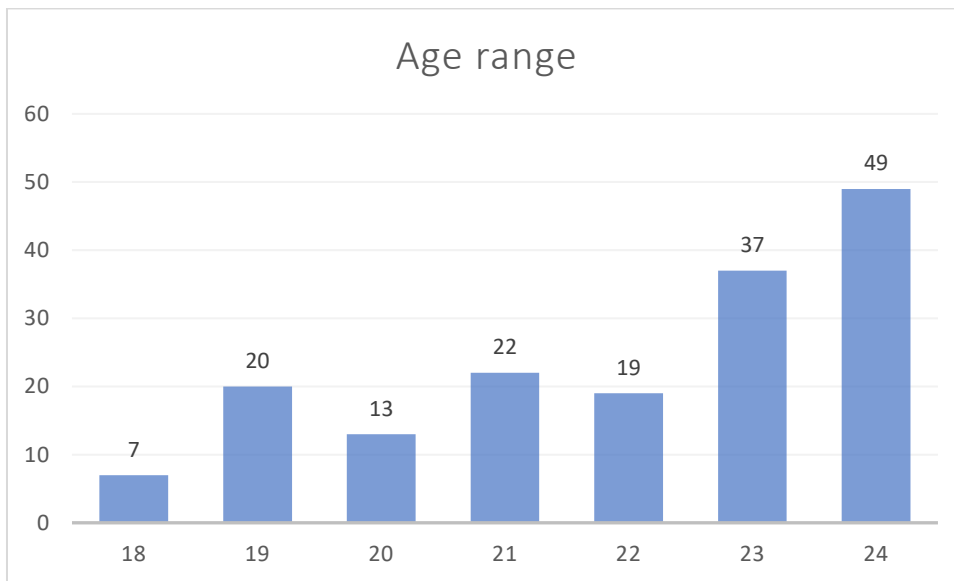
To get information about the gender of the participants, there have been asked if they were male or female. Further, the education information was conducted with the question about their highest level of education. They could choose the following options (in Dutch).

- Elementary education
- Preparatory secondary vocational education
- Vocational education
- Higher education
- Higher vocational education
- University

Participants

The participants were all young citizens of the city Hengelo, between 18 and 24 years old, and all were Dutch citizens. The participants were recruited via social media (Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram). Besides that, other participants were asked face-to-face to participate in the study. A total number of 167 respondents filled out the survey. Of these respondents 55 were male and 111 were female. The age range was from 18 till 24 years old ($M = 4.9$; $S = 1.9$).

Figure 3: Age range of the respondents



In table 1 it is shown how many participants followed a certain education level. Most of the participants followed a higher vocational education.

Table 1: Educational level of the respondents

Elementary education	-	-
Preparatory secondary vocational education	1	0.6%
Vocational education	44	26.3%
Higher education	17	10.2%
Higher vocational education	84	50.3%
University	21	12.6%
Total	167	100%

Results

This chapter presents the results of the in-depth analyses on the acquired data from the online questionnaire. The statistical analyses in favour of the hypotheses in terms of voting intention among young adults will be discussed. Differences in voting intention, knowledge, Behavioural skills, personal motivation, social motivation, social trust and political trust were analysed and means and standard deviations for each of the dependent variable and independent variables are depicted in table 2.

Table 2: Means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of dependent variable and independent variables.

	M	SD	Range	n
Voting intention	3.89	0.96	1 – 5	167
Knowledge	2.35	0.80	1 – 5	167
Behavioural skills	3.97	0.71	1.5 – 5	167
Personal motivation	3.75	0.71	1.25 – 5	167
Social motivation	3.40	0.77	1.5 – 5	167
Social trust	3.41	0.43	1.86 – 5	167
Political trust	3.07	0.66	1 – 5	167

Political knowledge

A one-way factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted that examined the effect of knowledge on voting intention. There was a significant effect of political knowledge $F(1, 166)=55,773$, $p<.001$. The proportion of variance for voting intention can be explained by political knowledge for 25 percent ($R^2=0.253$).

Also, the effect of political knowledge on Behavioural skills have been measured with a one-way factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA). There was a significant effect of political knowledge $F(1,166)=28.941$, $p<.001$ on Behavioural skills. The variance for Behavioural skills can be appointed to political knowledge for 15 percent ($R^2=0.149$).

For personal motivation a one-way factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed a significant effect of political knowledge $F(1,166)=30.662$, $p<.001$. The coefficient of determination for personal motivation is 16 percent ($R^2=0.157$). Thus, the higher political knowledge, the higher the personal motivation will be.

Political trust

The impact of political trust on voting intention of young adults was investigated via a one-way analysis (ANOVA); showing a significant effect on voting intention, $F(1,166)=29,740$ $p<.001$, ($R^2=0.153$). Thus, the higher political trust, the higher the voting intention of young adults will be.

Personal motivation

A one-way factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted that examined the effect of personal motivation on voting intention. A significant effect was found for personal motivation on voting intention $F(1,166)=156.321$, $p<.001$. The proportion of variance for voting intention can be explained by personal motivation for 49 percent ($R^2=0.486$).

One-way factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) has also been conducted to investigate the effect of personal motivation on Behavioural skills. A significant main effect was found ($F(1,166)=45.625, p<.001$). The coefficient of determination for behavioural skills is 22 percent ($R^2=0.217$).

Further, personal motivation has a significant effect on political knowledge according to a one-way factorial analysis of variance $F(1, 166)=30.662, p<.001$). For political knowledge, 16 percent can be explained by personal motivation ($R^2=0.157$).

Social motivation

A one-way factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted that examined the effect of social motivation on voting intention. There was a significant effect of political knowledge $F(1, 166)=38.953, p<.001$. Thus, the higher the social motivation, the higher the voting intention. In the analysis of all the variables together on voting intention there was no main effect for social motivation on voting intention. When analysis the single effect of social motivation on voting intention, there was found a significant effect. The proportion of variance for voting intention can be explained by social motivation of young adults for 19 percent ($R^2=0.191$).

Secondly, the effect of social motivation on behavioural skills has been measured with a one-way ANOVA test. There was a significant effect of social motivation $F(1,166)=12.442, p=.001$ on behavioural skills. The variance for behavioural skills can be appointed to political knowledge for 7 percent ($R^2=0.070$).

Lastly, a one-way factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed a significant effect of social motivation on political knowledge $F(1,166)=15.574, p<.001$). The higher the social motivation, the higher the political knowledge will be. The coefficient of determination for personal motivation is 9 percent ($R^2=0.086$).

Social trust

For social trust a one-way ANOVA analysis has been conducted. In this analysis the effect of social trust on voting intention was measured. There was **no** significant effect found for social trust on voting intention $F(1,166)=3.637, p=0.058$.

Political trust

The effect of political trust on voting intention was also measured. This effect was measured via a one-way ANOVA analysis. For political trust on voting intention there has been found a significant effect $F(1,166)=29.740, p<.001$. The forward regression showed that political trust can explain voting intention by 15 percent ($R^2=0.015$).

Behavioural skills

Lastly, a one-way factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted for behavioural skills on voting intention. A significant effect was found for behavioural skills on voting intention $F(1,166)=25.535, p<.001$. The higher the behavioural skills of young adults, the higher the voting intention will be. The variance for voting intention can be appointed to behavioural skills for 13 percent ($R^2=0.134$).

Summary of hypothesis

A summary of the supported and unsupported hypotheses is provided in Table 3, based on the results presented in the previous paragraphs.

Table 3: Supported and unsupported hypothesis

Supported?

H1: "The perceived behavioural skills of young adults have a positive impact on voting intention"	Yes
H2: "The amount of political knowledge of young adults has a positive impact on voting intention"	Yes
H3: "The amount of political knowledge has a positive impact on the higher behavioural skills of young adults"	Yes
H4: "The amount of political knowledge has a positive impact on the personal motivation of young adults"	Yes
H5: "Personal motivation of young adults has a positive impact on voting intention"	Yes
H6: "Personal motivation of young adults has a positive impact on the perceived behavioural skills"	Yes
H7: "Personal motivation has a positive impact on political knowledge of young adults"	Yes
H8: "Social motivation of young adults has a positive impact on voting intention"	Yes
H9: "Social motivation has a positive impact on the behavioural skills of young adults"	Yes
H10: "Social motivation has a positive impact on the amount of political knowledge of young adults"	Yes
H11: "Social trust has a positive impact on the voting intention of young adults"	No
H12: "Trust in politics has a positive impact on voting intention of young adults"	Yes

Voting intention

A two-way factorial between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted that examined the effect of knowledge, behavioural skills, personal motivation, social motivation, social trust and political trust all together on voting intention. There was a significant main effect of knowledge ($F(6, 160)=3,617, p<.001$), political trust ($F(6, 160)=2,951, p=.004$) and personal motivation ($F(6, 160)= 8,505, p<.001$) on voting intention. The higher knowledge, political trust and personal motivation, the higher the voting intention will be. However, there is no significant main effect for the variables behavioural skills $F(6, 160)= -0.666, p=0.506$, social motivation $F(6, 160)= 2.05, p=0.041$ and social trust $F(6, 160)=-0.809, p=0.420$. These variables have no significant impact on the voting intention of young adults. The predictors of voting intention are displayed in Table 4. The proportion of variance for voting intention can be explained by personal motivation, political knowledge and political trust is almost 60 percent ($R^2=.583$).

Table 4: Predictors of voting intention

	Accepted?	Beta
Behavioural skills	No	-.04
Political knowledge	Yes	.22
Personal motivation	Yes	.54
Social motivation	No	.12
Social trust	No	-.05
Political trust	Yes	.17

Discussion

This study tried to explain voting intention of young adults. One interesting finding is that almost 60 percent of voting intention can be explained by personal motivation, political knowledge and political trust as seen in Table 4. This means that voting intention could be influenced by personal motivation, political knowledge and political trust for 60 percent. The strongest relation is personal motivation, followed by political knowledge and lastly political trust. The other 40 percent of voting intention is still unknown. This is confirmed by the study of Glasford (2008) in which he used the IMB model. This model was the base of the current study. Besides, the findings are in line with the findings of Plutzer (2002) and Uslander (2018). They found that trust in politics and trust in society can influence voting intention of young adults. The study was unable to predict voting intention for 100 percent. However, the study showed that the higher knowledge, political trust and personal motivation, the higher the voting intention will be

The attitude towards performing the behaviour is also a variable that predicts the voting intention of young adults. This attitude is called personal motivation. The current study showed that the higher the personal motivation, the higher the voting intention will be. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) explain that personal motivation includes the outcomes of the behaviour, for example, if the party they voted on, gained more votes than four years ago that could result in a more positive attitude. But also, that the outcome will be beneficial for the person itself (Seacat & Northrup, 2010), for example, they feel that their vote contributed when their party gained more votes. Glasford (2008) adds that personal motivation is an individual's attitude and belief about the behaviour will increase the motivation. This is also confirmed in the current study. Lastly, the higher the personal motivation, the higher the political knowledge is confirmed in the current study. This is because people seek knowledge if they are motivated to perform a certain behaviour. People learn about issues if they are interested in these issues, when they are able to do so and motivated. This so called 'triad of learning' according to (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1997).

Political knowledge is essential when wanting to be involved in a certain topic and to perform behaviour (Converse, 2006). To have a well-functioning democracy it is important to be well-informed (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1997), which is also confirmed by Jerit (2009). The higher the political knowledge, the higher the voting intention will be. This is because people want to talk about topics, they know a lot of. This is the same with politics. People like to vote, if they know a lot of the topic. Secondly, according to the IMB model the levels of information and motivation work through behavioural skills to impact their behaviour (Seacat & Northrup, 2010). This is also confirmed in the current study. Because the higher the political knowledge, the more behavioural skills people possess. Thirdly, when young adults possess more political knowledge, they have more personal motivation to actually perform the behaviour. This is confirmed by the current study which shows that the higher political knowledge, the higher personal motivation. Torney-Purta, Lehman, Oswald and Schulz (2001) confirm this finding.

In this study political trust was found to influence voting intention. Dohmen, Verbakel and Kraaykamp, (2010) explain it is crucial that citizens trust each other but also the **political** institutions. Dalton (2006) and Apospori, Avlonitis and Zisouli (2010) explain that citizens and in specific young adults have gained less

confidence over the years in politics. This might explain the low voting intention of young adults. If they don't trust the politics and political institutions, they are less likely to vote. According to Michelson (2003), political trust is an essential determinant of this individual political behaviour and the effectiveness of the government. Distrust in politics can be explained by the perception of voters that politicians unfair or not honest. Another point for mistrust in the government is the idea that the government acts inefficiently (Gershtenson, Ladewig, Plane, 2006).

The higher social trust, the higher the voting intention will be, is not confirmed in the current study. According to Dohmen, Verbakel and Kraaykamp, (2010) it is very important that citizens trust each other but also the political institutions. Dermody and Hanmer-Lloyd (2008) add that young adults see politicians as unfair and inefficient. Therefore, they see voting as something useless and will not vote (Henn & Foard, 2012). Miller (1974) states that low trust, high cynicism and low effectivity makes the restraining from politics among young adults more visible. In this study the relation of the variable social trust in relation to voting intention is not confirmed. This is an unexpected finding because different studies, stated above, have shown that (social) trust is important for the actual execution of the behaviour.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

Despite the interesting results of this study, the results should be interpreted with respect to limitations of the study. The following limitations result in suggestions for future research. The first and main limitation of this research is that the measurement took place at one specific moment in time. This is called a cross-sectional study. 60 percent of voting intention can be predicted. This means that 40 percent is still unknown, therefore it can be state that voting intention is a variable which is influenced by a lot of dependent other variables. So, the voting intention of young adults can change. For example, different media intention, with possible influence on the political trust a young adult, might have an effect on the voting intention. Therefore, it is difficult to conclude if voting intention is being influenced by the variables after faced with the questions once. This limitation could have affected the results of this study. For future studies it is being recommended to examine the target group over a longer period of time via a longitudinal study to measure any developments in voting intention after possible exposure.

Secondly, the participants were aware that they participated in a study because they read it in the introduction and the researcher explained this to them. This can have an effect on the results because they might answer the questions in a way they think is expected. The subject of the study is widely discussed in society. This can ensure that they respond as they think they are expected to. For future research is might be better to include observations and asking question to participants when they don't know they are part of a study. For example, asking people randomly questions on the streets like a real conversation.

Thirdly, in this study only young adults who live in Hengelo have been asked to fill out the survey. The results can be different for young adults who live a vote in other cities or countries. For future research it may be interesting to ask young adults from different cities in the Netherlands or even ask young adults who live in other countries and compare the results of this study.

Also, the current study measured gender, education and age but didn't include the possible influence of gender, education and age on the voting intention of young adults. Also, the use of social media was not included in the current study. This could be interesting for future research because young adults could be influenced by the way the media presents the politics or the effect of voting behaviour. According to Esser and De Vreese (2007) and Moeller and De Vreese (2013) a positive effect has been found between the use of news sources and political participation.

Although some people may develop an intention to change their behaviour, they might not take any action, this discrepancy is called the intention-behaviour gap (Sniehotta, Scholz & Schwarzer, 2005). This means that the intention might be there, but it doesn't mean the actual behaviour will be executed. Sniehotta, Scholz and Schwarzer (2005) add that well planning of the action, perceived self-efficacy, and self-regulatory strategies may mediate between intentions and behaviour. Behavioural intention is the key ingredient in many behavioural models, such as health behavioural models but also in voting behavioural models (Weinstein, 2003). Whether or not the intentions are translated into action is the intention-behaviour gap. Although 60 percent of voting intention can be explained by the current study, the action of the (voting) intention is still unknown. Sniehotta, Scholz and Schwarzer (2005) indicate that planning, maintenance self-efficacy and action control may be important volitional variables. For future research this intention-behaviour gap is important to consider.

Lastly, for future research it may be interesting to zoom in on the rejected hypothesis. In this research the only hypothesis that was rejected was the following **"Social trust has a positive impact on the voting intention of young adults"**. For future research it might be interesting to investigate which variables influence social trust and how these variables influence voting intention.

Conclusion and practical implications

This research was conducted to answer the following research question: "What are the predictors of the voting intention of young people between 18 and 24 years old in elections for the local council?" and to test twelve hypotheses concerning the voting intention of young adults (18-24 years), potentially influenced by knowledge, behavioural skills, personal motivation, social motivation, social trust and political trust.

Personal motivation, political knowledge and political trust have an impact on voting intention. Social trust, behavioural skills and social motivation have no impact on voting intention. Additionally, behavioural skills, political knowledge, personal motivation, social motivation and political trust all have a single positive impact on voting intention. Social trust has no impact, individually or together with the other predictors, on voting intention. Next to that, political knowledge has a positive impact on behavioural skills and on personal motivation of young adults. Secondly, personal motivation has a positive impact on behavioural skills and political knowledge of young adults. Lastly, social motivation has a positive impact on behavioural skills and political knowledge of young adults. Therefore, it can be stated that the predictors of the voting intention of young adults in the elections for the local council are personal motivation, political knowledge and political trust.

To increase the voting intention of young adults it is important to invest in political knowledge, political trust and personal motivation. The results show that personal motivation has the strongest relation to voting

intention. To increase voting intention, it is important to meet the drivers of young adults. If they think something is important, they are motivated to act to it. It could be helpful to ask young people what they want to know more about, what do they find important? As a result, young people are really anticipated, and they may become more involved because they feel that their opinion is important. This is important because research by Kanne and Van Schelven (2017) shows that young people believe that politicians do not listen to them anyway. A platform where young adults could discuss about different topics might also increase the insight in which topics they are interested in and motivated to talk about. A platform called Synthetron can be a useful platform to get an online discussion going and to get insight in topics young adults are motivated to talk about. Also, the use of famous influencers can have an effect on the personal motivation of young adults. By engaging influencers that appeal to young people (liking), they can identify with the influencers and learn from them faster (Cialdini, 2016). This is very successful in retail, but also in topics which need behavioural influence. This ensures that the young people become familiar with the new account and the with voting. If the example is well set, they might follow this.

The second biggest predictor of voting intention is personal knowledge. To increase personal knowledge different tools and methods can be used. The municipality could invest in different, so called, masterclasses on schools such as high schools but also the ROC van Twente. The information has to be presented to the students in a fun and innovative way, for example via social media platforms. These masterclasses also have to include a motivation increasing element, because political knowledge also has a positive impact on personal motivation of young adults. The information has to be aimed for example on the difference they could make in society by voting, so they personally feel motivated to actually go voting.

Lastly, according to the results of the study political trust is a big predictor of voting intention. The target group needs to have a high trust, to be likely to have the intention to vote. Grönlund and Setälä (2007) showed that there is a clear relationship between trust and voter turnout as well as voting intention. According to them trust in parliament increases the likelihood of voting and can be increased with building a relation and trust with the voter. To do that the municipality could bring an alderman to the masterclasses as stated above. This could result in a relationship with the young adults, an increase of motivation and an increase of the trust they have in politics. Also, this can be achieved by introducing the young to the politicians to make it accessible for them to interact and gain trust. Besides, social media can be of great influence for the trustworthiness of parties. Cialdini (2016) explains that social media accounts for different purposes can increase trust in the parties, such as the government or political parties. Also, going live in groups on Facebook can increase the knowledge of young adults because it is a medium which could be used to send information to the target group, it can increase personal motivation when they are interested in the topic and it could increase trust of politicians. It is important to not only send information but also have interactions with the target group. This can be helpful to get to know the subjects the target group is interested about.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Preliminary study

Geslacht	Leeftijd	Opleiding	Gestemd? (gemeenteraad)	Reden 1	Reden 2	Reden 3
Vrouw	24	HBO	Ja	Huisgenoot extreem feministisch en ik me verplicht voelde	Ik had het nooit gedaan en dacht ik moet me een keer in verdiepen	Ik vind het zelf belangrijk
Vrouw	23	HBO	Nee	Ik heb me niet verdiept	Geen tijd	Geen zin
Vrouw	24	HBO	Ja	Ik vind het belangrijk om m'n stemrecht te gebruiken	Ik vind als je een mening wilt hebben, je ook gestemd moet hebben	Je weet wat er gebeurt, op wie je stemt en welke partijen er zijn
Vrouw	24	HBO	Nee	Niet in verdiept	Geen tijd	In mijn omgeving ook niet gestemd
Vrouw	23	MBO	Ja	Als je een burger bent heb je het recht om te stemmen	Iedere stem telt	Belangrijk
Man	22	MBO	Nee	Ik heb me er niet in verdiept	-	-
Man	24	HBO	Ja	Ik wil mijn mening laten gelden	Verandering teweeg brengen	Ik voel me verplicht
Vrouw	22	MBO	Ja	Ik vind het belangrijk	Belangrijk om te stemmen	Veel mensen in mijn omgeving stemmen

Geslacht	Leeftijd	Opleiding	Gestemd? (Europese verkiezingen)	Reden 1	Reden2	Reden 3
Vrouw	24	HBO	Nee	Geen tijd	-	-
Vrouw	23	HBO	Nee	Niet in verdiept	Geen tijd	geen zin
Vrouw	24	HBO	Ja	Ik vind het belangrijk om m'n stemrecht te gebruiken	Ik vind als je een mening wilt hebben, je ook gestemd moet hebben	Je weet wat er gebeurt, op wie je stemt en welke partijen er zijn
Vrouw	24	HBO	Ja	Ik had me erin verdiept	Omgeving deed het ook	Iets belangrijker

Vrouw	23	MBO	Ja	Als je een burger bent heb je het recht om te stemmen	Iedere stem telt	Belangrijk
Man	22	MBO	Nee	Niet in verdiept	-	-
Man	24	HBO	Ja	Ik wil mijn mening laten gelden	Verandering teweeg brengen	Ik voel me verplicht
Vrouw	22	MBO	Nee	Minder belangrijk	-	-

Appendix 2

Pretest 1

Vragen	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 4	Respondent 5	Respondent 6	Respondent 7
Wat is je geslacht?	Vrouw	Vrouw	Vrouw	Vrouw	Man	Vrouw	Vrouw
Wat is je leeftijd?	23 jaar	24 jaar	18 jaar	24 jaar	24 jaar	20 jaar	24 jaar
Wat is je hoogst genoten opleidingsniveau?	HBO	HBO	VWO	WO	HBO	WO	HBO
Ik weet veel van de lokale politiek	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ik beschouw mijzelf als een expert op het gebied van de lokale politiek	Zelfde als weet ik er veel over	x	x	x	Is expert niet hetzelfde als veel weten?	x	x
Als ik mijzelf vergelijk met anderen, weet ik meer dan zij over de lokale politiek	Prima vraag	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ik ben goed geïnformeerd over de lokale politiek	Prima vraag	x	x	x	x	x	x
Als het gaat om de lokale politiek, weet ik niet veel	Zelfde vraag alleen andersom	x	x	x	Is dit niet dezelfde vraag	In de beschrijving staat lokale politiek en in de vragen gemeenteraad.	
Over het algemeen ben ik de laatste in mijn vriendengroep die iets weet	Vind ik veel lijken op de andere vraag	x	x	Deze vraag is te lang en daardoor een beetje vaag.	x		

over wat er gaande is in de lokale politiek				Over het algemeen misschien weg halen.			
Stemmen voor de gemeenteraadsverkiezing in Hengelo vind ik belangrijk	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Stemmen voor de gemeenteraadsverkiezing in Hengelo zou a. Goed zijn - Slecht zijn	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Stemmen voor de gemeenteraadsverkiezing in Hengelo zou b. Schadelijk zijn - Gunstig zijn	x	Wat bedoel je precies. Voor wat of wie zou dat zo zijn?	Het lijkt teveel op elkaar. Kun je die anders verwoorden?	Deze zijn allemaal een beetje dubbelop	x	Ik denk dat de eerste goed van toepassing. De andere twee vragen vinden mensen denk ik lastig te begrijpen	x
Stemmen voor de gemeenteraadsverkiezing in Hengelo zou c. Belonend zijn - Straffend zijn	Wat bedoel je met belonend. Dat is niet duidelijk. Het lijkt alsof je er iets voor terug krijgt	Bij alle drie de vragen	x	Deze alle drie zijn een beetje raar maar ik zie niet echt een toegevoegde waarde wat ik hier moet invullen	x	x	Vind dit een gekke vraag
Mijn vrienden en familie vinden stemmen voor de gemeenteraad belangrijk	x	x	x	x	x	Misschien antwoord optie weet ik niet erbij. Of misschien valt dat onder neutraal.	x
De meeste mensen die belangrijk voor mij zijn,	Kun je de meeste mensen die	x	x	x	x	x	x

vinden dat ik moet stemmen tijdens de gemeenteraadsverkiezing	belangrijk voor me zijn niet vervangen door mijn naasten?						
Mijn vrienden en familie vinden dat ik moet stemmen tijdens de gemeenteraadsverkiezing	Dit is toch dezelfde vraag? Vrienden en familie en de meeste mensen die belangrijk voor me zijn	x	Meeste mensen die belangrijk zijn, is toch hetzelfde als je vrienden?	Vrienden en familie en mensen die belangrijk zijn, zijn hetzelfde.	x	De vraag erboven lijkt veel op elkaar door vrienden en familie en de meeste mensen die belangrijk voor mij zijn	Vrienden en familie hetzelfde als de mensen die belangrijk voor mij zijn
Hoe moeilijk zou het voor je zijn om bij te houden waar politici staan over kwesties die voor jou relevant zijn?	Dit moet ik drie keer lezen. Een te lange vraag. Ik snap de vraag niet.	x	x	x	x	x	x
Hoe moeilijk zou het voor jou zijn om informatie te vinden over waar je kunt stemmen tijdens de lokale verkiezingen?	x	x	x	x	x	Streepje onder waar loopt door	x
Hoe moeilijk zou het voor jou zijn om de vaardigheden te leren die nodig zijn te stemmen?	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? a. Familie	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? B. Vrienden	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? C. Collega's	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? D. De buurt	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? A. Mensen die je voor het eerst ontmoet	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? B. Mensen met een ander geloof	Dit voelt heel racistisch	x	x	Wat heeft dit er mee te maken?	x	x	x
Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? C. Mensen met een andere nationaliteit	x	x	x	Ik voel me net zo'n racistisch	x	x	x
Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? A. De gemeenteraad van Hengelo?	Wat is het verschil tussen de gemeenteraad en de gemeente? Uitleg nodig	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? B. De gemeente Hengelo	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? C. Het college van Burgemeester en Wethouders van Hengelo	x	x	x	x	x	Voor sommigen kan dit onderscheid lastig zijn. Misschien een uitleg geven.	x
Ik verwacht dat ik bij de lokale verkiezingen in 2022 te stemmen	x	x	x	x	x	Misschien iets meer context over	x

						die verkiezingen in 2022	
Ik ben van plan om te stemmen tijdens de lokale verkiezingen in 2022	x	x	x	Is dit hetzelfde?	x	x	x
Mijn intentie is om te gaan stemmen tijdens te lokale verkiezingen in 2022	Lijkt veel op elkaar.	x	Ik vul het in met dezelfde gedachten. Ik snap de verschillen wel maar die zijn gering.	x	x	x	x

Pretest 2

Vragen	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 4	Respondent 5	Respondent 6	Respondent 7
Wat is je geslacht?	Man	Vrouw	Man	Vrouw	Vrouw	Vrouw	Vrouw
Wat is je leeftijd?	24 jaar	24 jaar	24 jaar	18 jaar	23 jaar	23 jaar	23 jaar
Wat is je hoogst genoten opleidingsniveau?	HBO	HBO	HBO	VWO	HBO	WO	WO
Ik weet veel van de lokale politiek in Hengelo	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ik beschouw mijzelf als een expert op het gebied van de lokale politiek in Hengelo	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Als ik mijzelf vergelijk met anderen, weet ik meer dan zij over de lokale politiek in Hengelo	x	x	x	x	x	Met anderen uit Hengelo lijkt me	x

Ik ben goed geïnformeerd over de lokale politiek in Hengelo	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Als het gaat om de lokale politiek in Hengelo, weet ik niet veel	x	Ik vraag me af of dit niet dubbel is met de vragen erboven	x	x	Goed het dat dikgedrukt is. Ik lees daar overheen.	x	x
Over het algemeen ben ik de laatste in mijn vriendengroep die iets weet over wat er gaande is in de lokale politiek van Hengelo	x	x	Stel ik heb geen vrienden ?	x	Vragen niet te lang maken, anders moet ik het heel vaak overlezen door mijn dyslectie		x
Ik vind stemmen belangrijk	x	x	x	x	x	Slim dat dit de eerste vraag is, in verband met het toespitsen op Hengelo	x
Ik vind stemmen voor de gemeenteraad van Hengelo belangrijk	x	x	x	Dit is dubbel. Als je voor de gemeenteraad stemmen belangrijk vindt, vind je stemmen in het algemeen belangrijk toch?	x	x	x
Het is mijn plicht om te gaan stemmen	x	x	x	x	Misschien goed te vertellen wat het verschil is tussen de algemene verkiezing en de gemeenteraad	x	x
Het is mijn plicht om te gaan stemmen voor de gemeenteraad van Hengelo	x	x	x	Dit is te specifiek	x	x	x
Stemmen voor de gemeenteraad van Hengelo neemt te veel tijd in beslag	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Stemmen voor de gemeenteraad van Hengelo is gunstig voor de maatschappij	x	x	x	Hetzelfde als belangrijk vinden	x	Goede vraagstelling	x
Stemmen voor de gemeenteraad van Hengelo is makkelijk om te doen	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Een bijdrage leveren aan de maatschappij door te stemmen voor de gemeenteraad van Hengelo, is belangrijk voor mij	x	x	x	Vraag is al eerder gesteld	x	Misschien anders stellen doordat die duidelijker is	x
Ik ben te druk om te gaan stemmen voor de gemeenteraad van Hengelo	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
De meeste mensen die belangrijk voor mij zijn, vinden stemmen belangrijk	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
De meeste mensen die belangrijk voor mij zijn, vinden dat ik moet stemmen	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
De meeste mensen die belangrijk voor mij zijn, vinden stemmen voor de gemeenteraad van Hengelo belangrijk	x	x	Hier staat menden in plaats van mensen	Beetje dubbelop	x	x	x
De meeste mensen die belangrijk voor mij zijn, vinden dat ik moet stemmen voor de gemeenteraad van Hengelo	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Hoe moeilijk zou het voor je zijn om bij te houden waar politici staan over kwesties die voor jou relevant zijn?	x	x	x	x	x	Ik mis hier het woord standpunten	x

Hoe moeilijk zou het voor jou zijn om informatie te vinden over waar je kunt stemmen tijdens de lokale verkiezingen?	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Hoe moeilijk zou het voor jou zijn om de vaardigheden te leren die nodig zijn te stemmen?	x	Dit moet om te kunnen stemmen zijn	x	x	x	x	x
Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? a. Familie	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? B. Vrienden	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? C. Collega's	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? D. De buurt	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? A. Mensen die je voor het eerst ontmoet	x	x	x	x	x	Welk vertrouwen bedoel je. Vertrouwen in general? Of op politiek niveau?	x
Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? B. Mensen met een ander geloof	x	x	x	Vrij discriminerd	x	x	Dit zit me enigszins dwars omdat het discrimineren d voelt
Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? C.	x	x	x	Hier ook	x	x	idem dito

Mensen met een andere nationaliteit							
Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? A. De gemeenteraad van Hengelo?	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? B. De gemeente Hengelo	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? C. Het college van Burgemeester en Wethouders van Hengelo	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ik verwacht dat ik bij de lokale verkiezingen in 2022 te stemmen	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ik ben van plan om te stemmen tijdens de lokale verkiezingen in 2022	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Mijn intentie is om te gaan stemmen tijdens te lokale verkiezingen in 2022	x	x	x	Alle drie een beetje hetzelfde	Wat is het verschil tussen deze drie?	x	x

Appendix 3

Survey

This survey is written in Dutch because the aimed participants will mostly be Dutch and therefore, they most likely will be more inclined to participate in this study.

1. Woon je in Hengelo? (0: Ja, 1: Nee)
2. Wat is je geslacht? (0: man, 1: vrouw)
3. Wat is je leeftijd? (1: 18, 2: 19, 3: 20, 4: 21, 5: 22, 6: 23, 7: 24)
4. Wat is op dit moment je hoogst genoten opleidingsniveau?
 - a. Basisonderwijs/ lagere school

- b. Lbo/ vbo/ vmbo
- c. Middelbaar beroepsonderwijs (mbo)
- d. Hoger voortgezet onderwijs (havo of vwo)
- e. Hoger beroepsonderwijs (hbo)
- f. Wetenschappelijk onderwijs (universiteit)

Knowledge

- 5. Ik weet veel van de lokale politiek
 - a. Helemaal mee oneens
 - b. Oneens
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Eens
 - e. Helemaal mee eens
- 6. Ik beschouw mijzelf als een expert op het gebied van de lokale politiek
 - a. Helemaal mee oneens
 - b. Oneens
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Eens
 - e. Helemaal mee eens
- 7. Als ik mijzelf vergelijk met anderen, weet ik meer over de lokale politiek dan zij
 - a. Helemaal mee oneens
 - b. Oneens
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Eens
 - e. Helemaal mee eens
- 8. Ik ben goed geïnformeerd over de lokale politiek
 - a. Helemaal mee oneens
 - b. Oneens
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Eens

- e. Helemaal mee eens
- 9. Als het gaat om de lokale politiek, weet ik niet veel
 - a. Helemaal mee oneens
 - b. Oneens
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Eens
 - e. Helemaal mee eens
- 10. Over het algemeen ben ik de laatste in mijn vriendengroep die iets weet over wat er gaande is in de lokale politiek
 - a. Helemaal mee oneens
 - b. Oneens
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Eens
 - e. Helemaal mee eens

Personal motivation

- 11. Ik vind stemmen belangrijk
 - a. Helemaal mee oneens
 - b. Oneens
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Eens
 - e. Helemaal mee eens
- 12. Ik vind stemmen voor de gemeenteraad van Hengelo belangrijk
 - a. Helemaal mee oneens
 - b. Oneens
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Eens
 - e. Helemaal mee eens
- 13. Het is mijn plicht om te gaan stemmen
 - a. Helemaal mee oneens
 - b. Oneens
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Eens
 - e. Helemaal mee eens

14. Het is mijn plicht om te gaan stemmen voor de gemeenteraad van Hengelo
 - a. Helemaal mee oneens
 - b. Oneens
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Eens
 - e. Helemaal mee eens
15. Stemmen voor de gemeenteraad van Hengelo neemt te veel tijd in beslag
 - a. Helemaal mee oneens
 - b. Oneens
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Eens
 - e. Helemaal mee eens
16. Stemmen voor de gemeenteraad van Hengelo is gunstig voor de maatschappij
 - a. Helemaal mee oneens
 - b. Oneens
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Eens
 - e. Helemaal mee eens
17. Stemmen voor de gemeenteraad van Hengelo is makkelijk om te doen
 - a. Helemaal mee oneens
 - b. Oneens
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Eens
 - e. Helemaal mee eens
18. Een bijdrage leveren aan de maatschappij door te stemmen voor de gemeenteraad van Hengelo, is belangrijk voor mij
 - a. Helemaal mee oneens
 - b. Oneens
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Eens
 - e. Helemaal mee eens
19. Ik ben te druk om te gaan stemmen voor de gemeenteraad van Hengelo
 - a. Helemaal mee oneens
 - b. Oneens

- c. Neutraal
- d. Eens
- e. Helemaal mee eens

Social motivation

20. De meeste mensen die belangrijk voor mij zijn, vinden stemmen belangrijk
- a. Helemaal niet waar
 - b. Niet waar
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Waar
 - e. Helemaal waar
21. De meeste mensen die belangrijk voor mij zijn, vinden dat ik moet stemmen
- a. Helemaal niet waar
 - b. Niet waar
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Waar
 - e. Helemaal waar
22. De meeste mensen die belangrijk voor mij zijn, vinden stemmen voor de gemeenteraad van Hengelo belangrijk
- a. Helemaal niet waar
 - b. Niet waar
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Waar
 - e. Helemaal waar
23. De meeste mensen die belangrijk voor mij zijn, vinden dat ik moet stemmen voor de gemeenteraad van Hengelo
- a. Helemaal niet waar
 - b. Niet waar
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Waar
 - e. Helemaal waar

Behavioural skills

24. Hoe moeilijk zou het voor je zijn om bij te houden waar politici staan over kwesties die voor jou relevant zijn?

- a. Erg moeilijk
 - b. Moeilijk
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Makkelijk
 - e. Erg Makkelijk
25. Hoe moeilijk zou het voor jou zijn om informatie te vinden over waar je kunt stemmen tijdens de lokale verkiezingen?
- a. Erg moeilijk
 - b. moeilijk
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Makkelijk
 - e. Erg Makkelijk
26. Hoe moeilijk zou het voor jou zijn om de vaardigheden te leren die nodig zijn te stemmen?
- a. Erg moeilijk
 - b. moeilijk
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Makkelijk
 - e. Erg Makkelijk

Particularized trust

Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? (Heel veel, veel, neutraal, weinig, heel weinig)

- 27. Familie
- 28. Vrienden
- 29. Collega's
- 30. De buurt

Generalized trust

Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? (Heel veel, veel, neutraal, weinig, heel weinig)

- 31. Mensen die je voor het eerst ontmoet
- 32. Mensen met een ander geloof
- 33. Mensen met een andere nationaliteit

Political trust

Kunt u mij vertellen of u mensen uit deze groep vertrouwt? (Heel veel, veel, neutraal, weinig, heel weinig)

- 34. De gemeenteraad van Hengelo
- 35. De gemeente
- 36. Het college van Burgemeester & Wethouders van Hengelo

Voting intention

- 37. Ik verwacht dat ik tijdens de lokale verkiezingen in 2022 ga stemmen
 - a. Helemaal mee oneens
 - b. Oneens
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Eens
 - e. Helemaal mee eens
- 38. Ik ben van plan om te stemmen tijdens de lokale verkiezingen in 2022
 - a. Helemaal mee oneens
 - b. Oneens
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Eens
 - e. Helemaal mee eens
- 39. Mijn intentie is om te gaan stemmen tijdens te Hengelose gemeenteraadsverkiezingen in 2022
 - a. Helemaal mee oneens
 - b. Oneens
 - c. Neutraal
 - d. Eens
 - e. Helemaal mee eens