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An assessment of economic policies in Zimbabwe in compliance with SMART principles

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: In order to achieve self-reliance, Zimbabwe needs to concentrate on growing member countries' economies, which requires an environment conducive to growth because of political stability and good governance to be in place first. What appears to be some of the goals of the economic reforms are issues that need to be addressed now (are pre-conditions) to pave the way for the socio-economic development of the Continent. The problem is that Zimbabwe has developed and implemented several national economic policies since independence, which however, suffer from lack of implementation. In most cases, the policies are aborted at conception or during the course of their life or merely suffer a natural death with little or no documented reasons for their termination. The aim of the article therefore is to explain the Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-Oriented and Time Framed (SMART) policy objectives to improve economic policies for socio-economic development in Zimbabwe.

Design/methodology/approach: This study is qualitative in nature and utilised the triangulation of data in the form of conceptual analysis, document analysis, and unobtrusive research.

Findings: The findings show that all the selected policies did not have adequate funding from the national budgets. As such they depended on the possibility of receiving external funding to implement policy goals and objectives.

Recommendations/value: It is recommended that government prioritise its projects and programmes and implement what is feasible given the available resources and manpower.

Managerial implications: The study can assist government officials in Zimbabwean Public Administration/Management to understand that policy clarity and consistency can only be achieved if the proper methods of developing a policy are duly followed, such as extensive consultations, involvement of experts in developing policies, amongst others.

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Key phrases

Economic policies; socio-economic development; SMART policy objectives; Zimbabwe.

JEL Classification: E61; H11; O11

1. INTRODUCTION

The strife-torn colony of Rhodesia became the independent, black-ruled nation of Zimbabwe on April 18, 1980 (Ross, 1980). After independence, the country launched the 'equity-based' economic policies to redress the imbalances of the past. It was realised that though the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) has promulgated a series of economic policies in Zimbabwe since 1980, the economic situation has been deteriorating since independence due to unfavourable economic situations. It is considered that the elite with connections in politics, business/markets have dominance over the public policy development and implementation process in many countries, especially in the developing states (Mutenga, 2021). Their influence can be traced at any stage right through the public policy cycle. Their involvement can come in the form of politics, technical expertise, advisory services/think-tanks or financial assistance to assist at any stage of the policy cycle (Mutenga, 2021). The objective of this article is to discuss the four economic policies in Zimbabwe and to assess their compliance against the Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-Oriented and Time Framed (SMART) principles, which will be evaluated by means of a conceptual analysis.

This study is qualitative in nature. Golafashani (2003) suggests and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2017) considers that qualitative research seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings. The qualitative research approach of this study utilised the conceptual analysis, document analysis, and unobtrusive research to strengthen validity and reliability in the research process. Nhlapo (2020) reviews the University of Southern California (2020) documents and advocates that the primary reason for using conceptual analysis is to understand the meaning of an idea or concept. The secondary reason is to determine how that idea or concept relates to other philosophical problems. Nyikadzino and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2020) adapt that, document analysis involves analytical reading and a review of large amounts of written material. Nyikadzino (2020) follows Curtis and Curtis (2011) and adds that, in unobtrusive research, data are drawn from existing physical (material) traces, and existing records. The reason to utilise unobtrusive research suggested by Trochim (2020) and acknowledged by Bangani and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2020) is that it presumably reduces the bias that results from the intrusion of the researcher.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: ECONOMIC REFORMS IN ZIMBABWE

2.1 Theory of development

Modernisation theory claims that it is an irreversible process; once started modernisation cannot be stopped. However, this is misleading because "rapid rate of de-industrialisation" (Sachikonye, 1999:34) now taking place in Zimbabwe. The theory failed to consider natural disasters and political factors which many African countries are seized with. Such factors may reverse some socio-economic developments that a country might have gained. The theory did not involve the people concerned in identifying the problems, planning, policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (Matunhu, 2011).

2.2 Theory of dependency

As stated by Matunhu (2011), from a dependency perspective repatriation of profits represents a systematic expatriation of the surplus values that were created by African labour using African resources. This situation was expressed by Rodney (1972:149) analysing that "the relationship between Europe and Africa is that during colonialism, Europe organised herself, accumulated capital gained from her colonies in Africa, shrewdly". However, like in many African states, in Zimbabwe the involvement of government in the economy has brought numerous inefficiencies, corruption, among other negative influences. Thus, the policies end up not achieving the intended results.

2.3 Theory of world systems

According to the world systems theory, the structure is tri-modal and is comprised of the core, the semi-periphery and the periphery. The assumption is that the core developed by exploiting its immediate periphery, which is the semi-periphery, who in turn is the middleman prospering by exploiting the periphery (Reyes, 2001). In other words, according to Matunhu (2011), in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa has managed to pull itself from the periphery by capitalising on the Zimbabwean, Mozambican and Zambian (the periphery to South Africa) economies to develop.

2.4 Theory of globalisation

The main assumptions which can be extracted from the theory of globalisation can be summarised in three principal points (Reyes, 2001). First, cultural factors are the determinant aspect in every society. Second, it is not important, under current world conditions to use the nation-state as the unit of analysis (Reyes, 2001). Third, with more standardisation in technological advances, more and more social sectors will be able to connect themselves with other groups around the world (Reyes, 2001). However, the article contested that we seem to be already in the post-globalisation era, with African elites asking the question of whose culture we are embracing as global. It is clear that with inferior technology, Africa will continue lagging behind in development if the globalisation theory is something to consider. This suggests that whilst globalisation will enhance Africa's link to the core for bi-lateral and multi-lateral relationships, it is also suicidal for African economies which are rooted in their people's indigenous knowledge systems.

2.5. Arthur Lewis' industrialisation by invitation model

In the 1960s, according to Kofi (2002), it was assumed that Africa would develop by following the footpaths of the Anglo-Saxon development experience system and under the neoliberal, Washington consensus ideology. Contrary to Africa's social values, these ethnocentric models place heavy emphasis on free markets, deregulation, privatisation and the limited role the state has to play in the development process. Nustad (2001) supports Escobar (1984) and argues that development efforts in Africa in the past years using western models has been just a continuation of the colonial project. In a bid to develop using Lewis's Industrialisation By Invitation (IBI), Nkwame Nkrumah of Ghana employed Arthur Lewis in 1963 to help Ghana out of poverty but Ghana did not realise development. This can lead one to argue that African development does not need prescribed policies from the developed nations, following the failure of Lewis's IBI model in Ghana. Doctor Deng has argued that "Lewis' development model desperately failed in Africa because it sought to apply development models that were incompatible with African economic structure, social values, and institutions" (Deng, 1988:32). This therefore led to the import substitution of industrialisation policies being tried in the 1960s in some African and Latin American countries.

2.6. Import substitution (Prebisch-Singer Thesis)

Mendes, Bertella and Teixeira (2014) state that other African countries followed Ghana's lead in the 1960s. Mali and Kenya looked at industrialisation in terms of cost savings from local production in place of high-cost imports from abroad. The development policies, according to Kofi (2002), that were designed by the academicians did little to generate socially acceptable high rates of economic growth in Africa. Although politically independent, control of the import-export trade and the financial sector and ownership of major production capacity in the export and industrial sectors remained in foreign hands (industries were owned and managed by Europeans or third-country nationals). In short, African countries were economically dependent on the West for their: technology and capital goods industries; managerial skills; finance; and marketing skills.

In order to improve the situation, the GoZ participated in development summits and implemented few development strategies, discussed below in brief. The first economic summit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was held in Lagos in April 1980 and produced the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA). However, the LPA was overshadowed by the institution of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in almost all African countries from the early 1980s onward (Ikome, 2004). This demonstrates that the developed nations and the world financial institutions only support African policies which serve their ideologies, hence the advent of SAPs in Africa.

In order to access financial credit from International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), African countries were forced to undertake SAPs as another Economic Reform for the development of Africa. However, Shah (2013) contests that this is precisely what contributes to poverty and dependency in Africa. In fact, it represents a type of exploitation called unequal exchange (Shah, 2013). SAPs dismally failed in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Economic Commission for Africa,2014). To a larger extent, prescriptions proffered by the IMF and the WB are failing Africa; hence suggesting that African development may not need such prescriptions, resulting in Africa developing its home grown economic reform policy named New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD).

Africa in a bid to develop using home grown policies, at the 37th session of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) African leaders Summit held in Lusaka, Zambia, in July 2001, adopted NEPAD to address the critical challenges related to poverty and economic development (United Nations, 2021). The NEPAD mission was received with lack of contentment due to the ineffective economic development and financial growth on the African continent. To complement the efforts of NEPAD, a new policy dubbed Agenda 2063 was adopted in 2015 by African Heads of States (African Union, 2021). The authors noted that most of the AU Agenda 2063 flagship projects are yet to take off. It is important for the AU to identify the challenges being faced by member countries lagging behind and proffer solutions. Challenges in whatever forms facing one country have multiplier effects for the entire continent. In some instances, it is also important to legally bind these countries to meet these targets in case the Agenda 2063 remains a dream in the pipeline like other predecessor policies.

3. ECONOMIC POLICIES IN ZIMBABWE

3.1. Growth with Equity Policy (1981)

Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980 and had to undertake tasks to improve the socio-economic situations related to poverty, migration, refugees, unemployment, illiteracy, to state a few concerns. The new government therefore launched the Growth with Equity Policy in 1981. The key goal of the Growth with Equity Policy (GWEP) (GoZ,1981a), was to address the imbalance between predominant foreign ownership and control of assets on the one hand, and on the other, limited local participation and more especially the past colonial dispossession of land and other economic assets and the consequential impoverishment of the masses of the people. Moreover, according to the documents of the GWEP (GoZ,1981a), past policy and legislation and other Government instruments, especially fiscal and monetary including subsidies and other measures, were designed to maintain a sound economy but an inequitable socio-economic order, while education and manpower policies were generally designed to ensure the existence of cheap unskilled black labour combined with indiscriminate importation of skills mainly from overseas.

3.2 A Framework for economic reform (1991-1995)

After a decade of considerable social progress but limited per capita income growth, the GoZ embarked on a programme of economic policy reform aimed at stimulating investment and removing impediments to growth (GoZ, 1991). The Programme was known as A Framework for Economic Reform (FER), also commonly known as the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). The fundamental objective of the Programme was to improve living conditions, especially for the poorest groups. This was meant to increase real incomes and lower unemployment, by generating sustained higher economic growth. To achieve this broad objective, the economy needed to be transformed to make it more competitive and productive (GoZ, 1991).

3.3 Zimbabwe Millennium Economic, Recovery Programme - MERP (2001-2002)

The Zimbabwe Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP) was a continuation of the commitments and targets of Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST). This policy framework covered 30 months from July 2000 up to December 2002 and its aim was to 'fight spiralling inflation' which was cited as a major cause of macro-economic instability (GoZ, 2001). The Programme's goal was to build confidence in the economy and restore vibrant economic growth by removing the fundamental causes of inflation, which was a cause of macro-economic instability (GoZ, 2001).

3.4. Five Year Medium-Term Plan (2011-2015)

The MTP was launched in July 2011 to guide all Government plans and programmes beyond short-term stabilisation. The Medium-Term Plan (MTP) responded to the mandate set out in Article III of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) to support the restoration of economic stability and growth in Zimbabwe (GoZ, 2011). The policy was created to build on the foundations which had been laid by the Short-Term Emergency Recovery Programme (STERP) (February-December 2009) and the three- year Macro-Economic Policy and Budget Framework (STERP II). The MTP was put in place to guide all other Government policy documents. The MTP was meant to set out clearly the national priorities and investment programmes for the 2011-2015 period (GoZ, 2011).

The positives from the GWEP were mainly on the social front where access to education, access to health and employment creation greatly improved from 1980 to 1985. However, the productive sector of the economy was subdued. The GWEP also heavily depended on external resources and technical assistance for implementation. The policy also placed much focus on social development and little emphasis was placed on wealth generation using locally available resources. The FER's centre of attention was rapid economic growth, create conditions for a market led economy, stimulate investment, employment and exports. The idea of growing the economy was good but it was overemphasised at the expense of the social well-being of the general populace. Most of the macro-economic indicators were not favourable during the MERP lifespan. Basically, the policy was not developmental but only sought to stabilise both the economy and political environment. The MTP had a collection of policy frameworks for socio-economic development. However, it failed to mobilise local resources and lacked the donor support on which the blueprint was underpinned; hence it failed to meet some of its targets between 2011 and 2012.

In order to ensure that economic policies serve the purpose to offer socio-economic development in Zimbabwe, the article aims to assess policies' compliance with SMART principles.

4. ECONOMIC POLICIES' COMPLIANCE WITH SMART PRINCIPLES

4.1. Specific analysis of Policies' Compliance with SMART principles

Sapru (2012) points out that a good policy should have a clearly defined vision, goal and objectives, among other tenets. The SMART acronym, according to the documents of Marquette University (2020), is a tool designed to help organisations and individuals set goals and objectives in an effective and productive manner, thereby creating a good policy. SMART 'goal setting brings structure and trackability' into policy's goals and objectives. Instead of vague resolutions, SMART goal setting creates verifiable trajectories towards a certain objective, with clear milestones and an estimation of the goal's attainability (Marquette University, 2020). SMART is an acronym standing for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound. The following section analyses each policy's compliance with every SMART principle.

Growth with Equity Policy (1981): The policy did not have both a vision and a goal. The policy had fourteen primary objectives each of which started with an actionable word which is commendable (GoZ, 1981a). The objectives also attempted to describe the desired outcomes but fell short on the inclusion of percentages, frequencies, rate or numbers. Regrettably, most of the objectives combined more than one idea making them too long, losing focus and becoming vague in the process. For example, according to the GWEP document (GoZ, 1981a), the objective no. 10 states to provide, improve and extend rural economic and social services (including housing, health and education) to lower income groups in the urban and rural areas; and consider possible schemes for social security services where they do not exist, bearing in mind the overall responsibility of the state for the welfare and well-being of its citizens (GoZ, 1981a). Furthermore, it was noted that some of the objectives overlap; for instance, objective no. 10 stated above and objective no. 8 which states to provide, improve, and extend the rural economic infrastructure so as to serve adequately the Zimbabwean urban and rural economy (GoZ, 1981a). The two objectives basically attempt to achieve the same outcome. Objective no. 8 merely facilitates the attainment of objective no. 10. This explains why too many primary objectives were developed in this policy. The primary objective should be one comprehensive statement succinctly outlining the broad objective of the policy. It can be concluded that the primary objectives were ambiguous. The policy had sector specific objectives. After outlining the 14 primary objectives, the policy moved on to explain the various sectors the policy focused on. The sectors covered include agricultural and rural development;

manufacturing; mining; energy; transport and communication; water; manpower, labour and employment; incomes policy; social infrastructure; science and technology; monetary, financial and fiscal policies; investment; institutional development; and regional and international cooperation (GoZ, 1981a). However, the specific objectives given for the sectors did not describe the outcomes in quantifiable terms. Most of them were too long and vaguely stated. For example, under the health sector, paragraph 88 states that (GoZ, 1981a): in order to increase access to health services in rural areas, health clinics will be built at village level, manned by suitably trained primary health care workers, and backed up by rural health centres and hospitals, from district to provincial level. This objective and strategy in the provision of health care services will obviously require a considerable extension of training facilities for workers from the village health worker up to the fully trained nurse and midwife, including advisers in health education and nutrition.

A Framework for Economic Reform/ESAP (1991-95): The policy did not have both a vision and a goal. The broad objective of the Policy was stated in paragraph 13. A Framework for Economic Reform (GoZ, 1991) outlines that the fundamental objective of economic reform in Zimbabwe is to improve living conditions, especially for the poorest groups. This means increasing real incomes and lowering unemployment, by generating sustained higher economic growth. In order to achieve this primary objective, the economy needs to be transformed to make it more competitive and productive. This transformation, according to the ESAP (GoZ, 1991) entails moving away from a highly regulated economy to one where market forces are allowed to play a more decisive role, while concurrently taking steps to alleviate any transitional social hardships which may arise from this transition (ESAP, 1991). This broad objective described the desired result in a detailed manner. It focused on transforming the economy to make it competitive and highly productive by moving away from a highly regulated economy. Paragraph 14 narrates the specific objective of the policy. The ESAP (GoZ, 1991) informs that the Government has adopted an economic growth target of 5 percent per year by 1995. To achieve this overall growth target in a sustainable way, industrial growth will have to be about 5.8 percent per year, agricultural growth about 3.2 percent per year, and service sector growth about 5 percent per annum. Investment will need to rise to 25 percent of GDP, and exports and imports will both need to also increase as a share of GDP (GoZ, 1991). This specific objective did capture the desired results from various sectors in a quantifiable manner. However, the sectors were all lumped together in one paragraph making it difficult to clearly demarcate one from the other. The objectives lack actionable words which give direction on how each objective is intended to be executed.

Zimbabwe Millennium Economic, Recovery Programme (2001-2002): The vision of the Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP) is to mobilise all national stakeholders under the leadership of the Government to implement a package of macro-economic stabilisation policy measures. Government, Business, Labour and Civil Society must, therefore, build a common vision and accept respective responsibilities towards restoring the vibrancy of the economy. Further, Government will seek support from international co-operating partners during implementation of this programme (GoZ, 2001). The primary objective of this programme is to build confidence in [the] economy and restore vibrant economic growth by removing the fundamental causes of inflation, which is a cause of macro-economic instability (GoZ, 2001). The specific objectives of MERP (GoZ, 2001) were to:

- Build confidence in the economy;
- Consolidate the fiscus;
- Accelerate and complete public enterprise reform;
- Reduce inflation and interest rates;
- Stabilise the value of the Zimbabwean dollar and resolve the foreign currency crisis;
- Engage the support of the international community;
- Strengthen monitoring of the financial sector;
- Stimulate growth of productive sectors; and
- Economic empowerment and poverty reduction.

The vision/ goal/objectives did not have a description of a precise achievement or outcome which is, or can be, related to a percentage, frequency, rate or number. The objectives were lacking clear priorities, sequencing and binding targets.

Five Year Medium-Term Plan (2011- 2015): The vision of the Medium-Term Plan (MTP) was, enhancing a democratic developmental state anchored by a growing and transforming, socially just economy (GoZ, 2011). This vision is difficult for an ordinary person to understand. The policy's overall goal was to transform the economy, reduce poverty, create jobs, maintain macro-economic stability and restore the economy' capacity to produce goods and services competitively, building upon the gains achieved since the launch of STERP in March 2009 (GoZ, 2011). The policy presented objectives under various sectors. The sectors covered by the policy were GoZ, 2011):

- Economic policy framework;

- Key economic enablers, such as: i) energy, ii) transport & communication, iii) water & sanitation, iv) local government; v) housing & construction; vi) information, communication & technology; vii) media, information & publicity; viii) science, technology and innovation;
- Investment promotion, coordination & regulation;
- Private sector development;
- Employment creation and poverty eradication;
- Agriculture;
- Manufacturing;
- Mining;
- Tourism;
- Financial services;
- Small and medium enterprises;
- Environment and natural resources;
- Public service;
- Health;
- Education;
- Sport, arts and culture;
- Population and development;
- Social protection;
- Persons living with disabilities;
- Gender and development;
- Youth development;
- Governance and rights; and
- Diaspora and economic development.

Each sector had its own objectives supported by policy targets. For example, under macro-economic policy framework, Paragraph 3.4 states that the economic objectives will be to ensure economic recovery, growth and transformation to promote sustainable economic growth and development; poverty eradication; employment creation; price stability; and sustainable Balance of Payment position (GoZ, 2011). Paragraph 3.5 outlines macro-economic policy targets. It is stated that the macro-economic targets will achieve the following: an average growth rate of 7.1 percent during the Plan period; single digit annual inflation; interest rate regime that promotes savings and fosters investment; current account deficit of not more that 5 percent of GDP by 2015; average employment creation rate of 6 percent per annum; sustained poverty reduction in line with MDGs targets; foreign Exchange Reserves of at least three months import cover by 2015; double digit savings and investment ratios of around 20 percent of GDP by 2015; Budget Deficit to converge to SADC benchmark of less than 5 percent of GDP by 2015; and reduce sovereign debt to at least 60 percent of GDP by 2015 (GoZ, 2011). The objectives were too short and did not have actionable words to guide implementing agencies on courses of action to be followed. The objectives described the desired outcomes but fell short on the inclusion of percentages, rates or numbers to make them quantifiable. However, this shortcoming was addressed by the subsequent section on policy targets which gave desired results in figures. For example, objective (i) 'sustainable economic growth and development' will be read together with policy target (i) 'an average growth rate of 7.1 percent during the Plan Period.' This improves the specificity of the objectives.

4.2 General analysis of policies' Compliance to SMART principles

This section discusses a general analysis of the policies' compliance to SMART (principles.

4.2.1 Policies' compliance with 'specific' principles

Sapru (2012) affirms that the first step in policymaking is to identify whether and why there is a problem at all. Defining the problem involves moving from mundane descriptions to a more abstract, conceptual plane. Problem recognition itself requires that a social problem has been defined as such and that the necessity of state intervention has been expressed. The analysis should be brought out in such a way that the essential points can be easily grasped and communicated. Sapru (2012) further pronounces that the development of the policy approach rests on the idea that government could, by making good policies, solve problems of the society; hence, the need for developing clear specific visions, goals and objectives. The article observed that generally the policies under study did not have visions and goals, and where they existed, they were vague. The policies' objectives did not adequately meet the 'specific' principle. Most of them did not include an actionable word which is important to give guidance to the implementing agencies on the course of action to be taken to execute the objective. Most of the objectives did not clearly describe the desired outcome with the support of numerical figures. This again creates problems for the implementing agencies as it would be difficult to know if they have adequately executed the objective. In some cases, the broad and specific objectives were being interchanged. This attests that policy writers were not clear on the differences between these two words.

It is therefore against this background that some of the determinants of economic policies on socio-economic development could be policy clarity, and shared vision, inclusive goals and objectives. According to Peter Senge's book entitled *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation*, published in 1990, "a shared vision is what members want to create or accomplish as part of the organisation" (Grimsley, 2021:1). Now, if the policy is silent or has a vague vision how will the stakeholders know what they are expected to create or accomplish? The same applies with goals and objectives; they should be clearly stated in a simplified manner and understood by all concerned parties. This can be addressed by conducting broad consultations regarding inclusive and participatory tenets of good governance and democracy.

It is therefore recommended that the policy formulation process needs to be professionalised to get clear policies to 'get it right the first time'. Currently, the formulation of economic policies is being done by a Department of Macro-Economic Planning within the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. The Department only has twelve officers; thus, it is under capacitated to execute this huge task. The Department of Policy formulation, Analysis and Coordination in the Office of the President and Cabinet must also be given legal powers to adequately supervise all stakeholders to genuinely contribute to the policy making cycle and ensure that the policy is clear to all.

4.2.2 Policies' compliance with 'measurable' principle

The Chartered Management Institute (2011) illustrates that measurement is significant to know that the objective has been achieved because evidence is available, derived from a system, method or procedure which has tracked and recorded the behaviour or action upon which the objective is focused. In support of the above, the Corporate Finance Institute explains that a SMART goal/objective must have criteria for measuring progress [hence] ask yourself: how do I know if I have reached my goal? (Corporate Finance Institute, 2020). The following analysis is derived for selected policies:

Growth with Equity Policy (1981): The GWEP (GoZ, 1981a) gave an outline of 14 primary objectives. The specific objectives were stated under each sector. However, the analysis confirms that both the primary and specific objectives lacked the measurability component. For example, primary objective no. 1 states that "to establish progressively a society founded on socialist, democratic and egalitarian principles which are inherent in the policies and measures enunciated herein" (GoZ, 1981a:4). It is not clear how this objective is going to be measured to assess if it has achieved the intended results. Furthermore, specific Objective no. 1 under the agricultural and rural development sector indicates "an acceptable and fair distribution of land ownership and use" (GoZ, 1981a:4). Measurability of this objective is subjective and can be manipulated by various interest groups.

A Framework for Economic Reform (1991-95): The objectives were stated in a measurable manner. For example, one of the policy objectives was an economic growth target of 5% per year by 1995 (GoZ, 1991). Such an objective can be scientifically measured to assess the progress of its execution.

Zimbabwe Millennium Economic, Recovery Programme-MERP (2001-2002): The objectives did not adequately inculcate the measurability aspect, and the desired target; for instance, objective no. 1 build confidence in the economy, and no. 6 engage the support of the international community (GoZ, 2001). It may be difficult to hold implementing agencies accountable with such objectives. In this case, a minor positive change may be regarded as an achievement, yet it does not warrant being the ultimate desired result.

Five Year Medium-Term Plan (2011- 2015): The objectives alone were not measurable. However, the Medium-Term Plan (MTP) had a follow-up section on targets under the objectives. The targets outlined measurability aspects of the objectives. For example, under the energy sector, the MTP (GoZ, 2011) states the objective as to restore and increase power generation capacity to meet national demand for the attainment of economic recovery and growth and for export in the region. One policy target was restoration of generation capacity at Hwange to installed capacity by 2012 (GoZ, 2011). In this regard, the policy objectives and targets complement each other to have ‘measurable’ objectives. As such it is possible for implementing and supervising agencies to measure progress and check if they are still on track to reach the goal.

Measurability of results is the only aspect that determines if a policy is successful or not. As such it is a very important component of a policy that should not be overlooked when a policy is being formulated. Three of the four policies under study satisfy the measurability attribute. A measurable policy brings policy clarity to the implementing agencies, thereby making it easy for some of the determinants of policies, such as transparency, coordination and accountability, to be realised.

4.2.3 Policies’ compliance with ‘achievable (or agreed)’ principle

Lindblom (1979) states that studies have made a strong case against the rational model of decision making. Which policy option will be finally adopted depends on a number of factors; two of them being: first, the feasible set of options is reduced by basic substantial parameters. Some policies, according to Lindblom (1979), are excluded because of scarcity of resources and not only in terms of economic resources, but also political support presents a critical resource in the policy making process. Second, the allocation of competencies between different actors (e.g. government) plays a crucial role in decision-making.

It appears policies were not drawing lessons from the past where inadequate external funding was also being received to support policies. The government did not have adequate budgets to support the implementation of policies, which made it difficult for policies' objectives to be realised. The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development conducted a skills audit in the country. The audit results are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of national critical skills audit results

No.	Sector	Availability (%)	Surplus/deficit (%)
1.	Engineering and technology	6.43	-93.57
2.	Natural and applied sciences	3.09	-96.91
3.	Business and commerce	121	21
4.	Agriculture	12	-88
5.	Medical and health sciences	5	-95
6	Applied arts and humanities	82	-18

Source: (GoZ: National Critical Skills Audit Report, 2018:vi)

This National Critical Skills Audit Report (GoZ, 2018:vii) indicates that the skills analysis as shown in the Table 1 revealed that except for the Business and Commerce skills cluster, which has a surplus of 21 percent, all the other skills clusters have skills deficits. Of those with a deficit of critical skills only the Applied Arts and Humanities had a modest deficit (18%), with the rest having critical shortages above 90 percent. The Engineering and Technology skills cluster showed a skills deficit of 93.57 percent. The Natural and Applied Sciences skills cluster showed a skills output deficit of 96.91 percent. As mentioned before, the Business and Commerce skills cluster showed a skills output surplus of 21 percent. The Agriculture skills cluster showed a skills deficit of 88 percent. With agriculture contributing 68 percent of employment in Zimbabwe, this shows most of them are not formally skilled. The Medical and Health Sciences skills cluster showed a skills deficit of 95 percent. The Applied Arts and Humanities skills cluster showed a skills output deficit -18 percent. The National Budget Statement (NBS) (GoZ, 2009:20) acknowledges that a “massive brain drain has resulted in more than 4 million Zimbabweans now residing in the diaspora”. This was described as a structural development trap. Given such critical skills deficits in the country it is difficult for a policy to be effectively executed.

It can be noted that for policies to attain the desired results, there is a need to put the right human capital and systems in place. In congruence with this, it is suggested that government should employ people based on merit to ensure that knowledgeable people occupy the right positions to implement policies. It is considered that in most cases the policy goals and objectives are over-ambitious given fiscal constraints and critical skills shortages necessary to execute policies. Given this scenario, it implies that the achievability of policies at formulation stage is doubtful, thus demoralising implementing agencies. The requisite skilled manpower and adequate financial resources are important to convert any policy into action. The article recommends that policy drafters always conduct cost-benefit-analysis procedures before policies are launched. It is also imperative for government to mobilise adequate human and capital resources first before a policy is launched. The alignment of resources with the policy is crucial for effective implementation, motivation, accountability and transparency to be realised.

4.2.4 Policies' compliance with 'realistic' principle

University Centre Quayside (2018) articulates that the concepts of 'realistic' and 'achievable' are similar and this may explain why some use the term 'relevant' as an alternative. 'Realistic' suggests that there is a clear understanding of how the goal/objective might be reached; that there are no circumstances or factors which would make the achievement of the goal/objective impossible or unlikely; and that any potential obstacles and constraints have been taken into account (University Centre Quayside, 2018). 'Relevant' suggests that the goals/objectives set are appropriate to the individual or team and their job role and function, or at organisational level, they align with the overall purpose and strategy of the organisation (University Centre Quayside, 2018). The following analysis is revealed for the identified policies:

Growth with Equity Policy (1981): The assessment, by the GoZ, of the resource requirements for post-war recovery and land settlement and rural/agricultural development and technical assistance was indeed foreseen at the Lancaster House Conference, as enormous and well beyond the capacity of Zimbabwe or a single donor. Thus, government did not have adequate local resources in the form of financial and skilled human capital in the early years of independence. The Zimbabwe Conference on Reconstruction and Development (ZIMCORD) (GoZ, 1981b) states that the economy had just emerged from a war and from one and half decades of international economic isolation which had distorted its economic structure. Further it explains that because of the magnitude of the tasks and the resources required it is essential that in the first critical years Zimbabwe should receive external financial support in the form of grants, as well as soft and commercial loans (GoZ, 1981b). ZIMCORD (GoZ, 1981b) acknowledges that Zimbabwe inherited an economy which faced a critical shortage in the supply of skilled manpower for its development.

It was clear from the formulation stage that the government of Zimbabwe did not have adequate funds and skills to implement the GWEP. In contrast, the policy outlined 14 primary objectives and numerous specific objectives under fifteen sectors which required a huge budget outlay and several skilled manpower sectors such as doctors, nurses, engineers, architects, managers, accountants, teachers, amongst others. University Centre Quayside (2018) postulates that, if objectives are seen to be unachievable those responsible for them are likely to lose motivation and become demoralised. Individuals will be unwilling to invest energy and enthusiasm into something which they do not believe to be possible. This could be the reason why that Kavran report (1989) found inter alia “a bureaucracy characterised by lack of performance management culture; arrogance and poor attitudes to work (WB, 2012:5). Kavran’s report asserts that civil servants’ demotivation may be because they did not believe in the huge targets that they were being given against limited resources.

A Framework for Economic Reform (1991-95): A Framework for Economic Reform/ESAP (GoZ, 1991) explains that the total foreign financing required for the five years, 1991-1995 was estimated at US$3.44 billion, translating to about US$690 million per annum. This implies an increase of about US$1.75 billion, or double compared to recent trends. The policy states that raising this amount of additional financing, while maintaining the share of grants and concessional loans in the overall portfolio, would be a major challenge. This budget of US$3.44 billion was coming from foreign financing. A Framework for Economic Reform (GoZ, 1991) further states that Zimbabwe needed a major increase in both grants and a blend of concessional and other long-term lending. Short-term lending was not very helpful given that the problems were structural, and investment related. The policy further acknowledges that the lack of external support and structural changes would perpetuate low investment levels, a worsening of unemployment, and low growth. Under that scenario, Zimbabwe’s progress in extending health and education to the poor could not be sustained.

The success of this policy heavily depended on external funding and technical assistance. However, the University Centre Quayside (2018) explains that a goal/objective can be said to be achievable if the necessary resources are available. In the case of this policy there were inadequate local resources to execute the policy objectives and goals. In this case, it was important for the policy makers to outline only a few goals and objectives which could be supported by available resources rather than planning based on promised budgetary support.

Zimbabwe Millennium Economic Recovery Programme - MERP (2001-2002): There was no stated budget for MERP. This made it difficult for the central government to align policy and the national budget. The policy can be applauded for having an implementation plan with clear responsibilities, responsible authorities and timeframes to complete each task. However, generally the country did not have adequate skills to implement this policy. The harsh economic environment had caused a massive brain drain.

Five Year Medium-Term Plan (2011- 2015): The Medium-Term Plan-MTP (GoZ, 2011) states that, approximately US$9.2 billion total investment was required in order to meet the policy growth and development targets. This was expected to be harvested from the country's natural resources and growth dividend. Foreign Direct Investment, though critical was considered as a bonus. In addition, private sector credit lines and Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) were viewed as critical funding mechanisms during the Plan period. Clearly, adequate funding was not available to support policy goals and objectives. The policy hoped that revenue inflows would be generated from liquidating the country's natural resources. However, since independence these resources were failing to support the nation's budgetary requirements (GoZ, 2011). The University Centre Quayside (2018) explains that, a goal/objective can be said to be achievable if the necessary resources are available or similar results have been achieved by others in similar circumstances. In this case, previous policies had failed to meet their budgetary requirements although the country had plenty of natural resources. The MTP also states that government was going to pursue programmes targeted at skills retention that include in-service training, enhanced professionalism of the civil service, career development programmes, and improvement of salary and non-salary benefits (GoZ, 2011). This statement affirms that there were skills gaps to implement the policy. It is commendable that the policy acknowledged this shortcoming and came up with strategies to close the deficiencies.

Generally, all the policies under study did not have adequate budgets and human capital, yet each policy had over-ambitious objectives. It is recommended that policies be realistic at formulation stage, where there is proper alignment of resources and human resources available.

4.2.5 Policies' compliance to 'timely' principle

All the policies had distinct lifespans, however, most of the policies' objectives were not timed. Normally policy objectives should have different timelines spanning from weeks to months or years to fully achieve them. In most cases objectives complement and feed into each other. It is thus important to properly give specific timelines for each objective according to their sequence as these will ultimately contribute to the attainment of the overall policy goal after its full term. It is therefore recommended that all policies' objectives in Zimbabwe should have clear timelines. This makes sure implementing agencies become committed to action. It also makes it easier for supervising agencies to track progress. It poses a danger to wait for the tenure of the policy be completed before monitoring and evaluation of each objective is done. This might cause precarious unintended results which will be difficult to reverse causing more economic and social harm to the nation.

For goals/objectives that may take weeks or even months to fully achieve it is good practice to identify milestones or key steps and to set deadlines for these to help keep progress towards the end goal/objective on track. A deadline helps to create the necessary urgency, prompts action and focuses the minds of those who are accountable for the commitments that they have made in agreeing to the goals/objectives (Corporate Finance Institute, 2020). The following analysis is conducted for the identified policies:

Growth with Equity Policy (1981): The GWEP was clear that it was going to be implemented from 1981 to 1985. However, both the primary and specific objectives were not timed. For example, the GWEP (GoZ, 1981a) spells out some specific objectives for the agricultural and rural development sector as (i) an acceptable and fair distribution of land ownership and use; (v) achievement and maintenance of food self-sufficiency and regional food security; (viii) conservation of land and the environment for future generations; including a programme of conservation awareness. No time- frames are mentioned, therefore it is difficult to track results of these individual objectives throughout the policy's lifetime.

A Framework for Economic Reform (1991-95): The Framework for Economic Reform policy was distinct in that its life span would begin in 1991 and end in 1995. The policy objectives were also given annual timelines. For example, A Framework for Economic Reform (GoZ, 1991) states that industrial growth will have to be about 5.8 percent per year, agriculture growth about 3.2 percent per year, service sector growth about 5 percent per year. The objectives are easy to track as there are clear targets sought to be achieved per annum.

Zimbabwe Millennium Economic, Recovery Programme - MERP (2001 – 2002): The Millennium Economic, Recovery Programme's life span was 30 months, running from July 2000 to December 2002 (GoZ, 2001). The vision, goal and objectives were not time framed. Generally, the policy needed time to restore macro-economic, social and political stability.

Five Year Medium-Term Plan (2011- 2015): The Medium-Term Policy clearly indicated its lifespan as 2011 to 2015. The policy objectives did not exclusively incorporate their timelines. However, policy objectives were reinforced by policy targets which were clear on deadlines for the various policy objectives. For example, under the transport and communications sector, The Medium-Term Policy (GoZ, 2011) stated policy objectives as to have a well-developed trunk road network' and 'a well-developed and maintained rural and urban road network. The policy targets of MTP (GoZ, 2011) are: dualisation of Beitbridge to Chirundu road by 2015; Potholes repaired on urban roads by 2013; well-maintained rural roads by 2012; and enhanced maintenance performance of rural access roads by 2012 (GoZ, 2011). The clear policy targets provide room to track policy objectives' results as implementation of the policy is progressing.

Authors considered that formative and summative evaluations were not being conducted in Zimbabwe. To compound the problem, no baseline data was given for each objective. Without clear policy milestones it is difficult to carry out evaluations. Yet if the milestones are clear, implementing agencies will be compelled to continuously generate reports on the status of attaining stated key goals. The implementation of the results-based approach is the best solution to attain the desired results in government. The results- based management approach requires objectives to have clear timelines for realisation of policy goals.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The country needs to respond to [its] existing challenges on the basis of [its] concrete historic-cultural realities, the national interest and welfare of the citizenry. In other words, public policy formation [should] not be directed from outside (Nkhrumah, 1973). The country should open up their markets to allow more imports, export more of their commodities, remove subsidies, free their markets and reduce the state wage bill (Shah, 2013). Additionally, community members would partner government in the construction of schools and clinics, through the provision of labour to mould bricks, fetch water, among other activities (Dogan, 1975). The GoZ's National Budget Statement (NBS) (GoZ, 1984) already reiterates the importance of community participation stating that government [should] continue to look towards the increasing participation of local authorities, communities and the community at large to support existing education/health services as well as with regard to planned expansion of these services.

Based on the literature review and findings, the article offers the following recommendations as a way forward:

- The current perceived political instability by the international community makes it difficult for the country to trade and interact with the outside world. The prevailing situation deters potential investors from establishing themselves in Zimbabwe. In addition, the country cannot access lines of credit from the international community, making it difficult to fund macro-economic policies and other developmental initiatives in the country.
- The government of the day should always be sincere in socio-economic development. Drastic reforms must be implemented without fear and favour, to create an environment conducive to development. The policies should be focused on further developing the entire nation, not to pursue individual or certain political party interests. The issues of state capture by the political elite ought to be addressed. In the same vein, conflation between the ruling party and government business should be eliminated. This will boost stakeholder confidence and trust that the authorities are doing everything to benefit all. In addition, the authorities are required to be seen to be earnestly supporting those polices. Government must always do what is right, not what is popular or politically expedient.
- The policy vision, goals and objectives must be simple and clear and relevant to the upbringing of the general populace's livelihoods. Special attention must be given to involve the youth, women, people living with disabilities and other marginalised groups in society. The vision, goals and objectives ought to be economically linked and not politically linked. Government must demonstrate the strategies to achieve the vision, goals and objectives.
- A negative impact was created by economic sanctions that were imposed on the Zimbabwean leadership by the western countries. The sanctions were in pursuit of human security and good governance. These economic sanctions were conditional and exhorted the Government of Zimbabwe to comply with international best practices on governance and the respect of human rights. Secondary data sources indicated that the imposed sanctions caused more harm than good and hence achieved the opposite of what they were designed to accomplish. The article recommends that government implement the reforms required for the sanctions to be lifted. Politics plays a major role in the removal of sanctions. In this regard, all political parties must join hands and work on the removal of sanctions.
- The Department of Policy Formulation, Analysis and Coordination housed within the Office of the President and Cabinet needs to be capacitated to effectively coordinate policies when they are being formulated. A clearly defined system must be established that compels all government ministries to engage this Department at the formulation stage of any policy. This will reduce instances of policy inconsistencies, overlaps, duplication, gaps, disharmony and competition.

In conclusion, the recommendations in line with SMART principles are as follows: regarding the 'specific' aspect, the policy goals and objectives need to clearly describe the intended outcome with the support of numerical figures. This clarity may assist the implementing agencies to know what they are expected to work towards or achieve. The 'measurability' is an important inherent aspect of the goals and objectives as this makes it possible to track the implementation progress. Without it, stakeholders are not adequately equipped to objectively/scientifically assess the magnitude of change that has occurred. The principles of 'achievability and reliability' need to be considered by policy drafters. For a good policy to be adopted, a thorough cost-and-benefit-analysis has to be conducted to determine the availability of resources (both financial and human skills) and political support required to implement the policy. With respect to the 'timely' principle, the policies' objectives need to be timed. Policy objectives should have different timelines to complement and feed into each other. It is therefore recommended that all policies' objectives in Zimbabwe should have clearly defined timelines.

6. CONCLUSION

The article offered a specific and general analysis of selected policies in their compliance with SMART principles. The results revealed that policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation were being done in a top-down manner. There was minimal, or a total lack of, involvement of stakeholders in policy issues. The policies are politically prescribed and not linked to economic realities of the citizens. Hence, most citizens were divorced from the policy discourse. Authors trust that if all the determinants of economic policies explained in this article are adhered to, there will be rapid social, economic and political development in the country. It is important to note that the wholesome implementation of Constitution of Zimbabwe will address most of the aspects outlined in this article; nonetheless it takes political will to do that. Those in the positions of authority in government must create political will. It is therefore imperative for everyone within Zimbabwe to adhere to all the provisions of the Constitution. Constitutionalism must be simultaneously implemented with the rule of law by all to bring sanity to the country.

There were some limitations encountered while compiling information as all Government officials in Zimbabwe are bound by the Official Secrecy Act. Due to the existence of this Act, authors faced difficulties in approaching relevant officials for accessing important information which could enrich the findings of the study. Cabinet minutes are particularly restricted information, yet these were crucial for the study. Also, there is a lack of government evaluation documents on the performance of policies. Such information could have been obtained in cabinet papers which, however, are restricted information which is not accessible by the public. To overcome this, authors may conduct future studies incorporating primary data collection methods.

Note

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