


Public Policy Reforms: A Scholarly Perspective on Education 5.0 Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

Governments are duty-bound to carry out public policy reforms in a bid to address specific public concerns, needs, and social interests, and stir their economies on sustainable development trajectories. This is done following their constitutional mandates. Zimbabwe has implemented several policy reforms in education, health, housing, finance, agriculture, mining, energy, policing, correctional services, and transport, among others, with varied degrees of success and challenges. These reforms required varied formulation and implementation approaches depending on the objectives and prevailing circumstances. This study gives a scholarly perspective of the public policy reform, 'Education 5.0', on primary and secondary education in Zimbabwe, given concerns about the policy from stakeholders. An interview was conducted with a convenient sample of stakeholders. An assortment of documentary evidence was also used to gather secondary data. The study concluded that most of the respondents were satisfied with the policy Education 5.0 in principle.

KEYWORDS

Education 5.0, Primary and Secondary Education, Public Policy, Reforms, Scholarly Perspective, Zimbabwe

This paper aims to provide a scholarly perspective of the public policy reform Education 5.0 and its impact on primary and secondary education in Zimbabwe.

Mxenge (2020) defined a policy as the specified posture that an organisation takes with regard to internal and external matters and acts and informs the written foundation for the organisation's actions, regulation, guidelines, and governance. Mxenge further asserted that policies are required to enlighten the public on the government's long-term goal and purpose of government, with the ultimate objective of ensuring that its intentions are geared towards providing solutions to challenges that society faces, upholding the rule of law and entrenchment of democratic ideals.

Public policies refer to the pathway of action that government travels so as to achieve the intended goals or outcomes. Pardhasaradhi (2021) noted that public policy comprises of whatever government decides to do or not to do. The eventual goal of public policies is to bring about transformation that has positive implications to the generality of society. Pardhasaradhi (2021) also advised that, if

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government is to come up with sound policies, it should ensure that they are in the public interest, effective, dependable, fair/equitable, and insightful of societal/community values. These are some of the issues that the researchers sought to interrogate on the policy Education 5.0.

Ngcaweni (2019) claimed that effective policies can be achieved when they are anchored on a sound vision that is evidence determined, reliable, focused, clear, well communicated, partnered, and supported by properly functioning, well-resourced government institutions, driven by dedicated and innovative staff.

Public policy reforms involve government interventions through its agencies and aimed at effectively addressing specific problems. The government of Zimbabwe is mandated, through the Constitution of 2013, to ensure that citizen welfare is guaranteed. Specifically, Section 75 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe (Government of Zimbabwe, 2013) pronounces the “right to education” as a “fundamental human right and freedom” (p. 37).

Education 5.0 in Zimbabwe came about following the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training of 1999, which recommended that there be a genuine paradigm shift from examination-oriented education to one that emphasises experiential learning and development of desirable traits and competencies (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education [MoPSE], 2015). The reform process which saw the birth of Education 5.0 was embarked on in 2013 (Djeneba et al., 2020).

Education 5.0 is an offshoot of its predecessor Education 3.0, whose inception could be traced to as far back as the second half of the 19th century—the era in which European missionary education got entrenched into the Zimbabwean society (Wuta, 2022). The inception of missionary education coincided with the establishment of Education 3.0 at higher and tertiary levels. Education 3.0 is an instructional regime which focuses primarily on the three aspects namely “teaching,” “research,” and “community service/ outreach” (Wuta, 2022, p. 26).

According to Murwira (2019), the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science, and Technology Development, Education 3.0 took a colonial thrust, mainly focused on moulding workers and not innovators. Murwira further argues that although Africa emphasised mass University Education, it did not yield the expected outcomes, such as industrialisation due to its inclination to the Education 3.0 design.

Therefore, Education 3.0 was in place throughout the colonial era, as it had been just designed to feed employees into the existing colonial industries and economic system. It unfolded until recently, when the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science, and Technology Development added two pillars to those in Education 3.0, giving rise to a new model of instruction that has five missions, namely teaching, research, outreach, innovation, and industrialisation (Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science, and Technology Development, 2018). Given the five missions, this new instructional system is dubbed Education 5.0.

The underlying principle of Education 5.0, as a scientific and developmental doctrine, is that education does not produce goods and services (Government of Zimbabwe, n.d.). Consequently, Education 5.0 has gained traction at Zimbabwe’s higher and tertiary education levels. Maringehosi’s (2020) study to evaluate the efficacy of Education 5.0 in improving modernisation and automation in Zimbabwe revealed that Education 5.0 was equipping students with appropriate hands-on skills, apart from learning theory positioning them for job creation, innovation, and industrialisation, and recommended that government provided the requisite technical and nontechnical infrastructure for effective execution of the policy.

Wuta (2022) found that there was solid compatibility between the policy Education 5.0 and the Curriculum Framework 2015-2022, and therefore, envisaged the possibility of extending Education 5.0 to Zimbabwe’s secondary education cycle, for a start, thus increasing the likelihood of its success at higher and tertiary educational levels.

Alharbi (2023) conducted a comparative study on the implementation of the policy Education 5.0 in developed and developing countries, and specifically chose Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka in its

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