

THEME: THE UZ/GSM MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH RESEARCH

A workshop was held on the 24th of March 2017 which brought together representatives from the Banking and Finance Sector, Agricultural Sector, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, Telecommunications Sector, the Public Sector and the Academic community. This was spearheaded by the University of Zimbabwe's Graduate School of Management, a Department in the Faculty of Commerce. It gave the Graduate School of Management an opportunity to showcase research being conducted by the UZ academics and MBA students. The Workshop's main objectives were:

- To present key research findings and recommendations to the various economic sectors with the view that some of the recommendations will be adopted and begin to bring about socio-economic change;
- To get industry/economic sectors to guide future research;
- To get industry to ultimately/partly fund research;
- To encourage publication of top dissertations, which enhances the prospects of the University's overall international ranking;
- To spruce-up GSM's corporate image (Publicity/Awareness).

Research is critically important to Universities and industry, for a whole host of reasons, but chief of which is that research informs academic teaching. The criteria for ranking Universities takes into account several factors which include the quality of research and the ability of students to be easily absorbed by the labour market, be it the domestic, regional or international market. If policy makers and companies adopt some of the research findings and recommendations, we believe that they should be able to improve their operational performance which can help to turn around the economy. For example, in the banking sector, a key recommendation made is that they may be able to reduce the non-performing loans if they become more prudent during project appraisals and employ credit rating systems to manage credit risk before issuing out loans. Municipalities may improve service deliveries if they adopt geo-spatial based ICTs which are tracking devices that link Council resources with the approved work breakdown structure. So far as tax collection from the informal sector is concerned, ZIMRA needs to employ

strategies that are different from the formal sector in order to enhance revenue collection.

In the Agricultural sector, we might realise increased tobacco output if proper contract farming and best business practices are adopted. Furthermore, farmers can be enticed to save money if attractive rates are offered by the banks for deposits, and banks reduce their charges. In general, policy formulation should be informed by research and should involve stakeholder consultation. For the SMEs sector, recommendations were made of how best to market their products and services which were generally adversely affected by economic deflation, liquidity shortages and government policies. Lastly, it was noted that the mobile sector has greater opportunities for the financial sector, in addition to financial inclusivity and generally, Telecommunications has limitless business opportunities.

This workshop was in actual fact operationalizing one of the University of Zimbabwe's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan's thrust of Innovative Research. GSM is however cognisant of the fact that this was an initial workshop in a series of what is to come and will be a regular annual feature. GSM will make such workshops the New Normal such that information generated through such discussions can inform policy decision-making and managerial recommendations. For us, this was a learning curve and in future we will ensure close involvement of our key stakeholders in our strategic research agenda.



The PVC Professor Pedzisai Mashiri welcoming the delegates to the workshop. Beside him on the right is the Director of the GSM, Dr David Madzikanda, Dr Kennedy Mandevani (CEO National Tyre Services), Professor Charles Pfukwa, Dean of Social Studies Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE), Dr Maxwell Sandada, Acting Dean of Commerce (UZ), Mr Peter Muzariri (Member of the UZ Council) and Dr Alice Zinyemba (Director of Ceremonies)



The Director, Dr D. Madzikanda coordinates and directs the research by GSM's MBA students and organised the workshop

GSM'S MBA STUDENTS' PRESENTATIONS



Mr Brighton Chinyemba presenting on *Non-performing loans on bank liquidity*, supervised by Dr Gift Mugano



Ms Latifa Kassim presenting on *RBZ Directives on Liquidity and Liquidity Risk Management*, supervised by Dr Arnold Chidakwa



Mr Pardon Masuka presenting on *Micro-finance loans on performance of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises*, supervised by Mr Ephraim Makoni



Mr Pedzisai Quarter presenting on *Capital Structure decisions and effect on Financial performance*, supervised by Dr Godfrey Muponda



From left to right, Dr Mandevani, Panelist for the Public Sector, Mr Joshua Mudangwe, presented on *Organizational Capability Model and Competitive advantage*, supervised by Dr D. Madzikanda, Mr M. Kwembeya, presented on *Revenue collection from the informal sector*, supervised by Dr N. Kaseke and Mr Tapiwa Kunyadini who presented on *Geo-spatial based ICTs and Strategic Management processes in Municipalities*, supervised by Dr D. Madzikanda



Ms Tsitsi Munangwa presenting on *Corporate rebranding on sales performance in the mobile sector*, supervised by Dr D. Maravanyika



Miss Nyarai Simbarashe presenting on *Mobile Banking*, supervised by Dr M. Sandada



Mrs Natalie Jabangwe-Morris, Panelist for the Telecommunications sector



A mixture of both delegates and student presenters at the workshop.