

## **An analysis of the impact of a happiness culture on economic performance (A literature Review)**

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**Abstract:** This paper examined the contribution of happiness culture on economic development of Zimbabwe in the new dispensation of which the country is **Open for Business**. Zimbabwe's current economic performance since the year 2000 was characterised by low growth, low foreign direct investments, and depressed industry growth as a result of economic self-styled sanctions authored in Zimbabwe by citizens and submitted the United States of America (USA) for adoption to impose sanctions through the Zimbabwe Democracy Bill (ZIDERA) resulting in low business confidence, liquidity challenges and lack of competitiveness of the country's economy at large, however, this study unearthed issues relating to citizenship behaviours to motivate socio-economic progress of a nation. The study traced the elements of happiness namely: the power of gratitude, power of positive thinking, power of forgiveness and power of acceptance as key concepts in the happiness philosophy to motivate economic development. The study conclusion was that the discourse of happiness philosophy engenders feelings of social conscience, peaceful co-existence and national reconstruction. Happy people invigorate economic transformation and have the capacity to grow Zimbabwe to modernity. The paper established a close link between happiness and the potential to innovation and creativity in the race towards modernity of the economics of Zimbabwe. In this light, this study carries the recommendation Zimbabweans need training on the critical pillars of happiness namely: gratitude, positive thinking, power of acceptance and power of forgiveness. Training equips Zimbabwean nationals with requisite skills to understand the need to adopt citizenship behaviours. The government of Zimbabwe, through the ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Ministry of Primary and Secondary education and Ministry of Youth may work together to induce a culture of happiness to Zimbabweans at the tender age before one graduate to become senior citizen. An effective training program on happiness elements is a prescription for Zimbabweans to keep and maintain a culture of citizenship which is critical in economic development. To move Zimbabwe forward and to grow Cities in the country, Zimbabwe needs happy people with capacity to appreciate and adopt citizenship behaviour.

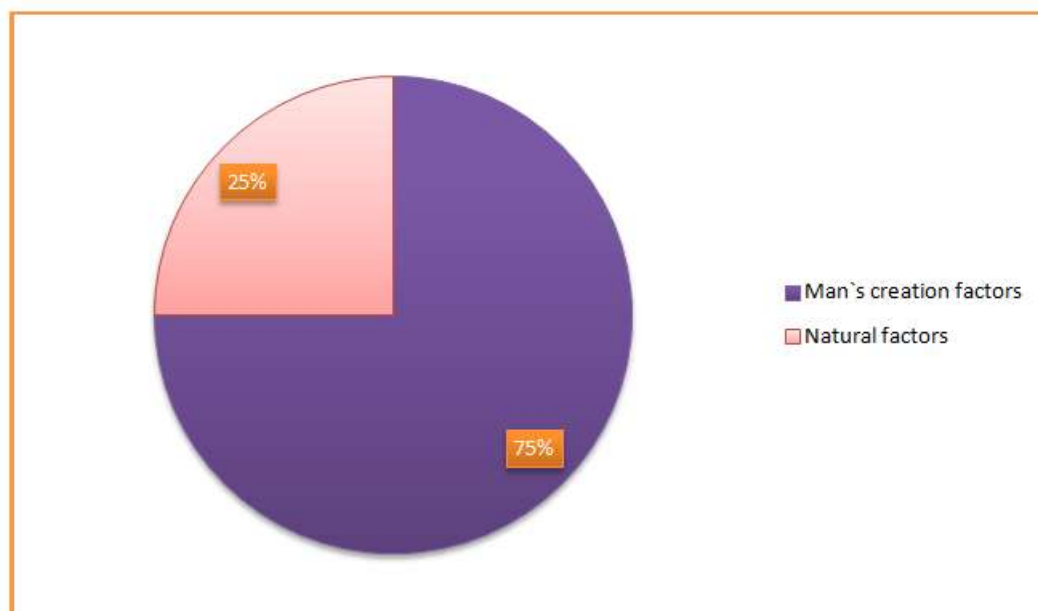
**Key words** Happiness culture, Economic development, Gratitude, Forgiveness, Acceptance, Positive thinking.

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Zimbabwe is hungry for development and the current call from the new dispensation in government is the "**Open for Business Mantra**". The country needs a serious paradigm shift to fully exploit what God endowed the nation with: land, minerals, natural resources and the human talent to motivate sustainable development. Zimbabwe's current economic performance since the year 2000 is characterised by low growth, low foreign direct investments, and depressed industry growth as a result of economic self-styled sanctions authored in Zimbabwe by citizens and imposed to Zimbabwe by the United States of America (USA) as the Zimbabwe Democracy Bill (ZIDERA). The sanctions role contributed to the country's low business confidence, liquidity challenges and lack of competitiveness of the industry sector. This paper was however tasked with an examination of the contribution and relevance of the culture of happiness to rejuvenate and motivate economic development in Zimbabwe. The paper carried the assumption that 75 percent of the factors suppressing economic development in Zimbabwe were man's creation and 25 percent were natural factors. (See the figure below)



Researcher's own assumption (2018)

**Figure 1: The share of factors suppressing development in Zimbabwe**

Figure 1 shows that 75 percent of Zimbabwe's economic challenges were created by its own people and 25 percent were caused by events in the global world. Examples of some of economic problems have origins from Zimbabwe's own people who authored the Zimbabwe Democracy Bill (ZIDERA) which was signed into Law by the United States of America to impose sanctions. These sanctions were authored by Zimbabwean Lawyers and submitted to the USA government to punish the government of Zimbabwe and its people following the actioning of the Land Reform Policy in the year 2000. Furthermore, the creation of Fake news through `Whats Up, Twitter, and other communication gadgets established a false picture of the political atmosphere in Zimbabwe leading to a low rating of the country's risk factor for investment purposes. The traces of man's creation to down play economic developments of the country motivated the researcher to investigate on the contribution of happiness philosophy to minimise further damage of the country's economy through perpetuation of disgruntlements from people pursuing personalized agendas at the expense of national interests.

Compton,(2003) holds that "Reality is created by the mind". This implies that experiences of people in their various environments are a creation of the mind. The point of view in Compton's model could be that economic hardships or prosperity of a nations is a creation of the minds of people. Zimbabwe's economic challenges could be traced right through the happiness culture philosophy to bring socio-economic progress. This means that 75 percent of the problems besieging the country could be suppressed through an understanding of happiness as a culture for Zimbabweans.

Happiness is experienced if people could avoid unpleasant experiences (Ryan, 2006). In this line of thinking, Algor and Haidt (2009) have advanced the view that happiness is the label of a family's experiences of joy, amusement, satisfaction, gratification, euphoria and triumph. The happiness culture views life in a more positive and realistic form and happy people sees the broader picture of life in a more and better perspective. According to Frey, et.al (2002), happiness is the creation of the mind and a global cognitive assessment of life satisfaction. Gardner, et.al. (2007) further notes that there is a close relationship between the gross domestic status of an economy and life satisfaction. The implication being that socio-economic development can be blended in a happiness culture to bring about a turnaround in the economics of the country.

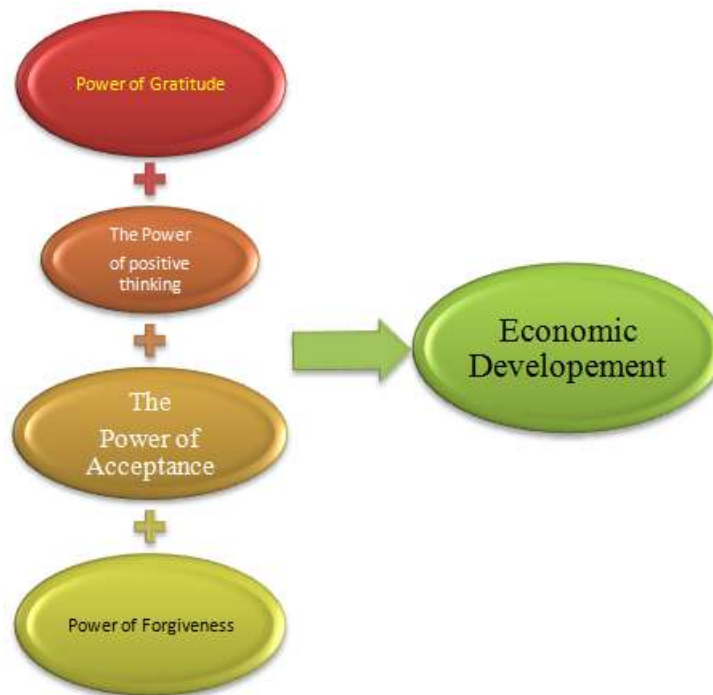
Socio-Economic development is measured by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which represents economic growth (Frey and Stutzer,2012). Economic growth is the increase in the inflation-adjusted market value of the goods and services produced by an economy over time. It is conventionally measured as the percent rate of increase in real gross domestic product (real GDP), usually in per capita terms (IMF, 2012). Growth is usually calculated in real terms to eliminate the distorting effect of inflation on the price of goods produced. Since economic growth is measured as the annual percent change of gross domestic product (GDP), it has all the advantages and drawbacks of that measure. The rate of economic growth refers to the geometric annual rate of growth in GDP between the first and the last year over a period of time. Implicitly, this growth rate is the trend in the average level of GDP over the period, which implicitly ignores the fluctuations in the GDP around this trend. An increase in economic growth caused by more efficient use of inputs is referred to as intensive growth. GDP growth caused only by increases in the amount of inputs available for use is called extensive growth.

Theories and models of economic growth include among others the Classical Growth Theory of Ricardian which is originally Thomas Maltus's theory on agriculture (Bjork,2014), Solow-Swan Model developed by Barro and Robert (2012) and Endogenous Growth Theory which focused on what increases human capital or technological change (Helpman,2004), Unified Growth Theory developed by Galor, (2005), The Big Push Theory which was popular in the 1940s, Schumpeterian Growth Theory which entrepreneurs use to introduce new products or processes in the hope that they will enjoy temporary monopoly-like profits as they capture markets Beugelsdijk,et.al.(2004).The list is endless on theories of growth of the economy, but the major challenge to be addressed in this study is the contribution of happiness to achieve growth and development of a nation, with specific reference to Zimbabwe.

### 1.1 Objective

To establish the contribution of the culture of happiness in the social-economic development of Zimbabwe

### 1.2 The Happiness culture model



Source: Researcher`s own conception  
**Figure 2 The Happiness Model 2018**

The study is built along the lines of positive psychology developed by Hirschman,(2012) who argues that the presence of resources and favourable government policies does not automatically manufacture national economic success, but basics of citizenship behaviour of the country`s nationals (people) is more critical. The happiness model is decorated by elements such as the power of gratitude, power of acceptance, power of positive thinking and power of forgiveness. The model assumes that an increase in the elements of happiness breeds national economic success.

#### 1.2.1 The power of Gratitude

Furh, Fulher and Miller, (2017) have defined gratitude as the feeling of appreciation in response to experiences beneficial and attributable to self. In the same line of thinking, Boxall and Purcell, (2015) gratitude emanates from a sense of emotional experience. Gratitude is triggered by tangible or intangible benefits shaped by the mindset (Dessler,(2015)).The intensity level of gratitude is the schematic manifestation of the mental structure of the individual mindset (Kinicki and Williams,2013),thus an individual person`s understanding and interpretation of the environment form the basis in which gratitude manifests.In view of network theories developed by Bower,(1981),Leventhal,(1980) and Tomkins,(1995),gratitude is sourced from emotional schemas which develop linearity from repeated paring of stimuli with emotions. For an example, an individual who repeatedly experience repeated abuse at the work-place results in anxiety emotion schema at work. The emotional experience which is characterised by anxiety originates from repeated episodes of abuse. Schema directs attention and regulates behaviour,(Rousseau,2010) leading to establishment of quick responses in a

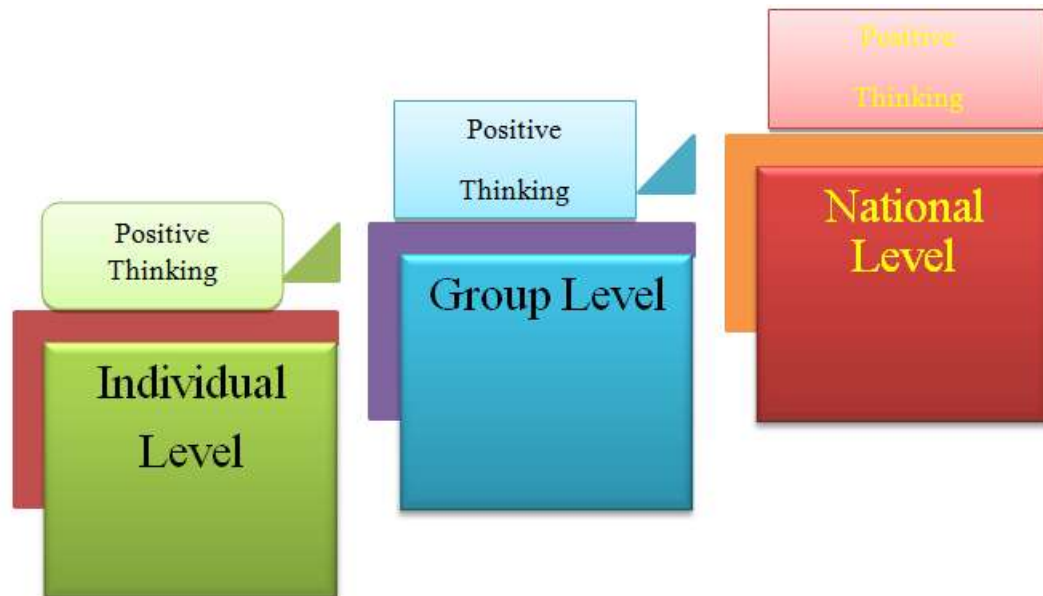
given domain (Thompkins, 1995). This implies that gratitude status of an individual results from a compilation of experiences that have been repeatedly paired to form a profile. The profile content determines the intensity of gratitude (Laventhal, 1980). What the **mind feeds on** forms the major determinant of gratitude intensity, thus gratitude inducing stimulants, (Compton, 2003). If the mind is fed with negativity, or is exposed to negative experiences, gratitude intensity lowers, and the reverse is the case, if experiences are positive, and the environment is friendly and welcoming, (Wilkowski et al, 2007). For an example, the majority of Zimbabweans are inundated with Fake News communicated through Social Media and negativity intensifies.

At the national level, collective gratitude is experienced, (Furh, et al. 2017). In this view, Rouseau, (1985) further notes that collective gratitude is the outcome of a bottom-up approach originating at the lower level of analysis through social interaction and exchange at a higher level. Feelings of collective gratitude shapes the way people construe the environment and is sourced from persistent gratitude at the individual level (Wilkowski, et.al, 2007). The implication is that if people experience gratitude at the individual level, the intensity of the gratitude is transferred to become collective gratitude at the national level. People experience peace and tranquility at the national level as a result of individual manifestations of the mindset at the individual level. Episodes of gratitude at the individual level spread to group level, and finally it becomes a national issue.

In socio-economic development of a nation, gratitude is a critical component worth analysis. Festinger in Kinicki and Williams, (2013) writes about cognitive dissonance. Accordingly, Festinger argues that cognitive dissonance is the psychological discomfort a person experiences between the cognitive attitude and incompatible behaviour. Kinicki and Williams, (2013) holds that individuals experiencing high level cognitive dissonance have a negative attitude towards work, which implies that they are not productive to the economy. People experiencing discomfort face the challenge of balancing attitude and behaviour (Robins and Coulter, 2012). The dissonance factor forms the basis of resistance to change and development, forces people to engage in counter-productive behaviours (Hudescu and Illies, 2011). Accordingly, when people engage into the counterproductive behaviour drive, the socio-economic development of a nation suffers.

### **1.2.2 The power of Positive thinking**

Positive thinking refers to the idealized way of depicting the future optimistically (Ford, Cerasoli and Higgins, 2011). In support of this view, Peter Drucker says "If you want something new, you have to stop something old." Several streams of research in positive thinking converge to support the effects of positive thinking on the well-being of people (Wood, et.al. 2010). The most compelling work employed the causal effect of positive thinking and the results demonstrated a decrease in depressive symptoms through positive reframing of the mind-set (Grant et.al. 2014). Positive thinking facilitates persistent use of effective coping mechanisms which include support seeking behaviours and a tendency to identify growth opportunities. A positive mind-set is naturally futuristic and individuals become more consistently attuned to positive life events and become better prepared to cope with challenges they face, with lasting implications for their long term well-being (Wood, et.al. 2010). According to Furh, et al. (2007), a low intensity in positivity level is counter-productive and subsequently, this translates into poor contribution of the individual person to national economic development. The flip-side of counter-productive behaviours (CWB) at national level include production negative reports about one's own country to invite sanctions to punish own people including friends and relative. Positive thinking is a powerful force with a wide array of desirable consequences, reflected in philosophy, literature and religions through-out the world. The implication is that, through a positive mindset, economic development is motivated. According to Emmons, (2003), there is virtually no hard research on the role of positive thinking in socio-economic development at national level, highlighting the need for theoretical development in this area. It is therefore the task of this study to examine how the nation may develop through a deep understanding of the benefits of positivity to economic development of Zimbabwe. The following figure refers to the multi-level effects of positive thinking translations (See the figure below):



Adapted from Ashkanasy, N.M.Ashton-James, C.E.(2007).Positive Emotion in organisations. A multi-level framework. Cooper and D.Nelson (Eds.)

**Figure 3 Multi-Level approaches to positive thinking**

Figure 3 shows the multilevel approach to positive thinking as detailed below:

#### **1.2.2.1 Positive Thinking at the Individual Level**

Positive thinking is a valuable emotion with an array of functional outcomes. At the individual level, the positive thinking episode influences the individual person to perceive the future positively and fill the individual person with feelings of gratitude. At this level, Ashkanasy, and Ashton-James(2007) have highlighted that individuals enjoy a health life and contributes positively to their own personal lives. The mindset is free and productive to the family. The next step is that episodes of positive thinking at the individual level are transferred to group level status as discussed below:.

#### **1.2.2.2 Positive thinking at the Group Level**

The collective status of individuals to positive thinking translates to group level approach. The individuals forming a group initiate a status in which people begin to think positively about the future. Episodes of gratitude and positive thinking explode to influence a group of people to situate positive feelings squarely within the group members. According to Ashkanasy, and Ashton-James (2007), feelings of positive thinking at group level elucidates the development gratitude sentiments at the national level as discussed below:

#### **1.2.2.3 Positive Thinking at the National Level**

Positive thinking at the national level translates into a deeper understanding of how positivity unfolds and the role that individuals play to influence emotions at the national level. Hudesu and Illies, (2011) holds that assessment of positive thinking at the national level translates into national development since the majority of people will behave in a more citizenry manner.. This implies that the positive thinking intensity level at national level determines the degree to which the nation develops. (2008) argues that positive thinking at national level is associated with people who are more willing to protect their country and to defend the national cause of the country and to think good about the country. This is the case with Americans; they have permanent interests in their country and its citizens. This means that people with high intensity of positive thinking have an appreciation of the nation and its natural resources. According to Kinnicki and Williams,(2013) positivity in the mindset people find consonant elements in hard times and contributes positively to turnaround the economy of the country. In this state of mind, dissonance factors are erased leading to high production and high contribution to economic development.Socio-economic development is a product of a motivated mind-set, hence the need to understand positivity gratitude at both individual and national level. Positive thinking intensity at national level signifies the strength of citizenship behaviours, which translates into constructive behaviours, respect for the spirit of peace, hard work, productivity and performance beyond the call of duty.

#### **1.2.3 The power of acceptance**

Acceptance denotes the spirit of receiving reality of failure and development of the growing sense to look into the future. Mueller, (2012) establishes that less than 15 percent of people accept the reality of events if

the results are negative. Media report of financial scandals seem to reinforce this phenomenon (Campbell, 2010). Nations suffer from a range of troubles through increased conflict, incivility and deviance as a result of people who fail to accept the reality of events in life. According to Cameron and Spreitzer, (2012) the power of acceptance cultivate a sense of appreciation and thankfulness, thus promoting high quality relationships and pro-social behaviour among the citizens. At the national level, acceptance of reality motivate a spirit of forward looking and improves life satisfaction (Boxall and Purcell, Emmons and Tsang,(2002) and reduces aggression intensity (DeWall,et.al.2012).Scholars have examined the role of acceptance power in servant leadership (Grant and Wrzesniewski,2010),Grant,et al,2014) and found some semblances of reality that people with a high level of acceptance power behave in a citizenry fashion. The implication is that loyalty of people to contribute positively to economic development can also be traced in the power of acceptance of individual people.The power of acceptance introduces a unique set of constraints and affordances which influences how individual people feel, think and act on a daily basis. It is through the power of acceptance that change and development can be increased and people will be able to put national interests ahead of personal and individual interests (Thomas and Hunt, (2014).The implication is that national development is motivated if the nation is full of people with capacity to understand reality of issues and model the way forward to move the nation ahead in terms of national development.

#### **1.2.4 The power of forgiveness**

Forgiveness refers to the power to exercise clemency amongst people. It is through clemency that relationships amongst people in a nation develops Hudescue and Ilies, (2011) have established that forgiveness transforms anger and hurt into healing and peace.The power of forgiveness help people to overcome feelings of depression, anxiety, rage and personal relational conflicts.It is about making conscious decisions to let go of a grudge. Feelings of anger, depression, rage and anxiety are a manifestation of laxity of the mindset to forgive. According to Smedes,(2017) to forgive is to set a prisoner free and to discover that the prisoner was oneself. The implication is that people who do not forgive their enemies experience more pain than the enemies themselves. Forgiveness does not erase the past, but looks upon the past with compassion. In this line of thinking, forgiveness keeps alive emotions of hurt, anger and blame which discolours the perceptions of life. According to Merritt Jones, (2014) to forgive means avoidance of the ruminating on thoughts of being wronged, indignant and antipathy. To forgive means to forget and the motive is preserved in self-forgiveness. The main issue of forgiveness is to let go of hatred, instead of allowing it to eat the body (Freeman, 2009). In the 2009 film, Nelson Mandela of the African National Congress in South Africa played by actor Morgan Freeman says, *"Forgiveness starts here....Forgiveness liberates the soul....It removes fear, that is why it is such a powerful weapon...The past is the past, we look to the future"*

The above stated issues show that there is a close link between illness and emotions. Merritt Jones,(2014) holds that toxic and destructive emotions have the potential to activate certain diseases if people fail to attend to emotional well-being. Forgiveness is associated with the emotional welfare of people and not merely granting the other person pardon.Forgiveness benefits both parties namely the forgiven and the forgiver. Merritt Jones,(2009) reiterates that forgiveness may sound illogical in some of the cases, but in the majority of situations, it is through unconditional forgiveness that people surrender the past and enter the present, freeing themselves to stand in the middle of infinite. Forgiveness heals the deepest and most painful wounds. Moran and Brightman (2011) have established that forgiveness is a strategic drift to the new world and this motivates change and development in the dispositions of people.The implication is that when people forgive each other at the national level, the economy of the country is assured of development. Accordingly Peter Drucker says *"There is nothing quite so useless, as doing with great efficiency, something that should not be done at all"*

In the language of forgiveness, Drucker's statement people who do not forgive those that have wronged them, waste in conflicts and battles either at the Law Courts or in the bush fighting wars, wasting resources and energy yet the solution is just forgiveness, simple.In terms of economic development, people who forgive each other, contributes to economic development at national level. It is a waste of resources for people to fight, but to simply understand each other and let go feelings of detestation and animosity. The economy of the nation grows when the mindset of people is positive about forgiveness as a philosophical stance. Dr.Wayne Dyer,(2018) holds that it is not possible for one to be both happy and right at the same time, so people should learn to let go destructive emotions to discover peace and happiness because the two cannot co-exist. Forgiveness is therefore the bridge to empowerment and selfworthness.These issues leads to development of the country.

In Zimbabwe, the culture of forgiveness was demonstrated in 1980 when the government of the black majority rule adopted a policy of national reconciliation as part of the political settlement between warring parties in the country.The national reconciliation policy was set out to address challenges of how colonisers and the once colonised might live together in the future (Parry 1995:86).Colonisers created identities of racial classifications and antagonism status between black indigenous people and the white man, but through the

reconciliation principle, Zimbabweans managed to co-exist peacefully because they had forgiven each other for the progress of the nation.

## II. CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that there is a close link between national economic development and the happiness culture philosophy in Zimbabwe. Happy people in the country motivate the spirit of citizenship behaviour and ethical openness. The discourse of happiness culture engenders feelings of social conscience, peaceful co-existence and national reconstruction. Happy people have the capacity to invigorate economic transformation and to grow Zimbabwe to modernity. Incorporating ideas about change and development and commonality of interests, the happy culture provides a potential site for innovation and creativity in the race towards modernity of the economics in Zimbabwe.

### 1.4 Recommendations

To **Grow** the economy of Zimbabwe under the new dispensation of **Open for Business** intonation, this paper recommends the adoption of the happiness philosophy to be incorporated in the broad programs of socio-economic development of the country. Sustainable economic development in Zimbabwe may take place if citizens receive training on the critical pillars of happiness namely:

1. Gratitude
2. Positive thinking
3. Power of Acceptance
4. Power of Forgiveness

Training equips Zimbabwean nationals with requisite skills to understand the cultural meaning of citizenship behaviour. It is quite a sad story to establish that some Zimbabweans in their right senses, spent their energy and skill to denounce their own country and call for sanctions to be imposed in order to perpetuate personal ascendance. This clearly shows the backwardness of the mindset to consider personal interests as superior than national interests. This paper therefore carries the recommendation that the government may need to take action to use the ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Ministry of Primary and Secondary education and Ministry of Youth to induce the of happiness philosophy to Zimbabweans at the tender age. An effective training program on happiness elements is a prescription for Zimbabweans to keep and maintain a culture of citizenship behaviour which is a critical in economic development.

Zimbabweans need to understand the strong link between the mindset and growth of the economy. In this light, this paper recommends that Zimbabweans may need to adopt the happiness culture to become creative and grow the economy. This can be achieved through an understanding of the importance of networks and connection of ideas. Zimbabweans need to lessons draw from Crabs as defined by Makaliko, (1998:146). Accordingly, a Crab rejuvenates lost claws, which means that Zimbabweans need to think of alternatives to job creation opportunities to reduce the challenges of poverty and to keep people happy. A crab can see 360 degrees which means Zimbabweans need to be comprehensive to understand to understand the implications of certain rights on obligations on a balancing scale of national interests than personal scores. Happy people understand the difference between foods served on the table and means to get food on the table. **Means** perpetuates happiness of people. Life is not about food on the table, but it is about means to work for Food to be on the table. The majority of Zimbabweans are at the mercy of pillagers of the country's natural wealth, who are ready to fund any program which stabilizes peace and development, hence efforts to create stability in the country is often met with resistance from people calling for embellishments of freedoms to advance personal interests without due consideration to obligations to national interests. This paper therefore recommends the need for the adoption of a happiness culture to enable citizens to appreciate the value of being Zimbabweans and seek divine intervention to observe the importance of national interests rather than personal interests in all endeavours. This attitude will also help the government of Zimbabwe to fight corruption if people understand the importance and relevance of citizenship behaviour. To move Zimbabwe forward and to grow Cities in the country, Zimbabwe needs happy people with capacity to appreciate and adopt citizenship behaviour.

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