

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND LIFE EXPECTANCY IN ZIMBABWE (1980 - 2010)

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ABSTRACT

This research studies the relationship between economic growth and life expectancy in Zimbabwe. It was largely inspired by the concentration of growth modelling on cross country studies whose findings are then generalised to economic growth in general, disregarding the differences and backgrounds of individual countries. The research comes in the realisation of the relative neglect of country specific studies of economic growth and health, yet health has long been established to be a key predictor of economic growth since the sprouting of new growth theories (Uzawa 1965, Lucas 1988, Turan 2009, Majdi 2012). Further, observed trends in Zimbabwe's economic growth and her life expectancy, where the former has seen some marked improvements and the later has remained generally low over the period under study, may be seen to be thought provoking, and as such, forms the basis of this study. The study adopted an Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model to analyse the relationship between economic growth and health as proxied by life expectancy. The choice of period between 1980 and 2010 was deliberate and it was intended to capture a period since the inception of independence in 1980. The data used was subjected to a battery of tests, both diagnostic and post estimation. The empirical results show that life expectancy is a positive and significant correlate of Zimbabwe's economic growth. The study thus calls for a policy refocus towards the attainment of good health for the Zimbabwean labour force. It argues that the attainment of such intermediate targets as a healthy labour force should pave way for economic growth.

Keywords: *Economic Growth, Life expectancy, Autoregressive Distributed Lag Model.*