Proffering alternatives to the top-down approach in policy development and implementation in ODL

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Abstract

The top-down approach used to be the conventional style of development. However, this had many flaws and has proved to be ineffective. It also raises questions about whether ‘outsiders’ have the right or the knowledge to set the development agenda of local people or has the indigenous knowledge became so obsolete. In the 1980s, development workers began to seek more participatory alternatives that avoided some of these problems. This paper assessed the alternatives available in policy development and implementation in ODL as a development project. The paper also analysed the technical and political nature of policy making so as to provide for the best alternative. It is only through participation at the grassroots-level that marginalised groups become contributors to economic progress in their countries. The tools provide an understanding of the complex problems people face. The research concludes that: the local community can analyse results and make decisions for itself, on the basis of information it has itself produced. People can be mobilised and organised around issues they themselves consider to be relevant to their own development. The community can identify and take ownership of the process through which problems are identified, analysed, and solved. The tools can play a decisive role in building self-esteem, by systematising and reassessing local experience and knowledge. Stronger, more positive interaction takes place between the community and professionals throughout the participatory process, from appraisal to evaluation. The paper recommends for the situational use of different models as alternatives to the top-down approach to policy making and implementation in ODL.

Key Words: Policy development, effective implementation of ODL, policy management

Introduction

Policy making is to a greater extent a political process since politicians have an interest and an upper hand in the making of policies because at the end of the day the policy should serve their agenda. According to the Elitist model the elites have control over the institutions, hence a major role to play in influencing policy making (Hanekom, 1990). It is also technical according to the linear model whereby the analysis, implementation and or execution of the formulated policies require some expertise. Most governments make use of this model to introduce policies upon gaining their independence (Sapru, 1994). It is common knowledge that they do not want to delay policy implementation. Thus, they feel that policies should be delivered at all costs. Some policies might be meant to achieve political expedience at the expense of economic sense. This paper shall explore the political and technical aspects of policy making in relation to examples in the governance system in detail to bring out whether it is more political or technical. The paper will analyse some of the methods used in policy making such as dialogue, lobbying petitions, listening to dissenters and bringing in outsider expertise.

Conceptual reflections

In order to put this paper’s discussion into its proper perspective, it is necessary to define
the following concepts; policy formulation, governance, policy development, policy management, Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and effective implementation of ODL.

**Policy formulation**

Policy formulation is a process whereby regulations and structures are put on paper through consultation, research and analysis, advocacy, dialogue and majority participation, for participation to be meaningful it is important that citizens have access to relevant information on the work of the local government, political options, (Anderson, 1979; Dror, 1968; Dye, 1987). The extent of the citizens informed is a pivotal motivational factor and a prerequisite for their participation in the political life of their community. At independence, most governments promise to deliver services with efficiency with the input of the majority (together we...), the closeness of the communication network instills confidence on the citizens and sounds to be an inclusive communication.

**Governance**

Governance refers to the exercise of power on behalf of the majority and good governance requires democratic exercise of state resources for the common good, through policy formulation and implementation, Sapru (1994). Everything succeeds or falls on communication and so does governance, the flow of information needs to be two way for effective communication. The recipient should respond to the sender so as for the parties to be communicating reciprocate. Listening to dissenters implies giving an ear to those who hold different views from us and it helps us to come up with new and informed decisions/policies. Cooper (2006) asserts that some leaders usually surround themselves with people who hold different and often opposing points of view collect new information to evaluate the new interpretations and alternatives generated by dissenters or our rivals. However, most leaders are reluctant to encourage dissent because it increases the amount of information and work that they have to process, giving them more pressure thereby threatening their positions, thus, policy making in this scenario has become political than technical.

Policy development is perceived as a process of coming up with viable policies to solve public problems. It is about a way of thinking and outlook, a system of values and priorities that marginalises other possible ways of thinking (Sutton,1999).

Policy management refers to the process of enforcing the policy (rules and regulations) of the organisation that pertain to information and computing (http://www.pcmag.com/encyclopedia/term/49463/policy-management). Also called “policy-based management,” it mostly deals with database access and network resource issues: which users have access to what data and how network traffic is prioritised (http://www.pcmag.com/encyclopedia/term/49463/policy-management).

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is a general term for the use of telecommunication to provide or enhance learning (searchsqlserver.techtarget.com/definition/ODL). Similarly, ODL is considered nowadays as the most viable means for broadening educational access while improving the quality of education, advocating peer-to-peer collaboration and giving learners a greater sense of autonomy and responsibility for learning (Calvert, 2006). Throughout the world, scholars and academics are busy discovering and exploring the Internet, teleconferencing, and related means to achieve an extended classroom or learning experience.

Effective implementation of ODL is effectuating e-learning that promotes open
learning, lifelong education, and a wide variety of mechanisms for continuing and distance education (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 80 in Siaciwena and Lubinda, 2008). This paper adopts Siaciwena and Lubinda’s (2008) view that effective implementation of ODL occurs when education aims to reach out-of-school children and adults who have no basic education, nor the ability to access formal school system due to inadequate provision or insufficient facilities, poverty, distance to the nearest formal/government school, increasing parental disinterest in school education, the impact of HIV and AIDS.

**Discussion**

Converting events into learning opportunities as a method of decision making in uncertain situations, decentralised decision making and frequently redesigning structures and policies, re-assigning responsibilities and bringing new points of view to various situations, thereby, getting rid of old taken for granted routines, these are re-examined so that people are forced to make new interpretations of situations, as Cooper (2006) advocates. Well formulated policies may be rendered useless by the change of circumstances in this era of ever changing technologies and holding on to them does not hold water. Delegation of duties and role assumption will make people think outside the box and be innovative. Policies intended for the youths are best formulated with the input of their cohorts; age comes with maturity but a high degree of redundancy in this era of globalisation. In this regard, Elite/Mass model of policy making prevails over other models of policy analysis. This model assumes that only a small, elite group (usually the government) is solely responsible for making policies (Hanekom, 1987). The same scholar gives four weaknesses of the top-down approach to policy management. First, the elite groups govern an ill-informed public. Second, the elite govern ill-informed masses. Third, public policies are perceived as preferences and values of the governing elite. Fourth, policies flow downward from elites to masses; they do not arise from mass demands.

Utilising Game Theory Jones (1992) in his book *Organisational Theory, Design and Changes*, describes the game theory as follows; the game theory is when leaders look forward and reason back. A simultaneous move game, a method in which one has to act at the same time in ignorance of their rival’s current actions. A sequential move game–you pursue after consideration of rival’s choice of strategies and you calculate the potential moves and strategies for confrontation, thus, your mind is challenged and exposed to new idea. Sanchawa (2015) sees game theory as an alternative to top down approach to policy making in three ways. First, it is a study of rational decisions in situations where two or more participants have choices to make and the outcome depends on the choices made by each. Second, game theory is an abstract and deductive model of policy making. Third, it does not describe how people actually make decisions but rather how they should go about making decisions in competitive situations if they are rational.

Jones (1992) asserts that for peace to prevail there has to be effective and genuine communication because as long as some party feels betrayed conflicts arise and eventually the credibility of the governance becomes questionable and once it reaches that point there is no peace in such a situation. It can be argued that through ODL, the gospel of peace could be spread, although this could be subject to the type of model of policy making employed with respect to policy development and implementation of ODL.

Active listening as a way of policy checks and formulation is whereby you listen to even an otherwise trivial case and consider. Through active listening one will minimise the chances of missing the crucial issues of concern in policy making, hence is kept well
Hahlo (1994) in the certification of the South African Interim Constitution advised the Constitution Making Committee to listen carefully with great care to even the so-called ‘nonsense’ of the drunkard, the uneducated, and the layman up to the most learned citizens of South Africa. Every grain in the field counts to make a bumper harvest.

Burns (1999) in the book *Administrative Law*, asserted the content of good governance to be founded on the principle of procedural fairness, the right to be heard and right to public hearing and goes further to pronounce that justice must not only be done but must be seen to be done, all this can only be done through policy formulation and proper implementation. In most African states, policy is rather political where policies are made from top to bottom without consultations, a good example will be the unilateral alteration of the Constitution by the President (Nkrunziza in Burundi, 2015). Currently, most beneficiaries of ODL lack craft literacy and competence (computer literacy, e–resources, use of software packages) as a result of exclusivity in the participation of masses from the policy formulation processes. The masses could be involved in policy making through public choice model of policy making. Sanchawa (2015) subscribes to the preceding view in three ways. First, the public choice model refers to a policy as a collective decision making by self interested individuals. Second, individuals come together in politics for their own mutual benefits and by agreement (Contract) among themselves they can enhance their well being. Last, therefore, people pursue their self interest in politics but even with selfish motives they can mutually benefit through collective decision making.

The Devil’s Advocacy is when a person is willing to stand up and question the beliefs of more powerful people, resists influence attempts and who works to convince others that new ideas or plans may be flawed or wrong and harmful. In Zimbabwe, this type of communication appears to very costly, hence, the writer will say in this scenario policy formulation is political, the one which puts those in power in a disadvantaged position. It is a typified example of the Elite/Mass Model of policy making which Hanekom (1987) views that policymakers perceive themselves as best informed to formulate policies, while the masses are ignorant and ill informed. Team leadership is when everyone participates and contributes in decision making. When everyone takes part in an event, it brings about the spirit of oneness and responsibility hence no one would want to be associated with failure or inefficiency. Concrete and viable decisions are made through massing of ideas and knowledge. A good example, according to Birds (2010) is human resources management in an organisation set up, as compared to the previously used personnel management. When people are involved in the decision making they feel so much obliged to implement their ideas as compared to having things being dictated to them. Power that is shared is ideas shared; hence, the sense of accountability will prevail.

Implementation of ODL awakens people’s knowledge regarding alternatives to top down approaches to policy development. Therefore, one other alternative to top down approach to policy making is the use of group model in policy management. Sanchawa (2015) and Hanekom (1987) concur on three issues about using group model in policy management. First, they agree one of the main agents for policy change is the initiative by the interest groups. Second, interest groups pressure and interact with policy makers on preferences and self interest. Third, thus, the role of political system is to establish and enforce compromise between various, conflicting interests in society.

Bringing Outsider Expert, Waldo (1984), asserts that new blood brings in new ideas. Not only do outsider experts bring in new ideas and information they also advice, guide
and when people know that there will be some checks from outside like external auditors they tend to act with responsibility for the fear of accountability. The style of administration will be more in line with modern developments, hence, the Shona saying which goes “kugara nhaka huona dzevamwe”, literally meaning we copy style of administration after seeing others doing it or we copy from others. All this can be done when policies are not formulated politically but technically, put in place as guidelines for administration and not as protective structures for those in power. It therefore follows that policy makers need to have both craft literacy and craft competency to enable them to execute their role accordingly. Craft literacy is the ability that a policy maker has to plan or come up with policy blue prints (Moyo, 1992). Craft competence is having the technical capacity to put policies into practice (Moyo, 1992). Therefore, the other alternative to top down approach to policy management could be the process model. Espoused by Sanchawa (2015), Jones (1992) and Hanekom (1987), the process model has the following five-fold step which justify why it could be an alternative to top down approach:

1. Identification of a problem and demand for government action.
2. Formulation of policy proposals by various parties.
3. Policy legitimation-Selection and enactment of policy.
4. Implementation of the chosen policy.
5. Evaluation of policy

Dialogue occurs when two or more parties in discussion usually on the same subject matter of concern. Currey (1995) in his book Civil War, Civil Peace: describes dialogue as the strongest tool to bring about peace and good governance. Dialogue helps people air their views and feelings and in this way issues in dispute can be resolved without or before straining relations. In the Truth and Reconciliation process post-apartheid South Africa, dialogue was used as a tool to achieve an atmosphere of forgiveness and reconciliation. It is only when people get down to talking that their views and feelings are made known one to another such that corrections and or adjustments are made in the parties’ conduct towards each other. Currey (1995) cited the bond between family members to be at its best when the relationship is one in which every member is able to get his or her view considered when crucial decisions are being made no matter how young. What one might consider to be best or in the best interest of another could be in fact being prejudicial to the party concerned. He/she went further to suggest that the question, “what do you think? Or let us talk” should be the order of the day in any form of administration be it a family, community, organisation or national setup. This type of a policy is almost absent in the African type of governance, there is imposition of policies unilaterally rather than through free dialogue, discussion and consultation. Some policies are introduced under the guise of implementation of government policy, one would wonder which policy, made where, by whom and for what purpose, the whole idea is political and benefiting the politically advantaged. Policies if technical should be seen to benefit the public even though some policies are politically fast tracked for the purposes of efficiency. Use of the rational theory might be an alternative to top down approach to policy management. According to Hanekom (1987, p. 82) in Sanchawa (2015, p.11) contends that, “rational comprehensive model has its roots in the rational comprehensive decision making and implies that the policy maker has a full range of policy options to choose from. Sanchawa (2015, p.11), emphasizes the above point by asserting that, “Rational theory is one that achieves maximum social gain/benefit, that is, Government should choose policies resulting in gains that exceed costs by greatest amount.” In view of the benefits of the rational model in policy management,
effective implementation of ODL was inevitable in pursuit of the human capital development needed by Zimbabwe and other countries.

Lobbying Petitions, Obama (1995) cited the lobbying of petitions as a powerful tool towards peace and good governance. It only takes a man to be at peace for the name good governance to exist. By lobbying petitions, the otherwise, hindered communication is received, but this is a political process meant to protect interests of a specific group not the majority. Therefore, a possible alternative to top down approach to policy management here is the institutional theory. Sanchawa (2015, p. 6) gives three pertinent reasons in favour of institutional model:
1. Public policy is determined by government institutions, which give policy legitimacy.
2. Government universally applies policy to all citizens of society and monopolises the use of force in applying policy.
3. The legislature, executive and judicial branches of government are examples of institutions that give policy legitimacy.

It can be seen from the above that effective ODL implementation takes off well enough with the support of government institutions. For example, school heads and education officers were required to be degree graduates by 1998 in Zimbabwe. That is how the Zimbabwe Open University (formerly called University of Zimbabwe, College of Distance Education from 1 January 1994 to 28 February 1999) was set up to offer ODL programme in educational planning and policy studies to capacitate educational managers and administrators with planning, leadership, policy, management and evaluation skills.

Advocacy Policy Changes, Obama (1995) in his autobiography, Dreams from my father; stated the need for policy changes as crucial to the ever changing demands and needs of the current society. Sticking to old policies might make the system of governance stay out dated, thereby, depriving the people of the much wanted provisions. Therefore, incremental model of policy making might be useful to effect minor modifications on the existing policies so that effective ODL implementation would not be resisted.

Fry (1989), defined good governance to be, “Prevailing views on good governance centre upon concepts of capability, accountability and responsiveness, all based on policy formulation which is technical. They focus on the need for the full participation of citizens and civil society actors in governance and are predicated on the effective flow of information and dialogue between citizen, governments and other actors. By situating communication, information dissemination and dialogue as key components of governance a positive correlation between communication and good governance is tacitly assumed”. Thus, rational policy model applies here because Sanchawa (2015, p. 15) notes that rational theory is a, “process for making sound decisions in policy making in the public sector, although the model is widely used in private organisations.”

Whilst Wildavsky (1992) defined good governance and its correlation to communication, the definition does not give the impact of communication on governance as well as specifying the type of communication and what impact these different forms of communication have on governance. In essence, governance can be good governance or poor governance depending on the forms of the administrative structures which are in use.

The ODL (2006) states that the world wide evidence demonstrates a strong association between good governance and improved investment, growth rates, better economic performance, improved adult literacy, a reduction in state corruption, and improved service delivery. There is also a general acceptance that a well functioning and capable administration alone is insufficient to ensure quality public service delivery to its citizens that meets their needs
and aspirations. The state/administration also needs to be accountable through communicating action plans and their evaluation at the beginning, middle and end of the plan term and responsive to its citizens; response however does not need to be the general trend by government in service delivery DFDI (2008). This broader conception of governance, builds on concepts of rights based development and development as a freedom and right, Sen (1999). These attributes fit very well with group model of policy making which make it an alternative to Elite/Mass model of policy making.

When dealing with citizens, the youth in particular it is essential to apply various communication approaches for behaviour and social change. Two key contemporary communication strategies are applicable, entertainment education and interpersonal - participatory communication. These communication strategies work best when they are integrated with other various strategies for behavior change or behaviour development, social mobilisation and advocacy; and then linked to other programme aspects and service provision. It also finds that there is a need to extend communication strategies beyond individuals and households to include service providers, traditional and religious leaders, and decision makers to engender systemic social change, (Almond et al., 2010). The communication forums and procedures should be ideal and well considered to cater for all classes of citizens. There is a general tendency especially in the African culture of having the elderly making decisions on behalf of the juniors even when they are adults. This culture poses a danger in well considered policies and projects to flaw. Good governance entails democracy and democracy freedom of expression, speech, movement, the press and communication remains relatively an under-prioritised area of good governance. Whilst some argue that good governance and Constitutionalism is just rhetoric in most African states. Some attribute this to a lack of robust evidence demonstrating communication’s impact on governance, of which the author is of the opinion that most African governments are not reluctant to implement these democratic governance principles for the fear of a relapse into colonial control. It is no doubt that most African intrastate conflicts have emanated or being fueled by the invisible which is profiteering on the chaos during the conflict. Others may argue that, “it is more fundamentally a question of whether support to communication which typically encompasses the development of an independent media sector, improving access to information, and the strategic use of media and political communication tools to influence behavior and social change – is a legitimate area for donor funding, given the often highly political nature of such interventions, (DFDI, 2008). Using communication in governance reforms is also inseparable from using the same communication for regime change as has been witnessed in Libya, Tunisia and Egypt, communication poses the danger of enlightening citizens of the loopholes in the governance and the desired change is not without consequences. Incremental model of policy making could work very well in this regard. According to Sanchawa (2015, p.17), “Under this model, policy is a continuation of previous policy with minimum changes. Existing programmes, policies and expenditures are considered as a base. Policy makers accept the legitimacy of previous policies because of uncertainty about the consequences of new policies.” Thus, effective ODL implementation was made possible by drawing lessons from the colonial policies on correspondence learning and distance education.

Many political scientists believe this encourages the development of trust between state and society, and is a foundation of state legitimacy over the long-term, (Lines, 2009). In order to achieve good governance, it is a
must that communication should be provided as a regular service to the poor and marginalised whether at community, national and international level. ODL is among the very good factors that act as a catalyst in enhancing sound policy development because it exposes citizens to various policy models. This is particular to Zimbabwe, which has the Zimbabwe Open University offering policy studies in its educational management programmes and youth studies in the Faculty of Arts and Education, general management programme in the Faculty of Commerce and Law, development studies and peace, leadership and conflict resolution in the Faculty of Applied Social Sciences.

The government is obligated to maintain public safety, fund and direct education, regulating commerce and protecting the nation from foreign aggression (Almond, Powell, Dalton, & Strom, 2010). Through its various departments it writes and enforce government policies to provide the required means for realising the set objectives, hence, the media is the intermediary between the government and the people in distributing information and benefits, and enforcing checks and balances, responses and regulations (Almond et al., 2010). In this case, group model of policy making works better than the top down approach to policy management because one of the main agents for policy change is the initiative by the interest groups (Sanchawa, 2015, p. 20). In order to enhance effective ODL implementation, the press played a big part in letting the Zimbabwean citizens know about the of ODL in 1993.

Communication structures include free, plural, and independent media systems, robust civil society, and the legal and regulatory framework that enables or precludes the free flow of information from government to citizens and vice versa, though the vice versa remains a myth. Thus, these form the framework through which citizens and government can communicate and engage in dialogue effectively. They are essential components of the right democratic public sphere and they play a very important role in forming public opinion (CommGAP, 2007). In a bid to downplay weaknesses of top down approach to policy making, Patton and Sawicki Six Step Model is critical.

From the above diagram, it can be seen that the government conceived the problem of lack of skilled educational managers at a

time when the country was offering mass education. For other observers, this was quantitative education at the expense of quality, hence, the need to employ the aforementioned six-step-model for public policy ahead of the top down approach to policy analysis.

Prioritising providing citizens with information on priorities, programmes and activities is a vital government function which underpins state towards society relations. Governments in the developed world are acutely aware of the need to communicate effectively both to influence public opinion and maintain their legitimacy, and often construct elaborate structures of press offices, and information ministries to perform the communication function. But in many developing countries, governments lack communication capacity, and the development of the communication function is hampered by a combination of weak incentives - no culture of disclosure, lack of professional training and communication infrastructure, and lack of supportive legal framework-access to information laws. Institutional culture often plays an important role in shaping approaches to communication, but changing institutional culture takes time. In the context of the preceding points, a Garbage-can Model of policy making becomes an alternative to top-down approach to policy making. According to Sanchawa (2015, p. 16), Garbage-can model is useful for two reasons. First, “The Garbage-can Model emerged as a critique to the Rational Model saying that organisations do not function as computer in solving optimisation problems.” Second, “The theory advocates that organisations function like garbage cans into which a mix of problems and possible solutions are poured, with precise mix determining the decision outcome.”

The importance of a free media in underpinning democratic development is often acknowledged, at least rhetorically, both in the academic governance literature and in the policy statements of development agencies. There is wide ranging consensus around the idea that the evolution of a free and plural media is essential for holding government to account and enabling an informed citizenry. The media is often identified as a key institution which can either enable or block pro-poor reform. Nevertheless, communication advocates maintain that media is a relatively under-prioritised area of governance reform, and that development practitioners need to better understand and address the potentially catalytic role of the media—whether in the form of print, television (TV), radio, or internet—both in supporting or undermining democratic processes. Mixed scanning model could be useful to employ in policy development and effective ODL implementation ahead top down approach to policy making for two reasons that Sanchawa (2015,p.18) advance. First, mixed scanning, “is a combination of the Rational Incremental Theories (this is trial and error method).” Second, “Users of this theory integrate characteristics of the rational model and incremental (Hanekom, 1987,p. 85) first by reviewing the overall policy and second by concentrating on a specific need, policy result or policy impact.”

1. In principle, free, independent and plural media can provide a critical check on state abuse of power or corruption, enable informed and inclusive public debate on issues of concern to poor people, and give greater public recognition to the perspectives of marginalised citizens. Whether reporting positive or negative news, news media exposure can contribute to political trust and engagement, and satisfaction with democracy. Where the media performs the roles of agenda-setter, watchdog and gatekeeper effectively, it can contribute to democratic governance and accountability in the following four ways:

2. As an agenda-setter the media can raise awareness of social problems, informing
elected officials about public concerns and needs. A number of studies have demonstrated that the issues the media present as important are the same as those the public subsequently think are important.

3. As a watchdog, the news can provide a check on powerful sectors of society, including leaders within the private and public domains. Investigative journalism, in particular, can uncover corruption and monitor public interests. The role of the media as watchdog can be highly political in fragile conflict-affected states. However, the media helps curbing corruption and improves efficacy on the government.

4. As a gatekeeper, the media can be a forum for the public debate and discussion of social issues and it can represent a plurality of perspectives, including those of poor and marginalised groups. However, a number of structural barriers often prevent them from living up to this ideal in practice. These barriers include state ownership or control and in most cases a prevailing environment of patrimonialism, media commercialisation, poor journalistic capacity and professional standards, and lack of citizen engagement with the media. Furthermore, many acknowledge that whilst the media may in principle be critical to public discourse, it cannot by itself guarantee improved state accountability or responsiveness, but only in collaboration with the citizens. The writer finds that news media are important in furthering democratic governance, provided they are set up in a way that allows them to act as effective watchdogs, agenda setters and gatekeepers. Hindering the fulfilment of these roles include restrictions on freedom of the press, market failures, lack of professional standards, weak civil society, and limitations in media literacy and public access to the media. Further research is required to fully determine the relationship between a free media and democratic governance. This research can be enhanced through ODL.

At the process level, there is some empirical and anecdotal evidence, largely contained in the political communication literature, of how communication can impact on people’s opinions and behaviour; for example increasing people’s individual knowledge of or participation in political systems, or their support for good governance. State governments are more responsive where newspaper circulation is higher and electoral accountability greater; there is a role for both democratic institutions and mass media in ensuring that citizens’ preferences are reflected in Policy, Rohr (1989).

**Conclusions and recommendations**

In conclusion, policy making in its technical sense is a mechanism for the effective external monitoring of government work, but also a means for making public policies that are close to actual citizen needs. The likelihood that public policies are based on actual citizen needs increases together with participation, and citizens are more likely to support decisions reached as a result of participatory practices. In addition, citizen participation is considered a possible solution for the problem of “democratic deficit”, manifested in the growing distrust of citizens towards governments, lower voter turnout and overall political apathy and skepticism towards established democratic values, procedures and institutions. In that sense, participation is especially suitable for the local government level, as decision making processes at that level are relatively close to citizens, and the implications of the adopted
decisions are quickly felt within local communities. However, policy making is a political process used to put in place structures which best protect the interests of the elites, those in power. Possible alternatives to top down approaches to policy development and implementation of ODL include rational theory, institutional model, mixed scanning, process theory, group theory, game theory, public choice theory and six-step-model of public policy. These policy models tend to differ in theory, but in practice they appear to achieve similar results. Their application is circumstantial as it is subject socio-political and economic dictates obtaining in a given country. The paper recommends the use of particular alternatives to top-down approach situationally in order for them to yield best results.

References


