

SPECIAL COLLECTION
LIBRARY USE ONLY

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

LIBRARY USAGE AMONG OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL)
STUDENTS AT ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY (ZOU), MATABELELAND SOUTH
REGIONAL CAMPUS (MSRC)

BY

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ABSTRACT

This case study research was conducted to evaluate the library usage among Open and Distance Learners (ODL) at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU), Matabeleland South Regional Campus (MSRC). A mixed research paradigm was employed. This paradigm was chosen because it provided for the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to collect and generate information and make inquiry into complex phenomenon of social and natural contexts such as of the library usage in an ODL environment. The population of the study was 361 prospective respondents. This population comprised 346 registered students drawn from all five faculties, two (2) library assistants and thirteen (13) Regional Programme Coordinators (RPCs). Purposive and random sampling techniques were used to come up with the study sample. In the study, a sample of 50 was used and comprised of 9 RPCs, 1 library assistant and 40 registered students drawn from five faculties. The only major constraint, the researcher faced was the delay by two weeks of being granted the authority to visit the library to administer questionnaires and carryout interviews. The study established that open and distance learners at ZOU MSRC library face a lot of discords due to several factors. Among them were: lack of students' familiarity with the Regional Campus library; lack of students' awareness of the library, inadequate or poor library skills and information literacy. On account of the above findings, the researcher recommends the following: There is need for the ZOU MSRC library staff to impart information literacy skills to the students and library orientation. In addition it was noted that there was need for the librarians to promote library awareness or to market ZOU MSRC library in such a way that students are aware of the library resources and services.