

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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**COMPUTERISATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY SERVICES: A FEASIBILITY
STUDY OF ZOU- BULAWAYO REGION LIBRARY**

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the feasibility of introducing a computerised library service at ZOU-Bulawayo region library. The study was based on the environment, hardware, software and other facilities most suitable in a computerised library, benefits and threats of a computerised library system model. With the advent of technology most ODL have computerised their library services. However, ZOU- Bulawayo region was still using the manual system in its operations raising questions as to their ability in linking with the distant learner. The aim was to investigate the possibilities of introducing a computerised library system to improve service delivery and access to information to distant learners. From literature ODL benefit more when they are computerised as library computerisation improves the quality of service offered by the library and brings the services to the distant learner. The study used the case study design and employed the mixed method approach of both quantitative and qualitative methods. The study sampled 2 library staff, 10 academic staff and 37 students. Interviews and questionnaires was designed and used for sourcing information from the respondents. The results showed that the library was in the process of computerisation as logistics had been done towards the implementation of the computerisation. Factors such as centralisation of the library management and the bandwidth were inhibiting the introduction of the computerisation process. Insufficient funding was a major problem which hampered the purchase of the most suitable hardware, software and other facilities for computerisation. Little prioritisation of the library computerisation process by ZOU was also another factor which stifled the introduction or implementation of the library computerisation. The attitude of the library staff and students was encouraging as they were eager or enthusiastic about the introduction of computerisation in the library. The recommendations were that ZOU should provide adequate funding for computerisation so that there are no delays in the implementation of the computerisation process. The librarians should acquire advanced skills and greater knowledge in information and communication technologies so that they will be able to dispense their services when the library is computerised.