

## **OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING: An Alternative University Education for Women At The Zimbabwe Open University**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study examined the extent to which open and distance learning(ODL) is an alternative university education for women at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU). it explored 50 ZOU staff , that is , 12 female academic and nine clerks- and 17 male academic staff and 12 clerical staff who were all purposively sampled. The study was a qualitative in nature. Its research strategy was a case study. Data were gathered using open-ended questionnaires. The study found out that most women had been deprived of university education because of the absence of ODL university education before 1993. Cultural and historical factors used to elbow women out of the conventional university education. The study concluded that lack of university education for women could be a drawback for the production of the human capital. It also concluded that lack of university education for women was a letdown to national development. The study recommended the need for Ministry of higher and tertiary education stake holders to allocate recourses to ODL university education for women. The study could be extended to other ODL tertiary education institutions in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries for the sake of comparison using other research methodologies.

**Keywords:** Southern African Development Community (SADC); conventional university education; education for women; Zimbabwe Open University.