

# **The Role of Programme Leaders in the Management of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Programmes in the Department of Education of the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU)**

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## **Abstract**

*The qualitative case study investigated the Regional Programme Coordinators' (RPCs') perceptions of the role of Programme Leaders on the management of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Programmes in the Department of Education at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU). Queter-views with open-ended questions were responded to by 20 out of 30 RPCs who were conveniently sampled. The study found out that Programme Leaders initiate, develop and design new programmes. They also review and evaluate existing programmes. RPCs indicated that the creation of teamwork, provision of expertise and direction, convincing students that ODL programmes are credible and representing RPCs at National level as some of the strengths that Programme Leaders offer in ODL programme management. RPCs cited lack of resources, delayed distribution of tutorial packages and missing results as challenges of great concern in ODL programme management by Programme Leaders. The study concluded that teamwork among Programme Leaders, RPCs, Dean and support Unit Heads was a pre-requisite for efficient and effective management of ODL Programmes. The study recommended that Programme Leaders need to work to the best of their ability. Programme Leaders need to effectively communicate their vision and mission all the time if ever their programmes are to bear a competitive cutting edge domestically and internationally.*