



IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE BACHELOR AND MASTER OF EDUCATION IN EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES AT THE ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the nature of Impact Assessment of the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes at the Zimbabwe Open University. Initially, it targeted 300 former students who graduated in the two programmes and are working elsewhere. It purposively sampled 230 graduates. The study found out that respondents were aware of the two programmes' learning outcomes, benefits, challenges, processes and possible means of training learners in the two programmes through ODL. The study concluded that respondents are conscious of the likely challenges to the offering of the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes at the ZOU. It also concluded that ZOU has played a big part in the development of the human capital in Zimbabwe, Southern African Development Community (SADC) and beyond. Above all, it also concluded that the teaching of the two programmes under study is not an event, but a process. The study recommended that ZOU ought to continue to quality assure all processes of the two programmes such that they remain enviable in a competitive university environment. It also recommended that the ZOU's Department of Educational Studies should introduce an integral practical component of the two programmes which involves following graduates to their stations in order to find out how well they are faring in the management of educational institutions.

Key Words: Impact assessment; Bachelor of Education in Educational Administration, Planning and Policy Studies; Bachelor of Education in Educational Management Programme; Master of Education in Educational Administration, Planning and Policy Studies; Master of Education in Educational Management Programme

INTRODUCTION

The Zimbabwe Open University started as Centre for Distance Education at the University of Zimbabwe in 1993. Its main aim was to upgrade qualifications of senior educationists who were holding posts of special responsibility. Many Education Officers, District Education Officers and School Heads studied the Bachelor of Education in Educational Administration, Planning and Policy Studies (BEDEAPPS) between January 1993 and July 2005. BEDEAPPS was rebranded to become the Bachelor of Education in Educational Management in August 2005. The Master of Education in Educational Administration, Planning and Policy Studies (MEDEAPPS) started to run in January 1999 to December 2005. It was also rebranded in January 2006 to become the Master of Education in Educational Management. For the purposes of carrying out the present study, the

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Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Administration, Planning and Policy Studies (BED/MEDEAPPS), and Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management would be used interchangeably. The present paper seeks to investigate the impact of the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management in Zimbabwe's ten administrative provinces.

Background to the Study

Impact Assessment of the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes at the Zimbabwe Open University is based on the enquiry of the significance of the two programmes to the nation Zimbabwe and beyond. Prior to the setting up of the Centre for Distance of Education, all non-graduate educators (teachers, school heads, Education Officers, and lecturers) used to scramble for limited places at the University of Zimbabwe where they would be offered places by the Faculty of Education. This Faculty could not cope with the demand for university education by educators in the country because it concentrated on the provision of education by conventional means which usually do not accommodate many candidates at one go (Chikuya, 2007). Chikuya (2007) notes that the Vice Chancellor's Working Party, buoyed by the findings of the 1985 Report on the Task Force on external degree programmes in Kenya recommended the introduction of distance learning university to alleviate the problem of place shortages at the university level. Research has documented that benefits of university education to educators go beyond the educational institutions and educators (www.phoenix.edu/colleges_divisions/education.html). Chief among such benefits according to (<http://www.c.e.org.uk/qualifications?gclid=CIP>) are:

- higher education qualifications open doors to new and exciting opportunities by providing learners with a global passport to success,
- higher qualifications help teachers to perform to their maximum ability,
- higher qualifications bring people closer together to share best practices and ideas to drive excellence in education, and
- young and inexperienced educators learn from veteran educators who understand the day-to-day challenges in and out of the classroom and the school.

The nature of impact assessment of ODL programmes is best summarised by the Southern African Institute of Distance Education (SAIDE) Annual Report (1993:1) in Chikuya (2007:22) who opines that:

We see open learning as an approach in education which seeks to transform the nature of educational opportunity and to remove all unnecessary barriers to learning so that as many people as possible are able to take advantage of meaningful learning opportunities throughout their lives. Education should, therefore, cause to be something that not only occurs within walls by a school conducted by the talking teacher and aimed primarily at young people. The focus should move instead to the learner and the outcomes of learning. Learning should take place in a number of contexts in a multiplicity of sites, through a variety of mechanisms and for people of all ages.

It is against the background of such observations that the present study seeks to investigate the impact assessment of the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes at the Zimbabwe Open University. The study also intends to explore the benefits and costs of carrying out the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes at the Zimbabwe Open University with the ultimate goal to pursue improved quality programme management.

Statement of the Problem

ODL programmes in developing countries like Zimbabwe have been perceived with a lot of skepticism by people who have been used to conventional means of university education. The study attempts to verify the validity of such perceptions by trying to interrogate the following problem:

To what extent have the Zimbabwe Open University Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management programmes impacted on the Zimbabwean education sector and beyond?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In an attempt to provide answers to the main research problem, the following research questions suffice.

1. What are the results sought for the ODL Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management programmes?
2. What processes mould the ODL Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management programmes' products?
3. How beneficial are the ODL Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management programmes products to the education system and society?
4. How are the ODL Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management programmes products challenged in their work?
5. How best can the ODL Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management programmes' products trained through ODL?

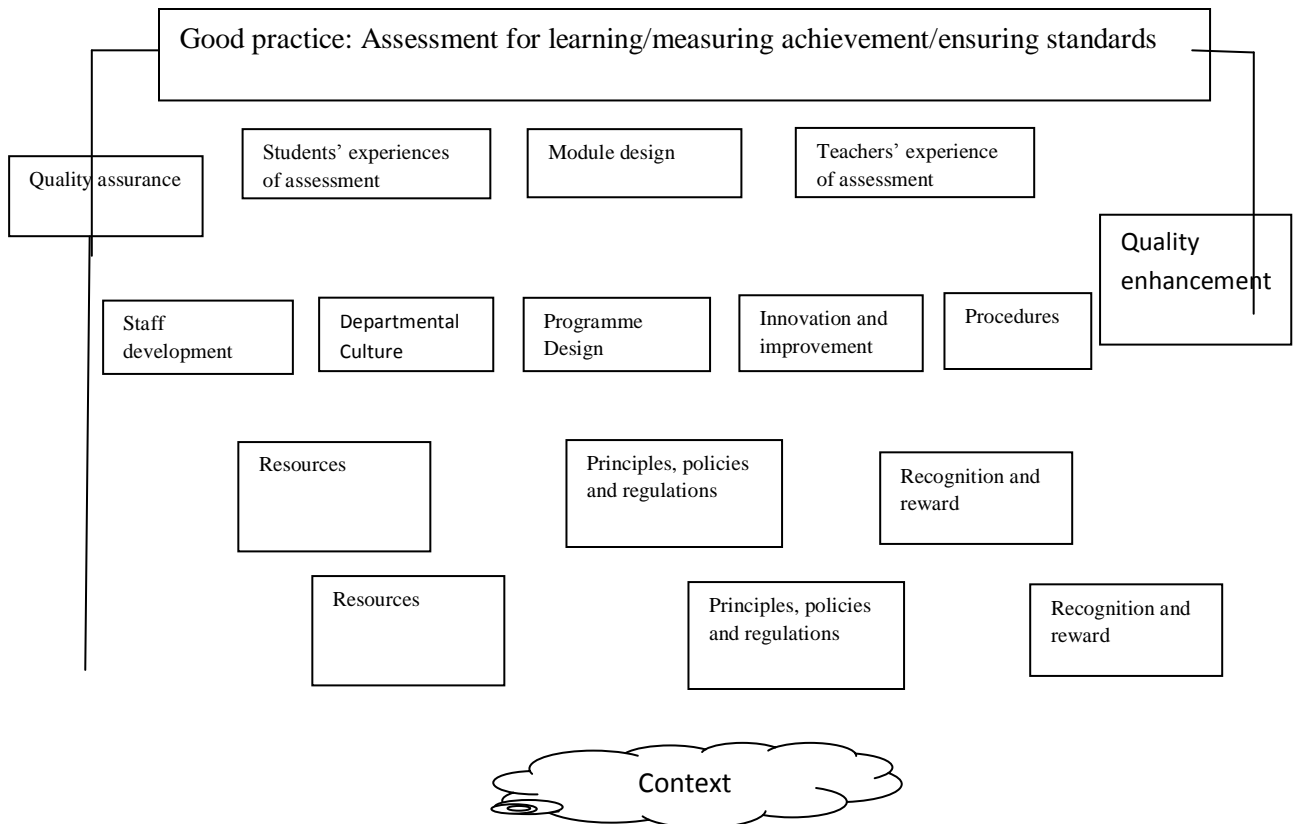
Significance of the Study

An impact assessment of ODL programmes of this nature is valuable in several ways. To begin with, it portrays the magnitude of outputs and outcomes of the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management programmes in Zimbabwe and beyond. It also brings to the fore the contribution of the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management programmes' products to the education system and national development by the production of a high profile human capital. Furthermore, challenges that are experienced in the running of educational institutions could be put under check when the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management programmes' products share best practices with veteran educators and academics about efficient and effective management principles.

Literature Review

The study is guided by the impact assessment model: The Higher Education Model that Macdonald and Joughin (2012) advance. The model consists of four principal levels with a number of elements at each level. The model is represented graphically on the next page.

Level 1 is where assessment actually happens, with good practice occurring in the context of students' and teachers' experience of assessment and dependent on the module design. Level 2 supports this with practice and includes the elements of staff development, departmental culture, programme design, innovation and improvement, and departmental procedures. Level 3 represents institutional context of assessment, where resources are allocated, principles, policies and regulations are determined, and processes for recognising and rewarding good teaching are put in place. Level 4 represents the overall context of the institution, including government policy and expectation of external bodies.



Research Methodology

The study is rooted in quantitative research paradigm which allows researchers to investigate phenomena from a wide geographical coverage (Thomas and Nelson, 2001). It makes use of the descriptive survey of 230 out of the intended 300 former BEd and MEd (EAPPS) later Educational Management students of the ZOU. Descriptive survey was employed in this study because of its capacity to produce generalisable knowledge as a result of making use of large samples (Gay and Airasian, 2003). A purposive sample of 230 out of the intended 300 former students of the BEd and MEd (EAPPS) programmes was used to select the study's respondents. Purposive sampling is useful when respondents possess the study's characteristics and needs (Punch, 2004). We made use of a semi-structured questionnaire based on Likert's scales of measurement ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SDA). SA is rated 5, while SDA is rated 1 as advocated for by Oladipo, Olapegba and Adenaike (2012). Such scales of measurement enabled us to measure respondents' opinions regarding impact assessment of BEd and MEd (EAPPS) programmes they studied with the ZOU. Telephone interviews save a lot of travelling and time expenses (Potter, 2006). These could be employed to some high profile former students who are presumed to be too busy to attend to the demands of a questionnaire. Research data were presented in two categories namely, demographic data and the actual research data. Demographic data was presented using frequency tables.

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The discussion of the research data is done in two parts namely, demographic data and actual research data.

Demographic Data

Table- 1. Distribution of research participants by gender (N=230)

Variable- Gender	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Male	149	65
Female	81	35
Total	230	100

The scenario in Table 1 shows the majority (65%) of the respondents being male, while female respondents constituted 35%. The results tend to show that former BEd and MEd (EAPPS) male students that were approached were more accessible than their female counterparts.

Table- 2. Distribution of research participants by age (N=230)

Variable- Age in Years	Frequency	Frequency (%)
21-30 years	3	1
31-40 years	78	34
41-50 years	83	36
51-60 years	62	27
61+ years	4	2
Total	230	100

Table 2 shows the distribution of the respondents by age. The majority of the respondents are aged between 41 and 50, followed by those aged between 31 and 40, and those aged between 51 and 60. Only 2 % of the respondents were aged at least 61, while 1 % of them were aged between 21 and 30. The results indicate that the respondents were relatively mature and serving the nation to the best of their ability.

Table- 3. Distribution of research participants by programme studied (N=230)

Variable	Frequency	Frequency (%)
MEd (Educational Management)	87	38
BEd (Educational Management)	143	62
Total	230	100

Table 3 portrays a picture that most (62%) of the respondents were holders of an undergraduate qualification, while 38 % were Master of Education graduates. The distribution indicates that educational institutions in the country albeit their small sample are largely run by graduate educational managers.

Table- 4. Distribution of research participants by present professional qualification (N=230)

Variable	Frequency	Frequency (%)
PhD	2	1
MEd	117	51
Bed	111	48
Total	230	100

The picture in Table 4 shows a distribution of 51 % of the respondents consisting of holders of a Master of Education Degree, 48% comprising holders of the first degree; and 1 % holding a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Education. The scenario in Table 4 is indicative of the realisation that the most of studied respondents are either yet to undertake or are undertaking studies in the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Education.

Table- 5. Distribution of research participants by present occupation (N=230)

Variable	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Programme Leader	3	1
Programme Co-ordinator	11	5
Quality Assurance Co-ordinator	5	2
Public Service Inspector	2	1
District Education Officer	8	3
Education Officer	5	2
College Lecturer	40	17
School head	62	28
Teacher	94	41
Total	230	100

Table 5 distributes respondents by their current occupation as result of their exposure to the Bachelor and Master of Educational Management at the ZOU. Most (41%) of the respondents are teachers, followed by 28 % who are school heads, 17 % who are college lecturers, 5 % who are Quality Assurance Co-ordinators at the ZOU, 3 % who are District Education Officers, 2% who are Education Officers, and 1 % who are Programme Leaders at the ZOU and Public Service Inspectors, respectively. In brief, the results show that most graduates of the studied programmes of Educational Management at the ZOU are holders of important posts in the country's education system.

ACTUAL RESEARCH DATA

Table-6. Results Sought for the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes

No.	SDA	DA	N	A	SA
1. Master of Education in Educational Management Programme produces practitioners who are:					
• Self-confident, analytical, proactive, articulate and capable of marrying theory to practice.	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(1%)	60(69%)	26(30%)
• Equipped with sound financial knowledge in order to handle organisational funds well.	0(0%)	0(0%)	2(2%)	81(93%)	4(5%)
• Capable of managing organisations guided by sound business economic principles and ethics.	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(5%)	20(23%)	63(72%)
• Capable of crafting realistic management plans.	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(1%)	26(30%)	60(69%)
• Employ research so as to solve real life situation problems at their work place.	0(0%)	4(5%)	1(1%)	16(18%)	66(76%)

2	Bachelor of Education in Educational Management Programme produces practitioners who are:					
	• Empowered to run their institutions efficiently and effectively.	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	136(95%)	7(5%)
	• Capable of mobilizing resources.	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(3%)	139(97%)
	• Innovative, inventive, proactive and self-motivated.	0(0%)	0(0%)	7(5%)	131(92%)	5(3%)
	• Policy analysts.	0(0%)	0(0%)	7(5%)	126(88%)	10(7%)
	• Capacitated to carry out their duties well.	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	139(97%)	4(3%)

Table 6 shows the distribution of five perceived results sought for the Master of Education in Educational Management Programme by the respondents. Sixty-nine percent and 30 % of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed to the opinion that Master of Education in Educational Management Programme produces practitioners who are self-confident, analytical, proactive, articulate and capable of marrying theory to practice. Only one percent of the respondents were neutral. Most (93%) and 5% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the view that their exposure to the Master of Education in Educational Management equipped them with sound financial knowledge in order to handle organisational funds well. Majority (72%) and 23% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that the Master of Education in Educational Management Programme produces practitioners who are capable of managing organisations guides by sound business economic principles. Only 5% of the respondents remained neutral. Still on Table 6, 69 % and 30% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the line of thought that the Master of Education in Educational Management programmes produced practitioners who are capable of crafting realistic management plans. The Master of Education in Educational Management was perceived by 76% and 18% who strongly agreed and agreed; while 5% disagreed to the contention it produces practitioners who are to employ research so as to solve real life situation problems at their work place. Only 1% of them were neutral.

Table 6 also shows a five-fold result of the Bachelor of Education in Educational Management Programme students' perceptions of the efficacy the programme. First, 95% of the respondents agreed and 5% agreed respectively to the line of thought that the programme empowered the graduates to run their institutions efficiently and effectively. Second, 97% and 3% strongly agree and agree respectively with the point of view that the Bachelor of Education in Educational Management produced practitioners who are capable of mobilising resources. Third, ninety-two percent and 3% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with the opinion that the Bachelor of Education in Educational Management produces practitioners who are innovative, inventive, proactive and self-motivated. Only 5% of them remained neutral. Fourth, 88% and 7% agreed and strongly respectively agreed that the Bachelor of Education in Educational Management produced graduates who are policy analysts. Only 5% of them were neutral. Fifth, 97% and 3% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively with the claim that the Bachelor of Education in Educational Management produced graduates who are capacitated to carry out their duties well.

Table-7. Perceived Processes that Mould the Products of the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes

No.		SDA	DA	N	A	SA
1.	Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes offer processes to mould their products. Chief among them include:					
	• Proper registration process	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	136(59%)	94(41%)
	• Orientation of new students	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	7(3%)	223(97%)
	• Setting and proof reading of assignment and examination items, and their marking guides as well.	0(0%)	0(0%)	12(5%)	212(92%)	7(3%)
	• The conduct of tutorials	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	136(59%)	94(41%)
	• Marking and moderation of assignment and examinations.	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	223(97%)	7(3%)
	• Research supervision, marking and moderation.	0(0%)	7(5%)	0(0%)	223(97%)	7(3%)
	• Quality Assurance of all processes	0(0%)	4(3%)	0(0%)	212(92%)	18(8%)

Table 7 shows the perceived processes that mould the products of the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes at the ZOU. Seven processes were identified as critical by the respondents. First, proper registration process was viewed as critical by the respondents. Fifty-nine percent and 41 % the respondents agreed and strongly agreed to the preceding process. Two respondents highlighted that proper registration process for new students especially at the Bachelor's Degree level was very important as it sets the tone and quality of the products which will be released to run educational institutions in the nation and beyond.

The second process to properly mould the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes' students constitutes orientation of new students. Ninety-seven percent and 3 % strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the need to orient new students. The students are shown the light, way and direction such that they will be able to put into practice the theories they will have learnt in the various courses as they will be running their institutions because they bring along with them a wealth of experiences to tutorials. They could share such experiences during discussions at tutorials and have a theoretical buttress of their knowledge.

Setting and proof reading of assignment and examination items, and their marking guides as well are among other processes that assist ZOU to properly mould the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes' students. Ninety-seven percent and 3 % of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the foregoing processes. This according to our opinion is spot on as it enables ZOU to test students what they will have learnt in the modules in relation to what they experience in the field.

The conduct of tutorials is another crucial process to mould the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes' students. Fifty-nine percent and 41 % the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively to the need for ZOU to continue with the conduct of tutorials. Fifty percent of the respondents share with us the line of thinking that tutorials are a

strong teaching tool. They help students to share experiences, knowledge and information. They help tutors and students to exchange knowledge and expertise. The tutors could clarify grey areas in the modules and refer students to the most relevant and current sources of information.

Marking and moderation of assignments and examinations is one other dual process of nurturing ZOU's products in the studied programmes. Ninety-seven percent and 3 % strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the need to mark and moderate assignments and examinations in the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes at the ZOU. These two processes are assessment procedures that pass a judgement on the quality of the two programmes' products. For that reason they are quality assured by the Departments, Faculties, Quality Assurance Unit and external assessors.

Allied to the processes of marking and moderation of assignments and examinations is the treble process of research supervision, marking and moderation. Ninety-seven percent and 3 % strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the need to mark and moderate assignments and examinations in the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes at the ZOU. These three processes are assessment procedures that pass a judgement on the quality of the two programmes' products in the field academia and real world.

Quality assurance of all processes is one of the last processes that the respondents identified as significant in moulding good Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes' students. Ninety-two percent and 8 % of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed to the relevance and criticality of the quality assurance process in the moulding good Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes' students.

Table-8.The Perceived Benefits of the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes

No.		SDA	DA	N	A	SA
1.	Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes offer benefits such as:					
	• Nurturing educational managers into efficient and effective managers of their institutions.	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	210(91%)	10(9%)
	• Turning educational institutions into enviable havens of academic pursuits.	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	198(86%)	32(14%)
	• Winning and calling back stakeholder support for the good of their institutions.	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	32(14%)	186(86%)
	• Dealing with problem solving strategies.	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	210(91%)	10(9%)
	• Keeping abreast with current theories, trends and practices in the field of education.	0(0%)	0(0%)	12(5%)	186(81%)	32(14%)

The scenario in Table 8 manifests a situation whereby a perceived five-fold benefit of the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management programmes could be best realised through ODL at the ZOU. First, 91% and 9% of the respondents respectively agreed and strongly agreed that Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes nurtured

educational managers into efficient and effective managers of their institutions. In the open ended responses, 60% of the respondents proffered that an exposure to the two programmes truly and duly prepares educational managers for proper practical educational management business.

Another benefit of exposing educational managers to the two programmes is sounded by 86% and 14% of the respondents who agreed and strongly agreed to the view that Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes endow educational managers with the capacity to turn educational institutions into enviable havens of academic pursuits. Twenty percent of the respondents underlined the preceding statement by penning down that the two programmes expose educational managers to relevant theories and standard practices in educational management. Ten percent of the respondents indicated that educational institutions manned by the ZOU's Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes products hardly lag behind in terms of hopping the ladder of progress in the areas of instruction, pass rates, teacher performance, reading performance and co-curricular performance.

Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes are also associated with the winning and calling back stakeholder support for the good of the educational institutions. Most (86%) and 14% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the afore-stated benefit of the two programmes. Fifty percent of the respondents were of the opinion that the two programmes had equipped them with professionally nourishing capacities to enable them to mobilise resources, win and woe stakeholder support to maximally benefit their organisations.

Dealing with problem solving strategies in Table 8 is one other benefit associated with an exposure of the respondents to the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes. Ninty-one percent and 9 % of respondents agreed and strongly agreed to the line of thought that the two programmes under study capacitated them with problem solving strategies. As a result, one of them had the guts to point out that never before had the Zimbabwean education reaped the benefits of realistic running of educational institutions prior to the coming of ODL in 1993. In the light of problems that best post-colonial Zimbabwean education system, we can say it was prudent for educational managers to receive graduate educational management training programme.

The Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes enable educational managers to keep abreast with current theories, trends and practices in the field of education. Eighty-one percent of the respondents were in agreement with this afore-mentioned benefit, while 14 % strongly agreed to the afore-stated benefit and 5 % were undecided.

Table-9.Challenges to the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes

No.		SDA	DA	N	A	SA
1.	Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes are susceptible to challenges such as:					
	• Competition from other programmes in the Department and in the Faculty	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	186(81%)	44(19%)
	• Competition from other programmes in the other faculties	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	188(82%)	42(18%)
	• Lack of modern resources to communicate with learners located in the remote areas	0(0%)	0(0%)	28(12%)	188(82%)	14(6%)

Respondents in Table 9 were in concurrent with three challenges to the two programmes offered by the ZOU. Eighty-one percent of the respondents were agreeing that the two programmes were challenged by competition from other programmes in the Department and in the Faculty, while 19% echoed similar sentiments. One respondent indicated that while the introduction of new programmes in the Department and Faculty was welcome news as far as the growth of the university is concerned, the tendency is downplay the significance of the existing programmes. In other words, much more attention and focus are given to the new programmes, thereby, making them steal the limelight from the existing programmes.

Allied to the challenge of competition from programmes in other Departments and the Faculty, is competition from other programmes in the other Faculties which was also perceived as another challenge to the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management programmes at the Zimbabwe Open University. Eighty-two percent and 18 % of the respondents were agreeing and strongly agreeing with the preceding challenge. Ten percent of the respondents shared similar sentiments regarding this challenge when they indicated that as more new programmes come on board in the university, the existing ones albeit their previous fame can no longer hog the limelight as they used to in the past. They will be competing for students, staff and other resources.

Lack of modern resources to communicate with learners located in the remote areas is one other challenge that respondents indicated as a threat to the manner in which how the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management learners could be best trained through ODL at the ZOU. Eighty-two percent and 6 % of the respondents were agreeing and strongly agreeing with the preceding challenge, while 12% were undecided on the issue. Twenty-five percent of the undecided respondents revealed that it was misleading to indicate that ZOU lacks modern technological resources to communicate with its learners especially at a time when it has website and has the capacity to interact with learners online through the internet. Ten percent of those in agreement with this challenge pointed out that lack of modern resources to communicate with learners tends vary from place to place. We can deduce from these findings that the degree to which lack of modern resources to communicate with learners located in the remote areas in the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management programmes at the ZOU could be situation specific.

HOW THE BACHELOR AND MASTER OF EDUCATION IN EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT LEARNERS COULD BE BEST TRAINED THROUGH ODL

In their open-ended responses, the respondents put forward a plethora of suggestions regarding the perceived good practices of training the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management learners through ODL at the ZOU. Critical among such suggestions were the need to:

- ensure that the two programmes marry theory with practice,
- involve the alumni in the teaching and giving of testimonies to motivate in-stream learners,
- twin with other universities so as to put ZOU on the international map,
- sourcing modern technology to scale up academic operations of the two programmes,
- encouraging research by both tutors and students in the two programmes,
- upping the level of computer literacy among the tutors and the learners,
- introducing monthly newsletters to encourage academic prowess among learners, and
- introducing formative prizes for student achievement during each semester.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In regard to the above findings, the study draws the following conclusions. First, we conclude that the learning outcomes (referred to as the results sought in this study) are well known and regarded by the respondents. Second, we conclude that the respondents are very much conversant and

confident with the processes that mould the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes. Respondents are also aware of the perceived benefits associated with the offering of the Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes. Furthermore, it can be concluded that respondents are conscious of the likely challenges to the offering of Bachelor and Master of Education in Educational Management Programmes at the ZOU. It can also be concluded that ZOU has played a big part in the development of the human capital in Zimbabwe, Southern African Development Community (SADC) and beyond. Above all, it can also be concluded that the teaching of the two programmes under study is not an event, but a process. It should not end in theory at the ZOU's Regional Centres, but at source institutions of the students where the graduates are expected to put into practice what they will have mastered as a result of their exposure to the two programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the preceding findings and conclusions, the present study recommends the need for:

- the ZOU to keep on vigorously marketing the two programmes so that they can retain their capacity to earn the university world over,
- the ZOU to continue to quality assure all processes of the two programmes such that they remain enviable in a competitive university environment,
- the ZOU's Department of Educational Studies to introduce an integral practical component of the two programmes which involves following graduates to their stations in order to find out how they will be faring,
- the ZOU to continuously staff develop and regularly train the Department of Educational Studies' tutors on the new and standard practices of administering their duties in order to water down competition from other universities,
- the former students (the alumni) to never cease their support to the two programmes by mobilizing and providing resources,
- ZOU's Educational Studies' tutors to develop and adopt a culture of research such that they will be able to carry out studies with their part-time tutors and students in a quest for solving problems that could undermine the quality of the two programmes, and
- Carry out the study of this magnitude at a national scale by means of other research paradigms other than the quantitative one.

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