ODL and educational development in Africa: The case of Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Africa is unfortunately referred to as the Dark Continent; in some quarters it is perceived as a land full of ignorance whilst in others it is viewed as both undeveloped and under developed. The argument of this paper is to assess the nexus between ODL and educational development in Africa with particular reference to Zimbabwe. The paper analysed the degree to which ODL has influenced development in Africa in social, political and economic contexts. Issues of culture, religion and gender are also their space as well. ODL is consistent with the general definition of development which includes the specification that social groups have access to basic such as education, health, housing, nutrition resources and above all else, that people and traditions are respected within the social framework of a particular community. Twenty participants were selected using snowball sampling. ODL and educational development contribute to national development through improving the people’s quality of life, boosting productivity levels, raising income levels of workers among other reasons. The paper concludes that most development work has concentrated on ensuring equality but leaving out women in participating in the development process. This is chiefly because do not have control over their labour and largely lack access to education. The paper recommends the need for ODL to be democratized and selective if ever sustainable development is to be realized in Africa. The government needs to fund universities’ research and staff salaries so that ODL and educational development could continue to hop the ladder of progress. There is need to conduct cross country studies in this studied area in order to build solid knowledge base capable to influence policy decisions on ODL and educational development in Zimbabwe as part of Africa.

Key Words: Development, underdevelopment, ODL

Introduction

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has been associated with educational development all around the world. In developing countries ODL is viewed as a way to train qualified workers in their own socio-cultural contexts, with no need to migrate from South to North (Karsenti and Collin, 2012). Educational development through ODL has had positive effects on development in Africa and beyond. The benefits of ODL and educational development in Africa have been documented. ODL offers enormous potential for Africa, where higher education systems face numerous constraints (Gioan, 2007 in Karsenti and Collin, 2012, p.9). Accordingly, Karsenti and Collin (2012, p. 9), “ODL could effectively contribute to develop a qualified African work force, which is why it has received special attention in the Action Plan for Higher Education developed by the African Union’s (2006) Seconde décennie de l’éducation pour l’Afrique (second decade of education in Africa) (2006–2015) and elsewhere.” These observations are confirmed by Glewwe and Muralidharan (2015) in second statements: first,
Governments in developing countries, international aid agencies, and almost all economists agree that an educated populace is necessary – though not necessarily sufficient – for long-run economic growth and, more generally, a high standard of living. Second, the governments in these countries spend approximately one trillion dollars each year on education, and households spend hundreds of billions more (a precise amount is difficult to calculate) on their children's education.

Even in certain seemingly developed countries in Africa, ODL is viewed as a catalyst for development. This is underscored by the Department of Education in South Africa (n.d., p.2) which remarked:

South Africa has a high-cost, low-performance education system that does not compare favourably with education systems in other African countries, or in similar developing economies. There is a multitude of well publicised problems, including a shortage of teachers, under-qualified teachers and poor teacher performance. In the classroom, this results in poor learner standards and results, a lack of classroom discipline and is exacerbated by insufficient resources and inadequate infrastructure. On a government level, difficulties have been caused by a failure of appropriate inspection and monitoring, and confusion caused by changing curricula without proper communication and training. All this has lead to massive demoralisation and disillusionment among teachers and a negative and worsening perception of the teaching profession.

In concurrence with the above observations, International Council of Open and Distance Educators, Open and Distance Policy Briefing (2013, p.2) asserted:

- Open and distance learning is one of the most rapidly growing fields of higher education and training globally.
- Open and distance learning may be the only way of meeting the growth and participation objectives of governments the world over, and anticipated future student demands for flexible learning opportunities.
- The rapid uptake of open and distance learning and the forecast continued growth as a key form of higher education delivery highlights different aspects of the open and distance learning experience and requires consideration in regulatory and policy decisions.

The benefits of ODL have not been realised in South Africa alone. Tanzania and Kenya have benefitted from ODL as a gateway to educational development (Komba, 2009). It has a fairly long history in the country and has been accepted as an alternative mode of acquiring new knowledge and skills necessary for survival in the economic, social and political system (Komba, 2009). ODL has the capacity to increase access to education not along gender discrimination lines. In agreement with this view, Muganda (2010) ODL increases the opportunity for those who would have found it difficult to fit in the conventionally structured education system. ODL has potentials to contribute to social justice in higher education including the capacity to widen provision; to provide equitable education opportunities; increases opportunities of provision and recognition of lifelong learning; and the capacity to contribute significantly towards poverty alleviation and sustainable development (Muganda, 2002, 2005 in Muganda, 2010).

Interestingly, McIsaac and Gunawardena (2001) in Oladejo and Gesinde (2014) further underlined the role of ODL and educational development by observing that the directions which distance education takes will depend on such factors as the development of new media and computing technologies, different methods of group learning and information gathering, and the development of government telecommunications policies. According to the Commonwealth of Learning, COL (2003) in
Oladejo and Gesinde (2014, p. 134), ODL is important in the following ways:

(a) **Overcoming physical distance:** Open and distance learning can overcome problems of physical distance for learners in remote locations who are unable or unwilling to physically attend a campus; and learners and teachers geographically separated in that teachers in urban settings instruct learners in rural settings.

(b) **Solving time or scheduling problems:** Open and distance learning can solve time or scheduling for client groups unwilling or unable to assemble together frequently; learners engaged in full-time or part-time work, both waged and volunteer; and family and community commitments.

(c) **Expanding the limited number of places available:** Open and distance learning can expand the limited number of places available for campus-based institutions few in number; and stringent entrance requirements.

(d) **Accommodating low or dispersed enrolments:** Open and distance learning can accommodate low enrolments over a long period of time; and low enrolments in one geographic region but additional enrolments elsewhere.

(e) **Making best use of the limited number of teachers available:** Open and distance learning can make the best use of the few teachers available when there is a lack of trained teaching personnel relative to demand; teachers are geographically concentrated; and teachers with certain expertise are in short supply.

(f) **Dealing with cultural, religious and political considerations:** Open and distance learning can deal with differences, and consequently widens women’s opportunities to learn; meets the needs of populations affected by violence, war or displacement; and makes learning possible even when group assemblies are proscribed.

The offering of ODL has not been all that smooth flowing. However, ODL programs have a number of drawbacks such as high dropout rates and lack of individualized supervision (Bernard & Amundsen, 1989; Blay, 1994; Bourdages & Delmotte, 2001; Brindley, 1987; Fredda, 2000; Garrison, 1985,1987; Morgan & Tam, 1999; Powell, Conway & Ross, 1990; Scalese, 2001; Visser, 1998 in Karsenti, 2010), to which we may add the many challenges that developing countries face, starting with access to adequate technologies so that students can enroll in the programs (Oladele, 2001; Intsiful, Okyere & Osae, 2003; Selinger, 2001; Tunca, 2002; Bakhoum, 2002 in Karsenti, 2010).

There are also ODL and educational development challenges experienced in other areas. According to Carr (2000) in Musingafi, Mapuranga, Chiwanza and Zebron (2015), in the US drop-out rates range from 20% to 50%. The OECD (2000) in Musingafi et al. (2015) reported that drop-out rates range from 20% in the United Kingdom to 45% or more in Austria, France, and Portugal. In Australia, drop-out rates range from 35% to over 55% (Fozdar et al., 2006 in Musingafi et al., 2015). In African countries the drop-out rate is estimated to be over 50% (Daniel, 2005 in Musingafi et al., 2015).

In view of the foregoing observations, the research has acknowledged the benefits of ODL, but with little focus on Zimbabwean experiences. Therefore, the argument of this paper is to assess the nexus between ODL and educational development in Africa with particular reference to Zimbabwe.

**Statement of the problem**

Developed countries have managed to reap benefits accrued from their citizens’ exposure
to ODL despite having very well resourced conventional higher and tertiary education institutions. The converse is true with developing countries, especially those in Africa, Asia and Latin America. To what extent is the nexus between ODL and educational development in Africa with particular reference to Zimbabwe?

**Purpose of the study**

The investigation explored the nexus between ODL and educational development in Africa with particular reference to Zimbabwe.

**Research questions**

The exploration was based on the following sub-questions:

1. What are the benefits of the nexus between ODL and educational development in Africa with particular reference to Zimbabwe?
2. What are the challenges associated with the nexus between ODL and educational development in Africa with particular reference to Zimbabwe?
3. How can the challenges associated with the nexus between ODL and educational development in Africa with particular reference to Zimbabwe be mitigated?

**Methods and materials**

The researchers carried out this study using the qualitative route. The method employed to carry out this study was phenomenology. This enabled researchers to study the phenomenon of the nexus between ODL and educational development in Africa with particular reference to Zimbabwe in great depth. The participants were selected using snowball sampling of twenty former well established ODL students in Zimbabwe. Five of them are now professors and fifteen of them are now PhD holders. They are now working in various Zimbabwean universities. Eight of them were female, and twelve of them were male.

The methods of data generation were unstructured interviews, analysis of existing literature and observation. The multi-methods of data generation covered issues of benefits, challenges, nexus between ODL and educational development and the nexus between ODL and educational development in Africa with particular reference to Zimbabwe. These methods of data generation complemented each other well in coming up with qualitative data regarding the nexus between ODL and educational development in Africa with particular reference to Zimbabwe. The data generation lasted five months, that is, from April 2016 to August 2016.

The participants were coded former students 1-20 (FS1-20). The generated data were analysed thematically using four broad areas namely, benefits of the nexus between ODL and educational development, ODL and educational development challenges, and strategies to buttress nexus between ODL and educational development in Africa with particular reference to Zimbabwe. The data interpretation was done by analytically blending interview, observation and literature data in a bid to derive meaning from the data.

**Findings and discussion**

**Benefits of the nexus between ODL and educational development**

Here are the findings regarding ODL and educational development benefits from perspective of the participants.

**Human capital development:**

The foremost benefit of the nexus between ODL and educational development that was
revealed by the study was human capital development. One relevant perception about this issue was advanced as follows by one participant:

ODL and educational development are associated with human capital development (FS1).

The finding above indicates that ODL is all about capacity development. The observation is in agreement Karsenti and Collin (2012) who made two conclusions about human capita development. First, the respondents overwhelmingly expressed satisfaction with their ODL programs, and reported that they gained specific benefits in terms of greater feelings of professional competency, and more generally, that they benefited from tangible improvements in their work conditions. Second, they concluded that ODL programs are useful for professional development in Africa, and that they merit further promotion. Consequent upon human capital development through ODL and educational development, Zimbabwe is now endowed with highly skilled human resources suitable for all sectors of the economy, which only need to be fully operational. These findings are consistent with the researchers’ observation that Zimbabwe is now like a training ground for professionals who work in Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and beyond.

**Increased labour expertise:**

Increased labour expertise emerged as one of the benefits of the nexus between ODL and educational development. This is demonstrated by the following participant’s line of thinking:

ODL increases labour expertise in the host country and beyond (FS3).

ODL and educational development are a fountain through which a nation develops her expert labour force. In Zimbabwe, for example, lots of educational managers (school heads, education and district education officers and inspectors) and managers and other personnel in most government ministries and the private sector have been trained through ODL. On the basis of competencies held by ODL products, the researchers observed that these ODL products are serving the labour market (both private and public sectors) very well.

**Boosted productivity levels:**

The study revealed how the nexus between ODL and educational development could boost workers’ productivity levels. In connection with the preceding view, one participant had this to say:

ODL and educational development boosted productivity levels of workers in a nation (FS6).

Allied to increased labour expertise, are boosted productivity levels. ODL and educational development produce a labour force that is highly productive in both presence
and absence of other resources. In the absence of other resources, the labour force is usually innovative and resourceful, although some labour outputs and outcomes could be both quantitatively and qualitatively compromised.

Raised income levels:

The study also established how the nexus ODL and educational development could raise income levels of citizens, as indicated by the following participant’s line of thought:

ODL and educational development have the capacity to raise income levels of citizens (FS5).

It has been established that ODL and educational development increase income earnings of citizens (Todaro, 1997). The researchers subscribe to this observation on the grounds that ODL and educational development might increase workers’ expertise and productivity consequent on their enhancement of human capital development. Expert workers possess skills, attitudes and values which when directed to productivity they boost worker income levels as a result of increased levels of profits, although this is subject to the performance of the economy.

Improved quality of life:

With regards to the finding of how the nexus between ODL and educational development would be a catalyst to improved quality of life, the ensuing two-fold opinion suffices:

ODL and educational development improve the quality of life of people (FS7).

People’s standards of living are raised (FS12).

Educated people pursue high living standards. It is through proper education that people’s standards are raised. Proper education improves the quality of life of people (Mapolisa, 2015). Thus, ODL and educational development have the capacity to improve the quality of life of people. In this regard, people’s lives get raised in terms of their nutritional standards, sanitary and hygiene standards, farming and mining techniques, and tastes for accommodation, education, clothing and shelter. As a result of ODL and educational development, as researchers see it, people begin to emulate and appreciate best practices of improving the quality of life in other countries.

Raised status of workers and citizens:

One participant advanced the following view about how the nexus ODL and educational development could raise the status of workers and citizens:

ODL and educational development raise the status of workers and citizens in a country (FS4).

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Boosted confidence levels:

In connection with the finding pertaining to boosted confidence levels as a result of the nexus between ODL and educational development, here is one pertinent former student’s remark:

ODL and educational development boost confidence levels of leaders and workers (FS8).

Workers who have been properly educated and developed into professionals usually exude confidence in whatever they
will be doing anywhere. They confidently speak, write and argue their views in a convincing fashion. They also articulate their lines of thought with eloquence and conviction. Furthermore, the researchers observed that such people are proud of their achievements when they reflect on their paths to success.

**Decision making:**

With respect to the finding regarding how well the nexus between ODL and educational development promote decision making, here are two participants’ perceptions:

ODL and educational development capacitate people into good decision makers (FS9).

Highly educated people can be promoted to decision making positions (FS17).

In connection with boosted confidence levels, is decision making. Well qualified personnel are promotable to positions of decision making on merit. They are likely to be efficient and effective decision makers. It is common knowledge that they are craft literate and craft competent enough to make decisions that could promote organisational efficiency, effectiveness, culture, and commitment among workers. Instead of making costly decisions by rushing to take courses of action, through their earned education they make informed decisions using empirically-tested ideas. The researchers observed that highly educated people exude not only maturity, but stability, direction, focus and precision in their decision making capacities.

**Raised trainability levels:**

The nexus between ODL and educational development was found to be associated with raised trainability levels of workers. Two participants appeared to support this observation by indicating that:

ODL and educational development raise the degree to which citizens can be trained to meet national needs (FS10).

It is relatively easy to train educated people (FS11).

As a result of ODL and educational development in Zimbabwe, more people are now well educated. This makes them increase their chances to be trained into professionals of their taste. Once they are trained they become skilled professionals who can not only earn a decent living, but contribute to the development of the economy by paying income tax and AIDS levy. The researchers observed that raised trainability levels of citizens ensure that the country always have a reserve pool of different kinds of labourers who can take over when the current ones retire or expire.

**Increased employment opportunities:**

Increased employment opportunities were seen to be among the outcomes of the nexus between ODL and educational development. The following two concise participants’ statements demonstrate this benefit:

ODL and educational development increase unemployed people’s opportunities to get employed by local and international labour markets (FS11).

*Well educated people are employable anywhere (FS14).*

The findings point out that educated people are relatively easier to employ anywhere than their uneducated counterparts. There is no need for employers to engage unethical practices whereby they employ someone through nepotism, favouritism or patronism at the expense of merit. Issues of meritocracy, utilitarianism and positivism reign supreme in the selection and recruitment of workers.
Poverty alleviation:

The nexus between ODL and educational development was perceived to be a panacea to poverty as pointed out by the following two views:

- ODL and educational development are one of the positive steps towards poverty alleviation in any given country (FS12).
- Educated people are aware of strategies to alleviate poverty (FS4).

Poverty is associated with lack of education. If people want to remain perpetually poor and beggars, they should not get educated. Poverty is also a result of unemployment and alienation. Therefore, these findings concur with Todaro (1992) in Mapolisa (2015) who point out that education eliminates unemployment, poverty, alienation and under-development. Higher education inclusive of ODL is education for development which is conceived by educational development.

Increased access to higher and tertiary educational opportunities:

The nexus between ODL and educational development benefit developing countries by means of facilitating people’s increased access to higher and tertiary educational opportunities as shown by the following two narratives:

- ODL and educational development increase people’s access to higher and tertiary educational opportunities (FS13).
- More people develop themselves both academically and professionally (FS9).

Through opportunities for ODL and educational development, Zimbabwean citizens and some students from the SADC Region have been upgrade themselves professionally and academically. They have acquired higher and better qualifications for use in their workplaces. In that regard, the researchers observed that access to higher educational opportunities has been extended to professionals in addition to the traditional catchment of school leavers.

Eradication of gender disparities in accessing higher and tertiary education opportunities:

The nexus between ODL and educational development was found to associate itself with the eradication of gender disparities in accessing higher and tertiary education opportunities as illustrated by following two opinions:

- ODL and educational development usually have the capacity to eradicate gender disparities along the lines of accessing higher and tertiary education opportunities (FS14).
- ODL and educational development are a conduit for gender empowerment (FS5).

In the past, access to higher and tertiary education was the privilege of males. It was characterised by gender disparities. Achievement of social justice was a dream rather than a reality. ODL has potentials to contribute to social justice in higher education including the capacity to widen provision; to provide equitable education opportunities; increases opportunities of provision and recognition of lifelong learning; and the capacity to contribute significantly towards poverty alleviation and sustainable development (Muganda, 2002, 2005 in Muganda, 2010). Therefore, ODL and educational development ensure that higher and tertiary education is not gender discriminatory and segregatory.

The Nexus between ODL and Educational Development Challenges

Challenges associated with the nexus between ODL and educational developments were highlighted by participants as follows:
Lack of ICT empowerment:

The first challenge to the nexus between ODL and educational development was lack of ICT empowerment among Zimbabwean citizens. This challenge was described by two participants in the following manner:

Most rural and some urban ODL students have not been empowered to capitalise on the benefits of using ICT in their learning (SF15).

Not ODL students are ICT literate (SF2).

The emerging scenario from the above excerpts is that ODL students need ICT empowerment in order to make them ICT empowered. These findings concur with Musingafi et al. (2014) who concluded individual related challenges were problems related to the access and use of ICT. As a result of these problems, ODL students were unable to make good use of e-resources, all at the expense of the nexus between ODL and educational empowerment.

Lack of access to ICT gadgets:

Related to the finding of lack of empowerment, was lack of access to ICT gadgets. Two relevant opinions are as given below.

Some ODL students do not have access Internet services, while others do not even own laptops, smart phones, ipads or tablets (SF16).

ICT gadgets are expensive (FS18).

Lack of access to ICT gadgets was found topping among challenges facing the nexus between ODL and educational development. Students fail to access Internet services required for researching current state of knowledge in their study areas. Lack of access and ownership of laptops, smart phones, ipads, ipods and tablets deprive the students of the opportunities to benefit from e-learning and m-learning (Mobile learning). Also, ICT gadgets are dear to buy. Their prices are beyond the reach of most students.

Again, these findings are consistent with Musingafi’s et al. (2014), Mapolisa and Mafa (2012), and Mapolisa, Muyengwa and Chakanyuka (2010) conclusion that Individual related challenges were found problems related to the access and use of ICT and financial constraints, although these challenges were redeemable.

Physical distances between Regional Centres and prospective ODL students:

Two pertinent findings regarding the challenges to the nexus between ODL and educational development came out of the study.

Large distances between Regional Campuses limit people’s access to ODL (FS17).

Cash shortages in the country worsen the problem of distances between Regional Campuses and ODL students (FS7).

The nexus between ODL and educational development was largely let down large distances and cash shortages in the country. These findings are compatible with previous studies’ (Kangai and Mapolisa, 2008; Mafa and Mapolisa, 2012; Musingafi, et al., 2013) which established that individual related challenges were found to be financial constraints and occasional obstacles resulting from travelling distance from home to the regional centre; especially during face to face and examinations sessions. These challenges become prohibitive to otherwise prospective ODL students who could promote national development upon completion of their study programmes.

Uncertain salary provision by the state:

One of the participants was deeply concerned about the uncertain salary provision by the state in this way:
Uncertain grant provision by the state to pay higher education workers, especially, those from the universities has a negative effect on the ODL and educational development in a country (FS18).

ODL and educational development suffer a heavy blow if staff members are insecure about their salary issues. They need to be sure that the state always meets its obligation to pay salaries. These findings bode well with Mapolisa (2015) who found that one of the staff retention strategies in Zimbabwe’s public and private universities was the provision of regular salary. Provision of regular salaries among other staff retention strategies kept staff motivated and committed to work for the good of ODL and educational development.

Limited library facilities:

Limited library facilities were cited among challenges associated with the nexus between ODL and educational development.

Students in remote areas find it hard to access library facilities (FS19).

Some students hardly visit the library because of long distances (FS20).

The glitch of limited library facilities undermines the quality of ODL and educational development. Absence of library facilities tends to compromise the quality of education offered by higher education institutions. Such a situation might make the institutions to churn out half-baked professionals whom the universities will not feel proud to associate with. Denis Wase (1972) in Mapolisa and Mafa (2012) observed that one of the greatest benefits in the classroom (tutorial room) after the master (tutor) is a good library. The library can be physical or electronic.

Strategies to buttress nexus between ODL and educational development in Africa with particular reference to Zimbabwe

The following participants’ perceptions emerged to be some of the strategies to buttress the nexus between ODL and educational development:

Introduction of mobile library facilities:

In a bid to counter the challenge of lack of library facilities, one participant indicated that:

Mobile library facilities can boost ODL and educational development in Zimbabwe (FS6).

It is necessary to create partnerships and networking among ODL institutional providers within the continent on one hand, and with the private telecommunication sector, and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) on the other hand, to share knowledge and reduce costs (Oladejo and Gesinde, 2014). In that way, ODL institutions can communally own mobile library facilities, equipment and vehicles to serve students in the ten provinces of Zimbabwe.

Staff motivation in ODL institutions:

Staff motivation in ODL institutions was found to be among strategies meant to buttress nexus between ODL and educational development in Africa with particular reference to Zimbabwe. This way portrayed by the following participant’s quote:

"ODL staff members, just like any other university staff need to be kept motivated for the benefit of ODL and educational development (FS10)."
ODL and educational development could prosper if staff is motivated to the highest levels. Mapolisa (2015) observed that both monetary and non-monetary staff retention strategies keep staff motivated. It follows that when ODL institutions have motivated staff, the staff execute their work very well, much to the benefit of ODL students and educational development in Zimbabwe.

### ICT literacy:

In search of ICT literacy, one of the participants pointed out that:

Introduction of ICT courses during the first semester in every undergraduate and postgraduate programme (FS14).

According to Oladejo and Gesinde (2014) African governments need to invest more in ODL, through budgetary allocations and cost sharing at higher levels of education considering the invaluable roles it plays in the overall African development. They should analyze costs carefully and support long-term financing. ICT courses need to be thoroughly taught to all students given the fact that ICT is now part of the new Early Childhood Development Education curriculum up to university education level. Perhaps, the nation is becoming part of the digital world.

### Facilitation of the purchase and acquisition of ICT gadgets:

In an effort to circumvent the lack of ICT empowerment, facilitation of the purchase and acquisition of ICT gadgets was found to be one of the key strategies. One participant was spot on regarding this issue:

ODL institutions need to facilitate the purchase and acquisition of ICT gadgets by students (FS9).

Oladejo and Gesinde (2014) advise ODL institutions that they need to prepare national strategies and build capacity for using ODL and technology within the overall continental framework for educational reform and implement these strategies within sector-wide approaches where they exist. ODL institutions can approach ICT gadgets and facilities providers to forge memoranda of understanding and agreement to permit students acquire ICT gadgets of their liking during their first registration with the university.

### Conclusions

The findings culminate in the following conclusions. First, ODL and educational development contribute to national development through improving the people’s quality of life, boosting productivity levels, raising income levels of workers among other reasons. Second, ODL and educational development are constrained by lack of finance, ICT facilities and illiteracy, and distance between regional campuses and students. Third, the paper concludes that most development work has concentrated on ensuring equality but leaving out women in participating in the development process. This is chiefly because do not have control over their labour and largely lack access to education. Fourth, there are strategies to combat challenges associated with ODL and educational development.

### Recommendations

The conclusions result in the ensuing recommendations. First, the government needs to fund universities’ research and staff salaries so that ODL and educational development could continue to hop the ladder of progress. Second, universities’ involvement of diverse stakeholders needs to be involved in the provision of sustainable finances and ICT facilities. Third, the paper recommends the need for ODL to be democratized and selective if ever sustainable development is to be realized in Africa. Fourth, there is need to conduct cross country
studies in this studied area in order to build solid knowledge base capable to influence policy decisions on ODL and educational development in Zimbabwe as part of Africa.

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