

Excavating factors that militate against social transformation through Open and Distance Learning (ODL): a case of women in Mkoba suburb of Gweru

Abstract

This study sought to establish factors that militate against women's social transformation through enrolment in ODL programmes. Purposive sampling was utilised to select participants in this study. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with twenty-five women in Mkoba suburb Gweru. Recorded interview data were transcribed and thematically analysed by identifying emerging themes and their sub-themes in line with qualitative research approach. Several factors that emerged from the findings included lack of finances, misconceptions on ODL programmes, family and work responsibilities, and the questioning of the credibility and legitimacy of ODL programmes. Findings further revealed that some women were just lazy and un-ambitious, and some found it difficult to miss the social interactions in conventional universities. The study recommends rigorous marketing of ODL programmes through open days, print, audio and video materials, highlighting the benefits of ODL. The study further recommends setting up of scholarships for women by respective universities and corporate and non-governmental organisations as well as special funding from Government for women studying through ODL.