

Learning Organisation Concepts in Open and Distance Learning University: Their Application in Fluid Times of Discontinuity and Uncertainty

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ABSTRACT This study explored the key elements in applying learning organisation concepts in changing environments of uncertainty and discontinuity in the Zimbabwe Open University. Drawing on the interpretive paradigm and grounded theory, an open-ended questionnaire generated data from a convenient sample of 20 lecturers and 120 students. Findings suggest that ODL institutions are pivotal for effective collaborative engagement to meet institutional goals. Thus, they need to apply organisational learning concepts and function as “learning organizations”. This may be achieved by fostering both collaborative and individual life-long learning, professional development and intellectual stimulation, research, creativity and innovation. Transformational leadership and autonomy, collective accountability and responsibility and, appropriate incentive schemes also emerged as important. The study suggests re-designing of the ODL university leadership and aligning it to the dictates of modern learning organisations. Being mindful of such issues may assist the university in navigating its way through the uncertainties in the terrain.