

**DISTANCE EDUCATION AND THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY:
A CASE STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA**

by

OS OLADOKUN

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Study Leader: Prof TDJ Bothma

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ABSTRACT

For reasons of its tested capabilities distance education has been widely accepted and adopted in many institutions across the world. The University of Botswana (UB) is an institution that operates a dual-mode educational delivery system – combining the traditional system with the non-conventional delivery mode. In pursuing the distance education programme, an outreach arm of the University - Centre for Continuing Education (CCE), was established. The Centre's distance education unit (DEU) presently runs two courses by distance delivery mode.

The University of Botswana Library (UBL) has a commitment to give necessary support service to all academic programmes of the university, irrespective of the mode of delivery. Indeed, the mission of the UBL among others aims at responding speedily and appropriately to academic support needs and expectation of students and faculty. The main aim of this study was to carry out an investigation of the role and involvement of the library in the provision of distance education at the University of Botswana.

Knowing that the practice of library and information service to the ubiquitous distance learners promises to be a clear departure from the known traditional library system, the dissertation starts with a detailed description of the research problem and specific aims and objectives of the study.

In carrying out the study the research methods adopted comprise mainly the review of the literature, structured interview and use of the questionnaire. In reviewing literature we consulted current journals, appropriate books, relevant proceedings of conferences, the Internet, etc. Structured interview was arranged with some staff of DEU and librarians who were directly involved. Questionnaires were directly administered to one of the two

groups of distance learners during a residential session and mailed/faxed to all the 18 students of the second group.

The findings and discussions from the research supported the hypotheses formulated and provided a concrete base from which conclusions are drawn and recommendations made to all the stakeholders. These are the library/librarians, the DEU - the providers of distance education at the university, and distance learners themselves.

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Above all, I give all glory to God for making it possible for me to accomplish this task.



DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife, 'Sumbo and children, 'Seun, 'Seyi and 'Sayo who missed so much of me while this study lasted.

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