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Factors Affecting Adult Weekend School Dissertation Academic Writing: A Case of One University in Harare, Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

The research looked into the factors that influence weekend adult dissertation writing at a Zimbabwean public university. The study sought to critically examine the difficulties associated with writing in an exoglossic language for the majority of adult students who use English as a second language for communication and academic writing. In this study, a phenomenological approach was used in the form of semi-structured interviews with twelve conveniently sampled weekend school students. Consent was obtained from each student before the data was collected. The study also used thematic analysis in conjunction with the capabilities theoretical framework to try to uncover the various capabilities that each student used in academic writing. The study discovered that adult academic writing for English as a second language speakers at the university level is hampered by a variety of factors, including poor time management on the part of students, a lack of writing experience, unrealistic curriculum time schedules, and supervisory attitudes. All of these factors combined to make weekend adult academic dissertation writing unavailable to students. However, the students are encouraged to improve on the negatives that affects their performance in academic writing. Furthermore, recommendations are made to university administrators and lecturers to become more actively involved in their roles in administering weekend school adult academic writing to students whose first language is not English.

Keywords: Weekend School; Dissertation Writing; Exoglossic Language; Adult Learning; Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

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1. Introduction and Background

Academic writing is a crucial skill for university students globally, and for adult learners, the inability to read and write effectively can pose significant challenges to their educational success. In the context of adult education, strong writing and reading skills are essential for navigating coursework, conducting research, and engaging in critical discussions, ultimately impacting their ability to achieve academic goals and succeed in their endeavors. Because of the difficulties that may arise with writing in a second language, adult students may find it difficult to generate ideas when writing about a specific research topic when allowed to do so. The study focused on adult education studying at Midlands State University which is a state-owned university in Zimbabwe and one of the top universities in Zimbabwe^[1]. Every adult student at Midlands State University (MSU) is required to write a dissertation in semester 3.1 for undergraduates and 2.1 for masters students and there is no way for MSU students to avoid academic writing of research and the numerous challenges that come with it. Zimbabwe, like the majority of Southern African countries, adopted exoglossic language policies in which ex-colonial languages were elevated to the status of official language^[2].

When Zimbabwe gained independence from British rule in 1980, English became the country's exoglossic official language. The country has a university policy (affecting about twenty universities) that mandates English as the language of instruction. Nonetheless, Zimbabwe is a culturally diverse country with a whopping sixteen official languages. This establishes Zimbabwe as one of the most culturally diverse nations in Southern Africa. The monolithic language policies that seek to elevate English (a foreign language) above all indigenous languages in the country's education system are deeply rooted in colonialism and the segregation of indigenous people, their languages, and their beliefs. Language, in this case, is a tool crafted in Zimbabwe's educational systems to portray a 'language imperialism'^[3] that is still elite-oriented and frequently the standard. The dominance of exoglossic languages denies the majority of African students' access to knowledge, and adult students are constantly faced with thesis writing challenges. Writing is extremely difficult as long as the language is a second language. According to White and Arndt^[4], writing is not an easy task.

Most students find themselves between a rock and a hard place when it comes to dissertation writing, which has the potential of being demanding. Hence, skills are required to overcome such writing skills challenges.

Writing an academic thesis can be more difficult than writing letters or business letters^[5]. Academic writing is concerned with the type of writing that students must perform at higher levels of education, such as in college or university, and the focus of this study is on MSU Harare weekend school adult students. Thesis writing is therefore academic writing for university students including MSU adult students. Writing a thesis entails compiling research reports that follow a specific format and method of organization that meets the institution's conditions and rules as well as international standards^[6-8]. According to Hardling^[9], dissertation writing is a task carried out by a researcher to present the results of their research findings in writing. The purpose of writing a thesis/dissertation, according to Budiharso^[10] is to conduct a research examination and to develop writing skills for research outcomes. Moreover, conducting research and summarizing the results of that investigation are the goals of thesis writing.

When writing a thesis, adult students may run out of words and fail to have direction and cohesion in their writing. One of the psychological variables is students' proclivity to lose focus when developing a strong thesis^[8, 11, 12]. One of the socio-cultural aspects of adult students' thesis writing that must be considered is whether they acknowledge thesis writing norms in their department or university less than other students. Furthermore, one factor that may prevent adult students from completing their theses is a lack of grammar usage in their writing. The majority of adult students, however, begin writing theses without understanding the fundamentals or the challenges they will face because they simply propose topics from their workplace or modules they are interested in and come up with a thesis topic^[13-16]. Their unique social and cultural variables, as well as language factors, can become a barrier to their writing^[17]. However, more research into the factors that contribute to the challenges of adult students writing a thesis at a weekend school is needed to identify the academic writing challenges they face. As a result, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the factors that contribute to dissertation writing challenges faced by Harare weekend school adult students.

2. Literature Review

A scoping review was carried out for this study to fully examine the extent, range and nature of available research on the effect of exoglossic languages on the academic writing of indigenous adult students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The review revealed that there is a shortage of literature that critically unpacks the effects of colonial languages on the academic writing skills of adult students in HEIs from the global south. There seems to be a deliberate attempt to trivialise and conceal the hurdles and challenges that come with learning at HEIs when dominant colonial languages are the medium of instruction for the majority of the African student body. On the contrary, popular scholarships have chosen to focus on problematising multi-linguism and the abundance of languages as a threat to “communication, in education and as far as political stability is concerned”^[3]. These reasons have been used as an excuse for language acquisition and the exclusion of vernacular languages from the curriculum of the education system in the Southern African context.

The very nature of language imperialism cannot be underestimated, it covers all aspects of a person’s educational levels, starting from nursery, primary, secondary, and high school and to the national university level. The dynamics of academic writing for university students whose home language is not English therefore should not be taken lightly. It is a by-product of colonialism, segregation and an attempt to not only make the native subservient but also to ensure that his voice is completely eradicated. The death of a language and a people^[18]. In the context of the students in HEIs, writing in an exoglossic language poses some serious challenges. The adult students usually find themselves struggling to write research dissertations and eventually try to outsource the writing of such activities that the students should be writing on their own. The scoping review carried out pointed out several issues that affect dissertation writing in adult academics at this university. Some of the issues raised are as follows:

2.1. Lack of Writing Skills

English as a second language may become very difficult for some adult students to express themselves. There

is research done to support the argument of adult students struggling to write research using 2nd language^[16, 17, 19]. The barrier is in expressing high organising and planning skills, which involves word choice, spelling, and punctuation. Writing is further understood by readers and researchers as adding mechanical skills, acquiring new social relations, and increasing cognitive thinking. The adult students at MSU, find themselves struggling to translate thoughts into writing as a means of communication with their audiences who are unknown to them, however, the adult students must be found to be writing coherently, clearly and precise without help from the reader^[20, 21]. Additionally, students who write in the second language may need to continuously practice to write in that language to improve self-efficacy. The ability to write scientifically of the student, is determined by an individual’s ability to have confidence in writing which was referred by Bandura^[22] as self-efficacy where is students comprehend academic writing deeply and practice frequently^[23] pointed out that “students writing confidence influenced their motivation to writing, resulting in more production of high-quality writing at school” (p. 1). The student at this university most of them showed that they did not have the self-efficacy needed to be able to write their dissertations.

2.2. Lack of Social Flow

The weekend school adult students may be lacking what is known as social flow where students lack sharing time everyone working and producing work at the same time while discussing breaks^[24]. Young and Ferguson^[25] expressed that adult students may lack effective time for writing practice eventually, there is no purposeful, pleasurable and satisfying exposure which provides strategies and techniques fostering a knowledge process and a conducive learning environment. Adult students at MSU, as they lack writing practice, fail to express themselves in the English language even though they write their examinations in the same language. Now that they are required to write a long continuous paper that requires continuous, coherent, precise and clear writing, they fear leaving out some key information, other adult students according to Checkett and Feng-Checkett^[26] may find it difficult to write a proper language without using slang or without getting confused.

2.3. Lack of Collaborative Training

There is a shortage of literature In Zimbabwe, some adult students come to universities from Polytechnics or universities that do not write dissertations. These adult students would have trained in other areas such as secretarial studies, and engineering and then decided to further their studies while already working. In so doing, such adult students do not have any experience in dissertation writing and no such collaborative training was received before hence finding it tough to write a dissertation. The weekend school students are adults who work from Monday to Friday morning and then attend lessons from MSU from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday until Sunday at 5 p.m. and the cycle goes on and on until they finish their studies. Although the adult students receive training in business research methods about research or dissertation writing, some do not take it seriously as they concentrate on module examinations. However, Vincent et al.,^[27] and Tremblay-Wragg et al.^[28] found that a writing retreat is a good way of improving adult students' conceptualisation of research. The adult students find it difficult to write in isolation versus writing in examination halls or class as they find solace in numbers^[29, 30].

2.4. Time Management

The discussion with adult students during supervision is always the issue of time management as a critical component in research writing^[31]. The students are adult working class that work from Monday to Friday, some to Saturday every week and then attend classes Friday from 2 p.m. and then Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Besides school and work, most of them are family people hence the issue of time becomes critical and real in research writing for the weekend school adult students since it's not only about writing but reading as well. In the same manner, the school does not have time management skills as a module or training for the adult students^[32, 33]. The time management concept, which is juggling between work, family and school, may hinder the weekend school adult students from writing the research well, and they will rush to write without a clear understanding of what they are writing since research writing needs a student to develop writing skills that are necessary for adult student to organise work in meaningful paragraphs, sections, chapters and eventually conclusions^[5].

2.5. Lack of Research Writing Skill

Research done by Meerah^[34] and Kakupa^[35] pointed out that the adult students mostly have a negative attitude towards research writing as they focus on their examinations and do not consider their research writing as a core component of their study hence failing the oral and thesis writing. Meerah^[34] went on to point out that the students lack: research skills such as the pre-research components (structure of the thesis), search for information, quantitative skills, interpretive skills and report writing. The failure of adult students to put their thesis together was corroborated by^[36] who stated that the adult students lack awareness and knowledge of research writing and they need to be assisted to achieve the fit as they make mistakes in writing which is a sure testimony that writing is not in the adult students. The writing is negatively impacted by the failure to find the relevant information and then the adult students find themselves no longer interested, which is the case with the MSU weekend school adult students. These research writing skills are very important to come up with meaningful, understandable research, and bringing all the thesis writing components together^[8, 17, 20, 37]. The adult students must be able to analyse and interpret data as well as the results of the research which further complicates the writing by the weekend school adult students at MSU, Harare Campus. Some of the issues that come up in the writing by the weekend school adult students are the failure to come up with a problem statement, identification of gaps in the literature, methodology chapter writing, wrong research terminology referencing styles being mixed and some students end up plagiarising the work of others^[38, 39]. This has been the norm with other universities across the country.

2.6. Negative Comments from the Supervisors

Negative comments always demoralise adult students and the adult students may fail to comprehend some comments and eventually, this leads to a lack of motivation to write the research^[5, 40]. The negative comments without giving the students direction may affect the writing performance of the students as they may end up feeling not good enough to write the research. The adult students may be affected by the fact that some supervisors do not have enough time for their students and end up submitting their work late.

3. Theoretical Framework

This article utilised Sen's^[41] Capabilities Approach in attempting to unravel the varying factors that affect weekend adult academic dissertation writing at one university in Harare. Sen^[42] contextualises the capabilities theory in education by focusing on a freedoms that are regarded as real or actual opportunities and in the case of this study, the adult students persuing their academic weekend school as a real opportunity to empower themselves. His adaptation of the capabilities approach shuns away from the focus on positivist pedagogies and therefore it has attracted younger researchers who resonate and identify more with concepts such as students' freedom, capacity to achieve and values^[43]. The students have the real means necessary to achieve academic success and it's a very big essential opportunity for one to move up the ladder in the work place and have a sense of achievement. Additionally, these students and other students who benefitted from such innovativeness of weekend school have gone to do their PhDs because they have been given the opportunities and the tools to go up in life, something that they could not achieve in their early years in life^[44-46]. One example is that many students see the weekend school as an opportunity to acquire a degree which has been elusive in one's life due to poor background or one had an opportunity to get a first degree but could not afford to do a masters due family commitment as one might be required to take care of the whole family including extended families once one gets a job. In addition, Sen^[47] talked of the conversion factors such as the marketable gains, where some students once they acquire the degrees, since they are a working class, they are marketable whether in the same company or outside the company. As if the conversion is not enough, some of the students who acquired the qualification through this kind of academic achievements, they have moved all over the world such as in UK, South Africa, America etc, but they couldn't get these opportunities before they acquired such degrees.

Furthermore, Sen's capability approach's basic concern was on status of individual students in the society and one may have a higher status due to the qualification acquired. The same author provided another scenario of human diversity in the context of capabilities approach; however, the students have oneness to achieve their academic qualification as in most cases the students are given assignments in groups which enhances oneness to achieve their degrees. The

capabilities approach further touched on human resource development and raising the human capability since human capability improves the well-being and people's freedom. Furthermore, this approach influences the social status and the role to influence economic production which further improves the country's GDP. The students as they attend the weekend school they are improved technically, progress and improve the industrialization. As the scoping review alludes, these potential capabilities include the presence of a social flow, collaborative training, good time management and a sound supervision support structure from lecturers. Here, parallels can be drawn with the Ubuntu philosophy as Sen's adoption of the capabilities approach believes in the potential and processual nature of humanity to which individuals, regardless of any situation can achieve maximum egalitarianism, given conducive environments. The objective of this study therefore was to investigate enabling and disabling factors affecting adult students attending weekend writing workshops at this university. This translated to the researchers looking into possible internal and external resources that enhance or inhibit or secure the functioning of the academic writing process for the students involved in the study. Hence the sample of the students was chosen based on the fact that someone is working and also attending the weekend school.

4. Methodology

The papers adopted the inductive approach for qualitative data analysis as it is said to be convenient and effective for qualitative data for several research purposes^[48]. The study takes the form of a qualitative case study as a research design. The purpose of the case study was to have an understanding of the phenomena under study within the context of the University weekend school adult student's dissertation writing. According to Yin^[49], a case study allows for researcher(s) to get data from individuals, and organisations through relationships and communities and support both the deconstruction and subsequent reconstruction of different phenomena^[50]. In this study, the researchers' focus was to explore the factors that are affecting adult weekend school students' dissertation writing at a University in Harare, Zimbabwe. Data was collected from both the undergraduate and postgraduate (masters) who attend the weekend school. The sample size used for this paper was 12 adult students

chosen through purposive sampling. The criteria for one to qualify was to be at a level of dissertation writing (3.1 or 2.1 respectively). Additionally, the adult student should have been allocated a supervisor for research writing. Furthermore, the researchers collected data using interviews with semi-structured questions the researchers crafted an interview guide. The interviews were conducted at the university campus when students visited their supervisors, requests were made, all the ethical considerations were observed and the participants consented to participate and give their opinions, this took at least a week to complete.

5. Data Analysis

Data collected was analysed using the thematic analysis method as suggested by Braun and Clarke^[51] and the same authors went on to describe thematic analysis as a “method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes within the data” (p.7). The researchers went through the six stages of thematic analysis which are 1. familiarising ourselves with the collected data, 2. we then generated initial codes, 3. we searched for themes, 4. we reviewed themes, 5. we redefined and named the themes and 6. eventually produced the report for this study^[51]. The respondents were given unique identifiers for example, **P002-f/m-01-und/msc** (P-participant, f/m- represents gender, 01/02- age range (01-between 20 and 30 years and 02 between 30 and 40 years) and und/msc- represents undergraduate or masters).

6. Discussion of Results

The results of the study provided evidence of the challenges faced by weekend school adult students in dissertation writing. The major problems highlighted or that came out are time management, lack of writing in general as a practice, and short timeframe for dissertation writing.

6.1. Time Management

The results of the study indicated that the adult students struggle to manage time since they are also working class. This is in agreement with the research done by Keshavarz and Shekari^[33] which pointed out that time management is a critical component for adult students who write their dissertations. The respondents **P002-f-01-und** concurred when

asked about the challenges that they are facing in dissertation writing;

“... limited time to write the dissertation has been my major challenge considering that I go to work, I have a family and another thing...” and this was further corroborated by the **P004-m-02-msc** who said *“... time management...”* hinders proper dissertation writing.

The researchers further asked the same respondents how such a challenge can be ameliorated and the response by **P002-f-01-und** was *“I will try to improve on-time planning, I have noted the importance of managing my job, family and school work...”* and the respondent **P004-m-02-msc** responded by saying *“I will set deadlines for my research and add commitment towards my dissertation writing”*. The results show that adult students are struggling to balance time between their work schedules, school work and family time as confirmed by this respondent **p010-m-02-msc**, *“... Failure to balance between, work personal life through modules and dissertation writing...”*. In this instance, the adult students may have other modules that they attend lectures, write examinations and continuously go to work including working on weekends which eventually contributes to a lack of time management, however, the weekend school adult student should just work hard to achieve the requirements of dissertation writing because without completing this important document, the student will not proceed to graduate. However, one respondent pointed out that procrastination is also a contributing factor to the problems of research writing, **P006-F-01-und** *“... procrastination and time management issues...”*

6.2. Lack of Writing Experience

The analysed results have further pointed to a challenge of lack of writing experience since the adult students are not used to writing. Some are used to just reading for pleasure without putting the writing into meaningful practice and then this hunts the weekend school adult students when it is time for academic writing^[8, 17, 21, 39]. Here are a few quotes from the respondents;

P007-F-02-und: *“...students are not sure of what is required of them in writing a dissertation...”*

P008-F-03-und: “... *dissertation writing is a new concept hence I need to grasp the concepts...*”

However, the same adult students have concurred that there is a need for them to find ways of working around the challenges they are facing in dissertation writing since it is one of the major requirement for one to graduate with a degree despite the constrained identified and their responses were;

P007-F-02-und: “*The university should include a module on research writing to assist the students in appreciating concepts*”.

P008-F-02-und: “... *I will try to read and write, especially responding to calls for abstracts so that I can have time to write meaningful papers...*”

The experiences of the adult students as shown above in their responses concurs with that of the authors that the student should continuously learn to write academically. The weekend school adult students are used to writing mostly work-related activities. They are found wanting when writing meaningful research or academic writing as they normally concentrate on reading and writing examinations only and struggle when it comes to dissertation writing.

6.3. Time-Frame

One of the themes that came out of the data analysis is the issue of the short time frame given to students to write their dissertations as they are only given one semester to write and finish and because the English language is a second language to these weekend school students.

Participant No **P002-F-01-und** indicated that a “*shorter time frame is a challenge for students in dissertation writing*”. the student then suggested that “the university should increase the timeframe taken by the weekend school adult students to write their dissertations. The normal timeframe for students undertaking research writing for undergraduate and postgraduate studies has always been one year^[52] but for the weekend school adult student, it has been shortened to only one semester year due to the nature of their studies. This participant further suggested that the university “*must open the library 24/7*” as this will allow those students

who may want to utilise the library for research writing can do so. The same challenge was echoed by another participant **P003-M-01-und** who indicated that “*limited time since the weekend schools adult students are adults who go to work*” Additionally, participant No **P005-M-01-und** validated the same problem by saying, “...*time frame given to complete dissertation is a major challenge*”. The participant was of the view that the university should “*introduce a semester dedicated only to dissertation writing*” without other modules to concentrate on as is the case now.

6.4. Managerial Implications

The study focused on the challenges faced by weekend school adult students in government-run universities in the Capital city of Harare. The study took a qualitative approach and the interviewed students pointed to a variety of challenges such as the limited time frame given to complete the dissertation, poor time management, and lack of experience in adult academic writing. Quite several suggestions were given by students on how students might overcome the major challenges that are currently limiting them when it comes to dissertation writing and also how the university may assist adult students. Some students suggested that the university could assist by increasing the time frame given to students to complete their research and also considering giving students more guidance on dissertation writing. Other adult students suggested that the university may use the library to generate additional income by allowing interested students to use it 24/7. The challenges and solutions all provided may act as a guide for the managers administrators and even lecturers as they play their role in administering this academic role.

6.5. Implications for Adult Learning

Time management has been one of the key challenges of the adult weekend school education balancing the weekend schools commitment with personal and professional lives. Additionally, adult students using the weekend schools opportunities vary in their academic motivational levels and learning hence more engagements and motivational skills by the lecturers are needed to meet the demand of each student. Furthermore, the additional support system services such as counselling, academic advice and an online support and lecturers or educators should be available to support

the diverse learning process and needs of the adult learning students. The weekend school adult students bring in a wealth of experience and knowledge from the industry to the academic world hence the lecturers learn and leverage by incorporating such for collaborative projects that includes the real world experiences added into curriculum. In addition, adult students who make use of the weekend school, help them to advance their professional careers and acquire new skills and the educators should align the curriculum content with the industry needs from professional development and networking with the same industry.

6.6. What Is the Key Take-Away from This Study?

Adult weekend school students often face unique needs and challenges, particularly arising from socio-economic hardships. Understanding these challenges within their specific context is crucial for promoting effective adult education. This study aimed to identify best practices and effective strategies that support adult education through weekend academic programs, shedding light on the struggles these learners encounter in their research efforts to complete their studies. Detailed and actionable recommendations for educational institutions and policymakers include:

The first recommendation from this study is that universities may offer enhanced Support Services. Support services can be in the form of dedicated counselling and mentorship programs to guide adult learners through academic challenges. Secondly the same universities may consider providing academic writing workshops tailored to the needs of adult students, focusing on practical skills and research methodologies.

Thirdly universities may consider flexible learning options. This can be done through developing hybrid learning models that combine in-person and online classes to accommodate diverse schedules and commitments. This will facilitate asynchronous learning resources to allow students to study at their own pace.

Fourthly, universities might want to consider financial assistance programs. This can be achieved through introducing scholarships or subsidized tuition specifically for adult learners facing financial hardship.

Another recommendation is to create partnerships with

local businesses and organizations to provide funding or resources for adult education programs.

Universities can also improve on designing curricula that are sensitive to the socio-economic and cultural contexts of adult learners, integrating real-world applications and community issues. A key component in this is to involve adult learners in the curriculum development process to ensure that their needs and goals are adequately addressed.

Universities are also encouraged to collaborate with educational institutions, policymakers, and community organizations to create a supportive ecosystem for adult learners. The supportive ecosystem can be nourished through conducting regular surveys and focus groups with adult students to gather feedback and continuously improve programs.

The goal for universities is to use the findings of this study to inform the design and implementation of adult weekend school education policies that are responsive to the realities of adult learners. There also need to be consistency in universities advocating for policies that promote inclusivity and accessibility in adult education, ensuring that marginalized groups are represented and supported.

Adult learners can also significantly enhance their dissertation writing efficiency through various technological tools and platforms. Project management tools like Trello and Asana help organize tasks and track progress; while writing software such as Scrivener and Google Docs facilitate collaboration and organization of content. Reference management tools like Zotero and Mendeley streamline citation processes and note-taking apps such as Evernote and OneNote enable effective information capture and retrieval. Additionally, mind mapping tools like MindMeister assist in brainstorming and outlining, while writing assistance tools like Grammarly and Hemingway Editor improve writing quality. Collaboration platforms such as Slack and Microsoft Teams enhance communication and file sharing among peers. Time management tools, including Pomodoro Technique apps and Toggl, help learners allocate their time effectively. To support adult learners, educational institutions should provide training on these tools, ensure access to necessary technology, and create mentorship programs that offer guidance and encouragement throughout the dissertation process. By leveraging these resources, adult learners can navigate the complexities of dissertation writing more efficiently, ultimately improving their educational experience.

While this study focuses on Zimbabwe, the insights gained may hold broader relevance for adult education researchers and practitioners globally. The significance of understanding socio-economic and cultural dimensions cannot be overstated when designing effective weekend school curricula. By addressing these factors, educational institutions can better support adult learners in their pursuit of knowledge and skills, ultimately enhancing their educational experiences and outcomes.

6.7. Uniqueness in the Context of Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe is a country with high unemployment rate and limited educational opportunities faced with many challenges hence one may need to understand the socio-economic dilemma from the Zimbabwean context, so the study shed light on the role of the weekend school in addressing some of these challenges and the expansion of access to education through adult weekend school learning. Additionally, this study brings to the readers the understanding that Zimbabwe is a rich cultural and linguistic background that influences adult learning experiences and the outcomes thereof offering some insights into learning approaches and adult school cultural responsiveness. Furthermore, understanding policy landscape and context that help examine adult learning regulatory frameworks, identify challenges and opportunities for advancing adult education in the country through the initiatives of weekend schools learning. The weekend school adult learning encourages community engagement as one its strong background in the Zimbabwean education and this strategy strengthens adult learning and support life-long learning opportunities in the local context. The other major uniqueness in the Zimbabwe context is the demonstration of innovation and resilience in pursuing educational opportunities and the weekend school is an example of innovative and success stories in Zimbabwe showcasing transformative change of adult education by introducing weekend school learning opportunities and teach the learners how to write a dissertation.

7. Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations

The study has concluded that the weekend school adult students at this university should improve their dissertation

writing skills and should work within the limitations and overcome them as they write their dissertations. The study further revealed that the students are failing to manage time considering that they are working class, they have difficulties in managing their work schedule and school. Additionally, it has been revealed that most weekend school students struggle with their dissertation writing because English is their second language. Furthermore, the study revealed that most weekend school adult student lacks academic writing experience, they are good at reading for examinations but they can't do the same when it comes to dissertation writing.

The study focused on the weekend school adult students who are already undertaking research writing having allocated a supervisor and not include visiting or block release students but all or most of them are also working class students who are there to further their studies. Additionally, since they were no other new information from the interviews, however, the researchers managed to reach a point of saturation because it seemed there were no new responses with different responses from the first twelve interviewees.

The writers recommend that the weekend school adult students should work hard and overcome these limitations they are facing especially in timeframe, and time management, considering that they enrolled knowing very well that this was a weekend school that needed their full attention and participation. Additionally, we recommend that the adult students take the dissertation writing seriously as this adds to their writing skills, logic writing, comprehension and the ability to argue a case, all these will further help in their daily work skills and improve businesses in the organisations they come from. Research writing is an art which they have to master. We further recommend that the adult student should make use of nighttime to cover the gap between work and dissertation writing commitments, this will loosen their time burden and just take it upon themselves to work hard and consider weekend school as part of their lives for as long as they are still learning.

The authors recommend a follow-up future study to track the long-term effects of the identified factors on dissertation writing. Longitudinal data can provide deeper insights into how adult learners adapt and overcome challenges over time.

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Conceptualization, C.M. and P.M.; methodology, C.M.; software, C.M.; validation, C.M. and P.M.; formal analysis, C.M.; investigation, C.M.; resources, C.M. and P.M.; data curation, P.M.; writing—original draft preparation, C.M.; writing—review and editing, C.M. and P.M.; visualization, C.M.; supervision, C.M.; project administration, P.M.; funding acquisition, C.M. and P.M. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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