



CHALLENGES BEING EXPERIENCED BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

Tichaona Mapolisa¹
Onias Mafa²

ABSTRACT

The study examined challenges that undergraduate students face in conducting research in Harare and Bulawayo regions of the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU). This has been motivated by the realisation that, a good number of postgraduate students encounter challenges when conducting research. It is therefore imperative that the causes of such challenges be identified and addressed. In our view, the undergraduate level is a fertile ground for such an investigation. The paper makes use of descriptive surveys, focus group discussions and document analysis. Random sampling shall be used for descriptive surveys, while purposive sampling shall be employed for focus group discussions, which shall be conducted in ZOU's Harare and Bulawayo Regions. Document analysis will entail reviewing undergraduate research projects that are in the university's regional libraries. Analysis of project markers' comments will be made. Forty five Bachelor of Education (Educational Management) students filled in the questionnaire. Research data were analysed and interpreted thematically. The study came up with three categories of some of the challenges that undergraduate students in the studied regions of the ZOU experience in their conduct of research. They comprised tutor, student and tutor- related challenges. In connection with tutor-related challenges that were associated with lack of research interest and experience, tutor absence from work and failure to return to work promptly. Critical student-related challenges were lack of money, time, library resources and family problems. All institution-related challenges (lack of internet facilities, lack of research-related courses, lack of library resources, and lack of computer literacy and lack of workshops) negatively impacted on the studied students' capacities to conduct research.

¹ Senior lecturer and National Programme Leader in the Faculty of Arts and Education of the Zimbabwe Open University, PO Box MP1119 Mount Pleasant, Harare. **E-mail:** tichmapolisa@yahoo.co.uk, tichmap@mail.com

² Senior lecturer in the Faculty of Arts and Education of the Zimbabwe Open University, Bulawayo Region, P.O. Box 3550, Bulawayo. **E-mail:** oniasmafa@gmail.com, mafa@yahoo.com

The study drew some conclusions from the findings. First, it concluded that no one set of challenges that research participants experienced in the conduct of their studies wholly impacted on the quality of their research projects. The three categories were mutually exclusive to each other. The study rejected; no tutor interest in students and their topics, leaving no-co-supervisor, too little direction and too little practical help given as challenges underpinning the present respondents' conduct of research. All the institution-related challenges were on the high side in terms of how they were experienced by undergraduate students who were undertaking research.

The study's major recommendations included the need for the ZOU's Department of Education to:

- *Mount regular workshops for research supervision and writing for both tutors and students.*
- *Provide opportunities for tutors and students to carry out collaborative research work.*
- *Supply tutors and students with research guidelines so that they will not abuse and misuse each other.*
- *Motivate tutors and students to present conference papers at local and international conferences. It is in such conferences that tutors and students can polish their research experiences and skills.*
- *Supply tutors and student with research supervision guidelines so that they will not abuse and misuse each other. That way, both parties will be able to know what is expected of them in the supervision of research projects, as well as, their writing of the research reports.*

Key Words: The following terms needed to be defined in the context of this study:

Challenges

These are hindrances or problems that negatively impact on tutors' abilities to supervise students' research project

Undergraduate Students

Bachelor of Education (Educational Management) students carry out a systematic inquiry directed towards increase of knowledge or understanding of the subject under study.

INTRODUCTION

At the Zimbabwe Open University, a research project is a prerequisite for the completion of a degree programme in all the faculties. This paper seeks to interrogate the challenges being experienced by undergraduate students in conducting research in ODL. The background to the study starts the study by showing reasons that prompted the researchers to carry out the present study. Statement of the problem, research questions and significance of the study form the first part of the study together with the background to the study. The second part of the study is made of the literature review, while the third part presents the research methodology employed in this study.

Discussion of findings makes the fourth part. Last, but not least, conclusion drawn from the findings is given. Finally, recommendations based on the findings and conclusions are made.

Background to the Study

ODL undergraduate students sometimes face challenges in conducting research. Students at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) are attached to a single supervisor. Some of these tutors have varying research exposures and experiences. The quality of the research product as a result of the supervision processes seems to be one of the challenges that the Department of Education at the ZOU faces among other competing challenges. This article examines findings of one year's study into challenges that influence the quality of research projects at the ZOU. Some tutors cease to continue researching soon after graduating (Cresswell, 2003). Some students are scared of carrying out research (Pearce, 2005). Not all tutors in Open and Distance Learning Institutions get the opportunity to present conference papers, attend research workshops and get involved in conducting base line studies (Bell, 2000). It is against this background that the co-researchers were motivated to investigate challenges that Bachelor of Education (BEd) (Educational Management) students research in Harare and Bulawayo regions of the ZOU experience in carrying out research.

Statement of the Problem

Undergraduate students experience challenges in conducting research. Research-challenged students experience problems in coming up with research products of high quality. Thus, the co-researchers were motivated to explore the following question:

How do challenges experienced by undergraduate students in conducting Bachelor Educational (Educational Management) research projects at Harare and Bulawayo regions of the ZOU influence the quality of the research projects?

Research Questions

The study sought answers for these research questions:

- What challenges do undergraduate students experience in conducting research in ODL?
- How do these challenges affect the quality of the students' research projects at the ZOU?
- How can these challenges be overcome in a bid to raise the standards of research supervision and quality of research supervision and quality of research products at the ZOU's Department of Education?

Significance of the Study

Research projects undertaken at Bachelor Education (Educational Management) Degree level are crystal indicators of the quality of academic work going on at the ZOU. Tutors and students who are challenged during research supervision may compromise the quality of research work at the ZOU. The study consciously hoped to collect data on the challenges that undergraduate students face in conducting research. Also the research students' input on research challenges they face would contribute to policy formulation and evaluation of the ZOU's current supervisory practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Challenges in the Supervision of Research Projects

There are three categories of challenges that impacts on the way students carry out their research projects. These are tutor-related, student-related and institution-related.

Research scholars in the mould of Nyawaranda (2005), Shumba (2004) and Chabaya, Chiome and Chabaya (2009) and Pearce (2005) highlight some of the supervisor-related challenges in the supervision of students' research projects.

- Too few meetings with students.
- No interest with students.
- No interest in the topic.
- Too little practical help given.
- Too little direction.
- Failure to return work promptly.
- Absence from work (Department) leaving no co-supervisor.
- Lack of research experience.
- Lack of relevant research skills and or knowledge e.g. statistics as observed by Thomas and Nelson (2001) and Bogdan and Biklen (1992).

As co-researchers we were destined to feel that failure to consider solutions to the above challenges would comprise the quality of students' research work at the studied regions.

Student-Related Challenges in the Supervision of Research Projects

Research authorities in the likes of Bell (2000), Pearce (2005), Sidhu (2001), Anderson, Day and MacLaughlin (2006) and Aspland, Edwards, O'Leary and Ryan (1999) sounded the following as some of the student-related challenges in the supervision of their research projects.

- Lack of time.
- Lack of money.
- Lack of library resources.
- Lack of commitment and motivation to do the research.
- Lack of adequate theory in the area being researched on.
- Students' failure to meet regularly with the supervisor.
- Family problems/commitments.

It is against the background of such student-related factors that we were prompted to find out the degree to which the foregoing challenges affect the quality of research supervision and work. We were also of the opinion that an ability to handle both tutor-related and student-related challenges in research supervision is a pre-condition to the quality of research projects produced by both the tutor and student.

Institution-Related Challenges

Apart from student and tutor-related challenges cited above, (Mouton,2001;Shumba,2004, Nyawaramda,2005;Pearce,2005) concur that students' capacities to conduct research are constrained by institution-related challenges such as: lack of exposure of tutors to research skills, lack of internet services, lack of exposure to computers and lack of research material. Thondhlana, Mawere and Weda (2011) add another dimension of tutor-related challenges by indicating that the practice of imposing research topics on the students militates against students' success in research work. It was in the light of such findings that the conduct of this study became a possibility in order to find out how well institution-related challenges other than student and tutor-related challenges were impacting on the undergraduate students' research outcomes in Harare and Bulawayo regions with a particular focus on the Bachelor of Education (Educational Management) programme.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The conduct of this study was based on a triangulated methodology. It employed the survey research design complemented by the case study research design as well as document analysis. Use of survey research design was preferred because it is the most appropriate design where participants' opinions are sought (Punch, 2004). Also, Chikombah, Chivore, Maravanyika and Nyagura (1999:19) note that, 'according to Hall (1978) 98 percent of education studies employ survey method or approach. It is also highly regarded for its ability to be flexible, to collect information that can be put to several uses and its broadness in scope (Thomas and Nelson, 2001). The case study design made it possible for the co-researchers to explore the story behind the figures, addressing the *how* and *why* questions, accessing the experiences of students from the emic perspective (Borg and Gall, 1996; Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). Document analysis (research projects in ZOU's regional and comments on marked projects) was considered suffice in unmasking the challenges experienced by students in conducting research. Findings from case studies aided in the discussion of quantitative data.

Methods and Procedures

The population of the current study comprised all registered Bachelor of Education (Educational Management) research students in their final year from studied Regions at the ZOU. It looked at 10 Bachelor of Education (Educational Management) students' projects. A questionnaire with both closed and open-ended sections was distributed to a random sample of 45 research students. A random sample became mechanical because the study had to use all the 45 registered students as a sample. A purposive sample was viewed as a form of non-probability sampling in which the research participants appeared to meet the study's needs (Baker, 1994). Also a purposive sample of 20 tutors was provided by the two regions by means of a staff list on the internet. Data was analysed and interpreted thematically. Focus group discussions were also conducted; these consisted of seven students and five tutors per region. Focus group discussions were recorded by the use of a Dictaphone, transcribed verbatim, sent to participants for verification, before being

analysed using the grounded theory. Analysis entailed segmenting, coding, enumeration and placing the responses into themes and subthemes. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Analysis of data of the current study indicated that diverse tutor and student related challenges in the supervision of research projects could militate against the quality of research work submitted by Bachelor Education (Educational Management) students at the ZOU. As a result of the analysis of the study's data, the discussion of findings was guided by the following questions.

1. Who is the Bachelor of Education (Educational Management) research student at the ZOU? What are his/her characteristics?
2. How do tutor and student-related challenges in the supervision of students' research projects affect the quality of students' research projects at the ZOU?

Table-1. Tutor-Related Challenges being faced by undergraduate students in conducting research (N = 45)

Challenge	Percentage rank of tutor-related challenge
Too little direction	0
Too little practical help given	0
Too few meetings with students	60
No interest in topics	0
Failure to return work promptly	40
No interest with students	0
Absence from work	60
Leaving no co-supervisor	0
Lack of research experience	20
Lack of research skills	20

Findings in Table 1 show a mixed bag of tutor-related challenges being faced by undergraduate students in conducting research. Too few meetings with the students (60%) and absence from work by supervisor (60%) ranked highest. They were followed by failure to return work promptly (40%), lack of research experience (20%) and lack of research skills (20%). The preceding findings are significantly compatible with Nyawaranda's (2005) findings that indicated some challenges that research students experience in the conduct of their research could be tutor-related. All students in the questionnaire, interviews and focus groups indicated that tutor-related challenges: too little direction, too little practical help given, no interests in topics, no interest with students, and leaving no-co-supervisor as ineffective challenges in their conduct of research, hence, they all have 0%. It can be argued that not all tutor-related challenges in Table 1 are being experienced by undergraduate students in the studied Regions. Furthermore, a scrutiny of tutors' score sheets and samples of research supervised work and research projects revealed that most tutors were dedicated

to their work, although some students were challenged by some strict supervisors. As a result of strict supervision some less confident students are scared of carrying out research (Pearce, 2005).

Table-2. Student-related Challenges being Experienced by Undergraduate Students in the Conduct of Research (N = 45)

Challenge	Percentage rank student-related challenge
Lack of time	80
Lack of money	60
Lack of library resources	60
Lack of commitment and motivation to do research	0
Family problems/commitments	80

Findings in Table 2 show student-related challenges being experienced by undergraduate students in conducting research. Most of the students indicated that lack of time (80%), lack of money (80%), family problems/commitments (80%), lack of library resources (60%), and family problems/commitments (60%) as challenges of great concern that the undergraduate students experienced in conducting their research. On that note, they were in agreement with Anderson et al (2006) who pointed out that time was a very limited resource for students carrying out research. One Bachelor of Education (Educational Management) student lamented one's failure to travel from remote parts of the country (Zimbabwe) to the city centres where one could access library resources and internet cafes. Furthermore, lack of funds let them down in photocopying recent journals, studies and e-resources. Consequent upon these findings, the quality of research supervision and research projects might be compromised. Research students had to strike a balance between financing their education and sending their children to school, as well as looking after their families. These students had to buy and provide basic needs (food, shelter and clothes) for their families. These commitments competed with their need to successfully complete their research projects. To underscore this scenario, one research participant indicated that lack of money was quite prohibitive in the conduct of one's study as one could fail to raise money to register for the research project that spans over two semesters. On the sample footing, two other candidates exhorted that lack of time and money were deterrent to one's ability to successfully carry out research projects because not everyone will have access to library and internet resources in the absence of money. Time would be a very hard resource to get if one is engaged on a full time job that has its equally competing demands.

All undergraduate students at the ZOU's studied Regions disagreed with Pearson and Kayrooz's (2004) perception that lack of commitment and motivation to do research is one challenge that students face. One Bachelor of Education (Educational Management) student pointed out that it was meaningless and irrational for him/her to lack commitment and motivation to do research, especially after choosing the topic him/herself and getting the necessary guidance and help from their supervisor. It is common knowledge that students choose research topics in their areas of

interest, expertise and experience. They also consider issues of resources to enable them successfully carry out their research projects.

Table-3. Institution-related Challenges that Undergraduate Students Experience in Conducting Research (N=45)

Challenge	Percentage rank student-related challenge
Lack of internet facilities	80
Lack of research-related courses	80
Lack of library resources	80
Lack of computer literacy	80
Lack of workshops	80

The scenario in Table 3 portrays that the majority of the studied undergraduate students perceived: Lack of internet facilities (80%), lack of research-related courses (80%), lack of library resources (80%), lack of computer literacy (80%), and lack of workshops (80%) as some of the most pronounced student-related challenges that undergraduate students in Harare and Bulawayo regions of the ZOU experience. These findings are in tandem with previous research findings by (Mouton,2001;Shumba,2004, Nyawaranda,2005;Pearce,2005) who concur that students' capacities to conduct research are constrained by institution-related challenges such as :lack of exposure of tutors to research skills, lack of internet services, lack of exposure to computers and lack of research material. They however tend to miss out the practice of imposing research topics on the students that militate against students' success in research work (Thondhlana et al, 2011). Chirume (2011) dislikes the idea of making life difficult for candidates. While the afore-mentioned institution-related challenges to undergraduate students' ability to conduct appear to be on the very high side, it does not mean that they are stand alone challenges because a 20% room for other challenges.

CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study sought to explore challenges being experienced by undergraduate students in conducting research at the ZOU's Department of Education with particular reference to Harare and Bulawayo Regions. We distributed a questionnaire to five tutors at each of the two Regions, and 45 to BEd (Educational Management) final year students at studied Regions. The findings could prompt larger scale studies in the same area, especially in the open and distance education in developing countries. Students were mature and very much willing to conduct research in the field of education. Tutors are relatively mature, qualified and experienced to supervise research projects. The results confirmed existing results in connection with tutor-related challenges such as: absence from work by supervisors and too few meetings with students; student-related challenges-lack of time, lack of money and family problems; and institution-related challenges-lack of internet facilities, lack of library resources, lack of computer literacy, and lack of workshops as some of the overarching challenges that the studied undergraduate students experience in conducting their

research. It can be concluded that time like money is an economic resource which compels students to utilise wisely in performing equally competing jobs to research both at home and work place. Students lamented that their incomes were rather inadequate to fully commit themselves to research in the wake of other competing family and social responsibilities. Distance education students needed to work with sensitive tutors who commit themselves to the progress and success of their students. Tutors ought to be students' models in the conduct of research projects. Lack of library resources was viewed as one of the greatest let downs to effective research supervision and writing. Tutors could be more resourceful by accessing and providing students with relevant reading material. Students needed to be coached how to balance their time to enable them to carry out their research well. In order to perfect the art of research but tutors for the benefit of the student tutors need regular research workshops because not all tutors in Open and Distance Learning Institutions get the opportunity to present conference papers, attend research workshops and get involved in conducting base line studies (Bell, 2000). Workshops are avenues to drive candidates towards the main route to successful research work. Commonwealth of Learning (2001) speaks highly of research-related workshops such as e-learning which has the capacity to enhance students' abilities to scale to dizzy heights.

The findings contested the following tutor and student-related challenges as some of challenges being experienced by the research participants in conducting their research:

From the tutors' perspective, the present findings rejected;

- Too little direction, too little practical help given to students and no tutor interest in the topics. By implication, committed research tutors help students know how to research. They show them the way. They value new areas as opportunities to further their horizons in research and their students' as well.
- No tutor-interest with the students. Documents analysed and students' perception of their tutors revealed that tutors had a very big heart for their students. They knew that they existed because of the students they teach; therefore, it is foolhardy for them to lack interest in the students.
- No interest in topics chosen by students. This untrue because students guided or sometimes even compelled to undertake certain research topics. Under such circumstances, it becomes untrue to claim that tutors show no interest in the students' topics. If they do so they will be defeating the purpose for which they exist. After all, they have a reputation to protect.
- Too little practical help given. All tutors want to be associated with succeeds. They therefore give ethically and professionally practical guidance to their students so that they can make a groove in academia.

From the students' front, the results disagreed with this viewed student-related challenge:

- Lack of motivation and commitment to do research. The findings revealed that students often choose research topics in the areas that interest them and

have expertise and experience in. Therefore, they are bound to be motivated and committed to their work.

The study also concluded that no one set of challenges that research participants experienced in the conduct of their studies wholly impacted on the quality of their research projects. The three categories were mutually exclusive to each other. Ignoring the challenges three categories of challenges mentioned above militates against the quality of research projects undertaken by undergraduate students. This ultimately negatively impacts on the ODL education offered and let alone the students produced as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In a deliberate drive towards the improvement of the quality of BEd (Educational Management) research projects submitted at the ZOU, the following recommendations are made from students' points of view. The Department of Education needs to:

- Mount regular workshops for research supervision and writing for both tutors and students. It is in such workshops that tutors and their students may fully become aware of each other's strengths, weaknesses, threats, opportunities and challenges in the conduct of academic research projects.
- Encourage Regional Programme Coordinators from the Department of Education to mount regular students' research workshops in which students could present their work to peers and tutors for some critiquing. This may go a long way in building confidence in the students as they obtain diverse opinions from peers and tutors.
- Approach the ZOU's Students Counselling Services Unit at the Regional Centres with students who will be experiencing family problems/challenges that may undermine the quality of research supervision and research projects. Such students may be given proper academic advisement to enable them carry on with their research well.
- Approach the ZOU's Marketing Services Unit with the intent to collaboratively devise ways and means of assisting research students with opportunities to purchase computer lap tops. Most of ZOU's students, even those in some rural areas have access to electricity. Such a venture may help students type their own research work or even access internet facilities.
- Provide opportunities for tutors and students to carry out collaborative research work. This will enable the tutors to rub on their research skills, expertise and experiences on their students. They can submit their research articles to refereed journals.

- Motivate tutors and students to present conference papers at local and international conferences. It is in such conferences that tutors and students can polish their research experiences and skills.
- Supply tutors and student with research supervision guidelines so that they will not abuse and misuse each other. That way, both parties will be able to know what is expected of them in the supervision of research projects, as well as, their writing of the research reports.
- Ensure that further research be carried out at a national scale or regional level on a comparative basis in the same area. This will give rise to tried and tested ideas on how to deal with tutor and student-related challenges in the supervision and writing of research projects.

REFERENCES

Anderson, C. Day, K. and MacLaughlin, P. (2006) 'Mastering the Dissertation: Lecturers' Representations of the Purposes and Processes at Masters Level Dissertation Supervision'. *Studies in Higher Education*. Vol.31, No.2, pp.20.

Aspland, T. Edwards, H., O'Leary, J. and Ryan, Y. (1999) Tracking New Direction in the Education of Post Graduate Supervisors. *Innovative Higher Education*. Vol.24, No.2, pp.21.

Baker, T.Z. (1994). *Doing Social Research* (2nd Edition). New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.

Bell, J. (2000). *Doing your Research Project*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Bogdan, R. C. and Biklen, S. K. (1992). *Qualitative Research for Education*, (2nd Edition.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Chabaya, O., Chiome, C. and Chabaya, R.A. (2009). A Case Study from Masvingo Regional Centre at the Zimbabwe Open University. *Open Learning*, Vol.24, No.3, pp211-221 Nov 2009 (EJ856759) ephost@epnet.com

Chikombah, C.E.M., Chivore, B.S.M, Maravanyika, O. E., Nyagura, L.M., and Sibanda, I.M. (1999). *Review of Education Sector Analysis in Zimbabwe 1990-1996*. Paris: UNESCO.

Chirume, C. (2011). E-Learning system success: The quest for the user acceptance variable. Paper presented at Zimbabwe Open University International Research Conference, Harare (16th-17th June, 2011).

Commonwealth of Learning International. (2001). *Building Capacity to Deliver Distance Education in Nigeria's Federal University System*. Report prepared for the World Bank (http://siteresources.worldbank.org/NIGERIAEXTN/Resources/capacity_de.pdf) Accessed on 13th August 2011.

Cresswell, V.W. (2003). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design Choosing among Five Traditions*. New York: Continuum

Gall, M. D. and Borg. W. R. (1996). *Educational Research: An Introduction*. New York; Longmans

- Mouton, J. (2001).** How to Succeed in your Masters and Doctoral Studies: A South African Guide and Resource and Resource Book. Pretoria; Van Schalk Publishers.
- Nywaranda, V.A. (2005).** A Paper Delivered at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) Workshop, Mashonaland Central Region, Bindura on 'Supervising Research Projects/Dissertations' 8 November, 2005.
- Pearce, L. (2005).** How to Examine a Thesis. New York Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University.
- Pearson, M. and Kayrooz, C. (2004).** 'Enabling Critical Reflection and Research Supervisory Practice'. International Journal for Academic Development. Vol.9, No.1, pp18-19.
- Punch, K. F. (2004).** 'Introduction to Social Research. Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches. London: Sage.
- Shumba, O. (2004).** 'The Social Research Workshops, Quantitative Educational Research. Synopsis and Reflections on the Scope of Data Analysis'. 27 May, 2004.
- Sidhu, K.S. (2001).** Methodology of Research in Education. New Delhi: Sterling.
- Thomas, J.R. and Nelson, J.K. (2001).** Research Methods in Physical Activity (4th Edition). Albany: Human Kinetics.
- Thondhlana, S., Mawere, D. and Weda, Z. (2011).** Factors Affecting Completion of Research Projects by Students: A Study of Three Zimbabwe Open University Regions. In the Zimbabwe International Journal of Open and Distance Learning Vol.1, No.1, 2011

Bio-data for Tichaona Mapolisa and Onias Mafa (Dr.)

AUTHORS' BIO-DATA

1. Bio-data for Tichaona Mapolisa (Mr.)

He is a senior lecturer and National Programme Leader for the Bachelor of Education (Educational Management) in the Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Arts and Education at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU). He has published two research articles with refereed journal of the African Symposium. He co-authored seven modules for the Department of Education, Development Studies and Youth Studies in Development. He has presented ten papers at the Africana Womanism Conference (UZ - 16-17 October 2010), LASU International Conference, Lusaka in Zambia (12 -15 May 2011) and Zimbabwe Open University International Conference (16-17 June 2011). He has also presented two papers for the Zimbabwe Open University Vice Chancellor's Day Jameson Hotel, Harare (17 May 2011) and two papers at the ACDE International Conference at Mlimani Conference Centre in Tanzania (13-15 July 2011). He is working on five full papers of the abstracts that were accepted by DEASA. He has content reviewed nine modules for ZOU's Education Programmes. He can be contacted at the Zimbabwe Open University PO Box MP1119 Mount Pleasant, Harare or by E-mail: tichmapolisa@yahoo.co.uk or tichmap@gmail.com or by cell: +263 733 608 577



2. Onias Mafa (Dr.)

He is a senior lecturer and Regional Programme Coordinator in ZOU's Bulawayo Region, in charge of PGDE and MEd (Educational Management) in the Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Arts and Education at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU). He is also in the panel of Supervisors for the Higher Research Degrees at ZOU. Apart from research supervision, he takes part in the critiquing and evaluation of MPhil and DPhil proposals. He has published one novel, four poems (Mambo Press, Gweru) and co-authored four ZOU's BEd Management programme modules. A manuscript, in which he was the research coordinator in CODESREA's Comparative Research Network programme, has been accepted for publication in CODESREA's book series as well as an OSSREA book chapter. He has presented of papers at regional conferences. He can be contacted at the Zimbabwe Open University (Bulawayo Region) P.O. Box 35550, Bulawayo or by E-mail: oniasmafa@gmail.com or o_mafa@yahoo.com or by cell: +263 773 724 793.

