

Navigating Dual Roles: Balancing Full-Time Employment and Academic Pursuits for Technical English Students at the University of Continuous Education- Relizane

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Abstract:

Universities of Continuous Higher Education in Algeria increasingly attract adult learners enrolled in English language programs while maintaining full-time employment. These learners must negotiate overlapping professional, academic, and personal responsibilities. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study examines the motivations, challenges, and support needs of adult working students at the University of Continuous Higher Education in Relizane. Data were collected through online surveys and semi-structured interviews. The findings indicate that career advancement and self-development are the primary motivational drivers. However, students face significant constraints related to time management, fatigue, and limited institutional support. Despite these challenges, participants demonstrate strong commitment and high intrinsic motivation. The study argues for more flexible and inclusive policies to better support adult working students' academic success.

Keywords: Full-Time Employment; Academic Pursuits; Motivation; EFL students; University of Continuous Education

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1. Introduction:

The Algerian government has initiated various programs aimed at enhancing the use of English within the country, acknowledging its escalating significance in the global socio-political and economic context. This shift towards English has prompted many adults to engage in English language education to fulfil the requirements of a swiftly changing world. Consequently, the increasing prominence of English in Algeria has resulted in a growing number of individuals registering for language courses at universities. While recent Baccalaureate graduates typically prefer to enrol in traditional universities, those who are employed full-time find it more advantageous to choose Universities of Continuous Education, which offer more flexible options for students unable to attend regular onsite classes.

A substantial number of students around the world struggle to manage the demands of their full-time employment alongside their educational obligations. In Algeria, there has been a significant increase in the number of working students, particularly those attending the University of Continuous Education. These individuals, many of whom are experienced professionals, undertake the pursuit of academic growth while balancing the demands of full-time employment. For these students, pursuing higher education transcends mere knowledge acquisition; it represents a calculated move towards career advancement, personal development, and fulfilling the increasing need for English language skills across diverse professional sectors (Covele, 2025)

At the University of Continuous Education-Relizane, a significant number of students are navigating the complexities of balancing full-time jobs with rigorous academic responsibilities, particularly in English language courses. This situation is increasingly common as many adult learners strive to further their education while managing their work commitments. In response to this challenge, the government is committed to offering flexible learning options that cater to the needs of adult learners. These initiatives aim to improve access to education for individuals whose professional obligations make it difficult to engage in traditional full-time study programs (Covele, 2025)

Despite the growing number of employed students within higher education globally, scholarly attention remains limited regarding the specific challenges and lived experiences of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students who simultaneously navigate both academic and professional commitments. This gap is particularly pronounced in contexts such as Algeria, where socioeconomic factors and evolving labour market dynamics increasingly compel students to undertake employment during their studies. While existing literature has explored the general impact of part-time employment on student performance and well-being, there is a notable lack of research that centres on the nuanced realities of EFL learners whose academic success is often closely tied to sustained language immersion, interaction, and practice.

This article seeks to address this deficiency by investigating the academic, social, and psychological dimensions of employed EFL students' experiences at the University of Continuous Education in Relizane. By focusing on this unique intersection of employment and language learning, the study aims to illuminate the coping strategies, perceived barriers, and institutional support mechanisms that shape these students' trajectories. The research is grounded

in the belief that understanding their perspectives is essential not only for pedagogical innovation but also for equitable educational policy design.

In this context, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What motivates employed adult learners to enrol in English language programs in continuous higher education?
2. What key challenges do these learners face while balancing employment and academic study?
3. How effectively do institutional policies and support systems meet the needs of employed adult learners?

In conclusion, the intersection of employment and language education presents a complex landscape for EFL students, one that is often overlooked in both institutional planning and academic discourse. By situating the experiences of working students at the University of Continuous Education in Relizane, this study highlights the multifaceted challenges these learners face, as well as the adaptive strategies they employ. As Algeria continues to expand access to higher education, particularly through continuing education programs, it becomes imperative to design inclusive policies that not only accommodate but also empower employed EFL learners.

2. Literature review:

Studies on the experiences of English as Foreign Language (EFL) students balancing employment and academic endeavours, especially in under-researched areas like Algeria, are scarce. This literature review seeks to compile key findings on student employment, language learning, and Continuous Education in Algeria, while identifying significant gaps in understanding the experiences of employed EFL students. It organizes insights from both international and local sources. This framework sets the stage for the current study and emphasizes the need to include perspectives from Algeria's continuing education sector.

2.1. An Overview of Continuing Education Universities in Algeria:

Universities of Continuous Education (UCE) or as commonly known in French as (UFC) '*Université de la Formation Continue*' represent a fundamental aspect of the system of higher education in Algeria, particularly for adult learners, professionals, and those seeking to enhance their educational qualifications while maintaining full-time employment. These institutions aim to provide flexible learning opportunities that cater to individuals who are unable to engage in traditional, onsite, full-time academic programs due to work or personal commitments. The concept of continuous education in Algeria is historically linked to the country's broader educational reforms and socio-economic goals, which prioritize expanding access to higher education.

One of the essential aspects that should not be disregarded in Algeria's universities of continuous education is the flexibility they provide regarding course structure and delivery. Unlike traditional universities, UCEs allow students to carry on their studies through evening classes

and distance learning programs, enabling them to balance their academic ambitions with their professional responsibilities (Ahouari, 2012). This system is particularly important to individuals in the workforce facing barriers in attending regular daytime courses. For instance, adult learners, including teachers, policemen, engineers, and business professionals, may prefer the UCE model of teaching, which offers them the opportunity to advance their education without having to give up their careers.

The growing demand for higher education in Algeria combined with the government's recognition of the need for a more educated and skilled workforce, has led to a significant expansion of these institutions. The government has supported continuous higher education through various reforms, such as offering free access to university education for those with a Baccalaureate diploma. This policy aligns with Algeria's broader efforts to build a more knowledge-based economy. The continuous education model plays an energetic role in these efforts by providing employed adults with the opportunity to improve their qualifications and skillset in several domains including English which makes the focal point of this article.

Despite their importance, continuing education universities face several challenges that are worthy of mentioning. One of the most pressing issues is the lack of sufficient infrastructure and resources to fully support the growing number of adult learners. Lately, these bodies of higher education have integrated online and blended learning opportunities which reinforced the concept of distance learning. This aims to meet the increasing demand for more flexible learning formats for these institutions. In this regard, Boumediene and Hamadi (2021) argue that technology-based learning environments, such as Google Classroom, have the potential to enhance flexibility and access to learning; however, their effectiveness largely depends on learners' digital competence and their ability to adapt to online pedagogical practices. Nevertheless, this is frequently contested due to the insufficient readiness of learners, who are predominantly adults with limited computer skills. Additionally, there is a necessity for more customized support services for adult learners that cater to their unique requirements as working students, such as tutoring and counselling, to aid in the operation of the technology utilized in their distance learning and to assist them in managing their academic and professional obligations.

Another challenge possibly a crucial one as well is the perceived disparity between traditional university education and continuous education programs. Although the degrees awarded by UCEs are generally recognized (**Smaïhi & Rawiya, 2025**) there remains some scepticism about their value compared to those offered by traditional universities. This gap in perception potentially limits the professional advancement opportunities for UCE graduates, especially in competitive fields where prestige and institutional reputation could be important. To address this issue, it is essential for universities of continuous education to further enhance the quality of their education which is what Boutabet and Machtar (**2025**) emphasized on by making all necessary changing that range from teaching practices, learning organization, and support systems. All these should ensure that academic standards raise up to meet the evolving needs of the labour market.

2.2. Motivation to Obtain a University Academic Degree:

The increasing number of professionals pursuing university degrees reflects a global trend driven by various economic, personal, and social motivations (Jerez, 2024). One of the primary reasons for adults returning to higher education is the desire to enhance their career prospects. A university degree often provides a competitive advantage in the job market, opening doors to better-paying positions, career advancement, and leadership roles. This is particularly important for individuals seeking to change careers or break into specialized fields. Professions such as medicine, law, and teaching require specific academic qualifications, which universities offer through rigorous programs designed to equip individuals with the necessary skills and accreditation. For many, these academic credentials are essential for achieving their professional goals.

In addition to career development, many individuals are motivated by intellectual curiosity and the desire for academic growth. Universities, as centres of research and knowledge, offer an environment that nurtures critical thinking and academic inquiry. These institutions provide opportunities for engagement with leading scholars and access to cutting-edge research. Universities encourage critical and analytical thinking, fostering intellectual development that extends beyond classroom learning. Furthermore, universities serve as platforms for students to follow advanced academic studies and research endeavours, enriching their intellectual and professional lives (Thomas, 2009).

Personal growth is another significant motivator for individuals enrolling in university programs. Higher education offers a structured environment where students can develop both academically and personally. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, education plays a key role in fulfilling self-actualization and personal development (Gawel, 1996). University life exposes students to diverse perspectives and cultures, fostering empathy and broadening their worldview. Such exposure not only enhances academic learning but also equips students with the skills and competencies necessary to succeed in a globalized world. The university experience thus contributes to both the intellectual and personal development of students, allowing them to reach their full potential.

Another critical aspect of university life is the opportunity for societal networking. Universities serve as hubs for professional and social interaction, where students can form connections with peers, professors, and professionals in their field. Such interaction by no means shapes their identities as learners and as members of the community (Jerez, 2024). These relationships often extend beyond academic pursuits, providing valuable opportunities for career networking and personal growth. The academic environment fosters collaboration, mentorship, and partnerships that can significantly influence a student's career trajectory.

The decision to track a university degree is multifaceted, influenced by career aspirations, intellectual curiosity, personal growth, and the social and professional opportunities that higher education provides. As individuals seek to enhance their skills, expand their knowledge, and build meaningful connections, universities offer the resources and environment needed for these transformative experiences. Ultimately, these motivations reflect the diverse ways in which higher education serves as a steppingstone for professional and personal success.

3.4. Managing Employment and Academic Commitments:

To navigate professional responsibilities and academic studies simultaneously is an increasingly common pursuit particularly among adults. This dual commitment presents significant challenges that can negatively affect professional and academic performance, as well as personal well-being. Time management stands as one of the primary obstacles for individuals balancing these responsibilities. Efficiently managing time is crucial for navigating overlapping deadlines and competing commitments. Effective prioritization, task allocation, and the ability to avoid conflicts are essential for achieving academic and professional goals. Poor time management, however, can lead to missed deadlines, heightened stress levels, and diminished productivity (Nasri & Saou, 2024)

Employers play a central role in supporting employees who are balancing work and academic commitments. Flexible work schedules, study leave, and financial assistance for education are essential policies that can significantly ease the burden on employees pursuing further qualifications. By fostering a work environment that values continuous learning, employers contribute not only to the professional success of their employees but also to their academic achievements. The support from employers can directly enhance an employee's ability to manage the competing demands of work and study, facilitating both career and academic progression.

The demands of balancing employment and study can also lead to significant social and personal sacrifices. Individuals may find it difficult to maintain social relationships or engage in leisure activities due to their overwhelming schedules, which can result in feelings of isolation and psychological distress. The imbalance between work, study, and personal life is a significant contributor to increased stress and reduced overall satisfaction (Nasri & Saou, 2024) This lack of time for social engagement and relaxation can further heighten the psychological toll of dual commitments.

Despite these challenges, managing both work and study concurrently presents substantial opportunities for career and personal development. Higher education, particularly in fields such as English as a Foreign Language (EFL), can serve as a critical lever for career advancement. The acquisition of additional qualifications can offer a competitive edge in the job market, and for working students, the opportunity to deepen their expertise in a subject that directly enhances their professional capabilities is invaluable. Furthermore, individuals who successfully navigate the complexities of balancing work and study often develop improved organizational skills, time management abilities, and a heightened sense of personal resilience. These attributes not only contribute to academic success but also foster increased efficiency and leadership potential in professional contexts (Covele, 2025)

Another key benefit of balancing work and study is the immediate application of academic learning to professional contexts. For EFL students, the overlap between theoretical knowledge and practical application is particularly meaningful. As students acquire new language skills and pedagogical techniques, they are able to integrate these insights into their professional roles, thereby enhancing both their academic understanding and job performance. This real-time integration of learning not only reinforces course material but also enriches the learning experience for peers, as students bring their professional experiences into classroom discussions

(Suminguit, Gacasan, Clarin, Generalao, & Baluyos, 2025).The ability to apply academic insights directly to work environments accelerates both professional development and personal growth.

In conclusion, while the dual demands of work and study pose significant challenges related to time management, physical and mental health, and social life, they also offer valuable opportunities for career advancement, personal resilience, and professional development. Employers and educational institutions must recognize these challenges and offer necessary support to ensure that working students can succeed academically and professionally. By fostering a balance between these two areas, individuals can achieve both academic success and career progression, contributing to a more productive and fulfilling life.

3. Methodology

This section provides a detailed overview of the research design, outlining the specific context in which the study is conducted. It describes the mixed-methods strategy that has been employed to gather comprehensive data, as well as the various instruments utilized for data collection. Additionally, it identifies the sample population involved in the study and elaborates on the techniques that will be used for data analysis. The primary objective of this methodology is to explore the experiences and challenges faced by working students enrolled in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) programs at the University of Continuous Education-Relizane (UCE-Relizane) in Algeria. Furthermore, it aims to identify the key factors that contribute to their academic success, providing valuable insights into their unique circumstances.

3.4. The setting: about UCE Relizane

The study was conducted at the University of Continuous Education (UCE) of Relizane, located in northern Algeria. The UCE-Relizane offers flexible academic programs to adult learners, particularly working professionals, who seek to enhance their qualifications while managing full-time employment. This university is part of a larger national initiative aimed at expanding access to higher education for adult learners and providing opportunities for individuals who cannot commit to traditional full-time studies. UCE-Relizane has become a focal point for students pursuing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) programs, as English proficiency is increasingly valued in Algeria's evolving socio-economic landscape.

Given its focus on providing flexible learning opportunities for working adults, UCE-Relizane offers a blend of face-to-face and online courses, allowing students to balance academic demands with their professional responsibilities. The EFL department within UCE-Relizane is particularly noteworthy for the large number of working professionals it serves, making it an ideal setting for this research.

3.4. The mixed method approach:

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to yield a holistic understanding of the experiences of

working students enrolled in the EFL program at the University of Continuing Education–Relizane (UCE-Relizane). The adoption of such an approach is justified by its capacity to facilitate an in-depth exploration of individual lived experiences while concurrently identifying broader trends and patterns across the participant population (Creswell & Clark, 2018):

- Quantitative data will be used to assess broader trends, such as the prevalence of specific challenges or factors that influence academic success. A structured survey will be distributed to students to quantify aspects such as motivation, time management, and academic outcomes.
- Qualitative data will provide insights into the personal experiences, challenges, motivations, and factors contributing to academic success among working students. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with students and faculty to gather in-depth perspectives.

The combination of these methods allows for a rich and nuanced understanding of the research questions, with qualitative data adding depth to the quantitative findings.

3.4. Data collection tools and analysis:

A survey and semi-structured interviews were conducted with students in the EFL program at UCE-Relizane. The survey collected quantitative data through closed-ended questions, exploring students' motivations for studying EFL, challenges they face, factors influencing academic success, and their perceptions of support from UCE-Relizane. The survey was administered online to accommodate different schedules. In parallel, semi-structured interviews gathered qualitative insights, allowing students to share personal experiences regarding their motivations, challenges, strategies for success, and suggestions for better institutional support. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics while interviews were analysed thematically focusing on understanding the experiences of working students in the EFL program (Saldaña, 2016)

3.4. Sample

The participants involved in this research were all full-time employed students enrolled in UCE courses. The UCE- Relizane includes 200 students enrolled in the Technical English Courses section, in all levels. The survey questionnaire had a response rate of 55.5% at 111 students. The table below shows the characteristics of the sample employed in this research:

Table 1: Demographics of the questionnaire

Demographics		N	Percentages
Gender	Male	60	54%
	Female	51	46%

Age	Less than 20	8	7%
	20 to 25	13	12%
	26 to 30	16	14%
	31 to 35	28	25%
	More than 35	46	42%
Level	1 st year	53	48%
	2 nd year	33	30%
	3 rd year	25	22%
Employment status	Full time employment	76	68%
	Part-time employment	4	3%
	Self-employed	23	22%
	Unemployed	8	7%
Type of employment	Education	40	35%
	Healthcare	14	13%
	Business	22	20%
	Other	35	32%

It is worth mentioning that because the research concerns working students, the researcher had to disregard the answers of eight female participants who identified as housewives (unemployed) and four students engaged in part-time employment were excluded from the analysis, as the study focused specifically on full-time employed adult learners.

As for the interviews, 12 participants were selected using purposive sampling, this aimed to capture a diverse range of working EFL students in terms of gender, job type, and academic level. This method was chosen to ensure that participants had relevant and varied experiences regarding balancing their full-time work with academic demands in the context of continuous higher education in Algeria. The interview duration ranged between 25 and 40 minutes and continued until thematic saturation was achieved.

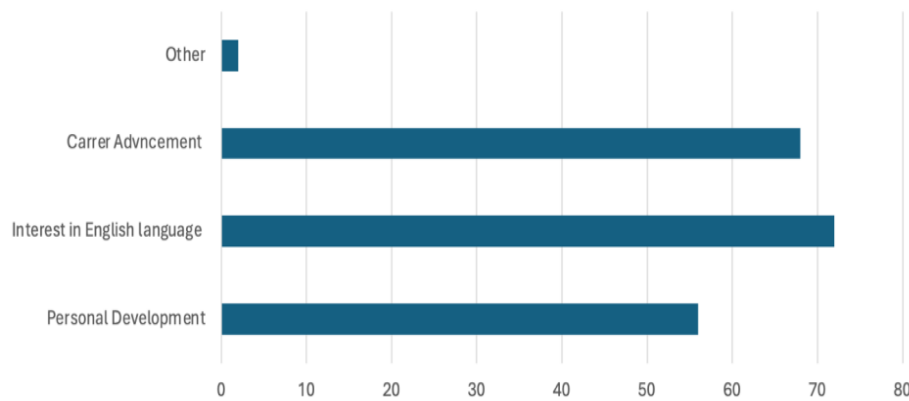
4. Findings

This section presents the findings and discussion based on data collected regarding the motivating factors that urge full-time employers to study English at UCE Relizane, the challenges they face, and the support this category of students need.

4.1. Motivations for Studying Technical English Course at UCE-Relizane

Students were inquired about their various motivations to enrol in a Technical English Course at UCE in order to understand the primary academic goals they want to achieve in this course. Their responses are shown in the figure below.

Figure 1: Motivation for studying technical English course at UCE -Relizane



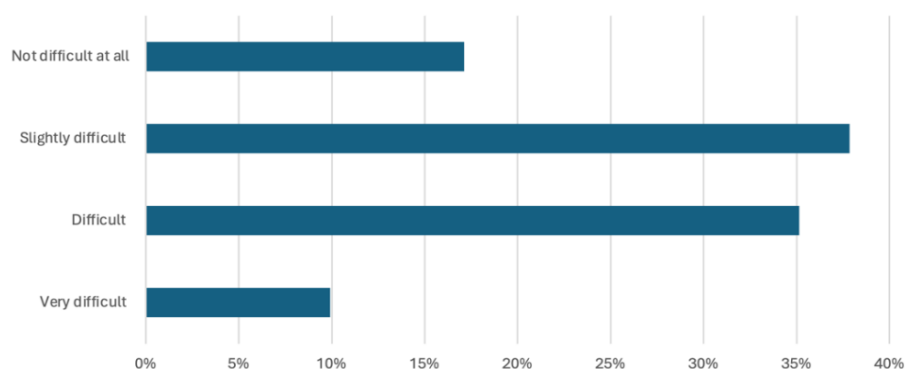
The figure demonstrates that the majority of students chose career advancement and interest in developing their English language skills as the primary motivation for studying English at university. 72 students declared that their interest in mastering English as a key motivation. In this respect, (Ryan & Deci, 2000) suggests that intrinsic motivation, such as self-improvement and intellectual curiosity, is critical in sustaining long-term engagement in language learning. The second most chosen options that reflected students' motivation in studying English were career advancement which reflects a need for English proficiency in their field of work. This accounted for 68 respondents who confirmed this. In this regard, interviewee 10 stated, "Improving my English skills will help me secure a promotion at my workplace." Also, interviewee 3 said, "In my job, English is essential, and I need to develop my skills to communicate effectively with international clients." This aligns with research by Gardner (1998), who argues that instrumental motivation, particularly for job-related reasons, significantly enhances language learning outcomes.

As shown above, motivations for studying Technical English at UCE-Relizane reflected a combination of career-oriented and personal aspirations. Whether students seek to fulfil workplace demands, advance their academic qualifications, or enhance their language skills for personal enrichment, their engagement in this course underscores the growing significance of English proficiency in technical and global contexts.

4.2. Challenges Faced by Working Students at UCE-Relizane

One of the key challenges faced by adult or working students is finding an effective balance between their academic responsibilities and professional obligations. The data on students' experiences with balancing work and study commitments revealed varying levels of difficulty.

Figure 2. Difficulties to balance work and study commitments



A significant proportion of respondents (83%) reported some degree of difficulty to balance between work and studies, with 10% finding it very difficult, 35% difficult, and 38% slightly difficult. Only 17% of participants indicated that it was not difficult at all. These figures suggest that managing both academic and professional responsibilities is a common concern. The interviews with students are to be discussed below where students gave more details about the several challenges that students face when balancing their work with studies. Students' data were thematically analysed and presented as follows:

a. Scheduling Conflicts and Rigid Timetables

A significant concern among respondents was the difficulty in managing work schedules alongside university commitments. six interviewees emphasized that initial course schedules, which were originally set for Saturdays, have been altered without prior notice, leading to conflicts with their professional obligations. Interviewee 3 said:

“They need to respect the initial program where we only had lectures on Saturdays and exams used to be scheduled on Saturdays also, now, they are extended to other days. This presented work problems for me and if I was told about it before registration, I would have just quit” Interviewee 3

Although this was noted one of the major problems that working students were facing, the majority of students indicated that they were still able to manage their schedules conflicts effectively despite the changes in timetable. It was only interviewee 3 who stated that he would have quit if he had known that the schedule would change from Saturdays to other days.

b. Overload of Summative Assessments

All 12 interviewees reported being overwhelmed by the number of assessments given within a short period. Among them, 5 interviewees found it particularly difficult to balance their workload, while 4 interviewees stated that, although challenging, they managed to complete their assessments on time. In contrast, 4 interviewees of students felt that the number of assessments was reasonable and did not significantly impact their ability to study. In this regard, interviewee 5 said “One thing I particularly want to address is the large number of summative assessments we are being given at the same time. I hope you will take this observation into consideration.” The student specifically emphasized that having too many assessments simultaneously made studying difficult and hoped the university would consider their concerns.

c. Limited Access to Learning Resources

A significant number of eight interviewees highlighted the need for recorded lectures and additional study materials. 3 of these, specifically mentioned that they usually miss onsite sessions on workdays due to work conflicts and they have serious problems in catching up. In contrast, two interviewees indicated that the available resources were sufficient, this showed a divide in student experiences regarding study material accessibility. Some students explicitly suggested that the university create summaries to facilitate studying and include more motivational activities for English language development.

d. Need for More Oral Expression Practice

A strong desire for more oral expression sessions by six interviewees to improve their English proficiency. In this regard, interviewee 3 said “We would like to have more Oral Expression sessions to practice the language more, as it is more beneficial in my job than studying literature.” This suggests that students are not only aware of the importance of the speaking skills but are also clear about their expectations from the course they enrolled themselves in. the fact that participants emphasized the need for more Oral Expression sessions reflects a strong understanding of how communicative competence directly impacts their professional futures. This emphasis on more speaking practice indicates a shift toward goal-oriented language learning, where learners actively seek skills that align with their workplace demands.

e. Issues with teaching quality and pedagogical methods

Half of the interviewees (6) raised concerns regarding the teaching methods employed by some instructors in UCE-Relizane. They emphasized the need for improved pedagogical strategies, and highlighted issues with instructor behaviour and classroom engagement. This was better elaborated by interviewee 5 who said:

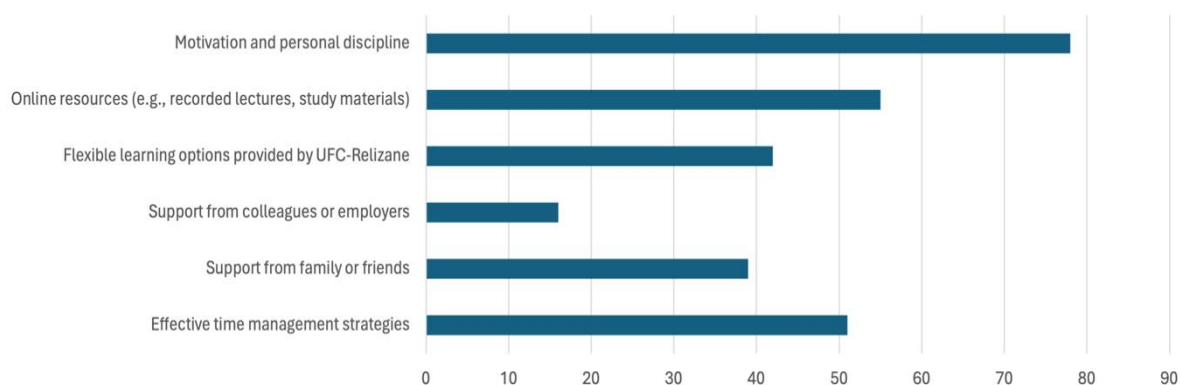
“.. we should have an opinion poll or another survey about how the teacher perform in term of pedagogical acquirement, methodology and social interaction with students because not all teachers seem to take their job seriously. In the other hand there is some teachers who really work hard and try to give their bests and they should be rewarded.” Interviewee 5

These concerns reflect students’ awareness of effective teaching and a desire for more accountability and engagement. However, several structural issues may contribute to the problems raised. Most teachers at UCE Relizane are part-time, with many holding only Master’s degrees and limited experience in university-level instruction. The lack of professional development and institutional training further complicates their ability to meet the pedagogical needs of adult learners. In the end, while students call for evaluation and recognition of committed staff, these challenges point to a broader need for institutional reform to support both learners and instructors.

4.3. Factors Influencing Academic Success

Students at UCE-Relizane identified several key factors that impact their academic success while balancing full-time employment and education. These factors were diverse and varied in their impact. The results below reflect data from the questionnaire and supported by evidence from the interviews as shown and explained in the sections below:

Figure 3. Factors contributing to students' academic success.



The bar chart highlights the key factors that supported students in managing their work and study commitments at UCE-Relizane. Motivation and personal discipline emerged as the most influential factor, noted by 79 respondents. This suggests that internal drive remains central to academic perseverance, especially among adult learners balancing multiple responsibilities. Online resources, such as recorded lectures and study materials, were also highly valued (55 respondents), underscoring the need for accessible, self-paced learning tools.

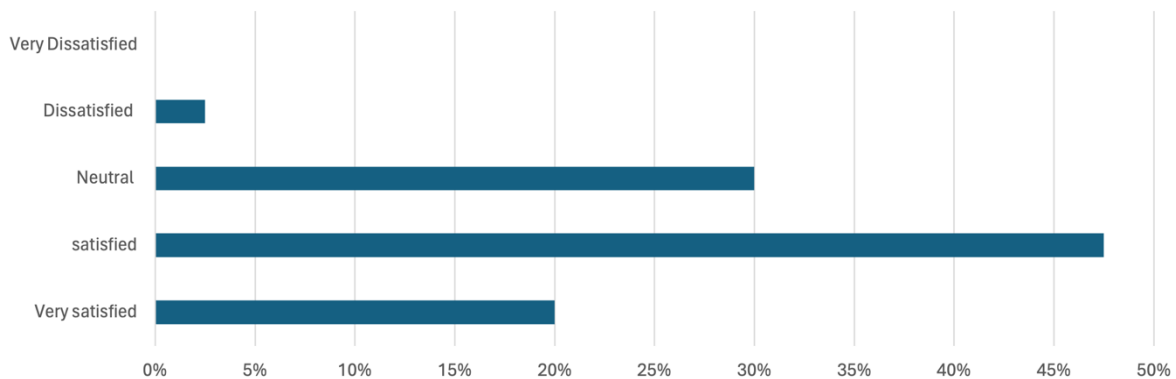
Effective time management and support from family or friends were cited by just over 50 and under 4 respondents, respectively, indicating that successful balancing also depends on both organization and social support. Approximately the same number of participants (around 40) acknowledged flexible learning options provided by UCE-Relizane, which may reflect a lack of systematic or consistent implementation of flexibility within the institution. In this regard interviewee 2 noted that there is a serious need for the university to provide more online options she said, “the time I spend on the bus coming from Chlef I could use it to study instead of wasting it in transportation”. This points to the logistical burden that many students face, especially those travelling long distances, therefore the need for hybrid or online delivery to reduce time loss and promote better learning outcomes.

Notably, support from employers or colleagues was the least mentioned factor (around 20), suggesting that many students may lack institutional support in the workplace. Additionally, students emphasized not just access and flexibility, but the quality of instruction they receive. Interviewee 5 noted that only some teachers deliver highly engaging lessons, while others fail to deliver a kind of teaching that is engaging to accommodate the stressing communicative needs of working students.

4.4. University Support Strategies for Employed EFL Students

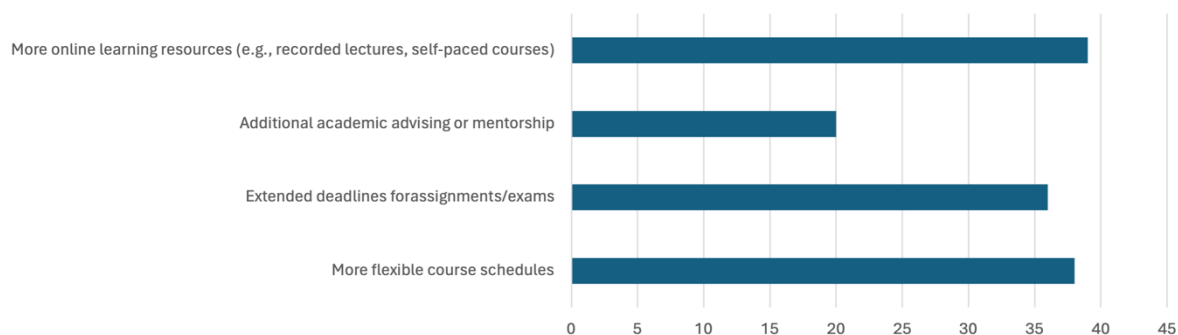
As it has already indicated across this article, balancing work and study is a significant challenge for many EFL students, particularly those who must juggle academic responsibilities with employment. The two key graphs below shed light on the students' satisfaction with current university efforts and the kind of support they need to improve their academic experience at UCE-Relizane. Addressing these insights can help institutions create more effective strategies to support working learning in UCE-Relizane and beyond.

Figure 4. The support provided by university to balance between work and studies.



The graph above measures student satisfaction with the university's existing support systems. While an encouraging 40% to 45% of students reported being satisfied or very satisfied, a substantial portion roughly 30% to 35% expressed neutral, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied sentiments. This disparity signals that while some students feel adequately supported, others still struggle due to unmet needs.

Figure 5. The support needed in balancing between work and studies.



The graph above reveals the types of support students believe would most improve their ability to manage work and study. Nearly 45 of respondents identified more flexible course schedules as their top need, highlighting the difficulty of aligning fixed class times with work commitments. This echoes the interviewees calls to take their work study balance into account. Interviewee 2 stated, "The university should take into account that most of us are working professionals who cannot attend weekday classes."

Around 35 students requested extended deadlines for assignments and exams, this point was highlighted several times in the interviews, this was vividly expressed by Interviewee 6 who stated, "I wish they could extend deadlines for us we get so many assignments on the platform, and it's difficult to complete them all especially with work pressures." The same percentage emphasized the value of additional academic advising or mentorship, suggesting that personalized guidance could alleviate stress, this need is particularly acute for those returning to education after many years. Such students often require extra support to navigate unfamiliar academic systems as using technologies or simply establishing their identities as learners (Jerez, 2024). Finally, approximately 40 students called for more online learning resources, in this regard, interviewee 5 stated that: "to better support working students pursuing a degree in technical English, universities should provide recorded sessions to allow students to study at their own pace and revisit complex topics when needed" Interviewee 5

By implementing these strategies, institutions can transform challenges into opportunities for empowerment. As the interviews reveal, targeted adjustments like recorded technical sessions or flexible attendance policies can significantly ease the burden on working students leading to more proactive reforms of education that would continue beyond the classroom and their workplace.

5. Discussion:

The findings revealed that employed adult students at UCE-Relizane are primarily motivated by career advancement and personal interest in mastering English, these factors aligned with global trends where English proficiency is linked to professional advancement and mobility (Suminguit, Gacasan, Clarin, Generalao, & Baluyos, 2025). Instrumental motivations related to the students' fields of work reinforced (Gardner, 1998) theory that entails career-driven goals enhance language learning persistence. However, intrinsic motivations like intellectual curiosity and self-improvement were equally significant. These also supported (Ryan & Deci, 2000) argument that personal engagement sustains long-term learning. This dual motivation reflects Algeria's shifting educational priorities, where English is viewed as a gateway to global opportunities. Yet, despite their enthusiasm, students faced several challenges, including rigid schedules and assessment overload, which flagged the need for institutional reforms to align with the realities that these of adult learners live.

Balancing work and study emerged as a critical challenge, can potentially lead to scheduling conflicts disrupted students' ability to manage professional and academic responsibilities, institutional flexibility. Additionally, the overwhelming volume of summative assessments created stress. All these suggested that UCE-Relizane's pedagogical strategies may not fully account for adult learners' time constraints. Pedagogical inconsistencies further compounded these issues, as part-time instructors, often lacking formal training, struggled to meet students' needs (Ahouari, 2012). These challenges call for a reassessment of curriculum design and instructor support to better serve students who are engaged in distance education (Mendoza, Ramírez, González, & Moreira, 2022).

Key factors influencing academic success included personal discipline, access to online resources, and effective time management, with motivation being the most cited driver. This

aligns with emphasis on self-regulation in adult learning. The findings also stressed the urgent need for digital resources. In this regard, students underscored the importance of blended learning models, particularly for students juggling work and study. However, the lack of employer support indicates a broader societal gap in recognizing Continuous Higher Education as a workforce development tool (Smaihi & Rawiya, 2025). Students' requests for flexible scheduling, extended deadlines, and academic advising also reflect maturity and sense of direction from adult learners who know exactly what they want from their education, where tailored support systems are needed. One of the implications of this research is for Universities of Continuous higher education including UCE-Relizane to potentially leverage these insights to enhance their hybrid learning/teaching infrastructure to ensure alignment with national goals of educational accessibility which is what the Ministry of National Education aspires to achieve.

6. Conclusion:

In conclusion, while UCE-Relizane provides a vital pathway for working professionals to acquire English proficiency and invaluable academic experiences, structural and pedagogical gaps stand in the way. Addressing these issues requires institutional reforms, such as stabilising schedules, reducing assessment burdens, and investing in instructor training. Moreover, expanding online resources and even fostering employer partnerships which could further bridge the gap between education and workforce needs. One of the recommendations of this research is that Future studies explore the long-term career outcomes of UCE graduates and employer perceptions of continuous education.

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