



---

## **IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES ENCOUNTERED BY STUDENTS IN COMPLETING THE RESEARCH DISSERTATION OF THE MASTER OF EDUCATION DEGREE PROGRAMME**

***W.M.S. Wanasinghe\*, R.N.P. Rathnayaka, S.A.S. Kaushalya Perera***

*Department of Secondary and Tertiary Education, The Open University of Sri Lanka*

Conducting educational research is important as it aims to provide reliable information regarding educational problems which lead to recommendation of informed solutions to those problems. Educational research can be defined as a ‘purposeful and systematic’ enquiry ‘to solve a problem, illuminate a situation or add to our knowledge’ (Forbes 2015). Therefore, the research component is a vital part of the Master of Education Degree Programme conducted by the Faculty of Education, The Open University of Sri Lanka. Our experience as a faculty is that the students, who have the potential to work as prospective researchers in the field of education, find it difficult to complete the research dissertation due to a variety of reasons. Therefore, the objectives of this study was to identify academic and personal issues faced by the students which affect their completion of the research study as well as to make suggestions to overcome the issues faced by the students in conducting their research study. Data collection was done by using a questionnaire for the students reading for the degree programme. A sample of 176 students who were in the second year of the Master of Education Degree Programme were the informants of the study. Data derived using the survey questionnaires were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. According to the findings, issues on the identification of a proper area of research, insufficiency of relevant literature and other related information on the proposed research study, unavailability of primary sources of data and research literature, lack of library facilities, the protracted time taken by the research supervisors to provide feedback, the difficulty of collecting data from several samples, the complexity of completing an action research and not being interested in the selected research topic were identified as some of the academic issues encountered by the students. In addition, workplace commitments, family commitments, health problems, insufficient support from family, problems regarding time management and travelling long distance to university were identified as personal issues. Preparing an action plan to meet the supervisors, conducting workshops for supervisors, preparing a checklist and comprehensive guidelines on writing and submitting the dissertation, maintaining a good rapport between the supervisor and student for sustaining their motivation are recommended to overcome the issues encountered by the students during the period of research study in this degree programme.

Keywords: Issues, Research Study, Master of Education Degree Programme

*\*Corresponding author: wmw@ou.ac.lk*