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## **Thesis Abstracts**

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### **Success in Teacher Education: A Comparative Study of the Factors Affecting Student Success in Teacher Education Programmes Conducted through Distance Mode.**

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*The study attempted to identify the factors which affect 'self-perceived success' among graduate teachers taking courses at a distance and to apply the findings to the development of a Sri Lankan distance taught teacher education programme.*

*Interviews with eight part-time Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students (UK) and discussions with the PGCE and OUUK course co-ordinators together with a knowledge of the Sri Lankan situation helped the development of two questionnaires (Teacher Education Questionnaire I for students and II for tutors). Data was collected from 564 OUSL (Post Graduate Diploma in Education - PGDE), 209 OUUK (Advanced Diploma) and 57 part-time PGCE students and five tutors from each of the three programmes.*

*A series of factor analyses of 28 'agree-disagree' statements for the OVERALL and the OUSL and OUUK samples separately produced similar results and allowed common scores to be calculated. These scores, together with data from other items were then grouped into seven sets. Each set represented a possible area of influence on 'self-perceived success'.*

*Discriminant analysis was used to establish the major differences between the OUUK and OUSL student populations. The two populations only differed in terms of support systems developed by the two institutions (OUUK and OUSL). Both factor and discriminant analysis provided evidence that the development of a common model was possible in the understanding of 'self-perceived success' (represented by items measuring overall satisfaction, course will give skills, confidence about passing and satisfaction with progress) among teachers taking courses at a distance. Then, the seven sets were submitted to a series of stepwise regression analyses to identify their importance in predicting 'self-perceived success'. The order in which the seven sets of variables were entered into the regression equation was as follows:*

- 1. Self-related Demographics*
- 2. Family Factors*
- 3. School-related Variables*
- 4. Study Time and Style of Study*
- 5. Course-related Variables*
- 6. Contact with Fellow Students*
- 7. Contact with Tutor*

*The results demonstrated that all the seven sets of variables had a role to play in predicting 'self-perceived success' with Course-related Variables playing the strongest part. 'High transfer to practice', 'workload, level and method suits' and 'important to pass' were the best single predictors of self-perceived success but some variables related to tutor contact, contact with fellow students, school, family and self and study methods also significantly contributed either in the regression process (process model or at the final stage of the analysis (final model).*

*Separate analyses for the OUUK and OUSL samples confirmed that seven sets of variables counted in both populations. The contributions made by non-course factors in explaining 'self-perceived success' were more pronounced in the OUSL than in the OUUK regression. Finally, on the basis of the major findings of the study, suggestions for changes to the Sri Lankan PGDE programme were made. It was suggested that 'self-perceived success' of the PGDE students can be strengthened by various means, including improving the applicability of the course, strengthening support for Teaching Practice, promoting more and better student-tutor contact and student-student contact and also, improving OUSL - school contact.*