

**Generating ideas and formulating research topics: An investigation on sources and constraints**

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This paper reports the findings of a small scale research study which investigates how researchers generate ideas to formulate their research topics for postgraduate dissertations and the constraints they undergo in this process. Due to various misconceptions and restrictions, researchers usually face challenges in identifying potential topics for their research.

Twelve researchers in various disciplines of the Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna, including the author, involved in postgraduate research (both M.phil. and Ph.D) were selected as samples for this study. The information about the sources for generating ideas and the constraints they underwent when formulating their research topics were elicited through a questionnaire and informal discussions and their responses analyzed qualitatively in order to list out the number of idea generating sources as well as the constraints faced by the researchers. Thus this study provides insights into the process of generating ideas and formulating research topics at the postgraduate level.

**Keywords: Research Topics, Postgraduate Level, Generating Ideas, Formulating, Sources, Constraints**