

DETERMINANTS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AMONG AGRICULTURAL UNDERGRADUATES OF STATE UNIVERSITIES IN SRI LANKA

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Entrepreneurship is an engine of economic growth that creates employment and fosters social development. Although the Sri Lankan higher education system produces a large number of well-educated individuals with academic skills, graduates, including those with agricultural degrees, rarely become entrepreneurs compared to other types of employment. According to research, intentions play a significant role in the decision to become an entrepreneur. Therefore, this study investigated the intention to become an entrepreneur of agricultural undergraduates of the state universities in Sri Lanka. An online survey was administered to 252 agricultural undergraduates from eight agriculture faculties. The questionnaire consisted of four sets of questions with 23 statements to assess entrepreneurial intention, attitude, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norm on a five-point Likert type scale as guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior. Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of data. To analyze the data, Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modeling were used with SPSS version 21 and AMOS version 18. The findings revealed both attitudes towards behavior and perceived behavioral control have a significantly positive direct effect ($p < 0.05$) whereas subjective norm has an indirect positive influence on entrepreneurial intention. Entrepreneurship education had a direct and significant ($p < 0.05$) impact on entrepreneurial intention. In conclusion, the most effective predictor of entrepreneurial intention was attitude, followed by perceived behavioral control, and entrepreneurship education. This study thus suggests specific attributes such as attitude and perceived behavior in becoming an entrepreneur. Furthermore, the results propose important implications for university education. The higher education institutes can design curricula that have the capacity to upbringing more skillful entrepreneurs to the nation.

Keywords: Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Entrepreneurship education, Structural equation modeling, Theory of planned behavior