Factors influencing on Entrepreneurial Intention among Undergraduates: Special Reference with Arts Stream Undergraduate

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship has been identified as the engine of long-term economic growth of a nation and it is leading factor in achieving economic growth, high employment, strong job creation, and positive social development. It drives and shapes innovation, speeding up structural changes in the economy. Small and Medium Enterprises are the breeding ground for entrepreneurs to set up their ventures for many reasons. As a result, a smaller number of successful entrepreneurs can be seen. Therefore, it is a timely need to promote entrepreneurship among individuals. Thus, entrepreneurial intention of individuals is of critical importance in today's business environment. The main aim of this study is to find out the factors that influencing entrepreneurial intention among the undergraduates the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka. Attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control were identified through literature survey which influence the entrepreneurial intention of individuals and leads to selected behaviour. A total of 130 students from third and final year of arts faculty students of the South Eastern University were selected and collected responses through the questionnaire. This study reveals attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control are influencing the entrepreneurial intention of individuals and this leads to selected behaviour which is important factors to be addressed in order to improve the entrepreneurial intention of undergraduates in the Sri Lankan context.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Intention, Attitudes, Social Norms, Perceived Behaviour, Undergraduates.

1. Background of the Study

Entrepreneurship is an innovative and creative process where there is potential to add value to products, create job opportunities, raise productivity, revitalize and diversify markets, improve social welfare, and more broadly to develop the economy (Guerrero, Rialp & Urbano, 2008). Entrepreneurship drives and shape innovation, speeding up structural changes in the economy by introducing new competition; they contribute indirectly to productivity (Opoku-Antwi, 2012). In addition, Entrepreneurship is about creating organizations, change, innovation, and wealth (Morris, 2010). Accordingly, the nature of entrepreneurship can be described in various perspectives such as creation of wealth: which means entrepreneurship involves assuming the risks associated with the facilitation of production in exchange for profit; creation of enterprise: which describes that entrepreneurship entails the founding of a new business venture where none existed before; creation of innovation: which signifies Entrepreneurship is concerned with unique combinations of resources that make existing methods or products obsolete; creation of change: indicates that it involves creating change by adjusting, adapting, and modifying one's personal repertoire, approaches, and skills to meet different opportunities available

in the environment; creation of jobs which is concerned with employing, managing, and developing the factors of production, including the labor force; creation of value which explains that it is a process of creating value for customers by exploiting untapped opportunities; and, finally, creation of growth is indicating that entrepreneurship is defined as a strong and positive orientation toward growth in sales, income, assets, and employment (Morris 1994). According to Kuratko and Hodgetts (2007), Entrepreneurship is a mindset that has revolutionized the way business is conducted at every level and in every country.

Akhter and sumi (2014) have a different view, defining an entrepreneur as a change seeker who responds to change and uses it as an opportunity for change. Entrepreneurs are confident people who have know-how. However, some entrepreneurs are challenged by a lack of education. on the other hand, interest in entrepreneurship is growing which is resulting in more universities offering entrepreneurship as a course of study (Nicolaides, 2011). Intention is a state of mind directing the attention of a person toward a specific goal in order to achieve something (Bird *et.al.*, 1988).

Entrepreneurial Intention is one of the excellent predictors of new business startups. According to Shook et al. (2003), there is no universally accepted theory to explain the intentions of people to become entrepreneurs. There are several theories that predict E ntrepreneurial Intention. Amongst them, the Theory of Planed Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen. 1991), the Theory Entrepreneurial Event of Shapero and Sokol's (1982), the Model of Implementing Entrepreneurial Ideas (Bird 1988) and the Maximization of Expected Utility Model (Douglas and Shepherd, 2002) can be seen. Among those theories, TPB has demonstrated Entrepreneurial Intention's most consistently. Under the Ajzen's Theory of Planed Behavior, the factors affecting the Entrepreneurial Intention are, attitudes (AT), perceived behavioral control (PBC) and subjective norms (SN). Apart from that, Marques et al., (2012) suggested through their conceptual research model that, psychological features like locus of control, propensity to risk, self-confidence, need for recognition, tolerance of ambiguity and capacity to innovate, demographic variables like age, gender, education and family background and education for entrepreneurship can be some other factors affecting the entrepreneur intention. In this research, the focus will be given to the factors which have conceded under Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB).

The world needs graduates who are innovative, dynamic, smart, daring, efficient, determined, modern and employable or in one word, Entrepreneurial. Making graduates more employable is a global challenge and universities around the world are becoming more entrepreneurial to face this challenge. The UK has been developing 'Entrepreneurial Universities' by embedding Entrepreneurship in to all areas of graduate education. Sri Lanka also has explored that how to create an entrepreneurial culture within its state universities (National Entrepreneurship Week, Sri Lanka, 2008). Today entrepreneurship has become a commonly taught subject in universities. Some of the universities in the Sri Lanka offer courses in entrepreneurship, and many businesses or management schools offer major field of academic programs in entrepreneurship beside traditional business or management areas such as finance, accounting, marketing, human resource management and basic management. Therefore, it is important to find out the factors of entrepreneurial intention among university undergraduates. Such understanding or finding will help to government officials, educators, potential entrepreneurs and policy makers in all district, to improve the graduate entrepreneurship and hence reduce graduate unemployment in Sri Lanka. In the Sri Lanka, entrepreneurs have the lack of business knowledge to emerge as most successful entrepreneurs in the national and international level. Knowledge gap should be fulfilled by the university undergraduates, because they have the tremendous business knowledge and business core competency in the fields of marketing, finance, accounting & human resource management in the systematic manner. But they have the lack of practical skills in the entrepreneurship field, due to that, most of the undergraduates generally prefer the government and private sector jobs in the market after their graduation. The aim of this study is to find out the factors that influencing entrepreneurial intention among the Arts Stream undergraduates of the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka.

2. Theoretical Framework

According to Gurbuz & Aykol (2008) economic factors, political factors, cultural factors, administrative complexities, access to resources and physical institutional infrastructure can be seen under contextual factors which might have an influence on entrepreneurial intension of an Individual. Oruoch (2003) mentioned that intensions are affected by individual differences and can be occurred due to an individual's attitude, predispositions (biasness), skills and abilities and cognitive differences. On the other hand, intentions are also affected by situational factors like, prior experience in entrepreneurship, availability of role models and the attitude towards entrepreneurship in the society an individual life etc. Ajzen & Fishbein (2005) recorded that background factors like, individual, social and information factors influence on intention. Further, they identified that individual factors which affects intention are, personality, mood, emotion, intelligence, values, stereotypes, general attitudes and experience while such social factors are education, age, gender, religion, race, ethnicity and culture. The following concepts are helpful to understand the intension and behavior of entrepreneurs.

Personality traits come under Trait Approach which is attempts to distinguish entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs. According to Kuratko & Hodgetts (2011), Entrepreneurship is interdisciplinary and therefore, it comprises various approaches that can contribute to increase one's understanding of the field. Littunen (2000) characterized such as taking risks, innovativeness, self-efficacy, need for achievement, business management skills, marketing skills, locus of control and ability to corporate are characteristics of entrepreneurship. Sagie & Elizur (1999) described that, if an individual has a higher need for achievement, he or she has the inclination to success. Need for achievement is a drive to do extremely well. Further, Perceived Desirability (PD) refers to what extent starting a new venture is attractive and interesting for a person. Krueger (1993) explains Perceived Desirability as the degree to which an individual finds the prospect of initiating a new venture to be attractive; particularly, it reveals one's likeliness towards entrepreneurship. Armitage & Conner (2001) has distinguished the intention from desirability by mentioning that intention mediates the relationship between desirability and behavior. Therefore, Perceived Desirability affects the individual's attitude towards being self-employed and having own business. Thus, if a person's Perceived Desirability of self-employment is high', it indicates that the particular person is in more favor of being self-employed than working for an organization which someone else owns (Kolvereid, 1996).

Attitudes explains as a feeling or way of thinking that affects a person's behavior'. According to Carison (1984) attitudes have been identified as a tripartite model which has three main components such as 'affect', cognition' and conation'. Robinson *et at.* (1991) explained that the aforesaid three components include positive or negative feelings, behavioral intentions and predisposition to behave and finally beliefs and thoughts respectively. Socio-psychological theories suggests two kinds of norms which human behavior is motivated i.e., descriptive norms and injunctive norms. Cialdini, Reno & Kaligren (1990) explains descriptive norms as what others do and injunctive norms as what others think a person should do. Indeed, descriptive norms refer to the perception of other's behavior or else observations that are based on how people act in a particular situation. Injunctive norms can be referred to as approval of particular behavior. Injunctive norms help an individual to decide what kind of behaviors are accepted or rejected by a particular culture he or she engages in. Norms can be described as a person's own assessment of the social pressure whether or not to perform a particular intended behavior. In this perspective, norms are divided into two i.e., social norms and personal norms. Burke & Young (2009)

defines social norms as informal obligations that are enforced by the customs of the society or, "a standard, customary, or ideal form of behavior to which individuals in a social group try to conform". Hence, it explains the social pressure is that the pressure people get from their socio-cultural background towards a particular behavior. Particularly, the perception holds regarding a particular behavior of an individual by the most important people his or her life. This perception would depend on the beliefs, values, norms etc. of the referent group. Perceived Feasibility is the person's confidence or person's belief in personal capability in starting a new venture (Shapero & Sokol 1982). Krueger & Brazeal (1994) stated that Perceived Feasibility is the most important factor which determines the intention towards entrepreneurship. Perceived Feasibility is a function of entrepreneurial knowledge (McMullen & Shepherd 2006). Moreover, other factors like financial support, advice, consultation, partners' involvement, strong self-beliefs regarding the skills and capabilities of the individual also affect to the Perceived Feasibility of an entrepreneur (Wood & Bandura 1989).

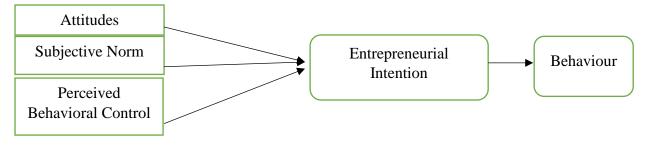
Perceived Behavioral Control is the individual's perception regarding the ease or difficulty of performing a given behaviour (Ajzen 1991). Husna *et al.* (2010) have found that this is the most influential factor in determining students' intention to become an entrepreneur. Self-Efficacy is the self-confidence of an individual regarding the things that he or she does or regarding the achievement of something (Boyd & Vizikis 1994). Education and the prior experience would affect the strength of the self-confidence of a person.

Employability of University Graduates in Sri Lanka Sri Lankan undergraduates have to face many challenges in seeking suitable employment opportunities after their graduation although they are very talented. According to Wickramarachchi (2008), graduates including who have undergone Management Studies are waiting a long time to be recruited by the government recruitment schemes. Dc Silva (1997) claimed that graduates have to go to the job market with insufficient self-confidence and an assurance for suitable employment opportunity. Due to these reasons un-employability and under employability among graduates has been a severe problem in the Sri Lankan economy. The unemployment rate is high amongst the graduates of the Arts stream. (UGC, 2004; Dc Silva 1997). Wickramarachchi (2008) mentioned that, Management graduates also face unemployment to some extent. One of the reasons for this situation is that the Sri Lankan society generally expects graduates to have high and reputable occupations (probably in a well-established organization) (Ariyawansa 1998). Preference for government job or a pensionable job, less preference for challenging jobs, to be self-motivated to earn more in private sector jobs, less preference to do a job which is at a lower level, negative attitudes regarding some sectors like agriculture or agro business are some other reasons for high unemployability among graduates. A person who is studying in a university and who have not yet taken a first degree is regarded as a University Undergraduate' in this study. Further, since this study investigates Entrepreneurial Intention among state university undergraduates, the term university undergraduates would confine to introduce the students who are studying in state universities in Sri Lanka and who have not yet obtained the first degree.

3. Research Design

The Theory of Planed Behavior, which is a well-grounded theory robustly, predicts a wide variety of intentional and planned behaviors. The Theory of Planed Behavior has been empirically well tested and validated by many studies done based on Theory of Planed Behavior. The conceptual model of this study is also adopted on Ajzen's Theory of Planed Behavior (2005) and is modified by the researcher. The conceptual framework derived how the research could be facilitated to conclude an ideology which will examine the reality compared to the ideology developed.

All with this importance and relationship, the conceptual illustration depicted components of the factors such as attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control are influencing on entrepreneurial intention which leads to appropriate behavior. Conceptual model is explained as follows:



Source: Ajzen (2002)

- H1 There is an influence between Attitude and Entrepreneurial Intention.
- H2 There is a positive relationship between social norms and Entrepreneurial Intention.
- H3 There is a positive relationship between PBC and Entrepreneurial Intention.
- H4: There is a positive relationship between Entrepreneurial Intention and Behaviour.

The population of this study would be all students who are in the third and final year in 2020 of Faculty of Arts and Culture at the South Eastern University. And this research is descriptive in nature and largely focused on empirical data. Survey method is used to collect data. Generally, surveys are used to collect information for the studies which are quantitative in nature. Non probability sampling has been chosen for the current study since subjects in the population do not have a known chance of being chosen as subjects in the sample. Further this study adopted with the convenient sampling which is a non-probabilistic sampling method. A sample of 130 undergraduates was selected based on the proportion represented by each year in the faculty in the population.

4. Results and Discussion

The Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test was carried out to assess the internal reliability of the questionnaire. According to Rodrigues (2010) reliability has been defined as the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable. The test will be significant when alpha value result more than 0.6. The alpha coefficient for the Entrepreneurial Intention is 0.799, Attitude is 0.682, Subjective Norms is 0.774, Perceived Behavioral Control is 0.867 and the Behaviour is 0.812. It illustrates that the items used on this dimension is supported to generate accurate results through the study. Simply it reflects how far respondents could be able to understand the research requirement and it has been guided them to answer in consistent way. This shows the higher reliability of the use of this questionnaire to examine the relationship between Entrepreneurial Intention and Effected Factors of undergraduates.

Concerning on this research study, primary data collected from 130 respondents who being an entrepreneur from third and final year undergraduates of Faculty of Arts and Culture in South Eastern University of Sri Lanka. Descriptive analysis used as summarize the demographic data in where 53 respondents were from the final year and 77 respondents were form third year of Faculty of Art and Culture. In the sample, 42 respondents were males and the rest of them were females where both genders represented 32.3 percent and 67.7 percent respectively.

Descriptive Statistics

Under the descriptive statistics it considers the mean value and standard deviation in order to identify the support of independent variables to dependent variable.

Table1: Descriptive results

Dimensions	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Attitude	130	4.12	0.678
Subjective Norms	130	3.89	0.667
Perceived Behavioral Control	130	3.79	0.641
Entrepreneurial Intention	130	3.70	0.623
Behaviour	130	3.81	0.661

According to the table mean value of Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control and Behaviours fall under the range of 3.5<=X <5 and the values are 4.12, 389, 3.79, 3.70 and 3.81 respectively. This is explaining a high-level agreement with regards to the variables. This mean value of attitude implies that students are highly agreeing with being an entrepreneur. This construct includes three indicators which are satisfaction, desirability and interest. That indicators influence of Attitude of the Entrepreneurial Intention of undergraduates. Those are help to improve the Entrepreneurial Intention of undergraduates. The mean of Subjective norms is implying that students are moderately agreeing with the being an entrepreneur. This dimension includes indicators which are opinion of family members and friends which influence of Subjective Norms of the Entrepreneurial Intention of undergraduates. Those are help to improve the Entrepreneurial Intention of undergraduates. The mean of Perceived Behavioral Control also implies that students are highly agreeing of being an entrepreneur. This dimension includes indicators which are Self efficiency, Effort and Knowledge. That indicators influence of Perceived Behavioral Control of the Entrepreneurial Intention of undergraduates. Those are help to improve the Entrepreneurial Intention of undergraduates. Those are help to improve the Entrepreneurial Intention of undergraduates. In Entrepreneurial Intention that implies discovered that students are almost highly agreeing with Entrepreneurial Intention.

Correlational Analysis

Correlation measure how variables or rank orders are related. Pearson's correlation coefficient is a measure of linear association. In this study, the Pearson's correlation coefficient with two-tailed test of significance was considered since the data was quantitative and normally distributed variables. The purpose of a correlation coefficient analysis used to identify whether two measurement variables co vary, and to quantify the strength of the association or relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable. In this research the results of the computed bivariate correlation of Pearson's correlation coefficient values shown in the below tables.

Correlation between Independent variables and Entrepreneurial Intention

Dimension	Pearson correlation	P-value
Attitude with EI	0.850	0.000
Subjective Norms with EI	0.768	0.000
Perceived Behavioral Control with EI	0.843	0.000
Entrepreneurial Intension with Behavior	0.776	0.000

The correlation between the constructs were shows positive relationships among all. For the Attitude, it denotes the r value of 0.850 with Entrepreneurial Intention which is suggested that there is a strong positive relationship between Attitude and the Entrepreneurial Intention among the students. Further, there is a significant association (at 0.01) between these two variables Correlation coefficient of Subjective Norms and Entrepreneurial Intention is 0.768 and which implies that there is a strong positive relationship between Subjective Norms and Entrepreneurial Intention. In addition to that, here is a significant association (at 0.01) between these two variables which is further supported by the zero-value associated with significance. Correlation coefficient of Perceived Behavioral Control and Entrepreneurial Intention is 0.843 and which implies that there is a strong positive relationship between Perceived Behavioral Control and Entrepreneurial Intention. Moreover, the relationship between Entrepreneurial Intention and the behaviors shows a strong positive relationship with the r value of 0.776 and significance association among the study concern.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Further the regression results reveal that the entrepreneurial intension is the predictor of attitude, social norms and perceived behaviouarl control. This is summarized as follows:

Table 2: Regression Results

Predictable Variables	Beta	Т	P
Attitude	0.406	4.097	0.000
Social Norms	0.197	2.919	0.004
Perceived Behavioral Control	0.268	2.446	0.016

Note: F= 153.973, p<0.000, R-square= 0.760, Adjusted R-Square=0.755, n=130

R-square is a statistical measure of how close the data are to the fitted regression line. It is also known as the coefficient of determination, or the coefficient of multiple determinations for multiple regressions. Accordingly, adjusted R square value for the model was 0.755. It represents 75.5% of variation in dependent variable Entrepreneurial Intention explained by the independent variable dimensions of Attitude, Subjective Norms and Perceived Behavioral Control. Therefore, it can be identified that there is 24.5% of unexplained variation in this model. Therefore, it appears that the model fitted in fairly manner. Adjusted R Square value is lower than the (0.760) R Square value, it indicates that regression equation may be over-fitted to the sample and limited generalizability. Furthermore, value of the standard error of the estimate is 0.309. It suggested that model fitted well because standard error of the estimate value was higher than mean value of Entrepreneurial Intention. (Mean value of EI is 3.70). Further it can be identified that F value is 153.973. It suggests that most of the variance is explained by model because calculated F value is greater than Table F value. P value 0.000, which is less than 0.05, suggests that overall, the model applied can statistically significantly predict the dependent variable Entrepreneurial Intention. All beta coefficient values represented positive values and thereby it is obvious that there is a positive relationship between depend and independent variables. When consider Attitude, the ß coefficient of 0.406 indicates that when Attitude increased by one unit while all variables. It can be seen that Attitude contributed significantly to the model since p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significant. Therefore, null hypothesis rejected and alternative hypothesis (H₁) accepted. Hence, there is a significant relationship between Attitude and Entrepreneurial Intention. According to coefficient of Subjective Norms, one unit of increase in Subjective Norms while other variables remain constant, Entrepreneurial Intention increased by 0.197. Further, this significantly contributed to the model as pvalue of 0.004 is less than the 0.05 level of significant. Therefore, null hypothesis H0 was rejected and alternative hypothesis (H2) accepted. Hence, there is a significant relationship between Subjective Norms

and Entrepreneurial Intention. When Perceived Behavioral Control increased by one unit while other variables remain constant, it results in increase of Entrepreneurial Intention by 0.268 unit. This is significant at 0.05 level of significant since its p-value of 0.016 is less than 0.05. Therefore, null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis (H₃) was accepted. Hence, there is a significant relationship between Perceived Behavioral Control.

Conclusions and Interpretations

The relationship between Attitude and Entrepreneurial Intention of undergraduates of the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, the results show a positive significant relationship with Entrepreneurial Intention. A beta coefficient of 0.406 depicts that the relationship is highly significant with regards to attitude towards. Thus, the proposed relationship between Entrepreneurial Intention and Attitude was fully supported with the empirical results of the study. Accordingly, Attitude has the most significant impact on Entrepreneurial Intention of undergraduates over other three factors. These results supported the theory that in order for individuals to develop intentions of becoming entrepreneurs they should have positive Attitude towards becoming an entrepreneur. It must be attractive or desirable for them to become an entrepreneur or start a business. further, Subjective Norms and Entrepreneurial Intention of results show a positive significant relationship. A beta coefficient of 0.197 depicts that the relationship is highly significant. Perceived Behavioral Control and Entrepreneurial Intention illustrate that respondents' perceptions of their capability to start a business (PBC) are related to their intention to start a business. A statistically significant positive relationship existed between seven perceived Behavioral Control factors and all four Entrepreneurial Intention factors. In addition, it proved that those intensions are direct the individuals through behaviour. The results depicted that, the desire to become an entrepreneur, the preparation to start a viable business and then approval of people who are important to the respondent about the decision of creating a firm are the most significant factors within attitudes, perceived behavioral control and subjective norms respectively.

Recommendations and Managerial Implications

Since Entrepreneurship is an intentional activity, it is important to have an understanding of the antecedents of Entrepreneurial Intention being vital in improving the efforts to promote entrepreneurship among the undergraduates. Since the undergraduates are the prospective entrepreneurs, policy makers and authorities in the country, their view of entrepreneurship is very much important in fostering entrepreneurship in the country in future. The study recommends to design educational programs for undergraduates to sharpen up the necessary skills and knowledge related to entrepreneurship, appreciate and acknowledge successful role entrepreneurial models and share their experience with the undergraduates, introduce and strengthen entrepreneurial education, send undergraduates to industrial attachments to gain valuable business and technical experience, government to provide technical trainings, providing grants and loans at concessionary rates, to provide access to entrepreneurship education, extend the government guarantee to graduates to pick up access to capital and include entrepreneurship as a subject of the curricular in the university for all degree program.

According to the findings of the study there can be seen a positive effect on Entrepreneurial Intention among the undergraduates in terms of their attitudes, society's perception and their perceived ability to have an entrepreneurial venture. In Sri Lanka, unemployment among the graduates has been a critical issue for many years especially for Arts graduates. Since self-employment is an excellent solution for that issue policy makers can highlight the importance of being self-employed in society to change society's Attitude towards entrepreneurship. Further, educators can change the undergraduates' Attitude regarding the entrepreneurship by giving more emphasis on their curriculum as well as educating students regarding the entrepreneurship as a mean of high earning potential independent career. The government

and government organizations, nongovernmental organizations as well as all individuals of the country has a responsibility to motivate people to be self-employed as an entrepreneur in order to be beneficial to the economy of the country.

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