

ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS AMONG MANAGEMENT UNDERGRADUATES IN SRI LANKAN STATE UNIVERSITIES: THE MODERATING ROLE OF UNIVERSITY SUPPORT

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurial intentions among university students are becoming increasingly significant for educational institutions and governments, especially in developing countries such as Sri Lanka, where entrepreneurship drives economic growth, innovation, and job creation. Despite the many benefits of entrepreneurship, the majority of graduates still favor traditional employment. While studies of undergraduates' entrepreneurial intentions have identified various push and pull factors, our understanding of these factors and the role of university support remains unclear. Gaining insight into the elements that shape students' entrepreneurial intent can help foster an entrepreneurial mindset among graduates, increasing their likelihood of launching new businesses. This study investigated the moderating role of university support in shaping entrepreneurial intentions among management undergraduates at state universities in Sri Lanka using Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior as a framework. The independent variables were attitudes towards behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, while entrepreneurial intention was the dependent variable. A quantitative survey-based approach was used to collect data from 379 management undergraduates across 13 state universities through quota sampling. The main variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). This was followed by descriptive and multiple regression analyses using the SPSS 26. The results revealed that attitudes towards behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control significantly affected Entrepreneurial Intention, with university support moderating these relationships. This finding underscores the influential role of university support in fostering entrepreneurial intention. However, this study's focus on state university management undergraduates excludes respondents from private institutions and other disciplines. Furthermore, only components from the Theory of Planned Behavior were studied, eliminating other potential implications on entrepreneurial determination. This study, which emphasizes the relevance of university-level support, provides insights for educational institutions seeking to build programs to better stimulate entrepreneurship, addressing an essential requirement for economic growth in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial intention, theory of planned behavior, moderating role of university support.