

# Students Career Attitudes towards Entrepreneurship

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**Abstract:** - Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in current business arena. Starting from the top government officials to the bottom level people, importance of these concept coming to the stage in various aspects. Even the degree programmes related to entrepreneurship offered by government and private universities develop students' entrepreneurial attitudes. Although all these effort are done to enhance the entrepreneurship culture among University students, still they have confusing mind to start up an Entrepreneurial career in their life. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify the problems associated with students' entrepreneurial career and what are the factors that help to change their minds towards entrepreneurial career aspirations. In order to identify this problem, data was collected through the entrepreneurial graduates of Sri Lankan Universities. The size of the sample was 100 students. A structured questionnaire was used to collect relevant data. The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale. According to findings, 89% of students have emphasized that they are not willing to take the risk associated with the new ventures. Majority of the students have explained that they are having negative attitudes towards Entrepreneurship due to lack of Practical awareness about business, Experiences received through Parents Business, Career aspirations of friends and relatives made them to rethink about starting up the Entrepreneurial career. In order to overcome these issues which are associated with Entrepreneurial mind-set of students, universities should address these issues in prominent manner.

**Key Words:** Entrepreneurship, Attitudes, Career, University Students, Career Aspirations

## I. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is became a key topic in every aspect of business within last decades. Entrepreneurship can be defined in various ways due to the broad nature which carries by it. According to Maneesh and Rina, (2016) Entrepreneurship is just like a path of opportunity exploration and managing the risk to create value for profit or social good in our existing environment. As per Kidane and Harvey, (2009) Entrepreneurship leads to the creation of small and medium scale businesses, providing employment opportunities, income generation, uplifting the standard of living, and utilisation of human, material and financial resources of a country in the right direction. Due to mentioned reasons, the concept of entrepreneurship has become a key element in academic research activities, conferences and course curriculums. Many countries have placed more importance in developing the programmes towards development of Entrepreneurship. In Sri Lankan context, it has been vastly scattered in government and private education institutes since it become a popular concept within every corner of the world.

According to Akponi, (2009) Entrepreneurship Education aims to inculcate the entrepreneurial behaviour among the students within the given time period. In addition, it aims to improve entrepreneurial attitude which contribute to enhance innovative practices in their career life. Entrepreneurship Education touches the soul of people to start up new ventures and enhance the entrepreneurial process within their business or career life (Postigo and Tomoborni, 2002). Entrepreneurship education enhances the innovative mind set of people which help to translate the economy of the country. Thus, people tend to learn on entrepreneurship and try to build their life and career in innovative manner.

Students' education which is offered by government and private education institutions and their attitudes are very important to the employment state of the country. According to Ajzen (1987) attitude is the degree or extent to which an individual like or dislike something. Attitudes of individual create the willingness of engaging in employment activities. By concerning all these, primary objective of the study is to identify the problem associated with students' Entrepreneurial career. Secondary objective of the study is to identifying the factors which change the mind-set of the students towards their career aspirations. Moreover, this research explains why entrepreneurial career aspiration is not popular among the students in Sri Lankan context.

## II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

According Scholar articles, Entrepreneurial career is more attractive in nature. In forming an entrepreneurial career, individuals face many problems such as lack of finance to start up a new venture, fear to take risk, fear about failure and grater resistance to come out from society and family. Although there are various organizations which concern about these issues, still people are afraid of forming an entrepreneurial career. Hence, these institutions are unable to fulfil their duty of reducing problems face by the society.

Thus, findings of this study help students to find solutions to reduce problems in forming an entrepreneurial career and develop their mind-set to start up new ventures which give higher contribution to economic growth of the country.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Yorke and Knight, (2004) employability is a broad term used to set important aspirations including technical skills, conceptual skills and managerial skills and personal attributes. Those aspirations may convert an individual to work in a secured environment. In addition,

they help to select an occupation for an individual which in turn gives many benefits to him/her family as well as to whole society. As Cottrell, (2003) explained, students in higher education students common leave that higher education institute with good vision regards their career with their chosen fields during the degree programme. Current educational programmes provide many employment opportunities to students in several specialization areas such as human resource, marketing, finance and etc. Those students have to work under the direction of others and it takes more time to go for a respectable and higher position in an organization. However, there are some students who are willing to start their own business ventures and do not have an interest to work under any supervision. They are interesting to work independently. Being an entrepreneur is desire nature of some personal characteristics. There are different explanations for the concept of entrepreneurship in literature. According to Amit and Zott, (2001) entrepreneurship needs divergent and creative thinking or thinking outside the box. Peters and Shepherd, (2008) mentioned that the key element of entrepreneurship is the creation of value towards achieving gains with respect to monetary or from the personal aspect. Further, different scholars argue that the concept of entrepreneurship is the key factor which direct and control the factors such as land, capital and labor. Entrepreneurship is essential to the current corporate world that carried certain uncertainties and upside downs of the business. This novel concept is a radical one and has been developed over centuries and allow individuals to work in any business sector.

Entrepreneurship is not withing the range of every person's mind. It generally deals with the perception of individuals. According to scholars who provide their argument regarding entrepreneurship says that entrepreneurial perception can be arisen through both supply-side and the demand-side of entrepreneurship. Supply side of entrepreneurship is the willingness and perceived ability to become an entrepreneur (Davidson, 1991). Perception plays a critical role in entrepreneurship. If a person like to engage in or perceived to do an entrepreneurial venture his or her act and belief will be expressed in more entrepreneurial nature. Further, scholars mentioned that a person's perception towards entrepreneurship is shaped by endogenous and exogenous factors. Endogenous factors are under the control of individual and hidden inside the person's character. The exogenous factors are beyond a person's control and they are outside situations such as environmental factors. Student's ambition towards entrepreneurship is shaped by family role models, previous work experience, student's attitudes of himself or herself and risk taking ability and creativity.

Generally, entrepreneurial willingness is derived through homes where their parents owned their own business, because young individuals are getting a hands on experience through their parents or relatives. Teachers or instructors and media have a key impact on student's perception towards

entrepreneurship (Henderson and Robertson, 1999). They further revealed that individuals generally concern about how media create images of entrepreneurs and how schools and other higher educational intuitions focus on developing entrepreneurial career.

Moreover, According to Fayolle et al., (2006) entrepreneurship education can be defined as any activity which enhance or inculcate the development of entrepreneurial attitudes and skills among individuals. In another way entrepreneurship education is process of hurtfully or forcefully entering the life of the learner to enhance the entrepreneurial qualities in order to show the path in surgient in the business world.

According to the Douglas (1999) on his study has investigated the relationship between the attitudes to start up a new business and individual's attitudes. Results of his empirical study suggest that individuals with a more positive attitude toward independence and risk are characterized by a higher willingness to become entrepreneurs. Moreover, according to the World Economic Forum (2010) noted that fear of failure, cultural barriers and role of family and friends had the greatest influence on students' perception of entrepreneurship.

Further, Autio et al., (1997) have provided an argument into role of common attitudes in the choice of entrepreneurial career. They investigated the impact of attitudes towards money, attainment, competitiveness, independence and change upon entrepreneurial opinion observed as the fundamental element of entrepreneurial intention. In addition, they found that common attitudes of individuals to have a great moderating impact on entrepreneurial opinion exclusion of competitiveness. They also found that the necessity for attainment and an optimistic attitude to independence arise as powerful attitudinal moderators of entrepreneurial opinion. They further highlight that there is a positive influence of attitude towards entrepreneurship on entrepreneurial opinion. Another study found a strong positive correlation between the attitude toward self-employment and the willingness to become an entrepreneur (Franke and Luthje, 2004). Further, Lüthje and Franke, (2003) examined the influence of personal dispositions and observed environmental conditions for founding a novel venture on entrepreneurial intent.

As many studies reveal, entrepreneurs are not naturally born and however, made via experiences and environment since they grow and learn, being influenced by tutors, instructors and guardians during their growth process (Teixeira and Davey, 2008). Generally, students' immediate cultural and social environment influence their beliefs and perspectives. Therefore, Alainet al., (2006) mentioned that the conducts and orientation of youth as well as young graduates are influenced by different ecological and individual variables. Ecological and individual variables suggest that the desirability and decision of forming an entrepreneur is a replication of economic and environmental forces.

According to Friendrich and Visser, (2005) education regarding entrepreneurship has the potential of enhancing students' willingness of becoming entrepreneurs in some stage after finishing their degrees. The attitudes and perceptions of young generation towards entrepreneurship different from country to country (Green and Pryde, 1990). In general, all most of all the youth are interesting to start their own business someday, however 50% of them think that they will financially fail, have lack of knowledge regarding the initial step to take and have lack of identity with the entrepreneurial role (Green and Pryde, 1990).

Nowadays, the success stories of young entrepreneurs appeared in YouTube, Skype and Facebook motivate a growing number of young and energetic people to begin their own ventures. In last decade young people show a growing interest towards starting their own business whilst enhancing education regarding entrepreneurship. For an instance high school students in U.S reported that 67% of them need to initiate their own businesses (Kourilsky and Walstad, 1998). In similar words, many students have joined business schools in order to become entrepreneurs. As Timmons, (1994) pointed out one third of graduates in Harvard Business School ended up working for themselves whilst 90% students in Harvard Business School have the desire of being self-employed. This was enriched by the courses in business offered by different colleges and universities. Further, higher education institutions and government have understood the significance of job-creating ability of start-up businesses. As a result of that they try to create new entrepreneurial education programs for students. In addition, new educational programs allow students to engage in more business plan contest, more funding and more resources.

## V. METHODOLOGY

Methodology of the study has been adopted with a questionnaire approach with a survey design. The population of the study comprised of 100 undergraduates of two faculties of management in Uva Wellassa University and University of Kelaniya.

## VI. OBJECTIVES

01. Identify the problems associated with students' towards entrepreneurial career
02. Identify the factors that help to change their minds towards entrepreneurial career aspirations

## VII. JUSTIFICATION OF THE SAMPLING

1. 100 undergraduates were selected based on their degree program the students who have chosen to read entrepreneurship as a subject were taken in to consideration.
2. Both male and female students were included to the sample that was as 46% male and 54% female represented

3. Justification for the selection of universities is to two universities represent 'old' and 'new' concepts. University of Kelaniya, which was established in 1875, has a 132 year history and it was taken to represent the 'Old' universities in Sri Lanka. Uva Wellassa University was one of the newest universities in Sri Lanka which is 15<sup>th</sup> University in the Sri Lankan University system, established in 2006 has only 11 years history.
4. Both faculties of the Management offer entrepreneurship course units to the undergraduates.
5. To be balanced, 50 students from each universities were selected using convenient sampling method.

## VIII. INSTRUMENT

Questionnaire was used as instrument for the collection of data. The questionnaire was consisted with 60 questions of a Likert scale from strongly agree (SA) Agree(A), Neutral(N) Disagree(DA) to Strongly Disagree(SD). The questionnaire which was consisted of two parts solicited information on respondents' demographic variables in the first part and in the second part sought to ascertain the attitudes of the students towards their career aspirations.

## IX. THE VALIDITY OF THE INSTRUMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was tested for reliability of instrument using Cronbach Alpha test.

Cronbach's alpha formula

$$\alpha = \frac{N \cdot \bar{c}}{\bar{v} + (N - 1) \cdot \bar{c}}$$

N = Number of items

C-bar – average inter-item covariance among the items

V-bar – equals the average variance

Source – UCLA – Institute for Digital Research and Education (<http://stats.idre.ucla.edu/spss/faq/what-does-cronbachs-alpha-mean/>)

The Cronbach Alpha for this study showed 0.742 as following table shows.

Cronbach alpha	No. of Items
0.742	22

Source- Analytical results

As this resulted value is more than the required value of 0.70 for the reliability of the instrument, (all the values were more than 0.6 and the overall Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.742 and it indicated the internal consistency among the items used in the questionnaire) the questionnaire was coded and analyzed.

## X. DATA ANALYSIS

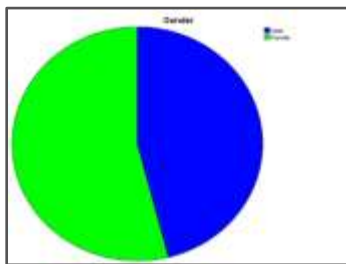
Descriptive statistics were employed for analysis and SPSS version 21 was used for quantitative analysis. All collected data was entered at SPSS sheet at analyze in the form of tables and graphs and made all percentage frequencies mean score by applying statistical formulas

## XI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The population taken for the study was all the 2<sup>nd</sup> year undergraduates who follow entrepreneurship as a course unit in both university of Kelaniya and Uva wellassa University. Out of the 100 of student sample, the response rate was 100%.

University

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
University of Kelaniya	50	50.0	50.0	50.0
University of Uva Wellassa	50	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	



Source – Analytical Results - Gender of the respondents

Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	46	46.0	46.0	46.0
Female	54	54.0	54.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

As the above table and graph show, the representation of both male and female students were 46% and 54% respectively.

In the university the students are taking entrepreneurship as a compulsory course unit which is calculated for their final grade point average marks.

I consider entrepreneurship as a very important course in the University

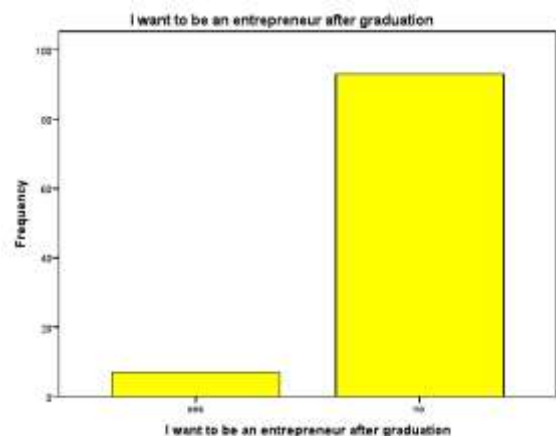
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	85	85.0	85.0	85.0
No	1	1.0	1.0	86.0
Somewhat	14	14.0	14.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From all the students 99% of them have indicated that 'the entrepreneurship course was very important for them to learn in the university. According to the respondents, the course unit of entrepreneurship offered in the university encouraged them to be entrepreneurs in future and provided with the required knowledge.

However when it comes to their future expectation of being an entrepreneur 93% of the students answer was No.

I want to be an entrepreneur after graduation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	7	7.0	7.0	7.0
no	93	93.0	93.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	



The sample was consisted with Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim students. Majority of the distribution of ethnicity who would like to be entrepreneurs were Tamil and its percentage was 57%. The percentage of Sinhala students was 28% and percentage of Muslim students was 15%

89% of the students were not willing to become entrepreneurs after the graduation because of their fear to take a risk associated with new venture.

I am not willing to take the risk associated with the new venture

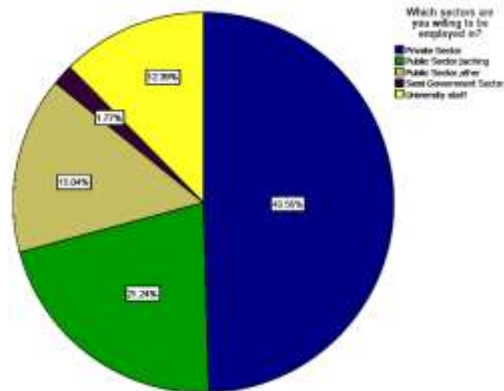
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	89	89.0	89.0	89.0
no	11	11.0	11.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

97% of the whole sample were willing to work under Privet sector, Public sector- Teaching, Public sector – other, Semi government Sector or as University staff. The bellow figure shows the percentages respectively. Percent was higher



among those who preferred private sector and it represents nearly 50% from the sample. Furthermore 21.24% of the graduates preferred public sector teaching after their university education while only 1.77% interested in Semi Government Sector.

Preferred employment sector after the university education



According to the results of the survey the factors affected above career aspirations of undergraduates were revealed under following themes

1. How family factors influence on career choice and attitude of the students
2. How peers Influence on career choice and attitude of the students
3. How role models influence on career choice and attitude of the students
4. The views about the influence of career benefits on career choice and attitude of the students
5. The attitude about the experiences of others regarding entrepreneurship.

The results revealed that the most influencing factors of not selecting of being an entrepreneur were students negative attitude towards Entrepreneurship due to lack of Practical awareness about business, Experiences received through Parents Business, Career aspirations of friends and relatives made them to rethink about starting up the Entrepreneurial career.

## XII. CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to identify what are the factors effecting to students career aspirations towards Entrepreneurial career. In there various factors and problems identified with respect to this student attitudes towards entrepreneurial career. According to findings, 89% of students have emphasized that they are not willing to take the risk associated with the new ventures. Majority of the students have explained that they are having negative attitudes towards

Entrepreneurship due to lack of Practical awareness about business, Experiences received through Parents Business, Career aspirations of friends and relatives made them to rethink about starting up the Entrepreneurial career.

Due to these reason people who are engage in developing Entrepreneurial skills among people like government institutions and education institutions to reduce the wrong image which build up in people mind. To implement that those organizations should conduct various workshops, develop discussions in media like televisions and radio. Moreover, they should organize the competitions and venture creation programmes to give practical experience to the people to enhance the awareness and reduce the fear of customers towards new venture creations.

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