

THE ROLE OF PRIOR EXPERIENCE OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS ON SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AMONG STATE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract. *The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that might influence the social entrepreneurial Intention of state undergraduate students in Sri Lanka. The Theory of planned behaviour was tested in the context of state undergraduate students in Sri Lanka. Exogenous variables included Personal Attitude, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavioural control, and Prior experience of social problems on social entrepreneurial Intention were studied. Using validated items from prior literature, the research instrument was developed. Undergraduate students from nine state universities in Sri Lanka provided the data for this quantitative study. Using IBM's SPSS 25 and AMOS 22 software, structural equation modelling was applied to extract insights from the valid data. Outcomes of the confirmatory factor analysis, followed by a structural model evaluation revealed a positive relationship exists between Social Entrepreneurial Intention and Employment attitude and social entrepreneurial Intention and Perceived behavioral control. However, the results did not support the relationships between social entrepreneurial Intention and subjective Norms and prior experiences with social problems and social entrepreneurial attitude. State university graduate unemployment has been a major socio-politico-economic problem in Sri Lanka, and Social entrepreneurship can be proposed as a viable career option. However, limited research has been carried out in the Sri Lankan context. This research will shed light on the antecedent factors that affect social entrepreneurial Intention and assist policymakers in developing appropriate strategies for promoting Social entrepreneurship among undergraduates.*

Keywords: *Social Entrepreneurship, Theory of Planned Behavior, Sri Lanka, Experience of Social problems.*

1 Introduction

The challenges and threats the world faces today have led to the worsening in the quality of human capital, a reduction in its competitiveness, and obstructs the realization of people's ability to work and receive decent income has all made social entrepreneurship an attractive option (Khaustova et al., 2019, Kimakwa et al., 2023). One challenge in particular that all developed and developing countries face is the problem of unemployment. Social entrepreneurship has been proposed as a viable solution to this problem (Martínez et al., 2019).

The Sri Lankan university system comprises 16 public Universities and numerous private higher educational institutions. The graduates of the state universities in Sri Lanka are facing high levels of unemployment (Wickramasinghe, 2018a) in a country with relatively low levels of unemployment (De Alwis, 2020), which has, over the years, grown into a social problem that past successive governments and society have been unable to address.

Despite the benefits social entrepreneurship brings to state university undergraduate students in resolving unemployment, no significant empirical research on social entrepreneurship has been conducted among these groups in Sri Lanka..

2 Literature Review

The term 'social entrepreneur' was first stated by Joseph Banks in 1972, when he used this term to show the need to apply managerial skills to address social issues (Banks, 1972). Prieto et al., (2014) noted that the motive of a social enterprise is to exploit opportunities that produce social values and satisfy social needs by facilitating social change. Social entrepreneurship is considered a process that produces value through creative and innovative resources (Shaw & Carter, 2007).

There is a lack of agreement regarding how to define social entrepreneurship (Ranville et al., 2022) and no unanimously accepted definition (Sanchis-Palacio et al., 2013). However, a common component among the various definitions is the pursuit of solutions to social problems (Cavazos-Arroyo et al., 2017). This view is supported by Bergamini et al., (2017), who suggest that there exists a broad agreement regarding the fundamental concepts, with most definitions revolving around the concepts such as the adoption of new, creative, and innovative ways to address social problems beyond the pursuit of personal wealth. At the same time, It should be clarified that social entrepreneurship is not the same as charity or philanthropy (Kroeger & Weber, 2014).`

Social entrepreneurs are also called social innovators as they are required to innovate to address social problems (Singh, 2019), which may have a global phenomenon that impacts society (Robinson et al., 2009), social change, and transformation (Nicholls, 2006). Kim (2018), first defined the concept of social entrepreneurship distinctly, propositioning a definition based on the complex role of entrepreneurs as agents of social change and level of commitment, highlighting innovativeness and responsibility. Social entrepreneurship can also be seen as a unique way to solve social problems and create social value (Yu et al., 2021).

Nasser Al Muniri et al., (2019), have proposed that the study of social entrepreneurship has increased significantly over recent years as an alternative to ease existing social problems. The role played by Social entrepreneurship has grown with the inequalities and loopholes that exist mainly in developing countries and the inability of governments to address all social issues (Tiwari et al., 2017c). Helmsing (2015) also recognized the fact that the crisis of the welfare state has encouraged social ventures and made governments redesign social policies.

Unemployment and underemployment of graduates is a devastating phenomenon that has caused many social problems worldwide. The graduate unemployment problem is present in developed regions such as the European Union and developing counties like Sri Lanka (Hedvicakova, 2018; Chandrasiri, 2008a). However, the situation in Sri Lanka is more pressing and has attracted much more attention (Chandrasiri, 2008a).

The market demand In Sri Lanka assured the employment of undergraduates to dominant positions in the private and public sectors from 1942 to the 1960s. However, in the late 1960s, jobs dwindled, especially in the Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (Samaranayake, 2016). By 1969, approximately 14,000 state University graduates were unemployed (Wilson, 1979). This number has increased since then, with around 26% of Art graduates unemployed in 1987, and in 1998 the number of unemployed graduates in Sri Lanka was 25,000 (Samaranayake, 2016). According to the Unemployed Graduate Association of Sri Lanka, the

number of state university unemployed graduates in Sri Lanka was around 53,000 in 2018, demanding solutions for this problem (Wijesiri, 2018).

Different explanations have been presented to explain the high unemployment rate among Sri Lankan undergraduates. One explanation has been that the quality and relevance of education they received at the universities do not match the market demands (Wickramasinghe, 2018b). Another explanation is that the sluggish economic growth rate has made it difficult to provide employment prospects for the increasing numbers of undergraduates entering the labor market, leading to a high unemployment level (Samaranayake, 2016). In contrast, De Alwis (2020) argues that The majority of unemployed undergraduates have completed their degrees with classes, yet their academic majors have restrained them from finding suitable employment.

It has been argued by Liñán & Fayolle (2015) that social entrepreneurship is relevant for most countries; they are particularly suitable for developing countries such as Sri Lanka. The high unemployment rate among state undergraduate students in Sri Lanka faces a pressing social problem (Wickramasinghe, 2018b).

Despite the prevailing situation of unemployment among state university graduates in Sri Lanka (Singam, 2017), which is considered a major socio-politico-economic problem (Chandrasiri, 2008b), and where social entrepreneurship is regarded as a means of generating employment (Hein, 2022), there is limited research that has been conducted on the antecedent factors that affect entrepreneurial Intention in Sri Lanka (Weerakoon & Gunatissa, 2014).

Approximately 50% of the students enrolled in state universities in Sri Lanka are believed to come from underprivileged families (Wickramasinghe, 2018a), and are more likely to have faced numerous life challenges (Naranpanawa et al., 2013). Empirical research has found that personal life experiences, such as the prior experience of social problems caused due to being underprivileged, act as motivators for social entrepreneurial behavior (Pangriya, 2019a). It is reported by Scheiber (2016), that there is a gap in the literature that focuses on the prior experience of social problems and social entrepreneurship.

In addition, there has been limited empirical research concerning social entrepreneurial Intention and social norms that may explain the intent for social entrepreneurial activity (Jaen and Linan, 2015). The proposed research will help fill this literature gap in the area of Social entrepreneurial Intention and, in particular, in the Sri Lankan and State University context.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION

The first attempt to develop a social entrepreneurial intention model was made by Mair & Noboa, (2006). Their model of social entrepreneurial Intention suggests that the Intention to start a social enterprise evolves from perception to desirability. This is influenced by empathy as an emotional factor and moral judgment as a cognitive factor, while perceived feasibility is influenced by self-efficacy and social support enablers. Mair & Noboa, (2006) model has been inspired by the Theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), though it does not follow this Theory closely.

PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Life experiences, such as the social difficulties individuals experience, motivate them to become social entrepreneurs (Ghalwash et al., 2017). Pangriya (2019), has also recognized that some personal life experiences play an important role in social entrepreneurial intention formulation. This Idea has been

reinforced by Sahinidis et al., (2014), Who found that the social surroundings of an individual impact entrepreneurial intention. Barendsen & Gardner (2004), found that early childhood traumatic events often act as a facilitator in the development of beliefs of social entrepreneurs and affect social vision. A study by Shaw & Carter (2007), revealed that Social entrepreneurs habitually rely on past life past experiences to achieve their social mission and put their credibility on line, if the venture fails. Kieng and Quack (2013), postulate that prior business life experiences of the social entrepreneur are important as they will be better able to assess institutional barriers to entry and assess social ventures.

3 Theoretical Framework

THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR

Research in the field of entrepreneurial Intention has seen major contributions and an increased interest, which has enabled rapid evolution in this area (Liñán and Fayolle, 2015). Various theories discuss human behavior, of which the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is one of the most commonly researched theories in relation to behavioral intentions (Chen-Yueh & Lin, 2021). In the field of intentions and behavior, the TPB is one of the most widely used theories (Aloulou, 2015). In addition, this Theory has become one of the most popular theories in behavioral intention research (Cheng et al., 2016). It has been argued that the reasoning for using the TPB is that behavior can be controlled by the intention of an individual and the intention is affected by many factors, which can reduce the explanatory power of the theory (Ming et al., 2020). Furthermore, this theory assumes that humans are rational in their decision making and attitude, behavioral control and subjective norms are considered as independent variables (Sajeewanee et al., 2019).

In the recent past, the Theory of Planned Behavior has received some criticism from academics and calls made to retire (Esposito et al., 2016) due to concerns about the utility and validity of the Theory (Sniehotta, Presseau & Araujo-Soares, 2014). St-Pierre et al., (2017) stress that the TPB mainly focuses on the cognitive processors and less on the affective domain, which has attracted criticism from many academics. This criticism of ignoring the affective domain or emotions in the decision-making process has been highlighted by authors such as Gibbons et al., (2009). As a result of the criticism received, there have been studies that have extended the Theory and improved on it (Esposito et al., 2016)

TPB states that intentions are a precursor to behavior (Esposito et al., 2016), which is one of the first actions in a series of actions that are followed in establishing an entrepreneurial organization (Bird, 1988). Authors such as Ajzen & Fishbein, (1975), have reinforced this idea by stating that intentions are a strong indicator of future behavior, which could be, in this case, engaging in entrepreneurial activity. The TPB model states three factors that affect behavioral intentions. These factors do not directly affect the behavior as individuals do not always act on their intentions (Lukšić et al., 2016).

The TPB has been applied in various studies, such as interventions at changing and modifying beliefs, behavior, and intentions (Buckley et al., 2013) and predicting people's intentions to act ethically in varying environments (Voegel & Pearson, 2016). This Theory has been extensively used in attitude-behavior research studies, which have been proven to be a successful predictor of behavior (Conner & Armitage, 1998). According to the TPB, the perceived behavioral control, attitude towards behavior and subjective norms are described as antecedents of intention to behave in a certain way (Jaleel et al., 2021)



The literature review shows that the TPB has been the primary Theory used in research relating to Entrepreneurial Intention (EI). In one of the studies by Usman & Yennita, (2019), 122 university students in Turkey used the TPB as the explaining model of EI. The study found that personal attitude (PA) and subjective norms (SN) were strongly related to EI, while perceived behavioral control (PBC) was moderately related to EI. In a similar study conducted by Mothibi & Malebana, (2019), in South Africa, secondary school learners found that EI was predicted by PA, SN, and PBC as suggested by the TPB. In a study by Alam et al., (2019), engineering students found that EI predicted PA and PBC in Pakistan. When applied in different contexts, these studies show that the TPB showed slight variation in the findings.

4 Hypothesis

Drawing from the Theory of Planned Behavior, Aleksandrova et al., (2019), assert that attitude towards entrepreneurial behavior plays a pivotal role in determining entrepreneurial Intention, while the study had not considered Subjective Norms, which is part of the Theory of Planned Behavior in determining entrepreneurial Intention. In this study, the researcher used individual-level data from 2013 and 2018 of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) survey focusing on Russia.

Hypothesis 1 (H1) -There is a positive relationship between State University Undergraduate students' social entrepreneurial Intention and Personal attitude.

Nguyen, (2018), concluded through his qualitative research to verify the various quantitative studies done on Entrepreneurial Intention using TPB found that subjective norms significantly affect the EI among young Vietnamese entrepreneurs. Soomro et al., (2018), conducted a study in Pakistan and Thailand to test the robustness of the TPB among 777 bachelor and master-level students in total; the results of the study suggested a significant difference in subjective norms in both countries, among other factors.

Several studies have found weak evidence that subjective norms influence Entrepreneurial Intention. A study that revealed a weak relationship between subjective norms and EI was conducted by Sousa et al., (2018), by collecting data from 280 undergraduate law students at the University of Porto in 2014. Another study that supports this notion was conducted by Gonzalez-Serrano et al., (2018); they looked at 183 sport science students from a Spanish University and found that Subjective Norms was not a significant determinant of EI, while it was a significant determinate of entrepreneurial intentions.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) -There is a positive relationship between State University Undergraduate students' social entrepreneurial Intention and subjective Norms.

Ajzen (1991), have proposed that perceived behavioral controls are one factor influencing EI as part of the TPB. Jeon, (2018), in a study using Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) data, tested the influence of perceived behavioral control on EI; the result indicated that perceived behavioral control strongly influences EI. The relationship between perceived behavioral controls and EI was further confirmed by D'Souza et al., (2018), through a study of high school students at Midwest US University to find the impact of experienced-based education on EI.

Hypothesis 3 (H3) -There is a positive relationship between State University Undergraduate students' social entrepreneurial Intention and Perceived behavioral control.

Mair & Noboa, (2006), proposed a relationship exists between prior experience with social problems and entrepreneurial Intention. In the same vein, Ip et al., (2017) found through a study that prior experience



with social problems was an antecedent to social entrepreneurial Intention. More specifically, a significant relationship between Personal attitude and early childhood experience with social problems was found by Drennan et al., (2005). Prior experience with social problems can take many forms. According to Hockerts, (2017), one way an individual receives such experiences is by working for social sector organizations.

Hypothesis 4 (H4) - There is a positive relationship between prior experiences with social problems and social entrepreneurial attitude.

5 Methodology

This study is a quantitative study based on a questionnaire survey. Quantitative inquiry generally adopts a deductive process (Hyde, 2000), which will take the form of quantitative research. The research will use deductive reasoning for this research project as the arguer claims that the conclusion follows necessarily from the premises in a corresponding way (Wilbanks, 2010). Deductive reasoning is a theory-testing process that commences with an established theory and seeks to see if the Theory applies to specific instances (Hyde, 2000). The research project will test the Theory of Planned Behavior in the context of social entrepreneurial Intention among undergraduate students in Sri Lanka. The study has four hypotheses for testing.

The research project used a cross-sectional or social survey design. In a cross-sectional design, data are gathered from more than one case at a single point in time to collect quantitative data to evaluate two or more variables to ascertain patterns between them.

The quantitative method enables the researchers to test the relationships between the variables identified in the model, thereby letting them provide evidence to support or disprove the hypotheses (Carter and Bélanger, 2005). The studies that engage in hypothesis testing explain the nature of certain relationships or establish the difference among groups or the independence of two or more factors in a situation (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). This study was developed with four hypotheses for testing, making it explanatory. The unit of analysis refers to the level of aggregation of the data collected during the subsequent data analysis stage (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010); this investigation studied university students; hence, the unit of analysis was individuals. The study population will be undergraduate students presently studying at Sri Lankan universities.

Non-probability sampling was used as the findings of this research will not be directly used to make any major decisions but rather pave the way to carry out further research in this area and expand the understanding of social entrepreneurship among undergraduate students. The respondents were chosen from 9 universities out of the 16 state universities covering all parts of the country. These universities will include Colombo University, the University of Peradeniya, the University of Ruhuna, the University of Jaffna, Wayamba University, Sabaragamuwa University, University of Moratuwa, University of Sri Jayewardenepura and Eastern University.

The sample size will be determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970), table. The total undergraduate student population in 16 universities in 2021 was 144,040, per the University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka. Accordingly, the sample size was 384 respondents. However, 504 respondents were interviewed as part of the research.

INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

Designing the questionnaire is complex since surveys can ask about topics in varying degrees of detail, and questions can be asked in diverse ways. A question asked earlier in a survey may affect how people answer other questions (Tella, 2015). According to Johnston, (2014), using existing data collection instruments is preferable when these are available. This will raise the research efficiency as the researcher will not need to develop and validate the instrument. The Theory of planned behavior was

used to identify entrepreneurial Intention by using the research instrument developed and validated by Kolvereid, (1996).

DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected were analyzed using IBM's SPSS and AMOS. Respondents' profiles were analyzed using descriptive statistics. To evaluate the measurement model and proposed research model, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and SEM were used.

A pilot study was conducted as an essential part of a research project. The pilot study aims to assess the recruitment strategies, the data collection instrument, research study protocols, and other research techniques. In other words, the feasibility of the larger research study. The pilot study was conducted among 127 undergraduate students from seven universities. The internal reliability test in the pilot study, for each subscale, were: Reasons for becoming a Social Entrepreneur of 19 items ($\alpha = .938$), Employment attitude of 4 items ($\alpha = .795$), Subjective Norm of 6 items ($\alpha = .897$), Perceived Behavioral Controls of 6 items ($\alpha = .0.758$), and Prior experience of Social problem of items 8 ($\alpha = .934$). In addition, exploratory factor analysis was carried out to determine the validity of the measurement instrument. A principal component analysis with a direct oblimin rotation of 71 of the 86 items from the social entrepreneurship questionnaire was conducted on data gathered from 127 participants. An examination of the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin measure suggested that the sample was factorable (KMO = .808), and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant ($p < .001$).

6 Respondents Profile

Descriptive statistics were used to see the respondents' demographic details. The majority of the 504 respondents were females, accounting for 73% or 368 individuals, while males, or 27% or 136 individuals. The survey respondents were primarily from two age categories, 21-30 and 31-35 years. The majority of the 428 respondents were from the 21-30 age category, which accounted for 84.5%, while the second largest category was the 15-20 age category, which accounted for 14.5%. Undergraduate students who participated in the survey were from five "year of study" categories. The number of students from years 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 was 36 (7.1%), 55 (10.9%), 118 (23.4%), 262 (52%), and 33 (6.5%), respectively.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>(%)</i>
<i>Gender</i>		
<i>Male</i>	136	27
<i>Female</i>	368	73
<i>Age</i>		
<i>15-20 years</i>	73	14.5
<i>21-30 years</i>	428	84.5
<i>31-35 years</i>	3	0.6
<i>Over 35 years</i>	0	0
<i>Year of Study</i>		
<i>Year 1</i>	36	7.1
<i>Year 2</i>	55	10.9
<i>Year 3</i>	118	23.4
<i>Year 4</i>	262	52
<i>Year 5</i>	33	6.5

Table 1. Demographic of respondents

7 Structural Equation Modeling Analysis

Structural Equation Modeling was used to test the study's hypothesis following the two-stage approach proposed by Anderson & Gerbing, (1988). The first stage is the development of the measurement model. The confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) method was used to develop the measurement model. The second stage involved the development of the structural model to assess the relationships between the independent, dependent, and mediating constructs.

CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

Measurement Model

As part of the confirmatory factor analysis, factor loadings were assessed for each item. No items were removed due to low factor loadings (< 0.5). The model fit measures were used to assess the model's overall goodness of fit (CMIN/df, GFI, CFI, TLI, SRMR, and RMSEA), and all values were within their respective common acceptance levels (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Bentler, 1990; Hair et al., 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1998; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). The measurement model yielded good fit (Table 2) for the data: CMIN/df = 1.576, GFI = .917, CFI = .958, TLI = .954, SRMR = .042, and RMSEA = .034.

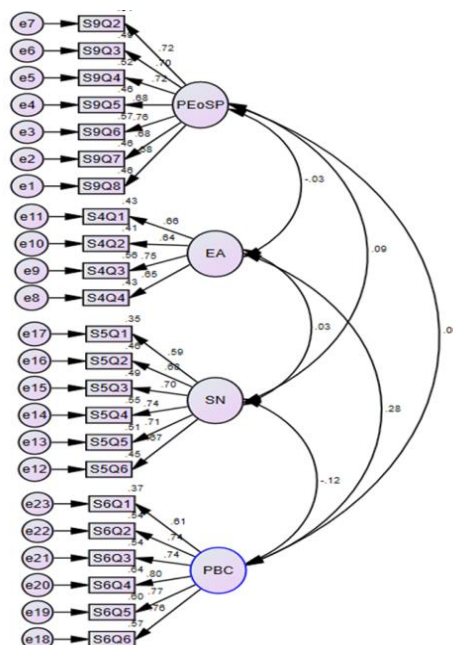


Figure 1. Measurement model

Fit Indices	Recommended Vales	Source	Obtained Values
P	Insignificant	(Bagozzi & Yi, 1988)	.000
CMIN (chi-square/ df)	<5	(Schumacker & Lomax, 2004)	1.576
GFI	>.90	(Hair et al., 2010)	.971
CFI	>.90	(Bentler, 1990)	.958
TLI	>.90	(Bentler, 1990)	.954
SRMR	<.08	(Hu & Bentler, 1998)	.042

RMSEA	<.08	(Hu & Bentler, 1998)	.034
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Table 2. Fit indices for reasons for prior experience of social problems

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

A structural equation model generated through AMOS was used to test the hypothesis in this research project. A good fit model is accepted if the values of CMIN/df, the Goodness of Fit Indices (GFI) (Hair et al., 2010), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI); Confirmatory Fit Indices (CFI) (Bentler, 1990) is >0.90 (Hair et al., 2010). In addition, an adequate fit model was accepted if the computed values of the Standardized Root Mean Square Residuals (SRMR) < 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1998), and the Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA) is < 0.08 (Hair et al., 2010). The fit indices of the model fell within the acceptable range: CMIN/df = 1.632, GFI = .914, CFI = .953, TLI = .950, SRMR = .055, and RMSEA = .035.

The squared multiple correlations was 0.275 for Social entrepreneurial Intention; this shows that 27.5% variance in Social entrepreneurial Intention accounted by employment attitude, Subjective Norm, and Perceived behavioral control. While the squared multiple correlation was 0.000 for Employment Attitude, this shows a 0% variance in Employment attitude accounted by Prior experience of Social problems.

The study assessed the Social Entrepreneurial Intention among Sri Lankan Higher Education students. The impact of Personal Attitude on Social Entrepreneurial Intention was positive and significant ($b = .041$, $t = 4.118$, $p < .001$), supporting H1. The impact of Subjective Norms on Social Entrepreneurial Intention was positive and insignificant ($b = 0.53$, $t = 1.807$, $p = 0.071$), hence not supporting H2. The impact of Perceived Behavioral Control on Social Entrepreneurial Intention was positive and significant ($b = .069$, $t = 8.374$, $p < .001$), supporting H3. The impact of Prior Experiences with Social Problems on Social Entrepreneurial Attitude was negative and insignificant ($b = -.041$, $t = -.408$, $p = .684$), not supporting H4.

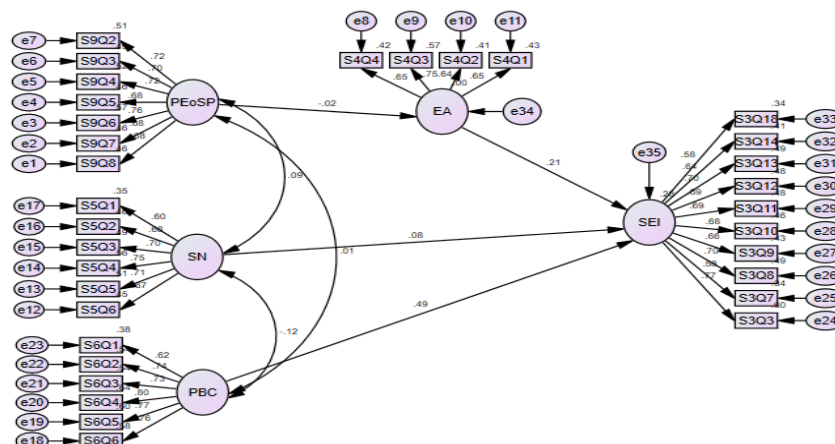


Figure 2. Structural Model

The model fit indices and hypothesis results are presented in table 3.

Hypothesized relationship	Standardized Estimates	t value	P value	Decision
Employment Attitude → Social Entrepreneurial Intention	0.041	4.118	<.001	Supporting H1

Subjective Norms → Social Entrepreneurial Intention	0.53	1.807	p=0.071	Not supporting H2
Perceived Behavioral Control → Social Entrepreneurial Intention	0.069	8.374	<.001	Supporting H3
Prior Experiences with Social Problems → Social Entrepreneurial Attitude	-.041	-.408	p=0.684	Not supporting H4
R- Square				
Social Entrepreneurial Intention	0.275			
Social Entrepreneurial Attitude	0.000			
Model Fit				
CMIN/df = 1.632, GFI = .914, CFI = .953, TLI = .950, SRMR =.055, and RMSEA = .035.				

Table 3. Standardized regression weights for the proposed model

8 Results and Discussion

Hypothesis 1 (H1) -There is a positive relationship between State University Undergraduate students' Social Entrepreneurial Intention and Personal attitude was supported by the research findings. Supporting this finding, Aleksandrova et al., (2019), assert that attitude towards entrepreneurial behavior plays a pivotal role in determining entrepreneurial Intention, while the study had not considered Subjective Norms, which is part of the Theory of Planned Behavior in determining entrepreneurial Intention. In another study done among 161 Taiwan Muslim tourists found that a positive relationship between travel intentions and destination image, which was in-line with the TPB and this study finding(Shazra Ibrahim et al., 2021).

Hypothesis 2 (H2) -There is a positive relationship between State University Undergraduate students' social entrepreneurial Intention and subjective Norms was not supported by the research findings. Supporting the research project findings, Soomro et al., (2018), conducted a study in Pakistan and Thailand and found a significant difference in subjective norms in both countries, among other factors.

Hypothesis 3 (H3) -There is a positive relationship between State University Undergraduate students' social entrepreneurial Intention and Perceived behavioral control was supported by the research findings. Ajzen (1991), has proposed that perceived behavioral controls are one of the factors that influence entrepreneurial Intention. Jeon, (2018), in a study using Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) data, tested the influence of perceived behavioral control on entrepreneurial Intention; the result indicated

that perceived behavioral control strongly influences entrepreneurial Intention. This study confirmed these findings as the research study findings supported this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4 (H4) - There is a positive relationship between prior experiences with social problems and social entrepreneurial attitude was not supported by the research findings. Ip et al., (2017) found through a study that prior experience with social problems was not an antecedent to social entrepreneurial Intention. The study's findings, which did not support this hypothesis, confirmed the empirical research findings of the study mentioned above.

9 Contribution of the Study

State university graduate unemployment has been a major socio-politico-economic problem in the small open economy of Sri Lanka for the past 35 years (Chandrasiri, 2008b). Social entrepreneurship can be proposed as a viable career option to address the unemployment issue. Singh, (2019), found that Social Entrepreneurship is in an embryonic stage, and the governments and entrepreneurs in different countries have much to do to scale up social enterprises for their betterment. The findings of this research can address the lack of understanding of the antecedent factors that affect social entrepreneurial Intention.

10 Limitations of the Study and Future Direction

This study has potential limitations. Due to time and resource limitations, this study was limited to five state universities in Sri Lanka. It would have been helpful if all fifteen state universities located in all parts of the country were covered.

Another limitation of this study was the study population considered was Undergraduate students presently studying at state universities in Sri Lanka and did not consider undergraduate students studying at private higher educational institutions.

The study adopted a non-probability sampling due to the researcher being unable to obtain the sampling frame due to the university privacy policy. Adopting a non-probability sampling can be considered a limitation due to the researcher not knowing how well the sample will represent the population and the lower generalization of research findings compared to probability sampling.

There has been a lack of previous research studies in the context of social entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka and other south Asian counties like India and Pakistan. These prior studies provide the empirical foundations for the research question the research is investigating and help in comparing the research findings.

Some suggestions for future research will include the following:

Conducting a comprehensive study that includes all 16 state universities in Sri Lanka. This will give a comprehensive picture of the social entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduate students. In addition, a study where the state universities are clustered by region whereby geographical regional differences in social entrepreneurial intentions could be identified if they existed.

A study can be conducted to include private higher educational institutions in Sri Lanka. This will give a comprehensive understanding of the social entrepreneurial intentions among all undergraduate students.




In addition, this study could also explore the differences between state and private higher educational institutions' undergraduate students' entrepreneurial intentions.


A similar study can be conducted utilizing probability sampling, which can confirm the findings of this research and or reveal new findings which can help further the knowledge in this area of study.


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