



Identifying Agri-Entrepreneurship Intention of Youth Engage in Agricultural Education: Referring Theory of Planned Behavior in Developing Context

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Authors' contributions

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ABSTRACT

Agricultural sector is becoming less attractive for young people, especially in educated youth, in an increasing rate, which has become a global trend. One of the dominant factors which support the development of the youth agri-entrepreneurship intention while boosting the economy of the country is the agriculture education. The study aims to identify the factors that influencing entrepreneurial intention of youth engage in agricultural education in Sri Lanka. The study mainly allied with the conceptual extension of the theory being proposed through the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and analyzed three main factors; perceived behavior, subjective norms, and personal attitude towards outcome, that can create effects. The scope of the study included undergraduates who were undertaking studies in the agricultural spectrum. Quantitative research approach was employed and primary data were collected utilizing a structured questionnaire. The results indicated that the agri-entrepreneurship intention among Sri Lankan university students are mostly influenced through their personal attitudes and perceived behaviors while the subjective norms have a lack of impact when compared with the studies that have been conducted in other countries. The results of the study could serve as the major guidelines to address the content that was lacking in entrepreneurial education in the agricultural spectrum. The study presents the areas through which the developments in education can be made and these can be used as the major focus areas for educators, policy makers and the students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has an unchanging demand, mainly due to its heavy contribution to food security. It is one of the key sectors among the others that contribute heavily towards the development of the economy of any country, which also interacts with the other sub-sectors that are related to increasing economic growth, reducing poverty, creating rural development and reaching towards environmental sustainability [1]. Traditionally, agriculture is viewed as an industry with lowest technological involvement with limited dynamics towards development, and a stronger link towards small family farms which have been undertaking the same pathway throughout the past, with lesser motivation to change the processes [2]. The economic liberalization in the world, alongside with the reduced protection shown towards the agricultural market and the critical view presented from the society has created major changes on this perspective, and the present context has been capable to heavily surpass the recognition presented on Agri-entrepreneurship. According to Naminse and Zhuang [3], agri-entrepreneur can be used to name an individual on the agricultural segment which includes full-time or part-time in farm activities (soil cultivation, crop growing and livestock rearing) as well as the non-farm activities including (market seeking, and customer handling) and are attempting to undertake newer approaches to increase the profitable gains. Interestingly, entrepreneurship and agriculture are two well-versed yet rarely adjoined concepts in the modern world, with a higher focus on their individual contributions towards economic values brought to a country. Undoubtedly, one of the dominant factors which support the development of the agri-entrepreneurship while boosting the economy of the country is the agriculture education [4]. As such, it is important to note that strengthening the link between agriculture education and agriculture-related development priorities of the country is essential to obtain a fruitful outcome of education. Regrettably, agricultural sector is becoming less attractive for young people, especially in educated youth, in an increasing rate, which has become a global trend, so that they tend to move on to more dynamic and attractive employment sectors [5]. Youth are the future of a country with their limitless energy, knowledge and aspiration. Hence there is a need

to ensure a successful agricultural sector in this country. Against this situation, there should be a promising pathway to retain youth in the agriculture sector in a more attractive and meaningful way.

At present, Sri Lankan agricultural sector is experiencing various issues which results negative consequences to the development and sustainability of the sector. Some of the key concerns are productivity stagnation, high production cost, marketing issues, food insecurity, resource degradation, health hazards, climate change uncertainties, agrarian poverty, lower product diversification and lower innovativeness [6]. These issues have become more complicated day by day indicating the need for proper remedial measures to achieve the real benefits of agriculture. Sri Lanka is a predominantly agricultural country where the rural economy still depends largely on agriculture. Although the contribution of the agricultural sector to the gross domestic production is at a level 8.69% it has been identified that this contribution keeps decreasing rapidly. However, it is known that the agriculture sector has a higher potential of uplifting the living conditions of the rural communities and providing food for the country, and thus it is necessary to provide methodologies to increase its contribution [6].

The agriculture education in Sri Lanka has relatively a long history. The Sri Lankan Government has been extending significant support to uplift the agriculture education over the past decades to collaborate education and agriculture to stimulate the development of the agriculture industry. The agriculture faculties in the national university system and the agriculture schools of Department of Agriculture are the main two types of educational institutes designed to provide systematic agriculture education in Sri Lanka. Additionally, some private sector institutions also offer agriculture education. Among those educational institutes, the national universities produce approximately 750 agriculture graduates annually [6,7].

There is a shift in agriculture graduates' job-orientation towards more lucrative and convenient avenues to a certain extent and lessen contribution on establishing themselves as agri-entrepreneurs. Sri Lankan youth would

be further encouraged and should be a boost in the image of agriculture in the youth mindset through entrepreneurship education. The ability of agriculture sector to create an environment so that youth are willing to embark in this sector is grossly required.

In general, Sri Lanka's position in the Global Entrepreneurship Index (GEI) was waning. In 2015, Sri Lanka's value in the GEI was 31.1%; unfortunately in 2019 it was dropped to 19.1%. Currently Sri Lanka was ranked 101th among 137 countries which is comparatively the lowest rank in the region (Global Entrepreneurship Development Institution, 2019). The statistics in GEI appears that there is a widening gap in entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka and agri-entrepreneur has no exemption. The agriculture sector is long left by the youth even there is lucrative long run potential economic growth. Their awareness and commitment as the agri-entrepreneur in the agriculture sector which left by them many decades ago need to be revived. As far as we concern, there is pressing need to change the paradigm of youth in universities towards looking the agriculture sector as one of the opportunities for them to be self-employed and government effort is to involve more youth in universities to become more knowledgeable, self-reliance and eventually establish themselves as agriculture entrepreneurs. Therefore, this study aims to identify the factors that influencing entrepreneurial intention of youth engage in agricultural education in Sri Lanka. To address the research objective, the study mainly allied with the conceptual extension of the theory being proposed through the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) [8]. The literature specified that the TPB has been formulated with the initial effort available towards the broader understanding on the concept of entrepreneurship [9]. Agricultural entrepreneurship itself is a planned behavior [10], and the TPB has been identified as the main model for predicting intentions [11].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Agriculture Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a process associated with creating economic value by providing a unique package of resources that allows to exploit newer opportunities that have not yet been accessed [12]. The scholars focusing on entrepreneurship has focused on many entrepreneurial situations, yet, it has been identified that there is little evidence on the agriculture entrepreneurship.

It has been however identified that there is no single precedented definition presentable towards agricultural entrepreneurship, yet, it has been identified as the ability of a farmer to generate new opportunities, that are organized either as a new business venture apart from that existing, or as a part of the existing business in order to improve and increase the outputs and profits obtained [13]. However, both agriculture economics and entrepreneurship domain scholars have used the term diversification in order to describe the strategic and systematic pathway undertaken from the basic activities in order to change and grow the business. This diversification is further viewed upon as on-farm and off-farm diversification – thereby attempting to bring clarity on the exact entrepreneurial aspect that is being applied in the industry. The on-farm entrepreneurship segment is associated with the activities that are undertaken within the farm environment, thereby to improve the performance and output of the existing farm-based business entity. The off-farm concept, on the other hand, is associated with the new business ventures being operated outside the farm in order to improve the performance by integrating newer opportunities [14].

The main entrepreneurship definitions brought forth with focus on the European farming segment and the European status of agricultural entrepreneurship include that presented by Beedell and Rehman [15] who suggest that the entrepreneurship in agricultural sector needs to be associated with the understanding on the farmer's attitudes and motivation to engage in such activities, which has been resulted through the changes being in the business environment, making it extremely hostile. It has been identified that owning a small business cannot explicitly be suggested as the verification criteria for an entrepreneur, yet it needs to be associated with the intention of expanding the business, while improving the leadership and managerial capabilities in order to achieve the goals [16]. As identified by Ridha and Wahyu [17], the agri-entrepreneur intention can be accessed as similar to the individual competency in being willing to conduct activities with regard to a certain behavioral pattern, with the intention of achieving a given set of goals.

2.2 Agri-entrepreneurship Intention and Educated Youth

Cheng and Liang [4] indicate that the effect of agricultural entrepreneurship among the younger

farmers is higher when considering with the older farmers, mainly due to the availability of time for trial and error, and the attitude towards balancing the agricultural production and improving the quality of rural life. The development of agricultural sector has been identified as an important requirement when addressing the future global food industry, yet, it cannot be identified without harnessing the quality human resources base of the youth. The special concern in this case is laid on the graduates from agricultural facilities, since they are mainly known to already bare a considerable amount of knowledge related to agricultural development. Universities present the students with an exceptional understanding and a focus on the skills required to engage in entrepreneurial activities related to agriculture. However, studies have shown that the young generation has a considerably low contribution towards the phenomenon in agricultural sector and it has been identified to showcase a positive correlation on the decreasing of the national income related to agriculture sector [17]. Certain studies on the other hand have showcased that the promotion of entrepreneurship education in the universities is unable to fully cater the entrepreneurship intention on the youth, and they argue that administrative barriers existing towards such ventures are to be removed while launching programs to support young entrepreneurs.

The universities creating graduates in increased numbers in a yearly basis contributes further to the increase of the unemployment rates, and on such background, the entrepreneurial intentions of the agricultural graduates are higher than that of others [18]. In the research of Utsugi [19], with regard to the employment of youth in the organic agricultural sector, it has been identified that many are uninterested and unwilling to take part in the field as a permanent career option. Similar results have been presented by Boateng et al., [20] and Pande [21] where they have identified that the youth is less interested due to perceiving of lack of capitals, skills, supports, market opportunities and risks as main obstacles for intending entrepreneurship. The highest youth participation in agri-entrepreneur is seen in countries such as Indonesia, and as suggested by researchers accessing the country's entrepreneurship intention, it has been identified that the youth who are graduated yet unemployed are the most prominent among such [17].

Entrepreneurship related education in the country has become a prominent requirement,

and it has been identified that there is a higher trend of graduate owned firms with young owners as well as intellectual property owners to be in a higher number [22]. However, there is a still vivid discussion on the same, mainly related to the willingness of entrepreneurs to be undertaking job roles specifically in the government sector than engaging in risky behavior. Expanding commercial orientation of farming activities, re-branding agriculture through high-quality products, enhancing the quality of the value chain, and grabbing export market opportunities are the most possible avenues to explore for those young entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka [7]. However, the agriculture sector still remains traditional with very low contribution in almost all aspects. It is assumed that in order to make this sector dynamic, it is necessary to convert this sector from the traditional standing to the commercialized. However, the commercialization is much dependent on the possibility of increasing the performance of agriculture entrepreneurs [23]. Although the creative youth is a fundamental necessity in building the agricultural sector through entrepreneurial participation, there is a gigantic deficiency of such involvement. The present study mainly allied with the conceptual extension of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) [8] as the basis for analysis on entrepreneurial intentions among agriculture students.

2.3 Theory of Planned Behavior

In the TPB model presented by Ajzen et al., [8], intention is assumed to be a portrait of motivation which thereby has the capability to affect an act. The level of willingness and the sacrifices that a person showcase to formulate the idea is presented in this theory. TPB can be identified as theorizing the influence of attitude towards behavior, subjective norms, and the perceived behavioral control through the mediation of the intentions under given circumstances. The willingness of people to undertake behaviors have been extensively studied and they have provided a repetitive confirmation on how these components are associated with the prediction of such behavior [24,25,26]. Agri-entrepreneurship itself is a planned behavior [10], and it has been identified through studies that the agri-entrepreneurship's relationship on the inclusion of the TPB as the readiness of an undergraduate to start an action related to a new or existing business activity in the agricultural sector [11].

A person appears to make assessments in support or against a behavior before creating any

intentions. According to TPB, dispositions are influenced by a collection of different behavioral beliefs that relate behavior to a variety of results and characteristics. Thus, people develop positive or negative attitudes that are based on their personal beliefs. When this situation is viewed in this approach, it shows that a positive behavior is created when it is conveyed that it has many positive advantages and other results. The unfavorable outcomes are caused by a negative attitude toward the behavior. If entrepreneurship is conveyed as a beneficial sector for the people, then it will bring good entrepreneurial intentions [27,28].

Attitude and perception are crucial factors in the development of entrepreneurial culture [29] and the personality characteristics depending upon the personal attitudes have an indirect effect on the agricultural entrepreneurship intention, while the entrepreneurial attitudes have been identified as having a significant relationship with the stated [30,31,32]. According to prior studies, personal attitude towards outcome can be accessed under two main variables as psychological traits and the perceived desirability [33]. When considering the psychological aspect of entrepreneurial intention of the youth to specially engage in agriculture related activities, it has been identified that the most important requirement is to develop the societal attitude towards entrepreneurship, thereby making it more socially attractive. This allows the youth to engage in such activities by taking initiative to launch their own business on such regions rather than preferring a job [34]. As Munir et al. [33] opined, major negligence within the development of psychological traits towards creating an individual willingness to engage in agricultural entrepreneurship is the lack of communication. The promotion and proper communication on the advantages, opportunities, and the other positive results obtainable can create a higher psychological impact on a direct positive level. Thus, youth are required to be presented with proper consultancy, proper platforms and other arenas that are capable to present a sense of security towards the operation of agricultural entrepreneurship activities.

Moreover, empirical findings have showcased that there is a strong impact of perceived desirability on the entrepreneurial intentions [35]. Perceived desirability is identified as the extent to which a person is considering and/or is attracted to the concept of initiating and involving with entrepreneurial activities. They have been

identified that having a direct relationship is the ability to operate in their desired manner with the inclusion of freedom, self-controlling, and potential affluent [36]. Interestingly, literature insists that women are more interested in the establishment of entrepreneurial ventures when compared with men, basically due to their ability to operate in a free environment, with their ability to operate in a desired time period with the desired level of dedication [37]. Indrianti [38] further opined that the perceived desirability on the agricultural entrepreneurship of youth in different countries are directly based on factors such as societal pressure, acceptance and the level and type of education presented by each country. With these arguments, the study proposed hypotheses as:

H1: Personal attitude toward outcome has a positive effect on agriculture entrepreneurial intention of youth in Sri Lankan universities.

Subjective norms refer to the belief about whether most individuals approve or disapprove of the behaviors [8]. This is also related to an entity's beliefs about whether individuals or peers of importance to the person think should engage in behavior. The personal subjective norms and its relationship with agricultural entrepreneurship as identified by Fitzimmons and Douglas [32]; Barani et al. [30]; Almobaireek & Manolova [27]; Krueger [39] and Lián and Chen [28]. However, it has been identified that the subjective norms of an individual could vary according to the normative beliefs and the social valuation of agribusiness career [40]. In the study of Ephram et al., [40], it has been identified that there is less youth engagement in agribusiness due to the belief that agriculture is related with lower class and rural people in the society. According to the prior studies, subjective norm associates with two main factors, social support and role models. It has been identified that the perception of an individual on the amount of support that the society is willing to extend in order to achieve success in their entrepreneurial venture [41]. The social support is also reviewed upon the cultural context where the culture within society shapes entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions [42]. The society, including their behavior, thinking pattern, and the view and support showcased to motivate youth willing to engage in a career path leading to an entrepreneurial business can positively affect entrepreneurial intention among the youth. Moreover, certain cultures and societies view agriculture related businesses as socially downward as other businesses thereby creating

an overall negative impact on the youth who are willing to participate in agriculture business activities [43].

Karimi et al., [44] opined that the entrepreneurial role models, with their conceptual success or failures in the many activities undertaken, are capable to create an indirect influence on the entrepreneurial intentions of the young students, by acting as an antecedent of the TPB. Media plays an important role in the promotion of entrepreneurship and related to agricultural activities among the youth through the focusing on publishing and telecasting successful entrepreneurs [45]. Such motivations can develop higher motivation through the increasing of role models available to the youth, and thereby showcasing the guidance pathways that can be obtained. In most communities, the role models are mainly limited to specific careers, and agriculture is considered a sector with minimal marketing yet along role models. Thus, the effect of creating focus on those who have been successful in the field is an essential to highlight the importance and possibility of such. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is posited:

H2: Subjective norms influence on agriculture entrepreneurial intention of youth in Sri Lankan universities.

As specified in the TPB, perceived behavioral control is driven by control beliefs about either the existence or lack of necessary resources and opportunities [46]. Control beliefs must be based as a sector of past experiences with behavior, yet, they will also be conveyed by other second-hand information experiences of acquaintances, and by other points that has a capacity to increase or reduce the perceived threat of performing the behavior that is in question [8]. Generally, it has been identified that little knowledge is available related to the agricultural intention of the youth, mainly due to the unknowing nature of the individual's interest and willingness to pursue business opportunities in the agriculture or agri-related activities in the value chain [40]. The perception whether the behavior is worth the pursuit, and the perception that the people and organizations will value and support the behavior has been identified as main components controlling the willingness to engage in agricultural activities [47]. The perceived behavioral control can be thereby accessed under two main sections as entrepreneurial skills and self-efficacy. The entrepreneurial studies and its related literature through the past 20

years have directed number of evidences to outline that entrepreneurship is not typically achievable in a consistent level yet is included with a number of skills which are collectively known as entrepreneurial skills [48]. Thus, entrepreneurial skills that are obtained using entrepreneurship programs that can affect the student behavior control and their anticipation towards a positive relationship with entrepreneurship activities is directly not capable to instill a willingness to profoundly engage in agricultural entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurial skills and motivation towards agricultural entrepreneurship are mostly dominated by the agricultural undergraduates [49]. Self-efficacy is considered as the capability that a person feels on their own ability to sustain and develop in entrepreneurial activities, and thus, are required to be identified as basic necessities in developing entrepreneurial intentions [50]. The belief of the youth on their ability to maintain such a venture on the agricultural industry with the inclusion of skills and knowledge has been highly promoted through agriculture based undergraduate programs within countries like Russia, thereby increasing the participation of youth. These youth, though have a certain fear on the business perspective specially related to the financial balancing, are however willing to undertake a risk on the business since they have a higher understanding on the probability of success within the agricultural sector [51]. As such, perception on the risk of failure and the fear of the failure act as important variables in creating negative influence on the willingness to initiate a new business [35]. Thus, the proposed hypothesis is:

H3: Perceived behavioural control has an effect on agriculture entrepreneurial intention of youth in Sri Lankan universities.

3. METHODS

This study used a quantitative methodology investigate the determinants of agriculture entrepreneurial intention of youth in Sri Lankan universities. The explanatory research design used to describe the strength of the relationships in order to establish a proper causal association among the variables through testing the validity of stated hypotheses that have been derived from the TPB. The four variables were selected on the basis of the literature review (Personal attitude towards outcome; Subjective norms; Perceived behavioural control and Agri-

entrepreneurial intention). A five-point Likert-type scale 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used to measure the constructs of the used variables. A total of 44 items were constructed on the basis of extensive literature review to grasp the perception of participants (undergraduates who follow agricultural spectrum) about Psychological traits, Perceived desirability, Role models, Social norms, Entrepreneurial skills, Self-efficacy and Entrepreneurial intention.

A questionnaire-based primary data collection approach is utilized with a series of close ended questions that are developed with the objective of gathering the direct responses from the respondents. The questionnaire contained five parts where the first section obtained demographic data of the participants including gender, religion, and area of residence. The second section obtained data related to the agriculture entrepreneurship intention of the respondents including their willingness to undertake salaried work or entrepreneur actions, and their consideration on becoming agricultural entrepreneurs. The third part included personal attitude towards outcome of the students related to the psychological traits and the perceived desirability. The fourth part included subjective norms and questions were introduced to include social support and the role models. The fifth section included questions related to perceived behavioral control including entrepreneurial skills of the respondents and the self-efficacy. All these questions were developed using previous studies thereby guaranteeing the accuracy of the applicability of results obtained [52,53,54].

The study was based on the agricultural entrepreneurship intention of the undergraduates in Sri Lankan universities, and thus the research population includes the entire set of university students who were mainly undertaking studies in the agricultural spectrum. This included six universities. The target population included both third and fourth year students and thus, the total number of students specific to the study was identified as 1188. Using simple random sampling technique, the study selected 350 undergraduates as the sample.

The data analysis was performed by utilizing the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) software tool. It has been identified that goodness of measurements, descriptive statistical measurements along with inferential statistical measurements including correlational analysis and multiple regression analysis

were the ideal for the determination of actual results.

4. RESULTS

Out of 350 questionnaires distributed, 157 responses were received, indicating 45 percent response rate. The questionnaire gathered information related to the demographic factors of the respondent, and the first part gathered information related to the gender, residential area, and the religion. Among the students 43 were male while 114 students were female which corresponded to 27.4% and 72.6% of the total selected respondents respectively. The majority of the respondents were identified to be from villages which included 80 of the entire respondents. 26 of the respondents were from towns while 51 of them were from cities. The percentages of respondents were 51% from villages, 32.5% from cities and 16.6% from towns. The religion of the majority was Buddhist which included 143 or 91.1% of the total respondents. Only 5.1% were Hindu and 3.8% were Christian. Thus, the sample profile mainly indicated Buddhist female university students who are living in villages.

4.1 Goodness of Measurements

The Kaiser-Meyer-Okin (KMO) measure of sample adequacy was employed to determine the appropriateness of factor analysis. Generally, a KMO measure of 0.50 or higher indicates the appropriateness of factor analysis [55], and that factor loadings with values above 0.70 are acceptable [56]. Table 1 shows that the KMO value of the measurement items was greater than 0.50 and that the Bartlett's test of sphericity showed a significant level ($p < 0.001$), indicating the appropriateness of factor analysis. The loadings of the items on their correspondents ranged from 0.531 to 0.929 (greater than 0.50). Hence, none of the items were dropped from the analysis. The reliability of each variable was assessed using Fornell and Larcker's [57] measure of composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach [58] alpha, as shown in Table 1. The CR and Cronbach's alpha values for each construct were above 0.70, which falls within the acceptable reliability range [59]. Convergent validity of the constructs was assessed by examining the average variance extracted (AVE). The results presented in Table 1 further shows that AVE values exceed the respective threshold values (above 0.50) ensuring the convergent validity. The discriminant validity was ensured as

the square root values of all AVEs exceed the correlation values of the respective constructs [57] (Table 2). The values of the square root of the AVE are as given in italic along the diagonals in Table 2. Based on the correlation values, there were statistically significant correlations among Personal attitude towards outcome; Subjective norms; Perceived behavioural control and Agri-entrepreneurial intention at a 0.01 significance level. Further, none of the correlation coefficient

was above 0.85, indicating the absence of multicollinearity in the variables [59].

4.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

The multiple regression analysis was performed to identify the significant influence of the selected independent variables over agri-entrepreneurial intention of undergraduates. The results are as given in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 1. Assessment of adequacy of measurement

Variable	No. of Items	KMO measure	Bartlett's test of sphericity	AVE	CR	Cronbach's alpha
Personal attitude towards outcome (PAO)	11	0.814	780.751	0.687	0.894	0.885
Subjective norms (SN)	11			0.549	0.814	0.878
Perceived behavioural control (PBC)	12			0.674	0.942	0.818
Agri-entrepreneurial intention (AEI)	09			0.642	0.876	0.810

Table 2. Discriminant validity

Variable	Mean	Std. deviation	PAO	SN	PBC	AEI
PAO	3.8558	0.66574	.829			
SN	3.6733	0.66831	.690**	.741		
PBC	3.06927	0.61178	.722**	.734**	.820	
AEI	3.3511	0.61178	.862**	.784**	.842**	.801

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3. Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson	F	Sig.
1	.804 ^a	.647	.640	.37463	1.589	93.295	.000 ^b

a. Predictors: (Constant), PAO, SN, PBC

b. Dependent Variable: AEI

Table 4. Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.149	.195		.762	.447		
	PAO	.444	.069	.473	6.431	.000	.426	2.345
	SN	.071	.071	.076	.991	.323	.397	2.517
	PBC	.334	.081	.327	4.100	.000	.363	2.756

a. Dependent Variable: AEI

In Table 3, it was identified that the R^2 value was at 0.647 while the F value was at 93.295 while the p value was less than 0.001, which therefore implies that around 64.7% of the agricultural entrepreneurship of the university students were explainable using the independent conditions identified in the study which included personal attitude toward outcome, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. Table 4 shows that the p-values of personal attitude toward outcome and perceived behavioral control were less than 0.05; hence those variables are statistically significant predictors of agri-entrepreneurial intention of the undergraduates of this study. Thus, the findings were supported with H1 and H3. However, p-value of subjective norms was greater than 0.05, they it is not significant predictor of agri-entrepreneurial intention of the undergraduates of this study. Thus, H2 was not supported. The highest beta value was recorded in personal attitude which is 0.473, the second highest beta value of 0.327 being recorded for perceived behavioral control. As seen in Table 4, the variation inflation factor (VIF) values of the variables are less than 5 which thereby imply that there are no multicollinearity problems within the model.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The main objective of conducting this study is to determine the factors that influence the agricultural entrepreneurship intention among youth in Sri Lanka. The results of the study revealed that the highest influence on agri-entrepreneurship is made by the personal attitude towards outcome and the perceived behavioral to be also having strong significant influence while subjective norms did not provide such results and have the least significance on creating agri-entrepreneurship intention among the undergraduates. The results are consistent with the research finding of Carr and Sequeira [60], however the findings are not consistent with the research findings of the Ridha and Wahyu [17] and Najafabadi et al. [61] which states that the attitude towards behavior factor has no significant impact on the entrepreneurial intention on the agricultural sector of the youth. The variable of perceived behavioral control was also identified to be having a significant impact on the entrepreneurial intention on the agricultural sector of the youth, which is consistent with the research findings of Najafabadi et al. [61] but are inconsistent with the findings of [17].

The study identified that the subjective norms has no significant effect towards the agri-

entrepreneurial intention which are consistent with the research findings of Najafabedi et al. [61]. However, the results of Shiri et al. [45] emphasised that someone who has agricultural education background are most likely to be subjected to subjective norms and therefore have the highest impact on entrepreneurial intention and the research findings of this research study directly defies this study. It can be stated that the difference on the findings has been caused due to the changes in the cultural, social and environmental conditions in the different countries.

It was identified that there were a number of studies conducted on the topic within various countries, and the results obtained by various researchers are both consistent and inconsistent with the research findings obtained from this study. These findings therefore contribute to expand the knowledge available on the understanding of the factors affecting the agricultural intention among the educated youth. The results show that the personal attitude towards outcome and perceived behavioral control have the strongest effects while the students can pay special attention to the factors that are having a positive association with entrepreneurship in order to expand their willingness.

With these results, the entrepreneurs, the students, government as well as the educational providers obtain the ability to determine the required changed in order to accommodate for the psychological requirements among the students. The results can be further used by the educational sector to develop their curriculum and study patterns to incorporate the requirements of the students, and to adapt such requirements, it would be initially essential to provide a background understanding on the mechanisms through which agriculture entrepreneurship can benefit the students. When considering the research finding the main implications that were identified included the fact that attitudinal change towards entrepreneurship is vital as a crucial part in higher education curriculum thus, it is necessary to ensure the proper engagement of attitudinal changes in order to promote agricultural entrepreneurship among students. Apart from that, it was also identified that establishing and strengthening the entrepreneurial characteristics that will lead to the entrepreneurial behavior development in students using influential factors such as risk-taking, self-confidence, achievement,

independence, creativity and innovation. Removal of governmental and legal obstacles to creating and launching entrepreneurial businesses to encourage graduates and providing students with the opportunity to organize visitation to successful entrepreneurial projects in agriculture while including invitation of entrepreneurs to share their experiences for business will enable the establishment of a proper understanding on the sector.

Apart from these the education sector needs to maintain assessment of student abilities and skills needed for entrepreneurship and thereby establish mechanisms that will help the students with developing the content required for knowledge, insight, and skills -using problem-solving methods and critical and creative thinking skills.

6. CONCLUSION

Entrepreneurship is an important skill that needs to be enhanced through leadership and other qualities, yet it is determined that most entrepreneurial skills are induced by certain external factors. However, most of the entrepreneurs in the world are limited to certain industries and the number of people who are keen in managing entrepreneurship activities related to agricultural sector are limited. Thus, this study has attempted to determine the manner in which the entrepreneurship intention related to the agricultural sector among the agriculture students in the Sri Lankan universities is impacted. The results have indicated that the entrepreneurship intention related to agricultural sector among Sri Lankan university students are mostly influenced through their personal attitudes and perceived behaviors while the subjective norms have a lack of impact when compared with the studies that have been conducted in other countries. These results can be identified to be inline with the cultural and social implications of Sri Lanka thus highlighting the reason behind the changes that have been seen with reference to certain existing literary studies.

The key findings reported in this study should be considered in light of certain limitations. The scope of the study consists with third and final year students enrolled with agricultural degrees in Sri Lankan universities. It would be suitable to conduct a comparative analysis of the first-year students and the final year students in order to determine how the entrepreneurial intentions of the students have changed through their

university life. Our understanding of why some of the factors are significantly influenced than others is limited. Further research is required to find the answer for the question; how these behavioural factors influence agri-entrepreneurial intention, employing qualitative research methods.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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