

Factors Affecting Enterprising Tendencies of Undergraduates: A Case Study of University of Peradeniya

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Understanding of enterprising tendencies of students provides insights on whether they possess the required traits to set up and manage innovative and growth-oriented projects more frequently. There are limited studies in Sri Lankan context which adapts psychological approach of studying entrepreneurship. Thus, this study explored the entrepreneurial tendency levels of undergraduates and examined what factors influence the tendency levels. A survey was conducted on a sample of 231 first year and final year students from three different fields of studies; Agricultural Technology and Management, Psychology and, Management from the University of Peradeniya. Using the General Enterprising Tendency (GETv2) test, enterprising tendency and its components, namely; Need for Autonomy, Need for Achievement, Creative Tendency, Calculated Risk-taking and Locus of Control were measured. In addition, demographic and personal characters were also measured. Results revealed that enterprising tendency levels of the majority of students range within the medium tendency level. The findings also highlighted that the year of study, entrepreneurship education and being involved in businesses positively affect the enterprising potential of undergraduates significantly ($p < 0.05$). More interestingly, the entrepreneurial tendency levels of final year students were found to be lower compared to that of first years. In an in-depth analysis on the entrepreneurial attributes of the first-year and final years, it was found that the levels of need for achievement, creative tendency, and risk-taking were significantly ($p < 0.05$) higher in first year students as compared to final years. However, there was no significant difference in the need for autonomy and internal locus of control. Based on the findings of this study, it appears that students who enter university with higher enterprising tendency levels are likely to reduce their enterprising tendency levels over the years at the university. Extending the study to more undergraduates from the state as well as private sector universities would provide further insights which will aid in designing programmes to enhance enterprising potential of students.

Key words: Enterprising Tendency, Entrepreneurial Attributes, The year of study, Undergraduates