

PREDICTING ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS THROUGH AUTONOMY, RELATEDNESS, AND COMPETENCY: A STUDY AMONG STATE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract. *The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of autonomy, relatedness, and competency on social entrepreneurial intention among state undergraduate students in Sri Lanka. The Self-determination Theory was tested in the context of state undergraduate students in Sri Lanka. Exogenous variables studied included Autonomy, Relatedness, and competency. The instrument used in the research was developed using validated items from past literature. Data for this quantitative study were collected from undergraduate students from nine state universities in Sri Lanka. Structural equation modeling was used to see the insights from the valid data using IBM's SPSS 25 and AMOS 22. Results of the confirmatory factor analysis and subsequent evaluation of the structural model revealed a positive relationship between Social Entrepreneurial Intention and Relatedness and, social entrepreneurial Intention and Autonomy. However, the results did not support the relationships between social entrepreneurial intention and competency and the moderating effect of gender on competency and Social Entrepreneurial Intention. limited research has been carried out relating to Social Entrepreneurial Intention in the Sri Lankan context. The lack of research has not assisted in addressing the state university graduate unemployment which been a major socio-politico-economic problem in Sri La. Social entrepreneurship can be proposed as a viable career option. 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 Intention, Self-determination Theory, Sri Lanka, Competency, Relatedness, Autonomy.*

1 Introduction

Social Entrepreneurship is a form of entrepreneurship where solving social problems is the primary goal, while profits are secondary outcomes (Singh, 2019). This view is supported by Littlewood & Khan (2018), who argue that profits are a means to an end rather than the organization's primary goal in social entrepreneurship. According to Kimakwa et al. (2023), social entrepreneurship is commenced to mitigate market failures and to generate social value while being financially sustainable. A characteristic of social enterprises is that they are self-sustainable and do not depend on donations or grants to operate and survive (Yunus, 2010).

Shepherd (2013), argues that social entrepreneurship has existed throughout history. Similarly, Borza et al., (2009), propose that there have always been people who use innovation to solve social problems by forming social ventures but were not recognized as social entrepreneurs until the 19th century, and the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship did not emerge until the 1980s. However, today the terms Social Entrepreneurship and the practice has increased in popularity.

Many authors have proposed that Social Entrepreneurship is a solution to the social problem of unemployment. Being unemployed has been recognized as a motivating factor in an entrepreneurial

career (Enterprise Support Systems : An International Perspective / Edited by Mathew J. Manimala, Jay Mitra, Varsha Singh, 2009).

2 Literature Review

According to Welsh & Krueger, (2012), "social entrepreneurship" was first coined in the 1980s and, in the 1990s, and was accepted in academic and non-academic circles. Dees, (2018), argues that social entrepreneurship has evolved from the foundations of traditional entrepreneurship. In addition, it can be argued that entrepreneurs have to deal with diverse unpredictable challenges (Ranasinghe et al., 2019), which may require them to take more risks and become more responsive to the environment they operate in.

Influential authors such as Peter Drucker also considered social entrepreneurship as important as traditional entrepreneurs with the changing demographics and growing social problems (Orr, 2016). Against this backdrop, Ashoka was one of the first organizations established primarily to support social entrepreneurs and was founded in 1980 by Bill Drayton in the USA (Orr, 2016). Ashoka Fellows Program claims to support individuals who are social engineers with the potential to make a significant social change (B. Drayton, 2003) by supporting them in the early stages of their careers (Leviner, Crutchfield, & Wells, 2010).

Social Entrepreneurship has recently received increasing attention through the increased availability of resources, government support, micro-finance models, and social support. Yet, a corresponding body of academic work has not emerged (Nasser Al Muniri et al., 2019). This point has been confirmed by Liñán & Fayolle, (2015), who argue that social entrepreneurship is being widely researched; however, there are still significant gaps that should be addressed through research. One of these gaps is that they identified social entrepreneurial intention.

A study by 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. In addition, this study found that entrepreneurial success factors included coordination, innovation, marketing, and leadership. In another study, the biggest priorities for social enterprises were developing their team and raising external financing to enhance social impact for the communities they are targeting. A recent study by Pangriya (2019a), considered aspects of the social entrepreneurs' life and suggested that education, prior work experience, global exposure, empathy, creativity, contentment, and community roots were the core characteristics of a social entrepreneur.

However, Sengupta & Sahay (2018), found through their study found that In South Asian countries, research on social entrepreneurship is focused mainly in India, followed by Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Social transformation and sustainability through Social Entrepreneurship were achieved predominantly by agriculture-based entrepreneurial ventures rather than ecopreneurs ventures (Palmås & Lindberg, 2013).

One of the criticisms against state universities is that the relevance and quality of education are not in line with market needs (Wickramasinghe, 2018). According to the World Bank (2010), state universities have not provided the country's graduates with the skills ready to face a dynamic market-oriented economy. However, it is widely accepted that self-efficacy plays a prominent role in Social entrepreneurial intentions Tiwari et al., 2017b) and is a good predictor of social entrepreneurial behavior (Mair & Noboa, 2006). However, there have been few systematic studies in the south Asian context on how educational institutions inculcate the skills needed to become a social entrepreneur (Hassan, 2020).

Social entrepreneurship is a viable career choice for state university undergraduates. Social Entrepreneurship research to date has tended to focus on definitions of the concept and not exhaustively look at the relationships between concepts (Martin & Osberg, 2015). Less significant studies have dealt with the antecedent factors affecting this group's social entrepreneurial intention.

The research project adds further significance as it studies the differences in social entrepreneurial interest among males and females in the Sri Lankan context, as studies have shown significant differences between genders from context to context (Jung-Rae, 2022; Vázquez-Parra et

al., 2021) . This is evident through the research of Vázquez-Parra et al., (2021), who found that females showed more interest, while in a study done by Jung-Rae, (2022), males showed greater interest in social entrepreneurship than females.

2.1 Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy defines an individual's perception of their ability to carry out intended actions (Bandura et al., 1999). Similarly, Hockerts, (2006), states that social entrepreneur self-efficacy is a measure of an individual's belief that he/she can have a meaningful social impact on a large and complex problem. Self-efficacy has been found empirically to envisage entrepreneurial intention (Chen & Wang, 2008). It stands out because many social issues are so huge that individuals may doubt they can have a significant impact on their own (Ali Thawabieh & Saleem, 2016). Similarly, Mair & Noboa, (2006), found that self-efficacy and social support as central precursors of social entrepreneurial behavior. Another study conducted by Chen & He, (2011), found that self-efficacy had a mediating effect on entrepreneurial intention. Therefore:

To achieve their social vision, social entrepreneurs should possess the correct values, skills, and capabilities to solve social problems (Cavazos-Arroyo et al., 2017). When assessing the viability of a social project, Individuals do not only consider their self-efficacy but also the presence of support systems such as social network ties that will help them attain the targeted outcome (K. Hockerts, 2015). In a study among engineering students in Malaysia, it was found that entrepreneurial opportunity recognition was significantly influenced by the level of self-efficacy (Rahim et al., 2022)

2.2 Social Networks

A business does not operate in a vacuum, rather in a dynamic business environment, therefore, social networking becomes a powerful dimension which may relate to sharing resources assisting entry to markets and technologies (Ranasinghe et al., 2018). The role of networks in entrepreneurship has been extensively studied (Littlewood & Khan, 2018; Davidsson & Honig, 2003). Entrepreneurial studies indicate that strong social ties indirectly affect entrepreneurial intention (Chen & He, 2011). It has been found that social support is needed to cause the formation of social entrepreneurial intention (Mair & Noboa, 2006). This idea is supported by Ghalwash et al., (2017); social networks play a significant role in motivating individuals to embark on a career in social entrepreneurship. The Author further states that community support in terms of recognition, resources, information, and network ties motivates individuals to consider social entrepreneurship a career option.

In social entrepreneurship, it is reasonable to assume that individuals weigh the extent to which they are supported in their social endeavors by individuals within their networks (K. N. Hockerts, 2013). This support can come from family, friends, colleagues, foundations, venture Philanthropists, and organizations (Tjornbo & Westley, 2012).

Reputation plays an important role in social networks as a non-sustainable social resource of the social enterprise (Schaper, 2011). Social entrepreneurs typically rely on personal and social networking connections for their mission and put their credibility online if their business fails (Shaw & Carter, 2007). It was reported by Harris & Wheeler, (2005), that the social entrepreneur garners the support of its stakeholders towards a common purpose by utilizing its social network ties to facilitate the generation of sustainable outcomes.

2.3 Gender

Gender is an important factor affecting entrepreneurial intentions (Garcia-Rodriguez et al., 2017; Farrington et al., 2012). The effects of gender differences on entrepreneurial intention were found in a study by Turker & Sonmez Selcuk, (2009), who found that males are more entrepreneurially motivated than females. Similarly, Garcia-Rodriguez et al., (2017), found that males are more agreeable to entrepreneurial activity than females. This idea is further supported by Johansen (2013), who suggests that empirical evidence has recognized that there are more male than female entrepreneurs. Furthermore, Franco et al., (2010), point out that males have higher expectations for

success than females. In addition, some religious societies, developing countries, and cultures prevent women from actively participating in entrepreneurial activities (Garrett & Holland, 2015).

A study conducted by Smith et al., (2016), using a two-study design among 169 undergraduate business students at the Midwestern University in the United States, found that gender did not directly influence entrepreneurial intention. Supporting the findings, Bendassolli et al., (2016), pointed out through their empirical study conducted by 596 professionals from creative industries in Brazil, of whom 47% were entrepreneurs, that gender did not directly influence entrepreneurship and suggested that further empirical explorations are required to understand this relationship better.

3 Theoretical Review

3.1 Self-Determination Theory

The self-determination theory (SDT) is a motivational theory (Szulawski et al., 2021), which refers to a person's ability to make choices and manage his life. According to Wei & Chen (2022), SDT is based on the idea that people have natural inclination towards psychological satisfaction, growth and internalization. Szulawski et al. (2021), states that the SDT contributes towards intrinsic motivation towards performance, striving and well-being. Furthermore, it states that individuals can become self-determined when their needs are satisfied in competence, autonomy, and relatedness. The individual's level of competence, autonomy, and relatedness are psychological forms that convert to behaviors (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

According to Ertac & Tanova (2020), SDT is a far-reaching theory of motivation that includes several sub-theories. Self-determination theory provides a background for human motivation founded on the knowledge that when people's inherent psychological needs of relatedness, autonomy, and competence are developed to challenge themselves, their motivation to explore and master new skills can be enhanced (Jones et al., 2021)

In opposition to other needs theories, in the SDT, competence, autonomy, and relatedness do not vary by the extent to which individuals possess them but by the degree to which the environment facilitates their satisfaction or frustration (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020). According to SDT, the three needs that can influence behavior is the environments that help the needs build autonomous and intrinsic types of motivation, consequently improving desired behaviors (Deci & Ryan, 2008). SDT considers the strength and level of motivation's importance in achieving a goal (Vansteenkiste et al., 2005).

According to Ryan & Deci (2000), SDT is often connected with intrinsic motivation, which relates to the intrinsic satisfaction of learning without the expectation of receiving extrinsic rewards; by contrast, extrinsic motivation relates to carrying out activities with the expectation of obtaining tangible rewards. Furthermore, Zuraik & Kelly (2019), posits that the SDT proposes that individuals become intrinsically motivated by the environment.

According to the SDT, to achieve well-being, the basic psychological needs of relatedness, competence, and autonomy must be satisfied (Deci & Ryan, 2013). Iremadze (2016), suggests that entrepreneurial behavior is influenced by self-determination, which is the mental attitude of entrepreneurs with a strong commitment to business behavior to achieve goals.

Competence

The need for competence is a mix of challenges and skills which enables an individual to carry out an action that is attainable but still challenging and, at the same time to possess skills that are needed to accomplish the activity (Sheldon et al., 2013). According to Ryan & Deci, (2000), capability reflects the need to feel that one is doing well at a given task or activity.

According to Ahn & Back (2019) and Vallerand et al. (2008), Self-determination is one of the important factors of success in the behavior of an entrepreneur with a determination for competency, autonomy, and relatedness needs. Furthermore, for an entrepreneur, competency can refer to the capability of entrepreneurs to show competencies that contribute to the environment (Ahn & Back, 2019b; Ryan & Deci, 2000b). In addition, competency needs refer to the desire to act in the face of challenges that make entrepreneurs more adaptive to the speed that occurs in changes in the business

environment (Grouzet et al., 2004). Competence is an internal locus of causality for the actions that could lead to taking ownership of the action (Deci et al., 1996).

Autonomy

Autonomy reflects the need to feel one has the faculty or power over a task and how to follow them (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). From an entrepreneurial perspective, autonomy is the entrepreneur's freedom to carry out the business activity concurring with his choice (Ahn & Back, 2019b; Ryan & Deci, 2000b). In addition, entrepreneurial autonomy needs to denote the capacity to manage individual behavior (Kuvaas, 2009) autonomously. For entrepreneurs that started an entrepreneurial venture with a desire to use their creativity, an environment with too many external conditions can lead to frustration, resulting in a reduction of self-determination (Ertac & Tanova, 2020). This is found to be true with female entrepreneurs in a male-dominated society when they are operating under societal pressure to conform to certain societal norms (Ertac & Tanova, 2020).

As the level of autonomy increases, the nature of motivation changes from controlled to autonomous (Ertac & Tanova, 2020). Controlled and autonomous motivation cannot be considered dichotomous but rather a point of a continuum (Ertac & Tanova, 2020).

Relatedness

Relatedness relates to the need to feel a connection to others (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). SDT highlights the relationship between religiosity, sex, years in business, political affiliation, childhood experience, emotional intelligence, and immigration status (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

From an entrepreneurial perspective, relatedness is the relationship of entrepreneurs to network with persons and their ecosystem with a sense of interdependency (Ahn & Back, 2019b; Ryan & Deci, 2000b). In addition, relatedness incorporates the behavior and values of entrepreneurs with the business ecosystem (Roche & Haar, 2013). According to Kusumawijaya (2020), relatedness needs make entrepreneurs part of the society formed based on shared values and belongingness, and the emergence of entrepreneurial markets is motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically. According to Deci & Ryan (1985), SDT suggests that an individual's social conditions will impact the motivation and ability to regulate extrinsically or intrinsically.

4 Hypothesis

Nguyen, (2018), validated the notion that self-efficacy influences entrepreneurial intention. Similarly, it was found that perceived behavioral control and personal attitude affected entrepreneurial intention positively (Gerezgiher & Mitiku, 2018). The relationship was further reinforced by Kusumawijaya (2020a), who stated that self-efficacy can predict entrepreneurial intention significantly.

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

According to Pérez-Macías et al., (2019), in a study conducted in South Korea among university students found that relatedness and entrepreneurial intention were statistically significant. In a study conducted by Bapoo et al., (2022) found that relatedness influenced entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) -There is a positive relationship between State University Undergraduate students' relatedness and entrepreneurial intention.

A study conducted among undergraduate students in South Korea revealed that autonomy and entrepreneurial intention were related (Pérez-Macías et al., 2019). A study by Kusumawijaya (2020b) showed that autonomy could significantly influence and increase the entrepreneurial intention of star hotel employees in Bali.

Hypothesis 3 (H3) -There is a positive relationship between State University Undergraduate students' autonomy and entrepreneurial intention.

A study by Griswold & Palmer, (2019), found that gender moderates the relationship between competency and entrepreneurial intention. Another study by Arshad et al., (2016), found that gender moderated the association between competency and social entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis 4 (H4) - The association between competency and social entrepreneurial intention is moderated by gender.

5 Methodology

This study is a quantitative study based on a questionnaire survey. In quantitative research, the generalization of the findings of the study is done by statistical generalization (Yin, 1994). Quantitative inquiry generally adopts a deductive process (Hyde, 2000). As this approach systematizes the knowledge generation process with the help of quantification. And ensures rigor and replicability and helps in the generalization of findings.

In this research, the study population will be undergraduate students presently studying at state universities in Sri Lanka. The sampling unit of this research is undergraduate students from business and non-business faculties/ specializations currently studying at state universities in Sri Lanka.

The sampling unit will be 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.

Awad et al., (2016), propose that many challenges in conducting research within education systems often lead researchers to adopt a non-probability sampling. In this research, the researcher will find it difficult to access a sampling frame or a list of undergraduate students from state universities. This information is not made available to non-university staff for privacy and security reasons. Therefore, the research will adopt non-probability sampling, specifically quota sampling. Quota sampling was chosen because the university students can be, more importantly, heterogeneous in terms of gender and specialization. Therefore, adopting a quota sample will help the researcher have the right mix of respondents. Quota sampling was chosen because the university students can be, more importantly, heterogeneous in terms of gender and specialization. Therefore, adopting a quota sample will help the researcher have the right mix of respondents.

The sample size will be determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970), table. The total undergraduate student population in 15 universities in 2021 was 144,040, per the University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka. Accordingly, the sample size will be 384. However, 504 respondents were interviewed as part of the research.

5.1 Instrument Development

A questionnaire can measure demographic characteristics, past, present, or intended behavior, attitudes and opinions, and level of knowledge (Tull and Hawkins, 1976). The rigor of using existing instruments will be higher as it may be based on a theoretical model and may also give an indication to the researcher on the data dictionaries, aggregate variables, and data reduction techniques previously developed for use with the instrument.

The self-determination theory was used to identify autonomy and relatedness developed by Iwanaga (2018), while the competency instrument was adopted from (Abrams, 2017). The entrepreneurial intention instrument was developed and validated by Kolvereid (1996).

5.2 Data Analysis

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

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 ($\alpha = .938$), the relatedness of 6 items ($\alpha = .0.758$), and competence of 19 items ($\alpha = .961$). 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 Modelling 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, which will take the form of individual and overall measurements. The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) method will be used to develop the measurement model. The second stage will involve the development of the structural model to assess the relationships between the independent, dependent, and mediating constructs.

7.1 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; L. Hu & Bentler, 1998; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). The initial individual measurement model yielded

good fit (Table 2) for the data: CMIN/df = 1.480, GFI = .942, CFI = .971, TLI = .968, SRMR = .035, and RMSEA = .031

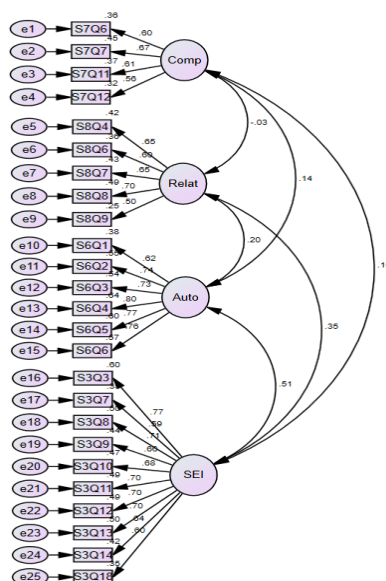


Figure 1. Measurement Model

Fit Indices	Recommended Vales	Source	Obtained Values
<i>P</i>	Insignificant	(Bagozzi & Yi, 1988)	.000
<i>CMIN</i> (chi-square/ df)	<5	(Schumacker & Lomax, 2004)	1.480
<i>GFI</i>	>.90	(Hair et al., 2010)	.942
<i>CFI</i>	>.90	(Bentler, 1990)	.971
<i>TLI</i>	>.90	(Bentler, 1990)	.968
<i>SRMR</i>	<.08	(L. Hu & Bentler, 1998)	.035
<i>RMSEA</i>	<.08	(L. Hu & Bentler, 1998)	.031

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 (L. Hu & Bentler, 1998), and the Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA) is between 0.05 and 0.08 (Hair et al., 2010). The fit indices of the model fell within acceptable range: CMIN/df = 1.470, GFI = .953, CFI = .961, TLI = .984, SRMR = .031, and RMSEA = .038.

The squared multiple correlation was 0.325 for Social entrepreneurial intention; this shows that 32.5% variance in Social entrepreneurial intention accounted by Competency, Autonomy, and Relatedness.

The study assessed the Social Entrepreneurial Intention Among Students in Sri Lanka Higher Education. The impact of Competency on Social Entrepreneurial Intention was positive and insignificant ($b = .045$, $t = .929$, $p = .353$), not supporting H1. The impact of Relatedness on Social Entrepreneurial Intention was positive and significant ($b = 0.044$, $t = 4.978$, $p < .001$), hence supporting

H2. The impact of autonomy on Social Entrepreneurial Intention was positive and significant ($b = .069$, $t = 7.993$, $p < .001$), supporting H3.

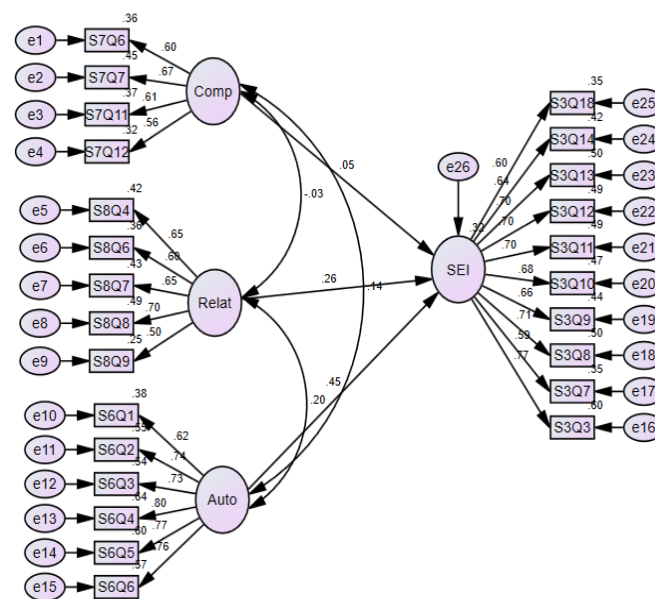



Figure 2. Structural Model

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

Hypothesized relationship	Standardized Estimates	t value	P value	Decision
Competency → Social Entrepreneurial Intention	0.045	.929	p=0.353	Not supporting H1
Relatedness → Social Entrepreneurial Intention	0.44	4.978	<.001	supporting H2
Autonomy → Social Entrepreneurial Intention	0.069	7.993	<.001	Supporting H3
moderating effect of gender on competency and Social Entrepreneurial Intention		1.121	0.297	Not supporting H4
R- Square				
Social Entrepreneurial Intention	0.325			
Model Fit				



$CMIN/df = 1.470$, $GFI = .953$, $CFI = .961$, $TLI = .984$, $SRMR = .031$, and $RMSEA = .038$

Table 3. Model fit indices and hypothesis results

8 Results and Discussion

Hypothesis 1 (H1) -There is a positive relationship between State University Undergraduate students' social entrepreneurial Intention and Self-efficacy. The research did not support this hypothesis. Several studies reported findings contrary to this research findings. One such study was done by Gereziher & Mitiku (2018), among 309 randomly selected undergraduate final-year students of Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia; here, it was found that perceived behavioral control and personal attitude affected entrepreneurial intention positively.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) -There is a positive relationship between State University Undergraduate students' relatedness and entrepreneurial intention. The study findings supported this hypothesis. Supporting this finding, Pérez-Macías et al., (2019), in a study conducted in South Korea among university students, found that relatedness and entrepreneurial intention were statistically significant.

Hypothesis 3 (H3) -There is a positive relationship between State University Undergraduate students' autonomy and entrepreneurial intention. The research findings supported the hypothesis in line with these findings. Kusumawijaya (2020b) showed that autonomy could significantly influence and increase the entrepreneurial intention of star hotel employees in Bali.

Hypothesis 4 (H4) - The association between competency and social entrepreneurial intention is moderated by gender. The findings of the research did not support the research findings. The research findings were in contradiction to the findings of Arshad et al., (2016). They reported that gender plays a significant role in moderating competency, social norms, and Entrepreneurial Intention in Pakistan among undergraduate students and a study conducted by Hu & Ye, (2017), among 364 Chinese sports major students found that competency was a predictor of entrepreneurial intentions and that gender moderated this relationship.

9 Contribution of the Study

The prevailing unemployment situation of state university graduates in Sri Lanka (Singam, 2017), has caused a major socio-politico-economic problem (Chandrasiri, 2008). Social entrepreneurship can be proposed as a viable career option to address the unemployment issue. The findings of this research can address the lack of understanding of the antecedent factors that affect social entrepreneurial intention, which was found to exist by Singh, (2019), who stated that Social Entrepreneurship is in an embryonic stage.

The research findings can be used in Sri Lanka, where policymakers can facilitate networking between entrepreneurs and the business community, which can help in their entrepreneurial journey. Potential social entrepreneurs understand the need for Relatedness or the Intensity and frequency of the relationship between the members of the network (Adler and Kwon, 2002); developing one's network can help them actively build social network ties as part of embarking on a social entrepreneurial career. This can increase their chances of taking up social entrepreneurship in the future.

Another practical implication is that social entrepreneurs understand that the extent that the individual has or has no control over external and internal factors that relates to the behavior is greatly influenced by competence or a person's belief in their ability to successfully reach their goal as a result of their actions (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, individuals who intend to become social entrepreneurs need to develop a strong belief in their ability to reach their goals due to their actions effectively. Furthermore, understanding that the gender of the individual interested in a social entrepreneurial career has no impact on how self-efficacy affects perceived behavioral control will indicate that there is no need for gender-specific strategies.

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Policymakers can utilize the findings of this research to develop policies that will help in developing university curriculums that can focus on developing the skills of potential social enterprises in areas such as building social network ties and self-efficacy.

### 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 county 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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