

# **A Study on Tourism and Hospitality Undergraduates' Entrepreneurial Intention**

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## **Abstract**

Tourism and travel are some of the most important economic activities around the globe. Entrepreneurship is seen as an important factor in the development of tourism, and it is a major contributor to economic development in both developing and developed countries. Further, Entrepreneurship is considered as the key to the growing problem of graduate unemployment. Sri Lanka has a very low presentation of entrepreneurs in the market numbering less than 1.5% of the population. Compared to other countries, the entrepreneurs' rate in Sri Lanka is low. Based on this background, this study aimed to examine the factors that affect tourism and hospitality undergraduates' entrepreneurial intention. The conceptual framework of the study was developed based on the Theory of planned behaviour. Accordingly, Personal Attitude, Subjective Norm, and Perceived behavioural control were considered as the independent variables and entrepreneurial intention was considered as the dependent variable. The population of this study consist of all the tourism and hospitality undergraduates of state universities in Sri Lanka. The sample of this study comprises 117 tourism and hospitality undergraduates of four state universities, which offer tourism and hospitality management degree programs. The primary data of the study were collected utilizing a structured questionnaire and the data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as correlation and regression analysis. The results of the descriptive analysis indicate that the tourism and hospitality undergraduates have strong entrepreneurial intentions as the mean value of entrepreneurial intentions is 4.0. Further, the results of the correlation analysis indicate that perceived behavioural control, personal attitude, and subjective norm have a positive significant relationship with tourism and hospitality undergraduates' entrepreneurial intention. The results of the regression analysis indicate that the perceived behavioural control, personal attitude, and subjective norm significantly affect the undergraduates' entrepreneurial intention. Further, the result indicates that personal attitude is the most influential factor on undergraduate' entrepreneurial intention. Based on the results, it is recommended for the universities to organize programs to inculcate the positive attitudes of undergraduates towards entrepreneurship. Also, make the undergraduates aware of the entrepreneur opportunities in the tourism industry. This study provides implications for comprehending the determinants of tourism and hospitality undergraduate students' entrepreneurial intention.

*Keywords:* Entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurship, theory of planned behaviour, tourism undergraduates