

Assessing Agribusiness Students' Attitudes towards Entrepreneurship

Sandika, A.L.¹, Senevirathna, I.W.¹, Sandarenu, P.C.¹, Abeysekara, W.C.S.M.¹

¹Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, University of Ruhuna

Chamindri.abeysekara@gmail.com

Economists describe entrepreneurship in diverse ways. Some economists believe an entrepreneur is a person who is willing to bear the risk of a new venture if there is a potential to make profit. Others define entrepreneurs as innovators. However, most economists agree that entrepreneurship plays a vital role in stimulating economic growth and generating employment opportunities in all societies need. Therefore, government should generate new policies to foster entrepreneurship as it is essential for job creation and economic growth. If government introduces an appropriate program to develop entrepreneurial characteristics (EC) of undergraduates, it will help to develop job creators rather than job seekers. One such course is BSc Agribusiness Management (BSc ABM) degree program introduced by the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna. Therefore, this study attempted to analyse the development of EC of students and to identify the students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship. 27, 41, 28 and 36 final, third, second and first year BSc ABM undergraduates, were selected respectively and randomly as the sample to collect data. Data were collected by administering a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA were used to analyse the data. Results revealed that the final and third year students have illustrated high EC in comparison to first and second year students. Further, third and final year students showed strong managerial competencies and higher desire for independency than first and second year students while there was no significant difference between first year to final year students regarding key personal attributes, namely, creativity, need for achievement and self-confidence. Moreover, final year students possess the highest risk taking ability among the sample. An attempt was made to identify the students' willingness of new ventures and creations. It was observed that 41%,

68%, 29% and 25% final, third, second and first year undergraduates respectively prefer to start their own businesses after graduation. Majority prefers to find a job in an existing organization. The study will be supportive to recognize attitudes toward entrepreneurship among the undergraduates and will provide suggestions for increasing the role of universities in improving students' entrepreneurial characteristics and developing policies in order to inspire entrepreneurial initiatives among students.

Key words: *Agribusiness Management, Entrepreneurship, Key attributes, Undergraduates.*