

Mothers' Perception of Entrepreneurship and the Factors Hindering the Children's Choice of Entrepreneurship: An Examination of Sri Lankan Mothers

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to explore how Sri Lankan mothers are influencing their children to become entrepreneurs. This is determined by how they perceive the concept of entrepreneurship and the factors that make them reluctant to make their children choose entrepreneurship as their future career, and that stops them from encouraging their children to become entrepreneurs. This paper uses an inductive approach with basic qualitative study. We used data on a sample size of 26, where individuals (mothers and children) were used as the study's unit of analysis. The understanding and interpretation of the concept of entrepreneurship leads to the finding of a mother's role in creating an entrepreneur. Results show that the existing economic, social-political background, and instability of the country, as well as the educational system with its poor contribution towards improving the entrepreneurial skills of a child, along with a mothers' negative perception of entrepreneurship are identified as the three main factors that prevent mothers from inculcating entrepreneurial intentions in their children, and from encouraging their children to become entrepreneurs. The implications of findings show how policymakers have a significant amount of responsibility to create a suitable environment and promote entrepreneurship in the educational system for a child to become an entrepreneur. The study contributes to the existing literature by understanding

how Sri Lankan mothers perceive the concept of entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka, as they have the capability to create new entrepreneurs who would contribute positively to the economy.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Perception of Entrepreneurship, Mothers' Perception of Entrepreneurship, Sri Lanka

Introduction

There are different views on entrepreneurship. Some view it as the setting up of a new small-medium business, whereas some think it as the innovative and opportunistic behaviour of an individual who transforms an existing organisation rather than setting up a new one. An entrepreneur is an individual who holds a business organisation knowing the probability of the occurrence of profit or loss (Glancey & McQuaid, 2000). Our research study is driven with the prime objective of understanding the factors that make mothers fear letting their children become entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka. It is crucial to understand the factors that make a mother fear letting a child pursue a career in entrepreneurship, as research findings of Kirkwood (2007) and Tarling et al. (2016) showcase that mothers have the capability to influence

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their children and act as a role model in their child's decision-making in relation to entrepreneurship. Thus, some mothers have become anti-role models and others have been perceived in a positive light in relation to their children pursuing a career in entrepreneurship (Kirkwood, 2007). Findings of Otto (2000) present mothers as playing a decisive role in their child's career choice. Thus, a mothers' perception of entrepreneurship will determine whether their child would become an entrepreneur. It is apparent that mothers have the potential to prevent a child from becoming an entrepreneur. Therefore, it is essential to identify the underlying factors that would make a mother fear their child perusing a career in entrepreneurship.

Problem Statement

It has been identified that parents play a crucial role in their child's choice of entrepreneurship as a career choice (Zellweger, Sieger & Halter, 2011; Boz & Ergeneli, 2014; Hatten, 2012; Criaco, 2017). Parents possess the capability to influence the entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurial orientation, and the entrepreneurial intention of a child (Mangundjaya, 2013; Georgescu & Herman, 2020; Nandamuri & Gowthami, 2014), which is determined by their perception of entrepreneurship. Even though studies conducted by Hatten (2012), Criaco (2017), and Zellweger, Sieger and Halter (2011) confirm that parents play an indispensable role in a child's choice of entrepreneurship, studies conducted by Cardon et al. (2005), Greene, Han and Marlow (2013), and Schindehutte, Morris and Brennan (2003) showcase that mothers possess the capability to influence their child's career choice. However, studies based on the understanding of the mother's role in their child's choice of entrepreneurship, determined by a mother's perception of entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka, is still in its infancy stages. Thus, it is important to understand how Sri Lankan mothers perceive the concept of entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka, as they have the capability to create new entrepreneurs who would contribute positively to the economy, as studies conducted by Sunter (2000) and Gorman et al. (1997) indicate that entrepreneurs provide a positive externality to the economy. On the other hand, recent research studies have identified several factors that prevent a parent from letting their child pursue a career in entrepreneurship; for instance, Pant (2015) has identified that parental profession plays a vital role on whether their child would

pursue a career in entrepreneurship. Lindquist, Sol and Van (2015) have identified that a parent's capability to act as a role model in terms of entrepreneurship increases the chances of their child pursuing a career in that context. Thus, parents who are unable to transmit the essence of entrepreneurship through role modelling would prevent a child from becoming an entrepreneur.

There are limited studies that specifically focus on the factors that would prevent a mother from letting their child pursue a career in entrepreneurship, despite multiple researchers who have identified that mothers have the capability to significantly influence their child's career choice (Cardon et al., 2005; Greene, Han & Marlow, 2013; Schindehutte, Morris & Brennan, 2003). Therefore, the primary objective of this current study is to provide an insight into the factors that would make a mother fear letting their children become an entrepreneur in Sri Lanka.

Research Objectives

RO1: To understand how mothers perceive entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka.

RO2: To identify the factors which prevent mothers from inculcating entrepreneurial intention in their children.

RO3: To propose possible systematic changes that can be adopted by the authorities and policymakers of Sri Lanka.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do mothers in Sri Lanka perceive the concept of entrepreneurship?

RQ2: What factors prevent mothers in Sri Lanka from instilling an entrepreneurial intention in their children?

Literature Review

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a process that arises initially with an innovative idea, followed by a triggering event that forces the individual to put the idea into action, finally leading to the implementation of the idea, thus setting up the business (Hatten, 2012). According to Stevenson and Gumpert (1985), entrepreneurs are not confined to being

opportunistic, but tend to be creative and innovative. They tend to integrate old ideas and come up with contemporary methods to use them. Entrepreneurship intention plays a vital role in an individual's probability in undertaking a career in entrepreneurship. As stated by Bird (1988), an intention is perceived as a state of mind that would direct an individual to fulfil a set goal. Thus, Kumara (2012) stated that for an individual to set up their own business, they should possess entrepreneurial intention, as this intention would direct an individual to becoming an entrepreneur.

Entrepreneurship and the Economy

Entrepreneurship has a fundamental impact on a country's economy, as it profoundly contributes to economic growth and job creation (Sunter, 2000). There is less priority given to permanence and longevity when determining a career path, as once widely-followed traditional practices are fading (Fallows & Steven, 2000). This has provided the possibility of an increase in individuals becoming self-employed. As stated by Gorman et al. (1997), there is a widely recognised belief that entrepreneurship has the capability to drive the economy of most nations. For an economy to grow, it is crucial to have an adequate number of entrepreneurs, and the supply of entrepreneurs is immensely affected by the availability of an environment that promotes entrepreneurship in an individual in their early stages of development; this would encourage a positive and self-enabling perception in an individual (Brijlal, 2010). Thus, a child's choice of entrepreneurship is impacted by the environment in which he or she is brought up. The findings of Walstad and Kourilsky (1998) presented in Brijlal (2010) showcased that there is a higher probability for a child to pursue a career in entrepreneurship as a result of the presence of an entrepreneurship role model, one who could be a parent, family member, or a friend.

Perception of Entrepreneurship

In research conducted by Brijlal (2010), Kruegar and Brazeal (1994) have stressed the importance of entrepreneurship perception, as this would set the foundation for an individual to become an entrepreneur well in advance, before an individual makes a decision

to become an entrepreneur. Peterson (2017) stated that perception of entrepreneurship is a key factor in ensuring success and the perception held by those who have the capability to influence the entrepreneur matters, as their perception has the potential to influence the success gained by the entrepreneur. Amid the entrepreneurial process undertaken by an individual, from an innovative idea to the final implementation of the idea, Hatten (2012) has showcased the influence of parents and role models on the entrepreneurial process. As stated by Criaco et al. (2017), a child's career choice intentions and behaviour are profoundly impacted by the family, as they are able to form a basis for the development of a child's choice of career. Thus, parents possess a higher degree of influence on the career choice of a child.

The perception held by well-performing entrepreneurial parents in relation to entrepreneurship would have an impact on a child's choice of entrepreneurship, as they are prone to have a negative self-evaluation and dissatisfaction due to their child's lack of motivation or capability in comparison to themselves (Collins, 1996 & Gibson, 2004). The perspective of poor-performing entrepreneurial parents is to encourage self-improvement of their children. In return, a child would perceive their parents' status as attainable and would be encouraged to perform better than their parents (Collins, 1996 & Gibson, 2004). Therefore, the perception held by a parent plays a vital role in a child's probability to pursue a career in entrepreneurship.

Mother's Perception of Entrepreneurship

Apart from the parental influence, a mother's perception of the choice of a career in entrepreneurship is crucial, as findings showcased by Kirkwood (2007) and Tarling, Jones and Murphy (2016) present that a mother possesses the power to influence the child's perception of entrepreneurship. Schindehutte, Morris and Brennan (2003) state that mothers are going to be significantly assertive and act as independent occupational role models towards their children, since women in this contemporary world have ditched traditional gender roles and stereotypes. According to Moen et al. (2000) and Eagly et al. (2000), a mother's occupational activity in terms of homemaking or waged employment has the capability to influence a child's choice of career in entrepreneurship.

Bandura (1977) in Schindehutte, Morris and Brennan (2003) stated that children of an entrepreneurial mother, who perceive their mother as a role model, that is, both positive and successful, have an increased likelihood of them imitating their role model. Thus, based on the findings of Greene, Han and Marlow (2011), a mother's perspective in relation to women and work has a direct influence on the tendency of their daughter to pursue a career in entrepreneurship. Furthermore, it is stated that a self-employed mother during a daughter's infancy stages increases the probability of the daughter pursuing a career in entrepreneurship. The findings of Schindehutte, Morris and Brennan (2003) clearly stated that mothers who are entrepreneurs have a significant impact on the childhood experience of their children and stated that there is an overall positive impact. Therefore, it is crucial to focus on the perception held by mothers, as they hold significant power on a child's career choice.

Mother's Positive Perception of Entrepreneurship

Positive perception of an entrepreneur would result in active participation by others. It is crucial to have a positive perception from a mother, since they have the capability to influence the child's career choice, and the perception of the entrepreneurial experience itself plays a significant role in ensuring success (Shane & Cable, 2002; Tarling, Jones & Murphy, 2016; Peterson, 2017). Based on the findings of Tarling, Jones and Murphy (2016), a mother's encouragement and freedom in the line of entrepreneurship has enabled the child to pursue a career in entrepreneurship, and this perception has made the mother a role model in the eyes of the child.

Mother's Negative Perception of Entrepreneurship

A negative perception in relation to entrepreneurship would lead to a lack of regard to social and professional support from others (Shane & Cable, 2002). Thus, a mother's negative perspective on entrepreneurship is a vital factor to consider, as it could hamper the possibility of a child choosing entrepreneurship as a career choice. As presented in the findings of Tarling, Jones and Murphy (2016), it is stated that one of the mothers of an entrepreneur

possessed a negative perception in which she was born worried with regards to her child pursuing a career in entrepreneurship, and furthermore saw the business as part-time work. These perceptions could discourage a child from pursuing a career in entrepreneurship, since a mother has a profound impact on a child's career choice (Kirkwood, 2007; Tarling, Jones & Murphy, 2016).

Methodology/Research Methods

This research can be regarded as a basic qualitative study. Hence, it clarifies the 'how' and 'why' of a particular scenario (Yin, 2014). It provides detailed insights into why mothers resist inculcating entrepreneurial intention in their children and from encouraging their children from becoming entrepreneurs. Different types of research designs are available relative to the qualitative research study approach; among the forms of designs, a case study approach was carefully chosen for this study, for the effective achievement of the objectives in the study. Individuals (mothers) were used as the study's unit of analysis. This study is aimed at identifying the factors that have stopped Sri Lankan mothers from inculcating entrepreneurial intention in their children and from encouraging their children to become entrepreneurs. Therefore, the nature of the study requires an in-depth analysis (Yin, 2014). Accordingly, this study gathered data through semi-structured in-depth interviews. The sample size was 26. 26 individuals were interviewed as the participants of the study. The sample consists of mothers (ten), as well as entrepreneurs (twelve), professionals (two), and full-time students (two) who were graduates and undergraduates who have started up their own business and have given up because of the negative influence of their parents. Prior to each interview, the researchers got the oral consent to record the interviews digitally. The entrepreneurs, professionals, and full-time students were interviewed by being recognised as individuals playing the role of a 'child'; they were questioned to understand how their mothers perceived entrepreneurship, and thereby how their mothers have engaged in terms of inculcating entrepreneurial intention in their minds in their childhood. A majority of the mothers came from a sound educational background as per Appendix 01; some were professionals, mothers who were working in the corporate sector, as well as housewives. The materials gathered were analysed thematically. The transcripts of

the interviews form the basis of the current study's data. The six-step data analysis approach of Clarke and Braun (2013) was used in this investigation. The first step was to read through and examine interview transcripts numerous times while looking for "recurring consistencies". Quotes and phrases from the interviews were underlined by the researchers. The researcher repeatedly compared transcripts using the constant comparison method until unique, yet consistent groups were revealed. The categories were given names, the transcripts were classified and indexed, and sections were placed in clearly labelled folders to represent each category. Second, the researcher combined the coded interviews and searched for connections between the various data sources as well as within them. To compare different coded interviews, a table was created. The categories were then combined and improved by the researcher till the concepts became clear. Additionally, every situation was handled in an ethical manner. Further, informed consent was obtained at every stage of the research procedure, including informed consent and confidentiality.

Results

This section aims to answer the first research question: How do Sri Lankan mothers perceive entrepreneurship? Many insightful descriptions were presented by the participants during the data collection that would enable the understanding of how they perceive entrepreneurship. To understand a mother's role in creating an entrepreneur, the starting point was to analyse the respondents' own understanding and interpretation of the concept of entrepreneurship. According to the interpretations made by the mothers, it appears that all of them were well aware of the concept of entrepreneurship.

Themes Derived from the In-Depth Interviews of Mothers

The existing study centres on two research questions. The researcher derived the themes separately to support the research questions. In the first research question, the researcher attempted to answer the question: "How do mothers in Sri Lanka perceive the concept of entrepreneurship?" Thus, first, the researcher reveals the perception of entrepreneurship.

Perception of Entrepreneurship

According to the responses of the interviewed mothers, they exhibit strong awareness of the concept of entrepreneurship. The quotations indicated below specifically prove the details described regarding what entrepreneurship is.

When asked about how they perceive entrepreneurship, Respondent 03 (a 44-year-old), a professor in textile with a Ph.D. in intergraded design (2012), with an only son who goes to an international school, stated:

"Entrepreneurship is the most successful human mechanism in the whole world. It is one of the ways through which an individual can develop his or her personality, economy, as well as social status. But it is difficult for an entrepreneur to be successful in Sri Lanka. I believe that the world's highest dignity lies within entrepreneurs. Because of the business management, creativity, production, and marketing. So, he is the governor. He has to make all the decisions about expansion, and the financing. So that is why I am saying that there is no proper education in Sri Lanka to develop an entrepreneur from the very young age of a child."

These responses powerfully demonstrate that the mothers have an average level of understanding of the concept of entrepreneurship. The respondent further regrets the fact that the current education system in Sri Lanka is crushing the pure soul of a child from a very young age, and it hinders the entrepreneurial skill set of a child.

Respondent 01 (a 52-year-old), who was a teacher of speech and drama with an educational background in the subject of English, has three children, where one is a graduate (27 years), the second an undergraduate (23 years), and the third a high-school student (19 years), stated:

"He is the one who does his own thing. The one who does new things. Having his own business. I think it is good rather than being controlled by someone else. I think what I do falls under entrepreneurship as well. I do classes. It's an educational service. Now I didn't like to go to work every day wearing a saree. But I loved teaching even from a very young age."

The above respondents' explanations reflect that the respondents had a moderate level of understanding of what entrepreneurship is, as well as its importance. From the analysis, it can be concluded that a majority of the participants were aware of the concept of entrepreneurship and its importance, despite their educational backgrounds and occupations.

Factors Preventing Mothers from Instilling an Entrepreneurial Intention in their Children

Education System in Sri Lanka

Respondent 03, who switched her child's school from a government to an international school because "government schools crush a child's pure soul at such a young age", stated:

"Government schools crush the pure soul of a child at such a young age. The future of a child is determined by the country in which they grow up. I don't think that the government schools and their curriculums are supporting in developing an entrepreneur. The lessons taught in schools don't provoke an intention within a child to become one when they grow up."

Respondent 22, who is 18 years old and about to face the advanced level examination, which is one of the most competitive examinations in Sri Lanka, stated:

"I don't like the written exam-based education system. Most of the time it's all about memorizing the subject matters. After the exams, I sometimes do forget the name of the subject and even sometimes the key theories that I studied and even got high grades at school for the term exams."

Economic Instability in Sri Lanka

The economic instability of the country is one of the major reasons that was highlighted by mothers; it is a major fact that negatively affects their children in becoming better-performing entrepreneurs in the country. Respondent 03 further added:

"There is no social security in our country. There is no long-term economic viability. As a result, I am not concentrating on his skill development as a mother.

Attempting to increase his qualifications in order for him to be able to conduct a job that will allow him to have sufficient economic sustainability. To be clear, I want to see him succeed as an executive in Sri Lanka, but I also want to see him expand his horizons by moving to another country and learning new skills."

Respondent 25, who is a lecturer in an international university and currently the owner of an academic writing business, stated:

"I am afraid to expand or invest in other business opportunities with all the crisis situations in the country. We can't enter into any export businesses; we can't import anything right on time because of the restricted transportation system. The value of the rupee is reducing every day and I don't think this is a suitable time to do business in Sri Lanka."

Negative Perception of Entrepreneurship

A majority of the mothers had a negative perception of entrepreneurship and the fact that their children wanted to become future entrepreneurs, because entrepreneurship as a career is comparatively challenging and risky.

Perceived as Risky

Respondent 01 (a 52-year-old), a teacher of speech and drama with three children, where one is a graduate (27 years), one is an undergraduate (23 years), and the other a high-school student (19 years), stated:

"Becoming an entrepreneur is not an easy task. You have to also bear all the losses by yourself when you start a business, which is scary."

It is evident that some of the mothers perceive entrepreneurship to be comparatively risky, and because of that, they are not encouraging their children to become future entrepreneurs.

Respondent 23, who is an undergraduate of a state university, with the goal of joining an organisation to work in upon completion of the degree, stated:

"My mother fears me becoming an entrepreneur. But I do know that by becoming an entrepreneur I will be able to reach a luxurious life quicker than doing a job in Sri Lanka. Besides it makes me enjoy my freedom. My

mother tells me that it is riskier than I think. So maybe after joining with a company and working there for some time and after gaining the experience, I would do my own thing."

Thus, a mother's perception of entrepreneurship as risky has a vital negative impact on the child's career choice as an entrepreneur.

Perceived as Comparatively Challenging

Respondent 06 (a 42-year-old), a housewife and a mother of two with a B.Com bachelor's degree, stated:

"Becoming an entrepreneur is quite challenging. It's not like just working in an air-conditioned room."

Respondent 21, an assistant lecturer at a state-owned university in Sri Lanka and who is currently studying for her Master's, stated:

"It was my parents' wish to see me becoming a lecturer. I don't as a person like to get myself caught up in a full-time job or a profession. But I like teaching. Even though I wanted to start my own class and grow it as the academy my mother didn't approve of it or encouraged the thought, saying that it is too challenging."

Thus, a mother's perception of entrepreneurship as challenging has a vital negative impact on the child's career choice as an entrepreneur.

Mothers' Understanding of the Children's Capabilities

Respondent 02 (a 42-year-old), who is a mother of two with a writership diploma, and studying for an external degree at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura along with a diploma in press, stated:

"Both of my children are very different. My eldest is into engineering but not into working in the field; she prefers administrative work in the field of engineering. She prefers staying in her comfort zone and working. My youngest is very artistic. She is not experimenting in nature. We have to teach her everything. And even though they say that they like to become many things, I observed them very well and support them in improving what they are capable of doing not what they merely like to do. I have taught them to have options in life because they can't

fall backwards when one thing goes wrong in life. So, I intend to prepare my eldest to become a lawyer one day if she doesn't become an engineer because she can talk and write very well. But my youngest is not giving me clues in which area she is capable yet."

It is clear that the mothers have pre-determined judgments and perceptions of their children's future careers.

Mothers' Incorrect Understanding of Entrepreneurship

According to the findings, it is evident that misconceptions of mothers about entrepreneurship are hindering the child's intention of becoming future entrepreneurs.

Respondent 01 (a 52-year-old), further claimed:

"I don't think my children want to become entrepreneurs. But they like to do their own thing one day. Like myself, teaching. I am a teacher and I have been teaching for 20 years now. When I was young, I never wanted to do a job. Go to work 8 to 5. But I wanted to become a teacher because I like teaching very much. I love being with children. I also like to be free. I don't like to get orders from a boss."

According to the response, it is clear that some of the Sri Lankan mothers have misunderstood the characteristics of an entrepreneur, which causes them to hinder their children's intention of becoming entrepreneurs. To summarise the findings, it is evident that even though the mothers of Sri Lanka have a better awareness of the concept of entrepreneurship and a positive perception of entrepreneurs, they tend to highlight the hardships of becoming an entrepreneur with respect to their own child's future. The mothers seem to have pre-determined expectations, dreams, and hopes about their child's future career.

Discussion

To help answer the research questions, the researcher derived the themes independently. The first research question asked was: Do mothers in Sri Lanka perceive the concept of entrepreneurship? This is to understand the mothers' understanding of the concept of entrepreneurship and the variables that inhibit mothers from instilling

an entrepreneurial intention in their children and from supporting their desire to start their own businesses.

Entrepreneurship is the process by which a person recognises opportunities for current marketable needs and plans to assume the likely risk of starting a business to meet the unmet needs (Hatten, 2012). These people are entrepreneurs because they are capable of starting new businesses in the face of ongoing risk and uncertainty, with the goal of making money and growing their existing businesses by recognising and seizing opportunities that may arise (Scarborough, 2012). According to Wu, entrepreneurship would have a hugely positive impact on society (2009). Since entrepreneurs are able to detect customer needs and develop fresh, practical goods and services, the formation of new businesses through entrepreneurship will raise people's standards of life, and hence improve the value acquired by an entrepreneur and their clients (Wu, 2009). These responses of the current study powerfully demonstrate that the mothers have an average level of understanding of the concept of entrepreneurship. Such a level of understanding, with slight misperceptions, is also identified as a factor behind a mother's fear in letting their children become an entrepreneur in Sri Lanka.

According to the research findings of Tarling, Jones, and Murphy (2016) and Kirkwood (2007), mothers have a significant impact on their children's likelihood of pursuing an entrepreneurial profession. The current research findings proved the existing literature. Within the entrepreneurship process presented by Hatten (2012), it has been identified that parents and role models possess the capability to influence entrepreneurs in their journey towards starting their own business. More specifically, researchers such as Kirkwood (2007) and Tarling, Jones and Murphy (2016) highlight the influence a mother has in their child pursuing in this direction. Thus, a mother's positive perception of entrepreneurship will play a vital role in the probability of their child pursuing a career in entrepreneurship, since a positive perception would encourage the mother to actively participate and support the entrepreneurship career of their child (Peterson, 2017). In contrast, if entrepreneurship is perceived poorly by a mother, then they would be prompted to not support their children in pursuing a role in entrepreneurship (Shane & Cable, 2002).

It is showcased in the research findings of Kirkwood (2007) and Tarling, Jones and Murphy (2016) that mothers are capable of positively influencing their children's personality and act as a role model in pursuing entrepreneurship. Thus, a mother's positive perception of entrepreneurship is vital for them to have a positive impact on their child's entrepreneurship career. On the other hand, research findings of Kirkwood (2007) and Otto (2000) present the negative influence of mothers on their children, where they were seen as anti-role models who play a decisive role in their children's entrepreneurship career. Thus, when a mother possesses a negative perception of entrepreneurship, they are more likely to have a negative influence on their child's probability of becoming an entrepreneur.

According to Brenner, Pringle and Greenhaus (1991), if a person's perception of entrepreneurship focuses on the insurmountable barriers in pursuing a career in entrepreneurship, they are less likely to become an entrepreneur. Thus, if a mother has a negative perspective on entrepreneurship, the child would be less likely to pursue a career in entrepreneurship. The current research findings prove the existing literature on the mother's negative perception of entrepreneurship and the child's poor career selection in entrepreneurship, as per respondents 21 and 23. According to the current research findings, mothers find entrepreneurship as a career challenging and risky. Peterson (2017) states that apart from the perception held by the entrepreneurs in pursuing entrepreneurship, the perception of other individuals who have the capability to influence the entrepreneur's success matters. Thus, the mother's perception of entrepreneurship plays a vital role in the success of an entrepreneur, due to the influence they have upon their children (Kirkwood, 2007; Tarling, Jones & Murphy, 2016). Positive perception encourages active participation and support for the entrepreneurs, while a negative perception results in a lack of regard for social and professional support (Peterson, 2017; Shane & Cable, 2002). Therefore, a mother has the capability to encourage or discourage a child from becoming an entrepreneur.

A society's socio-economic position is one of several variables that affect entrepreneurship; it is one of the key ones. Enterprise creation is heavily influenced by the economic prospects present in a nation. People take

advantage of chances if they believe they could result in the desired results. Economic opportunity is thus a key driver of entrepreneurial activity (Pant, 2015). It is understood that a majority of the Sri Lankan mothers fear their children becoming entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka with the current economic instability in the country. As per the findings of Arquisolaa and Muanar (2019), entrepreneurial education uplifts children's entrepreneurial intentions through entrepreneurial courses given by the children's schools, enabling them to gain knowledge and insights about entrepreneurship. Yet, a majority of the mothers in Sri Lanka view the education system as making a poor contribution towards improving the entrepreneurial skills of a child. A majority of the mothers agreed that the government school education system is not up-to-date and the education system itself is discouraging and destroying the inner entrepreneurs within the children from a very young age.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that the two main factors that prevent mothers from inculcating entrepreneurial intentions in their children, and from encouraging their children to become entrepreneurs, is the economic and social-political environment and instability of the country, as well as the education system with its poor contribution towards improving the entrepreneurial skills of a child. The mothers in Sri Lanka, according to the current sample, have an understanding of entrepreneurship. It can be concluded that they are unwilling to see their children as entrepreneurs even though they have an understanding of who an entrepreneur is. In addition, they have increasing concerns about the current economic condition of the country, as well as the effectiveness of the education system in developing the entrepreneurial education and the entrepreneurial skills of a child.

Some mothers perceived entrepreneurship to be risky compared to other career opportunities that are available for their children. The existing literature facilitated evidence for such a perception. Risk taking is essential for an entrepreneur, since they have to exploit opportunities that others are reluctant to take, to yield a higher gain (Nefzi, 2018). Entrepreneurs require higher risk propensity, as this will provide them with the potential to focus less on the probable losses incurred as a repercussion of a decision undertaken, but rather focus on the possibility of incurring a gain by exploiting that opportunity (Nefzi, 2018). Thus, mothers play a vital role in the cultivation

of risk appetite, or they are capable of hindering such a capability, as the research findings of Kirkwood (2007) and Tarling, Jones and Murphy (2016) state that mothers have the potential to influence their child's probability of undertaking a career in entrepreneurship. Research conducted by Niehues et al. (2015) showcased the manner in which mothers influenced the risk-taking capability of their children; one mother took a cautious approach to risk taking, as the children were perceived as vulnerable and requiring protection, and others prioritised the child's safety and withheld them from participating in risky age-appropriate activities. Niehues et al. (2015) further stated that risk taking was approached with a fearful perspective rather than a means of promoting resilience within the child. These approaches taken by a mother towards risk taking profoundly affect a child when they undertake a career in entrepreneurship. The research conducted by Tarling, Jones and Murphy (2016) presented an instance where one of the entrepreneur's mothers perceived her child's career as risky, and so she was worried and only accepted it as a part-time job.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurs are recognised as the life-blood of a country's economy. They are also regarded as the key drivers of innovations and economic development. The choice of individuals to opt for a career in self-employment, as an entrepreneur, is critical, contributing to a country's economy. Entrepreneurship as a choice is influenced by many contemporaneous variables, such as household wealth, gender, spouse's education, and family composition, along with health. Family background is an important factor, particularly if a parent was involved in entrepreneurship. At the very least, the children of entrepreneurs have multiple avenues with which to arrive at a career in entrepreneurship. Turning the issue around, an individual's choice of a career in entrepreneurship may be influenced by whether their parents were entrepreneurs. This paper examines the mothers' influence on the choice of individuals to engage in entrepreneurship. Even though many studies have been conducted in understanding the various factors that prevent an individual from becoming an entrepreneur, limited studies have been conducted in understanding the mother's contribution to creating or crushing the entrepreneurial mind set of a child, especially in the Sri Lankan context. Having understood

this, a qualitative research study supported by 20 in-depth interviews was conducted among mothers and children, to explore their influence on the child's choice of becoming an entrepreneur.

As a result, it can be concluded that the economic, as well as social-political stability of the country and the education system's poor contribution in helping to improve a child's entrepreneurial skills, are the two main factors that prevent mothers from instilling entrepreneurial intentions in their children and encouraging them in becoming entrepreneurs. The parents play an important role in a child's career choices. Thus, it is important to understand how Sri Lankan parents influence their children to become entrepreneurs. The prime objective of the research study was to understand the factors that make the mothers fear letting their children become entrepreneurs in the context of Sri Lanka.

Implications

Policymakers, as well as the government, bear a significant amount of responsibility for creating an environment and an educational system that are conducive to a child becoming an entrepreneur, as well as for an entrepreneur to successfully conduct and maintain a business in a stable economic environment. As far as the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education platforms is concerned, the findings of this study suggest that Sri Lanka's educational systems need to be changed immediately. It is clear that the Sri Lankan educational system contributes to the tarnishing of entrepreneurial abilities and goals in the minds of pupils from an early age. As the study understands, the choice to pursue a career in entrepreneurship is a complex decision influenced by the mothers of the children. It is hoped that this present research may contribute towards a better understanding of the way in which characteristics from the business world can be instilled in children from their early childhood, using entrepreneurship education from mothers and schools.

Even if a handful of the respondents are actually housewives, it is assumed that they all have a good educational background. A majority are also middle- or upper-middle-income earners. A majority of those who responded were employed in a variety of occupations. As a result, future research can concentrate on determining

the role of women with limited educational backgrounds, working entrepreneurship experience, and lower income earners from rural areas of Sri Lanka.

Future Research

Future research studies could look into parents' perceptions of existing government school syllabuses in terms of producing an entrepreneur, because both the parents' role and the educational systems' influence the child's ability to become an entrepreneur with a developed spiritual orientation.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Respondents' Profiles

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of Children</i>	<i>Education level of the Children</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Education Level</i>	<i>Role</i>
Respondent 01	52	03	Graduate, Under-graduate, GCE Ordinary Level Exam	Colombo – Dehiwala	Teacher – Speech and Drama	GCE Advance Level/ Diploma in Speech and Drama	Mother
Respondent 02	42	02	Grade 10 and Grade 05: Semi-private schools	Colombo – Kiribathgoda	Writer [L-board]	GCE Advance Level/ Completed AAT second stage; completed a writership diploma; reading for an external degree in USJ/reading for a diploma in press	Mother
Respondent 03	44	02	Grade 05 International school	Colombo	Professor in textile	Ph.D. in intergraded design 2012	Mother
Respondent 04	40	02	Grade 0	Colombo	School teacher	Bachelor's Degree	Mother
Respondent 05	45	02	Grade 11 and Grade 04: Government schools	Colombo – Kottawa	Former admin. secretary of a buying and selling company	GCE Advance Level/ Diploma English and HRM	Mother
Respondent 06	42	02	Grade 11 and Grade 06: Government schools	Colombo – Kottawa	Housewife	B.Com bachelor's degree	Mother
Respondent 07	40	01	Grade 03: Government schools	Colombo – Homogama	CBL – Pannipitiya	Postgraduate diploma	Mother
Respondent 08	38	03	Grade 03 and Grade 01, and two-year old: Semiprivate schools	Colombo – Pannipitiya	Assistant Manager	BSc in Biology	Mother
Respondent 09	41	04	Grade 13, 12, and Grade 04: Government schools	Colombo – Pannipitiya	Housewife	GCE Advance Level	Mother
Respondent 10	49	03	Just finished schooling, Grade 11, and Grade 03	Colombo – Pannipitiya	Former accountant: construction; housewife	B.Com, Dilli University	Mother
Respondent 11	72	03	All three are above 30 years old	Colombo	An entrepreneur in the ecofriendly energy industry	External degree holder of the University of Moratuwa	Entrepreneur
Respondent 12	50	01	25 years old	Colombo	An entrepreneur whose practices are spiritually driven	Graduate	Entrepreneur
Respondent 13	44	00	-	Matara	The founder of an island-wide educational institute	Graduate	Entrepreneur
Respondent 14	56	01	21 years old	Galle	The owner of a hotel	Graduate	Entrepreneur

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of Children</i>	<i>Education level of the Children</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Education Level</i>	<i>Role</i>
Respondent 15	55	01	21 years old	Galle	Supporting the husband in managing their medium scale -hotel	GCE Advance Level	Entrepreneur
Respondent 16	26	00	-	Colombo	Garment manufacturing	Graduate	Child and entrepreneur
Respondent 17	35	02	Grade 05 and Grade 02	Colombo	Raala kithul – Organic and healthy kithul jaggery and honey exporter	Graduate	Child and entrepreneur
Respondent 18	23	00	-	Colombo – Piliyandala	Professional photographer with two brands	Undergraduate	Child and entrepreneur
Respondent 19	23	00	-	Colombo – Dehiwala	Currently not involved in any business	Undergraduate	Child and entrepreneur
Respondent 20	23	00	-	Colombo	Working in an organisation	GCE Advance Level	Child and entrepreneur
Respondent 21	27	00	-	Colombo – Dehiwala	Assistant Lecturer	Studying for MSc	Child and non-entrepreneur
Respondent 22	23	00	-	Colombo	Student	Undergraduate	Child and non-entrepreneur
Respondent 23	18	00	-	Colombo	Student	School	Child and non-entrepreneur
Respondent 24	30	00	-	Boralla	Lecturer	MBA Qualified	Child and non-entrepreneur
Respondent 25	35	02	Eldest daughter is six years old and the youngest son is two years old	Rathmalana	Lecturer and has his own businesses	Studying for Ph.D.	Entrepreneur