

Factors Predicting the Intention of Academics of Faculties of Agriculture of the State Universities in Sri Lanka to Engage in Outreach Activities

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ABSTRACT: Evidence of research conducted on outreach activities of the Faculties of Agriculture in Sri Lanka focusing on agriculture related knowledge transfer is meager or absent. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate, with an underlying theoretical framework as to, what factors predict on intention (participation decision) of academics to engage in outreach activities? The theory of planned behavior (TPB) was applied for the prediction. A structured questionnaire was e-mailed and posted to randomly selected 67% of the academic staff members of each of the eight Faculties of Agriculture (N = 257) in the state Universities of Sri Lanka, where 126 filled questionnaires (49%) were returned after three reminders. Application of the theory along with additional variables could explain 40% of the total variability. In general, subjective norms and positive attitudes towards outreach activities were the strongest predictors of intention to engage in outreach activities. Those who have engaged in outreach activities in the past with a higher general level of satisfaction are more likely to engage in outreach activities in future as well. Recognition and rewards for participation was also an important determinant. These findings suggest that interventions to promote outreach activities of the academics in Faculties of Agriculture should target these factors in the short run together with establishment of an effective formal mechanism for outreach in the long run.

Keywords: Academics, Faculties of Agriculture, state universities, outreach, theory of planned behavior

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