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STRATEGIC APPROACH FOR OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRENUERSHIP IN SRI LANKAN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurs in the modern construction industry have adopted sustainable entrepreneurship instead of conventional entrepreneurship due to a high concern for sustainability in the world economy. However, entrepreneurs in Sri Lankan construction industry have not adequate awareness on sustainable entrepreneurship, and they are only applying sustainable practices to their construction projects. Sustainable entrepreneurship is a more complex concept than mere application of sustainable practices to their projects. For establishing effective sustainable entrepreneurship, it is required to identify the drivers and barriers and overcome these barriers. Thus, this study aims to propose suitable strategies to overcome barriers for sustainable entrepreneurship in the Sri Lankan construction industry. To obtain relevant data, semi-structured interviews were performed with entrepreneurs in construction enterprises in Sri Lanka, and data analysis was performed using manual content analysis. Findings revealed that government support, organizational culture, stakeholder influence, financial incentives, technology are the key drivers for sustainable entrepreneurship. In contrast, lack of financial resources, low market demand, lack of stakeholder support, and inadequate organizational structures, lack of technological innovations were emphasised, poor regulatory backing as barriers for sustainable entrepreneurship. To effectively implement sustainable entrepreneurship in the Sri Lankan construction industry, 13 strategies were introduced to avoid barriers and enhance drivers.

Keywords: *Construction industry; Sustainability; Sustainable Entrepreneurship.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainability is a significant topic in every economy, and the markets are producing sustainable products while achieving principles of sustainability. Both commercial and business sectors have been much concerned about sustainability when performing their business activities (Konys, 2019). Furthermore, businesses have been introducing innovations related to products, services and processes while complying sustainable features (de Medeiros et al., 2014). Ultimately, it is caused to change the customer's

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mindset to purchase and consume sustainable products and services (Hojnik et al., 2019). As a result of that, entrepreneurs also tend to focus on integrating sustainability with their entrepreneurship (Vuorio et al., 2018). Entrepreneurs perform various functions such as innovations, risk management, organizational management, resource organizing, decision making, leadership, social and economic development (Kozubíková et al., 2017). Due to the high demand, sustainable development also became one of major functions in entrepreneurship (Saleh & Alalouch, 2015). Latterly, entrepreneurship is developed based on sustainability functions and has resulted in the creation of sustainable entrepreneurship around the world (Ahmed & Wahab, 2018).

Sustainable entrepreneurship (SE) can be considered as a new concept in business environment that builds a relationship between sustainable development and business practices while balancing goals of sustainable pillars (Sargani et al., 2020). It is focused on all economic, environmental and social goals and balanced all three dimensions of "Triple Bottom-Line (TBL)"(Arowoshegbe & Emmanuel, 2016). TBL concept is totally aligned with the purpose of sustainable entrepreneurship as it focuses more on the environment and social dimensions than conventional accounting measures, which focus on only economic dimensions (Tarnanidis et al., 2016). In the modern era, most of the industries in the world economy have been trended to achieve TBL while establishing sustainable entrepreneurship (Sargani et al., 2020). Construction industry can also be considered a major industry that promotes sustainable entrepreneurship by balancing economic, environmental and social dimensions (Rosalinde & Woolthuis, 2010).

According to Masroori and Momayez (2014), typical construction has been adapted to the conventional entrepreneurship when perform their business activities. Conventional entrepreneurship is only concerned with economic goals such as profit and return on investments. Entrepreneurs in the modern construction industry are establishing sustainable practices throughout the business life cycle (Konys, 2019). There are a number of drivers that lead to initiate sustainable entrepreneurship in construction industry. It can be related to three main categories, such as intrinsic rewards, extrinsic rewards and personality traits towards sustainable practices (Vuorio et al., 2018). On the other hand, there are a number of challenges faced when implementing sustainable entrepreneurship in the construction industry, such as institutional influences, financial obstacles, team compositions, policy interactions, technical interventions and market failures, etc (Butkouskaya et al., 2020; Roblek et al., 2018).

In Sri Lanka, SE is still not adapted well in a proper manner because entrepreneurs are more focused only on corporate social responsibility (Rizvi & Somachandra, 2019). Furthermore, entrepreneurs in Sri Lankan construction industry do not have adequate awareness of sustainable entrepreneurship and they are only applying sustainable practices to their construction projects (Athapaththu & Karunasena, 2018). However, compared to regular entrepreneurs, sustainable entrepreneurship is a more complex concept than mere application of sustainable practices to their projects (Hoogendoorn et al., 2019). Furthermore, understanding the barriers and drivers is crucial for policymakers and industry stakeholders to promote sustainable construction effectively (de Oliveira & de Melo, 2024). It is evident that a key reason for the lack of understanding of sustainable entrepreneurship among entrepreneurs in the Sri Lankan construction industry. W.D.I.V. Somachandra et al. (2021) stated that, due to lack of awareness, misconceptions and legal obligations, implementing 'Corporate Social Responsibility' in sustainable construction is often limited. Also, recent studies indicate a need for increased awareness and

innovative approaches to overcome barriers in sustainable entrepreneurship (Perera & Abeysekera, 2021; V. Somachandra et al., 2024). Therefore, this study focus on proposing suitable strategies to overcome barriers for sustainable entrepreneurship in the Sri Lankan construction industry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurship has been defined by Hisrich and Peters (2005) spending the time and energy necessary, taking the corresponding financial, spiritual, and social risks, and capable of generating financial value and personal satisfaction and independence. According to Hafer (2013), entrepreneurs are business leaders who seek ideas and put them into practice to promote economic growth and development. Drucker (2014) stated that innovation is a crucial tool that should be consistently practised by entrepreneurs. The growing awareness of social and environmental issues has led to the emergence of SE, a unique entrepreneurial spirit that integrates social, environmental, and economic aspects (Parrish, 2010). Belz and Binder (2017) highlighted that, SE focuses on generating economic, social, and environmental value through business activities, unlike traditional entrepreneurship which primarily focuses on profit-driven activities.

2.1 APPLICABILITY OF SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Sustainability remains vital to the construction industry because its final destination is to seek a joined-up and continuing equilibrium amid the economics, communal also ecological features of mortal activities (Uğural et al., 2020). Currently, building production focuses on maximizing energy use, area design, disposal processes, and selecting suitable materials. This includes addressing ecological issues in construction areas, while also ensuring the construction program is environmentally friendly (Mir-Babayev et al., 2017). Building with renewable and recyclable resources offers economic benefits, ecological duty, and communal consciousness to the newly built surroundings and amenities, benefiting the larger society (Christini et al., 2004) . Entrepreneurship in the construction industry contains various forms, including starting a new business, developing innovative building methods or materials, and identifying new markets (Jain, 2023). Construction entrepreneurs employ various tactics to advance green architecture and overcome resource constraints (Johnsen, 2023). The investment in sustainable construction has a direct relationship with structure price, output, and ecological benefits, but there is no direct connection between asset amount and nesting point (Dobson et al., 2013).

2.2 DRIVERS OF SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Majid et al. (2012) have emphasized categorizations of the drivers, influencing Sustainable Entrepreneurship in the construction industry, including internal and external factors, public and private aspects, and proactive and reactive approaches. Table 01 indicates 15 drivers for Sustainable Entrepreneurship in construction industry.

Table 1:Drivers for sustainable entrepreneurship in construction industry

Drivers	Sources
Government support & incentives	(Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004)
Organization culture	(Tello & Yoon, 2008)
Community Surrounding	(Yadav et al., 2018)
Long term profit	(Matisoff et al., 2016)
Ability to funding	(Schlange, 2007)
Brand image and reputation	(Raja Mohd Rasi et al., 2010)
Stakeholder Influence	(Worthington & Patton, 2005)
Social and environmental awareness	(Kassim & Abdullah, 2008)
Level of internal bureaucracy	
Environmental Management Capability (EMC)	
Consumer satisfaction and demand	
Competitive advantage and strategic intent	
External support	
Technological advance	
Access to new markets	

2.3 BARRIERS OF SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP OF IN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Although many of the developed and developing countries have gained benefits through the SE in the construction industry, most of the countries are experiencing a number of barriers. Table 02 indicates seventeen barriers identified towards Sustainable Entrepreneurship by researchers.

Table 2: Barriers for sustainable entrepreneurship in construction industry

Barriers	Sources
Lack of financial resources	(Costache et al., 2021)
Limited resources	(Álvarez Jaramillo et al., 2019)
High initial cost	(Stewart et al., 2003)
Lack of expertise	(Dawo et al., 2023)
Lack of awareness	(Cassells & Lewis, 2011)
Legislation and regulation	(Auer & Jarmai, 2017)
Lack of market demand	
Resistance to change	
Lack of time for training	
Limited external stakeholder support	
Lack of competences	
Additional time consumption	
Lack of customer demand	

Barriers	Sources
Short of help and supervision from regulatory system	
Weak organizational structure	
Lack of technological advancement	

2.4 STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME BARRIERS IN SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Sustainable construction offers a fresh perspective on ecological and communal conditions, creating employment opportunities and reducing communal differences, while also improving population welfare (Hwang et al., 2017). Different strategies have been used to overcome the barriers in SE in the construction sector. Estimating normal resources is crucial for ecological financial systems, government decision-making, and investment redistribution (Stjepanović et al., 2017). Also, safety management capabilities help businesses identify and manage challenges, increasing the likelihood of achieving growth and objectives (Caliendo et al., 2015). Entrepreneurs' learning abilities can help overcome challenges in sustainable entrepreneurship through knowledge acquisition and experience summary, promoting long-term growth (Lis & Sudolska, 2015).

3. METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research approach is mostly used to answer research questions that start from "how" and "why"(Creswell, 2013). Considering the research question “how can be overcome barriers in SE construction industry by proposing suitable strategies”, this research was adopted the qualitative research approach. A comprehensive literature review was focused on the applicability of SE in the construction industry, drivers and barriers for SE in construction industry and current strategies used to overcome the barriers. Under qualitative approach, primary data collection was executed using semi structured interviews as a most sensible data collection technique for this study. In line with prior qualitative research, a total of 10 expert interviews were conducted, as theoretical saturation was reached at this point, with no new insights emerging beyond the tenth participant (Andarz et al., 2025). Interview participants were selected using purposive sampling by targeting entrepreneurs and senior professionals actively involved in sustainable construction projects in the Sri Lankan construction industry. A selection criterion included a minimum of 5 years’ experience in the construction industry, involvement in at least one project that incorporated sustainable or environmentally responsible construction practices and willingness to participate for an 30-45 minutes interview and share insights based on practical experience. Screening procedures involved an initial review of participants’ professional profiles on LinkedIn, project portfolios to ensure they met the selection criteria. Preliminary phone and email contact was made to confirm their eligibility and consent for participation. Table 3 indicates the details of participants selected for the interviews.

Table 3: Details of participants

Interviewee code	Designation	Experience (yrs.)	Sample questions asked
R-01	Director	5	How would you assess the current state of SE within the Sri Lankan construction industry?
R-02	Owner	5	To what extent do global drivers for SE in construction apply to the Sri Lankan context?
R-03	Owner	7	What are the key barriers to implementing SE in the Sri Lankan construction industry?
R-04	Director	10	In your opinion, how applicable are existing strategies for establishing SE to the Sri Lankan construction industry?
R-05	Managing Director	5	Are there any additional strategies you would propose to promote SE within the Sri Lankan construction industry?
R-06	Owner	5	
R-07	Owner	10	
R-08	Director	10	
R-09	Director	6	
R-10	Owner	7	

To investigate the collected data, manual content analysis was followed. The interview data, initially captured via audio recordings, were carefully transcribed. Subsequently, a deductive coding approach was employed. Pre-established themes derived from the literature review served as the foundational categories for organizing the qualitative data. Drivers were systematically categorized into distinct themes such as Government, Cultural, Financial, Managerial, External Support, Technological, and other drivers. Barriers were identified in the literature against interviewee and insights were identified as novel barriers. Finally, the proposed strategies were synthesized from the practical experiences and insights shared by the interviewees, and the literature findings ensuring their relevance and applicability.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

The data analysis for this study was executed under three main broader areas including the applicability of SE in Sri Lankan construction industry, drivers and barriers for SE in construction industry, and appropriate strategies for the effective implementation of SE in Sri Lankan construction industry.

4.1 APPLICABILITY OF SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP WITHIN SRI LANKAN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

The participants of semi-structured interviews validated that sustainable entrepreneurship as business that managed their all-internal organizational processes by promoting sustainability to achieve vision and mission that aligned with sustainability. However, R-03 highlighted, *"sustainable entrepreneurship was not limited to applying sustainable practices to internal organizational processes, because it should be extended to organizational performance also"*. Also, participants stated that, sustainable entrepreneurship covers all the functions from the initiation stage and leads to create sustainable outcomes. However, none of the participants were satisfied with the current status of SE within the Sri Lankan construction industry. All participants mentioned

"sustainable entrepreneurship is not effectively applied within Sri Lankan construction industry". Majority of interviewees highlighted *"most of construction entrepreneurs concerned to implement sustainable practices within their construction projects but they did not apply sustainable practices within their business operations that are performing in internal organizational environment".* , R-09 and R-10 highlighted, *"Organization's mission& vision also should be aligned with the concept of sustainability when adapting sustainable entrepreneurship and it was not still practiced within Sri Lankan construction industry.*

4.2 DRIVERS FOR SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP WITHIN SRI LANKAN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Drivers have been analysed under several pre-defined categories named; governmental drivers, cultural drivers, financial drivers, managerial drivers, external support drivers, technological drivers and other drivers as per Table 4.

Table 4: Interview participants' responses on drivers for sustainable entrepreneurship in Sri Lankan construction industry

Category	Drivers for sustainable entrepreneurship in Sri Lankan construction industry	R-01	R-02	R-03	R-04	R-05	R-06	R-07	R-08	R-09	R-10
Government Drivers	Government support & incentives	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cultural drivers	Organization culture	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Community Surrounding	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Financial Drivers	Long term profit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Ability to funding	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Brand image and reputation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Managerial Drivers	Stakeholder Influence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Social, environmental awareness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Level of internal bureaucracy										
	Environmental Management Capability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Consumer satisfaction & demand	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
External support drivers	Competitive advantage & strategic intent	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	External support	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Technological advance										

Category	Drivers for sustainable entrepreneurship in Sri Lankan construction industry	R-01	R-02	R-03	R-04	R-05	R-06	R-07	R-08	R-09	R-10
Technological Drivers	Access to new markets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Other Drivers	Acceptance of legal & other standard requirement		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Access to obtain different certifications	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

All participants highlighted that government support is an essential requirement to effectively maintain construction firms in Sri Lanka. Among the financial supports, providing incentives for firms that operate with SE in the Sri Lankan construction industry was highlighted. Further, R-05 emphasized *"government incentive systems support to SE in construction sector"*. This incentive system includes releasing tax charges and providing some funding to uplift business operations. Respondents emphasized *"government has been given priority to award government construction projects to sustainable entrepreneurs in the Sri Lankan construction industry"*. Nevertheless, most of interviewees emphasized *"support from Sri Lankan government is not adequate for sustainable entrepreneurship in construction industry and they still not properly maintain an incentive system to motivate entrepreneurs"*. Furthermore, Participants believed *"organization culture and community surrounding become as drivers for SE"*. Effective and systematic organization culture always create easy access to establish SE. Furthermore, community that are surrounding also highly encourage to adapt SE. On the other hand, R-08 highlighted, *"SE also leads to create strong organizational culture within Sri Lankan construction industry and to attract the community from surrounding of business environment"*.

All participants emphasized firms can be maximized long term profit using sustainable entrepreneurship, because of it saves costs by reducing wastages, minimizing energy consumption, reusing materials and reducing raw material requirements, etc. Furthermore, interviewees highlighted *"investors and financial services providers are more preferred to provide funds to construction firms that are operating with SE, because of they are always attempting to encourage the sustainable practices"*. The brand image and reputation also affect to get more attraction from clients and ultimately it will be increased the financial capabilities of firms.

In terms of managerial drivers, all participants mentioned that *"the level of internal bureaucracy is not applicable to establish sustainable entrepreneurship in Sri Lankan construction industry as a managerial driver due to their narrow management structure"*. As a result of that, four main managerial drivers were identified, such as stakeholder influence, social and environment awareness, environmental management capacity and customer satisfaction and demand. All participants believed, *"sustainable entrepreneurship leads to improved environment awareness, environmental management capacity, customer satisfaction, whereas it leads to a positive influence from stakeholders on business operations"*.

Sustainable entrepreneurship gains a competitive advantage in Sri Lankan construction by showcasing its sustainable practices in internal-organizational processes. Furthermore,

sustainable entrepreneurs can obtain benefits such as discounts, free services, and government support despite a lack of supervision from authorities. However, respondents highlighted *"establishing SE doesn't depend on firm size, as large-scale firms must meet additional requirements like legal, financial, and human resource requirements"*. All participants mentioned that SE provides access to new markets due to high demand and concern on sustainable products and performance. SE always increase advancement of organizational internal functions and operations, and it can be referred as technological advancement. On the other hand, R-09 mentioned, "*sometimes SE practices lead to preventing involvement of technological aspects when perform the business operations, as example reduce usage of automatic electric equipment to perform business operation due to high consumption of energy*".

4.3 BARRIERS FOR SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP WITHIN SRI LANKAN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

All participants confirmed 10 barriers for SE within Sri Lankan construction industry such as limited organizational resources including financial resources, high initial cost, lack of expertise, lack of awareness, resistance to change, lack of competences, additional time consumption, lack of support and guidance from regulatory authorities, weak organizational structure and poor supplier and/or distributor commitment to sustainability. Furthermore, participants agreed that the limited organisational resources including financial resources and high initial costs are barriers for implementing sustainable entrepreneurship in Sri Lankan construction industry. All participants further emphasised the lack of expertise is a barrier in successful implementation. According to participants most of the entrepreneurs in construction industry are not aware of the sustainable entrepreneurship. However, all participants stated that there are sufficient legal and regulatory establishments for sustainable entrepreneurs in construction filed.

The majority of participants validated limited external stakeholder support and lack of technological advancement as barriers for sustainable entrepreneurship within Sri Lankan construction industry. However, R-09 mentioned, *"due to high concern of external stakeholders on sustainability, they are providing adequate support to establish sustainable entrepreneurship"*. Furthermore, R-06 highlighted that, *"technological advancement sometimes prevents to establish SE in the Sri Lankan construction industry because involvement of technology always creates a complex process to adapt concept of sustainable entrepreneurship"*. However, other respondents mentioned that lack of technological advancement is a barrier to sustainable entrepreneurship. In addition to that, participants highlighted that the personal incapabilities of entrepreneurs such as poor attitudes, personal conflicts and lack of confidents to risk taking are major barriers in SE. All of the participants of semi-structured interviews did not agree to determine rules and regulations as barrier to establish SE in the Sri Lankan construction industry.

4.4 STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME BARRIERS IN SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP WITHIN SRI LANKAN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Based on existing literature, 7 main strategies were identified to overcome the barriers in sustainable entrepreneurship in the construction industry. Table 6 indicates the responses of participants on the applicability of the identified strategies in the Sri Lankan context.

Table 5:Interview participants'' responses on strategies to overcome barriers on sustainable entrepreneurship in Sri Lankan construction industry

Strategies to overcome barriers in Sustainable entrepreneurship in Sri Lankan construction industry	R-01	R-02	R-03	R-04	R-05	R-06	R-07	R-08	R-09	R-10
Invest resources for long term change	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Invest sufficient financial resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Adhere carefully to the market fluctuations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alignment of sustainable entrepreneurship objectives with the company's strategic goals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improve commitment and participation of management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Allocation of sufficient time and resources for change	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improve awareness on sustainable entrepreneurship	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

All participants believed all the above strategies are applicable to overcome barriers in sustainable entrepreneurship within Sri Lankan construction industry. Furthermore, the majority of participants highlighted *"the commitment of Sri Lankan government and other relevant authorities should be improved to establish sustainable entrepreneurship within Sri Lankan construction industry"*. R-01 also emphasized, *"introducing different standards and regulations also leads to sustainable entrepreneurship within Sri Lankan construction industry"*. R-02 believed, *"organization culture in the Sri Lankan construction industry should be reorganized to facilitate sustainable entrepreneurship establishment"*. Acquiring expertise knowledge from the global context, conduct a workshop to establish sustainable entrepreneurship and improve personal factors of entrepreneurs of including improving confidence to risk taking, making positive attitudes and improving thinking and creativity, etc also proposed by the participants. The following strategies are basically identified through interview rounds.

- Improve the commitment of Sri Lankan government and other relevant authorities and introduce standards and regulations.
- Reorganize organization culture of firms in the Sri Lankan construction industry.
- Acquiring expertise knowledge from the global context.
- Conduct workshop to establish sustainable entrepreneurship
- Improve personal factors of entrepreneurs including improving confidence in risk taking, making positive attitudes and improving thinking and creativity, etc.
- Restructuring the finding options and incentive systems for construction firms by promoting sustainable entrepreneurship.

5. DISCUSSION

The literature and interview findings on sustainable entrepreneurship in the construction industry indicate a strong alignment in identifying both drivers and barriers. Also, these findings provide detailed insights based on real experiences in the Sri Lankan context. From the literature, the applicability of SE in the construction industry emphasizes energy efficiency, eco-friendly material use, and design innovation (Mir-Babayev et al., 2017). Further literature emphasised that there are a number of drivers and challenges in SE in the construction industry. However, it was revealed that entrepreneurs are more focused on only corporate social responsibility, and due to a lack of awareness they are only applying sustainable practices to their construction projects (Athapaththu & Karunasena, 2018; Rizvi & Somachandra, 2019). There is a strong correlation between the literature and interviews on the key drivers. Both identify government support, organization culture, stakeholder influence, and financial incentives as critical enablers. Literature adds a broader view with aspects like technological advancement, access to new markets, and long-term profit potential (Tello & Yoon, 2008). The interviews justified them and were tailored to the Sri Lankan context. Interviews emphasised the government incentives (tax relief, funding), cultural alignment within organizations, and the influence of sustainability on organizations' reputation and investor appeal. Notably, technological drivers are seen as double-edged. Literature views technology as an enabler, while interviewees point out that sustainable operations sometimes avoid high-energy technologies, showing a complex local adaptation.

Considering the barriers, both literature and interview findings emphasize a lack of financial resources, limited experience, and significant upfront fees. Interviews, on the other hand, reveal more context-specific issues such as a lack of stakeholder support, low market demand, and inadequate organizational structures. While the literature highlights bureaucracy and regulation (Auer & Jarmai, 2017), respondents focus on a lack of technical innovation and poor regulatory backing as actual barriers. Additionally, interviewers mentioned that entrepreneurs' lack of confidence and creativity, suggesting internal personal limitations are overlooked but crucial barriers.

Scholars and interviewers agree on enhancing government involvement, improving organizational culture, and building management capabilities. However, interviews provide more actionable strategies relevant to the Sri Lankan context. These include acquiring global expertise, conducting workshops, and focusing on personal development, such as promoting risk-taking, creative thinking, and confidence building. This study provides significant implications across theoretical and practical domains, stemming from its comprehensive analysis of barriers and drivers to sustainable entrepreneurship. In addition, it proposed 13 actionable strategies based on literature and expert interviews. Theoretically, this study highlights the personal attributes of entrepreneurs, such as risk-taking, creativity, and confidence as critical enablers of SE. These insights provide a foundation for scholars to further investigate the interplay between institutional support and entrepreneurial mindset in developing countries. Practically, the study presents six targeted strategies identified through expert interviews that address the unique challenges specific to Sri Lanka. These include enhancing regulatory frameworks, fostering supportive organizational cultures, promoting access to international expertise, and improving funding systems. Also, it provides a roadmap for implementation by conducting workshops and entrepreneur development programs. These implications are especially valuable underdeveloped SE, offering a replicable

structure that aligns with local needs. Also, these implications inform policymakers, educators, and industry leaders about where support mechanisms should be strengthened.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study explored the drivers and barriers to sustainable entrepreneurship within the Sri Lankan construction industry by integrating insights from both literature and semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed a strong alignment between academic perspectives and practical experiences, particularly in recognizing key drivers such as government support, organizational culture, stakeholder influence, and financial incentives. However, a notable gap remains in the understanding of sustainable entrepreneurship among local entrepreneurs, as they solely consider it with corporate social responsibility and the adoption of isolated sustainable practices. Barriers such as limited financial resources, low market demand, lack of stakeholder support, and inadequate organizational structures were contextually emphasized in interviews. Furthermore, challenges like a lack of creativity, confidence, and risk-taking capacity were identified as limitations. The study concludes by proposing strategic approaches to promote sustainable entrepreneurship. It recommends actionable strategies such as enhancing government initiatives, fostering innovative organizational cultures, investing in personal and professional development, and facilitating knowledge transfer from global best practices. Addressing these areas will contribute to the development of a robust, sustainable entrepreneurship framework in Sri Lanka's construction sector, ultimately supporting long-term environmental, social, and economic goals.

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