

IMPACT OF GROUP INTERACTIONS ON ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOR OF VEGETABLE FARMERS

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Introduction

Empirical evidences have suggested entrepreneurial behavior as a function of the characteristics of the person, and the environment (Chell *et al.*, 1991). Entrepreneurial behavior has been found on nine characteristics, viz; innovativeness, achievement motivation, decision making ability, risk orientation, co-coordinating ability, planning ability, information seeking behavior, cosmopolitanness, and self confidence (Chaudhari *et al.*, 2007). However, many contextual factors have been found to exert an influence on the entrepreneurial behavior and its' success (Woo *et al.*, 1988). Padmaja and Batilan, in 2005 have researched that, among the many factors influencing the entrepreneurial behavior of farmers, group interactions were of high importance. They have further expressed "behavior of a person is governed by interactions and interrelations with other people" The general objective of the study was to examine the impact of group interactions on entrepreneurial behavior of vegetable farmers. The specific objectives of the study were to identify the major entrepreneurial behavior characteristics of farmers, to assess entrepreneurial behavior and group interactions among farmers, and to analyze the impact of group interactions on the entrepreneurial behavior of farmers.

Methodology

Matale district is among the top 4 districts in Sri Lanka, in terms of vegetable production. Sinha Framer Organization from Naula divisional secretariat area, and Mahasen Framer Organization from Dambulla divisional secretariat area of Matale district were selected for the study. Purposive sampling was used to select a sample of 60 vegetable farmers, 30 each from the two farmer organizations. Primary data were collected through a questionnaire survey, which was followed by focus group discussions, and key informant discussions. A questionnaire was prepared based on the entrepreneurial behavior scale developed by Chaudhari *et al.* (2007). Data were analyzed through Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS). Descriptive data were presented using tabular analysis and relationships were tested through correlation tests, and using the 2-independent sample t-tests.

Results

Results indicated a significant relationship between the group interactions and entrepreneurial behavior ($r=0.507$, $p=0.001$, significant at 0.01 level). However, the overall group interaction (mean value= 1.86) and entrepreneurial behavior (mean value= 71.186) of the sample was at moderate level. There was a significant positive relationship

between social participation and group interaction ($r=0.319$, $p=0.005$, significant at 0.01 level). Social participation was significantly influenced on the entrepreneurial behavior of farmers also ($r=0.302$, $p=0.005$, significant at 0.01 level). There was no significant relationship between age, experience and group interactions of the respondents. Age and experience of the farmers had not a significant relationship with their entrepreneurial behavior. There was a significant relationship between the socio-economic status and entrepreneurial behavior of the respondents ($r=0.216$, $p=0.097$, significant at 0.1 level).

Discussion

Study revealed that effective entrepreneurial behavior involved high planning ability, and decision making ability. Majority of the farmers were at a moderate level of innovativeness, risk orientation, coordinating ability, opportunity seeking behavior, self confidence, achievement motivation, and cosmopolitanism. Therefore entrepreneurial behavior of the respondents was at a moderate level. Group interactions were moderate at seasonal planning, and selecting of crops. Group interactions were low for land preparation, pest and disease controlling, harvesting, irrigation water distribution, participating in training programmes, and selling. Therefore the overall group interactions of the respondents were at a moderate level.

Conclusions

Entrepreneurial behavior of farmers was found to enhance with group

interactions. Farmers' decision making ability and planning ability were high. Risk orientation of the farmers' was low. Their entrepreneurial behavior enhanced with socio-economic status, and social participation. Group interactions of the farmers were high at seasonal planning, and selecting of crops. Group interactions were very low for selling of farmers' produce. Group interactions and entrepreneurial behavior had enhanced with social participation.

References

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