

DETERMINANTS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AMONG VOCATIONAL TRAINING STUDENTS: STUDY FROM EASTERN PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA

B.A.G.P. Nisansala^{1,*} and S.M.B.L. Suraweera²

¹*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*², *Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Kandy.*

*Corresponding author (Email: Pawaninisansala1126@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Fostering entrepreneurship is pivotal for economic growth and competitiveness in a globalized world. However, Sri Lanka faces challenges in cultivating successful entrepreneurs among its youth, who often demonstrate risk aversion and lack of entrepreneurial interest. This issue is particularly pronounced within the Vocational Training Authority (VTA) sector, where despite numerous study programs, nurturing entrepreneurs continues to be difficult. While there is existing research on entrepreneurial intention, studies specifically targeting vocational training students in Sri Lanka are limited. This sector is often overlooked despite its focus on practical and skill-based education, which makes these students ideal candidates for entrepreneurship. This study investigated the determinants of entrepreneurial intention among VTA students in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province. Notably, the Eastern Province ranks second in the number of vocational training institutes, with 32 out of 213 institutions nationwide. A quantitative approach was utilized, employing a self-administered questionnaire derived from the literature containing previously tested questions. Simple random sampling is a statistical method in which every individual in a population has an equal probability of being chosen as a sample. The study surveyed 924 VTA students, with a sample size of 274, who were selected through simple random sampling. The questionnaire aimed to capture data on educational and family backgrounds, personal attitudes, and innovativeness. The data were analyzed using SPSS software. Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between personal attitudes, innovativeness, and entrepreneurial intention. Although educational and family backgrounds exhibited statistically significant correlations, only personal attitudes ($0.05 > 0.021$) and innovativeness ($0.05 > 0.000$) emerged as significant predictors in the multiple regression analysis. Innovativeness has the strongest influence, followed by personal attitudes. Promoting innovativeness as a crucial component of entrepreneurial motivation can encourage VTA students to embrace creative potential and take risks. Enhancing personal attitudes may significantly improve entrepreneurial mindset, paving the way for successful future entrepreneurs. Furthermore, integrating curriculum elements that promote personal attitudes and innovativeness within VTA education can empower students to drive socioeconomic progress. Future research should expand the investigation to include both internal and external factors influencing entrepreneurial intention using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial intention, students, vocational training, personal attitudes, innovativeness