

Exploring Factors Affecting Entrepreneurial Intention of Vegetable Farmers in Nuwara Eliya District of Sri Lanka

R.M.A.I. Rathnayaka^{1,*} and C.M.Y.S.S. Bandara²

*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka^{1,2}*

*Corresponding author: bm2021297@mgt.rjt.ac.lk

Abstract

A country's economy depends on several main factors; among these, entrepreneurship plays a vital role. In the Sri Lankan context, agriculture plays a significant role, yet there is a low tendency for entrepreneurial activities among farmers. The purpose of this study is to explore the factors affecting the entrepreneurial intention of vegetable farmers in the Nuwara Eliya district. Despite the lack of existing knowledge focusing on this district, Nuwara Eliya is the highest upcountry vegetable producer in Sri Lanka. This study uses a qualitative research methodology consistent with positivism. The qualitative study is built upon a conceptual framework. Accordingly, data were collected from vegetable farmers in the Nuwara Eliya District through in-depth, in-person, semi-structured interviews, with data saturation achieved after twelve interviews, ensuring the adequacy and completeness of the qualitative findings. Thematic analysis was conducted by coding and classifying the data to generate themes under the conceptual framework (personal, economic, and social). The findings of this study provide economic (access to financing, market instability, infrastructure needs, and resource availability), social (family support, community attitudes, institutional support and trust, training programs, and market links), and personal (farming background, motivation and attitude, skills and knowledge gaps, entrepreneurial aspirations, and gender-related barriers) insights. These findings contribute new insights into existing knowledge on how personal, economic, and social factors influence the entrepreneurial intention of vegetable farmers. Furthermore, the study provides managerial implications that would aid public policymakers in creating practical plans to align public administration with the country's context while maintaining its avowed ideals. Additionally, the study offers managerial implications that would help policymakers address these issues.

Keywords: entrepreneurial intention, Nuwara Eliya district, qualitative study, rural entrepreneurship, vegetable farmers