

ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOUR OF PINEAPPLE FARMERS IN THE GAMPAHA DISTRICT

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Growing demand exists for pineapple (*Ananas comosus* L.) in locally and globally. However, pineapple farming in Sri Lanka is characterized by low productivity, high cost of production, declined profitability, poor quality, and limited value addition. Entrepreneurial farmers are the ideal solution for its modernization. This study assessed the entrepreneurial behaviour of pineapple farmers in the Gampaha district. Primary data were collected from 100 pineapple farmers selected through the multistage random sampling procedure. A pre-tested structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Forty-two statements were used to elicit entrepreneurial characteristics and measured on a five-points Likert scale. Entrepreneurial behaviour index (EBI), correlation coefficient, and principle component analysis (PCA) were employed for data analysis. Sample size was adequate for factor analysis (KMO = 0.660, $p < 0.05$). Overall, EBI revealed that 70% of the farmers had moderate entrepreneurial behaviour and 16% of farmers had high entrepreneurial behaviour. According to PCA, seven key behaviours; information-seeking, risk-taking, cosmopolitaness, self-confidence, leadership, decision-making, and management-orientation explained 63% of the entrepreneurial behaviour of pineapple farmers. Amongst, information seeking behaviour alone explains 14% of the entrepreneurial behaviour. Positive correlations were observed between entrepreneurial behaviour and level of education and farming experience ($p < 0.05$). The moderate level of entrepreneurial behaviour among the majority of pineapple farmers has resulted the poor entrepreneurship in the pineapple industry in Sri Lanka. Since education and experience are highly correlated with entrepreneurial behaviour, facilitating more training and education opportunities play a key role in promoting entrepreneurship in the pineapple industry in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial farmers, Entrepreneurial behaviour index, Principal component analysis