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Influence of entrepreneur traits of owner-manager on the growth of plant nursery agribusiness: A case study in Ampara, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The entrepreneurial success is influenced by diverse factors which are equally important to investigate. Previous studies confirmed that entrepreneur characteristics (personal traits) are vital for becoming a successful entrepreneur. This study investigates how entrepreneur traits namely, innovativeness, futuristic mindset, and commitment impact on the growth of a plant nursery agribusiness in Sri Lanka. This study uses a case study approach in the largest and most sophisticated private plant nursery in Sri Lanka, called Sevana Plant Nursery (SPN), based in *Ampara* District. This nursery initiated in 1993 as a family business in a 0.5 acres of land and it has been grown substantially over the last 29 years while expanding its business to 40 acres of land producing 10 million plants in 400+ varieties, annually. This study is qualitative in nature, and it used in-depth interview method as the main data collection method. Observation method and other reports/documents were used as validation sources of the findings. Pre-tested interview protocol was employed for in-depth interviews which were carried out with the owner-manager, and two other directors. Data analysis was guided by thematic analysis. The study found many entrepreneur traits in owner-manager, however, this study limits to three traits which substantially contribute to the growth of SPN over its 29-years of journey. Innovativeness, futuristic mindset, and commitment were derived from thematic analysis. In each trait, the owner-manager revealed his unique entrepreneurship skills which have been evidently doable and sustainable. These were supported by the elaboration of two other directors, observation being done by the research team, and other secondary sources. This study can be used as a role model for entrepreneurs in general, and practitioners in the plant nursery sector in particular. Further, this study helps to understand the importance of entrepreneurship traits which drive the growth of Agribusiness in general.

Keywords: Agribusiness, Entrepreneurial traits, Plant nursery

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