

**ASSESSING THE FACTORS INFLUENCING
ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AMONG
UNDERGRADUATES IN EASTERN UNIVERSITY, SRI LANKA**



BY

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurial Intention reflects one's planned decision to start a business. Although interest among students is on the rise, limited resources, practical exposure, and a fear of failure prevent intentions from being translated into actual entrepreneurial action. The limited localized evidence on the entrepreneurial orientation among Eastern University students forms a critical research gap that needs deeper investigation to understand the current traits influencing entrepreneurial intention. Accordingly, the objectives were to assess the level of Entrepreneurial Orientation, explore the interrelationships among its dimensions and ascertain how these factors influence entrepreneurial intention. A quantitative research design was employed, involving the administration of a structured questionnaire to 300 students selected from eight designated faculties through stratified random sampling. The data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, correlation and multiple regression in SPSS 22.0. Measurement scales were adapted from previously validated studies. Ethical standards were maintained throughout. The results indicated high innovativeness ($M = 16.18$) and autonomy ($M = 16.04$), while the lower means in risk-taking ($M = 11.98$) and proactiveness ($M = 12.07$) indicated cautious attitudes toward uncertainty. There were also significant positive correlations among the motivation and networking items, $r = 0.517$; networking and EO, $r = 0.648$; motivation and EO, $r = 0.711$. Regression analysis with R^2 of 0.623 showed that EO, motivation and networking together account for 62.3% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention. Risk-taking, innovativeness, motivation and networking are significant predictors: $B = 0.211$, $p = 0.000$; $B = 0.137$, $p = 0.005$; $B = 0.215$, $p = 0.000$ and $B = 0.116$, $p = 0.014$, respectively. Therefore, corroborates Self-Determination Theory, emphasizing autonomy and intrinsic motivation as drives for entrepreneurship. There is a need to promote the experiential and interdisciplinary nature of entrepreneurship education through incubators, innovation challenges and mentoring.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO), Entrepreneurial Intention, Motivation, Networking, Undergraduates in EUSL

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