




Intrapreneurial intention mediates between individual entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intrapreneurial behaviour

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of the study is to investigate the influence of Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation (IEO) and Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy (ESE) towards Intrapreneurial Behaviour (INB). Entrepreneurial Intention and Entrepreneurial Behaviour have been a growing interest of the scholars in research in entrepreneurship literature during the last three decades. Rigorous reviews on intentions and behaviors only appeared in limited number of studies to investigate the mediating effect of Intrapreneurial Intention. Further, this study examines the mediation effect on Intrapreneurial Intention (INI) between IEO, ESE, and INB. Thus, this study attempts to test an extended model to understand the individual behaviour of using TPB and IEO. The methodology is quantitative, followed by a survey method. The sample contained 120 small tea exporting companies in Sri Lanka, registered with the Sri Lanka Tea Board (SLTB). The data were collected from Owners and Managers of those companies. The results discovered that there is a significant positive impact of IEO, ESE, and INI on INB. Also, it was registered that Intrapreneurial Intention mediates the direct relationships and implies that IEO and ESE can enhance INB through Intrapreneurial intentions. In this scenario, INI plays an important role in influencing INB. Therefore, tea industry, the government, regulatory bodies and policymakers use these findings to enhance the INB among small tea exporters in Sri Lanka. This study provides useful insights to small tea exporters in Sri Lanka on how to enhance intrapreneurial behavior through psychological factors.

Contribution/Originality: The study examines the psychological factors affecting intrapreneurial behavior through the application of IEO and TPB. Further, it also provides empirical evidence that explains the intention-behavior link by investigating the effect of intrapreneurial intention as the mediator which is lacking in the recent literature.

1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in generating innovations through innovative behaviours. Intrapreneurship is a new and emerging sub-field under the entrepreneurship that focuses on innovation and innovative behaviors known as (INB) in organizations (Widmann & Mulder, 2018). Consequently, the innovative behaviors have been recognized as a critical element in human capital and are encouraged and widely utilized in contemporary

organizations to enhance effectiveness and gain competitive advantage (Lukes & Stephan, 2017; Widmann, Messmann, & Mulder, 2016). The potential employees with right skills, knowledge, commitment, and capabilities project themselves with intrapreneurship, which is defined as an employee's individual asset in the working life (Rivera, 2017). Thus, organizations launch a lot of innovations by bringing in new and improved products and services, penetrating new markets, and aligning strategies to attract and retain customers (Denicolai, Hagen, & Pisoni, 2015). In this scenario, it is very important to encourage the large-scale entities as well as small enterprises to host more innovative activities in both global and local markets (Akbar, Omar, Wadood, & Al-Subari, 2017). According to the *Global Entrepreneurship Monitoring Report (2018)* economies are characterized as factor-driven, innovation-driven, and efficiency-driven. According to the study conducted by Kuratko, Ireland, Covin, and Hornsby (2005) innovation-driven economies, the perceived level of opportunities registered 43.4%, whereas the perceived level of capabilities recorded 43%, which is relatively low when compared to the efficiency-driven economies and factor-driven economies. Entrepreneurial behavior commonly refers to all actions involved with entrepreneurial decisions, generating ideas, and the execution of a firm. INB refers to the initiatives that are being undertaken by employees to generate the useful and new ideas in the form of suggestions, communicate, and implement those ideas. It is suggested that IB can also be exercised in established firms to initiate innovations and with innovative tasks within the firm (Kuratko et al., 2005; Rank, Pace, & Frese, 2004).

Further, intrapreneurship can be practiced at the individual level to explore entrepreneurial ideas and opportunities (Kotlar & Sieger, 2019) which ultimately leads to innovations that need to be exercised in tea industry in Sri Lanka. Having understood the economic contribution of tea industry in terms of approx. 53% of total agriculture exports (US\$ million) in 2020 and being the main foreign exchange generator (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2020) exploring entrepreneurial ideas and opportunities is of quite importance. Presently, Sri Lanka is competing with many markets such as Kenya, China, India, and Vietnam as the main tea exporters both in value added tea categories and bulk tea. However, the tea exporters should exercise an essential role in the tea market and explore more opportunities to expand the tea export market with innovations.

According to the officials of the Sri Lanka Tea Board, the tea is mainly exported in bulk, packet tea, green tea, tea bags, and instant tea. In the year 2018, the bulk tea registered 60% and value-added tea registered 40% of the total tea that was exported. Although, tea exporters have taken initiatives to add value by introducing more value-added tea, it is seen that such initiatives are not sufficient to face the challenges in the global tea market (Mohan, 2018). Further, sum of cognitive work and physical actions displayed by the employees in their work efforts resulted from IB (Widmann & Mulder, 2018) however, it is evident that these initiatives have not been successfully applied in the tea industry in Sri Lanka. Therefore, it is more prudent for the tea exporters in Sri Lanka to motivate and encourage their employees to explore IB application efforts for more innovative Intrapreneurial behaviours.

Further, scholars have pointed out that socio-cognitive factors (Afriyie, Melyoki, & Nchimbi, 2020; Zhang, Bij, & Song, 2020) can be used to explain INB while giving attention to the psychological aspect that stimulates behaviours (Alghamdi & Badawi, 2023). Even though the literature suggests determinants of INI (Kolapo, Aboluwodi, Nomlala, & Latiff, 2023) and INB, which have not been properly utilized by small tea exporters in Sri Lanka to introduce the innovations this calls for a gap in practical perspective. Therefore, this study addresses the gap in literature on intrapreneurship by examining the impact of IEO and also ESE (Neto, Rodrigues, & Panzer, 2017) on the IB (Khan, Chen, & Fatema, 2022). This research paper is structured as literature review, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion, followed by implications, research limitations, and future research directions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation (IEO)

Many studies have empirically proven that entrepreneurial orientation is a major factor in organizational success (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Therefore, applying and displaying at EO in an individual level as the Individual

Entrepreneurial Orientation (IEO), in terms of three personality traits such as pro-activeness, innovativeness, and risk-taking ability of an individual (Howard, 2020) would also lead to success of those entities.

Innovativeness can be explained as adopting new ideas rather early than competitors in the business market; pro-activeness is an ability to display work involvement aggressively earlier than the rivalry companies, and the risk-taking is considered the ability to auction in an uncertain business environment (Bolton & Lane, 2012). It is considered, especially in smaller companies, that entrepreneurial activities are being initiated and seen as individual performances, and these activities are highlighted as pro-activeness, innovativeness, and risk-taken by the individuals (Kollmann, Christofor, & Kuckertz, 2007). In certain discussions, scholars highlighted and extended IEO by adding some other traits such as autonomy and competitive aggressiveness. However, recent studies showed that the first three traits remain the most prominent contributors to IEO. It is also argued that EO is much more important at an individual level than an organizational level as it specifically highlights the individual's tendency towards the entrepreneurial activities that are performed by the employee in the organization (Naveed, Zia, Younis, & Shah, 2021). Thus, despite the fact that the entrepreneurial orientation positively affects organizational performance, it is quite interesting to study how EO behaves at the individual level. In the recent studies, they have highlighted their empirical findings that IEO positively impacts individual behaviors (AlQhaiwi & Abukaraki, 2021; Kong & Li, 2018; Su & Zhang, 2020). On the other hand, it was further deliberated that IEO has a positive impact on intentions of an individual (Ahadi & Kasraie, 2020; Naveed et al., 2021; Nordin & Koe, 2023; Oluase, Brijlal, Yan, & Ologundudu, 2018). The outcomes of these studies revealed that IEO can be considered a key driver of positively stimulating intentions and behaviors.

In this event, it is proposed that Entrepreneurial Orientation of individuals could influence their intentions and their behaviours towards the initiation and identify more innovative approaches in the organization to achieve the competitiveness in the business markets and succeed in Organizational Performance.

These theoretic and empirical discoveries demonstrate a comprehensive foundation to build the hypotheses with regard to the association between Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation and Intention Behaviour.

2.2. Theories of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

This study is primarily based on "Theory of Planned Behavior" (TPB) conceptualized by Ajzen (1987). TPB advocates that intentions are considered the instant determinant for any form of behavior, and it proposes three determinants of intention, such as; Attitudes, Subjective Norms and Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC). Ajzen (2002) also defined that the Perceived Behavioral Control and the Self-Efficacy seem quite similar, and with the perceived ability of individuals they perform their behavior or else a sequence of their behaviors. Therefore, Entrepreneurial Self Efficacy (ESE) was considered in this study as one of the psychological determinants of intention with attitudes and subjective norms.

In the above conditions, the antecedents are well explained with regard to the psychological facets of individual behavior in terms of planned behavior of individuals as presented in the following figure.

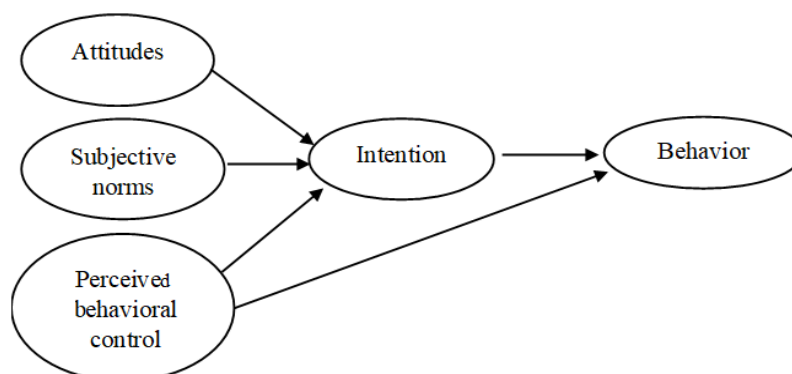


Figure 1. Theory of planned behavior.

Source. Ajzen (1987).

Figure 1 presents Ajzen's TPB, which includes five key variables. Individuals' intentions are being assumed to lead to the motivational factors those projects on behaviour. Attitudes denote the degree of a person's action that leads to favorable or unfavorable behavior that confirms an evaluation of the said behavior. Accordingly, it can be considered the "personal attraction of an individual is leading to the behavior." The Subjective Norm refers to and denotes the "likelihood that individuals or groups agree with the behavior or the performance. Similarly, it is considered a perceived social force to execute or not execute that particular behavior. Therefore, Perceived Behavioral Control states the perceived difficulty or ease of execution or performing the behavior that is in question (Ajzen, 1987). In addition, according to Ajzen (2002) the perceived self-efficacy is highlighted as the intentions and beyond attitudes in subjective norms that lead to one's behavior, also shows over and above the persons' intentions.

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is considered sphere-headed theory of psychology for predicting the specific individual behaviour (Feola, Vesci, Botti, & Parente, 2019). Thereafter, it was widely used and applied in the entrepreneurship literature to explain the EI as well as to explain the EB (Khan et al., 2022; Wahid, Noor, & Fareed, 2021). And its effect on EI was empirically supported by many recent studies (Gunawardane & Weerasinghe, 2021; Kolapo et al., 2023; Madhushyanthi & Wijerathna, 2020; Santika, Wardana, Setiawan, & Widagda, 2022; Wang et al., 2023). The Entrepreneurial Intention has been referred to explain the individual's state-of-mind that leads to implementing the new business concepts (Yıldırım, Çakır, & Aşkun, 2016). It was also discussed that the intentions do provide robust psychological initiative in the direction of individuals' behaviour to realize the results. Therefore, according to TPB and PBC, intention is influencing behavior. The empirical evidence does confirm a positive effect of PBC influence intention (Mothibi & Malebana, 2019) on behavior (Yamamoto & Kan, 2018). It is also denoted that ESE positively influences intention (Asyraf, Zakaria, & Jamil, 2023). The researcher explains the related empirical and theoretical foundations relating to intention and behavior.

2.3. Intention and Behaviour

The discussion relating to Intention and Behaviour on TPB denotes a solid theoretical base by Ajzen (1991) who states the nature of the relationship between the two fundamentals. It is also noted that intention is typically influences the behaviors and subsequently results in the outcomes performed by the individuals and companies, both of which benefit (Jeon, 2018).

In addition to the theory, the link and the effects of intention on behavior have been extensively empirically examined in many scenarios and contexts (Darmanto & Yuliari, 2018). It is also pointed out that intention-behavior have a strong link; therefore, it is important to investigate some contexts of entrepreneurship (Weiss, Anisimova, & Shirokova, 2019). The conclusions explained that the intention and behavior relationship has been significant and positively related and has also had an impact on Behavior (Alam, Kousar, & Rehman, 2019; Elsafty & Elshahed, 2021; Prabhu, McGuire, Drost, & Kwong, 2012) and it was also highlighted that the relationship among the concepts of Entrepreneurship, Intention and Behavior depicted in TPB is significant (Yen, Trang, & Duong, 2023). The association between intention and behavior can be defined as being inherent to those individuals' intentions and behaviours. Remarkably, studies showed a positive relationship with employee turnover intentions and counterproductive behavior and found that there is also a negative association between employee turnover and the intention and citizenship behaviour (Xiong & Wen, 2020). These empirical and theoretical reviews support the following conceptual framework:

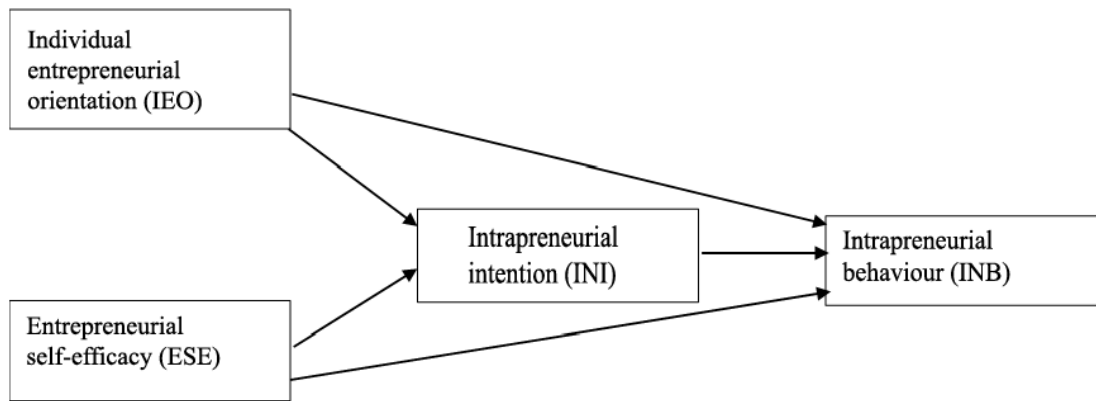


Figure 2. Conceptual framework.

Accordingly, Figure 2 illustrates the theoretical and empirical relationships among key constructs of the study. The proposed model attempts to explain how TPB affects Intention and Behavior and to examine empirically how Intrapreneurial Intention (INI) influences the Intrapreneurial Behaviour (INB). The Attitudes and Subjective Norms advocated by TPB are considered the control variables in this framework. Therefore, IEO and ESE can be considered Independent Variables. Apart from the direct relationships proposed by the model, this model may attempt to investigate the mediating effect on Intrapreneurial Intention as depicted in H6 and H7 below.

The conceptual framework proposes the following hypotheses.

H₁: Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation (IEO) influence on Intrapreneurial Intention (INI)

H₂: Entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) influence on Intrapreneurial intention (INI)

H₃: Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation (IEO) on intrapreneurial behaviour (INB)

H₄: Entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) influence on Intrapreneurial behaviour (INB)

H₅: Intrapreneurial intention (INI) influence on intrapreneurial behaviour (INB)

H₆: Intrapreneurial intention mediates the relationship between IEO and Intrapreneurial Behaviour

H₇: Intrapreneurial Intention mediates between ESE and Intrapreneurial Behaviour

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The research design of the study and the philosophy applied positivism, as the study paradigm was leading to finding business solutions to the problem in hand with deductive reasoning. The key focus of this research study was to investigate the factors that are affecting IB and the mediating effect of Intrapreneurial Intention.

Conceptual Framework of this study has been framed accordingly; the empirical and theoretical foundations and the study conducted to test hypotheses have applied the quantitative research methods. Therefore, researcher was determined to collect primary data to test the hypotheses. The research strategy adopted the survey strategy as the researcher identified to test the hypotheses in the tea export industry in Sri Lanka.

3.2. Sample and Data Collection Procedure

This study administered a structured questionnaire to collect data among the owners and managers representing small tea exporting companies and tea exporters. The tea exporter population of small tea exporters consists of 172, registered with the Sri Lanka Tea Board with a clear threshold of exporting tea per year less than one million kg.

After a careful deliberation regarding the population sizes of the previous studies, it was shown that the sampling methods had a limited sample size in the previous studies (Mihilar, 2017). Accordingly, researcher focused on the target population, which registered 172, and according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample metrics, the

recommended sample size was only 123. However, anticipating a high response rate researcher administered a higher number of questionnaires, totaling 172, anticipating a higher response, and was able to collect 126 questionnaires, registering a rate of responses of 73.2%. There were five cases with univariate outliers with extreme thresholds, and those were removed where the usable responses denoted only 70.3%.

3.3. Questionnaire Development

The measures of the construct were aligned with the questionnaire development process, and a careful application was made to the literature relating to the identified 41 Likert scale items. The measurements were made on 7-point Likert scale extending from Strongly Agree (7), Agree (6), Somewhat Agree (5), Neutral (4), Somewhat Disagree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The operationalization of the variables in the conceptual framework is based on the existing literature and modified by the researcher according to meet requirements of the study. Accordingly, the study used 15 items for IEO, (Bolton & Lane, 2012), 8 items for ESE (Shahab, Chengang, Arbizu, & Haider, 2019), 7 items for INI (Liñán, Urbano, & Guerrero, 2011) and 11 items for INB (Woods, Mustafa, Anderson, & Sayer, 2018). The operationalization of variables is given in Annexure A.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

The study sample included 55% of respondents who fell into the age category of 41-50. The gender of those respondents was 93% male and there were only 7% female respondents. It is to be noted that the female labour force in Sri Lanka registered approx. 32% to 35% (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2020). It demonstrates that small tea exporters in Sri Lanka are dominated by a male workforce, with 93% male representation in the sample. In addition, it is difficult to find statistical evidence with regard to women participating in the labour force in tea exporting companies in Sri Lanka, but it is believed to be low. 59% of respondents declared that they hold a bachelor's qualifications and that they have acquired relevant educational knowledge. Interestingly, 84% of respondents counted more than 15 years' total experience, and 33% counted 11 to 15 years' experience in the current business. Overlap.

4.2. Validity of the Measurement Model and Measurement of Reliability

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is acknowledged as the Second-Generation Multivariate Data Analysis technique, widely used in recent studies and literature. Covariance Based Structural Equation Modelling (CB-SEM) has been widely applied under different circumstances with sample size of at least 200, interval scale variables, and normally distributed data. PLS-SEM emerged as an alternative in the absence of fulfilling the above requirements. This study used PLS-SEM to analyze the data with a small sample size (Ringle, Sarstedt, Mitchell, & Gudergan, 2020). Data analysis process was conducted in two stages: the assessment of the measurement model and the Structural Model for testing hypotheses. All constructs relating to the conceptual framework are reflected and supported by empirical and theoretical evidence. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was carried out to ascertain the internal consistency with factor loadings, and reliability was assessed with Cronbach's Alpha values and Composite Reliability values. The measurement model represented factor loadings above .70 and confirmed a well-fitting reflective model (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). Cronbach's alpha thresholds and composite reliability values registered more than 0.7 in the measurement model securing, the reliability of the constructs. Figure 3 presents the final measurement model of the study, which serves to derive the structural model for testing hypotheses.

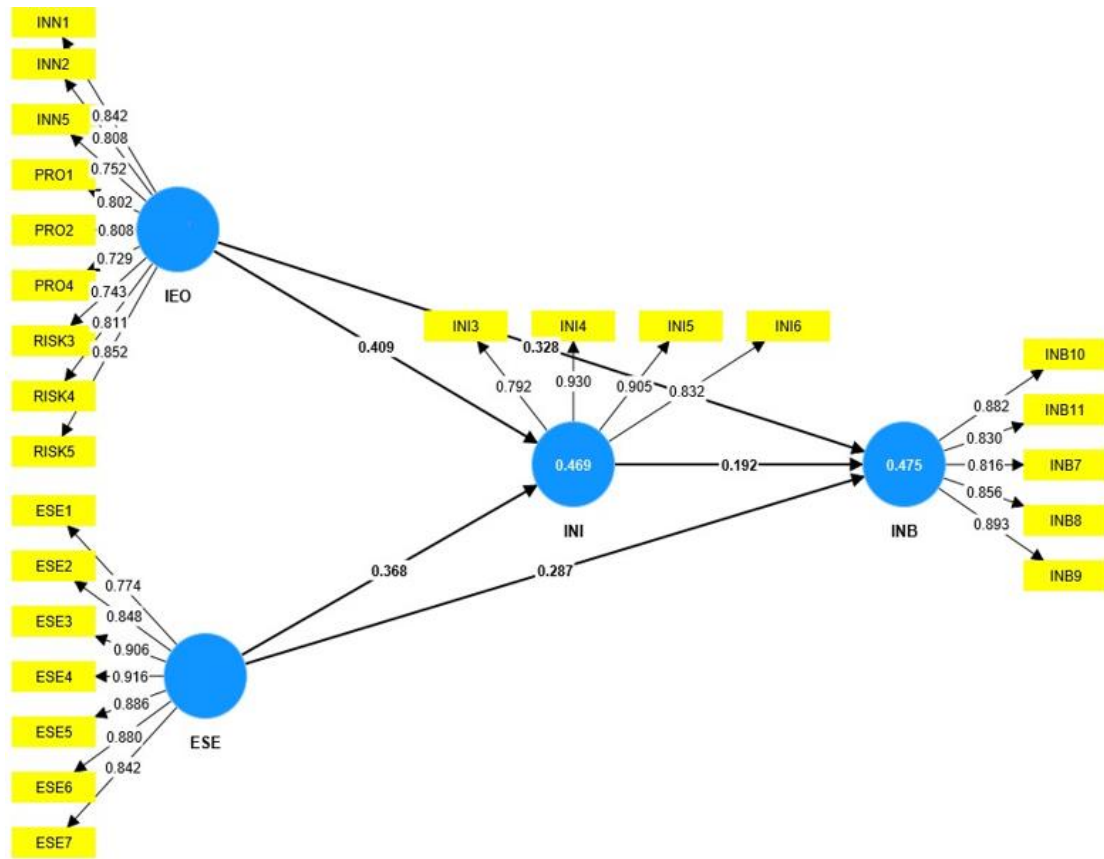


Figure 3. Measurement model.

The Table 1 represents the average Variance Extracted (AVE) values to test the validity of the measurement model.

Table 1. AVE values.

| Average variance extracted (AVE) | |
|--|-------|
| Entrepreneurial self efficacy (ESE) | 0.75 |
| Individual entrepreneurial orientation (IEO) | 0.632 |
| Intrapreneurial behavior (INB) | 0.733 |
| Intrapreneurial intention (INI) | 0.751 |

Further, convergent validity of the model was ascertained, with the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Discriminant Validity, followed by Fornell–Larcker Discriminant Validity criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). AVE values found for IEO, ESE, INI, and INB were 0.632, 0.750, 0.751 and 0.733 respectively, which are above 0.5. Thus, this study confirms the presence of convergent validity for the constructs in the model. In addition, Fornell–Larcker criterion with regard to square root of each AVE value corresponded to each latent construct, and that is greater than any correlation values between any pair of the latent constructs, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Fornell–Larcker discriminant validity criterion.

| | ESE | IEO | INB | INI |
|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| ESE | 0.866 | | | |
| IEO | 0.554 | 0.795 | | |
| INB | 0.583 | 0.605 | 0.856 | |
| INI | 0.594 | 0.613 | 0.564 | 0.867 |

Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios are also used to measure the Discriminant Validity. The previous studies have suggested that two distinct thresholds for HTMT criteria are needed to prove the discriminant validity: 0.85 and 0.9. (Henseler et al., 2015) the below results are depicted in Table 3.

Table 3. Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT).

| | ESE | IEO | INI | INB |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| Entrepreneurial self-efficacy | | | | |
| Individual entrepreneurial orientation | 0.587 | | | |
| Intrapreneurial intention | 0.625 | 0.651 | | |
| Intrapreneurial behavior | 0.633 | 0.669 | 0.615 | |

In conclusion, the above results confirm the discriminant validity of the model, satisfying the requirements. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). SRMR values reported below 0.08 confirm that the structural model is a best fit-model. Further, in this study, SRR for the Saturated Model and Estimated Model recorded the thresholds between 0.076 and 0.079, respectively. In addition, the model reported Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), which evaluates the collinearity below 3 to conclude that no collinearity issue exists (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017).

4.3. Testing, Reporting and the Direct Effects

Conceptual Framework proposes 5 primary hypotheses that were tested with bootstrapping in PLS-SEM 4.0; the results are presented below in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of hypothesis testing of the direct effect.

| | Original sample (O) | Sample mean (M) | Standard deviation (STDEV) | T statistics (O/STDEV) | P values |
|------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| ESE -> INB | 0.287 | 0.288 | 0.088 | 3.248 | 0.001 |
| ESE -> INI | 0.368 | 0.359 | 0.088 | 4.179 | 0 |
| IEO -> INB | 0.328 | 0.328 | 0.101 | 3.263 | 0.001 |
| IEO -> INI | 0.409 | 0.419 | 0.078 | 5.238 | 0 |
| INI -> INB | 0.192 | 0.192 | 0.083 | 2.312 | 0.021 |

Table 4 represents the results of the direct hypotheses proposed by the study. Results revealed that the p values and t statistics denoted the values less than 0.05 and larger than 1.96, respectively, which indicate the coefficients are significant. In addition, all path coefficient values are positive. Therefore, we concluded that IEO and ESE have a positive impact on both INI and INB. And also, INI impacts positively on INB. Further to this, a higher level of IEO and ESE enhances INI and INB in the case of small tea exporters in Sri Lanka. It also confirms empirically that the intentions impact on behaviors. The results support INI still plays a significant determinant of INB in small tea exporting companies in Sri Lanka. It concludes that increasing the level of IEO and ESE will contribute to enhancing intrapreneurial intention and behavior to introduce more innovations in tea industry in Sri Lanka.

4.4. Testing and Reporting the Mediation Effect

Conceptual framework suggests two mediating hypotheses, H6 and H7. Hair et al. (2017) suggest that if the direct effect is significant, there could be a possibility of mediation. Therefore, the indirect effect was assessed after including the mediator; Intrapreneurial Intention, in the path model. The basic bootstrapping technique was adopted to generate the following results: Figures 3 and 4 demonstrate the indirect and direct measures after applying the mediator of Intrapreneurial Intention.

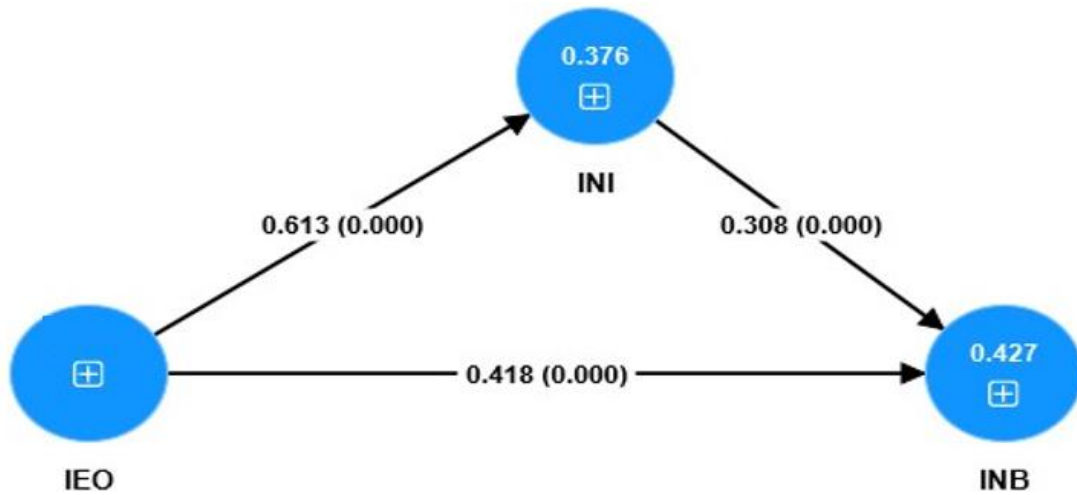


Figure 3. Indirect effects between variables IEO and IB.

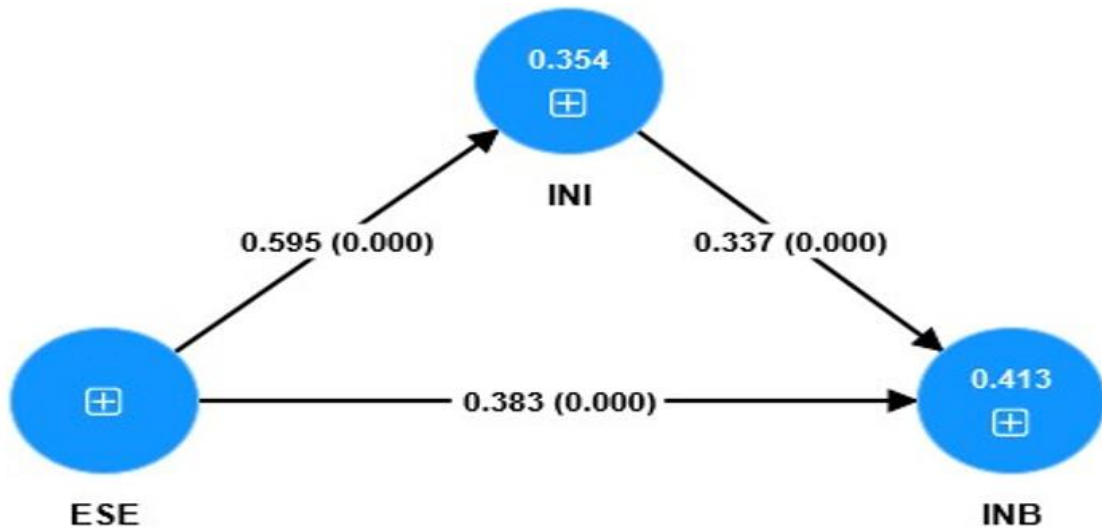


Figure 4. Indirect effects between variables ESE and IB.

Table 5. Results on mediation effects.

| | Direct effect without mediator | P value | Direct effect with mediator | P value | Indirect effect | P value (Bootstrap) | LCL 2.5% | UCL 97% | Total effect |
|----------------|--------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|---------|-----------------|---------------------|----------|---------|--------------|
| IEO ->INI->INB | 0.613 | 0.000 | 0.418 | 0.000 | 0.189 | 0.001 | 0.081 | 0.307 | 0.606 |
| ESE ->INI->INB | 0.583 | 0.000 | 0.383 | 0.000 | 0.200 | 0.000 | 0.100 | 0.312 | 0.583 |

Table 5 represents the results of the mediation effects. The results registered with a p value less than 0.05, t statistic recorded greater than 1.96, lower and upper confidence levels (0.081-0.307) and (0.100-0.312) which are positive, indicate no 0 exists between the lower and upper confidence levels. The results support the indirect effects that are significant. The mediation effect was tested, as was the value of Variance Accounted for (VAF). VAF is considered to be the ratio between the values of indirect effect and the total effect. For H6, it is 0.311 (0.189/0.606), and for H7, it is 0.343 (0.200/0.583). The value recorded under VAF shows whether there is a full mediation (VAF>80%), partial (20%≤VAF≤80%), or no mediation (VAF<20%). Thus, the study results confirm that a partial mediation exists.

5. DISCUSSION

The study was conducted to examine the factors that are affecting the Intrapreneurial Behaviour of small tea exporters in Sri Lanka. The theories and empirical evidence show that the factors are positively affecting INI. The study results revealed that IEO, ESE, and INI significantly affect INI and INB. Depending on the path coefficients, the results are relatively low in this study. Positive and significant impact of IEO on INI was supported by the previous studies (Darmanto & Yuliari, 2018; Yukongdi & Lopa, 2017). A positive and significant impact of IEO on INB is supported by Yamamoto and Kan (2018); Kong and Li (2018), and AlQhaiwi and Abukaraki (2021). The study concludes that the level of IEO, projects higher values among small tea exporters in Sri Lanka, and Intentions and Behaviours towards the Innovations will be higher.

Thus, it necessitates improving the pro-activeness, innovativeness, and risk-taking attributes of those personalities. ESE is considered an important psychological element for the individuals to the intended behavior and suggested in literature.

This study's findings show that the ESE is significantly positive and has an impact on both variables, i.e., INI and INB, at small tea exporters in Sri Lanka. In previous studies, evidence was provided supporting the results (Crespo, Belchior, & Costa, 2020; Fragoso, Rocha-Junior, & Xavier, 2020; Ohanu & Shodipe, 2021; Wang et al., 2023). It is to be noted that the higher the ES, the higher Intrapreneurial Intention. Finally, it concludes that the individual's higher ESE arouses their Intention and Behaviour initiating innovative introductions in the global tea markets. However, there are contradictory findings too, and it is still claimed that highlighting ESE can be taken as an important factor in INI and INB (Fridhi & Alwheeb, 2020; Muchabaiwa & Msimango-Galawe, 2021).

The study also found that INI positively affects INB. There is a foundational relationship between intention and behavior that is discussed in TPB. Later, there had been empirical evidence with several study outcomes showing that Intention and Behaviour link and confirm the study outcomes as per the present study. These studies have also proved the positive and significant impacts of INI on INB (Darmanto & Yuliari, 2018; Xiong & Wen, 2020). In these scenarios, Intention proved to be a key psychological factor in enhancing the behavior of small tea exporters in Sri Lanka to become innovative in the tea industry. The mediating effect on INI between IEO and ESE on INB, the findings provided meaningful and very good insights into impact of IEO and ESE on INB. The mediation analysis carried out according to the conceptual framework in this study revealed that INI mediates the relationship between IEO, ESE, and INB. It also showed the direct effect of IEO and ESE on INB, and without mediator, the values were reduced to a certain level with the inclusion of the mediator. This directs the INB factor to be improved through the INI, even with a higher level of IEO and ESE.

The contribution of this study is to investigate factors that are affecting IB that go beyond the analysis of the mediating effect of Intrapreneurial Intention. Therefore, the investigation contributes to Intrapreneurship by applying TPB and IEO to enlighten the Individual Behaviour. There are different factors yet to be examined that require further investigation. Concluding the model proposed in this investigation would be able to be applied in other settings to generate some interesting results.

6. CONCLUSION

The study examined the factors that are affecting Intrapreneurial Behaviour of the small tea exporters in Sri Lanka. The tea exporters seem to be the key players in global tea market and are facing dynamic competitive challenges. Therefore, tea exporters should focus on innovative mechanisms and techniques to be the game changers in the global markets of Sri Lankan unique tea from other competitors with other tea exporting countries. The major findings of the study results are that there are IEO, ESE, and INI increases in INB in small tea exporters in Sri Lanka. If they are looking at enhancing INB towards more innovative tea, to be marketed in the global market, the small tea exporters in Sri Lanka should improve IEO, ESE, and INI. Moving beyond the primary concern, this study outcome presents how INI can be beneficial as a mediator.

Accordingly, it is concluded that there is a direct influence between IEO, ESE, and INB, and all these relationships should be improved through INI. Examining INI effect as a mediator provided empirical and theoretical contributions, both confirming that INB can be enhanced by mediating INI. The results provided very meaningful and interesting insights that can be explained as the Individual Behaviour in different contexts and perspectives.

It is vital to understand that the human behavior is very crucial and important to support the business success, although it is hard to understand and complex to interpret. This study made an effort to deliberate its findings and how the organizations should encourage the Intrapreneurial Intentions towards the Intrapreneurial Behaviour to enhance the innovation and entrepreneurial mindset.

6.1. Implications

This section explains how the findings of the study impact theory and practice. Theoretical implications help academic further research on the applicability of TPB and IEO in different contexts. This would add new knowledge while filling the gaps in the literature. The managerial or practical implications of the study will help practitioners, governments, policymakers, and responsible authorities apply the findings to enhance the current situation.

6.2. Theoretical Implication

The research study results laid some empirical and theoretical foundations in the discipline of Entrepreneurship. This research provides the solid evidence for the application of TPB by explaining the Intrapreneurial Intention and Behavior. There were previous studies where they used TPB in different contexts, though these study results recorded a new perspective on tea industry. TPB is considered the main theory of this investigation and has brought out a new perspective with a solid foundation to describe the behaviour stimulating the psychological factors that are embedded in the internal characteristics. Application of IEO, an individual's personality and characteristics can be expanded by external stimulation. This study explains the combination of internal and external factors that are important to recognize someone's behaviour. The unique contribution of this study adds new knowledge to the literature on behavior through Intentions, which play a dominant role in IEO and ESE. In addition, this study further tries to confirm that "Behaviors are reflected in Individual Intentions." Therefore, it is vital to stimulate the individual intentions that lead to positive behavior to lead to better results in the intended contexts.

6.3. Managerial Implication

The explanation given above is to reiterate that IEO, ESE, and INI are significantly positive for INB. It is interesting to note that small tea exporters should enhance IEO and ESE, which lead to increased individual intentions leading to behaviors. From a managerial perspective, the management of small tea exporters, policymakers, practitioners, and government agents should encourage and stimulate individual positive intentions towards the innovation and their performance for them to display their Intrapreneurial behaviours. Without doubt, the innovations could be created with a positive stimulation on Intrapreneurial Intentions and Intrapreneurial Behaviours of the employees of tea industry; thereby, boosting the economy. In these circumstances, the government may acknowledge the vitality of innovations and understand the necessities for an actionable plan to promote intrapreneurial behaviours of the individuals who are attached to the tea industry. This initiative is a crucial factor in improving the presence of Sri Lankan tea in global tea market, overcoming the prevailing economic crisis, and to supporting the economy in Sri Lanka. These initiatives can be applied not only in Sri Lankan context but also to other underdeveloped countries' tea industries. The main focal point is that small tea exporters could enhance the level of IEO, ESE, and INB. It is also vital to evaluate the present outset and design a candid

motivational grounding for employees for them to improve the Intrapreneurial Intentions, thus leading to IB that leads to innovation if such organizations become key players in the global tea market and bring in a new story with Sri Lankan tea in the global market. The management should align policies and practices to improve the IEO, ESE, and INI of small tea exporters in Sri Lanka. The government should take initiatives and play a significant role to uplift the export tea market and provide legislative support.

6.4. Limitations and Future Research

In this study, data was collected from the owners and managers of small tea exporting companies; therefore, findings were merely generalized to that segment. It is noted that this study leads to future research to be conducted in different industries and with a larger population and a larger sample. Future research can apply different methods to collect data, potentially yielding interesting results. Although this research deployed the Intention as mediator, there could be many other mediators that affect IB through IEO and ESE, to address for further research.

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APPENDIX A

Appendix A presents the measurement of the key variables used in the conceptual framework of the study. The researcher has adapted the measurement items according to the requirements of the study based on the literature. Accordingly, IEO was measured with 15 items, ESE with 8 items, INI with items and INB with 11 items.

Appendix A. Operationalization of main constructs in the conceptual framework.

| Construct | Operational definition | Measurement items | Source of reference |
|--|---|--|--|
| Individual entrepreneurial orientation (IEO) | IEO is the personal/individual orientation towards acting in the complex and dynamic environment specially focusing on new venture creation. IEO is measures by three dimensions. | Innovativeness 1. I frequently like to new and unusual activities that are not necessarily risky, 2. I prefer new and updated methods than repeating same approaches, 3. I prefer to try my own and unique way when learning new things rather than others, 4. I would like to be a pioneer in introducing different forms of value-added tea, 5. I always think different and novel way about the tea industry Pro-activeness 1. I usually keep in touch with the possible problems, needs and challenges in the tea industry, 2. I usually expect upcoming problems, challenges, needs and developments in the tea industry, 3. I usually plan to introduce/export different forms of value added tea,4. I prefer to initiate and continue different forms of value added tea rather than sit and wait till someone else innovate, 5. I would like to play an important role in introducing/exporting value added tea for my customers/markets Risk-taking | Lumpkin and Dess (1996); Howard (2020) and AlQhaiwi and Abukaraki (2021) |

| Construct | Operational definition | Measurement items | Source of reference |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| | | 1. I would like to be brave in discovering new things in the tea industry, 2. I am ready to take risk when introducing/exporting value-added tea, 3. I am willing to spend a lot of time and/or money in exporting value-added tea that might yield a higher return, 4. I would like to be brave in risky situations, 5. I am willing to bear any positive or negative result when introducing new form of value-added tea | |
| Entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) | Strength of a person's belief that he or she is capable of successfully performing the various roles and tasks of entrepreneurship | 1. I can work productively under continuous stress, pressure and conflict, 2. I can create new ideas and products, 3. I can develop and maintain favorable relationships with external parties, 4. I can see new market opportunities for new products and services, 5. I can recruit and train key employees to contribute innovative activities, 6. I can develop a working environment that encourages individuals to try out something new, 7. I always give priority to introduce value-added tea for the customers, 8. I am committed towards introducing/exporting new forms of value-added tea | Shahab et al. (2019) |
| Intrapreneurial intention (INI) | Person's subjective probability that he or she will perform the behaviour in question | 1. I am ready to do anything to be an intrapreneur, 2. My professional goal is to become an intrapreneur, 3. I am determined to undertake innovative behaviours in the future to introduce/export new forms of value added tea, 4. I have seriously thought of undertaking innovative behaviours to introduce value added tea, 5. I will make every effort to introduce/export value added tea through my organization, 6. I have a strong intention to undertake innovative behaviours to introduce value-added tea, 7. I am always dreaming to be an intrapreneur | Liñán et al. (2011) and Howard (2020) |
| Intrapreneurial | Innovative behaviours can be | 1. I create unique solutions | Woods et al. (2018) |

| Construct | Operational definition | Measurement items | Source of reference |
|-----------------|--|---|---------------------|
| behaviour (INB) | defined as the behaviours through which the individuals discover and generate new ideas and make necessary efforts to implement them | for problems in the tea industry, 2. I search out new working methods, techniques, or instruments when introducing new forms of value-added tea, 3. I provide the necessary support for innovative ideas of employees when introducing value-added tea, 4. I obtain approval from relevant parties for innovative ideas, Where necessary, 5. I make important organizational members enthusiastic for innovative ideas, 6. I transform innovative ideas into useful applications in my organization, 7. I introduce/execute innovative ideas in my organization in a systematic way, 8. I evaluate the usefulness of innovative ideas, 9. I appreciate the innovative ideas in my organization, 10. I create a peaceful working environment for innovative ideas in my organization, 11. I always expect and encourage the contribution of parties inside and outside the organization to carryout innovative behaviours to introduce value-added tea | |

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