

Are Sri Lankans motivated by the need for achievement?

Helen Gamage, Donald Cameron and Elizabeth Woods

University of Queensland, Australia.
E-mail:s804171@student.uq.edu.au

The entrepreneurship models in existence in Sri Lanka are often based on the assumptions of n-Ach and personality trait theory. In this paper we describe empirical research into entrepreneurial motivations in Sri Lanka that addresses the neglect of socio-cultural factors. The research was exploratory, embracing the philosophy of subjectivism and an inductive qualitative methodology. Our findings suggest that entrepreneurial motivation in Sri Lanka is rooted not in a need for individual achievement, but in the conscious or unconscious need to satisfy a sense of social intimacy. The emphasis on social power, social relations and collectivism create a setting for entrepreneurial motivation in Sri Lanka that drives almost directly counter to western ideologies of entrepreneurial motivation.

Key words: Sri Lanka; Socio-cultural factors; Entrepreneurship; Motivation