

# ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION AT ABC HOTELS PLC

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## **Abstract**

*This case study is about Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) dimensions of autonomy, risk taking, innovativeness, proactiveness and competitive aggressiveness practiced at ABC Hotels plc, hypothetical name, as it is the benchmarking company for many practices in Sri Lanka. This is a qualitative study where the data for the research were gathered via interview and the annual reports of ABC Hotels plc. With regard to autonomy, middle and lower level managers had not been vested power to act as they wish. On the contrary, almost all the employees were vested with the power to bring forth anything to the ground as they wish provided they bring business turnarounds. Business risk taking is fairly high as it undertook loss incurring TA, and with a long term payback period of Obrim with huge investment. Proactiveness and competitive aggressiveness were seen in practice fairly. In conclusion it was observed that all the dimensions of EO except for autonomy were fairly practiced at ABC Hotels PLC.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO), Corporate Entrepreneurship, ABC Hotels PLC

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

For both successful start-up ventures and existing firms, entrepreneurship practiced in the pursuit of business opportunities leads business expansion, technological progress, and wealth creation. Entrepreneurial activity represents one of the major engines of economic growth and today accounts for significant amount of new business development and job creation in Sri Lanka (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2013) . As such, writers in scholarly literature (Covin & Slevin, 1991a) have argued that entrepreneurship is an essential feature of high-performing firms, followed by the overall economy in a country, rather the firms practicing entrepreneurial dimensions.

Before discussing about corporate entrepreneurship, it is noteworthy to mention what entrepreneurship is all about. Entrepreneurship has meant in different ways to different people (Gartner W. B., 1988); (Mcmullan & Long, 1990). The earliest definition to entrepreneurship is traced back to the definition by Richard Chantillan's seminal work. As for him entrepreneurship was self-employment with an uncertain return. To (Schumpeter, 1934a) an entrepreneur is "a person who carries out new combinations, which may take the form of new products, processes, markets, organizational forms, or sources of supply. Entrepreneurship is, then, the process of carrying out new combinations.

However, in the recent times the entrepreneurial abilities and capabilities of corporate organizations have become a major phenomenon of discussion among both practitioners and academicians. With this broadening of perspective, entrepreneurship has become more a hypothetical and abstract term attached (Sharma & Chrisman, 1999) to any individual or

group creating new combinations either on their own or attached to existing organizations (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996) , (Pass, Lowes, Davies, & Kronish, 1991) and this was also reflected in the writing by (Covin & Slevin, 1991a).

(Lumpkin & Dess, 1996) argued three entrepreneurial postures namely risk taking, innovativeness and proactiveness, introduced by (Miller D. , 1983, 29,7) can be applied to corporate processes and as well as to new ventures. As per (Burgelman, 1983) defined, corporate entrepreneurship is the process whereby the firms engage in diversification through internal development. Such diversification requires new resource combinations to extend the firms activities in areas unrelated or marginally related to its current domain of competence and corresponding opportunity set. Moreover, (Covin & Slevin, 1991a) emphasized Corporate entrepreneurship involves extending the firm's domain of competence and corresponding opportunity set through internally generated new resource combination. (Burgelman, 1983) and (Jennings & Lumpkin, 1989) highlighted corporate entrepreneurship as the extent to which new products and or new markets are developed. An organization is entrepreneurial if it develops higher than average number of new products and or new markets.

However, as the field of strategic management furthered, the emphasis shifted to entrepreneurial processes, that is, the methods, practices, and decision-making styles managers use to act entrepreneurially within the firms to intensify the performance and spur the expansion of the business. This include such processes as experimenting with promising new technologies, being willing to seize new product-market opportunities, and having a predisposition to initiate risky ventures. The trend was to use concepts from the strategy-making process literature to model firm-level entrepreneurship (Covin & Slevin, 1989b), 1991), (Miller D. , 1983). Five dimensions-autonomy, innovativeness, risk taking, proactiveness, and competitive aggressiveness- have been useful for characterizing and distinguishing key entrepreneurial processes, that is, a firm's entrepreneurial orientation (EO). Firstly, study addressed to discuss about the company and its operations followed by theoretical aspect of EO and its dimensions each by each with application at ABC Hotels chain, SBU, in ABC Holdings. Finally, study expects to provide implications for further research and practice and to provide a conclusion and recommendation to the study.

## **1.1.INTRODUCTION TO ABC HOLDINGS**

ABC Holdings plc (ABC) is one of the largest listed companies on the Colombo Stock Exchange, with business interests spanning primarily in Leisure, Transportation, Property, Consumer Foods & Retail, Financial Services and Information Technology. Established in the early 1870s as a produce and exchange broking business, the Group has been known to constantly re-align, re-position and re-invent itself in pursuing growth sectors. ABC was incorporated as a public limited liability company and got a listing on the Colombo Stock Exchange.

The Group's investment philosophy is based on a positive viewpoint, bold approach, integrity, ethical dealings, sustainable development and greater social responsibility in a multi-stakeholder context. The holding company of the Group, ABC Hotels Plc has business across Sri Lanka, India and the Maldives.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Dimensions of Entrepreneurial orientation**

This section of the study explains about the studies done associated with EO dimensions and their application at different corporate ventures. Speaking EO at the firm level is correspondent to the model used in the work by (Covin & Slevin, 1991a), who emphasized the role of entrepreneurship as firm behavior. In the following scenario with regard to entrepreneurship as firm level behavior at ABC, the researcher used strategic business unit (SBUs), Hotel Chain, to illustrate EO concepts.

The study of a firm's EO is quite similar to (Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990) concept of entrepreneurial management, in that it reveals the firm's processes, methods, and styles that organizations use to act entrepreneurially. With respect to the specific dimensions of EO, (Miller D. , 1983) provided a useful turning point. He proposed that an entrepreneurial firm is one which "involved in product market innovation, undertakes somewhat risky ventures, and is the first to come up with 'proactive' innovations, beating competitors to the punch". Accordingly, he used the dimensions of "innovativeness," "risk taking," and "proactiveness" to characterize and test entrepreneurship. Covin & Slevin, 1989b investigated the performance of entrepreneurial firms in hostile and benign environments. In their study, 161 manufacturing firms were used in the study to measure entrepreneurial strategic posture using a scale that graded firms as entrepreneurial if they were risk taking, innovative, and proactive. The rest of the dimensions are vital aspects of EO. The first being competitive aggressiveness, which captures the unique idea of "beating competitors to the punch," proposed by (Miller D. , 1983), definition of an entrepreneurial firm. It refers to the type of intensity and head-to-head posturing that new entrants often need to compete with existing rivals.

Another key element of EO is the inclination towards independent or rather autonomous action. (Bird, 1988), (Katz & Gartner , 1988) emphasized that start-up firms must exercise intentionality to carry forward the specific actions required to launch new ventures. However, hierarchy of bureaucracy and organizational tradition hardly contribute to new-entry activities in existing firms (Kanter, 1983). Instead of that, it requires the exercise of independence or autonomy by strong leaders, unfettered teams or creative individuals who are not engaged from organizational constraints in leading to new entry. Burgelman, 1983 found that, in the case of internal corporate venturing, "The motor of corporate entrepreneurship resides in the autonomous strategic initiative of individuals at the operational levels in the organization." The next five sections explain the dimensions i.e. autonomy, innovativeness, risk taking, proactiveness, and competitive aggressiveness.

### **2.2. Autonomy**

Entrepreneurship has prospered because independently minded people decided to leave secure positions so that they are able to promote novel ideas or venture into new markets, rather than allow organizational superiors and processes to impede them from bringing forth novelties (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Within organizations also, it is the freedom vested to individuals and teams who can apply their creativity and champion promising ideas that is needed for entrepreneurship to occur. Thus autonomy is considered to be a strong impetus of entrepreneurship and has become a key dimension in EO.

Autonomy refers to the self-determining action of an individual or a team in bringing about an idea or a vision and carrying it through to completion (Lumpkin & Gregory, 1996).

Generally, it deals with the ability and will to be self-directed in the pursuit of opportunities. Thus, in the Srilankan context of opportunity phenomena opens an avenue for luxurious apartment in the suburb such as Colombo (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2014).

## **2.2 Innovativeness**

“Innovation plays rather a distinctive and critical role in entrepreneurial process” emphasized by Schumpeter, 1934, 1942b and he was among the first to come up with the idea to highlight the importance of innovation as the economic process of “creative destruction” (1942) by which wealth was created. This is done by new entrants via shifting resources from existing firms to them in the market structures. Chiefly, this destruction was made possible by introduction of new goods and services to the market thus resource allocation was inclined towards new introduction in the market. The key to this destructive cycle was innovativeness and became an important factor to characterize entrepreneurship.

Firm’s inclination towards the engagement in supporting new ideas, novelty, creative processes and experimentation that may result in new products, services and technological processes is furthered as innovativeness. Innovativeness can vary in its degree of radicalness (Hage, 1980) given the context. Innovativeness displays a basic willingness to depart from existing technologies and processes to encourage novel state of art technologies and processes (Kimberly, 1981) providing an extra edge over rivals.

Among the most of the methods to classify innovativeness, Downs & Mohr, 1976, perhaps the most useful and applicable and distinctive method is between product market innovation and technological innovation. In most cases researches have focused on technological innovations i.e. product and process development, research and engineering and an emphasis on technical expertise and industry knowledge (Cooper, 1971), (Maidique & Patch , 1982). An emphasis on product design, market research, and advertising and promotion has been the Product-market innovativeness as per (Miller & Friesen, 1978a).

## **2.3 Risk taking**

Early entrepreneurship studies focused its attention towards and tried to equalize the idea of entrepreneurship as working for oneself that is as per Cantillon 1734, willingness to be self-employed rather than working for someone else for wages associated with assuming personal risk in venturing. Cantillon , 1734 was the first one to use the word entrepreneurship in more formal angle and argued that the principal factor separating entrepreneurs from hired employees was riskiness and uncertainty involved in self-employment. The most critical and crucial factor that defined entrepreneurship is personal risk taking ever since it came to be in practice.

Risk is a contextual phenomenon where depending on the context it is being applied it may vary. From the strategic point of view Baird & Thomas, 1985 highlighted three types of strategic risks i.e. “Venturing in to unknown”, “borrowing heavily” and “committing a relatively large portion of assets”.

Risk is used in the context of the familiar risk-return trade-off in financial analysis, where it refers specifically to the resultant probability of a loss or negative outcome in ventures. This is basically the definition that Miller and Friesen used when they framed risk taking as "the degree to which managers are willing to make large and risky resource commitments-i.e., those which have a fair chance of costly failures" (1983, p. 923) . The definition of risk taking

is consonant with the notion of heavy commitments of resources and high leverage from borrowing. Therefore, firms with entrepreneurial orientation are typified by risk taking behavior i.e. making large resource commitments and incurring heavy debt with the speculation of obtaining high returns by capitalizing on the opportunities in the market place. Lumpkin & Dess, 1996, p. 144 argued that all business endeavors involve some degree of risk. However, most studies on entrepreneurially related risk taking looked in to individuals rather than firms though at the level of the firm, risks are taken that would not be taken by a firm member on his discretion.

Most importantly, measuring and investigating risk taking at firm level remains rather untouched so that inducing scholars and practitioners to lay their hands on which. However, well accepted and widely used scale by Miller D. , 1983 managers' readiness for bold versus cautious acts to achieve firm objectives. Similarly, Venkatraman, 1989, also used a similar approach, asking managers the extent to which they adopted tried and true path or leaned towards supporting only projects of which returns were certain.

## **2.4 Proactiveness**

In Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary 1991, p. 937, proactiveness is defined as "acting in anticipation of future problems, needs, or changes." As an initial definition from an entrepreneurial perspective, Miller & Friesen, 1978a pointed out that the proactiveness to be present by shaping the environment by means of introducing new products, technologies and administrative techniques Later, proactiveness was used to demonstrate a firm that was the first to introduce new products or services and quickest to innovate. This is further highlighted by Miller's description (Miller D. , 1983) of an entrepreneurial firm as one which is "first to come up with 'proactive' innovations".

However, Penrose , 1959 argued that managers with entrepreneurial capabilities are of much important to the growth of the firm as they provide with vision and imagination needed for the business to opportunistic expansion.

Lieber & Montgomery, 1988, highlighted the importance of capitalizing on first-mover advantage as the best strategy for making the most of on a market opportunity by exploiting on available opportunities yet untapped by anybody else in the marketplace, the first mover can make unusually high profits and get a head start on establishing brand recognition in the first place thus position itself as the leader in the market. Given this, taking initiatives in anticipation of the future prospects in the market place and of the profits has become one of the dimensions in corporate entrepreneurship where the small as well as large scale firms exploit promising opportunities in the market place and capitalize on them (John Keells Hotels plc, 2014). As such, proactiveness has become associated with EO as it is about looking ahead via constant innovation and new venture activities in anticipation of furthering opportunistic growth in the marketplace.

However, the idea of acting in anticipation of future growth and demand was challenged by (Miller & Camp, 1985) in their seminal work claiming that a firm can be novel, forward thinking and fast without always being the first mover. This was proven by the study of eighty four SBUs, where they found the second firm to enter the market was as pioneering as the first. Moreover, Venkatraman, 1989, argued introduction of new products or services and etc. and brands ahead of intense competition, strategically eliminating operations which are in the mature or declining stages of life cycle" as constituencies in proactiveness. Therefore, a

proactive firm is a leader rather than a follower as it has will and capture new opportunities even if it is not the first to do so. Providing an extension to the definition of proactiveness, Lumpkin & Dess, 1996 referred it "how a firm relates to market opportunities on its way to new entry and it does so by seizing initiative and acting opportunistically in order to "shape the environment," that is, to influence trends and, perhaps, even create demand. As per (Chen & Hambrick , 1995), proactiveness refers to taking the initiative in an effort to shape the environment to one's own advantage. Thus EO involves proactiveness as one of the dimensions pursuing opportunities in the market place to exploit them followed by economic sustainability. This was practiced by IBM as per (Cooper, Willard, & Woo, 1986) studied, IBM had introduced a new product just as they were entering proactively to the large CPU market with faster and lighter machine to respond the request by the investors to secure an additional sixteen million to upgrade the business.

In operationalizing proactiveness at firm level, the researchers (Covin & Slevin , 1989b, Miller D. , 1983) have asked the question from the managers as to firm's tendency to lead rather than follow in the progress of new procedures and technologies and the introduction of new products or services as proactiveness proposes a tendency towards initiating activities. Proactiveness is closely related to innovativeness and is likely to covary with it, similar to the case of new-product introductions (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Moreover, the products and services that firms proactively bring to the market also may be imitative or reflect low innovativeness. This may be the case, for example, when a firm enters a foreign market with products that are tried-and-true in domestic markets, but uniquely meet unfilled demand in an untapped market.

## **2.5 Competitive aggressiveness**

Competitive aggressiveness though not received much emphasis in the literatures back in time refers to a firm's tendency to directly and intensely challenge its competitors to achieve entry or improve position, that is, to outpace industry rivals in the marketplace (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996).

However, (Stinchcombe, 1965) argued that young firms are mostly less likely to the liability of newness. Thus, they must take steps to establish legitimacy and power relative to suppliers, customers, and other competitors. Many scholars such as MacMillan & Porter, 1985 have argued that an aggressive stance and intense competition are critical to the survival and success of new entrants because new ventures are much more likely to fail than established businesses due to various reasons. Chiefly, competitive aggressiveness may be recognized by responsiveness, taking the form of head to head confrontation or reactive i.e. slashing the price in responsive to a competitor's corresponding action, willingness to be unconventional and other competitive aggressiveness available to new entrants would be adopting unconventional to challenge industry leaders (Cooper & Dunkelburge, 1986), focusing on high value-added products while carefully monitoring discretionary expenses (Woo & Cooper , 1981), and analyzing and targeting competitors' weaknesses (MacMillan & Jones, 1984). Corresponding to the above phenomenon (Porter, 1985) also recommended three ways for aggressively pursuing existing firms: reconfiguration; changing the context which is redefining the product or service and its market channels or scope and outspending the industry leader. Therefore, Lumpkin & Dess , 1996 highlighted competitive aggressiveness referring to firm's responsiveness directed towards achieving competitive advantage, as an imperative element in EO. This was furthered as an important component by Dean, 1993 in

his study concluding competitive aggressiveness explained more than a percentage of 37 variance in corporate entrepreneurship than did any other variable considered in the study. Providing an extension to the competitive aggressiveness, that it takes several forms (Covin & Covin, 1990) asked managers as to if they adopted very competitive, undo the competitor, posture or “live and let live” posture. Moreover, the corresponding activities for undoing competitors took the shape of setting ambitious market share goals and taking bold actions to achieve them. As per Venkatraman, 1989 highlighted such actions as cutting prices and sacrificing profit or spending aggressively on marketing, product or service and the quality compared to that of competitors’ were important. Camp & Miller, 1985, found that most successful ventures were those that did not shy away from broadly defined markets. The markets were defined as the number of markets, sizes and the types of customers.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This section of the study explains the methodology adopted. The case study focused its attention to discuss practical application of EO at ABC hotels plc. Herein afterward (ABC), a subsidiary in one of the top ten public limited companies (ABC Holdings PLC) listed in the share market of Sri Lanka. This study is presented as a case study concerned with identifying EO dimensions, if present, at ABC and trying to connect it with theories and practice. The study is based on qualitative research method where the researcher collected primary data for the study asking face to face questions from managerial level employees. Moreover, interview was conducted using a worldwide accepted questionnaire with regard to corporate entrepreneurship which is given as an annexure in the article. Additionally, secondary data for the study were from annual reports of the company, website. Further, what is mentioned in the annual reports and the answers provided by the interviewees were observed consistent. The advantage of the case study method over the other is that it tries to bring comprehensive and detailed full notes with analysis provided by the researcher (Tiwari & Saxena, 2012). However, the researcher observed a limitation that the managers were little hesitant to reveal some information with regard to autonomy. Moreover, the management did not know that the initiatives from EO dimension.

### **4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

This section of the study provides the analysis to the study done on descriptive basis. This provides as to how the initiatives were made from entrepreneurial perspective though not known by managers and the directors of the company as entrepreneurial orientation. The researcher delicately tried to connect the decisions and initiatives from entrepreneurial orientation point of view. The Analysis are based on the answers provided by the managers at executive level. Analysis is provided each by each separately from the dimensions.

#### **4.1 Autonomy**

“Centralized vision and strong leadership” This kind of autonomy, which is considered to be autocratic (Shrivastav & Grant, 1985) cannot be seen at ABC though entirely autonomous or individualistic decision making is not allowed at all times either unless it is of a decision which brings about business turnarounds (Manager, 2014) as decision making or ideas can have high level of ramifications in the long run though not seen in the short-run.

To foster entrepreneurship at firm level, many large scale firms have engaged in promoting intrapreneurship (Pinchot, 1985) by way of flattening hierarchies, changes in organizational structures, and delegating authority to operation level groups and individuals. This kind of low power distance in decision making can strengthen autonomy and thus EO performance

relationship suggested by (S, Yousaf Sai, & Engelen, 2014) and cited by (Dissanayaka & Semasinghe, 2015). Further he found in his study of 317 entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka that the degree of dependence of employees (i.e. power distance) affects the effective utilization of entrepreneurial strategy (i.e. EO) generating positive implications to the business. Where in the case of ABC, the lower level stewards have been vested with the power to render the best possible service they could with no intervention by the senior supervisors or managers in the absence of breach of code of ethics and conducts. Even the lower level employees are encouraged to propose creative and innovative ideas to nurture the service for better from where it is now and rewarded for the best idea proposed followed by rapid promotions in their job. These moves are intended to strengthen autonomy at operational level and intensify performance through creativity and innovations brought forward by employees even at operational levels. (Pinchot, 1985) As a result of the measurements to foster autonomy at ABC, it has been found in the employee satisfaction survey at ABC that employees are delighted and feel belongingness to the group (ABC Holdings plc, 2014). Contentment of the employees enables to generate a strong and a positive outlook for J K Hotels plc in the future as well (ABC Holdings plc, 2014). where the autonomy at ABC Hotels was observed where a group of individuals proposing a massive and growing major city and its main building project “UP front integrated resort”, hypothetical name, there by being able to generate significant amount of profit in the years to come (Manager, 2014) associated with more and more expansion of the business to various spheres in the domain

## **4.2 Innovativeness**

This method of innovativeness practiced at ABC was that has established a Research & Development center to encourage innovation through novel ideas and acknowledgement and execution of suggestions made by individuals at the grass root level in the hierarchy as long as they address the innovation landscape in gaining competitive edge over the rivals.

Moreover, ABC promotes its leisure activities via mega scale advertising campaigns, unprecedented customer offers from time to time via price slashes, unique product offers such as experience and excursion where walking tours, one of the ABC holding’s owned travel & tour guide service provider, provides a unique exposure to the tourists by enabling them to pluck tea cultivated in the hill country, Sri Lanka. This exposure on offer is embraced by more and more tourists and have attracted thousands of tourist arrival in the island and in to the hotel as per the reveals in the report.

Additionally, annual report of ABC reveals that offering a wide range of leisure solutions such as beach tours, wildlife and adventure, cultural tours, hill country tours, luxury tours have made ABC unique and placed in the first choice among the tourists visiting Sri Lanka. Thus the profit of the hotel chain rose to Rs. 1.5 billion in the year 2014 from Rs. 1.2 billion in the year 2013. However, one manager said that ABC expects to continue innovations in the future as well.

Further innovativeness emphasizes in the broadest sense, innovativeness may occur along a range of landscapes from a simple disposition to either try a new product line, as in the earlier case by ABC hotels, or experiment with a new advertising venue, to a passionate commitment to master the latest in new products at different markets (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996)’ Adoption of this landscape of innovativeness at ABC is possible to observe where it is inclined towards shifting their promotions about leisure activities to India and East Asian countries from European countries as per the discussion with the manager at ABC.



The level of expenses incurred and the number of resources allocated for research and development represent the firm's involvement and tendency towards innovation activities. From human resource perspective in innovation fostering, (Hage. J , 1980) argued that more professional and specialist in the firm i.e. professionals like engineers and scientists, the higher level of innovations. Innovation dimension with regard to the above argument at John keels hotels plc is more of the adoption of the same thing as it is where most of the managerial level employees are professionals either in engineering (Manager, 2014) or related fields.

Miller & Friesen, 1982b; Covin & Slevin , 1989b argued innovativeness from marketing perspective and highlighting the number of new product or service introductions and the rate of changes in services or product lines. With regard to the notion product line at ABC, came across earlier in the study at the dimension autonomy. However, one executive manager said that constant commitment to bringing novel ideas to delight the customers at ABC is engraved in the minds of the employees at all levels of the hotel chain.

As per the discussion with one manager at ABC that mentioned it is at its innovation stage where it rebrands its hotel chain to a different name with contemporary Srilankan tag. Also it claims with the belief that the rebranding gives more of an image for the youth and young asians with a feeling of youthfulness as much as possible.

### **4.3 Risk Taking**

The method adopted in measuring the risk taking at ABC was quite similar to that of Venkatraman's and found out from the responses by the managerial level employee that the acquisition of a leading hotel, one of the five star hotels in Colombo city, was a risky decision with a long-term possible payoff. However, the decision to acquire the hotel was based on calculated risk where the operations were redesigned to intensify the gainings through attracting more and more customers in to the hotel via linking walkers tours', luxury tours destination solutions. Thus, that riskiness involved in acquiring Oberoi hotel was mitigated to fairly a reasonable level. Here the decision to acquiring the Oberoi hotel was a collective decision after a series of board meetings and other discussions with consultants. ABC adopted the similar model at the decision to acquire yet another hotel, five star, located in Colombo city. Yet the risk in doing so was fairly higher than any other decision made before given that was already incurring losses at the time of acquisition. However, this exemplified literally how risk taking was practiced as one critical dimension of EO ABC. However, it is also noteworthy to mention that the hotel is now a profit making hotel under the ABC.

### **4.4 Proactiveness**

Finally, this sections with regard to proactiveness joins how proactiveness was related to ABC. As one of the brave initiatives and proactive measurements, ABC moved its operations to Maldives to capitalize on new market structure available and this is similar to the notion by Lumpkin & Dess, 1996, where they highlighted proactiveness is closely related to innovativeness and is likely to covary with it. Expansion of operation to Maldives corresponds to the dimension "innovativeness" where it deals with capturing new market or venue to do advertising. This was argued to be one angle in innovativeness by Downs & Mohr, 1976 in their seminal work. Thus, this brings out that ABC is in the process of adopting proactiveness in their firm and practicing EO at firm level. This decision to expand operations to new markets were underpinned with the careful examinations by the management team and they were supported by the inherent culture at ABC. Considering proactiveness

dimension at ABC, one manager said “*I see ABC as the trendsetter in hospitality segment*” to become the industry leader and this is in line with the (Covin & Slevin , 1989b, Miller D. , 1983) study conducted where they asked the managers as to if the firm has a tendency to lead rather than follow in the progress of new procedures and technologies and the introduction of new products or services. Thus, this question received answer mentioned above and it is possible to conclude that ABC is in the process of practicing proactiveness as one of the dimensions of EO. ABC is also in the process of rebranding its name to a new one where it expects to bring almost all the hotels’ name under the same name to make it easy for the visitors and tourists to remember. This decision is consistent with Venkatraman’, 1989, notion where he mentioned proactiveness can take the form of brands ahead of intense competition.

#### **4.5. Competitive Aggressiveness**

In the competitive aggressiveness dimension, ABC has taken several measures where it brought an expansion of the number of rooms in its hotel by three hundred more ahead of the competition and this was consistent with the notion by Venkatraman who defined competitive aggressiveness as aggressively spending product, marketing and etc. At the same time providing high value added product experience such as travelling coupled with luxury tour destination solution is consistent with the notion by Woo & Cooper , 1981. This is also consistent with Cooper & Dunkelburge, 1986, who emphasized doing things unconventional and different from that of competitors as competitive aggressiveness.

### **5. IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE**

This section of the study provides implications for further research and studies. Though the study examined as to if EO dimensions were present at ABC, a critical concern exists where it was hard to distinguish between effective strategic management initiatives and measurement associated with entrepreneurial orientation for, upper and middle level management did not see the decisions made from entrepreneurial point of view. This study examined one critical aspect of entrepreneurship; that is, entrepreneurial orientation construct and this distinguishes from the concept of new entry or new organization concept by (Gartner, 1988). However, EO dimensions at ABC captured through the interview had with managers and annual report published by the hotel chain whereas other variables such as organizational and environmental factors were not taken in to consideration, which can have direct or indirect influence to the adoption of EO construct. Thus, it is important to consider these factors in to further studies to give more accurate and detailed information about performance EO relationship at hotel chain. Moreover, relationship between EO and other variables such as strategy making and macro environmental variables that determine performance of hotel chain is yet another area for further studies. Researcher would like to encourage Srilankan or any other national to do explore application and the nature of application in multi dimensionality of EO construct at firm level among the other companies in Sri Lanka. Comparison of application in multidimensionality of EO construct between industries can also be a promising area to do studies on. Research to explore underlying measurements and processes associated with entrepreneurial activity and what underpins EO construct at firm level in Sri Lanka can be suggested for further research.

### **6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Exploring EO dimensions at firm level has become a timely phenomenon. Thus, (a) identifying as to if EO dimensions are in practice at ABC was the primary goal in order to clarify practicality involved in applying EO dimensions at firm level in Sri Lanka. The

researcher observed that almost all the dimensions of EO were in practice at ABC except for the autonomy dimension which was only practiced given the presence of high capability in bringing business turnarounds that can outperform the competitors or set benchmarks in the industry. All in all the initiatives taken to foster innovativeness were quite rigorous than that of taken towards autonomy. However, it is recommended that adoption of green practices to its operations and promoting it would be more fruitful as many tourists visiting Sri Lanka from around the world are now inclined towards having their leisure time at hotels practicing environmental friendly initiatives. This kind of environmental friendly and green practices were in the process of Aitken Spence Hotels (Aitken Spence Holdings PLC, 2013/14) in Sri Lanka where they claimed to have gained attraction of tourists in to their hotels and having them come to enjoy leisure time. All in all as per the researcher's knowledge it is good to move towards environmental sustainability initiatives so that it can foster rebranding its name across the world. As per the studies, (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996), fairly high autonomy has evidently underpinned business expansions by means of bringing novelties to the ground. As such ABC also can support autonomous actions more and more directed towards business turnarounds i.e. encouraging middle level managers to exercise their expertise with limited restrictions. However, the researcher identified that EO dimensions were present at ABC.

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