

# Comparative study of Emotional Intelligence and Entrepreneurial Orientation between Malaysian and Indonesian University Students

*by* Wahyukaton -

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**Submission date:** 18-Dec-2021 09:48AM (UTC+0700)

**Submission ID:** 1733170709

**File name:** 1.\_20161120\_Comparative\_Study\_Jurnal\_internasional.pdf (585.32K)

**Word count:** 4808

**Character count:** 28211



Volume 77 - 2016

ISSN 2212-0159

# Procedia

Economics and Finance

The Fifth International Conference on Marketing and  
Retailing (5th ICMoR) 2015

Editors:  
Wan Ezura Wan Rashid  
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Available online at [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

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FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MARKETING AND RETAILING (5TH INCOMaR) 2015

## Comparative study of Emotional Intelligence and Entrepreneurial Orientation between Malaysian and Indonesian University Students

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### Abstract

This paper presents a comparative study of Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) between students of two universities from Malaysia and Indonesia. The study investigates the extent to which EI and EO test scores vary among the students. EI showed different scores between students of the two universities. The importance of EI also differs between two universities. EI and EO collectively have an impact on Entrepreneurial Inclination of Indonesian students, but only EO was significant for Malaysian students. Recommendation is provided for future research.

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Peer-review under responsibility of Faculty of Business Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence; Entrepreneurial Orientation; university students; Malaysia; Indonesia

### 1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) has significant impact on several variables such as effects for entrepreneurial situations and social interactions like negotiation, attaining and organizing resources, identifying and exploiting opportunities, managing stress, getting and maintaining customers, as well as being a good manager and leader

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(McLaughlin, 2012, Awad and Kada Ali, 2012). The studies of EI have spread from workplace to entrepreneurship. EI is touted to be a useful concept in career success (Ahmetoglu, Leutner and Chamorro-Premuzic, 2011), organizational effectiveness (Cherniss and Goleman, 2007), job satisfaction (Ngah et al., 2009); Kafetsios and L.A. Zampetakis, 2008), strategic decision (Dincer and Orhan, 2012), leadership (Yitshaki-Hagai and Rothstein, 2011; Reego, Sousa, Cunha, Correia and Amaral, 2007), organizational performance (Yitshaki-Hagai and Rothstein, 2011). Students will eventually be part of the workforce, some will be entrepreneurs. It is therefore imperative to explore the EI impact on students. Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is one of the most researched construct in entrepreneurship. EO has been widely discussed (Taata and Down, 2012) in the field of entrepreneurship. With the introduction of entrepreneurial education in universities, students will have another career option. Recognizing students' entrepreneurial orientation trait would help universities to plan for good entrepreneurial activities (Bolton and Lane, 2012). Not many studies are done to explore EI and EO, as most focus on employees at workplace (Ghorbani et al. 2012; Hamidanour et al, 2015; Awad and Kada Ali, 2012). This paper is to explore the relationship of EI and EO among Malaysian and Indonesian university students.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Emotional Intelligence

EI has been defined as a set of individual social abilities or skills to monitor, discriminate and use-self and other's emotions in order to regulate one's thinking and action (Mayer and Salovey, 2000, Goleman, 2005). EI abilities are particularly salient to entrepreneurs because of their need to manage social interactions with other individuals. Social interactions include activities such as presenting to investors, gaining and maintaining customers, negotiating, as well as attracting, selecting, and handling employees, suppliers, and partners. EI is a combination of competencies. These skills contribute to a person's ability to manage and monitor his or her own emotions, to correctly gauge the emotional state of others and to influence opinions (Ghorbani et al. 2012; Tompkins et al. 2012). Although studies have shown that EI has a strong relationship to job performance success, it is not a strong predictor to academic success (Romannelli, Cains and Smith, 2006). EI is increasingly important for students because being aware and understanding their emotional will help them to be able to channel positive or negative effects into appropriately identifying and solving problems relevant to their lives especially if they are into entrepreneurship (Zampetakis et al., 2005). Wong and Law (2002) summarized EI into four dimensions with 16 items which was tested on students in Hong Kong. Table 1 shows the dimensions of EI.

Table 1: Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence

Dimensions	Description
Self Emotional Appraisal (SEA)	Individual's ability to understand and assessment of their deep emotions and be able to express these emotions naturally.
Others' Emotional Appraisal (OEA)	Ability to perceive and understand the emotions of others around them.
Regulation of Emotion (ROE)	Peoples' ability of people to regulate their emotions, which will enable a more rapid recovery from psychological distress.
Use of Emotion (UOE)	Ability of individuals to make use of their emotions by directing them towards constructive activities and personal performance.

### 2.2. Entrepreneurial Orientation



Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) can be defined as a person's natural tendency or attitude towards entrepreneurship (Pradhan and Nath, 2012). EO has become a central concept in the area of entrepreneurship that has received a substantial amount of theoretical and empirical attention (Covin, Green and Slevin, 2006). Entrepreneurial orientation has been evolved over the years. Based on Miller (1983) conceptualization, three dimensions of EO have been established and used consistently in the literatures which are innovativeness, risk-taking and proactiveness. Innovativeness is the predisposition to engage in creativity and experimentation through the introduction of new products/services as well as technological leadership via R&D process. Risk-taking involves taking bold actions by venturing into the unknown, committing significantly resources to ventures in uncertain environments and proactiveness is an opportunity seeking, forward looking perspective by the introduction of new products and services ahead of the competition and acting in anticipation of future demand (Rauch, Wiklund, Lumpkin and Frese, 2004).

### *2.3. Emotional Intelligence(EI) and Entrepreneurial Orientation(EO)*

Previous studies have shown that EI has direct, strong and positive relationship to EO of SMEs (Hamidanour et al, 2015; Awad and Kada Ali, 2012; Suliman and AlShaikh, 2007). However, Pachulia and Henderson (2009) found that EI and EO are not correlated while Suliman and AlShaikh (2007) found that EI has relationship to EO through innovation. In addition, Ghorbani, Johari and Moghadam (2012) found that EI has weak relationship to entrepreneurship. Another study by Gorji, Kalami and Pouya (2014) discovered that the relationship between EI and EO of private bank employees is higher than in public ones. Overall, EI plays an important role in entrepreneurship where their emotional capability has a strong impact on their business ventures (Yitshaki, 2012). In addition, previous study had also shown that EI helps company in generating creativity and innovation (Hamidianpour et al. 2015).

### **3.0 Design of the Study**

Convenience sampling technique which is non-probability sampling technique was utilized in this study where students are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. The population of the study consists of undergraduate students of two universities, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia and Universitas Pasudan, Indonesia. A total of 170 students participated in this survey, 98 from Malaysia and 72 from Indonesia. Only 19% of the participants were from the business management faculty while the rest were from the engineering faculty. In terms of gender, male constituted 53% of the respondents while the other 47% were female. To ensure the validity and reliability of this study the scales were adopted from various authors and revised to fit into it. The scales of emotional intelligence were taken from Wong and Law (2002), innovativeness items were adopted from Rhee, Park and Lee (2010) and Calatone and Cavusgil (2002), proactiveness and risk were adopted from Covin et al, (2006). The questionnaires were in English for the Malaysian students and Indonesia language (Bahasa Indonesia) for the Indonesian students. The scale range from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). The survey was carried through online survey. All analysis is performed using SPSS version 21 to analyze this study.

### 3. Findings

#### 3.1. Reliability

Reliability test is an assessment of the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable using Cronbach alpha coefficient (Nunnally, 1978). Reliability estimates (coefficient alphas) for EI is 0.88 and EO is 0.93. Reliability estimates (coefficient alphas) for the four dimensions of SEA, UOE, ROE, and OEA were 0.80, 0.88, 0.83, and 0.84, respectively. This is similar to study done by Wong and Law (2002). All the alpha coefficients were above the required level of 0.7 as suggested by Malhotra et al. (1999). The results of reliability test showed that the items measured are reliable.

#### 3.2. Descriptive Analysis

An independent samples t-test was performed comparing the mean consistency scores of emotional intelligence between Malaysian and Indonesian students. Malaysian students' scored higher in EI (M = 3.87, SD = 0.44, N=98; t (168) = 2.21, p = 0.028) compared to Indonesian (M= 3.68, SD = 0.686; N = 72). Table 2 shows result of independent sample t-test of EI.

Table 2 Independent Sample T-Test of EI

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
EI	Equal variances assumed	10.123	.002	2.211	168	.028	.19185	.08677	.02055	.36314
	Equal variances not assumed			2.075	113.262	.040	.19185	.09246	.00866	.37503

There were no significant difference in scores of ROE and SEA in Malaysian students (M=3.99, SD = 0.679) and (M=4.79, SD = 0.618) compared to Indonesian students (M=3.96, SD = 0.831; t (168) = 0.307, p=0.759) and (M=3.92, SD = 0.819; t (168) = 1.44, p=0.151). However, there was significant difference in score of UOE and OEA between these students. UOE scores showed significant difference of Malaysian students ((M=3.75, SD = 0.641) compared to Indonesian students (M=3.50, SD = 0.853; t (168) = 2.05, p=0.042). Meanwhile OEA showed scores of Malaysian students (M=3.67, SD = 0.831) compared to Indonesian students (M=3.35, SD = 1.00; t (168) = 2.42, p=0.017). Further analysis showed that there were differences of the importance of EI dimensions between these students. For Malaysian students Self-Emotional Appraisal (SEA) is the most important element followed by Regulation of Emotion (ROE), Use of Emotion ((UOE) and Others' Emotional Appraisal (OEA). For Indonesian students, Use of Emotion (UOE) is the most important element of EI followed by Self-Emotional Appraisal (SEA), Regulation of Emotion and Other's Emotional Appraisal. Table 3 shows the results.

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis

Malaysian		Indonesian	
	Mean		Mean
EI	4.08	EI	3.97
SEA	3.99	UOE	3.92
ROE	3.75	SEA	3.51
UOE	3.68	ROE	3.35
OEA		OEA	

Another independent t-test was conducted to check on EO dimensions on both groups of students. The test showed no difference in scores of EO of Malaysian students ( $M = 3.77, SD = 0.50, N = 98; t(168) = 1.036, p = 0.143$ ) and Indonesian students ( $M = 3.68, SD = 0.633; N = 72$ ). Table 4 shows result of independent sample t-test of EO. Both Proactive and Risk Taking didn't show any differences in scores but there was a significant difference in innovation scores of Malaysian ( $M = 3.83, SD = 0.473$ ) compared to Indonesian ( $M = 3.68, SD = 0.633704; t(168) = 1.28, p = 0.023$ ). Table 4 shows the result of independent samples t-test of EO.

Table 4 Independent Sample T-Test of EO

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
EO	Equal variances assumed	2.162	.143	1.036	168	.301	.09042	.08725	-.08181	.26266
	Equal variances not assumed			1.001	131.409	.319	.09042	.09034	-.08828	.26913

### 3.3. Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was carried out to explore the relationship of EI and EO of both countries. Table 3 shows the result of correlation analysis. The result of correlation showed that most of the EI dimensions have significant relationship with EO. However, UOE and OEA of Malaysian students showed moderate relationship with EO compared to Indonesian students' EI which showed strong relationship to EO.

### 3.4. Hierarchical Regression

A comparison of these two groups was conducted using hierarchical regression. The hierarchical procedure is an alternative to comparing betas for purposes of assessing the importance of the independents (Dattalo, 2013). A two stage hierarchical multiple regression was conducted with Entrepreneurial Inclination as the dependent variable. Emotional Intelligence was entered at stage one of the regression. The Entrepreneurial Orientation (Innovation, Proactive and Risk-Taking) was entered at stage two. Table 5 and Table 6 show the hierarchical regression of Malaysian students and Indonesian students respectively.

Table 5 Hierarchical Regression of Malaysian Students

Var	$\beta$	t	sr <sup>2</sup>	R	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1						
EI	0.43	4.62	0.17	0.43	0.18	0.18
Step 2						
EO	0.67	5.89	0.06	0.63	0.40	0.22

In Table 5, the hierarchical multiple regression revealed that at Stage one, EI contributed significantly to the regression model,  $F(4.62) = 21.41, p < .05$ ) and accounted for 18% of the variation in Entrepreneurial Inclination. Adding the Entrepreneurial Orientation variable explained an additional 22% of variation in Entrepreneurial Inclination and this change in R<sup>2</sup> was significant,  $F(5.89) = 31.83, p < .001$ . When all independent variables were included, EI was not a significant predictor but EO was significant predictor to Entrepreneurial Inclination. Together, the two independent variables accounted for 40.1% of the variance in Entrepreneurial Inclination.

Table 6 Hierarchical Regression of Indonesian Students

Var	$\beta$	t	sr <sup>2</sup>	R	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1						
EI	0.43	4.62	0.17	0.64	0.42	0.42
Step 2						
EO	0.67	5.89	0.06	0.67	0.45	0.04

In Table 6, the hierarchical multiple regression revealed that at Stage one, EI contributed significantly to the regression model,  $F(7.04) = 49.57, p < .05$  and accounted for 42% of the variation in Entrepreneurial Inclination. Adding the EO variable explained an additional 4% of variation in Entrepreneurial Inclination and this change in  $R^2$  was significant,  $F(2.24) = 28.72, p < .001$ . When all independent variables were included, EI and EO were both strong significant predictors to Entrepreneurial Inclination. Together the two independent variables accounted for 45.4% of the variance in Entrepreneurial Inclination. While EI and EO collectively have an impact on Entrepreneurial Inclination of Indonesian students, in contrast, only EO was significant in the relationship to Entrepreneurial Inclination for Malaysian students.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study enhances the understanding of EI and EO of university students. While there has been no research conducted to compare these variables, this study would be a good catalyst to begin with. The findings revealed that the level of perceptions of EI is different between these two countries as well as level of impact of EO on their entrepreneurial inclination. While Malaysian students utilized more self-emotional appraisal, Indonesian students are more inclined to utilize use of other’s emotion. This study also found that EI has more impact on innovativeness compared to proactiveness and risk-taking. Comparing the effect of EI dimension on EO, Indonesian students showed that EI has strong effect on EO compared to Malaysian students where self-emotional appraisal and regulation of other’s emotions showed strong predictors to entrepreneurial orientation. EI showed strong inclination to innovation among Malaysian students compared to Indonesian students. In contrast, EI dimensions’ scores of Indonesian students showed stronger relationship to EO compared to Malaysian students. This could be due to higher entrepreneurial inclination among the students of Indonesian (Kristiansen and Indarti, 2004). A comparison of EI and EO on Malaysian students showed that EO played a more important role in predicting entrepreneurial inclination compared to EI while among Indonesian students, both EI and EO were equally important in predicting entrepreneurial inclination among the students. There are numerous studies showing strong influence of Entrepreneurial orientation on entrepreneurial inclination among Malaysian students (Ismail et al. 2015, Ibrahim and Lucky, 2014) while there are very few studies done on Indonesian students. In fact, Shahban and Mohachandran (2015) highlighted that entrepreneurial intention among Indonesian students are low which is contrasted to the study done by Kristiansen and Indarti (2004). As EI is steadily being acknowledged in these countries, there are other factors that might influence the impact of these elements such as education setting, culture and environment.

This study also has few limitations. Firstly, there were fewer in the number of respondents; a larger number would have had provided different results. Secondly, this study focused on engineering students whose training is more inclined towards technical or hard skills. Lastly, the survey was conducted in English for the Malaysian students while in Indonesia it was Bahasa Indonesia. Therefore, the interpretation and understanding of the languages used in the survey might shape differently the way the students think.

In conclusion, EI has been lauded as good predictors for entrepreneurs. Davis and Peake (2014) found that students who possessed strong EI have strong communication skills leading to a strong entrepreneurial inclination. Thus it is recommended that university should include soft skill program for its students especially for engineering students. This would help them to interact better with people. Furthermore, EI can be trained and learned through curricular pedagogical design (Jaeger, 2003). Ability to utilize all dimensions of EI would give a person a better leverage especially in developing their entrepreneurial traits of EO such as creativity, innovation, proactiveness and risk-taking. Entrepreneurial education play an important role in inculcating EO among students thus it should not only focus on the technical aspects of entrepreneurship but also to take a holistic approach (Zampetakis et al, 2009, Ngah and Salleh, 2014). Despite the existence of EI for many years, not much studies of EI have been conducted among university students. It is recommended that further study of EI can include other variables such as innovative intelligence, social intelligence, business intelligence or spatial intelligence as well as entrepreneurial education,

entrepreneurial culture and technology in assisting and preparing students to embark on their future business ventures.

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