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The 9th International Conference on Marketing and Retailing**EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL
ORIENTATION ON ENTREPRENEURIAL INCLINATION OF
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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Abstract

Past studies associated emotional intelligence with a positive mindset to achieve better academic performance. Emotional intelligence is said to help students to set their goals. This paper investigates the relationship between emotional intelligence, entrepreneurial orientation, and entrepreneurial inclination of secondary school students. In this study, emotional intelligence is posited against entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurial inclination. A total of one hundred and three usable responses were collected, and data was tested using Partial Least Squares. Results indicated that emotional intelligence affects entrepreneurial orientation but recorded a low impact on entrepreneurial inclination. Entrepreneurial orientation served as a mediating link between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial inclination. Most of the respondents were not well exposed to the concept of entrepreneurship in the school thus, their interest in entrepreneurship needs to be more conclusive. In exploring students' inclinations, it is important to identify their level of emotion and how they regulate it for their best interest.

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Keywords: Emotional intelligence, entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial inclination, secondary school students

1. Introduction

Emotion is one of the most important elements that affect our personal and professional wellbeing. According to Ge (2021), the results revealed that positive emotions were associated with higher performance while negative emotions were associated with poorer performance, and low-intensity emotions were associated with performance between high and low levels.

The studies of emotional intelligence have been evolving since its interception, especially in explaining behavioural variance (Surti & Gangal, 2021). Many types of research in the field of EI suggest that high EI individuals can better perceive emotions, use them in thought, understand their meanings, and manage emotions better than others (Ge, 2021). Over the years, emotional intelligence has evolved and has been linked to many other areas and disciplines. In recent years, emotional intelligence (EI) has garnered the attention of researchers and practitioners alike because of its relationship with job performance (Gong et al., 2019), leadership (Weinberger, 2009), social competence in adults and children, academic achievement (Contreras & Cano, 2016) and both psychological and physiological wellbeing (Nagahi, 2014). Emotional intelligence has been proven to influence performance (Mayer et al., 2016), job satisfaction (Ngah et al., 20016) and entrepreneurial intention (Nawaz et al., 2019). Previous empirical studies also highlight the importance of levels of emotional intelligence for students' academic performance Chamizo-Nieto et al. (2021). R. Dubey (2012) found that students' EI was positively correlated with their learning motivation. Henter (2014) also proposed that EI, motivation, and linguistic performance correlated positively.

The present study aims to provide preliminary insight into the link between emotional intelligence, entrepreneurial orientation, and entrepreneurial inclination among high school students. Nevertheless, to date, less effort has been put into assessing the relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial orientation among high school students, as entrepreneurship subject has only been introduced recently in secondary schools. Wen et al. (2020) found that the higher the emotional intelligence the higher would be their entrepreneurial self-efficacy among college students. Therefore, emotional intelligence is an important factor in predicting entrepreneurial orientation. Furthermore, emotional intelligence will influence students' cognitive intelligence and attitude for better academic performance. Students with higher emotional intelligence are better equipped to deal with negative emotions that might disrupt learning (Ellwood, 2021; MacCann et al., 2020). In fact, during the pandemic of Covid19, emotional intelligence prevailed as an essential resilience skill for enhancing the quality of life during adversity, especially among students (Maharaj & Ramsaroop, 2022).

2. Literature Review

Emotional intelligence evolved over the years and spanned from the working environment to the school environment. Mayer and Salovey (1997) defined emotional intelligence as how an individual can control their emotion and utilize it for their advantage. Meanwhile, Petrides et al. (2016) defined emotional intelligence as an individual's cognition of personal emotion ability in understanding, regulating, and expressing their emotion to the environment for their benefit. Chien-Chi et al. (2020) found that emotional competence influences the entrepreneurial intention among students while

completing their social entrepreneurship activity. Emotional intelligence is an emerging topic for psychological, educational and management researchers and practitioners. Mayer and Salovey (1997) were the first to propose the concept of emotional intelligence. According to their definition, emotional intelligence is a subset of social intelligence that includes the capacity to keep an eye on, distinguish between, and utilize one's own and other people's feelings and emotions as a basis for decision-making. Wen et al. (2020) found that entrepreneurial self-efficacy tends to be low among vocational students in China when emotional intelligence is high. As emotional intelligence is related to the ability to control emotion, it affects self-efficacy in the opposite direction. Therefore, entrepreneurial self-efficacy will increase with the improvement of the emotional intelligence level of vocational college students. The study, published in the Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal, found that emotional intelligence was a stronger predictor of entrepreneurial success than general mental ability. A study by Ngah et al. (2016) found that the level of emotional intelligence to entrepreneurial orientation differs between students in Malaysia and Indonesia. Emotional intelligence strongly correlates to entrepreneurial orientation among students in India (Pradhan & Nath, 2012). Meanwhile, a study by Awwad and Ali (2012) posits that empirically emotional intelligence positively affects entrepreneurial orientation and success among managers in Jordan. In addition, emotional intelligence also influences creativity which leads to innovation.

In another investigation, Goleman (1995) pointed out that emotional competencies are learned abilities based on emotional intelligence that result in star performance or outstanding performance. This evidence points towards the link between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial orientation. A person with high emotional intelligence can build up self-efficacy with calculated risk to create new business opportunities for running a self-owned enterprise. He or she can manage diversity, make independent decisions, and mobilize human resources for optimum utilization (Pradhan & Nath, 2012). Bar-On (2006) mentioned that people with high emotional intelligence can manage stress, survive uncertainty, and can restore health and well-being. These are the abilities required for a person to become a successful entrepreneur. Although many scholars (P. Dubey & Sahu, 2022; Othman et al., 2005). have suggested examining the behaviour of entrepreneurs other than their personal/demographic differences, very little research focus has been there on the emotional intelligence of entrepreneurs. Some studies reported that the psychological characteristics of successful entrepreneurs somehow relate to emotional intelligence, that is, flexibility, need for achievement, tolerance of ambiguity, intuition, self-confidence and adaptation (Rhee & White, 2007).

Few researchers have examined intuition (intuitive personality) and creativity in their entrepreneurship-related research (Boren, 2010; Ensley et al., 2002; Hernández-Perlines et al., 2020). Goleman's (1995) five components of emotional intelligence—self-awareness, self-regulation, motivating oneself, empathy and handling relationships—are based on the competency approach. Self-awareness involves a realistic assessment of self-ability and self-confidence. Self-regulation refers to conscientiousness, avoiding any hindrance in the task and recovering from emotional distress by managing emotions. Motivating oneself is the tendency to drive one towards a goal, to strive to improve and excel. Empathy is awareness of others' feelings, needs and concerns. Social skills involve showing desirable emotions to others. Thus, emotional intelligence reflects the extent to which a person attends to,

processes and acts upon information of an emotional nature: intrapersonal and interpersonally. In a recent study on entrepreneurship research, Rhee and White (2007) reported that entrepreneurs are change catalysts to new venture processes. They claim that successful young entrepreneurs possess a high level of emotional intelligence (using Goleman's framework of emotional intelligence) skills such as self-confidence, trustworthiness, achievement orientations, service orientation, change catalyst, teamwork, and collaboration. Trustworthiness—the ability to maintain standards of honesty and integrity— was ranked highest among 18 emotional competencies. It seems that a possible link exists between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial personality or entrepreneurial orientation at the conceptual and perceptual levels. From the given literature, there is a need to research entrepreneurial orientation and emotional intelligence towards entrepreneurial inclination. Is there any link between the variables? Persons with high emotional intelligence tend to be more able to regulate their emotions (Wong & Law, 2002) and therefore experience more self-confidence and control over their environmental demands, making them act in an entrepreneurial way. Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses have been developed.

H1: Emotional Intelligence has a significant impact on Entrepreneurial Inclination

H2: Emotional Intelligence has a significant impact on Entrepreneurial Orientation

H3: Entrepreneurial Orientation has a significant impact on Entrepreneurial Inclination

H4: Entrepreneurial Orientation mediates the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Entrepreneurial Inclination

3. Research Methodology

Tests of the correlations in the study model were conducted using a survey methodology. Online questionnaires are now a vital component of research projects. Because of their histories, this strategy is not only easier to reach potential respondents, but it is also less expensive. Moreover, research has demonstrated the importance of online surveys in market research, with 20% of global data collecting technique spending going toward them (Hooley et al., 2012). Since online survey methods have had many constructive advantages, this study implemented the online survey as its primary collection tool.

Emotional Intelligence was operationalized by using the sixteen-item scale of Wong Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (Wong & Law, 2002). The scale measures four aspects of EI: an appraisal of one's own emotions (SEA), appraisal of others' emotions (OEA), use of emotion (UOE) and regulation of emotion (ROE) (LaPalme et al., 2016). Entrepreneurial orientation was adopted from Lumpkin and Dess (1996), and entrepreneurial inclination was adopted from Keat et al. (2011). A five-point Likert-type scale with anchors ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" was used to rate each item. To lessen the repetition of questions assessing the same construct, the questionnaire also had items that were properly negated and shuffled. A quantitative research design was used in this study to determine the relationship between the independent variable (emotional intelligence), mediating variable (entrepreneurial orientation) and dependent variable (entrepreneurial inclination) within a population (students).

4. Results and Discussion

The sample consisted of 37.7% male and 62.3% female. All of them are 18 years old. Most of the students are from the humanities section (64.8%). In terms of race, Malay is the majority, with 64.8%, Indian (19.7%), Chinese (13.1%) and others (2.5%). Table 1 shows the details of demographic profiling.

Table 1. Demographic Profiling

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	46	37.7
	Female	76	62.3
Race	Malay	79	64.8
	Chinese	16	13.1
	Indian	24	19.7
	Others	3	2.5
Stream	Science	43	35.2
	Humanities	79	64.8

The measures were validated and the hypotheses tested using partial least-squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with the Smart PLS 3.0 programme (Hair et al., 2017). Using a component-based methodology, this latent structural equation modeling strategy reduces sample size requirements (Hair et al., 2014). The PLS method can be used to identify potential links and corroborate theories. Two stages of data analysis were conducted: measurement and structural model development. The internal consistency, discriminant validity, and item loadings of the PLS measurement model were evaluated. Standardized betas of the path coefficients were used to examine the structural model and hypotheses. The model's overall predictive power was evaluated by calculating the explained variation in the dependent constructs.

4.1. Measurement Model

The measurement model or outer model presents the outer model results to examine the loadings, reliability, and validity of the measures used to represent each construct (Sarstedt et al., 2021) and the approach of PLS threshold values as suggested by Hair et al. (2017). The outer loadings of each variable showed good loadings ranging from 0.763 to 0.857. Hair et al. (2017) suggested that the factor loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted were used to assess convergence validity. The composite reliability values (as shown in Table 2), which show how much the construct indicators reveal the latent, were higher than the suggested threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017). Additionally, the average variance extracted—which represents the total variance in the indicators that the latent construct accounts for—was higher than the suggested threshold of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2014). As a result, all the variables' and constructions' measures exhibit strong degrees of convergent validity. The heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT), which has been shown to be reliable in evaluating discriminant analysis, was selected to assess discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 2. Convergent Validity

Variable	Construct	Loadings	CR	AVE
Emotional Intelligence	Ei10	0.789	0.897	0.544
	Ei11	0.831		
	Ei12	0.751		
	Ei13	0.717		
	Ei14	0.649		
	Ei16	0.741		
	Ei13	0.614		
Entrepreneurial Orientation	E19	0.782	0.808	0.639
	INV1	0.662		
	INV2	0.670		
	INV3	0.669		
	INV4	0.687		
	INV5	0.788		
	INV6	0.789		
	INV7	0.651		
	INV8	0.715		
	INV9	0.717		
Entrepreneurial Inclination	PR1	0.663	0.929	0.509
	PR2	0.695		
	PR5	0.666		
	PR8	0.715		
	PR9	0.717		
	EN1	0.788		
	EN3	0.842		
	EN5	0.844		
	EN6	0.716		

Low correlation between the measure of interest and the measures of other constructs indicates discriminant analysis, which is the degree to which a measure is not a reflection of another variable (Cheung et al., 2023). Henseler et al. (2015) suggested using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) to examine discriminant validity because of its better performance in identifying discriminant validity (Ab Hamid et al., 2017). Discriminant validity between two reflective constructs has been demonstrated if the HTMT value is less than 0.90. Table 3 demonstrated that every variable value was less than 0.9, establishing discriminant validity.

Table 3. Discriminant Analysis

	1	2	3
Emotional Intelligence			
Entrepreneurial Inclination	0.513		
Entrepreneurial Orientation	0.770	0.533	

4.2. Structural Model

The structural or inner model examines the hypothesized relationships among the constructs in the research model (Sarstedt et al., 2021). A total of 24.4% of the variance (R^2) in entrepreneurial inclination showed a reliable predictive explanatory power of variance explained by antecedents of emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial orientation of students, as shown in Figure 1. Emotional intelligence significantly affects entrepreneurial orientation ($\beta = 0.442$ with a t-value of 6.201), with R^2 of 0.615; therefore, H1 is supported. Emotional intelligence also significantly affects entrepreneurial orientation ($\beta = 0.714$ with a t-value of 18.426). Therefore H2 is supported. Meanwhile, entrepreneurial orientation significantly affects entrepreneurial inclination ($\beta = 0.315$ with a t-value of 2.493). Therefore H3 is also supported. Finally, entrepreneurial orientation significantly mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial inclination ($\beta 0.225, t= 2.486$). Table 4 presents the findings of the total effect and hypotheses of the study.

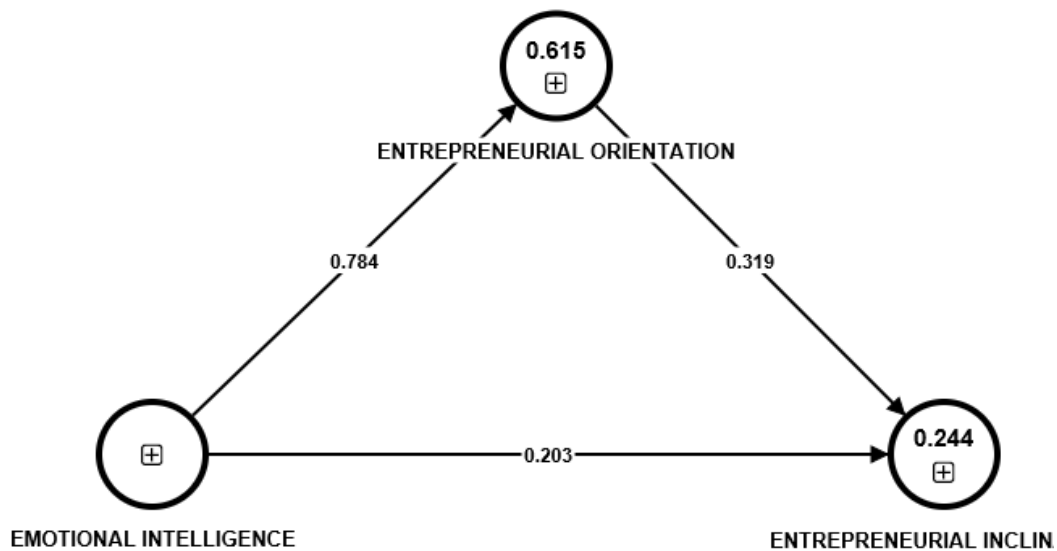


Figure 1. Structural Model

According to Hair et al. (2014), mediation is the process by which the influence of the independent variable is transferred to the dependent variable. In order to test the mediation analysis that satisfies the requirements set out by Hair et al. (2014) for evaluating the mediation impact, the total effect is obtained by bootstrapping. Subsequently, the VAF (variance account for) calculation demonstrates that there is a mediation between the antecedents and entrepreneurial propensity through entrepreneurial orientation. The model's predictive validity is supported by the low value of 0.244 for the coefficient of determination R^2 for entrepreneurial inclination (Hair et al., 2017). The Q^2 value of predicted relevance further supports this conclusion (Karia & Davadas Michael, 2022). When the blindfolding technique (Henseler et al., 2015) is performed with an omission distance of D 9, the PLS path model's predictive importance is indicated by the Q^2 value of entrepreneurial inclination (0.258), which is significantly higher than zero. In order to test the mediation analysis that satisfies the requirements set out by Hair et al. (2014) for evaluating the mediation impact, the total effect is obtained by bootstrapping. The entrepreneurial

orientation serves as a mediator between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial propensity, as demonstrated by the VAF calculation (99%). Table 4 presents the hypotheses testing results.

Table 4. Hypotheses Testing

	β	T Statistics	P Values	R ²	Decision
H1: Emotional Intelligence has a significant relationship to Entrepreneurial Inclination	0.442	6.201	0.000	0.244	Supported
H2: Emotional Intelligence has a significant relationship to Entrepreneurial Orientation	0.714	18.426	0.000	0.615	Supported
H3: Entrepreneurial Orientation has a significant relationship to Entrepreneurial Inclination	0.315	2.493	0.000		Supported
H4: Entrepreneurial Orientation mediates the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Entrepreneurial Inclination	0.225	2.486	0.013		Supported

5. Discussion and Conclusions

Emotional intelligence has become an important factor in our daily life. During the pandemic, many are affected emotionally due to many challenges. Previous studies have shown a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intention (Mortan et al., 2014; Miao et al., 2018; Velástegui & Chacón, 2021), which supported the finding of this study. This study has shown that emotional intelligence influences the entrepreneurial inclination of secondary school students. Interestingly, the subject of entrepreneurship has only been introduced in secondary school to gauge students' interest in entrepreneurship. It is good to know that students know how to manage their emotional intelligence towards the entrepreneurial orientation of innovativeness and proactiveness, as these two elements are critical for their future endeavours. Even though the impact on entrepreneurial inclination is small, it showed a positive indicator of students' entrepreneurial inclination. Chang and Tsai (2022) found that the student's emotional intelligence did not directly affect their academic achievement but was mediated by other variables such as learning motivation and self-efficacy. Emotional intelligence is supported by entrepreneurial orientation to create an impact on entrepreneurial intention. Ngah et al. (2016) posited how emotional intelligence influences the entrepreneurial intention of university students who were exposed to entrepreneurship subjects and activities. Previous studies have shown that entrepreneurial orientation is a potent mediator to encourage entrepreneurial intention (Khedhaouria et al., 2020; Kitsios et al., 2021; Zbierowski, 2020). This study contributes to the body of knowledge about the topic, as most emotional intelligence studies focus more on academic performance. The findings showed that students strongly utilize their emotional intelligence towards exploiting their personality traits of entrepreneurial orientation. This is important as Malaysia would like to grow its local young talents in entrepreneurship and technology.

6. Conclusion

The present study aims to provide a preliminary insight into the link between emotional intelligence, entrepreneurial orientation, and entrepreneurial inclination among high school students. The empirical study has shown that students can utilize their emotional intelligence accordingly and showcase entrepreneurial orientation even though they have not formally attended any entrepreneurship programs. It is good to note that entrepreneurial orientation comprised of proactiveness, innovativeness and risk-taking prevailed towards entrepreneurial intention among students. This is a good indication as the country is moving toward entrepreneurship by 2030. This study has limitations. Firstly, a survey was conducted face to face with students but relied on their perceptions. Secondly, the survey provides only generalizations without in-depth descriptions of related activities among students. However, this study offers many directions for future research. Emotional intelligence can be further to explored by expanding to other types of competence, such as social competence. Other suggestions would be to measure students' ability to utilize their emotional intelligence in social innovation or social entrepreneurship projects as it is trending currently. The study provides a new understanding of students' performance and internal capabilities. As mental health has become the main issue among students, emotional intelligence practices would help students be more positive, proactive, innovative, and creative as future leaders.

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