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**Individual and Social Perceptions in Entrepreneurship: A Study of  
the Minangkabau Ethnic**

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**Abstract:** This study investigates perceptions among members and non-members of a certain ethnic group, which are argued to influence perceptual overview toward entrepreneurship. The unit analysis is members and non-members of an entrepreneurial ethnic group i.e. Minangkabau ethnic in Indonesia, and was undertaken with 136 respondents. Data was collected through structured direct and online questionnaires, and analyzed quantitatively by using causal analysis approach. Structural Equation Modelling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) was used as the tool to support the analysis. The study finds that individual/self-perception and social perception from members of an ethnic group have significantly determined the creation of positive perceptual view toward entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, perception of non members of an entrepreneurial ethnic has contributed to their positive perceptual view regarding other sub-culture/ethnic group, which undertakes entrepreneurship as a part of its culture. Both positive perceptions given by members and non-members of entrepreneurial ethnic have boosted intention for entrepreneurship which could also further lead to the acceptance of entrepreneurship as a specific culture embraced by an entrepreneurial ethnic. Findings of this study indicate value and originality as it can trace and explain how does the perception possessed by members and non-members of an entrepreneurial ethnic group may contribute to entrepreneurship. Results and findings of the study can be used to set-up possible alternatives in improving awareness regarding entrepreneurship among people in and outside of entrepreneurial ethnic.

**Keywords:** Individual-Social Perception, Sub-Culture, Ethnic Group, Entrepreneurship.

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**A. Introduction**

The diverse entrepreneurial performance in either local or national levels cannot be separated from idiosyncrasies of ethnicity or sub-culture which directly or indirectly correspond with entrepreneurial intention and endeavors. Various studies and research found that the current economic condition/performance and

prospect of a country or a region should not merely be considered as the major antecedent that influences the level of entrepreneurial activity and performance (Diez-Martin, Blanco-Gonzalez, & Prado-Roman, 2013). Social and cultural contexts embraced by people in the country or region could also contribute as the determinant that impacts entrepreneurial

performance (Kuckertz, Berger, & Allmendinger, 2015; Ruda, Martin, Arnold, & Danko, 2012; Cardon, Stevens & Potter, 2011; Grichnik, 2008). It is understood that there are societies, which are recognized as supportive entrepreneurial culture that creates more positive entrepreneurial performance, whilst some are not. Nature, specific background/characteristics, and circumstances embedded into the society are regarded as the determinants for members of the society to be receptive toward entrepreneurship or not, and this would determine the creation of entrepreneurial culture.

Value and norms, which are based on cultural dimensions and embraced by societies impact negative or positive views, perceptions, and performance in entrepreneurship (Kleinhempel, Klasing, & Beugelsdijk, 2022; Röhl, 2018; Dubina & Ramos, 2013). Idiosyncratic of society could also play an important part (Wenlong & Haijun, 2021; Galvão, Fernandes, & Pinheiro, 2016) as well as career and future life orientation (Bičo, & Knezović, 2023; Kiani, Liu, Ghani, & Popelnukha, 2020; Thelken & de Jong, 2020). There are also studies, which focused on how individuals and members of societies perceived risks as the major precondition for entrepreneurship (Yin & Wu, 2023; Peng & Walid, 2022; Dvorsky, 2020; Forlani & Mullins, 2000; Boermans & Willebrands, 2017; Martinez, Herrero-Crespo, & Fernandez-Laviada, 2015). However, studies and research regarding perception toward entrepreneurship were often based on individuals' perception as one major psychological antecedent to boost entrepreneurial intention and culture (see the studies from Shahid Satar, Alarifi, Alkhoraif, & Asad, 2023; Martínez-Martínez, 2022; Barrera-Verdugo, 2021) and little from the view of social perception (Arroyo-Barriguete, Escudero-Guirado, & Minguella-Rata, 2023; Anggadwita & Dhewanto, 2016). Other studies, for example, from Wei-Loon Koe, Ismail, S., Mahphoth, M.H., & Karim (2020) clearly stated that individual and social perception can mediate entrepreneurs' orientation toward efforts to implement business sustainability through government policies. Dębicka, A., Olejniczak, K., & Skąpska, J. (2022) also mentioned that perception occurred within social and individual environment will be a significant signal for business support

institutions, in particular in terms of support for micro and small enterprises.

As each society has its diversity, differences, and cultural sets regarding the position and roles of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs, we can understand why certain societies are entrepreneurial and some are not.

In the case of Indonesia, entrepreneurship is viewed as an unpopular choice of living for many ethnic. An analysis of Indonesia's cultural dimension may give a hint that Indonesian culture is not supportive yet for entrepreneurship. Approaches/focuses are majorly given to a more traditional entrepreneurship practice (Ratten, 2022) rather than a more advanced business, such as technology-based businesses. Indonesian younger generation is also found to have lower confidence level and positive mindset regarding entrepreneurship (Adhikusuma & Genoveva, 2020) and still need to improve their cultural intelligence (CQ) (Yacub, Herlina, & Himawan, 2022) as the major determinant for entrepreneurship. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Report on Indonesia shows the mixture of results of self-perception from Indonesian people toward entrepreneurship. The perceived opportunity rate of Indonesian people toward entrepreneurship was 87.23 in 2013. This was higher than the global average which was only 55.30, and the regional average which was 68.23. In terms of perceived capabilities rate, the index was 75.45, which was also higher than the global average (59.09) and regional average (57.39). The fear of failure rate of Indonesian people showed that individually, Indonesian people tend to have a lower fear of failure in the entrepreneurial process. This was shown by the index of 36.81 (the global rate was 44.28, and the regional rate was 42.78). Meanwhile, in the entrepreneurial intention rate, the index was 33.26 (the global average was 22.33, and the regional average was 25.64). Those indices could practically prove that the self-perception of Indonesian people toward entrepreneurship is arguably in good form.

However, as Indonesia is considered a huge country (in terms of population it was 275.5 million in 2022, spread over 1,900 million km<sup>2</sup>, has more than 15,000 islands with over 1,300 ethnic groups, etc.) that self-perception index is viewed as coming from very limited samples and

therefore, are considerably having low representation of specific Indonesian community or ethnic group, especially the non-entrepreneurial one. Meanwhile, there are no indices and weak evidence that could show how and what perceptions are possessed by members of ethnic groups toward entrepreneurship, especially if they perceive others who are coming from a specific entrepreneurial ethnicity. Both that evidence would be a problem if we want to know what the exact/precise individual and social perception from members of communities toward entrepreneurship would be.

Looking at and considering findings and indices of its cultural dimension, Indonesia is characterized as a society tending to avoid uncertainty, has a short-term life orientation, tends to be a more feminine society, more collectivist, and has a broad power distance gap (Hofstede, 2011; Mangundjaya, 2010). Those indices may clarify that Indonesian culture is not so supportive and conducive to entrepreneurship. According to Hayton, George & Zahra (2002) supportive and conducive entrepreneurial climate can only be supportive in a more individualist and masculine society, lower power distance, and in the society, which is not fear of future uncertainty. The different direction of Indonesian national culture to entrepreneurship also influences entrepreneurial endeavors and performance by Indonesia as a nation. The previous Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Indonesia Country Report 2015-2016 (Nawangpalupi, Pawitan, Widyarini, Gunawan, Putri, & Iskandarsjah, 2016) also argued that in doing business, Indonesia is considered a country which is categorized as a relatively difficult country to start a business and has low numbers of young people who possess high business and practical skills. Consequently, this would be a difficult circumstance to promote and foster entrepreneurship for Indonesian young people.

However, if we look deeper into specific ethnicities in Indonesia, there are entrepreneurial ethnicities, such as Minangkabau ethnic, which inhabits the West Sumatra Province of Sumatra Island. For centuries, this ethnic is famous as an entrepreneurial ethnic, not only in their homeland but also throughout Indonesia and neighboring countries such as Malaysia and Singapore. People can easily find entrepreneurs

who are members of Minangkabau ethnic doing entrepreneurial activities.

This is an interesting phenomenon. As Indonesian culture is considered as not supportive and conducive to entrepreneurship, then why the Minangkabau ethnicity with its specific characteristics can perform differently in their entrepreneurial endeavors and performance. We consider this interesting phenomenon and facts and try to investigate how this can happen. As this study tries to understand the perception of people in the entrepreneurial performance of a certain entrepreneurial society, the major research question in this study is what is the influence of individual perception inside and outside of a certain entrepreneurial ethnic group i.e. Minangkabau ethnic to the creation of its entrepreneurial endeavors and performance?

However, there is a lack of studies and research that consider and investigate the perception of outsiders of society as the possible determinant that could influence entrepreneurial culture within a specific sub-culture or ethnic which are famous and well-known entrepreneurial sub-culture and/or ethnic. Therefore, this study aims to investigate both individual and social perceptions of members and non-members of a certain entrepreneurial ethnic group by using the context of Minangkabau ethnic in order to find their perceptual overview regarding entrepreneurship, in this matter entrepreneurial endeavors of Minangkabau ethnic. The findings and analysis of this study bring significant contributions to the knowledge and understanding in entrepreneurship which is especially related to the individual and social perception toward entrepreneurship from different contextual contexts i.e. a specific entrepreneurial ethnic group in a developing country (Indonesia).

## **B. Materials and Method**

This study is quantitative and was carried out with people in, and out of entrepreneurial ethnicity i.e. Minangkabau ethnic in West Sumatra, Indonesia as the research target. Data were collected through structured direct and online questionnaires as the research instrument, which comprised one hundred twenty questions.

Data analysis was carried out quantitatively by adapting the causal analysis approach with

the support of Structural Equation Modelling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) as the statistical tool. As in the SEM method, data and information of the study were analyzed by evaluating the measurement model and structural model. The measurement model was undertaken by measuring individual item reliability, internal consistency, and discriminant validity. Meanwhile, the structural model was undertaken

by proving the hypothesis of the study – which is: There is a positive and significant influence of individual self-perception and members of society within and outside of sub-culture and ethnic groups toward the perception regarding entrepreneurship.

The operational definition of variables used in the study is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Operational Definition of Variables

No	Variables	Conceptual definition	Indicators
1	Intention to become an entrepreneur	A state of mind which at the end, leads individuals to focus on new venture creation and take a career in entrepreneurship (Chhabra et al., 2020)	1. Level of intention to become an entrepreneur 2. Effort spent to start a business 3. Future planning to start a business 4. Thinking to start a business 5. Level of commitment to start a business Adopted from Ajzen (2006)
2	Attitude toward behaviour	A judgement whether entrepreneurship will result in positive or negative performance (Ajzen, 2020)	1. Level of positive consequences brought by entrepreneurship 2. Level of respect gaining by undertaking entrepreneurial activities 3. High-value character that could be created through entrepreneurship 4. Level of handful experiences when start a business Adopted from Ajzen(2006)
3	Subjective norms	A welcome attitude in a social group regarding entrepreneurship (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).	1. Level of family support to enter entrepreneurship 2. Level of friends' suggestion and support to start a business 3. Number of closest friends having businesses 4. Number of family members who have and run businesses Adopted from Fishbein & Ajzen (2010)
4	Perceived behavioral control – <i>self-efficacy</i>	Individuals believe that they would be able to and can control their behavior through entrepreneurship (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010)	The level of individual belief to: 1. identify business opportunity 2. develop a proper business 3. plan the operational area of the business 4. mobilize resources in starting a business 5. manage resources toward the establishment of the business 6. lead and manage the business 7. arrange production and logistic 8. commercialize goods and services 9. operate administrative matters related to the business Adopted from Lanero (2015)
5	Entrepreneurship ecosystem	A set of tools which is interdependent and interacts one to each other, consists of actors and factors which at the end can enable the development of entrepreneurship (Stam, 2015)	1. Enabling business environment, consists of [a] business registration, [b] conducive tax policies [c] access to finance [d] supportive labour laws and administration [e] the level of regulatory governance quality [f] land titles

No	Variables	Conceptual definition	Indicators
			[g] access to commercial court [h] market information 2. Investment climate, consists of: [a] economic predictability [b] political situation [c] labour market 3. Entrepreneurial culture and attitude Adapted from GTZ
6	Entrepreneurial orientation	Strategy-making processes that provide basis for entrepreneurial decisions and actions (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996)	1. Level of innovativeness* 2. Level of pro-activeness* 3. Level of risk-taking propensity* 4. Level of competitive aggressiveness** 5. Level of autonomy** *Adopted from Covin and Slevin (1989) **Adopted from Lumpkin and Dess (1996)
7	Individual perception	Individual perception is the process by which the individual forms an image of the surrounding reality. In other words, it is the cognitive representation resulting from the individual interpretation process. (Santos-Álvarez, Garcia-Merino, 2018)	1. Recognition of stimuli 2. Subsequent interpretation (Santos-Álvarez & Garcia-Merino, 2006) 3. Sensory awareness or cognition of the experience. 4. Personal experience. 5. Comprehension that can lead to a response. Adopted from (Walker & Avant, 2005)
8	Social perception	Social perception derives on how social perceivers form impressions of other people, and how they combine information about that other people into a coherent overall picture. Parkinson (2007), Heider (1958), Asch (1946)	1. Central trait 2. Peripheral trait within impression formation 3. Primacy effect 4. Implicit personality 5. Social information 6. Cognitive algebra Adopted from Parkinson (2005)

Source: conception of authors, adopted from various authors

### C. Results and Discussions

The first finding of the study reveals the profile of respondents. To recall, this study was conducted with members and non-members of an entrepreneurial ethnicity in Indonesia (Minangkabau ethnic). The study collects data from 136 respondents, which comprises 80 members of the Minangkabau ethnic (58.82%) and 56 respondents from non-Minangkabau ethnic/other ethnicities in Indonesia (41.18%). Further respondent profiles in this study can be seen in crosstabulation in both tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Cross-tabulation of respondent profiles (Ethnicity X Level of education)

No	Level of education	Ethnicities		Total
		Minangkabau	Non-Minangkabau	
1	Senior high school	3	15	18
2	University level	77	41	118
Total		80	56	136

Table 2 suggests that most of the respondents have relatively mid to high educational backgrounds, in which graduates of the university dominate the respondents' profile. This appears to both Minangkabau ethnic members and people who are not Minangkabau ethnic. Meanwhile, the most respondents are in the age range 21-40 years. Specifically, the most

of respondents are not entrepreneurs, as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Crosstabulation of respondent profiles (Ethnic X Level of education)

No	Age range	Type of Jobs			Total
		Jobless	Entrepreneurs	Non-Entrepreneurs	
1	17-20	15	0	0	15
2	21-30	12	7	19	38
3	31-40	2	5	34	41
4	41-50	0	4	26	30
5	51-60	0	2	7	9
6	>60	0	0	3	3
Total		29	18	89	136

This study divided job situation of respondents into three categories; [1] jobless, [2] entrepreneurs, and [c] non-entrepreneurs, and from table 3, the majority of respondents are people whose age is 31-40 & non entrepreneurs.

The second step in the analysis involved the outer model test, which is essential for evaluating the validity and reliability of the measurement model. For the validity assessment, the study employed a convergent validity test, using a minimum threshold of 0.70 for indicator loadings, as this value is accepted for convergent validity in social sciences. To ensure robustness, the convergent validity test was performed twice, adhering strictly to the 0.70 cut-off to confirm that each indicator reliably measures its intended construct. This approach to validity testing reinforces the reliability of the data and strengthens the interpretability of the findings. To sharpen the analysis, the convergent validity test was conducted for two contexts: [a] members of Minangkabau ethnic, and [b] non-members of Minangkabau ethnic.

Results for the second cycle convergent validity showed that the most indicators in the construct 'entrepreneurial orientation' as the proxy of entrepreneurship variable are valid. There was only one invalid statement from respondents of the research out of twenty-five statements regarding entrepreneurial orientation.

These findings confirm that the measurement model indicated satisfactory convergent validity as it shows that each construct is well-represented by its indicators. The high outer loading values across constructs

reinforce the robustness of the study's measurement approach, ensuring that each construct contributes meaningfully to the overall model. Consequently, this validation step enhances the credibility of subsequent analyses, supporting the study's objectives of exploring the relationships between the perception of members of Minangkabau ethnic and non-member of Minangkabau ethnic toward entrepreneurship, embraced by the Minangkabau ethnic.

The next step in the statistical procedure is to measure the reliability of variables. For this purpose, this study conducted composite reliability analysis. As the rule of thumb, a variable is reliable if it has threshold of composite reliability  $\geq 0.70$ . The lowest composite reliability found in this study has the value of 0.979, with Cronbach's alpha of 0.977, which shows that all each indicator used in this study are reliable. The lowest Average Variance Extracted (AVE) index of 0.648 has proved that variables in this study have good discriminant validity.

Analyzing the inner model was the next task to predict causality between variables. For this purpose, the study used R-Square. The study found that the R-Square is 0.043, which means that all variables analyzed in this study may contribute 4.3% to the propensity for entrepreneurship. Other variables that would contribute to the propensity for entrepreneurship might be in terms of educational background, previous business experiences, business network, and social environment surrounding the potential entrepreneurs.

The last statistical procedure was testing the hypotheses. In doing so, the study conducted

path-coefficient analysis to test the perception of members and non-members of Minangkabau ethnic to the propensity for entrepreneurship. The result of path-coefficient analysis results the index of 0.165, which explains the perception of members of Minangkabau ethnic toward entrepreneurship, and 0.119 to explain the perception of non-members of Minangkabau ethnic embraced by Minangkabau ethnic. The two findings further proved that either perceptions possessed by members of Minangkabau ethnic or perceptions belong to non-members Minangkabau ethnic have positively and significantly contributed to the propensity for entrepreneurship by Minangkabau ethnic as an entrepreneurial ethnic. This would further mean that individual and social perception could be used as an intangible element of support for the intention to entrepreneurship.

Findings of this study demonstrate perceptions possessed by both members and non-members of an entrepreneurial ethnic have influenced the propensity toward entrepreneurship. Taking Minangkabau ethnic as an entrepreneurial ethnicity in Indonesia, this study has proven that perception among members and non-members of Minangkabau ethnic have contributed to the occurrence of positive/supportive condition for the propensity for entrepreneurship within Minangkabau ethnic. This can be seen in the out-migration activity which is well-known as *merantau* among members of Minangkabau ethnic. Positive individual and social perception toward *merantau* as an informal entrepreneurial learning activity has significantly influenced the propensity for entrepreneurship among Minangkabau ethnic members. (Rahman, et al., 2019)

We viewed that the positive perception toward entrepreneurship acts as the source of energy for members of Minangkabau ethnic to enter entrepreneurship as the future career choice. As Ickson and Ayala (2013), individual positive perception may create the tendency for individuals to evaluate positively one's abilities, one's past and human nature. This means that either members of Minangkabau ethnic or non-member of Minangkabau ethnic perceived individuals, who are entering entrepreneurship as their future career, as something positive and

as having specific abilities in running their life. Apart from that, positive perceptions regarding propensity for entrepreneurship has boosted entrepreneurial network among Minangkabau entrepreneurs, which can be used as a powerful business strategy for scaling-up.

As part of the culture, entrepreneurship has been marked as the measurement of success by Minangkabau ethnic members. Therefore, the past experience from successful Minangkabau entrepreneurs in establishing, conducting and managing businesses has brought positive perception and impression to other members of the ethnic, as well as other ethnicities. As Rahman et al. (2019), the entrepreneurs' past experience and the practice of entrepreneurship embraced by Minangkabau ethnic has successfully contributed to the creation of positive psycho-cultural circumstance within members of Minangkabau ethnic to accept entrepreneurship as part of their culture and the choice for future life. The mixture of personal attitude, intention, orientation, norms, behavioral control as well as supportive local-social ecosystems have significantly contributed to the occurrence of positive perception among members and non-members of Minangkabau ethnic toward entrepreneurship embraced and carried out by Minangkabau people.

#### D. Conclusion

This study found that individual and social perceptions among members and non-members of an entrepreneurial ethnicity contribute significantly to the creation of a positive and supportive climate toward entrepreneurship in an entrepreneurial ethnicity. The positive perception given by members and non-members of ethnicity leads to the propensity for entrepreneurship among members of an entrepreneurial ethnicity. The creation of positive psycho-cultural constructs among members of an entrepreneurial ethnicity would be the other result of this positive perception, which has let members of an entrepreneurial ethnic to accept entrepreneurship as their way of life and part of the culture.

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