# International Conference of Organizational Innovation

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Examining Entrepreneurial Social Support Among Undergraduates

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Abstract
Entrepreneurial social support is believed as an important factor to enhance entrepreneurial self-efficacy. The aims of this study were to examine entrepreneurial social support among undergraduates; to investigate differences of support provided by family, friends, significant other, and entrepreneurship course facilitators; and to examine differences of support among students with gender differences. This study involved 199 undergraduate students from a university which adopted entrepreneurship education in the curriculum. Gender distribution of the sample was 51.8% females and 48.2% males. Entrepreneurial Social Support scale was used as a data collection tool. This scale was a modification from the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support developed by Zimet et al. (1988). The results showed that the perceived support reported by students were in a moderate level, and tended to be high. Findings showed that support from friends scored the highest, whereas support from entrepreneurship course facilitators was reported as the lowest. Male students in general received more entrepreneurial support compared to female students. Detailed findings related to each source of Entrepreneurial Social Support and discussion of findings will be explored further in the paper.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Social Support, Entrepreneurship Education, Gender, Students
1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship have been increasingly studied in Indonesia as entrepreneurship is believed as a solution to the poverty and as a way for economic development of a country. Many studies have been conducted to find important factors contributing to entrepreneurial success. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy was considered as a critical factor for a person to achieve entrepreneurial success especially during a start-up stage of business (De Noble et al., 1999).

Self-efficacy can be viewed as ‘can do attitude’. Therefore, individuals with entrepreneurial self-efficacy, have ‘can do attitude’ to perform entrepreneurial tasks. De Noble et al. (1999) define entrepreneurial self-efficacy as “a construct that measures a person’s belief in their own abilities to perform on the various skill requirements necessary to pursue a new venture opportunity.”

Setiawan (2012) argues that university should prepare students to face challenges after completing their study. Entrepreneurship education should be adopted in universities to prepare students to be able to create jobs, not only to seek jobs. Considering the importance of entrepreneurial self-efficacy in students’ business start up, efforts to enhance entrepreneurial self-efficacy among students need to be carried out.

One of variables that was assumed to be associated with entrepreneurial self-efficacy is entrepreneurial social support. A study by Setiyadi (2012) showed positive correlation between social support and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Therefore, entrepreneurial social support is believed as an important factor to enhance entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Those who receive higher entrepreneurial support have a higher level of help to do their entrepreneurial/business activities and have a better probability to success. Those with social support would also experience social persuasion to boost their efforts. These two positive impacts of social support can be summarized in the concept of mastery experience and social persuasion. These concepts are two of four sources of self-efficacy stated by Bandura (1995).

Social support is defined as comfort, caring, esteem, or help an individual receive from other people or groups (Wallston et al., 1983 and Wills & Fegan, 2001, cited in Sarafino, 2008). There are four types of social support, including emotional or esteem support, tangible or instrumental support, informational support, and companionship support. Social support in the context of entrepreneurship can be called as entrepreneurial social support. For this study, entrepreneurial social support is defined as support that an individual receives from another person or group of people, in carrying out their entrepreneurship or business activities.

A previous study by Pehlivan et al. (2012) showed that social support was negatively correlated to hopelessness and loneliness in cancer patients. Those who reported a higher level of perceived social support, were not hopeless or lonely. Whereas, those with lower social support experienced a higher level of loneliness and hopelessness. Therefore, it is suggested that students who have a higher level of entrepreneurial social support would be more optimistic and would not feel lonely in facing challenges in their entrepreneurial tasks. The positive impact of social support to self-efficacy was also confirmed in a study by Weber et al. (2007). The study found that dyadic social support had positive impact on self-efficacy in older men treated by radical prostatectomy for prostate cancer. Consequently, it is expected that students with entrepreneurial social support would have better entrepreneurial self-efficacy.
Having reviewed the positive effects of social support, it can be argued that students in their learning process to be an entrepreneur should receive adequate support from their social network to develop their self-confidence to be an entrepreneur. Du et al. (2011) emphasise that entrepreneurial success needs support from different sources. Sources of support in life can be various, such as family, friends, teachers, physician, and many others. Zimet et al. (1999) focussed on three sources of social support including family, friends, and significant other. In the context of this study which took place at university which provides entrepreneurship courses for students, the sources of support addressed were family, friends, significant other, and entrepreneurship course facilitators.

The aim of this study was to examine entrepreneurial social support among undergraduates. Specifically this study investigated the differences of entrepreneurial social support provided by family, friends, significant others, and entrepreneurship course facilitators. Additionally, this study also examined differences in entrepreneurial social support among students with different gender. The study was expected to provide feedback for family, friends, and entrepreneurship course facilitators as the potential providers of social support for students.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 RESPONDENTS

This study was conducted among 4th semester undergraduate students in a university in an urban area in Indonesia. They came from the study programs of Psychology, International Business Management, and Visual Communication Design, which adopted entrepreneurship education in their curriculum. A total of 119 students participated in the study. The gender distribution was 51.8% females (n= 103) and 48.2% males (n=96). Respondents ranged in age from 18-22, with a mean age of 19.43 years old.

2.2 INSTRUMENTS

To examine entrepreneurial social support among students, this study used a questionnaire which was a modification of The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet, et al., 1988). MSPSS was originally utilised to measure the perceived support among undergraduates. This instrument has also been widely used to measure social support among different samples and cultures (Duru, 2007).

The scale developed by Zimet et al. (1988) was designed to measure the subjective assessment of the adequacy of perceived social support (Duru, 2007). It can be used to capture three major sources of support, including family, friend, and significant other (Lopez and Cooper, 2011). However, for the purpose of this study, the scale was modified in order to measure entrepreneurial support not only from those three sources of support, but also support from facilitators of entrepreneurship courses that students had been experiencing during their study. Additionally, the items of the scales were also put into a context of entrepreneurial/business activities. The instrument used in this study consisted of 16 items, and was reliable to examine entrepreneurial social support (Cronbach alpha = 0.822).

The participants of this study were asked to rate the support they had received in their entrepreneurial activities or projects, using a ten point Likert type scale (1= strongly disagree...
to 10= strongly agree). The higher the score chosen indicated the higher level of support they receive. On the contrary, the lower the score chosen indicated the lower level of support they receive.

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Data were also categorized using the categorization shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Categorization by Mean score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥ 8.8</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6 ≤ x &lt; 8.8</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 ≤ x &lt; 6.6</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 ≤ x &lt; 4.4</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x &lt; 2.2</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. RESULTS

3.1 GENERAL RESULTS

Table 2 showed the descriptive results of Entrepreneurial Social Support among students.

Table 2
Entrepreneurial Self-Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.44</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>47.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>38.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.01%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at the mean score of Entrepreneurial Social Support, the perceived support reported by students were in a moderate level, and tended to be high. Above 51% students perceived high or very high level of social support for their entrepreneurial activities. Whereas, only 10.06% students reported low or very low level of social support.

3.2 SOURCES OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SOCIAL SUPPORT

Detailed distributions of entrepreneurial social support from each source of support are presented in Table 3, 4, 5, and 6.
Table 3
Entrepreneurial Support from Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.54</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>42.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>34.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.02%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean score in Table 3 showed that in general students tended to perceive high social support from their family. More than half of sample (53.26%) reported that the social support they received from family were on above moderate level. Only 12.57% students perceive low or very low level of support from their family.

Table 4
Entrepreneurial Support from Friends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.89</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>48.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>36.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.01%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to entrepreneurial support from friends, the mean score in Table 4 showed that students in general received a high level of entrepreneurial support. From data distribution, 57.79% students reported that they received high or very high level of support for their entrepreneurship activities. Only small number of students (5.53%) reported below moderate level of support from friends.

Table 5
Entrepreneurial Support from Significant Other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.45</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>41.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>39.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.01%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students in general perceived moderate level of social support from a significant other. As shown in Table 5, nearly 50% of students reported high or very high level of social support from a significant other.
As shown in Table 6, entrepreneurial support from facilitators was also categorized as moderate. However looking at the data distribution, it can be seen that only 40.2% students perceived high or very high level of support. Compared to support from other sources, higher percentage of students (23.62%) reported low or very low level of support from entrepreneurship course facilitators.

The results of Entrepreneurial Social Support from each source of support is presented in Figure 1.

To investigate the statistical differences in perceived social support from various sources, paired samples t-test was conducted. The results of the comparison tests are presented in Table 7.
Table 7
Comparisons of Entrepreneurial Social Support by Sources of Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family - Friends</td>
<td>-2.961</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family – Significant Other</td>
<td>0.825</td>
<td>0.411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family - Facilitators</td>
<td>3.878</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends – Significant Other</td>
<td>5.542</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends - Facilitators</td>
<td>7.257</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant Other - Facilitators</td>
<td>4.468</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 7, support from friends were perceived as significantly higher than support from other sources. Support from family were perceived as significantly higher than support from facilitators. Support from significant other was perceived as significantly higher than support from facilitators. In summary, friends was perceived to provide the highest level of entrepreneurial support, whereas facilitators was reported to provide the lowest level of entrepreneurial support.

Table 8 presents the comparisons of entrepreneurial social support by gender.

Table 8
Comparisons of Entrepreneurial Social Support by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Male (n=96)</th>
<th>SD Male (n=103)</th>
<th>Mean Female (n=103)</th>
<th>SD Female (n=103)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial Social Support</td>
<td>6.72</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>2.579</td>
<td>0.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESS - Family</td>
<td>6.78</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>6.32</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.702</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESS - Friends</td>
<td>7.18</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>6.62</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2.497</td>
<td>0.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESS - Significant Other</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>6.24</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>1.802</td>
<td>0.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESS - Facilitators</td>
<td>6.23</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.259</td>
<td>0.025</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 8, male students generally reported higher social support than female students. Looking at sources of social support specifically, male undergraduates perceived higher social support from friends and facilitators than female undergraduates.

4. DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The results of this study showed that students in general reported a moderate level of entrepreneurial social support, but tended to be high. Looking at the sources of entrepreneurial support specifically, support from friends was perceived to be the highest, which was followed with family and significant other. Support from entrepreneurship course facilitators was perceived to be the lowest.
Inarguably, social support received depends on the intimacy and frequency of contact between an individual and the potential support provider (Cutrona & Gardner, 2004 and Wills & Fegan, 2001, cited in Sarafino, 2008). Students’ contact with friends and family are generally more frequent than their contact with entrepreneurship course facilitators. Generally students’ relationships with friends are closer than their relationships with family or university course facilitators. This may be one of the possible explanations for the fact that support from friends achieved the highest score and support from entrepreneurship course facilitators scored the lowest.

Sarafino (2008) also asserts that one of the factors determining the support received is the openness and assertiveness of the potential recipients of support. Potential recipients of support need to let others know that they need some help. Their assertiveness to ask for support/help also influences the support they receive. It is possible that students did not ask for help from their entrepreneurship course facilitators. They sought help and support from friends and family instead. Previous studies showed that friends and family are the most favourite sources of help among students (Cook et al., 1984; Dubow et al., 1990; Lin, 2001; Offer et al., 1991; Oliver et al., 1999; Raviv et al., 2000; Rudowicz & Au, 2001; Setiawan, 2006; Skuy et al., 1985). A study by Setiawan (2009) found that even for help in academic area, the most frequently chosen sources of help among students was friend. Mother was chosen in the second rank, whereas lecturer was only chosen in the third rank.

However, the findings that entrepreneurial social support from entrepreneurship course facilitators scored the lowest level compared to other sources of help may serve as feedback for the facilitators to improve their support to students. It is possible that the support given by facilitators is not sufficient because of time constraints (Sarafino, 2008). However, it is also possible that support given by facilitators is not perceived as supportive because it is the wrong kind (Dunkell-Schetter & Bennett, 1990, Wilcox, Kasl, & Berkman, 1994, cited in Sarafino, 2008).

Comparisons of entrepreneurial social support by gender showed that males students in general received more support than females. Additionally, males students received more entrepreneurial social support from friends and entrepreneurship course facilitators than female students did. There are two possible explanations for these findings. Firstly, females students may not put attention on entrepreneurship or business, which prevent them from asking support from others. Wilson et al. (2007) proposes that compared to women, men are more active in entrepreneurship. Women may think that they lack the required skills (Chen, Greene, & Crick, 1998, cited in Wilson et al., 1998). This belief decreases their efforts and consequently females are more passive in entrepreneurship than males (Chen et al. 1998, cited in Wilson et al., 2007).

Secondly, friends and entrepreneurship course facilitators may not provide equal support for male and female students. The differences in treatment may be the result of a gender belief in a culture of society. People may consider that entrepreneurship is more relevant to males, as males will be the leader of family and source of family income in the future. Consequently they do not pay high attention to support females in entrepreneurship.

Having discussed the results of this study, some recommendations were made to develop more young entrepreneurs in the country. Further studies exploring entrepreneurial social support from entrepreneurship course facilitators are suggested. Studies on gender differences
in entrepreneurship education should also be conducted. These studies will inform issues and concerns in this area and will improve entrepreneurship education in university. The other recommendation goes to entrepreneurship course facilitators. Facilitators should enhance their efforts to provide support both for male and female students. They should be more sensitive to understand type support needed by their students in order to give the suitable support and be supportive.

REFERENCES


