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## Entrepreneurial orientation and antecedents of low-income household heads in Kelantan, Malaysia

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**Abstract.** The objective of this study is to determine the distribution of entrepreneurial orientation across districts, gender, education level, occupation, and experience levels in Kelantan, Malaysia. This study employs the cross-sectional approach and quantitative data were collected from 800 low-income household heads in Kelantan, Malaysia. It was found that the distribution of entrepreneurial orientation is the same across gender. However, findings reported a significant difference in the distribution of entrepreneurial orientation across districts, education level, occupation, and experience level. Policy makers should therefore focus on interactive programs in order to increase the level of entrepreneurial orientation among low-income household heads in the district of Jeli, those who never attended school, the unemployed, and those who reported to have no experience as they scored the lowest mean rank.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Ability of an individual or a group of people in identifying opportunity and utilizing it to bring benefit to society and in return, success to their organization is known as entrepreneurship. This is why entrepreneurship is regarded as the forefront of a country's economic and social development in the form of wealth creation and distribution. Yusuf and Albanawi (2016) state that entrepreneurship is the key to economic growth, and it is responsible for the expansion and promotion of all types of productive activities in the world economy. The localized effect of entrepreneurship is to uplift the level of a society where it creates job opportunity for the local community, utilizes the local resources and raw material, reduces poverty and creates wealth, and has the ability to identify socio-economic needs and finally benefits the society (Tersoo, 2013).

The importance of entrepreneurship is evident as discussed above, but it may bring a different meaning and image among those in low-income and underprivileged communities. Government and development agencies are pushing entrepreneurship towards the low-income people through programs, trainings, and financial assistance. These communities are known to be involved in informal activities and engage in multiple types of business activities (Rosa, Kodithuwakku, & Balunywa, 2006). At times, informal sectors are not included in the entrepreneurship definition, but Spring and McDade (1998) gave a broader definition and included small scale informal economy to large scale operators in the formal economy. However, the act of getting in an entrepreneurial activity is a challenge for the low-income group compared to those above the poverty line group, as the day-to-day survival on limited resources is hard enough; the question of involving themselves in entrepreneurship is harder. However, entrepreneurship is still found to be relevant, focused, and given importance by individuals and organizations involved in poverty alleviation activities (Dyal-Chand & Rowan, 2014).

In the Malaysian scenario, entrepreneurship is highly regarded and accepted as the backbone of economic development, employment creating agent, wealth creator, poverty alleviator, and many more. Entrepreneurship is a tool for poverty eradication and the uplifting of low-income and underprivileged individuals since the Malaysian independence in 1957 and followed by the New Economic Policy in 1971-1990 (Hamdam, Othman, & Hussin, 2012). Domestically, the Malaysian government and development agencies are promoting entrepreneurship through micro, small, and medium establishments; they are equipped with entrepreneurial training and guidance, and financial support. Various agencies such as Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia, Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) under the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, and TEKUN under the Ministry of Entrepreneur and Co-Operative Development are among others involved in the formulation, creation, implementation, support, and facilitation of entrepreneur development programs at the federal and state levels. Empirical study by Hussain and Bhuiyan (2014) found that micro, small, and medium establishments are directly correlated with economic growth and poverty alleviation, and training and infrastructure gives this low-income group a choice to grow out of poverty.

Entrepreneurship is a widely researched area by both general press and scholarly researchers, as there is strong positive relationship between entrepreneurship and performance (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001). The emphasis on entrepreneurship has drawn attention towards the factors that affect entrepreneurship, and the concept of entrepreneurial orientation is considered an important framework in the research area of

entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial activities (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001), and has received substantial empirical and theoretical attention (Covin, Green, & Slevin, 2006). Entrepreneurial orientation is regarded as a strategy making process which allows firms to make entrepreneurial decisions and actions (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003). Based on that, entrepreneurial orientation is expected to bring better and sound decisions in improving entrepreneurial activities and performance. The meta-analysis study by Rauch et al. (2009) notes that the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and performance is not straightforward. It was found that entrepreneurial orientation is far more important for micro business compared to large or small business, and high-tech industries rely heavily on entrepreneurial orientation than non high-tech industries. As the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and performance is not homogeneous, Rauch et al. (2009) suggested that there might be moderators that would likely determine how entrepreneurial orientation would affect performance. A recent study by Zehir et al. (2016) found that entrepreneurial orientation even plays a mediating role between strategic human resource management and firm performance in terms of financial and employee performances. Another study (Latif, Abdullah, & Jan, 2016), which looked at the role of entrepreneurial orientation in commercialization of university research products found that entrepreneurial orientation improves the rate of commercialization. Perhaps it is thus, Covin and Lumpkin (2011) found the topic of entrepreneurial orientation drawing much greater scholarly attention within the field of entrepreneurship.

As the link between entrepreneurial orientation and performance has been established, it is safe to note that entrepreneurial orientation is important to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial activities. Interestingly, although entrepreneurial orientation and its attributes have been assessed to some extent in certain previous studies (Covin & Miller, 2014; Levenburg & Schwarz, 2008; Raposo et al., 2008); a thorough empirical examination of the construct and its dimension attracted less attention in existing literature. Moreover, according to recent research, there has been no known attempt to investigate and validate the distribution of entrepreneurial orientation at an individual entrepreneur's level (Bolton & Lane, 2012). Furthermore as Campos and Valenzuela (2013) highlighted, the effect of entrepreneurial orientation is both businesses-specific and context-specific, especially in case of small enterprises; thus it is perceived that a gap in literature exist with regards to the distribution of entrepreneurial orientation, represented by its antecedents across underprivileged entrepreneurs in developing nations. Therefore the present study attempts to bridge the gap in existing literature by addressing the significant question of how entrepreneurial orientation and its dimensions is distributed across different districts, genders, education levels, occupation, and experience among low-income households in emerging economies? Entrepreneurship being regarded as the lifeline for the low-income households and the given importance of entrepreneurship particularly to this group of individuals, lays the foundation for this study, whereby it is crucial to measure the level of entrepreneurial orientation among them. Based on the above, this study empirically measures the level of entrepreneurial orientation among the low-income households using respondents from Kelantan, Malaysia.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Prior to the term "entrepreneurial orientation", Miller (1983) described entrepreneurial firms as having 3 distinct elements: product market innovation; undertake risky ventures; and proactive. Following this definition and literature, scholars coined the term "entrepreneurial orientation". Working on Miller's work, Covin and Covin (1990) included the fourth element of competitive aggressiveness and the work of Lumpkin and Dess (1996) included autonomy, innovativeness, risk taking, proactiveness, and competitive aggressiveness. Finally, entrepreneurial orientation is defined as decision making styles, behaviors, practices, and processes, which lead to new or existing markets with new or existing goods or services

(Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003; Walter et al., 2006). In measuring entrepreneurial orientation, several researchers have attempted to forward a generalized measure of the construct represented by the dimensions of risk-taking, innovativeness, and proactiveness (Covin & Miller, 2014; Freiling & Schelhowe, 2014; Zhang, Ma, & Wang, 2012). Hence, this study in no way, propose an undefined measure of entrepreneurial orientation; rather, this study simply echoes with Freiling and Schelhowe (2014), arguing that existing (popular) indicators of entrepreneurial orientation limited to innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking narrows the scope of the construct, particularly when applied to specific cultural or contextual perspective (Covin & Miller, 2014; Campos & Valenzuela, 2013), such as low-income households in emerging economies. Therefore, based on Miller (1983), Covin and Covin (1990), and Lumpkin and Dess (1996) for indentifying and defining measurement areas of entrepreneurial orientation, this study focussed on components such as creativity and innovativeness, risk taking propensity, pro-active personality, and autonomy in order to capture entrepreneurial orientation among low-income households. The choice of entrepreneurial orientation for the purpose of present study was further influenced by Rauch et al. (2009) and Richard et al. (2004), where it had been argued that entrepreneurial orientation consists of three to five dimensions, wherein two more components co-exist with risk taking, innovativeness, and proactiveness to form the construct of entrepreneurial orientation.

### **2.1. Creativity and innovativeness**

According to Lumpkin and Dess (2001), innovativeness is the commitment to support creativity aimed to experiment by introducing new products or services, research and development towards new processes, technological leadership, and novelty. Creativity is the ability to create and invent something new through imaginative skills and combining, changing, or reapplying existing ideas (Okpara, 2007). It is further explained that innovation somehow begins with creative ideas, where creativity is necessary for innovation but not sufficient. Entrepreneurs should have creativity to be involved in innovation and innovative activities in order to change and improve their product and service offerings to survive the turbulent economic environment.

### **2.2. Risk taking propensity**

Risk taking refers to the tendency to engage in brave decisions and actions (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001). This could include venturing into unknown markets, investing heavily in uncertain ventures, and heavy borrowing. Risk is regarded as an important element in entrepreneurial decision making to accomplish entrepreneurial goals. Desislava and Alexandrova-Boshnakova (2011) categorize situations involving risky decision making, i.e., potential of extreme outcome, possible outcome with high degree of variability, and uncertainty of the potential outcome. Apart from entrepreneurial orientation, risk taking is noted to be linked to entrepreneurial passion (Ismail et al., 2015). Risk taking has been linked to firm performance for a very long time, and a recent study on small and medium enterprises proved again the link between risk taking propensity and firm performance. It was also found that the effect was amplified by having a stronger business, political, and community network (Danso et al., 2016).

### **2.3. Pro-Active Personality**

Pro-active personality is based on proactiveness, where the person is opportunity-seeking and anticipated in the introduction of new products and services before the competitor does it. Forward-looking and prepared to meet the future demands to shape and change the environment (Lumpkin &

Dess, 2001). Pro-active personality is linked to various types of performance. Bakker et al., (2012) found that in the absence of managers, pro-active employees were able to job craft and engage in work, which leads to a higher in-role performance. An earlier study found that a pro-active personality is strongly associated with entrepreneurial intention among students compared to gender and parental role models (Crant, 1996).

#### **2.4. Autonomy**

Autonomy is the individual or team action aimed at accomplishing a business concept or vision and committed to completion (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001), and it the work of Miller (1983), who found that a large portion of entrepreneurial firms had autonomous leaders. In general, autonomy can be described as the will power and ability to push one's self towards opportunities. Autonomy may vary based on firm size, management style, and ownership status. Promoting autonomy should therefore be considered providing independence among employees. An earlier study by Gelderen and Jansen (2006) found that autonomous freedom, i.e., self endorsement, power and resistance towards bosses or rules, acted as a start up motive.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a cross-sectional design to determine the distribution of entrepreneurial orientation across districts, gender, education, occupation, and experience levels in Kelantan, Malaysia. The target population for this study is the low-income households of the poorest state in Peninsular Malaysia, i.e., Kelantan. This study then selected four locations randomly from the state of Kelantan, including Bachok, Tumpat, Jeli, and Gua Musang. The population of this study is the low-income households registered under '*Majlis Agama Islam Dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Kelantan (ASNAF)*', Kelantan, Malaysia. A total of 3,090 low-income households form the population across the four districts, i.e., Bachok (1394), Tumpat (1257), Jeli (233), and Gua Musang (206). Since this study intends to compare across the locations and other antecedents, it randomly selected 800 low-income respondents, a total of 200 respondents from each location. Primary data was collected by the 'Graduate Research Assistants' working in the project (Project 1, NRGs Grant under Ministry of Education, Malaysia) and several enumerators studying Masters and PhD in Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Business, University Malaysia Kelantan. Data was collected from the 800 randomly selected low-income household heads through a face-to-face structured interview from July to December 2016. After data collection, this study conducted Shapiro-Wilk test to assess the normality and Cronbach's Alpha to assess the reliability of the data. As the data are not normal, this study therefore used the non-parametric Independent-Samples-Kruskal-Wallis Test to compare the mean score across the groups; using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

#### **3.1. Research instrument**

The questionnaire was translated into Malay and checked for inter-translator consistency. The questionnaire was developed based on the review of the existing entrepreneurship indices and tested through a pilot survey and the instrument was enhanced based on the comment and feedback from the pilot survey. This study used a five-point Likert scale ranging from one denoted as strongly disagree to five denoted as strongly agree to avoid confusion and bias from fatigue of longer scales. The research instrument (presented in Appendix 1) was adapted and modified from past studies and the existing entrepreneurship index (i.e., Norasmah, 2006; Noraishah, 2003).

## 4. EMPIRICAL RESULTS

### 4.1. Demographic characteristics

In order to conduct a cross-district, cross-gender, cross-education level, cross-occupation, and cross-experience level comparison on the distribution of entrepreneurial orientation, this study collected quantitative data from a total of 800 low-income household heads from the state of Kelantan, Malaysia. Among them, 544 (68.0%) household heads are women and 256 (32.0%) are men. High proportion of them, 292 (36.5%) are aged more than 55 years old, followed by 250 (31.3%) people aged between 31 and 45. Among them, 78 (9.8%) household heads reported not having children, 297 (37.1%) reported to have 4 to 6 children and 5 (0.6%) reported to have more than 12 children. Among the respondents, 423 (52.9%) reported to have an earlier experience in managing business. 241 (30.1%) of them had experience for less than 5 years while 42 (5.3%) of them had experience for more than 21 years. A majority of them, 570 or 71.3% reported to have an interest in venturing into a business, while 202 (25.3%) reported to have no interest, and 28 (3.5%) reported to be uncertain.

Cronbach's Alpha explains the indicators' inter-correlations, which estimate the reliability for the indicators used and the Shapiro-Wilk's test ( $p > .05$ ) explains the normality of data distribution. Based on Table 1, Cronbach's Alpha values for all items, i.e., creativity and innovativeness, risk taking propensity, pro-active personality, autonomy, and entrepreneurial orientation, are more than 0.7, which means all the items are reliable. The  $p$  value for all the items are less than 0.005, which means that the data is not normally distributed. This study therefore used the non-parametric Independent-Samples-Kruskal-Wallis Test.

Table 1

Descriptive, Normality, and Reliability

	Items	Mean	SD	Shapiro-Wilk (p Value)	CAlpha
Creativity and Innovativeness	4	3.5042	.10778	.000	0.786
Risk Taking Propensity	3	2.9775	1.16777	.000	0.838
Pro-Active Personality	5	2.8475	.10503	.000	0.836
Autonomy	5	2.8438	.94893	.000	0.811
Entrepreneurial Orientation	17	2.8316	.86521	.000	0.934

Source: Authors' results

Table 2

Entrepreneurial Orientation - Cross District Analysis

	Mean Rank (Bachok)	Mean Rank (Tumpat)	Mean Rank (Jeli)	Mean Rank (Gua Musang)	Kruskal Wallis Test
Creativity and Innovativeness	395.26	504.77	221.97	480.02	.000
Risk Taking Propensity	438.89	458.84	280.80	423.47	.000
Pro-Active Personality	431.75	518.51	196.36	455.39	.000
Autonomy	363.81	543.16	269.93	425.10	.000
Entrepreneurial Orientation	406.14	533.41	201.80	460.64	.000

Source: Authors' results

Based on the results presented in Table 2, there is a statistically significant difference in the

distribution of creativity and innovativeness, risk taking propensity, pro-active personality, autonomy, and entrepreneurial orientation across the four districts of Bachok, Tumpat, Jeli, and Gua Musang. Creativity and innovativeness are noted to be the highest in Tumpat with a mean rank of 504.77 and the lowest in Jeli with a mean rank of 221.97. Risk taking propensity is noted to be the highest in Tumpat with a mean rank of 458.84 and the lowest in Jeli with a mean rank of 280.80. Pro-active personality is the highest in Tumpat with a mean rank of 518.51 and the lowest in Jeli with a mean rank of 196.36. Autonomy is the highest in the district of Tumpat with a mean rank of 543.16 and the lowest in the district of Jeli with a mean rank of 269.93. Overall, the distribution of entrepreneurial orientation among the low-income household heads are the highest in the district of Tumpat with a mean rank of 533.41 and the lowest in the district of Jeli with a mean rank of 201.80.

Table 3

## Entrepreneurial Orientation - Cross Gender Analysis

	Mean Rank (Male)	Mean Rank (Female)	Kruskal Wallis Test
Creativity and Innovativeness	409.04	396.48	.458
Risk Taking Propensity	393.75	403.68	.554
Pro-Active Personality	396.52	402.37	.727
Autonomy	408.72	396.63	.467
Entrepreneurial Orientation	405.62	398.09	.665

*Source:* Authors' results

As presented in Table 3, the distribution of creativity and innovativeness, risk taking propensity, pro-active personality, autonomy, and entrepreneurial orientation is the same for both the genders of low-income household heads.

Based on the results presented on Table 4, there is a statistically significant difference in the distribution of creativity and innovativeness, risk taking propensity, pro-active personality, autonomy, and entrepreneurial orientation across the education level of low-income household heads in Kelantan.

Table 4

## Entrepreneurial Orientation - Cross Education Level

	Mean Rank (St. Six)	Mean Rank (PMR)	Mean Rank (SPM)	Mean Rank (Religious)	Mean Rank (No School)	Mean Rank (Others)	Kruskal Wallis Test
Creativity & Innovativeness	382.03	437.18	449.53	476.42	289.23	384.13	.000
Risk Taking Propensity	377.01	437.16	472.29	456.58	256.32	404.60	.000
Pro-Active Personality	394.48	448.70	459.10	536.50	249.27	409.27	.000
Autonomy	376.80	441.30	462.40	550.75	271.77	328.33	.000
Entrepreneurial Orientation	374.34	447.82	475.33	529.92	244.16	377.43	.000

*Source:* Authors' results

Creativity and innovativeness are noted to be the highest among those who attended religious schools with a mean rank of 476.42 and the lowest among household heads who reported to have never attended school with a mean rank of 289.23. Risk taking propensity is noted to be the highest among SPM

holders with a mean rank of 472.29 and the lowest among household heads who reported to have never attended school with a mean rank of 256.32. Pro-active personality is the highest among those who had religious education with a mean rank of 536.50 and the lowest among household heads who reported to have never attended school with a mean rank of 249.27. Autonomy is the highest among those who attended religious schools with a mean rank of 550.75 and the lowest among household heads who reported to have never attended school with a mean rank of 271.77. Overall, the distribution of entrepreneurial orientation among the low-income household heads is the highest among those who received religious education with a mean rank of 529.92 and the lowest among household heads who reported to have never attended school with a mean rank of 244.16.

Table 5 presents the results for the distribution of creativity and innovativeness, risk taking propensity, pro-active personality, autonomy, and entrepreneurial orientation across different types of occupation of low-income household heads in the state of Kelantan. It was found that creativity and innovativeness, risk taking propensity, pro-active personality, autonomy, and entrepreneurial orientation are all significantly different among laborers, fishermen, individuals doing own business, farmers, the unemployed, and those who answered “others”. Creativity and innovativeness is noted to be the highest among laborers with a mean rank of 488.34 and the lowest among unemployed with a mean rank of 340.91. Risk taking propensity is noted to be the highest among those who have their own business with a mean rank of 480.63 and the lowest among the unemployed with a mean rank of 312.64. Pro-active personality is the highest among those who have their own business with a mean rank of 470.57 and the lowest among the unemployed with a mean rank of 322.94. Autonomy is the highest among laborers with a mean rank of 515.41 and the lowest among the unemployed with a mean rank of 334.03. Overall, the distribution of entrepreneurial orientation among the low-income household heads is the highest among laborers with a mean rank of 505.71 and the lowest among the unemployed household heads with a mean rank of 313.64.

Table 5

Entrepreneurial Orientation - Cross Occupation

	Mean Rank (Labor)	Mean Rank (Fisherman)	Mean Rank (Own business)	Mean Rank (Farmer)	Mean Rank (Un-employed)	Mean Rank (Others)	Kruskal Wallis Test
Creativity & Innovativeness	488.34	449.37	445.66	404.04	340.91	424.08	.000
Risk Taking Propensity	470.79	356.80	480.63	402.88	312.64	463.18	.000
Pro-Active Personality	461.69	437.90	470.57	397.35	322.94	447.05	.000
Autonomy	515.41	418.50	452.17	363.70	334.03	442.76	.000
Entrepreneurial Orientation	505.71	420.57	471.37	388.55	313.64	458.42	.000

Source: Authors' results

Based on the results presented in Table 6, there is a statistically significant difference in the distribution of creativity and innovativeness, risk taking propensity, pro-active personality, autonomy, and entrepreneurial orientation across the experience level of low-income household heads in Kelantan. Creativity and innovativeness are noted to be the highest among those who had 6 to 10 years of experience with a mean rank of 479.91 and the lowest among those with no experience with a mean rank of 353.94. Risk taking propensity is noted to be the highest among those who had 6 to 10 years of

experience with a mean rank of 496.46 and the lowest among those who had 16 to 20 years of experience with a mean rank of 316.55.

Table 6

## Entrepreneurial Orientation - Cross Experience Level

	Mean Rank (<5 years)	Mean Rank (6 – 10)	Mean Rank (11 – 15)	Mean Rank (16 – 20)	Mean Rank (> 21 years)	Mean Rank (No experience)	Kruskal Wallis Test
Creativity & Innovativeness	441.64	479.91	428.53	416.36	393.76	353.94	.000
Risk Taking Propensity	460.07	496.46	463.96	316.55	486.90	330.67	.000
Pro-Active Personality	443.79	490.32	380.11	388.95	494.25	345.17	.000
Autonomy	451.30	477.89	455.40	360.66	405.87	347.62	.000
Entrepreneurial Orientation	454.87	508.02	423.16	353.05	451.46	337.06	.000

Source: Authors' results

Pro-active personality is the highest among those who had more than 21 years of experience with a mean rank of 494.25 and the lowest among those who had no experience with a mean rank of 345.17. Autonomy is the highest among those who had 6 to 10 years of experience with a mean rank of 477.89 and the lowest among those with no experience with a mean rank of 347.62. Overall, the distribution of entrepreneurial orientation among the low-income household heads is the highest among those with 6 to 10 years of experience with a mean rank of 508.02 and the lowest among those with no experience with a mean rank of 337.06.

## 5. DISCUSSION

Entrepreneurial orientation represents a cornerstone of entrepreneurship literature and therefore is considered a significant research topic (Covin & Lumpkin, 2011). Although entrepreneurial orientation and its attributes have received deserved attention to some extent (Covin & Miller, 2014; Levenburg & Schwarz, 2008; Raposo et al., 2008); a thorough empirical examination of the construct and its dimension was missing in existing literature, particularly at the entrepreneur level in context of small-businesses (Bolton & Lane, 2012; Campos & Valenzuela, 2013). Hence, to address the significant gap in literature, this study measured the distribution of entrepreneurial orientation across districts, gender, education level, occupation, and experience levels, using respondents from Kelantan, Malaysia as a data source. The empirical results of this study portrayed that the distribution of entrepreneurial orientation is the same across gender, however, a significant difference in the distribution of entrepreneurial orientation exist across districts, education level, occupation, and experience level. The findings of this study draw support from several existing studies (Miller, 1983; Covin & Covin, 1990; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Rauch et al., 2009; Richard et al., 2004), thus establishing creativity and innovativeness, risk taking propensity, pro-active personality, and autonomy as components of entrepreneurial orientation among low-income entrepreneurs. Moreover the findings of this study empirically support Campos and Valenzuela (2013), reflecting the context-specific distribution of entrepreneur orientation among the dispersed (in terms of districts, gender, education level, occupation, and experience levels) respondents of this study.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Entrepreneurial orientation is a crucial factor in entrepreneurial decision making. Therefore, this study followed Covin and Miller's (2014) search of unrecognized entrepreneurial orientation dimensions, to measure the level of entrepreneurial orientation among the low-income households in Kelantan, Malaysia. The findings suggest that the distribution of entrepreneurial motivation is the same across male and female low-income household heads. However, it is noted that entrepreneurial orientation is low among low-income household heads in Jeli compared to Bachok, Tumpat, and Gua Musang. On the other hand, entrepreneurial orientation level is found to be low among the low-income household heads who did not attend school and evidently, entrepreneurial orientation is low as well among household heads that were unemployed. At the experience level, a significant difference was noted where household heads with no experience showed a low level of entrepreneurial orientation.

Although entrepreneurial orientation reflects a topic of much research, most existing literature is found to be converged on the relationship of entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance (Campos & Valenzuela, 2013; Freiling & Schelhowe, 2014; Zhang & Wang, 2012). Hence, although incremental, this study forwards significant contribution towards relevant literature that attracted little attention (Covin, & Miller, 2014; Covin, & Lumpkin, 2011). In terms of novelty, this study uniquely contributes to the body of knowledge by examining the distribution of entrepreneurial orientation components (i.e. creativity and innovativeness, risk taking propensity, pro-active personality, and autonomy) across districts, gender, education level, occupation, and experience levels through the lenses of low-income households in emerging economies.

Based on the finding of this study, it could be recommended that components such as creativity and innovativeness, risk taking propensity, pro-active personality, and autonomy should be the focus in increasing the level of entrepreneurial orientation among the low-income household heads. Leaders and policy makers should make implementations in order to increase entrepreneurial orientation generally; and specifically among the low-income household heads in the district of Jeli; those who never attended school and the unemployed. Finally, in terms of limitations, it is acknowledged that although this study enhances existing literature and would be beneficial to Malaysian (and similar regional) stakeholders; it lacks a wider macro-perspective because of its focus on a specific income group. Moreover, although this study successfully identified the unequal distribution of entrepreneurial orientation; the reason for such unequal distribution is not determined in this research. Hence, it is recommended that future studies should focus on the reasons for the unequal distribution and key factors contributing to the low level of entrepreneurial orientation that would allow us a better understand of the construct.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Research Instrument

Code	Questions
<i>Creativity and Innovativeness</i>	
CI1	I have an ability in initiating new activities
CI2	I do not like routine task
CI3	I often like to try unusual activities that are not necessarily risky
CI4	I would rather try to solve the problem
CI5	I like to do something and reflect valued-added
CI6	Someone who always manages according to rules will succeed
<i>Risk Taking</i>	
RT1	I have to ask in advance to be briefed in business
RT2	I have to think in advance in order to get clarification effects related to business
RT3	I am willing to take risks for the sake of business
RT4	I enjoy the uncertainty and risks of business since they energize me more than circumstances where there are predictable outcomes
<i>Proactiveness</i>	
PR1	In my opinion, businesses will continuously grow if we can control our abilities
PR2	I am able to find suitable jobs
PR3	I easily take chances compared to others
PR4	Successful business people pursue any opportunity and do whatever they have to do in order to survive
PR5	I think that a successful businessman would do whatever they need to do in order to remain in business
PR6	I usually act in anticipation of future problems, needs or changes
<i>Autonomy</i>	
AU1	I am quite independent of the opinions of others
AU2	I am uncomfortable when I have complete responsibility for deciding how and when to do my work
AU3	I find that I can think better when I have guidance and advice from others
AU4	I like a job in which I don't have to answer to anyone
AU5	I respect rules and established procedures because they guide me