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Zalinawati Abdullah, Ahmad Suffian Mohd Zahari, Marhana binti Mohamed Anuar

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Determinants of Urban Farming Intention among Graduates: A Conceptual Paper

¹Zalinawati Abdullah, ¹Ahmad Suffian Mohd Zahari, ²Marhana binti Mohamed Anuar

¹Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Malaysia,

²Programme of Marketing, School of Maritime Business and Management,
Universiti Malaysia Terengganu

Email: ahmadsuf@uitm.edu.my ((Corresponding Author))

Abstract

Urban farming activities are important because they supply food resources to urban communities, greening urban areas as well as the desire to achieve community sustainability in the city. Increasing concerns over food security, unemployment, growing urbanization and limited space availability has generated interest towards urban farming. Urban farming is fast catching in Malaysia with many young people taking it up to grow their own vegetables in their backyards. Considering the potential of urban farming as a promising career path among youth, this study aims to examine factors influencing graduates intentions to engage in urban farming from the lens of theory of planned behaviour (TPB). To date, very few empirical studies have been conducted on graduates intention to engage in urban farming, particularly. The future study hopefully can contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the importance urban farming in a country, in addition to being able to further expand studies in aspects of urban farming in Malaysia. This study can also contribute in terms of recommendations to the improvement of internal policies urban planning, i.e. taking into account agriculture as an activity that needs to be preserved and continued in city.

Keywords: Urban Farming, Graduates, Attitude, Intention, Subject Norm, Perceived Behavioral

Introduction

The true definition of agriculture refers to the production of food and goods through plantation, cultivation, livestock and forestry. Agriculture is important to the rise of civilization when cultivation and husbandry led to surplus food and in turn enable development in a growing society and class. The agricultural sector is one of the economic activities categorized as a primary sector other than mining and quarrying (Refiswal et al., 2021). Agricultural resources cover all agricultural, livestock, fisheries and forestry products. However, spending these agricultural products have experienced a decline in production. Problems of agricultural resource management which often gets the public's attention, consists of water and air pollution, absence agricultural zoning and market failure (Ali et al., 2020)

Increasing concerns over food security, unemployment, growing urbanization and limited space availability has generated interest towards urban farming. Urban farming is fast catching on in Malaysia with many young people taking it up to grow their own vegetables in their backyards. Considering the potential of urban farming as a promising career path among youth, this study will examine the factors that influencing graduate's/ intention in Terengganu to engage in urban farming from the lens of theory of planned behaviour (TPB). To date, very few empirical studies have been conducted on youth intention to engage in urban farming, particularly in Terengganu. A total of 300 graduates from three public universities in Terengganu will be surveyed. The findings from this study may provide useful information to the university program planners in identifying mechanisms to enhance students' and youth engagement in urban farming as a potential career prospect in the future to reduce unemployment among graduates. In addition, the results would also be useful for policy makers in Terengganu in planning for community's economic and social development.

- Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to proposed that an urban farmer is a good carrier path especially for youth.

Literature Review

Urban farming is defined as the activity of producing, processing and marketing food and agricultural products in urban and suburban areas using production methods intensive, natural resources and urban waste to produce diversity crops and livestock (Devkota et al., 2022). While Bailkey and Nasr (2000) provide a definition urban farming as the cultivation, processing and distribution of food and other products through intensive cultivation and farming in and around the city. Agriculture cities and suburbs provide food products from a wide variety of different crops such as fruits, vegetables, grains, and even livestock such as chickens, cows, goats etc (Malunga et al., 2020). The most widely used definition for urban agriculture is from Mougeot (2000) who states that:

... An industry located within (intra urban) or on the fringe which grows or raises, processes and distributes a diversity of food and non-food products, (re-) using largely human and material resources, products and services found in and around that urban area, and in turn supplying human and material resources, products and services mainly to that urban.

The definition of urban agriculture from Mougeot (2000) embraces the idea that urban agriculture as one production industry in the city and also need to supply the city with crop produce. However in this study, urban farming is not seen as an industry but as a practice cultivation that takes place in urban areas and in the suburbs. This cultivation practice is closely related to food supply to the city as noted by (Goldstein et al., 2011). Urban farming is planting crops and raising animals in an urban environment for the purpose of supplying food to the locals. Thus, urban farming is practiced globally in economic, cultural, ethnic and situation. Urban farming is an activity undertaken by the urban community in tackling food security problems, social injustice and even the environmental degradation that is taking place in their community.

Urban farming has provided food, employment, environmental improvements, education, local beautification and inspiration. Factors such as the high unemployment rate, rising food prices, elimination of food subsidies, social safety nets weak, food security awareness and

healthy lifestyle habits have led to its occurrence the movement of urban farming by local communities in most cities in the world (Mougeot, 1999). Urban farming fulfills various functions and benefits such as cleaning up waste sites, educating the youth, employment opportunities, providing utilities to the elderly, building society, recycle and produce fresh and nutritious food (Taib et al., 2019). For the urban area in facing food security problems, urban farming is important because it is one way to resolve food security issues and needs to be considered in a larger context. Urban farming may not be the best solution in addressing food security issues globally, yet security issues local food is one of the best ways to promote urban farming (Omotesho et al., 2017).

As stated in the policies that have been enacted, the youth are categorized as valuable assets of the country because they are the heirs which will continue the continuity of national development and constitute the most important source of labor. Besides, the energy resources that are the pillars of this country, must be developed and mobilized to be a quality energy resource development partner and productive. Although economic liberalization and privatization policies have been argued as a driver to the economic growth, the young generation are not able to continue and maintain that success. The full focus given by the government to the agricultural sector now is a sign that the government is so serious and expecting the progress that this sector can bring to the country. However this progress depends on many factors including the necessary role played by those who are the movers of agriculture themselves i.e. farmers, entrepreneurs, farmers, agencies and so on (Tiraieyari et al., 2019). To achieve the goals as expected by the country, youths who are productive, creative, imaginative and high competitive is highly expected in the Malaysian farming community.

Since the field agriculture is focused and becomes a hot topic of discussion, what about the views and acceptance of the youth towards agriculture? In a scenario where youth are particularly less likely to engage in agriculture now, what efforts are being made primarily to attract them. Will the youth take all the opportunities provided in particular to pursue agricultural education and to venture into agriculture as their occupation?. The fact is, despite many educational programs is organized by relevant ministries and agencies, youth participation still did not show an encouraging increase. Youth participation to receive agricultural education however depends on many factors. Among them theb perceptions or images of agriculture, knowledge and openness of mind them on information related to agricultural education programs, and curriculum. The perception and positive image among youth towards the field of agriculture became clues as to how they received and viewed the field of agriculture alone (Tiraieyari & Krauss, 2018). The overall view of the youth on agriculture is also very important because at least the youth know how to evaluate and rank on the contribution and importance of the agricultural sector to the development of the country.

How else do they want a job as an agricultural entrepreneur to be seen. Do the youth want the field of employment in agriculture to be considered as a professional profession and requires high expertise, high power entrepreneurship and so on? Despite the concern about positive impacts of urban farming, there is also a need to study the factors affecting graduates intention to involve in urban farming. Given a paucity of research, this study aims to uncover the factors influencing graduetes intention in urban farming in Terengganu, Malaysia.

Attitudes

Social-psychology theory of planned behavior (TPB) is an important framework to understand, predict and describe human intentions and behavior (Ajzen, 1991; 2012). TPB illustrate that attitudes directly affect the intention (Ajzen, 2006) and that behavioural intention is not only influenced by attitudes toward behaviour and subjective norms; but is also influenced by perceived behavioural control. The psychological constructs: attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control are derived from behavioral, normative and control beliefs, respectively (Borges et. al., 2016). A person's desire to do something is influenced whether he/she has a positive appraisal (valuable, vital, enjoyable, happy, etc.) or has a negative evaluation (upsetting, insignificant, evil, etc.). Previous research has shown that the strongest predictor of participation was students' attitude toward urban agriculture, followed by subjective norms, career motives and perceived barriers to participation (Tiraieyari & Krauss, 2018). Grebitus et al (2017) found that consumers generally have a positive attitude towards urban agriculture and the reasons that prevent them from using those farms as shopping outlets are mainly associated with cost and inconvenience. There are also other researchers that confirmed attitude of farmers is a significant factor towards their intention to convert (Deng et. al., 2016; Jones et. al., 2016; Sok et. al., 2016; Van Dijk et. al., 2016). However, in Lapple et. al (2013), the researcher subsequently divided the attitude into two categories which is economic and non-economic attitude. Farmers with high economic attitude do not have significant relationship with the intention to convert as compared to non-economic attitude.

Subjective Norm

The subjective norm is the perceived social pressure that causes a person to do or not to do a particular behaviour (perceived social pressure) (Ajzen, 1991). It is the degree to which people perceive that they will approve or disapprove of the people around them in the context of their expectations about the specific behaviour they are currently taking. The higher the motivation to respond, the higher the likelihood of performing a specified behaviour can be seen (Ajzen, 1991). Normative beliefs are the likelihood that important referent individuals or groups approve or disapprove of performing a given behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In other words, it is a belief concerning expectations of important referents to produce overall perceived social pressure or subjective norms towards an individual to perform a given behavior (Ham, et. al., 2015). Tiraieyari and Krauss (2018) found that subjective norms have had an effect on volunteering intention for urban agriculture among undergraduate students.

Perceived Behavioral Control

Perceived behavioural control is characterized by ease of execution of behaviour and it is defined as the level of belief that the behaviour is in It reflects a personal belief. This perceived behavioral control includes past experiences and anticipated difficulties. Perceived behavioural control is an important part in TPB. In fact, TPB differs from the theory of reasoned action due to the addition of perceived behavioral control. According to TPB, a person must to some extent dictate the possibility of behavioral achievement whenever the resources and opportunities are available (Ajzen, 1991). A study by Morais, et al (2017) found that the control beliefs 'ease to buy more land' and 'professional recognition' influence successors' perceptions about their own capability (perceived behavioral control) to take over the farm. Thus, the individual's previous experience has a big impact on that individual and

influences whether or not they are going to be compelled to perform a particular behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Intention

According to Hardin-Fanning and Ricks (2016), an individual should be able to competently act on their intention to the extent that they have the information, intellect, skills, capabilities and other internal factors needed to perform the behavior. Intentions are presumed to capture the motivational factors that influence a behaviour; they are signals of how hard people are willing to try, of how much of an effort they are planning to exert, in order to perform the behaviour. As a general rule, the stronger the intention to engage in a behaviour, the more likely should be its performance. A study by Tiraieyari, Ricard and McLean (2019) found that undergraduate students from across a university in Malaysia are more motivated to volunteer in an agricultural volunteer program. According to the theory of planned behaviour, intention or willingness to perform behaviour is the instant precursor to the individual engagement in the behaviour (Brayley et al., 2015). In fact, intention or willingness to perform behaviour is determining the readiness to perform behaviour (Ajzen, 2011). Intention to volunteer has shown to have strong and positive relationship with voluntary behaviour (Chancon et al., 2007). While a more recent study among Malaysian university students showed that intention refers to factors that drive and motivate practitioners to start urban farming in which the idea of urban farming was triggered by hobbies, passion and for a healthy source of food (Ibharim and Salim, 2020).

Methodology

The study setting for this research was a non-contrived setting and a field study in which the researcher plan to collect the data and adapted the Theory Planned Behaviour to empirically test the relationship between attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control and the influence on intention and willingness towards urban farming. The researcher plan to choose the survey method as the main research strategy. The survey will be use to collect information from graduates to describe, compare and explain their subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, intention and behaviour. The unit of analysis for this study will be the individual. Hence the data will be gathered from each individual graduate and each graduate's response will be treated as an individual data source. Lastly, as regards the time horizon for gathering the data in order to answer the research questions, the researcher decided that the data would be gathered just one time within 1 month and that the study would be cross-sectional in nature. This type of study is also known as a one-shot study. This study will use a purposive sampling technique and the unit of the sample will be chosen from 3 public universities alumni focused on graduates. The purposive sampling use to seek out 300 graduates' volunteers who would interest in participating in an online survey questionnaire that will be presented in the Google Form format and will made available via internet connection who interacting with social networking applications. This study will use software program SPSS version 25 for descriptive data analysis that emphasize the respondent background and SmartPLS version 3.2.9 software to determine the reliability and validity of the questionnaire as well as to examine the significance of each variable in the research framework. Therefore, the proposed conceptual framework is:

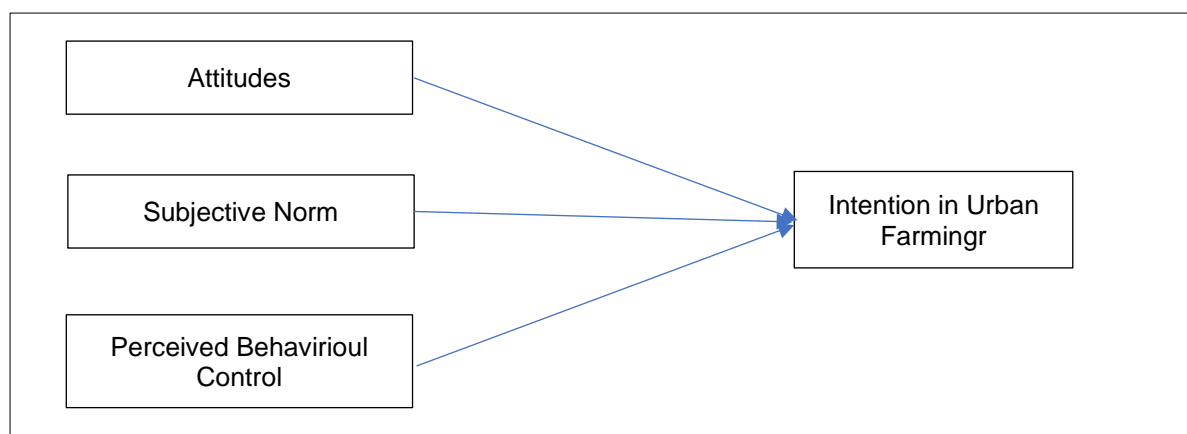


Figure 1. Proposed Framework

Conclusion

To make the agricultural sector move forward, the main driver is the youth. The youth's view on the importance and role of the agricultural sector to the country is a major contributor to the national economy. Appropriate methods will also be proposed to be adopted by the parties involved as programs and actions in their agenda to educate the youth as the next generation of agriculture. In this paper, the study is proposed to investigate the factors that influencing graduate's intentions to engage in urban farming from the lens of theory of planned behaviour (TPB). Attitudes, subjective norm, and purposed behavioural control are the proposed variables in creating intention decision on urban farming. It is hoped that the proposed framework will contribute for scholars, agriculture sectors as well as farmers in providing fruitful insight. Thus, it's far advocated for future researchers to do an empirical study at the anticipated framework.

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All authors are equally contributed to the conceptual as well as the design of the study.

Corresponding Author

Ahmad Suffian Mohd Zahari

Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Business and Management, UiTM Terengganu, Malaysia

Email: ahmadsuf@uitm.edu.my

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