

Factors That Influence the Interest of Youths in Agricultural Entrepreneurship

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Abstract

For as long as one can remember, agriculture has been considered a backwater sector. Hence it was not viewed as an attractive alternative to other work sectors such as manufacturing, private, and public sector employment. Nonetheless, the transformation of agriculture sector spearheaded by the Prime Minister of Malaysia has somewhat nullified the said perception. The primary purpose of this research is to identify the factors that influence youth interest to become agricultural entrepreneur, and to investigate the relationships of factors with the interest of youth to become entrepreneur. In this context, two hundred and fifty (250) youth in Pahang, Malaysia was selected as respondents from the population of agricultural entrepreneur in Malaysia. This study used two methods namely qualitative and quantitative as the best way to address the issue of agriculture entrepreneurship. In the qualitative method purposive sampling where chosen as data collection method. The respondents selected are those who have experience, expertise and involved for many years in the agricultural business. The first finding is that all respondent agrees that attitude, acceptance and knowledge are the factors that influence youth to become agriculture entrepreneurs. The second finding indicates that attitude and acceptances are the factors which significantly influence the youth interest in agriculture entrepreneurship. This study also surprisingly reveals that knowledge factor is not significant in influencing interest of youth to become entrepreneurs. Further, the open-ended questions reveals other factors which influenced young people to become entrepreneurs are; family support, government support and promotion through carnivals and festivals. These findings provide insight to the government officials in the ministry of agriculture to resolve unemployment issues and achieve successful economic growth through the agriculture sector.

Keyword: Factors, youth, agriculture entrepreneurship

Introduction

Background of the Study

Malaysia is a blessed country with fertile soil and right climate which is highly suitable for agriculture activities. Opportunities for agriculture-based businesses and activities are almost unlimited. Furthermore, the demand for agriculture products is rarely affected by the world economic crisis and downturn. The agriculture sector which comprise of lot of activities ranging from crops, livestock to fisheries. It is still seen as one of the sector which expected to offer many job opportunities. In many parts of the world, agriculture sector covers a wide array of industries such as farming, animal, fisheries, food processing, non-food processing, plantation and many more (Silva et al., 2010). The most popular activities are fisheries and agro-based industry, the rise of new contract farming activities such as leech rearing, worms rearing, herbs and mushroom have indeed attracted huge interests from public (Silva et al., 2010)

However, agriculture sector in Malaysia is still considered as secondary as compared to other more popular sectors such as manufacturing, commercial or even the government sector. This is largely due to the conventional opinion that the agricultural sector is a rough job with low salaries and does not promise a direct good future for the people. It is considered not the right place especially for those with tertiary education. The youngsters are more attracted to the glamorous jobs in factories and in commercial sectors.

The careers are important for every individual because they constitute a variety of benefits and functions that color the individual's life (Rahman, 2000; Sidek, 2006; cited by Othman and Ishak, 2009). Needless to say, these fields are less back-breaking and look more promising. As a result, most farm lands are abandoned due to insufficient labors. And to overcome this problem more farm owners are looking to migrants labors to work their fields (Ishak, 2009). Even to these workers, agriculture does not seem as attractive as factories and other commercial establishment (Ishak, 2009).

The economic crisis has also posed challenges to the youth to find a suitable work or to build a successful career. The number of unemployment among the university graduates keep on increasing (Bahaman et al., 2010). This situation should be taken more seriously as it is a national crisis (Bahaman et al., 2010). The number of youth constitutes 42% of Malaysian citizens and the current rate of unemployment among youth is at 4% (Bahaman et al., 2010). Likewise, a recent statistic displayed that from a total of 27 million Malaysian recorded, 41% or 11.1 million are youths, and the increase in the number of youths has boosted the percentage of unemployment especially among university graduates (Silva et al, 2009).

Agriculture industry has huge potential and thriving business with full and active government backing provide big opportunity to entrepreneur (Silva, 2009). Even though the general perception of people towards agriculture is negative, there still exist in the believe that agriculture sector has the ability to offer a high income provide it is operated in the right way (Man, 2007). Recent statistics presented in the Ninth Malaysia Plan (RMK-9) supported this fact where in 2005, income generated from agriculture sector was RM 39 million and in 2010 it is expected that more than RM50 million will be generated from this sector (Pemandu, 2013). The society is confident that the agriculture sector is the vast potential for investment and with higher returns. Furthermore, the high demand for agriculture products has never ceased. Although this transformation in agricultural sector is very encouraging, it is not an easy for one to be implemented because it requires energy from everybody, especially among the youth, be it man or woman.

The growth in business in the country can improve the personal economic autonomy and also helps to reduce unemployment (Othman and Ishak, 2009). Autonomy is also believed to have an attitudinal connection to choosing entrepreneurship as a career (Bird, 1989). With autonomy, an individual who craves freedom and challenges will be able to choose his own field, be independent, be his or her own boss, and work according to his or her own style (Hisrich and Peters, 1998). On the other hand, monetary value motivates an individual to monetarily strengthen his economic standing and use it as a yardstick to measure his or her success as an entrepreneur (Bird, 1989).

In order to cultivate interest in youth into agricultural entrepreneurship, Malaysian government has been providing a variety of activities and programs to improve their skills (Pemandu, 2013). The training such as product processing, marketing, advertising, branding are offered and organized largely by agricultural departments. Promotion of agricultural products to be launched by the Malaysian Agriculture, Horticulture and Agro-tourism will provide opportunities for youth to get ideas to create new products (Pemandu, 2013). Cooperation from the media such as television, radio, magazines, news paper is very important in promoting the agricultural sector and to influence the interest of youth towards agricultural entrepreneur.

Having recognizing the importance of agriculture sector, the Malaysia government is also putting concerted effort to promote and create more awareness among the youth of potential in this sector. It is achieved through the media by continuously promoting the government's transformation program. (Pemandu, 2013). This program is a model based on market requirements, economies of scale and the integration in value chain (Pemandu, 2013). The program is one of the creative programs by the government intended to change the Malaysian negative public mindset towards the agriculture sector.

Statement of the Problem

One of the pitfalls of the global economic crisis is the rising of unemployment, particularly among the youth. The ripple effect of this crisis is inflation which triggers the rising of food prices, commodities and fuels. The other worrying problem is the dramatic increase reliance on foreign workers on human resources requirement occurring in most industries.

It cannot be denied that the efforts to advance the national economy based on agricultural production has to be taken seriously. Youths are the future of a country with their limitless energy and aspiration. Hence there is a need to ensure a successful agricultural sector in this country.

Currently there is job scarcity in other more established fields such as government as well as the private sectors. The ability of agriculture sector to create an environment so that youth are willing to embark in this sector is grossly required. The agriculture sector is long left by the youth even there is lucrative long run potential economic growth. Their awareness and commitment in the agriculture sector which left by them many decades ago need to be revived. Above all, there is pressing need to change the paradigm of youth towards looking the agriculture sector as one of the opportunity for them to be self-employed. The other aspect is that the government is hard-pressed to revive the agriculture sector. The effort drawn by the government to involve more youngsters to become more self-reliance and eventually establish themselves as agriculture entrepreneurs is the outcome yet to be seen and proven.

Objectives and Research Questions of the Study

The objectives of the study are to identify the factors that influence youth to become agriculture entrepreneur and to investigate the relationship of factors with the interest of youth to become agriculture entrepreneur.

Based on these objectives, the factors that affect the interests of youth to participate as entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector can thus be identified. The objectives of the study give rise to the following research questions;

- What are the factors that influence the interest of the youth to become agricultural entrepreneur?
- What are the relationships of factors with the interest of youth to become entrepreneur?

Significance of the Study

Reviving the agricultural sector resulted in more job opportunities and new businesses. However to be a successful agricultural entrepreneur, youths must have a sense of self determination, hardworking, intelligent management and knowledge about agriculture to achieve the goals. The emergence of new technology in agricultural practices in the government transformation program has made the sector more attractive to the younger generations.

Transformation of the agricultural sector has provided in more a positive outlook from the public. The public have begun to realize the importance of the agriculture in nation building. There are vast and unlimited opportunities it offers the people, especially the youth. As such more young people are willing to have the opportunity to participate in agriculture-based businesses.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of the study is that the sample taken only from one of the state in Malaysia which restricted in terms of representativeness. There should be an attempt to cover the other states in Malaysia. The other limitation is the selected respondents were those aged between 18-40, both male and females. Some respondent genuine feedbacks are that young people typically do not give an honest and accurately answers. Thus, precise information required was difficult to acquire. The interviews with 10 respondents required to ensure ample items for designing appropriate questionnaire is considered small. Since all the respondents are working at the time of research, it is difficult to get their full cooperation.

Literature Review

Definition of Entrepreneur & Agriculture Entrepreneur

The entrepreneur is a person who bought factors of production for the production of goods to be sold (Othman et al., 2010). An entrepreneur is also an innovator or a developer who recognizes, seizes and converted opportunities into workable or marketable ideas, adds value through time, effort, skills, money, assumes the risks of the competitive marketplace to implement these ideas, and finally realizes the rewards from these efforts (Ronstadt, 1991). However, agricultural entrepreneurs are those who classifies all activities that help farmers to adjust a free market economy as entrepreneurial (Richards and Bulkley, 2007). This makes agricultural entrepreneurs a fairly diverse group with farm activities (Richard and Bulkley, 2007).

These activities are not necessarily correlated with farm size, gross receipts, production classification or geographic region (Richard and Bulkley, 2007). The other aspect of agriculture entrepreneurship is the management strategies employed by agricultural businesses in response to the structural changes in the agriculture sector (Man et al., 2002). These strategies are specialization, diversification, and supplementation.

Overview on Agriculture Issues in Malaysia

Malaysia is blessed with fertile soil, abundant rainfall and suitable climate for food production. Nonetheless, it is still a net food importer and has never achieved a food trade balance surplus (Shamsudin, n.d). Realizing the opportunity and potential for the development of this sector, the government had declared agriculture as the third engine growth to the economy (Shamsudin, n.d). Malaysia is still basically an agricultural country despite the fast developing into an industrial country (Murad et al., 2008). It has 4.06 million hectares of agricultural land distributed throughout 13 states (Murad et al., 2008). Eighty percent (80%) of this land is cultivated with industrial crops such as palm oil, rubber, cocoa, coconut and pepper (Murad et al., 2008). In 2006, Malaysian agricultural sector contributed significantly to country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and it became the third engine of growth next to the manufacturing sector and service sector (Murad et al., 2008). Thus Malaysian agriculture sector has a profound impact on the country's environment, economy and people.

Although there is an increase in awareness of the opportunities in the agricultural sector, lack of manpower is still a problem (Abdullah and Mustapha, 2009). In the Ninth Malaysia Plan 2006 that began in 2005, agricultural sector experienced a decrease in their work force, from 1.42 million in 2000 to 1.40 million (Abdullah and Mustapha, 2009). This number represented only 13.3 per cent of this country's total work force. Reliance on foreign workers is also very worrying. According another statistics, in 2000, there were 190,000 legal foreign workers in this sector (Abdullah and Mustapha, 2009). The Ninth Malaysia Plan in 2006 also identified that the migration of youth from this sector has also resulted in many elderly workers remaining in agriculture sector (Abdullah and Mustapha, 2009). Current statistics shows 43.8 percent of farmers in Malaysia are in the age group of 55 years and above, while only 25.3 per cent in the range of 15 to 40 years (Abdullah and Mustapha, 2009). Based on the previous study by Malik, & Mohaini (1992); Aliasak et al. (1993), Ahmad (1993); and Nurulhuda (2006) determined that this migration occurs because the children of the farmers, especially Small holders were no more interested in the agricultural sector (Abdullah and Mustapha, 2009). The low socio-economic standard associated with the agricultural sector is the prime reason for this migration. These youth would prefer to look for greener pastures in other field that promise better return such as in industrial sector (Abdullah and Mustapha, 2009). More secured employment opportunities in big cities cannot be matched with the much volatile employment in agriculture sector (Abdullah and Mustapha, 2009).

Manufacturing sector was able to offer higher wages and better conditions of work (Murad et al., 2008) as compared to agriculture sector. To make matter worst the agricultural workers were not offered higher wages although there are high of workers outflow from the agricultural to manufacturing sector (Murad et al., 2008). The agricultural sector can be a key factor in improving the country's economy based on supplying food to the world's population (Silva et al, 2009). In many parts of the world, the agriculture sector covers a wide range of industries such as farming, animal, fisheries, food processing, non-food processing, plantation and many more (Silva et al., 2009). The agriculture offers a lot of attractive activities and businesses (Silva et al., 2009). The most popular are fisheries and agro-based industry. The rise of new contract farming activities such as leech rearing, worms rearing, herbs and mushroom farming have indeed attracted huge interests from public and investors (Silva et al., 2009).

The transformation of the agricultural sector towards a money making entity enable the perception of the society and public towards entrepreneurship to change. The government driven transformations programs are creating challenges and opportunities for producers, processors, wholesalers, retailers and other supply chain participants (Silva et al., 2009). Contract farming is promoted by governments where development agencies act as coordinator to facilitate the integration of small farmers into these supply chains (Silva, 2005).

Youth as the target to implement Agricultural Business

Youth generally refers to man or women who are young, have abundance energy and strength both mentally and physically (Bahaman et al., 2010). Youth is the main focus acting as the backbone and catalyst for the country economic development goals (Bahaman et al., 2010).

United Nation categorized youth as those between 15-24 years old (Bahaman et al., 2010). However, the Malaysian Youth Council, 2007, emphasized that those whose age between 15 to 40 years old can be considered as youth (Bahaman et al., 2010). Youth can also be referred to as those whose age range from 15 to 40 years old based on a number of factors deemed fit in terms of their maturity, ability to think positive, or a risk-taker (Silva, et al., 2009).

Over the years many countries are gearing towards producing youth agro-businessmen that are productive, proactive, creative, imaginative and competitive (Silva et al., 2009). One of the modern agriculture methods that can be undertaken to overcome the rate of unemployment is to encourage youth participation in contract farming (Silva et al., 2009). In 2000, around 52.6% or 2.3 million of the 4.37 million youths are employed (Othman et al., 2010). The remaining youths (i.e. 47.4%) consisted of those who had completed their education or training, applying for work, and students who are still in the secondary schools, attending preparatory courses and in tertiary education. By 2005, the total youth population has increased to 4.98 million (Othman et al., 2010). These data indicated that there is high and bright prospects for encouraging the youth to be in business in the manufacturing and most suitably in the agricultural sectors.

Factors that influencing youth interest in Agricultural Entrepreneur

Although many people are aware of the significant advantage of agricultural sector, it still requires a monumental tasks attract the youth to become agriculture entrepreneurs. Thus, recognizing the factors that influence them to become entrepreneur is crucial as it can acts as guidance to strategize and to promote agricultural sector. There are several factors that influence the youth to become agricultural entrepreneurs. These factors which are extracted from the review of previous literature review are socio-demography, attitudes, acceptance and knowledge discussed in the subsequent sections.

Socio-Demography

The Socio-Demography is the first factor that affects the attitude and acceptance of youth towards agriculture entrepreneur. It includes gender, age, income, locality, and ethnicity. Demography factors are the variables that effect attitude towards contract farming (Silva et al., 2010). Demographic variables that had been studied were gender, age, income, locality and ethnicity (Silva et al, 2010).

Gender is one of the indicators for the factors that play a role in determining the attitude and acceptance of youth towards entrepreneurship (Silva et al., 2010). However gender did not have a significant impact on work performance (Konavalchuk et al., 2008). However in study by Gidarakou (1999) found that women were found to have negative attitude towards contract farming compared to men.

Age is meant to refer to the individual age appropriate for agricultural activities (Silva et al., 2010). There were significant differences between age groups concerning attitude towards contract farming (Man, 2007). Uli et al. (2010) stated that the research completed by Salleh and Azril (2009) and Ezhar et al. (2007) revealed that the average age of farmers in Malaysia is exceeding 46 years old. All of these findings bring us to one understanding; Malaysia needs a backup agriculture community consisting of youth, both men and women to support the current group of farmers.

Needless to say, there should be initiatives to attract the youth interest towards agriculture. For majority of the people, the most important consideration in choosing jobs is the remuneration, i.e. the wages or salary (Silva et al., 2010). Youth believed that agricultural industry is not a vibrant industry as it generates only meager income (Gidarakou, 1999). Hence, the attitude of youths in general is that getting involved in agriculture sector is seen as a temporary experience, acceptable as an answer to unemployment problem only for such time until better solution can be found (Girdarakou, 1996).

Silva et al. (2010) stated previous study by Stephenson and Lev (2004) found that income is not a major determinant in creating a positive attitude towards agriculture activities while a study completed by Hyttia and Kola (2006) found a altogether a totally different view. Generally, lower income people tend to choose agriculture activity as their main money generating activity or as a side income (Hyttia and Kola, 2006). Silva et al. (2009) claimed based on Kumar (2007) in his study noted that what contract farming has got to offer to the community posses the potential to increase youth acceptance of contract farming.

The study done by Kumar further strengthens the research completed by Mann and Kogl (2003) which emphasized bigger profits garnered through contract farming will be a catalyst for having more people to have a positive attitude to accept contract farming. The opportunity in agriculture can be tremendous and overwhelming. Needless to say, the demand for food will never subside regardless of the economic situation in any given country. Hence, the opportunity for agriculture entrepreneurship will be limitless. The problems of poverty and unemployment in the community also can be resolved. The poor chose agriculture as one of their main income generating activities because of their belief in the ability of agriculture in producing higher productivity with less investment (Silva et al., 2009). Rural people are always associated with agriculture activities including contract farming (Silva et al., 2010). However, it was found that no significant difference between those with agriculture background and those without (Silva et al., 2010).

Attitudes

Attitude is another factor that influences youth to be involved in agriculture entrepreneur. These attitudes can be formed based on an individual's degree of like or dislike on something (Bahaman et al., 2010). Usually attitude portrays either positive or negative views of a person, place, thing or an event (Brahaman., 2010). Attitude is an important determinant of an individual's success in entrepreneurship (Othman and Ishak, 2009). The attitudinal approach is the best way to explain the entrepreneurial process because it links the individual and the ever-changing attitudinal object (Robinson et al. 1991; cited by Kuratko and Hodgetts 2004). A true and positive attitude is needed to assist a person in choosing and participating in entrepreneurship (Salleh et al. 2005). This is because the decision to abandon a current career or comfortable life as it is not an easy decision to make, as entrepreneurship demands sacrifices (Hisrich et al., 2008).

Youth as the future of the nation must be sensitive and sensible in their career development. They should think not only for their future but also of their families, societies and to a larger extent that of their nation. Careers are important for every individual because they constitute a variety of benefits and functions that color the individual's life (Othman and Ishak, 2009). Careers in entrepreneurship are growing due to the fact that they can offer endless opportunities (Salleh 2002). Like any other careers, entrepreneurship has its own unique level of development (Salleh, 2002).

Youth attitude in selecting a career have an impact on the unemployment issues. It is identified that the number of youth constitutes 42% of Malaysian citizens and the current rate of unemployment among youth in Malaysia is 4% (Bahaman et al., 2010). In another statistics, from a total of 27 million Malaysian recorded, 41% or 11.1 million are youths and the increase in the number of youths has boosted the percentage of unemployment especially among university graduates (Silva et al., 2010). The high employment among youth can provide the potential feeder to country transformation programs towards creation of agriculture entrepreneurship.

Acceptance

Acceptance is another important factor in influencing youths to become agriculture entrepreneur. Youth will be more emotionally prepared and have positive outlook towards agriculture as a whole, and more importantly, motivated to establish their own agriculture related business. Acceptance as an expression or implication by action that demonstrates agreement to the terms and condition of an offer, this results in the formation of binding contract (Bahaman et al., 2010). Offer through some act of performance confer the exercise of power (Bahaman et al., 2010). This act of exercising the power for something is offered by oneself or another as intended by retaining the subject of the offer.

Contract farming offer to the community possess the potential to increase youth acceptance of contract farming (Kumar, 2007; cited by Silva et al., 2009). The study conducted by Kumar further strengthens the research completed by Mann and Kogl (2003) which emphasized that bigger profits garnered through contract farming will be catalyst for having more people to have a positive attitude and accept contract farming. Therefore, existence of acceptance factor will eventually attract more people to involve in the agriculture sector and give this sector the much needed boost.

Knowledge

Knowledge is the third factor and considered as important factor to establish an interest in youth in agriculture entrepreneurship.

Knowledge can lead to more skills to youth as a preparation to establish their own business (Othman et al., 2010). Othman et al. (2010) highlighted that in the Seventh Malaysia Plan 1996-2000, the thrust of youth development was on developing skills necessary for them to contribute towards effective nation-building (Malaysia, 1996). It was further mentioned that both in the Eighth Malaysia Plan (2001-2005) and the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010), the emphasis was to prepare the youths with positive attitude, knowledge, and skills so as to enable them face with the challenges and economic changes that brought about by globalization (Malaysia, 2001: 2005). Entrepreneurship education and training are important for economic development, particularly in improving the quality and increasing the quantity of future entrepreneurs (Othman et al., 2006). Entrepreneurship education at higher institution of learning is also expanding in the forms of academic and practical aspects (Othman et al., 2010)). There is positive links between entrepreneurial activity and economic outcomes such as innovation and economic growth (Praag and Versloot, 2007). In a way, more positive perceptions might result if the agricultural literacy knowledge level of citizens were to be enhanced (Frick et al., 1995; cited by Silva et al., 2009). Knowledge too has become a key factor in influencing perception, and this trend is set to be intensified (Silva et al., 2009). In the 21st century, knowledge accumulation and application will drive peoples' perception (Silva et al., 2009). When this occurs, it increases the possibility of having more positive perception towards contract farming (Silva et al., 2009). There is no doubt that new scientific knowledge coupled with concerns for the social, economic and environmental aspects of agriculture brought Malaysian agriculture sector into a physical transition (Murad et al., 2008).

Relationship between Factors and Interest to become Agriculture Entrepreneur – Research Model

Entrepreneurship is regarded as one of the best economic development strategies to develop country's economic growth and sustain the country's competitiveness in facing globalization (Schaper and Volery 2004; Venkatachalam and Waqif 2005; cited by Keat, et al., 2011). For most people, the popularity of entrepreneurship is largely due to the positive effects it has on many countries as a catalyst that creates wealth and the generation of job opportunities (Postigo and Tamborini 2002; Ghazali et al. 2005; Gurol and Atsan 2006). More specifically, entrepreneurship is a major engine driving many nations' economic growth, innovation and competitiveness (Scarborough and Zimmerer 2003; Kuratko and Hodgetts 2004). At the same time, most studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth in terms of job creation, firm survival and technological change (Hanlon et al. 1997; Lena and Wong 2003; cited by Pazarskis et al. 2006). Socio-Demography is also considered as the main reason that affects the attitude and acceptance of youth towards agriculture entrepreneur. Socio-Demography has a few other parts in the form an attitude of youth. It includes gender, age, income, locality, and ethnicity. Supported by the study of Keat et al. (2011) research by Koh (1995, 1996); Reitan (1997); Breen (1998); Picot et al. (2000); Dunn (2004); Smith (2005); Veciana, Aponte et al. (2005); and Kirkwood (2007) suggested the influence of demographic and family background on individual's inclination towards entrepreneurship. The common premise is that a good influence by family as well as own experiences about entrepreneurship would contribute to higher inclination towards entrepreneurship (Koh, 1996; Mazzarol, Volery et al. 1999; cited by Kirkwood, 2007).

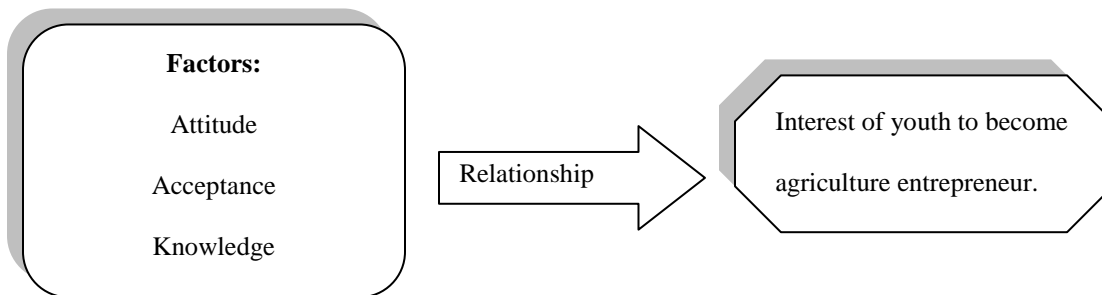
The effect of role models on inclination towards entrepreneurship is widely discussed in the literature (Ghosh et. al 1995; Glancey et al., 2005; Stephens et al. 2006; Kirkwood, 2007; cited by Keat, et al., 2011). According Hisrich et al. (2005), role models are "individuals influencing an entrepreneur's career choice or styles". Attitude refers to an object be it a specific person, place, thing, event, activity, mental concept, cognitive orientation, life style or even combinations of the various categories (Tamizharasi and Panchanatha, 2010). Attitude also exists at the general and the specific levels for many objects (Tamizharasi and Panchanatha, 2010). Because of this, attitude specificity needs to be matched by measurement specificity (Abelson, 1982; Ajzen and Madden, 1986). Attitude can also be defined as a mental and neural state of exerting readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individuals regards to all objectives and situation with it is related (Allport,1935). Human beings are said to have stable sets of attitudes (Keat et al., 2011). However, attitude differs across individual (Keat et al., 2011). Attitudes are not permanent features (Keat et al., 2011). For example, attitude towards achievement in general is not the same as attitudes towards an achievement in entrepreneurial setting (Keat et al., 2011).

Acceptance is defined as an expression or implication by conduct that demonstrates assent to the terms of an offer in a manner invited or required by the offer, this results in the formation of binding contract (Chirelstein, 2001; Bahaman et al, 2010).

The exercise of power conferred an offer by performance of some act (Bahaman et al., 2010). The act of a person to whom something is offered or tendered by another, whereby the offer demonstrates through an act invited by offer an intention of retaining the subject of the offer (Bahaman et al., 2010). Acceptance can be influenced by the exposure to the pertinent knowledge (Shaban et al., 2006; cited by Uli et al., 2010). Adding to this, people refuse to accept what agriculture can offer including contract farming because of their lack of knowledge (James, 2004). The acceptance towards agricultural can be further developed if the literacy knowledge level among the community can be enhanced (Frick et al., 1995).

Entrepreneurship education and training are important for economic development, particularly in improving the quality and quantity of future entrepreneurs (Othman et al., 2010). There has been great interest in entrepreneurship education and training in the recent years (Galloway and Brown, 2000). Youth are the power (Samah et al., 2010). As such the overall development of a country depends on their regimented, active and skilled performance (Samah et al., 2010). More than 40% of Malaysian population are youth (Samah et al., 2010). These youths have the ability to play the significant role in building global food security and development (Samah et al., 2010). The extraction from the review of previous literature indicated there is clear relationship between the three factors which is attitude, acceptance and knowledge and with the interest of youth to become entrepreneur. The relationship exist through discussed review of literatures, a research model of the study is developed and as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Research Model



Research Design and Methodology

Research methodology is a critical phase of the study since it highlights the actual process which will determine the outcomes of the research. This study is conducted using two methods: qualitative and quantitative. The two methods are discussed in subsequent sections.

Qualitative Method

The first method is qualitative which focuses on exploring the themes and patterns to of an entrepreneur environment. This theme is used to describe an integrating idea in relation with the data (Richards, 2005). In a sense it can be defined as a pattern that provides information which describe and organize observation that interprets maximum aspects of phenomenon (Boyatzis, 1998; cited by Fereday and Cochrane, 2006). In this study, qualitative method is carried out focused on themes and patterns.

Sampling Design

Purposive sampling techniques are primarily used in qualitative study in particular setting by selecting units for individuals, groups of individuals, and institutions which have specific purposes of obtaining information. (Teddlie and Yu, 2007; Maxwell, 2007). In this study purposive sampling was chosen. Ten (10) respondents with varies years of experiences and expertise in the agricultural business were interviewed.

Design of Interview Question

Structure interview is the specific way of asking questions and provide direct response (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). In order to explore the specific answers for entrepreneurs' particular decisions, structured interview is adopted. Interview is an interaction which takes place either face-to-face, over the phone, or on cyberspace and its purpose is to uncover information a short period of an individual's or group's life (Higgins, 2009).

In this study interview questions are designed to explore the interest of youths in agriculture entrepreneurship which allows spontaneous answer. There are a total of five (5) main sections of the questions. The first section designed to elicit the main reasons for their interest in entrepreneurship. The second section is meant to know their motivational factors for involvement in agriculture entrepreneur. The third section identifies the level of satisfaction of the youth involvement in the business. The fourth section is concerned with the importance of knowledge before venturing into the business. The last section explores the view on the future of agriculture business. There are altogether ten (10) questions from all these sections.

Pilot Study

Pilot test will assist the researcher in determining if there are flaws, limitation or other weaknesses within the interview design which allow him or her to make necessary revisions prior collection data of the main study (Turner, 2010). Performing a pilot is also a useful method to ensure that interview questions are appropriate and useful for the purpose of extracting the required information (Turner, 2010). Of the five (5) respondents participated in this pilot test, two (2) had more than ten years experience in the agricultural business. The other two (2) respondents had six years of involvement in agricultural business while one (1) had only two (2) years experience. The questions were given to those who participated in the pilot test. After the test, all of these were accepted with minor adjustment based on the comments provided by the respondent.

Data Collection

Data is collected by direct interaction or interviews (Matveev, 2002; Higgins, 2009). The latter were conducted on ten (10) respondents who had been selected based on their experience in the agricultural entrepreneurs.

Data analysis

The qualitative data is an analysis- based codes, patterns or themes that are related and coherent to one another, emerge to form a structure which explains a certain phenomena (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Dalyet al., 2007). The coding structure written in terms of themes and patterns will provide the indicators required by the questionnaire in the quantitative study.

Analysis on the qualitative method is based on the similar result of ten (10) respondents' opinion based on their experiences in agricultural business of the structured interview. This result in this analysis is based on three (3) different levels; high, medium and low. High level refers to the extensive number of respondents with similar opinions. Medium level refers to the fewer number or only half of the respondents with similar opinion and finally, the low level which refers to the small number of respondents with similar opinion. By the way, this analysis focused on five primary issues.

Quantitative Method

The quantitative methods allows researcher to deduce research questions a priori from established theory, allowing to test theories and examine relationships between cause and effects proven or tested empirically (Higgins, 2009). Descriptive statistics and multiple regressions were used as the two method of analysis.

Sampling Design

Random sampling method is chosen because of it is convenience and economical (Higgins, 2009). As such large number respondents are able to response at a minimum cost. This study used a simple random sampling where 250 youths in the state of Pahang, Malaysia were selected as the respondents. Based on literatures, the sample consisted of the youths who are between 18 to 40 years of age with various demographic backgrounds in terms gender, race, religious, marital status and education.

Questionnaire Design

A survey is a questionnaire that is designed to capture information about attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs (Haggins, 2009). The literature review and feedback from the panel of experts provides inputs or indicators for the development of the questionnaire (Samah et al., 2010). The indicators or items from the questionnaire in the quantitative study is taken from past literatures and from the themes drawn from qualitative study.

This questionnaire is divided into three (3) sections. Section A attempted to examine the socio-demographic profiles of respondents.

Section B explores the factors that influence youths to become agriculture entrepreneur which comprises of indicators with the aim to identify the factors that influencing youth to become agricultural entrepreneur. The three types of factors to be studied are attitude factor, acceptance factor and knowledge factor. The factors consist of attitude factors with 10 indicators, the acceptance factor with 8 indicators, and the knowledge factors with 9 indicators. Altogether there are total of 27 indicators. Section C of the questionnaire is designed to examine the relationship of the factors and the interest of youth to become entrepreneur. Likert scale was used in this study. Besides strength, simple and easy to use, Likert Scale is often interesting for respondents to complete the questionnaire (Robson, 1993). The five point Likert Scale ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. This scale is selected to ascertain data collected from the respondent is as accurate as possible. The last section which is section D is an open-ended question with the purpose to elicit other factors that will influence youth to become agriculture entrepreneur.

Pilot Study

In quantitative study, pilot test is necessary to evaluate and revise the questionnaire that was design earlier from a group of potential respondents (Forza, 2002). A total of thirty (30) respondents answered the questionnaire in the pilot test. The respondents are all from Pahang state. These respondents completed the questionnaire and their feedbacks from the questionnaire were recorded. Subsequently the researcher pop the questions ; are the instructions and questions are clear, are there any problems in understanding the question; and what kind of answers were to be expected; and guiding answers to the questions posed. The feedbacks recorded were adjusted and improved in the questionnaire before the main quantitative data collection was conducted.

Data Collection

The collection data begins with identifying the location and the target respondents to ensure accuracy of data. For the main quantitative study, a total of 250 respondents were selected from state of Pahang, Malaysia. Data for this study was gathered using self-administered questionnaire survey. As an additional form to data collection, the researcher also resorted to the direct mail or door to door survey.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics and multiple regression are used to analyze the data. The former is used to describe the behavior of the data as mentioned by Bazeley (2009) while the latter is a technique for modelling the linear relationship between two or more variables (Bakar, 2009). In the case of this study, the relationship between the factors and interest of youth to become agriculture entrepreneur is determined through multiple regression. Once the data has been collected from the survey, Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS Version 12.0) is used to analysis the data.

In this study, attitude, acceptance and knowledge are set up as independent while the interest of youth to become entrepreneur is the dependent. Cooper and Schindler (2011) identified the general linear regression model, with

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n + \epsilon, \text{ where}$$

β_0 = a constant, the value of Y when X values are zero

β_i = the slope of the regression surface (The β represents the regression coefficient associated with each X_i .)

ϵ = an error term, normally distributed about a mean of 0 (for purposes of computation the ϵ is assumed to be zero). Regression coefficient for this study found in the column "B" shows the unstandardized regression coefficients for the equation.

Data Analysis

Qualitative Analysis Findings

Table 2 indicated the results of the qualitative method of the information of the youth interest in agriculture entrepreneur. The result of the qualitative study reflected high level results from all ten (10) respondent opinions based on experience in agriculture business. The five main primary issues or themes are; the main reasons of interest, motivation, the satisfaction and the importance of knowledge and future views of this field. The high values of similar opinions of all the respondent indicated the interest of youths in the business or entrepreneurship.

Table 2: Information on Youth interest in Agriculture Entrepreneur

	<i>Results From Interviews</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low</i>
1.	Main Reasons of Interest			
a.	Believe this area is profitable	√		
b.	Desire to have own business	√		
2.	Motivation			
a.	Have motivation in running business	√		
3.	Satisfaction			
a.	Free to make decisions	√		
b.	Free to manage own business	√		
c.	Free to manage work time	√		
d.	Offer employment to others	√		
e.	Sharing of profit with their family	√		
4.	The importance of knowledge			
	Attend seminar to increase the skill	√		
5.	Future views of this field			
a.	Believe this field has good future	√		

Quantitative Analysis Findings

Of the 250 sets of the survey questionnaires distributed, all the questionnaires returned are usable, vis-a-vis a 100% respond rate. The inspection has been performed on the correctness of the data entry, missing values and other necessary treatments. Only the completed data is available in the SPSS tables for subsequent interpretation.

Respondent Profile

The respondents are classified into three classes of age. The respondents who are between 18 – 25 years old formed the biggest percentage of 38.4. The respondents who are between 26 – 35 years old formed 34.0% and the smallest percentage was 27.6 refers to respondents between 36 – 40 years old. On gender category, 74% were male while the female group formed 26 percent of the total number of respondents. In terms of ethnicity, 72.8% are Malay, 17.2% are Chinese, 8% are Indian and 2% refers to others. In the status category, 62.8% are single, 31.2% are married while 6.0 percent are divorced.

The respondents with income less than RM 3,000 constitute the biggest percentage (56.4 %) while 3.16% of the respondents draw an income between RM 3,001 – RM 6, 000. 10.8% take home between RM 6,001 – RM 10,000, while the smallest percentage, 1.2% refers to those earning more than RM 10,000.

The respondents are classified into four categories based on their educational background. The first group is SPM or STPM holders that make up the biggest percentage (85.6%). The second group is the Diploma holders at 6.8% percent, smaller than those with degree qualification which make up about 7.2% and the forth group is the Master holders with only 0.4%.

The backgrounds of the respondents were divided into two sections; the respondents with agricultural backgrounds at 89.6% and the respondents with no agricultural background at 10.4%. The locality of the respondents was also divided into two parts; the respondents who live in rural area (85.6%) and those residing in urban area (14.4%). Table 3 shows the results of the demographic profile of the respondent.

Table 3: Demographic Profile of Respondent

Variable		Frequency N=250	Percentage (%)
Age	18-25	96	38.4
	26-35	85	34.0
	36-40	69	27.6
Gender	Male	185	74
	Female	65	26
Ethnicity	Malay	182	72.8
	Chinese	43	17.2
	Indian	20	8
	Others	5	2
Status	Single	157	62.8
	Married	78	31.2
	Divorced	14	6.0
Income	Less than RM 3,000	141	56.4
	RM 3,001 – RM 6,000	79	31.6
	RM 6,001 – RM 10,000	27	10.8
	More than RM 10,000	3	1.2
Education	SPM/STPM	214	85.6
	Diploma	17	6.8
	Degree	18	7.2
	Master	1	0.4
Background	Have agriculture background	224	89.6
	Do not have agriculture background	26	10.4
Locality	Rural	214	85.6
	Urban	36	14.4

Factors that influence youths to become agriculture entrepreneur

Factors that influence youths to become agriculture entrepreneur as the answer the first research question. The results of this study are as indicated in Table 4;

Table 4: Factors that influencing youth (Frequency N=250)

Description	Mean
Attitude	4.3612
Acceptance	4.6725
Knowledge	4.6169

Table 3 shows that the mean variable for attitude is 4.3612 from a five of Likert-scale. Mean variable for acceptance is 4.6725 and for knowledge is 4.6169. Based on the results of this study, all respondents agree that these three factors do influence the youth towards agricultural entrepreneurship.

Open-ended questions provided the respondents with the opportunity to give their own views and opinions about other factors that influence them to become agriculture entrepreneurs. The other factors are as illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5: Other factors that

Factors	Frequency N=250	Percentages	Qualitative Result
Family Support	128	51.2%	High
Government Support	77	30.8	Medium
Promotion by carnivals and festivals	45	18%	Low

This result found that there were other factors that influence the youngsters whether to become agricultural entrepreneur or otherwise. These factors are support of own family, support of the government and the level and the intensity of promotion particularly during carnivals and festivals. This study found that family support is the highest factor based on the 128 respondents' opinions representing 51.2% of the 250 respondents while government support comes next with 77 opinions representing 30.8%. The lowest result refers to the promotion factor during festivals and carnivals with 45 respondents' opinion with 18% of 250 respondents.

The relationships of factors with the interest of youth to become entrepreneur

The relationships of factors with the interest of youth to become entrepreneur as the answer to the second research question as a purpose to fulfil the second objective of this study. The three factors consists of the attitude (X_1) acceptance (X_2) and knowledge (X_3) as independent and to interest of youth to become entrepreneur as the dependent (Y).

Using the enter method, a significant model emerged ($F_{3,246}=112.92, p < 0.0005$. Adjusted R square =0.574. Significant variables are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Coefficients^a of the Independent Variable

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.245	0.192		6.472	.000
Attitude	0.137	0.038	0.164	3.583	.000
Acceptance	0.425	0.050	0.512	8.465	.000
Knowledge	0.172	0.051	0.212	3.384	.001

Dependent Variable: Interest

Table 7: Relationship factors and interest of youth to become entrepreneur

Predictor Variable	Beta	Predictor
Attitude	0.164	P > 0.0005
Acceptance	0.512	P > 0.0005
Knowledge	0.212	P = 0.001

(Knowledge was not a significant predictor in this model)

From Table 6 and 7, the Coefficients^a of the independent variables can be presented in the form multiple regression equation as:

$$Y = 1.245 + 0.137X_1 + 0.425X_2 + 0.172X_3$$

The results from both Table 6 and 7 indicated that attitudes and acceptance have the highest significant relationship with the interest in agriculture entrepreneurship. The factor of attitude and the factor acceptance are related to the interest of youth to become entrepreneurship were similarly mentioned in the previous literatures (Bahaman, 2010). In contrast knowledge is not significant in influencing youth to become agriculture entrepreneur as indicated in Table 7. This finding is just the opposite to the previous literatures (Othman et al., 2006) that indicated knowledge is related to the interest of youth to become entrepreneurship.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has identified (3) three factors that influence the youth to involve in agricultural entrepreneurship; attitudes, acceptance and knowledge. Besides, it has also investigated the relationship between these factors with the interest of youths to become entrepreneurs. The study also identified other significant factors such as family support, government support and promotion through of festivals and carnivals. The finding indicated that the attitude and acceptance has significant relationship with the interest of youth to become entrepreneur while the knowledge has no significant relationship with interest of youth to become entrepreneurs. The study concluded that the decision on whether to be involved in agriculture entrepreneurship is not only confined to attitude, acceptance and knowledge but is also determined by the other factors such as family support, government support and the intensity of promotion by related government agencies and related authorities.

From the findings, it was concluded that Malaysia is in the right tract in promoting agriculture entrepreneurship as one of the transformation agenda. To expedite the process though, more effort needs to be done. From this study, it was found that attitude and acceptance have a significant relationship with interest of youth to become agriculture entrepreneur. Significantly, the interest to become agriculture entrepreneur is based on their attitude and voluntary acceptance without any coercion from any parties. Within the context of Malaysia, this study also indicates that the level of knowledge and education is relatively insignificant in influencing the youths to become entrepreneur.

The other factors such as family and government support as well as more aggressive promotions in the form of agriculture festivals are deemed to be equally important to encourage youths to participate in agriculture sector. It is apparent that youth is a catalyst for the success of a country. Therefore, they should be alerted to the opportunities for self-advancement and that of their families and should not be overly selective in their selection of jobs. Self-employment might be the avenue for them to a better and brighter future.

It is hoped that this research can act as a guideline or will explore new ideas for future researcher to conduct studies in similar issue. The findings will also help to enlighten the related authorities in their effort to have more youth in agriculture field. All in all, agriculture based businesses is the future to a more self-reliance nation like Malaysia.

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