

www.europeanproceedings.com

DOI: 10.15405/epsbs.2023.11.02.49

ICMC 2023 The 3rd International Conference on Management and Communication

ENGAGEMENT OF SARAWAK'S GEN Y BIDAYUH FARMERS IN AGROPRENEURSHIP

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Abstract

Agropreneurship, which combines aspects of agriculture and business, is drawing more attention as a way for nations to establish a sustainable competitive advantage. Agriculture production has become a viable alternative in many developing countries, like Malaysia, that supports growth on both a national and economic level. This study intends to look into the variables affecting Bidayuh Gen Y members' participation in agroentrepreneurship. There were four factors found: attitude, knowledge, familial influence, and a lack of other employment options. Purposive sampling was used in the study to decide on the sample size, and probability sampling was used as the sampling method. The data was analyzed using bivariate Pearson correlation analysis, descriptive analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The findings show that only three factors—knowledge, family influence, and a lack of other employment options— significantly and favorably affect a person's willingness to engage in agropreneurship. However, it was discovered that attitude had little bearing on how much they participated. Notably, family influence was found to have the greatest impact on individuals' intentions to engage in agropreneurship, followed by a lack of expertise and other employment options.

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Keywords: Agropreneurship, Attitude, Family Influence, Generation Y, Knowledge

1. Introduction

Despite the advancements in modern development and the adoption of an advanced economic way of life, the majority of the Bidayuh people continue to reside in rural areas, where they actively engage in various agricultural pursuits (Ambrose, 2003). The Bidayuh people hold a deep respect for land and soil, considering them vital sources of sustenance and life. This community is renowned for inhabiting fertile lands, some of which are dedicated to agricultural cultivation, resulting in a diverse range of agricultural products (Zaimah et al., 2015). These agricultural products not only serve as a source of sustenance but also contribute to the community's income when sold in the market. Consequently, the Bidayuh community is characterized by its strong inclination towards agropreneurship. Remarkably, this passion for the agriculture sector is evident across different age groups within the Bidayuh community (Ambrose, 2003).

However, despite the significance of agropreneurship, it has received limited attention in the existing literature, with most research primarily focusing on general entrepreneurship (Solesvik, 2013). Considering the vital role that the Gen Y segment plays in the country's economic development, it is surprising that their involvement in agropreneurship remains an understudied area, marked by a scarcity of empirical data (Ahmad et al., 2015). Moreover, even within the limited research available, the inclusion of Gen Y individuals who have undergone specialized training in Agribusiness-related programs has been overlooked. Although some studies have provided an overview of the literature on Gen Y entrepreneurs, they lack rigorous empirical investigations (Koe et al., 2012).

Several research studies have suggested that attitudes, knowledge, family influence, and a lack of alternative job opportunities significantly impact the intention of Gen Y individuals to participate in agropreneurship (Abdullah & Sulaiman, 2013; Keong Choong, 2008; Koe et al., 2012; Kimaro et al., 2015). However, these variables have yet to be explored within the context of the Bidayuh community's Gen Y population. Therefore, this research aims to investigate and determine which of these four factors has the most significant impact on the participation in agropreneurship among Gen Y individuals in the Bukar Sadong sub-clan.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Agropreneurship: The new dimension in agriculture sector

An entrepreneur, as defined by Drucker (1985), is an individual who possesses the capability to identify and seize opportunities, transforming them from less productive to more productive endeavors. In many developing countries, agricultural production is recognized as a viable alternative that can contribute to national and economic improvement. Bairwa et al. (2014) stated that agribusiness can foster economic growth in nations that prioritize the agricultural sector. Nowadays, agriculture is not solely practiced by impoverished individuals; individuals from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds engage in it, as it offers additional income and wealth accumulation compared to other sectors. Thus, the integration of entrepreneurship and agriculture has given rise to the concept of 'agropreneurship' (Yusoff et al., 2017).

Agropreneurship refers to the act of selling agricultural products, whether by purchasing from others or by producing and selling one's own products (Yusoff et al., 2017). Individuals involved in selling agricultural products are considered agropreneurs. This new dimension of the agriculture sector has implications not only for individuals but also for society and the entire country. It has led to the development of small and medium-sized agro-based enterprises (SMAES), which significantly contribute to global economic growth. Agropreneurship is progressively gaining popularity in the fields of agriculture and enterprise, as it offers sustainable competitive advantages for countries. It has profound effects on the country's economy, the growth of business as well as survival (Yusoff et al., 2017).

The formation of agricultural firms within the agricultural and related sectors is the consequence of agropreneurship, according to research, which further underlines that agriculture and entrepreneurship can coexist profitably (Bairwa et al., 2014). Yusoff et al. (2017) concur that agropreneurship encompasses activities related to the production, distribution, and to make money and support sustainable communities, agriculture produces goods for sale. The agriculture sector in Malaysia includes a wide range of operations, including raising crops, raising animals, raising fish, selling goods and services, developing and progressing, and undertaking unique initiatives like agrotourism and agro-based enterprises (Kadir & Quarters, 2010).

2.2. Community participation in agropreneurship

2.2.1. The attitude of the young farmers

Attitude refers to an individual's contrasting thoughts, beliefs, and emotions toward a particular object or concept. It represents the positive or negative perspective that a person holds regarding something. For entrepreneurs, a genuine and inspirational attitude is crucial in decision-making and business engagement (Barhemmati & Ahmad, 2015). Attitude encompasses an individual's perception and can influence their internal locus of control (Kimaro et al., 2015). When it comes to agriculture, Gen Y perceives it as a significant alternative solution to unemployment and economic challenges. However, research indicates that the attitude of Gen Y toward the agriculture industry tends to be negative, with only a limited number of individuals showing interest in participating. Many view the agriculture sector as low-status and unattractive for employment (Abdullah & Sulaiman, 2013).

Studies have found that youngsters in rural area who engage in agriculture endeavors exhibit a a favorable outlook on agriculture (Kimaro et al., 2015). Attitude has been identified as the factor with the strongest correlation to youth participation in agricultural activities. This finding aligns with research on the factors influencing the interest of young people in agricultural entrepreneurship, where attitude was also identified as a significant influence (Abdullah & Sulaiman, 2013). In addition, a 2011 study by Mosaee and Ommani examined how socioeconomic factors in Iran's rural youth population influence their attitudes toward agricultural jobs. The study highlighted the importance of factors such as farming systems, association membership rates, interest in expansion, education, social security, age, and income in shaping the attitudes of rural youth toward agricultural occupations. These studies shed light on the socio-economic determinants and varying levels of attitudes among the rural Generation Y towards

working in the agriculture sector. A deeper understanding of attitudes is essential for promoting youth involvement in agriculture.

2.2.2. Knowledge

Having knowledge about the agriculture sector is crucial in generating interest and involvement, especially among the younger generation like Gen Y, in agropreneurship (Abdullah & Sulaiman, 2013). Knowledge encompasses skills, information, education, and past experiences related to a particular subject (García-Palma & Molina, 2016). When individuals possess agricultural knowledge, they are emotionally prepared and develop a positive outlook toward agricultural business.

Othman and Ishak (2009) emphasize the significance of entrepreneurial education and training in fostering Gen Y's interest in agropreneurship and contributing to economic development. Consequently, higher education institutions offer entrepreneurship education that combines academic and practical aspects. Similarly, Yusoff et al. (2017) suggest that educational institutions should promote awareness among students and provide them with a realistic understanding of agropreneurship as their chosen career through professional programs or courses in agroentrepreneurship. Students should graduate from such programs with the information and abilities necessary to succeed as agropreneurs (Alim et al., 2021; Matlay, 2008). When individuals possess extensive knowledge, they tend to think positively and perceive agricultural activities in a favorable light (D'Silva et al., 2009), leading to a greater readiness and acceptance to engage in agropreneurship.

In the Bidayuh community, it is essential for Generation Y to have a basic understanding of the agriculture sector to cultivate positive perceptions and make the sector more attractive to younger individuals. Another crucial factor for entrepreneurial advancement is the individual's previous entrepreneurial experiences or background. Numerous studies have examined the influence of family background, educational level, and prior work experience on entrepreneurial tendencies. The family plays a significant role in an individual's socialization process (Kinias, 2013). It is therefore evident that an individual's receptiveness and inclination towards entrepreneurship are influenced by their family environment. People who were raised in families who were actively involved in entrepreneurship frequently carry on the family legacy by either expanding an existing business or starting one in a new industry. Similarly, children of public or private sector employees may be influenced by their family environment to pursue a professional career or may harbor reservations about entrepreneurial prospects (Kinias, 2013).

2.2.3. The Family influence

Youth involvement in agricultural activities and family background variables like income, parental background, and psychological support are strongly correlated (Mustapha & Selvaraju, 2015). Unlike other industries, agriculture has often been overlooked as a preferred sector for parents to encourage their children to pursue. Children's decision-making processes are heavily influenced by their families, which significantly shapes their choices and behaviors, including their career decisions. According to Kimaro et al. (2015), the cultural expectation for children to follow in their parents' steps in agriculture is a contributing factor to achieving self-sufficiency in agricultural production.

Previous research has revealed that individuals feel a strong connection to agriculture when their fathers have worked in the same industry (Koe et al., 2012). Consistent findings have shown a positive association between specific individual background factors and agropreneurial behavior. Several studies have demonstrated that a significant number of entrepreneurial managers have had parents who were self-employed (Akter et al., 2020; Stanworth et al., 1973). It is common for individuals who are considering or planning to start their own businesses to have parents who are also entrepreneurs. This family background has a favorable impact on entrepreneurial readiness, career aspirations, and the idea that starting a business is desirable (Stanworth et al., 1973).

2.2.4. Lack of other job alternatives

The increasing rate of unemployment, particularly among Generation Y graduate students, is a pressing global concern (Hanapi & Nordin, 2014). The need for job opportunities to sustain livelihoods has become increasingly evident as the world's population continues to grow. However, it is unrealistic to expect a single sector to tackle the monumental challenge of unemployment on its own. Nevertheless, the agricultural sector can play a significant role in creating more job posibilities and addressing the unemployment rate in the country. In Malaysia, Gen Y faces a significant unemployment problem, making agropreneurship an attractive option.

Encouraging the younger generation, especially Gen Y, to embrace agropreneurship can help meet the rising demand for food within the country. While a lot of youngsters move from countryside to cities in search of work opportunities (Kimaro et al., 2015), those in rural areas, particularly those without formal education, often have limited options and are more inclined to invest in agriculture. Research by Kimaro et al. (2015) indicates that youth engage in agricultural activities when they lack alternative employment opportunities. Dato Anthony Nogeh who is the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Agrobased Industry, emphasizes Malaysians are important, including those from Sarawak, venturing into the agricultural business to decrease the reliance of the nation on imported food, and decrease unemployment (Borneo Post, 2017). For the younger generation, involvement in other sectors may pose challenges, especially if they have low-income levels and struggle to compete with individuals earning higher incomes (Kimaro et al., 2015). Consequently, they may find that engaging in agriculture offers greater profitability compared to other sectors (Kimaro et al., 2015).

3. Method

Online questionnaires were used to collect data from Generation Y individuals in the Bukar Sadong Bidayuh community in Serian, Sarawak. The research employed purposive sampling, and G-Power 3.1.9.2 was utilized to determine the required sample size. With four predictors being tested, a minimum of 69 respondents was required. Consequently, 200 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 152 were deemed acceptable and suitable for data analysis. The items used for instrumentation were adapted from various scholars to test the proposed framework.

3.1. Analysis of findings and discussion

Table 1 provides the respondents' demographic characteristics, which includes 11 questions encompassing gender, age, monthly income, education, courses taken in university, employment status, involvement in the agro sector, background, years of involvement, type of involvement, and government agency support.

PARTICULAR	ITEM	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
		(F)	(%)
Gender	Female	87	57.2
	Male	65	42.8
Age	23-28 years old	67	44.1
	29-34 years old	54	35.5
	35-40 years old	31	20.4
Monthly Income	Less than RM 1,000	93	61.2
	RM 1,001- RM 2000	21	13.8
	RM 2,001- RM3,000	18	11.8
	MORE THAN RM 3,001	20	13.2
Education	UPSR	4	2.6
	PMR	10	6.6
	SPM/STPM	54	35.5
	Diploma	33	21.7
	Degree	51	33.6
Courses In University	Agriculture base	43	28.3
	Other courses	49	32.2
	Irrelevant	60	39.5
Employment	Student	51	33.6
	Employment	58	38.2
	Self-employed	43	28.3
Status	Part Time involve	107	70.4
	Full Time involve	45	29.6
Background	Have Agriculture Background	118	77.6
C	Do not Have Agriculture	34	22.4
	Background		
Years involve	1-2 years	78	51.3
	3-4 years	32	21.1
	More Than 5 years	42	27.6
Туре	Planting Crops	71	46.7
	Livestock	26	17.1
	Fisheries	6	3.9
	Marketing	39	25.7
	Technology and Innovation	10	6.6
Government Support	MARDI	25	16.4
	FAMA	14	9.2
	MARA	13	8.6
	Jabatan Pertanian Malaysia	24	15.8
	Others or No Support	76	50.0

 Table 1.
 Demographic Profile

Table 2 reveals the influence of various factors on participation in agropreneurship among the Bidayuh community. Among these factors, attitude emerges as the most significant, with an average mean score of 4.16. Family influence follows closely behind with a mean score of 3.85, while knowledge ranks third with a mean score of 3.44. The factor with the least impact on participation in agropreneurship is the lack of alternative job opportunities, scoring an average mean score of 3.00. It is worth noting that all factors scored above 3, indicating that the listed items or factors were generally perceived between neutral and agreement levels. The findings presented in Table 2 indicate the average mean score.

Table 2. Average Mean Scole		
Dimension	Average Mean Score	
Attitude	4.16	
Knowledge	3.44	
Family influence	3.85	
Lack of other Job Alternative	3.00	

 Table 2.
 Average Mean Score

3.2. Bivariate Pearson's Correlation analysis

The Pearson's correlation values between the variables in this study are less than 0.19, which indicates a poor correlation using Guttmann's Rules of Thumb. Consequently, there is no significant correlation between Attitude and Participation in Agropreneurship. The study's aim was to investigate the connection between Attitude and Participation in Agropreneurship, and the findings revealed a negative relationship with statistical significance (p>0.01). Therefore, hypothesis 1, which states that there is a relationship between attitudes towards the participation of Gen Y in the Bidayuh community and involvement in agropreneurship, is rejected. The results support the null hypothesis for objective 1, indicating that there is no relationship between attitudes towards the participation of Gen Y in the Bidayuh community and involvement in agropreneurship.

This finding contrasts with a study conducted by Kimaro et al. (2015) in Kahe East, Tanzania, which found a positive attitude towards agriculture among youngsters who lived in countryside engaged in agriculture endeavors. However, with relation to Malaysia, the literature does not support a similar relationship as observed in Kahe East, Tanzania. The researcher attributes these results to the demographic profile of the Bidayuh community, suggesting that their involvement in the agropreneurship sector may be driven by limited educational opportunities resulting from family poverty or underperformance in high school.

		Attitude	Participation in Agropreneurship
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	1	.092
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.257
	Ν	152	152
Participation in	Pearson Correlation	.092	1
Agropreneurship	Sig. (2-tailed)	.257	
	Ν	152	152

 Table 3.
 Correlation Analysis Result (Attitude)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-Tailed).

The findings presented in Table 3 indicate that the Pearson correlation value between knowledge and participation in Agropreneurship is r=0.200. This result indicates a strong and positive correlation between the two variables. The p-value of 0.013 is also significant according to the statistical significance test (P0.05), showing the existence of a relevant association between Knowledge and Participation in Agropreneurship. Based on these results, hypothesis 2, which proposes a relationship between having agriculture knowledge and the participation of Gen Y in the Bidayuh community in agropreneurship, can be accepted.

This result is consistent with the research done by Othman and Ishak (2009), who emphasized that the Y generation's interest in engaging in agropreneurship is greatly influenced by their understanding of and education in entrepreneurship, ultimately contributing to growth in the economy. Consequently, another objective of this study is successfully fulfilled by demonstrating a significant relationship between Knowledge and Participation in Agropreneurship.

			Knowledge Participation in	
			Knowledge	Agropreneurship
Knowledge		Pearson Correlation	1	$.200^{*}$
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.013
		Ν	152	152
Participation	in	Pearson Correlation	$.200^{*}$	1
Agropreneurship		Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	
		Ν	152	152
*. Correlation is si	gnific	ant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).		

Table 4. Correlation Analysis Result (Knowledge)

The results shown in Table 4 shows that family influence and participation in agropreneurship exhibit a weak positive correlation relationship. As a result, the aim of this study, which seeks to establish the connection between family influence and participation in agropreneurship, has been fulfilled by demonstrating that family influence significantly impacts the participation of Gen Y individuals in the Bidayuh community in agropreneurship. The findings show a strong and significant correlation between family influence and participation is (p<0.01). The statistical analysis indicates that at a 2-tailed significance level of 0.01, the correlation is significant. As a result, hypothesis 3, which postulates a connection between family influences and Gen Y's participation in agropreneurship in the Bidayuh community, is endorsed and accepted.

These findings are supported by previous research, such as the investigation conducted by Koe et al. (2012), which suggests that Gen Y individuals often perceive agriculture as a deeply ingrained tradition within their families due to their family's involvement in the same industry. The decision-making process of many young individuals is significantly influenced by their families, shaping their choices and behavior, including career decisions. Additionally, a demographic analysis reveals that a majority of the respondents in this study have an agricultural background. This suggests that they are aware of the potential profitability of the agriculture sector for their family members and are motivated to follow in their footsteps. It is worth noting that the agriculture sector currently holds a prominent position

and plays a crucial role in supporting other sectors, such as manufacturing, by supplying essential inputs. As a result, the agriculture sector offers lucrative opportunities for those involved.

			Family Influence	Participation in Agropreneurship
Family Influence		Pearson Correlation	1	.361**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		Ν	152	152
Participation	in	Pearson Correlation	.361**	1
Agropreneurship		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		Ν	152	152
**. Correlation is sig	gnifica	ant at the 0.01 level (2-taile	d).	

 Table 5.
 Correlation Analysis Result (Family Influence)

Table 5's study reveals that Lack of Other Job Alternatives and Participation in Agropreneurship exhibit a positive and weak relationship, with a Pearson correlation value of r=0.264. The statistical significance test (P<0.01) further confirms that the relationship between Lack of Other Job Alternatives and Participation in Agropreneurship is indeed significant, as indicated by the p-value of 0.001. Consequently, hypothesis 4, proposing a relationship between the lack of other job alternatives and the participation of Generation Y in the Bidayuh community in agropreneurship, is supported and accepted. This finding is consistent with a study by Kimaro et al. (2015) that found teenagers participate in agricultural activities when job opportunities are scarce. In the present economic landscape, many Gen Y individuals encounter challenges in finding employment, leading to higher rates of unemployment. Consequently, due to a lack of viable alternatives, they are compelled to participate in the agriculture sector. It is significant to remember that their involvement in this area is driven by external factors such as the absence of job opportunities, rather than their own willingness or attitude towards agropreneurship. Thus, the fourth objective of this study is successfully accomplished by demonstrating a significant relationship between Lack of Other Job Alternative and Participation in Agropreneurship.

		Lack of other job alternative	Participation in Agropreneurship
Lack of other job	Pearson Correlation	1	.264**
alternative	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	Ν	152	152
Participation in	Pearson Correlation	.264**	1
Agropreneurship	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	Ν	152	152
**. Correlation is significa	nt at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)		

Table 6. Correlation Analysis Result (Lack of Other Job Alternative)

3.3. Multiple regression analysis

A statistical method for estimating the relationships between variables, specifically the influence of independent variables on a dependent variable is referred to as regression analysis. Regression analysis, according to Malhotra (2010), is a potent and adaptable technique for examining associative

links between a variable that depends on a metric and one or more independent variables. It enables researchers to gauge the degree to which a group of predictors can account for the variance in the dependent variable. In the current study, regression analysis was employed to examine the factors influencing Gen Y's participation in Agropreneurship within the Bidayuh community. The findings are presented in Table 7. The table displays an R-squared value of 0.179 for the regression model, with a significant coefficient of 0.423a. This indicates that approximately 17.9% of the variability in the factors influencing Gen Y's participation in Agropreneurship can be accounted for by the four independent variables: attitude, knowledge, family influence, and lack of other job alternatives. The remaining 82.1% of the variability is unexplained and could be attributed to other variables not included in this study (R-squared = 0.179).

		Summary	/							
Model S	ummary ^b									
Model	R	R	Adjusted	Std.		Chang	ge Statis	tics		Durbin-
		Square	R Square	Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Watson
1	.423ª	.179	.157	1.10917	.179	8.013	4	147	.000	1.971
a. Predic	tors: (Con	stant), lack,	knowledge, a	ttitude, family						

Table 6 shows the conclusions regarding the elements impacting the participation of Gen Y individuals in Agropreneurship within the Bidayuh community in Serian, Sarawak. The factors impacting participation are the dependent variable in this analysis, and attitude, knowledge, family influence, and a lack of other employment options are the independent variables. Family influence, according to the findings, has the greatest Beta value of 0.349 and the most significant p-value of 0.000. This implies that familial influences have a significant impact on how Gen Y members engage in agribusiness in the Bidayuh community of Serian, Sarawak. This finding aligns with the demographic analysis, as it corresponds to the respondents' personal traits. The majority of responders have fewer qualifications and few work possibilities, and turn to the agriculture industry as a result. Their involvement is frequently motivated by economic concerns, for example, family poverty, that impede their pursuit of further education.

Additionally, the literature review reveals that the Bidayuh community possesses fertile land, which is utilized for various agricultural activities such as cultivating rattan for crafts, paddy fields, oil palm plantations, pepper palms, cocoa, and other crops. The Bidayuh people also engage in livestock breeding to generate additional income. According to Zaimah et al. (2015), the Bidayuh people pass down their land to their children, influencing them to participate in agricultural activities. This explains why a significant number of respondents attribute their involvement in Agropreneurship to family influence.

On the other hand, the attitude factor exhibits a negative Beta value. According to the researcher, attitude has a detrimental effect on Gen Y individuals tendency for agroentrepreneurship. The correlation analysis does not yield a significant result, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This suggests that Gen Y individuals are compelled to participate in Agropreneurship, rather than being motivated by their own willingness. The findings from Table 8 highlight the significant influence of family on

participation, in line with the demographic analysis and supported by previous research. However, the negative impact of attitude indicates that the involvement of Gen Y individuals is driven more by external factors than personal choice.

Model	Iodel Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	В	Std. Error	Beta	-	
1 (Constant)	1.844	.738		2.499	.014
Attitude	205	.186	093	-1.103	.272
Knowledge	.045	.119	.033	.380	.704
Family	.509	.137	.349	3.716	.000
Lack	.250	.091	.209	2.751	.007

 Table 8.
 Multiple Regression Analysis

4. Conclusion and Future Research Direction

The research findings reveal the factors that influence the behavioral changes in Gen Y's participation in agropreneurship. It is crucial for the Bidayuh community to develop a passion for agropreneurship, as it offers higher profitability similar to other sectors. The behavioral survey conducted among the respondents indicates that agriculture is perceived as an industry that will always remain relevant and sustainable, providing a promising future for their income and livelihood.

Among the factors examined, family influence emerges as the most significant factor driving the participation of the Bidayuh community in agropreneurship. This study uncovers important and previously unrecognized dimensions that motivate and urges the Bidayuh community to work in agriculture. As a result, this research contributes valuable insights to the Gen Y population in the Bidayuh community of Bukar Sadong Sub-clan. The findings and recommendations derived from this research enhance understanding of the factors influencing Gen Y's participation in agropreneurship and emphasize the crucial role of the agricultural sector in sustaining the country's competitive advantage.

Furthermore, these findings serve as a framework for comparing individuals involved or interested in agropreneurship with those who are not, providing a basis for formulating action plans to engage more youths in agricultural entrepreneurship. Given the relatively small scale of this study, the success and failure of young people participating in agropreneurship for comparable group study subjects or other creative groups in Sarawak or any state in Malaysia should be further investigated in future research.

Acknowledgments

This research is conducted as part of undergraduate final-year project submission and has been rewritten to suit conference requirements.

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