

# **The Level of Inclination towards Agriculture Entrepreneurship among Students of Agriculture Institutes in Peninsular Malaysia**

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## **Introduction**

Agriculture has become one of the most important and precious industry in Malaysia. Agriculture industry is relevant to the current needs in order to meet the need of people around the world. However, inadequate manpower has become a very challenging issue due to limited young people involved in agriculture sector. This finding has been proven by Md Salleh and Hayrol Azril (2009) and Ezhar et al. (2007) that the average age of farmers in Malaysia exceed 46 years old. This is a crucial issue for the agriculture sector in Malaysia as our country really needs young people to become an agriculture community to ensure the continuity of food supply (Abdullah, F.A., 2013).

Apart from that, creation of new organizations and institutions among youths can create new products, markets, and the use of new technologies in rural areas. However, there is lack of researches on rural and agricultural entrepreneurship (Sancho, 2010). Furthermore, as mentioned by Knudson et al. (2004), limited research has been devoted to the innovation and entrepreneurship within the sub-discipline of agriculture economics. Thus, this study has been conducted to investigate the inclination towards agriculture entrepreneurship among students at Agriculture Institutes in Peninsular Malaysia.

## **Methodology**

This study is a quantitative study and it has been conducted at four Agriculture Institutes in Peninsular Malaysia namely Serdang, Selangor; Titi Gantung, Perak; Bumbong Lima, Penang and Ayer Hitam, Johor. Simple random sampling has been employed for this study and 237 students from these four Agriculture Institutes have been selected as the respondent. Apart from that, pilot study which involved 32 respondents has been conducted at Serdang Agriculture

Institute. Those respondents who have been involved in pilot study will not be involved for the actual survey. All of the items in the questionnaire were measured by using Likert scale range 1-5 which represent strongly disagree to strongly agree and SPSS was used for the data analysis process to run the appropriate analysis.

## Results and Discussion

Based on Table 1, male respondents (58.2%) are slightly higher than females (41.8%) and 100% of the respondents were Malay. Moreover, based on the results, it is shown that 71.3% of the respondent's age ranged between 19-21 years old, 72.6% of the respondents are from rural area and 63.7% have experience in entrepreneurship.

**Table 1: Frequency distribution of demographic profile among the respondents**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	138	58.2		
Female	99	41.8		
<b>Race</b>				
Malay	237	100		
Chinese				
Indian				
Others				
<b>Age (years)</b>			20.75	1.66
19-21	169	71.3		
22-24	61	25.7		
25-27	7	3.0		
<b>Place of Origin</b>				
Urban area	65	27.4		
Rural area	172	72.6		
<b>Experience in entrepreneurship</b>				
Yes	151	63.7		
No	86	36.3		

Based on Table 2, the percentage for the items showed that the respondents of this study were inclined to make a move to be an agropreneur. This phenomenon is supported by Alam et al. (2009), in order to ensure the continuity of entrepreneurship activity especially in agriculture sector, participation among youths is crucial. With the knowledge they have learned in Agriculture Institutes and accompanied with strong determination, they have the courage to set up a new business ventures in the future. Furthermore, most of them have prepared their mental

and physical to take part in agricultural entrepreneurship once they had completed their course of study.

**Table 2: Percentage on Inclination towards agriculture entrepreneurship (n=237)**

Items	1	2	3	4	5
I am willing to do anything to be an entrepreneur in agriculture.	0.4 (1)	0.8 (2)	19.4 (46)	49.4 (117)	30.0 (71)
I will work hard to start and operate my business based on agriculture.	0.4 (1)	0.4 (1)	12.2 (29)	41.8 (99)	45.1 (107)
I am determined to create a business based on agriculture in the future.	0.4 (1)	0.4 (1)	12.2 (29)	43.0 (102)	43.9 (104)
My professional goal is to be an agriculture entrepreneur.	1.7 (4)	2.1 (5)	24.5 (58)	38.4 (91)	33.3 (79)
I choose to become an agriculture entrepreneur as my career goals.	2.1 (5)	6.3 (15)	29.1 (69)	43.0 (102)	19.4 (46)
I am thinking seriously to start agricultural entrepreneurship after the completion of the course.	0.8 (2)	7.6 (18)	31.2 (74)	40.9 (97)	19.4 (46)
I have a strong intention to start agricultural entrepreneurship in the future.	1.3 (3)	3.8 (9)	18.6 (44)	40.9 (97)	35.4 (84)

According to Table 3, the scores were grouped into three categories, namely, low (1-2.33), moderate (2.34-3.66), and high (3.67-5). More than half (67.1%) respondents have interest towards agriculture entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, the mean score for inclination towards agriculture entrepreneurship is 3.95 which considered as high. Prior to that, it is confirmed that most of the respondents from four Agriculture Institutes had high intention to be an entrepreneurs in agriculture sector once they graduated. In addition, youths are the new generation of the agriculture industry, thus, they must be part of the agriculture community (Atsan et al., 2009). In most developing countries including Malaysia, the effective emphasis on agriculture is crucial as it is important to reduce unemployment problems (Hayrol et al., 2010; Jeffery et al., 2009).

**Table 3: Level of Inclination towards agriculture entrepreneurship**

Level	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
			3.95	0.71
Low (1-2.33)	5	2.1		
Moderate (2.34-3.66)	73	30.8		
High (3.67-5)	159	67.1		

### Conclusion and recommendations

In these modern days, agriculture has become a serious issue due to the increasing of food demand around the world. Furthermore, the involvement of youth in agriculture sector become worst and the aging farmers are still working hard on this honourable job. Thus, this study has investigated the inclination towards agriculture entrepreneurship among youth at four Agriculture Institutes in Peninsular Malaysia.

The recommendations from this study is that there must have more responsible agencies instead of family members and friends in order to promote youths for being involved in this precious sector. Besides, the involvement of rural youths in this sector can increase the standard of living and they also do not need to migrate to big cities to find any available jobs. Moreover, cost of living in a big cities getting higher day by day. Apart from that, youths especially in rural areas need more exposure about the facilities given by the government agencies or NGOs (Non-Government Organization) to encourage youths being a successful entrepreneur in agriculture sector.

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