



FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE TOURISTS TO JOIN AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES

Feng-Yi Chang

The Department of Graduate Institute of National Development and
Mainland China Studies, Chinese Culture University
cfy0975075441@gmail.com

Abstract

In the last ten years, it is very popular to visit a rural village to experience agriculture in Taiwan, and the content is very diversified and abundant, such as fruiting picking, DIY, going for an outing, tasting local food, experiencing being a farmer; all of which are parts of agriculture experience activity. The activity can not only make people living in cities closer to rural villages, but also bring about a lot of business opportunity and consumers. Thus, it is currently very popular for the governments and communities of many zones to conduct agriculture experience activities. The study uses the framework of the theory of planned behavior to investigate which factors influence people to participate agriculture experience activities in order to try to understand the psychological decision-making process and motivations of people and provide our research results for the governments and communities as reference. The research results show AT, SN and PBC will positively influence BI, where SN has the largest influence. The study also further discusses our research results and provide our suggestions.

Keywords: Management, Leisure Agriculture, Theory Of Planned Behavior,
Experience Activity.

Introduction

So as to take advantage of the

commercial opportunity of the leisure
agriculture and the trend of travelers
enjoying being close to nature to ex-

perience the agriculture, Council of Agriculture (COA), Executive Yuan, has started to assist transferring the conventional agriculture to the leisure agriculture, actively help the leisure agriculture areas and the leisure agriculture farms to improve the travel environment, and train the agriculture manpower, and develop diversified agriculture travel elements, including agricultural products, local food, etc. Besides, Council of Agriculture further helps the relevant service providers to take part in foreign and domestic travel fairs and establish diversified physical and virtual marketing channels, increase field trips and international customer groups, and enhance the number of the travelers of the leisure agriculture. Currently, there are already 75 leisure agriculture areas of different topics in Taiwan, 317 leisure agriculture farms and 140 Tian-mama rural village food groups in order to combine the tourism with recreation and food and realize self-production-and-sale (Chen, 2016).

According to the statistics of Council of Agriculture, Taiwan has demarcated 82 leisure agriculture areas at the end of 2016; additionally, these areas are classified and assisted according to their assessment scores every year in order to gradually better the leisure agriculture recreation quality.

There are totally 380 leisure agriculture farms already obtaining formal approval registration certificates, where there are 45 leisure agriculture farms passing through the leisure agriculture farm service certification. Regarding the rural village local food and cuisines, there are about 137 “Tian-mama” rural village cuisine groups in Taiwan in order to provide local special delicious cuisines or snacks for the travelers visiting rural villages. Meanwhile, there are about 200 farmer associations and fisherman associations selling rural village travelling souvenirs in order to realize the concept of local production and local consumption. Regarding the virtual and physical agriculture channels, all of PChome, PayEasy, ibon, Famiport, etc., already start to sell the rural village travelling ticket sets in addition to foreign and domestic travel fairs and travel agencies, Further, Council of Agriculture also establishes English-version and Japanese-version agriculture travelling Gov websites, NonGov website, and develops mobile APP so as to effectively develop the customer groups of other foreign countries (COA, 2016).

According to the statistics of Agriculture Bureau of Kaohsiung City Government (ABKCG), there are about 8.06 million of foreign travelers visiting Kaohsiung, where the travelers

from Hong Kong increase by 4 times compared with that of the previous year (2014), which is up to 1.6 million of people. Besides, the travelers from Singapore is about 0.4 million of people. Regarding the performance of the promotion of Happy Farmer, it is estimated that the activity has attracted about 45 thousand travelers visiting the rural villages in Kaohsiung. About 20 thousand people are foreign travelers, which is the half of the total traveler number, where about 18 thousand travelers are from China, and 4 thousand are other foreign travelers. Some travelers come from the countries near Taiwan, such as Japan and Korea; some travelers come from the countries far from Taiwan, the farthest country is Canada (ABKCG, 2016).

As the agriculture experience activity can attract more foreign and domestic travelers, which can make them closer to rural villages, but also can effectively increase the earnings of farmers and communities. The study considers whether it is necessary to understand why the travelers participate in the rural village experience activity, what their opinions for the activity are, whether they are influenced by peripheral groups, and do they have other considerations to spend their money on and participate in the activity in addition to continuously updating the itin-

erary activities and contents. All of which promote the study to further investigate which factors will influence the travelers to participate in the agriculture experience activity in Kaohsiung City.

Literature Review

Leisure Agriculture

Leisure Agriculture Seminar (1989) provided the definition for the domestic leisure agriculture for the first time, which is “using the equipment, resources, and production sites of the rural villages, products, agriculture business activities, ecology and the agriculture natural environment to make the most of the leisure function of the agriculture and rural villages via planning and design for the purpose of bettering the recreation quality, increasing the earnings of the farmers, and promoting the development of the rural villages. Council of Agriculture defines the leisure agriculture as “the agriculture business of combining the countryside landscapes, natural ecology and environment resources with agriculture, forestry, fishery and husbandry productions, agriculture business activities, rural village culture and farmer life to provide the leisure for the nationals, and better the recreation object of the agriculture and rural villages for the

nationals” (Wu, 2003).

Research Methods

Theory of Planned Behavior

Research Framework

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is proposed by Ajzen (1991); the predecessor of TPB is Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA); all of which are comprehensively applied. Both TPB and TRA have been applied to the researches of many behaviors, including some researches using people in Taiwan as the samples (Lin, Wu, 2008; Chu & Chiu, 2003). TRA indicates that the behavior intention is a kind of cognitive activity, which reflects the intention of a person engaging in a certain behavior and the conscious plans; the indicator is used to anticipate the behavior. Ajzen also considers that the behavior intention is closely related to the behavior, so the behavior intention can be almost considered the behavior. BI is determined by the attitude toward the behavior and the subjective norm. In addition to that, TPB further takes the perceived behavioral control of a person into consideration. TPB anticipates that if the attitude of a person is more positive to a behavior, the person will feel more pressure from the peripheral norms, and if the person perceives more behavioral control from the behavior, the intention of the person adopting the behavior is stronger.

The framework diagram of the study includes four parts - attitude (AT), subjective norm (SN), perceived behavioral control (PBC), background variable (BV) and behavior intention (BI), and the directions of the arrows show the research assumptions (FIG. 1). The definition of AT is the cognition of the travelers participating in the agriculture experience, including agriculture experience helping development of rural villages, their own agriculture knowledge, liking agriculture, enjoying nature recreation, contacting farmers, enjoying Taiwanese farm products, attractive itinerary content, itinerary showing features of rural villages, tasting rural village local food, picking farm products on spot and purchasing farm products from farmers by discount. The definition of SN is friends, co-workers, family members, network information, reports of newspaper and magazine, etc., which may influence travelers' decisions. The definition of PBC is the conditions which travelers evaluate whether they will participate in the agriculture experience, including whether to search relevant information and content in advance, feeling interested to participate in itineraries, affordable charges,

Table 1. Summary of AT, SN & PBC Predict BI

	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t value	Significance
Constant	.262	.130		2.022	.044
AT	.217	.059	.212	3.653	.000***
SN	.302	.051	.322	5.898	.000***
PBC	.279	.050	.298	5.612	.000***
R square			.755		
Sum of Squares			97.946		
Degrees of freedom			3		
F value			243.876		
Significance			.000***		

*** $p < .001$

enough physical strength, daring wild insects, happy to experience farmer life style, enjoying sweating and sunshine, etc. BI includes the participation intention, promotion intention, re-visit intention, etc. In the meanwhile, the study also proposes the assumption that different travelers have different feelings in AT, SN and PBC, and are different in BI, too. Besides, AT, SN and PBC will influence BI.

Interviewees and Data Collection Method

The study selects the travelers participating in the agriculture experience activity in Kaohsiung City from

September to December of 2017 as the interview samples; there are 280 questionnaires distributed to the travelers in total, and 218 questionnaires are recovered; the valid recovery rate is 77.9%. Our major survey method is that the researcher of the study guides the travelers to answer each question in the questionnaire after the agriculture experience activity; if the travelers do not understand any one of the questions, the researcher of the study can explain the question on the spot.

Research Findings

Interviewee Background

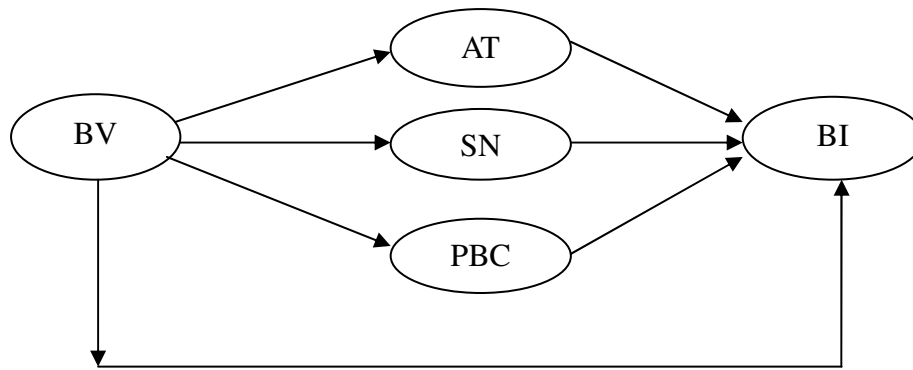


Figure 1. The Chart for this Study's Framework

The study obtained 218 valid questionnaires in total; most of the interviewees are female, where the total number of the female interviewees is 146 in total, and the total number of the male interviewees is 72 in total. Regarding the marriage status of the interviewees, the married interviewees are proportional to the unmarried interviewees, where the number of the married interviewees is 113 in total, about 51.8%, and the number of the unmarried interviewees is 105 in total. Regarding the age statistics of the interviewees, most of the interviewees are between 31-40 years old, and the total number is 62; the second is the interviewees between 21-30 years old, and the total number is 42; the third is the interviewees between 41-50 years old, and the total number is 41. Regarding the education level statistics of the interviewees, most of the interviewees have the university degree, and the total number is 73; the sec-

ond is the interviewees having the senior high school degree, and the total number is 57; the third is the interviewees having the junior college degree, and the total number is 45. Regarding the occupation of the interviewees, the occupation of most interviewees is freelance, and the total number is 68; the second is homemaker, and the total number is 42; the third is other occupations, and the total number is 26. Regarding the monthly income of the interviewees, most of interviewees are getting NTD\$20,001-30,000, and the total number is 80; the next is NTD\$40,001-50,000, and the total number is 44; the third is lower than NTD\$20,000, and the total number is 39. Regarding the residential district of the interviewees, most of interviewees live in Kaohsiung City, and the total number is 157. Regarding the source of the activity information, the highest proportion is obtaining the activity information by

word of mouth (35%); the next is promotion banners (24%); the third is network information (20%).

Multiple Regression Analysis

In order to understand whether AT, SN and PBC will influence BI, the study proposes the following regression model and further performs the analysis, where behavior intention $I = \beta_{10} + \beta_{11}$ attitude + β_{12} subjective norm + β_{13} perceived behavioral control + error. The test result shows that AT, SN and PBC will positively influence the interviewees' BI. More specifically, SN has the strongest influence ($\beta=.322$), the next is PBC ($\beta=.298$), and the third is AT ($\beta=.212$).

Average Analysis

According to T test result, the married interviewees have higher identification in attitude and higher behavior intention when compared with unmarried interviewees. The interviewees living in Kaohsiung City have higher identification in attitude and higher behavior intention when compared with the interviewees living in other cities. According to Anova Analysis result, the interviewees above 51 years old have higher identification in attitude when

compared with the interviewees under 20 years old. The interviewees graduating from the junior high school feel they have more resources and abilities to participate in the agriculture experience when compared with the interviewees having graduate school degree. The interviewees having junior college degree have higher behavior intention to participate in the agriculture experience activity when compared with the interviewees having college degree. The interviewees having the monthly income higher than NTD\$50,001 have higher identification in attitude, subjective norm and behavior intention when compared with the interviewees having the monthly income lower than NTD\$20,000. Regarding the perceived behavioral control, the interviewees having the monthly income between NTD\$20,001 -30,000 have behavior control ability when compared with the interviewees having the monthly income lower than NTD\$20,000.

Conclusion

1. The major agriculture advertisement channel is by word of mouth.

Most of the interviewees participating the agriculture experience are from Kaohsiung City, and the travelers from Pingtung City and

Tainan City are less; thus, the major source of the agriculture experience information is still by word of mouth and activity banners, and the third is network information.

The study also finds that many travelers indicate that they search the activity information or further ask the activity information after they hear that their friends or relatives participating the activity and feel interested. As the current network information is miscellaneous, it is very hard to make the travelers feel interested only by the website marketing of the governments if the relatives or friends of the travelers never participate in the activity.

2. The interviewees have high participation intention for the agriculture experience and have higher scores in all variables.

The study finds that the agriculture experience can make the travelers have high evaluation and intention to participate in the activity again in a short time, which proves that the domestic rural village tourism is highly promising. In addition, if the communities can make more effort in mobilization and cooperate with the governments to service the travelers and design the activities popular with the travelers by the lo-

cal resources of the rural villages to make the travelers be always enthusiastic about the agriculture experience, the development of the agriculture will have a brilliant record.

3. SN, PBC and AT will influence travelers' BI AT, SN and PBC will positively influence the interviewees' BI. More specifically, SN has the highest influence, the next is PBS, and the third is AT. The study considers the reason is that the travelers of the interview put the emphasis on the opinions of the people having participated in the agriculture experience activity because interviewees reflect that they participate in the activity after their relatives or friends introduce the activity to them. The core of SN is the opinions and the influences of the important opinion groups; therefore, the regression analysis result just verifies the opinions of the interviewees. In addition, PBC and AT can also influence BI; the interviewees should consider that the price is reasonable, the content of the activity is attractive and their physical strength is sufficient; the content of the activity should make the travelers consider that they can help the development of rural villages, better their agriculture knowledge, contact farmers, contact nature, taste local food, pick vegetables and

fruits on the spot, and directly purchase vegetables and fruits from farmers after they participate in the agriculture experience activity, which can be helpful for promoting the travelers continuously to participate in the agriculture experience activity.

4. There is not too much obvious difference for the interviewees' BV in AT, SN, PBC and BI.

According to the result of the average analysis, there is not too much obvious difference for the average test result of the BV in each of the variables. However, the study considers that the above result may be related to the high satisfaction of the travelers after participating in the recent agriculture experience activities. After investigating the scores made by the interviewees for each of the questions, these scores tend to be high; accordingly, the average test is not obvious. Regarding the obvious variables, the study suggests the relevant government departments to put the emphasis on the feedbacks of the interviewees for the agriculture experience, better the consumer opinion investigation, and understand the rural village travelling items and activities popular with the travelers so as to continuously design the activity itineraries attractive to

the travelers.

According to the above research results, the study proposes the following suggestions.

- (1) It is suggested that the rural villages should finish the resource integration before designing the experience activities.
- (2) It is suggested that the government should cooperate with the guidance department to provide the diagnosis and suggestion services for the communities.
- (3) It is suggested that the network marketing content should include the videos showing the feelings and feedbacks of the travelers.
- (4) It is suggested to put the emphasis on and collect the opinion investigation information of the interviewees.
- (5) It is suggested that the government should pay attention to the marketing effects resulting from the agriculture experience.

References

- ABKCG (2016) 2016/12/5/ derived from <http://agri.cocker.com.tw/upload/default1.asp>
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50, 179-211.
- Chen, H. Z.(2016). Analysis of Agricultural Leisure Industry Strategies: Take the Agricultural Leisure of Chiayi County as the Example. Chiayi: Department of Leisure & Recreation Management Toko University.
- Chu, P.-Y., & Chiu, J. F. (2003). Factors influencing household waste recycling behavior: Test of an integrated model. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 33(3), 604-626.
- COA (2017/12/14) derived from <http://www.coa.gov.tw/ws.php?id=2504015>
- Lam, S. P., & Wu, M. F. (2008). Cognitions and Behavior of Some Kaohsiung City Residents on Acquisition and Abandonment of Exotic Pets, 10(2) 45-56
- Wu, M. F. (2003). Study on the Patterns of the Leisure Agriculture Parks and Experiential Marketing Based on the View of Experience, Pingtung: Agribusiness Management National Pingtung University of Science and Technology.