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Enhancing Family Food Security Through Experiential Learning-Based Training In Organic Food Cultivation

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Abstract : This study aims to assess the impact of an experiential learning based training on organic food cultivation in increasing family food security, while also exploring the potential for behavior change and economic resilience. Employing a qualitative research design, the study used case study method. Participants engaged in an experiential learning program designed to impart skills and knowledge in organic food cultivation. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation study, and analyzed using thematic analysis triangulation. The findings highlight the participants' evolving perceptions of the link between organic food cultivation and family food security within the unique urban environment. The training resulted in shifts in consumption patterns and dietary habits within families, fostering healthier choices. Furthermore, the cultivation of organic produce contributed to family finances, reducing expenditure on purchased produce. The study underscores the impact of experiential learning in fostering practical skills and behavior change in an urban community setting. The research contributes to the understanding of how experiential learning interventions can positively influence family food security within specific urban localities. This study suggests that integrating experiential learning approaches into training initiatives can empower urban families to cultivate their own organic produce.

Keywords : Experiential learning, Food Security, Organic food cultivation, Training

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of urbanization has given rise to intricate challenges in ensuring the security of food for families, especially in densely populated regions. The rapid expansion of urban areas often leads to constrained access to fresh and nutritious food sources, subsequently resulting in suboptimal dietary practices (Tacoli, 2017). Furthermore, the dependency on external food supplies makes communities susceptible to disruptions in the supply chain. In response to these multifaceted challenges, empowering urban households to partake in organic food cultivation has emerged as a promising solution (Sumardjo et al., 2022). This proactive approach aligns with global initiatives aimed at bolstering food security by fostering self-sufficiency at the local community level.

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Despite the growing recognition of the potential benefits of engaging urban communities in organic food cultivation, several critical research gaps remain to be addressed. The specific challenges and opportunities inherent in urban contexts, such as Cibeber Residence, Cimahi City, are often distinct from those of rural areas. Understanding how experiential learning interventions can effectively bridge these urban-rural dynamics is crucial. Furthermore, the lack of comprehensive investigations that focus on the impact of experiential learning in the realm of urban organic food cultivation poses a significant research problem. Existing studies often underscore rural settings, and thus, there is a scarcity of knowledge tailored to the intricacies of urban communities, limiting the applicability of findings to contexts like Cibeber Residence.

Experiential learning has gained prominence as an effective pedagogical approach across diverse domains, including education, professional development, and community engagement. Rooted in the work of Dewey, Kolb, and Lewin, experiential learning posits that meaningful learning occurs when individuals actively engage with experiences, reflect on them, and apply the insights gained to real-world situations(Anugrahwanto & Nurhayati, 2020; Nurhayati, 2018; Smith & Crocker, 2017) . This approach offers a departure from traditional didactic methods, emphasizing hands-on participation, critical reflection, and the transfer of learning to practical contexts (Anugrahwanto & Nurhayati, 2020; Mutmainah et al., 2019; Nurhayati, 2018).

Experiential learning's iterative cycle of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation resonates with the process of cultivating organic food. Participants in experiential learning-based training are immersed in the practical aspects of soil preparation, seed planting, nurturing, and harvesting. This hands-on engagement is coupled with opportunities for reflective dialogue, allowing participants to connect their experiences with broader concepts of sustainable agriculture, nutrition, and food security. The active involvement and reflective processes within experiential learning contribute to the development of practical skills, critical thinking, and a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Training is a systematic and organized process aimed at enhancing individuals' knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes to improve their performance in specific tasks or roles (Hudri & Nurhayati, 2020; Intadiyah et al., 2021; Nurhadi et al., 2023; Nurhayati et al., 2023; Nurhayati & Rosita, 2020; Nurmawati et al., 2021; Qudsi & Nurhayati, 2023; Syafrudin & Nurhayati, 2020). It involves the intentional transfer of information, techniques, and experiences from trainers or facilitators to learners, with the goal of achieving predetermined

learning outcomes(Hidayat & Nurhayati, 2023; Sulaimawan & Nurhayati, 2023). Training can occur in various contexts, including educational institutions, workplaces, community settings, and beyond. training plays a pivotal role in personal and professional development by equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to excel in their chosen fields (Nurhayati et al., 2022; Nurhayati & Rosita, 2020; Qudsi & Nurhayati, 2023). It supports growth, enhances performance, and contributes to individual and organizational success.

Despite the recognition of the potential benefits of organic food cultivation, there exists a void in comprehending how interventions rooted in experiential learning can effectively foster and sustain such practices within urban settings. The scarcity of accessible, fresh, and affordable produce in urban landscapes like Cibeber Residence underscores the urgency of introducing innovative solutions. Addressing this pressing issue necessitates an in-depth exploration of the influence exerted by experiential learning-based training on the enhancement of family food security, transformation of dietary behaviors, and bolstering economic resilience.

The research problem also extends to the realm of behavior change and sustainability. While experiential learning has demonstrated efficacy in promoting knowledge acquisition and skills development, its ability to foster sustained behavior change remains underexplored, particularly within the sphere of organic food cultivation. Investigating whether the experiential learning approach can lead to enduring shifts in participants' behavior, influencing their long-term engagement in organic food cultivation practices, represents an important gap in the current literature. Furthermore, understanding how these behavioral changes relate to family food security and economic resilience is vital for crafting effective interventions.

Lastly, a research problem arises concerning the scalability and replicability of experiential learning-based training programs. While this study focuses on Cibeber Residence, broader questions emerge regarding the feasibility of implementing similar programs in diverse urban contexts. Factors such as resource availability, community engagement, and local infrastructure can significantly impact the success of such initiatives (Frazier, 2018; Sumardjo et al., 2022). Therefore, the research problem extends to exploring the conditions necessary for the sustainable expansion of experiential learning interventions to address food security challenges in various urban environments.

In light of these multifaceted research problems, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature by investigating the nuances of experiential learning-based training within the context of urban organic food cultivation in Cibeber residence. Through an in-depth examination of these challenges, the research endeavors to provide insights that can inform the

design of effective interventions to enhance family food security, facilitate behavior change, and promote economic resilience in urban communities.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research used a qualitative case study design to thoroughly investigate the complexities associated with the implementation and evaluation of experiential learning-based training for urban organic food farming in Cibeber residence, Cimahi City. This particular design is highly suitable for conducting a complete analysis of the intricacies of the training programme, the dynamics of participant interactions, and the resulting consequences, all within the distinct urban setting (Sugiyono, 2020). The rationale behind choosing Cibeber residence as the research location is based on its urban attributes, unique food security issues, and the potential for effective experiential learning interventions. This selection is specifically designed to acquire a thorough understanding of how this program may efficiently tackle urban food security issues in a practical context.

The informants of this study were 12 individuals who have actively participated in the experiential learning-based training programme. The research utilized a combination of data collection tools to validate and corroborate the obtained results. The study employed semi-structured interviews as a means of gathering qualitative data to explore the participants' perceptions, experiences, and post-training adjustments. Throughout the training sessions, detailed records were maintained to document participant dynamics, interactions, and levels of involvement. In addition, participants were requested to provide feedback by means of evaluation forms, contributing organized insights pertaining to different aspects of the training experience.

The process of data gathering entailed conducting individual semi-structured interviews with participants, which facilitated a personalized and comprehensive examination of their thoughts and experiences. Concurrently, comprehensive observational records were painstakingly maintained throughout the training sessions, including participant interactions, levels of participation, and noteworthy observations. Following the conclusion of the course, participants were provided with assessment forms to gauge their perceptions regarding the effectiveness and usefulness of the training, as well as its impact on their comprehension of organic food growing and food security.

The data that had been gathered was subjected to a thorough qualitative analysis procedure. The data collected, including transcribed interviews, observation notes, and

evaluation form replies, were subjected to thematic analysis. By employing a methodical approach of coding and categorizing, the analysis yielded overarching themes that unveiled discernible patterns, trends, and interconnections inherent in the dataset. The objective of this analysis was to explore the participants' perspectives on the training's influence on their understanding of organic food cultivation, changes in behavior, and the resulting effects on family food security. The use of several data sources enhanced the study's strength and offered a comprehensive perspective on the effectiveness and wider implications of experiential learning-based training.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Planning of Experiential Learning-Based Organic Food Cultivation Training. Before the training even begins, a deep understanding of participants' needs and expectations was gained through careful observations and informal conversations. This insight shapes the training content, ensuring that it resonates with participants' preferences and addresses their concerns. In the process of planning and goal setting, a crucial step involved selecting an appropriate venue and obtaining the necessary permissions from local authorities. Participant-centered planning is a cornerstone. Collaborative efforts were made to involve relevant individuals. The collaborative synergy with instructors played a significant role. Organizers and instructors collaboratively planned the training, drawing from each other's expertise to create a comprehensive program that combines various perspectives, resulting in a well-rounded learning experience (Intadiyah et al., 2021; Tan, 2018).

The training objectives were strategically aligned with the research goals, and the participants' needs were identified through comprehensive interviews and interactive sessions. The importance of participant engagement in planning emerged as a central aspect (Nurhayati, 2022). An approach that established a strong rapport and familiarity within the community is employed. This was achieved by fostering social interactions and consulting with local representatives. This engagement facilitated the identification of suitable activities that resonate with the participants, ensuring that the training remains relevant and impactful.

Implementation of Experiential Learning-Based Organic Food Cultivation Training. The training program was thoughtfully designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of organic food cultivation and its implications for family food security. The sequence of sessions, as witnessed through the experiences of participants like HR and NN, progressed from introductory concepts to more advanced practices. This design ensured that participants built a

strong foundation before delving into more intricate aspects of organic cultivation. The methods were meticulously selected to ensure effective communication and practical application. The aim was to create a seamless learning experience that resonates with the participants, ultimately enhancing their understanding and engagement. The implementation steps follow a structured approach. It commenced with participant gatherings, introduction of the session, sharing of information, practical hands-on sessions, and concluded with a question-and-answer segment. Integration of experiential aspects was seamlessly executed. Content was delivered based on personal experiences, which resonates deeply with participants. Coupled with practical demonstrations, this approach enhanced participants' understanding and engagement. Active participant engagement was a central theme. The training design prompted participants to be actively involved, posing thought-provoking questions and offering incentives to stimulate engagement and participation. Adapting to changes was seamlessly managed. The trainers responded to questions logically and provide clarifications as required, ensuring that participants stay engaged and informed.

The implementation of the experiential learning-based organic food cultivation training was structured to address the specific objectives of the study. The training employed an experiential learning approach, emphasizing hands-on activities and practical experiences to facilitate learning. Participants, like NKR, RT, DS, and others, benefited from the training by gaining knowledge about organic plant cultivation and its connection to family food security. This approach allowed them to grasp the concepts effectively and practically apply them in their own lives. Experiential learning centers on active pedagogical strategies that engage students in the learning process (Anugrahwanto & Nurhayati, 2020; Murray, 2018; Nurhayati, 2018).

The training's success laid in its emphasis on participant engagement and active involvement in organic food cultivation activities. This was in line with previous researchs that stated participation in the learning experience helped students to develop their academic writing proficiency, collaboration and teamwork, intercultural competence, and ability to engage in reflective practice (Chiyachantana et al., 2022; Lam et al., 2019). Participants like US and S attested to the training's practicality, where they were encouraged to apply their learning by cultivating kitchen herbs. This hands-on engagement allowed participants to experience the processes involved and understand the direct link between cultivation efforts and family food security.

Evaluation of Experiential Learning-Based Organic Food Cultivation Training. The effectiveness of experiential learning was assessed post-training through insightful interviews and evaluations. Mutalik (2017) also stated that the experiential aspects of experiential learning can and should be evaluated. Notably, participants express their newfound knowledge's utility and their ability to practically apply it, underscoring the tangible results of experiential learning. Integration of experiential learning principles into the training program is pivotal (Garay-Rondero et al., 2019; Oh & Polidan, 2018). These principles were thoughtfully embedded within the training's structure and content. The training's effectiveness and the experiential learning approach were evaluated based on participants' perceptions and behavior changes. The experiences of participants like NK and S exemplified the program's positive outcomes.

The training's success in promoting family food security through organic cultivation was highlighted, and the impact on participants' attitudes and behaviors was assessed. Furthermore, the training design was culturally sensitive, ensuring that participants are not overwhelmed and can fully embrace the learning process. Assessment methods employed are aligned with the training's experiential nature. Success was gauged by observing an increased interest in herb cultivation among participants, a tangible indicator that experiential learning has been successful. Data collection is methodically conducted, utilizing post-training interviews and evaluation forms. Online platforms streamlined this process, facilitating effective data gathering. Positive attitude changes among participants were noteworthy. The enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated post-training, with participants displaying an eagerness to continue herb cultivation, indicate a shift towards a more positive attitude and a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

The impact of the training on family food security was significant, as reflected in participants' perceptions and changes in consumption patterns. Through interviews with NKR, RT, and others, it became evident that participants developed a heightened awareness of the relationship between organic food cultivation and family food security. The training acted as a catalyst for behavioral change, leading to modifications in consumption patterns and family eating habits. Participants acknowledged the newfound significance of cultivating organic produce for sustaining family food security. The experiential learning approach effectively conveyed the importance of homegrown food sources. For instance, RM and D highlighted the transformative shift in their perceptions, recognizing the economic and nutritional benefits of organic plant cultivation. This is in line with Cinganotto (2017) finding that the processes of

discovering, learning, experimentation and socialization activated in the participants during the training pathway are key issues.

The training induced changes in consumption patterns and family eating habits. As observed in the experiences of participants like HR and NN, families started incorporating homegrown produce into their daily meals. This shift towards healthier and more nutritious diets was a direct consequence of the training's impact. The economic impact of the training was also evident in how families utilized cultivated produce to save on expenses. DS and others demonstrated a newfound understanding of utilizing homegrown ingredients, such as herbs and vegetables, in their cooking. This approach not only contributed to healthier meals but also yielded financial benefits by reducing the need for store-bought produce.

CONCLUSION

Participants demonstrated significant changes in their perceptions towards organic food cultivation, adopting new consumption patterns and better utilizing the cultivated produce. These changes were a direct result of the participant-centered planning, engaging methodology, integration of experiential principles, collaborative efforts, and effective assessment methods employed during the training. The results of this study go beyond just fulfilling its objectives; they illustrate the transformative impact of experiential learning in urban settings, particularly in the realm of organic food cultivation. This transformation was evident through heightened engagement, tangible learning outcomes, and positive shifts in attitudes within the community. Furthermore, these findings offer valuable insights for future research. Future studies could explore the long-term sustainability of behavior changes induced by experiential learning or examine the scalability of such training programs in different urban contexts. Additionally, research could focus on the economic impacts of adopting organic cultivation practices on a broader community level, thus contributing to a deeper understanding of the socio-economic benefits of experiential learning in urban agriculture. These directions not only extend the scope of the current study but also contribute to the broader discourse on food security, sustainable agriculture, and urban resilience.

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