

AN OVERVIEW CONTRACT FARMING ON SMALLHOLDER'S SOCIAL BUSINESS: THE IMPLEMENTATION TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE AND ISLAMIC SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: Over the last two decades, there have been a variety of production restrictions that smallholder farmers or contract farmers in many underdeveloped nations must contend with, including a lack of access to services such as effective extension and rural loans facilities, both of which are necessary pre-conditions for upgrading commodity value creation. Contract farming has the potential to be a socially sustainable business as its ability to perform well under triple bottom-line parameters. Despite the potential to be a socially sustainable business, contract farming is still underdeveloped and unable to generate a stable income for the rural poor. Therefore, this study attempts to understand smallholder welfare in terms of monetary support and social likelihood ecosystem by introducing Islamic social perspective. This study also identified the bottom line namely; survival, sufficient, and sustainable model to support and protect contract farming businesses from risk. Excluding the poorest or most vulnerable smallholders could also exacerbate pre-existing societal inequalities and prevent those groups from accessing services and inputs that facilitate an upgrade in their standard of living. This study used a literature review approach to understand the factors contributing to the effectiveness of the Triple Bottom Line in contract farming for smallholders. The expected outcome will show that the agricultural sector holds a central position in the economic systems of developing countries. For the smooth continuation of contract farming, its contribution to the economic system, and the proper working ecosystem of the agriculture sector, blending with the so-called new contract farming Triple Bottom Line is strongly required. In the livestock sector, the expected evidence will highlight the crucial role of survival (profit), sufficient (social), and sustainable (planet) in terms of contract farming social business. The evolution of the contract farming process will have numerous implications for the Triple Bottom-Line domains. This, however, could be materialized in any new type of contract farming on the farm and has to be coupled up with intervention from the authorities. This study will make a significant practical contribution to improving existing contract farming. The Triple Bottom Line will help governments in developing countries design policies and scenarios that perhaps could be a more sustainable ecosystem for contract farming. Existing smallholder agricultural entities can transform their business models to align and perhaps go beyond bottom-line parameters. Social business contract farming will foster and ensure small-scale farmers' well-being without sacrificing the economic goals of the agricultural firms.

Keywords: Triple Bottom Line, contract farming, social business, Islamic Social Perspective

INTRODUCTION

The study will focus on three essential components of the needs of the community in their agricultural activities. The three components as a parameter are survival, sufficient, and sustainable. This study's novelty lies in the conditions that social business activists and government agencies need to consider when it comes to helping the community in agricultural activities. Such efforts can sustain the income and agricultural activities that they carry out. This study discussed how the contract farming of broilers ensures sustainable community economic development in light of four sustainable development goals. The study also identifies what targets of each goal are satisfied by contract farming in social businesses to create sustainable community economic development. This is a new exploration of this area and the study would like to work on it by conducting this conceptual paper.

Contract farming has gained growing interest in many developing countries in recent years as an institutional innovation to improve agricultural performance. Although contract farming has existed in Malaysia as a private-sector initiative since the 1980s, in recent years, it has seen the involvement of the public sector in the form of planned intervention programs to assist the rural community. In Malaysia, contract farming is expanding in many businesses. The Federal Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority (FELCRA) has its contract farming scheme for cash crops and livestock involving settlers in its land and rural areas nationwide. For instance, Nestlé (Malaysia) contracted the farming of red rice to some small village farmers in Sarawak. There are ample indications of the growing acceptance of contract farming in Malaysia. In terms of the implementation process, most contract farming involves both private and public sectors. It is likely that public sector involvement, whether in direct management or supportive policy, will be necessary if contract farming schemes are extended to tree farming. Based on Baumann (2000), there is evidence of the government's intervention on behalf of small-based stakeholders through, for example, price stabilization, guaranteeing debts, or obtaining better contract conditions and services. Despite the success of contract farming in Malaysia, contract farming is not self-sustaining and continuous government intervention. Therefore, there is a need for a paradigm shift in contract farming to make it self-sustaining. Social business contract farming could be a solution to the above-said issue. The following section will discuss issues in contract farming in Malaysia and possible solutions to them.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Empowering Micro-Entrepreneurs in the Farming Industry

There are some issues regarding the legality of the agreements that the participants are not aware of, especially on the terms of the agreement. This leads to misunderstanding among the players and later creates an unsupportive environment for production. Moreover, the legal issue of land has always been among the popular issues in the implementation of contract farming. In Malaysia, there are 100,273 hectares of idle land reported in 2014. These lands offer huge potential to expand the contract farming project. However, the most challenging part to develop the land is to identify the owner and the process would be time-consuming. To date, only 60% of the land owners can be identified and the process of the distribution of inheritance takes a very long time. Hence, this will lead to the contract farming expansion project being postponed.

Contract farming is associated with capitalism, which stresses maximizing profit. In the process of profit maximization, the power asymmetry between the firms and the farmers always leads the former to have an advantage over the latter. Hence, manipulation cases, as previously discussed, arise. The said challenges in contract farming can be countered by social business. Social business focuses not only on the economic aspect but also includes the social and environmental aspects. The social business paradigm aims to support the poor by empowering them. Social business contract farming has the potential to create self-sustained contract farming without government intervention.

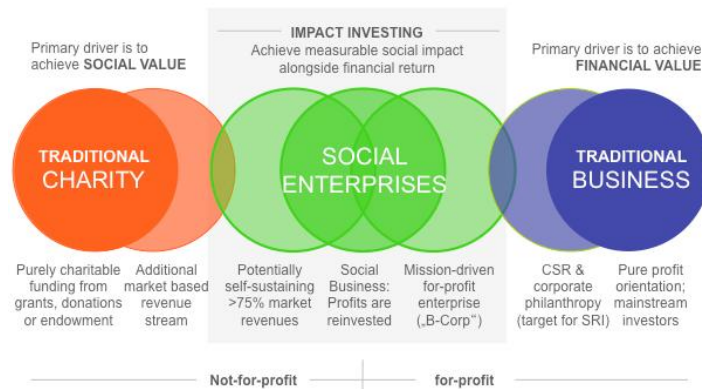
The average poor community lives in poverty and has limited business capital. This type of micro-enterprises needs equipment and support, such as agricultural equipment, seeds, and fertilizers, to continue their activities as social businesses. They need training, advice, monitoring, and supervision related to various stages of agricultural activities (Ationg et al., 2020). The training element is so essential and often publicized since it involves human resources. It has a strong connection, and an essential element to help them become self-reliant by having supervision, training, and motivation (Jamaluddin & Hanafiah, 2018). The main factors that cause social exclusion in society are; human capital capacity, demographics, economy, and other factors, including

training aspects (Azim et al., 2020). Ultimately, training-related ideas can change a person from ignorance to knowledge.

Social Business in Farming Industry

There are two types of corporate bodies operating in the capitalist system i.e. maximum profit. The purpose of an organization is to create value for shareholders, instead of a non-profit aimed at meeting social objectives. After all, Malaysia also shows its commitment toward Strategy No.8 – Decent Work and Economy Growth in Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). After winning on Noble Prize Concept in social business by Professor Yunus, creative destruction in business emerge in a new business platform structure called social business. Professor Yunus’s Grameen Bank took 30 years to gain worldwide recognition and appreciation by introducing the Gram model, the model has inspired many sectors by promoting and suggesting ideas about entrepreneurship rather than charity to address different social issues, such as poverty (Gerdoci, B.; Skreli, E.; Imami, D. 2015).

Figure 1:
Social Enterprises: A Hybrid Spectrum



Source: J. Kingston Venturesome, CAF Venturesome, and European Venture Philanthropy Association (2015)

Yunus Muhammad (2011) has built the foundation of the concept of social business based on two motives namely unselfishness and selfishness. The selfish aspect is that people seek profit through business. Even so, social business is also based on profit motives for philanthropic purposes. From another viewpoint, social business aims to provide support to the less fortunate. Social businesses are different from non-profit organizations in which, investors are allowed to take back their investments. However, no dividend distribution, and a portion of profits must be reinvested in the business (Heide, J.B. & John, G. 2016). There are seven basic principles of social business. The seven principles are objectivity, sustainability, no dividend distribution, profit reinvestment, gender sensitivity, and environmental awareness, fair wages, including a conducive and harmonious environment. Social business is used by all types of organizations such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for activities to businesses that have social responsibility as well as adhere to the triple-bottom-line concept.

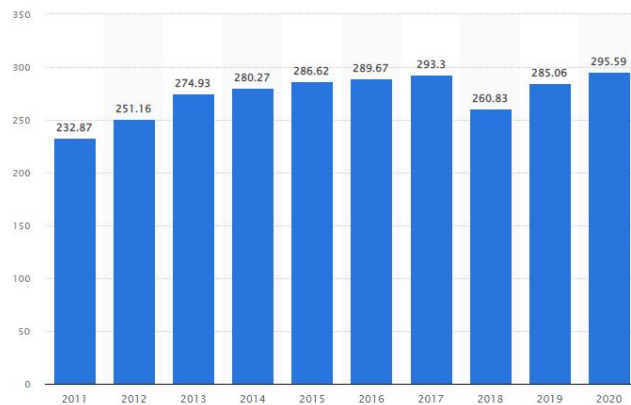
There are a variety of businesses, especially multinational companies in various sectors, that have innovations and innovative strategies to adapt their business models to social business (Hashom, H. et al, 2020). While in agricultural firms around the world have adopted contract farming as a tool of institutional innovation. Contract farming is one of the potential innovations to meet economic goals as well as improve the well-being of small-scale farmers. Contract farming has the ability to transform conventional farming businesses into social businesses (Nigel Key, M. 2002). Literature in social science disciplines, such as economics, law, and management, discusses contract farming in different aspects.

Broiler’s Contract Farming in Malaysia

Broilers are among the popular meat birds in Malaysia. Mostly they are rising mainly on feeds formulated to meet the energy and protein requirements for broilers. This is due to the fact that nutrient

requirements were specific for the relatively slow-growing. Numerous studies on the modern market broiler chicken have demonstrated that on completely balanced feeds, improved growth and feed conversion efficiency (FCR) could be achieved with an increased level of dietary energy (Saleh et al., 2004; Ghazalah et al., 2008; Niu et al., 2009).

Chart 1.0
Broiler Production in Malaysia from 2011 to 2020
(in million heads)



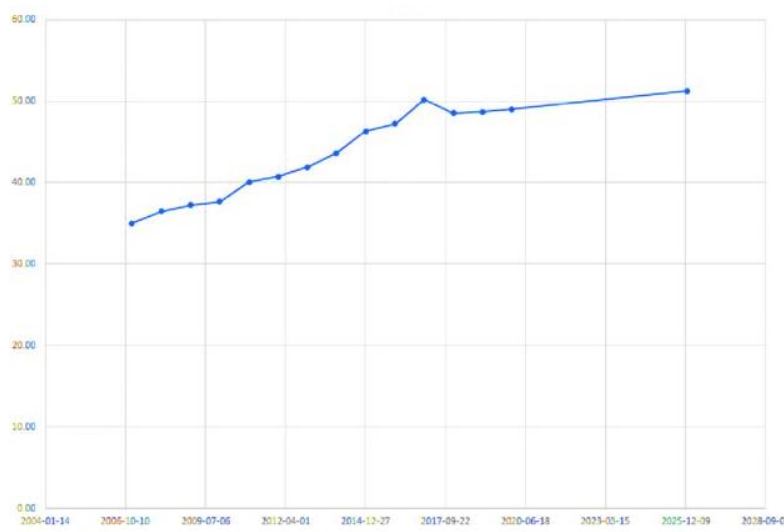
Source: statistica.com <https://www.statista.com/statistics/659667/malaysia-chicken-production/>

The year 2019, the ex-farm value of livestock products in Malaysia was more than RM 24 billion. Poultry meat contributed RM 12.4 billion, while the ex-farm value of eggs was RM 5.8 billion; the poultry industry, thus, represents almost 76% of the livestock ex-farm value. However, the ex-farm value has not been confused with the contribution to the GDP; as of 2019, agricultural contribution to Malaysia's GDP was 103.8 billion (7.3%) and livestock represented 14.9% of the agricultural contribution to the GDP (DOSM, 2019). The Malaysian poultry industry is self-sufficient, able to produce 98.4% of the national demand for poultry meat and 113.8% of the demand for chicken and duck eggs. From 2006 until 2019, per capita poultry consumption increased by 40%, from 35 to 49 kg per year per capita, and it is estimated to surpass 50 kg in 2025. Poultry is the main source of protein for Malaysians; according to statistica.com, the consumption of beef and veal is estimated to be 5.42 kg/year/person, pork 5.31 kg, and sheep 1.18 kg. However, the pandemic effect on production also needs to reconsider as all data shown above provide the future estimation of Malaysia's agricultural production.

Farming activities can be a way to reduce the unemployment problem. New trends and ways to operate agriculture activities are needed in order to drive the interest of farmers and increase their participation. Contract farming without doubt has the ability to attract more farmers to participate in agriculture activities. Hence, contract farming offers lots of advantages, one of which is consistent supply to the markets. Opportunities for contract farming are huge, especially in the field of livestock products. Broiler livestock contract farming is a source of food and livelihood for poor household living in rural areas across the globe. Broiler has the potential to be a socially sustainable business due to its ability to perform well under triple bottom-line parameters. Despite the potential to be a socially sustainable business, as far as today's progress, contract farming benefits small and medium producers and integrators since broiler farming is underdeveloped and unable to generate stable income for micro self sustain farmers, especially in the rural poor.

Previous studies have shown that the broiler industry lacks well established optimal supply chain and there is a need to integrate all actors and channels involved in broiler business. The history and importance of broiler farming can be dated back to 8000 years ago. Starting in China, chicken farming has moved all over the world. Broiler farming, also known as backyard farming, is an essential part of animal husbandry and has played a vital role in the agrarian economy of many countries by providing livelihood, contributing to poverty eradication, and food security.

Chart 1.1
Poultry Consumption Per Capita in Malaysia from 2006 to 2019 - Forecast for 2025
(per/kg).



Source: statistica.com <https://www.statista.com/statistics/757983/malaysia-poultry-consumption-per-capita/>

There are also studies on the constraints related to the supply chain of the broiler. Among the major constraints is the unavailability of proper supply chain systems which leads to poor management, communication gap between channels in the poultry supply chain, increase in the transportation cost and capital issues (Ronaldo, R. 2020), an improper and unorganized market system which leads to underdeveloped of broiler industry (Sarkar, K. and Golam, M. 2009). Every actor involved in the poultry supply chain faces some issues and it is important to classify the issues to improve the efficiency of the poultry industry. Based on the literature review, previous studies focus on broiler discovered actors involved in broiler farming, the limitations, and the prospect for every actor involved in broiler farming. The supply chain mapping of broiler farming has shown that the main actor in broiler farming is the producer who rears broiler for survival and food. The producer deals with both pre-producers and middlemen. Pre-producers provide raw materials and other services to producers whereas middlemen, buy chicken from the producers to sell chicken in the market. The literature review of indigenous poultry has also shown the constraints and opportunities each actor experiences in broiler farming such as the lack of market information. Producers have no direct link to the market, and they rely on middlemen to sell their chicken. Micro-farming broilers are the most affected by the constraints and these constraints have adversely affected the overall performance of broiler farming.

Contract Farming in Broiler Industry

The term “contract farming” generally refers to situations in which a farmer raises or grows an agricultural product for a vertically integrated corporation. There are two parties in a typical contract farming arrangement: the grower and the company (integrator). Broiler contracts consist of outsourcing the growing stage. Integrators recruit large farms (growers) to rear broiler chickens for meat according to contractual guidelines. Farming contracts can also help growers mitigate risks posed by fluctuations in input prices and provide a secure market outlet for their products. The latter is especially important because of the limited facilities that process chickens raised by independent farmers. While current trends are moving producers toward vertical integration, there remain many farms currently under contract or with unused infrastructure from past contracts. Most integrators in Malaysia participate in contract farming with growers for broiler production. Coordinating mechanisms along a vertical supply chain include contracts and integrated ownership and operation. Main players normally have a vertically integrated supply chain, operating as integrated producers, owning the majority of all breeding, feed, slaughtering, and processing facilities as well as operating with a wide variety of distribution channels, ranging from super and hypermarkets to distributors restaurants, wet markets, and groceries. Vertical production chains consist of a single company controlling all aspects of each stage of production. Hatcheries, farms, feed companies processing plants, harvesting teams, distribution, and markets

can all be integrated into a single corresponding supply system. In response to shifting conditions in both export and domestic markets, many producers are shifting their production further into these types of vertical systems. Moreover, a select number of firms control the majority of the market. There are some dangers of a few large integrated systems controlling the broiler sector. Vertical agreements may either foster competition by generating efficiency gains, or they may inhibit competition through vertical market foreclosure or by facilitating collusive activities at any level of the supply chain (MyCC, 2014). Contract farming, which is a form of coordination among agricultural supply chain actors, is common practice in agriculture all around the world (Eaton & Shepherd 2001). According to Shepherd (2013), contract farming has lately been expanding, particularly in Asia. Contract farming presents a specifically contractual relationship in which growers produce and deliver designated agricultural commodities and integrators obtain the commodities at a predetermined price (Eaton & Shepherd 2001; Swinnen & Maertens 2007; Shepherd 2013). On the other hand, it is of interest to integrators who seek guaranteed outputs of high quality and uniformity.

Hence, the use of agricultural contracts has become attractive to many smallholder growers, since the arrangement can assure stable income and access to reliable markets in the modern food supply chain. Nevertheless, the implementation of contracting programs has several potential constraints that would lead to the disappointment of lasting the agreement from both sides, may it be an integrator or a producer (Prowse 2012; Shepherd 2013; Will 2015), as this was the case in the poultry farming in Malaysia. Commonly, there are a few main hindrances to the expansion of the contract farming scheme in the poultry supply chain. Firstly, many integrators failed to build trust and invest in long-term relationships with the growers. This lack of trust leads to a low rate of contract farming success (Dung 2014). Secondly, several studies revealed that low prices offered by poultry integrators lead to a low rate of participation as well as high rates of breaks from growers (Roberts & Khiem 2005; Khiem & Emor 2005). Thirdly, according to World Bank (2013), opportunities for contractual relationship is highly encouraged but the effort is limited to enterprises that are not equipped with the required knowledge and skill.

DISCUSSION

Most successful companies have recognized that survival axes on two separate, yet intertwined factors are important to be recognized as being the best. Being the best in the implementation of contract farming requires a commitment to excellence in all areas. That means smallholder business leaders should not avoid hard decisions where employment is concerned, for example. Staff who consistently fail to perform must be replaced with those who will and specific training support by the contract needs to be continuing benefits the staff. The smaller the company, the more difficult such actions may be to take, but they are essential. Similarly, leaders need to ensure they have staff who are prepared to do what it takes to deliver results, no matter if that means asking for a commitment from staff far greater than a business rival's demand of their employees. Being the best also requires a company to recognize when it is lacking in excellence in key areas, and to identify whether that excellence can be delivered through hiring new employees, retraining existing staff, or seeking outside counsel. Money invested in improving core business competencies is never better spent than in tough times like today, because it directly impacts productivity, sales, and perceptions. Therefore, the study proposed two approaches as stated below;

The Triple Bottom-Line

i. Sustainability (Planet)

Sustainability is a holistic approach that considers ecological, social, and economic dimensions, recognizing that all must be considered together to find lasting prosperity. Ecological integrity is maintained, and all of earth's environmental systems are kept in balance while natural resources within them are consumed by humans at a rate where they are able to replenish themselves. Furthermore, economic sustainability and human communities across the globe can maintain their independence and have access to the resources that they require, gaining financial opportunities and others, to meet their needs. Economic systems are intact and activities are available to everyone, such as secure sources of livelihood. Universal human rights and necessities are attainable by all people, who have access to enough resources in order to keep their families and communities healthy and secure. Sustainability also promotes long-term competitive advantage, which is an asset that ensures future prosperity (Armstrong, 2018). It refers to the balance between a firm's profits, customer satisfaction, as well as the well-being of society. Many studies have shown the benefits of sustainability as a marketing strategy (Kasemsuk, 2016). Therefore, as benefits both the farm producers as well as to the integrator, contract farming

not only provide more standardized commodity but also high-quality agricultural production based on demand and control the risk of producing waste. The consistent supply of agricultural produce by firms strengthens the actor's reputation by offering quality production, at less cost and at the right time.

ii. Sufficient (Social)

According to the dictionary of the royal society, sufficiency economy means the philosophy that His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej has adapted to live and behave for the people from the family level. From the community level to the state level, to operate on the central line, not to be negligent, not greedy, consider moderation, rationality, immunity, and use knowledge and morality as the basis for surviving crises, being stable and sustainable amidst globalization and change (Charming Jamrik, 1998). Therefore, in short, the term sufficiency economy is to live a balanced life enough to hold itself. If there is more than enough, it can be sold for added value but must be based on righteousness.

The concept of sufficiency is based on sustainable consumption (Ariffin, A.H. et al., 2022), or how consumers and other stakeholders can affect the relationship between consumption and sustainable development (Reisch & Thøgersen, 2015), but goes further by aiming to actively level or reduce consumption. Also referred to as strong sustainable consumption (Spangenberg & Lorek, 2019), sufficiency is based on living well with less or “being satisfied with less new material goods than usually consumed today. In research, the sufficiency approach is commonly suggested for comfortable social groups that could reduce their consumption without significant loss of well-being (O’Neill et al., 2018). This is related to the social side of sufficiency: in addition to a maximum consumption, a minimum is also proposed by some scholars to ensure high welfare (Fuchs et al., 2021). While some research primarily considers sufficiency as an action by consumers (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002), the acceptance of sufficient consumption patterns rely heavily on business offerings that enable such changes (Freudenreich & Schaltegger, 2020). Although still a niche topic, businesses working towards sufficiency have gained increasing research attention in recent years, with some conceptual frameworks developed to highlight cross-sectoral and sector-specific sufficiency strategies. Bocken and Short (2016) present a sufficiency-driven business model based on the first three steps in the waste hierarchy. Schneidewind and Palzkill-Vorbeck (2011) utilize the four lessen framework (Sachs, 1993) to present the business case for sufficiency and exemplify different sufficiency business models. To achieve the sufficient objective, contract farming will enable smallholders to access cutting-edge production knowledge from the chain of contract companies involved. The guaranteed market for production is not only confirmed but fulfills the demand and social comfort.

iii. Survival (Profit)

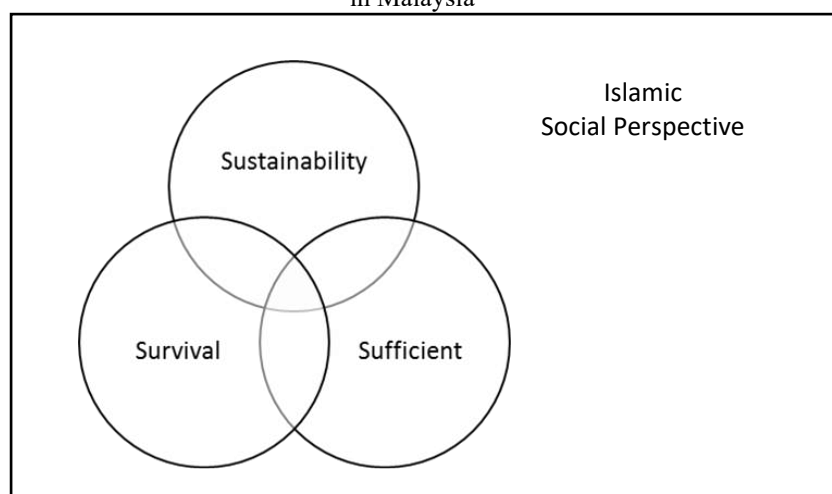
The most important thing today’s small businesses can do is expose their organizations to critical self-analysis. Small businesses survive not by competing head-on with global corporations, but by pursuing the market niches larger operators ignore. Such a strategy requires constant attention to detail, necessitating self-analysis well beyond the operational level; it is crucial that everything from the basic business model down to the operation of the mailroom is subject to rigorous decisions. This means determining what, precisely, the business is aiming to offer its customers, how this differentiates it from its competitors, and how well it is delivering on these core products and services. Based on the survival approach, smallholders should be able to generate a steady source of income at the individual operation while promoting process and value addition.

Identifying the growth and survival factors of contract farming is important as it establishes the base for preparing a policy framework and strategy that safeguards the success of smallholder social businesses (Hashom, H. et al., 2020). In the contemporary, global, dynamic business environment, strategic thinking and systematic decision-making are also important for the growth and survival of small enterprises (Dobbs & Hamilton 2007; Skrt & Antoncic 2004). The characteristics of business management strategies, including marketing and financial management, are found to have a strong positive relationship with business performance (O’Dwyer et al. 2009). A small business in which the owner reinvests retained earnings has the propensity to grow more than businesses that are not willing to reinvest (Fadahunsi 2012). Consistently, internal financing is presumed as the main reason for the success of most firms in the USA (Carpenter and Petersen 2002). The study by Read (1998) showed that over half of her total sample of small firms in the UK suffered from being undercapitalized as they are not reinvested. Moreover, evidence highlighted that internal control, including financial reports and inventory management, allows a business to enhance its effectiveness and gain a competitive advantage (Moore & Mula 1993).

Islamic Social Perspective as Value Creation in Social-Based Farming Industry

Value creation is a motivation for businesses creating believe in stakeholders especially customers patronize the products and services provided to them. This study defines values creation as an intangible quality created by business activities where the firm earns a return on capital and satisfied the shareholders (Hashom, H. et al., 2022). The conceptual uses components such as price, product, people, and planet (environment) as an element to introduce Islamic value in such aspects and this study will expand the idea towards sustainable production (Ariffin, A.S. et al., 2021) and provide a sufficient understanding of social Islamic value creation which safety of ecosystem also part of Islamic legal maxim (*Maqasid Sharia'*) (Hashom, H. et al.,2020). With support instruments such as this cash waqf fund and other muamalat pillar of excellent, it can help and support the socially based agricultural industry in addition to deceiving the Islamic social activities which is the main pillar for solving the problems that occurred in the existing economic and financial system (Rofiqoh, S. N. I., 2021). As the purpose of the study is to propose contract farming for smallholder social businesses, the introduction of social perspective can be considered as guidance that will support the grower's effectiveness to enhance the quality, quantity, and production on large scales. Therefore, the conceptual framework proposed by the study is as below;

Illustration 1.0:
The Triple Bottom Line and Islamic Social Perspective Parameter for Contract Farming Concept in Malaysia



Source: Author's

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, contract farming has a very wide potential under the Triple Bottom Line parameter namely, survival, sufficiency, and sustainability model to support and protect the contract farming business from any risk. The poorest or most at-risk smallholders are also not affected or do not experience existing social inequalities as well as prevent such groups from accessing services and inputs to improve their living standards. As well known, the agricultural sector plays an important role in the economic system of a developing country. To ensure the smooth running of contract farming, its contribution to the economic system, and a proper work ecosystem or so-called new contract farming Triple Bottom Line and social financial assistance are much needed in the agricultural sector. In the livestock sector, evidence has shown that survival, sufficient, and sustainability play an important role in terms of the social business of contract farming. This is because the evolution of the contract farming process will have many implications for the bottom-line domains such as survival, sufficiency, and sustainability. The parameter and the pillar will help governments in developing countries such as Malaysia shape policies and scenarios that could be a more sustainable ecosystem for contract farming and improve social business. Thus, social business contract farms will foster and ensure the well-being of small-scale farmers without sacrificing the economic goals of agricultural firms.

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