

# Exploring the Role of Urban Community Gardens in Promoting Food Security and Social Cohesion in Danao City

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## Abstract

This study explored the role of urban community gardens in enhancing food security and social cohesion in Danao City, Cebu. Conducted at the City Agriculture Services Office, it utilized a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews and survey questionnaires to gather data from diverse urban residents. The study interviewed the respondents to assess their demographics, interest in urban gardening, sales of harvest, and experiences. The findings revealed that urban gardening was mainly practiced by middle-aged, well-educated women with long-term ties to the city, driven by motivations such as enjoyment of fresh produce and economic savings. The study highlighted the non-commercial benefits of urban gardening, including improved access to fresh food, physical and mental well-being, and strengthened community bonds. These insights suggested that urban gardening was crucial for building resilient food systems and cohesive communities, providing valuable information for urban planning and community development.

**Keywords:** Non-commercial gardening, gardening experience, sustainable food practices

## 1. Introduction

The cultivation, processing, distribution, and sale of food for commercial, noncommercial, recreational, educational, or nonprofit reasons inside urban, suburban, and peri-urban regions were collectively referred to as urban agriculture (Papanek et al., 2023). These activities include food-producing gardens, which can be residential, communal, educational, institutional, rooftop, or market-based. They also encompass agricultural activities such as aquaculture, beekeeping, and poultry, as well as the planting of edibles. Urban farms, utilizing novel techniques for producing food like hydroponics, aquaponics, and vertical farming, are also part of these initiatives.

The need for a more precise definition of urban agriculture is growing due to the variety of initiatives that fall under this umbrella and differ in terms of scope, location, activities, and objectives. This is because there are differences among the various forms of urban agriculture and their associated challenges, as well as in terms of the effects they have and the conditions under which they operate. As our world becomes more urbanized, the importance of growing your food in limited spaces has never been clearer. Nearly 13% of Americans are food insecure, which means they do not always have enough money to buy food,

and many people in the country struggle to consume the daily recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables (Lee et al., 2022). Multifaceted community-level interventions are needed to improve healthy food access and fruit and vegetable intake, given the prevalence of food and nutrition insecurity in our urban neighborhoods (USDA, 2021).

Urban farming is becoming a popular trend in the Philippines, as more and more people are recognizing the benefits of growing food in the city. Community gardens have been popping up in urban areas, providing a way for people to gain access to fresh, nutritious produce. Urban farming has numerous benefits that make it an attractive and sustainable practice in urban areas. Some of the key benefits of urban farming in the Philippines are Food Security, Improved Nutrition, Environmental Sustainability, Waste Management, Community Building, Mental and Physical Health Benefits, and Economic Opportunities. These benefits highlight the potential of urban farming to address various challenges faced by cities, including food security, environmental sustainability, and community development (Bersabal, 2023).

Urban agriculture can improve food and nutrition security by increasing the availability of fresh, healthful, and culturally appropriate foods. Intensive production strategies for fruit and vegetable or egg production can support a consistent supply of fresh local foods for urban residents. Community, school, and home gardening especially promotes fruit and vegetable consumption for those who directly participate (Diekmann et al., 2020).

During times of larger food supply chain disruptions, such as pandemics or hurricanes, urban agriculture production can serve as a dependable source of local or regional foods to help residents meet their nutritional needs. Gardening and farming activities promote physical activity, time spent outdoors, and cognitive stimulation through engaging with nature (Suto et al., 2021).

In addition to nutritional benefits, urban agriculture activities also support physical and mental health and well-being benefits. Outdoor activities can have therapeutic effects on mental health by providing a relaxing, stress-reducing environment while also creating a meaningful sense of belonging (Koay & Dillon, 2020).

Urban agriculture has its environmental constraints, whether it be high-tech operations like hydroponics or in-ground soil farming. Urban soils of poor quality can make it difficult for growers to apply best management practices for irrigation, fertilizer, and pesticide use without sufficient knowledge or assistance, or they can make the soil healthier but lack the necessary expertise (Beavers et al., 2021). Furthermore, there are knowledge gaps among urban producers regarding root-zone ecology, plant lighting, and production processes. Growers rely on internet resources, such as social media, which are known to be misinformation sources, to fill in these knowledge gaps (Solis-Toapanta et al., 2020). The system may become ecologically inefficient due to improper resource inputs caused by a lack of knowledge in these areas. The environmental constraints related to urban agriculture Intriguingly, indoor hydroponic operations' resource-, energy, and water-intensive systems may raise rather than lower greenhouse gas emissions (Whittinghill & Sarr, 2021).

Urban agriculture, whether commercial or non-commercial, can be expensive, labor-intensive, and challenging to initiate and maintain. The effectiveness of these operations depends on specialized knowledge, a substantial amount of staff time, and funds for labor, all of which may be lacking in the event of a capital shortage. Commercial urban farms may find it challenging to turn a profit large enough to provide a sizable number of workers at livable wages, even with their initial investment capital (Campbell et al. (2022).

Growth in the agriculture sector has been found, on average, to be at least twice as effective in reducing poverty as growth in other sectors. Food insecurity – often rooted in poverty – decreases the ability of countries to develop their agricultural markets and economies. Access to quality, nutritious food is fundamental to human existence. Secure access to food can produce wide-ranging positive impacts, including Economic growth and job creation, poverty reduction, Trade opportunities, Increased global security and stability, and Improved health and healthcare. Nearly a billion people across the world experience the effects of food insecurity. According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), food security means having, at all times, both physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet dietary needs for a productive and healthy life. Put more simply, families are able to afford and obtain enough nutritious food. A family is food secure when its members do not live in hunger or fear of hunger. Both in the United States and in developing nations, food insecurity is often linked to poverty. Shifts in the global economy, including rises in international food and oil prices, can affect food security throughout the world, with especially severe effects in low-income countries (Krastanova, 2022).

In the Philippines, food security and food inflation are related and are growing problems. It was reported that the national average for food inflation rose from 6.5 percent in August to 7.7 percent in September. Of the food items, the foremost drivers of higher food inflation are sugar, confectionery, and desserts (30.2 percent), corn (26.2 percent), and oils and fats (20.1 percent). The big problem is the lack of productivity in our agricultural sector. Farming methods are old-fashioned, the economics of agriculture impoverish the farmers, and the government is focused on rice. According to the Philippine Institute of Development study or PIDS, “with traditional agricultural methods falling short, investing in new technologies is key to transforming the country’s livestock, poultry, and dairy (LPD) industries.” “Many investments must be poured into production and process improvements, including technology, equipment, animal inventory, and manpower capacity upgrades, for the agriculture industry to be more competitive,” the PIDS paper said. Though LPD industries produce a third of the agriculture sector’s output based on Philippine Statistics Authority data, local consumption still relies on imports. The study noted that pork import dependency showed “an increasing trend in value from 2012 to 2018”. Dressed chicken imports are “significantly higher than exports,” and local milk production constitutes only “five percent of the total milk demand” (Food et al.).

This study aimed to explore the multifaceted role of urban community gardens in fostering food security and social cohesion within Danao City. It seeks to understand the demographic characteristics of respondents, encompassing age, sex, occupation, educational attainment, and length of residence in Danao City. Furthermore, it delves into their level of interest in urban gardening initiatives, examining aspects such as backyard vegetable production, interest in urban gardening, preferred gardening spaces, time allocation, plant selection, motivations for gardening, garden size, and duration of gardening experience. Additionally, the study seeks to assess the extent of sales generated from urban garden harvests on a weekly basis and explore the experiences of individuals engaged in urban gardening. Through a comprehensive analysis of these factors, the study endeavors to explain the significance of urban community gardens in addressing food security challenges and fostering social cohesion within the city. By examining the benefits and limitations of urban agriculture, this research will provide insights into how these practices can improve access to fresh, healthy, and culturally appropriate foods, support physical and mental well-being, and foster a sense of community. Additionally, the study will address the environmental constraints, economic viability, and social dynamics associated with urban agriculture,

aiming to offer strategies for overcoming obstacles and enhancing the sustainability and inclusivity of urban farming initiatives.

## 2. Materials And Methods

### 2.1 Study Site

The study was conducted at the Danao City Hall, Cebu, Philippines. Danao City provided a diverse urban setting for investigating the impact of community gardening initiatives on food security and social cohesion.



**Figure 1. Danao City Hall, Cebu, Philippines**

### 2.2 Qualitative Approach

A qualitative approach was chosen as the research method for this study. Qualitative research involves a process known as induction, whereby data is collected relating to a specific area of study and from this data, the researcher constructs different concepts and theories. A qualitative approach was considered more relevant to undertake this research as it allowed greater capacity to gain more depth and meaning based on an individual's experiences of unemployment along with their beliefs and feelings as opposed to a quantitative approach, which is more structured, broader in scale, and more numerically based.

### 2.3 Instrument

Semi-structured interviews were selected to carry out this research study. Semi-structured interviews in qualitative research are used to collect qualitative, open-ended data. The researcher and participants engage in a formal interview. The researcher develops and utilizes an interview guide, a list of open-ended questions, and topics that the researcher will cover in the interview. The researchers allowed the participants to elaborate and, with that, provided more flexibility, range, and, therefore, the capacity to elicit more information from the participant.



## 2.4 Sample Selection

Representative participants from each barangay in Danao City were invited to participate in the study. Permission was obtained from the event coordinator of a seminar to access these participants. Researchers utilized qualitative methods and collected through survey questionnaires administered to urban residents involved in or affected by community gardening initiatives. These surveys covered demographic information, levels of participation in community gardening activities, perceptions of food security, and experiences of social cohesion within their communities.

## 2.5 Data Collection

Data collection involved conducting semi-structured interviews with participants. The interview guide, adapted from Kaiser, Barnhart, and Huber-Krum (2020), consisted of two parts: Part I gathered basic demographic information, while Part II included open-ended questions about urban community gardens' role in promoting food security and social cohesion. The interview guide utilized validated questions from existing literature to ensure reliability. Interviews were conducted personally, with assurance of confidentiality, and participants were briefed on the purpose and procedure before the interview commenced.

## 2.6. Data Analysis

Data Analysis encompassed qualitative techniques, including thematic analysis of interview transcripts, to delve deeper into participants' perspectives. Findings were presented using tables, charts, and narratives to provide a comprehensive analysis of urban community gardens' role in promoting food security and social cohesion. These insights aimed to inform policy and practice in urban planning, community development, and food systems management.

## 2.7 Ethical Consideration

Ethical approval was granted by the instructor prior to the commencement of the research. In conducting any research, the researcher must at all times be aware of the impact that their research will have on participants and on society as a whole and must, therefore, act accordingly. The researcher made it clear to all participants that their participation was on a voluntary basis and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. While conducting this study, the researcher ensured informed consent from all participants. The participants were also advised that they were under no obligation to answer any questions that they may not have felt comfortable with. Participants were given advanced notice prior to the interview, a broad outline of the subject to be discussed, an indication of the type of information that was required of the participant, the reasons why the research was being carried out, and how the information which they provided would be used. Prior to the commencement of each interview, the participants were told of the length of time involved with the interview and sufficient time was allowed before and after the interview for the participant to ask any questions relating to the research topic.

## 2.8 Limitations of the Study

While undertaking this study, the researcher encountered some limitations. Most notably, the small number of participants meant that one has to be cautious in generalizing from the findings. When conducting any research, it is beneficial to carry out the research on a larger and more in-depth scale in order to allow a more comprehensive analysis of the study. However, the use of semi-structured interviews

proved very useful in gaining in-depth and meaningful data from the participants. While the method of interviewing is a time-consuming process, it proved to be an extremely efficient means of extracting information from individuals openly and honestly.

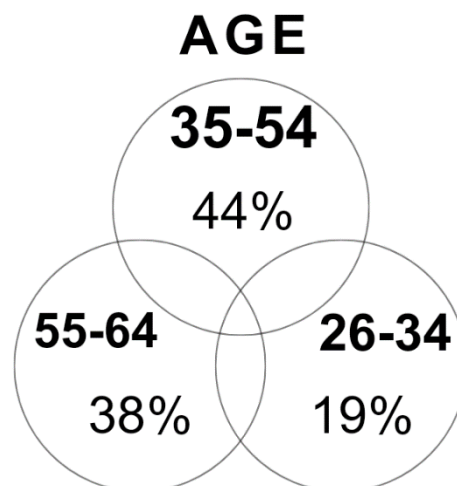
Another limitation relates to researcher bias which is always a risk in any type of research study, more so, the less structured the data collection is. This researcher tried to be aware of and to be vigilant of researcher bias. Although it is impossible to eliminate research bias, the researcher is confident to have achieved valid findings, which can be used for larger populations. Furthermore, it could be argued that the type of data collected leaves more room for interpretation than, for example numeric data would.

### 3. Results and Discussions

The data provides a detailed demographic and socio-economic profile of the 16 respondents. Age-wise, the majority are in the 35-54 age group (44%), with a significant portion aged 55-64 (38%) and no respondents under 26 or over 65. Females constitute the majority of respondents (75%). Geographically, respondents are mainly from Lowland (44%) and Poblacion (31%), with smaller representations from Mountain (19%) and Subdivision (6%). Occupationally, 31% are government employees, with other professions including nurses and teachers (13% each), self-employed individuals, machinists, and BNS (6% each), while 25% are unemployed. In terms of educational attainment, half hold graduate degrees (50%), and a significant portion have high school education (25%), with fewer respondents having undergraduate degrees (19%) and less than high school education (6%). The length of residence in Danao City is varied, with notable long-term residents, including 19% having lived there for 43 years and others ranging from 4 to 59 years. This data highlights a predominantly middle-aged, female, and well-educated population with diverse occupations and a long-term attachment to Danao City.

#### 3.1 Profile of Respondents

**Figure 2. Venn Diagram of Age**



Respondents 1 and 2 fall within the age range of 55-64, followed by respondents 3, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, and 15, who are categorized as belonging to the 35-54 age group. Respondents 4, 7, and 8 are in the 26-34 age range, while respondents 9, 10, 11, and 16 are aged between 55 and 64. This distribution showcases a varied representation across different age cohorts, providing insights into the demographic composition of the surveyed population. Research has shown that urban gardening is particularly appealing to older

adults due to its physical, mental, and social benefits. Older individuals often find gardening to be a source of relaxation, a way to stay physically active, and an opportunity for social engagement (Cattivelli, 2023). Female respondents dominate the data set, including respondents 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 16. Male respondents are represented by respondents 2, 4, 9, and 12. This gender distribution highlights a majority of female participants, suggesting a potential gender imbalance in the surveyed population. Older adults are significantly involved in urban gardening, driven by various motivations such as the desire for social interaction, health benefits, and a sense of achievement. Studies show that females often lead and participate more in urban gardening activities compared to males, driven by motivations such as enhancing household food security, creating aesthetically pleasing environments, and fostering community connections. For instance, a study found that urban gardening often appeals to women for its social and therapeutic benefits, reinforcing community bonds and personal well-being (Cattivelli, 2023).

Respondents 1 and 2 are both government employees, while respondents 3, 9, and 10 do not specify any occupation. Respondents 4, 14, and 15 are also government employees, indicating a notable presence within the surveyed group. Additionally, there is diversity in occupations among other respondents, with roles including nurse, teacher, self-employed, and machinist. There is evidence suggesting that government employees are often among those interested in urban gardening. Studies highlight that urban gardening is considered a beneficial activity by many, including those in public sector roles, as it contributes to personal well-being and environmental sustainability. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, urban gardening gained increased attention as a way to improve mental health and ensure food security, with government employees among those participating in such initiatives (Harding et al., 2022). Respondent 1 holds a graduate degree, while Respondent 2 has less than a high school education. Respondents 3, 9, and 12 have completed high school, while respondent 4 holds an undergraduate degree. A majority of respondents, including 5, 6, 8, 11, 14, 15, and 16, possess graduate degrees, with a notable emphasis on higher education within the surveyed group. Research indicates that individuals with higher education levels, including degree holders, show significant interest in urban gardening. This trend is driven by motivations such as enhancing food security, promoting sustainability, and improving community well-being. Degree holders often value the educational and ecological benefits of urban gardening, which aligns with their knowledge and interest in environmental issues and healthy living (Cattivelli, 2023).

Respondents 1 and 9 have resided in Danao City for 57 years, while respondent two has lived there for 59 years, indicating long-term residency among these individuals. Respondents 3, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, and 15 have resided in Danao City for varying duration ranging from 4 to 50 years. Additionally, respondents 4, 7, 8, 10, and 11 represent a younger demographic, with a shorter duration of residence in Danao City, ranging from 4 to 29 years. Long-term residents in municipalities often show a strong interest in urban gardening. This is due to their established connection with the community and the desire to improve their local environment. Studies indicate that community gardens foster a sense of belonging and ownership among long-term residents, enhancing their commitment to maintaining and beautifying their neighborhoods. These gardens provide both social and environmental benefits, which are particularly valued by those who have lived in the area for an extended period (Bonow & Normark, 2019).

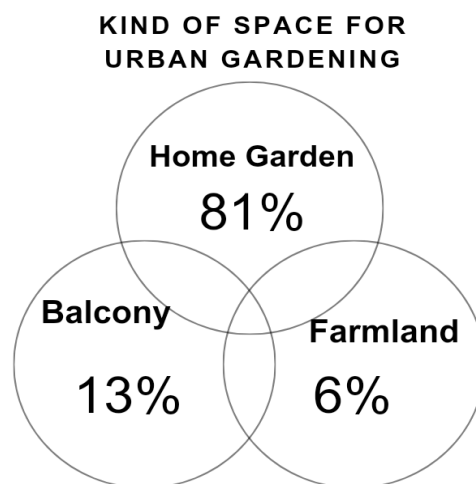
### **3.2 Interest in the Urban Garden**

Respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 16 have indicated that they produce food in their backyard, highlighting a prevalent practice among a majority of the surveyed individuals. Conversely,

respondents 7, 8, 14, and 15 reported not engaging in backyard food production. This data suggests a significant proportion of respondents are involved in homegrown food cultivation, potentially indicating a trend towards self-sustainability or a preference for fresh produce. Most urban gardeners tend to plant their crops in their backyards. This practice is common because it allows individuals to maximize their available space for growing a variety of plants. Backyard gardening not only provides fresh produce but also supports local biodiversity and offers numerous environmental benefits (Ugg-Admin, 2024).

All respondents, including respondents 1 through 16, have expressed an interest in urban gardening, indicating a widespread enthusiasm for this activity within the surveyed group. This unanimous interest suggests a strong inclination towards urban gardening as a potential means of enhancing food security, promoting sustainability, or simply enjoying gardening as a hobby. The data underscores a collective desire among respondents to engage in urban gardening practices, reflecting a growing trend towards urban agriculture and green living initiatives. There is a growing interest in urban gardening among a wide range of individuals. According to the 2021 National Gardening Survey, approximately 35% of U.S. households are engaged in growing vegetables, fruits, and other food items, indicating a significant rise in interest in urban gardening activities (Mayers, 2024).

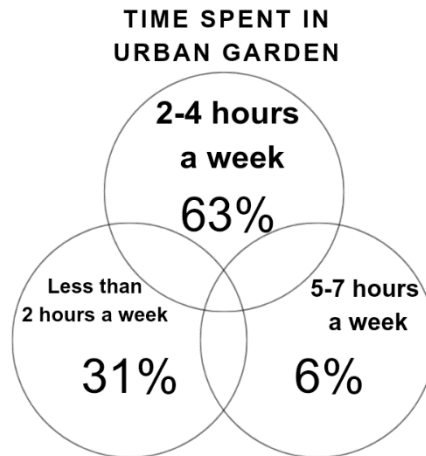
**Figure 3. Venn Diagram of kind of space for urban gardening**



Respondent 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, and 13 are interested in utilizing their home garden space for urban gardening, demonstrating a preference for cultivating produce within the comfort of their homes. On the other hand, respondents 5, 11, and 15 have shown interest in using alternative spaces such as balconies or farmland for their gardening pursuits, indicating a diverse range of preferred gardening environments among the surveyed individuals. A significant number of people are increasingly utilizing their home gardens for urban gardening. This trend has been particularly evident in recent years, with about 35% of U.S. households now growing their food, including vegetables, fruits, and herbs (Mayers, 2024). Various factors, including the desire for fresh produce, cost savings, and the therapeutic benefits of gardening, drive the surge in urban gardening. Additionally, around 80% of American households participated in some form of gardening project in 2022, highlighting the widespread adoption of this activity (Woods, 2024).



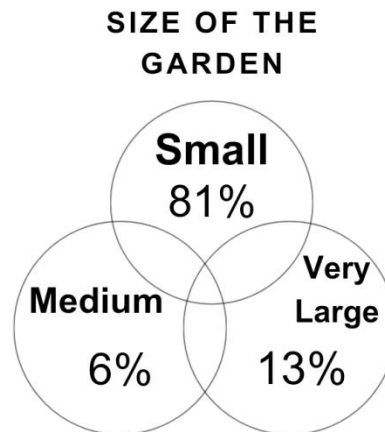
**Figure 4. Venn diagram of time spent in an urban garden**



Respondents 1, 2, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, and 16 typically spend 2-4 hours a week on urban gardening activities, suggesting a consistent time commitment among these individuals towards maintaining their gardens. Conversely, respondents 3, 4, 6, 8, and 13 allocate less than 2 hours a week to urban gardening, indicating a preference for more limited involvement or potentially facing time constraints in their gardening endeavors. Most people typically spend between 2-4 hours per week on urban gardening activities. This time is often used for tasks such as planting, weeding, watering, and maintaining their gardens, which provides both physical and mental health benefits (Peters, 2019).

Respondents 1 through 16 primarily cultivate vegetables in their urban gardens, reflecting a common preference for growing edible crops among the surveyed individuals. However, respondent 15 stands out by choosing to grow herbs, showcasing a slight deviation in plant selection within the surveyed group. Most people engaging in urban gardening primarily focus on cultivating vegetables. This reflects a common preference for growing edible crops among urban gardeners. Vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers, beans, and various leafy greens are especially popular due to their suitability for small spaces and containers (Agarwal et al., 2024). Additionally, the preference for growing vegetables aligns with the goal of producing fresh, home-grown food, contributing to both sustainability and food security (Botes, 2024). Respondents 1 and 14 grow food because they enjoy the flavor of home-grown produce, indicating a preference for the taste and quality of fruits and vegetables cultivated in their gardens. Conversely, respondents 4, 5, 7, and 8 primarily grow food as a means of saving money, highlighting a practical motivation among certain individuals to reduce grocery expenses through home gardening. Many people grow their food because they enjoy the superior taste of home-grown produce compared to store-bought options. Several factors, including the freshness and higher quality of home-grown fruits and vegetables, drive this preference. Freshly harvested produce from one's garden is often more flavorful due to being consumed shortly after picking, which preserves its taste and nutritional content. Moreover, home gardeners can select specific varieties known for their taste, which are often not available in supermarkets that prioritize durability and shelf life over flavor (Endicott, 2022).

**Figure 5. Venn diagram of the size of the garden**



Respondents 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, and 15 have small-sized gardens, suggesting a common trend towards compact gardening spaces among a majority of the surveyed individuals. In contrast, respondents 4, 11, and 12 have medium to very large-sized gardens, indicating a variation in the scale of gardening efforts within the surveyed group. A common trend in urban gardening is the prevalence of small-sized gardens, reflecting a move towards compact gardening spaces. Many people are utilizing innovative methods such as container gardening, vertical gardens, and selecting dwarf varieties of plants to maximize their limited space. This trend is evident in the popularity of compact fruit trees and small-scale vegetable gardening, which can be easily managed in urban environments (Sweetser, 2024).

Respondent 1 has maintained their garden for a longer period, while respondents 2, 3, 4, 9, and 11 have cultivated their gardens for 5-10 years, indicating a significant investment of time and effort in their gardening endeavors. In contrast, respondents 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 have relatively newer gardens, with durations ranging from 0-5 years, suggesting a more recent initiation into urban gardening among these individuals. Research indicates that many people maintain their home gardens for extended periods, often ranging from 1 to 5 years. This trend highlights the sustained commitment individuals have toward cultivating their green spaces, whether for food production, aesthetic enjoyment, or environmental benefits (Giambalvo, 2022).

Respondents 2 and 5 expressed enjoyment in gardening, while respondents 9 and 10 highlight the perception of food as healthy and safe. Respondent 11 finds gardening interesting, respondent 13 also enjoys gardening, and respondent 16 considers it their hobby to plant. Conversely, respondents 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14, and 15 have chosen not to comment on their gardening experiences. Many urban gardeners express significant enjoyment in their gardening activities and perceive the food they grow as healthier and safer. This trend reflects a broader appreciation for the taste and quality of home-grown produce. According to research, individuals engaged in urban gardening often report heightened satisfaction and a sense of well-being, which is associated with both the physical activity of gardening and the consumption of fresh, home-grown fruits and vegetables. Many urban gardeners express significant enjoyment in their gardening activities and perceive the food they grow as healthier and safer. This trend reflects a broader appreciation for the taste and quality of home-grown produce. According to research, individuals engaged in urban gardening often report heightened satisfaction and a sense of well-being, which is associated with both the physical activity of gardening and the consumption of fresh, home-grown fruits and vegetables (Bosch, 2020).

### 3.3 Sales of the Harvest for Urban Garden

Respondents 1 through 16 have reported zero sales of their harvest, indicating that none of them engage in selling the produce from their urban gardens. This suggests that the primary motivation for gardening among these individuals may not be commercial profit but rather personal consumption, enjoyment, or other non-monetary benefits. Most urban gardeners focus on consuming the produce they grow rather than selling it. This trend is supported by various community gardening initiatives that emphasize personal consumption and community sharing over commercial sales. For example, the Milwaukee urban gardening community includes diverse groups who primarily grow food for personal use and community building rather than for profit (Carmody, 2024).

### 3.4 Experiences in Urban Garden

Respondent 2, 5, 9, 10, 11, 13, and 16 have provided insights into their gardening experiences, expressing enjoyment, interest, or the perception of food as healthy and safe. Conversely, respondents 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14, and 15 have chosen not to comment on their gardening experiences, indicating a range of attitudes towards verbalizing their thoughts on the matter. For example, a study highlighted by Urban Gardening Guru emphasizes that urban gardeners in Boston derive significant pleasure from their gardening activities. This enjoyment is coupled with the perception that the food they grow is healthier and safer compared to commercially available options (Ugg-Admin, 2024). Similarly, experts from LawnStarter highlight the physical and mental benefits of gardening, underscoring the sheer pleasure it brings to individuals, which is a primary motivator for many gardeners (Coyoca et al., 2022).

## 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study revealed that urban community gardens played a significant role in promoting food security and social cohesion in Danao City. Through detailed demographic profiling of respondents, it was evident that urban gardening appealed predominantly to middle-aged, well-educated women who had a long-term attachment to the city. These individuals engaged in backyard vegetable production and allocated varying amounts of time to their gardening activities, driven by motivations ranging from the enjoyment of fresh produce to economic savings. The unanimous interest in urban gardening among the respondents highlighted its potential as a tool for enhancing food security and fostering community ties. Furthermore, the study underscored the personal and community benefits of urban gardening, such as improved access to fresh, healthy foods and enhanced physical and mental well-being. Despite the lack of commercial sales from garden harvests, the focus on personal consumption and enjoyment reflected the non-monetary value of these practices. The diverse experiences and motivations of urban gardeners, coupled with the challenges posed by environmental constraints and the need for sustainable practices, suggested that urban community gardens were vital for building resilient urban food systems and cohesive communities. The insights gained from this research provided a foundation for developing strategies to support and expand urban gardening initiatives in Danao City.

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