



# Different meanings of urban agriculture: Perspectives of housewives and women farmers

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Policy plays a crucial role in maintaining the sustainability of urban agriculture. Inclusive policies that represent all stakeholders are needed. Therefore, it is crucial to consider the diversity of urban agriculture stakeholders. Women in urban agriculture, often considered as homogeneous group, also exhibit diverse differences. The most obvious is the contrast between housewives and women farmers, who have differing priorities. This shows that these two groups may have different interpretations of urban agriculture practices, both functionally and experientially. Therefore, this study tries to understand and compare the perspectives of these two groups. **Methods:** This qualitative research uses secondary data analysis through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) with a thematic approach. Secondary data were collected using some keywords relevant to the topic with a research period of 2020–2025. **Findings:** The results in functional meanings show a significant difference between housewives and women farmers. This comparison indicates that housewives perceive a more diverse range of functional meanings in urban agriculture practices, including empowerment, economic benefits, environmental aspects, and even food security. In contrast, women farmers tend to focus more on economic benefits and food security. The results in experiential meanings also show significant differences. This comparison indicates that housewives perceive the experiential meaning of urban agriculture as skill development and personal fulfillment, whereas women farmers tend to focus more on the control they have in decision-making. **Conclusion:** Based on the contrasting findings between the two groups, inclusive policymaking is needed to address the diverse experiences of women farmers in urban agriculture. **Novelty/Originality of this article:** The novelty of this study lies in its examination of the differences in functional and experiential meanings between housewives and women farmers, an aspect that has not been previously explored in the context of urban agriculture.

**KEYWORDS:** experiential; functional; housewives; urban agriculture; women farmers.

## 1. Introduction

The presence of urban agriculture today is not only understood as a food security, several studies show that urban agriculture has an impact on environmental, economic, and social aspects (Deelstra & Girardert, 2000; Kirby et al., 2020; Tapia et al., 2021; Johansson et al., 2024). Yuan et al. (2022) stated that the impact of urban agriculture on society is also closely related to specific objectives that focus on these three aspects, such as discussions on community, climate, urban sustainability, poverty, and of course food security. This makes the discussion of urban agriculture always closely related to sustainability and policies are certainly needed to support it (Bellemare & Dusoruth, 2021; Yuan et al., 2022; Ebissa et al., 2024).

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Policies are essentially defined as guidelines for finding solutions, so it is important to understand the root cause of a problem before establishing a comprehensive policy (Peters, 2005; Nudzor, 2009). According to Meehan (1985), if a “policy” functions as a guideline, then that policy must have certain capacities. Ekaradt et al. (2023) in Sánchez-Soriano et al. (2024) further state that policies such as those related to the environment must strengthen inclusive governance mechanisms in the process. A policy is not born in a simple process, but rather through a long process, and the privilege of policy-making should not only come from the privilege of political figures, but must involve various stakeholders (Nudzor, 2009). Piggan (2020) also mentions that policies related to physical activity will contribute to the dignity, value, and life opportunities of individuals and communities. Therefore, the involvement of stakeholders representing the needs of each group involved is very important to demonstrate the capacity of these policies and understand that each group may have different priorities that can influence policy-making (Masefield et al., 2021).

The actors involved in urban agriculture are very diverse, and there are many differences between them. These differences include the type of agriculture they manage, their knowledge, motivation and goals, planting methods, age, and gender, which affect the benefits they obtain and how they view urban agriculture (Grebitus, 2021; Safitri et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2024). Gender as an indicator in urban agriculture practices focuses on eliminating inequalities and ensuring the implementation of inclusive practices (Kumari et al., 2025), where gender focuses on roles associated with women and men (James et al., 2021). Therefore, discussions about women in urban agriculture often focus on ensuring gender equality. Recognizing the historical role of women is essential for sustainability (Zaremba et al., 2021; Carvalho & Bógus, 2020). Several studies on gender have shown the influence of women on urban agriculture practices. Leder (2022) states that the feminization of agriculture is a sign of a real shift in the context of gender, although it is still vague but sufficiently indicates an increase in women's participation in urban agricultural practices. Carvalho & Bógus (2020) in their research also showed an expansion of the space for participation of women involved in urban agriculture practices.

Although it is important to continue fighting for gender equality, a closer look at women's groups shows that women tend to be viewed as a homogeneous group. Ironically, this leads to neglect of their status and identity within the social structure (Lau et al., 2021). Women cannot be defined as a homogeneous group, because in reality, a person's gender intersects with other identities such as their various backgrounds (James et al., 2021). This means that discussions about women in urban agriculture cannot be limited to examining the differences between women and men, but must also consider other intersecting aspects in order to develop relevant and targeted strategies (Lau et al., 2021; Zaremba et al., 2021).

In urban agriculture practices, groups of women with differences are quite easy to find; one of the most contrasting groups is housewives and women farmers. Housewives who manage urban farms generally do not use the land they cultivate as a primary source of income. Although it has an impact on the family economy, this is achieved through savings because the products are used for personal consumption and sales are not the priority (Mardiana et al., 2024). This is certainly in contradiction to women farmers who make urban agriculture their main source of livelihood, in this case, economic income is the main factor and has the potential to improve their quality of life (Lestari & Yuwana, 2023). The differences between these two groups can be an indicator that women from different backgrounds may see urban agriculture through different perspectives. This diversity emphasises the importance of understanding how different groups of women experience and interpret urban agriculture. Without acknowledging these differences, policies designed to support urban agriculture may fail to address the diverse needs, motivations and challenges faced by different stakeholders. In understanding how someone sees something, it is important to understand how they interpret it in order to understand how they see it. Meaning has a crucial influence because it plays a role in initiating engagement in a job, which then affects a person's motivation and goals (Ong et al., 2019). In understanding the context of urban agriculture, meaning can generally be viewed through the dimensions of functional meaning and experiential meaning. Functional meaning refers

to the practical benefits gained from urban agricultural activities, while experiential meaning relates to the subjective experiences and emotional involvement of the actors involved (Damanik, 2024; Umam, 2017; Anjarwati et al., 2021). Based on previous studies, urban agriculture has provided many functional benefits, the most commonly cited of which are the fulfillment of food needs, improved nutrition, utilization of urban space, environmental management, providing employment opportunities, and providing opportunities for socialization (Mougeot, 2000; Lovell, 2010). All of the benefits mentioned indicate that the functional benefits of urban agriculture can be represented by aspects of food security, economy, environment, society, and health (Yuan et al., 2022). In addition to functional meaning, actors involved in urban agriculture certainly have different interpretations of their experiences. Experiential meaning focuses on the quality and significance of experiences or events, and is closely related to the feelings of the actors (Umam, 2017; Anjarwati et al., 2021). In the context of urban agriculture, several studies have mentioned the existence of emotional attachment, involvement in social relationships, a sense of belonging, and positive feelings (Hale et al., 2011; Litt et al., 2015; Kingsley et al., 2019). This can be used as a reference indicator in measuring the experiential meaning, which related to psychological aspects.

Bandung is a region that actively develops urban agriculture programs and has conducted numerous studies on urban agriculture in general, and specifically on women involved in urban agriculture. Among these studies are those comparing subsistence and commercial farming groups (Abdoellah et al., 2023), discussing the role of women in urban agriculture (Rosita & Noor, 2020; Safitri et al., 2021; Bainus et al., 2025; Hermawati et al., 2025; ), and discussing policies and the benefits of urban agriculture for sustainable cities (Rahmilah, 2016; Dwiartama et al., 2020; Giyarsih et al., 2024; ). Although there have been many studies on urban agriculture in the Bandung area, there is no research that explicitly compares groups of women farmers with different backgrounds, particularly housewives and women farmers. The tendency to view women as a homogeneous group may lead to the neglect of their diverse characteristics, making it difficult to truly understand the issues faced by both groups. This may give rise to doubts and questions, can a policy be considered effective if it does not truly implement inclusive practices that understand each of its actors. Based on this gap, this study has the following research questions : (1) How do housewives and women farmers interpret urban agriculture in a functional and experiential context? (2) How does the meaning of urban agriculture in a functional and experiential context affect the lives of housewives and women farmers?. Therefore, this study aims to understand and compare the perspectives of housewives and women farmers in interpreting urban agriculture in terms of its functional and experience meaning, as well as how this affects their lives. By identifying these differences, this study also aims to provide insights that can contribute to the development of more inclusive and responsive urban agricultural policies.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1 Literature selection

This study is a qualitative study that uses secondary data analysis through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) with a thematic approach. SLR is a method for identifying, evaluating, and interpreting studies relevant to the topic (Kitchenham, 2004). Referring to Petticrew & Roberts (2006), the steps required in SLR include determining research questions, identifying and searching for relevant studies, sorting and assessing the quality of research, and synthesizing findings. Based on this, the study began by formulating research questions relevant to the study background and the next step is to search for relevant studies to obtain secondary data. This step was carried out by searching various academic databases, including Scopus, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect, which provide databases relevant to this research topic using the keywords "urban agriculture" or "urban farming" to cover literature related to urban farming practices, as well as the keywords

"housewives," "women farmers," "female farmers," and "gender" to cover literature related to women's involvement and gender issues. The articles selected for this study met several criteria. Inclusion criteria included studies conducted between 2020 and 2025 to ensure up-to-date and relevant data, research data located in the Bandung area, studies discussing urban agriculture, especially those involving the participation of women such as housewives or women farmers, and articles written in English or Indonesian. In addition, exclusion criteria for this study included studies that did not focus on women's participation in urban agriculture, studies outside the specified geographical context, and articles without accessible full text. The selected studies were then sorted by reviewing the titles, abstracts, and full texts relevant to the research focus.

## 2.2 Thematic analysis

Further data analysis was conducted using a thematic approach to synthesize findings from various sorted studies. The use of thematic synthesis allows for the production of results that remain credible, similar to the results of primary studies, by synthesizing transparently with the aim of identifying themes found in the literature used (Thomas & Harden, 2008). The codes found in the primary studies then grouped into descriptive themes and developed into analytical themes to produce a more in-depth interpretation (Thomas & Harden, 2008). This study also considers the risk of publication bias, particularly as it only uses secondary data. Therefore, to minimise bias in the results, this study was conducted by covering several databases and using keywords in English and Indonesian to capture a broader scope of study.

## 3. Results and Discussion

This study initially identified 30 research publications relevant to the research topic through a systematic search process. These publications were then carefully screened based on the established inclusion and exclusion criteria, resulting in 10 studies that were considered eligible and used as secondary data for further analysis. Subsequently, the findings from these selected studies were analyzed and categorized into two main dimensions, namely functional meanings and experiential meanings, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research focus.

### 3.1 Functional meanings

The results in table 1 show a significant difference in the functional meanings shared by housewives and women farmers. This comparison indicates that housewives perceive a more diverse range of functional meanings in urban agriculture practices, including empowerment, economic benefits, environmental aspects, and even food security. In contrast, women farmers tend to focus more on economic benefits and food security.

The functional meaning perceived by urban agriculture practitioners directly influences how they participate, commit, and position urban agriculture activities in their daily lives. An individual's choice in one dimension tends to be influenced by their motivations in related dimensions, indicating an interrelation between motivations and benefits that complement one another (Lemma & Sharma, 2024). In this context, functional meaning is not only understood as the material benefits derived from urban agricultural activities but also encompasses the social, psychological, and ecological values embedded within them. These meanings shape how women perceive the value of agriculture activities in urban areas. Therefore, analyzing functional meaning is essential to understanding how women interpret and integrate urban agriculture practices into their lives as part of their survival strategies, efforts to enhance well-being, and expressions of social identity.

Table 1. Comparison of functional meanings between housewives and women farmers

Category	Quotation	Code	Descriptive theme	Analytical theme
Housewives	They become a Women Farmer Group that can produce certain types of plants and sell them to other areas.	Skills Development	Productivity and product marketing capabilities	Urban Agriculture (UA) empowers housewives in economic aspects
	All urban farming activities in Garden ... are carried out if domestic tasks at home are completed.	Time management and priorities	UA as additional activities after domestic work for housewives	Housewives participation in UA depends on domestic responsibilities and is not main priority
	The processing of organic waste in RW 03 ... is carried out by housewives who are members of the Sauyunan women farmers group ... motivated by concern for the environment.	Recycle household organic waste	Housewives actively participate in eco-friendly practices	UA provides benefits in encouraging environmental awareness and social collaboration through community-based organic waste management
Women farmers	The community shows concern for food security, as seen from the types of crops most frequently grown, namely vegetables.	Health and Food Security	Housewives prioritize growing vegetables	Urban agriculture enhances community food security by focusing on locally grown vegetables
	The farmers had a perception that they could buy various basic needs and diversify their food with their income.	Economy and Food Security	Women Farmers use agricultural income to fulfill household needs	Urban agriculture supports household economic stability and enables dietary diversification for women farmers
	The agricultural sector was the primary source of income with time flexibility.	Time management and Economy	Women farmers have control over their working hours	Urban agriculture empowers women farmers by offering economic self-reliance and flexibility
	Commercial agriculture aims to meet the fulfillment of food supply and market demand.	Economy and Food Security	Commercial UA targets market and household needs	As a primary income, commercial UA empowers women farmers economically while meeting household food needs.

Based on the findings, it appears that housewives have a more diverse perspective, particularly related to functional meaning. One of them, as quoted from Safitri et al. (2021): They become a Women Farmer Group that can produce certain types of plants and sell them

to other areas. This shows that housewives experience functional benefits in terms of productivity and economic improvement. These activities not only demonstrate their skills in cultivation but also reflect their adaptive capacity in managing economic opportunities amid the limited resources of urban settings. Although urban agriculture provides economic benefits, among housewives, the most frequently cited statements indicate that such activities are typically carried out after domestic chores are completed.

As found in the study by Alynda and Kusumo (2021), all urban agriculture activities are carried out after domestic tasks at home are completed. This finding suggests that urban agriculture is not considered a primary occupation for housewives but rather an additional activity that holds social value. These findings also indicate that housewives engaged in urban agriculture do not regard agricultural land as a primary source of income. Similarly, Lemma & Sharma (2024) found that not all women participating in urban agriculture are driven by economic motives, some women place their primary emphasis on attaining a sense of well-being. Housewives have also been identified as one of the dominant groups that treat urban agriculture as a supplementary activity (Wulandari et al., 2023). Hence, this phenomenon is understandable, as generating income from urban agriculture is not their principal focus (Mardiana et al., 2024). In this context, the functional meaning perceived by housewives is not solely economic but also encompasses social values arising from their engagement in urban agriculture activities. Their participation in farmer groups provides opportunities to build social connections and engage in productive activities. Thus, urban agriculture functions as a medium of social expression for housewives, allowing them to expand their sphere of activity without disrupting their domestic roles.

Another functional meaning obtained from the perspective of housewives is the environmental aspect, as cited from Rosita and Noor (2020): the processing of organic waste in RW 03 is carried out by housewives who are members of the Sauyunan women farmers group, and this activity is motivated by their concern for the environment and the desire to contribute to community sustainability. This shows that ecological motivation constitutes an essential aspect of urban agriculture practices. Housewives perceive planting activities not merely as an effort to fulfill household food requirements but also as a contribution to environmental sustainability. The practice of processing organic waste into compost or natural fertilizer not only enhances the economic value of urban agriculture residues but also strengthens ecological awareness among women. Through such activities, housewives are able to integrate environmental concern into their daily domestic routines, expanding their roles from household managers to agents of environmental change within their communities.

Urban agriculture has long been recognized for its environmental benefits, not only in waste management but also in urban greening, temperature reduction, and even water and soil rehabilitation (Altieri et al., 2025). Therefore, the ecological function of urban agriculture for housewives carries a broader meaning than merely the act of cultivation. It represents a form of sustainable practice that connects the micro dimension of the domestic sphere with the macro dimension of the urban environment. In this context, activities such as planting, managing waste, and greening the surrounding home environment contribute to the formation of collective awareness regarding the importance of ecological balance. The creation of ecological spaces within urban agriculture practices is inherently linked to women's sense of care and responsibility. Furthermore, beyond the aim of maintaining environmental sustainability, urban agriculture also serves the purpose of producing healthy food (Sulistiani & Indriyany, 2025). Thus, this activity is not merely a cultivation practice but rather a manifestation of ecological and social ethics practiced in a sustainable manner.

The aspect of food security is also one of the functional meanings identified from the perspective of housewives, as cited from Wulandari et al. (2023): The community shows concern for food security, as seen from the types of crops most frequently grown, namely vegetables. This statement illustrates that the direct experience of producing their own food provides housewives with a sense of security and control over their families food availability. Experiencing the benefits of food security through urban agriculture represents

one of the program's key achievements, as the ability to supplement household food supplies through self-cultivation is considered fundamental in the practice of urban agriculture (Yani et al., 2025).

Urban agriculture activities can contribute to food security by shortening distribution chains. Despite the limited land area, this practice helps reduce household expenses and fulfill household food requirements through the production of healthy food, such as vegetables and fruits (Wijaya et al., 2022). The shorter distribution process ensures that agricultural products consumed are fresher and possess higher nutritional quality. This indicates that, for housewives, urban agriculture is not merely perceived as a planting activity but also as a means to strengthen local food security and enhance family well-being. Moreover, through cultivation practices, housewives gain a sense of security regarding food availability and greater control over the quality of ingredients consumed by their families.

Fundamentally, household food security is influenced by several interrelated factors, including access to food sources, price stability, and household income levels (Kes et al., 2024). Therefore, the experience of producing food independently through urban agriculture fosters a sense of self-reliance and emotional satisfaction, as participants are not entirely dependent on market systems. This condition illustrates that urban agriculture serves as a means of women's empowerment at the household level, not only in economic aspects but also in strengthening their role as guardians of family welfare. Moreover, this activity demonstrates the interconnectedness between economic, social, and ecological functions, which collectively form a multilayered pattern of practice in the daily lives of urban agriculture practitioners, particularly housewives.

In discussing about agricultural management, it is impossible to ignore the role of women involved in it. Alkire et al. (2012) stated in their research that empowered women, especially in urban agriculture, will be involved in aspects such as decision-making about agricultural production, access and control over productive resources, income control, and time allocation. While the power of housewives in urban agriculture is evident in the allocation of time that can be adjusted to their needs, for women farmers, power over productive resources and control over income are more important. Based on the perspective of women farmers, three quotes were found from Safitri et al. (2021), The farmers had a perception that they could buy various basic needs and diversify their food with their income. Safitri et al. (2022), The agricultural sector was the primary source of income with time flexibility. and Basagevan et al. (2024), Commercial agriculture aims to meet the fulfillment of food supply and market demand. Based on these statements, the functional meaning obtained by women farmers revolves only around the economic aspect and food security fulfillment. This is actually reasonable considering that women farmers use urban agriculture as their primary source of income.

Accordingly, women farmers interpret urban agriculture as an adaptive economic strategy that grants them control over household income and stability. In this context, urban agriculture is not merely a food production activity but also a critical means of maintaining household economic independence amid social and economic pressures in urban settings. The presence of urban agriculture becomes a rational choice for women striving to meet their families basic needs from resources they can manage independently. As highlighted by Mardiana et al. (2024), in research focusing on household-based hydroponic agriculture, women's involvement in urban agriculture significantly contributes to increasing household income. This finding demonstrates that urban agricultural activities directly support the fulfillment of both nutritional and financial needs, particularly for women who have limited access to formal employment in other sectors. Essentially, urban agriculture can serve as a primary livelihood source for women farmers in urban areas (Kwiringira et al., 2024).

This economic orientation, in turn, fosters a sustainable motivation to maintain productivity. Several studies affirm that economic orientation especially the pursuit of increased income and financial independence, acts as a strong motivational driver for sustaining productivity in urban agriculture. Dewi & Wahyudy (2022), for instance, found that economic motivation serves as the most dominant factor encouraging urban farmers

to develop their farming enterprises. Similarly, Lemma & Sharma (2024) demonstrate that the combination of income generation and food security motivation is the primary trigger for women's participation in urban agriculture.

The involvement of women farmers in urban agriculture not only demonstrates their ability to manage limited land resources but also reflects their adaptive response to economic and social pressures in urban environments. In conditions where agricultural land is shrinking, women farmers position urban agriculture as a survival strategy that grants them a degree of economic autonomy. However, on the other hand, their strong focus on economic outcomes often leads to the avoiding social and environmental dimensions. This phenomenon indicates a functional imbalance in perception between housewives and women farmers. While housewives tend to perceive urban agriculture as a medium for social and environmental engagement, women farmers emphasize its economic orientation. This imbalance may entail certain risks. In the case of women farmers, an excessive emphasis on economic profit can reduce attention toward non-economic aspects such as environmental conservation or community education. Consequently, their participation tends to be instrumental, dependent on tangible economic results and profits. As noted by Arriani & Rahdriawan (2019), urban agricultural actors driven by "economic egoism" are likely to withdraw when urban agriculture no longer provides economic benefits, often sidelining broader goals such as greening or social welfare.

Economic dependency also influences sustainability, when urban agriculture constitutes the main source of income, the absence of profit means the absence of capital to sustain production. When economic returns decline, motivation and participation may also weaken. This condition poses a specific challenge for the sustainability of urban agriculture, as the balance between economic objectives and socio-environmental values is a prerequisite for long-term resilience. This imbalance also presents an irony since urban agriculture, as a sustainable initiative, should ideally provide multidimensional benefits encompassing social, environmental, and economic aspects. Focusing excessively on a single dimension may hinder the development of the others. In the long run, an overly economic approach risks neglecting communal values and ecological sustainability. As Eiter et al. (2025) note, the sustainability of urban agriculture depends on maintaining equilibrium among economic, social, and environmental dimensions to prevent any one of them from becoming a limiting factor in the future. Therefore, it is essential for all actors, including housewives and women farmers, to understand that the functional meaning of urban agriculture lies not only in the immediate outputs it generates but also in the social and ecological processes that sustain it.

Based on the differences found between housewives and women farmers, it can be inferred that the functional meaning of urban agriculture is not merely a reflection of thought patterns but also a determinant of behavioral orientation and the ultimate goals of agricultural practices. Urban agriculture actors inherently possess diverse motivations, ranging from food security, economic gain, health, and environmental concern to psychological well-being (Adolvina Baik et al., 2024). These motivational differences result in a diversity of urban agricultural practices. Economically oriented farmers often emphasize production efficiency and profitability, like commercial vegetable gardens or small-scale hydroponic systems, while socially and ecologically oriented actors focus on collective benefits through community gardens, organic practices, and urban greening initiatives. Rather than opposing one another, these perspectives represent a spectrum of meanings attached to urban agriculture, reflecting the plurality of functions it can serve in the urban context.

In the context of policy development, understanding this variation in functional meanings is crucial for designing interventions that align with the needs and motivations of each group. Programs that emphasize economic outcomes, for instance, may not appeal to housewives who view urban agriculture as a space for social interaction, education, and environmental stewardship. Conversely, community-based or environmentally oriented programs may be less relevant to women farmers whose livelihoods depend on market production and income generation. Therefore, policymakers must tailor their intervention

strategies according to participants' motivational profiles. For housewives, who often perceive urban agriculture as a socio-ecological endeavor, programs should emphasize participation, environmental education, empowerment, and opportunities for household nutrition enhancement and small-scale income generation. Meanwhile, for women farmers with stronger economic motivations, policy interventions should provide technical support, market access, and capacity building, while gradually incorporating education about the environmental and social benefits of urban agriculture. Recognizing that different motivations shape distinct forms of participation and outcomes, urban agriculture policies should be designed inclusively and adaptively. Beyond enhancing productivity and economic gains, such policies can also strengthen social resilience and environmental sustainability. In this sense, understanding the interplay between functional meaning and motivation becomes the cornerstone of developing equitable and enduring urban agricultural systems.

### *3.2 Experiential meanings*

The results in table 2 also show significant differences in the experiential meanings shared by housewives and women farmers. This comparison indicates that housewives perceive the experiential meaning of urban agriculture as skill development and personal fulfillment, whereas women farmers tend to focus more on the control they have in decision-making. These differences highlight the varied roles and priorities of women in urban agriculture based on their socio-economic positions and levels of involvement.

The results of experiential meanings also reveal a significant difference between housewives and women farmers. According to Safitri et al. (2021), Women are expected to develop their skills and abilities while simultaneously changing their mindset about the importance of skill application and The benefits gained by women farmers group include benefits for actualizing the hobbies of farming, making food, and associating. These findings indicate that women's participation in urban agriculture provides not only functional benefits but also meaningful emotional and psychological experiences. Engaging in urban agriculture activities represents a form of women's empowerment that broadens their social roles, as such participation fosters a sense of influence and belonging (Angeles, 2023).

Women report increased confidence in their abilities and greater happiness through the pursuit of hobbies and engagement in social activities that expand their networks and interactions. Accordingly, urban agriculture serves as a medium for self-actualization and the reinforcement of social identity among women. As Carvalho & Bógus (2020) note, interactive processes in urban agriculture enable women to give meaning to their lives and recognize themselves as part of a collective identity formed through shared experiences.

Housewives perceive urban agriculture not merely as a productive endeavor, but as a meaningful avenue through which they rediscover self-worth and construct renewed identities as productive and reflective women. For them, happiness and empowerment are not solely measured by income generation but are instead derived from the sense of purpose embedded in daily practices and the social relationships cultivated through these activities. As noted by Angeles (2023), empowerment through urban agriculture instills confidence among women, enhances their capabilities, opens new opportunities, and strengthens their social relevance through the acquisition of novel skills. This understanding reflects a significant shift in experiential meaning, from perceiving urban agriculture as an economic undertaking to recognizing it as a deeper form of social and emotional participation.

For many housewives, engagement in urban agriculture not only provides an additional productive activity but also reinforces their presence beyond the domestic sphere. They are no longer confined to the role of household managers, rather, they emerge as active, creative, and empowered social agents contributing to the development of sustainable and resilient urban communities. The ability to exercise control over household food production, gain new competencies, and explore potential economic opportunities collectively cultivates a heightened sense of agency and empowerment (Martin et al., 2017;

Lemma & Sharma, 2024). Consequently, these women no longer perceive themselves as dependents within the family structure, but as autonomous individuals capable of generating value and contributing meaningfully to their social environments.

Table 2. Comparison of experiential meanings between housewives and women farmers

Category	Quotation	Code	Descriptive theme	Analytical theme
Housewives	Women are expected to develop their skills and abilities while simultaneously changing their mindset about the importance of skill application.	Skill development	The training makes UA practitioners aware of the importance of developing their skills	The training empowers housewives, enhancing their confidence, sense of capability, and appreciation of their skills in urban agriculture.
	The benefits gained by women farmers group include benefits for actualizing the hobbies of farming, making food, and associating.	Personal fulfillment	Women perceive participation in farming, cooking, and social activities as enjoyable and fulfilling hobbies.	Housewives gain happiness from participating in agricultural and social activities.
Women farmers	Based on women's opinions, involvement in decision-making regarding agricultural business implementation and group activity is quite strong in land preparation, planting, use of fertilizer production facilities, plant maintenance, and harvesting.	Decision making & control	Women farmers actively participate in decision-making at all stages of agricultural activities.	Women feel empowered through meaningful involvement in all key stages of agricultural activities, giving them control, agency, and influence over outcomes.
	The more women participate as farm family labour, the higher the amount of decision-making power they have.	Decision making & control	Women's participation as family farm laborers is positively associated with their decision-making involvement.	Women farmers feel empowered as their active labor contribution increases their control and influence over agricultural decisions

Urban agriculture also functions as a social bridge, enabling women to expand their networks through interactions with neighbors, community groups, and institutional partners. Such engagements foster new forms of solidarity rooted in shared experiences and collective ownership of urban spaces. For some participants, this practice even assumes a therapeutic dimension, serving as a safe and expressive medium for stress management, emotional release, and the pursuit of personal happiness through purposeful engagement. From an experiential standpoint, urban agriculture thus promotes not only social connectivity but also the expansion of relational circles beyond immediate domestic boundaries (Hume et al., 2022). Moreover, the presence of green, open environments within these practices is associated with enhanced calmness and improved mental well-being (Ainamani et al., 2022).

Beyond its social implications, urban agriculture contributes profoundly to women's psychological well-being. Farming activities generate a tangible sense of accomplishment

each time participants witness the growth and fruition of plants nurtured by their own hands. The continuous process of tending, waiting for harvest, and sharing the produce with others fosters intrinsic satisfaction, an experience seldom encountered within routine domestic work. The involvement of women, particularly housewives, in such practices offers psychological tranquility, characterized by elevated happiness, improved mental health, lower stress levels, and a greater sense of vitality and energy exchange (Park & Jeong, 2020; Kim et al., 2023; Konou et al., 2024). Thus, the experience of participating in urban agriculture carries a deeper symbolic meaning, not merely about producing food, but also about cultivating and nurturing the lives of those involved in it.

Urban agriculture ultimately becomes a transformative space through which women negotiate their identities between familial obligations and aspirations for personal growth. Within this process, farming serves as a form of self-reflection that enables them to reassess values such as happiness, empowerment, and well-being, not merely in economic terms but within broader social and experiential contexts. The experiences of housewives engaged in urban agriculture thus reflect a dynamic negotiation of meanings related to productivity, fulfillment, and self-identity amid the complexities of urban life. This practice represents how women create alternative spaces for growth, empowerment, and collective contribution without abandoning their social and familial roles. In essence, urban agriculture functions as a transformative arena that unites personal, social, and ecological values into a single, sustainable, and deeply meaningful practice. Especially when women's contribution to urban agriculture is inseparable from the gender gap that is often found. Farnworth et al. (2020) found in their research that there are still restrictions on women's roles, and male roles are still prioritised. These issues are often found in society, making women's active involvement and understanding of their goals in urban agriculture a strong foundation for managing agriculture.

When housewives tend to perceive urban agriculture primarily as a household supporting activity and a way to fulfillment personal needs, women farmers demonstrate stronger experiential meaning related to decision making and control over agricultural management. As cited in this study, Tarigan et al. (2021) highlight this perspective: Based on women's opinions, involvement in decision-making regarding agricultural business implementation and group activity is quite strong in land preparation, planting, use of fertilizer production facilities, plant maintenance, and harvesting. This demonstrates that women not only perform agricultural tasks but also exercise authority and influence over key production stages. Active participation in decision making fosters a heightened sense of empowerment and ownership over the agricultural outcomes. This experiential meaning reinforces women's sense of autonomy and strengthens their confidence as capable and influential actors in public spaces. Essentially, the participation of women in urban agriculture provides them with the confidence to act and maintain control over the spaces they manage (Angeles, 2023).

These findings are further supported by Qanti et al. (2022), who state that the more women participate as farm family labour, the higher the amount of decision-making power they have."This underscores the correlation between women's active engagement in agricultural activities and their decision making influence. In other words, the greater the contribution of women's labor, the stronger their control and impact on agricultural decisions. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that women are still frequently marginalized in agricultural decision-making processes. Therefore, their participation in planning, decision-making, land management, and the control of production outcomes can be seen as a strong indicator of empowerment. Such engagement is particularly significant because it fosters a sense of security and self-assurance among women (Roy & Kadinan, 2022). This sense of security arises from women, especially women farmers who depend on urban agriculture as a source of income they are feeling capable of fulfilling their basic needs, particularly in the economic dimension.

This active involvement also carries a significant psychological dimension, namely the sense of satisfaction that arises from being recognized as a principal actor rather than merely a complementary member of the family workforce. Women tend to feel deeply

empowered when they are able to make independent decisions without the interference or influence of others (Quisumbing et al., 2023). Furthermore, the ability of women to discover purpose and well-being through the agricultural practices they manage demonstrates the importance of having full control over the land they cultivate and the production systems they oversee (Arintyas, 2024). Collectively, the experiential meanings reported by women farmers reflect a more profound form of social transformation. Urban agriculture provides a crucial space for women to reconstruct their social and gender roles, allowing them to move away from a passive domestic position toward becoming active, capable, and influential actors within the urban agricultural system. In this sense, for women farmers, urban agriculture is not merely an economic activity but also a meaningful space for the actualization of power, self-determination, and social recognition. Therefore, urban agriculture functions not only as an economic or environmental resource but also as an arena for social and psychological empowerment (Alvares et al., 2025).

The contrasting experiences between housewives and women farmers further highlight the complex gender dynamics embedded within urban agriculture. These differences illustrate that women interpret and engage with urban agriculture in diverse ways, depending on their personal circumstances, roles, and socio-economic needs. Both groups reveal that urban agriculture should not be perceived merely as an economic or ecological practice, but rather as a social arena that shapes women's identity, agency, and empowerment. From a policy perspective, these findings emphasize the importance of developing interventions that are sensitive and responsive to the different experiences and realities of women. This is because the contrast between housewives and women farmers is clearly evident when examined through both the functional and experiential meanings. Even though similar aspects, such as economic and social dimensions are found across both groups, each interprets and perceives these aspects in profoundly different ways. Consequently, policies concerning urban agriculture should not be addressed in a generalized or uniform manner, but instead must be tailored more specifically to the distinct needs, contexts, and forms of participation of each group involved.

#### 4. Conclusions

The women farmers group, as found in this study, often perceived as a homogeneous entity, in fact exhibits a wide range of characteristics and experiences, as illustrated by the contrasting perspectives of housewives and women farmers. These two groups interpret urban agriculture differently, both functionally and experientially, reflecting variations in motivations, roles, and social engagement. Such diversity indicates that policies designed to sustain and support urban agriculture cannot adopt a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, policy frameworks should be inclusive, recognizing and incorporating the distinct meanings and values that each group attributes to urban agriculture. Among housewives, empowerment through various productive activities in urban agriculture and the sale of crops for economic value can increase motivation. Among women farmers, the introduction of environmentally friendly products and the processing of urban agricultural products to increase their sales value can facilitate economic improvement and raise awareness of the need to protect the environment. By considering diverse perspectives, policymakers can develop more effective, context-sensitive interventions that not only promote the sustainability of urban agriculture but also empower women farmers group in accordance with their specific roles, capabilities, and aspirations. The findings of this study are limited because they are based entirely on secondary data and as few studies have addressed the differences between these two groups. Future research using primary data collected from direct sampling to compare the perspectives of housewives and women farmers could provide more comprehensive and relevant insights.

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## Author Contribution

The author independently carried out all stages of this study, including research topic selection, secondary data collection, data analysis, data interpretation, and manuscript writing.

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## Informed Consent Statement

This study uses secondary data obtained from publicly accessible sources. Therefore, informed consent is not applicable .

## Data Availability Statement

Data available in publicly accessible repository.

## Conflicts of Interest

Authors declare no conflict of interest.

## Declaration of Generative AI Use

During the preparation of this work, the author used the DeepL application to ensure the translation and grammar were accurate. Afterward, the author reviewed, adjusted, and refined the text as needed. The author is solely responsible for the content of this publication.

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