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WHAT DRIVES YOUTH TO FARM? EXPLORING SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND PERSONAL FACTORS

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ABSTRACT

Cross-regional survey studies found that determinants of factors consistently influence youth decisions to enter/stay in agriculture: land access**,** capital/financial access**,** education & technical training, and family/community support**.** By analyzing the literatures, regression analysis and mixed-methods studies generally show that without improved land access and financing, training programs alone are difficult to drive long-term retention. A number of Indonesian case studies (and reviews on agricultural digitalization) show that digitalization (marketing platforms, agronomic information, management systems) can increase the attractiveness of agriculture for younger generations and help them become *agripreneurs*—but the evidence on the medium-term economic impact (income, business stability) is still limited and most studies are descriptive or qualitative. There are reports that emphasize the great potential but also the obstacles to implementation (digital literacy, infrastructure investment).

Keywords: young farmers, human resources, agripreneurs, socio-economic, decisions

INTRODUCTION

The issue of farmer regeneration is a major concern in modern agrarian studies: many countries (including Indonesia) are facing *an aging farmer* workforce and the challenge of attracting young people back to the agricultural sector. Empirical studies and academic reviews in the past decade have tried to map the determinants of youth interest, the role of technology/digitalization, and effective policies to encourage *youth engagement* in the agricultural sector. The agricultural sector has a very important role in ensuring food security, providing jobs, and becoming the main pillar of economic development in various countries, including Indonesia. However, in recent decades, the sector has faced a serious challenge in the form of a declining number of young workers involved in agriculture. This phenomenon is known as *the aging farmer phenomenon*, where the average age of farmers continues to increase while the interest of the younger generation in agriculture decreases (FAO, 2021). The lack of interest of the young generation to become farmers is caused by various factors, including low income in the agricultural sector, limited access to land, capital, technology, and social views that the farming profession is less prestigious than jobs in other sectors (Prokopy et al., 2020). In fact, the presence of young farmers is very important in ensuring the regeneration of agricultural labor and the sustainability of the national food system. On the other hand, technological developments and innovations in agriculture open up great opportunities for the involvement of the younger generation. Modern agricultural concepts such as *smart farming*, *agripreneurship*, and *digital agriculture* are new attractions that have the potential to increase the efficiency, productivity, and added value of agricultural products (Rigg & Salamanca, 2022). Several studies show that young farmers tend to be more adaptive to technology and more open to sustainable farming practices (Suphannachart & Warr, 2021). Therefore, research on young farmers is important to understand the factors that influence their interest, participation, and success in different types of farming. Analysis of social, economic, institutional, and innovation aspects that support young farmers can be the basis for policy formulation that encourages the regeneration of farmers in the future. This research is expected to contribute to efforts to strengthen food security and realize inclusive, sustainable, and highly competitive agriculture through the active role of the younger generation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses the library research method**,** which is research conducted by examining various literature sources such as scientific journals, books, research reports, and other academic publications relevant to the topic of young farmers. The main objective is to identify, analyze, and synthesize the results of previous research in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issue of the involvement of the younger generation in the agricultural sector.

The data used in this study is in the form of secondary data**,** namely information obtained from national and international journal articles that discuss youth *farmers*, farmer regeneration, or young agripreneurship. The researcher searched journals using databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and DOAJ with keywords such as *young farmers*, *agricultural regeneration*, *agripreneurship*, and *rural youth*. Articles that are relevant to the topic and published within a specific time frame (e.g. 2015–2025) are selected for analysis. Each article was analyzed to identify the main themes, research methods used, findings, and conclusions related to the roles and challenges of young farmers. The analysis is carried out using the qualitative content analysis method**,** which is by examining the content of each article to find patterns, themes, and relationships between concepts. The results of the analysis are then synthesized into several main categories such as Factors driving and inhibiting the participation of young farmers, Empowerment and innovation strategies, Role of policies and supporting institutions, Comparison between agricultural subsectors. The final results of the research are in the form of a thematic review that describes how previous studies have discussed the issue of young farmers in various agricultural contexts and subsectors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research conducted by Arvianti, E.Y. (2019) with the title "*Overview of the Indonesian Young Farmer Crisis" analyzes the picture of* the farmer regeneration crisis in Indonesia due to the decline in the interest of the younger generation in agriculture. Using the secondary data descriptive analysis method (BPS, Ministry of Agriculture), Aryianti found that the average age of farmers >45 years and the interest of the younger generation is low because the image of agriculture is considered "not modern" and "economically unpromising.". This study has not explained socio-psychological factors in depth, relying only on national quantitative data. This research is an important basic relevance for qualitative research on *the motivation and perception of* young farmers in certain areas. Geza, W., et al. (2021) in their study entitled "*Youth Participation in Agriculture: A Scoping Review"* found that youth participation increases when there is access to land, credit, training, and technology; community-based engagement programs are more effective than top-down policies. Unfortunately, this study does not review the specific context of Southeast Asia in depth but is still relevant by providing a theoretical framework for cross-country studies and farmer regeneration policies. Yunandar, D. T., & Sari, R. (2023) in a study entitled *"Increasing the Interest of the Young Farmer Generation Through the Agricultural Digitalization Program" focused* on**:** the impact of the agricultural digitalization program on the interest of young farmers. Using the method**:** qualitative approach (in-depth interviews with 20 young farmers participating in the program in Bogor) found that**:** digital technology (e-commerce, social media, agricultural information systems) increases the confidence and attractiveness of farming for the younger generation. This study has not yet measured the quantitative impact of the economic impact (income, productivity) so it can still be developed into evaluative research with *mixed-methods*. Insani, F.R. (2023) with the research title "*The Role of Young Farmers in Environmentally Friendly Agricultural Practices in Cisondari Village" focuses* on the extent to which young farmers play a role in the adoption of organic and environmentally friendly agriculture. Using the method**:** a qualitative case study with observation and interview of 15 young farmers. Researchers have found that young farmers are more innovative and brave to try new farming systems, especially when there is support from farmer groups and markets. Unfortunately, this study has a small geographical scope, so it cannot be generalized. The relevance of research to current conditions is important for the study of innovation behavior and the adoption of green technology. Ambarwati, A., et al. (2023) with the research title "*Youth and Agriculture in Indonesia" focuses* **on** mapping the condition of Indonesia's young agricultural workforce and regeneration policies. The methods used are secondary data analysis (BPS, World Bank) and government policies. Ambarwati found that structural barriers (land access, financing, vocational education) are the main factors in low youth participation. This study uses analyses that have not involved direct field surveys. Relevance to today's life is important as a national policy reference for research on *youth agripreneurship* development. Haryati, S., & Mazwan, M. (2024) in their research title "*Determinants of Youth Farmers' Decision to Stay in Agriculture in Indonesia"* focuses on factors that affect young farmers' decision to stay in the agricultural sector. Using the method**:** a survey of 300 young farmer respondents (aged 18–35 years) in West Java and DIY to fund logistic regression analysis.

Haryati found that the significant factors that influence young farmers to become farmers are—(1) land access, (2) entrepreneurship training, (3) family support, and (4) business profits. Socio-cultural aspects (prestige and public perception) have not been explored much in this study so that it can still provide room for elevation, namely being a strong reference for quantitative research in other regions (for example, Sumatra or Jambi). Mazwan, M. (2025) in his research title "*Aspirations and Career Preferences of Rural Youth Towards Agribusiness" focuses on* the career aspirations of rural youth towards agriculture. Using the method**:** *mixed-methods* (survey + FGD). The researchers found that although most youth do not want to become traditional farmers, they are interested in becoming *agripreneurs* if capital support and market access are available. This study has not assessed the long-term sustainability of these interests. The revelation of this research with the current conditions is suitable for research on the transformation of interest into modern innovation-based agribusiness. A study titled "Youth Participation in Agriculture: A Scoping Review" by W. Geza et al. (2021) found that psychosocial factors & youth participation programs play a major role in positive perceptions of agriculture; heterogeneous evidence between countries. This research is the theoretical basis for the study of perception/participation. Research conducted by Aryanti (2019) entitled "Overview of the Indonesian Young Farmer Crisis" using Indonesia's situational review/analysis found that changes in demographic structure; the need for regeneration policies are an important factor in the contribution of youth in agriculture. The title of the research "Increasing the Interest of the Young Farmer Generation Through the Digitalization Program" conducted by Yunandar et al using a qualitative case study (Bogor) found that: the digitalization program increases the interest of agricultural entrepreneurs in the younger generation when accompanied by mentoring. The title of the research "Young Farmers and Friendly Agricultural Practices" conducted by Insani (2023, Agribusiness Prospect UNPAD) using a village field study (Cisondari Village) succeeded in finding significant participation of young farmers in environmentally friendly practices; driving factors: knowledge, relative market access, community support. The research entitled "Youth and Agriculture in Indonesia" by Ambarwati et al succeeded in finding a statistical picture, the role of agrarian in employment, and policy recommendations for young farmers.

The following is an analysis of the condition of young farmers, especially in Indonesia. Hani Puspita Dewi & Suzanna Eddyono examined farming strategies carried out by young farmers in Sriharjo, Bantul, Yogyakarta, especially those who manage small land. Through interviews and observations, researchers found that young farmers use innovations such as agricultural technology, social media to promote crop yields, and diversify their businesses through agro-tourism. In conclusion, continuous education and training are very important for young farmers to be able to adapt and innovate in the face of land limitations. Nurliani et al. (Migration Letters, 2023) conducted a study focusing on the agribusiness behavior of young coffee farmers in Bantaeng Regency, South Sulawesi. With a survey method of 50 farmers aged 16–30 years, it was found that entrepreneurial characteristics such as creativity and innovation have a positive relationship with success in the agribusiness sector. Institutional support and market access also strengthen this entrepreneurial behavior. Furthermore, Nurarifin & Bayu Dwi Kurniawan (JISDeP – Bappenas, 2023) discussed the challenges of farmer regeneration in Sumatra and its relation to national food security. Using Sakernas data from 2018–2022, it was found that youth interest in agriculture is declining due to socio-economic factors and negative perceptions of the farming profession. The researcher emphasized that without affirmative policies to attract the interest of the younger generation, agricultural sustainability and food security will be threatened. The next researcher is Dea Widyaningsih, Ait Maryani & Achmad Musyadar (Bogor Polbangtan Journal, 2022) who researched the preferences of young farmers for urban farming in Tarogong Kidul District, Garut Regency. The survey shows that land access factors, extension support, and market opportunities influence young farmers' interest in developing urban agriculture. Urban farming is seen as a solution for urban youth who want to start farming with limited land. Millennial Farmer Ambassadors (JASEB – University of Bengkulu, 2023) conducted a study to evaluate young farmers' perceptions of the Ministry of Agriculture's "Millennial Farmers" program. The results of the online survey show that the program is appreciated for providing training and access to capital assistance. However, there are still many participants who view agriculture as a "less prestigious" job with unstable incomes. The researchers suggest that there needs to be a positive image campaign and ongoing support for this program to be effective. Oeng

Anwarudin et al. (IPB Extension Journal, 2022) analyzed the entrepreneurial capacity of young farmers in West Java. With the quantitative survey method, it was found that the success of young farmers is determined not only by individual character, but also by external support such as agricultural extension workers, markets, and farmer communities. In conclusion, the development of a supporting ecosystem for young agribusinesses is urgently needed so that they are able to survive and develop. Parveen Yadav (Research Review International Journal of Multidisciplinary, 2023) discusses the phenomenon of "reluctant youth farmers" or the reluctance of the younger generation to become farmers in the context of social and environmental changes. Based on a qualitative approach, researchers found that cultural factors and negative perceptions of agriculture as low-class jobs were the main obstacles. However, some youth are starting to return to agriculture with an agroecology and social entrepreneurship approach. Ali et al. (International Journal of Agriculture and Economics, 2024). This study was conducted in the coastal region of Bangladesh to examine the factors that influence youth participation in the polder farming system. The survey results show that land access, capital, education, and policy support are the main determinants of participation. Additional challenges for young farmers in coastal areas are climate risks and water management. Diah Fitria Widhiningsih (Journal of Agricultural Socio-Economics UGM, 2022) researched the relationship between family background and the technical skills and agribusiness knowledge of young farmers in Sleman, Yogyakarta. The results show that young farmers who come from farmer families have better technical knowledge and practices compared to those who do not have a farmer family background. This shows the importance of inheriting agricultural knowledge across generations. Surya Saputra & Lilis Kurniasih (Indonesian Journal of Agricultural Sciences, 2023) discuss the motivation and welfare of young farmers in running a farming business in Central Java. Through a qualitative approach and in-depth interviews, it was found that young farmers have high motivation to be economically independent, but still face economic pressures, limited market access, and stress due to price uncertainty. Social support from communities and governments has a profound effect on their resilience in the agricultural sector.

Thailand is one of the developing countries in Southeast Asia. Comparing the conditions of young farmers in Thailand and also in Indonesia can provide an overview of research related to young farmers. The study, titled The Relationship Factors of Youth-Farmers' Attitude toward Agricultural Extension in Dan Makham Tia District, Kanchanaburi Province (Kadkaew, Jai-aree & Srisountang, 2023), focuses on identifying factors that affect the attitudes of youth-farmers towards agricultural extension. Using methods**:** Questionnaire with 120 young farmers in Dan Makham Tia district; analysis with statistics such as Pearson correlation. The study gave key results: Attitudes towards agriculture/extension extension were quite positive; there were 12 significant factors, including parental support, agricultural extension workers, schools, group leadership, achievement motivation, group communication, and participation. The research titled Young Farmers' Utilization of Internet for Agricultural Purposes: Evidence from Chiang Mai Province, Thailand (Khamtavee, Chalermphol, Kanjina & Sirisunyaluck, 2024) focuses on how young farmers use the internet in agricultural activities, including information and communication resources. Using the model of a survey of 369 young farmers in Mae Chaem district, Chiang Mai; statistical analysis with ordered logistic regression obtained the main results that all respondents had internet access via mobile phones; applications such as LINE and Facebook were widely used; YouTube and the search engine (Google) are used as sources of agricultural information. Factors that affect internet utilization include: age, education, contact with extension workers, membership of agricultural organizations, types of internet connections at home, as well as the availability of government networks. The research is titled Getting Young People to Farm: How Effective Is Thailand's Young Smart Farmer Programme? (Jansuwan & Zander, 2021) focuses on the Evaluation of the Young Smart Farmer (YSF) Program in Thailand, focusing on whether it succeeds in increasing financial independence, adopting innovative farming methods, and retaining young farmers. Using the Survey method of participants and non-participants in Prachin Buri; analysis using the Propensity Score Matching (PSM) method. The main results obtained from this study were that Most participants were satisfied with the program (79%), but the program was less successful in significantly increasing financial independence and adoption of innovative methods. It is recommended that the program be expanded with capital/tool assistance and non-monetary support, not just training/information. The

research titled Business Model Innovation of Social Entrepreneurs: Empowering New Generation Farmers in Upper North of Thailand (Satjasomboon, Thechatakerng, Srinaruewan & Sukphan, 2024 focuses: The innovative business model of young farmers as social entrepreneurs in the Northern region of Thailand; how they operate and create social and economic value. The methods used are: In-depth interviews with farmers who have been running businesses for >5 years; snowball sampling techniques; qualitative data content analysis. The main results of this study are that young farmers combine innovations in production, processing, distribution; focus on standardized products, systematic operating structures; they solve community problems as business objectives; knowledge networks and exchange of innovations between farmers are considered important. The research entitled Factors Affecting Agricultural Success of Young Smart Farmers (Sodkhomkham, Poungsuk & Junlek, 2024) focuses on: What factors affect the success of young farmers who are members of the Young Smart Farmers (YSF) program. Methods: Questionnaire of 63 YSF young farmers; descriptive analysis and correlation. The main results of this study were that most of the young farmers were male, aged between 40-49 (uniquely somewhat older than the usual "youth"), with a bachelor's education, 1-10 years of farming experience on land of 1-40 rai; formal land ownership, access to financial resources and previous experience were factors supporting success. Adoption Behavior of Solar Technology among Young Smart Farmers in Thailand (Khobkhet, Limnirankul, Kramol, Sirisunyaluck & Chalermphol, 2024) focuses: How big and what factors influence the adoption of solar technology (solar) among YSF young farmers. The method used in this study is a survey of 300 young farmers who are members of YSF; binary logistics regression analysis. Key Outcomes on: Some important factors are: length of membership in YSF, farming experience, land ownership, perception of solar benefits, awareness of limitations and risks related to diesel; land ownership & perceived benefits are the main predictors. The research titled Needs of Non-formal Education to Youth Agriculture Entrepreneurship in Nakhon Chai Si District, Nakhon Pathom Province (Prattana Yimsrisoi, 2021) focuses on the Needs of non-formal education for agricultural entrepreneurship among youth in Nakhon Chai Si district. Using methods**:** Questionnaire on 191 youth farmers/agricultural entrepreneurs; descriptive analysis. The main result of the study is that many youth work as vegetable farmers, orchards; income is around 10,000-15,000 Baht/month; they need non-formal education especially in marketing, distribution, promotion, and product pricing. It also requires management training, critical thinking and decision-making skills. The research entitled The Development of Young Farmers Development Policies to Enhance Food Security in the Upper Northern of Thailand (Kawichai, Keawtip, Panyadee & Techatunminasakul, 2023) focuses on the development policies of young farmers in the Northern region of Thailand to increase food security. The methods used in this study are policy analysis; document review; field interviews. The main result of this study is that the policy of developing young farmers is directed but there is a gap in implementation related to resources, coordination between institutions, and the adjustment of policies to local conditions. The authors suggest policy adjustments to emphasize technical support, market access and training so that food security can be strengthened. The research titled Buddhist Agriculture and the Young Smart Farmer Concept in Thailand (Utis Tahom, 2024) focuses: Buddhist agriculture-inspired agricultural concepts and how the concept of "Young Smart Farmer" is shaped in that context — including environmental and sustainability values using qualitative research methods; group discussions, in-depth interviews, and participatory observations. The main result of this study is that the younger generation is starting to see environmentally friendly and sustainable agriculture as part of ethics and cultural values; practices such as the use of non-chemical materials, maintaining soil fertility and ecological balance are given priority. The concept of "young smart farmer" is seen not only as productive agriculture but also as a contribution to the environment and society. The Impact of Age Structure on Technical Efficiency in Thai Agriculture (Saiyut, Bunyasiri, Sirisupluxana & Mahathanaseth, 2018) Focus: How the age structure of the agricultural workforce—particularly the proportion of youth vs old age—affects technical efficiency in Thailand's agricultural sector. The methods used were: Provincial-level agricultural production panel data from 76 provinces in Thailand (2009-2013); Translog stohastic frontier model with technical inefficiency model. The main results of this study are: A workforce aged 60 years and above increases technical inefficiencies, while a workforce aged 15-59 years reduces inefficiency. This means that the proportion of youth & productive age has a positive impact on efficiency. It is suggested that there needs to be policies that encourage more young farmers and implement appropriate mechanization.

Comparing farmers in young people in several countries can provide an overview. However, looking at the type of agriculture as the object of research for young farmers is quite crucial. The research entitled "Factors Affecting Agricultural Success of Young Smart Farmers" — Suradej Sodkhomkham, Pakkapong Poungsuk & Piyanard Junlek (2024) has Types of agriculture: general / various types of agricultural businesses run by young farmers in the Young Smart Farmers (YSF) program — can be rice, horticulture, etc. The main findings of the study were: Most of the respondents were male, aged 40-49 years (quite older than the definition of "youth" in some contexts), undergraduate education, 1-10 years of farming experience, own their own land (certificates), and supporting financial facilities. Factors such as land ownership, experience, and financial resources are very influential in the success of their farming ventures. The research entitled "Toward a Modern Agriculture in Thailand: A Case Study of Freshwater Aquaculture in the Central Region" — Supawadee Khunthongjan, Thanaporn Athipanyakul & Suwanna Sayruamyat (2022) has a type of agriculture: freshwater aquaculture (freshwater fish farming) provides the main findings, namely There is interest from farmers to switch to more modern techniques, the use of innovation and technology in cultivation; barriers include capital, regulation, access to technological resources, and training. The research titled "Multifunctional Farming as Successful Pathway for the Next Generation of Thai Farmers" — Jansuwan & Zander (2022) has a type of multifunctional farming — a combination of food production, conservation, social, and community aesthetics. The study focuses on understanding the motivation of young farmers in Thailand in the long term and what type of agriculture they choose in the future to stay afloat and productive. The main finding of this study is that multifunctional farming is considered a successful pathway, as it provides flexibility in sources of income, increases satisfaction (non-economic), and allows adaptation to risks (weather, price fluctuations). Young farmers prefer a combination of businesses, for example food production + off-farm activities + environmental conservation. The study, titled "Smallholder Chicken Layer Farms... Viability & Sustainability" — Mukda Suwannasri & Buapun Promphakping (2022) have a type of farm: smallholder chicken layer farms. The main finding of this study is that small laying businesses still have relevance in the local food system, but face pressure from large agribusiness, fluctuating input costs, distribution problems, and food safety standards. Young farmers in this business need to receive support in terms of access to capital, training, and marketing facilities.

CONCLUSION

Many qualitative and mixed-methods studies report an aspirational pattern: youth do not necessarily want to return to traditional farming, but show a strong interest in modern/business-based farming models (agripreneurship) that offer better income, innovation, and status. This means that the regeneration program needs to be transformed from simply "giving away land" to building an attractive agribusiness business model. The policy review suggests a multi-stakeholder strategy (government, college, private, extension workers) for a combination of land access, affordable microcredit, entrepreneurship training, and market support. However, there are relatively few evaluative studies that quantitatively measure the effects of policy programs—most recommendations are still in the form of *policy narratives* without evaluation of long-term impacts. The literature on young farmers indicates that this issue is multi-dimensional: structural issues (land & capital), aspirations (desire to be agripreneurs vs. traditional farmers), and technological opportunities (digitalization). Recent evidence (Indonesian and international studies) provides a general map of determinants, but there is still a strong need for impact evaluation of interventions and longitudinal studies that can guide effective regeneration policies.

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