

## **FACTORS INFLUENCING AGRICULTURAL VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' INTEREST IN WORKING IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The agricultural sector is one of the sectors that makes a large contribution to labor absorption in Indonesia, however data shows a decline in the rate of labor absorption in the agricultural sector, especially among the younger generation. One effort to increase the number of young workers absorbed in the agricultural sector is through agricultural vocational school education which is expected to grow the interest of agricultural vocational school students to work in the agricultural sector in order to overcome the decline in farmer regeneration in Indonesia. The research objectives are to: (1) Identify the interest of agricultural vocational school students in agriculture to work in the agricultural sector, and (2) analyze the factors that influence agricultural vocational school students' interest in working in the agricultural sector. The research was carried out in September 2023 at one of the vocational schools specializing in agricultural skills in Ciamis Regency. The research sample consisted of 78 students who were determined using cluster random sampling. Agricultural vocational school students' interest in working in the agricultural sector was analyzed descriptively, while the factors that influenced agricultural vocational school students' interest in working in the agricultural sector were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis. The research results show: (1) The majority of agricultural vocational school students who are interested in working in the agricultural sector are in the medium category, and (2) The social environment, community environment and social status have a significant influence on agricultural vocational school students' interest in working in the agricultural sector, while their parents' income has no significant influence.*

**Keywords:** *Agricultural Sector, Agricultural Vocational High School Students, Interests, Work*

## INTRODUCTION

The agricultural sector is one of the sectors that plays an important role in growing the Indonesian economy (Wardie & Sintha, 2016), and provides a high contribution to labor absorption in Indonesia, however data shows a decline in the level of labor absorption in the agricultural sector (Sopfan et al., 2022; Polan et al., 2021), especially from young age groups (Oktafiani et al., 2021). Data released by Kementerian Pertanian (2023) shows that farmers aged 15- 24 years are 7.82 percent, 25-59 years are 67.38 percent, and 60 years and over are 24.80 percent.

It is difficult to find workers from the younger generation because they choose to work outside agriculture (Permana et al., 2021) to improve their welfare (Setia et al., 2013). Research by Fauzan *et al* (2021) shows the low interest of agricultural students and students to work in the agricultural sector. Research by Widayanti *et al* (2021) shows that children of farmers generally do not want to continue their parents' work as farmers. This is supported by research by Susilowati (2016) which shows that the majority of parents in rural areas do not want their children to work in the village as farmers like their current job.

One effort to increase the number of young workers absorbed in the agricultural sector is through Agricultural Vocational School (AVS) education which is expected to grow the interest of AVS students to work in the agricultural sector in order to overcome the decline in farmer regeneration in the Indonesian agricultural sector (Fikri et al., 2021; Syarifah et al., 2018). Interest in pursuing agriculture

should be the main reason for entering agricultural education (Makabori & Tapi, 2019). According to Putri *et al* (2022), education is an investment in human resources that has the strongest influence on the decision to choose a job. The question arises, what is the actual interest of AVS students to work in the agricultural sector?

A person's interests are influenced by two factors, namely internal and external factors (Marza et al., 2020). According to Mutolib & Nuraini (2022), interest is influenced by several factors, including the size and status of land ownership, income, social environment, government support and low rewards, motivation, family support, agricultural extension, agricultural technology, prestige of work in the agricultural sector, and high farming risks. According to Gulo et al (2018), a person's interests are not only influenced by social factors which include family environment, community environment and social status; This is also influenced by economic factors, namely income from the business involved.

Several previous studies regarding the interest of the younger generation to work in the agricultural sector include research by Wicaksana (2022), Nurcayah *et al* (2022), Polan *et al* (2021), Makabori & Tapi (2019), dan Afista *et al* (2021). Research related to students' interest in working in the agricultural sector includes research by Sopfan *et al* (2022) dan Polan *et al* (2021). Meanwhile, research related to vocational school students' interest in working in the agricultural sector is research by Oktafiani *et al* (2021). This research involves family environmental factors,

community environment, and social status (Widayanti et al., 2021), self-efficacy factors, students' attitudes towards the agricultural sector, and use of social media (Fauzan et al., 2021), economic environmental factors, environment. social and technological (Widayanti et al., 2021), as well as external factors (extension activities, availability of resources, government support) and motivational factors (rewards, achievements, life demands) (Wicaksana, 2022).

Research regarding the interest of vocational school students, especially agricultural vocational school students, to work in the agricultural sector is still very limited. Therefore, this research was conducted with the aim of finding out the interest of agricultural vocational school students to work in the agricultural sector, and the factors that influence this.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The research was carried out in September 2023 at one of the vocational schools specializing in agricultural skills in Ciamis Regency. The research sample consisted of 78 students who were determined using cluster random sampling. Identification of AVS students' interest in working in the agricultural sector was analyzed using 5 indicators, namely feelings of joy, interest, involvement, desire and enthusiasm. Each indicator is measured using a Likert scale with 5 scales, namely: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). Furthermore, the interest of AVS students to work in the agricultural sector is categorized into 3 categories, namely low, medium and high. Factors influencing the interest of AVS students

to work in the agricultural sector were analyzed using multiple linear regression with the equation:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + e_i$$

Where:

Y = AVS students' interest in working in the agricultural sector

X<sub>1</sub> = Social environment

X<sub>2</sub> = Community environment

X<sub>3</sub> = Social status

X<sub>4</sub> = Parents' income from the agricultural sector

β<sub>i</sub> = the estimated coefficient

e<sub>i</sub> = the error term

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

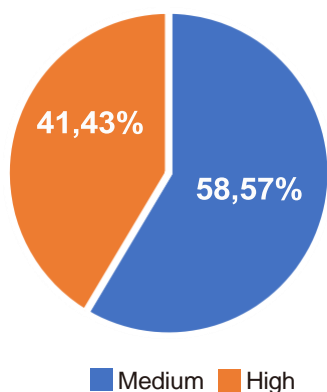
### Agricultural Vocational School Students' Interest in Working in the Agricultural Sector

AVS are education that aims to make graduates ready to work after completing their secondary education (Setianingsih & Wicaksono, 2022), especially working in the agricultural sector. This is to anticipate the loss of productive workforce in the agricultural sector, as stated by Faiz (2021) that the agricultural sector is the sector most vulnerable to losing its productive workforce. The role of AVS in agricultural sustainability is to prepare students as young people who have abilities in the field of agriculture, love agriculture, are interested, participate and/or are involved in agricultural activities, because the young generation is the main actor in agricultural sustainability (Fikri et al., 2021).

The trend of decreasing young labor force in the agricultural sector is a problem that causes the phenomenon of aging farmers. Linking this phenomenon to the life characteristics of the

millennial generation, where the rapid development of technology and easy access to information can influence the millennial generation's perception and interest in work in the agricultural sector. How future agricultural management is passed on to the millennial generation is a challenge in developing the agricultural sector (Dewi & Jumrah, 2023).

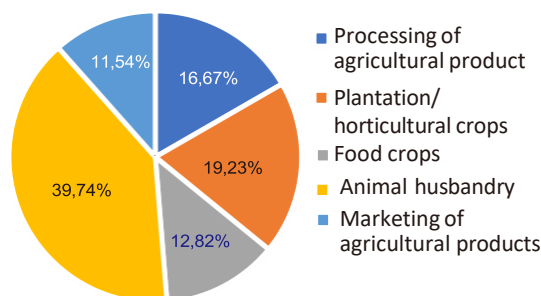
The decline in the number of the workforce, especially the young workforce, in the agricultural sector is thought to be related to interest in working in the agricultural sector. Based on research data, research results were obtained regarding the interest of AVS students to work in the agricultural sector as presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1** AVS Students' Interest in Working in the Agricultural Sector

Figure 1 shows that the majority of AVS students (58.57%) who are interested in working in the agricultural sector are in the medium category. This shows the need for more intense efforts from the government in the process of regenerating farmers in Indonesia, especially through formal education at AVS. AVS students' interest in working in the agricultural sector includes work in the

subsectors of plantation/horticultural crops, food crops, animal husbandry, processing of agricultural products, and marketing of agricultural products as presented in Figure 2.



**Figure 2** Fields of Work in the Agricultural Sector that are of Interest to AVS Students

Figure 2 shows that the majority of AVS students (39.74%) are interested in working in the livestock subsector. Ciamis Regency is a central district for livestock production in West Java Province, namely broiler chicken commodities (Mulyati et al., 2021; Ismail et al., 2019), and beef cattle (Isyanto, 2015). This is thought to be a factor that increases the interest of AVS students to work in the agricultural sector, especially the livestock subsector.

### Factors that Influence AVS Students' Interest in Working in the Agricultural Sector

According to Polan *et al* (2021), farmer regeneration is the main challenge for the agricultural sector, and if this situation is left unchecked, agricultural sustainability will stagnate or even decrease. Makabori & Tapi (2019) stated that regeneration is a crucial issue in rural-urban relations. Agriculture is a special sector whose regeneration is widely used as a comparison with other sectors. The younger generation who attend school and college have a preference not to work in the agricultural

sector and prefer to work in the non-agricultural sector. Supatminingsih & Tahir (2022) show concern about farmer regeneration because farmer regeneration is relatively slow, especially in the food agriculture sector.

Factors influencing the interest of AVS students to work in the agricultural sector were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis. Previous research data was converted using the Successive Interval (MSI) Method, then processed using SPSS version 23 with the output as in Table 1.

The social environment has a significant influence on the interest of AVS students to work in the agricultural sector. The regression coefficient has a positive sign of 0.350, indicating that an increase in the social environment by 1% will increase the interest of Agricultural Vocational School students to work in the agricultural sector by 0.350%. AVS students' interest in working in the agricultural sector arises because of the support and motivation from parents, siblings, and teachers, giving rise to a good perception of agriculture. The results of this research are

**Table 1** Factors that Influence AVS Students' Interest in Working in the Agricultural Sector

Variables	Coefficient	Standard Deviation	t-ratio
Constant	0.758	0.085	8.942*
Social Environment	0.350	0.073	4.778*
Community Environment	0.267	0.070	3.805*
Social Status	0.152	0.077	1.974**
Parents' income from the agricultural sector	0.001	0.022	0.032
R <sup>2</sup>	0.676		
F-ratio	38.113*		

Source: Primary Data (2023)

Information: \*significant pada  $\alpha$  0,01; \*\*significant pada  $\alpha$  0,10

Table 1 shows that simultaneously the variables social environment, community environment, social status and parents' income have a significant effect on the interest of AVS students to work in the agricultural sector. Meanwhile, partially, only the parent income variable did not have a significant effect on the interest of AVS students to work in the agricultural sector.

The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) value of 0.676 shows that 67.6 percent of AVS students' interest in working in the agricultural sector is influenced by the variables contained in the model, namely social environment variables, community environment, social status and parents' income; while the remaining 32.4 percent is influenced by other variables not included in the model.

in line with research by Gulo *et al* (2018) and Effendy *et al* (2020). According to Effendy *et al* (2023), the younger generation is less interested in agriculture because they are influenced by unfavorable perceptions of agriculture. For example, farming is synonymous with poverty, and farming is considered tacky and dirty. However, a social environment that has a good perception of agriculture will influence the perceptions of AVS students which will ultimately influence their interest in working in the agricultural sector.

The community environment has a significant influence on the interest of AVS students to work in the agricultural sector. The regression coefficient has positive sign of 0.267, indicating that improving the community environment by 1% will increase the interest of AVS students

to work in the agricultural sector by 0.267%. AVS students' interest in working in the agricultural sector is growing due to information from social media regarding innovations in the agricultural sector. Apart from that, this interest is also driven by the success of people around where the students live who work in the agricultural sector. The results of this research are in line with research by Gulo *et al* (2018). According to Amirullah & Rafsanjani (2022), the community environment is a place where activities or interactions between people take place with each other. The social environment has a very large role in shaping a person's personality, and will play a role in influencing a person's interests.

Social status has a significant influence on the interest of AVS students to work in the agricultural sector. The regression coefficient has a positive sign of 0.152, indicating that an increase in social status of 1 percent will increase the interest of AVS students to work in the agricultural sector by 0.152 percent. AVS students' interest in working in the agricultural sector is due to the perception that work in the agricultural sector has the same social status as work in other sectors. This is supported by students' perceptions that the younger generation is successful in working in the agricultural sector and therefore has high social status. The results of this research are in line with research by Gulo *et al* (2018), Mat Taib *et al* (2019), and Szabo *et al* (2021). According to Szabo *et al* (2021), the younger generation is not interested in agriculture because of negative perceptions of low social status. This triggers significant population aging

in agricultural practices at every stage of production (e.g., pre-planting, growth, and post-growth), which can also reduce agricultural productivity. Meanwhile, according to Mat Taib *et al* (2019), students are interested in a career in agriculture because it can provide better career development and because agriculture is a major contributor to economic development.

Parental income does not have a significant effect on the interest of AVS students to work in the agricultural sector. The regression coefficient which has a positive sign of 0.001 indicates that an increase in parental income from the agricultural sector by 1 percent will increase the interest of AVS students to work in the agricultural sector by 0.001 percent. 34.62 percent of students' parents work in the agricultural sector, either as farmers or farm laborers; the remainder worked as entrepreneurs (30.76%), traders (11.54%), and 23.08 percent others, either as craftsmen, casual daily laborers, or housewives. The income of parents of students who work as farmers is between IDR 1,000,000 – IDR 2,000,000, while those who work as farm laborers are less than IDR 1,000,000.

The results of this research are in line with research by Gulo *et al* (2018) and David *et al* (2022). The low income of parents from the agricultural sector will reduce the interest of Agricultural Vocational School students to work in the agricultural sector. According to Baliyan & Nenty (2015), most students have a negative attitude where they view agricultural business as a low-income business so they cannot develop a sense of pride in a career in agriculture. Kidane & Worth (2017) also expressed the

same thing, that low-income farming families will direct their children away from farming because farming requires natural resources such as land and initial investment which may not be affordable for low-income parents. According to Wulansari et al (2014), the income earned by farmers is used to meet family needs, to save, and to invest in agricultural businesses.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

AVS students who are interested in working in the agricultural sector are mostly in the medium category. Most of the AVS students (39.74%) are interested in working in the livestock subsector. The social environment, community environment and social status have a significant influence on the interest of AVS students to work in the agricultural sector, while parents' income has no significant influence.

Based on the research conclusions, increasing interest in AVS to work in the agricultural sector is done through: (1) increasing support and motivation from parents, siblings and teachers so as to create a good perception of agriculture, (2) increasing information through social media and other media. others regarding innovations in the agricultural sector and the young generation who are successful working in the agricultural sector so that AVS students have the perception that work in the agricultural sector has the same social status as work in other sectors.

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