

POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS, ENTREPRENEURIAL SELF-EFFICACY, AND AGRIPRENEURIAL INTEREST AMONG GENERATION Z: EVIDENCE FROM INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Background: Agricultural regeneration in developing economies depends critically on youth engagement, yet Generation Z participation in agripreneurship remains constrained by psychological barriers and structural gaps. Although perception and self-efficacy are recognized determinants of entrepreneurial intention, their interaction specifically the moderating role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy remains underexplored in agripreneurship research, particularly in the Indonesian context.

Purpose: (1) examining the direct effects of agricultural perception and entrepreneurial self-efficacy on Gen Z's agripreneurial interest, (2) testing entrepreneurial self-efficacy as a moderating variable in the perception–intention relationship, and (3) generating empirical evidence applicable to youth agripreneurship development in the Indonesian context an emerging economy where such integrative psychological models remain scarce.

Design/methodology/approach: A convergent mixed-methods design was employed. Quantitative data from 138 purposively sampled Generation Z respondents in West Java were analyzed using Structural Equation Modelling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) via SmartPLS 4. Qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews with 10 young agripreneurs and a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with YESS program stakeholders, analyzed via thematic analysis.

Findings: Perception significantly and positively influences agripreneurial interest ($\beta = 0.513$, $p < 0.001$). Self-efficacy also exerts a positive direct effect ($\beta = 0.468$, $p < 0.001$). Notably, self-efficacy negatively moderates the perception–intention relationship ($\beta = -0.048$, $p = 0.043$), indicating that excessively high self-confidence may attenuate the motivational impact of positive perceptions by inducing more critical appraisals of agribusiness challenges. The model explains 78.7% of variance in agripreneurial interest ($R^2 = 0.792$). Qualitative findings validate these results and highlight institutional barriers limited capital, unstable markets, and technology gaps alongside the facilitative role of the YESS program.

Conclusion: Agricultural perception and entrepreneurial self-efficacy are significant co-drivers of Generation Z's agripreneurial interest, with self-efficacy functioning as a compensatory moderator findings that extend Social Cognitive Theory to the agripreneurship domain and provide an empirically grounded framework for redesigning youth agripreneurship interventions, particularly in sustaining the legacy of Indonesia's YESS program beyond its formal conclusion in 2025.

Originality/value: This study extends Social Cognitive Theory to the agripreneurship domain by introducing entrepreneurial self-efficacy as a moderating variable a theoretical innovation rarely examined in Southeast Asian agricultural entrepreneurship research. The mixed-methods design further enriches empirical validity and contextual depth.

Keywords: generation Z, agricultural entrepreneurship, perception, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, youth agripreneurship, SEM-PLS, Indonesia

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INTRODUCTION

No Agriculture, No Life. The agricultural sector remains the backbone of food security and a vital source of livelihood for millions of Indonesians, yet it faces significant demographic and structural challenges. Despite employing a substantial share of the national workforce and contributing considerably to the gross domestic product (GDP), numerous international reports and studies highlight the aging farmer phenomenon and the steady decline of youth participation in agriculture (FAO, 2021; Ngadi et al. 2023) In Indonesia, this issue is exacerbated by the outmigration of young labor toward non-agricultural sectors and the growing appeal of opportunities in the digital economy, making farmer regeneration a critical issue for long-term food security (Ambarwati et al. 2024). The urgency is underscored by data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS, 2023), which recorded a 5.4% decline in agricultural employment among youth aged 15–29 between 2018 and 2022 signalling an accelerating disengagement that threatens long-term food system resilience.

Generation Z (born approximately 1997–2012) represents both a challenge and an opportunity in this landscape. While studies indicate that Gen Z perceives agriculture as physically demanding, risky, and financially less rewarding than technology-sector careers (Dyah Gandasari & Diena Dwidienawati, 2020; Haryati et al. 2024), the digital transformation of agrifood systems through precision farming, platform-based agribusiness, and data-driven supply chains aligns directly with Gen Z's digital fluency and innovation orientation (Garcia et al. 2023; Keefe et al. 2024). This duality creates a window for policy and educational interventions to reposition agriculture as an entrepreneurial career pathway for digitally capable youth.

Despite growing scholarly attention to youth agripreneurship, a critical knowledge gap persists regarding the psychological mechanisms that drive or constrain Gen Z's transition from positive agricultural perceptions to actual entrepreneurial engagement. This gap is particularly pronounced in emerging economy contexts such as Indonesia, where structural barriers limited capital access, fragmented markets, and institutional deficits interact with individual psychological factors in complex ways.

The past decade has witnessed a substantial expansion in research on youth entrepreneurial intention, yet critical gaps persist in its application to agripreneurship, particularly among Generation Z cohorts in emerging economies. Systematic reviews by Liñán & Fayolle, (2015), Schlaegel & Koenig, (2014) established that attitude, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norms as postulated by the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) are robust predictors of entrepreneurial intention across contexts. However, these foundational models were primarily developed and validated in Western, non-agricultural settings, limiting their direct transferability to youth agripreneurship in Indonesia (Lediana et al. 2023; Ngadi et al. 2023).

More recent empirical literature has begun to address this gap. Boye et al. (2024) conducted a systematic review across African and Asian contexts confirming that youth perception of agricultural modernization, profitability, and digital transformation significantly predicts agribusiness engagement. Consentino et al. (2023) further demonstrated that career perception and feasibility appraisal are stronger predictors of agricultural career intention among youth than structural or institutional factors alone. In the Indonesian context, K et al. (2022) reported a moderate positive relationship between perception and agripreneurial intention ($\beta = 0.501$), while Saqdiyah et al. (2025) confirmed that Gen Z entrepreneurial intentions in the agricultural sector are shaped by attitudinal and digital orientation variables findings that underscore the relevance of perception-based models but reveal their explanatory limitations when psychological moderators are absent. Regarding self-efficacy, Newman et al. (2019) conducted a systematic review of 67 empirical studies and confirmed that entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) is among the most robust predictors of entrepreneurial intention across industries and cultural contexts. Srimulyani & Hermanto (2021) specifically validated this relationship in the Indonesian micro and small business context, while Janse van Rensburg & Tjano, (2020) demonstrated a significant link between ESE and agripreneurial commitment in family agribusinesses. Wardana et al. (2020) further confirmed ESE's mediating role between entrepreneurial attitude and intention among Indonesian youth. Despite these advances, the moderating role of ESE specifically its capacity to condition the strength of the perception intention relationship has not been empirically examined in the agripreneurship domain, representing a substantive theoretical blind spot.

Regarding Generation Z specifically, Ferri et al. (2018) identified that Gen Z entrepreneurial intentions are shaped by distinctive value-driven career orientations and digital self-competence beliefs that differ markedly from prior generational cohorts characteristics that justify cohort-specific theoretical models. Haryati et al. (2024) reinforced this in the Indonesian setting, showing that demographic and educational variables uniquely condition Gen Z's agricultural career intentions. Yet no published study in the Southeast Asian context has integrated perception, ESE, and their interaction within a single model leaving a structural gap that the present study is designed to fill.

From a methodological standpoint, the dominance of single-method quantitative approaches in prior agripreneurship studies (predominantly cross-sectional surveys) limits the contextual validity of findings (Dong et al. 2022; Ferreira et al. 2022) The present study addresses this by employing a convergent mixed-methods design, combining SEM-PLS with in-depth interviews and FGD a methodological innovation that provides both statistical rigor and contextual depth rarely achieved in this literature stream, particularly in developing country settings where institutional programs such as YESS remain empirically underexplored (FAO, 2019; Lediana et al. 2023).

This study integrates two complementary theoretical frameworks. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB; Ajzen, 1991) posits that attitudes (analogous to perception), subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control jointly determine behavioural intentions. Social Cognitive Theory (SCT; Bandura, 2000) extends this by identifying self-efficacy an individual's belief in their capacity to execute specific tasks—as a central determinant of motivation, goal-setting, and behavioural persistence. Within the entrepreneurship domain, entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) captures individuals' confidence in their ability to execute key entrepreneurial roles, and has been empirically linked to entrepreneurial intentions across diverse contexts (Newman et al. 2019; Ye & Kang, 2025).

Integrating TPB and SCT, this study proposes that Gen Z's agricultural perceptions form the attitudinal foundation for agripreneurial intent, while entrepreneurial self-efficacy functions both as an independent driver of intention and as a moderating condition that shapes how perceptions translate into action. Prior studies have called for theoretical

integration of psychological capital and attitude-based frameworks in agripreneurship (Dong et al. 2022; Ferreira et al. 2022) a gap the present study directly addresses.

This study employs a convergent mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative SEM-PLS analysis with qualitative thematic analysis to provide both statistical rigor and contextual depth (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). SEM-PLS is particularly suitable for analysing complex relationships between latent variables and predicting behavioural intentions (Joseph F. Hair et al. 2022). Quantitative data were collected via structured questionnaire from 138 Generation Z respondents in West Java, Indonesia. Qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews (IDIs) with 10 young agripreneurs in Tasikmalaya and a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) involving stakeholders from the YESS (Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services) program. This approach allows for a deeper contextual understanding of youth motivation, challenges, and ecosystem support. By integrating statistical analysis with real-world experiential insights, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of both psychological and structural determinants influencing youth agricultural entrepreneurship.

This study is expected to yield three principal results. First, Generation Z's positive perception of the agricultural sector is anticipated to significantly and positively influence agripreneurial interest, consistent with TPB-based evidence in prior agripreneurship studies (Boye et al. 2024; K et al. 2022). Second, entrepreneurial self-efficacy is expected to demonstrate a significant positive direct effect on agripreneurial interest, in line with SCT predictions and meta-analytic evidence confirming ESE as a robust cross-contextual predictor of entrepreneurial intention (Janse van Rensburg & Tjano, 2020; Newman et al. 2019). Third, and most distinctively, entrepreneurial self-efficacy is expected to significantly moderate the perception–intention relationship, such that its interaction with perception reveals a boundary condition rarely examined in the agripreneurship literature thereby producing novel empirical evidence on the psychological dynamics of Gen Z agripreneurial decision-making in Indonesia (Dong et al. 2022; Lediana et al. 2023). Collectively, these results are expected to explain a substantial proportion of variance in agripreneurial interest (projected $R^2 > 0.70$), providing an empirically robust and theoretically grounded foundation for

designing targeted youth agripreneurship interventions in emerging economy contexts.

Based on the identified research gaps, this study aims to: Examine the effect of Generation Z's perception of the agricultural sector on their interest in agricultural entrepreneurship; Analyse the influence of entrepreneurial self-efficacy on agricultural entrepreneurial interest among Generation Z; Test the moderating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between perception and agricultural entrepreneurial interest; Integrate quantitative and qualitative findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of psychological and ecosystem factors influencing youth agripreneurship.

METHODS

This study employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. This study aims to examine the influence of Gen Z perception (independent variable) on entrepreneurial intention in agriculture (dependent variable) with self-efficacy (moderating variable), using a total of 11 measurement indicators across the three constructs.

The target population comprised Generation Z individuals (aged 22–27) in West Java with demonstrated interest or experience in the agricultural sector. Purposive sampling was applied using three eligibility criteria: (1) age 22–27 (Generation Z cohort), (2) residence in West Java Province, and (3) prior engagement in agriculture through entrepreneurship, academic study, or rural community involvement. Following the rule-of-thumb for SEM-PLS (5–10 respondents per indicator; Joseph F. Hair et al. (2022), the minimum required sample was 55–110 (11 indicators \times 5–10). The realized sample of 138 exceeds this threshold, providing sufficient statistical power.

Table 1 presents the measurement constructs and their corresponding indicators, adapted from validated instruments in the agripreneurship and entrepreneurial intention literature (Auzar et al. 2025; Janse van Rensburg & Tjano, 2020; K et al. 2022; Saqdiyah et al. 2025).

Data in this study were collected using a structured online questionnaire designed to measure Generation Z's perception of agriculture, self-efficacy, and interest in agricultural entrepreneurship. The questionnaire was developed based on validated measurement indicators adapted from previous entrepreneurship and agripreneurship studies to ensure content validity and construct relevance. Prior to distribution, the instrument was reviewed and refined to ensure clarity, consistency, and suitability for the target respondents. The questionnaire was distributed electronically through social media platforms, including WhatsApp, Instagram, and email, to reach Generation Z respondents in West Java. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and email. Respondents provided answers using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This scale was chosen to capture the degree of respondents' perceptions, beliefs, and intentions in a structured and quantifiable manner suitable for Structural Equation Modelling Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) analysis. To complement the quantitative data, qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews with 10 young agricultural entrepreneurs in Tasikmalaya and a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) involving stakeholders from the Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services (YESS) program. These qualitative methods aimed to provide deeper contextual insights into the motivations, challenges, and ecosystem factors influencing Generation Z's agricultural entrepreneurship interest. Data collection was conducted over a specified research period, and all responses were screened to ensure completeness and eligibility before being included in the final analysis. This mixed-method data collection approach strengthens the validity and comprehensiveness of the study by integrating both statistical evidence and contextual understanding.

The data analysis was conducted using PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling) with SmartPLS 4 software. PLS-SEM is suitable for predictive analysis, especially when dealing with complex models involving latent variables and a relatively small sample size (Hair, 2014). Convergent validity was assessed based on the factor loading values (≥ 0.7) and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE ≥ 0.5). Composite reliability (CR ≥ 0.7) was also tested to ensure internal consistency (Henseler et al. 2015).

Table 1. Research Variable Construct

Variable	Indicator	Label
Perception (Auzar et al. 2025)	Income earned from working as an agricultural entrepreneur is highly promising.	P1
	Income earned from working as an agricultural entrepreneur is sufficient to meet my family's needs.	P2
	Engaging in agricultural business activities will enhance my personal prestige and elevate my social status as a young generation member.	P3
	Having the status of an agricultural entrepreneur will earn me high recognition in society.	P4
	Working in the agricultural sector is relatively easy and enjoyable.	P5
	Agricultural facilities and supporting infrastructure are easily accessible.	P6
	Agricultural entrepreneurship involves minimal risk of failure.	P7
	The risk of failure in agricultural entrepreneurship can be anticipated and measured.	P8
Self Efficacy (Janse van Rensburg & Tjano, 2020; K et al. 2022)	I am confident in my ability to achieve success as an agricultural entrepreneur.	SE1
	I believe I possess the necessary skills to effectively manage an agricultural business.	SE2
	I am capable of providing clear strategic direction to my team in operating an agricultural enterprise.	SE3
	I am able to motivate and mobilize others to actively participate in agricultural business activities.	SE4
	I am confident in my ability to remain calm and effectively solve problems when facing challenges in agricultural business operations.	SE5
	I am able to maintain focus and perform effectively under time pressure and performance targets in managing an agricultural business.	SE6
Entrepreneurial Interest (Janse van Rensburg & Tjano, 2020; Saqdhah et al. 2025)	I am more interested in establishing a business in the agricultural sector than in other sectors.	WP1
	I consider agricultural entrepreneurship to be more aligned with my interests and capabilities compared to other fields.	WP2
	I intend to pursue agricultural entrepreneurship as my primary career choice.	WP3
	I believe that agricultural entrepreneurship has significant potential in the digital era.	WP4
	I am confident that agricultural entrepreneurship offers promising future prospects.	WP5
	I believe that engaging in agricultural entrepreneurship can enhance my long-term economic resilience.	WP6
	I have short-term plans to start a business in the agricultural sector.	WP7
	I actively seek to identify the resources required to establish an agricultural business.	WP8

The structural model (inner model) was assessed via bootstrapping (5,000 resamples) to derive path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. Model fit was evaluated using SRMR (threshold < 0.08). The moderating effect of self-efficacy was tested using the product-indicator approach for interaction terms in PLS-SEM (Sarstedt et al. 2022). Qualitative findings were triangulated with quantitative results to enhance construct validity and contextual interpretation.

Therefore, based on the literature, perception and self-efficacy emerge as central constructs in explaining Gen Z's entrepreneurial interest in agriculture. Studies focusing on these variables are essential not only for understanding theoretical relationships but also for designing practical interventions that can encourage youth participation in the agricultural sector (Boye et al. 2024). Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Perception of agriculture encompasses evaluative beliefs about its economic potential, social desirability, feasibility, and risk profile. According to TPB, positive attitudes toward a behaviour here, agricultural entrepreneurship are a principal antecedent of behavioural intention (Ajzen, 1991). Empirical support comes from Rohman et al. (2020) and Boye et al. (2024), who found that Positive perceptions of agriculture's economic viability, digital transformation potential, and innovation opportunities have been consistently identified as key attitudinal drivers of agripreneurial interest among youth, whereby favourable views of the agricultural sector directly strengthen young people's motivation to pursue entrepreneurship in agriculture.

H1: Generation Z's positive perception of the agricultural sector has a positive effect on their agripreneurial interest.

Self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their capacity to successfully accomplish specific tasks, plays a fundamental role in shaping entrepreneurial motivation and behavioural intention (Bandura, 2000). In the agripreneurship context, self-efficacy determines the extent to which young people believe they are capable of managing agribusiness challenges, making strategic decisions, and sustaining agricultural ventures beliefs that directly and positively influence their interest in pursuing agripreneurship (Newman et al. 2019). The stronger an individual's self-efficacy, the greater their agripreneurial interest, as high self-belief reduces perceived psychological barriers associated with agribusiness risks and reinforces the motivational drive to engage in agricultural entrepreneurship (Janse van Rensburg & Tjano, 2020; Srimulyani & Hermanto 2021). For Generation Z specifically, entrepreneurial self-confidence is a powerful determinant in shaping their interest in the agricultural sector the higher their self-efficacy, the stronger their desire and commitment to engage in agripreneurship. **H2: Entrepreneurial self-efficacy has a positive effect on Gen Z's agripreneurial interest.**

Although self-efficacy positively drives agripreneurial interest, its role in the relationship between perception and agripreneurial interest depends on how high or calibrated that self-efficacy is. Individuals with very high self-efficacy tend to critically assess agricultural realities rather than being straightforwardly motivated by positive perceptions, which can weaken the influence of perception on agripreneurial interest

(Barba-Sánchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2018; Hafid et al. 2024) . In contrast, individuals with moderate and realistic self-efficacy are more likely to be motivated by positive agricultural perceptions, as their confidence supports rather than overrides their attitudinal response to agriculture (Liguori et al. 2019). This means that self-efficacy does not simply strengthen the perception–interest relationship, but instead shapes how positive perceptions are converted into agripreneurial motivation depending on the individual's level of self-belief (Bandura, 2000). Prior studies confirm that when self-efficacy is excessively high without corresponding realistic environmental appraisal, its moderating effect on the attitude–intention relationship becomes compensatory rather than reinforcing—attenuating rather than amplifying the motivational impact of positive perceptions on entrepreneurial engagement (Gielnik et al. 2017). Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed: **H3: Entrepreneurial self-efficacy moderates the relationship between Gen Z's agricultural perception and agripreneurial interest, whereby higher levels of self-efficacy weaken the positive effect of perception on agripreneurial interest.**

The research framework is presented in Figure 1, illustrating the relationship between Generation Z perception, self-efficacy, and interest in agricultural entrepreneurship. In this model, Generation Z perception is positioned as the independent variable that directly influences agricultural entrepreneurial interest as the dependent variable.

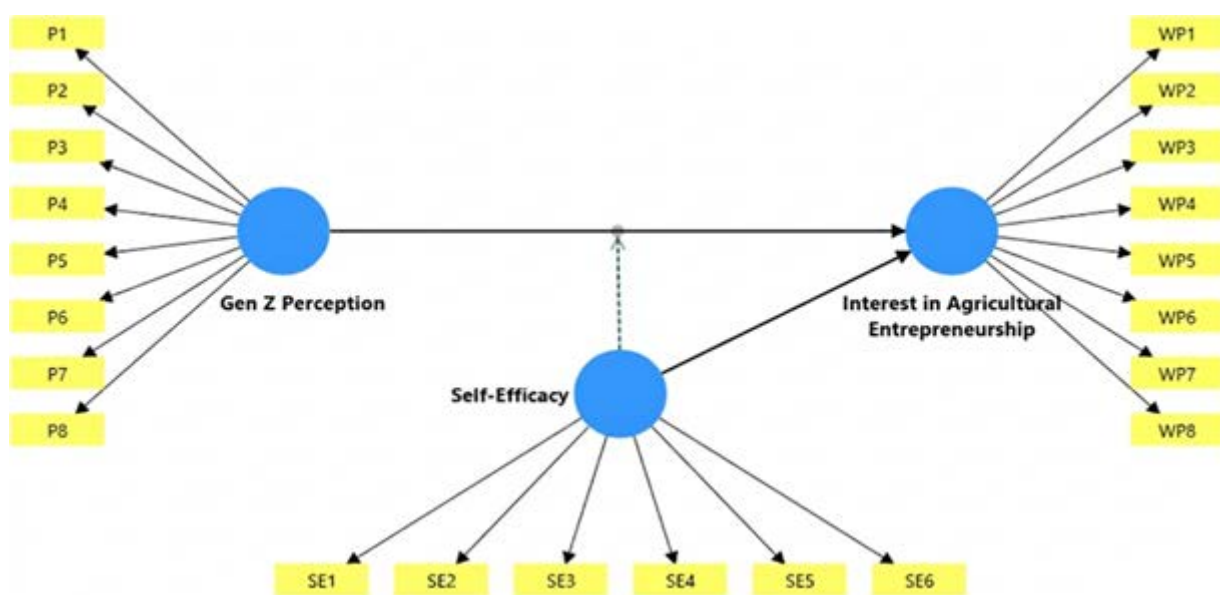


Figure 1. Research model relationship between generation Z perception, self-efficacy, and interest in agricultural entrepreneurship.

Self-efficacy plays a dual role: first, as an independent variable that directly affects entrepreneurial interest, and second, as a moderating variable that influences the strength of the relationship between perception and entrepreneurial interest. The measurement model shows that each latent construct is represented by multiple reflective indicators, namely eight indicators for Generation Z perception (P1–P8), six indicators for self-efficacy (SE1–SE6), and eight indicators for agricultural entrepreneurial interest (WP1–WP8). The structural model assumes that more positive perceptions of the agricultural sector and higher levels of self-efficacy will increase Generation Z’s interest in agricultural entrepreneurship, while self-efficacy also interacts with perception to influence the strength and direction of this relationship. This framework integrates psychological factors and behavioural intention theory to explain agricultural entrepreneurship interest among Generation Z.

RESULTS

Respondent Profile

A total of 138 Generation Z respondents participated. Gender distribution was 54.35% male (n = 75) and 45.65% female (n = 63), reflecting relatively balanced representation consistent with growing gender parity in agripreneurship engagement (Doss et al. 2018). The respondents were categorized into four criteria: gender, age, employment status, and experience. Table 2 presents of respondent criteria based on gender, age, occupation and experiences.

Based on the data, there were 75 male respondents (54.3%) and 63 female respondents (45.65%). This indicates that interest in agriculture is not solely dominated by men but is also significantly represented among women. This finding aligns with (Kahan, 2012), who emphasized that women’s roles in agricultural entrepreneurship have been increasing due to growing awareness of gender equality in access to resources. Furthermore, more recent research by (Doss et al. 2018) highlighted that women’s participation in agripreneurship contributes to food security and sustainable development. Thus, this relatively balanced distribution reflects the substantial potential of both genders in developing agricultural entrepreneurship.

Based on the age categories, the majority of respondents were within the range of 21–23 years (43.48%) and 24–27 years (44.93%), while the group aged 18–20 years accounted for only 11.59%. This indicates that most respondents were in early adulthood, a stage characterized by important transitions in career and life. (Arnett, 2023) explains that the phase of emerging adulthood (ages 18–29) is a period in which individuals explore identity, career opportunities, and begin making long-term decisions, including those related to entrepreneurship. This finding is consistent with recent research by (Ray et al. 2022), which highlights that younger age groups tend to be more open to innovation and more willing to take risks in the agribusiness sector. Therefore, the majority of respondents in this study were at a psychosocial development stage that is well-suited for fostering interest in agricultural entrepreneurship.

Table 2. Respondent criteria based on gender, age, occupation and experiences

Characteristics	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	75	54.35
	Female	63	45.65
Age	18-20	16	11.59
	21-23	60	43.48
	24-27	62	44.93
Occupation	Students	59	42.80
	Fresh Graduate	30	21.70
	other	49	35.50
Experiences	< 1 year	80	57.97
	1-2 year	40	28.99
	>2year	18	13.04

In terms of employment status, the respondents consisted of university students (42.8%), fresh graduates (21.7%), and other are members of Karang Taruna or village youth communities engaged in the agricultural sector (35.5%). This data reflects a variation in both academic and practical experiences among respondents. According to (Rees, 1965) human capital theory, formal education equips individuals with knowledge and skills that can enhance productivity in entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, involvement in village youth communities illustrates the importance of experiential learning relevant to agricultural practices. Recent research by (Olayinka et al. 2020) confirms that a combination of higher education and community experience strengthens the capacity of young people to innovate in agripreneurship.

With regard to agricultural entrepreneurship experience, the majority of respondents had less than one year of involvement (59.4%), followed by those with 1–2 years of experience (29%), while only a small proportion had more than two years (13%). This indicates that most respondents were still at the early stage of their entrepreneurial journey. Politis (2005) argues that even limited practical experience functions as a valuable entrepreneurial learning process, as it enables individuals to acquire skills through mechanisms of experiential learning. In other words, short-term experience still provides a crucial foundation for developing an entrepreneurial mindset. Supporting this, a meta-analysis by Unger et al. (2011) revealed that human capital, such as skills and experience, is strongly associated with entrepreneurial success. This suggests that respondents with brief experience still contribute meaningfully to entrepreneurial capacity building, while those with more than two years of experience can provide deeper perspectives on opportunities and risks in agribusiness. Moreover, recent research by Igwe et al. (2022) emphasizes that learning approaches combining academic theory with real-world practice significantly improve youth readiness for responsible entrepreneurship. Therefore, the respondent composition in this study reflects a diversity of experience levels, which ultimately strengthens the validity of the research findings on the relationship between perception, self-efficacy, and interest in pursuing agricultural entrepreneurship.

Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The measurement model was evaluated for validity and reliability across all three constructs (Naresh K. Malhotra, 2019). All factor loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 (range: 0.793–0.874), and AVE values surpassed 0.50 for all constructs (Perception: 0.679; Self-Efficacy: 0.689; Agripreneurial Interest: 0.707), confirming convergent validity (Hair, 2014). Composite reliability (CR \geq 0.90) and Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha \geq$ 0.90) for all constructs exceeded the 0.70 reliability criterion (Henseler et al. 2015) evidencing strong internal consistency. Results are summarized in Tables 3 and 4.

Validity Assessment

Convergent validity is examined by analysing the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). An AVE value greater than 0.5 indicates that the construct meets the acceptable threshold for convergent validity (Hengky Latan & Imam Ghozali, 2015). In addition, indicator reliability is evaluated using factor loadings, where a loading value above 0.70 is considered satisfactory (Sarstedt et al. 2022). According to (Hair, 2014), the Construct Validity and Reliability test serves to ensure that the indicators used are truly capable of consistently measuring the studied construct. Convergent validity is assessed through outer loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while construct reliability is evaluated using Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (CA). An instrument is considered valid if each indicator's outer loading value is >0.5 and AVE >0.5 , while reliability is considered fulfilled if CR and CA values are >0.7 . In other words, the higher these values are, the more reliable it is that the instrument truly measures the intended construct.

Reliability Testing

Based on the results of the reliability and convergent validity test in the Table 4, it can be seen that all research variables show very good values. The Cronbach's Alpha values for the variables are 0.932 for Gen Z Perception, 0.935 for Agricultural Entrepreneurship Interest, and 0.917 for Self-Efficacy. All of these values are well above the minimum threshold of 0.70 recommended by (Hair, 2014), indicating that the research instrument has strong internal consistency.

Table 3. Result Loading Factor, AVE and CL

Construct	Indicator	Convergent Validity		Discriminant Validity
		Loading Factor	AVE	CL
Perception	P1	0.803	0.679	0.803
	P2	0.835		0.835
	P3	0.795		0.795
	P4	0.805		0.805
	P5	0.854		0.854
	P6	0.809		0.809
	P7	0.862		0.862
	P8	0.828		0.828
Self Efficacy	SE1	0.851	0.689	0.613
	SE2	0.863		0.671
	SE3	0.839		0.617
	SE4	0.845		0.655
	SE5	0.828		0.625
	SE6	0.819		0.588
Entrepreneurial Interest	WP1	0.874	0.707	0.719
	WP2	0.793		0.705
	WP3	0.827		0.707
	WP4	0.803		0.618
	WP5	0.841		0.683
	WP6	0.830		0.721
	WP7	0.827		0.684
	WP8	0.842		0.713

Table 4. Result of composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Perception	0.932	0.933
Self-Efficacy	0.935	0.936
Entrepreneurial Interest	0.917	0.918

Furthermore, the Composite Reliability values for each variable are also high, exceeding 0.90. This confirms that the indicators used consistently measure the constructs and meet reliability requirements, referring to the criteria stated by (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), further reinforced by (Henseler et al. 2015), who argue that composite reliability values ≥ 0.70 are considered very good.

In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) results show that all research variables have values above 0.50, namely Gen Z Perception (0.679), Agricultural Entrepreneurship Interest (0.689), and Self-Efficacy (0.707). An AVE value above 0.50 indicates that the indicators of each variable are able to explain more than 50% of the variance of the measured construct, thus it can be concluded that the convergent validity criteria have been met (Hair et al. 2019).

Therefore, the results of the reliability and validity tests in this study indicate that all constructs meet the criteria for reliability and convergent validity. This means that the research instrument used can be relied upon to accurately and consistently measure Gen Z perception, agricultural entrepreneurship interest, and self-efficacy.

The Goodness of Fit Testing

Goodness-of-fit was evaluated using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). The saturated model yielded an SRMR of 0.054 and the estimated model 0.055, both well below the recommended threshold of 0.08, confirming adequate model fit (Narimawati et al. 2022). The Normed Fit Index (NFI) values of 0.805 and 0.804, respectively, provide additional support for model adequacy (Table 5).

The results show an SRMR value of 0.054 for the saturated model and 0.055 for the estimated model, both below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating a good model fit. Furthermore, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) values of 0.805 (saturated model) and 0.804 (estimated model) suggest an adequate level of model fit. The relatively low d_{ULS} and d_G values further support the absence of substantial discrepancies between the empirical covariance matrix and the model-implied matrix. Overall, these findings confirm that the model demonstrates satisfactory goodness-of-fit.

Analysis of Structural Model (Inner Model)

The structural model assessment aims to examine the relationships among latent constructs. This stage involves evaluating the R^2 and Q^2 values of the endogenous variables to determine explanatory power and predictive relevance, respectively. Additionally, bootstrapping procedures are applied to test the statistical significance of the hypothesized relationships (Sarstedt et al. 2022).

R-square Analysis

The analysis of the coefficient of determination (R-Square) is used to determine the extent to which the independent variables are able to explain the variation of the dependent variable in the research model. The R-Square test results in this study are presented in Table 6.

The data processing results show that the R-Square value for the variable Agricultural Entrepreneurship Interest is 0.792, with an Adjusted R-Square value of 0.787. This finding indicates that Gen Z Perception and Self-Efficacy are able to explain 78.7% of the variation

in Agricultural Entrepreneurship Interest, while the remaining 21.3% is influenced by other factors outside the research model.

According to the criteria proposed by (Sarstedt et al. 2022), an R-Square value of 0.67 or higher indicates a model with substantial explanatory power. Thus, the R-Square value in this study can be categorized as strong. This is in line with Hair (2014), who emphasize that the higher the R-Square value, the better the model's predictive ability of the endogenous variable. The Adjusted R-Square value, which is relatively close to the R-Square value, also shows the consistency of the model even after accounting for the number of independent variables used.

These results reinforce that Gen Z Perception and Self-Efficacy significantly contribute to shaping agricultural entrepreneurship interest. However, there are still other factors outside of this study such as family support, social environment, and access to capital—that may influence agricultural entrepreneurship interest and should be considered in future research.

Q-square Analysis

The Q^2 value assesses the predictive relevance of the structural model for endogenous constructs. A Q^2 value greater than zero indicates that the model demonstrates predictive relevance, whereas a value below zero suggests a lack of predictive capability. As presented in Table 7, the Q^2 value for Entrepreneurial Interest is 0.780. Since this value is substantially above zero, it confirms that the model possesses strong predictive relevance. This result indicates that the structural model has a high capability to predict variations in Entrepreneurial Interest, reflecting robust out-of-sample predictive power.

Table 5. Result of Model Fit

Variable	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.054	0.055
d_{ULS}	0.737	0.776
d_G	0.787	0.783
Chi-Square	541.239	546.206
NFI	0.805	0.804

Table 6. R Square Value (R^2)

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Entrepreneurial Interest	0.792	0.787

Hypothesis Testing Results (Bootstrapping, n = 5,000)

Hypothesis testing is a statistical process to verify the validity of the null hypothesis (H0) against the alternative hypothesis (Ha) based on sample data, determining the significance level (α , typically 0.05). According to Joseph F. Hair et al. (2022) the bootstrapping method in PLS-SEM hypothesis testing generates a random sample distribution (e.g., n = 5,000) to estimate path coefficients (β), t-statistics, and p-values more robustly against normality assumptions, making it suitable for complex structural models.

Table 8 presents the results of the hypothesis testing. The findings indicate that Gen Z Perception has a positive and significant effect on Entrepreneurial Interest ($P = 0.000 < 0.05$), supporting H1. Similarly, Self-Efficacy demonstrates a positive and significant influence on Entrepreneurial Interest ($P = 0.000 < 0.05$), confirming H2. Furthermore, the interaction effect between Self-Efficacy and Gen Z Perception ($SE \times P$) shows a significant moderating effect on Entrepreneurial Interest ($P = 0.043 < 0.05$). This result indicates that Self-Efficacy significantly strengthens the relationship between Gen Z Perception and Entrepreneurial Interest, thereby supporting H3. Overall, all proposed hypotheses are accepted, as each relationship exhibits a probability value below the 0.05 significance threshold.

The Effect of Gen Z Perception on Agricultural Entrepreneurial Interest (H1)

The finding that Generation Z’s positive perception of the agricultural sector significantly and positively influences agripreneurial interest ($\beta = 0.513, p < 0.001$) confirms H1 and is theoretically grounded in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) which positions attitude operationalized here as agricultural perception as the primary cognitive antecedent of behavioural intention. The magnitude of this effect ($\beta = 0.513$)

indicates a moderate-to-strong relationship, consistent with and extending (K et al. 2022) benchmark finding ($\beta = 0.501$) in the Zinienial generation context, and corroborating Suprehatin & Shidiq (2020) confirmation that attitudinal appraisal of agricultural careers is the strongest single predictor of agripreneurial intention among university-educated youth. The present result further aligns with Boye et al. (2024) systematic review across African and Asian contexts, which established that youth perceptions of agricultural modernization, digital transformation, and economic viability are robust determinants of agribusiness engagement findings directly transferable to the Indonesian Gen Z population examined here.

Critically, this result carries an important theoretical implication that extends beyond mere replication: it demonstrates that perception-based attitudinal formation operates as a meaningful driver of agripreneurial intent even within a demographic cohort Generation Z historically characterized by negative agricultural stereotypes, including perceptions of agriculture as physically demanding, technologically backward, and financially unrewarding (Dyah Gandasari & Diena Dwidienawati, 2020; Haryati et al. 2024) The positive perception effect observed in this study therefore suggests that targeted exposure to agriculture’s digital and innovative dimensions—as facilitated through programs such as YESS can effectively recalibrate Gen Z’s attitudinal baseline, shifting perception from deterrence to entrepreneurial motivation. This interpretation is supported by qualitative findings from in-depth interviews, in which respondents consistently cited digital agriculture, agri-tourism, local resource utilization, and technology-mediated supply chains as the specific perceptual dimensions that most strongly attracted them toward agricultural entrepreneurship confirming that perception formation is domain-specific and amenable to intervention (Consentino et al. 2023; Lediania et al. 2023).

Table 7. Q Square Value

Variable	Q Square
Entrepreneurial Interest	0.780

Table 8. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-stat	p-value	Result	Decision
H1	Perception → Agripreneurial Interest	0.513	6.742	0.000	Positive & Significant	Accepted
H2	Self-Efficacy → Agripreneurial Interest	0.468	5.891	0.000	Positive & Significant	Accepted
H3	Self-Efficacy × Perception → Agripreneurial Interest	-0.048	2.031	0.043	Negative & Significant	Accepted

The Effect of Self-Efficacy on Agricultural Entrepreneurial Interest (H2)

The positive and significant direct effect of entrepreneurial self-efficacy on agripreneurial interest ($\beta = 0.468$, $p < 0.001$) confirms H2 and is strongly consistent with Social Cognitive Theory Bandura (2000) which identifies self-efficacy as the primary psychological mechanism through which individuals translate environmental assessments into motivated action. The path coefficient ($\beta = 0.468$) is comparable to effect sizes reported in (Newman et al. 2019) systematic review of 67 empirical ESE studies (mean $\beta \approx 0.40-0.50$), confirming that the self-efficacy–intention relationship generalizes robustly to the agripreneurship domain and the Indonesian emerging economy context. This finding extends Janse van Rensburg & Tjano (2020) evidence from family agribusiness settings and Srimulyani & Hermanto (2021) confirmation of ESE’s role in Indonesian micro- and small-business success, providing the first direct evidence of ESE’s effect on Gen Z agripreneurial interest in West Java.

Theoretically, this result reinforces (Bandura, 2000) proposition that self-efficacy operates through four principal sources mastery experiences, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and physiological states each of which can be deliberately cultivated through structured entrepreneurship development programs. The qualitative findings corroborate this mechanism: respondents who had participated in YESS training, agribusiness internships, or community-based agricultural projects consistently reported markedly higher confidence in managing agribusiness challenges including financial planning, market access negotiation, and precision farming technology adoption compared to those without such structured experiences. This finding directly supports Zhao et al. (2005) theoretical argument that domain-specific experiential exposure is the most potent source of entrepreneurial self-efficacy formation, and has direct implications for program design: structured practice-based learning, mentorship

pairing, and competitive grant access as implemented through YESS appear to be effective institutional mechanisms for ESE development among Gen Z agripreneurs (Ferreira et al. 2022; Wardana et al. 2020). Importantly, the comparable magnitudes of the perception effect ($\beta = 0.513$) and the self-efficacy effect ($\beta = 0.468$) indicate that both psychological constructs contribute approximately equally and independently to agripreneurial interest formation a finding that challenges single-construct models prevalent in the prior literature and underscores the necessity of integrative TPB-SCT frameworks for understanding agripreneurial motivation among youth (Gielnik et al. 2017; Maresch et al. 2016).

The Moderating Role of Self-Efficacy in the Relationship between Gen Z Perception and Agricultural Entrepreneurial Interest (H3).

The most theoretically significant and novel finding of this study is the negative and significant moderating effect of entrepreneurial self-efficacy on the perception–agripreneurial interest relationship ($\beta = -0.048$, $p = 0.043$), which confirms H3 and reveals a critical boundary condition that has not previously been documented in the agripreneurship literature. While both perception and self-efficacy independently and positively drive agripreneurial interest, their interaction produces an attenuating effect: as self-efficacy increases, the marginal contribution of positive perception to agripreneurial interest diminishes. This finding is theoretically interpretable through the lens of compensatory cognitive appraisal: individuals with high entrepreneurial self-efficacy possess the psychological confidence and cognitive capacity to engage in more rigorous, realistic evaluation of agricultural sector challenges including capital access barriers, market volatility, climate risks, and technological competency requirements effectively recalibrating the motivational impact of broadly positive agricultural perceptions (Hafid et al. 2024).

This interpretation finds strong theoretical support in Bandura, (2000) foundational SCT proposition that self-efficacious individuals engage in more analytical and less emotionally driven information processing a cognitive style that may lead them to critically interrogate optimistic agricultural perceptions rather than uncritically convert them into entrepreneurial intent. Empirically, this pattern is consistent with (Barba-Sánchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2018) finding that ESE moderates the entrepreneurship education–intention relationship in a compensatory direction, and with Liguori et al. (2019) demonstration that perceived desirability and feasibility interact with self-efficacy in complex, non-linear ways. In the agricultural domain specifically, Dong et al. (2022) and Li et al. (2022) identified analogous patterns whereby psychological capital of which self-efficacy is a central component moderates the relationship between environmental perception and farmers’ entrepreneurial behaviour through a similar calibration mechanism.

The qualitative evidence provides rich contextual validation for this finding. Several experienced young agripreneurs interviewed in Tasikmalaya those with the highest self-reported confidence levels explicitly articulated that their entrepreneurial confidence had paradoxically made them more, not less, aware of the structural realities of Indonesian agribusiness: unstable commodity prices, limited cold-chain infrastructure, fragmented smallholder land tenure, and insufficient institutional support for market linkage. Rather than inflating their agripreneurial enthusiasm, high self-efficacy appeared to function as a cognitive lens through which positive perceptions were subjected to critical scrutiny a dynamic that explains the observed negative interaction effect and that is absent from lower-efficacy respondents whose entrepreneurial interest remained more straightforwardly perception-driven. This finding carries a nuanced implication for intervention design: entrepreneurship development programs should not only build self-efficacy but must carefully calibrate it toward realistic confidence pairing self-belief enhancement with structured exposure to agribusiness challenges, failure case studies, and risk management training to prevent the perception-dampening effect of uncalibrated overconfidence (Hafid et al. 2024; Newman et al. 2019).

Integrated Interpretation: Quantitative and Qualitative Convergence

The convergent mixed-methods design allows for a deeper and more comprehensive interpretation of the findings compared to using a single method. From the quantitative perspective, the model explains 78.7% of the variance in agripreneurial interest ($R^2 = 0.792$) and demonstrates strong predictive relevance ($Q^2 = 0.780$). This indicates that the integrated TPB-SCT framework provides a robust explanation of how agripreneurial intentions are formed among Gen Z in West Java.

From the qualitative side, thematic analysis of in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) reveals that agripreneurial motivation among youth is shaped by a complex ecosystem. This ecosystem includes intrinsic motivations (such as the desire to utilize local resources, achieve economic independence, and innovate through technology), structural barriers (including limited access to capital, unstable market linkages, and low technological competence), and institutional support (such as training programs, mentorship, competitive grants, and agribusiness networks).

The FGD results with stakeholders from the Tasikmalaya Agricultural Office confirm that institutional interventions are crucial in two key areas. First, improving perceptions of agriculture through the promotion of modern agricultural practices. Second, strengthening self-efficacy through hands-on training and mentorship. These efforts are essential to transform positive attitudes into sustainable agripreneurial engagement (FAO, 2019; Lediana et al. 2023).

These findings become even more important considering the conclusion of the YESS program at the end of 2025. This program had successfully supported around 200,000 beneficiaries and created approximately 122,000 new agricultural entrepreneurs across 19 regencies in Indonesia (IFAD, 2026). Its termination creates a significant institutional gap, particularly in areas identified by this study as critical namely, perception-building and self-efficacy development among Gen Z agripreneurs.

Although the Ministry of Agriculture plans to continue farmer regeneration programs through regional initiatives, this study suggests that such efforts must explicitly incorporate a dual psychological intervention approach. This means simultaneously strengthening agricultural perceptions and developing self-efficacy in a structured way to sustain the agripreneurial momentum generated by the YESS program among Generation Z.

A key contribution of this study lies in the convergence between quantitative and qualitative findings, especially in explaining the moderation effect. Quantitatively, the negative moderating effect of self-efficacy may seem counterintuitive. However, qualitative findings provide a clear explanation. Experienced and confident young agripreneurs tend to engage in “calibrated reality appraisal,” meaning they assess opportunities more realistically. Rather than becoming overly optimistic, higher self-efficacy actually increases their awareness of real structural challenges in agribusiness.

This psychological process is difficult to capture through survey data alone but becomes evident through in-depth interviews, where respondents clearly express how their confidence leads to more critical and realistic decision-making. This triangulation strengthens the internal validity of the findings and highlights the importance of mixed-methods approaches in uncovering complex psychological dynamics in agripreneurship research—an aspect often overlooked in previous studies that relied solely on quantitative methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Dong et al. 2022).

Managerial Implications

This study offers novel and strategically positioned managerial implications for advancing Generation Z agripreneurship in Indonesia. For the Ministry of Agriculture, the empirically validated dual role of agricultural perception and entrepreneurial self-efficacy as co-drivers of agripreneurial interest justifies institutionalizing a permanent perception shifting and confidence building intervention architecture within the regional sustainability phases of the YESS program which, despite formally concluding in 2025, leaves a critical psychological intervention gap that regional agricultural agencies must urgently fill through successor programs targeting Gen Z’s distinctive digital fluency and value-driven career orientations. For agribusiness incubators and youth

agricultural communities, the YESS alumni network should be strategically mobilized as a structured peer mentorship ecosystem, sustaining agripreneurial momentum beyond the program’s formal conclusion by leveraging the experiential capital of established young agripreneurs to develop both positive agricultural perceptions and calibrated entrepreneurial confidence among incoming Gen Z cohorts.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This study demonstrates that Generation Z’s agripreneurial interest is significantly influenced by two key factors: agricultural perception and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Consistent with prior research, positive perceptions of the agricultural sector particularly regarding its economic potential and innovation opportunities significantly enhance agripreneurial interest. In addition, entrepreneurial self-efficacy exerts a direct positive effect, reinforcing established evidence that self-confidence is a critical determinant of entrepreneurial intention.

However, in contrast to the commonly assumed reinforcing moderation effect reported in previous studies, this research finds that at higher levels, self-efficacy weakens the relationship between perception and interest. This indicates a compensatory moderating role, where individuals with higher confidence tend to evaluate agribusiness opportunities more realistically. This finding is supported by qualitative evidence, which shows that confident young agripreneurs are more aware of structural barriers rather than exhibiting excessive optimism.

Theoretically, these findings extend existing models of agripreneurial intention by highlighting that relationships among variables are not always linear or reinforcing. Practically, the results emphasize the need for interventions that not only promote positive perceptions of agriculture but also develop calibrated and realistic self-efficacy through practice-based training and mentorship. These implications are particularly relevant in the context of the YESS program’s conclusion, where future agripreneurship initiatives must adopt more integrated and evidence-based approaches to sustain youth engagement.

Recommendations

Thus, this study affirms that fostering agricultural entrepreneurial interest among young people requires more than building positive perceptions. It must also be accompanied by the development of realistic self-capacity and the provision of adequate entrepreneurial ecosystem support. The integration of psychological and structural factors will ultimately determine the sustainability and competitiveness of young agripreneurs in the future. Future studies are encouraged to expand the sample to a wider regional or national scope to enhance generalizability. Researchers may also integrate longitudinal designs to observe the dynamics of perception and self-efficacy over time. Additionally, exploring other psychological or ecosystem-related variables such as digital literacy, social support, and policy intervention may enrich the understanding of factors influencing Generation Z's interest in agricultural entrepreneurship. Mixed-method approaches combining digital ethnography or experimental design are also recommended to deepen insights into youth agripreneurship behaviour.

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