

THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEPTION OF OIL PALM FARMING PROFESSION AND INCOME ON THE INTEREST OF GENERATION Z IN BECOMING FARMERS IN TANJUNG JATI VILLAGE, BINJAI DISTRICT, LANGKAT REGENCY

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Abstract

The farmer regeneration crisis is a serious issue for the sustainability of Indonesia's agricultural sector. Data from the 2023 Agricultural Census by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that Generation Z only accounts for 2.14% of the nation's total farmers, significantly lagging behind Generation X (42.39%) and Baby Boomers (27.61%) This study aims to analyze partially and simultaneously the influence of perceptions of the farmer's profession and oil palm farming income on Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers in Tanjung Jati Village. This study uses a quantitative method with multiple linear regression analysis. The research sample consisted of 93 Generation Z individuals aged 17-29 years who reside in Tanjung Jati Village. Data were collected through a questionnaire with a Likert scale of 1-5. The results of the study indicate that the perception of the farmer profession has a positive and significant effect on Generation Z's interest in becoming a farmer with a t value = 3.286 and Sig. = 0.001, then the income from oil palm farming has a positive and significant effect on Generation Z's interest in becoming a farmer with a t value = 2.605 and Sig. = 0.011. Then the perception of the profession and income from oil palm farming simultaneously have a significant effect on Generation Z's interest in becoming a farmer with a value of F = 28.745 and Sig. = 0.000. The R² value of 0.390 indicates that the two variables explain 39.0% of the variation in Generation Z's interest while the remaining 61.0% is influenced by other factors outside the study.

Keywords : Perception of Profession, Farming Income, Interest, Generation Z, Palm Oil

INTRODUCTION

The agricultural sector plays a crucial role in the Indonesian economy, contributing 12.53% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2023 (Statistics, 2024). However, this sector faces challenges in the form of low interest among young people in working in agriculture. A 2023 Jakpat survey showed that only around 6% of Generation Z were interested in working in the agricultural sector, while BPS data (2022) showed that only 18% of young people aged 16–30 worked in the sector. The 2023 Agricultural Census also showed that farmers were dominated by Generation X and Baby Boomers, while Generation Z only made up 2.14% (BPS, 2023). Palm oil is one of Indonesia's strategic commodities, contributing significantly to exports and the national economy. However, the palm oil plantation sector also faces challenges in farmer regeneration, as younger generations tend to be more interested in working in the industrial, service, and technology sectors, which are considered more promising (Arvianti et al., 2019). The low interest among young people in becoming farmers is linked to negative perceptions of the farming profession, which is considered less prestigious, high-risk, and economically unpromising. Conversely, positive perceptions of the farming profession can increase young people's participation in agricultural activities (Ilyas, 2022). In addition to professional perceptions, farm income is also a significant factor influencing the younger generation's interest in entering the agricultural sector. Research by Arvianti et al. (2019) and Ardiansyah (2023) shows that the higher the income from oil palm farming, the greater the younger generation's interest in continuing the business. Family economic factors and business profit prospects also play a role in determining the sustainability of rural farming (Tazkiyah, 2020). Therefore, professional perceptions and farm income are interrelated factors influencing Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers (Ardiansyah et al., 2023). Tanjung Jati Village, Binjai District, Langkat Regency, was chosen as the research location because it is one of the

THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEPTION OF OIL PALM FARMING PROFESSION AND INCOME ON THE INTEREST OF GENERATION Z IN BECOMING FARMERS IN TANJUNG JATI VILLAGE, BINJAI DISTRICT, LANGKAT REGENCY

Cintia Dwi Andita et al

areas with active oil palm plantations. Despite its significant economic potential, Generation Z's interest in working as oil palm farmers remains relatively low. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of perceptions of the oil palm farming profession and oil palm farming income on Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers in Tanjung Jati Village, both partially and simultaneously.

THEORETICAL BASIS

Generation Z's Interest in Becoming Farmers

Interest is a person's tendency to feel drawn to and engaged in a particular activity. In the agricultural context, Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers is influenced by both internal and external factors, such as perceptions of the farming profession, economic conditions, family environment, and available business opportunities. The low interest of the younger generation in the agricultural sector poses a challenge to the sustainability of agricultural development in Indonesia (Ilyas, 2022). Therefore, increasing the interest of the younger generation is necessary to support farmer regeneration and the sustainability of the agricultural sector.

Perception of the Oil Palm Farmer Profession

Perception is the process by which individuals interpret and assign meaning to an object or profession based on their experience, knowledge, and social environment. Perceptions of the farming profession are a crucial factor in determining young people's interest in engaging in agricultural activities. Young people with positive perceptions of the farming profession tend to have a higher interest in working in the agricultural sector. Conversely, perceptions that the farming profession is less prestigious, high-risk, and low-rewarding can reduce their interest in becoming farmers (Ilyas, 2022).

Palm Oil Farming Income

Farming income is the difference between the income earned by farmers and all costs incurred in the production process. The level of income earned from farming is a key consideration for young people in choosing careers. The higher the income generated from oil palm plantations, the greater the attractiveness of the sector to young people. Research shows that economic factors, particularly income and profit prospects, positively influence young people's interest in continuing family farming (Arvianti et al., 2019; Ardiansyah, 2023; Tazkiyah, 2020).

The Relationship Between Perception of Profession and Farming Income and Generation Z's Interest in Becoming Farmers

Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers is influenced not only by economic factors but also by socio-psychological factors. Positive perceptions of the farming profession can increase pride and motivate young people to work in the agricultural sector. Furthermore, high farm incomes provide confidence that the agricultural sector can provide decent welfare. Therefore, perceptions of the farming profession and farm income are thought to jointly influence Generation Z's interest in becoming oil palm farmers (Arvianti et al., 2019; Ardiansyah et al., 2023; Ilyas, 2022).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research method uses a quantitative approach with a survey method to analyze the influence of perceptions of the oil palm farmer profession and farming income on Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers in Tanjung Jati Village, Binjai District, Langkat Regency. The study was conducted from May to June 2025. The study population was Generation Z aged 17–27 years who came from oil palm farming families, with a sample of 100 respondents determined using a purposive sampling technique based on certain criteria relevant to the research objectives. The data used consisted of primary data obtained through distributing questionnaires and direct interviews with respondents, as well as secondary data obtained from literature, scientific journals, and publications of related institutions. Variable measurements were carried out using a five-level Likert scale. Data analysis was carried out through validity tests, reliability tests, classical assumption tests including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests, and multiple linear regression analysis to test the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable. Hypothesis testing was carried out using the t-test to determine partial effects, the F-test to determine simultaneous effects, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) to measure the model's ability to explain the dependent variable (Sugiyono, 2019; Ghozali, 2021).

THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEPTION OF OIL PALM FARMING PROFESSION AND INCOME ON THE INTEREST OF GENERATION Z IN BECOMING FARMERS IN TANJUNG JATI VILLAGE, BINJAI DISTRICT, LANGKAT REGENCY

Cintia Dwi Andita et al

RESEARCH RESULT

CLASSICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Normality

The normality test aims to determine whether the residual data in the regression model is normally distributed or not. The test is conducted using the *One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (KS)* method on *unstandardized residuals*, with the following criteria: data is said to be normally distributed if the Sig value is > 0.05.

Table 1. Normality Test Results

Information		Unstandardized Residual
N		93
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Standard Deviation	5.24513569
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.085
	Positive	.060
	Negative	-.085
Test Statistics		.085
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.092 ^c

Based on Table 1, the results of the normality test show that the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value obtained is 0.092. This value is greater than 0.05 ($0.092 > 0.05$), so it can be concluded that the residual data is normally distributed. Thus, the normality assumption is met and multiple linear regression analysis can be performed. These results support the feasibility of the data obtained from 93 Generation Z respondents in Tanjung Jati Village as material for inferential statistical analysis.

Multicollinearity

A multicollinearity test was conducted to determine whether there was a strong relationship between the independent variables in the regression model, namely farmers' professional perceptions (X_1) and oil palm farming income (X_2). A good regression model should not experience multicollinearity. The assessment criteria used tolerance and VIF values, where multicollinearity does not occur if the tolerance value is > 0.10 and $VIF < 10$.

Table 2. Multicollinearity Test Results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-1.237	4,556		-.272	.787		
	Perception	.590	.179	.378	3,286	.001	.514	1,947
	Income	.442	.170	.299	2,605	.011	.514	1,947

Based on Table 2, the Tolerance value for the professional perception (X_1) and farm income (X_2) variables is 0.514, greater than 0.10. In addition, the VIF value for both variables is 1.947, less than 10. These results indicate that the regression model does not experience multicollinearity symptoms. Although the two variables have a fairly strong relationship with a correlation coefficient of 0.697, the VIF value is still far below the maximum limit indicating that professional perception and farm income are still suitable for use together in multiple linear regression analysis. Thus, there is no problem of multicollinearity in this research model.

Heteroscedasticity

The heteroscedasticity test is performed to determine whether the variance of residuals from one observation to another is homogeneous (homokedasticity). A good regression model is free from heteroscedasticity. This test is performed through a scatterplot analysis between the Studentized Residual (SRESID) and the Standardized Predicted Value (ZPRED).

THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEPTION OF OIL PALM FARMING PROFESSION AND INCOME ON THE INTEREST OF GENERATION Z IN BECOMING FARMERS IN TANJUNG JATI VILLAGE, BINJAI DISTRICT, LANGKAT REGENCY

Cintia Dwi Andita et al

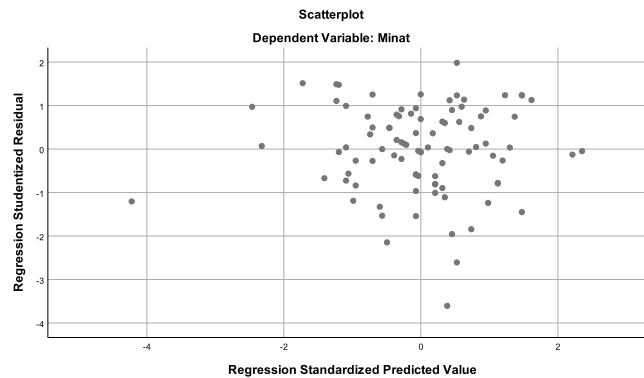


Figure 1. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Based on the Scatterplot graph in the SPSS output, it can be seen that the data points are randomly distributed above and below the 0 mark on the Y-axis and do not form a specific pattern. This indicates that there is no heteroscedasticity in the regression model, thus meeting the homoscedasticity assumption. This random pattern also confirms that the residual variation is constant for each predicted value, which is an important requirement for efficient regression coefficient estimation.

MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS

After all classical assumption tests are met, multiple linear regression analysis can be conducted to examine the perception of the farming profession (X_1) and farming income (X_2) on Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers (Y). In accordance with the established general equation, the regression model constructed is:

Table 3. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-1.237	4,556		-.272	.787		
	Perception	.590	.179	.378	3,286	.001	.514	1,947
	Income	.442	.170	.299	2,605	.011	.514	1,947

Based on Table 3, the multiple linear regression equation formed is as follows:

$$Y = -1.237 + 0.590 X_1 + 0.442 X_2$$

Information:

- Y = Interest
- X_1 = Perception
- X_2 = Income

The interpretation of the regression equation is as follows:

- a. The constant (α) = -1.237 indicates that if the variables of professional perception (X_1) and farm income (X_2) are 0, then the value of Generation Z's interest in becoming a farmer (Y) is -1.237. This value is mathematical and cannot be interpreted practically considering that no respondents have a score of zero on both variables.
- b. The Perception Coefficient of the Profession (b_1) = 0.590 indicates that every 1 unit of the perception score of the farming profession (X_1) will increase Generation Z's interest in becoming a farmer (Y) by 0.590, assuming the farm income variable (X_2) is constant. This is in line with existing perception theory, which states that a positive perception of the farming profession will encourage an increase in the interest of the younger generation in choosing that profession.
- c. The Farming Income Coefficient (b_2) = 0.442 indicates that every 1 unit increase in the farming income score (X_2) will increase Generation Z's interest in becoming a farmer (Y) by 0.442, assuming the profession perception variable (X_1) is constant. This finding is in line with the farming income theory, which states that stable income is the primary motivation for the younger generation to remain involved in the agricultural sector (Arvianti et al., 2019).

THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEPTION OF OIL PALM FARMING PROFESSION AND INCOME ON THE INTEREST OF GENERATION Z IN BECOMING FARMERS IN TANJUNG JATI VILLAGE, BINJAI DISTRICT, LANGKAT REGENCY

Cintia Dwi Andita et al

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Partial Test (t-Test)

The t-test was conducted to determine the partial influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable. The hypothesis in this study is:

H₁ : Perception of profession (X₁) has a significant influence on Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers (Y) in Tanjung Jati Village.

H₂: Income from oil palm farming (X₂) has a significant influence on Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers (Y) in Tanjung Jati Village.

Table 4. Partial Test Results (t-Test)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1.237	4,556		-.272	.787
	Perception	.590	.179	.378	3,286	.001
	Income	.442	.170	.299	2,605	.011

1. The Influence of Profession Perception (X₁) on Generation Z's Interests (Y)
Based on Table 4.10, the profession perception variable (X₁) obtained a t-value of 3.286 with a Sig. value of 0.001. Since the Sig. value of 0.001 < 0.05, H₀ is rejected and H₁ is accepted. This means that profession perception has a partial positive and significant effect on Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers in Tanjung Jati Village. The standardized Beta value of 0.378 indicates that profession perception is a variable that has a relatively greater influence on interest than farm income. These results are in line with research (Tampi et al., 2021) and support the Theory of Planned Behavior which states that a positive attitude or perception towards a profession will increase a person's interest in choosing that profession (Ajzen, 1991).
2. The Influence of Farm Income (X₂) on Generation Z's Interests (Y)
Based on Table 4.10, the farm income variable (X₂) has a t-value of 2.605 with a Sig. value of 0.011. Since the Sig. value of 0.011 < 0.05, H₀ is rejected and H₂ is accepted. This means that farm income has a partial positive and significant effect on Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers in Tanjung Jati Village. The standardized Beta value of 0.299 indicates that farm income has a positive contribution to this interest. This finding is in line with the opinion of (Arvianti et al., 2019) who stated that income is an important factor in attracting the interest of the younger generation to the agricultural sector, and is supported by the results of research (Tazkiyah, 2020) and (Rappang, 2024) which show that economic factors and income prospects influence the interest of the younger generation to work in the agricultural sector.

Simultaneous Test (F-Test)

The F test was conducted to determine whether the perception of profession (X₁) and farming income (X₂) together (simultaneously) have a significant effect on Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers (Y), as is the formulation of the third problem in this study, namely: H₃: Perception of profession (X₁) and palm oil farming income (X₂) together have a significant effect on Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers (Y) in Tanjung Jati Village. Criteria: H₃ is accepted if the Sig. value < 0.05.

Table 5. Simultaneous Test Results (F-Test)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1616,775	2	808,387	28,745	.000 ^b
	Residual	2531.053	90	28,123		
	Total	4147.828	92			

Based on the results of the F test, the calculated F value was 28.745 with a significance value of 0.000. Since the significance value of 0.000 < 0.05, H₀ is rejected and H₃ is accepted. This means that the perception of the profession (X₁) and farm income (X₂) simultaneously have a significant effect on Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers (Y) in Tanjung Jati Village. These results indicate that a positive perception of the farming

THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEPTION OF OIL PALM FARMING PROFESSION AND INCOME ON THE INTEREST OF GENERATION Z IN BECOMING FARMERS IN TANJUNG JATI VILLAGE, BINJAI DISTRICT, LANGKAT REGENCY

Cintia Dwi Andita et al

profession and high farm income can increase Generation Z's interest in working in the agricultural sector. This finding is in line with the Theory of Planned Behavior which states that interest is influenced by attitudes and perceptions of ability or feasibility in carrying out a behavior, where the perception of the profession reflects attitudes and farm income reflects perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991).

COEFFICIENT OF DETERMINATION (R²)

The coefficient of determination indicates that the dependent variable has significant variability and can be explained by the independent variable. In other words, the coefficient of determination is used to determine the extent to which the independent variable can explain the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination is determined by the R-square value, which can be seen in the following table:

Table 6. Results of the Determination Coefficient (R²)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.624 ^a	.390	.376	5,303	.390	28,745	2	90	.000

Based on Table 6, the R value of 0.624 indicates that the perception of profession (X₁) and farm income (X₂) have a fairly strong relationship with Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers (Y). The R Square (R²) value of 0.390 indicates that 39.0% of the variation in Generation Z's interest can be explained by these two variables together, while the remaining 61.0% is influenced by other factors outside the study. Meanwhile, the Adjusted R Square of 0.376 strengthens these results by considering the number of variables in the model. This finding indicates that Generation Z's interest is not only influenced by the perception of profession and farm income, but also other factors such as family support, land access, and the social environment that were not examined in this study (Ajzen, 1991).

DISCUSSION

1. The Influence of Professional Perception on Generation Z's Interests

The results of the study show that the perception of the profession (X₁) has a positive and significant effect on Generation Z's interest in becoming a farmer (Y), with a t value of 3.286 and Sig. = 0.001 (<0.05). This means that the more positive Generation Z's perception of the farming profession, the higher their interest in pursuing the profession. This positive perception is formed from the view that the farming profession has good economic prospects, is promising, and is able to provide a decent future.

These findings align with the perception theory proposed by Kotler (1991) and Robbins and Judge (Nisa et al., 2023), which states that perception is an individual's process of assessing an object based on the information and experience received. These findings are also supported by research (Tampi et al., 2021), which concluded that positive perceptions of the farming profession can increase the interest of the younger generation in entering the agricultural sector. From the perspective of the Theory of Planned Behavior, professional perception reflects *attitudes toward behavior*. Therefore, the more positive attitudes Generation Z has toward the farming profession, the greater their interest in choosing it (Ajzen, 1991).

2. The Influence of Palm Oil Farming Income on Generation Z's Interests

The results of the study showed that farm income (X₂) had a positive and significant effect on Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers (Y), with a t-value of 2.605 and Sig. = 0.011 (<0.05). This indicates that the higher the income obtained from oil palm farming, the higher Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers.

These results align with the opinion of (Fadhilah & Rochdiani, 2021), who stated that farm income is an indicator of well-being and a determining factor in the attractiveness of the agricultural sector for the younger generation. Furthermore, (Arvianti et al., 2019) explained that a stable and adequate income can encourage young people to choose agriculture as a career. This finding is also supported by research by (Tazkiyah, 2020), (Ardiansyah, 2023), and (Ardiansyah et al., 2023), which shows that income prospects are a crucial factor in increasing youth interest in continuing farming. In the Theory of Planned Behavior, farm income is related to *perceived behavioral control*, namely the belief that the farming profession can provide adequate resources and profits in the future (Ajzen, 1991).

3. The Influence of Perception of Farming Profession and Income on Generation Z's Interests

The results of the study indicate that the perception of profession (X_1) and farm income (X_2) simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers (Y), with an F value of 28.745 and Sig. = 0.000 (<0.05). The coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.390 indicates that both variables are able to explain 39.0% of the variation in Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers, while the remaining 61.0% is influenced by other factors outside the study.

These findings indicate that perceptions of profession and farm income jointly shape Generation Z's interest through socio-psychological and economic aspects (Ardiansyah et al., 2023). In the Theory of Planned Behavior, perceptions of profession represent *attitudes toward behavior*, while farm income represents *perceived behavioral control* (Ajzen, 1991). The results of this study align with the opinion (Siregar & Lubis, 2019) and research (Ardiansyah et al., 2023) which states that social perceptions and economic prospects are the main factors influencing youth interest in entering the agricultural sector. Therefore, increasing Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers needs to be done by fostering positive perceptions of the farming profession while simultaneously improving welfare through better farm income.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the perception of the farming profession has a positive and significant effect on Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers in Tanjung Jati Village. This is indicated by the calculated t value of 3.286 with a significance value of 0.001 <0.05 and a regression coefficient of 0.590. These results indicate that the more positive Generation Z's views on the farming profession, the higher their interest in working in the agricultural sector. In addition, income from oil palm farming also has a positive and significant effect on Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers. This is evidenced by the calculated t value of 2.605 and a significance value of 0.011 <0.05 and a regression coefficient of 0.442. These findings indicate that the higher the income obtained from oil palm farming, the higher Generation Z's interest in pursuing a profession as a farmer. Simultaneously, the perception of the farming profession and income from oil palm farming have a significant effect on Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers. The F test results show a calculated F value of 28.745 with a significance value of 0.000 < 0.05. In addition, the coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.390 indicates that 39% of the variation in Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers can be explained by the perception of the profession and farming income, while the remaining 61% is influenced by other factors outside the study, such as family environment, access to technology, education level, social support, and job opportunities in the non-agricultural sector. Thus, increasing Generation Z's interest in becoming farmers can be done through efforts to build a positive perception of the farming profession while increasing farming income to make it more attractive to the younger generation.

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THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEPTION OF OIL PALM FARMING PROFESSION AND INCOME ON THE INTEREST OF GENERATION Z IN BECOMING FARMERS IN TANJUNG JATI VILLAGE, BINJAI DISTRICT, LANGKAT REGENCY

Cintia Dwi Andita et al

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