The Role and Participation of Youth in Na-Oogst Tobacco Agribusiness

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Abstract. The involvement of family members of tobacco farmers in farming activities has been commonly practised in Jember Indonesia. For youths and children, doing farming activities was a matter of helping their parents and earning money from their own works. Despite the involvement of youths and children has been practiced from generation to generation in the local people, and that the practice has been perceived significant in the business, there has been no study aimed to deepen the reality of their involvement in the tobacco farming activity. Therefore, to fill this void this study aims to: (a) describe the characteristics and roles of the young generation involved in NO tobacco farming, (b) analyse the nature of transfer of knowledge and skills received by youth groups. The results of the study show: (i) youth groups began to get involved at the age of 13 years and up to 24 years, (ii) The role of the young people was primarily to handle cultivation, transportation, to warehousing, and (iii) transfer of knowledge and skills was obtained from their parents as a mentor mainly comprising of the knowledge on tobacco characteristics and the types of NO tobacco based on the planting time.

1. Introduction
Regeneration of agricultural human resource has become a strategic issue for decades because of stagnant and problematic implementation of human resource development for young people. Many young people are now considered less interested in the agriculture sector and more interested in non-agricultural jobs. This condition also occurs in tobacco farming.

Based on the results of Agricultural Census in 2003, the number of smallholders (families of farmers who control land less than 0.5 ha) was around 31.17 million. The census in 2013 depicted a significant decrease on the number of smallholders by 26.13 million. The data revealed that there was a depreciation of 5.04 million smallholders who were generally food crop farmers\(^1\).

In addition to the decrease in smallholder number, the majority of farmers that has been identified based on their age is in category of old farmers with over 45 years\(^1\). The data were based on the Agricultural Cencus carried out in 2013. It indicates a fright on the continuation of the agricultural business particularly in No Tobacco. Moreover, an overview of the data obtained from the last two or three decades indicates that most of farmers are those who have done their agricultural business or jobs for a long time.

Considering the above reality, regeneration of agricultural human resource is then becoming crucial to anticipate dramatic decrease on agricultural development in near future. In doing so, young generation has to be prepared intensively in order to be able to continue what is done by senior farming actors. Preparing young generation to continue farming business means preparing them to continue the process of agricultural production, to maintain the sustainability of food availability, and
to improve the quality and quantity for long-term agricultural sustainability. With competent youth human resources, it is expected that many farming problems and deficiencies in Indonesia be overcome. Therefore, revitalizing the role of young farmers is necessary to promote successful regeneration.

Revitalizing the role of young farmers requires comprehensive preparation in order to make them ready for doing the tasks with relevant qualification and expertise. Successful preparation will result in readiness of young people to take over the business simultaneously. Gaining the relevant qualifications and competencies will determine their success in doing the tasks and in turn will contribute to productivity, adaptability and sustainability of farming. When young generation could fulfill their strategic roles in the local farming, they could contribute more significantly to the improvement of competitiveness of the national tobacco business.

An important point to assert is that the youths have a strategic role to handle complications and to solve problems on tobacco agribusiness both in the local and national levels. Therefore, the purpose of this research is: (a) to describe the characteristics of young people involved in the farming of NO Tobacco, (b) to identify the roles performed by young people in tobacco agribusiness activities, and (c) to analyse the nature of knowledge transfer from their parents or from the older farmers to the young farmers.

2. Research methods
The research used a qualitative descriptive approach. Prior to the study, library research was done to identify relevant sources and documents, to analyse them against the research problem, and to underpin the next data collection. The whole research was intended to reveal the characteristics, perceptions and roles of youths in carrying out farming of NO tobacco agribusiness. The data were collected by using in-depth interviews with youth groups and the members of farmer groups actively involved in agribusiness activities of NO Tobacco. The participants were selected by using purposive sampling where the reason for selecting them was on the basis of tobacco cultivation timeline and the roles of the participants in the farmer groups. The study was mostly done in the locations of agribusiness activity comprising of three sub-districts, namely Wuluhan, Ambulu, and Balung which are located in Jember, Indonesia.

3. Results and discussion
3.1. Characteristics of the rural youths in No Tobacco Agribusiness
Referring to the English Dictionary [2] the word “youth” is understood as a time when childhood has not yet matured. In Indonesia, common understanding on the word “youth” is to address those in the age of 5 to 30 Years. It covers children (approximately from 5 to 10 years old), teenager (approximately from 11 to 15 years old), and adult (approximately from 16 to 29 years old). According to the United Nations (UN) the criteria of young people are those in the age of between 15 years and 24 years. On the other hand, the word “youth”, according to the Government Regulations No 40 year 2009, is as a group of people aged from 16 to 30 years. Therefore, based on this terminology review, young people are those who can be categorized in the age between 15 and 30 years. In this case, the youth researched in this study can be categorised into those who are married and those who are unmarried. Either married or unmarried, they can be divided into two, those who are living with parents and those who are living with their main family independently. Overall, 55 % of young people are living in the villages and rural areas, while 45% are in urban areas [3].

The rural youths in NO Tobacco agribusiness were those categorised into the middle age groups (from 18 to 20 years old), male, and having low formal education. In reality, the number of male youths was more than female. In social life, people in common believe that females with the age reaching out their 15th have entered for the period of marriage and building a family [4].

A research on 251 young people in East Java shows that the majority of the population has low level of formal education (40.6 %), while the rest of it (29.1%) is categorized having high education. Nearly half of the population gained their primary education [3 and 5]. However, youth participation is quite high in non-formal education, especially the participation on religion-based education located in
Langgar (a little mosque) and pesantren (Islamic school) [3]. In contrast, the participation of rural youths in any technical trainings and extensions such as those related to agriculture or agribusiness farming was minimum as found in [6].

Based on the data obtained in this study, young people who are still unemployment and had not started farming works are quite large (40%) in which there are 4 unemployment in every 10 youths. While the percentage of those who had started their agribusiness activities to support their parents or those who worked in other fields independently was 60% with equal ratio between the unemployment and employment.

Especially in No Tobacco agribusiness, the young groups who were involved in the farming activities utilized small land plots. The width of cultivated land was generally around 0.1 ha per person which was owned by their parents. Some of them whose parents had not have any land usually make use of rented lands. From the overall observations, the number of young people who run the farming independently was 10% meaning that there was 1 out of 10 young people who did an independent farming. In general, most of young groups above had initiated partnership with related institutions or companies.

When compared to the older or senior farmer groups at the age of 40 years and over, the youth groups were more optimistic in viewing their business. For example, within some extreme weather constraints or natural disasters which frequently occurred, they saw difficulty as a necessary risk and even a stage to reach successful business. Moreover, they were open minded and eager to learn new knowledge and technology.

3.2. The role of youths in No Tobacco Agribusiness

Based on the data, the involvement of young groups in agribusiness farming was perceived as a positive indicator for the success of the ongoing agricultural regeneration. In NO Tobacco agribusiness farming, young groups were actively participating in the entire chains of NO tobacco production and marketing.

However, the involvement of youth groups in tobacco agribusiness might not automatically represent a reality that tobacco farming is desired business. Overall, the youth groups working in tobacco agribusiness still saw these business activities as a common work having no significant impact on the individual and family pride. Likewise, such business was perceived as an ordinary profession with uncertain profit or income and therefore was doubted to give prosperity for long term welfare. Whereas, in fact when the business is well managed and developed, profits will be obtained.

The perspectives identified above is consistent with previous research which found that local people tend to perceive that agricultural work is identical with antiquity and something traditional, it is prideless or does not offer a high level of life style, but gets the people struggled with slums, and more importantly, it is not promising for family welfare [3 and 7]. Perceptions of farming are also associated with underdevelopment, ignorance and poverty. Other researchers explain that such perception arises as a result of agricultural work done by parents who are considered outdated and less profitable.

The youth groups believed that tobacco is an important commodity of agribusiness in Jember and is one of the world needs. The youths believed that working on tobacco is important because it is needed by the local and world markets. As stated in[8] although young people are not interested in agriculture, the majority of them agreed that agriculture is important for human life and have direct relationship with human welfare. By recognising the prominence of agriculture, they will have the opportunity to motivate themselves and others and possibly have great desire to improve their practical abilities to develop the fields.

Furthermore, the data demonstrated that youth groups had a high ethos when working on their farms. This condition can be seen from their technical capabilities in handling the business and their knowledge and attitudes towards business practices which are appropriate with good agricultural recommendations. The youths who cultivated NO Tobaco understood and accepted the principles of modern and technology-enhanced business, however they were less able to implement the principles in their business due to the rooted habit of traditional management. In the marketing of NO Tobacco production, the role of marketing is commonly left to belandang (a broker or middleman) and only a small portion of the production is marketed through partnership programs with companies.
In addition, the role of younger generation who worked for their parents was very limited which might influence their professional development. They carried out most of the technical activities such as post-picking cultivation and cultivation in the warehouse. In doing these, they worked under the supervision of their parents or other senior farmers appointed by their parents in carrying out farming activities. While the entire farm activities from land processing, planting, maintenance, and pest control were carried out together with parents. Cultivation technical activities were under the control of parental supervision. Likewise in post picking management, the interaction of marketing with collecting traders and some other activities on warehouse delivery were carried out by the young farmers under the supervision of parents.

The role of youths in marketing was relatively low. Most of agribusiness production produced by independent youth groups were generally absorbed by middleman. The youth groups which had partnership program set out the marketing of their products collaboratively with the farmer groups or associations. However, related to this there had not been significant role of youth groups in the determination of product quality and price.

3.3. Transfer of knowledge and skills

In NO or other types of tobacco farming activities, the community generally considered that the role of youths in managing farming had not been optimally implemented. This was associated with the minor roles the youths had performed. As a result, their professional development was generally influenced by or constrained with the role of supporting their parents to perform some technical activities based on the strict supervisions carried out by their parents.

In practice, transfer of knowledge from parents, senior or older farmers to the youths had been done informally. Older farmers demonstrated their ability in genuine farming situations while the youths saw, listened to, tried out, and did the works as the example given. Through daily farming activities, the youths had learned and developed their ability to handle technical works such as cultivation, post picking, and marketing. This knowledge transfer is categorized into traditional ways where the advancement of technology has not been involved.

In that ways, there were some psychological indicators of learning in NO tobacco knowledge transfer from parents to the youths. The indicators were characterised with technical and attitudinal changes which include:

- changes in performance as the result of live experiences of farming. The experiences improved knowledge and skills which in turn influenced new performance.
- changes in skills and knowledge where the learning outcomes could be true or false, but in principle, there were development of ability to manage NO tobacco farming as a result of the learning process.
- changes in behaviour affected by the interplays occurred between new knowledge, skills and feelings or perceptions when they were engaged in the society and other farming actors.
- Continuity of learning might result in particular skills and unique model of NO tobacco farming that will be practiced in the future.

Thus the learning activities experienced by the youths in NO tobacco farming process is characterised with: changes in performance, ability (knowledge, skills and feelings), behaviour, active efforts, realized or not, and as knowledge transfer with right or wrong results. Conceptually, the technical ability of youths in tobacco farming could be used to overcome problems faced in the field. The learning process experienced by the youths can be schematically described as follows.
Based on the observation above, the learning process occurred lively and genuinely in the fields, while the majority of young people decided not to continue NO tobacco farming as their profession in the future. Some of the young people desired to work as traders or entrepreneurs and tended to feel comfortable with non-cultivation working situations.

**Figure 1.** Learning process of the youths in NO tobacco farming

4. Conclusion
As presented in this paper, it can be concluded with regards to the research purpose that the youth groups in the three sub districts began to get involved in NO tobacco agribusiness at the age of 13 years up to 24 years with the background of farmer parents. Another reality from the data analysed in this study relates to the role of the young generation which was majorly in the agribusiness chains of cultivation, transportation, and warehousing. Furthermore, concerning with the knowledge and skills transfer of No tobacco farming, parents played an important role as mentors who informally taught the youths about the characteristics of tobacco and the types of NO tobacco based on planting time.

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