

RICE FARMING IN THE LENS OF THE MILLENNIALS

Bonilla, June Ann Adrienne T.
Capiloyan, Cleonante A.
Gomito, Candice Louise B.
Jaron, Anne R.
Locario, Jannine Anne L.
Tajale, Mark Anthony J.

University of Southeastern Philippines College of Development Management Graduate Program
Mintal Campus, Davao City

ABSTRACT

The study aims to analyze the factors that affect the millennial's interest in rice farming. This includes their insights, financial goals, career paths, standards set by society, and the availability of resources as well as to sustain their well-being. As Filipino rice farmers are aging, the problem of the diminishing number of young farmers is rising.

This study is a quantitative research method that involves one hundred fifty (150) respondents within the Davao Region, Philippines. It utilizes Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) that identifies the four pivotal factors namely Financial and Career Growth Security, Resources and Sustainability, Sensitivity in Farming, and Intrapersonal Perspective that unravel the complexities of the factors affecting Rice Farming in the lens of millennials. Findings reveal the financial issues that seeking high-income earning jobs and career advancement are the top reasons the millennials choose fields other than rice farming while difficulty in acquiring resources, the perceived idea that farming is an old-fashioned profession, and the search for social and development growth come next. The study emphasizes the actors not only influenced millennials' choices but also contributed to a broader societal shift towards a more sustainable and socially conscious farming practice

Keywords:

Rice Farming, Millennials, Aging, Aspirations, Filipino Rice Farmers, Young Farmers

INTRODUCTION

Growing rice or rice farming is not just as important to Filipinos as growing staple food, for as many work in rice fields for a living, it is also their culture and way of life. Receiving plenty of rainfall year-long and having a warmer climate makes the Philippines an ideal place for growing this crop. However, the country is facing problems such as the rate at which rice is grown, making the Philippines a country that is heavily dependent on rice importation. Rice farming cannot keep up with the ever-growing population of the Philippines. One of the observed reasons for this problem is that the interest of the younger generation or the Millennials in farming is dying down. The Filipino Farmers are aging. The problem of the diminishing number of young farmers is quite worrying because this condition might result in a shortage of food production including rice. This problem is not just in the Philippines but in other rice-producing countries as well.

Indonesia's farming sector status quo is that currently, the majority of farmers in Indonesia are 50 years old or older. Out of 33,4 million farmers, 91% are 50-60 years of age and only 9% are 19-39 years old despite a stratospheric demand for primary needs [2]. One of the problems in the agricultural sector is that the number of farmers continues to decline and the reduction occurs within the young farmers group [3]. Yodfiatfinda, 2020 conducted a study on the effort to improve the interest of the young generation in the agricultural sector to attain food security in Indonesia and showed that the problem is not only the number of farm workers but also the shift in the age group of farmers to become older [10]. The percentage of elderly farmers relates to low levels of education and the ability to apply technology or create new technological innovations.

IJETRM

International Journal of Engineering Technology Research & Management

www.ijetrm.com

In the Philippines, a study that involved farmers in three provinces— namely Agusan del Norte for Mindanao, Iloilo for the Visayas, and Isabela for Luzon said that the majority of the farmers did not want their children to be rice farmers. Most of them aspired to their children's college education because they want them to work in non-farming jobs in urban areas or abroad. Logistic regression showed that the age and number of children of farmers increase the likelihood that a farmer aspires for at least one of his or her children to be rice farmers. On the other hand, gender, tenure, and economic status of the province decrease that likelihood. The physical and economic hardships experienced in rice farming are the major reasons farmers do not want their children to follow their steps [6].

Millennials are the generation where the introduction of fast innovation of technology occurs. The millennials were the first generation to experience the transition from the remnant of the post-World War era into the digital world. Advancements in technology and the rise of the internet have directly affected how millennials live their everyday lives [1]. The present agriculture practices were way too far from the last generation as the evolution of technology was introduced to agriculture. The effectiveness and continuing practice of productive agriculture may be questioned as to how the millennials as the next generation to continue agriculture what the baby boomers started together with the innovation of technology. The millennial generation has prominent characteristics as dynamic, optimistic, and forward-thinking individuals that lead to better efforts and wider access to technology implementation in improving agricultural production performance (Novisma & Iskandar, 2022). But let it be known that some factors affect the interest of the millennials to be involved in agriculture. In Indonesia, the low interest of young generations in agricultural activities is caused by the less knowledge of technical and experience of agricultural activities. Decreased millennial generation's interest in the agricultural sector is also caused by the tendency to choose another sector either in the village or around the town region [4].

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study is to determine the dimensions of rice farming in the lens of the millennials. Further, this study aims to contribute valuable insights into understanding the millennials' views to help propose policy recommendations that will enhance their involvement in the future of the rice industry or the agriculture sector in general.

METHODOLOGY

Exploratory factor analysis was utilized in the study. A survey of 150 sample respondents of millennials aged 27 to 43 from descendants of rice farmers living in Region XI was conducted. The study tool used to collect data was a questionnaire evaluated properly by the examiners for content validity. The perspective of the millennials on rice farming was determined using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The strength of partial correlations between variables was examined using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy. The correlation matrix's identity as a matrix was tested using Bartlett's test of sphericity. The perspective of the millennials on rice farming was graphically depicted using a scree plot to show the number of factors to retain in the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The millennials, as the pioneering generation who experienced the evolution of technology, could have a great impact on modern agriculture. Up to this date, many elderly farmers still practice traditional farming even though they have been introduced to modern technology from land preparation, cultivation, and harvesting. Millennials are the technology generation; they are the ones to implement and perform what modern agriculture has to offer. The millennial's involvement and interest in agriculture must be monitored and encouraged to improve and enhance agricultural practices. This research random respondent's age ranges from 27 to 43 years old.

KMO and Bartlett's Test: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Measure of Sampling Adequacy are shown below. It is believed to have a good relationship between samples by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Score of 0.795. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity comes up with a value of 1590.369 and a level of significance that is less than the value of .001.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.795
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approximate Chi-Square	1590.369
	df	435
	Sig.	.000

Scree Plot: Figure 1 below shows the graph comparison between the Eigenvalues and the components illustrating the importance of each component. An ideal pattern of steep curve, followed by a bend and a straight line is observed in the scree plot. This scree plot shows that the eigenvalues start to form a straight line after the seventeenth component. Therefore, the remaining components account for a very small proportion of the variability (close to zero) and are probably unimportant. The number of factors before the curve flattens represents the significant number of factors to be extracted from the analysis and are discussed in the component matrix.

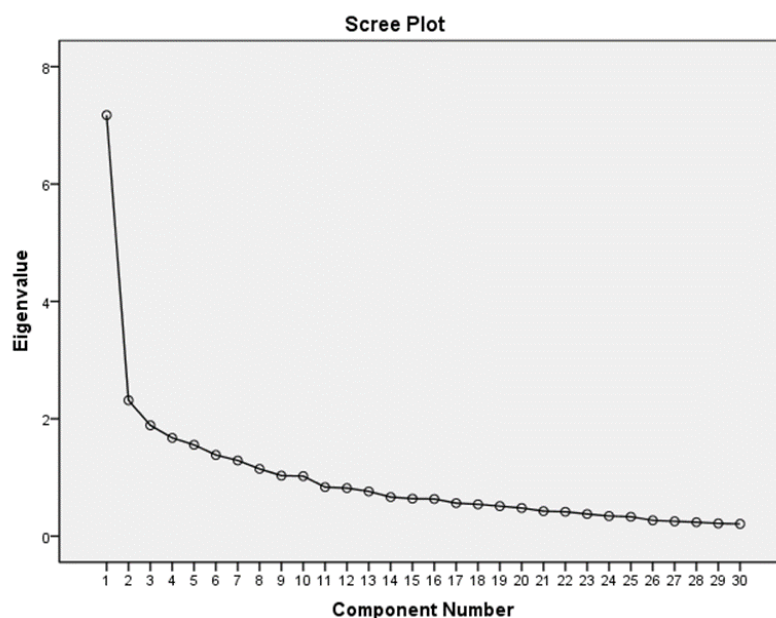


Figure 1. Scree Plot

Component Matrix

Table 1 shows items 8,12, 11, 7, 6, 1, 9, 13, and 12 that financial and career growth are being seriously concerned and set as priorities by the millennials in the present day. As to the aspect of financial security, millennials tend to have financial issues such as debts, loans, and acquiring property which is why they seek high-income earning jobs to ensure and sustain the level of well-being they aspire to. For farming activities, the millennials feel they need to be more secure, they do not consider it as a career path, they do not see it as their future, it does not generate passive income, and they rather choose to be involved in corporate settings. As to career growth, millennials nowadays seek to pursue career advancement equipped with a high level of education as a tool, so they can have more opportunities to be qualified for high-paying jobs. There are some reasons why young people tend to look for urban work because they have better educational background so that they have a good opportunity to get good jobs with higher salaries, there are difficulties in accessing agricultural inputs, and working in farming sector is mentally and physically challenging [8].

Table 1: Rotated Component Matrix with Grouped Attributes Related to Financial and Career Growth Security Factors of the Millennial's point of view in rice farming.

Factor	Attributes	Loadings
Financial and Career Growth Security	Item 8 – Farming is an uncomfortable job.	0.692
	Item 12 – Farming does not generate passive income.	0.661
	Item 11 – Working on a farm can lead to quick aging.	0.647
	Item 7 – I do not feel secure in farming.	0.642
	Item 6 – I don't have any knowledge of farming.	0.631
	Item 1 – I do not see a future for myself in farming.	0.610
	Item 9 – Farming is not my dream career path.	0.553
	Item 13 – Engaging in farming can develop severe illnesses and negatively impact one's physical health.	0.550
	Item 2 – I prefer working in a corporate setting than in farming.	0.507

Table 2 shows items 20, 19, 30, 21, and 24 that terms of acquiring resources to jump-start a farming business is quite challenging, especially these days when maintaining land costs more due to climate change and the lack of support from our government discourages our millennials from pursuing farming especially today when crops are bought cheaply by business owners and then sold expensively to the masses. In addition, access to fertile lands is limited, and farm activity is based on the season which affects the productivity of the crops. This condition was caused by the narrowing land, unfavorable market prices, lack of support from the government, import activities that harm small farmers, and policies that are not oriented toward farmers [5].

Table 2: Rotated Component Matrix with Grouped Attributes Related to Resources and Sustainability Factors of the Millennial's point of view in rice farming.

Factor	Attributes	Loadings
Resources and Sustainability	Item 20 – Access to fertile lands is limited.	0.639
	Item 30 – Rice farming is a low-paying career.	0.627
	Item 21 – Many farmers have reported experiencing a lack of support from the government.	0.556
	Item 24 – Farm work is seasonal, which means that income fluctuates accordingly.	0.556

Table 3 shows items 29 and 14 that being a farmer tends to receive less attraction from the public compared to other professions especially today when most of the youth has received more advanced education compared to the past eras. As technologies are fast evolving, the trend of online jobs and entertainment attracts and influences the millennials as these jobs generate high income. One of the reasons millennials shy away from farming comes from its perceived disconnect from technology. Since this generation is the first “digital generation,” they often look for careers that integrate technology [9].

Table 3: Rotated Component Matrix with Grouped Attributes Related to Intrapersonal Perspective Factors of the Millennial's point of view in rice farming.

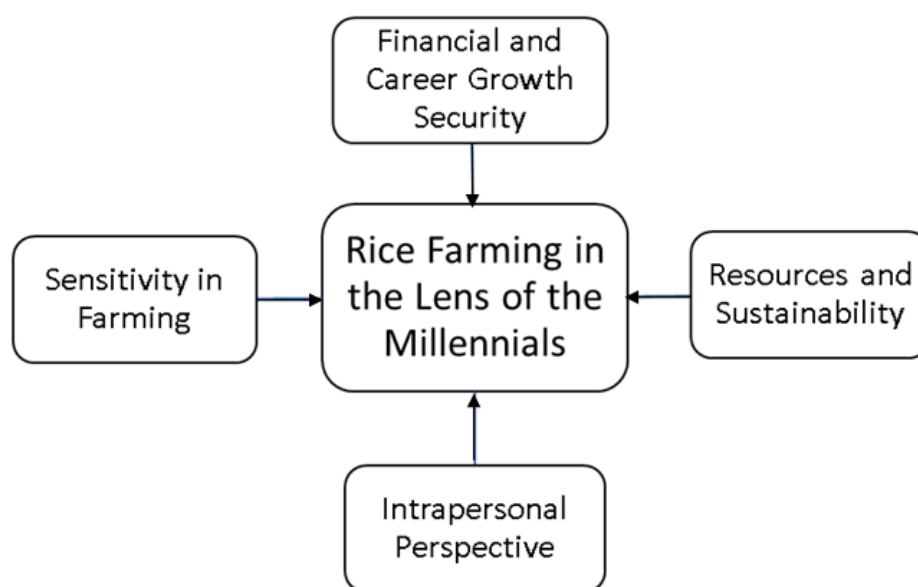
Factor	Attributes	Loadings
Intrapersonal Perspective	Item 29 – I prefer to gain knowledge and skills in areas other than agriculture.	0.709
	Item 14 – Farming is considered an old-fashioned profession.	0.706

Table 4 shows items 5 and 15 that the agricultural sector has not been prioritizing what the youth perceive to be a future profession because other jobs ensure good pay with good benefits plus they receive more affection and respect from the public's eye, unlike in farming, farmers tend to be collaborated with being poor, jobless, and untidy. This poor condition of the agricultural workers is indicative that the agriculture sector, despite its national economic contribution, has not been an effective engine of social growth and human development [7].

Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix with Grouped Attributes Related to Sensitivity in Farming Factors of the Millennial's point of view in rice farming.

Factor	Attributes	Loadings
Sensitivity In Farming	Item 5 –I am looking for well-paying employment opportunities.	0.583
	Item 15 – The farming industry is known to be susceptible to discrimination	0.508

Study Framework



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researchers would like to acknowledge those people who have contributed to the completion of this research. To Dr. Gaudencio G. Abellanosa, our professor in RM 201, for his guidance, and support and for sharing his expertise in the process of research. The researchers are also grateful to the participants, our respondents who generously shared their time and insights by carefully answering our questionnaires. Their input has been invaluable in the success of this research

CONCLUSION

In conclusion with study, it had shed light on a prevailing trend among millennials- prioritizing high-paying jobs over traditional occupations like rice farming. The findings underscore the evolving aspirations of this demographic that are driven by economic considerations and a desire for the financial stability of millennials. It highlighted the challenges faced by traditional agricultural practices, specifically here in the Philippines. The study effectuated reflection on the broader societal implications of such choices, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach that considers economic realities without overlooking the importance of sustaining traditional livelihoods and rural economies. As traditional rice farming became at risk, more millennials were driven away from it, thus they opted to choose paths where they could easily earn money like working in factories, companies and even working abroad. As millennials navigate their career paths, understanding these dynamics becomes crucial for policymakers and stakeholders alike to foster a harmonious coexistence between modern career pursuits and the preservation of cultural and agricultural heritage here in our country.

The study showed four (4) factors that affect Rice Farming in the Lens of the Millennials. The four factors include: Financial and Career Growth Security, Resources and Sustainability, Sensitivity in farming, and Intrapersonal Perspective. The study delves into the intricate intensity surrounding the engagement of millennials in rice farming. Resources and Sustainability emerged as one of the critical determinants in the choices millennials have to choose from and attributed greatly as shown in Table 2. The intrapersonal perspective, on the other hand, discussed more the millennial's motivations, values, and attitudes, thus emerging as an integral component in understanding the evolving field of rice farming within the millennial demographic. Lastly, Table 4 showed Sensitivity in Farming dealt with the millennial generation's sensitivity towards adopting more well-paying opportunities and the country's farming industry's discrimination. These factors not only influenced millennials' choices but also contributed to a broader societal shift towards a more sustainable and socially conscious farming practice.

REFERENCES

- [1] AGAMERICA blog. *Millennials: The Future of Farming*. 2018
- [2] Aria. *Young Generation Need to Rice Up*. 2022
- [3] Lovitasari et al.. *Perception of Young Generations' Interest in Farming in Tanah Lot Tourism Area (The Case of Subak Gadon III, Tabanan)*. 2017
- [4] Lukman Effendy* , Nawangwulan Widyaastuti, Hana Lastri. *The Millennial Farmers' Interest in Succeeding the Family Agriculture for Hydroponic Application in Garut District, West Java Indonesia*. 2022
- [5] Novisma and Iskandar. *The study of millennial farmers' behavior in agricultural production*. 2022
- [6] Palis, Florencia G.. *Aging Filipino Rice Farmers and their Aspirations for Their Children*. 2020
- [7] Sharie Al-Faiha Lubang.. *Towards Liberation From Debts of Filipino Farmers*. 2019
- [8] Sujarwo1, Dian Islami P1, Yusri Fajar2, Edlyn Khurotul Aini3, Anisa Aprilia1, Putri Budi Setyowati1, Fitrotul Laili. *Indonesian Millennial Generations Dillema in Working on Agriculture Sector*. 2022
- [9] Wes Gay. *The World's Oldest Profession Needs Millennials For The Future*. 2017
- [10] Yodfiatfinda. *Effort to Improve the Interests of Young Generations in the Agricultural Sector to Attain Food Security in Indonesia*. 2020