

Rural youth and the future of entrepreneurship: Insights from Jambi Province's millennials

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DOI: 10.22437/ppd.v11i2.15547	Received: 22.11.2021	Revised: 09.05.2022	Accepted: 20.03.2023	Published: 30.06.2023
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Abstract

This study aims to examine the entrepreneurial intentions and characteristics of the millennial generation in rural areas of Jambi Province and to identify the factors influencing these intentions. Data were collected through a survey of millennials in rural Jambi and were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools and the Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) approach. The key variables evaluated were individual characteristics, attitudinal factors, and contextual factors. The findings indicate that the entrepreneurial interest of millennials in rural Jambi is relatively high, signaling a promising potential for the emergence of young entrepreneurs in the future. The surveyed millennials' attitudinal and contextual factors directly influence this entrepreneurial interest. While individual characteristics do not directly impact entrepreneurial intentions, they exert an indirect influence mediated by attitudinal and contextual factors.

Keywords: *Attitudinal factors, Contextual factors, Entrepreneurial intentions, Millennial generation, Rural Jambi Province*

JEL Classification: J24, L26, O15

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is crucial for the economy and economic growth (Khyareh & Amini, 2021; Munyo & Veiga, 2022; Vatavu et al., 2022). It can enhance productivity, stimulate innovation (Alerasoul et al., 2022), address poverty, create job opportunities (Alharbi, 2020; Dong et al., 2021), and generate wealth (Forje, 2022; Uchehara, 2019). Entrepreneurship can also catalyze new products and services, reshaping or disrupting markets and enhancing competition and efficiency. Furthermore, it can promote social change (Bansal et al., 2019; Mia et al., 2022) and bolster other sectors of the economy.

One indicator of a nation's progress is the prevalence of entrepreneurs within its borders (Neumann, 2021; Vatavu et al., 2022). According to the 2018 Global Entrepreneurship Index (EGI), the average entrepreneurship index in developed countries stands at 14 percent. In contrast, Indonesia's entrepreneurship index is only 3.1 percent, lagging behind other ASEAN countries such as Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines (Liputan6.com, 2019).

To boost national competitiveness and expand job opportunities, it is essential to encourage and nurture the entrepreneurial spirit among the Indonesian workforce. The workforce in Indonesia needs to be empowered not merely as job seekers but to be

ready and capable of becoming job creators. This shift is vital given the current high global competition job seekers face. In this context, fostering an entrepreneurial mindset emerges as one alternative to increasing job opportunities.

This endeavor to enhance the entrepreneurial intent of the workforce is especially aimed at the younger generation (youth). Therefore, as stipulated in Law Number 40 of 2009 on Youth in Article 27, the government asserts that youth entrepreneurship aims to develop their skills potential and entrepreneurial independence.

Given this background, it is crucial to conduct a study on the entrepreneurial intentions of the youth to formulate policies that accurately target the enhancement of the number of entrepreneurs. In the youth/young generation context, this study is particularly relevant for millennials born between 1982 and 2000. This is because this generation currently dominates and is entering the job market. Moreover, according to the 2020 Population Census, millennials constitute more than a quarter (25.87 percent) of Indonesia's total population (BPS, 2021).

Entrepreneurial intention (EI) is a focal point for the foundation of future businesses (Do & Dadvari, 2017; Esfandiar et al., 2019). It is considered the most pivotal aspect of the prospective establishment of new ventures (Nguyen et al., 2019; Van Gelderen et al., 2008). Entrepreneurial intent is the primary predictor of future entrepreneurs (Amofah & Saladrighes, 2022; Farrukh et al., 2017; Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016). Due to the positive outcomes associated with entrepreneurial activities, researchers and policymakers are motivated to gain an in-depth understanding of EI (Amofah & Saladrighes, 2022; Mohan, 2022).

Both internal and external factors can influence the formation of an entrepreneurial spirit. Among these, the entrepreneurial attitude (EA) is considered one of the most significant factors affecting entrepreneurial intentions. This has been identified in various previous studies, such as Hossain et al. (2023), Mahfud et al. (2020), and Rodrigues et al. (2023). Akyol & Gurbuz (2008) identified attitude elements within the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) model. These elements encompass autonomy/authority, economic challenge, self-realization, perceived confidence, security & workload, avoidance of responsibility, and social career.

Another essential factor influencing entrepreneurial intention is the contextual factor. "Contextual Factors" refer to various environmental or situational factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions. These factors can encompass the economic environment, the entrepreneurial culture in society, access to resources, government policies, and other factors related to the context in which individuals operate. The influence of contextual factors on entrepreneurial intentions has been identified by, among others (Aloulou, 2016; Soria-Barreto et al., 2017).

Individual demographic characteristics also influence entrepreneurial intentions. Among the individual demographic characteristics are age and gender (da Costa et al., 2023; Dragin et al., 2022; Gomes et al., 2021; Pinto Borges et al., 2021; Pranić, 2023; Vankov et al., 2022). Beyond individual demographics, parents' socio-economic background (such as occupation, education, and income) can also determine entrepreneurial intentions (Huezo-Ponce & Saiz-Álvarez, 2020; Palmer et al., 2021). The family environment, especially the influence of parents on students' entrepreneurial intentions, can consequently be one of the career choices in the future (Bruton & Chen, 2022). Ambad & Damit (2016) posited that family members, especially parents, can act as role models and significantly sway entrepreneurial intentions.

This research is directed at the millennial generation in rural areas of Jambi Province, which has a proportion of millennials higher than the national average. With 68.24% of the millennial generation in Jambi residing in rural areas, this study aims to analyze the characteristics, entrepreneurial intentions, and the factors influencing them.

METHODS

The primary data used for this study consists of primary data collected from the millennial generation in rural areas of Jambi Province. The target population of this research encompasses the entire millennial generation residing in the rural areas of Jambi Province. The sample was drawn using a stratified two-stage sampling method as follows:

1. In the first stage, four sample villages were selected as research locations. These were chosen purposively, taking into consideration regional representation and population density. Based on these criteria, the research locations were Karang Berahi Village, Rantau Suli Village in Merangin District, Mendalo Darat Village, and Sekernan Village in Muaro Jambi District.
2. In the second stage, 25 millennials were chosen from each selected village. The sampling was conducted using random sampling, utilizing the RNG (Random Number Generator) software.

The data collection instrument used for the sample was a questionnaire. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools. Subsequently, to analyze the factors influencing the entrepreneurial intentions of the millennial generation, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed based on the following model framework:

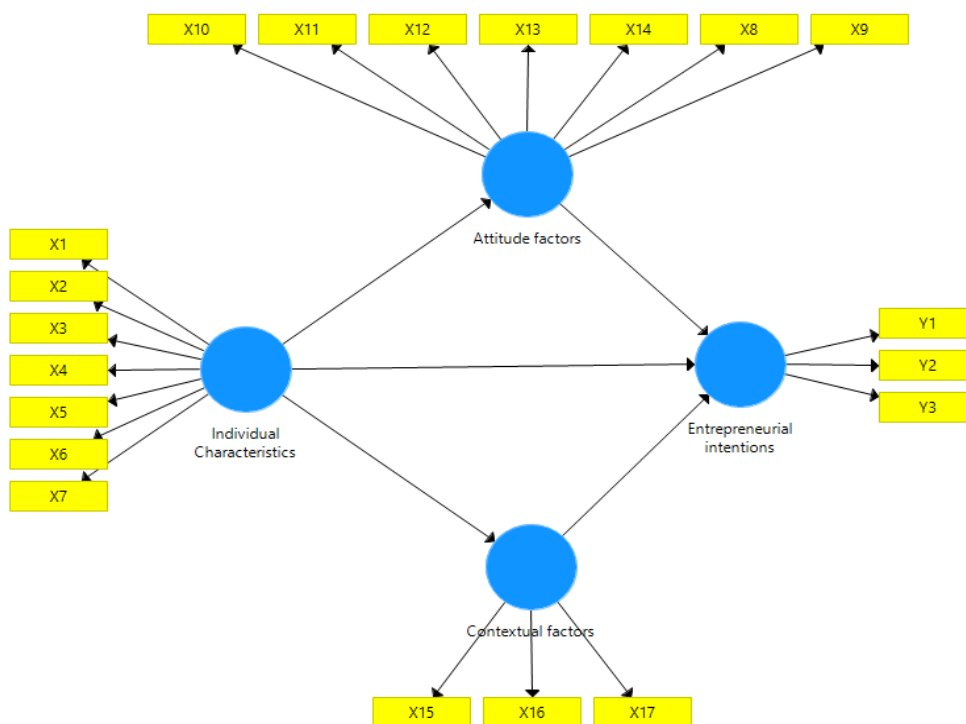


Figure 1. Model framework

The measurement and assessment of variables and indicators in the study are provided as follows:

Individual characteristics

Individual characteristics refer to the socio-demographic attributes of an individual and are comprised of:

X1 = Age, measured in years.

X2 = Gender, categorized as a dummy variable, where 1 = male and 0 = female.

X3 = Millennial's education level: 1 = Primary/not completed, 2 = Junior High, 3 = Senior High, 4 = Tertiary

- X4 = Father's education: 1 = Primary/not completed, 2 = Junior High, 3 = Senior High, 4 = Tertiary
- X5 = Mother's education: 1 = Primary/not completed, 2 = Junior High, 3 = Senior High, 4 = Tertiary
- X6 = Father's occupation: 0 = unemployed, 1 = Government employee/military/police, 2 = Private sector employee, 3 = Entrepreneur, 4 = Farmer
- X7 = Mother's occupation: 0 = unemployed, 1 = Government employee/military/police, 2 = Private sector employee, 3 = Entrepreneur, 4 = Farmer

Attitudinal factors (FS)

Attitudinal factors are measured using the TPB (Theory of Planned Behaviour) index (Akyol & Gurbuz, 2008) through seven indicators:

1. Autonomy and Authority (X5) - measured by six statements concerning decision-making power, authority, job choice autonomy, desire for self-supervision, preference for independent work, and aspiration for job freedom.
2. Economic Challenges and Opportunities (X6) - measured by seven statements related to challenging jobs, appealing jobs, motivational work environments, performance-based compensation, high earnings, jobs with better economic opportunities, and jobs realizing personal potential.
3. Job Security and Workload (X7) - assessed using five statements concerning stable, safe, fixed working hours, jobs without overtime, and stress-free occupations.
4. Avoiding Responsibility (X8) - evaluated by three statements indicating a preference for low-responsibility, non-complex, and non-committal jobs.
5. Participation and Self-realization (X9) - gauged through four statements about creativity, structured jobs, and comprehensive involvement in all job processes.
6. Career and Social Environment (X10) - measured by four statements highlighting involvement in social and religious activities, organizational roles, confidence in career advancement, and expectations of career promotions.
7. Self-confidence (X11) - appraised by three statements related to belief in entrepreneurial success, capabilities for such success, and possessing entrepreneurial skills.

Contextual factors (FK)

Contextual factors are measured through three indicators:

1. Academic Support (X12) - gauged using a scale from Autio et al. (2001), which consists of four statements regarding past/current academic environments fostering entrepreneurship, freedom to present ideas, the prevalence of good entrepreneurial ideas, and infrastructure support for new ventures.
2. Social Support (X13) - measured with three items from the scale by Akyol & Gurbuz (2008) addressing family support, friends' support, and support from significant individuals.
3. Environmental Support (X14) - ascertained using a scale from Verheul et al. (2006), consisting of four statements on financial support, administrative procedure support, information support, and economic condition/climate support.

Entrepreneurial intentions

The entrepreneurial intention variable is measured with three indicators, each having one question adopted from Gerry et al. (2008):

1. Intention to choose an entrepreneurial career after completing past/current education (Y1)
2. Preferring entrepreneurship over employment (Y2)
3. Anticipation of starting a business within the next 1 to 3 years (Y3).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Entrepreneurial attitudes of rural millennials

In general, it can be posited that the entrepreneurial attitudes of rural millennials are relatively positive. This is evident as all indicators have scores above 3.00 (Table 1). The indicator with the highest average score pertains to economic challenges and opportunities, while the one with the lowest score relates to avoiding responsibility.

Further analyzing sub-indicators, the highest score is attributed to the sub-indicator, which desires a job without demanding commitments (under the economic challenges and opportunities indicator). Conversely, the lowest score is found in the sub-indicator that seeks a job without requiring commitments (under the avoidance of responsibility indicator).

Table 1. Attitudinal scores of rural millennials towards entrepreneurship in Jambi Province, 2021

No	Statement	Average
Autonomy and authority		3.97
1	I possess the power to make decisions	3.96
2	I have authority/control	3.81
3	I can choose my job	4.10
4	I aspire to be my boss	4.08
5	I want an independent job	4.01
6	I desire a job that offers freedom	3.84
Economic challenges and opportunities		4.00
7	I seek challenging work	3.47
8	I desire interesting work	3.84
9	I want motivating work	4.17
10	I expect a large income	4.15
11	I choose jobs with better economic opportunities	4.28
12	I choose jobs that allow me to realize my potential	4.07
Job security and workload		3.76
13	I want a stable job	3.58
14	I desire a safe job	4.01
15	I prefer jobs with fixed working hours	3.65
16	I want a job that doesn't require overtime	3.51
17	I want a job that doesn't induce stress	4.06
Avoidance of responsibility		3.14
18	I want a job with minimal responsibilities	3.17
19	I seek uncomplicated work	3.14
20	I want a job without demanding commitments	3.11
Participation and self-realization		3.83
21	I aspire to create something	3.98
22	I want a job that leverages my creativity	4.01
23	I prefer structured and orderly work	3.77
24	I enjoy jobs that involve me in the entire process	3.56
Career and social environment		3.67
25	I like being involved in social and religious activities	3.83
26	I am a member/official of an organization	3.26
27	I believe I will progress in my future career	3.92
28	I'm confident of receiving promotions in my future career	3.66
Self-confidence		3.95
29	I believe I'll succeed if I start my own business	4.05
30	I possess the necessary capabilities for entrepreneurial success	3.85
31	I have the skills required for entrepreneurial success	3.94

Contextual factors of rural millennials for entrepreneurship

Contextual factors are measured through three indicators: academic support, social support, and environmental support. In general, it can be stated that the contextual factors of rural milenial’s for entrepreneurship are relatively good. This is evident from the values of all indicators being above 3.00 (Table 2).

Table 2. Scores of contextual factors of rural millennials for entrepreneurship in Jambi Province, 2021

No	Statement	Average
Academic Support		3.48
1	I know several individuals from my previous/current school or campus who succeeded in entrepreneurship (starting their businesses)	3.64
2	At my previous/current school or campus, individuals are actively encouraged to put forth their ideas	3.60
3	At my previous/current school or campus, I met many people with great ideas for starting a new business (entrepreneurship)	3.64
4	My previous/current school or campus provides adequate infrastructural support for establishing new businesses on-site	3.02
Social Support		3.73
5	If I decide to become an entrepreneur, my closest family will consider my decision correct	3.76
6	If I decide to become an entrepreneur, my closest friends will deem my decision appropriate	3.63
7	If I decide to become an entrepreneur, significant individuals in my life will consider my decision correct	3.80
Environmental Support		3.03
8	It's challenging for me to start my business due to a lack of financial support	3.39
9	It's difficult for me to commence a business due to complicated administrative procedures	3.04
10	It's challenging for me to gather enough information about starting a business	2.79
11	The current economic conditions/climate are not favorable for those wanting to become entrepreneurs	2.90

The indicator with the highest average score is the social support indicator, while the indicator with the lowest average score is the environmental support indicator. Furthermore, the highest value is for the sub-indicator "If I decide to become an entrepreneur, significant people in my life will consider my decision correct" (under the social support indicator). In contrast, the lowest value is for the sub-indicator "It is challenging for me to obtain adequate information on how to start a business" (under the environmental support indicator).

Entrepreneurial interest scores of rural millennials

Entrepreneurial interest, measured using three indicators, each with a single question adopted from Gerry et al. (2008), are as follows: 1. The intention to choose a career as an entrepreneur after graduation; 2. Preferring to be an entrepreneur rather than an employee; 3. Anticipating starting one's own business within the next 1-3 years. Based on Table 3, it is observed that all three indicators have relatively similar values, ranging between 3.98 and 4.11.

With an average score of 4.03 (on a scale of 1-5), it is evident that the entrepreneurial interest of the rural millennial generation is relatively high. This suggests a significant potential for the rural millennial generation to emerge as young entrepreneurs in the foreseeable future.

Table 3. Entrepreneurial interest scores of rural millennials in Jambi Province, 2020

No	Statement	Average
1	I intend to choose a career in entrepreneurship after graduation	3.98
2	I prefer being an entrepreneur over being an employee	4.01
3	I plan to start my own business within the next 1-3 years	4.11
Average		4.03

A high entrepreneurial intention among the millennial generation has been identified by Amril & Hardiani (2021), Hardiani et al. (2020), Hardiani & Hastuti (2019), and Hasanah & Nurhasikin (2019) in various research locations. These findings were also observed by Indriyani & Margunani (2019). This observation is further supported by research from Pratana & Margunani (2019), indicating that more than two-thirds (67.53%) of the millennial generation have a high entrepreneurial intention.

Entrepreneurial intention model for rural millennials

Before further analysis, an initial evaluation of the preliminary model was conducted, focusing on the validity and reliability of the indicators within its latent variables (constructs). The validity test employed both convergent and discriminant validity of the indicators, while the reliability test utilized two criteria: composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha.

Convergent validity was assessed based on the correlation between item and construct scores. An indicator is deemed convergently valid if its correlation (loading value) is ≥ 0.50 . On the other hand, the discriminant validity of an indicator was gauged by observing the average variance extracted (AVE) of each construct. An indicator is considered discriminantly valid if its AVE > 0.5 .

The reliability of a construct, measured using two criteria - composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha, should ideally exceed 0.7 for both. However, a Cronbach's alpha value up to 0.6 remains acceptable.

Based on the preliminary model test, three individual characteristic indicators (X2, X3, and X6), one attitude indicator (X11), and one contextual indicator (X14) were found to be neither valid nor reliable. These five indicators were subsequently excluded from the model. In other words, all the indicators within the revised model are now valid and reliable. The modified model is presented in Figure 2.

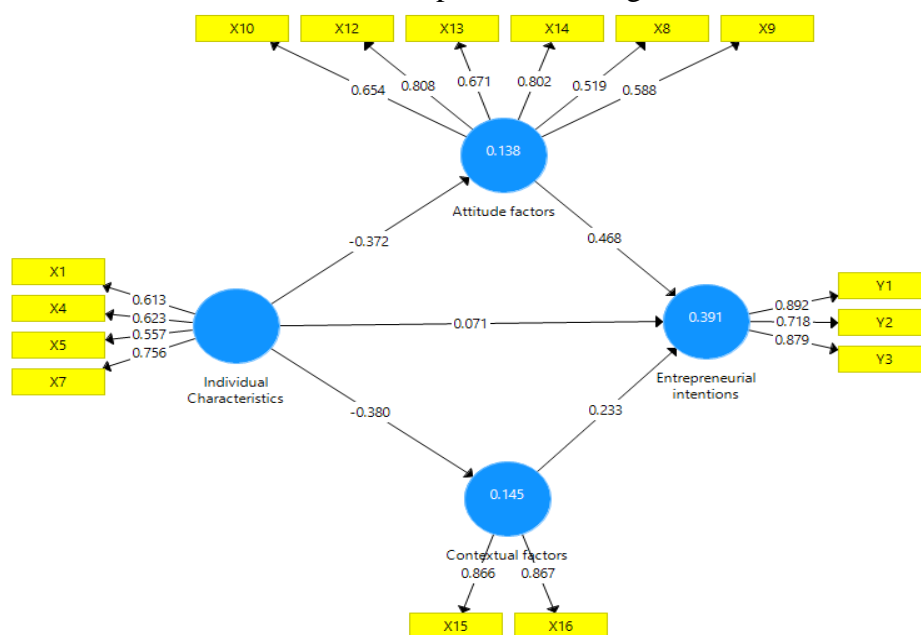


Figure 2. Modified model

Coefficients and the significance of the t-test indicate the relationship between variables. It's considered significant if the p-value is less than $\alpha = 1\%$, 5% , or 10% .

Table 4. Hypothesis testing for the modified model

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Attitude factors -> Entrepreneurial Intention	0.468	0.473	0.127	3.681	0.000
Contextual factors -> Entrepreneurial Intention	0.233	0.238	0.14	1.658	0.098
Individual Characteristics -> Attitude factors	-0.372	-0.393	0.135	2.761	0.006
Individual Characteristics -> Contextual factors	-0.38	-0.392	0.108	3.525	0.000
Individual Characteristics -> Entrepreneurial Intention	0.071	0.06	0.104	0.686	0.493

Based on Table 4, attitude factors have a significant direct influence on the entrepreneurial intention of the millennial generation. Specifically, the young generation's mindset towards entrepreneurship is already in place. This result aligns with Halberstadt et al. (2019), Bouarir et al. (2023), Tahir & Kutpudeen (2023), and Tarnanidis et al. (2019). This suggests that attitude mediates between values focused on social norms, other subjective variables, and specific behavioral and cognitive variables like motivation and actions.

It's important to note that the millennial generation is embedded within a digital ecosystem that constantly influences their decision-making processes. The connectivity offered by this digital age can amplify the effects of attitude and contextual factors on entrepreneurial intentions. Access to global markets, digital financial tools, and online educational resources can bolster an individual's confidence and capacity to venture into entrepreneurship.

Contextual factors exert a significant direct influence on rural millennial's entrepreneurial intentions. Previous studies such as Kaya (2019) and Nakku et al. (2020) also demonstrated a positive impact of perceived structural support on entrepreneurial intention. Empirical evidence from various studies indicates that academic support enhances an individual's prospects of engaging and succeeding in entrepreneurial endeavors (Liu et al., 2019; Mahendra et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the very definition of support has evolved for the millennial generation. Apart from traditional forms of support like financial backing or mentoring, digital platforms, online communities, and startup ecosystems have become vital in providing resources and networking opportunities essential for budding entrepreneurs.

Social support encourages individuals to believe that life will improve if they succeed in business, leading to more young people trying out business ventures. This association is corroborated by Mirjana et al. (2018) and Yang (2013). Relational support, the assistance an individual receives from close family and relatives (Turker & Sonmez Selcuk, 2009), can bolster confidence in entrepreneurship. The role of cultural norms and societal expectations in shaping one's attitude towards entrepreneurship also cannot be overlooked. In cultures that value innovation and individualism, entrepreneurship might be seen as a desirable career path, while others might view it as risky. Conversely, a lack of support correlates with a reduced intention to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Ben Moussa & Kerkeni, 2021). Earlier studies have

highlighted that relational support, such as that from family and friends, is pivotal in fostering entrepreneurship (Aldrich et al., 2021; Amirul et al., 2023; Khayru et al., 2021).

The third type of support in these contextual factors is environmental support, encompassing financial accessibility, intellectual and copyright provisions, and a conducive regulatory business environment. Proactive backing from the government and other institutions, including banks, can stimulate entrepreneurship (Chowdhury et al., 2019; Nguyen, 2020; Turker & Sonmez Selcuk, 2009). The broader economic and political landscape can also greatly influence entrepreneurial intentions. Stable economies and pro-business policies can foster the entrepreneurial spirit, while volatile economies might dampen it.

These findings explain that the intensity of rural milenial's entrepreneurial intentions is determined by how they perceive career-related aspects and opportunities and is profoundly influenced by contextual factors such as academic, social, and environmental support.

Individual characteristics do not directly affect entrepreneurial intention but do so indirectly through attitude and contextual factors. In other words, this data underscores that individual characteristics determine the attitude and contextual aspects of the millennial generation, which, in turn, influence their entrepreneurial intentions. Moreover, it might be worth considering how individual characteristics like gender play a role in this dynamic. Gender can significantly influence entrepreneurial intentions, and the current findings, while comprehensive, might benefit from such an exploration.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The entrepreneurial interest among the rural millennial generation in Jambi Province is notably high. This signifies the immense potential of the rural millennial generation to emerge as young entrepreneurs in the foreseeable future. The rural millennials' attitudes and contextual factors significantly influence this inclination towards entrepreneurship. On the other hand, these attitudes and contextual elements are determined by the individual characteristics of the millennial generation.

Furthermore, it's imperative to understand that the rural backdrop might offer unique challenges and opportunities for entrepreneurship. Rural areas' rich cultural and traditional values can provide novel business ideas and avenues. At the same time, the entrepreneurial spirit demonstrated by the rural millennials in Jambi Province also reflects a broader global trend where the younger generation, equipped with digital tools and global connectivity, is willing to venture into the entrepreneurial world. The findings underscore the necessity for policy interventions and educational programs tailored to harness this potential and address the specific needs of rural millennials. Integrating traditional values with modern business practices can pave the way for sustainable and locally relevant enterprises.

Recommendations

The high entrepreneurial interest should be complemented with the requisite entrepreneurial skills. Hence, it is recommended that higher education institutions, in collaboration with central and local governments, develop and enhance entrepreneurship training programs tailored to the rural millennial generation.

Additionally, considering the limitations of this study, which primarily focuses on the rural millennial generation in Jambi Province, future research should explore the

entrepreneurial intentions and driving factors in other rural areas, both within and outside of Indonesia, to ascertain the universality of the observed trends. Investigating how different sociocultural and economic contexts influence entrepreneurial intentions would be beneficial. A comparative study between rural and urban millennials' entrepreneurial inclinations might provide nuanced insights into these groups' distinct challenges and opportunities.

Moreover, technology integration in entrepreneurship training, especially for the digital-native millennial generation, could be explored in further studies. Understanding how digital tools and online platforms can be harnessed to boost entrepreneurial success in rural settings is crucial in this digital age.

Lastly, it's pertinent for researchers to delve into how various external factors, such as market access, infrastructure, and financing opportunities, affect the success rate of startups initiated by rural millennials. This would pave the way for more holistic policy recommendations and entrepreneurial training programs in the future.

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