

Original Article

Social Construction of Young Farmers in Developing Pineapple Agribusiness in Kediri Regency, East Java Province, Indonesia

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Abstract - This study uses social construction theory to (1) analyze young farmers' understanding of pineapple agribusiness development activities. (2) Analyzing the process of the social construction of young farmers in pineapple agribusiness development. (3) Analyzing the actions of young farmers in developing pineapple agribusiness according to their social construction.

This research paradigm uses the social definition paradigm based on social construction theory. This research used a qualitative approach and phenomenological research type. The research location is in Kediri Regency, Indonesia. The research informants consisted of young farmers cultivating pineapples, members or administrators of farmer groups, pineapple traders, sellers of pineapple production facilities, and other informants as needed according to the directions of the informants encountered before. The informant determination technique was carried out by snowball sampling, and the data were collected through in-depth interviews and observations. The data is analyzed through data collection, condensation, presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification.

Young farmers see pineapple agribusiness development as efforts to develop better livelihoods to address the weaknesses of their pineapple cultivation business processes that have been going on for generations. Young farmers understand that developing a pineapple agribusiness requires development for cultivation, broader marketing, and stronger institutions.

The social construction of young farmers in pineapple agribusiness development occurs through two-ways communication in the form of externalization, objectivation, and internalization. There has been externalization among young farmers in developing pineapple agribusiness since 1976. The pineapple business has been passed down from generation to generation but has developed in line as young farmers started to have two-way communication with their social environment. They realized the significance of the development of pineapple agribusiness. The intersubjective experience of young farmers in developing pineapple agribusiness is represented by the institutionalization of various activities in pineapple cultivation, marketing, processing, and supporting activities. Formal institutions and organizations are created in the form of farmer groups, combined farmer groups, Village Owned Enterprises (BUMDES), home industries, and the participation of young farmers as the main drivers of pineapple agribusiness development. The process of internalizing young farmers for these purposes is by re-absorbing other farmers' experiences. They are attached to social behavior as they must accept the reality social environment's rules, visions, goals, and expectations. Young farmers develop pineapple agribusiness by improving cultivation techniques better than their predecessors. Developmental actions that have been carried out include improving nurseries, improving pest control, and uniforming the ripening time for pineapples. They also improve plant varieties by planting varieties that are superior in producing, marketing, and processing pineapples so they can expand their social or pineapple business network.

Keywords - Social construction, Young farmers, Pineapple agribusiness.

1. Introduction

Pineapple agribusiness development requires many things, including quality young farmers. Young farmers are needed to replace old farmers and develop elements of the pineapple business. Young farmers' interest in agriculture today is influenced by their experiences or environment [1].

The construction of the minds of young farmers in farming, especially pineapples, is influenced by the experiences of the pineapple farmers they meet. Young farmers will do pineapple agribusiness if they encounter many successful experiences with senior pineapple farmers [2].



Efforts to develop pineapple agribusiness supported by young farmers require social construction understanding from young farmers. Given structural-functional theory, it is implied that the social structure in their habitat directs human behavior. Social norms and values influence the behavior of young farmers in their community [3]; thus, they generally follow all the rules and development programs in the pineapple business.

The opposite view of the structural-functional theory statement is found in social construction theory [4]. Young farmers create the reality of their social life, including in the pineapple business development.

This study investigated the social construction of young farmers in developing pineapple businesses. For this reason, this research is aimed at (1) analyzing the process of the social construction of young farmers in the development of pineapple agribusiness and (2) analyzing the actions of young farmers in developing pineapple agribusiness according to their social construction.

2. Theoretical Review

2.1. Social Construction Theory

Structural-functional theory exaggerates the role of social structure in influencing individual behavior. The basic assumption is that every structure in a social system is functional to the others. Individual behavior reflects the social structure in which individuals live. The functional, structural theory is included in the paradigm of social facts. This paradigm views the structure from a macro perspective. Community life is seen as a reality that stands alone, regardless of whether individuals in the social system like it [4].

The theory of action in the social definition paradigm overestimates the individual as an actor who can determine actions regardless of the external structure [5]. Individuals can form the structure they want. This study used the social definition paradigm. The theory chosen is social construction theory, considering that pineapple agribusiness development involves the concept of social structure in the future that will determine its life.

Humans are in objective and subjective reality. Humans are declared to be in objective reality as in their lives and development; humans are influenced by their environment [6]. Young farmers, as individuals, are influenced by their objective reality in terms of norms, social systems, groups, organizations, and other social environments [7]. On the contrary, young farmers can also influence the structure. Young farmers can construct behaviors to make their life better [8]. Under these conditions, young farmers are in a subjective reality. With their creativity, young farmers can shape their social environment by forming a pineapple agribusiness environment according to their aspirations [9].

The use of social construction theory in understanding the phenomenon of the formation of the social environment has been carried out by Tapi, Kasnawi et al. [10]. In this study, the social construction of farmers in forming farmer groups is strongly influenced by the cultural values and traditions of the local community [11]. The concept of "*igya ser hanjop*" as a product of the socio-cultural world of the Arfak community undergoes a process of externalization in the joints of social life for generations, then is internalized through actions and social behavior that prioritizes the collective interests of kinship. Consequently, everyone in the Arfak community perceives that participation in farmer groups is only possible if fellow members have a mutual kinship (objectivation process). Limited knowledge and understanding of administrators and members about the benefits of farmer groups and the absence of assistance by the program committee resulted in the deficient performance of farmer groups. In addition, farmer groups are considered the government's (stakeholders) needs instead of theirs. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the compatibility of the values and characteristics of innovation with local customary values [12].

The originators of social construction theory, Peter L Berger and Thomas Luckman, initially focused on religious dialogue but gradually developed into other studies of everyday life [4]. Thus, the phenomenon of pineapple agribusiness development activities by young farmers can also be observed using Berger and Luckman's theory. Phenomenology is used to institutionalize human life experiences into new traditions and institutions for humans in their communities [5]

Economic growth is created by using science and technology in production and distribution. Economic activity does not occur in a vacuum but is bound by space and time [13]. Bound to space, meaning that economic activity is influenced by the ability of residents to construct their traditions and institutions [3]. In this study, pineapple agribusiness development does not occur linearly. However, it is influenced by the ability of young farmers to form new traditions and build institutions that can develop their pineapple business [4].

The process of social construction is passed in three dialectical interactions, (1) Objective reality is a complex definition of reality as well as patterned established routines of action and behavior, experienced by individuals in general as facts. (2) Symbolic reality are all symbolic expressions of what is lived as objective reality. (3) Subjective reality is the construction of reality that belongs to the individual through internalization. Each individual's subjective reality is the basis for involvement in a social structure's externalization or social interaction. During the externalization, individuals collectively have the potential to objectify, giving rise to a new objective reality construction.

2.2. Dialectic Process of Social Construction

The dialectic process occurs through three stages: externalization, objectification, and internalization. The explanation of these three things is as follows:

- Externalization is an adjustment to the socio-cultural world. At this stage, humans devote or express themselves to various things in the world, both physically and mentally.
- Objectification is social interaction in the institutionalized intersubjective world. Objectification is the result of externalization, both mentally and physically, which produces an objective reality.
- Internalization is a stage where individuals identify themselves as a member of social institutions or organizations. Internalization is the process of absorbing the objective world back into consciousness in a way that the structure of the social world influences individual subjectivity. Through internalization, humans become the social product [14].

2.3. Agribusiness System

Agribusiness is a business activity in the agricultural sector involving upstream agricultural business activities, primary agriculture, downstream agricultural business activities, and supporting element activities. The upstream agricultural business activities include nurseries or seeding, fertilizer production, pesticide production, and procuring other production facilities. Primary agricultural activities are related to certain commodity agricultural cultivation activities. Downstream agricultural business activities are related to processing agricultural products, animal husbandry, fisheries, and plantations. Agribusiness supporting elements include research, counseling, financing, and policymaking [15].

In this research, the agribusiness system is a structure of social construction. The agribusiness sub-systems are part of the existing sub-structures, and young farmers are considered capable of dialectics between themselves as individuals and the agri-business sub-systems as a structure [3].

2.4. Framework

Young farmers, as individuals, can form structures (pineapple agribusiness systems) according to their wishes or needs. They do not simply accept the existing structure in carrying out actions, farming decisions, or developing their pineapple agribusiness. As individuals in the structure, young farmers create social structures. They carry out social construction in three stages: externalization, objectification, and internalization. This study will describe this process to understand the development of pineapple agribusiness at the research location.

3. Methods

The paradigm of this research is the social definition. The theory used is the theory of social construction. The

approach used is a qualitative approach. This study seeks to interpret phenomena according to the meanings given by informants to researchers. The researchers tried to understand the aspects of reality experienced by the informants. Qualitative data in sentences were spoken or written, situation data, process data, description data, and recorded voice using specific devices [16].

The type of this research is phenomenology, a qualitative method to reveal the similarity of life meaning in a group of individuals. In short, phenomenology is a type of research that directs researchers to understand other people's understanding of something [17].

This research was conducted in the Ngancar sub-district, Kediri Regency, East Java Province. Pineapple agribusiness development activities are centered in this sub-district. Agribusiness institutions in this sub-district are relatively well developed compared to other sub-districts. Thus, it is easy to find the number of farmers who are actively cultivating pineapples, pineapple farmer groups, farmer unions, pineapple traders, and local markets selling pineapples, along with other agribusiness-supporting institutions in this region [18].

Researchers tried to understand the informant's knowledge in terms of pineapple development. The informants in this research include young farmers who cultivate pineapples, members or administrators of farmer groups, pineapple traders, sellers of pineapple production facilities, and other informants accordingly. This informant-determination technique is known as snowball sampling, where the former interviewee appointed the next one to be interviewed in this study.

Qualitative data were collected using observational techniques from the social community at the research location, casual interviews with informants, in-depth interviews with key informants, and documentation of the informants' activities. This study mainly employed qualitative data and analysis suggested [27]. The stages of qualitative data analysis are (1) data collection, (2) data condensation, (3) data presentation, and (4) drawing conclusions or verification. The four processes are to obtain complete analysis results following the research focus.

4. Results and Discussion

The existence of young farmers in the business is established through externalization, objectification, and internalization.

4.1. Externalization Process of Pineapple Agribusiness Development for Young Farmers

Externalization is the adaptation process of young farmers to the business done by previous farmers. At this stage, young farmers express themselves in various ways in the field of pineapple agribusiness, both physically and mentally. Based on Mr. Basuki's statement, it was stated that:

"Tiang mriki nandur nanas mulai taun 1976. Wayah niku dereng ngertos varitase nopo, ning sa'mangke sampun ngertos lek riyen niku varitase sing pertama ditandur nggih varitas queen. (Farmers here started planting pineapples in 1976. At that time, they did not know the variety, but now they just acknowledged that it was of queen variety.)"

Information from this key informant emphasized that young farmers aged 19-40 have inherited the business from their predecessors. The farmer, born in 1976, is currently 46 years old. Information from other vital informants, namely the EPA, stated that:

"Farming is carried out conventionally in an old-fashioned pineapple cultivation behavior (following the behavior of previous farmers)."

Pineapple farming does not always employ the conventional agricultural method. Various kinds of cultivation technologies are introduced individually and formally in farmer and government institutions. Pineapple farmers led by advanced young farmers received new varieties besides queen: queen simplex, smooth cayenne, master diamond, and PK-1. Pineapple fertilization includes not only planting but also using various chemical fertilizers, organic fertilizers, and plant growth stimulants [20].

4.2. Objectivation Process of Young Pineapple Farmers in Pineapple Agribusiness Institutions

Objectivation is social interaction in the intersubjective world that is institutionalized. Objectivation is the result of externalization, both mentally and physically, which produces an objective reality.

Young pineapple farmers and pineapple farmer leaders were present during a focus group discussion at the Agricultural Extension Center, Ngancar sub-district, Kediri Regency, on August 25, 2022. All pineapple agribusiness stakeholders were present to develop the concept of pineapple agribusiness development [21]. In addition to young pineapple farmers and senior pineapple farmers, other groups that were also present include pineapple traders, pineapple farmer group administrators, Village Owned Enterprises administrators, pineapple home industries entrepreneurs, regional company managers, agricultural extension officers for the Ngancar sub-district, employees of the Kediri Regency Regional Development Research Agency, staff of the Ministry of Industry, employees of the Development Planning Agency, employees of the Food Security and Plantation Office, and employees of Department of Agricultural Affairs.

Young farmers presented tips on pineapple agribusiness development from the point of view of cultivation and marketing. Traders who were also pineapple farmers conveyed the grading of purchasing pineapples. An employee from the Department of Agricultural Affairs presented the cultivation obstacles in

terms of the fertilizer's price and the difficulty in obtaining subsidized fertilizer (pineapple commodities did not receive fertilizer at the subsidized price category). Pineapple-based food and beverage processors also conveyed plans for developing home industries that are currently being carried out. Advanced farmers were preparing steps to produce superior pineapple seeds. Regional Research and Development Agency employees conveyed plans to develop a pineapple agribusiness cluster in the future.

From the results of the FGD activities above, young pineapple farmers are in the objectivation process. Pineapple cultivation and its associated activities have been institutionalized so that the development of pineapple agribusiness is the objective state. All pineapple agribusiness development activities have undergone formalization. Formalization is not only for the system of norms that regulate their actions but also in the form of farmer groups, combined farmer groups, Village Owned Enterprises, home industries, and development proposal processes in government agencies, from villages to the regency. Formalization can be seen in the institutions or organizations involved in developing pineapple agribusiness.

4.3 Internalization Process of Young Pineapple Farmers in Social Institutions

Internalization is a stage where individuals identify themselves as members of social institutions or organizations. Internalization is the process of absorbing the objective world back into consciousness in a way that the social structure influences individual subjectivity. Through internalization, humans become social products.

Young pineapple farmers at present are the significant development actors in their area. Many young farmers and people are involved in various institutions such as agriculture, pineapple trading, trading in the production facility, processing pineapples, government, and counselling [22]. Their life is led by things outside themselves, such as rules within associations, regulations of groups or organizations, trading norms, agribusiness proposals, and cash loan applications that become more formal in the future, the development of an increasingly advanced processed business using modern technology will also be expected [28]. It is expected that in the future, processed pineapple will also employ modern technology to improve the business [24]. Several farmers proposed a more straightforward, formal agreement to provide land for pineapple cultivation with the State Forestry Public Company (Perhutani).

4.4. Young Farmers' Action for Pineapple Agribusiness Development Based on Social Construction

Young farmers have constructed ideas and acted in the form of more modern cultivation techniques than their predecessors. The young farmers develop a new method of seeding despite the existing technique. The old technique for providing seeds is to take saplings from pineapple plants that have bear fruit and then plant them again on the

land. The new technique is to carry out small stem cuttings, planted in polybags, then planted in the field according to the planting procedure. Simultaneously, a few young farmers establish nurseries using the tissue culture technique [25].

The manual pest and disease control techniques are shifted to a semi-mechanical system using a diesel sprayer compressor to cover a broader area faster. Thus, the method results in more efficient financing and effective targeting. Spraying is not only for pest control purposes but also to manipulate pineapples to ripen together (naturally, if not given growth regulating substance, they will ripen separately at different times).

Young farmers and government officials also formed a pineapple market at Kampong Wisata Pineapple in Sugiharas Village. For young farmers, this market will become the center for pineapples and authentic Kediri souvenirs. Another marketing method is offering SC and PK-1 pineapple varieties to modern market suppliers. They also plan to offer farming contracts with national fruit distributors.

Farmers plan to participate in more extensive management, such as main-small holder companies, to overcome the limited planting area and improve cultivation techniques and markets. For example, the regional company PD Margomulyo is the main company, and the farmers are smallholder companies.

Young farmers are also a driving force in processing pineapples into pineapple jam, pie, chips, juice, and other foods [26]. They then formed a home industry in their respective residences. The home industry's development needs better equipment, a more hygienic production process, better branding, broader marketing, production bookkeeping, financial accounting, and profitable business management.

Management of pineapple cultivation, arrangement of farmers, pineapple agribusiness development area, and relations with the government and entrepreneurs are carried out formally in the form of farmer groups, combined farmer groups, Village Owned Enterprises, housewives with health certificates, and more formal small companies. Young farmers are involved in formalizing institutions in the scope of their agricultural life. Young farmers are involved in more comprehensive agricultural development activities by participating in counseling and technical guidance by the government and the private party. Young pineapple farmers often discuss with researchers outside the region and government development planners.

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5. Conclusion

- Young farmers see pineapple agribusiness development as efforts to develop better livelihoods to address the weaknesses of their pineapple cultivation business processes that have been going on for generations. Young farmers understand that developing a pineapple agribusiness requires development for cultivation, broader marketing, and stronger institutions.
- The social construction of young farmers in pineapple agribusiness development occurs through two-ways communication in the form of externalization, objectivation, and internalization.
- There has been externalization among young farmers in developing pineapple agribusiness since 1976. The pineapple business has been passed down from generation to generation but has developed in line as young farmers started to have two-way communication with their social environment.
- They realized the significance of the development of pineapple agribusiness. The intersubjective experience of young farmers in developing pineapple agribusiness is represented by the institutionalization of various activities in pineapple cultivation, marketing, processing, and supporting activities. Formal institutions and organizations are created in the form of farmer groups, combined farmer groups, Village Owned Enterprises, home industries, and the participation of young farmers as the main drivers of pineapple agribusiness development.
- The process of internalizing young farmers for these purposes is by re-absorbing other farmers' experiences. They are attached to social behavior as they must accept reality and the social environment's rules, visions, goals, and expectations.
- Young farmers develop pineapple agribusiness by improving cultivation techniques better than their predecessors. Developmental actions that have been carried out include improving nurseries, improving pest control, and uniforming the ripening time for pineapples. They also improve plant varieties by planting varieties that are superior in producing, marketing, and processing pineapples so they can expand their social or pineapple business network.

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