

Accessibility of Young Farmers Towards the Government's Paddy Agricultural Aid Program in The MADA Administration Area

Ahmad Naim Mohamed Salleh¹, Mohamad Shaharudin Samsurijan^{1*}, Paramjit Singh Jamir Singh¹

¹School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Penang, Malaysia.

*Corresponding author: Mohamad Shaharudin Samsurijan (msdin@usm.my)

ABSTRACT

The role of young farmers in the paddy agriculture sector is vital for ensuring the sustainability and progression of agricultural activities. Therefore, it is crucial that young farmers receive attention from various parties to gain access to government aid for paddy agriculture. This study aims to address three objectives: identifying the challenges young farmers face in accessing government programs and aid for paddy agriculture, understanding the importance of accessibility to these programs and aid for young farmers, and exploring strategies to enhance accessibility. For this study, a qualitative approach was adopted, and 15 respondents were interviewed individually. The findings reveal that the main issue and challenge faced by young farmers is their lack of preparedness to access government aid for paddy agriculture. The study also explores the importance of government aid for young farmers through the insights gathered during the interviews. Five key benefits of government paddy agriculture aid for young farmers were identified: reducing operational costs, increasing revenue, lightening the workload, improving fertilizing and harvesting techniques, and increasing paddy farming yields. Finally, the study proposes practices to enhance accessibility for young farmers, which include empowering their skills and abilities, strengthening public institutions, and improving infrastructure facilities. These findings can serve as a benchmark for future endeavors and guide interested parties in their efforts to support young farmers.

Keywords: Young Farmer, Accessibility, Paddy Agriculture, Government Aid, MADA Administration Area

1. Introduction

The government's focus on improving accessibility to aid has been a major issue in society. With government assistance, people can improve their standard of living. The agricultural sector has become a benchmark for the government's development programs. "Starting with the First National Agriculture Policy, the government implemented the Expansory Policy, which expanded the cultivation of major commodities such as coconut, rice, palm oil, and cocoa, resulting in increased national income and improved income for farmers." (KPIAT, 2006a)

However, after the country shifted its economic structure to focus more on the industrial sector in the late 1980s, the agricultural sector faced issues such as a shortage of labor, rural-urban migration, and an aging farming population (Norsida Man, 2008). In response, the government

initiated programs and provided aid to empower young farmers and attract their interest in paddy agriculture. This is crucial to ensure continuous progress in the nation's agricultural revenue. Nevertheless, the accessibility of government agriculture aid programs for young farmers remains an issue due to factors such as their readiness, environmental adaptation, and geographical location.

The readiness of young farmers to access government paddy agriculture aid programs is influenced by several factors, including education, knowledge, financial stability, and access to resources. Young farmers may lack the necessary skills or training to effectively utilize agricultural aid, leading to underutilization of the available resources. Additionally, limited experience in navigating government procedures and understanding the requirements for aid can pose significant barriers. The lack of access to modern technology or farming techniques further complicates their readiness to benefit from these programs.

Geographical location plays a critical role in the accessibility of government aid programs. Farmers in remote or rural areas may face significant challenges in accessing aid due to poor infrastructure, lack of transportation, and limited communication channels. These areas may also be underserved by government agencies, resulting in delayed or inadequate support. Furthermore, the variability in regional agricultural conditions, such as soil quality and climate, may influence the effectiveness of aid programs, making it difficult for young farmers in certain locations to fully benefit.

2. Literature Review

In this era, individuals need knowledge to acquire something. The same goes for young farmers in this study who need information about the program and the paddy agriculture aid. According to Zohra and Siri (2001), "information seeking skills refer to the ability to gather information effectively, including identifying information sources, types of materials, and understanding the requirements of a matter." This clearly shows that individuals need to have knowledge and wisdom regarding any type of aid and information about their own needs. Young farmers who lack knowledge about the paddy agriculture aid will encounter difficulties accessing it. This is in line with Leung (2010), who states that "information technology is a portal that allows users to interact to obtain information."

The study also highlights that young farmers who lack problem-solving abilities or the capacity to meet their own needs tend to face challenges in accessing aid and unconsciously become dependent on other parties. This aligns with young farmers who rely on third parties, such as family members, for assistance. Faridah et al. (2009) states that "an entrepreneur is a person who is responsible for what will happen and takes the initiative to solve problems." Young farmers who are not accountable and rely solely on others to fulfill their needs will struggle to achieve their goals. In the realm of information technology, government aid is available on websites in this era. As Juhana Salim (2010) accurately states, "according to the era of information and communication technology, information is constantly being created and can be obtained in large quantities from all over the world at any time, but it depends on the individual to seek it."

Furthermore, the issue of accessibility is related to the geographical location of individuals. Those who live far away tend to miss out on things and assistance available in their area. For instance, they may have to travel long distances to reach their destination. This matter is also mentioned by Bernama (2022), which states that "it is a big challenge for rural residents as they have to rely on private vehicles. One of the factors is the lack of alternative transportation options."

According to Toumbourou et al. (2023) Young farmers represent the future of agriculture and are essential for ensuring the sustainability of farming practices. Access to government aid programs is crucial in enabling young farmers to adopt modern farming techniques, improve productivity, and contribute to the overall growth of the agricultural sector. Without the active participation of young farmers, there is a risk of stagnation in agricultural innovation and a decline in productivity, which could threaten food security. Anwarudin et al. (2019) and Adeyanju et al. (2023) also agreed that the involvement of young farmers in government aid programs also plays a vital role in rural development. By providing young farmers with the necessary support, these programs can stimulate economic growth in rural areas, reduce youth unemployment, and enhance the quality of life for rural communities. The infusion of young talent into the agricultural sector can drive innovation, leading to more efficient and sustainable farming practices. Consentino et al. (2023) was added that with the global farming population aging, it is crucial to attract and retain young farmers to ensure the continuity of agricultural practices. Government aid programs that are accessible to young farmers can help mitigate the challenges associated with an aging farming workforce by encouraging the next generation to pursue careers in agriculture.

According to Zagata and Sutherland (2015), May et al. (2019) and Sponte (2014) in improve accessibility, it is essential to implement targeted educational and training programs that equip young farmers with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate government aid programs. These programs should focus on enhancing agricultural practices, understanding the application process for aid, and leveraging technology in farming. Enhancing infrastructure in rural areas is critical for improving access to government aid. Anwarudin et al. (2019), Faysse et al. (2019) and Hamilton et al. (2015) highlighted in their studies the importance of improving young farmers' accessibility includes the development of better transportation networks, communication systems, and digital platforms that facilitate the dissemination of information and resources to young farmers, regardless of their geographical location. Anwarudin et al. (2019), Faysse et al. (2019) Toumbourou et al. (2023), emphasized that simplifying the application process for government aid programs can greatly enhance accessibility for young farmers. By streamlining documentation, offering clear guidelines, and providing application assistance, barriers can be lowered, encouraging more young farmers to seek aid. They also agree that raising awareness about the availability of government aid programs and ensuring that young farmers are informed about the opportunities available to them is essential. Inclusivity efforts, such as outreach programs targeting remote areas and marginalized communities, can help ensure that all young farmers have an equal chance to benefit from government support. Adeyanju et al. (2023) also suggested that providing incentives for young farmers to engage in government aid programs can improve accessibility. Such incentives might include financial subsidies, grants for adopting new technology, or rewards for practicing sustainable farming methods.

By addressing these factors and implementing supportive practices, the accessibility of government paddy agriculture aid programs to young farmers can be significantly improved, leading to a more vibrant and resilient agricultural sector.

3. Methodology

This study applied a qualitative approach and interviewed 15 respondents. The purpose of this study was to identify the issues and challenges faced by young farmers in accessing government paddy agriculture aid and programs, and to suggest practices to improve access. The qualitative approach aims to gain a deep and detailed understanding of the problems in social life (Creswell, 2013; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Primary data for this study was collected through semi-structured

interviews. These interviews were conducted face-to-face between the interviewer and the respondent, with the goal of gathering information about the study objectives (Lebar, 2015; Yusuf, 2014). The semi-structured interviews consisted of interconnected questions that were applied to all 15 respondents, who were young farmers directly involved in the paddy agriculture sector. By involving young farmers, the researcher hoped to obtain answers to the research questions and achieve the study objectives. As Lune & Berg (2021) stated, asking people is an effective way to learn about their living conditions. Sample selection was done purposefully to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Lebar, 2015; Creswell, 2013). Purposive sampling was used to select respondents who had the necessary skills and knowledge to answer the research questions (Neuman, 2014). The chosen sample consisted of young farmers who were actively involved in paddy agriculture and had knowledge and experience in this field. The snowballing technique was used to select respondents based on their continuous network or chain of relationships (Neuman, 2014).

4. Findings

This section is aim to tackle the research problems and objectives of the study. Initially, it focuses on identifying the challenges and obstacles associated with accessing the government's paddy agriculture aid and program. The researcher will carefully examine these issues, drawing on the insights shared by the 15 respondents who were interviewed. Table 1.1 below outlines the specific issues and challenges that young farmers encounter in accessing the program and receiving the government's paddy agriculture aid within the MADA administrative area.

Table 1.1: Issues and challenges arising for young farmers in accessing government's paddy agriculture aid and programs in the administration of MADA area.

No	Theme	Respondents's Code
1.	Preparedness Of Young Farmer To Access The Government's Paddy Agriculture Aid Information.	
	a. No knowledge to get the information on government aid	R02; R08; R12; R13; R15
	b. Illiterate of information technology	R05; R08; R10; R13
	c. Too dependent towards family members to get the government aid	R02; R05; R07; R08; R10; R11; R15
2.	Geographical Location Limits Young Farmer to Get the Access of The Government's Paddy Agriculture Aid	
	Live in rural area that far from the administration centre	R01; R03; R07; R09; R11; R14; R15
	Uncomprehensive broadband limits the young farmer to get the access to the aid	R01; R04; R07; R11; R14

4.1. Accessing Government's Paddy Agriculture Aid Information

Based on the conducted research findings, young farmers face issues such as a lack of knowledge about government aid, a lack of proficiency in using information technology, and a tendency to rely too heavily on family members for obtaining government aid. To address the issue of young farmers lacking knowledge about government aid, the researchers obtained information from the R02 respondent, who stated:

"For me, the main problem is that I don't know how to access government aid because I don't know how to search on Google to find out what kind of aid the government provides for farmers." (R02)

This statement clearly highlights the fact that young farmers lack the knowledge needed to access the aid provided by the government. They have become reliant on third parties to help them navigate this process. This demonstrates that young farmers are not adequately prepared to embrace the latest wave of information technology and have not been sufficiently exposed to it by relevant authorities.

The same applies to the issue of young farmers lacking proficiency in information technology. Based on the aforementioned statement, young farmers who are not proficient in technology encounter difficulties accessing government agency web pages. This assertion is further supported by the R05 respondent, who stated:

"..and he is wondering how to access government aid because he lacks the knowledge to do so. This is because he has only focused on cultivating rice and doesn't know how to manage it. They usually lack information technology skills." (R05)

Furthermore, young farmers who rely too much on others, particularly their family members, tend to depend on them for access. This claim is confirmed by the R02 respondent, who stated:

"I, myself, rely on my father to manage the aid I receive from the government. I only work in Bendang. My father has been involved for a long time and they have their own association." (R02)

In conclusion, young farmers encounter significant challenges, including limited knowledge of government aid programs, insufficient proficiency in information technology, and an overreliance on family members to secure government assistance. These factors collectively hinder their ability to fully benefit from available support.

4.2. Geographical Location Factors Limit Young Farmers' Access to Government's Paddy Agriculture Aid

Geographical location plays an important role in an individual's access to information. In this study, the researcher found that respondents located in rural areas, far from the government's administration office, encountered difficulties in obtaining information. The researcher also discovered that young farmers who were far from the operation administration center, where young farmer courses and programs were usually held, missed out on these opportunities due to the distance of their shelters from the center. Seven respondents expressed the same concern. For instance, R03 respondent stated:

"Although there is a program in the village, not everyone knows about it. I myself, living far from the office or the gathering place, missed out on the help and information. Every time there is a program or something similar, they set up booths. However, people who live far from that place are unable to access it." (R03)

While conducting the research, the researcher encountered a situation where respondents reported problems with broadband connectivity, which affected their access to government's paddy aid

online. Young farmers were unable to open and download the necessary forms or access the guidelines for government aid. R01 respondent raised this issue, stating:

"Perhaps it has to do with where we live. Most of us live in the countryside, making it difficult to access the assistance provided by the government. There are many government grants on the website that we need to review and apply for. The internet connection problem is indeed an issue because, as I mentioned earlier, the information is on the internet but this time I couldn't access it." (R01)

In order to address the second research objective, the researcher examined the importance of young farmers having access to government's paddy agriculture aid and programs. As shown in Table 1.2, 13 respondents agreed that government's paddy agriculture aid could increase the paddy yield for young farmers. A total of 10 respondents stated that it could reduce operational costs and increase revenue and income. Furthermore, 9 respondents believed that government aid could enhance fertilization and harvesting techniques, while 7 respondents emphasized that it was important in reducing the workload of young farmers. Table 1.2 below illustrates the significance of young farmers accessing government's paddy agriculture aid and programs.

Table 1.2: Importance of Young Farmers in Accessing Government's Paddy Agriculture Aid and Programs

No	Theme	Respondent	No. Respondent
1.	Reduce The Young Farmer Operational Cost	R01; R02; R04; R08; R09; R10; R11; R12; R13; R15	10
2.	Increasing The Revenue and Income of The Young Farmer	R01; R02; R03; R05; R06; R08; R09; R10; R12; R13	10
3.	Reducing The Work Load Of Young Farmer	R02; R03; R05; R06; R07; R08; R10	7
4.	Improve The Fertilization and Harvesting Techniques	R03; R04; R05; R06; R08; R09; R11; R12; R15	9
5.	Increase The Paddy Yield of Young Farmer	R01; R02; R04; R05; R07; R08; R09; R10; R11; R12; R13; R14; R15	13

Based on the interview results, the researchers found that the young farmer needs government assistance in paddy agriculture because the subsidy for paddy fertilizer can reduce the operational cost of their farming activities. This was voiced by respondent R04, who stated,

"Government assistance, such as rice fertilizer subsidies, can indeed reduce our costs. That's why we really need government assistance." (R04)

Furthermore, the respondents mentioned that government aid in the form of fertilizers, pesticides, and tools increases their income and revenue. Respondent R01 clarified how government aid can improve the income of young farmers, stating:

"When there is help from the government, income from agriculture also increases. One niche can fetch RM2,000 to RM4,000. From here, the income from beliatani increases." (R01)

In terms of reducing workload, the research findings revealed that the respondents have stated that the previous manual approach to tasks such as planting, harvesting, and plowing has been replaced

with government aid, such as drones and mixing machines, which significantly reduces the workload of young farmers. Respondent R07 expressed this, saying,

"Relieving our burden, we don't need to use more energy like our parents used to, harvesting manually. Now, when the government helps by supplying machines, we don't need to use more energy. The results also increased." (R07)

The courses organized by the government on skills and techniques for fertilizing and harvesting are highly important for young farmers. They stated that government aid in paddy agriculture is crucial for them. For example, respondent R12 mentioned,

"When there is government assistance, such as courses, beliatani can gain new knowledge and skills, allowing them to improve their skills in rice farming, such as fertilizing, harvesting, and pest control." (R12)

Lastly, this study revealed that government aid is important for increasing the productivity of young farmers. Respondent R03 stated:

"When there is government assistance, paddy productivity will increase. We cannot produce paddy with only our own resources. We need modern rice machines and equipment to use." (R03)

In conclusion, government assistance in paddy agriculture is not only essential for reducing costs and increasing income but also for alleviating physical labor, enhancing skills, and significantly improving productivity among young farmers.

Table 1.3: Improving the accessibility level of young farmers to government aid in the MADA administration area

No	Theme	Sub Theme	Respondent's Code	No Respondent
1	Empower Young Farmer Ability	Improve young farmer's knowledge about the government's aid	R02; R08; R13; R15	4
		Improve the young farmer's information technology skills.	R08; R05; R10; R13	4
2	Empower Public Institution	Empower Farmer's Family Institution.	R12; R05; R07; R08; R15	5
		Empower Local Community	R07; R03; R07; R09; R11; R15	6
3	Improve Infrastructure Facilities	Government Needs To Enlarge The Broadband Network	R01; R04; R07; R11	4

Table 1.3 above clarifies how to improve the level of accessibility of young farmers to the government's aid in the MADA administration area. The interview results show three (3) practices for improving accessibility, which are empowering the abilities of young farmers, empowering public institutions, and improving infrastructure facilities.

4.3. Empower Young Farmer Ability

Young farmers must be empowered with knowledge and government assistance. Classes and courses should be conducted, both in physical and virtual forms, as the latter can be highly effective. This recommendation was made by respondent R02, who stated:

"I don't know how to access this assistance myself, so the government should organize a guidance class for us to teach us about the different types of government aid available." (R02)

In terms of technology skills, young farmers who are unable to access online resources should be empowered through guidance classes and support from relevant authorities. This sentiment was echoed by respondent R08:

"I have to teach him how to use information technology because I am not proficient in this area myself. The class or course should cover what I mentioned earlier, including how to seek help and what kind of assistance is available."

In addition to general knowledge, enhancing technology skills among young farmers is essential, particularly for those who struggle to access online resources. This need for guidance and support from relevant authorities was underscored by respondent R08, who mentioned the importance of courses that teach young farmers how to use information technology, seek assistance, and understand the available support options.

4.4. Empowerment of Public Institutions

Young farmers who often rely on family members for help should be encouraged to seek assistance from public institutions, such as local authorities and community organizations. The role of family representatives within the community is crucial, as highlighted by respondent R05:

"Don't always rely on third-party assistance like family members. Family representatives have associations in the community, so they should encourage their children to become independent."

Likewise, public institutions need to be strengthened by actively engaging with the community. During interviews with respondents, it was revealed that young farmers living in geographically remote areas, such as rural regions or distant from MADA administration centers, face challenges in accessing information. Therefore, public institutions must be empowered to foster community engagement and ensure easy access to information. Respondent R07 expressed this need:

"The government should consider how to communicate with all the villagers when there are programs or initiatives. Especially for farmers living far from the business office, there are associations, but not everyone is part of them. Efforts should be made to ensure that everyone is included in these associations. Unfortunately, young people rarely participate in such associations."

In conclusion, enhancing the role of public institutions and community engagement is key to reducing young farmers' dependency on family support and ensuring they have the resources and information needed to succeed independently

4.5. Government Needs to Enlarge the Broadband Network

Broadband facilities need to be expanded to every area because in today's world, everyone needs access to the broadband network to obtain government aid information. This issue has been raised by R01 respondent:

"I believe that broadband coverage, particularly in rural and remote areas, needs to be further expanded. A significant amount of government assistance information is now exclusively accessible online. It is crucial for the government to increase people's access to these vital resources." (R01)

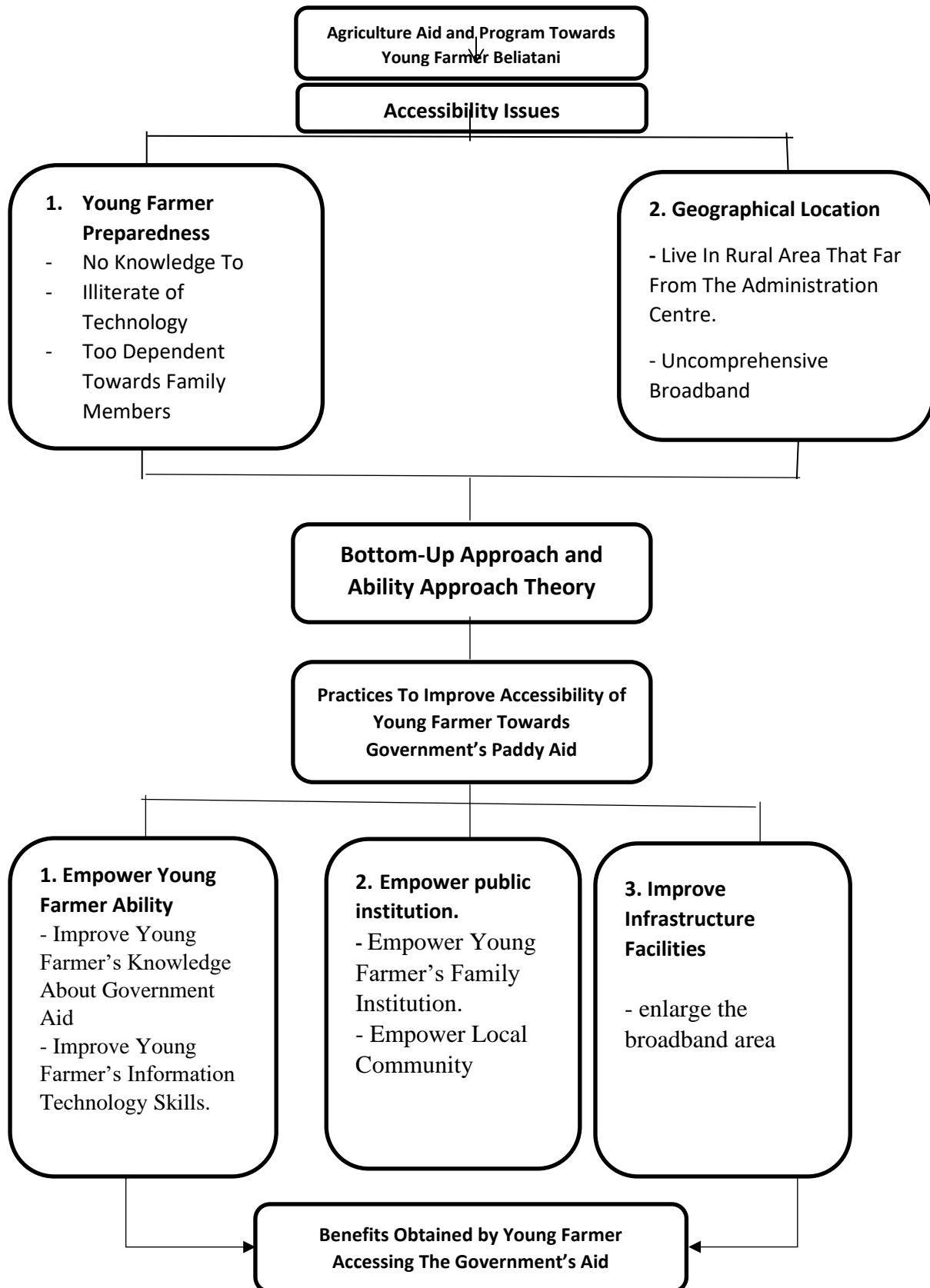
In conclusion, expanding broadband coverage is vital for ensuring that all individuals, especially those in rural and remote areas, have equal access to important government aid information.

5. Discussion

Holistically, this study succeeded in achieving the research objective and was able to answer the research problem that was introduced. The study discovered two main issues and challenges faced by young farmers in accessing the government's paddy agriculture aid and programs, including the preparedness of young farmers to access information about the government's paddy agriculture aid. The human capital approach is closely related to these issues and challenges because young farmers lack the ability to access the aid. Thus, the ability approach emerged as a solution to address these issues and challenges.

Furthermore, this study was conducted to emphasize the importance of young farmers accessing government aid and programs, as it is closely related to the theory of wellbeing. When the yield production of their paddy increases, it can significantly improve the quality of life for young farmers. The results of the study align with the ability approach theory, as young farmers who receive training, courses, tools, and subsidies are able to optimize their paddy production. Similarly, young farmers with farming skills can produce high-quality paddy, resulting in high yields and improved wellbeing. This study proves the significance of young farmers accessing paddy agriculture aid, as it reduces operational costs, increases revenue and income, reduces workload, improves fertilizing and harvesting techniques, and increases paddy production.

The third research result analyzes the practices to increase the accessibility of young farmers to government aid. The ability approach involves improving digital skills to ensure that young farmers have the knowledge to access government aid. Empowering public institutions, such as organizing classes for families, helps reduce young farmers' dependence on their families. Similarly, for young farmers in rural areas, the government needs to empower local infrastructure and foster a sense of community. This ability approach precisely addresses the practices to improve young farmers' accessibility to government aid. The following flow chart provides a holistic overview of this research based on the stated theories.



6. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is crucial for the government to effectively address accessibility issues in order to ensure that young farmers have access to aid. This study has provided discrete resolutions to these issues and challenges, as well as ways to mitigate them. The government must be prepared to confront future challenges posed by globalization, as the paddy agriculture sector has become increasingly challenging due to limited land sources. Therefore, this study effectively translates the issues and challenges faced by young farmers. The critical role of young farmers in the sustainability of paddy agriculture and outlines their challenges and potential benefits associated with government aid. The main issues identified include a lack of preparedness among young farmers to access such aid, which could be addressed by improving their skills, strengthening public institutions, and upgrading infrastructure. The study also emphasizes the significant benefits of government support, including reduced operational costs, increased revenue, lighter workloads, improved techniques, and higher yields. These findings could be instrumental in guiding future policies and support mechanisms for young farmers, ensuring they can effectively contribute to and benefit from advancements in paddy agriculture.

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