

Islamic Values and Their Influence on Youth Agropreneurship Mindset Challenges

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ABSTRACT

The Agropreneur Muda program by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries (MAFI) is one of the federal government's initiatives to reduce the unemployment rate among youth while simultaneously modernizing agricultural practices in Malaysia. This program has received financial and institutional support from selected agencies to ensure its sustainability, but this support is still seen as insufficient. The core issue that hinders the program's effectiveness stems from internal mindset challenges frequently faced by young farmers, such as unrealistic expectations, reliance on government aid, and a lack of entrepreneurial discipline. Previous studies have mainly focused on external issues rather than internal ones. This article focuses more on the role of Islamic values, which are viewed as one of the key initiatives to address internal issues among Muslim youth agropreneurs participating in this program. This study employed a qualitative approach by combining document analysis and semi-structured interviews with program participants. The findings show that the solutions emphasized from an Islamic perspective include integrity (*amanah*), perseverance (*sabr*), and responsibility (*mas'uliyah*) in overcoming issues related to entrepreneurial discipline and reducing dependence on external aid. In conclusion, Islamic values must be incorporated into training modules to ensure the continuity and excellence of young farmers in sustaining the agricultural sector over the long term.

Contribution/Originality: This study is one of very few studies which have investigated. Usually, the solutions proposed by certain parties in addressing mindset-related issues among young farmers rely on the perspectives of Western scholars, which mainly focus on external aspects alone. However, in this study, particularly for Muslims, religion itself has already provided effective and meaningful solutions as prescribed in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

1. Introduction

The Agropreneur Muda is known during the 11th Malaysia Plan (RMK 11) through the National Agro-Food Policy (DAN 1.0). This policy is implemented as an alternative to face challenges related to increasing competitiveness, meeting the needs of skilled and semi-skilled workforce, guaranteeing sufficient food supply, developing industries sustainably and attracting private investment. In fact, the National Agrofood Policy (DAN 1.0) 2011-2020, will focus on improving the efficiency of the agrofood industry along the value chain so that this industry becomes more productive, competitive and knowledge-intensive. A new approach that includes eight key ideas has been identified to support the transformation process of the agro-food industry.

However, the issues faced by young farmers participating in this program highlight persistent challenges in terms of consistency and youth retention, even after the program has been implemented for several years. According to researchers, the key contributing factors to these challenges include low entrepreneurial commitment, short-sighted vision, and inadequate resilience. These problems have often been attributed to structural shortcomings, while the deeper mindset-related issues have received comparatively less attention (Zamri et al., 2020; Kamarulzaman & Norsida, 2018).

The mindset challenges are not effectively addressed, they can create negative impacts that manifest as psychological and ethical gaps among young farmers, such as overreliance on instant success, aversion to risk, and a weak work ethic. According to Mohd Nor and Ali (2020), the effective implementation of entrepreneurship for the targeted group should not be limited to the development of capital or technical skills alone; rather, the cultivation of good values, discipline, and strong moral foundations must be prioritized within such programs.

Therefore, in order to achieve a holistic transformation of the mindset issues faced by young agropreneurs, Islamic values should serve as a critical framework for shaping successful participants in the agricultural sector. Within this framework, transforming the entrepreneurial mindset through perspectives rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah requires emphasizing attributes such as *ṣabr* (perseverance), *tawakkul* (reliance on God), *amānah* (trustworthiness), *ikhtiar* (continuous effort), and *barakah* (divine blessing in sustenance). Ultimately, these values foster the development of a determined and responsible entrepreneurial mindset (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007; Al-Suwailem, 2006).

Scholars of Islamic economics have argued that the integration of *akhlaq* (moral character) into economic behavior yields positive outcomes for the ethical conduct of individuals (Chapra, 2000). Aligning with this perspective, the incorporation of Islamic values can be applied as corrective tools for shaping attitudes and educating a new generation of agropreneurs who are both productive and guided by strong personal principles. For instance, the concept of *tawakkul* known as entrusting the outcomes of one's efforts to the divine will should serve as a guiding principle among agropreneurs, as the success of agricultural production cannot always be predicted for a given season (Salleh & Ahmad, 2009).

Thus, this article aims to discover the suitability of Islamic values in solving mindset issues among the young agropreneurs in Malaysia. Through this concept, it will highlight that how the Islamic attributes can solve the issue of mindset and technical development

based on moral-spiritual integration which will enhance the ethical and social responsibility behavior of a futuristic agropreneurs.

2. Literature Review

In recent years, agropreneurship has been actively promoted by governments and development agencies as a viable path for youth empowerment, rural development, and agricultural revitalization. Programs like Malaysia's *Agropreneur Muda*, launched in 2010, have aimed to attract young people into the agriculture sector by providing funding, training, and technical support. Despite these efforts, a significant number of participants fail to sustain their agribusinesses. One often overlooked reason: the wrong mindset among young agropreneurs.

Firstly, one of the problematic mindsets among Agropreneur Muda participants is the 'get-rich-quick' mentality. Many young farmers enter agropreneurship programs with the misconception that agriculture is an easy and fast way to make money. This belief is often shaped by social media success stories and government promotion materials that highlight exceptional cases of successful farmers, while overlooking the challenges that most agropreneurs face (Salleh & Sulaiman, 2021). Similar findings are reported in other developing countries, where youth are drawn into agriculture under the assumption that it provides quick profits but lose interest when these expectations are not met (Mwaura, 2017; Chigusiwa & Dube, 2020).

This issue is supported by findings from other developing countries, where youth are often led to believe that a career in agriculture can generate quick profits within a short period. However, when such expectations are not realized, many eventually lose interest once they confront the actual realities of the sector (Mwaura, 2017; Chigusiwa & Dube, 2020). One of the main reasons contributing to the failure of the Agropreneur Muda program among Malaysian youth is the widespread perception that agriculture offers an easy pathway to rapid wealth.

This misperception is reinforced by social media narratives and government promotional campaigns that highlight exceptional success stories of agropreneurs, while failing to adequately portray the difficulties and challenges that underpin those achievements (Salleh & Sulaiman, 2021). In reality, agriculture is a career that demands a high level of patience, continuous skills acquisition in farm management, and resilience to cope with unpredictable weather conditions, pest infestations, and fluctuating market prices (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2014; Ali & Rahut, 2018). When young farmers engage in agriculture with a profit-only mindset, without embracing the long and experiential learning process inherent in farming, they often become demotivated or eventually abandon their projects altogether.

Secondly, another recurring misperception among young farmers participating in agropreneurship programs is their high dependency on government assistance, which they perceive as essential for sustaining the long-term viability of their agricultural projects. The negative outcome of this overreliance is the emergence of a so-called "grant-seeking culture." In this situation, young farmers tend to remain motivated as long as financial support is provided, but their commitment diminishes once such assistance is no longer available (Mwaura, 2017; Yusuf et al., 2020). Research has shown that continuous dependence on grants, subsidies, and low-interest loans among

Agropreneur Muda participants constrains the development and growth of their enterprises (Salleh & Sulaiman, 2021).

This dependency mindset undermines entrepreneurial spirit, discourages innovation, and weakens the ability of young farmers to take risks in managing agricultural ventures (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2014; Chigusiwa & Dube, 2020). If such a culture is sustained over the long term within the Agropreneur Muda program, it not only burdens government resources but also delays the overall transformation of the agricultural sector into a market-driven and competitive industry.

Thirdly, another common mindset issue observed in the agricultural sector is the perception that farming is primarily about physical labor on the land. This assumption leads many young farmers to neglect the importance of acquiring entrepreneurial and technical skills such as business organization, market analysis, branding, and financial management which are essential prerequisites for starting and sustaining successful agricultural projects.

Scholars emphasize that while technical farming knowledge is important, it must be complemented with competencies in modern agribusiness to ensure that young farmers can maximize their entrepreneurial potential, identify emerging market opportunities, respond to consumer demands, and sustain competitive advantage (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2014; Mwaura, 2017). However, mismanagement of resources often occurs due to weak financial literacy and poor record-keeping practices, making it difficult for enterprises to expand or attract external investment (Chigusiwa & Dube, 2020; Yusoff et al., 2019).

In Malaysia, many young agropreneurs continue to struggle in maintaining long-term momentum in farming activities, despite the availability of various government start-up assistance programs. This struggle is largely attributed to weaknesses in managerial and entrepreneurial skills (Aziz & Samad, 2016; Yusuf et al., 2020). If such gaps persist over the long term, the ability of young farmers to remain competitive will be further undermined, ultimately hindering the development of a resilient generation of modern agropreneurs in the country

Fourthly, although the Agropreneur Muda program has been implemented for more than a decade among its target group of young agropreneurs, negative perceptions toward the agricultural sector persist, with many still regarding it as a “less prestigious” career choice. This critical mindset problem reflects how agricultural occupations continue to be perceived negatively within society. Even though increasing numbers of young graduates have participated in the program, farming is still often seen as a temporary or fallback option rather than a prestigious or aspirational profession.

The stigma surrounding agricultural careers is frequently associated with poverty, low education, and manual labor, while white-collar jobs are viewed as symbols of higher social status (Mwaura, 2017; Njeru, 2017). Such perceptions indirectly weaken the agricultural sector by discouraging young people from entering or sustaining careers in farming, thereby threatening the continuity of the nation’s agricultural legacy. The lack of pride in agricultural work also reduces commitment levels and weakens overall achievement within agropreneurship programs.

In the Malaysian context, studies show that many Agropreneur Muda participants perceive the program merely as a stepping stone until more lucrative career opportunities arise. This mindset undermines the long-term objective of building a resilient future generation of agropreneurs (Aziz & Samad, 2016; Yusoff et al., 2019). Unless the narrative surrounding agriculture is reframed more positively within society, youth participation in this sector is likely to decline further. This situation will have serious implications for national food security, including reduced manpower, lower production capacity, difficulty in meeting demand, and increased reliance on imported food products.

Lastly, a common mindset problem among young agropreneurs relates to their tendency toward short-term planning in farming. This is reflected in the implementation of agricultural projects that are primarily designed for short-term outcomes such as immediate profits, seasonal harvests, or short-lived financial gains while overlooking long-term sustainability and strategic business growth.

In Africa, Oluwatayo and Ojo (2018) highlight that the absence of entrepreneurial vision and limited access to credit push youth farmers toward short-term production objectives rather than scalable agribusiness models. From a broader development perspective, Proctor and Lucchesi (2012) stress the importance of encouraging young people to perceive farming as a strategic entrepreneurial pathway rather than merely a quick source of financial return. These findings indicate that the lack of long-term vision among young agropreneurs is not unique to Malaysia but is a widespread issue across many developing countries, ultimately constraining agricultural transformation and sustainability.

The consequence of this short-term planning mindset is an increased dropout rate among young farmers. When agricultural projects are pursued only under favorable conditions or for immediate returns, participants are less likely to invest in sustainable practices or diversify into value-added activities that could enhance profitability and resilience over time.

3. Methodology

The research design for this study is qualitative in nature, as qualitative methods are effective for exploring and understanding the issues at hand while providing valid and reliable insights from the key stakeholders involved. This approach had allowed an in-depth analysis of the involvement of young people in the Agropreneur Muda program and the challenges they faced, particularly within the context of agricultural policies led by the Ministry of Agriculture. The use of qualitative methods is appropriate for this research, as it included interviews with key participants, such as Agropreneur Muda participants, and stakeholders involved in the program's implementation. These stakeholders included the Ministry of Agriculture, Malaysian Agriculture Research and Development Institute (MARDI), Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA), *Lembaga Pertubuhan Peladang* (LPP), private agencies and banking institution.

This study adopted the purposive sampling method in selecting research informants, represented by individuals with relevant experience and direct involvement in the Agropreneur Muda program. The main reason for employing this method is that such a sampling technique allows the researcher to intentionally select participants who are directly involved in the study, as they are able to provide adequate, relevant, and

detailed responses in line with the objectives of this research. Furthermore, the selection of research informants was based on their roles and knowledge of the Agropreneur Muda program. Specifically, the officers from agricultural agencies were chosen because they are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the program's progress, while the program participants refer to the youth agropreneurs who have extensive experience in carrying out agricultural projects under the Agropreneur Muda initiative. Therefore, through this approach, the study was able to collect accurate and detailed data that reflect the perspectives of the most relevant stakeholders involved in the overall operation and implementation of this government program.

These interviews would serve as the primary data sources for this study. The program participants and the government agencies involved in the implementation of this program also constitute the target population for this study. Generally, all the participants of the Agropreneur Muda program themselves who have experience in participating in this program. Most of the participants who are research informants for this data collection are aged around 30 to 40 years old, which meets as one of the main conditions in the participation of the Agropreneur Muda program that they are not over 40 years of age and have experience in matters related to agricultural projects. Most of the research informants involved in this study came from Selama, Perak. This is because the number of grant recipients under the Agropreneur Muda is the largest number of recipients in the state of Perak. Indirectly it makes it easier to collect information obtained from research informants in the surrounding area. The total sample size involved in this study consisted of 17 research informants. Apart from that, this data was taken from May to June 2023 which took almost two months to reach out as a whole for the three stakeholders directly involved in the Agropreneur Muda.

This study employed a qualitative and exploratory approach, aiming to gain as many insights as possible rather than producing statistical data as in quantitative methods. Although the Agropreneur Muda program involves multiple stakeholders, only seventeen research informants (eight officers and nine program participants) were interviewed for this study. In general, there are several factors that explain the selection of a relatively small sample size. Firstly, the eight officers were chosen because of they were directly involved in the implementation of the program, including at the levels of implementation, monitoring, planning, advising, and strategizing, representing agricultural institutions or agencies. Secondly, the reason for selecting only nine persons from the program participant as a research informant is because this individual has extensive experience with the youth agropreneur program, particularly regarding the internal mindset challenges faced by young farmers in ensuring the success of the Agropreneur Muda program. Lastly, this is related to data saturation achieved through in-depth semi-structured interview sessions with the selected research informants for data collection. The responses provided by the seventeen research informants in this study were sufficient, as the data became repetitive during the interview sessions on this topic, particularly when exploring internal mindset issues and the role of Islamic values, rather than evaluating the overall implementation of the entire program.

For the purpose of data analysis in this study, three main parties were selected to obtain data through qualitative methods, specifically conducted via interviews, namely the participants of the Agropreneur Muda program, agricultural agencies (both private and government), and financial institution.

Table 1 shows the categories of research informants are referred to in the analysis section. For the first category represents the youth participants of the program who are nine (9) in number. It is referred to youths who have run the Agropreneur Muda program representing from Selama Perak. Most of the participants interviewed (online or face-to face) are among the those who are the running agricultural projects full-time under the Agropreneur Muda grant. The implementation of their project is focused on the cultivation of vegetables.

Table 1: Profiles of the Key Research Informants Involved for the Interview Sessions with Regards to the Agropreneur Muda Program

Category	Number of Research Informants	Description of Research Informants
Participants	9	Participants from Agropreneur Muda Program
Government agricultural agencies	5	MARDI, FAMA, PPK, Jabatan Pertanian Daerah dan Negeri
Private agricultural agencies	2	Abm Agrotech & Shanoir Agrofarm
Bank Agency	1	Agrobank
TOTAL	17	

Secondly is referred to the agricultural agencies that are involved in implementing government policies through the young agropreneur programs throughout Malaysia. Through the interview session with the agricultural agency, only a few parties could be interviewed such as MARDI, FAMA, Regional Farmers' Organization, private agricultural agencies, District and State Department of Agriculture consisting of seven persons (7).

Lastly, the research informants in this category are the bank, which is involved in providing financial loans to develop agricultural projects under the Agropreneur Muda program i.e., Agrobank. Through this interview it will focus on the role of bank agencies in helping this group and provide comments or suggestions for aspects related to financial management for the young farmer that joined this program.

The type of interview conducted for this study was fully based on semi-structured interviews with the research informants to obtain detailed information related to the research topic. The interviews were conducted online, either through WhatsApp calls or video calls, to save time and provide convenience for the research informants during the interview sessions. This method was fully adopted in response to the request made by all the research informants themselves. The data analysis for this study was conducted entirely using the ATLAS.ti method. For ethical considerations, all research informants involved as research informants in this study were provided with official consent letters issued by the university. At the same time, a draft of the interview questions was given to them in advance before they agreed to participate in the interview.

The transcribed data will then be analyzed thematically to suit the objective of this research. Through the process of thematic analysis, it will be examining the perspectives of different research informants, highlighting similarities and differences, and generating unanticipated insights related to the implementation of Agropreneur Muda program.

4. Findings

The Islamic perspective strongly emphasizes several core concepts within the religion itself that are closely related to internal things faith (*īmān*), intention (*niyyah*), and action (*‘amal*). In general, the Islamic worldview concise on the role of human in the earth is to worship (*‘ibādah*) towards Allah whether it is regarding with worldly and hereafter matters with worldly by following the guidelines that have been highlighted by Islam itself and at the same time interconnected with the values of sincerity and ethical. In this context, the agriculture and agropreneurship can be seen as a part of ibadah because of it is lawful and purposeful work instead of regarding with the worldly matters. Therefore, the Islamic principles will be able to look as a part of the best solution to address the problem of a wrong mindset and spiritual dimensions towards the young farmers that handled their agriculture projects.

4.1. Work as Worship and Agriculture as a Noble Vocation

For this context, the issue is referred to the attitude shown by the participants towards dependence on government assistance. The extension officer from the agricultural agencies were not really comfortable from the attitude portrayed by the participant of Agropreneur Muda being too dependent on the aids given by the government especially in supporting the continuity of their projects rather than putting his or her effort independently.

It means, some participants have a mindset that this program is totally sponsored by the government, looking at this program as an easy channel to get extra money from the agricultural agencies as long as their projects run smoothly. In fact, this kind of mindset needs to be scraped from their thinking so that they can see that the help given is only temporary at the beginning of a project and is not permanent to be given all the time. As an officer responsible for managing this program, I would comment that the lack of starting with good intentions is evident among some of the Agropreneur Muda participants.

“In my opinion, the shortcoming found among young farmers involved in this program is their lack of viewing this career as a form of worship to God in seeking halal sustenance, compared to entering this career with the sole intention of gaining profit” (Officer 1).

Somehow, the attitude of being dependent on assistance and aid is a misunderstanding by the participants of Agropreneur Muda program and also against the values of an agropreneur. The future of farming should be based on one’s own effort so as to remain steadfast in agriculture. The impact of such aid being given is that recipients keep waiting for more; they can whine and cry as much as they want and assistance will be given perhaps not in monetary form. This perspective reframes farming as a dignified and spiritually rewarding occupation, contrary to the mindset among some youth who perceive agriculture as a “fallback” or low-status career. By cultivating a mindset that views agriculture as both beneficial and blessed, programs can instill deeper motivation and pride in agropreneurship.

In Islam, work is regarded not merely as an economic activity but as an act of worship (*‘ibādah*) when carried out with sincerity, honesty, and responsibility. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the dignity of labor, stating that the most

virtuous food a person can eat is from what he has earned through his own hands (al-Bukhari, 1997). Agriculture, in particular, is viewed as a noble vocation because it sustains communities and contributes to collective welfare. The Prophet also highlighted that when a Muslim plant a tree or sows a crop from which humans, animals, or birds eat, it will be counted as charity (*sadaqah*) for him (Muslim, 2007). One of the officers shared the view that the agricultural sector is a branch of '*fardhu kifayah*' or collective responsibility from an Islamic perspective;

"For me as well, when a farmer intends and has the mindset to fulfil one of the communal obligations ('fardhu kifayah') to society particularly in producing halal food sources for the Muslim community through a career in the agricultural sector then such a career should not be looked down upon, but should be regarded on par with other professions" (Officer 2).

This perspective aligns closely with the Agropreneur Muda program, which aims to elevate farming from being perceived as a "low-prestige job" to a respected and purposeful career. By embedding the Islamic principle of work as worship, young agropreneurs can approach their agricultural activities with a sense of spiritual fulfillment, discipline, and ethical responsibility. Framing agriculture as a noble vocation further motivates youth to remain committed to the sector, not only for financial gain but also as a contribution to society, food security, and national development. Such values can reinforce resilience, reduce dropout rates, and encourage sustainable long-term engagement in agriculture.

4.2. *Amānah* (Trust) and Integrity in Resource Utilization

There have been cases among Agropreneur Muda participants involving the misuse of resources such as subsidies, financial grants, loans, agricultural tools, and farming inputs that were provided either free of charge or through government-supported schemes. The common stigma reflected in the attitudes of some young farmers is that such assistance is not perceived as a trust (*amānah*) to be carried out responsibly, but rather is taken lightly simply because it was received without cost. This practice, however, reflects a misuse of government aid and constitutes a breach of trust from the Islamic perspective. The officer who is experienced in handling the matter regarding Agropreneur Muda, commented about the untrustworthiness among the young farmers involved in this program after receiving the financial aid from the ministry;

"There are a few participants under this program who do not trust the physical assistance provided by the agricultural agency where they have sold agricultural tools and agricultural inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides at cheap prices to other parties for personal purposes. With things like this, it causes regret to the district agricultural agency because the aid approved by this party is not used optimally for the purpose of developing their agricultural projects in the Young Agropreneur" (Officer 3).

In addition, according to the officer stated that the issue of trust happened due to the incorrect mindset among the participants of Agropreneur Muda;

"In my opinion, when I was serving in managing matters related to grant or funding approvals under the Agropreneur Muda program, I observed

that some of them still had the mindset that the assistance provided for free by the ministry was not regarded as a trust that needed to be used responsibly. Instead, such assistance became an opportunity for a small number of them to pursue personal gain” (Officer 4).

For this situation, the officer detected low sense of awareness among the young farmers that joined in this program especially the value of trust;

“The value of trust must be instilled within every individual, especially among those who receive government funding, so that this responsibility is upheld and utilized in the best possible manner” (Officer 5).

In addressing this matter, Islam underscores the concept of *Amanah*, which embodies trust, responsibility, and accountability in the management of resources, the fulfillment of obligations, and the practice of honesty. The Qur’an emphasizes: “Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts (*amānāh*) to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice” (Islamic Book Trust, 2005). The positive impact of instilling the value of *Amanah* in individuals, particularly among young farmers involved in this program, is that it cultivates transparency in their character and responsibility, neglecting misuse or overdependence on government aid (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007; Chapra, 2000). When the value of *Amanah* is instilled among young farmers in this program, it can reduce the exploitation of resources in Malaysia’s agricultural sector.

4.3. Sabr (Patience) and Tawakkul (Reliance on Allah)

Another issue expressed by the research informant is about youths who cannot stay longer with the Agropreneur Muda program as a farmer does not provide a promising income. Most of them prefer to find jobs with a fixed salary, quick money and stable income especially in sustaining their daily economy life. Fast money will be the main consideration among youths who look for immediate comfort and lifestyle. The officer that represented one of the agricultural agencies said that;

“We cannot blame 100% on the young people who are not consistent in the agricultural industry, especially for the participants inside Agropreneur Muda program. This is because they feel that the income earned through this sector is not consistent with the current context. Furthermore, with the increase in the cost of living, income stability for a career becomes the main choice for this group. When the government created a grant for Agropreneur Muda within RM20,000 to RM30,000 for each of the project, for me it’s good enough initiative made by MAFL. However, based on my experience in managing agriculture, I found that the value was not enough to get a consistent profit. This is because, young people will face problems such as the increase in the cost of inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides imported from foreign countries, vegetable market prices tied to control prices, price games from middlemen and finally environmental factors that cause the profit earned is not properly earned as the capital released to carry out the project causes huge losses to the farmers. It is actually not easy for me to attract and convince young people to venture into this field of food production because the income earned is not stable at all” (Officer 6).

It is supported by other Ministry of Food Industry (MAFI) officer;

“What we can see with the rapid development of the 'gig economy' in Malaysia, it has to some extent caused a change in the mindset of young people in this country to not rely on the mindset of 'eating a salary'. With this Agropreneur Muda program planned by MAFI, it can attract this group to get involved in the country's agriculture even though it takes a long time to be involved massively among those youths” (Officer 7).

One of the participants shared his experienced in managing agriculture project more than 5 years;

“In my personal opinion, ensuring the continuity and consistency of young people in this country to remain committed to the agricultural sector requires a high level of patience before achieving success in this field. Agriculture is not a career that can guarantee definite profits within a specific period; instead, it requires time and extensive experience to truly understand the real challenges that occur in this sector. Farmers must endure various tests such as rising agricultural input costs, declining market prices, and pest attacks while maintaining strong patience throughout these challenges” (Participant 1).

It supported by another participant regarding the positive impact of involving in agriculture sector shaped his personality to become as a patience person in real life;

“For me personally, as a participant in this program, the agricultural sector is different from other careers. This is because before achieving success in this field, farmers themselves will experience failure in the early stages of implementing their agricultural projects due to various factors. However, such failures do not mark the end of a career in agriculture; rather, they teach us to experience the process of falling and rising, and to continue learning from the mistakes we have made previously” (Participant 2).

In this context, participants of the Agropreneur Muda program need to cultivate a mindset encouraged by Islam through the concepts of *Sabr* (patience) and *Tawakkul* (reliance on Allah). This is because the agricultural sector is often confronted with challenges such as climate change, pests, and fluctuating markets. By applying these two concepts, young farmers will be better able to endure and manage such hardships at the same time will develop our psychological resilience and long-term thinking rather than thinking more towards the instant profits. Based on one hadith from the Prophet stated that: *“If you were to rely upon Allah with due reliance, He would provide for you as He provides for the birds: they go out hungry in the morning and return full in the evening.”* (al-Tirmidhi, n.d.). Through the application of patience and reliance on Allah, young farmers can develop a balanced mindset that prevents passive attitudes, protects them from laziness and despair, and nurtures a sense of responsibility.

4.3. Taawun (Mutual cooperation)

An issue closely related to Agropreneur Muda, particularly involving cross-agricultural agencies or ministries, is weak cooperation. This stems from the mindset often held by

agricultural officers responsible for managing the implementation of the Agropreneur Muda program, whereby they assume that the program is exclusively under the jurisdiction of a single agency once the grant allocation has been approved at the ministerial level, without extending across other agricultural agencies or ministries.

However, most of the agricultural and ministries agencies continue acting in silos, the exposure to agricultural knowledge to the participants cannot be delivered comprehensively. In addition, some other situations discovered that the coordination and collaboration between the main stakeholders at the ministerial level and regional or local authorities are still not very strong in making this MAFI ministry initiative more effective. It means that, at the policy implementation level, it is agreed that these three ministries are important stakeholders to help execute the Agropreneur Muda program such as the Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Ministry of Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives. As planned at the policy level, the involvement of four major ministries to run this program could perhaps become a stronger force in ensuring the success of the program.

One of the participants of Agropreneur Muda program noticed that;

“Through my experienced in dealing with agricultural agencies, it is very clear that the collaboration between agricultural agencies under MAFI only happens at the service level. Basically, the agencies will compete with each other whether healthy or not and not helping each other” (Participant 3).

It also supported by one of the participants believed that the mutual cooperation could contributed to increase the productivity of young famers through their expertise;

“Based on my observations as a participant in this program, I found that each agricultural agency under the Ministry of Agriculture possesses its own expertise in enhancing the productivity of agricultural outputs produced by young farmers. However, the reality is that these areas of expertise within the various agencies are not fully utilized to improve the farmers’ skills in managing their agricultural projects effectively” (Participant 4).

Apart from that, the mutual cooperation among the participants of Agropreneur Muda itself is rarely found during the running of the agricultural project of a certain district. Most of the participants tend to carry out their agricultural project activities in a particular area without seeking views, suggestions, or feedback from peers who are more experienced in the sector. One of the participants commented that to this situation;

As a participant for this program, I found that the concept of mutual cooperation among the Agropreneur Muda participants themselves is not widely practiced within their groups. Many of them tend to carry out their agricultural projects individually without seeking support or assistance in the form of advice, guidance, or feedback from those who are more experienced. At times, this also becomes one of the contributing factors to project failure due to the absence of mutual cooperation among one another (Participant 5).

In this regard, an Islamic concept that can be applied to address the mindset issue often found among agricultural officers in managing the implementation of the Agropreneur Muda program is the cultivation of *Ta'awun* (mutual cooperation). As a fundamental principle, *Ta'awun* encourages collaboration and collective support in achieving a common goal. This aligns with the Qur'anic verse which clearly emphasizes this value: “*And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression*” (Islamic Book Trust, 2005). This is also supported by Islamic scholar Zakaria (2016), who explained that the concept of *Ta'awun* can strengthen the economic resilience of Muslim societies when social solidarity is emphasized in achieving a common objective. By cultivating this concept, the environment among agencies and ministries involved in the implementation of the Agropreneur Muda program can be transformed towards reducing isolation, promoting shared accountability, and contributing to the national goals of food security and agricultural reform.

4.4. Aligning Agropreneurship with *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*

One of the mindsets that needs to be transformed within Malaysia's agricultural system is the emphasis on environmental sustainability, whether at the level of agricultural agencies, ministries, or among participants of the Agropreneur Muda program. The adoption of safer and more sustainable farming practices in the country remains limited within the agricultural sector. A recurring mindset issue instilled by agricultural agencies and ministries in guiding young farmers under this program is that the focus is placed solely on to focus more on the production quantity of agriculture than aspects involving issues related to the importance of environment and sustainability.

This situation happened due to the inconsistency of the objectivity of policy to run this program. It becomes questionable among the private entities whether this program will make a reform in terms of the practice in our agricultural activities. The National Agrofood Policy is set up to produce safer foods to customers, yet the use of outdated, older brands of pesticides and fertilizers do not comply with what is termed 'safe'. The private agencies that have turned to bio agriculture system are questioning about the safety of foods produced by the young farmers in the program, and what impact it has in the short and long terms specifically on human health and the environment in general. In one of the research informants, he criticized about the direction of the program;

“In my opinion, I have a criticism that I want to throw in relation to the policy objectives in achieving food security. For me, the objective for the National Agro-Food Policy in Malaysia is not in line with the concept of food security itself. The main purpose of the current policy is only focused on producing the maximum amount of agricultural produce that can be brought about in a particular crop season. But in terms of the safety of food that will be used by consumers, it is a big question whether it is safe or not safe to eat. In my observation, the implementation of the agricultural program under the Agropreneur Muda program is only focused on the use of chemical-based poisons and fertilizers. I, as a private agency that promotes and implements organic agriculture to farmers, organic based system should be the main focus in achieving the true concept of food security in the country's agro-food policy itself” (Officer 8).

One of the participants commented on the objectivity of Agropreneur Muda is not in line with the *Maqasid Shariah* especially in terms of the agricultural practice;

“My comment on the implementation of this program is that it does not align with the concepts outlined in our National Food Security framework. I believe that this program should serve as one of the initiatives for the ministry to reform the national agricultural system towards practices that are safer for both the environment and human health. However, efforts to promote safer agricultural practices in the country have not received strong support” (Participant 8).

Furthermore, one of the young farmers expressed the view that the contradiction between the concept of food security and the program’s success is not aligned with the principles encouraged in the *Maqasid Shariah* itself;

“Even if this program succeeds in increasing supply and demand to meet the needs of both domestic and international consumers, if it results in negative impacts on the environment and human health, it would still be inconsistent with the objectives of food security embedded within the national agricultural policy” (Participant 9).

Based on [Auda \(2008\)](#) from an Islamic perspective, the emphasis in addressing this issue is grounded in the concept of *Maqasid Shariah*, or the objectives of Islamic law, which include the protection of religion (*dīn*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*‘aql*), lineage (*nasl*), and wealth (*māl*). In the context of agropreneurship, this is particularly relevant to the protection of life and intellect, where concerns such as food safety and the environmental impact of excessive pesticide use are strongly emphasized in Islam. The safety of food produced by young farmers in the implementation of the Agropreneur Muda program has become a major concern among Malaysian consumers, particularly regarding the extent to which locally produced food is safe for consumption. The *Maqasid Shariah* thus serves as a foundational principle for young farmers to prioritize the safety and integrity of agricultural production intended for consumers.

5. Recommendations

5.1. Integration of Islamic Ethics in Agropreneur Training Modules

The government and agricultural agencies need to undertake significant reforms in the agricultural sector, particularly in ensuring that training programs under the Agropreneur Muda initiative emphasize Islamic ethical education. Such values should be systematically incorporated into teaching and learning processes through well-designed modules that can be effectively implemented among the targeted groups. For example, agricultural training modules should integrate key Islamic values such as *ṣabr* (patience), *tawakkul* (trust in God), *niyyah* (right intention), and *amānah* (trustworthiness). These principles can be contextualized through case studies and reinforced with Qur’anic verses, serving as a core pedagogical approach to shaping the mindset of young agropreneurs in alignment with Islamic ethical perspectives.

5.2. Collaboration with Islamic Scholars and Institutions

The collaboration with Islamic institutions and scholars within the country is essential. Their involvement is crucial in providing appropriate guidance to ensure that agropreneurship training modules are developed in alignment with Islamic perspectives, particularly in terms of pedagogy, theology, and effective contextual application. Such collaboration would indirectly promote the integration of Islamic values within the framework of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, emphasizing principles such as economic justice, sustainability, and social welfare.

5.3. Mentorship and *Tarbiyah*-Based Entrepreneurship Programs

Next is the development of a mentorship module grounded in *tarbiyah*-based entrepreneurship programs. *Tarbiyah* in the Islamic approach refers to a method of educating and nurturing, delivered by experienced Muslim entrepreneurs who not only focus on business affairs but also emphasize the cultivation of discipline, humility, and purpose-driven entrepreneurship. Through the integration of *tarbiyah* within mentoring sessions for Agropreneur Muda participants, the program can generate long-term impact, as the learning process is reinforced through practical implementation rather than theoretical knowledge alone.

5.4. Islamic Social Support Networks

The establishment of an *ukhwah*-based approach should be introduced at an early stage within the agropreneurship ecosystem. By adopting this concept, a supportive and cooperative environment can be cultivated among young farmers, fostering peer learning, shared accountability, and mutual encouragement rooted in the spirit of Islamic brotherhood. Indirectly, this approach would assist young farmers in achieving collective outcomes while reducing the sense of isolation that often arises during their participation in agricultural programs.

5.5. Policy Reforms to Incentivize Value-Based Practices

In this regard, policy reforms are required by policymakers to shift away from a system that is primarily focused on incentive-based practices. Instead, recognition and special incentives such as awards, funding priority, and certifications should be granted to youth agropreneurs who demonstrate high ethical standards, strong social responsibility, and long-term commitment. By adopting such an approach, these exemplary behaviors can be encouraged and emulated by others, while simultaneously portraying a positive image of the agricultural sector.

5.6. Longitudinal Research on Islamic Value Impact

The effectiveness of implementing Islamic values in shaping the mindset of young farmers participating in the Agropreneur Muda program must be assessed through rigorous academic and policy research. Such evaluation is particularly important in measuring the extent to which these values influence business longevity, ethical decision-making, and social impact. This approach is vital for enhancing and informing broader policy integration in future studies. All in all, the integration of Islamic values among young farmers who are seriously engaged in the agricultural sector has the potential to cultivate agropreneurs with strong spiritual and moral foundations, a sense

of responsibility, resilience in facing hardship, and the capacity to contribute meaningfully to both the economy and society. This represents an initiative that can support long-term development, provided that the emphasis on Islamic values remains central to the formation of the next generation of young agropreneurs in Malaysia.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, the challenges faced by young agropreneurs in Malaysia clearly demonstrate that their complex involvement in the agricultural sector cannot be attributed solely to a lack of capital, technology, or market access. Despite the extensive structural and technical support provided by the government to the target groups participating in the Agropreneur Muda program, the primary obstacles remain rooted in mindset-related issues such as impatience, short-term thinking, low resilience, and the absence of strong ethical foundations. This study has shown that the problematic mindsets among young agropreneurs are closely linked to deficiencies of a spiritual and moral nature. By incorporating Islamic values grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah, a more holistic solution can be fostered through principles such as *ṣabr* (patience), *tawakkul* (dependence upon God), *ikhtiar* (continuous effort), *amānah* (honesty), and *barakah* (divine blessings derived from ethical conduct). By cultivating those Islamic values into the training and development activities among the young agropreneurs, it can be easily to develop a person to be a resilient, ethical, and sustainable entrepreneurial culture either in economic growth, individual moral and societal well-being.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

The researchers used the research ethics provided by the Department of Political Science at IIUM. All procedures performed in this study involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee. Informed consent was obtained from all participants according to their own agreement whether by online or email.

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Conflict of Interest

All authors have no conflicts of interest.

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