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## **The Reimagining of Indonesian Millennial Farmers' Identity on Social Media**

Vidi Sukmayadi, Nadya Salsabila & Karim Suryadi\*

Department of Communication, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung 40154, Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author: [vsukmayadi@upi.edu](mailto:vsukmayadi@upi.edu)

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**Abstract:** This study explores how millennial farmers in Indonesia's Farmer Rejuvenation Program shape their professional identities and present themselves on social media. The authors have recognized a notable gap in the representation of agriculture and farmers across both mainstream and social media platforms. Using the phenomenological approach with 8 millennial farmer informants, the study identifies three key dimensions of their identity construction: pride in being "agricultural sustainability heroes," viewing farming as a noble profession despite its unpopularity, and preserving familial occupational heritage. The study additionally explores their digital self-presentation techniques; millennial farmers use social media for three primary reasons: marketing farming as a career, involving younger generations in agriculture, and endorsing agricultural entrepreneurial initiatives. Their implementation strategies involve the preservation of authenticity through the use of spontaneous content creation, the application of narrative devices, and the emphasis on educational resources. The overall findings suggest that millennial farmers successfully integrate traditional agricultural values with modern digital communication tactics, potentially offering a solution to Indonesia's agricultural regeneration crisis. These strategies reflect 3 key identity dimensions: professional credibility, cultural rootedness, and aspirational modernity. Finally, it is expected that this study could contribute to our understanding of professional identity construction in the digital era, particularly in traditionally stigmatized fields such as farming. Hence, the significance of the study lies in its potential as a benchmark for farmer revitalization campaigns, offering insights into the utilization of digital platforms to reshape perceptions of agriculture while preserving authenticity in agricultural communication and development initiatives.

**Keywords:** Agriculture; farmers; Indonesia; millennials; phenomenology

### **Introduction**

As an agrarian nation, Indonesia's agriculture sector is essential in fulfilling national food requirements. Agriculture plays a crucial role in achieving domestic food security, hence fostering food sovereignty. The period from 2020 to 2024 poses challenges for the agricultural sector to attain advanced, autonomous, and modern practices, with a primary objective of cultivating 2.5 million millennial entrepreneurs in the agricultural domain by 2025 (PPSDMP, 2021).

Thus, fostering entrepreneurship among young farmers is regarded as a viable strategic measure to attain this objective. The participation of the younger generation in agriculture is essential for advancing sustainable agricultural regeneration (Agumagu et al., 2018). Particularly when considering that agricultural development in Indonesia today confronts the difficulty of insufficient human resource regeneration, attributed to a diminishing interest among the younger generation in the agricultural sector (Pusdiktan, 2017). This

interest in agricultural careers is a major contributing factor to the declining involvement of the younger generation in the agricultural sector.

As of 2011, the agricultural sector employed 20.18% of the youth, according to DataIndonesia.id. However, this figure has since decreased to 19.18% in 2021 (Mahdi, 2022). The age composition of farmers, majority of whom are approximately 50 years old, is indicative of the youth's lack of interest. The 2018 Inter-Census Agricultural Survey results indicate that the number of agricultural business households is distributed by age. Specifically, farmers aged 54 years and older comprise 10,379,211 individuals, while those aged 25-34 comprise 2,722,446 people (SUTAS, 2018).

The lack of participation of the younger generation in the agricultural sector is partly attributed to a negative stigma that perceives farming as a low-class and unpromising occupation (Prastiwi et al., 2023). Anwarudin et al., (2020) noted that the younger generation perceives agricultural business as less profitable. Consequently, the internal factors associated with the millennial generation contribute to the decreased interest in agricultural business, which is perceived as a less prestigious profession (Zulpardiasyah & Eko, 2022). This condition prompts millennials to seek professions beyond the agricultural sector, which are perceived as more prestigious and offer clearer financial prospects.

The agricultural sector is frequently perceived as less prestigious due to its technological lag and insufficient income generation (Susilowati, 2016). Farmers are depicted as individuals struggling to meet their needs, resulting in a perception of their status as inferior among certain demographics, particularly the younger generation (Khoiriyah, 2017). This has resulted in the endangerment of farmer regeneration in Indonesia. The agricultural relay must be embraced by the younger generation, as they will play a crucial role in the future success of agriculture. This is due to their greater familiarity with the adoption of contemporary technologies that can enhance the agricultural sector (Effendy et al., 2022).

In response to issues affecting regeneration in agriculture, the government has focused on enhancing the interest of the younger generation in this industry. The West Java Provincial government initiated the Millennial Farmer initiative in 2021, which was subsequently renamed the Farmer Regeneration program on May 27, 2024. This program is a government project aimed at cultivating young farmers in West Java across many agricultural commodities. According to the official website [Regenerasipetani.jabarprov.go.id](http://Regenerasipetani.jabarprov.go.id), this initiative seeks to cultivate agricultural enterprises among the millennial age through the effective utilization of technology, thereby fostering an independent, advanced, and sustainable agricultural environment.

This study emphasizes the novelty of looking at how West Java millennial farmers, participants in the Farmer Regeneration program, utilize virtual self-presentation strategies on social media to portray the farming profession. The negative stigma associated with the farming industry necessitates the involvement of Communication Science to elucidate the prevailing issues, particularly through the domain of personal branding and self-presentation methods. Self-presentation is an action undertaken by individuals to portray oneself in order to attain the desired self-image (Juditha, 2014).

The rapid advancement of information and communication technology in the digital era significantly impacts individual self-presentation efforts (Silaban et al., 2019). Social media influences an individual's public persona and image, allowing for self-management (Engholm & Hansen, 2014). In the dynamic realm of social media, self-presentation is crucial for developing mechanisms that facilitate the dissemination of information globally, with the objective of shaping perceptions (Chen, 2013; Goffman, 1959; Schau & Gilly, 2003).

This study serves as an initiative to open public awareness regarding the poor state of farmer regeneration. It provides a detailed overview of the self-presentation strategies employed by millennial farmers on social media, which can serve as a reflection to stimulate interest in agriculture among the younger generation. Hence, this study is shaped by two research objectives. The first objective is to better understand how millennial farmers in Indonesia perceive their farming experience, given the aforementioned concerns. Secondly, the study also aims to explore the self-presentation strategies of millennial farmers on social media.

## Literature Review

This paper's literature review presents two central aspects related to farmer rejuvenation and social media activities. First, we would like to provide an overview of the millennial farmer program in Indonesia. Second,

we will discuss the role of social media in self-presentation and phenomenology, illustrating how millennial farmer identities/experiences are constructed and mediated via digital platforms.

### 1. Characteristics of Millennial Farmers in the Farmer Regeneration Program

The Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Indonesia has introduced the term millennial farmer. The term millennial farmer is believed to attract younger people to work in agriculture. The word 'millennial' refers to the current young generation, synonymous with modern, up-to-date people who love everything related to advanced technology (Chaney, 2019). The term millennial farmer has gained momentum because the millennial generation will dominate Indonesia's labour force in the coming years. The Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture has introduced the term millennial farmer to maintain the sustainability of Indonesia's agricultural system and accelerate the adoption of information technology in agriculture.

According to Presidential Regulation No. 18 of 2020 concerning the 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN), the development of the agricultural sector is expected to continue to support positive economic growth through improvements/changes in strategies to increase productivity, strengthen product added value, sustainable investment, increase the labour market and improve the quality of human resources (HR). To achieve these expectations, the West Java Provincial Government has issued Governor Regulation No. 25 of 2021 concerning the Development of Human Resources in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry through the Millennial Farmers programme, which changed its name on 27 May 2024 to the Farmer Regeneration programme and branding it as "the Millennial Farmers Program".

Millennial farmers are young people in agriculture, part of the millennial generation. Based on Minister of Agriculture Regulations No. 04 and No. 09 of 2019 concerning Guidelines for the Movement to Develop Agricultural Human Resources Towards a World Food Barn in 2045, millennial farmers are farmers aged 19-39 years old and/or farmers who are adaptive to digital technology (Ministry of Agriculture, 2019). The participants in the Millennial Farmer Programme are millennials who, according to Novisma & Iskandar (2023), are a generation that incorporates technology into all aspects of life. The characteristics of millennial farmers that most strongly influence millennial performance are educational attainment and formal experience, as well as technology use (Haryanto et al., 2022). A clear example is that almost all millennials use smartphones. By using these devices, millennials become more productive and efficient individuals (Indardi & Ramadianti, 2021; Puspasari et al., 2024).

Previous studies consistently highlight that millennial farmers actively leverage social media and communication technologies to support their agricultural businesses. Rochaeni (2023) shows that millennial youth use diverse platforms that can be optimized for entrepreneurial activities, while Yunandar et al. (2020) emphasize their role in expanding cooperation networks, promoting and marketing products, and sharing agricultural knowledge. Similarly, Arvianti et al. (2022) note that this generation's use of digital tools enables more efficient product distribution and fairer pricing compared to traditional marketing chains. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that millennial farmers' familiarity with the internet and social media makes them a compelling focus for research on modern agricultural entrepreneurship.

### 2. The Concept of Social Media and Its Relation to Self-Presentation and Phenomenology

In this subsection, the authors aim to connect the philosophical foundation of social media and self-presentation in this study. Social media is a relatively new phenomenon and, due to its rapid spread and importance in major subjects and events, has attracted the attention of researchers. Recent statistics reveal that more than 5 billion people worldwide use social media, spending an average of 2 hours and 27 minutes per day (Capriotti et al., 2024). These platforms allow users to easily create, upload, and exchange information, images, and videos, facilitating dynamic two-way communication. Social media encompasses various platforms, including social networks (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok), video-sharing sites (e.g., YouTube), and news-sharing platforms (e.g., LinkedIn).

The phenomenon of social media has become a place for self-presentation practices. This social phenomenon continues today, with people trying to manage their impressions not only in person but also in a digital context, especially on social media platforms (Bolu-Steve et al., 2022; Sukmayadi et al., 2024).

According to Jones & Pittman (1982), self-presentation is an individual's effort to make an impression on others and is influenced by several motives.

Then, the practice of self-presentation on social media can be better understood through a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology emphasises subjective experiences and how individuals interpret the world around them (Goffman, 1956), including how they form and present their identity in the digital space. In this context, self-presentation is not only a strategic act to create an impression, but also an expression of an individual's life experiences, perceptions, and intentionality towards themselves and others. Social media is a medium through which these phenomenological experiences are manifested in posts, visual narratives, and digital interactions that reflect how a person wants to be seen and understood by the public (Fadhila et al., 2024). Thus, self-presentation on social media is not only related to impression management but also part of the existential process of constructing a projected self-identity in the digital age.

## Methodology

Employing a qualitative approach and phenomenological method, this study seeks to understand the significance of farmer identity for millennial farmers as well as investigate their self-presentation techniques on social media. The qualitative technique was chosen because it focuses on subjective meanings and experiences that are difficult to quantify, allowing researchers to explore the meanings associated with particular events (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Phenomenology is employed to comprehend the manner in which humans experience specific phenomena, such as those linked to technology. This is accomplished by highlighting the structure of lived experiences in order to achieve a profound comprehension of the significance of these experiences (Cilesiz, 2011).

### 1. Study Participants

Purposive sampling was implemented with a criterion sampling strategy to identify research participants. The selection of informants in qualitative research is predicated upon specific and pertinent criteria that are relevant to the research issue (Patton, 2002). This study employs the following criteria: (1) millennial farmers engaged in the government's Farmer Regeneration program; (2) active social media users who disseminate content related to their farming activities; and (3) micro-influencers with follower counts ranging from 1,000 to 100,000, to aid researchers in addressing the problem formulation. Micro-influencers were selected due to their perceived stronger connection with the audience (Girsang, 2020; Lowe-Calverley & Grieve (2021)).

The author employed the snowball sampling technique to address the challenge of locating participants. Due to the competitive nature of this government program, the number of millennial farmers is limited compared to the general farmer community; therefore, we solicited referrals for additional relevant informants from the previously interviewed informants. In qualitative research, informants not only provide specific data but also help researchers identify additional significant informants (Burgess, 1982). Based on this process, eight millennial farmer informants participated in this study.

This study was carried out within the framework of the Farmer Regeneration program in West Java, initiated by the West Java Provincial Government in 2021. This program was selected for its status as the country's inaugural initiative, its engagement of millennials active on social media, and its objective to advance agribusiness through technological innovation.

### 2. Data Collection

Primary data was gathered through in-depth interviews employing a semi-structured methodology. This method allows for the exploration of supplementary topics and specific concerns (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Kallio et al., 2016). The interviews were conducted online via the Zoom platform due to time limitations and researcher accessibility. Nonetheless, the technical guidelines for online interviews proposed by Salmons (2015) were adhered to by the author. The interview guide comprised general guidelines, demographic information, and a question grid aligned with the research focus. The total duration of the interviews was 7 hours and 33 minutes, averaging 56 minutes per informant, which, according to DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree (2006), is considered an optimal length for semi-structured interviews.

Alongside interviews, document studies obtained from the informants' personal Instagram accounts served as secondary data to enhance the findings. The study of documents aids in interpreting data and findings, backed by the historical context of the research subject. This aligns with the benefits of documentation study methods, such as easy access to data, comprehensive data presentation, written evidence, and efficiency in terms of time and cost (Creswell, 2013).

### 3. Data Analysis

The data analysis was performed interactively and continuously until saturation was achieved, following the steps delineated by Moustakas (1994), which included bracketing, intuiting, analyzing, and describing. During the bracketing stage, which involves the suspension of bias to identify pertinent information (Greening, 2019; Sanders, 1982), the researcher generated 384 codes, subsequently transferred to an Excel file (.xlsx) for the intuiting stage.

During the intuiting stage, characterized by the comprehension of data, the researcher successfully condensed 384 codes into 53 codes by identifying emerging patterns without imposing personal interpretation. The analysis stage, focused on identifying patterns and connections among themes, yielded three themes for the primary findings of the first research question and eight themes for the primary findings of the second research question. In the final stage of describing, the researcher synthesizes an overall understanding of the informant's experience by interpreting data derived from previously established theme patterns. This process aims to produce a comprehensive description of the experience's significance to the informant.

### 4. Ensuring Qualitative Data Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the data gathered during collection and analysis, researchers employed three dependability techniques: member checking, Inter-Coder Reliability (ICR), and data triangulation. The member checking technique, which involves sending interview transcripts to informants for verification and feedback (Creswell, 2013), was implemented, resulting in all informants providing feedback, including revisions to diction and information, thereby enhancing the validity of the data transcription.

Secondly, Inter-Coder Reliability (ICR) was employed to enhance the dependability of qualitative coding by incorporating additional evaluators to mitigate researcher bias, with reliability assessed through the congruence of codes among researchers and evaluators. The ICR computation yielded 92.67%, indicating that the data coding is highly trustworthy, as the acceptable threshold for inter-coder reliability is 0.8 (80%; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Third, triangulation of data sources was conducted by consulting and elaborating on the study findings with existing literature and a relevant expert to strengthen the interpretation of the findings, thereby enhancing the study's trustworthiness.

The ethical standards of this study were also upheld through the completion of the following stages: obtaining ethical clearance, obtaining research permission from the university, and obtaining consent forms from informants. The researcher also ensured the privacy of the information provided by the participants and the anonymity of their identities. The authors also acknowledge the use of AI tools in support of this study: Elicit, used to structure the review of international literature with column-based features; Perplexity AI for pattern analysis of interview data, at least by highlighting repetitive themes; and Google Translate to aid language translation. The use of AI tools followed the ethical rules of our university, ensuring the soundness and credibility of the results. The next section explains the research timetable.

## The Findings

### 1. How Millennial Farmer Identify Themselves

In addressing the first study objective, we looked at the value of the identity associated with being a millennial farmer. The interviews identified three primary themes: 1) Pride in the role of "agricultural sustainability hero"; 2) Farmer as a noble profession despite its unpopularity; 3) Farming as the preservation of familial occupational heritage.

### *Pride in The Role of "Agricultural Sustainability Hero"*

In the first theme, millennial farmers define themselves as "agricultural sustainability hero" who are instrumental in the preservation of national food security. They recognized the significance of farmer regeneration in light of the fact that the present number of young generation farmers is only 20-30% of that of senior farmers.

Informants consistently emphasized the vital role of farmers in sustaining national food security. As Informant 3 (male, farmer, 28 years old) articulated,

*"Farmers are like heroes because if we didn't have farmers, we couldn't eat"*

The informants in this study recognized the dire state of agricultural regeneration, noticing that only a small number of farmers in Indonesia are young in comparison to senior farmers. They emphasized the potential consequences of farmer extinction, with Informant 5 (male, farmer, 35 years old) cautioning that in the absence of agricultural regeneration,

*"food import costs would escalate significantly".*

In other words, they see farmers not only as farmers who grow food, but also as environmental protectors who conserve nature and ecosystems.

### *Farmer as a Noble Profession Despite Its Unpopularity*

The second theme that emerged was that millennial farmers perceive the farming profession as a noble occupation, which is rooted in a profound understanding of the challenging obstacles that farmers in Indonesia encounter. As stated by Informant 1 (male, farmer, 30 years old) who described farming as "one of the most noble professions", emphasizing the uncertainty and sacrifices involved.

They identified a variety of internal and external factors that make their position so challenging. Internal factors include a commitment of time and effort with no guarantee of success, the significant chance of crop failure, and income unpredictability. As pinpointed by informant 5 (male, farmer, 35 years old)

*"today youngsters tend to get a corporate job since it seems could give the, financial stability rather than being a farmer".*

Meanwhile, external factors include uncontrollable agricultural variables like weather and climate, changes in field functions, pest threats, and difficulties with marketing. Their school expertise in agriculture and agribusiness undoubtedly enhances their awareness of the complexities of this vocation in the face of industrialization and a lack of regeneration in the field. Farmers are viewed as heroes who persevere in the face of adversity, rather than simply economic actors.

### *Farming as The Preservation of Familial Occupational Heritage*

The final theme about the meaning of being a millennial farmer is the preservation of familial occupational traditions. The majority of interviewees commenced their farming journey through familial heritage. The familial influence is the primary catalyst for their engagement in agriculture, as evidenced by several subsequent quotations:

*"I became interested in agriculture because my parents are farmers"* (Informant 1, male, 30 years old),

*"Ornamental plants have been a family tradition from grandfather to parents to siblings"* (Informant 5 male, 35 years old),

*"My father had an agriculture hobby that was passed down, and I eventually became seriously involved in agriculture"* (Informant, 7 male, 22 years old).

The findings indicate that millennial farmers saw their chosen career as a noble calling rather than merely a job. They possess a profound understanding of the agricultural sector's issues while retaining a positive disposition. The three primary themes agricultural sustainability hero, noble occupation, and continuance of family tradition demonstrate the intricacy of millennial farmers' identity within the framework of sustainable agricultural growth in Indonesia.

## 2. Constructing the Self on Social Media

Self-representation theory on social media explores how individuals present themselves to others through digital platforms. This theory suggests that people curate their online personas by selectively sharing content that reflects their desired image. The second primary objective of this study is to explore the self-presentation strategies of millennial farmers on social media. We attempt to understand how these millennial farmers employ digital platforms to establish a positive image of their profession, attract the younger generation, and support agricultural entrepreneurship activities. The findings revealed that their self-presentation practices are primarily motivated by three objectives: rebranding farming as a profession, engaging the younger generation in agriculture, and supporting agricultural entrepreneurial activities.

### *Rebranding Farming as A Profession*

A primary finding was the attempt of millennial farmers to rebrand their line of work. All informants indicated that contemporary society frequently undervalues the farming profession. Informant 6 (male, farmer, 24 years old) said,

*"There exists a perception that farming is unclean and financially inadequate; however, this is a misconception. Farmers are not merely manual laborers; akin to employment in an oil refinery, the work may be dirty, yet it is still rewarding."*

The statement suggests that there is a negative connotation that requires to be altered. Informant 3 (male, farmer, 28 years old) further stated,

*"I am trying to brand myself as an agro-sociopreneur, with the hope that agriculture will become increasingly popular."*

They seek to demonstrate that the role of a farmer is not solely characterized by physical labor in the fields, but also by innovation and creativity. As a result of the current society's negative perception of the farmer's profession, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of informants have a motivation for rebranding the farmer's profession in order to improve the image and social status by raising positive awareness of the farmer's profession and breaking the insignificant and low economic stigma on farmers' identities.

### *Engaging the Younger Generation in Agriculture*

The second objective in the development of their social media persona is to motivate young individuals to pursue careers in agriculture. Additionally, Informant 3 (male, farmer, 28 years old) stated,

*"To motivate youngsters to think about careers in agriculture."*

Informant 8 (male, farmer, 26 years old) underscored the significance of the younger generation's involvement in agriculture by stating,

*"As a young farmer, I wish to extend an invitation to my peers. We live in an agricultural nation, and if we do not take the initiative to preserve this legacy, who will?"*

Similarly, Informant 7 (male, farmer, 22 years old) attempted to ask individuals to become engaged in agriculture, and it was clear from his experience that some people were invited by his self-presentation techniques,

*"I want to invite them, because it turns out that there are really some people who are interested in agriculture".*

Similarly, Informant 4's (female, farmer, 25 years old) goal was not only to convert disinterest into interest, but also to encourage action from those who were already interested in agriculture:

*"Well, I want to brand it, I want to convince people who aren't interested, and then people who are already interested can continue and do more concrete initiatives."*

Those excerpts imply that the study informants are self-motivated in carrying out self-presentation on social media with the goal of encouraging young people to get interested in agriculture.

### *Supporting Agricultural Entrepreneurial Activities*

The third finding indicates that millennial farmers utilize social media to enhance their entrepreneurial endeavors. Informant 6 (male, farmer, 24 years old) stated,

*"Indeed, the rationale for utilizing social media is to enhance sales turnover."*

Informant 8 (male, farmer, 26 years old) stated that the use of social media had augmented their income by 70%. Informant 3 (male, farmer, 28 years old) highlighted the benefit of utilizing social media as a cost-efficient promotional tool, stating,

*"Social media is an effective and inexpensive medium for promotion compared to extensive campaigns that incur significant expenses, making it preferable to use social media."*

Consistent with Informant 5's (male, farmer, 35 years old) perspective, social media presents significant marketing prospects when appropriate hashtags are utilized and credible communities are engaged.

*"Social media is vast for marketing, provided we sell effectively, employ the correct hashtags, and participate in reputable trading communities; I believe the market will be highly accessible."*

Overall, these findings demonstrate that most informants possess self-interests in their self-presentation on social media to promote agricultural entrepreneurial operations, perceiving social media as a broad and effective promotional instrument. In the subsequent subsections, the researcher will look at the implementation of self-presentation strategies by millennial farmers on social media.

### **3. Digital Self-Presentation Implementation Strategies**

In this study, we define digital self-presentation as the methods and techniques that the informants (millennial farmers) employ to curate and administer their online personas are referred to as digital self-presentation implementation strategies. The Millennial farmers utilize educational content as a means of self-presentation on social media. Informant 3 (male, farmer, 28 years old) employs diverse content formats, including photos and videos, to visually illustrate the educational farming process:

*"The trick is to create content that can be educational about the benefits of plants in our lives, and made in the form of reels."*

### *Focusing on Educational Content*

Millennial farmers have leveraged social media platforms, particularly Instagram, to showcase their agricultural achievements, aiming to inspire and motivate their peers. Similar to Informant 6 (male, farmer,

24 years old), there are instances of posting insightful content to motivate peers. Informant 3 (male, farmer, 38 years old) similarly noted, *“Then usually on IG, sometimes on Instastory, like posting achievements.”* While some may interpret this as arrogance, but the actual intention is to draw attention and demonstrate that farming can yield satisfactory outcomes. Informant 7 (male, farmer, 22 years old) stated,

*“For example, if the post is about pleasant times, such as yesterday when I had a great harvest, a big profit, some would believe it was me bragging, but in reality, I am just trying to show my social media followers that farming life is not that bad”.*

The excerpts suggest that modern millennial farmers are not only involved in crop cultivation but also actively partake in marketing and promotional efforts through the content they produce. Furthermore, other informants were also consistently exchanging content. The audience is provided with insights into the dynamics of the agricultural market through posting content that includes training activities, seminars, and trade events, as well as exports to multiple countries.

Sharing a range of material, such as daily vlogs and details about events at exhibitions, helps them build strong networks and spread the word about the possibilities of modern agriculture. This shows that young farmers are the ones who bring about change by encouraging new ideas and teamwork in agriculture. Based on this self-presentation implementation, we can say that most of the people we talked to share educational content every day on the farm as the main type of content they share as a way for millennial farmers to show their constructed “self”.

### *Storytelling and Originality*

An integral component of their self-presentation techniques are also storytelling techniques. Through sharing their daily agricultural experiences, informants help their listeners to develop emotional ties. Storytelling from harvesting events might draw attention from others, Informant 7 (male, farmer, 22 years old) pointed out:

*“So if for example the content, for example I'm glad, I'm harvesting, say...”*

Informant 7's storytelling method aesthetic crop images with simple typography to add a fascinating visual element is one used in great effect. The main goal of this material is to expose farmers' daily activities in a straight and real manner, therefore reflecting their realities. In his interview, Informant 7:

*“Well, I like posting on Instagram stories, it's just a regular photo, a photo of a farm with simple typography like that, we tell the story about what we feel on that day, the point is consistently showing the farming activities”.*

This approach not only engages followers but also educates them about the hard work and dedication that goes into farming.

By providing a glimpse into the daily lives of farmers, Informant 7 is able to create a connection with his audience and showcase the importance of agriculture. Through his use of visual storytelling, he is able to communicate the emotions and experiences that come with working on a farm, ultimately shedding light on a way of life that is often overlooked. Similar techniques are also applied by most of the informants. They showcase a consistent self-presentation across different social media platforms to help build a cohesive and recognizable online identity. By doing this, they create strong networks and increase awareness of the possibilities of modern agriculture by showcasing their original content in a more contemporary way to their social media followers.

Consequently, the viewers can perceive the nature of a farmer's life through the projected images and narratives. The implementation of this technique indicates that the storytelling approach enhances information retention and fosters an emotional connection with the audience, promoting a more profound comprehension of agriculture's significance in daily life.

### *Spontaneity in Making Content*

The fourth self-presentation technique identified from the interviews indicates that spontaneity in agricultural content conveys authenticity via flexibility. This theme emphasizes that the majority of informants develop agricultural content in a spontaneous and flexible manner, lacking an inflexible content plan. They develop ideas openly, according to the flow and the situation at hand, resulting in authenticity in each post. For example, informants 1 (male, farmer, 30 years old) and 2 (female, farmer, 22 years old) stated:

*"the creative process is impromptu, no written storyboards, only what designed in my mind" and*

*"I don't have a professional content plan, but the important thing is to be consistent every week there is content, for the topic it usually arises spontaneously".*

Although they lack a formal creative process, they are dedicated to providing consistent updates, such as publishing at least one Instagram story each day. As Informant 3 (male, farmer, 28 years old) discovered,

*"It's simply adaptable; I do not have a content planner, but I make sure that I post regularly."*

In other words, this strategy demonstrates that creativity may emerge from freedom of expression and adaptation to the surroundings, thereby making their work more relatable and captivating to their social media followers. In general, the millennial farmers social media presence functions as a platform for self-expression and as a tool for addressing the agricultural regeneration crisis by inspiring younger generations and challenging traditional farming stereotypes. These millennial farmers are attempting to bridge the gap between traditional agricultural practices and modern digital communication through strategic yet authentic digital self-presentation. This has the potential to establish a new era of farming that can attract the younger generation and maintain the significance of agricultural value in the country.

### **Discussion**

This study uncovers certain significant details regarding the ways in which millennial farmers formulate and convey their identities in both physical and digital domains. The findings reveal an elaborate relationship between traditional agricultural values and contemporary digital communication tactics, enhancing our comprehension of professional identity formation in the digital era, especially concerning a field that is overlooked or stigmatized.

How millennial farmers in Indonesia construct a professional pride in their line of job is worth discussing. The emergence of "agricultural sustainability hero" and "noble profession" as their primary identity marker represents a significant shift from traditional farmer identities documented in previous literature. While earlier studies often portrayed farmers' identities as primarily production-oriented (McGuire et al., 2013; Rozci et al., 2023), Our findings indicate that millennial farmers have broadened their identity to include ecological responsibility and advocacy for sustainable agriculture.

The study's findings on digital self-presentation strategies indicates how Goffman's (Goffman, 1956) dramaturgical theory of self-presentation is still relevant in this digital age. The informants' implementation of educational information, storytelling techniques, and impromptu filming exemplifies what may be referred to as "agricultural digital authenticity", a meticulous creative balance between professional marketing and genuine portrayal of agricultural existence.

It is particularly significant how millennial farmers employ social media not only for self-promotion but also as a mechanism for industry-wide transformation. Their triple strategy of rebranding farming jobs, engaging younger demographics, and fostering entrepreneurial initiatives exemplifies what scholars refer to as the "networked self," wherein individual identity expression fulfills wider societal goals (Agbugba, 2023; Fatur Rahman et al., 2023).

The spontaneity in content creation, although appearing to contradict conventional strategic communication methods, effectively enhances authenticity in digital environments. This finding reinforces the consensus of recent studies on digital authenticity (Blunden & Brodsky, 2024; Sukmayadi et al., 2024;

Tashmin, 2016) but adds an important agricultural perspective, suggesting that unplanned content may be particularly appropriate in agricultural communication. Still, it would be preferable if content ideas were not solely based on impromptu, as this may prove less effective in the long run. This is due to the fact that content planning is a critical component of the engagement generated by the content we post (Blunden & Brodsky, 2024; Fadhila et al., 2024).

The findings possess significant implications for agricultural sustainability and generational succession in farming, particularly in the Indonesian context. The capacity of millennial farmers to forge affirmative professional identities while recognizing the difficulties of farming indicates a possible avenue for tackling the agricultural regeneration dilemma in the nation. Their achievement in leveraging digital platforms to transform the perception of agriculture may serve as a blueprint for engaging younger demographics in the field. While this study sheds light on how millennial farmers develop their identities and express themselves digitally, it has numerous drawbacks. The emphasis on Indonesian farmers may limit the applicability to other cultural contexts. Furthermore, the study's focus on successful millennial farmers may overlook the experiences of individuals trying to establish themselves in agriculture.

Thus, future studies might look into the extent to which these identity construction and presentation strategies differ across various cultural contexts and agricultural scales. Furthermore, examining the reception of these digital presentation strategies among younger audiences could offer valuable insights into their efficacy in attracting new generations to farming.

## Conclusion

This study deepens our understanding of how farmers in Indonesia's national millennial farmers program manage the intricacies of building their professional identities in the digital era. Their capacity to integrate ancient agricultural principles with contemporary digital communication tactics indicates a possible avenue for agricultural sustainability. The results suggest that effective agricultural regeneration relies not only on technical and economic elements but also on the capacity to develop and convey persuasive professional identities that appeal to younger generations.

The practical implications of this research can be beneficial for the development of agricultural policy and farmer revitalization initiatives, particularly in Indonesia. The strategies employed by these millennial farmers may serve as examples for initiatives designed to engage younger generations in agriculture and facilitate agricultural regeneration. Their achievement in utilizing digital platforms to transform the perception of agriculture while preserving authenticity provides significant insights for agricultural communication and development initiatives.

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