



Gatekeepers of sustainability: from the perspective of the Indonesian coffee smallholders

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Context

Less attention has been given to the assessment of smallholders' interpretation of the process of value creation through sustainability standards and certifications.



Pak Made, a coffee farmer in Lampung.

We consider farmers like Pak Made to be the gatekeepers of sustainability, as they choose to apply sustainability principles in practice or not.

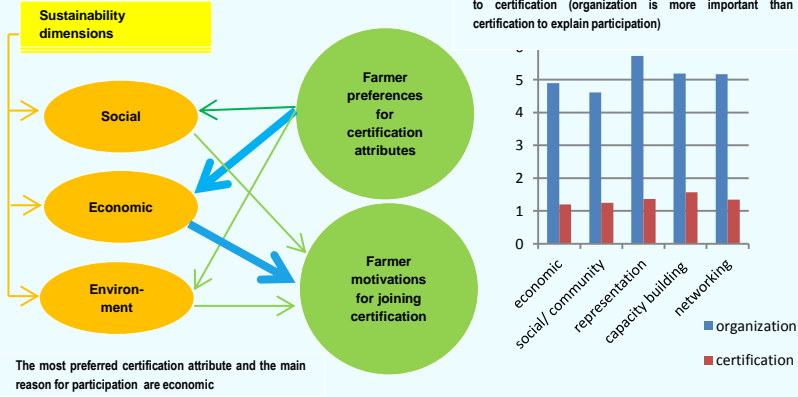
Sustainability practices start from smallholder plantations at the bottom of coffee value chain.



Methodology

- Smallholders in Aceh and Lampung
- Global private certification schemes (Utz, Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance, 4C), local certification (InoOffice), public certification scheme (ISCoffee)
- Data are obtained from surveys, interviews, focus group discussion, and questionnaires as well as published and unpublished reports and documents from the government and non-governmental bodies.

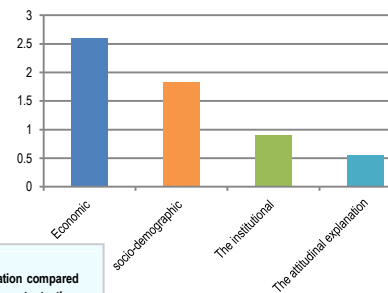
Results



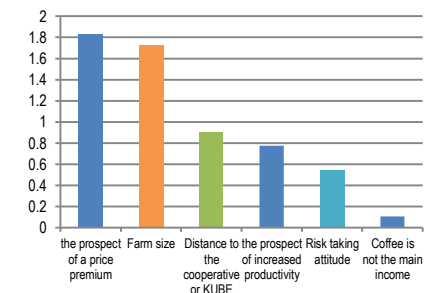
Attribute level summary of the most preferred certification scheme

Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6	Rank 7	Rank 8
Price Premium	Environmental Focus	Differential Price with Noncertified Farmers	Certification Target group	Important goal	Differential Price Based on Size	Marketing Schemes	Credit Option
Yes	Conservation	Yes	Smallholder farmers in group or cooperative	Fairness	Yes	No contract	No credit

The relative importance of explanations to participate in certification



The relative importance of variables explaining motivation to participate in certification



Summary and Conclusion

- Farmer preferences regarding certification schemes are primarily economically driven (i.e., schemes that can promise tangible economic benefits).
- Private certification is still weakly institutionalized among farmers.
- Economic motivations are the strongest explanatory factor behind farmer participation in certification.
- The prospect of a price premium is crucial in a farmer's decision to join certification.
- Organization is found to be relatively more important than certification in explaining differences in farmers' perceived benefits.
- Efforts to better organize farmers may, from a farmers' benefits point of view, be more effective than trying to involve more farmers in certification.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the position of smallholders as gatekeepers of sustainability.
2. To assess smallholders' interpretation of the process of value creation through sustainability standards and certifications.



The implications for a more sustainable coffee production.

Reflection

- The process towards a more sustainable coffee production requires a systemic view, covering the understanding of the function of agricultural systems and better adapted to real conditions.
- Economic sustainability needs to be the basis of any sustainable change in coffee production.
- Sustainable change also requires a change in farmers' perspective. Knowledge and information about a more sustainable production are crucial for farmers' willingness to change.