



2025 Careers in Agribusiness
A China & Southeast Asia Report

INTRODUCTION

Careers in Agribusiness

Recently we surveyed our connections to capture the reasons why they entered agribusiness and reasons why they remain in agribusiness. The candidates were employed in the Animal Protein Supply Chain.

This report aims to provide industry stakeholders with an understanding of **how professionals are attracted to our industry** and the **reasons why they choose to remain in our industry.**

Respondents

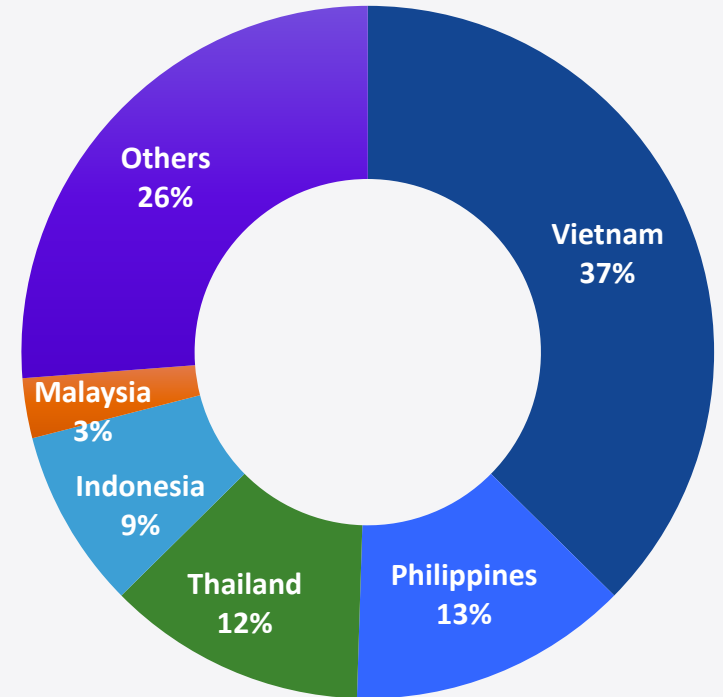
China: 65



Southeast Asia: 107



Respondent Breakdown in Southeast Asia





China Report



SURVEY RESULTS

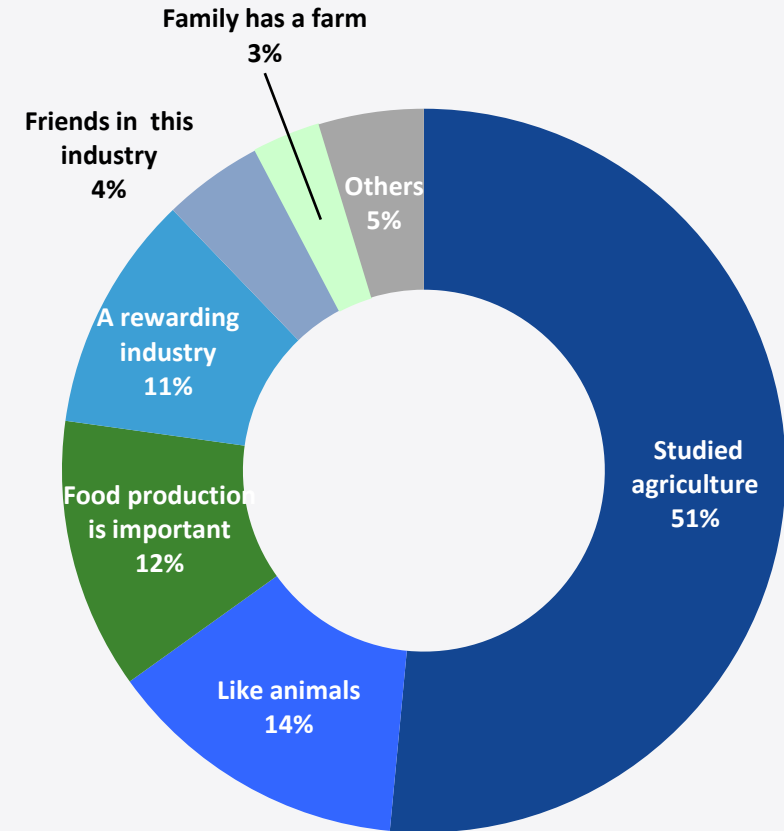
Reasons to Enter The Agriculture Industry

The survey indicated that a formal education in agriculture is the predominant reason individuals enter the agricultural sector, cited by 51% of respondents.

Secondary motivators include affinity for working with animals and recognition of food production’s societal importance.

Notably, career rewards social/family ties (friends; family farms) play relatively minor roles.

Reasons To Enter



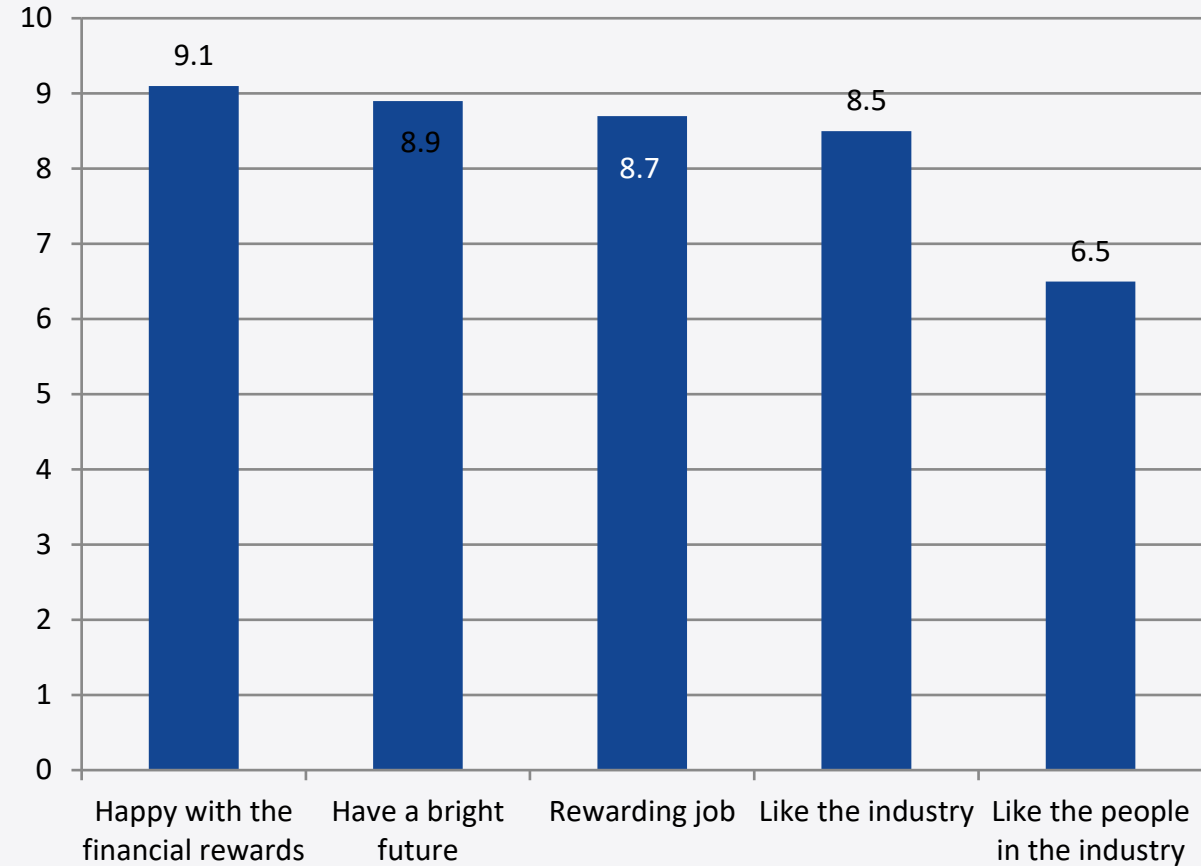
SURVEY RESULTS

Reasons to Remain In The Agriculture Industry

Survey participants were queried on various aspects, rating their significance on a scale from one, indicating 'extremely unimportant', to ten, representing 'extremely important'.

According to the findings, factors such as happy with the financial rewards, have a bright future, and rewarding job emerged as top reasons for those surveyed. While like the people in the industry are the least important reasons people remain in the industry

Reasons To Remain



SURVEY RESULTS

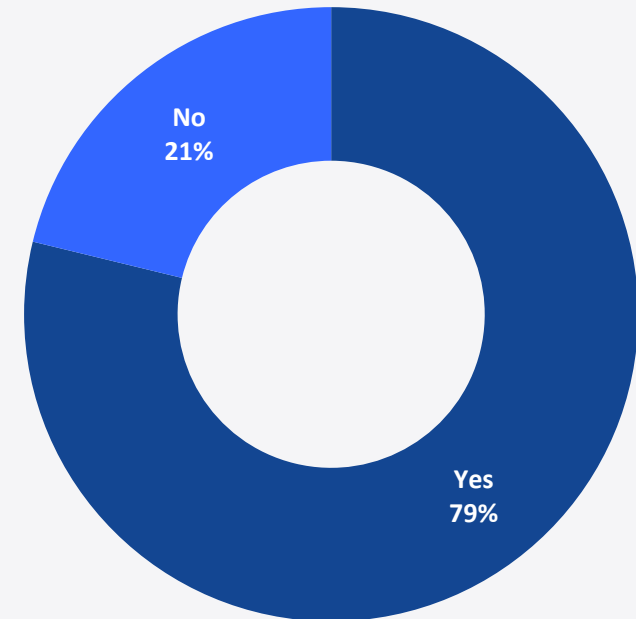
Agribusiness Education

According to the findings, 79% respondents have studied an agriculture related course. A previous study of agriculture was a strong reason to have a career in agriculture.

This finding suggests that China's agricultural sector benefits from a formalized educational pipeline of students.

The results demonstrate overwhelming prioritization of agricultural education, underscoring its critical role in sustaining food systems.

Agricultural Related Courses



SURVEY RESULTS

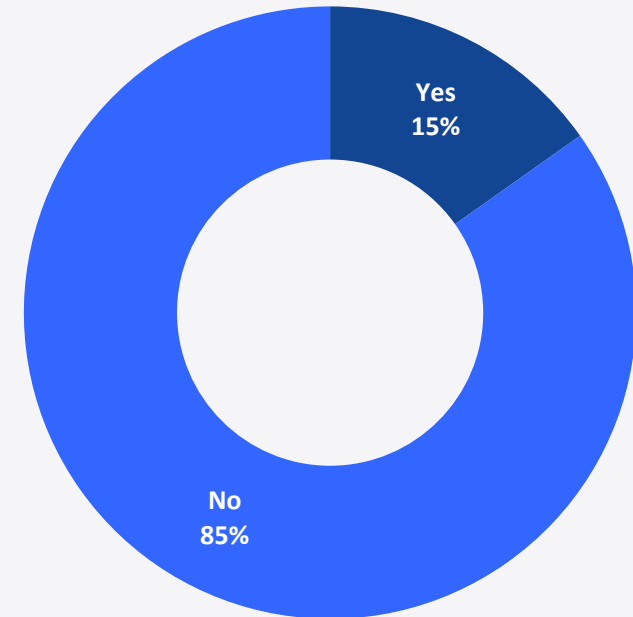
Education Outside of China

In this survey only 15% of the respondents had studied overseas.

China's lower overseas study experience rate aligns with its robust domestic higher education system, policies prioritizing local talent retention and the opportunities to enter the local work force immediately after graduation rather than to study overseas.

This suggests that in the agricultural field, the proportion of people with overseas study experience is relatively small, while most individuals have pursued their education within China.

Overseas Education



SURVEY RESULTS

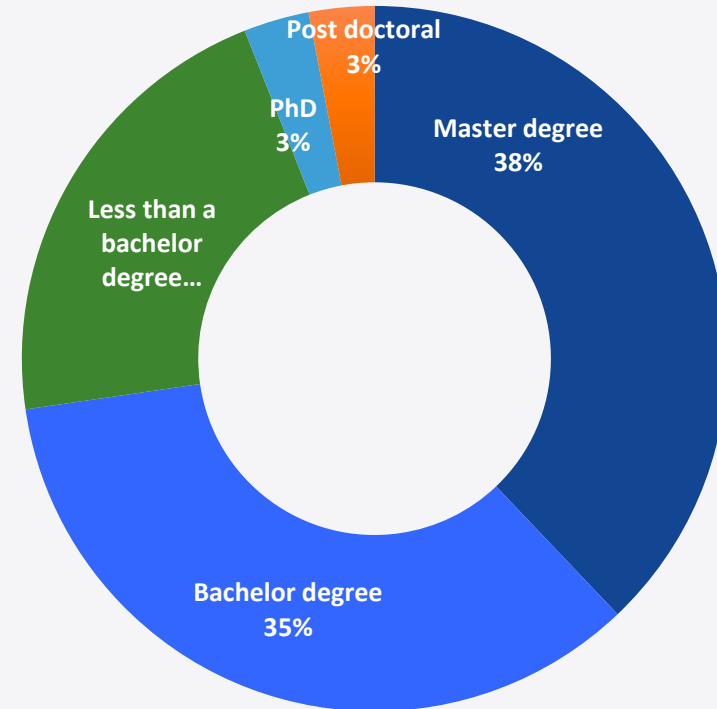
Highest Degree In The Agriculture Industry

Respondents with a Master’s degree or higher were the majority (44%). Bachelor’s degrees were held by 35% of the respondents. Thus 80% of the respondents working in the agribusiness industry had a higher education.

Universities are thus a very important platform for people to enter agribusiness. Also, universities provide a source of talent and relationship with universities are important for attracting the best talent.

Vocational training and career opportunities are also important sources of attraction for employees in agribusiness and still warrant attention for our industry.

Highest Degree In The Agricultural Industry



SURVEY RESULTS

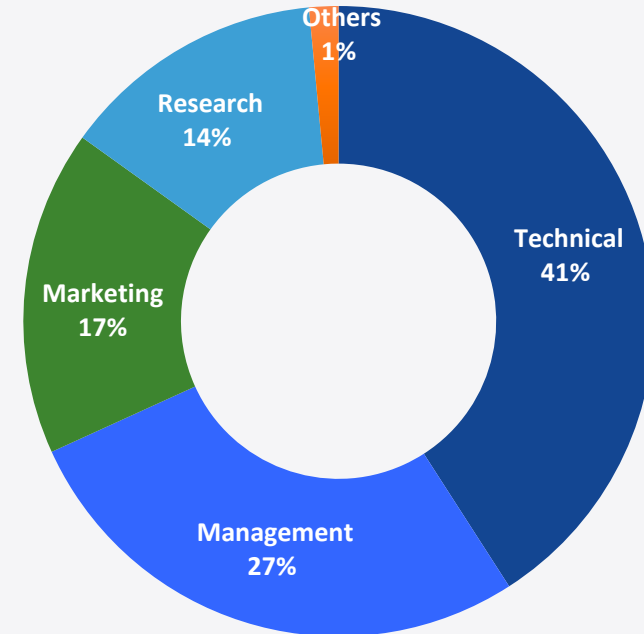
Most Valuable Skills

The data highlights the perceived importance of various skills in professional roles. In this survey technical skills were perceived as being the most valued at 41%, significantly outpacing other categories.

Management skills ranked the second most valuable with 27%, reflecting a focus on leadership and organizational competencies.

Marketing 17% and research 14% followed, suggesting that our respondents saw these roles as only moderate important compared to technical skills, which could be true for an industry that has a high degree of technology associated with it.

Most Valuable Skills



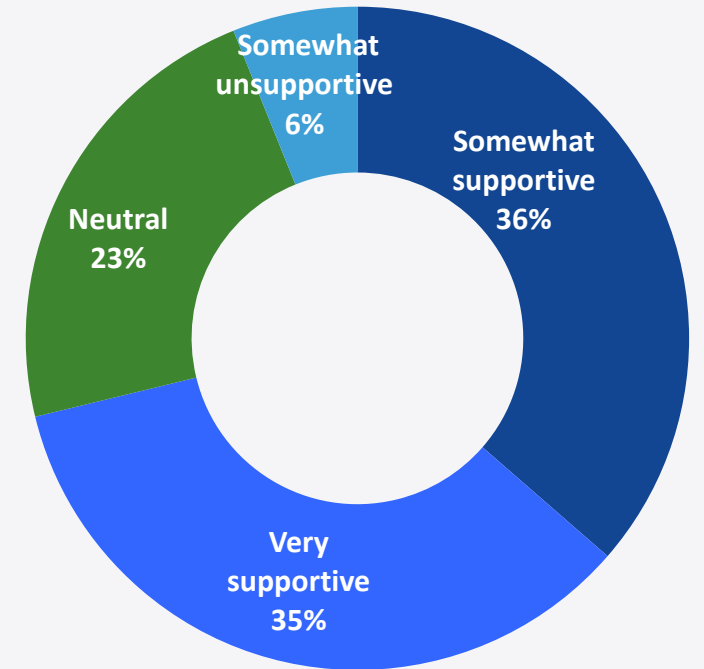
SURVEY RESULTS

Government Policies Perception

A significant 71% of respondents thought that government policies were either very or somewhat supportive. Indicating that a notable portion of the respondents believed the government is taking positive actions to support the industry they work in.

Overall, most of the people working in agriculture seem to think that government policies have a positive or at least neutral impact on the agricultural sector.

Perception of Government Policies





Southeast Asia Report

SURVEY RESULTS

Reasons to Enter The Agriculture Industry

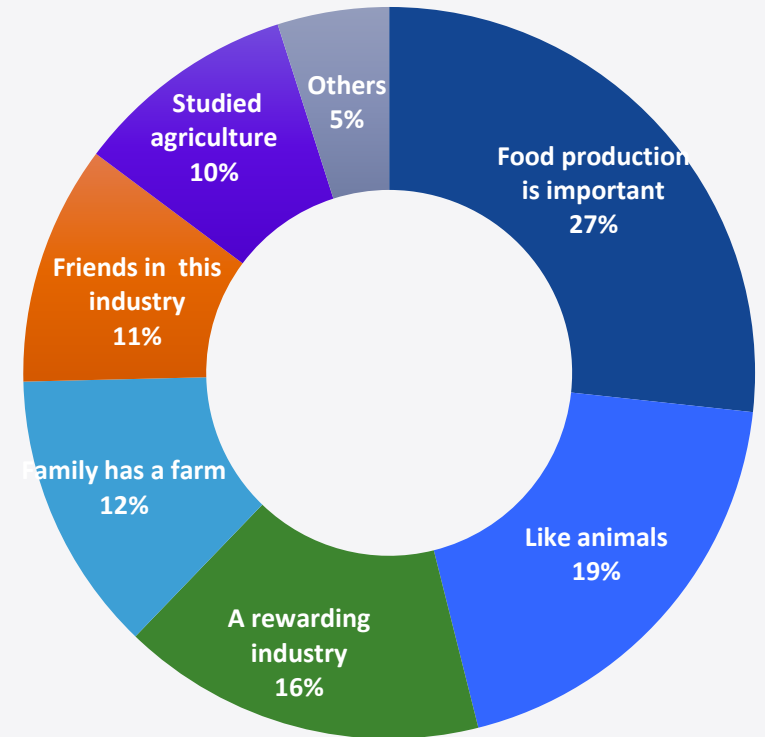
Food production’s societal importance was the predominant driver, cited by 27% of respondents.

Affinity for working with animals ranked second most important at 19%, reflecting a strong connection to animal husbandry or livestock roles.

Perceptions of agricultural rewards (16%) and family farming ties (12%) follow, suggesting both career optimism and generational influences.

Notably, social networks (friends in the industry:11%) and formal education (studied agriculture: 10%) play comparatively smaller roles.

Reasons To Enter



SURVEY RESULTS

Reasons to Remain In The Agriculture Industry

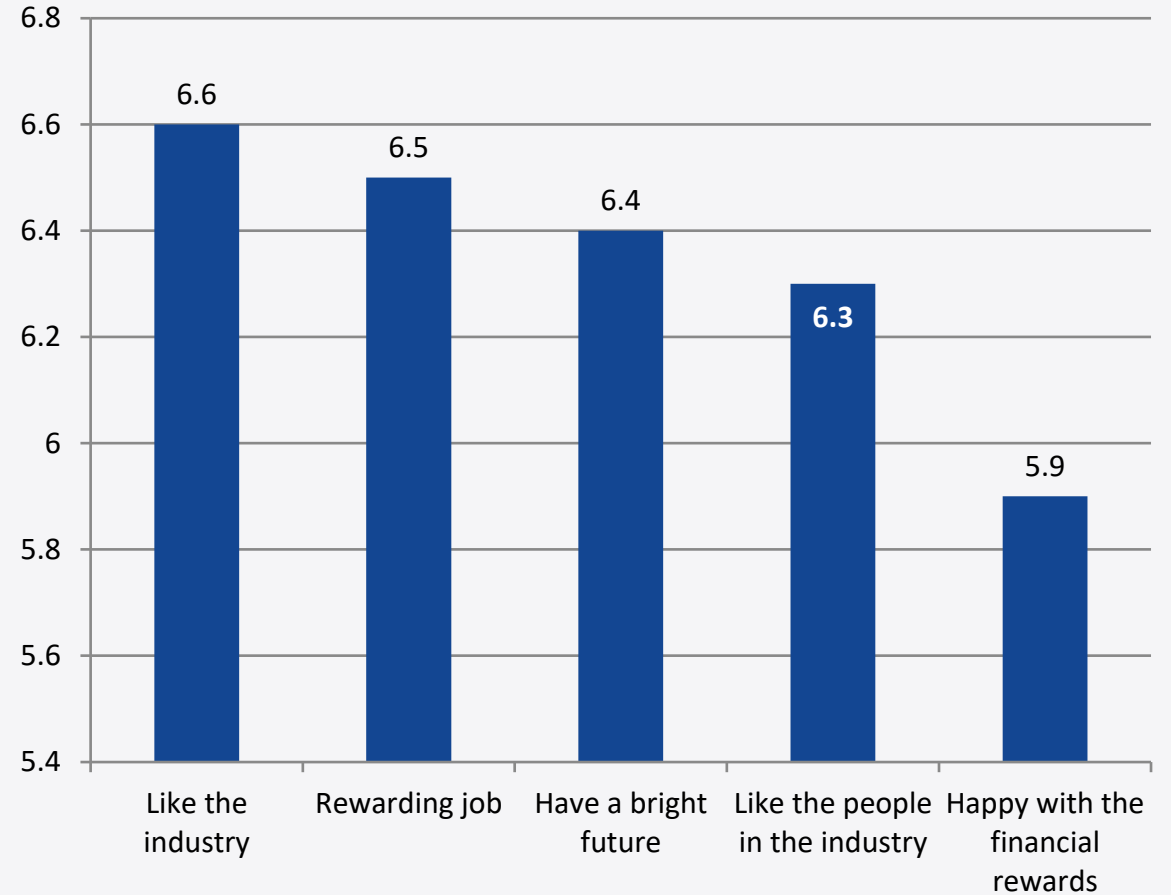
"Like the industry" is the number one reason that respondents decide to remain in agribusiness! Indicating moderate-to-strong personal affinity for the agricultural sector as a retention driver.

"Rewarding job" and "Have a bright future" follow, suggesting career satisfaction and optimism about industry growth are significant contributors.

Social and financial factors to remain in the industry such as "Like the people in the industry" reflects the role of workplace relationships and these were also important.

"Happy with the financial rewards" ranked lowest, underscoring that economic incentives are less critical compared to intrinsic or aspirational motivations.

Reasons To Remain



SURVEY RESULTS

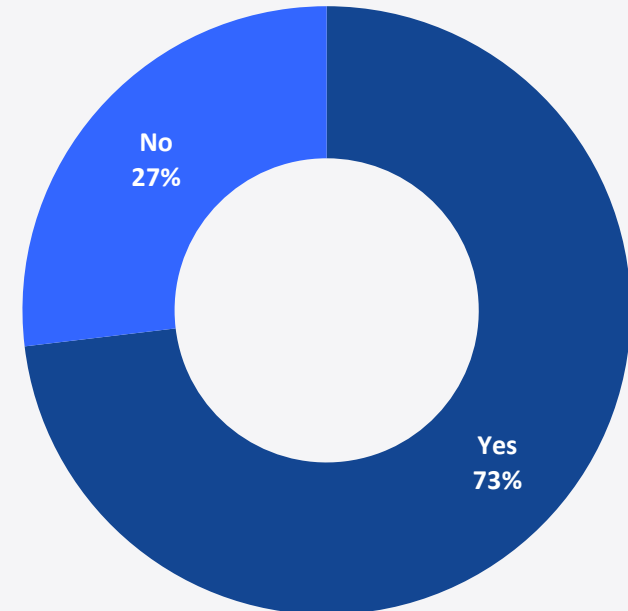
If Studied Any Agriculture Related Courses

73% of respondents have studied agriculture-related courses, while 27% have not.

The majority (73%) possesses formal agricultural training, aligning with professions requiring specialized knowledge.

Over a quarter (27%) lack formal coursework, implying alternative entry pathways such as vocational training, apprenticeships, or cross-disciplinary career shifts.

If Studied Any Agricultural Related Courses



SURVEY RESULTS

If Studied Overseas

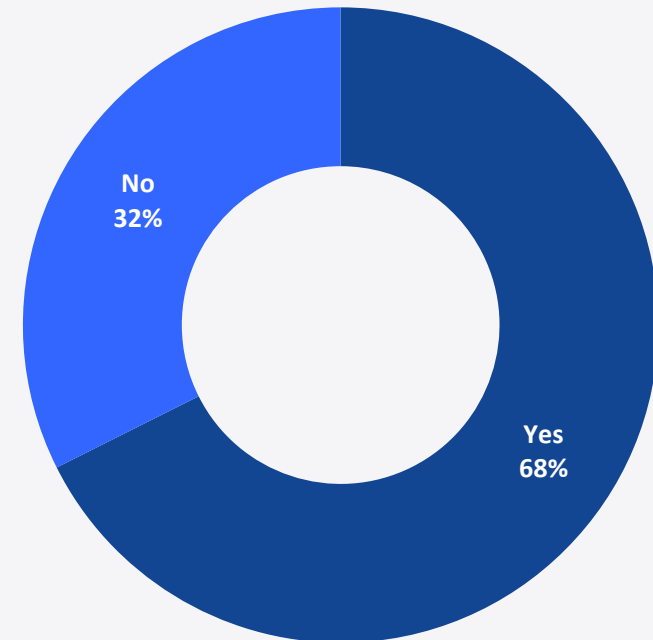
The data indicates that 68% of respondents have studied overseas.

This suggests a strong prevalence of international education exposure within the surveyed group.

The high percentage of individuals with overseas experience may correlate with industries or roles prioritizing global perspectives, multilingual skills, or specialized training unavailable domestically.

This results underscores the growing role of international education in shaping professional and academic trajectories, while also pointing to disparities in access to global learning experiences in the respondents home country.

If Studied Overseas



SURVEY RESULTS

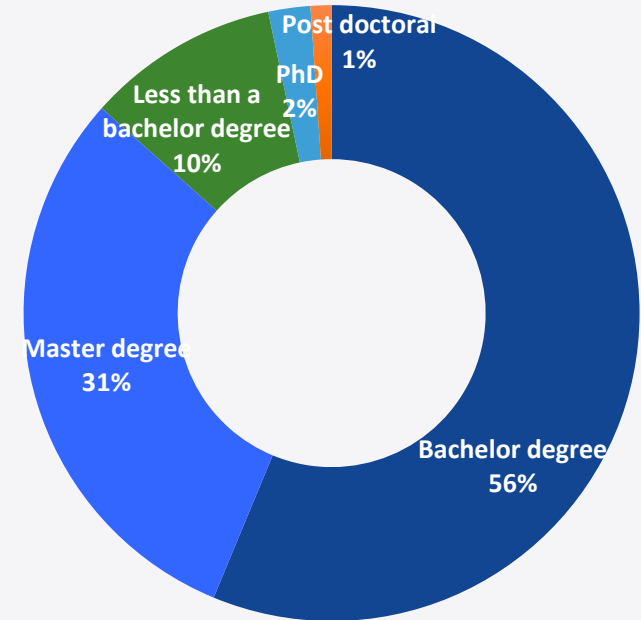
Highest Degree In The Agriculture Industry

Respondents with a Bachelor's degrees dominated the survey, representing 56% of respondents. Indicating that undergraduate education serves as the primary academic foundation for professionals in this field.

Master's degrees were held by 30%, reflecting specialized roles requiring advanced technical or managerial expertise.

Advanced academic studies were rare, highlighting either limited demand or opportunities for highly specialized research roles.

Highest Degree



SURVEY RESULTS

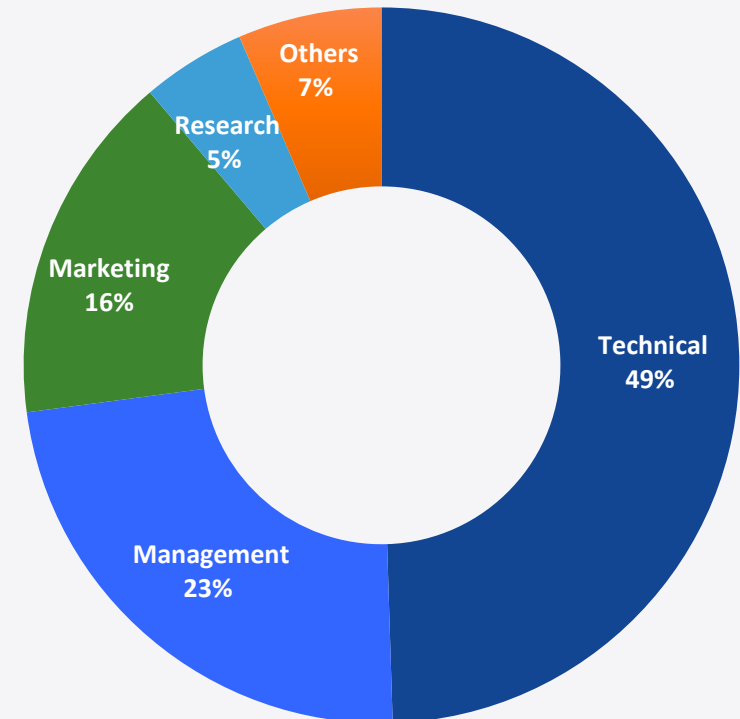
Most Valuable Skills

Technical skills are regarded as the most valuable skills by 49% of the respondents. This indicates that in their respective positions, a large proportion of people believe that technical proficiency is crucial.

Management skills were recognized as the second most important skills. This shows that the ability to manage and organize is also highly valued by a significant number of individuals.

Research skills were only classed as important by 5%, suggesting that while important, they are less emphasized compared to other skills.

Most Valuable Skills



SURVEY RESULTS

Government Policies Perception

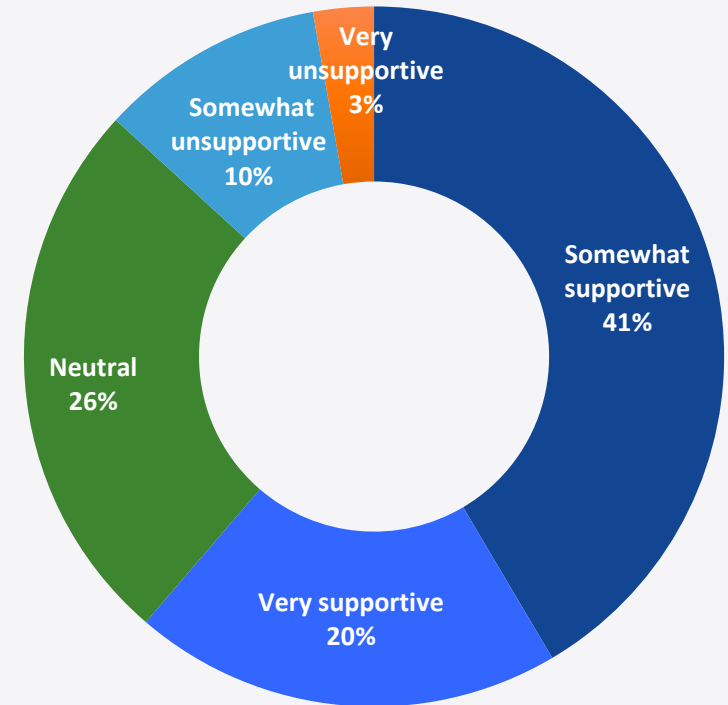
A combined 61% view policies as supportive, with 43% rating them "somewhat supportive" and 20% as "very supportive", indicating moderate-to-strong approval of current initiatives.

26% remain neutral, suggesting limited awareness or mixed experiences with policy impacts.

13% express dissatisfaction ("somewhat unsupportive" 10%, highlighting localized challenges or implementation gaps.

While most acknowledge policy efforts, the dominance of "somewhat supportive" over "very supportive" signals room for enhancing policy effectiveness, transparency, or communication

Perception of Government Policies





Comparison Between China & Southeast Asia

SURVEY RESULTS

Reasons to Enter The Agriculture Industry

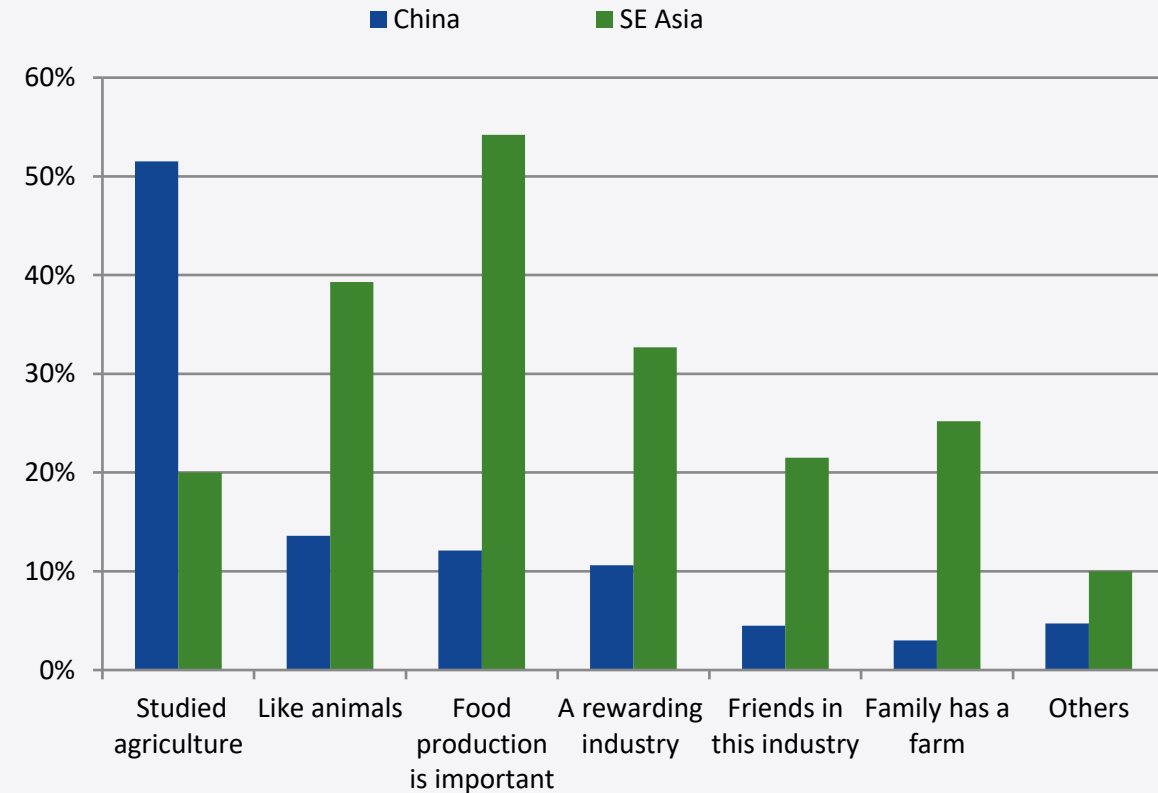
The survey results highlights distinct drivers of agricultural engagement between China and Southeast Asia .

China demonstrates stronger institutional ties, with 60% of respondents having studied agriculture compared to SE Asia's lower emphasis on academic training 20%.

Southeast Asia demonstrates higher awareness of the importance of food production & also an affinity with animals.

Southeast Asia shows relatively higher reliance on practical industry networks e.g., friends in the sector and family farming heritage

Reasons To Enter



SURVEY RESULTS

Reasons to Remain In The Agriculture Industry

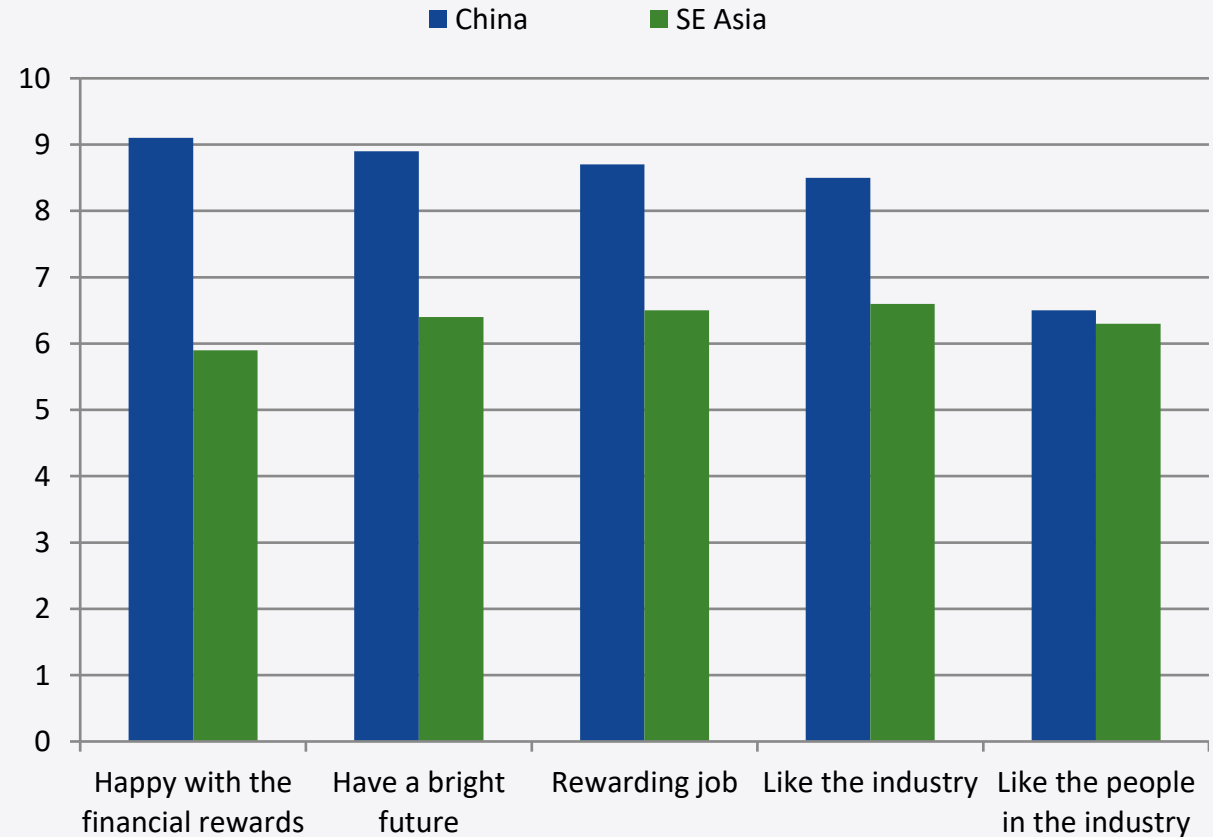
Financial rewards scores highest in China compared to Southeast Asia, highlighting China’s emphasis on economic returns in career choices and the competitive nature remuneration to attract and retain talent.

Industry outlook as characterized by “having a bright future”, rewarding job are all indicators or the competitive labor market in China as compared to Southeast Asia, who’s economy has not been through such a rapid growth phase as seen in China.

China seems to lean toward future-orientation and financial drivers, whereas Southeast Asian respondents seemed to place greater weight on social cohesion and industry culture.

But, when we observe the low strength of conviction in Southeast Asia, the region may be at risk of losing talent as the respondents did seem to feel too strongly compared to China.

Reasons Remain



SURVEY RESULTS

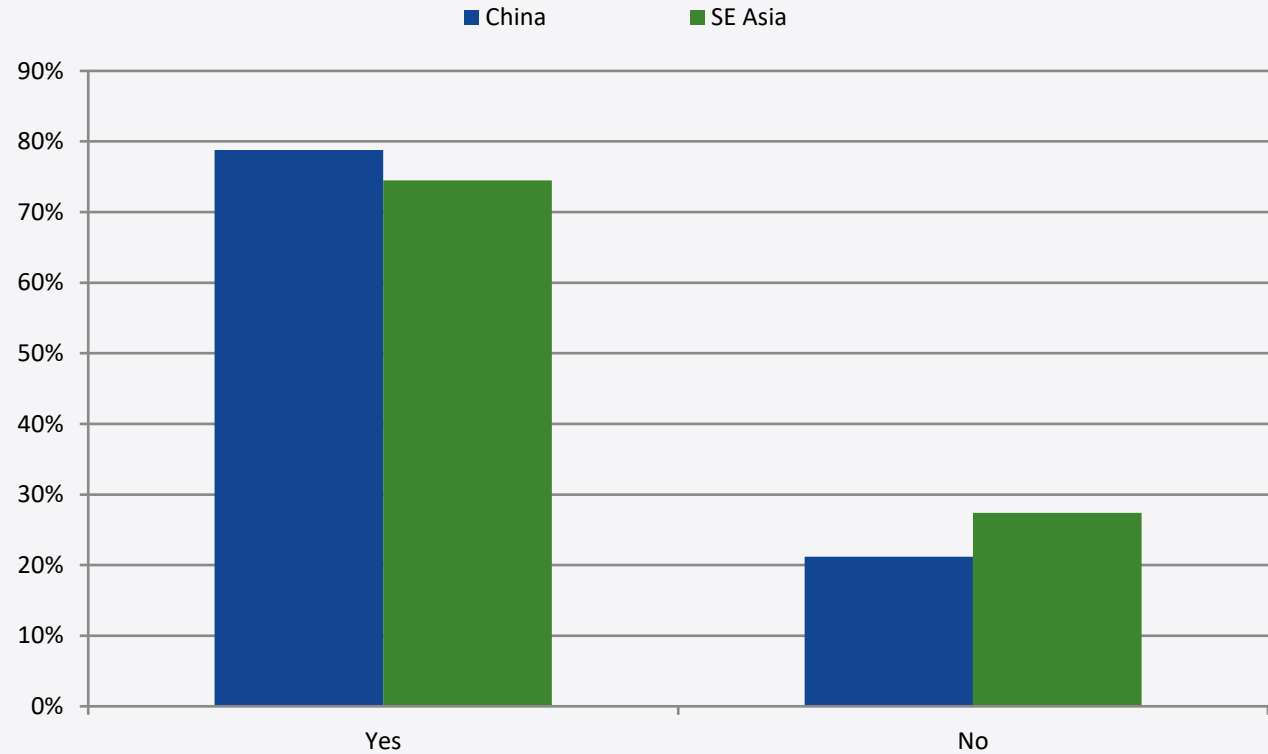
If Studied Any Agriculture Related Courses

While both regions show strong engagement with agricultural-related courses, China edges ahead with 79% of respondents having studied such courses, compared to Southeast Asia's 75%.

This suggests that China's agricultural sector benefits from a slightly more formalized educational pipeline. Southeast Asia's marginally lower participation may reflect diverse regional educational infrastructures or greater reliance on informal, experience-based knowledge transfer.

Both regions, however, demonstrate overwhelming prioritization of agricultural education, underscoring its critical role in sustaining food systems across Asia

If Studied Agriculture



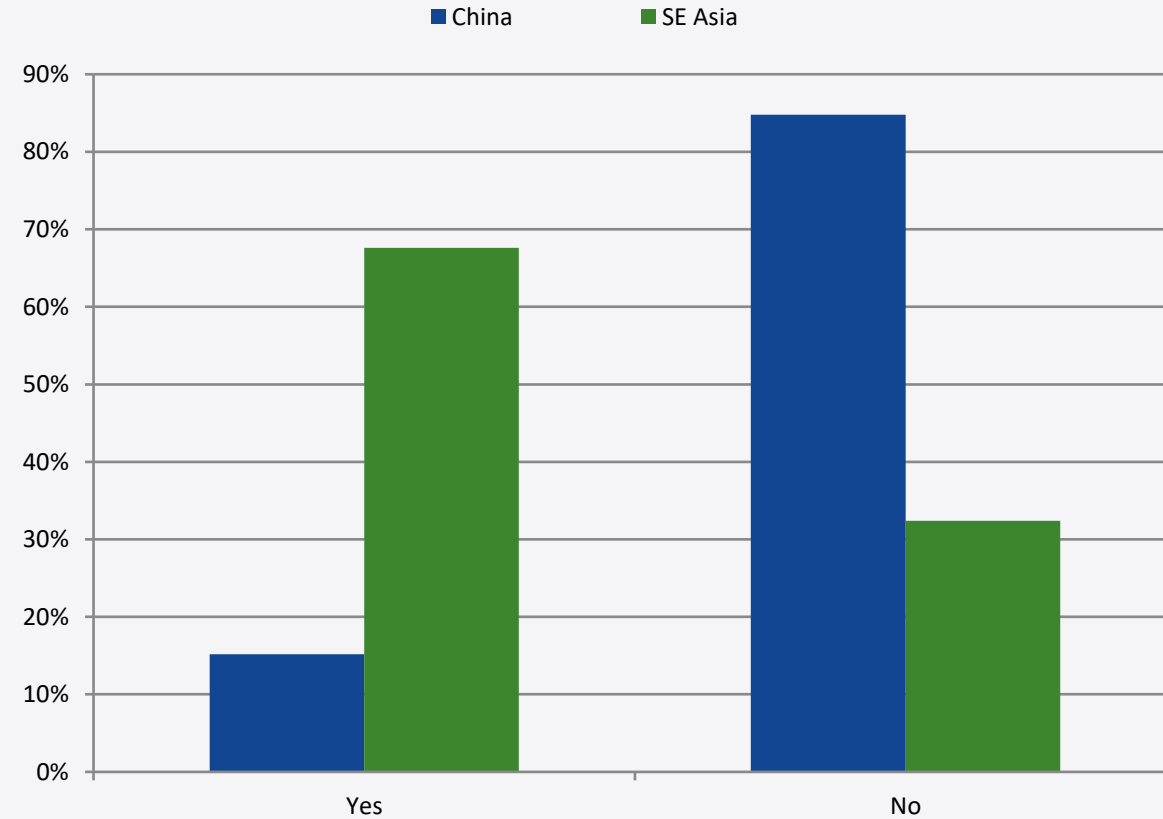
SURVEY RESULTS

If Studied Overseas

SE Asia shows a significantly higher proportion of individuals with overseas education 68% compared to China's 15%, reflecting stronger international academic mobility, likely driven by regional integration initiatives (e.g., ASEAN scholarships), demand for globally recognized credentials and less global recognition for local universities.

With 85% having no overseas study experience, China's lower rate aligns with its robust domestic higher education system and for policies prioritizing local talent retention for national development goals.

If Studied Overseas



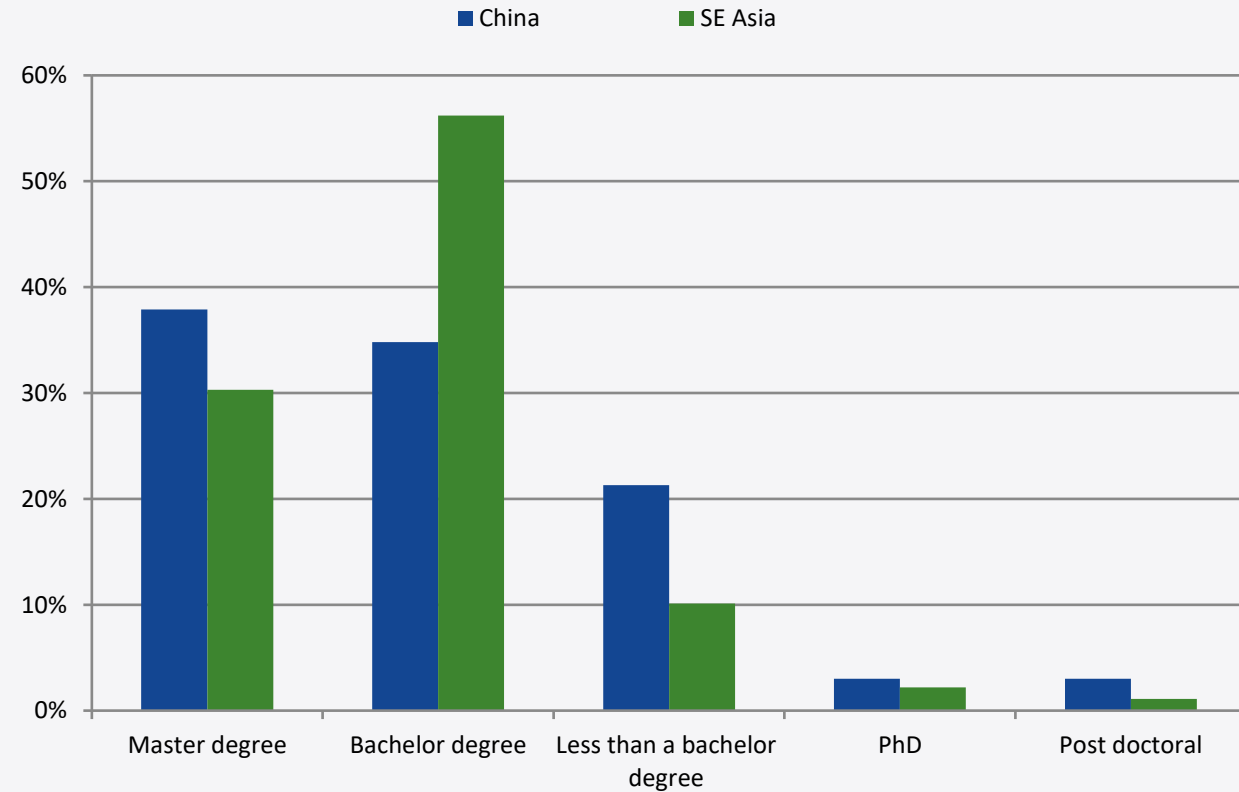
SURVEY RESULTS

Highest Degree In The Agriculture Industry

Chinese respondents had higher levels of education than their Southeast Asian counterparts, indicating a greater focus on higher degrees compared to Southeast Asia.

This maybe due to many reasons such as the competitiveness to advance and further education maybe viewed as one platform for improve a person's career opportunities and advancement.

Highest Degree In The Agricultural Industry



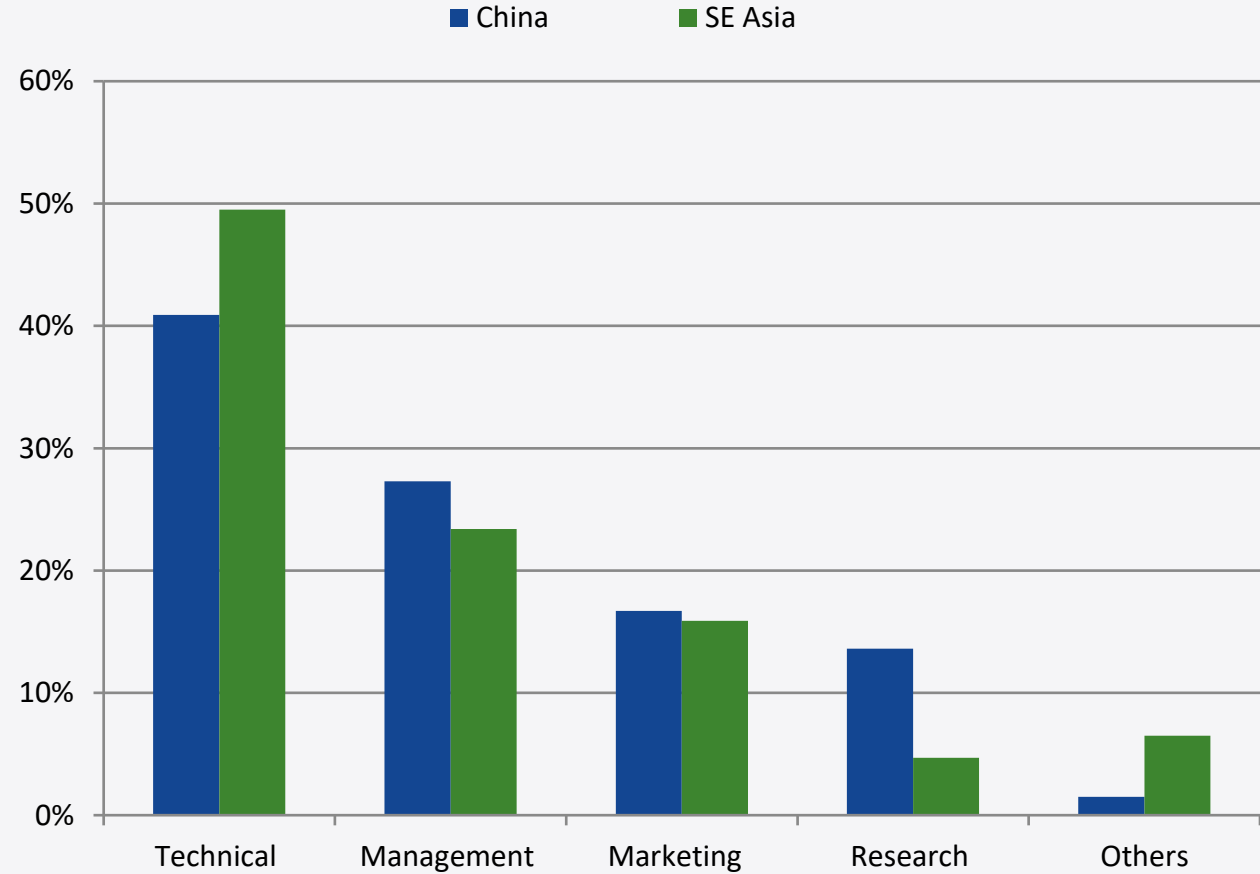
SURVEY RESULTS

Most Valuable Skills

In both China and Southeast Asia technical skills were regarded the highest. This is probably due to the technical nature of the business, where most respondents were involved in the technical aspect of the industry in some way shape or form.

Management skills were also regarded as important and the ability to communicate, manage complex task were evident in these responses.

Most Valuable Skills



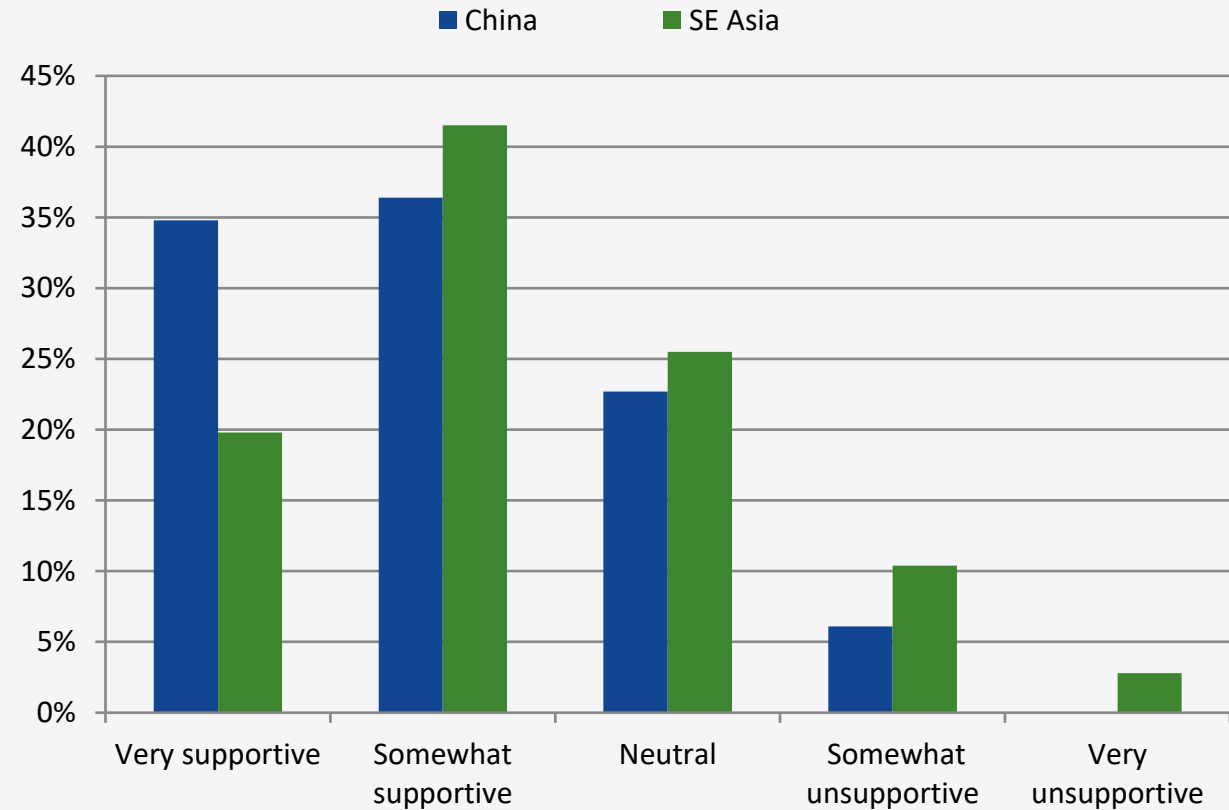
SURVEY RESULTS

Government Policies Perception

Chinese respondents felt good support from government policies for agriculture and the policies in place are well received and offer respondents confidence to remain in the industry.

Southeast Asian respondents whilst positive were just not as positive as Chinese, probably as they are exposed to imports and the pressure their governments are under to make food available verses defending their farmers.

Perception of Government Policies Regarding the Agricultural Sector



CONCLUSION

Strategic Insights

Entry Drivers

China: Formal education in agriculture is the predominant reason individuals enter the agricultural sector, cited by 51.5% of respondents. Universities need to keep attracting students, companies need to keep supporting universities through research, scholarships and external consultancies!

SE Asia: Food production is regarded as important and the industry needs to keep emphasizing in their public relations how important and honorable it is to work in the food industry.

Retention Drivers

For China, the industry needs to keep pace with salaries and provide opportunities for staff, it is these key components that will retain people in the industry,

In Southeast Asia, salaries also need to be relevant and competitive but the social aspects of employment needs to also be attractive as this is an important aspect for people in agriculture in these markets.

Implications for Leadership

Leaders need to be aware that the employment landscape is competitive and they need to do all they can to ensure that the right people choose to enter and remain in agribusiness. Leadership also needs to understand the differences across Asia and adjust their actions and strategies accordingly.



CONCLUSION

Strategic Insights

Educational Attainment

China: Prioritizes advanced degrees, with 37.9% holding master's degrees and 6% combined PhD/Postdoctoral credentials, reflecting a focus on specialized expertise and R&D integration.

SE Asia: Dominated by bachelor's degrees (56.2%), emphasizing mid-tier professional training aligned with operational demands.

Skill Prioritization

China: Values management (27.3%) and research skills (13.6%), supporting strategic and innovation-driven growth.

SE Asia: Prioritizes technical proficiency (49.5%) and management skills (23.4%)

Policy Perceptions

China: Stronger approval, with 71.2% viewing policies as supportive (34.8% "very supportive"), indicating confidence in government support.

SE Asia: Higher skepticism (13.2% critical), likely due to fragmented governance and implementation disparities across nations.





About Asian Agribusiness Recruitment

Asian Agribusiness Recruitment (AARTD) is a specialized full-service executive search firm that concentrates on sourcing middle and senior management and executives across Asia in the Agribusiness sector.

AARTD's executive search consultants live and work in Asia. All our consultants understand agribusiness because they work in an agricultural environment and this is helpful in saving a lot of time and energy, having to explain what often complex roles.

We have offices in Beijing, Ho Chi Minh City, and now Bangkok. We travel extensively across Asia to meet clients and candidates face-to-face and be "on the ground" at important industry events. We have made placements in most countries in Asia and the Pacific.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to help Asia feed itself! Food security is one of the biggest challenges facing Asia. Growing GDP, population, and protein demand require talented people to deliver solutions.

With that focus, we're single-mindedly dedicated to helping Asian Agribusinesses recruit and retain the best talent and helping talented people find opportunities in agriculture in Asia that are worthy of their potential.

Thank You



On behalf of AARTD, I would like to personally thank all of our respondents. Thank you for taking the time to make this survey valuable for our industry. We look forward to seeing you in person in the coming year, and we wish you all the very best for a successful year in which you realise your dreams.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Boddington

Founder & Managing Director
Asian Agribusiness Recruitment