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The Role of Social Capital in Red Chili Farming in Manimbahoi Village, Parigi District, Gowa Regency

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A R T I C L E I N F O

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A B S T R A C T

This qualitative study examines the role of social capital in red chili farming in Manimbahoi Village, Gowa. Using a saturated sampling technique, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed via reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal high interpersonal trust and strong social networks among farmers, characterized by mutual assistance and information sharing. However, trust in group leadership remains low, and social norms lack consistent enforcement. While social capital is established, barriers such as individualistic farming patterns and weak institutional cooperation limit the exchange of technology and market information. Consequently, social capital has not been optimally utilized to enhance productivity. Strengthening leadership and formalizing group norms are essential to improve farming competitiveness

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's national development prioritizes the community as the primary focus in efforts to improve welfare. In the rural context, the agricultural sector plays a strategic role as it is the primary source of livelihood for the community. As an agricultural country with a tropical climate, Indonesia has significant potential for developing horticultural commodities with high economic value and a crucial role in meeting food needs (Kawulur et al., 2017; Salmawati et al., 2018).

The success of agricultural development is determined not only by technical factors but also by social factors, particularly social capital, which encompasses networks, norms, and trust within a community. Social capital serves to strengthen cooperation, facilitate the flow of information, and help farmers overcome resource constraints. Previous research has shown that the strength of social capital influences farmers' ability to access information and market their produce (Sulaiman, 2018).

Chili peppers are a crucial horticultural commodity in Indonesia due to their high economic value and contribution to food inflation. In South Sulawesi, chili peppers are a leading commodity with increasing demand. Manimbahoi Village, Parigi District, Gowa Regency, has agro-ecological conditions that support the development of red chili peppers, making them a primary source of income for the community.

However, red chili farmers in Manimbahoi Village still face various obstacles, such as limited access to information, price fluctuations, and weak bargaining power in marketing. This situation suggests that social factors, particularly social capital, have the potential to be a significant pillar in the sustainability of farming businesses. However, in-depth studies that explore how social capital is interpreted and utilized by red chili farmers in the local context are still limited.

Based on this, this study aims to determine the social capital owned by red chili farmers in Manimbahoi Village and to determine the role of social capital and forms of social capital in red chili farming in Manimbahoi Village and the obstacles to social capital in red chili farming in Manimbahoi Village.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Red Chili Peppers

Red chili peppers (Capsicum annuum L.) are a horticultural crop widely cultivated in Indonesia and play an important role as both a vegetable and a culinary spice. This plant thrives in tropical regions at altitudes of 1–1,500 meters above sea level, with an optimal temperature of 18–30°C, moderate rainfall, and a harvest period of approximately 120 days. Red chili peppers are a seasonal crop with repeated harvests until productivity declines. As a strategic commodity, red chili peppers are among the top five seasonal vegetable crops with high production and demand, according to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2019). Demand tends to increase during religious holidays and certain events, so supply fluctuations often trigger price spikes. Botanically, chili peppers have diverse growth types and fruit varieties, with some commonly known types being large chili peppers, curly chili peppers, bird's eye chili

peppers, and paprika. In addition to their high economic value, chili peppers also contain various important nutrients, such as vitamins A, B1, and C, and serve as a leading commodity supporting food security and serving as an industrial raw material.

2. Farming

Farming is the activity of managing agricultural resources by individuals or groups by utilizing production factors such as land, labor, capital, and management to produce agricultural products effectively and sustainably. Farming is said to be successful if it is able to meet all production costs, including interest on capital, labor wages, and other production facilities, while maintaining business continuity (Suratiyah, 2009). Farming science studies how farmers organize and coordinate these production factors efficiently to obtain optimal results (Shinta, 2011; Pangemanan et al., 2011).

3. Social Capital

Social capital can generally be understood through two main approaches. The first approach emphasizes the importance of social networks as the basis for cooperation in society. According to Michael Woolcock, social capital is an active relationship based on trust, mutual understanding, and shared values that enable cooperation within a community, while Francis Fukuyama emphasizes that shared values and norms form the foundation for social trust. The second approach views social capital as a set of values, norms, and individual characteristics—such as universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security, as proposed by Shalom H. Schwartz—that encourage cohesion and cooperation within a group. Thus, social capital is a combination of the strength of social networks and the internalization of shared values that enable society to work together effectively.

4. The Role of Social Capital

Social capital plays an important role in economic development, especially in the agricultural sector, because the success of farmers in achieving common goals is highly determined by the strength of trust, norms, and social networks within the group. Trust is the basis for the formation of social relationships which is shown through honesty, transparency, and mutual respect, so that it can facilitate cooperation. Social norms serve as collective rules that govern member behavior, such as upholding togetherness and avoiding cheating, which ultimately strengthens group cohesion (Rumagit et al., 2019). Meanwhile, social networks characterized by active participation, cooperation, mutual exchange, and justice also determine the strength or weakness of social capital in a community (Badarudin in Ngangi, 2016).

5. Social Capital Barriers

Social capital barriers are influenced by various interrelated factors, such as low levels of trust between members, which results in weak cooperation and information exchange, often triggered by past conflicts, unfair competition, and a lack of transparency (Yunita et al., 2025). Rigid and exclusive social norms also

limit participation and hinder innovation, while socioeconomic inequality creates unequal relations and reduces the sense of justice within the group. Furthermore, weak social networks—whether due to limited internal relationships or minimal external connections—limit access to information, technology, and development opportunities, so that unresolved conflicts further reinforce suspicion and hinder the sustainability of long-term cooperation.

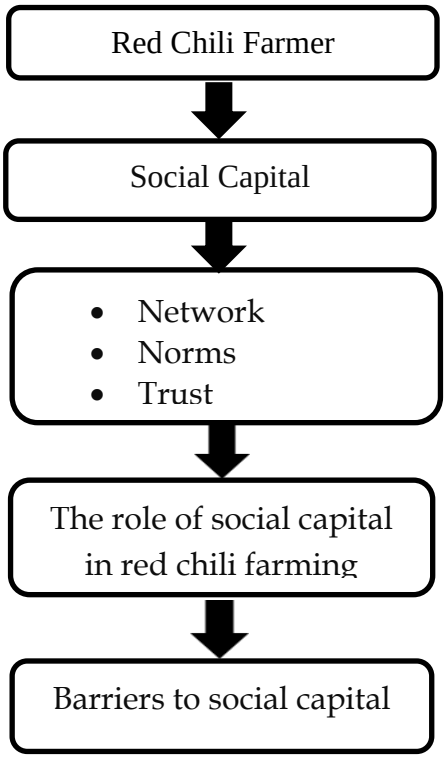


Figure 1. Of the framework for thinking about the role of social capital in developing red chili farming businesses in Manimbahoi Village, Parigi District, Gowa Regency

METHODOLOGY

1. Time and Place of Research

This research was conducted in Manimbahoi Village, Parigi District, Gowa Regency. The selection of this research location was done intentionally (purposive), with the consideration that in Manimbahoi Village, Parigi District, Gowa Regency, on average, or most of the residents grow red chili plants. The research implementation time took place from October to November 2025.

2. Population and Sample

The population in this study was all farmers who grow red chili peppers in Manimbahoi Village, Parigi District, Gowa Regency. Based on the data obtained, the total population of red chili pepper farmers in the village was 27. This population was chosen as the research subject because it was considered to be the most knowledgeable and directly involved in red chili farming activities, and to possess the social capital whose role will be studied. The informant selection technique used in this study was a saturated sampling technique, meaning that all members of the population were used as informants. Therefore,

this study included all 27 red chili pepper farmers in Manimbahoi Village, Parigi District, Gowa Regency.

3. Data collection technique

The data collection techniques used in this study are:

- Observation, which involves directly observing the respondents' conditions and the conditions occurring in the research area, namely Manimbahoi Village, Parigi District, Gowa Regency.
- Interviews, which involve conducting a series of direct interviews with respondents, namely farmers, to obtain the necessary information or data regarding the respondents' identities, farming costs, and income in Manimbahoi Village, Parigi District, Gowa Regency.
- Documentation, which involves collecting data through written statements obtained from respondents related to the research. These documents contain summaries with the necessary vocabulary.

4. Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis techniques used in this study include quality analysis, including: (Hubberman, 2014)

- Data reduction. The data obtained from the field is quite extensive, so it needs to be recorded carefully and in detail. Reducing data means summarizing, sorting out the main points, focusing on important points, and looking for themes and patterns. Thus, the reduced data will provide a clearer picture and facilitate further data collection and retrieval, if necessary.
- Data presentation is done in the form of brief descriptions, charts, relationships between categories, and the like. Data presentation in qualitative research ism21 through narrative text. This will facilitate understanding what is happening and planning further work.
- Conclusion drawing and verification are carried out by summarizing all data processing that has been carried out.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Social Capital Possessed by Red Chili Farmers in Manimbahoi Village

Social capital among red chili farmers in Manimbahoi Village is formed organically through shared livelihoods, geographic proximity, and intense social interactions. The key elements of this social capital manifest in trust, collective cooperative networks, and a strong sense of reciprocity. Farmers prioritize collaboration over competition, with the exchange of information and labor being key strategies for overcoming resource limitations and mitigating the risks of uncertainty in farming. This fosters social harmony that serves as an economic buffer for the farming community when facing challenges such as price fluctuations or crop failures.

However, the utilization of this social capital remains informal and focused on meeting short-term needs during the cultivation process. Existing social capital has not been optimally integrated into formal institutional structures, thus

failing to enhance farmers' collective bargaining power in the broader market. Strengthening organizational capacity and expanding social networks beyond the village community is necessary to transform this naturally established social capital into a strategic asset that supports the long-term economic sustainability and independence of red chili farmers.

2. The Role of Social Capital in Red Chili Farming

Social capital, manifested through trust, norms, and social networks, plays a crucial yet often overlooked role in improving the welfare of red chili farming households. In Manimbahoi Village, Gowa Regency, social capital is reflected in a fair profit-sharing system between landowners and cultivators, as well as interaction patterns that strengthen cooperation among farmers. Although the community tends to prioritize financial capital as the primary indicator of well-being, strengthening social capital has been shown to foster sustainable and mutually supportive collaboration. Thus, the integration of social values into farming activities is a significant determinant in achieving economic sustainability and improving farmers' overall standard of living.

3. Trust

Trust is a key foundation of social capital for red chili farmers in Manimbahoi Village, manifesting in confidence in the honesty and goodwill of fellow community members. Research results indicate a very high level of trust among farmers, with 25 of 27 informants expressing mutual trust. This relationship is strengthened through ongoing interactions such as keeping promises, sharing technical cultivation information, and providing labor assistance. This creates strong social bonds, facilitates coordination, and helps farmers collectively overcome technical challenges and capital constraints.

This social solidarity is also evident in the practice of sharing production resources. The majority of farmers (18) have actively engaged in mutual lending of agricultural tools, sharing seeds, and sharing fertilizer. This mutual cooperation practice has proven effective in reducing production costs and increasing farming efficiency. Furthermore, this strong horizontal trust accelerates the adoption of new technologies and innovations, as information sourced from fellow farmers is perceived as more credible and relevant to their field experiences.

However, there is an anomaly in the vertical trust dimension, where the majority of farmers (17) expressed distrust of the farmer group leader. This low level of trust indicates structural issues, such as a lack of management transparency, weak communication, and minimal member involvement in decision-making. These conditions risk hampering the effectiveness of agricultural development programs and triggering internal conflict. Therefore, strengthening leadership capacity and implementing accountability principles is necessary to ensure farmer groups can function optimally as a vehicle for improving farmer welfare.

4. Social norms

Social norms within the red chili farming community play a crucial role as guidelines for collective behavior based on the values of honesty, togetherness, and mutual respect. Although most farmer groups lack formal written rules, relationships between farmers are maintained through organic bonds of solidarity that grow naturally from shared livelihoods. This is evident from field data showing that the majority of farmers (23 of 27 informants) consistently practice a culture of mutual assistance throughout various stages of production, from land preparation to harvest, which serves as social capital to strengthen rural community resilience.

However, there is significant inequality regarding the institutionalization of rules within farmer groups, with the majority of informants (24 of 27) stating the absence of structured group rules or customs. This lack of formal regulation has the potential to lead to individualized group activities, lack of coordination, and be vulnerable to conflicts of interest. Although the practice of mutual cooperation remains dominant, a weak collective regulatory framework can hinder the group's effectiveness in achieving broader shared goals, especially in the face of changing societal patterns that are increasingly individualistic.

Regarding social control, the application of sanctions and handling of violations within farmer groups is also considered suboptimal and uneven. The majority of members (19 of 27 informants) felt there was a lack of firm enforcement of rules, which, if left unchecked, could undermine member discipline and responsibility. Therefore, support from relevant parties is needed to encourage the formulation of agreed-upon rules through deliberation. Strengthening norms through clear rules and consistent sanctions is expected to serve not only as a means of controlling behavior but also as a means of social learning to enhance the professionalism and internal solidarity of farmer groups.

5. Social networks

Social networks in Manimbahoi Village are a crucial element of social capital formed through the patterns of relationships between farmers within the farmer group. Research results show a high level of participation, with 22 of the 27 informants actively participating in regular meetings. This farmer group serves as a strategic interaction medium for exchanging technical information on cultivation and market prices, while simultaneously building mutual trust and solidarity among members. This informally developed collective knowledge has proven more easily accepted because it is tailored to local conditions, making it effective in enhancing farmers' basic capacity.

Although internal interactions at the local level are well-established, there are significant limitations in the dimension of out-group linkages. Data show that while access to price information and cultivation techniques has reached the majority of farmers (17 respondents), the remaining 11 respondents still lack collaborative networks with parties outside the village, such as wholesalers, financial institutions, or government institutions. This reliance on local information weakens farmers' bargaining position in the marketing system and hinders the adoption of more advanced agricultural technologies and the expansion of market reach.

To optimize existing social capital, efforts are needed to transform internal social networks into broader strategic partnerships. Strengthening the role of agricultural extension workers and local institutions is crucial for bridging farmers with access to capital, technology, and markets outside the village. Improving the quality of farmer group activities and adapting communication strategies is expected to reach inactive farmers, ensuring that the benefits of social networks are shared equitably, leading to sustainable economic prosperity in the agribusiness sector.

6. Social Capital Barriers

Social capital barriers in red chili farming are reflected in weak networks, trust, and collective norms, which hinder collaboration between farmers. An individualistic work culture makes it difficult for farmers to access crucial information regarding technological innovations, market prices, and access to assistance, as social networks tend to be closed or exclusive. Low levels of trust between individuals exacerbate this situation, fueling mutual suspicion and a reluctance to share technical knowledge about efficient cultivation. Consequently, the potential of social capital as a collective resource cannot be optimally utilized, directly impacting low business efficiency and farmer competitiveness.

To address these issues, strengthening social capital through the formation of solid farmer groups or cooperatives is an urgent need. The transformation from independent work patterns to organized collaboration allows farmers to share risks, expand market access, and accelerate the adoption of more modern and environmentally friendly agricultural technologies. Through intense and transparent interactions within institutional frameworks, trust between farmers can be restored, ultimately improving the bargaining power, productivity, and economic sustainability of chili farming communities in the face of market fluctuations.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Based on research on the role of social capital in red chili farming in Manimbahoi Village, Parigi District, Gowa Regency, it can be concluded that farmers' social capital has been formed through trust, social norms, and social networks. The level of trust among farmers is high, as evidenced by mutual assistance, information sharing, and cooperation in cultivation activities. However, trust in farmer group leaders remains relatively low, impacting the effectiveness of group coordination and management.

In terms of social norms, some farmer groups lack clear and consistently enforced rules and sanctions. This results in less than optimal control of member behavior in collective activities. Meanwhile, farmers' social networks are quite strong, indicated by participation in group meetings and relationships with parties outside the village, although their utilization is not yet optimal.

Overall, social capital plays a role in supporting the smooth operation of red chili farming, particularly in information exchange, labor cooperation, and mutual assistance in providing production inputs. However, obstacles remain,

such as weak group leadership, weak binding norms, and limited external networks, which impact less than optimal productivity and farm competitiveness.

Recommendations

1. Strengthening Farmer Group Leadership
2. Formulating and Enforcing Group Rules
3. Developing External Networks
4. Increasing Active Member Participation
5. Collaborating with Local Governments

ADVANCED RESEARCH

1. Expanding research locations to ensure more representative results.
2. More in-depth examination of the process of strengthening social norms and farmer group leadership.
3. Adding variables such as the role of extension workers and access to capital.

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