



Integration of Agricultural Technology in the Development of Horticulture-Based Agro-Tourism in Enrekang Regency

Firda Rahmayanti^{1*}, Risaldi Ismail², Farid Asfari Rahman³, and Titing Kartika⁴

Abstract

Purpose - The purpose of this research is to explore the untapped potential of agrotourism in Dante Mararih Hamlet, Tangru Village, Malua District, Enrekang Regency, South Sulawesi, and assess public awareness regarding the importance of its development.

Methodology/Design/Approach - A qualitative approach was used, combining observation, interviews, and documentation to gather data on the potential of agrotourism in the area and public awareness of its development.

Finding - The study found that Dante Mararih Hamlet has significant potential for agrotourism, driven by its horticultural resources, cultivation activities, natural beauty, and the quality of the local community. However, public awareness about agrotourism is still low, and there is a need to align perceptions to fully realize the potential. The development of agrotourism will require attention to various factors, including human resources, infrastructure, location, traditional agriculture characteristics, and agro-industry.

Originality/Value - This research emphasizes the importance of raising public awareness and aligning perceptions to optimize agrotourism potential. It provides practical insights into the factors necessary for successful agrotourism development, which could positively impact the economy of Dante Mararih Hamlet.

Keywords Agrotourism, Horticulture, Agricultural Potential, Dante Mararih Hamlet, Enrekang Regency

Introduction

The tourism sector in Indonesia is experiencing significant growth thanks to its abundant natural potential and cultural diversity. This growth is not only driven by an increase in the number of visitors, but also by investment in the tourism sector, infrastructure improvements, and increasingly effective promotion and marketing strategies (Syahrudin et al., 2022). However, despite the huge growth potential, the sector also faces various challenges, especially when it comes to careful planning. One of the key needs is adequate infrastructure to support tourist growth as well as ensure a positive impact on the local economy and the environment (Rahma & Primasworo, 2018).

*Correspondence:

Firda Rahmayanti
firda.rahmayanti@poltekba.ac.id

¹Department of Tourism, Politeknik Negeri Balikpapan, Balikpapan, East Borneo, 76126, Indonesia.

²Department of Tourism, Politeknik Pariwisata Makassar, Makassar, South Sulawesi, 90224, Indonesia.

³Department of Tourism, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jawa Timur, Surabaya, East Java, 60294, Indonesia. ⁴ Department of Tourism, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Pariwisata YAPARI, Bandung, West Java, Indonesia.



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Another challenge faced by the tourism industry in Indonesia is maximizing economic benefits without damaging the environment. Previous research has shown that a holistic and sustainable approach is essential in tourism development. One promising approach to achieve this balance is the development of agrotourism, which utilizes the agricultural sector as an environmentally friendly tourist attraction (Mudrikah, 2014). Agrotourism is expected to be able to maximize agricultural potential while reducing negative impacts on the environment, as well as providing economic benefits for local communities (Husadawan & Suastika, 2024).

The agricultural sector has an important role in supporting the development of a country (Kusmiati et al., 2023). Agrotourism develops on various scales according to specifications (Novikarumsari & Subekti, 2022). As an agrarian country, Indonesia has great potential in developing plantation-based and agriculture-based tourism. Agrotourism combines agronomic activities with tourism, offering tourists the opportunity to learn and interact directly with agricultural processes, from production to product processing (Pradipta, 2018). In Indonesia, many large plantations have been developed into agro-tourism destinations, attracting both local and international tourists (Subardi & Raidi, 2021). Agrotourism has the potential to develop the national economy (Miska & SP, n.d.). In addition to providing an immersive recreational experience, agrotourism also improves the welfare of farmers through diversification of their income sources.

The development of agro-tourism has a positive impact not only on the economy, but also on the environment and society of the surrounding community. Through the active involvement of managers, farmers, and tourists, agrotourism can be an effective means of community empowerment (Maulida, 2019). It is also one of the important strategies in agricultural development in rural areas, combining agricultural innovation with tourism promotion. Agrotourism not only provides a rich experience for tourists, but also plays an important role in environmental preservation and local economic sustainability (Sudirjo et al., 2023).

In other countries, such as New Zealand, agrotourism has grown rapidly, especially in promoting superior agricultural products such as grapes and kiwi (Bowie & Forbes, 2018). Agrotourism supports food security and tourism (Degarege & Lovelock, 2021). Indonesia, with its great agrarian potential, has the same opportunity to develop agrotourism as a competitive sector. One of the areas that has great potential for agro-tourism development is Enrekang Regency, South Sulawesi. The region has abundant horticultural richness, such as onions and beans, and is supported by beautiful natural scenery and fresh air.

Enrekang Regency is one example of an area that can develop horticulture-based agrotourism as the main attraction. However, despite its great potential, agro-tourism initiatives in this area have not been fully optimized (Yanuarti et al., 2022). Risk is a part that farmers always face in carrying out the process from start to finish. Previous research has shown that the development of agrotourism in Enrekang can help increase tourist visits, increase local income, and support environmental conservation (Sarjan et al., 2021). Agro-tourism development strategies in these areas must be based on a sustainable approach, by involving local communities and considering the unique characteristics of local agricultural products (Syahputera & Sunartomo, 2023).

Further research is needed to explore the potential of agrotourism in Enrekang Regency, especially in Dante Mararih Hamlet, Tangru Village, Malua District. The area has rich horticultural resources, and the development of agrotourism can have a significant impact on local economic development. This study aims to evaluate how agrotourism can be used to support local farmers, promote regional culture, and attract tourists (Tjilen et al., 2023). Agrotourism is not only an alternative in the tourism industry, but also an important strategy to maintain a balance between economic growth, environmental conservation, and community empowerment. Enrekang

Regency is one example of an area that has great potential in agro-tourism development, which can be the main driver in improving the welfare of farmers and local tourism attractions.

Method

The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a naturalistic process of inquiry that seeks a deep understanding of social phenomena in nature. This approach was chosen because the data needed is in the form of qualitative information that does not require quantification. This research focuses on the potential for agro-tourism development in Enrekang Regency, especially in Dante Mararih Hamlet, Tangru Village, Malua District. Based on this theme, this research is included in the type of case studies that study in depth the background, current circumstances, and environmental interactions of certain social units (individuals, groups, institutions, or communities) (Hendryadi et al., 2019). This research was conducted in Dante Mararih Hamlet, Tangru Village, Malua District, Enrekang Regency. The focus of the research is the local community and shallot farmers as resource persons to describe the development of shallot agricultural agrotourism in the area. The data collection techniques used in this study are Observation, Interviews and Documentation. Qualitative data analysis is carried out through three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Huberman, 2014).

Findings and discussion

Potential For The Development Of Horticultural Agriculture As Agrotourism In Enrekang Regency

Dante Mararih Hamlet, Enrekang Regency, has significant potential for agro-tourism development. With its diverse agricultural commodities, beautiful natural scenery, and strong cultural heritage, the region offers a unique experience for tourists interested in eco-friendly and community-based tourism. The area is mostly characterized by horticultural agriculture, with shallots being the main crop, in addition to other crops such as cabbage, carrots, tomatoes, and various types of beans. Additionally, the region's scenic beauty, especially at sunrise and at night, coupled with the mild climate, makes it an attractive destination for visitors looking for a relaxation and educational experience in agriculture

1) Agricultural Commodities

The season in Dante Mararih Hamlet affects the type of agricultural commodities grown by the community. According to Papa Pitta (Sedde) as the Chairman of the Beringin Jaya Farmers Group of Dante Mararih Hamlet, people usually plant several types of plants, such as onions, cabbage, tomatoes, carrots, chilies, and green onions, as superior crops during the rainy season, which lasts from mid-December to May. This plant is usually ready to harvest two months after planting. Meanwhile, in the dry season, which lasts from June to November, crops that are commonly cultivated include corn, peanuts, and kidney beans.

Table 1. Agricultural commodities in the dry season and rainy season

Agricultural commodities in the dry season (June – November)	Agricultural commodities in the rainy season (December – May)
Shallot	Peanut
Carrot	Red beans
Cabbage or cabbage	
Tomato	
Salak	

Source: Field survey, 2024

2) Natural Beauty



Figure 1. Morning Nature Panorama Dante Mararih Hamlet (Source: Field survey, 2024)



Figure 2. Situation at night in the agricultural area Dante Mararih Hamlet (Source: Field survey, 2024)

Dante Mararih Hamlet offers a unique agro-tourism experience with refreshing morning beauty, captivating large agricultural areas from heights, and attractive night views with lights on to protect plants from pests.

3) Climate

The cool climate is one of the important attractions for agrotourism. Although rainfall in Dante Mararih Hamlet can vary, it generally falls into the category of moderate rainfall. With cool to cold air, this area offers comfort for tourists who visit.

4) Agricultural Activities

To attract more farmers, examples of real practices in the development of agro-tourism agriculture are needed that have profitable prospects. According to Papa Pitta (Sedde), Chairman of the Beringin Jaya Farmers Group in Dante Mararih Hamlet, agricultural activities usually start at 6 am and finish around 5 pm. Farmers who bring provisions rest in the garden, while those who do not bring provisions go home to rest from 12 to 1 p.m. before returning to work. During the onion harvest season, some farmers also work at night to inspect the crop and prevent pests, usually done by men. The agricultural potential in Dante Mararih Hamlet strongly supports the development of agro-tourism, covering all stages from nursery to post-harvest (Chrimawati & Pramono, 2021).

5) Community Skills and Competencies

Community-based agrotourism requires local communities to manage and operate agrotourism businesses independently, including setting their own rules and tasks. Because management and ownership are carried out by local communities, their abilities and qualities, including tour guides from local circles, are very important. Based on the quality of its community, Dante Mararih Hamlet has the potential to develop agro-tourism, thanks to their ability to communicate with visitors and most farmers who have completed formal education and have literacy skills. This shows that the development of agro-tourism in this area can be managed effectively by local communities.

6) Community Culture

The natural and cultural conditions of the community are very important to be preserved because this affects the sustainability of agrotourism. Interviews with local people revealed that they have a tradition of gotong royong, or in the local language called (Utama & Junaedi, 2015) "**mangkombong**," where men work on the farm while women prepare food. After

harvesting, people who help harvest are required to bring the harvest, or "**Tangko**," as a form of gratitude to God and gratitude to others.

7) Institutional

Community-based agrotourism is a tourism initiative that utilizes natural and cultural resources, and involves support from local communities in the implementation of various tourism activities. Dante Mararih Hamlet already has a Beringin Jaya Farmers Group. This institution has great potential to support the development of agro-tourism in the area. Furthermore, it is necessary to form a tourism awareness group to increase public awareness about tourism development in Dante Mararih Hamlet (Suwarsito et al., 2022).

Today, there is a shift from mass tourism to individual or small group visits interested in the daily lives of rural communities. Tourists now prefer to experience and learn about local culture, especially agricultural activities. adding that abundant agricultural resources have great potential for agro-tourism. The development of agro-tourism answers the boredom of urban and modern life and helps introduce and empower local farmers through tourism activities. It can also reduce the negative impact of tourism on the environment (Utama & Junaedi, 2015).

Agricultural activities in Dante Mararih Hamlet, ranging from land cultivation to post-harvest, offer attractive tourism potential. Activities such as nurseries carried out in a mutual cooperation manner can be an educational attraction for tourists (Handayani, 2016). Currently, many parents and schools prefer to visit places with educational value rather than just entertainment places. With attractive packaging, agricultural activities can function as entertainment as well as education, attracting tourists.



Figure 3. Community Activities in the Garden
Source: Field survey, 2024



Figure 4. Community Mutual Cooperation Activities
Source: Field survey, 2024

Public Awareness Level About The Importance Of Agro-Tourism Development In Dante Mararih Hamlet, Enrekang Regency

The planning and development of agro-tourism in Dante Mararih Hamlet is expected to improve the agricultural sector, especially horticulture, and create synergy between agriculture and tourism. This will have a positive impact on ecological, social, economic, and management aspects in rural areas. The development of locally independent tourism aims to improve the quality of the community while preserving local nature and culture.

Currently, tourism development is focused on utilizing the local potential of nature, socio-cultural, and economic to provide benefits to local governments and communities. The community-based approach involves local communities in the development, management, and

service of tourism, so that they can immediately experience economic benefits and actively participate in every stage of development (Sunaryo, 2013)

The level of community awareness in Dante Mararih Hamlet is very important for the success of agro-tourism development, as it shows community support for the initiative. Most people support the development of agro-tourism because it is considered to improve the economy. However, there have been some rejections due to concerns over potential crop damage by tourists. Public knowledge about agro-tourism needs to be improved so that they clearly understand the benefits.

Agricultural cultivation in Dante Mararih Hamlet, such as shallots and other vegetables, has great tourism potential. Agricultural activities involving local culture and traditional technology can be transformed into educational attractions. The community needs to be provided with clear information about agrotourism and its important role in conservation and education. The establishment of tourism awareness groups and increasing public awareness will facilitate the development of agrotourism in this area, increase economic opportunities and benefits, and create unique tourism experiences.

Horticultural Agriculture Development Strategy In Making A Positive Contribution To The Community In Dante Mararih Hamlet, Enrekang Regency

The development of agro-tourism in Dante Mararih Hamlet is expected to provide positive benefits to the community, increase the conservation of natural resources, and preserve local culture for sustainable development. However, the agro-tourism development strategy must pay attention to several important aspects. According to the success of agro-tourism management, it depends on careful consideration of aspects such as human resources, facilities and infrastructure, site selection, farmer traditions, and agro-industry characteristics (Tandiga, 2023).

a. Human Resources Aspect

Human resources in agro-tourism require a workforce that is not only educated in agriculture but also has extensive experience and motivation in management. In terms of willingness to do business, the motivation of farmers as the main actors in agricultural business is a determining factor for success, in addition to the ability and business opportunities they have (Suherdi et al., 2014). Farmers' perception plays an important role in the development of innovations or programs in the agricultural sector (Puspaningtyas, 2024). Agricultural commodity management for agrotourism is different from ordinary agricultural production, so in-depth knowledge, farming skills, and professional attitudes are essential. Farmers who are skilled in farming must gain additional knowledge about plants and how to convey them to visitors.

b. Aspects of Facilities, Facilities, and Infrastructure

To support agrotourism, adequate facilities and infrastructure are needed, such as good roads, electricity, clean water, and telecommunications. Many agro-tourism sites, especially in inland areas, are experiencing problems with poorly maintained infrastructure. Public facilities such as toilets, restaurants, information rooms, and good transportation are essential to facilitate access and improve the tourist experience.

c. Aspects of Location Selection

The selection of agro-tourism locations must consider natural characteristics, such as lowlands for livestock and highlands with hilly topography for agriculture. Dante Mararih Hamlet, which is located in a highland with beautiful natural scenery, is very suitable for agricultural agrotourism because it can attract tourists with its natural beauty and horticultural commodities grown.

d. Characteristics of Farmers' Traditions

Agricultural traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation, such as mutual cooperation in cultivating fields, are still practiced in Dante Mararih Hamlet. This tradition, which involves cooperation between farmers and assisting in the presentation of food, can attract tourists by offering an authentic cultural experience.

e. Characteristics of Agroindustry Agroindustry processes agricultural raw materials into ready-to-eat products or the process of making food. Dante Mararih Hamlet has the potential to develop agro-industries based on superior commodities such as shallots and salak fruits. The development of products such as fried onions and salak chips can expand the attractiveness of agrotourism and increase the added value of agricultural products.

Development strategies that can be carried out include:

1. Improving the quality of agriculture through environmentally friendly technology and processing of agricultural products, as well as adding value to products through the agro-industrial approach, to create products that are varied and attract the interest of the workforce and the younger generation.
2. Improving the quality of human resources by providing training and coaching, as well as involving agricultural extension workers in increasing agricultural technology knowledge and the importance of tourism.
3. Forming a tourism awareness group to increase public awareness of the importance of tourism development and involvement in agro-tourism management.

Integrating educational value in agrotourism by developing agroedutourism, which allows tourists to learn about agriculture, especially through the cultivation of shallots, which is a leading commodity.

Conclusion

The development of agro-tourism in Dante Mararih Hamlet needs to be focused on improving the quality of human resources through training and coaching, the development of supporting infrastructure, and the formation of tourism awareness groups to strengthen public participation and awareness. In addition, the development of agro-industries based on local commodities such as shallots and salak can increase the added value of products and make a positive contribution to the local economy. This research also emphasizes the importance of integrating educational values in agrotourism to attract a wider segment of tourists and create a sustainable tourism experience.

However, this study has limitations, especially in terms of incomplete field data. A more in-depth survey is needed to get a more comprehensive picture of the potential of agro-tourism in Dante Mararih Hamlet. Further research involving more stakeholders and more detailed analysis of economic, social, and environmental aspects are urgently needed to optimize agro-tourism development strategies in the region.

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Declaration

Ethics approval and consent to participate

Not applicable.

Consent for publication

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Availability of data and materials

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Author contributions

FR and RI conceptualized the study and collected data. FAR and TK analyzed improved the quality of the manuscript.

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