

# Social Relations Patterns of Guava Farmers in Agrotourism Development (Case Study of Guava Agrotourism in Ngargoyoso District)

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**Abstract.** Guava agrotourism in Jatirejo Village, Ngargoyoso District, represents an agricultural-based economic strategy that also contributes to rural environment development through the integration of farming activities with tourism-based economic diversification. This study aims to analyze the social relation patterns of guava farmers as well as the influencing factors, within the broader context of strengthening sustainable rural agricultural ecosystems. The research employed a qualitative method with a descriptive and case study approach. Jatirejo Village was purposively selected as the research site due to its role as a guava agrotourism center in Karanganyar Regency. Data were collected through interviews, documentation, and field observation with informants from diverse backgrounds relevant to guava agrotourism. The findings reveal two patterns of social relations: associative and dissociative which play an important role in supporting or constraining environmentally sustainable agrotourism practices in rural areas. Associative relations are reflected in cooperation between farmers and agrotourism developers, as well as partnerships with guava collectors and government institutions. Conversely, dissociative relations emerge in the form of competition between developers and the dependency of farmers on guava collectors. The factors influencing these social relation patterns include frequency of interaction, communication, convergence or divergence of interests, and mutual trust among actors. These insights highlight the importance of social relations in strengthening a resilient, community based rural agrotourism ecosystem.

## 1 Introduction

Indonesia is recognized as an agrarian country where the agricultural sector serves as the backbone of its national economy. However, challenges in this sector continue to intensify due to climate change, market, dynamics, and global competition, including pressures on rural environments and the need for sustainable land use [1]. One strategy to improve farmers' welfare is agricultural diversification, such as the development of agrotourism,

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which can simultaneously strengthen rural environment development and support sustainable agricultural practices. Agrotourism is a tourism activity that utilizes agro-business as a tourism object, aiming to expand knowledge, experience, recreation, and business relations in the agricultural field [2]. Beyond offering recreation, agrotourism also serves as a solution for farmers to enhance the added value of their products [3]. The development of agrotourism requires the active participation of local communities. Jatirejo Village, located in Ngargoyoso District, has initiated guava-based agrotourism, integrating agricultural production with rural economic development efforts. Two guava agrotourism developers, Agrowisata Putra Jambu (PUJA) and Petik Jambu Helena have fostered both collaboration and competition, making the village a representative case for studying the dynamics of farmers' social relation in agrotourism and their implications for sustainable rural development.

Social relations among actors in guava agrotourism development are crucial to consider, especially in shaping the sustainability of green agricultural practices and rural agribusiness ecosystems. Stakeholder interactions play a significant role in agrotourism development, especially in rural communities, that rely on collaboration [4]. Cooperation among farmers, particularly within farmer groups, may increase productivity by up to 40%; however, competition among entrepreneurs, often leads to fragmentation [5]. In Jatirejo Village, development dynamics are marked by farmers' dependency on guava collectors who control most of the guava market, limited coordination among farmers, developers, and government, as well as competition between agrotourism developers that hinders promotional synergy. Such dynamics directly affect the capacity of the rural environment to maintain agricultural sustainability also economic, dependency and lack of synergy among actors often become obstacles in community-based enterprises [6]. These conditions demonstrate that social relations among actors play an essential role in the success of agrotourism development.

Social relation in the context of guava agrotourism may form patterns that are either associative or dissociative. Associative relations reflect unity among actors, while dissociative relation reflect division. Farmer-trader relations in agricultural systems are often influenced by factors such as trust and fairness, which are also evident in agrotourism ecosystems [7]. Understanding the dynamics of social relations in guava agrotourism is essential to ensure its sustainability. Particularly in supporting integrated rural environment development and strengthening community-based agrotourism ecosystems.

This study aims to identify the social relation patterns of guava farmers in the development of guava agritourism in Jatirejo Village and to analyze the factors that influence these relations. By understanding the interactions among the involved actors, this research is expected to provide strategic recommendations to strengthen collaboration within the agritourism ecosystem and reduce social barriers that may affect the development of guava agritourism. Furthermore, comprehending social relations in the context of agriculture and tourism can offer broader insights for designing policies that support farmers' welfare and the sustainability of agritourism enterprises in Indonesia.

## **2 Material and method**

This study was conducted to examine the social relation patterns among guava farmers in the development of guava agritourism in Ngargoyoso District. A qualitative descriptive method with a case study approach was employed. The study was purposively conducted in Jatirejo Village, Karanganyar Regency, recognized as the center of guava agrotourism. Data sources consisted of primary data from in-depth interviews and participatory observations, and secondary data from documentation such as books, academic journals, proceedings, and other relevant documents. In-depth interviews were conducted with 14 informants selected

purposively based on their roles and knowledge, including village officials, agrotourism developers, guava farmers, farm workers, guava collectors, agricultural extension officers, and tourists. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, comprising data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation.

### **3 Results and discussion**

#### **3.1 Actors Involved**

The study reveals that the development of guava agritourism in Jatirejo Village, Ngargoyoso District, involves multiple stakeholders categorized based on their influence and interests. Four distinct actor categories are identified: primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary actors [8]. Primary actors are individuals/groups/institutions with equally significant influence and interest in guava agritourism development. In Jatirejo Village, these include guava agritourism developers, guava farmers, and agricultural laborers. Secondary actors possess high influence but low interest in the agritourism initiative. Examples include students/academics and government bodies (Department of Agriculture and Department of Culture and Tourism). Tertiary actors exhibit low influence but high interest in the development of guava agritourism. The village government falls into this category, as it holds limited direct influence over agritourism projects but maintains a strong interest in enhancing the local economy, given that most residents work as Guava farmers. Quaternary actors are characterized by low influence and low interest. These include passive village residents and guava collectors. Collectors are classified as quaternary actors due to their divergent objectives: their focus is on procuring guava produce from farmers for broader market distribution, whereas agritourism developers prioritize creating plantation atmospherics and programs to support tourism activities.

#### **3.2 Associative Relation Patterns**

The social interactions among actors in guava agrotourism development are repeated and continuous, forming recognizable patterns. Two primary forms of social relations exist: associative and dissociative [9]. Associative patterns are demonstrated through cooperation among guava farmers in Jatirejo Village, grounded in shared interests and mutual trust [10]. Farmers play not only as cultivators but also as implementers in agrotourism development, while maintaining their social role as villagers who uphold values such as gotong royong (mutual cooperation). Social capital in rural communities is manifested in collective action for shared goals, strengthening community bonds [11].

##### ***3.2.1 Cooperation between Farmers and Developers***

A robust and sustained cooperative relationship exists between guava farmers and agritourism developers, particularly in harvest supply and knowledge exchange on cultivation techniques. Farmers serve as the primary suppliers to Putra Jambu Agritourism (PUJA), managing processes such as irrigation, fertilization, pruning, pesticide application, fruit wrapping, and harvesting. Developers, conversely, actively promote guava products to broader markets, enhancing public awareness and demand, while providing farmers with technical training. This mutually beneficial relationship ensures farmers secure stable markets, while developers guarantee quality produce for tourists. The continuity of this

partnership is reflected in consistent repeat orders and enduring engagements, illustrating a cooperative social relation pattern that supports locally rooted agritourism.

### *3.2.2 Partnerships between Farmers and Collectors*

Farmers also establish partnerships with guava collectors to stabilize harvest distribution. Partnerships are defined as equitable collaborations based on principles of mutual necessity, trust, reinforcement, and benefit [12]. The farmer-collector relationship aligns with this definition, operating on equality and shared needs. Trust cultivated through repeated, long-term interactions underpins this alliance. Collectors act as intermediaries, connecting farmers to larger markets, including wholesalers and non-local consumers. However, farmers frequently face weaker bargaining power in price negotiations, and dependence on collectors intensifies challenges during sharp price fluctuations.

### *3.2.3 Government and Developers*

Government support plays a critical role in shaping associative relations. The Karanganyar Regency Department of Culture and Tourism and Jatirejo Village Government contribute through training, equipment provision, policy support, and consultative forums. Collaboration between PUJA and the department exemplifies reciprocal and sustained cooperation to optimize local tourism potential, while the village government facilitates permits and conducive regulatory frameworks. However, their involvement remains limited in technical mentorship and expanded market access. Collectively, synergy between developers, government agencies, and the village reflects collaborative social relations aimed at sustainable agritourism development.

## **3.3 Dissociative Relation Patterns**

### *3.3.1 Competition between developers*

The emergence of competition between agritourism developers in Jatirejo Village has led to limited communication and coordination, which can give rise to contravention and further conflict. Competition and fragmentation between developers have prevented the creation of integrated tourism packages or joint promotional activities. This situation is reinforced by statements from managers, such as, “Our relationship is merely that of fellow villagers... there is no cooperation” (Mr. AS, June 7, 2024) and “There is no cooperative relationship... our development goals are different” (Mrs. KM, June 7, 2024). These patterns reflect dissociative relations characterized by competition and contravention, which, if left unaddressed, may escalate into latent conflict. These findings align with previous research indicating that competition among agritourism developers often overlooks the potential for integrated tourism products [13]. Without stronger collaborative strategies, such unhealthy competition is likely to hinder the growth of the local agritourism sector and reduce its overall appeal to visitors.

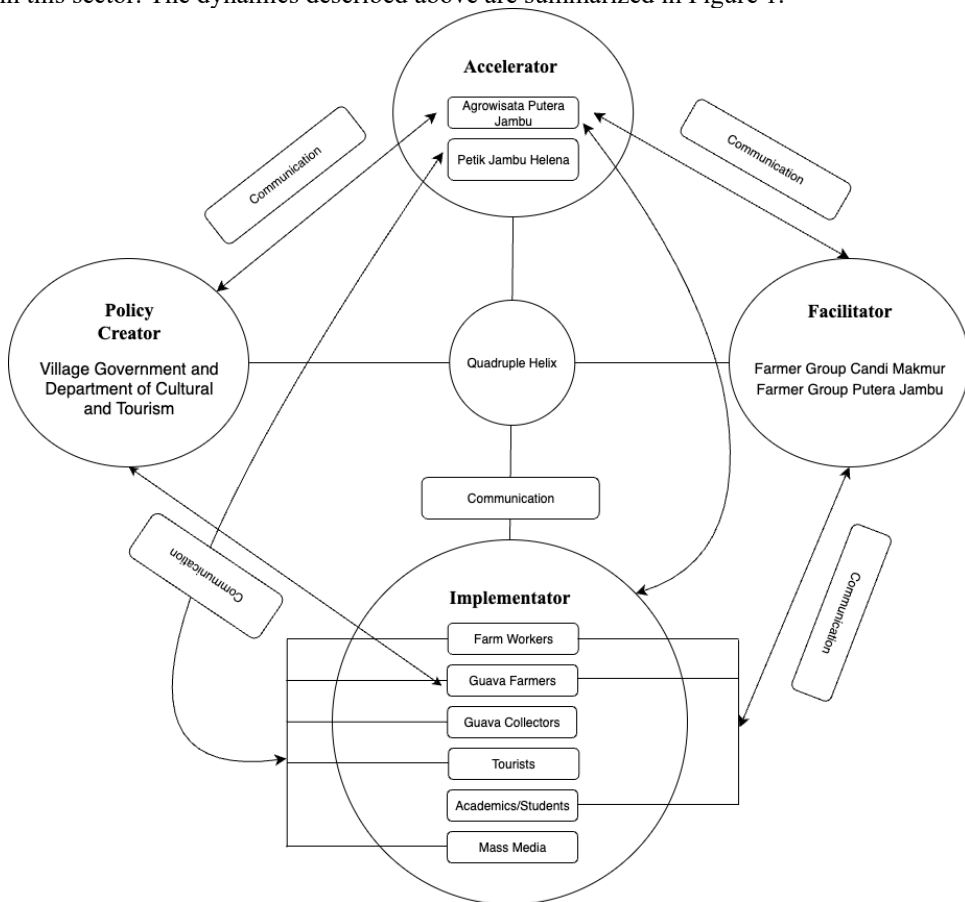
### *3.3.2 Dependence and Information Asymmetry: Farmers and Collectors*

Guava farmers exhibit a strong dependence on collectors in determining the sale price of their produce. Because they cannot set prices on their own, farmers have less negotiating power than collectors, who enjoy broader market access. As a result, farmers have limited

flexibility in establishing the market value of their crops. This dependence is further intensified during periods of price fluctuations. Information asymmetries regarding market demand, price transparency, and harvest timing further reinforce the collectors' dominant position. This situation is reflected in farmers' complaints about the lack of price transparency and sales mechanisms that are largely dictated by the collectors.

### 3.4 Quadruple Helix Model

The collaboration model reflects the quadruple helix framework, emphasizing synergy among academia, industry, government, and community. However, academic participation in Ngaroyoso's guava agritourism remains minimal. Increased involvement from academic institutions in research, training, and technical mentoring is essential to optimize innovation in this sector. The dynamics described above are summarized in Figure 1.



**Fig. 1.** Model Quadruple Helix dalam Pengembangan Agrowisata Jambu di Desa Jatirejo.

The frequency of social interactions among guava farmers enhances knowledge exchange. Farmers emphasize that regular meetings and peer interactions enable them to adopt updated fertilization and pest control techniques. Additionally, spontaneous interactions during fieldwork or village social activities strengthen kinship-based social capital. The strong tradition of direct communication and interaction, whether informal or planned, reflects a high intensity of social interaction and underscores the closeness of

community relationships [14]. However, dynamics in farmer-collector relations reveal information asymmetrical, with farmers expressing dissatisfaction regarding price transparency. Communication between agritourism developers and the government remains top-down, characterized by limited community participation in program planning.

Shared needs among stakeholders, such as the desire to enhance the economic value of guava, drive collaboration. For instance, farmers and collectors work together to implement fruit quality standards to stabilize prices. However, conflicting interests arise when developers prioritize tourism development while farmers focus on harvest stability. This underscores the necessity of aligning agendas through multistakeholder forums. Trust and fair conduct are essential for sustaining relations, as evidenced by communal practices like collaborative orchard maintenance (gotong royong) and timely cash payments.

## 4 Conclusion

The development of guava agritourism in Jatirejo Village, Ngargoyoso District, involves a multi-stakeholder framework categorized into four actor groups: primary (agritourism developers, farmers, laborers), secondary (academics, government agencies), tertiary (village government), and quaternary (passive residents, collectors). These actors show varying degrees of influence and interest, shaping both collaborative and competitive dynamics. The study identifies two dominant social relation patterns: associative relations, characterized by collaboration among farmers, developers, collectors, and the village government to strengthen social capital and ensure stable harvest distribution; and dissociative relations, marked by challenges such as farmers' price dependency on collectors and fragmented communication between developers. While stakeholders share a mutual goal of enhancing Guava's economic value, divergent priorities such as developers' focus on tourism attractions versus farmers' emphasis on harvest stability necessitate coordinated strategies through multi-stakeholder forums. The sustainability and integration of community-based agritourism depend critically on factors like the frequency of social interactions, communication quality, alignment of interests, and the cultivation of trust among stakeholders.

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