

Research Article

Partner Farmers' Perceptions of the Presence of the Palm Oil Company PT Tani Prima Makmur in Anggaberi District, Southeast Sulawesi Province

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to determine the perception of Plasma Farmers/Partners on the Existence of PT. Tani Prima Makmur Oil Palm Plantation, Andabia Village, Anggaberi District, Southeast Sulawesi Province. The number of samples in the study was 54 respondents of partner/plasma farmers. There are two types of data in general, namely quantitative data and qualitative data. The data sources used in this study are primary data and secondary data. The data analysis method in this study is qualitative descriptive analysis, with a qualitative analysis model. With a Likert scale, the measured variables are described into variable indicators. Then the indicators are used as a starting point for compiling instrument items that can be in the form of questions or statements. The answers to each instrument item using a Likert scale have positive questions and negative questions. Based on the results of the analysis, it appears that public perception regarding the economic impact of PT Tani Prima Makmur's activities is assessed as a total score of 574, indicating that the existence of oil palm plantations has a positive impact on improving the economy of partner/plasma farmers. The overall social impact has a total score of 416, which means that the presence of oil palm plantations is perceived to have a negative impact on the social community of partner/plasma farmers.

Keyword: Economic Impact; Oil Palm; Plasma Farmers; Social Perception; Southeast Sulawesi

1. Introduction

The agricultural sector plays a significant role in Indonesia's economic activity, as evidenced by its substantial contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which reached approximately 12.53 percent in 2023, ranking third after the Manufacturing Industry sector (18.67 percent) and the Wholesale and Retail Trade sector. One subsector with significant potential is the plantation subsector. In 2023, the plantation subsector contributed 3.88 percent to total GDP and 30.97 percent to the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries sector, ranking first in that sector (BPS, 2024).

One of Indonesia's leading agricultural commodity sectors is oil palm plantations. Oil palm is a plantation commodity that plays a significant role in Indonesia's economic activity due to its ability to produce vegetable oil, which is highly demanded by the industrial sector. Its high-pressure oxidation resistance and ability to dissolve chemicals that are insoluble in other solvents, as well as its high coating power, make palm oil suitable for various uses, including cooking oil, industrial oil, and fuel (biodiesel). As the world's largest palm oil producer, Indonesia has great potential to market palm oil and palm kernel both domestically and internationally. Potential markets that will absorb the marketing of palm oil (CPO) and palm kernel oil (PKO) are the fractionation/refining industry (especially the cooking oil industry), specialty fats (cocoa butter substitute), margarine/shortening, oleochemicals, and bath soap.

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Palm oil is a development of the plantation subsector based on agribusiness. Palm oil plantation activities and their derivative products provide high added value to the economy. According to Qoniyah (2012), the agribusiness sector creates jobs and plays a significant role in reducing unemployment. Furthermore, Saragih (2017) argues that agricultural industrialization is a necessary condition for strengthening the people's economy. Industrialization ensures a conducive macroclimate for the development of the people's economy, which is largely based on agricultural-based economic activities. To truly strengthen the people's economy, sufficient conditions are required, such as the development of farmer business organizations that can capture the added value created at every link in the economic chain of agricultural industrialization.

Indonesian oil palm plantations are growing rapidly in 22 of Indonesia's 33 provinces. The two main islands that are centers of oil palm plantation development in Indonesia are Sumatra and Kalimantan. Approximately 90% of oil palm plantations in Indonesia are located on these two palm islands, and these two islands produce 95% of Indonesia's crude palm oil production. Between 2000 and 2019, a revolution in palm oil plantations occurred in Indonesia, marked by the rapid growth and development of smallholder plantations, at 24% per year from 2000 to 2019 (Ministry of Agriculture, 2019).

Therefore, development in the agricultural sector today relies on a foundation of comparative advantage in producing various raw materials, one of which is plantations, which will undoubtedly impact the economic, social, and environmental conditions surrounding the plantations (Rusmawardi, 2007). The impacts or influences resulting from plantation development will influence public perceptions regarding their survival, whether leading to public unrest or complaints or to improvements in their living environment (Siradjuddin, 2015).

Perception is a person's direct response to something. Each person's perception tends to see the same thing differently. These differences can be influenced by many factors, including knowledge, experience, and perspective. Perception is also linked to how a person views a particular object in different ways, using their senses, and then attempts to interpret it. Positive and negative perceptions are like files neatly stored in our subconscious. These files emerge immediately when a triggering stimulus or event triggers them. Perception is the brain's way of understanding or assessing events around it (Nugroho and Rakhmadhani, 2018).

Companies and the surrounding communities are two interconnected components. A company's production activities impact the surrounding community, both positively and negatively. Conversely, the views or actions of the community surrounding a company can influence the company's continued existence in a particular area (Juspriyanti, 2017).

The perception of the community of Andabia Village, Anggaberi District, Konawe Regency, which is the closest village to the oil palm plantation sector of PT. Tani Prima Makmur, is a cognitive process experienced by every person (community) in understanding information about their environment related to the impact of the establishment of oil palm plantations, both through sight, view, appreciation, feeling and smell. PT. Tani Prima Makmur is a palm oil plantation company engaged in processing crude palm oil products. PT. Tani Prima Makmur is a company engaged in plantations and processing plants for the crude palm oil industry. Located in Konawe Regency, Southeast Sulawesi and has a distance of 78 KM from the city of Kendari with a travel time of about 2 hours by land. Established in 2008. Being one of the pioneers of oil palm plantations in Konawe Regency, Southeast Sulawesi, PT TPM continues to develop towards a sustainable oil palm company. To maintain business sustainability, the company is consistently developing internally and engaging independent smallholder farmers, which will undoubtedly boost the economic growth of the surrounding communities, contributing to national development and prosperity.

The company is also expanding its business into the downstream palm oil industry by establishing a 45-ton-per-hour palm oil processing plant, which commenced operations on

September 20, 2020, in Larehoma Village, Anggaberi District, Konawe Regency. The plant produces Crude Palm Oil (CPO) and Palm Kernel (PK). The company's current plantation area covers 6,578 hectares, all of which is in production. The surrounding community, particularly the Andabia Village community, serves as access to the company. The relatively short distance between the company and residential areas will impact the surrounding community, encompassing both positive and negative economic, social, and environmental aspects.

One example of the impacts resulting from the presence of a palm oil plantation company is the socio-economic conditions of the surrounding community. Research conducted by Helviani in 2021, using a case study of PT. Damai Jaya Lestari in Tanggetada District, Kolaka Regency, revealed that the presence of a palm oil company in the area has many positive social and economic impacts. The positive impact on social conditions is evident in the development of public facilities, education, health, and social institutions within community institutions. The positive impact on economic conditions is evident in the increasing availability of employment/business opportunities with the presence of PT. Damai Jaya Lestari, thus assisting the government in reducing unemployment in Tanggetada District, Kolaka Regency (Helviani et al., 2021). Therefore, based on the description above, the author is interested in conducting research related to the perception of the community in Andabia Village, Anggaberi District, Konawe Regency regarding the presence of PT. Tani Prima Makmur in their area. Based on the background above, the purpose of this study is to determine the perception of Partner Farmers regarding the Existence of PT. Tani Prima Makmur's Oil Palm Plantation in Anggaberi District, Southeast Sulawesi Province.

2. Literature Review

Definition of Perception

Perception is a person's direct response to something. Each person's perception tends to see the same thing differently. These differences can be influenced by many factors, including knowledge, experience, and perspective. Perception is also linked to how a person views a particular object differently, using their senses and then attempting to interpret them. Positive and negative perceptions are like files neatly stored in our subconscious mind. These files will immediately emerge when a stimulus triggers them or an event opens them. Perception is the result of the brain's work in understanding or assessing something that occurs around it (Nugroho and Rakhmadhani, 2018).

Perception is the process that involves the entry of messages or information into the human brain. Through perception, humans continuously interact with their environment. This connection occurs through their senses, namely sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell (Slameto, 2003). Miftah Toha (2009) states that perception is essentially a cognitive process experienced by everyone in understanding information about their environment, whether through sight, hearing, appreciation, feeling, and smell. Perceptual understanding is the cumulative interpretation of situations regarding objects that occur in the environment.

Partner Farmers/Plasma

Partner farmers or palm oil plasma is a government-regulated partnership model between a core company (oil palm plantation company) and smallholders (plasma). This model is designed to empower smallholders by providing them with access to resources, technology, and markets, thereby improving their productivity and well-being. The palm oil plasma system is regulated by Minister of Agriculture Regulation No. 26 of 2007 concerning Guidelines for Plantation Business Licensing, which requires core companies to allocate at least 20% of their total plantation area to the plasma/partner program.

According to Mara and Fitri (2013), agricultural partnerships are collaborations between partner group members (farmers/farmer groups/farmer groups/clusters) and partner companies based on the principles of mutual support, mutual need, and mutual benefit. Palm oil plasma is an effective partnership model for integrating smallholders into the palm oil industry value chain. With an inclusive approach, this program not only

improves farmer welfare but also supports the sustainable growth of the palm oil industry. To maximize its benefits, strict oversight, transparency, and collaboration between the government, companies, and farmers are required. Thus, palm oil plasma can be a solution that supports equitable and sustainable economic development.

Oil Palm

Oil palm (*Elaeis*) is the most important industrial crop producing both cooking oil and fuel (biodiesel). Oil palm development in Indonesia began in 1970 and experienced rapid growth, particularly in the 1980s. In 1980, the oil palm area was only 294 hectares, but it continued to increase rapidly, reaching 7.32 million hectares by 2009, with 47.81% being private large plantations (PBS), 43.76% being smallholder plantations (PR), and 8.43% being state-owned large plantations (PBN). With this area, Indonesia is the world's largest palm oil producer. In 2009, Indonesian palm oil production reached 20.6 million tons, followed by Malaysia in second place with 17.57 million tons. Indonesia's palm oil production accounts for 80% of total production. The main destinations for Indonesian palm oil exports are India, with a 33% market share, followed by China with 13%, and the Netherlands with 9% of total Indonesian palm oil exports (Tampubolon, 2016).

Palm oil is an important plantation crop producing edible oil, industrial oil, and biofuel. To establish a plantation, businesses must obtain a plantation permit. This is explained in Article 17 Paragraph (1) of Law Number 18 of 2004 concerning Plantations, which states, Every plantation cultivation business actor with a certain land area and/or industrial plantation product management business with a certain factory capacity must have a plantation business permit.

3. Method

There are two general types of data: quantitative and qualitative, which will be explained below. The author focuses more on qualitative data in this research.

a. Quantitative

Quantitative data is data or information obtained in numerical form. In this numerical form, quantitative data can be processed using mathematical formulas or analyzed using statistical systems.

b. Qualitative

Qualitative data is data in the form of words or verbally. Qualitative data can be obtained through interviews.

The data sources used in this study include primary and secondary data.

a. Primary Data

Primary data is research data obtained directly from data sources specifically collected and directly related to the problem being studied (Bernard, 2011). The primary data for this study were obtained from questionnaires distributed to respondents.

b. Secondary Data

Ferdinand (2006) collected secondary data from various existing data centers, including data centers at companies, research institutions, and similar institutions that have poll data. Data was obtained directly from the Andabia Village, the palm oil company PT. Tani Prima Makmur, and other institutions related to the research.

A population is a generalized area consisting of objects/subjects possessing certain qualities and characteristics determined by the researcher to be studied and then conclusions drawn (Sugiyono, 2014). Meanwhile, according to Ferdinand (2006), a population is a combination of all elements in the form of events, things, or people with similar characteristics that become the focus of a researcher's attention and are therefore viewed as a research universe. The population in this study was all plasma farmers/partners who are members of the Farmers' Group Association (GAPOKTAN) in Andabia Village, within the company area and affected by oil palm plantation activities. According to Arikunto (2006), a sample is a portion of a population, a portion of the population's numbers and characteristics. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is

a technique for determining a sample from population members based on criteria established by the researcher (Nasution, 2009). Similarly, according to Sugiyono (2014), purposive sampling is a technique for determining a sample with specific considerations. The sampling criteria were:

- a. Residents of Andabia Village, Konawe Regency
- b. Have been involved, interacted with, or received benefits/impacts from oil palm plantations/oil palm companies
- c. Are partner farmers/plasma farmers of the company

To determine the number of samples to be taken in this study, the researcher used the Slovin formula (Amirin, 2011). Mathematically, the Slovin formula can be written as follows:

$$n = N / 1 + (Ne^2)$$

Based on this formula, a sample of 54 farmer respondents was obtained.

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and organizing interview transcripts or other materials found in the field. The data analysis method in this study is qualitative descriptive analysis, using a qualitative analysis model. Sugiyono (2014) suggests three main components in data analysis:

- a. Data Reduction

Data reduction is the process of selecting and focusing on simplifying the raw data that emerges from written field notes. Data reduction is also a form of analysis that emphasizes, shortens, removes unimportant elements, and organizes data in such a way that final conclusions can be drawn.

- b. Data Presentation

Data presentation is defined as the presentation of information structured to allow for conclusions to be drawn. Furthermore, data presentation requires planning columns and tables for qualitative data in specific formats.

- c. Conclusion Drawing

Conclusion drawing is the final stage in research, where the data obtained is summarized and conclusions are drawn as the overall results of the research. According to Moleong (2007), the Likert scale is a scale that can be used to measure the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of an individual or group of people regarding a symptom or phenomenon. With a Likert scale, the measured variable is broken down into variable indicators. These indicators are then used as a starting point for compiling instrument items, which can be questions or statements. Each instrument item using a Likert scale has both positive and negative answers.

Table 1. Table of Likert Scale Statement Values.

Positive Questions (+)	Negative Questions (-)
Score 1: Disagree/Good	Score 1: Agree/Good/Like
Score 2: Agree/Good/Like	Score 2: Disagree/Good
Score 3: Strongly (Agree/Good/Like)	Score 3: Strongly (Disagree/Poor)

4. Results and Discussion

Company Profile of PT. Tani Prima Makmur

PT. Tani Prima Makmur is a company engaged in plantations and processing of crude palm oil. It is located in Konawe Regency, Southeast Sulawesi, 78 kilometers from Kendari City, with a travel time of approximately two hours by land. Established in 2008, PT. TPM is one of the pioneers of oil palm plantations in Konawe Regency, Southeast Sulawesi. PT. TPM continues to develop into a sustainable palm oil company. To maintain business continuity, it consistently carries out internal development and involves independent smallholder farmers, which will undoubtedly boost the economic growth of the surrounding communities, contributing to national development and prosperity.

The company is also expanding its business into the downstream palm oil industry by establishing a palm oil processing plant with a capacity of 45 tons per hour. It commenced operations on September 20, 2020, located in Larehoma Village, Anggaberi District, Konawe Regency. It produces Crude Palm Oil (CPO) and Palm Kernel (PK).

Average Monthly Income

The average income of respondents in this study was divided into five groups: 6 respondents with incomes below Rp 1,000,000; 4 respondents with incomes between Rp 1,000,001 and Rp 2,500,000; 2 respondents with incomes between Rp 2,500,001 and Rp 4,000,000; 14 respondents with incomes between Rp 4,000,001 and Rp 5,500,000; and 28 respondents with incomes above Rp 5,500,000, the largest group. This income level was dominated by respondents whose occupations and land area were plantations. The income group with the fewest respondents was between Rp 2,500,001 and Rp 4,000,000, with 2 respondents. This is because most of these respondents were not solely employees or farmers. This difference in income levels is due to differences in occupation, age, and level of formal education, with respondents of productive age and well-educated individuals tending to have higher incomes. The distribution of respondents' income levels can be seen in Table 1.

Table 2. Average Monthly Income of Respondents.

No	Average income/month (Rp)	Number of Respondents (People)	Percentase (%)
1	<1.000.000	6	11,11
2	1.000.001 – 2.500.000	4	7,41
3	2.500.001 - 4.000.000	2	3,70
4	4.000.001 – 5.500.000	14	25,93
5	>5. 500.001	28	51,85
Jumlah		54	100

Source: Primary Data After Processing, 2025.

Community Perception Analysis

In this study, a Likert scale was used to examine community views on the economic and social implications of plantation activities. The Likert scale was used to express the community's overall views and ideas, as well as their level of agreement with a series of questions. Results were obtained through respondents' answers to questionnaires administered directly or through community interviews. A three-choice scale was used, requiring respondents to choose one option; no "neutral" option was provided. Variables were questions or statements used in the study that were openly explained by the researchers. Perceptions measured included economic, social, and environmental impacts.

Public Perception of Economic Impact

The results of respondents' perceptions of the economic impact of PT. Tani Prima Makmur are outlined in Table 2 below:

Table 3. Analysis of Public Perception of Economic Impacts.

No.	Indicator	Score			Total Score
		1 Don't agree	2 Agree	3 Strongly agree	
1.	The company provides employment opportunities for local communities	5	37	12	155
2.	There is business development by local communities from the company	22	30	2	88
3.	Farmers become partners of the company in purchasing oil palm fruit.	9	36	9	108
4.	The company buys the palm oil harvest from farmers	11	23	20	117

5.	There is an economic improvement with the presence of plantation companies	8	40	6	106
	Amount	55	166	49	574

Source: Primary Data After Processing, 2025.

Oil palm plantations are an economic activity that can contribute to the communities surrounding the plantations. Economic development within the community serves as a benchmark for the extent of the impact of plantation activities in the area. The economic impact of this study is a simple assessment of the importance of plantations on a regional economy. The development of oil palm plantations has provided benefits, expanding their reach to the surrounding community. The increasing development of oil palm plantations has increasingly had a significant impact on partner/plasma farmers working in the plantation sector.

The socioeconomic characteristics of the community can be seen from direct income, indirect income, community impacts (induced), and community expenditures. The average farmer cultivating oil palm and partnering with the company earns > Rp 5,000,000 per month.

Based on the total score, the majority of respondents stated "agree" with a score of 166. This indicates that PT. Tani Prima Makmur has a positive economic impact on increasing farmer incomes.

Public Perception of Social Impact

The results of respondents' perceptions of the social impacts of PT Tani Prima Makmur are described in Table 3 below:

Table 4. Analysis of Public Perception of Social Impacts.

No	Indicator	Score			Total Score
		1 Don't agree	2 Agree	3 Strongly agree	
1	The relationship between plantation companies and farmers is always maintained well.	38	15	1	71
2	During the company's existence since its founding, there has never been a conflict between the plantation companies and the surrounding community/farmers.	41	12	1	68
3	The company provides human resource development programs, such as scholarship assistance, school improvements or other social activities from the company.	42	9	3	69
4	The company's presence does not disrupt the work activities of the local community/farmers.	7	45	2	103
5	The Company's Social Activities Have a Direct Impact on Farmers	18	21	15	105
	Amount	146	102	22	416

Source: Primary Data After Processing, 2025.

The palm oil plantation activities of PT Tani Prima Makmur have resulted in various social impacts, particularly for farmers living near the plantation, related to social issues. The presence of this palm oil mill will create various perceptions in the community. Perceptions tend to influence community behavior and responses to environmental, social, and cultural conditions.

The research results indicate that the plantation activities received a negative response from the majority of respondents, with a score of 146 indicating "disagree," although some indicators were perceived positively. This is due to several social conflicts between the company and the local community regarding fairness, particularly in the company's employee recruitment process, which does not prioritize local communities and the lack of local community empowerment.

To prevent conflict between the plantation company and the surrounding community, the actions taken are to provide fairness to the surrounding community. The community expressed "agreement" and "strongly agree" because the palm oil plantation company does not interfere in local land issues. The company needs to maintain good relations and communication with the surrounding community to prevent conflict around the palm oil plantation.

5. Conclusion and Limitations

The socio-economic characteristics of the community can be seen from direct income, indirect income, communities affected by the company (induced) and community expenditure. The average farmer who cultivates oil palm plants and is a partner of the company has an income of > Rp. 5,000,000,-/month. Based on the discussion of the research results, it appears that the community's perception of the economic impact of PT Tani Prima Makmur's activities is assessed as a total score of 574, indicating that the presence of oil palm plantations has a positive impact on improving the economy of partner/plasma farmers. The overall social impact has a total score of 416, which means that the presence of oil palm plantations is perceived to have a negative impact on the social community of partner/plasma farmers,

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