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Understanding the Practice of "Teseng" in Cattle Farming Businesses in Swadaya Village, Bone Regency

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to understand and analyze the practice of the teseng (profit sharing) system in cattle farming businesses in Swadaya Village, Bone Regency, and to identify the implementation mechanisms and profit sharing patterns between capital owners and livestock breeders.
Methodology: This study employed a qualitative approach with in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Informants were selected from cattle breeders involved in teseng in Amessangeng Hamlet, Swadaya Village. Data were analyzed through data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing, with triangulation to ensure data validity.
Results: Research results show that the teseng system in Swadaya Village is a traditional profit-sharing partnership based on trust and verbal agreement between capital owners and livestock farmers. Profit sharing is done alternately per calf birth or proportionally. This system empowers communities without capital to continue raising livestock and earn income.
Conclusions: The teseng system functions as a mechanism for empowering rural communities economically, enabling access to livestock businesses without initial capital, with its sustainability relying on social capital in the form of local beliefs and customary norms.
Limitations: This research is limited to cattle breeders who apply the teseng system in Swadaya Village, Bone Regency.
Contribution: This study contributes to the understanding of teseng practices as local wisdom in cattle farming, particularly profit-sharing mechanisms, social capital, and trust-based cooperation in rural Bone Regency.

Keywords: *Cattle Farming, Local Wisdom, Profit Sharing, Rural Economy, Teseng System*

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1. Introduction

The profit-sharing system is a form of economic cooperation that has long developed in agrarian societies in Indonesia. Generally, this system involves two parties contributing different resources: the capital owner who provides the assets and the manager who contributes labor and expertise, with profits shared according to a mutually agreed-upon ratio. This type of cooperation pattern not only has an economic dimension but also embodies social values such as trust, solidarity, and local wisdom rooted in community traditions. Comparable partnership-based cooperation has been documented in Islamic finance more broadly, where profit-sharing contracts such as *murabaha* and *musyarakah* are similarly used to structure economic relationships without relying on interest-based lending (Atal, Iranmanesh, Hashim, & Foroughi, 2020; Cherqaoui, 2022).

One concrete manifestation of the profit-sharing system that still exists and thrives in South Sulawesi is the practice of *teseng* in cattle farming. *Teseng* is a local Bugis term referring to a cooperative agreement between cattle owners (the capital providers) and livestock breeders (*pa'teseng*) to raise livestock under a mutually agreed-upon profit-sharing system. This system has been passed down through generations and has become an integral part of the socio-economic traditions of rural communities in South Sulawesi.

The livestock sector plays a crucial role in boosting the rural economy, particularly in Bone Regency. Besides providing a source of income, cattle farming also serves as a form of long-term savings for the community, as cattle have a high economic value and can be sold at any time to meet living expenses. In Swadaya Village, Bone Regency, cattle farming remains a popular livelihood, both as a primary occupation and as a side hustle to supplement family income. This important role played by smallholder livestock activity mirrors evidence from small and medium enterprise research more broadly, which finds that financial literacy, access to finance, and digital inclusion jointly shape how effectively small-scale economic actors can grow their businesses (Eniola, & Entebang, 2017;(Matar & Alkhawaldeh, 2017); Dharmawan, & Sholeha, 2021).

The *Teseng* system, or profit-sharing, is a traditional form of cooperation that has been practiced for generations in South Sulawesi, including in Swadaya Village, Bone Regency. This *Teseng* system involves cooperation between capital owners (cattle owners) and breeders (*pa'teseng*) in the cattle raising process, with profits being shared according to the agreement of both parties. Although this system has been practiced for generations by the community, its implementation still faces various obstacles, one of which is the lack of a written agreement that can trigger disputes in the future.

In Swadaya Village, the *Teseng* system is still widely used because it is considered a solution for rural communities with limited capital for cattle farming. This system helps farmers maintain livestock even without their own capital. Furthermore, the *Teseng* system is a form of social and economic relationship based on trust between communities. A flexible profit-sharing mechanism and a cooperative relationship that relies heavily on mutual trust between the parties involved are among the characteristics of the *Teseng* system. Its sustainability is supported by social capital, such as kinship ties and customary norms, which are prioritized over formal agreements.

However, despite its benefits, the *teseng* system also carries various financial risks for livestock farmers. These risks include livestock mortality, unstable cattle prices, increased feed and maintenance costs, and profit sharing that is sometimes considered less profitable for farmers. Furthermore, farmers are often in a more vulnerable position because they must bear maintenance costs and the risk of losing livestock during the breeding period. Risks in rural cattle farming typically arise from high livestock maintenance costs, the possibility of cattle disease, and the frequently fluctuating market price of livestock. These conditions can impact the profits and income earned by farmers. This kind of risk exposure is consistent with broader evidence on livestock management among smallholder farmers, which finds that limited access to formal risk-mitigation tools leaves informal producers particularly vulnerable to income shocks (Manda, Alene, Gardebroek, Kassie, & Tembo, 2016; Fianto, Maulida, & Laila, 2019).

The *teseng* system in cattle farming is still largely based on verbal agreements, potentially leading to unclear distribution of profits and responsibilities in the event of losses (Dahmen & Rodríguez, 2014). The absence of a written agreement in the *teseng* system can also lead to unclear distribution of profits and responsibilities in the event of livestock losses. Reliance on informal, trust-based agreements without written documentation is a pattern also observed in informal credit relationships more broadly, where relational trust functions as a substitute for the formal contracts and collateral that a bank or larger institutional lender would typically require (Wang, 2021;Mishra, Walsh, & Srivastava, 2021 ; Fafchamps, 2020).

If these risks are not managed properly, livestock farmers' income and profits can decline and even lead to losses. Furthermore, livestock farmers' dependence on capital owners can also hinder their ability to develop independently and impact their long-term economic well-being. Left unmanaged, financial exposure of this kind can compound over time in ways that formal performance-measurement research warns against, since informal arrangements lacking systematic monitoring make it harder to detect a deteriorating trend before it becomes severe (Kolk, van der Meer-Kooistra, & Widener, 2022; Bedford, 2020).

Given these conditions, research into the financial risks faced by cattle farmers in the *teseng* system is necessary, particularly in Swadaya Village, Bone Regency. This study aims to identify the various forms of financial risks experienced by cattle farmers in the *teseng* system and to understand their impact on the economic conditions and sustainability of community livestock businesses. The results are expected to provide a realistic picture of the conditions faced by cattle farmers and serve as input for creating a more open, balanced, and mutually beneficial *teseng* system. Addressing these risks in a way that preserves the underlying social relationship, rather than replacing it outright, is consistent with organizational research showing that resource-based interventions succeed most reliably when they build on existing trust rather than displacing it (Boselie, & Veld, 2021; Coyle-Shapiro, Doden, & Chang, 2019; Dubey, Gunasekaran, Childe, Roubaud, & Foropon, 2019; Kim, & Lee, 2021; Chowdhury, & Quaddus, 2017). This need for closer empirical attention parallels calls in the broader organizational literature for more granular, context-specific research designs capable of capturing risk dynamics that aggregate, cross-sectoral studies tend to average over (Franke, & Sarstedt, 2019; Kim, Vandenabeele, Wright, Andersen, Cerase, & Christensen, 2019).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Teseng System (profit sharing)

According to Rahmawati (2021), in Bugis society, the practice of profit-sharing agreements is known as *teseng*. Although the term is widely used in various Bugis ethnic groups, the implementation and form of the agreement can vary from region to region. This variation is seen in the implementation mechanism and the form of agreement used, both verbally and in writing. In customary law, profit-sharing agreements are a form of cooperation in the agricultural sector that has long been developed and practiced by the Indonesian people. This system is known by various different terms according to its region of origin. In Central Java it is known as Moro, in the Priangan region it is called Nengah, in Minahasa it is known as Toyo, in Sumatra it is called Perduana, in the Rejang region it is known as Pao, while the people of South Sulawesi know it as *teseng*.

The profit-sharing system (*teseng*) is a form of local wisdom that has been passed down through generations and is still practiced by communities, particularly in South Sulawesi. In practice, livestock owners hand over their livestock to farmers to be raised based on a trust-based relationship without a written contract. Profits from livestock reproduction are shared according to the agreement, while risks arising during the raising period are a shared responsibility between both parties. According to Claridge (2018), the *teseng* system is not solely based on economic relationships but also contains social elements such as trust, mutual cooperation, and community solidarity. Therefore, most *teseng* practices are carried out without written contracts and are based solely on verbal agreements. According to Fukuyama (2017), the sustainability of the *teseng* system is greatly influenced by the level of trust between livestock owners and managers because most collaboration is carried out informally without written contracts.

Research conducted by Fukuyama (2017) suggests that, in general, profit-sharing cooperation practices implemented by livestock farmers are carried out through verbal agreements. When viewed from the legal provisions in force in Indonesia, this form of agreement is not considered a prohibited act. Furthermore, verbal agreements have become part of the customs and traditions that have developed in community life. Therefore, the existence of unwritten agreements does not conflict with public order or prevailing moral norms. Thus, verbal agreements can be understood as a social practice that has been embedded in community life and has legal force as long as it meets the requirements for a valid agreement. This validity is based on the principle of freedom of contract in the Indonesian civil law system, which gives the parties the freedom to make agreements in various forms according to their agreement.

2.2 Teseng System as Local Wisdom

A profit-sharing system is a collaborative mechanism between two parties, each contributing different resources-one party provides capital or assets, the other party contributes labor and expertise-with profits divided according to an agreed-upon ratio. This system is not only economic but also imbued with social values such as trust, solidarity, and mutual cooperation, which serve as a bond between the parties (Rahmawati, 2021).

In the context of livestock farming, the profit-sharing system presents a solution for rural communities with limited capital but the energy and willingness to raise livestock: the capital owner provides the livestock as an asset, while the farmer is responsible for day-to-day care, and profits are shared according to an agreed-upon agreement. This system has long been practiced in various regions of Indonesia, with varying terms depending on local traditions. The persistence of regionally varied but functionally similar cooperative arrangements is consistent with broader evidence that locally adapted institutions often prove more durable than externally imposed, standardized alternatives, a pattern documented in Indonesian public administration reform as well (Turner, Prasojo, & Sumarwono, 2022; Sabani, 2021).

The profit-sharing system in livestock farming has several advantages over the traditional wage system. First, it encourages farmers to work more diligently because their profits depend on the productivity of their livestock. Second, it creates a sense of shared ownership of the business's success, thus motivating both parties to maintain livestock health and productivity. Third, it allows for more flexible capital turnover and does not place an undue burden on either party.

The sustainability of the profit-sharing system in livestock farming is heavily influenced by the strength of the social capital built between capital owners and livestock managers. This social capital encompasses trust between parties, mutually agreed-upon customary norms, and social networks that bind both parties in a mutually beneficial cooperative relationship. The social capital is the primary foundation supporting the sustainability of traditional profit-sharing systems in rural communities, particularly in the livestock sector.

In the context of cattle farming, the profit-sharing system also has a social dimension that is no less important than its economic one. This practice strengthens relationships among community members, creates networks of mutual assistance, and strengthens communal solidarity. Capital owners who lack the time or ability to directly manage livestock can still utilize their resources, while skilled but capital-poor farmers can remain productive. Thus, the profit-sharing system serves as a mechanism for equitable resource redistribution within the rural economy.

The practice of profit-sharing in cattle farming in Bone Regency shows that this system has proven to provide tangible benefits to rural communities, both economically and socially. The profit-sharing system helps farmers without capital to continue participating in productive economic activities, while also assisting capital owners to develop their assets without having to be directly involved in the maintenance process. Through this mechanism, the resources owned by each party can be utilized more optimally for the common good. Comparable findings on the value of experience-based competence appear in employee-development research, which shows that structured skill-building and mentoring meaningfully improve outcomes across a range of resource-constrained organizational settings (Bhatti, Soomro, & Shah, 2021).

2.3 Teseng System in Cattle Farming Business in Swadaya Village

Cattle farming is a crucial economic sector, providing a livelihood for many rural families, particularly in South Sulawesi. In this region, cattle farming is viewed not only as a source of income but also as a form of long-term savings and a symbol of social status. The introduction of the *teseng* system, a profit-sharing mechanism typical of the Bugis-Makassar community, has made cattle farming more inclusive by opening access for those without capital to participate in this productive activity (Sirajuddin et al., 2021).

In the context of cattle farming in South Sulawesi, the *teseng* system has become an integral part of the economic life of rural communities. This practice is carried out based on a relatively simple mechanism: cattle owners hand over their cattle to farmers (pa'*teseng*) to be raised for a specified period. After the cattle give birth, the calves are divided between the capital owner and the pa'*teseng* according to an initial agreement, either alternately or in a two-way arrangement. All daily maintenance costs, including feed and routine care, are the responsibility of the pa'*teseng*, while the capital owner covers certain unforeseen costs as agreed.

The long-term success of the *teseng* system is largely determined by the quality of the relationship between the capital owner and the pa'*teseng*. Trust is a crucial element because all collaboration is carried out without a written contract, solely based on oral agreements that have become traditional. The sustainability of the *teseng* system is greatly influenced by the level of trust between the two parties. The stronger the trust, the more harmonious the cooperative relationship. This makes the *teseng* system not just an ordinary economic transaction, but a social practice that reflects the noble values of the Bugis-Makassar community.

2.4 Factors Influencing the Success of the Teseng System

Several factors determine the success and sustainability of the *teseng* system in cattle farming. First, a clear initial agreement between the capital owner and the pa'*teseng* regarding profit-sharing mechanisms, maintenance responsibilities, and handling unforeseen circumstances such as livestock death or reproductive failure. The clearer the agreement established at the outset, the less likely it is to cause disputes later. This multi-factor view of success is consistent with organizational leadership research more broadly, which finds that sustained performance typically depends on the joint presence of several supporting conditions rather than any single determining factor (Curado & Santos, 2022; Uslu & Terzioglu, 2022).

Second, the pa'*teseng*'s ability to properly care for livestock. High-quality husbandry, from adequate feeding and timely disease management to ensuring livestock safety from theft, directly impacts livestock productivity and the overall success of the *teseng* system. According to Amam and Soetriono (2019), well-maintained livestock productivity is a key factor in determining the success of profit-sharing livestock partnerships.

Third, the utilization of local natural resources. The availability of natural feed in the form of wild grasses and forages around the farm is a distinct advantage for farmers using the *teseng* system. When natural feed is sufficiently available, operational costs can be minimized, thus optimizing profits for both parties. Rusdiana and Praharani (2019) emphasized that the ability of farmers to utilize natural feed sources is a crucial efficiency factor in smallholder cattle farming.

Fourth, open and ongoing communication between the capital owner and the farmer. The farmer system, which operates solely on verbal trust, requires intense and honest communication between both parties. Farmers who actively report livestock conditions to the farmer, including health developments, growth, and potential problems, demonstrate the integrity that forms the solid foundation of this collaborative relationship.

Fifth, customary norms and cultural values govern cooperative relationships. In Bugis-Makassar society, the values of siri' (shame) and pesse (empathy) strongly regulate behavior in every social interaction, including the *teseng* system. Anyone who fails to honor an agreement or cheats within the *teseng* system is considered to have violated social norms, which can damage their reputation within the community. These values have maintained the *teseng* system's fair and harmonious operation for centuries, even without a written contract. Marketing and digital-outreach research offers a complementary perspective here, suggesting that even traditional, trust-based economic arrangements can benefit from limited digital tools for record-keeping and communication without displacing the underlying social relationship (Deku, Wang, & Preko, 2024).

Sixth, the flexibility of the profit-sharing mechanism. One of the main strengths of the *teseng* system is its flexibility in adapting the profit-sharing mechanism to the conditions and agreements of both parties. There is no single, standard pattern; some use alternating patterns per calf birth, some use a two-part system, and others adapt to the number of cattle and the duration of rearing. This flexibility makes the *teseng* system adaptable to the varying economic and social conditions of each community.

Overall, the *teseng* system in cattle farming in South Sulawesi is a value-rich practice that has proven to be sustainable across generations. The success of this system is not solely determined by economic factors, but by the balance between mutually supporting economic, social, and cultural dimensions. A thorough understanding of the dynamics of the *teseng* system is crucial not only for those directly involved but also for stakeholders who wish to support the economic development of rural communities based on local wisdom (Nugraha et al., 2018).

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Participants

This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive case study design to explore the implementation of the *teseng* (profit-sharing) system in its natural setting. The case study design enabled an in-depth understanding of the experiences, perspectives, and social interactions of cattle farmers involved in the *teseng* system. Field research was conducted in Amessangeng Hamlet, Swadaya Village, Bone Regency, Indonesia, a location purposively selected because the *teseng* system remains widely practiced among local cattle farmers.

The study was conducted over a three-month period covering data collection, analysis, and validation. Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on three criteria: actively participating in the *teseng* system, possessing substantial knowledge of its implementation, and being willing to provide information openly. Three key informants participated in the study: A. Hukmawati (40 years old, two years of *teseng* experience, managing two cattle), A.M. Arifin (52 years old, four years of experience, managing four cattle), and A. Aziz (55 years old, five years of experience, managing four cattle). Their direct involvement provided rich contextual information regarding the operation of the *teseng* system.

3.2 Data Collection

Primary data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and direct field observations, while secondary data were collected from scientific journals, books, previous studies, and relevant documents issued by local government and livestock agencies. The researcher served as the primary research instrument, conducting all interviews, observations, and data interpretation.

Field observations were carried out during three visits to cattle farms to examine livestock management practices, farm conditions, and daily farmer activities. Each informant participated in two rounds of in-depth interviews: the first focused on obtaining a general understanding of the *teseng* system, while the second clarified and expanded the preliminary findings. Supporting documentation included photographs, field notes, and livestock ownership records. In addition, a literature review was undertaken to strengthen the theoretical and contextual foundation of the study. Semi-structured interview guidelines and observation sheets were used as supporting research instruments throughout the data collection process.

3.3 Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, consisting of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Interview transcripts, observation records, and documentation were systematically organized, coded, and categorized to identify emerging themes related to the implementation of the *teseng* system.

The study was guided by the assumption that the *teseng* system represents not only an economic arrangement but also a socio-cultural practice embedded in local wisdom and social capital. Therefore, the analysis was informed by social capital theory and the local wisdom perspective. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, data validity was established through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and time triangulation by comparing information across informants, data collection techniques, and different periods of observation.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Overview of the Implementation of the Teseng System in Cattle Farming

Table 1. Characteristics of cattle breeder informants in the teseng system in Swadaya Village

Informant Name	Teseng's Experience	Number of Livestock	Result Collection Pattern	Agreement Status
A. Hukmawati	2 years	2 Tails	Alternating per calf born	Oral
AM Arifin	4 years	4 Tails	Split the livestock yields in half	Oral
A. Aziz	5 years	4 Tails	Alternating per calf born	Oral

Based on Table 1, the three informants had between two and five years of experience participating in the *teseng* system and managed between two and four cattle. Although all partnerships were established through oral agreements, the profit-sharing mechanisms differed slightly. A. Hukmawati and A. Aziz adopted an alternating distribution of calves, whereas A.M. Arifin implemented an equal division of livestock yields between the owner and the farmer. These variations indicate that the *teseng* system is flexible and can be adapted to the agreement reached by each partnership while maintaining the same fundamental principle of cooperation based on mutual trust.

Based on the interviews with the three informants, the *teseng* system implemented in Swadaya Village is understood as a profit-sharing partnership between cattle owners who provide capital in the form of livestock and farmers who contribute labor, time, and husbandry skills. All informants viewed the system positively because it enabled individuals with limited financial resources to participate in cattle farming. As expressed by A. Hukmawati, "I think it's good, because I get capital from the cow owner," indicating that the system provides access to livestock ownership opportunities despite limited capital. This finding supports Rahmawati (2021), who argues that profit-sharing arrangements offer practical solutions for rural communities by allowing individuals without capital to engage in livestock production while creating mutual benefits for both parties.

Although the fundamental principle of the *teseng* system is consistent across informants, its implementation varies according to the agreement between the parties. A.M. Arifin explained that the system follows a "half-and-half" arrangement in which the livestock yields are divided equally between the capital owner and the farmer, while A. Aziz similarly described the alternating distribution of calves produced each year as the basis for profit sharing. These statements indicate that the profit-sharing mechanism is established through verbal agreements founded on mutual trust rather than written contracts. Furthermore, the object of distribution is the livestock itself rather than monetary income, making the process simple, transparent, and easily understood by both parties. These findings are consistent with Rahmawati (2021), who notes that profit-sharing arrangements are determined through mutual agreement, who explain that distributing livestock rather than cash helps minimize disputes arising from differences in market prices.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the *teseng* system generates reciprocal benefits. Capital owners earn returns without directly managing livestock, whereas farmers obtain employment opportunities and additional income despite lacking financial capital. This dual economic and social function supports the findings, who identify *teseng* as an alternative income-generating mechanism for rural communities, and Sirajuddin, Rasyid, Saleh, and Agustina (2022), who emphasize its role in strengthening social cohesion and cooperation within local communities.

4.2 Livestock Health Maintenance and Management

Table 2. Types of problems and handling strategies in the teseng system

Types of Risk	Risk Impact	Impact on Livestock Farmers	Handling Strategy
Risk of Livestock Death	Illness and Accident	Loss of productive assets	Self-medication, intensive care
Market Risk	Fluctuations in cattle selling prices	The economic value of livestock is decreasing	Distribution in the form of livestock, not money
Income Risk	Reproductive failure	There is no result for both parties	Shared according to agreement
Operational Risk	Technology and human resource limitations	Low maintenance efficiency	Local experiences and traditions passed down through generations
Capital Risk	Dependence on capital owners	Limitations of livestock breeder independence	Teseng system as an alternative capital
Production Cost Risk	Increase in drug/treatment prices	Expenses increase beyond plan	Natural food, self-medication
Conflict Risk	Absence of written agreement	Dispute over profit sharing	Trust-based verbal agreement

Based on Table 2, seven major categories of risk were identified in the implementation of the *teseng* system. Livestock mortality, market fluctuations, and reproductive failure represent the main production and income-related risks, while operational limitations, dependence on capital owners, increasing treatment costs, and the absence of written agreements constitute managerial and institutional challenges. Despite these potential risks, each category is accompanied by locally developed coping strategies, such as intensive livestock care, profit sharing in the form of livestock rather than cash, reliance on natural feed, and trust-based verbal agreements. These findings suggest that although the *teseng* system is vulnerable to various uncertainties, it possesses adaptive mechanisms that enable the partnership to remain sustainable.

The interview findings indicate that livestock mortality is relatively uncommon in the implementation of the *teseng* system in Swadaya Village, reflecting the farmers' strong commitment to maintaining animal health. A. Hukmawati explained that she had never experienced livestock illness or death during her participation in the system, attributing this outcome to consistent care and management. Similarly, A.M. Arifin stated that although cattle occasionally become ill, no livestock had died because treatment was administered promptly using appropriate medication. A. Aziz also emphasized that livestock health problems are addressed independently by farmers through immediate treatment, demonstrating their sense of responsibility for animals entrusted to them. These findings are consistent with previous studies highlighting that effective disease prevention and timely treatment are essential to maintaining productivity and minimizing losses in smallholder cattle farming (Rusdiana & Praharani, 2019; Hasan, Siregar, & Ilham, 2022).

Beyond reflecting practical livestock management, the interview results demonstrate that farmers perceive livestock care as a responsibility arising from the trust placed in them by capital owners.

Rather than viewing disease as an unavoidable obstacle, the informants regarded it as a challenge that could be managed through experience, routine monitoring, and self-administered treatment. This sense of responsibility strengthens the cooperative relationship between farmers and livestock owners and reinforces the sustainability of the *teseng* partnership. These findings support Amam and Soetriono (2019), who argue that the success of livestock profit-sharing arrangements depends largely on farmers' commitment and sense of ownership in caring for animals, despite not holding legal ownership.

Overall, the findings suggest that the sustainability of the *teseng* system is supported not only by the agreed profit-sharing mechanism but also by the farmers' capacity to manage the various risks summarized in Table 2, particularly those related to livestock health. Through preventive care, prompt disease treatment, and mutual trust between farmers and capital owners, the risks associated with livestock mortality and production can be minimized, thereby strengthening the long-term sustainability of the *teseng* partnership.

4.3 Problems faced by livestock breeders in the Teseng System

Based on the interviews, the implementation of the *teseng* system is accompanied by several risks that are recognized and accepted by both livestock owners and farmers. A. Hukmawati identified livestock theft and mortality as the most common challenges, indicating that farmers must protect not only the health of the cattle but also their physical security. A.M. Arifin emphasized livestock disease as the primary risk encountered during his participation in the system, while A. Aziz highlighted reproductive failure, explaining that when cattle do not produce offspring within a year, both parties share responsibility for the outcome. These findings suggest that the *teseng* system is founded on mutual agreement that extends beyond profit sharing to include shared responsibility for managing uncertainties throughout the livestock-rearing process. This interpretation supports previous studies showing that livestock mortality and disease are major sources of production risk in smallholder cattle farming (Amam & Soetriono, 2019; Hasan, Siregar, & Ilham, 2022), while the willingness to share risks reflects the values of trust, cooperation, and social solidarity embedded in the *teseng* system.

The findings further demonstrate that the *teseng* system in Swadaya Village possesses considerable flexibility in responding to unexpected situations during the production cycle. Rather than relying on rigid contractual arrangements, farmers and livestock owners resolve problems through mutual understanding established at the beginning of the partnership. This flexibility enables the collaboration to continue despite challenges such as livestock disease, theft, mortality, or reproductive failure, with the ability of farmers to maintain the health and safety of entrusted livestock serving as an important indicator of trust and the sustainability of the partnership. Consequently, the success of the *teseng* system depends not only on economic returns but also on the strength of interpersonal relationships and shared responsibility between the cooperating parties.

The risk analysis identified seven major categories of risk within the *teseng* system: livestock mortality, market fluctuations, income uncertainty resulting from reproductive failure, operational limitations, capital dependence, increasing production costs, and potential conflicts arising from the absence of written agreements. Farmers address these risks through practical strategies such as self-medication, intensive livestock care, reliance on natural feed, accumulated local knowledge, and verbal agreements based on mutual trust. Although the absence of formal contracts may increase vulnerability to disputes, the findings indicate that trust and long-established social norms continue to function as the primary governance mechanisms. Overall, the *teseng* system illustrates how an informal, community-based partnership simultaneously creates exposure to risk while providing the social capital needed to absorb and manage that risk effectively.

4.4 Cattle Price Dynamics and Their Impact on Profit Sharing Value

The interview findings indicate that fluctuations in cattle market prices have little influence on the benefits received by farmers participating in the *teseng* system. A. Hukmawati explained that profit sharing is based on livestock rather than cash, meaning that farmers receive calves instead of monetary payments, making short-term price changes less relevant to their returns. Similarly, A.M. Arifin emphasized that the agreed equal-sharing mechanism ensures fairness regardless of market price movements, while A. Aziz also stated that price fluctuations do not affect the implementation of the partnership. These findings suggest that the *teseng* system prioritizes the distribution of productive assets rather than immediate financial gains, thereby reducing the direct impact of market volatility on participating farmers. This interpretation is consistent with Rahmayanti (2021), who argues that livestock-based profit sharing provides greater flexibility and fairness because both parties share market-related risks.

The responses of all three informants further demonstrate that the sustainability of the *teseng* system depends primarily on adherence to the agreed profit-sharing mechanism rather than on fluctuations in market prices. Because the object of distribution is livestock rather than cash, the partnership remains stable even when cattle prices rise or fall. This arrangement strengthens mutual trust and minimizes disputes over financial returns, supporting Sirajuddin et al. (2021), who identify clear and mutually accepted profit-sharing agreements as the foundation of long-term cooperation in the *teseng* system.

Although previous studies have shown that cattle price fluctuations generally influence the profitability of livestock farming businesses, the findings of this study indicate that their effect is relatively limited within the *teseng* system. The livestock-based distribution mechanism enables farmers and capital owners to share market risks collectively, making the partnership more resilient to price volatility than conventional livestock enterprises that depend directly on cash sales.

4.5 Provision of Feed and Utilization of Local Natural Resources

The interview findings indicate that feed and livestock maintenance costs are not considered major obstacles in the implementation of the *teseng* system in Swadaya Village. A. Hukmawati explained that the availability of natural forage depends on seasonal conditions, but such fluctuations are regarded as a normal part of cattle farming rather than a significant constraint. Likewise, A.M. Arifin stated that farmers continue to rely on natural feed, particularly wild grass available around the village, eliminating the need for expensive commercial feed. A. Aziz further noted that routine feed expenses are minimal, with the primary operational cost arising only when livestock require medication due to illness. These findings suggest that the abundant availability of natural forage enables farmers to maintain cattle with relatively low production costs. This observation is consistent with Rusdiana and Praharani (2019), who identify seasonal forage availability as a key challenge while emphasizing that the effective use of natural feed resources enhances the sustainability of smallholder cattle farming.

The interviews also demonstrate that farmers have adapted their husbandry practices to local environmental conditions, allowing them to maintain operational efficiency despite seasonal variations in forage availability. Rather than depending on purchased feed, farmers utilize locally available natural resources, thereby reducing production expenses and strengthening the economic viability of the *teseng* partnership. As a result, livestock maintenance costs remain relatively stable, while expenditures are largely limited to unexpected veterinary treatment when cattle become ill. This finding supports Amam and Soetriono (2019), who argue that the efficient utilization of local resources represents one of the principal competitive advantages of smallholder livestock farming.

Overall, the findings indicate that the sustainability of the *teseng* system is supported not only by its profit-sharing mechanism but also by the low operational costs made possible through the use of natural feed resources. By minimizing feed expenditures, farmers can allocate their limited financial resources to livestock health management when necessary, improving overall production efficiency and maintaining the long-term viability of the partnership. These results reinforce the argument of Rusdiana and Praharani (2019) that reducing feed costs through locally available forage is an important strategy for increasing the efficiency and profitability of smallholder cattle farming.

4.6 Fairness of Profit Sharing in the Teseng System

The interview findings indicate that all informants perceived the profit-sharing mechanism in the *teseng* system as fair because it is based on mutual agreement established before the partnership begins. A. Hukmawati explained that fairness is achieved through an alternating distribution of calves, with the first calf belonging to the farmer, the second to the capital owner, and subsequent calves following the same rotation. Likewise, A.M. Arifin emphasized that the profit-sharing arrangement was discussed and agreed upon before the implementation of the *teseng* system, ensuring that both parties clearly understood their respective rights and obligations. Meanwhile, A. Aziz stated that no disputes had ever arisen during the partnership, reflecting the effectiveness of the agreed mechanism in maintaining harmonious cooperation. These findings are consistent, who argues that fairness in livestock profit-sharing systems is determined more by mutual acceptance of the agreed mechanism than by strict mathematical equality.

The interviews further demonstrate that fairness within the *teseng* system is closely associated with transparency, trust, and open communication between capital owners and farmers. Rather than relying on formal written contracts, both parties maintain their partnership through verbal agreements supported by long-standing social relationships and shared commitments. The absence of disputes reported by the informants suggests that clearly negotiated agreements established at the outset provide an effective foundation for preventing future conflicts. The clear initial agreements regarding profit-sharing mechanisms and responsibilities reduce the likelihood of disputes, the primary factor sustaining harmonious cooperation in informal livestock partnerships.

Overall, the findings indicate that the sustainability of the *teseng* system depends not only on the distribution of economic benefits but also on the perception of procedural fairness shared by both parties. Farmers view fairness as the result of mutually accepted agreements that are implemented consistently throughout the partnership, regardless of the monetary value ultimately received. Consequently, the *teseng* system demonstrates that trust-based agreements and reciprocal commitments can effectively support long-term cooperation, reinforcing the livestock profit-sharing arrangements remain sustainable when the rights and obligations of each party are clearly agreed upon from the beginning.

4.7 Dispute Resolution in the Teseng System

The interview findings indicate that none of the informants had experienced disputes during their participation in the *teseng* system. A. Hukmawati explained that conflicts had never occurred because the profit-sharing arrangement and other terms had been agreed upon before the partnership began. Similarly, A.M. Arifin emphasized that the prior agreement served as the primary basis for preventing disagreements throughout the collaboration. A. Aziz also expressed satisfaction with the system, stating that it was fair and had functioned without conflict. These findings suggest that the *teseng* system relies on mutually accepted agreements established at the outset, providing a clear framework that minimizes the potential for disputes. The oral agreements rooted in customary practice remain valid and effective because they are founded on the principle of mutual consent between the contracting parties.

The interviews further demonstrate that the absence of disputes is closely linked to the high level of trust maintained between capital owners and farmers. Rather than depending on formal written contracts, both parties rely on verbal commitments supported by open communication, shared responsibility, and consistent implementation of agreed profit-sharing arrangements. These social values strengthen the cooperative relationship and enable the partnership to continue despite the various risks associated with livestock farming. This finding supports Sirajuddin et al. (2021), who emphasize that trust is the key factor determining the long-term success and stability of the *teseng* system.

Overall, the findings indicate that trust-based agreements constitute the principal governance mechanism of the *teseng* system in Swadaya Village. Clear agreements established before cooperation begins, combined with continuous communication and shared commitment, have enabled the partnership to operate harmoniously without conflict. The results therefore demonstrate that social trust and mutual understanding are as important as economic incentives in ensuring the sustainability of traditional livestock profit-sharing arrangements.

4.8 Maintenance Practices as an Effort to Maintain Livestock Productivity

The interview findings indicate that maintaining livestock productivity in the *teseng* system depends primarily on farmers' commitment to providing consistent and responsible animal care. A. Hukmawati emphasized the importance of caring for livestock properly, referring to routine activities such as providing adequate feed, maintaining clean housing, and monitoring animal health. Similarly, A.M. Arifin highlighted that livestock productivity can only be sustained through continuous and proper maintenance, while A. Aziz stressed that farmers must always strive to care for livestock diligently throughout the partnership. These findings are consistent with Hasan, Siregar, and Ilham (2022), who identify effective husbandry management as a key strategy for reducing production losses and maintaining productivity in smallholder cattle farming.

The interviews further demonstrate that farmers perceive livestock care not merely as a technical responsibility but also as a commitment arising from the trust placed in them by capital owners. Routine feeding, regular health monitoring, proper housing management, and protection against potential threats are regarded as essential practices for minimizing the risks of disease, mortality, and declining productivity. This interpretation supports Amam and Soetriono (2019), who argue that the success of livestock profit-sharing partnerships largely depends on consistent supervision and proper maintenance throughout the production cycle.

Overall, the findings suggest that the sustainability of the *teseng* system is closely linked to farmers' dedication to maintaining livestock welfare and productivity. Beyond improving production outcomes, consistent husbandry practices strengthen the trust between farmers and capital owners, thereby reinforcing the long-term continuity of the partnership. This commitment also reflects the local cultural values underlying the *teseng* system, where responsibility and trustworthiness are regarded as fundamental principles of cooperation.

4.9 Trust, Oral Agreement, and Formalized Discourse

The interview findings reveal differing views among informants regarding the need for written agreements in the *teseng* system. A. Hukmawati considered written agreements necessary to clarify the profit-sharing arrangement and prevent future disputes, while A.M. Arifin argued that formal contracts were unnecessary because the partnership was already founded on mutual trust. A. Aziz adopted a more moderate position, suggesting that written agreements could be beneficial if unexpected problems arose, thereby reducing the likelihood of mutual blame. These differing perspectives indicate that farmers balance the perceived benefits of legal certainty with the long-established tradition of trust-based cooperation. The written agreements provide legal certainty and help reduce potential conflicts in livestock profit-sharing partnerships.

The interviews further demonstrate that although the *teseng* system has traditionally relied on verbal agreements, awareness of the advantages of formalizing these agreements is gradually increasing. Farmers who support written agreements view them as a mechanism for clarifying rights and responsibilities, particularly under unforeseen circumstances, whereas those who oppose formalization believe that mutual trust and customary norms remain sufficient to sustain cooperation. The social capital, trust, and local customs often function as the primary governance mechanisms in traditional rural partnerships, even in the absence of formal contracts. At the same time, the lack of standardized written agreements may create challenges when disputes arise.

Overall, the findings suggest that the *teseng* system in Swadaya Village continues to operate effectively through trust-based verbal agreements, while an emerging recognition of the value of written agreements reflects efforts to strengthen legal certainty without undermining established social relationships. This demonstrates that the sustainability of the *teseng* system depends on maintaining a balance between customary trust and the potential benefits of greater formalization in managing future partnerships.

4.10 Contribution of the Teseng System to the Income and Welfare of Livestock Farmers

The interview findings indicate that all informants perceived the *teseng* system as providing substantial benefits to their income and overall welfare by enabling individuals without financial capital to participate in cattle farming. A. Hukmawati explained that the system allowed her to obtain both livestock capital and income despite not owning cattle, while A.M. Arifin emphasized that the partnership benefits both farmers and capital owners through mutually agreed profit sharing. Similarly, A. Aziz stated that the *teseng* system enabled him to continue raising livestock even without initial capital. These findings demonstrate that the *teseng* system functions as an inclusive partnership that expands access to productive economic activities for rural communities with limited financial resources. This interpretation is consistent with Sirajuddin et al. (2021), who argue that the *teseng* system contributes to increasing rural income, creating employment opportunities, and improving the productivity of livestock-farming households.

Beyond its direct economic contribution, the interviews reveal that the *teseng* system promotes a mutually beneficial relationship rather than one of dependency. Farmers contribute labor, husbandry skills, and daily livestock management, while capital owners provide livestock as productive assets, allowing both parties to share the benefits generated by the partnership. Informants viewed this arrangement as a form of cooperation that optimizes the resources of each party without placing an excessive burden on either side. The cattle profit-sharing systems in Bone Regency provide tangible advantages for both farmers and capital owners by combining financial capital with livestock management expertise.

The findings further indicate that the *teseng* system serves not only as an economic mechanism but also as a form of rural community empowerment. By removing the barrier of initial capital, the system enables households with limited financial resources to remain productive and generate sustainable income through livestock farming. In this sense, the *teseng* system promotes economic inclusion while preserving the dignity and independence of participating farmers, reflecting the local values embedded within the Bugis community.The *teseng* system as a model of community-based economic empowerment rooted in local wisdom and social cooperation.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the *teseng* system contributes significantly to improving household income and welfare while strengthening social solidarity within rural communities. Its benefits extend beyond financial gains by fostering cooperation, expanding access to productive resources, and supporting long-term economic resilience among livestock farmers. These results reinforce the conclusions of Sirajuddin et al. (2022), who emphasize that livestock profit-sharing systems enhance rural welfare through optimal resource utilization, equitable cooperation, and mutually beneficial partnerships between capital owners and farmers.

5. Conclusions

This research successfully understood and analyzed the practice of the *teseng* system in cattle farming in Swadaya Village, Bone Regency. Based on the field findings, several important conclusions can be drawn.

The *Teseng* system implemented in Swadaya Village is a traditional profit-sharing partnership between capital owners and cattle breeders (*pa'teseng*) that has been passed down through generations. This system provides a real opportunity for rural communities lacking capital to continue running cattle farms. The profit-sharing mechanism is carried out alternately per calf birth or proportionally according to a pre-agreed agreement, with the entire process based on trust and verbal agreement between both parties.

The *teseng* system serves as an instrument for economic empowerment in rural communities. Through this system, livestock farmers without fixed capital can access livestock businesses and earn income from a share of the profits from their livestock. Capital owners also benefit from the care and breeding of their livestock without their direct involvement. This reinforces the finding that *teseng* is not simply an economic transaction but also a social practice that strengthens community bonds (Irma et al., 2023).

The sustainability of the *teseng* system in Swadaya Village is strongly supported by social capital in the form of trust and traditional norms deeply rooted in community life. All informants stated that the distribution of profits implemented is fair because it was discussed and agreed upon before the collaboration began. None of them have ever experienced any disputes, demonstrating that verbal agreements based on trust are an effective glue in this collaborative relationship.

Although the *teseng* system has been operating effectively based on verbal agreements, some farmers are beginning to recognize the importance of written agreements as a form of protection for both parties. However, not all farmers agree, as some believe that the trust already established is a sufficient foundation for cooperation. These findings indicate that formalizing the *teseng* system, if implemented, must consider the values of local wisdom that underpin the system to avoid damaging existing social relationships.

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Author Contributions

MEM conceived the study, designed the methodology, conducted the investigation, analyzed the data, and prepared the original manuscript. WOR contributed to data interpretation, critically reviewed and edited the manuscript, supervised the research process, and approved the final version for publication.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper. The research was conducted independently without any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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