



ISSN: 2455-9377

# A comparison of the dynamics and carbon stocks in rice fields with different management systems and soil types

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## ABSTRACT

Paddy fields in Indonesia, on average, have a very low content of organic matter (organic C < 2%). This organic matter's low content will affect the carbon stock. The management system as well as soil type could affect carbon stock in the soil. This study aims to determine the dynamics and carbon stock in paddy fields with different management systems and soil types. The research was conducted in Karanganyar Regency, Sukoharjo Regency and Klaten Regency. Factors observed include organic, semi-organic, inorganic management systems and soil types (i.e., ultisol, vertisol and inceptisol). Soil sampling was carried out 3-5 days after harvest. Each combination of the management system and soil type was taken with three soil sample points at two depths (0-20 cm and > 20 cm) with three repeats. The parameters studied include organic C, dissolved organic C, microbial C, pH<sub>H2O</sub>, total N, CEC, soil texture and bulk density. Soil depth and the interaction of management systems and soil types affect the total organic C. Total organic carbon is highest in vertisol soils with an organic management system (2.59%) and a depth of 0-20 cm (2.24%). Carbon stock (82.62 tons ha<sup>-1</sup>) in vertisol soils with organic management systems is higher than in vertisol soils with semi-organic and inorganic management systems, with a C stock of 71.19 tons ha<sup>-1</sup> and 68.4 tons ha<sup>-1</sup>.

**Keywords:** Organic carbon, Dissolved organic carbon, Carbon stock

**Received:** October 31, 2022

**Revised:** June 18, 2023

**Accepted:** June 22, 2023

**Published:** July 14, 2023

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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an agricultural country where most of the population works as farmers. Indonesia also has a large potential land for agriculture, especially rice fields. Rice fields are quite easy to find in various regions in Indonesia because rice fields are used to grow rice, the main food source. Paddy fields include a relatively stable land ecosystem and have very high sustainability. Paddy fields in Indonesia, on average, have a low to very low organic matter content (C-organic < 2%) (Wihardjaka & Harsanti, 2021). The low content of organic matter occurs due to low fertilization using organic fertilizers (Wahyuni *et al.*, 2020). Soil organic carbon comes from the decomposition of plants and animals. The value of soil organic carbon determines the fertility, productivity and quality of the soil. The low use of organic fertilizers followed by intensive tillage reduces fertility and nutrient content in the soil, especially the organic carbon content of the soil. Soil organic carbon circulation will also affect the carbon cycle and long-term climate change (Gunadi *et al.*, 2020).

BMKG (2021) states that CO<sub>2</sub> gas is the largest contributor to the composition of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere,

around 80%. Due to low carbon stock, the agricultural sector accounts for 10-12% of total anthropogenic greenhouse gases (Lintangrino & Boedisantoso, 2016). Carbon stock is the amount of carbon that does not emit CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere. Carbon stock in each land use is different, depending on the management system, soil type, plant diversity and density (Susanti *et al.*, 2021). Land with good soil fertility has a greater carbon stock, the amount of carbon stock in plant biomass is determined by the amount of carbon stock in the soil (Hairiah & Rahayu, 2007).

In research Syam'ani *et al.* (2012), different land management systems affect carbon stock and land biomass. No research has been conducted comparing this study site's rice field management system. Research on carbon stock in management systems differs Hábová *et al.* (2019), Asigbaase *et al.* (2021), Yuniarti *et al.* (2021) and Arunrat *et al.* (2022) is only carried out on organic and inorganic management systems, not including semi-organic management systems. The research carried out by Yulnafatmawita *et al.* (2011) and Gunadi *et al.* (2020) analyzes several land uses, while this research focuses on using paddy fields only.

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Previous studies have only observed different land uses and different management systems. Our research covers a more complex component, where the observations focused on the value of soil carbon in paddy fields with different management systems and soil types. The management systems in our study area include organic, semi-organic, and inorganic, while soil types consist of ultisols, vertisols, and inceptisols. The purpose of the research we want to achieve is to determine the dynamics and storage of soil carbon in rice fields with different management systems and soil types, then identify the influence of the diversity of cultivation systems and soil types on soil dynamics and carbon stocks.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

### Study Site

This research was conducted in July-December 2021 in three locations: Karanganyar Regency (7°42'16.35" S 111°00'17.46" E), Sukoharjo Regency (7°48'20.24" S 110°46'28.78" E) and Klaten Regency (7°38'04.02" S 110°36'23.15" E) (Figure 1). Karanganyar Regency is administratively bordered by Sragen Regency (north), East Java Province (east), Wonogiri Regency and Sukoharjo Regency (south), Surakarta City and Boyolali Regency (west). Karanganyar Regency has an altitude between 80 to 2,000 meters above sea level. Karanganyar Regency has a tropical climate with air temperatures ranging from 18-31 °C. Sukoharjo Regency is administratively bordered by Surakarta City and Karanganyar Regency (north), Gunung Kidul Regency and Wonogiri Regency (south), Karanganyar Regency (west), Boyolali Regency and Klaten Regency (east). Sukoharjo Regency has an altitude of 89-125 meters above sea level. Sukoharjo Regency has a tropical climate with air

temperatures ranging from 23-34 °C. Klaten Regency is directly bordered by Boyolali Regency (north), Sukoharjo Regency (east) and Yogyakarta Special Region (south and west). Klaten Regency is located between Mount Merapi and the Thousand Mountains, with an altitude between 75-160 meters above sea level. Klaten Regency has a tropical climate with rainy and dry seasons alternating throughout the year. The average air temperature is 28-30 °C.

Karanganyar Regency represents ultisol soil types which are generally brownish yellow to red, have low organic matter content, cation exchange capacity (CEC) and low soil biological activity (Tando, 2020). Sukoharjo Regency represents vertisol soil, generally jet black or grey-black, with relatively high soil pH and CEC (Santoso & Sajidan, 2013). Klaten Regency represents an inceptisol soil with a black or grey to dark brown colour with medium to high CEC (Sebayang *et al.*, 2015).

The organic management system is a management system where land is only given natural ingredients or organic fertilizers without synthetic chemicals. The organic management system in Sukoharjo Regency has been carried out since 2014, in Klaten Regency since 2016, and in Karanganyar Regency since 2015. The semi-organic management system is transitioning from inorganic to organic, where it takes 1-2 years until the land can use organic fertilizer in full and certify it as an organic rice field. The fertilizer application in each management system at each research location can be seen in Table 1.

Sampling is carried out by purposive sampling (intentionally), which represents the type of soil and management system, each sample point is taken at two depths, namely 0-20 cm and >20 cm, this is supported according to Yulnafatmawita *et al.*

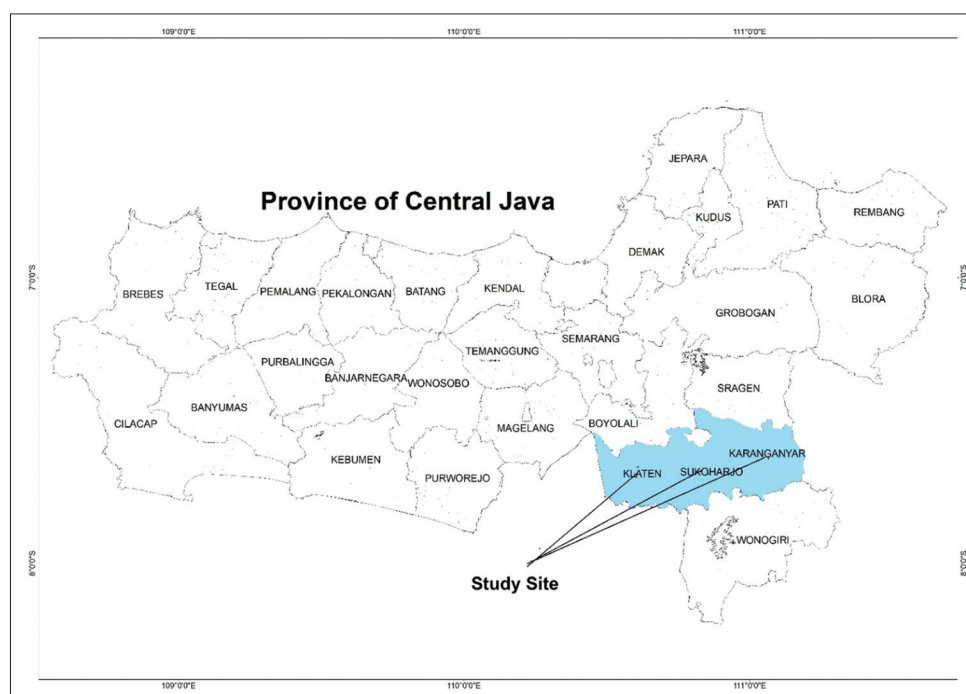


Figure 1: Map of the Study Area

**Table 1: Types and Doses of Fertilizers in Several Management Systems at the Research Site**

	Karanganyar Regency	Sukoharjo Regency	Klaten Regency
Organic Management System	Organic fertilizer 2.4 tons ha <sup>-1</sup> MOL solution of 5 L ha <sup>-1</sup> POC 15 L ha <sup>-1</sup>	Manure 1.4 tons ha <sup>-1</sup> MOL solution of 5 L ha <sup>-1</sup> POC 15 L ha <sup>-1</sup>	Manure 2.7 tons ha <sup>-1</sup> Petroganic 120 kg ha <sup>-1</sup>
Inorganic Management System	Urea 120 kg ha <sup>-1</sup> Phonska 150 kg ha <sup>-1</sup> SP36 120 kg ha <sup>-1</sup>	Urea, Phonska and SP36 125 kg ha <sup>-1</sup>	Urea 100 kg ha <sup>-1</sup> Phonska 100 kg ha <sup>-1</sup> SP36 50 kg ha <sup>-1</sup>
Semi-Organic Management System	Manure 1.5 tons ha <sup>-1</sup> Urea, Phonska and SP36 60 kg ha <sup>-1</sup>	Manure 700 kg ha <sup>-1</sup> MOL solution of 2.5 L ha <sup>-1</sup> POC 7.5 L ha <sup>-1</sup> Urea, Phonska and SP36 60 kg ha <sup>-1</sup>	Manure 1.2 tons ha <sup>-1</sup> Petroganic 40 kg ha <sup>-1</sup> Urea and Phonska 50 kg ha <sup>-1</sup> SP36 10 kg ha <sup>-1</sup>

(2011) that the depth of the soil profile affects the content of soil organic matter. Sampling activities are carried out 3-5 days after harvest. Disturbed soil samples were taken by composite technique. This soil composite aims to combine soils in the same area to represent the state of the land (Suryono *et al.*, 2011). Fifty-four soil samples will be taken (3 tests for each sample point).

The laboratory analysis carried out includes soil organic C with the Walkley and Black method (Disniwati *et al.*, 2021), dissolved organic C with the Spectrophotometry method (Prokushkin *et al.*, 2005), soil microbial C with fumigation and extraction methods (Anui & Banjarnahor, 2022), total soil N with the Kjeldahl method (Disniwati *et al.*, 2021), soil CEC with ammonium acetate saturation 1N pH 7 (Fitriani *et al.*, 2018), soil pH with potentiometric method (Fitriani *et al.*, 2018), soil texture with pipette method (Syofiani *et al.*, 2020), bulk density with chunk method (Yulina *et al.*, 2019) and soil carbon stock with calculations using the formula (Yulnafatmawita & Yasin, 2018) as follows:

$$Ct = BV \times Kd \times \%Corg$$

Description:

Ct : Soil C content

BV : Bulk density (g cm<sup>-2</sup>)

Kd : Sample depth (cm)

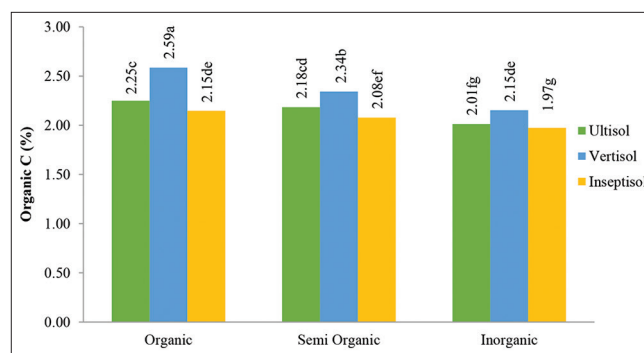
### Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis includes ANOVA, Duncan and correlation with IBM SPSS Statistics 26. An ANOVA analysis with a 95% confidence level was carried out to determine the effect of the management system on two depths in each soil type on carbon dynamics and stock (Rahman *et al.*, 2021). Duncan's further test with a 95% confidence level was carried out to determine the influence of the management system and soil type on the parameters (Tilaki *et al.*, 2022). Correlation analysis was carried out to determine the relationship between each parameter (Bai *et al.*, 2020).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Total Soil Organic Carbon

Figure 2 shows that soils with organic management systems with vertisol soil type have higher total soil organic



**Figure 2: Total organic C levels of soil on various management systems and soil types. Numbers followed by the same letter shows a markedly different result on the DMRT test ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).**

carbon (2.59%) compared to soils with management systems with other soil types. Soils with an organic management system with vertisol soil type have a high total soil organic carbon content due to the addition of organic fertilizers to the soil. Adding this organic fertilizer impacts the increase in organic matter, one of whose components is carbon (Sitorusdan & Sembiring, 2014).

Organic fertilizers will provide a large amount of activated organic carbon and carry the same amount of NPK elements as chemical fertilizers (Zhao *et al.*, 2021). Applying organic fertilizers will also impact the higher content of soil organic matter, increasing the nutrient supply and soil buffer capacity and contributing to higher carbon sequestration in the soil (Voltr *et al.*, 2021). According to Urmi *et al.* (2022), soil applied with organic fertilizer will increase the presence of carbon in the soil. Vertisol soil types with a high clay content (51.87%) also support the high presence of total soil organic carbon because the clay fraction in the soil accumulates more soil organic carbon than other fractions (Zhong *et al.*, 2018). This is supported by Rakhsh *et al.* (2020), that clay and soil surface area are used to determine the soil's ability to absorb organic carbon, soil absorbs organic carbon due to the strong bonds formed between organic matter and mineral surfaces. This is also in line with the research of Triharyanto *et al.* (2022) that vertisol soil has an organic carbon content of 1.9% and increases to 2.10% due to the use of liquid organic fertilizer.

Soils at a depth of 0-20 cm have a higher total organic carbon content of the soil compared to a depth of > 20 cm

(Figure 3). The total organic carbon content of the soil will decrease along with the increasing depth of the soil (Magar *et al.*, 2020). The high organic carbon at a depth of 0-20 cm occurs due to the addition of organic matter to the soil surface, the addition of organic matter finally has an impact on increasing the total organic carbon of the soil and the low content of organic carbon in the soil which is deeper due to reduced root activity at a depth of > 20 cm (Murphy *et al.*, 2019). The results of research by Raghuwanshi *et al.* (2022) show that total organic carbon at a depth of 0-15 cm is higher than the depth of 15-30 cm and 30-45 cm. Soil total organic carbon has a positive and very strong correlation with total N ( $r = 0.853^{**}$ ) shown in Table 2, the presence of N in the soil will increase the amount of carbon in the soil and reduce decomposition activity (Mayer *et al.*, 2020).

### Dissolved Organic Carbon

Dissolved organic carbon (DOC) on vertisol soils with a depth of 0-20 cm is higher than with a combination of soil types at other soil depths (Figure 4). Soils with vertisol soil types have a high content of dissolved organic carbon because vertisol soils, which have a high clay content, absorb a greater amount of organic carbon than soils with low clay content. Soils

Table 2: Correlation between Total Organic C and Total N

	r-value	p-value
Total N	0.853**	0.000

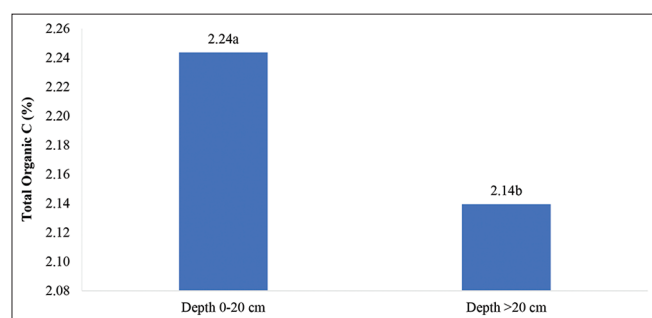


Figure 3: C levels of total organic soil at different depths. Numbers followed by the same letter shows a markedly different result on the DMRT test ( $\alpha = 0.05$ )

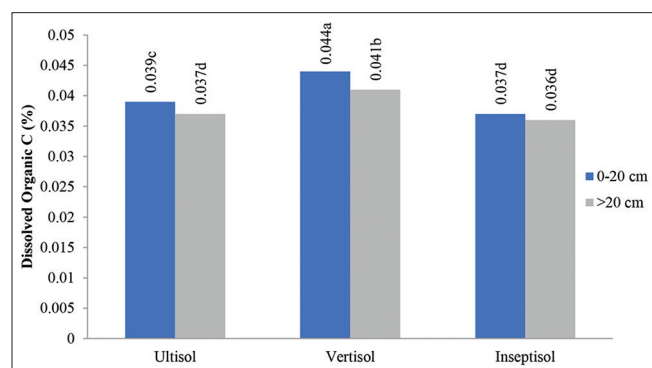


Figure 4: Dissolved organic C levels at different soil types and soil depths. Numbers followed by the same letter shows a markedly different result on the DMRT test ( $\alpha = 0.05$ )

dominated by clay fractions will have a larger surface area to absorb dissolved organic carbon (Singh *et al.*, 2016). In line with the research of Gmach *et al.* (2020) and Aumtong *et al.* (2023) that soils with high clay content will have high dissolved organic carbon as well. A soil depth of 0-20 cm has a higher content of dissolved organic carbon than a depth of > 20 cm. This is also influenced by the high presence of organic carbon at a depth of 0-20 cm. The high carbon supply will encourage soil organic carbon decomposition and facilitate an increase in dissolved organic carbon (Xiao *et al.*, 2020).

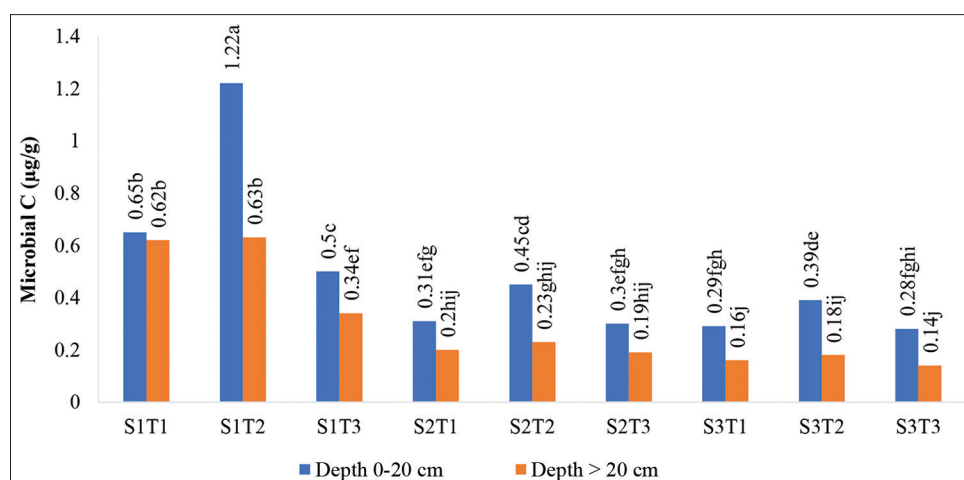
Soil-dissolved organic carbon has a strong positive correlation with soil total organic carbon ( $r = 0.886^{**}$ ) shown in Table 3. The same result was also put forward by Arifin *et al.* (2017), which state that organic matter that undergoes degradation and decomposition is a source of soil-dissolved organic carbon. Soil-dissolved organic carbon has a strong positive correlation with soil microbial carbon ( $r = 0.697^{**}$ ) shown in Table 3. This is supported by the results of research Zhang *et al.* (2020) that an increase will follow the increase in dissolved organic carbon soil microbial carbon, whereas Potapov *et al.* (2017) state that dissolved organic carbon is a food source of microorganisms.

### Soil Microbial Carbon

The carbon cycle and nutrient availability occur in the soil with the role of soil microorganisms. The formation of biomass of these soil microorganisms is influenced by the presence of organic matter in the soil. Soil microbial carbon is an indicator to determine the amount of microorganisms' biomass to measure the microorganisms' activity in the soil.

In addition to organic management systems, the type of vertisol soil at a depth of 0-20 cm has the highest microbial carbon compared to others (Figure 5). Applying soil organic fertilizer will add carbon, one of the variables that spur the activity of soil microorganisms (Pratiwi *et al.*, 2013). The results of research by Rahman *et al.* (2022) also show that the application of organic fertilizers increases soil microbial carbon. Microorganisms use organic matter as an energy source, the more organic matter available in the soil, the population of microorganisms will also increase (Giri *et al.*, 2020). The high activity of microorganisms sourced from the high presence of organic matter will impact increasing microbial carbon (Tabroni *et al.*, 2018). Vertisol soils also support the high carbon content of soil microbes because of the physicochemical content in soils with high clay content, such as the soil's ability to retain water and the total volume of pores filled with water is the main driver of the composition of microbial communities (Rakhsh *et al.*, 2020; Olagoke *et al.*, 2022).

Soils with organic management systems on vertisol soil types also show higher microbial carbon at 0-20 cm depth than at a depth of > 20 cm. This can happen because the soil has more organic matter content at a depth of 0-20 cm. The high content of organic matter in the layer of 0-20 cm will also impact the high carbon of soil microbes because microbial carbon is strongly influenced by organic matter in the soil



**Figure 5:** C levels of soil microbial in various management systems, soil types and depths

**Description:** The number followed by the same letter shows a markedly different result on the DMRT test ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). S1: organic management system; S2: semi-organic management system; S3: inorganic management system; T1: ultisol soil; T2: vertisol soil; T3: inceptisol soil

(Lepcha & Devi, 2020) this research also has the same result that soil microbial carbon is higher in the upper soil layer than subsoil. The low content of organic matter at a depth of >20 cm, followed by changes in the quality of organic matter, will have an impact on reducing the level of decomposition carried out by microorganisms because microorganisms have to invest large amounts of carbon and nitrogen into the production of exoenzymes (Spohn *et al.*, 2016).

Soil microbial carbon has a strong positive correlation with soil pH ( $r = 0.577^{**}$ ) shown in Table 4. The same is also stated by Wu *et al.* (2019), who stated that soil pH and microorganisms work together in controlling soil carbon turnover, and soil pH will affect soil microbial function related to carbon decomposition. Soil microbial carbon also has a very strong positive correlation with the total soil N ( $r = 0.889^{**}$ ) shown in Table 4. This happens because microorganisms need nitrogen to form proteins, a limited amount of nitrogen will affect the growth of microorganisms (Wahyuni *et al.*, 2020).

### Carbon Stock

Carbon stock describes the amount of carbon stored in the soil and biomass that has not been cycled back into the atmosphere (Arfina *et al.*, 2020).

Vertisol soils with an organic management system have the highest carbon stock of 82.62 tons  $\text{ha}^{-1}$  (Figure 6). Vertisol soils have the highest carbon stock in all management systems compared to other soil types. As Ly *et al.* (2022) researched, soils with high clay content will have high carbon stocks as well. This is because the soil carbon supply will be stored in the pore space of the soil so that the rate of carbon loss will be reduced due to the high clay content in vertisol soils (Siringoringo, 2007). The higher the clay content of the soil, the greater the soil's ability to withstand carbon. The organic matter in the soil will be coated by the smallest type of clay (clay platelets) and form stable aggregates that will protect the organic matter from

**Table 3:** Correlation of DOC with Total Organic C and Soil Microbial C

	r-value	p-value
Total Organic C	0.886**	0.000
Soil Microbial C	0.697**	0.000

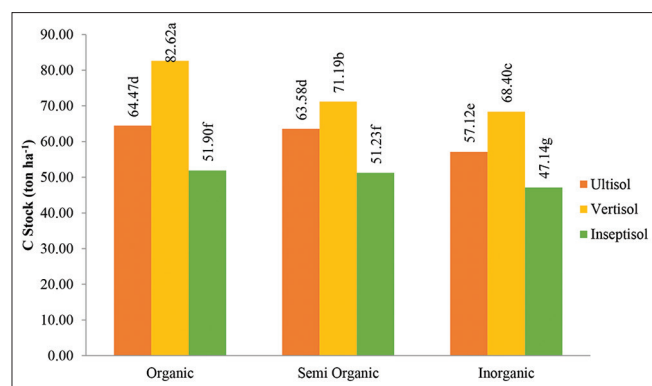
**Table 4:** Correlation of Soil Microbial C with Soil pH and Total N

	r-value	p-value
Soil pH	0.577**	0.000
Total N	0.889**	0.000

microbial decomposition (Siringoringo, 2014). Clay in the soil functions as a water holder and impacts poor air exchange, soil microbial activity is hampered in stacking organic matter (Budiadi, 2020). Soils with organic management systems also have high carbon stock compared to other management systems. In line with Gross and Glaser (2021) research that the use of organic fertilizers will increase carbon stocks by up to 40%. Adding organic matter to the organic management system will increase the soil's carbon content, where the soil's high carbon content means that carbon stock will also increase (Asbur & Ariyanti, 2017). Applying organic matter to the soil is one way to increase the storage of organic matter in the soil (Cotrufo *et al.*, 2019).

Based on Pearson's correlation test, carbon stock has a positive and strong correlation with total soil organic carbon ( $r = 0.882^{**}$ ) shown in Table 5. Soils with high organic carbon will also have higher carbon stock in these soils (Hickmah *et al.*, 2021). Carbon stock has a positive correlation to soil pH ( $r = 0.263$ ). This happens because a higher soil pH will reduce  $\text{CO}_2$  concentrations due to the inhibition of microbial respiration (Xu *et al.*, 2021). Carbon stock has a very significant positive correlation with soil volume weights ( $r = 0.911^{**}$ ) shown in Table 5. This is because the weight of soil volume strongly influences carbon sequestration in the soil, changing the porosity of the soil (Dheri & Nazir, 2021).





**Figure 6:** Carbon stock in various management systems and soil types. Numbers followed by the same letter shows a markedly different result on the DMRT test ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

**Table 5: Correlation of Carbon Stock with Total Organic C and Soil Volume Weights**

	r-value	p-value
Total Organic C	0.882**	0.000
Soil Volume Weights	0.911**	0.000

## CONCLUSIONS

Carbon stock in vertisol soils with organic management systems (82,62 tons ha<sup>-1</sup>) is higher than those of semi-organic (71,19 tons ha<sup>-1</sup>) and inorganic (68,4 tons ha<sup>-1</sup>) management systems. Carbon stock have a positive correlation with total organic carbon ( $r = 0.882^{**}$ ) and bulk density ( $r = 0.911^{**}$ ). In all soil types with three management systems, the average total organic carbon of the soil is higher at a depth of 0-20 cm by 2.24% compared to a depth of > 20 cm, which is 2.14%. Dissolved organic carbon in vertisol soils is 0-20 cm depth higher (0.044%) than depth > 20 cm (0.041%).

The dynamics and carbon stocks in each land use in previous studies show different conditions, but it is not yet known the conditions in rice fields with diverse cultivation systems and soil types, and whether the diversity of land characteristics can affect and relate to the dynamic conditions and carbon stocks in rice fields. Meanwhile, today knowing information on the dynamics and stock of carbon in the managed area is important related to its relationship to land productivity, to future climate conditions. Therefore, in our research we combined sources of diversity of cultivation systems and soil types and their reactions to dynamics and carbon stocks. The results of the research we found are carbon stocks in vertisol soils with organic management systems (82,62 tons ha<sup>-1</sup>) is higher than those of semi-organic (71,19 tons ha<sup>-1</sup>) and inorganic (68,4 tons ha<sup>-1</sup>) management systems. Carbon stock have a positive correlation with total organic carbon ( $r = 0.882^{**}$ ) and bulk density ( $r = 0.911^{**}$ ). In all soil types with three management systems, the average total organic carbon of the soil is higher at a depth of 0-20 cm by 2.24% compared to a depth of > 20 cm, which is 2.14%. Dissolved organic carbon in vertisol soils is 0-20 cm depth higher (0.044%) than depth > 20 cm (0.041%). From the results of the research that has been found, the summarized data and information

can be used as guidelines for local stakeholders to maximize efforts to increase carbon stocks in agricultural land, especially rice fields, and reduce carbon emissions by maintaining existing carbon stocks for the future.

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