

# Social Media Marketing Strategy to Promote Sustainable Tourism in Bantaeng Shallot Farms

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**Abstract.** *This study aims to develop a comprehensive strategy for managing shallot farms in Desa Bonto Lojong as a sustainable tourism destination. The shallot farms have faced significant challenges due to the negative impact of viral content on social media, resulting in substantial losses for the farmers. To mitigate these effects, the farm owners have implemented measures such as installing fences to control visitor access. However, these temporary solutions do not address the underlying issues of sustainable tourism development. Using a qualitative research design with observation and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) methods, this study focuses on the social media marketing strategy, utilizing the 4Ps of marketing product, place, price, and promotion to promote the shallot farm as a sustainable tourism destination. The research aims to identify the potential of shallot farms as a tourist attraction while ensuring that the development is sustainable and beneficial for both the local community and the environment. The findings will provide insights into transforming shallot farms into sustainable tourism destinations, enhancing their economic viability while preserving ecological and social integrity. This study contributes to the body of knowledge on sustainable tourism development by highlighting community-based initiatives and the role of social media in promoting local agricultural products. The outcomes will be beneficial for policymakers, local stakeholders, and farmers, providing practical strategies to manage and promote their agricultural products sustainably.*

**Keywords:** *Social Media Marketing, Social Media Marketing Strategy, Sustainable Tourism, Shallot Farm*

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## INTRODUCTION

The impact of social media on the tourism industry has led to sudden increases in visitor numbers, resulting in environmental degradation, local discomfort, and traffic congestion due to vehicle density (Cros, 2008). Social media is a primary cause of overtourism (Gretzel, 2019). Overtourism refers to a situation where the impacts of tourism, at a particular time and location, exceed the physical, ecological, social, economic, psychological, and political capacity (Vagena, 2021; Mihalic, 2020; Innerhofer et al., 2019; Nilsson, 2020; Szromek et al., 2019).

The negative effects of viral destinations are also felt by local farmers and communities, such as in Desa Bonto Lojong, Kecamatan Uluere, Kabupaten Bantaeng, Sulawesi Selatan. After going viral on social media, a bawang farm became damaged because the bawang plants were trampled by visitors seeking to take pictures (Henry, 2024). Initially, the farm could be accessed by anyone who wanted to enjoy the beautiful scenery and fresh weather. However, following observations, the farm is now protected by a barrier to limit visits. This kind of damage has

disrupted local communities' lives due to tourism (Rusdiana et al., 2021; Sudini & Arthanaya, 2022).

The short-term and long-term impacts of tourism will make a destination unenjoyable in the future due to the damage caused or local resistance. Some of the effects include accumulating trash (Isnaini & Zulaika, 2023) and the conversion of agricultural land into hotels and other industries supporting the tourism industry (Kartika et al., 2020). Tourism development should prioritize local interests and the environment, promoting sustainable tourism (Kapera, 2018; Streimikiene et al., 2021). Sustainable tourism involves developing concepts that provide long-term impacts on the environment, society, culture, and economy for both local communities and visitors. There are four focus pillars in sustainable tourism: sustainable management (tourism business), long-term economic sustainability (socio-economic), cultural sustainability (sustainable culture) that must be developed and preserved, and environmental sustainability (environmental sustainability).

To promote sustainable tourism at the Bantaeng shallot farms, the 4Ps of marketing (product, place, price, promotion) is utilized as a social media marketing strategy. The product aspect involves highlighting the unique selling points of the farm, such as the fresh air in the farm, the picturesque landscape, and the opportunity to engage with local farmers. By showcasing these aspects through high-quality images and videos on social media, the farm can attract enthusiasts and adventurers who are looking for authentic and sustainable tourism experiences (Santi & Zakiyah Zahara, 2024; Ningsih & Arianto, 2024; Asmoro, 2020).

The place aspect leverages the farm's location in Desa Bonto Lojong, Kecamatan Uluere, Kabupaten Bantaeng, Sulawesi Selatan, emphasizing its cultural and natural setting. Utilizing geotags and hashtags related to the region can help attract visitors interested in exploring local destinations. Price strategies should be competitive yet reflective of the farm's unique offerings, with special packages or discounts for sustainable tourism practices to incentivize visitors. Promotion is crucial, utilizing the attention-interest-search-action-share (AISAS) method to create engaging content that inspires visitors to take action. This includes SEO-based posts, stories about sustainable practices, unique experiences like farm tours, direct marketing campaigns, and reward programs to ensure loyalty and repeat visits. By integrating these elements effectively, the Bantaeng shallot farms can attract visitors while promoting sustainable tourism practices.

## METHODS

This research was conducted in Bantaeng shallot farm in Jalan Poros Buakang Paliang, Desa Bonto Lojong, Kecamatan Uluere, Kabupaten Bantaeng, South Sulawesi. The research design used in this study is a qualitative research design, which is an approach to conducting research that focuses on phenomena or naturalistic events, and is not conducted in a laboratory setting but rather in the field (Sugiyono, 2013).

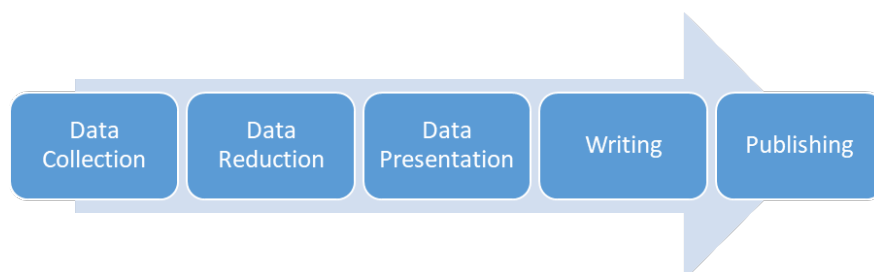


Figure 1. Research Design

Data collection was conducted using the methods of observation and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Observation was conducted to observe the current conditions of the shallot farms in Desa Bonto Lojong, Kecamatan Uluere, Kabupaten Bantaeng. This data was then reduced. The data reduction process involves making the data simpler by selecting only the relevant

information needed for the research. The data was also grouped according to the needs to facilitate the conclusion drawing. After reducing the data, it was presented in a way that determined the type and format of the data that could be included. In the conclusion-drawing stage, the presented data was aligned with the research problem and conclusions were drawn to address the research problem. In the writing stage, the research findings and conclusions were written in the format of a scientific article as determined. This article was then submitted to the journal manager for selection and publication.

The sample consisted of 25 farmers, shallot field owners, non-shallot field owners, village heads, and sub-district heads in Desa Bonto Lojong, Bantaeng. The sampling technique used was incidental sampling, where participants were selected based on their willingness to participate and join the FGD. Data was collected through observation and FGD. The FGD was guided by a moderator who discussed the current conditions of the shallot fields in Desa Bonto Lojong and the hopes of the community regarding the development of shallot fields as a sustainable tourist destination.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The shallot farms in Bonto Lojong, Bantaeng are currently experiencing a surge in visitor traffic, with many individuals seeking to take photographs in the region.



Figure 2. The Current Condition of Bantaeng shallot farms

*Source: Authors' Documentation*



Figure 2. The Condition of Bantaeng shallot farms After Viral in Social Media

*Source: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSYEtjAkv/>*

The initial stage of its popularity, the shallot farms in Bonto Lojong Village were open to everyone, but the shallot farmers were negatively affected. Visitors who came were busy searching for the best photo spots and neglected the shallot plants. The owners of the shallot farms stated that the productivity of their shallot crops has decreased since then, unlike when they first planted them. The damage to the farms due to the viral trend on social media has further increased the losses for the farmers. Although not all shallot farms were trampled by visitors, this trend poses a threat to other shallot farms in Bonto Lojong Village. The actions taken by the owners of the shallot farms included installing fences around their farms. These fences block access to all visitors, preventing them from walking to the top of the farms, which is a favorite photo spot.

Through a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) conducted, the residents expressed that the arrival of visitors to take photos at the shallot farms caused damage to the farms. They did not intentionally cause the damage because they were too busy finding the best photo locations. Additionally, a large number of visitors were visiting the farms simultaneously, making it impossible for the narrow paths in the farms to accommodate them all. Promoting Bantaeng shallot farms as a sustainable tourism destination necessitates a multifaceted marketing strategy that leverages the 4Ps of marketing: Product, Place, Price, and Promotion. This approach ensures that the farm's unique offerings are effectively communicated to potential tourists, thereby enhancing its appeal and sustainability. By focusing on these pillars, the farm can attract a significant number of tourists while ensuring its long-term viability.

### **Product**

The first pillar of the 4Ps is Product. In the context of Bantaeng shallot farms, this refers to the unique experiences and attractions that the farm offers. The farm's picturesque landscape, is a major selling point for tourists seeking a serene and natural environment (Kotler & Keller, 2012; Djaro et al., 2021; Sugiarti et al., 2016). To enhance the product offering, the farm could consider developing guided tours to control the number of visitors and to help them promote responsible behavior during the visit. These tours could include educational components about the benefits of sustainable tourism and the role of the farm in local ecosystems. This interactive experience would provide tourists with a deeper understanding of sustainable agriculture and create memorable moments.

### **Place**

The second pillar is Place. This refers to the physical location and its unique characteristics that make the destination attractive. Bantaeng shallot farms is situated in a picturesque area, which is a significant advantage. The farm's natural beauty, combined with its serene environment, can attract tourists seeking a tranquil getaway. To further enhance the place aspect, the farm could develop additional attractions that complement its natural beauty. For instance, it could create a "Nature Trail" where visitors can explore the surrounding landscape and observe local flora and fauna. This would allow tourists to immerse themselves in nature while enjoying the scenic views of the farm. Additionally, the farm could establish a "Picnic Area" where visitors can relax and enjoy the surroundings while having a meal. This would encourage tourists to spend more time on the farm, thereby increasing their overall experience.

### **Price**

The third pillar is Price. This involves setting prices that are competitive and appealing to potential tourists. The pricing strategy should balance the need to generate revenue with the need to attract visitors. For a sustainable tourism destination like Bantaeng shallot farms, it is crucial to set prices that are reasonable and reflect the value offered. If prices are too high, tourists may be deterred, which could negatively impact the farm's sustainability (Kotler & Keller, 2012; Wells, 1997).

To address this, the farm could consider offering tiered pricing options. For example, it could offer a basic admission fee for general visitors and premium packages for those interested

in more in-depth experiences, such as guided tours or workshops on sustainable farming practices. This approach allows the farm to cater to a broader range of tourists while ensuring that it remains financially sustainable. For instance, a basic admission fee could include access to the farm's scenic areas and picnic spots, while premium packages could include additional activities like the sustainable farming workshop or a guided nature trail tour.

### **Promotion**

The final pillar is Promotion, which involves communicating the value of the product to potential customers. Effective promotion is critical for attracting tourists to Bantaeng shallot farms. Given the digital age, social media is an essential tool for promoting the farm. The farm could create engaging content on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok to showcase its beautiful scenery, sustainable practices, and unique experiences. Collaboration with influencers who specialize in sustainable tourism or agriculture can also be beneficial. These influencers can help spread the word about the farm's unique offerings and attract a wider audience. For example, the farm could partner with eco-conscious influencers who have a large following on social media platforms. These influencers could share their experiences at the farm, highlighting its sustainable practices and scenic beauty, thereby increasing the farm's visibility and appeal.

Additionally, the farm could participate in local tourism events and festivals to increase visibility and attract more visitors. For instance, it could participate in the annual "Bantaeng Tourism Festival" where it could showcase its unique offerings and attract potential tourists. This would not only increase the farm's visibility but also contribute to the local economy by supporting other local businesses.

### **Integrated Marketing Strategy**

To ensure that the 4Ps of marketing are effectively integrated, the farm should develop a comprehensive marketing strategy that includes both online and offline promotional activities. Here are some steps that the farm could take: 1) Develop a Brand Identity: Create a strong brand identity that reflects the farm's commitment to sustainability and natural beauty. This could include a logo, tagline, and overall visual aesthetic that is consistent across all marketing materials; 2) Social Media Campaigns: Utilize social media platforms to create engaging content that showcases the farm's unique experiences and attractions. Share high-quality images and videos of the farm's scenic landscapes, sustainable practices, and tourist activities; 3) Influencer Partnerships: Collaborate with influencers who specialize in sustainable tourism or agriculture to promote the farm's offerings. This could include sponsored posts, product placements, or even hosting influencers at the farm for an immersive experience; 4) Local Events Participation: Participate in local tourism events and festivals to increase visibility and attract more visitors. This could include setting up a stall at the festival where visitors can learn about the farm's offerings and interact with staff; 5) Content Marketing: Create informative content such as blog posts, videos, or infographics that highlight the benefits of sustainable farming practices and the unique experiences offered by the farm. This could be shared on the farm's website or social media channels; 6) Email Marketing: Build an email list of potential and existing customers and send regular newsletters that update them about new activities, promotions, or events at the farm; 7) Collaborations with Local Businesses: Collaborate with local businesses to offer bundled packages or joint promotions. For example, the farm could partner with local hotels to offer packages that include accommodation and a visit to the farm; 8) Customer Reviews and Testimonials: Encourage customers to leave reviews and testimonials on social media or review platforms like TripAdvisor. Positive reviews can significantly enhance the farm's reputation and attract more visitors.

### **CONCLUSION**

Promoting Bantaeng shallot farms as a sustainable tourism destination requires a comprehensive approach that leverages the 4Ps of marketing. By focusing on the unique experiences and attractions offered by the farm, enhancing its physical location with themed



areas, setting competitive prices, and utilizing effective promotional strategies, the farm can attract a significant number of tourists while ensuring its sustainability. The integrated marketing strategy outlined above ensures that all aspects of marketing are aligned to promote the farm's unique offerings effectively. By leveraging social media, influencer partnerships, local events participation, content marketing, email marketing, collaborations with local businesses, and customer reviews, the farm can increase its visibility and appeal to potential tourists. Bantaeng shallot farms has the potential to become a leading sustainable tourism destination by effectively leveraging the 4Ps of marketing. By focusing on its unique product offerings, enhancing its physical location, setting competitive prices, and utilizing effective promotional strategies, the farm can attract a significant number of tourists while ensuring its long-term viability.

## SUGGESTION

To effectively promote Bantaeng shallot farms as a sustainable tourism destination, we suggest implementing a comprehensive marketing strategy that leverages the 4Ps of marketing. This should include developing a strong brand identity that reflects the farm's commitment to sustainability and natural beauty, engaging on social media platforms to share high-quality images and videos of the farm's scenic landscapes and sustainable practices, collaborating with influencers specializing in sustainable tourism or agriculture to promote the farm's offerings, participating in local tourism events and festivals to increase visibility, creating informative content such as blog posts, videos, or infographics highlighting the benefits of sustainable farming practices and unique experiences offered by the farm, building an email list to send regular newsletters about new activities and promotions, offering bundled packages with local hotels, and encouraging customers to leave reviews and testimonials on social media or review platforms. By implementing these strategies, the farm can attract a significant number of tourists while ensuring its long-term viability and sustainability.

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