



EXAMINING BRAND EQUITY AND TOURISTS' PURCHASING MOTIVATIONS TOWARDS THE WORLD'S BEST RICE 'ST25' FOR VIETNAM'S FUTURE SUSTAINABLE FOOD TOURISM DESTINATION

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>DOI: 10.52932/jfm.vi6.442</p> <p><i>Received:</i> October 20, 2023</p> <p><i>Accepted:</i> December 11, 2023</p> <p><i>Published:</i> December 25, 2023</p> <p>Keywords: CBBE model; Food souvenirs; Purchasing motivation; Sustainable food tourism; Rice ST25; Vietnam.</p>	<p>Until now, Vietnam is still confused about choosing a national product to represent the country and turning them into souvenirs everyone craves when traveling here. With the wide range of agricultural products, i.e., the world's best in 2019 Rice ST25, Vietnam can leverage its advantages to create a suitable must-buy item for tourists. There are two primary purposes: (1) to identify the awareness of tourists about ST25 Rice and (2) to examine the ST25 Rice in Customers' based brand equity (CBBE) model and purchasing motivations, therefore sustaining the tourism industry in the future. The study is done with quantitative research by a sample of 243 respondents who are from different countries staying in Ho Chi Minh City. The results show that rice ST25 is acknowledged, and consumers highly rate it, and its potential to be made into national gifts and to stand firm to represent the image of Vietnam from a tourism perspective. The conclusion and recommendations can be utilized to identify other hand-made items for Vietnam's sustainable tourism.</p>

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1. Introduction

Sustainable tourism has gained significant attention globally, emphasizing the importance of responsible travel that minimizes negative impacts on the environment and local communities. Vietnam, a popular tourist destination known for its rich cultural heritage and breathtaking landscapes, has been actively promoting sustainable tourism practices (Le, 2021). In this research, ST25 rice, a unique and sustainable agricultural product, emerges as an excellent choice for a souvenir that aligns with the principles of sustainable Vietnam tourism. This article explores the reasons why the ST25 rice is an ideal souvenir option (Nguyen, 2019), highlighting its ecological, economic, and cultural significance. Firstly, the ST25 rice, also known as the “World’s Best Rice,” is a high-yielding, fragrant rice variety cultivated in the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam (Anh Minh & Duc Minh, 2021). It is grown using eco-friendly farming techniques that prioritize organic fertilizers, minimal pesticide use, and water conservation. By selecting the ST25 rice as a souvenir, tourists support farmers who employ sustainable agricultural practices, contributing to the preservation of Vietnam’s rich biodiversity and ensuring the long-term ecological sustainability of the region. Secondly, tourism plays a significant role in Vietnam’s economy, and promoting sustainable souvenirs like the ST25 rice can contribute to the economic empowerment of local communities. By purchasing this rice variety, tourists directly support local farmers and cooperatives, helping to improve their livelihoods and generate income within the rural areas of Vietnam (Suhartanto et al., 2018). This economic empowerment enhances the socio-economic development of local communities and reduces the dependence on unsustainable practices, such as deforestation or mass tourism. Third, the ST25 rice holds immense cultural significance in Vietnam, as it represents the country’s agricultural heritage and culinary traditions. By choosing this rice as a souvenir, tourists engage in cultural preservation by celebrating and promoting traditional farming methods and local cuisine.

Additionally, the ST25 rice can serve as a vehicle for cultural exchange, as tourists can share their experience of the rice with their friends and family, fostering a deeper appreciation and understanding of Vietnamese culture (Tran et al., 2019) (*see Appendix 10 online*).

This study is conducted with two main objectives:

- (1) to identify and examine the attributes of ST25 Rice of Vietnam to be national food souvenirs via the Customer-based brand equity (CBBE) model and influence on purchasing motivation;
- (2) to clarify the influence of CBBE towards purchase intention of Vietnamese ST25 rice in the context of Vietnam’s sustainable food tourism

Using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) will analyze and justify the hypothesis. The models of food attributes (Lin, 2016), CBBE (Keller, 2002), and purchasing motivation for souvenirs (Wilkins, 2010) are used to identify whether Vietnamese rice, i.e., ST25, and related products could be potentially national souvenirs for tourists.

2. Literature reviews

(*see Appendix 11 online*).

2.1. The issue of sustainable tourism and the potential for food tourism in Vietnam

Sustainable tourism is not newly proposed, but it is a contemporary concept since, at present, environmental destructions are acknowledged. UNWTO (2021) stated that sustainable tourism includes mass and niche tourism in all destinations. There is a triangle of development on sustainable tourism formed by (1) environmental care, (2) economic concerns, and (3) social-cultural aspects. Combining three elements will strengthen long-term development with fewer adverse outcomes. Sustainable tourism focuses on socio-economic development in Vietnam, guided by policies and laws (Vietnam travel, 2021). The communities in Vietnam will work closely with local authorities and tourism experts to create significant items

or experiences for tourists. However, there are plenty of issues related to this type of tourism. Nguyen et al. (2019) indicate that the goal of sustainable tourism is unstable and incapable of facing different changes. The connections between people and the environment are not strong enough, and tourism organizations do not correlate to their objectives for domestic and international tourists. Furthermore, the levels of investment for a natural, sustainable tourism destination are not significant or half-baked.

Since sustainable tourism issues in Vietnam are apparent, they must be adjusted to ensure the government's vision. Food tourism, or gastronomy or culinary tourism, is one of the new dimensions to support sustainable tourism development. In the world, the food tourism destination is not new. Still, it may be a new surprise for Vietnam since, in two consecutive years, 2019 and 2020; Vietnam has been nominated and victorious for the prestigious Award of the Best Culinary Destination in Asia (WTA, 2020). Vietnam is a great and potential country for enjoying cuisines. Besides, Vietnam is an agricultural nation with thousands of years of farming. For instance, the experiences in rice cultivation could be an antecedent for complete tours of production-consumption to enjoyment for each tourist. It is an undeniable advantage that Vietnam possesses, but the question of how to flourish may take time to get started (Hong Linh, 2019).

To find connections among brand equity, purchasing motivation and the potential for sustainable food tourism in Vietnam, the theory of needs by McClelland (1961) is captured to explain the causes of travelers. According to this theory, there are three aspects to consider motivations: achievement's needs, affiliation, and power. When applying McClelland's needs to tourism, a person with a high demand for achievement is more likely to seek out new and exciting places to participate in such activities. They enjoy learning and gaining new experiences to broaden their awareness. People who have a greater need for association enjoy maintaining positive and stable relationships with others (both hosts and guests) and

accepting others. People with a higher demand for association enjoy maintaining positive and long-lasting relationships with others (both hosts and guests) and other people's approval. They enjoy having social encounters and meeting new people. Also, with unique cultural experiences, making more friends is quite common. The desire for power arises from supremacy, influences popularity, position, and influence over others. A traveler with a strong passion for management tends to engage in activities that allow them to control others, win situations, and so on (Curtis & Upchurch, 2010; Osemeke & Adegboyega, 2017).

2.2. Characteristics of food souvenirs: the views of ST25 Rice

Food souvenirs are tangible items to create both memories and experiences for travelers. Local food represents the cultural development of a nation and shapes images of travelers to any country. Tourism's positive or negative general images highly depend on cuisines (Suhartanto et al., 2018). Furthermore, the actual experiences of tourists could be affected by food because it creates complete trip satisfaction, which could retain the tourists to be back (Buczowska, 2014). Food souvenirs also help strengthen the local economy, society, and surrounding environment since they focus on the long-term target of supplying enough consistent products rather than seasonal ones. Understanding the attributes of food souvenirs is crucial as it will create awareness of any particular products in travelers' mindsets. Food souvenirs have five characteristics: collectability, value, storage, display, and functions, which can be used to analyze a specific item (Suhartanto et al., 2018).

Additionally, to evaluate food souvenirs, Lin and Mao (2015) propose three aspects (sensory, utility, and symbolism) to see food souvenirs from different perspectives. The sensory element shows visuals, taste, and feeling. At the same time, the utility one covers convenience, health, and organic components, and the symbolic aspect is about authenticity, tradition, and indigeneity of the local food. ST25 rice has enough quality to be a food souvenir of Vietnam.

2.3. Customers-based brand equity (CBBE) in the tourism sector of Vietnam

A brand is a name, term, symbol, design, or combination of all these elements. Each brand must have been carefully nourished and targeted with the right market segment to create trustworthiness among buyers. Developing a solid brand is equivalent to leveraging advantage for an organization (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017). Brand equity is the value of a brand. Substantial brand equity will enhance Customer's awareness of a product, preserve the brand image, increase the perception of the quality of branded products, and increase customer loyalty. Tran et al. (2019) show that brand equity could present in different perspectives: products, services, or even broadly, in destinations. The relationships between brand equity and customer satisfaction with moderating effects of cultural distance are approved (Tran et al., 2020). With the evaluation of the CBBE model, the brand of ST25 Rice will be reinforced by four main aspects: brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty (Keller, 2002). The CBBE model by Keller (2012) indicates how the popularity of a brand is directly related to the attitudes of its consumers. ST25 Rice could quickly set its image to the Customer's perception. To determine influences from understanding the attributes of food souvenirs to the perception of brand equity, Action-based Theories of Perception by Briscoe & Grush (2015) are utilized. The theory states that prior actions shape the perception of issues by inputs (information). As such, understanding the characteristics of food souvenirs will help

respondents identify the links to each element of the CBBE model (see Appendix 1 online).

2.4. Purchasing motivations for souvenirs of tourists in Vietnam

According to Marangkun & Thipjumnong (2018), research in Thailand shows three primary motivations for purchasing intentions towards souvenirs: fulfilling prestige, variety seeking, as well as history and culture. It is suitable to apply in the Vietnamese scenario with the same pattern of tourists and compatible with previous studies such as intentions to post-purchase behavior (Suhartanto et al., 2018), cultural shopping behaviors (Lin, 2016), or the authenticity for souvenir purchases (Wilkins, 2010). People tend to buy food souvenirs for their satisfaction and later as a token of appreciation or simply a gift to their loved ones. However, Vietnam does not have a specific solution to push up the motivation of purchasing souvenirs or even general spending of tourists (Do, 2020). Souvenirs are now very diverse, but it is a barrier to capture Vietnam with poor quality goods and inconsistent price and quality. Besides, tourists do not want to spend more because of a lack of attractive products or being incompatible with cultures (Nguyen, 2020). As such, rice will be a suitable souvenir with advantages from Vietnam (agricultural segment). The rice is not simply for eating. It can also be transformed into different shapes, purposes, or forms. The variety of rice products will attract more tourists and increase individual expenditure per trip.

2.5. Research Model & Hypothesis

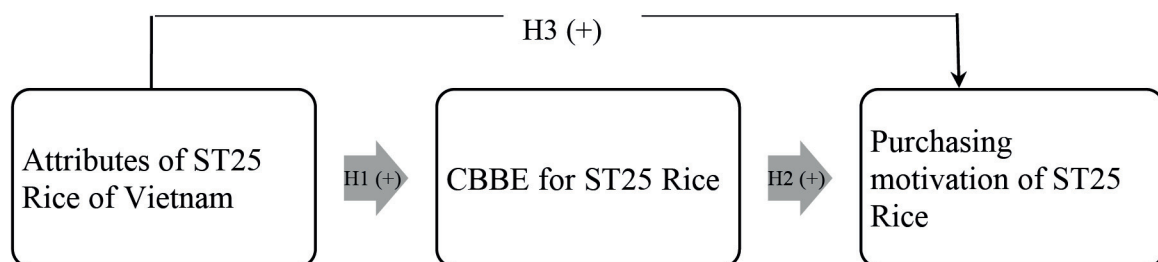


Figure 1. By authors, 2023

Based on theories and literature reviews, there are three hypotheses for this study.

Hypotheses H1: Attributes of ST25 Rice influence positively on customers' based brand equity (CBBE)

Hypotheses H2: CBBE for ST25 influence positively on customers' purchasing motivation.

Hypotheses H3: Attributes of ST25 Rice influence positively on customers' purchasing motivation.

3. Research methods

After reading all relevant and related articles, the study is conducted with quantitative research methods. The test is completed with 2 phases: Pilot Test and Main Survey. (1) The quantitative method for the Pilot test is conducted by distributing 40 questionnaires to random tourists. The results from the Pilot test are analyzed with Cronbach's alpha and EFA to check the reliability of variables. The results show no elimination of any variables, and the questionnaire is suitable for the main survey. (2) The quantitative method was also chosen in the main survey. The distribution of 243 questionnaires is given to tourists in Vietnam. The respondents are from different countries staying in Ho Chi Minh City in April 2023. The questionnaires are directly given to them by an online group of tourists and expatriates due to the effects of the pandemic. All variables in the questionnaire are strictly required to be answered, so the number of verified feedback equals the expected collection (243 responses). To analyze the hypothesis, SPSS is suggested because it can identify the relationships and other potential effects of all variables in the research model. Furthermore, SPSS suits the model of study.

To measure understanding of a particular product, different indicators are applied. The variables chosen to identify and examine the food attributes are from mixed questionnaires of food attributes by Lin (2016). There are four categories (quality, symbol, innovation, and practicality) to measure souvenirs' characteristics. The CBBE variables are

measured by the CBBE model of Keller (2002), modified and justified by Tong & Hawley (2009). The questionnaire for the CBBE section includes five parts: perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty, and brand equity. Each variable is attached with an ST25 image. The purchasing motivations are examined in 3 categories: gift, memory, and evidence, as proposed by Wilkins (2010). The variables are made with a Likert scale of 5. Each level represents extremely negative, neutral, and highly positive outcomes. The details of the variables are listed (*see Appendix 2 online*).

The study is done with quantitative research by a sample of 243 respondents. The survey was completed in March (Pilot test) and April (main survey) 2023. The data collected by the main surveys is fair and meaningful. Since the questionnaires are distributed to tourists and citizens living in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, all of them are familiar with souvenir-buying intentions and aware of ST25 rice and Vietnamese cultural food. They also acknowledge the potential of a sustainable food tour of Vietnam. All questionnaires are bilingual in Vietnamese and English. All terminologies are simplified to capture the full attention and understanding of respondents. Further recommendations from respondents are also collected to enrich the implications of this study.

4. Results and discussions

4.1. Demographic results

In this survey, the respondents were chosen to fit the best equality of gender. The number of females was 55.1 %, and 44.9% were male. 44.4% were employees, followed by self-employment (32.1%), and the rest were students (23.5%). Their incomes mainly were from 5 million VND per month (equivalent to USD 220.00 per month) and above (89.9%), so they could travel to a domestic destination once a year. Since 2020 and 2021, the Covid-19 pandemic has negatively obstructed travel and tourism. The author intended to ask for travel experience and frequency within five years (2018-2023). They all loved travelling, and at least once a year;

they travelled to different places domestically or internationally. Some could afford to travel up to 7 times yearly (16.9%) (see *Appendix 3 online*).

Nonetheless, the respondents mostly spent less than 20% of total travelling expenses on souvenirs, the smaller proportion may have spent more than that, and no one had spent half of their budget on shopping. Respondents also replied that they knew about buying souvenirs at destinations, but some did not purchase anything. Most respondents acknowledged Vietnamese rice and the presence of Rice ST25, but some must be explained further to notice Rice ST25. The sharp reminders by words strengthened respondents' perception towards Rice ST25 of Vietnam before heading to consistent and reliable responses. The demographic data shows the relevance and suitability of social awareness based on gender, income, and frequency of travel. As such, the quality of the following findings will be pretty reassured. Additionally, the variable response to perceptions about the potential of ST25 rice leads to non-biased points of view when judging ST25 Rice (see *Appendix 3 online*).

4.2. Statistical research findings

The reliability results indicate that 50 out of 51 variables used for analyzing ST25's attributes (18 variables), CBBE (18 variables), and purchasing motivation (14 variables) are reliable, with corrected item-total correlations greater than 0.3. Cronbach's alphas (α) are in an acceptable range of good measurement ($0.6 < \alpha < 0.8$). Only one variable is eliminated because the corrected item-total correlation result is less than 0.3. It proves that the measurements for this study are reliable (see *Appendix 4 online*).

The EFA results (see *Appendix 5 online*) specify the internal reliability of the study. It indicates that the KMO of all three groups of the research model is greater than 0.9 (under $0 < \text{KMO} < 1$), and the significance of Bartlett's test is all less than 0.05. The total variances explained are also greater than 50%. It proves that the data used for factor analysis is appropriate and variables are correlated with each other. Based on the results of rotated component matrices

of three variables (see *Appendix 6,7,8 online*), all loading factors are greater than 0.5. For the attribute categories, there are four groups of components of Attributes and all factors are greater than 0.5, which is equivalent to the questionnaire design.

However, in CBBE model, although all factors have factor loading greater than 0.5, elements of brand association is divided into 2 segments and merged into two segments of perceived quality and brand awareness. It shows that respondents perceive the similarity of brand association in two different segments. The third part of purchasing with all loading factors greater than 0.5 represent the validity, however, there is no difference between purposes of buying souvenirs of tourists. They perceive that buying souvenirs is an activity for tourism, regardless of purposes.

To identify the relationships of variables, linear regression is adopted. The results (see *Appendix 9 online*) state that the adjusted R^2 of H1 is nearly 0.5 (0.477), which shows that the independent variable Attributes explain 47.7% variation of the dependent variable CBBE. It shows that this linear regression model is consistent with the data set of the sample at 47.7%. Besides, the significance of ANOVA is $0.000 < 0.05$, proving that the population's R-squared is different from zero. The built-in linear regression model is consistent with the population, and the independent variable significantly influences the dependent one.

Furthermore, the significance of the coefficient is less than 0.05, $VIF < 2$ (no multi-collinearity effect), and a standard coefficient beta of H1 is 0.693, representing that when attributes increase by 1, the CBBE will simultaneously increase by 0.693. For H1, the mean value is $-1.48E-15$, which equals 0, and the standard deviation is 0.998, which approximately equals one, further confirming the normalization residue following the normal distribution. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is accepted. For hypothesis 2, the Adjusted R^2 is greater than in H1, and more than 0.5 ($R^2_{adj} = 0.572$) shows that CBBE explains 57.2% of the

purchasing motivation towards ST25 Rice. The significance of ANOVA is also $0.000 < 0.05$. It concludes that the model is also consistent. The significance of the coefficient is $0.000 < 0.05$, $VIF < 2$, and a standard coefficient beta of H2 are 0.757, which also indicates that the influences of CBBE on purchasing motivation are apparent. The mean is toward 0, and the standard deviation almost reaches one, which can strengthen and accept the H2 analysis.

Hypothesis 3 with the adjusted R^2 is 0.508 (greater than 0.5) indicating that dependent variable of purchasing motivation is 50.8% explained by the attributes of ST25 rice. The sig. is less than 0.05 so the relationship is significant. The coefficient is $0.000 < 0.05$, $VIF < 2$, and a standard coefficient beta of H2 are 0.714 represent the obvious impact of attributes of ST25 to purchasing motivation.

4.3. Discussions

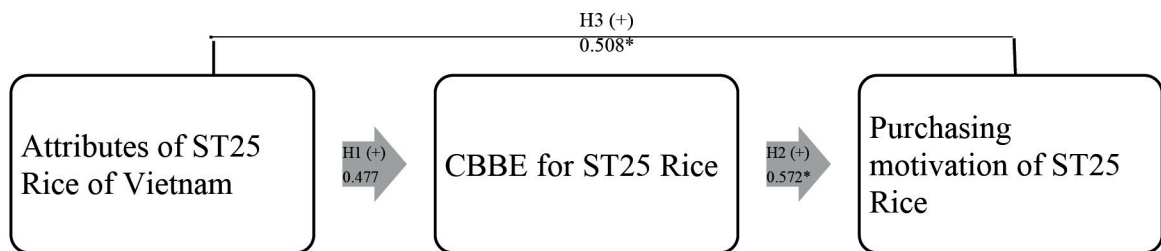


Figure 2. Hypothesis testing results

Hypotheses 1 (H1) proves that souvenirs play a significant role in brand building and the development of customer-based brand equity (CBBE). Understanding the effect of souvenir attributes on the CBBE model is crucial for organizations seeking to enhance their brand image and influence consumer behavior. Recent research has shed light on the impact of souvenir attributes on the CBBE model. For instance, a study by Zhang & Kim (2018) examined the relationship between souvenir attributes and brand associations. The findings revealed that the unique and culturally symbolic attributes of souvenirs significantly influenced consumers' brand associations, leading to enhanced brand awareness and brand image. This research highlights the role of souvenir attributes in shaping key dimensions of the CBBE model. Moreover, a study by Chen et al. (2019) explored the effect of souvenir attributes on brand resonance, an important component of the CBBE model. The researchers found that souvenir attributes, such as authenticity, uniqueness, and emotional value, positively influenced consumers' brand resonance, including their sense of community, active engagement, and loyalty towards the brand.

This study emphasizes the role of souvenir attributes in fostering strong connections with consumers. Additionally, research by Yang and Li (2020) examined the impact of souvenir attributes on brand loyalty, another dimension of the CBBE model. The study revealed that souvenir attributes, such as quality, design, and cultural relevance, significantly influenced consumers' brand loyalty, leading to repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth. This research underscores the significance of souvenir attributes in building long-term customer loyalty.

The Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model is a widely used framework for understanding and managing brand equity. It emphasizes the importance of customer perceptions and attitudes towards a brand and their impact on purchasing decisions. Recent research has further substantiated the influence of the CBBE model on purchasing attributes. For instance, in a study by Kim & Kim (2018), it was found that brand awareness, a central component of the CBBE model, positively affects consumers' purchase intentions by enhancing their perceived product quality and credibility. This finding aligns with previous studies (Keller,

2003) and underscores the enduring relevance of brand awareness in shaping consumer behavior. Moreover, a study by Wang & Yang (2019) explored the relationship between brand associations, another dimension of the CBBE model, and consumers' evaluations of product attributes. The findings indicated that strong and favorable brand associations significantly influenced consumers' perceptions of product quality, leading to increased purchase intentions. Hypotheses 2 (H2) shows the growing body of evidence supporting the impact of brand associations on purchasing attributes. Furthermore, recent studies have also highlighted the role of brand relationships in shaping purchasing decisions. For instance, in a study by Chen and Chen (2020), it was revealed that strong brand relationships, characterized by trust and emotional attachment, positively influenced consumers' brand preferences and purchase intentions. This underscores the importance of fostering meaningful connections with customers, as emphasized in the CBBE model.

Tourism is a vital sector of the global economy, and understanding the factors that drive tourists' purchasing motivation is crucial for businesses and destination management organizations. One significant aspect influencing tourists' purchase decisions is the attributes of items they encounter during their travels. The quality of items, including their durability, reliability, and craftsmanship, significantly impacts tourists' purchasing motivation (Gretzel et al., 2015). High-quality items are perceived as valuable souvenirs, gifts, or personal mementos, fostering positive emotions and enhancing tourists' satisfaction. Tourists often seek authentic products that reflect the unique culture, heritage, and traditions of the visited destination (Nawijn et al., 2013). Authentic items are perceived as genuine representations of the local culture, increasing their appeal and desirability among tourists. Items that possess an exclusive or limited availability are particularly alluring to tourists, as they provide a sense of uniqueness

and status (Kim et al., 2019). Limited editions, one-of-a-kind crafts, or customized items create a sense of exclusivity, prompting tourists to make a purchase to possess something distinct. Furthermore, items that hold cultural significance, such as traditional artifacts, artworks, or handicrafts, evoke curiosity and interest among tourists (Yoon et al., 2017). The cultural value of these items enhances their appeal and motivates tourists to purchase them as meaningful symbols of their travel experience. Next, tourists often develop emotional connections with items that remind them of their travel experiences or evoke nostalgic feelings (Kim et al., 2019). Such emotional connections can stem from the item's design, symbolism, or personal relevance, influencing tourists' purchasing motivation. Additionally, tourists consider the price-value ratio of items before making a purchase decision (Gretzel et al., 2015). They evaluate whether the item justifies its price in terms of its perceived quality, uniqueness, and cultural significance, ensuring a satisfactory exchange between cost and value.

With the accepted hypothesis, it can be inferred from the model that ST25 rice of Vietnam has a significant image in tourists' perceptions, and its brand can help push up the purchasing motivation of travelers upon trips to Vietnam. The attributes of ST25 Rice are linked to dimensions of the CBBE model to strengthen tourists' perceptions and significantly influence their purchasing motivations. Although the results from the survey may not fully reflect the real scenario of Vietnam's sustainable tourism via the image of ST25 Rice, it is already proved that ST25 rice and its products have the potential to become food souvenirs of Vietnam. Sustainable tourism rises as a most promising candidate. However, it must be speeded up with relevant actions to take back the pattern registration from other nations because ST25 Rice is originally from Vietnam. Protection of brand name and increases in brand equity will lead to long-term success in the future of Vietnamese Rice, particularly Vietnam tourism.

5. Conclusion, recommendations, implications, and limitations

5.1. Conclusion

Previous research has focused on turning particular products into food souvenirs in specific contexts and motivations for purchasing souvenirs (Lin & Mao, 2015; Lin, 2016; Gani et al., 2017). Nevertheless, the combination of understanding not only the characteristics of a particular product with its brand equity before further examining the motivation of purchasing them is not very popular, especially in Vietnam. Since different tourists have different perceptions towards food souvenirs from Vietnam, it is evident that surveyed respondents quite agreed with the new concept of Rice as a souvenir, even though sometimes they thought it was impossible. Furthermore, the implied brand name ST25 clarified the brand equity of Vietnamese Rice. It stated that understanding the Vietnamese ST25 rice belonged solely to Vietnam and its outstanding attributes and one-and-only brand of ST25 will upsurge purchasing motivations. It only concentrated on incentives rather than intention because there would be plenty of agricultural products in Vietnam, potential souvenirs. Branding products with the legal pattern was crucial to shaping the perception and creating the stimuli towards the immediate purchase. Food, especially essential ingredients, will replace traditional tangible inedible items such as mugs, key chains, or tee shirts. With its proper packages, art arrangement, commercials, and affordable prices, ST25 Rice and its products will conquer the taste and experiences of tourists.

5.2. Implications

5.2.1. Theoretical implications

Each theory used in this study represents the significance of factor relationships, but combining two theories to explain the perception and understanding is innovative. Action-based Theories of Perception and McClelland's theory of needs simultaneously explain the motivation for accepting and purchasing ST25 rice in Vietnam. The theoretical mixture helps further

to analyze the facts and figures in Vietnamese tourism because humans play an essential role in generating profits and ideas in the operation of tourism and hospitality. Understanding their perceptions and behaviors of a product will help shape the form of final products and amend necessary features to ensure that products will be bought at first sight. The better the perceived image of ST25, the more tremendous success it will bring to Vietnam's tourism.

5.2.2. Practical implications

Based on the results and discussions, there are three main practical implications for Vietnam's tourism industry, specialists, and future research.

Firstly, Vietnam's tourism industry should immediately choose ST25 as the national rice brand of Vietnam to reduce the risks of losing its own identity. The authorities should continuously advertise and join international tourism fairs to introduce and increase brand awareness to all potential travelers and travel agents. Before that, they set up a team to design and protect brands from all legal and economic perspectives. The adequately prepared ST25 Rice with detailed instructions on usage and quality controls will confirm that ST25 Rice was initially cultivated in Vietnam. There are no further pattern disputes from overseas.

Furthermore, the authorities should consider conserving the rice cultivation areas and turning them into a series of products related to agricultural tourism. Designing a must-go destination with the images of ST25 as the central concept will attract the attention of travelers. Media and social networks cannot be set out of the series of enhancing ST25 Rice's position globally. Positively and actively cooperating with travel bloggers and other television channels to create new platforms for experiencing Vietnam cuisines, the main character is ST25 Rice. The merged advertisements will alert travelers in both domestic and international markets.

Secondly, for tourism specialists, it is highly recommended that in any tour in Vietnam, including inbound and outbound, the Rice

of Vietnam's images must be on the priority list when introducing Vietnam and its food souvenirs. The impacts of specialists, such as tour guides or travel agents (including online travel agents), will spread the news of Vietnam ST25 rice and offer new experiences to travelers who love discovering new dimensions of tourism in Vietnam. Developing new types of tourist destinations is a crucial way to stand out the products and services for tourism. It also helps to sustain long-term development by raising awareness via continuously provided information from tour guides and travel agents towards customers, which increases their curiosity and intention to make actual purchases. Word-of-mouth with professional guides and directions will push up purchasing motivations of tourists to ST25 rice.

Lastly, for future research, it is highly recommended to have more reviews from producers and consumers of ST25 Rice rather than ideas of tourists only. The following research also needs to analyze a new model, for example, Stimuli – Organism – Response (SOR),

to verify the reliability, reflect the results of this study, and apply it to new potential items such as Vietnamese souvenirs. In the subsequent research, moderating effects of the designs of products and controlling the impact of cultural perspectives should be further examined to strengthen three variables in this study.

5.3. Limitations

This study was carried on during the pandemic period. Therefore, interviewing directly to respondents was not correctly done. Only online questionnaires were distributed, leading to statements and questions misunderstandings. Furthermore, since the information about ST25 Rice was in a crisis of pattern conflicts, most people only focused on these issues rather than how to utilize ST25 as Vietnamese food souvenirs, which affected the number of related research for literature reviews. Finally, since it was conducted in Vietnam, the results could not be reapplied in other nations due to differences in tourists' behaviors and perceptions. Those limitations are hopefully being minimized in future research.

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