Analysis of Consumer Behavior Psychology of Zhecheng Chili with SICAS Model

Yi Cheng[1*], Xiangheng Meng[2*], Menghan Qi[3]

[1]Agricultural Information Institute of Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Beijing, China.
[2]School of Energy and Control Engineering in Changji University, Changji, China.
[3]School of Marxism in Xinyang College, Xinyang, China.
*Corresponding author: qam1121@outlook.com; meng372021@163.com.

Abstract

In 2024, China has proposed to accelerate the construction of a strong agricultural country, pay close attention to stable production and supply of important agricultural products, and promote the coordinated development of rural revitalization. As an important agricultural product that makes the county prosperous and the people rich in Zhecheng County, Chili pepper is an important guarantee for Zhecheng County to achieve poverty alleviation and rural revitalization. Through analyzing consumer behavior towards Zhecheng pepper, it was found that consumers have a low perception level and low interest in buying. To address these issues, this study employs the SICAS consumer behavior theory model and proposes targeted recommendations, which will promote the high-quality and sustainable development of the Chili agricultural products in Zhecheng County. Additionally, this study can provide reference for the development of other unique agricultural products industries in different regions.

Full Text Article

Keywords: Chili; SICAS Theory; Rural Revitalization; Psychology of Consumer Behavior

Introduction

The 2024 No. 1 Central Document in China emphasizes the urgency of ensuring the stable production and supply of food and important agricultural products, consolidating the achievements of poverty alleviation, and expanding avenues for farmers to increase income and wealth. China has stressed that a strong country must first have a strong agricultural sector; the strength of a nation is directly tied to its agricultural prowess, and a strong agricultural nation is the foundation of a modern socialist powerhouse. Advancing agricultural modernization is a necessary requirement for high-quality development. Zhecheng County, a national-level impoverished county, relies heavily on chili peppers as an important agricultural product for poverty alleviation and increasing farmers'

wealth. The chili pepper industry in Zhecheng County has become a characteristic agricultural industry that enriches the people and strengthens the county. Zhecheng Chili have received honors such as the "National Geographic Indication Trademark" and "National Geographic Indication Protected Product", ranking 65th in the Top 100 Brand List of National Geographic Indications with a brand value of up to 4.337 billion yuan (Mingyang, 2020). In recent years, Zhecheng County has taken chili peppers as the development object of the characteristic agricultural product industry, actively explored the resource advantages of traditional chili pepper production areas and promoted its innovation in market competitiveness. This has further stimulated agricultural enterprises in Zhecheng County to practice their sense of responsibility and mission to "revitalize the countryside and accelerate the high-quality development of agriculture and rural areas". It also provides valuable references for the high-quality development of characteristic agricultural product industries in other regions.

Chili pepper is a significant agricultural commodity; enhancing its yield and marketability contributes to income generation, employment opportunities, and food security enhancement for a substantial portion of rural households. Optimizing chili pepper market strategies is a prominent research topic among academics and industry professionals both domestically and internationally. Wosene employed a probabilistic modeling approach, Minimum Viable Product (MVP), to analyze the determinants influencing chili pepper market channel choices in the Wonberma district of Ethiopia (Wosene, 2018). Lillywhite, through a comprehensive review of existing U.S. chili pepper trade data and consumer surveys, proposed recommendations to bolster U.S. chili pepper production and sales (Lillywhite, 2021). Hou identified a deficiency in chili pepper seed by-product processing enterprises in Henan Province, China, indicating an inability to meet market demands (Hou, 2020). Zhang suggested that the chili pepper industry in Hebei Province should prioritize the cultivation of superior chili pepper varieties and enhance the chili pepper value chain (Zhang, 2021). Ren highlighted the low levels of standardization and branding in Yunnan Province's chili pepper processing, hindering the development of influential and reputable processed product brands (Ren, 2022). Cui observed that despite possessing exceptional quality, Xinjiang chili peppers face challenges due to insufficient integration of industry resources and uncoordinated processing and sales, resulting in a suboptimal price-quality relationship (Cui, 2022).

The study of consumer behavior is foundational to marketing decision-making and the formulation of marketing strategies. Arenas mentioned that analyzing the factors influencing consumer behavior aids in enhancing corporate competitiveness (Arenas, 2019). Ahn investigated the determinants of consumer behavior during the food delivery process through online survey data (Ahn,2022). Huang stated that marketing should satisfy consumer needs from the perspective of the consumers (Huang, 2021). Ruan used multiple linear regression to discover that both marketing stimuli and environmental stimuli in external influences can significantly and positively affect consumers' perceived benefits (Ruan,2022). Li pointed out that reinforcing consumer behavioral intentions is a focal point for agricultural enterprises currently, and he proposed suggestions regarding consumer perceived value, consumer satisfaction strategies, and consumer behavioral intentions (Li, 2022). Yang explored the corporate social marketing model based on the SICAS model (Yang, 2011). Yang described the evolution of consumer patterns and marketing countermeasures, emphasizing the application significance of SICAS in the marketing domain (Yang, 2020).

In summary, scholars have conducted extensive literature research surrounding capsicum marketing strategies. However, few have analyzed and proposed corresponding optimizations for capsicum marketing strategies from the perspective of consumer behavior. Research into consumer behavior can assist agricultural product operators in formulating more precise marketing strategies, especially the SICAS consumer behavior theoretical model, which, due to the development of the internet, holds substantial practical significance for optimizing the marketing strategies of agricultural products like capsicum. Therefore, it is both necessary and meaningful for this paper to utilize the SICAS consumer behavior model to optimize the marketing strategy for capsicum in Zhecheng.

SICAS Theoretical Model

Consumer behavior denotes the psychological tendencies exhibited by consumers during the acquisition and utilization of goods and services. A comprehensive understanding of consumer needs, preferences, and purchasing decision-making processes allows enterprises to develop targeted products and services, and to strategize more effective marketing tactics, thereby enhancing their market competitiveness. Research on consumer behavior also aids enterprises in deciphering consumer psychological states, purchasing intentions, and habitual behaviors, optimizing product design and improving product quality. Moreover, the precise identification of target customers and the development of more efficient marketing strategies can enhance marketing efficiency and effectiveness (Qi, 2023).

The SICAS (Sense-Interest & Interactive-Connect & Communicate-Action-Share) theoretical model, a third-generation consumer behavior model, is a product birthed from developments in mobile internet. The core driving force of the SICAS model hinges on connected dialogue, rather than broadcast-style advertisement marketing. It not only relates to social networking, but also corresponds to the behavior model of consumers in the context of Internet+ and digitization. The SICAS model evolved from AIDMA (Attention-Interest-Desire-Memory-Action) to AISAS (Attention-Interest-Search-Action-Share), then from AISAS to SICAS. In the SICAS theoretical model, Sense refers to the dynamic perception process formed by consumers through social media platforms. Consumers are no longer passively receiving product information from companies and can actively participate in discussions and share their usage experience on social media, shaping their perceptions and understandings of products and brands. Interest & Interactive stems from diversified marketing methods used by companies to stimulate consumers' interest in their products and maintain their attention. With precise market positioning and personalized marketing strategies, companies can attract consumer interest and interaction, prompting consumers to actively participate and engage with the company. Connect & Communicate involves companies connecting all communication channels used by consumers, ensuring timely communication with consumers through social media, online customer service, or other channels to promptly address their inquiries, feedback, and needs, thereby establishing a good communication and trust relationship. Action refers to consumers' purchasing behaviors occurring within various channels, where companies need to record and organize these behaviors to understand their preferences and behavior patterns and make corresponding adjustments and optimizations to provide a better purchasing experience. Share denotes consumers' willingness to share their experiences with excellent products, attracting

more consumers through word-of-mouth marketing. In the era of social media, the influence of consumers' sharing and recommendations is substantial. Companies can stimulate consumers' desire to share experiences by providing high-quality products and a pleasant purchasing experience, thereby expanding the product's influence and market share (Meng, 2023).

Current Analysis of Consumer Behavior Psychology

Foster industry leaders to elevate industrialization levels. Zhecheng County has nurtured 560 new type of chili pepper farming entities, 16 high-quality seed breeding leading enterprises, and developed over 800 superior varieties. It has cultivated 26 agricultural industrialization leading enterprises such as Wangxianlou, Lade Fresh, Chunhai chili Pepper, and Red Cube, and actively cooperated with more than 10 chili pepper deep-processing enterprises such as Chongqing Red Sun and Hanbang Spicy Source, to fully enhance the industrialization level of Zhecheng Chili peppers.

Leverage the Internet to strengthen industry influence. Large-scale events such as the 15th National Chili Pepper Industry Development Conference were grandly held in Zhecheng. The Zhecheng Chili pepper industry has made its brand more well-known by releasing bulk Zhecheng media news and industry media news, and effectively combining it with online promotion, thereby enhancing the influence of the Zhecheng Chili pepper industry to a certain extent.

This questionnaire primarily targets the main consumer group of Zhecheng Chili peppers - consumers in the Henan region.

The survey questionnaire is designed into two parts: the first part includes the basic information of the respondent, the second part is designed into five dimensions, collecting respondents' feelings about brand marketing activities. It refers to consumer satisfaction survey methods, using the international satisfaction percentage general rule to assign values to options: The questionnaire options are divided into 1-5 degrees from low to high, with "1" assigned 0 points, "2" assigned 30 points, "3" assigned 60 points, "4" assigned 80 points, "5" assigned 100 points. Each element, each aspect, and the total score of the SICAS model are calculated using the weighted scoring method.

Assuming the total number of people is R, the number of persons in each option is R_i, ($i=1,2,\ldots,5$), the score of a single element x_i is:

$$x_i = (100 \times R_1 + 80 \times R_2 + 60 \times R_3 + 30 \times R_4 + 0 \times R_5) \ / \ R \tag{1}$$

the (S/I/C/A/S) score y_i is:

$$y_i = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_i}{n} \qquad (n = 2,3,\ldots) \tag{2}$$

the SICAS model score z is:

$$z = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{5} y_i}{5} \tag{3}$$

To further evaluate the overall effects of each element, each aspect, and the SICAS model, the scores are divided into five levels, namely excellent: 90-100; good: 80-89; medium: 70-79; pass: 60-69; fail: 0-59.

Measurement of the SICAS Model for Zhecheng Chili Pepper Brand

This questionnaire survey was conducted in paper form and the questionnaire statistics were conducted with professional software. A total of 360 questionnaires were collected, 11 invalid questionnaires were eliminated, and 349 valid questionnaires were collected, with a questionnaire efficiency rate of 97%.

The survey on the perception of the effectiveness of the Zhecheng Chili pepper marketing strategy is designed according to the SICAS theoretical model, mainly divided into 5 dimensions and 13 elements. The statistical analysis of the survey data for this part yielded the following results (see Table 1).

Table 1 The content and score of Zhecheng Chili pepper consumer behavior questionnaire

Dimension	Details	Score x_i	Total scores y_i
Sense	Zhecheng Chili has a certain popularity in your area	70.79	70.53
	You trust in the brands associated with Zhecheng Chili	70.67	
	You think highly of the quality of Zhecheng Chili	70.02	
Interest & Interactive	You often discuss Zhecheng Chili with your friends	58.26	60.73
	You approve of Zhecheng Chili's marketing campaign	63.51	
	You often pay attention to information about Zhecheng Chili	60.42	
Connect & Communicate	You will participate in the the discussion topics of Zhecheng Chili Marketing Campaign.	68.74	68.03
	Zhecheng Chili related businesses inquire about your experience	67.32	
Action	you think Zhecheng Chili related products are good value for money	71.58	72.19
	You are a frequent buyer of Zhecheng Chili related products	73.02	
	You are very satisfied with your consumer experience of Zhecheng Chili products	71.95	
Share	Would you like to recommend Zhecheng Chili products to your friends?	66.25	65.98
	Would you like to share and retweet information about Zhecheng Chili?	65.71	
SICAS scores z	——	——	67.49

As can be seen from the statistical table: The S brand perception scored 70.53, ranking as medium; the overall I interest score was 60.73, barely passing; the C interactive communication score was 68.03, ranking as pass; the A product purchase score was 72.19, ranking as medium; the S sharing score was 65.98, ranking as pass.

After measuring the five aspects of the SICAS model for the Zhecheng Chili pepper brand, the overall SICAS score was 67.49, ranking as pass, but the scores in each area were not evenly distributed. The highest score was the product purchase dimension with 72.19, ranking as medium, and the lowest score was the interest dimension with 60.73, barely passing. The above results indicate that the brand's marketing activities effectiveness is not good, especially in the aspects of interactive communication, sharing, and interest, there is still a lot of room for improvement.

Due to the limited budget of this study, it is not feasible to afford the costs, time, and human resources required for extensive reliability and validity analyses. Moreover, the focus of this study is to explore the relationship between consumer behavior and marketing effectiveness, rather than conducting an in-depth analysis of the nature of the measurement tools. Therefore, in this scenario, conducting reliability and validity analyses is not the primary focus of the research. Consequently, existing literature and research models are chosen to support the reliability and validity of the measurement tools used. (Wang, 2023)

Consumer Behavioral Problems in the Chili Industry

It is evident that the marketing model requires enhancement. The current marketing of Zhecheng Chili pepper is still dominated by the traditional mode, with competitive factors focusing on taste, price, and other factors. It is evident that the product brand, quality, and origin, among other key information, cannot be effectively transferred to consumers through the Internet. This is due to a lack of guidance and publicity, which in turn affects consumer awareness and confidence in Zhecheng Chili pepper products. Consequently, consumers tend to associate Chili peppers with larger, more well-known brands, such as Chongqing and Hunan Chili peppers, rather than with a smaller, lesser-known brand from Shangqiu City, Henan Province.

The link between interest stimulation and the product in question is relatively weak. The traditional marketing model has constrained the potential of Zhecheng Chili pepper, which has not only been used as a single marketing tool but also lacks the capacity to stimulate consumer interest and interaction with network media. For instance, the "net red card place" Zhecheng Chili characteristics of the town, despite the initial investment of significant resources, and the utilization of various Internet media platforms, including jittery voice, to disseminate information, has not generated a high level of interest. Furthermore, the enterprises related to Zhecheng Chili pepper lack detailed product descriptions. While the WeChat public number "Zhecheng Chili red" provides a daily market introduction, most consumers face difficulties in making accurate purchasing decisions due to the vast variety of Chili peppers available. This can lead to consumer frustration and a decline in interest in purchasing Zhecheng Chili peppers.

It is not possible to utilize the available traffic to establish a connection with consumers. Upon opening *TikTok,* one may search for short videos released by leading enterprises of Zhecheng Chili. It will be observed that commodity links rarely appear below the video. For instance, a food company in Zhecheng County has released numerous processing videos of Zhecheng Chili, as well as some manufactured products of Zhecheng Chili. However, none of these videos include a link to the relevant commodities, either at the bottom of the video or in the comment section. This is even though such links could potentially attract a high number of likes, thereby increasing the visibility of the commodities and the business in question. It is evident that this opportunity has not been

fully exploited, which hinders the connection between the commodities and the consumers.

The purchase channels are relatively straightforward. The Zhecheng Chili industry is currently in the developmental stage. Its production capacity and sales scale are insufficient to meet the needs of the large-scale consumer market. Furthermore, there is a paucity of evidence of Zhecheng Chili on e-commerce platforms. Despite being a specialty of Zhecheng County, the search engine feedback results are predominantly for "Zhecheng chicken claw twist". This is indicative of a lack of publicity and visibility on the e-commerce platform. Consequently, a single channel is insufficient to meet the needs of many consumers. The Zhecheng Chili, despite its popularity, has not received sufficient exposure on the e-commerce platform. A single channel is inadequate to meet the diverse needs of consumers, which may affect the strength of purchases.

The willingness of consumers to share information is not particularly strong. The extent of information sharing and communication channels among consumers is limited, and the corresponding incentives for sharing are also insufficient. Consequently, consumers cannot gain benefits from sharing information related to Zhecheng Chili products. This, in turn, leads to insufficient incentives for consumers to share the information in the first place.

Optimization Suggestions for Marketing of Chili Industry

It is recommended that the flow be fully exploited possible. Zhecheng Chili should seize the annual "Chinese farmers harvest festival," capitalizing on the advantageous traffic patterns to enhance the exposure of Zhecheng Chili in the minds of consumers. This will deepen the degree of consumer perception of the brand of Zhecheng Chili. Furthermore, enterprises related to Zhecheng Chili can leverage microblogging topics and publicity to assist farmers, thereby increasing consumer awareness of Zhecheng Chili.

The multifaceted and efficient use of media platforms can moderately guide consumers and enhance the degree of perception. The cultivation of leading enterprises in the province and municipality of Zhecheng County has resulted in the emergence of 26 leading enterprises. These enterprises serve as a significant driving force in the promotion of the brand awareness of Zhecheng Chili pepper. It is therefore imperative that they utilize the major Internet social media platforms to create their own traffic advantage and enhance the degree of Zhecheng Chili pepper perception in the minds of consumers. In addition, enterprises should also make optimal use of Internet media platforms to enhance the quality of video content and release relevant content on a regular basis. For instance, the use of Chili pepper is not only a common culinary ingredient, but also an important traditional Chinese medicine. It has been used to treat a range of ailments, including stomach cold and stagnant qi, vomiting, dysentery, rheumatism pain, and other diseases. Zhecheng Chili pepper, for instance, has been used to treat stomach ailments. It is possible for enterprises related to the use of chili pepper to utilize the Internet to moderate consumer guidance, thereby increasing consumer awareness of the use of chili pepper. Furthermore, the high quality of the video content can influence consumer preference, which may subsequently result in the implementation of purchasing behavior.

It is necessary to stimulate consumer interest. Zhecheng Chili-related enterprises may benefit from capitalizing on the influx of major festivals or events to align with the interest stimulation point of Zhecheng Chili consumers. It can be observed that people tend to prefer certain lively

scenes whenever major festivals or events commence. This is because such events arouse the interest of a significant number of people, who then search for and click on various online content. This presents an opportunity for Zhecheng Chili pepper-related enterprises to connect their products with these festivals or events, thus creating a positive association in the minds of consumers. It is necessary to create a sense of presence in the minds of consumers.

It is of the utmost importance to seize consumer opportunities in a timely manner. The interest of consumers in a commodity will be affected by time. Therefore, businesses must be sensitive enough to convert consumer interest into timely purchase action. It is of the utmost importance that Zhecheng Chili pepper enterprises take the comments of consumers on social media seriously. When consumers leave comments on the company's social media pages, the business should respond promptly to address any issues related to the company's products. This will help to maintain consumer interest and encourage further purchases.

Furthermore, the utilization of the Internet to highlight the quality advantages, standardize the management of employees and reduce geographical discrimination can also be a means of enhancing consumer interest. In the case of chili production in different townships in Zhecheng County, it is recommended that publicity and guidance be strengthened with the help of the Internet. Each production area has its own unique chili growth environment advantages. To reduce the "geographical discrimination" in the minds of consumers, the characteristics of these production areas should be introduced on the media platform. This will focus on the publicity of the chili pepper varieties produced in different townships in Zhecheng County. The aim is to inform consumers that although some varieties of Chili pepper are produced in some townships, the favorable geographic environment makes some varieties of Chili peppers richer in nutrients and of a higher quality. Furthermore, Zhecheng Chili peppers should continue to be cultivated using high-quality seeds to enhance the quality and taste of Zhecheng Chili peppers in accordance with market requirements. During this process, some of the cultivation links can be communicated to consumers via the Internet, thus enabling consumers to gain an understanding of the intentions of merchants and fostering goodwill and interest. Furthermore, the standardized management of Zhecheng Chili pepper processing workers is essential. This should include health and safety considerations in performance management procedures. For certain Zhecheng Chili pepper processing operations, standardized management of the workers' operating steps is also crucial. Additionally, the processing of Zhecheng Chili peppers through the Internet should be transparent to ensure consumer confidence and peace of mind.

It is recommended that a connection pathway with consumers be actively established through third-party applications. It is advisable to utilize the traffic to establish a connection with consumers and increase the number of topics. A well-chosen topic can facilitate the rapid dissemination of the product, as well as enhance its reputation. Cudgel Chili-related businesses may choose to create exclusive hotspots to build their own reputation. Alternatively, they may wish to take advantage of some hot topics, use events or other products to take advantage of the traffic, and provide channels for consumers to communicate with their services. Furthermore, businesses can maintain customer relationships through social media platforms such as WeChat by posting images and videos of the cultivation and harvesting of Zhecheng Chili peppers to their friends. To increase the visibility of Zhecheng Chili peppers in consumers' minds and to encourage engagement, the brand has implemented a strategy of offering incentives, such as forwarding the circle of friends to collect the

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number of likes required to receive a bottle of chili sauce made from Zhecheng Chili peppers. The bottle of Chili sauce provides consumers with an opportunity to experience Zhecheng Chili. When consumers are highly satisfied with the experience, they become, in a sense, the disseminators of word-of-mouth about Zhecheng Chili.

It is recommended that the purchase channels be broadened, the effective supply be increased, and the situation be exploited to develop the market. In 2019, Zhecheng County in Henan Province ceased to be a nationally designated poverty-stricken county. This has coincided with a significant improvement in infrastructure and an unprecedented increase in internet penetration. Zhecheng Chili-related enterprises should capitalize on the policy incentives and utilize the sales channels established for Zhecheng Chili during the process of poverty alleviation, such as the "Internet + agriculture" model. This entails leveraging the e-commerce platform *Buy Together*, which is specifically geared towards agricultural products, to create a "Duoduo Harvest Pavilion" and intensifying their efforts to go online. It is recommended that greater efforts be made to develop the online sales of Zhecheng Chili pepper, with the objective of increasing the effective supply of the product while simultaneously expanding the market space for Zhecheng Chili pepper.

It is recommended that the information sharing mechanism be improved. The advent of the Internet has facilitated the dissemination of information, rendering it more convenient and expedient. However, the current market conditions have rendered the traditional approach of "wine is not afraid of the deep alley" less effective. Consequently, Zhecheng Chili pepper producers must adapt to this new reality. The SICAS Consumer Behavior Theoretical Model of the sharing module primarily concerns the dissemination of information through the Internet. Zhecheng Chili pepper-related enterprises should proactively establish accounts on media platforms such as *Little Red Book*. Additionally, they should create channels for consumers to share information on media platforms such as *TikTok* and *Little Red Book*. Furthermore, consumers will be more inclined to consider the authentic feedback on a product when making a purchasing decision. This underscores the importance for sellers of Zhecheng Chili peppers to prioritize consumer feedback, respond to each evaluation in a timely and sincere manner, and address any negative feedback on chili peppers constructively. The demonstration of a sincere attitude by the businessman in addressing the issue will also serve to enhance the positive image of Zhecheng Chili, at the same time providing an opportunity for further promotion of the product.

Conclusion

The traditional marketing model has constrained the perception of Zhecheng Chili as an agricultural product, resulting in a lack of consumer awareness. Leveraging the Internet can be a solution to this problem. Zhecheng Chili-related enterprises can facilitate an enhanced perception of Zhecheng Chili among consumers by optimizing the utilization of traffic flow and the efficient deployment of Internet and social media platforms. In terms of consumer interest, Zhecheng Chili-related enterprises should proactively identify avenues to stimulate consumer interest, capitalize on consumer opportunities, respond promptly to consumer interest, and facilitate the emergence of purchasing actions. In terms of communication services, Zhecheng Chili-related enterprises should collaborate with the Internet social media platform to facilitate the emergence of purchasing actions. In terms of communication services, Zhecheng Chili-related enterprises should connect with third-

party applications (APPs) and leverage the advantages of traffic to establish interactive pathways with consumers. In terms of purchasing actions, Zhecheng Chili-related enterprises should utilize the policy dividend to improve connectivity between online e-commerce and consumer perception networks. This can be achieved by implementing the "Internet + Agriculture" agricultural products sales method. In terms of purchasing actions, the "Internet + Agriculture" agricultural products sales method can be employed to enhance the connection rate between online e-commerce and consumers' perception networks, thereby increasing consumer purchasing efforts. In terms of experience sharing, Zhecheng Chili pepper-related enterprises can improve the information sharing mechanism and motivate consumers to share shopping information about Zhecheng Chili peppers, thus encouraging consumers to be more willing to share.

The SICAS Consumer Behavior Theory Model is employed to identify the resource advantages of the chili production area in Zhecheng County and to promote the innovation of its market competitiveness. This enables the development of more appropriate countermeasures for the chili industry in Zhecheng County. By providing solutions to address consumer behavior issues in the pepper industry in Zhecheng County, the development trajectory of the pepper industry in Zhecheng County is optimized, enabling it to flourish in a manner that is both high-quality and sustainable. Furthermore, the insights gained from this process can serve as a valuable reference point for the advancement of other regional agricultural product industries.

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Conflict of Interest
The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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