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EXPLORING THE SUSTAINABILITY DIMENSION TO POSITION PORTUGUESE BEIRAS REGION ENDOGENOUS RESOURCES AS GREEN PRODUCTS IN THE GLOBAL MARKET

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ABSTRACT
Regional endogenous products are commonly perceived by consumers as cultural commodities. In a global market, where culturally differentiated products are difficult to shift due to the lack of awareness of their associated benefits, regional endogenous products are less appealing to consumers than mass-branded goods. As a consequence, regional products are mainly acquired by local consumers, narrowing the potential market to those who are mainly interested in regionally differentiated goods. A paradigm change related to endogenous resource products must be developed to widespread their market to a global scale, promoting a larger consumer-base and consequently enhancing local dynamics and competitive positioning of the regional ecosystems where such goods are produced. The purpose of this study is to explore the sustainability characteristics of endogenous products associated to the Portuguese Beiras Region and their role as a differentiation claim to a global mass-market. In-depth interviews were conducted with local Academia researchers and decision makers in order to explore the benefits of leveraging the sustainability dimension of local produced goods and forecast their effect on a global mass-market. Preliminary findings allowed inferring about the significance of the proposed green claim, but a gap was identified regarding the lack of information to customers regarding the associated distinctive attributes. Further research is needed to assess the remaining multiple-helix actors of the local ecosystem on identifying and developing the most promising strategies to effectively promote local endogenous produce to a global market.

KEYWORDS: regional ecosystems, endogenous resources, eco-innovation, green products, sustainability.

1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

In the last decades, a growing interest in the natural environment and sustainability issues has been one of the drivers behind the redesigning of existing products and the creation of new ones, making them more environmentally friendly. Recently, the attention of corporate environmental management has been shifting from clean technologies and pollution prevention to products (Pujari, 2006), particularly to green products (GPs). It has been recognised that the commercial success of GPs in the market place is crucial in helping companies and society to move towards the environmental sustainability (Hall & Clark, 2003). Although there is generally no agreed-upon definition, a 'green product' can be defined as a product, or service, which is developed to reduce environmental impact over the entire product life-cycle (Albino *et al.*, 2009). These products strive to protect or to enhance the natural environment by conserving energy and/or resources and

reducing or eliminating the use of toxic agents, pollution, and waste (Dangelico & Pontrandolfo, 2010; Tsai, 2012), using environmentally friendly materials, with end-of-life strategies (Joshi *et al.*, 2006), among others.

Environmental protection and preservation have become a widely accepted, mainstream issue for consumers (Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004). This increasing consumer awareness of environmentally conscious practices (Yung *et al.*, 2011) is moving the attention of consumers towards GPs (Chen & Chang, 2012). Thus, green consumers are not only more motivated to purchase GPs, but some are even willing to pay a premium price for GPs (Laroche *et al.*, 2001; Makower, 2009; Cherian & Jacob, 2012). Accordingly, the demand for GPs seems to be increasing (Mintel, 2009). The market share for GPs is estimated to be around 4% (Gleim *et al.*, 2013), and is likely to expand in the future (Dangelico & Pujari, 2010). Moreover, marketing managers have realized that consumer's criteria to evaluate products are changing and businesses have responded to these demands by introducing products that are marketed as being "environmentally friendly" or "green" (Follows & Jobber, 2000).

Although some researchers claim higher production costs for GPs, the Porter Hypothesis asserts that that there is no trade-off between economic growth and environmental protection (Porter & van der Linde, 1995). Moreover, integrating environmental sustainability issues into business strategy is becoming a strategic opportunity for companies (*e.g.*, Porter & Reinhardt, 2007). Therefore, as other researchers (*e.g.* Sharma & Vredenburg, 1998; Sarkis, 2003; Doran & Ryan, 2014) asserted, GPs can improve company's competitiveness. Driven by the environmental concerns, more customers have become motivated to purchasing green products and even willingly pay comparatively higher prices for these products (Chen, 2008). Accordingly, one may conclude that GPs can positively contribute to economic growth.

A particular case of GPs refers to regional endogenous products. These goods, which result from a distinct use of regional local resources, have a keen embedding in local ecology and an ample use of local knowledge (Roep, 2000). In this definition, the keyword is distinction, as this feature allows adding value to such products, which translates into specific uniqueness attributes that are commonly perceived by actual and potential customers (Bourdieu, 1986; Barberis, 1992; Allaire & Sylvander, 1995). The distinction the regional endogenous products have is not only in the nature of the regional local resources (van der Ploeg, 2002) but also in the transformation process (de Roest, 2000), on the price (Ittersum, 2001) or even in the process of commercialization (van der Meulen, 2000).

In a global context, as the state borders are becoming increasingly blurred, the differentiation in regional ecosystems is crucial to keep cultural and economic identities alive. The importance of regional socio-economic systems is enhanced through the currently common tendency to regionalise the role of national and local spaces, not only in Europe, but globally (Castells, 2010). As such, under the influence of new ways of globalisation throughout the world, the role and position of regional ecosystems becomes more relevant than ever before. Nowadays regions are no longer treated as mere territorial or historical units, but they aspire taking the role of a functionally alternative structure of national governance (Szajnowska-Wysocka, 2009). Hence, converting local ecosystems into pragmatic identities of the region, which can be translated into economic acts and marketing attractiveness for investors, creating new dynamics in the region, as well as to local resources and products.

Considering the classical theories of regional development, the concept of economic base is the most popular among such theories, as it explains the role of exogenous and endogenous economic activities to the development of a region (Isard, 1965). According to this theory, the exogenous activities are fundamental and constitute the economic basis of the region as the demand for goods and services stimulates regional economic development. This explains the need to increase the promotion of regional endogenous products to customers outside local markets and the need to find the right strategy to enhance the export trade of such products.

This paper aims to explore the sustainability dimension of the Portuguese Beiras Region endogenous resources as exportation claim to the global market, promoting this way their potential exports. The resulting sales growth should enhance the competitive positioning of the Beiras regional ecosystem, currently classified as a low density and peripheral territory.

2. POSITIONING REGIONAL ENDOGENOUS PRODUCTS AS GREEN PRODUCTS IN THE GLOBAL MARKET

The paper argues that labelling endogenous products (EPs) as GPs facilitates their entrance into larger markets and promotes consumption, enhancing competiveness and contributing to the development of competitive economies and regions. The lack of awareness is one of the most important inhibiting factors of sustainable products growth in the market place (Bonini & Oppenheim 2008). According to the Mintel Report (Mintel, 2009) in order to make sustainable products widespread, adequate information and labelling has to be provided.

The market availability and experience of EPs is less than for GPs, which makes current knowledge and information about EPs limited, particularly in the global market. As GPs research already demonstrated that product information and labelling is directly correlated with GP sales, it is imperative to promote the knowledge about EPs. Since individual consumers tend to purchase more varieties and less of each variety in large markets, these markets encourage the product differentiation (Ferguson, 2012), like the provided by EPs. Moreover, consumers are better off in larger markets with higher prices because the direct benefits of product differentiation and variety compensate the adverse indirect effect of product differentiation on real wages (Ferguson, 2012).

According to Tomasin *et al.* (2013) technical specifications are essential to increase the sales of GPs. Moreover, the Mintel report (Mintel, 2009) shows that the lack of adequate information and labelling may limit the ability of consumers to purchase GPs. It is also understood that product value is one of the most important buying criteria for GPs (Roberts, 1996) and that GP consumers tend to analyse prices according to their perception of value added (Drozdenko *et al.* 2011), therefore, product information needs to be efficiently transmitted to consumers. Particularly for first time buyers (D'Souza *et al.* 2006).

Driven by the environmental concerns, more customers are inclined to adopt GPs (Chen, 2008), but purchasing only occurs if the sustainable added value is perceived (Roberts, 1996), which can be addressed by the means of eco-labelling (Dangelico & Pujari 2010). Eco-labelling on products raises the knowledge value for the green preferential segment and subsequent sustainable consumption behaviour adoption (Biswas & Roy 2015). Moreover, eco-labelling, potentially, can provoke and modify buying behaviour (Carlson *et al.* 1993) and stimulate customers' awareness (Dangelico & Pujari 2010).

One of such examples of eco-labelling is related to the EU Ecolabel (R66, 2010), which was launched in 1992 by the European Commission. As of the March 2016 reporting period (European Commission, 2016), 36.403 products and services were registered, ranging from touristic accommodation services to textiles or footwear. The EU Ecolabel was created in light of developing a Europe-wide voluntary environmental labelling scheme that consumers could trust. EU Ecolabel meets the ISO 14020 Type 1 (ISO14024, 1999) requirements for ecolabels. This classic eco-labelling scheme awards a mark or a logo based on the fulfilment of a set of sustainability criteria and is managed by the European Commission and the national competent bodies.

A different type of protection in the European Union (R1151, 2012) refers to geographical indications and traditional specialities promotion and protection. This type of labelling promotes and protects names and characteristics of regional endogenous agricultural products and foodstuffs through three types of schemes, namely the protected designation of origin (PDO), the protected geographical indication (PGI), and the traditional specialities guaranteed (TSG). The way of increasing customers' perception and appeal to regional endogenous products is related to the type of labelling assuring that regional produce meets local ecology and knowledge on the production of awarded products. This claim can only be maintained by following regulations, rules and practices, allowing the customers' perception of value be added to products in line with such commitment carried out by local regional producers.

3. ROLE OF ACADEMIA IN A MULTIPLE HELIX APPROACH

In a Multiple Helix system, interactions amongst the different actors evolve from the traditional university–industry–government relations to a wider approach, where society, with its different roles and contributions, is considered (Carayannis & Campbell, 2009; Carayannis *et al.* 2012; Carayannis *et al.* 2015). In this model, societal aspects are discussed from a consumer's point of view, where their needs, expectations and attitudes are addressed. All issues related to the supply chain of GPs (and EPs) are influenced by these four main actors and their interrelationships (Julião *et al.* 2016).

Consumers are at the end of the supply chain and play a key role in the Multiple Helix system, because the commercial success of GPs depends on their intentions for buying. Understanding their motivations for GPs consumption is therefore crucial. Many researchers have investigated these motivations in several dimensions and using different approaches (*e.g.* Laroche *et al.* 2001; Tseng & Hung, 2013; Paço *et al.* 2013). In order to trace the roots of the "green consumer", studies are commonly based on social-demographic variables (*e.g.* gender and age) and psychographic variables (*e.g.* environmental knowledge). The studies based on social-demographic present inconclusive results and some are contradictory (Diamantopoulos *et al.* 2003), which indicates that they have limitations characterizing green consumer. Although psychographic variables seem more successful profiling green consumer motivations (Leonidou *et al.* 2010), they also show some weakness. For example, regarding price, some researchers identified that the price of GPs influence purchasing decisions (Gleim *et al.* 2013) and consumers will not pay higher prices for these products (*e.g.* Wasik, 1992; Graviria, 1995). Conversely, other researchers argue that consumers are willing to pay more for GPs (*e.g.* Laroche *et al.* 2001; Cherian & Jacob, 2012). Moreover, the green consumption is influenced by the product life cycle stage, *i.e.*, environmentally responsive consumers may purchase conventional products and compensates with recycling. Additionally, it also varies across industry sectors and product types (Wheale & Hinton, 2007). These gaps support the needs to characterise consumer purchase behaviour.

Companies are profit oriented organisations that obtain their revenue from the sales of products. Accordingly, companies tend to integrate environmental sustainability into new product to satisfy consumer demand (Horbach, 2008; Horte & Halila, 2008), address pressure from interest groups (Wagner, 2007), and changes in regulation (Porter & van der Linde, 1995; Dangelico & Pujari, 2010).
It has been confirmed by different researchers (*e.g.* Sharma & Vredenburg, 1998; Sarkis, 2003; Doran & Ryan, 2014) that sustainable products can improve the company's competitiveness. Nonetheless, environmental sustainability can be perceived by companies as constraints, which increases manufacturing costs and causes the selling prices become less competitive (Dangelico & Pujari, 2010). Thus, although it may be assumed that consumers prefer sustainable products and sustainable companies, these might not directly benefit the companies because some customers are not willing to pay premium price. Consequently, some companies find it difficult to compete with other companies who do not invest in sustainable products. As regional endogenous products tend to favour sustainable solutions, *i.e.*, a high degree of local and regional processes, based on localized tacit knowledge and its exchange as opposed to large industrial solutions, it is implicit to local customers that endogenous product manufacturers provide greener products compared to industrial mass-manufactured products. However, for those who are less familiar with the distinctive characteristics associated to endogenous regional products, that type association to GPs is not evident.

Due to the difficulty of fully communicating the environmental advantages of their products, GPs producers are facing increased challenges to successfully promote these advantages in order to attract, satisfy, and gain customers confidence. Consumers need to have the perception of the environmental issues and that the consumption of such product will make a difference. Moreover, even if the customer awareness is raised by means of eco-labelling, allowing the environmental benefits of the products to be communicated to the customers, a third party certification is still needed to increase credibility through a scientific and systematic assessment of the product's environmental impact at each life-cycle stage. A first significant step into that direction is provided by the European Union label of geographical indications and traditional specialities promotion and protection. However, even though that certification is not yet extended to all of EU regional endogenous produce, outside of the European Union this type of certification/protection is not universally accepted due to the conflict of interests from non-endogenous production companies. Therefore, this protective scheme is only being gradually expanded internationally via bilateral agreements between the EU and non-EU countries.

In order to increase sustainability, many countries created declarations and regulations for environmental protection and to encourage the adoption of GPs. As claimed in some literature, these regulations can generate opportunities for new business ventures (Wagner & Llerena, 2011), creating the 'win-win' opportunities with environmental gains and an increase in productivity (Kemp *et al.* 2001), and be a means for risk minimisation, revenue, and image protection (Dangelico & Pontrandolfo, 2010). However, it seems to be unclear as to which regulatory instruments dominate other instruments, the instruments which provide economic incentives (*e.g.* benefits or negative taxes) normally perform better than command and control regulation (Requate, 2005). Currently, in the European Union, an increasing effort is being made not only to provide to member states a dedicated sustainability related regulation framework, but also with significant endorsement to companies favouring sustainable and greener solution on a wide range of economic activities throughout the common community space.

Considering the Multiple Helix approach, endogenous regional development focuses mainly into local regional ecosystems (Tödtling, 2009; Szajnowska-Wysocka, 2009), attributing key roles to regional policy competences, decision-making functions and local actors, *i.e.*, regional institutions, local companies and academia, as well as civil society. A particular role in this context may be assigned to regional academia, as alongside their fundamental research, these actors may not only aid local companies in the development of GPs and related process solutions, but also helping these companies designing their market strategies and communicating the environmental advantages and distinctive characteristics of regional endogenous resources and products. To this end, current investigation centres on Portuguese Beiras Region local academia to identify the most suitable claims that could enhance the exportation potential of regional endogenous produce. As such, the proposed research question can be stated as follows: «What is the Portuguese Beiras Region local academia point of view on the use of endogenous products sustainability characteristics as a differentiation claim to a global mass-market?».

4. METHODOLOGY

The purposed research question has an exploratory nature, *i.e.* seeks to find what is happening and new insights. Rather than seeking to answer 'how many' and 'how much', it aims to answer 'what', 'how' and 'why' questions. The nature of the research question also suggests that a deeper level investigation would be required than that obtainable through a survey strategy, where a relatively small amount of data is typically gathered from a sample (Yin, 2009). Thus, a qualitative case study strategy was found to be most adequate for investigating the problem (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), because it enables an in-depth and detailed study of the chosen cases, which is suitable for capturing the richness of people's experiences in their own terms and producing a wealth of detailed data about a small number of cases (Patton, 1987). Although several data collection methods may be used with case study research (Yin, 2009), qualitative research interviews could be more appropriate, considering that the study aims to collect the individual perceptions of a process within a social unit (Robson, 2002). To support the interviews, taking into account the enquiry purpose, semi-structured interviews were selected, since they traditionally address qualitative research and are recommended for situations where the aim is to collect the interviewees' perception of reality when the interviewer has already identified the issues to address (Gillham, 2000).

A semi-structured interview guideline has been designed in accordance with the literature, covering a broad agenda of subjects raised by the formulated research question. To help outlining the interview, several sub-questions were derived from the main research question, aiding the interviewees on a comprehensive discussion on the subjects while attaining the researchers' pre-defined aims and goals of the study. In such in-depth interviews, the use of semi-structured questions offered a frame of reference, allowing the researchers analysing in detail certain critical answers by applying laddering and funnelling techniques (Grunert & Grunert, 1995; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

A non-probability sampling was considered since there is no intention or need to make statistical generalisation, and a purposive sampling technique was selected because is typically used with case studies and the principle of selection is the researcher´s judgement (Robson, 2002). Considering that research in this area is scarce, to conduct the envisaged in-depth interviews, a recommended sample size should range amongst 6 to 12 (Carson *et al.* 2001). A total number of eight interviews were conducted with mainly academic researchers and decision makers selected from the local region of interest, in a 75%/25%

male/female gender proportion. The age of the interviewed population ranged from 36 to 56, with an average age of 48 years. Half of the interviewees were academic researchers with backgrounds that ranged from cultural studies and design to product development and engineering. The second half of enquired population integrates the academia as decision makers, namely executive directors of local Business Incubator, or as head of local technology-transfer or international offices.

Data were collected through the semi-structured interviews. An interview guide was used to ensure that all relevant topics were covered. In order to fulfil the objectives that came from the research question, a questionnaire with both open and close questions was designed and tested with peers (Gillham, 2000). Questions were grouped according to the enquiry objectives and ordered, taking into consideration the data analysis technique and the aimed output (Oppenheim, 1992). The interviews were conducted in Portuguese language, digitally recorded and ranged from 53 minutes to 152 minutes (85 minutes on average, approximately 12 hours overall). After transcribing the interviews into English, the responses were coded (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Flick, 2009).

The data were then analysed following the classical set of analytical moves propose by Miles and Huberman (1994), data reduction, data display, conclusions drawing and verification. The raw data were initially analysed and summarised in a systematic order and grouped according to the research objectives using clustering techniques, in order to compare against each category (Dey, 1993). Once data have been synthesised, 'word tables' were used to display the information (Yin, 2009). These tables allowed searching for patterns, regularities, most weighted and frequent features. The clustering techniques described above provide an important role because grouping events with similar patterns and characteristics facilitated data analysis and the subsequent drawing of conclusions. Triangulation was also used to compare the data using different methods and sources, which improved the confidence of the events in which information from different sources converges in the same direction (Weerd-Nederhof, 2001).

5. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This exploratory investigation intends to challenge Portuguese Beiras Region local academia on identifying the most suitable claims to promote the potential exports of local regional endogenous products. The resulting sales growth should enhance the competitive positioning of the Beiras regional ecosystem, currently classified as a low density and peripheral territory. The initial research question was formulated considering the local academia's point of view on the use of endogenous products sustainability characteristics as a differentiation claim to a global mass-market.

To help tackling the suggested research question during the in-depth interviews, a semi-structured interview guideline has been designed, even though the order of questions was reasonably flexible and mainly dictated by interviewee's responses. To help outlining the interview, several qualitative sub-questions were also derived from the main research question and will be attained in this preliminary findings discussion.

When questioned about concepts like regional endogenous resources and products, the interviewees were unanimously pointing out at the distinctive attributes that such resources or products presented when compared to other non-differentiated goods. Geographical references and cultural heritage were the main attributes associated to such resources and products. When questioned about the difference between endogenous resources and products, the answers unanimously referred the human intervention as a creative force transforming local resources into tangible goods. However, only a minority made the distinction between material and immaterial goods, such like cultural references or musical traditions.

On what concerns the use of innovative non-traditional technologies on the manufacturing of regional endogenous products, the majority of the interviewees referred that they had no objection on what concerned to its use, even considering it mandatory in the case of foodstuff to ensure food safety and quality control. However, most of them expressed their opinion that such technology should be of a sustainable nature and that it should not affect or alter the identity and characteristics of traditional endogenous goods. To this latter aspect, a minority indicated the need to endure on the modification of traditional aspects to keep endogenous references alive, as in their opinion the original references only were useful if translated and adapted to current customers' needs and aspirations. On the contrary, some of the interviewees would not accept any type of modification on traditional products to keep the integrity of local references and habits untouched.

When asked about the main endogenous highlights of local Beiras Region that they would recommend to someone unfamiliar to that territory, most answers focused on the local agricultural produce and the related traditional specialties, alongside the current derived products, such as fragrances and non-traditional eatables. Local landscape as natural and geological patrimony was also commonly referred to as potential experience-based and touristic products. On a second degree of importance for most of the enquired persons, creative industries associated to cultural and historical regional references may produce endogenous goods that have a potential economic market.

As what refers to the current market of local endogenous products, the answers were not unanimous. Some indicated that most endogenous products were unexplored, others referred that such products were mainly acquired by local customers or, at the best, at a national scale. Only a few referred internationalization to as current market to these products, even though all showed to be unanimous about their export potential. When asked about why such potential has not yet converted into economic results, the answers varied significantly and pointed-out to different actors of local regional ecosystem:

a) To what concerned local companies and producers, some highlighted the lack of knowledge and ambition of local small-scale producers, whilst others responded that it was intrinsic to small-scale farmers not wanting to produce at larger scales. Most agreed that there is a lack of associative culture amongst local producers that inhibits larger scale availability of endogenous products. The lack of language skills was also pointed out as an inhibiting factor.
b) When referring to governance responsibility, some of the answers identified the lack of economic support and incentives, though some others referred that regional, national and European Union support was available to local companies and producers.
c) As for the role of civil society, the lack of the customers' knowledge concerning the distinctive attributes, as well as the increased or premium pricing associated to such products cumulatively contributed to low sales.
d) Finally, only a few of the interviewees attributed the responsibility of lack of appeal in the regional endogenous product exports to local academia. However, when questioned about the role of the academia to alter current trend and to promote the enhancement of endogenous resources at a larger global scale, almost all admitted the significance of the academia to attain such goal.

When asked about their perception on the sustainability dimension of main endogenous products available at the Beiras Region, most interviewees agreed to such claim characterizing local endogenous produce. Ecological and environmentally friendly processes were pointed out regarding local endogenous products and the non-intensive use of local resources agreed to the sustainability perception that unanimously was referred to. The almost untouched natural landscape that coexists harmoniously nearby local housing was referred to as being specially appreciated by foreign tourists and seemed to be an appealing attribute to advertise on future development of tourism or experience-based services.

Even though the interviewees agreed that local inhabitants intuitively assumed ecological and sustainable attributes to be associated to the region's produce, again, they were in consensus on referring that the potential foreign customers of such products and services would value those characteristics and perceive the value added to them as green products. When asked to classify between 1 to 5 (being 5 the maximum) if they would consider advertising the sustainability claim as a major attribute of local endogenous produce to potential foreign consumers being beneficial, marks attributed ranged amongst 4 to 5. When referring to the same question regarding advantages to use the sustainability claim in the national market, the average value of marks attributed by the all the answer lowered for a range between 2 and 4.

For a similar quantitative question about the expected sales increase promoted by such sustainability claim, attributed marks were lower about 1 to 2 points when related to the previous question. The possible reason of such low mark range was twofold. First, almost all interviewees identified the need of complementing to such sustainability label with the description of the distinctive endogenous products characteristics as being important for both national and global markets. The history of each product, as well as local tradition and habits related to its produce were referred to as being key to customers' perception of the distinctive uniqueness related to local endogenous products. Second, even though the appeal to local customers as perceiving local endogenous produce as green products may increase, it is not evident that a sales increase should be expected, mainly due to the low average income of local customers compared to that of the foreign countries. As such, local customers cannot afford to pay increased or premium prices typically associated to GPs.

6. SUMMARY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In order to identify the most suitable claims to promote the potential export of the Portuguese Beiras Region endogenous products, current pilot investigation focused on the local academia's point of view regarding promoting the sustainability domain associated to this type of products as a differentiation claim to endorse them as green products to a global market. A selected number of in-depth interviews on the subject were conducted amongst local academia researcher and decision makers.

The preliminary findings allowed inferrring about the significance of the proposed green claim, but a gap was identified. This was due to the lack of information about the distinctive attributes of local endogenous produce. To this end, local interviewees identified the need of complementing the proposed eco-label with information about the history of each product, as well as local tradition and habits related to its produce. During the interviews, the role of local ecosystem actors on a multi-helix point of view was discussed and their potential contributions to enhance a dynamic and competitive positioning of regional endogenous produce were identified.

Further research is needed to validate a new research question arising from current investigation regarding the cumulative eco and feature label to endorse local produce as the export claim. Beyond the role of local academia, remaining actors of local ecosystem have also to be assessed on identifying and developing the most promising strategy to effectively promote local distinctive endogenous products to the global market.

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