

The Role of Brand Heritage in Shaping Brand Authenticity, Brand Trust, and Purchase Decisions of Pulu Mandoti Rice Consumers in Enrekang Regency

Muh Resa Hidayatullah¹, Siti Athirah Asmarani²

¹ *Muhammadiyah Makassar University, Makassar, Indonesia*

² *Muhammadiyah Makassar University, Makassar, Indonesia*

muhresahidayatullah@gmail.com

Abstrack

This study aims to examine the role of *brand heritage* in shaping *brand authenticity* and *brand trust*, as well as its implications for consumer purchase decisions regarding Pulu' Mandoti Rice in Enrekang Regency, Indonesia. This study employed a qualitative approach using a single-case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation involving 14 informants, consisting of farmers, a farmer group leader, MSME owners, a retailer, and consumers. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data trustworthiness was ensured through source and technique triangulation based on the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The findings reveal that the *brand heritage* of Pulu' Mandoti Rice is constructed through the product's historical use, traditional farming practices passed down across generations, cultural values, and strong geographical attachment reinforced by Geographical Indication protection. This heritage shapes *brand authenticity* through the consistency of product characteristics, traditional production practices, certainty of origin, and perceived quality consistency. Furthermore, *brand authenticity* serves as the foundation for *brand trust* through positive consumer experiences, product reputation, consistent quality, and assurance of geographical origin. *Brand trust* subsequently encourages purchase decisions, repurchase intentions, and recommendations to others. Conceptually, the study identifies a sequential mechanism in which *brand heritage* serves as the foundation of authenticity, *brand authenticity* becomes the basis for trust, and *brand trust* translates these perceptions into consumer purchasing behavior. These findings extend the literature on heritage branding by demonstrating that, in Geographical Indication-based local food products, brand heritage is shaped not only through marketing activities but also through social practices, cultural values, local communities, and geographical attachment.

Keywords: *brand heritage; brand authenticity; brand trust; purchase decision; Geographical Indication; Pulu' Mandoti Rice.*

Introduction

The development of the global business environment has transformed the way firms build competitive advantage. The success of a product is no longer determined solely by functional attributes such as price, quality, and availability, but also by the ability of a brand to create

emotional, symbolic, and cultural value for consumers. Modern consumers increasingly consider experiences, identity, and the meanings attached to products when evaluating alternatives and making purchasing decisions. Keller (1993) explains that brand value is developed through consumers' perceptions and experiences with a brand, which subsequently influence their evaluations of the product. Similarly, Aaker (1996) emphasizes that a strong brand identity can serve as a source of competitive advantage because it creates differentiation that is relatively difficult for competitors to imitate.

These changes have encouraged firms to move beyond product innovation and develop brand identities and narratives that are connected to history, tradition, and inherited values. In this context, brand heritage has emerged as a strategic approach in marketing because it enables brands to utilize their history and past values as sources of value creation in the present. Urde et al. (2007) explain that brand heritage represents a dimension of brand identity reflected in a brand's track record, longevity, core values, symbols, and organizational belief in the importance of its history. This perspective was further developed by Pecot and De Barnier (2017), who emphasize that brand heritage is not merely associated with the age of a brand, but also with its ability to preserve inherited values and identity consistently over time.

Brand heritage becomes increasingly relevant when consumers face numerous product alternatives with relatively similar functional attributes. Under such circumstances, the history, continuity, and cultural values associated with a brand can become sources of differentiation that provide additional meaning to consumers. Rose et al. (2016) demonstrate that perceptions of brand heritage can strengthen consumers' emotional attachment to a brand. Pecot et al. (2018) further found that heritage can enhance perceptions of brand quality and credibility. These findings indicate that a brand's history and heritage are not merely representations of its past but can function as strategic assets in shaping positive consumer perceptions of the brand.

The relevance of brand heritage becomes even stronger in the context of local food products. Traditional food products possess value not only as commodities for consumption but also as representations of cultural identity, history, local knowledge, and the distinctive characteristics of a particular geographical area. Consumers may not evaluate local food products solely on the basis of their functional attributes, but may also consider their origins, production processes, traditions, and the cultural values embedded in the products. This condition creates opportunities for local food products to establish differentiation through brand identities rooted in cultural heritage.

One mechanism for strengthening the identity of local food products is through Geographical Indication (GI). A Geographical Indication indicates that the characteristics, quality, or reputation of a product are associated with its geographical origin. Such an identity can generate added value by connecting the product with environmental characteristics, community knowledge, and the reputation of a particular region. Dash et al. (2026) demonstrate that perceived quality, consumer knowledge, perceived value, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control can influence consumers' purchase intentions toward GI-based food products. These findings indicate that consumer decisions regarding local food products may be influenced by broader perceptions beyond physical product attributes, including the identity, reputation, and value associated with the product's

place of origin.

However, the existence of a long history and distinctive product characteristics does not automatically transform a product into a strong brand. Traditional products may possess high quality and a long history, yet still face limitations in developing recognition, positive perceptions, and competitiveness in broader markets. This issue indicates that functional advantages need to be accompanied by the ability to communicate a product's history, values, and identity convincingly. Consumers need a basis for perceiving that a product genuinely possesses distinctive characteristics and remains consistent with the history and identity communicated by the brand.

In this context, brand authenticity becomes an important construct for explaining how brand heritage is translated into consumer perceptions. Brand authenticity refers to the extent to which consumers perceive a brand as genuine, sincere, consistent, and congruent with the identity it claims to represent. Morhart et al. (2015) explain that brand authenticity consists of four main dimensions: continuity, credibility, integrity, and symbolism. This conceptualization indicates that authenticity is not determined solely by the existence of a history, but also by the consistency between brand identity, communicated values, and consumers' actual experiences with the brand.

The relationship between history and authenticity becomes particularly important for brands with cultural heritage. Rindell and Santos (2021) demonstrate that brand history, consumer experiences, cultural symbols, and collective memory can shape perceptions of authenticity. Thus, the heritage embedded in a product can serve as a source for developing perceptions that the product possesses a genuine identity and is not merely created to follow market trends. Södergren (2021), through a systematic review of brand authenticity research, shows that authenticity is associated with various positive consumer responses, including satisfaction, loyalty, and emotional attachment. These findings reinforce the argument that authenticity can function as an important mechanism connecting a brand's historical identity with consumer responses.

In addition to brand authenticity, brand trust is an important factor in explaining consumer relationships with brands. Consumers' decisions to choose a product are not based solely on perceptions of uniqueness and authenticity, but also on the belief that the brand can consistently fulfill its promises. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) define brand trust as consumers' willingness to rely on a brand's ability to perform its stated functions. Delgado-Ballester (2004) further explains that brand trust develops through experiences that lead consumers to believe that a brand is reliable and capable of fulfilling its promises.

Brand heritage has the potential to strengthen brand trust because history and continuity can serve as sources of credibility for consumers. Brands that are able to preserve their values and quality over a long period may be perceived as having a more reliable track record. Rose et al. (2016) found that perceptions of heritage can strengthen consumers' emotional relationships while also increasing their confidence in a brand. Pecot et al. (2018) similarly demonstrated that heritage can enhance perceived quality and credibility. These findings provide a basis for arguing that brand heritage can contribute to the development of trust through consumers' perceptions of brand consistency and credibility.

Such trust ultimately has implications for consumer behavior. Liu and Wang (2023), in their

study of regional brand agricultural products, found that brand trust positively influences consumer attitudes, purchase intentions, and purchasing behavior. This finding indicates that trust can serve as an important mechanism through which positive perceptions of a brand are transformed into consumers' tendencies to choose and purchase the product. Therefore, the relationships among heritage, authenticity, trust, and purchase decisions should be understood as an interconnected process rather than as isolated constructs.

This issue becomes particularly interesting in the context of local food products in Indonesia. Indonesia possesses a wide variety of food products that have not only economic value but also embody history, traditions, local knowledge, and community identity. One such product is Pulu Mandoti Rice, originating from Enrekang Regency, South Sulawesi. Pulu Mandoti Rice is recognized for its distinctive aroma, sticky texture, and flavor characteristics that differentiate it from other rice varieties. These unique characteristics are closely associated with the environmental conditions in which the rice is cultivated, local farming practices, and indigenous knowledge passed down across generations.

These characteristics provide a strong basis for viewing Pulu Mandoti Rice not merely as an agricultural commodity but also as a product possessing heritage value. The heritage embedded in the product can serve as a source of identity that differentiates it from commercially produced rice marketed on a mass scale. From a brand heritage perspective, these values become relevant when the product's history, values, symbols, and continuity can be recognized and meaningfully interpreted by consumers. Urde et al. (2007) identify history, core values, symbols, and continuity as important elements in the formation of brand heritage. In the context of Pulu Mandoti Rice, these elements can serve as a foundation for developing a product identity that distinguishes it from other rice products.

Despite possessing strong distinctive characteristics, the development of Pulu Mandoti Rice as a brand faces challenges in a competitive marketplace. Consumers have numerous rice alternatives with different price levels, quality attributes, packaging formats, and distribution channels. This condition means that physical product advantages alone may not be sufficient to encourage consumers to choose Pulu Mandoti Rice. The product needs an identity capable of explaining why consumers should select it over competing alternatives. At this point, brand authenticity and brand trust become particularly important. Consumers who perceive a product as authentic and possessing a consistent identity may develop greater confidence in that product. Such confidence may subsequently strengthen their tendency to make a purchase.

Although the literature on brand heritage, brand authenticity, and brand trust has continued to develop, research integrating these three constructs within the context of local food products rooted in cultural heritage remains limited. Urde et al. (2007) provide a conceptual foundation for brand heritage based on history, core values, symbols, and brand continuity. Morhart et al. (2015) subsequently strengthened the understanding of brand authenticity as consumers' perceptions of a brand's genuineness, credibility, integrity, and continuity. Meanwhile, Rose et al. (2016) and Pecot et al. (2018) demonstrate that heritage has important consequences for consumer perceptions and brand relationships. Nevertheless, these relationships have rarely been examined in an integrated manner within the context of local food products that possess strong connections to the history and cultural identity of a

particular region.

Another research gap concerns the position of brand trust in the relationship between brand heritage and purchasing behavior. Studies on brand trust frequently position it as a factor that directly influences purchase intentions or purchase decisions. Liu and Wang (2023), for example, demonstrate that trust in regional brands can enhance consumer attitudes, purchase intentions, and purchasing behavior. However, the mechanism through which such trust is developed through brand heritage and perceptions of authenticity requires further investigation. Therefore, there is an opportunity to examine whether brand heritage can serve as a foundation for developing brand authenticity and brand trust, which subsequently contribute to consumers' purchase decisions.

This research gap is particularly evident in the context of Pulu Mandoti Rice. Existing studies on this product have predominantly focused on agricultural aspects, product characteristics, cultivation practices, and economic potential. A strategic marketing perspective that positions Pulu Mandoti Rice as a heritage-based product and examines the relationships among brand heritage, brand authenticity, brand trust, and purchase decisions remains relatively limited. This is particularly important because the historical, geographical, and cultural characteristics associated with Pulu Mandoti Rice provide a relevant context for extending the study of heritage branding to local food products in Indonesia.

Based on these gaps, this study offers novelty by integrating brand heritage, brand authenticity, brand trust, and purchase decisions into a single research model within the context of a local food product rooted in cultural heritage. Brand heritage is positioned as a foundation derived from the product's history, continuity, values, and cultural identity. Brand authenticity and brand trust are then employed to explain how consumers translate this heritage into perceptions of genuineness and confidence in the brand. These two constructs are subsequently linked to consumers' purchase decisions. This framework enables the study to explain not only whether brand heritage influences consumer behavior, but also how such influence may be developed through perceptions of authenticity and trust.

Theoretically, this study is expected to extend the literature on heritage branding by applying the concept of brand heritage to the context of Indonesian local food products that are strongly connected to culture and geographical identity. Practically, the findings are expected to provide a basis for business actors, local governments, and relevant stakeholders in formulating strategies to strengthen the Pulu Mandoti Rice brand. Such strategies should not be limited to improving product quality but should also incorporate the management of history, cultural values, authenticity, and trust as sources of sustainable competitive advantage.

Based on the empirical phenomenon, theoretical foundations, and identified research gaps, this study aims to analyze the role of brand heritage in shaping brand authenticity, brand trust, and purchase decisions among consumers of Pulu Mandoti Rice in Enrekang Regency. The study is expected to contribute to the development of marketing theory, particularly by explaining the mechanism through which brand value is formed in local food products rooted in cultural heritage, while also providing strategic implications for strengthening the competitiveness of Pulu Mandoti Rice in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach using a single-case study design to obtain an in-depth understanding of how brand heritage shapes brand authenticity, brand trust, and consumers' purchase decisions regarding Pulu' Mandoti Rice in Enrekang Regency. A qualitative approach was selected because the study seeks to explore the meanings, experiences, and interpretations of actors regarding the heritage values embedded in Pulu' Mandoti Rice. Such phenomena cannot be adequately understood solely through quantitative measurement. Creswell and Poth (2018) explain that qualitative research is appropriate when the objective is to understand how individuals interpret and make meaning of a phenomenon within the social and cultural context in which it occurs.

The case study design was selected because the research focuses on a contemporary phenomenon that is strongly influenced by its local context. Yin (2018) emphasizes that a case study is an appropriate research strategy when the boundaries between a phenomenon and its real-life context are difficult to distinguish. In this study, perceptions of brand heritage are influenced not only by product characteristics but also by the history of cultivation, community cultural values, traditional production practices, and social relationships that have developed in the area of origin of Pulu' Mandoti Rice. Therefore, understanding the relationships among brand heritage, brand authenticity, brand trust, and purchase decisions requires an in-depth exploration of the context in which these values are formed and maintained.

A single-case design was employed because Pulu' Mandoti Rice represents a distinctive and unique case. The product is recognized not only for its physical qualities but also for its association with local history, cultural identity, and geographical conditions that contribute to its reputation. According to Yin (2018), a single-case study is appropriate when the case possesses unique or representative characteristics that can contribute to theoretical development through analytical generalization rather than statistical generalization. Accordingly, this study seeks to extend the conceptual understanding of heritage branding theory in the context of local food products rooted in cultural heritage.

Research Setting

The study was conducted in Enrekang Regency, South Sulawesi Province, with a particular focus on Baraka District, especially Salukanan Village and Kendenan Village, which constitute major production centers of Pulu' Mandoti Rice. The research setting was selected based on empirical considerations, as these areas represent the place of origin of the Pulu' Mandoti rice variety recognized under Indonesia's Geographical Indication (GI) system. Pulu' Mandoti Rice from Enrekang obtained a Geographical Indication certificate from the Directorate General of Intellectual Property in 2020, confirming that the product's reputation, quality, and distinctive characteristics are closely associated with geographical factors and local cultivation practices. The Geographical Indication specification document further explains that the cultivation of Pulu' Mandoti Rice producing its distinctive characteristics is restricted to certain areas of Baraka District, particularly Salukanan Village, Kendenan Village, and Pepandangan Village. When the same variety is cultivated outside these areas, its aroma, flavor, and quality characteristics are not entirely identical to those of the product originating from its designated geographical area. This condition demonstrates that geographical environmental factors, local

knowledge, and traditional cultivation practices constitute integral elements of the product's identity, making the research setting particularly relevant for examining the concept of brand heritage.

In addition to its legitimacy as a Geographical Indication product, Pulu' Mandoti Rice has also experienced dynamics in its development as a local commodity. Data from the Agricultural Extension Center of Baraka District indicate fluctuations in cultivated area and production volume during the 2019–2023 period. These dynamics suggest that the sustainability of the product depends not only on cultivation practices but also on the ability of relevant actors to maintain the product's reputation and added value amid changing production and market conditions. Therefore, this study does not regard Enrekang Regency merely as a location for data collection, but rather as an empirical context that enables an exploration of the relationship between cultural heritage, brand identity, and consumer behavior.

All data collection activities were conducted in a natural setting through direct interaction with informants at the production and marketing locations of Pulu' Mandoti Rice. This approach enabled the researcher to understand how historical values, cultural values, and collective experiences are practiced in the everyday activities of farmers, business actors, and consumers. Consequently, the interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation remained closely connected to the social and cultural context in which it occurs, consistent with the principles of qualitative research recommended by Creswell and Poth (2018).

Informants

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique in which participants are deliberately selected based on their knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In qualitative research, informant selection is not intended to achieve statistical representation but rather to obtain information-rich cases capable of providing an in-depth understanding of the research phenomenon (Patton, 2015). Accordingly, informants were selected based on their ability to explain the processes through which brand heritage, brand authenticity, brand trust, and purchase decisions regarding Pulu' Mandoti Rice are formed.

The study involved several groups of informants representing key actors within the Pulu' Mandoti Rice value chain, namely farmers, farmer group leaders, business actors or micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), retailers, and consumers. Farmers were selected because they are directly involved in preserving traditional cultivation practices and transmitting local knowledge that constitutes a foundation of brand heritage. Farmer group leaders were selected because they play an important role in coordinating production activities, maintaining quality standards, and connecting farmers with various stakeholders. Meanwhile, MSME actors and retailers were selected because they are directly involved in marketing, distribution, and communication of the product's value to consumers. Consumers were selected to obtain insights into how perceptions of history, authenticity, and trust toward Pulu' Mandoti Rice influence their purchase decisions.

In total, the study involved 14 informants, consisting of four farmers (PT1–PT4), one farmer group leader (KT1), two MSME actors (UM1–UM2), one retailer (RT1), and six consumers (KS1–KS6). The number of informants was not predetermined as a fixed target but developed according to the requirements of the research process until the information obtained began

to reveal recurring patterns and no longer generated substantially new findings, indicating data saturation. Saunders et al. (2018) explain that data saturation is an important indicator for determining data adequacy in qualitative research because it indicates that exploration of the phenomenon has reached a sufficient level of depth.

To maintain the confidentiality of participants' identities, all informants were assigned codes throughout the data analysis and reporting processes. The use of codes was intended to protect informants' identities without compromising the meaning and context of the information they provided, thereby ensuring that the study adhered to ethical principles in qualitative research.

Informants (Continued)

The composition of informants in this study was designed to represent various actors involved in the Pulu' Mandoti Rice value chain. Farmers and farmer group leaders were selected because they possess knowledge of the history of cultivation, traditional production practices, and cultural values that constitute the foundation of brand heritage. Meanwhile, MSME actors and retailers were selected because they have experience in developing marketing strategies, communicating product value, and understanding market responses to Pulu' Mandoti Rice. Consumers were selected to gain insights into how heritage values, perceptions of product authenticity, and levels of trust in the brand influence their purchase decisions.

The involvement of multiple groups of informants enabled the researcher to obtain diverse perspectives on the phenomenon under investigation. Information obtained from each group was subsequently compared and corroborated through source triangulation, ensuring that the resulting interpretation was not based on a single perspective but reflected a more comprehensive understanding of the formation of brand heritage, brand authenticity, brand trust, and purchase decisions regarding Pulu' Mandoti Rice.

Data Collection

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The use of multiple data collection techniques was intended to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation while enhancing the depth and credibility of the data through triangulation of information sources (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In-depth interviews constituted the primary data collection technique in this study. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format, allowing the researcher to use an interview guide developed according to the research focus while providing informants with sufficient flexibility to elaborate on their experiences, perspectives, and interpretations concerning Pulu' Mandoti Rice. This approach enabled the researcher to explore how informants understood the product's history, maintained traditional cultivation practices, developed consumer trust, and explained the factors influencing purchase decisions.

In addition to interviews, the researcher conducted non-participant observations of production, processing, marketing activities, and interactions between business actors and consumers. Observation was conducted to understand actual field conditions and identify the consistency between information provided by informants and practices occurring in the field. This technique enabled the researcher to capture contextual aspects that did not necessarily emerge during the interviews.

Documentation was used as a supporting source of data to complement the findings obtained

from interviews and observations. The documents analyzed included the Geographical Indication documents for Pulu' Mandoti Rice, reports from relevant government and institutional agencies, farmer group profiles, documentation of production and marketing activities, and various archives related to the history and development of Pulu' Mandoti Rice. Document analysis was conducted to strengthen the interpretation of field data and verify information obtained from informants.

All data collection activities were conducted progressively by applying the principle of flexibility inherent in qualitative research. The findings from each interview were subjected to preliminary analysis to identify issues requiring further exploration in subsequent interviews. This process enabled the researcher to adjust the direction of the inquiry throughout the study, allowing increasingly rich data to be generated and facilitating a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Yin, 2018).

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). This model was selected because it provides a systematic framework for organizing, simplifying, and interpreting qualitative data continuously from the data collection stage through the development of conclusions. In this study, data analysis was not postponed until all data had been collected; rather, it was conducted simultaneously with data collection, allowing the researcher to identify information requiring further exploration during subsequent interviews.

The first stage was data condensation, which involved selecting, focusing, simplifying, and organizing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documents. At this stage, all interviews were transcribed verbatim and read repeatedly to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the informants. The researcher then conducted coding by grouping information with similar meanings into categories relevant to the research focus, namely brand heritage, brand authenticity, brand trust, and purchase decisions. This process was intended to reduce the complexity of the data without eliminating the meanings embedded within them.

The second stage was data display. The categorized data were organized into matrices, thematic tables, and narratives to facilitate the identification of patterns, relationships, and differences in perspectives across informant groups. Data were also displayed by juxtaposing findings from interviews, observations, and documents so that each finding could be compared and understood more comprehensively. This stage assisted the researcher in identifying relationships between informants' experiences and the theoretical concepts underlying the study.

The third stage was conclusion drawing and verification. Conclusions were developed progressively through the interpretation of patterns emerging from the analysis. Throughout this process, the researcher continuously verified the conclusions by comparing information from different sources and revisiting interview transcripts, observation records, and supporting documents to ensure that the interpretations remained consistent with the empirical evidence. Thus, the conclusions were not based solely on the views of particular individuals but represented a synthesis of multiple sources of information that had been systematically verified throughout the research process.

Data analysis in this study was thematic in nature, involving the identification of major themes emerging from the experiences and perspectives of the informants. These themes were subsequently interpreted to explain how brand heritage shapes perceptions of brand authenticity and brand trust and, ultimately, consumers' purchase decisions regarding Pulu' Mandoti Rice. This approach enabled the researcher to connect empirical findings with the conceptual framework established in the introduction, thereby ensuring that the resulting interpretations were closely aligned with the objectives of the study.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the quality and credibility of the research findings, this study applied the trustworthiness criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility was established through source and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from farmers, farmer group leaders, MSME actors, retailers, and consumers. Technique triangulation was conducted by comparing findings from interviews, observations, and documentation, allowing each finding to be examined and corroborated using multiple sources of evidence.

Transferability was supported by providing detailed descriptions of the research context, including the characteristics of Pulu' Mandoti Rice, the research setting, the characteristics of the informants, and the data collection process. Providing a rich contextual description enables readers to assess the extent to which the findings may be applicable to or comparable with other contexts possessing similar characteristics.

Dependability was established by systematically documenting all stages of the research process, including the development of the interview guide, data collection procedures, data analysis, and conclusion development. This documentation provided an audit trail through which the research process could be traced and evaluated.

Confirmability was maintained through researcher reflexivity, documentation of research decisions, and verification of findings using multiple sources of data. This approach was intended to minimize researcher subjectivity and ensure that the findings reflected the empirical evidence obtained in the field rather than the researcher's personal interpretations.

Results

This section presents the empirical findings obtained through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis involving informants consisting of farmers, farmer group leaders, traders, MSME actors, retailers, consumers, and representatives of the Pulu' Mandoti Rice Geographical Indication Protection Society (Masyarakat Perlindungan Indikasi Geografis/MPIG). The analysis was conducted thematically based on the research focus to identify how brand heritage shapes brand authenticity and brand trust and ultimately influences consumers' purchase decisions regarding Pulu' Mandoti Rice in Enrekang Regency. The presentation of the findings follows the sequence of relationships among the concepts within the research framework. The discussion begins with findings concerning brand heritage as the primary foundation shaping consumers' perceptions of product authenticity. The study then examines how these perceptions develop into trust in the product and contribute to consumers' purchase decisions. Accordingly, each section of the findings illustrates the relationships among the concepts based on empirical evidence obtained from

the informants.

Brand Heritage of Pulu' Mandoti Rice

The findings indicate that the brand heritage of Pulu' Mandoti Rice is constructed through a combination of the product's history, cultural values, inherited cultivation practices, and its strong connection to its geographical origin. All informants perceived that the identity of Pulu' Mandoti Rice is determined not only by its physical characteristics as a food product but also by the stories, traditions, and collective experiences of the local community that have preserved the product over generations. This finding indicates that the brand heritage of Pulu' Mandoti Rice represents an accumulation of historical and cultural values that continue to be maintained by the local community.

One of the principal elements contributing to brand heritage is the historical use of Pulu' Mandoti Rice in customary activities and the social life of the Enrekang community. A farmer informant explained that the rice has long been part of local traditions and is used in various important events, including thanksgiving ceremonies and customary rituals. As stated by PT2: "It is different from ordinary rice because it has a naturally fragrant aroma and has been used for customary ceremonies in our village for a long time."

This statement demonstrates that the value associated with Pulu' Mandoti Rice derives not only from its product quality but also from its long history of use, which has been transmitted from one generation to another. For the local community, the existence of this product has become part of a cultural identity that continues to be preserved to the present day.

Beyond its historical value, the findings indicate that traditional cultivation practices constitute an important element in maintaining the continuity of the brand heritage. Farmers explained that production continues to preserve cultivation techniques inherited from previous generations. Quality preservation begins during the post-harvest stage through grain drying, varietal separation, and specialized storage practices intended to maintain the original characteristics of Pulu' Mandoti Rice. The farmer group leader (KT1) further explained that the farmer group implements quality management procedures developed in collaboration with the Geographical Indication Protection Society (MPIG), ensuring that product quality is maintained consistently.

The findings also demonstrate that the product's connection to its geographical origin strengthens its brand heritage. An informant from MPIG (IG1) explained that Pulu' Mandoti Rice has obtained protection through a Geographical Indication certificate that regulates the cultivation area, production methods, and product quality standards. The existence of the Geographical Indication is perceived not merely as a form of legal protection for a local product but also as recognition of the strong relationship between the quality of Pulu' Mandoti Rice and the geographical conditions of its place of origin. Consequently, the product's identity is further strengthened because consumers receive assurance regarding the origin and authenticity of the product they consume.

Interviews with MSME actors and retailers indicate that the history and cultural identity of Pulu' Mandoti Rice also provide added value in marketing activities. Informants explained that consumers are attracted not only by the aroma and quality of the rice but also by the story of its origin as a cultural heritage of the Enrekang community. This narrative constitutes a major point of differentiation from other commercial rice products and enhances the product's

appeal, particularly among consumers who value local products with strong cultural identities.

Furthermore, the interviews indicate that the local community perceives Pulu' Mandoti Rice as a symbol of regional identity. The cultural values embedded in the product are preserved not only through cultivation practices but also through its use in various customary activities and community traditions. The continued use of the product demonstrates that its heritage is not preserved solely by farmers as producers but also by the community as users who continue to maintain its social and cultural significance. This condition indicates that the brand heritage of Pulu' Mandoti Rice develops through interaction among the product, community, and local culture, with each element reinforcing the others.

Overall, the study identified four principal elements constituting the brand heritage of Pulu' Mandoti Rice: (1) the historical use of the product transmitted across generations, (2) traditional cultivation practices that preserve consistent product quality, (3) the product's connection to its geographical origin reinforced through Geographical Indication protection, and (4) cultural values that position the product as part of the identity of the Enrekang community. Together, these four elements establish a strong foundation for the image of Pulu' Mandoti Rice as a distinctive local product possessing substantial cultural value. These findings provide the basis for understanding how this brand heritage subsequently shapes consumers' perceptions of product authenticity (brand authenticity), as discussed in the following subsection.

Brand Authenticity of Pulu' Mandoti Rice

The findings indicate that consumers' perceptions of the brand authenticity of Pulu' Mandoti Rice are shaped by the belief that the product's authenticity is consistently preserved in terms of its physical characteristics, production processes, and geographical origin. This authenticity is understood not merely as a product attribute but also as a representation of cultivation traditions passed down across generations and the product's strong connection to its place of origin. For the informants, the authenticity of Pulu' Mandoti Rice constitutes a primary point of differentiation from other rice products available in the market.

Farmers explained that the distinctive characteristics of Pulu' Mandoti Rice are preserved through consistent cultivation practices. From seed selection and cultivation techniques to post-harvest handling, each stage is carefully managed to ensure that the product's aroma, texture, and quality remain unchanged. Farmers recognize that changes in production practices could affect the distinctive characteristics that have long constituted the identity of Pulu' Mandoti Rice. Therefore, they seek to preserve cultivation methods inherited from previous generations as a means of maintaining product authenticity.

Product authenticity is also reflected in consumers' perceptions of the physical characteristics of Pulu' Mandoti Rice. Loyal consumers emphasized that its distinctive natural aroma, soft and sticky texture, and flavor after cooking are characteristics that are difficult to find in other rice varieties. One consumer explained that the aroma of Pulu' Mandoti Rice can be recognized even before it is cooked, while its taste and texture provide a different experience from ordinary rice. Such perceptions strengthen consumers' belief that the product they purchase is genuine Pulu' Mandoti Rice rather than a product that merely uses the same name.

In addition to physical characteristics, the findings indicate that product origin is an important

factor in establishing perceptions of authenticity. An informant from the Geographical Indication Protection Society (MPIG) explained that Geographical Indication protection provides assurance that Pulu' Mandoti Rice is produced within the designated cultivation area and according to established quality standards. For most informants, the existence of Geographical Indication protection increases confidence that the product marketed genuinely originates from its designated geographical area and is produced using methods consistent with applicable requirements. Thus, product authenticity is not constructed solely through consumer perceptions but is also supported by an institutional protection mechanism that provides greater certainty regarding the product's identity and origin.

MSME actors and retailers further explained that consumers often inquire about the origin of the product before making a purchase, particularly when Pulu' Mandoti Rice is marketed outside Enrekang Regency. According to these informants, information regarding the geographical origin, production process, and story behind the product strengthens consumers' perceptions that Pulu' Mandoti Rice is an authentic product. Nevertheless, several informants noted that the relatively simple packaging does not yet fully reflect the quality and cultural value embodied in the product. They suggested that developing more informative and visually appealing packaging could further strengthen consumers' perceptions of authenticity. The findings also indicate that brand authenticity is influenced not only by product attributes but also by the consistency of consumers' experiences over time. Loyal consumers reported that the quality of Pulu' Mandoti Rice has remained relatively stable across purchases, strengthening their belief that the product continues to preserve its original characteristics. This perceived consistency in quality is one of the reasons they continue to choose Pulu' Mandoti Rice over similar products available in the market.

Overall, the study identified four principal elements shaping the brand authenticity of Pulu' Mandoti Rice: (1) consistency in traditional cultivation practices, (2) distinctive physical characteristics, (3) assurance of geographical origin through Geographical Indication protection, and (4) consistency in perceived product quality. Together, these elements create a perception that Pulu' Mandoti Rice is a genuine product with a clear identity that is capable of preserving its distinctive characteristics over time.

The findings further demonstrate that brand authenticity represents an important mechanism through which the heritage of Pulu' Mandoti Rice is translated into consumer perceptions. The historical and cultural heritage identified in the previous section becomes meaningful to consumers when it is manifested in tangible product characteristics, consistent production practices, verifiable geographical origin, and stable consumption experiences. Thus, brand heritage does not operate solely as a narrative about the past; rather, it becomes credible when consumers can recognize and experience its continuity in the present. This perceived authenticity subsequently provides an important foundation for the development of consumer trust in Pulu' Mandoti Rice, as discussed in the following subsection.

The Role of Brand Authenticity in Building Brand Trust

The findings indicate that consumers' perceptions of brand authenticity constitute a fundamental basis for the formation of brand trust toward Pulu' Mandoti Rice. Perceived product authenticity, reflected in consistent quality, distinctive characteristics, traditional cultivation practices, and certainty regarding geographical origin, encourages consumers to

believe that the product is capable of delivering quality that meets their expectations. This finding indicates that consumer trust does not emerge solely from the experience of consuming the product but develops from the belief that the product genuinely preserves its original identity and distinctive characteristics.

This interpretation demonstrates that brand authenticity functions as a mechanism for reducing uncertainty in the consumer decision-making process. For food products, consumers are generally unable to evaluate all quality attributes prior to purchase. Therefore, perceptions of authenticity become an important signal that assists consumers in evaluating whether a product is trustworthy. In the context of Pulu' Mandoti Rice, the belief that the product originates from the appropriate geographical area, is produced using consistent cultivation practices, and maintains its distinctive characteristics creates a sense of assurance among consumers when deciding whether to purchase the product.

This finding reinforces the concept of brand authenticity developed by Morhart et al. (2015), who explain that brand authenticity is established when consumers perceive a brand as genuine, consistent, and congruent with the identity it communicates. In the present study, such perceptions are not constructed solely through marketing communication activities but derive primarily from consumers' direct experiences with product quality, narratives concerning the history of Pulu' Mandoti Rice, and the existence of Geographical Indication protection that legitimizes the product's origin. Thus, authenticity is perceived not merely as a symbolic attribute but also as tangible evidence that can be verified through consumption experiences.

Furthermore, the findings extend the work of Napoli et al. (2014), who argue that authenticity is an important factor in building consumer trust in a brand. In previous studies, this relationship has generally been examined in the context of commercial products that rely on brand communication and corporate image to establish authenticity. The present study reveals a different pattern. In the case of Pulu' Mandoti Rice, trust is developed primarily through the continuity of social and cultural practices maintained by the local community rather than through corporate communication strategies. In other words, the community functions both as a guardian of authenticity and as a primary source of consumer trust formation.

The findings also demonstrate that quality consistency plays a critical role in strengthening the relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust. Loyal consumers develop trust after repeatedly experiencing a level of product quality that meets their expectations. The distinctive aroma, soft and sticky texture, and relatively consistent flavor reinforce their belief that Pulu' Mandoti Rice continues to preserve its original characteristics. This finding demonstrates that authenticity is not established solely through historical narratives or cultural identity but must also be substantiated through actual experiences perceived by consumers. If quality consistency cannot be maintained, perceptions of authenticity may weaken and subsequently affect the level of consumer trust.

Another notable finding concerns the role of Geographical Indication in strengthening the relationship between authenticity and trust. Geographical Indication has traditionally been positioned primarily as a legal protection instrument for local products. However, the findings demonstrate that such certification also functions as a form of **institutional assurance**,

strengthening consumers' confidence in the product's geographical origin and quality. Thus, trust is not developed solely through individual experiences but is also reinforced by the legitimacy provided by authorized institutions. This perspective suggests that the mechanism underlying brand trust formation in Geographical Indication-based products possesses distinctive characteristics compared with conventional commercial products.

From a marketing perspective, the findings indicate that building consumer trust in local products cannot be achieved merely by increasing promotional intensity. More fundamental strategies involve maintaining consistent quality, preserving authentic production practices, protecting the cultural values embedded in the product, and ensuring that information concerning the product's origin is accessible and understandable to consumers. In this respect, brand authenticity becomes a strategic asset capable of generating sustainable consumer trust.

Overall, this study provides an empirical contribution by demonstrating that the relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust in Geographical Indication-based food products operates through a distinctive mechanism. Consumer trust is influenced not only by perceptions of product quality but also by the belief that the product's identity, history, cultural values, and geographical origin are consistently preserved. Therefore, in the context of Pulu' Mandoti Rice, brand authenticity functions as a bridge connecting brand heritage with the development of consumer trust. This trust subsequently becomes an important factor influencing consumers' purchase decisions, as discussed in the following subsection.

The Role of Brand Trust in Consumer Purchase Decisions

The findings indicate that brand trust plays an important role in driving consumers' purchase decisions regarding Pulu' Mandoti Rice. Trust developed through positive consumption experiences, consistent product quality, and confidence in the product's origin and cultural identity provides consumers with a sense of assurance when deciding to purchase or repurchase the product. This finding indicates that purchase decisions are not based solely on price considerations or physical product attributes but also on the extent to which consumers believe that the selected product can consistently fulfill their expectations.

This interpretation demonstrates that brand trust functions as a mechanism for reducing perceived risk in the purchasing process. Food products possess the characteristics of experience goods, meaning that their quality can only be fully evaluated after consumption. Under such conditions, consumers tend to rely on trust in a brand as a basis for making purchase decisions. In the case of Pulu' Mandoti Rice, such trust is developed through repeated consumption experiences, consistency in aroma and taste, and the belief that the product originates from a geographical area recognized for producing high-quality rice. Accordingly, the higher the level of consumer trust, the greater the tendency to choose Pulu' Mandoti Rice over alternative products.

This finding reinforces the brand trust theory developed by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), who explain that trust in a brand strengthens consumer commitment and encourages repeat purchasing behavior. In the context of Pulu' Mandoti Rice, this relationship is evident when loyal consumers continue to choose the product despite the availability of various other rice products at lower prices. Such decisions demonstrate that trust in product quality and identity can reduce consumers' sensitivity to price differences. In other words, once trust has been

established, consumers' perceived value is no longer assessed solely from an economic perspective but also from their belief that the product possesses quality and distinctive characteristics that are difficult to find in other products.

This discussion also extends the findings of Delgado-Ballester (2004), who identified brand trust as an important determinant of loyalty and purchasing behavior. In previous studies, this relationship has generally been explained in the context of commercial brands that establish trust through corporate reputation, marketing communication, or service experiences. The present study reveals a different mechanism. In the case of Pulu' Mandoti Rice, trust develops primarily through consumers' attachment to the product's history, cultural values, and geographical legitimacy. Thus, the source of trust does not originate solely from marketing activities but also from the cultural heritage preserved by the local community.

Another notable finding is that purchase decisions are influenced not only by the functional benefits of the product but also by the symbolic benefits perceived by consumers. Some consumers perceive Pulu' Mandoti Rice as a representation of local culture possessing historical value and a distinctive identity associated with Enrekang Regency. Therefore, the decision to purchase the product is not merely intended to obtain high-quality rice but also represents an appreciation of a local product with cultural significance. This perspective demonstrates that consumer trust develops alongside an emotional attachment to the product's identity, meaning that purchase decisions encompass social and cultural dimensions in addition to economic considerations.

The findings further indicate that brand trust contributes to the development of repeat purchasing behavior and consumers' willingness to recommend Pulu' Mandoti Rice to others. Positive experiences during consumption create confidence that the product's quality will remain consistent in subsequent purchases. Consequently, consumers not only maintain their purchasing behavior but also act as sources of information by recommending the product to family members, relatives, and members of their social networks. In the context of local product marketing, such recommendations constitute word-of-mouth communication, which can play an important role in expanding market reach and strengthening product reputation. From the perspective of local product development, the findings imply that building consumer trust cannot be separated from efforts to preserve product authenticity. Marketing strategies that focus solely on increasing promotional activities without being accompanied by quality maintenance, preservation of traditional cultivation practices, and reinforcement of cultural identity may result in only temporary consumer trust. Conversely, when trust is built upon a strong foundation of authenticity and brand heritage, purchase decisions are more likely to become stable and sustainable.

Conceptually, this study demonstrates that brand trust functions as a mechanism linking consumers' perceptions of product authenticity with their purchase decisions. Brand heritage shapes perceptions of authenticity; these perceptions subsequently develop into brand trust; and trust ultimately encourages consumers to make purchases and repeat purchases. This relational pattern demonstrates that purchase decisions concerning Geographical Indication-based food products are influenced not only by rational considerations of quality and price but also by consumers' confidence in the product's cultural identity and geographical origin. Overall, this study provides an empirical contribution by demonstrating that consumers'

purchase decisions concerning heritage-based food products result from a trust-building process rooted in authenticity and brand heritage. The findings extend the literature on brand trust by positioning cultural identity and Geographical Indication as important elements influencing consumer purchasing behavior. Thus, the study not only explains the relationships among the constructs but also provides a deeper understanding of the mechanism underlying purchase decisions for local products with strong historical, cultural, and geographical value.

Conceptual Model of the Research Findings

Based on the overall findings and discussion, this study proposes a conceptual model that explains the mechanism underlying consumers' purchase decisions regarding Pulu' Mandoti Rice through an interconnected relationship among brand heritage, brand authenticity, and brand trust. The model indicates that purchase decisions are not formed directly but emerge through a sequence of psychological processes initiated by consumers' perceptions of the brand heritage embedded in the product.

At the first stage, brand heritage functions as the foundation for establishing the identity of Pulu' Mandoti Rice. This brand heritage is shaped by the product's historical use in the lives of local communities, traditional cultivation practices transmitted across generations, its connection with its geographical origin, and cultural values that continue to be preserved. These four elements form a collective narrative surrounding the product's identity, leading consumers to perceive Pulu' Mandoti Rice as a product with distinctive characteristics that differentiate it from other rice products.

The brand heritage subsequently shapes perceptions of brand authenticity. Consumers perceive Pulu' Mandoti Rice as authentic because it has a clear origin, consistent characteristics, and production processes that continue to preserve traditional practices. In this context, authenticity is not understood merely as the genuineness of the product's attributes but also as the congruence between the product identity being communicated and the actual experiences obtained by consumers. Thus, brand authenticity emerges from the ability of producers and the local community to preserve the continuity of the product's identity over time.

Furthermore, perceptions of brand authenticity develop into brand trust. Consumer trust emerges when their experiences of consuming Pulu' Mandoti Rice correspond with expectations established through the product's history, cultural values, and reputation. Consistent quality, certainty regarding geographical origin reinforced by Geographical Indication protection, and positive consumption experiences reduce consumer uncertainty and strengthen confidence in the product's quality and reliability. Therefore, brand trust functions as a mechanism that connects perceptions of product authenticity with consumer purchasing behavior.

At the final stage, brand trust contributes to the formation of purchase decisions. Consumers with a high level of trust are more likely to purchase, repurchase, and recommend Pulu' Mandoti Rice to others. Notably, purchase decisions in this study are influenced not only by rational considerations such as quality and price but also by consumers' emotional attachment to the cultural values, history, and local identity embedded in the product. This finding indicates that purchasing behavior toward heritage-based food products possesses characteristics that differ from those associated with conventional commercial food products.

The conceptual model developed in this study indicates that the relationships among the constructs follow a sequential relationship, in which brand heritage provides the foundation for the formation of brand authenticity, brand authenticity strengthens brand trust, and brand trust subsequently drives consumers' purchase decisions. This relationship demonstrates that the successful development of local food products depends not only on product quality but also on the ability to preserve cultural heritage, maintain authenticity, and establish consumer trust sustainably.

The findings provide a conceptual implication that, in Geographical Indication-based food products, cultural heritage functions not merely as a component of product identity but also as an important source of consumer trust formation. Therefore, preserving history, cultural values, traditional cultivation practices, and geographical legitimacy is important not only for maintaining the sustainability of the product but also for serving as a strategic marketing resource capable of creating added value and strengthening the competitiveness of local products in an increasingly competitive market.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that brand heritage in the context of Pulu' Mandoti Rice is not simply a representation of the product's historical past, but a living identity that continues to be reproduced through local farming practices, cultural traditions, geographical attachment, and consumer experiences. This finding extends the conceptualization of brand heritage proposed by Urde et al. (2007), which emphasizes history, continuity, core values, and symbols as important elements of heritage. In the case of Pulu' Mandoti Rice, these elements are not primarily controlled by a conventional corporate brand but are collectively maintained by farmers, communities, business actors, and institutions. Heritage therefore becomes a socially embedded source of brand identity. This is important because the commercial value of heritage depends not merely on having a long history, but on the ability to maintain meaningful continuity between the past and the present. The findings are consistent with Pecot and de Barnier (2017), who argue that heritage should not be understood simply in terms of brand age, but through the preservation of inherited values and identity over time.

The findings further indicate that brand heritage becomes meaningful to consumers when it can be recognized through authentic product experiences. This provides an explanation of why brand authenticity emerges as an important mechanism in the relationship between heritage and consumer perceptions. Consistent with Morhart et al. (2015), authenticity is developed when consumers perceive a brand as genuine, credible, consistent, and congruent with the identity it represents. In the present study, such perceptions are supported by the continuity of traditional cultivation practices, distinctive product characteristics, geographical origin, and relatively stable quality. Thus, the authenticity of Pulu' Mandoti Rice is not created solely through stories about its cultural heritage. Rather, the heritage narrative becomes credible because consumers can experience characteristics that correspond with the identity communicated by the product. This finding also supports Rindell and Santos (2021), who emphasize that authenticity can emerge from the relationship between historical identity, cultural meaning, and consumer experience. The implication is that heritage branding becomes fragile when the historical narrative is not supported by consistent practices and

product experiences.

An important contribution of this study is the identification of brand authenticity as a bridge between heritage and brand trust. Consumers appear to develop trust when the authenticity associated with the product is repeatedly confirmed through consumption experiences and supported by certainty regarding geographical origin. This finding reinforces the argument of Napoli et al. (2014) that authenticity can contribute to stronger consumer confidence in a brand. However, the present study provides a different contextual explanation of how this relationship operates in local food products. Trust does not primarily originate from corporate reputation or intensive promotional communication, but from the continuity of practices maintained by the local community and from the consumer's repeated experience with the product. This suggests that trust in heritage-based local food products is partly collective in nature because consumers place confidence not only in a seller or brand name but also in the production practices, community, and geographical identity associated with the product.

The role of Geographical Indication further strengthens this relationship. The findings suggest that GI functions not only as a legal protection mechanism but also as an institutional signal that supports perceptions of authenticity and trust. For consumers, geographical origin is difficult to verify independently, particularly when the product is marketed outside its original region. Institutional recognition therefore provides an additional basis for believing that the product genuinely originates from its designated area and maintains characteristics associated with that geographical environment. This finding is relevant to the signaling perspective of heritage branding proposed by Pecot et al. (2018), in which heritage can communicate credibility and perceived quality. In the case of Pulu' Mandoti Rice, however, the signal is strengthened because cultural heritage is supported by formal geographical protection. The combination of community-based continuity and institutional legitimacy therefore creates a stronger foundation for authenticity than either element would provide independently.

The findings also show that brand trust translates heritage and authenticity into consumer purchasing behavior. This is consistent with Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) and Delgado-Ballester (2004), who establish the importance of trust in encouraging consumer commitment and purchasing behavior. However, the present study suggests that purchasing decisions for heritage-based local food products involve more than functional evaluations of price and quality. Consumers may also attach symbolic value to the product because it represents local culture, historical continuity, and regional identity. Consequently, trust is developed not only from expectations concerning product performance but also from confidence that the product continues to represent what it claims to represent. This helps explain why consumers may continue purchasing the product and recommending it to others even when alternative products are available.

Taken together, the findings support a sequential interpretation in which brand heritage provides the identity foundation, brand authenticity establishes the perceived genuineness of that identity, and brand trust transforms these perceptions into purchasing behavior. The theoretical implication is that heritage branding in local food products should be understood as a process that connects cultural continuity with consumer psychology. Unlike conventional brands in which heritage can be deliberately constructed and communicated by firms, the

heritage of Pulu' Mandoti Rice is collectively sustained through the interaction of community, place, production practices, institutional protection, and consumer experience. This extends heritage branding literature by demonstrating that cultural and geographical embeddedness can become important sources of authenticity and trust. Practically, the findings suggest that strengthening the competitiveness of Pulu' Mandoti Rice should not rely only on promotional activities. Maintaining product consistency, preserving traditional practices, communicating geographical and cultural identity, and utilizing GI as a credibility signal are more fundamental to sustaining the trust that ultimately supports consumer purchasing behavior.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that brand heritage plays an important role in shaping brand authenticity, which subsequently strengthens brand trust and influences consumers' purchase decisions regarding Pulu' Mandoti Rice in Enrekang Regency. Brand heritage, reflected in the product's history, traditional cultivation practices, cultural identity, and connection to its geographical origin, provides the foundation for consumers' perceptions of product authenticity. These perceptions subsequently develop into trust as consumers experience consistent product quality, ultimately influencing purchase and repurchase decisions. The findings indicate that purchasing decisions regarding Geographical Indication-based food products result from a gradual psychological process, beginning with consumers' recognition of brand heritage and progressing toward the development of consumer trust.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature by extending understanding of the relationship among brand heritage, brand authenticity, brand trust, and consumer purchase decisions within the context of local food products protected by Geographical Indication. The study demonstrates that the brand heritage of Pulu' Mandoti Rice is shaped not only by brand attributes or marketing activities but also by social practices, cultural values, and geographical legitimacy collectively maintained by the local community. Thus, the study highlights cultural heritage as an important foundation for developing authenticity and consumer trust while extending the application of brand heritage theory, which has predominantly been examined in the context of corporate and commercial brands. From a practical perspective, the findings provide implications for farmers, local businesses, the Geographical Indication Protection Society (Masyarakat Perlindungan Indikasi Geografis—MPIG), and local government. Efforts should not focus solely on increasing production and promotional activities but also on preserving traditional cultivation practices, strengthening cultural identity, and utilizing Geographical Indication as part of a broader marketing strategy. Maintaining consistent product quality and effectively communicating the historical and cultural values embedded in Pulu' Mandoti Rice can strengthen consumer trust and enhance the product's competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market.

This study has several limitations. It focuses on a single Geographical Indication-based product and employs a qualitative approach within the specific context of Enrekang Regency. Consequently, the findings cannot be statistically generalized to all local food products in Indonesia. Future research is therefore encouraged to empirically test the conceptual model developed in this study using a quantitative approach, compare multiple Geographical Indication-based food products across different regions, or employ a mixed-methods approach to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms underlying

consumer purchase decisions for heritage-based food product.

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