

RESEARCH TRENDS ON GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS FOR POMELO PRODUCTS: THEORY AND PRACTICE

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Abstract. *This research has contributed to supplementing the theoretical and practical basis regarding the relationship between geographical indications for pomelo products and local tourism development. The results show that geographical indications are not only significant in protecting intellectual property rights and enhancing the commercial value of products, but also serve as an important resource for the formation and development of distinctive tourism products. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the effectiveness of exploiting geographical indications by developing experiential tourism products associated with pomelo-growing regions to enhance the utilization of geographical indications for tourism development.*

Keywords: *Geographical Indication; Pomelo; Tourism*

1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

In recent years, tourism has been identified as one of the fastest-growing economic sectors, making a positive contribution to economic growth, job creation, and sustainable development in many countries. The current trend in tourism development focuses not only on exploiting natural resources but also on promoting the cultural, historical, and unique values of each locality to create distinctive tourism products. Along with changes in tourist demands, products with regional characteristics are increasingly valued as an important resource to enhance the attractiveness of destinations. Many studies have shown that products associated with local origin and reputation not only create a competitive advantage for the agricultural sector but also contribute to increasing experiential value, building the image of the destination, and promoting tourism development (Hall et al., 2003; Sims, 2009; Everett & Aitchison, 2008).

In this context, geographical indications are considered an important tool for protecting and promoting the value of local specialty products. According to the TRIPS Agreement of the World Trade Organization (WTO, 1994), a geographical indication is a sign used to identify products originating from a specific geographical area, where the quality, reputation, or characteristics of the product are primarily shaped by the natural conditions and human factors of that area. Not only significant in terms of intellectual property, but geographical indications also contribute to enhancing commercial value, increasing competitiveness, and affirming the image of the locality in the market (Rangnekar, 2004; Giovannucci et al., 2009). Numerous studies have also shown that the effective exploitation of geographical indications can create a positive spillover effect in the tourism sector through the formation of experiential activities associated with agriculture, culture, and community life (Bowen & Zapata, 2009; Belletti & Marescotti, 2011).

The practical experience of tourism development in many countries and in Vietnam has proven that products bearing geographical indications can become valuable tourism resources if exploited properly. Many localities have successfully developed tourism products based on famous specialties such as Phu Quoc fish sauce, Buon Ma Thuot coffee, Luc Ngan lychees, or Tan

Cuong tea. Combining products bearing geographical indications with activities such as visiting, experiencing production, enjoying specialties, and learning about local culture not only contributes to increasing the value of the product but also creates a distinctive image and enhances the competitiveness of the destination (Nguyen Thi Thu Huong, 2021; Ministry of Science and Technology, 2022). This shows that geographical indications are not only a tool for protecting products but also an important resource for developing types of tourism associated with agriculture and local culture.

As a province in the Mekong Delta region, Vinh Long has many favorable conditions for developing ecotourism and garden tourism. Among the local characteristic agricultural products, pomelo is a famous fruit that has been protected by geographical indication and has enjoyed a reputable market for many years. Besides its economic value, this product is also closely linked to the history of the growing region, the farming experience of the local people, and the unique cultural characteristics of the area. These factors have the potential to create unique experiential tourism products, contributing to the diversification of tourism products and enhancing the value of Vinh Long as a destination.

Despite possessing numerous advantages, the exploitation of the geographical indication of pomelo for tourism development in Vinh Long province has not yet reached its full potential. Current exploitation activities mainly focus on the consumption of agricultural products, while the linkage between production, preservation of the value of the geographical indication, and tourism development is still lacking. Tourism products related to pomelo have not created a unique identity; promotional activities are limited; the level of awareness among tourists about the value of products bearing the geographical indication is not high, and coordination among stakeholders in the value chain still has many shortcomings. These limitations reduce the ability of the geographical indication to enhance the competitiveness of the destination and increase the value of local products.

Based on the aforementioned theoretical and practical foundations, the research project **“Exploiting Geographical Indications for Pomelo Products to Serve Tourism Development in Vinh Long Province”** is necessary. The research is expected to contribute to clarifying the scientific basis for exploiting geographical indications in tourism development, while also assessing the current situation, identifying influencing factors, and proposing appropriate solutions to effectively exploit the value of geographical indications for pomelo products. The research results will serve as a reference for management agencies, businesses, and local communities in the process of developing unique tourism products, enhancing product value, strengthening the competitiveness of destinations, and promoting sustainable socio-economic development.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS

2.1. The Concept of Geographical Indication

Geographical indications (GIs) are a type of intellectual property right used to identify the geographical origin of a product and to affirm the link between the quality, reputation, or specific characteristics of the product and the natural conditions and people in the corresponding geographical area. In the context of globalization and increasing competition in the goods market, geographical indications are considered an important tool for protecting the value of local specialties, enhancing product competitiveness, and contributing to sustainable local economic development.

The concept of geographical indications is officially recognized in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) of the World Trade Organization (WTO). According to Article 22 of the TRIPS Agreement, a geographical indication is a sign used to indicate goods originating from the territory of a country or from a region or locality within that territory, where the quality, reputation, or certain characteristics of the goods are primarily determined by their geographical origin (WTO, 1994). This definition emphasizes the close

relationship between the product and its geographical location, in which natural factors such as climate, soil, water resources, along with the production experience, techniques, and traditional knowledge of the local community, play a decisive role in shaping the unique characteristics of the product.

In Vietnam, the concept of geographical indication is defined in Clause 22, Article 4 of the 2005 Intellectual Property Law, as amended in 2022. Accordingly, a geographical indication is a sign used to indicate that a product originates from a specific area, locality, region, territory, or country. Furthermore, Article 79 of the Intellectual Property Law stipulates that a product bearing a geographical indication must have a reputation, quality, or main characteristic determined by the geographical conditions of the corresponding area (National Assembly, 2022). Compared to the definition in the TRIPS Agreement, Vietnam's regulations not only emphasize the origin but also clarify the requirement for a link between product quality and the specific geographical conditions of the production region.

From a local development perspective, Giovannucci, Jossling, Kerr, O'Connor, and Yeung (2009) argue that geographical indications are not merely legal tools for protecting product names, but also mechanisms for creating added value based on differences in origin and local identity. By affirming the prestige and quality of products, geographical indications contribute to increasing producers' income, promoting rural development, and preserving traditional cultural values associated with local communities. Similarly, Berard and Marchenay (2006) assert that geographical indications are the crystallization of product, territory, and culture, reflecting the organic link between natural resources and indigenous knowledge accumulated over generations.

In the field of tourism, many recent studies show that geographical indications are considered a resource capable of creating attractiveness for a destination. Products bearing geographical indications often contain distinctive values related to the history, culture, and production traditions of the locality, thereby contributing to the formation of unique experiential tourism, agricultural tourism, and cultural tourism products (Hall et al., 2003; Sims, 2009). Therefore, effectively exploiting products bearing geographical indications not only contributes to increasing the economic value of the product but also creates opportunities to promote the local image and develop sustainable tourism.

From the above perspectives, it can be understood that: "Geographical indications are signs used to identify products originating from a specific geographical area, where the quality, reputation, or distinctive characteristics of the product are primarily formed from the natural conditions and human factors of that area. At the same time, geographical indications are not only a tool for protecting intellectual property rights but also an important resource for promoting cultural values, enhancing the competitiveness of products, and boosting local tourism development." For this topic, the geographical indication of pomelo is approached as a unique resource with the potential to build a destination image and contribute to tourism development in Vinh Long province.

2.2 Characteristics of Geographical Indications

Geographical indications are a unique object of intellectual property rights, possessing distinct characteristics compared to other forms of protection such as trademarks or trade names. According to the TRIPS Agreement (WTO, 1994), the Vietnamese Intellectual Property Law (National Assembly, 2022), and studies by Giovannucci et al. (2009), geographical indications have several basic characteristics as follows:

Firstly, geographical indications are always associated with a specific geographical area. The value of a geographical indication is formed from the relationship between the product and the natural and human conditions in the production location. Therefore, only products originating from a defined geographical area are entitled to use the corresponding geographical indication.

Secondly, the quality, reputation, or characteristics of geographically indicated products are closely linked to the geographical conditions of the production site. Factors such as climate, soil, water resources, along with the traditional production experience of the local community, contribute to the distinctiveness and prestige of the product in the market (Bowen and Zapata, 2009).

Thirdly, geographical indications are communal in nature and not the property of a single individual or business. According to Vietnamese law, the State is the owner of geographical indications and grants the right to use them to organizations and individuals that meet the prescribed conditions. This reflects the communal nature and common benefit of geographical indications to the production area.

Fourth, geographical indications not only reflect economic value but also contain cultural values and local identity. According to Berard and Marchaney (2006), products bearing geographical indications are the crystallization of natural, historical, cultural, and indigenous knowledge. Therefore, geographical indications play an important role in preserving traditional values and creating a foundation for tourism development associated with local specialties.

These characteristics demonstrate that geographical indications are not only a tool for protecting intellectual property rights but also an important resource for enhancing product value, promoting local image, and boosting tourism development. For pomelo, these characteristics provide a basis for effectively exploiting the value of geographical indications in the development of tourism in Vinh Long province.

2.3. The Role of Geographical Indications in Socio-Economic Development

In the context of increasing competition in the goods and services market, geographical indications are not only considered a tool for protecting intellectual property rights but also play a crucial role in economic development, cultural preservation, and enhancing the competitiveness of localities. Many studies show that the value of geographical indications extends beyond protecting product names and origins, becoming a resource contributing to the promotion of agricultural development, rural development, and the building of a tourist destination image (Giovannucci et al., 2009; Berard and Marchenay, 2006; Bowen and Zapata, 2009).

Firstly, “geographical indications contribute to enhancing the value and competitiveness of products in the market.” Protecting geographical indications helps products be clearly identified in terms of origin, while affirming the quality and reputation associated with the production area. According to Giovannucci et al. (2009), geographical indications create a mechanism that helps consumers distinguish specific products from similar products in the market, thereby increasing customer trust and willingness to pay. In many cases, products bearing geographical indications often have higher commercial value due to guaranteed quality, origin, and authenticity. This contributes to increasing producers' income, improving economic efficiency, and promoting the development of local specialty product industries.

Furthermore, “geographical indications play a crucial role in protecting reputation and maintaining product quality.” When a product is protected by a geographical indication, the use of the product name must comply with established regulations regarding the production area, production process, and quality standards. According to Bowen and Zapata (2009), this mechanism helps to limit the falsification of origin, the unauthorized use of product names, or the deterioration of the product's reputation in the market. Simultaneously, quality control through the geographical indication management system contributes to maintaining and enhancing the product's reputation in the long term.

One of the other roles of geographical indications is to “contribute to the preservation and promotion of local cultural values.” According to Berard and Marcheney (2006), products bearing geographical indications not only reflect specific natural conditions but are also the result of the accumulation of indigenous knowledge, traditional production skills, and

experience of the local community over many generations. Protecting and exploiting geographical indications helps maintain traditional production methods, preserve regional cultural identity, and strengthen the connection between the community and its distinctive local values. This is considered an important factor in the context of globalization, where many traditional cultural values are facing the risk of disappearing.

Furthermore, “geographical indications also contribute to promoting local economic development and improving livelihoods for the local community.” Research by Giovannucci et al. (2009) shows that the effective exploitation of geographical indications can create many job opportunities, increase production value, and promote the development of related industries such as processing, trade, and services. Through increasing product value and expanding consumer markets, geographical indications contribute to raising the income of local people, while also providing impetus for sustainable rural economic development.

In particular, in the field of tourism, “geographical indications are considered a unique resource capable of building the image of a destination and developing distinctive tourism products.” Hall et al. (2003) argue that specialty products associated with famous landmarks can become elements of destination identification, contributing to differentiation and enhancing the competitiveness of localities in the tourism market. Similarly, Sims (2009) asserts that products with local characteristics and clear origins help tourists access authentic experiences, thereby increasing satisfaction and the value of the tourism experience. Through activities such as visiting production areas, experiencing farming processes, enjoying specialties, and learning about local culture, products bearing geographical indications can become the foundation for developing agricultural tourism, experiential tourism, and cultural tourism products.

For Vinh Long province, the geographical indication for pomelo not only signifies the protection of a specialty agricultural product but also serves as a crucial resource for local tourism development. The reputation of pomelo, along with its cultural value linked to the life of the orchards, the farming experience of the local people, and the characteristic fruit-growing landscape of the Mekong Delta, creates favorable conditions for developing unique tourism products. Effectively utilizing the pomelo geographical indication can contribute to promoting the image of Vinh Long province, enhancing the value of local products, and providing impetus for community-based tourism development.

From the roles mentioned above, it is evident that geographical indications are important in many aspects, including enhancing the value and competitiveness of products, protecting product reputation and quality, preserving local cultural values, promoting community economic development, and supporting tourism development. These roles form an important basis for considering the exploitation of pomelo geographical indications as a resource for tourism development in Vinh Long province in the current period.

2.4. The Value of Geographical Indications for Agricultural Products

Economic value is the most direct and readily apparent benefit of products bearing geographical indications, helping to clearly identify the product's origin, thereby increasing consumer potential and creating a competitive advantage in the market. According to Giovannucci et al. (2009), products bearing geographical indications often have the potential to generate higher value than similar products due to their reputation and quality recognized by the market. Besides increasing income for producers, geographical indications contribute to promoting trade, tourism, and related tourism activities. For pomelo, the economic value is not only reflected in the commercial value of the product but also in the potential to generate revenue from tourism activities associated with the cultivation of specialty pomelos.

In terms of cultural value, products bearing geographical indications are the result of the accumulation of knowledge, production experience, and cultural values formed over many generations. According to Berard and Marchenay (2006), geographical indications reflect the relationship between the product, history, customs, and the identity of the local community.

Therefore, protecting and developing products bearing geographical indications contributes to maintaining traditional production methods, preserving indigenous knowledge, and promoting the distinctive cultural values of each region. For pomelo products, the cultural value is expressed through long-standing cultivation experience over many generations and the characteristic garden culture of the Mekong Delta region.

Territorial value is demonstrated in the ability to link products with local landmarks and images. According to Pecqueur (2001), specialty products bearing geographical indications can become territorial resources, contributing to enhancing the position and competitiveness of the locality. Through products bearing geographical indications, the image of the production area is promoted more widely, thereby creating conditions to attract investment and develop tourism. In the case of pomelo, the product not only represents a specialty fruit but also contributes to promoting the image of Vinh Long province and the Binh Minh region to domestic and international tourists.

Brand value, along with geographical indications, contributes to building and strengthening the brand of a product by affirming its origin and distinctive quality. According to Keller (2013), a brand is formed when consumers have a positive perception of the product's quality and reputation. In the case of products bearing geographical indications, the reputation of the locality becomes an important factor in creating brand value. This helps the product enhance its recognition, build consumer trust, and increase its competitiveness in the market. At the same time, the product brand also contributes to promoting the local image and supporting the development of tourism associated with regional specialties.

2.5 The Role of Geographical Indications in Tourism Development

In the context of today's tourism industry, which increasingly emphasizes uniqueness, local identity, and authentic experiences, geographical indications are considered a crucial resource contributing to enhancing the attractiveness of a destination. Unlike ordinary goods, products bearing geographical indications contain values closely linked to the natural conditions, indigenous knowledge, production traditions, and cultural identity of a specific territory. These elements create differentiation and form the foundation for developing tourism products with distinctive local characteristics (WIPO, 2017; Ministry of Science and Technology, 2020).

First, geographical indications contribute to building and enhancing the image of a tourist destination. Products bearing geographical indications often have a high reputation and recognition level in the market, thereby helping to promote the locality to domestic and international tourists. According to Belletti and Marescotti (2011), products protected by geographical indications not only represent goods but also reflect the characteristic values of the production region, contributing to the formation of a territorial brand. In Vietnam, the Ministry of Science and Technology (2020) also affirmed that geographical indications are an effective tool in promoting the image of localities through specialty products associated with their origin.

Furthermore, geographical indications facilitate the development of experiential tourism and agricultural tourism. Products bearing geographical indications are often associated with specific production processes, long histories, and local cultural values, thus becoming objects of interest for tourists to visit, experience, and learn about. According to Bui Thi Tam (2020), combining the production of specialty agricultural products with tourism activities helps increase product value while creating authentic and unique experiences for tourists. For areas specializing in fruit cultivation, visiting orchards, learning about cultivation techniques, harvesting, and enjoying products on-site are becoming attractive features in agricultural tourism programs.

In addition to economic value, geographical indications also contribute to the preservation and promotion of local cultural values. The process of building the reputation of products bearing geographical indications is often linked to the production practices, traditional experiences, and cultural life of the local community. Utilizing geographical indications for

tourism not only helps promote products but also creates opportunities to introduce cultural, historical, and indigenous knowledge to the tourism sector. According to UNESCO (2013), linking traditional products with tourism activities is one of the important solutions for preserving intangible cultural heritage and raising public awareness of indigenous values.

At the same time, geographical indications contribute to promoting sustainable local economic development. When effectively utilized in tourism activities, products bearing geographical indications can generate additional revenue from sightseeing, experiences, shopping, and consumption services at the destination. This not only increases income for producers but also creates jobs and promotes the participation of local communities in the tourism value chain. According to the Intellectual Property Office (2023), combining the exploitation of geographical indications with tourism activities is one of the potential approaches to increase the value of specialty products and develop the local economy.

3. OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH SITUATION

3.1 . *Around the world*

Currently, geographical indications (GIs) are formed from the perspective of intellectual property, representing local knowledge passed down through generations, creating a community with shared living and farming practices. The development of a comprehensive GI protection system aims to control actions that damage the reputation of the local community, protecting the unique characteristics and quality of GI products. Exploiting GIs encourages the application of collective action and local self-governance capabilities to promote the preservation and development of local culture (according to Maze, 2023). Irene Calbolo's (2021) research suggests that GIs are a central foundation of Intellectual Property Law. Geographical Indication (GI) is also considered an important legal tool to promote sustainable development, protect the environment, enhance awareness and governance capacity of local communities, build territorial brands, and gradually adapt to the current digital context. According to Xiaoyu et al. (2024), recent studies show that GIs for agricultural products are a tool that helps goods and products gain prestige in the market thanks to reliable certificates of origin and product quality, thereby balancing information between buyers and sellers. At the same time, the product's position in the consumer market is enhanced compared to similar products without GIs. This significantly increases the value of agricultural products and positively improves farmers' income. For tourism, it further stimulates the upgrading of infrastructure and agricultural supply chains.

To fully exploit the potential of geographical indication (GI) protection (according to Valentina Raimondi et al., 2024), GIs are considered a crucial and optimal tool for promoting local socio-economic development. By increasing income from pomelo production, thereby creating a supply chain and providing jobs for local people, it helps them improve their lives. Furthermore, GIs also develop spatially due to close connections in climate and soil, and neighboring communities also cultivate agricultural products bearing geographical indications due to suitable conditions. For the pomelo processing industry, this is an economic strategy to enhance the value of local products and promote economic development. The combination of the SWOT model and the AHP process (hierarchical analysis) shows that local government support plays a crucial role in promoting local economic development. The application of this model requires scaling up, increasing production, innovating with modern technology, and cooperating with processing or tourism businesses to stabilize output, minimize the risks of land conversion for pomelo cultivation, and mitigate market fluctuations (Andi Ridwan Makkulawu et al. 2024). Furthermore, research by Riccardo Crescenzi et al. (2022) affirms the importance of geographical indications (GIs) in slowing population decline and restructuring the economy through labor structure shifts. Therefore, GIs play a crucial role in market adaptation, job creation, and maintaining livelihoods for local people, aiming for sustainable development.

Furthermore, geographical indications (GIs) are practical tools contributing to the development of the region's agricultural economy. They increase income and employment for local people, helping to retain residents and prevent mass migration to large cities in search of work (according to Aron Torok et al., 2020). From this, we can see the importance of protecting products bearing geographical indications in improving quality and stability in the consumer market. In addition, GIs are an essential foundation for stable employment and income for local people, and are one of the key factors in addressing economic, cultural, and social welfare issues.

Regarding tourism, according to Robert Brian Smith et al. (2024), geographical indications (GIs) play an important role in solutions to increase the economic value of local products, contributing to brand shaping in the market and raising public awareness in developing and preserving local traditional cultural values. They also create a positive ripple effect for the development of green tourism and sustainable tourism. Meanwhile, Tamara Gajic et al. (2025) consider GIs to be an important factor in preserving traditional cultural values and a lever to drive the development of the economy and tourism. Integrating products with geographical indications into tourism development plays a crucial role in providing authentic experiences, deeply connecting with the culture and history of the destination, contributing to increased satisfaction, stimulating consumption, and encouraging repeat visits from tourists.

According to Puti Mayang Seruni et al. (2024), research shows that geographical indications (GIs) are key to optimizing the value of specialty products and intellectual property, promoting economic development. The GI protection mechanism is the foundation for forming and developing a sustainable tourism model. However, applying this tourism development model requires a complex and costly registration process. For successful development, a strategic plan from large to small scale is needed after GI certification. The research also emphasizes raising public awareness, the linkage of the community with local authorities, combined with the preservation of local culture, society, and environment.

Geographical Indication (GI) products in tourism development are an advantage in attracting tourists to experience firsthand activities such as visiting, harvesting, and consuming local specialties. Simultaneously, they contribute to positioning the product in the market and promoting the destination's image widely. Building and promoting this image requires multi-media communication channels that integrate various elements such as history, culture, infrastructure, and a high-quality ecosystem. According to Vorasiha et al. (2024), research indicates that specific natural conditions regarding geography, soil, and water resources create the unique quality and flavor of GI products, thus building a reputation across generations. The research also shows that integrating product promotion with the promotion of traditional cultural heritage is key to increasing the product's value. To optimize the impact on real economic efficiency, the author emphasizes the linkage between tourism, agriculture, and local cuisine through garden tourism experiences, contributing to the sustainable development of the locality.

According to the study by Pamukcu et al. (2021), exploiting agricultural products bearing geographical indications (GIs) is a method related to culinary tourism. GI products are not only an effective marketing tool for destinations and increase income for local people, but also contribute to the preservation of indigenous culture, available resources, and knowledge passed down through generations. The study also indicated that GI products account for up to 60% of the motivations influencing tourists' interest and reasons for visiting, and local specialties account for 34.7%. Based on this, it shows that products combining tourism and cultural festivals are a strong motivator for tourists to like a destination, thereby establishing brand positioning and competitiveness in the market.

According to Vujko et al. (2025), products protected by geographical indications possessing strong cultural and heritage values are a core element contributing to shaping destination identity and promoting sustainable tourism development. Therefore, this research initiative aims to attract tourists through heritage experiences, exploration experiences, and sensory

experiences. Integrating products with geographical indications contributes to the preservation of traditional cultural values, enhances tourists' awareness of product authenticity, and protects destination resources.

Protecting geographical indications is not just about providing information, but also about building consumer trust and the potential for local economic development (according to Leonardo Cei et al., 2018). Currently, consumers are willing to pay higher prices for products bearing geographical indications, thereby enhancing competitiveness and increasing trade advantages. Products bearing geographical indications promote economic diversification, such as tourism (including ecotourism and culinary tourism). Furthermore, research by Gonda et al. (2021) shows that products bearing local specialties play a crucial role in creating the attractiveness and authenticity of a destination for tourists, acting as a tool to promote local economic, cultural, and social development. Exploiting products bearing geographical indications meets the demand for green consumption, raising awareness of health and the environment through ecotourism and garden tourism activities. At the same time, it is important to establish a product supply chain that ensures the output of agricultural products.

According to Mohd Nazri Abdul Raji et al. (2017), local specialties are considered symbols of the culture and people of a destination. They play a role as an intangible heritage component and are a resource that needs to be exploited. The combination of tourism and culture contributes to shaping local cultural identity, enhancing competitiveness, and improving destination positioning. Furthermore, it promotes linkages with businesses, local consumption channels, reduces transportation distances, protects the environment, and retains income for local people.

According to the research of Huseyin Pamukcu et al. (2011), local specialty products are a core element in preserving indigenous cultural values. Products registered under geographical indications (GIs) not only receive legal protection and have their production methods passed down through generations, but also serve as tools to promote the image of the destination and increase livelihoods for the people. Furthermore, integrating GI products with tourism aims to increase the added value of local agricultural products, create jobs, and promote economic development. Diversifying the service supply chain is achieved through the formation of routes connecting traditional production networks. According to Rian Saputra (2020), the combination of GI products with tourism aims to exploit the unique characteristics and values of the products to attract tourists, thereby enhancing economic benefits for the local community.

For rural tourism, it is a growth driver for the tourism industry and economic development, and a crucial factor in connecting and harmonizing urban and rural areas in the economic transformation structure to increase people's income. The essence of agricultural tourism is to exploit resources, develop traditional crafts, and preserve local cultural values. This process requires a specific, sustainable development plan with close linkages between stakeholders, including government agencies, businesses, and local communities (according to Zhang et al., 2021).

According to Kaewuthai et al. (2025), research shows that agricultural tourism focuses on hands-on learning rather than just entertainment or sightseeing. Tourism activities not only boost the local economy but also contribute to the equitable distribution of socio-economic benefits, promoting sustainable tourism development.

Another study on the development of agricultural tourism shows that it provides opportunities for local people, increases income for local communities, promotes economic development, and contributes to the revitalization of rural communities. The development of this type of tourism contributes to poverty reduction in rural areas and increases economic benefits (according to Xiao Kun et al., 2025). However, this model requires a comprehensive approach, closely integrating environmental and human factors, including economic, cultural, and social aspects; ecological conditions; legal and administrative aspects; and technological

aspects. In this approach, the goal of environmental protection and socio-cultural sustainability is central.

According to Wu et al. (2022), the development of agricultural tourism is an inevitable and strategic trend to promote sustainable tourism development, especially after the post-Covid-19 era when the trend of tourists wanting to experience and immerse themselves in nature and peaceful rural spaces is increasing. Combining tourism and agriculture helps increase the value of local agricultural products, creates a stable source of income for people, and contributes to the preservation of natural and cultural values.

According to Okosodo Ehi Francis (2024), developing tourism linked to agriculture through orchard tours is a highly feasible and effective option for improving the economic welfare of local communities and maintaining ecotourism resources. This combination helps people increase their income while providing educational and experiential opportunities for tourists. Furthermore, this model creates jobs, stimulates growth, and makes tourism more attractive. It ensures cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability. In addition, rural tourism is a new business model and a key method for activating and utilizing the values of cultural heritage. For tourism development models oriented towards conservation and adaptive management of heritage sites, this profoundly impacts economic development, ecological protection, cultural dissemination, and efficient resource management (according to Fengli Dong et al., 2024). At the same time, this model emphasizes the role of the people in producing and preserving traditional farming methods.

According to Yung-Lun Liu et al. (2023), the role of agritourism in community development is demonstrated through a hierarchical structural model comprising four core aspects: economic, educational, socio-cultural, and environmental. Of these, the economic aspect is the most important core element, contributing to local economic development. Along with this, agritourism also brings socio-cultural values through heritage preservation. Regarding the environment and education, it raises awareness among locals and tourists about ecosystem conservation and landscape preservation, while providing entertainment and sightseeing services, fostering a deeper connection with natural values. Furthermore, culinary tourism is also an important strategy in defining destination identity and promoting comprehensive development in Biosphere Reserves. This involves exploiting local culinary products using purely local ingredients (according to Marta Carvajal-Aparicio et al., 2024). This development model also encourages community cohesion, creating strong relationships to achieve balance and preserve indigenous cultural values.

The study by Vorasiha et al. (2024) has several limitations, such as failing to thoroughly analyze and explore the impacts of marketing and brand promotion strategies based on geographical indications combined with a green biological circular economy model, encompassing economic, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects, on agricultural tourism activities. Furthermore, the model is only applied to a small locality, reducing the ability to generalize the results to other specific locations. As for the study by Cui et al. (2021), its spatial approach has not explored the multidimensional perspective of consumer variables, leaving open the potential negative impacts of agricultural tourism, such as cultural misunderstandings between buyers and sellers and environmental degradation.

Overall, overseas research has clearly identified stakeholders, theoretical foundations, and tourism models. In particular, the role of tourism combined with agriculture and fruit orchards for local people and communities has been highlighted. However, most studies have focused only on the economic benefits of geographical indications (GIs) associated with tourism. Meanwhile, research on grapefruit products bearing geographical indications and their application to tourism development in the Mekong Delta remains limited. This represents a gap that needs further in-depth research on tourism combined with grapefruit orchards in Vinh Long.

3.2 In Vietnam

According to Giang Hoang et al. (2020), geographical indication protection is considered an effective tool in promoting rural development based on three pillars: economic development, environmental conservation, and preservation of local culture. The application of geographical indications helps improve the quality of specialty products and brand recognition. This, in turn, enhances the quality of specialty products and brand recognition in the market, optimizes selling prices, and improves the quality of life and income of local people. Simultaneously, this research model requires adherence to environmentally friendly farming practices and the limitation of chemicals, along with improving rural infrastructure linked to activities promoting regional cultural values. Furthermore, a synchronized policy system is needed to link the value chain of agricultural specialty products protected by geographical indications, encompassing production area planning, quality management, supply chain linkages, and commercial promotion (according to Nguyen Van Linh, 2025). The study also indicates that management through a traceability system linked to quality standards such as VietGAP/GlobalGAP is crucial for protecting brands and enhancing competitiveness in the market. The author also mentions the key element in building a contractual linkage mechanism between agricultural processing businesses and local people. Along with agricultural tourism integrated into the OCOP program, this is a crucial factor in increasing the value and sustainability of local products.

Furthermore, geographical indications (GIs) are also a tool under intellectual property law that helps preserve cultural identity and promote sustainable economic growth for rural areas (according to Doan Vu Thanh Van, 2024). Products bearing GIs not only demonstrate quality and affirm the origin of local specialty products through rigorous inspection processes, thereby combating widespread counterfeiting in the market, but GI exploitation plans also help improve the lives and stabilize the income of local people, preserve indigenous cultural values, and maintain farming practices passed down through generations.

According to To Ngoc Thinh and Nguyen Duc Duong (2023), agricultural tourism is a combination of elements ranging from landscapes, farming processes, and local culture to processing and product consumption. Its development creates a mutually beneficial relationship: agriculture provides tourism resources, and tourism enhances the value of agricultural products and promotes their image. Besides improving the quality of life for local people, tourism development also promotes the shift in economic structure from agriculture to services. Simultaneously, it raises awareness among locals and tourists about preserving cultural values and protecting the environment.

According to the research by Son.NTNguyen, QN and Hoang. THL (2023), the core elements of agro-tourism are natural landscapes, local people's lives, production activities, and agricultural products. Tourist satisfaction with agro-tourism in the Mekong Delta is influenced by six factors: local culture, natural landscape, novelty, assurance, human resources, and perceived value. Among these factors, the natural landscape has the strongest influence on tourist satisfaction when participating in sightseeing and service experiences. The agro-tourism model attracts tourists thanks to the novelty and uniqueness of the tourism activities, thereby contributing to increasing income, reducing poverty, protecting the environment, and preserving traditional local culture.

According to Hoang Thi Hoai Huong et al. (2023), agricultural tourism is a unique type of tourism thanks to available resources, with advantages in rivers, countryside, rural life, and traditional cultural heritage. The goal of this tourism model is to improve income, increase livelihoods for people, and develop the local economy. Factors affecting the development of local tourism include the capacity to exploit available resources, the participation of the local community, support activities from the government, and the ability to link destinations to meet tourist behavior.

Vinh Long province is currently notable for its community-based tourism associated with the pristine orchard ecosystem and the distinctive homestay accommodation model (according to

Nguyen Thuy Diem and Pham Thu Hang, 2025). However, smart and sustainable tourism is still in its early stages, characterized by spontaneous, individual development, and inadequate digital infrastructure, as well as a lack of supporting policies. This study proposes a “digitalized tourism” model, applying multimedia communication technologies to promote the image and cultural values of the locality, empowering local people to become managers and direct beneficiaries. Simultaneously, it focuses on preserving and promoting unique local cultural values such as traditional Southern Vietnamese folk music (Don Ca Tai Tu) and establishing links with technology hubs like Can Tho to promote the image of orchard tourism to the international market.

According to Bao Hoang Gia (2021), Vinh Long province has great potential for developing agricultural tourism based on its unique natural resources. However, the exploitation of tourism resources is still ineffective and has many limitations such as spontaneous, isolated, and unsynchronized development, duplication with other provinces in the Mekong Delta region, lack of uniqueness, and weak human resources in tourism. Sustainable development requires linkage between local authorities, researchers, scientists, travel businesses, and local people. Along with that, building a tourism brand based on the seasonal characteristics of specialty fruits is also necessary.

The close integration of agriculture and tourism aims to increase livelihoods and stabilize products when the market fluctuates. The exploitation and development of agriculture in Vinh Long province needs to maximize the value of natural and ecological resources associated with local culture. Initiatives on regional linkages and agricultural development planning linked to tourism play a crucial role in limiting spontaneous development and improving the skills of local people. At the same time, tourism linked to agriculture contributes to improving product quality, promoting the image, and preserving long-standing traditional cultural values. Furthermore, it creates conditions for people to share economic benefits and responsibilities (according to Tu Minh Thien, 2022).

According to Nguyen et al. (2024), for agricultural tourism and community tourism, local people play a leading role in the tourism chain from production, tourism services, product creation, and development orientation. The tourism development model of the study aims to improve the quality and satisfaction of tourists. New proposals encourage increased cultural experiences through exchange activities and promote the culinary specialties of the region to enhance the competitiveness of the destination.

According to research by Nguyen Dinh Nghia and Nguyen Thi Truc Quynh (2023), specialty products and gifts are key factors contributing to increasing the attractiveness of a destination, attracting consumption, retaining tourists, and promoting the local image. Developing local tourism contributes to increasing income, improving the lives of the people, and this is also the core element in creating a complete tourism product chain and building a destination brand. Synchronizing solutions from local authorities, improving product quality and human resources for trade promotion will optimize the value of agricultural products and contribute to preserving and promoting local traditional cultural values. Similarly, according to Nguyen Hoang Long et al. (2023), community tourism plays a crucial role in local economic development and people's livelihoods. Enhancing the role and responsibility of the community in providing products, services, and preserving tourism resources is essential. This ensures that economic benefits from tourism will be shared fairly based on the level of contribution from the local people.

According to Nguyen Thi Thuy Trang (2025), cultural tourism is a basis for preserving and promoting traditional cultural values and honoring new values. Cultural tourism development activities aim to transform heritage resources into resources serving socio-economic development in a sustainable direction, while simultaneously improving the quality of life for local people. Implementing this model requires close collaboration between cultural resources and market research, destination tourism planning, investment in technical infrastructure

development, and raising awareness among locals and tourists, establishing a sustainable tourism development environment.

According to Huynh Van Tanh's (2024) research, the prerequisite is the development of high-quality human resources in the fields of agriculture and tourism. This is to promote socio-economic development towards sustainability in the current era of climate change. Improving the quality of human resources encourages employment in new technologies, the application of digital transformation, improved resource management, environmental protection, and a shift to a green growth model. Nguyen Thi Hoai Thanh (2023) argues that exploiting cultural human resources in tourism development is an important strategy in transforming the value of indigenous heritage into economic assets, contributing to improving people's lives. Combining cultural values and specialties to organize tourism activities, sightseeing, and experiences, thereby creating a sustainable chain linked to the OCOP program and community tourism. Through community capacity building, we contribute to the preservation of indigenous cultural values, enhance management capabilities, promote the local image and specialties to tourists, and develop tourism in a sustainable direction.

According to Thi Thanh Hien Phan et al. (2023), the impact of rapid urbanization and mass tourism activities creates fierce competition between local consumption and production activities. The study indicates that agricultural tourism prioritizes investment in tourism infrastructure to attract tourists and generate profits. This leads to the loss of the essence of local culture and environmental degradation. Therefore, a balance is needed between maintaining production and developing tourism to preserve local culture and the environment. Furthermore, it is necessary to promote innovation and enhance the creative capacity of local businesses wishing to start up. Several plans should be implemented when developing agricultural tourism, including strengthening linkages through professional associations, promoting the application of information and communication technology in digital technology, and creating professional skills training programs for the people.

According to An Nguyen Thi Ngoc and Trang Huynh Nguyen Thuy (2025), the orchard system of the Mekong Delta has great potential for developing orchard tourism, sightseeing, and experiences. However, this model is currently facing challenges such as climate change, drought, saltwater intrusion, and changes in biochemical content affecting the quality of local specialty agricultural products. For sustainable development, it is necessary to optimize cultivation processes to protect the local ecosystem. In addition, for ecotourism, orchard tourism relies on the ecosystem and the adaptive capacity of local people to global climate change (according to NTT Trang and HH Loc, 2022). Ideas for agricultural tourism combine experiences and local farming models, thereby helping to create a stable source of income for people, preserve local cultural values, and develop in a sustainable direction.

According to Vu and Pham (2023), tourist satisfaction with ecotourism and rural tourism services is a crucial factor determining loyalty and the intention to return, thus promoting the destination's image. This research model aims to enhance tourist satisfaction with destination management and image positioning, while also encouraging the maintenance of product and service quality standards and perceived values, thereby promoting sustainable tourism development.

According to Phung et al. (2024), tourist satisfaction is a core factor determining the success and competitiveness of a destination. For tourism development in the Mekong Delta in general and Vinh Long province in particular, it is necessary to improve service quality based on fundamental aspects such as trust, responsiveness, assurance, and infrastructure. The development orientation emphasizes exploiting local characteristics to create differentiation, make a lasting impression on tourists, enhance product reputation, and ensure sustainable destination development.

Domestic research has established a theoretical framework and development orientation for tourism linked to orchards, agriculture, and ecology. However, studies have not yet focused on

geographically indicated products serving local development. Furthermore, research often concentrates on economic benefits, but the role of geographically indicated products is not clearly demonstrated. Currently, in Vinh Long, the geographically indicated product, pomelo, requires in-depth research focusing on resources, markets, participating entities, and necessary future development directions.

Studies show that the topic “Exploiting geographical indications for pomelo products to serve tourism development in Vinh Long province” builds upon previous research, focusing on a specific product, the region's specialty pomelo, and proposing solutions and development directions suitable to the current situation of Vinh Long province.

4. SOME EXPERIENCES IN EXPLOITING GEOGRAPHICALLY INDICATED PRODUCTS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED

4.1 . Experiences in Exploiting Geographical Indication Products for Tourism Development in Some Countries around The World

In Japan, the Mishima region (Shizuoka Prefecture), with its volcanic soil conditions offering good water permeability and high sunshine hours on the southern slopes of Mount Fuji, is famous for its May Queen potatoes. This is due to the meticulous craftsmanship, traditional harvesting techniques, and natural sun and wind drying methods, resulting in a naturally delicious flavor that has earned the region a strong reputation. Recognizing the potential of the product, in 2016, the potatoes from this region received Geographical Indication (GI) certification. The local government and cooperatives have gradually shifted from purely agricultural production to multi-value agriculture through experiential tourism. Farms are planned to provide opportunities for tourists and students to visit and experience harvesting agricultural products.

According to Kimura and Rigolot (2021), key components contributing to the effectiveness of farming in Mishima are maintaining the agricultural value chain through a “localization of production and consumption” strategy. After harvesting potatoes, some of the standard potatoes are consumed fresh, some are used to make the famous traditional Mishima croquettes, while the substandard potatoes are processed into other products to optimize economic benefits, minimize waste, and protect the environment. Simultaneously, innovation is promoted through the linkage of geographical indications (GIs), the first model of which is “in combination with Tagonoura Shirasu glass fish”.

Furthermore, according to Kimura and Rigolot (2021), activities related to harvesting, processing, and experiential activities, along with festivals (such as the National Croquette Festival, etc.), have contributed to increasing economic value and raising people's income. Policies on gender equality, job creation for people with disabilities, and landscape preservation, as well as tourism models linked to products bearing the Mishima potato geographical indication, are considered a prime example of sustainable and diversified economic development.

In Italy, a model for exploiting geographical indication (GI) products has been effectively implemented. Thanks to favorable natural conditions and the farming experience of the local people, South Tyrol apples are a reputable and well-known product. Up to 44% of farms here grow high-quality, economically viable apples and other fruits. Recognizing the potential of the GI product, the government has supported the people in transitioning from purely agricultural apple production to a combined product serving local tourism by promoting its existing reputation, stabilizing the product in the market, and enhancing the image of the destination. Local farms are planning and investing in services to support sightseeing, accommodation, shopping, and experiencing the local way of life.

According to Fischer's (2019) research and assessment, the key factor contributing to the economic development in South Tyrol is the optimization of online sales channels. After harvesting, a portion of the fresh apples is kept at farm shops, another portion is shipped to food

processing companies, and the remainder is delivered to local restaurants and hotels. This maximizes domestic value and improves the lives of the people through this exploitation model.

The combination of agriculture and tourism services (such as accommodation, harvesting experiences, etc.) along with an export network to other countries has contributed to increasing the income of local people, accounting for 23% of the total industry revenue. Government agencies and production facilities have balanced the tourism service model with maintaining the core productivity of apples in South Tyrol, which is considered a model for developing tourism linked to geographical indication products with sustainable development (Fischer, 2019).

According to the research by Sarkar et al. (2024), this is evidence that the geographical indication (GI) protected product, Darjeeling tea from West Bengal, India, has shaped and developed its brand. Thanks to its distinctive flavor resulting from the blend of geographical and climatic factors unique to the Himalayan region, this tea is recognized worldwide as the “Champagne of teas,” a premium brand on par with Champagne (France). The reputation of Darjeeling tea, protected by the GI, is known not only for the product itself but also for the traditional tea plantations, thereby attracting tourists to visit and explore the region. This model contributes to the preservation of the local ecosystem and ensures income for local people.

Based on the research results of Sarkar et al. (2024), the impact of climate change, from 1991-2023, shows that global warming is adversely affecting local ecosystems, leading to environmental degradation and shrinking cultivated areas, along with a decrease in annual tea production. Climate change and declining tea production have also reduced the characteristic quality of the product, directly impacting the economy, supply chain, and related support services.

The core value of this research lies in the inseparable correlation between exploiting the value of geographical indications (GIs) and managing resources and protecting the environment to adapt to climate change. Localities and countries need to optimize techniques, manage resources, and apply modern science and technology to protect the unique characteristics of the product. Maintaining stable quality and output is a key factor in sustaining the attractiveness of tourism brands associated with GIs.

4.2 Experiences in Exploiting Geographical Indication Products to Develop Tourism in Vietnam.

In Buon Ma Thuot (Dak Lak province), the famous coffee product with its unique flavor attracts tourists from near and far. Tourism involving sightseeing and coffee tasting is a core element that creates differentiation and establishes its position in the market (according to Nguyen Ngoc Minh, 2025). However, in reality, the development and exploitation of this tourism model have not yet fully exploited the value of the product due to fragmented and inconsistent activities, lacking the attractiveness to retain tourists.

To address the current issue, based on the research results of Nguyen Ngoc Minh (2025), optimizing the value of Buon Me Thuoc coffee products requires restructuring tourism activities and extending the agricultural value chain. Instead of just visiting and enjoying coffee in the usual way, tourists should directly participate in the process of cultivating, harvesting, and producing coffee, which is a unique experience, and then enjoy the product after participating in the activities with the locals. Above all, this model emphasizes the combination of tourism space, promotion, and hands-on experience in producing coffee products.

Model for exploiting the Tan Cuong tea geographical indication product to serve tourism development:

In the Tan Cuong region (Thai Nguyen province), there is a geographical indication (GI) product that embodies the cultural essence and traditional identity of this temperate land. This is Tan Cuong tea, with its unique flavor, attracting tourists to learn about this traditional craft village. To exploit this GI product, it is necessary to establish a heritage space linked to local traditions and cultural life. According to Dong Duy Khanh et al. (2023), the model for exploiting Tan Cuong tea has successfully leveraged its GI value by integrating farming activities with local

traditional culture, such as cultural spaces, craft village museums, demonstration areas, and product showrooms. This close integration not only focuses on the production of ordinary agricultural products but also contributes to effectively promoting the product brand to tourists and positioning the destination in the tourism market. At the same time, reorganize production according to collective and cooperative models, creates effective linkages for OCOP product development, improves designs, and diversifies processed tea products on the market.

Furthermore, to adapt to the current technological era, Xinjiang has adopted modern technologies such as ArcGIS, Google SketchUp, and ArcScene to visually observe natural landscapes and infrastructure. Most importantly, this model provides strong promotional capabilities on platforms like 3D Warehouse, building 3D models to promote local destinations to domestic and international tourists, making destination identification easier and stimulating demand for tourism to Xinjiang and local tea products.

Model for exploiting the Tan Trieu pomelo geographical indication product to serve tourism development:

In Tan Trieu (Dong Nai province), thanks to favorable soil conditions, water resources, and traditional farming practices, Tan Trieu pomelo has become a local specialty with its unique flavor. In 2012, it was granted geographical indication protection by the Intellectual Property Office. According to Vu Thinh Truong et al. (2024), research results show that the product consistently yields stable quality and quantity, meeting the demand for souvenirs for tourists. The successful model of exploiting Tan Trieu pomelo in orchard tourism is due to local knowledge, agricultural extension organizations, and professional collective economic organizations, shifting from purely agricultural tourism to tourism services. However, in reality, there are still limitations in resource allocation and cost efficiency for producers, leading to wasted input resources. Furthermore, good agricultural practices (VietGAP) are ineffective because data is difficult to retain, and online markets are not mandatory. Most importantly, the majority of households sell their produce to traders without formal contracts or stable outlets. Regarding tourism, visitor reception is fragmented and spontaneous, lacking coordinated policies between local authorities and households for effective and sustainable development.

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