

The Impact of Perceived Value of Regional Products on Consumers' Multi-Dimensional Decision-Making Behavior

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of the perceived value of regional products (PVRP) on multiple facets of consumer decision-making, including brand decision heuristics, preference formation, recommendation behavior, attribute preference, and usage situations. Data were collected via on-site, street-intercept surveys in Zhanjiang, Zhuhai, and Shantou (N = 217). The perceived value was categorized into Low, Medium, and High levels. Cross-tabulation, chi-square tests, and Cramer's V analyses revealed significant associations between PVRP levels and all behavioral dimensions (Cramer's V range: 0.195 - 0.205). The study identified three distinct consumer behavior patterns: low-PVRP consumers (13.8%) exhibited externally-dependent behavior, characterized by a reliance on word-of-mouth and external incentives; medium-PVRP consumers (49.3%) demonstrated experience-oriented behavior, emphasizing service quality and social contexts; while high-PVRP consumers (36.9%)

displayed intrinsically-driven behavior, focusing on ingredient safety, brand recognition, and integration into daily usage scenarios. The findings confirm that perceived value can systematically influence multiple behavioral dimensions in the context of regional products. This provides actionable insights for regional brand managers to develop value-based segmentation strategies. Furthermore, the study suggests that future research could employ longitudinal designs or multi-regional comparisons to further validate the generalizability of these conclusions.

Keywords: Perceived value of regional products, Brand decision heuristic, Brand recommendation behavior, Brand attribute preference, Brand usage situation

1. Introduction

In market environments characterized by intertwined globalization and localization, regional products (RP) demonstrate growth trajectories in consumer markets owing to their distinctive regional characteristics and cultural attributes (Feldmann & Hamm, 2015; Waehning & Filieri, 2022), increasingly becoming consumers' preferred choice for differentiation and authenticity. From the European Union facilitating global dissemination of RP such as Italian Prosciutto di Parma and French wines via the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) system (European Commission, 2025), to China's "Rural Revitalization" strategy leveraging RP as a catalytic link bridging urban-rural consumption and stimulating local industries (Wang & Yang, 2021; Peng et al., 2024), these developments underscore the dual economic and cultural significance of RP. Consequently, RP function not merely as pillars of local economic development but also as vessels embodying unique regional cultural identity, natural endowments, and traditional craftsmanship. This forms a multidimensional construct encompassing emotional resonance with the origin, curiosity-driven interest in traditional craftsmanship, and identity expression through consumption. (Sampalean et al., 2021; Jeong & Lee, 2021). Such dynamics reflect consumers' escalating demand for products distinguished by regional uniqueness and cultural traceability, concurrently expanding opportunities for regional brand development. Nevertheless, many products are readily categorized by consumers as generic commodities due to ineffective communication of their unique attributes, resulting in diminished premium pricing power and inadequate market competitiveness. Consumers' perceived value of regional products (PVRP) now extends beyond fundamental assessments of functional utility and physical attributes (Merlino et al., 2022; Bharti et al., 2025). This expansion, in turn, potentially influences their multi-dimensional decision-making behavior. For instance, does elevated perceived value lead consumers to prioritize ingredient safety over price during decision-making? How does it shape brand preferences grounded in intrinsic cultural identity rather than extrinsic incentives? These questions arise because consumer decision-making involves not a singular "purchase" action but a complex behavioral sequence comprising information processing, preference formation, recommendation sharing, and scenario selection.

Extant theories, such as the Means-End Chain Theory (Mort & Rose, 2004) and Self-Determination Theory (Khan et al., 2023), provide foundational frameworks for understanding value-behavior relationships. However, their explanatory power in

contemporary consumption contexts requires further validation and extension. This is particularly true for the unique value dimensions of regional products (RP), such as cultural authenticity and place identity, which these theories may not fully capture. Consumers may exhibit higher expenditure on products from a specific region due to cultural identification (Zhang et al., 2023), or enhance their assessment of functional and emotional value through cultural signals conveyed by packaging (e.g., multilingual labeling) (Janssen et al., 2021). This process of perceived value augmentation triggered by cultural factors, along with its cascading effects on subsequent behavior, remains insufficiently addressed by existing theories. Concurrently, research predominantly posits that "higher perceived value correlates with increased positive consumer behavior," yet neglects potential divergent behavioral logics among consumers across perceived value levels. This "value-behavior gradient effect" is pivotal to comprehending RP consumption behavior but has not undergone systematic investigation.

Accordingly, this study conceptualizes PVRP as an independent variable while deconstructing consumer decision-making behavior into five interrelated yet distinct dimensions: brand decision heuristics, brand preference formation, brand recommendation behavior, brand attribute preference, and brand usage situation. Through empirical data collection in Guangdong Province, China—a region exemplifying both economic dynamism and pronounced cultural identity—this research elucidates how varying levels of PVRP systematically shape consumers' decision-making behavior patterns across these five dimensions.

2. Theoretical Foundation and Hypotheses

In markets characterized by information asymmetry, brands must convey reliable quality signals to consumers (Erdem & Swait, 2001). High-PVRP itself functions as a potent signal, indicating consumers' pre-existing belief in the brand's superior intrinsic quality (Zeithaml, 1988, Sharif et al., 2024). Grounded in Means-End Chain Theory (Mort & Rose, 2004), consumer decisions follow a hierarchical linkage from product attributes to personal values. The functional value attributes of RP (e.g., ingredient safety) serve as critical links between regional natural endowments and personal values such as health and safety (Bharti et al., 2025). Consequently, high-PVRP consumers with established brand knowledge structures base decisions on intrinsic, stored positive beliefs. In contrast, low-PVRP consumers—lacking intrinsic trust—preferentially employ heuristics, leveraging user reviews as external cues to minimize cognitive effort during decision-making. Thus, as PVRP rises, consumers' decision criteria systematically transition from reliance on external social proof to trust in the product's core functionalities and intrinsic worth. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H1: Higher PVRP leads consumers to exhibit a stronger preference for functional value attributes (e.g., ingredient safety) over externally-oriented attributes (e.g., word-of-mouth) in brand decision heuristics.

The formation of preference for these products extends beyond habitual usage accumulation, emerging from the synergy of regional cultural resonance, authenticity endorsement, and

experiential engagement (Bharti et al., 2025). This mechanism is interpretable through Self-Determination Theory (Khan et al., 2023) and the cultural value attributes of they embody. Self-Determination Theory categorizes behavioral motivation into intrinsic (e.g., interest) and extrinsic (e.g., rewards) dimensions, wherein the intrinsic cultural identity of RP constitutes the core of intrinsic motivation. When consumers endorse the regional culture embedded in products, preference formation transitions from passive acceptance to active identification, exhibiting enhanced stability (Luong & Long, 2025). Consumer preference and loyalty originate from sustained trust in brand reliability and integrity, rather than ephemeral external stimuli (Khamitov et al., 2024). Such relationships surpass transient emotional responses, reflecting deeper commitment-based bonds (Yang et al., 2024). Conversely, low-PVRP consumers develop transactional brand relationships, rendering their preferences vulnerable to external novelty cues (e.g., brand event participation). External stimuli thus directly elicit emotional reactions, potentially inducing short-term preference alterations or purchase behavior (Luong & Long, 2025), resulting in an unstable, externally driven preference formation mechanism (Wu et al., 2021).

Furthermore, recommendation behavior towards RP represents the socialization of consumers' personal endorsement of the product's cultural value (Zhang et al., 2023; Luong & Long, 2025). The exchange value of such recommendations varies with perceived value levels (Deng, 2022). Under low-PVRP, recommendations are predominantly motivated by utilitarian external incentives (e.g., discounts). Under high-PVRP, they evolve into affective social value dissemination (e.g., sharing regional culture), targeting intrinsic needs like social interaction, relationship maintenance, and self-expression. This dissemination satisfies social interaction needs—an intrinsic motivation where the act itself generates enjoyment, reinforces social ties, and communicates self-identity (Wan et al., 2024; Sánchez-Fernández & Jiménez-Castillo, 2021). For these consumers, recommendation behavior functions as a social practice: sharing enjoyment, strengthening communal bonds, and demonstrating cultural capital (Gildin, 2022). This constitutes value co-creation, enabling consumers to consolidate social identity and accumulate social capital. High-PVRP consumers thus exhibit recommendation behavior as an advanced loyalty manifestation, intrinsically motivated by acquired functional, emotional, and social value (e.g., regional identity).

Consequently, brand preference formation mechanisms correlate with consumer-brand relationship depth (indexed by perceived value). High-PVRP fosters deep preferences rooted in trust and habituation, whereas low-PVRP associates with superficial preferences influenced by external factors. Similarly, recommendation motivation transitions from extrinsic incentive-driven to intrinsic social value-driven as brand relationship strength intensifies (elevated perceived value). This leads to the following hypotheses:

H2: Higher PVRP strengthens the role of "habitual quality endorsement" (e.g., habitual use) over "situational affective triggers" (e.g., brand engagement) in brand preference formation.

H3: Higher PVRP increases the propensity for "social value dissemination" (e.g., needs for social interaction) rather than "extrinsic incentives" (e.g., incentives from brand activities) to drive brand recommendation behavior.

Drawing on Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Pawsey et al., 2023), human needs follow a hierarchical structure wherein higher-level needs emerge as motivators only after lower-level needs are sufficiently satisfied. Consumers assign preference weights to product attributes based on their alignment with core personal values (Yoon & Lee, 2021). For RP, region-specific attributes serve as critical linkages between natural endowments and core values (e.g., health, cultural identity), with their weighting intensifying significantly as perceived value increases. While "cooking convenience" addresses time-saving and hassle reduction—fulfilling functional and physiological needs (Kokkranikal & Carabelli, 2021)—"ingredient freshness" satisfies safety needs and underpins the pursuit of high-quality living (esteem and self-actualization needs). Consequently, high-PVRP consumers no longer prioritize convenience to mitigate uncertainties but instead focus on core quality and health benefits. Conversely, low-PVRP consumers, constrained by budgets or usage contexts, emphasize immediate basic needs. Thus, attribute preferences transition hierarchically with rising perceived value: from "utilitarian convenience attributes" (addressing basic needs) to "quality-trust attributes" (fulfilling higher-order needs). H4 posits this need hierarchy evolution in RP preferences:

H4: Higher PVRP leads consumers to prioritize "quality-trust attributes" (ingredient freshness) over "utilitarian convenience attributes" (e.g., ease of Preparation) in brand attribute preferences.

The selection of consumption scenarios for RP embodies consumers' integration of cultural value into lifestyles (Ljubičić et al., 2023). This process is analyzable through Self-Determination Theory (Khan et al., 2023) and the identity-expressive properties of RP. Intrinsically motivated consumption favors routine integration for sustained need fulfillment. Daily cultural expression scenarios—where consumers continuously affirm regional identity and derive cultural value—see increased selection frequency with higher PVRP. Conversely, usage contexts reflect a product's role and mind share in consumers' lives (Tang et al., 2023). "Festival banquets" denote high-trust, high-risk scenarios requiring deliberate brand endorsement, representing "privileged moments" of usage (Banerjee & Quinn, 2022). In contrast, weekday meals signify high-frequency, low-involvement routine contexts, indicating deeper habitual acceptance. High-PVRP consumers develop profound trust and emotional attachment (Savelli et al., 2022; Juliana et al., 2023), ensuring confidence in product reliability for daily consumption. This trust facilitates repeated use in unplanned routine scenarios, embedding the brand into daily lifestyles. Thus, elevated perceived value expands usage from occasional, high-involvement "ceremonial scenarios" to frequent, low-involvement "routine scenarios." H5 formalizes this shift:

H5: Higher PVRP leads consumers to prioritize "routine quality scenarios" (e.g., weekday meals) over "high-trust scenarios" (e.g., festival occasions) in brand consumption contexts.

3. Methods

3.1 Methodology and Sample Profile

Street-intercept surveys were conducted in three coastal cities of Guangdong Province

(Zhanjiang, Zhuhai, Shantou) selected for their representative RP markets: Zhanjiang (seafood specialties), Zhuhai (agricultural products), and Shantou (traditional snacks). This design ensured heterogeneity in consumer exposure to RP, thereby enhancing variability in measured constructs. Data collection occurred from June 30 to July 20, 2025, with trained research assistants recruiting participants in high-traffic areas (e.g., shopping malls, farmers' markets, residential communities). Inclusion criteria required: (1) age ≥ 18 years (China's legal threshold for autonomous decision-making); (2) prior purchase or consumption of RP within six months to ensure topic familiarity and minimize invalid responses; (3) informed consent for anonymized academic data use, with participants receiving a small gift upon questionnaire completion.

To mitigate common method variance, procedural countermeasures including randomized question sequencing were implemented. Of 300 distributed questionnaires, 217 were deemed valid after excluding incomplete or logically inconsistent responses. Demographic characteristics are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of Samples (N=217)

Variable	Type	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	119	54.8
	Female	98	45.2
Age	18-25 years	79	36.4
	26-35 years	59	27.2
	36-45 years	54	24.9
	46-55 years	15	6.9
	56 + years	10	4.6
Education	High school or below	54	24.9
	Associate degree	60	27.6
	Undergraduate degree	98	45.2
	Graduate degree	5	2.3
Income	< 3000 CNY	51	23.5
	3001-4500 CNY	63	29.0
	4501-6000 CNY	39	18.0
	> 6000 CNY	64	29.5
Total		217	100

Demographic analysis indicated: (1) a balanced gender distribution with slight male predominance; (2) a concentration of respondents in young-to-middle age groups; (3) high educational attainment, with bachelor's degree holders comprising the largest cohort (45.2%); (4) relatively balanced distribution across monthly income brackets.

3.2 Measurement Instruments

PVRP was measured using the scale developed by Charton-Vachet et al. (2020), comprising four items. While preserving the original construct validity, items were minimally adapted to reflect China's market context: (1) RP available locally exhibit high quality at reasonable prices; (2) Purchasing RP represents a worthwhile quality-driven expenditure; (3) RP provide attractive pricing without quality trade-offs; (4) RP deliver superior cost-effectiveness.

Psychometric testing confirmed scale reliability ($\alpha = 0.802$), with no item deletion improving this coefficient. For analytical robustness, PVRP scores were trichotomized: Low PVRP (1.0-2.5), Medium PVRP (2.6-3.5), and High PVRP (3.6-5.0).

All five consumer decision-behavior dimensions were assessed via closed-ended questions featuring mutually exclusive and exhaustive response categories. Items were grounded in seminal frameworks (Keller, 2003; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001) and contextualized for RP, with operationalization detailed below:

Table 2. Multi-Dimensional Decision-Making Behavior

Variable	Operationalization & Response Options
Brand Decision Heuristics	1. Reasonable price; 2. Service convenience; 3. Product efficacy; 4. Word-of-mouth; 5. Ingredient safety
Brand Preference Formation	1. Habitual use; 2. Nostalgic attachment; 3. Value alignment; 4. Positive disconfirmation; 5. Brand engagement
Brand Recommendation Behavior	1. Sharing positive experiences; 2. Incentives from brand activities; 3. Perceived need fit; 4. Needs for social; 5. Interaction brand commitment
Brand Usage Situation	1. Ingredient freshness; 2. Ease of preparation; 3. Flavor fidelity; 4. Price reasonableness; 5. Brand trust
Brand Attribute Preference	1. Weekday meals; 2. Solitary consumption; 3. Family gatherings; 4. Travel and picnics; 5. Festive occasions

4. Results

4.1 Brand Decision Heuristics Data Analysis

A significant association was found between PVRP and Brand Decision Heuristics, $\chi^2 = 17.374$, $p = 0.026$, Cramer's $V = 0.200$ (weak-to-medium effect size). This confirms that perceived value systematically influences decision criteria, although it is not the primary determinant. In the aggregate sample, consumers prioritized product efficacy (36.9%) when selecting RP, followed by reasonable price (23.0%) and ingredient safety (18.0%). Service convenience (11.5%) and Word-of-mouth (10.6%) were comparatively less influential.

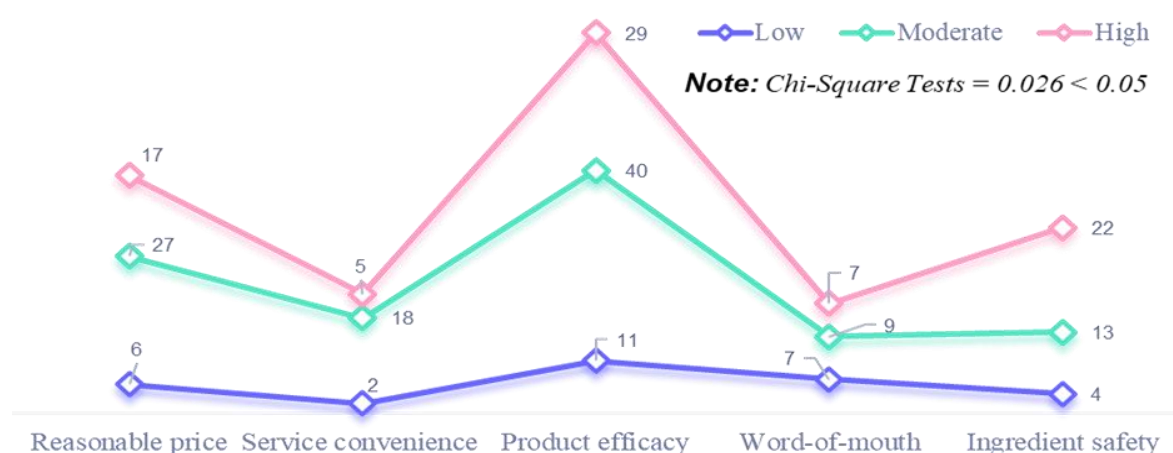


Figure 1. Perceived Value of Regional Products * Brand Decision Heuristics

Figure 1 presents an in-depth analysis of brand decision heuristics across PVRP segments (Low: n= 30; Medium: n= 107; High: n= 80). A consistent priority for product efficacy is observed across all segments (Low: 36.7%; Medium: 37.4%; High: 36.3%). Secondary priorities, however, diverge significantly. Low-PVRP consumers prioritize word-of-mouth (23.3%), indicating an external reliance. This suggests that their weak intrinsic value recognition necessitates dependence on peer evaluations to mitigate decision risk. Conversely, medium-PVRP consumers emphasize service convenience (16.8%), reflecting an experience orientation that balances core functionality with consumption ease to enhance satisfaction. High-PVRP consumers focus on ingredient safety (27.5%), demonstrating intrinsic safety-driven behavior attributable to high product quality trust, which elevates the importance of long-term safety attributes. This differentiation offers critical strategic insights for regional brands: enhancing word-of-mouth for low-PVRP consumers, optimizing service convenience for medium-PVRP consumers, and emphasizing safety certifications for high-PVRP consumers.

4.2 Brand Preference Formation Data Analysis

Chi-Square Tests reveal a significant association between PVRP and brand preference formation ($\chi^2 = 16.862$, $p = 0.032$), with Cramer's $V = 0.197$ indicating a discernible yet non-dominant influence of perceived value on preference formation. Across the total sample, habitual use emerges as the primary driver of habitual use (45.6%), followed by positive disconfirmation (22.6%) and value alignment (19.4%). Nostalgic attachment (5.5%) and brand engagement (6.9%) exhibit comparatively lower influence.

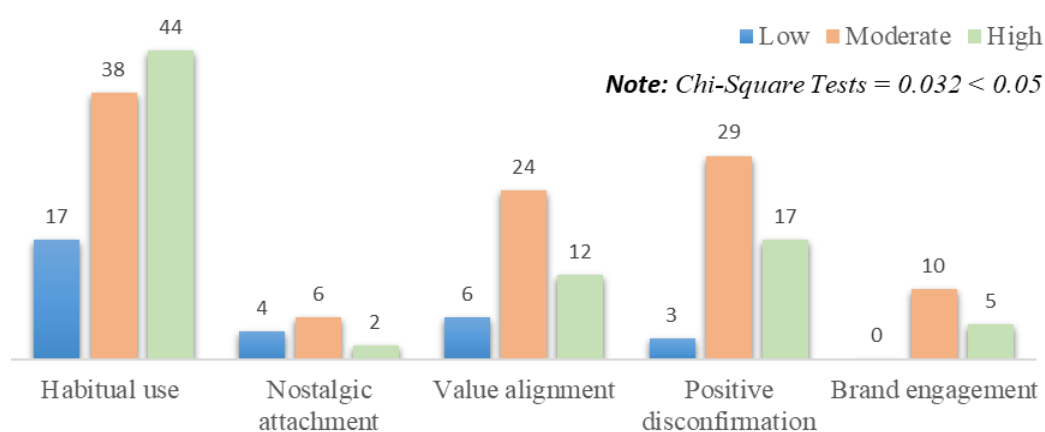


Figure 2. Perceived Value of Regional Products * Brand Preference Formation

Figure 2 provides a detailed analysis of brand preference formation across PVRP segments. The low-PVRP consumers predominantly exhibit habitual use (56.7%), reflecting passive habitual preferences characterized by weak intrinsic value recognition and reliance on long-term usage patterns without active emotional engagement. In contrast, the medium-PVRP consumers show a stronger inclination toward positive disconfirmation (27.1%), demonstrating active emotional preferences formed through service experiences

exceeding expectations or alignment with brand values. Although habitual use remains primary for the high-PVRP consumers (55.0%), their significant emphasis on value alignment (15%) indicates stable quality preferences, where high product value recognition fosters enduring habits independent of external incentives. This divergence suggests that low-PVRP consumers are retained passively through habitual behavior, medium-PVRP consumers through experiential and value-driven connections, and high-PVRP consumers through quality-stabilized habitual loyalty. These insights offer strategic direction for regional brands: reinforcing habitual behavior via high-frequency exposure and contextual integration for low-value segments; enhancing service quality and value communication to cultivate active preferences among medium-value segments; and maintaining product consistency and long-term relationships to solidify stable preferences in high-value segments.

4.3 Brand Recommendation Behavior Data Analysis

Chi-Square Tests revealed a significant association between PVRP and brand recommendation behavior ($\chi^2 = 16.876$, $p = 0.031$), with Cramer's $V = 0.198$ indicating a weak-to-medium effect. While perceived value clearly influences recommendation motivation, its impact must be evaluated alongside contextual factors such as social settings and experiential quality. Across the total sample, the primary driver of brand recommendation behavior was sharing positive experiences (41.9%), followed by brand commitment (21.7%) and perceived need fit (14.7%). In contrast, needs for social interaction (10.6%) and incentives from brand activities (11.1%) were less influential.

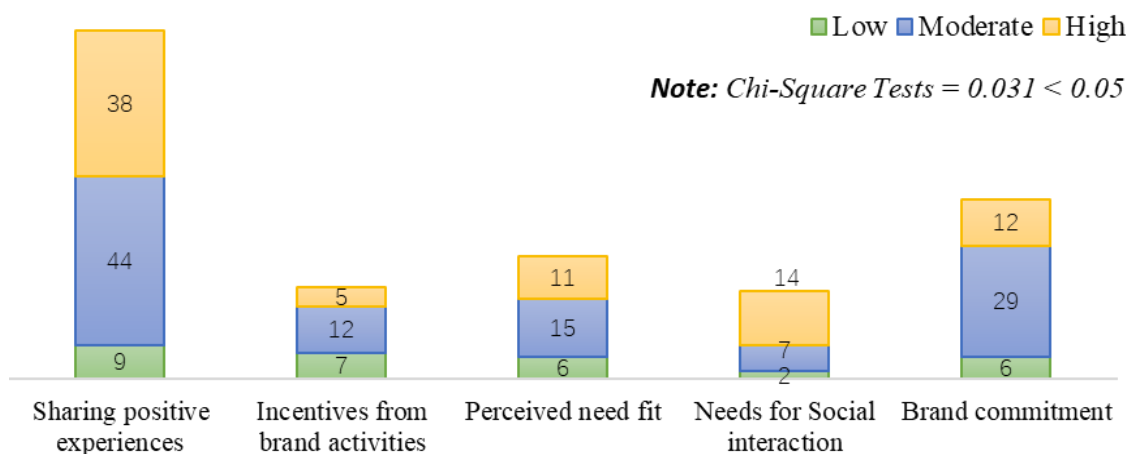


Figure 3. Perceived Value of Regional Products * Brand Recommendation Behavior

Figure 3 delineates brand recommendation behavior patterns across PVRP segments. All groups prioritized sharing positive experiences (Low: 30.0%; Medium: 41.1%; High: 47.5%). For low-PVRP consumers, incentives from brand activities (23.3%) emerged as the secondary factor, characterizing an incentive-driven recommendation pattern. This reflects passive recommendation triggers due to limited intrinsic value recognition, where behavior is contingent on external rewards. Medium-PVRP consumers exhibited brand commitment

(27.1%) as their secondary driver, demonstrating an emotionally identified recommendation pattern. These consumers proactively shared experiences and affirmed brand loyalty without external incentives. High-PVRP consumers prioritized needs for social interaction (17.5%), indicating a social-context-driven recommendation pattern. Here, recommendations were naturally embedded in social interactions, fulfilling both experiential sharing and relational needs, thereby enhancing spontaneity and contextual relevance. These patterns suggest differentiated strategic pathways: reinforcing incentive mechanisms (e.g., cashback, loyalty points) for low-value segments; optimizing experiential quality and brand identity communication to stimulate proactive sharing among medium-value segments; and cultivating social-sharing ecosystems (e.g., community forums, themed events) to facilitate organic recommendations for high-value segments.

4.4 Brand Attribute Preference Data Analysis

Chi-Square Tests revealed a significant association between PVRP and brand attribute preference ($\chi^2 = 18.314$, $p = 0.019$), with Cramer's $V = 0.205$ indicating a clear yet non-dominant influence of perceived value on attribute preferences, contingent on consumption contexts and usage needs. In the overall sample, consumers prioritized ingredient freshness (48.8%) when selecting RP, followed by flavor fidelity (18.0%) and ease of preparation (13.8%), while brand trust (10.1%) and price reasonableness (9.2%) were less influential.

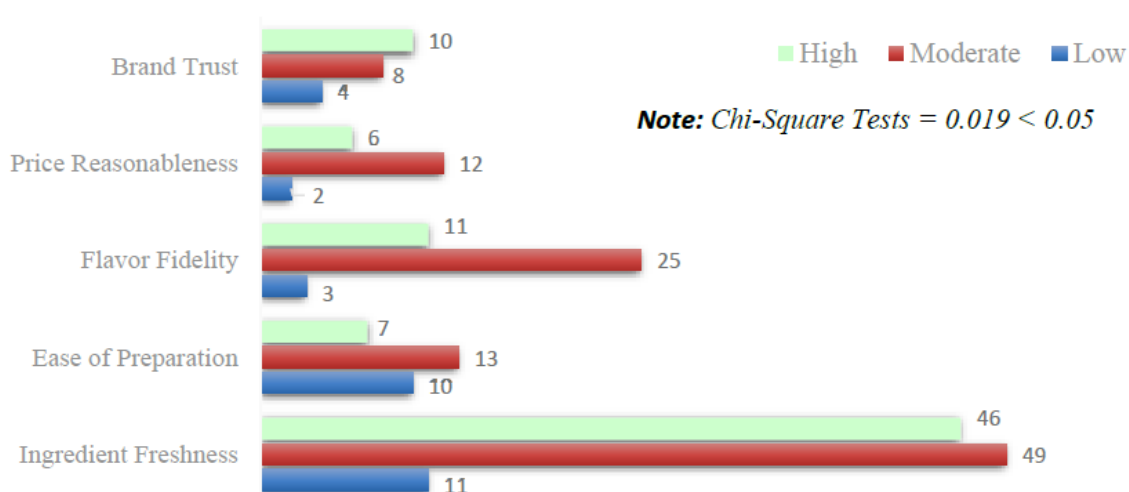


Figure 4. Perceived Value of Regional Products * Brand Attribute Preference

Figure 4 delineates attribute preferences across PVRP segments. The low-PVRP consumers exhibited a convenience-oriented preference, with 36.7% prioritizing ingredient freshness and 33.3% emphasizing ease of preparation. This reflects a focus on reducing consumption friction through convenience, driven by limited recognition of core product value and diminished attention to quality indicators like freshness. The medium-PVRP consumers demonstrated an experience-balanced preference, with 45.8% valuing ingredient freshness and 23.4% prioritizing flavor fidelity. This segment balanced core functional attributes

(freshness) with experiential factors (flavor), while maintaining relatively equitable concern for price reasonableness and brand trust. The high-PVRP consumers displayed a quality-trust preference, with 57.5% focusing on ingredient freshness and 13.8% on flavor fidelity. High value recognition led to prioritization of freshness as a quality foundation and brand trust as a long-term consumption assurance, with markedly reduced sensitivity to ease of preparation. These patterns suggest that low-PVRP consumers reduce consumption friction through convenience, medium-PVRP consumers enhance satisfaction via flavor experiences, and high-PVRP consumers anchor quality perceptions through freshness and trust. This offers strategic directions for regional brands: (1) for low-PVRP consumers, reinforce convenience-oriented designs (e.g., ready-to-eat formats, simplified cooking); (2) for medium-PVRP consumers, emphasize flavor innovation and standardization; (3) for high-PVRP consumers, highlight ingredient traceability, quality certifications, and brand trust endorsements to align with their core attribute demands.

4.5 Brand Usage Situation Data Analysis

Chi-Square Tests reveal a significant association between PVRP and brand usage situation ($\chi^2 = 16.398$, $p = 0.037$), with Cramer's $V = 0.195$ indicating a medium effect of perceived value on context selection, contingent on social needs and usage habits. Across the sample, solitary consumption (34.6%) and weekday meals (34.1%) dominate usage contexts, followed by travel and picnics (17.1%), family gatherings (11.5%), and festive occasions (2.8%).

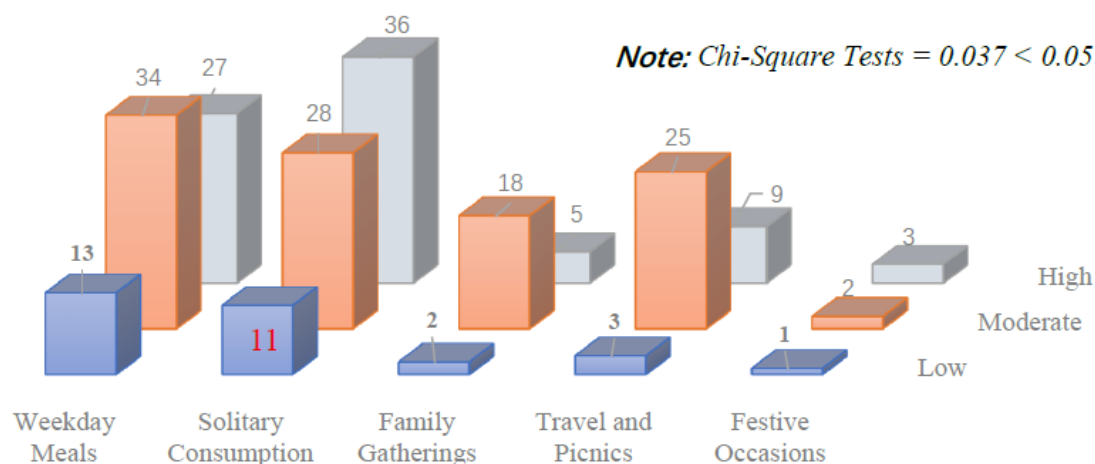


Figure 5. Perceived Value of Regional Products * Brand Usage Situations

Figure 5 reveals divergent consumption context patterns across PVRP segments. Low-PVRP consumers predominantly engage with weekday meals (43.3%) and solitary consumption (36.7%), exhibiting a risk-mitigation orientation where limited value perception drives preference for low-exposure individual scenarios to minimize social scrutiny. Conversely, medium-PVRP consumers distribute engagement across weekday meals (31.8%), solitary consumption (26.2%), and travel and picnics (23.4%), reflecting a social-validation

orientation. Medium value confidence facilitates usage in socially interactive settings such as family sharing and travel activities, leveraging peer feedback to affirm consumption choices. High-PVRP consumers on solitary consumption (45.0%) and weekday meals (33.8%), demonstrating a quality-intrinsic orientation. Substantial trust in product value reduces dependency on social reinforcement, prioritizing individualized quality experiences. These behavioral distinctions inform targeted strategies: low-PVRP consumers respond to convenience-oriented messaging emphasizing individual consumption scenarios including weekday meal solutions and solitary dining options; medium-PVRP consumers engage with socially adaptable product formats such as family-sharing packaging and travel-compatible designs; high-PVRP consumers resonate with quality-centric narratives decoupled from social contexts.

5. Discussion

This study establishes the multifaceted impact of PVRP on consumer behavior through systematic analysis across five behavioral dimensions. The identified value-behavior gradient effect not only extends theoretical understanding of perceived value but also provides actionable guidance for RP marketing. Recognizing these value perception-based behavioral patterns holds strategic significance for regional brands seeking differentiation in competitive markets. Future research could build upon these findings to further explore the behavioral mechanisms underlying value perception, advancing theoretical innovation in RP marketing.

5.1 Theoretical and Empirical Contributions

Cross-dimensional analysis reveals significant associations between PVRP levels and all five consumer behavior dimensions ($p < 0.05$), with Cramer's V coefficients ranging from 0.195 to 0.205, indicating weak-to-medium effect strengths. This confirms perceived value's role as a critical predictor of consumer behavior. Specifically, a distinct value-behavior gradient emerges as PVRP increases from low to high, demonstrating systematic behavioral evolution. First, low-PVRP consumers ($n = 30$, 13.8%) exhibit externally-dependent behavior characterized by reliance on external cues for decision-making (23.3% recommending due to brand incentives), preference formation driven by habitual consumption (56.7%), and usage confined to personal daily contexts (43.3% for weekday meals). This pattern suggests external validation compensates for insufficient intrinsic value cognition. Second, medium-PVRP consumers ($n = 107$, 49.3%) display experience-oriented behavior, showing heightened responsiveness to service quality exceeding expectations (27.1%) and taste authenticity (23.4%). This group demonstrates the strongest propensity for product usage in social settings (23.4% during travel/picnics), aligning with Gildin's (2022) perspective on experiential learning and shared enjoyment. Their behavioral patterns underscore the importance of updating brand evaluations through direct product experiences. Third, high-PVRP consumers ($n = 80$, 36.9%) manifest intrinsically-driven behavior centered on product attributes (57.5% prioritizing ingredient freshness). Their recommendation motivations stem from experience sharing (47.5%) and social needs (17.5%), with deep integration into daily routines (45% for solitary consumption). This pattern aligns with self-determination theory (Khan et al., 2023), indicating that the behavior of high-value

perception consumers is more driven by intrinsic motivation.

From a cultural perspective, the core value of regional products stems from their cultural authenticity and the emotional resonance they foster with the region (Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Juliana et al., 2023; Bharti et al., 2025). This process helps explain the behaviors of different value perception groups. Consumers in the high-value perception group form a deep identification with the cultural meaning of regional products, which elevates their behavior from mere functional satisfaction to cultural expression. For instance, their focus on the freshness of ingredients (57.5%) reflects a trust in the region's natural endowments, while recommending products based on social needs (17.5%) serves as a means of cultural transmission and sharing. Additionally, incorporating these products into daily routines, such as solitary consumption (45%), exemplifies how regional identity is internalized into lifestyle choices. In contrast, low-PVRP consumers fail to recognize the cultural uniqueness of regional products, viewing them merely as ordinary goods. As a result, they rely on external cues, such as user reviews and promotional incentives, to reduce decision-making risks, forming an 'externally dependent' behavior pattern. This closely aligns with studies on consumers' perceptions of regional products that go beyond functional judgments (Merlino et al., 2022; Bharti et al., 2025). Additionally, the findings of Janssen et al. (2021) on the role of cultural signals in enhancing value assessments are reaffirmed. Medium-PVRP consumers prefer service experiences that exceed expectations (27.1%) and use in social contexts (23.4%), reflecting their gradual development of cultural cognition through cultural interactions in service settings (e.g., regional stories conveyed by brands). This group is in the process of transitioning from functional experiences to cultural identification.

In terms of regional differences, the cultural foundations and value endowments of regional products vary naturally across the selected cities of Zhanjiang, Zhuhai, and Shantou in Guangdong Province. Zhanjiang is characterized by its marine ecology, giving rise to the regional label of 'fresh and natural,' while Zhuhai leverages its urban-rural integration advantages to create a product image of 'ecological and healthy.' In contrast, Shantou's focus on traditional culinary craftsmanship embodies the cultural essence of 'heritage and authenticity.' This regional cultural embedding highlights that the consumption of regional products is not just an individual choice but also an expression of collective cultural identity. Therefore, the existing 'value-behavior relationship' is not universally consistent, and it is likely to be influenced by regional cultural characteristics. Future research could further expand the sample coverage to compare regional product consumption behaviors across different provinces and cultural contexts, in order to test the generalizability of the conclusions across regions.

5.2 Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This study advances theoretical understanding in three primary domains. Firstly, it develops the behavioral impact theory of PVRP, demonstrating that perceived value systematically influences not only traditional purchase decisions but also preference formation mechanisms, recommendation motivations, attribute weighting, and consumption scenario selection. This finding extends perceived value research from isolated decision contexts to the entire

ecosystem of consumer behavior, responding to consumers' integration of local emotional attachment with curiosity about traditional craftsmanship, thereby constructing a multidimensional identity through consumption (Sampalean et al., 2021; Jeong & Lee, 2021). Secondly, it proposes the Value-Behavior Gradient Framework, which transcends conventional high-low dichotomies by revealing continuous patterns between perceived value levels and behavioral modes. Specifically, as perceived value increases, consumer behavior evolves from external dependence to intrinsic drive, shifts from utilitarian to experiential orientation, and expands from individual usage to social scenarios. This framework offers a refined theoretical lens for understanding the behavioral consequences of value perception. Thirdly, it establishes a multidimensional behavioral linkage mechanism, identifying intrinsic consistency across five behavioral dimensions: low-PVRP consumers exhibit externally dependent patterns (decision reliance on word-of-mouth, habit-based preferences, incentive-driven recommendations, focus on utilitarian attributes, and individual usage scenarios), whereas high-PVRP consumers demonstrate intrinsically driven patterns (quality-focused decisions, identity-laden preferences, sharing-motivated recommendations, emphasis on safety attributes, and integration into daily scenarios). This multidimensional consistency provides a novel integrative perspective for consumer behavior theory.

In terms of practical implications, this research offers actionable guidance for RP marketing. Firstly, enterprises should implement value-based precision marketing: for low-PVRP consumers, adopt risk-reduction tactics such as free samples and user testimonials; for medium-PVRP consumers, design experience-enhancement programs like cooking workshops and tasting events; for high-PVRP consumers, develop value-reinforcement initiatives including origin traceability and quality certification. Secondly, firms should formulate dimension-synergized marketing strategies. Given the consistency across behavioral dimensions, campaigns should synchronize efforts across multiple domains—for high-PVRP consumers, concurrently emphasizing product quality (decision dimension), brand values (preference dimension), sharing culture (recommendation dimension), ingredient safety (attribute dimension), and daily usage integration (scenario dimension). Finally, companies must establish dynamic value-escalation pathways. The observed value-behavior gradient indicates consumers may transition across value perception levels. Enterprises should design guided progression routes by enhancing product experiential quality and service excellence to facilitate movement from low-PVRP to high-PVRP consumers, thereby maximizing customer lifetime value. Moreover, it must be recognized that the success of regional products depends not only on the inherent quality of the products but also on their capacity to convey cultural narratives and foster a sense of regional identity.

5.3 Research Limitations and Future Directions

This study acknowledges several limitations that provide critical avenues for future scholarly inquiry. The cross-sectional design restricts causal inference regarding the value-behavior relationship, necessitating longitudinal methods to capture the dynamic co-evolution of perceived value and behavioral patterns or experimental paradigms to establish causality through controlled manipulation of value perceptions. In terms of sample size and measurement, the sample population is relatively limited, and although self-report data offers

certain advantages in reflecting individuals' real situations, it may also be subject to bias. Future research should not only expand the sample size to enhance representativeness but also incorporate behavioral big data for multi-regional comparisons. For instance, further exploration into the moderating role of geographical and cultural factors in the value-behavior relationship could provide deeper insights.

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Authors contributions

Manqi Liu was responsible for funding acquisition, investigation, conceptualization, and writing the original draft. Zhihua Xiang was responsible for investigation, data curation, and writing - review. Dr. Wenjie Yang (Corresponding author) was responsible for funding acquisition, investigation, methodology, formal analysis, and writing - review & editing. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Obtained.

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The Publication Ethics Committee of the Macrothink Institute.

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Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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