

**EXPLORING MINDFUL MARKETING TRENDS FOR ELEVATING BRANDING
SUCCESS IN VIETNAM'S TEA INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY OF TEA & COFFEE
SANDALS GROUP**

by

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Dedication

This thesis is respectfully dedicated to my mother, who has raised, loved, and been a great financial resource for me to complete this never-ending path of learning.

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First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family, who have always been my unwavering source of strength and support throughout this challenging journey of study and research. In particular, I am profoundly thankful to my beloved son, who has been not only a great source of encouragement but also the very reason I strive every single day. His smile, his trust, and his loving reminders have given me the determination to persevere and see this journey through to the end.

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING MINDFUL MARKETING TRENDS FOR ELEVATING BRANDING SUCCESS IN VIETNAM'S TEA INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY OF TEA & COFFEE SANDALS GROUP

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2025

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The rise of mindful consumption has driven a shift in the way brands approach and operate marketing, especially in culturally-driven categories like tea in Vietnam. This study aims to explore emerging Mindful Marketing trends and how they impact brand success in the Vietnamese tea industry, through a case study at Tea & Coffee Sandals Group (TCSG). By analyzing the integration of mindfulness into marketing strategies (including elements of Mindful Marketing, authenticity, sustainability, CSR (corporate social responsibility), CSV (creating shared value), branding theories, and cultural relevance), and examining real-world cases where Mindful Marketing has been successfully implemented, this study provides deeper insights into the role of Mindful Marketing in building consumer trust and loyalty for brands. The research results will contribute to modern marketing theory, supplement practical Mindful Marketing solutions for TCSG in the future, as well as orient brand strategies for tea businesses in particular and traditional FMCG businesses in general in Vietnam.

Keyword: Mindful Marketing, branding, Vietnam tea industry, Tea & Coffee Sandal Group

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

As globalization continues to shape business activities and socio-environmental issues become more visible, many businesses have come to view sustainable development not only as an ethical concern but also as a practical strategic consideration (United Nations, 2023). Consumers, especially Millennials and Gen Z, seek brands that are transparent, responsible, and create positive value for the community (Naderi & Van Steenburg, 2018). This trend has led to the attention of Mindful Marketing as a suitable approach. Unlike marketing strategies that emphasize short-term growth, Mindful Marketing focuses on empathy, ethics, and sustainable values throughout the entire brand building process and customer interaction (Sheth et al., 2011). This approach helps businesses communicate more clearly and apply mindful principles in product design, supply chains, and customer experience, which can strengthen responsible and long-term relationships with consumers.

Mindful Marketing is a current trend adopted by businesses in many different industries worldwide (Kumar et al., 2024). Over time, researchers have observed a growing awareness of environmental protection among both businesses and consumers. Therefore, Mindful Marketing is considered a balanced approach to attracting customers, promoting mindful consumption and smart shopping behavior, benefiting society, businesses, and individuals. Numerous studies have shown that today's consumers tend to prefer brands that demonstrate transparency, social responsibility, and humanistic values (Kotler et al., 2021; Naderi & Van Steenburg, 2018).

In recent years, consumers in the US and Europe have shifted from shopping driven by emotion and convenience to mindful choices about personal well-being and social responsibility (Simon-Kucher, 2024). According to a global survey by McKinsey (2024), 82% of consumers in the US and 73% in the UK consider health and “well-being” a top priority in their personal lives, rather than focusing solely on basic needs. In this context, Mindful Marketing becomes a way for brands to not only sell products but

also convey ethical values, support trust building, and promote social responsibility, aligning with the trend towards sustainable consumption. Typically, according to Newar & Chetry (2024, p. 5), “Mindful Marketing focuses on building long-term emotional relationships with consumers by prioritizing sincerity, transparency, and ethical engagement over short-term sales tactics.”

While synchronizing the entire organizational structure is a necessary strategy for implementing Mindful Marketing activities, it is not a prerequisite. Businesses can initiate Mindful Marketing activities at any stage, at any scale, and in any form to achieve effective results (Vogus and Sutcliffe, 2012).

Many international brands in the tea and beverage industry have successfully applied Mindful Marketing with an ethical, community, and sustainable approach, such as Pukka Herbs (UK), which stands out with its goal of “creating an ethical circle” for growers, employees, and the community. This brand was certified B Corp UK, Fair for Life, carbon neutral in 2019, and committed to donating 1% of its revenue to social and environmental causes (Unsustainable Magazine, 2021). This clearly demonstrates its dedication and full implementation of its Mindful Marketing policy. Tazo Tea (USA, owned by Unilever): launched the "Tazo Tree Corps" campaign in 2021, focusing on climate justice and increasing the number of trees in minority communities. The brand employs members of the BIPOC community, supports travel and childcare costs, aiming for a practical and socially ethical goal. At the same time, Tazo is also aiming for a completely renewable supply chain by 2029, affirming its seriousness about sustainability (AdExchanger, 2021). Tata Tea (India), thanks to its “Jaago Reh” campaign focusing on promoting a green lifestyle and raising public awareness, has created sustainable brand recognition and a strong impact on consumer behavior (Mukhopadhyay & Jose, 2024).

According to Sheth et al. (2011), ethical and Mindful Marketing can change consumer behavior, building trust and long-term brand loyalty. Evidence from food export industries (such as Kalleh and Solico in Iran) shows that green marketing strategies significantly increase brand loyalty and recognition (Mohammadi et al., 2023). These cases provide a practical basis for affirming the effectiveness of Mindful Marketing in the beverage industry, especially tea and coffee. These lessons can inspire food and beverage brands in the Vietnamese context.

In addition, pioneering businesses are replacing market rules with a new, more advanced model called Disruptive Innovation (Christensen & Raynor, 2003). A prime example is Luckin Coffee in China, developed on a mobile application platform, an O2O model, and data-driven (Wang, 2024). They quickly captured market share by overcoming the limitations of traditional operations. In the Industry 4.0 era, technologies such as AI, IoT, blockchain, and big data have driven the real-time collection and analysis of customer data. Therefore, Mindful Marketing can be deeply integrated with user experience, such as personalization, transparent supply chains, and "clean label" products, to create new, sustainable and differentiated value in the market. In short, Mindful Marketing combined with disruptive innovation and Industry 4.0 technology delivers a "mindful - digital - responsible" brand positioning approach, aligning with the psychology and needs of modern consumers.

In the context of the Vietnamese tea industry, Mindful Marketing is not simply a trend from developed economies, but an approach that may bring meaningful change to traditional industries like tea. Vietnam ranks fifth in the world in raw tea exports, after China, India, Kenya, and Sri Lanka (Thu Huong, 2024), a position that reflects potential but also raises questions about its ability to create added value. Vietnamese finished tea products have not yet achieved a commensurate presence in the international market, and even domestically, many brands have not built a clear identity. This gap reflects limitations in brand strategy as well as the level of connection that products can create with consumers.

In East Asia, tea is part of spiritual life and rituals, and Vietnam shares this tradition (Nishimura et al., 2010). This creates a cultural foundation that Mindful Marketing can leverage in a way that both respects identity and creates new value. However, incorporating cultural elements into marketing strategy requires businesses to recognize the line between inheritance and over-interpretation. Cultural elements are only truly effective when used cautiously, especially in a market where consumers are increasingly sensitive to authenticity.

Consumer trends in Vietnam are shifting towards prioritizing health, the environment, and transparency. Data from NielsenIQ (2023) and PwC (2024a; 2024b) show that consumers are willing to pay higher prices for sustainable and traceable products. This is not just a theoretical statement, as behaviors such as using reusable bags, sorting waste, or choosing brands that contribute positively to the

environment are becoming increasingly common. Observing the emergence of tea and coffee spaces in major cities reveals a growing demand for quiet and focused experiences, especially among young people. However, these trends should be understood within their own context, reflecting more of the urban consumer segment than the entire market.

At the same time, the development of e-commerce and digital technology is changing how F&B businesses build and deliver value. Platforms like TikTok Shop and Shopee expand customer reach in ways that traditional methods couldn't (Vietnam Briefing, 2023). Technologies associated with Industry 4.0, including AI, IoT, and blockchain, support more consistent data collection, analysis, and communication. The Vietnamese government's digital transformation policy (Vietnam National Assembly, 2023) further reinforces this. Research by Ha and Trinh (2023) also shows that a high level of digitalization is often accompanied by the ability to build more sustainable brands. When combined with Mindful Marketing, technology not only optimizes operations but also opens up opportunities to convey messages more persuasively and with greater depth.

TCSG provides a relevant case of how a domestic brand integrates traditional values with Mindful Marketing practices. The brand's focus on organic ingredients, sustainable packaging design, and human-centered storytelling, which reflect the spirit of Bahl et al. (2016). However, there is still a lack of systematic academic research evaluating the application of Mindful Marketing in the Vietnamese tea industry. This creates a significant gap, especially as the tea industry faces the need for transformation in both market and technology. Therefore, choosing TCSG as a case study is not only logical but also necessary to examine how cultural, technological, and consumer behavior factors interact within a traditional industry. The results from this case study can offer guidance for other tea businesses and contribute to efforts to enhance the position of Vietnamese tea in the international market.

1.2 Research Problem

1.2.1 Theoretical Gap

Although Mindful Marketing has been studied and applied in many different fields by numerous scholars, most current research focuses on modern and highly innovative industries such as fashion, cosmetics, and fast food (Sheth et al., 2011; Naderi & Van Steenburg, 2018). In these fields, consumers

are often attracted by values such as aesthetics, personalization, and modern lifestyles, easily combined with mindfulness elements such as organic products, environmentally friendly marketing campaigns, or humanistic messaging. However, the tea industry has distinctly different characteristics. It is a field deeply rooted in culture, tradition, and community elements, especially in the context of Asian countries like Vietnam – where tea drinking is not just a consumer behavior but also part of cultural heritage and social rituals (Thuy et al., 2023). Therefore, applying Mindful Marketing to the tea industry requires adjusting the theory and approach to suit this specific cultural context. Furthermore, in Vietnam, there is no systematic academic research on how Mindful Marketing can support the development of tea brands, simultaneously preserving traditional values and appealing to younger generations of consumers who are more concerned with health, environmental factors, and emotional experiences (PwC, 2024; NielsenIQ, 2023). This gap creates an urgent need for in-depth research to expand and verify the feasibility of Mindful Marketing theory in the tea industry, where balancing modernization and traditional preservation is a major challenge for businesses.

1.2.2 Practical Gap

In practice, the application of Mindful Marketing in the Vietnamese tea industry shows a gap between expectations and applicability. Although this concept has been explored in many sectors worldwide, the domestic tea industry still lacks a sufficiently clear strategic framework to guide businesses in operating effectively. Most tea brands still rely on traditional methods, which struggle to create emotional connections with the growing number of young consumers. Millennials and Gen Z tend to prioritize transparency, social responsibility, and sustainability in brand choices (Naderi and Van Steenburg, 2018; NielsenIQ, 2023), but businesses lack the appropriate tools to meet these values.

Despite the growing role of digital technologies in the business environment, many tea enterprises have not yet used these tools effectively to enhance customer experience or to systematically shape consumer awareness. International examples such as Tata Tea, with its application that helps users trace product origins and assess environmental impact (Tata Consumer Products, 2024), demonstrate the potential of technology in reinforcing ethical values and promoting sustainable consumption. Conversely, the majority of F&B businesses in Vietnam have only digitized basic operations, lacking integration

between technology and brand strategy (Vietnam Investment Review, 2025). Instead of using Big Data or blockchain to create supply chain transparency and personalize experiences, many businesses still prioritize trade fairs, outdoor advertising, or mass promotional programs. The Digital Drag report shows that 60% of global F&B businesses struggle to integrate technology into their brand strategy (TraceGains, 2025), and many experts believe this situation is even more serious in Vietnam. This makes it difficult for businesses to convey humanistic values or create a community of mindful consumers, two core elements of Mindful Marketing. From this reality, building a Mindful Marketing framework suitable for the Vietnamese tea context becomes urgent. A clear strategic framework not only helps businesses preserve traditional values but also supports conquering the younger customer group, who seek a combination of awareness and technology. If the current gap is not addressed, the Vietnamese tea industry risks maintaining its role as an exporter of raw materials with low added value and missing the opportunity to build strong brands. International competitors such as Twinings, Tazo Tea, and Ito En have systematically applied Mindful Marketing, transparently managing their supply chains, telling in-depth brand stories, and leveraging sustainability as a core value (Kumar et al., 2024). As Vietnamese consumers increasingly prioritize health and ethics (NielsenIQ, 2023), continuing to rely on traditional methods makes it difficult for businesses to maintain market share. PwC (2024) noted that 72% of young consumers are willing to switch to imported brands if they feel they align with their personal values. In the context of global competition and increasingly rapid technological innovation, slow adaptation means losing ground even in the domestic market.

1.3 Purpose of Research

1.3.1 Academic Purpose

Based on the issues discussed, this study aims to explore the applicability of Mindful Marketing and analyze its impact on brand development in the Vietnamese tea industry, with Sandals Tea & Coffee Group (TCSG) chosen as a case study. This objective stems from the fact that although Mindful Marketing has been widely discussed globally (Sheth et al., 2011; Kotler et al., 2021), almost no research has examined this approach in the Vietnamese tea industry, a sector rich in cultural values and needing to adapt to the rapidly changing tastes of modern consumers. Therefore, this study contributes to bridging the

theoretical gap and simultaneously provides practical guidance for tea businesses seeking sustainable development models.

The first specific objective is to survey the level of awareness and practice of Mindful Marketing in Vietnamese tea businesses. This helps to outline the current context, understand how values such as sustainability and authenticity are integrated into brand strategy, and identify gaps for improvement. The second objective is to identify internal and external factors affecting the applicability of Mindful Marketing, from organizational culture to consumer behavior and technological conditions. Clarifying these factors helps businesses recognize what are the drivers and barriers in the transformation process. The third objective focuses on analyzing the impact of Mindful Marketing on aspects such as trust, emotional connection, and brand differentiation. This forms the basis for evaluating the suitability of this strategy in the tea industry. Finally, the research aims to propose recommendations for TCSG and other tea businesses to integrate Mindful Marketing in a feasible way, contributing to strengthening brand identity and enhancing competitiveness in an increasingly open market.

1.3.2 Personal Purpose

Beyond academic and practical considerations, this study reflects the author's professional background and sustained interest in Marketing and Brand Management. Throughout years of teaching and research, the author has consistently sought models that can reconcile business growth with community values, especially in the context of sustainable development becoming a global standard. This makes the Mindful Marketing approach relevant both academically and practically.

The author also pays special attention to Vietnamese tea, not only as an industry but as a part of cultural life. The desire to see this product better positioned in the international market has been a key motivation for choosing this topic. The author believes that developing a mindful tea brand is a way to both generate economic benefits and contribute to preserving cultural values.

As a lecturer, the author also believes that case studies from Vietnamese businesses will provide students with additional strategic perspectives. Therefore, this research not only supplements academic knowledge but also reflects the author's personal desire to contribute to the field and to the generation of students they are mentoring.

1.3.3 Research Subject

This research focuses on Mindful Marketing and its impact on brand building in the Vietnamese tea industry, with Sandals Tea & Coffee Group (TCSG) as a case study. The study examines how the company integrates mindful values such as authenticity, transparency, empathy, and ethics into its brand strategy, as well as the effectiveness of Mindful Marketing tools in practice.

Furthermore, the research analyzes consumer responses, particularly from Millennials and Gen Z, customer groups with strong concerns about sustainability, the environment, and social responsibility. The combination of business perspectives and consumer behavior clarifies the relevance of Mindful Marketing to the development of Vietnamese tea brands in the current competitive environment.

1.3.4 Research Scope

Scope of Content

This study focuses on Mindful Marketing in the context of tea branding, covering three main areas: how businesses apply mindful values in their brand strategy, factors shaping the applicability of this approach and specific activities implemented by TCSG in practice.

Spatial Scope

The study is set within the context of the Vietnamese tea market and also references the experiences of several international brands for comparison and relevant lessons.

Temporal Scope

The analysis focuses on the period 2018–2025, a time when mindful consumption and sustainable development trends have become more prominent, especially after the pandemic and the accelerated digital transformation process.

Limitations

The study only considers the tea industry and a typical case study. Therefore, the results may not reflect the entire F&B industry or the entire Vietnamese tea market.

1.3.5 Research methods

The research methodology of this thesis is designed to answer all research questions while accurately reflecting the complexity of the Mindful Marketing topic in the Vietnamese tea industry. The

study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to explore both the depth and breadth of the issue. Placing the two methods side-by-side not only complements but also verifies each other, leading to more reliable results.

In the initial phase, qualitative research was conducted to build a conceptual foundation and identify factors related to the practical application of Mindful Marketing. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with experts in marketing, branding, and the F&B industry, as well as key leaders of TCSG. These discussions provided practical insights into how the company understands and applies values such as authenticity, transparency, and ethics to its brand strategy. Simultaneously, secondary document analysis helps the author compare the Vietnamese context with international studies and models, thereby systematizing core concepts and development trends of Mindful Marketing. Synthesis, comparative analysis, and classification methods are used to build a suitable theoretical framework, while clarifying gaps requiring further investigation.

Qualitative results serve as a guide for the quantitative phase. Based on topics derived from interviews and document analysis, a survey was developed to measure the level of awareness, attitudes, and mindful consumption behavior of Vietnamese tea consumers, with a focus on Millennials and Gen Z. The survey also aims to examine factors influencing the applicability of Mindful Marketing in businesses, from organizational strengths to market expectations. Data is then processed using descriptive analysis methods to identify prominent trends and response patterns.

A mixed-methods approach was chosen to reflect the nature and complexity of the research topic. Applying Mindful Marketing to the tea industry requires both an understanding of the cultural and organizational context and quantitative evidence to assess its relevance and scalability. Qualitative methods provide a starting point, while quantitative methods help to strengthen and test the hypotheses formed. As a result, the research can draw conclusions and make recommendations that are highly practical and relevant to the specific characteristics of the Vietnamese tea industry.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study aims to broaden understanding of Mindful Marketing in a unique industry like Vietnamese tea, where traditional cultural values coexist with the pressure for innovation. With rising

consumer expectations for transparency, sustainability, and emotional engagement, the tea industry is increasingly required to adapt. The tension between traditional practices and contemporary market demands gives this topic both theoretical relevance and managerial importance.

1.4.1 Theoretical contributions

International studies on Mindful Marketing often focus on fast-paced industries such as fashion, cosmetics, or fast food (Sheth et al., 2011; Naderi & Van Steenburg, 2018). Few studies have examined this approach in a highly identity-driven field like tea, where cultural values form a unique contextual layer. Bringing Mindful Marketing into this context enriches the theoretical foundation and demonstrates how mindfulness principles can be adapted to industries deeply influenced by tradition.

The research also clarifies the role of mindful consumer behavior in emerging markets, where consumers seek both familiar values and access to globally emerging sustainable norms. These analyses open up a new theoretical space, allowing for deeper discussion of the intersection of culture, technology, and sustainable brand strategy. Viewed from that perspective, Mindful Marketing is not just a set of tools but becomes a way of building a brand based on understanding people and their social context (Kotler et al., 2021).

1.4.2 Practical contributions

In practical terms, the research provides a systematic view of how tea businesses can mindfully transform their strategies. Analyzing the current state of the industry, the driving forces, and the obstacles within the organization helps businesses better understand the path they need to take to enhance their competitiveness. The study moves beyond market-level analysis to emphasize the role of people across the process, particularly in terms of creative capacity, technological competence, and sustainability-oriented thinking. All of these are necessary conditions for an effective Mindful Marketing strategy.

Besides human resources, leadership culture also emerges as the foundation of transformation. When leaders demonstrate commitment and the ability to lead change, mindfulness values can be infused into the organizational structure and become a driving force for long-term development (Boeske, 2023). Finally, the findings from this research can assist regulatory bodies and industry associations in developing policies to enhance the brand image of Vietnamese tea in the international market.

1.5 Research Purpose and Questions

The rapid shift in consumer behavior in the digital age shows that today's customers are not only concerned with product quality but also with health, the environment, and ethical values related to the production process (Kotler et al., 2021; Naderi & Van Steenburg, 2018). In this context, the Vietnamese tea industry faces the need to innovate its branding strategies while maintaining the cultural depth that characterizes the industry.

Although Mindful Marketing has been widely discussed in many international fields (Sheth et al., 2011), its application to the Vietnamese tea industry has been largely unstudied. Most businesses still rely on traditional methods, paying little attention to mindful experiences or digital technology to create a genuine connection with the younger generation of consumers. This gap highlights the need to develop a strategic framework that can help tea businesses shift from a product-centric mindset to a value- and people-centric one.

The aim of this study is to explore the role of Mindful Marketing in the development of Vietnamese tea brands, focusing on the case of Sandals Tea & Coffee Group (TCSG). This objective stems from the urgent need to reshape brand strategy towards sustainability and awareness, while meeting the new expectations of domestic and international consumers.

Through analyzing the core elements of Mindful Marketing and consumer responses to these values, the study aims to build a solid theoretical foundation and provide practical guidance for Vietnamese tea businesses in their brand innovation process.

Research Questions

To achieve the study's objectives, this research is guided by the following central research question:

- 1) *How does the application of Mindful Marketing affect the branding process in the Vietnamese tea industry?*
- 2) *What role do the elements of Mindful Marketing play in the branding process?*
- 3) *Why does the Vietnamese tea industry need to apply Mindful Marketing in the current context?*
- 4) *What Mindful Marketing activities and tools will be used in the brand development plan of Tea & Coffee Sandals Group (TCSG)?*

5) *How does Mindful Marketing impact consumer awareness, emotional connection and brand loyalty in the Vietnamese tea market?*

These research questions define the specific gap that this thesis seeks to address. Most studies on Mindful Marketing to date have focused on developed markets, while the Vietnamese tea industry presents a completely different context. Answering these questions will also provide a basis for evaluating the applicability of Mindful Marketing in a traditional industry facing pressure for innovation, and offer strategic direction for tea businesses in building sustainable brands and enhancing competitiveness in both domestic and international markets.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the fundamental theories and related concepts to build a scientific basis for the research. The synthesis and analysis of theories not only help shape research thinking but also create a foundation for developing a suitable conceptual basis for the topic. In particular, theories on mindfulness, consumer behavior, branding and sustainable development will be selected and combined to address the research questions. This approach is the author's desire for the thesis to have both academic value and be closely linked to the practical context of the Vietnamese tea industry in the period of digital transformation and integration.

2.1.1 Definitions

2.1.1.1 Mindful Marketing

Mindfulness

When it comes to mindfulness, we cannot help but mention Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh who is a Vietnamese monk, peace activist and pioneer in bringing mindfulness to the world. He became a monk at the age of 16 and founded Engaged Buddhism, combining mindfulness practice with social activities (King, 2021). According to Thich Nhat Hanh, mindfulness is a multidimensional concept, combining mind-body awareness and the relationship between the individual and the surrounding world, which he calls "interbeing" (Hanh, 1998).

In his writings, Thich Nhat Hanh defined mindfulness as "awareness" and "deep contemplation" (Hanh, 2006, p. 9), focusing on the present (Hanh, 1976, p. 11). He emphasizes the proactive nature of mindfulness: "When you see, you must act" (Hanh, 1991, p. 91).

From its Buddhist foundation, mindfulness has been interpreted in various ways by modern scholars, reflecting the shifts in this concept across historical and cultural contexts. In early Buddhist scriptures such as the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, mindfulness was linked to the socio-economic conditions of the era and viewed as a practice aimed at transforming human perception and worldview (Bodhi, 2000;

Nyanasatta, 1993). However, when mindfulness was introduced into a Western context, particularly in therapeutic fields and contemporary life, some scholars questioned the risk of its cultural depth being simplified. Carrette and King (2005) argue that Westernization has gradually transformed mindfulness into a tool serving personal and consumer goals, detached from its original metaphysical and ethical foundations. From this perspective, an integrated approach to mindfulness, respecting tradition while reflecting modern needs, is considered necessary to avoid discrepancies in practice.

In this development, mindfulness has also been defined through various academic lenses. Langer (1989) emphasizes mindfulness as a flexible cognitive state that allows individuals to break free from old patterns to receive new information and context. In the fields of medicine and psychology, Kabat-Zinn (1994) approaches mindfulness as intentional attention to the present moment, accompanied by a non-judgmental attitude, while Brown and Ryan (2003) view it as a cognitive capacity that improves health and reduces stress. These definitions tend to converge when Bishop et al. (2004) describe mindfulness as a process of self-regulation of attention, combined with openness and acceptance of experience. Shapiro et al. (2006) further expanded this understanding by emphasizing that mindfulness is not just a skill, but a lifestyle that shapes how people are present and act in the contemporary world.

Mindful Marketing

Mindful Marketing is a historical concept that reflects the shift in marketing approaches from profit-centric strategies to strategies that emphasize sustainable value and social responsibility. Mindfulness is considered a state of awareness of the present moment, which becomes the foundation for Mindful Marketing (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Mindful Marketing encourages businesses to listen and understand their customers in each moment, thereby making marketing decisions that are both relevant and meaningful.

Mindful Marketing does not only focus on profits but also creates value for customers, society, and the environment (Sheth et al., 2011). Applying mindfulness principles in marketing helps businesses balance commercial goals with social responsibility, thereby helping to shape Mindful Marketing into a comprehensive marketing philosophy with greater development.

Mindful Marketing is also considered as building deep relationships with customers by understanding their needs, emotions and values (Langer 1989). According to Langer, creating positive and meaningful experiences for customers is a core element of Mindful Marketing. With the same opinion, Garcia-Ruiz and Rodriguez-Lluesma (2014) emphasized that Mindful Marketing reflects a business's ethical commitment to conducting marketing activities responsibly. They argued that transparency, fairness, and respect for customer rights are indispensable principles in Mindful Marketing.

Purser & Milillo (2015) argue that Mindful Marketing is a comprehensive approach that combines strategic thinking with sensitivity to social issues which focusing not only on selling products but also on creating positive change in the community.

Kotler & Keller (2016) explain that Mindful Marketing is a strategy that attempts to achieve business objectives and social obligations simultaneously, thus requiring an in-depth appreciation of the impact of marketing activities on stakeholders.

Linh and Giang (2025) advanced the discussion about Mindful Marketing by adding that it should start with the self-imposed discipline that businesses must think over and evaluate their marketing actions vis-a-vis their stated values and long-term vision to make effective responsible marketing campaigns.

Mindful Consumption

Sheth and Sisodia (2006) approach mindful consumption as a way of re-examining the nature of consumer behavior, beyond the physical attributes of products. In this understanding, consumption is not just about what is bought, but also about the manner and purpose of that action, thereby forcing individuals to reflect on the broader meaning of consumption in social life.

Developing from this perspective, Sheth et al. (2011) define mindful consumption as a balance between personal gain and social, ethical, and environmental concerns. Consumption, in this context, becomes a responsible behavior, aimed at reducing waste and promoting sustainable development rather than merely satisfying short-term needs.

Bahl et al. (2016) emphasize the experiential aspect of mindful consumption, viewing it as a state of full presence in each purchasing decision. When consumers clearly recognize the true value of a product or service, they tend to limit unnecessary spending and avoid impulsive purchasing decisions.

In the context of digitalization, Smith et al. (2024a) argue that digital tools can support consumers in becoming more responsible by raising awareness of the consequences of consumer behavior and promoting sustainable choices.

At the societal level, Lorek & Fuchs (2013) expand this concept by suggesting that mindful consumption is not only an individual behavior but also the result of interaction between communities. Through knowledge sharing and building support networks, mindful consumption gradually emerges as a social norm towards ethics and sustainability.

Mindful Products

Mindful products have also been claimed to incorporate other values aside from the environment, such as social ethical values like concern for the employee's welfare, non-discriminatory and non-exploitative employment practices, and decent working conditions (Bahl et al., 2016).

Further, Bahl et al. (2019) argue that mindful products go beyond meeting users' physical needs by creating experiences that are deeply valued, as they encourage individuals to savour the present moment and reconnect more consciously with themselves and their immediate surroundings.

Mindful Consumers

More recently, Milne et al. (2020) have characterized mindful consumers as people who incorporate the concept of mindfulness within the process of consuming. They take time to self-evaluate to consider their genuine needs, refrain from making unnecessary purchases, and concentrate on what is useful. This self-regulation enables them to balance consumption with the pursuit of individual contentment.

Mindful Leadership

Brown and Ryan (2003) emphasized that Mindful Leadership involves building deep and genuine relationships with employees. Mindful leaders are those who listen, understand, and respect others' opinions, thereby creating a trusting and supportive work environment.

With the recent technological boom, Mindful Leadership has been redefined to emphasize the role of technology and adaptability in the digital age. Lorek & Fuchs (2013) suggested that mindful leaders in

the digital era must be able to manage rapid change, use technology responsibly, and maintain connections with employees in remote work environments.

Mindful Communication

According to Wrench et al. (2021), mindful communication is an interaction process in which both the speaker and listener maintain full presence, listen deeply, and respond in a non-judgmental manner. This concept emphasizes being present in the moment, regulating emotions, and quickly adapting to changes in the conversation. It is not only a skill for exchanging information, but also a means of building empathy, reducing conflict, and enhancing emotional connection. Mindful communication plays a fundamental role in modern leadership, marketing, and customer relationship management strategies.

In the Mindfulness in Organizations (MIO) program in Thailand, Kumprang & Suriyankietkaew (2024) emphasized mindful communication as a fundamental component of workplace mindfulness practice. They describe workshops that include “mindful communication” exercises that encourage participants to communicate in a thoughtful and attentive manner: thinking before speaking, listening actively, and giving constructive feedback. Through this, communication becomes not only a tool for exchanging information but also a means of building deep connections, enhancing mutual understanding, and contributing to fostering an honest, respectful, and inclusive work environment.

Mindful Marketing and Ethical marketing

Murphy and Lacznia (1990) emphasized that Mindful Marketing and Ethical Marketing have a close relationship, in which both aim to create value for customers and society. While Ethical Marketing focuses on compliance with ethical principles in business, Mindful Marketing complements by emphasizing a deep awareness of the impact of marketing decisions.

Until later years, Lantos (2002) pointed out that Mindful Marketing can be considered the foundation for Ethical Marketing. According to him, practicing mindfulness in marketing helps managers become more aware of ethical issues and thereby make more responsible marketing decisions. This helps businesses not only comply with ethical standards but also make a positive difference in society.

E- Mindfulness Marketing

O’Leary et al. (2024) argues that digital tools can help businesses track and evaluate the impact of marketing campaigns in a transparent and accountable manner, thereby effectively combining mindfulness and ethics in marketing in the digital age.

Escandon-Barbosa et al. (2024) finds that consumer mindfulness moderates the relationship between technological stress and digital shopping attitudes, suggesting a role for mindfulness in creating healthier, more conscientious digital experiences.

This concept has been expanded by emphasizing that E-Mindful Marketing is concerned with providing honesty and accountability within business digital marketing practices. It is necessary for businesses to make digital marketing strategies that are beneficial not only to the business, but also to the consumers' privacy and rights.

Applying these theories of Mindful Marketing in the study not only helps to shape a solid theoretical foundation, but also facilitates a comprehensive assessment of the relationship between tea brands and consumers in the modern context. These concepts contribute to clarifying how brands can create sustainable value, enhance emotional connections, promote responsible consumption and strengthen trust from stakeholders which are key factors in enhancing brand success in the Vietnamese tea industry.

2.1.1.2 Branding

Brand

As Aaker (1980) defined it as a collection of elements like name, symbol, design, and other features which aid in differentiating a business’ products or services from its competitors, Brand is not only a marketing tool, but a priceless intangible asset that aids in building trust and loyalty among customers.

The concept of brand has been expanded with the “Customer Based Brand Equity” model Keller (1993) introduced. He thinks that a brand not only encompasses a product, but also encompasses the emotions, values, and meanings it evokes and is regarded as a set of associations and perceptions which customers have, based on interaction and communication over time.

Kapferer (2010) noted that a brand is a complex system of identity and image elements, culture, customer relations which defines the brand.

Deloitte (2024) pointed that a brand is more than its outward image, as it reflects the interaction between technology, customer experience, and core values. These days, brands do not only exist in the real world, they transcend to the virtual one where engagement and personalization is pivotal to fostering customer loyalty.

Branding

According to Aaker (1995), the development and maintenance of a brand's value is aimed at creating value for both the business and the customer. He emphasized that a brand is not only recognized but also creates awareness, loyalty and positive relationships, making it a strategy to gain an advantage over competitors.

According to Keller and Lehmann (2006), a brand is the continuous reinforcement of the consumer's connection with the brand. They stated that a prominent brand is not only recognizable but also evokes distinct values and emotions, which differentiates it from competitors. Consistency in messaging and interaction with customers is essential for building an effective brand.

According to Edelman (2022), branding in the digital era is the process of building trust and transparency by combining core values, customer experience, and social responsibility. Edelman emphasized that modern branding is not only profit-driven but also aims to create a positive impact on society and the environment. Successful brands are those that listen and respond promptly to the increasingly high expectations of consumers.

Brand Identity

Kapferer (1996) stated that Brand Identity is everything that is associated with the brand when describing it to the audience. Brand Identity is considered to comprise elements like the brand name, the logo, the slogan, and core values which the brand associates with. This helps the brand create differentiation and clear recognition in the minds of consumers.

Brand Loyalty

In 2001, Oliver defined Brand Loyalty as the deep commitment of consumers to repurchase or support a specific brand, despite environmental influences and competitive marketing efforts. According

to him, Brand Loyalty is not just repurchase behavior but also includes emotional attachment and trust in the brand (Oliver, 2001).

Brand Experience

Brakus et al. (2009) defined Brand Experience as the set of sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses of consumers triggered by brand-related stimuli. According to them, Brand Experience includes not only physical interactions but also emotional and mental interactions, creating a deep connection with the brand.

Brand Equity

Aaker (1991) defined Brand Equity as the added worth that a brand bestows on products or services it is associated with and often measured by Brand Awareness, Customer Loyalty and Perceived Quality. He stated that Brand Equity is not just an intangible asset but a logical business asset that can be conceptualized and managed strategically from the top down.

Brand Love

Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) stated the concept of Brand Love is a deep mindful and submindful emotional attachment of consumers towards brands.

His studies recorded by their research demonstrated this was probably true as they investigated and found that Brand Love is more than just satisfaction but also excitement, passion long term loyalty toward brands by foundation.

Brand Authenticity

Brand authenticity is understood as the extent to which consumers perceive a brand to represent its core values, be consistent and transparent in all activities. Authenticity helps brands build trust and deep relationships with customers, especially in the context of modern markets where consumers increasingly value ethics and social responsibility. The authors emphasize that a brand is considered “authentic” when it reflects genuineness, preserves heritage and demonstrates transparency in messages and actions (Napoli et al., 2014).

2.1.1.3 Tea and Tea-Drinking Culture

Tea

Tea is the beverage made from the leaves of certain species of evergreen *camellia sinensis* and has been drunk for thousands of years, particularly among Asian societies such as those in China and India. Chacko et al. (2010) focused tea has dual importance as a cultural food and medicine, where its polyphenolic compounds (especially catechin) have highly strong antioxidant properties, free radical scavenging.

Tea became one of the major consumed beverage all over the world. Yang and Wang (2010) found epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG) in unfermented green tea to be most potent for cancer prevention, cardiovascular protection, weight management and cognitive function by way of metabolic stimulation.

Tea types were attributed the health benefits (Abiri et al, 2023) as inversely fully fermented black tea's theaflavins promote cardiovascular and digestive health while minimally processed white tea demonstrates superior anti-aging antioxidants. This diversity shows the nutritional aspects of tea.

Tea-Drinking Culture

Tea drinking culture is an ideal environment to implement Mindful Marketing strategies. By exploiting cultural depth (e.g. Shan Tuyet tea, tea-serving customs), businesses can build their brands not only through products but also through cultural experiences (Yang, 2024). Tea, derived from *Camellia sinensis*, has been consumed for millennia, especially in Asia, serving both nutritional and medicinal purposes. Rich in polyphenols like catechins, tea demonstrates antioxidant, anti-aging, and disease-prevention properties (Khan & Mukhtar, 1999). Green tea, noticeably EGCG, has been shown to support cancer prevention, cardiovascular health, weight management, and cognition (Abiri et al., 2023).

In addition to its nutritional and medicinal value, tea is also a profound cultural symbol that has been associated with Asian civilizations for thousands of years. In China, Gongfu Cha (tea ceremony) is not simply a method of making tea but has developed into an art form, reflecting the sophistication, family and community connection in each tea-drinking action (d'Abbs, 2019). Meanwhile, in Japan, Chanoyu (tea ceremony) is associated with Zen philosophy and the principle of harmony-respect-purity-tranquility (wa-kei-sei-jaku), promoting respect, balance and tranquility, turning tea-drinking into a highly artistic ritual (Nippon, 2017). In Korea, the Darye ritual, meaning tea ceremony, is practiced to express hospitality and harmony between people and nature, reflecting the Confucian and Buddhist values of tranquility and

gratitude (Chae, 2015). In Vietnam, the daily green tea culture is especially prominent with Shan Tuyet tea that is a centuries-old tea tree growing in the highlands of Ha Giang and has been recognized as a Vietnamese heritage tree. Shan Tuyet tea not only has economic value but is also a cultural heritage, demonstrating the connection between nature, people and local traditions (VietnamPlus, 2022).

These cultural values provide a solid foundation for businesses to exploit in their Mindful Marketing strategy, where brands not only focus on products but also bring cultural experiences, emotional connections and human values to customers.

Around the world, tea culture has adapted flexibly to each region, carrying profound cultural values. In the United Kingdom, the afternoon tea ceremony has become a symbol of elegance and social connection, reflected in studies of British tea culture and Victorian social class (Gao and Yajun, 2021).

In India, Masala Chai is not only an everyday drink but also a cultural symbol associated with family and community relationships, originating from Ayurvedic traditions and flourishing in the 20th century (Eating-Better, 2023).

In Morocco, mint tea is used in the ceremony of welcoming guests with elaborate preparation, symbolizing warmth, hospitality and community connection, the service process is often elaborate and highly performative (WorldSpice, 2024; MoroccanCorridor, 2023).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a review of 13 studies reported that global tea consumption increased by 70%, compared with a 53.8% increase in coffee consumption. This difference indicates a stronger tendency for tea to be consumed as a source of comfort and relaxation during periods of social isolation. (Castellana et al., 2021).

2.1.2 Concepts

2.1.2.1 Goal 8, 12 and 13 of the 17 United Nations Principles of Sustainable Development

Three of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are key to promoting inclusive and sustainable growth (United Nations, 2015). Goal 8 is Sustainable Economic Growth and Decent Work calls for promoting inclusive economic growth, high productivity and quality work for all. Goal 12 is Responsible Consumption and Production emphasizes resource efficiency, reducing waste and

promoting sustainable production models. Meanwhile, Goal 13 is Climate Action calls on countries and businesses to take urgent action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build resilience to environmental impacts. These three goals are closely linked, aiming to protect the planet while ensuring equitable economic and social development.

2.1.2.2 CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)

Carroll (1979, 1991) was one of the first scholars to systematize the concept of corporate social responsibility through a pyramid model, in which CSR is seen as a combination of economic responsibility, legal compliance, ethical standards, and contributions to the community. This approach shows that CSR is not a supplementary activity but a multi-tiered responsibility structure linked to the existence and development of the business.

From a strategic perspective, Porter and Kramer (2006) expanded the concept of CSR by emphasizing the ability to create shared value for both the business and society. According to them, responsible business policies, from environmental protection to ethical communication, not only bring social benefits but also help businesses build sustainable competitive advantages.

ISO 26000 (2010) further reinforces this understanding by defining CSR as the responsibility of an organization for the social and environmental impacts arising from its activities, emphasizing the ethical aspects and integration of CSR into the strategy and daily operations of the business.

2.1.2.3 Creating Shared Value (CSV)

Porter and Kramer (2006) first introduced the concept of Creating Shared Value (CSV) in their article, "Strategy and Society," in the Harvard Business Review, viewing CSV as a parallel link between business interests and social interests. According to them, business policies and activities can simultaneously strengthen a company's competitiveness and improve the socio-economic context in which it operates, thereby transforming social and environmental issues into sources of economic value.

By 2011, this concept had been further developed, Porter and Kramer (2011) defined CSV as a strategic approach to both creating economic value and addressing social and environmental challenges. Porter and Kramer emphasized that CSV is not an extension of CSR but is directly linked to the core objectives of a business: growth and profitability. Michelini and Fiorentino (2012) also argued that CSV

is an integrated business model in which social and environmental goals are placed at the center of the strategy instead of merely playing a communication or public relations role.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, Kramer & Pfitzer (2020) further expanded the understanding of CSV as a tool contributing to the restructuring of the economy towards sustainability, emphasizing the role of businesses in regional recovery and development. Menghwar and Daood (2021) viewed CSV as a strategic approach that allows businesses to generate purposeful profits while improving the performance of both the business and society through the planned resolution of social and environmental issues.

2.1.2.4 Sustainability

To put it simply, it is the effort to ensure the survival of future generations and serve their needs. It is among the oldest and most recognized definition of sustainability is found in the Brundtland Report (“Our Common Future”) launched in 1987 that called for a reconciliation among economical growths with environmental preservations and social justice. Elkington (1997) came up with Triple Bottom Line (TBL) where he presented economic, social and ecology as its constituent parts. Using this perspective, a sustainable business is one that makes a profit, serves the people and protects the planet. Elkington's TBL approach, which offered a broad framework for nonfinancial reporting of business undertakings and outcomes, was later improved by incorporating the measurability of constituents of frameworks Performance Economics on Social Responsibility (PESR) and Performance of Socially Responsible Earnings Management (PSREM) . The growth of the TBL concept’s constituents is indicative of the heightened social responsibility of the business sector, answering How-bes of corporate social responsibility.

2.1.2.5 Authenticity

Branding authenticity is the capacity of the brand to consistently and dependably enact and articulate its core values. In his view, authenticity is an important element of trust and loyalty of the customers (Beverland, 2005).

Authenticity is the intimate projection of a brand or product and its identity and values (Gilmore and Pine, 2007). They note in this era, consumer purchase willingness is high when a product is proven to be authentic because consumers value it more.

2.1.2.6 Customer-Centric Focus

Levitt (1960) described a customer-centric focus as the placing of the customer's wishes and wants at the very heart of any business decision you make.

While with Sheth et al. (2000), a customer-centric is focusing as a way of doing business in which the customer is put and kept at the center of all activities, including marketing, product design, and after sales service to remodel the business. They argued that focusing on customers helps businesses build long-lasting relationships with them and thus, generate enduring value.

Kannan and Li (2017) defined a customer-centric focus for the digital age as, "the application of data and technology for effective and timely meeting of personalized customer experience." They insisted that this approach in the digital era calls for a blend of technology with insightful knowledge of customer behavior.

2.1.2.7 Well-being and Quality of Life

Campbell et al. (1976) recognized quality of life as the degree of satisfaction an individual derives from his life in health, work, family, and living environment. They pointed out for quality of life, material conditions are not everything, since it also comes from how people perceive things by themselves .

Diener (1984) defined subjective well-being as life satisfaction, positive and negative emotions. For him, well-being is not just the absence of problems, but rather, the presence of good emotions and satisfaction.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2013) defines well-being and quality of life as "combination of material and mental conditions which comprises income, health, education, environment and social relationships," while indicating that it is the social phenomena that goes beyond economics. The OECD has put special emphasis on the fact that well-being and quality of life are metrics that ought to be evaluated on holistic and not solely economic terms.

2.1.2.8 Long-Term Value

Levitt (1960) defined long-term value as the ability of a business to maintain and develop relationships with customers by continuously meeting their needs and desires. He emphasized that

businesses should avoid "marketing myopia" by focusing on creating long-term value rather than short-term profits.

Kannan and Li (2017) defined long-term value in the digital era as "the ability of a business to use data and technology to optimize customer experiences, thereby creating sustainable value in the long term." They emphasized that in the digital age, measuring and optimizing long-term value requires a combination of technology and business strategy.

2.1.2.9 Employee Well-Being

Maslow (1943), in his Hierarchy of Needs theory, defined employee well-being as "a state where employees' basic and higher-level needs are met, including physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs. He emphasized that only when basic needs are satisfied can employees achieve satisfaction and happiness at work.

In conjunction with this, Grant et al. (2007) offered a definition of employee well-being as the positive state of mind and body of the employee in relation to his or her job or position in the organization concerning the satisfaction derived from it, the support provided by the organization, and the work-life balance. Additionally, they defined well-being as something more than simply not being stressed. It is the positive engagement one feels towards work.

2.1.2.10 Cultural Sensitivity

From a practical perspective, Hofstede (1980), through his Cultural Dimensions framework, described cultural sensitivity as the ability to understand and recognize differences among cultures at the national level. He pointed out that the cultural components of power distance, individualism, collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance must be understood in order to be properly communicated and work cross-culturally.

Ting-Toomey (1999) stated that cultural sensitivity is defined as the "ability to adjust and react in a plausible way to different cultures' principles, values, and practices." She noted that cultural sensitivity calls for one to have the capacity to understand other people's feelings, to have respect, and possess skills of intercultural communication so as to mitigate conflicts and misunderstandings.

Ang and Van Dyne (2015), in their analysis, focused the definition of cultural sensitivity on globalization by defining it as "the capability to appreciate, understand and evaluate cultural elements in a

given context, thereby taking relevant decisions and actions.” They insisted that cultural sensitivity is one of the most important competencies in any global setting.

The relationship of these concepts to the thesis topic

The concepts used in this thesis form the theoretical foundation for analyzing and developing Mindful Marketing strategies in building the brand of Vietnamese tea. Sustainable Development Goals 12, 13, and 8 provide a framework for responsible consumption, climate action, and fair working conditions in the tea value chain, thereby forming the basis for brands to shape a humane, ethical, and community-oriented image. Based on this foundation, CSR and CSV are used to assess the extent to which brands integrate social responsibility into their communication strategies and their ability to create economic value alongside social benefits.

The concepts of sustainability, authenticity, and brand trust help determine the level of "mindfulness" of the brand strategy, as well as the degree to which it accurately reflects the cultural identity of Vietnamese tea and its ability to build a trusting relationship with consumers. Customer-centric approaches, health and quality of life, employee welfare, and long-term value allow for a comprehensive analysis of how tea brands design experiences, care for people, and foster sustainable relationships with the market. Furthermore, cultural sensitivity plays a key role in assessing a brand's ability to tailor its messaging to regional characteristics and local cultural contexts.

Based on these theoretical frameworks, the study analyzes the business practices of tea in Vietnam through the case of TCSG, focusing on Mindful Marketing strategies such as brand storytelling, sustainable packaging design, traceability, and humanistic communication. The impact of these strategies is assessed through brand awareness and consumer behavior, with indicators such as trust, positive emotions, loyalty, and willingness to recommend. Based on that, the thesis aims to articulate an evidence-based linkage (conceptual interpretation) Mindful Marketing and brand building effectiveness that is suitable for the cultural and market context of Vietnam.

2.2. Theories

2.2.1 Behavioral & Philosophical Theories

2.2.1.1 Mindfulness Theory - Langer (1989)

Langer (1989) views mindfulness as a flexible state of awareness in which individuals focus on the present, are sensitive to context, and are receptive to change. In Mindful Marketing, this approach suggests designing authentic, meaningful brand experiences and avoiding mechanical consumer patterns, thereby fostering a sustainable mindset in both businesses and customers.

2.2.1.2 Self-Determination Theory (SDT) - Deci and Ryan (1985)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) points that human intrinsic motivation stems from three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and engagement. Applied to Mindful Marketing, SDT emphasizes the role of empowering customers with choices, providing clear information to foster confidence, and building consumer communities that enhance engagement and meaning in the brand experience.

2.2.1.3 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) - Ajzen (1991)

According to Ajzen (1991), individual behavior is driven by intention, which is influenced by attitudes, social norms, and the level of perceived behavioral control. In the context of Mindful Marketing, TPB helps explain how consumers form intentions to purchase sustainable products by building positive attitudes, reinforcing social norms, and facilitating responsible behavior.

2.2.2 Branding and Customer Theories

2.2.2.1 Brand Equity (Aaker, 1991)

Aaker views brand value as a collection of intangible assets including identity, perceived quality, associations, loyalty, and proprietary assets. This framework helps measure brand strength and is particularly suitable for evaluating the effectiveness of Mindful Marketing strategies.

2.2.2.2 Customer-Based Brand Equity (Keller, 1993)

The CBBE model approaches brand value from the customer's perspective, through brand recognition, meaning, feedback, and relationships. In Mindful Marketing, this model emphasizes the role of consumer feelings, experiences, and long-term engagement.

2.2.2.2 Brand Personality (Aaker, 1997)

Aaker proposed five brand personality types: genuine, exciting, competent, sophisticated, and tough. This framework helps brands express authenticity and build emotional connections, which is especially important in a marketing landscape focused on trust and human values.

2.2.2.4 Brand transformation process model (Muzellec et al., 2006)

The brand transformation model emphasizes the need for clear objectives when repositioning a brand, through three phases: the changing context, transformation goals, and implementation activities. This model helps explain the internal and external drivers that lead to changes in brand identity and culture.

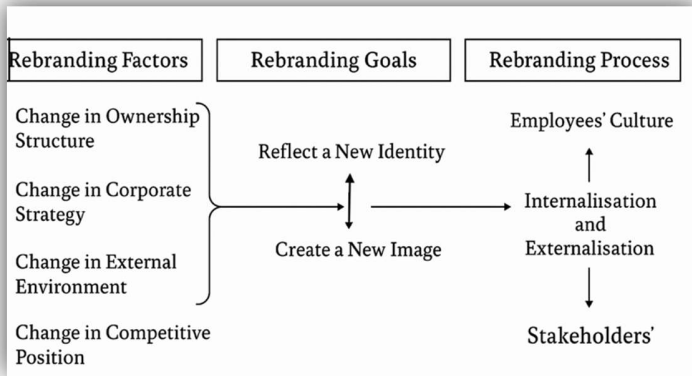


Figure 2.1: Brand Transformation Process Model (Source: Muzellec et al., 2006)

2.2.2.5 Customer Journey Mapping (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016)

The customer journey model analyzes the entire experience, from awareness to loyalty. This approach allows businesses to identify key touchpoints and optimize the experience in a consistent and mindful manner.

2.2.2.6 Customer-Centric Marketing Model (Kumar and Reinartz, 2016)

The model emphasizes the role of data and technology in understanding, personalizing, and optimizing the customer experience. This is a crucial foundation for implementing Mindful Marketing in a digital context.

2.2.3 Sustainability & Ethics Theories

2.2.3.1 Creating Shared Value - Porter and Kramer (2011)

The CSV theory posits that businesses can generate profits by addressing social and environmental issues. In Mindful Marketing, CSV encourages a balance between economic and community benefits.

2.2.3.2 Triple Bottom Line (TBL) - Elkington (1997)

The TBL model proposes evaluating business performance based on three pillars: profitability, people, and the planet. This is the foundational framework for explaining why sustainability and ethics are core elements in Mindful Marketing strategies.

2.2.3.3 Stakeholder Theory - Freeman (1984)

Freeman (1984) argues that businesses are responsible not only to shareholders but also to all stakeholders such as customers, employees, suppliers, the community, and investors. Sustainable value can only be created when the interests of these groups are considered in a balanced and systematic way.

In the context of Mindful Marketing, stakeholder theory provides a foundation for understanding marketing as a socially responsible activity, going beyond short-term sales goals. Integrating the interests of multiple stakeholders into marketing strategies helps brands build trust, strengthen loyalty, and create long-term relationships with the market.

The relationship of these theories to the thesis topic

The selection and combination of 12 fundamental theories including Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), Mindfulness Theory (Langer, 1989), Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), branding theories (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Muzellec et al., 2006) and sustainable development frameworks such as Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 1997) and Shared Value Creation (Porter & Kramer, 2011) is completely reasonable and necessary to comprehensively address the research objectives. Specifically, these theories provide the foundation to analyze the role and impact of Mindful Marketing in the process of building a Vietnamese tea industry brand, explain customers' consumption motivation, and propose marketing tools and activities suitable for the current cultural, social and economic context. In addition, the integration of brand management and sustainable development models helps ensure that the research not only contributes theoretically but also brings practical value in providing a context-specific conceptual illustration grounded in the case study in the following chapters.

2.3 Related Researches

2.3.1 Domestic Researches

- Tuan (2012). *Understanding Vietnamese culinary culture through folk songs and proverbs*

This study approaches traditional culinary culture through folk literature, in which tea appears as a symbol of simplicity, hospitality and social harmony. Folk songs and proverbs reflect not only tea consumption habits but also demonstrate moral depth, emphasizing the role of tea in the spiritual life of Vietnamese people. Although not exploited in the direction of marketing or brand building, the study still contributes to strengthening the cultural perspective, an important foundation for storytelling and brand identity in research on Mindful Marketing.

- Tran (2014). *Promoting the image of Thai Nguyen tea through the Thai Nguyen Tea Festivals in Vietnam in 2011 and 2013*

The work focuses on evaluating the communication effectiveness and socio-economic impact of Thai Nguyen tea festivals. Research has shown that festivals contribute to increased tourism revenue, improved farmer income, and enhanced local tea image. However, it also recognizes the challenge of maintaining brand recognition after the event. Although mainly referring to short-term event marketing, this study provides an important practical basis from which to expand into sustainable branding strategies in a mindful way.

- Hoa (2014). *A Comparison of Tea Culture Between Vietnam and the United Kingdom*

The article compares the differences in tea drinking customs and accompanying rituals between the two countries, in which Vietnamese tea is associated with simplicity and flexibility, while British tea emphasizes form and ritual. The study helps clarify cultural factors that influence consumer behavior and shape the tea identity of each nation. However, there is no clear connection with media, brand or customer experience factors. This study supports the current research in the cultural background aspect, thereby further exploiting the value of mindfulness in brand communication.

- Yen and Tam (2015). *Proposed Marketing Strategy for Thai Nguyen Tea Festival*

The study proposes practical marketing initiatives such as experiential activities, digital marketing, and brand cooperation to increase the attractiveness of the tea festival and attract young people. Emphasizing the role of unified branding and sustainable development, this work is a useful premise for developing Mindful Marketing tools in current research, especially in connecting consumer experience, community values and humanistic communication.

- Thien (2016). *The Art of Tea Drinking in Vietnam and Japanese Tea Ceremony*

The article compares the two tea value systems of Vietnam and Japan, in which Vietnamese tea tends to be natural and informal, while Japanese tea follows meditative rituals. The author emphasizes the intersections between the two traditions through the elements of tranquility, respect and living in harmony with nature. These are the key values of Mindful Marketing, opening up a new approach to tea brands through exploiting the depth of philosophy and emotional experience

- Chinh and Hue (2018). *Exploring the tea drinking culture of Da Nang people*

The study documents the shift in tea drinking habits of Da Nang people - from family tea ceremonies to street tea and more modern spaces. This shows that tea still maintains its role in connecting the community despite changes in urban life. The work clearly reflects the process of localizing consumer behavior, thereby providing practical data for current research to integrate local cultural elements into sustainable branding.

- Trang et al. (2020). *Building a database and tools for evaluating, managing the quality and identifying the origin of Vietnamese tea*

The project focuses on establishing a traceability system, evaluating the quality of tea through chemical data and geographical indications. This is an important step to ensure product transparency and increase consumer trust. Although not going into communication or branding, this tool has the potential to be integrated into a Mindful Marketing strategy to connect the elements of trust, authenticity and sustainability.

- Giang (2022). *The Spread Of The British Tea-Drinking Culture Into The Vietnamese One - The Reasons Behind This Phenomenon And Its Related Results*

The article analyzes the spread of British tea culture into Vietnamese life, especially in the context of globalization and cultural exchange. The author explains this phenomenon through factors such as the influence of mass media, the development of the service industry and the need for new cultural experiences of young people. The article also points out consequences such as changes in consumer habits, the combination of Western tea and Vietnamese identity in modern teahouse spaces. Thereby, the study suggests profound cultural impacts and localization trends in the reception of foreign cultures in Vietnam.

- Thuy et al. (2023). *Vietnamese Tea Culture*.

The work provides a comprehensive picture of the diversity of Vietnamese tea culture across regions, ethnic groups, and tea rituals in traditional medicine, spiritual festivals, and international exchanges. The author affirms that tea is a living heritage that needs to be preserved. Although not exploited from a marketing perspective, this study provides a fundamental source of material for the current topic to integrate indigenous, emotional, and spiritual elements into a brand strategy in a mindful direction - both preserving heritage and aiming for global integration.

- Vu et al. (2023). *Exploring the coffee shop experience model in the Vietnamese context*.

The study focused on exploring the coffee shop experience model in the Vietnamese context. Using a mixed research method (qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys), the authors identified key factors that shape customer experience, including: shop space (ambience), beverage quality, staff service, social interaction and personalization. The research results indicate that the coffee shop space is not only a place to consume drinks but also an “experience space” that helps customers relax, connect socially and express their lifestyle. Factors such as interior design, music and friendly service play an important role in building customer satisfaction and loyalty.

- Nguyen and Dao (2024). *Mindfulness affecting loyalty with mediating role of customer experience in the context of adventure tourism in Vietnam.*

This study analyzes the impact of mindfulness on customer loyalty in the context of experiential tourism in Vietnam. The results show that mindfulness does not directly affect loyalty, but rather indirectly through customer experience. Positive experiences play a crucial mediating role, transforming mindful awareness into committed attitudes and behaviors. The study emphasizes the importance of designing conscious tourism experiences, rather than focusing solely on communication or individual services.

- Linh and Giang (2025). *Exploring Stakeholder Value Through Mindful Marketing: The Case Of Health And Wellness Sector.*

The authors analyzed the Mindful Marketing approach as a strategy to help businesses balance economic benefits and social responsibility. Using a case study in the healthcare sector, the study emphasized that Mindful Marketing not only creates value for customers but also contributes positively to building sustainable relationships with stakeholders, including the community, employees and the environment. The results show that businesses applying Mindful Marketing are able to enhance customers' emotional engagement, enhance brand reputation and play a pioneering role in promoting sustainable consumption.

- Nguyen et al. (2025). *Mediator effects of customers' attitude on factors influencing Vietnamese consumers' intention toward purchasing organic beverages*

The authors analyzed the mediating effect of customer attitudes on factors influencing Vietnamese consumers' intention to purchase organic beverages. Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the study conducted a quantitative survey of 450 consumers in major cities. The results showed that awareness of health benefits, environmental concerns, and social influence all positively affected consumer attitudes, leading to higher purchase intentions. In addition, the study emphasized the important role of transparent communication and consumer education campaigns in forming positive attitudes toward organic products.

2.3.2 International Researches

- Bhattacharya & Sen (2004). *Doing better at doing good: When, why, and how consumers respond to corporate social initiatives*

This study analyzes the relationship between mindful branding and customer loyalty. The authors argue that actively participating in community activities, communicating sustainable values, and developing socially beneficial products help brands build trust and emotional connections with consumers. The study proposes many policy recommendations for brands to effectively implement mindful branding,

although it has not yet delved into the tea sector. However, the suggestions on branding through social responsibility are an important reference for this study when evaluating TCSG's sustainable branding strategy.

- Nishimura et al. (2010). *Tea in the Historical Context of East Asia: Cultural Interactions across Borders. In: Cultural Reproduction on its Interface: From the Perspectives of Text, Diplomacy, Otherness, and Tea in East Asia.*

The article explores the role of tea in the historical context of East Asia, emphasizing that tea is not only a beverage but also a cross-border cultural symbol. Through the perspectives of textualism, diplomacy and cultural differences, the author analyzes how tea became a medium of cultural exchange between China, Japan, Korea and other countries in the region. The study clarifies the adaptation, while preserving the identity, of tea rituals and tea ceremony practices in the process of East Asian history and cultural exchange .

- Sheth et al. (2011). *Mindful consumption: A customer-centric approach to sustainability*

The paper introduces the concept of Mindful Marketing as a new approach to creating sustainable value for customers, society and the environment. According to the authors, Mindful Marketing is not only about profit but also considers the long-term impact of marketing activities on the community and the planet. The core elements of Mindful Marketing such as transparency, ethics and empathy are systematized. Although the study has not been applied specifically to the industry, it provides an important theoretical foundation for the current study in defining the concept and establishing the brand value system in the Vietnamese tea industry.

- Prothero et al. (2011). *Is green the new black? Reflections on a green commodity discourse*

The article focuses on the role of Mindful Marketing in promoting sustainable consumption behavior. Strategies such as green advertising, corporate social marketing and responsible product design have been shown to guide consumers to make more mindful consumption choices. Although primarily approached from a consumer behavior perspective, the study provides useful implications for green messaging which is an aspect that will be explored in this study through TCSG's communication activities.

- Hajra (2017). *Organic Tea: Global Market and Forecast Sales.*

The article examines the global organic tea market, with particular attention to consumption trends, key growth drivers, and sales forecasts. The author highlights that the demand for organic tea is growing rapidly due to the growing awareness of health, the environment, and sustainable consumption. The study also points out the strong growth in the European, North American, and Asian markets, while also

mentioning challenges in the supply chain, organic certification, and brand competition. The conclusion affirms that organic tea will continue to be a high-growth segment in the global tea industry.

- Bisgaard (2017). *Future of tea and tea culture*.

The article discusses the future of tea and tea culture in the context of globalization and social change. The author analyzes new trends such as the rise of premium tea, organic tea, cold-bottled tea, and the combination of tea and modern technology. The article also mentions the role of tea culture as a form of social communication, a factor of cultural identity, and a tool for building a mindful lifestyle. Through this, Bisgaard predicts that tea culture will continue to adapt and develop, both preserving traditional values and expanding according to modern consumer needs.

- Langford (2021). *From global to local tea markets: the changing political economy of tea production within India's domestic value chain. Development and Change*.

The article analyzes the shift in the political economy of the Indian tea industry from global markets to a greater focus on domestic value chains. The author clarifies how factors such as government policies, domestic consumer demand, and land ownership structure influence the organization of tea production and distribution. The article highlights the increasing role of smallholder producers, the reconfiguration of power among stakeholders, and the challenges to sustainable development in the industry. The study contributes to a better understanding of value internalization in the tea industry in developing countries.

- Han et al. (2023). *The Effects of Mindfulness on Sensory Marketing: The Role of Mental Imagery*

Through three experiments with a total of 593 consumers, the study analyzed the relationship between mindfulness and multisensory marketing. The results showed that consumers with high mindfulness increased their attention and visualization of the senses (such as taste and smell), thereby increasing their purchase intention. When advertising combined multiple senses, the effect was even stronger.

- Kumar & Sharma (2024). *Mindful Media: Mental Health Challenges in the Digital Age*.

The article focuses on the challenges of mental health in the digital age and the role of mindful media in mitigating negative impacts. The author analyzes the impact of social media, information overload, and social comparison on mental health, especially among young people. The study suggests a more mindful approach to digital engagement, including thoughtful media content, appropriate time allocation, and selective information consumption, as a practical means of supporting individual mental well-being.

- Tanaka-Kanegae (2024). *Feasibility and Efficacy of a Novel Mindfulness App Used With Matcha Green Tea in Generally Healthy Adults: Randomized Controlled Trial.*

The article explores the feasibility and effectiveness of mobile health (mHealth) applications in supporting healthy behavior change in users. The study uses a clinical trial approach to evaluate engagement, content personalization, and positive impacts on physical and mental health. The results suggest that mHealth technology, if designed with mindfulness and personalization in mind, can effectively promote health self-management, especially in the context of telehealth and chronic disease prevention.

- Talukder, Kumar & Das (2024). *Mindful Consumers and New Marketing Strategies for the Restaurant Business: Evidence of Bangladesh*

This chapter-based study from IGI Global focuses on the restaurant market in Bangladesh, examining mindful consumers and their responses to new marketing strategies. The results show that consumers tend to value local products, supply chain transparency, and health-sustainability brand messaging. The authors suggest specific tactics such as information transparency, social impact communication, and the use of digital platforms to connect with like-minded consumers, thereby building trust and increasing brand loyalty

- Mukhopadhyay & Jose (2024). *Effectiveness of Advertising on Promotion of Sustainable Lifestyle: A Case Study on TATA Tea Jaago Re Campaign*

The study evaluates the effectiveness of Jaago Re campaign advertising on inducing sustainable behavior in India. The results show that the campaign has triggered public awareness, changed behavior and strengthened brand loyalty through humane and socially relevant content.

- Shen and Zhang (2025). *Brewing tea traditions, religion, and philosophy: a comparative study of Bashu and Wakayama cultures in the Belt and Road Initiative*

A comparative study of traditional Chinese (Bashu) and Japanese (Wakayama) tea cultures, analyzing how tea ceremonies are digitized through Digital Humanities (images, JETRO/JNTO data, virtual museums), helping to preserve and disseminate profound spiritual/philosophical values. This is how mindfulness (in tea ceremonies) is integrated with digital technology to expand global reach.

2.2.3 Summary and Research gap

- Summary of domestic studies (strengths and limitations)
- Domestic studies related to tea culture, promotional events and tea marketing in Vietnam have contributed to clarifying cultural factors, customs and practices and the role of tea in community life. Some studies also propose short-term communication activities such as festivals, experiences or applying technology to

product promotion. However, most of the works are still descriptive, have not delved into long-term brand strategies and have not systematically integrated the concept of Mindful Marketing. In addition, the studies have not exploited the connection between indigenous culture, new consumer behavior and the requirements for sustainable brand development in the digital age.

- Summary of international studies (strengths and limitations)

Many international studies have systematized the concept of Mindful Marketing, establishing its constituent elements such as transparency, ethics, empathy, sustainability and responsible consumption. The works also analyze the effectiveness of mindful branding in increasing customer loyalty, brand love and trust. However, the studies mainly focus on developed markets, very few documents apply to the tea industry or traditional industries in emerging markets such as Vietnam. On the other hand, there are not many works that closely combine theories of branding, consumer behavior, sustainable development and culture in an integrated research framework such as Mindful Marketing in the tea industry.

2.4 Industry Context: Global and Vietnam Tea Industry

2.4.1 Global Tea Industry Overview

The global tea industry is undergoing significant changes driven by consumer tastes, technological advancements, and environmental challenges. Tea remains one of the world's most consumed beverages, deeply intertwined with the culture and economies of many countries. According to the FAO (2023), global tea production reached approximately 6.5 million tons in 2022, with China accounting for nearly 40%, followed by India, Kenya, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. The global tea market value reached approximately US\$55 billion and is projected to continue growing due to demand for organic tea, specialty tea, and ready-to-drink tea (Grand View Research, 2024).

Alongside its growth potential, the tea industry also faces serious sustainability challenges. Climate change, drought, and land degradation in major tea-growing regions such as Assam and East Africa are directly impacting productivity and quality (Ahmed et al., 2019). To adapt, many producers have shifted to sustainable farming and applied technologies such as IoT, smart irrigation systems, and drone monitoring (Wang et al., 2023).

On the demand side, consumer trends toward health and healthy lifestyles are driving the popularity of green tea, functional teas, and premium tea lines. Consumers are increasingly willing to pay higher prices for ethically sourced, high-quality products with environmentally friendly packaging (Hong et al., 2024). In addition, e-commerce and digital media are expanding market access, allowing tea brands to

connect directly with consumers and spread product value (Euromonitor International, 2023; Chaffey & Smith, 2022).

Overall, the future of the global tea industry will be shaped by a combination of technological innovation, upscale consumer trends, and sustainable development strategies.

2.4.2 Best Practices in Mindful Marketing Applications in the Global Tea Industry

In the context of the global trend towards sustainable development and responsible consumption, many international tea brands have successfully applied the principles of Mindful Marketing (MM) to create differentiation and long-term value. These models not only demonstrate the feasibility of MM in the tea industry, but also show the ability to harmoniously connect brand - people - culture - environment, thereby providing valuable lessons for the context of Vietnam.

- Twinings (United Kingdom) - Transparency and Human Well-being

Established in 1706, Twinings is a pioneer in combining traditional values with sustainable development strategy. Under the Sourced with Care program (2018 to present), the company is committed to traceability of the entire supply chain, ensuring living conditions, education and gender equality for tea growers in India and Kenya. Twinings makes the entire process transparent through its annual reporting system and QR tracking, in line with the spirit of Mindfulness Theory (Langer, 1989) that raising awareness and responsibility on both sides: businesses and consumers (Twinings, 20). In terms of communication, Twinings uses introspective storytelling (“It’s amazing what a cup of tea can do”), not focusing on selling products but evoking feelings of peace, self-care and connection. This is a typical expression of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), emphasizing the role of autonomy and the need for personal happiness in mindful consumption behavior

- Dilmah (Sri Lanka) - Creating Shared Value through tea and kindness

Dilmah Tea, founded by Merrill J. Fernando, is one of the pioneering brands applying Creating Shared Value (CSV) (Porter & Kramer, 2011) in the tea industry. All profits are shared with community projects through the MJF Charitable Foundation and Dilmah Conservation, focusing on nature conservation and youth education. Dilmah’s hallmark is authenticity: the brand has always stuck to the message “Do Try It – With Kindness,” emphasizing compassion and honesty – true to the Law of Candor in Branding. Minimalist packaging, the use of recycled paper, and campaigns like Kindness in a Cup that turn the cup of tea into a symbol of sharing, making the brand a “moral statement” rather than just a consumer product (Dilmah, n.d.).

- ITO EN (Japan) – Cultural Resonance and Everyday Mindfulness

ITO EN, Japan's largest tea producer, is a prime example of combining cultural identity and mindfulness. The "Ocha no Kokoro" (Spirit of Tea) strategy is considered a consistent operating philosophy – where each cup of tea is seen as a quiet ritual, helping people connect with nature and the community. ITO EN applies Mindful Marketing not through a massive advertising campaign, but through a series of micro-experiences: each tea can is designed with the message "slow down and feel," each packaging is minimalist to reflect the sophistication of Japanese culture (Ito En, 2025). The company has implemented a Used Tea Leaves Recycling System that converts tea waste into materials for paper production, bioplastics, and fertilizers, reflecting an approach aligned with the principles of the Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 1997).

- **Tazo Tea (United States) – Mindful Activism and Green Innovation**

After restructuring under Unilever ownership (2017), Tazo Tea launched the "Rewild the World" campaign with the goal of regenerating 500,000 acres of natural land. Tazo combines storytelling with social engagement initiatives, connecting the brand to actions such as environmental protection and regenerative agriculture. Tazo uses emotional design: natural colors, images of wildlife, soft music in storytelling videos which activating "green emotions" (green empathy). This model represents a new branch of Mindful Marketing, eco-emotional storytelling, in line with the Gen Z consumer trend of seeking spiritual connection with the brand (Sustainable Brands, 2022).

- **Teatulia (Bangladesh) – Empowerment and Traceability**

Teatulia is a rare example from a developing country to be honored in the Sustainable Brands Award 2022. The brand operates a single-estate model, ensuring transparency throughout the chain "from garden to cup". Organic farming practices, no middlemen and support for local women are considered key elements of the empowerment marketing strategy. Teatulia also pioneered compostable canisters, the entire tea box is biodegradable, plastic-free. The message "Drink Tea. Do Good." sums up the mindful philosophy: consumption is a mindful act, creating a positive impact on the community and the environment (Teatulia, 2023).

2.4.3 Vietnam Tea Industry Overview

The Vietnamese tea industry has a history dating back to the 19th century and was once an export commodity to Europe and Russia (Trang et al., 2020). However, for a long time, tea productivity and quality were low due to scattered cultivation and outdated processing technology. Before 2000, production was mainly based on manual methods, focusing on cheap green and black tea, making it difficult for the

tea industry to access high-end market segments (General Statistics Office [GSO], 2000; Trang et al., 2020).

In recent years, the Vietnamese tea industry has recorded significant growth in production and exports. In 2022, Vietnam exported approximately 146,000 tons of tea, achieving a value of nearly US\$237 million and ranking fifth in the world (ITC, 2023). Key tea-growing regions such as Thai Nguyen, Lam Dong, and Phu Tho are planned for concentrated production, with green tea accounting for a large proportion of the product structure (6Wresearch, 2025). However, the average export price remains significantly lower than that of major producing countries due to weak branding, inconsistent quality, and limitations in the distribution system (VAN, 2024).

- Advantages of Vietnam's tea industry

The Vietnamese tea industry possesses many fundamental advantages. The tropical monsoon climate and suitable soil conditions in regions such as Thai Nguyen, Lam Dong, and the Central Highlands allow tea plants to grow year-round, creating room for long-term productivity improvement (FAO, 2022a). Vietnam also has a diverse product portfolio, ranging from green tea and black tea to oolong and white tea, catering to various international market segments (ITC, 2023). In 2022, tea exports reached approximately US\$230 million, placing Vietnam among the top five tea exporting countries in the world (ITC, 2023).

The cost-competitive advantage is also quite evident, with labor costs in the tea industry being approximately 40–50% lower than the global average (FAO, 2022b). Furthermore, free trade agreements such as EVFTA and CPTPP are creating more favorable conditions for Vietnamese tea to access large markets such as the EU, Canada, and Japan (WTO, 2023). State support programs for agricultural extension and raw material area development also contribute to improving productivity and production quality (GSO, 2021; FAO, 2022b).

- Challenges of Vietnamese tea industry

Despite its potential, the Vietnamese tea industry still faces structural limitations. Inconsistent product quality and failure to fully meet international food safety standards have diminished its reputation in high-end markets, some shipments have been returned due to pesticide residue exceeding permissible limits as announced by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD, 2020). This contributes to the fact that the export price of Vietnamese tea is approximately 30–40% lower than that of leading countries (Ministry of Industry and Trade, 2021).

Processing technology remains a bottleneck, as most production facilities still rely on manual methods, leading to inconsistent quality (Agriculture & Environment, 2022). Simultaneously, the capacity for international branding and marketing is weak, with many exported products being raw materials or semi-finished products with low added value (General Statistics Office, [GSO] 2021).

Furthermore, increasingly stringent non-tariff barriers and the impact of climate change are putting increasing pressure on the industry. Extreme weather, environmental pollution, and the low rate of organic farming continue to affect the productivity, quality, and competitiveness of Vietnamese tea in the international market (VITAS, 2025; WTO, 2023).

- **The status of tea production and export by Vietnamese companies**

The Vietnamese tea industry currently has approximately 500 processing enterprises, of which a small group of nearly 20 large enterprises account for up to 70% of export volume (VietnamCredit, 2022). Enterprises such as Vinatea, Tan Cuong, and Moc Chau have invested in modern processing technology and expanded their scale, contributing to improved production capacity and product quality.

Tea export value has increased significantly over the past two decades, reaching approximately US\$230 million in 2020, four times higher than in 2000 (ITC, 2023). Key export markets include Pakistan, Taiwan, Russia, and several European countries, with the first three markets accounting for more than half of total export value in 2022. The application of standards such as ISO, HACCP, and GlobalGAP has contributed to improving the quality of exported tea and enhancing acceptance in demanding markets.

However, export efficiency remains limited, with Vietnamese tea prices only reaching about 65% of the average of leading countries, 30–35% lower than India and Sri Lanka (WTO, 2024; VITAS, 2025). A significant reason is that most small businesses still produce using manual methods, with little investment in branding and added value. Although some regions like Thai Nguyen have expanded the area applying VietGAP standards, the rate of application of the standard across the industry remains low, indicating a significant gap between production capacity and the requirements of the international market.

2.4.4 Marketing Practices in Vietnam Tea Industry

- Traditional promotion channels still dominate

Vietnamese tea businesses mainly use television, print media and participate in trade fairs, traditional promotion strategies that have been maintained for many years. However, according to Digital 2023: Vietnam by We Are Social, 79% of the Vietnamese population is using the Internet and 71% of people use social media. This shows that consumers are shifting strongly to digital platforms (We Are Social & DataReportal, 2023).

- Shift to digital marketing

A report by the Ministry of Industry and Trade (2021) said that FMCG industries, including agricultural products such as tea, have started to apply advertising on Facebook, Instagram, SEO and Google Ads to reach new consumers. However, limited resources and digital skills mean that the adoption rate of many businesses is still low (MOIT, 2021).

- Experiential marketing by large enterprises

Leading tea enterprises such as Vinatea and Tan Cuong have organized tea garden tours, seminars and tea experiences to increase customer connection. Although there is no specific research on tea, this strategy is consistent with experiential marketing, which has been successfully applied in FMCG and Vietnamese agricultural products such as coffee and milk (We Are Social & Meltwater, 2023; Facebook Business, 2023).

- Government support for national branding

The Ministry of Industry and Trade's "National Brand Programme 2020–2030" aims to enhance Vietnamese brand recognition and bring agricultural products, including tea, to international markets. The goal by 2030 is for at least 90% of enterprises to be aware of the importance of branding (Vietnam News, 2024).

2.5 Research Gap and Novelty of the research

2.5.1 Research Gap

From the synthesis and analysis of the above studies, it can be seen that there is still a clear gap in the application of the concept of Mindful Marketing to the Vietnamese tea industry that is a unique industry with a rich identity but without a systematic, sustainable and humane brand strategy. There has been no study that has systematically evaluated branding activities based on the principles of Mindful Marketing, and measured their impact on the level of brand engagement, trust and consumer behavior in the context of local culture.

Besides, through the synthesis of domestic research, it can be seen that there is currently no work directly referring to the application of Mindful Marketing in the Vietnamese F&B industry, especially the tea/coffee industry. Most of the current research only stops at the perspective of culture, events or traditional marketing strategies. This gap is not a limitation of the overview, but a clear demonstration of the research gap that this thesis aims at: building a theory-informed analytical basis and an integrative interpretive framework for applying Mindful Marketing combined with digital transformation to enhance the brand of the Vietnamese tea industry.

2.5.2 Novelty of the research

This study is novel, firstly, in its interdisciplinary approach, combining theoretical foundations from marketing, consumer behavior, sustainable development, corporate social responsibility, culture, and psychology to build a unified analytical framework for Mindful Marketing. Instead of viewing these concepts as disconnected pieces, the study places them in an interactive relationship to explain how brands are formed and maintained within the context of mindful consumption.

The next novelty lies in the direct application of this theoretical framework to a traditional industry in Vietnam through the case study of The Sandals Tea & Coffee Group. This approach allows for the assessment of the feasibility and effectiveness of Mindful Marketing in a real-world market where cultural values, competitive pressures, and the need for innovation coexist.

Based on this, the study develops an integrative synthesis that links mindful elements with brand outcomes, extending beyond awareness to include emotional connection and customer loyalty. A noteworthy novelty is the integration of Mindful Marketing with digital transformation, viewing digital platforms not merely as sales tools but as means of conveying humanistic and sustainable values. This approach both helps fill a theoretical gap in the Vietnamese context and provides practical guidance for tea businesses in their journey to enhance competitiveness in the international market.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of the Research Problem

3.1.1 Background of Vietnam's tea industry

Vietnam's tea industry has approximately 128,000 hectares of cultivated land, with an estimated dry tea production of 230,000 tons by 2024 (B-Company.jp, 2025). The main growing regions include Thai Nguyen, Lam Dong, and the Central Highlands.

In terms of exports, Vietnam ranks fifth in the world. In the first half of 2024, exports reached approximately 62,000 tons, generating \$106 million in revenue, representing a 28% increase in volume and a 30% increase in value compared to the same period (FoodExpo.vn, 2024). The average price of \$1,710/ton increased slightly but remains lower than that of Sri Lanka and Kenya, indicating that growth is still more focused on quantity than value.

The value chain remains unbalanced, with about 98% of exports being in the form of raw materials or semi-finished products, resulting in thin added value and difficulty in building a strong brand. Trang et al. (2020) showed that the average export value of Vietnamese tea is only about 65% of the global average. The bottleneck lies in deep processing, quality consistency, and positioning capabilities.

On the demand side, the picture is changing. The ready-to-drink tea market in Vietnam is estimated to reach US\$350 million in 2024, growing rapidly in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (Tuan et al., 2020). Young consumers want convenience but still prioritize health benefits and experiences, leading to new demands for products and marketing.

Signs of sustainable consumption are also becoming clearer. NielsenIQ (2024b) noted that 62% of consumers prioritize environmentally friendly packaging and 67% prioritize products with natural ingredients and transparent origins. Kantar (2023) showed that despite tightening spending, 51% of households are still willing to pay a higher price for brands associated with health and social responsibility. Therefore, transparency and authenticity are no longer "plus points," but have become minimum requirements.

Digital transformation should directly support this need, but its application in the industry remains limited. The 2023 National Report on Digital Transformation indicates that only about 15% of tea businesses have effectively implemented digital technology (Ministry of Industry and Trade, 2023). Many

businesses are still limited to websites or social media, while digital traceability, customer data analysis, and e-commerce have not yet become core competencies.

Conversely, advanced tea exporting countries such as Japan, Sri Lanka, and India have invested in traceability, digital supply chain management, and multi-channel marketing (FAO, 2022b). Competition is therefore increasingly fierce: FAO (2022b) shows that China, India, Kenya, and Sri Lanka continue to dominate the market. Tuan et al. (2020) estimated that for every 1,000 tons of exports from a rival country, Vietnam's exports decreased by an average of 34 tons.

Free trade agreements (FTAs) like EVFTA and CPTPP open opportunities, but also impose stricter technical, food safety, and environmental standards. The WTO (2024) emphasizes the role of non-tariff barriers in maintaining export value. In reality, the price of Vietnamese tea is approximately US\$1.71/kg, only about 45% of the global average of US\$3.78/kg (World's Top Exports, 2024).

Overall, the Vietnamese tea industry is being forced to shift from a quantity-based mindset to a value-based mindset: standardization, deep processing, transparency, and branding. In the context of consumers prioritizing health and sustainability, strategies like Mindful Marketing become a worthwhile approach, especially since this thesis places the case of TCSG at this transitional stage.

3.1.2 Theoretical Gap

Although Mindful Marketing has been studied and applied quite extensively in modern consumer goods industries such as fashion, cosmetics, and fast-moving consumer goods (Sheth et al., 2011; Naderi & Van Steenburg, 2018), most of these studies are based on highly standardized industries where elements such as organic products, CSR campaigns, or humanistic messaging can be relatively easily integrated into brand strategies (Kotler et al., 2021). This approach does not fully reflect the specifics of industries closely tied to cultural and community foundations, of which tea is a prime example.

In Vietnam, tea is not only a consumer product but also a long-standing cultural practice and social ritual, linked to collective memory, local identity, and community relationships (Nguyen & Pham, 2022). Therefore, applying Mindful Marketing to the tea industry cannot simply replicate models from modern consumer industries. It requires theoretical and methodological adjustments to suit the cultural context and emotional needs of domestic consumers. However, most existing research on Mindful Marketing focuses on individual psychological aspects, particularly the relationship between mindfulness and purchasing decisions (Brown & Ryan, 2003), while a systematic strategic marketing framework for traditional product categories has yet to be developed.

This gap is even more pronounced in the Vietnamese context, where there is a lack of empirical research clarifying the role of Mindful Marketing in helping tea brands simultaneously preserve traditional values and adapt to Millennials and Gen Z, consumer groups that increasingly emphasize health, the environment, and authentic experiences (NielsenIQ, 2023; PwC Vietnam, 2023). This gap between theory and practice highlights the urgent need to develop a Mindful Marketing framework suitable for the Vietnamese tea industry and to test its feasibility in a real-world business context, particularly through specific business cases like TCSG.

3.1.3 Practical Gap

Besides the theoretical gaps, the implementation of Mindful Marketing in the Vietnamese tea industry currently faces many practical limitations. Although this concept has been studied and applied relatively successfully in modern consumer goods industries such as fashion, cosmetics, and fast-moving consumer goods (Sheth et al., 2011; Naderi & Van Steenburg, 2018), in the context of the Vietnamese tea industry, there is still a lack of a clear strategic framework for businesses to apply it systematically and effectively.

In the wave of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, digitalization is considered a crucial driver for enhancing competitiveness, yet most Vietnamese tea businesses have only reached the level of "formal digitalization". The application of technology has primarily focused on websites, social media, or basic online sales channels, while failing to leverage tools such as big data analytics or blockchain to build supply chain transparency, personalize customer experiences, or design mindful consumer journeys (MOIT, 2023). The lack of connection between business objectives and the core values of Mindful Marketing, including transparency, respect for tea-growing communities, and ethical experiences, is undermining the ability to differentiate brands.

Meanwhile, the expectations of Vietnamese consumers, especially Millennials and Gen Z, are rapidly changing. These groups are increasingly concerned about health, the environment, product origin, and the humanistic values that brands represent (NielsenIQ, 2024a; PwC, 2023). The lack of a consistent Mindful Marketing strategy keeps many domestic tea brands stuck in a model of exporting raw materials with low added value, making it difficult to build a strong brand image in the international market.

Conversely, international tea brands such as Twinings, Tazo Tea, and Ito En have implemented Mindful Marketing systematically, combining brand storytelling, supply chain transparency, and a commitment to sustainable development to create lasting emotional connections with young consumers.

These brands sell not just tea, but also experiences, values, and lifestyles that align with mindful consumption.

In the context of Vietnamese consumers increasingly willing to spend purposefully through digital channels (PwC, 2023), if domestic tea businesses continue to maintain traditional marketing thinking, they will not only lose their international competitive advantage but also face the risk of being replaced in the domestic market. This highlights the urgent need to develop a Mindful Marketing framework tailored to the specific characteristics of the Vietnamese tea industry, one that both preserves traditional values and meets new market expectations in the context of globalization and digital transformation (Kotler et al., 2021).

3.1.4 Research Context: Tea & Coffee Sandals Group (TCSG)

3.1.4.1 Overview and Business scope

According to official information from Doi Dep (2024), The Sandals Tea & Coffee Group (TCSG), with its flagship brand Doi Dep, was established in 2008 in Bao Loc, Lam Dong. Initially operating as a restaurant specializing in local tea and coffee, the group adopts the philosophy of “inseparable,” emphasizing the connection between people, nature, and consumer experience.

Between 2008 and 2014, TCSG gradually expanded into related business areas, including resort tourism, high-tech agriculture, tea and coffee production and distribution, as well as the operation of multi-location restaurant and resort facilities. This expansion laid the foundation for a vertically integrated business model.

At present, TCSG operates across multiple stages of the tea and coffee value chain, ranging from certified growing areas and FMCG production to restaurant services, eco-resorts, and educational activities.

This model allows the company to control the entire value chain, from agriculture, processing, and distribution to consumer experiences and tourism. As of 2023, TCSG served over 10,000 customers through 11 resorts and a system of restaurants and beverage outlets in various locations. With this structure, TCSG not only creates economic value but also builds layers of experiential, cultural, and emotional value, becoming a prime example for studying Mindful Marketing in the context of the Vietnamese tea industry.

3.1.4.2 Production activities and product portfolio

TCSG focuses on producing premium tea lines: Kinh Lo Oolong Tea (grown in Bao Loc), Nhat Minh Hoang Ty Tea, Ngoc Trac Tea, Phong Mat Tea, etc., harvested and processed through a closed-loop

process from garden to cup, ensuring "clean label" quality and demonstrating the authenticity of the raw material source.

The production process includes: cultivation in cool climates, red basalt soil, mainly in Bao Loc city, Lam Dong province, with soil and climate conditions suitable for premium tea; handcrafted processing combined with advanced technology; professional packaging serving the high-end segment and export.

3.1.4.3 Marketing strategy and brand recognition

TCSG implements a multi-layered marketing strategy based on the brand philosophy of "Inseparable" a philosophy built from inspiration from local culture rather than purely marketing slogans. This ideological foundation originates from the poem "Two Pairs of Sandals" by Nguyen Trung Kien (1964), in which the image of two sandals walking side-by-side becomes a symbol of the enduring connection, support, and companionship between people. TCSG has transformed this literary image into a brand value system, emphasizing that people cannot be separated from the community, businesses cannot be separated from society, and economic growth must go hand in hand with cultural and environmental responsibility. This philosophy is reflected in the logo featuring two parallel sandals, symbolizing the connection between nature, people, and products across TCSG's business activities (Figure 3.1).



Figure 3.1: Logo TCSG (Source: TCSG internal)

In terms of application, the "inseparable" philosophy is concretized throughout, from products and communities to sustainable development orientation. TCSG's tea and coffee lines are not simply positioned as consumer goods, but as experiences connecting people with nature and Vietnamese tea culture. At the same time, the company places emphasis on balancing the interests of growers, processors, and end consumers, in line with the principles of Mindful Marketing discussed in this thesis. This approach is also clearly demonstrated in brand experience spaces such as "Tea World," tea resorts, and experiential agricultural activities, where tea ceremony rituals are recreated within a natural and contemporary context.

Beyond physical experiences, TCSG promotes brand digitalization through e-commerce platforms, online brand storytelling systems, and a presence on international and internal marketplaces such as Amazon, Shopee, and Lazada, thereby expanding its reach to young consumers and international markets. This strategy is reinforced by external relations activities and symbolic cultural events. In 2024, TCSG participated in the World Tea Expo in Las Vegas, bringing a Vietnamese tea brand directly to the global tea community for the first time. Prior to that, the company also partnered with the Tea Connect program within the framework of the Ho Chi Minh City Economic Forum (HEF 2023), connecting leaders and entrepreneurs through tea culture.

Especially, in 2025, TCSG will continue to expand its international and academic footprint by announcing and organizing the World T.E.A Fest 2025 at Tea Resort Prens, Lam Dong, a large-scale event aimed at promoting Vietnamese tea culture and connecting experts, businesses, and the public both domestically and internationally (Figure 3.4). This series of activities demonstrates that TCSG does not approach marketing as a short-term communication tool, but as a long-term value-building strategy based on culture, experience, and social responsibility, making it a suitable case study for Mindful Marketing in the Vietnamese tea industry.



Figure 3.2: TCSG participates in World Tea Expo 2024 (Source: TuoitreOnline)



Figure 3.3: TCSG organizes CEO 100 Tea Connect (Source: TuoitreOnline)



Figure 3.4: Press conference announcing the International Tea Festival – WORLD T.E.A Fest 2025 at Tea Resort Prenn, Lam Dong. (Source: TuoitreOnline)

During its development, TCSG is facing fundamental challenges, particularly related to digital transformation and international market expansion. Despite implementing a website, e-commerce, and online communication channels, the application of core technologies such as Big Data, blockchain-based traceability, and production automation has not been systematically implemented. This means that digitalization primarily focuses on sales support and has not become a strategic tool for enhancing transparency, personalizing experiences, and increasing brand value.

Furthermore, pressure from international trade demands increasingly higher standards for quality, traceability, and sustainability. Currently, TCSG only accesses foreign markets through international retail channels and has not yet formed a stable export strategy linked to a clear brand positioning. Competition from established tea brands like Twinings and Ito En, which have invested heavily in Mindful Marketing, puts pressure on Doi Dep to adjust its strategy if it wants to expand its global presence.

However, alongside the challenges are significant growth potentials. The Bao Loc Oolong tea growing region offers a clear advantage in quality and local storytelling, making it well-suited for developing high-value product lines. TCSG's experiential offerings, including tea resorts and "Tea World" spaces, create favorable conditions for developing deeper relationships with more discerning consumers. In particular, the "Inseparable" brand philosophy, with its cultural and humanistic depth, can become a sustainable differentiating factor if integrated into a consistent Mindful Marketing strategy.

3.1.4.5. Reasons for choosing TCSG as a case study

TCSG was chosen as the case study due to its long-term development approach, which links production activities with experiential offerings and social responsibility. This case reflects a shift among Vietnamese enterprises from a production-oriented focus toward more structured brand building. With a scale large enough to create market impact but still flexible enough to adjust strategies, TCSG provides a suitable context to test the effectiveness of Mindful Marketing. In addition, the relatively high level of

transparency through its website, events, and external activities makes the collection and analysis of research data feasible.

3.1.4.6. Connecting with research on Mindful Marketing factors

The TCSG case study allows for a direct connection between the theoretical frameworks of Mindful Marketing and the practice of building brands based on cultural heritage and customer experience. By applying the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2, the study can assess the impact of supply chain transparency, ethical experience, and sustainability commitment on brand identity and consumer behavior. This is particularly significant in analyzing the potential for enhancing product value and personalizing marketing strategies for Millennials and Gen Z.

Statement of the Problem

At the industry level, Vietnamese tea is still primarily exported as raw materials with low added value, while the national brand has not yet made a significant mark on the international market (Trang et al., 2020). Mindful Marketing, although considered a global trend integrating ethical, emotional, and sustainability values into brand strategy (Sheth et al., 2011; Kotler et al., 2021), has not yet been systematically studied and applied in the Vietnamese tea industry. The case of TCSG, with recent efforts such as Tea Connect and participation in the World Tea Exhibition 2024, shows clear potential but also reveals strategic gaps. Therefore, this study aims to fill these theoretical and practical gaps by a practice-oriented roadmap grounded in the case context suitable for the context of the Vietnamese tea industry, while supporting businesses like TCSG in enhancing their competitiveness domestically and internationally.

3.2 Operationalization of theoretical constructs

To ensure the connection between the theoretical framework and the practical context, the core concepts synthesized from Chapter 2 have been concretized to guide the design of the qualitative research framework. Instead of transforming these concepts into variables and scales as in quantitative research, the study chooses a thematic approach, forming the basis for constructing semi-structured and in-depth interview questions. This approach allows for a deeper exploration of the perceptions, experiences, and assessments of experts in the tea industry, thereby better reflecting the practical context of Mindful Marketing in Vietnam.

Concepts such as Mindful Marketing, Brand Success, and Cultural Authenticity play a central role in shaping the interview framework and guiding data analysis. Each concept is transformed into discussion

topics, which are then processed using thematic coding and analysis to derive scientifically and practically valuable arguments.

The study employs online surveys to obtain an overview of consumer perceptions and behaviors, with particular attention to Millennials and Generation Z and their responses to key marketing factors in the tea industry. The survey data are first examined using descriptive analysis to identify major patterns, which then inform the subsequent qualitative analysis. In addition, a case study of TCSG is adopted to illustrate how theoretical insights can be applied within the Vietnamese tea industry and to support the development of a proposed integrative synthesis.

3.2.1 Systematization of Core Theoretical Frameworks

While Chapter 2 presented a broad theoretical framework of Mindful Marketing, branding, and sustainable development, this section focuses on selecting core theoretical structures that directly guide the research design. Only theories that guide the development of qualitative tools, thematic coding organization, and the formation of a Mindful Marketing interpretive lens suitable for the local context are emphasized.

The overall objective of this study is to explore how Mindful Marketing factors influence brand success in the Vietnamese tea industry, with Tea & Coffee Sandals Group (TCSG) selected as the case study. To achieve this objective, the research relies on an integrated theoretical framework encompassing marketing, branding, consumer psychology, and sustainable development.

At its core is the concept of Mindful Marketing, serving as the primary analytical lens. Components such as mindful consumption (Sheth & Sisodia, 2006; Bahl et al., 2016), mindful product (Bahl et al., 2016; Bahl et al., 2019), mindful consumer (Milne et al., 2020), and mindful leadership (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Lorek & Fuchs, 2013) help clarify how ethical, emotional, and social responsibility values are integrated into brand strategy. These concepts are expanded upon through mindful communication (Kumprang & Suriyankietkaew, 2024), the link between Mindful Marketing and Ethical Marketing (Murphy & Laczniak, 1990; Lantos, 2005), and the role of the digital environment in mindful e-marketing (Escandon-Barbosa et al., 2024; Suttharattanagul, 2025). This approach allows for a deeper analysis of the process of building trust, emotional connection, and long-term relationships with stakeholders.

To place Mindful Marketing within the context of brand building, the study references foundational theories such as brand identity (Kapferer, 1996), brand value (Aaker, 1991), brand loyalty and love (Oliver, 2001; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006), and brand authenticity (Napoli et al., 2014). These theoretical frameworks

help explain how strategies focused on mindfulness can strengthen brand identity and enhance consumer awareness.

Behavioral and psychological theories, including Mindfulness Theory (Langer, 1989), Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), offer useful perspectives for understanding the cognitive and emotional processes underlying mindful consumer decision-making. In parallel, sustainability and ethics frameworks such as Creating Shared Value (Porter & Kramer, 2011), the Three Dimensions of Sustainability (Elkington, 1997), and Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), together with the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015) and Corporate Social Responsibility principles (Carroll, 1979; ISO 26000, 2010), situate this research within widely accepted international standards. Integrating these theories forms the basis for interview design, qualitative data analysis, and the development of a Mindful Marketing integrative synthesis suitable for the Vietnamese tea industry.

3.2.2 Qualitative method: expert in-depth interview questionnaire

To ensure the research adheres to the theoretical framework and accurately reflects the practical context of the Vietnamese tea industry, the author constructed two comparison tables to clarify the relationship between the theoretical framework, core research topics, and the in-depth interview question system. This approach allows for the transformation of the theories synthesized in Chapter 2, including Mindful Marketing, branding, consumer behavior, and sustainable development, into research topics capable of deeply exploring the experience and perspectives of experts.

Table 3.1: Mapping Of Theoretical Constructs Factors To Interview Questions (Source: Author)

Theories (Chap 2)	Core Themes	Interview Questions (Bilingual)
Mindful Marketing (Sheth & Sisodia, 2006; Kotler et al., 2021)	Understanding and Applying Mindful Marketing	Q5, Q6, Q7: "Anh/chị hiểu thế nào về mindful marketing? Mindful marketing giúp cân bằng lợi nhuận và trách nhiệm XH/Môi trường như thế nào?" "What is your understanding of mindful marketing? How does mindful marketing balance profit and social/environmental responsibility?"
Mindful Consumption (Suttharattanagul, 2025)	Impact on Consumer Behavior	Q13, Q14: "Mindful marketing thay đổi nhận thức và thói quen tiêu dùng như thế

		nào? Khác biệt giữa người tiêu dùng bền vững và truyền thống?" "How does mindful marketing change consumer awareness and habits? What are the differences between sustainable and traditional consumers?"
Mindful Leadership (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Lorek & Fuchs, 2013)	Role of Leadership in Development Direction	Q21: "Giải pháp công nghệ nào có thể hỗ trợ doanh nghiệp áp dụng mindful marketing hiệu quả?" "What technological solutions can support businesses in applying mindful marketing effectively?"
Mindful Products (Bahl et al., 2016; Bahl et al., 2019)	Sustainable & Responsible Tea Products	Q12: "Truyền tải thông điệp bền vững thế nào để tránh greenwashing?" "How to communicate sustainable messages to avoid greenwashing?"
CSR & Shared Value (Porter & Kramer, 2011; Carroll, 1979)	Social Responsibility & Transparent Supply Chain	Q22: "Làm sao xây dựng chuỗi cung ứng minh bạch, phù hợp tiêu chí mindful marketing?" "How to build a transparent supply chain aligned with mindful marketing?"
Brand Identity & Authenticity (Kapferer, 1996; Beverland, 2005)	Building Authentic Tea Brand Identity	Q8, Q9: "Những yếu tố nào trong mindful marketing tăng giá trị thương hiệu, lòng tin người tiêu dùng? Tạo sự khác biệt lớn nhất cho thương hiệu trà?" "Which mindful marketing elements increase brand value and consumer trust? What differentiates a tea brand?"
Brand Loyalty & Brand Love (Oliver, 2001; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006)	Enhancing Emotional Connection & Loyalty	Q16: "Đo lường hiệu quả chiến dịch mindful marketing thế nào?"

		"How to measure the effectiveness of a mindful marketing campaign?"
Brand Experience (Brakus et al., 2009; Pine & Gilmore, 1999)	Customer Experience: From Tea to Brand Story	Q20: "Giải pháp công nghệ nào hỗ trợ trải nghiệm tiêu dùng mindful?" "What technological solutions support mindful consumer experiences?"
Sustainability & Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 1997)	Sustainable Development: Balancing Profit, Society & Environment	Q5, Q11: "Mindful marketing cân bằng lợi nhuận và trách nhiệm xã hội/môi trường ra sao? Làm sao tránh greenwashing?" "How does mindful marketing balance profit and social/environmental responsibility? How to avoid greenwashing?"
Customer-Centric Marketing (Kumar and Reinartz, 2016)	Targeting Young Consumers (Millennials & Gen Z)	Q18, Q19: "Chiến lược nào thúc đẩy Gen Z, Millennials chọn trà bền vững? Cạnh tranh giữa thương hiệu trà bền vững & truyền thống?" "What strategies encourage Gen Z and Millennials to choose sustainable tea? How does competition differ between sustainable and traditional tea brands?"
Behavioral Theories: Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991)	Guiding Behavioral Change in Tea Consumption	Q14, Q15: "Mindful marketing thay đổi nhận thức & thói quen tiêu dùng trà Việt Nam như thế nào?" "How does mindful marketing change consumer perceptions and tea consumption habits in Vietnam?"
Global Trends & E-Mindfulness Marketing (Escandon-Barbosa et al., 2024); O'Leary, 2025)	International Trends and Digital Mindfulness	Q26, Q27: "Mindful marketing giúp thương hiệu trà Việt cạnh tranh quốc tế ra sao? Xu hướng nào có thể áp dụng thành công cho ngành trà Việt?"

		"How does mindful marketing help Vietnamese tea brands compete internationally? What trends can be successfully applied in the Vietnamese tea industry?"
Cultural Sensitivity (Hofstede, 1980; Nguyen & Pham, 2022)	Blending Vietnamese Tea Culture and Innovation	Q25: "Anh/chị đánh giá yếu tố mindful marketing nào TCSG đã làm tốt? Còn thiếu gì để phù hợp với bối cảnh văn hóa trà Việt?" "Which mindful marketing factors has TCSG implemented well? What is missing to align with Vietnam's tea culture?"

Table 3.2: Mapping Of Contextual Constructs Factors To Interview Questions (Source: Author)

Contextual Focus	Core Themes	Interview Questions
Business Context: Tea & Coffee Sandals Group (TCSG)	Exploring TCSG's Operations & Strategies	Q1–Q4: "Anh/chị có thể giới thiệu về hoạt động sản xuất, kinh doanh và các chiến lược hiện tại của TCSG không?" "Could you please introduce the operations, business activities, and current strategies of TCSG?"
Vietnamese Tea Industry Trends	Understanding the Vietnamese Tea Market Landscape	Q10, Q17: "Anh/chị nhận thấy những xu hướng nào trong ngành trà Việt Nam? Xu hướng nào ảnh hưởng nhiều nhất đến thương hiệu?" "What trends do you see in the Vietnamese tea industry? Which trends have the greatest impact on branding?"
Challenges & Opportunities in Mindful Marketing	Identifying Barriers & Enablers	Q23, Q24: "Những thách thức và cơ hội nào khi áp dụng mindful marketing cho ngành trà Việt Nam?" "What challenges and opportunities do you see in applying mindful marketing to Vietnam's tea industry?"
Sustainability Practices in	Current Sustainable Initiatives	Q2: "Doanh nghiệp trà Việt hiện tại có thực hành bền vững nào nổi bật không?"

Vietnamese Businesses		"Are there any outstanding sustainable practices among Vietnamese tea businesses?"
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The first comparison table (Table 3.1) focuses on directly linking theoretical structures with interview question groups to ensure that each interview topic has a clear academic basis. The second comparison table (Table 3.2) expands the analysis to contextual factors, particularly the specifics of the Vietnamese tea industry and the practical operations of TCSG, helping to avoid interviews that are overly theoretical and lack practical depth. These two tables also serve as a reference framework in the process of coding and classifying data after interviews, contributing to improved consistency and reliability of the qualitative analysis.

3.2.3 Quantitative Method: Survey Questionnaire

The study applies a mixed method to explore both the depth and breadth of the research problem. However, the focus remains on qualitative research through expert interviews and content analysis, while quantitative surveys are used as a supplementary tool to provide an overview and preliminary verification of research assumptions. This approach enhances objectivity and limits the subjective biases often found in purely qualitative research.

To fully reflect the perspectives of stakeholders in the tea industry, the author designed two survey questionnaires for two different target groups: consumers and F&B businesses. Using two separate questionnaires allows for multidimensional data collection and provides a basis for comparison between target groups to support the identification of key themes for in-depth qualitative analysis. The survey questionnaires are based on the theoretical structures presented in Chapter 2, but do not establish detailed comparison tables between each survey question and theory, as the main objective of the survey is description and preliminary verification rather than hypothesis testing.

Form 1: Tea Consumers in Vietnam

The first survey questionnaire focuses on exploring the perceptions and behaviors of Vietnamese consumers regarding Mindful Marketing in the tea industry. The objective is to analyze how consumers perceive factors related to brand sustainability, transparency, and social responsibility, as well as the impact of these factors on brand awareness, loyalty, and purchase decisions.

The survey subjects included tea consumers in Vietnam with diverse consumption levels and age groups, focusing on Millennials and Gen Z, who are playing an increasingly important role in the consumption structure and tend to prioritize health, the environment, and ethical values. The survey content

was structured around several main themes. The analysis first considers the level of awareness of Mindful Marketing and its perceived role in sustainable brand development, drawing on Langer's Mindfulness Theory (1989) and the concept of electronic Mindful Marketing (Escandon-Barbosa et al., 2024). It then examines consumer preferences for sustainable brands, reflected in concerns related to environmentally friendly packaging, transparency of origin, and certification schemes. These preferences are discussed in relation to the Three Dimensions of Sustainability (Elkington, 1997), Creating Shared Value (Porter & Kramer, 2011), and Corporate Social Responsibility (Carroll, 1991).

Furthermore, the survey analyzes consumer perceptions of brand, loyalty, and emotional attachment, based on theoretical frameworks of brand value and brand love (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Consumer behavior and factors influencing purchase decisions, such as price, brand story, or mindful experience, are approached through the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and the Theory of Self-Determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Finally, the survey also examines the role of communication channels and consumer trust in sustainable marketing messages in the context of "greenwashing" risks, based on Mindful Communication (Kumprang & Suriyankietkaew, 2024) and the concept of authenticity (Beverland, 2005).

The results from this survey are expected to provide an important quantitative foundation to supplement and compare with qualitative findings, thereby reflecting relatively comprehensively the perceptions and consumer behavior of tea in Vietnam in the modern context, and supporting the development of strategic implications for Mindful Marketing in the tea industry.

Form 2: Vietnamese F&B Enterprises

Survey Form 2 is designed to collect data from business owners, marketing departments, and brand managers in the Vietnamese F&B industry, focusing on assessing the level of awareness, practical application, and barriers to Mindful Marketing. The goal of the survey is to clarify how businesses approach this concept, the strategic benefits they expect to achieve, as well as the difficulties arising during implementation in the real business context.

The survey targets individuals in strategic decision-making roles, reflecting organizational capabilities, readiness for innovation, and the company's perspective on Mindful Marketing as a marketing approach linked to sustainability, ethics, and emotional connection with consumers. The initial focus of the survey is the level of awareness and application of Mindful Marketing in practice, including whether the company has previously approached this concept, the specific implementation methods, and the recorded effectiveness. This content aligns with Langer's Mindfulness Theory (1989) and e-Mindful

Marketing (Escandon-Barbosa et al., 2024), emphasizing the role of mindfulness, transparency, and intent in marketing activities.

In addition, the survey focuses on identifying barriers to application, including implementation costs, limitations in human resources, difficulties in measuring financial effectiveness, or short-term competitive pressure. These issues are approached from the perspective of the Three Aspects of Sustainability model (Elkington, 1997) and Creating Shared Value (Porter & Kramer, 2011), thereby reflecting the challenge of balancing economic goals, social responsibility, and environmental responsibility in F&B business operations.

The survey also analyzes factors driving businesses to apply Mindful Marketing, including responsible consumer trends, long-term brand benefits, and the impact of policies or market norms. This content is placed within the framework of Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) and Corporate Social Responsibility (Carroll, 1991), showing that meeting the expectations of customers, the community, and partners is increasingly becoming a strategic driver rather than a formal obligation.

Another important aspect of the survey is the communication channels and brand strategies chosen by businesses to convey their mindful message. This section directly relates to Mindful Communication (Kumprang & Suriyankietkaew, 2024) and the concept of Brand Authenticity (Beverland, 2005), emphasizing consistency between the brand's message, actions, and core values in the context of increasing "greenwashing" risks. Finally, the survey examines businesses' expectations of long-term benefits from Mindful Marketing, such as increased customer loyalty, international market expansion, or attracting investors interested in sustainable development, based on theoretical frameworks of Brand Value (Aaker, 1991) and Customer-Based Brand Value (Keller, 1993).

Survey Questionnaire 2 plays a crucial role in the research by providing a perspective from the business side, the entities directly determining brand direction and strategy. The collected data helps assess readiness levels, identify practical challenges, and form the basis for proposing a Mindful Marketing framework suitable for the specific characteristics of the Vietnamese tea industry. Combined with expert interviews and consumer surveys, this approach ensures that theoretical development does not stop at abstract analysis but is firmly anchored to real-world data, creating a solid foundation for developing an evidence-based integrative synthesis and high applicability in the Vietnamese context.

3.2.4 Conceptual structure guiding the study

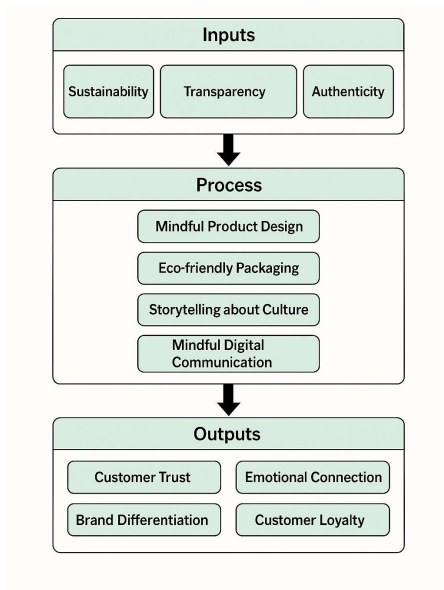


Figure 3.5: Conceptual structure of Mindful Marketing-based brand development (Source: Author)

The above figure illustrates the conceptual structure guiding this study, showing the process of implementing Mindful Marketing in the F&B industry and its impact on the brand. It is derived from the theoretical foundations discussed earlier and serves as an organising structure for the case study analysis rather than as a newly proposed theoretical model.

The Inputs section includes three core values: Sustainability, Transparency and Authenticity. These are important theoretical foundations, derived from the principles of Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 1997), CSR (Carroll, 1991) and Brand Authenticity (Beverland, 2005), helping to shape the direction of tea brand development in the new context.

The Process section presents some Mindful Marketing activities that businesses apply, including: Mindful Product Design (mindful design towards user experience), Eco-friendly Packaging (environmentally friendly packaging), Storytelling about Culture (storytelling about culture, heritage associated with tea) and Mindful Digital Communication. These activities play a key role in conveying the brand message consistently and humanely.

The Outputs section reflects the expected results: Customer Trust, Emotional Connection, Brand Differentiation and Customer Loyalty – important factors in building a sustainable Vietnamese tea brand and connecting more closely with consumers, especially Millennials and Gen Z.

This conceptual structure provides a basis for connecting theory and practice and guides the case study research at TCSG by organising the relationships examined in the analysis.

3.3 Research Purpose and Questions

3.3.1 Logical explanation of the formation of objectives and research questions

As discussed in Chapter 1, in the context of the Vietnamese tea industry's gradual shift from a production-oriented approach to value-added development and branding, issues related to sustainable brand development and differentiated value positioning are becoming increasingly urgent. However, as analyzed in Section 3.1, most studies on Mindful Marketing worldwide still focus on modern consumer industries such as fashion, cosmetics, or fast-moving consumer goods, where "mindful" elements are relatively easy to integrate through organic products, social responsibility communication, or digital experiences (Sheth et al., 2011; Naderi & Van Steenburg, 2018; Kotler et al., 2021). Conversely, the application of Mindful Marketing to the tea industry – a field closely linked to culture, community, and traditional social rituals – remains relatively limited and lacks systematic research.

This theoretical gap raises a fundamental question: how to adapt and develop the Mindful Marketing theoretical framework to suit the context of the Vietnamese tea industry, where tea-drinking behavior reflects not only consumer choice but also cultural identity, collective memory, and long-standing social relationships (Nguyen & Pham, 2022). Simultaneously, a practical gap also exists as many domestic tea businesses still primarily rely on traditional marketing methods, failing to create deep connections with the new generation of consumers, especially Millennials and Gen Z. These customer groups increasingly value transparency, social responsibility, sustainable consumer experiences, as well as convenience and personalization in the brand journey (NielsenIQ, 2023; PwC, 2023). The lack of a specific model or framework for Mindful Marketing makes it difficult for businesses to both preserve traditional values and adapt to modern consumer expectations.

Based on these research gaps, the study aims to clarify core Mindful Marketing concepts in the context of the Vietnamese tea industry and to explore consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors related to tea brand marketing. The case of Sandals Tea & Coffee Group (TCSG) is used to examine current practices and to propose a contextually suitable context-specific synthesis for Vietnam.

To answer the research questions, a mixed-methods research approach was chosen due to its ability to combine in-depth analysis and practical relevance. Specifically, the qualitative approach allows for a deeper exploration of how businesses and consumers interpret the concept of Mindful Marketing, as well as the cultural values and social contexts that govern decision-making. In-depth interviews with experts and business leaders, particularly in the case of the TCSG study, help clarify strategic drivers, organizational challenges, and opportunities for applying Mindful Marketing in an industry where tradition and community play a central role. Quantitative data are used to assess the extent to which qualitative

insights are shared among a wider group of consumers and businesses. This combination minimizes the subjectivity of purely qualitative analysis while enhancing the reliability and generalizability of the research results.

Based on this, the connection between the core themes in section 3.2 and the research questions is established in a rigorous manner. The concepts of Mindful Consumption and Mindful Product, stemming from Mindfulness Theory (Langer, 1989) and related studies (Bahl et al., 2019), are used to analyze how Vietnamese consumers perceive and respond to mindful elements in tea marketing. This directly leads to examining the impact of Mindful Marketing on brand perception, emotional connection, and customer loyalty. Simultaneously, theories of Brand Value, Loyalty, and Brand Love (Aaker, 1991; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) provide a foundation for evaluating the relationship between the implementation of Mindful Marketing and brand building effectiveness in the tea industry.

In addition, concepts of Mindful Leadership and Organizational Practice (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Lorek & Fuchs, 2013) help explain how TCSG implements Mindful Marketing activities at the strategic and operational levels. Finally, topics related to Digital Transformation, e-Mindful Marketing (Escandon-Barbosa et al., 2024); Kotler et al., 2021), along with theoretical frameworks on sustainable development and corporate social responsibility (Carroll, 1991; Porter & Kramer, 2011), are integrated throughout to assess the reach and relevance of Mindful Marketing strategies in the digital environment and current sustainable consumption trends. Thanks to this interconnected structure, the research questions ensure both theoretical rigor and a close reflection of the practical realities of the Vietnamese tea industry.

3.4 Research Design

To answer the research questions and address the theoretical and practical gaps identified in sections 3.1 and 3.2, this study adopted a mixed methods design with a focus on qualitative research combined with descriptive quantitative research to create a solid and comprehensive analytical foundation. This approach was chosen because it allows for the exploration of depth and breadth of the research phenomenon, while minimizing bias and increasing reliability (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

Research Paradigm

The research philosophy of the study is built on pragmatism. Pragmatism supports the integration of qualitative and quantitative data to answer research questions in a flexible manner. This approach is consistent with the goal of exploring the elements of Mindful Marketing that are abstract and closely linked to ethical and emotional values. Furthermore, it balances the subjective experiences of consumers and experts with objective data on marketing activities (Johnson et al., 2007). This is the theoretical foundation

for mixed methods because it allows for the combination of different research techniques to optimize data collection and analysis (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

Research Approach

The study applied mixed methods, specifically exploratory sequential design (Creswell, 2014). The qualitative phase delves into the opinions of experts and consumers to identify core themes and patterns. The subsequent quantitative phase validates these findings on a larger sample, ensuring generalizability and reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Data Collection Methods

Qualitative Interviews

In this study, a multi-layered sampling strategy was used to ensure both depth and breadth of data to reflect multiple perspectives of stakeholders. This approach was designed based on Creswell's (2014) recommendation of using exploratory sequential design in mixed-method research, in which qualitative data are first explored before being confirmed by additional data. In Mohammadi et al.'s (2025) study, this interview approach provided the necessary contextual knowledge for analysis, assessing the extent to which their interviews captured a diversity of perspectives. More specifically in this study, the 'exploratory sequential' design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017) allowed the author to begin with an in-depth qualitative phase (Layer 1: in-depth interviews), then use an additional phase (Layer 2: semi-structured in-depth interviews) to verify and expand the results. In-depth interviews help "explore complex motivations, experiences and perspectives" (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020), while the second step ensures multidimensionality, increasing reliability ('triangulation') (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). In the first layer, 5 participants are experts with in-depth knowledge in the fields of marketing, brand development and the tea industry were selected to conduct 27 questions in-depth interviews. This phase aims to comprehensively explore the factors related to Mindful Marketing, from awareness, implementation practices to impact on consumers and brands. According to Patton (2015), in-depth semi-structured interviews help researchers explore complex and undefined perspectives, while maintaining flexibility in communication with participants.

In the second layer, 12 additional participants, including business managers and experts in the F&B industry, were interviewed with a shortened version of 5 summary questions. This phase serves as validation and expansion of the themes identified from layer 1. In addition, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2018), the use of multiple layers of interviews increases the reliability of the study through triangulation, reduces bias, and strengthens the findings.

The two-layer interview method not only helps the research to exploit the depth of the problem but also ensures the coverage of diverse perspectives from different target groups, thereby enhancing the academic value and applicability of the research results.

Quantitative Surveys

In parallel with the interviews, quantitative data were collected from five surveys that were deployed with a total of 600 respondents. These surveys focused on:

- Measuring consumer awareness of Mindful Marketing.
- Assessing the level of willingness to change consumer behavior towards sustainable products.
- Exploring businesses' views on Mindful Marketing brand strategy.

The survey questions were designed based on scales that have been validated from previous studies such as the Brand Love scale (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006), Mindfulness Awareness (Brown & Ryan, 2003) and CSR Perception (Carroll, 1991).

Data Analysis

Qualitative data from in-depth interviews will be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns, meanings, and core themes related to the application of Mindful Marketing and its relationship to consumer perceptions and behavior. The coding process follows the guidelines of Braun and Clarke (2006), where the theoretical themes established in section 3.2 serve as the initial analytical framework, while still allowing new themes to emerge from the actual data. This approach ensures flexibility in analysis while maintaining consistency with the theoretical foundation of the study.

Quantitative data collected from the surveys are analyzed using descriptive statistics to illustrate proportions, trends, and levels of awareness across different target groups.

This analysis does not aim to test the causal model but focuses on providing an overview of the prevalence and similarity of research topics on a broader scale, thereby supporting and strengthening qualitative findings (Saunders et al., 2019).

The choice of a mixed methodology stems from the characteristics of the research phenomenon and the context of the Vietnamese tea industry. While Mindful Marketing is still a relatively new concept, the qualitative method allows for in-depth exploration of underlying factors, cultural interpretations, and complex relationships between tea brands and consumers. Conversely, quantitative data serves to confirm and strengthen the reliability of these findings through empirical evidence on a larger scale (Creswell, 2014).

The mixed-methods approach is particularly well-suited to the tea industry, where cultural, social, and technological factors are closely intertwined, requiring a multi-dimensional perspective to fully reflect business practices and consumer behavior (Johnson et al., 2007). Overall, the study's data analysis design ensures a strong connection between theory and practice, prioritizing in-depth qualitative analysis while using quantitative data as a supporting tool to enhance the generalizability and applicability of the research conclusions to tea businesses in Vietnam.

3.5 Population and Sample

In scientific research, sampling methods play a key role in ensuring that the collected data can accurately and sufficiently reflect the characteristics of the overall research population. According to Singh and Masuku (2014), sampling techniques determine the level of achievement of research objectives, and directly affect the generalizability of the results. Basically, sampling techniques are divided into two main groups (Figure 3.5):

Probability Sampling

Non-Probability Sampling

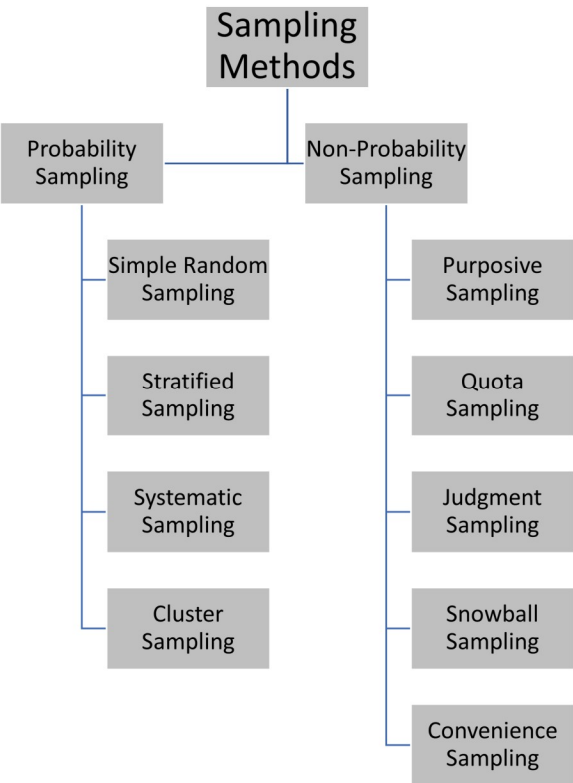


Figure 3.6: Classification of Sampling Methods in Research (Source: Singh and Masuku, 2014)

- Probability Sampling

In scientific research, sampling methods are divided into two main groups: probabilistic sampling and non-probabilistic sampling, each serving different research objectives.

Probabilistic sampling is a method in which every element of a population has a predetermined probability of being selected into the sample. This approach is often used in quantitative research to ensure a high degree of representativeness, thereby allowing the generalization of research results to the entire population. Common forms include simple random sampling, where each individual has an equal probability of being selected (Kothari, 2004); systematic sampling, with the first element selected randomly and subsequent elements at fixed intervals; stratified sampling, where the population is divided into homogeneous groups and samples are randomly selected within each stratum to ensure representativeness (Saunders et al., 2019); and cluster sampling, in which the population is divided into clusters and only a few clusters are randomly selected for the entire survey (Creswell, 2014). In general, probabilistic methods are suitable for large-scale studies with a clear overall database and requiring high statistical accuracy.

Non-probabilistic sampling does not ensure that every population element has a measurable chance of selection. It is therefore widely applied in qualitative and exploratory studies, especially when the research population is hard to identify or reach. Common techniques include convenience sampling, selecting the most accessible subjects (Patton, 2002). Judgmental or purposeful sampling, in which the researcher actively selects individuals with knowledge and experience relevant to the research problem (Tongco, 2007) Snowball sampling, starting from a small group and expanding through referrals. Quota sampling to reflect certain demographic characteristics of the population.

In this study, the differences between the two sampling methods are systematized in Tables 3.3 and 3.4, based on criteria of target, representativeness, generalizability, and cost, as suggested by Creswell (2014) and Saunders et al. (2019)

Table 3.3: Different factors between probability and non-probability sampling techniques – 1
(Source: Author's compilation based on Saunders et al., 2019, Creswell, 2014, and Kothari, 2004)

Feature	Probability Sampling	Non-Probability Sampling
Selection	Random	Non-random
Bias	Low	High
Generalizability	High (if done correctly)	Low
Cost & Effort	High	Low
Best For	Quantitative research	Qualitative/exploratory research

Table 3.4: Different factors between probability and non-probability sampling techniques – 2 (Source: Author's compilation based on Saunders et al., 2019, Creswell, 2014, and Kothari, 2004)

Application	Non-Probability Sampling	Probability Sampling
Goal	Initial insights, specific situations	Generalizable Finding
Selection Method	Convenience, judgement based	Random
Generalizability	Limited	High
Example	Pilot studies, focus groups, market research, case studies	Public opinion polls, medical research

Based on comparisons of sampling methods, this study selects a flexible approach to suit a mixed-method design, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The choice of sampling method does not aim to maximize pure randomness, but prioritizes suitability to the research objectives, available resources, and the specifics of the Vietnamese tea industry.

For qualitative research, a purposive sampling method was used to target experienced experts and managers in the tea and food-beverage industry. This group is capable of providing in-depth insights into brand strategy, marketing practices, as well as the barriers and opportunities when implementing Mindful Marketing in the Vietnamese context. This purposive selection allows for a focus on information quality rather than quantity, consistent with the exploratory and interpretive nature of qualitative research (Patton, 2002; Tongco, 2007). Information gathered from this group not only reflects a strategic perspective but also helps clarify organizational mechanisms, internal cultural factors, and how businesses interpret the concept of "Mindful Marketing" in marketing practices.

The quantitative component employs convenience sampling in combination with online surveys to reach a broad group of tea consumers and F&B businesses across the country.

This method is suitable for time and budget constraints while still ensuring sufficient data collection to identify common trends (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Distributing the survey across multiple channels helps reduce sample bias and increase the diversity of participants.

The study is designed to explore the impact of Mindful Marketing on brand building in the Vietnamese tea industry; therefore, the two main population groups identified are tea consumers and professionals/managers in the F&B and sustainable marketing fields. This approach allows for a balanced perspective from both the market and the business, thereby more fully reflecting the relationship between brand strategy and consumer behavior.

For qualitative research, the participants were business leaders, marketing experts, and senior managers in the tea and F&B industries. These individuals are directly involved in the planning and implementation of strategies and are able to view Mindful Marketing not just as an academic concept but as a concrete strategic choice. Interviewing this group helps the research address long-term decisions, as well as the tensions between business goals and sustainable values in practice.

The quantitative component of the study focuses on two respondent groups: tea consumers and F&B businesses operating in Vietnam. The consumer sample includes individuals aged 18 and above, representing a range of income and educational backgrounds. Particular attention is given to Millennials and Generation Z, as these groups play a key role in shaping emerging consumption trends, especially with

regard to health, transparency, and corporate social responsibility (NielsenIQ, 2024a). Focusing on these two generations allows for an assessment of the relevance of Mindful Marketing to the expectations of future tea industry customers.

For the F&B business group, the survey targets business owners, managers, and marketing professionals, especially those directly involved with tea products. Data collected from this group reflects the level of awareness and application of Mindful Marketing in business practices, from product development and brand communication to building relationships with stakeholders. Through this, the study can clearly identify the driving forces as well as the barriers in the implementation process.

In terms of sample size, the qualitative study includes 17 F&B professionals participating in in-depth interviews. In this study, five experts were interviewed with a full questionnaire to comprehensively explore the elements within the theoretical framework, while the remaining 12 experts participated in shortened interviews to verify and strengthen the initial findings. This two-Layered approach ensures both in-depth analysis and cross-checking between data sources.

For the quantitative research, an online survey was conducted with 500 tea consumers using a convenience sampling method. To increase representativeness, the survey was distributed through various channels, including social media, tea-loving communities, and several retail outlets in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and other provinces and cities. Although not a probabilistic sampling, this approach still allows for the identification of common behavioral and attitudinal trends within the context of the exploratory study.

Combining the two sampling methods accurately reflects the spirit of mixed-methods research, where qualitative data provides interpretive depth, while quantitative data broadens the context and increases the reliability of conclusions (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This approach is particularly suitable for research on Mindful Marketing that is a relatively new field in Vietnam, where understanding the cultural context, behavioral motivations, and organizational practices is just as important as measuring general trends.

3.6 Participant Selection

Qualitative Phase

In the qualitative research phase, participants were selected using a purposive sampling method to ensure that interviews were conducted with individuals who possessed knowledge and practical experience directly related to *Mindful Marketing* in the tea and food-beverage industry in Vietnam. This approach

aligns with the exploratory nature of the research, allowing for a focus on information depth rather than statistical representativeness (Patton, 2002).

The research subjects were professionals, managers, and middle to senior-level leaders working in F&B businesses, particularly those operating in the tea and coffee sector. Participants had at least three years of experience in brand management, marketing, or strategic planning, and held direct roles in decision-making or the implementation of marketing activities related to sustainability, social responsibility, or community values. This selection process aimed to ensure that the collected data reflected both strategic perspectives and organizational practices within the specific context of the industry.

Participant outreach was conducted through email invitations and a network of experts. Of the 20 experts contacted, 17 agreed to participate in the interviews. All were fully informed about the research objectives, benefits, and obligations of participation, and signed informed consent forms granting them the right to withdraw at any time without hindrance (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

To balance data depth and coverage, the study employed a two-layer interview model. Five experts participated in comprehensive in-depth interviews with a full set of questions designed to thoroughly explore strategic issues, perspectives, and experiences in implementing *Mindful Marketing*. The remaining twelve experts participated in semi-structured interviews with a shortened questionnaire, focusing on confirming, supplementing, and comparing key findings. This approach allowed the study to both delve into core arguments and broaden perspectives from businesses of different sizes and operating contexts in the F&B industry, thereby increasing the reliability and robustness of the qualitative analysis (Tongco, 2007).

Table 3.5: Demographics of Qualitative Interview Participants (Source: Author)

Criteria	Layer 1 (n=5)	Layer 2 (n=12)	Total (n=17)
Gender			
Male	5	7	12 (70.6%)
Female	0	5	5 (29.4%)
Age			
Under 35	0	3	3 (17.6%)
35 – 50	3	7	10 (58.8%)

Above 50	2	2	4 (23.6%)
Years of Experience			
5 – 10 years	2	8	10 (58.8%)
More than 10 years	3	4	7 (41.2%)
Position in Organization			
Top Manager	3	4	7 (41.2%)
Middle Manager	2	8	10 (58.8%)

Table 3.5 presents the demographic characteristics of the 17 experts participating in the qualitative interviews, thereby demonstrating the suitability of the research sample for the in-depth exploration of Mindful Marketing in the F&B industry. Among these experts, men accounted for 70.6% and women 29.4%, reflecting quite accurately the management personnel structure in the food and beverage industry in Vietnam, where leadership and strategic planning positions are still predominantly held by men. In terms of age, the 30-45 age group accounted for the highest proportion at 58.8%, a group that typically holds key roles in brand management and marketing, possessing both practical experience and the ability to adapt to new marketing trends. In addition, 35.3% of experts over 45 years old indicate the presence of individuals with many years of experience, contributing to providing strategic perspectives and deep accumulated experience in the industry. Regarding years of experience, the entire sample had at least 5 years of experience in the F&B sector, with 64.7% having 5 to 10 years of experience and 35.3% having over 10 years of experience. This structure ensures that the opinions collected are not speculative but based on real-world experience. Furthermore, the combination of middle management (58.8%) and senior management (41.2%) allows the study to simultaneously approach both strategic and operational perspectives, thereby creating a solid foundation for analyzing the brand building process and the application of Mindful Marketing in businesses.

Besides the qualitative phase, quantitative research was conducted to broaden the scope of observation and verify the findings on a larger scale. This phase focused on two main groups: tea consumers in Vietnam and businesses operating in the food and beverage industry. The simultaneous selection of these two groups allows the study to fully reflect both the demand and supply sides, from

consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors to how businesses approach and implement Mindful Marketing activities.

For the consumer group, the survey targets individuals aged 18 and over residing in Vietnam, with diversity across regions and socio-economic contexts. The research sample focuses particularly on major cities such as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Da Nang, where consumers have higher access to branded tea products and marketing campaigns linked to sustainability. In particular, Millennials and Gen Z are considered key groups as they are shaping consumer trends towards mindful consumption, health, environmental concerns, and corporate social responsibility. Data collection was conducted through online surveys, using a convenient sampling method to quickly reach a large number of participants, suitable for the research's resources and time constraints.

The quantitative survey targeting the F&B business group focused on managers and marketing professionals working in beverage manufacturing and trading companies, particularly those related to tea products. The respondents had practical experience in branding, marketing, or strategic planning, and represented businesses that had implemented initiatives related to social responsibility, sustainable development, or community engagement. Targeted sampling was applied to reach representative businesses, ensuring the quality and depth of the collected data.

The selection process for respondents in both groups was transparent, using invitation letters that clearly stated the objectives, scope, and benefits for participants. No compensation was paid to ensure voluntary participation and limit bias in responses. The final results recorded the participation of 332 consumers and 168 F&B businesses. Detailed demographic characteristics of the consumer group are presented in Table 3.6, providing an important basis for further analyses in the study.

Table 3.6: Demographics of Quantitative Participants – Consumer Group (Source: Author)

Demographics	Categories	Number of Participants (n = 332)
Gender	Male	147
	Female	182
	Other	3
Age	Under 25	79
	25–35	111

	36–45	89
	Over 45	53
Consumption Frequency	Daily	68
	Several times weekly	164
	Occasionally	45
	Rarely	55

Table 3.6 provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the consumer group participating in the quantitative survey. Specifically, out of a total of 332 participants, the proportion of women (182 respondents) is higher than that of men (147 respondents), reflecting the fact that women often play a decisive role in choosing and consuming tea in Vietnamese families. In terms of age, the 25–35 age group accounts for the largest proportion (111 respondents), followed by the 36–45 age group (89 respondents). This shows the significant interest of the Millennials generation who are playing a pioneering role in the trend of mindful consumption and sustainable products. In addition, the majority of survey participants said that they consume tea several times per week (164 respondents), indicating a high level of exposure and attachment to the product, facilitating research on factors affecting awareness and mindful consumption behavior. In the survey for the F&B business group, the questionnaire was designed to focus on measuring the level of awareness, level of application and factors affecting the implementation of Mindful Marketing. Since the research objective in this quantitative phase is mainly to explore general trends and supplement in-depth qualitative analysis, demographic variables of the business (such as size, specific industry, respondent title) were not collected. This is a limitation that the study identified in advance and will be considered in the future research orientation to ensure the representativeness of the sample (Patton, 2002; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

3.7 Instrumentation

To facilitate data collection, this study utilizes two main sets of tools corresponding to the qualitative and quantitative phases, consistent with a mixed-methods research design. The tools were developed based on the theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter 2 and references to previous studies, ensuring content validity, reliability, and applicability within the context of the Vietnamese tea industry (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019).

In the qualitative phase, the study uses a semi-structured interview questionnaire to explore the perspectives, experiences, and assessments of experts and managers in the food and beverage sector. The

questionnaire, consisting of 27 questions, was designed around five core content groups: awareness of Mindful Marketing, practical implementation experience, impact on brand building, challenges and opportunities when applying it, and suggestions for the direction of the Vietnamese tea industry. This design allowed interviewers to adhere closely to the research framework while flexibly adjusting questions to clarify issues arising during the discussion.

To balance depth and feasibility, the study adopted a two-layer interview model. Five experts from Layer 1 participated in answering the full questionnaire to provide in-depth and comprehensive data. The remaining twelve experts from Layer 2 answered a shortened version of the questionnaire, focusing on verifying and supplementing the key findings from Layer 1. This model helps broaden the scope of perspectives without compromising the quality of analysis, and is particularly suitable for exploratory research in the context of limited resources (Patton, 2002). Before official implementation, the interview questionnaire was piloted with a small group of experts to assess its clarity, relevance, and ability to elicit discussion. Formal interviews were recorded or transcribed with the participants' consent, then processed and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify meaningful patterns in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In the quantitative phase, the study developed two separate survey questionnaires: one for tea consumers and one for F&B businesses in Vietnam. The structure of each questionnaire was based on key theoretical concepts, including target screening information, scales measuring awareness and attitudes toward Mindful Marketing, variables related to consumer behavior, engagement and brand loyalty, as well as the level of application and implementation results from the businesses. Variables were primarily measured using a 5-point Likert scale for descriptive statistical analysis and comparison. Before widespread release, both sets of survey questionnaires were pilot-tested with a small group of consumers and F&B business representatives. The pilot results showed that the questions were clear, contextually appropriate, and not misleading, requiring only minor adjustments to wording. These pilot tests, detailed in Tables 3.7 and 3.8, contributed to improving the reliability and validity of the research tool, ensuring a solid methodological foundation for the formal data collection phase.

Table 3.7: Pilot Test Results – Qualitative Deep Interview (Source: Author)

Aspect Evaluated	Feedback Summary	Action Taken
Clarity of Questions	Experts reported that the interview questions were clear and facilitated in-depth discussion.	No adjustments required.

Question Flow and Logic	The sequence of questions was logical and helped maintain a natural conversation.	No adjustments required.
Relevance to Research Topic	All questions were found to be highly relevant to the topic of Mindful Marketing in the F&B industry.	No adjustments required.
Interview Duration	Average interview time was 45–60 minutes, which participants found appropriate.	No adjustments required.
Suggestions for Improvement	No major concerns; one participant suggested merging two similar probing questions for efficiency.	Merged two similar sub-questions for clarity.

Table 3.8: Pilot Test Results – Quantitative Survey (Consumers) (Source: Author)

Aspect Evaluated	Feedback Summary	Action Taken
Clarity of Questions	Participants reported that all survey questions were clear and easy to understand.	No adjustments required.
Question Relevance	Questions were considered relevant to the topic of Mindful Marketing and consumer behavior.	No adjustments required.
Survey Length	Average completion time was 8–10 minutes, considered acceptable by pilot participants.	No adjustments required.
Technical Issues (Online form)	No technical difficulties encountered during completion.	No adjustments required.
Suggestions for Improvement	No significant suggestions were provided by pilot participants.	N/A

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

To ensure the quality and feasibility of the data collection process, the study conducted a pilot testing phase before official implementation. The test results are presented in Tables 3.5 and 3.6, allowing for an assessment of the clarity and comprehensibility of the interview and survey questions, as well as testing the validity of the content and its applicability in the practical context of the Vietnamese tea industry. Based on feedback from this phase, minor adjustments to the wording and structure of the

questions were made to ensure the research tool was suitable before full-scale data collection (Creswell, 2014).

In the qualitative phase, the study focused on in-depth and semi-structured interviews with 17 experts in the food and beverage industry. A two-class interview method was applied to balance the depth and scope of information. Specifically, five Layer 1 experts participated in comprehensive interviews with a full 27-question questionnaire, averaging 60 to 90 minutes in duration, to provide in-depth strategic analysis and experience sharing. The remaining twelve Layer 2 experts answered a shortened questionnaire consisting of five comprehensive questions, lasting 30 to 45 minutes, to verify and supplement the key findings from Layer 1. The outreach process began with an email invitation clearly outlining the research objectives, scope of participation, and participant benefits. Interview schedules were flexible depending on each expert's availability, conducted through in-person meetings or online platforms. Interviews were conducted using a standardized questionnaire framework but allowed for open exploration to clarify issues related to Mindful Marketing. All interview data was recorded with the participants' consent, then transcribed and stored for analysis, while ensuring confidentiality and anonymity (Patton, 2002).

In the quantitative phase, two separate questionnaires for tea consumers and F&B businesses were designed and implemented on the Google Forms platform to optimize accessibility and convenience for respondents. Before official release, the questionnaires were tested with 15 consumers and 5 business representatives to check their comprehensibility, completion time, and scale suitability. The test results showed that the questions met the requirements for content and clarity, requiring no major adjustments (Saunders et al., 2019).

Quantitative data collection was carried out by distributing survey links via social media, email, and networks within the tea and food and beverage industry. Approximately 600 survey invitations were sent out, along with follow-up notifications to improve response rates. The results included 332 valid responses from consumers and 167 responses from businesses. The data was then directly reviewed on the system to remove incomplete or irrelevant responses, ensuring reliability for subsequent analysis.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data collected from interviews and surveys were processed and analyzed in parallel, qualitative and quantitative, to ensure both in-depth exploration of the research phenomenon and verification of trends across a broad scope. This approach allows the study not only to clarify the views, experiences, and arguments of industry experts, but also to compare them with the actual perceptions and behaviors of consumers and businesses related to Mindful Marketing in the Vietnamese tea industry.

For qualitative data, in-depth interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis according to the Braun and Clarke framework. First, the author familiarized themselves with the data by listening to the recordings multiple times and carefully reading the transcripts to grasp the context, tone, and recurring ideas. The entire interview content was transcribed verbatim to ensure completeness and avoid information loss. Based on this, the data is coded by breaking down the content into meaningful units directly related to aspects of Mindful Marketing, such as strategic awareness, leadership roles, organizational culture, or barriers to implementation. Codes with similar content are further grouped into more general themes and sub-themes. This process is repeated multiple times to review, refine, and ensure consistency between themes and the research objectives and questions. Finally, the themes are interpreted and presented with representative quotes from experts to clearly illustrate the analytical points and increase the persuasiveness of the results. This approach accurately reflects the strategic perspectives and practical experiences of professionals, while also serving as a basis for building and adapting the Mindful Marketing theoretical framework to suit the context of the Vietnamese tea industry.

Quantitative data from the two survey questionnaires, covering consumers and F&B businesses, were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. Data extracted from the online survey system was reviewed to eliminate incomplete or invalid responses. Valid results were aggregated and presented in tables and charts to clarify the proportions, trends, and differences in the perceptions and behaviors of the target groups. The quantitative analysis results were then compared with the qualitative analysis findings for cross-validation and to increase the reliability of the research conclusions. This ensures both in-depth analysis and improved generalizability of the results within the context of the Vietnamese tea industry.

3.10 Research Design Limitations

While the study adopts a mixed-methods design to strengthen the robustness of the findings, certain limitations remain and should be acknowledged when interpreting the results in both academic and practical terms. Acknowledging these limitations not only clarifies the scope of interpretation of the results but also suggests directions for further research.

Because the study prioritizes qualitative inquiry through in-depth interviews, the findings emphasize exploratory insight rather than broad generalization across the entire Vietnamese tea or food and beverage sector. The qualitative sample comprises 17 experts selected via purposive sampling, a method well suited to capturing strategic and experience-based perspectives. While this approach enables rich, context-specific understanding, it may also reflect the viewpoints of a particular group of stakeholders rather than the full diversity of the domestic F&B industry.

In the quantitative phase, data from consumers and businesses were collected primarily through online surveys. This approach facilitates rapid data collection and broad geographic reach, but it is inherently shaped by respondents' willingness to participate and their access to digital technologies. As a result, the sample may be skewed toward younger, more digitally active groups, while traditional consumers, older age cohorts, or individuals in rural areas may be underrepresented. Such conditions introduce the potential for sampling bias and limit the extent to which the findings fully capture heterogeneous consumption patterns across the Vietnamese market.

Although standardized survey scales allow for statistical analysis, they are less effective in capturing emotional nuance, deeper motivations, and contextual experiences. Meanwhile, the two-layer interview model in the qualitative phase helps balance data depth and scope, but shortening the questions in the second layer to fit the experts' time constraints may leave some aspects unexplored.

Finally, due to time and resource limitations, the data was collected over a relatively short period, insufficient to reflect long-term trends or cyclical fluctuations in the tea market in the context of digital transformation and post-COVID-19. However, these limitations do not diminish the core value of the study. On the contrary, they highlight the need for further studies with a wider sample size, longer study time, and the incorporation of probabilistic sampling methods to enhance the representativeness and generalizability of the results.

3.11 Conclusion

Chapter 3 presents the entire research methodology design used to meet the research objectives and answer the research questions posed. Building upon the theoretical and practical gaps identified in Chapter 2, this chapter constructs a mixed-methods research process, allowing for the combination of the advantages of qualitative and quantitative research to ensure the comprehensiveness, rigor, and reliability of the results.

This chapter outlines the methodological approach adopted in the study, which is grounded in a constructivist perspective that emphasizes understanding marketing phenomena through the lived experiences and viewpoints of research participants within their practical context. On this basis, a mixed-methods design is employed. Qualitative research serves as the primary approach for exploring the key components and operating mechanisms of Mindful Marketing in the tea industry, while quantitative research plays a complementary role in examining, comparing, and extending the robustness of the qualitative findings.

The chapter also describes the research subjects and sampling strategies. The qualitative component is based on in-depth interviews with 17 food and beverage experts selected through purposive sampling to obtain rich, experience-based insights. In parallel, the quantitative component focuses on tea consumers and F&B businesses in Vietnam, with particular attention to Millennials and Generation Z as influential groups in shaping sustainable consumption patterns. The research instruments, including structured questionnaires and a two-layer interview design, along with data collection procedures and ethical considerations, are presented to ensure methodological clarity and transparency.

The chapter also acknowledges methodological limitations, those associated with non-probability sampling and online surveys significantly. Nonetheless, the use of multiple methods and data sources helps reduce potential bias. Overall, Chapter 3 functions as a methodological bridge linking the theoretical framework to the empirical findings developed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

Demographics and Overview of Data

Before presenting detailed results for each research question, this section provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the survey sample and the data collected from the expert interviews. Describing the sample characteristics helps clarify the representativeness of the data and lays the foundation for subsequent analysis.

Consumer Survey Sample

The consumer survey was intended to be sent to 350 people, of which 332 valid forms were collected, achieving a response rate of 94.9%. This survey sample reflects a relatively diverse structure in terms of gender, age, consumption frequency, purchase channels and information sources, thereby providing a reliable foundation for analyzing the role of Mindful Marketing in consumer behavior and awareness of the Vietnamese tea industry.

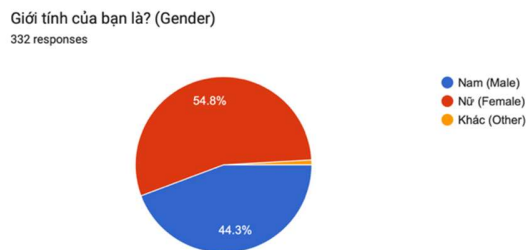


Figure 4.1: Gender (Source: Author)

In terms of gender (Figure 4.1), women predominate at 54.8%, while men account for 44.3% and 0.9% is other groups. This shows that female consumers have a higher level of participation in the survey, which is consistent with the fact that women are often the group of customers who are more interested in beverage products related to health and lifestyle.

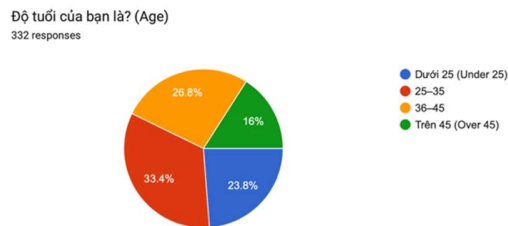


Figure 4.2: Age (Source: Author)

In terms of age (Figure 4.2), the 25-35 age group accounts for the highest proportion (33.4%), followed by the 36-45 age group (26.8%). The group under 25 years old accounts for 23.8%, while the group over 45 years old accounts for only 16.0%. This result reflects that tea is not only a traditional drink associated with the older generation, but is increasingly present in the lifestyle of young adults, especially the Millennials.

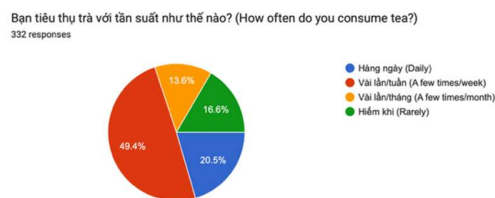


Figure 4.3: Frequency (Source: Author)

In terms of consumption frequency (Figure 4.3), 20.5% of respondents said they drank tea daily, while nearly half (49.4%) consumed tea a few times a week. In addition, 13.6% drank tea occasionally and 16.6% rarely used it. This confirms that tea is still a familiar part of the daily life of the majority of Vietnamese people, with a high consumption frequency, while there is still a significant proportion of less loyal customers which is potential for market development.

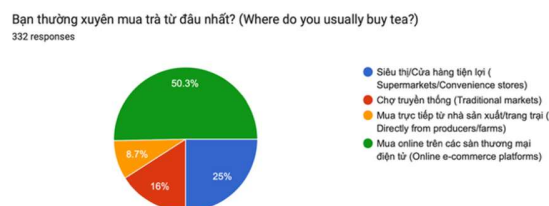


Figure 4.4: Purchase Channel (Source: Author)

In terms of purchasing channels (Figure 4.4), e-commerce is the most popular channel, with 50.3% of consumers choosing it, showing a strong shift to online shopping behavior. In addition, 25.0% buy tea at supermarkets or convenience stores, 16.0% at traditional markets, and 8.7% buy directly from farmers.

This reflects a change in tea consumption behavior, in which modern distribution channels increasingly play a leading role.

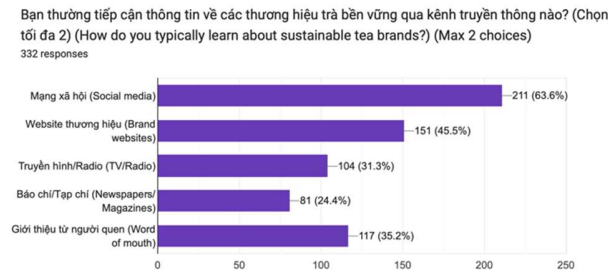


Figure 4.5: Information sources (Source: Author)

In terms of information sources, social networks dominate with 63.6% of consumers choosing them, followed by brand websites (45.5%). Traditional channels such as television or radio (31.3%) and print media (24.4%) have a lower level of influence, while word of mouth still plays a certain role with 35.2% (figure 4.5). This result shows that digital media and social networks are becoming the most important tools for tea brands to reach and interact with consumers.

In summary, the demographic characteristics of the consumer survey sample show diversity in gender and age, and reflect modern consumption trends associated with high frequency of use, shopping behavior shifting to online channels, and heavy dependence on digital media. These are important factors that guide how tea brands build Mindful Marketing strategies to meet the expectations and consumer behavior of the target market.

Managerial Survey Sample

The survey was aimed at a group of administrators and experts/marketing/branding specialists in the tea and F&B sector in general, sent to 200 people, of which 167 valid forms were collected, achieving a response rate of 83.5%. This survey did not collect detailed demographic information (gender, age, job title, etc.), however, the research sample accurately reflects the target group of individuals directly involved in administration, branding and marketing at tea and F&B businesses .

Expert Interviews Sample

In addition to the quantitative survey, the study also conducted in-depth interviews with a total of 17 experts to supplement qualitative data for the analysis process. The expert group was divided into layers to ensure a diverse and comprehensive perspective:

Layer 1 (n = 5): includes experts in the Vietnamese tea industry, with many years of direct experience in production, business, quality management, branding and tea market development. This group brings in-depth insights into product characteristics, raw material regions, soil, tea culture, as well as industry-specific challenges.

Layer 2 (n = 12): includes experts in the field of F&B and marketing, including CEOs, marketing directors, brand consultants and senior managers at food and beverage businesses, and experienced marketing specialists. This group brings a broader perspective on brand management, consumer behavior, CSR trends, CSV, ROI, as well as competition and international integration requirements.

The interviews were conducted in the form of semi-structured in-dept interviews and in-dept interviews, each session lasting an average of 45–60 minutes. The interview questions were designed based on the theoretical foundation of Mindful Marketing and closely followed the five main research questions of the thesis. The interview data were then coded, thematically coded, and analyzed comparatively between the two layers of experts.

The expert interview sample, although smaller in size than the quantitative survey, was deliberately selected to ensure diversity in experience, sectors and roles in the value chain. As a result, qualitative data not only provides depth in the perception and strategy of the enterprise, but also contributes to comparing, supplementing and explaining the quantitative survey results.

The research data was built using mixed methods, including quantitative survey and qualitative interview. The quantitative survey was conducted with two groups of subjects: consumers (332 valid questionnaires) and managers/marketers in the tea and F&B sector (167 valid questionnaires). In parallel, qualitative data was collected through 17 in-depth interviews with experts, divided into two layers to ensure both a specialized and interdisciplinary perspective. These data were processed using descriptive statistics and thematic coding, then synthesized according to each research question to ensure consistency

and comprehensiveness of the results. All questionnaires and links demonstrating the two qualitative and quantitative methods are in the appendix of the thesis.

4.1 Research Question One

RQ1: How does the application of Mindful Marketing affect the branding process in the Vietnamese tea industry?

4.1.1 Restatement of the Research Question

With growing competitive pressure, Vietnamese tea enterprises need to reinforce their brand identity and cultivate long-term consumer trust. Mindful Marketing is gradually being seen as an important tool, not only helping businesses emphasize transparency, sustainability and community engagement, but also opening up a strategic direction for the process of building and developing brands in the tea industry.

To clarify the specific impact of Mindful Marketing on the brand building process, the following section will present quantitative survey results along with qualitative analysis from expert interviews, to examine this research question from both empirical and theoretical perspectives.

4.1.2 Findings from Quantitative Survey

4.1.2.1 Consumer survey findings

The results of the consumer survey revealed several important aspects that reflect the impact of Mindful Marketing on the branding process in the Vietnamese tea industry. These findings provide empirical evidence for the theoretical arguments presented in Chapter 2, while also pointing out the practical challenges that tea businesses face when seeking to apply Mindful Marketing as a strategic orientation.

a) Perceptions of Mindful Marketing

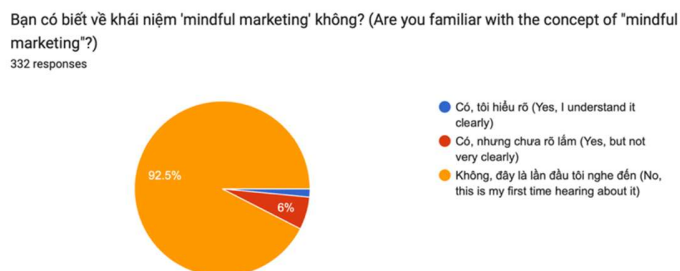


Figure 4.6: Level of awareness (Source: Author)

First of all, the survey results reflect the limited level of awareness of consumers about the concept of Mindful Marketing (Figure 4.6). Specifically, up to 92.5% of survey participants said they had never heard of or did not fully understand this concept, only 1.5% confirmed that they had mastered it, and 6.0% said they had a partial understanding. This shows that Mindful Marketing is still a relatively new concept in the Vietnamese context. However, when asked about the level of importance, 51.5% of consumers agreed or strongly agreed that Mindful Marketing plays an essential role in sustainable brand development (Figure 4.7). This finding points to a clear paradox: while the concept of Mindful Marketing remains relatively unfamiliar, its core values—such as transparency, social responsibility, and sustainability which are nevertheless widely valued by consumers. This is the premise for tea brands to exploit Mindful Marketing as a positioning tool, even when the market does not have a clear understanding of the academic concept.

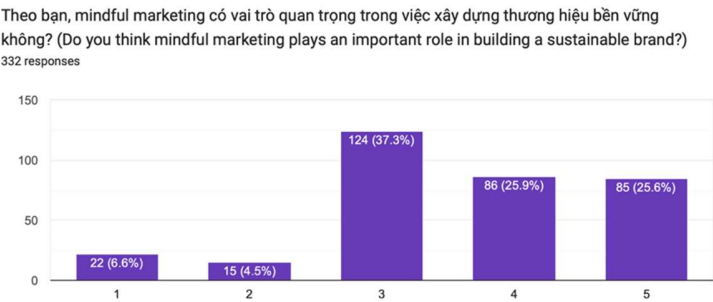


Figure 4.7: Importance (Source: Author)

a) Factors influencing tea purchase decisions

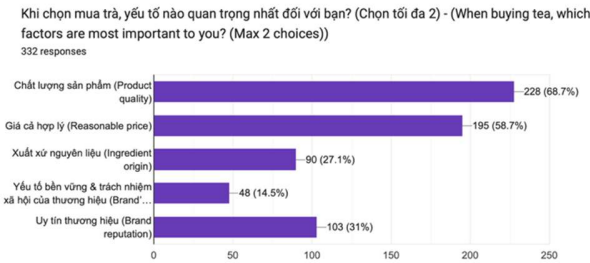


Figure 4.8: Tea purchase decision (Source: Author)

When analyzing the factors influencing consumer behavior (Figure 4.8), the survey shows that tea products are still chosen mainly based on quality (68.7%) and price (58.7%). Factors related to brand (31%), origin of raw materials (27.1%) and especially sustainability commitment (14.5%) play a secondary role. This clearly reflects the fact that core factors (functional attributes) such as quality and price are still dominant, while supportive factors (emotional or symbolic attributes) of Mindful Marketing have not really shaped consumer behavior.

In addition, when asked about the ability to pay more for sustainable products, the results show a clear differentiation: about 29.5% are willing to pay more because of environmental concerns, 34.0% agree to pay more at a moderate level, while 36.4% still consider price to be the main deciding factor. This result suggests that Mindful Marketing can add value to the brand, but it is difficult to replace the traditional role of price and quality. In other words, Mindful Marketing is a value-added factor, but not a decisive factor in current tea consumption (Figure 4.9).

Bạn có sẵn sàng trả giá cao hơn cho trà từ thương hiệu cam kết phát triển bền vững không? (Would you pay a higher price for tea from a brand committed to sustainability?)
332 responses

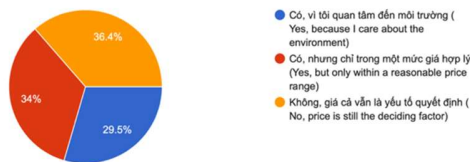


Figure 4.9: Sustainable products (Source: Author)

b) Trustworthiness and sustainable information verification behavior

Bạn có tin rằng marketing xanh (green marketing) thực sự phản ánh cam kết của doanh nghiệp không? (Do you believe "green marketing" truly reflects a brand's commitment?)
332 responses

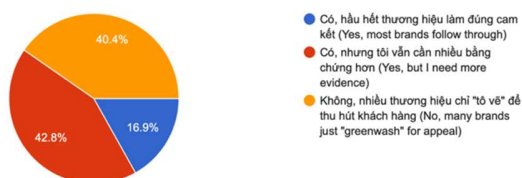


Figure 4.10: Green Marketing Credibility (Source: Author)

A key finding from the survey was the high level of consumer skepticism (figure 4.10). As many as 40.4% believe that brands are “greenwashing”, and 42.8% demand clear evidence for sustainability claims. However, only 11.1% of consumers regularly verify information before purchasing, with the majority (52.7%) admitting to being limited by time (figure 4.11). This reveals a paradox in consumer behavior: while consumers expect greater transparency from brands, they often invest limited effort in verifying related information themselves. Therefore, the responsibility of proving authenticity falls entirely on businesses.

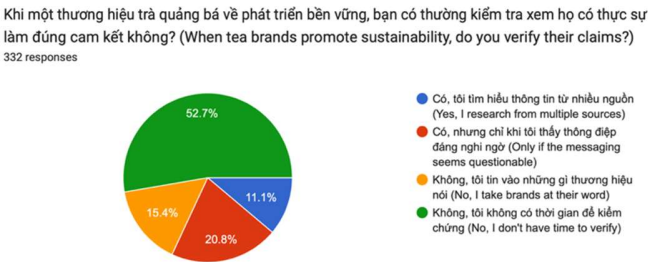


Figure 4.11: Claim Verification Behavior (Source: Author)

Of the evidence, 42.5% considered supply chain transparency to be the most compelling factor, followed by sustainability certification (22.9%), peer reviews (21.7%), and community activities (13%). This finding reinforces the argument that in Mindful Marketing, transparency is a key pillar in building brand trust (Figure 4.12).

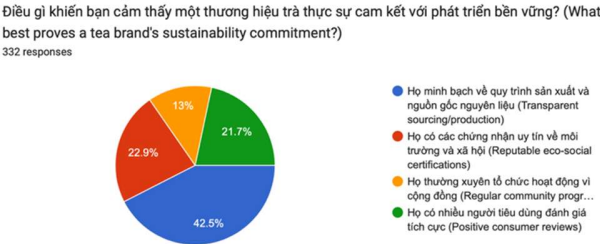


Figure 4.12: Proof of Commitment impact on brand behavior (Source: Author)

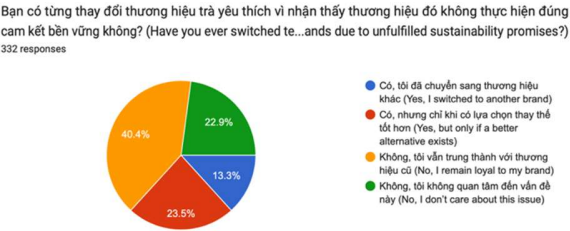


Figure 4.13: Brand Switching Behavior (Source: Author)

The survey also found that Mindful Marketing had an impact on brand behavior, but it was mostly neutral. In terms of switching behavior, 13.3% of consumers said they had switched brands due to a failure to deliver on sustainability commitments, while 23.5% said they would be willing to switch if a better option were available. However, 40.4% remained loyal regardless of the effectiveness of the commitment, and 22.9% were indifferent (figure 4.13).

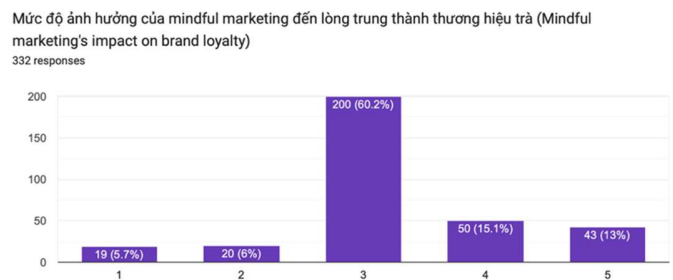


Figure 4.14: Brand Loyalty Impact (Source: Author)

Regarding loyalty, 60.2% rated it neutral, 28.1% acknowledged that Mindful Marketing had a positive impact, and 11.7% said it had almost no impact (Figure 4.14). At the same time, the current communication effectiveness (Figure 5.15) was also rated low: 44.9% were neutral, 35.2% were dissatisfied, and only 19.9% rated it positive. This result clearly reflects the gap between expectations (desire for transparency and accountability) and reality (communication is not convincing enough).



Figure 4.15: Communication Effectiveness on Sustainability Messaging (Source: Author)

Regarding the way Mindful Marketing is delivered (Figure 4.15), the results show that social media (66.9%) and websites (42.2%) are the two main channels for consumers to receive sustainability information. Traditional channels such as TV/radio (26.8%) and print media (21.4%) have significantly lower influence.

In terms of message formats, consumers prefer inspirational storytelling (31.0%) and visual content (28.6%), while technical data (15.1%) is less appealing. In addition, environmental protection campaigns (31%) are rated higher than forms such as community programs (25.3%) or origin stories (28.6%) (Figure 4.16).



Figure 4.16: Preferred Communication Approaches (Source: Author)

Survey results show that 27.4% of consumers are open to sustainable experiences, and 43.7% would consider a loyalty program if suitable incentives were available (Figure 4.17). These findings confirm that Mindful Marketing is only effective when it is conveyed in a language that is close, inspiring and linked to specific actions, instead of just stopping at theoretical messages.



Figure 4.17: Loyalty Program Engagement (Source: Author)

c) Prioritize sustainable improvement

Nếu bạn có thể đề xuất một thay đổi để thương hiệu trà Việt Nam trở nên bền vững hơn, bạn sẽ chọn gì? (What change would most improve Vietnamese tea sustainability?)
332 responses

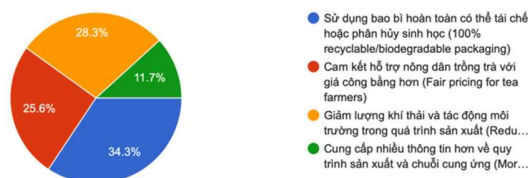


Figure 4.18: Sustainability Improvement Priorities (Source: Author)

When asked about their priorities for future improvements, consumers focused on specific and tangible issues (Figure 4.18). Improving packaging (34.3%), reducing emissions (28.3%), and ensuring

fair income for farmers (25.6%) were the top three priorities. In contrast, supply chain transparency was selected by only 11.8%, indicating that consumers are more focused on “tangible” and easily recognizable improvements. This is an important signal for tea businesses to design appropriate Mindful Marketing strategies: combining both transparency (to strengthen trust) and specific improvements (to meet consumer expectations).

4.1.2.2 Managerial survey findings

The survey results of marketing and brand management groups at tea enterprises show that Mindful Marketing is currently only at the awareness and testing level, and has not yet become a key strategic component in the brand building process.



Figure 4.19: Mindful Marketing Adoption (Source: Author)

As shown in Figure 4.19, only 3.0% of businesses have successfully implemented Mindful Marketing, whereas 53.3% are still considering adoption and 33.5% have no concrete plans. This situation reflects the reticence in integrating Mindful Marketing into brand strategy, despite the widely recognized potential.



Figure 4.20: Adoption Motivations (Source: Author)

Regarding motivations for adoption (Figure 4.20), managers identified consumer demand (46.7%) and brand reputation (35.9%) as the two most important drivers. In contrast, factors such as competitive pressure (11.4%) and legal framework (6.0%) are considered to have less impact. This suggests that

businesses view Mindful Marketing primarily through the lens of market and brand value, rather than as mandatory factors.

Nếu doanh nghiệp của bạn áp dụng mindful marketing, bạn mong đợi lợi ích nào lớn nhất? (What is the top expected benefit of mindful marketing?)
167 responses

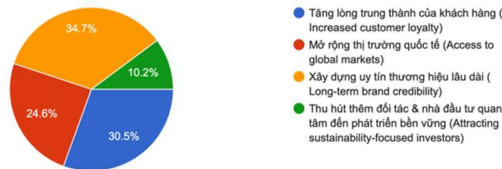


Figure 4.21: Expected Marketing Benefits (Source: Author)

With respect to expected benefits (Figure 4.21), businesses expressed the greatest confidence in long-term brand reputation (34.7%) and customer loyalty (30.5%), followed by the potential to access new markets (25.7%). Thus, Mindful Marketing is recognized as a strategic tool to strengthen brand value, rather than just creating short-term advantages.

Khi áp dụng mindful marketing, doanh nghiệp của bạn gặp khó khăn lớn nhất ở đâu? (What is the biggest challenge in implementing mindful marketing?)
167 responses

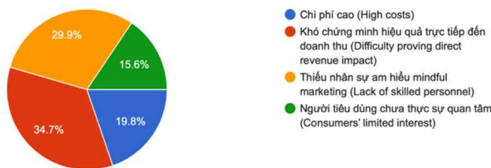


Figure 4.22: Implementation Challenges (Source: Author)

Regarding implementation challenges (Figure 4.22), businesses identified demonstrating a direct impact on revenue as the main difficulty (34.7%), followed by limited human resources (29.9%) and increased costs (19.8%). These barriers cause many businesses to remain cautious when considering investing in Mindful Marketing.

Doanh nghiệp của bạn có thực hiện các cam kết cụ thể về trách nhiệm xã hội và môi trường không? (Has your business made public commitments to social/environmental responsibility?)
167 responses

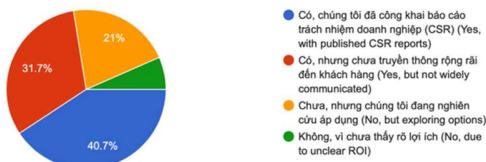


Figure 4.23: Public Sustainability Commitments (Source: Author)

With regard to public commitment (Figure 4.23), 40.7% of enterprises reported having CSR reports or official public statements, while 31.7% had implemented sustainability-related activities without communicating them widely. The transparency of these commitments plays an important role in building brand trust, but has not yet become a common standard for the entire industry.

Overall, from a management perspective, Mindful Marketing is considered a strategic direction with great potential in enhancing brand reputation and strengthening customer loyalty. However, its application is still limited due to resource challenges and difficulties in demonstrating financial efficiency, leading to a significant gap between theoretical awareness and practical implementation.

Survey results from both consumers and business management reflect a multidimensional picture of the impact of Mindful Marketing on the branding process in the Vietnamese tea industry. From a consumer perspective, Mindful Marketing is identified as an important complementary factor, contributing to strengthening trust, emotional engagement and increasing brand loyalty. Consumers particularly value supply chain transparency, certified sustainability commitments and eco-friendly packaging improvements. However, the survey also shows that product quality and price remain the main determinants, while the impact of Mindful Marketing is often only rated as neutral. The gap between transparency expectations and current communication effectiveness of businesses shows that there is still much room for Mindful Marketing to play a role in the branding process.

On the other hand, from a management perspective, Mindful Marketing is considered a strategic direction with long-term potential, especially in enhancing brand reputation and strengthening customer loyalty. Businesses note that the main motivation for adoption comes from increasing consumer demand and the desire to build a responsible brand image. However, the level of actual application is still modest: only a very small percentage of businesses have successfully implemented it, most of them are still in the testing or consideration stage. The main reasons are barriers in terms of resources, costs and difficulties in demonstrating direct financial efficiency. In addition, the level of transparency about CSR, CSV and sustainability commitments is also uneven, leading to limitations in increasing brand trust.

Data from both groups shows that both consumers and businesses believe Mindfulness Marketing can help strengthen tea brands, especially when transparent and telling good stories. But consumers have

high expectations and are somewhat skeptical, while businesses see the potential but are still hesitant to invest, creating a gap between expectations and implementation. Overall, Mindfulness Marketing in the Vietnamese tea industry currently plays a supporting role for the brand, not the “main engine”. If businesses are clearer about information, seriously invest in communication and strategy, this approach can absolutely become a long-term advantage.

4.1.3 Findings from Quatitative Survey

Table 4.1: Thematic Synthesis from Expert Interviews (Source: Author)

Theme/Insight	Evidence (quote/paraphrase)	Implications for tea branding process	Experts (Layer)
1) Concept & scope of Mindful Marketing	MM = “marketing with mindfulness,” emphasizing authenticity, transparency, balance of interests, avoiding short-term profit orientation.	Core orientation guiding 4P/7P decisions: quality, supply chain, communication, and customer experience must align with true values.	P6 (L2); P2 (L1)
2) Differentiation through terroir & heritage (GI)	Vietnamese tea has unique soil–climate–ancient Shan snow tea, potential for geographical branding and “from farm to cup” storytelling.	Positioning strategy anchored on terroir + heritage + community; foundation for brand identity and storytelling guidelines.	P1 (L1)
3) Supply chain transparency & traceability	QR codes and digital landing pages showing region, cultivar, methods; transparency is the most convincing proof.	Standardize traceability data across farm–factory–distribution; integrate into packaging/digital touchpoints.	P1 (L1); P7 (L2)
4) Avoiding “greenwashing” & ensuring consistency	Gen Z cancels brands exposed as misleading; “do real–say real.” Rebuilding trust takes long-term consistency.	Communication principles: verified claims, monitoring implementation, transparent crisis response.	P8 (L2); P7 (L2)

5) Leadership & inside-out culture	Leadership and internal training are essential; employees become storytellers at points of sale.	Internal branding: training, fair rewards, KPI linked to MM values; brand handbook with storytelling narratives.	P6 (L2); P9 (L2); P10 (L2)
6) Generational behavior (Gen Z/Millennials)	Gen Z highly aware, demand consistency, conditionally loyal, expect personalization, quick to reject inconsistency.	Funnel design: trial–learning–loyalty with personalized experiences/CRM; strict consistency between claims and actions.	P11 (L2); P8 (L2); P9 (L2)
7) Storytelling, experiences & touchpoints	Narratives about raw materials, farmers, community; farm-to-table tours, livestreams, transparent menus/QR.	Build a “brand journey” across multiple touchpoints: POS, social media, events, farm experiences.	P12 (L2); P7 (L2)
8) Pricing & premiumization (WTP)	Younger consumers willing to pay more for “authentic, clean, traceable” products and quality experiences.	Portfolio strategy: flagship terroir premium line + accessible line for consumer education.	P8 (L2); P3 (L1)
9) Farmer partnerships & social fairness	Farmers as cultural ambassadors; reinvestment in communities enhances brand image.	Sustainable contracts with farmers, fair income distribution, featuring farmer stories in brand communications.	P1 (L1); P2 (L1); P4 (L1)
10) Implementation challenges & ROI	Barriers: proving revenue impact, lack of human resources, cost sensitivity. Doing right is harder and costlier than short-term tactics.	Roadmap: (i) internal foundation, (ii) pilot transparency with 1–2 SKUs, (iii) scale up with retention/CLV metrics.	P5 (L1); P10 (L2); P8 (L2)

11) Long-term benefits (trust, loyalty)	MM reduces short-term ad cost but builds long-term trust, loyalty, and word-of-mouth.	Introduce KPIs: trust index, NPS, repeat purchase, CLV; evidence-based communication dashboards.	P7 (L2); P12 (L2)
12) Brand architecture: corporate vs personal	Personal brands spread faster but are unstable; corporate brand more sustainable for trust accumulation.	Establish brand architecture: corporate master brand, personal brands as storytellers.	P4 (L1)
13) Channels & tools (social–CRM–POS)	Social/digital channels to personalize; employees as storytellers at POS; QR for transparency.	Channel playbook: content calendar, CRM automation, POS storytelling training.	P9 (L2); P1 (L1)
14) Global status & national heritage	Potential to elevate Vietnamese tea as national cultural symbol if managed with standards.	GI development + national branding campaigns (exhibitions, cultural diplomacy).	P1 (L1); P3 (L1)
15) SME readiness & capacity	Many tea SMEs lack awareness/resources for certification and transition.	“Small steps” approach: prioritize 1–2 certifications, pilot in one region/SKU, then expand.	P2 (L1); P6 (L2)
16) USP & niche markets	Invest in unique, authentic selling points; MM fits niche strategy with long-term premium value.	Define USP via terroir/storytelling; start with high-WTP segments before mass scaling.	P5 (L1); P3 (L1)

17) Risks & crisis management	Social media amplifies risks; need for verified claims, quick transparent response; Gen Z may “cancel” strongly.	Crisis SOP: verified evidence, spokesperson, transparent timeline reporting.	P8 (L2)
18) Profit–responsibility balance	Optimize based on real value, not price competition; community reinvestment increases long-term credibility.	Impact budget integrated into P&L; reinvest profits into community projects.	P9 (L2); P2 (L1)
19) “Clean & evidence-based” IMC/4P	4P executed with transparency and proof; deep content rather than shallow trends.	Communication guidelines: claim checklist, “evidence blocks” on website/POS/social.	P7 (L2)
20) Execution limits & scope	Balance profit–quality; avoid competing on price with “unclean” brands; fit scope to resources.	Scope-fit strategy: small, credible steps; be transparent about what is achieved rather than over-claiming.	P8 (L2); P6 (L2)

Expert Interview Insights for RQ1

Expert interviews, including those with expertise in the tea industry and a group of F&B, marketing, and branding specialists, revealed that Mindful Marketing (MM) has a clear but long-term structural impact on the branding of Vietnamese tea. The results of the coding analysis suggest that authenticity and trust form the central themes, extending to emotional experience, brand strategy, implementation capacity, and internal support conditions.

Consistent results across both groups indicate that MM is primarily understood as a commitment to transparency, particularly regarding the origin of ingredients, production processes, and social responsibility. As consumers become more sensitive to “greenwashing”, authenticity has shifted from a source of competitive advantage to a basic requirement for brand survival. Building upon that foundation, MM expands its role to building emotional brands through storytelling about the growing region, cultural heritage, and farming communities, while requiring businesses to design multi-touch experiences, especially in the digital environment, to create connections with the younger generation.

From a strategic perspective, MM is seen as a brand restructuring tool, allowing for the enhancement of product value, expansion of product portfolios, and a shift in focus from product branding to sustainable corporate branding. However, implementation still faces significant hurdles, particularly certification costs and difficulties in measuring short-term financial effectiveness. Nevertheless, experts agree that the core value of MM lies in its long-term cumulative benefits such as trust, positive word-of-mouth, and lasting loyalty.

Comparing the two data sets reveals a complementary relationship: the tea expert group emphasizes intrinsic identity and the preservation of traditional values, while the F&B and marketing expert group focuses on modern management and strategic communication. This intersection confirms that Mindful Marketing is not just an ethical trend, but a practical strategic framework capable of enhancing the long-term competitiveness of Vietnamese tea brands.

4.1.4 Summary & Integration

To answer the research question about the impact of Mindful Marketing on brand building in the Vietnamese tea industry, the study synthesized data from consumer surveys, business management surveys, and expert interviews to identify practical activities and the perception gap between relevant groups. The results show that Mindful Marketing primarily influences brands by reinforcing authenticity and transparency. Consumers take "green" claims seriously and only form trust when there is concrete evidence of origin, certification, and social responsibility, while businesses and experts consider this a

fundamental foundation of brand value, consistent with the CBBE framework and mindfulness theory. Building on this trust, storytelling and brand experiences play a role in enhancing emotional value, helping Vietnamese tea create differentiated information about cultural products, sourcing regions, and multi-touchpoint experiences. However, the process of building customer loyalty remains cumulative over time: consumers remain neutral, while businesses and experts perceive long-term strategic value. Simultaneously, the discrepancy between customers' priorities of price and quality and the firm mindset of businesses demonstrates that the concept of Mindful Marketing still plays a supporting role. Overall, Mindful Marketing emphasizes trust, emotional value, and a long-term strategic orientation in tea brand development.

4.2 Research Question Two

RQ2: What role do the elements of Mindful Marketing play in the branding process?

4.2.1 Restatement of the Research Question

Under increasing domestic and international competitive pressure, Mindful Marketing in the Vietnamese tea industry requires clearer differentiation of its key components rather than a purely general orientation. These elements, including authenticity, supply chain transparency, social responsibility, sustainable development, customer experience, storytelling, and long-term orientation, all have distinct roles in forming brand value. How these elements operate and interact with each other will determine the level of success of a tea brand in winning consumer trust, creating differentiation in the market, and ensuring long-term sustainability.

Repeating this research question helps guide the next presentation, where the findings from the survey and interviews will be analyzed to clarify each specific element of Mindful Marketing and their role in the brand building process. These findings will demonstrate not only the importance of each individual element, but also highlight the interconnectedness between them in creating a Vietnamese tea brand that is both authentic, sustainable, and emotionally appealing to consumers.

4.2.2 Findings from Quantitative Survey

4.2.2.1 Consumer survey findings

The consumer survey clearly showed the role of each element of Mindful Marketing (MM) in shaping the branding process of the Vietnamese tea industry. Instead of viewing MM as a holistic concept, the data reflected how each individual element works to contribute to brand value.

(a) Transparency and Authenticity

Transparency plays a fundamental role in building brand trust. The survey results showed that 40.4% of consumers were skeptical about the phenomenon of “greenwashing” and 42.8% required more clear evidence for sustainability claims (Figure 4.10). Among the proposed evidences, supply chain transparency was considered the most trustworthy (42.5%, figure 4.12). This proves that transparency is the “social proof” for brands to affirm their commitments, thereby strengthening their position in the market.

(b) CSR

Consumers are not only interested in products but also have expectations about how businesses treat their communities and the environment. 25.6% want brands to ensure fair income for farmers (Figure 4.18), and 28.3% appreciate efforts to reduce emissions. These data show that CSR is not just a formality but plays a key role in shaping a responsible brand image, creating a foundation for sustainable differentiation.

(c) Sustainable Packaging and Eco-innovation

34.3% of consumers choose packaging innovation as a top priority to evaluate the brand's sustainability efforts (figure 4.18). Packaging therefore not only has a functional function, but also serves as tangible evidence for brands to demonstrate their commitment to Mindful Marketing. The role of this element lies in transforming intangible values (statements, philosophies) into a concrete presence before the eyes of customers.

(d) Storytelling and Emotional Connection

Consumers responded most positively to inspirational storytelling (31.0%) and visual images (28.6%), while technical data only accounted for 15.1% (figure 4.16). This proves that storytelling plays an important role in creating emotions, making mindful values part of the brand identity. This is the

factor that turns product experience into brand experience, helping the brand differentiate in the minds of customers.

(e) Pricing and Value Perception

The survey shows that 68.7% of consumers consider quality as the top factor and 58.7% are strongly concerned about price (figure 4.8). However, nearly 64% (29.5% willing to pay more, 34.0% accepting a moderate price increase) are willing to pay more for tea products linked to sustainability (Figure 4.9). This suggests that pricing acts as a signaling mechanism: higher prices can reflect mindful values if accompanied by transparent evidence and a relevant experience.

(f) Loyalty Programs and Customer Retention

When asked about loyalty, 60.2% remained neutral, while 28.0% said that MM had a strong influence (Figure 4.14). However, 43.7% were willing to join a loyalty program if there were incentives linked to sustainability, and 27.4% were definitely willing to join (4.17). This result shows that loyalty programs not only maintain customer loyalty, but also serve as a tool to transform mindful values into practical benefits, thereby strengthening the branding process.

(g) Experiential Marketing - Brand Experience

23.2% of consumers are willing to participate in sustainable experiential activities (farm tours, green events), and an additional 34.6% agree if the cost is reasonable (Figure 4.24). This shows that experiential marketing plays a bridge role between brands and consumers, transforming mindful values into vivid experiences, thereby enhancing brand engagement.

Nếu một thương hiệu trà mời bạn tham gia các hoạt động trải nghiệm như tham quan trang trại, hội thảo về trà bền vững, bạn có quan tâm không? (Would you be interested in tea experiences (farm visits, workshops)?)

332 responses

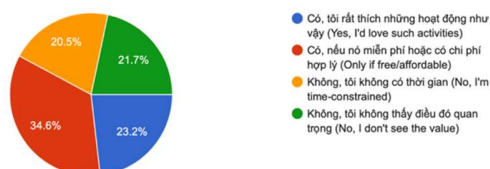


Figure 4.24: Experience Participation (Source: Author)

In summary, the consumer survey results show that each element of Mindful Marketing plays a specific functional role in the branding process: transparency is the foundation for creating trust, CSR

and CSV strengthen social reputation, sustainable packaging is tangible evidence, storytelling creates emotional connections, pricing conveys value, loyalty programs maintain engagement, and experiential marketing turns value into real experiences. This proves that the branding process in the Vietnamese tea industry does not only rely on core attributes (quality, price) but also needs to be enhanced through consistent operation of Mindful Marketing elements.

4.2.2.2 Managerial Survey Findings

The survey results with a group of managers and marketing/branding experts have clarified how specific elements of Mindful Marketing (MM) are identified and implemented by businesses in the process of building a brand. The data clearly reflects the functional role of each element, and also shows the difference between strategic expectations and operational practices.

a) *Transparency and Authenticity*

Transparency is considered an important tool to build trust and attract modern consumers. 44.9% of businesses believe that supply chain transparency has a direct impact on customer behavior, and an additional 29.9% believe that it is effective when accompanied by appropriate communication (Figure 4.25). Thus, transparency acts as a lever to build a trustworthy brand, especially in the context of skepticism about “greenwashing”.

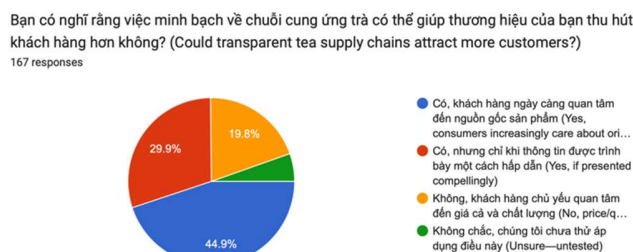


Figure 4.25: Supply Chain Transparency Potential (Source: Author)

b) *CSR and Public Commitments*

40.7% of enterprises have published official CSR reports, while 31.7% have implemented them to a limited extent (Figure 4.23). Publicizing these commitments is seen as a mechanism to enhance legitimacy and strengthen brand reputation. CSR is therefore not only complementary but also plays a direct role in shaping a responsible brand image.

c) Sustainable Practices and Policy Frameworks

Only 10.2% of enterprises said they have fully implemented sustainability policies, while 34.7% have only stopped at the pilot level (Figure 4.26). This reflects that the internal sustainability policy currently plays an unsound foundation. However, the need for external support was also highlighted: 40.1% wanted tax incentives for sustainable activities and 25.1% expected funding for material innovation (Figure 4.27). Thus, policy is both an internal factor and a systemic condition for brands to successfully operate MM.

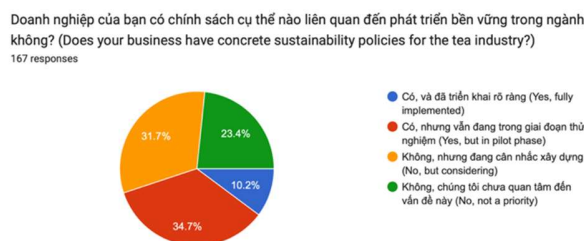


Figure 4.26: Policy Implementation (Source: Author)

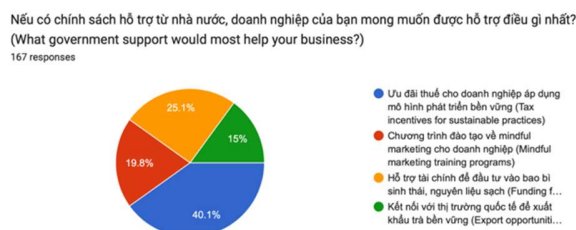


Figure 4.27: Desired Policy Support (Source: Author)

d) Communication Channels and Storytelling

Social media is the most effective channel (44.9%), almost twice as effective as websites (25.1%), while traditional newspapers (16.2%) and live events (13.8%) are less effective (Figure 4.28). This shows that storytelling and sustainable messages need to be prioritized on digital platforms, where young consumers can easily access and response. Thus, the role of storytelling is not only to create emotions but also to be a competitive tool in modern media channels.

Kênh nào phù hợp nhất để truyền thông về mindful marketing cho thương hiệu? (Which channel is most effective for mindful marketing communication?)
167 responses

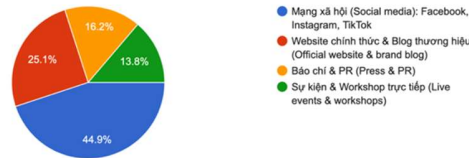


Figure 4.28: Effective Communication Channels (Source: Author)

e) Product Value and Competitive Advantage

34.7% of businesses believe that the quality of natural ingredients is the biggest support, followed by traditional tea culture (29.9%) and storytelling (25.1%) (Figure 4.29). This shows that the core elements of MM are quality, locality and story together forming brand value, in which quality remains an irreplaceable pillar.

Theo bạn, doanh nghiệp trà Việt Nam có thể tận dụng yếu tố nào để thành công với mindful marketing? (What unique factor can Vietnamese tea brands leverage for mindful marketing success?)
167 responses

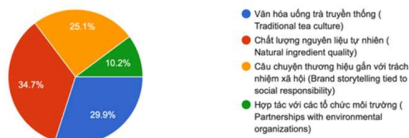


Figure 4.29: Competitive Advantages (Source: Author)

f) Pricing and ROI

19.8% of businesses consider cost to be the main barrier (Figure 4.30), and 16.8% believe that they have not seen a clear ROI from sustainable investment (Figure 4.31). This shows that pricing and ROI play an intermediary role: without demonstrating financial benefits, businesses will find it difficult to maintain MM elements in the branding process.

Khi áp dụng mindful marketing, doanh nghiệp của bạn gặp khó khăn lớn nhất ở đâu? (What is the biggest challenge in implementing mindful marketing?)
167 responses

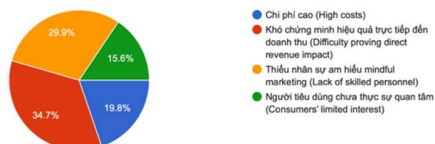


Figure 4.30: Implementation Challenges (Source: Author)

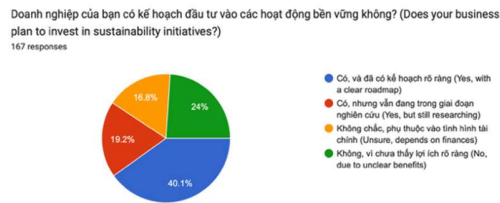


Figure 4.31: Sustainability Investment Plans (Source: Author)

g) Loyalty and Long-term Brand Benefits

30.5% of businesses expect MM to strengthen customer loyalty, while 34.7% emphasize the biggest benefit is long-term brand reputation (Figure 4.21). Thus, loyalty is considered as an important outcome, but MM also plays a more strategic role: building long-term credibility for the brand to maintain its competitive position.

h) Consumer Demand and Education

46.7% of businesses implement MM because of market demand, followed by enhancing brand reputation (35.9%) (Figure 4.20). However, 29.9% believe that consumers are still price-sensitive and 4.8% lack market data (Figure 4.32). Therefore, an important role of MM is consumer education, which 34.7% of businesses plan to implement in the future (Figure 4.33).

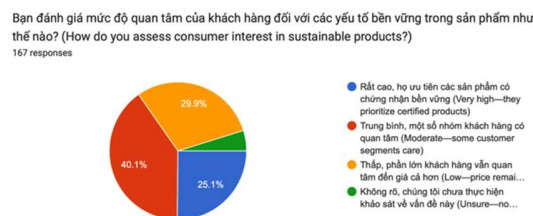


Figure 4.32: Consumer Sustainability Demand Assessment (Source: Author)

Doanh nghiệp của bạn có thực hiện các hoạt động giáo dục người tiêu dùng về tiêu dùng bền vững không? (Does your business educate consumers about sustainable consumption?)
167 responses

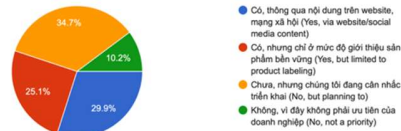


Figure 4.33: Consumer Education Initiatives (Source: Author)

Overall, the findings show that Mindful Marketing elements play differentiated roles in branding, ranging from trust building and reputation enhancement to operational support, value creation, long-term loyalty, and consumer education. Thus, MM not only affects the brand in general, but each component element also takes on a separate function in building and maintaining the Vietnamese tea brand.

4.2.3 Findings from Quatitative Survey

Expert interviews for Mindful Marketing did not approach the branding of Vietnamese tea in a linear fashion, but rather through various functional elements that complement and intertwine. Unlike the first research question, which focused on the synergistic impact, the results for the second research question clarify the specific roles of each element in the MM system.

Previously, transparency and authenticity were considered irreplaceable foundations. The tea industry emphasized the origin of production, the raw material region, and the presence of rural people as direct evidence of brand value, while the F&B expert group viewed transparency as a mechanism to protect the brand from the threat of "greenwashing." From both perspectives, transparency is no longer just a communication tool but a condition for brand trust and legitimacy in the minds of young consumers.

Social responsibility and equity are identified as factors that enhance reputation. For tea experts, the relationship with farmers is the core of the brand story; for management and marketing teams, CSR and environmental commitment play a role as "social permits," helping the brand maintain acceptance over time. Durable packaging emerges as the clearest evidence of these connections, both differentiating at the point of sale and visually conveying mindful values.

Storytelling and vulnerability serve as emotional triggers. Tea experts focus on products, regions, and regional identity as sources of robust differentiation, while F&B experts emphasize multi-channel communication and digital experiences to engage Millennials and Gen Z. Price, in this context, is seen as a positioning factor: only meant to be affected by certification and the question answered, otherwise it will and should be maintained before ROI.

Ultimately, loyalty programs and ongoing experiences play a crucial role in transforming Mindful Marketing values into actual engagement behaviors. These experiences, ranging from farm-based experiences to eco-friendly consumption and digital events, help make MM a lived experience rather than just a slogan.

A comparison of the two groups of experts reveals one focusing on intrinsic identity and the other on management and efficiency, but both agree that the elements of Mindful Marketing only truly shine when implemented as a synchronized system in building the Vietnamese tea brand.

4.2.4 Summary & Integration

The second research question focuses on clarifying the functional role of each element in Mindful Marketing in the process of building a brand for the Vietnamese tea industry. A simultaneous comparison of three data sources, consumer surveys, management surveys, and expert interviews, reveals that Mindful Marketing elements do not exist in isolation but operate as a tightly linked value system.

Previously, transparency and authenticity were identified as the foundation of the entire brand building framework. Consumers may show a high degree of skepticism towards “green” claims and demand concrete evidence, while businesses and experts view supply chain transparency and traceability as prerequisites for establishing trust. This role aligns with the Customer-Based Brand Value Framework, where trust and authenticity are prerequisites for all positive brand associations, and reflects the spirit of Mindfulness Theory, emphasizing presence and honesty in interactions with customers.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the creation of shared value continue to play a crucial role in legitimizing and supporting commercial reputation. Consumers expect specific commitments related to farmers and the environment, businesses view CSR as a governance standard, but experts see

it as a long-term competitive advantage. This approach shows that Mindful Marketing not only meets ethical expectations but is also closely tied to a sustainable development model and creates shared value.

Sustainable and innovative green packaging emerges as the clearest evidence of mindful commitments. Data shows that packaging is both a powerful direct point of contact with users and a differentiating factor at the point of sale, although it comes with cost pressures for businesses. In this context, packaging becomes part of the experiential experience, defining the formula and evaluating the customer's price during the use-action process.

Storytelling and emotional connection play a key role in activating brand depth. Consumers respond positively to inspiring stories and emotionally rich imagery, businesses view storytelling as a competitive tool, but experts clearly distinguish between heritage storytelling and digital storytelling. This underscores the role of experience and personality in creating distinct solids.

Price and perceived value act as intermediaries. While quality and price remain priorities, users are willing to pay extra for solid products if the value is clearly demonstrated. Businesses are concerned about ROI, while experts emphasize that price is only meaningful when accompanied by verifiable evidence and a consistent experience.

A customer-oriented engagement program, supported by consistent brand experiences, helps convert value propositions into long-term customer loyalty. Loyalty data only forms when solid value foundations are realized in real-world experiences and community connections.

In summary, Mindful Marketing impacts brand building through an integrated system where transparency builds trust, CSR strengthens reputation, packaging provides evidence, storytelling evokes emotion, pricing conveys value, and experiences transform reasoning into behavior. This interconnectedness helps Vietnamese tea brands build and protect their competitiveness sustainably in a context of input costs.

4.3 Research Question Three

RQ3: Why does the Vietnamese tea industry need to apply Mindful Marketing in the current context?

4.3.1 Restatement of the Research Question

In recent years, the Vietnamese tea industry has faced many challenges and opened up new opportunities. On the one hand, competitive pressure from major tea-producing countries such as China, India, Sri Lanka or Taiwan has increased, along with stricter standards from export markets. On the other hand, the trend of sustainable consumption, the demand for safe and transparent products and the emergence of a younger generation of customers (Millennials, Gen Z) requires Vietnamese tea brands to change their approach strategy. In that context, Mindful Marketing is increasingly seen as an inevitable direction to both affirm distinctive values, build long-term trust and enhance brand position in both domestic and international markets. Re-emphasizing this research question helps to guide the next analysis section, where survey and interview results will be exploited to clarify why Mindful Marketing is not just an option, but has become an urgent need in the strategy of building a Vietnamese tea brand.

4.3.2 Findings from Quantitative Survey

4.3.2.1 Consumer Survey Findings

The results of the user survey have revealed the core reasons why the Vietnamese tea industry needs to adopt Mindful Marketing in the current context. Earlier findings show that although awareness remained low, the potential for further development was nonetheless acknowledged. While the majority of users were unfamiliar with the concept of Mindful Marketing, more than half believed this approach was meaningful for building a strong brand. This reflects a well-received blank slate, while also leaving ample room for redefining communication strategies and positioning.

Although quality and price continue to be key drivers, purchasing decisions are increasingly influenced by sourcing, brand, and sustainability. Willingness to pay more for perceived value is beginning to translate into actual purchase intention. However, the survey also revealed a high level of skepticism. Many consumers are concerned about "greenwashing" and demand clear evidence, while absolute trust in the sustainability message of businesses remains limited. A large majority lack the time to verify the information themselves, meaning the responsibility for transparency and communicating evidence rests with the businesses. By contrast, formal certification schemes remain relatively unfamiliar to consumers, pointing to gaps in communication and formal education. Finally, sustainability factors

have begun to impact brand loyalty. A segment of consumers are willing to switch to another brand if the commitment is not fulfilled in a potentially dangerous manner. This shows that Mindful Marketing is no longer just a "decorative" element but is becoming a necessary condition for maintaining trust and loyalty. Overall, consumer data reflects the changing tides of change, while simultaneously affirming Mindful Marketing as a strategic direction for the Vietnamese tea industry.

4.3.2.2 Managerial Survey Findings

A survey of managers and marketing-branding experts has clarified the structural dynamics of the Vietnamese tea industry, highlighting the inability to ignore Mindful Marketing in the current period. Data shows that the actual level of development remains modest, with only 3.0% of businesses reporting successful implementation, 10.2% showing unclear results, over half (53.3%) still considering it, and 33.5% having no development plan. This reflects a practical action plan: Mindful Marketing is still in its nascent stage, but is simultaneously becoming an increasingly clear pressure for transformation.

The main difficulties in implementation stem from within the businesses themselves rather than the market. The biggest barrier identified is the difficulty in directly demonstrating activities that contribute to revenue (34.7%), followed by a lack of suitable human resources (29.9%) and high implementation costs (19.8%). Only 15.6% believe weak consumer demand is the main reason for the shift. This structural barrier suggests the core issue lies in organizational capacity and strategy maintenance, rather than purchasing power or market interest.

On the other hand, the impetus for businesses to shift their focus comes from external factors. Nearly half of businesses (46.7%) identify consumer demand as the biggest pressure, while 35.9% emphasize brand signals. Competition pressure (11.4%) and regulatory pressure (6.0%) play a secondary role. This indicates that changing customer expectations are becoming a direct force driving businesses to adjust their marketing strategies.

Sustainability commitments are also gradually becoming a governance norm. 40.7% of businesses have published formal CSR reports, 31.7% have developed them at a regulatory level, and 21.0% are considering implementing them. Even businesses that haven't systematically pursued Mindful Marketing face the pressure of demonstrating a minimum level of consistent responsibility.

Regarding expected benefits, businesses view Mindful Marketing primarily as a long-term investment. Brand reputation (34.7%) and customer loyalty (30.5%) are valued more highly than market expansion (25.7%) or attracting investors (10.2%). Simultaneously, perceptions of market demand show optimal differentiation: 25.1% noted strong demand for products with solid certifications, 40.1% found interest in certain segments, while 29.9% considered customers price-sensitive.

Lastly, policy factors and broader institutional support remain important drivers of future potential. Only 10.2% of businesses have fully implemented sustainability policies, while 34.7% are in the testing phase and 31.7% are in the assessment phase. Expectations for tax incentives (40.1%) and support for new product changes (25.1%) for Mindful Marketing are not only market-driven but also policy-driven.

In summary, from a management perspective, Mindful Marketing is shifting from a strategic approach to an adaptive requirement. Consumer pressure, the need to strengthen brand reputation, transparency requirements, and policy direction are simultaneously shaping a new development path for the Vietnamese tea industry.

4.3.3 Expert Interview Insights

The interviewed experts provided compelling evidence affirming the necessity of applying Mindfulness Marketing to the Vietnamese tea industry today. Data collected from two groups, including Layer 1 with major tea industries (P1–P5) and Layer 2 with experts in the food & beverage, marketing, and branding sectors (P6–P17), showed a clear consensus on the urgency, although their approaches to addressing the root causes differed significantly from a professional standpoint.

Regarding international competitiveness, Layer 1 experts consistently highlighted the weaknesses of Vietnamese tea compared to established brands such as China, India, and Sri Lanka. P1 described a common paradox in the industry: high-value products with low efficiency, leaving Vietnamese tea vulnerable to price competition when exporting. This view is reinforced by Layer 2 experts, who argue that the premium market inevitably demands sustainable production standards and traceability, making Mindful Marketing a necessary condition for maintaining international market access.

Experts agree that younger generations, especially Generation Z, are no longer satisfied with mere products but demand information about origin, social impact, and community value. P4 suggests that young consumers want to understand who created the product and how it impacts the environment and society. From a management perspective, Layer 2 experts note that modern consumers buy the “story” associated with the brand, forcing the tea industry to shift from a commodity mindset to building experiences and emotional connections.

Another pressure highlighted is the need for transparency and the risk of “greenwashing.” Experts warn that conveying expectations of certainty not only undermines domestic confidence but also carries the risk of serious failure when accessing markets such as the EU. At this point, Conceptual Marketing is identified as a protective mechanism, emphasizing transparent data, credible evidence, and clear traceability.

Layer 1 experts view Mixed Market Marketing (MM) strategically as an opportunity to reposition Vietnamese tea, shifting the focus from low prices to intrinsic values such as land, heritage, and farming communities. Layer 2 experts add that this process is only effective when combined with digital communication and multi-touch experiences, suitable for the global market. Both groups agree that the benefits of MM are long-term. As point P11 points out, effectiveness cannot be achieved within a 1-2 year cycle, but rather lays the foundation for effective survival and development over 10-20 years.

When these perspectives are considered together, Mindful Marketing emerges as a strategic requirement rather than an experimental option for the Vietnamese tea industry. This is shaped by international competitive pressure, evolving consumer behavior, transparency expectations, policy integration, and the pursuit of sustainable value creation.

4.3.4 Summary & Integration

The third research question focuses on clarifying why the Vietnamese tea industry needs to apply Mindful Marketing in the current context. Evidence from consumers, managers, and experts suggests that this issue extends beyond short-term trends and reflects a structural requirement. Market pressure, internal capabilities, and international integration capacity jointly shape this shift.

From the consumer perspective, this need emerges in a noteworthy paradox. Although familiarity with the concept of Mindful Marketing remains low, at only 7.5%, more than half of those surveyed recognize its importance for sustainable brand development. Purchasing decisions are still strongly influenced by quality and price, but have expanded to include factors such as raw material origin, brand, and commitment to sustainability. 63.5% are willing to pay a higher price for products associated with certain values that guarantee conversion within their consumer value system. The song reflects a high degree of skepticism: 40.4% are concerned about "greenwashing" and 42.8% demand concrete evidence. Loyalty is also increasingly linked to responsible behavior, with 13.3% switching to other brands due to businesses failing to keep their commitments and 23.5% willing to change if a more sustainable option is available. This result reflects the sound logic of Mindfulness Marketing (TPB) and CBBE, where attitudes, social norms, and beliefs increasingly influence consumer opinions and behavior.

From a management perspective, the motivation for adopting Mindfulness Marketing primarily stems from market pressure and the need to strengthen brand reputation. Nearly half of businesses identify consumers as the main source of pressure, while a third emphasize the role of commercial signals. However, the successful implementation rate is only 3.0%, indicating significant internal barriers, particularly difficulty in demonstrating revenue impact, manpower shortages, and high costs. Nevertheless, over 40% of businesses have published CSR statements, reflecting the growing trend of social responsibility becoming a standard of governance. Long-term expectations focus on brand signaling, fostering loyalty, and expanding reach, aligning with the logic of TBL and CSV.

From an expert perspective, the necessity of Mindful Marketing is more clearly seen in the context of global competition. Major tea industries emphasize a competitive model based on price and product, while viewing identity, heritage, soil, and transparency as viable paths to value enhancement. F&B and marketing experts add further emphasis on sustainability standards, avoiding the risk of "greening," and demanding long-term returns on investment. Both groups agree that Mindful Marketing not only helps build brand identity but is also a necessary condition for integration and sustainable survival.

Synthesizing three data sources reveals that, despite differing priorities, they all converge on one point: without Mindful Marketing, the Vietnamese tea industry faces the risk of declining trust, loss of competitive advantage, and limited integration capabilities. Therefore, Mindful Marketing plays a necessary role in sustaining brand reputation and expanding industry reach.

4.4 Research Question Four

RQ4: What Mindful Marketing activities and tools will be used in the brand development plan of Tea & Coffee Sandals Group (TCSG)?

4.4.1 Restatement of the Research Question

Unlike the previous research questions that focused on the overall impact, the role of each factor, or the reasons for applying Mindful Marketing, the fourth question focuses directly on the practical aspect. The focus of the question is to identify specific activities and implementation tools that TCSG can apply to turn Mindful Marketing from a theoretical concept into a tangible part of the brand development plan. In the context of TCSG inheriting the traditional values of the Vietnamese tea industry while also aiming to expand the market and improve its competitive position, identifying and choosing the right Mindful Marketing activities/tools is crucial. The next analysis will be based on survey data and expert interviews to clarify which tools are considered the most suitable and effective for TCSG, thereby building a practical foundation for the brand development plan.

4.4.2 Findings from Quantitative Survey

4.4.2.1 Consumer Survey Findings

The consumer survey results highlight clear issues regarding marketing activities and tools that can inform TCSG's economic development plan. The responses focused most heavily on sustainable packaging, brand communication, customer experience, and loyalty programs, while emphasizing the crucial role of transparency.

The first key finding concerns sustainable packaging. 34.3% of consumers considered packaging innovation the area needing improvement first, higher than emission reduction (28.3%) and ensuring fair income for farmers (25.6%) (Figure 4.18). At the same time, 29.5% valued environmentally friendly packaging, and 34.0% were willing to use it if the packaging change did not increase the selling price

(Figure 4.9). This shows that packaging is not just a functional or aesthetic element, but is also seen by consumers as the first visual indicator of a brand's commitment to sustainability.

Regarding communication, consumers may have the highest priority for storytelling and emotional delivery. Storytelling (31.0%) and imagery (28.6%) were rated much higher than purely technical information (15.1%) (Figure 4.16). When examining campaign content, environmental protection commitments (30.1%) and community programs (26.8%) received high levels of attention, while stories about product origin also received a significant amount (25.9%) (Figure 4.34). These figures indicate that consumers expect tea brands to communicate in a humane and inspiring way, rather than simply providing information.

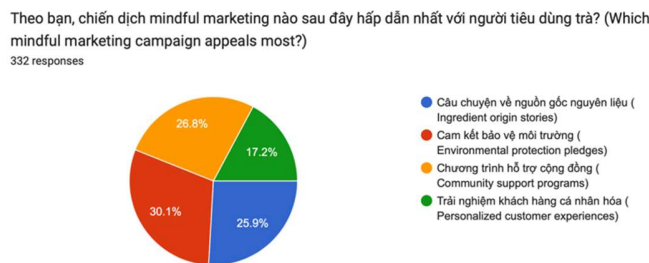


Figure 4.34: Campaign Preference (Source: Author)

Regarding customer experience, the available parameters are at a moderate level but still show potential. 23.2% are willing to participate in sustainable experiential activities, and 34.6% consider family participation if the cost is negligible. Conversely, 20.5% face practical barriers, and 21.7% feel the value is insufficient (Figure 4.24). This implies that experiential activities are only effective when designed efficiently, engaging with the community, and not creating an excessive burden for participants.

Sustainable customer loyalty programs are also quite well-received. 27.4% are willing to participate immediately, and 43.7% would participate if suitable incentives were offered, while only 9.6% are completely uninterested (Figure 4.17). This provides a basis for responsible consumption incentive programs that are entirely feasible in the market.

The final key finding relates to evidence-based trust, with consumers placing strong emphasis on transparency. 42.5% chose supply chain transparency, 22.9% trusted international evidence, while

community programs (13.0%) and other user feedback (21.7%) played a less significant role (Figure 4.12). This confirms that for TCSG, transparency regarding origin and production processes should be considered a cornerstone of the Mindful Marketing strategy.

In summary, from a consumer perspective, the most suitable Mindful Marketing tools for TCSG include robust packaging innovation, storytelling communication linked to the environment and community, well-designed customer experiences, loyalty programs guiding sustainable behavior, and especially a transparent supply chain providing core evidence of economic outcomes. These elements help shift Mindful Marketing from a conceptual orientation to a concrete development strategy.

4.4.2.2 Managerial Survey Findings

Survey data from a group of managers and marketing/branding experts provides further guidance on key marketing activities and tools that can be developed within TCSG's economic development plan. The results show that the focus is not on a single tool, but on a combination of appropriate communication, intrinsic competitive advantage, firm commitment, and operational transparency.

Regarding communication channels, 44.9% of managers considered social media the most effective channel for delivering sustainable messages, significantly higher than the website (25.1%). Newspapers (16.2%) and live events (13.8%) were seen as supplementary rather than central channels (Figure 4.28). This reflects a clear shift to the digital environment, while also suggesting that social media should be considered a key element in TCSG's targeted marketing campaigns.

When discussing competitive advantage, managers strongly favor values intrinsically linked to the product's essence. Natural raw material quality (34.7%) was considered the greatest benefit, followed by traditional tea culture (29.9%) and brand storytelling (25.1%), while a suitable environment was only used at 10.2% (Figure 4.29). This shows that Mindful Marketing is only truly persuasive when closely tied to product quality and cultural foundation, rather than relying solely on symbolic messages.

In terms of firm commitment, 40.7% of businesses have published official CSR reports, 31.7% have activities but haven't publicly disclosed them, and 21.0% are only at the reminder level (Figure 4.23). At the same time, 40.1% reported having clear information about their investments, while 24.0% still lacked specific ROI (Figure 4.31). This shows that CSR and transparent reporting are considered

essential foundations for building credibility, although the short-term financial effectiveness remains questionable.

Regarding supply chain transparency and consumer education, 29.9% of businesses used digital platforms to convey sustainability messages, 25.1% through product labels, and 34.7% planned future projects (Figure 4.33). 44.9% believed that supply chain transparency could directly attract modern customers, and 29.9% believed that effectiveness depended on how it was communicated (Figure 4.28).

Finally, managers expect the long-term benefits of Mindful Marketing to primarily lie in brand reputation (34.7%), customer loyalty (30.5%), and market expansion (25.7%), while attracting investors accounts for only 10.2% (Figure 4.21). Overall, these results suggest that TCSG needs to approach Mindful Marketing as a strategic toolkit, combining digital communication, storytelling linked to tea quality and culture, applied supply chain transparency, and CSR to build a sustainable brand foundation.

4.4.3 Expert Interview Insights

The expert interviews provided highly practical tips on how TCSG can concretize Mindful Marketing in its effective economic development plan. Data from the expert groups of the two families found a clear consensus that tools should not be developed individually, but need to be integrated into a unified system revolving around product, communication, experience, and social responsibility.

As discussed earlier, packaging was certainly considered the first and most visual touchpoint of a brand. The major tea industry emphasized that consumers may not yet be familiar with the concept of Mindful Marketing, but they feel a strong commitment from the business through the materials, design, and messaging on the packaging. From a strategic perspective, the F&B expert group argued that green packaging not only serves the domestic market but is also a necessary condition when TCSG guides high-standard international segments.

Moreover, storytelling and digital communication are seen as the connecting link between enduring value and customer perception. Major tea industries consider cultural products, terroir, and farmer stories as the foundation for long-term engagement. Meanwhile, marketing experts emphasize that these stories are only effective when conveyed through social media, short videos, and multi-channel campaigns, where young consumers not only receive information but also participate and share.

Customer experience is the next step in transforming the message into action. Activities such as raw material tours, tea workshops, or community events are considered effective ways to create economic signals and build social capital. Experts believe that in-depth experiences create much stronger engagement than short-term offers.

In parallel, transparency throughout the supply chain is also considered a prerequisite. The work of declaring origin, production processes, and collaboration with certified countries not only aims to strengthen domestic trust but also serves as a "information sheet for action" for TCSG to participate in the global value chain. Corporate social responsibility and community engagement are seen as long-term foundations, possessing both ethical significance and creating a competitive advantage in terms of reputation.

Lastly, mindful customer loyalty programs are published as a tool to transform sustainable value into concrete behavior, encouraging reuse, community participation, and the spread of responsible consumption. Overall, experts agree that TCSG needs to develop an integrated, Mindful Marketing tool that closely links the value content of Vietnamese tea with modern management and communication methods, building a sustainable brand and capable of long-term integration.

4.4.4 Summary & Integration

The fourth research question focuses on clarifying the Mindful Marketing activities and tools that can be applied to the brand development plan of Tea & Coffee Sandals Group (TCSG). Synthesizing data from consumer surveys, management surveys, and expert interviews reveals that Mindful Marketing is not a disparate set of tools, but rather an integrated approach where decisions about product, communication, experience, and social responsibility are guided by mindfulness, transparency, and long-term orientation.

From a consumer perspective, the results indicate that sustainable packaging is the first visual touchpoint for recognizing a brand's mindful spirit. Communication campaigns based on storytelling, especially those connected to the environment, community, and product origin, are valued more highly than purely technical information. This suggests that consumers are not seeking more data, but rather meaning and consistency between the message and action. The focus on sustainable experiences and

mindfulness-oriented loyalty programs also reflects a desire for deeper engagement with the brand's values. In particular, supply chain transparency and certifications are seen as the most reliable evidence, demonstrating that mindfulness in marketing is only valuable when expressed through concrete and verifiable signs.

From a management perspective, survey data shows that social media plays a central role in spreading the spirit of Mindful Marketing. Managers simultaneously view tea culture and storytelling as long-term competitive advantages, while the disclosure of corporate social responsibility is increasingly becoming a management norm rather than a purely visual activity. Supply chain transparency is valued not only as a compliance requirement but also as a tool for building trust with modern consumers. The greatest expectations for Mindful Marketing relate to brand reputation, loyalty, and market expansion, aligning with the logic of creating long-term value rather than optimizing short-term results.

Expert interviews add depth to the quantitative findings. The tea industry expert group emphasized product identity, cultural heritage, and relationships with farmers as the core foundation of Mindful Marketing. Meanwhile, the food and marketing expert group broadened their perspective to include digital media, experiential marketing, international certifications, and scalable social responsibility models. Both groups shared the understanding that Mindful Marketing is only effective when intrinsic values are translated into consistent experiences throughout the entire customer journey.

Therefore, it can be affirmed that TCSG's brand development plan needs to be built on an integrated Mindful Marketing tool system, in which packaging, storytelling, experience, transparency, and social responsibility are not separate but together reflect a mindful, responsible, and sustainable marketing philosophy.

4.5 Research Question Five

RQ5: How does Mindful Marketing impact consumer awareness, emotional connection and brand loyalty in the Vietnamese tea market?

4.5.1 Restatement of the Research Question

RQ5 targets three key outcomes of the branding process: brand awareness, emotional connection and brand loyalty. These are three important indicators that reflect the success of Mindful Marketing in creating long-term brand value.

This question is practically relevant in light of sustainability trends and the growing role of younger consumers in the Vietnamese tea market. It helps assess the extent to which Mindful Marketing has truly impacted consumer behavior and perceptions, thereby determining the potential for long-term brand loyalty.

The following analysis will be based on the results of consumer surveys, management surveys and expert interviews to clarify the impact of Mindful Marketing on the three aspects mentioned above, thereby completing a comprehensive picture of the impact of Mindful Marketing in the Vietnamese tea industry.

4.5.2.1 Consumer Survey Findings

Consumer survey results provide clear evidence of the impact of Mindful Marketing on three core aspects of branding: awareness, emotional connection and brand loyalty in the Vietnamese tea market.

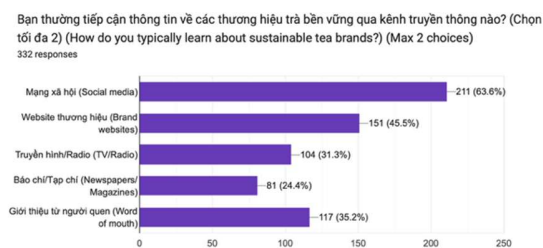


Figure 4.35: Sustainability Information Sources (Source: Author)

First is the impact on brand awareness. The main sources of information about corporate sustainability activities are social media (66.9%) and websites (42.2%), while traditional media (TV/radio 26.8% and print 21.4%) have less influence (Figure 4.35). This shows that Mindful Marketing helps raise awareness when delivered through digital channels that are aligned with modern consumer behavior. However, limitations still exist: only 10.2% of consumers regularly pay attention to

sustainability certification, while 67.7% rarely or never pay attention (Figure 4.36). This result reflects that although Mindful Marketing has the potential to increase awareness, its implementation is not strong enough to change the research behavior of the majority of consumers.



Figure 4.36: Sustainability Certification Awareness (Source: Author)

Second is the impact on emotional connection. Consumers show a preference for inspirational forms of communication: 31.0% choose storytelling and 28.6% choose visual images, much higher than technical data (15.1%) (Figure 4.16). At the same time, campaign types such as environmental protection commitments (30.1%) and community programs (26.8%) are highly appreciated, while origin stories (25.9%) also contribute to creating engagement (Figure 4.34). This shows that Mindful Marketing can foster emotional connection through humane, inspirational and socially relevant messages. In addition, sustainable experiential activities attract 23.2% of consumers who are willing to participate, and 34.6% agree if the cost is insignificant (figure 4.24). This demonstrates that mindful experiential marketing is an effective tool for building stronger emotional connections.

Third is the impact on brand loyalty. The survey results show that 13.3% of consumers have switched tea brands due to a company not keeping its promises, and 23.5% are willing to switch if there is a more mindful option (Figure 4.13). Although 40.4% remain loyal regardless of sustainability factors, the presence of a group of customers willing to “brand switch” suggests that Mindful Marketing is increasingly becoming a factor in maintaining or losing loyalty. When asked about the direct impact of Mindful Marketing on loyalty, 60.2% gave a neutral assessment, 28.0% said it had a positive impact, and only 11.8% gave a low assessment (Figure 4.14). This result reflects that Mindful Marketing has the potential to strengthen loyalty, but the actual effectiveness depends on the level of implementation and the authenticity of the commitment. At the same time, 27.4% of consumers are willing to participate in

a mindful loyalty program, and 43.7% would participate if there were suitable incentives (Figure 4.17), confirming that a sustainability-based loyalty program is a practical tool to maintain loyalty in the long term. In summary, from the consumer perspective, Mindful Marketing has a positive but uneven impact: (i) it helps raise brand awareness through digital media channels, but is not strong enough to change information-seeking habits; (ii) it has the ability to create emotional connections through storytelling, community campaigns and real-life experiences; and (iii) its impact on loyalty is still average, but can be significantly increased if it is linked to a loyalty program and demonstrated transparently. This is an important basis for TCSG and the Vietnamese tea industry to shape the Mindful Marketing strategy to achieve sustainable brand success.

4.5.2.2 Managerial Survey Findings

Survey data from managers and marketing professionals indicates that Mindful Marketing is considered a strategic leverage point in shaping brand awareness, connecting emotionally, and maintaining customer loyalty in the Vietnamese tea industry.

Earlier evidence shows brand awareness, businesses rated social media as the most effective channel for conveying sustainable messages, with 44.9% choosing it, higher than websites (25.1%), traditional newspapers (16.2%), and subsequent live events (13.8%). This reflects the belief that Mindful Marketing is only truly effective when developed on platforms where young consumers are present and interact regularly. Of these, 29.9% of businesses have developed user education activities on sustainability, and 34.7% plan to expand in the near future. This approach shows that the Concept of Mindful Marketing doesn't stop at simply "talking well" in the workplace, but rather directs work towards fostering understanding and awareness of the long-term impact of brand value.

On the edge of emotional connection, storytelling is seen as a crucial competitive advantage, with 25.1% of businesses strongly emphasizing this role, alongside natural ingredients (34.7%) and traditional tea culture (29.9%). Stories connected to heritage, people, and ingredients are considered effective means of creating strong emotions and a sense of closeness to the brand. The fact that 40.7% of businesses have officially published CSR, along with 31.7% maintaining robust activities despite less

extensive communication, shows that CSR is being seen as an emotional foundation, contributing to building a responsible and trustworthy brand image.

Regarding loyalty, managers expect the most significant long-term benefits of Mindful Marketing to lie in brand reputation (34.7%) and customer loyalty (30.5%), surpassing the goal expansion aspect (24.6%). Simultaneously, 44.9% of businesses believe that supply chain transparency can directly attract and retain modern consumers, while 29.9% believe this effectiveness depends on how it is communicated. This suggests that loyalty is no longer built on breadth or frequency of repeat purchases, but rather on trust built on transparency and consistency.

Overall, from a management perspective, Mindful Marketing is seen as a strategic tool to expand brand awareness through digital media, create emotional connections through storytelling and CSR, and strengthen loyalty efforts by providing a transparent and responsive supply chain. These activities not only address short-term needs but also lay the foundation for the sustainable development of Vietnamese tea brands in the long term.

4.5.3 Expert Interview Insights

Expert interviews clarify how Mindful Marketing (MM) truly impacts the three core pillars of tea brand building: awareness, emotional connection, and loyalty. Unlike unconventional survey data, these perspectives reflect the accumulated experience and strategic thinking of those directly involved in brand management within the tea and F&B industries.

At the awareness level, tea experts argue that MM helps brands break free from "homogenization" in a market traditionally dominated by price and volume. Awareness is no longer simply about consumers knowing the brand name, but about understanding what the brand represents. The growing F&B industry plays a significant role in communication across its broader scope, but warns that awareness is only valuable when built on a foundation of transparency. When security messages lack concrete evidence, negative reactions can occur quickly. Therefore, MM not only expands awareness but also enhances the "quality of awareness," associating the brand with responsibility and trustworthiness.

On the emotional level, experts believe that tea is a deeply symbolic product. Emotions don't come from isolated advertising but are formed through experiences, from the story of the raw material source and the farmers to the tea-drinking ritual. By telling a story connected to real-world experiences such as farm visits or community activities, MM transforms the message of sustainability into a living experience. However, emotions are only sustainable when there is consistency between communication and action. Formal CSR will quickly exhaust rather than nurture strong emotions.

Regarding loyalty, experts observe a shift in sentiment, especially among younger customers. Loyalty is increasingly less based on habits or price and more on shared values. MM helps customers feel they are partnering with a responsible brand, thereby forming a relationship that goes beyond a transaction. Redesigning loyalty programs to encourage mindful behavior is an example of loyalty shifting to social and emotional dimensions.

A comparison of the two expert groups reveals differences in mindset, but not independence. The tea industry group emphasizes identity, culture, and intrinsic quality; the F&B group focuses on modern tools, experiences, and time-bound measurement. The common ground identified is that MM is not just a communication technique but a foundation for building sustainable relationships within the Vietnamese tea industry.

4.5.4 Summary & Integration

The fifth research question examines the impact of Mindful Marketing (MM) on three core aspects of brand recognition in the Vietnamese tea market: recognition, emotional connection, and loyalty. Data from surveyed users, survey managers, and interviewees were synthesized to determine high levels of convergence and highlight the most significant differences in expectations and approaches among the groups.

From the perspective of the standard user, MM is recognized as a technical parameter in enhancing brand recognition, particularly through digital media channels such as social media and websites. However, the level of interest in evidence confirming durability remains fragmented, reflecting uneven understanding and subsequent information reception. From an emotional perspective, consumers respond positively to brand storytelling, community- and environmental campaigns, and find a growing need for humanistic and inspiring messages. Experiential activities are also seen as an effective way to enhance engagement. Regarding loyalty, the results show a divergence: some are willing to switch to another brand when a business fails to keep its commitments, while the majority remain neutral.

Nevertheless, the potential for increased loyalty through customer loyalty programs with a strong conceptual spirit is considered significant. These results are consistent with Keller's (1993) Customer-Based Brand Value framework, which emphasizes the central role of perception, experience, and emotion in brand value formation.

From a management perspective, MM is seen as a strategic tool that simultaneously enhances awareness, creates emotional connections, and maintains loyalty. Social media is considered the most effective channel for brand recognition, while storytelling and traditional tea culture are seen as prominent emotional advantages. The fact that over 40% of businesses have published CSR statements shows that social responsibility is becoming the norm, contributing to positive sentiment and strengthening reputation. In the long term, 34.7% of businesses emphasize brand reputation and 30.5% emphasize loyalty as the most important benefits of MM, with supply chain transparency considered a key factor in retaining customers. This result is consistent with Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) and Shared Value Creation (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

Expert perspectives further enhance this in-depth analysis by asserting that MM impacts all three pillars simultaneously. Brand recognition is not only expanded but also improved in "perceived quality" thanks to transparency and social responsibility. Emotional connection is nurtured through storytelling, experiences, and CSR, while loyalty shifts from transactional relationships to long-term commitment based on shared values. The latter point emphasizes authenticity, as a lack of authenticity weakens the overall impact of MM. This is further reinforced by Oliver's (1999; 2001) definition of brand loyalty and its connection to Elkington's (1997) Three-Sided Model.

Overall, Mindful Marketing has a positive impact on the appearance, emotions, and brand loyalty in the Vietnamese tea industry, but its effectiveness depends directly on the level of consistency and authenticity in its development. When implemented transparently and in depth, MM becomes a strategic foundation for enhancing the value proposition of the tea industry in general and TCSG in particular.

4.6 Summary of Findings

This chapter synthesizes and compares research findings aimed at answering five research questions surrounding Mindful Marketing in the Vietnamese tea industry, with a case study at Sandals Tea & Coffee Group (TCSG). Generating quantitative data from user and manager surveys alongside qualitative data from consultants allows for a relatively complete picture of the impact, role, necessity, development tools, and effective economic system of Mindful Marketing in this context.

Regarding the first research question, the results show that Mindful Marketing has a clear framework for the brand-building process. Findings from all three data sources indicate that transparency, consistent commitment, and long-term orientation play a central role in building trust and emotional connection while supporting long-term brand development. While consumers view transparency as a condition for building trust, businesses and experts consider Mindful Marketing as a tool for revitalizing and enhancing the value and image of Vietnamese tea.

The second research question clarifies the functional role of each constituent element of Mindful Marketing. The results show that sustainable packaging, storytelling, corporate social responsibility, supply chain transparency, and follow-up experience do not operate in isolation but complement each other. Consumers prioritize visual and emotional elements such as green packaging and storytelling; businesses emphasize CSR, CSV, and transparency as governance standards; while the broader scope includes international certifications and social media. These elements form an integrated toolkit for shaping brand identity.

Regarding the third research question, the need to apply Mindful Marketing stems from international competitive pressure, the increasingly high expectations of young consumers, the demand for transparency to avoid "greenwashing," and global policy trends on sustainable development. Mindful Marketing is therefore seen as a necessary condition for input signals and maintaining credibility.

The fourth research question identifies appropriate activities and tools for Mindful Marketing, including robust packaging, storytelling linked to media, mindful experiences, transparency and supply chain certification, and CSR and customer loyalty programs. This forms the foundation for Mindful Marketing to concretize its business strategy.

Finally, the fifth research question shows that Mindful Marketing has a positive but uneven impact on perception, emotions, and loyalty. Its effectiveness largely depends on authenticity and the maximum extent in the development and disclosure process. Overall, the five research questions form a unified logical thread, affirming that Mindful Marketing is not just a short-term trend but an essential strategic direction for the sustainable development of Vietnamese tea brands.

Conclusion

Chapter 4 focuses on answering five research questions on Mindful Marketing in the Vietnamese tea industry through the case of TCSG. The results show that this approach has a multi-dimensional impact on brand building, from the role of each element to the urgency of the industry context. The study also identifies the tools that can be deployed and how they impact consumer awareness, emotions and

loyalty. Three data sources including consumers, managers and experts all converge in viewing Mindful Marketing as an inevitable trend and strategic tool. The benefits go beyond short-term communication and also open up a long-term foundation for reputation, international competition and customer engagement. These findings provide an empirical basis for Chapter 5 to compare with theory, compare previous studies and build managerial implications for TCSG and the entire tea industry in applying Mindful Marketing more effectively.

CHAPTER V:

DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion of Results

The gap between “conceptual awareness” and “value awareness” is a notable characteristic of the Vietnamese tea market: consumers may not name Mindful Marketing, but they still value concrete manifestations such as transparency of origin, commitment to sustainability, and authentic messaging. This reflects the fact that in agricultural product sectors, consumers often form attitudes based on lived experience and market signals rather than on abstract theoretical constructs. In terms of measurement, this finding reinforces the approach of specific manifestations instead of requiring respondents to correctly understand an academic term, thereby better reflecting underlying attitudes. When placed within the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), it can be seen that positive attitudes and social norms regarding “drinking clean, drinking responsibly” have gradually formed, but attitude formation does not equate to behavior without “sufficiently convincing evidence” and “perceived behavioral control.” In the Vietnamese context, skepticism about the origin and standards of “clean-organic” products remains prevalent, leading consumers to endorse value propositions while hesitating to act consistently, especially when simple and reliable verification tools are unavailable.

While genuine support for sustainability exists, price and quality remain the primary priorities in purchasing decisions. The attitude-behavior gap becomes apparent when shifting from value assessment to purchasing decisions: while sustainability, transparency, and “being kind to farmers” are perceived positively, pragmatic factors like price and quality still dominate brand selection behavior. This is not merely a psychological paradox, but a rational response in a market that remains price-sensitive and uneven in input quality standards. According to TPB (Ajzen, 1991), attitudes only transform into behavior when consumers are both motivated and feel capable and justified in acting. In Vietnam, however, “quality” is often inferred from sensory perception, habits, recommendations, and price, rather than from validated standards. Furthermore, when viewed through the lens of brand value and brand knowledge (Keller, 1993), price and quality are direct signals that create brand associations and reduce perceived risk, while sustainability, although creating goodwill, is often considered an “added value” rather than a mandatory attribute. Therefore, Mindful Marketing at its current stage is unlikely to replace pragmatic considerations and should be understood as an approach to “increase confidence and reduce

doubt" to support decision-making, rather than being expected to be the primary immediate buying motivation.

Besides, a small pioneering group (especially younger consumers) is emerging, willing to pay a premium for organic/transparent tea, but its scale is still limited. The formation of a small segment willing to pay a premium for organic, transparent products with a clear story shows that Mindful Marketing has a real "foothold," although it has not yet spread widely. This finding is consistent with the argument about mindful consumption (Sheth et al., 2011): behavioral change often originates from a pioneering group with purchasing power, a high level of concern for health and consumer identity, and then spreads to the rest of the market. In the Vietnamese context, this group is often associated with large cities, has strong exposure to global consumer norms, and tends to use products as a statement about lifestyle (healthy, responsible, tasteful). However, the "smallness" of the pioneering group is not a weakness of the results, but rather a signal about the market's stage of development: Mindful Marketing is not yet the universal standard, but it is strong enough to create segmentation and lay the foundation for longer-term development. The key point in the discussion is to view this group as an "early segment that may signal future diffusion": if businesses build reliable evidence (certification, traceability, quality control) and consistent experiences, the pioneering group can become an indicator of potential diffusion for broader adoption over time, rather than just a fragmented "niche".

Businesses are increasingly aware of the trend but hesitant to implement it due to costs, manpower, and the challenge of measuring effectiveness. On the business side, the common state is awareness of the trend but hesitation in implementation, reflecting the structural barriers of the Vietnamese tea industry: fragmented supply chains, uneven standards, high price competition, and disparities in brand capabilities. When placed within the framework of Creating Shared Value (Porter & Kramer, 2011), businesses only strongly integrate social and environmental values when they see economic benefits (or at least demonstrable medium-term benefits). In practice, Mindful Marketing is easily misunderstood as "communication costs" rather than "long-term brand strategy," especially when businesses lack the capacity to measure: they do not know how transparent, traceable investments and the story of the raw material source will translate into trust and revenue. Expert data adds depth to this point: in a market prone to skepticism about origin, "transparency and authenticity" are no longer optional advantages but are becoming conditions for trust, and storytelling associated with the heritage of Vietnamese tea becomes a differentiating factor with international market relevance. However, it is necessary to clearly distinguish between emotional engagement and behavioral loyalty: according to

Oliver (1999), loyalty is a long-term commitment across multiple stages and requires repeated positive experiences. Therefore, it is logical that emotions and perceptions increase faster than loyalty behavior, especially since Mindful Marketing has only recently been clearly implemented. In this sense, Mindful Marketing is a necessary condition for building trust and emotional attachment (Aaker, 1991; Napoli et al., 2014), but it is still insufficient without practices to maintain a consistent experience and credible evidence throughout the value chain.

5.2 Discussion of Research Question One

The first research question asks: How does Mindful Marketing impact the brand building process in the Vietnamese tea industry? Brand building operates as a cumulative process rather than a single communication act, moving from awareness and emotional attachment to commitment and repeat behavior. In the Vietnamese tea industry, this progression is less straightforward, as tea functions simultaneously as a consumer good and a cultural product, while many firms still rely on limited, short-term market approaches.

What is found in Chapter 4 indicates that Mindful Marketing has the most significant impact on the first two layers, including brand awareness and emotional connection. In the third layer, behavioral loyalty, the impact is not lost, but it is not direct. It is indirect and requires intermediate conditions. This interpretation aligns with the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2, where Mindful Marketing is viewed as a way to design experiences and values "mindfully" rather than merely a short-term demand-stimulating tool.

5.2.1 The role of Mindful Marketing in building the brand of the Vietnamese tea industry

The influence of Mindful Marketing on brand building is rarely immediate. It develops over time and depends on whether consumers experience consistent and contextually meaningful brand practices across repeated interactions. In Chapter 2, Mindful Marketing is based on Mindfulness Theory, emphasizing a flexible, context-sensitive state of awareness and avoiding mechanical behavioral patterns. When applied to brand building, this approach aims to create authentic, consistent, and meaningful experiences for consumers, rather than focusing solely on persuasive messaging.

The Vietnamese tea industry is a particularly suitable context for this approach. Tea is not simply a consumer product, but is intertwined with rituals, community memories, and cultural spaces. Applying Mindful Marketing in the tea industry is therefore not only about sustainability or social responsibility issues, but also a way for brands to clarify and strengthen their cultural identity. Mindful Marketing

strengthens value clarity and brand consistency when it is embedded in overall brand strategy rather than treated as a standalone activity.

5.2.2 Consumer awareness and behavior: value acceptance and hesitation in action

Consumers' understanding of Mindful Marketing does not arise directly from the concept or terminology, but rather emerges slowly and conditionally through how they interact with and interpret the values expressed in the specific behaviors of the business.

The survey results of 332 consumers show that the level of awareness of the term Mindful Marketing is very low, with 92.5% of respondents having never heard of this concept. However, more than 50% of survey participants highly value the core values associated with Mindful Marketing and consider them important factors in shaping brand image. The separation between conceptual awareness and value acceptance in this study is consistent with the argument of Sheth et al. (2011) on mindful consumption, where consumers can respond positively to ethical values without needing to clearly identify the academic conceptual framework. However, in the context of the Vietnamese tea industry, this result highlights the supplementary role of consumer culture, which has not been emphasized in previous international Mindful Marketing literature.

At the behavioral level, tea purchasing decisions are still primarily influenced by quality (68.7%) and price (58.7%), while sustainability-related factors play only a supporting role. This result is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior, which states that a positive attitude is a necessary but insufficient condition to drive behavior when consumers do not perceive the necessary level of control and trust.

Trust remains the key constraint. While 40.4% of consumers are skeptical about “green” claims, only 11.1% actively verify them. This gap highlights the crucial role of transparency and authenticity in translating attitudes into actions. Measures such as traceability and certification therefore become important supporting factors in building trust.

The trust gap is also directly reflected in consumer behavior: 13.3% of consumers switched to other brands due to a lack of clear commitment to sustainability, 23.5% were willing to switch if a more suitable option was available, while 40.4% remained loyal despite unclear commitments. From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory, this phenomenon reflects that the needs for autonomy, judgment, and trust have not been fully met, making it difficult for positive attitudes to translate into long-term behavioral commitments, even though the values that Mindful Marketing aims for have been positively perceived by consumers.

5.2.3 Perspective from businesses: Mindful Marketing as an emerging orientation rather than a fully implemented practice

From a business perspective, Mindful Marketing is now viewed more as a strategic direction than as a fully implemented practice. The survey results of 167 businesses show that the rate of comprehensive implementation of Mindful Marketing is still very low, only about 3%, while most businesses are still at the initial consideration or testing stage. The primary driving force stems from market pressure and the need to build brand reputation. However, practical implementation faces numerous obstacles, including high investment costs, difficulties in measuring investment effectiveness, and limitations in specialized human resources. This result reflects the logic of Creating Shared Value, according to which businesses only tend to integrate social responsibility when economic and social benefits are clearly identified.

Communication of social responsibility activities also remains limited, reducing the reach of Mindful Marketing. From the perspective of Stakeholder Theory, businesses must simultaneously balance the interests of customers, producers, investors, and the community. Without a specific approach for measuring and linking shared interests, short-term priorities continue to dominate strategic decision-making.

5.2.4 Comparison of research results with the theoretical framework in Chapter 2

When placing the research findings alongside the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2, the relationship between the empirical data and the underlying theoretical frameworks becomes consistent. Mindfulness Theory (Langer, 1989) and Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) help explain why factors such as brand transparency, social responsibility, and authenticity gain consumer approval. These factors directly address basic psychological needs for autonomy, judgment, and a sense of belonging, which are considered prerequisites for intrinsic motivation.

Meanwhile, Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) provides a suitable explanatory framework for the observed gap between positive attitudes and actual purchasing behavior. Research data indicates that support for sustainable values does not automatically translate into behavior, especially in the context of consumers lacking sufficiently strong experiences to reinforce beliefs and a sense of control over their behavior. This gap does not reflect a contradiction in perception, but rather reveals the limitations of attitudes when not supported by specific implementation conditions.

At the brand building level, theories of Brand Value (Aaker, 1991) and Customer-Based Brand Value (CBBE) (Keller, 1993) help explain the patterns by which Mindful Marketing impacts brand

awareness and emotional engagement. However, research results demonstrate that the formation of loyalty does not directly stem from positive perceptions, but requires the repetition of consistent experiences over time. This finding confirms that Mindful Marketing plays a foundational role in building brand value, but is not sufficient to substitute for longer-term experience consistency.

From a management perspective, the Three Aspects of Sustainability Theory (Elkington, 1997) and Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) help explain why the implementation of Mindful Marketing in Vietnamese tea businesses remains cautious. Data show that Mindful Marketing is only truly integrated when businesses recognize the connection between economic, social, and environmental benefits in their operations. This places Mindful Marketing in the position of a longer-term orientation, rather than a communication tool that can be implemented independently.

5.2.5 Cultural identity as a contextual factor in Mindful Marketing

It is impossible to discuss Mindful Marketing in the Vietnamese tea industry without considering the role of cultural identity. Tea culture is not just a consumption context, but a social space where tranquility, community, and a relationship with nature coexist. When brands leverage these elements through storytelling, cultural experiences, and community engagement activities, they not only provide products but also convey a symbolic set of values.

This approach aligns with Napoli et al.'s (2014) view on brand authenticity, which posits that authenticity plays a fundamental role in building trust and long-term relationships with consumers. However, this research adds another layer of interpretation, showing that in the context of the Vietnamese tea industry, cultural identity not only reinforces emotions but also plays a facilitating role. It supports the transition from emotional attachment to commitment to the brand.

This role can also be explained through approaches to cultural sensitivity (Hofstede, 1980; Ting-Toomey, 1999; Ang & Van Dyne, 2015). When the level of cultural fit between the brand and the consumer is high, the need for rational persuasion decreases. Instead, understanding and empathy become catalysts, helping to support the transition from emotion to commitment, an aspect that has been less emphasized in previous universal discussions of Mindful Marketing.

5.2.6 Interpreting theoretical perspectives in the Vietnamese tea context

The empirical results suggest refinements in emphasis when applying these theoretical perspectives to the Vietnamese context. Mindful Marketing demonstrates a clear impact on brand awareness and emotional connection. However, the formation of loyalty does not occur directly, but depends on several supporting conditions.

Three recurring themes emerge in the data: customer experience (direct product experience, storytelling, and multi-channel interaction), cultural fit (supporting the transition from emotional connection to long-term commitment), and implementation capacity (the firm's ability to maintain authenticity and consistency over time). Weakness in any of these areas can disrupt the transition from stated values to actual behavior.

Therefore, this study contributes academically by clarifying the role of indigenous cultural factors as a component to be considered in Mindful Marketing research, especially in industries with strong heritage and traditional values. This contribution is not intended to replace existing theoretical frameworks, but rather to expand them in a way that is more sensitive to the cultural context, where brand building occurs not only through communication, but also through the resonance of values between firms and consumer communities.

5.2.7 Comparison of research results with domestic and international studies

When comparing with domestic studies on tea and consumer culture, many similarities can be observed in the approach to tea as a cultural practice linked to community, memory, and local identity (Tuan, 2012; Thien, 2016; Thuy et al., 2023). However, most of these studies mainly focus on describing the cultural value and social significance of tea, while not emphasizing the integration of these elements as a systematic component in brand building strategy. The results of this study therefore supplement the view by considering cultural identity not only as a context, but as a resource that can be transformed through experience and brand storytelling.

Several recent domestic studies have addressed the role of transparency, traceability, and experiential activities in enhancing consumer trust (Trang et al., 2020; Thuy et al., 2023). This study's findings are consistent with the above results, showing that transparency and authenticity are fundamental conditions for building trust. However, the current study further finds that these solutions are unlikely to generate long-term commitment without being linked to practical internal implementation and a consistent experiential chain over time.

Internationally, studies on Mindful Marketing, mindful consumption, and value-based branding all acknowledge the positive role of transparency, ethics, and social responsibility in brand perception and emotional engagement (Sheth et al., 2011; Napoli et al., 2014; Kotler, 2021). The results of this study support those findings, particularly regarding the impact of Mindful Marketing on brand awareness and emotional connection. However, unlike some international studies that assume a relatively direct relationship between emotional engagement and loyalty, this study shows that in the context of the

Vietnamese tea industry, this transformation occurs more slowly and is strongly dependent on cultural relevance and repeat experiences.

Overall, this study sits between two streams of research: domestic studies rich in cultural material but heavily descriptive, and international studies strong in the conceptual framework of Mindful Marketing but lacking in depth in the context of the tea industry in emerging markets. The contribution of this study lies in connecting these two streams, thereby clarifying the role of cultural identity and practical implementation as important mediating factors in the process of transforming Mindful Marketing values into sustainable brand engagement and commitment.

5.3 Discussion of Research Question Two

The second research question was designed to expand the analysis from the overall impact to the specific operation of Mindful Marketing in the brand building process. While the first research question focused on identifying the general role of Mindful Marketing, the second question delves into clarifying the different functions of the constituent elements, as well as how they interact and complement each other in creating brand value. In the context of the Vietnamese tea industry, where businesses simultaneously face domestic competition and the demands of international integration, correctly identifying the function of each element becomes essential to avoid scattered implementation and increase strategic effectiveness.

5.3.1 Key aspects of Mindful Marketing observed in Vietnamese tea brand building

Mindful Marketing in the Vietnamese tea industry should be understood as a set of interconnected practices rather than a series of disconnected activities. This aligns with Langer's Mindfulness Theory (1989), which emphasises contextual sensitivity, and with Sheth et al. (2011), who frame Mindful Marketing as a value orientation rather than a set of isolated marketing tools.

In relation to the brand-building perspectives presented in Chapter 2, particularly Aaker's Brand Value Model (1991) and Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity Model (1993), the elements of Mindful Marketing in the Vietnamese tea industry can be seen through three recurring patterns observed in the data. The first theme relates to building a foundation of trust, through practices of transparency, authenticity, and social responsibility. The second theme focuses on forming emotional connections, linked to brand storytelling, cultural experiences, and the symbolic values of tea. The third theme plays a supporting role in the process of transforming value into behavior, through brand experience, value positioning, and mechanisms for maintaining interaction.

These themes are presented as an integrative interpretation of the empirical findings rather than as the development of a new theoretical construct. From a theoretical perspective, this progression can be understood through Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior, which suggests that attitudes, intentions, and behaviors tend to follow a structured sequence rather than occurring simultaneously. At the same time, international studies on authenticity and mindful consumption also show that trust-building functions are only effective when placed within a specific context, rather than operating as universal motivators.

In the Vietnamese context, domestic studies on tea culture and consumer behavior show that tea is not just a consumer product but also a socio-cultural practice. This thesis inherits that approach, while clarifying that the cultural values of tea go beyond symbolic meaning, directly contributing to shaping consumer beliefs, emotions, and expectations towards the brand.

5.3.2 Trust-related practices: Transparency, authenticity, and social responsibility

In the Vietnamese tea industry, brand trust isn't built on isolated statements, but rather accumulated over time through consistently maintained transparent, authentic, and socially responsible practices. Data from consumer surveys, business surveys, and expert interviews show that these trust-building functions operate conditionally, forming the foundation for Mindful Marketing to have an impact.

From the consumer perspective, supply chain transparency is considered the most reliable signal when evaluating tea brands. 64.1% of respondents stated that origin information is the most important factor, higher than price (59.6%) and packaging (34.3%). However, this trust is accompanied by a significant degree of skepticism. Approximately 40.4% of consumers expressed doubt about "green" claims if verifiable evidence is lacking, while only 11.1% reported that they regularly and proactively verify information. This gap suggests that transparency is only effective when supported by credible verification approaches, rather than stopping at mere media statements.

This result is consistent with international studies on brand authenticity, which view transparency and origin as the foundation of trust in industries related to heritage, crafts, and agriculture (Beverland, 2005; Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Napoli et al., 2014). Theoretically, this role is compatible with the Customer-Based Brand Value model, where transparency and authenticity help reinforce positive associations and reduce information asymmetry between the brand and the consumer (Keller, 1993). At the same time, Langer's Mindfulness Theory (1989) helps explain why consumers are increasingly sensitive to inconsistencies between information, context, and brand cues. However, in the Vietnamese

tea industry, these factors only build trust when they are demonstrated through familiar and recognizable signs in the context of daily consumption.

Besides transparency and authenticity, social responsibility and creating shared value contribute to strengthening trust at the reputation level and the social legitimacy of the brand. 28.3% of consumers consider the commitment to reducing emissions important, 25.6% emphasize income fairness for tea growers, and 22.7% care about community activities. On the business side, 40.7% said they have published official CSR reports and view them as a tool to strengthen their brand image. Experts describe CSR as a “social license,” allowing brands to achieve community acceptance and maintain long-term presence. Compared to previous studies, this result finds that in the Vietnamese tea industry, CSR and CSV commitments only build lasting trust when implemented consistently and verifiably, rather than existing as symbolic initiatives (Elkington, 1997; Porter & Kramer, 2011; Thien, 2016; Trang et al., 2020).

5.3.3 Emotional connections through brand storytelling and cultural values

If 5.3.2 lays the foundation for trust, then the emotional connection aspect helps tea brands "go deeper" into the consumer experience, going beyond purely rational attributes such as quality or price. In the survey results, storytelling appears as a clear emotional process: 42.8% of consumers rated storytelling as a factor that creates a feeling of closeness, 38.1% noted a lasting impression of cultural stories, and 21.7% said they switched to another brand because the new story resonated more strongly on an emotional level. From a business perspective, 44.6% view storytelling as a "soft anchor" for conveying meaningful messages in a subtle yet effective way. Experts also agree that storytelling is an "emotional gateway," where brands best express their memories, identity, and values.

In relation to Chapter 2, the role of storytelling in this aspect has a clear basis at the brand and experience level. First, storytelling helps to form and strengthen brand associations in an emotionally rich way, thereby thickening the brand image in consumers' memories, consistent with the logic of Customer-Based Brand Equity (Keller, 1993) and Aaker's Brand Equity Model (1991). At the same time, storytelling can be seen as a way to "personify" the brand, helping consumers perceive the brand as an entity with its own identity and style, compatible with the Brand Personality framework (Aaker, 1997). At the experience level, storytelling often does not stand alone, but is accompanied by sensory cues and contact situations, thus directly related to brand experience as an emotional and cognitive process (Brakus et al., 2009).

In the Vietnamese tea industry, storytelling is often closely linked to local cultural values. Domestic studies show that tea is not just a consumer product but also a cultural and social space, where tranquility, community, and nature are evoked through rituals, raw material sources, and regional memories (Tuan, 2012; Thien, 2016). Recent studies also emphasize that storytelling and traceability can enhance the perception of prestige and authenticity of tea brands (Trang et al., 2020; Giang, 2022; Le & Pham, 2022). The findings of this thesis reinforce this view, while adding a behavioral observation: storytelling not only creates goodwill but can also trigger brand switching, as reflected in the 21.7% of consumers who reported switching because a new story evoked stronger emotions.

Internationally, studies on mindful and socially responsible consumption have also noted that stories connected to community, the environment, and authenticity help increase trust, purchase intention, and brand loyalty (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Sheth et al., 2011; Han et al., 2023). This study's findings are consistent with those findings in that storytelling helps brands convey values beyond functional benefits. However, unlike some international studies that often approach storytelling as a relatively universal process, the context of Vietnamese tea shows that the effectiveness of storytelling depends strongly on its cultural and heritage relevance. In other words, a story is only persuasive when it connects to cultural practices that consumers can recognize and feel connected to, rather than simply being a layer of language attached to the product.

In summary, brand storytelling and cultural values constitute an aspect aimed at creating emotional connections within the Mindful Marketing of the Vietnamese tea industry. This theme does not replace the role of transparency and authenticity, but complements it by creating meaning, memory, and identity for the brand. This is a crucial condition for sustainable values to not be perceived as an abstract moral message, but rather as an experience capable of being remembered and maintained over time.

5.3.4 Conditions supporting the transformation from value to consumer behavior

Although Mindful Marketing strengthens trust and emotional connection, these values do not automatically translate into repeated consumer behavior. In the Vietnamese tea industry, the transformation from value to behavior only occurs when specific supporting conditions exist, particularly direct experience and practices for maintaining long-term engagement with customers.

Survey data reveal the clear supporting condition of experiential marketing. 46.2% of consumers appreciate tea brands that offer experiential activities such as farm visits, workshops, or tea festivals, and 28.9% expressed a willingness to share these positive experiences on social media. On the business

side, 52.7% acknowledge that experiential marketing increases awareness and strengthens trust, but also face cost and human resource barriers, making implementation less systematic. Experts view experiences as “moments of focus,” where consumers not only receive information but also directly engage with the brand philosophy.

These findings are consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which posits that positive attitudes can only be translated into intentions and behaviors when reinforced by relevant experiences and social norms. Simultaneously, the Brand Experience framework (Brakus et al., 2009) helps explain why sensory experiences and direct interactions have the potential to connect cognition, emotion, and behavior in a seamless process. Domestic and international studies also note that real-world experiences play a crucial role in the transition from perceived value to consumer behavior (Tran, 2014; Vu et al., 2023; Sheth et al., 2011; Han et al., 2023).

Besides experience, the approaches for maintaining engagement, especially loyalty programs linked to community values, are identified as important conditions for forming repeat consumer behavior. Survey results show that 48.7% of consumers believe that sustainable customer care programs help them trust the brand more; 36.5% are willing to participate if they perceive clear real value; and 22.4% reported switching to regular use due to programs linked to community values. However, on the business side, only 41.2% viewed loyalty as a long-term part of their brand strategy, while 33.9% admitted to not yet being able to systematically implement these systems.

These results can be explained through Oliver's (1999, 2001) brand loyalty model, in which behavioral loyalty only forms after the cognitive, emotional, and volitional stages have been consolidated. Mindful Marketing has a strong impact in the early stages, but to achieve repeat behavior, ways to maintain engagement are needed to transform experiences and emotions into stable interactions. Studies on domestic tea consumption behavior also show that brand loyalty is nurtured through community elements, rituals, and cultural experiences, rather than solely based on material rewards (Tuan, 2012; Thien, 2016; Thuy et al., 2023). This extends Oliver's loyalty model by suggesting that, in the Vietnamese tea industry, the transition to behavioral loyalty is further shaped by culturally embedded practices that sustain engagement beyond initial emotional responses.

In summary, within the context of the Vietnamese tea industry, the transformation of Mindful Marketing values into consumer behavior depends on the simultaneous presence of direct experience and practices for maintaining long-term engagement. When these conditions are established on a

foundation of trust and emotional connection, consumer behavior is not merely temporary but has the potential to be sustained and repeated over time, thereby completing the process of building brand equity.

5.3.5 Overall interpretation of how Mindful Marketing is practiced in the Vietnamese tea industry

Based on evidence from the three data sources, the findings indicate that Mindful Marketing practices in the Vietnamese tea industry are interrelated rather than isolated, and suggest a general progression over time. Transparency and authenticity play an initial role by establishing early trust. On that foundation, corporate social responsibility and sustainable commitments strengthen credibility and legitimise the brand in the eyes of consumers and the community. Tools such as sustainable packaging and brand storytelling translate these values into recognisable signals, while price functions as a positioning cue that shapes perceived credibility of the communicated commitments. Direct experience and engagement maintenance practices then become necessary for values to translate into repeated consumer behavior.

These findings are consistent with the theoretical perspectives discussed in Chapter 2. Mindfulness and self-awareness help explain the formation of trust and emotional connection; brand equity and brand experience perspectives clarify the transition from awareness to engagement; and sustainability and shared value perspectives explain why social and environmental commitments can become longer-term resources. Compared with international studies that place stronger emphasis on sustainability and social responsibility as primary drivers, this research highlights the Vietnamese tea cultural context as a condition that deepens engagement and supports the maintenance of loyalty over time.

In this context, different Mindful Marketing practices contribute in complementary ways. When applied consistently, they foster trust and positive emotional responses in the shorter term while gradually supporting more stable consumer behavior, contributing to longer-term brand performance and helping tea brands maintain cultural identity amid broader market integration.

5.4 Discussion of Research Question Three

The third research question shifts the focus from analyzing the role of Mindful Marketing to why the Vietnamese tea industry needs to adopt this approach in its current context. While the previous two research questions focused on "how Mindful Marketing impacts" and "how its elements operate" in the brand-building process, the third question delves into clarifying contextual pressures, from the market

and consumers to the demands of sustainable development. This makes the adoption of Mindful Marketing no longer a choice but increasingly relevant. This analysis helps place the research findings within the correct industry context and explains the urgency of Mindful Marketing for the Vietnamese tea industry during its current transition period.

5.4.1 The structural condition in the context of the Vietnamese tea industry

International studies on Mindful Marketing and mindful consumption have mainly developed in the context of mature markets, where consumers have a high level of awareness of sustainability and relatively stable established ethical consumption norms (Sheth et al., 2011; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). Conversely, domestic studies on the Vietnamese tea industry tend to focus more on cultural values, heritage, and community, but rarely situate these factors within a systematic strategic marketing perspective (Tuan, 2012; Thien, 2016; Trang et al., 2020).

The findings suggest that Mindful Marketing becomes necessary precisely because of the incomplete intersection between these two approaches. Specifically, although 92.5% of consumers are unfamiliar with the concept of Mindful Marketing, 51.5% still value its core values such as transparency and social responsibility. The Vietnamese tea industry can no longer be understood as operating solely within a traditional consumption model, but has not yet reached the level of "mindful consumption" as seen in international studies. Therefore, Mindful Marketing becomes increasingly relevant as a way to reconcile these two value systems.

5.4.2 The gap between sustainable expectations and consumer beliefs

Many international studies show a relatively strong relationship between positive attitudes towards sustainability and purchasing behavior (Sheth et al., 2011; Han et al., 2023). However, data from this thesis reveals a more pronounced gap. While 63.5% of consumers stated that they were willing to pay a higher price for sustainably sourced tea products, actual purchasing behavior remained primarily driven by quality (68.7%) and price (58.7%).

Compared with earlier domestic studies that often assumed trust in tea was largely grounded in origin and tradition (Tuan, 2012; Hoa, 2014), the current findings suggest that trust is no longer a default condition. In fact, 40.4% of consumers expressed skepticism towards "green" claims, while only 11.1% actively verified related information. This indicates that transparency is not only value-adding, but increasingly a necessary condition for reducing skepticism and enabling behaviour in a transforming market.

5.4.3 Vietnamese tea businesses: high awareness but limited implementation capacity

In the Creating Shared Value literature, businesses are often assumed to be able to simultaneously integrate economic and social goals when they perceive long-term benefits (Porter & Kramer, 2011). However, data from this thesis reveals a different reality in the Vietnamese tea industry. Only 3.0% of surveyed businesses reported having implemented Mindful Marketing, while 53.3% were only considering it. This nuance challenges the CSV assumption that perceived long-term benefits are sufficient for integration, by showing that implementation capacity and measurement readiness are the binding constraints in this context.

Compared to domestic studies that primarily view CSR as a tool for image building (Thien, 2016), this result points to measurement and implementation capacity as the primary barrier. Specifically, 34.7% of businesses faced difficulties in measuring financial effectiveness, 29.9% lacked suitable personnel, and 19.8% were concerned about costs. In other words, the gap is not primarily one of intention, but of execution: without basic measurement routines, suitable personnel, and cost control, Mindful Marketing remains an awareness-level approach rather than an operational practice.

5.4.4 Expert perspectives and a shift in perspective

International studies on sustainable branding emphasize the role of storytelling and experience in creating differentiation (Brakus et al., 2009; Keller, 1993). Domestic studies, however, affirm the power of cultural heritage and local communities. The results of interviews with 17 experts in this thesis show that these two approaches need to be integrated rather than separated. Building on work that positions storytelling and experience as differentiation tools, expert accounts also frame them as trust foundations that must be sustained over time, rather than campaign assets used episodically.

Experts emphasize that the benefits of Mindful Marketing are not short-term but accumulate through the process of building trust. This view aligns with business data, where 35.9% consider Mindful Marketing a tool for long-term reputation building rather than immediate benefits. Overall, experts view Mindful Marketing not as a set of tools, but as a long-term brand position built through consistent and culturally grounded experiences.

5.5 Discussion of Research Question Four

While the previous research questions clarified the role of Mindful Marketing in brand building, the fourth research question focuses on the implementation layer, where mindful values are transformed into specific activities and tools. The focus of RQ4 is not on listing common tools, but on identifying which tools are evident in the context of the Vietnamese tea industry and the practical capabilities of TCSG.

This approach differs from many international studies on Mindful Marketing, which focus on tool systems in the context of developed markets where transparent infrastructure and sustainable standards are relatively well-established (Sheth et al., 2011; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). At the same time, it also expands domestic research on tea brands, which often mention cultural and heritage factors but rarely analyze them from the perspective of implementing operationalised through marketing practice (Tuan, 2012; Thien, 2016).

5.5.1 Consumer priorities: clear signals and verification

The influence of Mindful Marketing on consumer choice is conditional on whether its values are expressed through signals that consumers can easily recognize and verify. Consumer survey data (n = 332) shows that the five highest-rated Mindful Marketing tools in the survey are all directly related to easily recognizable and verifiable signals. Specifically, 42.5% of consumers consider supply chain transparency as the most reliable signal when making purchasing decisions, 34.3% prioritize sustainable packaging as a clear sign of commitment, 31.0% believe that brand storytelling creates a strong emotional connection, and 23.2% are willing to participate in experiential activities if the cost is reasonable and 27.4% are interested in customer loyalty programs linked to community values.

Compared to international studies, where experience and storytelling are often considered the main drivers of sustainable consumer behavior (Brakus et al., 2009; Han et al., 2023), these results show that Vietnamese consumers place more emphasis on transparency and tangible signals than pure emotion. This also complements domestic studies that emphasize the role of origin and tradition, by showing that these values are only effective when transformed into concrete and easily verifiable signs (Trang et al., 2020).

5.5.2 Business perspective: feasibility and implementation limitations

At the business level, the adoption of Mindful Marketing appears conditional on firms' ability to translate perceived consumer interest into measurable and economically justifiable outcomes. The business survey (n = 167) reflects a more cautious picture. 44.9% of businesses chose social media as the primary channel for communicating mindfulness values, storytelling, and the quality of natural ingredients, which were identified as two common positioning pillars. Although 40.7% of businesses have published CSR activities, the majority lack a long-term and systematic communication approach. Especially, 44.9% believe that supply chain transparency strongly influences consumer behavior, but 24.0% acknowledge that they cannot yet measure the effectiveness of their investment.

These results are consistent with international studies on Creating Shared Value, showing that businesses are only willing to invest long-term when social value can be combined with economic value (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Compared to domestic studies that view CSR as a tool for image building (Thien, 2016), this thesis points out that the bottleneck lies in the capacity for measurement and implementation, rather than simply in awareness.

5.5.3 Expert perspective: integrating tools and localization requirements

Interviews with tea industry and marketing experts reveal a convergence around six recurring tools: sustainable packaging, brand storytelling, experiential marketing, supply chain transparency and certification, CSR linked to farming communities, and mindful customer loyalty programs. Tea industry experts emphasize heritage, soil, and community as foundations for differentiation, while marketing experts highlight the ability to standardize and scale to meet international market demands.

This difference reflects a point that previous studies have often failed to clarify: Mindful Marketing in the Vietnamese tea industry cannot simply replicate international approaches wholesale, but needs to be adapted to harmonize local identity with global standards. This is an extension of sustainable branding studies that approach culture as storytelling content, rather than as a condition for strategic implementation (Keller, 1993; Brakus et al., 2009).

5.5.4 Connecting theory and observed patterns of tool impact

When compared with the theoretical frameworks in Chapter 2, the findings can be interpreted coherently. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, sustainable packaging, supply chain transparency, and certification play a role in enhancing the perceived control and social norms, thereby supporting behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1991). Within brand equity and Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) perspectives, storytelling and experiential marketing reinforce cognitive and emotional layers, while loyalty programs help maintain this value over time (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993).

Within the Sustainability and Creating Shared Value literature, Mindful Marketing tools are viewed less as moral costs and more as investments that may support longer-term brand outcomes when integrated consistently (Elkington, 1997; Porter & Kramer, 2011). Stakeholder theory further reinforces that effectiveness is only achieved when stakeholders, from farmers and businesses to consumers, are involved in the value creation process (Freeman, 1984).

This perspective is consistent with prior sustainability and stakeholder-based studies, but it adds that in the Vietnamese tea industry, more durable outcomes are more likely when these principles are embedded consistently across the value chain rather than adopted as isolated strategic commitments.

5.6 Discussion of Research Question Five

The fifth research question focuses on evaluating the practical impact of Mindful Marketing on three core outcomes of brand building in the Vietnamese tea industry: brand awareness, emotional connection, and loyalty. These three outcomes do not exist in parallel, but reflect a cumulative process over time, where awareness plays a starting role, emotion develops subsequently, and loyalty tends to emerge later.

The focus of RQ5 is to clarify the extent and conditions under which Mindful Marketing leaves an impact on consumers' perceptions, emotions, and engagement behaviors, thereby explaining the gap between cognitive impact and repeat behavior in the context of the Vietnamese tea industry.

5.6.1 The impact of Mindful Marketing on brand awareness: broad but not deep

The influence of Mindful Marketing on awareness develops unevenly over time, expanding reach through frequent digital exposure while remaining limited in deepening consumer understanding. Consumer survey results show that Mindful Marketing (MM) has a relatively clear impact on the scope of awareness, but is not strong enough to enhance depth of awareness. Social media (66.9%) and corporate websites (42.2%) are the two main channels that help consumers access information related to sustainability, while print media (21.4%) and television (26.8%) have a lower level of influence. This reflects the suitability of MM to digital media channels and reinforces the conclusions in Keller's (1993) study on the role of touchpoints in increasing brand prominence.

However, the level of "deep understanding" awareness remains limited. Only 10.2% of consumers regularly pay attention to sustainability certification, while 67.7% rarely or never pay attention. The gap reflects a form of surface-level awareness rather than substantive understanding. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, positive attitudes can coexist with low levels of cognitive behavioral control, especially when consumers lack the time, knowledge, or tools to verify (Ajzen, 1991). This result is consistent with international studies on sustainable consumption in the food industry, showing that sustainability information is often passively received without accompanying cognitive support approaches (Sheth et al., 2011; Han et al., 2023).

In Vietnam, studies by Trang et al. (2020) and Thien (2016) also help explain that consumers tend to trust source information when that information is presented simply, visually, and easily verifiable, rather than general statements. Therefore, the results of this thesis support previous studies showing that MM helps expand brand awareness, but also add that verifiable transparency is a key condition for improving awareness quality in the Vietnamese tea industry.

5.6.2 Impact on emotional connection: the prominent role of storytelling and cultural values

Emotional connection becomes the primary entry point for mindful values when Mindful Marketing emphasizes storytelling and imagery over technical detail. Compared to brand awareness, the impact of MM on emotional connection is more evident. Consumers prioritize storytelling (31.0%) and visual imagery (28.6%) over technical information (15.1%), showing that emotions play a key role as the main "gateway" in receiving mindful values. Content related to environmental commitment (30.1%), community activities (26.8%), and origin stories (25.9%) generated higher levels of trust and empathy.

In addition, 23.2% of consumers were willing to participate in sustainable experiences, and an additional 34.6% were willing if the cost was reasonable. These results show that experiential marketing plays a crucial role in transforming fleeting emotions into brand memories, consistent with the Brand Experience model of Brakus et al. (2009). International studies on brand storytelling also reflect that stories linked to ethical values and cultural identity are more likely to create stronger emotional engagement than functional messages (Escalas, 2004; Fog et al., 2005).

In the Vietnamese context, studies by Tuan (2012), Thien (2016), and Thuy et al. (2023) emphasize that tea culture, tea drinking rituals, and community memory are highly resonant emotional factors. This study shows that the emotional influence of Mindful Marketing is closely tied to local cultural values, adding a contextual layer to earlier research centered mainly on Western markets.

5.6.3 Impact on brand loyalty: positive but with a lag

Brand loyalty reflects the most delayed and conditional response to Mindful Marketing. Compared with perceptions and emotions, the impact of MM on brand loyalty presents a more cautious picture. Survey results show that 13.3% of consumers switched to another brand due to the company's failure to uphold sustainability commitments, and 23.5% were willing to switch if there were a more environmentally friendly option. However, 40.4% remained loyal despite sustainability factors. When assessing the direct impact of MM on loyalty, 60.2% considered the impact to be neutral, 28.0% rated it positively, and 11.8% rated it negatively.

These results are consistent with Oliver's (1999; 2001) model of loyalty formation, in which behavioral loyalty only emerges after a long-term accumulation process of cognitive and emotional factors. MM has a noticeable impact in the early stages of this process, but it is not strong enough to create widespread behavioral change in the short term. However, supporting factors show clear potential

for transformation: 27.4% of consumers are willing to participate in a loyalty program linked to sustainable value, and 43.7% would participate if there were reasonable incentives.

Compared to international studies, this result is consistent with the findings of Bhattacharya & Sen (2004) and Sheth et al. (2011), which suggest that the impact of CSR and mindful consumption on loyalty is often indirect and time-consuming. In the Vietnamese context, cultural resonance helps explain why emotional responses may translate into loyalty in culturally embedded industries like tea.

5.6.4 Comparison with previous research and contributions of the thesis

When comparing the results of RQ5 with domestic and international studies, several key points emerge. These findings reinforce a common view in international research that Mindful Marketing significantly impacts consumer perceptions and emotions, while its influence on loyalty is not immediate but develops slowly and accumulates over time. However, in the context of the Vietnamese tea industry, the results suggest that the cultural value of tea is not merely a background context but also plays a crucial contextual role, helping to maintain emotions and facilitate their transformation into long-term commitment. Moreover, the data highlights that without verifiable and transparent factors, the impact of Mindful Marketing often remains at the level of perception, failing to progress further to repeat behavior, thus explaining why loyalty levels remain relatively cautious.

Overall, RQ5 confirms the relevance of existing theories, while also showing that in the Vietnamese tea industry, brand loyalty is formed through the interaction of emotions, cultural meanings, and community beliefs.

CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

The Vietnamese tea industry currently faces a clear paradox: cultural and ecological values are increasingly emphasized, while branding methods still largely operate according to traditional production logic. Instead, brands are increasingly judged based on the consistency between communicated commitments and verifiable practices in practice. This study focuses on analyzing the role of Mindful Marketing in the branding process of the Vietnamese tea industry, with a focus on how transforming sustainable values into consumer awareness, emotions, and behavior.

6.1.1 Research purpose and scope

Although linked to community livelihoods and regional identity, most Vietnamese tea businesses have not yet translated these values into the foundation of more sustained brand approaches. However, most businesses in the industry still operate according to traditional models, lacking long-term brand strategies and not effectively exploiting sustainable values such as origin, supply chain transparency, and social responsibility. Meanwhile, export markets are increasingly demanding stricter requirements regarding traceability, sustainability certification, and ethical standards, forcing businesses to restructure their branding from within.

Based on this, the study is designed to clarify five core issues: (1) the impact of Mindful Marketing on the branding process of the Vietnamese tea industry; (2) the role of Mindful Marketing elements in this process; (3) why Mindful Marketing is necessary in the current context; (4) Mindful Marketing activities and tools identified as suitable for Tea & Coffee Sandals Group (TCSG); and (5) the extent to which Mindful Marketing influences consumer perception, emotional connection, and loyalty.

The study is designed to observe not only the extent of the impact of Mindful Marketing, but also how these values are interpreted and validated in brand practice.

6.1.2 Key findings on the impact of Mindful Marketing on brand building (RQ1)

Data shows that Mindful Marketing is not perceived by consumers as a moral message, but rather as an implicit standard for evaluating brand trustworthiness. Particularly, consumers may value transparency and social responsibility even if they cannot name the concept. Survey data clearly reflects this paradox: more than half of respondents supported values related to transparency and social responsibility, while 92.5% admitted to never having heard of the term Mindful Marketing. In other words, perceived value comes first, while conceptual language follows.

On the business side, most are still in the awareness stage, not yet translated into a synchronized implementation strategy. Expert interviews reinforce the view that brand trust is formed from verifiable initial touchpoints, especially clear origins, authentic stories, and cultural experiences. Expert interviews suggest that cultural experiences and authentic stories support trust formation, especially when combined with verifiable cues such as origin information and traceability.

6.1.3 Operational approaches of Mindful Marketing in brand positioning (RQ2)

The six elements of Mindful Marketing only become meaningful when when interpreted as reinforcing cues rather than as independent tools in brand positioning. More importantly, it is how they combine to create a consistent chain of signals. When a business demonstrates environmental responsibility through packaging innovation, consumers have a visual cue to identify the commitment. When the brand story is told using specific data and experiences, emotions become grounded. When traceability information is sufficiently clear for verification, trust is no longer based on goodwill.

A significant shift lies in how businesses begin to re-evaluate “costs.” Packaging is increasingly perceived not only as a cost component but also as a visible cue of sustainability commitments. Consumers respond better when sustainability messages don't stand alone, but are accompanied by cultural symbols associated with the source region. At that point, the commitment is not only true but also meaningful.

6.1.4 The necessity of Mindful Marketing in the current context (RQ3)

Pressure from export markets and changes in how consumers evaluate brands are revealing the limitations of purely traditional marketing strategies. Export markets are tightening standards. The younger generation of consumers is changing how they evaluate brands. The trend towards transparency

makes unsubstantiated claims counterproductive. In this context, experts emphasize three recurring priorities for tea brand positioning: transparency of origin, product localization, and an integrated experiential chain. Together, they reflect the need to meet international standards while maintaining origin-based identity. Businesses can meet international standards, but still maintain the identity of their raw material source as a competitive advantage, rather than viewing it as a secondary storytelling element.

6.1.5 Approaches of value conversion in Mindful Marketing practices (RQ4)

The findings suggest that different Mindful Marketing practices become relevant under different circumstances. Storytelling and experiential activities tend to play a stronger role in shaping emotional engagement, while cues related to traceability and verification are more closely associated with trust formation. Emotional connection is often established through narratives and lived experiences that allow consumers to relate to the brand on a personal level. Over time, however, the continuity of this relationship depends less on emotion alone and more on perceived value and ongoing interaction, which support repeated engagement rather than one-off purchasing decisions.

The tea industry has a characteristic that many industrial sectors lack: cultural identity can become a direct bridge between emotion and loyalty. Both quantitative and qualitative results show that when brand messages are expressed through cultural rituals and sensory experiences, consumers report stronger emotional connection and higher willingness to maintain engagement over time.

6.1.6 Brand awareness, emotional connection and loyalty outcomes (RQ5)

The findings suggest that the gap between positive emotional responses and loyalty behavior is most clearly reduced when two conditions are present: verifiable transparency and cultural resonance. This aligns with established views of loyalty formation, in which positive emotion alone is insufficient to translate immediately into repeat behavior.

When origin information, certification, and sustainability practices are presented in ways that consumers can recognize and verify, and when regional symbols and local narratives are integrated in a culturally meaningful manner, attitudinal approval is more likely to shift into repeated choice. In this

sense, loyalty outcomes appear to strengthen not simply through value agreement, but through the combination of evidence-based trust cues and contextually grounded meaning.

6.2 Theoretical contribution of the study

This study contributes theoretically by clarifying how Mindful Marketing operates in the Vietnamese tea industry and by sharpening how established behavioral and branding perspectives should be interpreted under domestic market conditions. Rather than proposing a new validated theoretical model, the study offers an integrative synthesis grounded in the case-study context, derived from empirical findings and aligned with existing theories.

The findings confirm a process-based progression in consumer response, in which Mindful Marketing-oriented practices are most clearly associated with brand awareness and emotional connection, shaping how consumers interpret brand claims and assign meaning to sustainability-related value signals. On this basis, brand trust does not form instantaneously but develops cumulatively through the perceived consistency between communicated commitments and lived experience across touchpoints. Trust then supports purchase intention and, over time, the accumulation of brand loyalty. This staged pattern is consistent with process-oriented explanations such as Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior, where attitudes and affective reactions inform intention and behavior through progression rather than occurring simultaneously or directly.

Beyond confirming the general trust–intention–loyalty logic, the study further extends existing perspectives by explaining why identical value-oriented messages lead to different levels of trust and loyalty in a heritage-related category such as tea. Specifically, the stability and strength of the trust–intention–loyalty pathway appear to depend on two context-sensitive boundary conditions:

- Cultural resonance: Mindful Marketing tools become more effective when messages and experiences align with locally recognised symbols, language, and heritage meanings associated with tea. In this context, resonance determines whether sustainability-oriented cues are experienced as meaningful or remain superficial.

- Implementation capacity: The credibility of Mindful Marketing claims depends on consistent operational delivery over time. Where execution fails to match communicated commitments, the promise–experience gap undermines trust and weakens intention and loyalty, even when initial messaging is appealing.

Accordingly, loyalty formation in the Vietnamese tea industry is shaped not only by the value content conveyed, but also by cultural embeddedness and the firm’s capacity to deliver consistently across touchpoints.

Importantly, these findings do not constitute the development of a standalone theory, nor do they alter the core assumptions of established behavioral and branding perspectives. Rather, they reinforce that trust and loyalty formation is cumulative and dependent on repetition and consistency over time. The theoretical contribution lies in clarifying how local cultural factors and category context condition the expression and intensity of established relationships, particularly in a market where the formal terminology of Mindful Marketing is not widely recognised despite positive consumer responses to its underlying values.

6.3 Implications

The implications of this study indicate that Mindful Marketing shapes how trust is built in the Vietnamese tea industry, with relevance that extends beyond individual firm-level advantages. Empirical evidence suggests that Mindful Marketing can function as a bridge between communicated commitments and verifiable practices, thereby influencing relationships among businesses, consumers, and broader stakeholders.

Building on the analyses in the previous chapters, this section outlines implications at managerial, policy/industry, and academic levels, as well as implications for the practical case of TCSG. Overall, Mindful Marketing should not be interpreted as a disconnected set of tools, but rather as a coherent approach whose effects depend on consistency across touchpoints and implementation capacity.

6.3.1 Managerial implications for tea enterprises

The findings suggest that brand building in the Vietnamese tea industry increasingly depends on the ability to translate sustainability commitments into verifiable and accessible signals, rather than relying on visual claims alone. As consumers become more cautious toward “green” messaging, positioning grounded in clear, evidence-based commitments becomes a more credible basis for competition. Survey evidence indicates a mismatch: many firms perceive sustainability as cost-intensive, while consumers tend to rely on tangible cues (e.g., packaging) and origin-related information to infer the authenticity of commitments. This implies that the core challenge is not the message itself, but the ability to disclose origins, production practices, and environmental or social efforts in ways that are easy to verify and difficult to misinterpret.

At the product portfolio level, the findings imply that Mindful Marketing is most effective when embedded in the product’s core value proposition, rather than applied uniformly as an external layer of communication. Differentiating specialty lines associated with heritage ingredients and culturally grounded storytelling from mainstream lines can help firms maintain authenticity while expanding reach. This enables brands to tailor meaning for different segments without diluting overall positioning.

Across both quantitative and qualitative evidence, consumer trust appears stronger when major touchpoints follow the same value logic. Packaging, brand narrative, and lived experience are interpreted not as separate elements, but as different expressions of a single commitment. When this chain lacks consistency, the perception–behavior gap is more likely to widen; when it is consistent, the transition from positive perception to committed behavior becomes more feasible.

Finally, the findings indicate that Mindful Marketing is unlikely to be sustained without corresponding internal capabilities. When sustainability goals are integrated into operations, production, and marketing as a long-term direction rather than a campaign, firms are better positioned to maintain credible commitments over time. This strengthens external trust and supports shared value outcomes consistent with the study’s broader findings.

6.3.2 Policy implications for government and industry bodies

The findings indicate that the effectiveness of Mindful Marketing in the Vietnamese tea industry cannot rely solely on individual firm efforts, particularly given that a large proportion of producers are

small enterprises, cooperatives, and farming households. While many possess strong raw-material value and cultural identity, their capacity to meet transparency, traceability, and independent verification requirements aligned with international standards remains limited, weakening industry-wide competitiveness (VIRAC Research, 2025).

A key implication is the need to strengthen and operationalize transparency criteria for the tea industry within an existing national traceability framework. The Prime Minister's Decision No. 100/QD-TTg on developing and managing product traceability systems provides a foundation for unified approaches across agricultural sectors, including tea (Prime Minister of Vietnam, 2019). Aligning tea-specific standards with this framework may reduce fragmented requirements, support more consistent market access, and provide consumers with clearer bases for comparison and verification.

The study also highlights the role of independent certification arrangements, particularly for small-scale producers. When certification and data-management costs exceed firm capacity, sustainability standards may function as barriers rather than competitiveness tools. Policy support could therefore prioritize reducing access costs through shared certification schemes, technical training, and shared industry data infrastructure (OECD, 2020).

More broadly, the absence of a coherent industry-level branding direction may weaken Vietnamese tea's position in international markets. International practice suggests that origin-based branding anchored in cultural heritage and sustainable commitments can create synergistic effects, enabling local businesses to participate more effectively in global value chains while retaining regional identity as a competitive asset (FAO, 2021).

6.3.3 Theoretical and academic implications

This study adds to consumer-behavior research by showing that commonly used behavioral explanations do not fully capture decision-making in culturally embedded product categories such as tea. The evidence suggests that cultural resonance functions as a key link between what consumers endorse (attitudes), what they feel (emotional connection), and what they eventually do (repeat-oriented behavior). In contexts where identity, memory, and shared cultural practice shape meaning, cultural resonance helps explain why favourable attitudes can coexist with hesitant or delayed behavior

ral commitment. Rather than replacing the Theory of Planned Behavior, this finding positions cultural resonance as a contextual factor that strengthens explanation of the attitude-intention-behavior gap in heritage-related markets.

The study also extends the Customer-Based Brand Equity perspective in a local setting by highlighting two conditions that shape whether sustainability-oriented values translate into behavior: firms' execution capacity and the degree of cultural fit. The findings indicate that positive associations and emotional responses can be built through mindful cues, but they are unlikely to persist without consistent delivery across operations and touchpoints. This helps explain why sustainability-led branding often underperforms in practice, not because the message is absent, but because the promised values are not experienced as coherent, credible, and culturally meaningful over time.

Methodologically, the study illustrates the value of combining large-scale survey evidence with expert and stakeholder accounts to identify not only "whether" effects exist, but "when" and "under what conditions" they are more likely to occur. This mixed evidence is particularly useful in agricultural and cultural product sectors where trust, verification, and lived experience interact.

In addition, the findings carry curriculum implications for marketing education in Vietnam. Mindful Marketing can be taught as a strategic capability rather than treated as a CSR add-on, with emphasis on evidence-based storytelling, experience design, traceability communication, and culturally grounded positioning. These emphases align with a market environment in which credibility and authenticity increasingly determine brand acceptance.

6.3.4 Integrative synthesis of findings within existing theories

Drawing on the empirical findings and the theoretical synthesis presented earlier, this thesis summarises the empirically observed relationships into an integrative synthesis (Figure 6.1). This is intended as a context-specific synthesis rather than a new standalone theory. Its purpose is to clarify how Mindful Marketing-oriented inputs are associated with brand outcomes over time, and under what conditions the link from value signals to behavior becomes more plausible.

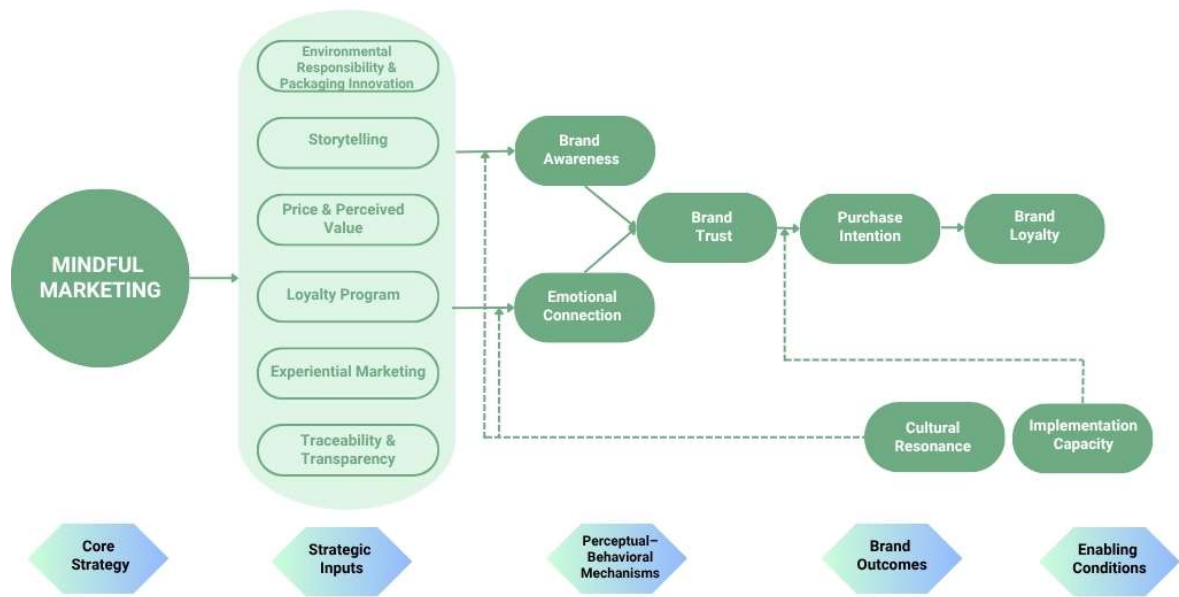


Figure 6.1: An Integrated Interpretation of Mindful Marketing Practices in the Vietnamese Tea Industry (Source: Author)

Mindful Marketing is treated as a strategic orientation that shapes how firms design commitments, communicate value, and organise experiences. The evidence suggests that Mindful Marketing-related tools operate primarily through two intermediate outcomes: brand awareness and emotional connection. These two outcomes influence how consumers interpret brand claims and assign meaning to sustainability-related signals.

Brand trust is positioned as the central consolidation point in this analytical synthesis. When transparency, accountability, and authenticity cues are experienced as coherent across touchpoints, awareness becomes more defined and emotional connection becomes more grounded. Under these circumstances, trust is more likely to develop, and it is through trust that purchase intention and, eventually, loyalty can accumulate. Loyalty is therefore framed as an outcome that builds through repeated confirmation, rather than as an immediate response to communication.

The analytical synthesis also specifies two enabling conditions that shape strength and stability of these relationships. First of all, cultural resonance increases effectiveness of Mindful Marketing tools when messages and experiences align with local symbols, language, and heritage meanings that consumers recognise. In a category such as tea, where regional identity and cultural memory are part of

product meaning, cultural resonance determines whether sustainability-oriented cues are felt as relevant or remain superficial. Secondly, execution capacity determines whether the brand can sustain credibility over time. Where operational delivery fails to match communicated commitments, the promise–experience gap undermines trust and weakens intention and loyalty, even when initial messaging is appealing.

Overall, the analysis reframes Mindful Marketing away from short-term communication tactics and toward an integrated strategic orientation that links firm practices to consumer interpretation and behavior within a specific cultural setting. As such, it offers a structured basis for future research on sustainable branding in heritage-related product categories and provides a practical lens for tea firms to diagnose priorities that are both credible and feasible.

6.4 Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study provide an initial interpretive basis for understanding how Mindful Marketing operates in culturally embedded industries such as tea. Rather than being treated as a finalized model, these insights highlight patterns and conditions that warrant further academic exploration across different contexts.

Based on these insights, future research may be oriented in three main directions: expanding the scope and subjects of investigation, examining the processes through which mindful values are translated into consumer responses in greater depth, and adopting interdisciplinary, interregional, and intertemporal perspectives.

6.4.1 Expanding the scope and subjects of the study

The current study is situated within the Vietnamese tea industry, a culturally embedded sector where branding outcomes are closely tied to origin narratives, trust cues, and lived consumption practices. This setting offers a useful lens for observing how cultural identity and emotional resonance interact with trust formation. At the same time, it raises questions about the transferability of the framework beyond tea and beyond Vietnam. Future research could extend comparison to other origin-linked categories such as specialty coffee, cocoa, handicrafts, or experiential tourism to examine whether similar relationships hold, and to clarify where the boundaries of applicability lie.

Beyond industry comparison, geographical extension would also be valuable. Tea-producing contexts such as Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Japan provide contrasting institutional settings and consumer cultures. Cross-country comparisons could help identify which elements of Mindful Marketing appear more universal and which are strongly conditioned by local norms, rituals, and expectations of authenticity and verification.

Another direction is to refine sampling by consumer segments. The findings suggest generational variation in how transparency cues, experiential touchpoints, and cultural meaning are interpreted, particularly under digitalisation and global exposure. Future studies could investigate generational mindful consumption in greater depth, including how cultural meanings are reconfigured over time. In addition, expanding the subject base to include international consumers would help assess how mindful values are communicated and received when cultural references travel across borders.

Finally, longitudinal designs would strengthen understanding of how mindful practices mature over time within firms. Multi-year case studies of enterprises such as TCSG would allow researchers to track how trust, emotional connection, and loyalty evolve across repeated market interactions, and how organisational capability and external conditions shape the stability of these relationships, rather than capturing only a single time point.

6.4.2 Deepening the Process of Value Transformation

A significant contribution of this research is the identification of the role of cultural resonance and implementation capacity as supporting conditions in the value transformation process. However, the relationships between these conditions and consumer perceptions, emotions, and behaviors still require further clarification. Subsequent studies could focus on examining in more detail how these factors interact and evolve over time.

One potential direction is to examine mediating and moderating relationships among the constructs identified in this study, to better understand why the same Mindful Marketing message can elicit different responses across consumer groups. Observing changes in the chain of perceptions, emotions, and beliefs over time may help clarify the dynamic nature of these relationships rather than treating them as static.

Moreover, research could extend from the business and consumer levels to the supply chain. When Mindful Marketing values are enacted across activities from cultivation and processing to distribution, brand trust is shaped not only through communication but also through observable practices. Supply-chain level analysis can help explain how authenticity is built and sustained in day-to-day operations.

The role of technology and data is also a worthwhile area for further research. In an increasingly data-driven marketing landscape, the question is not only how technology optimizes consumer responses, but also how it can support mindful experiences. Further studies could explore how technology can enhance transparency, support appropriate personalisation, and maintain longer-term connections without undermining the spirit of mindfulness.

In addition, the influence of new media actors such as influencers and online communities should be considered within the Mindful Marketing context. Their role as emotional catalysts or belief intermediaries can significantly shape how values are received and circulated, especially among younger consumers.

6.4.3 Developing an interdisciplinary and time-dimensional approach

Mindful Marketing is situated at the intersection of marketing, psychology, cultural studies, and data science. Accordingly, future research could adopt an interdisciplinary approach to examine consumer cognition and emotional response in greater depth. Integrating perspectives from psychology, anthropology, and experience design may help clarify how consumers perceive, remember, and relate to brands in more reflective and mindful ways.

One promising direction is to explore physiological and emotional responses to Mindful Marketing stimuli. Such approaches may help explain underlying response patterns associated with mindful engagement, complementing self-reported data and offering insight beyond what consumers are able to articulate verbally.

Comparative research across different regions of Vietnam could further illuminate regional variation in how Mindful Marketing is received and interpreted. Differences in cultural background,

consumption habits, and local identity may shape how mindful values are understood and practiced, contributing to a more nuanced contextual understanding.

Another important direction lies in linking Mindful Marketing with public policy research. Examining the alignment between mindful branding practices, export standards, and national branding initiatives may help clarify how enterprise-level practices connect with broader industry and policy contexts. Longitudinal research that follows how brand experiences are remembered, shared, and reinterpreted over time would also provide valuable insight into the development of mindful practices at both organisational and market levels.

6.5 Conclusion

This thesis demonstrates that building a tea brand in the current context is no longer only a communication challenge, but rather a shift toward translating values into credible, verifiable trust. In this context, Mindful Marketing, as approached in this thesis, is not treated as a new marketing trend, but as an organising lens that helps explain how mindful values are transformed into trust and brand loyalty in an industry deeply rooted in cultural identity.

The central objective of this research is to clarify the role of Mindful Marketing in the brand building process of the Vietnamese tea industry, as well as the process through which commitments to transparency, responsibility, and authenticity are received and responded to by consumers. Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, along with a case study at Sandals Tea & Coffee Group (TCSG), this thesis shows that Mindful Marketing influences consumer perceptions and emotions and contributes to the formation of brand trust. This trust does not emerge instantaneously; it accumulates through repeated experience and becomes a condition that supports the development of purchase intention and, over time, long-term loyalty.

The integrative summary presented in Chapter VI reflects this as a structured process in which Mindful Marketing practices do not operate in isolation but reinforce each other. Transparency, experience, storytelling, perceived value, and forms of community engagement all contribute to the foundations of perception and emotion. Two enabling conditions, cultural resonance and internal implementation capacity, shape how strongly these practices translate into trust over time. This

underscores that brand building in the context of sustainable development cannot rely on communication alone, but depends on the ability to realise commitments through consistent day-to-day business practices.

Academically, the thesis contributes first by placing Mindful Marketing within the Vietnamese cultural context, where this concept has received limited systematic attention to date. By integrating theoretical foundations related to mindfulness, intrinsic motivation, planned behavior, and brand value, the study clarifies that trust and loyalty are not only outcomes of persuasive messaging, but also consequences of consistency between stated values and validated experiences. Second, the synthesis developed in this study extends conventional brand value discussions by highlighting cultural relevance and execution capability as conditions that influence whether sustainability-related values are converted into behavior. This is particularly relevant for product industries linked to origin and heritage, where local identity is closely intertwined with brand meaning and cannot be separated from implementation.

From a practical perspective, the research results provide a basis for tea businesses to approach brand building in a more selective and feasible way. The managerial implications suggest that prioritising transparency, experience, and internal capability development in the early stages is necessary before scaling up or moving toward international positioning. In this sense, internationalising a tea brand is not simply market expansion; it involves carrying identity and responsibility in ways that remain coherent with the cultural and production contexts from which the brand originates.

The research also shows that tea brand building takes place through a recurring and verifiable relationship among businesses, production communities, supply chain partners, and consumers. Brand trust, in this case, is formed through the consistency of how commitments are practiced and how stakeholders respond to those commitments across touchpoints. This helps explain why Mindful Marketing is most likely to be effective when relationships within the value chain are maintained through transparency and mutual respect. The brand is no longer only a communication asset, but increasingly becomes the outcome of sustained interaction among actors who share and validate values over time.

Besides the contributions mentioned above, the study still has certain limitations. The survey scope is still focused on a geographical area and mainly reflects the perspective of domestic consumers.

Furthermore, the study did not track changes in perception and behavior over a long period. These limitations do not invalidate the findings; rather, they highlight the need for further research to test and refine the analysis in other contexts, including different regions, consumer segments, and time horizons.

More importantly, this thesis shows that Mindful Marketing should not be understood as a set of marketing techniques, but as a business orientation grounded in responsibility, culture, and people. In a context where consumers increasingly evaluate the meaning and consequences of their consumption choices, branding efforts are strengthened when they are anchored in verified commitments and lived experiences. For the Vietnamese tea industry, this implies building brands not only to sell products, but also to sustain cultural meaning, connect communities to markets, and create longer-term value through practices that can be demonstrated and trusted. From this perspective, Mindful Marketing can be understood as a coherent brand logic grounded in alignment between values, practices, and cultural context.

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APPENDIX A
SURVEY COVER LETTER

(for quantitative survey respondents)

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted as part of a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) thesis. The purpose of this study is to examine the role of Mindful Marketing practices in shaping consumer trust, brand perception, and behavioral responses within the Vietnamese tea industry, with a specific focus on the case of TCSG.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. The survey is anonymous, and no personally identifiable information will be collected. All responses will be used solely for academic research purposes and analyzed in aggregate form.

The survey will take approximately 5–7 minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers, we are interested in your honest opinions and experiences. You may choose to withdraw from the survey at any time without providing a reason.

By proceeding with the survey, you confirm that you have read and understood the information above and consent to participate in this study.

Thank you very much for your time and valuable contribution to this research.

Sincerely,

Dinh Tran Thuy Vi

Doctor of Business Administration Candidate

Swiss School of Business Management Geneva

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

(for qualitative interview participants)

Dear Participant,

You are invited to take part in a qualitative research interview conducted as part of a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) thesis. This study aims to examine Mindful Marketing practices in the Vietnamese tea industry, with a specific focus on the case of TCSG.

This consent form applies only to participants involved in in-dept semi-structured qualitative interviews.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this interview is to explore professional perspectives on the implementation of Mindful Marketing, its perceived impacts on consumer trust and brand value, and the contextual challenges associated with its application in practice.

Participation and procedure

Your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary. The interview will take approximately 30–40 minutes and will be conducted in a semi-structured format. With your permission, the interview may be audio-recorded solely for the purpose of accurate transcription and analysis.

You may decline to answer any question and may withdraw from the interview at any time without providing a reason and without any negative consequences.

Confidentiality and anonymity

All information provided during the interview will be treated with strict confidentiality. Your identity will not be disclosed in the thesis or in any related publications. Interview data will be anonymized using participant codes and will be reported in aggregated or non-identifiable form.

All data collected will be used exclusively for academic research purposes and stored securely in accordance with research ethics requirements.

Risks and benefits

There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this study. While there is no direct personal benefit, your contribution will support academic research and provide insights relevant to the development of responsible and mindful marketing practices in the Vietnamese tea industry.

Consent

By agreeing to participate, you confirm that:

- You have read and understood the information provided above;
- You voluntarily agree to participate in this interview;
- You understand that you may withdraw at any time without consequence.

If you have any questions regarding this research, please feel free to contact the researcher.

Sincerely,

Dinh Tran Thuy Vi

Doctor of Business Administration Candidate

Swiss School of Business Management Geneva

Supervised by:

Dr. Ljiljana Kukec

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Interview objectives

The qualitative interview component was designed to complement the quantitative findings and provide deeper contextual understanding of Mindful Marketing practices within the Vietnamese tea industry.

Specifically, the interviews aimed to:

- Explore expert perspectives on the meaning and practical relevance of Mindful Marketing in the context of tea and related F&B industries in Vietnam.
- Examine perceived benefits, limitations, and challenges associated with the implementation of Mindful Marketing at both firm and industry levels, with specific reference to TCSG.
- Provide contextual insights to support the interpretation of empirical results and enhance the discussion of research findings.

The interview study involved two groups of experts:

- Layer 1: Experts with direct professional experience in the tea industry, tea marketing, and sustainable development within the tea sector.
- Layer 2: Experts from food and beverage, marketing, branding, and related fields, offering broader perspectives on consumer trends, brand strategy, and Mindful Marketing practices.

2. Participant background (summary)

Prior to each interview, basic background information was recorded to contextualize responses. Participants were categorized by interview layer and assigned anonymized codes (P01–P17). No identifying personal or organizational information is reported in the thesis.

3. In-dept semi-structured interview themes and guiding questions

The interviews followed a semi-structured format. Core questions were used consistently across interviews, with follow-up prompts applied where relevant to clarify or deepen responses.

- Theme 1: Understanding of Mindful Marketing

How do you understand the concept of Mindful Marketing in the context of the food and beverage industry?

In your view, how does Mindful Marketing differ from conventional marketing approaches currently used in the tea industry?

- Theme 2: Implementation and practical experience

Based on your experience, how are Mindful Marketing principles currently applied in practice within tea or F&B businesses?

What strategies, tools, or methods are commonly used to align branding and marketing activities with Mindful Marketing orientation?

- Theme 3: Perceived impacts on consumers and brands

How do you evaluate consumer awareness and consumption trends related to sustainable and responsible brands in Vietnam, particularly among younger generations?

In your observation, how does Mindful Marketing influence consumer trust, brand perception, or engagement?

- Theme 4: Challenges and limitations

What difficulties or constraints do organizations face when attempting to implement Mindful Marketing practices?

From an industry perspective, what factors may limit the effectiveness of Mindful Marketing in the Vietnamese tea sector?

Theme 5: Reflections and practical insights

Based on your professional experience, what key lessons can be drawn from the application of Mindful Marketing in the tea industry?

What considerations should businesses be aware of when seeking to adopt more mindful and responsible marketing practices?

4. Data recording and processing

All interviews were conducted with prior informed consent. Interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy and subsequently transcribed for analysis.

During and after each interview, the researcher recorded field notes focusing on tone, emphasis, illustrative examples, and notable observations. Interview data were anonymized using participant codes and analyzed solely for academic research purposes.