

Place branding and local food souvenirs: the ethical attributes of national parks' brands

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souvenirs

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to identify what ethical attributes tourists associate with national parks' brands shown on food souvenir labels and the influence of such attributes on purchase motivations.

Design/methodology/approach – An exploratory study was carried out involving a total of 102 Italian tourists, who were interviewed at two different souvenir shops in Italy. Respondents were first asked to describe what images and values they were associating with the visited Italian National Park. The second level of questions related to the association of food products with national parks and the purchase motivations of food products branded with the national park's label. The ethical attributes associated with the national parks' brands and their relevance in purchase motivations were detected and analyzed through content analysis.

Findings – The analysis of the national park brand allows highlighting the food souvenir role in communicating ethical values that influence the perceived quality of food as well as tourists' purchase motivations. The analysis reveals interesting implications for the enhancement of local productions in tourist destinations, more specifically, how the place brand can act as a valuable communication tool. Particular attention is given to the crucial role that national parks' brands play in strengthening the value proposition of small businesses located within parks. This vision must be implemented from the perspective of mutual promotion of local food and tourism in these parks.

Originality/value – The results of this paper contributed to the literature by filling the gap regarding the role of place brands in promoting food souvenirs.

Keywords Place brand, National parks, Ethical attributes, Food souvenirs

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Food is usually considered as one of the most popular souvenirs, as it allows tourists to experience the place as well as to keep memories of different countries and cultures (Bessiere and Tibere, 2013; Lin and Mao, 2015; Suhartanto *et al.*, 2018). Food souvenirs give tourists the opportunity to bring home memoirs of their experiences, being, therefore, able to indulge in it again, upon their return (Bessière, 2001; Turner and Reisinger, 2001).

Food souvenirs indeed represent a key element for the economy of tourist destinations, especially when a strong association between food and destination image does occur. Food represents an essential element of the branding and marketing of places, as it involves and connects many aspects of the destination experience (Richards, 2015). Therefore, quality and uniqueness of local food products support destination brand and image (Rinaldi, 2017),



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and they encourage tourists to consider food as a symbol of the place (Lin and Mao, 2015). Food souvenirs are also important to increase destination awareness and to promote its image, being often bought as gifts to share the experience with others (Wilkins, 2011).

Empirical studies showed that food taste and quality are among the main reasons for choosing food souvenirs (Altintzoglou *et al.*, 2016).

Local origin and authenticity are also important factors, which respond to the tourists desire to explore the local culture, to obtain unique products and to satisfy altruistic needs, such as contributing to the development of the local community (Altintzoglou *et al.*, 2016; Sims, 2009; Erore Sthapit, 2018).

In this regard, the importance of the intangible aspects of food products and the broader concept of perceived quality is highlighted. By consuming food souvenirs, the intrinsic quality of the product, representing tourist destinations' local skills and production traditions, can be tested or reassessed. Moreover, the tourist experience is enriched with symbolic and image values strongly linked to a place (Gordon, 1986; Lin and Mao, 2015; Sims, 2009). The importance of the symbolic dimension can be observed, and it appears to add value to both food consumption while on holiday and to food as souvenirs (Lin and Mao, 2015; Mak *et al.*, 2012a). The latter should, therefore, not only evoke memories of the trip but also transmit values characterizing the place visited.

Food in tourism has a strong symbolic nature (Mak *et al.*, 2012b). With reference to the symbolic values of food souvenirs, there has been a growing academic interest in the ethical aspects of purchase and consumption of food products (Bissinger and Leufkens, 2017). In the past decades, several studies showed that ecological elements determine consumer preferences on foods that are perceived to be more eco-friendly and natural (Honkanen *et al.*, 2006; Lockie *et al.*, 2004; Loureiro *et al.*, 2001; Lusk and Briggeman, 2009; Tsakiridou *et al.*, 2008). Moreover, human rights, country of origin, fair trade, health, animal welfare, regional production and fair prices for farmers are among the most important ethical attributes concerning food consumers (Dowd and Burke, 2013).

Ethical values regarding purchasing and consumption of food in the holiday and post-holiday contexts appear increasingly important. In this term, the region of origin of food products can contribute to the enrichment of ethical values and communicate these through the place branding. As showed by Temperini *et al.* (2017), many of these values are intrinsic in national parks' brands, that include also the environmental regulations and control systems, image of natural environments where food grows naturally, food production processes that preserve natural properties, reduction of the information asymmetry, sustainability, protection of biodiversity and local communities development.

Based on these observations, the objective of the paper is to investigate what role can be played by place brands in conveying ethical values and in influencing the purchasing choices of tourists via food souvenirs.

In this perspective, the analysis of national parks' brands becomes crucial because of their representativeness of territorial brands with strong ethical values. Moreover, the relationship between national parks' brands and food souvenirs seems to be an under investigated topic in the scientific literature. In particular, the ethical values of national parks' brands shown on food products and their impact on tourists' perceptions and purchase intention of food souvenirs need to be further analyzed. This can contribute to the differentiation of the offer, the enhancement of local production and, therefore, the development of tourist destinations, and the broader territory, with certain food vocations.

Food souvenirs and ethical attributes

Previous studies on food souvenirs focused the attention on which attributes influenced the choice of food as souvenirs (Kim and Littrell, 2001; Lin and Mao, 2015; Swanson and

Horridge, 2006; Swanson and Timothy, 2012). As suggested by Lin and Mao (2015), food souvenirs could present different dimensions for tourists: the sensory aspect of taste, visual and other sensory evaluations; the utility aspect regarding souvenir convenience, health and naturalness; and the symbolic aspect consisting of authenticity, tradition and indigenous aspect (Lin *et al.*, 2011). More in detail, the uniqueness and the authenticity of food products are commonly found among the preferred attributes, together with taste and convenience in transport, especially when tourists travel by plane (Pysarchik, 1989). The connection with the place visited is also observed (Swanson and Horridge, 2006). In relation to this last aspect, it is highlighted that “food is not only a method to communicate the local values but also a medium to connect visiting tourists to a local distinctive way of life” (Suhartanto *et al.*, 2018). As noted by Swanson and Timothy (2012, p. 492), souvenirs identify a specific place and “possessing souvenirs is one way to capture the unique qualities of the destination and transport these qualities home as reminders of what made the place special.” So far, studies associating souvenirs with place have focused on the concept of authenticity. Product’s authenticity, related to destination, is among the most sought-after elements when tourists purchase souvenirs (Cave *et al.*, 2012; Trinh *et al.*, 2014). Despite the considerable effort researchers put into the understanding of what tourists perceive as authentic (Littrell *et al.*, 1993; Sims, 2009; Melewar and Skinner, 2020), the concept still lacks unambiguity. It has been pointed out that consumers are influenced by their own identity and ethical values when they are looking for authenticity (Sims, 2009, p. 325).

The desire for authenticity is satisfied through the purchase of local products (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016; Melewar and Skinner, 2020). Indeed, “local foods may be particularly popular with tourists because they are considered iconic products that capture the nature of a particular location” (Lin and Mao, 2015). Through the purchase of local food products, visitors establish a closer bond to the place and producers, thus making the overall experience more meaningful. Moreover, they “can experience the moral satisfaction of choosing what they consider to be a more ethical form of consumption” (Sims, 2009, p. 328). Accordingly, altruism can be considered as one of the most important factors that motivate the purchases of tourists on vacation (Timothy, 2005). Furthermore, it is noted that the purchase of local food as food souvenirs satisfies a symbolic consumption of ethical values, strengthening the identity of the tourists and the sense of personal authenticity (Ekinci *et al.*, 2013). The importance of ethical attributes in consumer and tourists’ buying motivations regarding local food has been observed in several studies. The main focus is on eco-sustainability; local products are perceived as more ecofriendly, as the impact of transport is reduced or avoided (Cholette *et al.*, 2013). Another aspect is given by the desire to support the socio-economic development of the local community (Bean and Sharp, 2011). The desire to support small family businesses, usually associated with local food production, has also been highlighted (Hu *et al.*, 2010). It is possible to identify other ethical values in addition to such as the organic certification, although it has been observed that often organic and local products are perceived indiscriminately (Ueasangkomsate and Santiteerakul, 2016). In addition, animal welfare has assumed a certain relevance among the ethical attributes associated with organic products; it is believed that organic products are made with production methods that better respect animal rights (Zander and Hamm, 2010; Zander *et al.*, 2013).

It must be considered, however, that the symbolic value of local products as food souvenirs can be enriched by additional ethical values that are inherent to the territory of origin (Marcoz *et al.*, 2016) and which can satisfy the need for the differentiation of food products (Zander and Hamm, 2010).

Place brand and ethical attributes: the case of national parks' brands

Tourism in protected areas substantially contributes to the global tourism industry (Leung *et al.*, 2018). National parks are one of the main categories of protected areas designated by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (Temperini, Limbu, and Jayachandran, 2017). They are defined as:

[...] large natural or near natural areas set aside to protect large-scale ecological processes, along with the complement of species and ecosystems characteristic of the area, which also provide a foundation for environmentally and culturally compatible spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational, and visitor opportunities (Dudley, 2008, p. 16).

Although the definition given by IUCN is universally recognized (Leung *et al.*, 2018), classification differences at individual country level still exist. Under a marketing perspective, such a lack of uniformity limits the potential role of national parks' brands, especially regarding locally produced food. In several countries, national parks cover a significant area of the territory, but in some cases, like in the USA, human presence is strictly limited to excursions or recreational activities. On the contrary, in some European countries like Italy, communities are allowed to pursue social and economic activities (e.g. tourism, farming and livestock cultivation and food and wine production) in accordance with national park regulations and the principles of environmental sustainability (Temperini *et al.*, 2017). By involving local people, national parks can not only maintain and reinforce their natural and agricultural heritage but also protect the broader ecosystem (Sjölander-Lindqvist and Cinque, 2015). Selling food products and tourism promotion are the primary objectives for the socio-economic development of local communities. In Italy, the IUCN classification has recognized 24 national parks and 145 regionals. Within these areas, 250,000 farms are located, representing 16.7 per cent of the total farms in Italy (Temperini *et al.*, 2017). The data show the high incidence and importance that such activities have on the national economy. Accordingly, local companies, complying with specific quality standards, are allowed to label their products with the park logo for marketing purposes. However, the regulations of the Italian parks regarding the use of the logo by local producers differ from one another; the use of the national park's brand is allowed both to companies or farmers based within the parks' borders and those located just outside, but still nearby, as long as raw materials from the park are used to produce other products (i.e. use of flour to produce bread or pasta). In other cases, the use of park's brand is allowed when the products already have a quality certification (i.e. organic, PDO and PGI); in other cases, the minimum requirements to put the products on the market are required. The brand allows local producers and farmers to create a closer relationship with the tourists, increase the attractiveness of the place and enable local producers and farmers to acquire more skills and a longer lifetime (de Jong and Varley, 2018).

Previous studies underlined the existence of synergistic relationships between food production and tourism in national parks (Hjalager and Johansen, 2013). The tourists physiologically and psychologically assimilate the values associated with the protected areas by purchasing or consuming natural, traditional and farm products (Bessiere and Tibere, 2013). Indeed, the national parks' brand communicates an image of natural environments in which food grows naturally (Temperini *et al.*, 2017), and it is a guarantee that the food production processes are as controlled as possible and preserve natural properties (Barham, 2003; Van Ittersum *et al.*, 2003). In the past decade, studies predominantly focused on organic food have investigated the ethical values and the role of naturalness and authenticity in consumers' purchase intention (Dowd and Burke, 2013; Honkanen *et al.*, 2006; Sims, 2009). By contrast, the theme seems to have been overlooked in

food tourism studies and little attention been given, so far, to the role of national parks and of the values transmitted by them in terms of place branding. Based on these observations, the objective of the paper is to bridge the gap in the existing academic literature regarding the ethical values associated with the national parks brand and the influence of such attributes on purchase motivations. It also investigates the role of the Italian national parks' brand showed on food souvenir labels in communicating these values to tourists.

Although each national park in Italy has its own regulations, there are general guidelines that must be respected so that the use of the brand is granted for food products labels. In particular, the food products must be organic or indicate protected designation of origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI), recognized as traditional and typical of the area, and the farms and food producers must have the European environmental certification system (ISO14001) and activate a path of environmental sustainability, tradition and quality. Considering these characteristics, national parks' brands can communicate an image of natural environments where food grows naturally; they may also provide a guarantee that food production processes preserve natural properties and highest levels of control are pursued. As demonstrated by studies on the territory of the origin of food (Barham, 2003; Van Ittersum *et al.*, 2003), the park's brand can also have positive effects on the perception of higher-quality products, because they are produced in highly safeguarded natural environments.

The academic literature underlines a great attention to food-related experiences and food souvenirs in rural areas in general; however, protected areas have received little empirical attention (Hjalager and Johansen, 2013).

Method

In tourism studies, the role of national parks in place development and branding has been under-researched. Investigating the role of the park's brand in communicating ethical values and its influence on tourists' purchase intention related to food souvenirs through an explorative study facilitates comprehension of the phenomenon (Sarantakos, 2012).

An exploratory study was carried out involving a total of 102 Italian tourists, interviewed at two different souvenir shops in Italy from April to May 2018. Usually, exploratory research involves a qualitative approach (Creswell and Creswell, 2017; Stebbins, 2001). In tourism studies, in-depth interviews are recognized as a sufficient technique to acquire the needed data (Mason *et al.*, 2010).

Specifically, 49 tourists were interviewed in Macerata and 53 in Rimini. Of the respondents, 45 per cent come from Northern Italy, 30 per cent from the center and 25 per cent from the South. Among the participants, 55 per cent are women and 45 per cent are men. Of all, 19 per cent fall in the age group between 18 and 35 years, 26 per cent between 36 and 50, 28 per cent 51 and 65 and 27 per cent in the over 65 years group.

Interviews lasted an average of 25 minutes and were focused on the following main themes:

- values associated to National Park brand;
- food products associated to National Park brand;
- farms and industries characteristics' (small or large companies);
- environmental sustainability of food production;
- animal rights; and
- willingness to pay a higher price for the food products from NPs to support the local economy.

Respondents were asked first to describe what images and values they were associating with an Italian national park. They were then asked which food products were associated with national parks. The purchase motivations of food souvenirs, which show the national park's brand on the label, were then indicated.

The following open-ended questions were formulated, and respondents were asked to argue their answers:

"When you think of an Italian national park, what comes to mind?"

"What food products do you associate with Italian national parks?"

"Why do you buy food souvenirs promoted with Italian national parks' brands?"

The interview protocol is based on a study carried out by [Sthapit \(2018\)](#) concerning the preferred attributes of souvenirs.

Notes were taken during conversation and later used in the analysis. The results of the interviews were elaborated through a direct content analysis with the aim of detecting the ethical attributes associated with the national parks' brands and their relevance in purchase motivations.

Initially, answers were transcribed, read and parts more representative of ethical attributes were highlighted. During the second step, ethical attributes were identified and categorized according to predetermined codes taken from the existing literature ([Potter and Levine-Donnerstein, 1999](#)). Data that could not be coded were also identified, analyzed and associated with new codes. The coding work was carried out manually. This qualitative approach allows the researcher to grasp all the aspects and to extend the knowledge of a phenomenon.

Values associated to national parks

The perceived image of national parks is largely positive.

Values associated to national parks' brand

- Nature.
- Relationship between man and nature.
- Healthy and pollution-free.
- Genuineness, understood as authenticity.
- Respect for nature.
- Eco-sustainability.
- Protection of native animal and plant species.
- Respect for people living in parks.
- Typical products.

Among the associations indicated by the respondents, *nature* emerges predominantly; this seems rather obvious, given the distinctive characteristics of national parks and their reason of being, namely, conservation of biodiversity and enhancement of natural systems.

This brand reminds me of respect for nature and environment.

Female, 45 years old

In my opinion, the brand enhances the characteristics of nature.

Male, 33 years old

In relation to the national parks, the *relationship between man and nature* is emphasized, highlighting the possibility of coming into contact with it through visits and excursions on paths that plunge into uncontaminated territories (Leung *et al.*, 2018). These experiences can contribute to “an individual’s personal growth and well-being, while instilling an increased sense of stewardship and ownership at the local level” (Walker and Chapman, 2003).

In this last regard, landscape beauty was also observed, indicating the charm of the hills and the predominance of the green vegetation. This characteristic is rather important from the perspective of tourist experience, as it arouses strong emotions in the visitors. The quality of the environment is another image value that stands out in a widespread way within the respondents’ answers. Overall, the environment was perceived as *healthy and pollution-free*, most likely thanks to the park’s managing body assuring compliance with the regulation governing human activities within the territory and promoting the principle of environmental protection (Sjölander-Lindqvist and Cinque, 2015). Also, in this case, it brings significant value in terms of tourism promotion, especially with reference to visitors from large urban areas characterized by high levels of pollution and who can find in the park a bit of well-being and relief. *Genuineness*, meant as authenticity, was a further value that interviewees were often associating to parks’ image. Such value is linked not only to the uniqueness of the preserved natural environments but also to the history, culture and above all the traditions found in the territories of the parks. In this sense, it should be considering the presence of villages within the Italian protected areas, which represent an important component of the tourism offer, presenting an important historical and cultural heritage that is interesting to tourists. To reinforce this notion, there are the local communities that, in addition to transmitting folk elements typically found in small urban centers, represent the integration between man and nature:

I think the NP’s brand represent a guarantee of the respect for the environment and for the people who live there, recovery of lost values as well as products and typical farms.

Male, 55 years old

Respect for nature, eco-sustainability and the protection of native animal and plant species were ethical values expressly indicated by the prevalence of the interviewees in relation to the image of Italian national parks. Some respondents also indicated respect *for people living in parks*, considering their harmonious and synergistic relationship with nature.

Most respondents also associated national parks with the *offer of typical products*, referring in particular to agri-food productions. This is highlighted by the answer to the question “*What food products do you associate with Italian national parks?*”, to which most of the respondents indicated sausages, cheeses, cereals, legumes, honey and bakery products. Actually, the supply of agri-food products from Italian national parks is much broader; different crops and animal breeding and important production chains for the Italian economy, such as oil and wine, can be found within these parks. The agri-food sector is a driving force for the socio-economic development of the communities living in parks, and together with tourism – with which there is a strong integration and a relationship of mutual enhancement – is the most promising sector in terms of environmental sustainability (Sjölander-Lindqvist and Cinque, 2015). The enhancement of production chains is, therefore, a primary objective, and in this sense, the role of the parks’ brands as communication tools is particularly important.

Food souvenir promoted with national parks' brand: a contribute to place development

Respondents were asked to recall the purchasing reasons of food souvenirs showing the logo of a national park on their label. In addition to food quality and taste, there are different ethical values that can be pointed out, in part common to the motivations for buying local products, and others that are attributable to national parks.

Further ethical values associated to food souvenirs

- Eco-sustainability.
- Support for local economy and communities.
- Support for small-family businesses.
- Biodiversity protection.
- Animal welfare.
- Respect for human work.
- Freedom.

Among the values associated with local products, there are eco-sustainability, support for local economy and communities and for small-family businesses. *Eco-sustainability* represents an increasingly important ethical value in consumer purchasing decisions, in relation not only to food souvenirs but also to food in general. Several studies show the increasing importance of ecological motives in determining consumer preferences, especially in favor of foods that are perceived as more ecofriendly and natural (Honkanen and Ottar Olsen, 2009; Honkanen *et al.*, 2006; Lockie *et al.*, 2004; Loureiro *et al.*, 2001). The attention of consumers on eco-sustainability is focused not only on the farming practices but also on products transformation and distribution (Hamzaoui Essoussi and Zahaf, 2008). With specific regard to food from the parks, the perception of respondents is that they are produced in a preserved natural environment through environmentally friendly practices. Tourists believe that agricultural products grow naturally, and even the transformation processes are characterized by their low environmental impact; to this is added the attribute of "0 km food." The principle of eco-sustainability would be strongly shared by the local community, which demonstrates great interest (but also the obligation) in preserving the environment:

In the NP animals are free to graze, thanks to the environmental restrictions applied. Local entrepreneurs care about the soil and the animals because this affects the quality of the final product.

Female, 47

A further widely recognized ethical value was represented by the *desire to support the economy and local communities*, which has assumed an increasingly important weight in the food souvenirs purchase motivations (Altintzoglou *et al.*, 2016; Sims, 2009; Erore Sthapit and Coudounaris, 2018). Willingness to support local communities in the national parks was driven by the contribution they make to the conservation of biodiversity and by the sharing of values, such as the respect for nature and the harmonious relationship with it as a philosophy of life.

The results also show the desire to support small family businesses:

Buying the food products with NP'S brand I can support the economic growth of small family businesses run from young people, who rediscover ancient jobs. They are workers who make many sacrifices and efforts to preserve nature.

Male, 60 years old

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Products promoted with the national park brands were perceived as produced by *small family businesses*, a more eco-sustainable production model, especially for the territories within parks. As people and families who live in the park area, they have great interest in not compromising environmental quality. Small family businesses are associated with craftsmanship, which recalls the idea of more eco-sustainable production methods and favors the perception of greater food naturalness for the highest component of manual labor (Abouab and Gomez, 2015). It was noted that the preference for small companies was also connected to the idea that the workers have better conditions than in larger companies (Berlin *et al.*, 2009).

It is interesting, then, to observe the association of further ethical values. First, most of the interviewees believed that the purchase of food promoted with the national park brands can contribute to the *biodiversity protection*. In fact, farmers play the role of guardians of biodiversity, and in this sense, the importance of environmentally sustainable agriculture is widely recognized. Maintaining the variety of products that nature offers is a widely shared goal and expectation.

The ethical value of *animal welfare* is also noted. In several studies, greater attention has been paid to consumers in relation to animal health and their living environment and to the growing role that such altruistic value has in perceived quality and in purchasing behavior of food products (Dowd and Burke, 2013; Frewer *et al.*, 2005; Verbeke and Viaene, 2000; Zander and Hamm, 2010). With specific reference to farms in the territories of national parks, the perception that emerges is that animals can graze in open spaces in a natural environment, with greater freedom, and feed in a more natural way than can happen in other areas. The common idea is that respect for animals, as well as for nature in general, is a principle strongly shared by breeders in the park.

Another value expressed by some interviewees is *respect for work*, linked to the awareness that the production methods respectful of nature are more difficult and they require more patience and sacrifice. From this perspective, the knowledge and know-how of producers and farmers within national parks are also appreciated, as well as their strong willingness to produce products of high intrinsic quality in compliance with important moral principles.

The results also highlight the willingness to support young entrepreneurs, either starting new activities or continuing the family business, conforming to the moral principles highlighted above. This is also because of the negative effects of the economic crisis that has hit Italy in recent years and which has led to troubling levels of youth unemployment. The idea of contributing to the future of young people and give them a better life is a particularly significant value in this time. Finally, some of the interviewees indicated the value of *freedom*, which is closely linked to the natural context, the open spaces and the fauna living in the wild in the national parks.

In conclusion, national parks' brands can transmit ethical values that enrich the experience of buying and consuming food souvenirs, representing an important means of enhancing the local production chains and contributing to the socio-economic development of local communities. Therefore, the role of the place brand as a communication tool for the

promotion of products and services is confirmed, which in turn can help to strengthen the image of the territory and to promote tourism.

Conclusion

The results of this research point out the role of place brands in promoting food souvenirs. In particular, the case of the national parks' brands allows us to highlight their ability to communicate specific ethical values that influence the perceived quality of food and the purchase motivations of tourists (Altintzoglou *et al.*, 2016). *In addition to the ethical attributes that are generally associated with local products (Brown et al., 2009; Zepeda and Deal, 2009), these brands communicate further values, such as freedom, respect for work and animal welfare.* The analysis reveals interesting implications for the enhancement of local productions in tourist destinations, highlighting how place brand can be a valuable communication tool. Particular attention is given to the opportunity to use national parks' brands to strengthen the communication of the value proposition of small businesses located within the parks. The small scale of these enterprises usually does not allow to make big investments in marketing strategies. Therefore, the use of the national parks' brand could represent a marketing tool to increase the awareness of companies and their products.

Moreover, small and medium enterprises' in the area can benefit from the ethical consumers' choice, because tourists that recognize the national parks' brand on food souvenirs labels are willing to pay a higher price for these products (Temperini *et al.*, 2017). The increased revenues might allow small businesses to cover the greater costs incurred to ensure high levels of quality and to respect the principles of environmental sustainability. In conclusion, this approach could allow a mutual promotion of local food and tourism in parks. The food souvenirs promoted with the national parks' brands contribute both to increase the notoriety of the area and to attract tourists in search of experiences characterized by ethical values.

The exploratory research presents some limitations including the low number of tourists interviewed. Future research on this topic could extend the sample and consider some specific food products. Moreover, based on the research results, further insights on the ethical attributes that more significantly impact tourists' purchasing preferences might be achieved through a survey. This could help to define marketing communication policies. Furthermore, it would be interesting to investigate the role of ethical values in the differentiation of food souvenirs and their impact on tourists' willingness to pay.

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