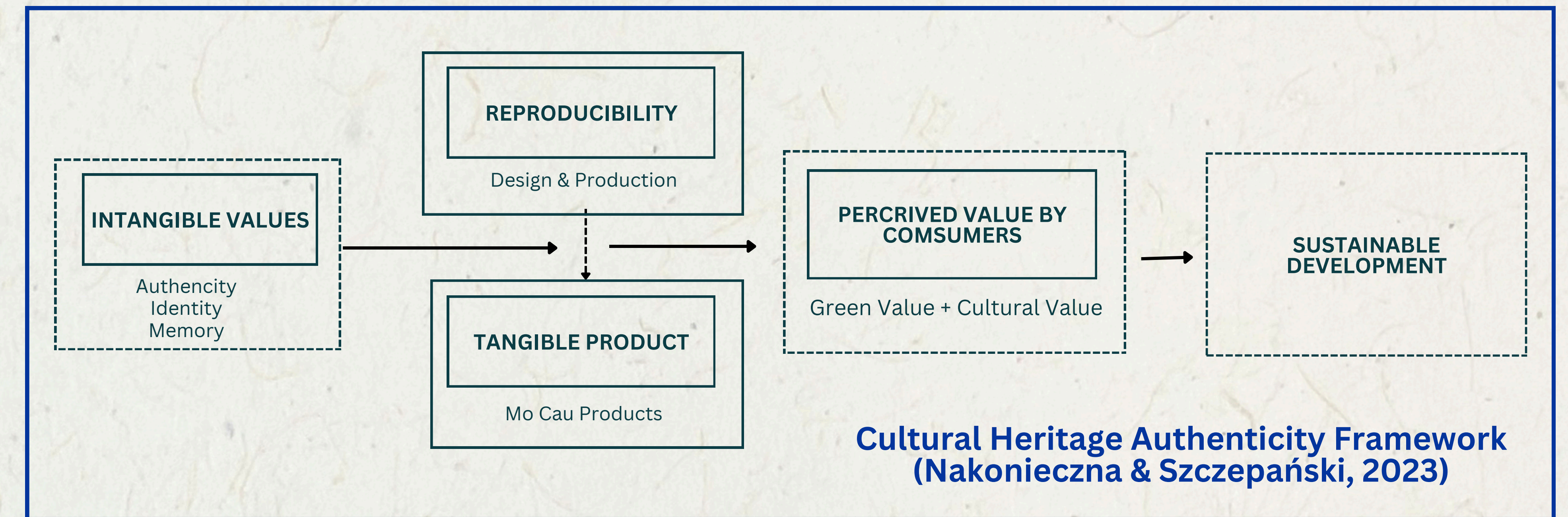


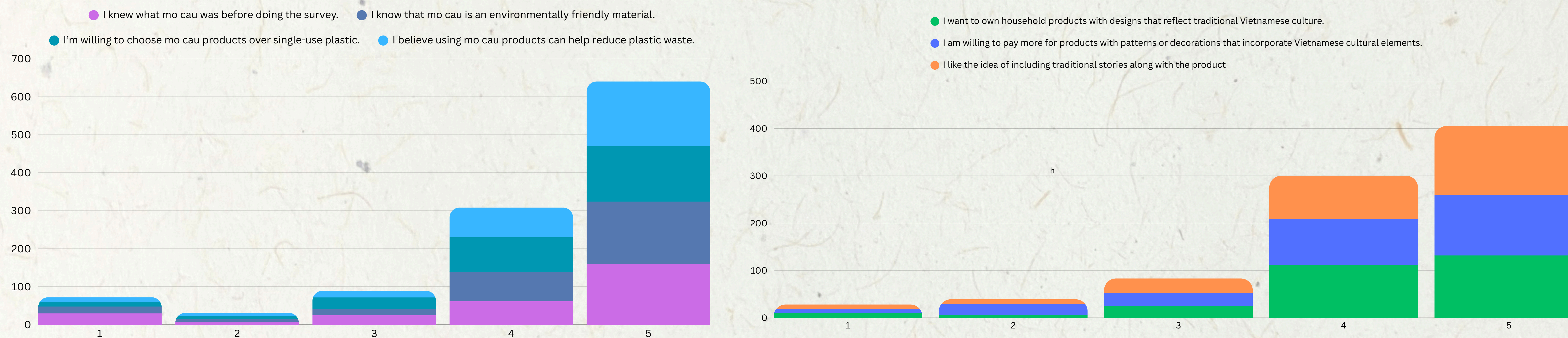
Background

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>THEN - Traditional Vietnam</p> <p>Mo cau was an integral material in traditional Vietnamese daily life, used for household tools, food packaging, and folk games. Beyond its function, it carried cultural meanings, collective memory, and community-based practices embedded in everyday life.</p> | <p>NOW - Plastic & Green Market Transition</p> <p>Since the early 2000s, plastic has largely replaced traditional materials due to low cost and convenience. Recently, mo cau has re-emerged through the global sustainability movement, entering commercial production and export markets as an eco-friendly alternative.</p> | <p>KEY CHALLENGE - Cultural Dilution</p> <p>In current commercialization, mo cau is mainly positioned as a generic "green material." Its intangible cultural values—traditional practices, symbolic meanings, and cultural narratives are largely absent from product design, branding, and consumer experience.</p> | <p>FUTURE—Sustainability with Cultural Identity</p> <p>As mo cau products become standardized to compete in global bio-material markets, they risk losing cultural distinctiveness. This research asks how mo cau can be re-positioned as a sustainable material while retaining and communicating its cultural identity.</p> |
|--|---|---|--|

Theoretical Framework



Survey Results (n=285)



Environmental Awareness (Strong) → INSIGHT:

- 85% know mo cau is eco-friendly
- 87% believe it helps reduce plastic waste
- 83% willing to choose mo cau over plastic

Mo cau is firmly recognized as green material.

Cultural Interest → INSIGHT:

- 86% want products with Vietnamese cultural design
- 83% like cultural storytelling with products

Cultural elements still attract consumers emotionally.

Value-Behavior Gap (Key Problem) → VALUE INSIGHT:

- only ~79% willing to pay more

Environmental value is dominant, while cultural authenticity remains under-valued and under-commercialized.

HIGH AWARENESS
POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Solutions

1. Product Repositioning:

- Shift from being just a simple "plastic substitute" to a "sustainable cultural product."
- While the bio-material serves as the foundation, the cultural story is the core value. This strategy creates a unique identity and helps avoid direct price competition with other materials.

2. Storytelling Design:

- Turn the product into a visual storytelling tool using folk patterns (such as bronze drums, bamboo images) and legends (like the traditional Areca fan).
- The goal is to help users not just use the product, but to "read" and remember its heritage value.



3. Experience & Education Model:

- Expand from simple manufacturing to experiential tourism (visiting craft villages, DIY workshops to make products by hand).
- Combine education on green consumption with cultural preservation, turning the Areca sheath into a "living heritage practice" rather than just a lifeless product.



Ms. Phan Vu Hoai Vui (Tien Phuoc, Quang Nam)

- Concept:** Turning discarded mo cau into eco-friendly tableware (bowls, plates, spoons).
- Process:** Wash → Heat-press → Sterilize → Package.
- Impact:** Purchases 400k sheaths/year; employs 80% underprivileged local women.
- Goal:** Finalist of 2021 Women's Startup Competition; targeting European exports.

Limitation

- Lack of Testing: No physical prototypes tested in real-life scenarios.
- Subjective Data: Online surveys reflect attitudes rather than actual buying behavior.
- Operational Gaps: Costs, supply chains, and export logistics are not yet analyzed.

Future Work

- Prototype Testing: Develop and evaluate actual product samples.
- Behavioral Research: Study real-world consumer choices.
- Business Optimization: Deep dive into supply chain and export feasibility.
- Psychological Comparison: Analyze "Green" vs. "Cultural" motivations.
- Circular Economy: Link Farmers – Designers – Markets into a sustainable loop.