Beyond Profit. Exploring the Motivators of Local Producers in Multiple Sub-regions in Western Hungary

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Article

Beyond Profit: Exploring the Motivators of Local Producers in Multiple Sub-Regions in Western Hungary

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Abstract: Most research on sustainable small-scale, local producer lifestyles emphasises healthy food production, lacking integration of mental and spiritual well-being into a holistic concept of a healthy lifestyle. This study explores the motives behind the production activity of producers engaged in sustainable food production in several Western Hungarian sub-regions, aiming to identify their attitudes and motivations. The small-scale entrepreneurial mindset encompasses needs beyond physical and ethical aspects, such as involvement, socio-cultural attachment to the past, tradition, nature, place, and local culture. An online questionnaire was conducted with 73 local producers in the second quarter of 2024. The results of the factor and cluster analyses were used to classify the producers into two clusters: the "Value-Creator" and the "Proud" clusters. The main features of these two clusters were illustrated in persona profiles. The "Value-Creator" cluster, mainly women, feel a strong connection to the local community and view sustainable production as a lifestyle choice. The "Proud" cluster, consisting of young men, focus on the quality and uniqueness of their products. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of sustainable production by exploring producers' intrinsic motivations and lifestyle choices. The findings could also inform other entrepreneurial projects, such as urban initiatives.

Keywords: local producers; sustainable producer attitudes; mental and spiritual well-being; autotelic factors; Hungary; local identity; local entrepreneurship; work well-being

1. Introduction

This study explores the motivations of local agricultural producers engaged in sustainable production in Western Hungary. Our aim is to show that attitudes towards sustainable production extend beyond environmental sustainability and healthy living, encompassing a broader range of contexts.

We begin with the premise that the motivations behind responsible production are multi-faceted, involving social, environmental, and psychological factors. This perspective highlights the necessity of a holistic approach in research, supporting the argument that sustainable production cannot be solely defined by health and environmental awareness. Therefore, sustainability research should also consider the internal experiences and personal motivations of producers.

In this study, we examine the intrinsic motivations and lifestyle choices of local producers involved in sustainable production across several sub-regions of Western Hungary. We aim to shed light on aspects of this lifestyle choice that go beyond a mere preference for environmentally conscious production and the cultivation of healthy food.

The study focuses on the Western Transdanubian region of Hungary, specifically the Zala river valley and its neighboring sub-regions. These geographical and historico-cultural areas, located between Lake Balaton and the Austrian-Slovenian border, cover approximately 2,250 square kilometers and span across Vas and Zala counties (see Map 1). The region's unique topography has

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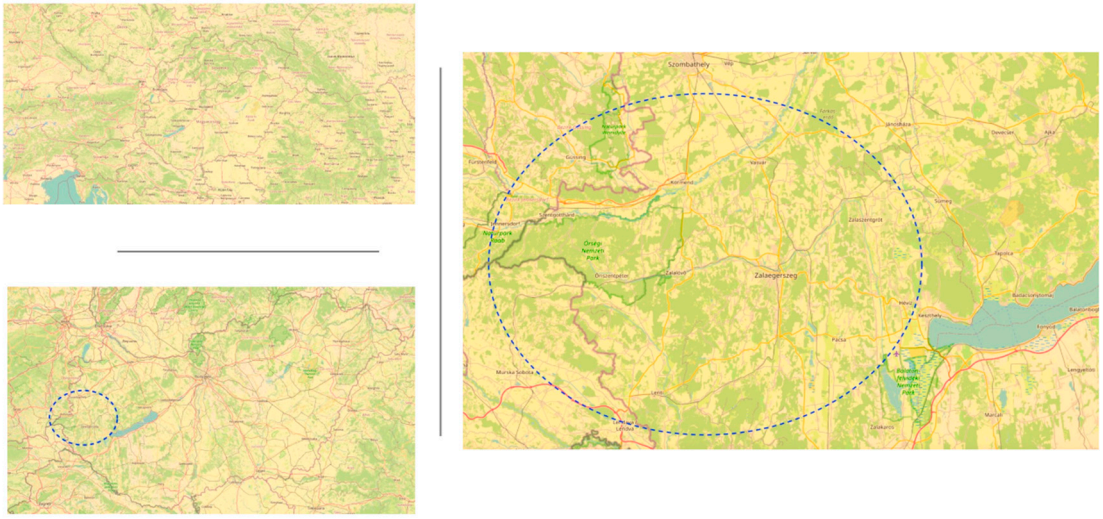
created a fragmented landscape, which has significantly shaped the local communities and their ways of life. This landscape fragmentation fosters an environment conducive to small-scale production. Unlike regions dominated by large-scale, industrial agricultural practices, this area has preserved traditional production methods and a variety of local products that are characteristic of the region.



Map 1. Location of the study area: Hungary, Western Transdanubia and the adjacent sub-regions in Zala and Vas counties. Source: [1].

2. Literature Review

2.1. Points of Departure

Previous studies on agricultural entrepreneurship have mostly focused on the financial success of the business [2–4] and have been less concerned with identifying the psychological capital of small-scale agricultural entrepreneurship, the determinants of entrepreneurial attitudes. Those who studied these aspects have largely identified environmental and consumer responsibility as the main motif of the activity of producers, and as reasons for their satisfaction and happiness, which can lead to greater social recognition of their work [5]. In recent years, however, several studies have attempted to identify additional factors of 'work wellbeing', such as a 'sense of togetherness' to convey a sense of community [6–8].

Responsible production cannot be solely determined by goal- and profit-oriented motives. Instead, they can also be influenced by components such as absorption, environmental connections, and social stimulation. The authors aimed to examine how the subjective motives of the 'choice of path' (i.e., the production processes) and the 'goals to be achieved' relate to each other from the producer's perspective.

Modern work is often characterised by a sense of alienation. Many work-related challenges can be traced back to the sense of alienation, which arises from extreme specialisation. Classical and neoclassical economics assumed that people's decisions were solely influenced by rational expectations. However, the rise of behavioural economics was prompted by the need to analyse the distortions caused by rational expectations, using psychological and other social science disciplines [9]. The present study does not identify such human biases in rational decisions as a problematic phenomenon. Instead, it seeks to ascertain the extent to which they contribute to a sense of producer satisfaction as motivators.

Connected to our previous research [10], three main components of motivators were identified: local embeddedness, social embeddedness, and autotelic factors. Understanding these factors as deeper components of quality of life is not only important in the context of agriculture or rural

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revitalisation, but the research may also have some lessons for other entrepreneurial (e.g., urban) projects.

An individual's subjective quality of life is a broader concept than the standard of living, because it includes factors other than income and consumption that affect well-being. For example, there is a consensus in the literature that attachment to a place enhances quality of life scores, a sense of responsibility towards a place, and a sense of commitment among residents [11,12].

Smallholder lifestyles and life management practices have their own specific traits. In contrast to large-scale production, the small-scale producer is connected to the product. They do not merely specialise in a single operation but oversee the entire production process. Therefore, the position of the producer (owner) is active. The owner is present, exercising actual control over the enterprise and its physical assets. In addition to these, intellectual values may also be attached to ownership. Ownership is a direct source of pleasure in addition to income. Thus, the enterprise contributes to fulfilling the personality of the small producer and thus represents a subjective value for the business owner, regardless of its market value [13].

2.2. Local Food Production

Before delving into the subject, it is important to clarify the concepts of local production, local products, and their unique characteristics. Unfortunately, there is no universally accepted and definitive definition of these concepts as they are subject to a range of interpretations and viewpoints. The following specificities of local food production are highlighted with some of the main references to the literature.

Table 1. The unique attributes of local production and local products.

Attributes	Sources of information
Geographical proximity (production, processing, distribution, and consumption occur geographically close to each other or within the same region, within a 20 to 100 km radius)	[14–22]
Social proximity (closeness of the relationship between producers and consumers, and the extent of trust, transparency, information sharing)	[14,23–25]
Subjectivity (depends on factors such as the size of the population and whether the settlement is rural or urban in nature, or the closeness of cities)	[26–28]
Perceived traits (authenticity, freshness, better quality and taste, uniqueness, cultural heritage preservation)	[24,29–35]
Positive social impacts (health consciousness, environmental considerations, uniqueness, and a desire to support local economies)	[14,17,23,36–38]

Source: Authors' own compilation, 2024.

It is important to note that local production operates on different principles than other sectors of the global market. As human labour inputs or other costs may be higher, it is necessary to identify the characteristics that can lead to positive change for small-scale farmers, and then examine their role in shaping attitudes to sustainable production and choices of management strategies.

2.3. Motivators of Local Producers

On this basis, we have identified three main dimensions in our research, which are as follows:

1) *Local Embeddedness*

The concept of local identity emerged in social science studies in the 1960s, particularly as an endogenous development potential. The literature emphasises the importance of attachment to one's

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place of residence, the cultivation and preservation of local community ties, and the maintenance of local traditions. A strong attachment to place/locality is vital not only for fostering a well-functioning community but also for supporting the local economy. A strong local identity is an endogenous development potential, as it can increase the willingness of the population to act [26].

In this dimension, we sought to identify how the characteristics and cultural heritage of a given area contribute to the development of producer identity. It was particularly important to examine the key components that define local producer identity. We also sought to understand the strength of the connection between producers and the local culture and place in which they operate, as well as how important this connection is to them. Another important question is the extent to which their businesses highlight distinctive local products or the specificity of local production.

2) *Social Embeddedness*

While mutual stimulation is not typically framed as an economic phenomenon, the 'background experience' associated with economic activity and resources is highly valued among the benefits generated. Most of the stimulating effects have been observed within human relationships and their reciprocity. A wealth of psychological research has shown that social stimulation is one of the most important sources of human experience. However, a common effect of a rational, utilitarian, work-centred approach to life is that it often reduces the time and attention given to others. Yet, the quality and richness of interpersonal relationships have been found to increase happiness far more than increases in income or consumption [24,39,40].

Local economic actors have the opportunity to interact regularly, which can lead to more intense economic links between them. This proximity and coexistence can result in interactions that are not market-driven and, therefore, cannot be managed by traditional market mechanisms.

3) *Autotelic Attitude*

Focusing solely on the objective of an activity may diminish the very essence of participation and involvement. A range of human activities, including sports, play, and the fine arts, serve to enrich our lives with pleasure and provide joyful experiences. In these autotelic activities, satisfaction is derived from the activity itself, without the need for external rewards or motivations [13,41–44]. Based on Csíkszentmihályi's flow theory and the works of [45], the authors of this paper identified several components of autotelic attitude. It is important to emphasise that we can speak of autotelic activity when we do something not for further gain, but simply because we like doing it. If a given activity is autotelic in nature, then the health benefits associated with that activity, or even the benefits of being free from stress, are irrelevant [25,46].

This research sought to answer the following questions:

Q1: What are the main motivations for local producers to pursue their activities?

Q2: What do they see as the role of the local community?

Q3: How are the following dimensions reflected in the perceptions of local producers?

- attachment to local traditions
- environmental and cultural ties
- social and interpersonal stimuli
- autotelic motives / attitudes

Q4: Which characteristic segments can be identified along the dimensions mentioned in Q3?

This research is organized as follows: First, we will describe the data collection methods and the research methodology. After presenting the baseline data, we will carry out a factor analysis and examine which motivators were the most dominant among the attitudes of local producers. We will also build up clusters from the responses of local producers using cluster analysis, and characteristic persona profiles will be created using design thinking methodology. In conclusion, the five factors studied will be fitted to the CX anatomical pyramid model.

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3. Methods

3.1. Methodology and Data Collection

The research was carried out using a quantitative technique, including an online survey, in the second quarter of 2024, reaching 73 local producers. The target area of the study was the Zala River Valley in Western Transdanubia, Hungary, which covers 3 counties, including Zala and Vas counties, as local production has a significant tradition and a crucial role in this region.

The subject-specific questions of the questionnaire were adapted to the research objectives and based on the three dimensions identified in the literature. In addition to multiple-choice and open-ended questions, a 6-point Likert scale rating was included. Question block 18, which assesses the perceptions of local producers, contains 22 scale items and focuses on the following factors: attachment to local traditions, environmental and cultural attachments, social and peer stimuli, and autotelic motives.

For the successful data collection, we received significant support from the Zala Thermal Valley Association (https://nyitottportak.hu/) and the Göcsej Knowledge Centre (https://gocsejitudaskozpont.hu/), and we also relied on local producer directories available on websites, such as:

- https://portal.nebih.gov.hu/termelo-kereso, https://vasizoldkosar.hu/,
- https://kosarkozosseg.hu/, https://kerkavidek.hu/helyi-termelok/,
- https://kataszter.zalapaktum.hu/projekt_bemutatasa/oldal/1_
- https://www.termeloikosar.hu/#
- https://zoldkamra.hu/termelok/
- https://nak.hu/kiadvanyok/kiadvanyok/7676-helyi-terme-k-katalo-gus-ii

The data were analysed using descriptive statistical methods, association correlation analysis, factor analysis and K-means cluster analysis using SPSS 25.0 statistical software. In order to better visualise the groups identified by the cluster analysis, persona profiles were developed based on the most relevant criteria and visualised after presenting the main characteristics of the clusters, thus making the main attitudes of local producers more visible.

3.2. Data Analysis

Of the 73 local producers, 41% are men and 59% were women. The majority of respondents (37%) were from Generation X (1966-1979), 31% from Generation Y (1980-1995) and 30% from the veteran generation (1943-1965). Only 1 respondent from Generation Z completed the questionnaire. In terms of educational attainment, 52% of respondents have a college or university degree, 15% have a vocational qualification of the National Qualification Register (OKJ) junior college training programme, 23% have a secondary school leaving certificate, and nearly 10% have a technical or vocational qualification of the National Qualification Register (OKJ) intermediate training programme.

In terms of target area, most respondents (66%) from the two counties were from the Göcsej and Zala Valley regions, 25% from the 'Őrség' and 'Vendvidék' region, but local producers from the Keszthely basin and the Hetés region were also involved. Several local producers (52%) were engaged in local production on a full-time basis, while 41% were in full-time employment and the remaining 7% were retired. The experience of the local producers in terms of years is shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Experience of respondents by years.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-1 year	1	1.4	1.4	1.4
	1-2 years	5	6.8	6.8	8.2
	2-5 years	13	17.8	17.8	54.8
	5-10 years	20	27.4	27.4	82.2
	10-20 years	21	28.8	28.8	37.0

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More than 20 years	13	17.8	17.8	100.0
Total	73	100.0	100.0	

Source: generated by SPSS program based on authors's primary data collection.

Table 1. shows that the majority of respondents (74%) have been involved in local production for more than 5 years, so the answers given are based on the strength of practical and life experience. 77% of respondents started local production as a result of their own business ideas, while the remaining 23% had been involved in an existing family business since childhood and continued with it.

The predominant activities undertaken by local producers are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. Products and services that are most relevant to the profile of the respondent.

Mentioned as an activity by more than 10 respondets	Mentioned as an activity by 4-9 respondents	Mentioned as an activity by 1-3 respondents
fruits vegetables canned vegetables and fruits (jam, syrup, juice), honey, honey products, entertainments (exhibitions, tastings)	pickles dried fruit, lyophilised vegetables, fruit, herbs and spices, eggs, brandy, meat products, oil seeds, horticultural products, tourist services (catering, accommodation)	milk and milk products, cod meat, poultry meat, pasta, bakery products, pastries, pressed or extruded oils, spices, tinctures, wines, essential oils, flowers

Source: Own compilation based on primary data collection, 2024.

4. Results

4.1. Results of Research on the Perceptions of Local Producers

Following the presentation of the baseline data, factor analysis was performed on the 22 scale items listed in the questionnaire using varimax rotation. The 22 scale items were grouped into five different factors, which explained 64.1% of the total variance.

The five factors identified are as follows: 1) Local attachment and local community, 2) Autotelic attitude, 3) 'I love it' experience, 4) Attachment to tradition, 5) Attachment to deep roots (see Table 2.).

Table 2. Main features of the factors.

Factor	Local attachment and local community	Autotelic attitude	'I love it' experience	Attachment to tradition	Attachment to deep roots
Factor-related statements	Measuring the attachment to the local area, the importance of the local community and the connection to it	Own pleasure and flow	Personal and community experience	The role of tradition and the passing on of its experience.	Attachment to the family and the local natural environment.

Source: Own compilation based on primary data collection, 2024

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The first factor has strong explanatory power, explaining 27.7% of the total variance. The principal component analysis showed the following results: KMO=0.624; Bartlett's test of sphericity approx. chi-square, 877.014; df, 231; sig. 0,000.

Table 3. Structure matrix of the factor analysis.

Scale items	Local attachment, local community	Autotelic attitude	'I love it' experience	Attachment to tradition	Attachment to deep roots
I have a strong sense of attachment to the place in which I do my work.	0.698				
Local heritage is an important root for me	0.798				
I consider local community ties important	0.724				
I strive to take advantage of local community ties.	0.843				
I try to initiate local cooperation	0.583				
I like to provide experience programmes for my customers.	0.605				
It feels good to bring joy to others through my activities.	0.434				
Making local produce is also my hobby.		0.480			
The activities I do recharge me, I often get carried away and immerse myself in them.		0.533			
It's a pleasure to be involved.		0.709			
I'm proud of my activity.		0.596			
I pay particular attention to the environmental aspects of production.		0.779			
I became involved in local production because I wanted to meet family expectations.		-0.762			
Profit is a secondary consideration, I simply love doing this activity.			0.859		
Nothing can replace the experience and atmosphere of the fairground.			0.730		
What I do is intergenerational, so I'm practically born into it.				-0.619	
I discovered the region later in life and decided to produce locally.				0.387	
It's good to be independent.				0.748	
I often organise programmes that involve the people who are interested.				0.560	
I am happy to open up my premises to anyone who might be interested.				0.689	

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I know the local environment and its characteristics.	0.806
I got most of my knowledge and experience in local production from my parents/grandparents.	0.634

Principal component, Promax with Kaiser normalisation. KMO 0,627; (Bartlett test p= 0,000; total variance explained 57,5%); N = 73. Source: Own compilation based on primary data collection, 2024.

Following the factor analysis, we examined which scale items or factors were the most dominant in the observations of the local producers.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of scale items of local producer perceptions on the full sample based on factor analysis.

Scale items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median
Local attachment and local community (α=0.844)			
I have a strong sense of attachment to the place in which I do my work.	4.32	1.079	5.00
Local heritage is an important root for me.	4.22	1.044	5.00
I consider local community ties important	4.33	1.081	5.00
I strive to take advantage of local community ties.	4.45	0.834	5.00
I try to initiate local cooperation	3.99	1.021	4.00
I like to provide experience programmes for my customers.	4.21	1.142	5.00
It feels good to bring joy to others through my activities.	4.78	0.449	5.00
Autotelic attitude (α=0.558)			
Making local produce is also my hobby.	4.25	0.940	4.00
The activities I do recharge me, I often get carried away and immerse myself in them.	4.30	0.982	5.00
It's a pleasure to be involved.	4.74	0.578	5.00
I'm proud of my activity.	4.66	0.628	5.00
I pay particular attention to the environmental aspects of production.	4.56	0.666	5.00
I became involved in local production because I wanted to meet family expectations.	1.55	0.929	1.00
'I love it' experience (α=0.686)			
Profit is a secondary consideration, I simply love doing this activity.	3.74	1.054	4.00
Nothing can replace the experience and atmosphere of the fairground.	3.51	1.454	4.00
Attachment to tradition (α=0.743)			
What I do is intergenerational, so I'm practically born into it.	1.97	1.374	1.00
I discovered the region later in life and decided to produce locally.	2.45	1.625	1.00
It's good to be independent.	4.29	1.047	5.00
I often organise programmes that involve the people who are interested.	3.01	1.389	3.00
I am happy to open up my premises to anyone who might be interested.	3.75	1.199	4.00
Attachment to deep roots (α=0.527)			
I know the local environment and its characteristics.	4.47	0.765	5.00
I got most of my knowledge and experience in local production from my parents/grandparents.	3.16	1.491	3.00

Likert scale: 1 not at all; 6 very much. N = 73. Source: Own compilation based on primary data collection, 2024.

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Once the factor analysis was complete, we tested the internal consistency of the items in each factor using the Cronbach's alpha index. All items show a value above 0.5, and in most cases a value above 0.65, which clearly demonstrates that the items in a factor measure a common phenomenon. The table also shows that the highest score was given to the statement "It feels good to bring joy to others through my activities" (mean=4.78; median=5), with the second highest score being given to the statement" It's a pleasure to be involved." (mean=4.74; median=5). The factor "I'm proud of my activity." is also dominant in addition to the pleasure statements. It is clear that local producers did not enter into local production because of family expectations at all (mean=1.55; median=1), and that the activity they do is intergenerational, i.e. the item „I am practically born into it" is also not a dominant factor among the survey participants (mean=1.97; median=1).

4.2. Results of the Cluster Analysis

The responses of the local producers were used to inform the application of K-means clustering and Euclidean distances. Upon completion of the analysis, a two-cluster solution was identified, comprising 55 individuals in the first cluster and 18 in the second. The clusters were primarily distinguished by perceptions related to local production, including joy, pride, family values, local identity, and tradition. With the exception of one statement, all factors exhibited significant differences between the clusters (see Table 3), and were thus included in the analysis.

The study yielded two clusters of respondents, each with distinct characteristics. These characteristics were described based on the clusters' basic data and the results of Table 5. To illustrate these characteristics, persona profiles were prepared, which were further informed by the open-ended responses in the questionnaire.

Table 5. Results of the cluster analysis.

Factors	Clusters	Cluster 1.			Cluster 2.			ANOVA p-value
	Statements	Mean	Standard deviation	Median	Mean	Standard deviation	Median	
Local attachment and local community	I have a strong sense of attachment to the place in which I do my work.	4.75	0.480	5.00	3.00	1.328	3.00	0.000
	Local heritage is an important root for me.	4.56	0.739	5.00	3.17	1.150	3.00	0.000
	I consider local community ties important.	4.60	0.894	5.00	3.50	1.200	3.00	0.00
	I strive to take advantage of local community ties.	4.73	0.449	5.00	3.61	1.145	3.50	0.000
	I try to initiate local cooperation	4.29	0.854	5.00	3.06	0.938	3.00	0.000

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	I like to provide experience programmes for my customers.	4.65	0.751	5.00	2.83	1.043	3.00	0.000
	It feels good to bring joy to others through my activities.	4.85	1.356	5.00	4.56	0.616	5.00	0.013
Autotelic attitude	Making local produce is also my hobby.	4.53	0.604	5.00	3.39	1.243	4.00	0.000
	The activities I do recharge me, I often get carried away and immerse myself in them.	4.49	0.814	5.00	3.72	1.227	4.00	0.003
	It's a pleasure to be involved.	4.91	0.290	5.00	4.22	0.878	4.00	0.000
	I'm proud of my activity.	4.80	0.447	5.00	4.22	0.878	4.00	0.000
	I pay particular attention to the environmental aspects of production.	4.67	0.474	5.00	4.22	1.003	4.00	0.012
	I became involved in local production because I wanted to meet family expectations.	1.49	0.791	1.00	1.77	1.274	1.00	0.036
' I love it' experience	Profit is a secondary consideration, I simply love doing this activity.	3.95	0.989	4.00	3.11	1.023	3.00	0.003
	Nothing can replace the experience and atmosphere of the fairground.	3.84	1.358	4.00	2.50	1.295	2.00	0.000
Attachment to tradition	What I do is intergenerational, so I'm practically born into it.	2.05	1.325	1.00	1.97	1.526	1.00	0.370
	I discovered the region later in life and decided to produce locally.	2.15	1.508	1.00	3.39	1.650	3.00	0.004
	It's good to be independent.	4.44	0.958	5.00	3.83	1.200	4.00	0.033
	I often organise programmes that involve the people who are interested.	3.33	1.375	3.00	3.01	1.389	3.00	0.001
	I am happy to open up my premises to anyone who might be interested.	4.05	0.951	4.00	3.75	1.199	3.00	0.000

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Attachment to deep roots	I know the local environment and its characteristics.	4.69	0.466	5.00	3.78	1.060	4.00	0.000
	I got most of my knowledge and experience in local production from my parents/grandparents.	3.35	1.430	3.00	3.16	1.577	3.00	0.049

Source: Own compilation based on primary data collection, 2024.

The initial cohort is referred to as „Value-Creator". This group is predominantly comprised of women who have obtained a tertiary education and are either 'Veterans' or belong to Generation X. They developed their own concept for local production activities as an ancillary or supplementary pursuit to their pension in the Göcsej region, and have accumulated over a decade of experience.

They have a strong attachment to the place where they work, pay particular attention to the environmental aspects of production, value local community ties and try to make the most of them. They are committed to preserving and passing on local values and are keen to organise experiential activities to this end.

These local producers are characterised by a highly autotelic attitude. They are happy to be involved in an activity that is rewarding. Creative work brings new products to life, and on the way here they often experience a flow-like experience of immersion and reflection. This is the driving force behind the community experience programmes they organise for their customers.

This is indicated by the average score of 4.65 for the statement " I like to provide experience programmes for my customers." They enjoy the atmosphere of the fairs, where they get immediate feedback from their customers and they can share the "secrets behind the products". They believe in the power of creating shared value and are keen to get involved in and take the initiative to organise such programmes.

They are less attached to tradition but recognise that it is an important foundation on which to build, and are keen to combine it with innovative, modern solutions.

„The value of the knowledge we inherit from our family roots is invaluable, combined, of course, with the application of new technologies."

Traditional values and expertise from the ancestors are gladly shared with the interested public, so the motif of knowledge transfer is also present.

Local producers in Cluster 1. demonstrate a comprehensive integration of the studied motives in their activities, with the two most dominant motives being local attachment and local community, and the experience dimensions.

The main features are summarised and illustrated in the persona profile (see Figure 1.).

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Figure 1. The persona profile of the local producer named „Valery Value-Creator". Source: Author's own creation based on primary data collection, 2024.

The second cluster is called „Proud" and is made up mainly of Generation Y men with a high school diploma or technical training. They have been involved in local production since childhood and have continued to do so. Their main occupation is running a business in the Zala Valley area. Most of them have 1-5 years of experience in self-employment.

Their local ties are moderately strong, they have less sense of the role and potential of the local community and therefore show moderate activity and openness to local cooperation and relationships. They are highly motivated to produce good quality, unique products and are proud of these creations. The autotelic motives are rather superficial and the experience of deeper involvement and flow is less evident in this group, as confirmed by the responses given in the statements below:

- The activities I do recharge me, I often get carried away and immerse myself in them. (Mean: 3.72)
- Making local produce is also my hobby. (Mean: 3.39)

They are happy to bring joy to others through his activities, but they do not really offer experiential activities to his customers, but They are happy to pass on and show the values of tradition: "I am happy to open up my premises to anyone who might be interested." (Average score: 3.75).

They are not attached strongly to traditions, but build on experience and knowledge from parents/grandparents, and recognises that these provide an important basis for the future.

Producers in Cluster 2. are goal-oriented, moving in the right direction and building on solid roots, but 1-5 years of experience has not yet given them enough ground to build deeper roots for the five factors we studied in our research. They strive for excellence in their products, and this gives them pride, but they need to build more consciously on the involvement of local actors and experiential factors, both at the individual and community level.

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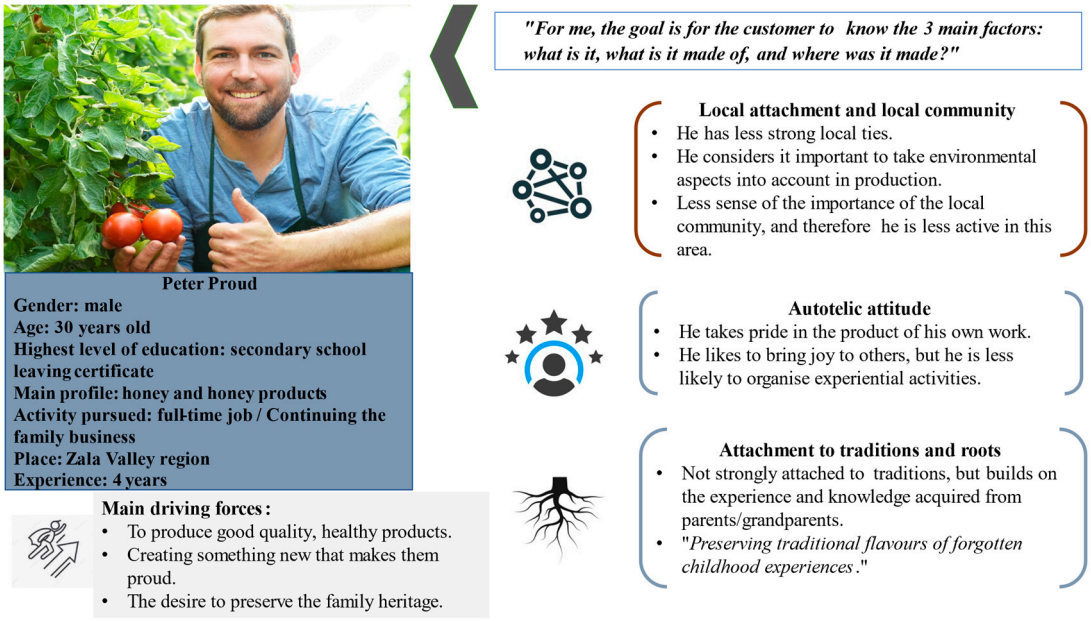

Figure 2. The persona profile of the local producer named „Peter Proud". Source: Author's own creation based on primary data collection, 2024.

The diverse range of producer experience attributes presented in the study is also reflected in the products on offer in the area under study. Small-scale producers attempt to enhance their products with local characteristics, complimentary items and novelties in order to achieve a more profound consumer engagement. In addition to the intrinsic value of their products, they provide programmes that range from simple experiences to the creation of a profound emotional impact.

It is apparent that the identified producer values and attitudes can be translated into increased customer experience. For example, this can be clearly highlighted by fitting the motivator components to the Anatomic Pyramid model of CX (Customer Experience), as can be seen in Figure 3.

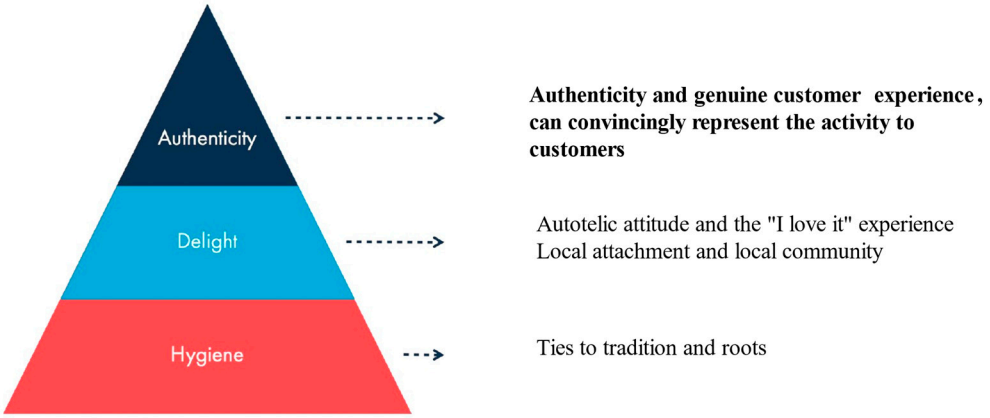

Figure 3. Fitting factors to the CX Anatomic Pyramid model. Source: own compilation based on [47]

For small producers, engagement and positive inner experiences predominate over alienation. These joyful experiences increase their openness to local community relations and cooperation, and provide a basis for the development of shared value creation initiatives.

Moving on from level 2 of the pyramid, the customer experience based on authenticity can be created, which perpetuates the factors of the previous two levels and can elevate it to a very unique, authentic and memorable level.

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The results of our research allow us to conclude that the characteristics identified by the factors are present in the local producers of the study area. Members of Cluster 1 are already exhibiting a high level of intensity in their efforts to move towards the top of the pyramid, attempting to align themselves with the latest trends, demonstrating openness to innovation and commitment to value creation. The dimensions at level 2 are a significant driving force for them.

Members of Cluster 2 have a defined vision of the direction required to attain level 3. Their established roots, familial patterns, childhood experiences and high-quality products provide a solid foundation for this. However, there is a need to strengthen their position concerning the level 2 factors, which serve as a crucial intermediate step to the top.

5. Summary

The starting point for our research was the recognition that social, environmental, ethical and psychological factors should be taken into account when examining responsible production. This underscores the need for a holistic approach to sustainability research, whereby the concept of sustainability cannot be limited solely to health consciousness. Our study investigated the attitudes and intrinsic motivations of local producers in the Zala Valley and the neighboring sub-regions in Western Hungary, which influence their beliefs, perceptions and practices.

We identified three primary motivators: local embeddedness, social embeddedness, and autotelic attitudes. Local embeddedness refers to the importance of local identity and community ties. Social embeddedness emphasizes the significance of community relationships and the incentives come from them. Autotelic attitudes are defined as attitudes of doing an activity for its own sake, not for external rewards or material gain.

Our research confirmed our initial assumptions. The respondents' answers reflected the importance of the motivating factors we believe play a role in local production. The results showed that small producers are not driven by a sense of alienation, but rather by a strong sense of commitment. They often experience a positive, joyful engagement with their work, contrasting with the monotony that can accompany mechanical tasks.

These positive experiences foster a commitment to and openness toward developing local community relationships and cooperation. They also lay the groundwork for promoting and enhancing shared value creation initiatives. When an experience is shared with others, it becomes sustainable and forms a shared memory, which tends to endure longer than individual memories. [48].

Based on the results of the research, we identified two distinct clusters of producers. The first cluster, " Value-Creator," primarily consists of women who feel a deep connection to their place and community. For them, sustainable production is more than just a business; it is a lifestyle choice and a communal experience. They have a strong autotelic attitude, which means that they do their activities for themselves and for the pleasure they get from them.

The second cluster, "Proud," is mainly composed of young men. This group is less attached to local communities and traditions and more focused on the quality and uniqueness of their products. Although autotelic motives are prominent, although less pronounced in this group, their commitment to production quality is evident. The potential for creating experiences is only used to a lesser extent.

A novel aspect of our research is the identification of key elements that shape local producers' attitudes, informed by theoretical perspectives and distinguished through cluster analysis based on respondents' perceptions. Following this, we developed persona profiles using design thinking methodology. In conclusion, the five factors studied were fitted to the CX anatomical pyramid model (Figure 3), leading to further insights, future research agendas, and conclusions.

6. Future Research Agenda

The findings of this study present several opportunities for further research, which could contribute to a deeper understanding of the underlying determinants of producers' flow experiences.

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Firstly, the results provide a solid foundation for comparative analysis across other Hungarian regions and sub-regions with similar local production traditions. By examining these areas, researchers can explore whether the motivations and experiences identified in this study are consistent or vary across different geographical and cultural contexts.

Given the significant presence of artisanal entrepreneurs in the study area, we also plan to investigate the dimensions examined in this study within the context of these entrepreneurs. By contrasting their experiences with those of local agricultural producers, we aim to uncover any distinct motivators or challenges that may be unique to artisanal production.

The results will lay the groundwork and pave the way for exploring the extent to which authentic producer experiences can be transferred, transformed and communicated to consumers. We therefore plan to examine the factors that fit into the CX anatomical pyramid model from the consumers' perspective. with the intention of gaining insights into the experiences of individuals in different age groups. Specifically, we will focus on understanding how individuals in different age groups perceive and engage with these producer experiences.

This research also opens up possibilities for comparative studies that explore consumer opinions and identify relationships between producers and consumers. From a practical standpoint, our findings suggest that local producers are on a promising path and offer guidance for reaching the highest level of the CX anatomical pyramid.

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