THE ROLE OF LOCAL PRODUCTS IN TOURISM

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Abstract: There is a resurgence of regional and local products in Hungary today. Thanks to the development of local businesses, communities and towns are also able to derive a number of economic, environmental, social and cultural advantage. The products in focus are emerging in tourism more often, frequently acting as foundations of tourist attractions built upon them, providing the receiving end with a unique and authentic force of attraction that follow the present trends. The aim of our study was to explore tourists' needs for local products and the role of local food in regional tourism services. The region of our empirical research was the area of Baranya and Tolna counties in Southern Hungary where we analyzed local producers' and their consumers' attitudes towards local products.

Keywords: local food products; local economy; environment awareness; rural development.

Absztrakt: A regionális és helyi termékek reneszánszukat élik Magyarországon. A helyi gazdaságoknak köszönhetően számos gazdasági, környezeti, társadalmi és kulturális előnyhöz juthatnak nemcsak a folyamat közvetlen actorai, hanem az érintett közösségek, és a települések is. A figyelem középpontjába került produktumok egyre többször tűnnek fel a turizmusban, gyakran turisztikai attrakciókat építve rájuk, ezzel a jelenlegi trendeket követő, egyedi és autentikus vonzerőhöz juttatva a fogadóterületet. Kutatásunk célja, hogy feltárja a turisták helyi termékek iránti igényeit, a lokális élelmiszerek térségi turisztikai kínálatban betöltött szerepét. Empirikus kutatásunk célterülete a dél-magyarországi Baranya és Tolna megye, ahol a helyi termékeket előállítók és az azokat fogyasztók helyi termékekkel kapcsolatos hozzáállását vizsgáltuk.

Kulcsszavak: helyi élelmiszertermékek; helyi gazdaság; környezettudatosság; vidékfejlesztés

Highlights

- Are local products an attraction, and do they appear as elements of the culture for tourists?
 - The research also deals with the opinions of manufacturers and customers.
 - Local products are most sought by only two consumer groups.
 - There is a lack of marketing, collaboration and a database of local products and producers.
 - Local-product manufacturers should focus on high value and not on low prices.
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1. Introduction

It is fashionable to talk about local products today. There is growing criticism, also in the food industry, expressed against the harmful economic, social, environmental and cultural effects of globalization and free trade. The food industry is experiencing substantial changes. Besides mass-produced foods made by industrial methods, quality and premium category foods also have a significant role in Europe. Local, seasonal products are becoming re-valued, the traditional – bred-in-the-bone – know-how related to their manufacture, the role of traditional production methods has evolved into a value (Sarmiento et al., 2017). Accordingly creating local products, their sales and promotion on a broad scale can become the inducement of tourism and gastronomy as well as rural developments (Angler, 2015).

It is favorable that this phenomenon gained ground within new regional organizations of tourism, in tourism destination management organizations, and in the work of tourism clusters. It has become trendy to introduce local products to the market, their purchase and consumption, and to talk about local products. This topic is living its renaissance, this is a fact (Choe – Kim, 2018). The question is whether the prevalence of discourse and social dialogue related to the phenomenon will be followed by a development commensurable with economic indicators.

Will more local products emerge, and will there be demand for them at all? It seems valid to raise the question: is it merely a temporary trend, or rather a socially and economically embedded development process that can be maintained permanently? Is it gastronomic or tourism demand that generates the organic growth in this field, or the development, utilization of local products are seen as a set of instruments arising on the level of desires in politics that is willing to slow down, prevent certain rural regions from falling behind? In the present research – taking into account the results of previous studies and our own previous research – we base our hypotheses on the research question on what kind of tourism resources local products – primarily or exclusively intended for tourism consumption – represent in the studied Southern Transdanubia region. In our study, we endeavor to give professional answers to these questions by inviting the actors and consumers who are involved in manufacturing local products.

2. Regional development and rural development aspects of local products

It is worth beginning the discussion of the topic by defining the term *local product*. Since the number of organizations (such as civilians, associations, and local touristic organizations) concerned with promoting local products is gradually increasing, we can also find more than one definition in the literature in terms of local products, different from each other to a greater or lesser degree. In general, we can state local product is a type of output which is locally produced, namely it is not transported from one part of the country to the other (and certainly it is not imported from abroad). Production, processing and sales, as well as the end consumer is closer and closer – “within a defined geographical area” (Kovács Sárkány – Kovács, 2015, pp. 182) – to each other. This type of product is sold within 40–50 km of its place of production. These goods do not enter into the supply chain, their sales being realized at the place of their production directly from the producer, or at markets, shops created for the purpose of promoting the products. With the help of these distribution channels, the short supply chain principle is also realized (Szomi, 2016). It is not a mass product, but a local specialty; furthermore, it contains at least 51% of added value by means of local raw materials or local workforce.

Local product is an ecologically-friendly local specialty made of native or locally produced raw materials processed by a technology or procedure characteristic of the region, utilizing collective traditional knowledge – handed down by the leader of the activity to the future generations. It is typically produced by a small-scale producer, a micro or small enterprise with no factory or industrial methods involved. Producers often have a personal emotional connection with the goods produced by them. The producer can be identified by the label of the local product, which indicates the name and place of business of the producer, so they take personal responsibility for the quality and other features of the product. Therefore, the trademark of the producers is their own name; moreover, they have direct contact return customers, thus giving their own reputation to the product. The personal relationship between customer and seller is an indisputable advantage of frequent direct sales of local products. This type of communication is beneficial for both parties: it strengthens both consumer confidence and product development, because the producer can receive first-hand feedback on the quality and usefulness of the goods and can also satisfy special needs.

Looking at it from a different perspective or dimension, local product, indirectly, is a means of

- employment creation and retention,
- maintenance, preservation and revitalization of traditions,
- creating and sustaining a viable countryside, and
- diversifying tourism supply and making it unique (Gonda et al., 2018a).

Mainly in an effort to become self-sufficient, previous generations were preoccupied with producing basic foodstuffs based on cultivation of plants and raising livestock. The tricks of traditional food production can still be picked up from them, and their – in today’s terms – environment-conscious behavior, also stands as a good example not only for those who live in rural regions (Gonda, 2012). Therefore, it is not by accident that this one-time way of life can serve as an example once again in the present day for people living in the countryside.

In Western European countries, the process through which there was an increased demand for foods produced in a traditional way characteristic of a given region started in the 1980's (Gross, 2004). In light of that trend, the first stock list of special products offering high added value was written in France. Following the success of the French research, in 1992, the European Commission's Directorate-General of Agriculture commissioned the project promoter with the professional management of the extensive program covering the whole European Union, called Euroterroirs. Since food consumption habits have a cultural aspect as well, and as traditions can strengthen national identities, the conceptual core of the program is that it views traditional and regional foods as part of the national cultural heritage. The European collection includes 4,000 products from 129 regions of the European Union. Due to the centuries-old reputation of Hungarian agricultural and food industrial culture, Hungary was the first to join the Central Eastern European expansion of the program. The country joined the Euroterroirs program as early as 1998, and as a result of professional-historical descriptions, about 300 traditional and regional agricultural products, foods, and also of plants and animal species are listed today in the collection of "Traditions – Tastes – Regions" (Hagyományok – Ízek – Régiók, HÍR). One of the elements of the program was creating and labeling the merchandise with the HÍR trademark⁴.

The Year of local products in 2015 and "Helyből Jobb!" (Local is Better) its succession, were aimed at promoting local products and conscious consumer behavior – both lead by clear governmental intention. The primary aim of the latter – which was a forum sequence – was to motivate the production of local foods and to build and expand sales channels (www.helyboljobb.hu). The celebration of the vast variety of local raw materials and gastronomic traditions is "TERRA MADRE", Mother Earth day. Its domestic events also help in boosting consumers' confidence in traditional goods⁵.

As a result of the mentioned efforts, local products have also become more widely used in restaurants, catering services (Gheribi, 2015) and catering services provided by accommodation establishments (Chourischi – Waghchoure, 2019; Gheribi – Bonadonna, 2018).

Regional development has also realized the import of internal resources of the regions. Local raw materials, products and production methods were reviewed accordingly. Environment protection is becoming a topic of daily life, environmental approach is gaining strength in Hungary as well, as we use the terms of sustainability, sustainable development more frequently (Cortés, 2012; Bristow – Jenkins, 2018). All of this, together with a change in attitude and mentality, has had a perceptible effect on tourism and gastronomy: one of the famous manifestations of the process was the "slow-food" movement that started in Italy in 1989, emphasizing the connection between diet and environment protection and strongly promoting the consumption of local products (<http://slowfood.com>, Németh et al., 2010). Another considerable awareness-raising initiative worth mentioning was the "100-mile diet" movement launched by a Canadian couple in 2005. For one year, the founders of the movement had only eaten food that originated from within a 100- mile radius, thus they only purchased local products all along (<http://100milediet.org>).

The above-mentioned desire for a healthier life has brought about a stronger emphasis on the relationship between diet and health to Hungary too, both in terms of preventing illnesses and curing them. As a result of all of this, those who follow the trends today give priority to using local, regional products as raw material (Angler, 2019). The *locavore* approach fits in well into this health-centric thinking, as it prefers local and domestic products, clean and natural ingredients, as well as healthy and seasonal raw materials free of chemicals. The locavore movement – still in its early stages in Hungary – promotes the consumption of locally processed seasonal food grown close to the consumer, opening local markets, the direct, local distribution of goods, and it calls for the integration of raw materials into the everyday household and to catering, too. Locavore culture enhances the environment-protection behavior of consumers, and it supports the sustainability of production traditions and traditional products of the countryside (Gonda,

⁴ <http://eredetvedelem.kormany.hu/hagyomanyok-izek-regiok>

⁵ <http://wineflow.hu/2015/12/04/a-slow-food-mozgalom-bemutatja-terra-madre-nap-a-helyi-alapanyagok-unnepe-dec-10/>

2017). Targeting this special consumer group by high quality goods also acts as the economic interest of enterprises.

For tourists, local products are the part of the cultural heritage of the destination, the medium of the cultural characteristics of the given region. Programs, events related to them appear as attractions on the market of tourism, therefore they contribute to the magnetic force tourism generates in the area. These attractions include local producer markets, regional fairs, festivals, culinary programs and artisan exhibitions (Lee et al., 2017). Thus, the power of local products in tourism becomes more significant, and as a result, tourists act as consumers at catering providers (Alderighi et.al 2016). Calling for the production and distribution of local products and supporting their access to the market, can widen the tourism repertoire of the countryside. The success of the developments in connection with local products (e.g., local markets and local-product festivals) has a positive effect on the image and reputation of the given village. As a result, the economic situation of the villages may be enhanced, it could help create a positive image of the villages and regions, and this could contribute to successful regional and rural development. Consequently, purchasing local products is beneficial for local economy (Gonda et al., 2018b). As the 52/2010 (IV. 30) decree of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development created the opportunity in Hungary to process and distribute local products and to supply them to catering service providers, it also gave a momentum to the promotion of local products. The role of local products in gastronomy is an actual trend of catering services today. Catering contributes to the complexity of tourism too, which has always been an integral part of tourism. Local cuisine and food, diet and gastronomy are widely famous fields of interest. They are in the center of tourism experiences worldwide. In an ideal case, tourist-centered local gastronomy (for example, in the framework of the village guest table) uses raw materials produced on site and by local producers nearby to prepare traditional types of food characteristic of the region. During preparation and serving, it is also recommended to use tableware and other tools that reflect and mark local characteristics (Angler, 2019).

According to our experience, due to their manifold occurrence and numerous types, local products are relatively difficult to classify or sort into different categories. It is also a common feature of local products that they utilize a certain knowledge base accumulated through several generations, that is handed over by the performer of the activity from generation to generation. One can find mainly agricultural products and artisan-made products among local products.

In Hungary the increased need for these types of merchandise can be observed mainly at local product festivals, folklore events, and at thematic programs tailored for various product groups (Szabó, 2014, Angler, 2018). Looking at the international literature, a number of authors analyze the role of local products in tourism. According to Hall and Sharples (2003) "food tourism is an experiential trip to gastronomic regions, for recreational or entertainment purposes, which includes visits to primary and secondary producers of food, gastronomic festivals, food fairs, events, farmers' markets, cooking shows and demonstrations, tasting of quality food products or any tourism activity related to food" (World Tourism Organization, 2012). However, food tourism means travel based on an aim, and while travelling, the tourist gets to know different local products, typical foods and beverages characteristic of the given destination, in a way it becomes a lasting experience for the traveler. (Kivela – Crotts, 2005; Antón et al., 2019). Food tourism may include several other subtypes, the prominent one among them being tourism aimed at becoming acquainted with local products. Food trips built upon local products are the most well-known products in this field of tourism. Practically speaking, such a food trip is a system that is able to create a comprehensive and thematic offer. As Global Report on Food Tourism (2012) puts it, food trips can be successful if they can build on the gastronomic heritage provided for them in order it to become a gastro-touristic attraction for the tourist. Food, that is a possibility of acquiring an experience, may help throughout the branding process of a given locality (Lai et al., 2019), which can be attractive for tourists in and of itself (Hjalager – Richards, 2002; OECD, 2009). The way Pine and Gilmore (1999) see it, the consumer does not pay only for basic services, but for the complete experience. People are ready to pay more to have a gastronomic experience chosen by them together with something that demonstrates an added value. The importance of the experience in today's gastronomic offer has been greatly enhanced (Cetin – Bilgihan, 2016). In other words, it creates a channel between the possibilities given by local culture, creativity,

foods and landscapes (Richards, 2012). Local products have key importance in sustainable gastronomic efforts becoming even more tangible today (Kapiki, 2012). Cortés (2012) defines sustainable gastronomy as gastronomy that takes care of basic resources while trying not to put too much pressure on producing the different ingredients and the ecosystem (Rein, Starsdas, 2015).

3. Methodology

In Hungary, research investigating consumer behavior has long traditions and extensive scholarly literature (Törőcsik, 2016). Analyzing consumer trends and the effects of these trends on tourism is also among widely researched focus points (Törőcsik – Csapó, 2018).

The present paper discusses local agricultural products and the food products made from them, focusing on the fact that local products, besides their role in everyday consumption, are ever more popular among tourists: their purchase and consumption have become fashionable during their travels. In addition to our research question, we formulated two hypotheses: According to our initial research hypothesis, there is an increasing role of local products in tourism (Gonda, 2014), and thus tourists represent a significant consumer layer, with tourism service providers establishing tighter and more organized contact with local-product manufacturers. As a second hypothesis, we presume that for tourism, participant's local products themselves appear as elements of the culture of a given region, and as such have tourism appeal.

For our investigation, we chose a quantitative research instrument. A questionnaire survey was conducted in Tolna and Baranya counties, focusing on two domains: we inquired into the experience of local producers as well as of consumers of local products. As the study covered a wide range of issues, the present article will by necessity have to focus on a few segments of it. The two questionnaires were developed in such a way for them to be available online and as paper-based instruments.

The instruments were developed using Google Forms, inviting potential respondents primarily via online means. This was done in an attempt to reach a high rate of response, enabling reliable analysis and conclusions. The online form also aided in data crunching. As for content and formal aspects, we strove to achieve clarity of items, to eliminate ambiguity, and to establish a proper sequence.

The producer questionnaire consisted of 22 main items and additional items of several types, tapping into areas such as the form of activity, products and their volume, forms of cooperation, marketing, the supply of products and services as well as relationships with tourism. The consumer questionnaire consisted of 33 main and several additional items. The first set of questions aimed to collect demographic data (e.g., age, residence, education), whereas the second consisted of items about the household, eating habits, and buying preferences. This was followed by items about familiarity with local products, attitudes to them, motivation to buy such products in their residence and while travelling. To aid statistical analysis, most items were of a close-ended type offering response options from which to choose one or more. Additionally, combination items, open-ended items, rank order and response matrix and rating items, were also employed.

Using publicly available producer databases, the producer questionnaire was sent to 300 addresses (about the same number in each of the two counties), yielding 94 responses. This rate of 31.3 percent can be regarded as satisfactory. Another 38 responses were collected in 2018 and 2019 at the Orfű Wild Garlic Festival from participating local producers, thus resulting in a total of 136 responses to this instrument.

The empirical research into the consumer aspect was also conducted in 2018 and 2019. The questionnaire, to which consumers responded randomly, voluntarily, and anonymously, was filled out by 594 individuals. Information from it is handled confidentially, in line with the statistical and privacy law currently in effect, with the results interpreted as averages and are shown in tables and figures. The data are used exclusively for educational and research purposes. The research, while based on random selections, cannot be regarded as representative.

Certain responses were analyzed by simple descriptive measures, while with others, where this was possible, undergoing computer-assisted mathematical-statistical analysis. Using IBM SPSS 25, the K-means cluster analysis method was employed to identify deeper relationships. Cluster analysis was used to group local producers and local-goods consumers. To identify differences between the developed clusters Chi-square tests were applied with 5% significance thresholds (0.05). During the analytic stage, for items using interval scales, we calculated averages and percentile rates, with others presented in cross tables as percentage scores. Microsoft Excel 2019 was used to produce summative diagrams to visually present data points and ratios.

4. Empirical results

4.1 Results of the study among local producers

Of the 136 respondents, the largest group (33.82%) was made up of primary producers, with the second largest (29.41%) of those who also act as private persons, and 16.17% of respondents were self-employed. Almost one-third (30.88%) worked with jams, one-fourth with fruit (26.47%), 23.53% with vegetables, which represent the most popular local products in the sample. A smaller number work with Hungarian ratatouille and chutney (22.05%), vegetable cream and pickles (20.59%), although even these products are very popular among respondents.

According to our results, the majority of local producers neither engage in nor plan systematic and well-developed marketing activities, with most of them concentrating on going to farmers' markets and fairs. A little over half of them (52.94%) use no partnership assistance at all for popularizing their products, with the rest only occasionally doing so. None of them make use of such an opportunity on a regular basis and have not joined organizations that would provide such help. Slightly more than two-thirds (77.94%) remain outside any organization or union. Although 51.47% of respondents have partnerships with other local producers and service providers, another 39.71% reported no such partnerships. Some 38.97% have working partner relations with local businesses and entrepreneurs, with 30.15% having partnerships with local governments and 26.47% with catering businesses.

The analysis of geographic markets has revealed results that were mostly within the range of what was expected. Most respondents (76.47%) regarded local markets of the smallest geographic dimension to be their target group, with only two people reporting preference for the largest, international market. Within these two extremes, geographical extent growth correlates with a decreasing number of those who regard it as their essential target group, the only exceptions being regional and national levels, with the latter regarded relevant by more (14.71%) than the former (8.8%).

As for services, pre-order is provided by most respondents (66.18%), with another large number offering tastings (58.82%) and home delivery (45.59%). Only 14 reported owning a web shop, and only 18 accept payment by bank card. Many have mentioned that they do not even plan on introducing these two services in the future. Public customer comments on products are limited to 29.41% of respondents, although the number of those who plan on launching such services in the medium or long term is relatively significant (33.82%) when compared to other service types. Almost every respondent (98.53%) receives personal feedback on their products, with 32.35% reporting this via emails from customers and 26.47% in the form of public rating.

In terms of the effect that customer feedback exerts on product portfolios, the results are very positive. Almost every second producer (45.59%) claimed the primacy of consumer feedback even if their management is determined by additional factors. Another 32.35% reported that consumer feedback is taken into account in each and every case. As few as 4 respondents claimed receiving no feedback whatsoever, with another 2 saying that they did not seriously consider such feedback. Feedback from consumers resulted in management changes in the case of 32 respondents (23.53%), of whom eight mentioned opening their web shop as a result.

There were only 8 respondents mentioning that they participated in some sort of tourism network in order to grow a need for local products and services. It is satisfying that two-thirds of respondents would regard such networks as beneficial, with 27.94% not planning on ever participating in one. As reasons to be part of such networks respondents listed tastings of

products (51.47%), special packaging of products (47.79%), and seeking opportunities to sell products via travel agencies, restaurants, and (48.53%) accommodation services.

Potential help was seen mostly in the form of cooperation among producers, farmers, and entrepreneurs (51.47%) in order to raise awareness of products and facilitate their market distribution. It shows a positive attitude that in this regard they place a premium on community-wide collaboration, whereas industry-wide support and tenders were seen as less likely (19.12%).

According to the picture emerging from attitude statements, local-goods producers have some doubts about whether tourism service providers are open to collaboration as well as about an increase in their sales to hospitality services. In the five-step scale, the majority marked 3 (don't know) or 4 (agree), with less than 40% thinking that tourism services are more open to collaboration. We can see promising signs in the majority of respondents reporting no sales problems, as only 22.1% said the opposite. Another such sign is that the majority see a steady increase in local products in the last few years, including their own products as well. (See Figure 1).

Fig 1. Components of demand for local products according to producers' opinions. Source: Authors' data and design, 2019

Turning to the role of tourists' purchases, we can report a range of diverse opinions being voiced by respondents. One-fifth of them do not regard them as critical at all, one-fourth tend not to think so, with 17.6% tending to think such purchases are critical. The rate of those regarding them as absolutely critical was 22.1%. Hungarians are still viewed as the primary consumer group, although it is noteworthy that for 39.71% of them, foreign tourists' purchases are also critical. There is significant division as far as the opinions about foreign and Hungarian tourists are concerned. Although both segments were seen as positive in terms of their interest in local products, 51.5% agreed that there was a growing interest in them on the part of foreigners, with 73.5% stating this for Hungarian tourists. Local products are seen as fashionable: 44.1% rated in with a 4, whereas 41.2% with 5.

Producers and distributors provided very positive feedback about the values of local-goods consumers. In their view, it is either the price that determines what consumers buy (88.24% rating this as a 4 or higher), or the price/value ratio (95.59% rating this as a 4 or higher). A slightly lower

level of agreement was seen for the increased consciousness of consumers (63.24% rating this as a 4 or higher), for increased health consciousness (4 or higher marked by 69.12%), and for increased environment consciousness (4 or higher marked by 55.88%). 48.53% of respondents tended to agree (marking it as 4 or 5) that their customers are eager to support the local economy by consuming local products, although this item elicited the lowest rate of agreement in this item block.

A five-step Likert scale was employed to analyze each of the attitude statements as part of the cluster analysis for grouping local producers, which because of its uniform features provided adequate basis for cluster analysis even without standardization. However, we did perform standardization as we were curious about deviation from the standard in terms of group characteristics. The number of groups to identify was originally set at four, but in this case, two groups had minimal sample size that would not allow for generalizations. The procedure was thus repeated for three groups, which again left one with a small sample size. Finally, the number was reduced to two, which allowed for adequate sizes for all clusters.

Upon analyzing the data, the two groups were named according to their characteristics as struggling and successful, the groups showing considerable differences in some cases. The deviations from the average of the two clusters in connection with different statements are shown in Figure 2.

Fig 2. Deviation from the average in the clusters based on producers' responses. Source: Authors' data and design, 2019

Of the 136 respondents, 36 (26.47%) belong to the struggling group. They rated significantly below average, their feeling that foreign and Hungarian tourists would be interested in local products, that local products would be fashionable, and that demand for them had increased in recent years. Also, below average was their perception that there would be growing demand for their own goods, the willingness of Hungarian catering businesses to buy local products, and the growing openness of the tourism sector toward cooperation. As far as their opinions about their customers are concerned, rated below average were the consumers' environment consciousness, health consciousness, and being increasingly conscious consumers. To a slightly lesser degree, but still below average was their perception of their consumers' activity assisting the local economy by consuming local products. Within the struggling group, sales problems appeared to a higher degree, and, although minimally, but their perception of consumers being driven by the primacy of the price and the price/value ratio was higher than average.

The successful group is made up of 100 producers (73.53%), for whom deviation from the average appeared to a lesser degree than in the case of the struggling group. Higher than average was their opinion that foreign and Hungarian tourists are interested in local products, that such products are fashionable, and that recently there had been a steady increase in the demand for them. To a lesser degree, but above average was their perception of a steady increase in the demand for their own products, the increasing willingness of Hungarian catering businesses to buy local products, and the growing openness of the tourism sector for cooperation. As for their opinions about their customers, rated above average were their consumers' environment consciousness, health consciousness, and being increasingly conscious consumers. Slightly above average was their perception of their consumers' activity assisting the local economy by consuming local products. In the successful group, sales problems appeared below average and, although minimally, but their perception of consumers being driven by the primacy of the price and the price/value ratio was lower than average.

When comparing the two groups, we can clearly see that they represent opposite ends. The struggling group have a weaker perception of an increased demand, and thus more of them may face sales problems. It seems evident, based on the responses, that they see prices and the price/value ratio more as motivation for their customers than the context related to their products (health-consciousness and environment-consciousness). By contrast, members of the successful group have a stronger perception of growing demand, which may be why they do not seem to face sales problems. In terms of their opinions about their customers, to a slight degree, but they tend not to think that prices and the price/value ratio are the main motivation for their customers, instead realizing the importance of the context related to their products, which can be identified with a higher quality.

The reason for less success among the struggling group may thus lie in the fact that they go against current trends (health-consciousness, environment-consciousness, and being conscious consumers) when it comes to views of consumers. They regard the price and the price/value ratio as primary for their consumers as opposed to their contexts (quality). Even when this awareness is applied in their work for setting price points and developing products, limited success can be attributed to this stance. In a small business, it is detrimental if prices are emphasized as opposed to higher quality (context) as in this case, it cannot compete with larger producers who can operate under more economical conditions.

For most of them, tourism-related events and festivals represent important selling venues points (66.18%). Over half (51.47%) make products available at their residence or by selling them from their farms, and 47.06% sell their goods at producers' markets. Only 22 (16.18%) have deals with restaurants. The situation is even worse in other tourism areas. Only 12 respondents cooperate with accommodation services, representing only 8.82% of respondents. Only 14 reported having deals with travel agencies (10.29%). Still, we can see it as a positive that 12.12% have become tourism service providers directly by selling some of their products in village guest table events.

4.2 Results of the study among consumers

Most of the 594 consumer questionnaire respondents were women, and half of all respondents were between 31 and 50 years old. Young adults also make up a sizeable group in the sample.

Although our aim was to get to know residents' opinions from the southern Transdanubia, our combination question offered the category "other county" as well. Over half of responses came from Baranya county. Nearly 60% live in county seats, 10.77% in Budapest. 18.86% marked villages as their residence.

Consumer responses seem to verify the product specificity of choosing where to shop. Of the 28 products and product categories under investigation, local markets are sought out for honey (29.63%), eggs (26.6%), jam and dried fruits (18.85%), vegetables and fruits (18.52%), canned foods (17.85%), smoked meats (15.82%), pickles (15.49%), and cheese (11.78%). The top three products traditionally are jams (59.26%), canned foods (47.64%) and pickles (44.11%). None of the respondents mentioned buying primary or small-scale produced goods at travel agencies and restaurants at in their localities. About a third of them purchase local goods directly from the producer. Most do so for honey (51.85%), followed by eggs (22.56%), and smoked meats (18.86%), which is in line with their claim that it is only 11.11% of them who do not know a local producer personally. Hence, direct contact and trust toward the producer and the product seem key factors. However, only 8.92% make purchases in wine cellars, even though wine is one of the products primarily bought from local producers. Local products were purchased in souvenir shops and tourism events (2%), at regional fairs and festivals (15%). A sign of the interest in local markets is that without exception, all of the respondents buy at such places, with 22.22% doing so at a regular basis, at least once a week.

Sources of information about local products include experience of acquaintances (25.93%) and festivals, fairs, and local producers' markets (18%).

In addition to one's own locality, purchase and consumption of local goods is frequent during travels as well. As well as satisfying a physiological need, regional gastronomy festivals, local tasting events provide a palatable experience as tourists get to know the food and drink offer, gastronomical values, related culture, and way of life of the given destinations. Part of getting a feel of the countryside is tasting the ingredients, products, and special dishes specific to a region. We provided seven statements about this aspect, asking participants to rate their agreement on a 5-step scale. (See Figure 3.)

We have documented lesser values for the statements "I am willing to pay a higher price for local specialty dishes made from local ingredients" and "In rural restaurants, I seek out local specialty dishes made from local ingredients". For each of these, 15.32% expressed disagreement, whereas for the former 55.89%, for the latter, 67% expressed agreement. Agreement or strong agreement was chosen for the statement "In rural restaurants I seek out local specialty dishes made from local ingredients" by 70.2% of respondents, as opposed to 11.78% who did not look for such dishes. Similar rates were found for the statement "I am willing to pay a higher price for local specialty dishes made from local ingredients".

Of the seven statements, "I am not interested in local specialties" was met with overwhelming rejection, which is a positive result since it allows us to claim that consumers do in fact care for special local things: 78.28% of respondents disagreed strongly, 12.12% disagreed. These two statements combined make up over 90 percent. The summary of answers indicates that the majority of consumers are interested in special local things during their travels as well. The committed ones (41.58%) always seek out local products, with an additional 55.22% doing so occasionally. 3.2% have never consumed local products during their travels and are not planning to do so in the future either.

When they are travelling, consumers buy local products predominantly at local markets (78.45%) and regional fairs and festivals (78.11%). Even the process of choosing the product means a special experience at these venues, which in and of itself may become tourism appeal. There are some producers' markets in South Transdanubia, open occasionally or regularly, which attract tourists as well. The number of those who would definitely visit local farms for this purpose is low (59.93%), even though in some of them brochures are supplemented by attractions specifically tailored for tourists (such as cheese making, jam cooking with the locals, and sausage making). Travel agencies and souvenir shops are not in the consumers' focus when buying local products.

Fig 3. Respondents' attitudes toward local products while travelling. Source: Authors' data and design, 2019

To group respondents according to their attitudes to local products, a cluster analysis was performed on the responses to the seven attitude statements in the questionnaire. The deviations from the average of different statements in case of the formed clusters are shown in Figure 4.

On the 5-step Likert scale, 1 meant strong disagreement with a statement, and 5, strong agreement. Before the cluster analysis, standardizing the variables enables demonstrating the deviation from the average. Initially, we set the number of groups to create at five, but in that case, one group had too small a sample size for conclusions. When repeating the procedure with four groups, adequate sample sizes were seen for all for clusters. The attitude statements allowed for the creation of the following four groups: Preferring what is known, Uninterested in local products, Enjoying, what is new and local, and Average.

To fine-tune the characteristics of the groups, during the grouping of respondents in clusters, we looked at what statistically significant differences were present between them in terms of certain characteristics. Chi-square tests were applied to explore these differences at 5% significance level ($p=0.05$). Major differences were found between the groups in terms of the following: education ($p=0.013<0.05$), frequency of purchase at local markets ($p=0.010<0.05$), knowing local producers ($p=0.002<0.05$), preference for local food products ($p=0.001<0.05$), regular household activities ($p=0.023<0.05$), and the importance of healthy eating habits ($p=0.023<0.05$). However, no significant differences were present across the four clusters in terms of gender ($p=0.859>0.05$), age ($p=0.350>0.05$), expense on food ($p=0.450>0.05$), location of buying local products ($p=0.354>0.05$), per capita income ($p=0.269>0.05$), frequency of cooking ($p=0.192>0.05$), and frequency of shopping ($p=0.095>0.05$).

Fig 4. Clusters with their deviation from the average based on costumers' responses. Source: Authors' data and design, 2019

5. Discussion

With our questionnaire survey among local producers in Tolna and Baranya counties, we have partially been able to verify our hypotheses. It has become evident that local products play an important role in tourism, not just in everyday life. From the responses of local producers, they validated that it is fashionable to buy and consume local. The range of consumers is constantly growing, of which international and national tourists represent an ever more significant consumer segment, adding to the demand for and popularity of local food products. The majority of respondents seek out local products while travelling, they choose dishes made from local ingredients, even taking them home in fine packaging as special gifts.

We have shown that most tourists purchase local products in fashionable farmers' markets and popular gastronomical events. They seek out traditional, locally sourced courses at restaurants. The attractiveness of traditional and local food products is a major appeal for tourists, in some cases even providing motivation to travel.

Of the four special consumer groups, two appear to be the ones that producers would do well to concentrate on as they aim to achieve success. Our study has revealed that those who prefer what is known and the ones who enjoy what is new and local have attitudes that make them interested in local products and tend to prefer them to others. There is, however, an important difference between these groups that producers need to take into account depending on the kind of products they sell. People who like what is known tend to avoid new things when travelling to an unfamiliar location; when in a new restaurant, they will not choose local items from the menu. When shopping at their home location, however, they enjoy local foods that are known to them. By contrast, those enjoying the new and local do so even in new places and they try foods made by local producers, not just at their homes. By revealing the significant differences between

various groups, our research may help the work of local producers by targeting precise segmentation and positioning.

Although we hypothesized that in popularizing local products, a major role is played by various entities in tourism (e.g., agencies, visitor centers, catering and accommodation services), this did not reflect in the answers to the questionnaire. Travel agencies, souvenir shops, and accommodation services are not in the consumers' focus when buying local products. One reason for this may be that even though they do not doubt the tourism importance of local products, tourism service and hospitality providers do not treat them properly as would be required to satisfy the growing interest of consumers. Thus, there is much to be done by service providers and product developers as they aim to exploit the economic benefits of displaying and selling regional products.

For example, besides the normally required breakfast offers, a wide range of local products could easily be added, resulting in a unique offer by the given accommodation service. Pre-packaged local products that one can take home are not yet widely known as a way for the catering business to sell local products, although international examples show how such products placed on shelves and counters can boost sales and visitor information. When selling local goods, we need to know that in many cases, they can let consumers taste them. However, we can see from consumers' responses that these are viewed as per the course, so they do not represent motivation for buying. Also, even though more and more producers let potential customers observe the manufacturing process, few consumer respondents have actually done so. Since such programs have been among successful products in recent years, one wonders whether consumers are in fact aware of encountering a local product in every case. An up-to-the-minute database, currently lacking, of local products and producers would also bolster access to and identification of products.

Intensive community marketing could effectively fill the information gap between tourists and producers, which could be achieved by their cooperation – one that has been voiced as a need by producers. The responses to the producers' questionnaire would lead us to believe that most tourism service providers deal with local products, a popular theme, in an informed manner. Based on the ever-increasing demand, we can assume that hospitality businesses and gastronomy providers put a premium on this question. Still, local-goods producers are far from completely satisfied with the current cooperation with their tourism counterparts. In our view, a more intensive collaboration between the two parties can be the main source of progress in this regard. Tighter and more organized contact with local producers would be necessary than is currently in evidence. Producers would happily join a well-functioning tourism organization, primarily by offering tastings and promoting their products that tourists could buy as souvenirs.

In today's globalized world, there is no doubt about the importance of the maintenance and popularization of the competitiveness and viability of agricultural communities and of their cultural heritage. One way to achieve this is the wide choice of local food products, an element contributing to the market of rural tourism, which, by appropriate product development and marketing, can gain tourism appeal in its own right. It is because all of this that we hope for the continued and growing interest in local products, gaining recognition in the near future in a major way in tourism providers' offers, which will buttress a locally sourced, unique and authentic supply.

6. Conclusion

Based on our results, we have proven that local products play an important role not only in everyday life but also in tourism. Many tourists look for local products during their travels, like sample dishes made from local ingredients, and even take home tastefully packaged versions as special gifts. In line with this, attractions based on traditional and regional foods generated by local products, are a major attraction for visitors and even provide travel motivation in some cases. In our research, we also discovered that the success of local-product manufacturers is closely related to thinking about consumer needs and moving in the same direction as trends (e.g., health awareness, environmental awareness, consumer awareness). Those who consider that low price is more decisive for consumers than the underlying content (quality) associated with it often have very strong sales problems. We revealed that producers should actually focus on two of the four

uncovered consumer groups in order to be successful in their positioning work. Those who prefer what is known and the ones who enjoy what is new and local have attitudes that make them interested in local products and tend to prefer these products to others. These value driven groups should be the target groups of many local-product manufacturers in order to increase their success.

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