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### **CRITICAL FACTOR OF THEMATIC VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT – THE CASE OF LITHUANIA**

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This paper discusses the possibility of thematic village development and presents the results of qualitative research aimed at determining why some thematic villages are developing while others are not. The grounded theory approach was used for semi-structured interviews in best practice examples of thematic villages in Lithuania. The structured grounded theory coding techniques (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Corbin & Strauss, 2015) were employed to analyze the collected data. The grounded theory of thematic village development was built around the core category, a critical success factor, i.e., the weighted involvement of thematic village actors in thematic village activities. In the absence of weighted involvement by actors, there are no possibilities to implement theming and meet the needs of consumers and the village population. Meeting the expectations of thematic village actors ensures their involvement and the sustainable development of the village in which the thematic village is located. The stronger the weighted involvement of thematic village actors, the more benefits they create for sustainable village development. Thematic village actors get involved in thematic village activities only when they have specific expectations and opportunities to be involved, and when certain contextual conditions arise. Stronger involvement brings more benefits. Thematic village actors enjoy the highest benefits, manifesting themselves through self-realization, communication, and the creation of prosperity in the countryside. To encourage the involvement of thematic village actors, a government support mechanism for thematic villages needs to be established, including legalization, income generation, and the empowerment of elderships to take care of the well-being of thematic villages. A culture of cooperation with the local population, organizations, and institutions should also be strengthened. This would enable the activities of a thematic village to transform from a hobby into an income-generating job and enable the needs of residents and visitors to be met through the development of the thematic village and the rural area in which it is located.

**Keywords:** *Thematic village, Critical Factors, Village Sustainable Development, Theming.*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Theming rural development is becoming increasingly important for integrated environmental, economic, and socially sustainable development in rural areas worldwide. It enables the rural population to become active participants in the value chain of local products and services and provides a backdrop for rural tourism. To make a village attractive to residents and visitors, the strategy of thematic village development is implemented proactively. The development of a Thematic Village (TV), further referred to as TV, is primarily pursued by a creative, entrepreneurial, collaborative, and innovative community, family, or another group within the rural population.

An analysis of the literature revealed a lack of scientific guidance on critical factors for thematic village development that should be focused on to ensure the sustainable development of rural areas. As a result, some Lithuanian and other countries' TVs are developing and providing opportunities for sustainable development in their respective locations, while others are not.

This article addresses a scientific problem: what are the critical factors, and how should TVs be developed to achieve sustainable rural development?

Such a situation in the scientific space limits the abilities of TV actors to make theoretically and practically informed management decisions for TV development, which could influence the sustainable development of rural areas. The lack of research in this area not only hinders the development of a comprehensive theory of the TV phenomenon but also limits the availability of theoretical and practical guidance on how to develop TVs to promote the sustainability of rural areas.

The aim of the study is to identify the critical factors and their managing conditions and strategies for TV development. The objectives are as follows:

1. To identify the critical factors for TV development.
2. To define the relationships between the critical factors and other factors determining TV development.
3. To define the management conditions and strategies for the critical factors.

Most researchers who have studied thematic objects emphasize that TV is designed to attract income from tourism and to actively involve the community in TV activities. Idziak, Majewski, and Zmyslony (2015) consider the involvement of the local community as a key factor in the development of TV as a tourist destination. These researchers outlined the stages of TV development but did not delve into the contextual, causal, intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences of involving the local community as a critical factor in TV development. Atkočiūnienė and Kaminaitė (2017) found that successfully developing TVs are especially characterized by the entrepreneurship of the village population. Vilkė and Gedminaitė-Raudonė (2019) emphasize that the successful development of a TV requires an exceptional theme, the involvement of TV actors, a strong leader, and an original theme. They also stress the importance of national and regional policies and cooperation with various partners and local authorities in supporting and assisting TV development. While these authors identified the mentioned critical success factors of TV, they did not analyze their management processes. Ulva et al. (2020) pointed out that the attractiveness of TV to visitors is created by the uniformity of theme disclosure. They also mentioned the importance of thematic graphic design solutions in connecting and presenting remote TV objects more accessibly. These authors primarily focused on consumer needs in their research but emphasized that the best solutions come from collaboration between village residents and specialized organizations such as graphic design professionals. Sodik et al. (2021) noted that, in addition to themes that reveal village economic and cultural activities and are attractive to visitors, the involvement and support of the village population and the promotion and orientation of village initiatives are essential. They particularly emphasized the development potential of TVs created from village initiatives with the support of local authorities. Yuliati et al. (2019) concluded that community participation and the potential of village culture, including traditions and local wisdom, may be the basis for TV development. According to the authors, community involvement positively affects the planning, management, and development of TV activities and promotes the development of a creative economy in rural areas. They argue that TV development also needs to ensure that community leaders act as facilitators, organizers, and mentors to support and encourage innovation for village and community development. Additionally, they emphasize the government's involvement in improving community well-being by providing incentives and helping structure TV activities.

In contrast to the TVs discussed above, Tobiasz-Lis et al. (2019) note that TVs are not only for visitors but also for village residents. Village theming can help solve local problems, build a local community, increase the self-esteem of the population, and provide opportunities for a more interesting life. All of this has a positive effect on village development and contributes to the creation of an identity. The authors emphasize the importance of the involvement of the village population in the processes of selecting and implementing the village theme, as well as the support of professional consultants and the state. However, the factors singled out by these authors focus on the development phase of TVs rather than on the critical factors in the development of TVs that are relevant after the development phase.

In summary, the analysis of the scientific literature reveals three main conclusions. First, all the researchers who have analyzed TVs note that the implementation of the TV strategy facilitates the development of the TV area. However, these authors do not detail the consequences felt by the internal stakeholders of the TV when it is successfully developing. Second, researchers often attribute the success of TV development to a unique, tourist-friendly theme, with a focus on consumer needs. Lastly, a smaller part of the analyzed researchers points out that the involvement of the village community in the development of the thematic object is one of the critical factors of TV development. According to them, TV is designed not only to meet the needs of visitors but also the needs of the local population. However, they do not detail why members of the village community are involved in TV development, how to involve them, and how to keep them involved to ensure TV development.

Thus, the analysis of the literature reveals a lack of scientific advice on the internal critical factors of TV that ensure TV development. To date, researchers who have analyzed TVs have not accurately identified the critical thematic factors of village development and have not revealed their management processes.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The methodology chosen for this study is a structured grounded theory study based on the Corbin & Strauss (2015) version. This methodological approach was selected to explain the essence of the analyzed phenomenon, including the critical and other related factors, contextual, causal, and intervening conditions determining their control, the strategies used for control, and their consequences. This methodology allowed for an understanding of the context of TV development, including decisions and actions of TV actors, and provided explanations for the reasons behind them.

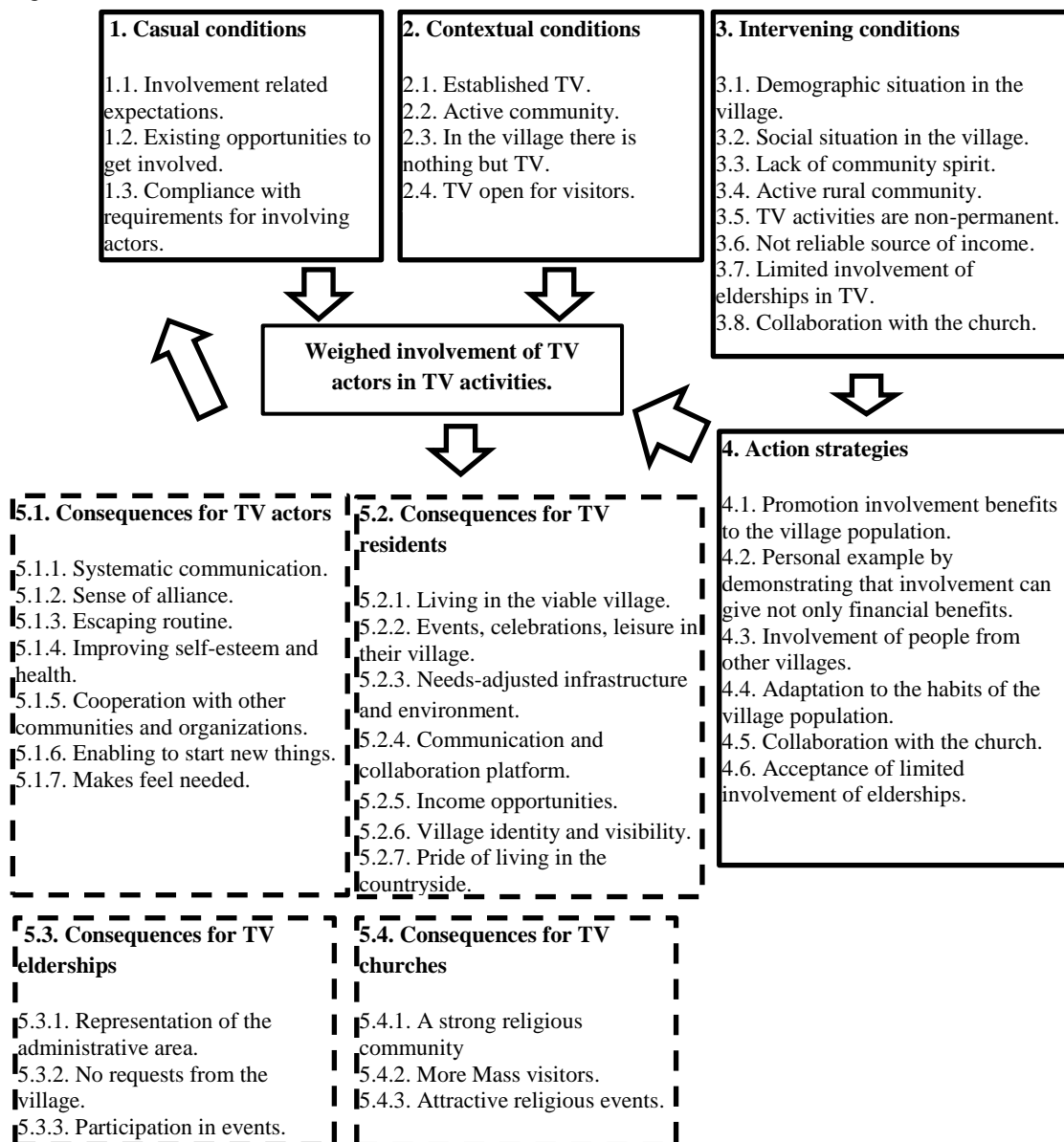
The empirical study was conducted in five TVs in Lithuania: The Antalieptė Footbridge village, The Vajasiškis Antecedent village, The Cijonai Bird village, The Pelėdnagai Owl village, and The Dargužiai Cheese Capital village. Research period 2020-2021 years. Fourteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with leaders and actors from these mentioned TVs. The statements of the interviewees quoted in the article are coded (e.g., L1, L3, DS13, PA11, S1, etc.) to maintain confidentiality. The research sample was determined using the method of theoretical sampling, which is characteristic of grounded theory methodology. Data were collected for theory development until repetition occurred, and all categories were saturated.

The researcher was a master's student of management and economics and a PhD student in rural development and management. The researcher had an interest in the development of rural areas, not only as a visitor of tourist destinations (TVs) but also as a resident of a rural area and a member of the local community.

Qualitative research software MAXQDA was used to code the text of the semi-structured interviews, write memos, and determine relationships between codes, categories, and concepts. Data coding processes were performed in strict compliance with the Corbin & Strauss (2015) structured grounded theory. The open coding method involved breaking down the text of the interviews into codes, aiming to develop as many codes as possible and grouping them into concepts and categories. In the axial coding stage, a coding paradigm was used to identify categories that reveal critical factors of TV development (phenomena). Contextual, causal, and intervening conditions impacting these phenomena were determined, including action strategies applied by actors and leaders of the TVs and the consequences arising from the interaction of such conditions and strategies. In the selective coding phase, the theory of the research phenomenon was developed, a core category (a factor determining TV development) was identified, and its links to other categories and subcategories were established. The Paradigm was used as a tool to organize and link concepts.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

Grounded theory, with respect to the critical factors of TV development, was formed in Figure 1 based on the coding results of the research interviews. The methodologists mentioned earlier suggest developing a central category (the critical factor of TV development) by coding the interview results into causal, contextual, and intervening conditions, strategies for dealing with them, and consequences to establish the interrelationships between the categories, utilizing the paradigm model.



**Figure 1.** Grounded theory with respect of the critical factors of the TV development: weighed involvement of TV actors in thematic activities

Therefore, after open and axial coding, during the selective coding phase, it became evident that all categories revolve around a single category critical to TV development, much like the thematic object and the sustainable development of the village in which it is located. The critical factor of TV development is the weighted involvement of TV actors in TV activities. In addition to the main properties and dimensions of this category, the coding paradigm was used to develop the critical factor and connect it with other categories and subcategories elaborated during axial coding (see Figure 1). The collected data and the results of their analysis enabled the development of a grounded theory related to the control of critical factors in the development of thematic villages.

### **1. Causal conditions for weighed involvement**

Involvement in TV activities is weighed because residents engage only when their involvement can help them meet certain expectations. The actors on TVs are actively involved in the activities of the TV because: *they like it. Everyone has different motives (L3)*. Each TV actor has their own reasons (expectations) for getting involved in TV activities (4.1.1./fig.1): they seek employment, communication, appreciation, improvement, escaping from routine, creating rural prosperity or they simply want to be involved in TV activities. Personal income as the main motive, especially in the community TV, is insufficient: *We do not work for material well-being. We work from enthusiasm (L6)*.

In order for TV actors to be involved in TV activities, they must also have opportunities to do so (4.1.2./fig.1). For residents to get involved, it is important to have an engaging theme and ways of expressing it. Moreover, the distance from the TV to their homes must be reasonable as most TV actors live in a different village than the TV: *That's what we call. Then, we need all the transport ... Not so that they can come (S1)*. The residents who get involved in TV activities should find acceptable working hard and dedicating time to the TV: *Those who have farms, they can't, really. You'd have to go out of it (S1)*. TV actors should be ready to earn no income from their work as it is a community service: *it is a non-profit project. Sorry for my words, but you will not coin it in here (L3)*. Furthermore, TV actors should find it acceptable that TV activities are non-permanent but rather seasonal, holiday and weekend activities: *I mean the summer is sacrificed. Fridays, Saturdays (S1)*. TV actors should be able to combine TV activities with everyday routines (work, home, family): *as most of us go this way, we all have jobs (L4)*. They must be in good health and have their family support: *and others say, I came to visit and you're leaving (S2)*.

Furthermore, to get involved in TV activities, residents must meet the requirements for TV actors (4.1.3./fig.1). Requirements for TV actors include but are not limited to theme expression skills: *They said that those having a fancy for that or can do something, they can join. Nor everyone can spin or weave (S1)*, charisma: *My actors, those who had learned their roles, they were much more charismatic (L3)*, people skills: *Yes, I know, then you need enthusiasts. Those who like socialising and things (L3)*, altruism, and responsibility: *You work with people, say, you are told the date and time, so you have to bring everything (S1)*, artistry, creativity, entrepreneurship, a proactive approach. TV actors need to have some knowledge covering the topic: *know how to present it, all those customs, and traditions to the visiting groups (S10)*.

### **2. Contextual conditions for weighed involvement**

For residents to be involved in the activities of a TV, it first must be established (4.2.1./fig.1). The investigated TVs have been established thanks to a successful TV development project: *a joint project was written, joining together with Latvia (PA11)*. Later, when the project was over, these TVs became a role model for other active communities: *no, we were not involved there. We created ourselves because several villages had already been established in Lithuania (PE8)*. To establish a TV, one needs an active community (4.2.2./fig.1), which is engaged in the establishment of the TV, cooperates with the project curators, suggests a theme, finds resources needed for the theme and uses them to create a thematic object: *just think of that, if it weren't for the community, there wouldn't be this theme here, well, as elsewhere, where the village is at the point of death (S1)*. Moreover, a TV requires a certain context, which in this case is that in the village there is nothing but TV (4.2.3./fig.1): *take this little village - there is nothing here, nothing but church... neither school, nor shop, nor culture... not a thing. Like I said. The village is sort of going down the tubes, we need something to breathe new life (S2)*. A lack of things to do and the desire to have something interesting encouraged the village community to establish a TV – a place of interest not only for visitors, but also for the residents: *you have pursuit, that TV is sort of our own, and then you cook something up (S5)*. For the residents to have somewhere to get involved, the TV must be live and open for visitors (4.2.4./fig.1), that TV actors could reveal the theme and involve visitors.

### **3. Intervening conditions for weighed involvement**

Intervening conditions have either positive or negative effects on the phenomenon of weighed involvement of TV actors. One of them is the demographic situation (4.3.1./fig.1), which sees falling numbers of rural population: *no burning with enthusiasm. There are almost no people left (L2)*. The small size of the rural population negatively determines the opportunities for TV development: *there is no critical mass, which we most often encounter (DS13)*. On the other hand, the rural population is small, they live far apart, so they are in particular need to come together, solve common problems and carry out joint projects: *the community consists of many participants, because that community was created not for one village, but is like the parish, the center of the parish is (S10)*. The fact that most of rural people are old and in poor health leads to inactive community life and non-involvement in thematic rural activities: *people are tired, unhealthy, and unwilling to do anything (DS13)*. On the other hand, the older age provides opportunities to have more free time: *the family already has children raised, there is already more time and life (S1)*.

A good social situation (4.3.2./fig.1) of most of the remaining rural population has a negative impact on the inclusion opportunities. TV actors have a job, or they are engaged in routine activities and thus they do not have enough time for TV activities: *So, then we have jobs, and odd as it may sound, we are expected to care and be interested (L2)*.

Moreover, a lack of community spirit and interest in what is happening in the village (4.3.3./fig.1) also has negative effects on the involvement opportunities: *because people stay at home, with their families. Work, children, home, family. And that's all (L2)*. However, there is still part of village residents who belong to an active rural community (4.3.4./fig.1) and are involved in TV activities, and it is them who support the vitality of the TV: *and where there is community... And we, and the church, you know, the same people (S1)*. People are unwilling to get involved because they know that TV activities are non-permanent (4.3.5./fig.1) and they cannot be a reliable source of income (4.3.6./fig.1), while it requires a lot of time and energy.

The position of the eldership (4.3.7./fig.1). The small population of rural areas and their links with kinship, neighbourhood, community and friendship make it easier to involve local authorities' actors in the activities of TVs: *that you understand is that we are almost all the eldership itself. Those who are in the community, we all work in the work of the ward, that's all it says (L6)*. Such connection provides the employees of the eldership with opportunities to delve deeper into the needs of TVs, to cooperate with the actors of the TV in pursuit of village development: *we agree well with the eldership. The elder took care of everything. Not with the mayors yet (PA12)*.

Although the employees of the eldership are aware of the benefits of the TV for rural development, although they make every effort to help them, their powers are limited, therefore they help not only with what they can do according to their duties and powers, but also as individuals, rural welfare people: *I'm an elder, well that's what I have to worry about. It is not written in the job description for me, but here it gets by itself (L4)*.

Another very important institution in the life of the rural population is the church (4.3.8./fig.1). It gathers the villagers, educates them, and maintains the spiritual and emotional state of the villagers. In order to achieve rural well-being, it is necessary to ensure that they do not compete with each other and that TV actors and residents can participate in the activities of the TV and church: *our women are each singing in a chore. We combine. So, we were left with that Sunday must be a holy day (S1)*.

#### 4. Action strategies for weighed involvement

Action strategies are steps aimed at controlling a phenomenon or responding to it under certain conditions. To attract residents to the TV a strategy of promoting involvement benefits to the village population (4.4.1./fig.1) is applied. Within the scope of TV activities, funds earned by the TV are used to organise events and leisure activities for rural residents and to adapt the rural infrastructure and environment to their needs. Thus, residents are shown that involvement in the TV presents opportunities to contribute to the prosperity of the rural area. People are invited to try it out at least briefly and thus to contribute to the implementation of the TV programme: *here comes a man who can do it, teaches... we invite. For all that, we have some education, we learn together (S5)*. The actors of the TVs give the villagers the opportunity to take part in the festivities they organize, sometimes hoping that they will like and join in: *they only come to the annual festivals we organize (PE9)*.

Residents are encouraged to contribute to thematic rural activities and to set a personal example by demonstrating that involvement can give not only financial benefits (4.4.2./fig.1), not all of them financial: *we earn some cash, invest somewhere. Well, one feels needed (S5)*. Creating and promoting alliance means that the residents will be convinced that once involved in TV activities they will not lack communication: *somehow one to another, kind of socialising. And people keep coming. For sure, they saw a real interest (S5)*. Moreover, the residents can sell their products to TV visitors: *yes, indeed, we have sort of marketplace. They are so busy making those cheeses and butter. And we know that people will want (S1)*.

To address a persistent shortage of human resources in the activities of the TV, and in particular people with required skills, people from other villages are offered possibilities to get involved (4.4.3./fig.1): *we found her kilometres away and, here, we bring a woman who plays music (S2)*. In order to remove the barriers to getting involved in the activities of a TV, resulting from their employment, jobs, other activities and the rural lifestyle, a strategy of adapting to the habits of the village population (4.4.4./fig.1) is applied, where the working hours of the TV are aligned with the activities and employment of the people and community, the village values, as well as the church service hours. We do our best not to demand things from the residents and to integrate into the daily life of the countryside. TV activities are also coordinated with the church community activities (4.4.5./fig.1): *none, after Mass just like that (S2)*.

Due to the limited participation of the local authorities and a limited amount of help and support for initiatives, no reactive strategies are pursued. The chosen strategy of settling for a limited engagement of elderships (4.4.6./fig.1) suggests accepting the fact that public institutions do not have to help and being happy that they at least do not interfere: *they have not impact. They do not create obstacles. They do not forbid, they allow, they help us if needed. That's all fine (L4)*. In the absence of an official mandate for the elders to take care of the TV, the elder's strategy of equating the needs of TV actors with other rural affairs provides opportunities for the elder to contribute to meeting the needs of TV actors: *well as a power of attorney, I don't even know... it's a joint job. I don't even need any special powers (L7)*. Realizing that TVs are a tourist destination, the eldership tries to manage the environment of the TV as a matter of priority: *workers go in a row, as everywhere. Of course, we understand that people come there, we go there to mow more often, practically every week (S10)*. Often, without understanding the limits and powers of the eldership, the actors of the TVs are disappointed and avoid cooperation or asking for help, it seems to them that the eldership only uses the popularity of the TV but gives nothing back: *not this thing. Only boast that there is such a village in the eldership (S1)*. Therefore, closer dialogue and cooperation between the actors of the TV and the eldership would allow to identify the needs and opportunities and at the same time seek the help of the TVs.

#### 5. Consequences

The strategies for actions and interactions that are implemented in order to control a phenomenon give rise to consequences. The consequences are likely to have effects on people or other objects. The research reveals that the more

people get involved in the TV activities, the more consequences they are experiencing. The involvement of TV actors in the TV activities provides conditions for the development of the TV itself and village as a countryside.

### 5.1. Consequences of TV actors weighed involvement to TV

The people who get involved in TV activities – the TV actors – experience even more consequences. Active involvement in the activities leads to systematic communication (5.1.1./fig.1) and a sense of alliance (5.1.2./fig.1) between the TV actors: *desire, just willingness and maybe another thing – maybe also that activity, maybe the contribution (S2)*. Involvement in thematic villages provides opportunities to avoid loneliness: *well, I like to communicate with people. I just don't like being alone (PE8)*.

The people involved in TV activities have a possibility of celebrating their personal occasions in a very special way, enjoying active and interesting leisure, getting involved in engaging activities. So, here they can relax and escape from the routine (5.1.3./fig.1): *the TV is also for ourselves, for spending time together (S5)*.

Involvement in TV activities arouses a great deal of positive emotions, active participation and satisfaction in the activities make people feel needed and improve their self-esteem and even health (5.1.4./fig.1): *well then, they boost their energy and go around with others, at that (S5)*.

Involvement in TV activities provides with the opportunity to cooperate with other communities and organizations (5.1.5./fig.1). Involved people acquire new skills as they have an opportunity to try out new activities and responsibilities: *then there it was about different things: management, and dissemination, and communication, and funding, and how to invest this money, how to use it (L4)*. Cooperation provides new acquaintances, activities, opportunities to prepare joint projects. Furthermore, people involved in TV activities also join other activities and projects, they feel more motivated and have more courage to start new things (5.1.6./fig.1): *and there are some nice projects that were born out of the TV (L3)*.

Earning community income enables to reinvest and to improve the living conditions in the village facilitates contribution to welfare by each person involved in the TV, makes TV actors feel needed (5.1.7./fig.1), valued and proud of themselves: *yes, it's giving practical meaning, I feel very good myself because I contribute to the village (S2)*.

### 5.2. Consequences for TV residents

All rural residents, even those who do not or do not occasionally become involved in the activities of the TV, have the opportunity to live in a viable village (5.2.1./fig.1). Residents can see interrelation between rural vitality and the visitors. They say that the bustle and crowds of people bring life to the village: *previously it was literally unpeopled. And look here. The village is full of people. They come in groups of 30, 50, by huge buses (S5)*.

The TV offers rural residents an opportunity to participate in higher quality events (5.2.2./fig.1) in their village, to spend their free time in activities of the TV, and to have unforgettable celebrations in its premises: *but events or celebrations – and then they come. And then they are happy (S5)*.

Village residents can enjoy it because thanks to the money earned by the TV actors and voluntary work the surroundings are clean, and the infrastructure is adapted to the needs of the villagers (5.2.3./fig.1): *we've done many good things to this village. Let's say, electricity was connected to the graveyard (S2)*. The TV has established Communication and collaboration platform (5.2.4./fig.1) for relations between rural residents and other rural organisations: *there it was this connection to become a bridge for relationship. Between us and you or us and the visitor (L3)*. TV created a cooperation space and offered people a possibility to earn additional income (5.2.5./fig.1): *your own people can still make money. At retirement. Or else doing things like that, knitting socks, that's something else (S1)*.

The TV increased the resident's pride of living in a village (5.2.6./fig.1). That hosts a TV: *we have it, we are happy and proud. That such a small village with only about 300 hundred citizens has such a relatively big project (L4)*. Village theming provides opportunities to develop an existing or create a new village identity (4.5.1.7./fig.1). That meets the needs of the village population, linked to the village resources: *but the ancients have it... and the idea arose to make such an ancient village (S1)* however, it does not necessarily have to be based on village history: *at least the name Owl is derived from the word Pelédnagis. Which means unclean, rancid... But because we've been saying this all the time, we're not like that now (PE8)*. Theming provides opportunities for an acceptable identity and specialization for most of the rural population, which provides opportunities for diversification, entrepreneurship, investment, and innovation and encourages pride in the village in which it is lived - to develop it towards sustainability.

### 5.3. Consequences for elderships

Although the involvement of the eldership is limited, it experiences positive consequences of the TV development: it can be represented through the TV (5.3.1./fig.1); take part in TV events (5.3.2./fig.1); bring guests to the TV (5.3.3./fig.1) and benefit from increased visibility of the region through the TV activities: *this place is, as the head of the neighbourhood says, not asking for anything (S1)*. TV actors make their own money to satisfy their public needs, the development requires minimum support of the elderships, and TV actors are invited to represent the neighbourhood and the municipality: *really, like the authorities, they are so happy when they come to an event. And in the region, we are the most active community (S2)*. The involvement of the local authorities can be compared to that of the local citizens – although they contribute to a very limited extent, they actively get positive consequences. The close links between local authorities and TV actors are based not only on official responsibilities, in terms of territorial location, but also in the fact that often the same people work in the eldership, community and TVs, or people are connected by neighborhood or kinship ties. Such connection provides the employees of the eldership with opportunities to delve deeper into the needs of TVs, to cooperate with the actors of the TV and to do more than is required by official responsibilities in pursuit of village development.

#### 5.4. Consequences for churches

If TV activities are combined with the activities of the church, these two organizations can become an integral tandem by organizing events for rural residents and guests, carrying out educational and cultural activities, helping each other to develop. In order to achieve rural well-being, it is necessary to ensure that they do not compete with each other, and that TV actors and residents can participate in the attractive religious events (5.4.1./fig.1) of the TV and church: *the same people in the church ... this is what St. John's Day and the Feast are all about, the feast of Oninia is great ... we leave those days in reserve (S1)*. The involvement of the church in the activities of the TVs helps to build a strong religious community (5.4.2./fig.1): *It is now the pastor comes every week. But we are now celebrating the parish and the community together, well everything together. Undivided (S1)*. Thanks to the thematic village, the increased awareness of the village helps to attract more visitors to the Mass (5.4.3./fig.1): *And this church is already full of people. Village is on the road, but only up to 20 people gather there, and at least 50 people come to us in the winter (S2)*.

### DISCUSSION

For organizations, the involvement of people in their activities becomes crucial, and the voluntary efforts of employees are regarded as essential resources. Nimon et al. (2016) describe employee engagement as an active and positive work-related state. They argue that the more active and positive an employee is, the more likely they are to be engaged in the organization and their work, providing opportunities for the organization to grow. In the case of TVs, this study demonstrates that the weighted involvement of TV actors determines the development of the TV. As long as there are individuals involved, the TV, like other organizations, has the opportunity to develop.

Another definition of employee engagement is provided by Schaufeli et al. (2006). They argue that employee engagement is a positive and rewarding state specific to work. They describe employee engagement through the following three criteria: energy, dedication, and absorption. The actors involved in TV activities exhibit components that characterize their involvement in work or organizational activities: energy, dedication, and immersion. These aspects are discussed in the results section, which explores the causal conditions of involvement in TV and the consequences for TV actors. This suggests that the weighted involvement of TV actors, identified as the primary criterion for TV development in this study, can be considered central and key, not only based on the interviews and coding results of the research participants but also in comparison with other researchers.

According to other researchers, the involvement of an organization is influenced by certain circumstances, periods, individuals, or situations (Bakker et al. 2014; Sonnentag et al. 2008). The survey results of TVs revealed that the involvement of TV actors also depends not only on their personal characteristics but also on their opportunities for involvement at different stages of life. Causal and intervening conditions of weighted involvement were discussed in the results section as intervening conditions. It is particularly important for TV actors to be able to balance TV activities with their official work, daily life, agricultural work, family needs, and participation in other organizations, especially the church. Additionally, the age and health of TV actors are significant aspects determining long-term involvement.

Employees involved in organizational activities typically identify with the goals and values of the organization and feel loyal to it (Chen, 2009). In the case of a TV, besides receiving community income, TV actors have other personal goals. Some seek communication and relaxation, while others pursue self-realization. Everyone who gets involved in a TV has their own goals, and if they see opportunities to achieve them through the TV, they remain engaged.

In the context of organizational behavior, it is debated that involvement in an organization's activities is also influenced by the extent to which the participant's attitudes and values align with the organization's attitudes and values (Liao et al. 2012). The research results also revealed that the involvement of TV actors depends on the alignment of their values and attitudes with those of the TV, such as the theme and the ways it is presented. For instance, in order for TV actors to become involved, the TV's theme must align with their beliefs, attitudes, values, and interests. If money is of great importance to TV actors, it can lead to short-term involvement, as the thematic village does not generate substantial personal income; it is based on voluntary community work.

Summarizing the opinions of scientists and the results of the research, it becomes clear that involvement in the work or activities of an organization is important and beneficial for both the participant and the organization in which they are involved. An active participant in the TV finds satisfaction in their activities, opportunities for self-realization, communication, and contributions to the well-being of the village, as well as the potential for additional income if applicable. The TV, like other organizations, also benefits from the involvement of its actors, as it creates opportunities for development. With the involvement of TV actors, planned thematic activities and projects are realized, and the TV's mission is fulfilled, often exceeding expectations. This situation of long-term TV development with engaged actors aligns with the findings of Chen and Chiu (2009), who argue that employee involvement increases employee productivity, a goal pursued by all organizations as it provides opportunities for development. Furthermore, as demonstrated by Liao and Wu (2010), a high level of engagement in work leads to greater employee self-growth, satisfaction, and performance, ultimately making the organization more competitive. To sum up, employee engagement is recognized as an important factor in an organization's effectiveness, innovation, and competitiveness, facilitating the achievement of organizational goals.

Therefore, the involvement of TV actors in TV development differs from the involvement of employees in other organizations, especially revenue-generating organizations. TV actors assess all personal, community, and organizational aspects of their involvement in a TV before and during their engagement. When evaluating the value provided by the TV, TV actors consider whether they will receive a satisfactory level of value in return, leading to their active involvement or continued engagement in TV activities. To emphasize the uniqueness and validity of TV actors' involvement in TV

activities in terms of expectations, opportunities, and benefits, the term "Weighted Involvement" is used. Involvement is weighted because TV actors carefully consider the balance between the effort they put into the TV and the rewards they receive. When satisfied with this ratio, they become actively engaged in the TV and contribute to its development through their involvement.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The weighted involvement of TV actors is a critical factor in TV development. Involvement in TV activities is weighted, as residents only become involved when their specific expectations can be met. Even if a TV is established and the theme is presented impeccably, exclusively, and seamlessly, without the participation of TV actors, it will lack value for visitors, residents, elderships, or churches.

In many cases, the weighted involvement of TV actors satisfies their social needs, such as self-realization, employment, communication, and an escape from routine. However, the absence of opportunities to meet personal financial needs reduces the involvement of TV actors in TV activities and limits the possibilities for the systematic development of the TV. TV activities can only be pursued periodically and during spare time under such circumstances. However, the reasons for the weighted involvement of these TV actors are only a partial and short-term solution to the development problems of the TV.

Opportunities to earn income, not only for the community but also to generate sufficient personal income for TV actors, would transform the TV into more than just a hobby for them—it would become a source of income. Sufficient personal income would increase the motivation of TV actors to participate in TV activities. This would address the shortage of human resources and the need for TV actors to sacrifice their free time for the TV, allowing them to continuously combine TV activities with income-generating employment.

Strengthening the support of elderships and cooperation with TV actors could create conditions for long-term weighted involvement of TV actors and the development of the TV.

The weighted involvement in TV activities is directly proportional to the benefits. By ensuring active, weighted involvement of a sufficient number of TV actors to meet the needs of TV human resources with respect to program implementation, staff replacement, and change, the development of the TV and the village hosting the TV can be facilitated.

Thanks to the weighted involvement of TV actors, benefits can be created for village residents and elderships, offering various opportunities including a vibrant countryside, leisure activities and events, additional income and employment, as well as infrastructure and surroundings adapted to the needs of the villagers. With high-level engagement of TV actors, elderships and residents receive maximum benefits with minimum involvement.

Collaboration between the church and the actively engaged TV actors further strengthens the community and opens up more opportunities for both organizations. Numerous and well-known religious events, masses, cultural programs adapted to worship, become more popular not only among local villagers but also among residents from remote villages and other areas.

Socially responsible and reliable partnerships and agreements between the elderships and TV actors would enable TV actors to develop TVs not only as venues for leisure activities but also as the primary means of meeting the needs of village development, TV actors, and visitors.

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