

CHALLENGES FACED BY HANDICRAFT BUSINESS IN BOSTON AND CATEEL, DAVAO ORIENTAL

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to understand the challenges handicraft businesses faced in Boston and Cateel, Davao Oriental. This study utilized a qualitative phenomenological study through a validated interview questionnaire. In addition, Purposive sampling was used, which included four participants from handicraft businesses in Boston and Cateel, Davao Oriental, with more than 2 years of experience. After analyzing the data, the participants shared the types of handicraft products: handicraft products made from beads, handcrafted mats, handicraft products made from abaca fiber and coconut sticks, and crocheted and cross-stitched products. As well as the participants shared the challenges encountered in the handicraft business, including customer preference, time management, and business management. Furthermore, in Perception Toward Government Intervention in the Handicraft Industry, the participants shared the importance of government support for the handicraft industry and the lack of knowledge and information about government interventions. Moreover, insights shared by the informant about the handicraft business derived from the responses of the participants include perseverance and dedication in the handicraft industry, personal fulfillment and satisfaction in the handicraft industry, and handicrafts being the source of income and livelihood. The study recommends that handicraft businesses can overcome challenges; stakeholders, policymakers, and industry professionals must support handicraft businesses to achieve sustainable growth through targeted interventions, access to resources, and collaboration.

Keyword: *challenges, handicrafts, business, phenomenological, cateel, and boston*

1. INTRODUCTION

Craft manufacturing in small industries, in particular, is a significant source of employment. It makes up a major portion of their export-based economy. Artisans are the second-largest rural employment sector behind agriculture in many parts of the world. However, studies show that the handicraft sector can predict an escalating potential to decline in the future because of a myriad of reasons. Almost all inputs have issues, including skilled labor, funding, raw materials, equipment/spare parts, and occasionally information. In addition, the extensive distribution distances, prohibitive transportation expenses brought on by the exorbitant cost of fuel and replacement parts, the terrible condition of important roads, and the challenging communications have all contributed to rising black-market pricing. Particularly, global and regional challenges have also manifested concerning handicraft businesses (Rutashobya & Jaenssson, 2014).

Establishing a link between the tourism sector and traditional handicrafts has received less attention. Additionally, the production and commercialization of traditional handicrafts are dispersed and disorganized economic sectors, according to Mulu Yenaebate and June (2017). The handicraft industry and the artisans were again

given little attention, despite traditional handicrafts' long history and distinctive cultural and religious appearances like hand-woven cotton clothing, clayware, and religious paintings (icons, canvas paintings). The handicraft industry's full tourism potential has yet to be discovered (Abraham, 2002).

Furthermore, in the Philippines, there is evidence that the sources of ethnic and native handicrafts are in danger due to the advancement of modern technology. First, environmental deterioration is beginning to impinge on

indigenous raw material sources. Urban lifestyles' growing popularity is destroying rural or indigenous ways of life. Additionally, the handicraft equipment and devices that support these communities have a great probability of disappearance. On top of this, no other government agency can look into the handicraft industry (Vargas et al.,2013).

There are several recorded studies about handicraft industries, yet there have been few researches regarding its issues, challenges, obstacles, and the best ways to respond. By examining Boston and Cateel handicraft traders' struggles and their tactics for dealing with exporting difficulties, this study aimed to close this research gap.

With the argument above, the researchers propose that this study found that the small-scale production of handicrafts, particularly, is a key employer and contributes significantly to the export economy of every nation. Handicraft producers are facing many problems that hinder their survival and growth. Like other industries, the handicraft industry has a variety of difficulties, yet it has been designated as one of the potential engines of economic growth. Therefore, this paper makes some essential strategic recommendations for overcoming these issues. Moreover, it will facilitate members of society in dealing with the challenges facing handicraft traders. Handicraft business stakeholders, in particular, will learn about the challenges they faced when starting their businesses.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This qualitative study aims to explore the various issues and challenges encountered by handicraft businesses in Boston and Cateel, Davao Oriental, and eventually, provide insights that the participants can share with the handicraft industry and facilitate knowledge sharing among stakeholders regarding the challenges facing handicraft businesses.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The general objective of the study is to examine challenges faced by handicraft businesses in Boston and Cateel.

1. What handicraft are you making?
2. What challenges did you encounter in this line of business?
3. What is your perception of government intervention in your industry?
4. What insight can you share with the handicraft industry?

1.3 THEORETICAL LENS

This research used Igor Ansoff (1957), often called the Product/Market Expansion Grid, a two-by-two framework used by management teams and the analyst community to help plan and evaluate growth initiatives. In particular, this theory helps stakeholders conceptualize the level of risk associated with different growth strategies (Peterdy, 2022). Based on Ansoff's Matrix, he believed the paradigm of strategic management to consist in conceiving a strategic plan to contain the overall strategy of the business, detailed into administrative and financial strategies, a strategy based on markets-products, and strategies represented as targets. . Thus, the risk field has been and will always be the highlight of any firm's most important areas of interest, regardless of its business. Risk management makes it possible to identify them with an impact on a company's business, directly related to the efficiency and validity of decisions taken at the management level of the firm. Almost any action in the economic reality gets out of the line of predicted or planned parameters and outcomes. Hence, any manager or entrepreneur assumes several risks in their activities. However, one of the methods of risk reduction in a business is diversification. Diversification strategies aligning with this theory help the company achieve greater performance in line with risk reduction. Thus, with the possible challenges in the handicraft business, it might help alleviate the problems answering to leading and expanding the company's business by adding new services and products, penetrating new markets, licensing technologies, and more. The company's diversification strategy expands the scope of its activities in different areas from those of its current business (Loredana, 2017).

Kurniawan (2020) also expounds on the Ansoff Matrix Theory through its initiated product development. This product development strategy has a new concept or product that is offered to existing market segments. This step is taken to develop products in the production section and variants and to give potential buyers a better experience. This product development is essential to provide refreshments to existing potential customers (Robinson

et al., 2019). From a greater range of understanding, if one handicraft business is on the verge of lying low, owners could create a wise and innovative way to uplift production development. The author also added the Market Penetration strategy, which has the lowest risk because the product is already on the market and the market share offered is the same. Therefore, there is no need for market share education about these products. Usually, this strategy is carried out to increase the current customer base and increase consumer purchases (Robinson et al., 2019).

Furthermore, Hussain, Khattak, Rizwan, and Latif (2013), in Ansoff Matrix, Environment, and Growth- An Interactive Triangle, stated that the Ansoff matrix theory is the Growth essential to run a business for profit and studying growth Ansoff matrix is a planning technique used for deliberate judgment about firm growth through product and market extension networks. Ansoff's matrix is one of the well-known frameworks for decision-making about strategies for expansion. Igor Ansoff presented it in his article 'Strategies for Diversification,' giving four market growth strategies. Ansoff's matrix theory concludes that a business firm must continuously grow and change. The growth vectors are market penetration, product development, and diversification (Hall & Lobina, 2017). This matrix is used by marketers, who have the valor to grow in the market and create a competitive advantage. Ansoff matrix offers strategic alternatives to accomplish these objectives.

Moreover, the Ansoff Matrix plays an important role by assuming all risk variables using a four-quadrant approach (M.S. Clarissia., 2019). Due to the increasing technological changes, marketers must follow a step-by-step procedure to make their product acceptable in a highly competitive environment by considering market penetration, which includes various uncertainties and other diversification strategies to acquire a relatively risk-free company. This technique is widely used in business strategy management to evaluate ideas for organizations to grow the market and create new goods more objectively and correctly (Yin,2016).

The theory also explains Marketing Development, which indicates a new market share for existing products and is offered back to potential buyers with different characteristics or habits from the previous market share.

To conclude, Ansoff Matrix Theory is an avenue to let business owners, especially in handicrafting, expound their ideas on how to properly set foot in managing the business, specifically in bringing its spice into the marketing world.

1.4 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is akin to its contribution to understanding the factors that affect the marketing of handicrafts in Boston and Cateel, Davao Oriental. Specifically, stakeholders of handicraft businesses were to get knowledge on strategies established for challenges faced by handicraft businesses, factors hindering handicraft businesses in promoting their products and then applying good alternatives in promoting handicraft businesses.

1.5 DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This qualitative research paper delves on focusing the challenges that have been faced by handicraft business owners in Boston and Cateel, Davao Oriental. From a greater perspective, the data collection shall be implemented, covered by 4 craftsmen, and is expected to finish within December 2022. In this regard, an in-depth interview was used to gather the needed information. Thus, by this strategy, the researchers were capable enough to know the challenges faced by the handicraft business.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter comprehensively reviews recent and relevant literature related to the topic. Literature review is a process of searching the available literature in the field of research to review and analyze them. The literature survey provides the researcher with knowledge of the status of their field of research. That helps the researcher discover what research studies have been conducted in their chosen survey field and what remains to be done.

2.1 HANDICRAFT BUSINESS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Innovation to enable resources to produce value is the act of entrepreneurship. It is maintained through imagination. The entrepreneur recognizes and takes advantage of possibilities via practiced ingenuity. Applying a

decision-making logic is seen as crucial Individual entrepreneurial decision-making is likely to be a precursor to practiced creativity and invention (Blauth et al., 2014). When pursuing innovation, new value is produced through combinations that cause discontinuity. Significant value is produced, essential for the economic system to function properly (Bruyat & Julien, 2015). Combinations can often be anything novel in the following five areas: product, production process, industry structure, market, and supplier (Bull & Willard, 2019). The Philippines' hand-made goods market contributes about US\$71.9M to earnings from foreign exchange as of 2000 and employs more than one million Filipinos.

Over the years, Philippine handicrafts have evolved through innovative design changes, reinforced by exciting choices and a combination of indigenous materials. Data show that the Philippines is the second largest world producer of handicrafts, mainly baskets made from indigenous materials. It has also maintained the respect of the high-end markets in the United States, European Union, and Japan (Beth811, 2015). However, there is still plenty of room for improvement, particularly in remote upland communities with little access to market information, brokering services, capital, and technologies to add value to their products (Beth811, 2015). Improvement is the key to many companies' success. It may be attributed to the continuous search to improve a product or service to gain a competitive advantage over competitors and satisfy consumers (Heyne, Boettke, & Prychitko, 2020). Improvements are achieved through creativity and innovations. Creativity is the "production of novel and useful ideas by an individual or a small group working together" (Amabile, 2018, p. 126). Innovation, conversely, is the process of conceptualizing and implementing new and improved ways of product/service design and delivery, including the product itself, process, and method (Alsaaty, 2016).

Moreover, the kind of entrepreneurship that is practiced should be sustainable. Sustainable entrepreneurship is the foundation for realizing sustainability innovations geared toward a larger market and benefiting society (Kumar et al., P., 2017). Sustainability and sustainable development have become public mantras (Bello, 2000, as cited in Baharin & Sentosa, 2015) and, when applied to business, can be understood as "meeting the needs of a firm's direct and indirect stakeholders (such as shareholders, employees, clients, pressure groups, communities, and more.) without compromising its ability to meet the needs of future stakeholders as well" (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2021, p. 131). It further means integrating the firm's economic, ecological, and social capital in a triple-bottom-line (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2021). Saddled by problems such as a dwindling supply of raw materials and seasonality of demands (Decena, 2017), Filipino artisans have constantly produced new product designs to overcome these problems. Innovation, as in this case, can be perceived as the "tangibilization of creativity" (Fillis & Rentschler, 2018, p. 66). It is the manifestation or concretization of the novel, different, or unique ideas. Creativity is something you think of, while innovation is something you implement and eventually involves application. While the linkage between creativity and innovation exists (Edwards-Schachter et al., & Amara, 2015), and the nexus is often cited in many works of literature, it has varying findings ranging from highly correlated to moderate or negligible relationship. It has also become incumbent for businesses to look for novel ways to align innovation with public expectations and seriously offer a management framework based on discoursing, deciding, and producing sustainable value. Dominant enterprises have comprehended that this hinges upon understanding the unfolding nature of society and rethinking the relationships they want to establish with stakeholders like customers, suppliers, governments, and the public (Dearing, 2018).

Presently, the handicrafts industry has large-scale involvement of women, the underprivileged section of society and minorities, and the out-of-school youths, among others. Women entrepreneurs, in particular, make a substantial contribution to national economies, through their participation in start-ups and their growth in the informal sector, in achieving sustainable and competitive growth of businesses (United Nations, 2016). In the Philippines, women constitute more than half of the population of 100 million people and have a significant role in society's socio-cultural and economic spheres. Filipina entrepreneurs represent enterpinays engaged in either micro, small, or medium enterprises. Literature has shown, though, that Filipina women entrepreneurs are now more empowered, resilient, competent, and given more support by the government, which can increase their influence in shaping our society and the economy. The Filipina entrepreneurs, in another study, "rated high on innovation strategy as manifested in their vision, commitment to innovation and leadership, while their efforts to motivate their people, propensity to take risks and efforts to make the organization an attractive place to work on, points to the value they put on organization and culture" (Caning & Edralin, 2016, p. 228).

Thus, it is worthwhile to look into the insights of Entrepinays in the handicrafts industry about creativity, innovation, and sustainability. According to Nowduri (2016), entrepreneurship involves creating a new business and transforming innovations into economic goods. Through venture creation, entrepreneurs create new value necessary

for the economic system to function properly (Bruyat & Julien, 2016). The entrepreneur creates value by creating new combinations in the product, production method, market, supplier, and industry structure (Bull & Willard, 2018). Innovation is conceptualizing and implementing new and improved product/ service design and delivery methods, including the product, process, and method (Alsaaty, 2016). It is the entrepreneurs' specific means by which they exploit change as an opportunity for a different business or service (Drucker, 2017). Likewise, it creates new knowledge and ideas to facilitate new business outcomes geared at improving internal business processes and structures and forming market-driven products and services (Yeo, Ariss & Deilami, 2017). It is a complex phenomenon and a practical discipline that generates new ideas. Innovations can be classified into four: product, process, marketing, and organization. Product innovations pertain to changes in the product or service offerings. Process innovations refer to changes in delivery or production methods. Marketing innovations deal with new ways to reach the customer; innovations related to the organization usually involve organizational methods. Organizational innovations refer to a new method of business practice, workplace organization, or external relations that are different from others in enhancing the business. (OECD/ Eurostat, 2005, cited in Alsaaty, 2016, p. 7). Creativity and innovation are linked (Edwards-Schachter et al., 2015). This nexus is often cited in many pieces of literature but with varying findings ranging from highly correlated to moderate or negligible relationships. In today's global business environment, most firms rely on the close link between creativity and innovations for reasons such as profitability, competitiveness, and sustainable entrepreneurship. Amabile (2018) pointed out that creativity is an integral skill set to innovation. Hence, innovation is the result of the creative beginnings of thought. Innovation occurs when one tries to conceive new ideas by tapping one's inner thoughts to offer a new stream of ideas that catalyze a relatively different context previously thought of (Amabile, 2018).

2.2 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN HANDICRAFT BUSINESS

Entrepreneurship is a process through which an individual creates opportunities for innovation leading to additional and novel contributions to society (Stam & Spigel, 2016). It is "the catalytic agent in the society which sets into motion fresh enterprises, novel combinations of production and exchange" (Collins & Moore, 2018). Entrepreneurship is vital for the continuous development of contemporary market economies and generates innovative businesses that nurture competition and support economic growth (Djankov et al., 2018). Entrepreneurship is about economic individualism and competition (Grey, 2022, p. 61) and thus can also be defined as "the creation and extraction of value from an environment" (Anderson, 2016). Moreover, challenges are inevitable in creating the handicraft business, not only for the local businesses but also for the other side of the world, which sets handcrafting as a well-off investment.

Women entrepreneurs play a substantial role in developing the small business sector and driving enterprises in transition economies (Lerner et al., 1997) supported (Brush, 2018). Evidence from Iran, (Hosseini and McElwee, 2017) Uganda (Lourenço et al., 2016), India (Kumbhar, 2016), the Middle East (Mathew, 2017), and other studies in developed economies (De Rosa & McElwee, 2016; Bock, 2018) show that women's entrepreneurship can become an essential driver of economic growth. There is consensus that social and economic problems in Arab countries would benefit from greater private sector growth, particularly in the small business sector (Fergany, 2016), whereby women contribute to this growth. The number of women entrepreneurs is growing in Arab countries due to increasing Western facing economic reforms that open up career pathways for women wanting to initiate, shape and manage their businesses (Tlaiss, 2015; Dechant & Lamky, 2018). However, the social, economic, and cultural context presents specific challenges to women entrepreneurs not commonly observed elsewhere. There has been little research on these entrepreneurs' barriers, motivations, or performance, as most previous research on women entrepreneurship has focused on Western or developed economies (Marlow & Ahl, 2017; Marlow & McAdam, 2015). The narrow literature of the Arabian context has identified basic challenges and needs, often framed in terms of contribution to economic growth and the diversification of Gulf economies away from oil (Dechant & Lamky, 2018).

Arab women entrepreneurs traditionally establish informal micro-sector enterprises focused on non-technical goods and services. Typical enterprises produce simple home-based items for local markets. Access to wider markets is challenging because of socio-cultural factors and geographical remoteness. Consequently, women-owned companies are considerably less profitable and innovative than those owned and managed by males. However, women-owned ventures tend to employ a bigger share of women workers. Hence, the expansion of this sector has the potential to aid economic growth and address issues of women's empowerment and economic engagement. To achieve this, policymakers, financial institutions, markets, and the media must come together to identify methods for facilitating and supporting potential women business leaders.

In India, the handicraft industry is a major source of income for rural communities employing over 7 million artisans, including many women and people belonging to the weaker sections of society (Agrawal, 2017). Mir and Bhutan (2014) described that the handicraft industry has deep roots, is spread over the entire country, and contributes to a significant part of the export of the rural economy. The handicraft sector is important for the economy due to its employment generation, foreign exchange earnings, and vast untapped export potential. India's share in the world handicraft market is a dismal 2% compared to China which claims 17% of the world market share (Ghouse, 2018). The author has brought up the major reason for India's low share in the international market is low international market awareness, poor information about upcoming trends in the international market, marketing inefficiencies, weak infrastructure as compared to other handicraft exporting nations and use of obsolete technology in the manufacturing of the handicrafts.

2.3 RELEVANCE OF ANSOFF MATRIX IN UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES IN HANDICRAFT BUSINESS

One of the strategic management planning founders, Igor Ansoff, created a matrix and a vector of growth in 1957. His theory was that developing a strategic plan would include the organization's overall strategy, administrative and financial strategies, a strategy based on markets and goods, and strategies articulated as goals. The researchers believe that through this framework, handicraft enterprises will be guided in building efficient marketing strategies necessary for overcoming and easing industrial obstacles (Loredana, 2017).

The American planning guru Igor Ansoff developed the Ansoff Matrix, a strategic planning tool that connects an organization's marketing strategy with its overall strategic direction. It is based on Free Management (2013). In the form of a 2x2 table or matrix, it offers four different growth strategies. The matrix has two dimensions: one for "product" (both new and existing) and the other for "markets" (existing and new). The order of these strategies is as follows: a) Market Penetration, where you concentrate on increasing market share by selling your current products or services to your current markets; b) Market Development, where you concentrate on creating new markets or market niches for your current products or services; c) Product Development, where you concentrate on creating new products or services for your current markets; and d) Diversification, where you concentrate on creating new products to sell. Regarding penetration, the company seeks to strengthen the position of currently offered products in current markets. This tactic aims to persuade as many customers as possible to purchase the product from the existing lineup; else, cost-cutting measures would be implemented. Developing new markets is risky because one only knows some factors influencing how well existing items sell. One develops a strategy for producing new products for the business rather than necessarily for consumers by offering customers new products. To be truly accepted by the market, these products must offer novel features. When viewed from the perspective of handicraft businesses, this is especially true. In order to understand their struggles as handicraft business owners and ultimately find solutions to these problems, handicraft firm owners must identify their most effective and most damaging marketing and overall organizational strategies.

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Significantly, the abundance of studies and specialty papers emphasizes the worry regarding the current issues in the Ansoff matrix study field. This idea is still regarded and comprehended as one of the most crucial tools for expanding the handicraft industry and entering the relevant market. Numerous studies demonstrate that one of the effective strategies particular entrepreneurs use to develop their businesses in the industry, as mentioned earlier, is using Ansoff's matrix. In the 1960s, a diversification strategy ensured several businesses' growth, particularly those specializing in crafts and artwork. The concept was built on the premise that an effective manager can oversee multiple enterprises without connections. Diversification refers to two or more responsibilities, each of which could simultaneously be the distinctive operations of specialized businesses. A company is considered diversified if, while maintaining some of its 1.1sprior producing activities, it also manufactures new, distinctly distinct goods through substantial variations in its production or distribution activities. Participation in numerous marketplaces is a component of diversification (UNIBUC, 2016).

According to Loredana (2017), one of the most crucial areas of attention for the handicraft industry has been and will continue to be the risk field. Being directly tied to the effectiveness and validity of decisions made at the management level of the business, as mentioned above, risk management and analysis make it possible to identify them as impacting the craft business. Any management or entrepreneur in the handicraft industry will take several risks because almost every action in the economic reality deviates from the expected or anticipated parameters and consequences. Thus, diversification is one strategy for lowering risk in a company. Diversification strategies assist the business in enhancing performance while lowering risk. All these lead to the widening of the company's business by having new services and products, penetrating new markets, licensing technologies, and more. The company's diversification plan enlarges the scope of its operations in industries other than its core industry. A handicraft firm can thus choose to use additional market segments and develop unique offers for each segment using a differentiated marketing approach (Neamțu & Neamțu, 2016). According to Ansoff, a company's diversification strategy considers the markets where the products will be sold and manufactured and the markets themselves. Handicraft business owners can develop various diversification strategies based on those two variables, depending on the objectives, potential risks, duration, and more. These are referred to as concentric diversification, horizontal diversification, and conglomerate-based diversification in specialized literature.

In other words, handicraft business owners can sell existing products in current markets, expand those products into emerging markets, create new crafts for existing markets, or create new products for emerging markets. Concentric diversification's main goal is coordinating various craft business operations to produce an effective result. In order to draw in new customers, it, therefore, entails the acquisition of new goods or services that are associated with the mentioned company's line of business.

This diversification strategy assumes the company can benefit from its current knowledge and expertise. Entrepreneurs in the handicraft industry can look for new items with technological and marketing resemblances to existing production lines that may appeal to a new clientele. Putting a concerted diversification plan into practice can spark company synergies, increase production capacity, and increase market share. Business synergy is the capacity for two or more components of an organization to work together more effectively than they could individually (Bacanu, 2014).

Last but not least, firms employ horizontal diversification to grow their customer base and boost revenues. It can entail developing brand-new handicrafts or acquiring handicraft partners whose areas of expertise differ from those already in place. In order to try and promote and sell these products to the current customer base, new products unrelated to existing products are added to the portfolio. Therefore, unlike other forms of diversification, this strategy focuses on providing a wider range of products to the current customer base rather than trying to draw in new customer categories (Mitran, 2017). In order to expand their commercial influence or market share, a handicraft company that practices vertical diversification buys other companies that serve as suppliers along the acquisition chain. Functional components, base materials, and other elements are required for every product a business manufactures, and they are assembled to create the finished product. These components that make up the finished product can all be bought from various suppliers. For instance, a sizable manufacturer could purchase some of its suppliers. Vertical diversification, therefore, entails increasing the production of materials, parts, or components. However, the activities, procedures, and technology these providers use are distinct from those of the primary activities. Because of this, vertical diversification necessitates adjusting to new technology, processes, and products (Afaceri, n. d.). Businesses, including handicraft businesses, can only afford to engage in commercial activity by illustrating a perspective, both in the short and long term, to ensure the economic and financial conditions necessary to achieve profit after analyzing the conditions of the competitive environment. Consequently, the management of the business is always responsible for enabling the establishment and adoption of strategic decisions to materialize into a strategic model that integrates all interfaces of action of the company, including economic, financial, accounting, human, and technological aspects. Thus, to investigate the difficulties faced by the handicraft industry and ultimately find solutions to these commercial problems, the Ansoff Matrix would be a pertinent and essential theoretical foundation, asserted by Loredana (2017).

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the design to be used in the study and a description of the participants, data collection method, and data analysis. This chapter also builds up the trustworthiness of the study as well as the description of the role of the researchers and the ethical considerations to be used.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study utilized a qualitative phenomenological study because it is more relevant to undertake this research, and it allowed us greater capacity to gain more depth and meaning based on our participant's experience in the challenges of handicraft business owners in Boston and Cateel, Davao Oriental. This thesis also aimed to explore and understand the meanings constructed by our participants; it developed an understanding of people's opinions about their lives and the lives of others. It also helped the researcher to generate an in-depth account that present a lively picture of our research participants' reality.

Potter (2018) argues that interviews are valuable tools for collecting data in qualitative research. Within the interpretive paradigm of educational research, this phenomenological study fits. Given that it aims to comprehend the subjective nature of human experience, it falls within this paradigm (Cohen et al., 2017). The main advantage of personal interviews is that they involve personal and direct contact between our participants and eliminate non-response rates; however, we must also develop the necessary skills to successfully carry out an interview (Fisher, 2017; Wilson, 2013). Interviewing our participants, we set individual face-to-face interviews to have an opportunity to observe and interpret our participant's feedback which is valuable during interviews or discussion and analysis. We also used guide questions that we posed to all of our participants. The study did not aim to provide the ultimate truth about the research topic but rather investigated a particular way of looking at and deriving meaning from the phenomenon under investigation.

3.2 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The participants of the study were four (4) handicraft business owners in Boston and Cateel, Davao Oriental. Those in the field for over 2 years were identified as participants because their experience was so important.

4. RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the study during the interview with four (4) handicraft business owners in Boston and Cateel, Davao Oriental. It discusses themes that emerged in the study. The discussions were recorded, transcripts were produced and later converted into worksheets for thematic analysis. Pseudonyms were being used also to hide and protect the identity of the informants. Worksheet from interviews was read many times for thematic analysis. Important phrases that emerged from the transcript were identified and categorized to identify the themes of the study. They were listed and grouped accordingly to determine patterns and connections between themes. A theme was noted when at least two informants highlighted a particular idea or experience.

4.1 TYPES OF HANDICRAFT PRODUCTS

Table 1 presents the themes and core ideas that pertain to the types of handicraft products of the informants. The themes are handicraft products from beads, handcrafted mats, products made from abaca fiber and coconut sticks, and crocheted and cross-stitched products.

Table 1. Themes and Core Ideas of the Types of Handicraft Products

Theme/s	Core Ideas
Handicraft Products from Beads	Bead-based crafts are made by the informants into various items, including a pack bag, wallet, pencil box, necktie, sling bag, and flower vase.
Handcrafted Mats	According to the informants, they produce handcrafted mats.
Products made from Abaca Fiber and Coconut Sticks	The informants made bags, ID holders, garlands, tumbler holders, baskets, plates, shoes, and sling bags from abaca fiber and coconut sticks.
Crocheted and Cross-stitched Products	Informants use crochet to create baby garments, shoes, hats, and sling bags, while cross-stitch is utilized to create framed things.

4.2 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN THE HANDICRAFT BUSINESS

Table 2 presents the themes and core ideas that pertain to challenges encountered in the handicraft business. The themes are customer preference, time management, and business management.

Table 2. Themes and Core Ideas of the Challenges Encountered in the Handicraft Business.

Theme/s	Core Ideas
Customer Preference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Difficulty in selling due to consumers' desire for made-to-order products -Low desire to purchase handicrafts -Consumers favor affordability over quality -Preference for Internet purchases over physical stores
Time Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Balancing work and studies -Inability to accommodate all orders -Unable to produce large quantities of products -Difficulty in handling high demand
Business Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Difficulty in training others to make crafts -Struggles in promoting and selling products -Negative feedback from customers -Difficulty in persuading clients due to prices

4.3 PERCEPTION TOWARD GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN THE HANDICRAFT INDUSTRY

Table 3 presents the themes and core ideas that pertain to the perception of government intervention in the handicraft industry. The themes are the importance of government support for the handicraft industry and the lack of knowledge and information about government interventions.

Table 3. Themes and Core Ideas of the Perception Toward Government Intervention in the Handicraft Industry

Theme/s	Core Ideas
Importance of Government Support for the Handicraft Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The interviewee believes that if the government assists the handicraft industry, more people would be interested in learning to handcraft, resulting in more job opportunities. -Government support could lead to higher commissions for handcrafters and help them produce higher quality products by providing access to necessary materials and machinery. -The interviewee also believes that government support could lead to easier processes of making handicrafts and reduces the scarcity of supplies. -Government support for the handicraft industry could also assist marginalized individuals in making a living through learning handcrafting. -The interviewee also mentioned that if they received government assistance, they would have the opportunity to train and pay other individuals, creating more job opportunities within the handicraft industry.
Lack of Knowledge and Information About Government Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The interviewee acknowledges that they do not have any knowledge of government assistance in their industry, particularly financial assistance. -Despite being featured by the government, the interviewee has yet to receive any supplies or finances from them, only promotional assistance. -The interviewee expresses a desire to have more information about government assistance and mentions that it would be helpful to them in their business.

4.4 INSIGHTS SHARED BY THE INFORMANT TO THE HANDICRAFT BUSINESS

Table 4 presents the themes and core ideas that pertain to insights shared with the handicraft business. The themes of perseverance and dedication in the handicraft industry, personal fulfillment and satisfaction in the handicraft industry, and handicrafts are the source of income and livelihood.

Table 4. Themes and Core Ideas of the Insights Shared by the Informant to the Handicraft Business

Theme/s	Core Ideas
Perseverance and Dedication in the Handicraft Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Success in the handicraft industry requires dedication and perseverance. -Building a customer base and sustaining it is important for the growth and profitability of the business. -Despite challenges, it is important to continue to invest time and effort in business. -The handicraft industry has the potential for innovation and growth, and staying committed to the craft can lead to success.
Personal Fulfillment and Satisfaction in the Handicraft Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Making handicrafts can be a source of happiness and personal fulfillment. -Handicrafts provide a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. -Creating handicrafts can feed the soul and provide a creative outlet. -The process of making handicrafts can be therapeutic and help relieve stress.
Handicrafts as a Source of Income and Livelihood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Handicrafts can be a viable source of income and livelihood for individuals and families. -Personal involvement in the business allows for maximum profit and control over the capital. -The handicraft industry has potential for growth and expansion, providing more job opportunities for others. -Learning the trade can also provide valuable skills for individuals seeking employment.

5. DISCUSSION

This chapter contains the researcher's parted discussion and conclusion from the themes that emerged from the study's findings.

5.1 TYPES OF HANDICRAFT PRODUCTS

Almost every family in the Philippines owns one or more handicraft products, such as baskets, brooms, feather dusters, bamboo sofa sets, cupboards, and other furniture. Native materials like beads, shells, seeds, and other items are also used to make the clothing, jewelry, and accessories that young people today like wearing. Terry (2017) mentioned that due to its labor-intensive nature, the handicraft industry can currently be assumed to contribute to the development process, including reducing unemployment, underemployment, and poverty. As of 2000, the Philippine handicraft industry employed over a million people and contributed approximately US\$71.9M to foreign exchange profits (Edralin et al., 2019). In their study, Edralin et al. (2019) also mentioned that data shows the Philippines is the world's second-largest producer of handicrafts, primarily baskets constructed of local materials. Additionally, it has continued to command the respect of the premium markets in the US, EU, and Japan (Beth811, 2015). According to Deepak (2008), using handicrafts for physical purposes is not always necessary; they also have aesthetic value. However, there is no distinct line that separates artistic worth from utility. In truth, the practicality and appeal to more delicate types of intellections of an object are ensured by good craftsmanship.

Handicraft products form beads. Beads have existed since the earliest prehistoric times. A pair of beads made from a sea snail shell is thought to be the earliest known example of jewelry. According to Kindy (2021), the research claims that ornaments like beads were among early humans' earliest examples of symbolic activity. Their appearance heralds' significant advancements in social and cognitive development. Although the first beads were only stones, bones, or teeth that had been perforated, they were highly valued and utilized as a medium of

commercial exchange, but a specific variety of beads known as "Wumpun" was used as a medium to sign a treaty (Dholakia, & Parmar, 2021). Historians believe traders from Malaysia, several Arab nations, China, India, and Indo-China brought beads to the Philippines. Back then, they were traded for other goods, including metals, porcelain, silk and other fabrics, teakwood, and the like (Abbacan-Tugaic, 2016).

Handcrafted Mats. The results of traditional weaving play a crucial role in the community's sustenance aside from the cultural, religious, and practical significance of indigenous handicrafts goods of great value Tristram (2022). Asuncion (2019) stated that loincloths represent this kind of painting. For instance, they make waistline apparel for men known as ambalad by weaving a thin tree bark covering using rattan (locally known as yantok). The Tagbanua tribes are also skilled producers of basketry. They use these handcrafted items for various purposes, such as tingkop, which are containers.

5.2 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN THE HANDICRAFT BUSINESS

Pastoralists are under much pressure today to find other sources of income than livestock. Both artificial and natural factors contribute to the difficulties faced by pastoralists. Despite several efforts made by the government and non-governmental organizations, the situation could be better. The lack of organization, education, finance, exposure to new technology, market intelligence, and a weak institutional framework causes handicraft artists great suffering (Shah & Patel, 2017). Other striking results include that the handicraft industry is dominated by owners and operators with low levels of education and draws very few young people, posing a threat to its long-term viability (Makyao, 2013).

On the one hand, Banik (2018) elaborated that several challenges must be overcome while considering effective policies for rural artisans. Their skills still need to be honed in antiquated methods, and their technology is conventional. The unorganized artisan sector must deal with a lack of expertise, limited access to knowledge and technology, formal training, marketing support, and non-competitive products. Below are the themes derived from the responses of the participants of the challenges they encountered in the handicraft business;

Customer Preference. One of the respondents also stated that they need to meet the customer's expectations; however, if things fall into expectation, they are likely to retain their customers. Dash and Mishra (2021) claim that consumer research in handicrafts is conspicuously absent. The ability of the artists to manufacture the goods according to the buyers' tastes and preferences is essential to handicrafts' success. According to Dash's research, the demand for hand-made goods is heavily influenced by the tastes and preferences of consumers (De Silver, 2013). Additionally, buyers may pay more than the standard price if they prefer hand-made goods. Customers express a clear preference for handicrafts, including the materials used, due to industrialization, globalization, and changes in consumer tastes and preferences that have led to the production of similar machine-made products and negatively impacted the consumption of handicrafts (Yang et al., 2018). To expand and remain competitive, artisans must differentiate their goods from those produced by machines and adopt innovation to meet consumer wants (Sanches & Zilber, 2019).

This theme can be anchored to the Ansoff Matrix Theory through product development (Kurniawan, 2020) and the market penetration method (Robinson et al., 2019). Crafters can develop products to give potential buyers a better experience. It is crucial to develop new products to entice potential customers who are already clients (Robinson et al., 2019). If a handicraft company is on the edge of going out of business, the owners can devise an intelligent solution to advance production growth. It may create a new product that appeals to the audience or customers (Finlay, 2021). Because the product is already on the market and the market share offered is the same, they can also use the Market Penetration method, which has the lowest risk. Rather than attempting to create a brand-new concept, you would seek fresh approaches to improve your product's attractiveness and marketability in your current niche. Therefore, educating consumers about these items' market shares is unnecessary. This tactic typically grows clientele and increases consumer sales (Robinson et al., 2019).

Time Management. One of the respondents responded that time management is one of their challenges. They could not cope with their customers wanted time because they tend to be cautious when implementing new technology, even though it could help them produce the same goods more effectively and with higher-quality materials (Makyao, 2013). It is due to the shift from local economics to a worldwide competitive environment and changing customer demands, including low pricing, quick turnaround times, and excellent quality. Modernizing their product system is necessary to increase their competitiveness (Chouiraf & Chafi, 2018). Time is the most important factor in business to be managed properly. It can help organizations or individuals achieve their goals

effectively and efficiently (Business Trends, 2016). Time management is also defined as improved performance. In this regard, crafters can strategically utilize product development by appealing to the wants of their customers (Joshi, 2021). Developing a new product means welcoming the fact that customers' needs are evolving. Introducing and using new technology can help meet the customers' expectations through the product.

Business Management. Marketing is a strategic instrument for business growth that aids in developing and surviving micro, small, and medium-sized businesses. It is essential to the success of any business, and while large corporations have been employing people to handle their company's product or service marketing, micro business (Handicraft industry) and other small businesses lack the strong financial backing necessary to effectively spend money on marketing handcrafted goods. The ability of sellers to raise awareness of, draw in, and keep customers for their crafts is crucial to the survival and success of handcraft marketing. Hence more successful promotion techniques provide positive results, and lucrative financial gains should be made (Tugang, 2021). Lekhanya (as cited by Makhita, 2016) examined how SMEs used marketing. According to the study's findings, the owners and managers of rural SMEs needed a thorough understanding of marketing concepts and rarely employed marketing tactics. In order to plan and develop a coherent and synergistic approach, marketers can unify all of their communications with the help of marketing communication (Zimuto, 2013).

5.3 PERCEPTION TOWARD GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN THE HANDICRAFT INDUSTRY

Through several laws, programs, and incentives, the government contributes significantly to developing and supporting the handicraft industry (Majeed et al., 2023). For thousands of years, numerous civilizations worldwide have produced handicrafts with a rich history and cultural value (Liu & Deng, 2017). Handicrafts are valuable culturally, but they are also economically and socially significant. They can also aid in the preservation of traditional knowledge and skills. They give many artists and their families a means of support. Additionally, according to UNIDO (2019), the production and sale of handicrafts can support the growth of regional economies and the tourism sector. Therefore, where appropriate, strong and decisive government intervention is required to ensure the inheritance of traditional skills and products through appropriate government-led programs because, in the absence of such an initiative, it would be challenging to lay a solid sustainable development foundation for this marginal sector (Makyao, 2013).

Importance of Government Support for the Handicraft Industry. The government is heavily involved in advancing and assisting the various policies, programs, and incentives handicraft industry. The government has implemented several programs and regulations to support the growth of the nation's handicraft sector. Research Council of India's study of international economic relations discovered that government initiatives like considering the handicrafts development and marketing program have contributed to an increase in the quality of their items and increased the income of artisans Kaur & Thakur (2020). In their 2015 study, Gupta and Bhatnagar examine how government initiatives have helped Rajasthan's handicraft industry grow. This handicraft industry benefits from government policies, especially programs like the Rajasthan State Handloom Development Corporation and the Rajasthan Small Industries Corporation. However, they also contend that additional problems, such as low productivity and restricted market access, must be addressed.

In the Philippines, on the other hand, Lopez (2022) claims that during the pandemic, government organizations and other private sectors assisted local MSMEs, such as local artisans and crafters, in learning more about digital marketing and exploring various online platforms in order to keep up with the "new normal" and prevent being left behind or excluded from the rapidly evolving markets and supply chains. However, despite push-marketing initiatives, the handicrafts industry is still recovering slowly since some individuals, particularly buyers, continue to put off purchasing items for non-essential requirements. In this regard, Makhitha (2016) thought artisans needed access to government support programs catering to SMEs. Relating this theme to the theory, the government can support local crafters by creating programs and opportunities to increase their market share. According to Peterdy (2023), a market development strategy can help owners grow their businesses by entering the domestic or international market. To aid these local business owners, the government can open opportunities or programs like fairs or bazaars to showcase their products.

Lack of Knowledge and Information about Government Interventions. Government regulations of online behavior and social media se must follow international norms and have a fair-minded approach. Every form of communication media and the information being transmitted can have both beneficial and harmful effects, which are frequently arbitrary. The free flow of information must therefore be protected from government interference. The most improbable scenario is that there is a threat to national security. Encouragement of stakeholder communication

on social concerns should be the main priority. Rahul and Sanjay (2015) found that only one-third of the population knows all kinds of government schemes for handicrafts. In their study, the awareness of government schemes and policies among artisans in the Indian handicraft sector.

Similarly, Jain and Sharma (2015) investigated how artisans view the government's promotion strategy for the Indian handicraft industry. They also concluded that while some artisans benefitted from handicraft bazaars and melas, true marketing help and regulations still needed to be a long way off. Furthermore, according to Kumar and Rajeev (2014), the industry's marketing of hand-made products is currently a major concern. Customers' need for knowledge of crafts products was challenging for manufacturers, suppliers, and retailers. It is related to Ansoff Matrix, specifically under Market Development, since this tactic can be vulnerable to government regulations. For instance, businesses may have to deal with trade restrictions like taxes while exporting goods, which reduces the competitiveness of their goods with local ones in the country of destination (Nasrudin, 2023). Additionally, customers in emerging areas, including those overseas, could have different demands and preferences than those in established markets. Local companies, therefore, need to do in-depth research on consumers in the target market, including an analysis of the market size and anticipated demand.

5.4 INSIGHTS SHARED BY THE INFORMANT TO THE HANDICRAFT BUSINESS

Perseverance and Dedication in the Handicraft Industry. According to Victorio (2019), there are abundant natural resources in the Philippines, which is blessed with 7,107 islands. These God-created natural wonders are the sources of people's food, housing, and other necessities. People eventually developed a variety of talents that allowed them to manipulate nature. They created straightforward yet practical tools or equipment out of the raw materials obtained from the country's rich trees, plants, and other natural resources. Nowadays, many Filipinos work in the handicraft industry. Craftsmanship and hard work are two elements that determine how long something will last and what makes it special. Hand-made crafts produce durable and aesthetic appeal through diligent efforts and skill (CraftyThinking, 2023). Crafts manufactured by hand take many hours of diligent work and are carefully picked by professional artisans. Robots cannot duplicate these handicrafts due to their complexity. Women artists in Nepal, for instance, have a long history of creating felt, and they are the lifeblood of this craft. From finely woven carpets to hand-felted purses, they put their hearts and souls into each creation, and their dedication shows in every thread (Sapkota, 2022). With perseverance and dedication, crafters can grow their business through different strategies. Ansoff Matrix can be a leeway for them to market their products and be compensated accordingly. Crafters are given options for extending their product endeavor in the market by comparing the relative attractiveness of growth plans that use existing products and markets vs. new ones and the risk associated with each (Peterdy, 2023).

Personal Fulfillment and Satisfaction in the Handicraft Industry. Career satisfaction is the joy people experience due to both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of their work, such as compensation, opportunity for growth, and professional development. It contrasts with job satisfaction, characterized as a pleasant or positive emotional state brought on by an evaluation of one's employment or professional experiences. Because it offers many options to discover one's abilities and talents, it is one of the finest strategies to end unemployment (Colosushandicraftadmin, 2013). Women who stay at home and are unemployed can use their free time to learn handicraft skills to make a nice living. The level of your abilities, resources, and the amount of money you invest in your craft business will all affect your ability to generate income.

Regarding the study of Belen, Manloctao (2013) noted that when unique handicrafts are produced with expertise, confidence, and excitement, they provide an artisan with a great deal of personal satisfaction. It has been claimed that there is no room for the development of unhappiness, boredom, petty concern, anxiety, or jealousy when the "mind and the hands are occupied with the creation of something useful and attractive." In this situation, handicrafts are therapeutic. Handicrafts are an excellent outlet for us at this age of adolescence for this reason alone, allowing us to channel our youthful energy and creative urges into useful activities. Channeling these creative urges into practical activities may be developed using Ansoff Matrix as it may help analyze plans and evaluate growth initiatives (Peterdy, 2023). As said above, it can develop intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of their work, such as compensation, growth opportunities, and professional development.

Handicrafts as a Source of Income and Livelihood. In this study, a sustainable livelihood method has been used to quantify the livelihood impact of craft sales as one of the many livelihood options that supplement subsistence farming. According to research by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), the handicraft sector employs around 7 million individuals, the majority of whom are women and come from

underrepresented groups Das (2018). According to Dar and Parrey (2013), the handcrafted business has enormous potential since it attracts millions of artisans' attention, including established crafters and recent recruits. For Bhat and Yadav (2016), the craft industry has greatly risen as a source of employment, raised national income, and become a key export resource. Nowadays, many Filipinos already work in industries like this, and as time passes, the handicraft sector has become the primary source of income for most households (Filipino Culture and Products, 2018). It has created jobs all around the nation, particularly now that the items have already expanded and are being exported outside. Japan, the United States, Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, and Canada are a few nations that have been importing Philippine goods. Accordingly, Ansoff Matrix can be one way of growing the handicraft business, especially since it can help local owners to expand their market. By assisting them in better comprehending various growth opportunities, they can better weigh their options. A growth marketing plan can be implemented in one of two ways, according to Ansoff: either by changing the product or the market (Joshi, 2021).

5.5 Concluding Remarks

This study focused on the challenges faced by handicraft businesses in Boston and Cateel Davao Oriental, which included challenges with selling their products or attracting customers. They felt as if their hard work was not enough; their abilities were not enough to catch every buyer's attention; the hardship of handling their time by balancing work and studies, being unable to accommodate all orders, unable to produce large quantities of products, and difficulty in handling high demand.

With this study, the researchers could observe informants' first-hand work. As individuals mainly interested in this field, the research opened our minds to the realities of the handicraft business. It showed the researchers the different facets and experiences of people in this industry, which helped elicit a glimpse of an understanding of small businesses in general. The researchers also felt a sense of empathy upon witnessing these crafters' hard work and dedication in crafting the products for more than the income they earned; the sense of fulfillment and satisfaction etched on their faces is invaluable. Through conducting this research, issues, and aspects in the handicraft industry are unraveled. Hence it is only appropriate for the government to listen to the call of these people and for future generations to delve deeper into the topics and issues raised in this research.

Every challenge of this study there are unwelcomed surprise in ourselves as researchers. As a student who are rely to our family's financial resources, we are working extremely hard to put this study success, it was never simple for us to reach out to other informants because of the cost of transportations, it was very hard in budgeting money for as to go to our informants location among others factors. Those challenges and struggles we encountered through this research are terrible. However, in some point in making this study the most unwanted surprise we never expected in conducting this study is that our relationship towards each other were also challenges, but unfortunately, we decided that we have to pull-through our personal matters to pursue this study.

Meanwhile, this study has shed light on the significant challenges handicraft businesses encounter in the face of evolving market demands. The findings reveal that Handicraft businesses face challenges meeting client expectations, which can be addressed through strategies and initiatives. Moreover, this study provides practical solutions to address the identified challenges and improve the resilience and competitiveness of handicraft businesses. It also highlights the importance of ongoing research initiatives and targeted training programs to deepen our understanding of the needs and aspirations of handicraft businesses. Consequently, this study contributes to the broader goal of sustaining and advancing the handicraft sector.

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