

Original Research Article

Strategies, Challenges, and Consequences of Crafts Based on Tourism Development Using the Grounded Theory*

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Abstract Handicraft art has many spiritual and material values, which is one of the essential components of cultural tourism. A society is definitely on the path of growth and development if art is one of the ways to expand cultural and economic development. Our country, with its diverse and high-quality handicrafts, can be among the leading countries in the tourism industry, but it also faces challenges. This article aims to identify the strategies and consequences of handicrafts in the development of the cultural tourism industry using grounded theory and via open and in-depth interviews and the study of related articles and documents. The research analyzes the subject during three stages open coding, axial, and selective coding using data analysis software (MAXQDA). The obtained results show that the variety of cultural and artistic products in the country can make a great contribution to the non-oil economy. If the export of handicrafts is put on the agenda, it will be profitable. The important point here is that the industry has a dialectical relationship with tourism, and handicrafts are an important part of the tourism industry and are closely related to it. The output of the model showed that the participation of villagers, artists, and cultural artisans is largely dependent on government support. For example, the import of new and diverse workshop equipment requires bank and monetary facilities as well as the support of governmental and semi-governmental cultural organizations. Also, the existence of a comprehensive system and specialized websites in the field of handicrafts is one of the important needs of this field, which will lead to the production of cultural wealth the growth of the art economy, and the elimination of unemployment in the country. Also, the existence of a comprehensive system and specialized websites in the field of handicrafts is needed seriously, which results in the production of cultural wealth the growth of the art economy, and the elimination of unemployment in the country. The result of the development of handicrafts will contribute to the development of the economy of culture, strengthening of national pride, and gross national growth.

Keywords | Culture, Cultural industries, Cultural tourism, Grounded theory.

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Introduction | Handicraft knowledge is the strength of art (Niedderer & Townsend, 2015). Handicrafts are a great opportunity to enrich culture and preserve cultural heritage (Csapo, 2012). Handicrafts are one of the oldest achievements (Moradzadeh, Yaghoubi & Jila, 2021), express the art, taste, and culture of a nation, and have a lot of fusion with the history, tradition, geographical environment, and consumption needs of people (Sorayayi & Atf, 2013, 20). Handicrafts mean creating new job opportunities, i.e., currency acquisition (Alvani & Pirouzbakht, 2005, 123). Nowadays, to improve people's living standards and economic mobility, it is inevitable to find an alternative to using indigenous and local resources (Black & Cobbinah, 2018, 81). Handicrafts are one of the important factors in the gross domestic product and creating employment in the country (Vazifedoust, 2013) and have a significant impact on the country's economy (Ansari & Koupal, 2021, 52). To be present in global markets, quality should not be considered only, but paying attention to the product name (Bendixen, Bukasa & Abratt, 2004) and its brand to improve the economic status of handicrafts (John, 2014). Today, brand and name are part of business success (Kotler, 2012). Cultivation in handicrafts can bring significant economic progress (Ansari & Khalili, 2020, 53). What we have available today in handicrafts is the memory of the past in the form of valuable historical treasures that deserve to be kept alive (Shayestefar, 2013). Due to its familiarity with handicraft art, Iran is one of the few countries that has the largest variety of handicraft products and a high potential for tourism in the world, which can play a significant role in the fields of economy, culture, tourism industry and attracting tourists (*ibid.*, 106). Tourists' lack of familiarity with the handicrafts of different regions is one of the challenges of tourism development (Shabani, Mohammadi & Mahdavi Hajilui, 2022, 156) and the promotion and development of handicrafts improves the standard of living (John, 2014) and economic development options should not be limited (Nair & Whitelaw, 2015). Iran's handicrafts have diversity and abundance (Yavari, 2021, 14) and are among the leading countries in the world, which is an important factor in attracting tourists (*ibid.*, 2021, 64-66). The production of handicrafts will lead to economic prosperity, the expansion of the tourism industry, and cultural dissemination, and the development of tourism as a cultural phenomenon will create enough opportunities for cultural exchange and dissemination between the tourist and the host community (Papoli Yazdi & Saqai, 2012, 88). In addition to the export of cultural goods, handicrafts play an important role in the tourism economy, which leads to family businesses

in different regions of the country (Shabani et al., 2022, 160). Based on this, the purpose of this article is to analyze the strategy and consequences of handicrafts and cultural industries in the tourism industry, which was conducted with an in-depth and semi-structured interview with 28 experts and stakeholders in this field using grounded theory.

Research Background

By redefining the contemporary handicrafts of Iran with a future research approach, Houshiar (2021) believes that handicrafts have always served human beings to maintain and continue human life, and efforts should be made for their growth and development. Shahriari, Athari & Amini (2022) addressed the role of international developments and their effect on handicrafts by researching the impact of the JCPOA on the development of contemporary handicrafts. Shabani et al. (2022) examined the position of handicrafts in the development of Mazandaran tourism and pointed out the need for new technologies in the market. Ansari and Koupal (2021) believe that investigating the factors affecting the presence of Iranian handicrafts in world exhibitions can lead to solidarity among artisans as well as cultural dissemination. Rezaei, Karimi & Ebrahimpour (2020) examined the strategies, causes, and challenges of cultural development with the approach of tourism development, and addressed the role of cultural development in helping economic and cultural development. He claims that by knowing the capacities of a precise strategy and knowing its challenges, it is possible to be a pioneer in cultural and tourism development. Hosseini, Sami'i, and Eshraghi (2020) examined the creation of entrepreneurship opportunities for handicrafts from the perspective of sustainable development, and in it, they expanded on the economic and cultural dimensions of society along with innovative technology for the creation of entrepreneurship opportunities for handicrafts. Bahrami (2019) examined the role of rural industries on the economic development and job creation of rural society and found a meaningful relationship between the development of rural industries and the economic development and employment of rural household. He also showed that the development of handicrafts causes an increase in the level of income, job creation and a decrease in the unemployment level in the affected villages (*ibid.*, 82). Amini and Mazrou'i (2018) considered the conceptualization of the tourism business model in handicrafts of Isfahan to have the highest potential of the country in the field of handicrafts and they believe that the city of Isfahan is successful in attracting tourists and also remind the specialized and skilled forces to attend to this sector. Vazin and Zamani (2020) dealt with the factors

influencing the behavior of handicrafts among foreign and domestic tourists and the importance of buying souvenirs, and they considered two important factors, quality, and authenticity, influencing the buying of tourists, although, of course, easy carrying and practical value were more important for foreign tourists. Mousavi, Ghafourian Shagerdi, Sereshoumi & Sepahvand, (2019) discussed the development of handicrafts through branding in Isfahan and pointed to the high potential of Isfahan in handicrafts, and the year 2014 when the city was selected as the city of handicrafts and the two factors of quality and price are considered to be effective on buying handicrafts in Isfahan. Toghrayi & Rezvani (2016) studied the organization of cultural heritage, handicrafts, and tourism, which refers to cultural and economic development and its role in architecture and urban planning, which leads to investment and economic profitability, and at the end, a general image of the status of institutions related to the Ministry of Cultural Heritage was drawn in an article titled 'Handicrafts and Tourism under the Title of Tourism and Handicrafts'. Agha Dawoudi (2015) investigated the handicrafts manifested in the Chaharbagh Mosque-Madrasa of Isfahan and its importance and has addressed important questions such as its typology and important features, as well as the arts hidden within it and the importance of this building for cultural and historical tourists.

Theoretical Foundations

• Handicrafts

Handicrafts are one of the most critical sectors of the world economy and have deep roots in the beliefs, customs, and culture of the society (Ahmadi Gandomani, Sadeghi & Basri, 2022, 7-8). Artistic and creative products are made by hand with natural and high-quality raw materials that are rooted in the customs and traditions of that region (Taghibeygi, Mousavi Matloub & Mirakzadeh, 2011) Each province and region, due to its natural reserves, geographical features, industrial talents, and artistic taste, has its creations and products, which in some cases make that region or province famous, and shape part of the identity of that region. Of course, it should be noted that modern technology, machine industries, and mass production will destroy the prosperity of handicrafts as commercial goods. The mass production of a factory in one day is more than the annual production of handicrafts in another region of the country, which undoubtedly captures the daily consumption market of the people. There are no longer the merchants of Saadi's time who take Persian sulfur to China, Chinese bowls to Rome, Roman diba to India, Indian steel to Aleppo, crystal to Yemen, and Yemenite stone to Persia because they know very well that no profit (Rouh al-Amini, 2020, 154-155).

• Definition of handicrafts

Handicrafts are a group of products and applied and

livelihood arts of human history, culture, and civilization to bring along a part of the beliefs, customs, traditions, and native culture of that region in addition to meeting economic needs (Houshiar, 2021). Handicrafts are one of the historical and cultural attractions of that region (Mousavi et al., 2019, 227) and it is applied to all decorative and applied arts (Ahmadi Gandomani et al., 2022, 9). And it is one of the identity and cultural indicators of every society (Arman, Ale ali & Zakerin, 2021, 150). Handicrafts have both a practical and an aesthetic aspect (Mirnasl, 2008). According to UNESCO, handicrafts are considered to be made entirely by hand or with the help of hand tools. The involvement of machine tools in the production of handicrafts is accepted to the extent that it does not negate the direct presence of hands or human power in the respective productions. Handicrafts should be made from natural raw materials and be able to be produced in unlimited quantities. Such artifacts should be beautiful, innovative, artistic, or consumer, and while describing cultural-artistic concepts, they should have decorative, traditional, religious, social, or meaningful symbols (Hajipour Shoushtari, 2006, 165); (Table 1).

• The importance of handicrafts in tourism

In the current era, our society should move in a direction where sustainable development and all-round sustainable development are at the top of all its policies and programs (Ghaffari, Younessi & Rafiei, 2016). Achieving these lofty goals and the development policy depends on the exploitation, learning, and use of new sciences, techniques, and technologies (Pourezat, Kiani & Pourezat, 2014). Artistic activities, as one of the most attractive phenomena of life and the most sublime and perfect way of expression, can lead them to virtue and perfection, which is related to two important and basic categories, i.e., the cultural industry and the economy of art (Imani Khoshkhou, 2008, 78). Today, the tourism industry is considered among the most profitable businesses in the world, and trade, cultural industry, and art economy are considered a significant part of this profitable business. Since every province in the country has its handicrafts, this cultural and artistic diversity with the support of the government can play a significant role in meeting unemployment and gross domestic development. One of the important reasons for the positive aspects of handicrafts is the importance of these arts in meeting unemployment, that these sources of income from sustainable tourism have a direct effect on three economic, social, and environmental domains (Ansari & Khalili, 2020). Today, with the extensive facilities that exist in the field of domestic sales and export of handicrafts to foreign countries, it is possible to create jobs and income for the surplus labor force in the

Table 1. Dimensions and components of cultural indicators from UNESCO's point of view. Source: Abdi & Kavousi, 2015.

Dimensions	Parameters
Economic	Added value, economic activities in GDP, employment in the cultural sector, Budget and cultural expenses
Education	Inclusive education for all, diversity and cultural creativity in the first two years of high school, education of experts in the field of culture
Cultural heritage	Preservation of cultural heritage, value of cultural heritage
Communication	Freedom of expression Access and use of the Internet and diversity of media
Governance and institutions	Standardized frameworks for culture Institutional and political frameworks for the distribution of cultural superstructures Civil society participation in cultural governance
Social participation	Participation in cultural activities, trust, freedom of self-determination
Levels of gender equality, understanding of gender equality	Gender equality

agricultural sector and prevent excessive migration to the cities. The production of handicrafts is based on domestic industries, more than 90% of the value of data in this field, which mainly includes the labor force, consumable raw materials, and work tools, can be provided inside the country and naturally. Any increase in the amount of production and sale of handmade products has a direct effect on the Gross National Product (GNP) (Hatefi, 2008, 76-77).

The role of cultural industries in the general development The issue of culture and cultural industries requires long-term planning (Shadalouyi, 2018). Explaining the role of cultural industries requires a comprehensive and complete understanding of the importance of culture (Fig. 1); (Salehi Amiri, 2016). In the general development of the country, especially among the elites, issues such as culture and cultural industries are considered strategies (Karubi, 2003). In the real world, when cultural industries are formed, there is a market for cultural goods (Kamalabadi, 2008). This market's demand should be directed inward. When the demand is directed inward, a transformation is created within the culture of families. This happens when the main culture-creating institutions (broadcasting, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, cultural heritage, handicrafts and tourism, education, higher education, municipalities, etc.) fulfill their mission and meaningful communication between people and form cultural industries. At that time, it

can be said that the society has the potential to offer its cultural industries (handicrafts) in international markets as well, the output of which, in addition to economic income, also ends in cultural dissemination. This is where the role of governments becomes important to respond to the demands (Bonyanian, 2008, 4-6).

• Culture industry

The term "culture industry" was first used by Adorno and Horkheimer, two of the most famous and important people of the Frankfurt School. According to them, the characteristic of today's culture is its industrial aspect, which is of special importance. This culture was formed in industrialized countries and then spread to other continents and the world. According to the words of French researcher Augustin Gijart, during the last thirty years, it is as if more than a hundred years have passed and the face of the cultural life of the people of the world has undergone a fundamental transformation. The development of the tourism industry can be called the imposition of the cultural industry. This industry is mainly owned by industrialized and Western countries. About Western culture, Abdul Karim Soroush considers the current state of our culture to be influenced by three national or Iranian, Western, and religious or Islamic cultures. According to him, we have been familiar with Western culture for more than a century and a half; Western science and philosophy and values along with political institutions, technology, etc. They found their

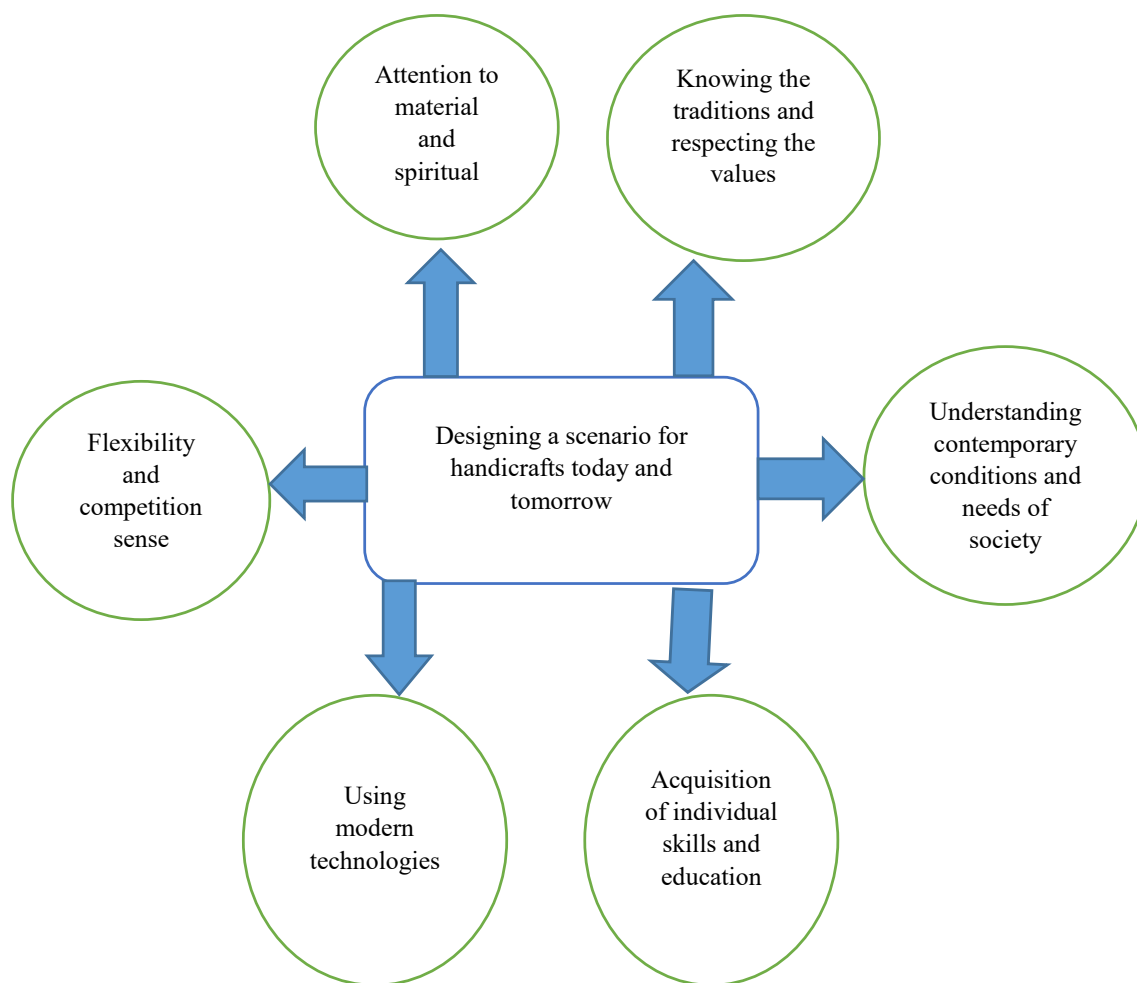


Fig. 1. Factors contributing to designing the scenario of contemporary handicrafts in Iran. Source: Houshiar, 2021, 27.

way among us reached our homes and left an impact on our minds and hearts as well (Rezaei, Karimi & Ebrahimpour, 2021, 52).

• **The need for economic prosperity in handicrafts and tourism**

Tourism is a vital driver of the economy (Vahidzadegan & Zangiabadi, 2021) and has a high competitive advantage in its target areas and destinations (Isa, Ariyanto & Kiumarsi, 2020). Handicrafts need private investment owners (Shayestefar, 2013) and must have the capacity to accept and create different works that can invest in each of these works and provide their production, marketing, and export (Dalir, 2003). Handicrafts are an important part of the tourism economy. Trade organizations and national trade policymakers can identify artists and hand over small production units (knowledge base) to them so that this method leads to the privatization of handicrafts (Shayestefar, 2013, 117). Of course, in our country, despite the diversity and high quality of international standards, handicrafts are facing serious challenges (Kalantari, Chabchian & Karami, 2013), many of the

components in Fig. 2 were repeated by the interviewees and they emphasized that the existing challenges cause Slowness in handicrafts have become common sense.

• **Positive characteristics of direct jobs in the field of tourism**

Tourism brings prosperity to the economy, culture, and functional and subsistence products, and in addition to meeting material needs, it affects culture (Houshiar, 2021, 20). One of the important strategies among countries is the expansion of tourism in deprived areas, which has a lot of potential for the expansion of tourism, which causes employment among households (Motamedi, Fakhar, & Mafi, 2020, 74). Most jobs related to tourism are relatively easy, these jobs do not require a lot of skill and training (Mahdavi, 2015) and they require human power more than capital (Richards & Wilson, 2007). Jobs related to tourism do not require much initial capital compared to other economic sectors and provide new opportunities for young people, people without skills, and those who seek to increase their income (Nourbakhsh & Akbarpour Saeskanroud, 2009, 26-27).

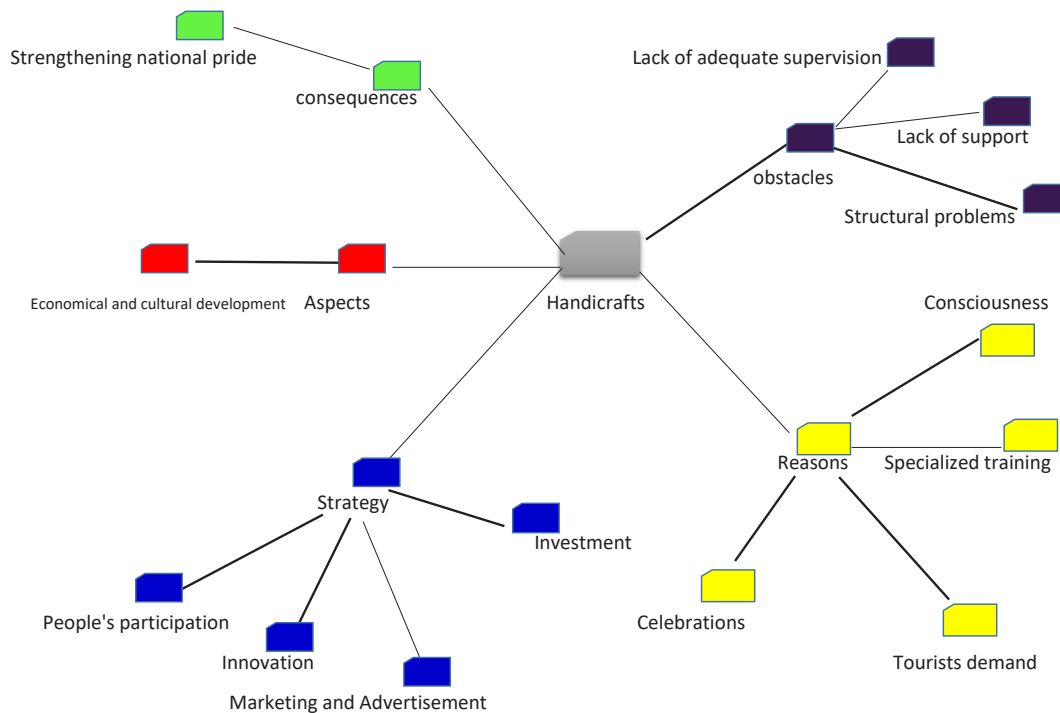


Fig. 2. Handicraft challenges. Source: Sorayayi & Atf, 2013, 26.

The characteristics of tourism and the jobs related to it have caused tourism to play a supporting role in the local economy to play the main role in the local economy (ibid., 28).

Research Method

This research is qualitative and was conducted using the grounded theory method of Strauss and Corbin. The statistical population of this research is the beneficiaries, executive agents, managers, and experts in the fields of crafts and cultural heritage, and specialists in various artistic fields. The snowball sampling method was used until theoretical saturation was reached in the interviews. A semi-structured and an in-depth interview were conducted with 28 people (Table 2). In open coding, 384 concepts were extracted, which were separated line by line. In the phase of axial coding, these concepts were categorized and coded as core categories based on semantic similarity, using the qualitative data analysis software (MAXQDA).

Research Findings

By studying related articles, books, interviews, lectures, and documents related to handicrafts and the tourism industry, the grounded theory method of the Strauss and Corbin model was used. A semi-structured and in-depth interview was conducted with 28 beneficiaries of the field of handicrafts, artists, university professors,

handicraft entrepreneurs' cultural tourists, etc., and the codes in Table 3 were extracted, coded, and categorized.

- Strategy: People's participation (villagers, artists, cultural artisans) / equipment innovation/marketing and advertising/creation of local and new models/ encouragement to invest / importance of virtual space/ elimination of unemployment/reduction of delinquency
- Reasoning conditions: Creating awareness among handicraft artists, especially in small towns and villages/ adaptation of cultural products to the development of needs/ satisfying the demand of cultural and art-loving tourists/ holding domestic and foreign exhibitions and festivals/ training skilled human forces (artists)
- Obstacles and challenges (interventionist): Lack of adequate supervision by the relevant ministries/ lack of quality raw materials/ lack of support for small home businesses/structurally severe problems in the field of handicrafts/ lack of a comprehensive website/ lack of entry of foreign tourists/ inability of domestic tourists to buy/ high cost of energy in small and large workshops/ lack of specialized exhibitions/lack of education and familiarization of people with handicrafts.
- Fields: Recognition of cultural and artistic capacities/ emphasis on sustainable specialized education/ development of creative understanding and understanding of values/
- Consequences: Cultural and economic development/ sense of national pride/ gross national growth/ cultural

Table 2. Interviewees. Source: Authors.

No	Age	Sex	Major
1	30	female	MA, carpet weaver
2	30	female	Associate Degree, housewife
3	51	female	Professor in culture and art
4	32	female	Bachelor of Architecture, Active in the field of tourism
5	27	female	Bachelor of culture
6	37	female	Bachelor of literature, active in Cultural Industries
7	40	female	Professor in the tourism department
8	40	female	MA, artist
9	47	female	MA, entrepreneur
10	31	female	Bachelor, housewife, handicraft entrepreneur
11	36	female	MA in handicrafts
12	43	female	Bachelor, Working in an art workshop
13	80	male	Professor
14	36	male	Bachelor in tourism
15	49	male	MA, writer, and cultural activist
16	41	male	Bachelor in tourism and tour leader
17	62	male	MA, painter
18	50	male	MA, cinema director
19	33	male	MA student in tourism
20	25	male	Bachelor of painting
21	37	male	Bachelor in building, Interested in handicraft
22	55	male	Researcher and professor in culture
23	40	male	Professor in tourism
24	59	male	MA, entrepreneur
25	45	male	MA, retired, shopkeeper of handicraft
26	60	male	Professor, art researcher
27	29	male	Student of tourism bachelor
28	32	male	Bachelor in cultural management

identity/ development of local and indigenous arts (Fig 3& 4).

Conclusion and interpretation of data

Based on the collected data, it has been determined that the participation of villagers, artists, and cultural artisans is largely dependent on government support because the import of new and diverse workshop equipment and new models that lead to innovation requires bank facilities and the support of governmental and semi-governmental cultural organizations. One of the lecturers in the field of handicrafts believes that this will lead to “the training of expert forces and lecturers in art workshops and the training of pragmatic experts”. As an example, the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee supports handicraft producers as much as possible and introduces them to

the operating banks to get the necessary facilities. Of course, there are many structural problems in this field, which can be pointed to the existence of many parallel organizations, “the lack of strategic vision in managers and the lack of clarity of tourism goals and policies, the sensory needs and mental satisfaction of artists and art lovers, and the suitability of cultural products with the development of needs”. One of the beneficiaries of this area believes that “the culture and tourism industry needs more and more effective support from the government” because the current support for handicrafts and tourism either does not exist or does not meet the needs of the producers and beneficiaries of the tourism field. The development and growth of cultural industries, including handicrafts and tourism, require continuous and serious investment. “The poor marketing and advertising status of

Table 3. Categories and concepts of core codes. Source: Authors.

Axial coding	Codes	Signs
Strategies	People's participation	Participation of villagers, artists, and cultural craftsmen
	Innovation	Importing new and varied workshop equipment and new models Necessary facilities for importing equipment and facilities
	Marketing and advertisement	Poor marketing and advertising status of handicrafts and cultural tourism Lack of integrated website The importance of virtual space
	Investment	Cultural wealth, economy of art Cultural richness Eliminate unemployment Reducing crime
	informing	More information in the community, handicraft artists especially in small towns and villages Meeting the needs of cultural and art-loving tourists Educational use of historical and cultural places No informing about tourist attractions
	Reasons	Holding exhibitions and festivals
Tourists' demands		Meeting sensory needs and mental satisfaction of artists and art lovers Suitability of cultural products with the development of needs
education		Training of pragmatic specialists Training of specialists and teachers of art workshops Lack of experienced and specialized manpower People's lack of familiarity with handicrafts People's lack of familiarity with the spiritual value hidden in handwork
Lack of adequate supervision		Lack of sufficient supervision and lack of necessary facilities in the field of promotion of handicrafts
Obstacles	Structural problems	Absence of plans for relevant ministries Lack of quality raw materials No entry of foreign tourists Inability to buy domestic tourists The existence of multiple parallel organizations
	not support	Non-cooperation of banks for low-interest loans High cost of energy in small and large workshops Lack of support for small home businesses
Aspects	Recognition of cultural and artistic capacities	Cultural, artistic, historical, and natural potentials in the country Emphasis on sustainable specialized training in government, semi-government, and private centers
	Growth	The development of artistic understanding and the understanding of the values hidden in arts and crafts
Consequences	Cultural and economic development	Distance from the oil industry Understanding the economy of art by people The spread of culture and art in society Changing people's attitudes Moving towards new technologies
	Strengthening national pride	The feeling of being Eliminate weaknesses Acquaintance of children with ancient art and their ancestors Mental health

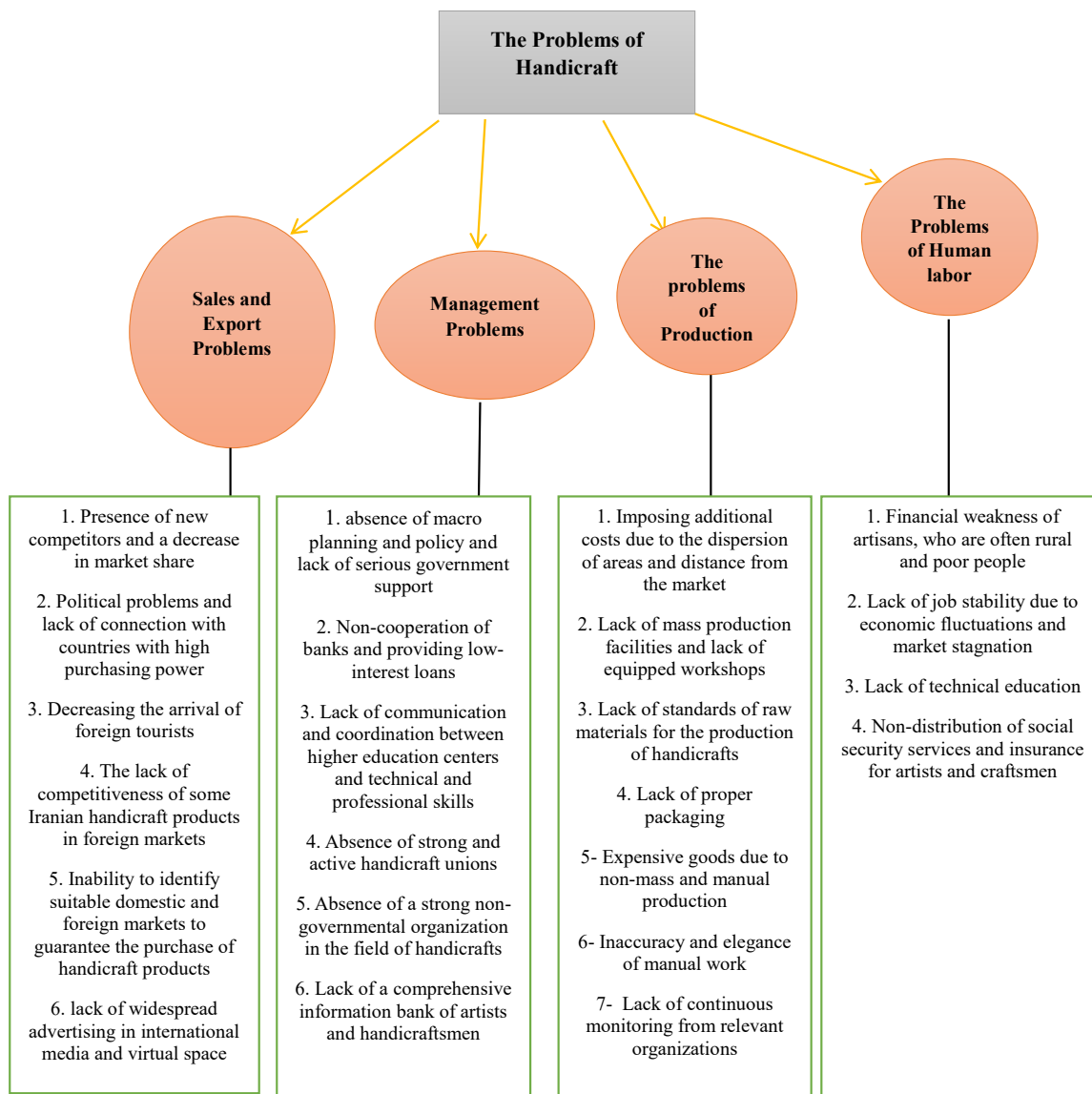


Fig. 3. Map of relationships between variables. Source: Authors.

handicrafts and cultural tourism and the lack of an integrated website” are also among the necessities and deficiencies in the country. The existence of a comprehensive system and specialized websites in the field of handicrafts is one of the important needs of this field, which will lead to cultural wealth and the growth of the art economy, cultural richness, reducing delinquency and eliminating unemployment, especially among young men and women who are artists and art lovers. The consequences of the development of tourism and handicrafts will lead to the development of the economy of culture, strengthening national pride and gross national growth. Throughout the history of human life, applied indigenous arts had a determining role in economic growth, and cultural trading in the market was carried out with these goods, which was mentioned in the theoretical foundations. Handicraft art is undoubtedly a reflection of a nation’s culture, art, history, and values, and it is considered

one of the important components of cultural tourism. Now that the sanctions are putting more pressure on us than ever, we should know that the reduction of oil dependence is very important because the more the government moves away from the oil economy, the closer it gets to the oil-free economy. Now that the sanctions are putting more pressure on us than ever, we should know that the reduction of oil dependence is very important because the more the government moves away from the oil economy, the more approaches to the oil-free economy. Increasing non-oil exports, including privatization, cultural industries, handicrafts, and the tourism industry, can be an alternative to oil. The variety of cultural and artistic products in the country can be a great contribution to the oil-free economy. Taking into account the geographical and geopolitical position of Iran in the world and its attractive historical, cultural, and natural attractions, cultural and medical

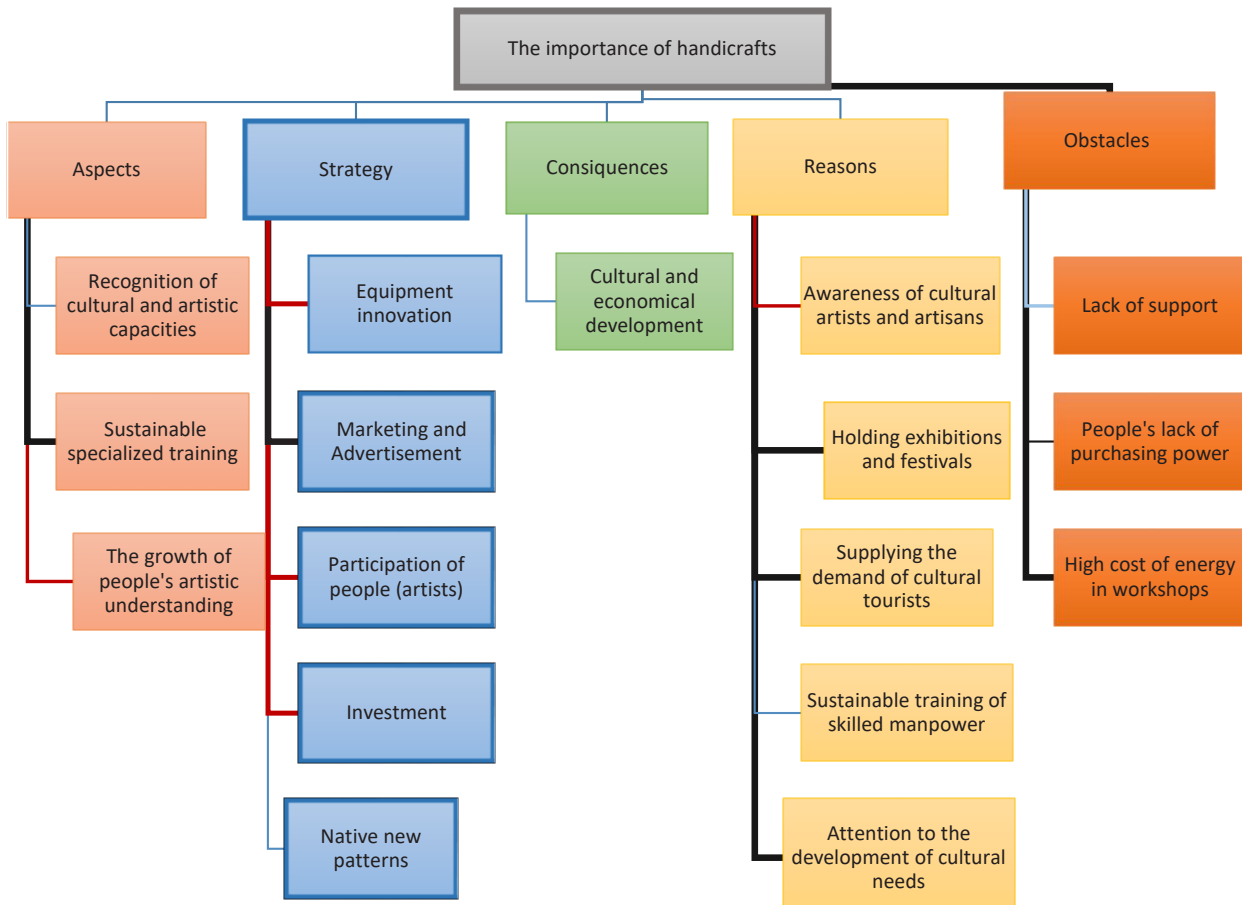


Fig. 4. Data analysis with software (MAXQDA). Source: Authors.

tourism, and handicrafts have taken an important step in the oil-free economy policy. Although handicraft is a simple industry and requires little cost, its export will be profitable and the important point here is that this industry has a dialectical relationship with tourism and is an important part of the tourism industry. The tourism industry leads to the expansion of the export of handicrafts. Handicrafts help the country's economy, but we should not forget this very important point that the export of handicrafts helps to diffuse culture because it contains a part of our identity and values, which is transported around the world by tourists and its cultural value cannot be compared with its economic value, this is where the importance of exporting handicrafts in a multifaceted manner is seen, which has both economic and cultural importance.

Suggestions

The fluidity and attractiveness of cultural research require everyone's effort. University professors, researchers, and students should prioritize research in the field of crafts.

- Necessary banking and other facilities should be provided to women and villagers for the development and production of handicrafts.
- Training of specialized forces in the form of training workshops in different regions and villages should be carried out by relevant organizations.
- Creating a marketing network to sell products produced especially in villages
- Creating a local and indigenous app for the virtual space and internet platform for the production of cultural industries, especially handicrafts

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