

Assessing Marketing Strategies Used

By Woodcraft Artisans From Paete, Laguna

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Abstract

This study examined the marketing strategies used by woodcraft artisans in Paete, Laguna, intending to determine how digital advancements can enhance the promotion and sustainability of the town's traditional woodcarving industry. Despite Paete's long-standing reputation as the "Carving Capital of the Philippines," many artisans continue to depend on traditional methods such as word-of-mouth referrals, walk-in customers, and local collaborative marketing. Using a quantitative, descriptive–correlational research design, data were gathered from 108 purposively selected artisans to assess their current marketing practices and to evaluate the effects of digital tools such as social media, online marketing, and e-commerce. Findings showed that while traditional marketing remains widely practiced and valued, artisans recognize the strong potential of digital platforms in expanding their market reach. Respondents agreed that social media platforms significantly increase visibility, attract younger audiences, and provide effective ways to showcase craftsmanship. Results further revealed that digital marketing strategies contribute to improved customer engagement, broader market access, and enhanced brand identity. Statistical analysis confirmed a significant relationship between the artisans' current marketing strategies and the perceived effectiveness of digital marketing on business performance. However, challenges such as limited digital literacy and unfamiliarity with online selling were also identified, indicating the need for stronger support and training. Based on these results, the study concludes that a combined approach integrating traditional methods with digital marketing strategies is essential for strengthening Paete's woodcraft industry in a modern, technology-driven marketplace. To support this transition, the study proposes a digital marketing action plan that focuses on skills building, collaboration with local government and tourism offices, content development for social media, and participation in online marketplaces.

Keywords: Woodcraft Artisans, Marketing Strategies

1. Introduction

The town of Paete, Laguna, justly earns its title as the "Carving Capital of the Philippines", possessing a rich and invaluable woodcarving tradition dating back to the 16th century, with its name derived from the Tagalog word for chisel, paet. This deep generational expertise forms the primary source of livelihood for Paetenians, who produce intricate religious icons, furniture, and decorative items that embody profound artistic heritage. In today's fast-paced environment, the internet and digital tools are no longer supplemental but essential for businesses to maintain competitiveness, enabling them to significantly expand their audience reach at a low cost. Recent studies emphasize that for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the Philippines, digital marketing, including social media, content marketing, and e-commerce, is crucial for visibility, customer engagement, and sales performance in the "new normal" (Posadas et. al., 2022). However,

the long-term sustainability of this woodcarving tradition now faces critical contemporary obstacles. These include a documented decline in the number of active carvers practicing the trade and the pervasive effects of industrial modernization (Bayocot, 2021), leading to a stark reality: the generational expertise is fading, and there is a genuine risk that no one will be able to continue the Paete woodcarving tradition in the future. In response to these emerging threats, the proponents of this study conducted an initial interview within the Municipality of Paete, engaging directly with the Tourism-OIC, Mr. Gary V. Trencio, to identify the primary challenges that have been accelerating this decline. This foundational inquiry revealed that while the quality and cultural value of Paete's woodcrafts are exceptional, the reliance on traditional advertising methods such as word-of-mouth, reselling, and physical stores severely limits the artisans' ability to reach wider, modern consumer markets and ensure the economic viability necessary for the craft's future. The artisans consistently emphasized the critical need for expanded market access. To safeguard the long-term continuity of this heritage, it is imperative to address not only these market limitations but also to actively encourage and introduce the woodcarving craft to the youth and women to revitalize and broaden the artisan field. Furthermore, digital platforms are increasingly vital for promoting traditional Filipino crafts, allowing artisans to connect with younger audiences through strategic storytelling and showcasing the authenticity of their work, which helps preserve cultural narratives while meeting modern consumer preferences (Pore, 2025). The ability to leverage social media, online marketplaces, and digital storytelling is key to overcoming the limitations of traditional marketing, thus linking the sustainability of the woodcarving tradition directly to the successful adoption of digital strategies. Given these challenges, this study aimed to provide the foundational data required for effective intervention. Specifically, this research aimed to identify, analyze, and evaluate the marketing strategies currently employed by Paete's woodcraft artisans. By understanding what strategies are being used and how effective they are, the study sought to pinpoint key challenges, reveal significant market opportunities in the online field, and ultimately provide an evidence-based foundation for strategic recommendations that will help the artisans overcome existing marketing limitations, significantly expand their customer reach, increase sales, and ensure the long-term economic viability and cultural preservation of their generational heritage craft. With all the facts stated above, the proponents undertook this study entitled "Assessing Marketing Strategies Used By Woodcraft Artisans From Paete, Laguna." The research study entitled "Assessing Marketing Strategies Used By Woodcraft Artisans From Paete, Laguna," strongly aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), primarily focusing on SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. By analyzing and proposing improvements to the artisans' marketing strategies, the project directly promotes sustained and inclusive economic growth, aiming to secure higher, more stable incomes and ensure productive, decent work for the people involved in the wood carving industry in Paete. Furthermore, the project addresses SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities by safeguarding the rich cultural heritage of Paete's wood carving tradition, ensuring the craft remains economically viable and contributes to sustainable cultural tourism. Finally, the research relates to SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, as effective marketing can encourage both the artisans to practice ethical and sustainable sourcing of wood, and consumers to value high-quality, culturally significant artisanal products, thereby promoting more responsible production and consumption patterns within the region (United Nations, 2025).

2. Methodology

Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive correlational research design to systematically explore the marketing environment of woodcraft artisans in Paete, Laguna, Philippines. This methodological approach was tactically appropriate with the research goals, developing a thorough understanding of prevailing practices, digital marketing integration, and interaction between marketing approaches, business performance, and tourism interaction. According to Quaranta and Spencer (2015), descriptive correlational research aimed to depict the inherent connections between different factors as they existed in the real world. This approach allowed researchers to identify patterns and associations among variables without manipulating them or trying to prove that one caused another. Essentially, it was a tool for uncovering relationships and making predictions based on observed data without altering the natural flow of events.

The study was carried out in the town of Paete in the province of Laguna, Philippines. Known as the "Carving Capital of the Philippines," Paete is a unique town on the eastern bank of Laguna de Bay, well known for its woodcarving heritage and excellent craftsmanship dating back centuries. The town's reputation was closely connected with the arts, with craftsmanship and 39 techniques passed from generation to generation of woodcarvers. These customary practices remained alive in the community, and Paete was, therefore, an important and culturally significant location for learning about woodcraft and its social effects.

Population

The respondents of the study were the local woodcarvers from Paete, Laguna, as they were the primary practitioners and preservers of the town's rich tradition of woodcarving. These artisans possessed extensive knowledge, skills, and firsthand experiences that were invaluable to the objectives of the research. The study utilized purposive sampling as the sampling technique. According to the recent (2024) official survey conducted by the Municipality of Paete, Laguna, the total population of local artisans and woodcarvers stood at 148 individuals. This figure served as the basis for determining the sample size for the study. The official list of local artisans was obtained by the researchers at the Municipality of Paete with the help of Mr. Mikiel Cadapan, a Tourism Officer of Paete, Laguna. The total population of woodcarvers and artisans identified for the study consisted of 148 individuals. From this population, a sample of 108 respondents was selected, which accounted for 72.97% of the total population. This proportion indicated that a substantial majority of the identified artisans were included in the study, thereby providing sufficient representation to support the reliability and validity of the research findings. The researchers utilized Slovin's formula to determine an appropriate sample size. The computation was based on a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the study's findings.

Research Instrument

The researchers used a set of Likert scale questionnaires; a questionnaire is a tool that consists of a set of questions that were used to gather information from individuals. A survey was a process of collecting data on respondents' attitudes, opinions, or motivations, enhancing the marketing promotion through digital advancement of woodcrafts from Paete's wood carving culture. According to Bhandari and Nikolopoulou (2023), a Likert scale is a rating scale used to measure opinions, attitudes, or behaviors. Questionnaires could be taught as a kind of statement or questions, followed by a series of answer statements, and they could be carried out face-to-face. The Likert scale questionnaire was used to determine the range of possible knowledge of individuals regarding enhancing the marketing promotion through digital advancement of woodcrafts from Paete's wood carving culture. Likert scale questionnaires consisted of statements that were followed by a set of response options, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

Data Gathering Procedure

To obtain reliable and relevant data for this study, a quantitative approach was employed, utilizing a survey questionnaire as the primary instrument. The survey questionnaire was conducted by the researchers to gather data, and it was carried out face-to-face through Google Forms. The data collection process was carefully organized to guarantee both ethical standards and accuracy. First, the researchers obtained permission from the appropriate authorities of Paete, Laguna, including the research advisor, to secure proper authorization and ensure compliance with ethical guidelines. Once approval was granted, the researchers distributed carefully designed questionnaires to the chosen participants. These questionnaires were tailored to gather specific information relevant to the study's objectives, and participants were informed about the purpose of the research. After collecting the data, the researchers meticulously transcribed and organized the responses into a structured format to enable thorough analysis. Throughout the entire process, strict ethical principles were upheld to protect the confidentiality and dignity of all participants.

3. Results and Discussion

The said data were presented in tabular form in accordance with the specific questions posited on the statement of the problem. Marketing Strategies used by Paete's Woodcraft Artisans The marketing strategies employed by Paete's woodcraft artisans encompass traditional, collaborative, and online approaches. Among these, traditional marketing is the most frequently utilized, reflecting the artisans' reliance on community-based methods such as word-of-mouth promotion, walk-in customers, and referrals. Collaborative marketing often involves collaboration with local shops, while online marketing remains the least utilized strategy due to limited digital literacy and resources among the majority of artisans.

Traditional Marketing

	TRADITIONAL MARKETING	MEAN	REMARKS
1.	I rely on word of mouth to promote my woodcraft products.	3.48	Strongly Agree
1.	I rely on walk-in customers and referrals.	3.71	Strongly Agree
1.	I participate in local festivals to help my business's visibility.	2.41	Disagree
	WEIGHTED MEAN	3.20	Effective

Traditional marketing remains the primary strategy used by Paete's woodcraft artisans, particularly through word of mouth and walk-in customers or referrals, both of which are strongly perceived as effective and reliable methods. These approaches thrive in close-knit communities where trust and personal relationships significantly influence purchasing decisions. In contrast, participation in local festivals is less favored due to high costs and uncertain returns, leading artisans to prioritize low-cost, dependable strategies. Overall, while traditional marketing continues to play a vital role, the findings suggest that relying solely on these methods may no longer be sufficient in an increasingly competitive market environment.

Collaborative Marketing

	COLLABORATIVE MARKETING	MEAN	REMARKS
1.	I collaborate with local businesses or tourism offices to promote my products.	2.99	Agree
1.	I have reseller agreements with souvenir shops or partner stores.	3.00	Agree
1.	I participate in local festivals or online marketplaces to reach more customers.	2.49	Disagree
	WEIGHTED MEAN	2.83	Effective

Collaborative marketing is utilized by Paete's woodcraft artisans through partnerships with local businesses, tourism offices, and reseller arrangements, which are generally seen as beneficial in expanding market reach and enhancing product visibility. However, participation in festivals and online marketplaces is less common due to high costs, inconsistent returns, and limited technical knowledge in digital platforms. While collaborative marketing is acknowledged as useful overall, it remains underutilized, indicating opportunities for artisans to further strengthen their market presence by expanding partnerships and improving engagement in broader and more modern marketing channels.

Online Marketing

	ONLINE MARKETING	MEAN	REMARKS
1.	I use social media to market my woodcrafts.	3.15	Agree
1.	I sell my products on online selling platforms (e.g., Shopee, Lazada).	2.35	Disagree
1.	I manage promotions through my own website or business page.	2.74	Agree
	WEIGHTED MEAN	2.75	Effective

Online marketing is the least utilized strategy among Paete's woodcraft artisans, primarily due to limited digital literacy, resources, and confidence in using online tools. While some artisans have begun using social media and business pages to promote their products, they are generally hesitant to engage in e-commerce platforms like Shopee or Lazada due to challenges such as technical skills, logistics, and concerns over online transactions. Although digital marketing is recognized as beneficial for increasing visibility and customer engagement, its adoption remains limited, indicating a need for greater capacity-building to help artisans fully maximize online opportunities.

Effects of Digital Marketing Strategies on the Business Performance of Paete's Woodcraft Artisans

The effects of digital marketing strategies on the business performance of Paete's woodcraft artisans were assessed to understand how online tools and platforms influence sales, customer engagement, and overall business growth. With social media marketing being the least explored, most artisans face limitations due to low digital literacy and restricted access to online resources. Other digital approaches, such as e-commerce platforms and online advertising, are similarly underutilized, which affects the potential impact of digital marketing on their business performance.



Effects of Digital Marketing Strategies in terms of Sales Growth

	SALES GROWTH	MEAN	REMARKS
1.	Digital marketing can help increase my sales.	3.39	Strongly Agree
1.	Using digital marketing strategies can help increase a business's monthly sales.	3.40	Strongly Agree
1.	Digital marketing can improve customer loyalty.	3.26	Strongly Agree
	WEIGHTED MEAN	3.35	Strongly Agree

Respondents strongly agree that digital marketing helps increase sales (3.39), supports monthly sales growth (3.40), and improves customer loyalty (3.26). With a weighted mean of 3.35 (Strongly Agree), it is clear that artisans recognize digital marketing as an effective way to enhance profitability and sustain customer relationships.

Effects of Digital Marketing Strategies in terms of Customer Reach

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	CUSTOMER REACH	MEAN	REMARKS
1.	A business can reach more customers by starting marketing online.	3.49	Strongly Agree
1.	Online promotions are believed to help reach new customer segments	3.47	Strongly Agree
1.	Digital marketing can make it easier for a business to target specific customer groups effectively.	3.39	Strongly Agree
WEIGHTED MEAN		3.45	Strongly Agree

The respondents strongly agree that online platforms help businesses reach more customers (3.49), access new market segments (3.47), and target specific groups effectively (3.39). The weighted mean of 3.45 (Strongly Agree) emphasizes that digital marketing has significantly expanded customer access, making it a valuable strategy for reaching both local and global markets.

Effects of Digital Marketing Strategies in terms of Brand Awareness

	BRAND AWARENESS	MEAN	REMARKS
1.	A business can build stronger connections with customers through social media.	3.50	Strongly Agree
1.	Woodcraft products can be more recognized online.	3.47	Strongly Agree
1.	Digital strategies can make a business more competitive.	3.46	Strongly Agree
WEIGHTED MEAN		3.48	Strongly Agree

Artisans strongly agree that social media helps build stronger customer connections (3.50), enhances recognition of woodcraft products (3.47), and makes businesses more competitive (3.46). With the highest weighted mean of 3.48 (Strongly Agree) among the digital marketing measures, this demonstrates that online presence is highly effective in increasing visibility and strengthening the brand identity of Paete's woodcraft industry.

Relationship of Marketing Strategies of Paete Woodcraft Artisans and the Effects of Digital Marketing on Business Performance

Current and Digital Marketing	R Value	P Value	Decision	Interpretation
	0.480824	0.00001	Reject Ho	Significant

The findings of the study revealed that there is indeed a significant relationship between the current marketing strategies employed by the woodcraft artisans of Paete and the effects of digital marketing on their business performance. The statistical analysis yielded an R value of 0.480824 and a P value of 0.00001, demonstrating a moderately strong positive correlation between these variables. The rejection of the null hypothesis indicates that the traditional and emerging marketing practices of artisans, when integrated with digital tools, have a measurable and positive impact on their sales growth, customer reach, and brand awareness.

Digital Marketing Plan for Woodcraft Artisans of Paete

Goal/ Objective	Strategies/ Activities	Time Frame	Person/Agency Responsible	Expected Output
Strengthen Digital Presence and Online Visibility	Conduct a 1-day basic social media training for artisans (how to post products, take photos). Help 20–30 artisans set up FB Marketplace shops.	January 2026	LGU Paete; Artisan Associations	Increased online visibility, 50% growth in online inquiries, and enhanced brand awareness.
Strengthen collaborative marketing & Market Linkages	Coordinate with 2–3 travel agencies to include Paete in weekend tours.	February 2026	LGU Paete; Artisan Associations	Expanded distribution networks; improved product innovation; more sales from partner promotions
Create a Unified Heritage Branding Campaign	Introduce "Paete: Home of Skilled Carvers" campaign/ seminar.	March 2026	LGU Paete; Artisans	Strong, recognizable town branding; increased cultural recognition; consistent marketing identity
Increase Tourism Engagement Through Craft Tourism	Launch a "Meet the Carvers" half-day shop visit.	April 2026	Tourism Office of Paete; Local Schools; Artisan Workshop Owners	Increased tourist arrivals, added income streams, and deeper cultural appreciation
Revitalize Festivals and Cultural Events	Livestream 1–2 major festivals using basic equipment. Organize 1 simple youth carving contest.	May 2026	LGU Paete; Festival Committees; Schools; Media Teams of Paete	Higher event attendance, stronger cultural identity, and greater community and tourist participation
Support E-Commerce Integration	Help artisans create simple online product catalogs (photos + prices).	June 2026	LGU of Paete; Artisan Groups	Wider national & international reach; organized online selling system; increased online sales
Seminars and Training Workshops for the Youth and Women	Launch a "Paete Seminars/campaign offering: training in woodcarving and mentorship with established artisans.	July 2026	LGU Paete, TESDA, Paete Artisans Guild	15% increase in youth and female participation in the woodcraft industry within 6 months.

4. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The study on marketing tactics demonstrates a strong dependence on effective traditional approaches, such as walk-in clients and referrals (3.71) and word of mouth (3.48), with a weighted mean of 3.20 (Agree) for this area. However, less conventional traditional strategies, such as participation in local festivals (2.41), are generally opposed because the registration fees are prohibitively expensive and festival participation does not always guarantee a profit, prompting them to prefer more dependable, low-cost strategies such as word-of-mouth and direct customer traffic. In terms of collaborative marketing and teamwork, artists think that working with local firms (2.99) and forming reseller agreements (3.00) are beneficial. However, the overall category weighted mean of 2.83 (Agree) indicates that these chances are not completely utilized, particularly in terms of involvement in festivals or online marketplaces (2.49), because of their lack of technical skills due to their age.

The results overwhelmingly demonstrate that Paete's woodcraft artisans recognize the strong positive effects of digital marketing across all critical areas of business performance. Artisans strongly agreed that digital strategies enhance profitability and customer loyalty, effectively increasing sales (3.39) and supporting monthly sales growth (3.40) (Weighted Mean: 3.35, Strongly Agree). Furthermore, they emphasized that online platforms significantly expand market reach, enabling them to access new market segments (3.47) and reach more customers (3.49) (Weighted Mean: 3.45, Strongly Agree). Finally, the highest perceived impact was on brand visibility and competitiveness, where artisans strongly agreed that social media helps build stronger customer connections (3.50) and enhances recognition of woodcraft products (3.47) (Weighted Mean: 3.48, Strongly Agree), confirming that the digital presence is highly valued for strengthening brand identity and competitive standing.

The statistical analysis strongly confirms that there is a significant relationship between the marketing strategies currently utilized by Paete's woodcraft artisans (including both traditional and emerging tactics) and the resulting positive effects of digital marketing on their overall business performance.

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The Paete woodcraft industry was found to be predominantly dominated by traditional marketing practices, with artisans primarily relying on word-of-mouth promotion and walk-in clients. Strategies like participating in local festivals are less used due to the high cost of registration and uncertain return on sales. Collaborative marketing, including partnerships with local businesses and reseller agreements, is acknowledged as helpful but is not fully utilized. In online marketing, artisans are starting to use social media and business websites, but their presence on large e-commerce platforms is limited.
2. The use of digital marketing strategies improved the business performance of Paete's woodcraft artisans by increasing sales, customer reach, and brand visibility. Online promotions, such as social media posts and digital catalogs, made product information more accessible to both local and international customers. Although digital adoption remained limited, its positive impact highlighted the strong potential of digital platforms to enhance competitiveness and support sustainable business growth.
3. A significant and moderately strong positive relationship was found between the marketing strategies of Paete woodcraft artisans and the effects of digital marketing on business performance. The R value of 0.480824 and the P value of 0.00001 led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming that the integration of digital tools enhanced the effectiveness of traditional marketing practices.
4. The recommended strategies are: E-commerce integration, Tourism-linked promotions, Heritage branding campaign, Social media storytelling, Collaborative digital marketplace, Skill workshops and craft tourism, and Festival revitalization.

Based on the findings and conclusions presented, the following recommendations are hereby proposed:

1. Considering the predominance of traditional marketing strategies among artisans, the university should integrate an applied business tools course, including marketing, digital promotion, and entrepreneurship, into relevant courses and provide practical sessions to enhance artisans' capacity to reach wider markets. The LGU can facilitate training programs that combine traditional and digital marketing techniques to help artisans improve visibility beyond the local community. Future researchers should examine the effectiveness of traditional marketing in comparison to digital strategies to identify optimal methods for promoting Paete's woodcraft products.
2. In light of the demonstrated positive impact of digital marketing on business performance, the university should conduct applied workshops on social media marketing, online product catalogs, and e-commerce platforms to enhance artisans' digital presence. The LGU can collaborate with local and international partners to develop online marketplaces and digital campaigns that showcase Paete's woodcraft globally. Future researchers are encouraged to study the measurable effects of various digital marketing strategies on sales, brand visibility, and customer engagement in traditional craft industries.
3. Considering the statistical evidence of a positive relationship between marketing strategies and business performance, the university should offer targeted courses on strategic marketing planning that integrate both traditional and digital tools, emphasizing evidence-based approaches to improving outcomes. The LGU may support artisans through funding or grants for innovative marketing initiatives, promoting sustainable growth.

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