CRAFTSHIP - A FUTURE PROFITABLE BUSINESS?

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Abstract- This paper is focused on the issue aof sustaining the craftsmen and on the future developments of the financial investments on their field of work viewed at the level of Belgium and Romania economy. The questions which can arise from this study are the following: Can you support yourself and make a decent living while working in the crafts field? Does the promotion of the traditions, arts and crafts of one country is sufficient to raise the awareness of the tourism field?
This article presents two qualitative researches in which the technique of the in-depth interview was used on the craftsmen from Bruges, Belgium and the craftsmen from all over Romania. This study has the main purpose of emphasizing the characteristics and the difficulties of the activity in the crafting field.
The field research done on this study case describes the vision of the artisans on their work. The aspects of transmitting the craft through oral history, the socio-cultural and economic views and the knowledge of the craft passed from and to a relative are the most important when it comes to the preservation of tradition and to sustainable development in areas related to the field of crafting.

I. INTRODUCTION

Most artistic works are hand-made, expressive and unique. Given this perspective the tourism is heading towards a place where the culture will be standardized and also the local phenomena will translate into global trend.
(Thompson, Hannam, Petrie, 2012) find the labels which are often placed on goods an important element to make the items more authentic. These labels add a quality assurance tag to the products and even explain their origins and the context in which they were made.
(Brancu, Guðmundsdóttir, Gligor and Munteanu, 2015) consider that through national cultural values it is possible to create higher or lower potential entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurial concept it is influence by the values of the national culture which can have a contribution to the individuals' motivation+, values and beliefs.
(Lovrentjev, 2015) considers that the intangible cultural heritage, preservation might be endangered if the development of tourism priorities the satisfaction of tourists instead of preserving the traditional values in the local municipality.

As an essential aspect of the production of cultural goods, the entire process until the delivery of the product on the market can be analysed. Based on a historical review, it is obvious that the indigenous skills of craftsmanship and local expertise were transferred from one generation to another without using any formal courses or means.

(Jalil, Santagata, Tabassum, 2004) emphasize the issue of cultural districts and their development. A high level of significance can be found when the topic of cultural districts in an appropriate climate comes to discussion. The economic and social benefits can be described as it follows:

- There will be more available jobs, thus the unemployment rate will decrease.
- New sources of income will be created and the poverty index will have lower values.
- The emigration rate will be reduced as a consequence of better environmental work conditions.

(Brandenburg, Zimmerli , Albert, 2010) define the present economy as a co-existence and combination of several source, such as wage labor, traditional sustenance, arts and crafts production, and welfare.
The heritage niche is mostly represented by the crafts. There is a need of interaction and collaboration with the educational and social field in order for the unique techniques of craftsmanship to be safely transmitted to the next generations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

(Carrozzino, Scucces, Leonardi, Evangelista, Bergamasco, 2011) debate that the products and processes of craftsmanship are in jeopardy of being lost. This would be a significant loss for the cultural patrimony, as not only these crafts are an important means of artistic expression, but they represent the foundations of our cultural heritage and a significant aspect of humanity at large.

In the UNESCO World Report Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue, it is underlined that crafts have become a major means of income-generation and capacity-building for trade. Craft fairs are appearing in more and more countries, sometimes to raise funds for humanitarian causes but increasingly to sell products for utilitarian use, such as furnishing or decoration.
Another key factor, beside economics, so that the survival of crafts may be guaranteed is education. The handcraft has often a weak or negative image in

the youth's eyes, therefore the number of candidates willing to enrol in craft-related classes is low.
In the article with the title "A future for crafts inspirational guidebook for heritage workers, designers, craftsmen, entrepreneurs, teachers" can be observe the following:

- An economy based on crafts is a small-scale one and it requires intensive labor.
- One of the most important aspect about the crafts economy is that the products are customized and a high level of quality, easy to maintain, repair or restore.
- Craftsmen do their job with passion and they have a close connection with the customers.

(Hirshman, Lovis, Pollard, 2010) shows that the ceramic craft specialization reflected by homogeneous products has a high level of complexity.
In one of his papers, (Gheorghe, 2014) has emphasized the term of niche tourism which has become more and more important to the marketing field because it consists in researching new markets and clients in order to make the products sell more efficiently. (Gheorghe, Tudorrache and Nistoreanu, 2014) state that to the motivation of tourists should be given a significant place in marketing research because it is a key element in the process of designing and creating new products and services which add value for tourists.

III. METHODOLOGY

In the methodology section, two studies are presented for the purpose of describing the main differences between the skill level of the craftsmen and the way they are supported by the authorities in their country.
I have conducted my research in Romania and in Bruges, Belgium.
I have conducted two qualitative researches using the in-depth interview. Both interviews used the same interview guides.
The main goal of the research was to underline the main issues and aspects of craftsmen.
The main objective was to show the impact of crafts on the national economy. The in-depth interview technique was used for the qualitative research in order to obtain a data set which will accurately and reliably project the reality.
The main information about the two studies are presented in Table No.1.

Table No.1. Methodology

	Bruges	**Romania**
Research method:	Technique of in-depth interview	Technique of in-depth interview
The purpose of the research:	Identifying the main issues and aspects of the craftsmen which can develop a new way to improve the Belgian economy.	Identifying more relevant date about craftsmen and the way in which is it develop the intangible cultural heritage in Romania. Finding the relevant data about the crafting field and highlighting the connection between craftsmen and Romanian's intangible cultural heritage.
Objectives:	- Identifying the main issues of the Belgian craftsman; - Identifying the main relationships between governmental institution and craftsmen regarding the way in which they are promoted.	- Figuring out the main way for products commercialization; - See if there is a relationship between governmental institutions and craftsmen when it comes to the way they are promoted.
The interview's duration:	30 minutes.	30 minutes
Research's time and place:	Between 1.09.2016 and 03.09.2016 in Bruges	December 2015. Bucharest, Universitate square market
The targeted group:	24 artisans and craftsmen	21 artisans and craftsmen

IV. RESULTS

Through these in-depth interviews I have found the following information:

Most of the craftsmen have learnt their art from their parents and grandparents;
High involvement: All the craftsmen show a high level of passion and dedication when it comes to their field of work.
Top quality: All handmade products have unique features, significantly differentiating them from the mass production.
- Only a few pass on their art to the next generation because the teenagers are not interested to learn their ancestors' crafts;

- The standard of living provided by this crafts can maintain a decent life;

Most of the Belgian craftsmen from Bruges have their own shop in which they present and sell their products, while the Romanian craftsmen are more likely to join in fairs where they can expand their range of customers and establish new connections.

- The craftsmen are bind to be a registered sole trader, self-employed person or individual service in order to pay their taxes;

There are a couple of similarities between Bruges and Romania when it comes to fairs invitations. Only a small number of artisans and craftsmen are invited to join in such events by the public authorities.

The difficulty of survival by owning a craft-related business: The economic strength and tenacity of small firms with a low production capacity is limited and full of risks. As a conclusion to this, a well skilled craftsman is not always a good entrepreneur.

Can be observe the second aspect that it is the same in the both countries - the international tourists are the ones who are the most interested in the local products and traditions.

One of the main differences which can be pointed out is the state of these two countries infrastructure. Bruges is well connected to other cities, while in Romania the roads are mostly one way roads which pass through villages and you can encounter traffic jams more often.

- Lack of support, structures and platforms: A characteristic of craftsmanship is that it takes place at a specific, small-scale and it is often affected by various type of unfit policy.
- Lack of formal recognition: A specific statute of craftsmen does not exist and the technical qualities and skills are not formally acknowledged.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The craftsmen continue to sew, embroider, shape pots, paint on wood, shape glass or crave wood in order to maintain the local traditions and to provide the next generation with cultural skills.

As can be pointed out from this qualitative researches, the results indicate that the Belgian craftsmen's work can have a positive evolution in the market because the people who are in this field know how to manipulate the market and how to adapt their products to the tourists' requests. Romania craftsmen need to be supported more by the public authorities, so they can sell their products more easily and be widely spread on the market. Another aspect that can be taken into consideration is the category of tourists who buy the local products. The fact that international tourists invest money in this category of products sustains the craftsmen in order to produce and develop more crafts and invest time in the manufacture of traditional items. Even if the craftsmen try to pass their art on to the next generation their efforts have a small impact on the teenagers because they are not that interested in learning crafts.

Craftsman can have a positive influence on the economy of the country: if the craftsmen can participate to as many fairs as possible they can attract tourists to buy the products and to promote their work.

- Everyday changes: One of the most important thing to do for the artisans is to deliver their products at a high added value and at a high level of quality.
- The tourism field: Craft products and practices go well hand in hand with the local tourism, giving a unique feeling of a certain area.
- The support of Intangible Cultural Heritage crafts by UNESCO: The new established Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage creates a framework and raise certain standards for the products in this field.

A limitation of this research is that the method is not necessarily representative to the entire population of interest.

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