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# Analysis of the Market Conjuncture of Traditional Handicraft Products in the Bukhara Region

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**Abstract:** This article provides an in-depth analysis of the market conjuncture of the Bukhara region's handicrafts sector, with particular attention to the factors influencing the dynamics of demand and supply, examined through the interview method. The part of this study involved the semi-structure interviews with 50 artisans from G'ijduvon, Vobkent, Shofirkon and the city of Bukhara. Data were collected on the types of products artisans manufactured, their production capacity, seasons of operations, advertising & marketing approaches, branding capabilities, and their perceived need for government assistance. The results indicate that while the Bukhara handicrafts market is evolving in conjunction with cultural heritage and tourism, there exists an ongoing need for better marketing, branding, digital trade, and financial resources. The research highlights market development possibilities based on PESTLE and SWOT assessments and strategic options are recommended.

**Keywords:** Handicrafts, Market Conjuncture, Demand and Supply, Bukhara, Interview, Marketing Strategies, PESTLE, SWOT.

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## 1. Introduction

Handicrafts represent not only an economic activity but also an important social institution that preserves local culture and historical heritage in many societies. Traditional handicraft products are often closely linked to tourism, shaping visitor demand and generating income for the local economy. Thus, the handicrafts market is generally attached to regional tourism policy and cultural heritage conservation.

In economic terms, market conjuncture, demand and supply of handicraft products have specific rules governed by, for instance, economic (rise in raw material prices; rate of accessibility to the credit; income levels in the nations), socio-culture (nations values; gift-giving culture), and technology (digital platforms; use of social media) [1]. Recent research shows that while digital marketing and online marketplaces offer new opportunities for artisans, their limited digital literacy and low branding competencies inhibit them from realizing the full potential of this opportunity.

Considering the multi-layered identity of Bukhara region, with its centuries-old traditions of craftsmanship and powerful tourism resources, it represents an essential framework for studying the regional handicrafts market (2023) [2]. Here, the mix of products; the timing of seasonal sales cycles; and the degree of branding are all closely tied to tourism movements and government policy so understanding the local context is critical for the demand–supply balance.

If so, then empirical research, particularly qualitative interviews with artisans are critical for determining the nature of demand and supply in the Bukhara handicrafts market. This not only unearths genuine market behaviours including production capacity, seasonality, sales channels and promotional activities, but also deeper strategic challenges in terms of branding, digital maturity-needs and government support (2025) [3]. This article, therefore, analyzes the results of semi-structured interviews conducted with artisans in the Bukhara region, identifying the local characteristics of demand–supply mechanisms and offering practical recommendations.

## 2. Materials and Methods

This study was conducted using qualitative research methods to empirically examine the demand and supply dynamics in the handicrafts market of the Bukhara region. The research methodology consisted of three main stages: selecting respondents, conducting semi-structured interviews, and analyzing the collected data (2024). The choice of a qualitative approach made it possible to gain a deeper understanding of market participants' experiences, motivations, daily practices, and decision-making processes [4].

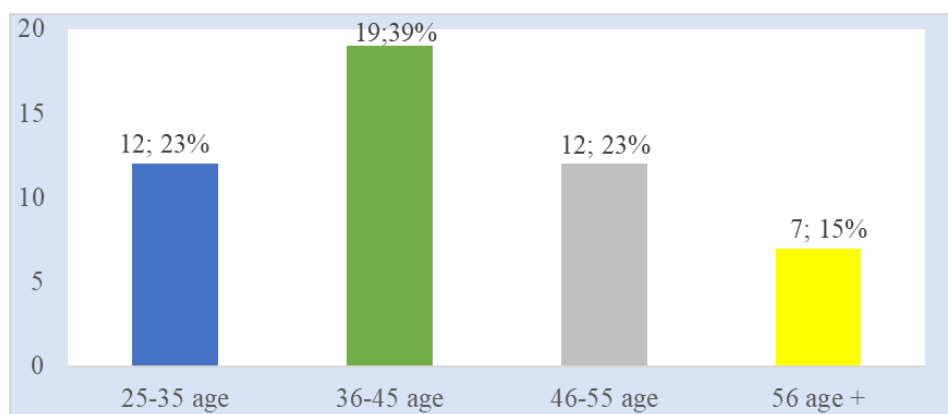
A semi-structured interview method was employed in the study. This method allowed the researcher to maintain a consistent framework based on key questions while also providing flexibility to pose additional probing questions depending on the flow of the conversation and emerging topics (2018). This flexibility allowed for exploring the multi-dimensional characteristics of artisans behaviours such as their views on seasonality, branding, marketing and production in an enabling environment.

Interviews were conducted in June–July 2025 among artisans in G'ijduvon, Vobkent, and Shofirkon districts, and in Bukhara city [5]. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique to ensure that those who best met the purpose of the study were represented.

## 3. Results

The findings of the semi-structured interviews conducted on the demand and supply dynamics of the handicrafts market in the Bukhara region indicate that this market segment is multifactorial, highly seasonal, and closely interconnected with cultural heritage (2025). The interviews were carried out across the Bukhara region during June and July of 2025, involving 50 artisans selected as respondents, with whom semi-structured interviews were conducted [6].

Among the 50 respondents, 20 resided in rural areas, while 30 were located in urban areas. Of the total participants, 23 (46%) were male and 27 (54%) were female. The interviews included artisans of various age groups, and Figure 1 below presents the distribution of respondents according to their age categories.



**Figure 1.** Analysis of respondents by age group.

Based on the information presented in Figure 1, the age composition of the interviewed artisans reflects a balance between experience and innovative potential. Respondents aged 36–45 constitute 39%, indicating a strong presence of skilled and experienced artisans, while those aged 25–35 (23%) demonstrate growing interest and involvement of youth in the sector [7]. Artisans aged 46 and above play an important role in preserving traditional craftsmanship.

Handicraft activities are multifaceted, and their directions are closely linked to cultural customs, historical traditions, and contemporary needs. The areas in which the interviewed artisans carry out their activities are summarized and analyzed in Table 1 below.

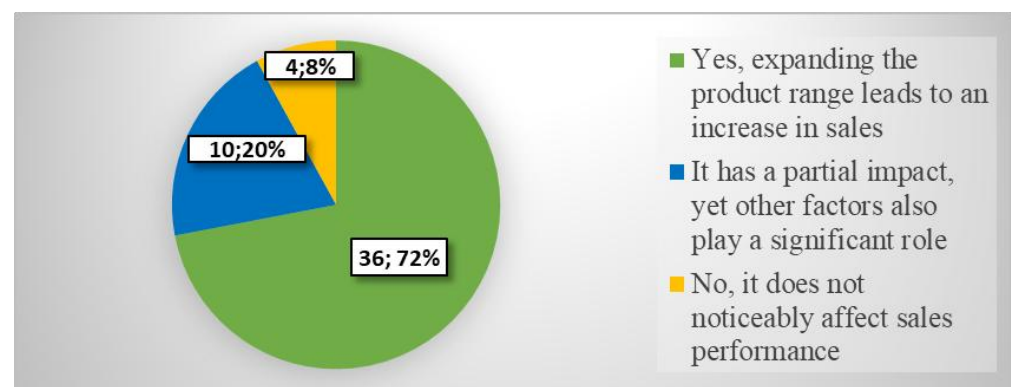
**Table 1.** Analysis of the respondents' fields of activity.

No	Type of Handicraft	Number(person)	Share(%)
1	Gold embroidery	7	14
2	Ceramic products and souvenir making	5	10
3	Creation of traditional garments and souvenir items	10	20
4	Blacksmithing	4	8
5	Kashtachilik	12	24
6	Decorative painting and miniature art	5	10
7	Jewelry making from precious metals	4	8
8	Carpet weaving	3	6
	Jami:	50	100

According to the data presented in Table 1, 24% of the respondent artisans are engaged in embroidery, while 20% are involved in the creation of traditional clothing and souvenir items [8]. This indicates a strong market demand for products grounded in aesthetics and national cultural values.

In addition, the presence of handicraft fields such as gold embroidery, ornamental painting, blacksmithing, jewelry making from precious metals, and the production of ceramic items reflects the historical and practical diversity of regional craftsmanship.

Given this context, it is important to examine how the variety of product types influences sales volume [9]. Figure 2 below analyzes the extent to which an increase in the range of products offered by respondents impacts their sales performance.

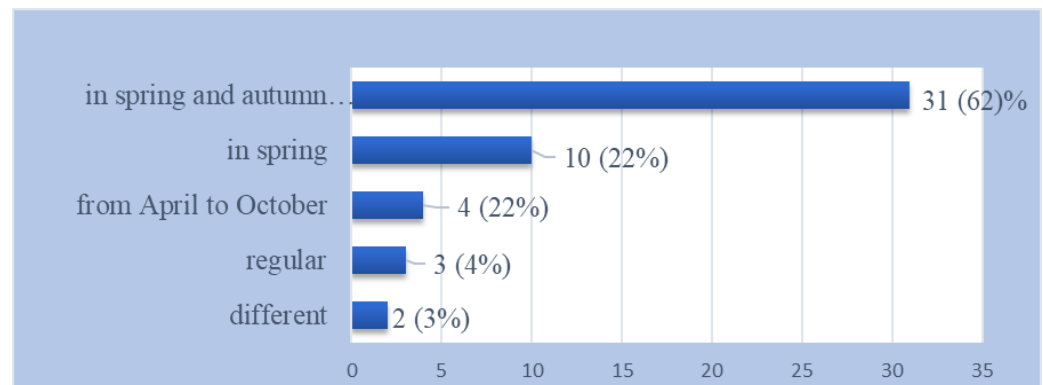


**Figure 2.** The impact of increasing product variety on sales volume.

According to the data presented in Figure 2, the majority of artisans -72 percent - believe that expanding the product assortment has a positive impact on sales volume. This

indicates that implementing a diversification strategy is essential for increasing competitiveness in the market and meeting the needs of different consumer segments.

Figure 3 below summarizes the respondents' answers regarding the season in which they experience the highest sales.



**Figure 3.** The impact of increasing product variety on sales volume.

According to the data presented in Figure 3, the majority of artisans in the study 62 percent - stated that their highest sales occur during the spring and autumn seasons. Additionally, 22 percent of respondents indicated that only the spring months are active for sales, while 8 percent identified the April–October period as their most productive season [10]. Another 4 percent said their sales were steady all year, while 3 percent said their sales seasonally do not make a great impact. These findings show that sales for handicraft goods peak during both the spring and autumn seasons.

PESTLE analysis to study the shape of development prospects and available opportunities in the handicraft market. This method enables systematic analysis of Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental aspects which unveil external factors affecting the market conditions and the operations of the artisans [11]. The results of this analysis are summarized in Table 2 below.

**Table 2.** PESTLE analysis of the handicraft products market in Bukhara region.

Factor type	Key factors	Impact
<b>P – Political</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government policies supporting handicrafts (subsidies and incentives)</li> <li>- National strategies for tourism development</li> <li>- Expanding opportunities for participation in international exhibitions</li> </ul>	Political stability and supportive government policies create new market opportunities for artisans and enhance their potential to establish a strong brand presence.
<b>E – Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seasonality of domestic and foreign tourist flows</li> <li>- Fluctuations in the exchange rate</li> <li>- Increase in raw material prices</li> <li>- Availability of preferential (concessional) loans</li> </ul>	Seasonal income fluctuations and changes in raw material costs directly affect production volumes and pricing policies.
<b>S – Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The historical significance of traditional handicraft practices</li> </ul>	Social support and cultural interest help expand the market; however, the

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interest of local residents and tourists in national (traditional) products</li> <li>- The younger generation's growing attention toward this sector</li> <li>- Tourism as a means of cultural exchange</li> </ul>	number of young people willing to continue the craft profession remains insufficient
<b>T–Techno-logical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of online sales platforms</li> <li>- Marketing through social media</li> <li>- Modern design software</li> <li>- Development of packaging technologies</li> </ul>	Technologies enhance branding and market differentiation opportunities, yet the low level of digital literacy among artisans remains a significant challenge.
<b>L – Legal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regulations governing handicraft activities</li> <li>- Tax incentives</li> <li>- Protection of intellectual property rights</li> <li>- Standards and requirements related to export procedures</li> </ul>	Legal protection strengthens the brand, but registration and documentation procedures often remain complex and bureaucratic.
<b>E – Environ-mental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use of natural raw materials in product manufacturing</li> <li>- Environmental protection requirements</li> <li>- The need to maintain ecological balance alongside tourism development</li> </ul>	Environmental requirements help improve product quality, but they may also increase the cost of raw materials.

According to the data presented in Table 2, the handicraft market in Bukhara is among the sectors that receive strong political and social support. Growth potential of the market is considerably supported by tourism development strategies of the government and range of incentives offered to artisans as well. Social factors - in particular the high national interest in national cultural heritage; as well as the permanent influx of tourists help stabilise market demand.

Still, high raw material prices, seasonality and exchange rate variations represent some risk to production stability. Even if there are possible technological opportunities due to online sales and digital marketing, the artisans cannot take the advantage of those tools because of the low level of digital literacy [12].

Opportunities exist in the legal environment from the protection of intellectual property and favorable tax incentives; but bureaucratic registration procedures and the complexity of export regulations hamper the sectors export capacity. Though likely to improve product quality, environmental requirements may also add cost to production. Overall, the primary strength of the market lies in its integration with cultural heritage and tourism, whereas its main weaknesses stem from economic and technological constraints.

The above PESTLE analysis provided a detailed examination of external factors affecting the handicraft products market in the Bukhara region. The next step is to assess how these factors influence the market internally and to identify available resources, opportunities, and constraints through a SWOT analysis.

Craft market development of this region necessitates the accurate evaluation of internal capabilities and external limitations and forces. SWOT analysis provides a structured means with which to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a market and the opportunities and threats in the context of the market [13]. Related SWOT analysis is given in Table 3 below aimed at strengthening the competitiveness of Bukhara handicraft sector, product quality improvement as well as increase in marketing capacity.

**Table 3.** SWOT analysis of the handicraft products market in Bukhara region.

<b>Strengths (S)</b>		<b>Weaknesses (W)</b>	
1. The presence of rich cultural heritage and ancient handicraft traditions.		1. Lack of branding and marketing skills.	
2. The uniqueness of products due to their national style and design.		2. Limited financial resources (insufficient subsidies, grants, and credit opportunities).	
3. High demand among tourists.		3. Low participation in digital sales platforms.	
4. Availability of local raw material sources.		4. Limited use of new technologies and modern design techniques.	
<b>Opportunities (O)</b>		<b>Threats (T)</b>	
1. Lack of branding and marketing skills.		1. The increase in cheap, low-quality counterfeit products in the market.	
2. Limited financial resources (insufficient subsidies, grants, and credit opportunities).		2. Uneven distribution of demand due to seasonal tourism flows.	
3. Low participation in digital sales platforms.		3. Rising raw material prices and disruptions in supply chains.	
4. Limited use of new technologies and modern design techniques.		4. The impact of global economic crises or exchange rate fluctuations.	

According to the data presented in Table 3, the SWOT analysis of the handicraft market in the Bukhara region shows that the sector possesses strong competitive potential due to its rich cultural heritage, nationally styled products, and access to local raw materials. Nevertheless, the absence of branding and marketing competencies, the limited access to resources, and the weak involvement on digital sales channels constitute key internal problems [14]. Although government support, the growing inflow of foreign tourists, and the development of online sales channels provide great opportunities, the proliferation of low-quality counterfeit goods, seasonal demand fluctuations, and uncertainties around the world economy remain serious challenges. Hence, to develop the sector sustainably, it is necessary to match the sector strengths with emerging opportunities, minimize the weaknesses and also to design adaptive mechanisms to mitigate the threats from outside.

The handicraft product market of Bukhara region, having deep historical roots, richness of cultural heritage, strong potential synergies of tourism and crafts, is one of the high priority sectors of national economy. Informed by the interviews and analysis conducted through PESTLE & SWOT the following conclusions were drawn: The sector has significant strength in internal capabilities and some promising opportunities externally however there are significant deficiencies in branding, marketing, digital commerce and access to financing. Support for the sector through government financial and institutional support, the increasing inflow of foreign tourists, and the establishment of online sales channels may significantly determine the competitiveness of the sector [15]. However, it is crucial to take steps to avoid the penetration of mass and low-end fakes, seasonal pressure balancing, and global trends; In the end, an overall development will enhance the competitive position of handicraft sector in both national and international markets.



#### 4. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the dynamics of supply and demand in the handicraft market of Bukhara region represent a multi-layered and interdependent system shaped by tourism flows, socio-cultural values, and broader economic conditions. The empirical evidence collected from artisans aligns with international theoretical frameworks, including market conjuncture models (2021), cultural economics perspectives, and tourism-driven demand models (2018). The strong demand seasonality, highly dependent on tourism smacks another time that the regional economy is purely “cultural-tourism-driven” and that handicraft production is both an economic and cultural asset.

The significant spring and autumn peak in demand (62%) matches the classical tourism seasons of the region (2024). It points to the need for stronger features to boost domestic demand in low seasons for the sector to sustain its growth momentum. Overseas experiences like Malaysia and Türkiye reveal that dispersed income distribution throughout the year can be achieved with the help of the “off-season craft markets” local festivals, and theme-based events. In Bukhara, similar measures would prevent sharp uplinks and downlinks during the seasons and would give the artisans a stable economic activity.

Another major weakness of the sector as revealed throughout the study is the limited marketing and branding competencies among artisans.

With 38% of artisans not engaging in any promotional activity and 24% believing that their products “sell without advertisement,” current practices fall short of modern market requirements. This issue is common in small-scale creative industries, where a lack of marketing literacy significantly weakens competitiveness. Prior international research confirms that increasing marketing capabilities enhances market visibility and sustainable growth (2014).

Moreover, considering the cyclical character of supply and demand in Bukhara, they needed to diversify their product lines by improving management practices, online sales channels, and activating export-oriented development from the branches of the economy that have a chance to achieve sustainable growth over the long term. The findings also reveal that although artisans generally have the appetite for innovation, they are constrained by factors such as financial resources, knowledge, and technology, which limit their potential for modernization and market promotion.

In general, taking a lot of historical depth, eternal richness in culture, and a high level of tourism attraction, the handicraft market of the Bukhara region has relatively good potential. But to become more competitive, it is essential to turn strategic institutional support, marketing infrastructure, and digital transformation into a very fast process. These measures, if implemented effectively, can help the sector grow out of servicing local economic needs and position its role as a major contributor to the global cultural economy as well.

#### 5. Conclusion

The study, based on interviews with 50 artisans in the Bukhara region, unveils some of the main trends influencing the local handicraft market. Demand during the year for these larger units is very seasonal, with peaks during the spring and autumn because of continuous tourist traffic. Though sales which particularly come from a wider product range especially embroidery, national clothing and souvenirs are increasing, many artisans lack marketing, branding, and digital skills. Access to wider markets is limited since only a handful use online platforms. Artisans have also indicated a strong necessity for financial support, training, and more adequate institutional support.

The research outlines a number of actionable suggestions. A regional brand called “Bukhara Handicrafts” together with branding to ensure quality would contribute to

improving authenticity and visibility. Training, support centers, and integration into online marketplaces should be prioritized to secure digital transformation. This will lessen the hire seasonality factor as well through expanded marketing channels, such as off-season events, exhibitions, and tourism trade partnerships. Things like microcredits, subsidies, and simplified loans would help businesses grow. It also needs additional training on design, packing, pricing, management and supporting artisans going into export markets. Lastly, collaboration with tourism authorities through craft routes, workshops, and cultural programs, would further boost sales and promote local heritage.

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