

## Stories that Enchant: A Cultural Entrepreneurship Approach to the Study of Entrepreneurial Narratives in the Promotion of Creative Economy Initiatives <sup>†</sup>

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### PURPOSE

Crafts and the creative economy can be seen as socially constructed cultural phenomena that connect entrepreneurial stories to wealth creation. Thus, this work sought to understand how entrepreneurial action in handicrafts contributes to fostering creative economy initiatives, enabling economic growth and inclusive social development in the city of João Pessoa-PB, recognized by UNESCO in 2017 as a Creative City in the Handicrafts and Popular Art segment.

### METHOD

A qualitative study was conducted with 14 artisans from the city of João Pessoa-PB, using interviews, observations, and documents. The qualitative content analysis made it possible to identify linguistic devices, narrative patterns and strategies used by the artisans to valorize their products and raise funds of different kinds.

### FINDINGS

Results indicated three predominant narratives among the artisans of João Pessoa-PB: (i) the story of the piece, in which artisans not only highlight aspects of the origin of the materials and the creation process, but also the meaning and symbolism attributed to the piece; (ii) the personal story, in which artisans emphasize their personal experiences, origins, influences and individual journeys as an integral part of their creations; and (iii) the story of respectful innovation, in which artisans emphasize the search for innovation, whereas respecting the virtue of traditional practices and the materials used, incorporating new elements into the craft process without compromising the integrity of traditions. These narratives function as entrepreneurial strategies to add value to products, strengthen cultural identity and broaden engagement with consumers and investors. By disseminating these stories, artisans contribute to the appreciation of local culture, boost tourism and promote economic and social development in the region. The findings also reinforce the importance of handicrafts as a vector for economic inclusion and wealth generation within the creative economy.

### MANAGERIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The study showed that the main challenges faced by artisans in the field involve: unfair competition from industrialized products; the lack of adequate supervision; the scant dissemination of genuine products; and the lack of appropriate spaces for marketing. Considering these, it was possible to provide potentially applicable recommendations for entrepreneurs, public managers, and policymakers. Understanding the role of entrepreneurial narratives can help the development of marketing and positioning strategies for craft products, leveraging the sector and stimulating the sustainable development of the creative economy. In addition, the narratives constructed, especially those that combine tradition and innovation, reinforce cultural identity, and ensure the legitimacy of artisans in the market, attracting consumers and support from institutions. For public managers and policymakers, the development of public policies aimed at protecting genuine handicraft products, the creation of exclusive spaces for marketing authentic handicrafts, and the implementation of public-private partnerships (PPPs) can enable strategic investments in infrastructure, technical training, and promotion of handicrafts, strengthening their sustainability and competitiveness.

SUPPORTED BY:



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