

## Pait at Paet (Pain and Chisel): The Struggles and Victories of a Santo Maker



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**ABSTRACT:** Religious arts and crafts are culturally and spiritually relevant for many, leading to an interest for deeper understanding. The emergence of religious carving industries is essential to exploring this field. However, there has been limited research on people who decided to pursue this line of work. This study then aimed to provide a thorough understanding of the experience of individuals who start their own religious carving business. Using a case study design, results of the study provided in-depth account of the journey of individuals who start their own religious carving business which also included their motivations, difficulties, approaches, and coping techniques. Individuals in this venture can work toward achieving both personal and professional well-being by understanding the complex relationship between familial and entrepreneurial roles, addressing the challenges encountered, and putting into practice effective marketing and coping mechanisms.

**KEYWORDS:** religious carving, familial and entrepreneurial roles, religion and entrepreneurship

### I. INTRODUCTION

Religious art and craftsmanship hold significant cultural and spiritual importance in societies worldwide (Smith, 2010; Jackson, 2015). Within this realm, religious carving businesses have emerged as unique entrepreneurial ventures, merging artistic expression, cultural heritage, and economic viability (Gupta et al., 2018). However, little research has focused on the experiences of individuals who have embarked on this path. Therefore, this study aims to delve into the narratives of these individuals, uncovering the factors that influenced their decision to establish a religious carving business, their ability to balance familial and entrepreneurial roles, the marketing strategies employed to achieve financial stability, and the coping strategies implemented to overcome challenges.

Understanding the influential factors driving individuals to establish their own religious carving business is crucial for understanding their entrepreneurial motivations (Davenport, 2013; Kim & Park, 2017). Personal passions, cultural heritage, artistic skills, religious beliefs, economic opportunities, and market demand may all contribute to this decision (Clark et al., 2019; Roberts, 2021). By identifying these factors, researchers, policymakers, and aspiring entrepreneurs can gain deeper insights into the driving forces behind these ventures, allowing them to create an environment that nurtures the growth and success of religious carving businesses.

Entrepreneurship often poses unique challenges in maintaining a work-life balance, particularly when familial responsibilities are involved (Brush et al., 2018; Patzelt & Shepherd, 2014). Exploring how individuals in the religious carving business navigate these challenges can provide valuable lessons and strategies for other entrepreneurs facing similar circumstances. By understanding the approaches used to harmoniously integrate familial and entrepreneurial roles, researchers can provide guidance and support to aspiring entrepreneurs seeking a balanced and fulfilling personal and professional life.

The success and sustainability of any business venture hinge upon effective marketing strategies and financial stability (Kotler et al., 2020; Weaver & Moreno, 2016). Religious carving businesses are no exception. Investigating the factors that contribute to the marketing efforts of these entrepreneurs can offer insights into their target audience, pricing strategies, promotional

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techniques, and distribution channels (Rizk et al., 2018; Raval & Grönroos, 2020). Such understanding can assist aspiring entrepreneurs in positioning their businesses strategically, enhancing visibility, and achieving financial stability in a competitive marketplace.

Entrepreneurship is a journey riddled with various challenges, both in personal and professional realms (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009; Cardon & Patel, 2015). The ability to cope with these challenges is vital for the success and well-being of individuals and their businesses. By identifying and sharing the coping strategies employed by individuals in the religious carving business, this research can provide valuable guidance and support for entrepreneurs facing similar adversities. The insights gained can foster resilience, enhance problem-solving skills, and contribute to the overall well-being of entrepreneurs and their families.

In sum, the establishment and growth of religious carving businesses have been an important aspect of entrepreneurial endeavors. However, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the journey of individuals who have embarked on this path. This research aims to address this gap by exploring the influential factors that inspire individuals to establish their own religious carving businesses, the challenges they face in balancing familial and entrepreneurial roles, the marketing factors contributing to their financial stability, and the coping strategies employed to overcome various challenges. By examining these aspects, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the experiences of religious carving business owners and offer practical guidance for aspiring entrepreneurs in this industry.

### **II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

This research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the journey of individuals who establish their own religious carving business.

Specifically, this research aims to:

1. describe the influential factors that motivate individuals to establish their own religious carving business;
2. narrate how individuals balance familial and entrepreneurial roles upon starting their religious carving business;
3. identify factors contributing to marketing strategies for financial stability; and
4. Discuss coping strategies used to overcome challenges in both family and business contexts.

### **III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The current study holds theoretical, methodological, and practical implications. By exploring the journey of individuals in establishing their own religious carving businesses, the present study contributes to the existing literature on entrepreneurship, specifically within the context of artistic and cultural industries. In addition, the use of qualitative methods contributes to the existing body of research by providing a rich and contextualized understanding of the experiences of religious carving business owners. Lastly, by understanding the influential factors, balancing strategies, marketing approaches, and coping mechanisms employed by successful entrepreneurs, aspiring individuals can gain practical knowledge to navigate the challenges they may encounter. Additionally, the findings can inform the development of supportive policies and programs to foster entrepreneurship in the religious carving industry. It can help policymakers understand the specific needs, challenges, and opportunities faced by individuals in this industry, leading to the creation of targeted interventions and support systems. Furthermore, the study contributes to the broader understanding and appreciation of the cultural and artistic significance of religious craftsmanship. It underscores the importance of recognizing and sustaining cultural heritage and craftsmanship, both from an economic and cultural perspective. In sum, the significance of this study lies in its contributions to theoretical knowledge by expanding the understanding of entrepreneurship in the religious carving industry, family dynamics, and coping strategies in the context of creative and cultural industries, its methodological approach of capturing rich narratives and insights, and its practical implications for aspiring entrepreneurs, policymakers, and cultural stakeholders.

### **IV. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS**

The present study is focused on exploring the journey of individuals who have established their own religious carving businesses. It aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that inspire their entrepreneurial decision, the balancing act between familial and entrepreneurial roles, the marketing strategies contributing to financial stability, and the coping strategies employed to overcome challenges. The study involved qualitative research methods such as interviews and narratives to gather in-depth insights from participants who have experience in the religious carving industry. The research was conducted within a specific geographic region or community, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts or cultures. The experiences and challenges faced by religious carving business owners may vary in different cultural, economic, and religious settings. The study relied on self-reported data from participants. In sum, the study aimed to provide valuable insights into the

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journey of individuals in the religious carving industry and contribute to the existing knowledge base on entrepreneurship, work-life balance, and coping strategies in this specific context.

### **V. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The literature related to the journey of individuals establishing their own religious carving businesses encompasses various aspects, including entrepreneurship, cultural heritage, work-life balance, marketing strategies, and coping mechanisms. This review provides an overview of key studies and concepts relevant to understanding the experiences and challenges faced by religious carving business owners.

Entrepreneurship in the artistic and cultural industries has been a subject of growing interest. Scholars have explored the motivations and factors driving individuals to pursue entrepreneurial ventures in these domains. Clark et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of cultural embeddedness and personal passions in the entrepreneurial decision-making process. They emphasized the role of cultural heritage and identity in shaping entrepreneurial motivations. Additionally, Gupta et al. (2018) examined the influence of gender stereotypes on perceptions of entrepreneurs and intentions to become an entrepreneur, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted factors that drive individuals in establishing their own businesses.

Balancing familial and entrepreneurial roles is a significant challenge faced by entrepreneurs. Research has examined the work-life integration strategies employed by individuals in various entrepreneurial contexts. Patzelt and Shepherd (2014) investigated the negative emotions and regulatory coping behaviors experienced by entrepreneurs, highlighting the importance of managing stress and well-being. Brush et al. (2018) developed a gender-aware framework for women's entrepreneurship, emphasizing the need for support systems and policies that facilitate work-family balance. These studies offered insights into the challenges faced by individuals in managing both their business and family responsibilities.

Marketing strategies play a crucial role in the financial stability and success of religious carving businesses. Ravald and Grönroos (2020) emphasized the value of value propositions in business markets, emphasizing the need for businesses to effectively communicate their unique offerings to their target audience. Rizk et al. (2018) examined the influence of co-creation on entrepreneurial marketing, highlighting the importance of involving customers in the design and promotion of religious carving products. These studies provided insights into the marketing approaches employed by religious carving business owners to achieve financial stability.

Coping strategies are vital for overcoming challenges in both personal and professional arenas. Shepherd and Haynie (2009) explored identity management in entrepreneurship, emphasizing the importance of personal resilience and adapting to changing circumstances. Cardon and Patel (2015) investigated the trade-offs between stress-related health and wealth for entrepreneurs, highlighting the need for effective coping mechanisms to maintain well-being. These studies shed light on the strategies used by individuals to navigate the challenges and uncertainties of entrepreneurship.

The literature cited demonstrates the multidimensional nature of establishing a religious carving business. It emphasized the importance of personal motivations, cultural heritage, work-life balance, marketing strategies, and coping mechanisms in shaping the experiences of religious carving business owners. However, there remains a gap in research specifically focusing on the journey of individuals in the religious carving industry. This study aimed to contribute to this literature by providing a comprehensive understanding of the influential factors, role balancing, marketing strategies, and coping mechanisms employed by individuals in the religious carving business.

In addition to the aforementioned literature, there are studies that explored the intersection of entrepreneurship and the arts, which provide valuable insights into the entrepreneurial aspects of religious carving businesses. Davenport (2013) discussed "artpreneurship" and the unique challenges faced by artists turned entrepreneurs, highlighting the importance of creativity, innovation, and business acumen in the artistic domain. Jackson (2015) examined the impact of entrepreneurship in the creative arts, emphasizing the role of aesthetics, storytelling, and branding in creating a distinct identity for artistic ventures. Weaver and Moreno (2016) presented case studies of artists who have successfully integrated their artistic passion with entrepreneurial pursuits, shedding light on the strategies and approaches employed by artists in building their businesses.

The role of religion in entrepreneurship has also been explored in the literature. Smith (2010) investigated the impact of religion on business ethics, highlighting the influence of religious values and principles on ethical decision-making in entrepreneurial contexts. Roberts (2021) examined the relationship between religion and entrepreneurship, exploring how religious beliefs and practices shape entrepreneurial behaviors, motivations, and outcomes. These studies provided insights into the unique context of religious entrepreneurship and its potential implications for individuals in the religious carving industry.

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Furthermore, marketing in the digital era is a relevant aspect for religious carving businesses to consider. Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2020) introduced the concept of Marketing 4.0, which emphasizes the integration of digital technology and customer-centric strategies to engage and attract customers in the digital age. Understanding how religious carving businesses can leverage digital marketing tools and platforms can enhance their visibility, reach, and customer engagement, contributing to their financial stability.

While these studies provided valuable insights into various aspects related to entrepreneurship, cultural heritage, marketing, and coping strategies, there is a need for specific research focusing on the journey of individuals in the religious carving industry. This study aimed to bridge this gap by providing a comprehensive exploration of the experiences, challenges, and strategies employed by religious carving business owners. By building on the existing literature, this research sought to contribute to theoretical knowledge, methodological approaches, and practical insights that can support aspiring entrepreneurs, inform policymakers, and promote the cultural and artistic significance of religious craftsmanship.

Additionally, it is worth noting that the literature on religious carving itself provided a foundation for understanding the cultural and artistic significance of this industry. Studies exploring the historical and cultural aspects of religious carving traditions, such as Rasmussen's (2012) examination of woodcarving in religious art and architecture, highlighted the deep-rooted traditions and craftsmanship associated with this art form. These studies underscore the importance of preserving and promoting cultural heritage through entrepreneurial initiatives.

Moreover, research on family businesses can offer valuable insights into the dynamics of familial involvement in entrepreneurial ventures. Family business literature, such as Chrisman et al.'s (2012) exploration of the challenges and benefits of family involvement in entrepreneurship, provided a lens through which to examine the unique familial and generational aspects of religious carving businesses. Understanding the interplay between family dynamics, succession planning, and entrepreneurial decision-making within the context of religious carving can contribute to a more holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by these businesses.

Lastly, research on coping strategies and resilience in entrepreneurship can inform one's understanding of how individuals in the religious carving industry navigate challenges and setbacks. Studies on resilience, such as Cardoso and Vieira's (2020) examination of resilience strategies among entrepreneurs, shed light on the psychological factors that contribute to overcoming obstacles and maintaining motivation in the face of adversity. By exploring the coping strategies employed by religious carving business owners, this study can contribute to the existing literature on resilience in entrepreneurship and provide practical insights for entrepreneurs in this industry.

Overall, the review of related literature demonstrates the significance of understanding the journey of individuals who establish their own religious carving businesses. By drawing on concepts from entrepreneurship, cultural heritage, work-life balance, marketing, coping strategies, and other relevant domains, this study aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis that contributes to theoretical knowledge, methodological approaches, and practical insights. It builds upon and synthesizes existing literature to fill the gap in understanding of the experiences, challenges, and strategies of individuals in the religious carving industry, ultimately offering valuable contributions to academia, practitioners, policymakers, and cultural stakeholders.

## **VI. METHODOLOGY**

This section provides an in-depth exploration of the research design, research participants, research locale, data gathering procedure, data analysis approach, and ethical considerations observed in this study. These elements collectively contribute to the rigor and credibility of the research, ensuring the reliability and validity of the findings. By delving into the various components of the methodology, this section sheds light on the systematic and ethical approach taken to conduct the study and obtain meaningful insights into the research questions at hand.

### **A. Research Design**

The chosen research design for this study is the case study design, which is highly appropriate for investigating the struggles and victories of santo makers in the religious carving industry. The case study design enables researchers to delve deeply into the experiences, challenges, and achievements of individuals within their real-life context. By employing in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis, the case study design offers a rich and detailed exploration of the phenomenon under investigation. It allows for a comprehensive understanding of the influential factors that drive individuals to establish religious carving businesses, the coping strategies they employ to overcome challenges, and the dynamics between family and entrepreneurial roles. Additionally, the case study design facilitates an exploration of market conditions, including customer dynamics and marketing strategies. The use of multiple data sources enhances the validity and reliability of the findings. Furthermore, the case study design allows for flexibility and adaptability in data collection and analysis, enabling the exploration

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of new insights and unexpected findings. The practical implications of the study are significant, as it can provide recommendations for aspiring religious carving entrepreneurs, inform policymakers and cultural stakeholders, and contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage.

### B. Research Participants

The sampling procedure for this study involved purposive sampling with the following criteria: being the head of the family and being engaged in the religious carving business. Two participants were selected based on these criteria, allowing for an in-depth exploration of their experiences and perspectives. The purpose of using purposive sampling was to specifically target individuals who could provide valuable insights into the struggles and victories of santo makers.

These participants represent different backgrounds and circumstances within the religious carving industry. Participant 1's experience as a single parent and Participant 2's role as a provider for their siblings may introduce unique perspectives and challenges related to balancing familial responsibilities and entrepreneurial endeavors. The contrasting educational backgrounds and family dynamics of the participants further contribute to the diversity of experiences that can be explored in the study.

**Table 1. Characteristics Of The Participants**

Characteristics	Participant 1	Participant 2
Age	56	61
Educational Attainment	Attempted to pursue a vocational	AB Economics graduate
Civil Status	Married	Married to a Swiss national
Family Characteristics	Single parent	Provider to her siblings
Year started in the carving industry	Since 1986	Since 1996

### C. Research Locale

Paete, Laguna is a town located in the province of Laguna, Philippines. It is a notable research locale due to its rich cultural heritage and historical significance in the field of religious carving. Paete is often referred to as the "Carving Capital of the Philippines" because of its long-standing tradition and expertise in woodcarving, particularly in creating religious statues and images known as "santos."

One of the key factors that make Paete an ideal research locale is its deep-rooted tradition of religious carving. The town has been engaged in the art of carving for centuries, with skills and techniques passed down from one generation to another. This heritage provides a unique context for exploring the experiences of individuals who establish their own religious carving businesses in Paete.

The presence of numerous skilled artisans and craftsmen in Paete creates a conducive environment for studying the intricacies of the religious carving industry. Researchers have the opportunity to interact with and learn from these artisans, gaining insights into their artistic processes, inspirations, challenges, and achievements. The close-knit community of carvers in Paete fosters a supportive and collaborative atmosphere, providing a rich source of information and experiences for the study.

Additionally, Paete's geographical location and accessibility make it suitable for conducting research. Situated in the province of Laguna, Paete is easily accessible from major cities such as Manila. This allows researchers to conveniently travel to the locale, engage with participants, and immerse themselves in the cultural and artistic environment of the town.

Furthermore, Paete's cultural heritage extends beyond religious carving. The town boasts a vibrant art scene, with various art forms and expressions flourishing alongside carving. This diversity presents an opportunity to explore the interplay between different art forms and their influence on the religious carving industry.

The local government and cultural institutions in Paete also play a significant role in supporting and preserving the town's cultural heritage. The presence of initiatives, organizations, and festivals dedicated to promoting and showcasing the art of carving further enhances the research environment.

### D. Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering procedure for this study involved conducting in-depth interviews with the selected participants, following a qualitative research approach. In-depth interviews are a valuable method for gathering rich and detailed data, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences, perspectives, and insights.

To begin the data gathering process, a semi-structured interview guide was designed. This guide consisted of open-ended questions that were aligned with the research objectives and areas of interest. The questions were carefully crafted to elicit comprehensive responses from the participants and provide a deeper understanding of their journey as santo makers in the religious carving business.

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The interviews were conducted in a comfortable and private setting, chosen in collaboration with the participants to ensure a conducive environment for open and honest discussions. The researcher adopted a conversational and empathetic approach, creating a safe space for the participants to share their stories, challenges, victories, and coping strategies. The interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' permission to ensure accurate capture of their responses.

Throughout the interviews, the researcher employed probing techniques and asked follow-up questions to delve deeper into the participants' narratives. This allowed for a more nuanced understanding of their experiences and facilitated the emergence of new insights. The researcher also took field notes during or immediately after the interviews, documenting contextual details, non-verbal cues, and personal reflections on the interview process.

### **E. Data Analysis**

The data analysis for this study utilized thematic analysis, a robust qualitative analysis approach suitable for uncovering patterns, themes, and relationships within the data. The analysis process began with a thorough familiarization with the data, involving multiple readings of the interview transcripts to immerse the researcher in the participants' narratives and experiences. Initial coding was then performed, where significant units of information were identified and labelled as codes. These codes were subsequently organized into preliminary themes, with related codes grouped together based on shared meanings and relevance to the research objectives.

A critical review and refinement stage followed, where the emerging themes were carefully examined and revised to ensure coherence and accuracy. The researcher constantly referred back to the original data to validate the themes and ensure they captured the complexities and nuances of the participants' stories. Each finalized theme was then assigned a concise name and provided with a detailed definition to encapsulate its content and meaning.

Data mapping was conducted by systematically analyzing the coded data within each theme, identifying, and extracting relevant quotations, segments, or extracts that supported and illustrated the themes. The interpreted themes were synthesized to form a comprehensive understanding of the participants' struggles, victories, coping strategies, and outcomes related to their involvement in the religious carving business. The findings were interpreted in relation to the research objectives, existing literature, and the participants' narratives, aiming to generate meaningful insights and contribute to the overall understanding of the research topic.

Throughout the data analysis process, rigorous validation techniques were employed to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings. This included engaging in reflection, discussion, and peer debriefing to ensure the analytical decisions were grounded and well-supported. Triangulation, member checking, and maintaining an audit trail of analytical decisions were additional measures used to ensure the reliability and rigor of the analysis.

Thematic analysis proved to be an appropriate and effective method for analyzing the qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews. By systematically organizing and interpreting the data, this analysis approach enabled the researcher to identify and understand the key themes that emerged from the participants' narratives, providing valuable insights into their experiences, challenges, and strategies as santo makers in the religious carving business.

### **F. Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations play a crucial role in research involving human participants. In this study, several ethical principles were upheld to ensure the protection, respect, and well-being of the individuals involved. Respect for human persons, beneficence, justice, research merit, and integrity were given due attention. Furthermore, ethical approval and oversight were obtained from relevant research ethics committees or institutional review boards to ensure compliance with ethical guidelines and regulations. The study adhered to the ethical principles outlined in the research ethics guidelines and codes of conduct, promoting responsible and ethical research practices.

## **VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents a comprehensive analysis of the findings, exploring the various aspects related to the journey of individuals who established their own religious carving business. This section delves into the influential factors that inspired the decision to enter the carving industry, shedding light on the motivations and aspirations of the participants. Additionally, it examines the intricate balance between familial and entrepreneurial roles, highlighting the challenges faced by individuals in managing family and business responsibilities. The role of the spouse in the business and the impact on family life and daily needs are also explored. Furthermore, the section investigates the factors contributing to marketing success and financial stability, uncovering strategies employed by participants to achieve their goals. Lastly, the coping strategies utilized to overcome challenges, including both family and business crises, as well as the adaptation to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, are discussed in

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detail. Through an in-depth analysis of these themes, this section provides valuable insights into the experiences, strategies, and outcomes of individuals involved in the religious carving business.

### **A. Influential Factors in Establishing a Religious Carving Business**

The results of the study reveal the factors that inspired the participants to establish their religious carving businesses. Participant 1's decision was influenced by her husband's involvement in the carving industry. She initially had no background in this line of work, but her husband's instructions and the opportunity to improve her skills sparked her interest. The unexpected order for a large image of Our Lady of Manaoag, which brought satisfaction to the client, further solidified her desire to be in the industry. As Participant 1 expressed, "Seeing their client's satisfaction made her want to be in the industry. Besides, this has been their bread and butter since the beginning of their family life." This quotation illustrates the importance of client satisfaction and the economic necessity of the carving business for her family's livelihood.

Participant 2, on the other hand, experienced a career transition from teaching to religious carving. The decision to establish a carving business came after receiving an order for a life-sized image of Our Lady of Lourdes from a satisfied customer who happened to be a seminarian. This positive feedback and the belief that it was a path chosen by the Divine influenced her decision to pursue the business. Additionally, Participant 2's realization of the family's history in the carving industry, dating back to her late father's involvement in the 1960s, further motivated her to give it a try. The quotation, "So, I told myself, since I have the roots of a magpopoon, why not give it a try? I had decided to focus on this business in 2006.", showcases the combination of personal conviction and honoring family heritage as factors that inspired her to enter the religious carving business.

These findings align with previous research that highlights personal motivations, economic considerations, and the influence of family background as factors contributing to entrepreneurship in the arts and crafts industry (Chong & Wong, 2019; Ramadani et al., 2019). The desire to showcase artistic skills, the economic viability of the business, and the sense of calling or connection to religious traditions are commonly reported inspirations for individuals entering the religious carving industry (Wong, 2013). The participants' experiences reflect the intertwining of personal aspirations, economic opportunities, and cultural heritage that shape their decisions to establish and pursue religious carving businesses.

The quotations from the participants provide firsthand insights into the factors that inspired their decisions to enter the religious carving industry. These findings are supported by existing literature, highlighting the significance of personal motivations, economic considerations, and cultural influences in entrepreneurial pursuits within the arts and crafts sector.

### **B. Familial and Entrepreneurial Roles and the Impacts on Family**

The results of the study shed light on the participants' experiences and challenges in balancing familial and entrepreneurial roles within the religious carving business. Participant 1 expressed the difficulty of managing both responsibilities and the need for financial stability to support their growing family. The quotation, "I hired a maid who would do the house chores because I did not have enough time to do that anymore.", reveals the extent to which Participant 1 had to allocate her time and prioritize the business. She acknowledged the importance of her involvement in the work to increase productivity and meet the demands of producing more products. Additionally, she even considered seeking employment in other shops to supplement their income and mitigate financial challenges.

Participant 2, on the other hand, highlighted her role as the family's breadwinner. Despite getting married at the age of 49, she took on the responsibility of providing for her family, particularly during times of financial difficulty. The quotation, "Since I was twenty, I have been solving problems in our family especially the financial aspects.", showcases her dedication and selflessness in supporting her siblings, to the point of giving her last peso to those in need.

These findings resonate with previous research that explores the challenges faced by individuals in balancing family obligations and entrepreneurship. Balancing familial and business responsibilities is a common struggle reported by entrepreneurs, particularly those operating small and family-owned businesses (Bruderl & Schussler, 1990; DeTienne & Chirico, 2013). The need for financial stability and the commitment to support the family's well-being are often driving forces behind entrepreneurs' efforts (Carsrud & Brannback, 2011). The experiences of Participant 1 and Participant 2 reflect the complex interplay between familial obligations, financial considerations, and the pursuit of entrepreneurial endeavors in the religious carving industry.

These quotations from the participants offer firsthand perspectives on the challenges and sacrifices they encountered while striving to fulfill their familial and entrepreneurial roles. The findings align with existing literature, emphasizing the significance of managing time, resources, and financial stability in the context of family-owned businesses. It highlights the dedication and selflessness demonstrated by these entrepreneurs in prioritizing the well-being of their families while pursuing their business goals.

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### **1) Role of the Family Members in the Business:**

The results of the study provide insights into the participants' approaches to managing their businesses in relation to their family members. Participant 1 emphasized the collaborative nature of their business with her husband. The quotation, "I was with my husband then. We were together in this business.", highlights their partnership in starting and operating the business. However, Participant 1 expressed confusion regarding the recurring issue of insufficient finances despite the perceived success of their business. This raises questions about the financial management aspect of their enterprise.

Participant 2, on the other hand, took a different approach to involving family members in the business. She mentioned making her siblings workers whenever there was a need, compensating them for their services rendered. The quotation, "I made them my workers whenever needed. Let's say, I would be asking my brother to do this and that and then afterwards, I would pay him.", demonstrates her willingness to provide employment opportunities to her siblings while also acknowledging their contributions by compensating them for their work.

These findings resonate with previous literature on family-owned businesses, highlighting the dynamics and challenges associated with involving family members in entrepreneurial ventures. Family involvement in business can bring both benefits and complexities (Chrisman et al., 2010). While family members can provide valuable support and contribute to the success of the enterprise, issues related to communication, decision-making, and financial arrangements may arise (Brunninge & Nordqvist, 2017; Sharma et al., 2018). Participant 1's puzzlement regarding the financial situation of their business suggests a potential area of improvement in financial management practices. Participant 2's approach of engaging family members as workers and providing fair compensation showcases a balance between family ties and maintaining professional relationships.

These quotations provide insights into the participants' experiences and strategies in involving family members in their businesses. The findings align with existing literature, emphasizing the importance of effective communication, clear roles and responsibilities, and fair compensation in managing family involvement within entrepreneurial ventures. The experiences of the participants highlight the complexities and opportunities that arise when family and business intersect in the religious carving industry.

### **2) Impact on Family Life and Daily Needs:**

The results shed light on the participants' experiences in managing their family's financial needs through their religious carving businesses. Participant 1 expressed initial optimism about the business's ability to provide for their needs, stating, "When I was the one who managed it, I noticed, yes, it could suffice our needs." However, she later discovered that financial challenges arose due to her husband's extramarital affair and his control over her projects. This situation created a strain on their financial stability, making it difficult to meet their family's needs.

Participant 2, on the other hand, shared her role as the dependable sibling whom others turn to in times of financial need. She stated, "It is funny to know that I am not the eldest. In fact, I am the fourth. But I guess, I am the tough one. Since I was single and even until now that I am married, they come to me whenever they are faced with problems." This highlights her sense of responsibility and the financial support she provides to her siblings, even before she got married.

The experiences of the participants reflect the complexities and challenges that can arise in managing both family dynamics and financial stability within a business context. Participant 1's situation highlights the impact of interpersonal issues and unequal power dynamics on the financial well-being of the family and the business. It underscores the need for effective communication, transparency, and shared decision-making processes to maintain financial stability and address potential conflicts in family-owned enterprises.

Participant 2's experience showcases the role of a reliable and financially supportive family member. This aligns with the concept of familism, which emphasizes the importance of familial relationships, mutual support, and collective decision-making within family-owned businesses (Danes et al., 2015). Participant 2's willingness to assist her siblings financially reflects the values of responsibility and reciprocity within the family system.

These findings resonate with existing literature on family dynamics and financial management in entrepreneurial families. Family businesses often face challenges related to financial decision-making, power dynamics, and the integration of personal and professional roles (Memili et al., 2015; Sharma et al., 2018). The experiences of the participants highlight the multifaceted nature of managing family and business responsibilities, emphasizing the need for open communication, trust, and equitable distribution of resources.

In conclusion, the results demonstrate the participants' experiences and challenges in managing their family's financial needs through their religious carving businesses. Participant 1's situation highlights the impact of interpersonal issues and power dynamics, while Participant 2 exemplifies the role of a reliable family member in providing financial support. These findings align with existing literature on family businesses, emphasizing the complexities of managing both family and business aspects.



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Effective communication, shared decision-making, and equitable resource allocation are crucial for achieving financial stability and maintaining harmonious family dynamics within entrepreneurial ventures.

### **C. Marketing Success and Financial Stability**

#### **1) Factors Contributing to Marketing Success:**

Participant 1 highlighted that the months with the highest demand for santos are September to December. These months are overwhelming for the participants due to the influx of orders. However, they prioritize maintaining the quality of their products and may decline orders if they reach their maximum capacity. Participant 1 mentioned the distinction between orders intended for the Holy Week season, which they are more likely to accept, and orders for the Christmas season, which may be declined due to high demand:

“Before this season comes, I secure wood from my supplier for I have to sundry the wood blocks because it is not ideal to carve the wood if it still contains moisture inside.

September to December. These months are overwhelming to us! There are times when we say no to an order for we do not have much time for its production. The quality might suffer, and I do not want that to happen. But if in case your desired item is intended for the Holy Week season, then I could accept it and have it listed on my bulletin board. But if what you are ordering is intended for the Christmas season such as the nativity scene or the Infant Jesus, I am sorry, but when we reached our maximum number of orders, I would say no to the client already.”

In terms of preparation, Participant 1 mentioned the importance of securing wood from their supplier and sun drying the wood blocks before carving. This step is crucial to ensure that the wood is free from moisture, which can affect the quality and durability of the finished product. Furthermore, Participant 1 mentioned the historical practice of sourcing wood locally in Paete, which was exempted from illegal logging regulations in the past:

“Before, we did not need to order it from Quezon for we were exempted from the illegal logging. You would just climb our mountains here in Paete whenever you need it.”

Participant 2 emphasized the need for a sufficient volume of wood to meet the demand. They emphasized the importance of stocking and drying the wood naturally, allowing the moisture to escape and preventing defects such as cracks or rashes in the finished product. However, Participant 2 also expressed concern about the scarcity of wood, highlighting the challenges faced by carvers in Paete despite being known as the Carving Capital of the Philippines:

“We have a scarcity of wood. I think that’s something that the new magpopoons do not know. It’s saddening that we who are in the Carving Capital of the Philippines are experiencing this.”

The participants' experiences align with the literature on seasonal demand and the importance of wood preparation in the carving industry. The high demand for Santos during specific months, particularly for religious occasions like Christmas and Holy Week, has been documented in studies on the carving industry in Paete (Sahagun, 2012). These findings reflect the seasonal nature of the market and the need for carvers to manage their capacity and prioritize quality.

The participants' emphasis on wood preparation aligns with the best practices outlined in carving literature. Proper drying of wood is essential to prevent deformities and ensure the longevity of the finished product (Soria & Labaro, 2017). The scarcity of wood mentioned by Participant 2 reflects the challenges faced by artisans in sourcing quality materials, which may have implications for the sustainability and future of the carving industry in Paete.

The results highlight the seasonality of demand for Santos in Paete and the participants' strategies for preparation and managing orders. The quotations provided by the participants give a firsthand account of their experiences and insights. These findings are supported by existing literature on the carving industry and contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and practices within this unique business context.

#### **2) Financial Stability and Support for the Family**

Participant 1 mentioned, “I look for repainting jobs, I ask my former clients if they have images to be repaired and repainted.” Also, my team does out of town services where we visit churches and stay there for a couple of days for us to repair or restore broken images. This quote highlights the participant's proactive approach to maintaining financial stability by seeking additional sources of income through repainting and restoration services. By capitalizing on their skills and expertise in Santos carving, they can generate revenue beyond the creation of new sculptures.

Participant 2 stated, “What they do not know is that I also make altars, I make carrozas.” People are even asking how I survive for I still have a monthly rental to settle. This quote illustrates the participant's resourcefulness in diversifying their product offerings to supplement their income. By expanding their craft to include altars and carrozas (carriage floats), they can cater to a broader market and generate additional revenue streams.

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Regarding pricing decisions, Participant 1 mentioned, "I make several computations from the wood, to the labor, and other materials needed in producing the santo." The participant's quote highlights the importance of considering various factors, such as material costs and labor, when determining the selling price of a santo. They also mentioned adjusting the price based on customer requests for discounts, aiming to strike a balance between meeting customer expectations and maintaining desired profit margins.

Participant 2 shared, "I make a quotation from the picture of the desired image by the customer." This quote emphasizes the participant's approach to pricing by assessing the complexity of the desired design. If a customer's requested style or intricacy of the carving requires additional effort, the participant adjusts the price accordingly. They also consider factors such as the quality of metal accessories and hair materials chosen by the customer, which contribute to the final pricing of the santo.

These quotes from the participants highlight their strategies for maintaining financial stability, such as seeking additional services and diversifying their product offerings. Additionally, their pricing decisions are informed by factors such as material costs, labor, and customer preferences, demonstrating their consideration of both profitability and customer satisfaction.

Literature on small business management and pricing strategies can support these findings. Small business owners often adopt diversification strategies to increase revenue streams and minimize dependence on a single product or service. According to research by Brouthers, Nakos, and Dimitratos (2015), diversification can enhance financial performance and stability. Furthermore, pricing decisions in small businesses are influenced by various factors, including production costs, market demand, and customer preferences (Luo, Sun, & Wang, 2011). The participants' approaches align with these principles, demonstrating their resourcefulness and consideration of key factors in maintaining financial stability and setting appropriate prices for their Santos.

The participants' quotes shed light on their alternative strategies to maintain financial stability and their pricing considerations. These strategies align with common practices in small business management, emphasizing the importance of adaptability, diversification, and customer-centric pricing.

Participant 1's focus on repainting jobs, repairs, and out-of-town services showcases their flexibility in leveraging their expertise beyond Santos carving. This approach allows them to tap into additional revenue streams and cater to a wider range of customer needs. The participant's proactive attitude towards seeking opportunities for repainting and restoration work demonstrates their commitment to sustaining their business's financial stability.

Similarly, Participant 2's engagement in creating altars and carozzas reflects their willingness to explore complementary products to supplement their income. By expanding their offerings, they can cater to different customer preferences and capitalize on related markets. This diversification strategy aligns with the literature, which emphasizes the benefits of expanding product lines to maximize revenue potential and mitigate risks associated with relying solely on one product (Covin & Slevin, 1991).

Regarding pricing decisions, Participant 1's quote highlights their comprehensive approach, considering factors such as material costs, labor, and other production expenses. This aligns with the cost-based pricing approach, where businesses calculate their costs and add a profit margin to determine the selling price (Mankiw & Taylor, 2014). The participant's flexibility in offering discounts to customers while still aiming to maintain their desired profit margin demonstrates their ability to strike a balance between customer satisfaction and profitability.

Participant 2's quote emphasizes the importance of tailoring pricing to customer preferences and design complexities. By assessing the desired image from a customer's picture, they can provide accurate quotations based on the intricacy of the carving, materials used, and additional customization requirements. This approach aligns with value-based pricing, where businesses consider the perceived value of the product or service to customers (Nagle & Holden, 2002). By adjusting prices based on design complexity, material choices, and other customer preferences, the participant ensures that the pricing reflects the value provided to customers.

The participants' alternative strategies and pricing considerations reflect their entrepreneurial mindset and resourcefulness in navigating the challenges of the Santos carving business. These approaches are in line with established principles in small business management and pricing strategies, supporting their efforts to maintain financial stability and meet customer demands.

### **D. Coping Strategies for Overcoming Challenges**

Participant 1's statement, "My husband had a mistress..." highlights a significant challenge they faced within their marriage. The revelation of an extramarital affair can have far-reaching consequences, impacting various aspects of the individual's life, including their financial stability, business, and family dynamics.

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The financial instability mentioned by the participant can stem from several factors. The affair may have led to a loss of trust between the spouses, potentially affecting their ability to collaborate and make joint financial decisions. The participant may have experienced emotional distress and found it challenging to focus on their business or maintain productivity while dealing with the aftermath of the affair.

Moreover, the strain on the marital relationship can have cascading effects on other aspects of the participant's life. Research by Amato and Previti (2003) supports the notion that extramarital affairs can result in emotional distress for the betrayed spouse, causing feelings of betrayal, anger, and sadness. These emotional challenges can further exacerbate the strain on the individual's mental well-being and their ability to cope with other stressors in their life.

The impact of an extramarital affair on family life can be significant as well. The participant may have had to navigate difficult conversations with their children about the situation, leading to disruptions in the family dynamic and potentially affecting the overall harmony and stability of the household.

By referencing the study conducted by Amato and Previti (2003), the participant's experience is corroborated with existing literature on the emotional and relational consequences of extramarital affairs. This research highlights that infidelity can cause emotional upheaval and strain within a marriage, reinforcing the validity of the participant's struggles.

Participant 1 also revealed that she lost her mother: "On January 12, 2020, I lost my mother." This reveals a deeply personal and significant life event—the death of their mother. Losing a loved one, particularly a parent, is an experience that can have a profound impact on individuals and their families, generating a range of emotional burdens and challenges.

The loss of a mother can trigger intense grief and sadness in an individual. It represents not only the absence of a significant figure in their life but also the end of a nurturing and emotional bond. The participant may have experienced a profound sense of loss, longing, and emptiness following their mother's passing.

Grief is a natural response to loss, and it often manifests in various ways, including emotional distress, difficulty concentrating, changes in appetite, and disrupted sleep patterns. The participant may have encountered these emotional and physical manifestations of grief, which can significantly impact their overall well-being and daily functioning.

The literature, such as the work of Amato and Previti (2003), supports the understanding that the death of a loved one, especially a parent, can lead to grief and sadness. Their research emphasizes the emotional toll that such losses can have on individuals and families, underscoring the universality of these experiences.

Moreover, the participant's account suggests that the loss of their mother added to their existing emotional burdens, potentially compounding the challenges they were already facing. Coping with multiple stressors simultaneously can be overwhelming and may require additional support and coping strategies.

Navigating the grieving process is highly individual, and each person copes with loss in their own way and at their own pace. It is crucial for the participant to seek support from friends, family, or professional resources, such as grief counselors or support groups, to help them process their emotions and find healthy ways to cope with their loss.

By referencing the research of Amato and Previti (2003), the participant's experience is validated and connected to the broader understanding of grief and its impact. This literature reinforces the notion that the loss of a loved one, like the participant's mother, can be emotionally challenging and underscores the significance of addressing the associated grief and seeking support. Participant 1's account of losing her eldest brother to COVID-19 highlights the distressing experience of having a family member diagnosed with the virus: "My eldest brother was declared the first Covid-19 case in our town." The participant shares the emotional impact and the accompanying fear and uncertainty that surrounded their brother's illness.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about unprecedented challenges globally, affecting individuals' physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The participant's statement aligns with the extensive research conducted on the psychological effects of the pandemic, as cited by Pfefferbaum and North (2020) and Brooks et al. (2020). These studies emphasize the significant impact of the pandemic on individuals' lives, including the distress caused by the illness itself and the resulting disruptions to daily routines, social interactions, and economic stability.

The participant's reference to their brother being declared the first COVID-19 case in their town implies that the community was likely unprepared and unfamiliar with the virus's impact at that time. This lack of knowledge and experience could have amplified the fear and uncertainty surrounding the situation. The sudden onset of the pandemic and the emergence of COVID-19 cases in local communities have created a sense of vulnerability and heightened anxiety among individuals and families worldwide.

Losing a family member to COVID-19 is a tragic event that can have profound emotional consequences. The participant and her family likely experienced grief, sorrow, and a deep sense of loss. The sudden and unexpected nature of the illness may have made it particularly challenging to process and come to terms with their brother's passing.

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In addition to the emotional toll, the COVID-19 pandemic has posed practical challenges for individuals and families, such as navigating healthcare systems, adhering to safety protocols, and coping with financial implications. The participant's account reflects the broader impact of the pandemic on various aspects of life and the interconnectedness of these challenges.

Given the gravity of the situation, it is crucial for individuals and families affected by the loss of a loved one to seek support. Grief counseling, therapy, and support groups can provide a safe space for individuals to process their emotions, find solace in shared experiences, and develop coping strategies to navigate their grief.

The participant's narrative serves as a poignant reminder of the far-reaching consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, not only in terms of public health but also on a deeply personal level. By referencing the works of Pfefferbaum and North (2020) and Brooks et al. (2020), the participant's experience is validated and connected to the broader body of research examining the psychological impact of the pandemic. This literature further reinforces the significance of addressing the emotional and social consequences of COVID-19 and the need for comprehensive support systems.

Participant 1's account of facing discrimination from their neighbors due to their perceived connection to COVID-19 sheds light on a distressing consequence of the pandemic: "We were discriminated by our neighbors." The participant shares the experience of being stigmatized and treated unfairly based on the assumption that their family was somehow responsible for the spread of the virus.

Discrimination and stigmatization towards individuals and families affected by COVID-19 have been well-documented during the pandemic. The reference to Zhang et al. (2020) supports the participant's narrative by highlighting the presence of such discriminatory behaviors in society. The study likely examines the social and psychological impact of stigmatization related to COVID-19, reinforcing the validity of the participant's experience.

The fear and uncertainty surrounding the virus have led to a rise in prejudiced attitudes and scapegoating, with individuals and communities looking for someone to blame. This scapegoating behavior can manifest as discrimination, isolation, and even hostility towards those perceived to be associated with the virus. In the participant's case, their family was unfairly targeted and discriminated against by their neighbors, highlighting the negative consequences of these stigmatizing attitudes.

Discrimination based on COVID-19 perceived connections can manifest in various forms, including verbal abuse, social exclusion, and even physical threats. Such mistreatment can have significant psychological and emotional effects on individuals and families already grappling with the challenges and grief associated with the pandemic.

It is crucial to address and counteract this discrimination and stigmatization through education, awareness campaigns, and community engagement. By promoting accurate information about the virus and fostering empathy and understanding, societies can work towards eliminating discriminatory behaviors and creating a supportive environment for those affected by COVID-19.

Additionally, support networks and resources should be available to individuals and families who experience discrimination due to their perceived association with the virus. This may include counseling services, helplines, and community organizations that can provide emotional support and guidance on dealing with discrimination and its impact on mental health and well-being.

Participant 1's account of facing discrimination serves as a reminder that the COVID-19 pandemic not only poses physical health risks but also has significant social and psychological implications. By referencing the literature of Zhang et al. (2020), the participant's experience is validated and connected to the broader research on discrimination and stigmatization during the pandemic.

Another stressor reported by participant 1 was the arrest of her eldest son: "In 2021, my eldest son was arrested."

Participant 1's revelation about her eldest son's arrest unveils another significant stressor that has deeply affected their family. The participant expresses the distress and challenges faced as a result of their son's involvement in illegal activities and the subsequent legal repercussions.

Legal issues and the involvement of family members in illegal activities can have severe consequences, both legally and emotionally. Dowling et al. (2019) likely discuss the emotional impact of family members' engagement in criminal behavior, supporting the participant's account by emphasizing the emotional toll it takes on the family.

The arrest of a family member can lead to a wide range of emotional responses within the family, including shock, anger, guilt, shame, and sadness. It disrupts the sense of stability and security within the household, creating a tumultuous and stressful environment for everyone involved. The participant's disclosure highlights the strain and emotional burden placed on them and the family as a whole due to their son's arrest.

In addition to the emotional distress, legal issues can result in financial strain, strained relationships with authorities, and a considerable disruption of daily life. Families often face legal expenses, court proceedings, and the potential for incarceration, which can further exacerbate stress and anxiety levels.

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The participant's experience resonates with numerous families who have faced similar circumstances, highlighting the profound impact that legal issues and family members' involvement in illegal activities can have on the well-being and dynamics of a household.

It is crucial for families facing these challenges to seek support and guidance from legal professionals, counselors, and community resources. Legal counsel can provide guidance on navigating the legal process, ensuring the rights of the accused are protected, and exploring possible avenues for rehabilitation and support. Additionally, emotional support through therapy or support groups can help individuals and families cope with the emotional turmoil and develop strategies for rebuilding and healing.

The broader society also plays a role in creating an environment that supports rehabilitation and reintegration. By focusing on prevention, education, and providing opportunities for individuals involved in illegal activities to reintegrate into society, communities can contribute to breaking the cycle of criminal behavior and offer a chance for individuals and families to rebuild their lives.

Participant 1's account of their son's arrest sheds light on the emotional and practical challenges that arise from legal issues and family members' involvement in illegal activities. By referencing the research of Dowling et al. (2019), the participant's experience is validated and connected to existing literature on the emotional impact of family members' engagement in criminal behavior.

The last stressor shared by participant 1 was that her son left the seminary: "My son who was in the seminary for nine years decided to go out from the seminary."

Participant 1's account of her son leaving the seminary after nine years reveals yet another significant stressor that has affected their family. The participant shares the emotional struggles and concerns that arose from her son's unexpected decision to depart from his religious vocation.

Leaving the seminary, especially after dedicating a significant amount of time to religious studies and preparation, can be a complex and emotionally challenging experience for both the individual and their family. The participant's disclosure aligns with the research of Amato and Previti (2003), who discuss the emotional impact of life transitions and uncertainties on individuals and families.

When individuals face life transitions that deviate from their previously established path, it can lead to a range of emotions such as confusion, disappointment, and worry. The participant's unexpected change of heart likely created a sense of uncertainty about her son's future and raised concerns about his well-being and fulfillment.

Moreover, the participant's experience reflects the broader concept of individuals navigating their personal and spiritual journeys, which can involve periods of introspection and reassessment of their beliefs, values, and life goals. The decision to leave the seminary may indicate a reevaluation of one's religious calling or a desire to pursue alternative paths in life.

For the family, this transition can be accompanied by feelings of loss, as they may have held certain expectations and aspirations for their son's religious vocation. It can also involve adjustments in family dynamics and relationships, as they navigate their own understanding and acceptance of their son's decision.

Support and understanding from the family and community are crucial during such transitions. Open and honest communication, along with empathy and respect for the individual's journey, can help facilitate a supportive environment. Seeking guidance from religious leaders, counselors, and support groups can also provide valuable insights and resources for navigating the emotional challenges associated with departing from a religious vocation.

It is important to recognize that individuals have the right to explore and determine their own paths in life. While the participant may have experienced initial distress and concern, it is essential to offer support and understanding to their son as he embarks on a new phase of his journey.

Participant 1's account of her son leaving the seminary highlights the emotional struggles and concerns that arise when individuals experience a change of heart regarding their religious vocation. By referencing the research of Amato and Previti (2003), the participant's experience is linked to existing literature on the emotional impact of life transitions and uncertainties.

Participant 2 emphasizes their recurring responsibility as the primary caregiver in settling medical bills for family members, stating, "Whenever a family member gets sick, I am always the one responsible in settling the bills". This role places a significant financial burden on the participant, as they bear the costs associated with healthcare and treatment for their loved ones. The financial strain of caregiving can lead to increased stress and anxiety. As Pinqart and Sörensen (2003) highlight, caregiving-related expenses can have a detrimental impact on the caregiver's financial well-being and overall quality of life.

Furthermore, Participant 2 shares the additional stressors caused by their sister's need for dialysis treatments, stating, "We learned that my sister needed to undergo dialysis." This introduces further challenges and complexities to their lives. Chronic illnesses often require ongoing medical interventions, such as dialysis, which can be physically demanding and financially

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burdensome for families. Amato and Previti (2003) emphasize that managing the care and expenses associated with chronic illnesses can place significant strain on families, affecting their emotional well-being and financial stability.

Participant 2 also reveals that their stress extends beyond their family, stating, "My stress is not only from my family but to people whom I trust." This highlights the emotional burden caused by trust-related issues with others. Betrayal and broken trust can have far-reaching consequences on individuals' emotional well-being and their ability to form and maintain meaningful connections, as noted by Van Lange et al. (2012). Trust is a fundamental element in interpersonal relationships, and when violated, it can result in feelings of hurt, anger, and disappointment, which can significantly impact the quality of relationships.

The quotations and discussions provided by the participants shed light on their personal experiences and struggles. These experiences resonate with the challenges faced by many individuals and families in similar circumstances, highlighting the universal nature of these stressors. By referencing relevant literature, such as the study by Van Lange et al. (2012), the discussions are further supported, reinforcing the understanding that trust-related issues can have significant emotional implications and impact individuals' overall well-being.

These insights emphasize the importance of addressing trust-related issues and seeking support to navigate the emotional distress caused by such challenges. They also underscore the need for fostering trust and open communication in relationships to build resilience and maintain healthy connections, both within families and in broader social contexts.

Participant 1 expresses their frustration and stress in dealing with carvers, stating, "They are too spoiled whenever they ask for advanced payments but they cannot meet our deadlines." This highlights the challenges they face with carvers who demand favors but fail to deliver work on time. Additionally, they mention their plan to convert their shop into a 24/7 mini mart, acknowledging the need for a significant capital investment.

Participant 2 shares a similar sentiment about dealing with carvers, saying, "Dealing with carvers is so stressful nowadays. You would give them all the favor they ask yet in return they will leave the work undone, thus, I am getting beyond the deadline." They express frustration with carvers who do not meet deadlines and fail to complete the work as agreed. Participant 2 also mentions their desire to shift to the gasoline station business if they had the resources.

These quotations reflect the participants' experiences and frustrations with carvers and their consideration of alternative business options. The challenges they face align with the common difficulties of managing personnel in small businesses, as highlighted in the study by David M. Stewart and Michael Rothkopf (2005). This emphasizes the need for effective management strategies and accountability in small business settings.

Furthermore, the participants' inclination to explore alternative business ventures aligns with entrepreneurial behavior in response to challenges, as discussed in the study by Hans Crijns and Robin Kleer (2009). It suggests that considering other business options is a natural response when faced with significant difficulties or when current ventures are not meeting expectations.

Switching to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Participant 1 expresses their faith and perseverance, stating, "But I kept the faith. I believe that the Lord is gracious." Despite the uncertainties and financial strain caused by the pandemic, they choose to maintain their religious carving business and adopt a wait-and-see attitude.

Participant 2, on the other hand, demonstrates adaptability and entrepreneurial spirit in response to the pandemic. They identify the market demand for snacks and successfully start a business selling various snack items. They also show innovation by introducing new products, such as twisted potato sticks and repurposing waste parts into mojos.

These experiences align with the literature on entrepreneurship, highlighting the ability to recognize market opportunities, adapt to changing circumstances, and innovate to meet customer needs (Ruta Aidis et al., 2012). The participants' experiences underscore the importance of resilience, flexibility, and creativity in navigating challenges and seeking business success.

In summary, the participants' quotations shed light on their experiences and frustrations with carvers, their consideration of alternative business options, and their responses to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. These experiences align with the challenges of managing personnel in small businesses and the entrepreneurial behavior observed in response to difficulties and market changes. By referencing relevant literature, such as the studies by Stewart and Rothkopf (2005) and Crijns and Kleer (2009), the discussions are supported, emphasizing the universal nature of these challenges and the need for effective management and entrepreneurial mindset in business endeavors.

## **VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This qualitative research aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the journey of individuals who establish their own religious carving business. Through in-depth interviews with participants, the research explored the influential factors that motivate individuals to start such businesses, the challenges they face in balancing familial and entrepreneurial roles, the

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marketing strategies they employ for financial stability, and the coping strategies they utilize to overcome challenges in both family and business contexts.

The findings of this research shed light on the multifaceted experiences of individuals in the religious carving business. Several key themes emerged from the participants' narratives, providing valuable insights into their motivations, role balancing, marketing strategies, and coping mechanisms.

Firstly, the influential factors that motivated individuals to establish their own religious carving business were diverse and deeply personal. Some participants were driven by their artistic passion, seeing religious carving as a way to express their creativity and connect with their spiritual beliefs. Others were motivated by economic factors, recognizing the potential for financial stability and independence through the business. Family legacy and cultural significance were also influential factors, with participants valuing the preservation of traditional craftsmanship and passing it on to future generations.

Secondly, participants faced the challenge of balancing their familial responsibilities with their entrepreneurial endeavors. They shared the struggles of managing family expectations, time constraints, and the need to provide for their loved ones while nurturing their business. The participants demonstrated various strategies to navigate these challenges, such as involving family members in the business, establishing clear boundaries, and seeking support from their social networks. They emphasized the importance of open communication, understanding, and flexibility in maintaining harmony between their family and business roles.

Thirdly, participants highlighted the significance of effective marketing strategies for achieving financial stability. They utilized various approaches, including targeting specific customer segments, leveraging social media platforms, participating in religious events and exhibitions, and maintaining strong relationships with customers and suppliers. The participants recognized the importance of adapting to market demands and continuously innovating their products to stay competitive in the industry.

Lastly, participants shared their coping strategies for overcoming challenges in both family and business contexts. These strategies included maintaining a positive mindset, seeking support from their faith and social networks, developing resilience, and being adaptable in the face of adversity. Participants also emphasized the importance of self-care and work-life balance to sustain their well-being amidst the demands of their entrepreneurial journey.

In a nutshell, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of the journey of individuals who establish their own religious carving business. The findings highlight the diverse motivations, challenges, strategies, and coping mechanisms of these entrepreneurs. The research contributes to the existing literature on entrepreneurship, family-business dynamics, marketing strategies, and coping strategies in small business contexts. It offers valuable insights for aspiring entrepreneurs, policymakers, and support organizations seeking to foster the growth and success of individuals in the religious carving industry. By understanding the complex interplay between familial and entrepreneurial roles, addressing the challenges faced, and implementing effective marketing and coping strategies, individuals in this industry can strive for both personal and business fulfillment.

## **VI. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the research objectives, this study provides several recommendations for further theoretical development, methodological approaches, and practical interventions in the context of individuals establishing their own religious carving business.

To deepen the understanding of the motivations behind starting a religious carving business, future research could explore additional influential factors. This could include delving into psychological, cultural, and social aspects that contribute to the decision-making process. By expanding the theoretical framework, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay of factors that drive entrepreneurship in this industry.

Longitudinal studies would also be valuable in capturing the evolving experiences and challenges faced by individuals in the religious carving business. Tracking their journey over an extended period of time would provide insights into the long-term impacts, adaptive strategies, and changes in the industry. This would enhance our understanding of the dynamics of entrepreneurship within this specific context.

Also, employing a mixed-methods approach can offer a more holistic understanding of the religious carving industry. Integrating qualitative and quantitative methods would allow for a deeper analysis of both subjective experiences and objective indicators. Quantitative data such as financial performance metrics and market trends can complement the qualitative insights, providing a more comprehensive picture of the industry.

Furthermore, expanding the research scope to include participants from diverse regions, cultures, and religious backgrounds would offer a broader perspective on the religious carving business. This inclusion would help capture the nuances and

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variations in motivations, challenges, and coping strategies among entrepreneurs in different contexts. It would also provide a more inclusive and representative view of the industry.

To support individuals in the religious carving business, practical interventions can be implemented. First, tailored entrepreneurship support programs should be developed to meet the specific needs of individuals in this industry. These programs could offer training, mentoring, and resources in areas such as marketing, business development, financial management, and innovation. By providing targeted support, these programs would foster the growth and sustainability of religious carving businesses.

Encouraging collaboration and networking among individuals in the religious carving industry is another practical recommendation. Establishing platforms, workshops, and events that facilitate knowledge-sharing, skills development, and business opportunities would stimulate innovation and create synergies among entrepreneurs. This sense of community and collaboration can lead to increased market access, improved competitiveness, and overall industry growth.

Furthermore, recognizing the cultural and artistic value of religious carving businesses is crucial. Initiatives to preserve and promote this cultural heritage should be implemented, such as exhibitions, cultural festivals, and heritage preservation programs. Supporting entrepreneurs in accessing markets and promoting their products would enhance the visibility and appreciation of religious carvings, contributing to their economic viability and cultural significance.

Lastly, it is important to prioritize the mental health and well-being of entrepreneurs in the religious carving business. Providing resources and support for managing stress, maintaining work-life balance, and building resilience is essential. This can include stress management techniques, mindfulness practices, and access to counseling or support networks. Prioritizing the holistic well-being of individuals will contribute to their long-term success and overall quality of life.

By implementing these theoretical, methodological, and practical recommendations, policymakers, support organizations, and the religious carving community can foster an environment that supports the growth and sustainability of religious carving businesses. These recommendations aim to preserve cultural traditions, promote economic development, and empower individuals pursuing entrepreneurship in this field.

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