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Distinct Business Strategy of Philceramics in Tiwi, Albay

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Abstract—Pottery is one of our oldest handicrafts, but surprisingly little has changed in the past few centuries. Out of all humankind's handicraft, pottery is the oldest. Established in 1976, PhilCeramics has been instrumental in providing training and support to potters, as well as showcasing their works through exhibitions and sales. The pottery produced by them is deeply connected to the local territory and tradition. They introduced the modern technology of pottery making in Tiwi, Albay. The researchers draw the following conclusions: Majority of the respondents are engaged in sole proprietorship form of business organization, operating 11-15 years and offering ball clay as the core of their business. Additionally, majority of them are using air dry clay as raw material in the production of ceramic products. The competitive advantage that they are practicing is sustainability. Moreover, they are focused on modern ceramic production as one of the major contributory factors in the economy. Partnership with local tourism and local government units were the predominant business strategy being practiced by the company. Market competition is the topmost challenge experienced by them in their operation. As part of the contribution of the researchers to the field of business administration a set of recommendations was crafted to address the challenges met; Improve the design and pricing; Maintaining the good quality of the product; More competitive in the marketing world; Quality of ceramics products; Innovation of facility; and Friendly tourism facility.

***Index Terms*—Earthenware, Silicon carbide, Bone china, Distinct Business Strategies, Bundle Discounts.**

1. Introduction

Pottery is one of our oldest handicrafts, but surprisingly little has changed in the past few centuries. Out of all humankind's handicraft, pottery is the oldest. Even writing, the very method of communication used to create this article, came after the first pots. And like many other things, it's theorized that it was discovered by complete accident. In ancient times, people would transport water in hand-woven baskets. The water, especially that from rives, would have some clay in it. As the clay dried out, it would take on the shape of the basket, eventually, people realized that these clay linings could be used as sturdy containers. They gathered clay, shaped it, and baked in the sun or hot ashes, sometimes decorating them with primitive tools. Thus, the first clay pots were born. Nowadays, pottery is heated through the use of a kiln. It's widely accepted that the ancient Egyptians created the first kilns, lined with brick made with clay and saw for insulation. They were also among the first to glaze their pottery before firing. Much like their modern equivalent, this glaze gave the pottery a glass-like sheen and texture and made the item non-porous.

After reviewing ancient pottery practices, it might seem odd to learn about pottery from the mid to late 20th century. West German pottery plays a large role in the art form and technically, comes from a country that no longer exists. West German pottery resulted from a "golden era" in the craft that was defined by experimentation and creativity. As a result, West German pottery can't be defined as one thing but, overall, most work from this time and place shared notable characteristics. It often had a "fat lava glaze," which made the pottery appear more tactile, as well as avant garde handle shapes and bright colors (*Hill, Mark, 2023)*.

The first examples of pottery appeared in Eastern Asia several thousand years later. In the Xianrendong cave in China, fragments of pots dated to 18,000-17,000 BCE have been found. It is believed that from China the use of pottery successively spread to Japan and the Russian Far East region where archeologist have found shards of ceramic artifacts dating to 14,000 BCE. Use of ceramics increased dramatically during the Neolithic period, while the establishment of settled communities dedicated to agriculture and farming. Starting approximately in 9,000 BCE, clay-based ceramics became popular as containers for water and food, art object, tiles and bricks, and their use spread from Asia to the Middle East and Europe. The early products were just dried in the sun or fired at low temperature (below 1,000ºC) in rudimentary kilns dug into the ground. Pottery was either monochrome or decorated by painting simple linear of geometric motifs.

It is known that around 7,000 BCE, people were already using sharp tools made from obsidian, a natural occurring volcanic glass. The Roman historian Pliny reported that the first man-made glass was accidentally produced by Phoenician merchants in 5,000 BCE, when while resting on a beach, they place cooking pots on sodium-rich rocks near a fire. The heat from the fire melted the rocks and mixed with the sand, forming

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molten glass. Archeologists have not been able to confirm Pliny's account. Instead, simple glass items, such as beads, have been discovered in Mesopotamia and Egypt dating to 3,500 BCE. At the beginning of the Bronze Age, glazed pottery was produced in Mesopotamia. However, it was not until 1,500 BCE that Egyptians started building factories to create glassware for ointments and oils *(Evans, Scarlett, 2024).*

The discovery of a 3,500-yer-old secondary burial jar from the Manunggul Cave of Tabon Caves in Lipuun Point, Palawan proves that pottery in the Philippines started as early as the Neolithic period. Found in the early Sixties, the burial jar is incised with curvilinear scroll designs painted with hematite. Its lid is etched with a boat with two human figures that symbolize two souls journeying to the afterlife. Up to this day, the Manunggul Jar is considered to be one of the finest Philippine precolonial artworks ever produced and a masterpiece of Philippine ceramics. Even back then, pottery items were created to suit household needs: *palayok* (pots) for cooking, *tabo* (native dipper) for scooping water, as well as dishes, vases, goblets, globular bottles and vessels for both essential and ornamental use *(Reyes, 2021)*.

The Philippine Ceramics Arts and Crafts Center is a government-funded center in Tiwi, Albay, Philippines that aims to preserve and promote the art of pottery in the region. Established in 1976, PhilCeramics has been instrumental in providing training and support to potters, as well as showcasing their works through exhibitions and sales. The pottery produced at PhilCeramics is deeply connected to the local territory and tradition. The clay used is sourced from nearby deposits, and the techniques employed have been passed through generations. The design often features motifs inspired by nature, such as flowers, leaves, and animals. In addition to preserving traditional designs, PhilCeramics also encourage innovation through experimentation with new forms and techniques, while still staying true to the essence of Albay pottery. This blend of tradition and innovation has resulted in a unique and vibrant body of work *(Layug, Benjie 2015).*

Established in 1976, PhilCeramics has been instrumental in providing training and support to potters, as well as showcasing their works through exhibitions and sales. The pottery produced at PhilCeramics is deeply connected to the local territory and tradition. PhilCeramics introduced the modern technology of pottery making in Tiwi, Albay. They are now the leading terracotta ceramic industry in the Bicol Region. This was the project of Department of Tourism and was funded by the Philippine Government under the General Appropriation Act of 1994. The Department of Trade and Industry's Bureau of Philippine Standards (DTI-BPS) has relisted ceramic tiles under the agency's mandatory products for certification. The DTI Department Administrative Order (DAO) No. 20-09, series of 2020 provides the technical regulation concerning the mandatory product certification of ceramic tiles manufactured through normal processes of extrusion and dry pressing, whether locally manufactured or imported. It was signed by DTI Secretary Ramon Lopez on 22 December 2020.

2. Research Method and Design

The researchers used the Quantitative/Descriptive research as its research design. The reason why this type research was used because survey results can be depicted in numerical form and after carefully collecting structured observations and understanding these numbers, it is possible to predict the future of the service to establish causal relationship and make changes accordingly. It primarily centers on the analysis of numerical data and utilizes inferential statistics to derive conclusions that can be extrapolated to the broader population *(Engay, 2024)*.

3. Results and Discussion

A. Economic Profile of PhilCeramics

This part presents the economic profile of PhilCeramics along forms of business organization, number of years of operation, products offered, and type of clay as raw materials used. The subsequent tables present the economic profile of PhilCeramics

1) Forms of Business Organization

Table 1
As to forms of business organization

Forms of Business Organization	Frequency	Percentage
Sole proprietorship	18	52.94%
Partnership	1	2.94%
Corporation	3	8.82%
Cooperative	12	35.30%

Table 1 shows the forms of business organization. Majority of the respondents are sole proprietorship having a frequency of eighteen (18) or 52.94% followed by cooperative with twelve (12) or 35.80%; corporation with three (3) or 8.82% and partnership with one (1) or 2.94%. This implies that the sole proprietorship remains the predominant forms of business organization. It is the easiest and least expensive business structure to establish, minimal legal formalities and paperwork are required compared to corporations or partnerships. Additionally, the owner has complete authority over business decisions without interference from partners or shareholders. This flexibility allows for quick decision-making and adaptability. Profits are taxed as personal income, avoiding corporate tax rates and double taxation. Tax filings and compliance requirements are simpler compared to corporations. Moreover, sole proprietorships have fewer regulations and reporting obligation. The owner keeps all profits generated by the business, unlike partnerships or corporations where profits are shared.

2) Number of Years in Operation

Table 2
As to number of years in operation

Years of Operation	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	2	5.71%
6-10 years	7	20.00%
11-15 years	12	34.29%
16-20 years	6	17.14%
21 years and above	8	22.86%

Table 2 shows the number of years of operation of the business entity. Majority of the respondents operate for almost

11-15 years with a frequency of twelve (12) or 34.29%; 21 years and above with eight (8) or 22.86%; 6-10 years with a frequency of seven (7) or 20.00%; 16-20 years with six (6) or 17.14% and 1-5 years with two (2) or 5.71%.

This implies that the business entity has moved beyond the start-up and growth phases and is likely in the maturity stage of its business lifecycle and is likely to have a strong brand presence and customer trust. It signifies resilience and success, but to sustain and grow, it must continuously innovate, adapt to market changes, and plan for long-term sustainability. Business owners should focus on expansion, efficiency, and succession planning to maintain profitability and relevance.

3) Products Offered

Table 3
As to the products offered

Products Offered	Frequency	Percentage
Porcelain	0	-
Stoneware	0	-
Ball clay	16	36.36%
Earthenware	13	29.55%
Silicon carbide	0	-
Bone China	0	-
Brick	1	2.27%
Silicon	0	-
Glass	0	-
Natural clay	1	2.27%
Red clay	9	20.54%
Ceramics/Terracotta	1	2.27%
Ball mill	1	2.27%
Jars	1	2.27%
Lampshade	1	2.27%

Table 3 determines the products offered by the business entity. Majority of them are offering ball clay with a frequency of sixteen (16) or 36.36% followed by earthenware with thirteen (13) or 29.55%; red clay with nine (9) or 20.54% the following products got a frequency of one (1) comprising 2.27% of the total respondents which include brick, natural clay, ceramics/terracotta, ball mill, jars and lampshade. This implies that majority of the respondents are offering ball clay as the core product of their business.

To the fact that ball clay is highly valued in the ceramics industry due to its unique properties and essential role in ceramic production. Ball clay is extremely plastic, making it easy to shape and mold. It enhances the workability of ceramic mixtures, making it a key ingredient in pottery, tiles, and sanitary ware. The ultra-fine grain structure of ball clay improves the smoothness and finish of ceramic products. It contributes to high green strength, preventing cracks during shaping and drying. Ball clay prevents warping and cracking during the drying and firing process. It enhances the overall mechanical strength of ceramic products. When fired, ball clay turns white or light-colored, which is essential for sanitary ware, porcelain, and tiles. This improves the aesthetic quality of ceramic products. In conclusion, ball clay is in high demand because of its plasticity, strength, fine particle size, and white-firing properties. It is a vital ingredient in ceramic manufacturing, helping to produce high-quality, durable, and aesthetically appealing ceramic products.

4) Types of Clay as Raw Materials Used

With regards to the type of clay used as raw materials, majority of the respondents are using air dry clay with a frequency of fourteen (14) of 32.56% followed by red clay with ten (10) or 23.25%; ball clay with six (6) or 13.95% and white clay with five (5) or 11.62%. This infers that air-dry clay is the prime raw material used in making ceramics because it is soft, pliable, and easy to sculpt, making it ideal for detailed modeling. It can be carved, painted, or sealed after drying and No need for specialized equipment. It is Ideal for DIY projects, home décor, and educational purposes. Also used for sculptures, prototypes, decorative items, and lightweight ceramics. Some air-dry clays mimic the look of ceramics when properly finished. Air-dry clay is widely used in crafts, modelling, and prototyping

Table 4
As to type of clay as raw materials used

Type of Clay	Frequency	Percentage
Earthenware clay	2	4.65%
Stoneware clay	0	-
Ball clay	6	13.95%
Fire clay	2	4.65%
Porcelain clay	0	-
Air dry clay	14	32.56%
Red clay	10	23.25%
Black clay	1	2.32%
White clay	5	11.62%
Terracotta	2	4.65%
Baras	1	2.32%

5) Competitive Advantage of PhilCeramics

Table 5
As to competitive advantage of PhilCeramics

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Company culture	4	11.76%
Reputation	2	5.88%
Economies of scale	4	11.76%
Innovation	5	14.70%
Customer experiences	10	29.41%
Technology	11	32.35%
Location	14	41.17%
Employee expertise	1	2.94%
Quality	9	26.47
Business partners	2	5.88%
Product or service variety	5	14.70%
Sustainability	22	64.70%

The respondents were ask to rate the competitive advantages that they are practicing. The following are the results and arranged according to the degree of magnitude: The indicator sustainability got the highest frequency of twenty two (22) or 64.70% followed by location with fourteen (14); technology with eleven (11); customer experiences has a frequency of ten (10); quality with nine (9); product or service variety and innovation got the same frequency of five (5); economies of scale and company culture with four (4) and reputation and business partners with the same frequency of two (2).

This implies that the top three competitive advantages of PhilCeramics are *sustainability, location* and *technology*. Sustainability is no longer just a social responsibility; it has become a strategic advantage for businesses. Companies that integrate sustainability into their operations can gain a

competitive edge in several ways like enhanced brand reputation and customer loyalty, operational efficiency. Sustainability is a powerful competitive advantage that enhances brand reputation, cost efficiency, investor appeal, and market positioning. Companies that integrate sustainable practices into their core operations not only comply with regulations but also drive profitability, innovation, and long-term business success.

6) Economic Contributions

Table 6
As to economic contributions

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Employment	8	18.18%
Cultural and historical significance	23	52.27%
Modern ceramic production	25	56.81%

Table 6 shows the economic contributions of the business organization. Majority of them perceived that modern economic production is the prime contributory factor to the economy with a frequency of twenty five (25) or 56.81% of the respondents followed by cultural and historical significance with twenty three and lastly employment with eight (8) or 18.18%.

The data signify that modern ceramic production plays a crucial role in economic growth, industrial development, and technological innovation. Its impact extends across multiple industries, influencing job creation, trade, and sustainability. Ceramics are essential in construction, electronics, healthcare, and manufacturing. The ceramic industry contributes significantly to national and global economies through exports, domestic sales, and industrial expansion. Ceramic production supports millions of jobs in manufacturing, supply chains, and R&D. Advanced ceramics require expertise in materials science, engineering, and design, leading to workforce up skilling. Small-scale ceramic businesses, pottery workshops, and home-based production create self-employment avenues. Modern ceramic production is a key driver of economic progress, supporting infrastructure, employment, exports, and technological advancements. As industries adopt advanced ceramics and sustainable manufacturing, the sector will continue to fuel global economic growth while shaping the future of technology and innovation.

B. Business Strategies Practiced by the Company

Another area looked into by the researchers is business strategies being practiced and adopted by PhilCeramics. Table 7 outlines the results.

The respondents were asked to rate the seven (7) pre-identified business strategies employed by PhilCeramics. The indicator *partnership with local tourism* got the highest frequency of twenty six (26) followed by *participation to trade shows and exhibit* with a frequency of twenty five (250 or 56.81%; *social media and online marketing* with twenty (20) or 45.45%; *brand awareness and advertising* eight (8) or 18.18%; *bundle discounts, consignments and limited edition* with five (5) or 11.36% and *major's permit* with one (1) or 2.27%.

This implies that partnership to local tourism is the predominant business strategy being practice by PhilCeramics. Partnerships in local tourism play a crucial role in enhancing economic growth, community development, and destination competitiveness. Businesses, governments, and communities benefit from collaborative efforts, leading to sustainable and long-term tourism success. Partnerships attract more tourists, increasing revenue for hotels, restaurants, and local businesses. Joint ventures between private and public sectors lead to infrastructure development, improving tourist experiences. Collaborations between tourism businesses create unique travel packages, increasing visitor spending. It also allows shared marketing efforts, such as joint advertising, festivals, and events. Hotels, airlines, tour operators, and local attractions can promote each other, reaching wider audiences. Well-coordinated tourism campaigns enhance the destination's global appeal, attracting more visitors.

More tourists mean more jobs in hospitality, transport, and cultural industries. Partnerships with small businesses promote local handicrafts, food, and experiences which Involves local residents in tourism activities, preserving cultural heritage and traditions. Forming partnerships in local tourism is a powerful strategy that drives economic success, sustainable practices, and business innovation. Collaborating with local communities ensures authentic experiences and protection of traditions. Governments working with private investors create a favorable business environment for tourism growth. Public-private partnerships improve roads, airports, and safety measures, attracting more visitors and Ensures that tourism growth aligns with legal and sustainability standards. By working together, stakeholders create a stronger, more attractive destination, benefiting both businesses and the local community while ensuring long-term tourism growth.

C. Challenges Experienced by PhilCeramics in their Operation

The last area looked into by the researchers is the challenges experienced by PhilCeramics in their operation along political influence, economic, market competition, economic and environmental preservation, technology and production efficiency, financial constraints and legal. The results are presented in Table 8.

The respondents rated the indicator market competition with

Table 7
Along business strategies practiced by the company

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Brand awareness and advertising	8	18.18%
Social media and online marketing	20	45.45%
Partnership with local tourism	26	59.09%
Participation to trade shows and exhibit	25	56.81%
Product differentiation	0	-
Bundle discounts, consignments and limited edition	5	11.36%
Mayor's permit	1	2.27%

Table 8
Challenges experienced by PhilCeramics

Indicators	WM	AD
Political influence	3.97	Often Experienced
Economic (supply chain and raw materials)	3.61	Often Experienced
Social (labor and skilled workforce)	3.52	Often Experienced
Market competition	4.15	Often Experienced
Economic and environmental preservation	3.36	Often Experienced
Technology and production efficiency	3.52	Often Experienced
Financial constraints	3.24	Often Experienced
Legal	3.45	Often Experienced
Average	**3.60**	**Often Experienced**

the highest weighted mean of 4.15 followed by political influence with 3.97; economic (3.61); technology and production efficiency and social with 3.52; legal has 3.45; economic and economic preservation with 3,36 and lastly financial constraints with 3.24. All the above indicators have an adjectival description of often experienced. The composite mean for the challenges experienced is 3.60 which is adjectivally described as often experienced.

This implies that market competition is one of the biggest challenges businesses face, affecting profitability, growth, and sustainability. Increased competition requires companies to continuously innovate, differentiate, and adapt to remain successful. Companies must optimize operations and reduce expenses to maintain profitability. Businesses need to offer unique value propositions beyond just price reductions and must invest in customer experience, branding, and personalized services to retain customers. Companies need to engage customers through social media, digital marketing, and influencer partnerships. They constantly update, improve, and innovate to meet changing market demands, integrate automation, AI, and data analytics to stay competitive.

Moreover, businesses must invest more in advertising, promotions, and brand awareness. Companies need to continuously train employees to keep up with market trends and technological advancements and investment in new products and process improvements is necessary to stay ahead. Invest in training and development to maintain competitive talent. Competitors may attract employees with better salaries, benefits, or work conditions. Market competition challenges businesses to be more efficient, innovative, and customer-focused. While it can drive industry growth and innovation, companies must develop strong branding, competitive pricing, and operational efficiency to thrive in a highly competitive environment.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The researchers draw the following conclusions:

Majority of the respondents are engaged in sole proprietorship form of business organization, operating 11-15 years and offering ball clay as the core of their business; additionally, majority of them are using air dry clay as raw material in the production of ceramic products; the competitive advantage that they are practicing is sustainability; moreover, they are focused on modern ceramic production as one of the major contributory factors in the economy; partnership with local tourism is the predominant business strategy being practiced by PhilCeramics; market competition is the topmost challenge experienced by PhilCeramics in their operation.

As part of the contribution of the researchers to the field of business administration a set of recommendations was crafted to address the challenges met; Improve the design and pricing while maintaining the good quality of the product; Be more competitive in the marketing world by showcasing the quality of ceramics products, while innovation of the existing facilities could put PhilCeramics into a more competitive advantage by presenting a friendly tourism practices to tourists both foreign and domestic.

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