



An Assessment of Village Type Pottery Industry

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Abstract A village type pottery industry was operating in a village of Talibon, in northern Bohol, Philippines which existed for quite sometime and was observed to be very slow in its improvement in terms of number and design of products, number of workers and the facilities remained obsolete. This study was conducted to determine the features of the village type pottery industry in terms of the beginnings of industry, the management structure, how pottery craft was learned, the process followed to produce a product, the source of raw materials, facilities and equipment used, designs of the products, the customers and the workers of the pottery. This was also conducted to determine the contribution of the industry to the local community. Further, the study was conducted to identify the level of satisfaction of the customers in terms of the product quality, quantity and timeliness of delivery of the product and to recognize the problems met by the industry. This study used descriptive survey method utilizing questionnaire, interview and actual observation. The result shows that this industry started in 1970s by the great grandparents of the present proprietors, the products were only limited to cooking pots, flower pots, and stove. Presently, this industry is managed by a couple, the husband as the manager and the wife as assistant manager. It has 5 workers in the production area, 3 males and 2 females who are daughters of the couple managing it. There were additional 2 workers, one helped in getting raw materials and the other one in selling the product. The result also shows that the raw materials were taken from the area near the pottery. It can be noted that improvised facilities and equipment were used in this pottery industry. Their customers were composed of walk-in customers and wholesalers. The result in the level of satisfaction on the products in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness in product delivery, revealed that the customers were Satisfied and Very Satisfied. The top three problems experienced were lack of capital, obsolete technology and lack of diversification. These results challenged the state university in Bohol and gave it the opportunity to use their capacity of helping this pottery industry in those aforementioned problems.

Keywords pottery, local community, pot designs, improved facilities

INTRODUCTION

Pottery is a ceramic material which makes up potterywares that include earthenware, stoneware and porcelain (Dinsdale, 1986). It is also defined as a clay that is modelled, dried, and fired, usually with a glazed or finished into a vessel or decorative object. The term "clay" refers to a naturally occurring material composed primarily of fine-grained minerals, which is generally plastic at appropriate water contents and will harden with dried or fired. Although clay usually contains phyllosilicates, it may contain other materials that impart plasticity and harden when dried or fired.

Pottery in Bohol utilized clay found in the locality where the pottery operated. It is unique because the clay was first stamped by the workers using their feet to make it fine, it was also moulded

by the hands of the workers without the aid of any tool or moulder except for hollow blocks and fire bricks. It was observed that it existed for quite sometime but was noticed to be very slow in its improvement in terms of the operation, number of products and product quality. It is in this context that the researchers were encouraged to conduct an assessment about this industry.

OBJECTIVE

This study was conducted specifically to determine the features of the village type pottery industry in terms of the beginnings of industry, the management structure, how pottery craft was learned, the sources of raw material, the process followed to produce a product, facilities and equipment used, and the designs of the products. This study was also conducted to determine the contribution of the industry to the local community. Further, the study was conducted to identify the level of satisfaction of the customers in terms of the product quality, quantity and timeliness of delivery of the product and to recognize the problems met by the industry.

METHODOLOGY

This is qualitative and quantitative study using descriptive survey method utilizing questionnaire and reinforced by interview and observation during the actual pottery operation. There were 42 respondents of the study broken down as follows; 2 owners (husband and wife), 5 workers, 25 customers and 10 wholesalers. The researchers used both convenient sampling and snowball techniques in identifying the 25 customers and ten wholesalers. This study was conducted in Talibon, the northern part of Bohol, Philippines.



Fig. 1 Map of the Philippines and Bohol

The responses of the walk-in customers and the wholesalers on the satisfaction level used the scale of 1 to 5, 5 as the highest level of satisfaction/ highest gravity of the problem and 1 as the lowest. For analysis of the data, the following ranges were used 4.24 - 5.00 Very Satisfied/ Very Serious problem, 3.43 - 4.23 Satisfied/ Serious Problem, 2.62 - 3.42 Moderately Satisfied/ Moderately Serious Problem and 1.00 - 1.80 Dissatisfied/ A Problem but did not greatly affect the operation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the profile of the village-type pottery industry, the result of the interview shows that the pottery started in operation in 1970s by the great grandparents of the present owner, when their children were still young. During that time they only used a piece of wood like a paddle in de-airing and kneading the raw materials, they only used their hands in making pots, flower pots and cooking stoves. It was

only his grandmother who made the products, travelled to different towns during scheduled market days to sell them. They discovered that pot making helped much in their livelihood.

In the present time, it is managed by the grandson of the previous owner and his wife, they have only five workers, which include their two daughters, and three male workers who were also their close relatives. The males are between 20 to 40 years of age. They learned the craft through experience without proper training. As of the present time nothing much was changed although changes in the operation was noticeable. In the interview with the workers, they said, they still got the raw material near the place where the pottery house was erected. It can be observed that several holes were already made which shows that they got the raw materials in these areas.

The village type pottery industry adopted the some steps in the making of pots. It started with the gathering of raw materials from the main source just in the vicinity of the building, then de-airing followed which was done only by using their feet or stepping on the raw materials done several times. It was followed by kneading using their hands. These steps only indicated that they still need facilities for de-airing and kneading. When the raw materials were already ready, these were placed near the potter's wheel ready for the mass production.

For facilities and equipment, they already have the potter's wheel, which made their work a bit easier. They also have improvised moulders for fire bricks and hollow blocks, ovens small and big were also available. The small oven can bake 600 products fired in 6 hours, while the big one can bake 2000 products in 18 to 24 hours. Small oven was only used when there was an emergency order while the big was used in the normal operation. The ovens were fed with firewood, ordinary firewood with dried leaves of coconut to start the fire. There was also a building made of native and light materials used to air dry the products before baking and which also served as their display area before delivering the products to the customers or while waiting for the customers to pick them up.

As observed in the actual visit to the village type pottery industry, the designs of the products had already improved. In addition to the usual cooking pots, flower pots and cooking stoves, additional products were already produced such as the new designs of pots, flower pots of different sizes, vases with stand, haron jar, water jar, montabana, plant stand, bonsai pots, fire bricks and hollow blocks. But when the workers were interviewed, they said, that they wanted to learn more designs and more techniques in pot making.

In the result of the interview with the proprietor, he said that the village-type pottery industry became their means of livelihood until the present time. This is also where their workers earned a living. The community was also benefited because of the taxes they paid to the government.

For the satisfaction level of the customers in terms of quantity, quality of the products and the timeliness of product delivery, Table 1 shows, the products that ranked first in the level of satisfaction in quantity were the Fowls' Feeders with a weighted mean of 4.92 or Very Satisfied. It was followed by flower pots with the weighted mean of 4.85 and 4.385, Very Satisfied for cooking pots. It means that these products were always available in the display area. The customers said they can immediately buy these products anytime with the quantity they need. However, hollow blocks, fire bricks and flower vase with stand were the last three products in the rank as to quantity with a rating of 2.61 or "Moderately Dissatisfied" for hollow blocks, and 2.63 and 3.11" Moderately Satisfied" for both fire bricks and flower vase with stand respectively. These are made-to-order products, so nobody can just go to the pottery and buy the product but they need to put an order because these stocks were not always available. The potters will only manufacture these products when there are orders, so customers have to wait if they need the products.

Table 1 also manifests the respondents' satisfaction level as to the quality of the products. It shows that the top three products which the respondents rated "Very Satisfied" with a rating of 4.91, 4.88 and 4.8 were Fowl Feeders, Cooking pots, and Flower Pots respectively. The workers or the potters were already experts in producing fowl feeders, cooking pots and flower pots because these were the first products they produced since the beginning of the pottery operation. On the other hand, the last three products in the rank were Bonsai Pots, Plants Stand and Hollow Blocks. These products were rated 3.97 Satisfied, 4.32, Very Satisfied, and 4.54 Very Satisfied respectively. When the customers were asked further why they ranked these products in the lowest three ranks, they said they oftentimes saw cracks in the products, although the potters can also remedy the cracks by putting

additional clay on the cracks but the more it made the product not presentable anymore because the cracks were still evident.

The customers further commented that there were products which need glazing which the workers had no knowledge yet on how to do it. The workers started painting some products like the Montabana and Haron Jar but these products will look much better if these will be glazed according to the customers in the interview. The customers suggested that these workers be educated/ trained further on some techniques to produce better products.

Table 1 Respondents' Satisfaction level on the Quantity, Quality and Timeliness of the Delivery of the Products

Products	Quantity			Quality			Timeliness			Ave. WM	DR	R
	NR	DR	R	NR	DR	R	NR	DR	R			
Cooking Pots /Stoves	4.85	VS	3	4.88	VS	2	4.85	VS	3	4.85	VS	3
Flower Pots	4.85	VS	2	4.80	VS	3	4.93	VS	2	4.86	VS	2
Flower Vase with Stand	3.11	MS	9	4.60	VS	7	3.46	S	9	3.72	S	9
Haron Jar	3.83	S	6	4.61	VS	6	3.84	S	6	4.09	S	5
Water Jar	4.69	VS	4	4.69	VS	4	4.72	VS	4	4.7	VS	4
Montabana	3.41	S	8	4.55	VS	8	3.43	S	11	3.79	S	8
Plant Stand	3.82	S	7	4.32	VS	10	3.84	S	7	3.99	S	6.5
Bonsai Pots	3.97	S	5	3.97	S	11	4.03	S	5	3.99	S	6.5
Fire Bricks	2.63	MS	10	4.68	VS	5	3.45	S	10	3.57	S	10
Hollow Blocks	2.61	MD	11	4.54	VS	9	3.47	S	8	3.54	S	11
Fowl Feeders	4.92	VS	1	4.91	VS	1	4.97	VS	1	4.93	VS	1

In terms of the satisfaction level on the timeliness of the delivery of products, it was also included in this study because it can affect the operation if the products were not delivered on time. The result shows that all items to be delivered were rated from Satisfactory to Very Satisfactory. On the same table, it clearly discloses that the first three items in quantity and quality were also the first three in the timeliness of delivery. It was obvious that since these items were readily available then, it can be delivered on time. However, hollow blocks, flower vase with stand, fire bricks and Montabana were the last in terms of timeliness in the delivery since these were made- to- order products. The potters will only manufacture these products when there are orders. So it took time for the potter to deliver and customers have to wait after making the order.

Per observation, the researchers noticed that this pottery industry has problems just like any other endeavours and so they included these in the study to find out the seriousness of the problems they meet in running the pottery industry. Three groups were asked to answer the questionnaires on the seriousness of the problems; the proprietors, the workers based on their experience; and the customers based on their perception and observation in the operation.

The proprietors' top three problems in managing the pottery were marketing mechanism which they rated 4.8 "Very Serious" Shortage of working capital with a rating of 4.24 "Very Serious" and Lack of Diversification 4.20 "Serious". It can be gleaned that marketing mechanism was really important to make the industry more productive. The two problems on shortage of working capital and the lack of diversification were interrelated because any industry can have the difficulty of diversifying the products if there is shortage of capital which usually lead to lesser productivity. The findings are in consonance with what Kasemi (2014) stated, that lack of diversification of the product also accounts for slow growth of the pottery sector.

Table 2 Problems Experienced by the Proprietors and Workers and as Perceived by the Customers

Problems	Proprietor			Workers			Customers			Ave. WM	DR	R
	NR	DR	R	NR	DR	R	NR	DR	R			
Shortage of working capital	4.24	VS	2	4.8	VS	2	4.24	VS	6	4.43	VS	2
Low investment in fixed capital	3.44	S	7.5	4.24	VS	4	4.4	VS	4.5	4.03	S	5
Obsolete Technology	4.0	S	4	5.0	VS	1	5.0	VS	1.5	4.67	VS	1
Lack of diversification	4.20	S	3	4.6	VS	3	4.8	VS	3	4.5	VS	3
Competition of other pottery industries	3.46	S	6	3.48	S	6	4.0	S	7.5	3.65	S	8
Management Problem	3.48	S	5	4.0	S	5	4.0	S	7.5	3.83	S	7
Lack of Research and Development Effort	3.44	S	7.5	3.48	S	8	5.0	VS	1.5	3.97	S	6
Marketing Mechanism	4.8	VS	1	3.46	VS	8	4.4	VS	4.5	4.22	S	4

On the other hand, on the workers' part, their first three problems were obsolete technology which they rated 5.0, Shortage of Working Capital, 4.8 and lack of diversification, 4.6 all were of descriptive rating "Very Serious". Since the workers were the front liner of production, they really felt that the facilities used were already obsolete, in the interview they said, they can have better product and improved productivity if the new facilities will be given to them. It can be understood that the problem on the obsolescence of the facilities can be attributed to shortage of working capital which also affected the diversification of the products.

On the part of the customers, they really felt that the industry were having that problem on obsolete technology which got a tie in rating with lack of research and development efforts, both got a rating of 5.0 or Very Serious. Through research and development effort, the lack of diversification problem can be addressed which they also rated as the third problem of the industry.

For the overall rating, it shows that the first problem was the obsolete technology, followed by shortage of working capital, lack of diversification; marketing mechanism followed closely then low investment on fixed capital. The last three among the identified problems were the lack of research and development effort, management problems and competition among pottery industry. It shows that though the pottery industry felt there were competitors in the business, they did not consider it as a very serious problem that could greatly affect the operation.

CONCLUSION

The village type pottery industry despite being run by family members who lacked proper training with limited experience and resources and using obsolete facilities, was able to survive for many years in operation. The industry slowly improved its operation, the product quantity and quality and most of all on how to satisfy the needs of the customers.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the LGU of the village may consider looking for financial institutions which can provide additional capital because if the pottery can have additional capital other problems can be solved. The state university through its extension mandate, has to work closely for the improvement of the product quality, teach additional designs and techniques for diversification and advancement and help produce better facilities and equipment of the pottery in the village

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