

## From tradition to innovation: Examining Ifugao's local weave products as One Town One Product – Next generation

### *Dari tradisi ke inovasi: Menelaah produk tenun lokal Ifugao sebagai Satu Kota Satu Produk – Generasi berikutnya*

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#### Abstract

The traditional weaving industry in Lagawe, Ifugao, Philippines, is a vital cultural and economic asset rooted in indigenous knowledge and craftsmanship. However, the sustainability of these enterprises in the modern market context remains a pressing concern. This study aims to determine the current condition of traditional weaving businesses in Lagawe, Ifugao, using the One Town One Product—Next Generation criteria. Owners of traditional weaving businesses that were purposively selected in Lagawe, Ifugao, were interviewed in 2023. Using thematic and inductive analysis, findings revealed that handwoven products are valued for their cultural authenticity, craftsmanship, and durability. Weavers from Kiangnan and Hingyon provide quality materials, ensuring the integrity of the weave. Consumers appreciate the uniqueness, symbolism, and artisanal quality, which enhance personal identity and cultural pride. However, the sector faces challenges in branding, product innovation, and packaging. Traditional designs are mostly limited to garments, restricting broader market appeal, while non-traditional items like bags show minimal design evolution, reducing competitiveness. Packaging lacks labeling, including care instructions and cultural context, weakening branding and customer education. Quality control depends largely on raw materials and weaving techniques, but durability also relies on customer handling. Participants highlighted variability in longevity, suggesting the need for consumer education. Innovation that balances modernization with cultural preservation is essential for market sustainability. Overall, the traditional weaving industry in Ifugao showcases admirable product quality rooted in heritage. However, it must address gaps in market-oriented practices and product development to ensure long-term sustainability and relevance in a competitive and evolving global market.

**Keywords:** cultural value; One Town One Product; product potentials; traditional Ifugao weaving

#### Abstrak

Industri tenun tradisional di Lagawe, Ifugao, Filipina, merupakan aset budaya dan ekonomi penting yang berakar pada pengetahuan dan keterampilan adat. Namun, keberlanjutan usaha-usaha ini dalam konteks pasar modern tetap menjadi perhatian yang mendesak. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kondisi terkini usaha tenun tradisional di Lagawe, Ifugao, menggunakan Kriteria One Town One Product—Next Generation. Pemilik usaha tenun tradisional yang dipilih secara purposive di Lagawe, Ifugao, diwawancarai pada tahun 2023. Dengan menggunakan analisis tematik dan induktif, temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa produk tenun tangan dinilai berdasarkan keaslian budaya, keterampilan, dan daya tahannya. Penenun dari Kiangnan dan Hingyon menyediakan bahan berkualitas, yang memastikan integritas tenunan. Konsumen menghargai keunikan, simbolisme, dan kualitas kerajinan, yang meningkatkan identitas pribadi dan kebanggaan budaya. Namun, sektor ini menghadapi tantangan dalam pencitraan merek, inovasi produk, dan pengemasan. Desain tradisional sebagian besar terbatas pada pakaian, sehingga membatasi daya tarik pasar yang lebih luas, sementara barang-barang non-tradisional seperti tas menunjukkan evolusi desain yang minimal, sehingga mengurangi daya saing. Kemasan tidak memiliki label, termasuk petunjuk perawatan dan konteks budaya, sehingga melemahkan pencitraan merek dan edukasi pelanggan. Kontrol kualitas sangat bergantung pada bahan baku dan teknik menenun, tetapi daya tahan juga bergantung pada penanganan pelanggan. Peserta menyoroti variabilitas dalam keawetan, yang menunjukkan perlunya edukasi konsumen. Inovasi yang menyeimbangkan modernisasi dengan pelestarian budaya sangat penting untuk keberlanjutan pasar. Secara keseluruhan, industri tenun tradisional di Ifugao memamerkan kualitas produk yang mengagumkan yang berakar pada warisan. Namun, industri ini harus mengatasi kesenjangan dalam praktik berorientasi pasar dan pengembangan produk untuk memastikan keberlanjutan dan relevansi jangka panjang di pasar global yang kompetitif dan terus berkembang.

**Kata kunci:** nilai budaya; Satu Kota Satu Produk; potensi produk; tenun tradisional Ifugao

## Introduction

One of the earliest local industries in the Philippines is weaving, which is practiced by indigenous communities from various regions (Vilbar & Bronda 2019). A priceless component of the nation's generational past, traditional handloom weaving is ingrained in its cultural character (Shrivastava 2020). The creation of cloth for personal usage is the reason for its emergence, and it has become a way of expressing people's arts, culture, and tradition, which are essential to people's survival (Centillas et al. 2023). It plays a crucial role in a country's economic structure, serving as a central pillar supporting overall economic growth and stability. It is also a vital source in creating significant employment opportunities and is essential in driving the engine of economic development, with substantial contributions. Moreover, it positively impacts reducing economic disparity and income equality, making them a vital element for realizing social inclusion and sustainable development (Ausat & Suherlan 2021, Yani et al. 2023).

Since their influence on employment and production metrics at the local and national levels was recognized, cultural industries have been the subject of numerous studies. This significance implies that cultural activities substantially contribute to GDP and the creation of direct and indirect jobs, which enhance the standard of living for the cultural actors who engage in these activities (Boccella & Salerno 2016). The contribution of traditional craft industries aids in accomplishing SDGs regarding the empowerment of women, the reduction of inequality, the expansion of access to decent employment, and the promotion of sustainable modes of production and consumption (Bardhan & Bhattacharya 2022).

Weaving has a long and illustrious history in the Philippines, spanning centuries of tradition across numerous indigenous cultures and changing over time in terms of meaning, purpose, and value (Laszczka & Przada-Giersz 2020, Inovero et al. 2021). For many indigenous peoples, weaving has been a vital way to practice and express who they are and what they believe. According to the global creative economy report, the craft still has much-untapped potential. The value and purpose of handloom weaving have evolved due to trade, industrialization, globalization, technology, and mass production, becoming what they are today: a source of cultural pride, a way to make a living, an assertion of identity, and one of the newest design trends (Imapi et al. 2022, Gopura & Wickramasinghe 2023).

According to UNESCO, cultural assets can be safeguarded in two ways. The first is to document and preserve cultural material, and the second is to ensure that it is transmitted from one generation to the next to maintain its existence. In the Cordillera region, the north of the Philippines has a rich cultural weaving tradition that is practical and demonstrates the artistry of the region's many ethnolinguistic groups. In the Cordillera, weaving is transmitted orally rather than in writing, with older women serving as the current master weavers' teachers (Glover & Stone 2018). While Ifugao is preserving, enhancing, and cultivating the tradition of weaving, it is also working to make the Philippines' Cordillera a better hub for business (Malinao 2021). For women in the area, weaving has developed into a source of rural employment and income. The potential of handloom weaving to augment household income while enabling weavers to carry out their responsibilities as wives and mothers keeps them economically motivated (Baten et al. 2020).

The Philippines' weaving culture has been significantly impacted by industrialization, trade, colonization, and interventions, which have established that textiles are consumer goods. Hand-woven textiles remain symbols of Indigenous group membership in the face of these advances. Still, depending on the wearer's intention, they may also take on the role of a social and political representation of their ethnicity within the framework of a more significant national identity. Many weaving communities now rely on weaving as a source of revenue; they are no longer the final consumers of their products. As a result, patterns and designs have evolved to satisfy customer needs. Using imported yarn has expanded the range of hues used in textiles, including hitherto unexplored colors. Higher quality, tighter weaves are kept for the communities themselves, whereas lower quality, looser weaves are also more frequently produced for commercial and, often, tourist sales (Soodsung 2016, Chanasda Chullasthira 2017, De Jesus Icasiano 2017).

Notwithstanding its vital function, the industry faces numerous obstacles (Wanjiru & George 2015). As the sophistication of industrial items increases, the demand for these products declines, forcing the artisans to abandon their businesses and relocate to the cities to make a living. As a consequence

of the declining interest of younger generations in studying the art, many old craftsmanship skills and techniques have vanished. As a result, industrial items thrived because of their better durability and economic worth, while handicrafts declined and slowly lost their role in society. This legacy must be recognized and preserved during globalization and swift economic transformation, or it may be lost forever. Accordingly, several cultural heritage specialists have emphasized the necessity of protecting this cultural heritage to provide financial benefits and other advantages and maintain the community’s identity (Yang et al. 2018). Several parties are purposefully developing efforts to resuscitate the sector through cultural and economic interventions, but these are being carried out in silos. Despite the implementation of livelihood programs for the weavers over the past forty years, their self-sufficiency has not yet been achieved (British Council 2020).

Multi-stakeholder initiatives have been made to help the industry, particularly in establishing and maintaining weaving centers through partnerships with designers, skill development, and other groups (British Council 2020). However, according to Malbog et al. (2018), traditional weaving enterprises are declining. These traditional weaving businesses’ self-sufficiency and financial sustainability have not yet been entirely achieved, even with the current economic interventions aimed at revitalizing the industry and promoting the growth of micro, small, and medium businesses (MSMEs) (British Council 2020).

Recognizing these challenges, the Philippine government launched the One Town, One Product (OTOP) program, designed to promote inclusive local economic development by focusing on the unique cultural products of each town or city (Department of Trade and Industry 2022, Malinao 2022). OTOP provides a comprehensive framework that combines cultural preservation with enterprise development, addressing key aspects such as product quality, marketability, innovation, and financial capacity. In the case of Ifugao, the OTOP framework offers a strategic approach to revitalizing the weaving sector, not only by improving the competitiveness of local products but also by safeguarding the cultural and historical significance of weaving within the community.

The use of the OTOP framework in this study is essential because it allows for an integrated analysis that goes beyond mere documentation of cultural practices. It assesses the readiness and potential of Ifugao weaving enterprises to thrive in modern markets, while at the same time preserving their cultural integrity. By evaluating the local weaving industry using the OTOP Next Generation criteria—namely product quality, marketability, production and delivery capacity, financial capability, business innovations, and cultural value—this study aims to provide a holistic understanding of both the challenges and opportunities facing the sector.

Focusing on the local context of Lagawe, Ifugao, this research responds to the urgent need for evidence-based strategies to strengthen the weaving industry, enhance local entrepreneurship, and ensure that cultural heritage remains a dynamic part of economic development. The results will inform policymakers, local government units, and support institutions such as the Department of Trade and Industry and the academe, enabling them to design targeted interventions, capacity-building programs, and sustainable marketing strategies. Furthermore, this study addresses a critical gap in the literature by exploring the intersection of indigenous entrepreneurship, cultural preservation, and local economic development in Ifugao. This area has remained under-researched despite its significance.

## **Research Method**

This study employed a qualitative-descriptive research design, which is appropriate for capturing the lived experiences, insights, and practices of traditional weaving entrepreneurs in their natural setting. The study focused on seven owners of traditional weaving businesses in Lagawe, Ifugao, who were purposively selected based on specific criteria: they have been operating their weaving businesses for at least five years and, registered to the Department of Trade and Industry, actively produce woven products for sale, and participate in local or regional trade fairs or programs within and outside the locality. This ensured that the participants had deep-rooted experience and relevant insights into the current condition of the traditional weaving industry. Although the number of participants was only seven, the validity and credibility of the findings were supported through several qualitative strategies.

Qualitative research emphasizes depth over breadth, focusing on small, carefully selected participants/informants to explore participants' perspectives in detail (Subedi 2021). Purposive technique is crucial for improving research rigor and trustworthiness, aligning the data with study objectives. Generally, qualitative data collection aims to generate rich, detailed data that enhance the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings (Campbell et al. 2020). The participants' expertise and long-term involvement in the industry ensured that the data reflected authentic and nuanced understandings of the traditional weaving sector in Ifugao. While purposive data collection can provide valuable insights, findings are typically applicable only to the specific participant/informant or context studied (Lawani et al. 2023).

Key informant interviews and field observations were conducted to shed light on the stated objectives of the study comprehensively. The interview protocol was aligned with the One Town, One Product (OTOP) criteria set by the Department of Trade and Industry, focusing on six core dimensions: product quality, marketability, production and delivery capacity, financial capability, innovation potential, and cultural value. An informed consent form outlining the goals of the study, data confidentiality, ethical considerations, the location and duration of the research, the procedures involved, and the intended beneficiaries was provided to the participants. Only those who completed the informed consent form could participate in the study.

Data analysis involved open coding, where initial codes were assigned to recurring themes and observations. Product descriptions were documented and contextualized within the local weaving landscape, highlighting prevailing conditions and barriers. Subsequently, a thematic analysis was applied to extract patterns and generate insights. At the same time, an inductive writing approach was used to propose actionable strategies for enhancing the traditional weaving business in support of sustainable rural development.

## Results and Discussion

This section is divided into several sub-chapters, including the current condition of traditional weaving businesses as perceived by business owners in terms of (1) product quality, (2) marketability, (3) production and delivery capacity, (4) financial capability, (5) business innovations, and (6) cultural value.

### Product quality of Ifugao's local weave products

Summary of themes with sample verbatim quotations on the current condition of the traditional weaving business in Lagawe, Ifugao, using the One Town One Product Criteria on Product Quality are presented in Table 1. Notably, the analysis of the product quality indicators of the local weave product shows strengths in cultural authenticity and performance. Nevertheless, it also highlights key areas for improvement concerning branding and market competitiveness.

According to informants, all products are handmade and of high quality. Hand-created products are made to the highest quality because the makers understand the value of each piece. Moreover, handcrafted work is built to last, and local woven products have various factors or values that make them worthwhile to purchase. The participants mentioned that the bag's quality is different, and the quality of the native dress is different. What they use for weaving is from Kiangan and Hingyon – both municipalities in the province of Ifugao, which is why textiles are of good quality. The participants noted that the quality of the bags differs from that of the native dresses, largely due to the source and type of materials used in weaving. The materials often used for weaving bags may sometimes be sourced from other areas or use blended, less traditional, or commercial fibers, which can affect the product's strength, texture, and appearance.

Native dresses demand finer craftsmanship and more durable materials to preserve their cultural symbolism and withstand wear. Specifically, they emphasized that the textiles woven using materials from Kiangan and Hingyon are of notably high quality. This is because these areas are known for producing superior raw materials that are well-suited to the intricate patterns, durability, and cultural authenticity required for native dresses. This indicates that in terms of the product performance of weave



products, they provide good value at an acceptable price, balancing quality with cost-effectiveness. This implies that the local weaves can only satisfy customers’ expectations bound by affordability. This factor helps keep the local markets moving and extends into broader consumers. However, without continuous innovation or refinement, the product might not hold for a long time in competitive differentiation in rapidly shifting consumer preference markets.

**Table 1.**

Summary of themes on the current condition of traditional weaving businesses based on product quality

Product quality indicators	Themes on product quality	Sample verbatim quotations
Product Performance	The product provides satisfactory performance at an acceptable price or conformance at an acceptable cost.	<i>Our customers say the fabric lasts long and feels comfortable, even with the price being a bit higher than the synthetic ones.</i> – Participant B.
Reliability / Shelf-life	Depending on the handling of customers	<i>“If they wash it properly and don’t overexpose it to the sun, the colors stay vibrant for years.”</i> – Participant A
Quality Control	Quality hand-woven materials	<i>“We always inspect the threads before weaving. If the thread is weak or broken, we don’t use it. It must be durable.”</i> – Participant.
Product Design	Depends on the type of product. Traditional outfits need not be altered. Traditional hand-woven products are not allowed for bags and other handicrafts.	<i>“For cultural clothes, we follow the design of our elders. We don’t make bags or wallets from them because it’s not respectful to cut the weave.”</i> – Participant D.
Packaging	Contains the name of the producers Other details are not applicable*	<i>“We only put our names on the package. No barcodes, no price tags, just the weaver’s name.”</i> – Participant E
Labelling	None*	<i>“We don’t use labels. We hand it over or place it in plastic if they ask. That’s all.”</i> – Participant F

Source: Data processed from the results of interviews with informants

The reliability and durability of local weave products, largely dependent upon customer handling, result in variability in product longevity. This calls for educating consumers through various educational platforms on handling hand-woven products for longevity, thereby allowing end-customer satisfaction. Quality control within the local weave products is based on the raw materials used for hand weaving, which can be identified as a crucial factor in sustaining the cultural authenticity of the products in Lagawe, Ifugao. The reliance on traditional methods has attached great importance to craftsmanship and the heritage of outputs.

Classically, the product designs of local woven products are traditional. Accordingly, there is a clear line separating the design of conventional costumes from other items made from hand-woven materials. It does not change the design of traditional garments. Innovations in designing other products, such as bags or handicrafts, are strictly limited. This means that attaching great importance to cultural preservation is a disadvantage in terms of limited possibilities concerning the type of products. As a result of identifying non-traditional items and allowing for more flexible designs, the local weavers could diversify into new markets, modernizing product lines yet still respecting cultural boundaries.

The packaging and labeling of local woven products indicate severe deficits underpinning marketability. In this respect, the fact that the producer’s name appears on the package while other helpful information, such as details about the product, care instructions, or even its cultural significance, is not available decreases the customer value proposition for this product. Lack of whole labeling also erodes consumer transparency, a vital perspective in global markets since product sourcing and overall sustainability have been increasingly emphasized. Further, the absence of proper labeling diminishes the ability to establish the brand identity of local weaves against competitors from more developed markets.

According to Imapi et al. (2022), local weave products in the province of Ifugao are valued for their durability, lightness, portability, ease of washing, reasonable pricing, and overall practicality. Beyond these functional qualities, woven bags from the province are described as cozy and enjoyable to use, providing customers with a sense of satisfaction and pleasure. Importantly, for many Ifugao people, purchasing and using handwoven bags is not just about utility — it is deeply connected to personal and cultural identity. Using these products strengthens their sense of pride and belonging as Ifugao, as the act symbolizes support for local craftsmanship and heritage preservation.

Respondents highlighted that handwoven bags help reinforce their cultural identity by serving as visible expressions of Ifugao traditions. This cultural connection enhances their self-esteem and social standing, as the use of local woven products often leaves a positive impression on others and signals cultural rootedness and social responsibility. Additionally, the distinctive design, harmonious color combinations, and high-quality textiles used in these products further elevate their appeal. Informants noted that when they carry or display woven items, they not only express cultural loyalty but also promote community pride and encourage others to value traditional crafts. This combination of practical benefits, aesthetic appeal, and cultural symbolism helps explain why woven products hold such a meaningful place in the daily lives and identities of Ifugao consumers.

### **Marketability of Ifugao's local woven products**

Table 2 presents the summary of themes with sample verbatim quotations on the current condition of the traditional weaving business in Lagawe, Ifugao, using the One Town One Product Criteria on Marketability. All traditional weaving businesses target locals, tourists, and schools. This somewhat diverse market segment suggests that demand for the products already exists. According to Mirajiani et al. (2024), Community members, including government and NGO employees, buy local woven products to support local artisans. Fitri et al. (2024) and Sore & Bobi (2024) identified Cultural enthusiasts who value these products for their traditional craftsmanship and cultural identity. Social media has expanded access to global markets, drawing tourists and international buyers seeking unique, handmade items. Additionally, fashion and lifestyle consumers are increasingly interested in sustainable and ethically produced woven goods for their distinctiveness and artisanal quality.

The product strategies aim at high-quality final products by emphasizing that this is a positive attribute in the current competitive scenario. On the other hand, pricing strategies underscore minimum pricing, which may not add value to the craftsmanship or cultural values of woven products. Although low pricing could attract more consumers, the risk is perceived value erosion among consumers, especially tourists and global consumers who could be clients and significantly increase value for genuinely handwoven products.

On the other hand, distribution strategies by weaving businesses in the locality have included direct and indirect channels, limited to physical store retail and wholesale, providing access to consumers. However, scalability might be restricted depending on traditional channels. Online platform expansion might ensure broader exposure and access to the market for high-value products. According to Sumarmi et al. (2023), the expansion of online platforms can significantly enhance market access for high-value products by leveraging digital marketing strategies and improving consumer engagement. This transition allows businesses to reach broader audiences, thus facilitating the trade of high-value foods and processed goods, which often face barriers in traditional markets (Akim 2024). Furthermore, the promotional strategies currently adopted are confined to exhibitions, trade fairs, and word of mouth, which are effective but may not create brand awareness on a large scale.

Digital marketing, social media campaigns, and strategic collaborations could promise much more significant movement in brand visibility and market penetration. Digital marketing strategies empower SMEs to enhance their market presence, as evidenced by training initiatives that enable entrepreneurs to comply with regulations and effectively brand their products (Sumarmi et al. 2023). The adoption of digital tools allows these businesses to create dedicated exhibition spaces, showcasing their offerings to a broader audience. The strong point of the differentiation strategy is that the textiles are handwoven

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by artisans from Hingyon and Kiangnan, Ifugao. It brings out the underlying culture and authenticity. Despite having an existing brand identity and being duly registered with the DTI, it still does not register trademarks with IPOPHIL. This jeopardizes the brand from a protection and intellectual property rights standpoint. Getting a trademark will protect the brand against imitation and establish the authenticity of the products in domestic and international perception.

**Table 2.**

Summary of themes on the current condition of traditional weaving businesses based on marketability

<b>Marketability indicators</b>	<b>Themes on marketability</b>	<b>Sample verbatim quotations</b>
Target Market	Locals, tourists, schools	<i>“Our main buyers are tourists and sometimes students during school events when they need native attire.” – Participant C.</i>
Product Strategies	Good quality of final products	<i>“We focus on making each weave strong and neat so that customers keep coming back.” – Participant B.</i>
Pricing Strategies	Minimal pricing	<i>“Hhmmmm, we try to keep the price low so locals can still afford it, even if the weaving takes days.” – Participant C.</i>
Distribution Strategies	Direct and indirect channels (physical store retail & wholesale)	<i>“Some sell directly at the weaving center. Others bring our products to Baguio or Manila and nearby towns.” – Participant A</i>
Promotional Strategies	Exhibit or trade fairs/ word-of-mouth	<i>“We rely mostly on exhibits and word-of-mouth. If someone likes the weave, they tell their friends.” – Participant G</i>
Marketing Plan	None*	<i>“We don’t have a marketing plan” – Participant A – G</i>
Market Penetration Strategy	None*	<i>“None” Participant A – G</i>
Differentiation Strategy	Hand-woven textiles are from the weavers of Hingyon and Kiangnan, Ifugao	<i>“What makes our products unique is the weave itself—each pattern comes from our own culture in Hingyon and Kiangnan.” – Participant A</i>
Positioning Strategy	None*	<i>“None” Participant A – G</i>
Brand Identity	With a brand name	<i>“Our products carry the name of our weaving group, so people will know it’s from Lagawe.” – Participant C.</i>
Brand /Product Registration	DTI registered / Brand name not registered to IPOPHL (trademark)	<i>“We are registered with DTI, but we haven’t processed the trademark yet because it’s expensive.” – Participant D</i>
Feedback Mechanism	None*	<i>“None” Participant A – G</i>
Service Recovery Strategy	None*	<i>“None” Participant A – G</i>
Post-sales service strategy	None*	<i>“None” Participant A – G</i>

Source: Data processed from the results of interviews with informants

Traditional Weaving Businesses have no defined marketing plan or market penetration strategy. However, opportunities are still not touched upon regarding expanding this market and tapping into more significant, potentially broader markets. This could limit growth and profitability for the products due to the unavailability of a structured approach towards entering new markets and maximizing the existing ones. The absence of a well-defined positioning strategy diminishes the brand's aptitude to be distinctive in highly competitive markets. A positioning strategy that could be developed as unique may focus on cultural heritage, sustainability, and craftsmanship, which could attract socially conscious consumers who want to be different from mass-produced textiles. The absence of a feedback mechanism, a strategy for service recovery, and a post-sales service strategy is a massive rift in customer relationship management. Such strategies not only help in improving customer satisfaction but also give insight into product improvement and innovation. It would also allow the weavers to understand customers' preferences through structured feedback mechanisms and adjust their offerings accordingly. A post-sale service recovery strategy would also go a long way in building customer loyalty.

The handloom industry is vital for rural economies, especially for women, and gives an environmentally friendly way of production (Gogoi et al. 2020). However, weavers face many problems: raw material scarcity, inadequate available facilities, and marketing constraints (Divyanshi et al. 2022). Product diversification will require design innovation and improvement in marketing mechanisms to increase the marketability of the products (Khakhlari 2020). The industry must rely on intermediaries for sales, showing gaps that must be improved in marketing strategies and facilities. Price fluctuations in the raw materials and the need for design innovation to reach the global markets also pose significant challenges. Therefore, these issues can be addressed by collaborating more with marketing academics and practitioners since their combined expertise could bring much more valuable outcomes to the marketing field. Considering this, integrating thinking with doing in marketing can also benefit the handloom industry and the broader marketing discipline (Deighton et al. 2021).

### **Production and delivery capacity of Ifugao's local woven products**

Table 3 presents the summary of themes with sample verbatim quotations on the current condition of the traditional weaving business in Lagawe, Ifugao, using the One Town One Product Criteria on Production and Delivery Capacity. Table 3 reveals the current conditions of traditional weaving businesses in Lagawe, Ifugao, Philippines, regarding production and delivery capacity. The results indicate a small-scale manufacturing model, which corresponds to the artisanal nature of the weaving process, but presents challenges in fulfilling growing demand significantly when market opportunities improve.

The quantity of the production of woven fabrics is 15-30 yards per month, and the other handicrafts, for example, bag packs, 20-30 pieces per month, show limited output due to manual weaving. The traditional outfits are done according to order, showing that every product was attuned to the customer's needs. Although this low-volume production does assure exclusivity and personal care for each product unit, this burdens the business in terms of the inability to scale up to meet larger market volumes. This may reduce the potential to get out and explore growth opportunities, particularly in broader markets where demand for handmade products is increasingly becoming culturally relevant. The availability at partner retail stores maintains consistency of supply, providing consumers with a stable channel of access to the products.

However, relying on local retail partners and physical stores alone significantly limits the geographical reach of the product. Greater access by a wider audience, both domestically and internationally, could be achieved by expanding distribution through digital channels, including e-commerce platforms. Consuming also would reduce the risk of local market fluctuations by spreading the consumer base. According to Batsakis et al. (2023), retailers can adopt a combination of online and offline sales channels, optimizing resource allocation to enhance both product and international diversification. Implementing an online-to-offline (O2O) strategy can lower delivery costs and improve profitability, especially when self-building online capabilities (He et al. 2021).



**Table 3.**

Summary of themes on the current condition of traditional weaving businesses based on production and delivery capacity

<b>Production &amp; delivery capacity indicators</b>	<b>Themes on production &amp; delivery capacity</b>	<b>Sample verbatim quotations</b>
Volume Capacity	Weaved Fabrics – 15 – 30 yards/month Handicrafts (Bag packs) 20 – 30 pcs/month Traditional outfits – per order	<i>“We usually finish about 15 to 30 yards a month, depending on how many of us are weaving. For bags, maybe 20 to 30 pieces. But for traditional clothes, we only make them when someone requests.”</i> – Participant F.
Consistency of Supply to Consumers	Available at partner retail stores	<i>“Our products are always available in the shops that we work with. They call us if they’re running low.”</i> – Participant E
Deliveries and Transportation	The physical store serves as a storage area/display area	<i>“We use our store both for display and for keeping the finished products until someone buys them or we bring them to the fair.”</i> – Participant C
Logistics	Delivery through PUB outside the municipality	<i>“When we need to send products to Baguio or Manila, we use the bus. We label the package and inform the buyer when it leaves.”</i> – Participant A
Networks	Partner retail stores	<i>“We don’t have our shop in town, but some stores sell our products for us. We split the sales.”</i> – Participant E

Source: Data processed from the results of interviews with informants

The store is a display and storage area, while transportation is by delivery. This is quite effective in operations at the local level but becomes a bottleneck when demand increases, especially when the physical store must be the only point for display and warehousing. Besides, using PUBs for delivery outside the municipality indicates a cost-effective solution. Still, it is not efficient and reliable, which could be achieved if the logistic solutions were more extensive. In the face of increasing demand, it will be essential to explore partnerships with logistics companies or build a better infrastructure for delivery to ensure delivery on time and reliably, at least outside the immediate region.

The evolution of consumer goods’ production and trade-distribution logistics has pointed out the urgent need for more effective and responsive supply chain systems. Conventional methods often involve speculative determinations of volumes and ranges that have continuously led to financial losses and the decay of customer satisfaction. Blockchain technology infrastructure will increase transparency and traceability in a supply chain environment (Telepneva et al. 2021). This is supported by Raskin et al. (2019). Supply chain flexibility has also been brought into light as “firms “enhance production flexibility components with supply and logistic networks to improve their responsiveness to clients and assure concrete benefits.” These are meant to realize a more efficient, transparent, and agile supply chain system with better customer service at lower costs.

### **Financial capability of Ifugao’s local weave products**

Table 4 presents the summary of themes with sample verbatim quotations on the current condition of the traditional weaving business in Lagawe, Ifugao, using the One Town One Product Criteria on Financial Capability.

**Table 4.**  
Summary of themes on the current condition of traditional weaving businesses based on financial capability

Financial capability indicators	Themes on financial capability	Sample verbatim quotations
Monitoring of Income and Expenditures	Record keeping	<i>"We keep a notebook to write down sales and expenses, just to make sure we don't spend more than what we earn."</i> – Participant A
Financial statements prepared	Quarterly and annual income tax return	<i>"We submit financial reports once a year and quarterly for tax purposes. It's a requirement from the government."</i> – Participant B.
Person in charge of the preparation of financial statements	Tourism employee of the Provincial Capitol Office	<i>We ask for help from the tourism office. They have someone who prepares our financial documents for BIR."</i> – Participant C.
Tracking of money coming in and out	Record keeping	<i>"All money going in and out is written manually. We're not using any apps or computers—just notebooks."</i> – Participant D
Budget Plan	None*	<i>"None"</i> - Participant A – G
Management of Credit	None*	<i>"None"</i> - Participant A – G
Inventories	Once every three months	<i>"We check our stock every three months to see how many are left and what we need to make more of."</i> – Participant G

Source: Data processed from the results of interviews with informants

Table 4 shows that record keeping of income and expenditures for monitoring reveals that a system exists to keep track of the inflow and outflow of money within the business. This becomes essential in its financial management to enable the company to be aware of its health status within its area of operation at any time. However, mere essential record-keeping without a formal budget plan enormously restrains informed decisions on cost control, investment, and expansion. Without a formalized process being put in place for budgeting, resources would likely be optimally allocated. This may impact the company's ability to plan for future growth, absorb shock from surprise expenses, or capitalize on new opportunities. A formal budgeting process would spell out a specific plan and pathway to deal only with operational costs, investments, and savings.

The preparation of financial statements and quarterly and annual income tax returns would indicate that the regulatory requirements have been complied with. However, it is interesting to note that these statements are prepared by a tourism employee from the Provincial Capitol Office rather than by the employee directly involved in the business operation. This ensures compliance and may indicate a disconnection between day-to-day financial decision-making and financial reporting. The financial oversight in this regard must be internal: the person in charge of the business or a financial officer must comprehend and manage the financial statements to make more calculated operational and strategic decisions. The lack of a credit management system is another significant gap.

The businesses currently operate without formal credit management, which could limit growth opportunities. Access to credit would allow the business to invest in expanding production capacity, marketing, and infrastructure without relying solely on existing cash flow. A strategic approach to managing credit could support business development and allow for scaling operations, particularly

when larger orders or expansion into new markets require additional capital investment. Furthermore, the absence of credit management increases financial vulnerability, as the business may struggle to manage cash flow during slow sales periods or unexpected economic downturns.

From the point of view of inventory management, the three-monthly inventory stock practice implies that the business performs periodic inventory checking; however, it may not be adequate when scaling up production or fluctuating demand becomes necessary. More frequent stock inventories would prevent inventory shortages at the right time and help replenish and optimize the supply chain for any expansion in its distribution channels or product lines. More frequent and systematic inventory management would yield greater operational efficiency with a lower risk of supply disruption.

Financial management and reporting are crucial for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Many MSMEs struggle with proper accounting practices, often relying on manual methods or essential tools like Microsoft Excel. Implementing web-based financial applications can streamline processes, improve accuracy, and provide real-time access to financial data. Training and assistance in financial management and report preparation benefit MSMEs, helping them understand the importance of proper financial practices and enabling them to create financial statements using tools like MS Excel. Financial statements for MSMEs should be prepared based on the Financial Accounting Standards for Micro, Small, and Medium Entities, which typically include a statement of financial position, income statement, and notes to financial statements. Proper financial management and reporting can contribute to the sustainability of MSMEs and fulfill internal and external financial information needs (Hasmawati et al. 2023, Azis et al. 2024).

### **Business innovations of Ifugao’s local weave products**

The innovation indicators shown in Table 5 for local weave products show a positive trajectory toward diversification and efficiency, reflecting creativity and adaptability in the weaving industry. The introduction of additional product lines, from coin purses to handbags, backpacks, and traditional outfits, indicates that the business has actively pursued product innovation to cater to a broader market. This diversification is crucial for the industry’s sustainability, allowing the enterprise to tap into different consumer segments, including traditional and modern markets. By offering various products, the business can reduce the risks associated with relying on a single product line and enhance its appeal to locals and tourists. However, while expanding product lines is a positive step, further innovations could focus on improving these products’ functional features or aesthetic appeal to align with modern fashion trends or specific market demands.

**Table 5.**  
Summary of themes on the current condition of traditional weaving businesses based on business innovations

<b>Business innovations indicators</b>	<b>Themes on business innovations</b>	<b>Sample verbatim quotations</b>
Product Innovations	Additional product lines. From coin purses to handbags to backpacks to traditional outfits	<i>“Before, we only made tapis and coin purses, but now we sew handbags, backpacks, even school uniforms-traditional outfits using woven fabric.” – Participant F.</i>
Tools, machines, and equipment used in operating a business	High-speed sewing machines	<i>“We bought a high-speed sewing machine so we can finish bags and clothes faster and more neatly.” – Participant G</i>
Person-in-charge	Owner and employee	<i>“It’s usually me and my helper who do the sewing and product development. I decide what designs to try next.” – Participant C.</i>

Source: Data processed from the results of interviews with informants

The use of high-speed sewing machines represents a commitment to improving production efficiency, particularly in the manufacturing process of hand-woven textiles. This technological upgrade has the potential to significantly reduce production time, increase output, and maintain the high quality associated with handcrafted products. However, while this tool enhances productivity, it also signals a need for continued investment in technology and training. The reliance on high-speed sewing machines may still leave gaps in areas such as product finishing, design intricacies, or materials integration, which could be further refined by adopting more advanced machinery or innovative production techniques.

According to Hidayani (2024), traditional tools in weaving play a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage, enhancing economic development, and ensuring the sustainability of weaving practices. These tools, primarily looms, facilitate the intricate process of interlacing threads to create textiles, embodying both artistic expression and community identity. Traditional weaving tools are vital for maintaining cultural practices and passing down skills through generations, as seen in the cloth weaving traditions of various communities. The use of specific looms and techniques reflects the unique identity of different cultures, such as the narrow strip weaving in Ghana, which showcases local heritage (Asinyo et al. 2021).

Regarding management, the person in charge, the owner, and an employee indicate a small-scale operation where decision-making and day-to-day operations are centralized. While efficient for a smaller business, this structure may limit growth potential. As product lines diversify and demand increases, the owner may face challenges balancing strategic oversight with operational tasks. Hiring specialized personnel, such as product designers, production managers, or marketing experts, could alleviate the burden on the owner and enable the business to focus on further innovation and expansion. This could lead to more streamlined operations and a greater continuous innovation capacity.

Recent research points to innovations in handloom weaving and efforts to revive this age-old craft. As a primary rural livelihood, the sector is continuously innovative in terms of technologies, designs, markets, and social organization. On the other hand, this sector is under considerable threat from modernization and needs revitalization to ensure its survival. Studies indicate that design Intervention, closed-loop manufacturing strategies, and community-based entrepreneurship have the potential to enable sustainable innovation in the handloom industry. Social enterprises are testing new avenues of recovery in the post-pandemic context by focusing on digital impact, particularly for women. Notwithstanding the intrinsic sustainability of the industry and its promise of social inclusion, structural barriers to innovation and growth persist (Mamidipudu & Bijeker 2018).

According to Hegde & Ramaiah (2024), significant advances in weaving technology have been made in recent years, including integrating digital sensors, automated looms, and precision control systems. The benefits of these advancements include faster production, better-quality textiles, and less material waste. Traditional handloom weaving is different from the current weaving method in several ways. Modern weaving is automated and efficient, whereas conventional weaving is labor-intensive and time-consuming. Handloom weaving uses techniques such as 3D weaving, laser cutting, and digital printing to produce distinctive textures, patterns, and finishes, increasing the range of textile design options. Customization and individualization are made possible by computerized controls in modern weaving techniques, allowing rapid color and design adjustments. This makes it possible to produce customized goods even in large quantities. Changes in design and color. This allows for personalized products even in mass production (Hossain et al. 2024).

### **Cultural value of Ifugao's local woven products**

Table 6 presents the cultural value of handloom weaving in the locality, highlighting how it functions as both a tangible and intangible form of cultural capital. The current condition of local woven products involves the use of indigenous raw materials, signaling that sustainability plays an essential role in the authenticity and continuity of cultural heritage. According to Cultural Capital Theory, cultural knowledge, skills, and artifacts—such as weaving techniques and materials—are resources that can



enhance social cohesion, identity, and even social mobility within communities. When artisans continue working with their specific indigenous materials, they sustain not only the tangible aspects of their crafts but also the ecosystems, both ecological and cultural, that they are embedded in. This process reinforces their cultural capital by preserving traditional knowledge, strengthening community identity, and supporting economic resilience.

Using raw indigenous materials thus serves as a vehicle for cultural continuity, environmental conservation, and economic viability, with the traditional knowledge system resting on these indigenous weaving techniques. This aligns with Bourdieu’s (1986) perspective that cultural capital can be institutionalized and embodied in practices that generate symbolic and material benefits for communities.

**Table 6.**

Summary of themes on the current condition of traditional weaving businesses based on cultural values

Cultural value indicators	Themes on cultural value	Sample verbatim quotations
Cultural integration in the product and process	Usage of indigenous raw materials	<p><i>“We still use the same traditional threads and dyes passed down from our elders. That’s what makes our product truly Ifugao.”</i> – Participant A</p> <p><i>“Even if we try new designs, we make sure to use local materials.”</i> – Participant B.</p> <p><i>“Weaving is not just business for us. It’s culture. Every pattern, every color has meaning, and we keep that alive in our products.”</i> – Participant C</p>

Source: Data processed from the results of interviews with informants

Handloom weaving has immense cultural significance and is symbolic of identity and heritage in many communities. For the Bodo people of Assam, it is deeply embedded in their socio-economic fabric and artistic practice, embodying local wisdom and ingenuity (Busamatary & Khawzawl 2024). Similarly, in Ethiopia, weaving preserves ethnic identity, culture, and history, playing an indispensable role in religious and social rituals (Chernet & Ba 2020). The adaptability of handmade weaving to historical, social, and economic forces underscores its resilience as a form of cultural capital.

Despite challenges such as raw material shortages and competition from machine-made fabrics, handloom weaving remains central to cultural identity. It offers communities a means to strengthen social status and economic opportunities. As Cultural Capital Theory suggests, cultural heritage is not just a matter of preserving the past—it is an active resource for social empowerment. Understanding weaving practices through this lens highlights the need for stakeholder conservation efforts, including sustainable tourism, urban planning, and community involvement, to ensure these cultural assets continue to serve as both a source of identity and a tool for social advancement (Kiarie 2024).

## Conclusion

The findings emphasize that the traditional weaving businesses in Lagawe demonstrate strong craftsmanship and cultural authenticity in their product quality. However, they face limitations in areas such as labeling, packaging, and innovation that must be addressed to enhance competitiveness and sustainability. While traditional weaving businesses in Lagawe possess culturally distinct and high-quality products, their marketability is hindered by the absence of formal marketing strategies, limited promotional efforts, and lack of post-sales services—factors that are crucial for expanding market reach and sustaining growth. The production and delivery capacity of traditional weaving businesses in Lagawe remains modest but steady, with consistent supply supported by partner retail stores and basic logistics arrangements; however, scalability is limited by manual production and reliance on informal distribution networks. The financial capability of traditional weaving businesses in Lagawe

is characterized by basic manual record-keeping and external assistance for financial reporting. Still, it lacks formal budgeting, credit management, and advanced financial tools, indicating a need for capacity-building in financial planning and control.

Traditional weaving businesses in Lagawe have begun adopting modest innovations, such as expanding their product lines and using modern equipment like high-speed sewing machines, while still relying on the creativity and leadership of the owners and their assistants for product development. The cultural value of traditional weaving in Lagawe is deeply rooted in the use of indigenous materials and ancestral techniques, reflecting the community's commitment to preserving Ifugao identity and heritage through every woven piece. Overall, the weaving industry in Lagawe, Ifugao, possesses immense potential, provided it embraces innovation in design, communication, and quality assurance without compromising its cultural identity. These actions will enable it to compete more effectively and preserve its unique legacy for future generations.

Implications for practice are forwarded based on the salient findings of the study. Product quality must be ensured by sourcing high-quality raw materials, implementing a quality control system, and incorporating the Ifugao identity into designs. Packaging should be durable, cost-effective, eco-friendly, and compliant with regulations, mainly for export. Marketability can be enhanced through strategic positioning, competitive pricing, diversified payment methods, and effective distribution. Traditional and digital marketing strategies, branding, and intellectual property protection should also be prioritized. Customer experience can be improved by integrating feedback systems, service recovery policies, and after-sales services. Production and delivery capacity should be strengthened through efficient scheduling, inventory management, and collaboration with other regions. Financial capability must be reinforced with proper monitoring and resource management. Innovation should focus on improving products, processes, and services, while cultural integration ensures the preservation of traditional weaving techniques. Entrepreneurs should take advantage of training and mentorship programs from government and private organizations to maximize opportunities and enhance business growth.

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**Client William M. Malinao** is an esteemed academician and researcher, distinguished by his educational qualifications and multifaceted expertise. He holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration with a major in Marketing Management from Cagayan Valley Computer and Information Technology College, a master’s degree from Northeastern College, and a Doctorate in Commerce from Saint Mary’s University—each institution recognized by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the Philippines. Malinao is currently advancing his academic pursuits by working toward a PhD in Educational Leadership and Management at Isabela State University. As an Assistant Professor IV and the Program Chairperson of the College of Advanced Education at Ifugao State University – Potia Campus, he imparts knowledge across both undergraduate and graduate programs, specializing in Business Administration, Management, Entrepreneurship, Education, and Social Sciences.

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