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## TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION AND CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY CREATIVE BUSINESSES IN NUEVA VIZCAYA

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### ABSTRACT

Total Quality Management (TQM) is an essential component in a business's planning process, not just for major enterprises, but also for micro and small businesses like creative industries. By integrating TQM principles into their strategic planning, businesses may make sound choices to improve the quality of their products and ensure that resources are efficiently allocated. This study focused on identifying the total quality management of creative businesses in Nueva Vizcaya. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches and the survey method of collecting data were used where the questionnaire was administered through face-to-face. A total of 19 available creative businesses in Nueva Vizcaya. Results revealed that they have been operating for less than ten years, employing two employees, offering *runo* and other products like *baki*, *sarukang*, *takkab*, and lampshade, with an initial capital of above 3,000 and have been applying key principles of TQM significantly in the business. Furthermore, the principle of leadership involvement was the only significant distinction when grouped by products offered, but the other principles showed no significant difference when grouped according to profile. Most of the issues encountered were financial stability and resource management, process efficiency and quality improvement, supply chain management, employee management and training, and external influences affecting production. The study's recommendations address these difficulties. Recommendations to solve the issues encountered by present creative businesses in Nueva Vizcaya were made based on these findings.

*Keywords:* capitalization, handicrafts, leadership involvement, MSME's, quality improvement, supplier relationships

### INTRODUCTION

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a comprehensive approach to improving the quality and efficiency of operations that is particularly pertinent to small businesses striving for excellence in their products or services. It encompasses a set of principles and practices aimed at fostering a culture of continuous improvement, customer focus, and employee involvement throughout the organization. In small businesses, where resources may be limited and competition intense, implementing TQM can be a strategic advantage, enabling them to enhance customer satisfaction, reduce costs, and maintain a competitive edge in the market (Dale, 2003). This management philosophy emphasizes the importance of not only meeting but exceeding customer expectations by systematically identifying and eliminating defects, streamlining processes, and empowering employees to contribute to the organization's success. Deming (1986) emphasizes that management's role in setting clear quality objectives and providing the necessary resources is fundamental to TQM's success. When leaders actively participate in TQM processes and demonstrate their commitment through their actions, it sends a clear message to the entire business that quality is a top priority (Oakland, 2003). Such commitment fosters a culture of continuous improvement and employee engagement, which are vital components of TQM's effectiveness (Sashkin & Kiser, 1993).

As part of today's competitive business landscape, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) also need to understand the significance of TQM in their sustainability. Because they tend to experience more difficulties than medium-sized firms (Ackah & Vuvor, 2011), acknowledging the problems and challenges they encounter in their operations and finding solutions to address them promptly is essential (Hayes et al., 2015).

The creative business, including the handicraft sector, which falls under the MSMEs, is characterized by emphasis on innovation, uniqueness, and aesthetic appeal. And as consumer preferences evolve and competition intensifies, ensuring high-quality products and services becomes paramount. The principles of TQM, such as continuous improvement, employee involvement, and customer-centricity, align with the dynamic nature of the creative business, enabling artisans and businesses to consistently deliver products that not only meet but exceed customer expectations (Mitra, 2017). By integrating TQM practices, these enterprises can streamline their operations, reduce defects, and foster a culture of excellence that resonates with both contemporary consumer demands and long-standing artistic traditions.

Moreover, despite the promising climate in the creative business, one challenge it faces is the competition from mass-produced and cheaply manufactured goods. This can make it difficult for artisans to compete in terms of price and quantity and as Sadovnikova and Rakhmatullin (2017) states, this affects their ability to maintain the uniqueness and authenticity of their handmade products.

In this context, this study aims to determine the TQM implementation and challenges encountered by creative businesses in Nueva Vizcaya. Nueva Vizcaya is renowned for its vibrant creative business, particularly its rich tradition of handicrafts and handmade products. While various crafts are produced like *inabel* by Aruga products (Kasilag, 2022), bamboo crafting is a prominent handicraft in the province. Based on the results, recommendations were crafted to address the challenges encountered and to create awareness that can improve the activities of these businesses which can assist them to achieve quality products and services.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study, conducted in the school year 2024-2025, aims to determine the TQM implementation and challenges encountered by creative businesses in Nueva Vizcaya.

Specifically, it determined the following:

1. What is the profile of the creative businesses in Nueva Vizcaya in terms of
  - 1.1 Years of Operation;
  - 1.2 Number of Employees;
  - 1.3 Products Offered; and
  - 1.4 Initial Capitalization?
2. What is the extent of total quality management implementation of these businesses along
  - 1.1 Customer Focus;
  - 1.2 Continuous Improvement;
  - 1.3 Employee Involvement;
  - 1.4 Process Improvement;
  - 1.5 Leadership Involvement;
  - 1.6 Supplier Relationships?
3. Is there a significant difference between the extent of total quality management implementation of these businesses when grouped according to their business profile?
4. What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of total quality management?
5. What recommendations can be crafted to address these challenges?

### **Statement of Null Hypothesis**

There is no significant difference between the extent of total quality management implementation of the creative businesses when grouped according to their business profile.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gather relevant data with specific use of survey and interview. The study was conducted in Nueva Vizcaya, focusing on creative businesses in Sta. Fe, Bagabag, and Bayombong that produce handicrafts such as *runo* products, *sarukang*, *takkab*, *baki*, and lampshades. Using purposive sampling, 19 business owners were selected based on criteria including being located in Nueva Vizcaya, producing handmade products, and operating with family members due to limited financial resources; most were not registered with the Department of Trade and Industry. Data were collected using a questionnaire adapted from Camison (2007) and Syduzzaman (2017), covering respondent profiles and the six principles of Total Quality Management (TQM), measured through a 4-point Likert scale. Data analysis included frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, Mann-, Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis tests. Descriptive-narrative analysis was also applied to analyze the challenges and formulate recommendations.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Section 1. Profile of the Creative Businesses

The majority of the creative businesses have been operating for less than ten years, having two employees, with the others either having 1 or 3 employees. Most of the respondents offer products like *runo* and others like lampshade, *baki*, *sarukang*, and *takkab*. These products were created using resources available in the respondents' municipality. As featured in Manila Standard Lifestyle (2020), Northern Luzon, particularly the province of Nueva Vizcaya, has taken pride in its handicrafts made of natural materials and sustainable resources. One of which are *runo* products. *Runo* resembles small circle-shaped bamboo and is commonly used to make home decorations, particularly curtain blinds. The environmentally friendly *runo* blinds mimic modern fiber-fabric curtains. In addition to blinds, *runo* is also used in making other products such as baskets and *parol* or Christmas decorations.

In terms of capitalization, most of the respondents have an initial capitalization of above P 3,000.

### Section 2. Extent of Total Quality Management Implementation of Creative Businesses in Nueva Vizcaya Along Key Principles

**Table 1**

*Summary Table of Key Principles*

Key Principles	Mean	Interpretations
Customer Focus	3.71	Applied to a great extent
Continuous Improvement	3.70	Applied to a great extent
Employee Involvement	3.62	Applied to a great extent
Process Improvement	3.84	Applied to a great extent
Leadership Involvement	3.79	Applied to a great extent
Supplier Relationship	3.52	Applied to a great extent

The table summarizes the extent of TQM implementation of creative businesses in Nueva Vizcaya along with customer focus, continuous improvement, employee involvement, process improvement, leadership involvement, and supplier relationship principles. It shows that all of the principles are applied to a great extent which means that creative businesses in Nueva Vizcaya are deeply committed to integrating total quality management (TQM) principles into their operations. By prioritizing these principles, creative businesses aim to enhance product and service quality, foster innovation, and ensure customer satisfaction, ultimately positioning themselves for long-term success in a competitive market.

### Section 3. Significant Difference Between the Extent of Total Quality Management Implementation of Creative Businesses in Nueva Vizcaya When Grouped According to Their Business Profile

**Table 2**

*Significant Difference Between the Extent of the Total Quality Management Implementation of Creative Businesses in Nueva Vizcaya When Grouped According to Their Years of Operation*

	Years of Operation	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]
Customer Focus	less than 10 years	10	9.30	38.000	.604
	10 years and above	9	10.78		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>			
Continuous Improvement	less than 10 years	10	9.55	40.500	.720
	10 years and above	9	10.50		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>			
Employee Involvement	less than 10 years	10	8.55	30.500	.243
	10 years and above	9	11.61		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>			
Process Improvement	less than 10 years	10	8.00	25.000	.113
	10 years and above	9	12.22		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>			
Leadership Involvement	less than 10 years	10	9.25	37.500	.549
	10 years and above	9	10.83		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>			
Supplier Relationship	less than 10 years	10	8.75	32.500	.315
	10 years and above	9	11.39		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>			
Overall	less than 10 years	10	8.10	26.000	.133
	10 years and above	9	12.11		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>			

\*Significant at 0.05

Table 2 shows that there is no significant difference between the principles of TQM and years of operation. This means that the businesses that operate even for less than ten years consider addressing the concerns of their customers since customer feedback can significantly inform the needed improvements. Customer satisfaction does not require years of experience. Even a new business can prioritize its customers immediately. This contradicts the EPRA (2019) study, which argues that a business needs to be established for a reasonable amount of time before it can truly focus on satisfying its clientele. Moreover, whether in the business for short or long, they improve their products continuously which could be their way of integrating improvements based on the preferences of the customers eventually resulting in business survival and successful operation. In contrast, Puspaningrum (2019) shows that the length of operation has a favorable and significant impact on the growth of small businesses. Also like many businesses in the creative sector, they need employee engagement because as Liu (2021) suggests, when employees actively participate, it leads to quality performance. While Fornell (2006) reports that businesses that operate for more than ten years tend to develop the capacity for process improvement and adapt to the dynamic business environment, the respondents, whether operating for shorter or longer time, continuously improve their process

which according to the results also highly involve leaders. Finally, regardless of years of operation, the creative businesses build strong relationships with their suppliers by discussing the desired quality of the resources. Also, the businesses rely on few suppliers as they control the risks that the suppliers might integrate in their business. Al-Abdallah (2014) agrees stating that supplier relationship is important even in small businesses for it can ensure the supply of reliable and quality resources so that the businesses can rely on their suppliers even in the long run.

**Table 3**

*Significant Difference Between the Extent of the Total Quality Management Implementation of Creative Businesses in Nueva Vizcaya When Grouped According to Their Number of Employees*

	Number of Employees	N	Mean Rank	Kruskal Wallis	df	Asymp. Sig.
Customer Focus Mean	1 employee	6	11.00	1.079	2	.583
	2 employees	7	8.43			
	3 or more employees	6	10.83			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				
Continuous Improvement Mean	1 employee	6	11.17	.790	2	.674
	2 employees	7	10.29			
	3 or more employees	6	8.50			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				
Employee Involvement Mean	1 employee	6	10.08	.493	2	.782
	2 employees	7	10.93			
	3 or more employees	6	8.83			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				
Process Improvement Mean	1 employee	6	10.17	1.566	2	.457
	2 employees	7	11.57			
	3 or more employees	6	8.00			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				
Leadership Involvement Mean	1 employee	6	9.33	.644	2	.725
	2 employees	7	11.21			
	3 or more employees	6	9.25			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				
Supplier Relationship Mean	1 employee	6	9.67	.856	2	.652
	2 employees	7	8.93			
	3 or more employees	6	11.58			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				
Overall	1 employee	6	9.50	.354	2	.838
	2 employees	7	11.00			
	3 or more employees	6	9.33			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				

\*Significant at 0.05

Table 3 shows the significant difference between the extent of total quality management implementation of creative businesses in Nueva Vizcaya when grouped according to their number of employees. There is no significant difference between the customers focus ( $p=0.583$ ), continuous improvement ( $p=0.674$ ), employee involvement ( $p=0.782$ ), process improvement ( $p=0.457$ ), leadership involvement ( $p=0.725$ ), supplier relationship ( $p=0.652$ ) when grouped according to the number of employees by the business.

Dalluay and Jalagat (2016) confirm that employees who are encouraging and who assist customers are more likely to help achieve ideal business effectiveness and flexibility in the business world. This implies that regardless of whether they have few or more employees, effective businesses should focus on encouraging employee involvement to achieve their primary goal of providing the best products and services to customers. Meanwhile, Durston (2022) says that when more employees are involved in the success of a business, it is easier to build a culture of continuous improvement. This is contrary to the result of the study because even with only two employees, the creative businesses are able to work on continuous

improvement. In terms of employee involvement, Fontein (2021) asserts that employees are more than just staff members of a business because each member has something to learn and knowledge to share — something that makes the decision-making process of the business much more successful. Based on the results, the respondents may have been practicing this because they have a limited number of employees which suggests that each has his own role to play. In relation to process involvement, Bakotić and Krnić (2017) say that employees serve as a key resource of any business that represents its dynamic and creative factors and as such, the number of employees represents an essential factor for business process improvement. To achieve business processes improvement, it is necessary not only to ensure an adequate number of employees, but also to achieve their optimal engagement and commitment which is contrary to the result due to the fact that the process of making the handicraft product requires one employee to be finished.

Furthermore, Baralt et al. (2020) says that leadership should move away from merely dictating to inspiring workers so that they can altogether work for a common goal. The results show that the respondents have very employees with some playing both the role of leader and employee. This may explain the absence of a significant relationship between the number of employees and TQM practices. Finally, the number of employees does not impact the supplier relationships of the creative businesses, as the owner is typically the one who maintains connections with suppliers, not the employees.

**Table 4**

*Significant Difference Between the Extent of Total Quality Management Implementation of Creative Businesses in Nueva Vizcaya When Grouped According to Their Product*

	Product	N	Mean Rank	Kruskal Wallis	df	Asymp. Sig.
Customer Focus Mean	soft broom	5	10.20	2.372	2	.306
	runo products	7	12.00			
	Others	7	7.86			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				
Continuous Improvement Mean	soft broom	5	9.40	4.780	2	.092
	runo products	7	13.29			
	Others	7	7.14			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				
Employee Involvement Mean	soft broom	5	11.30	2.265	2	.322
	runo products	7	11.50			
	Others	7	7.57			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				
Process Improvement Mean	soft broom	5	10.80	3.858	2	.145
	runo products	7	12.36			
	Others	7	7.07			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				
Leadership Involvement Mean	soft broom	5	8.80	7.418	2	.024*
	runo products	7	14.00			
	Others	7	6.86			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				
Supplier Relationship Mean	soft broom	5	9.00	.988	2	.610
	runo products	7	11.57			
	Others	7	9.14			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				
Overall	soft broom	5	9.30	5.888	2	.053
	runo products	7	13.86			
	others	7	6.64			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				

\*Significant at 0.05

The results indicate that there is no significant difference between types of products offered and customer focus, continuous improvement, employee involvement, and process improvement. Results suggest that even if the businesses offer different products, they do not significantly differ in terms of customer focus. The study of Liu et al. (2024) discussed that there is a significant positive impact of the customer preferences to the business sales and customer satisfaction. This is related to the result of the study because respondents say they respond immediately to the customer complaints and also consider the customer needs and expectations. Moreover, even if they offer different products, the respondents have comparable continuous improvement throughout their business. The results of the study of Edralin et al. (2019) supports this finding that *entrepinays* in the handicraft sector look at creativity to be a continuous process to achieve sustainability. This implies that the continuous improvement of creative businesses is ongoing, aiming to enhance their operations even though they offer different products.

As for employee involvement, Singh and Lagos (2019) discovered that employee involvement in decision-making positively impacts employee engagement, attitude, and productivity. The result in this study implies that regardless of products offered, the employee involvement does not differ because most employees of the creative businesses are also the owner of the business. For process improvement, Edralin et al. (2019) supports the result of the study which showed that creativity sustainability does not affect process innovations. This indicates that, despite offering different products, creative businesses share a common focus on process improvement to ensure quality.

Meanwhile, there is a significant difference between products offered and leadership involvement. Moreover, the pairwise comparison result reveals that *runo* products have significantly higher extent of quality in terms of process than other products. To increase the productivity of employees, transformational leadership relies on innovative methods and procedures. Transformational leadership management is more successful because leadership can motivate followers to make beneficial changes (Singh & Chaudhary, 2023).

Finally, whatever their products are, the respondents try to maintain a good working relationship with their suppliers. Putting supplier relationship management into practice calls for constant work and follow-up in many businesses. Lut (2021) points out that even if there is a constant communication or contact between businesses and suppliers, they tend to be unaware of the other's status. However, the results imply that supplier relationships are consistent because creative businesses generally maintain good terms with their suppliers.

**Table 5**

*Significant Difference Between the Extent of Total Quality Management Implementation of Creative Businesses in Nueva Vizcaya When Grouped According to Their Initial Capitalization*

	Initial Capitalization	N	Mean Rank	Kruskal Wallis	df	Asymp. Sig.
Customer Focus Mean	less than P1000	5	10.00	.000	2	1.00
	P1000 to 3000	6	10.00			
	above P3000	8	10.00			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				
Continuous Improvement Mean	less than P1000	5	7.60	1.745	2	.418
	P1000 to 3000	6	11.83			
	above P3000	8	10.13			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				
Employee Involvement Mean	less than P1000	5	8.40	.973	2	.615
	P1000 to 3000	6	11.58			
	above P3000	8	9.81			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				

Process Improvement Mean	less than P1000	5	9.30	.522	2	.770
	P1000 to 3000	6	9.25			
	above P3000	8	11.00			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				
Leadership Involvement Mean	less than P1000	5	7.00	3.222	2	.200
	P1000 to 3000	6	9.67			
	above P3000	8	12.13			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				
Supplier Relationship Mean	less than P1000	5	9.50	.499	2	.799
	P1000 to 3000	6	9.17			
	above P3000	8	10.94			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				
Overall	less than P1000	5	7.60	1.649	2	.433
	P1000 to 3000	6	9.75			
	above P3000	8	11.69			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>				

\*Significant at 0.05

The table reveals that there is no significant difference found between customer focus and initial capitalization. It is supported by the study of Rashid et al. (2020) which found no connection at all between Bangladeshi Islamic Banks' financial performance and client focus. The study's significant conclusions indicate that, rather than client focus, the financial performance is primarily influenced by a wide range of other financial and non-financial factors. This means that regardless of the initial capitalization of the business, catering customer needs is a prime concern, and it does not differ from other creative businesses.

The results of the study also show that there is no significant difference between continuous improvement and initial capitalization which means that the creative businesses continuously improve despite differences in capitalization. Megan (2022) explains that planning the appropriate amount of initialization cash is one of the hardest things for anyone looking to launch their own business. A business will fail and go bankrupt if its owners are unable to determine how much capital is needed, which contradicts the result. The value of a business can be significantly affected by the capitalization rate decision. The continuous improvement of the creative businesses in this study does not differ from each other since they all strive to improve even if they have a small amount of capitalization.

The results of the study show that there is no significant difference between employee involvement and initial capitalization which means that the creative businesses have the same employee involvement. One of the most effective ways to improve organizational performance is to involve employees in management (Palumbo et al., 2023). Also, businesses that make greater investments demonstrate increased levels of output and service quality, as well as financial. The study concluded that there is no significant difference between employee involvement and initial capitalization for the reason that the employees of the creative business are also their family members.

Leadership involvement, in relation to the amount of initial capitalization, did not differ too which means that despite the amount of initial capital, leadership involvement is the same. This may be because the creative businesses are owned and managed by the family. Damini (2023) explains that to be successful, TQM needs the support and involvement of the leadership. Establishing the organization's vision, beliefs, and goals as well as providing all the resources and support required to meet them are the responsibilities of leaders.

Lastly, according to the study of Kadapakkam and Oliveira (2021), suppliers who operate in more competitive business and have lower levels of relationship-specific investments are more vulnerable to the influence of relationships. However, the research findings state that

despite the differences in capitalization, supplier relationships do not differ.

#### Sections 4. Challenges and Recommendations by the Respondents Based on the Key Principles of Total Quality Management

**Table 10**

*Categorized Challenges and Recommendations by the Respondents Based on the Key Principles of Total Quality Management*

Total Quality Management Principles	Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of Total Quality Management	Recommendations Crafted to Address the Challenges Encountered	Frequency
<b>Customer Focus</b>	Customers are criticizing the quality of materials used.	Address immediately the concerns and provide explanations.	1
<b>Continuous Improvement</b>	Shortage in financial aspect. Price of raw materials are increasing. Low sales due to declining of customers.	Borrow money. Shift to cheaper raw materials or personally plant own supply. Lower the price or give discounts.	5
<b>Employee Involvement</b>	Insufficient knowledge in the production of products.	Watch tutorials, learn thoroughly and join free trainings.	3
<b>Process Improvement</b>	The correct processes are not properly executed. The outputs do not meet the quality standards.	Thoroughly learn the processes to avoid mistakes. Always check and make sure to achieve good outputs.	4
<b>Leadership Involvement</b>	Limited ideas.	Be updated and get ideas from social media.	2
<b>Supplier Relationships</b>	Lack of supply. The quality of supply is not guaranteed because of the inconsistencies of suppliers.	Maximize the available supply and minimize wastage. Communicate the suggestions and comments to the supplier.	4
<b>Total</b>			<b>19</b>

The challenges encountered and recommendations crafted by the respondents were categorized based on the key principles of total quality management. Out of 19 respondents, continuous improvement has the highest frequency (5 respondents) which implies that the majority of the challenges affect total quality management in sustaining the businesses. Subsequently, under both process improvement principle and supplier relationship principle, there were 4 respondents who faced challenges in the processes of products and building good relationships with suppliers. Moreover, 3 respondents encountered problems in the employee involvement principle because of not enough participation and knowledge of the business. Two respondents experienced challenges subject to leadership involvement principle and finally, the lowest frequency of only 1 respondent is under the customer focus principle which indicates that the businesses are providing enough customer service and are able to handle customer feedback.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusion

1. Most of the creative businesses in Nueva Vizcaya have been operating in the business for less than ten years with two workers employed in the whole operation of the business. *Runo* products such as home decorations consist of the highest percentage of what the businesses are offering, and nearly all the businesses started with more than 3,000 initial capital.

2. Total quality management implementation in terms of the key principles in the creative businesses holds a significant application which means that these businesses have applied TQM key principles in achieving quality products. This implies that the implementation of total quality management key principles is to a strong extent thus helping them achieve competitiveness and sustainable development in the business.
3. The extent of total quality management implementation when grouped according to business profile has a significant difference between the leadership involvement when grouped according to the type of product offered specifically on *runo* products. This implies the necessity for the business to enhance leadership involvement in creating a product which cultivates a culture of innovation through acquiring relevant and enough knowledge in developing unique features of the product offered. Leaders of the business should have unlimited ideas that bring in a higher level of performance which is necessary in leading the business and achieving total quality management.
4. In terms of the challenges encountered in the implementation of total quality management, the highest frequency is under continuous improvement principle which includes shortage in financial aspects used to sustain the needs of the business, inflation which limits the resources used in the operation and low sales which is a factor to expand the business for more opportunities and growth. These challenges encountered have been hindrances for the businesses as they greatly affect the overall performance of the business to achieve continuous improvement in the long run.
5. The recommendations crafted to address challenges encountered by the creative businesses focused more on borrowing money to sustain the needs of the business, choosing raw materials with cheaper quality as well as being resourceful in time of inflation and lowering price and giving discounts to bring in sales. These recommendations have been the businesses' ways to be able to maintain the continuity of the business despite the majority of challenges encountered under continuous improvement.

### Recommendations

**For the Creative Businesses:** For continuous improvement, the researchers recommend that the businesses may use survey methods to gather knowledge from customers on how to improve the quality of the products since customers have different standards for specific products. With regards to continuous improvement, specifically financial problems, businesses should also consider investing in planting and producing their own supplies since handicrafts offered are mostly made up of *runo*, woods and bamboo. Also, price strategies such as discounts, buy 1 take 1 and coupons are recommended. This will minimize expenses, allow them to personally monitor the quality of supplies produced and used in the products and, strategically be prepared for the increasing price of raw materials.

**For the Provincial Local Government Unit (PLGU):** The study's findings emphasize a strong correlation between leadership involvement and products offered. The researchers recommend that PLGU should consider allocating a budget for free seminars, training, and product development opportunities for the employees to engage with which could enhance and develop leadership skills and equip them with knowledge on how to develop unique products which will differentiate the business from competitors and attract more customers. Subsequently, PLGU should also ponder monitoring and guiding such small businesses for a more consistent and reliable supplier, potential investor and a wider customer base. As a result, the creative business will have a bridge to more opportunities for continuous improvement.

**For the School of Accountancy and Business Faculty and Staff:** This study may be used as a reference for lecture purposes and the results can be a guide for students who wish to explore similar fields of study. Moreover, they may validate this study to a greater extent for both current and future researchers.

**For Future Researchers:** It is recommended to conduct further research to enhance the understanding in the implementation of TQM in creative businesses. In addition, they may consider a wider scope of various business respondents such as outside family members, and types of products offered to gain different knowledge on how quality is important to every business. Moreover, they can discuss any limitations of the study and propose avenues for future research to address these limitations and build upon the current findings

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