

Dedicated vs modest commercialization of small-scale handicraft production in Sabah

Abstract

It is surprisingly that despite the government supports and initiatives to encourage formal or dedicated commercialization (full-time workshop-based production), vast majority of handicraft producers in Kota Belud, Sabah still produce their handicrafts in a modest way – from home, in fact, half proportion of these home-based producers are part-timers. This paper offers valuable insight for future research, specifically on factors for commercialization process and performance among handicraft producers in rural Sabah, in spite of their “advantaged” or “disadvantaged” production status. This paper outlines the several issues related to producers’ decisions to go (or not) in workshop-based production and main challenges to produce handicraft in a formal commercialized manner. This paper presents the emergent issues arising from a preliminary fieldwork (local desk research and key informant interviews) on the nature of handicraft production in rural Sabah. This finding has provided some valuable insight to question “why home-based production is so favored among handicraft producers in rural Sabah” and recognized the important of handicraft production in a modest way in Sabah.