

# CRAFTS INDUSTRY LIFECYCLE STRATEGIES AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT IN IKOT EKPENE SENATORIAL DISTRICT OF AKWA IBOMSTATE

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## ABSTRACT

The study evaluates crafts industry life cycle strategies and entrepreneurial development in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. The survey research design was adopted and a sample size of 265 was determined for the study using the Taro Yamane formula. A total of 265 copies of questionnaire was administered on the sample craft producers in the ten LGAs that make up Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. 250 copies of the questionnaire were returned and used for the study. Descriptive statistics were used for data analysis while multiple regression was used in testing hypotheses. It was discovered that industry life cycle analysis enables craft producers to identify the stages of their business development in the industry in order to take steps towards gaining market share and remain competitive. Other findings revealed that the adoption of strategies such as entry strategy, market penetration, cost leadership and diversification strategies at the various phases of the craft industry life cycle enhance development, growth and sustainability of craft businesses. It was therefore recommended that entrepreneurs, particularly craft producers should adopt strategies such as entry strategy, market penetration, cost leadership and diversification strategies at the different stages of the industry life cycle in order to enhance growth, profitability and sustainability of their business. Also, Akwa Ibom State government should provide access to funds and as well build entrepreneurship development centres in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District in order to enhance the skills and knowledge of entrepreneurs particularly craft producers to enable them navigate their businesses in the different phases of the industry life cycle.

**KEYWORDS:** Industry Life Cycle; Entrepreneurial Development; Strategy Adoption

## INTRODUCTION

In virtually all industries, understanding, identifying and adopting appropriate strategies at the various phases of the industry life cycle typically involves the level of skill and education of an entrepreneur which is aimed at enhancing survival, growth, competitiveness and sustainability of business operations. In order to remain competitive, the entrepreneur needs to be innovative in ideas, creative and able to manage strategic corporate relationship or linkage with stakeholders with a view of leveraging the firm's

resources in order to realize new market opportunities in the industry (Hill & Jones, 2010).

However, the relationship between the internal and external environment of the business determines how the firm accomplishes set targets based on the chosen strategy at the various phases of the industry life cycle. Therefore, it is pertinent for an entrepreneur to identify the different stages of its business in the industry, hence take decision on the strategy that will propel the venture to the next stage in the life cycle. Industry life cycle is the natural stages that an entrepreneurial venture goes through during

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the course of its lifecycle in the marketplace (Kaličanin, 2008). It traces the evolution of a given industry based on the business features commonly displayed in each stage. The central objective of an industry life cycle analysis is to enable an entrepreneur within an industry identify the phases of its business development and adopt proper strategies to counter potential threats and as well seize opportunities that abound in the industry, gain market share and remain sustainable.

As indicated by Chrisman and Patel (2012), entrepreneurship development is a dynamic process of starting-up, development and expansion of business ventures. It is the process of understanding activities concerned with identifying and exploiting business opportunities in the environment, while assuming its antecedent risk to produce goods and services that meets customers' expectations. Craft entrepreneurship has remained one of the ancient occupations of the Akwa Ibom people and Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District in particular. Craft making is a profession that requires some particular kind of skill work in producing sculptural and other related goods.

The development of the crafts industry in Akwa Ibom State and Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District in particular dates back to the ancient times where the inhabitants of the senatorial district mastered the art of caving and other related product to end a living. The craft industry has grown from a mere source of survival to a renowned industry, despite the various challenges facing the industry such as access to funds, government policies, lack of appropriate technology and poor education of most craft producers etc., which affect their ability to adopt appropriate strategies necessary to navigate through the industry life cycle. However, the craft industry is a significant component of development of crafts product. Its properties ascertain the competitive battle in the marketplace, and thus the necessity for strategies to enhance survival and growth at the various stages of the life cycle. Therefore, this study evaluates craft industry life cycle strategies and entrepreneurial development in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.

**STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

The life span of every business depends largely on the type of strategy adopted at every stage of an industrial life cycle. Entrepreneurship businesses in craft making both small and large

are expected to be concerned of the several stages of their industry life cycle and the strategies necessary to enhance its development while making entrepreneurship a creative and innovative platform capable of meeting the needs of customers.

It is observed that craft businesses strategic plan is often affected by the stages of its development. In spite of the importance attached to the knowledge and ability of an entrepreneur to ascertain the stage of his/her business and adopt strategies capable of enhancing its development; most present day entrepreneurs are either not paying full attention to the specific stages in the industry or lack the capacity to identify the stage in which their business is operating, as such the strategic thrust that would have been applied in the relevant phases to enhance the development of the business are disregarded. These result in most craft businesses being stagnated or go into extinction without attaining the decline phase. This invariably deters and impedes entrepreneurship development in craft. In view of this, the study evaluates the relevance of craft industry life cycle strategies on entrepreneurial development in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER**

The purpose of this study is to evaluate craft industry life cycle strategies and entrepreneurial development in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the effect of entry, market penetration, cost leadership and diversification strategies on the development, growth and sustainability of craft products through the different stages in the industry life cycle.

**RESEARCH QUESTION**

1. To what extent does entry, market penetration, cost leadership and diversification strategies affect the development, growth and sustainability of craft products through the different stages in the industry life cycle?

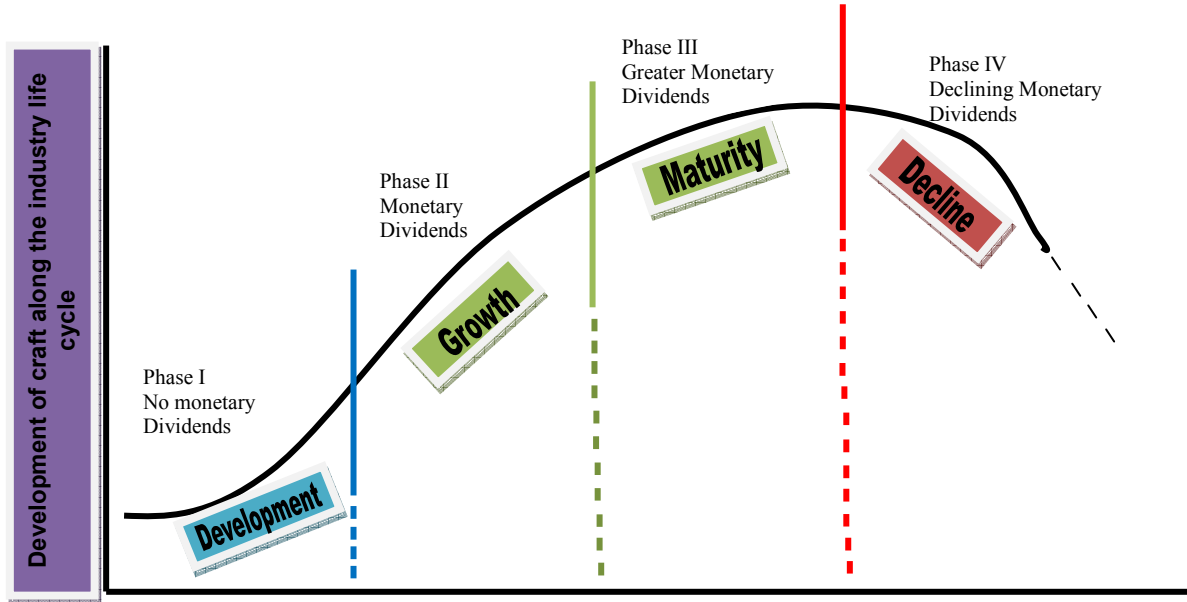
**RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

Ho<sub>1</sub>: Entry, market penetration, cost leadership and diversification strategies does not significantly affect the development, growth and sustainability of craft products through the different stages in the industry life cycle

**LITERATURE REVIEW**  
**CONCEPT OF INDUSTRY LIFE CYCLE**

One of the regularly utilized frameworks of life cycle analysis was propounded by Michael Porter in 1980. Despite the fact that a wide array of studies exists that aimed at analyzing life cycle of an entrepreneurial venture, the model remains generally accepted as the basis of analysis. As

indicated by Porter cited in Walker and Larreche (1996), industry is the most significant element of an entrepreneurship business environment. Its mechanism and elements ascertain the competitive struggle which requires adoption of appropriate strategy for survival and development at every stage of an entrepreneurial venture. Figure one below indicated the industry life cycle of entrepreneurship ventures.



**FIG. 1:** Industry life cycle of entrepreneurship venture  
**Source:** Adopted from Andrija and Matej (2013)

The figure above clearly shows a four stage industry life cycle and the corresponding dividend strategy most likely to be found at each stage of the craft development venture. The vertical scale in figure one above is logarithmic, which indicates that a straight line on this scale implies a constant growth rate of an entrepreneurial venture. The steeper the line the faster the growth rate and the flatter the line, the slower the development of the craft venture. The slope of the line in the life-cycle curve is a pertinent indicator of growth in the analysis of craft entrepreneurial development (Malburg, 2000).

An entrepreneur’s strategic plan is often influenced by the stage of the venture in the life cycle. “The sales of craft products over time are utilized to chart the life cycle. The discrete phases of craft industry life cycle are: development, growth, maturity and decline” (Hill and Jones, 2012, p.17). Below is the discussion of each phases of craft entrepreneurship venture

in the industry life cycle and the strategies necessary at each stages of development:

**DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE OF CRAFT PRODUCTS IN THE INDUSTRY LIFE CYCLE**

The developmental stage has to do with the implementation of entrepreneurial ideas which involves, starting up a venture, product, services or production tactics that makes the craft products unique and aim at satisfying customers’ needs. Craft venture in this stage are usually financed by the entrepreneur as well as funds from family or from financial institutions etc. As indicated by Hitt and Hoskisson (2010), entrepreneurs often try to create a niche for their business within an industry in the development stage.

However due to costs implications in developing new product, testing the prototypes and marketing the product, the entrepreneurial venture and the industry earnings are usually negative at the development phases (Suarez and Lanzolla, 2007). Most of the revenue or profit

earned in this phase is most times reinvested into the venture to gain market share and assist in financing continuous growth and expansion.

#### **STRATEGIC CHOICE –ENTRY STRATEGY:**

As indicated by Kaličanin (2008, p.78) “A market entry strategy is a planned method of delivering goods or services to a new market and distributing them to target consumers”. The market rewards an entrepreneur who enters into the market first at a significant “prize” (Urban & Carter, 1986, p.7). First entry advantage can be accomplished in various ways, by designing a new product and using creative and innovative business processes (Suarez, and Lanzolla, 2007). Craft ventures could also, utilize a focused strategy at developmental phase to indicate the distinctiveness of the new product or service to target consumers. Marketing technique at this phase is projected to give details and create awareness of the product to consumers. Also adoption of a potent feasibility analysis could increase the survival of craft business at the entry stage (Emmanuel and Morgan, 2018)

#### **GROWTH STAGE OF CRAFT PRODUCTS IN THE INDUSTRY LIFE CYCLE**

The growth phase clearly indicates crafts ventures that have achieved some level of market acceptance for its product or services. At this phase, the product or service have started gaining market share with its accompany profit to the entrepreneurs. The increasing growth is evident in the slope of the industry life cycle curve, in figure one.

Like the development phase, the growth phase also requires funds to enhance a focused marketing campaign with the aim of differentiating a business product offering from other competitors within the industry. As indicated by Willem (2007) at this stage the industry is experiencing more product standardization, which may encourage economies of scale, product efficiency and enhance entrepreneurship development. However, during the growth phase, the life cycle curve is often very steep, as shown in figure one indicating rapid growth. Craft ventures often expand out geographically during this phase.

#### **STRATEGIC CHOICE-MARKET PENETRATION**

Penetration strategy is a business growth strategy in which businesses implements ideas and marketing campaigns to expand the customer’s base for its product or services within a certain market space (Yang and Yu, 2013). The

penetration strategy enables the craft ventures to amplify the market share of their present product or service in the industry through enhanced marketing campaign (Kotler, 2001).

#### **MATURITY STAGE OF CRAFT PRODUCTS IN THE INDUSTRY LIFE CYCLE**

Maturity phase is a stage in the industry life cycle where the product or service of the venture have gained market share and is growing at a slow pace. At the maturity phase the industry life cycle curve is often flatter as indicated in figure one which implies slow growth. At this phase competition from late entrants will be apparent, and these new entrants will attempt to gain market share from existing products, however the marketing campaign must be strong stressing the unique characteristics of goods or services in order to distinguish the business offerings from industry competitors (McGahan, 2004).

#### **STRATEGIC CHOICE-PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

Craft ventures use the product development strategy at the maturity stage of their business to enhance sales by modifying present products. Product development often involves greater research and development funding. Craft ventures that have successful products in their maturity stage can encourage satisfied consumers to try new improved product as a result of their positive experience with the firm’s present product. Also, cost leadership strategy can also be employed at this level to reduce manufacturing expenses thereby offering craft products at a cheaper price in order to gain customers’ patronage (Grant, 2010).

#### **DECLINE STAGE OF CRAFT PRODUCTS IN THE INDUSTRY LIFE CYCLE**

Decline phase are most times unavoidable in an industry. It is a stage where craft products are losing market share at a faster pace. In this phase, sales are decreasing at a faster pace. This is often followed by shake-out in the industry as competitors who did not leave during the maturity phase now exit the industry. However, few businesses may remain and compete for the available market share in the industry or market. “Similarly, mergers will become a norm at this phase as businesses try other strategies to remain competitive or grow through acquisition and diversification” (Grant, 2010, p. 72)

### **STRATEGY CHOICE- DIVERSIFICATION STRATEGY**

The adoption of diversification strategy at the decline stage of craft ventures aims at diversifying the firm's product. The strategy enables the addition of new but related craft products. This boosts the firm's strategic position and increase earnings (Sahaf, 2008). Also, in this stage of the industry life cycle, harvesting strategy can also be employed. Kotler (2001, p.132) defines "harvesting strategy as a strategic management decision to reduce investment in the business unit with the hope of reducing costs and improving cash flow". It entails brand management in a declining phase and cost minimization. This strategy is acceptable when the competitive advantage of the business is in an unstoppable decline, or when the market conditions gets worsen and when the firm has a relatively strong competitive position in the market at the beginning of the decline, which makes it likely for current customers to keep the level of their purchases even when the marketing support is highly reduced (Doyle, 2008, p.67).

### **CONCEPT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

Entrepreneurship is the process of understanding activities concerned with identifying and exploiting business opportunities in the environment while assuming it antecedents risk to produce goods and services that meet customer's satisfaction (Grant, 2010). "Entrepreneurship development has to do with the study of entrepreneurial behaviour, the dynamics of business start-up, development and expansion of the enterprise; it is the process of enhancing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through structured training" (Doyle, 2008, p.43). It is essentially focused on increasing the knowledge and skills of entrepreneurs in order to speed up the rate at which new businesses are established.

Entrepreneurship development concentrates on the entrepreneur who desires to develop or expand a venture. As indicated by McGahan, (2004), the skill, education and experience of an entrepreneur is vital in enhancing the development of craft ventures, growth, expansion and maturity in the industry life cycle. The entrepreneur's willingness and capacity to innovate could contribute in enhancing growth and profitability of a business. In the craft industry, lack of funds often impedes growth and expansion (Carney, 2015). As indicated by Doyle (2008), the adoption of

appropriate strategy could also play a role in complementing funds, entrepreneurial idea and experience, thereby enhancing growth of craft ventures.

### **DEVELOPMENT OF CRAFTS IN IKOTEKPENE SENATORIAL DISTRICT OF AKWAIBOM STATE**

Craft have remained one of the ancient occupations of the Annang people located at Ikot Ekpene senatorial district. The Annang people have a long history in craft making such as raffia cane furniture, basket weaving, sculpture, bamboo craft and bead making etc., and this ancient occupation have developed into a renowned industry and lead to poverty reduction and employment generation while also contributing to economic growth.

The craftsmen are mostly referred to as artisans who are found in both urban and rural areas (Akpan and Udoekong, 2014). The development of craft in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District dates back to the ancient times where the inhabitants of the senatorial district, mastered the art of caving and other related product to earn a living. The craft industry has grown from a mere source of survival to a renowned industry, despite the various challenges facing the industry such as access to funds, government policies, lack of appropriate technology and poor education of most craft producers etc., which affects their ability to adopt appropriate strategies necessary to navigate through the industry life cycle.

The stepwise approach to mastery of craft making, which include the attainment of the required skill, has survived in Ikot Ekpene senatorial district of Akwa Ibom State for decades. Despite this success, the skills required by the profession and the need to be involved in the exchange and sales of craft product demands a higher level of formal training. However, promoting crafts is one way to retain creative skills, enhance economic growth and employment generation; therefore, there is a need for the adoption of necessary strategies capable of enhancing the development, growth and sustainability of craft product through the various phases of the industry life cycle.

### **REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES**

Myriads of research exist that seeks to determine the importance of entrepreneurship development on economic growth (Willem, 2007). In the case of entrepreneurship development in relation to industry life cycle, only recently has concerted effort been made to determine the strategies capable of enhancing the development, growth

and sustainability of crafts ventures in the industry. This may be mainly due to the fact that most researchers believe that several factors enhance entrepreneurship development in the industry, such as access to credit facilities, favorable government policies, knowledge, creativity and innovative ideas of the entrepreneur among others (Chrisman and Patel, 2012).

However, Altomonte and Aquilante (2012) carried out a study on entrepreneurship development strategies in a competitive business industry in Jordan. The survey research design and a sample size of 560 entrepreneurial ventures in Jordan were used. The study found that poor adoption of strategies at the different stages of entrepreneurship ventures was a major factor impeding entrepreneurship development. Further finding revealed that access to funds, government policy, infrastructure and entrepreneur's knowledge and creativity among others also impact on entrepreneurship development in Jordan. Carney (2015) carried out a study on the effect of strategy on small businesses development in Pakistan. The study adopted the survey research method. A sample size of 1065 small businesses was used for the study. Data was analyzed using the multiple regression. The study found that adoption of appropriate strategy plays a significant role in the development of small businesses in Pakistan.

Eddleston and Kellermanns (2016) carried out a study on the implication of strategy adoption on the growth and development of small and medium scale enterprise in Peninsular, Malaysia. The study adopted both survey and descriptive research method. The population of the study was 780 small and medium scale enterprises in the Peninsular Malaysian region. Data was analyzed using regression. The study found that adoption of entry strategy, expansion strategy and market penetration strategy respectively at the various phases of development of small and medium enterprise impact positively on the development of SMEs in the Peninsular Malaysian region.

Andrija and Matej (2013) carried out a study on industry life cycle and development of business strategies. The study adopted the exploratory research method based on secondary data. The study revealed that adoption of appropriate strategies at the various phase of a business in the industry life cycle has a positive effect in enhancing the growth and sustainability

throughout the life cycle of an enterprise. The study carried out by Akpan and Udoekong (2014) on the implication of strategy on the survival and sustainable development of entrepreneurship in Akwa Ibom State, using survey research method. A sample size of 400 businesses was selected from the three Senatorial District of the State. The study found that strategies adopted in managing entrepreneurship ventures through the various life cycles have significant effect on sustainable development and growth of entrepreneurship in Akwa Ibom State.

Also, study carried out by Charles and Zeitlin (2015) on successful development and growth of entrepreneurship along the different industry life cycle in Kenya, using the survey research method and sample size of 320 businesses. Regression analysis was adopted to test hypotheses of the study. The study found that adoption of appropriate strategy at each stages of the business life cycle to complement fund, favorable government policies and infrastructure have significant positive effect on the growth and sustainable development of entrepreneurship in Kenya.

Furthermore, study by Hill and Jones (2012) on industry life-cycle analysis and strategic management for entrepreneurship development in Georgia, using the descriptive research method. The study found that strategies in managing entrepreneurship ventures in the different phases of industry life cycle have significant positive effect in enhancing the development of entrepreneurship.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The survey research design was adopted for this paper. This was necessary in order to adopt the survey tool of questionnaire in gathering primary data for the paper. The scope of the study focused basically on the strategies to enhance the development, growth and sustainability of craft venture in the industry life cycle. The population of the study comprised of craft producers in the ten LGAs that make up Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. Based on information from Craft Producers Associations (2017) out of the 10 LGAs that made up the senatorial district, there are 786 craft producers spread across the senatorial district, which formed the population of the study. Additionally the sample size used for this study was determined through the application of the Taro Yamane formula as shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} = \frac{786}{1 + 786(0.05)^2}$$

Where n = sample size  
 N = Population  
 e = error limit

$$n = \underline{265}$$

$\epsilon$  = Error term

Therefore the sample size used for this study was 265. A total of 265 copies of questionnaire was administered on the sample craft producers in the ten LGAs that make up Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. However, 250 copies of the questionnaire was return and use for the study representing 96 percent return rate.

**DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

Data collected from the field were edited for accuracy and conformity with the objective of the study. Descriptive statistics was use in data analysis and multiple regression analysis was used in test of the hypothesis. This was due to the fact that the study sought to establish the strategies that enhance development, growth and sustainability at the various stages of craft industry life cycle in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom. In view of this, regression analysis was the appropriate statistical tool because it tests causal relationship or effect between two or more variables. The gathered data were analyzed using SPSS version 21. The multiple regression model was given as:

$$DGS = f(ES, MPS, CLS, DS)$$

$$DGS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 ES + \beta_2 MPS + \beta_3 CLS + \beta_4 DS + \epsilon$$

Where:

$\beta_0 + \beta_1 + \beta_2 + \beta_3$  and  $\beta_4$  are the parameters of the model

- ES = Entry Strategy
- MPS = Market Penetration Strategy
- CLS = Cost Leadership Strategy

DS = Diversification Strategies

**DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS**

Table 1 below shows the descriptive statistics of entry, market penetration, cost leadership and diversification strategies. Based on the table, cost leadership strategy has the highest mean and standard deviation with values of 4.31 and 0.83 respectively with corresponding high significance level indicating that cost leadership highly correlates with the development, growth and sustainability of craft products through the different stages in the industry life cycle. This was followed by entry strategy with mean and standard deviation values of 4.22 and 0.78 with corresponding high significance level. This indicated that entry strategy could enhance the development of craft products in the industry life cycle. Market penetration strategy has a mean and standard deviation values of 4.18 and 0.75 respectively with corresponding high significance level indicating that market penetration strategy correlates with development, growth and sustainability of craft products while diversification strategies has the lowest mean and standard deviation with values of 4.17 and 0.73 with corresponding moderate significance level. The aggregate mean and standard deviation was 4.25 and 0.75 respectively indicating that entry, market penetration, cost leadership and diversification strategies correlates with development, growth and sustainability of craft products through the different stages in the industry life cycle.

**Table 1: Descriptive statistic of entry, market penetration, cost leadership and diversification strategies**

Strategies	N	Mean	Std	Significance level.
Entry strategy	250	4.22	0.78	High
Market penetration strategy	250	4.18	0.75	High
Cost leadership strategy	250	4.31	0.83	High
Diversification strategy	250	4.17	0.73	Moderate
Aggregate mean and Std		4.25	0.75	

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2018

**Table 2: Summary of multiple regression analysis of entry, market penetration, cost leadership and diversification strategies on development, growth and sustainability of craft products in the industry life cycle**

S/N	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Standard error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	Intercept	6.50	1.402		5.90	.000
1	Entry strategy	.064	.021	.152	4.942	.001
2	Market penetration strategy	.112	.053	.071	6.109	.000
3	Cost leadership strategy	.053	.065	.167	5.043	.002
4	Diversification strategy	.093	.052	.081	3.362	.001

**Source:** SPSS output, 2018

$R = .774$   
 $R^2 = .655$   
 Adjusted  $R^2 = .653$   
 $F\text{-cal} = 39.697$   
 $Sig = 0.000$   
 Significant @ $P < 0.05$   
 $DGS = 6.50 + 0.064 ES + 0.112 MPS + 0.053 CLS + 0.093 DS.$   
 $SE = [1.402], [0.021], [0.053], [0.065] \text{ and } [0.052].$   
 $t\text{-statistics} = [5.90], [4.942], [6.109], [5.043] \text{ and } [3.362].$



**TEST OF HYPOTHESES**

Ho<sub>1</sub>: Entry, market penetration, cost leadership and diversification strategies does not have significant effect on the development, growth and sustainability of craft products through the different stages in the industry life cycle.

Hi<sub>1</sub>: Entry, market penetration, cost leadership and diversification strategies have significant effect on the development, growth and sustainability of craft products through the different stages in the industry life cycle.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Table 2 showed the summary of multiple regression analysis of entry, market penetration, cost leadership and diversification strategies on development, growth and sustainability of craft products in the industry life cycle in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District. The table indicates that entry strategy has a beta coefficient value of 0.152 with a significant value of 0.001 which is lower than  $P < 0.05$  level of significance, hence entry strategy significantly affect development, growth and sustainability of craft products in the industry life cycle. This means that for every one unit increase in entry strategy; development growth and sustainability of craft products in the industry life cycle increase by 0.052 units. Market penetration strategy has a beta coefficient value of 0.071 with a significant value of 0.000 which is lower than  $p < 0.05$  significance level, hence market penetration strategy significantly affect development, growth and sustainability of craft products in the industry life cycle. This implies that a unit increase in market penetration strategy increased development, growth and sustainability of craft products in the industry life cycle by 0.071 units. Cost leadership strategy has a beta coefficient value of 0.167 with a significant value of 0.002 which is lower than  $P < 0.05$  level of significance, hence cost leadership strategy significantly affect development, growth and sustainability of craft products in the industry life cycle. This means that a unit increase in cost leadership strategy increased development, growth and sustainability of craft products in the industry life cycle by 0.167 units. Diversification strategy has a beta coefficient value of 0.081 with a significant value of 0.001 which is lower than  $P < 0.05$  level of significance, hence diversification strategy significantly affect development, growth and sustainability of craft products in the industry

life cycle. This implies that a unit increase in diversification strategy increased development, growth and sustainability of craft products in the industry life cycle by 0.081 units.

The coefficient of multiple determination as indicated by Adjusted  $R^2$  showed that regressand variables entry, market penetration, cost leadership and diversification strategies accounted for 65.3 percent variation on the development, growth and sustainability of craft products in the industry life cycle while the remaining 34.7 percent was not explained by the model.

The overall significance of the model carried out through the ANNOVA F-test, showed a calculated F value of 39.697 which was found to be statistically significant at 1 percent level of significance. Based on this result the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative was accepted. This implies that entry, market penetration, cost leadership and diversification strategies significantly affect the development, growth and sustainability of craft products through the different stages in the industry life cycle in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. The finding was supported by the finding of Charles and Zeitlin (2015) who found that adoption of appropriate strategies at each stages of the business life cycle to complement fund, favourable government policies and infrastructure have significant positive effect on the growth and sustainable development of businesses.

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The study evaluates the influence of craft industry life cycle strategies and entrepreneurial development in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. Based on the tested hypotheses and literature review, it was found that:

Entry, market penetration, cost leadership and diversification strategies significantly influence the development, growth and sustainability of craft products through the different stages in the industry life cycle in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. However, industry life cycle analysis enables craft producers to identify the stages of their business development in the industry, in order to take steps towards gaining market share and remain competitive.

Adoption of entry, market penetration, cost leadership and diversification strategies at the various stages of the craft industry life cycle enhance development, growth and sustainability of craft businesses throughout the industry life cycle and lead to long term survival of the business in the industry.

Access to funds, skills and experience plays a critical role in assisting craft producers in navigating through the industry life cycle and embark on product innovation in order to gain competitive advantage over its competitors and as well enhance the development, growth and sustainability of craft business in the industry life cycle.

## CONCLUSION

It is evident from the study that adoption of appropriate strategies aimed at enhancing survival, growth and competitive advantage in a sustainable manner at the various stages of the industry life cycle is imperative for craft development/ventures. Identification of appropriate strategy at the different stages of the industry life cycle of crafts products typically involves the skill, education and experience of the entrepreneur. To ensure development at the various stages of the life cycle and remain competitive, crafts producers may have to develop ideas, nurture, innovate, be creative and manage strategic corporate relationship or linkages with stakeholders with a view of leveraging the firm's resources in order to realize new market opportunities in the industry and remain profitable.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations were made:

- I. Craft producers should often carry out industry life cycle analysis in order to identify the stages of their business development in the industry and take steps towards gaining market share and remain competitive.
- II. Entrepreneurs, particularly craft producers should often adopt strategies such as entry strategy, market penetration, cost leadership and diversification strategies at the different stages of the industry life cycle in order to enhance growth, profitability and sustainability of their business.
- III. Government of Akwa Ibom State should provide access to funds and also build entrepreneurship development centres in Ikot

Ekpen Senatorial District in order to enhance the skills and knowledge of entrepreneurs; particularly craft producers to enable them navigate their businesses through the different phases of the industry life cycle.

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