

## Caiçara Crafts in Paraná Coast: A Brief Overview of Trade and Production

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### Abstract

*For centuries, caiçara culture has been transmitted through orality from generations to generations on the coast of Paraná, being expressed in many ways, but especially in handicrafts, and this segment represents an alternative income for dozens of families in all municipalities of the region. However, despite the relevance of the activity, there is a lack of information regarding the production and trade of regional handicrafts. Thus, this study aimed to elaborate a panorama about the activity, evidencing its implications and potentialities. Exploratory descriptive research was carried out between March and September 2018. The total for accessibility was interviewed 24 artisans who practiced handicrafts based on the caiçara culture. The study revealed that the artisans were more in the male gender (n = 54%). The majority were older than 50 years (n = 54%), and most had only elementary education (n = 58.34%). The main raw materials used in the manufacture of caiçara handicrafts were leather of tanned fish, woods, seeds of native vegetables, vines removed from forests, coconut shells, palm leaves, feathers, shells, oyster shells, shells, which were often collected in nature. The main implications in the development of the activity were the low price of the handmade pieces; the use of pieces based on the extraction of raw material from nature and the bureaucratic difficulty to extract it; and the industrialized pieces that competed with the caiçara handicrafts. It was concluded that the organization of artisans in class would increase bargaining power with partner institutions and could solve problems such as the need for training to improve production, the insertion of new forms of commercialization and consequently the increase of income of families involved in manufacture and trade of caiçara handicrafts.*

**Key words:** Trade, handmade products, Manufacture, Marketing, Paranaguá, Typical products



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### INTRODUCTION

The emergence of early artisans began in prehistory, when men began to produce various objects from ceramics, to use fibers, feathers, stones and animal skins for accessories, ornaments or to facilitate the rudimentary life system of the period (PEREIRA, 1991).

Handicrafts, according to LIMA (2010), would be the making of an object having the hands as the main instrument to make it. However, these objects have relevance due to the reflection of the aggregate culture of those who made them, giving to these objects symbolic values that are often greater than the financial values (LOURIDO, 2005).

According to ALVIM (1983), artisanship would be considered as a form of production that involves work and art, in which the artisan has a relation with his product in a different way. Thus, in addition to manual ability, artistic ability and knowledge of culture are important in its productive and creative process, resulting not from formal education, but from the relationship with one's own work and the socio-cultural milieu in which one lives.

Brazil has a wealth of artisanship. Since the time of the empire, colonization and regional conditions such as: climate, vegetation, habits and customs, conferred great cultural richness. These, was also reflected in the artisan production with the adoption of procedures peculiar to the culture of each region resulting in

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authentic crafts and originals that refer their confection to the identification of a people or a region (DINIZ, DINIZ, 2007). According to IBGE (2013), Brazilian handicraft directly involves 8.5 million people and moves approximately R \$ 52 billion per year, which places the activity in evidence in Brazil's internal scenario.

Brazilian artisanship presents two distinct realities: the first reality, described by SANTOS (2007), reveals that the artisanal product, besides possessing a great deal of benefit, continues at a satisfactory pace of growth in the domestic scenario and in international trade, promoting the diversification of traditional pieces for insertion in the market. At the same time has had good acceptance of the external and internal consumer, which in some regions generates a development factor.

The second reality described by Keller (2011) promotes a deep reflection that, despite the Brazilian artisanship having quality and unique cultural elements, under the economic prism, the difficulty of sustaining the activity occurs. With the decline of production in several regions of Brazil, as a result of unsatisfactory sales figures and consumer compliance with low value industrial products due to large scale production and imitation of handicrafts.

Thus, this conjunction of factors results in the fact that despite the rich cultural production, some regions present greater difficulty in the consolidation of crafts and family income (KELLER, 2014). Specifically in what concerns the coast of Paraná, similarly to the colonization of other Brazilian regions, during its process of colonization and development were constituted more distant communities of the ports and cities, being they originated from the racial mixture of Europeans and blacks with the indigenous tribes existing "Paraná caiçaras communities" (DIEGUES, 1983)

According to DIEGUES (1983), the term *caiçara* originates from the word Tupi-Guarani *caá-çara*, which was used to describe a type of fence used in indigenous villages. Over time, the term has been designated to name individuals from the miscegenation and colonization processes.

The population of *Caiçara* in the coast of Paraná, according to Anacleto et al. (2007), is estimated in 35 rural communities with approximately 4000 people and 600 families and has suffered through the times the influence of external factors, which have reduced their original populations and jeopardized the *caiçara* culture. It should be noted that the process of miscegenation became an important factor in establishing the cultural patterns present in Brazilian culture (IPARDES, 2018).

The *caiçara* culture, for centuries, has been transmitted through orality from generation to generation, being expressed in the instruments of work that they adopt, in the systems of cultivation of lands, in fishing, in dwellings, in religious rituals, in dance, in music and especially in language (DIEGUES, 1983). In addition to these factors, handicrafts are also reflected in the life and tradition of the peoples of the coast of Paraná (SNIETIKOSKI et al., 2009), and this production represents an alternative income for dozens of families in all municipalities in the region.

According to Anacleto et al. (2007), the artisanship culture was strengthened in the coastal region of Paraná. The beautiful landscape in these places that, besides the beaches, is also composed of rivers, bays and forests, triggered a process in which the presence of visitors to these communities was elevated each summer season. The increasing seasonal population during the summer period meant that the populations of these rural areas perceived in this fact an interesting alternative of survival, among them the commercialization of handicrafts, since according to the Government of the State of Paraná (2018) the region reaches receive up to one million two hundred thousand tourists during the summer season.

Despite the historical, cultural, and economic relevance of handicrafts, few and sparse studies deal with the theme of the coast of Paraná. Thus, given that little is known about the current situation of the artisan in the region, from this perspective, it is justified to carry out diagnostic studies that can give an overview of the current situation of *caiçara* crafts on the coast of the State. Thus, in this context, this study aimed to obtain an overview of the *caiçara* handicraft as an income activity in the coast of Paraná, as well as its implications and potentialities.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive exploratory research was carried out between March and September 2018 among artisans (who were also artists) related to caiçara culture; artisans who also marketed in different forms their own artistic production.

Initially, visits were made to cultural associations, as well as tourism foundations in the municipalities that make up the coast of Paraná. From this action, it was possible to identify the artisans, as well as the places where they realized the sale of their crafts.

A total of 30 artisans related to caiçara culture were identified. However, due to receptivity, 24 voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. Similar to that proposed by GIL (1999), a questionnaire for field data collection was previously elaborated. Before the beginning of each interview, according to the proposal by VERGARA (2000), the interviewees were duly explained to the purpose of the study, and only after the data collection process was started. The collections were carried out in retail stores, exhibitions, production workshops and especially in the free fairs.

In order to investigate the main implications and potentialities of the activity, it was requested that the artisans describe the positive and negative factors that are essential when working with caiçara handicrafts, and in that way, an interpretative analysis of the contents acquired during the interviews was carried out.

For the definition of relevance of the implications and potentialities, the "cross impact matrix" was used. The opinions expressed by the interviewees were evaluated as to their influence and their influence compared to other opinions.

The analysis of the factors that generated the results was rigorously carried out as proposed by NEGRELLE et al. (2012), evidencing the positive and negative factors related to the commercialization and production of caiçara handicrafts.

The impact matrix, according to NEGRELLE et al. (2012), assigns percentage values from 0 to 100 to each opinion expressed by the interviewees. Being that they are first checked individually and later information is crossed collectively, comparing as to the respective influence exerted and the influence suffered, and the higher the index, the greater the relevance of the factor on the commercialization and production of the caiçara handicrafts.

The impact matrix generates an index of relevance that can be obtained by the following equation:

$$IR = \frac{FA \times FB \times 100}{\sum SF}$$

IR= Relevance Index of the evaluated situation;

FA = Influence indexes received;

FB = Induced influence indexes;

$\sum SF$ = Sum of the indexes (FA x FB) of all questions analyzed.

After the completion of the primary data collection, according to the proposal presented by VERGARA (2000), the interpretative and descriptive analysis of the contents obtained during the interviews was carried out using the data triangulation technique between the observation of the researchers and the similar responses obtained from the artisans interviewed.

## RESULTS

The study revealed that a small difference was observed among the classes evaluated, with the men in the greatest presence (n = 54%), with regard to the genre and confection of caiçara handicrafts on the coast of Paraná. Regarding the marital status, the results indicate that the majority of artisans (75%) were married and with an average of 4 children.

Regarding the age group, the artisan who practices his art related to the caiçara culture of the coast of Paraná is relatively advanced age, being mostly older than 50 years of age (n = 54%). The presence of

people in the age of the most active economic group in Brazil, which is between 18 and 30 years old, was the minority (n = 12%).

Regarding education level (Figure 1), the majority of respondents had primary education (n = 58.34%), and a significant portion (n = 29.17%) had not even completed this phase of education.

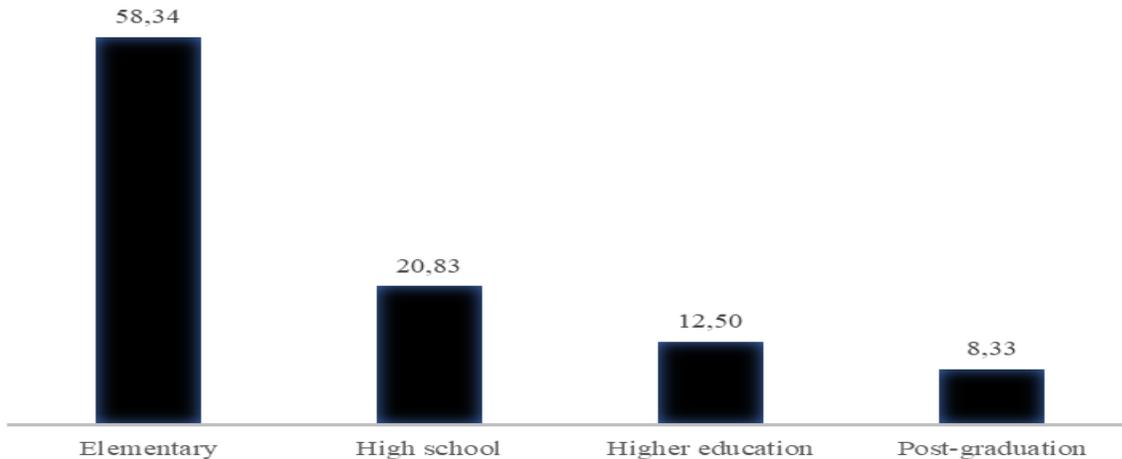


Figure 01: Percentage sample distribution (%) of the artisans practicing the caiçara culture in the coast of Paraná in relation to schooling.

Regarding the income range (Figure 2), the highest concentration of respondents was one whose monthly income ranged from R \$ 530.12 to R \$ 801.53 (classes C and B = 62.5%). In this context, the interviewees considered that the income obtained from production and trade was classified as insufficient for family support, and it was necessary then to have income supplementation activities. Complementary income from retirement (n = 30%), and governmental social programs (n = 20%) such as the family grant and the rural family grant were the most cited. It is noteworthy that according to the totality of the interviewees the income derived from the caiçara handicrafts is variable due to the summer period and the seasonality of tourism.

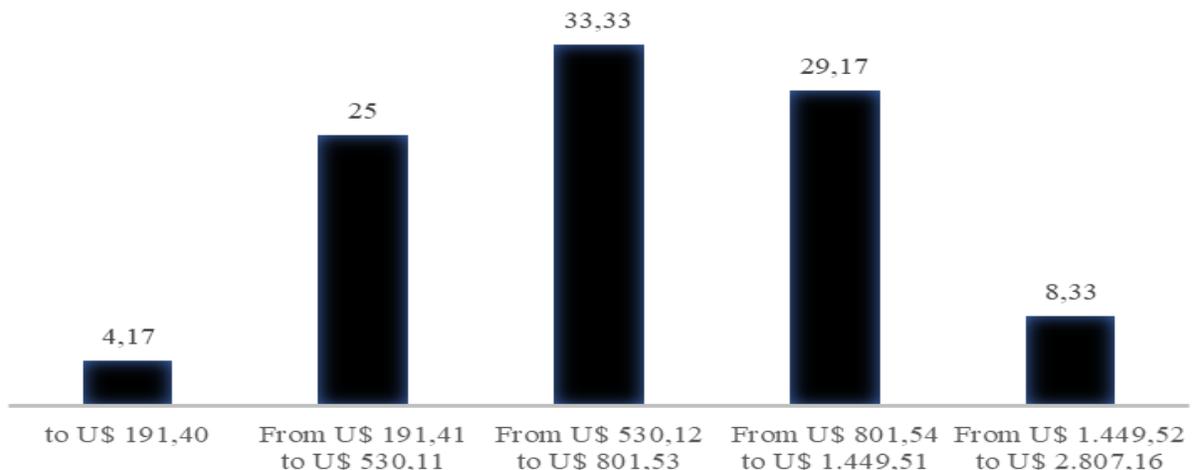


Figure 2: Monthly income obtained by artisans who practiced caiçara handicrafts on the coast of Paraná.

The raw materials used by the artisans in the making of the caíçara handicrafts cited by all the interviewees were diverse: leather and fish scales tanned, banana trunk fiber, woods, native vegetable seeds, vines removed from the forests, coconut shells, clay, palm leaves, dried straws of various native vegetables, dried tree trunks, feathers, shells, oyster shells, shells and rocks. All these items are often associated with other materials from other regions such as wire, bottles and glass.

Regarding the acquisition of raw materials, all the artisans informed that the material comes from the region where they are inserted, and after collection, raw materials are stored in their homes in small deposits.

Most of the interviewees (n = 85%) reported that they themselves collect the raw material moving to the Atlantic forest, mangrove, beaches, and quarry areas where they find most of the raw materials. It was also recorded that the smallest number of respondents (n = 15%), probably due to their older age, hire third-party services to collect materials or enter into partnerships with other artisans.

The physical spaces for commercialization are diverse, the most cited being the small shops owned by artisans (n = 23.33%), fairs held in the tourist spots of the coast of Paraná (n = 30%), as well as some of the interviewees prefer sell their productions in traditional stalls (small rustic trades located along the banks of streets and highways in the region). The order sales system was also cited (n = 26.67%), although the totality of respondents used several marketing channels.

The forms of dissemination of handicrafts are mostly (n = 71.88%) for viral marketing, which is done through the indication of one person to another. The minority of respondents (n = 18.7%) use the internet with a means of dissemination through social networks as a channel for the commercialization of their pieces.

The set of linked opportunities reveal a scenario where the artisan anchored in the low cost of the raw material obtains its support, and as an artist undertakes. However, it is noticeable that the implications act by limiting the capacity of income generation and development based on the regional culture (Table 1).

**Table 1. Diagnosis of the external scenario to the activity of production and trade of caíçara handicraft on the coast of Paraná in the perception of the interviewees.**

Threats (implications)		IR	Opportunities (strengths)		IR
1	Industrialized pieces compete with caíçara handicrafts	27,30	1	Income alternative in the context of urban pluri-activities	19,11
2	Use of parts based on the extraction of raw material from nature	26,33	2	Exclusivity of pieces of the caíçara culture	17,11
3	Bureaucratic difficulty in extracting raw material	16,00	3	Low raw material cost	11,04
4	Organization of class in embryonic stage	13,60	4	Customer demand for differentiated parts in other regions	11,01
5	Lack of incentive of the public power	5,44	5	Viral marketing on production	10,69
6	Low price of handmade pieces	4,11	6	Increase in sales due to summer season	9,23
7	Little dissemination of caíçara handicrafts	3,01	7	Appreciation of the female labor force	8,18
8	Climate instability hinders open-air trade	2,12	8	Flexible working hours	5,99
9	Low quality of the pieces produced by some artisans	1,08	9	Production technologies adapted to regional reality and culture	4,24
10	Competitiveness for prices among artisans	1,01	10	Established Relationship Network (Network)	3,40

The study revealed that the artisans had been engaged in the making of artisan handicrafts on average for 15 years, and despite their experience and learning as a cultural heritage, most of the interviewees (n = 58) , 3%) never participated in these events in order to improve their artistic techniques. In the general context, all the interviewees reported that there would be a possibility of increasing the production in number of pieces if there were more demand for the caiçara handicrafts.

## DISCUSSION

Craftwork has proved to be an excellent opportunity to leverage new ventures, translating into income generation and occupation for various levels of the social pyramid. However, the lack of government incentives to trade has been an obstacle to stronger sector growth.

The artisan, for the most part, is excluded from the formal market. However, it is included in labor relations, even through informality, developing its artistic work often in precarious conditions if it uses only raw material that the regional nature allows the extractivism or the collection in a more facilitated way. Thus, art, although subject to formal exclusion, generates and maintains in a dignified way incomes that complement the families involved in the activity

The trajectories expressed and lived by significant part of the artisans demonstrate the path traveled by thousands of other Brazilians who live in their daily lives, who after retirement feel the need to complement the income. In this circumstance, the combination of high age and low schooling results in a scenario where artisanship, within the context of pluriactivity, becomes a viable activity.

The presence of older people in the production and trade of caiçara handicrafts may be associated with the fact that this type of activity, according to the artisan's decisions, can be accomplished with less use of physical force, and generate the complement of income.

Still according to the IBGE (2013), the increase in the life expectancy of the third age coupled with the decrease in the birth rate, means that, in 2030, the number of people in the third age should represent 33.7% of the population total in Brazil.

The senior's class has gradually changed the social scene in Brazil, and even after retirement, many people are still looking for another income activity. In this scenario, the observed low schooling may also justify the presence of this class in the craft, since the activity requires more skill and creativity than physical effort or formal schooling.

Another factor that favors the presence of this group of people is the fact that most of the raw material used in the manufacture of caiçara handicrafts comes through the collection of the environment, and therefore, low cost. Although the collection of these sources of nature occurs on a small scale, it should be analyzed in greater depth under the focus of sustainability, given that the exact number of this type of artisan is still unknown in the coast of Parana, as well as the quantity of products collected.

When extracting a raw material from its habitat, be it trees, lianas, shells, seeds, stones among others, the artisan must also emphasize the qualities and importance of a resource to reduce the possibility of its destruction. In this context, BEHR (1994) shows that in some regions traditional populations through their cultural and economic practices (among them handicrafts) have contributed to the maintenance of the ecosystems where they live. Thus, coastal natural resources can sustain the culture of the population and their way of life directly linked to the region in which they reside.

Still, according to Behr (1994), while the use of these native raw materials transmit a positive symbology of the region, making these inputs are valued, other regions do not perceive the counterpart in the awareness of the artisans about the impacts that the withdrawal of them can cause in the environment, which can negatively affect sustainability over the years.

The primordial stimulus of a consumer for the acquisition of some product is the necessity of everyday life, or even an inner impulse and the desire to possess some object. This motivation, in the case of handicrafts, can be due to the unique characteristics of the caiçara culture. In this context, Barros and Magalhaes (2016) describe that the artisan must efficiently perform the handicrafts by highlighting the values representative of his culture, the insertion of a differentiated design of the industrialized products, his own peculiarities and the artisan's vision of the piece. Still according to the authors, in the current context it is urgent that the artisan possesses a vision about sustainability in the practice of his art, which

besides the culture and beauty in itself, can also offer a handicraft more appropriate to the environmental preservationist context.

The lack of knowledge and rules of natural resources use for the production of handicrafts can result in the degradation of the natural areas, for however harmless it may be, the removal of the raw material for use in handicrafts can cause impacts in the coastal environment. In order to do so, it is necessary to have a concern with the socio-environmental context, since, according to JACOBI (2003), the craft beyond the expression of art itself must also, albeit indirectly, address the issue of environmental complexity. It will result from an understanding of the process of reflection on practices existing and the multiple possibilities of defining it as a new rationality and a space where nature, technique, culture and art are articulated.

In this context, before the extraction of a product from its natural environment, it is impossible to know the importance of the raw material in relation to the environment, in order to have an awareness that can be transmitted to the consumers themselves about the sustainability of the material used in the *caçara* handicraft. Thus, although environmental damages seem to be small, this issue needs further studies to evaluate the impacts of extractive action on the environment.

The artisans of the coast of Paraná should seek the concept of socially fair and environmentally responsible production, which can be described as alternatives resulting from business with social impact emerged as an alternative development, job creation, income and entrepreneurship. It goes beyond the borders of simple production, even becoming a socioeconomic strategy to combat poverty, but with minimal impacts to the environment.

The demand for socially just and environmentally responsible products has presented good indices and growth in Brazilian and world trade, since it would significantly minimize environmental impacts, and could be economically attractive, through the generation of income and the perpetuation of art and regional culture.

The dialogue between environmental preservation institutions (which are also those that provide for the norms of use of environmental assets with artisans), regarding the use, forms of extraction and limitation of the use of these materials, are revealed as essential to the strengthening of the *caçara* handicraft segment on the coast of Paraná.

Some sectors of the craft and the dialogue with the environmental institutions are more evolved, as is the case of the black *cipó*, that although there is no specific legislation that regulates the use. There are tacit agreements in which the artisans who work with this type of product only explore a tonne of raw lupine per month, which apparently guarantees the perenniality of natural populations. Thus, dialogue can facilitate the bureaucratic issue regarding the authorization of raw material collection by establishing extractive standards that are classified as possible without endangering the environment.

Therefore, once the pressures for extractivism are minimized and the artisans obtain the legality of the extraction of the raw material, it becomes imperative that commercial issues are discussed and in relation to the dissemination of the artisanal *caçara*, thus making it possible to increase production and, for that reason, income.

The commercialization of *caçara* handicrafts is directly linked to tourism. In the coast of Paraná, due to tourism, there are sales throughout the year; however, in the high summer season, the craft trade has its high demand. The *caçara* handicraft presents growth potential as an alternative of income, since it has been observed a niche market that can be better explored. If there are strategic actions aimed at commercialization, as well as the specialization of artisans, which could reduce the influence of the industrialized products and, mainly, increase the final value paid of the pieces produced from the *caçara* culture.

The artisanship that portrays regional identities, according to Freeman (2010), should have consumer appreciation. Nevertheless, this fact only occurs if the client perceives, in the piece offered, the remarkable presence of the artisan and the characteristics that refer to the region. In this way, the art that emphasizes the identity of the craft promotes a differentiation in relation to the industrial product.

The artisans of the coast of Paraná due to the wide presence of tourists must be attentive to these conditions. According to Souza (1993), crafts must aggregate artistic values and simultaneously express

the origins of a particular place, in this way the consumer will have at his disposal a piece with symbolic characteristics that differentiates itself from the industrialized product, manufactured in large scale. According to DABUL (2014) there are different criteria for valuing the marketing of handicrafts, and with technological advances, especially with regard to social media, disclosure can be carried out more efficiently and at a lower cost, delivering the correct message to customers potential, as also described by SEBRAE (2018).

The caiçara handicraft on the coast of Paraná can be classified as a segment still embryonic, and despite the vast field possible with regard to the enlargement of the pieces produced and marketed, when referring to the collective organization, artisans still have a low organizational capacity.

Artisans organize themselves into formal associations, cooperatives and informal groups. Nonetheless, custom-made products use this organization format for the collective marketing and division of exhibition spaces.

As far as the exhibition of the works is concerned, it is noticeable that the associations play a considerable role in the process of marketing local handicrafts, with the majority of artisans exhibiting their works at the points of sale of the associations. It is worth noting that this way of marketing, especially during the low holiday season, has proved to be efficient, since it guarantees the exposure and commerce of professionals who live far from urban centers.

However, the expansion of the actions of these organizations and the objective of collective sale can represent the mitigation of other threats and implications to the development of the activity. As in the case of the feasibility participation in larger events, such as agricultural exhibitions, handicraft fairs outside of the coastal region, courses of production, design, and finishing processes of the pieces.

Other relevant actions would be training in planning and production management, and training of artisans in marketing actions with the knowledge of communication tools and new forms of dissemination and commerce of caiçara handicrafts, especially with the use of social networks.

Anacleto et al. (2016) describes that the low organizational capacity of the various productive segments of the coast of Paraná has been an obstacle to the development of the sectors. Still according to the authors, the traditional knowledge of the caiçara handicraft on the coast of Paraná perpetuated with the passage of time between the several generations that have succeeded. However, recent events suggest that, especially in the younger generation, the abandonment of these secular practices and, in particular, artisanship, will occur. This issue is evidenced by the low presence of young artisans.

The challenge, then, is to reverse the process by satisfactorily developing the caiçara artisanship so that in the future it is not only a second source of income but also rather the main form of livelihood dedicated by artisan groups on the coast of Paraná. Thus, from the point of view of social justice, efforts presuppose that the broad-based collective organization is the way to mitigate the threats of the sector, resulting in an equation in which they satisfy the human needs, managing extractive collection and enabling a model of the needs of families in the present and in the future.

In order to reduce the threats and the identified implications, it is necessary to seek strategies and actions articulated interdisciplinarily without losing sight of the preparation of individuals in a position to exercise citizenship. To that end, some aspects, such as sustainable local development, should be considered, since it is multidimensional and involves economic, social, cultural, political, psychological, ecological, physical and especially historical knowledge.

According to Aquino (2006), there are no territories condemned to absolute poverty and also doomed to social marginality, but only territories without discussions of projects and abandoned by the public power. In this context, through the collective organization, it is possible to visualize alternatives that seek to correct these dysfunctions, resulting in an improvement of the caiçara handicraft production and trade capacity in the Paraná coast.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study revealed that the artisans were more in the male gender (n = 54%). The majority were older than 50 years (n = 54%), and most had only elementary education (n = 58.34%).

The main raw materials used in the manufacture of caixara handicrafts were leather of tanned fish, woods, seeds of native vegetables, vines removed from forests, coconut shells, palm leaves, feathers, shells, oyster shells, shells, which were often collected in nature. However, this issue needs further studies to evaluate the impact of this action on the environment.

The main implications in the development of the activity were the low price of the handmade pieces; the use of pieces based on the extraction of raw material from nature and the bureaucratic difficulty to extract it; and the industrialized pieces that competed with the caixara handicrafts.

It was concluded that the organization of artisans in class would increase bargaining power with partner institutions and could solve problems such as the need for training to improve production, the insertion of new forms of commercialization and consequently the increase of income of families involved in manufacture and trade of caixara handicrafts.

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