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Autonomy, competence, and relatedness: How and why do artisan entrepreneurs act as responsible leaders?

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3 **Autonomy, competence, and relatedness: How and why do artisan entrepreneurs act as responsible**
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5 **leaders?**
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8 **Abstract**
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10 **Purpose:** The aim of this paper is to answer the question: What stimulates artisan entrepreneurs to act as
11 responsible leaders?
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14 **Methodology:** A qualitative research method was employed and semi-structured interviews with 30
15 artisans working in four different artisanal activities was used to gather the data. Thematic analysis was
16 subsequently applied to the interview transcripts.
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19 **Findings:** The findings suggest that the main factors causing artisan entrepreneurs to act responsibly are as
20 follows: autonomy (the authority artisans exercise in managing their businesses; preserving socio-cultural
21 identity is an artisan's main duty; proving an individual competency in implementing society-related
22 priorities), competence (adhering to generally accepted business practices; simplicity of developing and
23 maintaining the social agenda of artisan enterprises; meeting the clients' desire in exercising a social
24 awareness) and relatedness (returning social favours; necessitating involvement with different stakeholders;
25 contributing to the common good).
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28 **Originality/ value:** This paper contributes by filling a gap in the literature on artisan entrepreneurship,
29 responsible leadership and research in tourism and hospitality in which empirical studies on the responsible
30 practices of artisan entrepreneurs have been limited so far.
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33 **Keywords:** artisan entrepreneurs, responsible leadership, tourism and hospitality, self-determination
34 theory, artisanal enterprise
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1. Introduction

The tourism sector contributes significantly to job creation and the national income in different countries (Buhalis & Foerste, 2015). In recent decades, there has been a notable shift in the tourism sector, where cultural tourism has regained prominence alongside other dominant types such as beach tourism and medical tourism (Mousa et al., 2023a). Cultural tourism involves active exploration and visitors engaging with the local customs, traditions, and way of life in the places they visit (Ferreira et al., 2019). This encompasses historical landmarks and captivating urban areas (Marques, 2012), with cultural tourists being particularly drawn to museums and cultural sites (Ferreira et al., 2019). The resurgence of cultural tourism can be attributed to changing preferences of tourists to seek out unique experiences (Cabiddu et al., 2013). As cultural tourism has evolved, scholars have recently developed a keen interest in artisan entrepreneurship (Ratten & Ferreira, 2017; Ramadani et al., 2017). This particular form of business, which is also known as cultural entrepreneurship, pertains to cultural enterprises that focus on creating handmade products deeply rooted in the historical, social, religious, or ethnic heritage of a specific society (Ratten et al., 2019). These enterprises have the ability to attract tourists to their local areas through offering a diverse range of goods, such as custom-made clothing, locally sourced organic food, and crafted beverages (Curtis, 2016; Ratten & Ferreira, 2017; Kapp, 2017).

Furthermore, scholars (e.g., Siemens, 2014; Bredvold & Skalen, 2016) view artisan entrepreneurship as connecting business opportunities and an individual's talent, circumstances, lifestyle, and personal context. Artisan entrepreneurship offers artisans the opportunity to diverge from conventional career paths and engage in more fulfilling work, where they can enjoy taking responsibility, learning, staying motivated, earning an income, and enjoying autonomy (Crossick, 1997). Furthermore, they act like other entrepreneurs in scanning their business environment, deciding whom they should target and how, decreasing costs while providing high-quality products, using social networks to market their products and following what their competitors do to retain their consumers (Urbano et al., 2019; Rashid & Ratten, 2020). However, the main

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3 struggle artisan entrepreneurs face is how to create and maintain a balance between their creative mindset
4 and economic rationality (Ratten et al., 2019).
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8 Studying the potential trade-offs between the economic and socio-cultural objectives that artisans may face
9 remains an unfilled gap in management and entrepreneurship literature (Hoyte, 2019). In addition, and to
10 the best of the authors' knowledge, little is known about the extent to which artisans act responsibly and
11 the specific practices they employ in their leadership roles. These knowledge gaps have motivated the
12 authors to explore responsible leadership practices among artisans. Responsible leadership reflects a
13 mechanism through which board members and personnel are guided towards sustainability and social
14 inclusion (Mousa, 2018). Furthermore, it can be perceived as a style of leadership that takes into account
15 stakeholder interests in addition to the traditional shareholder desire to maximise profits (Schinzel, 2018).
16 Those stakeholders might include and are not limited to employees, suppliers, social activists, government
17 representatives and future generations (Maccoby & Scudder, 2011). Accordingly, responsible leaders care
18 about people, society and the environment (Han et al., 2019).
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32 The emergence of responsible leadership has appeared to motivate corporate leaders to engage in ethical
33 practices (Benn et al., 2014). Consequently, it reflects an understanding of the shift towards ethics and
34 social betterment in Western countries (Carrasco, 2007; Voegtlin, 2011). To act responsibly, leaders should
35 have adequate skills and authority (Waldman & Galvin, 2008). The scope of responsibility any leader
36 exercises is based on his level of engagement with outside stakeholders and his readiness to understand
37 stakeholder needs (Miska et al., 2014). Over the past decade, responsible leadership has also been associated
38 with climate change (Mousa et al., 2019), corporate social responsibility (Schnizel, 2018), organisational
39 citizenship behaviour (Han et al., 2019) and organisational inclusion (Mousa & Abdelgaffar, 2023a, b, c).
40 However, finding out why artisans combine economic pursuits with a social mission and community
41 involvement remains a gap in the literature in management, leadership, entrepreneurship, and tourism and
42 hospitality (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007; Bredvold & Skalen, 2016; Ramadani et al., 2017; Ferreira et al.,
43 2019). Accordingly, and given the scarcity of empirical studies on artisan entrepreneurship (Ratten et al.,
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2019; Arias & Cruz, 2019) particularly in non-Western countries (Hoyte, 2019), in addition to the lack of literature on responsible leadership (Mousa & Arslan, 2023) particularly in the tourism and hospitality sector (Castaneda Garcia et al., 2023), we address a group of artisans who act as founders or co-founders for a number of tourism and hospitality-related enterprises in Egypt, in order to answer the question: **What might stimulate artisan entrepreneurs to act as responsible leaders?**

According to the Egypt State Information Service, SIS (2017b), the value of the global market for handmade crafted goods exceeds 100 billion dollars. This type of entrepreneurship not only plays a vital role in creating job opportunities worldwide but also serves as a way to preserve the cultural identities of countries, particularly those with extensive and rich histories (SIS, 2017a). One notable benefit is the flexibility to engage in artisan entrepreneurship from any location and at any time, as long as the individual possesses the necessary talent (SIS, 2017b). In this specific context, our study focuses on artisan entrepreneurial enterprises within an insufficiently examined setting, specifically Egypt. Our contribution encompasses three aspects: first, we contribute to the existing body of literature on artisan entrepreneurship, and the tourism and hospitality sector, which lacks empirical research on artisan enterprise in non-Western countries (Arias & Cruz, 2019; Hoyte, 2019). Second, we investigate whether the known skills of the artisan entrepreneur in integrating their economic pursuits with their social mission and community involvement are adequately employed to ensure their socially responsible commitment to their society (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007; Mousa & Abdelgaffar, 2023a). Third, this paper elaborates on how the scope of responsibility is determined in micro, small and medium-sized artisan enterprises characterised by limited budget, inadequate planning skills, inadequate effective communication policies and the lack of a detailed business plan or model. The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. After the literature review, the methodology and analysis are presented. The results are then presented followed by a discussion and implications for theory and practice. The paper concludes with limitations and the potential for future research.

2. Literature review

2.1 Artisan entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship has been referred to as “efforts to bring about new economic, social, institutional and cultural environments through the actions of an individual or a group of individuals” (Rindova et al., 2009, p. 477). It also involves a deliberate process where individuals utilise their skills to address specific gaps in the market. The entrepreneurship event model developed by Shapero and Sokol (1982) outlines key elements such as desirability (positive attitude towards a business idea/activity), feasibility (belief in being able to overcome challenges), and the propensity to act (confidence in one’s knowledge, resources, and energy for the business). Over the past decade, artisan entrepreneurship has noticeably gained currency in economics and management literature (Abatecola & Uli, 2016; Abatecola et al., 2022; Karim et al., 2022; Sobhan & Hassan, 2023). This might be as a result of the number of jobs this type of entrepreneurship secures and its contribution to the economic prosperity of countries (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007; Abatecola, 2013; Hasan, 2020; Mousa & Abdelgaffar, 2023a, b). However, the drivers of the active engagement of artisans in their entrepreneurial activities vary across countries (Rashid & Ratten, 2020). The same could be said about the outcomes of such active engagement (Rodrigues et al., 2023). Noticeably, artisans find greater autonomy when managing their small businesses and enjoying the resulting flexible work arrangements (Segaras, 2022). Despite the scarcity of studies on the determinants of artisanal entrepreneurial success, the authors of this paper believe, similar to traditional entrepreneurship, cash flow and annual income determine the success of artisanal businesses (Nikolaev et al., 2018; Wach et al., 2020). Moreover, it is worth highlighting that context – “the circumstances, conditions, situations or environments” (Walter, 2011; p. 67) and artisan works in – might shape his/her success (Zahra et al., 2014). More specifically, this context might be an opportunity or a challenge (Walter, 2011).

In the context of artisan entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs create handmade products, often without relying on automated processes (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), primarily within a domestic setting (Ratten et al., 2019). These artisanal products encompass a wide variety, including perfumes, paintings, curtains, tablecloths, handicrafts, and food items (Hoyte, 2018). These carefully crafted goods not only attract

tourists but also convey the cultural nuances, traditions, and customs of the visited location (Richards, 2011). Hence, they contribute to preserving cultural heritage (Al-Daja and Marlow, 2013). Artisan enterprises typically operate without seeking external funding (Pret et al., 2015) and may choose to establish their businesses in rural areas despite the challenges of finding skilled collaborators and sourcing high-quality raw materials, aiming to optimise their work-related expenses (Curtis, 2016; Arias & Cruz, 2019). By practicing artisan entrepreneurship, these businesses effectively embody a culture, history, sense of place, and way of life, significantly influencing the perspectives of the artisans involved (Morrison, 2006; Ram et al., 2016; Munz, 2018).

Artisan entrepreneurs adopt a self-reliant or *do it yourself* approach to their work (Ratten et al., 2019), while also emphasising the transmission of cultural essence and social awareness across generations (Kapp, 2017). This might explain why artisan entrepreneurs feel comfortable investing time, effort and passion into their activities (Arias & Cruz, 2019). Despite its potential to stimulate tourism and create employment opportunities, artisan entrepreneurship and the associated business models have received limited scholarly attention (Pret & Carter, 2017; Arias & Cruz, 2019). As a result, artisanal enterprises, like other small enterprises, often encounter immense challenges (Salem et al., 2023). In addition, these businesses face further difficulties as they are unable to access government support due to the lack of robust business plans, credit history, crisis management systems, adequate planning skills, effective communication policies, and access to external finance (Hoyte, 2019; Sithas & Surangi, 2021; Korede et al., 2021; Arslan et al., 2022). The following table includes the previous main studies on artisan entrepreneurship that the authors relied on.

Table 1: previous studies on artisan entrepreneurship (prepared by the authors)

Study and authors	Research method	Objective of the study	Country and research population

Rashid & Ratten (2020)	Qualitative	Elaborating how artisans can guide and use their creative skills in developing business enterprises.	Pakistan
Gupta et al. (2021)	Quantitative	Finding out the factors stimulating the satisfaction of both artisans and their customers.	India
Rodrigues et al. (2023)	Qualitative case studies	Finding an answer for the question of “how does artisan entrepreneurship contribute to the sustainable development of its surrounding context?”.	Portugal and Spain
Arias & Cruz (2019)	Qualitative	Answering the question of “how do artisans deal with the lack of resources while finding an increased tourism?”.	Honduras
Ferreira et al. (2019)	Ethnographic case studies (qualitative)	Investigating the experience of creative entrepreneurs who deal with cultural tourism.	Portugal
Hoyte (2019)	Conceptual	Investigating whether artisans share common personality traits.	_____
Ratten et al. (2019)	Conceptual	Identifying the main current and future research avenues of artisan entrepreneurship	_____
Segares (2022)	Qualitative	Investigating the work experience of women artisans during the era of Covid-19.	United States
Discua Cruz et al. (2022)	Qualitative multiple case study design	Addressing the contribution of women to the continuity of family businesses work in rural areas.	Honduras

Shafi et al. (2021)	Conceptual analysis	Identifying the determinants of survival and growth for the enterprises of handcrafted products.	Pakistan
Igwe et al. (2019)	Mixed approach	Determining the factors shaping artisans' decision to engage into business activities and the challenges they mostly face.	Nigeria
Sanchez-Medina (2020)	Qualitative	Exploring how artisanal enterprises can develop organizational capability in order to position themselves in the market and meet its changes.	Mexico
Siemens (2014)	Qualitative	Discovering how artisans who work in constrained environments can contribute to the economic development of their region.	Canada
Ramadani et al. (2017)	Qualitative	Finding out what artisans think about their activities and what ethnic minority-affiliated artisans think about exercising their entrepreneurship outside their home country.	Macedonia
Curtis (2015)	Qualitative	Highlighting the ethical market practices that support artisan entrepreneurs.	United States

Previous empirical studies on artisan entrepreneurship, albeit limited in number, have not addressed the social role artisans might undertake. For instance, the benefits artisans might receive from recognition and support from local municipalities have been addressed by Rodrigues et al. (2023), who indicate that such support might include funding and professional training. The effect of tourists on the production, consumption and future of handmade products, particularly in resource-limited contexts, has been investigated by Arias and Cruz (2019). Ferreira et al. (2019) indicate that artisans consider tourists as not

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3 only clients of their products but also a source of learning who share comments, concerns and suggestions
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5 on how artisans can improve their products. Gupta et al. (2021) explore what artisans depend on to satisfy
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7 their customers, while Segares (2022) has highlighted the coping strategies women artisans implement
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9 during rush periods during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is also worth highlighting that none of the previous
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11 conceptual and theoretical studies have examined the socially responsible roles artisans might play. This
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13 not only reflects the importance of the present paper since it is the first to focus on what causes artisans to
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15 act responsibly but also highlights our attempt to fill such gaps in entrepreneurship literature.
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18 2.2 Self-determination theory, scope of responsibility and artisan entrepreneurship in the Egyptian 19 20 context 21 22

23 In the case of the responsible activities exercised by artisans, self-determination theory focuses on human
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25 motivation and hence, might explain why individuals (artisans in this case) feel motivated to devote time
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27 and effort to some activities (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This theory says that humans feel inspired to work and
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29 accomplish a specific set of duties when they find an appropriate work atmosphere and environmental
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31 conditions (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Self-determination theory includes the following three dimensions:
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33 autonomy (ability to decide), competence (knowledge and abilities) and relatedness (feeling of belonging)
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35 (Kusurkar et al., 2020). The following is a detailed explanation of the three dimensions of self-
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37 determination theory in association with artisans' responsible activities.
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41 First, autonomy, describes the authority an individual has in deciding the scope of his/her social obligation
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43 and the dynamics of fulfilling them. It also describes an internally perceived locus of control (Ryan & Deci,
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45 2000). The extent to which a leader (artisan in this case) acts responsibly will depend on answers to
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47 questions such as why the leader has to be responsible, what challenges might hinder the leader from acting
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49 responsibly and what the outcomes may be from such responsible behaviour (Pruzan & Miller, 2006; Mousa
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51 & Chaouali, 2021; Chaouali & Mousa, 2021; Mousa et al., 2023). Hence, aspects such as time, ego, internal
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53 pressure, external pressure, distance and the desire of any leader to maximise his or her personal benefits
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55 could also be considered as determinants of the scope of a leader's responsible behaviour (Pruzan & Miller,
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2006; Mousa & Arslan, 2023). According to Antunes and Franco (2016), responsible leadership consists of the following four dimensions. First, aggregation of virtuousness – the differentiation between right and wrong (Gond et al., 2011). Second, stakeholder involvement – granting internal and external stakeholders the opportunity to participate in any decision relates to the social betterment of the surrounding society (Cameron, 2011). Third, individual competencies – the skills, authority and knowledge leaders have and use to ensure their organisation adopts an active socially responsible agenda (Mousa, 2018); and fourth, ethical orientation – the considerable care leaders devote to ethics and values when making decisions (Cunha et al., 2007). Second, competence describes the knowledge, skills and abilities individuals hold and use in making career progress (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In this case, competence appears in the ability of artisans to understand the nature and entrepreneurial identity of their activity and hence their presumed role in preserving the cultural heritage of the context they work in (Urbano et al., 2019; Ferreira et al., 2019).

Third, relatedness describes the sense of belonging individuals find and give to their society or country (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In the case of artisans, relatedness entails the sense of affiliation or belonging artisans experience through the social support perceived from their surrounding society and translate this it into activities aimed at social betterment (Mousa & Arslan, 2023). In doing so, artisans have to develop long-lasting and trusting relationships with all stakeholders (Pless, 2007). This has drawn upon stakeholder theory, which states that businesses have to meet the expectations of all stakeholders, including those of the shareholders (Freeman, 1984). According to this theory, a leader is responsible when he or she maintains a continuous contribution to the common good (Argandona, 1998; Maak, 2007). The common good itself necessitates organisations (artisanal enterprise in this case) to strike a balance between the economic and other socio-ecological goals of the organisation (Szekely, 2005; Mousa, 2020). Moreover, the common good varies across organisations due to the differences in their budget, managerial orientation and scope of responsibility (Argandona, 1998). It includes activities such as caring about employee health, resisting corruption, decreasing pollution, developing job opportunities for local citizens, enhancing environmental awareness and safeguarding human rights (Stahl & de Luque, 2014; Mousa & Ayoubi, 2019). It is worth

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3 highlighting that according to the theory of social exchange (Blau, 1964), all human interactions and
4 sometimes those involving the environment are based on the principle of give-and-take. Moreover, social
5 networks are the main determinant of any exchange process among humans and sometimes the exchange
6 between organisations and their environment (Cook & Emerson, 1978). In organisational contexts, the
7 values and orientation of managers and founders guide such social exchanges between organisations
8 (artisanal enterprise) and their environment (Gouldner, 1960).
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16 Egypt is renowned for its artisans, who number over 3.5 million, positioning the artisan entrepreneurial
17 sector as the second largest and most densely populated sector in the Egyptian economy, second only to
18 agriculture (Mahmood, 2022). Artisan entrepreneurship in Egypt encompasses a diverse array of activities,
19 including the manufacturing of carpets, the production of ceramics, tent making, papyrus production, the
20 glass industry, designing national clothing, and copper engraving (SIS, 2017a). Moreover, artisan
21 enterprises in Egypt hold a significant position, as they are considered an essential part of the country's
22 heritage. Artisan entrepreneurs perceive their craft as an artistic tradition that has been passed down through
23 generations. Interestingly, several villages in Egypt rely heavily on specific artisan trades as their primary
24 economic activity (Amer, 2016; Hasan, 2020). In the capital city, Cairo, each historic neighbourhood boasts
25 a distinctive artisan industry. It is noteworthy that artisan work in Egypt has deep historical roots spanning
26 the Pharaonic, Coptic, and Islamic eras (Khallaf et al., 2022).
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40 Although the artisan industry in Egypt faced neglect for around three decades, it began to regain attention
41 and support in 2013 (Mahmood, 2022). This revitalization holds particular significance, given that artisan
42 industries have always been recognised as a vital component of Egyptian identity (Hasan, 2020). The
43 Egyptian presidency, government, civil society organisations, and social activists have more recently
44 collaborated to on campaigns to support artisan entrepreneurs. These initiatives involve various actions
45 such as promoting their handmade products online, facilitating access to loans, and establishing long-lasting
46 partnerships with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education to address the challenges
47 faced by these entrepreneurs, particularly in the early stages of their ventures (SIS, 2017a). Notably, in
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3 2017, the President of Egypt enacted a law to regulate the work of artisan entrepreneurs, empowering the
4 Prime Minister to appoint experts who provide regular consultation and support (Mahmood, 2022).
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6 Additionally, Egypt has designated the city of “El-Fostat” as a central hub for handmade and crafted
7 industries (SIS, 2017a). The Egyptian government actively supports artisan enterprises by organising 130
8 annual exhibitions and fairs within the country to showcase their crafted and handmade products (Saeed,
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10 2018). Furthermore, Egypt arranges six exhibitions and fairs each year in various Arab Gulf countries,
11 including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, as well as North African countries like Morocco,
12 with the aim of promoting its handmade products (Saeed, 2018). There have also been suggestions to
13 incorporate artificial intelligence into handmade craft industries to ensure their continued relevance in the
14 future (Saeed, 2018).
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25 **3. Research methodology**

26 3.1 Sampling and methodology

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30 This paper seeks to answer the question: what might stimulate artisans in the tourism and hospitality
31 industry to act as responsible leaders? In order to achieve this, we conducted qualitative research using an
32 inductive approach in order to delve into the specific and contextualised experiences of artisan
33 entrepreneurs in Egypt (Yin, 2003; Schmidt, 2004). By adopting this research approach, we were able to
34 gain new insights and perspectives on responsible leadership practices and the scope of responsibility
35 demonstrated by these particular people (Thomas, 2006). It is important to note that the context we explored
36 is relatively under-researched and has received limited attention (Mousa and Arslan, 2023), providing an
37 additional rationale for utilising this approach (Denzin, 2001; Creswell & Poth, 2016).
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47 For this study, we conducted semi-structured interviews employing snowball and purposive sampling
48 techniques to recruit the participants. Our focus was on co-founders of artisan enterprises who possess
49 comprehensive knowledge of the topic under investigation, which led us to adopt a purposive sampling
50 strategy. We specifically targeted four distinct types of artisan entrepreneurship: carpet manufacturing,
51 handmade national dress design and sales, papyrus production and copper sculpture. This sampling strategy
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3 was chosen because it is considered the most appropriate method for exploring the macro, meso, and micro
4 factors that shape organisational contexts (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Initially,
5 we reached out to a small group comprising one representative from each type, who helped us identify and
6 connect with additional participants using a snowball approach. In total, we conducted interviews with 30
7 artisan entrepreneurs selected from four provinces in Egypt: Fayoum (carpet manufacturing), Gharbia
8 (dress design and sales), Giza (papyrus production) and Cairo (copper sculpture). It is important to note
9 that the selection of these provinces was based on their association with specific types of artisan
10 entrepreneurship. A detailed overview of the participants can be found in the following table.
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21 Table 1. Data on the respondents – field of activity, interview code, enterprise, education and interview
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28 The interviews for this study were conducted by the first author in Arabic, which is the native language of
29 both the participants and two of the authors. Skype and Telegram were used as platforms for conducting
30 the interviews. In adherence with generally accepted ethical guidelines for interviews, all participants were
31 informed about the main purpose of the research and assured of their right to refuse to answer any questions
32 that could potentially cause embarrassment regarding their profession or personal life. To ensure an accurate
33 translation of the transcripts from Arabic to English, a professional translator collaborated with the authors.
34 Moreover, to verify the accuracy of the English transcripts, the author translated them back into Arabic and
35 requested the participants to review them. We used the interview questions developed by Mousa and Arslan
36 (2023) when addressing the responsible leadership practices of family businesses. The following are some
37 of the questions we relied upon: To what extent do artisan businesses feel committed to responsible
38 leadership practices? Why? How? What criteria does your enterprise use for engaging in responsible
39 leadership activities? To what extent do you as an artisan entrepreneur develop long-lasting relationships
40 with your stakeholders? What factors might stimulate you to actively engage in responsible leadership
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3 activities? To what extent does your enterprise receive support from government bodies and civil society
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5 organisations while exercising responsible leadership activities?
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8 3.2 Data analysis 9

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11 In analysing the conducted interviews, we employed the four steps developed by Miles and Huberman
12 (1994). Accordingly, we first started by transcribing the data received from each respondent separately to
13 identify the scope of the respondent's responsibility and how it is executed. During this stage, we asked the
14 respondents how important responsible leadership was for them, the scope of their social responsibility,
15 their socially responsible activities, how they cared about surrounding environment and the support they
16 received from civil society organizations while activating their socially responsible agenda. In their answers
17 the respondents explained the behaviours and practices they engage in (Kvale, 1983). Their answers also
18 form a tie between the author/researcher and the phenomenon under investigation (Alvesson & Karreman,
19 2011). Second, upon identifying the scope of each respondent's social responsibility, we combined the data
20 collected together and constituted codes. Third, we highlighted the most repeated words and phrases in the
21 conducted interviews. During this stage, we observed how the respondents stressed some words such as
22 stakeholder engagement, association with the surrounding society, ethical values, government support,
23 financial assistance, favours and gratification, socio-cultural identity and generally accepted principles of
24 doing business. Given our analysis of the data from the interviews and the three dimensions of self-
25 determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), we developed three themes and consider them to be the main
26 factors or motives for why artisans act responsibly. In summary, the empirical analysis involved gathering
27 the respondents' answers, categorizing them, combining similar codes and then generating the final themes.
28 These will be discussed below in the findings section. It is worth highlighting that we were interested in
29 everything expressed by the respondents so as to build a comprehensive picture of the nature and scope of
30 their responsible behaviour and the practices undertaken by artisan entrepreneurs that they perceived as
31 responsible (Alvesson & Karreman, 2011).
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54 4. Findings 55 56 57 58 59 60

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3 As highlighted, the aim of the present paper is to explore what stimulates artisan entrepreneurs to act as
4 responsible leaders. The data analysis revealed three main themes: autonomy (the authority artisans exercise
5 in managing their businesses; preserving socio-cultural identity is an artisan's main duty; proving an
6 individual competency in implementing society-related priorities), competence (adhering to generally
7 accepted business practices; simplicity of developing and maintaining the social agenda of artisan
8 enterprises; meeting the clients' desire in exercising a social awareness) and relatedness (returning social
9 favours; necessitating involvement with different stakeholders; contributing to the common good). The
10 following is a discussion of the developed themes.
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20 21 4.1 Autonomy

22 23 4.1.1 The authority artisans exercise in managing their businesses

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25 Since artisans are the managers of their own business, the decision to go green, care about ethical guidelines
26 and engage in environmentally sustainable practices is solely taken and implemented by the artisans
27 themselves without any external or internal pressure. The interviews showed that artisans are motivated to
28 take more serious steps towards social betterment.
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35 *I am the owner and manager of my enterprise. I can decide whatever I want without*
36 *any worries. In complying with the values of social responsibility, I only try to use*
37 *natural resources and manual machines in producing my carpets. I try to ensure a clean*
38 *environment for the coming generations. C2*
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44 *The main advantage of being an artisan is that I feel that I am the president of my*
45 *workplace. I prefer self-employment because of that. So, following some detailed steps*
46 *from the ministry of environment, I can act responsibly. However, the government and*
47 *civil society organizations should explain to me what exactly I have to do towards social*
48 *betterment. S29*
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54 55 4.1.2 Preserving socio-cultural identity is an artisan's main role

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3 Artisan entrepreneurship not only generates jobs but also preserves the socio-cultural identities of
4 individuals. Moreover, responsible leadership aims to develop and/or direct the value systems in societies
5 and individuals in ethical directions and towards social betterment. Such value systems are the main
6 component of any socio-cultural identity, especially for individuals. Consequently, responsible leadership
7 is a vital subset of artisan entrepreneurial activity.
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14 *The responsible leader cares about virtuousness and safeguarding the history and/or*
15 *identity of a country through producing dresses that match the public moral standards*
16 *and virtuousness. So, I and other dress-making artisans are responsible. D19*
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21 *I reflect the practices, history, religion, customs, traditions, and glory of Ancient*
22 *Egyptians in my sculpture on copper. I reflect the main stages of our Pharaonic, Coptic,*
23 *and Islamic in my work. Moreover, my talent is an indication that Egyptians are hard*
24 *workers and artists by nature. Difficult to find an artisan working with copper sculpture*
25 *outside Egypt. S25*
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33 What might support this is the fact that artisan enterprises produce handmade products that are deeply
34 rooted in the cultural, social, ethnic and historical heritage of a specific society. In the interviews, the
35 respondents also voiced that their socio-cultural heritage, which is long-lasting and always transferred
36 across generations, is a tool for prioritising the ethics and wisdom of an ancient people. Accordingly,
37 artisanal products are a reflection of the responsibilities that individuals have inherited. As an elaboration
38 of this idea, Egyptian handmade papyrus mostly involves painting and wisdom (e.g., be kind in dealing
39 with others, always work hard, always act as a caring human) that illustrates the ethical behaviour ancient
40 Egyptians were engaged in and invites current generations to follow.
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50 *Artisans are more responsible than others. I as a producer of papyrus always draw*
51 *and/or write examples of Pharaonic ethical wisdom in my products (in which the leader*
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3 *has to care about their followers, and followers have to show respect for their leaders*
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5 *as an example). So, I am a disseminator of responsible speech. P21*
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8 4.1.3 Proving an individual competency in implementing society- related priorities 9

10 Given the growing concern on sustainability and social responsibility in different TV channels and social
11 media means, artisans compete to prove who among them has the skills and knowledge that might involve
12 a contribution to the social betterment of their society.
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18 *I see that the majority of my competitors are knowledgeable about sustainability. I don't*
19 *accept to find myself lag behind. C6*
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23 *The one who hasn't some knowledge about climate change and the increase in world's*
24 *temperature will feel unable to deal with the market condition in the coming years. C1*
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27 4.2 Competence 28

29 4.2.1 Coping with the generally accepted business practices 30

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32 Businesses currently have to maintain a contribution to the common good. This suggests that organisations
33 (artisan enterprises in this case) have to strike a balance between economic and socio-cultural ecological
34 objectives. Accordingly, even if artisan enterprises have limited budgets and their activities are mostly
35 exercised in rural areas, they should act responsibly and play a role in activities such as reducing illegal
36 payments (bribes) to the tax authorities or other government units.
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44 *Even if I don't have a university degree, I know what is required from me as a founder*
45 *and manager of a business. I always watch TV and YouTube. Moreover, I know by heart*
46 *that I have to care about the environment, ensure social betterment, contribute to social*
47 *solidarity and think about future generations. Obeying the country's business-related*
48 *laws is itself a priority for me and should be a priority for others as well. D18*
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3 *Word of mouth is so important in today's business arena. Who can risk ignoring the*
4 *generally accepted practices of doing business or neglecting ethical values in return*
5 *for a temporary profit while losing his future and/or the continuity of his artisan*
6 *enterprise!? I do what is acceptable to the government, community and consumers. This*
7 *is a matter of life for me because the majority of my consumers are tourists from*
8 *Western countries, and they care about how responsible their entrepreneur is more than*
9 *the local client. P24*
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18 4.2.2 Simplicity of developing and maintaining the social agenda of artisan enterprises

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21 Since the budget of artisanal enterprises is mostly limited, the socio-ecological goals of artisans are also
22 simple. For instance, they can decrease pollution by using natural resources, develop job opportunities for
23 local citizens or even teach the basics of their artisanal profession to the younger generation to ensure its
24 continuity. Consequently, adopting social agenda in artisanal enterprises is possible within their limited
25 resources and average education.
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32 *As a part of my social responsibility, I transfer my experience/talent to at least four*
33 *young individuals annually. I am also open to donating a sum from my profits to the*
34 *poor people in my surrounding area. P23*
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39 *I still use manual machines to produce my carpets. Moreover, I will be happy to train*
40 *others on how to produce manual carpets if there is a need for that. C3*
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44 4.2.3 Meeting the clients' desire in exercising a social awareness

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47 Respondents P22 and S27 indicate that their clients are mostly tourists, who hold a positive attitude towards
48 social responsibility. Accordingly, they, as artisans, have to maintain a considerable level of social
49 awareness.
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3 *Tourists are my main customers. I learn from their comments and suggestions.*

4
5 *Moreover, and given their favouritism to the handcrafted products created from natural*
6
7 *resources, I have always to act responsibly. P22*

8
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10 *Social awareness is a mean I mostly utilize to promote for my products and hence build*
11
12 *a trust with my clients. S27*

13 14 15 4.3 Relatedness

16 17 4.3.1 Returning social favours

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20 Egypt organises 130 annual exhibitions of artisan products inside its borders and arranges six fairs in the
21 Arab Gulf and North Africa. Moreover, the President and the Prime Minister assign experts who support
22 artisans through their guidance, advice and consultations. This stimulates artisans to express their desire to
23 act properly, and responsibly play a role in ensuring a commitment to their society. They recognise the
24 favours received from their country.
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31 *The country helps me in promoting my products online. Why shouldn't I provide some*
32
33 *help in securing job opportunities for unemployed people!?* P22

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36 *The government helps my enterprise secure the ability to apply for loans besides*
37
38 *continuously organising exhibitions and fairs for artisan products in and outside Egypt.*

39
40 *I have to return what I currently receive through creating a job opportunity annually*
41
42 *for a young unemployed individual and ethical practices such as refusing to pay bribes.*

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45 D14

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47 *Any enterprise, particularly small artisan ones cannot survive without the guidance of*
48
49 *the government and society. I always do what is acceptable to all stakeholders in order*

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51
52 *to maintain a good name in the business arena and in a pragmatic way to convince bank*
53
54 *employees and government representatives when applying for loans and/or support.*

55
56 *Showing commitment to the environment and donating to charity shows how I give*
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back to my society in return for the support I receive. It is a win-win exchange process.

D11

4.3.2 Necessitating involvement with different stakeholders

Artisan entrepreneurship is mostly based on cultural tourism in which tourists actively seek to discover and engage with the local customs and traditions of a specific country or place. Moreover, the main objective of artisan enterprises is to attract tourists to local areas. However, what if for some reason the number and movement of tourists decreases. For instance, during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic, which was between March and August 2020, Egypt lost 90 per cent of its usual tourism and hospitality revenue due to the global lockdown and temporary halt to the movement of tourists (Mousa et al., 2023). Consequently, to avoid a global and local crisis, artisan entrepreneurs had to maintain connections with all stakeholders including local buyers of their products.

I cannot work without establishing ongoing communication with local stakeholders.

They are the buyers of my products in the extreme tourism eras. Moreover, they support me with ideas, designs, lovely words and sometimes advice. C7

Surprisingly, the notion of responsible leadership is also about developing long-lasting and trusting relationships with different stakeholders who might also include consumers, suppliers and environmental activists. Accordingly, it appears that artisan entrepreneurs have to always maintain relationships with different stakeholders.

I myself maintain long-term relationships with many stakeholders. I have dealt with the same suppliers over the past three decades. I consider my employees as partners because they have worked with me for more than two decades. I have a fixed list of clients who always prefer and trust my carpets. Moreover, and due to the difficult time my industry is passing through, I have found financial and non-financial support (suggesting ideas to improve my products, explaining how I can incorporate green

resources into the manufacturing of my carpets) from many civil society organisations, neighbours, artisans in other industries. C5

Civil Society organisations sometimes support me with low-interest financial loans.

Accordingly, my business cannot survive without social activists and civil society organisations. S27

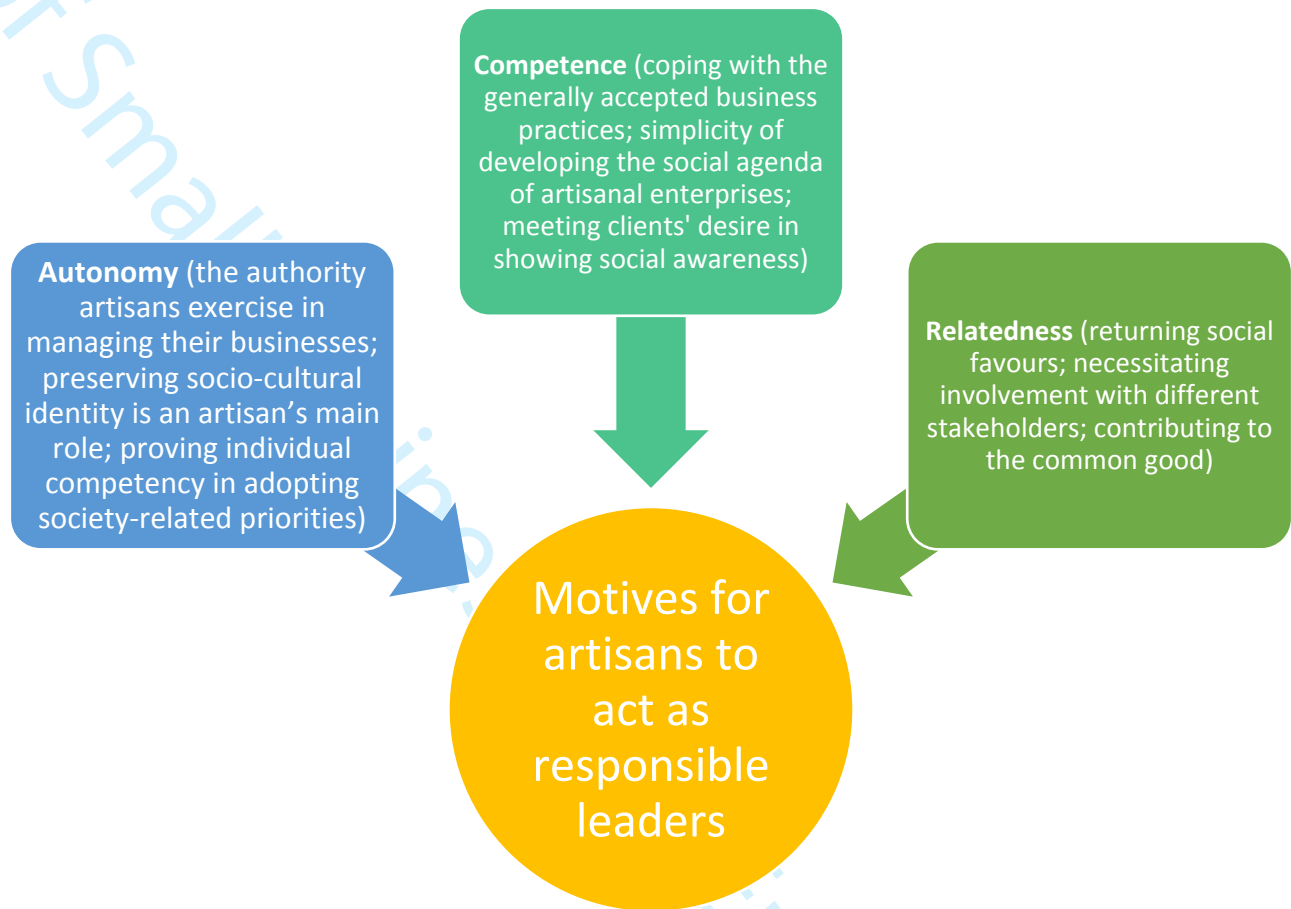
4.3.3 Contributing to the common good

The common good describes the social betterment of the context artisans work in. this common good stimulates organizations to care about the socio-ecological goals besides their traditional financial ones. In the conducted interviews, the respondent C4 perceive the common good as a priority.

Ensuring the betterment of our society should be balanced with the profit I seek to obtain. I live in this society and hence, I have to create job opportunities for young men, it is a sign of patriotism. C4

The following figure summarizes our main findings.

Figure 1: Motives of the responsible practices of artisans (Composed by the authors)



5. Discussion

This paper aims to explore the motives of artisan entrepreneurs to act as responsible leaders. Moreover, it responds to Mousa et al. (2024), who assert the need for more empirical studies on artisan entrepreneurship-related practices, challenges and future prospects, particularly in non-Western contexts. In agreement with Ramadani et al. (2017), the present study has revealed that artisan entrepreneurship plays a vital role in contributing to the economy of developing nations by generating employment opportunities for both the artisans themselves and others. Moreover, the study provided evidence that artisan entrepreneurs actively engage in preserving cultural heritage and identity, particularly in societies with a rich history and culture.

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3 This goes in line with Al-Dajani (2019) and Al-Dajani and Marlow (2013), who highlight that Syrian and
4
5 Jordanian artisans demonstrate a commitment towards sustaining their cultural heritage even through home-
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7 based embroidery enterprises.
8
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10 To act responsibly, leaders should have the authority to make decisions (Waldman & Galvin, 2008).
11
12 Artisans do not have conventional career paths (Crossick, 1997). Instead, they are the managers of their own
13
14 businesses (Urbano et al., 2019; Segaras, 2022). They enjoy taking responsibility, exercising autonomy and
15
16 staying motivated (Rashid & Ratten, 2020). This is why the addressed artisans stated that they care about
17
18 societal challenges, are keen to preserve socio-cultural heritage and act in a green manner only because they
19
20 are the owners of their enterprises. More specifically, they do not encounter any contradiction,
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22 disagreement, refusal or even discussion with their staff about how to use their income/profit. However, it
23
24 is worth highlighting that the scope and range of socially responsible activities that artisans might undertake
25
26 are limited by budget (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007).
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30 In line with stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), the addressed artisans tend to meet the expectations of all
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32 stakeholders and not only the shareholders' desire to maximise profits. This explains why they cope with
33
34 the generally accepted business practices and maintain a social agenda. Furthermore, and in agreement with
35
36 Kapp (2017), the addressed artisans feel comfortable investing time and effort in transmitting a cultural
37
38 essence and social awareness across generations. In doing so, they adopt the "do-it-yourself" approach to
39
40 contributing to the common good (Ratten et al., 2019). Admittedly, this common good varies across
41
42 businesses due to the differences in their budget and managerial orientation. However, it necessitates
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44 business owners (artisans in this case) to actively consider social aspects, such as combating poverty,
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46 developing job opportunities and caring about labour rights (Schinzel, 2018).
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50 Lastly, and similar to other entrepreneurs, the addressed artisans invest considerable effort and time in
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52 scanning their business environment (Rashid & Ratten, 2020), deciding who they should target and using
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54 social networks to create and maintain contacts with buyers, suppliers, government representatives, social
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56 activists, consumers and employees (Urbano et al., 2019).
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6. Implications

6.1 Theoretical contributions

The first theoretical contribution lies in empirically identifying the following three themes or motives for artisan entrepreneurs to act responsibly: autonomy (the authority artisans exercise in managing their businesses; preserving socio-cultural identity is an artisan's main duty; proving an individual competency in implementing society-related priorities), competence (adhering to generally accepted business practices; simplicity of developing and maintaining the social agenda of artisan enterprises; meeting the clients' desire in exercising a social awareness) and relatedness (returning social favours; necessitating involvement with different stakeholders; contributing to the common good). It is worth highlighting that the notion of responsible leadership consists of the following four dimensions: stakeholder engagement, aggregation of virtuousness, ethical orientation, and practices aimed at promoting the common good (Argandona, 1998; Maak, 2007; Antunes & Franco, 2016; Mousa, 2018). Accordingly, the nature of the work of artisan entrepreneurs entails intentionally or unintentionally implementing the four dimensions of responsible leadership. The findings have expanded the scope of self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), which is often used to explain why individuals (artisans in this case) might feel motivated to devote time and effort to some activities. The use of this theory has previously been limited to exploring why individuals might engage in traditional entrepreneurship activities (Atarah et al., 2023).

The second theoretical contribution lies in advancing the scope of stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) to include artisan enterprises. This theory highlights that organisations have to meet the expectations of all stakeholders not just shareholders who always seek to maximise their profits (Freeman, 1984; Argandona, 1998; Maak, 2007). It is worth highlighting that all previous studies on stakeholder theory have occurred in the context of public organisations and multinational corporations. In the present paper, we prove that micro and small and medium-sized artisan enterprises, characterised by limited financial budget, inadequate planning skills and lack of a detailed business model, are also required to exhibit a level of responsibility,

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3 even if it is limited, and seek to play a social role. Hence, we expand the scope of this theory to include
4 enterprises that mostly work from rural areas producing handcrafted goods.
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8 The third contribution lies in stressing the importance of social exchange theory in organising the
9 relationship between artisans and their society. Due to the nature of artisan enterprises, artisans usually act
10 as founder, manager, coordinator and leader (Hoyte, 2019; Ferreira et al., 2019). Accordingly, artisans, like
11 other people, prefer to employ the give-and-take principle in sustaining the exchange process with the
12 surrounding community and country (i.e., all stakeholders) (Blau, 1964; Cook & Emerson, 1978). In
13 particular, artisans in Egypt find their country supports them with consultations, advice, exhibitions, fairs
14 and loans (Mahmood, 2022). In return, the artisans act responsibly and show a commitment to the common
15 good of their society. Consequently, we can show that the give-and-take principle controls the interactions
16 between the country and artisan enterprises.
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27 6.2 Practical implications

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30 Given the findings of the present paper, which empirically proves that artisan entrepreneurs have the
31 intention and readiness to act as responsible leaders, we propose the following. First, artisan entrepreneurs
32 should start a collaboration with the government in Egypt (particularly the ministry of environment, the
33 ministry of commerce and the ministry of industry) in order to determine which common-good areas they
34 can contribute to and how. Such contributions might differ across provinces. Moreover, the contributions
35 might involve training unemployed young individuals to work in artisanal enterprises, donating an annual
36 sum of money to civil society organisations, among others. Second, artisan entrepreneurs could follow
37 artisans in Western countries, such as Spain, Greece, France, Canada, the UK and USA, to see what they
38 do to ensure the social betterment of their community. This even might be expanded to observe the ethical
39 practices such countries implement. Third, given their readiness to act as responsible leaders, artisans in
40 Egypt might consider launching the “green artisanal entrepreneurship era”. This might involve increasing
41 the environmental awareness of their staff and mostly depending on green supplies or resources or deal
42 with suppliers who show a commitment to their environment. Furthermore, they might actively decrease
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any activity that causes pollution for their surrounding environment. Fourth, artisans might use social media to launch a campaign entitled: What do people in Egypt expect from artisans? This campaign might help artisans identify the social roles their stakeholders expect of them and how they should act to ensure them.

7. Limitations and future research

Despite the significance of the topic, the originality of the research idea and novelty of the context, the paper has the following limitations. First, focusing on the opinions of artisans who work in only four artisanal activities despite there being many more artisan industries in Egypt is a major limitation of this study. Second, overlooking the viewpoints of social activists and government representatives who might report on the financial support artisans receive to activate their socially responsible agenda is a second limitation. Our findings here open several avenues for future exploration. First, the perception of social and environmental activists should be explored in order to decide what might help empower the social role of artisanal entrepreneurs in ensuring the common good. Second, interested scholars might also explore what barriers artisans might face in their socio-cultural and ethical commitment to the surrounding society.

8. Conclusion

This paper contributes to the growing dialogue on artisan entrepreneurship and addresses the motives artisans can rely on to activate their socially responsible agenda. In doing so, the authors identified the following three themes: autonomy (the authority artisans exercise in managing their businesses; preserving socio-cultural identity is an artisan's main duty; proving an individual competency in implementing society-related priorities), competence (adhering to generally accepted business practices; simplicity of developing and maintaining the social agenda of artisan enterprises; meeting the clients' desire in exercising a social awareness) and relatedness (returning social favours; necessitating involvement with different stakeholders; contributing to the common

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3 good). and considered them as main motives behind artisans' engagement in responsible
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5 behaviour.
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38 Table 1. Data on the respondents – field of activity, interview code, enterprise, education and interview
39 duration
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N	Artisan enterprise	Code	No. of employees	Position of respondent	Education of respondent	Duration of the interview	Date of the interview
1	Carpet	C1	8	Founder	Average	42	14/06/2023
2	Carpet	C2	6	Founder	Average	43	14/06/2023
3	Carpet	C3	12	Founder	Average	42	14/06/2023

4	Carpet	C4	12	Founder	Average	50	17/06/2023
5	Carpet	C5	12	Founder	Average	55	17/06/2023
6	Carpet	C6	6	Founder	Average	41	19/06/2023
7	Carpet	C7	6	Founder	Average	42	19/06/2023
8	Carpet	C8	12	Founder	Average	44	20/06/2023
9	Dress	D9	12	Founder	Bachelor	42	20/06/2023
10	Dress	D10	20	Founder	Bachelor	47	21/06/2023
11	Dress	D11	20	Founder	Bachelor	42	21/06/2023
12	Dress	D12	30	Co-founder	Bachelor	51	22/06/2023
13	Dress	D13	30	Co-founder	Bachelor	52	22/06/2023
14	Dress	D14	32	Co-founder	Bachelor	55	23/06/2023
15	Dress	D15	32	Co-founder	Average	51	23/06/2023
16	Dress	D16	32	Co-founder	Average	51	26/06/2023
17	Dress	D17	16	Founder	Average	41	04/07/2023
18	Dress	D18	16	Founder	No education	40	04/07/2023
19	Dress	D19	14	Founder	Average	41	10/07/2023
20	Dress	D20	16	Founder	Average	44	11/07/2023
21	Papyrus	P21	4	Founder	Bachelor	51	02/07/2023
22	Papyrus	P22	6	Founder	Bachelor	51	02/07/2023

23	Papyrus	P23	6	Founder	Bachelor	51	03/07/2023
24	Papyrus	P24	6	Founder	Average	52	03/07/2023
25	Copper sculpture	S25	4	Founder	Average	41	10/07/2023
26	Copper sculpture	S26	4	Founder	No education	41	10/07/2023
27	Copper sculpture	S27	5	Founder	Average	42	11/07/2023
28	Copper sculpture	S28	3	Founder	No education	42	11/07/2023
29	Copper sculpture	S29	3	Founder	Average	41	12/07/2023
30	Copper sculpture	S30	3	Founder	No education	40	12/07/2023

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