



**THE PROFILE OF HANDICRAFT SHOPS IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF THE  
CITY OF DIAMANTINA - MG**

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**SUMMARY**

This article is the result of a teaching and research project carried out by students in the Administration discipline of the Information Systems course at a federal university in Minas Gerais, whose objective was to outline a profile of handicraft stores in the central region of Diamantina-MG. The research of a quantitative nature has a qualitative approach in its analyzes and, as for the object of study, the investigation took place through non-probabilistic sampling, offering excellent estimates of the studied population.

**Key words:** management, handicrafts, enterprises, income, Diamantina;

**INTRODUCTION**

This article aims to present the results of the research carried out by undergraduate students of the Administration II discipline, from July to September 2017, of the Information

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Systems course at a federal university, in the state of Minas Gerais, presenting the profile of the stores of handicrafts from the central region of the city of Diamantina - MG. As in the first and second semesters of the year 2016, in which students of the same course and discipline, carried out researches elaborating profiles of workers and managers of individual microentrepreneurs - MEI of the sector of bars, restaurants, cafeterias and similar in the region of Diamantina-MG, the objective of the research now presented is to outline the profile of these enterprises that sell local handicrafts.

The justification for the clipping of the central region is due to the fact that it is a tourist spot and includes most establishments of this nature. The costs and the short time available for the research were also considered, being necessary to respect the academic semester to execute the Administration II discipline, from which the project originated. Thirteen (13) establishments were invited to participate in the research, of which ten (10) agreed to participate and three (3) did not obtain a return on participation. Of these, ten (10) workers, between owners and employees, answered the questionnaires.

The research is an integral part of the extension project “Observatory of Labor and Diamantina Workers - OTTD”, a website still under construction, which will deal with the dissemination and debate of the forms, conditions and working relationships diagnosed in the city and, which should cover other locations and districts that are part of the Alto Jequitinhonha region. The website will feature, every six months, new scientific publications, in digital magazine format about the mentioned object, developed by students of the Administration II discipline, from the Information Systems course. These students are in contact with administrative theories that aim to support the development of technical, human and conceptual skills to improve the management decision-making process, such as: planning, organization, direction, execution and control.

When given the task of having to collect quantitative data and, through them, carry out qualitative analyzes on the local social reality, without the intention of exhausting the subject, it is expected to provide the discipline student with an environment in which the strategies for the production of knowledge are dialogical, and that put them in direct contact with the lived reality, consisting of workers, micro, small and medium entrepreneurs. Students are expected to test their acquired skills in a critical manner, reflecting their education and the effective historical possibilities of exercising citizenship. In addition, they promote the dissemination of the results obtained through the magazine, which will also have its printed version, so that it can be delivered by hand to the research participants, especially those who do not have

internet access. This whole process is supervised by the teacher responsible for the discipline.

## **PROBLEMATIZATION, THEORETICAL AND JUSTIFICATION BASIS FOR RESEARCH**

Handicraft is the product resulting from the transformation of the raw material, with manual predominance, by an individual who has full mastery of one or more previously considered techniques, combining creativity, skill and cultural value, and limited assistance may occur in the process of their activity. of machines, tools, artifacts and utensils (BRASIL, 2012, p. 11). Digby (2007) emphasizes that this activity, originating from the execution of the hands, must be done with sensitivity, skill and care.

According to some authors, (ILLUSTRATUS, 2010; apud COSTA, 2012), the first artisans emerged in the Neolithic period (6,000 BC) when man learned to polish the stone, to manufacture ceramics and to weave animal and vegetable fibers . In Brazil, handicrafts also appeared during this period. The Indians are considered to be the oldest artisans. They used the art of painting, using natural pigments, basketry and ceramics, not to mention feather art such as headdresses, thongs and other garments made with feathers and bird feathers.

According to Pereira (1991), handicraft arises with the need of man to supply physical and spiritual needs, ranging from simple ceramics to cook food to sophisticated ritual adornments. And although these needs are common to almost all peoples, their solutions and forms vary widely, depending on the influence of the geo-environmental configuration on resident communities and the specificity of their cultures (DAMANTE, 1980; MEGALE, 2003; SILVA and VIDAL, 1995; VERGARA and SILVA, 2007; apud HEMZO et al, 2011).

Handicrafts can be erudite, popular and folk, and can be manifested in various ways, such as ceramics and pieces of utilitarian clay, braids and fabrics made of vegetable and animal fibers (silk), lace, wood carving, sculptures, crochet, baskets and braids, indigenous crafts, among others. Brazilian handicrafts are one of the richest in the world and guarantee the livelihood of many families and communities. Moraes (2010) concludes that handicrafts raise the potential for income generation in Brazil. This area is positioned as a promoter of territorial development, thus gaining economic notoriety both in the private and public sectors. The search for originality and differentiation, makes handicrafts hinder the path contrary to the standardization of globalized products, rescuing the regional and cultural identity.

The Jequitinhonha Valley is a region, located basically in the northeast of the state of Minas Gerais, with 79 thousand km<sup>2</sup>, a population of approximately 980 thousand inhabitants, comprising 74 municipalities. Although constituted by cultural and environmental wealth, Vale do Jequitinhonha, presents a socio-geographical infrastructure with high levels of poverty and malnutrition, being thus considered as a “depressed” region. Ribeiro (1996) concludes that poverty and misery are inherent factors in the last centuries of its population. He states that in the middle of the 18th century, the Valley was a region rich in mineral resources. Poverty began to show signs from the second half of the 20th century. Oliveira (2007) explains that handicrafts stimulate Local Development, in a way that enhances the insertion of stagnant or underdeveloped areas,

Artisanal production from the Vale, which includes the high, medium and low Jequitinhonha, characterized by the mapping carried out by Codevale (1970, p. 117 - 118, apud RAMALHO, 2010, p. 45), identified the activities of weaving, cooperage, tin, jewelery, leather, stone and vegetable products. It was also found that production increased in the municipalities of Berilo, Chapada do Norte, Diamantina, Minas Novas, Rio Pardo, Rubim and Virgem da Lapa.

According to Santos (2004), despite the performance of several cities in the artisanal process, the activity has decreased, since the younger generation has no interest in learning about this type of art, which threatens the continuity of local crafts. The city of Diamantina presents a varied handicraft. In its districts, various types of products are produced: in Planalto de Minas straw crafts are made using maize straw as material, in the village of Galheiros crafts are made from *Semper-Vivas*, artisans work from the plant harvest process until the final product is finished. There is also, in Diamantina, the manufacture of oratories made of different materials that is very popular due to the Catholic tradition, the Arraiolo Rug, an embroidery of Portuguese origin,

In view of this scenario, the justification for conducting this research has defined socioeconomic and academic aspects. With regard to the first aspect, the research is supported by studies by the Regional Coordination for the Environment of the Jequitinhonha and Mucuri River Basins, which identified that with the prohibition of mining for about twenty-seven (27) years for environmental reasons, the economy of the region was severely affected, with handicrafts becoming more consistent with family income. According to Ramalho (2010) the handicrafts made in the Jequitinhonha Valley are one of the cultural activities that contribute economically to the community of artisans. In your research, the author reported

that the fairs were composed of artisans who sold their own work and middlemen who resold parts. Vale's artisans also participate in renowned and relevant fairs, thus reaching not only the public in the region.

Still according to the work carried out by Codevale (1970, p. 116, apud RAMALHO, 2010, p. 44), handicraft is an activity prior to industrial and which does not depend exclusively on infrastructure, and should be encouraged to benefit the strength of labor, since it has raw materials found in the region at low or no cost. And because it is an activity that generates income for a short period, it should receive incentives such as: the exchange of techniques and processes between producers, strengthening individual potential; foster creative and technology processes; stimulate the fixation of man in the region; and take care of setting up craft centers.

The second aspect is based on the scientific investigation process, as it is necessary to consider that, by providing an environment in which the student has the opportunity to deal with the reality experienced, based on a systematized language, whose methodological procedures give him the opportunity for critical reflection and possibilities of social intervention, this broadens your field of vision and the perception of professional performance in the city. Diamantina, is no longer positioned in the student's mind only as a university city, a transitional stage in the construction of professional life, and is now considered an unexplored locus of work and business opportunities.

In the same way, the realization of studies and the discovery of the profiles of the enterprises that work essentially with artisanal pieces, grants the student a perception about the dynamics of the work and the market of this sector.

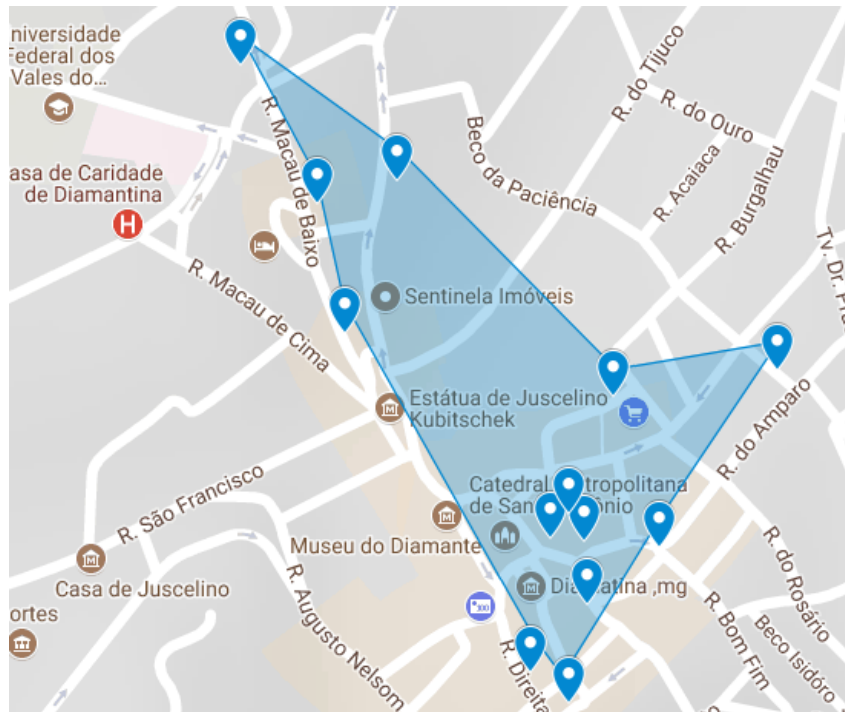
## **RESEARCH AREA CUTTING**

Firstly, an attempt was made to define the sample space of the stores that participated in the research, seeking information, from the Municipal Secretariat for Culture and Tourism - SECTUR, about specific associations, regulatory bodies or organizations related to Diamantinense handicrafts. A list of these enterprises was made available to the project team by SECTUR, which was found to be out of date. Thus, an on-site search for establishments was carried out to validate those that still remain in operation, reaching a total of thirteen (13) collated enterprises.

The cut of the worked area was made from the address of the stores listed by

SECTUR, verifying that most of the projects are located in the central region of the city of Diamantina-MG.

**Figure 1 - Cut out the research area**



Source: (Google MyMaps)

## METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The research presented here has a quantitative nature with a qualitative approach in its analyzes. Its purpose was to formulate the profile of the enterprises in the handicraft sector, the handicraft stores, in the central area of the city of Diamantina, Minas Gerais. Thus, as for the object of study, the investigation was based on a non-probabilistic sample. According to Malhotra (2001 apud OLIVEIRA, 2011, p. 32), this technique is based on criteria based on the personal judgment of the researcher who must select the elements included in the sample. Non-probabilistic samples "can offer good estimates of the characteristics of the population" studied, but these should not be designed for the entire population. In this case, the geographic cut established is due to the fact that in the historic center of the city, most tourist activities are concentrated and, also, due to the short time available for carrying out the work, which prevents the objective increase in the scope of the investigation. In addition to the geographic cut, the choice of establishments that participated in the research was based on a list drawn up

by the work team, based on data obtained from the city's Municipal Department of Culture and Tourism, with the support of the Google Maps website, on which other craft stores were found in the region mentioned.

The list needed to be validated by the team members, who had to check the on-site addresses of the establishments to make sure that they were operational. Thus, from a universe of thirteen (13) identified stores, ten (10) craft stores were validated to participate in the survey.

The research is also classified as descriptive, because according to (Gil, 2002), this technique describes the characteristics of a given population or phenomenon whose results should serve as a basis for future explanations. It aims to observe, record, analyze, classify and interpret the facts without influencing the researcher.

The quantitative element of the research occurs, according to Richardson (1999, apud OLIVEIRA, 2011, p.26) for the quantification in the collection of information and for the statistical treatment of the analyzes. Thus the sample results are quantified and generalized. The data generated after the surveys were carried out supported the subsequent qualitative analyzes.

“[...] the qualitative approach works on data seeking its meaning, based on the perception of the phenomenon within its context. The use of qualitative description seeks to capture not only the appearance of the phenomenon but also its essence, trying to explain its origin, relationships and changes, and trying to intuit the consequences. [...]”(OLIVEIRA, 2011, p.25).

The techniques of data collection occurred through bibliographic research and questionnaire. According to (GIL, 2007) the bibliographic investigation consists of collecting information on the subject under study, previously published. Fonseca (2002) adds that the bibliographic research is made from the survey of theoretical references already analyzed, and published by written and electronic means, such as books, scientific articles, web pages. The objective is to raise the current theoretical debate on the topic, which was identified that, in relation to handicrafts, especially the handicrafts of the Valleys of Jequitinhonha and Mucuri, research is still very incipient and difficult to be found.

The other technique used, the questionnaire, consists of questions that aim to provide the researcher with certain knowledge. Santos, (1999) details that this tool seeks information directly with an interest group regarding the data that one wishes to obtain, demonstrating to be a useful procedure that fits the purpose initially outlined. Thus, the questionnaire was

elaborated, the application technique was decided, which was in person, the data tabulation and finally analysis and interpretation of the material, with the support of descriptive statistics. This technique, which exposes organized information from a set of data, in syntheses supported by graphs and tables, facilitates the analysis and possible problem solving (MAGALHÃES, 2009).

## **DATA STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

It can be considered that the handicraft market, in the central region of Diamantina, is traditional since there are stores with up to sixty (60) years of existence, which was the scene of soap operas, documentaries and, on the other hand, articulates in this space, stores recently inaugurated, with only one year of existence. Excluding the oldest and the most recent, it can be said that the average time of existence of the stores surveyed is around twenty-five (25) years.

It can be seen that forty percent (40%) of stores, in addition to working with handicrafts, seek to resize their income with other types of products. In the research, stores were found that have jewelry, varieties of shoes, as well as everyday clothes such as pants and industrial blouses.

On average sixty percent (60%) of the owners of the establishments said they were artisans. It was also noted that most owners have both technical and practical knowledge of the type of product they sell.

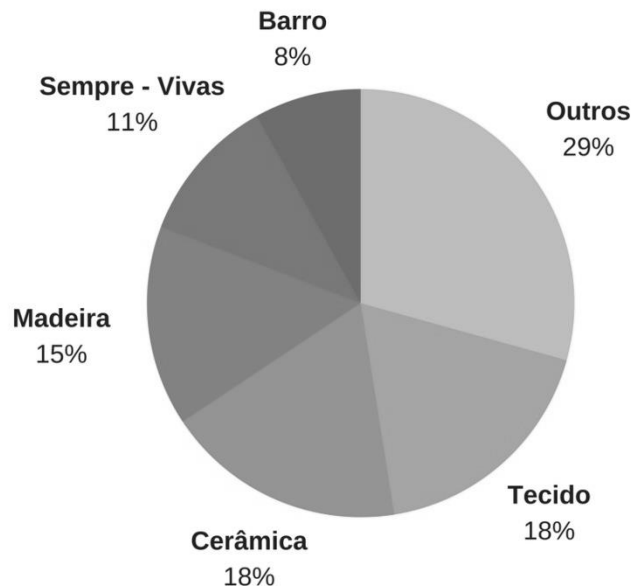
It is evident that sixty percent (60%) of artisanal pieces are own productions and forty percent (40%) come from other locations. Although traditional, today, in the artisanal trade of Diamantina, you can find a variety of works from other regions, in addition to your own productions. Most of the products come from cities such as Araçuaí, Tourmaline and Belo Horizonte. Diamantina for being characterized as a tourist city, it can be considered an important pole of commercialization of the handicrafts of the High, Medium and Low Jequitinhonha, facilitating, promoting and promoting the various types of products.

As mentioned, the handicraft market in Diamantina has several types of handicrafts, but the works made with ceramics and fabrics are the most commercialized types in the region. It is important to highlight in the graph what is characterized as “Others” with twenty-nine percent (29%). It means the types of handicrafts that were mentioned only once, that is, they do not appear in all ventures, but that shows the variety of pieces that can be found in the



city.

**Graph 1: Distribution of types of handicrafts sold, year 2017.**



Source: (Own authorship)

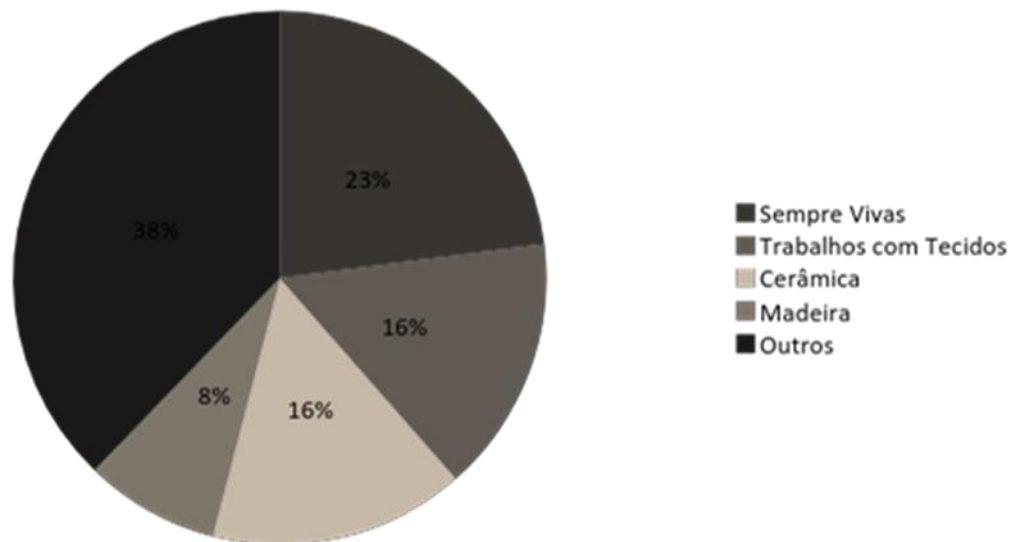
Although there is a predominant offer of handicrafts made with fabrics and ceramics, the pieces that have the greatest demand are those produced with Semper Vivas. This fact can be explained by the fact that Diamantina is considered one of the largest centers of biological diversity in Brazil, with several state parks in its surroundings, due to its high degree of endemism, that is, the existence of several species that only occur in this region, such as Semper Vivas and Capim Dourado. According to the Estrada Real Institute, Semper Vivas, a plant characteristic of the cerrado, is used in the municipality for the production of handicrafts through a solidarity project to generate income, which also helps to preserve some plant species that were threatened with extinction due to predatory exploitation. The work is carried out by the Associação de Artesãos Semper Viva, in the district of Galheiros, which is mostly composed of women. They represent twenty (20) of the twenty-nine (29) members, according to the Estado de Minas newspaper<sup>10</sup>.

Thus, it can be said that the work of these artisans in plant extraction, based on sustainable management techniques, derived from popular wisdom and passed on from generation to

<sup>10</sup>Decent life from Semper - Viva. State of Minas, August 31, 2016 edition.

generation, has contributed significantly to the environmental preservation of these places. Again, the chart highlights what is characterized as “Others” thirty-eight percent (38%), which means the types of handicrafts most sold that were mentioned only once, that is, they do not appear in all ventures.

**Graph 2: Distribution of the most sold types of handicrafts in Diamantina, year 2017**



Source: (Own authorship)

It was found that most of the artisanal production comes from Vale, Alto, Médio and Baixo Jequitinhonha. This fact is still corroborated by the mapping carried out by Codevale (1970, p. 117 - 118, apud RAMALHO, 2010, p. 45), which stated that most of the artisanal production came from the Valley, since some materials such as ceramics, for example, are not found in the Diamantina region. It is noteworthy that the fourteen percent (14%) identified as “does not receive” in the graph below, means the number of enterprises that work only with their own crafts.

**Graph 3: Distribution of handicraft suppliers to the stores in the center of Diamantina, year 2017.**

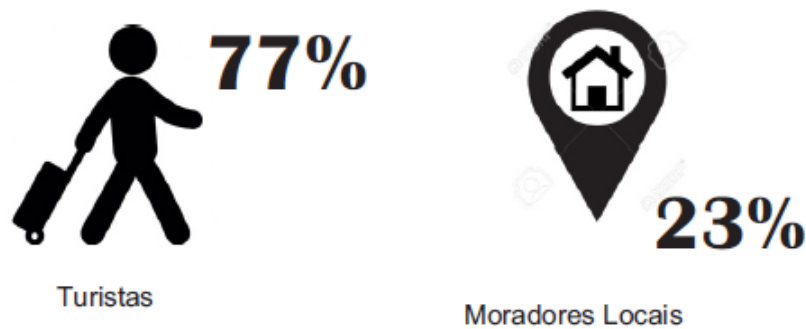


Source: (Own authorship)

The merchants, in their entirety, confirmed the importance of promoting tourism, and the arrival of tourists to obtain a positive dynamic in the artisanal economy in the city and

region. In addition to being recognized as a Cultural Heritage of Humanity, Diamantina has a vast cultural calendar, with well-known Vesperates, Festivals, Cultural and Gastronomic Contests. Such tourist dynamics creates a heated market for sales of handcrafted products.

**Graph 4: Distribution of Customer Profiles at craft stores, year 2017.**



Source: (own authorship)

Most stores, eighty percent (80%), do not supply their products for resale, limiting their trade to retail only, their stock ends up destined for local tourist trade. It can be said that the nature of the business, which is essentially manual and therefore of low standardization, both in processes and in products, makes it impossible to produce on a larger scale to serve other markets.

It was also found that in almost all the number of store employees belong to the female gender, eighteen (18) women, against one man, a fact that corroborates with data from previous research indicating that the vast majority of handicrafts are practiced. made by women<sup>11</sup>. The age of employees varies from eighteen (18) to more than sixty years (60), which demonstrates that the sector, although characterized as traditional, is capable of articulating and employing several generations.

About ninety-four (94%) of the employees are artisans. This is because the owner, a craftsman, ends up teaching his employees some techniques that contribute to increasing the replacement of certain pieces that were sold.

The survey also shows that fifty percent (50%) of employees and artisans have completed high school and one hundred percent (100%) of respondents have at least

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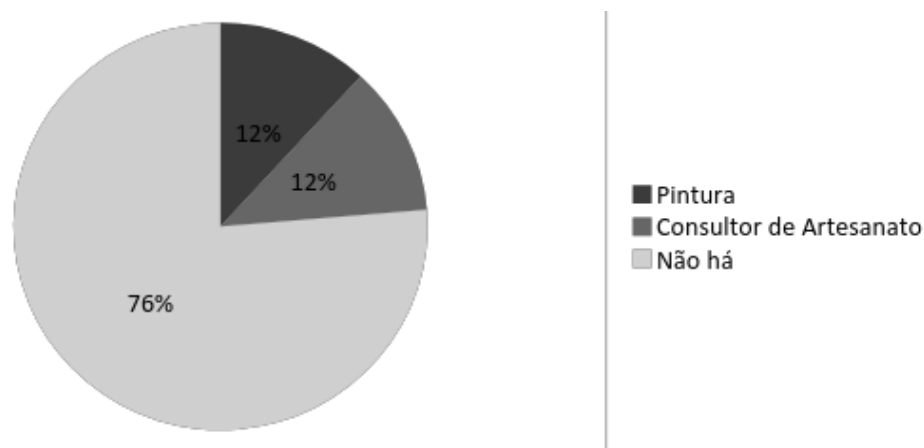
<sup>11</sup>Source: [http://actacientifica.servicioit.cl/biblioteca/gt/GT1/GT1\\_RibasBernardesTomeSabino.pdf](http://actacientifica.servicioit.cl/biblioteca/gt/GT1/GT1_RibasBernardesTomeSabino.pdf). Accessed on: Aug 18, 2017.

completed elementary school. On the other hand, no person with complete higher education was found, only current students, fifteen percent (15%) since the city of Diamantina is home to a university campus.

Regarding the average salary of employees, it was found that wages are low. We found people who received less than a minimum wage, 67% of the total, and that, in this case, the activity works as a significant addition to income. Thirty-three percent (33%) perceive wages between one and two minimum wages.

Seventy-six percent (76%) of stores do not have any craftsman or employee with specific formal qualifications to control the quality of the finish of handcrafted pieces or to develop innovative designs. This is done based on the knowledge learned, passed on from generation to generation.

**Graph 5: Distribution of employees' technical qualifications.**



Source: (Own authorship)

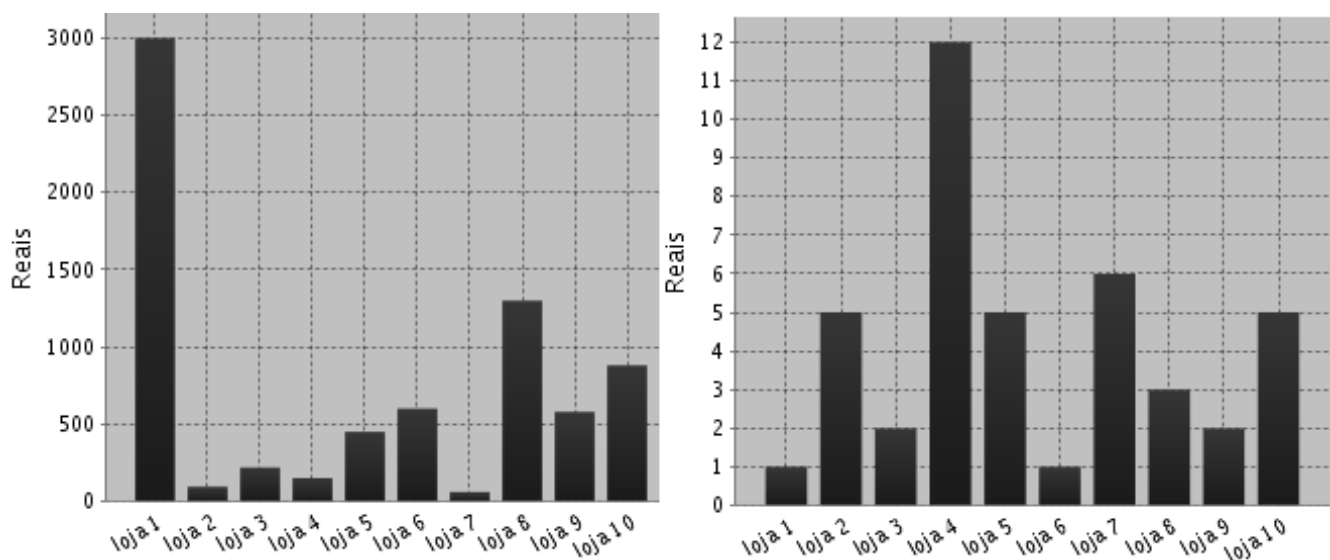
Based on the companies of the MEI category (Individual Microentrepreneur) to create the annual income scale, we obtain that the vast majority of the enterprises fit in the income of the MEI, with a few exceptions. But it is noteworthy that stores that have an annual income greater than twenty-four thousand reais (R \$ 24 thousand) do not work exclusively with handicrafts and only these pay rent for the establishment, with rentals of one thousand reais (R \$ 1,000.00) up to three thousand reais (R \$ 3,000.00). It was verified that the number of commercial points, owned or rented, are balanced, remembering that stores that work exclusively with artisanal products own the properties of the establishments.

As observed in most questionnaires, practically all stores do not receive support, help or incentives from any government or association. Thus, the construction of artisanal

commerce in the city is basically due to the promotion of private initiative. Even though it is a historic city, with great tourist attraction, it was reported, by practically all stores, the little investment and appreciation of the local artisan culture, without an intensive and well-known public policy that supports this sector in the city. Only one enterprise reported the existence of an associative organization that promotes handicrafts in its space, which was identified by the research within the Department of Culture and Tourism. For this reason, a section has been dedicated in this article on the mentioned association, by virtue of its specific and differentiated characterization. An interview was recorded with the person in charge of the store, who signed the Free and Informed Consent Form, so that it could later be transcribed and analyzed.

It was also observed that the stores present pieces whose sales values range from one real (R \$ 1.00) to three thousand reais (R \$ 3000.00), revealing themselves to be true works of art, reflecting the wealth and great variety types of handicrafts present in the Jequitinhonha Valleys.

**Graph 6: products of maximum and minimum value found in craft stores in the center of the municipality of Diamantina, year 2017**



Source: (own authorship)

### **ASSART Diamantina - Association of Artisans and Earth Art**

ASSART- Association of Artisans and Earth Art, currently has more than seventy (70) members in its records. When it appeared, it had a smaller group of ten (10) artisans.

However, of those there are only six (6) remaining since its foundation. However, other producers sought out these organizations interested in linking up and making their creations available.

As they did not have an environment to exhibit what they produced, artisanal producers, in 2003, offered them on Rua da Quitanda, in the city center. At that time, they organized themselves only as a group of artisans and not as an association. With the support of the city hall, at first these workers occupied the basement of the building of the Secretariat of Culture and Tourism, coming in the future to occupy the place where they are today, inside a side room, in the entrance hall of the same building.

This speech, given by Mrs. Dicinéia Maria, President of ASSART, explains what those moments were:

“[...] it was a craftsman helping the other [...]”

On December 2, two thousand and five, the group of artisans became ASSART DIAMANTINA. The location allows small artisans in the city and districts to display their products for sale. Among the associated districts, those of Galheiros and Planalto de Minas stand out, which have other associations within these locations, operating decentrally, however linked to ASSART. The association also supports producers in the districts of Inhaí and Senador Mourão.

The making of handicrafts takes place in the places where the artisans reside. The acquisition of materials and the investment for the continuity of production depend exclusively on the artisan's own income. According to the president of ASSART

“[...] the association has already asked for funds to help with the production of handicrafts, but so far it has not been granted [...]”

According to one of the associated artisans, present at the time of the interview with the ASSART president, who did not want to be identified in the survey:

“[...] Our greatest difficulty is that some resources for the manufacture of handicrafts are not found in Diamantina [...]”

Artisans use raw materials such as newspapers, magazines, clay, clay, straw, gourd, demolition wood, and are always alive; they make arraiolos rugs, crochet, cross stitch embroidery; using techniques that do not involve any automation, they are done manually.

Finally, it was questioned whether the association charges fees to those interested in joining, being informed that artisans pay a monthly fee in the amount of fifteen reais (R \$ 15) and another ten percent (10%) that is levied on the value of each product sold. The amounts

received subsidize expenses with the maintenance of all the necessary contribution to ASSART.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The research, now presented, had the purpose of elaborating the profile of the enterprises of the handicraft sector, the handicraft stores, of the central area of the city of Diamantina, Minas Gerais.

The results highlight crafts as a craft that allows artisans to complement their family income. It is stated that in the Jequitinhonha Valley this activity contributes economically to the artisan community. In the city of Diamantina in the same way, the articles produced are disseminated to the population, local residents or tourists, through handicraft stores or popular weekly fairs, where they sell what is produced throughout the region.

When approaching this theme, one can observe how much remains to be explored on the subject, notably with regard to the specific demands for an optimal management of artisanal production and its proper promotion and distribution. It is necessary to better understand the conditions of these workers in order to be able to propose public policies that are effectively effective. However, due to the short time available for this project combined with the breadth of the work field, it was considered essential to delimit the objects of analysis as previously exposed. However, there is a glimpse of the opportunity for new investigations to take place from other perspectives, highlighting other nuances in continuity with the purpose of this work, a moment where several points may be further explored.

With the purpose of demonstrating the credibility and commitment of the creators of the research to the enterprises that sell handicrafts, research participants, the research results systematized in an article, will be forwarded to the owners of the commercial establishments involved as a way of thanking and recognizing the support provided. .

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