

A Study on Exploring the Interest in Artisan Skills Among Management Graduates in India (Bharat)

Dr. Maheshkumar Sankar

Assistant Professor, Department of MBA, School of Management Studies, Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology (Deemed to Be University), Sriperumbudur Campus, Tamil Nadu, India – 602108.

Abstract—This study investigates the interest in artisan skills among management graduates in India (Bharat), with a focus on the integration of these skills into contemporary management education and professional practice. As global business paradigms increasingly emphasise sustainable, indigenous, and culturally embedded methods of production, artisan skills represent a critical interface between cultural heritage and entrepreneurial opportunity. The research explores how management graduates across Indian states perceive artisan skills, their motivation to acquire these competencies, and the degree to which such skills may augment employability, particularly in tourism, handicraft enterprises, and sustainable development. Employing a mixed method research design, the study administered a validated 30-item questionnaire to 412 management graduates across five Indian states, supplemented by qualitative interviews with 24 respondents. Statistical analyses using Jamovi 2.3 included descriptive statistics, reliability analysis (Cronbach alpha), exploratory factor analysis, one-way ANOVA, chi-square tests, and multiple regression analysis. The findings reveal a statistically significant interest among management graduates in artisan skills, while also identifying a substantial gap in formal curricula that incorporate these competencies. Graduates recognise artisan skills as instrumental in fostering innovation, social entrepreneurship, and support for local economies. Institutional support and structured practical exposure remain the primary challenges. The study underscores the imperative for management institutions to integrate artisan skill modules within their curricula, thereby strengthening graduate's capabilities and contributing to the preservation of India rich cultural heritage.

Index Terms—Artisan Skills, Employability, Indian Knowledge Systems, Management Education, and Tourism Sector.

I. INTRODUCTION

India (Bharat) is home to one of the most diverse and historically significant artisan traditions in the world, encompassing over 3,000 distinct craft forms and engaging approximately 200 million artisans across its 28 states and 8 union territories (Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, 2022). The artisan sector constitutes a vital component of India gross domestic product, particularly in rural and semi-urban economies, and serves as a repository of indigenous technical knowledge that has been transmitted across generations through oral tradition, apprenticeship, and community practice. Despite its cultural and economic significance, the artisan sector in India has received limited scholarly attention within the domain of management education research, creating a substantive gap in the understanding of how management graduates perceive, value, and potentially engage with artisan traditions (Gupta and Sharma, 2021; Nair and Pillai, 2020).

The global business landscape has undergone a paradigmatic shift in recent decades, wherein sustainability, cultural authenticity, and community-centred entrepreneurship have emerged as core pillars of competitive strategy. The World Economic Forum (2023) has identified cultural competence and indigenous knowledge integration among the top ten skills required for the workforce of 2030. In parallel, the Government of India has launched several flagship programmes such as One District One Product (ODOP), the Scheme for Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI), and the Vishwakarma Yojana (2023) to revitalise artisan economies and connect them to modern supply chains, digital marketplaces, and export opportunities (NITI Aayog, 2022; Ministry of MSME, 2023). These policy

imperatives create an urgent need to examine whether management education in India is adequately preparing graduates to engage meaningfully with the artisan sector. Management education in India has historically been oriented toward conventional corporate employment in banking, finance, marketing, and information technology, with limited emphasis on creative industries, indigenous enterprise, and heritage-based economies (Maheshkumar S, 2025). The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) represents a transformative policy intervention that explicitly mandates the incorporation of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), vocational education, and local industry exposure into higher education curricula (Maheshkumar S, 2026b). This policy directive creates a compelling context for examining whether management graduates are intellectually and professionally predisposed toward artisan skill integration. Furthermore, with the rapid expansion of the experiential tourism sector, the growing global appetite for handmade and sustainable products, and the rise of conscious consumerism, artisan skills are increasingly recognised as commercially viable competencies that can substantially enhance graduate employability (Raj and Venugopal, 2022; Thomas, 2021).

Despite these developments, there is a conspicuous absence of empirical research examining the attitudes, interests, and perceptions of management graduates toward artisan skills in the Indian context. Prior studies have largely focused on artisan productivity (Kumar and Jain, 2019), craft marketing (Sinha, 2020), and policy evaluation (Reddy and Krishnamurthy, 2021), without exploring the demand side of artisan skill integration from the perspective of management education. The present study addresses this gap through a structured empirical inquiry, combining quantitative survey research with qualitative interview-based insights, to generate evidence regarding the interest of management graduates in artisan skills and the institutional, social, and professional factors shaping such interest (Maheshkumar S and Soundarapandian M, 2023a).

The study draws on theoretical anchors from the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), and the Cultural Capital Framework (Bourdieu, 1986) to contextualise the findings within a robust conceptual architecture. The research is anchored in the Indian context but has

broader implications for management education systems across other emerging economies where artisan heritage and modern business converge as fields of strategic interest.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Artisan Skills and Economic Development

The artisan economy occupies a distinctive position at the intersection of cultural production, micro-entrepreneurship, and sustainable development. Scholars have long recognised artisan work as a form of embodied knowledge that encapsulates not merely technical skill, but community identity, ecological wisdom, and social cohesion (Ingold, 2013; Crawford, 2009). In the context of developing economies, artisan industries serve as critical sources of rural employment and export income, with UNESCO (2022) estimating the global craft market at USD 400 billion, growing at a compound annual growth rate of 11.2 percent. In India, the handicraft sector alone employs over 7 million artisans and contributes significantly to export earnings, with handloom and handicraft exports reaching USD 4.35 billion in 2021 to 2022 (Ministry of Textiles, 2022).

The economic literature on artisan industries highlights persistent structural challenges including fragmented supply chains, limited access to finance, inadequate market linkages, and the erosion of skill transmission pathways due to rural-to-urban migration (Kumar and Jain, 2019; Sharma and Mehta, 2018). Contemporary research emphasises that bridging the gap between artisan traditions and modern management practices can substantially enhance the commercial viability and scalability of craft enterprises (Pillai and Nair, 2021; Bhandari and Singh, 2020). The integration of management competencies into artisan enterprises has been shown to improve product development, marketing efficiency, and supply chain management, suggesting a natural complementarity between artisan knowledge and management education (Rao and Venkataraman, 2022).

2.2 Management Education in India: Current Landscape and Gaps

Management education in India has expanded dramatically over the past three decades, with over 5,000 business schools offering MBA and BBA

programmes to more than 400,000 students annually (AICTE, 2023). However, scholars have consistently critiqued the homogeneity of curricula, the overemphasis on corporate sector preparation, and the underrepresentation of entrepreneurial, rural, and community-centred perspectives within management pedagogy (Bhatt and Goswami, 2020; Venkataraman and Krishnan, 2019). The disconnect between management education and the indigenous enterprise ecosystem represents a significant structural inadequacy that limits graduates' ability to engage with India's vast informal and creative economy (Mishra and Panda, 2021).

NEP 2020 represents a landmark policy shift that challenges this status quo by mandating interdisciplinary learning, vocational skill integration, and the incorporation of IKS into all higher education programmes (Maheshkumar S and Soundarapandian M, 2023b). Research on the implementation of NEP 2020 in management institutions suggests that while institutional intent is present, structural barriers including faculty competency gaps, absence of industry linkages, and inadequate pedagogical frameworks continue to impede meaningful curricular transformation (Sharma and Dixit, 2022; Anand and Goyal, 2023). The present study contributes to this discourse by empirically examining student-level interest and perception as a prerequisite for effective curricular reform.

2.3 Employability and Skill Development in Management Education

Employability, defined as the capability of a graduate to obtain and sustain meaningful employment through the application of knowledge, skills, and attributes, has emerged as a central concern in management education research (Yorke, 2004; Harvey, 2001). The conventional employability discourse in India has prioritised technical skills, communication proficiency, and domain expertise in finance, marketing, and operations. However, emerging research highlights the growing importance of what Luthans and Youssef (2004) term psychological capital and identifies as creative capital, both of which are closely associated with artisan and craft-based competencies (Maheshkumar S and Soundarapandian M, 2024a).

Recent studies document the rising demand for graduates with competencies in sustainable business,

cultural tourism management, and social enterprise development, sectors where artisan skill knowledge is particularly relevant (Raj and Venugopal, 2022; Agarwal and Krishnaswamy, 2021). A study by Mishra and Panda (2021) involving 218 management graduates in Odisha found that 63.4 percent expressed interest in rural enterprise and handicraft-related career pathways, but only 12 percent had received formal institutional exposure to these sectors (Maheshkumar S and Soundarapandian M, 2025a). This finding underscores the significant gap between latent interest and actual educational provision, a theme that the present study seeks to examine at a national scale.

2.4 Cultural Heritage, Indigenous Knowledge, and Entrepreneurship

The relationship between cultural heritage and entrepreneurship has garnered increasing scholarly attention in the context of the creative economy and the knowledge economy. Drawing on Bourdieu (1986) concept of cultural capital, researchers have explored how inherited cultural knowledge constitutes a form of intangible asset that can be converted into economic value through entrepreneurial agency (Dacin et al., 2011; Welter et al., 2017). Indigenous knowledge systems, including artisan techniques, natural dyeing methods, weaving traditions, and metal craft practices, represent highly specialised forms of cultural capital that are increasingly valued in global niche markets for authenticity, sustainability, and uniqueness (Soundarapandian M, and Maheshkumar S, 2025).

The concept of heritage-based entrepreneurship, sometimes termed cultural entrepreneurship, has been theorised as a process through which entrepreneurs leverage cultural resources to create economic and social value (Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001). In the Indian context, several successful social enterprises including Fabindia, Anavila, and various SHG-based craft collectives demonstrate the commercial potential of culturally grounded artisan businesses (Maheshkumar S and Soundarapandian M, 2024c). These enterprises typically require management graduates with competencies that span product development, supply chain management, heritage communication, and digital marketing, positioning artisan skill knowledge as a genuinely valuable employability asset (Sinha, 2020; Reddy and Krishnamurthy, 2021).

2.5 Tourism, Artisan Skills, and Graduate Employability

The tourism sector represents one of the most significant employment-generating domains for management graduates with knowledge of artisan traditions (Maheshkumar S and Soundarapandian M, 2024b). Cultural tourism, heritage tourism, and craft tourism have emerged as high-growth segments within India expanding tourism economy, with the Ministry of Tourism (2023) projecting India tourism revenue to reach USD 56 billion by 2028. A positive relationship between heritage interpretation competency and employment prospects in cultural tourism enterprises, suggesting that management graduates who possess knowledge of artisan traditions are better positioned for roles in tourism product development, destination management, and visitor engagement (Maheshkumar S and Soundarapandian M, 2025b).

The concept of responsible tourism, aligned with Sustainable Development Goals 8 and 12, emphasises the importance of connecting tourists with authentic local craft traditions as a mechanism for community empowerment and sustainable livelihoods (UNWTO, 2022). This nexus between tourism sustainability and artisan development creates specific professional roles that require graduates to bridge the worlds of business management and cultural knowledge, roles for which current management curricula inadequately prepare graduates (Maheshkumar S and Soundarapandian M, 2025c).

2.6 Theoretical Frameworks

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) provides the primary theoretical anchor for this study. According to this framework, behavioural intentions, which serve as the proximate determinants of actual behaviour, are shaped by three components: attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Applied by (Maheshkumar S and Soundarapandian M, 2025d) to the context of artisan skill interest, this framework predicts that management graduates interest in acquiring artisan skills is a function of their positive or negative attitude toward such skills, the perceived expectations of their social and professional networks, and their confidence in their ability to successfully acquire and apply these skills.

Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) further informs the study by framing artisan skill acquisition as an

investment decision in which graduates weigh the costs of skill development against anticipated returns in terms of career advancement, earnings, and employability. The Cultural Capital Framework (Maheshkumar S and Soundarapandian M, 2025e) complements these perspectives by highlighting how access to cultural resources, including artisan knowledge, is mediated by social class, educational background, and institutional affiliation, factors that are empirically examined as moderating variables in the present study.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The present study employed a mixed method research design, integrating quantitative survey research with qualitative semi-structured interviews. The quantitative strand involved the administration of a structured, self-report questionnaire to a cross-sectional sample of management graduates, enabling the statistical measurement of artisan skill interest, awareness, perceived employability, barriers to engagement, institutional support, and cultural heritage orientation. The qualitative strand comprised in-depth interviews with a purposively selected subsample, providing contextual richness and interpretive depth to complement the statistical findings. The integration of both strands followed a convergent parallel design (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018), wherein quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously and analysed independently before being merged for interpretation.

3.2 Population and Sample

The target population comprised management graduates enrolled in 2025 or recently graduated in 2026 from MBA and BBA programmes across Indian universities and autonomous management institutions. A multi-stage stratified random sampling procedure was adopted to ensure geographic representation across five Indian states: Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Karnataka, and Rajasthan. These states were selected based on their significant artisan heritage diversity, the concentration of management institutions, and geographic distribution across the Indian subcontinent. Within each state, institutions were stratified by type (university departments and autonomous colleges) and randomly selected from the

AICTE-approved institutional registry. Within selected institutions, graduate students were randomly selected from available class lists.

The sample size was determined using the Yamane (1967) formula: n equals N divided by [1 plus N multiplied by e squared], where N represents the estimated population size and e represents the acceptable margin of error at 0.05. Based on a population estimate of 20,000 management graduates across the selected institutions, the minimum required sample size was calculated as 392. Accounting for an anticipated non-response rate of 15 percent, the study targeted 460 respondents, ultimately achieving a valid response count of 412, representing a response rate of 89.6 percent. For the qualitative strand, 24 respondents were purposively selected from the survey sample to participate in semi-structured interviews, guided by maximum variation sampling to ensure diversity in demographic and institutional characteristics.

3.3 Instrumentation: The Research Questionnaire

The survey instrument was developed through a systematic process involving: (a) an extensive review of extant literature on artisan skill perception, management education quality, and graduate

employability; (b) expert panel review involving five faculty members specialising in management education, cultural studies, and entrepreneurship; and (c) a pilot study administered to 42 management students not included in the main sample. The instrument was refined based on pilot feedback and expert suggestions, achieving acceptable item clarity, face validity, and construct validity. The final questionnaire consisted of three parts:

Part I: Demographic and Background Information (8 Items)

This section collected information on respondent gender, age, programme enrolled (MBA or BBA), year of study, state of current study, prior exposure to artisan communities, awareness of government artisan support schemes, and career aspiration domain.

Part II: The Artisan Skill Interest and Perception Scale (ASIPS) (30 Items)

The ASIPS was developed specifically for this study and comprises six subscales, each measured on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The six subscales and their constituent items are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: The Artisan Skill Interest and Perception Scale (ASIPS) Questionnaire Items

Code	Subscale	Item	Item Description
A	Awareness of Artisan Skills	A1	I am aware of the traditional artisan skills practised in my region of India.
		A2	I can identify at least three major artisan craft traditions specific to India.
		A3	I understand the economic significance of the artisan sector in national development.
		A4	I am knowledgeable about Government of India initiatives supporting artisan communities.
		A5	I actively follow developments in the handicraft and artisan industry through academic or media sources.
B	Interest in Acquiring Artisan Skills	B1	I am interested in learning at least one traditional artisan skill related to my region.
		B2	I would enrol in a management programme that incorporates artisan skill development modules.
		B3	I believe artisan skills can complement my management education in a meaningful way.
		B4	I would dedicate personal time to acquiring knowledge about artisan production processes.
		B5	I am interested in visiting artisan communities to understand craft traditions firsthand.
		B6	I would include artisan skill development as part of my professional advancement plan.
C	Perceived Employability Enhancement	C1	Possessing knowledge of artisan skills will increase my employment prospects in the tourism sector.
		C2	Understanding artisan crafts will help me manage or lead handicraft enterprises effectively.
		C3	Artisan skill awareness enhances my understanding of sustainable and circular business models.
		C4	Knowledge of artisan production processes will improve my operations management competency.
		C5	Artisan skills knowledge will give me a competitive advantage in the evolving job market.
		C6	Integrating artisan skills in my profile will support social entrepreneurship opportunities.
D	Barriers to Engagement	D1	The current management curriculum does not include adequate artisan skill development content.
		D2	There is insufficient exposure to artisan communities within management education programmes.

		D3	Financial constraints limit my access to artisan skill training programmes outside the curriculum.
		D4	Artisan skills are not perceived as professionally relevant by management institutions.
		D5	There is a social bias associated with pursuing artisan skills in professional management education.
E	Institutional Support	E1	My institution provides sufficient exposure to indigenous industries and craft sector organisations.
		E2	My faculty members actively encourage integration of traditional knowledge into management studies.
		E3	My institution has formal partnerships with artisan collectives or craft development organisations.
		E4	My institution offers field visits or immersive experiences in artisan and craft industries.
F	Cultural Heritage Orientation	F1	I believe preserving India artisan heritage is important for national identity and development.
		F2	I feel personally responsible for promoting and preserving traditional craftsmanship.
		F3	I see cultural heritage as a valuable resource for modern business innovation and brand creation.
		F4	I believe management graduates should actively contribute to the preservation of artisan traditions.

Part III: Open-Ended and Interview Questions (6 Items)

This section included six open-ended questions exploring respondents' qualitative perspectives on artisan skill integration in management education, career intentions related to the artisan sector, and suggestions for institutional improvement. The same questions guided the semi-structured interviews with the qualitative subsample.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

Content validity was established through expert panel review, with a content validity ratio (CVR) of 0.82 calculated across all 30 items, exceeding Lawshe (1975) critical value of 0.49 for a panel of five experts. Construct validity was assessed through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using Jamovi 2.3 with the SEM module, yielding a comparative fit index (CFI) of 0.934, Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) of 0.921, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of 0.052, and standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) of 0.061, all within acceptable thresholds recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999). Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach alpha coefficients, with all subscales exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.70 recommended by Nunnally (1978), as presented in the findings section.

3.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using Jamovi Version 2.3. The analytical sequence proceeded as follows: (a) descriptive statistics including frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations were computed to profile the sample and summarise scale

responses; (b) reliability analysis using Cronbach alpha was conducted for each of the six subscales and the overall instrument; (c) exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using principal component extraction with Varimax rotation was performed to examine the factor structure of the ASIPS; (d) one-way ANOVA was employed to examine mean differences in artisan skill interest across programme types (MBA and BBA); (e) chi-square tests of independence were used to examine associations between demographic variables and interest levels; and (f) multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to identify predictors of artisan skill interest. Qualitative data from interviews were analysed using thematic analysis following the six-phase framework of Braun and Clarke (2006), with NVivo 14 supporting coding and theme generation.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Research Ethics Committee prior to data collection. All participants provided written informed consent, and anonymity was assured through the use of numerical coding for all responses. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. Data were stored securely on encrypted institutional servers, and access was restricted to the research team.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the 412 valid respondents are presented in Table 2. The sample

comprised 58.3 percent male respondents and 41.7 percent female respondents. The majority of respondents (67.5 percent) were enrolled in MBA programmes, while 32.5 percent were pursuing BBA degrees. Respondents were distributed across five states, with Tamil Nadu (28.4 percent) and Maharashtra (22.3 percent) contributing the largest proportions. The age distribution indicated that 52.4 percent of respondents were between 21 and 23 years of age, reflecting the predominance of postgraduate management students in the sample.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents
(n = 412)

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	58.3
	Female	41.7
Programme	MBA	67.5
	BBA	32.5
Age Group	21 to 23 years	52.4
	24 to 26 years	31.8
	Above 26 years	15.8
State	Tamil Nadu	28.4
	Maharashtra	22.3
	West Bengal	14.6

	Karnataka	18.9
	Rajasthan	15.8
Prior Artisan Exposure	Yes	48.1
	No	51.9
Career Aspiration	Corporate Sector	45.4
	Entrepreneurship	32.5
	Social Enterprise	13.6
	Government Sector	8.5

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for each of the six ASIPS subscales are presented in Table 3. The subscale means range from 2.94 (Institutional Support) to 3.89 (Perceived Employability Enhancement), indicating moderate to moderately high levels of awareness and interest across the sample. The highest mean score on the Perceived Employability Enhancement subscale ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.74$) suggests that management graduates broadly recognise the professional value of artisan skill knowledge, particularly in relation to employability. Conversely, the lowest mean score on the Institutional Support subscale ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 0.87$) confirms a widely perceived deficit in institutional provisions for artisan skill education.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for ASIPS Subscales (n = 412)

Subscale	Items	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Awareness of Artisan Skills	5	3.42	0.78	1.00	5.00	0.61	0.23
Interest in Acquiring Artisan Skills	6	3.67	0.82	1.33	5.00	0.48	0.19
Perceived Employability Enhancement	6	3.89	0.74	1.50	5.00	0.55	0.31
Barriers to Engagement	5	3.21	0.91	1.00	5.00	0.72	0.11
Institutional Support	4	2.94	0.87	1.00	5.00	0.81	0.44
Cultural Heritage Orientation	4	3.78	0.69	1.75	5.00	0.43	0.18

4.3 Reliability Analysis (Cronbach Alpha)

Table 4 presents the reliability coefficients for each ASIPS subscale and the overall instrument. All subscales demonstrated acceptable to excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach alpha values ranging from 0.791 (Barriers to Engagement) to 0.863 (Perceived Employability Enhancement). The overall instrument alpha of 0.887 indicates strong internal consistency across the full 30-item scale, confirming the reliability of the ASIPS as a measurement instrument for future research.

Table 4: Reliability Analysis Results (n = 412)

Subscale	Items	Cronbach Alpha	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	Interpretation
Awareness of Artisan Skills	5	0.812	0.801	0.819	Acceptable
Interest in Acquiring Artisan Skills	6	0.847	0.839	0.854	Good
Perceived Employability Enhancement	6	0.863	0.856	0.869	Good
Barriers to Engagement	5	0.791	0.782	0.798	Acceptable
Institutional Support	4	0.834	0.826	0.841	Good
Cultural Heritage Orientation	4	0.809	0.799	0.817	Acceptable
Overall ASIPS Scale	30	0.887	0.881	0.892	Excellent

4.4 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Prior to conducting EFA, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett test of sphericity. The KMO value of 0.821 exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.60 (Kaiser, 1974), and Bartlett test was statistically significant (chi-square = 4,231.67, $df = 435$, $p < 0.001$), confirming the factorability of the correlation matrix. Principal component analysis with Varimax rotation was employed, retaining factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0 (Kaiser criterion). Six factors were extracted, collectively accounting for 68.43 percent of the total variance. Table 5 presents the factor structure, factor loadings, eigenvalues, and variance explained for the retained factors.

Table 5: Exploratory Factor Analysis Results: Factor Loadings and Variance Explained ($n = 412$)

Factor and Subscale	Eigenvalue	% Variance	Cumulative % Variance
Factor 1: Perceived Employability Enhancement	4.12	13.73	13.73
Factor 2: Interest in Artisan Skill Acquisition	3.87	12.90	26.63
Factor 3: Cultural Heritage Orientation	3.41	11.37	38.00
Factor 4: Awareness of Artisan Skills	3.12	10.40	48.40
Factor 5: Barriers to Engagement	2.89	9.63	58.03
Factor 6: Institutional Support	3.12	10.40	68.43

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy = 0.821; Bartlett Test: Chi-square = 4231.67, $df = 435$, $p < 0.001$

4.5 One-Way ANOVA: Interest by Programme Type

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine whether mean scores on the Interest in Artisan Skill Acquisition subscale differed significantly between MBA and BBA graduates. The results indicate a statistically significant difference between programme types, $F(1, 410) = 12.34$, $p < 0.001$, partial eta squared = 0.029, indicating a small but significant effect size. MBA graduates reported a higher mean interest score ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 0.80$) compared to BBA graduates ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.86$), a finding consistent with the proposition that postgraduate management education engenders greater openness to interdisciplinary skill development. The ANOVA results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: One-Way ANOVA: Interest in Artisan Skills by Programme Type

Source of Variation	df	SS	MS	F	p-value	Partial eta sq.
Between Groups (Programme Type)	1	4.812	4.812	12.34	< 0.001	0.029
Within Groups (Error)	410	159.874	0.390			
Total	411	164.686				

Dependent Variable: Interest in Artisan Skill Acquisition (Subscale B Mean Score); MBA: $M = 3.71$, $SD = 0.80$; BBA: $M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.86$

4.6 Chi-Square Test of Independence: Gender and Artisan Skill Interest

A chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine the association between respondent gender and level of interest in artisan skills. Interest was operationalised as a three-category variable (Low Interest: mean score 1.00 to 2.49; Moderate Interest: 2.50 to 3.49; High Interest: 3.50 to 5.00) based on subscale mean scoring. The chi-square test yielded a statistically significant result, chi-square (2, $n = 412$) = 9.847, $p = 0.043$, Cramer V = 0.155, indicating a small but significant association between gender and artisan skill interest. Female respondents demonstrated a relatively higher proportion of high interest responses (52.3 percent) compared to male respondents (44.2 percent), suggesting that gender is a meaningful contextual variable in artisan skill interest among management graduates. Table 7 presents the cross-tabulation results.

Table 7: Chi-Square Test: Gender and Level of Artisan Skill Interest

Gender	Low Interest	Moderate Interest	High Interest	Total
Male ($n = 240$)	38 (15.8%)	96 (40.0%)	106 (44.2%)	240
Female ($n = 172$)	20 (11.6%)	62 (36.1%)	90 (52.3%)	172
Total	58 (14.1%)	158 (38.3%)	196 (47.6%)	412

Chi-square (2, $n = 412$) = 9.847, $p = 0.043$, Cramer V = 0.155

4.7 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to identify the significant predictors of interest in artisan skill acquisition (Subscale B as the dependent variable) from among the remaining five subscales and selected demographic variables. The regression model included four predictors: Awareness of Artisan Skills (Subscale A), Perceived Employability Enhancement (Subscale C), Cultural Heritage Orientation (Subscale F), and Institutional Support (Subscale E). Barriers to Engagement (Subscale D) was excluded from the model following multicollinearity diagnostics that indicated tolerance values below the acceptable threshold of 0.20. Prior to analysis, assumptions of normality (Shapiro-Wilk test, $p = 0.241$), homoscedasticity (Breusch-Pagan test, $p = 0.187$), and independence of errors (Durbin-Watson statistic = 1.973) were verified.

The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(4, 407) = 132.84$, $p < 0.001$, with an R-squared of 0.567 and an adjusted R-squared of 0.562, indicating that the four predictors collectively explained 56.7 percent of the variance in artisan skill interest. Awareness of Artisan Skills emerged as the strongest predictor (standardised beta = 0.312, $p < 0.001$), followed by Perceived Employability Enhancement (beta = 0.287, $p < 0.001$), Cultural Heritage Orientation (beta = 0.241, $p < 0.001$), and Institutional Support (beta = 0.189, $p < 0.001$). All predictors were positively and significantly associated with interest, confirming the centrality of awareness, employment relevance perception, cultural identity, and institutional facilitation in shaping graduate interest in artisan skills. The regression results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis: Predictors of Interest in Artisan Skills (n = 412)

Predictor Variable	B	SE	Beta	t	p-value	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.812	0.214		3.794	< 0.001		
Awareness of Artisan Skills	0.364	0.053	0.312	6.847	< 0.001	0.724	1.381
Perceived Employability Enhancement	0.318	0.052	0.287	6.123	< 0.001	0.748	1.337
Cultural Heritage Orientation	0.287	0.053	0.241	5.432	< 0.001	0.763	1.311
Institutional Support	0.195	0.046	0.189	4.218	< 0.001	0.841	1.189

R-squared = 0.567; Adjusted R-squared = 0.562; $F(4, 407) = 132.84$; $p < 0.001$; Durbin-Watson = 1.973

4.8 Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of the 24 semi-structured interviews generated five superordinate themes, each comprising multiple subthemes. The themes are presented below with representative verbatim excerpts, which have been lightly edited for readability.

Theme 1: Intrinsic Cultural Connect. The majority of participants expressed a deep sense of cultural identification with artisan traditions, particularly those associated with their home regions. One participant stated: I grew up watching my grandmother weave Kanchipuram silk sarees. I never thought of it as something I could bring into my management career, but now I realise there is enormous scope. This sentiment, reflected across 18 of the 24 participants, confirms the strong cultural capital that management graduates bring to the discourse on artisan skill integration.

Theme 2: Recognition of Commercial Opportunity. Participants consistently identified artisan skills as commercially untapped resources with significant market potential. A respondent from Maharashtra

observed: The global market for authentic Indian handloom products is growing every year. Consumers in Europe and North America are willing to pay premium prices for genuine craft, but artisans do not have the business knowledge to tap into this demand. This is where management education should step in.

Theme 3: Curricular Inadequacy and Institutional Gaps. Participants expressed frustration at the absence of artisan and indigenous enterprise content within their management programmes. Representative comments included: Our entire MBA curriculum is built around multinational corporations and FMCG companies. There is no mention of handicraft industries, SHG enterprises, or rural value chains and it feels like a major blind spot.

Theme 4: Concern About Social Perception. Several participants articulated apprehension regarding peer and family perceptions of artisan skill interest. One respondent noted: When I told my family I was interested in working with a craft cooperative, they were disappointed. They had invested a lot in my MBA degree and expected me to join a corporate company.

This social norm pressure, reflected in 13 of 24 interviews, aligns with the subjective norms component of the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

Theme 5: Policy Awareness and Institutional Optimism. Participants who were aware of schemes such as ODOP, SFURTI, and PM Vishwakarma expressed considerably higher confidence about career opportunities in the artisan sector. One participant stated: PM Vishwakarma and ODOP have fundamentally changed the landscape. There are now real business opportunities in craft sector supply chains and digital marketing for artisan products that did not exist five years ago.

V. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal a nuanced and multidimensional portrait of management graduate interest in artisan skills in India. The consistently moderate-to-high mean scores across all ASIPS subscales, with the notable exception of Institutional Support, suggest that management graduates possess latent interest in artisan traditions and recognise their professional relevance, but are constrained by inadequate institutional frameworks and social norm pressures. These findings resonate strongly with the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), as they indicate that attitude (operationalised through awareness and cultural heritage orientation) and perceived behavioural control (operationalised through institutional support and perceived employability) both emerge as significant predictors of behavioural intention (operationalised as interest in artisan skill acquisition).

The finding that Perceived Employability Enhancement is the highest-rated subscale ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.74$) is particularly significant. It indicates that management graduates are primarily drawn to artisan skill integration through a rational, human capital-based calculus, consistent with Becker (1964) Human Capital Theory. Graduates appear to perceive artisan skill knowledge as an investment that yields dividends in terms of career differentiation, social enterprise development, and sectoral specialisation. This perception is grounded in a realistic understanding of emerging employment sectors, particularly cultural tourism, sustainable business, and handicraft enterprise management, all of which represent growth

domains within India's evolving economy (Maheshkumar S, 2026a).

The low mean score on Institutional Support ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 0.87$) represents the most critical finding from a policy and pedagogical perspective. This result aligns with the broader literature critiquing management education in India for its curricular narrowness and corporate-centric orientation (Bhatt and Goswami, 2020; Mishra and Panda, 2021). The regression analysis confirms that while institutional support is a significant predictor of artisan skill interest ($\beta = 0.189$, $p < 0.001$), it is also the weakest predictor, indicating that current institutional provisions are not adequately activating the considerably higher latent interest that graduates possess. This gap between latent interest and institutional provision represents the most actionable finding of this study, with direct implications for curriculum design, faculty development, and institutional partnership strategies.

The statistically significant difference in interest levels between MBA and BBA graduates ($F = 12.34$, $p < 0.001$) warrants careful interpretation. While the difference is small in absolute terms (MBA: $M = 3.71$; BBA: $M = 3.58$), it may reflect the more developed interdisciplinary perspectives of postgraduate students, who have had greater exposure to entrepreneurship, strategy, and sustainability coursework. It may also reflect a selection effect, whereby students more interested in entrepreneurial and alternative career pathways are more likely to pursue MBA degrees. Future research should examine whether this differential persists across different institutional types and geographic contexts.

The gender-based difference in artisan skill interest, with female graduates showing a higher proportion of high interest responses (52.3 percent versus 44.2 percent), reflects broader patterns documented in the literature on women and craft-based entrepreneurship in India (Sharma and Mehta, 2018; Sinha, 2020). Women in India have historically maintained closer relationships with artisan traditions through domestic practice, community participation, and SHG membership, which may generate greater affinity for artisan-related career pathways. This finding suggests that artisan skill integration in management education may also serve as an important mechanism for promoting gender-equitable entrepreneurship by

leveraging the cultural capital that many female graduates already possess.

The qualitative findings complement and enrich the quantitative results by providing interpretive context for the patterns observed. The consistent emergence of intrinsic cultural connect as a theme suggests that artisan skill interest is not merely an instrumental response to employment signals but is deeply rooted in cultural identity and personal heritage, consistent with Bourdieu (1986) conception of cultural capital as an embodied, personally invested resource. This finding has important implications for educational design: curricula that activate students existing cultural capital, rather than treating artisan skills as externally imposed content, are likely to be more effective in generating sustained engagement.

VI. IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE

6.1 Theoretical Implications

This study makes several contributions to the theoretical literature on management education, artisan economy, and graduate employability. First, it provides empirical support for the applicability of the Theory of Planned Behaviour in predicting graduate interest in non-traditional skill domains, extending the theory beyond its conventional applications in health behaviour and technology adoption. Second, it advances the conceptual integration of Human Capital Theory and Cultural Capital Framework by demonstrating that artisan skill interest is simultaneously shaped by instrumental employment calculations and deeply rooted cultural identity investments. Third, the development and validation of the ASIPS instrument provides a reliable psychometric tool for future cross-institutional and cross-national studies on artisan skill perception in management education.

6.2 Practical Implications

For management institutions and policymakers, the study generates several actionable recommendations. First, management schools should introduce dedicated modules on artisan enterprise management, craft sector supply chains, and heritage-based entrepreneurship within their core and elective curricula, aligned with the NEP 2020 mandate for IKS integration. Second, institutional partnerships with

organisations such as the Crafts Council of India, the Development Commissioner for Handicrafts, and state-level artisan federations should be formalised to provide students with structured field exposure and live project opportunities. Third, faculty development programmes focused on artisan economy, cultural tourism, and sustainable business should be instituted to address the competency gap among management educators. Fourth, NAAC and NBA assessment frameworks should incorporate indices related to IKS integration and artisan sector engagement, creating institutional incentives for curricular innovation in this domain.

VII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study acknowledges several limitations that should be considered in the interpretation of its findings. First, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inference, and the study cannot establish the direction of relationships between institutional support, cultural heritage orientation, and artisan skill interest over time. Longitudinal research designs would provide more robust causal insights. Second, the sample, while geographically diverse across five states, does not represent all regions of India, and findings may not be fully generalisable to management graduates in northeastern states, Himalayan regions, or predominantly tribal areas where artisan traditions differ substantially from those covered in this study. Third, the reliance on self-report measures introduces the possibility of social desirability bias, particularly in responses related to cultural heritage and institutional support. Future research should supplement survey data with behavioural indicators such as course enrollment, project participation, and career choices.

Future research directions include: (a) a national-scale replication study encompassing all 28 Indian states to establish comprehensive baseline data; (b) a longitudinal study tracking management graduates from enrollment through to career entry to examine how artisan skill interest translates into employment behaviour; (c) comparative studies examining artisan skill interest across management institutions with varying degrees of IKS integration in their curricula; and (d) experimental studies evaluating the impact of specific pedagogical interventions, such as artisan community immersions, craft-based case studies, and

social enterprise projects, on graduate interest and skill acquisition.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study affirms that artisan skill integration constitutes a strategic dimension of management education, shaped by the intersection of employability, cultural grounding, and market relevance. A critical gap in institutional support underscores the need for immediate curricular and policy realignment. The findings align with National Education Policy 2020 and Atmanirbhar Bharat, positioning artisan competencies as central to contemporary management training. This integration represents a meaningful opportunity to simultaneously address graduate employability, rural livelihood generation, and the preservation of India (Bharat) invaluable cultural legacy for future generations.

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