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Circular Economy in Creative Industries on the Example of Craft and Artisan Makers

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Abstract:

Purpose: *The research aims to present current circular economy practices among craft and artisan makers, identify gaps and opportunities, and highlight sustainable development methods employed in this sector.*
Design/Methodology/Approach: *The study utilized focus group interviews (FGI) as the primary data collection method. Three focus group sessions were conducted over two years (2022-2023), involving 28 diverse craft and artisan makers from Poland. Participants represented various creative industries and had varying levels of experience and age.*
Findings: *The research revealed four key areas of good circular economy practices: production processes, products and packaging, waste reuse, and sharing. Participants emphasized the importance of maintaining traditional production methods while incorporating sustainable practices. They also highlighted the use of natural ingredients, upcycling, and networking as crucial elements in implementing circular economy principles. Further studies could explore the long-term impact of circular economy practices on the sustainability and profitability of craft and artisan businesses. Additionally, research into developing sector-specific guidelines for circular economy implementation could be beneficial.*
Practical Implications: *The findings suggest that craft and artisan makers can significantly contribute to sustainable development by adopting circular economy principles. Practitioners should focus on innovative ways to incorporate these practices while preserving traditional craftsmanship. Networking and knowledge sharing among artisans could also facilitate the wider adoption of circular economy practices in the creative sector.*
Originality value: *Circular economy is gaining prominence in creative industries, including design, architecture, fashion, and art. This approach aims to minimize waste generation by ensuring continuous circulation of materials in the economy. The creative sector, known for its innovation and dynamism, also faces challenges related to waste production. This study explores the application of circular economy principles in craft and artisan makers' organizations within the creative sector.*

Keywords: *Creative sector, Creative industries, craft and artisan makers circular economy, closed-loop production.*

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1. Introduction

The idea of the GOZ emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, when it began to be noticed that the traditional model of a linear economy, based on extraction of raw materials, production, use and dumping of waste, was leading to depletion of natural resources and environmental pollution. In 1966, Boulding published an article, 'The Economics of the Coming Spaceship Earth', in which he introduced the concept of an economy based on circular principles (Boulding, 1966).

He compared Earth to a spaceship that has limited resources and cannot afford to waste raw materials and energy. Boulding pointed to the need for a change in the economic model, which would be based on circular principles, that is, using raw materials and energy as efficiently as possible, thus minimizing waste. In such an economy, waste and end products are reused as raw materials for new products, and energy is obtained from renewable sources.

Boulding noted that a circular economy would require a change in the way people think and act; they would have to start thinking of raw materials and energy as scarce and precious resources that need to be conserved and used as efficiently as possible. Boulding was one of the first to draw attention to the need to change the economic model and introduce circular principles into the economy. His concepts have inspired many subsequent theorists and practitioners of the circular economy.

The ideas he presented follow the concept (Commoner, 1971), which detailed the connections between the level of technological development, the ecosystem, and the economy. Commoner presented the concept of a closed cycle in which all substances and energy are reused naturally. The author argued that modern society is dependent on technology that introduces dangerous substances into the environment and

disrupts natural cycles. Commoner said that in order to achieve sustainable development, it is necessary to replace this technology with a more environmentally friendly one, as well as change the way goods are produced and consumed.

He also presented the concept of the 'Four Laws of Ecology', which define how a sustainable society should operate. The first of these informal laws ‘Everything is connected to everything else’ emphasizes the interconnectedness of all living things and their environment. It highlights the importance of understanding the relationships between different organisms and their habitats, and the impact that human activities can have on these relationships.

The second law of ecology, ‘Everything must go somewhere’ recognizes that all materials and resources are finite and that waste products must be managed in a way that minimizes their impact on the environment. It emphasizes the need for responsible waste management practices and the importance of reducing waste through sustainable production and consumption.

The third informal law of ecology ‘Nature knows best’ recognizes the importance of natural systems and processes in maintaining ecological balance and sustainability. It emphasizes the need to work with, rather than against, nature in order to achieve sustainable outcomes. The fourth informal law of ecology ‘There is no such thing as a free lunch’ recognizes that all human activities have environmental costs and that these costs must be taken into account when making decisions about resource use and management. It emphasizes the need for responsible and sustainable resource use practices that take into account the long-term impacts of human activities on the environment.

Overall, the Four Laws of Ecology provide a framework for understanding the complex relationships between human activities and the environment, and for promoting sustainable practices that support ecological balance and long-term sustainability.

The 1980s saw the concept of a closed-loop economy proposed by Stahel and Reday-Mulvey (1981), based on the idea that the economy should be designed so that waste from one industry is a raw material for another industry. Instead of throwing away waste, the economy should operate in a closed-loop in which all raw materials are used sustainably.

Stahel and Reday-Mulvey wrote about the linear economy, which is based on the "take-make-dispose" model, in their concept of the closed-loop economy. They asserter that the linear economy is not sustainable and leads to the of natural resources and the accumulation of waste. In contrast, the closed-loop economy is based on the principles of circularity and resource efficiency, where waste is treated as a secondary resource and all resources are used in a sustainable manner. Stahel (1982) proposed that the closed-loop economy can be achieved through changes in

the design and production of products, as well as in the way we consume and dispose of them. Their concept has influenced the development of the circular economy and the transition towards a more sustainable and resource-efficient society.

In parallel, Turner and Pearce (1990) wrote about the interactions and benefits between environmental protection and circular economics. At the same time, the idea of industrial ecology developed, which allowed waste to be used as an input to production processes, and there was a strong emphasis on promoting recycling. Since the 1990s, science has increasingly looked at issues related to ecological approaches to business operations.

However, the most publications appeared in the last decade. Interesting observations were presented in their analysis by Geissdoerfer *et al.* (2017) reporting that more than 100 articles were published on CE in 2016 alone, compared to only about 30 articles in 2014 and as reported by Figge *et al.* (2023) 4.000 was created articles in academic journals in 2022.

In the following years, publications related to specific problems falling within the circular economy theme have been created exponentially, including those intervening from the point of view of this article, among others, environmental sustainability of plastics management in Europe (Cardamone *et al.*, 2021) strategies for introducing the circular economy in the textile industry (Saha *et al.,* 2021), implementation of circular economy principles in the fashion industry (Denise Reike *et al.*, 2022; Bartkute *et al.*, 2023; Saccani *et al.*, 2023), the role of digital technologies and their impact on the transition from a linear to a circular economy model (Han *et al.*, 2023), the impact of the digital circular economy on sustainable development (Piscicelli, 2023).

Today, Stahel's (1982) theory and Braungart and McDonough's (2002) "cradle to cradle" philosophy combined with the approach represented by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation are widely identified as the driving forces behind the implementation of the CE model into the economy.

According to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, a circular economy is an economic system that is restorative and regenerative by design. It is founded on the principles of designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use, and regenerating natural systems. In a circular economy, resources are kept in use for as long as possible, waste is minimized, and the environmental impact of production and consumption is reduced.

The circular economy is seen as an alternative to the traditional linear economy, which is based on the take-make-dispose model. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation promotes the circular economy as a way to create a more sustainable and prosperous future, and works with businesses, governments, and other stakeholders to accelerate

the transition towards a circular economy (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013; 2014; 2015).

In sum a circular economy consists of several key elements, including: (1) Design for circularity: Products are designed to be durable, repairable, and recyclable, and to minimize the use of non-renewable resources; (2) Resource efficiency: Resources are used in a more efficient manner, through measures such as reducing waste, increasing recycling, and using renewable energy sources; (3) Sharing platforms: Sharing platforms enable the sharing of goods and services, reducing the need for ownership and the associated resource consumption; (4) Product-as-a-Service: Products are offered as a service, rather than sold as a product, which encourages reuse and reduces waste; (5) Closed-loop supply chains: Supply chains are designed to minimize waste and pollution, and to ensure that resources are kept in a closed loop; (6) Biomimicry: Biomimicry involves using nature as a model for design and innovation, and can inspire new ways of creating products and services that are more sustainable; (7) Circular business models: Circular business models involve new ways of doing business that prioritize sustainability and circularity, such as leasing, repair, and remanufacturing.

These elements work together to create a circular economy that is more sustainable, resource-efficient, and resilient. By keeping resources in use for as long as possible and minimizing waste and pollution, a circular economy can help to address some of the major environmental and social challenges of our time.

CE issues could not bypass industries from the Creative Sector, which plays an important role in the economy and society, contributing to economic growth and cultural development. One of the key features of the creative sector is its ability to generate innovation and creativity, which are essential for driving economic growth and competitiveness. The creative sector plays an important role in the economy and society, contributing to economic growth, and cultural development. One of the key features of the creative sector is its ability to generate innovation and creativity, which are essential for driving economic growth and competitiveness. The creative sector is also a major source of employment, particularly for young people and those with creative skills and talents.

As maintained by UNCTAD Creative industries encompass activities ‘at the intersection of art, business and technology,’ producing ‘symbolic products that depend heavily on intellectual property’ (UNCTAD, 2004, p. 4). The term creative industries was first introduced by the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in 1998 to describe the ‘[…] Those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property’ (DCMS, 1998, p. 3). An important moment for the formation of the economic space for the creative sector turned out to be the 1990s, when one of the most widely used interpretations of the creative sector in the UK was created, which is still used today.

This definition was described in a document produced by the Creative Industries Team, it refers to the activities which stem from individual creativity and talent and which also have the potential to create wealth and employment through the production and exploitation of intellectual property rights. A list of creative industries was identified, which included advertising, film and video, architecture, music, the art, and antiques market, performing arts, computer and video games, the publishing market, crafts, software, design, radio and television, and fashion design (after Törnqvist, 1983).

These industries represent two branches of the creative economy – the traditional cultural industries and the new knowledge-based sectors. In this view, the industries are defined as activities: (1) derived from an individual's own creativity, talent, and skills; (2) having the potential for wealth and wealth creation and job creation through generations, which translates into a constant desire to search, in order to discover new information or resources.

By a pan-European definition, created by Kern European Affairs (a Brussels-based European organization for the development of arts, culture, and sports) and published in the report The Economy of Culture in Europe, the creative sector can be divided into two types of activities: cultural industries and creative industries.

Cultural industries include film and video, television and radio, video games, music, books, and press, while creative industries include design, advertising, and architecture. Cultural industries are types of cultural activities whose outcome involves a purely artistic dimension, as well as traditional art fields. Creative industries, on the other hand, use culture as an added value to produce non-cultural products (Kern European Affairs, 2006).

According to the definition of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, creative sectors/industries are defined as cycles of creation and production, distribution of goods and services using creativity and intellectual capital as the main elements of this process (UNCTAD, 2008). In addition to the definition of a creative sector/industry, this UN subsidiary body also created the term creative product. According to UNCTAD, it is the result of the work of a creative individual (creator) and can be both a tangible and intangible product. The features of a creative product that clearly distinguish it from other consumer products available on the market are originality, uniqueness, and artistry (UNCTAD, 2010).

From the point of view of Eurostat (the statistical office of the European Union) creative industries are defined as first, cultural industry enterprises that create and distribute goods and services that, at the time of their development, are perceived as having individual, unitary attributes, use or purpose, and those that include or carry artistic and cultural expression, regardless of their commercial value (ESSNet-Culture, 2012).

Secondly, creative and cultural enterprises that are engaged in creating and providing market products and services that result from cultural and creative, artistic contributions that determine their value; this area includes the following cultural spheres: national heritage, libraries, archives, books and press, visual arts, performing arts, multimedia and audiovisual arts, architecture, advertising, handicrafts.

As stated by Caves (2000), the creative sector is a collection of fields that are based on creative intellectual work and produce products or services that have aesthetic, symbolic or cultural value. Landry (2000) defines the creative sector as a sector of activities leading to the production of a product whose added value is a genuine, original idea, related to the form and/or function of the product or the manufacturing technology and/or materials used. The added value makes the product competitive with other creations (due to its unique, inimitable character, functionality, aesthetics or price) (Landry, 2000, p. 11).

The creative sector is therefore seen as an activity based on individual skills and talent, which enable both the creation of an unprecedented product as well as jobs. The specificity of this activity is created by individual creators demonstrating extensive knowledge, used to produce goods and services that have added value (in the form of high quality and unique form), who derive benefits mainly from intellectual property rights.

The analysis of the entrepreneur operating in the creative sector – in the case of this article, craft and artisan makers – in the creative industries focuses on the person and the potential for generating value from creativity. Talent, passion and Internal motivation are key drivers of artistic creativity which often starts with the way these individuals spend their free time or with their hobbies and ends in a nascent entrepreneurial activity. Many analyses concerning artists and creative people, as well as their personalities and aspirations, show the 'tension' between artistic ambitions and economic imperatives (Swedberg, 2006; Win, 2014).

This dissonance results from the fact that creative people often start entrepreneurial activity as a hobby driven by passion, internal motivation, or their need for individual expression and satisfaction of personal desires (Beltrán and Miguel, 2014). Oliveira and Melo (2015) note strong emotional ties and a huge involvement of creative personalities in their businesses. Poettschacher (2005) sees creative freedom and relationships based on friendship as basic values and main motivators for establishing an economic venture.

People in creative start-ups build their own specific identities in contrast to traditional enterprises associated with business-orientation and a lack of authenticity or a sense of aesthetics. Swedberg (2006) also distinguishes entrepreneurs-artists who reject, contemplate or focus on economic realities, while Neugovsen (2010) distinguishes between entrepreneurs with high and low commercial visions.

Craft and artisan makers, operating in the creative sector, specialize in handcrafting products such as jewelry, furniture, ceramics and textiles. This requires manual and artistic skills, as well as knowledge of unique materials and production techniques very often handed down from generation to generation. They create works of art such as paintings, sculptures, installations or performances. They use a variety of techniques and materials to express their ideas and emotions. Their works influence national culture and identity, as well as the way people think and perceive the world.

They also have a significant impact on sustainable development. The more conscious ones apply the principles of circular economy, using recycled materials and minimizing waste in the production process or to create artworks with low environmental impact.

Undoubtedly, craft and artisan makers, as sensitive people open to innovation and creative solutions, have a significant impact on sustainable development. Despite such an intensive popularization of the topic and the growing awareness of the importance of the circular economy, many craft and artisan makers operating still lack a clear understanding of its benefits and how to implement circular practices in their operations. This is particularly true for businesses in developing countries, where there is often a lack of resources and infrastructure to support the transition to a circular economy. These observations were the reason for taking up this topic and analyzing it.

This paper will discuss how circular economics can be applied to the creative sectors, what benefits it brings and what challenges it poses to creative sector businesses. The purpose of the paper is to present the results of the research focus. It also displays current practices of craft and artisan based organisations with regards to CE processes as well as patterns of sustainable development and closed-loop production and identifying gaps and opportunities in CE implementation.

2. Research Methodology

The origins of focus group interview (FGI) date back to the 1940s (Merton 1987; Merton *et al.,* 1990) and Morgan himself (1988) traces its prototype to group interviews described by Bogardus in 1926 (Bogardus, 1926). Its inception was preceded by a study described many times in the literature (Stewart *et al.,* 1990, Stewart *et al.,* 2007) conducted at Columbia University, where Merton, together with Lazarsfeld, first organized a focus session and gave it its name (the focussed interview).

According to David Morgan (1998), focus is defined as a research technique that involves a group of individuals who are brought together to discuss and provide insights on a specific topic of interest. FGI offers several advantages over other qualitative research methods. Firstly, it provides a platform for participants to express their opinions and engage in dynamic discussions, leading to a deeper

understanding of the research topic. Secondly, FGI allows researchers to observe group dynamics and interactions, providing valuable insights into social processes and collective decision-making.

Lastly, FGI enables researchers to gather rich and context-specific data, enhancing the validity and credibility of the research findings. FGI provides a unique opportunity to capture the richness and complexity of human experiences and perspectives. FGI typically involves a small group of participants, ranging from 6 to 10 individuals, who engage in a facilitated discussion led by a moderator. The moderator's role is crucial in guiding the conversation, asking relevant questions, and ensuring active participation from all participants. The interactive nature of FGI allows for the exploration of diverse perspectives, experiences, and opinions related to the research topic.

The research described in the article employed a comprehensive methodology involving a series of focus groups conducted over a two-year period. In April 2022, the first focus group session was organized, followed by two additional sessions in April and May 2023. The study included a diverse group of 28 craft and artisan makers from Poland, representing a wide range of industries within the creative sector. The participants exhibited significant variation in terms of age, experience, and specialization. The age range of the participants included both young, novice craft and artisan makers aged form 25 years old, and experienced up to 60 years old, providing a rich mix of perspectives that combined fresh, innovative ideas with traditional techniques.

Experience levels varied widely, including both novice makers with just a few years of experience and master craftspeople with decades of expertise in their respective fields. This range allowed for a comprehensive understanding of both traditional and contemporary practices. The focus groups included professionals from various creative fields, such as architecture, fashion design, ceramics, lace-making, polygraphy, painting, performative arts, and other artistic disciplines. This diverse representation ensured a broad spectrum of insights across different sectors of the creative industry.

The research was conducted through three separate focus group sessions: the first in April 2022 with 8 participants, and the second and third in April and May 2023, each with 10 participants. The primary aim of this study was to gain a deep understanding of current practices in craft and artisan-based organizations and producers, with a specific focus on production and procurement processes. The research explored five key areas: (1) Sourcing raw materials, (2) Preparing materials ready for production, (3) Production processes, (4) Energy uses, (5) Waste disposal. The focus group sessions were designed to foster creativity and collaboration among participants.

The research panel was focused on encouraging, enabling and capturing creative ideas and participants collaborated to design new innovations for businesses in the field of CE. Their task was also to identify opportunities for sustainable and circular methods (low carbon and zero waste) used in individual industries of the creative sector.

3. Results

When analysing good CE practices that they themselves use and consider worthy of recommending to others, participants pointed to four key areas: (1) Production process, (2) Products and their packaging, (3) Waste and their reuse, (4) Sharing (see Table 1 for more). One of the main problems that was grasped at this stage of the research was the combination of CE requirements and the maintenance of a production process that has been handed down, very often from generation to generation, that is characteristic of a given product. If the specifics of the product made it impossible to make pro-environmental changes in the very process of creation, respondents pointed to other solutions, such as changing the workspace in accordance with the possibilities of nature, e.g.: redesigning the work space, working at appropriate hours in accordance with the natural rhythm of the day.

'We create spaces so that they harmonize with nature (....) new production lines from the very beginning are designed in accordance with ecological principles, e.g. "zero waste" and effective interaction of nature's principles and influence'– architectural industry

(...) we revitalize places and even bring whole localities back to usable life (...) creating spaces for creative, artistic and creative work"– architectural industry

Respondents attached great importance to attention to the simple and natural composition of manufactured products and services, the use of natural ingredients in both the composition of products and their packaging. Another element was the conscious and purposeful use of products that are nearing the end of their life or have reached the end of their life (they are useless) to produce new products. In the focus group, artists in particular pointed to the power of used products in their works:

'I operate according to the principle of "zero waste", my work is upcycling and recycling. It uses what for others may seem to be simply a worn-out object, useless waste. I give things a second life, bringing out their soul, giving them a new form and shape' – Artisan

Respondents also considered networking to be a strength in CE, enabling the exchange of products that are unnecessary to some and very useful to others. They also pointed to the need to reuse them:

'Every printing industry has all sorts of waste paper in its existence: being a printing error, waste during calibration and commissioning of machines or waste during cutting to format (strips of paper, any shapes from cutting out forms) This waste paper with its matter is very diverse: thin paper, smooth paper, cardboard, colored, etc. (...) in order not to throw it away passes it to art schools as a material used by students and teachers to create, for example: building spatial form, composition systems, creating collages...' – printing industry

'Broken, damaged ceramics gets a new life in an artistic work (...) is used for creative, therapeutic work in workshops (...) the circulation of its usefulness is closed. In my company nothing goes to waste.' – ceramics industry

'Many fashion companies realize how important it is to use clothes and fabrics for as long as possible in order to globally reduce both the overproduction of clothes and the amount of textile waste (...) They have a company day so that they can once again reach customers (...) be recycled into new fabrics or clothes through repair or recycling. We take great care of the sustainability and biodegradability of the fabrics we use in production (...) we also use recycled materials (...) we produce repairable and recyclable clothes and accessories.' – fashion industry

Table 1. *Focus group interview result – Good Practice*

Good Practice	**Topic area**
Designing the production process so that waste is minimized and can be reused	**Production process**
Changing the production process for ecological solutions	
Unconventional use of products/materials/waste that were not previously used in the arts/crafts industry	
Independence of production processes from technology, energy, etc. – own ecological solutions, using nature	
The art of minimalism – production minimalism already at the planning stage	
Using new technologies to strengthen circular economy processes	
Designing a workspace using the possibilities of nature	
Caring for a simple and natural composition of manufactured products/services	**Products and their packaging**
The use of natural ingredients both in the composition of products and their packaging	
Repair of the product without hiding defects in order to obtain an artistic effect	
Deliberate use of products whose life is ending or ended for the production of new products	
Using the forces of nature in the production process	
Increasing the quality and value of products by reusing them	**Waste and their reuse**
Extending the useful life of IT products, especially IT products	
Modernized machines and devices, not replaced with new ones	

Helping consumers to discard packaging properly, by giving them information on recycling.	
Network of contacts enabling the exchange of products unnecessary for some but useful for others	**Sharing**
Supporting local production – the impact on shortening the supply chains	

Source: *Own elaboration.*

When analyzing gaps and opportunities, participants pointed to four main areas: (1) Lack of knowledge and awareness, (2) New technologies, (3) System support, (4) Finance.

The biggest gap, in their view, is the lack of awareness of and experience with the circular economy. They point to the need for system support, and this applies to both CE and crafts maintenance. They point to the risk of the death of some craft industries. And here they place great hope in using new technologies as a link between generations (see more Table 2).

An interesting example of such activities was the initiative of two female artists who dress up public places with openwork, e.g.: entrances to buildings and nature, e.g. trees. Their venture includes various workshops, picnics and the creation of art installations. At the workshops they encourage knitting, especially those related to traditional folk techniques. Their audience includes people of all ages and backgrounds. The artisans pass on the tradition to their young successors in return they support them in promoting the works on the Internet. This is a beautiful example of giving second life to objects, professions and people alike.

Table 2. *Focus group interview result – Gaps and Opportunities*

Gaps and Opportunities	**Topic area**
Lack of awareness about the circular economy	**Lack of knowledge and awareness**
Lack of knowledge about the possibilities of recycling waste	
Lack of experience in the field of circular economy	
Lack of education in the field of circular economy	
Lack of knowledge about innovations in the field of circular economy and funds for them	
Lack of knowledge about the production method, quality and value of creatively produced products	
Lack of people who want to learn a craft (there is a belief that you cannot make money on craft) – the risk of death of some craft industries	
No promotion of craft professions	
No promotion of the therapeutic value of the craft	
No tradition of delight	
Wise/appropriate/multifaceted use of digitization tools – tailored to craft (as support, not devastation)	**New technologies**
Lack of systemic support for maintenance/development of crafts	**System support**

professions	
Systemic educational gaps – no support for education in crafts	
Bureaucracy and mismanagement	
Lack of financial support for development of craft professions (but there is support for their digitalization)	**Finanse**

Source: *Own elaboration.*

Creating ideas, participants pointed to 6 main topic areas: (1) Manufacture of innovative arts/crafts products serving nature, (2) Collaboration, (3) System support, (4) Products, (5) Waste and Reuse, (6) Openness and innovation. At this stage of the focus research, it was particularly important for participants to emphasize the need for system support for the use of non-standard and ecological production systems, as well as openness to ecological solutions and changing habits among craft and artisan makers regarding the circular economy. For this, in their opinion, proper education and promotion of CE is needed. Participants exchanged ideas on producing innovative arts/crafts products that serve nature (Table 3).

Table 3. *Focus group interview result – Ideas*

Ideas	**Topic area**
Making products that serve nature (e.g., handmade paper soaked in sugar for bees to survive in harsh conditions)	**Manufacture of innovative arts/crafts products serving nature**
Collaboration between people, companies, communities, disciplines, etc.	**Collaboration**
Knowledge base/information about resources for reuse (unnecessary for some e.g. producers, but to be used in crafts/artistic work)	
Systemic support for crafts/artists (creative/crafts/arts incubators), e.g., for sustainable/ecological solutions	**System support**
Establishment of Artist Residencies	
Further education in relevant industries (learning about circular economy opportunities from others in the same industry, e.g. learning from experiences in other countries, etc.)	
Rewards and incentives for pro-environmental action (instead of penalties for not acting ecologically)	
Availability and universality of green solutions	
Defining CE as an economic development strategy with appropriate legal and economic instruments	
Establishment of indicators to monitor the implementation of the CE strategy	
Promoting circular solutions	
Use of natural ingredients	**Products**
The use of sustainable ingredients and direct and indirect packaging	
Waste should be managed according to the waste hierarchy, i.e. prevention, preparation for re-use, recycling, other recovery and	**Waste and Reuse**

disposal	
Openness to ecological solutions and changing habits regarding circular economy	**Openness and innovation**
Use of non-standard and ecological production systems	

Source: *Own elaboration.*

4. Conclusions and Limitations

The circular economy is an economic model that aims to keep resources in use for as long as possible, minimize waste, and reduce the environmental impact of production and consumption. It offers a range of benefits for businesses, including cost savings, improved resource efficiency, and reduced environmental impact. However, many enterprises operating in creative industries are still focused on traditional linear business models that prioritize short-term profits over long-term sustainability.

As shown by the results of the focus group research to address this issue, there is a need for greater awareness-raising and education on the circular economy, particularly among industries where the production causes large side effects for the environment. This could include training programs, workshops, and other capacity-building initiatives that provide businesses with the knowledge and skills needed to implement circular practices.

It could also involve the development of supportive policies and regulations that incentivize circular practices and provide craft and artisan makers with the necessary resources and infrastructure to make the transition.

Despite the challenges, there are many examples of craft and artisan makers that have successfully implemented circular practices and are reaping the benefits of a more sustainable and resource-efficient business model. These businesses demonstrate that the circular economy is not only good for the environment, but also for the bottom line. By implementing good practices and promoting greater awareness and understanding of the circular economy among creative industries, we can help to accelerate the transition towards a more sustainable and prosperous future.

The research method presented in the article is not without limitations. One challenge is the potential influence of dominant voices within the group, which may overshadow the perspectives of others.

Additionally, FGI may be susceptible to social desirability bias, where participants may provide responses that align with societal expectations rather than their true opinions. Moreover, the generalizability of FGI findings can be limited due to the small sample size and the specific characteristics of the participants. Nevertheless, the results presented in the article may be the basis for further analyses.

5. Ethical Requirements

The focus research was conducted in accordance with ethical principles, including: the principles of voluntary participation, the principle of informed consent, the principle of no harm to respondents (including in an emotional sense), the principles of anonymity, confidentiality and truth. The measures taken fulfill the requirements of the Regulations of the Research Ethics Committee and the Rector's Regulation on the Personal Data Protection Policy at the University of Lodz.

The aforementioned acts stipulate the necessity of obtaining the Ethics Committee's approval only in two situations: (1) If biological material is collected, (2) Interfering with the human psyche. In other cases, the researcher (an employee of the University of Lodz) is bound by the above-mentioned regulations without the need to seek approval from the Ethics Committee.

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