

## A Qualitative Study on Marketing and Sustainability in the Meerschaum Craft Industry

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### Abstract:

This study explores the marketing practices and sustainability challenges of the meerschaum (lüle taşı) craft industry, a significant element of cultural heritage in Eskişehir, Turkey. Known for its whiteness, porosity, and cultural symbolism, meerschaum is not only a raw material but a medium of artistic expression and historical continuity. Drawing on qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with six meerschaum artisans, the research identifies two major themes: marketing and sustainability. Findings reveal that artisans rely heavily on individual initiatives for branding, sales, and international promotion, often constrained by limited digital skills and institutional support. On the sustainability front, issues such as raw material depletion, lack of apprentices, insufficient intergenerational transfer, weak organizational structures, and inadequate public support pose multidimensional threats—environmental, economic, and cultural. Despite these challenges, the study highlights the resilience and dedication of master artisans, whose efforts preserve this unique tradition. The research concludes with recommendations to enhance digital visibility, institutional collaboration, and policy recognition to ensure the long-term viability of the meerschaum craft.

### Keywords:

Meerschaum, cultural heritage, handicrafts, marketing, sustainability, Eskişehir, traditional craftsmanship.