



# Unpacking the Factors that Drive the Success of Nakshi Kantha Businesses in Jamalpur, Bangladesh

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**Abstract:** This research investigates the key factors contributing to the success of Nakshi Kantha businesses in Jamalpur, Bangladesh, a traditional handcrafted embroidery technique with profound cultural and economic significance. The study explores seven independent variables, including Financial Resources, Promotional Efforts, Institutional Support, Market Demand, International Trade Prospects, Entrepreneurial Collaboration, and Workforce Competency, in relation to Business Success in this context. Employing linear regression analysis, the study uncovers that Financial Resources, Promotional Efforts, International Trade Prospects, Market Demand, and Workforce Competency significantly influence the success of Nakshi Kantha businesses. In contrast, Government and banking support and Entrepreneurial Collaboration exhibit weaker associations with business success. These findings emphasize several crucial factors for Nakshi Kantha entrepreneurs and policymakers. First, securing adequate financial resources is paramount to sustain and grow these businesses. Second, investing in marketing and promotional activities is essential to enhance brand visibility and stimulate market demand. Third, nurturing a skilled and competent workforce is vital for maintaining product quality and meeting market demands. Additionally, exploring international trade prospects can open new avenues for expansion. Moreover, promoting collaboration among Nakshi Kantha business owners and facilitating government and banking support are essential for the industry's sustainable development and economic prosperity in the region. This research provides valuable insights for Nakshi Kantha stakeholders, offering a roadmap to address challenges and ensure the continued growth and success of this culturally and economically significant industry in Jamalpur, Bangladesh.

**Keywords:** Nakshi Kantha; Business Success; Quantitative Investigation; Bangladesh.

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## **Introduction**

The enchanting artistry of Nakshi Kantha, a traditional handcrafted embroidery technique originating from the heart of Bangladesh, not only represents cultural richness but also serves as a cornerstone of economic sustenance within the region. Nakshi Kantha is far more than just intricate needlework; it symbolizes the vibrant tapestry of Bengali life, encapsulating cultural diversity, geographical intricacies, and socio-economic narratives of the artisans who meticulously craft these masterpieces (Zaman & Stevulak, 2014). This art form is aptly named, with "Naksha," a Bengali word meaning creative pattern, echoing its essence. Nakshi Kantha is not confined by borders; its allure extends to West Bengal in India and beyond. While it thrives as a cultural treasure, it also plays a pivotal economic role, especially for women in rural Bangladesh (Bahadur, 2018). Over time, the Nakshi Kantha industry has undergone transformations, and as it stands today, traders grapple with financial constraints. The exquisite Nakshi Kantha, with its vibrant embroidery, mirrors the essence of Bangladeshi life. Each stitch in a Nakshi Kantha represents the hopes and aspirations of the artisans, who weave their stories into this intricate fabric (Haque, 2019). These artisans, predominantly women in rural areas, engage in this age-old craft, making Nakshi Kantha not just an art form but also a narrative of the lives it touches. Nakshi Kantha is more than a mere art form; it is a living testament to the perseverance, creativity, and identity of Bengali women. Each piece is a work of art, deeply rooted in emotions, with every embroidered pattern telling a unique story (Haque, 2019). The tradition of gifting Nakshi Kantha from the father's house to the house of the bride's father-in-law has deep-rooted cultural significance in Bangladesh. Regions like Jamalpur, Rajshahi, Bogura, and Jessore have carved their own niches in the Nakshi Kantha industry. In fact, Jamalpur, often referred to as "Jamalpur Nakshi Kantha, Bangladesher Gorbogatha," holds a special place as a hub of Nakshi Kantha production in Bangladesh (Shabuj, 2020). However, despite its cultural and economic importance, Nakshi Kantha businesses face formidable challenges in contemporary times. While Nakshi Kantha products gained popularity after the 1970s, they experienced a period of stagnation and decline in the 90s and early 2000s due to outdated designs and quality issues. Moreover, global competition from countries like Vietnam, Cambodia, China, and India poses a significant challenge to Bangladeshi Nakshi Kantha businesses. These competitors often have easier access to bank loans and government support, providing them with a competitive advantage (Shabuj, 2020). This study embarks on a quantitative exploration into the core factors influencing the success of Nakshi Kantha businesses in Jamalpur, Bangladesh. With the aim of unlocking the secrets to prosperity in this unique industry, our research objectives are twofold: first, to identify and quantify the factors that underpin the success of Nakshi Kantha businesses in Jamalpur, and second, to scrutinize the intricate relationships between these factors and the actual levels of success achieved by these businesses. The present study objectives are given below:

1. Identify and measure the factors influencing Nakshi Kantha business success in Jamalpur, Bangladesh;
2. Investigate the relationships between these factors and the level of success achieved by Nakshi Kantha businesses.

## **Literature Review**

The Nakshi Kantha industry in Bangladesh offers the potential for increased foreign exchange earnings through exports and serves as an empowering force for women. Despite facing challenges and global competition, there is a growing demand for Bangladeshi handicraft products, including Nakshi Kantha. The market for Nakshi Kantha products in Bangladesh is substantial, with significant demand both domestically and internationally, as indicated by Shabuj (2020). Financial capital availability stands out as a primary determinant of success in the Nakshi Kantha industry. Access to adequate financial resources is vital for procuring raw

materials, providing training to artisans, and effectively marketing products (Bahadur, 2018). Chawdhury (2012) underscores the significance of financial capital in promoting and sustaining Nakshi Kantha businesses, aligning with the findings of Dash and Mishra (2021), whose quantitative investigation reveals a significant positive relationship between financial resources and the success of Nakshi Kantha businesses. Promotional efforts and stimulating market demand are paramount for Nakshi Kantha businesses. Effective marketing and promotional strategies not only enhance brand visibility but also drive demand for Nakshi Kantha products (Eagle, 2014). Market demand, in turn, propels business growth (Mahgoub & Alsoud, 2015). Sawrov and Islam (2018) explore the potential of e-marketing in Bangladesh and emphasize the pivotal role of promotional efforts in expanding the handicraft and others products in market. The research conducted by Sawrov and Sheikh (2022) identified significant challenges facing Nakshi Kantha businesses in Jamalpur, Bangladesh, including a lack of capital, high raw material prices, limited foreign trade opportunities, inadequate government and banking support, a labor crisis, declining demand, insufficient marketing efforts, and a need for greater industry unity. These findings provide valuable insights for Nakshi Kantha entrepreneurs, policymakers, and stakeholders, highlighting the imperative to address these challenges to ensure the industry's sustained growth and success (Sawrov & Sheikh, 2022). Institutional support and collaborative initiatives among entrepreneurs play pivotal roles in Nakshi Kantha businesses' success. Government and banking support provide the necessary infrastructure and financial aid needed for business growth (Garg & Walia, 2018). Unity and coordination among business owners further contribute positively to business success (Rahman, 2020). Foreign direct trade prospects open new avenues for Nakshi Kantha businesses, allowing them to expand beyond local markets (Islam et al., 2018). Additionally, the availability of a skilled workforce is vital for maintaining product quality and meeting market demands (Makhitha, 2016). Workforce competency is one of the factors that positively affect business success (Pushpika & Masakorala, 2005). The challenges faced by Nakshi Kantha businesses encompass a broad spectrum, including a lack of marketing knowledge, competition with machine-made products, and difficulty in accessing loans and government support (Rahman, 2021). These challenges have a significant impact on the industry's growth and sustainability. The findings of this study, as outlined by Sawrov (2022), underscore the significance of branding strategies in enhancing the demand for handicraft products, particularly within the context of Bangladesh. Notably, handicraft studies and handicraft branding emerged as pivotal factors influencing increased demand. The study's implications resonate with the Nakshi Kantha industry, suggesting that a strategic focus on branding initiatives can captivate potential customers, ultimately driving sales growth. It is recommended that both public and private sectors collaborate to promote handicrafts, incorporating them into educational curricula, conducting effective advertising campaigns, and invoking cultural heritage to reignite interest. These insights can be invaluable in the Nakshi Kantha sector's sustainable development (Sawrov, 2022). To address these issues comprehensively, our study employs quantitative analysis to examine the relationships between these key factors and Nakshi Kantha business success in Jamalpur, Bangladesh. By understanding these dynamics, we aim to provide valuable insights for Nakshi Kantha entrepreneurs, policymakers, and stakeholders. This study underscores the importance of securing financial resources, investing in marketing efforts, nurturing a skilled workforce, and exploring international trade prospects to enhance the success of Nakshi Kantha businesses. Furthermore, it highlights the need for promoting collaboration among business owners and facilitating government and banking support to foster the industry's sustainable development and economic prosperity in the region.

## Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework has been established through the analysis of relevant literature and the execution of focus group interviews to formulate the construct or factor (Figure 1)

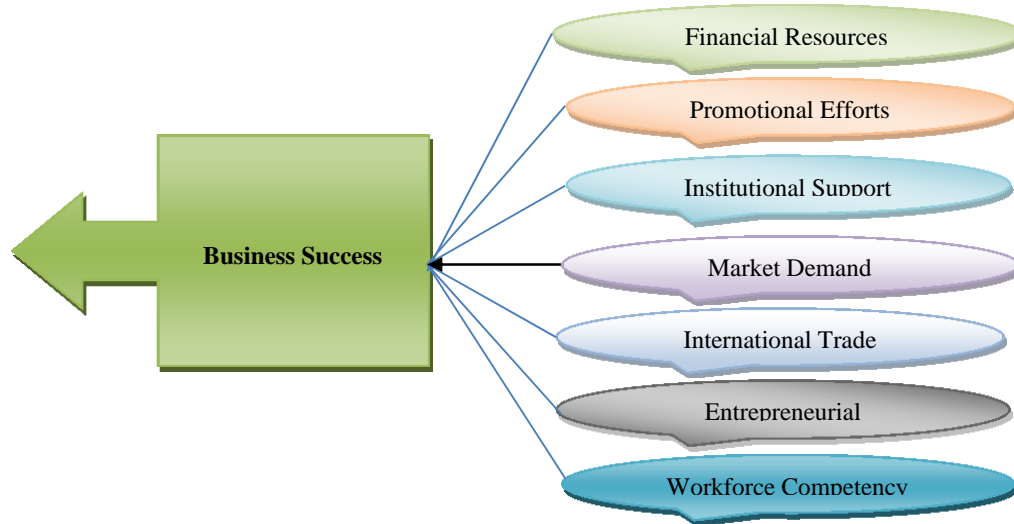


Fig. 1. Conceptual Model

Source: Authors' Synthesis, 2023.

## Research Hypotheses

**H1:** There is a significant positive relationship between the availability of financial capital and the level of success achieved by Nakshi Kantha businesses in Jamalpur, Bangladesh.

**H2:** The extent of marketing and promotional activities positively influences the success of Nakshi Kantha businesses in Jamalpur, Bangladesh.

**H3:** Government and banking support have a positive impact on the success of Nakshi Kantha businesses in Jamalpur, Bangladesh.

**H4:** There is a significant positive relationship between the demand for Nakshi Kantha products and the success of businesses producing them in Jamalpur, Bangladesh.

**H5:** Opportunities for foreign direct trade positively affect the success of Nakshi Kantha businesses in Jamalpur, Bangladesh.

**H6:** Greater unity and coordination among business owners contribute positively to the success of Nakshi Kantha businesses in Jamalpur, Bangladesh.

**H7:** The availability of skilled labor significantly contributes to the success of Nakshi Kantha businesses in Jamalpur, Bangladesh.

## Research Methodology

### Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate the factors influencing the success of Nakshi Kantha businesses in Jamalpur, Bangladesh. A cross-sectional research approach is used to collect data from a sample of Nakshi Kantha entrepreneurs in the region.

## Sampling

The study uses stratified random sampling. Jamalpur is divided into strata based on geographical locations within the district, and then random samples are drawn from each stratum. The sample size is determined through power analysis to ensure statistical validity. A sample of 140 Nakshi Kantha entrepreneurs is selected from various regions within Jamalpur.

## Data Collection

Primary data is collected through structured questionnaires administered to Nakshi Kantha entrepreneurs. The questionnaire includes questions related to the independent variables (Financial Resources, Promotional Efforts, Institutional Support, Market Demand, International Trade Prospects, Entrepreneurial Collaboration, Workforce Competency), as well as the dependent variable (Business Success). Trained research assistants distribute and collect the questionnaires from the selected entrepreneurs. Data is collected through face-to-face interviews to ensure clarity and accuracy.

## Variables

Dependent Variable: Business Success is the dependent variable, measured using a Likert scale or a composite index derived from financial indicators. Independent Variables: Financial Resources, Promotional Efforts, Institutional Support, Market Demand, International Trade Prospects, Entrepreneurial Collaboration, and Workforce Competency are the independent variables, also measured using Likert scales or relevant indicators.

## Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages etc. are used to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Linear regression analysis is employed to examine the relationships between the independent variables and Business Success.

This analysis helps test the research hypotheses and assess the statistical significance of each predictor. Statistical software SPSS is utilized for data analysis.

## Result and Discussions

Table 1 represents demographic summary statistics reveal a balanced gender distribution (44.3% male, 55.7% female) among survey respondents. Most respondents are in the 20-29 age groups (47.1%), while the occupation mix is diverse, with entrepreneurs being the largest group (35.0%). In terms of education, there is a significant percentage with education below SSC (27.1%) and a substantial proportion in the "Others" category (38.6%).

**Table 1.** Distribution of Participants Based on Gender, Age, Occupation, Education

Variables	Scales	Freq.	Percent
Gender	Male	62	44.3
	Female	78	55.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>140</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Age	10-19	19	13.6
	20-29	66	47.1
	30-39	35	25.0
	40-49	10	7.1
	50- Above	10	7.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>140</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 1 (cont.)

Occupation	Entrepreneur	49	35.0
	Businessman	34	24.3
	Owner of Showroom	21	15.0
	Worker	23	16.4
	Others	13	9.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>140</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Education	Below SSC	38	27.1
	SSC	3	2.1
	HSC	13	9.3
	Honours/Masters	32	22.9
	Others	54	38.6
<b>Total</b>		<b>140</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Researchers' compilation based on field Survey, 2023.

Table 2 shows the model summary provides key statistics for the linear regression analysis, assessing how the independent variables (Financial Resources, Promotional Efforts, Institutional Support, Market Demand, International Trade Prospects, Entrepreneurial Collaboration, Workforce Competency) relate to the dependent variable (Business Success) in Nakshi Kantha businesses in Jamalpur, Bangladesh.

Table 2. Model Summary

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.853 <sup>a</sup>	.728	.713	.387	.728	50.368	7	132	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Workforce Competency, Market Demand, Promotional Efforts, Institutional Support, Entrepreneurial Collaboration, Financial Resources, International Trade Prospects

b. Dependent Variable: Business Success

Source: Analysis conducted by researchers using SPSS Output, 2023.

**R (Correlation Coefficient):** Indicates a strong positive relationship between the independent variables and Business Success, with an R value of 0.853.

**R<sup>2</sup> (R-Square):** About 72.8% of Business Success variation can be explained by the independent variables.

**Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>:** Considering the number of predictors, it is 0.713, suggesting the model's explanatory power remains strong.

**Std. Error of the Estimate:** Measures prediction accuracy, with a value of 0.387 indicating the average difference between predicted and actual Business Success.

**F Change:** Significantly improved the model's fit, with a high value of 50.368 and a low p-value (0.000).

This model effectively explains how the independent variables collectively influence Business Success in Nakshi Kantha businesses. High R<sup>2</sup> and a significant F Change highlight the model's strength in capturing these relationships.

Table 3 in this section presents the analysis of variance (ANOVA) table, which assesses the statistical significance of the linear regression model for predicting Business Success based on the independent variables in Nakshi Kantha businesses in Jamalpur, Bangladesh.

**Table 3.** ANOVA and Fstatistics

ANOVA <sup>b</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	52.860	7	7.551	50.368	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	19.790	132	.150		
	Total	72.650	139			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Workforce Competency, Market Demand, Promotional Efforts, Institutional Support, Entrepreneurial Collaboration, Financial Resources, International Trade Prospects

b. Dependent Variable: Business Success

Source: Analysis conducted by researchers using SPSS Output, 2023.

**Model:** This row represents the regression model's components. The sum of squares (52.860) attributed to the variation explained by the regression model with its predictors. The sum of squares (19.790) representing unexplained variation or errors within the model. The total sum of squares (72.650), combining both explained and unexplained variation.

**Predictors:** Lists the independent variables included in the model: Workforce Competency, Market Demand, Promotional Efforts, Institutional Support, Entrepreneurial Collaboration, Financial Resources, International Trade Prospects.

**Dependent Variable:** Specifies the variable the model aims to predict, which is Business Success. The F statistic (F) tests whether the variance explained by the model (Regression) is significantly greater than the unexplained variance (Residual). In this case, the F statistic is 50.368, with a corresponding p-value (Sig.) of less than 0.001 (indicated as .000a), suggesting that the regression model is statistically significant. ANOVA table indicates that the linear regression model, with its independent variables, is a statistically significant predictor of Business Success in Nakshi Kantha businesses in Jamalpur, Bangladesh

Table 4 provides an overview of the Coefficients table, with detailed explanations for each row presented below.

**Table 4.** Coefficients

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>										
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
(Constant)	-.634	.315		-2.016	.046	-1.256	-.012			
Financial Resources	.421	.054	.456	7.790	.000	.314	.528	.750	.561	.354
Promotional Efforts	.226	.052	.232	4.355	.000	.124	.329	.577	.354	.198
Institutional Support	.012	.042	.014	.289	.773	-.071	.095	.066	.025	.013
Market Demand	.108	.052	.100	2.052	.042	.004	.211	.342	.176	.093
International Trade Prospects	.252	.061	.254	4.131	.000	.131	.373	.697	.338	.188
Entrepreneurial Collaboration	.013	.057	.011	.223	.824	-.101	.126	.318	.019	.010
Workforce Competency	.093	.043	.106	2.150	.033	.007	.178	.337	.184	.098

a. Dependent Variable: BusinessSuccess

Source: Analysis conducted by researchers using SPSS Output, 2023.

**Model:** This section represents the linear regression model used in the analysis.

**Unstandardized Coefficients:** These coefficients provide information about the estimated impact of each independent variable on the dependent variable (Business Success) without standardizing. The constant, represented by  $-.634$ , is the estimated intercept of the regression equation. It indicates the expected value of Business Success when all independent variables are zero. This coefficient is  $.421$ , suggesting that for a one-unit increase in Financial Resources, the estimated increase in Business Success is  $.421$  units. With a coefficient of  $.226$ , a one-unit increase in Promotional Efforts corresponds to a  $.226$  unit increase in Business Success. This coefficient is  $.012$ , indicating a very weak positive impact on Business Success. With a coefficient of  $.108$ , a one-unit increase in Market Demand is associated with a  $.108$  unit increase in Business Success. This coefficient is  $.252$ , indicating a positive relationship between International Trade Prospects and Business Success. The coefficient for Entrepreneurial Collaboration is  $.013$ , suggesting a very weak positive effect on Business Success. With a coefficient of  $.093$ , a one-unit increase in Workforce Competency corresponds to a  $.093$  unit increase in Business Success.

**Standardized Coefficients (Beta):** Beta values represent the standardized coefficients, allowing for comparison of the relative strength of each predictor's effect on the dependent variable. Financial Resources has a Beta value of  $.456$ , indicating it has a relatively stronger influence on Business Success compared to other variables.

**t-statistic (t):** The t-statistic measures the significance of each coefficient. Larger absolute t-values indicate greater significance. Financial Resources and Promotional Efforts have relatively large t-values, indicating their stronger impact on Business Success.

**Sig. (Significance):** This column provides the p-value associated with each coefficient. In this case, all predictors except Institutional Support and Entrepreneurial Collaboration have p-values less than  $0.05$ , indicating their statistical significance. This means they are likely to have a real impact on Business Success.

**95% Confidence Interval for B:** These intervals provide a range within which the true coefficients are likely to fall with 95% confidence.

**Correlations:** The "Zero-order" correlation represents the unadjusted correlation between each independent variable and Business Success. The "Partial" correlation takes into account the influence of other variables in the model. These correlations help understand the relationships between variables.

## Conclusion

Finally, this quantitative investigation provides valuable insights into the determinants of success in Nakshi Kantha businesses in Jamalpur, Bangladesh. Nakshi Kantha, a traditional handcrafted embroidery technique, holds both cultural and economic significance in the region. The study examined seven independent variables—Financial Resources, Promotional Efforts, Institutional Support, Market Demand, International Trade Prospects, Entrepreneurial Collaboration, and Workforce Competency—in relation to Business Success. The findings of this research highlight the importance of these factors in influencing the success of Nakshi Kantha businesses. Financial Resources, Promotional Efforts, International Trade Prospects, Market Demand, and Workforce Competency were identified as significant drivers of business success. Government and banking support, as well as Entrepreneurial Collaboration, had weaker associations with success but remain important considerations. This study underscores the need for Nakshi Kantha entrepreneurs and policymakers to focus on securing financial resources, investing in marketing efforts, nurturing a skilled workforce, and exploring international trade prospects. Collaboration among business owners and government and banking support should



also be encouraged to support the sustainable development and economic prosperity of the Nakshi Kantha industry in Jamalpur, Bangladesh. These findings provide a roadmap for addressing the challenges faced by Nakshi Kantha businesses and ensuring their continued growth and success.

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