

CULTURAL FACTORS OF FAMILY BUSINESS SUCCESSION: A CASE STUDY IN BATIK INDUSTRY

Abdurokhim^{1*}, Puspo Dewi Dirgantari², Merlinda Intan Fauziah³ and Muhammad Khoirul Umam⁴

^{1,3,4} Politeknik Siber Cerdika Internasional, Indonesia.

² Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia.

Email: ¹abdurokhim@polteksci.ac.id (*Corresponding Author), ²puspodewi@upi.edu,

³merlinda_intan@polteksci.ac.id, ⁴muhhammad_khoirul@polteksci.ac.id

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Abstract

The succession process becomes crucial if the company does not regenerate leadership. The indicator is the difficulty of reaching the third generation. Hundreds of batik entrepreneurs in Trusmi Batik Center survived from generation to generation, even to the fifth and eighth generations. This study aims to identify business succession factors in family companies, primarily cultural and value factors, to help them survive from generation to generation. The research was conducted using a qualitative approach and a case study method. The main instrument is to use interviews directly with the owner or other parties who support the research. The informants involved were two batik entrepreneurs, namely Batik Ninik Ichsan (5th generation) and Batik Katura (8th generation). Interviews were conducted using guidelines containing 50 research questions and 7 indicators, one of which is an indicator of culture and values. The results show that the pattern of succession in the Batik Industry is always hereditary, i.e. parents will pass their business on to their children through the same business or the establishment of a new business for each child. The pattern of succession in the batik industry with distinctive characteristics can be considered by other family businesses in different industries because it is vital in values, culture, and locality so that business continuity is strong enough to exceed more than three generations.

Keywords: Culture and Values, Business Succession, Family Companies, Batik Industry.

1. INTRODUCTION

Succession to a company or family business occupies a very strategic position, especially in maintaining the company's business sustainability (Wahjono, 2011). Very few family companies survive into the third generation and beyond. Because the succession process is essential, it requires careful planning to prepare successors for the next generation. In the succession process, there is a relationship between succession success business performance and the existence or sustainability of a family company. (Abdurokhim, 2024)

The Family Firm Institute concludes that most family business owners want to see their business transferred to the next generation. It is estimated that 70% will last on the 2nd generation, and 90% will not make it to the 3rd generation (Grant, 2011). Many family companies need help going through 3 (three) generations (Widyasmoro, 2008), (Magnadi et al., 2021)

In line with the data above, Price Waterhouse Cooper (PwC) released the results of its research on family companies published in 2014 in Indonesia, which showed that 95% of companies in Indonesia are family companies or businesses (Survey Bisnis Keluarga 2014 Indonesia, 2014). PwC records show that 40,000 wealthy people in Indonesia, or about 0.2% of the total population in Indonesia, run family business businesses.

The number of family company's accounts for 25% of Indonesia's total domestic product (GDP) based on 2014 data. The contribution of family businesses is very influential on the Indonesian economy, but it still leaves problems. As PwC finds, the problem is that the regeneration of leadership or company ownership is maximally stopped in the third generation, with 30% of the total family companies in Indonesia, and no company has reached the fourth generation.

Failure in succession or the cessation of the baton of leadership in family companies, one of which is the absence of successors, causes the sustainability of family companies to stop in only one or two generations. The small success rate of each family company in transferring the business to the next generation gives rise to an idiom in the family business that "the first generation is establishing, the second generation is building, and the third generation is destroying" (Wahjono, 2011).

Succession in the first generation, usually the founders of family companies, can no longer lead the company due to age but feel that the next generation is still being prepared. Meanwhile, second-generation companies have other problems related to succession. Usually, company leaders find it necessary to help the decision-maker. Consideration of two things, namely loyalty and emotional closeness between successors, is a complex issue to solve (Baer, 2007). Then, when the family company has reached the third generation, there is a shift in the problem, namely whether to choose a successor from within the family members (Kellermanns et al., 2008) or from outside with various considerations. Furthermore, when succession problems occur in fourth-generation family companies, most of the succession problems are caused by value-added factors from employees about corporate culture (Zulfikar, 2004).

All generations of family company leaders must have a plan so that the succession process can run well and maintain business continuity and family relationships. Succession unpreparedness factors or succession planning will affect success. A 2016 survey of family businesses published by the National Bureau of Economic Research Family Business Alliance found that 43% of the world's family-owned businesses still need a succession plan. However, approximately three-quarters of companies plan to pass ownership to the next generation, who will only sometimes be successful in continuing the legacy (Eisenberg, 2019).

A survey by Jakarta Consulting Group stated that not all companies had prepared the next generation, or as many as 67.8% and 32.2% have not even prepared the next generation because the younger generation is not interested, and it is challenging to determine children who will continue (Kamener & Putri, 2017).

The batik industry chosen was Batik Trusmi because apart from being an Indonesian cultural heritage recognized by UNESCO (Galih, 2017), it has also become a cultural heritage in Cirebon Regency that must be preserved and become a business centre that has an economic impact on its people. The Trusmi Batik Center is located in Trusmi Kulon Village, Weru District, and Cirebon Regency, the centre's location for developing the batik industry in Cirebon. Batik Trusmi has existed since the 14th century and still survives today with various developments accompanying it (Batik Foundation, 2014). At least in the last 10 years, the Trusmi Batik Center business units have continued to increase. In 2014, according to data from the Industry and Trade Department of Cirebon Regency, there were 420 business units with a total of 4,462 employees, which continued to increase the following year (Disperindag, 2015). The

business unit is located in Trusmi Kulon Village and its surroundings, which are included in Weru District and Plered District, Cirebon Regency.

Based on a preliminary study of hundreds of batik entrepreneurs in the Trusmi batik centre, most are family businesses that are continued or come from families of batik craftsmen who create new businesses (Ninik, 2019). Can survive *Trusmi* until now and even up to the eighth generation. Because the average business in the Trusmi Batik area is a family business, succession is a significant agenda for family companies. The planning and succession process of each batik entrepreneur in Trusmi must be different from one another. For this reason, preparing the next generation in the future must be done with careful planning and a process that takes time to maintain batik from the cultural and traditional side and business continuity.

Research that discusses succession patterns in family companies was carried out previously in previous studies ((Luan et al., 2018); (Morris et al., 1996); (Bakoğlu & Yıldırım, 2016)) conducted the same study, namely in the succession of family companies, but the studies above are still exploring the pattern of succession in companies. Families with middle to upper scale still need to be in smaller family companies or SMEs. The different types of companies certainly have differences in the process and pattern of succession. Other previous research is from ((Fletcher et al., 2012); (Dhaenens et al., 2018); (Mussolino & Calabrò, 2014); (Luan et al., 2018); (Morris et al., 1996); (Bakoğlu & Yıldırım, 2016)), which describes the overall average of previous studies showing the research process using the literature review or literature study and not on empirical research on the practice of family firms. The results showed many recommendations for future research. In addition, empirical research is also carried out on companies with a medium to upper scale, which is different from what the researchers took in this paper, namely in small and medium industries or MSMEs. In a more substantial context, previous research is still examining many factors that might be a solution for the sustainability of a family company business but have not linked traditional cultural values to achieve success in the succession process.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Family business succession is the transfer of leadership and ownership of the family business to successors from the next generation. Over the last decade, several studies have been conducted on the topic. (Luan et al., 2018) conceptual research studies the exclusion of female successors in family businesses. The exclusion of female candidates could lead to an adverse reaction to the future of business because they have the required potential and can be the most worthy successors compared to their male counterparts. This issue has received little attention, even though the consequences can have a negative impact on the family business. The estranged daughter will lose interest in the family business and be unwilling to contribute to future problems. Sibling rivalry can also occur when a business is passed on to a female successor while an older brother still joins the business (Vera & Dean, 2005).

Different empirical findings related to gender roles can be observed from the work of (Chen et al., 2018) conducted in a three-decade family business in China. Although rooted in Confucian culture, contemporary family businesses in China welcome female successors, most likely due to specific institutional changes that have taken place in China over the last few decades. An example of a change is the One Child Policy,

which limits the options for incumbents to choose future business successors. (Hofstede et al., 2010) categorize China as a country with a relatively high value of masculinity, meaning that Chinese society will place more emphasis on competition and success. Acceptance of female successors in (Chen et al., 2018) this research is unique because it is not in accordance with Chinese values but was finally accepted due to institutional changes.

The study of family business succession in Indonesia is starting to get attention. The findings of the succession process in the hotel industry (Tirdasari & Dhewanto, 2012) reveal that incumbents already have a clear succession path and will transfer ownership and business leadership to their daughters. This finding is predictable because Indonesian society tends to be feminine (Hofstede et al., 2005). A similar result was presented by (Ramadani et al., 2017) who state that the participation of Indonesian women in family businesses in big cities in Indonesia is extensive, especially for those with higher education and broad business insight. In Indonesia, the emphasis on family business succession is not on the gender of the successor but rather on preserving harmony (Perdhana, 2014).

Gender issues and sibling rivalry are just one of the challenges in family business succession. Many other factors, such as the incumbent's willingness to relinquish control, survival of successors, role conflicts and stereotypes, also pose challenges during the transition period (Vera & Dean, 2005). Even though a successor has been appointed, the incumbent is sometimes too reluctant to give his successor complete control of the business. Reasons may vary, from psychological factors of fear of losing power and loss of personal identity (Harveston et al., 1997) to the perception that successors are not worthy enough to take over the family business (Handler, 1994). Both the incumbent and the successor can also experience role conflicts, where each does not know when to act as parent/child and when to act as employer/employee. This situation hinders the transfer of knowledge and authority to successors. When the successor is male, the pressing need for power can make succession happen more quickly than expected (Dyck et al., 2002). Female successors are also at risk of being perceived as "little girl fathers", which makes succession take longer than it should (Vera & Dean, 2005). Apart from information about the challenges experienced during the succession process, findings from previous studies need to be tested and implemented in different cultural contexts. The unique phenomenon of enduring business in Trusmi Batik Village raises several questions for this research: (1) Does the batik industry in Indonesia have the same pattern of succession as other family businesses in other countries? (2) How did they survive for generations? (3) Are there specific cultural aspects that need to be highlighted in their succession process?

Such questions are essential to understand better the application of research results to family businesses in non-Western contexts. To answer this question, this research uses a qualitative case study method to provide a better nuance in investigating the Batik family business's succession pattern. This study adopts the cultural values framework of Hofstede et al. (2010b), which believes that people from different cultures will have their own uniqueness because of "cultural programming of the mind". Therefore, this study would like to propose a hypothesis: that the findings of family business succession in the family business of the Batik Industry in Indonesia are likely to be unique and different from the findings of previous studies, especially studies conducted in the context of Western culture.

3. METHOD

The type of research used is qualitative, namely, the type of research that seeks to understand the phenomenon in its natural context (according to the incident) and not from a formation in a laboratory where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon being observed (Leedy & Ormrod, 2023). Qualitative research involves using and collecting various empirically studied materials such as case studies, personal experiences, introspective life stories, interviews, and observational, historical, interactional and visual texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings and meanings in an individual's life (Denzin & Lincoln, 2004). Qualitative research also seeks to explore and understand the different meanings of truth by different people. Based on Lincoln's definition, one qualitative research approach is a case study, and the researcher decided to use a case study approach in this research. The determination of case studies is adjusted to the problems and phenomena that arise in the context of object research.

According to Yin, case study research is a research approach that explores a phenomenon in its context using data from various sources (Yin, 2009). In the case study approach, the main focus is to emphasize the importance of the case at each stage of the research process and to answer research problems that begin with the question of how or why (Creswell, 2014).

This study uses interviews as an instrument to collect data from sources. Interviews were conducted with 50 questions related to the succession process in the industry Trusmi batik. The interview was conducted for 120 minutes for one research location, each 30 minutes using a voice recorder. The results of the interviews were then described and analyzed. Each interview was opened by asking the respondents about their background in the business. Afterwards, the interviewer ensured the following questions flowed naturally based on the participant's answers to the first question. The interviewer uses probing to ensure that each respondent's answers cover all the topics in the interview guide.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Batik entrepreneurs in Trusmi village are divided into two, namely batik craftsmen and batik showrooms. A craftsman only works on batik orders from consumers for individual needs and resale. While showroom owners are batik entrepreneurs more dominant in reselling in shops (boutiques), most showrooms do not employ their craftsmen. Many factors are related to Trusmi's sustainability, which is where craftsmen and entrepreneurs survive. Traditionally, it is said that Trusmi village is destined as a batik environment, which explains the number of businesses that have survived from generation to generation. To explain this phenomenon, this study conducted observations from two research locations to investigate the problem under study.

The first family business is Batik Ninik Ichsan. According to various sources, it is one of the oldest in the Trusmi Batik industrial area in Trusmi Kulon Village, Cirebon Regency. Batik Ninik Ichsan was established in 1978 as the successor to Batik Masinah, which is no longer in operation. During his journey, Ninik Ichsan was forced to close his business in 1997 due to the economic crisis. In 2000, it resumed production and consistently produced fine hand-drawn batik. Ninik Masruni Masinah, the fifth generation of the family, leads the family business, carrying the torch handed

down by her parents, Masinah and Narsipo, who are the fourth and third generations, respectively.

The second business is Batik Katura, which has been around since 1974. The owner is Pak Katura, the eighth generation of his family line in the batik business. His father is Pak Kasmin, the seventh generation, and his grandmother is Ibu Asgani, the sixth generation. Katura is considered one of the essential artists in the Trusmi Batik area because of their achievement in breaking the national record of the Indonesian National Record Museum.

Based on field research through direct interviews with several informants, including the owner of each batik and assisted by relatives, children, and senior employees encountered, the results of the research are described in the following categories.

4.1 Relationships, Communication and Conflict Management

Theoretically, the process of succession can be a highly emotional and controversial issue that can cause important breakdowns in business within the family (Harveston et al., 1997). So it is very important that this succession has been agreed upon by all family members. In this case, Ninik Ichsan's Batik does not matter because almost all of the siblings have opened their own batik business. As stated by the following informant,

“Eight children, two of whom do not make batik. Mr. Masnedi, Mrs. Ninik, Mrs. Uka, then Mr. Yanto, Mr. Udip, and Mr. Budi, the six brothers are still working in the batik industry.” (Susilo)

Susilo also explained that about 99% of Trusmi's people have made a living from the batik business, almost all of them are hereditary businesses, a similar case was also found in Batik Katura where 10 of his brothers were involved in the batik business. but they tend to focus more on being craftsmen. As batik craftsmen, parents Katura and Ninik Masinah imparted knowledge and skills to their children, which led to the initiative to open their own batik business. Based on whether the successor has batik skills, or just wants to trade batik. Parental support for children when they want to set up their own business results in no conflict of parents' business ownership.

4.2 Succession Planning

The reported by all informants simultaneously has one thing in common, namely that there is no written or unwritten agreement regarding the child whom I will inherit the business. Usually, family businesses must have documents that regulate in writing about the process of family business mechanisms and the relationship between family and business in the sense of succession planning (Brenes et al., 2011). The informant assured the researcher that the unplanned succession process in the batik business was quite normal in Trusmi.

“From the beginning we were (born) in the batik environment. My father and mother are batik makers and batik entrepreneurs. Initially, we started a batik business, so when we were little, our parents helped us in batik processing. From A to Z. That was when I worked in batik since I was 11 years old. Then when I grew up or was a teenager, in 1974, I started to develop my own business.” (Katura)

Katura emphasized that his success as one of Trusmi's leading batik artists cannot be separated from the environment in which he was raised. Not all children will master

the art of batik, so later the child will become a batik artist, or batik trader. Whatever the choice, the parents support the child's decision.

In the case of Batik Ninik Ichsan, Ninik Masinah admitted that she never knew about succession planning. She said that her parents' batik business should be continued, and she did so without coercion. His parents' efforts did not specify a specific brand or company name, because for batik, the most important selling point is not the brand, but the quality of the batik itself. Therefore, in the batik industry, children do not inherit the "company" but inherit the art Batik skills that differ from one craftsman to another.

4.3 Selection of Successors and Mentoring Process

In the previous literature, successors were selected based on specific criteria set by the incumbent. When assessing potential successors, criteria such as education, technology skills, and managerial and financial skills must be considered. Other factors such as age, gender and birth order are less critical (Brockhaus, 2004). In the case of Trusmi's batik business, researchers found different results, and each informant stated that the consideration of successor voters was not based on gender, skills, or even education level. Anyone can become the successor of the family business. No specific successor is chosen because anyone can be the successor to the parent business. The same condition also occurs in Batik Katura, where all siblings have opened their own batik business. Children can open their businesses even though their parents are still alive. Although some will see this as premature, children's businesses can be supervised by parents, who will provide the necessary assistance. Parents will order batik from their children, share their employees, teach incomplete batik techniques, and even share a network of buyers with their children.

The parents of Katura and Ninik Masinah assisted in the batik industry. As a small business, batik artisans have involved their children from an early age in batik activities. Katura said that he had received direct assistance from his parents since he was 11. Meanwhile, Ninik Masinah has been involved in batik since elementary school. They do it as an obligatory obligation set by their parents in their free time. Thus, the two businesses in this study were indirectly prepared for the succession process by their parents. Compared to the literature, the difference is that parents will carry out the same mentoring process for all children, not just the preferred successor.

4.4 The culture and values of the Batik Industry

Were preserved by both participants. The two of them also firmly stated that in the future, their successors would also preserve the culture and business values. Batik Ninik Ichsan argues that this business consistently maintains the characteristics of Trusmi's handmade batik and prevents the desire to sell "rough" batik that does not pay attention to quality and detail, even though it is more profitable.

"I keep reminding them (the children): please don't sell rough batik. Why? Because capital is not strong. If you work in rough batik, big companies will crush it later. Focus your business on providing batik of superior quality." (Ninik Masinah)

Katura has proven that preserving tradition is very important in the batik business. Her award-winning batiks are based on traditional motifs and contain a social and moral message. Thus, innovation in batik ways is almost impossible done; because you cannot paint batik using a machine, otherwise it will lose value because it is not done in the traditional way.

4.5 Lessons from Outside

There is a tendency in family businesses where the successor must get work experience outside the family business. However, this rule does not apply in the batik business. Although there is a process that must be studied, the informants said that there was no need for external lessons because they got a lot of experience from their parents. This was experienced by Katura who since the age of 11 has been involved in learning batik from her parents. In the case of Ninik Masinah, the lesson learned is not ha her about the batik production process; but also, the entire business process of the batik industry.

"I started in this field since I was a child. I saw it and the sooner I got the hang of it. I think my parents' house which serves as a production facility makes it easier for me to do that." (Ninik Masinah)

5. CONCLUSION

Trusmi Village is the location and centre of development of local culture in the archipelago in the form of batik. Batik itself is an intangible art made using wax (wax). The batik industry in the Trusmi area has grown more rapidly than in the previous 10 years. It can be seen from the interest of tourists who make the Trusmi Batik Center a mandatory destination when visiting Cirebon. The growing modernization of the business made it more acceptable in many circles. Most business actors in Trusmi are MSMEs, and almost 90% of Trusmi residents live in batik, both becoming batik craftsmen and entrepreneurs.

The rapid development of the batik industry is based on history, which began in the 14th century and persists to this day. This long endurance is an exciting thing to research. Based on preliminary research, when researchers were interviewed at the observation stage, it was found that there was one batik craftsman and entrepreneur who was in the fifth generation. If drawn according to many studies, the average company only reaches the third generation. Even after the field research took place, the researchers found that there was one craftsman figure who was the eighth generation. This may occur in the environment. The succession process could be better. So, to find out how the power of regeneration occurred at the Trusmi Batik Center, the researcher used several aspects to find answers to the abovementioned events. These aspects include the relationship and handling of generational conflicts, succession planning, selection of successors, and mentoring. This study seeks to present the business succession process at the Trusmi Batik Center Cirebon.

The research results discussed in the previous chapter show that the possibility of conflict at the level of the next generation, which becomes a candidate for successor, is very small. This is due to a unique succession pattern in which every owner or entrepreneur, batik craftsman, and his children will continue by themselves by opening new businesses that are not the result of inheritance from their parents.

The absence of succession planning is a differentiator in the company at the Trusmi Batik Center. Suppose a company is formed through a process to be able to lead the business of his parents. However, in Trusmi, business owners do not care about their children whether they want to continue or not. Still, whether they realize it or not, the business owners know that in the natural process of running in the environment, their children will return to the Trusmi batik industry. The researcher concluded this incident because the batik business owners know that their business will close and their

children will open a new business (if interested) because the predecessor's name cannot be used if he has died. In addition, many children cannot be inherited from one place, so naturally, they open their respective areas and let their parents' businesses close.

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