USING ACTION RESEARCH IN TRAINING TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE OF BATIK BUSINESS GROUP IN JARUM BAVAT KLATEN

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Abstract

Want to have an independent business is a dream of some batik crafts workers who become members of a batik business group in 'arum, Bayat, Klaten. However, lack of knowledge and experience in managing the business seems to be obstacles. To overcome these obstacles, we provided training using action research method. Purpose of this action research was to give impact of changes in the journey of business of this group. Action research applied in training to reduce problems that arise in the trainirfs· and to enhance the training strategy. Subjects in this study were members of batik business group in larum, Bayat, Klaten. Age of the group members were ranged between 34-56 years, most of them (more than 80%) were graduated from elementary school and the remaining were graduated from junior high school. Action research was done in 4 cycles. Results showed that delivery of the training materials needs to be fitted to the educational level of participants. They did not need too many theories, but the things that were practical. Participants would be able to accept the knowledge if the examples given related to what they face in their daily. In delivering the knowledge, participants liked the two-way communication and seem actively involved in discussions. The using of technology (e.g. PowerPoint[r] and viewer) can be done to display images, but not in the delivery of the knowledge. Ice breaking is preferred because it can break boredom and rebuild the spirit in the training.

Keywords: action research, the training strategy, a business group of batik.

INTRODUCTION

Batik is a cloth that is made traditionally using a manual wax-resist dyeing technique. Application of this technique in cloth actually is an ancient art form. Discoveries showed it already existed in Egypt in the 4th century BC.[1]

People often revers to the development of Majapahit Kingdom and the spreading of Islam in Java when talk about the history of Batik in Indonesia. In the prior time, Batik was the art owned by the King's family. In the 17th century, this art then owned by Solo and Jogjakarta folk, and then spread widely throughout Java Island. Next, batik then became commodity of trading.

According to the Museum of Cultural History of Oslo, Javanese immigrants to Malaysia brought the art of batik with them. That's why the production of hand drawn batik in Malaysia is related to the Javanese batik tulis. In Sub Sahara Africa, Javanese batik was introduced in the 19th century by Dutch and English traders. The local people there adapted the Javanese batik, with some modifications in the motives and colors. In the 1970s, batik was introduced to the aboriginal community in Australia, who then developed it as their own craft. [1]

Batik then became globalize. As part of acknowledgment, UNESCO insisted that Indonesia preserve their heritage, and designated Indonesian batik as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity on October 2, 2009. [1]

One of famous batik producer areas in Java Island is Bayat, a sub-district of Klaten district, Central of Java. This area is located about 21 kips from the east of Klaten city, The technique of wax-resist dyeing is not only applicated in clothes media here, but also in lumbers media (such as tables, chairs, cabinets. windows, and even guitars), Once given a

touch of batik, the price of cloth or lumber products can raise many times more than the price of the raw products.

Unfortunately, the high price of batik products does not followed by the high wages of batik craft workers, who are mostly women. The wage rate they receive is far from proper Living standard. This condition lead to the reducing of young people interested in batik crafting. Instead being a batik craft workers, they tend to find other job. If it is continued, batik will be extinct, as there are no workers doing the craft.

Related to the lack of wages they received, the batik craft workers from Jarurn village, Bayat sub-district, formed a batik business group named "Putri Kawung". They expect, being the owner of the business together with their friends like this would increase their income. However, since they only had experiences as a batik craft worker, there are many things they have to learn, particularly those related to managerial. That's why we wanted to help them by providing training on managerial. But we faced a challenge, the business group members have low level of education.

Result of our prior observations of the delivery of some training given by our colleagues to small entrepreneurs showed that they used "too much" technologies (e.g. using of PowerPoint4v and viewer) and too many theories in delivering the training. Besides, a lot of training subject they delivered based on the trainers themselves, not based on the trainees. So, then we were questioning: could the small entrepreneurs, who were mostly have low level education, accept the knowledge they delivered? So, we wanted to deliver knowledge that our target audiences need. We also wanted our target audiences understand the knowledge we delivered.

Training
Training refers to the methods used to give new or present employees the skills they need to perform their jobs. Effectivity of the training can be recognized from the changes in employee's behavior and performance.

Action Research
Action research is a systematic study of the effort of improving the quality of education / training by a group of people through practical actions by reflecting on the results of actions.[4] In action research, the researcher and participant are one. Knowledge is produced through systematic inquiry, with the collaboration of those affected by education and affecting social change. [5]

The characteristic that commonly define action research include the following:
- ✓ The researcher's practice is the subject of the research.
- ✓ This research is intended to achieve both action (in the form of data driven change) and research (to develop an understading that prompts ongoing change or improvement, and to add what is known).
- ✓ It is cyclic. The later cycles used to challenge and refine the result cif earlier cycles. l This research tends to be qualitative and participative
- ✓ This research requires critical self-refection.[5]

Action research can be done through the steps following (see also Figure 1):
- ✓ First observation. The researcher observes and documents phenomena in his or her own particular setting. The results are then reflected for knowing if there are inconsistencies or tensions between values and practices. Existence of inconsistencies will lead to the next step.

- ✓ Plan and action. The researcher plans and initiates change in the setting in order to make the phenomena or practices to be more consistent with the value.
- ✓ Second observation. The researcher observes and document effects of the change, evaluates, and reflects the improvement, then modifies the change, if necessary, cycling back through the process. [161]
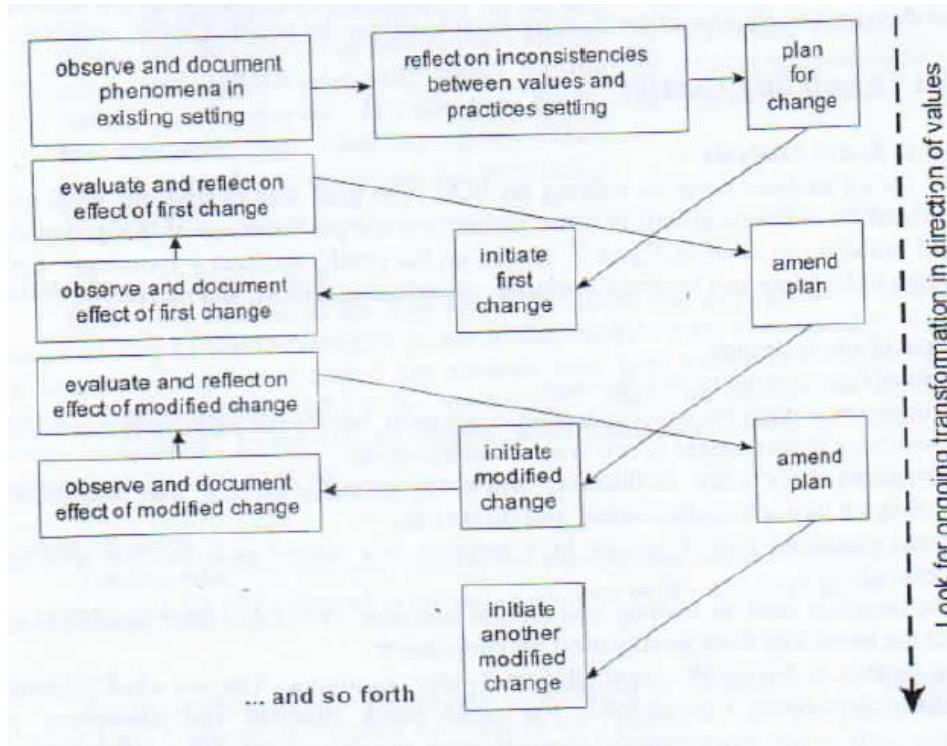

Figure 1. Basic Action Research Cycle t6]

Social Analysis

Social analysis is one form of problem-oriented approach that often accompanies action research. It focuses especially on problems experienced within organizations. According to Rowbottom, social analysis aims to help people understand better the social institutions within which they interact, so that they may modify and improve them in controlled way. The means by which an independent agent or researcher may participate and assist in this process are varied, it is include one-to-one interviews, group discussions, and written reports. [7]

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Subject

Subject of this research were batik craft workers who become members of "Putri Kawung" batik business group. Age of the group members were range between 34-56 years, more than 80% were graduated from elementary school, and the remaining were graduated from junior high school.

Social Analysis

We did social analysis by holding a focused group discussion (FGD). From this discussion. we could assess the needs of this business croup.

Action Research

This project used action research to identify, implement, and evaluate process of introduction of the training used to enhance managerial knowledge of the batik workers. Using action research would enable us to make the trainings better from time to time. So, the amount of the cycles in this action research depended on the amount of the trainings we would deliver. The amount of the training itself based on the result of social analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result of Social Analysis

Social analysis done by holding an FGD. The goal was to find out what training was needed by business groups in order to improve the performance of the group. Result showed problems as seen in Figure 1. Based on the result, we held 4 trainings: building the dream of business and business planning, capital acres, FIRM, and marketing.

Scenario of the trainings
Scenario of the trainings were following:

- ✓ Training was done by using andragogic approach, where the instructors conveyed the knowledge to participant in two-way communication.
- ✓ Instructors were only facilitators, while the problem-solving was developed by participant through brainstorming and discussion.
- ✓ There would be 2 or 3 session in a meeting. We started each session with an ice breaking.
- ✓ The language used in training was simple language_ We didn't used academic terms, but the terms that were usually used by participants.
- ✓ To be able to deliver the knowledge in 2-ways communication, we didn't deliver the information using PowerPoint°, but using blank flipchart and metaplans. After presenting a case, we conducted brainstorming and discussion. The result then written in metaplan and/or flipchart.
- ✓ Modul would be given to the participant in the end of each session, so participants' focus was not distracted during the discussion.
- ✓ For knowing whether they understand the knowledge we delivered or not, we didn't use any test, as the test might make them scared. We could know the level of their understanding from whether they did the task that fit with our request or not. We could also know that from the discussion going during the training.

Table 1. Problems and Recommendation

No	Problems	Recomendations
1.	Although they had high spirit to go forward, we caught hesitation and uncenfidentiality	Training topics: ✓ Capital access: internal ✓ Capital access: external
2.	They didn't have a lot of capital to run the business. How could they get access for getting the capital?	Training topics: ✓ Capital access: internal ✓ Capital access: external
3.	When they formed the business group, firstly they defined management person, such as chairman, secretary, and treasurer. In the discussion, we caught their confusion when we	Training topics: ✓ FIRM: organization structure and job description

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	asked them to imagine if their business run well, who will be tasked to do this and that. Furthermore, it appeared they still confused in the distribution of wages, as a batik clothes is done by some workers	✓ HRM: compensation
4.	They still confused in determining the selling price. Until that time, they determined a cost of goods sold (COGS) by only based on the variable cost they spent. The way they did for the marketing was word of mouth. They wanted to be able to sell more, but they didn't know how.	**Training topics:** ✓ Marketing: price ✓ Marketing: promotion ✓ Marketing: place

Action Research: First Cycle

In the first session of the first cycle, we asked the participants to dream. Even dream that they thought impossible to reach. Participants were also asked to write down how they would reach that dream. The answers were then written in mctaplan, collected, mad, and posted on the wall by the resemblance. Then we explain the importance of dreams in business. In the second session, participants were asked to create a simple business plan for their business.

Training situation

Training situation was very conducive. Participants seemed enthusiastic to follow the process, and did not awkward in providing answers to the questions given.

Evaluation

We had problems of the setting time. The timing of the training was longer than the planned time. It happened because we want to wait patiently until the participants could complete the given task. As the impact of the length of the training time, some participants that seemed enthusiastic at the first time, then seemed sleepy in the middle of training.

What change did we want to try in the next cycles?

Time management would be tightened. Participants would be motivated to complit the task as soon as possible. To refresh the body, especially considering the training participants sat cross-legged on the floor, in the middle of training we would give an exercise. Exercise could be done through a small game that was not time consuming. Through this exercise the circulation of the blood would flow more smoothly so it was expected to be reduced drowsiness.

Action Research: Second Cycle

The material in this second cycle contained more 'theory' than the previous cycle, although the discussion of the case also remained to be done. Activities begun with the reading of a case about small businesses that lack of capital. Participants were asked to discuss whether the employer should take the credit or not. If the employer should take the credit, where did she get the credit from?

Training situation

When discussing the case, participants seemed enthusiastic. Participants could explain how they have been practicing the savings and loan. But when talking about

'theory', for example the requirement from a hank where we wan to borrow the money, some participants seemed sleepy.

Evaluation

Different topics would give different effects on training situation. In this second training, beside the discussion, there was some 'theory' needed to be delivered. Based on our observations, participants were more enthusiastic when discussing than listening to the theory. They liked if the examples or questions given close to what they do. For example, savings and loans. They enthusiastically explained how they practice savings and loans for personal gain. We only added a little bit information to the implementation of the savings and loans to groups (related to how they can get capital from external source). But when the discussion related to the 'theory' about how they can get in touch with a bank as provider of capital (especially in relation to any issues that must be fulfilled when they are going to borrow), participants looked bored/sleepy. It might be because they could not apply the topic being disscused in the near future.

Another thing, participants were not used to use Indonesian within a long time. Some participants even used the Javanese when asked or answered questions. Although they could catch the material given in Indonesian, it seems this thing needs to be taken into consideration.

According to the input from cycle 1, where participants need to be asked to move the body in the middle of the training, the participants seemed like activity. Some commented, "hmmm... fresh ..."

What change did we want to try in the next cycles?

Training materials (such us cases of discussions, examples, and also questions) must be close to what is usually faced by participants. In addition, the delivery of materials might be more effective if sometimes interspersed with the Javanese.

Action Research: Third Cycle

In this cycle, *the* participants were asked to make an organizational structure based on existing activities in Weir business group. Each job in the organizational structure also needed to be describe, so clear who will run the job right. In the session about compensation, participants were asked to determine the wage of each job. Of course, the amount of the wage should be higher than the amount of wage they got as a batik craft workers. Participants were also asked to explain the benefits of compensation.

Training situation

Participants did not realize that they were actually working on assigned tasks of training. Perhaps it was because *the* task they done was something they need. Therefore, they did the task seriously.

Evaluation

Participants seemed enjoy the process of learning. This is because the task assigned related to their immediate needs. So the task was solution of their real problem. In this cycle, the time seemed to be a problem again. as the time allocated was not enough. So. the training time is longer for this cycle.

What change did we want to try in the next cycle?

Time allocation was different from a topic to another topics, depended on the kit and the weight of the material in the topic, as well as the task assigned

Action Research: Fourth Cycle
Participants were asked to determine the selling price of its products. For it, they need to understand what meant by cost of goods sold (COGS). Participants were also asked to specify how did they promote their products and how did they market it.

Training situation
Training situation was very conducive. Participants seemed enthusiastic to follow the process (particularly the discussion), and did not awkward in answering the questions given.. Participants could explain how they set the prices (although after being calculated, the selling price was below COGS). However, alter the discussion ended and continued to the delivery a tittle theory, some participants seemed very sleepy. They said they watched a football game on television the night before.

Evaluation
Under conditions of participants drowsy from lack of sleep, a discussion on the real problems was able to maintain them to stay awake.

Analysis of overall trainings
Number of participants attended the training was ranged around 14-20s, each time arrivals (50-70% of all members of the group). We could not force all members to attend this training, as it was voluntary (we did not give any money to the presence of the participants). However, about 30% of the members were present at all training (the remaining were, absent shiftly). Some participants asked permittion when they couldn't attend the training, for example, when they have to ˉrewang" !help a neighbor or relative who hold a celebration). There was also a participant that almost in every training got extra tasks from her boss. The other participant analized that the boss was not willing the participant to be more advanced.

CONCLUSIONS

1) Related to the training materials
    a. The delivery of the training materials needs to be lined to the educational level of participants. They did not need too many theories, but the things that were practical.
    b. Participants would be able to accept the knowledge if the examples given related to what they face in their daily.
    c. In delivering the knowledge, it was necessary that sometime we interspersed with the local language (Javanese).

2) Related to the delivery of knowledge
    d. Participants liked the two-way communication in delivering the knowledge and seem actively involved in discussions.
    e. The using of technology (e PowerPoinr and viewer) can be done to display images, but not in the delivery of the knowledge. The using of technology in delivering the knowledge might annoy the 2-way communication.
    f. In delivering the knowledge. ice breaking is preferred because it can break boredom and rebuild the spirit in the training**.**

Recommendation
Result of this research can't be generalized to all of industry or business group. The most important thing in the implementation of training was need assessment, as there could

be any differences of needs among one group to another. We should also consider the character of the participants, such as level of education, passion, and seriousness in making a change. Recognition of the charactor will help in determining the treatment of the business group.

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