Part IV: Training Intervention

Non-Conventional Soft Skills Training Intervention for Garment Factory Workers

- How do we train soft skills? -

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What are the challenges in training soft skills?

• Interpreting the idea to fit into the specific work conditions.

• Soft skills tend to be taught in an abstract and general manner, so most of the trainings offer knowledge on soft skills at conceptual levels.

• However, recently, there are arguments that soft skills should be learned contextually. Trainees may find it difficult to connect generals concepts with their everyday situations at the workplace (Laker & Powell, 2011).

Teamwork is the effective collaboration within a group and it helps increasing productivity in a production line.

How? When? And to whom exactly?
Decalative knowledge vs Procedural knowledge
How many doors in your house?
How many letters are there in English Alphabet?
Decalitative knowledge

- The knowledge that helps individuals to name, explain and talk about matters.
- Knowledge of ‘what’
- E.g. explaining the method, giving examples
- Learners receive new knowledge in declarative form.

Procedural knowledge

- The knowledge that helps us to act and perform tasks.
- Knowledge of ‘how’
- E.g. the body knowing how to maintain balance while riding the bike, teachers knowing how to transform knowledge to students
- Expertise develops over time through actual trial and error.
Conventional training methods such as lecturing may create some changes in trainees’ declarative knowledge, but might not be sufficient to motivate behavioral changes.

Aiming to capture also changes at behavioral levels, the SKY project employs ‘Behavior Modeling Training’ to initiate the soft skills training module.
Behavior Modeling Training

- Behavior Modeling Training, also known as BMT, is grounded on the Social-learning theory of Bandura (1977).

- Social-learning theory emphasizes that individuals learn by observing others’ behaviors.

- Observed behaviors might not be learned unless the observation goes through the following steps of the modeling process;

  (1) Attention, (2) Retention, (3) Reproduction, and (4) Motivation.
• Decker and Nathan (1985) proposed five sub-steps of the BMT from the original modeling process as follows:

1. explaining trainees well-defined behaviors to be learned
2. presenting models performing the to-be-learned behaviors
3. providing trainees opportunities to practice the behaviors
4. providing feedback to trainees
5. guiding trainees to transfer the learned behaviors to their job.
In the current decade, the spotlight on game-based learning is sharply expanding in the field of education along with the extreme growth of technology (Armstrong & Landers, 2018).

SKY projects merges the concept of BMT with a package of board games.

Not only to give trainees more relaxed training atmosphere, games offer more significant elements to accelerate the effectiveness of BMT.
Games as the workplace simulation practice

- Many researchers suggest that learning soft skills in the workplace simulation is the most effective way (Dawe, 2002; Shuman et al., 2005; Talavera et al., 2007).

- Game design and endless creatable functions of games can create any mimicked actual place, situations, and even intangible concepts of things.

- By practicing through games, the employees will know how to properly behave when encountering real-life challenges they have already confronted in games.

- Practicing in the game reduces the risk of loss in real life and allow players to repeatedly explore different possibilities of behaviors’ consequences through a trial and error process in a gamified setting.

- The SKY project’s board games are designed based on actual production lines as well as other elements in garment factories, such as garment pieces, sewing stations, and recycle bins.
Games enable remote trainings

- Using games in BMT training enables remote training and minimizes the time consumption and cost of live models.

- Models in our games are mainly in symbolic and verbal instructional. 
  1. Cards with illustration and verbal instructions,
  2. Games’ board and other elements’ design

Bandura (1977)
Games create the sense of achievement

• The functions of games in BMT grant players a sense of accomplishment, which is considered internal rewards.

• Bandura's (1977) Social learning theory: **Internal factor** connect observed behaviors with learners' motivation to imitate and transfer them to real situations.

• Internal/mental factor: individuals' internal reward or self-satisfaction, such as sense of achievement.

• **Games enlarge the positive intrinsic reinforcement** through many creative functions.

• In the game of the SKY training module, there are both goal setting and quest functions. We create a trainees' soft skill progress board for placing the received cards in front of them to provide a sense of acquiring particular skills indirectly.
Structure of SKY’s training package

Introduction session
The facilitator explains training’s objectives

Game 1: Card game
Trainees are given chances to know and retain targeted behaviors

Game 1 reflection time
The facilitator guides trainees to reflect on the 1st game within the group

Game 2: Role-playing game
Trainees will have to use skills they have known in the 1st game to achieve the 2nd game’s objective. This game is designed to mimic the real setting and situations at garment factory in Ethiopia.

Game 2 reflection time
The facilitator guides trainees to reflect on the 2nd game within the group and compare with other groups

Wrap-up session
The facilitators initiate a discussion on how to apply the learned skills to trainees' daily life at work
BMT approach’s steps

- Explaining trainees well-defined skills or behaviors to be learned
- Presenting targeted models
- Providing feedback to trainees*
- Providing trainees opportunities to practice the behaviors
- Providing feedback to trainees*
- Guiding trainees to transfer the learned skills to their work

SKY’s training package

- Introduction session
- Game 1: Card game
- Game 1 reflection time
- Game 2: Role-playing game
- Game 2 reflection time
- Wrap-up session
References

- Dawe, S. (2002). Focussing on generic skills in training packages. Leabrook S. Aust.: NCVER
Illustration card: Soft skills card

I always organize tools neatly so that it is easy to find.

I use first aid to minimize injury.

I help my colleagues when they need assistance.

Teamwork