The Need for Work Health and Safety (WHS) Training Programs
– Bangladesh Context

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ABSTRACT
Due to some recent accidents in the Bangladeshi readymade garment (RMG) factories, I believe improve awareness on Workplace Health and Safety program may reduce the future consequences in terms of cost and human lives. Every employee is the part of human capital for the workplace as employers need to ensure safe employment and the quality of jobs, returns on investment in social security and reduce inequality, instability and employment. This training would be similar to a socially inclusive workplace practice, where employee voice would be valued in improving safety and establish ethical consumerism for the global consumers. It’s also challenge even for the training organizer to improve the delivery scope through ensuring stakeholder expectation and include both nationally and global perspective as well. Literature will cover ethical consumerism, overview of the current WHS status in Bangladesh and Australian best WHS practice and other relevant issues as they emerge. Other issues could be training Needs, learning theories behind the program, sample training plan, training structure, teaching approaches and formative assessment strategies to ensure the best outcome.

KEYWORDS:
Ethical Consumerism, WHS, Learning Theories, Learning Styles, Training Plan

INTRODUCTION
When organisational Work Health and Safety (WHS) training programs have poor safety measures, it can lead to massive mishaps and misfortunes, which will be elaborated upon shortly. This final project will deal with the importance of safety training programs and the global challenges facing readymade garment (RMG) factories in Bangladesh that have zero safety measures and/or poor safety measures. The primary focus of this study will revolve around:
• learning theories behind safety training programs,
• training needs,
• samples of training plans,
• training structure,
• teaching approaches, and finally
• the formative assessment strategies which evaluate the developed and implemented training program.

The secondary focus of this study will be on aspects such as global challenges to managing ethical consumerism in relation to safety training, the current status of WHS measures in Bangladesh and, for comparison, best WHS practices currently practiced in Australia.

TARGET TRAINING GROUP
The target group in this study are the current managers in the RMG industry in Bangladesh, along with supervisors in the wider sector. The duration of the training program would be two days. The first day would be a face-to-face theoretical training class (off-the-job training); the second day would be on-site delivery (on-the-job training). By improving safety program awareness among RMG sector employees, it is believe that a drastic reduction in the mortality rate along with a better work environment can be achieved.
THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE WHS MEASURE IN BANGLADESH

The WHS measures in the RMG industry in Bangladesh are quite poor. As noted in several studies (Rahim, 2013; Abdus-Sabur, 2012) on current WHS measures, it can be observed that the Bangladesh RMG sector is the worst in following WHS regulations. Fire accidents, building collapses and other issues in factories have jeopardized employee safety which, coupled with broader health issues in Bangladesh, have caused mortality rates to increase at a disturbing rate when compared to other nations’ industries. In comparison, Australia presents the best practice of WHS such as accidents and mortality rates against which we can measure WHS training programmes or industry standards. Even Australia’s educational sector, for example, has adopted Business Services training packages, endorsed by the Industry Skills Councils (ISC). Courses such as BSBWHS501A “Ensure a Safe Workplace” is a nationally endorsed training encompass the knowledge and skills required for high WHS standards through its training and assessment tools.

THE NEED FOR TRAINING

Proper training is essential in every company, even if employees and staff have gone through training at a previous workplace or are experienced in their field. Mandatory training develops the talents of all individuals, allowing individuals to seek help as the company trains employees with future endeavours in mind. According to Zia et al (2013) the training has been considered important for a number of decades now.

Workplace risks and issues can affect an employee’s performance, health, safety and, ultimately, their attendance. Traditional hazards have included accidents such as fire, collapsing structures, toxic air, improper training regarding calamities and natural disasters, etc. To avoid such hazards in the workplaces, companies and organisations must employ health and safety measures. It is necessary for companies and the organizations to implement strong actions and precautions regarding training because at the end of the day, when calamities or mishaps happen, safety training is what will enable employees to survive (Tejinder & Jyothi, 2013). Due to economic imbalances and fluctuations, organisational environments tend to adapt unique training activities depending on the company.

LEARNING THEORIES BEHIND THE SAFETY TRAINING PROGRAM

According to Takahiro (2013) safety training programs came into existence as companies globally began to ignore health and safety training programs for last five years due to rising the concepts of ethical consumerism; at the time, there was more investment in professional training, and end users acquired very little knowledge even from training sessions but indirectly support the company which consider employee as resources and concern about the safety. Organizations training employees should focus on workers’ issues rather than offering general training more broadly.

According to Susan (2010), analysing problems, learning independently and making decisions as per the circumstances would provide employees with stronger skills, rather than exposing them to technical or oral training. According to learning theories of learning, an individual should be exposed to the three distinctive methods of learning: self-reflective, dialogic and instrumental. Thus, learning theories differ according to the needs of the individuals rather than the need of the company itself. Proper learning theory in the workplace for health and safety training would be based on behavioural theory, as discussed by Skinner (1971, pg 43).

Skinner was an American psychologist (Watson, 1913) who introduced the notion of behaviourism as a “psychological perspective whose explanations about learning are based on the relationship between observable behaviours and environmental events rather than on internal processes.” Learning is reflected in behaviour. Skinner's (1938) research work drew attention to what he described as behavioural change as a function of response consequences. Outcomes produced by an action caused behavioural change.

Health and safety training should differentiate between objectives and goals in order to attain clarity in the work/outcome; rewarding individuals for attaining better outcomes in any learning activity would encourage behavioural change continuing into the future. Accident rates would be the best indicators of behavioural transitions after completion of training.
THE TRAINING PLAN
To train employees according to their actual jobs to address potential skills lacking which are required for that job, trainees should plan their training phases or programmes with a proper agenda. For instance, if training is for the RMG sector then the trainer should plan considering the workplace, environment, duration, whether training should be face-to-face or in group sessions, whether employees require individual attention or if their skills can be developed with orientation and on-the-job training. To design the plan, the trainee should have prior exposure or experience on the topic, so that the agenda and the design would meet the purpose regardless. According to Rashed-Al (2005) the training plan should encompass: the personal details, main/training details, delivery models, structure of the responsibilities, the workplace tasks and finally the assessment methods. By utilizing this sample training plan a trainee can assure the development in the individuals’ skill level through proper measures.

STRUCTURE OF THE TRAINING
The first day in a training programme would consist of “off the job” training sessions, where the theories involved in real-time scenarios would be thoroughly explained. Off-the-job training is an effective way to look at the cause and effect of scenarios; as lessons are applied, individuals are able to increase their cognitive abilities surrounding situations by having time to inquire about the reasoning behind procedures and functions. On the second day, sessions would be run as on-the job training to allow individuals to put the theories learnt into practice; this is where observational skills pay off (Paul & Garry, 2007). The effectiveness of the off-the-job training (theories through presentations, videos, workshops, etc.) is generally lesser than that of on-the job training (field experimentation) for many reasons, including exposure, experience, environmental effects and practical/live explanations with suggestions on how to correct mistakes immediately. If organizations work alongside trainers to plan a proper training structure, then large-scale mishaps could be avoided. In other words, through proper training companies could ensure employee safety, security and health with no bullying and harassing (Nakib & Mia, 2014).

TEACHING APPROACHES IN TRAINING AND FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES
Trainers often take a systematic approach and behavioural approach when developing training, adopting the very best methods or approaches to teach employees the skills they lack. In the systematic approach trainers teach employees through regular classes and sessions, allowing individuals to gain insight regarding issues they or their company might face. In a behavioural approach, trainers adapt teaching methods to the individuals’ behaviour as per their need. These teaching approaches which are the most practitioners prefer are the KOLB and VAK styles. The KOLB learning styles (Kolb & Kolb, 2005) consists of four categories while the VAK learning style (James Cook University, 2013) only three; both are outlined in Figure 1.
Our orientation between KOLB and VAK styles would not be fixed. We would consciously ensure that two days of training engage our sample target group through adopting the most relevant modes of teaching. At the end of the session, formative assessment on what has been learned is the crucial stage where pre- and post-training evaluation can be measured. Training assessment tools are used by trainers globally comparing formative assessments with post-training evaluation of individuals to measure without bias. Numerous studies (Dennis et al., 1981; Jean-Paul and Claire, 2004) show that employee training within organizations is effective only when employees learn and implement the learned strategies in their jobs afterwards. As formative assessment strategies (Wang et al., 2006, pg. 209) refer to short tests and quizzes, question and answer sessions in lessons, assignments, homework and so on. Assessments further offer the trainer opportunity to amend outcomes through receiving ongoing feedback on participants’ growth in performance. Thus, proper training requires formative assessments for employees to acquire skills which will in turn increase profitability, productivity and skill improvement to the highest level, ultimately reducing costs that could be incurred due to health and safety incidents.

**ETHICAL CONSUMERISM AND GLOBAL ISSUES RELATING TO SAFETY TRAINING PROGRAMS**

“Ethical consumption” is a term used broadly to refer to the ethical considerations of companies as well as consumers. Strong (1996) defines ethical consumerism as the behaviour of a buyer who considers principles of environmental consumerism and human rights in their purchasing. Sweatshop working conditions in the RMG sector have regularly violated International Labour Standards (ILS) and Codes of Conduct (CoC) (Uddin, 2008 and Dasgupta, 2002). Recruitment guidelines and policies are exceedingly informal when evaluated according to standards of Western countries. It has also been noted that there are rarely documented appointment letters or formal contracts. Employees in the RMG sector are consequently susceptible to losing their jobs at any point. However, the fear of not keeping their jobs and a deficiency of alternative job opportunities lead workers to maintaining unacceptable and substandard employment conditions (Hossan et al., 2012).

Globally, companies have implemented training programs in the workplace regarding health and safety measures. Yet there are still companies that unethically demand other countries have proper measures regarding the employee safety. From my professional experience, companies are holding positive image as a safety supporter while in business practice sublease the work to the under rate factories to save cost and boost up profit. In the Bangladeshi RMG sector, there have been several serious accidents that have occurred due to improper safety training and unethical practices, such as no fire...
extinguisher being available in case of fire accidents, paying the labourers minimal allowances to increase the company’s profitability yet not investing in proper training programmes, recruiting illiterates and the uneducated so that companies can pay less without proper agreements covering employee benefit statements, safety measures, health insurance, and so on (Ataur & Stuart, 2010). Consumers and brands that purchase clothing and fabric from Bangladesh reacted to these incidents by starting boycotts, raising global awareness regarding these issues and risks. These boycotts have in turn forced Bangladeshi companies to follow laws and regulations, re-equipping their employees with proper training.

The significance of mandatory safety training programs worldwide has been made clear through these incidents, demonstrating that companies who train their employees following regulations and standards will also succeed in earning profits along with reducing costs incurred through experiencing calamities; these can range from general confusion or inept practices due to improper training which may result in accidents to outright death or disability from machinery or equipment accidents (Ataur & Robin, 2010). Ethical consumerism has demanded that garment factories and their owners consider the lives of their employees, rather than thinking solely about profitability, productivity and cutting costs.

CONCLUSION
It is better to prevent health and safety problems rather than correcting or paying for mistakes after mishaps occur. By adopting the best training methods and approaches from the start, companies globally can concentrate on the workplace instead of investing more into yearly training. Using both on- and off-the-job training is considered to be most effective for employees, therefore when trainers plan their programmes it is best to include both approaches rather than sticking to one. Effective training not only increases individuals’ skills but also overall performance, in turn increasing a company’s profitability.

REFERENCES


