

The Soft Skill Training to Improve the Readiness of Alumni in Entering the Working World

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Abstract—In the era of this global competition, everyone is expected to improve their competencies both in soft skill and hard skill. An excellent human resource does not only have proficiency in hard skill but also in soft skill to handle various challenges and changes of technology in the working world. This study aims at describing soft skill training as an attempt to improve the readiness of alumni in entering the working world. This study uses descriptive method by using qualitative approach. The research respondents are the students in the last year and alumni of Indonesia University of Education. The result of the study shows that the training is directed to the mastery on how to deal with the other people (interpersonal skill) and self-regulating skill (intrapersonal skill), thus the characteristic of a good and responsible working behavior will be achieved by the employees.

Keywords—training; soft skill; working readiness

I. INTRODUCTION

The dynamic development of working world requires different competencies of human resources in the past, present, and future. The competency need of workforce is related to the development of working world influenced by the market, economic, and technological changes. Current movements in the world of work competencies include the dynamics of the relationship between higher education and the world of work, especially related to the gap between the outcome of higher education and the demands of competence in the world of work. Some important shifts that have taken place include the increase in educated unemployment, both open and covert unemployment as a result of the massification of higher education, the changing socio-economic and global political structures that affect the world market of labor and the rapid development of science and technology causing various changes fundamental in terms of qualifications, competencies, and requirements to enter the workforce [1].

The era of industrial revolution 4.0 needs the skills related to the use of technology, communication, and efficiency on working. The skill in 21st Century emphasizes the creation. It means that having competency is not only about being able to apply the theory, but also to analyze, evaluate, and design a new creation from the previous one. The era of industrial revolution 4.0 has fundamentally changed human life and work. Unlike the previous industrial revolution, this 4th

generation industrial revolution has a wider scale, scope and complexity. The advancement of new technologies that integrate the physical, digital and biological worlds has influenced all scientific, economic, industrial and government disciplines [2].

Indonesia University of Education (Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia) is one of universities in West Java in which each year it graduates thousands of students. The readiness of the alumni is an important concern for a university. The quantity of the alumni cannot be the indicator of a university in creating a success, but the quality of the alumni. Therefore, the improvement on the students' competency to be able to compete in the future is very important. In this case, the preparation is not only about hard skill but also soft skill that influences the performance when the alumni enter working world.

The need on the training of soft skill improvement for university alumni is very important and no longer negotiable. Soft skill training for the alumni is conducted to prepare the career, both academically and non-academically [3-6]. Career development for the alumni through hard skill development is not enough and not a primary need. Hard skill is related to the technical skill that should be owned in a profession or job. However, a job does not only need technical skill relying on individuality.

A job deals with an interaction with the others. The skill to interact with the others needs the ability to collaborate, but it is often left out by the alumni on the improvement of competencies [7-9]. Soft skills are intrapersonal and interpersonal personality attributes that can distinguish a person from others in their community and differentiate people with levels of work or career at one job [10]. It signifies that soft skills show two dimensions that occur inside which are how to interact with others (interpersonal) and how someone controls himself/herself (intrapersonal).

Interpersonal skills include the abilities to understand and be sensitive towards the feeling, intention, motivation, characteristics, temperament, and sensitivity to facial expression, voice, and gesture (signal) as well as to keep relation with other people. Meanwhile, intrapersonal skills include the ability to understand self and be adaptive based on

the knowledge about self, reflection, self-balance, self-awareness, high initiation, and bravery [11].

This is in line with the strategy of high education formulated by Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education (in Indonesian language, it is called Kemristekdikti) clearly stated that the role of high education in improving the competitiveness is very vital since the level of human resource competitiveness in national or international job market is increasing along with the improvement on the utilization of the new science and technology in many fields and the needs of professionalism level (knowledge, hard skill, soft skill) are higher.

All this time, the learning process of university mostly emphasizes theoretical skills that affect the students to prioritize hard skill rather than soft skill. The skill sometimes does not fit the need of competency needed by working world. Lack of soft skill affects the students to only be good at memorizing the lesson because they are habituated and feel already successful by having some skills. On the other hand, the demand on the working world is more than that [12].

In education, it is recognized that due to technological advancement, soft skill development becomes an important need to create an adaptive, excellent, and globally competitive human resource. An understanding and mastery on soft skills can be improved through many kinds of learning activity integrated directly and indirectly with subjects in the college. The problem is although there are a lot of references describing some indicators considered as soft skills, there is no standard that can be taught to the students or the alumni. Therefore, it needs the determinants of particular attributes on soft skills adjusted the need of the students and working world.

Soft skill training is conducted to prepare the students on the skills they need to have. It certainly should concern the initial characteristics of soft skill given to the participants. It is conducted in order to ease the finding on what the determinant characters that become the priority of soft skill attributes or elements. Thus, this study aims at providing the depiction of the need on the attributes of soft skills needed by the related working world in which the development of soft skill is not only conducted separately in the learning process in the class but also it is integrated with the curriculum of university.

II. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. Descriptively describes the process of implementing soft skills training. Data analysis in this study was sorted into data analysis in order to develop models and analyze data in order to test the effectiveness of the model. Data analysis is done qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative data obtained through interviews, focus group discussions, and observations analyzed through logical analysis. Respondents in this study were alumni of the Indonesian Education University located on the Bumi Siliwangi campus and some 916 Regional Campus respondents with 591 Female and 325 Male.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The soft skill is improved by conducting a training. It eases the learning process where the students are not burdened with theory, but they have some practices to improve their soft skill. Soft skills formulated in this study are 1) interpersonal skills including a) communication skill; b) motivation; c) team work and cooperation; and d) adaptability, 2) intrapersonal skills including a) integrity; c) analytical skill; d) work ethic.

The improvement on communication skill in the training is conducted by having interview practice and discussion with the other participants. The participants are trained to understand, listen to, and give responses to the communicant well and attentively, thus they are able to receive the message delivered by them. During verbal communication, someone should be skilled to use orderly and polite words and able to be a good listener for the communicant [13]. Each communication activity conducted is expected to result something beneficial for the communicant and communicator involved. Communication will run dynamically if there is a reaction from the communicant. This reaction signifies that a delivered message leads someone to respond, so it is important for the people involved in a communication to respect, understand, and give a response to each other.

Motivational improvement. Motivation emphasized to be mastered by the participants is learning and working motivation. This motivation needs to be improved and developed by the participants since working motivation will be related to work ethic while learning motivation deals with problem solving encountered in working world. By having motivation, someone can do their activities to be directed to their goals [14].

Team work and cooperation. These skills should be the concern of every participant since how good an individual's skill is, he/she will not be successful if he/she cannot cooperate and collaborate with others. In the working world, an employee is expected to collaborate with his/her co-workers to achieve an organizational or working goal. Team work is an element of soft skill that includes (1) the ability to build a relationship, interact with, and work effectively with others, (2) ability to understand and role as a leader or members, (3) ability to understand, appreciate, and respect someone's behavior, point of view, and belief, (4) ability to give contribution to the planning and coordination of the team, and (5) be responsible for the team's decision [15].

Adaptability is an individual skill in handling a task transition or relating to work. It reflects an individual readiness in handling a predictable or unpredictable task [16]. This skill can improve the success of university alumni to face the transition from study to working world with a good job quality [17].

Besides the development of interpersonal skill, the training on intrapersonal skill is also given including a) integrity; c) analytical skill; c) work ethic. Self-integrity represents the ability on conscience including honesty, sincerity, commitment, and others. Meanwhile, an integrity is built through consistency and commitment elements [18]. Someone with a good integrity will be able to control his/her behavior

and mentality in work. Some experts reveal their point of view on someone's analytical skills in work regarding high thinking activities that include analyzing, synthesizing, recognizing the problems and solutions, concluding and evaluating [19].

Work ethic is related to the excellence of a characteristic that results an individual performance. The participants are taught how to develop the good working characteristics such as fixing the tasks when finding them wrong, accepting suggestions, giving opinion, and being responsible for their work.

IV. CONCLUSION

The training is expected to prepare the students or the participants of the proper soft skill training. This activity is expected to improve the competencies of the alumni not only in their hard skill but also the soft skill, thus they can be accepted in the job fair or able to develop entrepreneurial activities. Therefore, various kinds of learning on soft skill improvement are not only conducted through training, but those also can be included into a structured curriculum. The identification of soft skill indicator possibly changes dynamically every time. Consequently, a comprehensive study to develop soft skill on what fits the development of working world in the future is needed.

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