WORK-RELATED WMSDs ASSESSMENT AMONG VIDEO DISPLAY TERMINAL USERS

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To my beloved family
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ABSTRACT

The goal of this research was to assess the prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders as well as psychosocial work factors among the Staffs of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. Furthermore the association between psychosocial work factors and WMSDs were investigated. This research was based on questionnaire survey. The questionnaire were extracted from the standard version of QPS Nordic questionnaire for the assessing the psychosocial work factors. For assessing the WMSDs the standard Nordic questionnaire were utilized. The questionnaires were translated into Bahasa Melayu, and a pilot study was performed to ensure the reliability of the questionnaires. The prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders was investigated using standard Nordic questionnaire. The WMSDs symptoms of shoulder, neck, upper back and lower back were found to be significant among the staffs. According to the recent research the psychosocial risk factors found to be a significant contribution to the development of musculoskeletal disorders were also considered in this research.
ABSTRAK

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>XII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1 Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 Background of the Study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 Problem Statement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4 Scope of the Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.5 Objectives of the Study</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.6 Significance of the Study</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.7 Organization of thesis</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.8 Conclusion</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2</td>
<td>LITRATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.1 Introduction</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 WMSDs in the workplace</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.3 WMSDs among video display terminal users</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.4 Musculoskeletal and mental disorders and associated risk factors</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.5 Psychosocial Risk Factors of WMSDs</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.6 Physical Risk factors of WMSDS

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction
3.2 Research Design
3.3 Questionnaires
  3.3.1 QPS Nordic
  3.3.2 Content and development of the QPS Nordic
  3.3.3 Standardised Nordic questionnaire for the analysis of musculoskeletal symptoms
3.4 Conclusion

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction
4.2 Data Collected from Questionnaires
4.3 Analysing Base on Questionnaires
  4.3.1 Demographic
  4.3.2 Prevalence of WMSDs Symptom among Staffs
  4.3.3 WMSDs across UTM
  4.3.4 Prevalence of Psychosocial Work Factors
  4.3.5 Association of Psychosocial Work Factors with WMSDs
4.4 Conclusion

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Introduction
5.2 Discussion of Result of Collecting Data from Questionnaires
  5.2.1 Reliability Test
  5.2.2 Demographic
5.3 Prevalence of WMSDs Symptom among Staffs 99
5.4 Prevalence of Psychosocial Work Factors 104
5.5 Association of Psychosocial Risk Factors with Health 105
5.6 Conclusion 107

CHAPTER 6 108

SUMMARY AND FUTURE WORKS 108
6.1 Introduction 108
6.2 Summary 108
6.3 Future Works 109
6.4 Conclusion 109

REFERENCES 111

APPENDIX A 122


LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE NO.</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.1</td>
<td>(A) An overview of evidence of effects in systematic reviews</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.2</td>
<td>Plus in wrists were grouped since according to the Reports of MSDs</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.3</td>
<td>The most relevant predictive parameters that emerged from the statistical analyses</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.4</td>
<td>A set of 30 questions gauging subjects’ perceptions of a range of variables</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.5</td>
<td>Structure of the qualitative interview to identify exposure factors during work</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.6</td>
<td>Prevalence and severity of MSDs in telecommunications workers</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.7</td>
<td>Physical and psychosocial risk factors associated with the development of WMSDs</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.1</td>
<td>Content areas of the QPS Nordic questionnaire classified according to the conceptual</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.1</td>
<td>Age Statistics</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.2</td>
<td>Prevalence of MSD symptom among staffs</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.3</td>
<td>Name and Size of Work Organization and/or Workplace Psychosocial Measures</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.4</td>
<td>Psychosocial scales</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.5</td>
<td>Job Demand subscale Statistics</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.6</td>
<td>Job Demand Statistics</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.7</td>
<td>Statistic of Qualitative and Learning Demands</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.8</td>
<td>Role Expectations subscale Statistics</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.9</td>
<td>Role Expectations Statistics</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.10</td>
<td>Control at work Subscale Statistics</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.11</td>
<td>Control at Work subscale Statistics</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.12</td>
<td>Control at work statistics</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.13</td>
<td>Positive Challenge at Work</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.14</td>
<td>Control of Decision Statistics</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.15</td>
<td>Control of Work Peacing</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.16</td>
<td>Predictability at Work statistics</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.17</td>
<td>Mastery of Work Statistics</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.18</td>
<td>Social Interaction Statistics</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.19</td>
<td>Support From Superior Statistics</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.20 Support from co-workers Statistics 82
Table 4.21 Support from Friends Statistics 83
Table 4.22 Leadership statistics 84
Table 4.23 Organization Culture And Climate of UTM Statistics 86
Table 4.24 Organization Culture and Climate Subscale of UTM Statistics 86
Table 4.25 Perception Of Group Work among UTM Staff statistics 88
Table 4.26 ob Satisfaction among UTM Staff Statistics 88
Table 4.27 Preception of Stress at Job among the UTM staff 89
Table 4.28 Pearson Chi-Square Tests 92
Table 5.1 Reliability Statistics 98
Table 5.2 Level of Consistency using Cronbach's Alpha 98
Table 5.3 Age Statistics 98
Table 5.4 Prevalence of WMSDs Symptom among Staffs 99
Table 5.5 shows the location of pain among staffs 103
Table 5.6 Association of Psychosocial Risk Factors with Health 105
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE NO.</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.1</td>
<td>Operational variables used in included studies to show risk factors or health effect</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.1</td>
<td>Research Design Outline</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.2</td>
<td>Approximate Positions of the Body Parts</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.3</td>
<td>Good and Bad postures (A)</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.4</td>
<td>Good and Bad Postures (B)</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.1</td>
<td>Age of Respondents Histogram</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.2</td>
<td>Respondents Gender</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.3</td>
<td>Height of staffs</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.4</td>
<td>Weight of staffs</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.5</td>
<td>WMSDs among ISC Staff</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.6</td>
<td>WMSDs among SPS Staff</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.7</td>
<td>WMSDs among Library Staffs</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.8</td>
<td>WMSDs among Bendehari Staffs</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.9</td>
<td>WMSDs among Office of Postgraduate Staffs</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.10</td>
<td>WMSDs among UTM Staffs</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.11</td>
<td>Learning and Qualitative Demand Histograms</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.12</td>
<td>Controls at Work Histogram</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.13</td>
<td>Subscales of Control at Work</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.14</td>
<td>Positive challenge at work Histogram</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.15</td>
<td>Control of decision Histogram</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.16</td>
<td>Control of Work peacing Histogram</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.17</td>
<td>Predictability at Work Histogram</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.18</td>
<td>Mastery of Work Histogram</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.19</td>
<td>Subscales of Social Interactions</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.20  Social Interaction Histogram 81
Figure 4.21  Supports from Superior Histogram 82
Figure 4.22  Support from co-workers Histogram 83
Figure 4.23  Supports from Friends Histogram 84
Figure 4.24  Leadership Histogram 85
Figure 4.25  Organization culture and climate of UTM Histogram 86
Figure 4.26  Organization culture subscale Histograms 87
Figure 4.27  Perception of Group Work among UTM Staff Histogram 88
Figure 4.28  Satisfactions among UTM Staff Statistics 88
Figure 4.29  Stress at job Histogram 89
Figure 5.1  Location of pain among female staffs 99
Figure 5.2  Location of pain among male staffs 101
Figure 5.3  Location of pain between female and male 102
Figure 5.4  Pain on left shoulder in female and male staffs 102
Figure 5.5  Pain on right shoulder in female and male staffs 102
Figure 5.6  Pain on neck in female and male staffs 103
Figure 5.7  Pain on lower back among staff 103
Figure 5.8  Pain on upper back among staff 103
Figure 5.9  Ranking severity of psychosocial work factors 104
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

WMSDs (WMSDs) represent a significant threat to employees’ health and wellbeing across a wide range of industries and occupation. One line of work in this area has focused on the physical demands of work that employees must perform in using video display units (VDU) (Choobineh et al., 2011).

There are two main types of musculoskeletal injuries, injuries associated with Manual Materials Handling (MMH), low back injuries often due to MMH that includes the results of force and amount of weight lifted. Cumulative trauma disorders (CTD), are physical injuries due to repeated biomechanical or physiological stresses on a specific body part. CTD is a collective name for discomfort, disability, impairment, persistent pain in muscles, tendons and other soft tissues. The economic loss due to such disorders affects not only the individual but also the organization and the society as a whole (Kemmlert, 1994).

The physical demands on different works create various injuries and illnesses related to WMSDs. The predictors for the risk of developing MSDs can be divided into individual (Ekman et al., 2000, Spyropoulos et al., 2007, Johnston et al., 2008), ergonomic (Demure et al., 2000) (Palmer et al., 2001) (Nakazawa et al., 2002, Ortiz-Hernández et al., 2003) and psychosocial factors (Faucett and Rempel, 1994) (Polanyi et al., 1997) (Haufler et al., 2000, Hanse, 2002). In office users, the risk of developing MSDs is higher among users who have a high work strain, continuous
mouse and keyboard use, high muscle tension, and previous MSDs in the neck and shoulder (Kryger et al., 2003) (Brandt et al., 2004) (Juul-Kristensen et al., 2004) (Nicholas et al., 2005) (Werner et al., 2005) (Hush et al., 2009).

Previous studies have shown that these recommendations have little effect on reducing the prevalence of musculoskeletal symptoms (Torp et al., 1999). Ergonomic interventions are expressed as a means to improve working conditions (Motamedzade et al., 2002). There is evidence that ergonomic interventions are not solely sufficient to control WMSDs, but psychosocial conditions should also be considered. This study carried out to identify the prevalence of WMSDs among the UTM staff and the spread of psychosocial risk factors were examined and the ranking severity was established. Finally, the relationships between the psychosocial risk factors and the development of WMSDs among office users were investigated.

1.2 Background of the Study

In the recent world, industries are faced with enormous challenge that one of them are respect to work-related WMSDs (Silverstein and Clark, 2004). In fact, owners of factories need to ensure safety for both users, as their worth assets, and increase their productivity. It is now considered that some of the common factors with regard to WMSDs have been realised by ergonomists. These factors lead to some WMSDs such as the repetitive work, work in extreme and static postures, and work including forceful arm and hand movements.

On the other hand, they have realized psychological factors which are associated with WMSDs such as poor social support at work, the opportunity to influence decisions, work pressure and lack of variety and work satisfaction (Fredriksson et al., 2001).

According to (Erez et al., 2008), the weight of evidence over the years suggests that the development of WMSDs has increasingly been influenced by psychological work factors (Erez et al., 2008). In this respect, it appears increasingly
clear that psychological work factor helps to intensified workload, monotonous work, limited job control, low job clarity, and low social support (Erez et al., 2008). Although there has been many studies to show relationships between psychological work factor and MSDs, but the concern over the problems have been poorly perceived among management.

Generally, there are concerns that WMSDs have dramatically increased among video display terminal users due to inappropriate design of work desk, hence the need to carry this investigation is justified.

1.3 Problem Statement

The video display terminal users have been influenced by high level of WMSDs mainly due to nature of the job for prolonged sitting. However several other factors are influencing the development of WMSDs among VDT users, therefore the risk factors of WMSD are still yet to be determined. The physical risk factors of WMSDs were investigated in previous studies; however the psychological aspect of work is another risk factors that may contribute to the development of WMSDs and needs to be investigated. Therefore, this research aims to investigate and uncover the psychological aspect of mental demands in offices on which causes the work pressure that persists among VDT users. The results of this research provide insights for future intervention plans in order to mitigate WMSDs symptoms among the VDT users.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The research will covers a certain scopes that include the prevalent WMSDs among VDT users in UTM offices and to provide recommendation and the ways to overcome the problem.
1.5 Objectives of the Study

As mentioned previously, this research will focus on WMSDs assessment among video display terminal users. Thus, the following objectives was planned to achieve the aim of research:

I. To identify the spread of WMSDs among video display terminal users using standard Nordic questionnaire.

II. To determine the spread of psychological work-factors among the video display terminal users using the modified version of standard QRS Nordic questionnaire.

III. To establish the ranking severity of the WMSDS among video display terminal users using associations.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is set up to provide the ranking severity of the WMSDS among video display terminal users. In fact, video display terminal users are facing several WMSDS in their working environment, which can be divided into two categories: physical and psychological. This study is going to recognize both physical and psychological factors in WMSDS among video display terminal users. The significance of the study can be seen in two parts;

First, from a view of theoretical aspect, discussion of WMSDS and their prevention is the most common issue on the workplace rules in the different job including video display terminal users. In fact, WMSDs include injuries and illnesses involving soft tissues or bones. They can occur suddenly or develop gradually over time. WMSDs may involve backs and arms accounted for 36 percent of Labour and Industries' users' compensation claims between 1989 and 1996 and cost $2.7 billion, according to a Labour and Industries study released in January. The WMSDs kept employees off work 24½ million days during the eight years studied. The lost work time had the same effect as removing 12,250 employees from the workforce each
year (Labor & Industries Website, 2013). Moreover, they mentioned that "We must do more to prevent these costly injuries and illnesses. They represent a huge toll of pain, suffering and lost productivity," said Gary Moore, director of Labor & Industries. "We need everyone's help to draft a fair and effective rule for Washington's users and employers" (Labor & Industries Website, 2013).

Second, in practice, the application of the study can inform planners and designers in the industries to consider different physical and psychological elements that will influence on WMSDS among of video display terminal users in offices.

1.7 Organization of thesis

This study consists of six chapters, which are summarized below:

Chapter 1 provides introduction of work related WMSDs assessment among video display terminal users, scope of work and the expected outcome for the whole research.

Chapter 2 provides literature review to of previous Work-related WMSDs (WMSDS) and psychological work-factors among the video display terminal users.

Chapter 3 discusses on the methodology that will be carried out in this study in order to obtain sufficient information for analyzing and decision making for achieving the objective in Chapter one.

Chapter 4 shows and explains briefly the outcome for each experiment.

Chapter 5 discusses in details the outcome of the experiment, such as how the result being analyzed, benefits and problems encountered.

Chapter 6 provides the conclusion to the whole research and future work.
1.8 Conclusion

Generally this chapter explained the introduction, background of the problem; scope and objective of this research. Next chapter discussed the literature review of past research in this area.
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