

Psychosocial Issue among Office Workers: A Case Study at a Public Higher Education Institution in Malaysia

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Self-awareness of workers' own health status had been proven can prevent work-related harm and injury and also mental health problems. Both mental and physical health improvements (physical and psychosocial factors) should be the main focused in any research. Workload and work-related stress are the examples of psychosocial factors that may exist in each organization. A case study related to safety and health was conducted among staff at Human Resources Management Division (HRMD) at a public higher education institution (Institut Pengajian Tinggi Awam -IPTA) in Malaysia. Total numbers of 22 staff were employed. However, only 21 staffs were participated in this study which contributed to about 95% of the response rate. A set of self-administered questionnaires which consist of questions on socio demographics information, questions on working hour, questions on workload and also questions on work-related stress were used as the study instruments. Result shows that office workers in HRMD, work in long hours in a week to keep up with workload. The availability of supplies, equipment and materials to do the work however, helps the workers to manage their works in a proper way. The relationship of inter-staff also found in a good condition. This study will be useful for other researcher to conduct a psychosocial study among office workers in a bigger sample size. This finding also can be as a guidance to manage workload and work-related stress in workplace.

Keywords: Psychosocial, Workload, Work-Related Stress, Office Workers

1. Introduction

Psychosocial issue is considered as one of the important factors in occupational ergonomics study (Choobineh et al. 2011). However, psychosocial issues were not giving so much attention as what have been done to any physical issues in the field of occupational ergonomics. As noted, there are many approaches that can be done to measure physical risk factors in a workplace. For example, study on posture and other related physical load have been conducted actively (e.g. Mohamad et al. 2013; Mokhtar et al. 2013; Sukadarin, et al. 2013). Study on body or work station dimension which are important to design ergonomics element as well as to identify the limitations of design in anthropometry study were also getting so much attention from researchers (e.g. Ismail et al. 2013; Nazif et al. 2011). All those conducted researches were aimed to manage and prevent Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) among workers. However, in order to ensure that MSDs is properly managed, psychosocial factors in the work environment also have to be understood and handled in a very good manner (Solange et al. 2010). This can be seen, for example in the study of Pascale et al. (1999), which found that lack of job control (one of the psychosocial factors at work) associated with an increased rate of musculoskeletal sickness absence and also increased the risk of hospitalization due to MSDs. Besides that, work demand, job content and social support were also proven have significant relationship with low back discomfort (Habibi et al. 2012).

2. Literature Review

The prevalence of MSDs in relation with psychosocial factor is undeniable (Wahlstedt et al. 2010; Krause et al. 2005). Unlike measuring physical ergonomics and conducting anthropometry study, to study about psychosocial factors, different approaches are required.