

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Chassis used in off-road vehicles have almost the same appearance since the models developed in 20 or 30 years ago. This indicates that the evolution of these structures is still slow and stable along the years [1]. Therefore many researchers in automotive industry have taken this opportunity to be involved in the chassis manufacturing technology and development. Malaysia had invested large amount of money in automotive industry. However, the automotive industry in Malaysia especially in truck manufacturing is still in the development phase and much relying on foreign technology.

Nowadays, the current trend in truck design involves the reduction of costs and increase in transportation efficiency. The pursuit of both these objectives results in lighter truck, which uses less material and carries less dead weight. At the same time, the comfort of the driver cannot be neglected as the driver has to operate safely and comfortably for many hours. Chassis is one of the parts in the truck that is strongly influenced by these guidelines of weight and cost reduction [2]. The consequence of a lighter chassis is a vehicle that has structural resonance within the range of typical rigid body vibrations of the truck subsystems. On the other hand, the vibration also can be formed due to dynamic forces induced by the road irregularities, engine, transmission and more. Thus under these various dynamic excitation, the chassis will tend to vibrate and can lead to ride discomfort, ride safety problems, road

holding problems and also to cargo damage or destruction [3]. However, it is worried most if one of the excitation forces coincides with the natural frequencies of truck chassis. It can cause resonance to occur where the chassis will undergo dangerously large oscillation. This can result in excessive deflection and failure.

To solve this problem, the study of dynamic characteristics of truck chassis is essential by determining the natural frequency and mode shape of the system. The truck chassis can be avoided from vibrating at dangerous level by making sure that the excitation forces frequency does not coincide with the natural frequency of truck chassis. Besides that by understanding the dynamic characteristics; mode shape of truck chassis, the suitable mounting location of the components such as engine, suspension, cab and transmission can be determined. Modification of chassis structure has also become one of the important stages in a truck chassis development. This can be done by modifying the dynamic behavior of the chassis which result in enhancing the structure fatigue characteristic, reduce the vibration effect and improve the strength of truck chassis. Adding stiffener is the most common method used in structural modification [4].

1.1 Objective

The objectives of this project are:

- i. To determine the natural frequency and mode shape of the truck chassis by using finite element method and modal analysis.
- ii. To improve the dynamic behavior of the truck chassis.

1.2 Scope of Project

The scopes of this project are:

- i. Literature review and critical analysis of dynamic characteristic of truck chassis.
- ii. Analysis of 1 tonne loading truck chassis
- iii. Simulation work by using finite element method.
- iv. Experimental work by modal analysis.
- v. Correlation of finite element analysis and modal analysis.
- vi. Modal updating analysis on FE model by adjusts the selective properties.
- vii. Proper modification and improvement of truck chassis to suit desired requirement.

1.3 Outline

Chapter 2 discusses on the literature study of truck chassis based on recent papers and journals that have been carried out lately. The entire literature searches are basically related to the recent structural dynamic analysis, modal analysis testing, finite element analysis and model updating on the truck chassis.

The theory and mechanics of vibration as they are used in this study are explained in Chapter 3. An explanation of truck chassis such as the ladder frame chassis, fundamentals of finite element methods and modal analysis testing are also discussed.

Chapter 4 provides an outline of the truck chassis setup at the Structural Dynamic Laboratory for vibration testing. It includes the chassis installation for free-free vibration test and the data acquisition system for modal testing. Meanwhile the steps and work procedure for finite element analysis are also been clarified in Chapter 4. The correlation and updating process are also defined in this chapter.

Chapter 5 discusses on the experimental results and the analytical predictions by finite element analysis of the truck chassis vibration. All the discussion related to this study such as the correlation analysis, model updating and the structural modification of truck chassis are also discussed in this part.

Finally, Chapter 6 summarizes and concludes the results of the study and provides recommendations for future research.