

Monitoring Stress and Promoting Awareness at the Workplace

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1 Abstract

Stress at the workplace has been associated with an increase in absenteeism and presenteeism in organisations, with a high impact regarding productivity and co-worker's wellbeing at the workplace. The paper addresses such concerns by considering an approach that can act preventively by implementing a framework for early detection of stressing symptoms. The aim is to provide the organisation with a situational- awareness tool to keep the decision-maker well informed about any suspicious situation requiring the user attention, providing insights based on the co-worker wellness and specific needs, prompting in this way a healthy policy environment at the workplace. The research challenge addresses the study of the health indicators associated with unhealthy lifestyles and co-worker's behaviour at the workplace, including monitoring the provided conditions at the workplace environment. The paper presents an ongoing research work for early recognition of the identified risk factors, and to engage the workers in becoming proactive in their workplace. The primary goal of this model is to monitor the risk factors with impact on managing stress at the workplace. From a management viewpoint, the proposed model addresses the general theory of systems, as each variable in a system interacts with other variables so completely that cause and effect cannot be separated, as the workplace and the collaborators are linked together in order to maintain an equilibrium as is the best efficiency and efficacy at organizations. We expect to develop an integrated, systematic and dynamic model to ensure that the health decision-maker is always provided with the appropriate and necessary knowledge elements that will help ensure that the results of the health decision-making process are optimised for the maximum benefit of the client. The Boyd Cycle complements the decision-making process in order for health professionals to make more informed decisions in useful time. The Boyd Cycle assumes the existence of constant feedback and reorientation based on existing information and intuition, promoting the management of the workers and environment information, leading to adjustments in the workplace in real-time. The Monitoring and Preventive Diagnosis (MDP) model presented in this article (Fig. 1), is based on the use of the Boyd Cycle, as known as OODA Loop (Osinga, 2007; Thompson, 1995) seen as a decision-making model, but it can be more accurately described as a model of learning and individual and organizational adaptation. The OODA Loop facilitates decision making because it is filtered through culture, genetics, previous experience, new information, and the ability to analyse and synthesise (Enck, 2012). It aims at integral and systemic monitoring of the collaborator in the work context, integrating both analysis dimensions typical of work-content and work-context, as well as monitoring of the organisation itself, allowing the creation of a space that promotes the physical and mental well-being. The model will use Key Performance Indicators, required to cope with the situational-awareness mechanism required for continuum surveillance addressing preventive actions. The operational indicators express in numbers perceptions that would be otherwise difficult to identify and correlate (Arora & Kaur, 2015); therefore the indicators are grouped into three categories: Indicators of Physical Environment (work context), Indicators of Social Environment (work content) and Worker Health Context. Within the scope of the project, two categories of professionals will be considered for the target-group: white-collar workers (WCW) and blue-collar workers (BCW), the BCW can be defined as those who perform primarily physical work and whose career paths are relatively restricted and WCW professional and semi-professional employees (Hu, Kaplan, & Dalal, 2010).



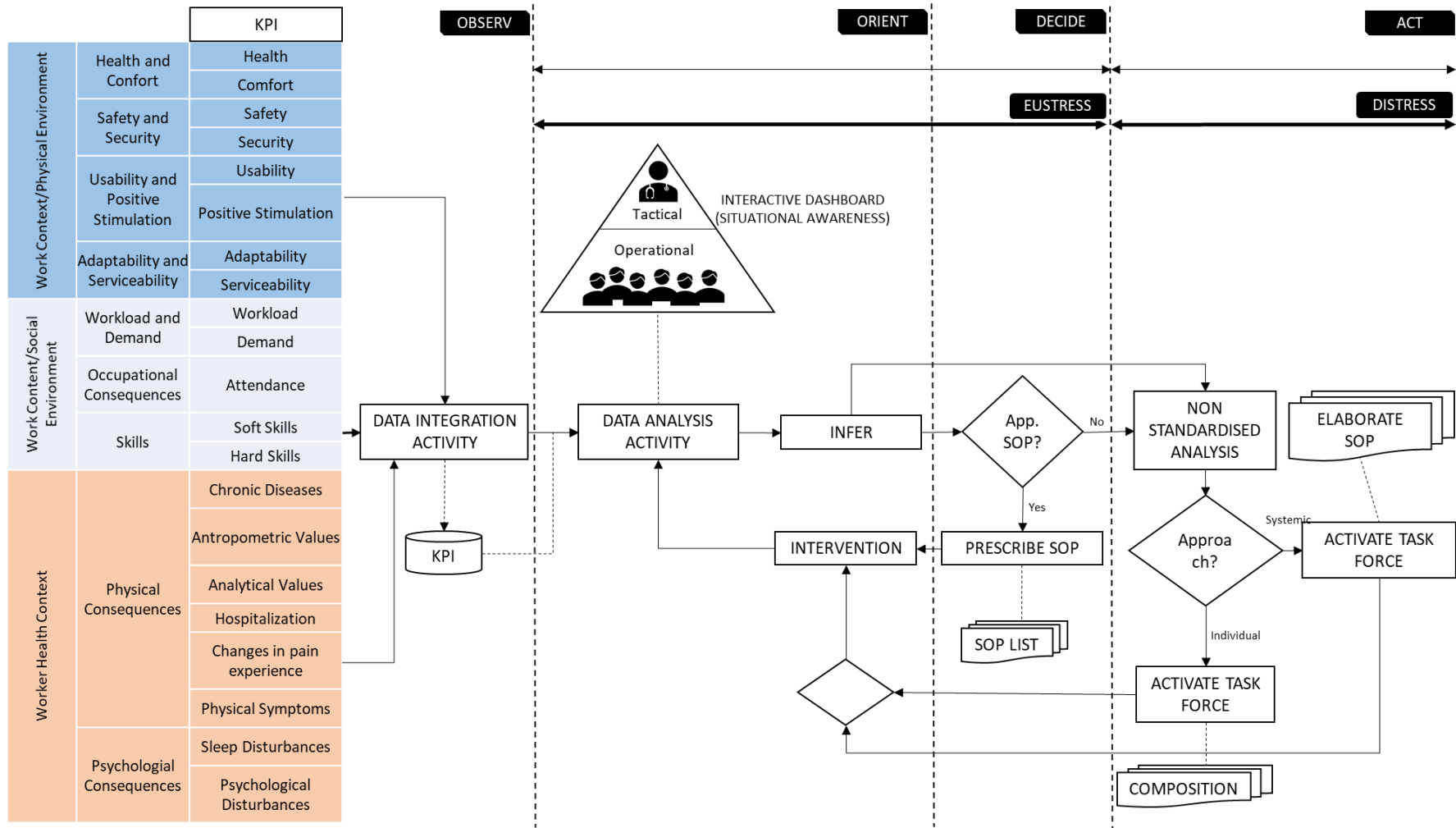


Fig. 1. The Monitoring and Preventive Diagnosis (MDP) model



The research will adopt the Design Science Research Methodology (DSRM) approach, where each informational artefact is generated to address the challenges identified for the target group. The study object for the proposed model is the health sciences with a focus on the nursing discipline and will be validated using interviews, panels of experts and later with the use of simulations. If the target problem is not recognised or neglected, it can affect the productivity of the co-worker and the organisation in general.

Standard operating procedures (SOPs) can help identify what actions need to be taken before it becomes critical, contributing to improving situational awareness within the organisation. Thus, the organisation will gain stability and an equilibrium between the environment and the workers. The model will have an object of study, the health sciences and will be validated through interviews, panels of experts and later with the use of simulations. It is expected that this model increases the efficiency of organisations, through a better outcome in work context, work content and workers' health. This model will also lead to an improvement in the political framework within the organisations and, expectedly, in all the health sector too.

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