



**A GAMIFIED AUGMENTED REALITY APPLICATION FOR
HUMAN-MACHINE INTERACTION IN CNC MILLING MACHINE**

By

NADIA HANIM BINTI ABD RANI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Chairman: Assoc. Prof. Ir. Ts. Faieza Binti Abdul Aziz, PhD
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The 4th industrial revolution and the digital transformation are prevailing factors in the manufacturing industry and augmented reality (AR) currently plays an important role to undertake the challenges in integrating technologies to expedite the march towards the revolution. The manufacturing evolution provided more efficient techniques to extend the humans capabilities and cost reduction in various areas. Computer Numerical Control (CNC) milling machine was the most difficult machine as it takes several procedures with different processes. It requires skilled users and knowledge in programming, 3-D model design, and understanding machine language. Therefore, machining competencies in CNC machines practices are highly demanded. Tool length offsets are one of the most widely misunderstood aspects of CNC milling operation and these procedures rely on human-input parameters. Human-machine interaction (HMI) is an interaction and communication between human and a machine, a dynamic technical system and it is the methodology for evaluation of user interface techniques. The objectives of this research are to measure the ability of beginners, and empowering the CNC milling machine operation. A gamified AR application is to be developed, called CNC Milling Interaction Learning (CMiL), to assist user understanding in performing the machining task. Then, the AR application effectiveness is being evaluated for user acceptance of this technology. This research also developed a conceptual framework on HMI with cybergogy learning concept for human engagement and heutagogy learning. The items difficulties in handling CNC milling machine were identified through and experiment which involved 31 participants. Numbers of softwares have been used for the AR application development. The hardware used was Boxford VMci300 CNC milling machine and, tablet or mobile as the device to run the CMiL application. CMiL effectiveness evaluation, involved 20 CNC milling machine users and experts. A conceptual framework was developed and validated by the CNC milling machine expertise and curriculum developer. As a result, 14 items were identified as difficulties to empower CNC milling machines for beginners. An immersive 3D gamified AR application was developed to

enhance the user experience and user interface for better understanding with video, images, tasks, simulation in the AR environment. The CMiL application contents was 100% function, pertinent with the real-scene machine procedures, validated by CNC machines experts. Therefore, 90.5% of CMiL users have accepted that CMiL can be act as the learning platform for the CNC Milling machine, 76.1% agreed that the apps enhanced their knowledge and 85.7% agreed that the CMiL apps enhanced their skills. The newly developed conceptual framework on humanistic theory guided by technology-based learning design shows the relationships and connectivity of the gamified AR application. 90% experts concurred that the conceptual framework of cybergogy and heutagogy learning concept by CMiL application leads to assist user interface and user experience of the HMI elements. This can be concluded that using AR via gamification and digital content offers a rich experience, assist and support the enhancement of psychomotor phase in human skills development. It is a tool for learning motivation and enhances cognitive, persistence, and competencies in human performance.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**APLIKASI REALITI BERPERANTARA SECARA GAMIFIKASI UNTUK
INTERAKSI MANUSIA-MESIN BAGI PEMESINAN CNC KISAR**

Oleh

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Revolusi industri ke-4 dan transformasi digital adalah faktor yang mempengaruhi industri pembuatan dan aplikasi realiti berperantara, *augmented reality (AR)* memainkan peranan penting untuk menghadapi cabaran dalam mengintegrasikan teknologi ke arah pencapaian revolusi yang lebih pantas. Evolusi pembuatan menyediakan teknik yang lebih cekap untuk memperluas kemampuan manusia dan pengurangan kos dari pelbagai bidang. Mesin *Computer Numerical Control (CNC)* adalah mesin yang paling sukar kerana memerlukan beberapa prosedur dengan proses yang berbeza. Ia memerlukan pengguna dan pengetahuan yang mahir dalam pengaturcaraan, reka bentuk model 3-dimensi, dan memahami pengaturcaraan. Oleh itu, kemahiran yang tinggi dan pekerja yang berpengalaman ada amat diperlukan bagi mengendalikan mesin CNC. Pengukuran dan penentuan ketinggian mata alat, ofset adalah salah satu aspek yang paling banyak disalah tafsirkan dan dilakukan dalam pelbagai cara sebelum menjalankan operasi mesin CNC dan prosedur ini bergantung pada maklumat parameter oleh manusia. Interaksi manusia-mesin, *human-machine interaction* adalah proses komunikasi antara manusia dan mesin, sistem teknikal yang dinamik dan ini adalah metodologi untuk penilaian teknik ke atas antara muka, *user interface* pengguna. Oleh yang demikian, objektif penyelidikan ini adalah untuk mengukur kemampuan pengguna yang baru untuk mengendalikan mesin CNC kisar. aplikasi realiti berperantara (AR) yang dibangunkan dan dikenali sebagai, CNC Milling Interaction Learning (CMiL), adalah untuk membantu pemahaman pengguna dalam melaksanakan proses pemesinan secara asas. Kemudian, keberkesanan aplikasi realiti berperantara (AR) ini dinilai penerimaannya untuk digunakan oleh pengguna dan penggunaan terhadap teknologi ini. Penyelidikan ini juga membangunkan kerangka konsep mengenai interaksi manusia-mesin dengan konsep pembelajaran cybergogy untuk meningkatkan penglibatan manusia dan pendekatan konsep pembelajaran heutagogy. Bagi mengenal pasti kesukaran item mengendalikan Mesin CNC Kisar, 31 sampel telah terlibat di dalam eksperimen yang dilaksanakan. Oleh yang demikian, dalam proses

membangunkan aplikasi interaktif perantara (AR) ini, beberapa perisian telah digunakan. Perkakasan pula yang digunakan adalah mesin kisar CNC Boxford VMCi300 dan, tablet atau telefon sebagai peranti untuk menjalankan aplikasi CMiL. 20 pengguna dan juga pakar dalam mesin CNC kisar telah terlibat dalam penilaian keberkesanan CMiL. Kerangka konsep dibangunkan dan disahkan oleh pakar mesin CNC kisar yang juga sebagai pembangun kurikulum TVET. Hasilnya, 14 item dikenal pasti sebagai kesukaran untuk mengendalikan mesin CNC kisar kepada pengguna yang baru. Aplikasi realiti berperantara AR secara gamifikasi 3D yang dibangunkan adalah untuk meningkatkan persepsi manusia dan antara-muka pengguna untuk pemahaman secara praktis yang lebih baik berpandukan video, gambar, tugas, simulasi di dalam persekitaran aplikasi ini. Kandungan aplikasi CMiL ini telah disahkan oleh pakar dalam bidang pemesinan CNC. Keberfungsian aplikasi ini adalah 100% sebagaimana prosedur pemesinan secara sebenar. Oleh itu, 90.5% telah menerima aplikasi CMiL untuk digunapakai sebagai landsan pembelajaran bagi pemesinan CNC kisar, 76.1% bersetuju bahawa aplikasi ini dapat meningkatkan pengetahuan mereka dan 85.7% bersetuju bahawa aplikasi CMiL meningkatkan kemahiran mereka. Rangka kerja teori humanistik yang baru telah dibangunkan berpandukan reka bentuk pembelajaran yang berasaskan teknologi gamifikasi AR. 90% pakar dalam bidang pemesinan CNC, penggerak industri, aplikasi maya dan para akademik dalam sistem TVET telah bersetuju bahawa rangka kerja teori humanistik yang dibangunkan menunjukkan hubungan domain pembelajaran cybergogy dan pembelajaran sendiri, heutagogy melalui aplikasi CMiL. Ianya memberi kesan terhadap antara-muka pengguna pada sesebuah mesin dan persepsi manusia melalui emosi dan keyakinan. Ini dapat disimpulkan bahawa menggunakan AR melalui gamifikasi dan kandungan digital memberi pengalaman, membantu dan menyokong peningkatan fasa psikomotor dalam proses peningkatan kemahiran manusia. Ini adalah sebuah alat dan kaedah bagi memotivasikan pembelajaran dan meningkatkan kognitif, keupayaan, dan kecekapan dalam prestasi manusia.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

2D	Two Dimensional
3D	Three Dimensional
APK	Android Application Package
AR	Augmented reality
BI	Behavioral Intention
CAD	Computer Aided Design
CAM	Computer Aided Manufacturing
CC	Community College
CMiL	CNC Milling Interactive Learning
CNC	Computer Numerical Control
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
HCI	Human-Computer Interaction
HMI	Human-Machine Interaction
INFIT	Inlier-sensitive or information-weighted fit
IR	Industrial Revolution
MCO	Movement Control Order
MR	Mixed Reality
MNSQ	Mean-Square
OUTFIT	Outlier-sensitive or information-weighted fit
PEOU	Perceived Ease of Use
PIDM	Person Item Distribution Map
PMC	Point Measure Correlation
PU	Perceived Usefulness
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model

TVET	Technical Vocational Education Training
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UI	User Interface
UX	User Experience
VM	Virtual Manufacturing
VR	Virtual Reality



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Precision manufacturing of machine tools is very evolutionary. Incremental experience-based improvements are steadily achieved and as the machinery itself advances in precision, the components that make up the next generation of machines also improve. Dornfeld (2008) stated that together with the value-added by skilled craftsmen results in ever-increasing accuracy of machine tools could increase. Nekrasov et al. (2018) defined that the quality of the part is characterized by the precision of its processing where a good fit of the product parts depends on how accurately the size and shape of the part are maintained during machining. In metalworking operations, the quality of cutting-tool performance is one of the most significant issues that need to be addressed (Grigoriev et al., 2019).

Machine equipment equipped with Computer Numerical Control (CNC) an abbreviation for Computer Numerical Control systems has a high discreteness of movements, functions of adjusting the movement of the tool, accounting for wear of the cutting edge, etc. CNC is and such machines are electro-mechanical contrivances that handle machine shop tools using computer programming inputs. Machine tool errors have been mainly categorized by Chatterjee (1996) in two classes namely, quasi-static and dynamic errors. It is often difficult to achieve desired accuracies due to the complexity and the interactions of the various factors. The quasi-static error is related to the relative positioning error between the tool and the workpiece.

Martinov et al. (2017) had developed a generic platform underlying the design of custom CNC systems for hi-tech production complexes. Sima et al. (2020) identified the influences of the Industry Revolution 4.0, IR 4.0 on human capital development and consumer behavior which are shifting the work environment and the drivers for human capital development and consumer behavior. AR currently plays an important role to undertake the challenges in integrating technologies to expedite the march towards IR 4.0 (Rani et al., 2020). Machine tools developed by Czerniak et al. (2017) aided with advanced technology controllers, ergonomic requirements focused on the communication, cooperation, and interaction between humans and machines to reduce human error. Ali (2012) investigated the higher age group of CNC machine operators, using motor action time and applied force as response variables to evaluate the CNC machine operator's performance.

AR can be combined with human abilities to provide efficient and complementary tools to assist manufacturing tasks comparatively, fewer AR applications can be found in CNC machining (Nee et al., 2013). An AR interface has been applied by Yew et al. (2016) to improve the information perception of the different types of workers in a manufacturing facility and to make interaction with manufacturing software, CAD/CAM. Fischer et al. (2016) used AR as an aid for workforce training and the study showed better interaction between humans and machines. Qeshmy et al. (2019) implemented AR as automation to alleviate the workload of an operator with augmented system performance to reduce human errors in the assembly area. A virtual CNC milling simulation process to assist the generation of G-codes with AR application was applied by Yap et al. (2016).

Ulmer et al. (2020) has developed a concept on evaluation system combining gamification and VR practice for flexible assembly tasks and compared it to existing works. Paravizo et al. (2018) used game elements to support manufacturing education tackling sustainability awareness issues. Gamification can generate valuable feedback for improving employees' engagement and performance, (Ulmer et al., 2020). Paliokas et al. (2020) used an AR application game-based with a quiz, to foster motivation and enhance learning experiences. Gamification can be integrated effectively into manufacturing education to motivate students and enhance their learning effectiveness, (Zhiqiang et al., 2020). Reddy et al. (2020), has compared time of machining completion using virtual CNC turning machine and determined that the virtual learning given faster completion of 62 minutes of time compared to conventional learning 75 minute.

Digital design and manufacturing technologies provide great support for product realization from design conception and engineering to manufacturing, sales, and services of a product. Chen et al. (2015) used cyber-physical system (CPS) models, for intelligent-machining applications, such as the optimization of NC processing parameters and the health assurance of CNC machine tools. Dong (2004) defined that the more machines used in manufacturing, HMI has changed from the adaption of humans to machines gradually to the adaption of machines to humans. Damiani et al. (2018) determined that virtual application such as VR and AR could be adapted for workforce training as the applications could interact human workforce in efficient way. This was the way by improvised the cooperation between humans and machine as well teach workers complex tasks in a safer manner to increase their productivity.

1.2 Problem Statement

The advanced technology in machines tools involved computers, automation, coding, etc. Many machining processes continue to require immediate human input for years to come, (Ma et al., 2019). The human input involved machine set-up procedure, programming and workpiece installation before the CNC machining operation. Therefore, human skills are still needed even an advanced technology and robotics took the place for fast and smart manufactured. Lynch (2019) stated that handling CNC machines is very difficult because it requires skilled users and knowledge in programming, 3D model design, and understanding machine language. Karuguzel et al. (2015) has described one of the most important and unique cutting parameters which is the tool axis offset and determined its effects on process outputs such as cutting force, surface quality, and tool wear.

Tool length offsets are one of the most widely misunderstood aspects of CNC mill operation, (Lamngeun, 2019). This is at least partly because there are many different ways to manage length offsets, shown in Figure 1.1

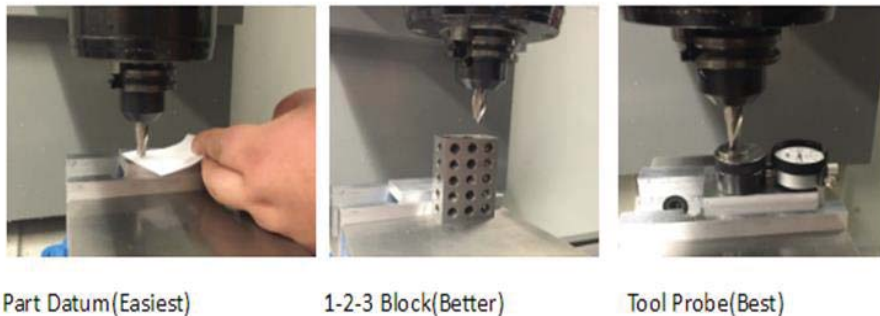


Figure 1.1: Methods of tool length offset in CNC milling machine
(Source: Lamngeun, 2019)

The geometric errors are greatly affected by the error modeling and error measurement methods, which could require significant machine downtime to implement, (Gu et al., 2015). Nazir (2016) in his article pointed out improper setting, improper maintenance, and improper programming lead to the failure of CNC machines. Zhang (2010) determined that an important aspect of human-machine interaction is the methodology for the evaluation of user interface techniques. The use of metrics beyond precision and recall include,

- time required to learn the system
- time required to achieve goals on benchmark tasks
- error rates
- retention of the way to use the interface over time.

Berlin & Adam (2017) developed a framework as Figure 1.2, to understand the relationship between factors affecting the mental workload, and how this affected the attention of the workers and their performance which then leads to produce errors.

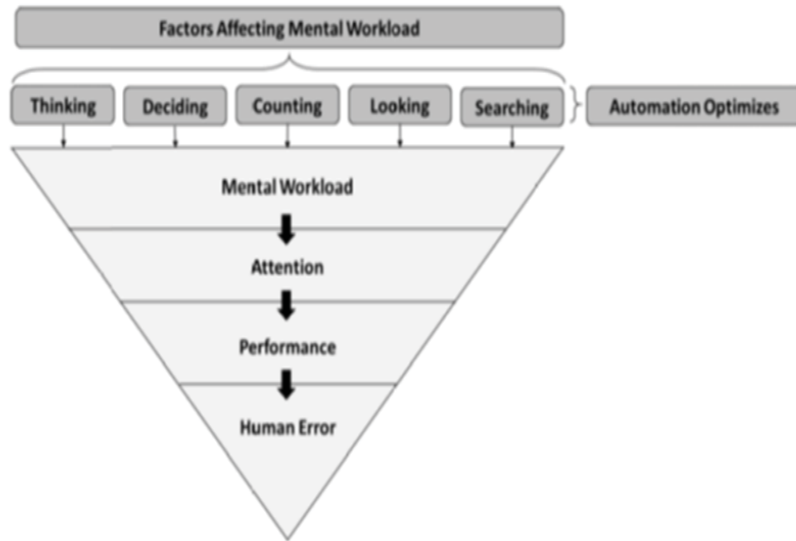


Figure 1.2: Mental Workload framework
(Source: Berlin and Adam, 2017)

As related to CNC machining operation, mental resources required to perform a set of concurrent tasks related to thinking and deciding method of machining, counting for programming, looking and searching for controller button and machine components for machine set-up and etc. Gregori et al. (2017) considered the social aspects to promote social sustainability while developing new production systems, together with more traditional environmental aspects by ensuring the crucial aspect of human growth and wellbeing. Monika et al. (2020) emphasized AR as a supporting tool for a direct visualization solution, as well as an enriched information graphics environment to track the machining process in real-time.

Dudley et al. (2018) further described that for machine learning, it is essential that the implementation of new and exciting artificial intelligence for such applications is followed by careful design of user interfaces. Bacca et al. (2015) applied mobile AR for educational purposes from a collaborative creation process (Co-Creation) and based on the universal design for learning (UDL) for a vocational program of car maintenance. Based on Quintana et al. (2020) case study, AR has been acknowledged as a suitable sustainable technology that may foster social and cognitive justice and inclusive education, and train students that are equally prepared for the dynamic future.

Figure 1.3 indicates the traditional human-machine interaction only incorporates human perception from system output (1). An improved model suggested, have to include personal capabilities, individuality, and actual condition (2) as well as physiological processes involved in interpersonal communication (3), (Riener, 2017).

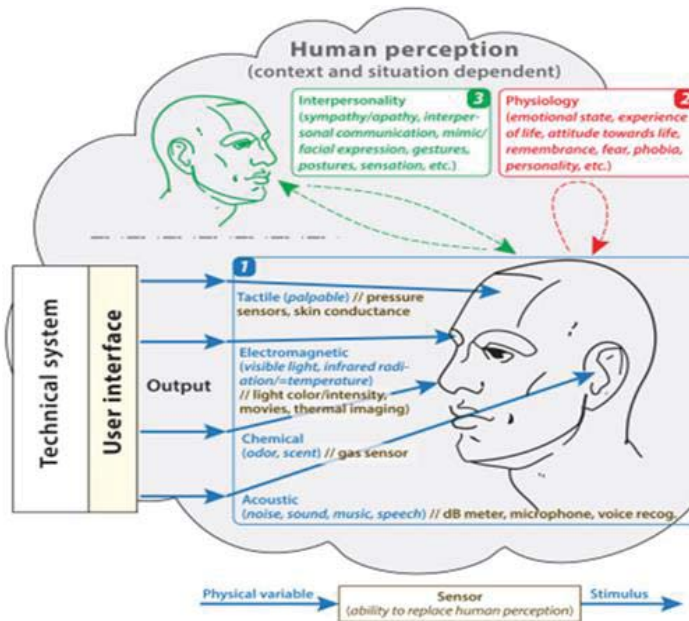


Figure 1.3: The traditional and improved model of human-machine interaction

(Source: Riener, 2017)

Based on the various studies, the human input requires multiple methods of approaching due to the mobility of the CNC machines to users. Critically issued by Lotti et al. (2019), CNC milling machine interfaces from the point of view of human-machine interaction and summarized as: not suitable support information; the alternation between panel and machine; non-homogeneity of presented information and user's tasks not focusing on production functions. Chardonnet et al. (2017) justified that CNC machines are high complexity machines with low ergonomics. The operator has to move continuously between the machine window and a control screen to ensure smooth operations. A good digital learning platform should be able to completely record learners' learning history so that instructors could understand learners' learning conditions and learners could realize the level of understanding and learning outcome for adjustment and improvement (Lin et al., 2017).

Previous studies had indicated numbers of issues regarding human-input parameters in CNC machines operation which are regarding to:

- workpiece installation
- G code and M code programming
- machine parameters
- machine set-up procedures

Therefore, the affected of mental workload to handle the CNC machine effects the human perception. The context and situation perception affected physiology condition based on human experience and emotional state which include phobia, fear and remembrance. The human perception involves physiology is being improvise by using digital learning platform to enhance user interface (UI) and user experience (UX) to empower handling CNC milling machine. The AR is a trending technology that has been used as a supporting tool to reduce and assist the occurrence of human errors which affected product precision generally and to embrace the (IR 4.0) specifically. Devedzic et al. (2016) indicated that AR as a key technology of concept Industry 4.0 to support learning activities becomes a trend in education and AR-based methods are proven to be effective teaching aids for engineering courses.

Therefore, in this study, the process of machine setting procedures for model Boxford VMCi300 CNC milling machine will be developed using AR application with interactive element embedded with game-based to gives motivation and enhance learning engagement, with enjoyment and playfulness along with the machine set-up tasks given. This application will use mobile or table as a device to enhance the learning practice of handling CNC milling machines by adopting AR technology, fusing the virtual 3D models or animations in real-life scenes. The time of machine set-up completion could be compared between two learning environment, conventional and virtual application to evaluate the effectiveness of the AR application. Throughout the needs in the industry and education, especially in the TVET education, skills training now becomes a requirement for job prospects, especially in the manufacturing sectors. This cybergogy and heutagogy learning concept approach will enhance the psychomotor values and confidence level for the effective skilled outcome.

The research questions of this study are:

- I. What are the obstacles restricted empowering the CNC machine operation?
- II. How to sustain information between users and machine (human-machine interaction) and mobilize users' experience of the CNC machine operation
- III. Why the gamified AR application learning platform better than the conventional machine learning for CNC machine set-up procedure
- IV. How to show that the AR application act as Cybergogy and Heutagogy learning concept that beneficial for handling CNC machine

1.3 Research Objectives

Objectives that to be achieved in the research are:

- I. To measure the abilities of beginners in empowering handling CNC Milling machines.
- II. To develop a gamified augmented reality (AR) model for machine set-up for CNC milling operation.
- III. To evaluate the effectiveness of augmented reality (AR) application in handling CNC milling machines.
- IV. To develop a conceptual framework for cybergogy and heutagogy learning concept through augmented reality (AR) application.

1.4 Hypothesis

Based from the above objectives, several hypotheses had been drawn as below:

- Using the AR application in cybergogy learning platform will enhance emotive, social and cognitive presence that engaged learners to learn CNC milling machine
- Extended AR platform to gamification will improve self-determination which influence users' skill performance (solving tasks and improve score)
- Conceptual framework with cybergogy and heutagogy learning platform can be developed that beneficial in human-machine interaction (HMI) CNC milling machine.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Manufacturing evolution provided more efficient techniques to extend the humans capabilities and cost reduction in various areas. Ability is talent, skill, or proficiency in a particular area of human or person to do things with passion and confidence in self. The impact of Industry 4.0 on workforce recruitment is expected to be significant since the requirements of the skill needs will be changed. AR has become one of the pillar elements to revolute the IR4.0 realization. The case study interest is more on enhancing the innovation and creativity of human-machine interaction through training, teaching, and learning for upskilling and reskilling activities with interactive technology. Through the AR apps via gamification the machining handling procedures and interfacing with Boxford VMCi300 CNC milling machine, could be used in various TVET institutions for CNC machining courses and other manufacturing programs. Eventhough the AR application massively demanded in the IR 4.0 implementation, the safety aspect highly required. When using the AR application, the user should aware the physical safety risks. Augmented reality applications can be immensely distracting and may lead to physical injuries. It is

to be aware as well that visually induced motion sickness (VIMS) can occur in augmented reality (AR) optical see-through applications, (Kaufeld et al., 2022)

1.6 Scope of Work

The gamified augmented reality (AR) application developed is based on the model Boxford VMCi300 CNC milling machine, with control panel and CAD/CAM software. Manual procedures of the machine and CNC milling machining course syllabus including rubrics were used as part of the application contents. The detection collision between tools and workpiece were assumed. 31 respondents, only students as beginners of CNC machine users are being observed for identifying obstacles to empower CNC machining course. In the evaluation of the AR application usability, only 20 respondents are being selected based on the knowledge and experience using the BOXFORD VMCi300 CNC milling machine and CAD/CAM software. The respondent group was from students, lecturers, instructors, and graduated students of Community College, Department of Polytechnic, and Community College Malaysia.

1.7 Thesis Layout

This thesis is structured into five (5) chapters as listed:

Chapter 1 contains an introduction and overview of the research, problem statements, research objectives, significance of the study, scope of work, and, thesis outline.

Chapter 2 reviews previous works on virtual application, human-machine interaction, CNC machines, gamification, and theoretical framework studied by researchers. This includes design development in AR application, gamification in machining as well as cybergogy and heutagogy learning concepts.

Chapter 3 describes and explains the methodology used to achieve all the research objectives respectively. This includes hardware and software used in the design and development of the gamified AR application. The effectiveness of usability was being evaluated with a theoretical model and measurements items were validated.

Chapter 4 analyze and discuss the finding results with data and tabulated graph and develop a conceptual framework according to variables of UI and UX for assisting interaction between human and machine.

Chapter 5 concludes the results and discussion with novelty from the research in implementing the virtual application in the machining industry and future recommendations to sustainability in quality education

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