



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## Integrating predictive analytics into safety management frameworks in business aviation

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### Abstract

With the increased expansion of business aviation comes sophisticated safety problems that require different approaches to management. While the traditional Safety Management Systems, or SMS, have helped lower incidents, the use of predictive analytics events suggests a more intuitive strategy to risk evaluation and management. This research focuses on the integration of predictive analytics within business aviation safety management frameworks to boost operational safety. A quantitative methodology was employed, and a total of 100 structured questionnaires were distributed to a selected sample of pilots, safety and operational managers, and operational personnel from selected business aviation companies. Findings are presented using frequency and percentage distributions, with interpretations underscoring the significant role of predictive tools in safety return on investments. Findings show that predictive analytics effectively improve risk assessment, enhance operational insight, and decrease incidents, thus fortifying the SMS structure.

**Keyword:** Predictive Analytics; Safety; Management; Business Aviation

### 1. Introduction

Due to technological changes, new regulations, and the growing intricacy of airspace around the world, business aviation has undergone considerable transformation in the past two decades. While the industry is still growing, safety is an ongoing preoccupation for operators, regulators, and industry stakeholders. The adoption of Safety Management Systems has eased the burden of hazard identification, risk management, and safety culture internalization across aviation organizations (McNeely, 2012). Nonetheless, opportunities for improvement still exist, as deficiencies within a business aviation safety framework that relies on compliance and reactive methods, as highlighted by Oster et al, (2013). This underscores the need to integrate predictive analytics for more proactive risk management in business aviation.

Predictive analytics is the act of utilizing data mining, statistical modeling, and machine learning to forecast future results. This has already been applied successfully in the healthcare industry, and even within manufacturing and commercial aviation. In business aviation, predictive technologies enable the evaluation of considerable datasets, such as flight data monitoring, maintenance logs, and human performance evaluations to provide early warning indicators of safety risks well before they lead to accidents. With regard to business aviation, the effectiveness of predictive analytics hinges on safety data collection and its subsequent analysis, thus, shifting the focus from responsive measures to proactive and preventative actions.

With predictive analytics, the safety program can establish appropriate threshold levels for more precise hazard and risk evaluation, as well as better safety resource allocation (Ajayi et al., 2020). As noted, the author's focus on business aviation stems from the understanding that such industry innovations are pervasive and fundamentally necessary. For example, the detection of abnormal flight parameters during maintenance of the aircraft, as well as the analysis of

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maintenance procedures associated with system failures, and even the prediction of fatigue-related human error risks are only a few ways predictive analytics would fortify industry standards. With such advanced predictive tools, tailored operational risk interventions can be executed.

In addition to this, governing organizations like the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have recognized the importance of advanced data analytics in bolstering safety culture (ICAO, 2018; FAA, 2021). There are, however, problems with adopting such systems in business aviation because of their high costs, scarce data, need for specific high-level knowledge, and specialized skills (Ferguson & Nelson, 2020). This poses a contrasting scenario in research and practice, given that such systems in commercial aviation are widely and progressively being adopted, whereas business aviation, despite being faced with similar operational risks, continues to lag.

For this reason, this research focuses on the use of predictive analytics in the safety management frameworks of business aviation. This research focuses on the predictive technologies and their capabilities during the safety management processes and their abilities to mitigate safety occurrences, enhance hazard discovery, and boost organizational learning. The research, through a quantitative questionnaire-based approach, seeks the views of aviation professionals on the use of predictive analytics within the framework of safety management systems (SMS). The outcomes are expected to advance academic dialogue and practical issues, demonstrating the need for predictive analytics in the business aviation safety frameworks.

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## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. From reactive SMS to predictive safety management**

Contemporary Safety Management System (SMS) frameworks are constructed upon four essential components: policy, risk management, assurance, and promotion. However, the fourth edition of ICAO's Safety Management Manual (Doc 9859) advocates for the incorporation of performance monitoring and leading indicators, which serve as gateways to predictive analytics. In the United States, regulators describe SMS as a hierarchical, enterprise-wide, risk-driven structured framework. There are proactive regulations being developed to expand the scope of SMS to different operator categories, which will compile and diversify safety data for enhanced predictive analysis.

### **2.2. Foundations of predictive analytics: safety intelligence, FDM, and FOQA**

Flight Data Monitoring and FOQA programs are recognized for generating data at a high frequency. They are considered the backbone of predictive safety work. The evolution of FOQA is particularly intriguing. Historical reviews demonstrate its evolution from monitoring to the proactive identification of unstable approaches, exceedances, and precursor events, thereby "feeding" the SMS safety assurance and risk assessment cycles (USDOT/Volpe review, 2020). FDM is currently grappling with the problem of thousands of parameters and their transformation into anomaly and severity indices that reflect operational risk.

### **2.3. Predictive maintenance and PHM in business aviation**

An emerging body of literature focuses on predictive maintenance / PHM that uses aircraft sensor data streams to project potential failures and refine the scheduling of maintenance activities. Reviews and industry assessments suggest that ML-enabled PHM has a reduction in unscheduled events and improvement in dispatch reliability, advantages that align seamlessly with the SMS risk management framework and safety assurance (Anumbe, 2022). In business aviation, where downtime and fleet size increases risk exposure per tail number, predictive PHM benefits are pronounced for the health of components, APU/engine monitoring, and maintenance performed on a condition basis.

### **2.4. Machine learning for flight risk and anomaly detection**

Recent academic studies are exploring the application of unsupervised and semi-supervised techniques to identify outliers and precursor events in flight data sequences using multidimensional data without the presence of labeled out, an advantage in the case of infrequent accidents (Li, et.al., 2015). Approaches include the use of autoencoders, variational autoencoders, isolation forests, and clustering on FDM datasets. Comparative research has demonstrated the capacity of such models to identify latent hazards (e.g., certain atypical energy states and flap/gear timing). These models can also identify engage actionable metrics that can be integrated into SMS risk and focused training.

## 2.5. Text intelligence: mining reports and narratives for leading indicators

Apart from sensors, reports such as ASRS, voluntary reports, maintenance write-ups, MEL/CDL notes, as well as safety reports from which personal information has been removed, are a rich source of unstructured text that can be analyzed using Natural Language Processing to extract relevant context, hazards, and trends. Topic modeling and classification along with other forms of NLP are rapidly being adopted for aviation safety, with one of the latest systematic reviews focusing on the identification of human-factors precursors and signals of organizational drift. These signals are increasingly being incorporated with Fatigue Detection Monitoring systems to develop multimodal SMS dashboard predictors.

## 2.6. Airport/operator case evidence for predictive SMS

End-to-end organizational case studies such as Split Airport have demonstrated predictive safety performance forwards and backwards (Garriga et.al., 2021). These studies correlate certain indicators to specific focused mitigations and demonstrate comprehensive SMS. Stepwise feedback as illustrated in forms a complete cycle and is tailored to business flight-department aviation operator SMS.

## 2.7. Implementation challenges: data governance, explainability, and scale

The literature emphasizes that predictive safety requires data quality, integration, data governance (ownership of FOQA data, de-identification, sharing protocols), and trust in the models (alerts and actions) so safety managers and pilots can make decisions based on the models and alerts. Operational data science can be implemented using semi-supervised models with explainable features such as saliency and reconstruction contributions. For small business-aviation operators, the constraint of specialist skills and IT systems labeling hampers progress. There is active research and practice into low-cost vendor tools and pipelines tied to SMS processes

## 2.8. The state of the science: safety AI: bibliometric and systematic reviews

The scope of systematic and bibliometric reviews is broader, capturing the AI-for-aviation-safety research explosion (2004) as well as advancements in anomaly detection, maintenance prediction, trajectory risk assessment, and safety text mining. The reviews emphasize the addition of predictive analytics to help implement SMS (safety management system) as the move from using SMS as a lagging indicator to SMS as a proactive risk management tool, but the processes, validation, and assurance require embedded governance and oversight.

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## 3. Regulatory trajectory and implications for business aviation

With the FAA/EASA extending the scope of SMS requirements above the border of Part 121, business aviation, including Part 91, 135 operators, and corporate flight departments now have a responsibility and a chance to assimilate predictive analytics into SMS through FDM, PHM, and text-mined safety intelligence. SMS FDM PHM text mining FDM PHM text mining safety intelligence systems. The regulatory drive provides better access to data and streamlines assurance processes, thus operationalizing the SMS suggests that predictive frameworks can be integrated into the iterative cycles of the system's refinement.

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## 4. Methodology

The current research was conducted with a defined quantitative approach and solicited business aviation professionals through structured questionnaires.

- **Population and Sample:** The study's scope was a sample set of 100 respondents consisting of pilots, safety managers, engineers, and operations personnel from targeted business aviation operators.
- **Data Analysis:** The data was processed with descriptive statistical methods and summarized as frequency counts with associated proportions and tabular representation. Conclusions were formed under each table.

5. Results

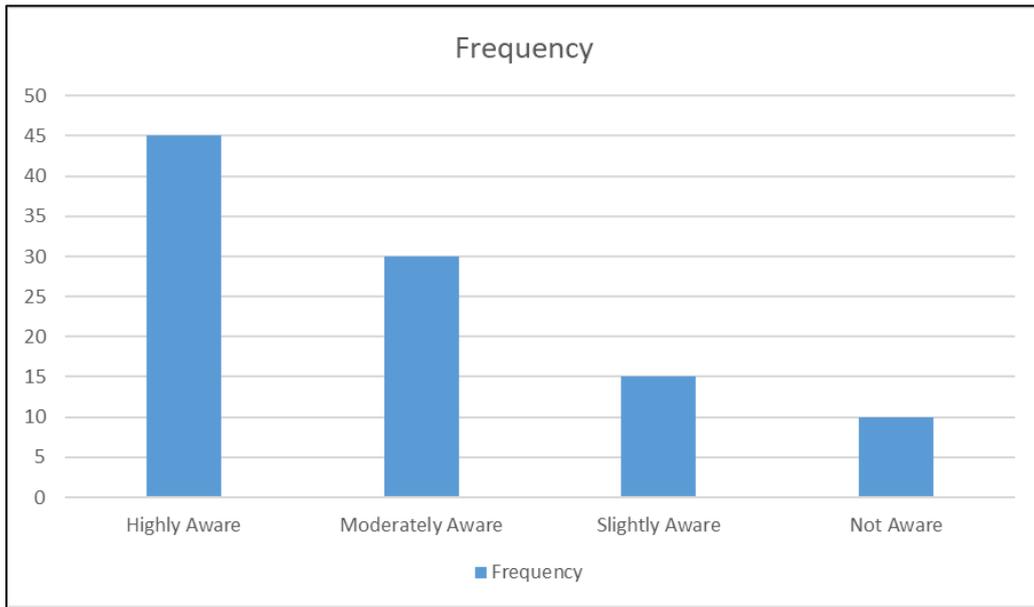


Figure 1 Awareness of Predictive Analytics in Business Aviation SMS

Findings show that 45% of respondents are highly aware of predictive analytics and its application in SMS. This indicates that a significant proportion of aviation professionals understand the potential of predictive tools. However, the 25% who are either slightly aware or not aware at all highlights the need for training and awareness campaigns.

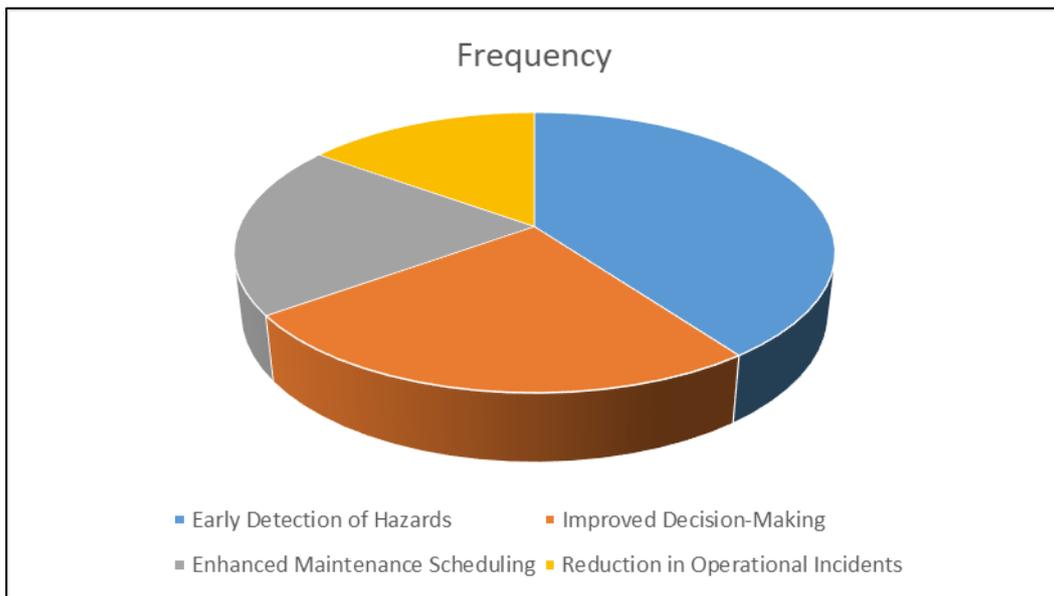


Figure 2 Perceived Benefits of Integrating Predictive Analytics into SMS

Early detection of hazards (40%) was the most frequently identified benefit, underscoring predictive analytics' role in proactive safety. Improved decision-making (25%) and enhanced maintenance scheduling (20%) reflect the operational efficiency advantages. The reduction in operational incidents (15%) suggests that while important, it is perceived as a long-term outcome rather than an immediate benefit.

**Table 1** Challenges of Integrating Predictive Analytics

Challenge Identified	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High Implementation Costs	35	35%
Lack of Technical Expertise	30	30%
Data Privacy Concerns	20	20%
Resistance to Change	15	15%
Total	100	100%

The results show that cost (35%) and lack of expertise (30%) are the primary barriers to predictive analytics adoption. Data privacy (20%) and resistance to change (15%) were also noted, reflecting organizational and cultural barriers. These findings indicate that while predictive analytics holds potential, adoption requires substantial investment in training and resources.

**Table 2** Overall Perception of Predictive Analytics Impact on Safety

Perception	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Positive	50	50%
Positive	30	30%
Neutral	10	10%
Negative	10	10%
Total	100	100%

An overwhelming 80% (Strongly Positive + Positive) view predictive analytics as having a beneficial impact on aviation safety. Only 20% expressed neutral or negative perceptions, highlighting the broad industry consensus that predictive analytics enhances SMS effectiveness.

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## 6. Conclusion

The study shows that predictive analytics greatly enhances safety management in business aviation by facilitating proactive risk detection, improving effective resolution, and streamlining operational activities. With the perception being overwhelmingly positive in the industry, concerns such as high cost of implementation and shortage of experienced personnel pose significant issues. This means that the aviation industry is increasingly recognizing the need for integration of predictive analytics in Safety Management Systems (SMS).

### *Recommendations*

- **Training and Awareness:** Organize regular workshops to improve the predictive analytics competence of staff.
- **Investment in Infrastructure:** Devote funds to the acquisition and implementation of predictive data systems and analytics tools.
- **Collaborative Data Sharing:** Promote the conclusion of data-sharing agreements among operators to enhance the performance of the predictive models.
- **Regulatory Support:** Aviation authorities need to formulate policies aimed at the use of predictive analytics in SMS proposing guidelines to foster its usage.
- **Gradual Implementation:** Use fatigue monitoring as the baseline for small-scale predictive initiatives prior to full SMS integration.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Statement of informed consent*

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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