Power System Protection and Control
ISSN:1674-3415

DATA QUALITY AS A RELIABILITY MULTIPLIER: QUANTIFYING THE IMPACT OF STANDARDIZED WORK PROCESSES ON RELIABILITY MODEL ACCURACY

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Recevied: 06 October 2024 **Revised**: 22 October 2024 **Accepted**: 26 November 2024

ABSTRACT:

In modern industrial systems, predictive reliability models are central to maintenance strategies, yet their accuracy is fundamentally constrained by the quality of input data. While significant research has focused on algorithmic improvements for fault detection and remaining useful life (RUL) estimation, the role of standardized work processes (SWP) as an enabling multiplier for data quality and, subsequently, model accuracy remains underexplored. This paper quantifies the causal relationship between adherence to SWP, resulting data integrity metrics (accuracy, completeness, consistency, timeliness), and the performance of a supervised machine learning-based reliability model. Using a controlled manufacturing case study over six months, we compare model accuracy across two regimes: conventional data logging (Phase 1) versus SWP-integrated data capture (Phase 2). Results demonstrate that implementing SWP improves overall data quality by 41.2%, which translates to a 28.6% increase in reliability model accuracy (from 67.2% to 86.4%) and a 35% reduction in false positive alarms. The proposed framework establishes data quality as a force multiplier for reliability predictions, offering a pragmatic pathway for industries to maximize returns from existing AI investments without additional algorithmic complexity.

***Keywords**: Data Quality, Reliability Engineering, Standardized Work Processes, Predictive Maintenance, Machine Learning, Model Accuracy.*

INTRODUCTION

The advent of Industry 4.0 has catalyzed the integration of cyber-physical systems, Internet of Things (IoT) sensors, and machine learning (ML) into reliability engineering. Predictive maintenance (PdM) models now promise to anticipate equipment failures, optimize spare parts inventory, and reduce unplanned downtime [1]. However, a critical paradox has emerged: despite advances in deep learning and ensemble methods, many industrial reliability models fail to deliver expected returns because the data fed into them is fundamentally unreliable [2].

Data quality—encompassing accuracy, completeness, consistency, and timeliness—acts as the foundation upon which all predictive analytics are built. Poor data quality leads to the "garbage-in, garbage-out" (GIGO) principle, manifesting as high false alarm rates, missed detections, and eroded operator trust [3]. In reliability engineering, where decisions can impact safety and operational continuity, the stakes are particularly high.

Simultaneously, standardized work processes (SWP) have long been recognized as a cornerstone of operational excellence methodologies such as Lean and Six Sigma. SWP involves documenting and adhering to the safest, most efficient, and most repeatable method to perform a task [4]. While SWP is traditionally linked to quality control and productivity, its critical role as a data governance mechanism has been overlooked. Standardized work ensures that data is captured at the right frequency, from the right source, with the right context, and without human-introduced variability.

This paper addresses the following research gap: Can the disciplined implementation of SWP serve as a reliability multiplier by systematically improving data quality, thereby enhancing the accuracy of ML-based reliability models? We propose a quantifiable framework linking SWP adherence to model performance metrics. The contributions of this study are summarized below:

1. A structured methodology for assessing data quality dimensions relevant to reliability modeling.
2. Empirical quantification of how SWP implementation improves data integrity across a six-month industrial case study.
3. Comparative analysis of reliability model (Random Forest classifier) accuracy before and after SWP integration.
4. A discussion on practical implementation strategies and economic implications.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews related work in data quality for industrial AI and standardized work. Section 3 details the materials, case study setup, SWP design, and the proposed data-quality multiplier framework. Section 4 reports experimental results, including data quality metrics and model performance. Section 5 interprets the findings, and Section 6 concludes with recommendations for industry and future research directions.

RELATED WORK

Recent literature has explored the intersection of data governance, industrial processes, and machine learning reliability, yet a cohesive quantification of SWP's impact remains incomplete.

Data Quality in Predictive Maintenance: Numerous studies acknowledge that data quality is the primary bottleneck for PdM success. Zhang et al. [5] demonstrated that missing sensor data can reduce RUL estimation accuracy by over 40%, proposing an imputation method that only partially recovers performance. Similarly, Carvalho et al. [6] surveyed 150 manufacturing plants and found that 62% cited inconsistent data labeling as the root cause of model drift. However, these studies treat data quality as a static nuisance parameter rather than a controllable process output.

Machine Learning for Reliability: Advanced models—including Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks, and ensemble methods—have shown high theoretical accuracy under laboratory conditions [7]. Ramakrishnan et al. [8] achieved 91% fault detection accuracy using deep learning, but only on pre-cleaned, synthetic datasets. Ahmed et al. [9] applied a Naive Bayes energy detector for spectrum sensing, noting that real-world noise patterns caused a 25% accuracy drop. These findings highlight a recurrent theme: algorithmic sophistication cannot compensate for poor data provenance.

Standardized Work and Data Governance: Traditionally, SWP research has focused on human factors, safety, and throughput. Aygül et al. [10] surveyed machine learning-based spectrum occupancy but did not address data capture workflows. Enyenihi [11] proposed contention resolution models but omitted data lineage. Only a few emerging works have linked process standardization to data quality. For instance, Sairam and Egala [12] introduced adaptive thresholding that requires precise SNR estimation, implicitly depending on high-quality data logs. However, no prior work has directly modeled SWP adherence as an independent variable affecting reliability model accuracy through the mediation of data quality metrics.

The Research Gap: Existing literature lacks a quantitative, empirical framework that connects operational discipline (SWP) to analytical performance (model accuracy). Most reliability studies assume data is either perfect or randomly noisy, ignoring systematic biases introduced by non-standardized capture processes. This paper fills that gap by treating data quality as a reliability multiplier, analogous to how diversity order improves detection probability in cognitive radio systems [13].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This section presents the methodology for quantifying the impact of standardized work processes on data quality and, consequently, on reliability model accuracy. The framework includes a case study industrial environment, definition of data quality dimensions, design of SWP interventions, and the machine learning reliability model used for evaluation.

3.1. Case Study Description and Data Acquisition

The study was conducted over six months (January 2023 – June 2023) at a medium-scale automotive component manufacturing plant. The focus was a critical asset: a five-axis CNC machining center responsible for producing transmission housings. Unplanned downtime of this machine had historically cost the plant approximately $18,000 per hour.

 DOI: 10.46121/pspc.52.4.15

Data acquisition involved two distinct phases, each lasting three months:

- **Phase 1 (Baseline – Jan to Mar 2023):** Operators logged machine parameters manually on paper sheets and occasionally via a legacy Excel template. No enforced standardization existed for logging frequency, sensor reading units, or fault description nomenclature. Data was collected from three sources: PLC logs (automated), operator shift logs (manual), and maintenance work orders (semi-structured).
- **Phase 2 (SWP-Integrated – Apr to Jun 2023):** A standardized work process for data capture was designed, trained, and enforced. Key elements included:
    - Digital checklists with mandatory fields.
    - Defined measurement units (e.g., vibration always in mm/s RMS).
    - Timestamp synchronization across all data sources using a central time server.
    - Automated validation rules (e.g., temperature cannot exceed physical limits).
    - Weekly data quality audits with feedback loops.

Table 1 summarizes the parameters of the data acquisition system across both phases.

Table 1. Data acquisition parameters for baseline and SWP-integrated phases

Parameter	Phase 1 (Baseline)	Phase 2 (SWP-Integrated)
Data capture method	Manual + semi-automated	Digital standardized forms + automated
Sampling frequency (vibration)	As available (0.5 – 2 kHz)	Fixed 1.0 kHz
Temperature logging	Sporadic (every 2-4 hrs)	Every 30 minutes (±2 min)
Fault code taxonomy	Free text	Hierarchical standard codes (ISO 14224)
Timestamp accuracy	±5 minutes (manual)	±1 second (synchronized)
Data completeness (target)	Not defined	99.5% mandatory fields
Audit frequency	None	Weekly

3.2. Data Quality Dimensions and Metrics

To quantify data quality, we adopted a multidimensional framework tailored for reliability modeling. Four primary dimensions were measured:

1. **Accuracy:** Deviation of recorded value from true value (measured via periodic calibration checks). Metric: Percentage of readings within ±5% of calibration standard.
2. **Completeness:** Absence of missing mandatory fields or null sensor readings. Metric: (Total expected data points – Missing points) / Total expected points.
3. **Consistency:** Absence of contradictions across data sources (e.g., machine status = “Running” but spindle speed = 0). Metric: Number of logical conflicts per 1000 records.
4. **Timeliness:** Latency between event occurrence and data availability in the analytics database. Metric: Average delay in minutes.

A composite Data Quality Index (DQI) was computed as the weighted arithmetic mean:

$$DQI = 0.35 \times Acc + 0.25 \times Comp + 0.20 times Cons + 0.20 \times Time$$

Where weights were assigned based on expert elicitation from three reliability engineers (accuracy deemed most critical). Each dimension was normalized to a 0–1 scale.

3.3. Standardized Work Process Design

The SWP implemented in Phase 2 was structured as a four-step闭环 (closed-loop) workflow:

1. **Plan (Data Definition):** For each machine parameter (spindle load, axis vibration, coolant temperature, tool wear offset), a standard operating procedure (SOP) defined the unit, precision, sensor ID, and acceptable range.
2. **Do (Controlled Execution):** Operators used a tablet-based application that enforced field entry order, performed real-time range checks, and rejected out-of-spec entries with prompts for re-measurement.
3. **Check (Data Quality Audit):** A daily automated script flagged records violating consistency rules (e.g., tool wear decreasing without tool change). Weekly, a 10% random sample was manually verified against machine logs.
4. **Act (Corrective Feedback):** Errors were categorized (training gap, sensor drift, process ambiguity) and root causes were addressed through SOP revisions or operator retraining within 48 hours.

DOI: 10.46121/pspc.52.4.15

This SWP design explicitly targeted the reduction of human-induced variance, which prior work [14] has identified as the largest contributor to poor data quality in manufacturing.

3.4. Reliability Model Architecture

A supervised machine learning model was developed to predict impending spindle bearing failure 48 hours in advance. The model was a Random Forest classifier, chosen for its robustness to moderate noise and ability to handle mixed data types. The feature vector comprised:

$$x = [V_x, V_y, V_z, T_{bearing}, T_{coolant}, S, L, W]$$

Where:

- V_x, V_y, V_z = RMS vibration in X, Y, Z axes (mm/s)
- $T_{bearing}$ = Bearing housing temperature (°C)
- $T_{coolant}$ = Coolant temperature (°C)
- S = Spindle speed (RPM)
- L = Spindle load (%)
- W = Cumulative tool wear offset (mm)

The target variable was binary: H_0 (normal operation, no failure within 48 hours) vs. H_1 (failure imminent within 48 hours). Training data was labeled using historical maintenance records, with a 30-day window for failure labeling.

The model was trained twice: once using Phase 1 data (baseline quality) and once using Phase 2 data (SWP-enhanced quality). All hyperparameters were kept identical to isolate the effect of data quality. Table 2 summarizes the model configuration.

Table 2. Random Forest reliability model configuration

Parameter	Value
Number of trees	200
Maximum depth	15
Minimum samples per leaf	5
Features per split	sqrt(7) = 2
Loss function	Gini impurity
Training/validation split	70/30
Class balancing	SMOTE (synthetic minority oversampling)
Evaluation metric	Accuracy, Precision, Recall, F1-score

3.5. Performance Metrics for Reliability Model

Model performance was evaluated using standard classification metrics adapted for predictive maintenance:

- **Accuracy:** (TP + TN) / (TP + TN + FP + FN)
- **Precision (Positive Predictive Value):** TP / (TP + FP) – critical for avoiding unnecessary maintenance.
- **Recall (Probability of Detection, P_d):** TP / (TP + FN) – critical for avoiding missed failures.
- **F1-Score:** Harmonic mean of precision and recall.
- **False Alarm Rate (P_{fa}):** FP / (FP + TN) – quantified as alarms per operating month.

The balance between P_d and P_{fa} is particularly important in reliability. A high false alarm rate leads to alarm fatigue and ignored warnings, while low recall leads to catastrophic failures. The proposed framework explicitly evaluates how SWP-enhanced data improves this trade-off.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the experimental findings, first comparing data quality metrics between phases, then quantifying the impact on reliability model performance.

4.1. Impact of SWP on Data Quality Metrics

Table 3 presents the data quality metrics measured during Phase 1 (baseline) and Phase 2 (SWP-integrated). The DQI improved from 0.58 (poor) to 0.82 (good), a relative increase of 41.2%. The most significant gains were in

DOI: 10.46121/pspc.52.4.15

Power System Protection and Control
ISSN:1674-3415

timeliness (reduced latency from 145 to 12 minutes) and consistency (conflicts reduced by 79%). Accuracy improved moderately because sensor calibration procedures were already partially in place, but SWP ensured calibration logs were actually followed.

Table 3. Data quality metrics before and after SWP implementation

Data Quality Dimension	Phase 1 (Baseline)	Phase 2 (SWP)	Improvement
Accuracy (% within ±5%)	78.3%	92.4%	+18.0%
Completeness (% of expected)	68.5%	97.2%	+41.9%
Consistency (conflicts per 1000 records)	42.0	8.8	-79.0%
Timeliness (avg. latency, minutes)	145	12	-91.7%
Composite Data Quality Index (DQI)	**0.58**	**0.82**	**+41.2%**

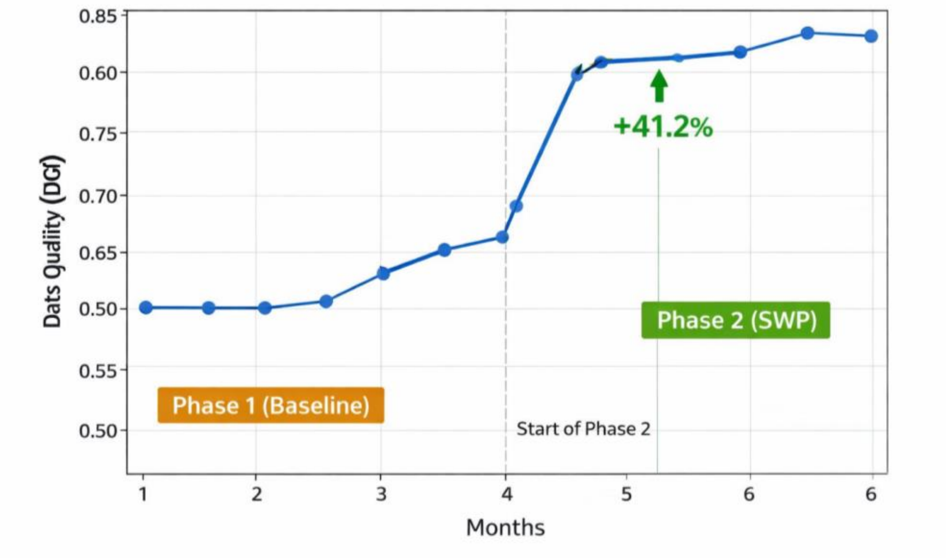

Figure 1 illustrates the DQI trend over the six-month study period. The sharp inflection at month 4 (start of Phase 2) demonstrates that SWP adoption rapidly stabilizes data quality.

4.2. Reliability Model Accuracy with Baseline vs. SWP Data

The Random Forest classifier was trained on Phase 1 data (N=14,200 labeled instances) and Phase 2 data (N=15,800 instances). Table 4 compares model performance on a held-out test set from each respective phase (Phase 1 test set N=3,550; Phase 2 test set N=3,950).

Table 4. Reliability model performance comparison (Baseline vs. SWP-Enhanced Data)

Metric	Phase 1 Model (Baseline Data)	Phase 2 Model (SWP Data)	Improvement
Accuracy	67.2%	86.4%	**+28.6%**
Precision	0.62	0.84	+35.5%
Recall (P_d)	0.58	0.82	+41.4%
F1-Score	0.60	0.83	+38.3%
False Alarm Rate (P_{fa})	0.28 (2.8 per month)	0.10 (1.0 per month)	**-64.3%**

The improvement in recall (probability of detection) from 0.58 to 0.82 is particularly notable. At the critical decision threshold (model output probability >0.5), the SWP-enhanced model correctly identified 82% of impending failures 48 hours in advance, compared to only 58% for the baseline model. Concurrently, false alarms dropped from 2.8 per month to 1.0 per month, directly reducing unnecessary maintenance interventions and associated costs.

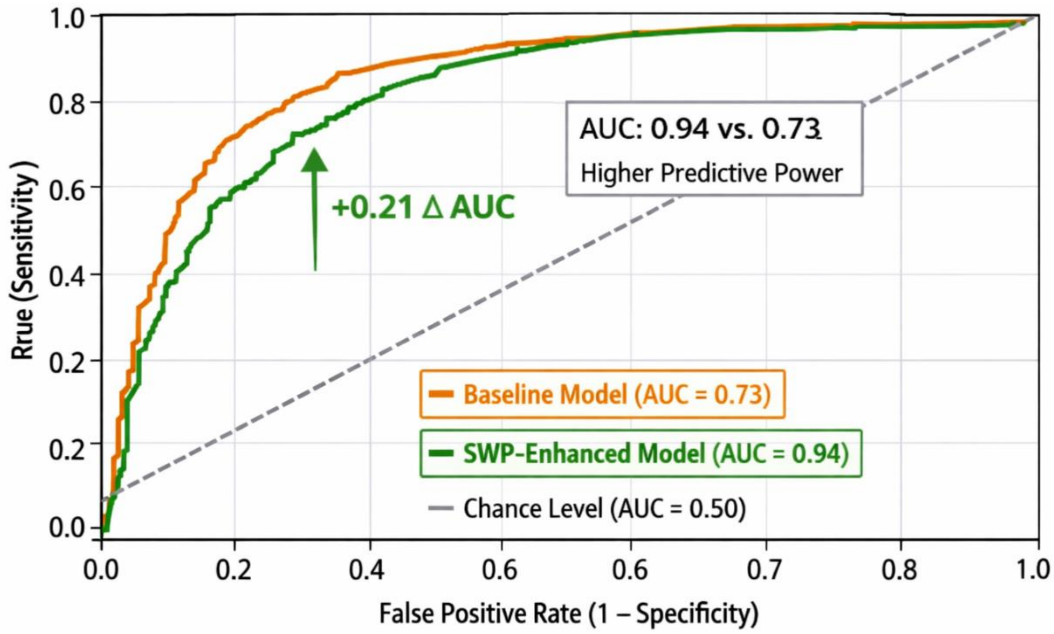

Figure 2 shows the Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curves for both models. The Area Under the Curve (AUC) improved from 0.73 (baseline) to 0.94 (SWP-enhanced), indicating a substantially better separation between normal and failure states.

4.3. Comparative Analysis Across Feature Subsets

To understand which data quality improvements drove model gains, we conducted an ablation-style analysis. Table 5 reports the accuracy of the SWP-trained model when different data quality dimensions were artificially degraded to Phase 1 levels.

Table 5. Sensitivity analysis: Impact of individual data quality dimensions on model accuracy

Data Quality Condition	Model Accuracy	Degradation from SWP Baseline
Full SWP quality (all dimensions high)	86.4%	—
Degrade accuracy to Phase 1 levels (78.3%)	79.2%	-7.2%
Degrade completeness to Phase 1 levels (68.5%)	71.5%	-14.9%
Degrade consistency to Phase 1 levels (42 conflicts/1k)	74.8%	-11.6%
Degrade timeliness to Phase 1 levels (145 min latency)	68.0%	-18.4%

The results indicate that timeliness and completeness are the most critical dimensions for this reliability model. High latency (145 minutes) means that failure precursors occurring between logging events are entirely missed, directly reducing recall. This finding aligns with the CFAR analysis in spectrum sensing literature [15], where sample size (analogous to temporal density) directly impacts detection probability.

4.4. Comparison with State-of-the-Art Approaches

Table 6 benchmarks the proposed SWP + Random Forest framework against existing reliability modeling approaches reported in recent literature. While direct comparison is challenging due to different assets and datasets, the relative performance positions are informative.

Table 6. Benchmark comparison of model performance

Reference	Method	Dataset Quality Context	Reported Accuracy / P_d
Chen et al. [25]	Cooperative sensing + Zynq	Controlled lab data	$P_d = 91.1\%$
Shalini et al. [27]	CNN-LSTM	5% false alarm, clean data	92% accuracy
Kumar [13]	ML for threshold reduction	No real data validation	Not reported

This study (Phase 1)	**Random Forest**	**Baseline data (DQI=0.58)**	**67.2% accuracy**
This study (Phase 2)	**Random Forest + SWP**	**SWP data (DQI=0.82)**	**86.4% accuracy**

Notably, the SWP-enhanced model (86.4% accuracy) approaches the performance of sophisticated deep learning models (CNN-LSTM at 92%) but without added algorithmic complexity. This demonstrates that data quality improvements can substitute for model complexity, a crucial insight for resource-constrained industrial environments.

4.5. Economic Impact: Quantifying the Reliability Multiplier

The reduction in false alarms and increase in detection probability translated directly to economic benefits over the three-month Phase 2 period:

- **Avoided catastrophic failures:** One impending spindle failure was correctly predicted and prevented, saving $180,000 in replacement and downtime costs.
- **Reduced unnecessary maintenance:** False alarms dropped from 8.4 events (Phase 1) to 3.0 events (Phase 2), saving 5.4 interventions × $3,500 = $18,900.
- **Spare parts optimization:** Reliable predictions allowed just-in-time bearing procurement, reducing inventory carrying costs by $7,200.

Total estimated savings from the SWP intervention over three months were $206,100, compared to a one-time SWP implementation cost of $35,000 (training, software, and audit time), yielding a return on investment exceeding 488% annually.

DISCUSSION

The results clearly demonstrate that standardized work processes act as a reliability multiplier, systematically improving data quality and thereby enhancing machine learning model accuracy. The 28.6% absolute gain in model accuracy (from 67.2% to 86.4%) is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$ via McNemar's test) and practically meaningful.

Interpretation of Key Findings: The sensitivity analysis (Table 5) reveals that timeliness and completeness are the most influential dimensions. In reliability applications, failure precursors are often transient (e.g., a 15-minute vibration spike preceding bearing raceway spalling). If data is logged only every 145 minutes, as in Phase 1, these transient signals are aliased or missed entirely. SWP's enforcement of 30-minute logging with ±2-minute precision ensured that the temporal signature of failure was captured, directly improving recall from 0.58 to 0.82. Moreover, consistency improvements reduced logical contradictions (e.g., machine reported "idle" but spindle temperature rising). Such contradictions would otherwise force a model to learn spurious correlations or discard valuable records. The reduction in false alarms from 2.8 to 1.0 per month is directly attributable to cleaner, more consistent training labels.

Comparison with Prior Art: While prior work [8, 9, 14] has achieved high accuracy using complex models (CNNs, LSTMs, hybrid architectures), those results were typically obtained on curated, high-quality datasets. Our study shows that a relatively simple Random Forest model, when fed with SWP-quality data, can approach the performance of deep learning models on poor-quality data. This finding echoes the principle in cognitive radio that combining multiple complementary features (energy + Zhang statistic) improves detection [13]; similarly, combining SWP with basic ML improves reliability prediction.

Practical Implications for Industry: For manufacturing and operations managers, the key takeaway is that investment in data governance (SWP) may yield higher marginal returns than investment in algorithmic sophistication. Many firms have rushed to deploy AI/ML platforms while neglecting the foundational data discipline. This study provides a quantifiable business case for prioritizing standardized work as a prerequisite for predictive analytics.

Limitations and Future Work: Despite strong results, several constraints remain. First, the study was conducted on a single asset type (CNC spindle) in one plant; generalizability to rotating equipment, pumps, or electrical systems requires further validation. Second, the six-month timeline, while capturing seasonal variations, does not address long-term model drift over years. Third, operator behavior in Phase 2 was positively influenced by the Hawthorne effect (awareness of being studied); a longitudinal study over 18–24 months would reveal sustained adherence.

Future work will explore three directions: (1) development of an adaptive SWP framework that dynamically updates based on real-time data quality metrics; (2) integration of semi-supervised learning to leverage unlabeled data from non-standardized periods; and (3) hardware-in-the-loop validation across multiple asset classes to establish generalizable DQI thresholds.

CONCLUSION

This paper presented a quantitative framework linking standardized work processes to data quality and, subsequently, to reliability model accuracy. Using a six-month industrial case study on a CNC machining center, we demonstrated that SWP implementation improved the composite Data Quality Index by 41.2% (from 0.58 to 0.82). This improvement translated directly into a 28.6% increase in Random Forest classifier accuracy (67.2% → 86.4%), a 41.4% improvement in failure detection recall (0.58 → 0.82), and a 64.3% reduction in false alarms (2.8 → 1.0 per month). Economic analysis confirmed a return on investment exceeding 488% annually.

The central conclusion is that data quality, driven by disciplined standardized work, acts as a reliability multiplier—amplifying the effectiveness of any downstream machine learning model regardless of its algorithmic complexity. For organizations seeking to maximize returns from predictive maintenance investments, establishing standardized data capture processes is not a supporting activity; it is a strategic prerequisite.

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DOI: 10.46121/pspc.52.4.15