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RCM 4.0: A Novel Digital Framework for Reliability-Centered Maintenance in Smart Industrial Systems

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***Abstract:** Reliability-Centered Maintenance (RCM) 4.0 introduces an AI-driven digital framework that integrates Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), Digital Twins, and Big Data Analytics to enhance Reliability, Availability, Maintainability, and Safety (RAMS) in Smart Industrial Systems. As industrial environments grow increasingly complex and data-driven, traditional maintenance strategies struggle to deliver the agility and precision required for intelligent asset management. This study presents RCM 4.0 as a self-optimizing, predictive maintenance paradigm, transforming reactive and preventive approaches into autonomous, data-driven ecosystems that enhance operational efficiency and resilience. The proposed framework synergizes RCM principles with Lean Six Sigma's DMAIC (Define-Measure-Analyze-Improve-Control) methodology, providing a structured, data-driven approach to failure mode classification, risk-based maintenance prioritization, and real-time performance optimization. By leveraging IIoT-enabled condition monitoring, Digital Twin simulations, and machine learning-driven predictive analytics, RCM 4.0 enables real-time anomaly detection, intelligent diagnostics, and adaptive maintenance strategies. This shift eliminates inefficiencies, minimizes downtime, optimizes asset performance, and enhances cost-effective maintenance planning. This research establishes RCM 4.0 as a transformative approach to industrial maintenance, integrating cyber-physical intelligence to drive operational resilience, sustainability, and cost efficiency. Future research will explore 5G-enabled industrial communication, autonomous robotic maintenance, blockchain-secured predictive maintenance, and edge AI-powered diagnostics, further advancing next-generation digitalized maintenance ecosystems' scalability, cybersecurity, and self-learning capabilities.*

***Keywords:** Reliability Centered Maintenance, RCM 4.0, DMAIC, RAMS, Maintenance Improvement.*

Abbreviations:
MTBF: Mean Time Between Failures
LSS: Lean Six Sigma
DMAIC: Define-Measure-Analyze-Improve-Control
RCM: Reliability-Centered Maintenance
IIOT: Industrial Internet of Things
AI: Artificial Intelligence
FMEA: Failure Mode and Effects Analysis
BTS: Base Transceiver Stations
CAWCD: Central Arizona Water Conservation District
RAMS: Reliability, Availability, Maintainability, and Safety
SMEs: Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
KPLs: Key Performance Indicators

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I. INTRODUCTION

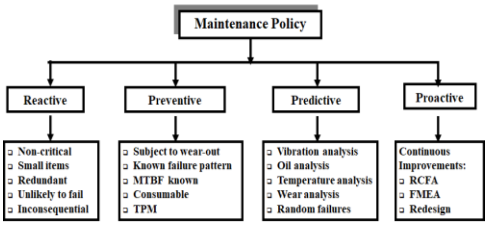
In modern industrial environments, effective maintenance planning is critical for ensuring Reliability, Availability, Maintainability, and Safety (RAMS) across complex assets and infrastructure. A well-structured maintenance strategy enhances operational efficiency, minimizes unplanned downtime, optimizes resource utilization, and mitigates safety and environmental risks. With the increasing complexity of industrial systems and the growing reliance on data-driven decision-making, conventional maintenance strategies must evolve into intelligent, self-optimizing frameworks that leverage advanced analytics, automation, and real-time monitoring. To meet these demands, industries are integrating risk-based maintenance methodologies with digital transformation technologies, fostering proactive, cost-effective, and sustainable maintenance ecosystems, (Gomaa, 2025a, [1]).

Reliability-Centered Maintenance (RCM) is a structured methodology designed to systematically identify, classify, and prioritize failure modes to develop optimal maintenance strategies. Originally developed in the 1960s for the aviation industry, RCM is now widely applied in manufacturing, energy, transportation, and process industries, where it enhances asset reliability, minimizes failures, and optimizes maintenance resources. By categorizing failure modes based on their impact on safety, operations, and costs, RCM ensures that maintenance efforts are directed toward critical components, leading to improved efficiency, reliability, and cost-effectiveness, (Gomaa, 2024a, [2]; Geisbush and Ariaratnam, 2023, [3]; Al Farihi et al., 2023, [4]).

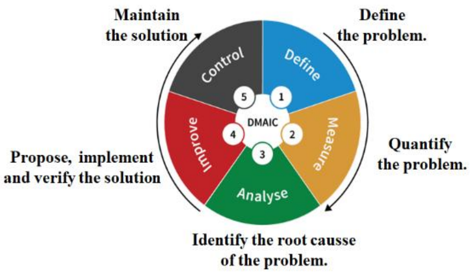
To further enhance maintenance optimization, industries are integrating Lean Six Sigma (LSS) principles to eliminate inefficiencies and improve process effectiveness. The Define-Measure-Analyze-Improve-Control (DMAIC) framework offers a structured, data-driven approach for problem-solving, root cause analysis, and continuous maintenance improvement. Combining RCM with DMAIC strengthens failure mode analysis, data-driven decision-making, and proactive maintenance execution, enabling long-term asset reliability, operational resilience, and cost savings. As illustrated in Figure 1, DMAIC serves as a systematic methodology for diagnosing and resolving maintenance inefficiencies, (Gomaa, 2024b, [5]).

According to BS EN 50126:2017, RAMS provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating asset performance. Reliability measures an asset's ability to function without failure, commonly quantified by Mean Time Between Failures (MTBF) for repairable components and Mean Time to Failure (MTTF) for non-repairable parts. Availability represents the probability of an asset being operational at any given time, incorporating both reliability and maintainability factors. Maintainability assesses how efficiently maintenance can be performed, typically measured by Mean Time to Repair (MTTR). Safety focuses on minimizing risks to personnel, equipment, and the environment (Gomaa, 2023, [6]; Zhang et al., 2021, [7]). Although RCM has demonstrated significant success in improving RAMS performance, the emergence of Industry 4.0 technologies necessitates a paradigm shift toward intelligent, AI-driven maintenance ecosystems. Traditional RCM and DMAIC frameworks must now integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI), Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), Digital Twins, Big Data Analytics, and predictive maintenance algorithms to support real-time monitoring, autonomous diagnostics, and adaptive decision-making. This transformation leads to the development of RCM 4.0, a next-generation digitalized maintenance framework that leverages AI-driven analytics, IoT-enabled condition monitoring, and Digital Twin simulations to optimize asset performance and reduce operational risks, (Gomaa, 2025b, [8]).

This study proposes RCM 4.0, an AI-enhanced, data-driven framework that merges Reliability-Centered Maintenance with Lean Six Sigma's DMAIC methodology, augmented by Industry 4.0 technologies. By integrating risk-based failure analysis with intelligent predictive maintenance, this framework enables proactive, cost-effective, and sustainable asset management, ensuring long-term operational excellence in smart industrial systems. The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides a comprehensive review of RAMS optimization, RCM, and DMAIC methodologies, establishing the theoretical foundation. Section 3 identifies research gaps, highlighting the need for an integrated RCM 4.0 approach. Section 4 details the research methodology and framework implementation. Finally, Section 5 concludes with recommendations, industry implications, and future research directions, focusing on the role of AI, IoT, Digital Twins, and 5G in advancing intelligent maintenance and asset management.



[Fig.1: RCM Outcomes]



[Fig.2: Lean Six Sigma DMAIC Cycle]

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the 1960s, Reliability-Centered Maintenance (RCM) has been widely adopted across various industries as a structured approach to developing maintenance strategies. RCM integrates factors such as system lifecycle, operational efficiency, and cost-effectiveness, relying on Failure Mode and Effects Analysis (FMEA) to determine optimal maintenance strategies. Numerous organizations have implemented RCM to enhance system reliability, availability, maintainability, and safety (RAMS). Table I summarizes RCM applications across different industries:

A. Aviation Industry: The airline industry pioneered RCM and has applied it for over 40 years, setting a precedent for other sectors. Initially used for airframe and engine maintenance, RCM has since expanded to air traffic control equipment and aircraft design. Modern commercial aircraft incorporate RCM principles to ensure redundancy, reliability, and maintainability, with evolving maintenance packages provided by manufacturers (Federal Aviation Administration, 2015, [9]; Rehmanjan, 2017, [10]).

B. Automotive Industry: RCM is utilized in vehicle maintenance and in scheduling maintenance for production equipment to minimize downtime. By prioritizing maintenance tasks based on equipment criticality, RCM enables proactive scheduling and decision-making to improve operational efficiency (Wartgow, 2019, [11]).

C. Facilities Maintenance: Building systems, including HVAC, plumbing, and fire suppression, require efficient maintenance strategies. RCM enhances traditional preventive maintenance by incorporating remote monitoring to detect anomalies such as refrigerant leaks or clogged filters, thereby preventing efficiency losses and costly failures (Geisbush and Ariaratnam, 2023, [3]).

D. Food and Beverage Industry: Maintenance costs can account for up to a third of indirect expenses in food processing plants. RCM redefines failure in terms of business objectives, ensuring that equipment such as labeling machines remains operational to prevent production disruptions. Studies indicate that RCM-driven reliability improvements can reduce maintenance costs by 20% (Geisbush and Ariaratnam, 2023, [3]).

E. Manufacturing and Processing: RCM has been applied with fuzzy logic in manufacturing, improving reliability and availability. Gupta and Mishra (2016), [12] analyzed milling machines, classifying 46% of failure modes as highly critical and recommending predictive maintenance for high-risk components. Afefy et al. (2019), [13] demonstrated that RCM implementation in a sugar processing plant reduced corrective and preventive maintenance downtime by 55.77% and 52.17%, respectively, leading to cost savings of 6.19 million L.E.

F. Oil and Gas Industry: RCM is critical for pipeline reliability, reducing failures caused by corrosion, welding defects, and human errors. Omoya et al. (2019), [14] found that pipeline incidents in the U.S. cost an average of $414 million annually. RCM integrates reliability-centered design, condition monitoring, and optimized maintenance scheduling to improve safety and cost efficiency.

G. Power Generation: RCM is employed in thermal power plants to enhance grid reliability and optimize maintenance strategies. Piasson et al. (2016), [15] highlighted how RCM

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minimizes unplanned outages and operational costs, ensuring sustained power delivery and improved system reliability.

H. Nuclear Industry: More than 400 nuclear power plants have adopted RCM since its introduction by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) in 1984. RCM corrects inefficiencies in traditional preventive maintenance by tailoring schedules based on actual duty cycles and system functions (Geisbush and Ariaratnam, 2023, [3]).

I. Mining and Mineral Processing: RCM enhances the reliability of capital-intensive mining machinery. Hoseinie et al. (2016), [16] applied RCM to optimize the maintenance of a spray jetting system in a coal mine, demonstrating cost-effective failure mitigation strategies.

J. Maritime Industry: The shipping industry relies on RCM to ensure safe and cost-effective vessel operations, as maintenance constitutes 40% of total operational costs. RCM plays a key role in sustaining maritime assets throughout their lifecycle (Emovon et al., 2018, [17]).

K. Medical and Healthcare Facilities: Hospitals require robust maintenance strategies for life-critical systems. Salah et al. (2018), [18] analyzed mission-critical systems in ICUs, emergency rooms, operating rooms, and patient rooms, demonstrating that RCM reduced maintenance costs by up to 16% compared to traditional preventive maintenance.

L. Military Applications: Every branch of the U.S. military employs RCM for equipment ranging from aircraft and ground vehicles to submarines and missile systems. The U.S. Navy's Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) has pioneered RCM adoption, integrating condition-based monitoring to optimize maintenance schedules (Geisbush and Ariaratnam, 2023, [3]).

M. Pulp and Paper Industry: RCM has shifted the approach to maintenance in paper mills by linking reliability assessments with design engineering. Implementing predictive diagnostics has reduced recurring failures and improved machine uptime (Geisbush and Ariaratnam, 2023, [3]).

N. Railway Industry: RCM applications in heavy rail transit and rolling stock maintenance have led to increased availability and reliability. The U.S. railway sector has extended RCM beyond rolling stock to infrastructure components, including catenary systems (Amtrak, 2020, [19]).

O. Telecommunications: Base Transceiver Stations (BTS) are critical to network uptime. Indonesia's telecommunications sector implemented RCM to transition from reactive to proactive maintenance, optimizing crew sizes and maintenance intervals to enhance service reliability (Geisbush and Ariaratnam, 2023, [3]).

P. Water and Wastewater Utilities: Utilities have applied RCM to aqueducts, emergency generators, and irrigation gates. The Central Arizona Water Conservation District (CAWCD) utilized RCM to optimize maintenance strategies for its extensive infrastructure, though literature on RCM adoption in water transmission and distribution remains limited (Geisbush, 2020, [20]; Geisbush and Ariaratnam, 2023, [3]).

In conclusion, RCM has been extensively implemented across industries, demonstrating substantial improvements in reliability, availability, maintainability, and safety (RAMS). Its effectiveness is particularly pronounced when integrated with Industry 4.0 technologies, such as AI-driven predictive analytics, IoT-enabled monitoring, and digital twins, further enhancing system efficiency and asset management.

Table-I: RCM Applications Across Industries

#	Industry	Key RCM Applications & Benefits	Citations
1	Aviation	Pioneered RCM in airframe and engine maintenance, expanded to air traffic control and aircraft design. Ensures redundancy, reliability, and maintainability.	(FAA, 2015, [9]; Rehmanjan, 2017, [10])
2	Automotive	Optimizes vehicle and production equipment maintenance, minimizing downtime and improving scheduling efficiency.	(Wartgow, 2019, [11])
3	Facilities Maintenance	Applied to HVAC, plumbing, and fire suppression systems. Uses remote monitoring for anomaly detection and efficiency improvements.	(Geisbush and Ariaratnam, 2023, [3])
4	Food & Beverage	Reduces maintenance costs by 20% in processing plants by ensuring equipment uptime and preventing production disruptions.	(Geisbush and Ariaratnam, 2023, [3])
5	Manufacturing & Processing	Improves reliability using fuzzy logic, reducing downtime by 55.77% and saving 6.19 million L.E. in a sugar processing plant.	(Gupta & Mishra, 2016, [12]; Afefy et al., 2019, [13])
6	Oil & Gas	Enhances pipeline reliability, reducing failures from corrosion and human errors, saving $414M annually.	(Omoya et al., 2019. [14])
7	Power Generation	Minimizes unplanned outages and operational costs, ensuring sustained grid reliability.	(Piasson et al., 2016, [15])
8	Nuclear	Adopted by 400+ nuclear plants since 1984, optimizing maintenance schedules based on duty cycles and system functions.	(Geisbush and Ariaratnam, 2023, [3])
9	Mining	Improves reliability of expensive machinery, optimizing maintenance strategies.	(Hoseinie et al., 2016; [16])
10	Maritime	Reduces operational costs (40% of total costs) while improving vessel safety and lifecycle management.	(Emovon et al., 2018; [17])
11	Healthcare	Reduces maintenance costs by 16% for critical hospital systems (ICUs, emergency rooms, operating rooms).	(Salah et al., 2018, [18])
12	Military	Enhances maintenance for aircraft, submarines, missile systems, and ground vehicles using condition-based monitoring.	(Geisbush and Ariaratnam, 2023)
13	Pulp & Paper	Improves machine uptime by integrating RCM with predictive diagnostics and engineering design.	(Geisbush and Ariaratnam, 2023)
14	Railways	Increases availability and reliability of rolling stock, extending to infrastructure components like catenary systems.	(Amtrak, 2020, [19])
15	Telecommunications	Transforms BTS maintenance from reactive to proactive, optimizing crew sizes and maintenance intervals.	(Geisbush and Ariaratnam, 2023)
16	Water Utilities	Applied to aqueducts and irrigation systems, though research on water distribution remains limited.	(Geisbush, 2020, [20]; Geisbush and Ariaratnam, 2023, [3]).

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Reliability-Centered Maintenance (RCM) is a vital methodology for improving asset reliability, optimizing maintenance strategies, and minimizing unplanned downtime across various sectors, (Rodríguez-Padial et al. 2024, [21]). As shown in Table II, extensive research highlights its effectiveness in aligning maintenance practices with both operational and organizational objectives. For example, Liu et al. (2025), [22] applied RCM to high-speed rail facilities, utilizing predictive models to prevent facility deterioration while reducing maintenance costs. Ali Ahmed Qaid et al. (2024), [23] developed a fuzzy-FMECA-based framework for analyzing failure modes in manufacturing machinery, enabling data-driven, criticality-focused maintenance strategies. In the utility sector, Asghari and Jafari (2024), [24] used RCM for water treatment plant pumps, enhancing Mean Time Between Failures (MTBF) and operational efficiency, while Cahyati et al. (2024), [25] achieved a 70% reduction in maintenance costs at a processing plant. Industry-specific adaptations further emphasize RCM's flexibility, with applications ranging from boiler engines (Sembiring, 2024, [26]) to cement plants (Al-Farsi and Syafiie, 2023, [27]). Additionally, RCM has been integrated with Industry 4.0 technologies to optimize performance (Introna and Santolamazza, 2024, [28]) and improve resource allocation (Jiang et al., 2024, [29]). Resende et al. (2024), [30] introduced a Fuzzy FMEA methodology for risk analysis in the aeronautical sector, improving risk prioritization and decision-making through Matlab's Fuzzy Logic Toolbox. This approach demonstrated value by addressing uncertainties and providing context-specific risk assessments for aeronautical and other industries.

Previous studies, including those by Elijaha (2021), [31] and Rosita and Rada (2021), [32], validate RCM's ability to enhance asset reliability [33], reduce downtime, and achieve cost-effective maintenance strategies [34]. These findings collectively demonstrate RCM's crucial role in improving operational efficiency and optimizing maintenance across various industries [35].

Despite its proven benefits, traditional RCM approaches often rely on static schedules and lack integration with real-time data, limiting their adaptability to dynamic operational environments [36]. Key research gaps include the development of adaptive frameworks that utilize real-time data to assess and prioritize failure modes [37], exploring the influence of human decision-making on RCM effectiveness [38], and integrating continuous monitoring and predictive analytics for proactive maintenance [39]. Future research should focus on creating flexible [40], real-time RCM frameworks that incorporate [41] operational data and advanced analytics [42], while also addressing the role of human factors in decision-making to improve implementation [43]. These advancements will enhance asset performance [44], reduce unplanned downtime [45], and optimize maintenance practices [46], further solidifying RCM's importance in modern asset management [47].

Table-II: Summary of the Review of Reliability-Centered Maintenance

Aspect	Details
Role of RCM	Improves asset reliability, optimizes maintenance strategies, and minimizes unplanned downtime across various sectors (Rodríguez-Padial et al., 2024, [21]).
Key Applications and Research	- High-speed Rail Facilities: Liu et al. (2025), [22] used predictive models to prevent deterioration and reduce costs.
	- Manufacturing Machinery: Ali Ahmed Qaid et al. (2024), [23] applied fuzzy-FMECA for criticality-based maintenance strategies.
	- Water Treatment Plants: Asghari and Jafari (2024), [24] improved MTBF and operational efficiency.
	- Processing Plants: Cahyati et al. (2024), [25] achieved a 70% reduction in maintenance costs.
	- Boiler Engines & Cement Plants: Applications in various industries (Sembiring, 2024, [26]; Al-Farsi and Syafiie, 2023, [27]).
	- Industry 4.0 Integration: Introna and Santolamazza (2024), [28]; Jiang et al. (2024), [29] optimized performance and resource allocation.
RCM Effectiveness	Validated by studies like Elijaha (2021), [31] and Rosita and Rada (2021), [32] for enhancing asset reliability, reducing downtime, and enabling cost-effective strategies.
Challenges and Research Gaps	- Static schedules in traditional RCM models, lack of real-time data integration.
	- Need for adaptive frameworks that incorporate real-time data and predictive analytics.
	- Exploration of human decision-making's impact on RCM effectiveness.
Future Research Directions	- Focus on flexible, real-time RCM frameworks integrating operational data and advanced analytics.
	- Addressing human factors in RCM decision-making for improved implementation.

III. RESEARCH GAP ANALYSIS

The transformation of Reliability-Centered Maintenance (RCM) in the Industry 4.0 era is driven by the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Industrial IoT (IIoT), big data analytics, digital twins, and machine learning. These technologies have significantly improved asset reliability, operational resilience, and downtime reduction, shifting maintenance strategies from reactive and preventive to predictive, prescriptive, and autonomous frameworks. The synergy of risk-based failure analysis and continuous improvement methodologies is enabling the evolution of self-optimizing, data-driven maintenance ecosystems that support real-time anomaly detection, intelligent diagnostics, and adaptive decision-making.

However, despite these advancements, critical research gaps persist in scalability, cross-industry implementation, and interoperability of RCM frameworks. Many industries face challenges in seamlessly integrating AI-driven predictive analytics, IIoT-enabled condition monitoring, and digital twin-based simulations into standardized, cost-effective maintenance solutions. To address these challenges, future RCM frameworks must leverage federated learning, edge AI, blockchain-secured predictive maintenance, and cyber-physical intelligence, driving the development of proactive,

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resilient, and sustainable maintenance strategies. Table III provides a detailed analysis of existing limitations and emerging research directions, paving the way for a more adaptive, cost-effective, and AI-driven maintenance paradigm.

A. RCM in SMEs: Enhancing Scalability and Affordability: Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) encounter significant obstacles in adopting RCM due to resource constraints, cost barriers, and the complexity of implementation. Traditional RCM models are tailored for large-scale industrial operations, rendering them impractical for SMEs that lack specialized personnel and digital infrastructure. To address this, cloud-based, modular RCM platforms can facilitate centralized maintenance data management, while AI-driven automated failure mode analysis can reduce reliance on human expertise. Additionally, affordable digital twin solutions can enable real-time monitoring of asset health without requiring extensive capital investment. These advancements will enable SMEs to transition from reactive to predictive maintenance, improving asset performance without excessive financial burdens.
B. RCM in Healthcare Infrastructure: Expanding Beyond Medical Equipment: Current applications of RCM in healthcare focus predominantly on medical devices, overlooking critical hospital infrastructure such as HVAC systems, emergency power supply, and water purification systems. Failures in these subsystems can severely impact patient safety and hospital operations. Expanding RCM to a comprehensive hospital infrastructure model will improve operational reliability, reduce energy consumption, and enhance patient safety. This can be achieved through IoT-enabled real-time monitoring, AI-driven predictive analytics, and hospital-wide risk management frameworks to optimize maintenance schedules for life-critical systems.
C. RCM in Water & Wastewater Systems: Leveraging AI and Digital Twins: Water and wastewater systems rely heavily on reactive maintenance strategies, leading to unplanned failures and high operational costs. Current RCM implementations in this sector are limited, requiring more intelligent, real-time monitoring solutions. By integrating AI-enhanced sensor networks for pipeline integrity and water quality analysis, digital twin models for predictive failure analysis, and autonomous maintenance scheduling algorithms, industries can transition towards sustainable water management practices, reducing failures and inefficiencies.
D. RCM in Renewable Energy: Tailoring Maintenance for Wind and Solar: The renewable energy sector lacks a standardized RCM model for wind, solar, and hybrid power systems. These assets operate in highly variable environments, rendering conventional maintenance models inefficient. Developing AI-powered predictive maintenance algorithms tailored to environmental conditions, IoT-enabled sensor networks to optimize wind turbine and solar panel performance, and machine learning-driven fault detection systems can maximize the efficiency and longevity of renewable energy infrastructure.
E. RCM for Sustainability: Reducing Carbon Footprint and Energy Waste: While industries often implement RCM for cost reduction, its potential in reducing carbon emissions and improving energy efficiency remains underexplored. Integrating RCM with ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) metrics, energy-efficient maintenance scheduling, and lifecycle assessment models will align maintenance practices with global sustainability goals, promoting a shift toward green manufacturing and resource optimization.
F. RCM in Extreme Environments: Advancing Autonomous Maintenance: Industries operating in extreme environments—such as space missions, deep-sea exploration, and Arctic conditions—require adaptive RCM models that account for harsh operational conditions. Advancements in AI-driven autonomous diagnostics, self-healing materials, and remote-controlled robotic maintenance will be crucial for high-risk industries, enhancing reliability in mission-critical applications.
G. RCM Cost-Benefit Analysis: Standardizing Financial Evaluation Models: Organizations struggle to quantify the financial benefits of RCM due to inconsistent cost-benefit analysis models across industries. The development of a lifecycle cost modeling framework, risk-based asset prioritization, and standardized industry-wide benchmarking tools will enable more data-driven, cost-effective maintenance investments.
H. Human & Organizational Factors: Overcoming Training and Adoption Barriers: RCM adoption is often hindered by workforce resistance and skill gaps. Employees may struggle to interpret RCM recommendations, limiting its effective implementation. Enhancing workforce capabilities through AI-driven adaptive training programs, VR/AR-based simulations, and digital knowledge-sharing platforms will accelerate RCM adoption and operational efficiency.
I. RCM & Industry 4.0: Enabling AI and IoT Integration: Despite the potential of Industry 4.0 technologies, their integration with RCM remains fragmented. Many industries still rely on traditional maintenance models, missing the advantages of real-time predictive analytics. Advancing federated learning for decentralized AI-driven maintenance optimization, interoperable IIoT (Industrial IoT) platforms for seamless data exchange, and automated maintenance workflows using AI-powered decision-making models will drive the evolution of self-learning, adaptive maintenance systems.
J. RCM in Smart Manufacturing: Towards Self-Optimizing Maintenance: The adoption of cyber-physical factories and autonomous manufacturing systems requires next-generation RCM strategies that can adapt to self-learning environments. However, case studies on RCM in smart manufacturing remain scarce. To address this, digital twins, real-time analytics, and AI-driven optimization should be leveraged. Digital twins can simulate maintenance scenarios, while real-time analytics can dynamically adjust maintenance strategies based on operational data. These advancements will drive the development of self-optimizing maintenance

systems, where machines autonomously detect and resolve faults.

Shaping the Future of RCM and Intelligent Maintenance. This analysis identifies critical gaps in RCM implementation and presents strategic directions for future advancements. By integrating AI, IoT, digital twins, and sustainability principles, industries can redefine maintenance strategies for the Industry 4.0 era and beyond. As organizations shift toward intelligent, autonomous maintenance ecosystems, these innovations will ensure long-term asset reliability, operational efficiency, and environmental sustainability.

Table-III: Advanced Research Gap Analysis for RCM Applications

#	Research Area	Key Research Gaps	Strategic Directions
1	RCM in SMEs	Existing models lack scalability and affordability.	Develop modular, cloud-based, AI-driven RCM frameworks tailored for SMEs.
2	RCM in Healthcare Infrastructure	Focus remains on medical equipment, overlooking hospital systems.	Expand RCM to HVAC, power, and emergency systems using IoT and AI analytics.
3	RCM in Water & Wastewater Systems	Limited real-world applications and optimization frameworks.	Implement AI-enhanced sensor networks and digital twins for predictive maintenance.
4	RCM in Renewable Energy	No sector-specific models for wind, solar, and hybrid systems.	Develop AI- and IoT-based predictive maintenance tailored for renewables.
5	RCM for Sustainability	Underexplored impact on carbon footprint and energy efficiency.	Integrate RCM with ESG metrics, circular economy, and green maintenance strategies.
6	RCM in Extreme Environments	Lack of adaptive models for space, deep-sea, and Arctic conditions.	Leverage autonomous maintenance, AI diagnostics, and self-healing materials.
7	RCM Cost-Benefit Analysis	Inconsistent financial evaluation models across industries.	Develop a standardized framework integrating lifecycle cost modeling and risk-based prioritization.
8	Human & Organizational Factors	Limited focus on workforce training and adoption challenges.	Implement AI-driven training, VR/AR simulations, and digital knowledge-sharing platforms.
9	RCM & Industry 4.0	Gaps in full integration with AI, IoT, and cyber-physical systems.	Advance AI-driven predictive models, federated learning, and IIoT interoperability.
10	RCM in Smart Manufacturing	Scarcity of case studies in autonomous and cyber-physical factories.	Utilize digital twins, real-time analytics, and self-optimizing maintenance strategies.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study introduces a data-driven maintenance optimization framework that integrates Reliability-Centered Maintenance (RCM) with Lean Six Sigma's DMAIC methodology to enhance Reliability, Availability, Maintainability, and Safety (RAMS). Traditional RCM relies on static failure assessments and fixed schedules, limiting its adaptability to evolving operational conditions. To overcome these limitations, this research incorporates Industry 4.0 technologies—including AI, IIoT, Digital Twins, and Big Data Analytics—to establish a predictive, self-optimizing maintenance system. The proposed closed-loop framework continuously refines maintenance strategies by leveraging real-time monitoring and AI-driven analytics, transforming traditional maintenance into a proactive, intelligent, and cost-efficient ecosystem.

A. Implementing RCM 4.0: A DMAIC-Driven Intelligent Framework

The optimization of Reliability, Availability, Maintainability, and Safety (RAMS) is a critical driver of industrial efficiency, sustainability, and risk resilience. However, legacy maintenance strategies often fail to address the complexities of highly automated, data-driven industrial ecosystems, leading to inefficiencies, unplanned downtime, and escalating costs. While Reliability-Centered Maintenance (RCM) provides a structured failure mode assessment, its integration with data-centric methodologies, such as the Define-Measure-Analyze-Improve-Control (DMAIC) framework, remains underdeveloped. To bridge this gap, RCM 4.0 leverages AI-driven diagnostics, IoT-enabled real-time monitoring, Digital Twins, and prescriptive analytics, transforming maintenance from a reactive cost center to an intelligent, self-optimizing function. Table IV outlines the limitations of conventional RCM and the strategic advantages of an AI-powered, DMAIC-driven maintenance paradigm.

The Define phase lays the foundation for RAMS optimization by systematically identifying critical assets, failure modes, and maintenance priorities. This process employs Failure Modes and Effects Analysis (FMEA) and Criticality Analysis, classifying assets based on safety implications, operational significance, and cost impact. Additionally, RAMS Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)—such as Mean Time Between Failures (MTBF), Mean Time to Repair (MTTR), availability rates, and safety performance metrics—are established to quantitatively measure maintenance effectiveness. This structured approach ensures that maintenance efforts are targeted toward high-risk assets, aligning maintenance strategies with operational and business objectives.

The Measure phase focuses on real-time data collection and performance monitoring, enabling precise evaluation of asset reliability and operational efficiency. This is achieved through IoT-enabled sensors, which track key parameters such as temperature, vibration, pressure, and energy consumption to detect early signs of equipment degradation. Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems provide centralized real-time monitoring, while Computerized Maintenance Management Systems (CMMS) facilitate maintenance tracking, scheduling, and resource allocation. Additionally, Digital Twins replicate physical assets in a virtual environment, allowing organizations to simulate different maintenance scenarios and predict potential failures before they occur. These advancements shift maintenance from reactive and time-based approaches to predictive and condition-based strategies, minimizing unnecessary interventions

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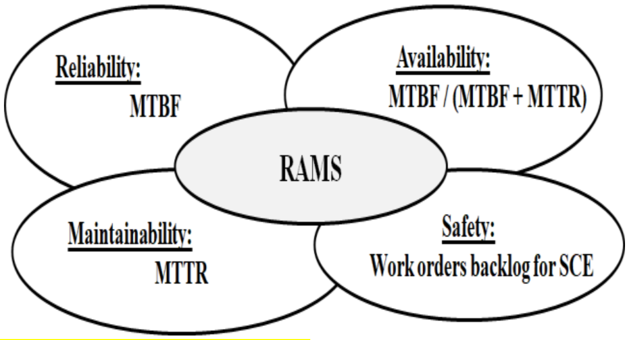
while optimizing asset performance.

The Analyze phase leverages advanced diagnostic techniques to identify root causes of failures, assess failure patterns, and determine optimal maintenance strategies. Methods such as Failure Modes, Effects, and Criticality Analysis (FMECA) and Root Cause Analysis (RCA) systematically evaluate failure severity, likelihood, and impact. AI-driven predictive analytics enhance failure detection by utilizing machine learning models to identify hidden correlations and forecast system malfunctions before they occur. Big Data Analytics strengthens diagnostics by integrating historical performance data with real-time sensor inputs, providing a comprehensive understanding of failure trends. By prioritizing maintenance interventions based on risk and operational impact, organizations can enhance resource allocation, reduce downtime, and extend asset lifespan.

The Improve phase translates analytical insights into proactive maintenance strategies designed to enhance asset performance and reliability. Key implementations include AI-driven predictive maintenance, which employs machine learning algorithms to forecast failures and initiate preventive actions before disruptions occur. Digital Twins for maintenance optimization enable organizations to simulate and refine intervention strategies in a virtual environment before applying them to physical assets. Additionally, optimized scheduling algorithms dynamically adjust maintenance plans based on real-time asset conditions and workload balancing, ensuring that maintenance tasks are executed at the most effective intervals. This phase represents a strategic transition from reactive maintenance to intelligent, AI-enhanced maintenance planning, leading to improved system reliability, reduced operational disruptions, and significant cost savings.

The Control phase ensures that maintenance improvements remain sustainable, scalable, and continuously optimized through real-time monitoring, AI-driven decision-making, and continuous refinement. Organizations achieve this by standardizing maintenance best practices, automating KPI tracking, and deploying AI-driven anomaly detection, which identifies deviations in asset behavior and triggers early intervention alerts. Blockchain-secured maintenance records enhance data integrity, traceability, and compliance with regulatory standards. Additionally, Edge AI technology enables real-time, decentralized decision-making at the asset level, reducing response time and enhancing system resilience. By integrating continuous feedback loops and self-learning maintenance models, this phase establishes an adaptive, data-driven maintenance ecosystem capable of dynamically evolving to meet changing operational demands.

The integration of RCM with DMAIC, enhanced by AI, IoT, Digital Twins, and Big Data Analytics, establishes a next-generation self-optimizing maintenance framework that ensures real-time condition monitoring, AI-driven predictive maintenance, Digital Twin-based failure prevention simulations, optimized scheduling for resource efficiency, autonomous decision-making for maintenance execution, and continuous learning for performance enhancement. As industries transition toward intelligent, cyber-physical maintenance ecosystems, this RCM-DMAIC framework serves as a foundation for autonomous, AI-driven maintenance systems, delivering long-term sustainability, cost efficiency, and operational resilience in modern industrial environments.



SCE: Safety critical elements.

[Fig.3: RAMS Key Parameters]

Table-IV: RCM-DMAIC Framework for Intelligent Maintenance Optimization

Phase	Objective	RCM Integration	Industry 4.0 Technologies	Key Outcomes
Define	Identify critical assets, failure modes, and maintenance priorities to establish a proactive maintenance strategy.	Conduct Failure Modes and Effects Analysis (FMEA), define RAMS KPIs, and perform Criticality Analysis.	AI-Driven FMEA, Cloud-Based Risk Analysis, Automated Asset Prioritization.	Optimized maintenance planning aligned with operational risks, improving resource allocation.
Measure	Collect and analyze real-time performance and failure data to establish baselines and detect anomalies.	Utilize IIoT-enabled monitoring, SCADA, and CMMS for asset tracking and predictive analytics.	IIoT Sensors, Edge AI for Real-Time Data Processing, Cloud-Based CMMS, Big Data Analytics.	Data-driven benchmarking for predictive maintenance, reducing failures and enhancing reliability.
Analyze	Diagnose failure root causes, classify risks, and refine maintenance strategies.	Apply Failure Modes, Effects, and Criticality Analysis (FMECA), Root Cause Analysis (RCA), and AI-driven predictive modeling.	Machine Learning for Failure Prediction, Digital Twins for Virtual Simulations, AI-Powered Diagnostics.	Optimized failure management, reducing corrective maintenance costs and improving asset performance.
Improve	Implement predictive, prescriptive, and autonomous maintenance strategies to maximize efficiency.	Deploy AI-powered predictive maintenance models, Digital Twins, and adaptive scheduling algorithms.	Self-Optimizing Maintenance Systems, Automated Work Order Scheduling, AR for Remote Assistance.	Reduced downtime, increased asset lifespan, and cost-efficient maintenance through AI-driven optimization.
Control	Ensure sustainable, data-driven maintenance improvements through automation and real-time monitoring.	Standardize best practices, automate real-time KPI tracking, and implement AI-driven anomaly detection.	Edge AI for Predictive Anomaly Detection, Self-Healing Maintenance Systems, Cyber-Physical Systems for Automated Decision-Making.	An autonomous, self-learning maintenance ecosystem, ensuring long-term RAMS optimization and operational resilience.

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B. Strategic Objectives and KPIs for RCM 4.0 Implementation

The implementation of Reliability-Centered Maintenance (RCM) 4.0 demands a strategic, data-driven approach that integrates AI-powered predictive analytics, IoT-enabled asset monitoring, and autonomous decision-making. As industries move toward cyber-physical maintenance ecosystems, organizations must establish well-defined strategic objectives and performance-driven KPIs to maximize reliability, cost efficiency, and operational resilience. This section introduces a holistic framework for aligning RCM 4.0 objectives with real-time performance tracking, leveraging AI, Digital Twins, and predictive maintenance algorithms. Table V presents a structured matrix of key objectives, performance indicators, and AI-driven analytics models, ensuring continuous optimization and sustainability.

- *Maximizing Asset Reliability & Availability:* Ensuring asset reliability and availability is a core objective of RCM 4.0, reducing unplanned downtime and improving overall system performance. Mean Time Between Failures (MTBF) and Mean Time to Repair (MTTR) measure asset reliability and maintenance efficiency, while Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE) provides a comprehensive assessment of availability, performance, and quality. Failure Detection Lead Time (FDLT) (%) evaluates how early AI-driven predictive maintenance detects potential failures, while Predictive Maintenance Accuracy (%) quantifies the effectiveness of AI and IoT-enabled failure forecasting. These KPIs drive the shift from reactive maintenance to intelligent, data-driven decision-making.
- *Optimizing Maintenance Costs & Resource Utilization:* Cost efficiency is a critical factor in sustainable maintenance operations. Maintenance Cost as a Percentage of Revenue ensures that maintenance expenditures remain within budget while optimizing asset performance. Reduction in Unplanned Downtime (%) highlights the impact of predictive maintenance on minimizing costly disruptions. The IoT-Enabled Condition Monitoring Adoption (%) KPI tracks real-time monitoring system implementation, ensuring assets operate at peak efficiency. Additionally, AI-Optimized Spare Parts Inventory Reduction (%) measures AI's ability to optimize spare parts management, reducing overstocking and minimizing stockouts. These KPIs ensure that maintenance processes are both cost-effective and resource-efficient.
- *Leveraging AI, IoT & Edge Computing for Smart Maintenance:* Industry 4.0 technologies enable autonomous and self-optimizing maintenance strategies. Edge AI Response Time (ms) measures how quickly AI-driven systems detect and respond to anomalies, ensuring real-time corrective actions. Digital Twin Simulation Accuracy (%) assesses the reliability of Digital Twins in predicting failures and optimizing maintenance planning. Automated Work Order Execution Rate (%) tracks AI-driven work order generation and execution, reducing manual intervention. The Self-Healing System Activation Rate (%) evaluates the ability of AI-powered systems to autonomously detect, diagnose, and correct failures, reducing human dependency and improving system resilience.
- *Enhancing Sustainability & ESG Compliance:* Sustainability and regulatory compliance are key components of modern maintenance strategies. Energy Efficiency Improvement (%) measures reductions in energy consumption achieved through AI-optimized maintenance practices. Carbon Footprint Reduction (%) quantifies the environmental benefits of maintenance-driven emission reductions, aligning with global sustainability goals. Organizations track the Regulatory Compliance Score to ensure adherence to industry standards such as ISO 55000 and IEC 61508. Additionally, Waste Reduction in Maintenance (%) evaluates efforts to minimize industrial waste, contributing to a circular economy. These KPIs ensure that maintenance practices support both operational efficiency and environmental responsibility.
- *Developing Autonomous, Self-Learning Maintenance Systems:* AI-powered, self-learning systems continuously refine maintenance strategies by analyzing real-time data. AI Self-Learning Model Accuracy (%) measures AI adaptability in optimizing maintenance processes. Automated Failure Diagnosis Rate (%) tracks AI efficiency in identifying and diagnosing failures, reducing manual troubleshooting time. Continuous Improvement Index quantifies AI-driven enhancements in maintenance workflows, ensuring sustained optimization. Additionally, Anomaly Detection Sensitivity (%) assesses AI's ability to detect emerging failure patterns, enabling proactive intervention before issues escalate. These KPIs drive the transition from static, rule-based maintenance to adaptive, self-optimizing maintenance ecosystems.
- *Enhancing Workforce Productivity & Digital Skill Development:* Even with automation, human expertise remains essential in maintenance operations. AI-Assisted Maintenance Efficiency (%) evaluates how AI augments human decision-making and task execution. Augmented Reality (AR) Maintenance Adoption (%) measures the use of AR-based systems for real-time troubleshooting and technician training. The Digital Workforce Training Completion Rate (%) ensures employees are equipped with the skills needed for RCM 4.0 implementation. Additionally, the Maintenance Robotics Deployment Rate (%) tracks the integration of robotic automation in maintenance workflows. These KPIs facilitate a seamless transition to AI-augmented maintenance while enhancing workforce capabilities.
- *Improving Resilience & Emergency Maintenance Preparedness:* Operational resilience ensures minimal disruptions from unexpected failures. Emergency Downtime Response Time (min) measures the speed at which maintenance teams respond to critical system failures. The Backup System Activation Rate (%) assesses the reliability of redundancy measures in maintaining business

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continuity. AI-Driven Fault Escalation Efficiency (%) evaluates how effectively AI escalates critical maintenance issues, reducing response times in high-risk situations. These KPIs enhance an organization's ability to respond to emergencies swiftly, ensuring operational stability.

In conclusion, the strategic objectives and KPIs outlined in this framework serve as a roadmap for RCM 4.0 implementation, enabling industries to transition from traditional maintenance approaches to intelligent, predictive, and autonomous maintenance ecosystems. By leveraging AI, IoT, Edge Computing, and Digital Twins, organizations can optimize cost efficiency, asset reliability, and sustainability while improving workforce productivity and resilience. As industries continue their digital transformation journey, these KPIs will act as key benchmarks for achieving long-term maintenance excellence.

Table-V: Strategic Objectives & KPIs for RCM 4.0 Implementation

#	Strategic Objective	KPI	Formula / Measurement	Industry 4.0 Relevance & Impact
1	Maximize Asset Reliability & Availability	Mean Time Between Failures (MTBF)	Total Operating Time / Number of Failures	Reduces unplanned downtime via AI-driven predictive maintenance.
		Mean Time to Repair (MTTR)	Total Downtime / Number of Repairs	Enhances repair efficiency using AI-powered diagnostics.
		Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE)	Availability × Performance × Quality	Assesses reliability improvements in real time.
		Failure Detection Lead Time (FDLT) (%)	(Time Before AI Prediction / Time Before Actual Failure) × 100	Measures AI's effectiveness in early failure detection.
		Predictive Maintenance Accuracy (%)	(Correct AI Predictions / Total Predictions) × 100	Evaluates AI and IoT-enabled failure forecasting accuracy.
2	Optimize Maintenance Costs & Resource Utilization	Maintenance Cost as % of Revenue	(Total Maintenance Cost / Total Revenue) × 100	Ensures cost-efficient maintenance through AI-driven decision-making.
		Reduction in Unplanned Downtime (%)	(Previous Downtime - Current Downtime) / Previous Downtime × 100	Demonstrates the impact of predictive maintenance on downtime reduction.
		IoT-Enabled Condition Monitoring Adoption (%)	(IoT-Monitored Assets / Total Assets) × 100	Tracks real-time predictive maintenance deployment.
		AI-Optimized Spare Parts Inventory Reduction (%)	(Previous Inventory Cost - Current Inventory Cost) / Previous Inventory Cost × 100	Tracks AI-driven reductions in spare parts overstock and stockouts.
3	Leverage AI, IoT & Edge Computing for Smart Maintenance	Edge AI Response Time (ms)	Time from Anomaly Detection to Automated Response	Measures real-time, AI-driven maintenance automation.
		Digital Twin Simulation Accuracy (%)	(Predicted Failures Matched with Actual Failures) / Total Failures × 100	Assesses Digital Twin reliability in predictive maintenance.
		Automated Work Order Execution Rate (%)	(AI-Generated Work Orders / Total Work Orders) × 100	Tracks autonomous AI-driven workflow execution.
		Self-Healing System Activation Rate (%)	(Self-Corrected Failures / Total Failures) × 100	Measures AI-enabled self-healing maintenance interventions.
4	Enhance Sustainability & Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Compliance	Energy Efficiency Improvement (%)	(Previous Energy Use - Current Energy Use) / Previous Energy Use × 100	Ensures AI-optimized energy consumption in industrial assets.
		Carbon Footprint Reduction (%)	(Previous CO_2 Emissions - Current CO_2 Emissions) / Previous CO_2 Emissions × 100	Aligns maintenance with global sustainability targets.
		Regulatory Compliance Score	Compliance Rating (ISO 55000, IEC 61508, etc.)	Tracks adherence to industry-specific maintenance regulations.
		Waste Reduction in Maintenance (%)	(Previous Waste Generated - Current Waste) / Previous Waste × 100	Measures sustainability improvements in maintenance processes.
5	Develop Autonomous, Self-Learning Maintenance Systems	AI Self-Learning Model Accuracy (%)	(Correct AI Model Adjustments / Total Adjustments) × 100	Evaluates AI adaptability in optimizing maintenance strategies.
		Automated Failure Diagnosis Rate (%)	(AI-Driven Diagnosed Failures / Total Failures) × 100	Tracks AI's efficiency in root cause analysis.
		Continuous Improvement Index	Rate of AI-Optimized Maintenance Process Refinement	Measures AI-driven optimization of maintenance strategies.
		Anomaly Detection Sensitivity (%)	(Detected Anomalies / Total Anomalies) × 100	Determines AI effectiveness in identifying complex failure patterns.
6	Enhance Workforce Productivity & Digital Skill Development	AI-Assisted Maintenance Efficiency (%)	(AI-Supported Tasks / Total Tasks) × 100	Evaluates AI's impact on human workforce augmentation.
		Augmented Reality (AR) Maintenance Adoption (%)	(AR-Guided Repairs / Total Repairs) × 100	Tracks AR adoption for training and remote troubleshooting.
		Digital Workforce Training Completion Rate (%)	(Employees Trained on Digital RCM / Total Workforce) × 100	Ensures workforce digital transformation readiness.
		Maintenance Robotics Deployment Rate (%)	(Robotic Maintenance Tasks / Total Maintenance Tasks) × 100	Assesses robotic automation in maintenance processes.
7	Improve Resilience & Emergency Maintenance Preparedness	Emergency Downtime Response Time (min)	Time from Failure Detection to Initial Recovery	Ensures rapid response to critical system failures.
		Backup System Activation Rate (%)	(Successful Backup Activations / Total Failures) × 100	Tracks resilience and system redundancy effectiveness.
		AI-Driven Fault Escalation Efficiency (%)	(Correct Escalations / Total Escalations) × 100	Ensures AI-driven escalation reduces response time in high-risk failures.

V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

This study introduces Reliability-Centered Maintenance (RCM) 4.0 as a novel digitalized framework that integrates Artificial Intelligence (AI), Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), Digital Twins, and Big Data Analytics to enhance Reliability, Availability, Maintainability, and Safety (RAMS) in Smart Industrial Systems. As industrial environments grow increasingly complex and data-driven, traditional maintenance strategies struggle to provide the agility, precision, and predictive capabilities required for modern asset management. RCM 4.0 addresses these challenges by transforming maintenance practices into intelligent, self-optimizing ecosystems, shifting from reactive and preventive approaches to predictive, prescriptive, and autonomous maintenance strategies that enhance operational efficiency, asset reliability, and cost-effectiveness.

The proposed framework integrates RCM principles with Lean Six Sigma's DMAIC (Define-Measure-Analyze-Improve-Control) methodology, establishing a structured, data-driven approach for failure mode classification, risk-based prioritization, and dynamic maintenance optimization. By leveraging IIoT-enabled condition monitoring, Digital Twin-based simulations, and AI-driven predictive analytics, RCM 4.0 enables real-time anomaly detection, automated diagnostics, and adaptive maintenance strategies, ensuring proactive decision-making, reduced downtime, and optimized asset performance. This transformation strengthens operational resilience, asset longevity, and cost efficiency, driving the transition toward intelligent, data-driven maintenance management in next-generation industrial ecosystems.

Future research should focus on Edge AI and federated learning to enable real-time, decentralized maintenance decision-making while ensuring data privacy and cybersecurity. The integration of 5G-enabled industrial communication will enhance connectivity, ultra-low latency, and high-speed data exchange, enabling seamless interaction between digital twins and AI-driven predictive models. Additionally, autonomous robotic maintenance systems should be explored to facilitate precision-based, real-time interventions in hazardous or high-risk environments, reducing human dependency while improving safety and operational efficiency.

Further advancements in blockchain-secured predictive maintenance will ensure data integrity, security, and transparency, fostering trust and accountability in industrial maintenance operations. Moreover, conducting cost-benefit analyses and lifecycle assessments will provide industries with quantifiable insights into the economic and sustainability impact of RCM 4.0, enabling informed decision-making regarding its long-term adoption and scalability. By integrating these innovations, RCM 4.0 will evolve into a fully autonomous, cyber-physical maintenance ecosystem, fostering resilient, adaptive, and future-ready industrial operations. The continued convergence of AI, IoT, Digital Twins, and advanced analytics will drive the next generation of intelligent maintenance frameworks, accelerating the realization of Industry 4.0 and Smart Manufacturing paradigms while reinforcing sustainability, efficiency, and competitiveness in modern industrial landscapes.

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I must verify the accuracy of the following information as the article's author.

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- **Data Access Statement and Material Availability:** The adequate resources of this article are publicly accessible.
- **Authors Contributions:** The authorship of this article is contributed solely.

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