Impacts of International Safety Management Code on Prevention of Incidences and Casualties in Ship Operation in Nigerian Maritime Industry

ONYA NWAKAMA[1], BEREIWERISO LAWRENCE[2], DOUBARA JOHNSON KWESI[3]
[1, 2, 3]*Port and Shipping Management, River State University, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.*

Abstract- This study investigates the impact of International Safety Management (ISM) Code on Incident and Casualty Prevention in Ship Operations in Nigerian Maritime Industry. The study identified the dependent variables to include Risk Assessment, Safety Management System, Training & Competence, Emergency Preparedness and Reporting & Investigation; while the dependent variable were Human Error Reduction, Equipment Maintenance, Crew Awareness and Safety Procedures in ship operations in Nigeria maritime industry. The research adopted survey method and structured questionnaire designed in four Likert scale was used for data collection from a population size of 384 respondents. Four objectives were hypothesized and multiple regression was used for data analysis. The study found there is strong positive relationship between the dependent and independent variables which is significant at 95% significant level. The test of the hypotheses infers that the impact of RA, SMS, TC, EP and RI; on HE Reduction, EM, CA and SP in ship operations in Nigeria maritime industry is statistically significant. The study shows that a unit increase in RA, SMS, TC, EP and RI would bring about 10.02, 4.010, 2.005, 0.526 and 1.962 degrees of changes in HER respectively; a unit increase in RA, SMS, TC, EP and RI would bring about 2.261, 3.032, .936, 1.277 and 1.340 degrees of improvement respectively on EM practice culture; a unit increase in RA, SMS, TC, EP and RI would bring about 2.123, 4.030, 2.971, 0.928 and 1.025 degrees of improvement respectively on Crew Awareness; and a unit increase in RA, SMS, TC, EP and RI would bring about .096, .228, .069, 4.123 and 1.080 degrees of improvement on SP respectively. It comes to the conclusion that improving safety culture in marine operations necessitates a multipronged strategy supported by strong corporate administrative plans and a dedication to ongoing learning and development. The strategic recommendations place a strong emphasis on the value of organizational leadership commitment, the incorporation of safety into procedures, the prudent use of technology, and an attitude of constant development in ship operations safety procedures.

Keywords: Safety Management System SMS, Risk Assessment, Emergency preparedness, Reporting and Investigation, Training and Competency

I. INTRODUCTION

The International Safety Management (ISM) Code, which was adopted by the International Maritime Organization in 1993, mandates that safety management systems (SMS) be established by all shipping corporations that operate specific types of vessels. However, concerns about marine safety persist twenty years later, prompting a number of studies into the reasons behind this. One element that was frequently found was the human element, which in turn had its origins in the maritime industry's economic climate. Ship owners have reduced operating expenses due to increased competition by hiring cheap, generally less skilled labor and by re-flagging their vessels to get around flag state laws (Bhattacharya 2009). Furthermore, "safety" and "pollution" were typically understood to refer to issues with machinery and construction rather than personnel and management systems (Anderson 2003). Resolution A. 741(18), which is the ISM Code as stated in IMO, 1993, was adopted by the 18th session of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Assembly in 1993 in response to these changes. On May 19, 1994, the IMO Assembly adopted the Code as a new Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Chapter IX, "Management for the Safe Operation of Ships," making it mandatory. "The ship and the company shall comply with the requirements of the International Safety Management Code" (IMO 2009) is what is said here. According to Rodriguez & Mary (1998) and (1999), the ISM Code is intended to give businesses a framework for implementing integrated Safety Management Systems (SMS) in order to lower the number of incidents brought on by human error.

Additionally, it links the document of compliance (DOC) holder with organizational players at the micro (seafarer), meso (shipping management), and macro (maritime administration) levels (Schröder-Hinrichs et al. 2011). Even if there has been a decrease in human causes since the ISM code was implemented, serious incidents still happen, and people are still the primary cause (Tzannatos 2010; Hetherington et al. 2006). Human aspects and safety management issues are not adequately addressed by the maritime regulatory framework (Kuronen and Tapaninen 2010), These issues are essentially the same ones that were recognized a century ago (Schröder-Hinrichs et al. 2012). The ISM Code is a component of the larger international legal system that governs shipping. The Load Line Regulations of 1934 were the first international accord to govern maritime safety. Following World War II, international maritime regulation expanded with the creation of the IMO and the United Nations (Anderson 2003). The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982, the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Convention (STCW) of 1978, and the International Convention for the SOLAS of 1974 all codify the responsibilities of flag states. Limiting certain liberties is the goal of regulation in order to make sure that people's actions align with the interests of the general welfare. A growing number of regulators are looking for alternatives to the conventional division between "free market" and "command-and-control" regulation (Gilad 2010). The maritime industry is now subject to mandated self-regulation rather than compliance-driven practices according to the ISM Code (Kristiansen 2005). When the regulator (such as the state or administration) mandates that the subjects of regulation (such as ship owners) create, put into place, and maintain their own management systems for controlling behavior and practice in accordance with specific rules and regulations, this is known as enforced self-regulation (Baldwin et al. 2010). This gives the regulated targets the freedom to customize cost-effective solutions based on their unique situation (Gilad 2010; Baldwin and Cave 2019; Gunningham and Rees 2019). As acknowledged in the Code, "Not every shipowner or shipping company is the same" (IMO 2002). Measures set by a company's SMS may be more pertinent and valid than those enforced by a "outside" regulator, encouraging greater levels of compliance (Baldwin and Cave 2019). The cost-benefit incentives are the main obstacles to efficient self-regulation (Baldwin et al. 2010) This might not support safety precautions and making sure the right penalties are in place to encourage adherence. Because of the ISM Code's flexibility, evaluating each shipping company's compliance with the design of their SMS may be difficult.

All methodical actions done to create and preserve safety levels that meet regulations, objectives, and other specifications can be referred to as safety management (Abrahamsen et al. 2014). With its several sections addressing distinct facets, the ISM Code offers a comprehensive and integrated approach to safety management. Although it doesn't specify how this is to be done, Part A of the Code declares that it is the responsibility of the companies to set up Safety Management Systems (SMS). Part B deals with certification and verification: the tools that administrators (states) can use to make businesses fulfill their Part A duties. The Code is intended to "guarantee maritime safety, the avoidance of harm to people or death, and the preservation of the environment, especially the marine environment and property" (IMO 2022). A company's SMS shall "ensure a safe working environment and safe ship operations procedures, evaluate all hazards found and put in place suitable safeguards, and consistently enhance safety management abilities (IMO 2022). Additionally, the Code calls for the establishment of such systems to guarantee adherence to customary national and international laws, rules, codes, guidelines, and standards set by the flag state, the IMO, classification societies, and organizations representing the marine industry (IMO 2022). Nevertheless, this does not imply that the Code is a comprehensive law that creates new duties in this regard (Anderson 2023).

1.4 Research Questions

i. Are the impacts of Risk Assessment, Safety Management System SMS, Training/Competence, Emergency Preparedness and Reporting/Investigation on Human Error Reduction in ship operations in Nigeria maritime industry statistically significant?
ii. Are the impacts of Risk Assessment, Safety Management System SMS, Training/Competence,

Emergency Preparedness and Reporting/Investigation on Equipment Maintenance in ship operations in Nigeria maritime industry statistically significant?

iii. Are the impacts of Risk Assessment, Safety Management System SMS, Training/Competence, Emergency Preparedness and Reporting/Investigation on Crew Awareness in ship operations in Nigeria maritime industry statistically significant?

iv. Are the impacts of Risk Assessment, Safety Management System SMS, Training/Competence, Emergency Preparedness and Reporting/Investigation on Safety Procedures in ship operations in Nigeria maritime industry statistically significant?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

i. $H0_1$: The impacts of Risk Assessment, Safety Management System SMS, Training/Competence, Emergency Preparedness and Reporting/Investigation on Human Error Reduction in ship operations in Nigeria maritime industry are not statistically significant.

ii. $H0_2$: The impacts of Risk Assessment, Safety Management System SMS, Training/Competence, Emergency Preparedness and Reporting/Investigation on Equipment Maintenance in ship operations in Nigeria maritime industry are not statistically significant.

iii. $H0_3$: The impacts of Risk Assessment, Safety Management System SMS, Training/Competence, Emergency Preparedness and Reporting/Investigation on Crew Awareness in ship operations in Nigeria maritime industry are not statistically significant.

iv. $H0_4$: The impacts of Risk Assessment, Safety Management System SMS, Training/Competence, Emergency Preparedness and Reporting/Investigation on Safety Procedures in ship operations in Nigeria maritime industry are not statistically significant.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Heinrich's theory of industrial accident prevention

Herbert William Heinrich put forth Heinrich's idea in 1931 as a means of preventing industrial accidents. According to the notion, there are 29 accidents that cause minor injuries and 300 accidents that cause no injuries for every accident that causes a catastrophic injury. Since improper activities cover two simple sources of accidents, they are arguably the most straightforward of the notions. The first possibility is that the accountable party was merely ignorant. Alternatively, he or she may have chosen to take that risk consciously even though they knew it could lead to an accident. The root of incompatibility is a little more complicated than inappropriate behavior. It includes both an individual's improper reaction to a circumstance and minor environmental factors, like an improperly sized workstation. An overload may also result from an individual's load. This encompasses the task's difficulty, the environment's affects (noise, diversions, etc.), whether positive or negative, and even the task's level of hazard. In addition to one another, incorrect activity, overburden, and incompatibility can all result in human error, which can cause an accident.

Petersen’s Accident/Incident Theory

Ferrell's Human Factor approach is essentially expanded upon in Petersen's approach. Ferrell's work is quite similar to the idea of an overload that is brought on by capacity, status, or load. There are a few adjustments and improvements, though. The environmental component of incompatibility (workstation design and displays/controls) was first envisaged by Petersen as a separate component of the model, which he named ergonomic traps. Petersen's acknowledgment that human mistake is merely a component of a bigger paradigm is another significant contribution. One potential mediator between errors and accidents was added: a system failure, or the organization's incapacity to fix mistakes. There are several potential outcomes for these errors. Examples of system failures include inadequate training and management's inability to identify errors. Inadequate policy alone may result in a system failure that does not stop an accident from happening after a human error.

Systems Theory

The majority of the theories that have been discussed so far center on environmental defects and human error. A systems model theory takes a different tack when examining how people interact with their surroundings. A system model perspective finds harmony between man, machine, and environment rather than a dangerous environment and a human being prone to mistakes. There is relatively little probability of an accident under typical conditions. The likelihood of an accident happening significantly rises the moment someone or anything upsets this balance by altering one of the elements or the connections among the three.

Reason's Swiss Cheese Theory

James Reason's Swiss Cheese Model, which was first put forth in 1990, is arguably the most well-known systems theory regarding accident causation. This hypothesis states that there is a chance for failure at every stage of a process (Reason, 2013). A slice of Swiss cheese is used to symbolize each tier of defense, with the holes in the cheese standing in for potential issues or breakdowns in that defense.

Heinrich's Domino Theory

In 1950, Heinrich used the analogy of dominoes falling on top of each other to explain accidents. As one of the earliest scientific hypotheses to explain accidents, this theory is particularly notable even though it is not the most sophisticated or intricate. Even now, seven decades later, it is frequently cited. When one domino topples, the next one is sufficiently tipped over to force it over, and so on, until all of the connected dominoes have fallen. But if you take away one domino, the whole process stops. Heinrich uses the same method to describe how accidents happen. Five phases of accident causation were distinguished by Heinrich's Domino Theory. The first stage, which includes everything that could cause people to develop bad qualities, is the social environment and ancestry. It is important to note that Heinrich's use of ancestry and genetics was very much influenced by the era in which it was written. Similar to how temperaments and alcoholism can be inherited, a modernized version of this hypothesis would probably refer to this behavior as "inherited behavior." There are several similarities between this level of accident causation and the social learning theories covered in the criminological theories. According to Reason (1995), the model created for accident causation contains two interconnected causal sequences: an active failure pathway and a latent pathway. Reason argues that human failures are not limited to the "sharp end" those who labor in close proximity to the source of danger. According to this paradigm, latent failures are referred to as "preconditions to unsafe acts," "unsafe supervision," or "organizational influences," whereas sharp-end errors or active failures are called "unsafe acts." The purpose of this essay is to clarify the role that human errors whether active or latent play at different organizational levels in relation to the ISM code.

Conceptual Review

Although the frequency of incidents caused by technical malfunctions has decreased over the past few decades due to the advancement of systems, human factors still play a significant influence (Konstandinidou et al., 2006, De Ambroggi et al., 2011, Aalipour et al., 2016, Burns et al.,, 2018, Franciosi et al., 2019, Orzáez et al., 2019, Taylor et al., 2020, Abílio et al., 2020, Martins, et al., 2021, Catelani et al., 2021). In this sense, human mistake accounts for between 70 and 90 percent of accidents in various industries, with technological or system errors accounting for the remaining portion (French et al., 2011). Nevertheless, the following is the foundation around which this study is built:

The Safety Management System (SMS)

An organized system designed and put into place by shipping corporations to guarantee the safety of ships and the marine environment is called the safety management system (SMS) (Raunek, 2021). The Vessel Safety Management System, or SMS, is a complete platform that combines several software programs to assist shipping corporations in managing the workload, safety, and efficiency of their fleets while avoiding environmental harm (Raunek, 2021). An essential component of the International Safety Management (ISM) code, SMS outlines all the crucial rules, guidelines, and protocols that must be adhered to in order to guarantee the safe operation of ships at sea (Raunek, 2021). Every commercial ship

500 grt and larger must have safe ship management protocols in place. One of the key components of the ISM code is SMS. Therefore, the safety management system (SMS) makes sure that all ships adhere to the obligatory safety rules and regulations as well as the standards, codes, and recommendations that are suggested by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), classification societies, and other relevant maritime organizations. To guarantee the safety of every ship, any safety management strategy should meet a few fundamental functional requirements. They are:

- How to proceed and what to do in an emergency circumstance
- Policy for environmental preservation and safety
- Protocol and rules for reporting mishaps or any other type of non-compliance
- Detailed information about the authority and communication channels between shore and shipboard staff as well as among ship crew members
- Protocols and policies to guarantee ship safety and marine environment preservation in accordance with applicable international and flag state laws
- Protocols for management reviews and internal audits
- Vessel details

To put it briefly, a safety management system would include information about how a vessel would function on a daily basis, what to do in the event of an emergency, how training and drills are carried out, the steps taken to ensure safe operations, who would be in charge, etc.

Safe operations of ship and pollution prevention

Oceans, the largest ecosystem in the world, are experiencing issues such rising seawater temperatures, acidification, and falling seawater oxygen levels as a result of environmental contamination (Bindoff et al., 2019; Laffoley et al., 2019). The introduction of materials or energy into the marine environment that harms the marine ecosystem's life sources and limits its potential uses is known as marine pollution (GESAMP, 2015). Permanent organic materials, heavy metals, oil and oil compounds, radioactivity, sewage, solid wastes, garbage, food, debris, and noise are all examples of marine pollutants that are segregating (Chahouri et al., 2022; Mostofa et al., 2013; Zeng et al., 2015). The primary marine activities that cause marine pollution are classified as maritime transportation, port operations, fishing, open sea hydrocarbon activities, other sea-based energy industries, sea-based mining, and marine tourism (Tornero et al., 2016; UNEP, 2020). Clearly, different management levels whether on land or at sea will call for varied degrees of familiarity with and understanding of the things listed. Strong leadership commitment is the foundation of effective safety management. The final outcome in safety and environmental protection problems depends on the dedication, skill, attitudes, and drive of people at all levels (Chung-Ling et al., 2013).

Casualties and Incidences Rates in Maritime Industry

Axial routes, globalized logistic networks, and larger ships are the trends of the international shipping sector. All regions of the world are connected by the bustling maritime transportation networks, which contribute to the expansion of the world economy and trade. Approximately 90% of global trade in goods is carried out by sea, according to statistics (Jensen *et al, 2018)*. However, due to the complexity of the worldwide maritime environment, accidents might result from even small human irresponsibility. Total-loss marine accidents are a nightmare for the crew and the shipping industry since they not only result in significant financial losses for the sector but also seriously endanger the lives of crew members and associated personnel. Furthermore, widespread marine body destruction brought on by oil or marine pollution can harm the biosphere irreparably (Lagring *et al., 2018)*. Therefore, one of the main issues facing the worldwide shipping sector is ensuring the safety of ship navigation (Mostofa *et al*, 2013). A total of 15,738 people were killed or injured in 3976 complete-loss marine incidents involving ships of 100 gross tons or more between 1998 and July 2018, according to Lloyd's List Intelligence Casualty Statistics. Total-loss marine accidents have decreased as a result of advancements in navigation technology and increased government focus on environmental preservation and maritime safety (Lagring *et al., 2018)*, however, the number of fatalities from these accidents is still significant.

Ship operational conformity and compliance with IMO regulations

The sole global regulatory authority for safety and pollution management resulting from maritime industry operations is the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which works to avoid maritime accidents and pollution (Hardiyant, et al, 2020). As the maritime sector expanded in the late 1960s, the IMO implemented a number of policies aimed at preventing pollution and reducing its effects. The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as amended by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto (MARPOL 73/78), and SOLAS 1974, which primarily address maritime life safety, were the most significant measures. They are crucial for maintaining the safe operation of ships and preventing pollution of the marine environment. The ISM Code was put into effect to guarantee maritime safety, prevent harm or death to people, and prevent environmental damage, especially to property and the marine environment. A number of maritime insurance-related factors may be impacted by the ISM Code. It may have some effects on seaworthiness, duty of disclosure, insurance regulations, and coverage.

Training and Competence relevance to Prevention of Incidences and Casualties in ship operations

Every seafarer must complete the Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping (STCW) Basic Training (BT) before beginning work on commerce ships (Amir, et al. 2020). According to the knowledge, attitude, and behavior (KAB) theory, having more knowledge improves one's attitude, which in turn results in better behavior (Amir, et al. 2020). Although knowledge, competence, and most importantly, attitude is key to reducing accidents, human error is not limited to seafarers (Joseph, 2014). One of the administration's numerous reasons for reversing the trend is that the inherent risks discourage those who may otherwise like to pursue a career in seafaring, as human factors are thought to be responsible for 80% of marine catastrophes (Joseph, 2014). Since competency requires knowledge, skill (i.e., practical proficiency), and attitude, all factors must be addressed and managed effectively in order to lower maritime accidents. Faster ship turnarounds, which lead to shorter port stays and fewer possibilities for deck and mechanical maintenance, are frequently the cause of accidents. Over time, this has placed a great deal of strain on seafarers. Seafarers frequently suffer injuries as a result of their hasty completion of tasks. Only the most qualified applicant is permitted to enroll in seafarers' training under a new method that was implemented to reduce accidents.

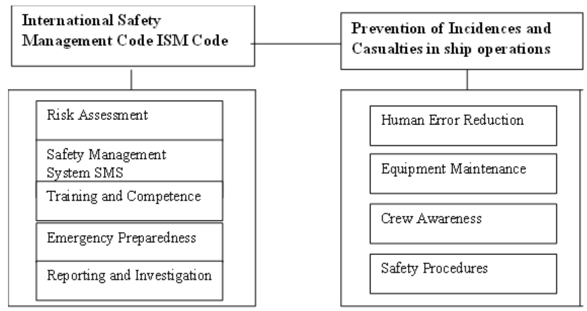

Fig 2: Conceptual Framework of the study
Source: Research Desk (2025)

Empirical review

Safety Management System and Incidence Prevention in Nigeria Maritime Industry

The international maritime community is working harder to encourage safe navigation and the preservation of the marine environment as a result of the increasing number of ship accidents and ship-generated marine pollution. Businesses must have a safety management system (SMS); this is a requirement of the ISM code. Nonetheless, numerous studies have documented the effects of ship-generated trash and the regulating influence of the firm SMS requirement for ISM code. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has a number of treaties that regulate vessel source pollution in addition to UNCLOS. The phrase "competent international organization" in UNCLOS subtly acknowledges the IMO's global mandate. The IMO is in charge of establishing global guidelines to stop pollution from vessel sources. These consist of construction, design, equipment, staffing, navigational, and discharge and emission requirements. Therefore, by evaluating the effects of the ISM code on the prevention of incidents and casualties in the Nigerian maritime industry marine pollution control is a primary mandate of the ISM code this study aims to fill current research gaps.

Risk Assessment, Casualties and Incident Rates in Nigeria Maritime Industry

An incident that occurs in a ship or involving any equipment, investments, or properties exposed to the maritime environment and results in harm to people at sea or in port, as well as damage to the marine property or investment, is referred to as a marine accident (Vouker-Schellhammer 2014). It covers incidents that occur at sea or at ports, quaysides or anchorages, shipyards or dockyards, etc. As long as the unintentional objects are at sea or being used for sea transportation, in port, or in a dockyard, and are covered by a marine insurance policy, maritime accidents are caused by exposure to the risks, perils, and hazards of the marine environment. Whether the object or vessel involved in the accident is moving or not at the moment of the accident is irrelevant (MAIB, 2008). Therefore, by evaluating the effects of the ISM code on the prevention of injuries and incidents in the Nigerian maritime industry, this study aims to fill current research gaps.

Ship Regulatory Compliance and Incidences Prevention in Nigeria maritime industry

At the national and international levels, globalization has profoundly altered the framework for governance and regulation. A great deal of discussion has been sparked by this shift on how to improve governance and regulate more effectively in the new environment. At the level of the maritime industry, one of the main concerns is how standards mandated by legislation are really met throughout operations. The key to the shipping industry's success in ensuring safe operations and preventing maritime pollution is the compliance of seafarers, ship managers, charterers, and associated workers. Sampson, et al. (2014) implies that taking into account the viewpoints of managers and employees is essential to comprehending the factors that influence compliance and, consequently, to guiding discussions on efficient regulation. Essentially, the marine industry's dedication to making sure that its operations are carried out in a way that prioritizes sustainability, safety, security, and environmental preservation is based on regulatory compliance. Company SMS investigates the different aspects of maritime laws and compliance and recognizes how important they are to the development of marine activities in the future (Michael, et al. 2013). While the Cabotage Law case highlights the need of abiding by national maritime laws, the oil spill response case demonstrates how NESREA enforces environmental standards to protect marine ecosystems. Lastly, the cooperation between NIMASA and a global oil corporation exemplifies the advantages of regulatory alliances in guaranteeing offshore drilling safety compliance. When taken as a whole, these incidents highlight how important compliance is to fostering safe, legal, and sustainable operations in Nigeria's maritime oil industry (Uzougbo et al., 2024). Additionally, oil companies can foresee possible compliance issues and create proactive strategies to resolve them by integrating risk assessments into their operational planning. This foresight is essential to guaranteeing that businesses continue to adhere to national and international laws controlling maritime operations (Oyeniran et al., 2024). Nigerian oil companies must use a multifaceted strategy that include frequent audits, employee training, technology adoption, cooperation with regulatory bodies, and strong risk management to ensure compliance in maritime operations. By putting these tactics into practice, businesses can reduce legal and operational risks while simultaneously promoting economic growth, environmental preservation, and sustainable development in the oil and gas industry.

Emergency Operational Response and Maritime Accidents Mitigation

Disaster management uses systematic observation and analysis of disasters to improve preparedness, emergency response, prevention, mitigation, and recovery efforts (Carter, 2008). Cooperation between numerous public and commercial organizations spread out geographically is necessary for an efficient operational response to unforeseen emergency situations (Janssen et al., 2010). Effective communication procedures and situational awareness on the part of all parties are essential in the event of maritime accidents (Nordström et al., 2016). The process of gathering correct and trustworthy information to create a shared, cohesive image of an emergency scenario is known as situational awareness. Communicating the safety and threat condition at the accident site is a key component of the first two phases, which heavily rely on rich information that can

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.64388/IREV9I7-1713471

alter perceptions quickly. Lack of a shared knowledge and, hence, sense-making among stakeholders can lead to challenges. A co-created operational picture can be achieved in real time by connecting various stakeholders through the use of an SMS and information-sharing platform (Treurniet et al., 2020).

SMS AND HUMAN ERROR MITIGATION IN MARITIME ACCIDENTS

The number of accidents involving maritime transportation has decreased within the last ten years (Dominguez-Péry, et al., 2021). However, because transportation vessels are getting bigger, a single occurrence, such oil spills from "super" tankers, can have disastrous long-term effects on local economies, the environment, and marine ecosystems (Roberts et al. 2002). Complex events or processes can lead to maritime transport accidents, which can ultimately cause lasting ecological, environmental, and economic harm in addition to the loss of human and marine life (Dominguez-Péry, et al., 2021). There are still many unresolved issues about the most effective means of preventing catastrophic human mistake in marine situations, as numerous studies indicate that direct or indirect human error is a key contributor to maritime accidents (Chen et al., 2013). According to Dominguez-Péry, et al., (2021) three primary root causes of human and organizational error were identified by a bibliometric review of the body of literature on the causes of maritime accidents involving human error. These are individual/cognition-related errors, socio-technical information systems and information technologies, and human resources and management.

Reporting and Investigation of the Risk Influential Factors and Maritime Accidents Prevention

The increased volume of marine traffic in recent years has increased the risk of maritime accidents in this industry. The European marine Safety Agency (EMSA) reports that between 2014 and 2021, there were 21,173 recorded marine accidents and casualties, with significant losses in terms of people and property (EMSA, 2022). Due to numerous uncertainties, the situation of marine safety remains critical despite the tremendous efforts made by all players in this domain. Ship conditions are just one of many Risk Influential Factors (RIFs) that interact intricately to cause maritime accidents (Antao, et al., 2023), weather conditions (Li, et al., 2024), geographical factors (Liang, et al., 2024), navigational elements (Yu, et al., 2024), and more recently, emerging cyber risks (Yu, et al., 2023). According to Yuhao, et al., (2025), According to the findings of the critical review, the main sources of data for this study were accident investigation statistics from international maritime authorities. These statistics usually included specific, in-depth information about the state of the vessels involved, the environmental conditions at the time of the accidents, and the resulting effects.

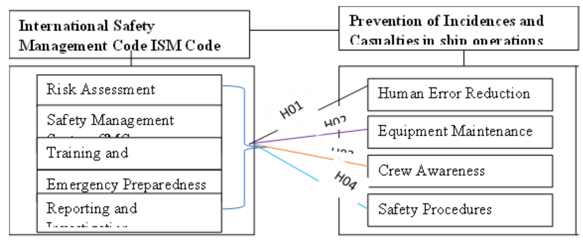

Fig 3: Operational Design of the study

Source: Research 2025

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study collected data using a questionnaire approach. Since the goal of the study was to evaluate the effects of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code on the prevention of casualties and incidents in the Nigerian maritime industry, the design was appropriate for the research and approved by maritime specialists.

Description of the study area

The Nigerian economy depends heavily on maritime transportation. The structure and character of Nigeria's international trade highlight its importance. One may argue that the effectiveness of global trade and commerce is a major factor in Nigeria's economy. As a result, expanding maritime transportation capabilities becomes crucial to her financial existence (Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, 2011). Both primary and secondary data sources were used to gather the study's data. Nigerian shipping companies operating under the Nigerian

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.64388/IREV9I7-1713471

Cabotage Act 2003, shipowners, the company's Designated Person Ashore (DPA), ship crews (including captains, engineers, and other senior crew members), NIMASA and NPA employees, and the Nigerian Shipper's Council were the main sources of data. The internet, books, and other pertinent resources, such as images and templates documenting accidents and incidents involving cabotage vessels in Nigerian territorial waters, are the sources of secondary data.

3.4 Research Population

The total population of the study is the population size. The total group about whom we wish to make inferences is known as the study's population. Using probability sampling, which involves random selection, a sample size is chosen from this population. Although the study's population size is unknown, a precise estimate is necessary, particularly when working with tiny or simple-to-measure groups of people.

3.5 Instrument of Data Collection

A structured questionnaire created by the research team to accommodate the study's objections and the intended respondents is the data gathering tool used for this. The purpose of the questionnaire was to get prompt and thorough answers from the study's target audience. There are two sections or categories on the questionnaire. While part B focuses mostly on the final questions for the study's objective of answering the research questions, section A focuses primarily on the demographics of the respondents. With grades of 4, 3, 2, 1, and Strongly Agreed AS, Agreed AG, Disagreed DA, and Strongly Disagreed SD, the questionnaire was created using the four Likert standards; therefore, the researcher calculates the average or mean acceptance of responses that are 2.5 and higher.

Sample Size Determination

Determining the sample size aims to make sure that it is both manageable and economical while still being large enough to provide statistically valid results and precise estimations of demographic parameters. The size of the population, the level of precision we desire in our estimations, the degree of confidence we want in the results, the likelihood of population diversity, and the amount of time and money available for the study all play a role in determining the statistically significant sample size. Nevertheless, determining the sample size is crucial to guaranteeing the validity and dependability of study findings and conclusions. To determine the study sample size, the researcher employed Andrew Fisher's formula

Sample size =[(Z-score)^2 * StdDev * (1- StdDev)] / (confidence interval)^2

Confidence level	z-score
80%	1.28
85%	1.44
90%	1.65
95%	1.96
99%	2.58

Source: Author's calculation

$[(1.96)^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5)] / (0.05)^2$

(3.8416 x 0.25) / 0.0025

0.9604 /0 .0025

384.16

Consequently, 384 people are listed as the sample size.

3.10 Method of Data Analysis

The researcher employed a variety of statistical methods, such as bar charts, pie charts, and graphs, to show the data gathered for this study in order to assess it. Regression analysis was used in the study to test hypotheses and assess how the International Safety Management Code affected the Nigerian maritime industry's ability to prevent incidents and casualties. A computer-based SPSS version 22 and Microsoft Word 2013 version were used to compute the data analysis.

3.10.1 Regression Analysis

The relationship between independent and dependent variables is shown by multiple regression analysis, which shows how dependent variables will alter when one or more independent variables change as a result of various circumstances.

3.10.2 Model Specification

$Y_{HER} = a + b1X_{RA} + b2X_{SMS} + b3X_{TC} + b4X_{EP} + b5X_{RI}$ Eq1

$Y_{EM} = a + b1X_{RA} + b2X_{SMS} + b3X_{TC} + b4X_{EP} + b5X_{RI}$ Eq2

$Y_{CA} = a + b1X_{RA} + b2X_{SMS} + b3X_{TC} + b4X_{EP} + b5X_{RI}$ Eq3

$Y_{SP} = a + b1X_{RA} + b2X_{SMS} + b3X_{TC} + b4X_{EP} + b5X_{RI}$ Eq4

Where,

Y= dependent variables

X= independent variables

a= the intercept of the graph

b= the slope of the lines

$Y_{HER =}$ Human Error Reduction

$Y_{EM =}$ Equipment Maintenance

$Y_{CA =}$ Crew Awareness

$Y_{SP =}$ Safety Procedures

$X_{RA=}$ Risk Assessment

$X_{SMS =}$ Safety Management System SMS

$X_{TC =}$ Training and Competence

X_{EP} = Emergency Preparedness

$X_{RI =}$ Reporting and Investigation

IV. RESULTS

Data Analysis

Table 2 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.677[a]	.458	.456	2.76032

a. Predictors: (Constant), RI, SMS, TC, EP, RA

Source: SPSS Output (2025)

Table 2 The relationship between the factors was explained above. Given that R = 0..677, this indicates that the dependent and independent variables have a significant positive connection. At 67.8%, this suggests that the link is strong. Additionally, a decent fit for the model is demonstrated by the R square value of 0.458, which demonstrates that almost 46% of the variance in the dependent variable can be predicted from the independent variables. The regression model's goodness of fit is 45.6%, as indicated by the Adjusted R square, which is 0.456.

Table 3 ANOVA[a]

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1Regression	1722.253	5	344.451	45.209	.000[b]
Residual	2880.119	378	7.619		
Total	2897.372	383			

a. Dependent Variable: HER

b. Predictors: (Constant), RI, SMS, TC, EP, RA

Source: SPSS Output (2025)

The Table 3 The ANOVA table shown above shows the significance and F-value of the relationship between the study's independent and dependent variables. At the 95% significant level, the regression model explains a considerable percentage of the variance in the dependent variable, as indicated by the F-value of 45.2. Given that the p-value is (0.000<0.05), this indicates that the powerful positive correlation between the data variables found in the model summary table is significant at the 95% significant level. The association between the independent and dependent variables is therefore accepted by the study to be 95% statistically significant.

Table 4 Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.64388/IREV9I7-1713471

	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	20.912	1.521		13.749	.000	17.922	23.903
RA	10.029	.088	.564	113.966	.000	.144	11.201
SMS	4.010	.058	.229	69.138	.000	.103	5.124
TC	2.005	.041	.340	48.902	.000	.086	3.075
EP	.526	.042	.217	12.524	.000	.108	1.056
RI	1.962	.104	.160	18.865	.000	.266	2.142

a. Dependent Variable: HER

Source: SPSS Output (2025)

Table 4 explains the significance of the link between the study's independent and dependent variables. The model equation, which is provided below, provides the best explanation of the relationship's impact:

$$Y_{HER} = 20.912 + 10.029X_{RA} + 4.010X_{SMS} + 2.005X_{TC} + 0.526X_{EP} + 1.962X_{RI}$$

According to the model, the Human Error Reduction (HER) is attained at a constant value of 20.912 under typical conditions, when all regulatory rules are followed. However, the HER would be significantly impacted by a unit increase in any of the independent variables. According to the calculation, HER would change by roughly 10.02, 4.010, 2.005, 0.526, and 1.962 degrees for every unit rise in RA, SMS, TC, EP, and RI, respectively. As a result, the study rejects the null hypothesis (H01) and acknowledges that there is a statistically significant impact on human error reduction in ship operations in the Nigerian maritime industry from the following factors: risk assessment, safety management system, training and competence, emergency preparedness, and reporting and investigation.

Table 5 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.717[a]	.514	.512	4.26165

a. Predictors: (Constant), RI, SMS, TC, EP, RA

Source: SPSS Output (2025)

Table 5 explained the link between the variables. Given that R = 0. 717, this indicates that the dependent and independent variables have a very strong positive connection. At 71.7%, this suggests that the link is extremely strong. Once more, a strong fit for the model is demonstrated by the R square value of 0.514, which demonstrates that around 51.4% of the variance in the dependent variable can be predicted from the independent variables. In the same way, the Adjusted R square is reported as 0.512, or 51.2% of the regression model's goodness of fit.

Table 6 ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	995.314	5	199.063	10.960	.000[b]
	Residual	6865.100	378	18.162		
	Total	6960.414	383			

a. Dependent Variable: EM

b. Predictors: (Constant), RI, SMS, TC, EP, RA

Source: SPSS Output (2025)

The Table 6 The F-value and significance of the link between the study's independent and dependent variables were given by the ANOVA table above. The regression model explains a substantial amount of variance in the dependent variable, as indicated by the F-value of 10.960, which is also significant at the 95% significant level. Given that the p-value is ($0.000<0.05$), this indicates that the strong positive link between the data variables found in the model summary table is significant at the 95% significant level. As a result, the study acknowledges that there is a 95% statistically significant association between the dependent and independent variables.

Table 7 Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	21.807	2.348		9.287	.000	17.190	26.425
RA	2.261	.135	.381	16.748	.000	-.527	3.005
SMS	3.032	.089	.619	34.067	.000	-.207	4.143
TC	.936	.063	.332	14.857	.000	-.088	2.160
EP	1.277	.065	.279	19.646	.000	-.204	2.050
RI	1.340	.160	.211	8.375	.000	.025	2.655

a. Dependent Variable: EM

Source: SPSS Output (2025)

Table 7 explains the significance of the link between the study's independent and dependent variables as well as how independent variables affect the dependent variable. The model equation, which is provided below, provides the best explanation of the relationship's impact:

$$Y_{EM} = 21.807 + 2.261X_{RA} + 3.032X_{SMS} + .936X_{TC} + 1.277X_{EP} + 1.340X_{RI}$$

According to the model, equipment maintenance is maintained at a constant value of 21.807 under normal conditions, when all regulatory policies are followed. However, a unit increase in any of the independent variables would have a significant impact on the culture of EM practice. According to the calculation, the EM practice culture would improve by roughly 2.261, 3.032,.936, 1.277, and 1.340 degrees for every unit rise in RA, SMS, TC, EP, and RI. Therefore, the study rejects the Null hypothesis ($H0_1$) and accept that the impacts of Risk The following factors are statistically significant in the Nigerian maritime industry: assessment, safety management system, training and competency, emergency preparedness, and reporting and investigation on equipment maintenance in ship operations.

Table 8 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.587[a]	.344	.342	3.93520

a. Predictors: (Constant), RI, SMS, TC, EP, RA

Source: SPSS Output (2025)

Table 8 explained the link between the variables. Given that the R value is 0.587, this indicates that the dependent and independent variables have a positive connection. This infers that the strength of the link is calculated at 58.7% between dependent and independent variables. Additionally, the model does not well fit the data, since the R square value is 0.3444, which is significantly less than 1, meaning that around 34.4% of the variance in the dependent variable can be predicted from the independent variables. Likewise, the Adjusted R square is 0.342, or 34.2% of the regression model's goodness of fit. The researcher did note the absent predictors, though.

Table 9 ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	484.847	5	96.969	6.262	.000[b]
	Residual	5853.642	378	15.486		
	Total	5898.490	383			

a. Dependent Variable: CA

b. Predictors: (Constant), RI, SMS, TC, EP, RA

Source: SPSS Output (2025)

The Table 9 The F-value and significance of the association between the study's independent and dependent variables are shown in the ANOVA table above. The regression model explains a substantial amount of variance in the dependent variable, as indicated by the F-value of 6.262, which is also significant at the 95% significant level. Given that the p-value is ($0.000<0.05$), this indicates that the positive link between the data variables found in the model summary table is significant at the 95% significant level. As a result, the study acknowledges that there is a 95% statistically significant association between the dependent and independent variables.

Table 10: Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	20.887	2.168		9.632	.000	16.623	25.150
RA	2.123	.125	.393	16.984	.000	.122	3.369
SMS	4.030	.082	.520	49.146	.000	.192	5.131
TC	2.971	.058	.113	51.224	.000	.115	3.115
EP	.928	.060	.232	15.467	.000	.146	1.089
RI	1.025	.148	4.017	6.926	.000	.316	1.266

a. Dependent Variable: CA

Source: SPSS Output (2025)

Table 10 explains the significance of the link between the study's independent and dependent variables. The model equation, which is provided below, provides the best explanation of the relationship's impact:

$Y_{CA} = 20.887 + 2.123X_{RA} + 4.030X_{SMS} + 2.971X_{TC} + .928X_{EP} + 1.025X_{RI}$

According to the model, the Crew Awareness is attained at a constant value of 20.887 under normal conditions, when all regulatory regulations are followed. On the other hand, a unit increase in any of the predictor variables would have a positive effect on the Crew Awareness. According to the equation, Crew Awareness would improve by roughly 2.123, 4.030, 2.971, 0.928, and 1.025 degrees for every unit increase in RA, SMS, TC, EP, and RI, respectively. Thus, the study rejects the null hypothesis (H03) and accepts the alternative that there is a statistically significant effect on crew awareness in ship operations in the Nigerian maritime industry from Risk Assessment, Safety Management System, Training & Competence, Emergency Preparedness, and Reporting & Investigation.

Table 11 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.815[a]	.664	.662	4.27911

a. Predictors: (Constant), RI, SMS, TC, EP, RA

Source: SPSS Output (2025)

Table 11 explained the link between the variables. Given that R = 0. 815, this indicates that the dependent and independent variables have a very strong positive connection. At 81.5%, this suggests that the link is extremely strong. Additionally, the R square value is 0. 664, indicating a good fit for the model and that roughly 66.4% of the variance in the dependent variable can be predicted from the independent variables. In a similar vein, the Adjusted R square is 0. 662, or 66.2% of the regression model's goodness of fit.

Table 12 ANOVA[a]

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.

1 Regression	972.008	5	194.402	10.617	.001[b]
Residual	6921.489	378	18.311		
Total	7013.497	383			

a. Dependent Variable: SP

b. Predictors: (Constant), RI, SMS, TC, EP, RA

Source: SPSS Output (2025)

The ANOVA table, shown in Table 12 above, yielded the F-value and significance of the correlation between the study's independent and dependent variables. The regression model explains a substantial amount of variance in the dependent variable, as indicated by the F-value of 10.617, which is also significant at the 95% significant level. Since the p-value is less than the table value (0.000<0.05), it is suggested that there is a very strong positive link between the data variables, as shown in the model summary table, which is significant at the 95% significant level. As a result, the study acknowledges that there is a 95% statistically significant association between the dependent and independent variables.

Table 13 Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	23.430	2.358		0.706	.001	18.794	28.067
RA	.096	.136	-.066	34.022	.000	.363	.171
SMS	.228	.089	-.017	3.685	.001	.204	4.147
TC	.069	.063	.056	63.431	.002	.062	.188
EP	4.123	.065	-.126	6.708	.000	.250	5.005
RI	1.080	.161	.050	0.706	.000	.236	3.397

a. Dependent Variable: SP

Source: SPSS Output (2025)

Table 14 explains the significance of the link between the study's independent and dependent variables. The model equation, which is provided below, provides the best explanation of the relationship's impact:

$$Y_{SP} = 23.430 + .096X_{RA} + .228X_{SMS} + .069X_{TC} + 4.123X_{EP} + 1.080X_{RI}$$

According to the model, the Safety Procedure is reached at a constant value of 23.430 under typical circumstances, when all regulatory rules are followed. However, the SP would be significantly impacted by a unit increase in any of the independent variables. According to the formula, an increase of one unit in RA, SMS, TC, EP, and RI would result in improvements in SP of approximately.096,.228,.069, 4.123, and 1.080 degrees, respectively. As a result, the study rejects the null hypothesis (H01) and acknowledges that there is a statistically significant impact on safety procedure in ship operations in the Nigerian maritime industry from Risk Assessment, Safety Management System, Training & Competence, Emergency Preparedness, and Reporting & Investigation.

V. DISCUSSION

Impact of Risk Assessment, Safety Management System SMS, Training and Competence, Emergency Preparedness and Reporting and Investigation on Human Error Reduction in ship operations in Nigeria maritime industry

The results of this investigation demonstrate a robust positive correlation between the independent and dependent variables. The result showed a strong positive relationship at 67.8% inferring that the adoption of company ISM code policies on Risk Assessment, Safety Management System, Training and Competence, Emergency Preparedness and Reporting and Investigation would enhance Human

Error Reduction in ship operations in Nigeria maritime industry. The result of study informs that the positive relationship between the dependent and independent variables were significant at 95% significant level given that (0.000<0.05). Furthermore, the study confirms that the positive relationship that exist among the data variables has a significant impact. It infers that a unit improvement in the independent variables - Risk Assessment, Safety Management System SMS, Training and Competence, Emergency Preparedness and Reporting and Investigation would bring about 10.02, 4.010, 2.005, 0.526 and 1.962 degrees of changes respectively in Human Error Reduction in ship operations in Nigeria maritime industry. Thus, the study accepts the alternative hypothesis that the effects of Risk Assessment, Safety Management System, Training and Competence, Emergency Preparedness, and Reporting and Investigation on Human Error Reduction in ship operations in Nigeria maritime industry are statistically significant and rejects the Null hypothesis (H01), which states that these factors do not have a statistically significant impact on human error reduction in ship operations in Nigeria maritime industry.

> Impact of Risk Assessment, Safety Management System SMS, Training and Competence, Emergency Preparedness and Reporting and Investigation on Equipment Maintenance in ship operations in Nigeria maritime industry

In the Nigerian maritime industry, improving the culture of equipment maintenance in ship operations would also improve the culture of risk assessment, safety management system, training and competency, emergency preparedness, and reporting and investigation. This is explained by the study's findings, which show a very strong positive relationship between the dependent and independent variables at 71.7%. The analysis demonstrates that, at the 95% significant level, there is a positive correlation between the dependent and independent variables. This suggests that the Nigerian maritime industry's equipment maintenance culture would be improved by improvements in Risk Assessment, Safety Management System SMS, Training and Competence, Emergency Preparedness, and Reporting and Investigation. As a result, the study acknowledges that there is a 95% statistically significant association between the dependent and independent variables.

Nevertheless, the study evaluated the importance of the relationship between the dependent and independent factors as well as the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable. The Nigerian maritime industry's equipment maintenance culture would benefit from a unit improvement in risk assessment procedures, safety management systems, crew training and competency, emergency preparedness, and reporting and investigation methodologies. The impact of Risk Assessment procedures, Safety Management System, crew Training and Competence, Emergency Preparedness, Reporting and Investigation were estimated at 2.261, 3.032, .936, 1.277 and 1.340 degrees respectively to improve Equipment Maintenance culture or practice onboard ships in Nigerian maritime industry. The study concludes that the effects of Risk Assessment, Safety Management System, Training and Competence, Emergency Preparedness, and Reporting and Investigation on Equipment Maintenance in ship operations in the Nigerian maritime industry are statistically significant, rejecting the Null hypothesis (H01).

> Impact of Risk Assessment, Safety Management System SMS, Training and Competence, Emergency Preparedness and Reporting and Investigation on Crew Awareness in ship operations in Nigeria maritime industry

According to the analysis's findings, there is an estimated 58.7% relative positive correlation between the independent and dependent variables. It also mentions that the study's dependent and independent variables have a significant association at the 95% significance level. This implies that crew awareness in ship operations in the Nigerian maritime industry is influenced by risk assessment, safety management system SMS, training and competency, emergency preparedness, and reporting and investigation. As a result, the study acknowledges that there is a 95% statistically significant association between the dependent and independent variables. The study also demonstrates how the link between the study's independent and dependent variables has a significant impact. It concludes that there would be approximately 2.123, 4.030, 2.971, 0.928, and 1.025 degrees of improvement in Crew Awareness for every unit increase in the predictor variables of Risk Assessment, Safety Management System, Training and Competence, Emergency Preparedness, and Reporting & Investigation.Thus, the study rejects the null hypothesis (H03) and accepts the alternative that there is a statistically significant effect on crew awareness in ship operations in the Nigerian maritime industry from Risk Assessment, Safety Management System, Training and Competence, Emergency Preparedness, and Reporting and Investigation.

Impact of Risk Assessment, Safety Management System SMS, Training and Competence, Emergency Preparedness and Reporting and Investigation on Safety Procedures in ship operations in Nigeria maritime industry

The study's dependent and independent variables have a very strong positive association, according to the research findings. At 81.5%, this suggests that the link is extremely strong. Additionally, the finding is significant at the 95% level. The research hypothesis is rejected and it is acknowledged that there is a statistically significant association between the dependent and independent variables. This suggests that there is a very strong positive relationship between the data variables, which is significant at the 95% significant level. In the Nigerian maritime industry, a unit increase in Risk Assessment, Safety Management System SMS, Training and Competence, Emergency Preparedness, and Reporting and Investigation would result in approximately 0.096, 0.228, 0.069, 4.123, and 1.080 degrees of improvement on Safety Procedures, respectively. This finding clarifies the impact of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Thus, the study rejects the null hypothesis (H04) and acknowledges that there is a statistically significant impact on safety procedure in ship operations in the Nigerian maritime industry from Risk Assessment, Safety Management System, Training and Competence, Emergency Preparedness, and Reporting and Investigation.

CONCLUSION

The goal of the study was to evaluate how the International Safety Management Code (ISM Code) affected ship operations and the prevention of casualties in the Nigerian maritime sector. The study selected various variables of the ISM code to include; Risk Assessment, Safety Management System, Training and Competence, Emergency Preparedness and Reporting and Investigation as well as the variables of that supports Incidence and Casualty Prevention in Ship Operations such as Human Error Reduction, Equipment Maintenance, Crew Awareness and Safety Procedures. The study determined the impact of Risk Assessment, Safety Management System SMS, Training and Competence, Emergency Preparedness and Reporting and Investigation on Human Error Reduction, Equipment Maintenance, Crew Awareness and Safety Procedures in ship operations in Nigerian Maritime Industry. The study concludes that Risk Assessment, Safety Management System, Training and Competence, Emergency Preparedness and Reporting and Investigation have significant impacts on Human Error Reduction, Equipment Maintenance, Crew Awareness and Safety Procedures which also have positive correlations.

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