

# RISK MANAGEMENT APPLIED TO QUALITATIVE AIRFLOW VISUALIZATION METHODS IN WIND TUNNELS

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**Abstract:** This study aims to implement a risk management framework for qualitative methods of airflow visualization in wind tunnels, emphasizing the identification, assessment, and mitigation of potential hazards associated with wind tunnel testing. Qualitative airflow visualization techniques, such as thread method, smoke visualization, PSP technology, and PIV laser technology, are instrumental in understanding aerodynamic behavior. However, they also introduce risks that must be carefully managed. This research presents a systematic approach to risk management, ensuring that these visualization methods are applied safely and effectively. By addressing potential risks, this study enhances the reliability and accuracy of experimental data, contributing to the advancement of aerodynamic research and the development of improved aerodynamic designs.

**Keywords:** risk management, qualitative methods, airflow visualization, aerodynamic, wind tunnel

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Qualitative experimental methods for visualizing airflow around aerodynamic models in subsonic wind tunnels are pivotal in advancing the understanding of aerodynamic behavior. Techniques such as the thread method, smoke visualization, Pressure Sensitive Paint (PSP)

technology, and Particle Image Velocimetry (PIV) laser technology provide critical insights into flow patterns and phenomena, including flow separation and turbulence.

These methods allow researchers to collect essential data that inform the improvement of aerodynamic designs and the development of advanced technologies.

However, the application of these qualitative visualization techniques is accompanied by significant risks, including potential damage to experimental models, data loss, and safety hazards for research personnel.

This study aims to implement a robust risk management framework tailored to these qualitative visualization methods. By systematically identifying, assessing, and mitigating these risks, this research seeks to enhance the safety, reliability, and efficacy of these experimental practices. Ultimately, this approach ensures the generation of accurate and valuable data, thereby contributing to the advancement of aerodynamic research and the optimization of aerodynamic designs.

## 2 SYSTEMATIC RISK IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT PROCESSES TO ENSURE THE SAFE AND EFFICIENT VISUALIZATION METHODS IN WIND TUNNELS

Qualitative airflow visualization methods are instrumental in understanding the aerodynamic behavior of models in subsonic wind tunnels. This chapter provides a comprehensive and detailed methodology for applying these visualization techniques, ensuring that the research can be accurately reproduced by other research groups. The methods discussed include the thread method, smoke visualization, PSP technology, and PIV laser technology.

**Thread Method:** Thin threads are attached to the model's surface to visualize airflow direction and intensity. High-speed cameras record the threads' movements to identify flow patterns and separation zones.

**Smoke Visualization:** Non-toxic, oil-based smoke is released into the airflow upstream of the model. A laser sheet illuminates the smoke, and high-speed cameras capture the flow patterns around the model.

**PSP Technology:** Pressure-sensitive paint is applied to the model's surface. Under UV light, the paint luminesces, and specialized cameras capture the emission, revealing pressure distributions.

**PIV Laser Technology:** The airflow is seeded with fine particles and illuminated by a laser sheet. High-speed cameras record the particles' movements, and PIV software analyzes the data to generate velocity fields.

Each method is rigorously evaluated for accuracy and reproducibility. Pre-tests are conducted, and instruments are regularly calibrated to ensure precise data collection. Staff undergo comprehensive training to minimize human error and ensure the correct handling of equipment and techniques. Continuous monitoring and detailed documentation during testing enable prompt identification and resolution of any issues, contributing to the overall reliability and effectiveness of the experiments.

Figure 1, presents a comprehensive and detailed qualitative holistic methodology aimed at minimizing the risks associated with qualitative airflow visualization methods in wind tunnels. The methodology integrates multiple visualization techniques with systematic risk assessment, rigorous staff training, and continuous monitoring and documentation to ensure the accuracy, safety, and reproducibility of experimental results. By adhering to this detailed qualitative holistic methodology, other research groups can accurately reproduce the experiments, ensuring the repetitive and reproducible nature of the scientific study. This approach not only enhances the reliability of the results but also contributes significantly to the advancement of aerodynamic research.

a. **Risk identification:** First, the wind tunnel test team must identify and assess the specific risks associated with airflow visualization methods. These risks may include, for example, potential damage to the model, loss of important data, disruption to the airflow itself, or risks to the personnel involved.

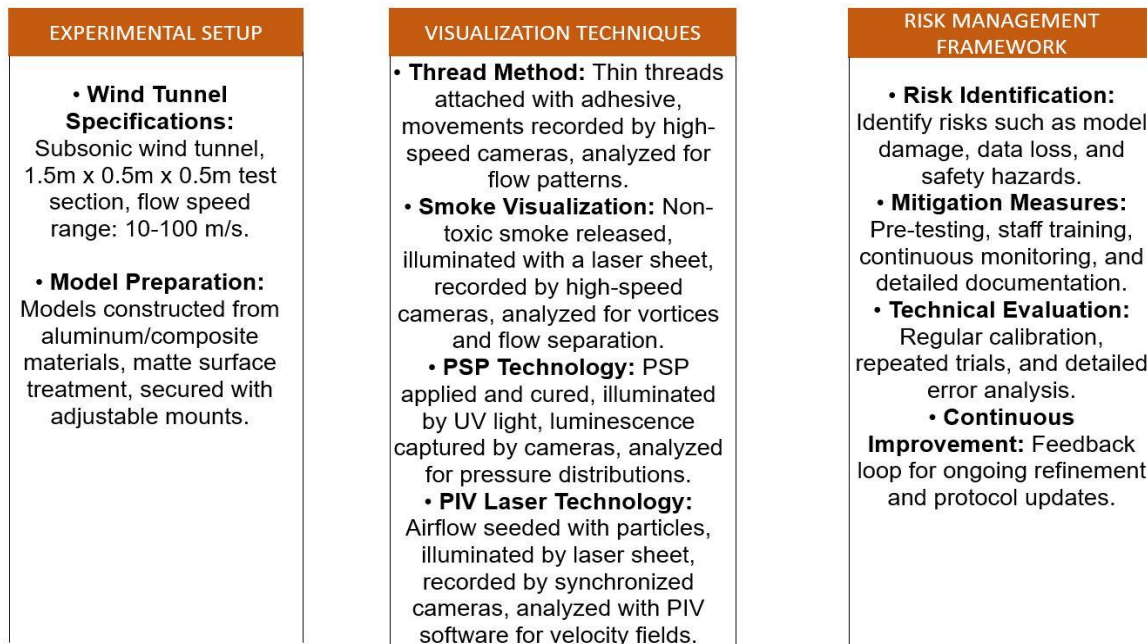


Figure 1. Risk management determination scheme applied to qualitative airflow visualization methods

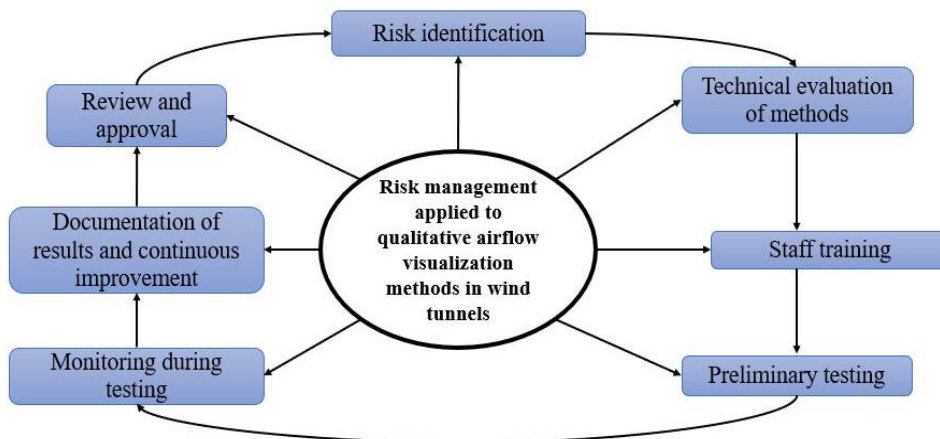


Figure 2. Risk management determination scheme applied to qualitative airflow visualization methods

b. Technical evaluation of methods: Each airflow visualisation method shall be evaluated for accuracy, reproducibility and possible system errors. Some methods may require adjustment or calibration to ensure accurate and relevant results.

c. Staff training: A well-trained and risk-aware team can help reduce human error and potential incidents. Staff should be trained in both the use of visualisation methods and safety measures.

d. Pre-testing: Before conducting final tests on valuable models or prototypes, it may be

beneficial to conduct pre-tests to further assess risks and make adjustments if necessary.

e. Monitoring during testing: Careful supervision during testing can help detect any unexpected problems or behaviours early and intervene quickly to prevent incidents.

f. Documentation of results and continuous improvement: Careful recording and documentation of each test, the methods used and the results obtained can help to learn from experience and improve future tests.

g. Personnel safety: Where tests involve the use of potentially hazardous substances or techniques, personnel must observe appropriate protection and safety measures.

h. Review and approval: Before conducting major or complex tests, plans should be reviewed and approved by a management team, ensuring that risks are understood and adequately managed.

Risk management applied to qualitative airflow visualization methods in the wind tunnel involves a careful and systematic process of risk identification, assessment and management to ensure safe and efficient testing (Sabnis et al, 2021).

Identifying the risks, Figure 2, associated with qualitative methods of visualising airflow in the wind tunnel can help prevent potential problems and incidents and ensure a safe and efficient testing process (Childs et al, 2021).

Thus we can say that in order to manage the risks associated with qualitative airflow visualization methods, Figure 3, it is essential that the team in charge is well trained, follows safety protocols and performs preliminary tests before final tests on valuable models or prototypes (Lax et al, 2022).

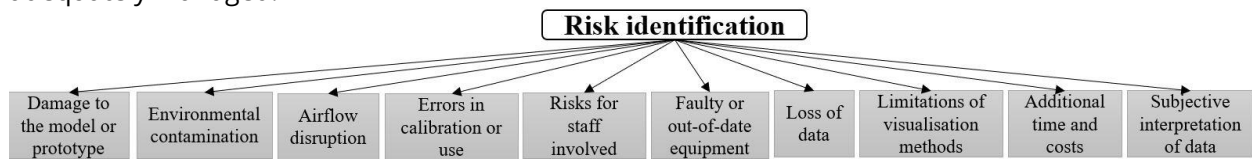


Figure 3. Specific risk identification indicators for qualitative airflow visualisation methods

Technical evaluation of qualitative methods for visualising airflow in the wind tunnel, Figure 4, is crucial to ensure that these techniques

provide accurate and relevant data for analysing the aerodynamic behaviour of a model or prototype:

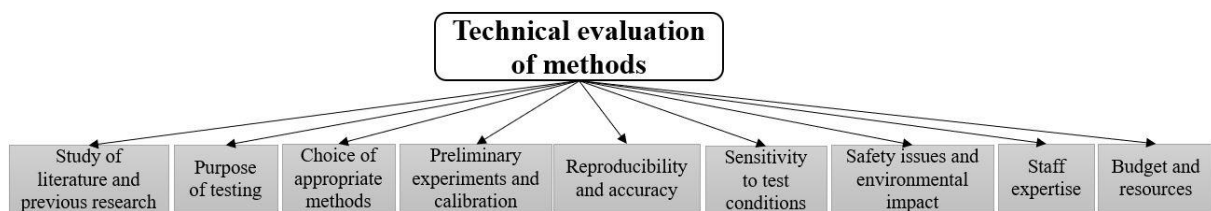


Figure 4. Specific indicators identified on the technical assessment of airflow visualisation methods

Rigorous technical evaluation of qualitative methods for visualising airflow in the wind tunnel will ensure that the most appropriate and efficient techniques are used to obtain the required data and will contribute to a better

understanding of the aerodynamic behaviour of the models and prototypes tested (Sosa, 2022).

Adequate training of personnel, Figure 5, in qualitative airflow visualization methods in the wind tunnel is essential to ensure the correct and safe use of these techniques:

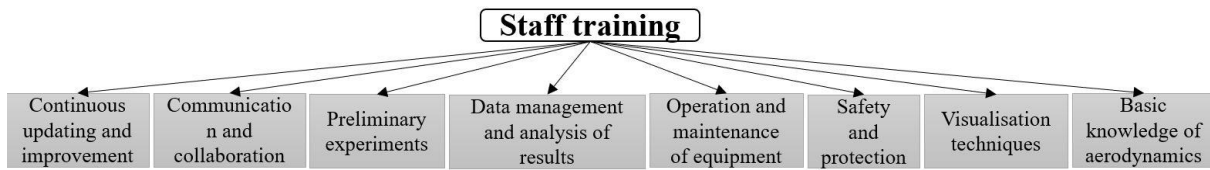


Figure 5. Specific indicators identified for staff training following experimental airflow visualisation methods

By ensuring adequate training of personnel involved in qualitative airflow visualisation methods, the correct and safe use of these techniques can be ensured, thereby maximising the benefits of wind tunnel testing (Simmons et al, 2022).

Preliminary testing of qualitative methods for visualising airflow in the wind tunnel, Figure 6, is an essential step to assess the performance and potential problems of these techniques before carrying out final tests on valuable models or prototypes:

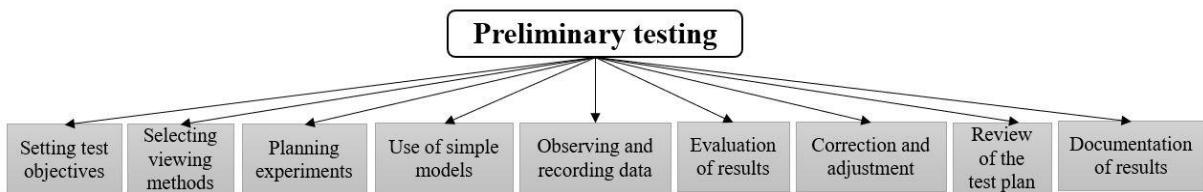


Figure 6. Specific indicators identified for preliminary testing following experimental airflow visualization methods

Preliminary testing of qualitative airflow visualisation methods provides an opportunity to evaluate and optimise the techniques used, ensuring that we obtain accurate and relevant data during final wind tunnel testing (Thomson et al, 2021).

Monitoring during tests of qualitative methods of visualising airflow in the wind tunnel, Figure 6, is crucial to ensure that experiments are carried out correctly and to identify any problems or unexpected behaviour:

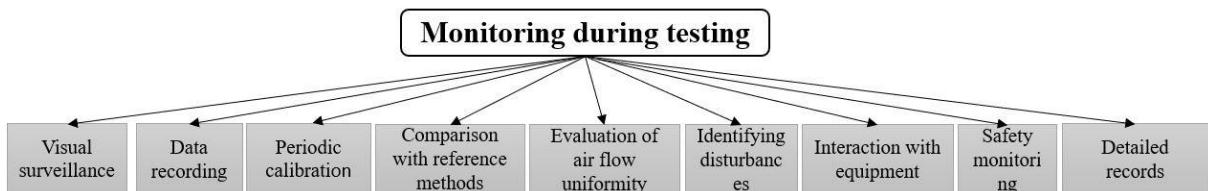


Figure 7. Specific indicators identified for monitoring during testing following experimental airflow visualization methods

Proper monitoring of qualitative airflow visualisation methods during tests helps us to obtain accurate and relevant data and quickly

identify potential problems or errors, thus ensuring efficient testing with confident results in the wind tunnel (Machacek et al, 2001).

Documentation of results and continuous improvement of methods to visualise airflow in the wind tunnel, Figure 8, are key issues to

ensure that tests are effective, that data is accurate and that progress is made in research or development projects:

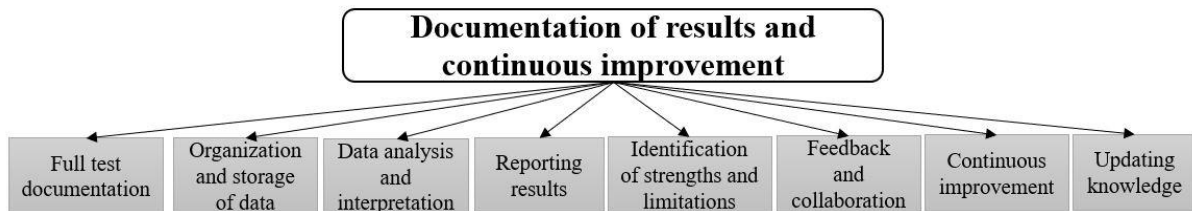


Figure 8. Specific indicators identified on documentation of results and continuous improvement from experimental airflow visualisation methods

Documenting results and continually improving airflow visualisation methods helps us achieve better results in wind tunnel testing and advance research or development projects more efficiently and safely (Janour et al, 2010). The review and approval of wind tunnel airflow visualisation methods, Figure 8, must be a rigorous and well-structured process to ensure

that the techniques used are appropriate, safe and meet the test objectives:

The review and approval of wind tunnel airflow visualisation methods is an essential process to ensure the quality and reliability of tests and to obtain relevant and accurate data for subsequent analysis and interpretation (Cecilia et al, 2005).

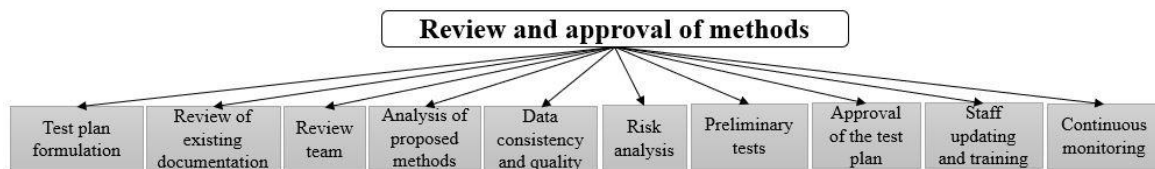


Figure 9. Specific indicators identified for method review and approval following experimental airflow visualization methods

### 3 QUALITATIVE HOLISTIC METHODOLOGY ON MINIMIZING RISKS IDENTIFIED WITH QUALITATIVE AIRFLOW VISUALIZATION METHODS IN WIND TUNNELS

The central premise of this chapter is the implementation of a comprehensive qualitative holistic methodology that combines multiple qualitative airflow visualization techniques with a robust risk management framework. This approach ensures the safety, accuracy, and reproducibility of wind tunnel experiments. By

utilizing methods such as the thread method, smoke visualization, PSP technology, and PIV laser technology, the study provides a detailed understanding of airflow behavior. Additionally, systematic risk management, including pre-testing, staff training, continuous monitoring, and detailed documentation, enhances the reliability of aerodynamic research. This methodology not only improves current practices but also lays the foundation for future advancements in the field.

Studying the aerodynamic behaviour of aircraft by qualitative methods of visualisation in wind tunnels is an essential practice for

improving aircraft performance and developing new technologies in aviation (Apostol et al, 2021). However, qualitative methods carry certain risks, such as incorrect interpretation of data or technical failures. In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the results, we consider it crucial to apply a holistic qualitative methodology to minimise the identified risks (Apostol et al, 2022).

This chapter focuses on presenting a holistic approach for managing the risks associated with qualitative airflow visualization methods in wind tunnels (Banciu et al, 2017). The qualitative holistic methodology approaches risk assessment and management in a comprehensive way, taking into account all relevant factors and their interactions (Banciu et al, 2019).

In the following, we explore the main aspects of the qualitative holistic methodology, including specific risk identification and assessment, careful planning of experiments, use of redundant techniques and appropriate staff expertise. We will also discuss the

importance of fully documenting the visualisation process and the need for regular risk assessment.

The objective of this approach is to demonstrate how the application of a holistic qualitative methodology can increase the efficiency and reliability of aerodynamic research and ensure that the results obtained are as accurate and relevant as possible for aircraft development.

In what follows, we detail each aspect of the methodology and highlight how these integrated risk minimisation measures contribute to the advancement and progress of the aerodynamic field. In order to minimise the risks identified for qualitative airflow visualisation methods in wind tunnels, and following the scientific research applied in this study, we believe that the following strategies and preventive measures can be applied to minimise the risks for qualitative airflow visualisation methods in wind tunnels, Table 1.

Table 1. Strategies and preventive measures can be applied to minimise the risks for qualitative airflow visualisation methods in wind tunnels

Standardisation of procedures and protocols	Equipment verification and calibration	Multi-disciplinary team and appropriate training	Validation and comparison with experimental data or numerical simulations	Use of multiple visualization methods	Proper documentation and reporting	Assess and manage identified risks
Establish standardised procedures and protocols for the preparation and conduct of airflow visualisation experiments. This includes the steps of preparing aerodynamic models, applying the visualisation agent and performing measurements in a consistent and coherent manner.	Ensure that the equipment and instruments used for qualitative visualisation are properly verified, calibrated and maintained. This helps to reduce errors and uncertainties associated with measurements.	Involve a team of experts from different fields such as aerodynamics, data visualisation and experimental analysis. We ensure that team members are well trained and educated to interpret visual data correctly and minimize subjectivity.	To validate visual results, we compare them with independently recorded experimental data or results from numerical simulations. This ensures that the visual data are relevant and that their interpretation is consistent with physical reality.	Apply multiple qualitative visualization techniques in a complementary manner to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the airflow behavior. This can reduce the risk of omissions or misinterpretations.	Document in detail the visualization process, the results obtained and the conclusions drawn. Adequate reporting helps to ensure transparency and consistency in the analysis and to keep an accurate record of the experiments.	Identify specific risks associated with qualitative visualization methods and develop risk management plans. This may involve applying additional preventive measures or adjusting procedures according to the identified risks.

By implementing these risk minimisation methods, we can ensure that qualitative airflow visualisation in wind tunnels is performed accurately, reliably and relevantly, contributing to quality data and a better understanding of airflow behaviour.

We considered that the application of risk management to qualitative airflow visualization, methods in wind tunnels, Figure 9, is motivated by several important aspects that contribute to ensuring the reliability and relevance of research in this field, such as:

-Reliability of results: qualitative airflow visualisation can provide valuable information, but can be influenced by the subjectivity of the observer and the technical limitations of the methods. Through a risk management approach, these sources of uncertainty are taken into account and minimised, ensuring more reliable and robust results.

-Scientific validation: Validation of experimental results is a crucial issue in scientific research. By managing risk, researchers can demonstrate that they have considered possible

errors and applied measures to reduce them, which increases the credibility of their studies in the scientific community.

-Replicability of studies: Detailed documentation and risk management in qualitative visualization experiments facilitates replication of studies by other researchers. This is essential to validate and strengthen the results obtained and to advance knowledge in the field of aerodynamics.

-Improving methods: Risk management can highlight areas for improvement in visualisation methods. Proactively addressing risks can lead to the development of more accurate and advanced techniques to study airflow behaviour.

-Research efficiency: Risk identification and management encourages a more rigorous and structured approach to research. This can save resources and time by focusing on relevant issues and avoiding unproductive directions.

-Avoiding undesirable events: By anticipating and managing risks, negative events or major errors that could affect research results or the safety of experiments are prevented.

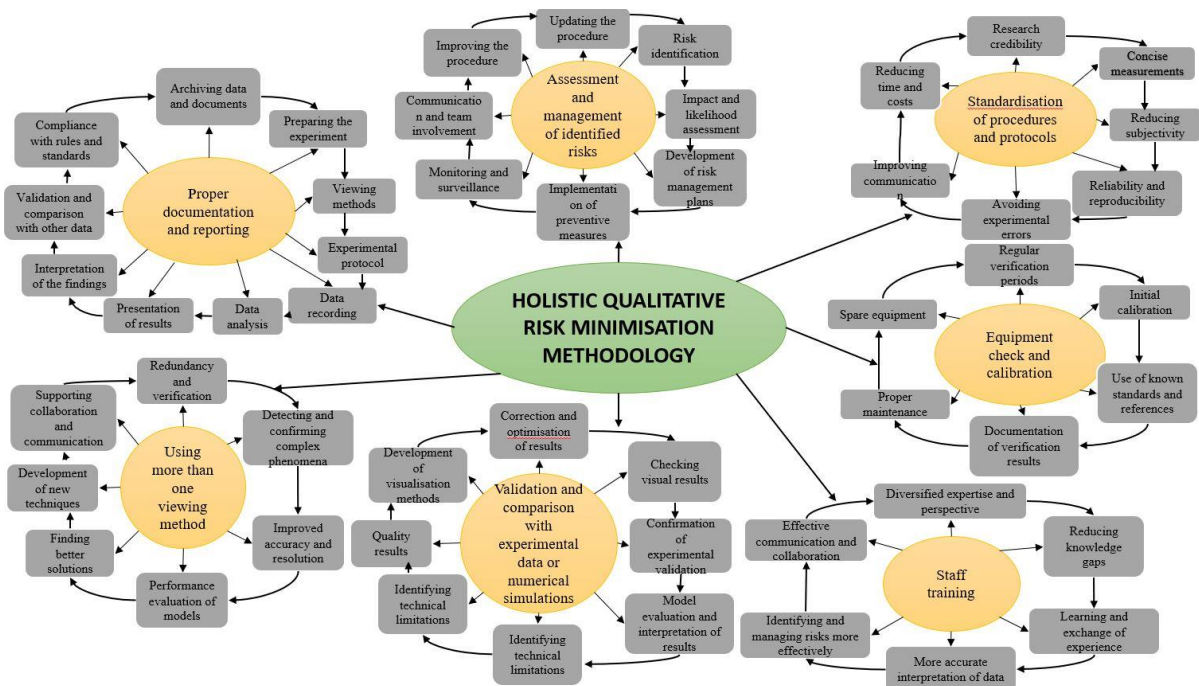


Figure 10. Qualitative holistic risk minimisation methodology



The research topic of this paper is the implementation of risk management strategies applied to qualitative airflow visualization methods in wind tunnels. These visualization methods, which include techniques such as the thread method, smoke visualization, Pressure Sensitive Paint (PSP) technology, and Particle Image Velocimetry (PIV) laser technology, are crucial for understanding aerodynamic behaviors in subsonic wind tunnels. The focus is on identifying, assessing, and mitigating potential hazards and difficulties associated with these visualization techniques to ensure safer and more effective experimental practices.

#### *Contribution and Innovation*

This paper makes several significant contributions and innovations to the field of aerodynamic research:

##### 1. Comprehensive Risk Management Framework:

The study introduces a detailed risk management framework specifically tailored for qualitative airflow visualization methods in wind tunnels. This framework systematically addresses risk identification, assessment, and mitigation, ensuring safer experimental environments.

##### 2. Enhanced Methodological Detail:

The paper provides an in-depth, step-by-step methodology for each visualization technique, ensuring that other research groups can accurately reproduce the experiments. This level of detail supports the repetitive and reproducible nature of scientific research, which is essential for validation and further study.

##### 3. Integration of Multiple Visualization Techniques:

By combining multiple qualitative visualization methods, the research offers a more comprehensive understanding of airflow behavior. This multi-faceted approach reduces the risk of omissions or misinterpretations and enhances the overall reliability of the experimental data.

##### 4. Training and Safety Protocols:

The study emphasizes the importance of staff training and safety protocols, presenting a structured training program to minimize human error and ensure proper handling of equipment and techniques. This focus on training contributes to the safer execution of experiments.

##### 5. Continuous Improvement and Documentation:

The paper introduces a feedback loop for continuous improvement, based on detailed documentation and analysis of each experiment. This system ensures that any issues are promptly addressed, and methodologies are continually refined.

##### 6. Validation and Cross-Referencing:

The research includes robust validation techniques, cross-referencing experimental results with independent measurements and numerical simulations. This cross-validation enhances the credibility and accuracy of the findings.

By addressing these aspects, the paper not only improves the safety and efficiency of using qualitative airflow visualization methods in wind tunnels but also contributes to the advancement of aerodynamic research. The innovations presented provide a foundation for future studies, promoting further exploration and development in the field.

## 4 CONCLUSION

This research has demonstrated the critical importance of implementing a comprehensive risk management framework tailored to qualitative airflow visualization methods in wind tunnels. By systematically identifying, assessing, and mitigating potential hazards, the study enhances the safety, reliability, and effectiveness of these experimental practices. The detailed methodologies and risk management strategies outlined in this paper provide a robust

foundation for reproducible and reliable aerodynamic research.

#### Arguments:

##### 1. Enhanced Safety and Reliability:

The risk management framework ensures that potential hazards associated with qualitative airflow visualization methods are proactively addressed, minimizing the risk of model damage, data loss, and safety hazards for personnel.

##### 2. Methodological Rigor:

The comprehensive, step-by-step methodology for each visualization technique allows other research groups to accurately reproduce the experiments, thereby supporting the repetitive and reproducible nature of scientific inquiry.

##### 3. Holistic Understanding:

Integrating multiple qualitative visualization techniques provides a more complete picture of airflow behavior, reducing the likelihood of omissions or misinterpretations and enhancing the overall reliability of the data.

##### 4. Continuous Improvement:

The emphasis on continuous documentation and feedback ensures that methodologies are continually refined, leading to progressively more accurate and effective experimental practices.

#### Future Research Opportunities:

The findings and methodologies presented in this study open several promising avenues for future research:

##### 1. Advanced Visualization Techniques:

Future research could explore the development and integration of more advanced qualitative visualization techniques, such as digital holography or advanced imaging technologies, to provide even more detailed insights into aerodynamic phenomena.

##### 2. Quantitative Correlation:

Combining qualitative visualization methods with quantitative measurement techniques, such as computational fluid dynamics (CFD) simulations or high-precision

sensors, could enhance the depth and accuracy of airflow analysis.

##### 3. Automated Risk Management:

Developing automated systems for risk assessment and management, utilizing machine learning and artificial intelligence, could further improve the safety and efficiency of wind tunnel experiments.

##### 4. Broader Applications:

Applying the risk management framework and visualization techniques to other fields, such as automotive or marine engineering, could provide valuable insights and improve the design and performance of a wide range of vehicles.

##### 5. Interdisciplinary Collaboration:

Encouraging collaboration between aerodynamics researchers and experts in fields such as materials science, data analysis, and machine learning could lead to innovative approaches and solutions to complex aerodynamic challenges.

By addressing these future research opportunities, the field of aerodynamic research can continue to advance, leading to new discoveries and innovations. This study not only enhances the current understanding and application of qualitative airflow visualization methods but also lays the groundwork for further exploration and development, promising a fertile ground for scientifically significant research endeavors.

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