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Air Quality Monitoring and Risk Prediction System Utilizing Integrated Sensor Network to Create a Safer Work Environment in Foundries

Reem Alyaqoubi and Batool Alwerfalli
MSc Petroleum Engineering
Khalifa University of Science & Technology
Abu Dhabi, UAE
100045424@ku.ac.ae, 100051957@ku.ac.ae

Shahna Manakat Vakeri
MSc Water and Environmental Engineering
Khalifa University of Science & Technology
Abu Dhabi, UAE
100063785@ku.ac.ae

Sarath Haridas and Maryam Qassem
MSc Chemical Engineering
Khalifa University of Science & Technology
Abu Dhabi, UAE
100062568@ku.ac.ae, 100063285@ku.ac.ae

Saed T. Amer
Doctor in the Management Science and Engineering Department
Khalifa University of Science & Technology
Abu Dhabi, UAE
saed.amer@ku.ac.ae

Abstract

This project proposes a novel approach to bolster workplace safety in foundries through the implementation of an integrated sensor network for real-time air quality monitoring and risk prediction. Foundry environments are notorious for their hazardous conditions, primarily due to the emission of harmful particulate matter and gases during metal casting processes. Traditional safety measures often fall short of effectively mitigating these risks. Therefore, our system aims to revolutionize safety protocols by providing continuous, accurate monitoring of air quality parameters such as particulate matter concentration, gas emissions, temperature, and humidity. Leveraging advanced data analytics and machine learning algorithms, the system can predict potential risk events and provide timely alerts to workers and management, enabling proactive intervention strategies. By establishing a safer work environment, this innovative solution not only safeguards the health and well-being of foundry workers but also enhances operational efficiency and productivity. This interdisciplinary endeavor amalgamates expertise in sensor technology, data science, and industrial safety to forge a pathway toward sustainable workplace practices in the foundry industry.

Keywords
Foundry, Air quality monitoring, Risk prediction, Integrated sensor network, Workplace safety.

Introduction

Products from the foundry sector are utilized extensively in the manufacturing, pumps, and car windmill industries, among other industries (Wang et al. 2007); (Olasupo and Omotoyinbo 2009). For many economies, the foundry industry's contribution to global growth is essential. Nonetheless, a major environmental issue is brought on by the foundry industry's emissions. According to (Krishnaraj 2015), these emissions include mineral dust and organic carbons released during melting, sand molding, casting, and casting cleanup. The foundry industry's pollution issues need to be carefully and quickly examined in light of the increased public awareness of environmental issues (Lichtfouse, Schwarzbauer, and Robert 2015)

Metal was melted using cupola furnaces in foundries up to the 1900s. Foundries started installing induction furnaces after 1900. Metals are burned in an induction furnace using electrical coils. Cupola involves burning a lot of scraps, which releases a lot of harmful gases into the air. According to (Yih-Liang Chan et al. 2010), induction furnaces do not create harmful gasses since scrap is not burned. Since most foundries now burn metal in induction furnaces, there is a significant reduction in the number of pollutants released during the melting process. But during the other foundry operations, like sand mixing, sand mold preparation, and metal pouring (Yu et al. 2006) (Zanetti and Fiore 2003); (Yu et al. 2006), contaminants are released, and these excessive pollution emissions have an impact on the ecosystem (Zanetti and Fiore 2003; (Rao and Khan 2009).

Studies show that the investment of cleaner air in the workplace not only promotes the workers' psychological health but also has an impact on the workers' psychological health as it reflects the importance of their well-being to the employer and, thus, feeling secure and confident (Amer et al. 2023). In line with this, both engineers and managers have been attempting to evolve cleaner production technological devices for controlling the emission of pollutants during the sand preparation, melting, and pouring of metals while carrying out foundry practices. Despite all these efforts, the levels of pollutants emitted by the foundries have been crossing the limits stipulated by the environmental laws in various countries, and this alarming situation is the case which needs the development of an air quality monitoring system, which stands out from its existing counterparts with an inbuilt risk prediction system which utilizes an integrated sensor network.

In foundries, it's crucial to maintain air quality to keep the working environment safe and healthy. However, the current air quality monitoring systems often lack the real-time capabilities needed to deal with health risks from airborne pollutants. Moreover, the changing nature of foundry operations adds complexities in predicting and managing fluctuations in air quality. Therefore, there is a pressing need for an advanced Air Quality Monitoring and Risk Prediction System tailored specifically to address the unique challenges foundries face. This system should incorporate a network of sensors that can continuously monitor pollutants along with predictive analytics capabilities. By doing this, it can address risks promptly. In the end, such a system will play a role in creating a workplace for foundry workers, ensuring their well-being and productivity are upheld amidst the inherent challenges of industrial air quality management.

1.1 Objectives:

Develop a conceptual framework design for the proposed air quality monitoring and risk prediction, where integration of sensors, data transmission protocols, and a centralized monitoring system will be prioritized.
Specify the air quality parameters, including particulate matter, gas concentrations, and temperature, to provide an understanding of the work environment.
Develop and implement algorithms used in risk prediction based on data revealed from various situations.
Investigate integration solutions for this model that could be combined with Utilization Reduction Roadmap goals.
Design wearable devices with sensors that can measure and monitor individual exposure levels to air pollutants within the foundry environment.

Literature Review

Working in a foundry presents various hazards, including exposure to air pollution, silica dust, and excessive noise. The melting and processing of metals release harmful particulates and gases into the air, which can lead to respiratory issues and long-term health complications for workers. Additionally, the constant movement of machinery and equipment generates considerable dust, posing risks of inhalation and eye irritation. Furthermore, the loud machinery and industrial processes create a noisy environment, potentially causing hearing damage over time.

Silica dust is the primary hazard in foundries (Table 1), posing severe health risks with the lowest exposure limit among dust types. Silicosis, induced by silica dust, is a leading cause of pneumoconiosis, with potential liver complications. High respirable silica exposure increases risks of sarcoidosis, rheumatoid arthritis, and possibly gastric cancer. Foundry dust, rich in silica and containing carcinogens like cadmium and chromium, exacerbates respiratory inflammation more than silica alone. Noise level studies (Table 1) conducted at various sections of the foundries revealed significant differences, prompting management to intensify noise control efforts, particularly in investment casting. Occupational noise exposure affects millions of workers, resulting in hearing impairments. The WHO reports that 16% of disabling hearing impairments stem from such exposure. Besides auditory harm, noise can also impact broader health, including stress, cardiovascular issues, and cognitive decline, necessitating comprehensive attention. Therefore, it is crucial to implement mature strategies for silica dust and noise control promptly (Duan et al. 2023).

Table 1. Main occupational hazards in ferrous casting foundries (Duan et al. 2023)

			Sand casting		**Investment casting**	
			Exposure[mg/m^3 or dB(A)]	**Length of exposure**	**Exposure [mg/m^3 or dB(A)]**	**Length of exposure**
1	**Sand conditioning**	Silica-dust	0.48	8	0.35	6
		Noise	81.7	8	90.95	6
2	**Molding and Core Making**	Silica-dust	1.15	8	0.38	8
		Noise	82.9	8	82.9	8
3	**Melting**	Silica-dust	0.26	8	0.29	8
		Noise	82.7	8	85.4	8
4	**Shakeout sand**	Silica-dust	1.47	8	0.61	7.5
		Noise	90.75	8	98.6	7.5
5	**Shot blasting**	Silica-dust	0.45	8	0.52	7.5
		Noise	88.1	6	89.6	7.5
6	**Cutting and polishing**	Other dust	1.5	7	0.43	7.5
		Noise	90.05	7	90.7	7.5

Several studies have reported that foundry workers may be exposed to high levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). Previous studies have shown that exposure to PAHs can cause DNA damage in workers handling fireproof materials and bitumen. Increased risks of DNA damage and oxidative lesions have been observed in coke-oven workers exposed to PAHs. Additionally, occupations involving PAH exposure are linked to higher risks of lung, bladder, and urinary cancers, as well as an increased risk of cardiovascular disease in foundry workers (Liu et al. 2010).

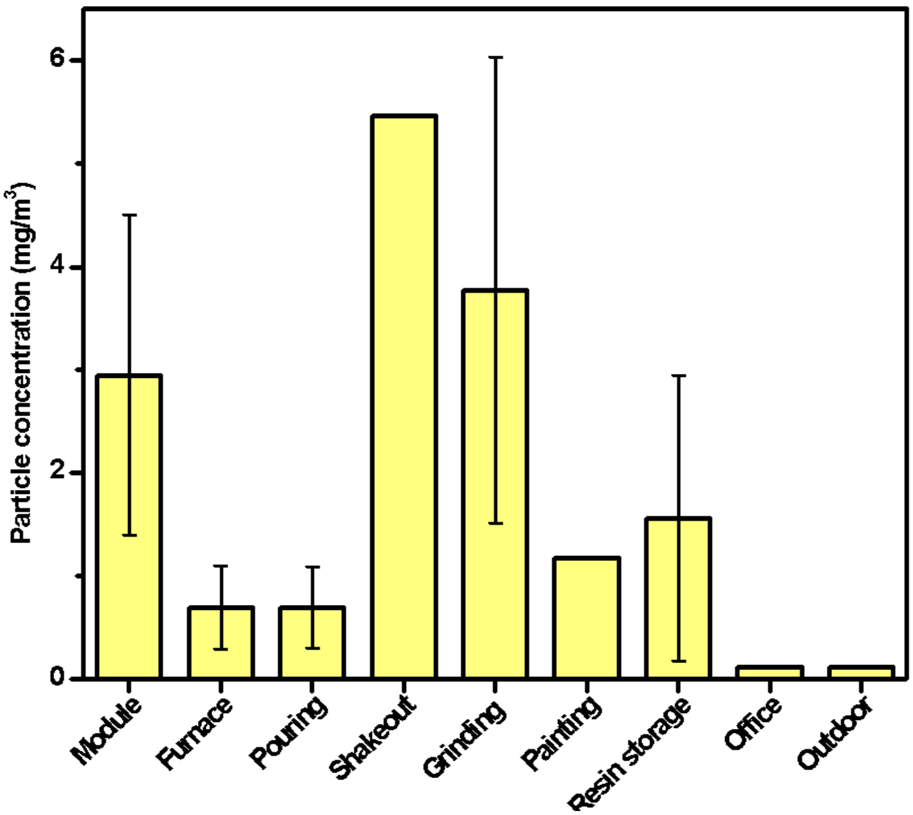

Figure 1. Average Particle concentration in different sectors of the foundry (Liu et al. 2010*).*

The identification and quantification of pollutants and irritants are important for maintaining worker safety. Various pollution control devices are utilized to measure pollutants emitted from foundries. Chemical analysis on steel foundry dust (SFD) identified harmful elements such as chromium, cadmium, lead, and zinc. Ultrafine particles during metal melting and pouring were measured using scanning mobility particle size (SMP) analysis. Polychlorinated dibenzodioxins and dibenzofurans (PCDD/Fs) in iron foundries were quantified using chromatography and a mass spectrometer. Emissions of PCDD/Fs and PCBs in South Korean metallurgy industries, including ferrous foundries, were studied using emission factors. Particulate matters in iron and aluminum foundries were measured, while PCDDS, PCDFS, PCBS, and HCB emissions were quantified in Polish metallurgy industries. Pollutants emitted by foundry cupola furnaces were measured using particulate matter concentration. These studies indicate diverse measurement methods and units, emphasizing efforts to quantify and control foundry pollutants (Lichtfouse et al. 2015).

In the context of Industry 4.0, automation plays a crucial role in enhancing workplace safety, aiming to prevent industrial incidents and injuries. Despite automation implementation, achieving zero accidents remains elusive. Effective safety management requires collaboration from all workers and involves identifying potential hazards. It is reported that the Job Safety Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (JSHIRA) analysis method identifies potential incidents, with over 50% of hazards eliminated. JSHIRA critically assessed various workplace threats to enhance safety measures. JSHIRA techniques serve as an innovative tool, combining Job Safety Analysis and Risk Matrix analysis, to identify hazards in industries (Rajkumar et al. 2021).

Various pollution control devices are currently employed, such as fabric filters, electrostatic precipitators, wet scrubbers, venturi scrubbers, inertial separators, and centrifugal collectors. Proper ventilation systems, personal protective equipment, and noise-reduction measures are essential for mitigating these hazards and ensuring the safety and well-being of foundry workers (Duan et al. 2023; Rajkumar et al. 2021).

3.Methods

3.1 Project Overview

The project of air quality monitoring and risk prediction system will help to create a safer work environment in foundries and reduce acute and chronic ill-health issues. The monitoring and prediction system is designed by integrating a sensor network around the whole workplace. The project has two main functions. First, the air quality is monitored by measuring the concentration exposure time of airborne contaminants produced during foundry operations. Second, predicting the possible health hazards workers may be exposed to over a short and long period of time.

The sensor network is a collection of various types of sensors that are distributed throughout the workplace to monitor and collect data about airborne contaminants that cause adverse effects on human health. Different types of airborne contaminants can cause respiratory diseases ranging from irritation to cancers. The proposed sensor network will have sensors that will monitor the major and common air contaminants in foundries and sensors that will monitor and track workers' exposure and their location around the foundry. The sensor network is composed of multiple sensors that relate to each other and relate to a system that will use these data, analyze, and interpret it; to display information about the health and safety conditions in the workplace.

3.2 Sensor Network Design

The proposed sensor network needs to perform effective prevention and control measurements, which is a developed model from the wireless sensor network (WSN) (Wu and Ding, 2021). To do that, the identification of hazards and evaluation of work conditions need to be implemented. The sensors need to identify and evaluate the most crucial types of air contaminants that can cause harm to workers in terms of gases, vapors, fumes, and dust. (NOHSC, 1989).

In general, sensors work as follows: sensor nodes, which are devices that are fixed around the workplace and will detect and measure; As part of the network, sensors will relate to each other which will share the measured and detected data to get a complete image about the workplace condition. Then, these data will be collected and transferred to a software system that will analyze, evaluate, predict, and make reports that will save workers' health and minimize discomfort all the time.

The proposed air quality monitoring and risk prediction system is divided into four main parts:

Figure 2. Sensor Network system main components.

1) **Sensors:** These sensors are divided into two main types. The first one will monitor and continuously measure the amount of air contaminants in terms of concentration and their distribution in the workplace over a period of time. The second type will be sensors used to track workers' location and their exposure to air contaminants. These sensors will work simultaneously to connect between the release of air contaminants and workers' exposure.

Data collection & analysis: after detecting the different types of air contaminants along with workers' locations, these data will be collected and transferred to software. The software will analyze the different types of contaminants and relate them to workers' locations to determine the concentration and exposure time. These measurements are in real time and are continuous, which will help build historical data to compare the results and make the right processing and analysis. The software will also build an air quality map of the foundry, identify potential hazardous zones, and predict the future hazards that workers may be exposed to.

Risk Assessment: As a part of data analysis, the collected data will be sorted into different categories based on a generated risk matrix, where each data will be classified as very low, low, medium, high, and very high for the workplace environment as a whole and each worker exposed to toxic air contaminants.

Table 2. Risk assessment matrix for the proposed air quality monitoring project.

Frequency	**Severity of consequences**				
	Very Low	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Very High**
High					
Medium					
Low					

Actions: After doing the required measurements, analysis, and evaluation, the system will take action and make decisions based on the collected data supported by the previous continuous data to create a right and accurate evaluation regarding the health of workers in terms of respiratory diseases. The system will generate reports to display a summary of air contaminants, types, concentrations, exposure time, worker conditions, and individual conditions. Additionally, the software can predict future health diseases that may affect workers for short and long periods of time to alert workers to do diagnostic and periodic tests to ensure they are safe and no future ill-health will be revealed that will prevent them from working in good and healthy conditions. The actions that the system will take are in terms of sending signals to alert workers if they exceed the safety exposure level or if a very toxic air contaminant is released with a very high concentration. These signals will send signs to workers to stop or make adjustments in their operation or to use upgraded personal protective equipment (PPE).

3.2.1 System Workflow

The chart below illustrates how the air quality monitoring and risk prediction system works and the steps from detecting the toxic air contaminants to the data visualization.

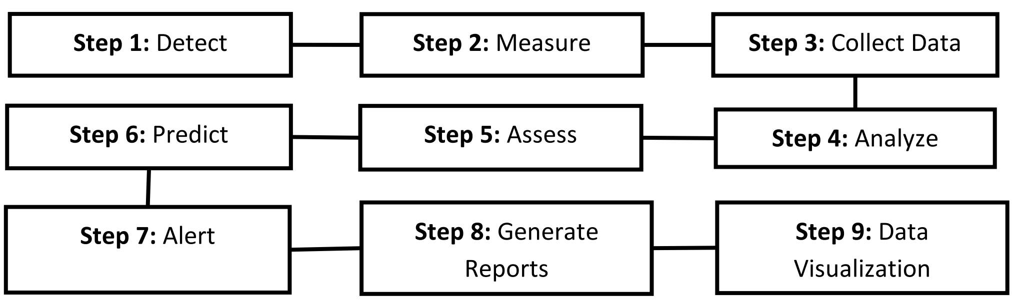

Figure 3. Detailed steps of air quality monitoring system

1. **Detect:** the sensors will detect the different types of toxic contaminants.
2. **Measure:** the sensors will measure the quantity of air contaminants.
3. **Collect Data:** Data will be collected constantly by measuring the concentration and exposure time.
4. **Analyze:** the data will be transmitted to program software that will interpret the different types of data and identify patterns and trends.
5. **Assess:** The software will then sort the generated data based on the risk matrix.
6. **Predict:** the software will also anticipate the future and potential health hazards that might affect workers based on the built-up historical data.
7. **Alert:** The software will send warnings and signals for workers in case they exceed safety limits, are exposed to very toxic air contaminants, and have high concentrations for a long period of time.
8. **Generate Reports:** The software will periodically generate reports on both the overall air quality in the workplace and for individuals. This data will be secured and the generated individual reports with

consider the privacy of individuals and will not be accessed by all others except for authorized workers and individuals themselves.

Data visualization: the generated reports will displace data by incorporating charts, graphs, tables, and other elements that will enhance the clarity and quality of the generated reports.

3.3 Sensor Network Structure

Many industries use different types of sensors. The type of sensors that are proposed for this project are environmental monitoring sensors. These sensors will be used to monitor the air quality in foundries, as they produce huge quantities of toxic air contaminants when performing operations such as melting, pouring, molding, core making, sandblasting, grinding, welding, and more (European Commission, 2014). The other sensor type that will be used is the tracker sensor, which will monitor workers' real-time movements around the area and estimate their exposure to air contaminants, such as time and concentration.

3.3.1 Types of Sensors Utilized in Network

To select the proper types of sensors in foundries, first, it is important to classify the different types of toxic air contaminants that we need to detect. The air contaminants that the sensors will detect in foundries are classified into two main groups, which are particulate matter (PM) and gases (Soares, 2014; El Morabet, 2018).

Particulate matter is defined as solid particles that are suspended in the air and vary in size and composition from different foundry processes.

Gases: defined as gaseous contaminants from vaporized materials during foundry processes.
The table below shows the most common and highly toxic air contaminants that can be found in foundries. (NOHSC, 1989; Weber, 2012)

Table 3. Types of toxic air contaminants in foundries.

Particulate matter	Gases
Metal Dust (lead, manganese)	Combustion gases (NO_2, SO_2, CO)
Silica Dust	Volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
Fumes	Isocyanates
Fibers	Welding fumes

3.3.2 Sensors Structure

Several different types of sensors will be used and distributed around the foundry to identify and measure the concentration and exposure time of the hazardous air contaminants. Three major sensors will be utilized to detect the toxic air contaminants in foundries: particulate matter, gases, and a tracker.

Particulate matter sensors

To detect and measure the concentration of particulate matter of PM2.5 and PM10 in foundries, several sensors are available in the market that can effectively measure particulate matter in the air; according to the literature, some of the sensors can reach an accuracy up to R^2 of 0.99. One of the sensors that can be utilized is the beta attenuation monitor (BAM), which uses theβ-rays attenuation to measure the concentration of particulate matter in $\mu g/m^3$. Another type that can detect and measure particulate matter is the synchronized hybrid ambient real-time particulate monitor (SHARP). This sensor is a combination of the BAM and nephelometers, which are high-time resolution sensors. The nephelometer works by measuring the light scattering caused by particulate matter when it passes through an illumination beam. Additionally, light scattering sensors can be used alone to measure concentration with precision and accuracy. (Alfano et al. 2020; Para Air. 2024).

The table below summarizes each type of particulate matter with a possible sensor type that can be used.

Table 4. Types of sensors to use for different particulate matter in foundries.

Particulate matter	Sensor type
Metal dust	1. Light scattering (nephelometers) 2. Electrochemical (metal-specific)
Silica dust	1. Light scattering
Fumes	1. Light scattering 2. Electrochemical
Fibers	1. Light scattering

Gas detector sensors

Different sensors can be used for different types of gases. For combustion gases, electrochemical, CO, and oxidative gas sensors can effectively detect and measure the concentration of these gases (Mohajer et. al. 2018). Additionally, non-dispersive infrared sensors (NDIR) can detect and measure the concentration of combustible gases in foundries. The NDIR sensors detect as the infrared radiation interacts with the gas molecules and will be absorbed, causing vibration of gas molecules. The sensor will detect the decrease in transmitted infrared light, which can be measured as gas concentration (FIGARO 2018). Volatile organic compounds (VOC) are characterized by their low boiling point, so they easily evaporate into the atmosphere, which exposes workers to toxic conditions such as cancer and serious ill-health problems. commonly used for monitoring VOC, photoionization detectors use bright UV light to measure the electrons present in the VOC molecules. (GDS Corp 2024) For other types of gases, the following sensors can be utilized.

Table 5. Types of sensors to use for different gases in foundries.

Particulate matter	Sensor type
Combustion gases	1. Electrochemical 2. Non-dispersive infrared sensors
Volatile organic compounds	1. Photoionization detectors 2. Metal-oxide semiconductor
Isocyanates	1. Chemiluminescent sensors
Welding fumes	1. Light scattering 2. Electrochemical

Tracker sensors

Besides monitoring the toxic air contaminants in the foundries, it is crucial to monitor individual exposure too. Tracker sensors are needed to measure worker's exposure time and the amount of concentration they are exposed to. The data from tracker sensors and the previous sensors proposed to measure air contaminants in foundries will be combined and correlated to measure the overall concentration in the workplace along with the exposure for each worker. Many different tracking sensors are available in the market to keep workers safe. Examples of the tracking sensors that can be used are the Sewio's and GENIO's real-time location systems. These sensors are fixed in the wall, and they can record precisely the real-time worker's movement by a tag that is provided for them. Additionally, these sensors can measure some of the toxic air contaminants and inform workers immediately if the exposure exceeds the safety limits. This data will be transmitted to the system, and an analysis will be conducted to ensure the safety of workers during operations and minimize the acute and chronic effects of ill health. (SEWIO 2024; QuicSolv 2023)

Data Collection

Foundries, characterized by their intense industrial activities, emit a range of airborne contaminants, such as particulate matter, gases, and volatile organic compounds that pose significant health risks. The integrated sensor network is designed to monitor these pollutants in real-time, utilizing advanced sensor technologies and data acquisition systems. This section describes the types of sensors employed, their strategic placement throughout the foundry, and the methodologies used for data collection and transmission. The data thus collected feeds into the risk prediction models, providing foundational insights essential for effective monitoring and management of workplace safety.

4.1 Sensor Network Design

To design sensor networks for air quality monitoring in foundries, it is crucial to understand the environmental conditions and the nature of the pollutants. Recent advancements in sensor technology can be tailored to the harsh environments of foundries where high temperatures and metal particulates pose unique challenges. The sensor network typically includes a variety of sensors to monitor different pollutants:

Particulate Matter Sensors: These are used to detect fine particles that are prevalent in foundries due to operations like grinding and sanding. Research highlights the effectiveness of these sensors in capturing real-time data on particulate concentrations, which is critical for assessing air quality and the health risks to workers.

Gas Sensors: These include sensors for monitoring carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2). For instance, sensors utilizing graphene-based materials have shown high sensitivity and rapid response times, particularly for NO_2 detection, which is crucial in foundries where gas exposure can vary significantly over short periods (Mitrovics and Llobet 2020).

VOC Sensors: Volatile Organic Compounds in foundries can be monitored using sensors that detect benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene. These sensors are essential for tracking VOC levels, which can fluctuate with changes in production activities and are linked to various health risks.

Strategic placement of sensors is essential for comprehensive monitoring. Sensors should be placed at points where emissions are highest, near furnaces and processing areas, to ensure accurate and timely detection of pollutants. The use of wireless sensor networks (WSNs) allows for flexible placement and easy integration into existing foundry environments. These networks can transmit data in real-time to central systems where it can be analyzed and used for immediate decision-making (Suárez et al. 2019).

Advancements in cloud computing and artificial intelligence offer robust platforms for processing the vast amounts of data generated by these sensor networks. Techniques such as principal component analysis and machine learning algorithms are used to analyze the data, optimizing the detection and quantification of air pollutants (Suárez et al. 2019). Figure 4 shows a suggested cloud sensor network that can be utilized and is composed of three components: a) sensor network, which comprises sensor nodes that can be placed throughout the foundry b) cloud system that oversees data storage and transmission and c) end-user software (Suárez et al. 2019).

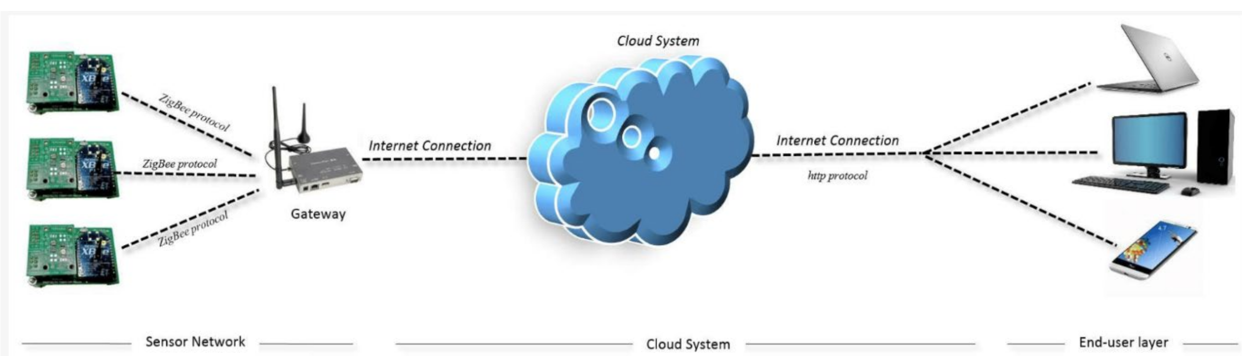

Figure 4. Schematic of cloud sensor network (Suárez et al. 2019).

4.2 Data Acquisition

The data acquisition process involves collecting, transmitting, and initially processing the data from various sensors strategically placed throughout the facility. This process ensures that the data captured is both accurate and reliable, providing a solid foundation for decision-making. Figure 5 shows the data acquisition process.

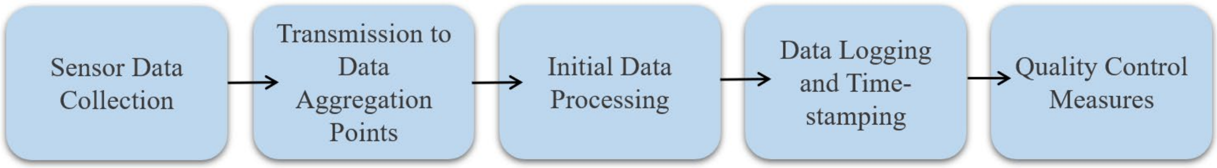

Figure 5. Data Acquisition process.

The sensors deployed in the network continuously monitor and collect data on various pollutants like particulate matter, gases, and VOCs. Each sensor is designed to detect specific types of pollutants at predefined intervals, ranging from real-time continuous monitoring to periodic sampling. This flexibility allows for the adjustment of data collection rates based on the operational dynamics of the foundry and the nature of the pollutants (Carluccio et al. 2023).

Once collected, the data is transmitted wirelessly using technologies such as LoRa (Long Range) or ZigBee, which are ideal for industrial environments where long-range and low-power consumption are critical. These technologies ensure that data from even the most remote sensors in hazardous or hard-to-reach areas is reliably transmitted to data aggregation points without significant loss (Mitrovics and Llobet 2020).

At the data aggregation points, initial processing occurs. This step often involves data validation and preliminary analysis to filter out noise and correct any anomalies. Techniques such as signal averaging or threshold checks are applied to ensure that the data integrity is maintained. This preprocessing helps reduce the load on central processing units and enhances the responsiveness of the system to detect critical changes in air quality.

Each data packet received is logged with a timestamp and a sensor identifier. This metadata is crucial for tracking trends over time and correlating data with specific operational conditions or events within the foundry. Timestamping also facilitates the synchronization of data streams from multiple sensors, which is essential for accurate cross-sectional environmental analysis.Lastly, quality control is an integral part of the data acquisition process. Calibration data is regularly recorded alongside environmental data to ensure that sensor drift or degradation does not compromise data quality. Automated alerts for recalibration are generated based on deviations from expected sensor outputs or pre-set schedules (Suárez et al. 2019).

4.3 Data Transmission and Storage

This subsection deals with how the data, once collected, is transmitted from the sensors to a centralized system and how it is subsequently stored. In the proposed air quality monitoring system, data transmission from sensors to centralized storage utilizes low-power wide-area network (LPWAN) technologies, with a focus on LoRa (Long Range) for its extensive range and robust penetration in industrial environments. This technology supports the transmission of data over distances up to 15 km in rural areas and 5 km in urban settings, making it ideal for expansive foundry facilities (Mitrovics and Llobet 2020). The sensors transmit data at intervals every 30 seconds during active monitoring phases, ensuring timely updates on air quality conditions. Figure 6 shows a comparison between LoRa and other communication technologies in terms of range and efficiency (Sanchez-Iborra et al. 2018).

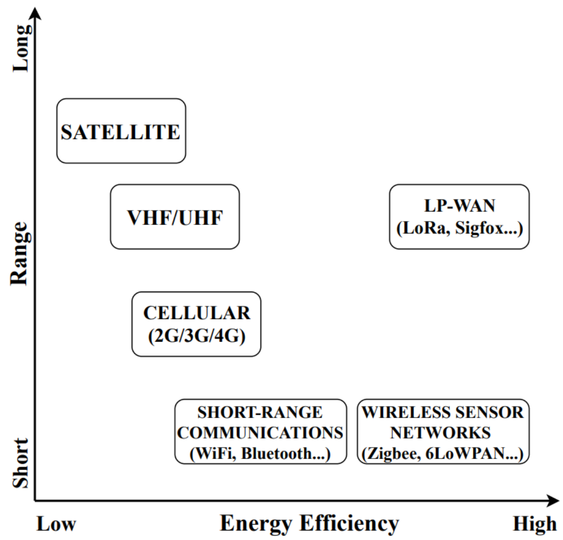

Figure 6. Range and efficiency comparison between the different communication technologies (Sanchez-Iborra et al., 2018)

Data collected from the network is stored in a cloud-based system that allows for scalability and remote accessibility. The system uses an optimized data management platform that incorporates features for data compression and encryption to ensure security and efficient storage management. On average, the system handles approximately 50 gigabytes of data per day from various sensors, which is processed and archived across multiple data centers (Suárez et al., 2019). The stored data is readily accessible for analysis through a suite of analytical tools designed to perform real-time data processing. These tools apply machine learning algorithms, including principal component analysis and support vector machines, to predict air quality trends and detect anomalous events. The integration of these tools has been shown to improve the detection accuracy of specific pollutants like VOCs by up to 30% compared to traditional monitoring methods (Carluccio et al. 2023).

4.4 Preliminary Data Processing

This phase is concerned with refining the raw data collected from the sensor network into actionable insights. The data processing framework goes through the following stages:

1. Data Cleansing: Initial processing includes filtering out noise and correcting anomalies due to sensor malfunctions or environmental interferences. This involves algorithms that identify outliers and apply corrections based on historical data trends and sensor calibration.
2. Normalization and Standardization: Standardization is done to ensure uniformity across different measurement scales. This process is crucial for integrating data such as particulate matter concentrations and gas levels into a readable dataset.
3. Feature Extraction: Key features are extracted from the normalized data, which are critical for subsequent analysis. Techniques such as Principal Component Analysis (PCA) are employed to reduce dimensionality and highlight significant patterns and trends (Carluccio et al., 2023).
4. Statistical Analysis: Descriptive statistics provide initial insights into the data, including mean values, standard deviations, and correlations among different pollutants. This is essential for setting thresholds for real-time alerts and long-term health risk assessments.

4.5 Quality Control and Calibration

Sensors are subjected to routine calibration using standard trace gases and controlled test environments to ensure their accuracy and stability over time. These calibration exercises are necessary, especially for sensors measuring concentrations of particulate matter and volatile organic compounds. The calibration process often involves comparing sensor readings with those from higher-grade reference instruments to adjust and correct any deviations. To automate quality control, systems incorporate real-time diagnostics that continuously evaluate sensor performance against predefined thresholds and calibration curves. This process includes statistical methods to detect anomalies in sensor outputs, triggering recalibration protocols or flagging the need for maintenance if needed.With advancements in machine learning, adaptive calibration methods are being integrated to dynamically adjust sensor calibrations based on changing environmental conditions and sensor response behaviors. These techniques utilize historical data and machine learning models to predict and correct sensor drift without manual intervention, enhancing the system's reliability and reducing downtime. Figure 7 shows the algorithm framework of a self-calibrating temperature sensor (Opasjumruskit et al. 2006).

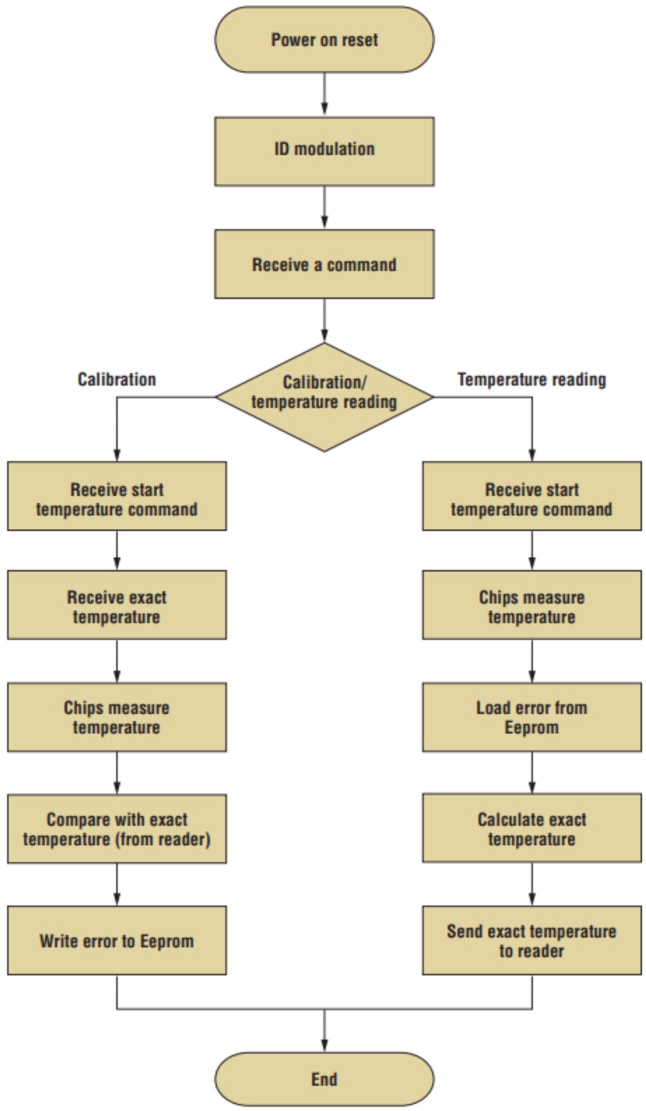

Figure 7. The algorithm for a self-calibrating microchip in the temperature sensor.

4.6 Data Integration and Management

Data integration and management are fundamental to ensure that data from diverse sources is harmonized and made useful for analysis, reporting, and decision-making. Data from various sensors (measuring particulates, gases, and VOCs) and external sources (like weather data) are integrated using advanced data management platforms. These systems utilize middleware solutions that standardize data formats, synchronize data streams, and ensure seamless data flow into analysis applications. Modern integration platforms also support the handling of big data volumes, employing technologies such as Apache Kafka and Hadoop for real-time data processing and large-scale data storage (Carluccio et al. 2023).Given the sensitivity of environmental data, especially when linked to public health, strict data security is in place. These include encryption, access controls, and regular audits to comply with data protection regulations such as GDPR and HIPAA, ensuring that data is handled responsibly.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed air quality monitoring and risk prediction framework presents a comprehensive solution for ensuring worker safety in foundry environments. By integrating sensors, data transmission protocols, and a centralized monitoring system, we provide real-time insights into crucial air quality parameters. Algorithms for risk prediction enable proactive measures, aligning with Utilization Reduction Roadmap goals.

Moving forward, the framework will evolve to incorporate advancements in sensor technology and data analytics, enhancing predictive capabilities. Additionally, efforts will focus on scalability and interoperability to accommodate future integration needs. The development of wearable devices will continue to prioritize individualized monitoring, promoting worker empowerment.In summary, this framework not only addresses current challenges but also sets the stage for ongoing innovation and improvement in occupational health and environmental sustainability within the foundry industry.

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Biographies

Shahna Manakat Vakeri is a master's student of Water and Environmental Engineering at Khalifa University of Science and Technology. She graduated with a Bachelor of Technology in Chemical Engineering from the University of Calicut, Kerala, India. She has worked as an Environmental Engineer, focused on Solid Waste Management from 2020 - 2022 in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Reem Alyaqoubi is a master's student at Khalifa University of Science and Technology in the petroleum engineering department. She earned her BSc in petroleum engineering from Khalifa University.

Batool Alwerfalli is a master's student in petroleum engineering at Khalifa University, with a BSc in petroleum engineering from Khalifa University – Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Sarath Haridas is a master's student at Khalifa University of Science and Technology in the chemical engineering department. He graduated with a Bachelor of Technology in Chemical Engineering from the National Institute of Technology, Calicut, India.

Maryam Qassem is a master's student at Khalifa University of Science and Technology in the chemical engineering department. She earned her BSc in chemical engineering from United Arab Emirates University.

Saed T. Amer holds a Ph.D. in Computer and Information Systems Engineering, obtained in August 2012 from Tennessee State University in the United States. He is currently a distinguished faculty member in the Department of Management Science and Engineering at Khalifa University. Dr. Amer's research is centered on Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE) engineering, with a strong emphasis on training and education. His extensive expertise encompasses fire protection, industrial hygiene, system safety, quality health, safety and environment (HSE), as well as human factors related to HSE.