

Adaptable Regulatory Oversight and Safety Awareness Regime: An Experience-Based Contribution Towards Sustainability in a Changing Railway Environment

Authors : Peaceman Sopazi, Mabila Mathebula, John Smallwood

Abstract : Recent health and safety (H&S) concerns and their resultant impact on railway operations, namely, the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) or collectively known as SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) pandemic and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), which have dominated public discourse, brought into question as to whether, or not, some aspects of how we have so far managed safety oversight as railway regulatory bodies and operators will remain relevant in a changing railway environment. Railway practitioners have generally found themselves between a proverbial rock and a hard place by being confronted by emerging challenges which have brought along great opportunities for sustainability. As witnesses and participants to the progressively introduced railway safety management, and transformation regimes, this paper attempts to share gathered field experience on adaptable regulatory oversight and safety awareness. The discourse is approached from a South African context but also with an informed perspective of what seems to work and what usually does not. The authors share their own multi and transdisciplinary experience coupled with insights they have gained as researchers of global trends in general safety management and specific aspects of railway safety management, for sustainability. In addition to sharing a largely experience-based methodology for survival, suggestions are offered for consideration as a way of keeping the railway safety management discourse alive as practitioners navigate a new path which is shrouded in a cloud of untold uncertainty. The authors further believe that the right timing for the implementation of the proposed suggestions in this paper will produce beneficial outcomes. Finally, the paper will identify areas that are still open for further investigation for and by researchers and practitioners alike.

Keywords : health & safety management, safety awareness, railway safety management, railway systems sustainability

Conference Title : ICREM 2022 : International Conference on Railway Engineering and Management

Conference Location : Singapore, Singapore

Conference Dates : May 05-06, 2022