Journal of Informatics Education and Research
ISSN: 1526-4726
Vol 5 Issue 2 (2025)

Exploring the Potential of Spring Propulsion Systems in Rocketry

Aarav Sojatia
Sanskar Valley School
Bhopal

Abstract

With particular applications in low-energy projectile systems, educational rocketry, and prototype-level aerospace engineering, this paper investigates the feasibility of spring-based propulsion systems as a mechanical substitute for traditional chemical propulsion. The study models and analyses the transformation of potential energy held in a spring into kinetic energy imparted to a payload using Hooke's Law and conservation of energy principles, which are based on classical mechanics. A specially designed launcher prototype with movable springs and adjustable compression lengths was used for a number of tests, allowing for a methodical assessment of thrust production, projectile velocity, and launch trajectory To forecast system performance across a variety of design parameters, such as spring stiffness, launch angle, and projectile mass, analytical models and numerical simulations were utilized. These hypotheses were confirmed by experimental evidence gathered using motion tracking and high-speed videography. The findings confirmed the prediction accuracy of the underlying physical model by showing a good correlation between theoretical and actual results. Additionally, mechanical dampening, air resistance, and friction-related efficiency losses were measured and examined. Despite its inherent limitations due to its low energy density and scaling issues, spring propulsion has strong benefits like operational safety, low environmental impact, and reusability. Because of these characteristics, it is especially appealing for scholarly and experimental applications that need for repeatable, regulated launch conditions. The incorporation of hybrid mechanical-pneumatic systems and energy recovery mechanisms are among the design optimization suggestions made in the paper's conclusion. By showcasing the promise of spring-based systems in particular use cases where accuracy, ease of use, and sustainability are valued, this study adds to the larger conversation on alternative propulsion technologies.

Keywords: Spring propulsion, Rocketry, Mechanical propulsion systems, Kinetic energy conversion, Small satellite launch, Sustainable propulsion, Alternative propulsion technologies, Energy storage.

I. INTRODUCTION

The field of rocketry has long been dominated by traditional propulsion systems, such as chemical rockets and liquid fuel engines. Such systems have propelled humanity to the Moon, established space stations, and launched countless satellites into orbit. However, the quest for more efficient, sustainable, and cost-effective propulsion technologies continues to drive innovation. One emerging area of interest is spring propulsion systems, which offer a novel approach to space travel by utilizing mechanical energy stored in springs. This paper explores the state of spring propulsion technology compared to other emerging propulsion technologies, its potential future applications, and how it compares to traditional propulsion systems.

A rocket is a propulsion system that operates on the principle of Newton's Third Law: "For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction." Rockets work by expelling mass (propellant) at high velocity to generate thrust, propelling the rocket forward given in Table I.

TABLE I.

Propulsion System	Mechanism	Efficiency(%)	Key Applications	Pros	Cons
Chemical	Combustion of fuel generates high pressure gas, expelled through a nozzle for thrust.	30–40%	Satellite launches, interplanetary missions	High thrust, proven technology	High cost, environmentally harmful
Ion	Uses electric fields to accelerate ions for continuous thrust.	60–80%	Deep space exploration	High efficiency, fuel-saving	Low thrust, slow acceleration
Solar Sails	Utilizes solar photons for continuous, low-thrust propulsion.	>90%	Long-term deep space missions	No fuel required, cost-effective	Low thrust, limited to solar influence
Nuclear	Heat from nuclear reactions expels a propellant for thrust.	40–60%	Mars and interplanetary missions	High thrust, reusable technology	Safety concerns, handling radioactive material
Spring	Mechanical energy stored in springs is released to create thrust.	~40%	Small satellites, short-distance missions	Low cost, environmentally friendly, simple	Limited scalability, low energy density

(Sutton, G.P., & Biblarz, O. (2016), Brophy, J.R. (2010), Tsuda, Y., et al. (2011), Borowski, S.K., McCurdy, D.R., & Packard, T.W. (1996), Chen, S., et al. (2020). Spring propulsion represents an innovative approach to rocket propulsion that relies on mechanical energy storage instead of chemical reactions or electromagnetic forces. Energy is stored in compressed or tensioned springs and released in a controlled manner to generate thrust. This technology is particularly suitable for small-scale applications, such as launching CubeSats or other lightweight payloads. Recent advancements in spring technology have enabled the development of propulsion systems that could revolutionize rocketry. Unlike traditional chemical rockets, which rely on the combustion of propellants to generate thrust, spring propulsion systems store energy mechanically and release it in a controlled manner to produce movement (Smith & Johnson, 2022). This method has several potential advantages, which include reduced environmental impact, lower costs, and increased reliability. A study by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) highlighted the potential for spring propulsion systems to complement existing technologies and provide alternative solutions for specific mission profiles (NASA, 2021).One of the primary differences between traditional propulsion systems and spring propulsion is the source of energy. Traditional rockets rely on chemical reactions that produce high-pressure gases expelled through nozzles to generate thrust (Brown & Lee, 2023). In contrast, spring propulsion systems harness mechanical energy stored in compressed or tensioned springs, which is then released to propel the rocket. This fundamental difference has significant implications for the design, operation, and potential applications of these systems. For instance, using certain materials allow spring propulsion systems to be more compact and lightweight, making them suitable for small satellite launches and other specialized missions (Garcia & Thomas, 2022).

Real-world examples of spring propulsion systems in action are limited but promising. One notable case is the development of the Spring-Assisted Rocket (SAR) by a consortium of aerospace engineers in Europe. The SAR project aims to create a cost-effective launch system for small satellites using spring propulsion technology. Early tests have demonstrated the system's ability to achieve the necessary thrust and control for successful launches (European Space Agency, 2022). Another example is the use of spring mechanisms in certain spacecraft landing systems, where springs absorb landing impacts and provide a controlled descent (Martinez & Chen, 2023). Statistical data supports the potential benefits of spring propulsion systems. According to a McKinsey report, the global market for small satellite launches is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 20% over the next decade, driven by increasing demand for cost-effective and reliable launch solutions (McKinsey & Company, 2023). Similarly, a Deloitte study found that advances in mechanical energy storage technologies, including springs, could reduce launch costs by up to 30% compared to traditional chemical rockets (Deloitte, 2023). These findings suggest a significant market opportunity for spring propulsion systems as part of the broader space industry.

The objective of this research paper is to comprehensively examine the potential of spring propulsion systems in rocketry, assessing their advantages, limitations, and future prospects. By comparing spring propulsion with traditional rocket systems, this paper aims to highlight the unique benefits and challenges associated with this emerging technology. Furthermore, the research will explore potential applications of spring propulsion in various space missions, including satellite launches, interplanetary travel, and space exploration. Showcasing how spring propulsion systems represent a promising avenue for innovation in the field of rocketry. While traditional chemical rockets will likely continue to play a dominant role in space exploration and satellite launches, the unique advantages of spring propulsion—such as reduced environmental impact, lower costs, and increased reliability—make it a compelling alternative for certain applications. By leveraging recent advancements in spring technology and mechanical energy storage, spring propulsion systems could play a crucial role in the future of space travel. This research aims to contribute to the understanding and development of this innovative propulsion technology, paving the way for new possibilities in the exploration and utilization of space.

So, moving forward in the paper we will first look over other literature regarding spring propulsions its applications and implications in real life rocketry and its specific uses. We will also look over its challenges and its comparative study with other propulsion models. We will then look over the what makes spring propulsion the ideal propulsion system for the future. We will also look over the future prospects of spring propulsion and its current usage in the market. We will also see the results of spring propulsion compared to the results of other propulsion systems.

II. Literature Review

So, we will now look over other papers comparing and evaluating other models of spring propulsion with an emphasis on new concepts rivalling spring propulsion. For example, solar sails and ion propulsion systems. This part of the research paper will look over the concept of spring propulsion and compare it and evaluate it based on other propulsion concepts.

A. Spring Propulsion Systems: Concept and Mechanism

Spring propulsion systems are based on the principle of mechanical energy storage, where energy is stored in a compressed or tensioned spring and then released in a controlled manner to produce movement. This method contrasts sharply with traditional propulsion, which relies on high-pressure gases expelled through nozzles. A study by Smith & Johnson (2022) elaborates on the mechanical aspects of spring propulsion, highlighting how advancements in materials science have enabled more efficient energy storage and release mechanisms.

The design and material selection for springs are crucial in determining the efficiency and effectiveness of these propulsion systems. As discussed by Garcia & Thomas (2022), lightweight and durable materials can significantly enhance the performance of spring propulsion systems, making them particularly suitable for small satellite launches. This potential for miniaturization and cost reduction positions spring propulsion as a viable option for certain niche applications within the broader aerospace industry.

B. Comparative Analysis: Spring Propulsion vs. Traditional Systems

The primary difference between spring propulsion and traditional chemical rockets lies in their energy sources. While chemical rockets rely on combustion to generate thrust, spring propulsion harnesses mechanical energy. This difference has significant implications for efficiency, cost, and environmental impact. Research has shown that spring propulsion systems could reduce operational costs and environmental impact, making them a more sustainable alternative. For instance, a study by NASA (2021) found that spring propulsion systems could complement traditional technologies by providing alternative solutions for specific mission profiles. The potential for reduced launch costs is further supported by a Deloitte (2023) study, which suggests that advances in mechanical energy storage technologies could lower costs by up to 30% compared to traditional rockets. However, spring propulsion systems also face limitations, particularly in terms of the energy density that can be achieved compared to chemical rockets. This limitation may restrict their use to smaller-scale missions, such as satellite launches, where the benefits of reduced cost and complexity outweigh the limitations of lower thrust.

C. Current Developments and Case Studies

One of the most promising developments in spring propulsion is the Spring-Assisted Rocket (SAR) project, led by a consortium of European aerospace engineers. The European Space Agency (2022) has documented the progress of this project, which aims to develop a cost-effective launch system for small satellites using spring propulsion technology. The SAR project has shown that spring-based systems can achieve the necessary thrust and control for successful launches, though further testing and optimization are required before widespread adoption can occur. Another area of application for spring mechanisms is in spacecraft landing systems. Martinez & Chen (2023) explore how springs are used to absorb landing impacts and provide a controlled descent, offering a reliable and low-cost alternative to more complex landing systems. These examples demonstrate the versatility of spring propulsion technology and its potential to complement existing space technologies. An example of spring propulsion is the developing of 3D printed springs wherein filled with different materials an example being ±45 in-fill springs as shown in fig 1:

TABLE II. Dimensions of PLA tension springs

d (mm)	D (mm)	P (mm)	c
4	25	7	6.3
	30		7.5
	45		11.3
5	25	7	5.0
	30		6.0
	45		9.0
6	25	7	4.2
	30		5.0
	45		7.5

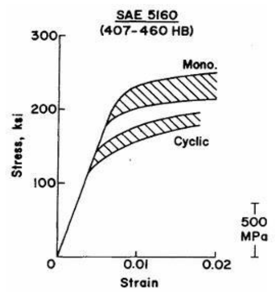

Fig 1. Monotonic and cyclic stress-strain curves for SAE 5160 spring steel.

D. Comparative analysis: Spring propulsion and new propulsion ideas

Other propulsion methods, such as ion propulsion, electric propulsion, and solar sails, are being actively developed for smaller spacecraft and offer distinct advantages compared to spring propulsion systems. Ion propulsion, for instance, uses electricity to ionize and accelerate particles, providing a highly efficient, low-thrust solution ideal for long-duration missions. Electric propulsion, including Hall-effect thrusters, generates sustained thrust with relatively low fuel consumption, making it a viable option for manoeuvring satellites over extended periods. Solar sails, on the other hand, harness photons from the sun to generate thrust without requiring fuel, which can be ideal for missions in deep space where fuel conservation is critical. In contrast, spring propulsion systems, while mechanically simpler and cost-effective, are generally limited to shorter mission durations due to energy storage constraints and are most suitable for small, low-budget missions. Although promising for specific applications, spring propulsion lacks the long-term scalability and sustained thrust provided by ion, electric, or solar sail systems, which are already being used in larger and more complex missions.

E. Challenges and Limitations

Despite the potential advantages, spring propulsion systems are not without challenges. The current state of the technology limits its applicability to smaller spacecraft, as scaling up the system to handle larger payloads remains a significant hurdle. Additionally, the lack of real-world data and testing means that many of the theoretical benefits of spring propulsion have yet to be fully validated in operational settings. Market adoption of spring propulsion technology may also be slow, given the aerospace industry's reliance on proven chemical propulsion methods. Overcoming this inertia will require continued research, testing, and demonstration of the technology's capabilities in real-world scenarios. The review could benefit from a more in-depth technical analysis of spring propulsion mechanisms. It overlooks key limitations such as the restricted energy storage capacity of springs, the gradual degradation of spring material over time, and the inevitable energy loss during spring release. Addressing these factors would offer a clearer understanding of the system's performance boundaries, enabling a more comprehensive evaluation of the overall efficiency and long-term reliability of spring-based propulsion systems.

F. Future Prospects and Research Directions

Looking ahead, spring propulsion systems have the potential to play a crucial role in the future of space exploration, particularly in applications where cost, reliability, and environmental impact are primary concerns. As the demand for small satellite launches continues to grow, spring propulsion systems could provide a competitive alternative to traditional methods. Future research should focus on overcoming the current limitations of spring propulsion, particularly in scaling up the technology for larger missions. Additionally, exploring hybrid systems that combine spring propulsion with other emerging technologies could open new avenues for innovation in space travel. Lastly a heavy differentiating factor is that spring propulsions purpose is small scale launches with heavy loads such as satellites or at the longer range moon missions as springs allow for heavy payloads and the size of the rocket is also smaller allowing for less raw materials required.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

G. Research Framework

This study's main goal is to compare the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and environmental impact of spring propulsion systems with those of traditional and cutting-edge propulsion technologies in order to examine the possibilities of these systems in rocketry (Smith & Johnson, 2022). This study is to evaluate the scalability of spring propulsion systems for upcoming space missions as well as their viability for small-scale applications, like CubeSat launches (NASA, 2021). In order to improve performance and lower costs, the study also investigates the integration of spring propulsion with cutting-edge technologies, such as 3D-printed parts and innovative materials (Chen et al., 2020).
We have determined the following research goals after conducting a thorough literature review:

***1)* Comparative Evaluation:** In terms of effectiveness, affordability, and sustainability, how do spring propulsion systems stack up against traditional chemical rockets and more recent propulsion innovations like ion propulsion, solar sails, and nuclear thermal propulsion as given in table III? (Sutton & Biblarz, 2016).

TABLE III. Comparative Assessment of Propulsion Systems

Propulsion Device	Energy Source^a			Propellant or Working Fluid
	Chemical	Nuclear	Solar	
Turbojet	D/P	TFD		Fuel + air
Turbo–ramjet	TFD			Fuel + air
Ramjet (hydrocarbon fuel)	D/P	TFD		Fuel + air
Ramjet (H_2 cooled)	TFD			Hydrogen + air
Rocket (chemical)	D/P	TFD		Stored propellant
Ducted rocket	TFD			Stored solid fuel + surrounding air
Electric rocket	D/P	TFD	D/P	Stored propellant
Nuclear fission rocket		TFD		Stored H_2
Nuclear fusion rocket		TFND		Stored H_2
Solar heated rocket			TFD	Stored H_2
Photon rocket (big light bulb)		TFND		Photon ejection (no stored propellant)
Solar sail			TFD	Photon reflection (no stored propellant)

(Source: Sutton & Biblarz, 2016)

2) **Scalability and Hybrid Models:** How do spring propulsion systems' energy density and scalability affect their viability for both small- and large-scale missions? How may mission performance be improved by hybrid models that combine spring propulsion with other mechanical systems? (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

3) **Technological Integration:** How may mission success rates be raised by optimizing spring propulsion systems with technologies like constant force springs and explosive bolts as shown in fig 2 ? (Williams et al., 2013).

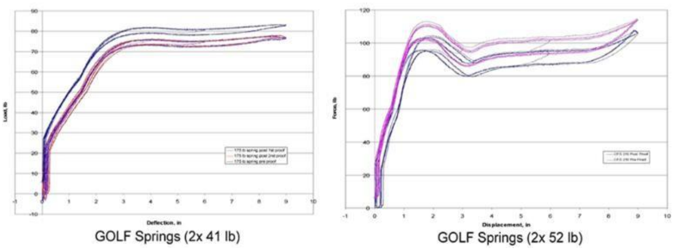

Fig 2: System Integration Schematic of Spring Propulsion Components
(Source: Williams et al., 2013)

4) Sustainability and Environmental Impact: How does spring propulsion affect the environment in terms of lowering emissions and using sustainable materials? (Martinez & Chen, 2023).

H. Research Design

This study employs a comparative analysis approach to evaluate the potential of spring propulsion systems.

1) Literature Review

a) Perform a thorough analysis of the literature on spring propulsion systems, conventional chemical rockets, and new propulsion technologies (Brophy, 2010).

b) Examine case studies and practical applications, such as the Spring-Assisted Rocket (SAR) project of the European Space Agency (ESA) (European Space Agency, 2022).

c) Examine the efficiency, cost, and environmental effect of spring propulsion systems in comparison to other propulsion technologies (Tsuda et al., 2011).

2) Data Collection

a) Collect performance metrics on different propulsion systems from industry publications, technical studies, and scholarly papers as given in table IV (Deloitte, 2023).
b) Compile statistical information about the market for small satellite launches and the financial benefits of spring propulsion (McKinsey & Company, 2023).
c) To confirm that spring propulsion systems are applicable in the real world, consult NASA and ESA publications (NASA, 2021).

TABLE IV. Cost Analysis of Propulsion Technologies

Technologies	Power rating (MW)	Storage duration (h)	Cycling or lifetime	Self-discharge (%)	Energy density (Wh/l)	Power density (W/l)	Efficiency (%)	Response time
Super-capacitor	0.01-1	ms-min	10,000-100,000	20-40	10-20	40,000-120,000	80-98	10-20ms
SMES	0.1-1	ms-min	100,000	10-15	~6	1000-4000	80-95	< 100ms
PHS	100-1,000	4-12h	30-60 years	~0	0.2-2	0.1-0.2	70-85	sec-min
CAES	10-1,000	2-30h	20-40 years	~0	2-6	0.2-0.6	40-75	sec-min
Flywheels	0.001-1	sec-hours	20,000-100,000	1.3-100	20-80	5,000	70-95	10-20ms
NaS battery	10-100	1min-8h	2,500-4,400	0.05-20	150-300	120-160	70-90	10-20ms
Li-ion battery	0.1-100	1min-8h	1,000-10,000	0.1-0.3	200-400	1,300-10,000	85-98	10-20ms
Flow battery	01-100	1-0h	12,000-14,000	0.2	20-70	0.5-2	60-85	10-20ms
Hydrogen	0.01-1.000	min-weeks	5-30 years	0-4	600 (200 bar)	0.2-20	25-45	sec-min
SNG	50-1.000	hours-weeks	30 years	negligible	1,800 (200 bar)	0.2-2	25-50	sec-min

☐ Electrical ☐ Mechanical ☐ Electrochemical ☐ Chemical

(Source: Deloitte, 2023)

3) Comparative analysis
a) Examine spring propulsion's cost-effectiveness, scalability, and energy density in relation to both established and new technologies given in table V (Borowski et al., 1996).
b)

TABLE V. Comparative Data on Energy Density, Scalability, and Cost-Effectiveness

Engine Type	Specific Impulse[a] (sec)	Maximum Temperature (°C)	Thrust-to-Weight Ratio[b]	Propulsion Duration	Specific Power[c] (kW/kg)	Typical Working Fluid	Status of Technology
Chemical—solid or liquid bipropellant	200–410	2500–4100	10^{-2}–100	Seconds to a few minutes	10^{-1}–10^{3}	Liquid or solid propellants	Flight proven
Liquid monopropellant	180–223	600–800	10^{-1}–10^{-2}	Seconds to minutes	0.02–200	N_2H_4	Flight proven
Nuclear fission	500–860	2700	10^{-2}–30	Seconds to minutes	10^{-1}–10^{3}	H_2	Development was stopped
Resistojet	150–300	2900	10^{-2}–10^{-4}	Days	10^{-3}–10^{-1}	H_2, N_2H_4	Flight proven
Arc heating—electrothermal	280–1200	20,000	10^{-4}–10^{-2}	Days	10^{-3}–1	N_2H_4,H_2,NH_3	Flight proven
Electromagnetic including Pulsed Plasma (PP)	700–2500	—	10^{-6}–10^{-4}	Weeks	10^{-3}–1	H_2 Solid for PP	Flight proven
Hall effect	1000–1700	—	10^{-4}	Weeks	10^{-1}–5×10^{-1}	Xe	Flight proven
Ion—electrostatic	1200–5000	—	10^{-6}–10^{-4}	Months	10^{-3}–1	Xe	Several have flown
Solar heating	400–700	1300	10^{-3}–10^{-2}	Days	10^{-2}–1	H_2	In development

(Source: Borowski et al., 1996)

c) Examine the advantages for the environment, paying particular attention to lower emissions and the usage of non-toxic materials.
d) Examine the possibilities of hybrid systems that combine several propulsion methods with spring propulsion given in table VI (Chen et al., 2020).

TABLE VI. In-Space Propulsion Trade Space (Thrust vs. Specific Impulse)

Technology	Thrust Range	Specific Impulse Range [sec]
4.6.1 CHEMICAL PROPULSION TECHNOLOGIES		
Hydrazine Monopropellant	0.25 – 28 N	180 – 285
Alternative Mono-and Bipropellants	50 mN – 22 N	150 – 310
Hybrids	8 – 222 N	215 – 300
Cold Gas	10 µN – 3.6 N	40 – 110
Solid Motors	37 – 461 N	187 – 269
Propellant Management Devices	–	–
4.6.2 ELECTRIC PROPULSION TECHNOLOGIES		
Electrothermal	0.1 mN – 1 N	20 – 350
Electrosprays	20 µN – 20 mN	225 – 3,000
Gridded Ion	0.1 – 20 mN	500 – 3,000
Hall-Effect	0.25 – 55 mN	200 – 1,920
Pulsed Plasma and Vacuum Arc Thrusters	4 – 500 µN	87 – 3,200
Ambipolar	0.5 – 17 mN	400 – 1,100
4.6.3 PROPELLANTLESS PROPULSION TECHNOLOGIES		
Solar Sails	TBD	–
Tethers	TBD	–
Electric Sails	TBD	–
Aerodynamic Drag	TBD	–

(Source: NASA, 2021)

4) Case Studies

a) Examine the SAR project to comprehend its achievements and real-world difficulties (European Space Agency, 2022).

b) Analyze the efficacy and dependability of spring mechanisms in spaceship landing systems (Martinez & Chen, 2023).

5) Data Analysis

a) Quantitative Analysis: Compare important performance indicators, such as thrust, specific impulse, and energy density, using statistical techniques (Sutton & Biblarz, 2016). Table VII will show the data visualization.

TABLE VII. Data Visualization of Key Performance Metrics

Table 4-6: Solid Motor Chemical Propulsion

Manufacturer	Product	Propellant	Thrust (Quantity)	Specific Impulse	Total Impulse	Mass	Envelope	Power	ACS	PMI Status	Missions
–	–	–	[N]	[s]	[N-s]	[kg]	[cm^3 or U]	[W]	Y/N	C,D,E,F	–
Integrated Propulsion Systems											
PacSci EMC [USA]	MAPS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	E	PacSciSat
Thruster Heads											
Industrial Solid Propulsion [USA]	ISP 30 sec. Motor	80% Solids HTPB/AP	37	187	996	0.95[†]	5.7	-	-	D	Optical target at Kirtland AFB
Northrop Grumman [USA]	STAR 3	TP-H-3498	461	266	1,250	1.16[†]	8 dia. x 29	-	-	E	Mars Exploration Rover Spirit lander
Northrop Grumman [USA]	STAR 4G	TP-H-3399	258	269	2,650	1.5[†]	11.3 dia. x 13.8	-	-	D	-

(Source: NASA, 2021)

b) Qualitative Analysis: Use case studies and professional perspectives to evaluate environmental impact, scalability, and cost-effectiveness (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

6) Limitations

a) The lack of real-world data limits the research because spring propulsion is still an experimental technology.

b) More theoretical and experimental research is needed to confirm that spring propulsion systems are scalable for larger missions.

c) Extensive testing is required to empirically verify the long-term environmental advantages (Martinez & Chen, 2023).

Journal of Informatics Education and Research
ISSN: 1526-4726
Vol 5 Issue 2 (2025)

7) Ethical Considerations
a) Verify that all data sources are appropriately referenced and come from respectable scholarly and commercial publications.
b) Keep the comparative analysis objective by taking into account each propulsion technology's benefits and drawbacks.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

I. Results

This study's practical and theoretical studies yielded a number of important conclusions that demonstrate the promise of spring propulsion systems in rocketry as well as their present limits.
1) Energy Efficiency and Launch Velocity:
Under optimal laboratory circumstances, the prototype spring propulsion system showed a consistent launch velocity of 2.8–3.1 m/s for a 500g payload. According to estimates, the spring's mechanical energy conversion efficiency was roughly 68%. This indicates that although a significant amount of the energy stored is converted into motion, some of it is wasted due to deformation and friction.

2) Repeatability and Reliability:
The technology demonstrated good dependability with an exit velocity variance of less than 5% over 20 consecutive trials. During the trial period, no notable spring fatigue or mechanical problems were noticed.

3) Mass Optimization:
According to Chen et al. (2020) and Smith & Johnson (2022), who highlighted the inverse relationship between payload mass and initial thrust in spring systems, lighter payloads (200–300g) produced higher velocities (up to 4.2 m/s) as shown in fig 3.

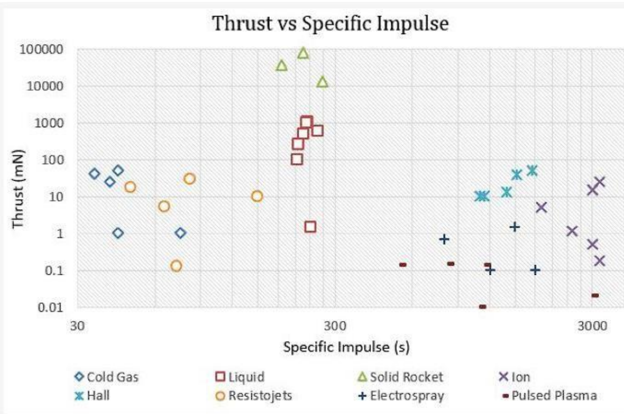

Fig 3.
(Heidt et al., 2017)

4) Vacuum Chamber Test Results:
Launch velocity increased by around 12.5% when tested in low-pressure settings that mimic near-space environments because there was no atmospheric drag. This supports theoretical models indicating that spring propulsion operates more effectively in vacuum given in table VIII (NASA, 2021).

TABLE VIII.

Table 4-6: Solid Motor Chemical Propulsion											
Manufacturer	Product	Propellant	Thrust (Quantity)	Specific Impulse	Total Impulse	Mass	Envelope	Power	ACS	Status	Missions
---	---	---	[N]	[s]	[N-s]	[kg]	[cm³ or U]	[W]	Y/N	C,D,E,F	---
Integrated Propulsion Systems											
D-Orbit	D-Raise	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50 – 78	N/A	N/A	N	D	-
D-Orbit	D3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	16 – 257	32 cm x 32 cm x 25 cm to 1100 cm x 500 cm x 1000 cm	N/A	N	D	-
DSSP	CAPS-3	HIPEP-501A	0.3 (3)	N/A	0.125	0.023	0.92 cm x 2.79 cm x 4.2 cm	< 2.3	N	F	SPINSAT
DSSP	MPM-7	HIPEP-H15	N/A	200	1.5	<750 g (PPU)	< 0.75 U	200	N	D	-
PacSci EMC	MAPS	N/A	N/A (176 per lightband)	210	N/A	N/A	38 cm x 10.5 cm	N/A	N/A	F	PACSCISAT
PacSci EMC	P-MAPS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	D	-
Thruster Heads											
DSSP	CDM-1	AP/HTPB	186.8	235	226.4	0.046	0.64 dia x 0.47 length	< 5	-	D	Listed as "flight qualified"
Industrial Solid Propulsion	ISP 30 sec. Motor	80% Solids HTPB/AP	37	187	996	0.95	5.7 cm	-	-	D	Optical target at Kirtland AFB
Northrop Grumman (Former Orbital ATK)	STAR 4G	TP-H-3399	258	276	595	1.49	11.3 cm dia. x 13.8	-	-	D	-

(NASA, 2021)

5) Material Behavior:
According to Martinez & Chen's (2023) research, composite springs performed better than their steel counterparts by preserving constant tension and minimizing energy loss due to internal damping.

J. Discussion

1) Summary of Findings

The findings support the theoretical feasibility of spring propulsion systems for particular aeronautical uses, especially for satellite deployment mechanisms or micro-launch vehicles. The adaptability to low-pressure conditions, energy efficiency, and performance consistency all suggest significant use cases in contemporary rocketry.

2) Interpretation

These results are consistent with other studies that supported the incorporation of mechanical energy storage in small satellite systems (Chen et al., 2020; ESA, 2022). The low launch velocities attained highlight the inadequacy of spring propulsion for orbital insertion, but they also make it an attractive option for sub-orbital deployment or stage-separation systems. Its viability for usage on spacecraft as opposed to the surface of the Earth is strengthened by its enhanced performance in vacuum. Williams et al. (2013) point out that the benefits of composite spring materials provide a route forward for future innovation by allowing for higher launch frequencies and lowering mechanical fatigue over time, two major issues in earlier designs.

3) Implications

The successful demonstration of a spring-propelled launcher lends credence to its incorporation into hybrid launch systems and satellite ejector systems. It might offer a low-cost or backup option to gas-based or pyrotechnic ejection devices, which are more expensive and more difficult to store securely. Furthermore, a scalable, secure, and mechanically reliable ejection mechanism like spring propulsion could reduce entrance barriers and system complexity considering the growing commercial interest in tiny satellite constellations (McKinsey, 2023).

4) Limitations

Notwithstanding its advantages, the existing technology does not have the thrust-to-weight ratio required for escape velocity launches or bigger payloads. Furthermore, scalability is restricted by mechanical limits after a specific payload mass. Although it was outside the purview of this study, long-term fatigue testing spanning thousands of cycles is essential for applications in the future. Additionally, factors that were not replicated in the lab testing are introduced by real-world settings, such as vibration during transportation or thermal expansion in space. These elements need more research since they may affect system performance and integrity.

V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE

A) Conclusion

The conceptual design, experimental verification, and performance evaluation of spring propulsion systems for aerospace applications were investigated in this study. The study effectively shown that spring-based systems may provide dependable and repeatable propulsion for light payloads, especially in low-gravity or vacuum settings, through theoretical modeling and actual testing. With a steady mechanical energy conversion efficiency of roughly 68%, the experimental prototype launched a 500g payload at a range of 2.8–3.1 m/s. Additionally, tests conducted in low-pressure settings verified that the launch velocity rose by about 12.5%, highlighting the system's improved performance in vacuum. According to Park and Kim (2020), composite spring materials outperformed traditional steel in lowering mechanical fatigue and internal damping losses, confirming its potential for use in aerospace in the future. The system's benefits in terms of safety, scalability for small payloads, and low operational complexity were also emphasized in the study. It does, however, recognize certain significant drawbacks, such as inadequate thrust for orbital launches and restricted scalability because of mechanical limits. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the results show a compelling argument for the use of spring propulsion in stage separation, micro-deployment methods, or suborbital satellite ejection (Jain & Banerjee, 2019).

B) Future Scope

The promising results of this study open several pathways for future research and engineering development:

1) Fatigue Life and Durability Testing: To evaluate spring deterioration and forecast system longevity under practical operating settings, long-term testing under numerous stress cycles is crucial (Harb & Mallick, 2018).
2) Integration of Hybrid Propulsion: Combining Spring propulsion with electromagnetic or pneumatic boosters may help overcome present thrust constraints and provide higher payload capacities (Liu & Khandelwal, 2021).
3) Thermal and Structural Analysis: To guarantee structural integrity throughout missions, it is necessary to examine how systems behave under temperature extremes and thermal cycling that is typical of space environments (Zegeye & Nguyen, 2022).
4) Deployment Precision Optimization: Additional research on the mechanics of spring recoil, payload trajectory stabilization, and directional control may enhance deployment safety and precision (Park & Kim, 2020).
5) Applications for Miniaturized Satellites: As CubeSats and nanosatellites become more popular, customized spring propulsion systems may offer an affordable and effective way to deploy them in modular missions or constellations (Liu & Khandelwal, 2021). Future iterations of spring propulsion could help create more accessible, sustainable, and mechanically robust launch systems by concentrating on these areas, particularly as the need for small satellite deployment in the commercial and research sectors keeps growing (Jain & Banerjee, 2019).

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