African Journal of Advanced Pure and Applied Sciences (AJAPAS)
Online ISSN: 2957-644X
Volume 3, Issue 3, July-September 2024, Page No: 177-187
Website: https://aaasjournals.com/index.php/ajapas/index
معامل التأثير العربي 2023: (1.55) SJIFactor 2023: 5.689 ISI 2023-2024: 0.877

Design and Analysis of Liquid Propellant Rocket Thruster

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تصميم وتحليل غرفة احتراق للمحرك صاروخ يعمل بالوقود السائل

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Received: June 24, 2024	Accepted: August 14, 2024	Published: September 03, 2024

Abstract:
This paper explores the intricate design considerations of liquid propellant rocket thrusters, which are pivotal components in modern space exploration and satellite deployment. The study begins with an overview of liquid propulsion systems, highlighting their advantages such as high efficiency and the ability to throttle thrust. The design process incorporates various critical elements including the selection of propellants, the configuration of the combustion chamber, injector design, and cooling methods. In our study, the model was designed with dimensions by analytical and software. The propellant of the model has been selected. The model was drawn and analyzed by Ansys workbench software. The paper also addresses the integration of these components into a cohesive system, focusing on achieving a balance between performance, reliability, and manufacturability. Advanced computational simulations and empirical testing methodologies are employed to validate design choices and optimize the thruster's performance.
In conclusion, the design of liquid propellant rocket thrusters involves a complex interplay of material science, thermodynamics, and fluid dynamics. This paper provides a comprehensive framework for the design process, aiming to guide the development of efficient and reliable thrusters for future aerospace missions.

Keywords: Liquid Propellant, Rocket Thrusters, Liquid Propulsion Systems.

الملخص
تستكشف هذه الورقة البحثية الاعتبارات التصميمية المعقدة لمحركات الدفع الصاروخي بالوقود السائل، والتي تعد مكونات محورية في استكشاف الفضاء الحديث ونشر الأقمار الصناعية. يبدأ البحث بمراجعة أنظمة الدفع السائل، تم تسليط الضوء على مزاياها مثل الكفاءة العالية وإمكانية التحكم في الدفع. تتضمن عملية التصميم عدة عناصر حاسمة تشمل اختيار الوقود، تكوين غرفة الاحتراق، تصميم الحقن، وطرق التبريد. في دراستنا، تم تصميم النموذج بأبعاد محددة باستخدام التحليل والبرمجيات. تم اختيار وقود سائل للغرفة الاحتراق، وتم رسم النموذج بطريقة دقيقة وتحليله باستخدام برنامج Ansys Workbench. تتناول الورقة أيضًا تكامل هذه المكونات في نظام متماسك، مع التركيز على تحقيق توازن بين الأداء، والموثوقية، وقابلية التصنيع. تُستخدم المحاكاة الحاسوبية المتقدمة ومنهجيات الاختبار التجريبية للتحقق من صحة اختيارات التصميم وتحسين أداء المحرك.
في الختام، يتضمن تصميم محركات الدفع الصاروخي بالوقود السائل تفاعلاً معقدًا بين علوم المواد، والديناميكا الحرارية، وديناميكا السوائل. تقدم هذه الورقة إطار عمل شامل لعملية التصميم، بهدف توجيه تطوير محركات دفع فعالة وموثوقة للمهام الفضائية المستقبلية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: غرفة احتراق، وقود سائل، محرك صاروخ.

Introduction

The term "rocket" encompasses a variety of objects. It can denote a type of aerial vehicle utilized by astronauts, space explorers, and unmanned space missions. Additionally, rockets are employed as weapons, launched from platforms such as tanks and airplanes. In aerospace engineering, the development of efficient and reliable propulsion systems is fundamental to technological progress. Within this domain, liquid propellant rocket thrusters are crucial, providing exceptional control and power for maneuvering spacecraft and satellites in space. Rocket thrust is the reaction force generated by expelling particles at high velocity through a nozzle. The intricate design and precise engineering of these thrusters highlights their vital role in ensuring mission success and operational efficiency. This paper examines the comprehensive design considerations and engineering principles of liquid propellant rocket thruster systems. It meticulously explores each component and subsystem, from fundamental concepts to advanced propulsion techniques, to elucidate the complexities involved in achieving optimal performance and reliability. By analyzing propellant selection, combustion dynamics, structural integrity, and control mechanisms, this study aims to provide a thorough understanding of the principles driving the design and operation of liquid propellant rocket thrusters [1,3].

Integrating theoretical frameworks, computational simulations, and empirical data, this paper contributes to the broader discourse on propulsion technology, offering insights essential for future advancements in aerospace engineering. Ultimately, a deeper understanding of liquid propellant rocket thruster design enhances our capabilities in space exploration and fosters innovation in satellite deployment, orbital maneuvering, and other related fields [4].

Chemical Rocket Propulsion Systems

Chemical rocket propulsion systems (**Figure 1**) derive their energy from high-pressure combustion reactions involving propellant chemicals, typically comprising a fuel and an oxidizing agent. This reaction results in the heating of product gases to extremely high temperatures, ranging from 2500 to 4100°C (4500 to 7400°F) [1]. These hot gases are then expanded through a nozzle and accelerated to high velocities, between 1800 and 4300 m/sec (5900 to 14,100 ft/sec). Given that these temperatures significantly exceed the melting point of steel, it is essential to implement cooling or insulation for all surfaces exposed to the hot gases. Chemical rocket propulsion systems can be categorized into several classes based on the physical state of the propellant used.

Literature Review

Numerous studies have been conducted on the design and analysis of liquid rocket engines. Comprehensive (**Figure 2**) simulations of these engines are based on independent studies of each constituent component, which are then integrated to form a complete assembly.

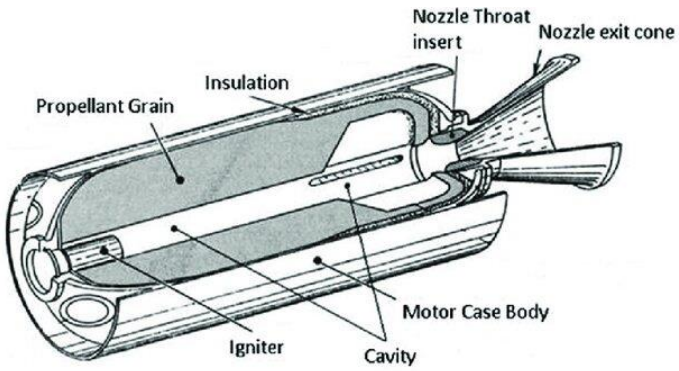

Figure 1: Solid propellant rocket motor.

The modelling of each component involves two primary aspects: the geometrical (parametrical) design and the analysis of its performance. This approach allows for the simulation of any rocket engine by specifying the design requirements and subsequently obtaining both the geometrical specifications and performance data for the individual components as well as the overall engine [4]. The main objectives of the project by Germán García Gómez-Sáenz and Carmen López Alcalá were to develop the preliminary design of a liquid propellant rocket engine by specific design criteria and to simulate its performance [2]. The authors did not aim to use simulations to reduce real-world testing costs, a common objective in such studies. Instead, they focused on creating foundational modules that model all elements of a rocket engine as generally as possible. These modules can be combined to facilitate the preliminary design of any liquid propellant rocket engine and to determine how different configurations affect performance and control. The outcome includes the preliminary design of each component

and a controlled, verified outline of the final configuration. These foundational modules also provide a solid basis for future simulations of real tests on specific rocket engines.

The ongoing research into the use of hydrogen peroxide for propulsion is also summarized. A detailed design study of a laboratory-scale hydrogen peroxide monopropellant engine with a thrust of 100 N is presented. A distillation facility has been established for preparing concentrated hydrogen peroxide. Initial tests, involving water analogy, did not yield successful firings with the concentrated hydrogen peroxide. Factors such as low environmental temperature, insufficient contact area of the catalyst pack, and contamination in the hydrogen peroxide were identified as contributing issues. Addressing the first two factors resulted in successful engine firings. The project encompasses the design and analysis of the components of a liquid propellant rocket engine and their integration. Each component, studied separately and catalogued for future use, allows for the study of other engines by assembling the necessary components as required.

Thrust Chamber

Thrust is the force generated by a rocket propulsion system acting on a vehicle. It is essentially the reaction force experienced by the vehicle's structure due to the expulsion of matter at high velocity. Momentum, a vector quantity defined as the product of mass and velocity, underlies this thrust. The relationship between thrust and momentum is illustrated below, assuming constant thrust and mass flow, and uniform, axial gas exit velocity.

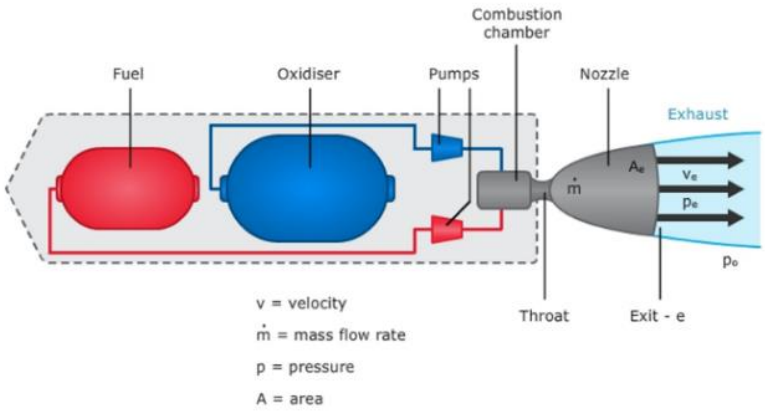

Figure 2: Liquid propellant rocket engines.

This force represents the total propulsion force when the nozzle exit pressure equals the ambient pressure. The pressure of the surrounding fluid (the local atmosphere) gives rise to the second contribution that influences the thrust. The external pressure acts uniformly on the outer surface of a rocket chamber and the gas pressure on the inside of a typical thermal rocket engine.

$$F = \frac{dm}{dt} v_2 = \dot{m}\, v_2 = \frac{\dot{w}}{g_0} v_2 \qquad (1)$$

The rocket nozzle is usually designed so that the exhaust pressure is equal to or slightly higher than the ambient fluid pressure.

$$\mathrm{F} = \dot{\mathrm{m}}\mathrm{v}_2 + (\mathrm{P}_2 - \mathrm{P}_3)\mathrm{A}_2 \qquad (2)$$

Combustion Chamber

The combustion chamber (**Figure 3**) is a segment of the thrust chamber where the combustion of propellant occurs. The temperatures during combustion significantly exceed the melting points of most materials used for chamber walls. Consequently, it is essential either to implement cooling mechanisms for these walls or to cease rocket operation before the critical wall areas overheat. Excessive heat transfer can lead to localized overheating of the walls, resulting in thrust chamber failure [5].

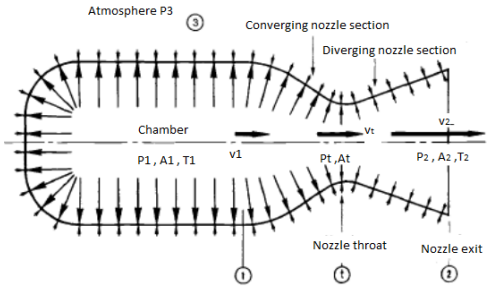

Figure 3: Pressure balance on chamber.

Chamber Volume

1. The chamber volume is defined as the volume extending up to the nozzle throat section, encompassing the cylindrical chamber and the converging cone frustum of the nozzle. Neglecting corner radii effects, the chamber volume V_C is :

$$V_C = A_1 L_1 + A_1 L_C \left(1 + \sqrt{\frac{A_t}{A_1}} + \frac{A_t}{A_1} \right) \qquad (3)$$

2. The volume and shape are determined after assessing these parameters:

   a. The volume must be sufficient for adequate mixing, evaporation, and complete combustion of the propellants. Chamber volumes vary depending on the propellants used, the time delay needed for vaporization and activation, and the reaction speed of the propellant combination.

   b. The chamber diameter and volume impact the cooling requirements. Larger chamber volumes and diameters reduce heat transfer rates to the walls but increase the exposed area and wall thickness.

   c. All inert components should have minimal mass. The mass of the thrust chamber depends on its dimensions, chamber pressure, nozzle area ratio, and cooling method.

   d. Manufacturing considerations favor a simple chamber geometry, such as a cylindrical shape with a double cone bow-tie-shaped nozzle, utilizing low-cost materials and straightforward fabrication processes.

The characteristic chamber length is the length that a chamber with the same volume would have if it were a straight tube without a converging nozzle section [5,6,7].

$$L^* = V_C / A_t \qquad (4)$$

The chamber includes all the volume up to the throat area. Typical values range between 0.8 and 3.0 meters (2.6 to 10 ft) for various bipropellants and are higher for some monopropellants. The stay time of the propellant t_s gases is the average time each molecule or atom spends within the chamber volume, defined by:

$$t_s = V_C + \dot{m} V_1 \qquad (5)$$

where V_C is the chamber volume and $\dot{m}$ is the mass flow rate. The minimum stay time required to achieve good performance determines the chamber volume necessary for complete combustion.

Chamber Wall Loads and Stresses

During the engineering design of propulsion components, an analysis of loads and stresses is conducted. This analysis ensures that components are robust enough to withstand all loads, thereby fulfilling their intended function. Additionally, it identifies potential failure points and suggests possible remedies or redesigns. The masses of components are minimized to a practical extent without compromising structural integrity.

The stress s can be calculated for simple cylindrical chamber walls that are thin concerning their radius as:

$$s = \frac{2\lambda E \Delta T}{1 - v} \qquad (6)$$

Nozzles

A nozzle (**Figure 4**) is a duct of varying cross-sectional area in which the velocity of fluid increases with the corresponding pressure drop [6].

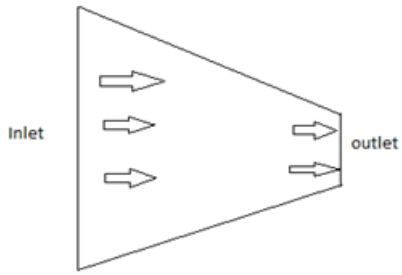

Figure 4: Convergent Nozzle.

A. **Nozzle thermodynamic**

They furnish the mathematical tools needed to calculate the performance and determine several of the key design parameters of rocket propulsion systems. The principle of conservation of energy can be readily applied to the adiabatic, no shaft-work process inside the nozzle. Furthermore, without shocks or friction, the flow entropy change is zero. For ideal gases, the enthalpy can conveniently be expressed as the product of the specific heat Cp times the absolute temperature T. The total or stagnation enthalpy per unit mass h_0 is constant:

$$h_0 = h + {v^2}/{2} \qquad (7)$$

The conservation of energy for isentropic flow between any two sections x and y shows that the decrease in enthalpy or thermal content of the flow appears as an increase of kinetic energy and any changes in potential energy may be neglected.

$$h_x - h_y = \frac{1}{2}\left(V_y{}^2 - V_X{}^2\right) = c_p\left(T_x - T_y\right) \qquad (8)$$

Nozzle design equations

The following section will detail simplified equations for the design of small liquid-fuel rocket motors.

Firstly by knowing the combustion chamber pressure for the mixture ratio of the fuel and oxidizer, the designer calculates the pressure at the nozzle throat from this equation:

$$P_t = P_o * \left(\frac{2}{\gamma + 1}\right)^{\frac{\gamma}{\gamma+1}} \qquad (9)$$

After calculating the pressure at the throat, calculate the throat velocity:

$$v_t = \sqrt{\frac{2\gamma}{\gamma + 1} RT_o} \qquad (10)$$

Next, calculate the exit velocity by the equation:

$$v_e = \sqrt{\frac{2\gamma}{\gamma - 1} RT_o \left(1 - \left(\frac{P_e}{P_o}\right)^{\frac{\gamma-1}{\gamma}}\right)} \qquad (11)$$

The total mass flow rate is calculated by:

$$\dot{m} = \frac{F}{v_e} \qquad (12)$$

The fuel mass flow rate is calculated by:

$$\dot{m}_f = \frac{\dot{m}}{r+1} \qquad (13)$$

The oxidizer mass flow rate is calculated by:

$$\dot{m}_o = \dot{m} - \dot{m}_f \quad (14)$$

The specific volume at instance to the nozzle:

$$V_0 = R\frac{T_o}{P_O} \quad (15)$$

At the throat and exit sections, the specific volumes are calculated as:

$$V_t = V_o * \left(\frac{\gamma + 1}{2}\right)^{\frac{1}{\gamma - 1}} \quad (16)$$

$$V_e = V_o * \left(\frac{P_o}{P_e}\right)^{\frac{1}{\gamma}} \quad (17)$$

The areas at the throat and exit sections and the nozzle are:

$$A_t = \frac{\dot{m}V_t}{v_t} \quad (18)$$

$$A_e = \frac{\dot{m}V_e}{v_e} \quad (19)$$

The diameters at the throat and exit sections and the nozzle are:

$$D_e = \sqrt{\frac{4\,A_e}{\pi}} \quad (20)$$

$$D_t = \sqrt{\frac{4\,A_t}{\pi}} \quad (21)$$

The temperature at the nozzle exit is calculated by:

$$T_e = T_O\left(\frac{P_e}{P_o}\right)^{\frac{\gamma - 1}{\gamma}} \quad (22)$$

Combustion chamber design equations

The L* values of 15 to 120 inches for corresponding propellant stay-time values of 0.002-0.040 seconds have been used in various thrust chamber designs. The chamber length is calculated from the equations:

$$V_c = L^* A_t \quad (23)$$

$$V_c = 1.1 A_c L_{cyl} \quad (24)$$

The combustion chamber cross-section area equals 3-5 times the throat cross-section area.

$$D_c = \sqrt{\frac{4A_c}{\pi}} \quad (25)$$

The nozzle throat section has the contour of a circular arc with a radius R ranging from 0.5 to 1.5 times the throat radius Re. The half angle of the nozzle convergent cone section can range from 20° to 45°.

Methodology:

Rocket propulsion analysis (RPA) software is utilized for conducting comprehensive analyses of rocket propulsion systems, encompassing calculations related to rocket geometry and performance parameters. in this study, the engine specifications include a chamber pressure of 2.06 Mpa and **a desired thrust of 3 KN for the thrust** chamber. the nozzle configuration is designed to operate optimally at sea level conditions, ensuring optimal pressure at the exit plane. specifically, the nozzle adopts a conical shape with an exit angle of 15 degrees.

Regarding propellant specifications, liquid oxygen is designated as the oxidizer, while methyl-alcohol serves as the fuel, with a specified mixture ratio of 1.25. these detailed inputs have been incorporated into the RPA software as fundamental parameters for the analysis and design processes. The modeling process of the thrust chamber involved several sequential steps using specialized software tools. Initially, the geometric configuration of the thrust chamber was generated using the Geometry output functionality of the RPA software. Subsequently, the geometric data was exported in DXF file format (**Figure 5**) and imported into the Solid Works software environment. This facilitated the creation of a detailed surface model representing the thrust chamber [1,6].

Following the surface modeling phase, the Solid Works model was transferred to the workbench of the ANSYS modeling package for meshing. Meshing is a critical step in computational fluid dynamics (CFD) simulations, as it discretizes the geometric domain into smaller, manageable elements. In this instance, a mapped mesh type was employed to ensure an appropriate distribution of mesh nodes across the thrust chamber model.

Upon completion of the meshing process, various boundary conditions and features necessary for the combustion simulation were established. These included oxygen mass flow inlet boundaries, methyl-alcohol mass flow inlet boundaries, a pressure outlet boundary, an axis boundary to define symmetry or rotational axis, and several walls to encapsulate the model and define material boundaries.

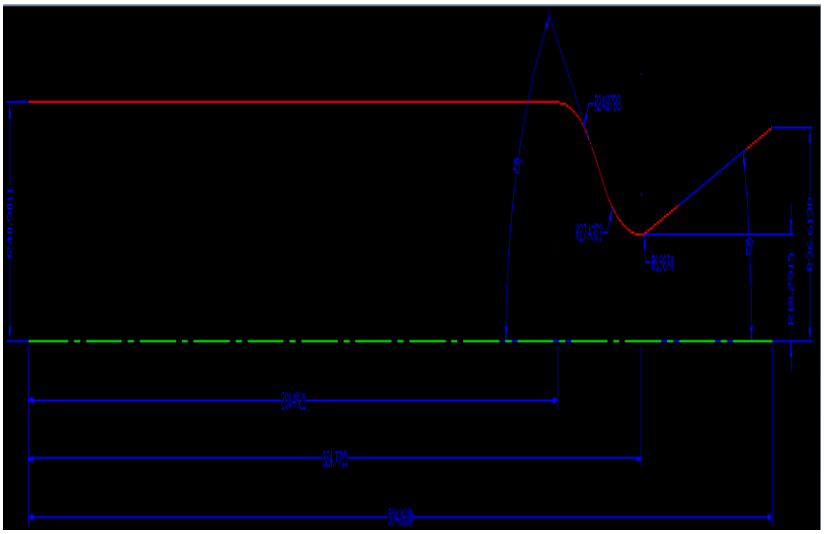

Figure 5: The DXF file when imported as a DXF file to DRAWING of Solid Works software.

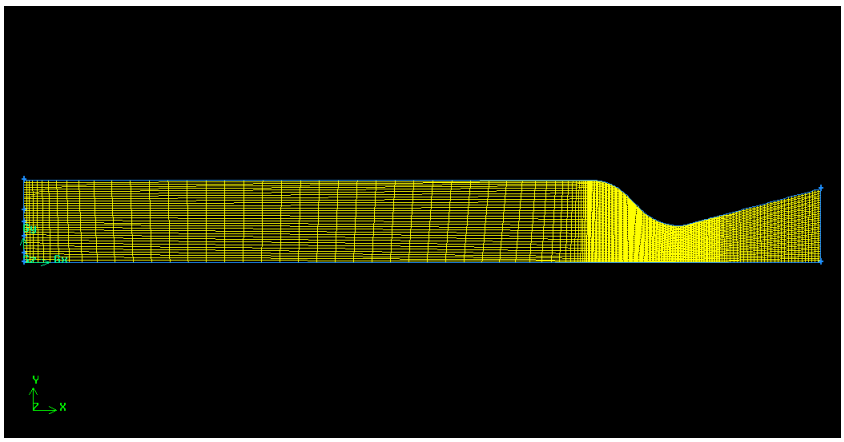

Figure 6: Generation of the mapped mesh type of the model.

The mesh density (**Figure 6**) is higher around the boundaries of the thrust chamber, the inlet zone, and the nozzle throat, in contrast to other areas of the mesh.

The exported mesh file is imported into Fluent for problem-solving purposes. The Fluent settings for the nozzle geometry design include the incorporation of the energy equation and the use of the k-epsilon viscous model. The

materials specified are methyl alcohol as the fuel and oxygen as the oxidizer. The material flow is treated as an ideal gas, and the mixing law is selected for the specific heat options.

Boundary conditions

Accordingly, the geometry of the thrust chamber is divided into zones and boundary conditions given to these are:

Table 1 Parameters of Boundary Conditions Input.

Name	Zone Type	Value
Oxygen inlet	Mass flow inlet	0.73233kg/s
Methyl-alcohol	Mass flow inlet	0.58586 kg/s
Nozzle exhaust	Pressure outlet	101325 Pa
Thrust chamber axis	Axis	————

Upon initiating the numerical analysis, a total of 3000 iterations were specified for the analysis. The axisymmetric swirl formulation was selected, utilizing a coupled solver in conjunction with the k-epsilon turbulence model.

Design equation results:

The model operates at a pressure of 2,068,427 Pa and a temperature of 3133.15 K. These values were derived from the combustion of liquid oxygen and methanol at an oxidizer-to-fuel mixture ratio (O/F) of 1.25. For liquid oxygen and methyl alcohol chamber pressure is 2068427 Pa, and the atmospheric pressure at sea level equals 101325 Pa For our propellant combination the value of the specific heat ratio. The analysis of the equations and corresponding figures indicates that the variations between the thrust chamber geometry derived from the design equations and the results produced by the RPA software are minimal. Consequently, the reliability of this model design is substantiated.

Ansys Results

Accurate simulation and analysis of these phenomena are essential for optimizing design and ensuring operational stability. Ansys, a powerful computational fluid dynamics (CFD) software, is widely employed to model and analyze such complex systems. The following results demonstrate the effectiveness of the nozzle design and highlight key aspects of fluid dynamics within the system.

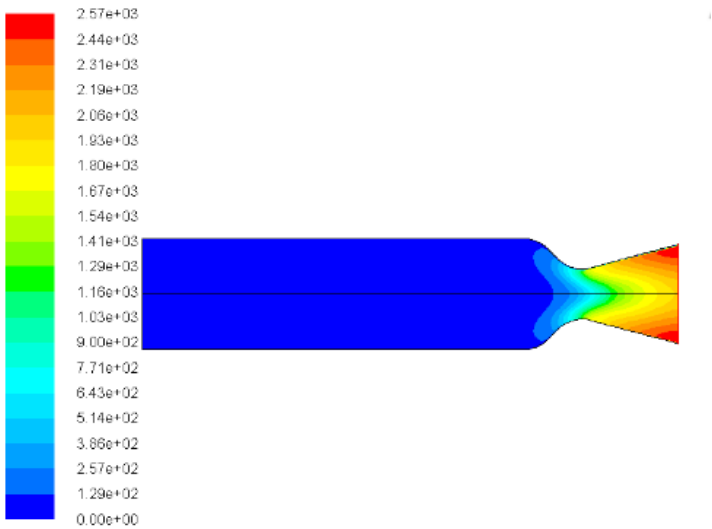

Figure 7: illustrates the velocity magnitude contours, measured in meters per second (m/s).

The velocity magnitude (**Figure 7**) increases along the length of the nozzle as the fluid expands through the divergent section. No shock waves are present within the nozzle.

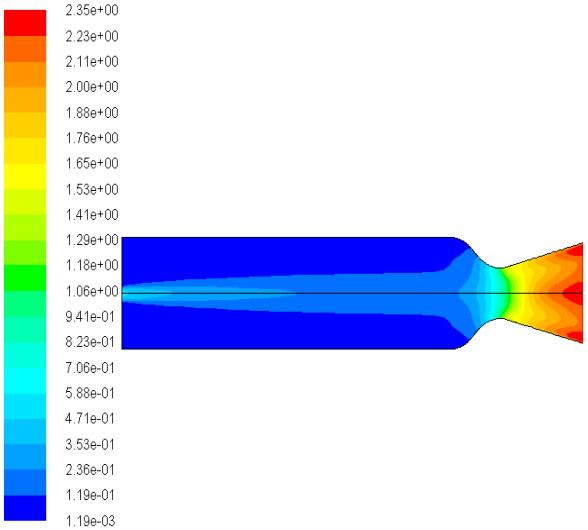

Figure 8: illustrates the Mach number contours.

The Mach number (**Figure 8**) also increases along the nozzle length as the fluid expands through the divergent section, with no shock waves detected inside the nozzle.

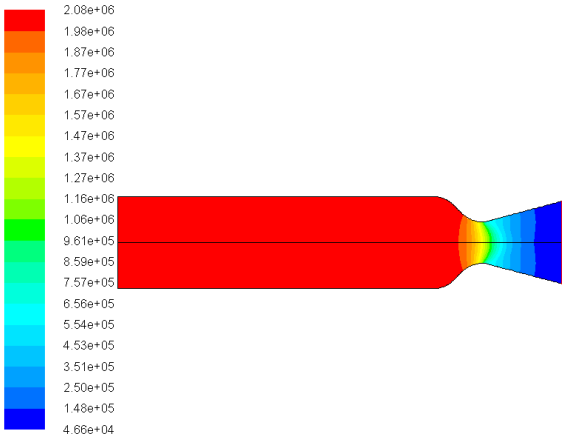

Figure 9: illustrates the static pressure contours.

Static pressure (**Figure 9**) gradually decreases along the length of the nozzle. According to Bernoulli's equation, pressure decreases as velocity increases within the expansion zone. The absence of shock waves is attributed tothe continuous pressure decrease during expansion.

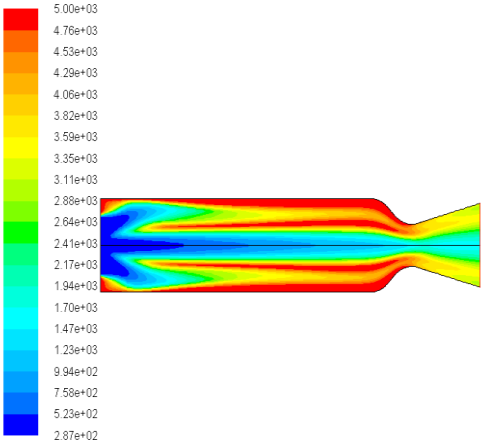

Figure 10: illustrates the static temperature contours.

The blue zones within the combustion chamber (**Figure 10**) indicate the low temperature of liquid oxygen. The temperature decreases gradually from the throat along the length of the nozzle.

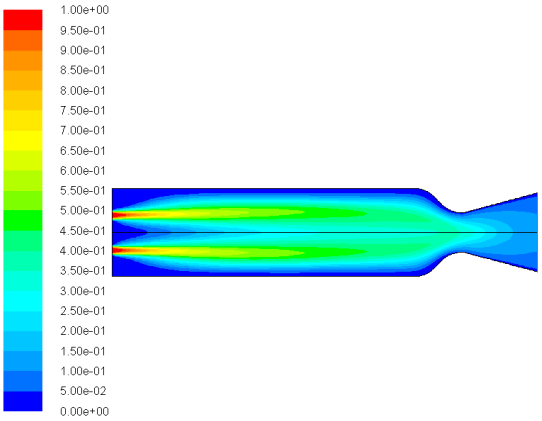

Figure 11: illustrates the mass fraction of ch3oh.

A negligible amount of CH3OH (**Figure 11**) mass fraction moves through the nozzle due to the injection system, which can be disregarded in terms of efficiency.

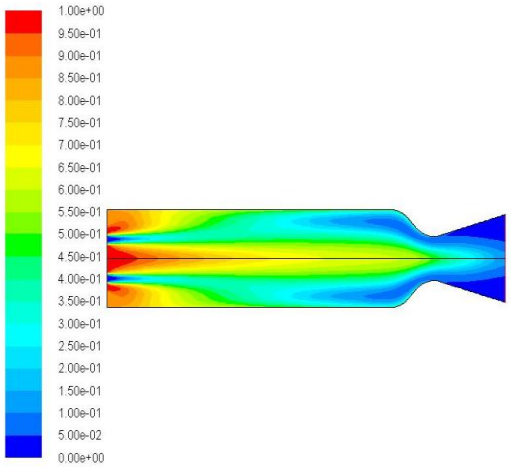

Figure 12: illustrates the mass fraction of O_2

The red zone with high values (**Figure 12**) indicates the oxygen inlets, while the blue zone in the combustion chamber shows low values, indicating the fuel inlets.

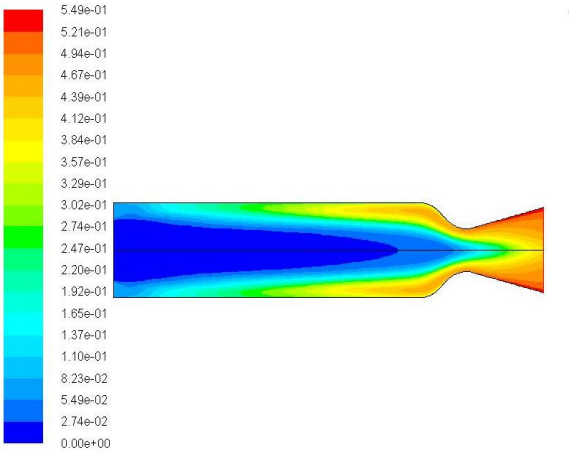

Figure 13: illustrates the mass fraction of CO_2

The blue zone within the combustion chamber (**Figure 13**) signifies that the reaction has not yet occurred, whereas the red zone contains a higher concentration of CO_2 mass fraction.

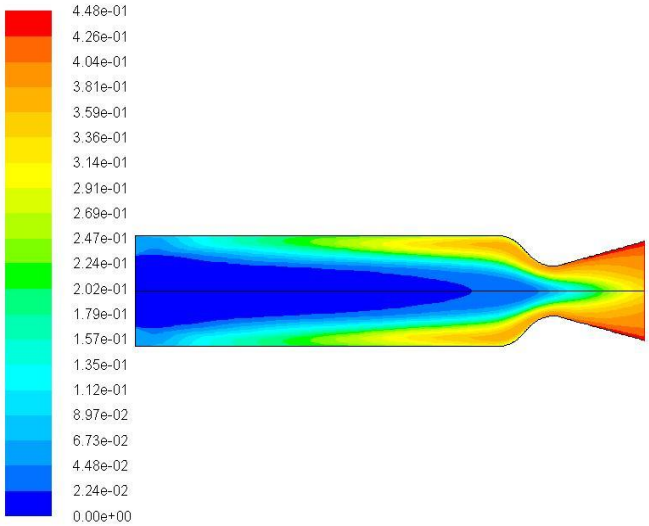

Figure 14: illustrates the mass fraction of H_2O

Similarly, the blue zone within the combustion chamber (**Figure 14**) suggests that the reaction has not yet taken place, and the red zone contains a higher concentration of H_2O mass fraction.

Conclusion

The design and development of liquid propellant rockets represent a critical and complex field within aerospace engineering. Throughout this paper, we have explored the fundamental principles, key components, and significant challenges involved in creating efficient and reliable liquid propellant rocket systems. The thrust chamber was designed by using the analytical method and the RPA software. The differences between the thrust chamber geometry which was obtained by design equations and RPA software outputs are very small and can be neglected. Then the model efficiency was checked by fluent solver analysis by using our desired operation conditions. The model efficiency was high such as there are no types of shock waves and flow separation inside the nozzle, then the model can be fabricated due to the high efficiency. Despite the remarkable progress in liquid propellant rocket technology, several challenges persist. Thermal management, thrust vector control, and reliability under extreme conditions continue to be areas requiring further research and development. Additionally, the environmental impact of propellant production and rocket launches poses a growing concern, necessitating the exploration of greener alternatives and sustainable practices.

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