IJARSCT

International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Communication and Technology

International Open-Access, Double-Blind, Peer-Reviewed, Refereed, Multidisciplinary Online Journal

ISSN: 2581-9429

Volume 5, Issue 5, December 2025

Impact Factor: 7.67

Review of Reliability-Centered Maintenance Approaches for Maximizing Mechanical Equipment Lifespan

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Abstract: *Mechanical equipment it is normal for the functional effectiveness of key components to determine the operational reliability of large mechanical equipment. Fixing mechanical equipment quickly before it breaks down is important to make sure it works well. This paper is a critical discussion of the reliable maintenance and care of mechanical systems to achieve the fullest life of equipment and efficiency. It discusses the shift in the past from reactive and preventative maintenance to smart, data-driven, predictive and reliability-focused operations that Industry 4.0 technologies provide. The principles of reliability optimization design are discussed, which focus on combining the methods of probabilistic approach and dependability on a system level. Performance comparison is drawn between various maintenance strategies, and common mechanical failures of rotating machines, including bearing, gearbox, and misalignment faults, are discussed in terms of causes and consequences. Also, the paper addresses predictive maintenance and the significance of the Internet of Things-based sensor technologies in real-time condition monitoring as part of lifecycle management. The literature review has indicated new trends related to machine learning, deep reinforcement learning, and predictive maintenance optimization models. The paper ends with defining strategic research gaps and showing the necessity of a single, AI- and IoT-based maintenance system that allow making the industry more reliable, cost-effective, and sustainable.*

Keywords: Mechanical System Reliability, Predictive Maintenance, Lifecycle Management, IoT Sensors, Equipment Lifespan, Fault Diagnosis

I. INTRODUCTION

The swift advancement of the industrial sector, the complexity and reliability standards for mechanical apparatus are progressively rising[1]. Maintaining productivity and competitiveness has grown more dependent on the ongoing and efficient functioning of machinery as companies move toward intelligent production and automation[2]. Reliability engineering is therefore, a vital discipline that strives to achieve assurance that the mechanical systems perform their intended purposes as most as required with regard to time and given conditions without collapsing[3]. This growing emphasis on dependability are aimed at minimizing downtimes, maximizing performance and the cost of operations related to unexpected failure of complex mechanical infrastructures[4]. This has resulted in reliability engineering relying more on maintenance processes. Industries used to undertake reactive maintenance which implied correcting the mistakes when they occurred. Such a solution often resulted in high-cost unplanned downtimes and reduced equipment life. The introduction of scheduled interventions on a time or use schedule was a response to the move toward preventive maintenance that minimized the threat of unexpected problems. However, the maintenance trends changed over time and adopted a predictive and prescriptive approach, allowing guided decision-making based on data and condition monitoring in real-time, with the emergence of Industry 4.0 and the introduction of smart sensors, IoT systems, and artificial intelligence [5][6][7]. This development not only enhances dependability but also allows for

DOI: 10.48175/IJARSCT-30645

maintaipning the efficient operation of the devices through the enhancement of the maintenance schedules and resource utilization[8][9].

Besides, to come up with systems that are robust and durable, it is now imperative to find out why mechanical failures occur[10]. Even though large components such as turbines, motors, and generators play significant roles in manufacturing operations, studies indicate that failure that occurs to the rest of the system is usually due to minor components of bearings, gears and shafts[11]. Factors like poor alignment, absence of lubrication and material fatigue can cause problems of little anomalies to pure failure. Due to this fact, predictive maintenance models have been based on the accurate remaining useful life (RUL) prediction to guide the engineers in the prediction of component degradation and how to schedule maintenance interventions[12].

Modern advances in AI have enabled intelligent systems to learn intricate breakdown patterns on sensor data due to recent improvements, fully revolutionizing RUL estimation[13]. These data-driven models can detect and predict fault more accurately than more traditional statistical approaches due to their ability to adjust to changing operating condition[14]. The solution is therefore an integrated structure of reliability analysis and smart maintenance technique which increase the life of equipment, enhance cost effectiveness and improve the sustainability of industries. In light of the importance of intelligent maintenance systems, predictive analytics, and reliability theory in enabling next-generation industrial resilience, this paper thoroughly analyzes the most recent advancements in mechanical system dependability and maintenance techniques.

A. Structure of Paper

The following paper is organized as follows. Section II covers reliability optimization design. Section III reviews maintenance strategies and common mechanical faults. Section IV discusses predictive maintenance and IoT-based monitoring. Section V presents recent studies and identifies research gaps toward integrated AI- and IoT-driven maintenance frameworks. Section VI concludes the paper with future scope.

II. RELIABILITY OPTIMIZATION DESIGN OF MECHANICAL PRODUCTS

In the field of optimization design, the significance of optimization design based on dependability has increased. used in two mechanical parts, the gear and the gear reducer. China has been at the forefront of designing planetary gear transmissions and gear transmissions with reliability-based optimization, among other things. The ability of a system or component to operate flawlessly under particular circumstances for a predetermined amount of time is emphasized by mechanical dependability. The DRM discusses reliability in a number of chapters since a system component failure might lead to a utility service disruption or failure. Mechanical items have unique design and analysis methods and features when compared to electronic products. In outcome, mechanical product dependability design should adhere to the following guidelines:

A. Combination of Reliability and Traditional Design

The dependability of mechanical parts may be guaranteed in the majority of situations using the conventional safety coefficient approach, which is straightforward, easy to understand, and requires little effort. However, it is now exceedingly challenging to implement classic dependability design for mechanical goods in certain situations[15]. Therefore, using probability design to refine and enhance the conventional approach appears both sensible and essential. Furthermore, it is possible to carry out the reliability probability design targeted at critical components progressively.

B. Paralleling of Mechanical Reliability and Durability

In a broad sense, durability and dependability are components of mechanical product reliability. Thus, the two previously stated are part of mechanical dependability design. Reliability design specifically addresses sporadic errors, whereas durability addresses progressive defects. Therefore, their fault mechanisms differ [16].

C. Paralleling of System and Parts Reliability

The designers must create a thorough system and part design since mechanical parts have a complicated functional status and structure, and are less standardized and universal. The most basic building block of the entire system is its parts, and their strength is the fundamental assurance of systematic reliability. In this instance, the traditional dependability design should be enhanced by the parts' design.

III. MAINTENANCE STRATEGIES FOR MECHANICAL SYSTEMS

The designed life of any piece of machinery or plant must be respected. Basic upkeep tasks that can increase the life of equipment include replacing broken parts, lubricating parts properly, and tightening up belts that are too loose. Some machines can hold their tolerances better, make fewer scraps, and make items that are more uniform and of higher quality [17]. Cleaning and fixing machines and tools so they work well and last longer is called upkeep. It includes various actions made by the company to maintain, replace, and repair the plant's equipment and components, enabling ongoing operation within acceptable bounds.

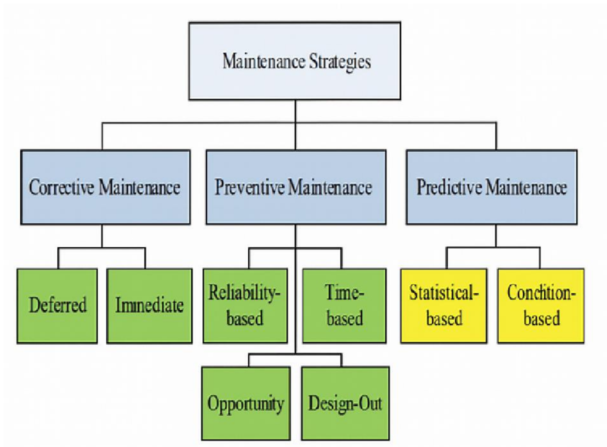

Fig. 1. Classes of maintenance strategies [18]

Maintenance management can therefore be said to be one of the remedial functions of the production management aimed at ensuring that the equipment/machines and plant services are fully in place and in good working conditions at all times. Table I compares the various maintenance techniques with respect to different characteristics, and Figure 1 shows the maintenance strategy classification

TABLE I. THE PROS AND CONS OF MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Maintenance strategy	Advantages	Disadvantages
Breakdown/Reactive (Run-to-Failure)	Very straightforward and easy to understand Needs little planning Fewer people or resources are needed	Very difficult to predict Particularly very expensive Making plans and schedules for staff is hard There is a safety risk.
Preventive	Fewer accidents Less downtime A safer place to work Longer useful lives for assets Better quality of production	More work required to complete the task Equipment that has to be maintained too often (wasting money and time) Equipment that wears out too quickly
Predictive [19]	Improvements in manufacturing efficiency, component operational life and availability, less repair time and unexpected failures, decreased maintenance costs are all	Problems with installation configuration, and operation high start-up costs equipment limitations

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Volume 5, Issue 5, December 2025
Impact Factor: 7.67

	outcomes of this strategy. allows for proactive measures to be taken to fix problems before they ever happen.	incorrectly interpreted data resulting in unnecessary maintenance requests.
Reliability-centred maintenance	Reduces maintenance expenses, which in turn lowers personnel costs increases equipment availability and dependability aids in preventing loss of life, property damage, and environmental degradation incorporates root cause analysis.	Training and equipment can be expensive up front. Management may not see any savings potential. Accurate and full asset data demands a certain level of maintenance maturity.

A. Mechanical Faults in Rotating Machines (RMs)

Manufacturing, transportation, and power generation are just a few of the industrial domains where RMs are vital. Turbines, motors, generators, and other forms of spinning machinery are required to transform mechanical energy into usable work [20]. These machines' complex mechanical and electrical parts make them efficient, reliable, and versatile—but also prone to a wide range of unsavoury failures. Mainly utilised IMs include the rotor, shaft, stator, windings, bearings, and various electrical and mechanical parts. The RMs mainly consist of gearboxes and rolling element bearings that facilitate the operation of the [21]. In such machinery, mechanical faults—which include gearbox, misalignment, and bearing issues—are the most common [22]. Table II lists some mechanical failures, their causes, and their effects.

TABLE II. SUMMARY OF MECHANICAL FAULTS, THEIR CAUSES, AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THESE FAULTS [23]

Fault	Causes	Consequences
Bearing fault	Increase in shaft voltage above the insulating capability of the bearing grease Shaft misalignment/imbalance Overload Loss/contamination of lubricants Manufacturing flaws Increased temperatures	Excessive vibration and eventual bearing failure Accelerated wear on rotating components Ripple in output torque Ripple in current harmonic spectrum at definite frequency Eccentricity faults
Gearbox fault	Overload Improper lubrication Misalignment Frosting Surface contamination Manufacturing flaws	Dynamic Instabilities (vibrations) Fluctuations in load transmitted to the driven machinery Mechanical losses in the power transmission system Structural Fatigue
Misalignment fault	Incorrect alignment of drive shaft with load Center of mass does not lie on the axis of rotation, i.e., heavy spot-on rotor Installation errors Failure in bearings	Premature wear to mechanical drive components Vibration being fed into both the load and the motor drive shaft Eccentricity faults Gear and bearing damage

Bearing, gearbox, and misalignment faults are all defined and explained, along with the ways in which they impact the mechanical components of RMs. [24]. Moreover, the detailed description of the causes and effects of each type of fault is presented in the subsequent subsections beginning with a thorough investigation of the faults of rolling bearings, then gear faults, and lastly, misalignment faults.

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IV. PREDICTIVE MAINTENANCE IN LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT

Predictive maintenance is very important in lifecycle management. Predictive maintenance improves system performance and eliminates system failures by combining real-time monitoring and data analytics. In order to keep costs down and system efficiency high, it helps to decide whether to fix, replace, or update components. System planning, design, operation, maintenance, and disposal are all part of a system's lifecycle [25]. It is the management of the overall life of the system, including its conception to decommissioning[26]. Lifestyle management is necessary to make sure that systems are optimized to perform well and to be economical to use considering the necessity to be able to operate and the limits of the budget, resources, and time. Lifecycle Management Stages:

• Design and Development: The system's lifetime is defined during the design phase. Throughout the system's lifetime, it's important to think about not just the performance need but also the possible failure modes, maintenance needs, and operating circumstances.

• Operational Use: This step is associated with the constant observation of the health of the system, which can be carried out by sensors and diagnostic devices. The real-time data serve as input to make decisions as to when repairs, replacement, and upgrades made.

• Maintenance and Upgrades: The maintenance activities play an essential role in making the system reliable and improving its operational life[27]. Use of modular components, straightforward diagnostics, and efficient maintenance procedures are all ways to make system design simpler to maintain. Additionally, new technologies or unforeseen issues may need the updates.

• Decommissioning and Disposal: The system's decommissioning and disposal are problematic when its useful life is over. Managing this stage in a way that has the least negative impact on the environment and recovery costs is essential to effective lifecycle management.

A. IoT Technologies in Industrial Predictive Maintenance

Contemporary industrial IoT infrastructures utilize a variety of sensor technology (see in Table III) in order to obtain a complete set of machine health-related indicators[28]. Vibration analysis is still considered as the basic of rotating machines where accelerometers and velocity sensors are used to identify imbalance, misalignment, bearing defects and other mechanical irregularities[29]. Thermal sensors detect thermal abnormalities associated with friction, electrical, or cooling system problems using thermocouples, RTDs and infrared sensors

TABLE III. IOT SENSOR TECHNOLOGIES FOR INDUSTRIAL PREDICTIVE MAINTENANCE [30]

Sensor Type	Parameters	Measurement	Fault Detection Capability	Typical Equipment
Accelerometer	Vibration (acceleration)	±2g to ±200g	Bearing defects, imbalance, misalignment, looseness, gear faults	Motors, pumps, gearboxes, turbines
Infrared Thermal Camera	Infrared Thermal Camera	Infrared Thermal Camera	Infrared Thermal Camera	Infrared Thermal Camera
Velocity Sensor	Vibration (velocity)	0.1-100 mm/s RMS	Overall machinery health, resonance detection	Rotating machinery, fans, compressors
Thermocouple	Temperature	−200 °C to +1800 °C	Overheating, thermal degradation, cooling failures	Motors, bearings, transformers, furnaces
RTD (Resistance Temperature Detector)	Temperature	−200 °C to +850 °C	Precise temperature trends, thermal abnormalities	Critical bearings, windings, process equipment
Current Sensor (CT)	Electrical current	0–1000 A+	Motor degradation, phase imbalance, rotor bar faults	Electric motors, generators, transformers
Voltage Sensor	Electrical voltage	0–690 V AC/DC	Power quality issues, insulation breakdown, loose	Electrical systems, motor drives

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			connections	
Acoustic Emission Sensor	Acoustic Emission Sensor	Acoustic Emission Sensor	Acoustic Emission Sensor	Acoustic Emission Sensor
Pressure Sensor	Fluid/gas pressure	0–10,000 psi	Leak detection, blockages, pump degradation	Hydraulic systems, pneumatic systems, pipelines
Ultrasonic Sensor	Ultrasonic sound waves	20 kHz–100 kHz	Air/gas leakage, bearing lubrication issues, electrical arcing	Compressed air systems, steam traps, electrical equipment
Oil Quality Sensor	Viscosity, moisture, contamination	Varies by parameter	Lubricant degradation, wear particles, contamination	Gearboxes, engines, hydraulic systems
Flow Meter	Flow Meter	Flow Meter	Flow Meter	Flow Meter

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

The reliability of the mechanical system is highlighted here where special emphasis on the methods that enable the equipment to have maximum life as explained below in Table IV:

Rathore, (2025) reports on such new technologies as 3D printing, greener energy models, robotics, and the Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial intelligence (AI) in the mechanical arena. These technologies contribute to improving productivity and accuracy and adapting mechanical engineering to the global environmental goals, including carbon emissions reduction, more efficient resource use, or adherence to the postulates of a circular economy. The article concludes that the future of mechanical engineering based on creative strategies that reap the growth of industries as well as being considerate to the environment[31].

Yuan et al., (2025) provide a novel approach to reliability reconstruction that would redesign the reliability measure during training, assisting the DRL agent in striking a better cost-reliability balance. In contrast to traditional maintenance methods, which base maintenance choices on schedules or fixed thresholds, DRL-based agents continuously learn and modify maintenance decisions based on the condition of the equipment and do not require preset maintenance thresholds. By combining a realistic dependability model with a multi-objective reward, the framework improves decision-making and safety compared to earlier reinforcement learning approaches that tended to just reduce cost or use basic degradation models. The CNC machine tool and aviation engine case studies, where the taught rules dramatically lower maintenance costs while retaining high dependability, confirm the framework. The suggested approach demonstrates its better efficacy and flexibility for intelligent maintenance planning by outperforming baseline solutions in cost savings and reliability trade-offs[32].

Liu et al., (2024) The idea of reliability-centered maintenance (RCM) is put forward to find the most important parts of performing preventive maintenance on single-unit mechanical equipment. PM models are also created to give a more realistic plan for PM. propose two PM optimisation models that account for time-varying failure rates; one model aims to maximise availability and the other to minimise costs. The models' validity is demonstrated by the usage of a six-part tire-building machine component as an example of a PM plan. The two sections of the maintenance plan that were analysed in the availability maximisation model had availability results over 0.99, while the four parts that were analysed in the cost minimisation model had total costs per unit of time below 5.69 [33].

Vincent et al., (2024) explains how current industrial paradigms are compatible with predictive maintenance. RF, LR, Exponential Smoothing, ARIMA, and LSTM are five popular forecasting models that were evaluated in the study for their ability to anticipate industrial equipment maintenance. The effectiveness of each model was evaluated using a range of performance criteria. A high R-squared value suggests that the model adequately explains a significant

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percentage of the observed data variability. Maximal R-squared, minimum MSE, and root mean squared errors are indicators of a model's correctness [34].

Ji, (2023) Investigations into the effects of ML technology on mechanical system reliability assessment and prediction have shown that ML approaches, when applied, may boost the accuracy of predictions and the recovery rate of reliability assessment models. The reliability evaluation model of mechanical systems based on metal learning methodologies has enhanced accuracy by approximately 8% and recall by 10%; users are quite satisfied with this model. The study's results show how machine learning technology can be used for many different things and how important it is for mechanical system reliability evaluation and forecasting [35].

Miraje et al., (2022) Examine many machine learning algorithms that are frequently used for predictive maintenance, including as ensemble approaches, deep learning models, and supervised and unsupervised learning strategies. Analyse real-world examples from the energy, industrial, automotive, and aerospace industries that show how machine learning may be applied for predictive maintenance. Lastly, discuss the methods and metrics utilised for performance evaluation of predictive maintenance models, including F1-score, accuracy, precision, and recall, to determine their reliability and effectiveness. The purpose of this research is to provide light on the potential impact of ML on predictive maintenance and the optimisation of mechanical system lifespan and performance [36].

TABLE IV. SUMMARY OF RECENT STUDY ON MECHANICAL SYSTEM RELIABILITY AND PREDICTIVE MAINTENANCE

Author	Focus/Objective	Techniques/Methods	Key Findings/Outcomes	Limitations / Recommendations
Rathore (2025)	Trends in mechanical engineering for efficiency & sustainability	3D printing, IoT, AI, robotics, eco-friendly energy systems	Enhances productivity and accuracy while supporting environmental sustainability and circular economy principles	Focuses on broad technological trends; lacks detailed case studies or quantitative evaluation of performance gains
Yuan et al. (2025)	Reliability reconstruction and adaptive maintenance	DRL-based framework with multi-objective reward	Reduces maintenance cost while maintaining high reliability; outperforms conventional and prior RL approaches	Applied to limited case studies (CNC tools, aircraft engines); needs validation on diverse equipment and larger-scale industrial settings
Liu et al. (2024)	Preventive maintenance for single-unit equipment	Reliability-Centered Maintenance (RCM), PM optimization models	Availability >0.99 for critical parts; cost per unit time <5.69 for other components; validates PM optimization models	Limited to single-unit or component-level analysis; scalability and integration with IoT/real-time monitoring not addressed
Vincent et al. (2024)	Forecasting for predictive maintenance	Random Forest, Linear Regression, ARIMA, Exponential Smoothing, LSTM	Accuracy measured via R^2, MSE, RMSE; identifies best-performing forecasting models for equipment maintenance	Focused on model comparison; lacks integration with adaptive maintenance strategies and real-time data streams
Ji (2023)	Machine learning for reliability evaluation	ML-based reliability prediction models	Increases prediction accuracy (~8%) and recall (~10%), improving user satisfaction and model effectiveness	Mostly theoretical evaluation; limited practical implementation and cross-equipment validation
Miraje et al. (2022)	Machine learning for predictive	Deep learning, ensemble techniques,	Increases operational effectiveness, lowers	General overview; lacks detailed framework for

	maintenance	and supervised/unsupervised learning	maintenance expenses and downtime, and shows useful machine learning applications across sectors.	deployment and multi-objective optimization including cost, reliability, and sustainability

Research Gap: Recent studies on predictive maintenance and mechanical system reliability have developed using DRL, machine learning, and optimization models; but the vast majority of studies examine individual equipment or particular cases, which makes them less generalizable. There is still no integration of emerging technologies into a single, real-time, and sustainable maintenance framework, including the IoT, AI, and digital twins. Additionally, there are not many methods to maintain the balance between cost, reliability and environmental goals, and the holistic, adaptive, and scalable maintenance solution is needed.

VI. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

The growing sophistication of the contemporary industrial practice has augmented the necessity of reliability-focused technologies to guarantee ongoing functioning and reduce the quantity of unplanned terminations in the industrial setup. In the current study, reliability-based technologies in industrial systems and maintenance are considered to be important in terms of guaranteeing long-term efficiency of operational activities and decreasing unexpected interruptions in the industrial systems. The paper highlights the shift toward more intelligent processes of relying on data and AI technologies to optimize the reliability of various systems, instead of the traditional reactive ones, by providing a detailed analysis of reliability optimization design, maintenance methods, and predictive maintenance incorporation. Supported by sensor-based monitoring and advanced data analytics, predictive maintenance has shown itself to be a highly effective way of improving the availability of equipment, the accuracy of fault detection, and cost-effectiveness throughout the lifecycle of machinery. The literature review indicates that there has been significant advancement in machine-learning and reinforcement learning-based reliability models but it also shows that there is a gap in scalable frameworks to incorporate real-time monitoring, cost optimization and sustainability. The next-generation industrial architectures must be holistic, AI-driven, and IoT-driven maintenance architectures, which are able to make adaptive decisions, guaranteeing greater reliability, longer equipment life, and a sustainable industrial future.

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