



UNIVERSITI TEKNIKAL MALAYSIA MELAKA

**DESIGN AND ANALYSIS OF CAST METAL MATRIX
USING CAD TOOLS**

This report is submitted in accordance with requirement of the Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM) for the Bachelor Degree of Manufacturing Engineering (Manufacturing Design) with Honours.

by

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ABSTRACT

This project presents the new design of cast metal matrix automotive wheel using simulation of low pressure die casting. By using CATIA, a 3-dimensional model of new automotive wheel design is developed as the master pattern. As an approach to simulate the actual casting process, casting simulation tool is used to introduce the cast metal matrix material with composition of aluminium A356 alloy and 20wt% SiC particles into the cast wheel. Then, the finite element model of the wheel is built and solved by using ANSYS, followed by a discussion on the casting simulation using AnyCasting software. Finally, a scaled-down rapid prototype model is produced to represent the master pattern for casting.

ABSTRAK

Projek ini mempersembahkan rekaan baru roda kereta matriks logam tuangan dengan menggunakan simulasi tuangan tekanan rendah. Dengan menggunakan CATIA, satu model 3-dimensi roda rekaan baru telah dihasilkan untuk dijadikan pattern untuk simulasi process tuangan. Sebagai satu pendekatan, alat simulasi proses tuangan telah digunakan untuk memasukkan komposisi matriks logam tuangan yang mengandungi aloi aluminium A356 dan 20wt% butiran kecil SiC ke roda tuangan tersebut. Seterusnya, sebuah model unsur terhingga dibina dengan menggunakan ANSYS. Keputusan simulasi menggunakan perisian AnyCasting dan ANSYS dibincangkan untuk mengenalpasti kerosakan tuangan. Akhir sekali, sebuah model prototaip yang dikecilkan dihasilkan untuk menunjukkan paten tunggal bagi process tuangan.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this report to my parents, my mentors, and my friends. Without their patience, understanding, support, and most of all love, the completion of this work would not have been possible.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

Abstract.....	i
Abstrak.....	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgement.....	iv
Table of Content.....	v
List of Tables.....	viii
List of Figures.....	ix
List of Abbreviation.....	xii
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Project Background.....	1
1.2 Problem Statement.....	2
1.3 Objectives.....	3
1.4 Scope of Project.....	3
1.5 Organisation.....	4
1.6 Gantt Chart for PSM 1 & 2.....	5
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	6
2.1 Cast Metal Matrix/Metal Matrix Composites (MMCs).....	6
2.1.1 Aluminium and Aluminium Alloys.....	6
2.1.2 Silicon Carbide (SiC).....	9
2.2 Application of Cast Metal Matrix in Automotive Wheel Production.....	9
2.3 Fabrication of MMC Wheel – Casting Process.....	12
2.3.1 Sand Casting.....	13
2.3.2 Squeeze Casting.....	13
2.3.3 Investment Casting.....	14
2.3.4 Low Pressure Die Casting.....	14
2.4 Automotive Rim/Wheel.....	17

2.4.1	Rim Nomenclature.....	18
2.4.2	Type of Wheel Material.....	19
2.4.2.1	Wire Spoke Wheel.....	19
2.4.2.2	Steel Disc Wheel.....	20
2.4.2.3	Light Alloy Wheel.....	20
2.5	Enkei.....	21
2.5.1	Enkei EV5.....	22
2.6	Casting Simulation.....	23
2.6.1	CATIA.....	24
2.6.2	Solidworks.....	26
2.6.3	ANSYS.....	27
2.6.4	AnyCasting.....	27
2.7	Rapid Prototyping (RP).....	28
2.7.1	Fused Deposition Modelling (FDM).....	29
3.	METHODOLOGY.....	31
3.1	Introduction.....	31
3.2	Flow Chart of Methodology Process.....	32
3.3	Problem Definition.....	33
3.3.1	Objective Tree Method.....	33
3.3.2	The Functional Analysis Method	35
3.4	Concept Generation.....	35
3.5	Concept Evaluation & Selection.....	40
3.6	Preliminary Design.....	41
3.6.1	Material – Cast Metal Matrix.....	42
3.7	3D Modelling of Wheel and Die Design.....	43
3.8	Casting Simulation and Analysis.....	47
3.9	Static Structural Analysis.....	48
3.10	Fabrication of Rapid Prototype (RP).....	48

4.	RESULT AND DISCUSSION.....	50
4.1	Design for Low Pressure Die Casting – Gating and Cooling System.....	50
4.2	Setup of AnyCasting Simulation.....	51
4.2.1	Set Entity.....	52
4.2.2	Mesh Generation.....	52
4.2.3	Task Design and Material Selection.....	54
4.2.4	Initial Conditions for Heat Transfer Model.....	56
4.2.5	Sensors and Cooling Channel.....	58
4.3	AnyCasting Simulation Results.....	59
4.3.1	Filling Sequence.....	60
4.3.2	Solidification Time	61
4.3.3	Velocity vs. Time Graphs.....	63
4.3.4	Temperature vs. Time Graphs.....	65
4.3.5	Air Entrapment Sequence.....	69
4.3.6	Retained Melt Modulus.....	69
4.4	ANSYS – Static Structural Analysis.....	71
4.4.1	Total/Directional Deformation.....	73
4.4.2	Stress/Strain Analysis.....	75
4.4.3	Thermal Strain Analysis.....	77
5.	CONCLUSION.....	79
	REFERENCES.....	81

APPENDICES

- A Shape of Rim
- B Rim Size Designation
- C SAE Wheel Standards
- D Detail Drawing of Gating System
- E Detail Drawing of Cooling System

LIST OF TABLES

2.1	Properties comparison of pure aluminium, A356 aluminium alloy, Duralcan F3S.20S and AM60A magnesium alloy	11
3.1	Morphological chart of wheel design	36
3.2	Concept scoring of all three designs	40
3.3	Chemical composition of A356 alloys	42
4.1	Functions of low pressure die casting components	51
4.2	Initial temperature for stalk and mould	56
4.3	Heat transfer coefficients of the entities	56
4.4	Pressure setting of the injection	56
4.5	Settings of cooling channels	59
4.6	Filling % and solidification % of the overall process	63
4.7	Properties of Duralcan F3S.20S (T6)	73

LIST OF FIGURES

2.1a	The yield Re of composite materials on an Al-4.5% Cu-1.5% Mg matrix reinforced with SiC dispersion particles of 10.7mm	8
2.1b	The tensile strength Rm of composite materials on an Al-4.5% Cu-1.5% Mg matrix reinforced with SiC dispersion particles of 10.7mm diameter	8
2.2	Components in low pressure die casting process	15
2.3	Microstructure of cast A356 wheel with reference to the different positions analyzed where R-Rim, S-Spoke, H-Hub	16
2.4	Cast alloy wheel	17
2.5	Rim nomenclature	18
2.6	Enkei performance rim EV5	22
2.7a	Simulation of calculated melt velocity at 20% of die filling the wheel	23
2.7b	Simulation of calculated melt velocity at 70% of die filling the wheel	23
2.8	Product requirement drive the design intent	25
2.9	Knowledgeable features to impose the design intent of a wheel design	26
2.10	Part produced by FDM technology	29
2.11	Fabrication of parts using FDM machine	30
3.1	Flow chart of methodology process	32
3.2	Objective tree of cast automotive wheel	34
3.3	Sketch of design 1	37
3.4	Sketch of design 2	38
3.5	Sketch of design 3	39
3.6	Preliminary design of wheel	41
3.7	3D model of wheel design	44
3.8	Detail drawing of 3D wheel model using CATIA	45
3.9	Exploded view of gating and cooling system design	46
3.10	CAD models of casting moulds for an aluminium disc wheel	47

4.1	Components of low pressure die casting simulation for automotive wheel	50
4.2	Import of .STL files and setting of entities	52
4.3	Mesh generation in X-axis direction	53
4.4	Mesh generation in Y-axis direction	53
4.5	Mesh generation in Z-axis direction	54
4.6	Thermal properties of Duralcan F3S.20S-T6 (A356 – 20% SiC) for cavity, ingate and cast feeder	55
4.7	Thermal properties of cast Steel SKD61 for stalk and mould	55
4.8	Relationships between heat Transfer coefficient, entities and material	57
4.9	Gate position (Circled in red)	58
4.10	Direction of gravity force	58
4.11	Sensors placement in the cast model	58
4.12	Generation of actual casting product	60
4.13	Filling sequence	61
4.14	Regions that solidify during 5.121s	62
4.15	Solidification trend of wheel casting	62
4.16	Velocity vs. Time Graph (Sensor 1, Center of Hub)	64
4.17	Velocity vs. Time Graph (Sensor 4, Spoke)	64
4.18	Velocity vs. Time Graph (Sensor 6, Rim)	65
4.19	Temperature vs. Time Graph – Sensor 1 (cavity, core)	66
4.20	Temperature vs. Time Graph – Sensor 4 (cavity, spoke)	66
4.21	Temperature vs. Time Graph – Sensor 5 (cavity, rim)	67
4.22	Temperature vs. Time Graph – Sensor 2 (mould, center of hub)	67
4.23	Temperature vs. Time Graph – Sensor 3 (mould, side of hub)	68
4.24	Temperature vs. Time Graph – Sensor 6 (mould, spoke)	68
4.25	Air entrapment sequence	69
4.26	Regions that have least retained melt	70
4.27	The rim surface and edge are showing high percentage of retained melt	70
4.28	Meshing of wheel	72
4.29	Fixed supports on the bolt holes	72

4.30	Car load in $-Z$ direction	72
4.31	Virtual tire pressure	72
4.32	Total deformation of the wheel	74
4.33	Directional deformation in Y-axis	74
4.34	Equivalent (Von-Mises) stress	75
4.35	Equivalent (Von-Mises) strain	76
4.36	Maximum principal stress	76
4.37	Maximum principal strain	77
4.38	Thermal strain under temperature 39°C	78

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

2D	-	Two Dimensional
3D	-	Three Dimensional
CAD	-	Computer Aided Design
CAE	-	Computer Aided Engineering
CATIA	-	Computer Aided Three-dimensional Interactive Application
FDM	-	Fused Deposition Modelling
FE	-	Finite Element
FEA	-	Finite Element Analysis
MMC	-	Metal Matrix Composite
RP	-	Rapid Prototype

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

Cast metal Matrix, or metal matrix composites (MMC's), an evolutionary composite material for reinforcement and weight reduction in casting products, has showed significant success in industries such as automotive, aerospace and electronics for the past 10 years (Kaczmar et al., 2000; Sala, 2002). By adding in sufficient reinforcement, the mechanical properties of soft metal alloys can be greatly enhanced. Improvement on the yield strength and tensile strength can be clearly seen after the metal alloys are being reinforced (Kaczmar et al., 2000).

In designing and producing a new product, time and cost are inevitably the main constraints that urge manufacturer to find new ways to lower manufacturing cost together with increased productivity (Edwards, 2004). Hence, computer aided engineering (CAD) tools show its advantages in making the lead time of design process shorter and reduce the cost of producing prototype by efficiently create and modify the 3-D model (Carman & Tigwell, 1998; Materialise, 2009).

Conventionally, the design of cast metal matrix involves fabricating the physical specimens for analysis on the microstructures of casting and study on their mechanical behavior (Clegg & Lim, 1997; Jasmi, 2001; Sala, 2002; Vijayaram et al., 2006; Yamagata et al., 2008). It not only requires longer lead time but also higher

manufacturing cost. Therefore, this has come to a demand in a new method of producing cast metal matrix in a cheaper and faster way.

Modern 3-dimensional modeling, analysis and simulation tools play an important role in reducing the lead time and the cost of design process. Casting simulation tools such as ProCAST has replaced the conventional method of designing and analyzing of cast metal matrix (Taufik et al., 2009). Also, numerical techniques like finite element method is applied to do modeling of composites solidification process, which helps the manufacturing industries to study the casting parameters such as temperature history (Vijayaram et al., 2006; Taufik et al., 2009).

For this project, a new design of cast MMC automotive wheel using aluminium A356 as binding material (matrix) and Silicon Carbide particles (reinforcement) will be developed and analysis will be conducted on the product using simulation of CAD tools. The simulated analysis results will be compared with the experimental results obtained from the previous studies.

1.2 Problem Statement

Cast Metal Matrix has proven to be effective and reliable in casting automotive products such as connecting rods in weight reduction and reinforcement (Sala, 2002). In the previous studies, actual cast specimens or products are needed to be fabricated in order to analyze the mechanical properties of cast metal matrix such as impact strength and yield strength. This leads to higher cost consumption and longer lead time in the design stage of new product development. The effectiveness of implementing CAD and casting simulation tools in the design of cast metal matrix has yet to be proven. The study on the impact of Cast Metal Matrix design parameters such as gating system, cooling channel design, flow pattern and solidification are necessary to predict the quality of final casting product.

1.3 Objectives

The aims of this paper are:

- To study the design parameters of producing cast metal matrix using CAD tools.
- To design and analyze a cast MMC automotive wheel using CAD and casting simulation tools.
- To propose the new design of cast MMC wheel.

1.4 Scope of Project

The research project will focus primarily on the design, analysis and simulation of the 3D model of the cast metal matrix wheels. Other aspects such as actual casting process and parameters will not be discussed in this project. Various tools such as CATIA, Solidworks, AnyCasting and ANSYS will be used for the 3D modeling, casting simulation and structural analysis. As an approach, a combination of A356 alloy (matrix) and 20wt% of SiC dispersion particles (reinforcement) will be used as the material of wheel design in one of the casting simulators, AnyCasting to simulate the low pressure die casting process of cast wheel. The structural analysis of new MMC wheel design will be focused on the part performance which includes stress/strain distribution, deformation and thermal strain. Finally, a scale-downed rapid prototype model of the cast wheel will be produced to represent the master pattern for casting process.

1.5 Organisation

The organization of this report is as follows: Chapter 2 describes the literature review of the related journals and papers of previous researches conducted by other parties. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology of the project using the CAD tools. First the 3D models of wheel design and gating system components are produced using CATIA and Solidworks respectively. After that, the properties of MMC material is introduced into the simulation model using AnyCasting software. Then, the finite element model is constructed and solved using ANSYS via the static structural analysis. A brief description of the design process of the cast metal matrix is also included in this chapter. Chapter 4 presents the detailed simulation studies carried out for new MMC wheel design. An analysis on the flow pattern, air entrapment, and impurities prediction of low pressure die casting simulation and the structural behavior of the product were discussed in this chapter as well. Lastly, the results and findings of the study are concluded in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Cast Metal Matrix/Metal Matrix Composites (MMCs)

A metal matrix composite is one of the composite materials consists of a binding metal (matrix) and one/more than one reinforcement material in the form of either particle, fibre, or layer (Callister, 2003). Cast metal matrix is a type of MMC produced by the casting process. Ductile metals, such as aluminium, magnesium, titanium and their alloys, have been popular matrices for MMCs applied in industries such as aerospace, automotive, defence and construction (Clegg & Lim, 1997).

2.1.1 Aluminium and Aluminium Alloys

In accordance with Degarmo et al. (2003), aluminium is the most important nonferrous metal that has principal uses in transportation, construction, electrical applications, containers and packaging, consumer durables, and mechanical equipment. Pure aluminium is soft and ductile and has a specific gravity of 2.7, which is a relatively light weight metal compared to steel (specific gravity 7.85). Due the low density properties of pure aluminium, alloying process is favoured in acquiring greater strength in non-electrical applications. The low melting point of aluminium (approximately 660°C) makes the alloying process easier (Callister, 2003).

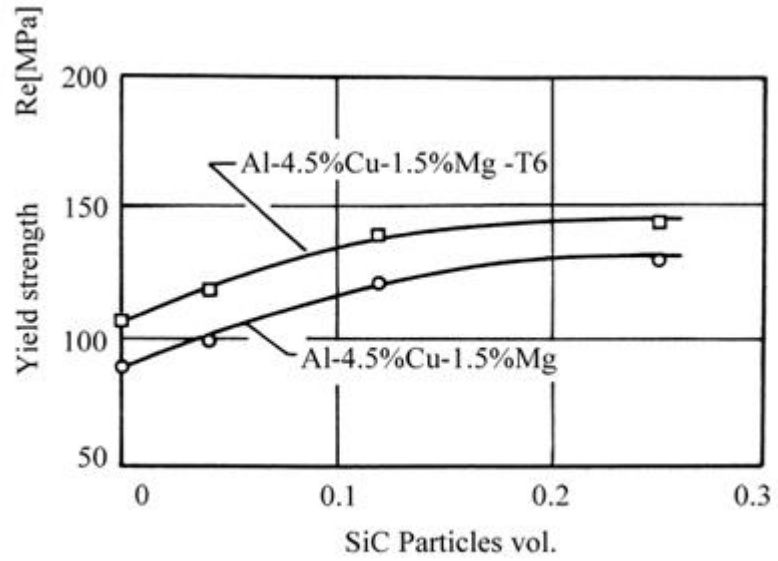
- Characteristics of pure aluminium (Ahmad & George, 2000) :
 - easily formed, machined, and casted
 - although not found free in nature, aluminium is an abundant element in the earth's crust
 - low density
 - corrosion resistant
 - non-magnetic
 - non-combustible
 - highly reflective
 - heat barrier and conductor
 - malleable

- Properties of pure aluminium (Degarmo et al., 2003) :
 - Density/Specific Gravity (g/cm^3 at 20°C) = 2.70
 - Melting Point ($^\circ\text{C}$) = 660
 - Specific heat at 100°C , $\text{cal.g}^{-1}\text{K}^{-1}$ ($\text{Jkg}^{-1}\text{K}^{-1}$) = 0.2241 (938)
 - Thermal conductivity (W/mK) = 237
 - Thermal emmisivity at 100°F (%) = 3.0

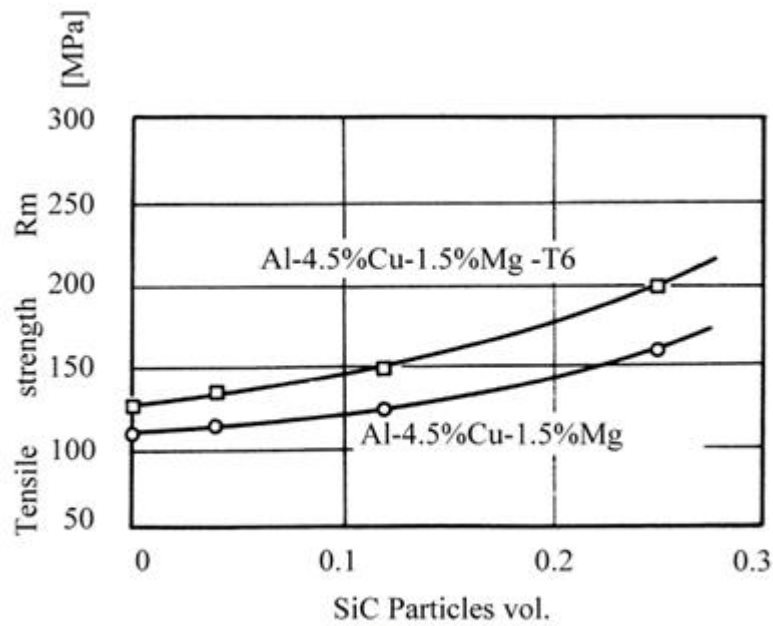
Conventionally the mechanical strength of aluminium is enhanced by cold work and by alloying them with some of the principal elements such as copper, magnesium, silicon, manganese, and zinc (Callister, 2003). However, both of these processes tend to reduce the corrosion resistance of aluminium.

An important feature of aluminium and its alloys (and other non - ferrous alloys) is that the fatigue strength aluminium alloys continues to fall with increasing stress cycles, unlike ferrous alloys that exhibit finite fatigue endurance strength, and this must be accounted for in design process.

MMC system of aluminium alloy matrix reinforced by SiC dispersion particles has further strengthened the aluminium alloys. In the previous studies of Kaczmar et al. (2000), results showed that the increase of SiC 10.7mm dispersion particles has improved the yield and tensile strength of Al-4.5%Cu-1.5%Mg alloy (Figure 2.1a & b).



(a)



(b)

Figure 2.1: (a) The yield R_e and (b) the tensile strength R_m of composite materials on an Al-4.5% Cu - 1.5%Mg matrix reinforced with SiC dispersion particles of 10.7mm diameter (Kaczmar et al., 2000).