

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF ELECTRICAL DISCHARGE MACHINE  
ON TITANIUM ALLOY USING COPPER IMPREGNATED  
GRAPHITE ELECTRODE

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First of all, all the praises and thanks be to Allah S.W.T for His Love,

This thesis is dedicated to my family,

*To my beloved parent,*

Maimunah Hj Abdullah,

*My supportive wife,*

Amizah Abdul

*My wonderful brothers and sisters,*

Hamnah Mohd Isa, Mohd Helmi Mohd Isa, Huda Mohd Isa

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And last but not least to all my relatives and my close friends

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## ABSTRACT

Electrical discharge machining (EDM) which is very prominent amongst the non conventional machining methods is expected to be used quite extensively in machining titanium alloys due to the favorable features and advantages that it offers. This thesis presents the EDMing of titanium alloy (Ti-6246) using copper impregnated graphite electrode with diameter of 8 mm. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the influenced of various parameters involved in EDM on the machining characteristics, namely, material removal rate (MRR), electrode wear ratio (EWR), surface roughness (Ra) and overcut.

In this investigation, the machining trials were performed using a Sodick linear motor EDM sinker series AM3L. The experimental plan for the processes were conducted according to the design of experimental (DOE) and the results were statistically evaluated using analysis of variance (ANOVA). Results showed that current was the most significant parameter that influenced the machining responses on EDM of Ti-6246.

Confirmation tests were also conducted for the selected conditions for each machining characteristics in order to verify and compare the results from the theoretical prediction using Design Expert software and experimental confirmation tests. Overall, the results from the confirmation tests showed that the percentage of performance was acceptable due to all results obtained were within the allowable values which was less than 15% of marginal error.

## ABSTRAK

Proses pemesinan nyahcas elektrik (EDM) yang agak dominan di antara proses pemesinan bukan konvensional dijangkakan akan bertambah meluas penggunaannya disebabkan sifat-sifat dan kelebihan yang dihasilkan keatas bendakerja. Kajian yang dijalankan ini adalah mengenai pemesinan EDM *sinker* terhadap bahan aloi titanium (Ti-6246) dengan menggunakan *copper impregnated graphites* yang berdiameter 8 mm sebagai elektrod. Tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji kesan beberapa parameter yang terlibat dalam EDM proses terhadap kriteria pemesinan seperti kadar pembuangan bahan (MRR), nisbah kehausan elektrod (EWR), kekasaran permukaan (Ra) dan 'overcut'.

Dalam kajian ini, pemesinan yang dijalankan ke atas titanium dilakukan menggunakan *Sodick linear motor EDM series AM3L*. Ujian pemesinan untuk kedua-dua proses telah dinilai secara statistik menggunakan analisa variasi (ANOVA). Keputusan menunjukkan arus elektrik merupakan parameter yang paling signifikan yang mempengaruhi tindak balas pemesinan EDM ke atas Ti-6246.

Ujikaji pengesahan juga telah dijalankan bagi tujuan pengesahan dan perbandingan keputusan di antara nilai ramalan teori menggunakan perisian *Design Expert* dengan nilai yang diperolehi dari ujikaji. Secara keseluruhan, keputusan pengesahan ujikaji menunjukkan bahawa kesemua peratusan ralat perbezaan yang diperolehi berada di dalam lingkungan nilai yang dibenarkan iaitu peratus ralat kurang daripada 15%.

## CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
	<b>DECLARATION</b>	ii
	<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	iv
	<b>ABSTRACT</b>	v
	<b>ABSTRAK</b>	vi
	<b>CONTENTS</b>	vii
	<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	x
	<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	xii
	<b>NOMENCLATURE</b>	xiv
	<b>LIST OF APPENDICES</b>	xv
<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
	1.1 Overview	1
	1.2 Background of Research	2
	1.3 Statement of the research problem	4
	1.4 Research Question	4
	1.5 Objectives	4
	1.6 Scope of study	5
<b>2</b>	<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	
	2.1 Introduction	6
	2.2 Electric Discharge Machining (EDM)	7
	2.2.1 Principle EDM Spark Erosion	8
	2.2.2 Machining Parameter	10

2.2.3	Electrode	10
2.2.3.1	Key Factors of Electrode Material Selection	11
2.2.3.2	Material Removal Rate (MRR)	11
2.2.3.3	Electrode Wear Rate (EWR)	11
2.2.3.4	Surface Roughness (SR)	12
2.2.3.5	Machinability	12
2.2.3.6	Material Cost	13
2.2.3.7	Graphite Electrode	13
2.2.4	Flushing	14
2.2.5	Dielectric Fluid	17
2.3	Machining Characteristics	17
2.3.1	Material Removal Rate	17
2.3.2	Electrode Wear Rate, EWR	18
2.3.3	Surface Roughness, SR	19
2.4	Titanium Alloys and Their Machinability	20
2.4.1	Introduction	20
2.4.2	Classification of Titanium Alloys	22
2.4.2.1	Commercially pure (CP) titanium (unalloyed)	23
2.4.2.2	Alpha and near-alpha alloys	23
2.4.2.3	Alpha-beta Alloys	24
2.4.2.4	Beta alloys	24
2.4.3	EDM of Titanium Alloys	25
2.4.3.1	Machining Titanium Alloys with EDM	25
2.5	Design of Experiment (DOE)	26
2.5.1	Two-level Fractional Factorial Design	27
2.5.2	Response Surface Methodology (RSM)	28
2.5.3	Test of Statistical Significance	28
<b>3</b>	<b>RESEARCH DESIGN</b>	
3.1	Introduction	30
3.2	Research Design Variables	30
3.2.1	Response Parameters	31
3.2.2	Machining Parameters	31
3.2.3	Workpiece Material	32

3.2.4	Electrode Material	33
3.2.5	Machine and Equipment	34
3.3	Analysis	39
3.3.1	Statistical Analysis	39
3.3.2	Metal Removal Rate (MRR) Measurement	40
3.3.3	Electrode Wear Rate (EWR) Measurement	41
3.3.4	Surface Roughness Measurement	42
3.3.5	Measurement of Hole Diameter	42
3.3.6	Experimental Design	43
<b>4</b>	<b>RESULT AND ANALYSIS</b>	
4.1	Introduction	46
4.2	Experimental Results	47
4.3	Result Analysis	48
4.3.1	Analysis Results for Material Removal Rate, MRR	49
4.3.2	Analysis Results for Electrode Wear Rate, EWR	56
4.3.3	Analysis Results for Surface Roughness, SR	61
4.3.4	Analysis Results for Overcut	64
4.3.5	Analysis with Central Composite design	70
<b>5</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	
5.1	Introduction	86
5.2	Material removal rate, MRR	87
5.3	Electrode wear rate EWR	87
5.4	Surface roughness, SR	88
5.5	Overcut	89
5.6	White layer	89
<b>6</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	
6.1	Introduction	91
6.2	Conclusion	91
	<b>REFERENCES</b>	93
	<b>APPENDICES</b>	97



## LIST OF TABLES

<b>TABLE</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
2.1	Physical and mechanical properties of elemental titanium	21
2.2	Some commercial and semicommercial grades and alloy titanium	22
3.1	Machining parameters	31
3.2	The composition of Ti-6246	32
3.3	Mechanical Properties of Ti-6246	33
3.4	Typical Value for copper impregnated graphite	34
3.5	Factor and level for EDM of Ti-6246	43
3.6	Two level full Factorial experiment with four factor and four center point	44
3.7	Experimental plan for EDM of Ti-6246	45
4.1	Experimental results for EDM of Ti-6246	47
4.2	ANOVA table for MRR in EDM process	51
4.3	ANOVA table for EWR in EDM process	57
4.4	ANOVA table for SR in EDM process	61
4.5	ANOVA table for Overcut in EDM process	65
4.6	Summary of significant factors in EDM experiments	70
4.7	Experimental plan for EDM of Ti-6246 (CCD)	71
4.8	Response results for EDM of Ti-6246 (CCD)	72
4.9	ANOVA table for response surface quadratic model for MRR in EDM of Ti-6246	73
4.10	ANOVA table after transformation for MRR in EDM of Ti-6246	74
4.11	Final ANOVA for EWR in EDM of Ti-6246	77
4.12	Final ANOVA for SR in EDM of Ti-6246	79
4.13	Final ANOVA for overcut in EDM of Ti-6246	81

4.14	An example of output from the point prediction tool EDM of Ti-6246	83
4.15	Analysis of confirmation experiments for MRR in EDM process	84
4.16	Analysis of confirmation experiments for EWR in EDM process	84
4.17	Analysis of confirmation experiments for SR in EDM process	84
4.19	Analysis of confirmation experiments for Overcut in EDM process	84

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>FIGURE</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
2.1	Classification of EDM processes	7
2.2	Types of EDM processes	8
2.3	Spark gap	8
2.4	Phase of electrical discharges	9
2.5	Ignition of the first discharge	15
2.6	The particles created	16
2.7	The additional particle density	16
3.1	Sodick AM3L	35
3.2	Mitutoyo Formtracer CS-5000 surface roughness tester	35
3.3	Zeiss – Coordinate Measuring Machine (CMM)	36
3.4	Precisa Balance	36
3.5	Buehler automatic mounting machine	37
3.6	Grinder and Polisher	38
3.7	Optical microscope	38
3.8	Flowchart outlining the analysis steps undertaken	40
4.1	Pareto Chart for significant effect choosed (MRR)	49
4.2	Normal probability plots of residuals for MRR in EDM process	52
4.3	Residual vs predicted response for MRR in EDM process	52
4.4	Residual vs run number response for MRR in EDM process	53
4.5	Interaction between Peak Current (A) and Pulse on time (C)	54
4.6	Interaction between Peak Current (A) and Pulse on time (D)	54
4.7	Interaction between Pulse on time (C) and Pulse off time (D)	55
4.8	Perturbation plot for MRR in EDM process	56

4.9	Normal probability plots of residuals for EWR in EDM process	58
4.10	Residual vs predicted response for EWR in EDM process	58
4.11	Residual vs run number response for EWR in EDM process	59
4.12	Interaction between Peak Current (A) and Servo Voltage (B)	60
4.13	Interaction between Peak Current (A) and Pulse Off Time (D)	60
4.14	Normal probability plots of residuals for SR in EDM process	62
4.15	Residual vs predicted response for SR in EDM process	63
4.16	Residual vs run number response for SR in EDM process	63
4.17	Interaction between Peak Current (A) and Pulse On Time (C)	64
4.18	Normal probability plots of residuals for overcut in EDM process	66
4.19	Residual vs predicted response for overcut in EDM process	67
4.20	Residual vs run number response for Overcut in EDM process	67
4.21	Interaction between Peak Current (A) and Pulse On Time (C)	68
4.22	Interaction between Peak Current (A) and Pulse On Time (D)	69
4.23	Interaction between and Pulse On Time (C) and Pulse Off Time (D)	69
4.24	Normal probability plots of residuals for MRR in EDM process (CCD)	75
4.25	Residual vs predicted response for EWR in EDM process (CCD)	76
4.26	3D response surface for MRR in EDM process (CD) interaction	76
4.27	3D response surface for MRR in EDM process (AD) interaction	77
4.28	One factor plot for EWR in PMD-EDM process	78
4.29	One factor plot for Overcut in PMD-EDM process	80
4.30	Pulse off time (D) plot for Overcut in PMD-EDM process	80
4.31	3D response surface for Overcut in EDM process (CD) interaction	82
4.32	3D response surface for Overcut in EDM process (AD) interaction	82
5.1	White layer with lower pulse on current	90
5.2	White layer with higher pulse on time	90

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS**

ANOVA	-	Analysis of variance
CCD	-	Central composite design
CMM	-	Coordinate measuring machine
EDM	-	Electro discharge machining
EWR	-	Electrode wear rate
EWV	-	Weight of electrode used
MRR	-	Material/metal removal rate
RSM	-	Response surface methodology
SR	-	Surface Roughness
T <sub>m</sub>	-	Machining times
W <sub>a</sub>	-	Weight of workpiece after machining
W <sub>b</sub>	-	Weight of workpiece before machining
WRW	-	Weight of workpiece used
x <sub>1</sub> ,x <sub>2</sub> , x <sub>3</sub> ,...,x <sub>k</sub>	-	Input variables
$\alpha$	-	Alpha phase
$\beta$	-	Beta phase

## LIST OF APPENDICES

<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
A-1	Workpiece preparation plan	97
A-2	Actual workpiece preparation	97
A-3	Electrode preparation	98
A-4	Electrode and Workpiece for experiment	98
B-1	Program For hole making on EDM die sinking (AM3L)	99
C-1	Experimental results for EDM of Ti-6246 (two level full factorial)	100
C-2	Experimental results for EDM of Ti-6246 (CCD)	101
D-1	Unmodified ANOVA table for MRR in EDM process	102
D-2	Box Cox Plot for MRR in EDM process	103
E-1	Ra reading for sample run 18	104
F-1	White layer for low and high MRR	105
F-1	White layer for low and high Ra	105
F-1	White layer for low and high Overcut	106
F-1	White layer for low EWR	106

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Overview**

The use of light, thin and compact mechanical elements has recently become a global trend. The search for new, lightweight material with greater strength and toughness has led to the development of new generation of materials such as titanium and nickel alloys, although their properties may create major challenges during machining operations. Having greater hardness and reinforcement strength, these materials are difficult to machine by the traditional methods. Although these materials can be machined conventionally, sub surface damages such as metallurgical alterations, work hardening, delimitation and microcracks and others can occur under certain circumstances which cause a detrimental effect on the performance of the machined component. Since the cost of using conventional machining is generally prohibitive, non-conventional machining such as electric discharge machining (EDM) and laser machining probably amongst the ideal technique in dealing with these materials.

Most titanium alloys and component design characteristics make them expensive to be machined and historically, titanium has been perceived as a material that is difficult to machine (Ezugwu, E.O and Wang, Z.M. 1997). Due to titanium's

growing acceptance in many industries, along with the experience gained by progressive fabricators, a broad base of titanium machining knowledge is now exist. It was reported that commercially pure grades of titanium [ASTM B, Grades 1, 2, 3, 4] (ASM International, 1988) can be machined much easier than aircraft alloys.

Although titanium alloys is tough it can experienced sub-surface damaged during machining operations. Damage appears in the form of microcracks, built up edge, plastic deformation, heat affected zones and tensile residual stresses (Sharif, 1999; and Hong *et al.*, 2001). In service, these can lead to degraded fatigue strength and stress concentration.

Non-traditional machining of metal removal such as EDM expected to be used extensively years to come, because it's favorable results. It is particularly useful for rapid removal of metal of free form surface or complex shaped parts, thin sections, and from large areas down to shallow depths. This process has less damaging effect on the mechanical properties of the metal (Rival, 2005).

## **1.2 Background of Research**

EDM is a non-traditional concept of machining which has been widely used to produce dies and molds. It is also used for finishing parts for aerospace and automotive industry and surgical components. This technique has been developed in the late 1940s (Norliana Mohd Abbas *et al.*, 2006).where the process is based on removing material from a part by means of a series of repeated electrical discharges between tool called the electrode and the work piece in the presence of a dielectric fluid (Norliana Mohd Abbas *et al.*, 2006).

This process is finding an increasing demand owing to its ability to produce geometrical complex shapes as well as its ability to machine hard materials that are extremely difficult to machine when using conventional process. EDM has proved its



capability especially in the machining of super tough, hard and electrically conductive materials such as the new space age alloys (Rival, 2005). The process variables include not only the electrical but also non-electrical parameters, which have received quite a substantial amount of research interest.

Optimum selection of process parameters is very much essential, as this is a costly process to increase production rate considerably by reducing the machining time. Several researchers carried out various investigations for improving the process performance. As EDM is a very complex and stochastic process, it is very difficult to determine optimal parameters for best machining performance, i.e., productivity and accuracy (T. A. El-Taweel, 2009). Material removal rate, tool wear, surface finish and also overcut are most important output parameters, which influence the cutting performance. But these performance parameters are conflicting in nature. The higher the MRR, the better, whereas the lower the tool wear, the better. In a single objective optimization, there exists only one solution. But in the case of multiple objectives, there may not exist one solution, which is the best with respect to all objectives. In EDM process, it is difficult to find a single optimal combination of process parameters for the performances parameters, as the process parameters influence them differently. Hence, there is a need for a multi-objective optimization method to arrive at the solutions to this problem.

The published literature indicates that few studies have been reported for the optimization of process parameters in EDM. Therefore, this study is aims at investigating the best performance of various input process parameters in EDM die-sinking process of Ti-6246. Further, no technology tables or charts are available for EDM of titanium alloy (Ti-6246) using copper graphite electrode. Therefore, it is imperative to develop a suitable technology guideline for appropriate machining of Ti-6246. Electrodes with copper graphite, peak current, servo voltage, pulse on time and pulse off time are considered as input EDM machining parameters. The process performance such as material removal rate (MRR), surface roughness (SR), overcut and electrode wear rate (EWR) were evaluated.

### **1.3 Statement of the research problem**

How does a new developed electrode performed when EDM alpha beta titanium alloy Ti-6246 with respect to material removal, electrode wear, dimensional hole accuracy and surface finish.

### **1.4 Research Question**

- a. What are the machining parameters that influence the EDMing of Ti-6246 using copper impregnated graphite electrode.
- b. What are the significant parameters that influence to the response during EDM of Ti-6246.
- c. What correlations exist among the parameters and machining responses and also how to quantify.
- d. What mathematical model is suitable to represent the performance evaluation of EDMing Ti-6246.

### **1.5 Objectives**

The objectives of the study are:

- a) To evaluate the performance of copper Impregnated graphite electrode when Electro-Discharge Machining Ti-6246 with respect to various machining responses.

- b) To determine the significant parameters that influences the machining responses during Electro-Discharge Machining of Ti-6246.
- c) To establish mathematical model for the MRR, EWR and surface finish during EDM of Ti-6246 using DOE approach.

## **1.6 Scope of study**

- a) Machining responses to be investigated are material removal rate (MRR), electrode wear rate (EWR), surface roughness (SR) and overcut.
- b) Electro-Discharge Machining (Die sinking) AM3L SODICK will be employed.
- c) Alpha-beta alloy, Ti 6Al 2Sn 4Zr 6Mo (Ti-6246) will be selected as workpiece material.
- d) Copper impregnated graphite will be used as the EDM electrode.
- e) Kerosene will be used as the dielectric fluid.

SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT OF CONCURRENT DESIGN  
FOR MANUFACTURING PROCESS SELECTION  
OF PLASTIC MATERIALS

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## **ABSTRACT**

For plastic products, one of the most critical decisions made during the early design stage is the selection of an appropriate manufacturing process. Designers or engineers must concurrently select the suitable plastic materials and its processing method while they develop the part geometry. It is thus meaningful to develop such a system for helping the engineers at preliminary design stages. This project proposes a system of selecting suitable manufacturing processes and materials in concurrent design for manufacturing environment. The prototype system called PROSEP, use Boothroyd-Dewhurst DFM methodology in evaluating and selecting suitable manufacturing process/material. Visual Basic computer programming language is used as a tool for system development. Three major factors are considered; shape attributes of part, material requirements and production characteristics. The working of the prototype system is demonstrated using prismatic and rotational parts case study.

## ABSTRAK

Untuk produk plastik, satu daripada keputusan paling kritikal dibuat semasa permulaan peringkat reka bentuk adalah pemilihan satu proses pembuatan yang sesuai. Para jurutera mesti serentak memilih bahan-bahan plastik yang sesuai dan cara pembuatannya manakala mereka membangunkan bahagian geometri. Oleh itu adalah amat bermakna bagi membangunkan satu sistem yang boleh membantu jurutera-jurutera pada permulaan fasa reka bentuk. Projek ini mencadangkan satu sistem untuk memilih proses-proses pembuatan dan bahan-bahan yang bersesuaian dalam reka bentuk serentak untuk bidang pembuatan. Sistem yang dinamakan PROSEP, menggunakan kaedah Boothroyd-Dewhurst DFM dalam menilai dan memilih proses pembuatan atau bahan yang munasabah. Bahasa pengaturcaraan Visual Basic digunakan untuk pembangunan sistem. Tiga faktor utama diambil kira; sifat-sifat bentuk bahagian, syarat-syarat bahan dan ciri-ciri pengeluaran. Penggunaan sistem prototaip ini ditunjukkan menggunakan kajian kes komponen prismatic dan putaran.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
	<b>DECLARATION</b>	<b>ii</b>
	<b>DEDICATION</b>	<b>iii</b>
	<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>iv</b>
	<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>v</b>
	<b>ABSTRAK</b>	<b>vi</b>
	<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>vii</b>
	<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>xi</b>
	<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>xii</b>
	<b>LIST OF APPENDICES</b>	<b>xiv</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
	1.1 Introduction to the Problem	1
	1.2 Objective of Study	3
	1.3 Scopes of Study	4
	1.4 Methodology of Study	4
	1.5 Significant of Study	6
	1.6 Thesis Structure	6
	1.7 Summary	7

<b>2</b>	<b>LITERATURE REVIEW ON MANUFACTURING PROCESSES AND PLASTIC MATERIALS</b>	
2.1	Introduction	8
2.2	Design for Manufacturing and Assembly	8
2.3	Manufacturing Processes for Plastic Materials	10
2.3.1	Injection Moulding	10
	2.3.1.1 Process Capabilities	12
2.3.2	Blow Moulding	14
	2.3.2.1 Extrusion Blow Moulding	14
	2.3.2.2 Injection Blow Moulding	15
	2.3.2.3 Process Capabilities	16
2.3.3	Structural Foam Moulding	18
	2.3.3.1 Process Capabilities	19
2.3.4	Rotational Moulding	21
	2.3.4.1 Process Capabilities	22
2.3.5	Thermoforming	25
	2.3.5.1 Process Capabilities	26
2.3.6	Machining	28
	2.3.6.1 Process Capabilities	31
2.4	Plastic Materials	32
2.4.1	Thermoplastics	33
2.4.2	Thermosets	34
2.4.3	Elastomers	35
2.5	Review on Previous Studies	37
2.6	Summary	41
<b>3</b>	<b>BOOTHROYD-DEWHURST DFM METHODOLOGY</b>	
3.1	Introduction	42
3.2	Overview on Boothroyd-Dewhurst DFM Methodology	42
3.3	Selection of Manufacturing Processes	44
3.4	Selection of Materials	48
3.5	Factors of Consideration	49

3.5.1	Shape Attributes	50
3.5.2	Material Properties	53
3.5.3	Production Requirements	54
3.6	Summary	56

#### **4 TOOL FOR PROTOTYPE SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT**

4.1	Introduction	57
4.2	Overview on Visual Basic Software	57
4.3	Object-Oriented Programming	60
4.4	Interface in Visual Basic	62
4.5	Database in Visual Basic	62
4.6	Summary	65

#### **5 DEVELOPMENT OF PROTOTYPE SOFTWARE**

5.1	Introduction	66
5.2	Prototype Software Development	67
5.3	Implementation of Prototype Software	69
5.4	Structure of Prototype Software	72
5.5	Graphical User Interface of Prototype Software	72
5.5.1	Welcome Window Interface	73
5.5.2	Main Window Interface	74
5.5.3	Design Guides Window Interface	75
5.5.4	Result Window Interface	77
5.5.5	Help Window Interface	78
5.6	Summary	79

<b>6</b>	<b>VERIFICATION OF PROTOTYPE SOFTWARE</b>	
6.1	Introduction	80
6.2	Case Studies	80
6.2.1	Prismatic Part	81
6.2.2	Rotational Part	84
6.3	Prototype Software Capabilities	88
6.4	Summary	89
<b>7</b>	<b>DISCUSSIONS</b>	
7.1	Introduction	90
7.2	Discussion on Prismatic Part Case Study	90
7.3	Discussion on Rotational Part Case Study	93
7.4	Summary	95
<b>8</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	
8.1	Introduction	96
8.2	Future Work Recommendations	96
8.3	Concluding Remark	97
	<b>REFERENCES</b>	98
	<b>APPENDICES</b>	100

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
2.1	Process capabilities of injection moulding	13
2.2	Process capabilities of blow moulding	17
2.3	Process capabilities of structural foam moulding	20
2.4	Process capabilities of rotational moulding	24
2.5	Process capabilities of thermoforming	28
2.6	Process capabilities of machining	32
2.7	Previous studies on manufacturing and process selection approach	40
3.1	A compatibility matrix between processes and materials	46
3.2	Process capabilities of some selected processes	47
4.1	Example of database table	63
5.1	Example to calculate Total Rating Score	71
5.2	Example to rank the possible materials	71
6.1	Design requirements for main base of paper trimmer	82
6.2	Design requirements for traffic cone	86
7.1	Possibilities of processes and materials for main base of paper trimmer	91
7.2	Possibilities of processes and materials for traffic cone	93

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
1.1	Typical plastic products	2
1.2	Flowchart represents the methodology of study	5
2.1	Relationship between DFA and DFM with selection of materials and processes	9
2.2	Injection moulding process	11
2.3	Schematic diagram of the extrusion blow moulding process	15
2.4	Structural foam product	18
2.5	Rotational moulding process	22
2.6	Straight vacuum forming	25
2.7	Elastomers bridge the hardness ranges of rubbers and plastics	36
3.1	Flowchart of Boothroyd–Dewhurst DFM methodology	43
3.2	(a) Depressions in a single direction	51
	(b) Depressions in more than one direction	51
3.3	(a) Uniform cross section	51
	(b) Non-uniform cross section	51
3.4	(a) Part that can be generated by rotation of a single axis	52
	(b) Part that cannot be generated by rotation of a single axis	52
4.1	Start-up of Visual Basic software	59
4.2	Relationship of Visual Basic application and database	64
5.1	Software development flowchart	68
5.2	Flowchart of PROSEP Software	70
5.3	Prototype software structure	72
5.4	Welcome Window of PROSEP software	73
5.5	Main Window of PROSEP software	75

5.6	Design Guides Window (process) of PROSEP software	76
5.7	Design Guides Window (shape attributes) of PROSEP software	77
5.8	Result Window of PROSEP software	78
5.9	Help Window of PROSEP software	79
6.1	Example of prismatic part to evaluate by using prototype software	81
6.2	Input format of main base part by using PROSEP software	83
6.3	Result Window for main base of paper trimmer	84
6.4	Example of rotational part to evaluate by using prototype software	85
6.5	Input format of traffic cone by using PROSEP software	87
6.6	Result window for traffic cone generated by PROSEP software	88

**LIST OF APPENDICES**

<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
A	Project planning -Gantt chart of Semester 1 -Gantt chart of Semester 2	101
B	Comparative costs and production characteristics for processing of plastics	102
C	Comparison of some thermoplastics properties	103
D	Comparatives of properties of some thermosets	105
E	Comparison of some elastomers properties	106
F	Shape generation capabilities of processes	107
G	Visual Basic source code of PROSEP software	108
H	Database of plastic processes characteristics	134
I	Database of plastic materials properties	136



## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction to the Problem**

Plastic materials have become an essential necessity in all aspect of today's recent life. Plastics are replacing most of the materials today due to good mechanical, chemical and thermal properties. Plastics are found on various products ranging from housing appliances, telecommunication equipment, electronics product, clothing and commercial market. One of the reasons for the great popularity of plastics in a wide variety of industrial applications is the great range of properties exhibited by plastics and their ease of processing (Harper, 2006).

Plastic properties can be modified to meet particular needs by changing the atomic composition of the repeat structure, by changing molecular weight and molecular weight distribution. The flexibility can also be varied through the existence of side chain branching, via the lengths and polarities of the side chains. Figure 1.1 shows the example of plastic products that very common used in modern life.



**Figure 1.1:** Typical plastic products

The importance of process and materials selection in designing plastic products has increased in recent years. The adoption of concurrent design methods and Design for Manufacturing has brought design engineers into the design process at an earlier stage. The selection of plastics material and an appropriate manufacturing process for a specific application is always a challenging task. Wrong process and material selection lead to product failure. In this situation, one of the most important tasks for engineers or designers is process and material selection at the early stages.

Some plastic processes can readily produce certain classes of shape attributes, but it may be very costly, or even impractical, to realize other classes of shape attributes. Furthermore, some processes may be totally unsuited with certain materials. As a result, together with the selection of materials, process selection becomes a very important decision before designers continue to the design of detailed geometry.

As a design engineers, they requires general knowledge of the part design, process limitations, advantages and disadvantages, success and failure affect with a collective practical significance of design and manufacturing process. Plastic product

can be manufactured by employing a wide variety of manufacturing processes such as blow moulding, structural foam moulding, injection moulding, rotational moulding, and thermoforming. Each plastic manufacturing process has individual advantages and disadvantages. The manufacturing process also affects productivity, cost, and quality of the part.

By tradition, the decision to choose an appropriate manufacturing process is delegated to an expert who employs a complex reasoning process based on empirical knowledge and previous experience. This selection procedure may result in inconsistent or poor choices if the decision is made by a novice who fails to map correctly the product characteristics with the manufacturing efficiency of various manufacturing processes (Raviwongse *et al.*, 2000).

In order to select the most suitable material and process, a lot of methods and techniques has developed, but only a few work has been done in developing a computer-aided software that accommodates information about different plastics processes, evaluates the appropriateness of each process with the design engineer's needs, and assist in selecting the most appropriate process. As a result this project has tried to contribute on this issue to help an engineer at the early design stage.

## **1.2 Objective of Study**

The main objective of this project is to develop the prototype system for concurrently selecting the plastic materials and its processing method while attributes of the part are considered.

### **1.3 Scopes of Study**

The scope of work is clearly defined the specific field of the research and ensure that the entire content of this project is confined the scope. Scopes of this project are limited to:

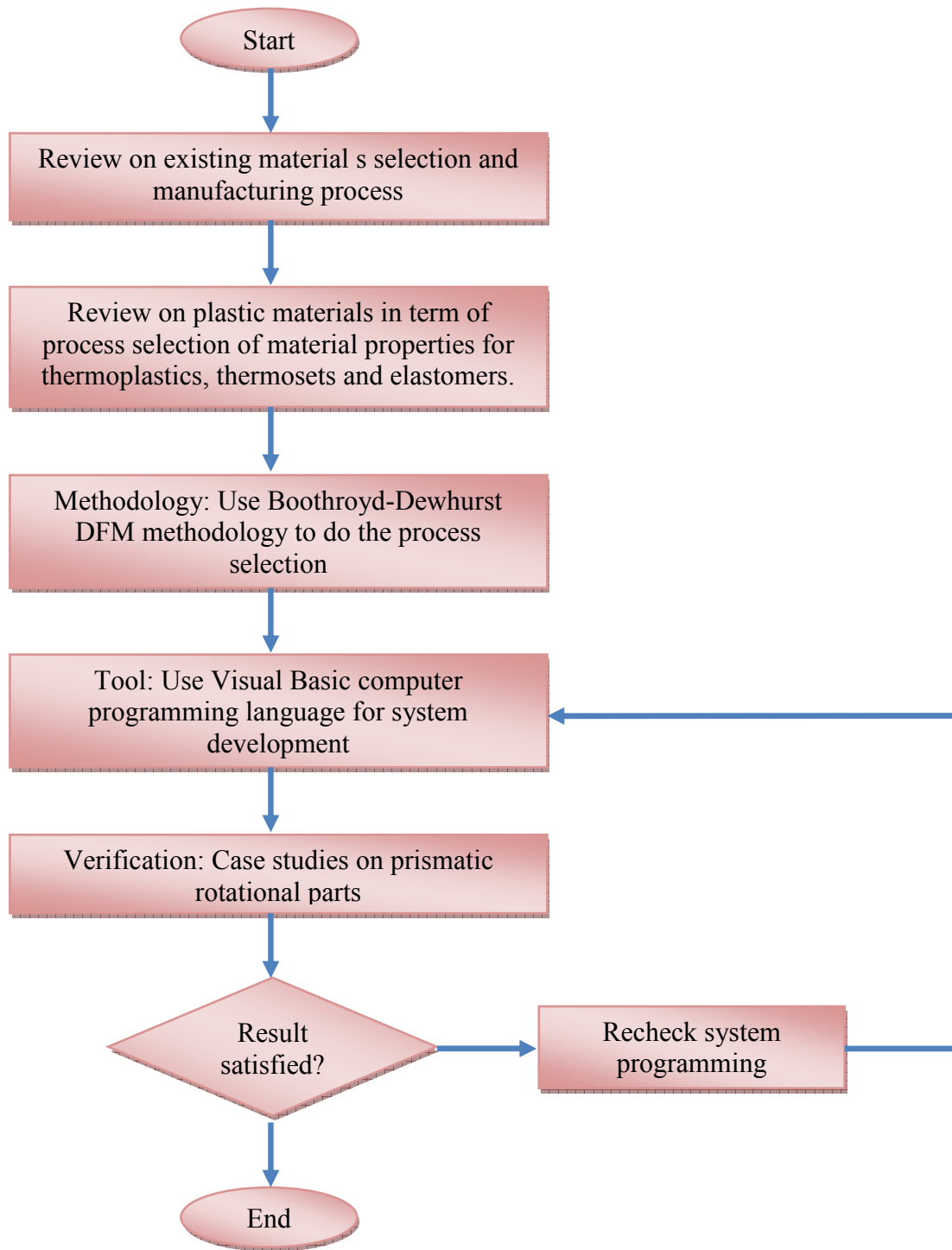
- i. Concentrate on plastic materials in term of process selection of material properties for thermoplastics, thermosets and elastomers.
- ii. Use Boothroyd-Dewhurst DFM methodology to do the process selection.
- iii. Use Visual Basic computer programming language for system development.

### **1.4 Methodology of Study**

The methodology of study begins with literature review on existing materials selection and manufacturing processes procedures. The next step is review on manufacturing processes capabilities and plastic material properties. At this stage all the advantages, disadvantages and limitations of processes and materials are analysed. The analysis or selection of processes and materials are done using Boothroyd-Dewhurst DFM methodology.

Visual Basic computer programming software is used as a tool for prototype system development. This stage is the critical part of the study that involved with develops the graphical user interface and writes the program coding. Finally, the verification of the prototype software will be done by doing the case studies of prismatic and rotational parts. It can be described in terms of flowchart as the following Figure 1.2

while Gantt charts as shown in Appendix A show the detail of the works of the project that had been implemented in the first and second semesters.



**Figure 1.2:** Flowchart represents the methodology of study

## **1.5 Significant of Study**

The use of prototype software, PROSEP (Process Selection of Plastic Materials) should help the designers or engineers to select a manufacturing process for engineering plastics effectively. On the other hand, this prototype software can also be used as a teaching tool or as guidance to the inexperienced designer or student in manufacturing processes and plastic materials selection. The design of a part is often iterative in environment, but by using PROSEP software, major design drivers can be identified early in the design stages, and improvement can be simply and economically made.

## **1.6 Thesis Structure**

The thesis presents the software development for concurrent design for manufacturing process selection of plastic materials. This thesis consists eight chapters. In first chapter, it discusses generally an introduction to the problem, objective, scopes and significant of this project as long as summary of works.

Chapter 2 focuses on the literature review, which introduces the overview on Design for Manufacturing and Assembly. Then the detail discussion and explanation on manufacturing process capabilities for plastic materials are covered. The discussion covers six processes namely injection moulding, blow moulding, structural foam moulding, rotational moulding, thermoforming and machining. Besides, the types of plastic materials; thermoplastics, thermosets and elastomers and related properties also discussed in details. This chapter is then described by related researches on existing software or procedures which are found to be related and facilitate to this project.

Chapter 3 provides the Boothroyd-Dewhurst DFM methodology. It well discusses about the technique on process and material selection refers to Boothroyd-Dewhurst DFM methodology. It also discusses on factors that are considered in process and material selection. Chapter 4 deals with the tool that is used to develop the prototype software. It discusses about Visual Basic software. In Chapter 5, it provides the methodology that is used through out the work of this project. It covers the software development methodology in terms of prototype software structure and graphical user interface.

Chapter 6 will focuses on verification of prototype software. The case studies on prismatic and rotational parts will discuss on this chapter. On the other hand, the software capabilities also are explained. The result of case studies and discussions on that result will be presented in Chapter 7. Last but not least, Chapter 8 presents the conclusions of the project as well as some constructive suggestions for further development of this project. The project outcomes are concluded in this chapter.

## **1.7 Summary**

In this chapter, the background of the project, objective, scopes, methodology of study and significant of study were discussed. The structure of the thesis also was presented in general overview of the contents for each of chapters.