



Ain Shams University

Faculty of Engineering

Design and Production Engineering

Dynamic and Static Characterizations of Biodegradable Polymer Composites

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering

(Design and Production Engineering)

by

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Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering

(Design and Production Engineering)

Faculty of Engineering, Ain Shams University, 2013

Supervised By

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Cairo – (2018)



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Statement

This thesis is submitted as a partial fulfillment of Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, Ain shams University. The author carried out the work included in this thesis, and no part of it has been submitted for a degree or a qualification at any other scientific entity.

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Thesis Summary

Worldwide concerns over disposal of petroleum derived polymers led to an increase in governmental regulations and environmental awareness. Using composite materials consisting of natural fibers and biodegradable plant-based polymers provides environmental benefits in terms of raw material utilization and safe disposal at the end of their life cycle. These natural composite materials are already being used in some applications such as car doors, sandwich plates, interior paneling, and tubes. Starch is regarded as a promising biodegradable material owing to its wide availability and low cost. However, starch has relatively low mechanical properties and tends to absorb moisture. These drawbacks can be controlled by adding fibers into starch matrix to form composites. Several types of natural cellulose fibers such as jute, sisal, date palm, and hemp have been used as reinforcements for starch-based composites.

This work examines the effect of DPF content and moisture absorption on the tensile and impact strengths of starch matrix composites. In addition, the fatigue behavior of thermoplastic starch (TPS) reinforced with short date palm fibers (DPFs) were investigated under bending loading conditions and the power law model was used to describe the fatigue damage behavior.

Biodegradable composites of starch–date-palm fibers were prepared by first plasticizing corn starch and chemically treating the fibers before being formed by compression molding. The effect of fiber content on mechanical properties was examined and it was found that tensile strength and Young's modulus for 50 weight percent (wt%) fiber composite improved by 7 and 12.5 times, respectively, compared to thermoplastic starch. Impact strength showed similar behavior and improved by 4.3 times for 50 wt% fiber composites. At higher fiber content the matrix was insufficient to cover the fibers, causing the mechanical properties to deteriorate. The results also showed that exposure to moisture resulted in progressive decrease in mechanical properties with increasing moisture absorption. It was found that after reaching moisture saturation, the retained tensile strengths were about one-third the starting values and the retained impact strengths were about two-thirds the starting values.

The fatigue strength of 50 wt% fiber content was the highest compared to other composites. The alternating stress at which the composites lasted for 10^7 cycles was about 16% of the flexural strength. Moreover, the experimental results of the residual strengths under various fatigue cycles and of the fatigue damage index at different levels of stresses were having a good agreement with Mathematical models following the assumptions of D'Amore et al. (1996) and Mao and Mahadevan (2002).

Keywords: Biodegradable Composites, Date-Palm Fibers, Thermo-Plastic Starch, Moisture Absorption, Tensile Strength, Bending Strength, Residual Strength, Impact Strength and Fatigue Behavior.

Contents

Chapter 1	1
1. Introduction and Scope of the Thesis.....	1
1.1. The New Challenge.....	1
1.2. The Environmental and Economical Impact.....	3
1.3. Biodegradable composites.....	3
1.4. Objective	5
Chapter 2.....	6
2. Literature Review.....	6
2.1. Biodegradable polymers.....	6
2.1.1. Native Starch.....	7
2.1.2. Thermoplastic Starch	8
2.1.3. Starch Gelatinization.....	9
2.1.4. Starch Plasticization.....	10
2.1.5. Factors Affecting Thermoplastic Starch Properties	11
2.2. Natural Fibers	16
2.2.1. Date Palm Fibers.....	20
2.2.2. Classification of Date Palm Fibers	20
2.2.3. Natural Fibers Mercerization	22
2.3. Composites Reinforced with Natural Fibers	31
2.3.1. Mechanical Properties.....	31
2.3.2. Water Uptake	36
2.3.3. Biodegradation.....	36
Chapter 3.....	39
3. Objectives and Work Plan	39
Chapter 4.....	40
4. Experimental Work.....	40
4.1. Materials.....	40

4.1.1.	Date Palm Fibers	40
4.1.2.	Corn Starch Matrix	40
4.1.3.	Others	40
4.2.	Methods	41
4.2.1.	Date Palm Fibers Preparation	42
4.2.2.	Corn Starch Matrix Preparation	43
4.2.3.	Composite Preparation	43
4.3.	Characterizations	45
4.3.1.	Density Measurements	45
4.3.2.	Dimension Measurements	45
4.3.3.	Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM)	45
4.3.1.	X-ray Diffraction (XRD)	46
4.3.2.	Tension Test	46
4.3.3.	Bending Test	48
4.3.4.	Impact Test	48
4.3.5.	Fatigue Test	49
4.3.6.	Moisture Uptake	51
Chapetr 5	53
5.	Results and Discussion	53
5.1.	Density Results	53
5.2.	Fibers Dimension	54
5.3.	Morphology Investigation	55
5.3.1.	Fibers Morphology	55
5.3.2.	Starch Morphology	56
5.4.	X-ray Diffraction (XRD)	57
5.5.	Tension Test Results	62
5.6.	Bending Test Results	65
5.7.	Impact Test Results	68
5.8.	Fatigue Results	71

5.8.1. Experimental Results	71
5.8.2. Model Prediction.....	74
5.9. Moisture Absorption	77
Chapter 6.....	82
6. Conclusions and Future Work	82
6.1. Conclusion.....	82
6.2. Future Work	84
References.....	85

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Fiber-reinforced plastic composites used in 2002— 2.28×10^9 lb[2].....	2
Figure 2.1 Polymers classification according to biodegradation.	6
Figure 2.2 Native starch chemical and schematic representations; (a) linear amylose; (b) branched amylopectin [9].	8
Figure 2.3 Schematic representations of starch gelatinization and retrogradation [13].	10
Figure 2.4 Flexural strength and flexural modulus of plasticized SPS [19].	12
Figure 2.5 Strain at break (ϵ_b) and nominal stress at break (σ_b) versus water content during compression molding (W) for potato, corn, wheat and waxy corn starch [24].	14
Figure 2.6 Structure of natural fiber [34].	18
Figure 2.7 Photograph of date palm plant [39].	21
Figure 2.8 SEM morphology for untreated DPF [36].	23
Figure 2.9 SEM for DPF that treated with (a) 0.5% NaOH, (b) 1% NaOH, (c) 1.5% NaOH, (d) 2.5% NaOH and (e) 5% NaOH [36].	24
Figure 2.10 SEM micrographs for DPF treated with (a) 0.3 N, (b) 0.9 N and (c) 1.6 N HCl [36].	25
Figure 2.11 SEM images of typical natural MDPSF [41].	26
Figure 2.12 SEM investigation of untreated DPFs [5].	26
Figure 2.13 SEM investigation of treated DPFs [5].	27
Figure 2.14 Effect of NaOH treatment on (a) tensile strength and (b) Young's modulus of DPF [36].	27
Figure 2.15 Tensile testing data of single fibre treated with different NaOH concentrations [42].	28
Figure 2.16 Thermogravimetric curves of (A) Raw and (B) Soda solution (5%) date palm fibres [36].	29
Figure 2.17 Composites biodegradation; (a) flax composite, (b) DPFs composite[5].	38
Figure 3.1 Objective and work strategy.	39
Figure 4.1 The preparation steps of DPF.	42
Figure 4.2 Home-use mixer with the heating coil.	43
Figure 4.3 The composite under hydraulic press.	44
Figure 4.4 The composite preparation steps.	44
Figure 4.5 Densitometer.	45
Figure 4.6 (a) fiber tensile specimen in (mm); (b) fiber fixation after tensile test.	47

Figure 4.7 Universal testing machine.	47
Figure 4.8 The bending test samples.....	48
Figure 4.9 (a) fatigue bending mechanism; (b) bending fatigue machine (HSM20).	49
Figure 4.10 The fatigue test samples.	50
Figure 4.11 The humidity chamber with samples inside it.	52
Figure 5.1 Diameter measurement of untreated fibers.....	54
Figure 5.2 Diameter measurement of treated fibers.....	54
Figure 5.3 SEM image of untreated date palm fiber.....	55
Figure 5.4 SEM images of NaOH treated date palm fibers.	56
Figure 5.5 SEM images of native corn starch.....	56
Figure 5.6 SEM images of thermoplastic starch (TPS).	57
Figure 5.7. XRD pattern for untreated and treated fibers	58
Figure 5.8. XRD pattern for native and thermoplastic starch granules	59
Figure 5.9. XRD pattern for different fiber content composites.....	61
Figure 5.10 Effect of DPF content on the tensile properties of TPS composites; (a) Tensile strength, (b) Tensile modulus	62
Figure 5.11 SEM investigation of 50 wt% DPF TPS-based composite.	63
Figure 5.12 SEM investigation of 70 wt% DPF TPS-based composite.	63
Figure 5.13 Effect of DPF content on the compatibility factor of TPS composites.....	64
Figure 5.14 Example of stress-strain curves of different fiber content composites.....	66
Figure 5.15 Flexural Strength and modulus of different fiber content composites.....	66
Figure 5.16 SEM images of 20 wt% (a,b), 50 wt% (c,d), and 70 wt% (e,f) composites.....	67
Figure 5.17 SEM images for 20wt% composite showing: (a) lack of fibers (b) good adhesion.....	69
Figure 5.18 SEM images for 50wt% composite showing: (a) fibers pull out (b) gap between fiber and matrix.	70
Figure 5.19 Graphs showing the residual Strength vs number of cycles for different fiber content composites at deflection $d = 4$ mm.	71
Figure 5.20 SEM image for 50 wt% after (a) 10^4 and (b) 10^6 cycles.....	72
Figure 5.21 SEM image indicating the crack initiation and propagation for 20 wt% composite at $N = 105$ cycles and $d = 4$ mm.	73
Figure 5.22 S-N Curve for 50 wt% DPFs reinforced TPS.....	74
Figure 5.23 Experimental and model prediction residual strength of 50 wt% composite tested at different deltas.....	75

Figure 5.24 Experimental and model prediction damage index of 50 wt% composite tested at different deltas.....	76
Figure 5.25 Graph showing the moisture absorption for composites with different fiber content (0, 20, 50, 70) wt%.	77
Figure 5.26 Graph showing the thickness swelling for composites of different fiber content (20, 50, and 70 wt%) with testing duration.....	79
Figure 5.27 SEM images for 50wt% composites exposed to moisture absorption for (a) 0, (b) 2, (c) 5, and (d) 8 days.....	80
Figure 5.28 Graph showing the variation of the tensile strength with moisture absorption for various fiber contents.	81
Figure 5.29 Graph showing the variation of the impact strength with moisture absorption for various fiber contents.	81

List of Tables

Table 2.1 Characteristic of native starch [11].	8
Table 2.2 PHB/starch thermal stability [20].	12
Table 2.3 Physical, mechanical and chemical composition properties of different natural fibres as compared to glass and wood [35].	19
Table 2.4 Diameter and elastic properties for some plant fibers [4].	22
Table 2.5 Time for complete biodegradation for various materials [4].	37
Table 5.1 Theoretical and experimental densities of different fiber content composites.	54
Table 5.2 Diameters of untreated and treated DPF.	54
Table 5.3 % Crystallinity for DPF reinforced TPS with different fiber content.	61
Table 5.4 Variation of mechanical properties with fiber content in starch-DPF composites.	68