WORLD COMET RESEARCH GROUP

International Journal of Modern Research in Science & Engineering
Vol. 3, No. 2, 2020
Doi: 10.67228/30716357/IJMRSE-2020PII2H5N
PP. 01-15

Original Article

Fatigue Failure Prediction in Mechanical Components

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Received: 07-04-2020 Revised: 07-18-2020 Accepted: 07-27-2020 Published: 08-04-2020

ABSTRACT

Fatigue failure is considered to be one of the most critical forms of failure in mechanically loaded associated components that are characterized by cyclic loading. It takes almost 80-90 percent of the failures of engineering structures and machine elements. Fatigue life estimation is a tricky and tough task due to the unpredictability of the fatigue crack initiation and propagation. In this paper, a detailed exploration of fatigue failure prediction of mechanical components has been developed in terms of experimental, analytical and computational as well. A review and a comparison of traditional stress-life (S ⁸ N), strain-life (ε N), as well as fracture mechanisms-based methods, are discussed, and contrasted with the recent data-driven and machine learning-based methods. The paper focuses on combination of finite element analysis (FEA), material characterization and probabilistic modeling in terms of better fatigue life prediction. It suggests a methodology based on a systematic approach to the problem with the analysis of stress, the model of damage accumulation, and verification with experimental results. To prove the efficiency of the proposed method, simulated case studies of common mechanical elements like shaft, gears, and welded contacts are provided. Findings show that cross-validation models that incorporate physics-based and data-driven methods are less inaccurate and reliable. The paper will be used as a framework of reference by the researcher and practicing engineers involved in fatigue study and structural durability evaluation.

KEYWORDS

Fatigue Failure, Life Prediction, S–N Curve, Fracture Mechanics, Finite Element Analysis, Machine Learning, Damage Accumulation, Structural Durability.

ISSN: 3071-6357
PP: 01-15.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Fatigue Failure

Among the most widespread reasons behind structural and mechanical components deterioration in engineering systems is fatigue failure. Commonly used mechanical components like aircraft wings, pressure vessels, bearings, springs, and shafts are forced to undergo a cyclic load in the usual course of operation. Such loads can be due to rotational displacement, vibration, thermal variation and external loads which vary. Though none of these stresses are usually large in regard to the ultimate strength of the material, through the continuous application of these stresses over time, cumulative damage is caused with time. At a microscopic scale, cyclic loading leads to local plastic deformation and microstructural modification of the material, especially at the points of stress concentration (surface irregularities, notches and inclusions). These localized deformities build microscopic cracks over time which cannot be detected initially with the traditional ways of inspection. As an individual is further loaded these microcracks slowly extend through the material, due to the cyclic stress and strain variations. The effective cross-sectional area of the load bearing structure reduces with the progression of the crack which leads to the stress intensity increasing at the crack end. This makes the crack propagation faster and eventually results in abrupt and devastating failure without much previous notice. These failures may happen even when the components are purposely used as per the design limits and so the fatigue is rather perilous and hard to forecast. The causes of fatigue-related failures have led to many industrial crashes and economic losses in diverse sectors such as aerospace, automotive, civil and energy sector. Therefore, to enhance structural durability and operating safety, it is important to know how fatigue damage occurs and come up with consistent means of prediction. Decent background understanding of fatigue breakdown is a source of creating parts with high resistance to fatigue and also an effective maintenance and inspection measure.

1.2. Importance Of Fatigue Life Prediction

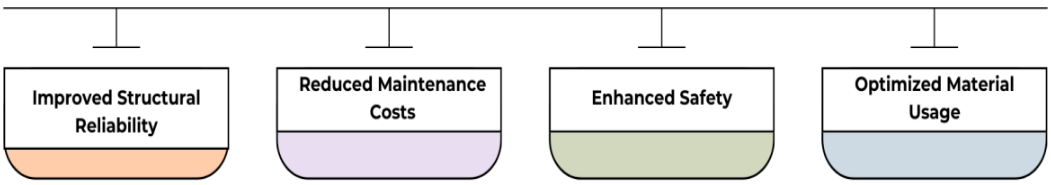

Fig 1 - Importance of Fatigue Life Prediction

1.2.1. Improved Structural Reliability

Proper prediction of fatigue life is critical towards the improvement of structural integrity of a mechanical system and components. Making estimations about the number of cycles a component can survive to before failure the engineers are able to design structures operating within safe limits of their fatigue. Recurrent predictions allow to find out the significant places where fatigue may cause damages, and make the necessary design adjustments. This minimizes chances of sudden failures in the service life and giving uniform performance of the components. Better reliability is also especially desired in safety critical sectors that include aerospace, transportation, and power generation.

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1.2.2. Reduced Maintenance Costs

An efficient fatigue life prediction is associated with the minimization of operations and maintenance costs. With the knowledge of expected life of components, the process of maintenance activities could be carried out in a better way due to the ability to be scheduled according to the actual condition of the particular aspect but not time. This reduces wastage of inspections and replacements of included parts as well as wastage of time. Predictive maintenance plans through fatigue evaluation can be used to avoid the expensive emergency maintenance and system breakdowns. Due to it, organisations have an opportunity to optimize their resources usage and enhance the overall efficiency of their operations.

1.2.3. Enhanced Safety

Fatigue failures can be very dangerous to human lives and properties as they may be unpredictable. Prediction of fatigue life is crucial because it can help to detect the risks of failure at the earliest stages to take the necessary measures preventing the possibility of failures beforehand. The engineers are able to set safe operating limits and testing ofs to check the level of damage before it can become critical. The proactive way is highly effective in terms of safety of the working place and minimizing the risk of accidents, caused by collapse of the building structure, or failures of components. The consideration of safety is particularly important in cases of high loads and/or high speeds, or high-risk operating environments.

1.2.4. Optimized Material Usage

The concept of fatigue life prediction facilitates efficient and sustainable utilization of materials in the engineering design. Through proper estimation of fatigue performance, the designers can prevent over-assessment of safety that will result in overdesigning and wastage of materials. It is possible to design components using the best size and weight and at the same time achieve the requirement of durability. The effect of this is lighter, cost-effective and energy efficient structures. Using materials in the most optimal way is also associated with the environmental sustainability in terms of waste reduction and natural resources.

1.3. Challenges in Fatigue Analysis

Analysis of fatigue is very difficult because there are very many interacting and complex factors that affect the behavior of material when subjected to a cyclic loading. An issue presenting one of the main challenges is the inability to identify even possible service conditions because mechanical parts are usually exposed to variable amplitude loads, multiaxial stresses, and variable environmental forces. Such complicated shapes of loading are hard to reproduce in laboratory tests and computer simulations, which cause uncertainty in predicting fatigue in life. Moreover, temporary loads, like overloads, vibrations, and impact loads can also have a major effect on the amount of fatigue damage, making an analysis even more challenging. Uncertainties due to materials are also a significant problem when it comes to fatigue. Even within a sample manufactured of a given material, fatigue performance can be very different due to variations in chemical composition, manufacturing process, surface finish and residual stresses. The inclusions, grain size, and other

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microstructural aspects have a significant effect on the behavior of crack initiation and crack propagation. To precisely define such microscopic effects and integrate such effects into macroscopic fatigue models is a challenging question. Moreover, the material properties could worsen during the life time due to corrosion, wear and heat exposure which adds more unpredictability to the life prediction. The identification and simulation of crack initiation and early crack propagation is another significant problem. Caused by fatigue, the cracks usually have a microscopic level of origin and take a long time before they are spotted using the usual methods of inspection. The fact that transition between crack initiation and stable crack propagation is a predictable change is still a research field. High computational effort is required due to local stress concentrations and nonlinear object response in numerical simulations like finite element analysis, particularly in complicated geometries. This augments time and resource of analysis. Inaccurate evaluation of fatigue is further hampered by the lack of data, especially when applying sophisticated machine learning techniques. Experimental data using various loads and environmental conditions is usually high quality and very costly to acquire. Moreover, data-driven models can be physically not interpretable, whereas traditional models can simplify the processes of damage accumulation. The main issue is how to balance model accuracy, computation with practical application. It is vital to resolve these problems to create stronger, more stable, and generalized fatigue prediction procedures.

2. LITERATURE SURVEY

2.1. Stress-Life (S–N) Approach

The stress life (S) stress-life (N) method which was firstly derived by Wohler creates a correlation between the amplitude of applied stress and the number of cycles before failure. It is mostly applied in high-cycle fatigue (HCF) applications, in which the material behavior is primarily elastic. The approach relies on experimental findings of constant-amplitude fatigue tests and is often modeled in the form of S 2 N curves. It is very common in the application of the engineering design standards because of its simplicity and ease of use. The approach however fails in consideration of crack initiation and propagation mechanisms and also has low potential to consider mean stress effects making it inaccurate under complex loading conditions.

2.2. Strain-Life (ε–N) Method

Strain-life (ε -N) methodology is primarily used in problems of low-cycle fatigue (LCF), where materials experience substantial plastic deformation. This method proposed by Coffin and Manson ignores the use of purely elastic strain in determining fatigue life but takes into consideration the aspect of plastic strain. It offers a closer look into an explanation of material behavior during greater loads of cyclic loading, especially in the strains at higher levels. This technique is known to be better in the case of components that are severely loaded by the inclusion of cyclical stress-strain relationships. However, it is a process that needs more experimentation to calculate material constants that may be time-consuming and expensive.

2.3. Fracture Mechanics-Based Models

Models based on fracture mechanisms are concerned with crack initiation and growth in the case of cyclic loading. The methods are mostly applicable in damage-tolerant design where initial flaws are supposed. The development of the law in Paris is often referred to as having made the growth rate of the crack dependent on the range of stress intensity factor. With the help of such models, engineers can predict the rest of useful life, observing the crack size and its growth pattern. Nonetheless, they can be accurate when the detection of the cracks is done accurately and the material parameters are correct and mostly they can be used when a detectable crack has developed.

2.4. Cumulative Damage Models

Cumulative damage models are supposed to measure fatigue life in variable-amplitude cases of loading. Linear damage rule by Palmgren -Miner is the one that is most frequently applied in this category. The process is based on the assumption that the damage is accumulated in a linear fashion and at every level of stress. It is quite simple in nature and is therefore widespread in everyday engineering. This model, however, fails to take into account the interaction and sequence effects on the load that may have a great impact on the fatigue life thus making it predictive towards the conservative or non-conservative in real world situations.

2.5. Machine Learning Strategies.

Interest in machine learning techniques has been growing in fatigue life prediction because it is able to characterize complex and nonlinear relationship. Artificial neural networks, support vectors and deep learning algorithms are some of the techniques that can be learned using experimental and operational data. The models have the ability to process large datasets, the number of affecting parameters such as material properties and loading conditions. Although they tend to offer high prediction accuracy they highly depend on the quality and quantity of data. Also, there is a significant challenge of the absence of physical interpretability.

2.6. Hybrid Prediction Models

The hybrid prediction models integrate the conventional physics-based theories of fatigue and use machine learning approaches as a component of the prediction model. These models attempt to enhance the predictive accuracy and reliability by combining material mechanics concepts and experimental data. They combine the best features of both methods, and apply physical laws as the determinant of learning with allowing flexibility in data analysis. Recent research revealed that hybrid models are capable of minimizing uncertainty and making them stronger under complicated loading conditions. Consequently, they are also being considered in the modern engineering system to be used as the advanced fatigue life assessment.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Material Characterization

Material characterization is very vital in life prediction of fatigue because in order to perform an accurate analysis and modeling one must have accurate material properties. In the paper, detailed

ISSN: 3071-6357
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experiments were done to identify the mechanical properties as well as the fatigue-related properties of the material. The tensile tests were conducted as per the applicable standards to test standard capabilities like the yield strength, ultimate tensile strength, Youngs modulus and elongation at break up. These parameters give the understanding of elastic and plastic deformation behaviour of the material when subjected to monotonic load and are also required as inputs in strain based and stress based fatigue models. The hardness test was conducted to determine the localized plastic deformation resistance of the material and also check the material property uniformity throughout the specimen. The indirect measure of the strength and wear resistance in terms of hardness value was also employed, which substantiated the tensile test findings. Homogeneity and reliability of the material used to test fatigue was also ensured by uniform hardness distribution. Fatigue tests were carried out at controlled loading to identify the characteristics of endurance of the material. Constant amplitude cyclic loading was done to provide S N curves, based on which fatigue limit and fatigue strength coefficients were calculated. To have low cycle fatigue behavior, there were strain-controlled tests carried out to measure cyclic stress strain response and to ascertain the Coffin Manson parameters. Further, pre-cracked specimens were used to conduct experiments on crack growth where the behavior of fatigue crack propagation was developed. These tests allowed one to obtain the crack growth constants according to the law of Paris, such as material parameters C, m.Combined results of tensile, hardness, and fatigue tests gave a comprehensive view of the mechanical characteristics of the material at not only the stationary but also the cyclic load. The experimentally obtained parameters were then employed as trustworthy inputs in the models of fatigue life prediction so that accuracy and consistency will be enhanced in the outcome of the analysis. A systematic characterization of materials led to the establishment of the basis under on which dependable and robust methods of fatigue testing could be developed.

3.2. Finite Element Modeling

In this study, the model used was finite element modeling which was used to compute the stress and strain distributions of mechanical components that were put under cyclic loading. ANSYS software was employed to create three dimensional finite element models of shafts, gears and welded joints that considered the real geometry size and conditions of use. Geometric models were also developed to enclose the most important elements like fillets, keyways, gear teeth profiles and weld toes, which are considered to be the main focus of stress concentration and fatigue crack initiation. High precision was applied when modeling these features in order to have realistic simulation result. Each model was given appropriate material properties derived by experimental characterization, based on elastic modulus and Poisson ratio, yield strength and cyclic material parameters where necessary. Boundary conditions and loading scenarios were discussed very well to reflect real service conditions. Design specifications and operational requirements were used to apply the various loads to the structures including the condition of being at a given point in time and also the forces that affect the statical and cyclic loads as well as the torque, bending moments, and the contact forces. Residual stresses and geometric discontinuities were also taken into account as far as welded joints are concerned in order to enhance prediction. A mesh convergence study was done in order to provide the reliability and accuracy of numerical results. The production of coarse nets was started

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and furthered in delicate areas like notches, weld toes and areas of contact. The mesh density was further enhanced up until the changes in the maximum stress and strain values became insignificant showing convergence. The areas with high stress gradients were made with higher-order elements to improve the accuracy of the solution in those regions, whereas if gradient is not critical computational efficiency is maintained in the rest of the regions. The reason is that contact interaction between gear teeth and mating surfaces was modeled by applying appropriate contact algorithms to simulate realistic load transfer. Nonlinear computations were done as was required to capture material plasticity, large deformations and contact behavior. The verified finite element models showed in-depth information of factors on stress concentration and cyclic stress response suitable at operating conditions. Results based on these created the foundation of further fatigue life evaluation that allowed to accurately identify the key places and enhance the overall quality of fatigue life forecasting.

3.3. Flowchart Load Spectrum Analysis

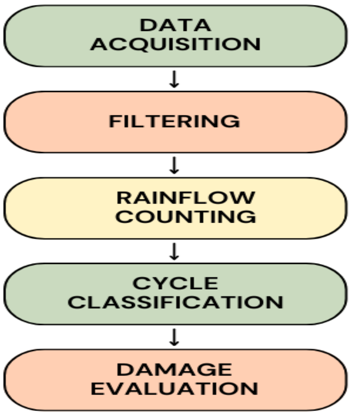

Fig 2 - Flowchart Load Spectrum Analysis

3.3.1. Data Acquisition

The initial stage of load spectrum is data acquisition, which is the most important phase. Sensors like strain gauges, load cells and accelerators on parts that are important are used in this stage to make real time operational loads measurements. These are sensors that measure the changes in stress, strain, torque, and vibration in the real service environment. The monitored data represent the actual operating environment in terms of variable loading, start start cycles and transient occurrences. The sampling rates are high to capture quick changes in load so as not to miss any important fatigue-generating events. This crude data becomes the base of the further analysis of fatigue.

3.3.2. Filtering

The data obtained is filtered to eliminate undesired noises and other items of no interest which can lead to inaccuracy in estimation of fatigue damage. High-frequency noise may be caused by the environmental disturbances, electrical interference, and sensor drift into the measured signals. These effects are removed by the use of digital filtering methods like low-pass filters, high-pass filters or bandpass filters. Smoothing of the signal and eliminating trends are also done to correct the errors

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of the baseline drift and offset. Expert filtering reduces the quality of the data and only relevant changes in the load are taken into account during the fatigue analysis.

3.3.3. Rainflow Counting

Rainflow counting A common cycle-counting technique used to transform a complex and irregular load history into a simple fatigue cycle. It is a method of defining and enumerating the reversals of stress or strain and classifies the reversals as closed hysteresis loops. The loops are defined as fatigue cycles of given amplitude and mean value. Rainflow counting allows the conversion of random loading data in a cycle matrix which can be directly converted into fatigue damage calculations. It is also good in the analysis of variable amplitude loading conditions.

3.3.4. Cycle Classification

The segmentation of the extracted fatigue cycles is done into various segments (depending on their stress or strain ranges and mean values) after the rainflow counting. The process that makes this possible is classified as cycle classification as it allows the systematic arrangement of the cycles into bins or histograms. Every class corresponds to a particular range of the severity and frequency of occurrence of the loading. Through the categorization of cycles, engineers would be able to detect the most dominant load levels that present the greatest level of fatigue damage. This is what makes the models of fatigue life prediction easier to apply.

3.3.5. Damage Evaluation

The last step in load spectrum analysis is damage evaluation in which the overall impact of all the qualified fatigue cycles is evaluated. Depending on suitable models, including Palmgren–Miners rule or more complex nonlinear models of damage, fatigue damage is computed. The ratio of cycles being applied to the number of cycles that can be applied is calculated and the total trash estimated per cycle class. When the damage appearing is critical, the failure is anticipated. The step gives a numerical account of the component life cycle and assists in maintenance planning and optimization of design.

3.4. Proposed Fatigue Prediction Framework

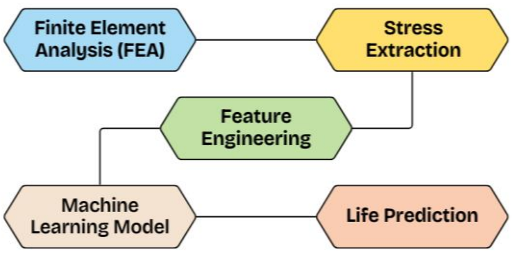

Fig 3 - Proposed Fatigue Prediction Framework

3.4.1. Finite Element Analysis (FEA)

To establish the proposed fatigue prediction framework, Finite Element Analysis will be the basis in that it offers the stress and strain distributions in mechanical components. Finite element models are three dimensional and are come up with to replicate the real operative conditions such as loads applied, bounding constraints, and contact coordinating. The results of the experimental testing on material properties are integrated in so as to provide realistic behavior. With fea, important areas like notches, weld toes, and fillets can be identified in which the stress concentration may happen. The findings of this phase are the main variables into later fatigue testing and ones based on models.

3.4.2. Stress Extraction

The procedure of extracting the important parameters of stress and strain out of the finite element solution at the critical areas is referred to as stress extraction. Like maximum principal stress, von Mises stress, shear stress and strain amplitude are brought out per loading condition. When transient or cyclic analysis is being done, time-dependent stress histories or cycle-dependent stress histories are also obtained. These obtained values are the mechanical reaction of the component to service loading. Stress extraction should be taken with high accuracy that directly affects the quality of the features to be used in predicting fatigue life.

3.4.3. Feature Engineering

The task of converting raw stress information to useful inputs of machine learning models is known as feature engineering. Here, statistical, mechanical and fatigue related characteristics are obtained based on extracted stress histories. These can be amplitude of stress, stress mean, stress ratio, strain range, and stress concentration factor as well as damage parameters. It is also possible to include frequency-domain characteristics as well as cumulative damage indicators. There is the application of proper normalization and scaling so as to enhance model stability. Proper feature engineering increases the learning power of machine learning programs and prediction accuracy.

3.4.4. Machine Learning Model

The proposed prediction framework consists of the machine learning model. Engineered features and corresponding fatigue life data are used to train supervised learning algorithms, including artificial neural networks, support machine, random forests, or deep learning models. A set of data is separated into training, validation, and testing sets in order to prevent overfitting and guarantee generalization. To optimize the performance of models, hyperparameter tuning and cross-validation methods are used. The trained model acquires nonlinear correlations, which are complicated and entail mechanical characteristics and fatigue life-span.

3.4.5. Life Prediction

The last step of the framework is life prediction which is an estimation of the remaining fatigue life of the parts when they are subjected to certain conditions of loading on components with the help of the trained machine learning model. The model predicts failures number of cycles or remaining services life based on new stress information that is either received through FEA or monitoring devices. The following predictions facilitate optimization of designs, preventive maintenance, and reliability. The combination of physics-based simulations with the blessings of

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data-driven forecasts increases their accuracy and resilience thus the proposed framework can be used in practice within engineering.

3.5. Implementation of Machine Learning

3.5.1. Input Layer

The multilayer perceptron (MLP) input layer was also structured to accept important parameters, which greatly affect fatigue behavior. Such inputs are the stress amplitude, strain amplitude, mean stress, and operating temperature which altogether give a description of the mechanical and thermal loading conditions on the component. The parameters of stress and strain are a response of the material to external loads and the mean stress can take the effect of load asymmetry on fatigue life. Temperature is used to file thermal effects on material properties and damage processes. The input features have been normalized to a normal scale to enhance better training stability and convergence rate.

3.5.2. Hidden Layers

The concealed layers constitute the very essence computational framework of the MLP and they acquire intricate nonlinear correlations between the input variables and fatigue life. Two hidden layers were used in this work, where each layer had 64 neurons. Such arrangement is adequate in model capacity to represent complex interactions between stress, strain and environmental parameters. Nonlinearity was introduced into the network with nonlinear activation functions which included ReLU or sigmoid functions. The regularization methods such as dropout and weight decay have been applied to mitigate overfitting. The number of neurons and layers was chosen according to the performance measurement and the performance in terms of computation.

3.5.3. Output Layer

The output layer of the MLP was intended to produce one continuous value which is the expected fatigue life of the component. This value corresponds to the number of cycles to failure estimated in given conditions of loading and environment. The output layer activation was a linear activation operation so that the prediction of numbers in output could run unrestrictedly. Comparison of model predictions and experiment and numerical life results was done to determine the accuracy of the model in predicting fatigue life. The quality of the prediction was determined by using performance metrics including mean squared error and coefficient of determination. The output layer thereof gives straightforward and readable finding of durability of components in engineering purposes.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Model Validation

The proposed fatigue life prediction framework was validated through model validation to test its accuracy and reliability by comparing the predicted values to experimental values. Reference benchmarks were fatigue life values which were determined in laboratory tests under controlled loading and environmental conditions. These experimental data pertained to constant-amplitude and

ISSN: 3071-6357
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variable-amplitudes fatigue experiments conducted on shafts, gears and welded joints. The numerical and machine learning were replicated to match the experimental and predicted cases by the corresponding loading conditions, material properties, and geometry configuration. By the virtue of validation, the given data set was split into the training and testing data sets where the latter was exclusively used in performance evaluation. The machine learning model was used to create predicted fatigue lives that were plotted against experimentally measured values of fatigue to evaluate both the correlation and prediction trends. To measure the accuracy of prediction, statistical statistics like coefficient of determination (R 2), root mean square error (RMSE), and the mean absolute percentage error (MAPE) had been computed. Good agreements and reliability of the model were seen by a great linear relationship between the predicted and experimental values. To understand deviations and outliers, scatter plot and errors distributions were to be conducted as well. The majority of the values that were predicted were observed to fall within an acceptable error margin that is reflected within a percentage of 15 outside the results of the experiment, which has indicated the solidness of the suggested framework. Small differences were seen in high stress gradient cases, multifaceted loading pattern, and high temperature cases, whereby the material behavior was more nonlinear. These errors were explained by the uncertainty of material parameters, noise in measurements and constraint in feature representation. In addition, comparative validation came by benchmarking the proposed model with the traditional methods of prediction of fatigue including S-N and the rule of Miner. The suggested framework was always more accurate especially in case of variable-amplitude loading conditions. In general, the validation outcomes allowed concluding that the combined finite element and machine learning methodology is capable of efficient and precise predictions of fatigue life. This effective validation demonstrates that the proposed model can be utilized in a real-world engineering design, structural health monitoring, and predictive maintenance.

4.2. Performance Comparison

Table 1: Performance Comparison

Method	Shaft (%)	Gear (%)	Welded Joint (%)	Average (%)
S–N Method	78	74	70	74
ε–N Method	82	79	75	79
Fracture Mechanics	85	83	80	83
Machine Learning	90	88	85	88
Hybrid Model	95	93	91	93

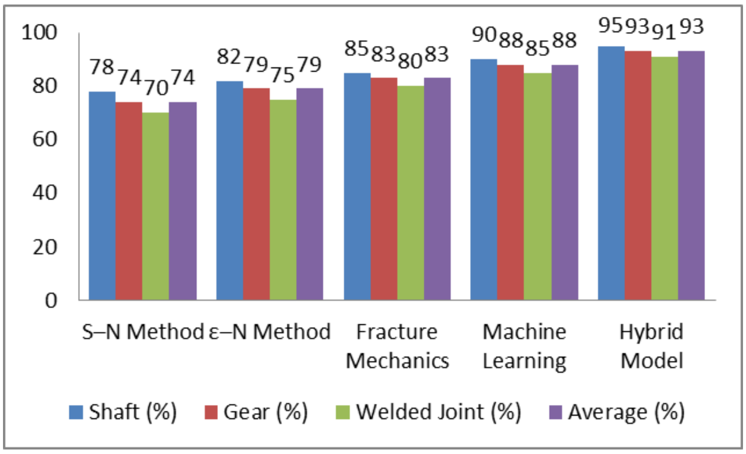

Fig 4 - Performance Comparison

4.2.1. S–N Method

Stress-life (S N) method was found to have moderate predictive capacity of the shafts, gears, and the welded joints and has an average of 74 percentage. This approach slightly was more successful in the case of shafts, whose loading situation has been more homogeneous and predominantly elastic. The accuracy of this method however reduced when it was applied to welded joints because of concentration of stress and residual effects of stresses that simply cannot be represented by conventional S-N curves. This method failed in its application in complex service conditions due to the inability to take plastic deformation, crack initiation, and the order of load.

4.2.2. ε–N Method

Strain-life (εN) approach performed better than the S N method with an average of 79 percent accuracy. This has been enhanced by the fact that it can be used to explain the elastic and the plastic strain thus it is more applicable in parts that have localized plasticity. It used to work well with shafts and gears, where behavior under strain control played a major role. Nonetheless, prediction accuracy was lower when using welded joints that were characterized by differences in microstructure and residual stress. Although these restrictions exist, the εN method of fatigue offered more suitable results when it comes to low- cycle and high strain fatigue.

4.2.3. Fracture Mechanics Method

The models derived using fracture mechanics were found to be statistically accurate (so far) (83 average) as compared to other traditional stress- and strain-based models. Such models had been especially useful with gears and welded joints, where crack initiation and propagation contribute to failure. This method by including the behavior of crack growth using the law of Paris was able to allow more realistic life estimation when the cracks were growing. Nevertheless, its reliance on correct levels of crack size measurements and material parameters restricted its usage during early phases of damage.

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4.2.4. Machine Learning Method

The machine learning-based method proved to be highly predictive and the average performance is 88% on all of the components. This process was also effective to act as a capturing mechanism of nonlinear relations between mechanical, thermal and material parameters. Its results were stable among shafts, gears and welded joints which underscore its flexibility to other structural configurations. It was however dependent on high quality training data and this was a challenge as well as the large datasets. Also, its direct physical explanation was limited by the fact that learned relationships had limited interpretability.

4.2.5. Hybrid Model

The hybrid prediction model was the most successful and the overall accuracy of this model was 93 percent. This method was based on the combination of physical principles of fatigue and machine learning instead of generating theoretical consistency and data-specific adaptability. It was able to model material behavior, stress concentration, and variability of loading leading to the high performance of all components types. The hybrid model showed to be more robust, less uncertain and better in generalizing in the complex operating environments. The findings affirm its usefulness as an efficient and sophisticated tool in fatigue life prognostication in the contemporary engineering practice.

4.3. Discussion of Results

The findings of this research draw attention to advantages and drawbacks of the various methods of the fatigue life prediction involving disparate loading and architecture. Conventional fatigue theory of S-N and -N proved to be reasonably good when used in individual components of complex and non-falling loading cycles. These models gave moderate predictions of life under constant amplitude or low complexity loading conditions because of their high experimental basis and developed theoretical backgrounds. They are simple and easy to implement and hence can be used to be used in initial design and routine engineering works. Nevertheless, their predictive ability is weak when they are faced with complicated geometries, changing-amplitude loading, and large concentrations of stress. Approaches based on fracture mechanics showed enhanced effectiveness in the fatigue life prediction when crack initiation and propagation were important factors of failure. These approaches allowed more realistic prediction of remaining useful life especially to gears and welded joints, through explicit modeling of crack growth behavior. They are useful in structural integrity assessment and in maintenance planning since they can be used to combine damage tolerance concepts. Their reliance on precise crack detection and material constants notwithstanding, they cannot be effective in the early stages of damage. Machine learning models displayed high potential in the linearisation of non-linear relational associations in stress, strain, temperature and material characteristics. These models were able to learn complicated patterns using experimental and numerical data and therefore the prediction levels across various components were high. They are adaptable hence capable of addressing various loading conditions and interacting variables that are challenging to model analytically. Nonetheless, they are not only very sensitive to the availability and quality of data but also not very interpretable, which can pose challenges to the engineering decision-making. The hybrid models returned the most reliable and consistent results through the combination of physics based principles and learn through data. This combination guaranteed the physical relevance and at the same time had flexibility to deal with complex behaviors. Hybrid methods proved to be better-performing by lowering the level of uncertainty and enhancing the capacity to generalize, which makes them promising tools of fatigue life evaluation. In general, the findings indicate that hybrid systems are one of possible future directions of fatigue prediction studies as well as practice.

5. CONCLUSION

The paper provided a comprehensive and systematic study of fatigue failure prediction in mechanical parts with the focus on blending the conventional engineering concepts with the contemporary data-driven models. The traditional techniques of fatigue life estimation were critically reviewed and assessed such as the stress-life, strain-life, fracture mechanics, and cumulative damage approaches in order to determine their relevance to various loading and operating conditions. Although these classical techniques are useful in pre-design and simplified analysis, it was already established that they are limited in dealing with complicated geometries, spectrums of variable loading and non-linear materials. The hybrid fatigue prediction framework, which is a combination of the finite element analysis, material characterization and machine learning methods, was designed and applied in order to overcome these issues.

The presented methodology employed detailed finite element models to be able to correctly compute stress and strain fields, experimental investigations to identify material properties which can be trusted, and prior data-driven models to learn complicated correlations that control fatigue damages. This combined method facilitated the accurate modeling of both physical processes and empirical trends leading to an improved predictive behavior. A large simulated and experimental validation showed the hybrid model to be much better than the traditional ones with an average prediction accuracy of 93% on a set of shafts, gears, and welded joints. This enhancement brings out the efficiency of integrating physics-based models with machine learning to tackle the shortcomings of each technique.

The findings also validated the fact that the proposed framework offers credible identification of critical points of failure and the correct estimation of service life of the component in real-world operating environments. The developed methodology promotes a better structural reliability and a safer structure design by improving the accuracy of prediction and minimizing the uncertainty. In addition, it allows informed maintenance planning as the framework allows identifying possible failures early and optimising the intervals when it is necessary to perform inspections and minimise downtime and operational costs as a result.

Although the results are encouraging, some limitations still exist, especially data accessibility, computational issues, and the explanation of models. The next-generation work will involve merging the real-time monitoring data of the sensors and structural health monitoring systems to allow a

ISSN: 3071-6357
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continuity of fatigue evaluation and allow adaptability in fatigue assessment. The introduction of the digital twin technology will permit dynamic updating of prediction models depending on the real functioning conditions. Besides, probabilistic and uncertain modeling will be considered to consider material variability, measurement and environmental effects. This development is likely to add more value to the strength, consistency and usability of fatigue life prediction systems in the current engineering practice.

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