Fused Deposition Modeling (FDM) in Additive Manufacturing: An Overview of the FDM Process

Aniket
yadavaniket018@gmail.com
M. Tech Scholar, Department of Mechanical Engineering, BRCM CET, Bahal, (Haryana), India
Suresh Kumar
sureshjangra161086@gmail.com
Assistant Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering, BRCM CET, Bahal, (Haryana), India

ABSTRACT

Fused Deposition Modeling (FDM) is a widely recognized and extensively utilized additive manufacturing technique that has revolutionized the field of manufacturing. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive and detailed overview of the FDM process, shedding light on its working principles and process steps. FDM involves the layer-by-layer deposition of thermoplastic materials, where a filament is fed through a heated nozzle and extruded onto a build platform, creating three-dimensional objects with precision and accuracy. The abstract delves into the working principles of FDM, emphasizing the key components involved in the process, such as the 3D printer, filament, extruder, and build platform. It further elaborates on the process steps, which include pre-processing tasks like model design and slicing, followed by the actual printing process, and post-processing steps such as support removal and surface finishing. The abstract discusses the importance of materials and filament selection in FDM. Factors such as material properties, compatibility, and availability play a crucial role in determining the success of the FDM process. The abstract highlights the wide range of thermoplastic materials that can be used in FDM, including commonly used filaments such as ABS (Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene) and PLA (Polylactic Acid), as well as specialty filaments with unique properties like flexibility, strength, or heat resistance. The abstract explores the diverse applications of FDM across various industries. FDM has found applications in fields such as aerospace, automotive, medical, consumer goods, and prototyping. It discusses the advantages of FDM, such as its ability to rapidly produce complex geometries, create functional prototypes, and enable cost-effective production. The abstract emphasizes the versatility of FDM in manufacturing customized parts, reducing lead times, and supporting design iterations.

Keywords: FDM, 3D Printing

INTRODUCTION

Fused Deposition Modeling (FDM), also known as Fused Filament Fabrication (FFF), is a widely used additive manufacturing technique that has revolutionized the manufacturing industry(Ilyes et al., 2020). It has gained popularity due to its simplicity, versatility, and cost-effectiveness. FDM enables the production of complex and customized parts directly from digital designs, making it a preferred choice for various applications(Wang et al., 2018).The FDM process involves the deposition of thermoplastic filament layers, which are heated and extruded through a nozzle. The material is carefully deposited layer by layer, following the specified design, until the final part is created. This layer-by-layer approach allows for precise control and flexibility in creating intricate geometries and complex internal structures(Liu et al., 2020).One of the key advantages of FDM is its compatibility with a wide range of thermoplastic materials. Commonly used materials include Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene (ABS), Polylactic Acid (PLA), and Polyethylene Terephthalate Glycol (PETG). Each material has its specific characteristics, such as strength, flexibility, and temperature resistance, which make it suitable for different applications.Various parameters influence the quality and properties of FDM-printed parts(He et al., 2019). These include layer thickness, infill density, printing speed, and nozzle temperature. Choosing the appropriate parameters is essential to achieve the desired level of detail, strength, and surface finish. Additionally, post-processing techniques such as sanding, polishing, and painting can be employed to further enhance the aesthetics and functionality of FDM-printed parts(Kollamaram et al., 2018).FDM offers several advantages. It allows for rapid production times, making it suitable for prototyping and small-scale production. The process also minimizes material waste, as only the required amount of filament is used for each print. Furthermore, FDM offers the advantage of being a relatively affordable and accessible additive manufacturing technology, making it widely adopted by individuals, hobbyists, and small businesses.However, there are certain limitations to consider when using FDM. The resolution of FDM-printed parts may be lower compared to other additive manufacturing techniques, resulting in visible layer lines(Tosto et al., 2022). Achieving a smooth surface finish may require additional post-processing steps. Moreover, the mechanical properties of FDM-printed parts can be influenced by factors such as layer adhesion, infill density, and material selection.

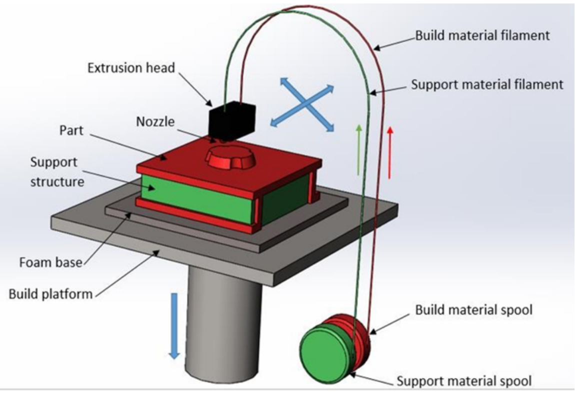

Figure 1 Schematic diagram of FDM 3D Printer

Literature Review

In this chapter the overall detailed discussion on composites developed by FDM and other 3d printing technologies are presented.

(Kovalcik et al., 2020)The study indicate that the development of a single-use plastic alloy (SUPA) consisting of ternary polyethylene (PE), polypropylene (PP), and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) shows promise as a 3D printing material. The study investigated the mechanical properties, morphology, and crystallization behavior of the SUPA.Through tensile and bending tests, it was found that the optimal ratio of components for the best mechanical performance of the SUPA was 20% PET, 2% maleic anhydride grafted polypropylene (PP-g-MAH), and 2% organic modified montmorillonite (OMMT). The SUPA exhibited a tensile strength of 14.48 MPa, a tensile modulus of 586.42 MPa, a flexural strength of 15.85 MPa, and a flexural modulus of 544.67 MPa.

The study suggests that the inclusion of a compatibilizer (PP-g-MAH) and nanoclay (OMMT) in the SUPA formulation contributes to its enhanced mechanical properties. However, the study also highlights potential challenges related to the collection of feeding filaments and the nozzle of the 3D printing process, which may lead to variations in the mechanical performance of the SUPA(Pelzer et al., 2023). The findings of this study demonstrate the feasibility of using a SUPA composed of PE, PP, and PET for 3D printing applications. The optimized formulation shows favorable mechanical properties, which are essential for the successful implementation of SUPA as a sustainable alternative in packaging and other industries.The study focused on optimizing the printing parameters and investigating the effects of different process variables on the quality and performance of the microfluidic chips. Through a systematic experimental approach, the researchers examined the influence of layer height, printing speed, and nozzle temperature on the dimensional accuracy, surface roughness, and channel integrity of the printed chips. The results showed that the printing parameters significantly affected the overall quality of the microfluidic chips. (Yang et al., 2018)By optimizing the parameters, the researchers achieved high precision in terms of dimensional accuracy, with deviations within acceptable limits. The surface roughness of the printed chips was found to be suitable for microfluidic applications, ensuring smooth flow within the channels. Moreover, the study demonstrated the feasibility of incorporating complex microfluidic features, such as different channel geometries and structures, into the printed chips. The researchers successfully printed chips with various channel widths, depths, and configurations, showcasing the versatility of the FDM process for microfluidic chip fabrication.The study aimed to develop a method to incorporate imperceptible watermarks into 3D printed objects for authentication and copyright protection purposes. (Goncalves et al., 2018)The researchers focused on the placement of seams, which are the lines formed by the FDM printing process, as potential locations for embedding watermarks.

Through a series of experiments and analyses, the researchers investigated the effects of different seam placements on the visibility and robustness of the embedded watermarks. They evaluated the visibility of the watermarks under various lighting conditions and angles, as well as the resilience of the watermarks to common post-processing techniques, such as sanding and painting.(Yin et al., 2021)The results demonstrated that specific seam placements could effectively hide watermarks within the printed objects, making them imperceptible to the naked eye. The watermarks remained intact and recognizable even after post-processing, indicating the robustness of the embedding technique. Furthermore, the study explored the impact of different factors, such as layer height and infill density, on the visibility and quality of the watermarks. It provided insights into optimizing the printing parameters to enhance the watermarking process and achieve better visibility and durability of the embedded watermarks. Overall, the findings suggest that the seam placement technique in FDM technology offers a viable approach for embedding digital watermarks into 3D printed objects. The study contributes to the field of intellectual property protection for 3D printed objects by providing a methodology for incorporating hidden identifiers that can be used for authentication and copyright verification purposes. The research opens up possibilities for ensuring the integrity and traceability of 3D printed objects in various applications, including product authentication, anti-counterfeiting measures, and digital rights management. The study aimed to address the challenge of accurately predicting the deviation in FDM-produced parts due to the complex nature of the printing process. (Poljak et al., 2020)The researchers proposed a simulation method that can quickly estimate the deviation and assist in optimizing the printing parameters for improved accuracy. Through their experiments and analyses, the researchers developed a mathematical model that considers various factors influencing the deviation, such as material properties, machine settings, and geometric complexity of the printed part. They validated the model by comparing the simulated deviation with the actual deviation observed in printed parts.T he results demonstrated that the proposed simulation method provided a fast and reliable estimation of the deviation in FDM-printed parts. The model's accuracy was validated by its ability to predict the deviations within an acceptable range of error when compared to the actual printed parts.(Armillotta et al 2017) The study investigated the influence of different parameters, such as layer thickness and printing speed, on the deviation. It highlighted the importance of optimizing these parameters to minimize the deviation and achieve higher dimensional accuracy in FDM-printed parts.The findings of the study contribute to the field of FDM 3D printing by providing a valuable tool for predicting and managing the deviation in the printing process. The simulation method offers a practical approach for manufacturers and designers to optimize their printing parameters, reduce errors, and enhance the overall quality of FDM-printed parts.

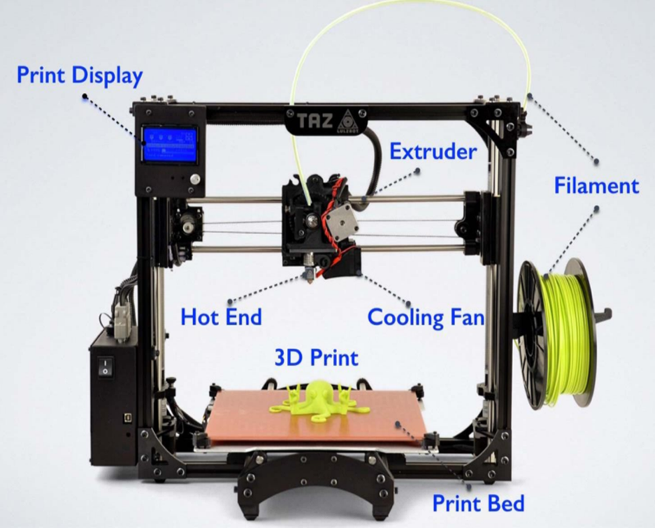

Figure 2. Main Parts of the 3-D Printer

Working Principles and Process Steps of FDM

Fused Deposition Modeling (FDM) is a widely used additive manufacturing technique that builds objects layer by layer using a thermoplastic filament. Understanding the working principles and process steps of FDM is essential to effectively utilize this technology. This section provides a detailed exploration of the working principles and process steps involved in FDM.

Material Selection: The FDM process begins with the selection of a suitable thermoplastic material. Commonly used materials include ABS, PLA, PETG, and Nylon. The choice of material depends on the desired properties of the final part, such as strength, flexibility, temperature resistance, and chemical resistance.

Filament Preparation: The selected thermoplastic material is processed into filament form, which is typically supplied in spools. The filament is carefully loaded into the FDM printer's extruder system, where it will be melted and deposited to create the object.

CAD Design and Slicing: A Computer-Aided Design (CAD) software is used to create a digital 3D model of the desired object. The CAD model is then converted into machine-readable instructions using slicing software. Slicing involves dividing the 3D model into a series of 2D layers, each with its specific path and deposition pattern.

Bed Preparation: The build platform, also known as the print bed, is prepared for the printing process. This involves ensuring that the bed is clean and properly leveled to provide a stable and consistent surface for the deposition of the filament.

Preheating: Before the printing process begins, the printer's extruder system and build chamber are preheated to the appropriate temperature. The extruder temperature is set based on the melting point of the filament material, while the build chamber temperature helps to maintain optimal conditions during the printing process.

Printing Process: Once the preheating is complete, the printing process begins. The extruder system starts to melt the filament, and the molten material is then extruded through a small nozzle. The nozzle moves along the X, Y, and Z axes, depositing the melted filament layer by layer according to the instructions generated by the slicing software.

Layer Bonding: As each layer of the object is deposited, it fuses with the previous layers, forming a strong bond. The layer bonding is achieved through the controlled cooling of the molten filament, which solidifies and adheres to the previous layers.

Post-Processing: After the printing process is finished, the printed object may undergo post-processing steps to improve its surface finish or to remove any support structures. Common post-processing techniques include sanding, polishing, painting, or chemical treatments, depending on the desired final appearance and functionality.

Understanding the working principles and process steps of FDM is crucial for optimizing the printing process, achieving desired object characteristics, and minimizing errors or defects. By following these steps and considering the specific requirements of each print job, manufacturers can effectively utilize FDM technology to produce high-quality parts for various applications.

Materials and Filament Selection for FDM

In Fused Deposition Modeling (FDM), the choice of materials and filaments plays a crucial role in determining the final properties and performance of the printed objects. FDM technology offers a wide range of thermoplastic materials that can be used as filaments for printing. This section provides a detailed exploration of the materials and filament selection considerations for FDM.

Thermoplastic Materials: FDM technology utilizes thermoplastic materials, which are capable of melting and solidifying repeatedly without significant degradation of their properties. Some commonly used thermoplastics for FDM include:

Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene (ABS): ABS is a popular thermoplastic known for its strength, durability, and impact resistance. It can withstand high temperatures and exhibits good mechanical properties.

Polylactic Acid (PLA): PLA is a biodegradable and environmentally friendly thermoplastic derived from renewable resources such as corn starch or sugarcane. It is easy to print, offers good surface finish, and is suitable for a wide range of applications.

Polyethylene Terephthalate Glycol-Modified (PETG): PETG combines the desirable properties of both ABS and PLA. It offers good strength, flexibility, and resistance to chemicals. It is also known for its clarity and transparency.

Filament Properties: When selecting filaments for FDM, it is important to consider various filament properties that can influence the print quality and performance of the printed objects. Some key filament properties to consider include:

Diameter: Filaments are available in different diameters, typically ranging from 1.75mm to 3mm. It is crucial to select filaments that match the specifications of the printer's extruder system to ensure smooth filament feeding and accurate deposition.

Color: Filaments come in a wide range of colors, allowing for customization and aesthetic appeal of the printed objects.

Strength: Different filaments offer varying degrees of strength, which is important to consider depending on the intended application and load-bearing requirements of the printed objects.

Flexibility: Filaments can vary in flexibility, from rigid to highly flexible. Flexibility can impact the ability of the printed objects to withstand bending or deformation.

Heat Resistance: Some filaments exhibit higher heat resistance than others, making them suitable for applications that involve exposure to high temperatures.

Printability: Filaments differ in their printability characteristics.

The selection of materials and filaments for FDM is a critical aspect of achieving desired print quality and performance. By carefully considering the properties of different thermoplastic materials and filaments, manufacturers can choose the most suitable options for their specific applications, ensuring optimal results in terms of strength, durability, functionality, and aesthetics. It is important to experiment and test different filaments to identify the optimal combination of material and filament for each printing requirement.elongation, and the data is represented according to that machine used to test the universal tensile strength

Applications of FDM in Various Industries

Fused Deposition Modeling (FDM) has found numerous applications across various industries due to its versatility, cost-effectiveness, and ability to rapidly produce complex geometries. This section provides a detailed exploration of the applications of FDM in different industries.

Aerospace: FDM is widely utilized in the aerospace industry for prototyping, tooling, and manufacturing lightweight components. It allows for the production of complex shapes and intricate internal structures, enabling the creation of lightweight and durable parts for aircraft and spacecraft. FDM is also used for producing jigs, fixtures, and customized tools, reducing lead times and costs associated with traditional manufacturing methods.

Automotive: FDM is employed in the automotive industry for rapid prototyping, functional testing, and producing low-volume parts. It enables the development of concept models, design validation prototypes, and manufacturing aids. FDM's ability to produce durable and high-temperature resistant components makes it suitable for applications such as air ducts, engine mounts, and interior trim components.

Medical and Healthcare: FDM has revolutionized the medical and healthcare sectors by enabling the production of patient-specific anatomical models, surgical guides, and prosthetics. It offers customization and precise replication of patient anatomy, aiding in surgical planning and training. FDM is also used for manufacturing biocompatible and sterilizable medical devices, such as orthopedic implants and dental aligners.

Consumer Products: FDM is widely used in the consumer products industry for creating prototypes, product enclosures, and functional parts. It allows for rapid iteration and design verification, reducing time to market. FDM is utilized in the production of consumer electronics, appliances, sporting goods, and household items.

Architecture and Construction: FDM is increasingly utilized in the architecture and construction fields for creating intricate architectural models, prototypes, and scale models. It enables architects and designers to visualize and communicate their concepts effectively. FDM is also employed for producing construction elements such as molds, formwork, and structural components.

Education and Research: FDM plays a significant role in education and research by facilitating hands-on learning and experimental studies. It allows students, researchers, and scientists to prototype and test their ideas quickly, aiding in concept validation and innovation. FDM is extensively used in engineering, design, and scientific research laboratories.

Defense and Defense: FDM is utilized in the defense and military sectors for creating prototypes, specialized components, and customized tools. It enables the production of lightweight, durable, and functional parts for military vehicles, equipment, and defense systems.

Art and Design: FDM has opened up new possibilities for artists and designers to create intricate and complex artworks and sculptures. It allows for the exploration of unconventional shapes and structures, giving artists the freedom to bring their creative visions to life.

These are just a few examples of the diverse applications of FDM across various industries. The versatility and cost-effectiveness of FDM make it a preferred choice for rapid prototyping, customized manufacturing, and low-volume production. As technology advances and new materials become available, the applications of FDM are likely to expand even further, revolutionizing industries and driving innovation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Fused Deposition Modeling (FDM) is a versatile and widely used additive manufacturing process that has revolutionized various industries. Through this overview of the FDM process, we have gained insights into its working principles, process steps, materials, and applications. FDM offers several advantages, including cost-effectiveness, rapid prototyping, design flexibility, and the ability to produce complex geometries.The FDM process involves the layer-by-layer deposition of molten thermoplastic materials, which solidify to create a three-dimensional object. It is a relatively simple and straightforward process that allows for the production of functional prototypes, end-use parts, and customized components. The selection of suitable materials and filaments is crucial for achieving desired mechanical, thermal, and aesthetic properties.FDM has found applications in various industries, including aerospace, automotive, medical, consumer products, architecture, education, defense, and art. It has enabled advancements in product development, manufacturing efficiency, and innovation. FDM is particularly valuable in rapid prototyping, functional testing, low-volume production, and customization.As technology continues to advance, we can expect further improvements in FDM, including the development of new materials with enhanced properties, increased precision and accuracy, and larger build volumes. These advancements will further expand the applications of FDM and drive its integration into mainstream manufacturing processes. It is important to recognize that FDM does have limitations, such as limited material options compared to other additive manufacturing processes, relatively lower resolution, and surface finish compared to traditional manufacturing methods. Therefore, the suitability of FDM for a specific application should be carefully evaluated, taking into consideration the desired properties, cost-effectiveness, and production requirements.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

Fused Deposition Modeling (FDM) in additive manufacturing is highly promising, with several advancements expected to shape the field. The continuous expansion of material options will provide greater versatility and enable the production of functional prototypes and end-use parts with enhanced properties. Furthermore, improvements in precision and resolution will result in higher-quality components with improved surface finish and finer details. The development of FDM equipment with larger build volumes will enable the fabrication of larger parts or multiple parts in a single build, catering to industries with specific size requirements. Integration with multi-material printing will allow for the creation of complex, multi-functional parts with varying material properties, enhancing product performance. Process optimization and automation, including advancements in software algorithms and artificial intelligence, will optimize printing parameters and enhance overall efficiency. FDM will find applications in various industries, including healthcare, electronics, energy, and consumer goods, contributing to personalized medicine, custom electronics, and sustainable manufacturing practices. Integration with post-processing technologies will further enhance the aesthetics and functionality of printed parts. Overall, the future of FDM holds great potential for advancements in materials, precision, build volume, process optimization, industry-specific applications, and post-processing integration, making it a key technology in the additive manufacturing landscape.

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