

DEVELOPMENT OF ADC14 HYPEREUTECTIC AlSi
ALLOY BASED COMPOSITE REINFORCED WITH
SiC, Al₂O₃ AND TiB₂ THROUGH STIR CASTING

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CASTING

AQEEL AHMED BHUTTO



A thesis submitted in
fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the
Doctor of Philosophy in Mechanical Engineering
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ABSTRACT

The hypereutectic AlSi alloys contain Si more than 12.3 % (eutectic point), and possesses better mechanical properties than eutectic and hypoeutectic AlSi alloys. But the higher percentage of Si in the hypereutectic AlSi alloy caused to result primary and eutectic Si in microstructure during melting, which in turns to hitch the mechanical properties. The proper control of microstructure and addition of common reinforcement materials (SiC, Al₂O₃, TiB₂) in hypereutectic AlSi alloy will improve mechanical properties. Thus, in this research work, ADC14 hypereutectic AlSi alloy based composite reinforced with SiC (5 to 20%), Al₂O₃ (5 to 15%) and TiB₂ (2 to 8%) was developed through stir casting. The mechanical, physical and thermal properties, and microstructure were investigated for the developed composite through ASTM standards. The results showed that tensile strengths and hardness of all the three composites were increased by increasing the weight percentage of all three reinforcements. The maximum values of ultimate tensile strength and hardness were obtained as 115.81 MPa and 69 HV for 20% of SiC and 8% of TiB₂ reinforcements respectively. For physical properties, the optimum values were obtained as 2.67 g/cm³ and 0.023% for 8% of TiB₂ and 5% of SiC respectively. For thermal properties, the optimum values were obtained as 178 W/mK and 10.7 1/°C x 10⁻⁶ for 20% of SiC and 15% of Al₂O₃ respectively. Furthermore, the addition of Al₂O₃ improved the microstructure of ADC14 hypereutectic alloy based composite. And minor porosities were observed in microscopic images. Comprehensively, all three reinforced materials improved the mechanical, physical and thermal properties of the ADC14 hypereutectic AlSi alloy based composite. The development of ADC14 composite may provide some practical knowledge in materials engineering. Also, based on the results of hardness and thermal properties, the developed composite can be applied for automotive part.

ABSTRAK

Hipereutektik AlSi aloi mengandung Si lebih daripada 12.3% (titik eutektik), dan mempunyai sifat mekanikal yang baik daripada aloi eutektik dan hipoeutektik AlSi. Tetapi peratus Si yang tinggi di dalam aloi hipereutektik AlSi disebabkan keputusan primer dan eutektik Si dalam struktur mikro ketika mencair, yang secara giliran menyekat sifat mekanikal. Kawalan struktur mikro yang baik dan penambahan bahan pengukuh (SiC, Al₂O₃, TiB₂) biasanya dalam aloi hipereutektik AlSi akan meningkatkan sifat mekanikal. Oleh itu, dalam kajian ini, bahan komposit pengukuh asas aloi ADC14 hipereutektik AlSi dengan SiC (5 hingga 20%), Al₂O₃ (5 hingga 15%) dan TiB₂ (2 hingga 8%) dibangunkan melalui proses kacauan. Sifat Mekanikal, fizikal, termal, dan struktur mikro di kaji untuk pembangunan komposit mengikut piawai ASTM. Keputusan menunjukkan kekuatan tegangan dan kekerasan untuk ketiga – tiga komposit meningkat dengan peningkatan peratus berat ketiga-tiga bahan pengukuh. Nilai maksimum kekuatan tegangan muktamad dan kekerasan yang di perolehi adalah 115.81MPa dan 69 HV untuk 20% pengukuh SiC dan 8% pengukuh TiB₂. Untuk sifat fizikal, nilai optimum yang di perolehi adalah 2.67 g/cm³ and 0.023% untuk 8% TiB₂ dan 5% SiC. Untuk sifat termal, nilai optimum yang di perolehi adalah 178 W/mK dan 10.7 1/°C x 10⁻⁶ untuk 20% SiC dan 15% Al₂O₃. Selain itu, penambahan Al₂O₃ memperbaiki struktur mikro bahan komposit pengukuh asas aloi ADC14 hipereutektik dan keliangan kecil dapat dilihat dalam imej mikroskopik. Secara keseluruhan, kesemua tiga bahan pengukuh memperbaiki sifat mekanikal, fizikal, dan termal bahan komposit aloi ADC14 hipereutektik. Pembangunan komposit ADC14 dapat memberi pengetahuan praktikal dalam kejuruteraan bahan. Juga, berdasarkan keputusan kekerasan dan sifat termal, komposit yang dibangunkan boleh di guna pakai untuk komponen automotif.

CONTENTS

TITLE	i
DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
ABSTRACT	v
ABSTRAK	vi
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS	xvi
LIST OF APPENDICES	xvii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background Study	1
1.2 Problem Statement	4
1.3 Objectives	7
1.4 Scope of Study	7
1.5 Significant of study	8
1.6 Outline of the thesis	9
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 Aluminium Piston Alloy	10
2.3 Alloying Elements	15
2.3.1 Addition of Silicon	16
2.3.2 Addition of Copper	17
2.3.3 Addition of Magnesium	17
2.3.4 Addition of Nickel	18



PT TAAUTHM
PERPUSTAKAAN TUNKU TUN AMINAH

2.3.5 Addition of Iron	20
2.4 Aluminium Alloy and Reinforcement Elements	20
2.4.1 Aluminium Metal Matrix Composite with SiC	21
2.4.2 Aluminium Metal Matrix Composite with Al ₂ O ₃	28
2.4.3 Aluminium Metal Matrix Composite with TiB ₂	35
2.5 Casting Techniques	41
2.6 Effect of Heat Treatment	44
2.7 Thermal Conductivity and Thermal Expansion	46
2.8 Density	48
2.9 Porosity	50
2.10 Review Work on Aluminum Composite	51
2.11 Summary	56
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY	58
3.1 Introduction	58
3.2 Research Methodology	58
3.3 Experimental Materials	60
3.4 Preparation of Aluminium Alloy Metal Matrix Composite	61
3.5 Heat Treatment of the Specimen	65
3.6 Mechanical Testing	66
3.6.1 Tensile Testing	66
3.6.2 Hardness Testing	67
3.7 Microstructural Testing	69
3.7.1 Scanning Electron Microscopy Study	69
3.8 Physical Characteristics Analysis	72
3.8.1 The density of the Aluminium MMC	72
3.8.2 The porosity of the Aluminium MMC	73
3.9 Thermal Analysis	73



3.9.1 Thermal Conductivity Analysis	74
3.9.2 Thermal Expansion Analysis	75
3.10 Summary of the Chapter	77
CHAPTER 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	79
4.1 Introduction	79
4.2 ADC 14 Hypereutectic Composite Reinforced with SiC	79
4.2.1 Tensile Strength of ADC14 Composite Reinforced with SiC	80
4.2.2 The hardness of ADC14 Composite Reinforced with SiC	83
4.2.3 Microstructure Analysis of ADC14 Composite Reinforced with SiC	84
4.2.4 Physical Properties of ADC14 Composite Reinforced with SiC	88
4.2.5 Thermal Properties of ADC14 Composite Reinforced with SiC	90
4.3 ADC 14 Hypereutectic Composite Reinforced with Al ₂ O ₃	92
4.3.1 Tensile Strength of ADC14 Composite Reinforced with Al ₂ O ₃	92
4.3.2 The hardness of ADC14 Composite Reinforced with Al ₂ O ₃	95
4.3.3 Microstructure Analysis of ADC14 Composite Reinforced with Al ₂ O ₃	96
4.3.4 Physical Properties of ADC14 Composite Reinforced with Al ₂ O ₃	99
4.3.5 Thermal Properties of ADC14 Composite Reinforced with Al ₂ O ₃	101
4.4 ADC 14 Hypereutectic Composite Reinforced with TiB ₂	104
4.4.1 Tensile Strength of ADC14 Composite Reinforced with TiB ₂	104
4.4.2 The hardness of ADC14 Composite Reinforced with TiB ₂	108



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PERPUSTAKAAN TUN ABDUL RAZAK

4.4.3 Microstructure Analysis of ADC14 Composite Reinforced with TiB_2	109
4.4.4 Physical Properties of ADC14 Composite Reinforced with TiB_2	112
4.4.5 Thermal Properties of ADC14 Composite Reinforced with TiB_2	114
4.5 Technical Discussion on Overall Results	116
4.6 Summary of the Chapter	119
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	120
5.1 Introduction	120
5.2 Conclusion on ADC 14 Composite Reinforced with SiC .	120
5.3 Conclusion on ADC 14 Composite Reinforced with Al_2O_3	121
5.4 Conclusion on ADC 14 Composite Reinforced with TiB_2 .	122
5.5 Recommendation for Future Work	122
REFERENCE	124
APPENDIX	141
VITA	162



PT T A U T H M
PERPUSTAKAAN TUNKU TUN AMINAH

LIST OF TABLES

2.1	Chemical Composition of Hypoeutectic, Eutectic, and Hypereutectic AlSi Alloys	13
2.2	Hypereutectic and Eutectic AlSi Alloys Characteristics	14
2.3	Hypoeutectic AlSi Alloys Characteristics	15
2.4	Tensile Properties of Al-Si Alloys after Hot Extrusion	16
2.5	Hardness and Tensile Strength of Metal Matrix Composites of Different Compositions	24
2.6	Vickers hardness of SiC reinforced AMCs	26
2.7	Density and co-efficient of thermal expansion for al-al ₂ O ₃ composites at 300 rpm grinding speed	30
2.8	Percent Porosity and Hardness data for the AA 6063 – Al ₂ O ₃ Composites	31
2.9	Tensile test results of as-cast 6061Al, with the addition of 0, 4, 8 and 12 % of TiB ₂	36
2.10	Tensile test values	37
2.11	The summary of aluminum composites with SiC	52
2.12	The summary of aluminum composites with Al ₂ O ₃	53
2.13	The summary of aluminum composites with TiB ₂	54
3.1	Composition of ADC14 Hypereutectic Aluminium Alloy (wt.%)	60
3.2	Different Reinforcement Materials and their Particle Size	61
3.3	Weight percentage of reinforcements for casting ADC14 based composite.	61
4.1	Mechanical Properties of AMMC reinforced with SiC	80
4.2	Composite Density and Porosity for Al MMC reinforced with SiC	88

4.3	Coefficient of thermal expansion and thermal conductivity of ADC14 composite reinforced with SiC.	90
4.4	Mechanical Properties of AMMC reinforced with Al_2O_3	93
4.5	Composite Density and Porosity for Al MMC reinforced with Al_2O_3	100
4.6	Coefficient of thermal expansion and thermal conductivity of ADC14 composite reinforced with Al_2O_3	102
4.7	Mechanical Properties of AMMC reinforced with TiB_2	105
4.8	Composite Density and Porosity for Al MMC reinforced with TiB_2	113
4.9	Coefficient of thermal expansion and thermal conductivity of ADC14 composite reinforced with TiB_2	114
4.10	Optimum results value of ADC 14 Hypereutectic AlSi alloy reinforced with SiC, Al_2O_3 and TiB_2	117



LIST OF FIGURES

1.1	Downsize concept and simulation results	3
2.1	Aluminium-Silicon Equilibrium Diagram	11
2.2	Microstructure of (a) Hypoeutectic Al-Si alloy (<12% Si), (b) Eutectic Al-Si alloys (12.6% Si) and (c) Hypereutectic Al-Si alloy (>12.6% Si)	12
2.3	Mechanical properties of the three different Al-Si alloys: (a) Hardness data, (b) tensile strain–stress curves	16
2.4	The micro hardness of as-cast and Mg_2Si (p)/AA332 Composite	17
2.5	Mechanical properties of squeeze cast alloys at different temperatures: (a) UTS; (b) YS; (c) EL; (d) Tensile stress-strain curves	18
2.6	Micro-hardness of the squeeze cast alloys with different Ni contents and temperatures	19
2.7	Effect of Ni particle addition on ultimate tensile strength (UTS) of produced composite materials	19
2.8	Microstructure of Al–10% SiCp MMC fabricated at 600 rpm with 10 min	21
2.9	Effect of stirring time on the hardness of Al–SiC MMC fabricated at 600 rpm	22
2.10	Effect of stirring speed on the hardness of Al–SiC MMC fabricated at 10 min stirring	22
2.11	Brinell hardness values of composite material	23
2.12	Tensile strength values of composite material	23
2.13	Comparative bar chart (Hardness)	24
2.14	Hardness (HRB) Vs Wt.% of SiC	25

2.15	Ultimate tensile strength (MPa) Vs Wt.% of SiC	25
2.16	% Elongation Vs Wt.% of SiC	25
2.17	Tensile strength of SiC reinforced AMCs	26
2.18	Tensile strength curve (MPa)	27
2.19	HRB Hardness	27
2.20	Tensile Strength of Composite with Al ₂ O ₃ Particle Content (wt.%)	28
2.21	Variation of porosity with Al ₂ O ₃ particles content	29
2.22	Variation of hardness with Al ₂ O ₃ particle content	29
2.23	Tensile Stress-Strain curves of the AA 6063 –Al ₂ O ₃ Composites	30
2.24	Variation of Ultimate Tensile and Yield Strengths in the Composite with an increase in Volume percent alumina reinforcement	31
2.25	Effect of stirring time on Hardness of composite	32
2.26	Effect of wt. % on the hardness of the composite	32
2.27	Effect of particle size on the Hardness of composite	32
2.28	Effect of wt. % on tensile strength of composite	33
2.29	Effect of stirring time on tensile strength of composite	33
2.30	Effect of nano Al ₂ O ₃ particle addition together with 5% Ni particles on ultimate tensile strength (UTS) of composite materials	34
2.31	HB Average Hardness against Al ₂ O ₃ wt.%	34
2.32	UTS and Yield stress against wt. % nanoparticles (Al ₂ O ₃)	35
2.33	Hardness of 6061Al before and after addition of different wt% of TiB ₂ Particulates	36
2.34	Age hardening curves of differently prepared specimens aged at 170 °C	37
2.35	Micro hardness plot of specimens	37
2.36	Effect of hardness on wt.% of TiB ₂ particles	38
2.37	Difference in hardness between the peak-aged and solution treated A356, A356–2.5 wt%TiB ₂ and A356–2.5 wt%TiB ₂ –0.1wt% La samples	39



2.38	Variation of hardness with Silicon content	39
2.39	Effect of EMS on the tensile properties of the composites	40
2.40	Effect of EMS on the hardness of the composites	41
2.41	The hardness variation of the composites fabricated by compo and stir casting with nano and micro- Al_2O_3 content	43
2.42	Vicker's Hardness of AA332	46
2.43	Variation of Thermal conductivity for varying Alloy Composition	47
2.44	CTEs of the three different Al-Si Alloys after Hot Extrusion	47
2.45	Density (gm/cm^3) Vs Wt.% of SiC	48
2.46	Variation of density with Silicon and TiB_2 content of the prepared in-situ composites	49
2.47	Porosities content on ADC12/Nano-SiC composite	50
3.1	Research Methodology	59
3.2	ADC14 Hypereutectic AlSi Alloy Ingots.	62
3.3	Crucible Furnace.	62
3.4	Schematic Diagram of Stir Casting Technique for the Composite fabrication.	63
3.5	Mechanical Stirrer	63
3.6	The permanent mold for casting specimens	64
3.7	Specimen Dimension for Mechanical Testing	64
3.8	Furnace for heat treatment	65
3.9	Solution Heat Treatment of the ADC14 Composite	65
3.10	Testometric TM M500 Universal Testing Machine (UTM)	67
3.11	Vickers indenter	68
3.12	Buehler Vickers Hardness Tester	68
3.13	SEM Hitachi SU1510	70
3.14	Mounted Microstructure Test Specimens	70
3.15	Grinding and Polishing Machine.	71
3.16	Density Balance (A&D HR-250AZ)	72
3.17	Thermal Conductivity Apparatus (TH 310)	75
3.18	Thermo-Gravimetric Analyser Apparatus LINSEIS L81 / 1550	77



4.1	Tensile Strength of ADC14 composite reinforced with SiC	81
4.2	Elongation of ADC14 composite reinforced with SiC	82
4.3	Hardness of ADC14 composite reinforced with SiC	83
4.4	SEM images for ADC14 composite (a) 5, (b) 10, (c) 15 and (d) 20 wt% of SiC	86
4.5	EDS images for ADC14 composite (a) 5, (b) 10, (c) 15 and (d) 20 wt% of SiC	86
4.6	Density of ADC14 composite reinforced with SiC	89
4.7	Porosity of ADC14 composite reinforced with SiC	89
4.8	Coefficient of thermal expansion and thermal conductivity of ADC14 composite reinforced with SiC	91
4.9	Tensile strength of ADC14 composite reinforced with Al_2O_3	94
4.10	Elongation of ADC14 composite reinforced with Al_2O_3	95
4.11	Hardness of ADC14 composite reinforced with Al_2O_3	95
4.12	SEM images for ADC14 composite (a) 5, (b) 10 and (c) 15 wt% of Al_2O_3	98
4.13	EDS analysis for ADC14 composite (a) 5, (b) 10 and (c) 15 wt% of Al_2O_3	99
4.14	Density of ADC14 composite reinforced with Al_2O_3	100
4.15	Porosity of ADC14 composite reinforced with Al_2O_3	101
4.16	Coefficient of thermal expansion and thermal conductivity of ADC14 composite reinforced with Al_2O_3	103
4.17	Tensile strength of ADC14 composite reinforced with TiB_2	107
4.18	Elongation of ADC14 composite reinforced with TiB_2	107
4.19	Hardness of ADC14 composite reinforced with TiB_2	108
4.20	SEM images for ADC14 composite (a) 2, (b) 5 and (c) 8 wt% of TiB_2	110
4.21	EDS images for ADC14 composite (a) 2, (b) 5 and (c) 8 wt% of TiB_2	112
4.22	Density of ADC14 composite reinforced with TiB_2	113
4.23	Porosity of ADC14 composite reinforced with TiB_2	113
4.24	Coefficient of thermal expansion and thermal conductivity of ADC14 composite reinforced with TiB_2	115



LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

HRA	-	Rockwell Hardness Test A
HV	-	Vickers Hardness
HB	-	Brinell Hardness
ADC14	-	Alternative Daily Cover
GPa	-	Giga Pascal
ASTM	-	American Society of Testing Materials
MMC	-	Metal Matrix Composite
AMMC	-	Aluminium Metal Matrix Composite
UTHM	-	Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia
FKMP	-	Fakulti Kejuruteraan Mekanikal Dan Pembuatan
gf	-	Gram force
TGA	-	Thermogravimetric Analysis
°C	-	Degree centigrade



LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX	TITLE	PAGE
A	Material Data sheets	141
B	Tensile Strength for ADC14 reinforced with 20% of SiC, 15% of Al ₂ O ₃ and 5% of TiB ₂	155



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Study

Advancement of engineering materials is increasing day by day which not only improves the performance but also reduces the weight of the engineering parts. Researchers are focusing to introduce new materials for various engineering applications. The new engineering materials are being produced by introducing composites using many casting techniques and by varying the composition of them. The biggest advantages of composites are that they are light in weight and strong. By choosing an appropriate combination of matrix and reinforcement material, a composite can be made that exactly meets the requirements of particular applications. Composites also provide design flexibility and because many of it can be moulded into complex shapes. Not end here; the composites are lighter weight, the ability to tailor the layup for optimum strength and stiffness, physical and thermal properties, and good design practice; reduce assembly costs due to fewer detail parts and fasteners.

Aluminium alloys are the preferred material for many automobile parts (combustion chamber parts) due to their specific characteristics: low density, high thermal conductivity, simple net-shape fabrication techniques (casting and forging), easy machinability, high reliability and very good recycling characteristics (Hirsch, 1997). But AlSi alloys are most commonly used in many automobile parts (Nakata and Ushio, 2001). Furthermore, AlSi alloys are characterized into three major groups: hypoeutectic (<12% Si), eutectic (12-13% Si) and hypereutectic (14-25% Si) (Lee, 2003). Hypereutectic AlSi alloys are one of the widely used alloys in cylinders, cylinder heads, cylinder liners and pistons of the automobile engines. It is because of

many good properties such as: corrosion resistance, excellent wear resistance, low density, low coefficient of thermal expansion, high specific strength and many more (Dwivedi, 2010 and Hou et al, 2010). Furthermore, the proper control of the chemical composition, the processing conditions, and the final heat treatment can ensure the required mechanical and thermal performance (Imam et al. 2015). Hypereutectic aluminium alloys are stronger, resist scuffing and seizure, and reduce groove wear and cracking of the crown at extremely high temperatures (Aqeel et al., 2016 and Saaminathan and Antony, 2017). Additionally, the adequate combination of Al-Si-Cu-Mg-based Al-Si hypereutectic alloy could produce good flowability, low coefficient of thermal expansion, low density, high strength, and good high-temperature performance characteristics (Li et al. 2017). Furthermore, hypereutectic AlSi alloys are very resistant to expansion because the high percentage of silicon essentially "insulates" the piston from the effects of heat (Kumar and Ramesha, 2018). Higher content of silicon in hypereutectic AlSi alloy makes ideal for modern engines with tight clearance requirements. Also the introduction of AlSi based composites may provide better properties by tailoring proper percentage and inclusion (Pankaj and Srivastava, 2019). Nonetheless, the continuing development of modern gasoline engines leads to specific objectives for further piston development: reduction of piston weight, an increase of mechanical and thermal load capacity, lower friction, and thus improved scuffing resistance, etc. As Sroka and Dziedzioch (2015) defined the concept of downsizing engine in their research. There are mainly three ways of downsizing such as reducing the displacement of engine ($W_d = 1-A$), diameter of the piston ($W_d = 1-B^2$) and by reducing both ($W_d = 1-AB^2$). Such downsizing of engine caused to produce heavy mechanical and thermal forces during combustion and led to premature failure of the piston. The downsize engine concept and simulated result of piston is shown in Figure 1.1. Thus, it seems to proceed for a better piston material which can sustain such mechanical and thermal stresses. And such objects can be achieved by a targeted combination of high-performance aluminium piston composite materials.

The alloy typified by ADC 14 (Alternative daily cover 14) (Japanese designation, corresponding to an aluminium alloy casting) die-cast aluminium alloy for the automotive engine block, the cylinder block, the swashplate, brake blocks, pulleys, and other thermal cracking resistance high wear resistance requirements of die casting is one of the high-silicon aluminium die-casting is currently the most widely used (Goran, 2019). On the other hand, although the resulting product is more efficient,

the raw materials are often expensive (Pooja et al. 2019). Furthermore, the cast ADC14 microstructure consists of coarse α Al, needle shaped eutectic phase and primary silicon, which improve the mechanical properties (Okayasu et al., 2013). Such microstructure characteristics make ADC14 to utilize in numerous applications. However, the use of ADC14 is still restricted due to lower strength as compared to steel for many automobile applications (Yoon-Seok et al., 2020).

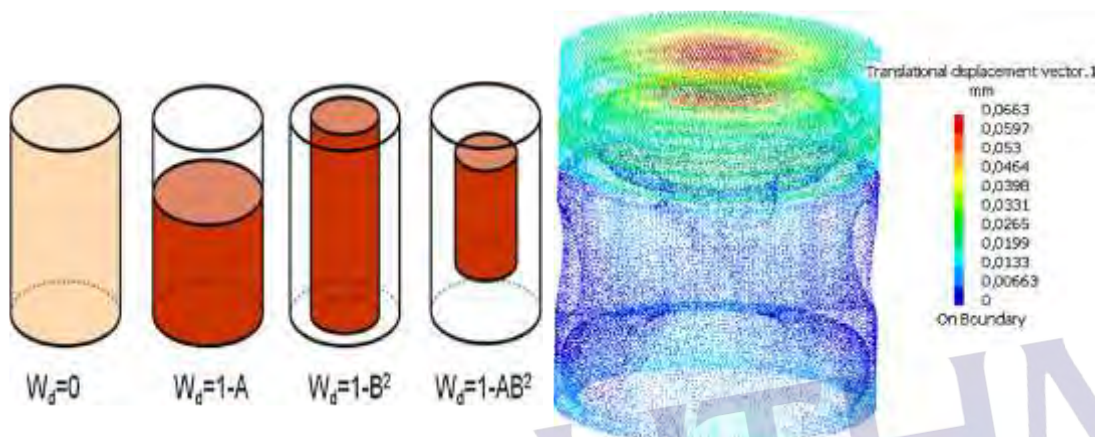


Figure 1.1: Downsize concept and simulation results (Sroka and Dziedziuch, 2015)

The large number of research studies investigating the effect on mechanical and other properties of aluminium alloys have been reported by using the different types of reinforcements like SiC, Al_2O_3 , TiB_2 (Surappa, 2003). From these studies, it has been observed that such reinforcement increases the mechanical and thermal properties of the aluminium-based composites (William, 2007). Furthermore, the addition of SiC leads to a decrease in the density of aluminium alloys because of the agglomeration of SiC particles (Sanjeev et al. 2015). Whereas, the mechanical properties could be reduced if SiC added in AlSi alloy beyond than critical values. The addition of SiC beyond critical values form clusters and reduce mechanical properties of AlSi alloy / SiC composite (Don et al. 2016). While, the reduction in density of AlSi / SiC composite is due to difference in density values of matrix and reinforcement (Nuruzzaman and Kamaruzaman, 2016). As SiC is a ceramic material and its addition has a significant effect on the hardness of the matrix and increased hardness owing to the hard nature of ceramic particles. Also, it was revealed that small-sized SiC particles give more hardness than large-sized SiC particles because of fewer defects in the fine-grained structure (Mohammad and Gajendra, 2017). But overall, the addition of SiC increased the mechanical properties of the AlSi alloy based composite (Gourav et al.

2018 and Vijaya et al. 2018). Furthermore; Al_2O_3 (Alumina) is a single crystal material that poses many excellent properties such as high corrosion resistance, high dielectric strength, high thermal conductivity and stability, and high strength and hardness; therefore, it is a preferred material for high-performance systems used in plenty of application in automobile, aerospace, electronics, optics, advanced sensing, and other engineering parts (Kai-Peng et al. 2017). Also, the Al-TiB₂ composite exhibited higher values of hardness, tensile strength, and young's modulus than the base alloy (Suresh et al. 2012 and Derek et al., 2013). Additionally, TiB₂ reinforcement reveals outstanding features such as high melting point (2790 °C) high hardness (86 HRA or 960 HV) and high elastic modulus (530×10^3 GPa) and good thermal stability. TiB₂ is a ceramic particle and does not react with molten aluminium, thereby it avoids the formation of brittle reaction products at the reinforcements-matrix interface (Johny et al. 2014).

In focusing the above facts; a better composite material is the right choice for parts that are directly facing high mechanical and thermal stresses. Furthermore, the importance and attractive characteristics of hypereutectic AlSi alloy demanding research for manufacturing composite reinforced with ceramic materials. Thus in this regard, the modern research attention to the development of new aluminum-based composite for the manufacturing of it. Though the conventional materials are still used, but this is the time to introduce new composite materials based on hypereutectic AlSi alloy and research trend in composite materials.

1.2 Problem Statement

Materials that are most commonly used for manufacturing pistons include cast iron, alloy steel, aluminium-silicon (Al-Si) alloys, an aluminium-copper (Al-Cu) alloys (Tomasz and Piotr, 2015). These alloys are characterized by low density, which is advantageous due to the less weight, and a large thermal conductivity and lower thermal coefficient (Rafsanjani and Rezaeezadeh, 2016). The cast iron and alloy steel can provide higher mechanical properties but they have higher density and are poor in thermal conductivity (heat conduction) during the combustion process (MAHLE GmbH, 2012). Al-Si and Al-Cu alloys have light density and are better in thermal conductivity than but not as strong as the previous materials (steel and cast iron) for

manufacturing piston and other engine parts (Uthayakumar et al., 2008; Ajay and Pushpendra, 2014 and Sheelam and Agrawal 2018). Furthermore, resistance to expansion is a key, as the modern engines are designed with very tight piston and cylinder wall tolerances. Higher expansion and contraction of a piston can result in lower tolerances which decrease the performance, efficiency and increases fuel consumption and leads to a higher amount of exhaust emissions.

The recent advancement in engine technologies such as downsizing engine and others are applied, abnormal combustion phenomenon appears commonly which led to the high amplitude and high-frequency pressure oscillations (Anren et al. 2015). This abnormal combustion phenomenon is alarming to many engine problems including complications for the materials of piston and other engine parts (Heywood, 1998). The best design and material for the automobile piston are the main challenges in the downsizing of the engine (Lee, 2003) and other new engine technologies (Yun-liang et al. 2015). As Sroka and Dzedzioch (2015) found thermal loading (mean effective pressure), mechanical loadings, high levels of stresses in the combustion chamber of the downsize engine. Almost an increment of 41.7% increment in the translation vector displacement and 35.9% in Huber–Mises stress of the downsize engine piston then the normal piston.

These advancements in engine technologies are attractive research areas in automobile engineering, and still various problems generated due to unaccustomed issues like: generation of high-pressure waves cause to fail the piston material prematurely, improper combustion, unwanted exhaust gases, and increment in the usage of fuel. Moreover, despite so significant progress in the engine design, the types of engine failures that can be found are still similar. One of the most frequently occurring engine breakdowns is the failure of the engine pistons due to different causes. These failures are caused by material defects and engineering and operational errors. The most common causes of piston failures include insufficient cooling, insufficient lubrication of the piston guiding part, thermal fatigue of the piston head surface, failures due to an incorrect combustion process, and mechanical damage (Tomasz and Piotr, 2015). But the introduction of proper materials like aluminium-based composites can at least provide solutions for premature failure of piston material due to high-pressure shock waves.

An AlSi alloy that is saturated with silicon is known as “eutectic” (12.3% of Si) and when the alloy contains silicon at a percentage that is less than saturated, it's

called “hypoeutectic” (less than 12.3% of Si) and if contains more silicon than the saturation limit, it's called “hypereutectic” (more than 12.3% of Si). The characteristics of AlSi alloy in each of these categories are very distinct. Hypoeutectic alloys are less strong, less resistant to scuffing and seizure, and cannot withstand the groove wear and cracking of the crown at extremely high temperatures. The lower percentage of silicon causes to reduce the resistance to the expansion and results in easily heavily impacts on the piston crown due to thermal forces and heat during combustion. Whereas, hypereutectic alloys are stronger, resist scuffing and seizure, and reduce groove wear and cracking of the crown at extremely high temperatures and the high percentage of silicon essentially provides insulation to the piston from the effects of thermal forces and heat during combustion especially when the engine design and combustion parameters varied/changed. Hypereutectic designs also allow for decreased distance between ring grooves, which improve the "seal" between the rings and the cylinder wall and improves efficiency. Finally, because hypereutectic pistons don't expand or contract, they're ideal for modern engines with tight clearance requirements. Thus, if generally speaking, modern engine pistons must use hypereutectic aluminium alloy. But the main problem is to withstand the high mechanical and thermal stresses generated on account of latest advancement in engine technologies. And to settle this issue, it is prime important to introduce hypereutectic AlSi alloy based composite material. The most common reinforcements are SiC, Al_2O_3 , TiB_2 , and others. But the main challenge in the development of hypereutectic AlSi alloy base composite is to control the microstructure, mechanical, physical, and thermal properties (Lee, 2003). On the other hand, AlSi alloys (hypoeutectic) are still used for piston manufacturing but these alloys are not suitable for high-temperature applications because tensile and thermo-mechanical strengths are not as high as desired in the temperature range of 250°C-350°C. Thus, as based on it, it is prime important to develop hypereutectic AlSi alloys based composite material to endure the better mechanical and thermal properties for the piston, especially; when the design of the engine is modified/changed. And in this context, this research is focusing on the development of ADC 14 hypereutectic AlSi alloy based composite reinforced with SiC, Al_2O_3 , and TiB_2 .

1.3 Objectives

The ultimate aim of this research is to develop ADC14 hypereutectic AlSi alloy based composite reinforced with SiC, Al₂O₃, and TiB₂ separately. To achieve this ultimate aim of the study, the following objectives are to be done:

- i. Development of ADC14 hypereutectic AlSi alloy based composite reinforced with SiC, Al₂O₃, and TiB₂ through stir casting.
- ii. To investigate the mechanical, microscopic, physical and thermal properties of ADC14 hypereutectic AlSi alloy based composite reinforced with SiC, Al₂O₃, and TiB₂.
- iii. To investigate the mechanical, microscopic, physical and thermal properties of ADC14 hypereutectic AlSi alloy based composite reinforced with Al₂O₃.
- iv. To investigate the mechanical, microscopic, physical and thermal properties of ADC14 hypereutectic AlSi alloy based composite reinforced with TiB₂.

1.4 Scope of Study

Al-Si alloys are commonly used for commercial aluminium casting parts and have been utilized extensively in automotive, aerospace, transportation, and defence industries, as they have low weight, good specific strength, good thermal conductivity, good machinability, and excellent corrosion resistance. This research is focused on the development of ADC 14 hypereutectic AlSi alloy based composite material. In light of the above-highlighted objectives, the following is the main scope of the current research:

- i. ADC14 hypereutectic AlSi alloy will be used for the development of composite material.
- ii. Three reinforcement materials such as SiC Al₂O₃ and TiB₂ were used for fabricating ADC14 hypereutectic AlSi composite.
- iii. Stir casting technique will be used for developing composite material.
- iv. ASTM standards will be followed for mechanical, physical, and thermal properties.
- v. Mechanical properties such as ultimate tensile strength, yield strength, breaking strength, elongation, and hardness will find by using ASTM standards.

- vi. Physical properties; experimental density and porosity of the composite will be found through the Archimedean principle.
- vii. Thermal properties, coefficient of thermal expansion will be found, however, the thermal conductivity of the composite material will be found on a single temperature.
- viii. For microscopic investigation; SEM analysis will be carried out by the following standard.

1.5 Significant of study

This research is conducted to develop ADC14 hypereutectic AlSi alloy based composite reinforce with different ceramic materials such as SiC, Al₂O₃, and TiB₂ through stir casting. The different weight percent of such ceramic materials has been added in ADC14 hypereutectic AlSi alloy. A wide range of research has been conducted on hypoeutectic AlSi alloy reinforced with different ceramic materials, however; very few research was conducted on hypereutectic AlSi alloy reinforced with ceramic materials. As per the best knowledge of author, even such research on hypereutectic AlSi alloy did not discuss well the inclusion of SiC and its effect on mechanical properties. Also, the inclusion of Al₂O₃ and TiB₂ in hypereutectic AlSi alloy did not research yet to a class where any conclusions could be drawn about physical, thermal, and mechanical properties. At the end of this research, three different composite materials will be developed and their property evaluation like mechanical, physical, thermal, and microscopic properties will provide a wide range of knowledge, ideas, and recommendations for the hypereutectic AlSi alloy based composite material. Moreover, in the light of obtained such properties of the ADC14 hypereutectic AlSi alloy based composite, the utilization of hypereutectic AlSi alloy based composite could be differentiated from hypoeutectic AlSi alloy based composites.

1.6 Outline of the thesis

The thesis comprises of five chapters in total. Following this chapter, Chapter 2 is devoted to providing the essential background information to this research work. The literature relevant to this research is also summarized in Chapter 2. Chapter 3, defining the details of the methodology carried out for conducting this research. The details about the method of stir casting carried for producing ADC 14 hypereutectic AlSi alloy reinforced with SiC, Al₂O₃, and TiB₂ composite has been defined. Furthermore, a comprehensive methodology for conducting experimental work to find mechanical, physical, and thermal properties of composite materials. Moreover, details about SEM analysis carried out for composite materials have been defined. In chapter 4, the results and discussions have been defined regarding mechanical properties, SEM analysis, physical and thermal properties of the composite materials. It is important to highlight here that, in chapter 4; all the results and discussions have been defined separately for SiC, Al₂O₃, and TiB₂ inclusion in ADC 14 hypereutectic AlSi alloy. Finally, chapter 5 provides conclusions and recommendations based on the obtained results. The conclusions in this chapter have been drawn separately for SiC, Al₂O₃, and TiB₂ reinforcement in ADC 14 hypereutectic AlSi alloy. Finally, the recommendations have been highlighted for future research work related to this current research.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The most common material used for automotive pistons is aluminium due to its lightweight, low cost, good wear & corrosion resistance, and acceptable strength. Although other elements may be present in smaller amounts the core alloying element of concern in aluminium for pistons is silicon. The point at which silicon is fully and exactly soluble in aluminium at operating temperatures is around 12%. Either, more or less silicon than 12% will result in two separate phases in the solidified crystal structure of the metal. When significantly more silicon is added to the aluminium than 12%; the properties of the aluminium alloy change in a way that is useful for pistons for combustion engines. However, at a blend of 25% silicon, there is a significant reduction of strength in the metal, so hypereutectic pistons commonly use a level of silicon between 14% and 19%. The other elements such as iron, magnesium, manganese, zinc, etc. are also added within 10% of alloy by weight depending on the kind of aluminium piston alloy (Fayomi et al. 2017).

2.2 Aluminium Piston Alloy

In earlier days, steel and cast iron were mostly used for making pistons due to their high strength. But in the recent times, these both materials are being replaced by aluminium alloys because of the promising properties of aluminium (normally AlSi) alloys over them such as low density, excellent thermal conductivity (Javidani and Larouche, 2014), high strength at elevated temperature (Love et al. 2018), high

strength to weight ratio (Dwivedi, 2010), low thermal expansion coefficient (Alshmri et al. 2014) and excellent corrosion resistance (Feyzullahoğlu et al. 2013) for piston manufacturing. Due to excellent thermal conductivity and low thermal expansion of aluminium-silicon alloys, these alloys can sustain high thermal loads acting during the thermal cycle of combustion of fuel in which temperature of piston and cylinder pair changes from -30 °C in cold winter to 300 °C in a very short interval of time (Javidani and Larouche, 2014). Also due to its low density, aluminium-silicon alloys provide the same strength as provided by cast iron and almost by steel at less weight. This reduces the weight of IC engines and improves the efficiency of automobiles. However, the issue concerning the use of aluminium alloys is the high wear rate and more strength are demanding to withstand high-pressure thermal forces during combustion especially for new combustion technologies.

For piston application, mostly aluminium-silicon alloys are used and generally categorized as hypoeutectic and hypereutectic aluminium-silicon alloys based on silicon wt%. An aluminium and silicon equilibrium diagram is shown in Figure 2.1 (Fayomi et al. 2017).

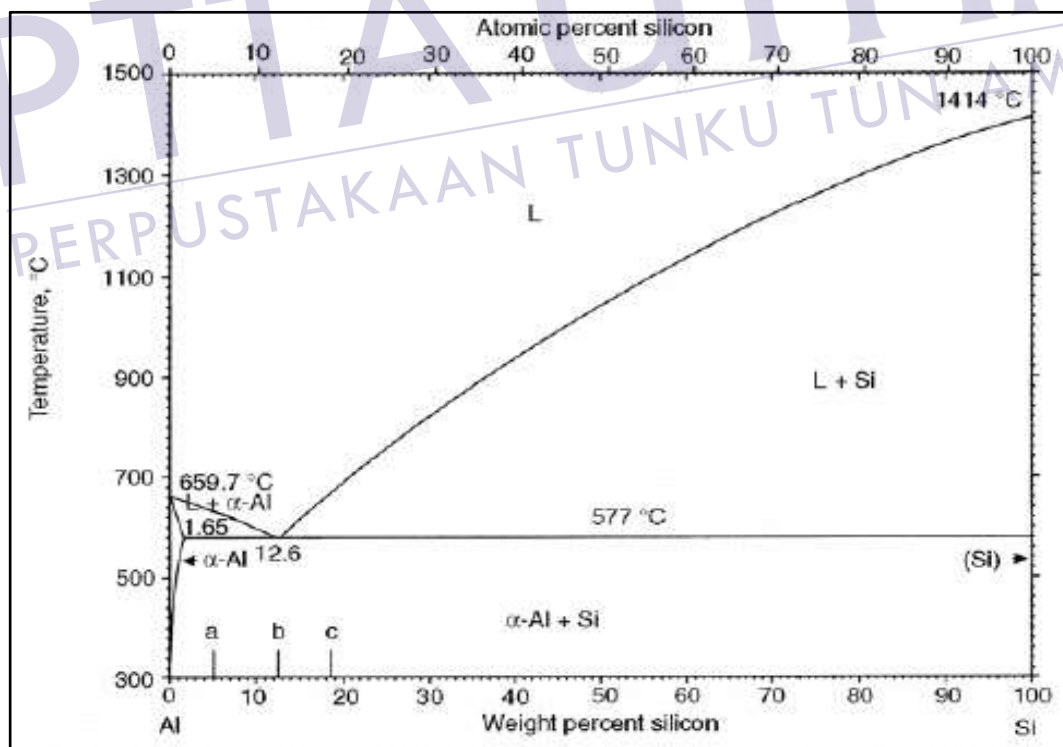


Figure 2.1: Aluminum-Silicon Equilibrium Diagram (Fayomi et al. 2017)

Depending on the Si concentration in weight percent (wt.%), the Al-Si alloy systems fall into three major categories: hypoeutectic (<12% Si), eutectic (12-13% Si)

and hypereutectic (14-25% Si). Typical hypoeutectic aluminum-silicon alloys possess two major microstructural components, namely, aluminum matrix and an aluminum-silicon eutectic. The hypoeutectic Al-Si alloys contain ductile primary Al which forms and propagates dendritically, and a needle-like brittle hard eutectic Si phase as shown in Figure 2.2 (a). Eutectic Al-Si alloys composed of an Al-Si eutectic phase. In eutectic phase, the primary Si has a cuboidal form which can be seen in the micrograph (Figure 2.2 (b)). The eutectic mixture, though, is non-lamellar in form and appears, in section, to consist of separate flakes. Further, hypereutectic alloys normally hold coarse, primary angular Si particles together with a eutectic Si phase (Fayomi et al. 2017) as shown in Figure 2.2 (c).

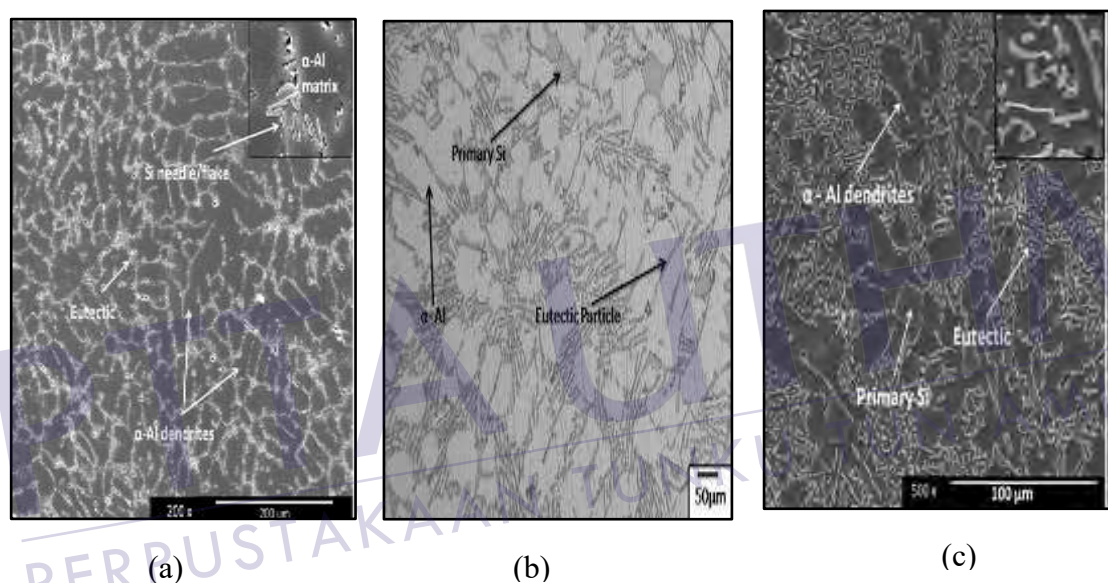


Figure 2.2: Microstructure of (a) Hypoeutectic Al-Si alloy (<12% Si), (b) Eutectic Al-Si alloys (12.6% Si) and (c) Hypereutectic Al-Si alloy (>12.6% Si) (Fayomi et al. 2017).

A hypereutectic piston is an internal combustion engine piston cast using a hypereutectic alloy and has a composition beyond the eutectic point. Hypereutectic pistons are made of an aluminium alloy which has much more silicon percent than is soluble in aluminium at the operating temperature. Hypereutectic aluminium has a lower coefficient of thermal expansion, which allows engine designers to specify much tighter tolerances. They are not as strong as forged pistons but are much lower cost due to being cast. Hypereutectic pistons are stronger than most common cast aluminium pistons and used in many high-temperature applications and advanced combustion technologies. In recent years, the development of diesel and direct fuel

injection gasoline engines with high specific powers has resulted in a big performance impact on piston materials due to increased combustion pressures and piston temperatures.

Table 2.1: Chemical Composition of Hypoeutectic, Eutectic, and Hypereutectic AlSi Alloys (Aluminium Association Incorporation, 2013 and International Alloy Designations, 2001).

Al-Si Alloys		Chemical Components (wt%.)									
		Si	Fe	Cu	Mg	Ni	Zn	Ti	Mn	Cr	Al
Hypoeutectic AlSi Alloys	2024	0.5 Max:	0.5 Max:	3.8- 4.9	1.2- 1.8	-	0.25 Max:	0.15 Max:	0.3- 0.9	0.1 Max:	Bal
	2618	0.10- 0.25	0.9- 1.3	1.9- 2.7	1.3- 1.8	0.9- 1.2	≤0.10	0.04- 0.1	-	-	Bal
	6061	0.4- 0.8	0.7 Max:	0.15- 0.4	0.8- 1.2	-	0.25 Max:	0.15 Max:	0.15 Max:	0.04- 0.35	Bal
	7075	0.4 Max:	0.5 Max:	1.2-2	2.1- 2.9	-	5.1- 6.1	0.2 Max:	0.3 Max:	0.18- 0.28	Bal
	A319	5.5- 6.5	0.1 Max:	3-4	0.1 Max:	0.35 Max:	1.0 Max:	0.25 Max:	0.5 Max:	-	Bal
Eutectic AlSi Alloy	AC8A	11- 13	≤0.8	0.8- 1.3	0.7- 1.3	-	≤0.15	-	≤0.15	-	Bal
	4032	11- 13.5	1.0 Max:	0.5- 1.3	0.8- 1.3	0.5- 1.3	0.25 Max:	-	-	0.1 Max:	Bal
Hypereutectic AlSi Alloy	B390	16- 18	1.3 Max:	4-5	0.45- 0.65	0.1 Max:	1.5 Max:	0.1 Max:	0.5 Max:	-	Bal
	A390	16- 18	0.5 Max:	4-5	0.45- 0.65	-	0.1 Max:	0.2 Max:	0.1 Max:	-	Bal
	ADC14	17- 18	0.75- 1.0	4-5	0.50- 0.65	≤ 0.30	≤ 1	≤0.10	≤0.50	-	Bal

Most of the Al-Si cast alloys to date are intended for applications at temperatures of not higher than about 121°C. Above this temperature, the alloy's microstructure strengthening mechanisms will become unstable, rapidly coarsen and dissolve resulting in an alloy having an undesirable microstructure for high-temperature applications. Such alloys have little practical application at elevated temperatures because the alloy lacks the coherency between the aluminium solid solution lattice and the precipitated strengthening particles (Belov et al. 2005 and Robles and Sokolowski, 2006). However; the most common AlSi alloys used for piston manufacturing are shown in Table 2.1 along with their chemical compositions (Aluminium Association Incorporation, 2013 and International Alloy Designations, 2001).

The main mechanical, thermal and physical properties of such AlSi piston alloys are shown in Table 2.2 and Table 2.3.

Table 2.2: Hypereutectic and Eutectic AlSi Alloys Characteristics (Aluminium Association Incorporation, 2013).

Characteristics	Hypereutectic AlSi Alloys			Eutectic AlSi Alloy	
	A390	B390	ADC14	4032-T6	AC8A-T6
Ultimate Tensile Strength (MPa)	190-290	320	260	390	250-320
Tensile Strength, Yield (MPa)	190-290	250	258	320	190-300
Hardness, Vickers	110-140	130-160	135	120	110-130
Thermal Conductivity (W/m-K)	130	130	134	140	120
CTE, linear ($\mu\text{m/m-}^{\circ}\text{C}$)	20	20	19	19	19
Density (g/cm^3)	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.6	2.8

Table 2.3: Hypoeutectic AlSi Alloys Characteristics (International Alloy Designations, 2001).

Characteristics	Hypoeutectic AlSi Alloys				
	2024-T3	2618-T61	6061-T6	7075-T6	A319
Ultimate Tensile Strength (MPa)	483	441	310	572	190-240
Tensile Strength, Yield (MPa)	345	372	276	503	110-180
Hardness, Vickers	137	130	107	175	78-84
Thermal Conductivity (W/m-K)	121	164	167	130	110
CTE, linear ($\mu\text{m/m-}^{\circ}\text{C}$)	24.7	22.3	25.2	25.2	22
Density (g/cm^3)	2.78	2.76	2.7	2.81	2.9

2.3 Alloying Elements

Mostly Al-Si alloy is used for the manufacturing of piston because of having low density, high specific strength, and low coefficient of thermal expansion, excellent wear, and corrosion resistance. These properties can be further improved by varying the amount of other alloying elements (Cu, Mg, Zn, Ni, Mn) (Aqeel et al., 2016).

2.3.1 Addition of Silicon

It is determined that above 230 °C, the Al-Si alloy microstructure will be unstable, and the desired properties will be reduced. Si is the main ingredient of the Al-Si alloy to achieve better mechanical properties and varying the distribution and particle size will affect the mechanical properties. The mechanical properties like micro-hardness may increase when Si dissolved in the α -Al matrix (Zou et al. 2015). The effect of the Si content on the mechanical properties is depicted in Figure 2.3.

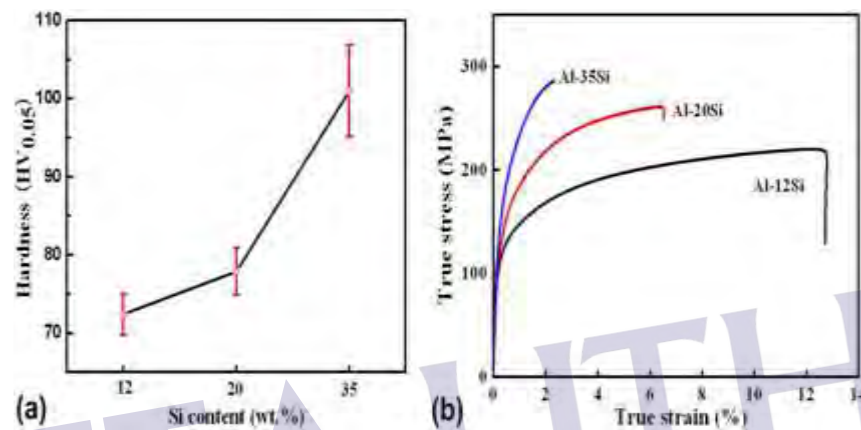


Figure 2.3: Mechanical properties of the three different Al-Si alloys: (a) Hardness data, (b) tensile strain–stress curves (Ma et al. 2017).

Table 2.4: Tensile Properties of Al-Si Alloys after Hot Extrusion (Ma et al. 2017).

Alloy	UTS (MPa)	YS (MPa)	δ (%)
Al–12Si	219.8 ± 1.8	127.5 ± 1.1	12.1 ± 0.8
Al–20Si	261.5 ± 2.1	173.2 ± 1.5	5.8 ± 0.1
Al–35Si	287.5 ± 2.7	199.4 ± 1.6	1.2 ± 0.1

Both the hardness and the tensile strength increase significantly with increasing Si content. The hardness values are found to be 72.4 ± 0.4 HV_{0.05}, 77.9 ± 0.5 HV_{0.05}, and 101 ± 0.7 HV_{0.05} for Al–12Si, Al–20Si, and Al–35Si alloys, respectively (Ma et al. 2017). The tensile property results showed in Table 2.4 in the form of true stress–strain curves. As observed, the ultimate tensile strength (UTS) and the yield strength

(YS) of these alloys increase with increasing Si content, whereas the elongation shows an adverse trend (Ma et al. 2017).

2.3.2 Addition of Copper

Copper has the influence to affect the hardness and strength of aluminium piston alloy at either heat treated or non-heat treated and also at ambient or at elevated temperature. Copper also increases the hardness and cause improvement in the machinability of the aluminium piston alloy (Yang et al. 2011).

2.3.3 Addition of Magnesium

The next element Mg in the aluminium piston alloy provides a considerable strength and also improves the work hardening characteristics. Mg also imparts good corrosion resistance, provides extremely high strength, and cause good weldability. The addition of Si and Mg together in the aluminium piston alloy improves the weldability, however; the maximum addition of Mg can be 4-8 wt% because of good thermo-mechanical properties (Yang et al. 2011).

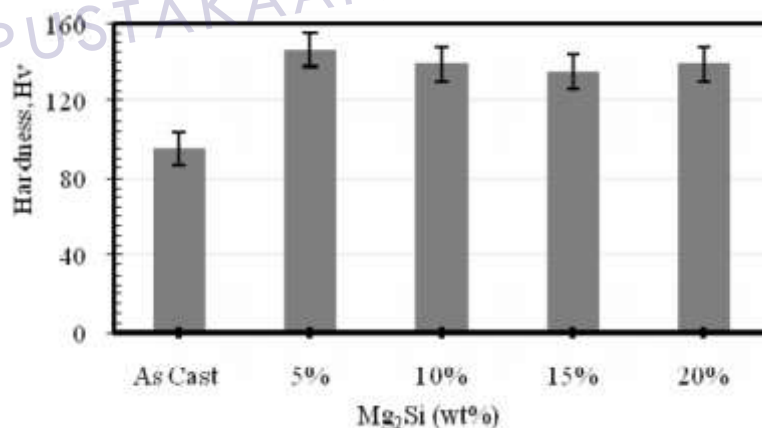


Figure 2.4: The micro hardness of as-cast and Mg₂Si (p)/AA332 Composite (Fizam et al. 2016).

Figure 2.4 depicts the hardness values of the alloy due to the addition of Mg₂Si together, it can be seen that the maximum value of the hardness achieved at 5 wt% of it (Fizam et al. 2016).

2.3.4 Addition of Nickel

Nickel causes to improve the hardness and other mechanical properties of aluminium piston alloy. Figure 2.5 shows the mechanical properties and tensile stress-strain curves of squeeze cast alloys at different temperatures.

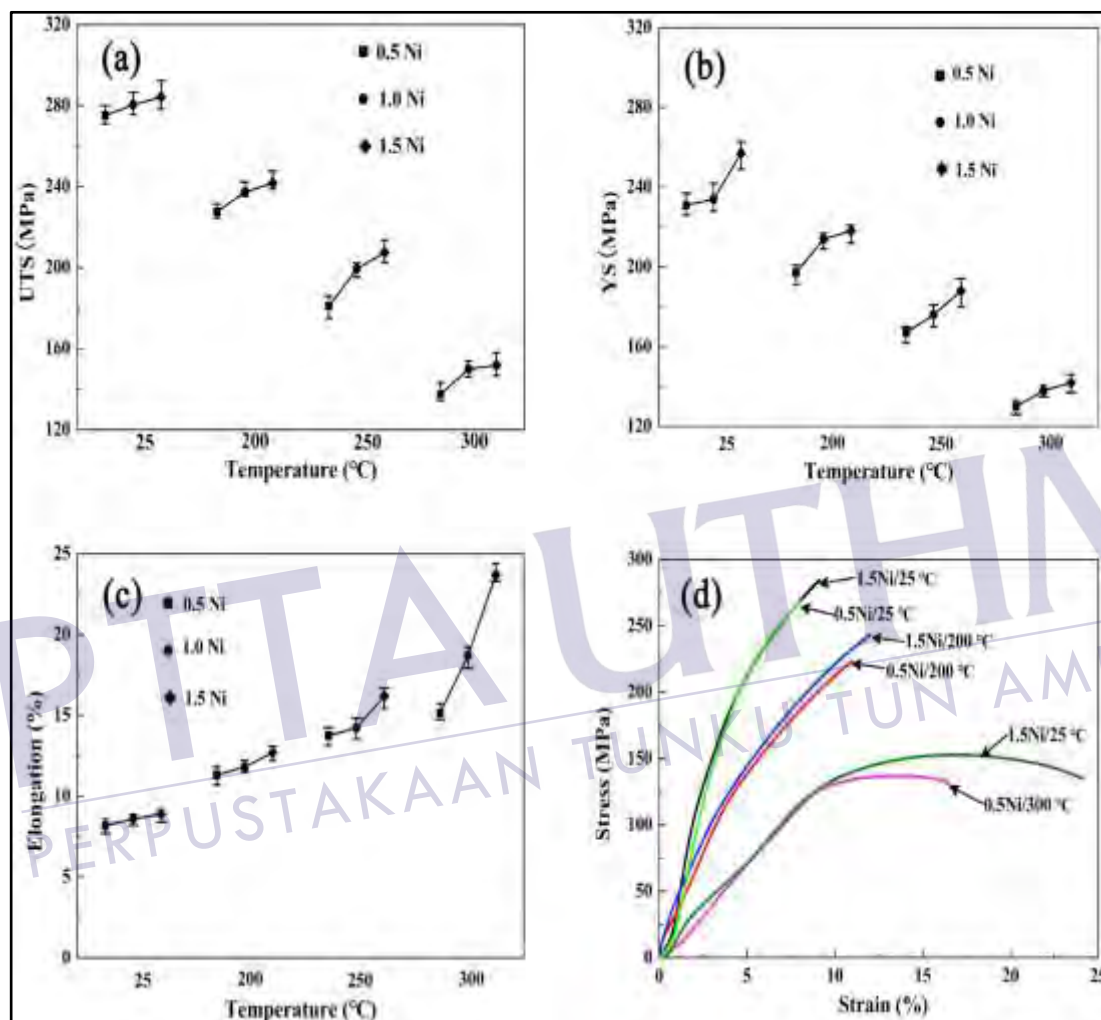


Figure 2.5: Mechanical properties of squeeze cast alloys at different temperatures: (a) UTS; (b) YS; (c) EL; (d) Tensile stress-strain curves (Bo et al. 2019).

The strength decreased and elongation increased as the tensile temperature increased. Both strength and elongation at room temperature and elevated temperatures increased with an increase in Ni content from 0.5% to 1.5%. At an elevated temperature of 300 °C, the squeeze cast 1.5 Ni alloy had tensile properties that were superior to those of the 0.5 Ni alloy, especially in terms of elongation. UTS, YS, and ductility of the squeeze cast 1.5 Ni alloy at 75 MPa were recorded as 152 MPa, 142 MPa, and 23.7%, respectively. These values correspond to increases of 16

MPa, 12 MPa, and 56%, respectively, compared to the respective values for the 0.5 Ni alloy (Bo et al. 2019).

Figure 2.6 shows the micro-hardness of the squeeze cast alloys with different Ni contents and temperatures. The micro hardness of the α (Al) matrix increases gradually with an increase in Ni content at the same tensile load temperature.

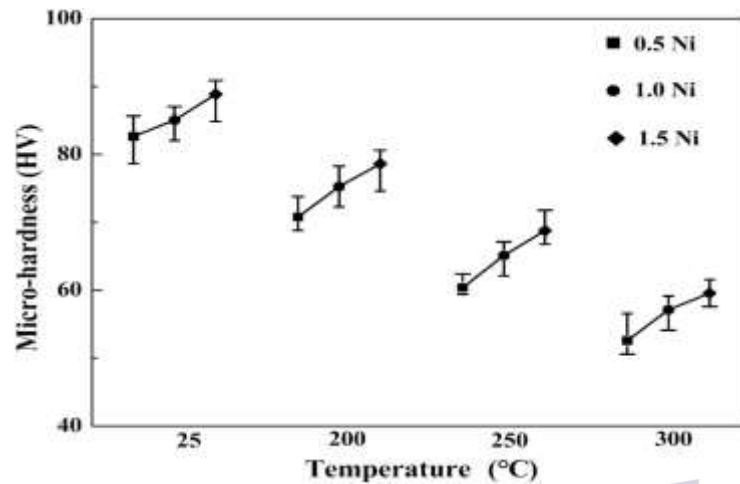


Figure 2.6: Micro-hardness of the squeeze cast alloys with different Ni contents and temperatures (Bo et al. 2019).

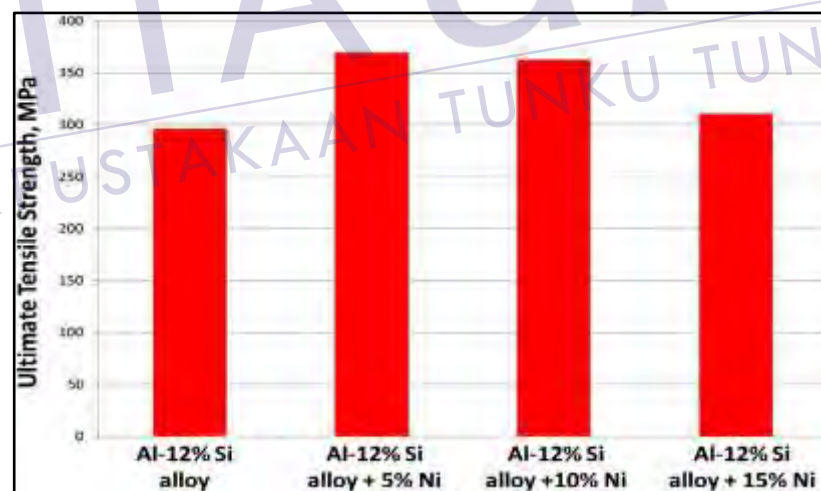


Figure 2.7: Effect of Ni particle addition on ultimate tensile strength (UTS) of produced composite materials (Labban et al. 2014)

The increase in micro hardness of the α (Al) matrix with an increase in Ni content can be attributed to the increment in $\text{Al}_{20}\text{Cu}_2\text{Mn}_3$ in the α (Al) matrix (Bo et al. 2019). Thus, Ni addition can increase the mechanical properties but as per Labban et al. (2014), the higher percentage addition of Ni reduces the UTS as shown in Figure 2.7. The maximum value of UTS achieved at 5% of Ni.

2.3.5 Addition of Iron

Iron is added to some pure alloys to provide the increment in strength which is the most common impurity found in aluminium alloys. Though the quantity of iron in aluminium piston alloys is less than 1% by weight, it provides enough strength to sustain pressure generated during combustion.

Moreover; generally, discussion on other alloying elements, titanium is added to aluminium alloy to serve as a grain refiner. Titanium is a common addition to aluminium weld filler wire as it refines the weld structure and helps to prevent weld cracking. The fine precipitate of intermetallic particles that inhibit recrystallization is produced when Zirconium is added to aluminium (Fayomi et al. 2017).

2.4 Aluminium Alloy and Reinforcement Elements

Aluminium alloys have high corrosion resistance, high thermal conductivity, sufficient strength characteristics, recyclability, ductility, durability, and especially low density (Campbell, 2015; Tan et al. 2015 and Yuksel et al. 2016). Therefore, it can be widely used in many areas of industry such as aerospace, architectural construction, marine industries, and particularly in automotive applications (Al Hawari et al. 2014). Nowadays, especially in the automotive industry, demands are increasing day by day and aluminium piston alloys do not satisfy in some cases. So that the production industry has begun to look for alternative engineering materials.

One of the engineering materials is composite. Composite materials consist of two or more materials. One of these materials is called reinforcement and the other one is called the matrix (Kandpal et al. 2014). Fibers, particulates or whiskers are examples of reinforcements and metals, plastics or ceramics are examples of the matrix material. In metal matrix composites systems, aluminium and its alloys have been drawn attention especially for the last 20 years (Garg et al. 2012; Kandpal et al. 2014 and Ramnath et al. 2014). Silicon carbide (SiC), aluminium oxide (Al_2O_3), titanium di-boride (TiB_2), boron carbide (B_4C), zirconium, and some more are the most commonly used reinforcements (Ramnath et al. 2014). In this research work; the literature was reviewed about aluminium metal matrix composites in which SiC, Al_2O_3 , and TiB_2 used as reinforcements materials.

2.4.1 Aluminium Metal Matrix Composite with SiC

SiC is one of the most researched reinforcement materials, many research has pointed out its merits with many ferrous and non-ferrous metals. Although the SiC is denser than AlSi piston alloys which cause difficulty to reinforce for metal matrix composite, powder metallurgy, stir casting and few more casting techniques can provide the solution for such difficulty. Prabu et al. (2006) studied the effect of different stirring speeds at 500, 600, and 700 rpm and durations of 5, 10, and 15 minutes for aluminium metal matrix composite with 10 wt% SiC with an average particle size of 60 μm . They determined that the stirring speed and time causes clustering of SiC particles and got better distributions of reinforcement material after 10 minutes and stirring at 600 rpm as shown in Figure 2.8.

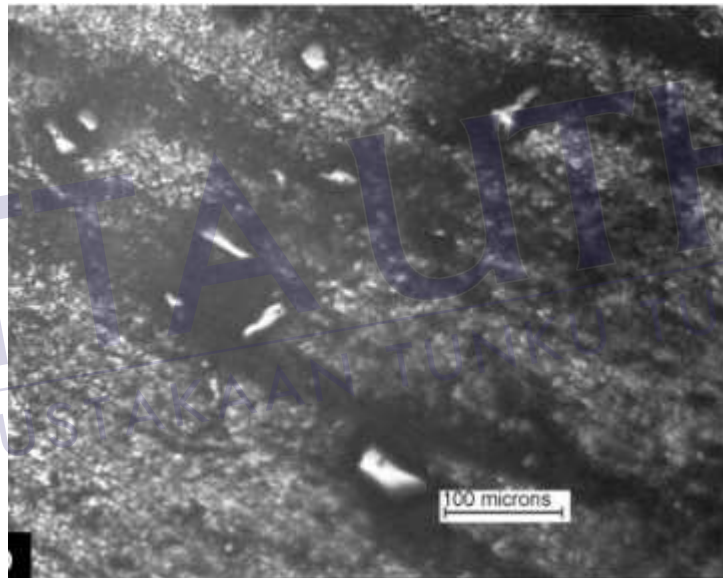


Figure 2.8: Microstructure of Al–10% SiCp MMC fabricated at 600 rpm with 10 min (Prabu et al. 2006)

Their research shows that the hardness value of composite is non-uniform for short stirring time and speed such as 5 minutes and 500 rpm respectively. The same conclusions were drawn at higher speed such as 700 rpm. Thus, they determined that mechanical properties can be directly affected by stirring speed and time. They concluded that better hardness of composite could be obtained at 10 minutes stirring time and 600 rpm stirring speed as shown in Figure 2.9 and 2.10.

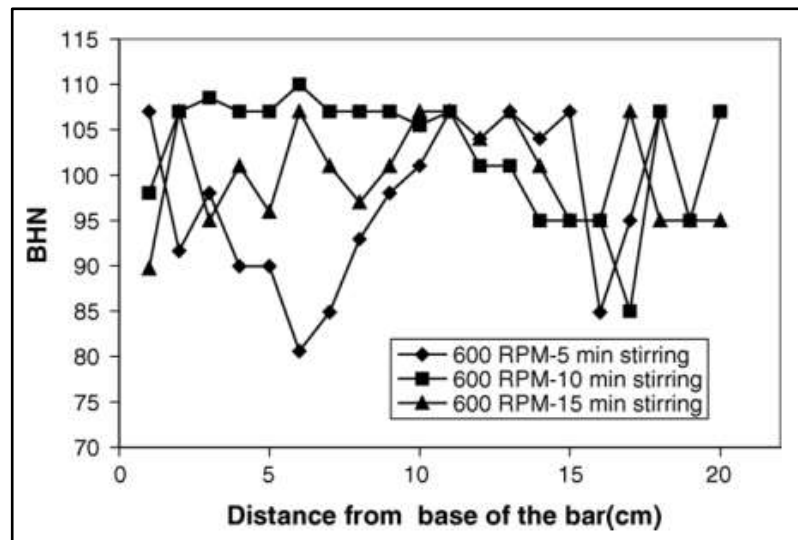


Figure 2.9: Effect of stirring time on the hardness of Al-SiC MMC fabricated at 600 rpm (Prabu et al. 2006).

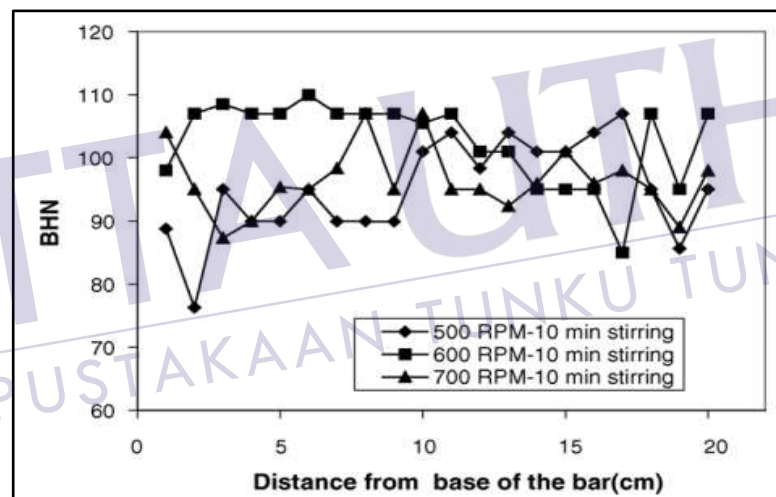


Figure 2.10: Effect of stirring speed on the hardness of Al-SiC MMC fabricated at 10 min stirring (Prabu et al. 2006).

Ozben et al. (2008) studied the mechanical properties of aluminium metal matrix composite with different ratios: 5, 10, and 15% wt% of SiC reinforced. They obtained maximum hardness as 65 HB with 15 wt% SiC as shown in Figure 2.11. However, they determined that maximum tensile strength obtained in 10 wt% SiC as shown in Figure 2.12 and over this interface bond between particles and matrix was inadequate. They concluded that increasing of reinforcement ratio improves mechanical properties such as hardness but tensile strength indicated different properties for the same reinforced additives.

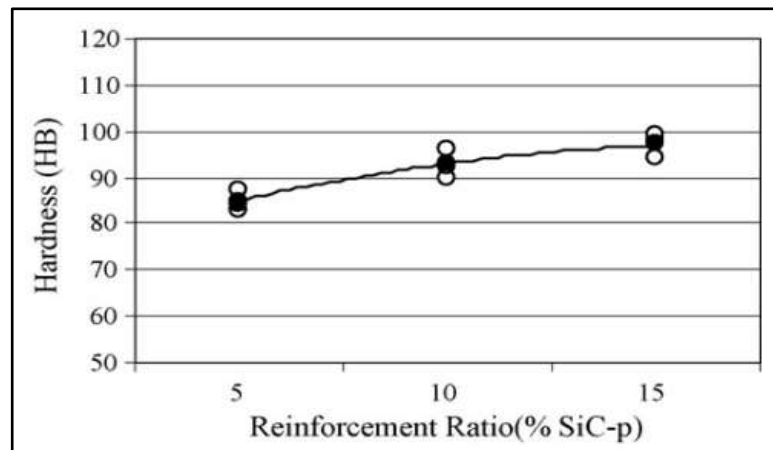


Figure 2.11: Brinell hardness values of composite material (Ozben et al. (2008))

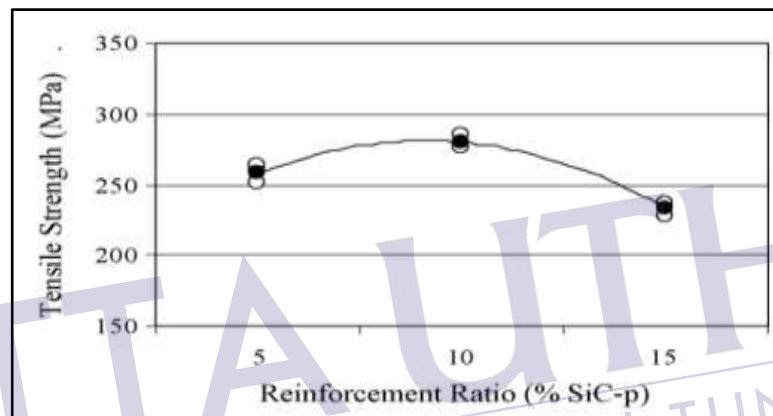


Figure 2.12: Tensile strength values of composite material (Ozben et al. (2008))

Singla et al. (2009) studied the effect of different amounts of SiC (5%, 10%, 15%, 20%, 25%, and 30% wt) on the hardness and other mechanical properties. They used preheated aluminium scraps at 450 °C for 3-4 hours and preheated SiC particles at 1100°C for 1-3 hours and applied two steps of the stirring process. At first step, they heated aluminium scraps above the liquidus then cooled just below liquidus to get semi-solid state then added SiC particles and mixed manually. At the second step, they reheated and stirred by automatic stirrer. They came to the conclusion that the hardness increase by increasing in weight percentage of SiC and obtained maximum hardness as 45.5 BHN with a 25% weight fraction of SiC as shown in Figure 2.13.

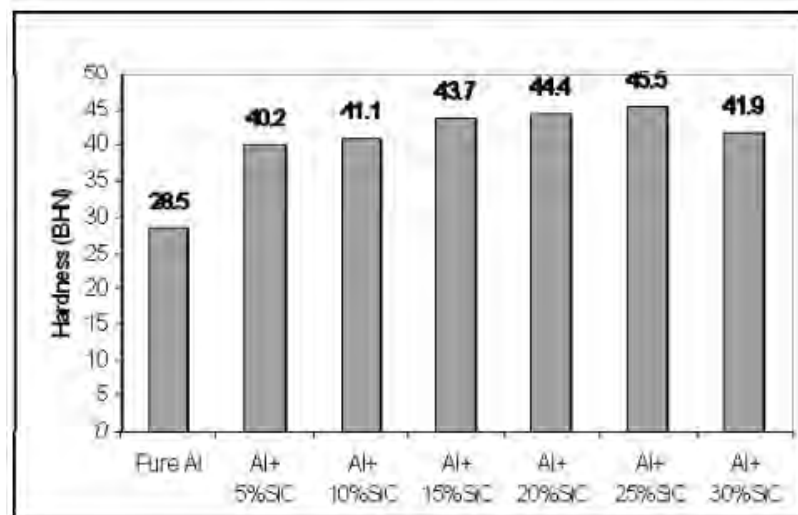


Figure 2.13: Comparative bar chart (Hardness) (Singla et al. (2009)).

Sujan et al. (2012) investigated both Al_2O_3 and SiC reinforced aluminum matrix composite by stir cast method. They used different weight fraction of SiC such as 5, 10, and 15% and determined that hardness and tensile strength increased 30, 45, and 50 HR and 258.8, 293.3 and 310.5 MPa, respectively as shown in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5: Hardness and Tensile Strength of Metal Matrix Composites of Different Compositions (Sujan et al. (2012))

Composition with SiC wt%	Rockwell Hardness (HR)	Brinell Hardness (HB)	Tensile Strength (MPa)
Al with 5%SiC	30.0	75.0	258.8
Al with 10%SiC	45.0	85.0	293.3
Al with 15%SiC	50.0	90.0	310.5

Meena et al. (2013) investigated SiC reinforced aluminium with different weight fractions (5, 10, 15, and 20%) and particle size (220, 300, and 400 mesh) by using the melt stir technique. They determined that the hardness and tensile strength were increased but elongation at fracture was decreased by increasing reinforced weight fraction as shown in Figure 2.14 to 2.16 respectively.

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