



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***FRICTION-STIR INCREMENTAL SHEET FORMING OF ALUMINUM  
ALLOY AND METAL MATRIX COMPOSITE***

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**FRICION-STIR INCREMENTAL SHEET FORMING OF ALUMINUM  
ALLOY AND METAL MATRIX COMPOSITE**

By

**QASIM MHALHAL AZPEN**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra  
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**April 2018**

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## DEDICATION

To my lovely homeland Iraq, soul of my father may Allah SWT blesses his soul and put him in Wide paradises, my beloved mother, Allah bless her, and finally my marvelous family



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in  
fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

## **FRICITION-STIR INCREMENTAL SHEET FORMING OF ALUMINUM ALLOY AND METAL MATRIX COMPOSITE**

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**April 2018**

**Chairman : Associate Professor B.T. Hang Tuah Bin Baharudin, PhD**  
**Faculty : Engineering**

Currently, there is a growing market for manufacturing customized, rapid prototyping and low-cost sheet parts with small to medium batches (particularly in transportation, artificial medical alternatives, and aerospace industries). Incremental Sheet Forming (ISF) was born as an advanced sheet forming process to perfectly fit previous requirements. ISF is described to have inherent flexibility, high formability, and low-cost and forming forces compared to traditional sheet metal forming processes. Nevertheless, increasing demands to utilize the lightweight materials in various applications has placed this developed process in a critical challenge to deal with low formability materials at room temperature. Among all heat-assisted ISF processes, frictional stir-assisted Single Point Incremental Forming (SPIF) was presented in this study. Besides the mentioned advantages of ISF, frictional stir-assisted SPIF displays superior benefits as it does not require an external heating source and has a better final surface finish than the other types. Accordingly, this technique was used to improve the formability of two lightweight materials: aluminum alloy AA60601-T6 and metal matrix composite AA6061/20%SiCp-T1 sheets. The study focuses on the investigation of the process aspects, which include process formability indicators, forming forces, and surface roughness. Tool rotation speed, feed rate, step size, and tool diameter are proposed as process parameters to evaluate their impact on the output responses. In this regard, Taguchi Design of Experiment (DoE) technique and the analysis of variance (ANOVA) were employed to design the experimental work and statistically evaluate the

impact of each parameter. For AA6061-T6 experiments, the rotation spindle speed was the most dominant parameter that affects formability and forming forces where the percentage contributions of this parameter are 90% and 73%, respectively. On the other hand, the tool diameter has a significant impact on the internal surface roughness with a percentage contribution of 93%. The values of the determination coefficients  $R^2$  are 95, and 98% for the formability and surface roughness, respectively. From the results comparison of the two materials, maximum angles, maximum height, minimum forming force, minimum surface roughness are 66.15° and 48°; 27.46 mm and 11.55 mm; 2.4478 KN and 2.1273 KN; 0.3  $\mu\text{m}$  and 1.741  $\mu\text{m}$ , for AA606-T6 and AA6061/20%SiCp-T1, respectively.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia  
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

## **PEMBENTUKAN TOKOKAN GESERAN ADUKAN ALOI ALUMINUM DAN KOMPOSIT MATRIKS LOGAN**

Oleh

**QASIM MHALHAL AZPEN**

**April 2018**

**Pengerusi : Profesor Madya B.T. Hang Tuah Bin Baharudin, PhD**  
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Saat ini, ada pasar yang berkembang untuk pembuatan komponen prototyping yang disesuaikan, cepat dan murah dengan batch kecil hingga menengah (terutama dalam transportasi, alternatif medis buatan, dan industri kedirgantaraan). Incremental Sheet Forming (ISF) lahir sebagai proses pembentukan lembaran lanjutan untuk memenuhi persyaratan sebelumnya dengan sempurna. ISF digambarkan memiliki fleksibilitas yang melekat, formabilitas tinggi, dan kekuatan biaya rendah dan membentuk dibandingkan dengan proses pembentukan lembaran logam tradisional. Namun demikian, meningkatnya tuntutan untuk memanfaatkan bahan ringan dalam berbagai aplikasi telah menempatkan proses yang dikembangkan ini dalam tantangan kritis untuk menangani bahan formability rendah pada suhu kamar. Di antara semua proses ISF panas yang dibantu, Frictional Stir-assisted Single Point Incremental Forming (SPIF) disajikan dalam penelitian ini. Selain keuntungan ISF yang disebutkan di atas, bantuan gesekan gesekan (SPIF) menampilkan manfaat unggul karena tidak memerlukan sumber pemanasan eksternal dan memiliki akhir permukaan akhir yang lebih baik daripada jenis lainnya. Dengan demikian, teknik ini digunakan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan formability dari dua bahan ringan: paduan aluminium AA60601-T6 dan matriks logam komposit AA6061 / 20% SiCp-T1 lembar. Studi ini berfokus pada penyelidikan aspek proses yang meliputi indikator formability proses, kekuatan pembentukan, dan kekasaran permukaan. Kecepatan putaran alat, laju umpan, ukuran langkah, dan diameter pahat diusulkan sebagai parameter proses untuk mengevaluasi

dampaknya terhadap tanggapan output. Dalam hal ini, teknik Taguchi Design of Experiment (DoE) dan analisis varians (ANOVA) digunakan untuk merancang pekerjaan eksperimental dan secara statistik mengevaluasi dampak dari setiap parameter. Untuk eksperimen AA6061-T6, kecepatan putaran spindle adalah parameter yang paling dominan yang mempengaruhi formability dan kekuatan pembentukan di mana kontribusi persentase dari parameter ini adalah 90% dan 73%, masing-masing. Di sisi lain, diameter alat memiliki dampak yang signifikan terhadap kekasaran permukaan internal dengan persentase kontribusi 93%. Nilai koefisien determinasi  $R^2$  adalah 95, dan 98% untuk sifat mampu bentuk dan kekasaran permukaan, masing-masing. Dari hasil perbandingan dua bahan, sudut maksimum, ketinggian maksimum, gaya pembentuk minimum, kekasaran permukaan minimum adalah 66,15° dan 48°; 27.46 mm dan 11.55 mm; 2.4478 KN dan 2.1273 KN; 0.3  $\mu\text{m}$  dan 1.741  $\mu\text{m}$ , untuk AA606-T6 dan AA6061 / 20% SiCp-T1, masing-masing.



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“In the name of Allah, most Gracious, most Compassionate”

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 12 April 2018 to conduct the final examination of Qasim Mhalhal Azpen on his thesis entitled "Friction-Stir Incremental Sheet Forming of Aluminum Alloy and Metal Matrix Composite" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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## LIST OF SYMBOLS

$t_0$	Initial sheet thickness
$t$	Instantaneous part wall thickness
$\theta$	Forming wall angle
$\delta$	Thinning limit
$\sigma_\phi$	Meridian stress
$\sigma_m$	Hydrostatic stress
$\sigma_\theta$	Circumferential stress
$\sigma_t$	Thickness stress
$\epsilon_\phi$	Meridian strain
$\epsilon_\theta$	Circumferential strain
$\epsilon_t$	Thickness strain
$\epsilon_1$	Major strain
$\epsilon_2$	Minor strain
$F_x$	Forming force in X-direction
$F_y$	Forming force in y-direction
$F_z$	Forming force in z-direction
$F_{xy}$	The in-plane reaction force
$F_{z_p}$	Peak forming force in Z-direction
$F_{z_s}$	Steady state force in Z-direction
$F_r$	Radial force
$F_t$	Tangential force
$\omega$	Spindle speed
$f$	Feed rate
$z$	Step size
$D$	Tool diameter
$h$	Height of the sample
$F_{z-max.}$	Maximum axial force
$R_a$	Surface roughness
$F$	Friction force



$V_i$	Relative velocity between the forming tool and the sheet metal
$T_{max}$	Maximum tool-sheet interface temperature
$\mu$	Coefficient of friction
$P_o$	Mean pressure
$H$	Hardness
$l$	Effective contact length of the tooltip with the sheet metal at instant forming angle
$U_1$	Sliding velocity of the forming tool
$U_2$	Sliding velocity of the sheet metal
$K_1$	Thermal conductivity
$\rho_1$	Density
$C_1$	Specific heat
$R^2$	Regression coefficient
Pred. $R^2$	predicted $R^2$
Adj. $R^2$	Adjusted $R^2$

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ISF	Incremental sheet forming
SPIF	Single point incremental forming
MMC	Metal matrix composite
DoE	Taguchi design of experiment
S/N	Signal to noise ratio
ANOVA	Analysis of variance
AMCs	Aluminum matrix composites
SiCp	Silicon carbide particles
VWACF	Varying wall angle conical frustum
CNC	Control numerical computer
CAD	Computer added design
CAM	Computer added manufacturing
TPIF	Two points incremental forming
FLDs	Forming limit diagrams
FLCs	Forming limit curves
FFLDs	Fracture forming limit curves
LST	laser surface texture
FEM	Finite element method
ORB	oblique roller-ball tool
EHIF	Electric hot incremental forming
EAIF	Electropulse-assisted incremental forming
EP	Elastoplastic
HSS	High speed steel

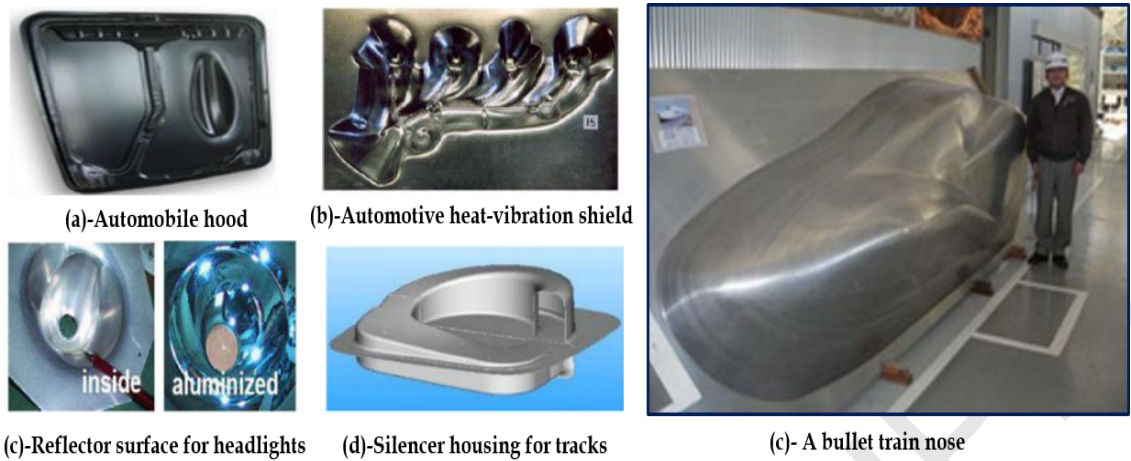
## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Overview

In recent decades, most world governments and organizations have been pushed to decrease the classical energy consumption, while simultaneously restrict using resources that cause environmental pollution. Thus, utilizing lightweight materials and innovative production techniques, in many industrial sectors, are the key factors to reach these valuable goals (Kleiner *et al.*, 2003).

The Incremental Sheet Forming (ISF) process is an emerged flexible forming process (Hussain *et al.*, 2013), whereby, complex three-dimensional shapes can be manufactured by simple jig and with the use of simple forming tools that move over a controlled tool path. Therefore, the lead-time and production cost will be less. The sheet is deformed into the final required shape by a sequence of small, localized, and incremental deformations; consequently, avoiding necking in sheet metals. As a result, the formability of sheets is extremely high compared to the conventional sheet metal forming processes (Cao *et al.*, 2015; Ingarao *et al.*, 2011; Zhang *et al.*, 2010). Moreover, the forming forces in this process are less than that in conventional ones because of localized deformation. This contributes, to a great extent, in reducing the capacity and size of the machines employed in this process. All these advantages make ISF an alternative to traditional sheet forming processes for producing intricate components in small batches like customized and prototype parts; especially in aerospace, automotive, and biomedical applications (Cao *et al.*, 2015). Figures 1.1-1.3 present the applications of ISF in the transportation and medical fields, respectively.



**Figure 1.1 : Some of the transportation sector parts produced by ISF: a) [Amino website], b) and c) (Jeswiet *et al.*, 2005c), d) (Jeswiet *et al.*, 2005b) and e)-[Amino website]**

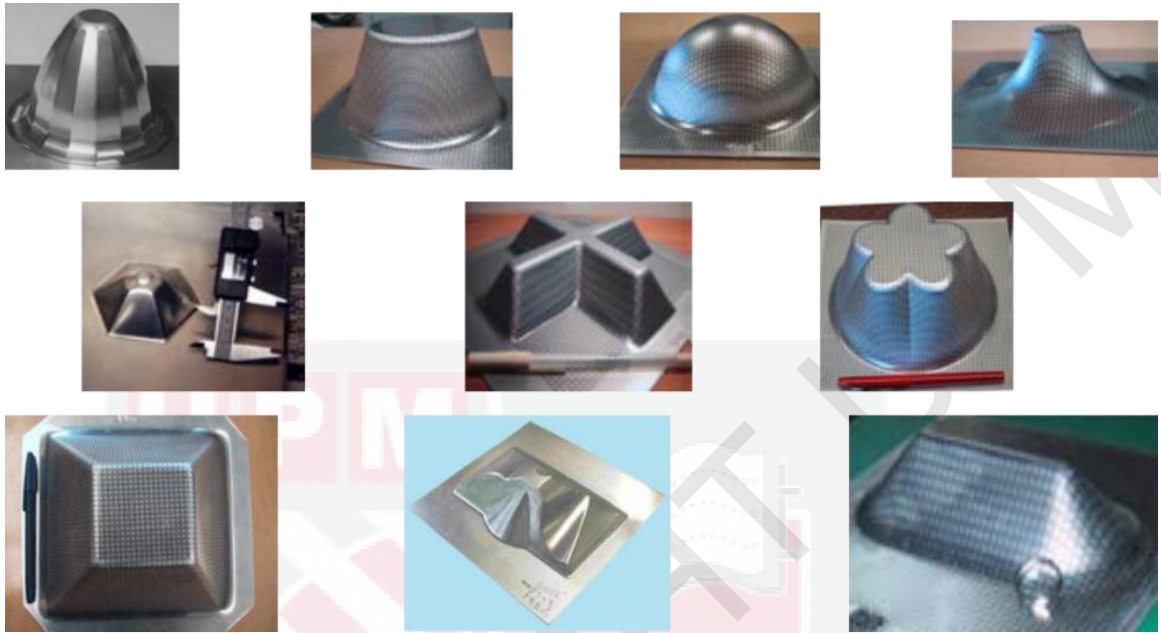


**Figure 1.2 : Some of the medical parts manufactured by ISF: a) (Bagudanch *et al.*, 2015b) , b) (Ambrogio *et al.*, 2005) and c)**



**Figure 1.3 : Some of the medical parts produced by ISF: a) Cobalt-chrome alloy (cast) b) EN DCO4 (ISF) and c) EN X6r17 (ISF) (Milutinovića *et al.*, 2014)**

While Figure 1.4 displays the different intricate shapes that can be achieved by incremental sheet forming.



**Figure 1.4 : Some of the intricate parts produced by ISF**  
(Jeswiet et al., 2005c)

In the beginning of the last century, high interest appeared to improve and employ lightweight materials in various industrial applications such as aerospace, marine, and automobile sectors (Ambrogio *et al.*, 2012a; Bao *et al.*, 2015). In general, lightweight materials include aluminium, magnesium, titanium, and their alloys: plastic, polymer, ceramic, and metal matrix composites (Campbell, 2012). These materials are known for their high strength-to-weight ratio, and characterized by their low formability at room temperature (Ambrogio *et al.*, 2012a; Ambrogio and Gagliardi, 2015; Jeswiet *et al.*, 2008). With the growth of lightweight material applications, dealing with the challenges in forming these low formability materials have become inevitable (Ambrogio *et al.*, 2012a; Ambrogio and Gagliardi, 2015; Hussain *et al.*, 2012).

According to the excellent ability of ISF, this technique can be utilized for manufacturing intricate parts; and simultaneously, is an appropriate process to enhance the formability of lightweight materials (Bambach *et al.*, 2007; Fratini *et al.*, 2004; Silva *et al.*, 2009b).



## 1.2 Problem Statement

In the past few decades, high interest has focused on utilizing lightweight materials in various industrial applications such as aerospace, marine, and automobile sectors due to their superior properties (Ambrogio et al., 2012a). For instance, aerospace ingredients and aircraft bodies are manufactured from aluminum, magnesium, and titanium alloys (Bao et al., 2015). These materials are known for their high strength-to-weight ratio and characterized by low formability at room temperature (Jeswiet et al., 2008). Moreover, research and development has shifted from plain to composite materials. Among the numerous types of MMCs, aluminum matrix composites (AMCs) are gaining importance; particularly in applications where strength-to-weight ratio is of major interest (Swamy et al., 2010). The main benefits of AMCs comprise of enhanced stiffness, controlled thermal expansion coefficient, improved damping capability, enhanced high-temperature properties, and thermal/heat management (Christy et al., 2010). Consequently, these composites are widely employed in many industrial applications such as aerospace, marine, automotive, sports, electronics, and welding electrodes (Anandakrishnan and Mahamani, 2011; Yuan et al., 2012). With the growth in the applications of lightweight materials, including AMCs, dealing with the challenges in forming these low formability materials have become inevitable (Ambrogio et al., 2012a; Ambrogio and Gagliardi, 2015; Hussain et al., 2012). Conventional manufacturing processes such as deep drawing and stamping require expensive equipment and long lead-time (Ambrogio et al., 2012a; Neugebauer et al., 2011).

ISF is a promising sheet forming process and becomes a worthy alternative to the traditional sheet forming processes. ISF has been used in manufacturing small batch or customized sheet components in various sectors. These sectors comprise transportation (automobile hood, automotive heat-vibration shield, reflector surface for headlights, silencer housing for tracks and a nose of bullet train), biomedical (cranial plate, ankle support, knee implant and dental – custom-made dental crowns), aerospace (Housings and fairings) and architectural (custom-made formwork, panels).

Heat-assisted ISF processes have been suggested to improve the formability at warm or hot conditions. These methods include electric-assisted ISF, laser-assisted ISF, and frictional stir-assisted ISF. Among all heat-assisted ISF processes, frictional stir-assisted Single Point Incremental Forming (SPIF) was presented in this study. This process depends on the frictional heating generated by increasing the tool rotation speed, which causes a significant rise in sheet metal temperature, thereby, increasing the material's formability.

Besides the advantages of heat-assisted ISF, frictional stir-assisted SPIF displays superior benefits as it does not require an external heating source and has a better final surface finish compared to other heat-assisted SPIF approaches. One of the limitations of this process is the probability for getting an adequate combination of the main process parameters values to attain a high formability, low forming forces and high quality of the surface finish of the part formed. Accordingly, this technique was used to improve the formability of lightweight materials AA60601-T6 and AA6061/20%SiC<sub>p</sub>-T1 sheets. These two materials are widely used in aerospace and transportation industries. For example- the percentage weight of the composites materials and aluminum alloys in Boeing 787 are 50% and 20%, respectively.

From the above discussion, the following advantages of frictional stir-assisted SPIF implemented on AA60601-T6 and AA6061/20%SiC<sub>p</sub> sheets are presented as follows:

1. These two materials are attractive to use in many industrial sectors, but their employment is limited by material and production costs.
2. There is an increasing demand to customize components and rapid prototyping techniques in the forming of sheet parts.
3. According to the requests mentioned, SPIF can be proposed as a promising process that can achieve the above-mentioned demands.

### **1.3 Thesis Objectives**

Based on the problem statement, the main study objectives can be expounded as follows:

1. To investigate experimentally the formability of two lightweight materials, which are aluminium alloy and aluminum matrix composite sheets, by using frictional stir incremental forming. The formability is evaluated in regard to the maximum wall angle, maximum height, and thinning limit.
2. To analyse the impact of the parameters (tool rotational speed, feed rate, step size, and tool diameter) on forming forces via the forming process.
3. To determine the effect of studied parameters on the surface roughness of the samples produced.

Design of the experiment (Taguchi method) and analysis of variance (ANOVA) approaches were employed to determine the qualitative correlation that characterizes the relationship between the main single point incremental parameters and the different process responses.

The novelty of this work comes from that two lightweight materials were first successfully formed with friction-stir assisted SPIF process. While the significant difference with the previous studies is building empirical models for formability indicators and surface roughness for the AA6061-T6 with an optimization of the final surface roughness. In addition, the present study develops an effective mathematical equation to estimate the maximum flash temperature at the tool-sheet interface. Estimation of the interface temperature is quite important to know the range at which the materials reach their maximum elongations. This can be achieved by a proper combination of the process parameters values during incremental sheet forming process.

#### **1.4 Significant of Study**

In the last decade, there has been an increasing demand for using lightweight materials in different industrial applications; they include magnesium, titanium, aluminum alloys, and compound materials. These materials are preferred due to their low weight and extraordinary strength-to-weight ratio. On the other hand, metal matrix composites (MMCs) are compound materials that provide the means for ultra-lightweight components. Currently, MMCs are employed in a wide range of applications pertaining to aircrafts, the automobile industry, in cutting tools, and sporting products. The application of MMCs is limited by its low formability at room temperature, low machining efficiency, and poor machinability which is the result of their highly abrasive-nature. These factors cause excessive tool wear in cutting processes.

Besides the advantages of incremental sheet forming, the use of frictional stir incremental forming presents superior advantages because it does not require additional heating equipment compared to other heat-assisted SPIF. In this work, this technique was used to improve the formability of two important lightweight materials (AA6061-T6 and AA6061/SiC<sub>p</sub> sheets) that can be employed in the automotive, aerospace, and space structural sections. Furthermore, this study encourages the continuation of this research to develop incremental sheet forming that deals with hard-to-form materials. Thus, it will contribute to the increasing probability of applying this technique with such materials to manufacture components in vital applications in future. Moreover, no previous study had focused on ISF to produce components made from AA6061-T6 or AA6061/SiC<sub>p</sub> metal matrix composites by frictional stir-assisted Single Point Incremental Forming (SPIF).



## **1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

### **1.5.1 Scope**

The scope of this work is limited to studying of process demands of SPIF at room temperature within three parts:

- 1- Obtaining the mechanical properties and chemical composition of the two studied materials (AA6061-T6 and AA6061/SiC<sub>p</sub> composites) using tensile test and chemical composition test, respectively.
- 2- Utilizing the single point incremental forming to investigate the formability for both materials using varying wall angle conical frustum (VWACF) test.
- 3- Studying the effect of different parameters (tool rotational speed, feed rate, step size, tool diameter, and material type) on:

- Formability indicators (wall angle, height, and thinning limit)
- Forming forces
- Surface roughness
- Tool-sheet interface temperature

### **1.5.2 Limitations**

As known, the recognized limitations in SPIF are wall angle, surface quality, geometric accuracy, and material thinning. Moreover, hard-to-form materials, such as lightweight materials, are characterized with high yield stress, spring back, and surface properties which increase the friction between the forming tool and the sheet surface. Usually, to deal with these hard materials, it will require high forming forces that result in high friction, dimensional deviation, and tool degradation. Consequently, utilizing one of the heating resources is essential to solving this issue.

## **1.6 Thesis outline**

The present thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter that offers the basic information and applications of incremental sheet forming in various industrial sectors. Chapter 2 is the literature review of the single point incremental forming process. It includes an enumeration of previous works, which deal with the forming of hard-to-form materials according to the heating resource. It extensively provides the influence of important parameters on the performance of the frictional stir incremental forming process. Chapter 3 discusses the main methodologies applied in this

work. It includes the testing of the materials used, and the design of the experiments. The experimental equipment employed in the single point incremental forming experiments include CNC milling machine, jig and forming tools, dynamometer, as well as measuring devices and instruments. Moreover, CAD/CAM software was applied to design and generate the tool path of the final product shape. Chapter 4 provides the obtained results of the frictional stir incremental forming experiments. Some of the important relationships between the results of both studied materials were specified. Chapter 5 presents the overall conclusions of this project and the directions for future work.



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