

Opinion Article

Study on process parameter optimization and strength failure mode of 3D printing board structure lattice material

Abstract: Structural lightweight design is the process of reducing the amount of material in a component to reduce its overall weight without sacrificing reliability or function. It is the most common application in aerospace, automotive manufacturing and Marine ships, and has received extensive attention from the industry and academia. TPMS combined with 3D printing technology can realize the integrated production of porous structures, solve the problem of processing micro-size material components, and is an important technical support in the process of structural lightweight. In this paper, by designing different TPMS porous structures and optimizing the 3D printing parameters process, polylactic acid (PLA) was successfully printed by material fusion deposition molding (FDM) method, and the tensile and compression characteristics of different structures were analyzed through mechanical properties testing. By finite element analysis, the Abaqus simulation model was established, and the mechanical properties of each sample were compared with the experimental results. The difference between the experimental data and the curves obtained by different models shows that the D-type structure has the best tensile property and the best compressive property.

Keywords:TPMS model;3D printing;Mechanical property

1、 Introduction

"3D printing", known academically as "rapid prototyping" or "additive manufacturing", is a high-tech manufacturing technology that emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It is a process of building components layer by layer using 3D design data. Unlike traditional manufacturing techniques, 3D printing is a bottom-up process that offers more design freedom and the ability to create complex tissues without the need for molds and tools. As a result, 3D printing has been recognized as an efficient and fast manufacturing technique for realizing digitally modeled geometric objects in a variety of industries, including chemical, mechanical, automotive, aerospace, electrochemistry, electronics, and biomedical engineering. The 3D printing market has grown significantly over the past 10 years at an average rate

of about 26% per year^[1].

The development of 3D printing technology benefits from the integration of modern CAD/CAM technology, mechanical engineering, layered manufacturing technology, laser technology, computer numerical control technology, precision servo drive technology and new material technology^[2]. Its basic principle is to use layered manufacturing and layer-by-layer superposition to achieve the production of objects, which is similar to the integration process in mathematics. In the process of 3D printing, the printer is connected to the computer, the printing method and parameters are set through the computer software^[3], the cross-section shape of the workpiece is formed by scanning in the XY plane, and then the printing materials are gradually stacked layer upon layer according to the Z coordinate interval to realize the transformation of the design drawings on the computer into solid objects. Because the final product is obtained by gradually adding materials and stacking them layer by layer, 3D printing technology is also often referred to as additive manufacturing technology.

Fused deposition molding (FDM) : Fused deposition molding is a 3D printing technology widely used in rapid prototyping and custom production^[4]. Thermoplastic filament is used as the starting material and fused and extruded for layer upon layer bonding to create 3D objects. In the FDM process, computer aided design software first cuts the 3D model into thin layers and generates path data for each layer. The printer then heats the thermoplastic material (such as PLA, etc.) from the nozzle to the melting temperature, and piles it up layer by layer on the printing platform in a predetermined path by moving the nozzle, while cooling and curing between each layer. Hot melt extrusion technology is often used in combination with FDM technology to melt and mix drugs and excipients together in the extruder to produce high-quality intermediate filaments for subsequent preparation. Some polymers commonly used in filaments preparation include polyethylpyrrolidone (PVP) and polylactic acid (PLA)^[5]. As a mature 3D printing technology, melt deposition molding has a wide range of application prospects in industrial manufacturing, education and individual makers. The FDM printing principle is shown in Figure 1.

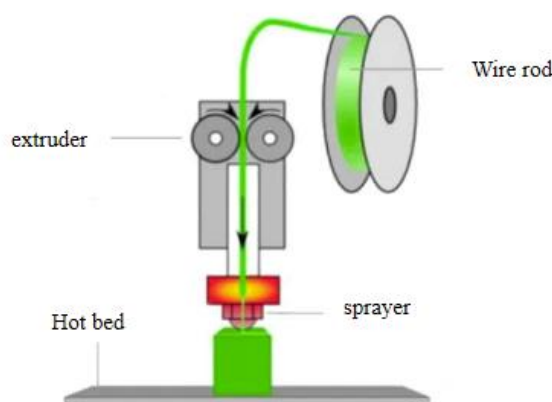


Figure 1 FDM printer principle

Porous structure is a bionic structure with natural advantages, including a large

number of pore structures, with low relative density, high specific surface area, good permeability^[6], lightweight and other advantages, widely used in aerospace, automotive manufacturing, material chemistry, medical and other engineering fields. Among them, the open pore structure has connected channels, so it has a wider applicability in various applications. Common porous structures include lattice structures, honeycomb structures and three-period minimal surfaces. In recent years, three-period minimal surface structures (TPMS) have attracted more and more attention because of their unique characteristics. The three-period minimal surface has the advantages of diverse geometric shapes, high specific surface area, fully connected pores, controllable parameters and quasi-self-supporting, so it is widely used in energy-absorbing structure and bone scaffold modeling. There are many types of porous models, which can be formed by randomly distributing voids in space or according to specific laws, or by methods such as function surfaces. In this paper, we choose the thicker triply periodic minimal surface TPMS as the basis of the porous model^[7].

Minimal surface is a geometric structure whose mean curvature is zero, which makes it have excellent mechanical and structural properties. Rashid K et al.^[8] used selective laser sintering (SLM) technology to prepare super-strong steel (i.e. maraging steel) and successfully created micro-scale curved structures. Maskery^[9] et al. designed the volume fraction of lattice structures by using the surface equation of structures, and established the relationship between the volume fraction of materials and the elastic modulus of lattice structures, which provided a method for designing lattice structures with specific stiffness. Over the past three centuries, this structure has been extensively studied, especially in the fields of mathematics and computer graphics. This geometry can be defined mathematically and porous structures with three-dimensional continuous full connections can be designed. In addition, due to its exquisite design and smooth curve characteristics, minimal curved surface has been widely concerned in the field of architectural design, and has been widely recognized in practical applications. As shown in Figure 2, the Astana Expo, located in Kazakhstan, is a design application of minimal curved surfaces^[10].



Figure.2. Minimal curved architecture

Up to now, many people have studied the mechanical properties of PLA. In order to improve the inherent brittle-ability of PLA and expand its application range, a new biobiofuran diformate (DAF) plasticizer with novel structure was designed and synthesized by esterification of 2, 5-furan diformate and natural fatty alcohols. The

plasticizing behavior and mechanism of DAF on PLA were studied by means of tensile properties test, melt crystallization behavior analysis, thermogravimetric behavior analysis, dynamic mechanical properties analysis and microscopic morphology analysis. It was found that DAF showed a good substitution effect for DOTP in plasticized PLA^[11]. Orisekeh^[12] et al. studied egg shell particles (ESP) as inorganic calcium carbonate fillers to enhance the mechanical properties of PLA. Eggshell powder enhanced the dynamic mechanical properties of PLA, where 3 wt% concentration had the highest energy storage modulus at room temperature, and the energy storage modulus of filament and 3D printed sample was increased by 5.2 % and 3.6 %, respectively. Finally, eggshell particles had little effect on the tensile and bending strength of the composite, but increased the compressive strength of PLA. The average strength and modulus of the 5 wt% sample were 66.50 MPa and 2.27 GPa, respectively. Li^[13] et al. used polylactic acid (PLA) as a 3D printing melt deposition forming (FDM) material, took tensile strength as an optimization index, and systematically studied the influence of four process parameters, namely printing layer thickness, printing Angle, filling density and printing temperature, on the tensile strength of PLA parts through single factor test and response surface method. With the help of Design-Expert software, variance analysis and parameter optimization were carried out to obtain the optimal combination of molding process parameters and verify the correctness of the test results. The results show that when the thickness of the printing layer is 0.2mm, the printing Angle is 70°, the filling density is 70%, and the printing temperature is 200°C, the mechanical properties of the specimen are the best. Li^[14] et al. addressed this gap by using computational fluid dynamics (CFD) to investigate the effect of isosurface migration on the mass transfer performance of the three TPMS stents (Fisher-Koch S, Gyroid, and Split-P).

In this paper, FRD, D-type and N-type porous surfaces in TPMS are selected as research objects, and the models are printed by FDM3D printing technology, and their mechanical properties are analyzed.

2、 Experimental process

2.1 3D printing materials

Polylactic acid (PLA) is a popular 3D printing material that is favored for its unique properties^[15]. First, it has excellent stiffness and strength, making the printed parts strong and durable. Secondly, PLA is easy to process and can be made into a variety of shapes, from simple components to complex structures^[16]. PLA is also a biodegradable material, which means that under certain environmental conditions, it can be broken down naturally, reducing the negative impact on the environment. Because PLA generally does not contain toxic substances, it is also more common in fields such as food packaging and medical devices. Although it softens at high temperatures, PLA still has certain thermal stability, making it more widely used in low temperature environments. Overall, PLA has shown broad application potential in many industries due to its excellent mechanical properties, processing convenience, biodegradability and high safety. The material used for 3D printing in the experiment

is PLA filament. Table 1 lists the specific material parameters.

Table 1 Material properties of PLA

Materials	Density /g*cm-3	Poisson's ratio	Young's modulus /GPa	Yield strength /MPa
PLA	1.24	0.38	3.5	60

2.2 Build a model

In this paper, three-period minimal surface is used as the sample model. Since three-period minimal surface is usually modeled by implicit function, and common computer-aided design software (CAD) has difficulties in the accuracy of establishing three-period minimal surface model, therefore, In this paper, Blender software with the function of accurately designing three-period minimal surface was selected to build the model. Blender software shows remarkable efficiency in building three-period minimal surfaces (a complex surface with specific mathematical properties). It provides advanced modeling techniques and toolsets that enable engineers and designers to create these types of surface models quickly and accurately. As a software designed specifically for 3D modeling, Blender is not only good at handling complex geometric forms, but also ensuring that these forms are translated into designs with actual manufacturing value. Compared to other modeling software, Blender has a significant advantage when it comes to building three-period minimal surfaces. Its flexible adjustment function allows users to precisely control the curvature and shape of the surface to meet specific design needs, while maintaining the detail richness and smoothness of the surface. This makes Blender ideal for dealing with this type of complex surface design. The TPMS model function used in this paper is shown in Table 2 below, and the model built by Blender is shown in Figure 3.

Table 2 Mathematical functions of FRD, N and D surfaces

TMPS	Mathematical function
FRD	$f(x,y,z)=\cos(\omega_x x)\cos(\omega_y y)\cos(\omega_z z)+\cos(2\omega_x x)\cos(2\omega_y y)\cos(2\omega_z z)-\cos(2\omega_x x)\cos(2\omega_y y)-\cos(2\omega_x x)\cos(2\omega_z z)-\cos(2\omega_y y)\cos(2\omega_z z)=C$
D	$f(x,y,z)=\cos(\omega_x x)\cos(\omega_y y)\cos(\omega_z z)-\sin(\omega_x x)\sin(\omega_y y)\sin(\omega_z z)=C$
N	$f(x,y,z)=3\{\cos(\omega_x x)+\cos(\omega_y y)+\cos(\omega_z z)\}+4\cos(\omega_x x)\cos(\omega_y y)\cos(\omega_z z)=C$

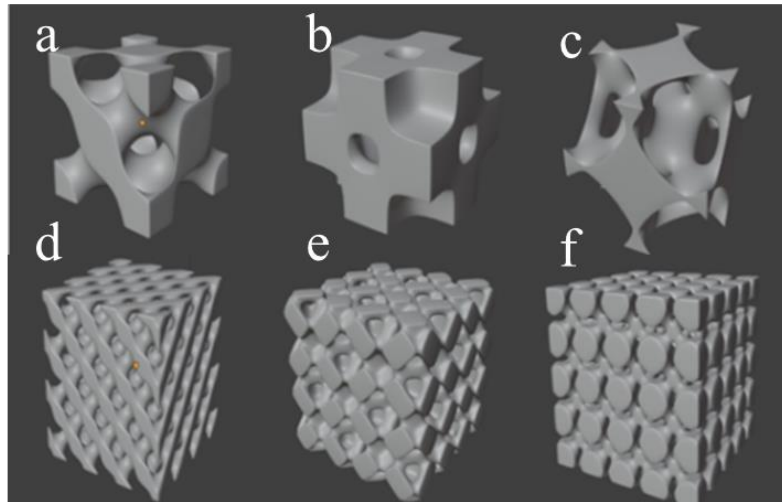


Figure.3.(a-c)D, FRD, N single cell model;(d-f)D, FRD, N model diagram

2.3 Setting of slicing and printing parameters

Based on the experience analysis of unsuccessful printing before, we finally determined the best printing parameters in this experiment, as shown in Table 3. This paper mainly discusses how to use this optimum printing parameter to improve the surface quality and adhesion of the metal sheet on the hot melt layer. First, in order to make the specimen adhere more efficiently to the hot bed surface, we initially decided on a slower printing speed, which reached 30mm/s. The height of each layer was also set to 1mm, and in addition, we utilized Raft as an attachment platform. At other levels, the printing rate is 40mm/s, but the vertical height of this layer remains constant. This approach not only enhances the stability of the first layer, but also guarantees the overall efficiency of the printing process. The platform temperature is 60°C and the filling rate is 100%.

Table 3 Print parameter Settings

Print speed (mm/s)	Initial print speed (mm/s)	Attachment platform type	Layer thickness (mm)	Packing density (%)	Print temperature / (°C)	Platform temperature/ (°C)
50	30	Raft	1	100	210	60

1、Mechanical property test and result analysis

3.1 Material properties test method

In order to explore the mechanical properties of the material, in this test, according to the national standard GJB770B-2020^[17], an electronic universal testing machine is used to carry out a uniaxial tensile test on the specimen, and the mechanical properties of the material are evaluated by observing the P-Δl curve and fracture appearance, combined with the performance index. We have carried out tensile and compression experiments on the lattice structure, from which the relationship between load and displacement and deformation image data are obtained, aiming to explore the deformation mode and energy absorption characteristics of the lattice model under the environment of tensile and compression. Tensile and

compression experiments were carried out on the TMPS structure samples, and the test was carried out by displacement controlled loading method, and it was ensured that one test was carried out in each model experiment to ensure the accuracy of the data. The force sensor on the test machine captures the loading force of the specimen during the stretching and compression process.

3.2 Experimental equipment and operation process

In this experiment, we used the WDW microcomputer controlled electronic universal testing machine, which is a test equipment specially used to evaluate the mechanical properties of metal and non-metal raw materials and finished semi-finished products in tensile, compression, bending and shear. It can simultaneously measure the mechanical properties of many materials. This technology is mainly used in a number of mechanical testing centers, such as in the iron and steel metallurgy industry, where it is often used to test the physical properties of thin sheets and small and medium diameter metal materials. The test system is composed of three parts: data acquisition system, control system and display system. The device uses a four-column frame design, combined with a high-precision ball screw drive and load sensor, to enable precise loading of samples. At the same time, the system is driven by stepping motor, and the step Angle is changed by software programming, so as to achieve the required load value. The transmission system uses the servo drive and servo motor of Panasonic Japan, as well as the imported reducer and synchronous gear belt to achieve the loading operation. At the same time, the equipment has high reliability and good maintainability, and can meet the requirements of different specifications of samples. In addition, this equipment is also equipped with a microcomputer control system, so as to achieve the entire test process of automatic management, the testing machine can be remotely controlled and data transmission through the upper computer.



Figure.4.WDW microcomputer control electronic universal testing machine

Experimental steps:

Boot the operating system and generate a new compressed file. Through the measured data, the load and strain values required to be applied to the die after the specimen deformation are determined. The properties of the material are added to the model and the area of the force on the model is estimated. Start the computer loading

program, apply different pressures to test the specimen, and record the data at each time point. Then, put the specimen into the test machine and make sure that there is a slight contact between the model and the load sensor on the test machine. After setting up, start the loader to perform the experiment. Next, we set the experimental conditions in the software: the pressure is set to 2000N, the compression rate is 2.4mm/s, and the displacement control strategy is selected. When the sample is completely pressed in, close the valve and stop loading. Click the Start experiment button on the software interface to start the compression process of the model, and make its deformation amplitude reach 65% until the compression task is complete. Finally, the experimental data will be saved. The same is true for the tensile experiment. The material properties are introduced, the sample is clamped with a fixture, and the experimental parameters are set in the software: the tensile force is set to 2000N, the tensile speed is 1mm/s, and the displacement control mode is selected. Click Start experiment on the software, start stretching the model, make it break, complete the stretching experiment, and finally save the experimental data.

3.3 Experimental data and results

3.3.1 Tensile test results

Table 4 Model parameters of tensile specimen

TMPS MODEL	SINGLE CELL SIZE /MM	POPULATION SIZE /MM	BULK VOLUME /MM ³
D	2×2×2	115×25×2	3603
N	2×2×2	115×25×2	3603
F-RD	2×2×2	115×25×2	3603

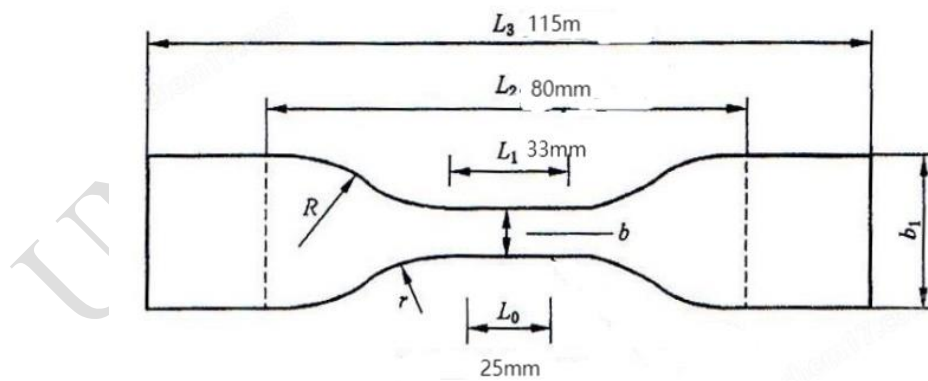


Figure.5.Tensile specimen

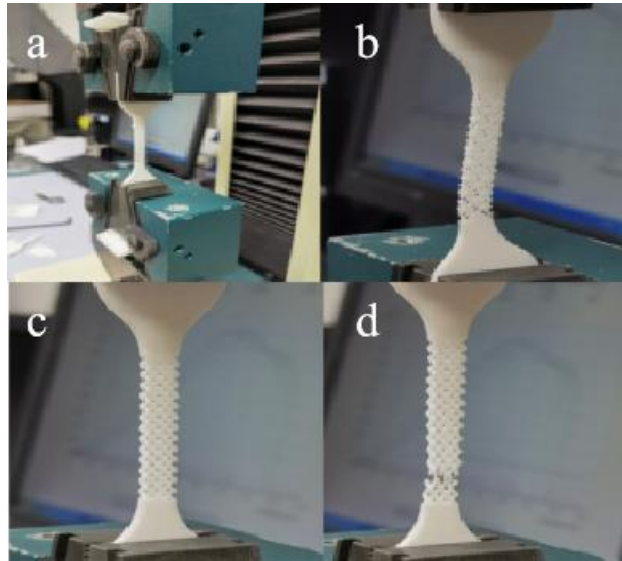


Figure.6.(a)Before the D-stretch;(b)After the D-stretch;(c)Before the N-stretch;(d)After the N-stretch

Table 5 tensile sample data table

TMPS Model	Elastic phase maximum displacement (mm)	Maximum load in elastic phase (N)	Fracture displacement (mm)	Breaking load (N)
F-RD	2.4	25	3.9	24
N	1.6	11	3.0	10
D	1.6	82	5.7	75

As can be seen from Figure 7, we can observe that the stress-strain curve of the printed specimen mainly presents three obvious stages. The first is the elastic stage, in which the stress increases linearly as the strain increases. At this stage, the damage inside the specimen is less, and when unloaded, it will regain its shape without plastic deformation. The second is the yield stage, which is due to the flow of the slurry during the printing process resulting in the surface of the component and the fixture is not fully fitted, in a weak connection state, in this stage, the specimen will gradually fit the fixture with the increase of tensile stress, so there is a flat section. Finally, there is the fracture stage, in this stage, with the increase of strain, the stress no longer increases linearly, but suddenly decreases, resulting in a sudden fracture of the specimen. The fracture characteristics of the material show the characteristics of ductile fracture, which means that the material undergoes a certain degree of plastic deformation before the fracture occurs. Therefore, during the tensile process, the material exhibits a high tensile strength. By comparing the stress sizes of the three models under the same strain, we can obviously see that under the same strain, the stress required by D surface is the largest, indicating that D surface has the best tensile property.

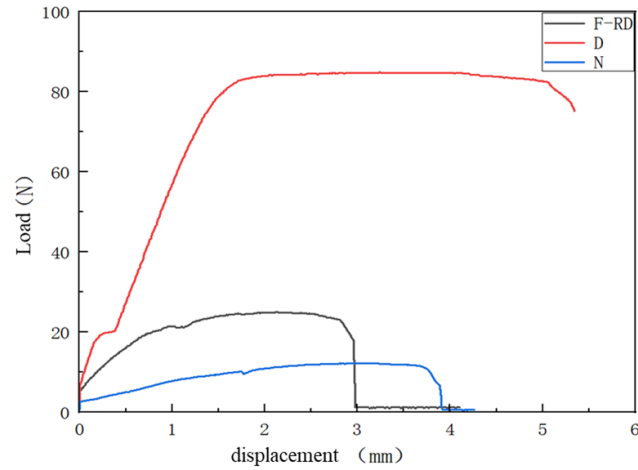


Figure.7. Experimental data of tensile model

3.3.2 Compression test results

Table 6 compressed sample model parameters

TMPS MODEL	SINGLE CELL SIZE /MM	POPULATION SIZE /MM	BULK VOLUME /MM3
D	2×2×2	115×25×2	3603
TMPS MODEL	Single cell size /mm	Population size /mm	Bulk volume /mm3
N	2×2×2	115×25×2	3603
F-RD	2×2×2	115×25×2	3603

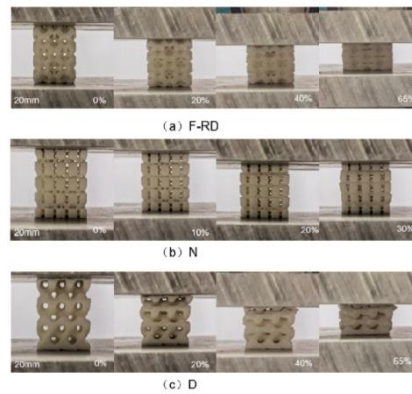


Figure.8. Compression test diagram

Table 7 Compressed sample data table

TMPS Model	Elastic strain(%)	Elastic stress (MPa)	Compact strain (%)	Densification stress (MPa)	Maximum stress(MPa)
F-RD	7.2	4	55	8	13
D	12	6	55	8	13
N	4	2.5	15	5	13

The F-RD surface model and D-surface model made of PLA material can be divided into three stages, as shown in Figure 9, namely, the ascending stage, the

gentle stage and the second ascending stage. However, the N-surface model only has two stages, namely, the ascending stage and the second ascending stage, and there is no gentle stage. In the first rise stage, all three models undergo elastic deformation, during which the model is subjected to a small load and bounces back to its original shape at the end of the load without permanent deformation. With the gradual increase of external load, the whole structure of the model does not change significantly, but a single cell begins to bend and deform. With the decrease of load, the displacement of TPMS structure increases gradually, which indicates that the TPMS structure has reached the maximum compressive strength. Even if the F-RD and D-type structures are destroyed, the cells can still provide a certain degree of compressive resistance. The degree of bending deformation increases when the cell is further damaged. In the compression area, instability occurs first, followed by the fracture of the fiber in the tension area, when the slip phenomenon occurs. The N-surface model does not appear at this stage because the cell is completely destroyed and does not provide a compressive effect. Subsequently, the load gradually increased due to the densification of PLA material. From this stress-strain curve, we can analyze that the compressive capacity of N surface is relatively poor, while the other two models have relatively good compressive capacity.

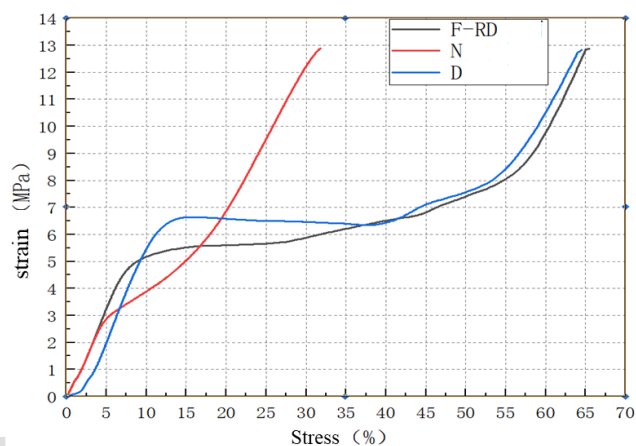


Figure.9. Compression model experimental data

4. Conclusion

In this chapter, the mechanical properties of PLA materials with different TPMS structures were investigated through tensile and compression tests on TPMS structures, and the factors affecting the mechanical properties of printed specimens were analyzed. The main conclusions are as follows:

(1) The print specimen is divided into three stages in the whole tensile process, which are elastic stage, yield stage and fracture stage, and the failure form is brittle failure. Among them, the tensile properties of D structure are the best, while the tensile properties of F-RD structure and N structure are relatively poor.

(2) The printed specimen has two forms in the whole compression stage process, F-RD structure and D structure have three stages, that is, the rising stage, the gentle

stage, the second rising stage, and the N structure has only two stages, that is, the rising stage and the second rising stage. Among them, F-RD structure and D structure have relatively good compression performance, while N structure has poor compression performance. Through analysis, the failure mode of the 3D printed TPMS structure designed in this paper is the yield instability of the cell structure when it is subjected to out-of-plane compression load.

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