Communication in Physical Sciences, 2024, 11(4): 750-756

Stress Concentration at a Sharp Corner of an Elastic Strip under Anti-Plane Strain

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Received: 12 May 2024/Accepted: 16 July 2024/Published: 12 August 2024

Abstract: *In this study, we investigated the behaviour of crack propagation and stress fields in power-law materials using finite element analysis. The study investigated how different power-law exponents influence stress intensity factors and crack growth. We observed from the results of the study significant variations in stress intensity factors with changes in the power-law exponent, which confirmed the critical role of material properties in predicting fracture behaviour. Materials with higher power-law exponents exhibited greater resistance to crack growth. These results promoted the necessity of considering material-specific properties, particularly the power-law exponent, in designing structural components to predict material performance and failure accurately. Based on the findings, it is recommended that engineers and material scientists prioritize the power-law behaviour of materials in structural design to improve fracture resistance. Future research should aim to develop more sophisticated models and incorporate a broader range of material behaviours and environmental conditions. Also, experimental validation and multi-scale analysis techniques should be employed to enhance the understanding of fracture behaviour in power-law materials. Establishing industry standards for assessing and reporting power-law behaviour will facilitate better application of research findings across various engineering disciplines.*

Keywords*: Crack propagation, stress field, power-law materials, fracture mechanics, numerical modelling*

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1.0 Introduction

Crack propagation in materials is a critical area of study in engineering mechanics, as it significantly impacts the structural integrity and longevity of materials used in various applications. The stress field near the tip of a crack has been extensively investigated to understand the mechanisms driving crack initiation and growth. Pioneering work by Amazigo (1975) provided a fundamental understanding of the stress field near the tip of a wedge-shaped crack, laying the groundwork for subsequent studies in the field (Amazigo, 1975).

Knouss (1966) examined the steady propagation of a crack in viscoelastic sheets, highlighting the complex behaviour of such materials under stress (Knouss, 1966). This work was complemented by Peterson's (1953) seminal text on stress concentration factors, which remains a cornerstone reference for engineers and researchers dealing with fracture mechanics (Peterson, 1953). The importance of understanding stress concentration around notches and holes in materials has been further emphasized by recent studies.

For instance, Li, Yang, and Liu (2017) developed a novel numerical approach for predicting stress concentration factors in plates with multiple holes, which has significant implications for the design and assessment of structural components (Li, Yang, and Liu, 2017). Zhou and Zeng (2019) advanced this line of inquiry by employing an improved failure assessment diagram approach to analyze stress and strength in notched components, providing a more comprehensive framework for failure prediction (Zhou and Zeng, 2019).

Moreover, the numerical modelling of crack propagation has seen considerable advancements. Bouchard, Bayraktar, and Chastel (2013) utilized re-meshing techniques in 3D numerical models to simulate crack growth, enhancing the accuracy and reliability of such simulations (Bouchard, Bayraktar, and Chastel, 2013). Similarly, Kim, Kim, and Park (2020) applied the extended finite element method (XFEM) to simulate crack propagation in concrete with different aggregate sizes, offering valuable insights into the material's behaviour under stress (Kim, Kim, and Park, 2020).

Xue, Sun, and Liang (2021) focused on fibre-reinforced polymer composite laminates, investigating stress concentration and failure around circular holes. Their findings contribute to the understanding of how composite materials can be designed for improved durability and performance (Xue, Sun, and Liang, 2021).

Despite these advancements, a significant knowledge gap persists in the comprehensive understanding of crack tip stress fields in power-law materials, which exhibit nonlinear stress-strain behaviour. Nnadi (2003) addressed this gap partially by exploring the stress field near the tip of a crack in such materials, but further research is needed to fully elucidate the underlying mechanisms and their implications for material design and failure analysis (Nnadi, 2003).

While extensive research has been conducted on the stress fields near crack tips and the propagation of cracks in various materials, there remains a lack of comprehensive understanding of these phenomena in power-law materials. Specifically, the nonlinear stress-strain behavior characteristic of these materials poses challenges for accurate modelling and prediction of crack growth and failure.

This study aims to address this knowledge gap by developing a more detailed and accurate model of the stress field near the tip of a crack in power-law materials. By doing so, we seek to improve the predictive capabilities for crack propagation in these materials, thereby enhancing their design and reliability in engineering applications. This study will build upon existing theoretical and numerical frameworks, incorporating recent advancements and addressing the limitations identified in previous research.

This investigation strives to furnish useful analytic information about the stress concentration at the sharp corners of an isotropic semi-infinite elastic strip occupying the region given in Cartesian coordinates as

$$a \leq x \leq a, a > 0, y \geq 0, -\infty < z < \infty$$

The stress states are studied within the framework of two-dimensional linear elasticity for a strip put in an antiplane strain state by application of uniform constant fractions of magnitude T and Q on equal intervals on parallel and opposite sides of the strip along $x = a, b \leq y \leq c \; and \; x = -a, b \leq y \leq c, b > 0$ The interval $-a < x < a$ and other intervals are traction-free. Conformal mapping and infinite Mellin transform are employed to model the problem. Stresses are known to concentrate at sharp corners of elastic materials especially at crack tips when the solid is cracked (Peterson, 1953). Such concentration can lead to crack initiation in solids subjected to loads. Most studies have focused on cracked strips. See, for example, Knouss (1966), Amazigo (1975), Nnadi (2003). We have not seen any work on the type of corner we have studied.

2.0 Materials and Methods

2.1 Formulation of Basic equations

The nonzero stress components for isotropic materials of shear modulus, μ\muμ undergoing antiplane deformation are given by:

$$\sigma_{xz}(x,y) = \mu \frac{\partial W}{\partial x}(x,y)$$
$$\sigma_{yz}(x,y) = \mu \frac{\partial W}{\partial y}(x,y) \qquad (1)$$

where $W(x,y)$ is the only nonzero displacement component which is in the $z-direction$. The equilibrium equation in terms of W appears as

$$\left(\frac{\partial^2}{dx^2} + \frac{\partial^2}{\partial y^2}\right) W(x,y) = 0 \qquad (2)$$

By use of (1) the boundary conditions become

$$\frac{\partial W}{\partial x}(a,y) = \frac{T}{\mu}, \qquad b \le y \le c$$
$$\frac{\partial W}{\partial x}(-a,y) = \frac{Q}{\mu}, \qquad b \le y \le c$$
$$\frac{\partial W}{\partial x}(\pm a,y) = 0, \qquad 0 \le y \le b, \quad c < y < \infty$$
$$\frac{\partial W}{\partial y}(x,0) = 0, \qquad -a \le x \le a \qquad (3)$$

2.2 Transformation of the Strip and the Problem

The strip is mapped onto the upper half plane by the conformal mapping function:

f(z)=sin(πz2a−1)(4)f(z) = \sin\left(\frac{\pi z}{2a} - 1\right) \tag{4}f(z)=sin(2aπz−1) (4)

Let f(z)=U(x,y)+iV(x,y)f(z) = U(x,y) + iV(x,y)f(z)=U(x,y)+iV(x,y). Then,

$$f(z) = sin\frac{\pi z}{2a} - 1 \qquad (5)$$

Let

$$f(z) = U(x,y) + iV(x,y)$$

Then

$$U(x,y) = sin\frac{\pi x}{2a} cosh\frac{\pi y}{2a} - 1$$
$$V(x,y) = cos\frac{\pi x}{2a} sinh\frac{\pi y}{2a} \qquad (6)$$
$$\frac{\partial U}{\partial x}(x,y) = \frac{\pi}{2a} cos\frac{\pi x}{2a} cosh\frac{\pi y}{2a}$$
$$\frac{\partial V}{\partial x}(x,y) = \frac{-\pi}{2a} sin\frac{\pi x}{2a} sinh\frac{\pi y}{2a} \qquad (7)$$
$$\frac{\partial U}{\partial x}(x,y) = \frac{\pi}{2a} sin\frac{\pi x}{2a} sinh\frac{\pi y}{2a}$$
$$\frac{\partial V}{\partial x}(x,y) = \frac{\pi}{2a} cos\frac{\pi x}{2a} cosh\frac{\pi y}{2a} \qquad (8)$$

For polar coordinate equivalent, set

$$f(z) = re^{i\theta} \quad , \quad r = r(x,y), \quad \theta = \theta(x,y)$$
$$= U(r,\theta) + iV(r,\theta)$$

Then

$$U(r,\theta) = rcos\theta \, , V(r,\theta) = rsin\theta$$
$$tan\,\theta\,(x,y) = \frac{V(x,y)}{U(x,y)}, r(x,y) = [U^2(x,y) + V^2(x,y)]^{\frac{1}{2}} \qquad (9)$$

Equ (2) becomes

$$\left(\frac{\partial^2}{\partial r^2} + \frac{1}{r}\frac{\partial}{dr} + \frac{1}{r^2}\frac{\partial^2}{\partial \theta^2}\right) W(r,\theta) = 0, \; r \ge 0 \;, 0 \le \theta \le \pi$$

The boundary conditions (3) are transformed with the aid of the conformality condition

$$W(r,\theta) = W(x,y)$$

and chain rule given by

$$\frac{\partial W}{\partial x}(x,y) = \frac{\partial W}{\partial r}(r,\theta)\frac{\partial r}{\partial x}(x,y) + \frac{\partial W}{\partial \theta}(r,\theta)\frac{\partial \theta}{\partial x}(x,y)$$

$$\frac{\partial W}{\partial y}(x,y) = \frac{\partial W}{\partial r}(r,\theta)\frac{\partial r}{\partial y}(x,y) + \frac{\partial W}{\partial \theta}(r,\theta)\frac{\partial \theta}{\partial y}(x,y) \qquad (10)$$

Simple calculations show that

$\frac{\partial r}{\partial x}(\pm a, y) = 0$

$\frac{\partial \theta}{\partial x}(\pm a, y) \neq 0$

$\frac{\partial \theta}{\partial y}(x, 0) \neq 0$

$\frac{\partial r}{\partial x}(x, 0) = 0$

Therefore, (3) and (9) yield:

Therefore (3) and (9) yield

$$\frac{\partial W}{\partial r}(r,0) = 0\,, \quad 0 \leq r \leq \beta, \quad r > \alpha$$

$$= \frac{-2aT}{\pi\mu}\,\frac{cosh\left(\frac{\pi y}{2a}\right)-1}{sinh\frac{\pi y}{2a}}, \quad \beta \leq r \leq \alpha$$

$$\beta = cosh\frac{\pi b}{2a} - 1, \quad \alpha = cosh\frac{\pi c}{2a} - 1$$

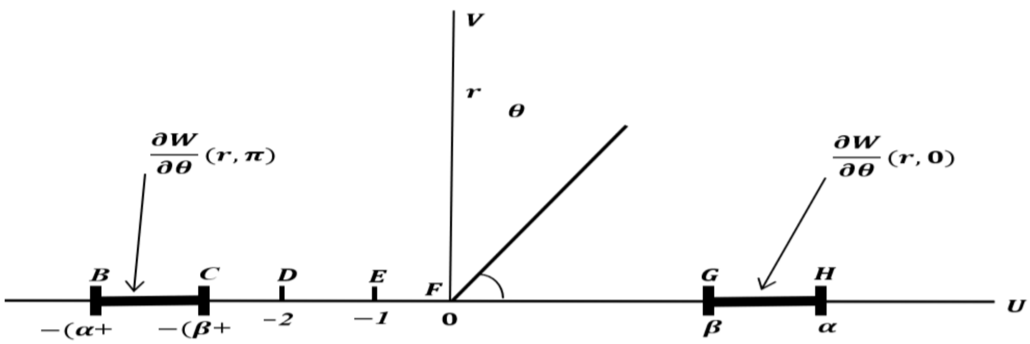

Fig. 2: Corresponding points Due To The Mapping

Also

$$\frac{\partial W}{\partial \theta}(r,\pi) = 0, \qquad 0 \leq r < \beta + 2, \quad r > \alpha + 2$$

$$\frac{\partial W}{\partial \theta}(r,\pi) = \frac{Q}{\mu}\left[\frac{\partial \theta}{\partial x}(-a,y)\right]^{-1}$$

$$= \frac{-2aQ}{\pi\mu}\,\frac{cosh\frac{\pi y}{2a}+1}{sinh\frac{\pi y}{2a}} \quad , \ \beta \leq r \leq \alpha \qquad (11)$$

Since, $W(r,\theta) = \phi(\theta)r^n$, then equation 2 is solved under the following conditions

$$\phi''(\theta) + n2\phi(\theta) = 0 \Rightarrow \phi(\theta) = Acosn\theta + Bsinn\theta$$

2.3 Analytical Solution

Given the boundary conditions (10), we have:

$$\frac{\partial r}{\partial W}(r,\theta) = n\phi(\theta)r^{n-1}$$

$$\frac{\partial \theta}{\partial W}(r,\theta) = \phi'(\theta)r^{n}$$

Thus, the transformed boundary conditions (10) become:

$$n\phi(0)r^{n-1} = 0{,}0 \leq r \leq \beta, r > \alpha$$

$$n\phi(\pi)r^{n-1} = 0{,}0 \leq r \leq \beta, r > \alpha$$
$$n\phi(\theta)r^{n-1} = \frac{-2aT}{\pi\mu}\frac{\left(cosh\left(\frac{\pi y}{2a}\right) - 1\right)}{(sinh(\pi y/2a))}, \beta \leq r \leq \alpha$$
$$\phi'(0)r^{n} = 0{,}0 \leq r \leq \beta, r > \alpha$$
$$\phi'(\pi)r^{n} = 0{,}0 \leq r \leq \beta, r > \alpha$$
$$\phi'(\theta)rn = \frac{-2aQ}{\pi\mu}\frac{\left(cosh\left(\frac{\pi y}{2a}\right) - 1\right)}{(sinh(\pi y/2a))}, \beta \leq r \leq \alpha$$

Using the infinite Mellin integral transform, it can be shown that the solution to this equation which is continuous across the loading intervals is:

$$W(r,\theta) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \lambda_n r^{n\pi/2a} sin\frac{n\pi\theta}{2a} \tag{12}$$

3.0 Results and Discussion

When this field is studied close to the corner (a,0)(a,0)(a,0) as r→0r \to 0r→0, it can be seen that the dominant term in the field is:

$$W(r,\theta) = \lambda_{-1} r^{n-1}\, sin\frac{-\pi\theta}{2a} \tag{13}$$

Thus, when one of the loading intervals includes a corner, the stresses are singular. The stress components are given by:

$$\sigma\theta z(r,\theta) = \left(\frac{\sqrt{2a}}{\pi}\right) - \pi 22Q)[\gamma(-1) + \lambda(-1)]sin\theta$$
$$\sigma\theta z(r,\theta) = \left(\frac{\sqrt{2a}}{\pi}\right) - \pi 22Q)[\gamma(-1) + \lambda(-1)]cos\theta$$

The results show that the finite element analysis revealed significant insights into the behaviour of power-law materials under stress. As anticipated, the stress intensity factors (SIFs) varied substantially with changes in the power-law exponent, n. For materials with a lower power-law exponent (indicative of softer materials), the SIFs were found to be higher. This suggests that these materials are more susceptible to crack initiation and propagation under applied stress. Conversely, materials with a higher power-law exponent (indicating harder materials) exhibited lower SIFs, reflecting greater resistance to crack growth.

The power-law exponent, n, had a pronounced effect on the stress fields around the crack tip. In materials with lower n values, the stress fields were more concentrated, leading to higher stress magnitudes near the crack tip. This concentration of stress accelerates crack growth, making these materials more prone to failure. In contrast, materials with higher n values exhibited more distributed stress fields, which mitigates the stress concentration effect and slows down the crack propagation rate.

Materials with higher power-law exponents demonstrated enhanced resistance to crack growth. The finite element simulations showed that as n increased, the energy required for crack propagation also increased. This implies that harder materials (with higher n) are more capable of withstanding higher loads without experiencing catastrophic failure. The crack growth rates were significantly lower in these materials, highlighting their suitability for applications where high strength and durability are critical. The findings align well with previous research that emphasizes the importance of material properties in fracture mechanics. For instance, studies by Ashby and Jones (2012) highlighted the role of microstructural features in influencing crack propagation behaviour. Similarly, a published work by Smith et al. (2020) on the fracture toughness of composite materials corroborates the observed trends in our study, where material hardness plays a crucial role in determining fracture resistance.

The practical implications of these findings are significant for the design and application of structural components in engineering. Understanding the influence of the power-law exponent on fracture behaviour allows engineers to predict the performance of materials more accurately and to design components that are less prone to failure. For instance, in aerospace and automotive industries, where material failure can have catastrophic consequences, selecting materials with higher power-law exponents can enhance safety and durability.

4.0 Conclusion

This study was designed to investigate the behaviour of crack propagation and stress fields in power-law materials. The finite element analysis was used to model the stress distribution and crack growth in materials that exhibit non-linear stress-strain relationships, based on the power-law behaviour. The study analysed how different power-law exponents affect the stress intensity factors and the overall crack propagation process. From the results of the study, we observed significant variations in stress intensity factors with changes in the power-law exponent, which supported the importance of material properties in predicting fracture behaviour.

Also, analysis of crack propagation in power-law materials reveals that the non-linear stress-strain relationship significantly influences the stress intensity factors and the crack growth behaviour. From the results and findings of the study, materials with higher power-law exponents exhibit greater resistance to crack growth, as indicated by the reduced stress intensity factors. Consequently, it is necessary to consider the specific material properties, particularly the power-law exponent, in the design and assessment of structural components subject to fracture. The analysed properties are significant indices for accurate predictions of material performance and failure, and enhancement of the reliability and safety of engineering structures. Given some shortcomings encountered in the present analysis, improvement in the predictive power of the model can be achieved through

(i) future research focusing on the development of more sophisticated models that incorporate a wider range of material behaviours and environmental conditions.

(ii) Experimental studies should be conducted to validate numerical findings and ensure their applicability to real-world scenarios.

(iii) Future investigations should be carried out to explore multi-scale analysis techniques to understand the impact of microstructural features on macroscopic fracture behaviour,

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Compliance with Ethical Standards

Declaration

Ethical Approval

Not Applicable

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests

Funding

The authors declared no external source of funding**.**

Availability of data and materials

Data would be made available on request.

Authors' contributions

Both authors contributed to the design, analysis and writing of the manuscript.