

The Effects of Cocos Nucifera (Coconut Shell) on the Mechanical and Tribological Properties of Recycled Waste Aluminium Can Composites

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Keywords:

Metal Matrix composites
Cocosnucifera particles
Mechanical properties
Wear behaviour

ABSTRACT

The dry sliding wear behaviour and mechanical properties of recycled aluminium metal matrix composite reinforced with 5 and 10 % coconut shell particles (CSp) has been investigated. The particle size of Cocosnucifera (coconut shell) that were used ranges from 50-300 μ m. The wear behaviors of developed samples were investigated under varied loads and speed using pin on disc equipment. The samples were also subjected to tensile, impact and hardness test. The result shows that the additions of coconut shell particles improved the wear resistance of the recycled aluminium can/CSp composites at low Speed (2.36 m/s). However, with increase in Speed (4.72 m/s), an increase in the specific wear rates were observed. Increasing the coconut shell particles additions to the recycled waste aluminium cans (RWAIC) reduced the impact resistance, hence the toughness of the RWAIC/CSp composite samples. However, the impact resistance of the composites increased as the Cocosnucifera particle size increased. The result of the filler size variation shows that decrease in filler particles size improved the tensile strength and yield strength of the developed aluminium metal matrix /CSp composite. The hardness of the composite increased with increased additions of the filler within the matrix.

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1. INTRODUCTION

It has been noticed that the limited mechanical properties (strength and hardness) of aluminium and its alloys adversely affect its applications in automobile and aerospace industries (Lai, 2000; Wang, 2002). This constitutes a major concern in its fabrication to suit its different applications. Hence, there has

been growing interest in the use of aluminium based metal matrix with improved mechanical properties and wear resistance ability, especially in the transport industries, where component weight reduction, enhanced friction and wear performances, are key objective. This growing requirements of materials with high Specific mechanical properties with weight savings characteristic has increased significant research

activities in recent times focused primarily on further development of aluminium based composites (Ajoy Kumar Ray et al, 2002; Walker et al, 2005; Joel, 2009). Their distinctive properties of high stiffness, high strength and low density have promoted an increasing number of applications for these materials. The demand for structural materials to be cost effective and also to provide high performance has also resulted in continuous attempts being made particularly in areas of alloy design and the use of novel processing techniques to develop composites that will compete favorably with traditional engineering alloys (Lorella and Roberto, 2011). The largest improvement in properties (strength and stiffness) has obtained with the introduction of fiber reinforcements (Clyne and Withers, 1993; Guo et al, 1995), but the properties of fiber-reinforced composites are not isotropic. Particle-reinforced metal matrix composites (MMCs) are attractive in that they exhibit near-isotropic properties when compared with the continuously-reinforced matrices (Peng and Zhu, 2003) and have better wear resistance (Pruthvira, 2011; Rajaneesh and Kanakuppi, 2011).

Most of the researches on MMCs that are carried out on the aluminium based composites to improve its mechanical properties involve incorporation of hard ceramic oxides, carbides or nitrides into the metal matrices. Typical reinforcements in particulate-reinforced MMC are ceramics, such as Al_2O_3 and SiC (Slipenyuk et al, 2006; Kainer, 2006; El-Daly et al, 2013). In Al- SiC composites, the reinforcing SiC phase is incorporated in the form of particulate, fiber or whiskers into the matrix of aluminium metal by a large number of techniques (Soon-Jik et al 2003; Joel, 2009). The promising use of SiC as reinforced material to the aluminium metal matrix is restricted due to the reaction of Al with SiC above 720°C forming Al_4C_3 , which has poor mechanical properties and severe corrosion problem (Ahmad, 2003). Low composite toughness may be another disadvantage of conventional SiC reinforcement particles with sharp pointed corners; because it has been shown that the reinforcement particle shape has a great effect on strain field localization in composites under stress (Qin et al, 1999). Fly ash has also been successfully used as reinforcement in Al-based MMCs (Rohatgi et al, 2006; Mohanty and Chugh, 2007; Sarkar et al, 2008).

In the present study, MMCs produced from reinforced recycled aluminium with *Cocosnucifera* (coconut shell) particulate were produced by stir cast process, and their sliding tribological behaviors and mechanical properties were investigated. The objective is to determine how the particulate volume fractions of *Cocosnucifera* affect these properties. The *Cocosnucifera* that was used is classified as waste which causes environmental pollution. Hence, the work was also aimed at optimizing the properties of the recycled waste aluminium cans at reduced cost and to solve the environmental menace associated with *Cocosnucifera* waste and aluminium can.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

The unprocessed coconut shell was sun dried, ground and sieved into different sizes (50, 75, 150, 212, 300 μm) using BS 1377: 1990 standard.

The recycled waste aluminium cans were remelted in a pit furnace with ladle capacity of 20 kg. After the aluminium cans have become molten, the ladle with melt was taken out of the furnace. A control sample was casted by pouring the molten metal without any filler addition into the metal mould at $660^\circ\text{C} \pm 5^\circ\text{C}$. Thereafter, the melt was poured into a red hot crucible containing 5 % weight of coconut shell particles with 50 μm particle size. The mixture was stirred manually for about 60 seconds. The crucible containing the mixture was returned to the furnace and the mixture was reheated after which the melt was poured into a metal mould at $660^\circ\text{C} \pm 5^\circ\text{C}$. Similarly, the composite sample containing 10 % weight fraction of coconut shell particulates of 50 μm particle size was produced. At each instance, the cast was allowed to solidify and cooled to room temperature (35°C) in the mould before it was knocked out. The same procedure was repeated for casting the remaining samples using coconut shell particulate of different particle sizes (50, 75, 150, 212, 300 μm).

The RWAlC/ CS_p composite sample was subjected to XRD analysis to determine the phases and their compounds. Samples were prepared for microstructural examination to investigate the microstructure and distribution of reinforcement within the matrix. Scanning

Electron Microscope model EVOMA 10 LaB6 Analytical VP-SEM at 20 KV was used. The results of the SEM micrographs are presented in Figs. 2-4. The tensile test was conducted on the RWAIC/CS_p composite samples using an Instron Testing Machine with a strain rate $2 \times 10^{-3} \text{ s}^{-1}$ in accordance with the American Society for testing and Materials (ASTM-D3039). The response of the RWAIC/CS_p composite samples to the tensile loading was plotted as a function of particulate sizes and shown in Figs. 5 and 6.

The hardness of the RWAIC/CS_p composite samples was estimated based on the American Society for testing and Materials (ASTM E10). Brinell Hardness Tester (Dynamic Hardness Tester by Fasne Test Equipment), Model: DHT-6. The test was carried out under a load of 300 kg at four different points on the surface of the samples and the average reading was recorded. The response of samples to surface indentation was plotted against the particle sizes of coconut shell and shown in Fig. 7.

Based on ASTM D256-93, the impact energy test was carried out on the notched samples of dimensions 60 x 10 x 10 mm using the Avery-Denison Universal Impact -Testing Machine (machined by Adcock Shipley Milling Machine, Model 2E operating at maximum Speed 1200 rev/min). Impact energy of the composite samples produced was plotted against the particulate sizes of the coconut shell. This is shown in Fig. 8.

The wear behavior of RWAIC/5CS_p (50 μm size) and RWAIC/10CS_p (50 μm size) samples was investigated. Emery paper of 180 grit size was mounted on circular rotating disc. The surface of the test sample (60 x 10 x 10 mm) was placed against the rotating disc for a period of 60s each, under varied loads of 6.37 N, 10.29 N, 14.21 N and 16.17 N and a rotating speed of 2.36 m/s. The coupon sample was placed at a fixed sliding distance of 62.86 m. A surface contact was maintained between the samples and the abrasive materials. After each test, the worn out samples were cleared from the emery paper with a compressed dry air blower. The experiment was repeated at higher speed of 4.72 m/s. In each case, the test was carried out twice and corresponding weights were measured with an

electronic scale with accuracy 0.001 mg. The volume loss was determined from the average weight loss.

Sliding moment was calculated using equations 1.

$$\text{Sliding moment} = \text{Applied load} \times \text{sliding distance} \quad (1)$$

The graph of volume loss as a function of sliding moment was plotted for the samples both at low (2.36 m/s) and high (4.72 m/s) speed. The slope of each graph gives the specific wear rate of (a parameter that defines the wear severity of the samples).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 XRD Analysis and SEM Micrographs

The coconut shell particulates were subjected to XRD test to analyses the substance and elemental compositions of the coconut shell. The identified substances and elements are presented in Table 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 1. Percentage Weight of Identified Substances in Coconut Shell.

Composition	%weight
Lignin	29.2
Pentosans	27.8
Cellulose	26.5
Moisture	7.8
Solvent extractives	4.4
Uronic anhydrides	3.6
Ash	0.7

Table 2. Elemental Analysis of Coconut Shell.

Elements	%weight
Carbon	53.88
Hydrogen	6.56
Oxygen	38.56
Nitrogen	0.97
Sulphur	0.03

The identified phases with their corresponding compound formulas of the composites from the XRD test are presented in Table 3. One sample was selected for XRD analysis because all the identified compounds are presumed to be the same for all the developed composites. The XRD profile of elemental segregation is shown in Figure 1. The density of the control sample and developed composites is shown in Table 4.

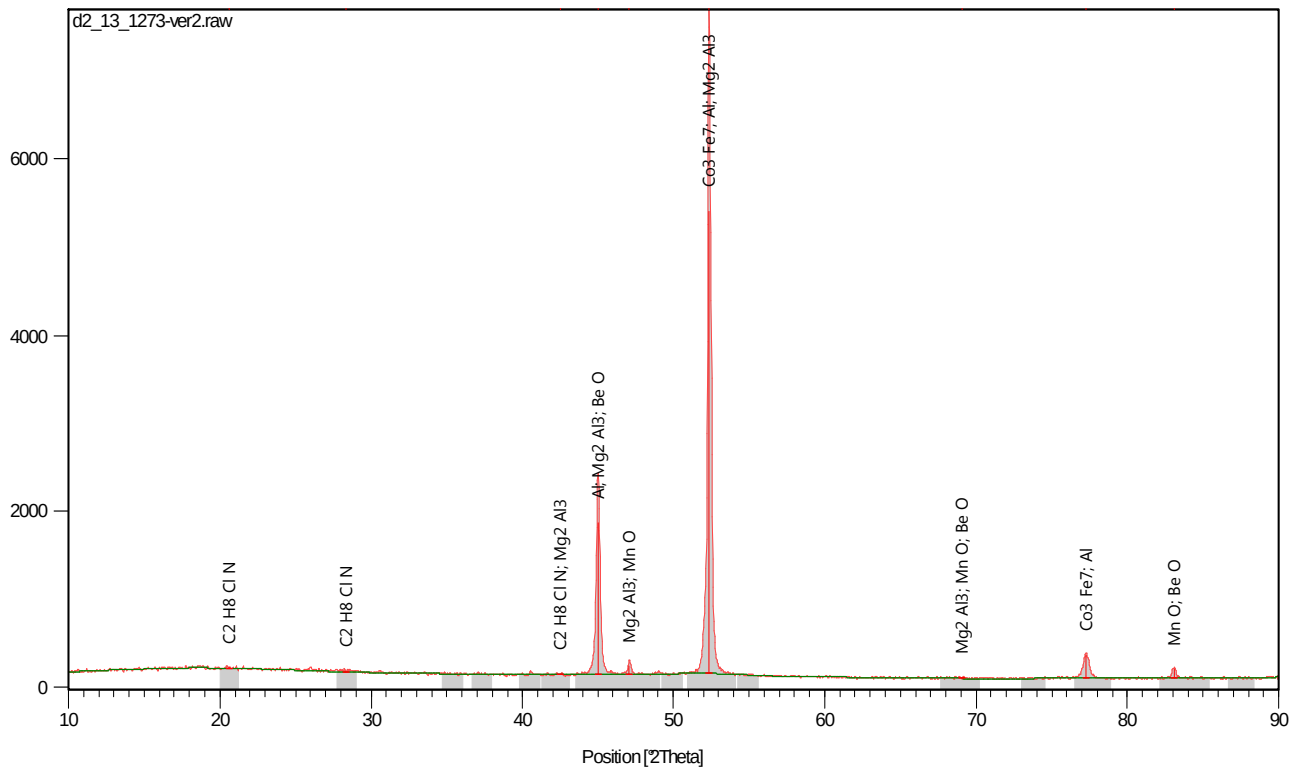


Figure 1. XRD Profile of Elemental Segregation of RWAIC/10CSp Composite.

Table 3. RWAIC/10CSp composites phases and their chemical formulas.

Score	Compound	Chemical Formula
63	Cobalt Iron	Co_3Fe_7
45	Aluminium	Al
30	Dimethylamine chloride	$\text{C}_2\text{H}_8\text{ClN}$
18	Magnesium Aluminium	Mg_2Al_3
35	Manganosite	MnO
11	Bromellite	BeO

Table 4. Density of RWAIC/CSp composites.

Composites	Density g/cm^3
Control Sample	2.40
RWAIC/5CSp (50 μm)	2.43
RWAIC/10CSp (50 μm)	2.46

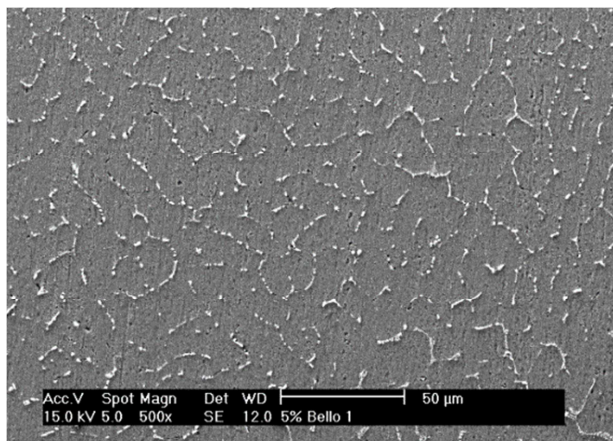


Fig. 2. SEM Micrograph of RWAIC/5CSp (50 μm) composite (X500).

Figure 2 shows the SEM micrograph of the RWAIC/5CSp (50 μm size) composite sample. There is a uniform distribution of the coconut shell particulates within the matrix of the recycled waste aluminium can. The observed homogeneity is reflected in the almost consistency of the hardness values taken at different points on the composite (See Table 5).

Table 5. Hardness Values of the RWAIC/CSp Composites.

Coconut shell addition (%)	Particle Size (μm)	HB ₁	HB ₂	HB ₃	HB ₄	HB _{Av}
0	N/A	29	29	29	29	29
5	50	35	36	34	35	35.00
10	50	48	49	49	49	48.75

Figure 3 shows the SEM micrograph of the RWAIC/10CSp (50 μm size) composite sample. It can be seen that the volume of particulate coconut shell does not affect the homogeneity of the RWAIC/CSp composite significantly. However, the composites hardness/tensile strength were affected (see Table 5 and Fig. 5). The hardness and tensile strength values obtained for RWAIC/10CSp (50 μm) is higher than that obtained in RWAIC/5CSp (50 μm).

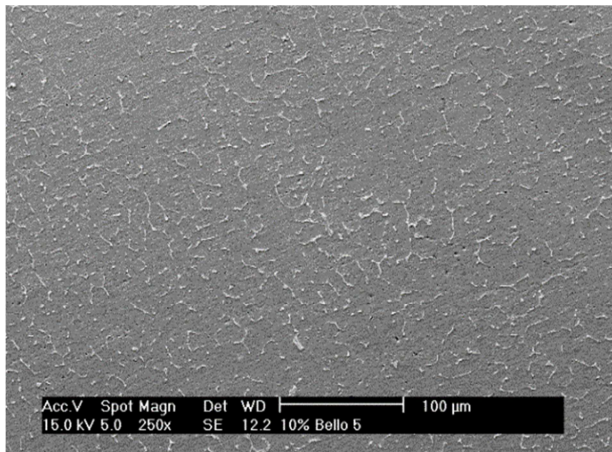


Fig. 3. SEM Micrograph of RWAIC/10CSp (50µm) Composite (X250).

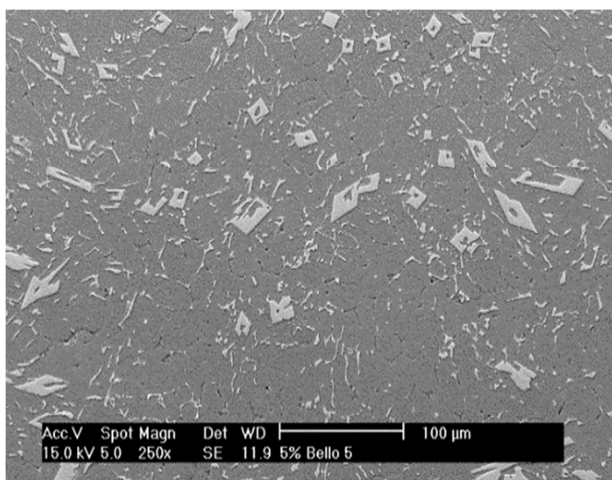


Fig. 4. SEM Micrograph of RWAIC/5CSp (300µm) Composite (X250).

Figure 4 shows the SEM micrograph of the RWAIC/5CSp (300 µm size) composite sample. The micrograph is similar in morphology to that in Fig. 2 but with increased size of the filler phase. The samples with the highest filler particle size show the highest resistance to impact but a corresponding low hardness, yield and tensile strength values (Figs. 5-8). Hence, for applications where impact energy is of significant important, increasing the particle size of the filler within the composite matrix is recommended.

3.2 Tensile Strength, Hardness and Impact Energy

The result of the filler size variation shows that decreased in filler particle size improved the tensile strength of the developed aluminium metal matrix composite (Fig. 5). This agrees with Hall-Petch equation (Equation 2).

$$\sigma_y = \sigma_0 + KD^{-1/2} \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

Where σ_y is the yield stress of the material; σ_0 is a materials constant for the starting stress for dislocation movement of the material; K is a measure of resistance to dislocation and D is the diameter of the particulate size. As D decreases, that is decrease in particulate size, the repulsion stress felt by a grain boundary dislocation decreased and the applied stress needed to propagate dislocations through the material increased. There was about 28 % increase in the strength of RWAIC/10CSp (50 µm) sample than that of RWAIC/5CSp (50 µm) sample (Fig. 5). This is due to greater hindrance which coconut shells particulates offer to dislocation movement. From Fig. 6, it can be seen that increased in the filler content improved the yield stress of the composite at all particle sizes.

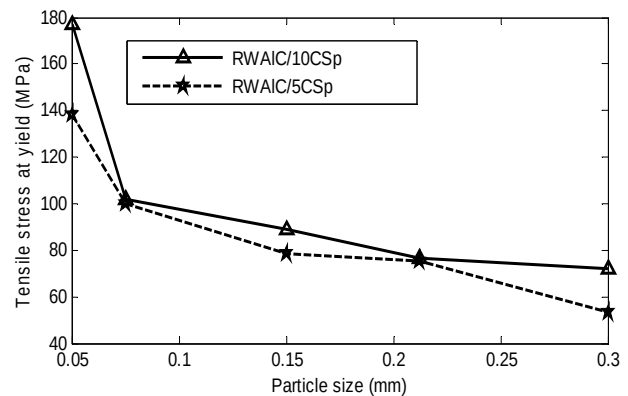


Fig. 5. Tensile Stress of composites with Particulates Size Curve.

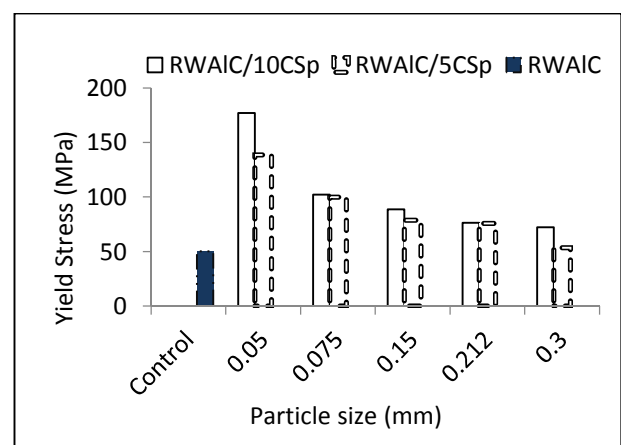


Fig. 6. Yield Stresses of Composites Particulates Size Curve.

The effect of particle size of coconut shell filler on hardness of the aluminium matrix composite is shown in Fig. 7. The resistance of the composite to surface indentation increased with

increased addition of the filler within the matrix. Compared to the hardness values of control sample (30HB), all the samples showed increase in hardness. With respect to 50 μm particles size, about 40 % increase was observed when the filler addition was increased from 5 % volume to 10 % volume fraction of coconut shell particulates in the composites. The higher resistance to localized deformation during indentation can be attributed to the harder coconut shell particles distributed with the aluminium matrix. It was also observed that the hardness of the material increased with decreased in the filler particle size. This is due to the presence and distribution of more fines of coconut shell within the matrix.

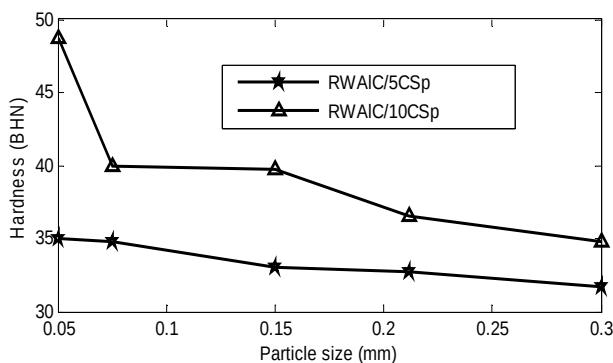


Fig. 7. Hardness Values with Grain Size Curve of the RWAIC/CSp Composites.

It was observed that increasing the additions of coconut shell particles to the recycled waste aluminium reduced the impact resistance; hence the toughness of the RWAIC/CSp composite samples (see Fig. 8). However, as the particle size increased, the impact resistance of the composite increased. The tougher surface provides a higher resistance to impact flow. This is in agreement with the result from the hardness test (Fig. 7).

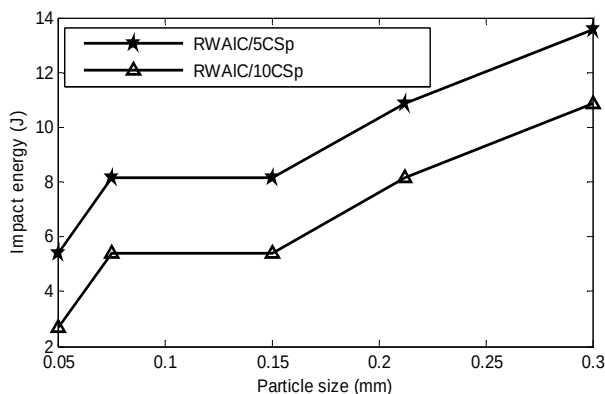


Fig. 8. Impact Energy with Grain Size of RWAIC/CSp.

3.3 Wear

The specific wear rate being a parameter used for measuring wear severity was evaluated with MATLAB program as slope of the lines of best fit in the Figs. 9 and 10. The resulting equations are shown in equations 2-7. From Figs. 9 and 10, it can be deduced that increased load affect significantly the wear behaviour of the developed composites. In addition, significant transition in volume loss was observed after the load of 14.21 N at both speed of 2.36 m/s and 4.32 m/s. Hence, for the specific composites, it will be appropriate to use them in service under a maximum load of 14.21 N to prevent rapid wear rate.

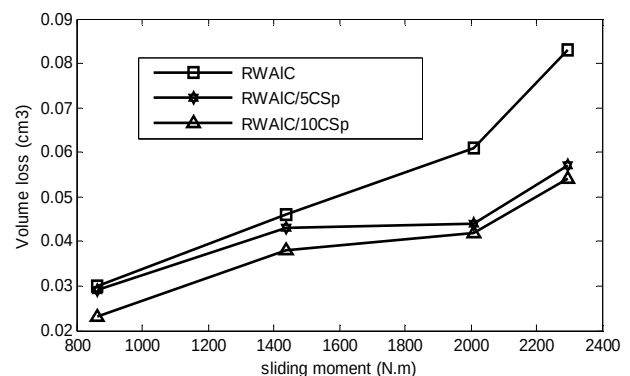


Fig. 9. Volume Loss at 2.36 ms⁻¹ with sliding moment curves.

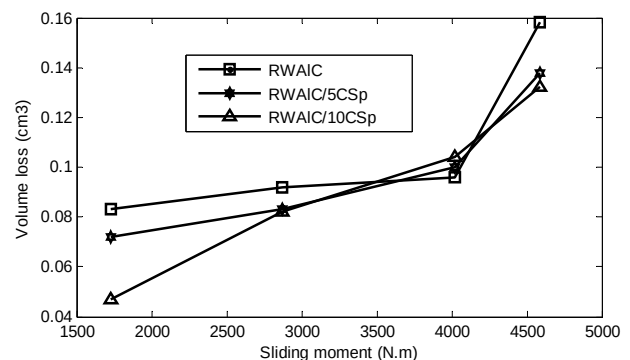


Fig. 10. Volume Loss at 4.72 ms⁻¹ with Sliding Moment Curves.

Subsequently, the specific wear rate values (Table 6) extracted from the equations was plotted against volume percentage of filler as shown in Figs. 11 and 12.

$$y_1 = 0.000035x - 0.002066 \dots \dots \dots (3)$$

$$y_2 = 0.000019x + 0.015 \dots \dots \dots (4)$$

$$y_3 = 0.000017x + 0.011 \dots \dots \dots (5)$$

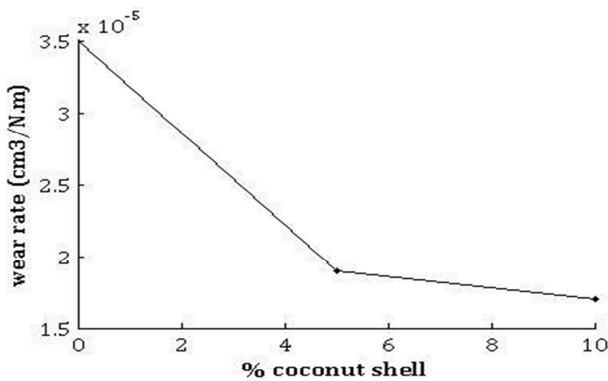
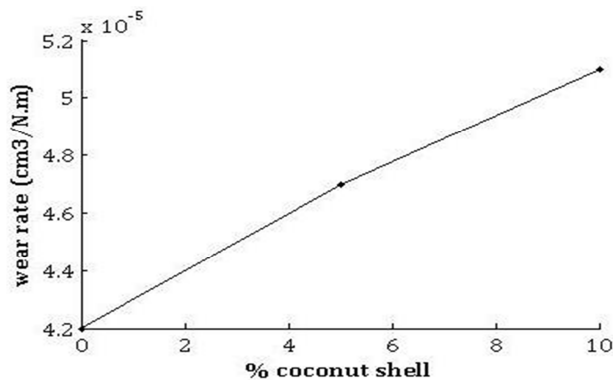
$$y_4 = 0.000042x + 0.038 \dots \dots \dots (6)$$

$$y_5 = 0.000047x + 0.023 \dots \dots \dots (7)$$

$$y_6 = 0.000056x - 0.0011 \dots \dots \dots (8)$$

Table 6. Specific wear rates (cm^3/Nm).

@2.36m/s			
	Samples	Wear rate	Norm of Residuals
y ₁	Control	0.000035	0.0090378
y ₂	5%	0.000019	0.069843
y ₃	10%	0.000017	0.0045044
@4.72m/s			
y ₄	Control	0.000042	0.037052
y ₅	5%	0.000047	0.20611
y ₆	10%	0.000056	0.0091574

**Fig. 11.** Specific wear rates-% coconut shell at 2.36 ms^{-1} .**Fig. 12.** Specific wear rate -% coconut shell at 4.72 ms^{-1} .

A reduction in specific wear rate, hence wear severity was observed at low Speed of 2.36 m/s as the volume percentage of the filler increased (Fig. 11). This infers that the addition of coconut shell improves the wear resistance of Recycled Waste Aluminium Can/CSp composites. The improved wear behaviour of the composite may be attributed to high bearing capacity of the hard reinforcing material as well as better interfacial bonding between the filler and the matrix which prevent the possibility of pull (Agunsoye et al., 2013; Basavarajappa et al., 2009). However, with increase in speed (4.72 m/s), an increase in the specific wear rate was observed (Fig. 12). The increased in wear rate may be due to thermal softening effect which lowers the interfacial bonding between the particulate coconut shell and the aluminium matrix (Singla and Mediratta, 2013).

4. CONCLUSION

From the results and discussion of this work, the following conclusions can be made:

1. Increased addition of coconut shell particles content improved the strength and yield stress of the composite at all particle sizes. Hence, the strength of the Recycled Waste Aluminium Can/CSp composite increases with increase in amount of the coconut shell particles. This is due to greater hindrance which coconut shell particulates offer to dislocation movement.
2. The resistance of the composite to localized surface indentation increased with increased addition of the coconut shell particulates within the matrix.
3. Increased additions of coconut shell particles to the recycled waste aluminium cans reduced the impact resistance, hence the toughness of the RWAlC/CSp composite. However, as the particle size increased, the impact resistance of the composite increased.
4. The addition of coconut shell improves the wear resistance of RWAlC/CSp composites at low speed. However, with increase in speed (4.72 m/s) an increase in the specific wear rate was observed. Also, significant increase in volume loss was observed after a maximum load of 14.21 N. Hence, in service the composites should be used under a load that is below 14.21 N to prevent rapid wear rate.
5. Recycled aluminium cans and coconut shell can be processed and used for the production of useful engineering materials.
6. The use of recycle waste aluminium cans for production of engineering materials will reduce its dangerous use in the production of local bombs by suicide bombers and terrorists. Also, the environmental menace associated with agricultural waste (coconut shell) and empty aluminium cans are solved.

Note

- ◆ CSp = Coconut Shell particles.
- ◆ RWAlC = Recycled Waste Aluminium Can.
- ◆ RWAlC/nCSp ($xx\mu\text{m}$) = $n\%$ CSp at $xx\mu\text{m}$ particulate size + $(100-n)\%$ RWAlC.

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