

1 **Tensile failure strength and separation angle of FDM 3D printing PLA**
2 **material: experimental and theoretical analyses**

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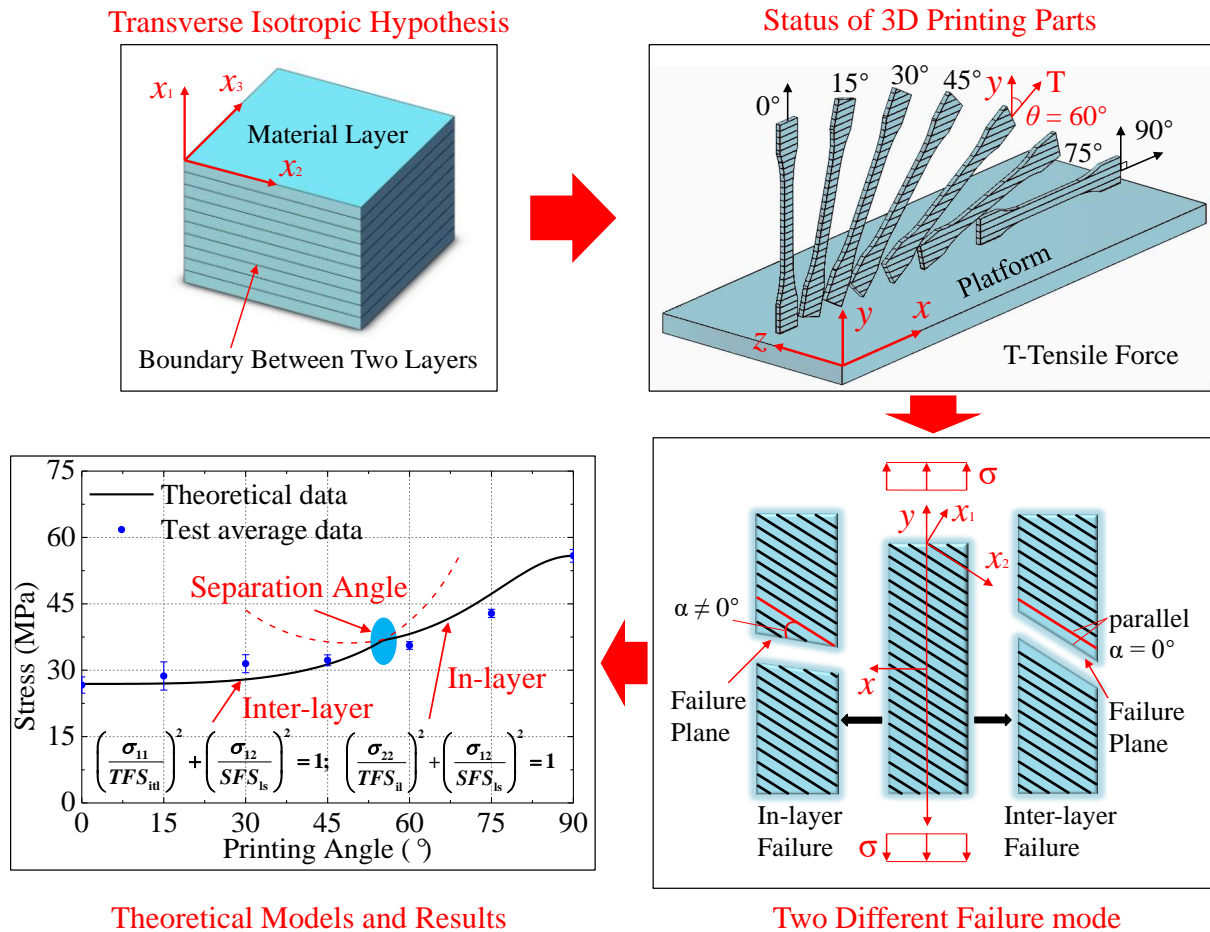
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13 **Abstract**

14 It is discovered in this investigation that there exist two different failure modes and a special
15 separation angle which is the demarcation point of the two different failure modes when FDM
16 (Fused Deposition Modelling) 3D printing materials fail under a tensile load. In order to further
17 understand the mechanical properties of FDM 3D printing materials and promote the use of
18 FDM 3D printing materials, their tensile failure strengths at different printing angles and
19 separation angles are measured and analysed theoretically. A new separate-modes of
20 transversely isotropic theoretical failure model is established to predict the tensile failure
21 strength and separation angle of FDM 3D printing PLA (polylactic acid) material based on the
22 hypothesis of transverse isotropy and the classical separate-modes failure criterion. During this
23 research, the tensile specimens designed according to the current test standard ISO (527-2-2012)
24 for plastic-multi-purpose specimens are fabricated in 7 different printing angles (0° , 15° , 30° ,
25 45° , 60° , 75° , 90°) and three levels of printing layer thickness (0.1 mm, 0.2 mm, 0.3 mm).
26 Experimental results show that the tensile failure strength increases with the increase of the
27 printing angle or the decrease of the layer thickness. Meanwhile, inter-layer failure tends to
28 occur when the printing angle is small and in-layer failure tends to occur when the printing

29 angle is big. In comparison with the results predicted by the established theoretical model, all
 30 values of the Generalized-Relative-Root-Mean-Square Error are close to zero and the
 31 experimental separation angles are also between 45° and 60°. So the predictive capacity of
 32 the theoretical model is affirmed by experimental results.

33 **Graphical Abstract**



34 **Theoretical Models and Results**
 35 **Keywords:** 3D printing; tensile failure strength; separation angle; failure criterion; printing
 36 angle; layer thickness

37 **1. Introduction**

38 One area of great progress in manufacturing science and engineering is the rapid
 39 development of 3D printing technology in the past two decades [1-4]. Combining Computer
 40 Aided Design (CAD) and Computer Aided Manufacturing (CAM) technologies, 3D printing
 41 technology fabricates items without involving any traditional cutting techniques and the waste
 42 of raw materials caused in this process is also very little [5, 6]. For manufacturing thin-walled

43 structures, complex structures [7, 8] and multi-material structures [9, 10], this technology has
44 inherent advantages [11-13]. Nowadays, 3D printing technology has been widely applied in
45 manufacturing [14], civil engineering [15, 16], automotive engineering [17], biomedical
46 engineering [18-21], food [22-24], clothing [25] and so on.

47 Fused Deposition Modelling (FDM) is a widely-used 3D printing technology for polymer
48 and composite filaments due to its flexible and rapid printing process, low cost, diversity and
49 non-toxicity of materials, high strength and toughness of materials. A schematic diagram of
50 FDM 3D printing technology is shown in Fig. 1 and the printing process can be described as
51 follows. A digital 3D model should be built in CAD software and stored as a stereolithography
52 (STL) format file. Then a slicing software module is used to slice the 3D model into thin layers
53 horizontally and control the FDM machine. Printing parameters including printing speed, layer
54 thickness, printing temperature, filling rate, printing orientation, support structure and so on are
55 all set in the slicing software. During the modelling process, a printing filament is extruded into
56 the nozzle at semi-liquid state and deposited onto the previous material layer shown in Fig. 1.
57 After the new material layer solidifies on the printing object at room temperature, the printing
58 platform with the printing item moves down by the height of one material layer and then the
59 next material layer will be printed. This process will continue until the entire model has been
60 printed. At last, the support structure will be removed manually. Considering the fabrication
61 process, a FDM 3D printing item can be simplified as a transversely isotropic material and the
62 plane of transverse isotropy is the material layer plane.

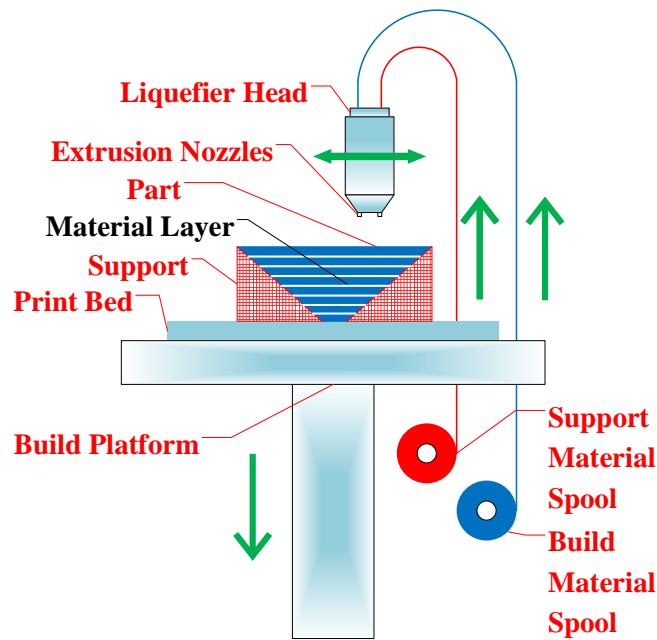


Fig. 1. Schematic diagram of FDM 3D printing technology.

As a new fabricating process for a new class of materials, one shortcoming of this 3D printing technology is that the mechanical properties are still unclear, and the constitutive models and strength models dedicated for FDM 3D printing materials are not yet available. Thus actual FDM 3D printing structures cannot be modelled and analysed accurately. This lack of knowledge has seriously hindered the development and application of FDM 3D printing technology and calls for its research. The research on the mechanical properties of FDM 3D printing materials has mainly focused on two aspects: failure strengths [26] and elastic properties. Among them, there has been more research on their elastic properties. However, the research on their failure strength is still rare.

The research on failure strength of 3D printing materials can be roughly divided into 3 categories. Qualitative parametric analysis is the first and most common one. Chacón et al. [27] did tests and analysed the influences of parameters including building orientation, layer thickness and feed rate on the tensile strength and bending strength. They found that layer thickness and feed rate had a negative correlation with the two strengths. On the other hand, building orientation had an obvious influence on the two strengths. Tanikella et al. [28] investigated the tensile strength for a wide range of 3D printing materials. The results demonstrated that the tensile strength of 3D printing specimens depended largely on the mass of the specimen, for all materials. Sood et al. [29] evaluated the relationship between the

83 parameters including layer thickness, orientation, raster angle, raster width and air gap and
84 tensile, flexural and impact strength. Empirical models relating mechanical responses and
85 process parameters were developed. Croccolo et al. [30] studied the effects of FDM production
86 parameters on the tensile failure strength and the stiffness of the materials. An empirical
87 analytical model was developed based on the process parameters. García-Plaza et al. [31]
88 established a mathematical modelling to analyse the effect of printing parameters including
89 building orientation, layer thickness, feed rate, and plate-extruder movements on the
90 dimensional accuracy, flatness error, and surface texture of 3D printing PLA parts. Other
91 parametric analyses [32-37] have also been done in the past decades. All of the above studies
92 mainly focused on the influences of printing parameters on failure strength of 3D printing
93 materials. Only some empirical models and qualitative results were obtained during these
94 research.

95 Secondly, some theoretical failure models have been built to predict the failure strength of
96 3D printing materials. Zhang et al. [38] established a theoretical model based on Tsai-Wu failure
97 criterion [39] to predict the macroscopic failure of 3D printing glassy polymers and the model
98 was applied to simulate the failure of 3D printing lattice structures. Ahn et al. [40] developed
99 an anisotropic failure model of tensile strength as a function of raster angle by Tsai-Wu failure
100 criterion [39]. A failure criterion for anisotropic materials that incorporated stress interactions
101 was implemented to predict the failure strength of 3D printing materials by Obst et al [41].
102 Theoretical results showed that the failure of 3D printing parts was strongly influenced by the
103 interaction between stresses and there were significant differences between tensile and
104 compressive strengths. The theoretical failure models mentioned above only have the ability to
105 roughly represent the experimental data without considering the specific experimental
106 phenomena.

107 Thirdly, the strength of multi-materials and structures fabricated by 3D printing technology
108 has also been investigated. Ning et al. [42] experimentally researched the effect of raster angle,
109 infill speed, nozzle temperature and layer thickness on the tensile strength of carbon fibre-
110 reinforced plastic composites (CFRP). These 4 factors had a significant impact on the tensile
111 strength of CFRP. Caminero et al. [43] investigated the effect of graphene nanoplatelet
112 reinforcement on the mechanical properties, dimensional accuracy, and surface texture of 3D

113 printed PLA structures. The 3D printed PLA-Graphene composite samples showed higher
114 tensile strength, flexural strength, and inter-laminar shear strength than 3D printed PLA, and
115 PLA 3D850 samples. Ulu et al. [44] experimentally studied the influence of printing orientation
116 on the performance of 3D printing structures. An optimization algorithm was used to identify
117 the build orientation that maximized the factor of safety (FS) of a structure under prescribed
118 loading and boundary configurations.

119 Obviously, two problems exist in the previous research. Firstly, only qualitative results have
120 been obtained in most previous parametric analyses of FDM 3D printing materials. Meanwhile,
121 the empirical models constructed are rarely based on a mechanics principle. Secondly,
122 theoretical models were only established on rough experimental phenomena and did not clearly
123 classify the tensile failure modes of these materials. An accurate prediction of tensile failure
124 strength (TFS) is very important for analysing the structures fabricated by FDM 3D printing
125 technology, for the sake of structural safety. In order to promote and develop the 3D printing
126 technology, a quantitative theoretical failure model which is consistent with experimental
127 phenomena and based on experimental data is urgently needed.

128 A large number of experimental results obtained during this investigation demonstrate that
129 there are two different failure modes, inter-layer failure mode and in-layer failure mode, when
130 the FDM 3D printing PLA material fail. In addition, a special separation angle which is the
131 demarcation point of the two different failure modes exist during the failure experiment.
132 Therefore, a separate-modes of transversely isotropic theoretical failure model is established to
133 predict the TFS and separation angle of the FDM 3D printing PLA material based on the
134 hypothesis of transverse isotropy and classical separate-modes failure criterion [45]. The
135 influence of printing angles and layer thickness on TFS is measured and analysed by tensile
136 experiments and the parameters of the theoretical model is amended and improved based on the
137 test data. At last, a modified theoretical failure model is obtained which can accurately predict
138 the TFS with different printing angles and layer thickness and can approximately predict the
139 range of the separation angle with different layer thickness.

140 The remainder of this paper is outlined as follows. Fabrication of specimens, tensile
141 experiment and phenomena of experimental results are described in Section 2. The separate-
142 modes of transversely isotropic theoretical failure model and the model in plane stress state are

143 established in Section 3. The detailed calculation process of separation angle show in Section
144 4. The approximate range of the separation angle and the TFS comparison between the
145 theoretical data and experimental data have been analysed thoroughly in Section 5. Four
146 conclusions of this paper are drawn in Section 6.

147 **2. Procedures of experiment**

148 2.1. Fabrication of 3D printing specimens

149 2.1.1. Material and 3D printing machine

150 The testing material used during this research is polylactic acid (PLA) which is an
151 amorphous, durable, strong thermoplastic, healthy and pollution-free material with excellent
152 printing capability. Therefore, it is one of the most commonly used materials in 3D printing.
153 The PLA filaments used are produced by Polymaker Industries (Shanghai, China) and their
154 properties are given in Table 1.

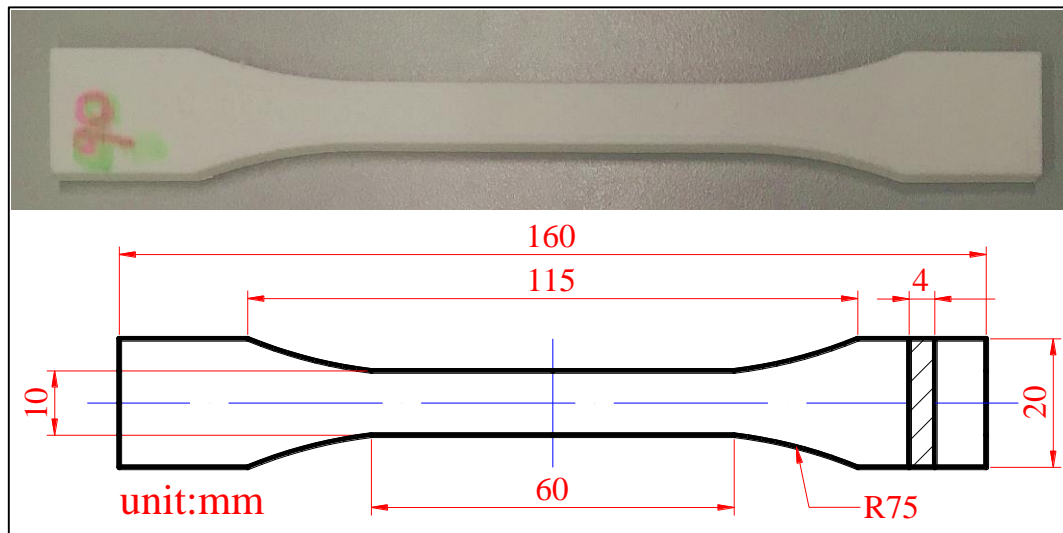
155 **Table 1** Properties of PLA filament.

Property	Typical value
Average Filament Diameter (mm)	1.75 ± 0.05
Recommended Printing Temperature (°C)	195 ~ 230
Softening Temperature (°C)	146 ~ 150
Recommended Printing Speed (mm/s)	40 ~ 90
Density (g/cm ³ at 21.5 °C)	1.17 ~ 1.24
Recommended Heated Build Platform Temperature	Not Required

156 Desktop 3D printer (Makerbot Industries, Brooklyn, USA) is used to fabricate the test
157 specimens. 3D printing software is used to control the printing parameters including printing
158 angle, printing speed, temperature and so on. Printing temperature is set to 215 °C, which is
159 suitable for the PLA filaments. The printable layer thickness is 0.05 ~ 1.2 mm. Considering
160 the printing speed and mechanical properties, 3 levels of layer thickness are chosen in this
161 research: 0.1 mm, 0.2 mm and 0.3 mm.

162 2.1.2. Printing dimension and states of specimens

163 The dimension of these 3D printing specimens follows ISO 527-2-2012 (International
 164 standard, plastics determination of tensile properties Part 2: Test conditions for moulding and
 165 extrusion plastics), which is shown in Fig. 2. The total number of specimens used during this
 166 research is 84 and the details are given in Table 2.



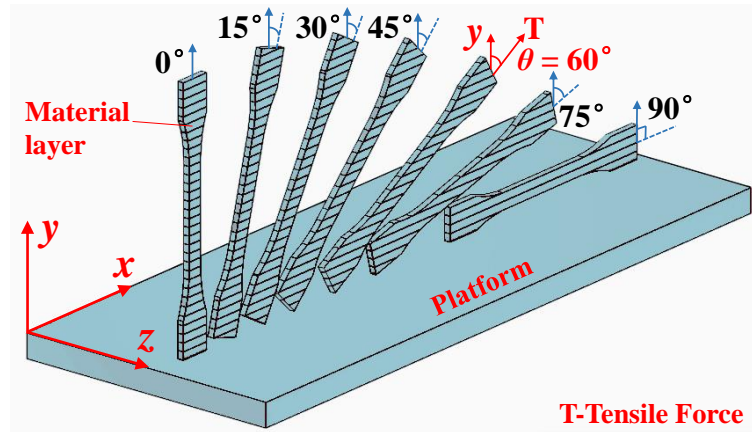
167
 168 **Fig. 2.** The dimension of 3D printing specimens.

169 **Table 2** The numbers of specimens used during this research.

		Printing Angle (°)						
		0	15	30	45	60	75	90
Layer thickness = 0.1 mm		4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Layer thickness = 0.2 mm		4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Layer thickness = 0.3 mm		4	4	4	4	4	4	4

170 Based on previous research results and the forming process of FDM materials (layer by
 171 layer), the 3D printing material produced in this research project is modelled as being
 172 transversely isotropic. In order to understand the effect of printing angle on TFS of the material,
 173 these specimens are fabricated with 7 printing angles (2 angles of 0° and 90° for on-axis
 174 specimens; 5 angles of 15°, 30°, 45°, 60°, 75° for off-axis specimens), respectively. The

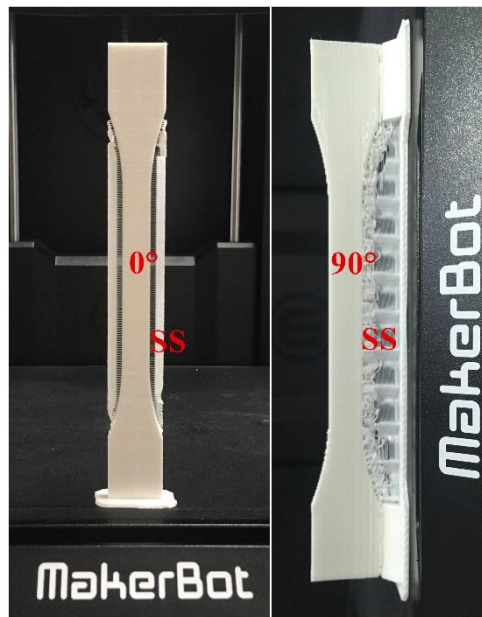
175 0° on-axis specimens are used to test the inter-layer TFS while the 90° on-axis specimens are
 176 used to test the in-layer TFS. Off-axis specimens are used to verify the new theoretical failure
 177 model established during this research. The printing states and printing angles are shown in Fig.
 178 3. Here, the printing angle is defined as the angle between the direction that is perpendicular to
 179 the material layers and the direction of the tensile load to be applied onto the specimens in the
 180 tests. The hatched lines in Fig. 3 represent the boundary between two material layers.



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 182

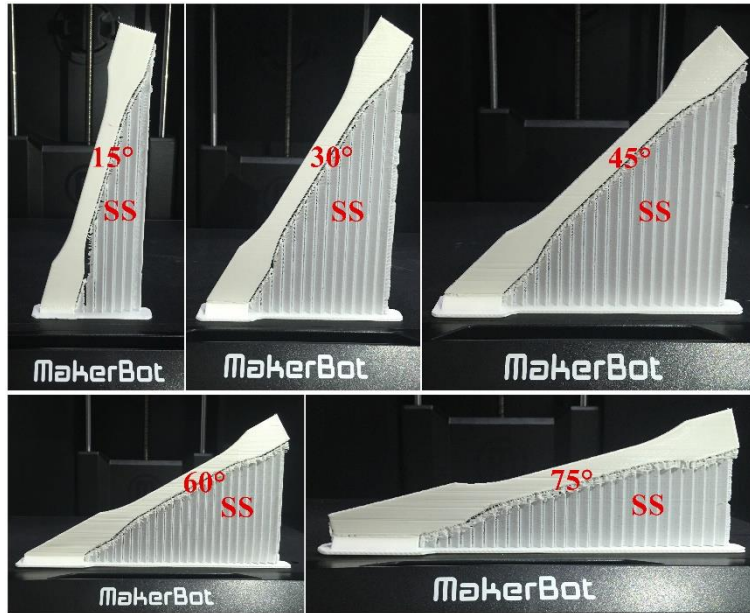
Fig. 3. The printing status and angles of specimens.

183 In order to ensure the printing quality of the specimens while considering the problem of
 184 excessively high hanging angle during the printing process, sufficient support structures are
 185 preset in the printing software. The support structures (SS) are illustrated in Fig. 4.



186
 187

(a) Support structures of on-axis specimens.



(b) Support structures of off-axis specimens.

Fig. 4. Support structures of 3D printing specimens.

188

189

190

191 2.2. Uniaxial tensile experiment of specimens

192 Quasi-static uniaxial tensile tests are performed on the computer-controlled electronic
 193 universal tensile machine provided by Changchun Institute of Mechanical Science China. In all
 194 the quasi-static tensile tests the specimens are stretched at a constant speed of 0.1 mm/min and
 195 at room temperature kept at 23 °C. So the experiment condition is standard. The test machine
 196 and one of the specimens are shown in Fig. 5.



197

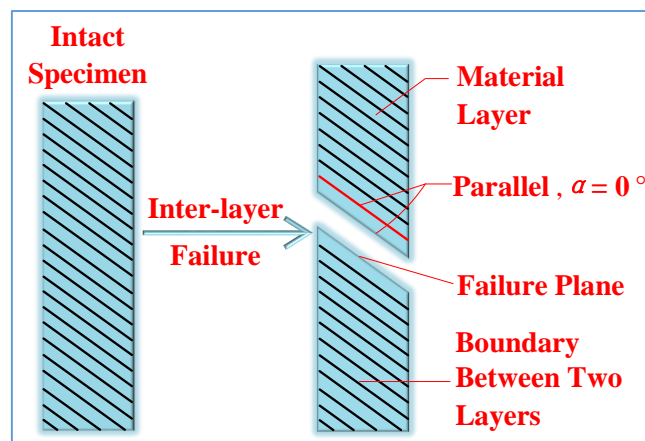
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Fig. 5. The tensile machine and specimens under testing.

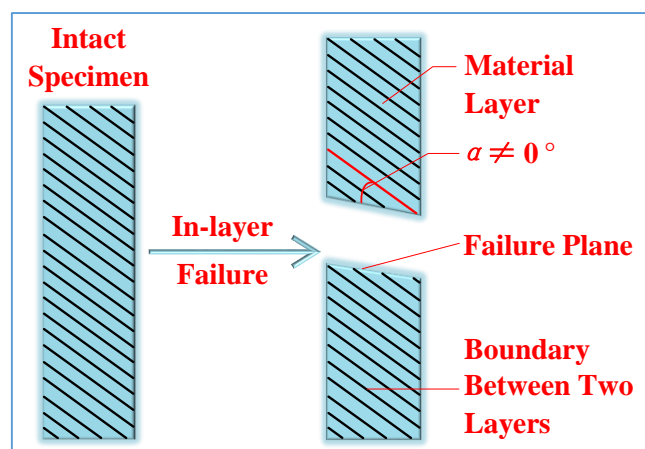
199 2.3. Phenomena of experimental results

200 Before analysing phenomena of the experiment results, two failure modes should be
201 defined, inter-layer failure mode and in-layer failure mode, which are illustrated in Fig. 6. An
202 inter-layer failure mode occurs when fracture appears at the interface between two adjacent
203 material layers and the material layers remain intact after failure, and the angle α between
204 the failure surface and the material layers is 0° . An in-layer failure mode occurs when material
205 layers break and the angle α between the failure surface and the broken material layers is not
206 equal to 0° .

207 Test results for 3 different layer thicknesses (0.1 mm, 0.2 mm, 0.3 mm) are shown in Fig.
208 7. All failure features are shown in an enlarged form. So both inter-layer failure mode and in-
209 layer failure mode can be easily seen in this figure.

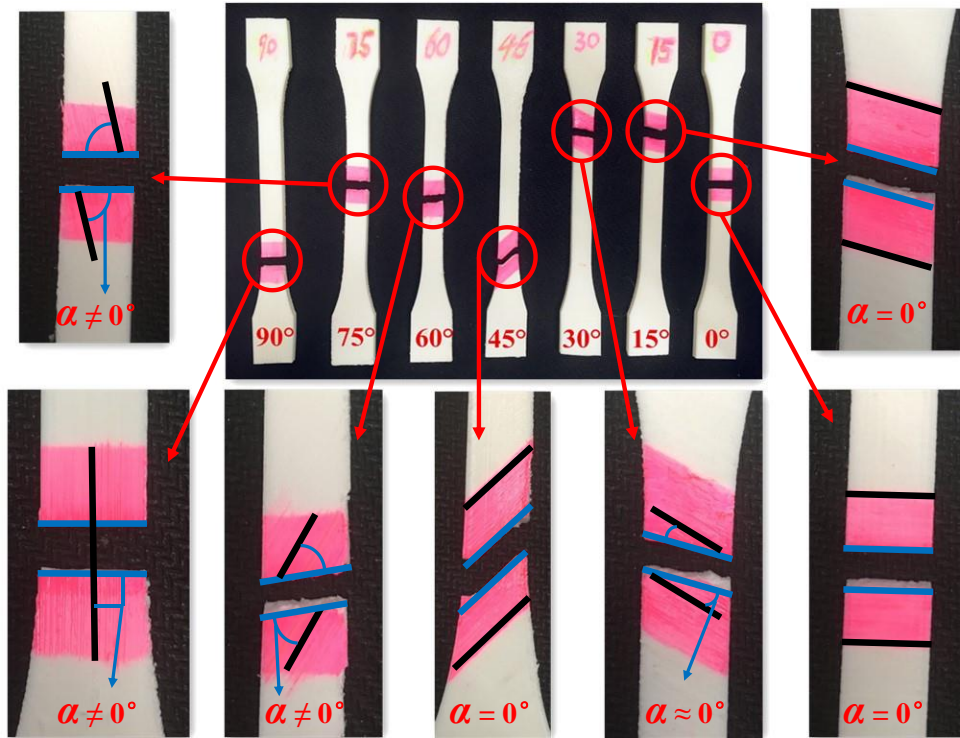


210
211 (a) Inter-layer failure mode.



212
213 (b) In-layer failure mode.

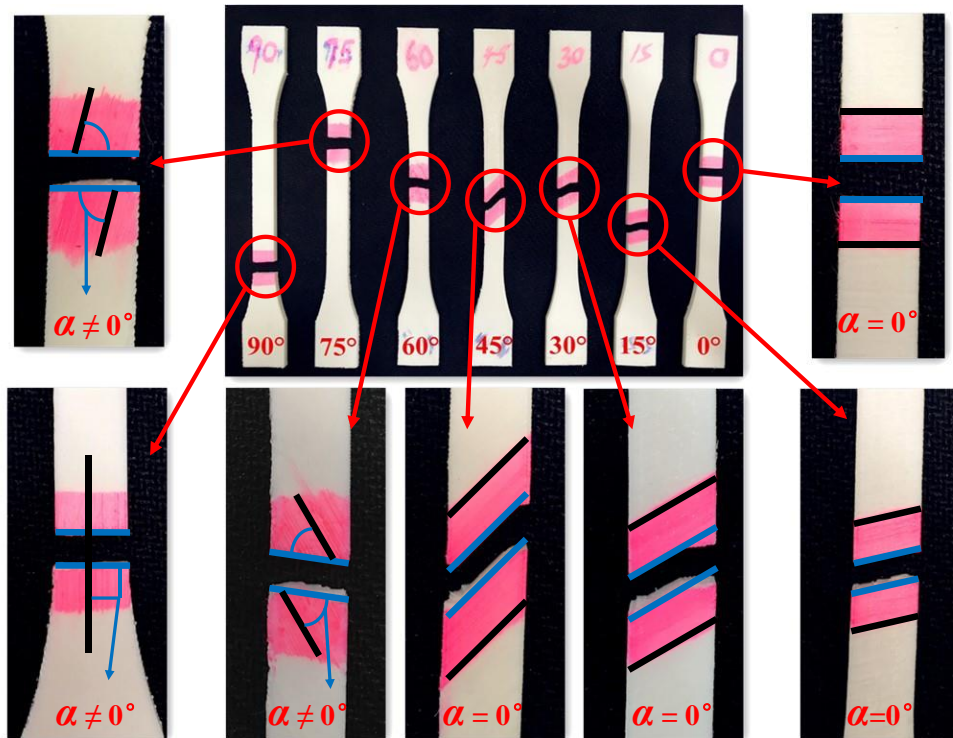
214 **Fig. 6.** Schematic of inter-layer failure mode and in-layer failure mode.



215

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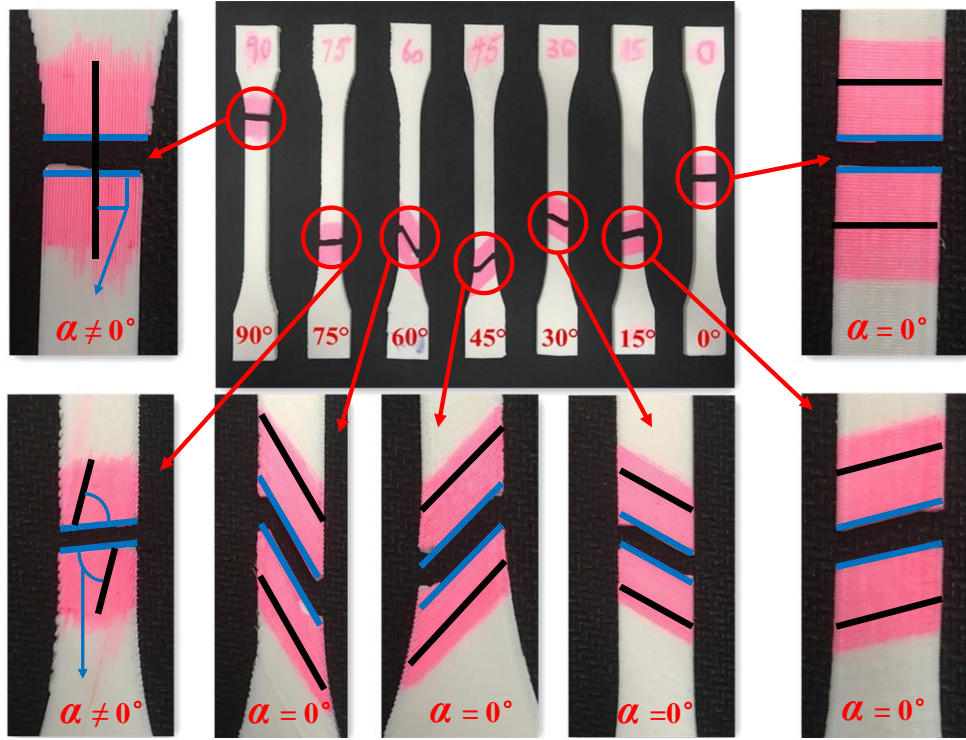
(a) Specimens with 0.1 mm layer thickness.



217

218

(b) Specimens with 0.2 mm layer thickness.



(c) Specimens with 0.3 mm layer thickness.

Fig. 7. Failure features and details of specimens with 3 different layer thicknesses.

3. Theoretical model

3.1. Separate-modes of transversely isotropic failure model

3.1.1. Quadratic failure model for transversely isotropic materials

Usually a quadratic failure criterion of isotropic materials is formulated in terms of the stress invariants. The invariants of stress tensor for isotropic materials are given below.

$$I_1^i = \sigma_{11} + \sigma_{22} + \sigma_{33} \quad (1)$$

$$I_2^i = \sigma_{11} \cdot \sigma_{22} + \sigma_{22} \cdot \sigma_{33} + \sigma_{33} \cdot \sigma_{11} - \sigma_{12}^2 - \sigma_{23}^2 - \sigma_{31}^2 \quad (2)$$

$$I_3^i = \sigma_{11} \cdot \sigma_{22} \cdot \sigma_{33} + 2\sigma_{12} \cdot \sigma_{23} \cdot \sigma_{31} - \sigma_{11} \cdot \sigma_{23}^2 - \sigma_{22} \cdot \sigma_{31}^2 - \sigma_{33} \cdot \sigma_{12}^2 \quad (3)$$

where all the stresses in Eq. (1) ~ Eq. (3) are shown in Fig. 8. Superscript i in Eq. (1) ~ Eq. (3) represents isotropic materials.

As explained before, FDM 3D printing materials can be simplified as transversely isotropic materials with respect to the building direction of material layers. Here, a 3D rectangular

234 coordinate system is defined, with x_2 and x_3 being the two perpendicular axes in the plane
 235 of the material layers, and x_1 normal to this plane, as shown in Fig. 8. For transversely
 236 isotropic materials, the failure model must be invariant under any rotation of the x_2 and x_3
 237 axes around x_1 . Therefore, a function of stress invariants under rotation around x_1 is
 238 constructed for this special failure model. The stress invariants used in the special failure model
 239 can be expressed as follows.

$$240 \quad I_1^{t-i} = \sigma_{11} \quad (4)$$

$$241 \quad I_2^{t-i} = \sigma_{22} + \sigma_{33} \quad (5)$$

$$242 \quad I_3^{t-i} = \sigma_{23}^2 - \sigma_{22} \cdot \sigma_{33} \quad \text{or} \quad \frac{1}{4}(\sigma_{22} - \sigma_{33})^2 + \sigma_{23}^2 \quad (6)$$

$$243 \quad I_4^{t-i} = \sigma_{12}^2 + \sigma_{13}^2 \quad (7)$$

$$244 \quad I_5^{t-i} = 2\sigma_{12} \cdot \sigma_{23} \cdot \sigma_{13} - \sigma_{22} \cdot \sigma_{13}^2 - \sigma_{33} \cdot \sigma_{12}^2 \quad (8)$$

245 Eq. (4) ~ Eq. (8) are obtained based on Eq. (1) ~ Eq. (3) and transverse isotropy. Superscript
 246 $t \sim i$ in the Eq. (4) ~ Eq. (8) represents transversely isotropic materials.

247 The one-dimensional uniaxial TFS and shear failure strength (SFS) of FDM 3D printing
 248 materials are given below.

249 TFS_{itl} - the maximum of σ_{11} in Fig. 8 - inter-layer TFS in the direction that is perpendicular
 250 to the material layers.

251 TFS_{il} - the maximum of σ_{nn} in Fig. 8 - in-layer TFS in transversely isotropic material layers.

252 SFS_{ls} - the maximum of σ_{n1} in Fig. 8 - shear failure strength in the plane that is
 253 perpendicular to the material layer (longitudinal shear).

254 SFS_{ts} - the maximum of σ_{nt} in Fig. 8 - shear failure strength in the plane that is parallel to
 255 the material layer (transverse shear).

256 Considering a quadratic approximation (which will be shown to be quite accurate), I_5^{t-i}
 257 should not appear in the failure model. Therefore, the general quadratic approximation of failure

258 for transversely isotropic materials can be expressed as,

259
$$e_1 \cdot I_1^{t-i} + f_1 \cdot (I_1^{t-i})^2 + e_2 \cdot I_2^{t-i} + f_2 \cdot (I_2^{t-i})^2 + g_{12} \cdot I_1^{t-i} \cdot I_2^{t-i} + e_3 \cdot I_3^{t-i} + e_4 \cdot I_4^{t-i} = 1 \quad (9)$$

260 where $e_1, e_2, e_3, e_4, f_1, f_2$ and g_{12} are the parameters which need to be determined
 261 thereafter.

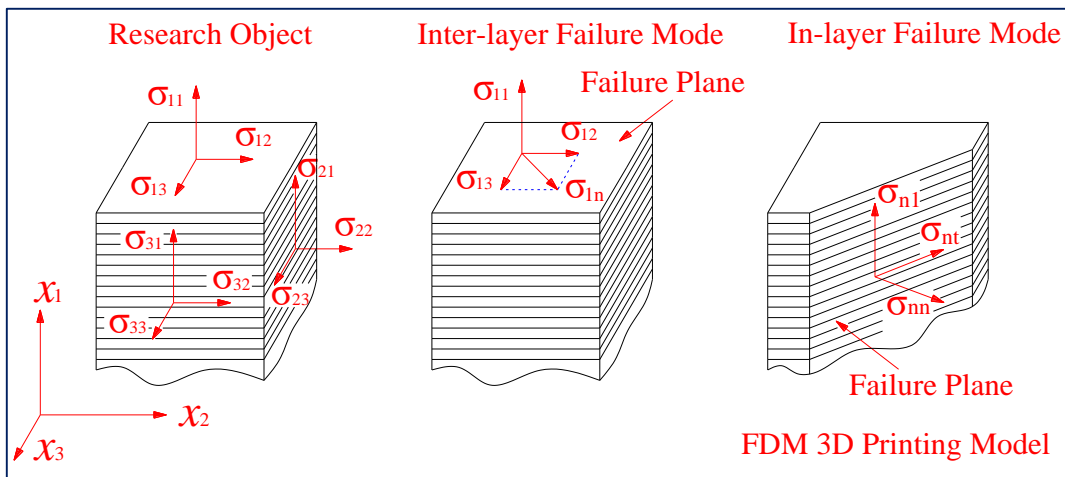
262 Combining Eq. (4) ~ Eq. (7) and Eq. (9), the following equation can be obtained under pure
 263 transverse shear condition.

264
$$e_3 = \frac{1}{SFS_{ts}^2} \quad (10)$$

265 Combining Eq. (4) ~ Eq. (7) and Eq. (9), the following equation can be obtained under pure
 266 longitudinal shear condition.

267
$$e_4 = \frac{1}{SFS_{ls}^2} \quad (11)$$

268 The phenomena of experimental results show that there are two failure modes: inter-layer
 269 failure mode and in-layer failure mode. These two failure modes have been defined in detail in
 270 Section 2.3, which can also be seen in Fig. 8.



271
 272 **Fig. 8.** Schematic of failure modes and failure plane.

273 3.1.2. Inter-layer failure mode

274 It is assumed that the failure is caused by the tensile normal stress and shear stresses on the
 275 failure plane. For the inter-layer failure mode, the failure plane is $x_2 - x_3$ plane. Therefore,
 276 stresses σ_{11} ($\sigma_{11} > 0$), σ_{12} and σ_{13} are considered to result in the inter-layer failure.

277 Combining this assumption and Eq. (9) ~ Eq. (11), the inter-layer failure model can be obtained
 278 as follows.

$$279 \quad e_{\text{itl}} \cdot \sigma_{11} + f_{\text{itl}} \cdot \sigma_{11}^2 + \frac{\sigma_{12}^2 + \sigma_{13}^2}{SFS_{\text{ls}}^2} = 1 \quad (12)$$

280 where the parameters have been defined in detail in Section 3.1.1 and Fig. 8. Only e_{itl} and f_{itl}
 281 need to be found. A one-dimension uniaxial tensile test can only determine one of the two
 282 parameters. Therefore, failure data under a combination of stresses are needed to establish the
 283 additional equation for this problem. A large number of experimental data [46-48] have shown
 284 that linear term e_{itl} has a very small influence on tensile failure of polymers or composite
 285 materials under a quasi-static load and the patterns of failure curves of stresses σ_{11} and σ_{12}
 286 (or σ_{13}) are in convex shapes. Therefore, an elliptic equation of σ_{11} and σ_{12} (or σ_{13}) can
 287 be used to approximate this tensile failure relationship. With this approximation, the simplified
 288 form of Eq. (12) is given below.

$$289 \quad f_{\text{itl}} \cdot \sigma_{11}^2 + \frac{\sigma_{12}^2 + \sigma_{13}^2}{SFS_{\text{ls}}^2} = 1 \quad (13)$$

290 Under these condition, a one-dimension uniaxial tensile test can be used to determine f_{itl} .
 291 Thus, Eq. (13) can be reduced to,

$$292 \quad \left(\frac{\sigma_{11}}{TFS_{\text{itl}}} \right)^2 + \frac{\sigma_{12}^2 + \sigma_{13}^2}{SFS_{\text{ls}}^2} = 1 \quad (14)$$

293 where parameters of TFS_{itl} and SFS_{ls} have been defined in detail in Section 3.1.1 and σ_{11} ,
 294 σ_{12} , σ_{13} have been defined in detail in Fig. 8.

295 3.1.3. In-layer failure mode

296 Modelling of the in-layer failure mode is more complicated, since the failure plane is not
 297 known in advance. Experimental results obtained during this research show that most of the
 298 failure planes of the in-layer failure mode are approximately perpendicular to the material layer.
 299 Therefore, a simple case in which the failure plane is perpendicular to the material layer is
 300 studied in depth during this research. Again, it is assumed that the failure is caused by the tensile

301 normal stress and shear stresses on the failure plane. The failure plane is shown in Fig. 8. As
 302 defined in Section 3.1.2, stresses σ_{nn} ($\sigma_{nn} > 0$), σ_{nt} and σ_{n1} are considered to result in
 303 the in-layer failure. Combining this assumption and Eq. (9) ~ Eq. (11), the in-layer failure model
 304 can be derived as,

$$305 \quad e_{il} \cdot (\sigma_{22} + \sigma_{33}) + f_{il} \cdot (\sigma_{22} + \sigma_{33})^2 + \frac{\sigma_{23}^2 - \sigma_{22}\sigma_{33}}{SFS_{ts}^2} + \frac{\sigma_{12}^2 + \sigma_{13}^2}{SFS_{ls}^2} = 1 \quad (15)$$

306 where the parameters have been defined in detail in Section 3.1.1 and Fig. 8. Also only e_{il} and
 307 f_{il} need to be found in the above equation. A one-dimensional uniaxial tensile test can only
 308 determine one of the two parameters. Therefore, failure data under a combination of stresses
 309 are needed to establish the additional equation for this problem. A large number of experimental
 310 data [46-48] have shown that the linear term e_{il} has a very small influence on tensile failure
 311 of polymers or composite materials under a quasi-static load and the patterns of failure curves
 312 of stress σ_{nn} and σ_{nt} (or σ_{n1}) are in convex shapes. Therefore, with the same
 313 approximation in Section 3.1.2, the simplified form of Eq. (15) is given below.

$$314 \quad \left(\frac{\sigma_{22} + \sigma_{33}}{TFS_{il}} \right)^2 + \frac{\sigma_{23}^2 - \sigma_{22}\sigma_{33}}{SFS_{ts}^2} + \frac{\sigma_{12}^2 + \sigma_{13}^2}{SFS_{ls}^2} = 1 \quad (16)$$

315 where parameters of TFS_{il} , SFS_{ts} and SFS_{ls} have been defined in detail in Section 3.1.1.
 316 σ_{22} , σ_{33} , σ_{12} , σ_{13} and σ_{23} have been defined in detail in Fig. 8.

317 3.2. Failure model for plane stress state

318 3.2.1. Rotation matrix of plane stress state

319 For transversely isotropic materials including FDM 3D printing materials, the constitutive
 320 equation of elastic materials can be expressed in matrix form as,

$$321 \quad \begin{bmatrix} \varepsilon_1 \\ \varepsilon_2 \\ \varepsilon_3 \\ \varepsilon_4 \\ \varepsilon_5 \\ \varepsilon_6 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} S_{11} & S_{12} & S_{12} & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ S_{12} & S_{22} & S_{23} & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ S_{12} & S_{23} & S_{22} & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 2(S_{22} - S_{23}) & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & S_{55} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & S_{55} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_1 \\ \sigma_2 \\ \sigma_3 \\ \sigma_4 \\ \sigma_5 \\ \sigma_6 \end{bmatrix} \quad (17)$$

322 Eq. (17) can be simplified as Eq. (18) for plane stress state,

$$323 \quad \begin{bmatrix} \varepsilon_1 \\ \varepsilon_2 \\ \gamma_{12} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} S_{11} & S_{12} & 0 \\ S_{12} & S_{22} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & S_{55} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_1 \\ \sigma_2 \\ \tau_{12} \end{bmatrix} \quad (18)$$

324 where $S_{11} = \frac{1}{E_1}$, $S_{22} = \frac{1}{E_2}$, $S_{55} = \frac{1}{G_{12}}$, $S_{12} = \frac{-\nu_{21}}{E_1} = \frac{-\nu_{12}}{E_2}$. E_1 and E_2 are the Young's moduli in

325 the x_1 and x_2 directions as shown in Fig. 9. G_{12} is the shear modulus in the $x_1 - x_2$ plane.

326 ν_{21} and ν_{12} are the Poisson's ratios of materials involving directions x_1 and x_2 .

327 Eq. (18) can be expressed in the stiffness matrix form as,

$$328 \quad \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_1 \\ \sigma_2 \\ \tau_{12} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} Q_{11} & Q_{12} & 0 \\ Q_{12} & Q_{22} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & Q_{55} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \varepsilon_1 \\ \varepsilon_2 \\ \gamma_{12} \end{bmatrix} \quad (19)$$

329 The constitutive equation in any direction including on-axis material direction can be
330 expressed as,

$$331 \quad \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_x \\ \sigma_y \\ \tau_{xy} \end{bmatrix} = \mathbf{T}^{-1} \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_1 \\ \sigma_2 \\ \tau_{12} \end{bmatrix} = \mathbf{T}^{-1} \mathbf{Q} \begin{bmatrix} \varepsilon_1 \\ \varepsilon_2 \\ \gamma_{12} \end{bmatrix} = \mathbf{T}^{-1} \mathbf{Q} (\mathbf{T}^{-1})^T \begin{bmatrix} \varepsilon_x \\ \varepsilon_y \\ \gamma_{xy} \end{bmatrix} \quad (20)$$

332 The rotation matrix \mathbf{T} in Eq. (20) can be expressed as,

$$333 \quad \mathbf{T} = \begin{bmatrix} \cos^2 \theta & \sin^2 \theta & 2 \sin \theta \cos \theta \\ \sin^2 \theta & \cos^2 \theta & -2 \sin \theta \cos \theta \\ -\sin \theta \cos \theta & \sin \theta \cos \theta & \cos^2 \theta - \sin^2 \theta \end{bmatrix} \quad (21)$$

334 where θ is the angle between the material x_1 axis and the global x axis, as shown in Fig.

335 9.

336 3.2.2. Failure model

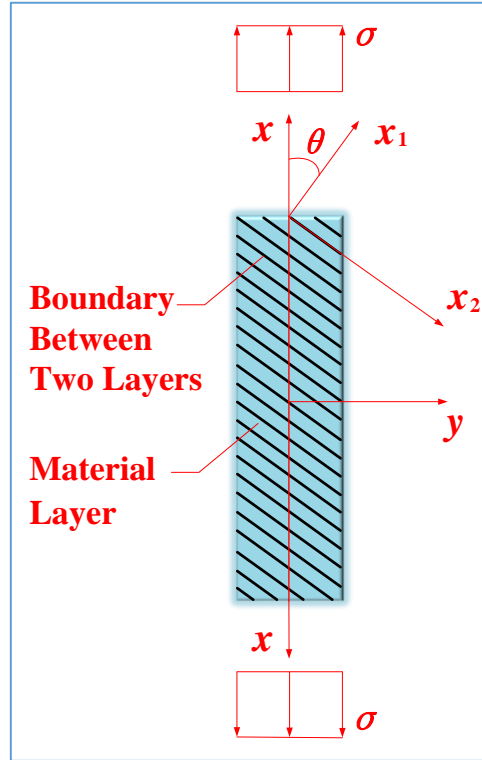
337 As mentioned before, 3D printing technology is often dedicated to fabricating complex
338 thin-walled structures. Therefore, the cases of plane stress state are very important and thus
339 should be studied thoroughly. For this purpose, two coordinate systems should be built. System

340 $x - y - z$ which represents the load directions is the global coordinate system. System $x_1 - x_2$

341 $- x_3$ which represents the material direction is the material coordinate system. The plane $x_2 -$

342 x_3 is the material layer plane and the direction x_1 is the direction that is perpendicular to the
 343 material layer in the local material coordinate system.

344 The specimens under tension during this research can be simplified as in a plane stress state
 345 because of the dimension of the specimens. The global coordinate and the material coordinate
 346 systems in 2D are shown in Fig. 9. Therefore, the mechanical theory of plane stress state can
 347 be used in the separate-modes of transversely isotropic failure model established in Section 3.1.



348
 349 **Fig. 9.** Material direction and stress direction of FDM 3D printing materials
 350 for plane stress state.

351 The non-vanishing stress components in Eq. (14) and Eq. (16) under plane stress state are
 352 σ_{11} , σ_{22} and σ_{12} (see Fig. 8). Then the separate-modes of transversely isotropic failure
 353 model for plane stress state can be derived as,

354 **Inter-layer Failure Mode**

355
$$\left(\frac{\sigma_{11}}{TFS_{itl}} \right)^2 + \left(\frac{\sigma_{12}}{SFS_{ls}} \right)^2 = 1 \quad (22)$$

356 **In-layer Failure Mode**

357
$$\left(\frac{\sigma_{22}}{TFS_{il}}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{\sigma_{12}}{SFS_{ls}}\right)^2 = 1 \quad (23)$$

358 If only uniaxial stress σ is applied on the specimen shown in Fig. 9, the stress
359 components in the material coordinate system are,

360
$$\begin{cases} \sigma_{11} = \sigma \cdot \cos^2 \theta \\ \sigma_{22} = \sigma \cdot \sin^2 \theta \\ \sigma_{12} = -\sigma \cdot \sin \theta \cdot \cos \theta \end{cases} \quad (24)$$

361 These lead to Inter-layer Failure Mode below

362
$$\sigma_{itl} = T_\theta = \left[\frac{\cos^4 \theta}{TFS_{itl}^2} + \frac{\cos^2 \theta \cdot \sin^2 \theta}{SFS_{ls}^2} \right]^{\frac{1}{2}} \quad (25)$$

363 $\sigma_{itl} = T_\theta$ is the TFS in the x direction ($\sigma_{itl, 0} = T_0 = TFS_{itl}$).

364 Similarly, Eq. (24) leads to In-layer Failure Mode below

365
$$\sigma_{il} = T_\theta = \left[\frac{\sin^4 \theta}{TFS_{il}^2} + \frac{\sin^2 \theta \cdot \cos^2 \theta}{SFS_{ls}^2} \right]^{\frac{1}{2}} \quad (26)$$

366 $\sigma_{il} = T_\theta$ is the TFS in the x direction ($\sigma_{il, 90} = T_{90} = TFS_{il}$).

367 4. Separation angle

368 A separate-modes of transversely isotropic theoretical failure model for plane stress state
369 has been established in Eq. (25) and Eq. (26). However, which equation should be used to
370 predict the TFS is still unknown. In order to characterise failure modes properly, the concept of
371 separation angle θ_{SA} which is the demarcation point between the two failure modes is put
372 forward. Let σ_{itl} in Eq. (25) equal to σ_{il} in Eq. (26). Then the following equation for
373 separation angle θ_{SA} is obtained.

374
$$\left[\frac{\cos^4 \theta_{SA}}{TFS_{itl}^2} + \frac{\cos^2 \theta_{SA} \cdot \sin^2 \theta_{SA}}{SFS_{ls}^2} \right]^{\frac{1}{2}} = \left[\frac{\sin^4 \theta_{SA}}{TFS_{il}^2} + \frac{\sin^2 \theta_{SA} \cdot \cos^2 \theta_{SA}}{SFS_{ls}^2} \right]^{\frac{1}{2}} \quad (27)$$

375 Simplification of Eq. (27) leads to

376
$$\tan \theta_{SA} = \sqrt{\frac{TFS_{il}}{TFS_{itl}}} \quad (28)$$

377 Based on the above theoretical derivation and the phenomena of experimental results

378 obtained in this research, the following two conclusions can be easily obtained:

379 (a) When $\theta \leq \theta_{SA}$, the inter-layer failure mode in Eq. (22) or Eq. (25) should be used to predict
 380 the TFS of specimens during this research.

381 (b) When $\theta > \theta_{SA}$, the in-layer failure mode in Eq. (23) or Eq. (26) should be used to predict
 382 the TFS of specimens during this research.

383 5. Results and discussions

384 5.1. Experimental data

385 TFS test data for the FDM 3D printing PLA material with all three layer thicknesses are
 386 given in Table 3. The magnitude of all these TFS test data is similar to the test results in previous
 387 researches [49, 50]. In Table 3, STDEV is Standard Deviation and CV is Coefficient of Variation.
 388 T_0 , T_{45} and T_{90} represent TFS of the material with 0° , 45° and 90° printing angles,
 389 respectively. Based on the discussion in Section 4, T_0 is the inter-layer TFS (TFS_{il}) and T_{90}
 390 is the in-layer TFS (TFS_{il}). TFS of off-axis specimens T_{45} is used to calculate the longitudinal
 391 shear failure strength SFS_{ls} . Then, all the parameters in the theoretical failure model for plane
 392 stress state in Eq. (25) and Eq. (26) are obtained and TFS of material with other 4 printing
 393 angles can be predicted.

394 **Table 3** TFS test data for FDM 3D printing PLA material (unit: MPa).

θ	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Test 4	Mean	STDEV	CV (%)
Layer thickness = 0.1 mm							
$0^\circ (T_0)$	28.67	25.07	26.21	27.66	26.90	1.58	5.89
$45^\circ (T_{45})$	30.84	32.97	32.94	28.54	31.32	2.11	6.72
$90^\circ (T_{90})$	54.37	55.97	57.24	-	55.86	1.44	2.57
Layer thickness = 0.2 mm							
$0^\circ (T_0)$	25.53	24.95	26.20	23.05	24.93	1.35	5.43
$45^\circ (T_{45})$	31.47	30.56	30.02	-	30.68	0.73	2.39

90° (T_{90})	51.18	53.53	54.53	57.65	54.22	2.68	4.95
Layer thickness = 0.3 mm							
0° (T_0)	23.56	24.14	23.63	-	23.78	0.32	1.33
45° (T_{45})	29.32	29.19	28.98	-	29.16	0.17	0.59
90° (T_{90})	44.94	45.62	45.24	48.71	46.13	1.74	3.78

395 At the same time, Young's modulus and maximum elongation test data (extensometer) for
396 the FDM 3D printing PLA material are given in Table 4.

397 **Table 4** Young's modulus and maximum elongation test data
398 for FDM 3D printing PLA material.

θ	Young's modulus (unit: MPa)			maximum elongation (%)		
	Mean	STDEV	CV(%)	Mean	STDEV	CV
Layer thickness = 0.1 mm						
0°	1528.75	31.04	2.03	2.09	0.13	6.15
45°	1555.33	28.04	1.80	2.39	0.14	5.85
90°	1648.67	53.70	3.26	3.87	0.11	2.90
Layer thickness = 0.2 mm						
0°	1951.50	53.73	2.75	1.59	0.10	6.32
45°	2065.33	74.66	3.61	1.88	0.09	4.87
90°	2251.04	58.93	2.62	2.81	0.11	3.74
Layer thickness = 0.3 mm						
0°	1660.67	86.63	5.22	1.75	0.09	5.12
45°	1769.67	82.42	4.66	2.05	0.12	5.90
90°	1726.50	32.93	1.91	3.14	0.08	2.57

399 5.2. Discussion of separation angle θ_{SA}

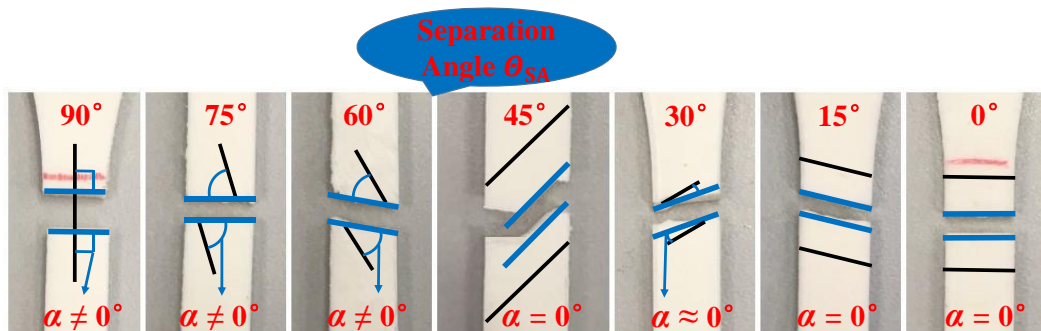
400 Based on the experimental data in Section 5.1 and the expression of separation angle in Eq.
 401 (28), separation angle θ_{SA} can be easily obtained, and are given in Table 5. Its values ranges
 402 between 45° and 60° .

403 **Table 5** Separation angle for the FDM 3D printing PLA material.

Layer thickness (mm)	θ_{SA} ($^\circ$)
0.1	55.24
0.2	55.85
0.3	54.32

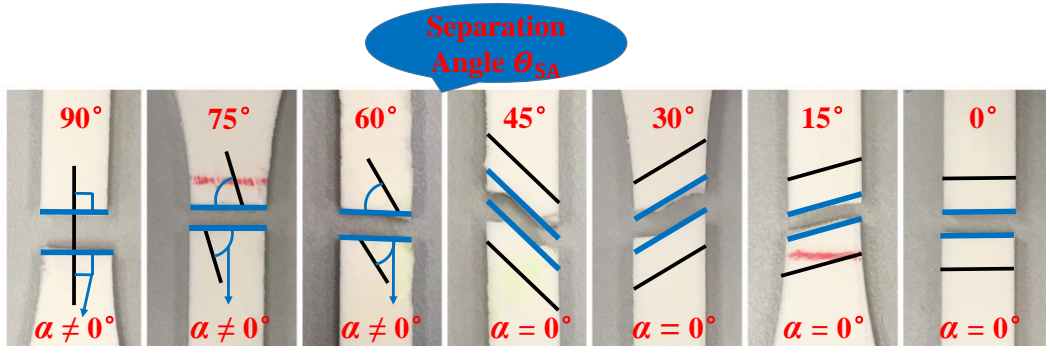
404 As explained therein before, there are two failure modes, which can be seen in Fig. 10 ~
 405 Fig. 12. In addition, the experimental results of separation angles θ_{SA} are given. Almost all
 406 the separation angles θ_{SA} of experimental results are between 45° and 60° , which is
 407 basically consistent with theoretically predicted value in Table 5. Therefore, one can conclude
 408 that the theoretical model established in Section 4 has the capacity in predicting the approximate
 409 range of the separation angle θ_{SA} .

410 The classification of failure modes is given in Table 6. Almost all the inter-layer failure
 411 events occur when the printing angles are 0° , 15° , 30° and 45° . In contrast, in-layer failure
 412 events occur when the printing angles are 60° , 75° and 90° . So the conclusion that inter-
 413 layer failure tends to occur when the printing angle is small and in-layer failure tends to occur
 414 when the printing angle is big can be drawn.



416

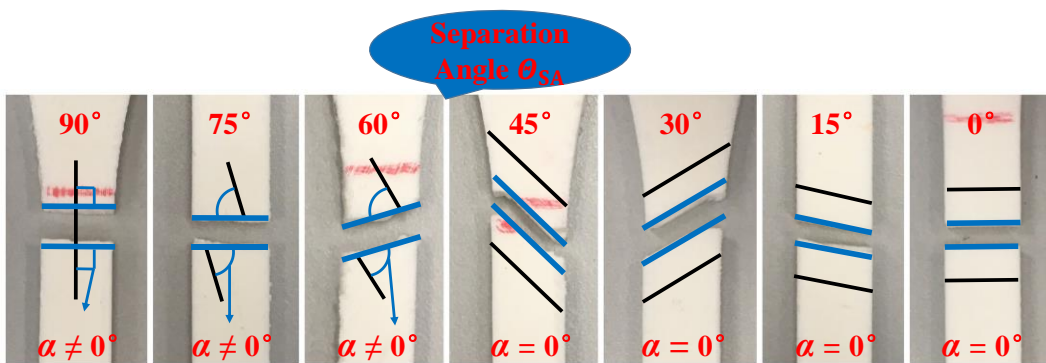
(a) Separation angle θ_{SA} of test-1.



417

418

(b) Separation angle θ_{SA} of test-2.



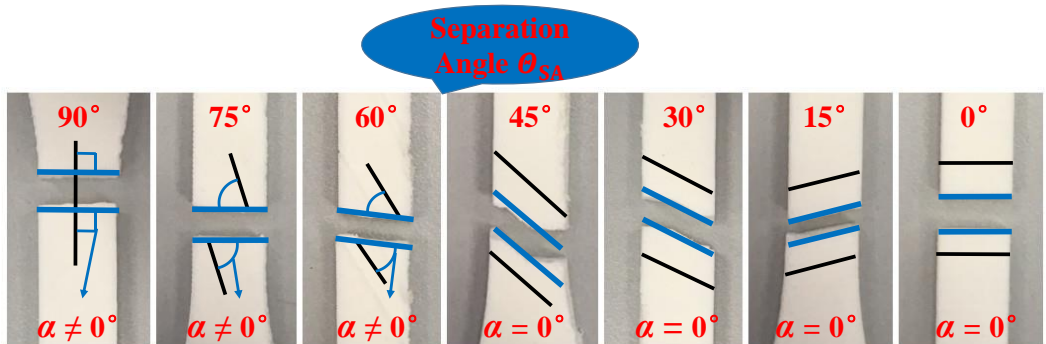
419

420

(c) Separation angle θ_{SA} of test-3.

421

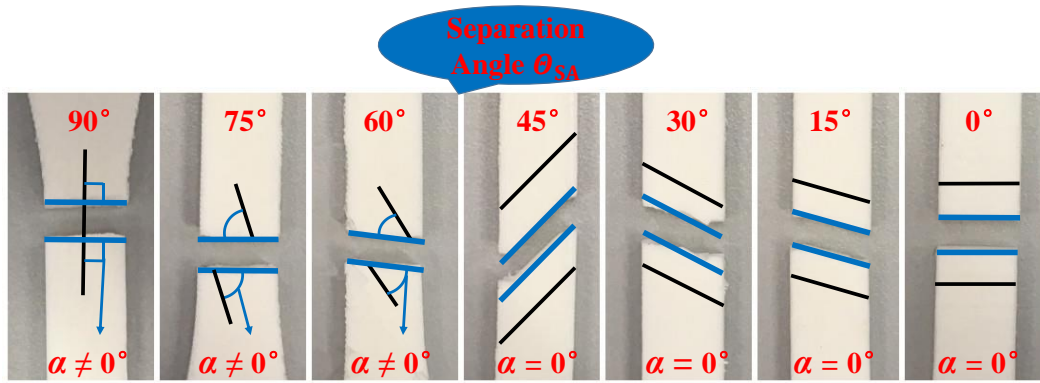
Fig. 10. Distribution of separation angle θ_{SA} with 0.1mm layer thickness.



422

423

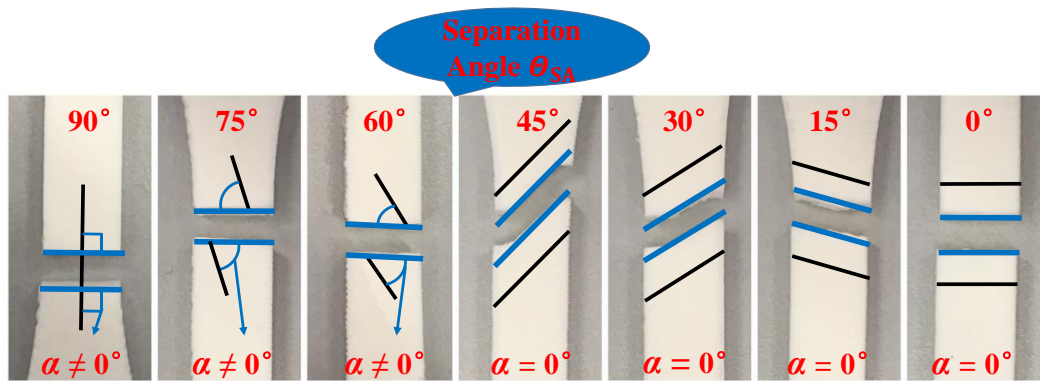
(a) Separation angle θ_{SA} of test-1.



424

425

(b) Separation angle θ_{SA} of test-2.



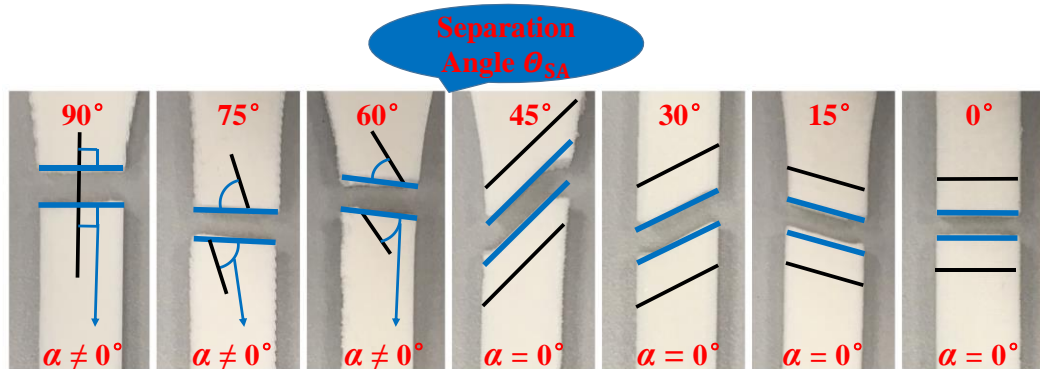
426

427

(c) Separation angle θ_{SA} of test-3.

428

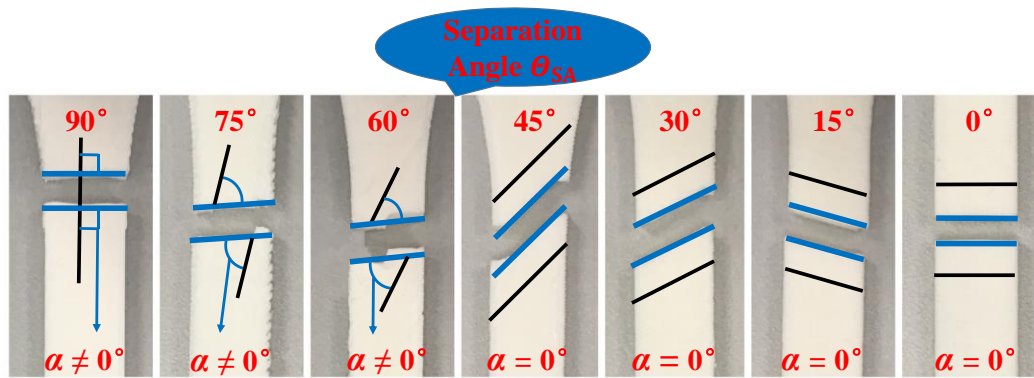
Fig. 11. Distribution of separation angle θ_{SA} with 0.2mm layer thickness.



429

430

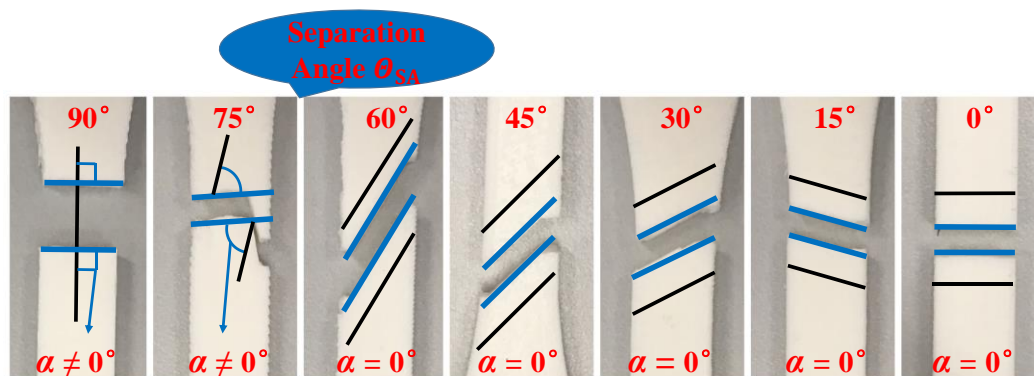
(a) Separation angle θ_{SA} of test-1.



431

432

(b) Separation angle θ_{SA} of test-2.



433

434

(c) Separation angle θ_{SA} of test-3.

435

Fig. 12. Distribution of separation angle θ_{SA} with 0.3mm layer thickness.

436

Table 6 The classification of failure modes.

Layer thickness (mm)	Test times	Failure modes	
		Inter-layer failure	In-layer failure
0.1	1	0°, 15°, 30°, 45°	60°, 75°, 90°
	2	0°, 15°, 30°, 45°	60°, 75°, 90°
	3	0°, 15°, 30°, 45°	60°, 75°, 90°
0.2	1	0°, 15°, 30°, 45°	60°, 75°, 90°
	2	0°, 15°, 30°, 45°	60°, 75°, 90°
	3	0°, 15°, 30°, 45°	60°, 75°, 90°
0.3	1	0°, 15°, 30°, 45°	60°, 75°, 90°

2	0°, 15°, 30°, 45°	60°, 75°, 90°
3	0°, 15°, 30°, 45°, 60°	75°, 90°

437 5.3. Comparison between theoretical results and experimental data for TFS

438 TFS comparison between theoretical results and experimental data is made in Fig. 13. In
439 these three figures, the data including theoretical results and experimental data with STDEV
440 continues to increase with the printing angle increasing from 0° to 90°. This change rule can
441 also be seen in previous studies [50, 51]. At the same time, the degree of agreement between
442 theoretical results and experimental data is satisfactory.

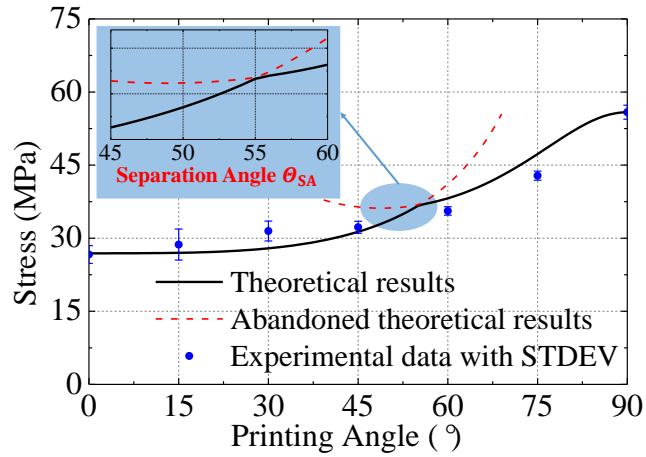
443 In order to quantify the prediction accuracy of the theoretical model, a Generalized-
444 Relative-Root-Mean-Square Error (*GRRMSE*) between theoretical results and experimental
445 data is defined in Eq. (29). When the *GRRMSE* is close to zero, the accuracy of the theoretical
446 model is high. In Table 7, the order of magnitude of all the *GRRMSE* is 10^{-2} , which is consider
447 to be very close to zero. The same results can also be seen in Fig. 14. Therefore, one can confirm
448 that the theoretical model established in this paper has the capacity in predicting the TFS of
449 FDM 3D printing PLA material with different printing angles.

$$450 \quad GRRMSE = \frac{\sqrt{\frac{1}{n} \cdot \sum_{i=1}^n (TR_i - ED_i)^2}}{\frac{1}{n} \cdot \sum_{i=1}^n ED_i} \quad (29)$$

451 where n is the number of distinct printing angle ($n = 7$ in this research),

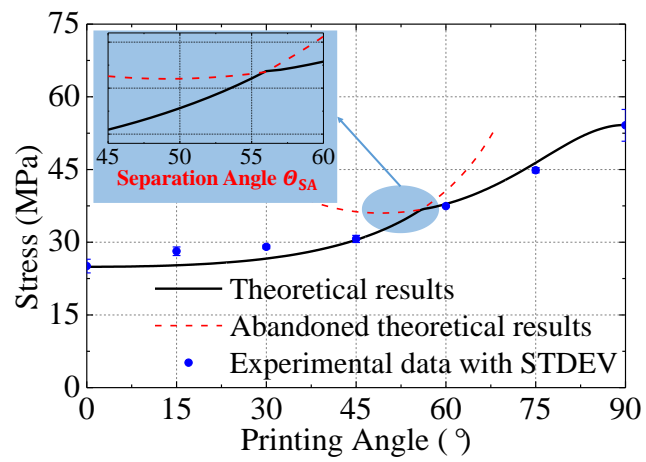
452 TR_i refers to theoretical results corresponding to the i th printing angle, and

453 ED_i refers to averaged experimental data corresponding to the i th printing angle.



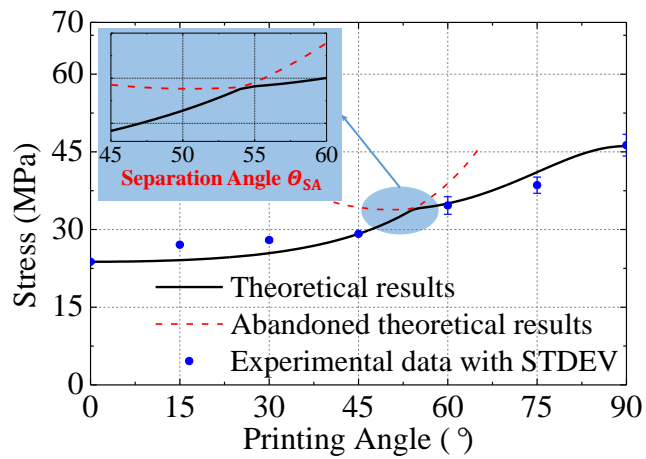
454
455

(a) Comparison of 0.1 mm layer thickness.



456
457

(b) Comparison of 0.2 mm layer thickness.



458
459

(c) Comparison of 0.3 mm layer thickness.

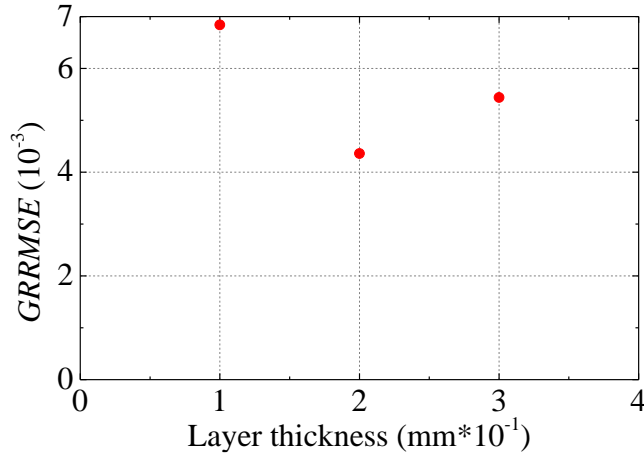
Fig. 13. TFS comparison between theoretical results and experimental data.

460
461

Table 7 *GRRMSE* between theoretical results and experimental data.

Layer thickness (mm)	<i>GRRMSE</i>
0.1	0.0684

0.2	0.0436
0.3	0.0544



462

463

Fig.14. GRRMSE between theoretical results and experimental data.

464 5.4. Influence of layer thickness on TFS

465

466

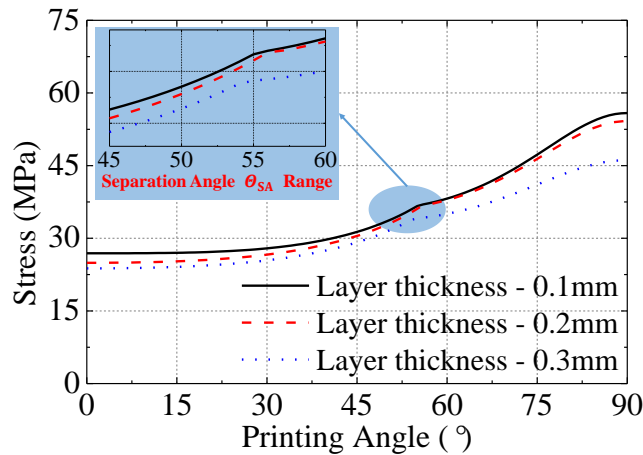
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470

The reliability of the theoretical model established during this research has been verified in Section 5.3. So the theoretical model can be used to analyse the influence of layer thickness on TFS. Fig. 15 displays this influence. Obviously, the TFS of the FDM 3D printing PLA material with same printing angle becomes bigger as layer thickness decreases from 0.3 mm to 0.1 mm. In Fig. 15, one can also see that the separation angle range of the FDM 3D printing PLA material stays between 45° and 60°.



471

472

Fig. 15. Influence of layer thickness on TFS.

473 **6. Conclusions**

474

A preliminary study of tensile failure strength and the associated separation angle θ_{SA} of

475 a FDM (Fused Deposition Modelling) 3D printing PLA (polylactic acid) material is presented
476 in this paper. It is found that the material can be modelled as transversely isotropic and a
477 separate-modes of transversely isotropic theoretical failure model is put forward and then
478 verified by experimental data, as well as the range of separation angle θ_{SA} of this material.
479 Based on the results and analysis of this research, four conclusions can be drawn as follows.

480 1. All the Generalized-Relative-Root-Mean-Square Error (*GRRMSE*) between theoretical
481 results and experimental data are close to zero. So the theoretical model based on the
482 transversely isotropic material hypothesis and separate failure-modes hypothesis established in
483 this research is suitable for the failure of FDM 3D printing PLA material and has the capacity
484 in predicting the tensile failure strength of this material.

485 2. The experimental results show that the range of separation angle θ_{SA} is between 45°
486 and 60° . The theoretical model is shown to be able to approximately predict the range of
487 separation angle θ_{SA} of this FDM 3D printing PLA material.

488 3. Two different failure modes are discovered in the tensile experiments. Inter-layer failure
489 mode occurs when the printing angle is small while in-layer failure mode occurs when the
490 printing angle is big.

491 4. Apparently, the tensile failure strength of this FDM 3D printing PLA material with the
492 same printing angles becomes bigger as its layer thickness decreases from 0.3 mm to 0.1 mm.

493 Further research will be concentrated on optimizing the separate-modes of transversely
494 isotropic theoretical failure model. The theoretical model will be extended to predict the failure
495 strength and distribution of separation angle (θ_{SA}) of different kinds of 3D printing materials.

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