

Thermophysical Properties of Cellular Aluminium and Ceramic Particulate / Aluminium Composites

Khalid Almadhoni*, Sabah Khan**

*Ph. D. Student, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering and Technology, JMI, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-110025 (India).

**Dr. Assistant Prof., Department of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering and Technology, JMI, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-110025 (India)

ABSTRACT

In this paper, the thermophysical properties of cellular Al and Ceramic Particulate / Al Composites were explored. Thermophysical properties are defined as material properties that vary with temperature without altering the material's chemical identity including thermal conductivity (TC), coefficient of thermal expansion (CTE), energy absorption, porosity and relative density. The significance of cellular Al and AMMCs reinforced by ceramic particles lies in their properties which are difficult to be available combined in other engineering materials. New cellular AMMCs that meet the needs of the required engineering applications could be synthesized by selection an appropriate reinforcements. Different kinds of ceramic particles such as oxides, carbides, nitrides, as well as carbon nanotubes can be utilized as reinforcements for manufacturing of cellular AMMCs. Thermophysical properties of cellular AMMCs consisting of Al as continuous matrix phase and ceramic particles as reinforcements are directly influenced by type, size, and geometry of dispersions, also the RVR. In addition, the constituents of ceramic particulate / aluminium composites characterized by different heat transfer mechanisms, where the TC mechanism in metals is attributed to free electrons, while phonons are primarily responsible for TC in nonmetallic materials, as well as an interfacial thermal barrier resistance influence effectively on heat transfer inside the composite and thus the thermophysical properties. In this paper, based on the literature review, thermophysical properties of cellular Al and AMMCs reinforced by ceramic particles were discussed.

Keywords - Al foams, Cellular AMMCs, Ceramic particles, Thermal properties, physical properties.

I. INTRODUCTION

Cellular metals and metal composites are relatively new materials offer opportunities in a wide range of an engineering applications. They have been under increasing development and commercial utilization in different sectors of the economy such as building and architecture, mechanical, chemical industries. This type of materials can be used, for example, to fabricate light-weight structures, filters, heat exchanger, biomedical implants, sound absorbers, sensors, catalyst substrates and mechanical damping devices [1]. Cellular materials are highly porous, with relative density lower than 0.3, and present an interesting combination of physical, thermal and mechanical properties, as low weight, high impact absorption, damping properties, sound and thermal insulation, etc. [2-3]. Because of consisting different physical, thermal and mechanical properties cellular metals and metal composites are become more popular and new applications of these materials are brought out each passing day. There are many different composite materials can be produced by different methods. Metal Matrix Composites (MMCs) is one of these materials. Cellular MMCs keeping a

combination of many advantageous properties of metal matrix composites with low relative density, present an interesting combination of properties, as low weight, high energy absorption, etc. Various kinds of ceramic materials, e.g. SiC, SiO₂, Al₂O₃, MgO, ZnO, BeO, MnO₂, TiO₂, TiC, etc. are generally used as reinforcement elements. Superior properties of these materials such as refractoriness, high compressive strength and hardness, excellent wear resistance, etc. make them appropriate for use as reinforcement in MMCs [4-5-6]. Metal foams are characterized by high performance applications as multifunctional materials in electronic, mechanical, civil, chemical and biochemical engineering. These materials are anticipated to find many more applications. The foams make high efficiency heat exchanger (i.e. for stirling engines, latent heat cooling systems and regenerators in solar power plants) and industrial filters. Furthermore, metal foams are used as electrode materials for fuel cells and rechargeable batteries because they have very high specific surface areas, characteristics required for flow-through applications or when surface exchange are involved. Hybrid foams (composites consisting to two foamed constituents), in addition to

combining metal foams with ceramic and polymer materials are expected to see more exposure [7]. Metal foams keeping a combination of numerous advantageous properties of metals with low relative density, are cellular materials containing pores filled with gas. There are two types of metal foams: closed- and open cell metal foams. If pores insulated by metal walls from each other, then this is named as closed cell metal foam, if pores interconnected with each other is referred to as open cell metal foam or metal sponge.

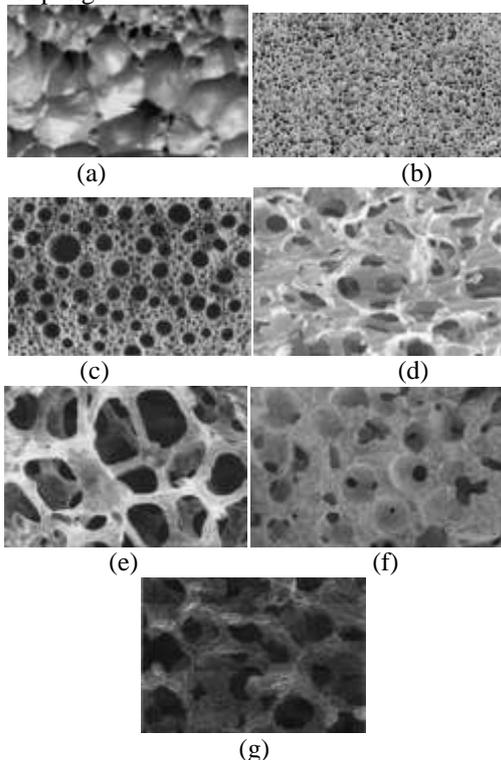


Fig. 1.1 (a): Al foam produced by a continuous process of gas injection to a viscous melt (Banhart, 2001), (b): Pore structure of aluminum foamed by gas releasing agent (TiH₂) (Duarte and Bhanart, 2000), (c): Pore structure of aluminum foamed by solid-gas eutectic solidification (Banhart, 2001), (d): SEM micrograph of pure aluminum foam produced by replication (Marchi & Mortensen, 2001), (e): SEM image of Al foam parts made by investment casting (Banhart, 2001), (f): Cellular aluminum material made by using space-holding fillers. Density 1.1 g/cm and (g): SEM micrograph of a typical Al foam manufactured by SDP (Zhao and Sun, 2001).

The relative densities ranging from 50 to 98% can be achieved. Open-celled aluminum foams can be produced via varied methods. Investment casting, pre-form infiltration and SDP are the most widely used techniques. For production of closed-celled aluminum foams, Alcan, Alporas and gasar are the most widely routes, (figures 1.1-a, -b, -c, -d, -e, -f and -g) show various structures of Al foams produced by

different techniques. Due to rapidly increasing demand for higher quality Al foams, there has been a growing requirement for developing other cost effective manufacture technologies. [8].

Thermal properties of cellular metal matrix composites reinforced by ceramic particles are affected by type, shape, distribution and the size of particles, as well as the reinforcement volume ratio (RVR) and cell size. AL alloy AA2011 was infiltrated in the semisolid state into preforms of sintered NaCl particles. Results showed that the feasibility of the application of semisolid technology to fabricate an open cell and closed cell syntactic foams, as well as low density metal matrix composites via thixoinfiltration of the alloy into removable preforms of NaCl particles or non-removable preforms of hollow glass microspheres and ceramic porous particulates. Concerning the materials produced, results showed composites containing porous reinforcements can present some mechanical characteristics of the conventional cellular metals, figure 1.2.

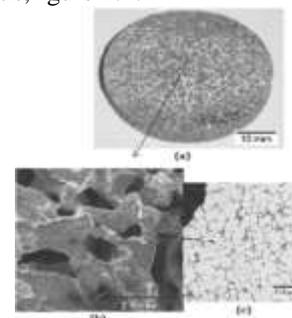


Fig. 1.2: Typical sample produced by thixoinfiltration of AA2011 alloy into a preform of removable NaCl particles; (a) general aspect; (b) general aspect of the architecture; (c) microstructure of cell walls.

Due to this behavior associated to the low density and other specific properties inherent to metal matrix composites, more attention should be paid to this kind of material, [9].

A closed cell AlMg4.5Mn0.7 / SiCp composite foam was fabricated by direct foaming at semi-solid temperature, and the effects of reinforcement size and fraction on energy absorption were investigated, results show that energy absorption capability increase with increasing reinforcement ratio and decreasing reinforcement size, (figures 1.3-a, -b, -c and -d).

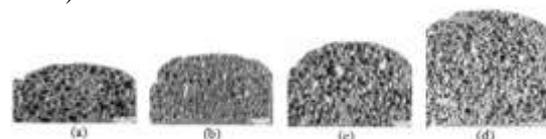


Fig. 1.3: Product of foam with different fraction of SiCp (12µm), a) %5, b) %10, c) %15, d) %20.

It was realized that composite foam with produced by smaller size of reinforcement is more capable to absorption of energy [10].

An Open-cell Al alloy (AC3A) composite foams with 1-5% SiC particles have been successfully manufactured via pressure infiltration casting route with polyurethane preform. An addition of higher ceramic particle led to higher volume fraction of the particles both in the matrix and on the strut surface, as a result, improved the compressive strength, energy absorption and microhardness of the foams, as illustrated in figure 1.4 [11].

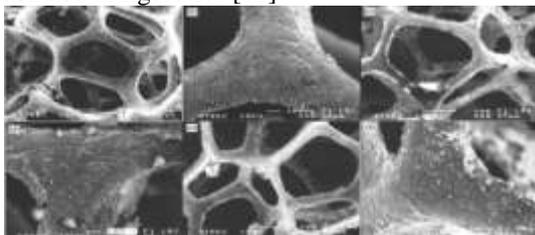


Fig. 1.4: SEM micrographs showing structures of pure AC3A and composite foams containing 1% and 5% SiC particles: (a), (b) Pure AC3A; (c), (d) AC3A+1%SiC; (e), (f) AC3A+5%SiC.

Thermal property of a material is its physical property related to application of heat energy and explain its response. As a solid body absorbs energy in the form of heat, its temperature increases and its dimensions increase. Heat capacity, thermal expansion, and thermal conductivity are properties that are often critical in the practical utilization of solids. Heat is transferred at a higher rate across materials of high thermal conductivity than across materials of low thermal conductivity. The reciprocal of thermal conductivity is called thermal resistivity [12].

Different kinds of engineering materials (metals, ceramics, polymers and composites), so the thermal conductivity mechanism depends on kind of material. TC mechanism in materials is attributed to electrons and phonons. Due to a large numbers of free electrons with high free mean paths and velocities in high pure metals, the electron mechanism of heat transfer is much more efficient than the phonon contribution. The TC in pure metals remains approximately constant with rising temperature. Metals with crystal structure type of FCC are characterized by the highest TC. Metals have crystal structure of BCC exhibit an order of magnitude lower TC. Alloying metals with impurities result in a reducing in the TC. Atoms of different metals have different sizes, act with impurities as scattering centers and lead to lowering the efficiency of electron motion. Nonmetals, such as glass, ceramics and polymers, are thermal isolating materials as much as they lack numbers of free electrons. Phonons are primarily responsible for TC in nonmetallic materials and they are scattered much more than electrons by

lattice imperfections, so they are not as effective as free electrons in the transport of heat energy. Crystalline ceramics are characterized by higher thermal conductivities than another amorphous ceramics, since the phonon scattering is much less than effective when the atomic structure is little disordered and irregular. With rising temperature, increases the scattering of lattice vibrations. As a result, the TC of most ceramic materials normally diminishes with increasing temperature, especially at relatively low temperatures (Figure 1.5).

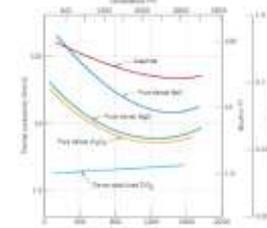
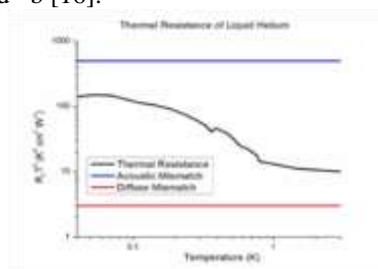


Fig. 1.5: Dependence of thermal conductivity on temperature for several ceramic materials

Porosity may have a considerable effect on TC of ceramics. Increasing the pore volume will lead to a decreasing of the TC [13-14-15].

Thermal boundary resistance “Interfacial thermal resistance” is defined as a measure of an interface’s resistance to thermal flow. The heat energy carrier (phonon or electron, depending on the type of material) will scatter at the interface when it attempts to travel through the interface. The probability of transmission after scattering will depend on the available energy states on both the sides of interface. Two primary models are utilized to understand the thermal resistance of interfaces: the acoustic mismatch and diffuse mismatch models. Both are based only on phonon transport, with ignoring of the electrical contributions. Therefore, they should be used for interfaces where at least one of the materials is electrically insulating. That means the thermal resistance will result from the transfer of phonons across the interface. Heat energy is transferred when higher energy phonons exist in higher density in the hotter material propagate to the cooler materials, which in turn transmits lower energy phonons, resulting a net energy flux. The decisive factor in determining the thermal resistance at an interface is the overlap of phonon states., as shown in figures 1.6-a and -b [16].



M. Robert and A. Jorge used AA7075 alloy as matrix and porous, lightweight and low cost SiO₂/MgO/Al₂O₃ ceramic particles as reinforcements to produce a cellular AMMC via hot infiltration technique.

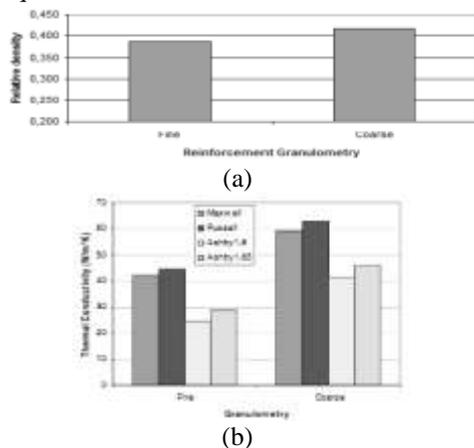


Fig. 2.2(a): Relative density of the AA7075/SiO₂-MgO-Al₂O₃ composite produced and (b): Thermal conductivity of AA7075/SiO₂-MgO-Al₂O₃ composites, estimated by different theoretical models.

Results showed that the new cellular composite material can present low thermal conductivity, in the order of 30% of the conductivity of the alloy without reinforcement (depending on RVR of reinforcement), the relative density (figure 2.2-a) and the thermal conductivity of the cellular composite increased with increasing the particles size, as shown in figure 2.2-b. [22].

The effective thermal conductivity and thermal contact resistance (TCR) of ERG Doucel aluminum foam samples with different porosities and pore densities in a vacuum under varying compressive loads are measured. Results showed that the effective TC increases with increasing the foam density. It is relatively insensitive to compressive load up to 2MPa. It is found that the TCR contributes more than 50% of the total thermal resistance, for relatively low compressive loads.

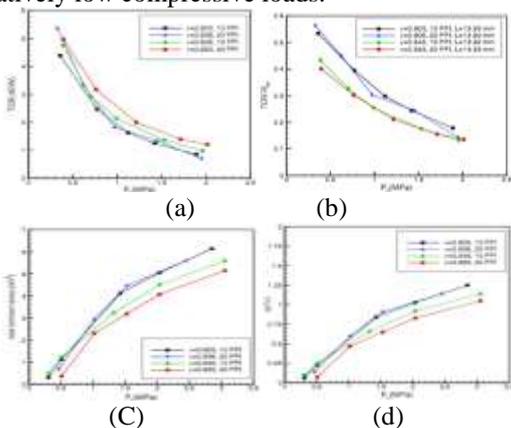


Fig. 2.3 (a): TCR of different Al foam samples over a range of compression, (b): TCR to total thermal

resistance ratio for different Al foam samples under compression, (c): Real contact area to cross-sectional area for various Al foam samples under compression and (d): ratio of total contact area to cross-sectional area for various Al foam samples under compression.

As illustrated in figures 2.3-a, -b, -c and -d, Also, TCR increases with reducing the ratio of contact area to the cross-sectional area and it is more sensitive to the compressive load rather than porosity and pore density. It decreases with increasing the foam density [23].

The 6063 aluminum open cell foams have been produced via conventional precision casting route to investigate the thermal. A water heating system was organized for measuring of heat transfer. Measurement of heat transfer showed that the temperature between the top and bottom of the foam increased and became larger with increasing the cell size, figures 2.4-a, -b, -c, -d, -e and -f.

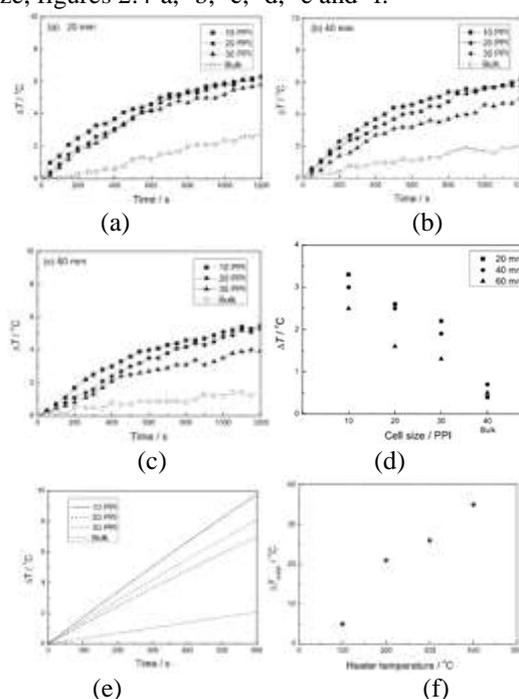


Fig. 2.4 (a, b and c): Temperature increase of the 20, 40 and 60 mm thick foams, respectively, with time, (d): Temperature increase of the 20, 40 against cell size after 300 s, (e): Simulated temperature increase of temperature increase of water plotted and (f): The 60 mm thick foams with time against the setting temperature of heater.

This means that temperature rise effect is greater for larger cell size foam, even with the same amount of heat due to low density of the foam [24].

Coefficient of thermal expansion (CTE) values of the aluminum alloy A356 matrix syntactic foams filled with SiC hollow particles (SiC_{HP}) was investigated. As illustrated in figure 2.5, it was found that syntactic foams had lower CTE compared to the

matrix alloy. The syntactic foam demonstrated a higher CTE values at higher temperature [25].

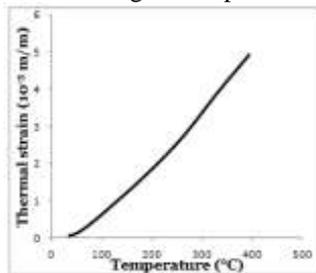


Fig. 2.5: Coefficient of thermal expansion values of the A356/SiCHP syntactic foams

Thermal properties of different density Alporas aluminum foam was investigated via X-ray tomography and comparative method in the function of the temperature at 30, 100, 200, 300, 400 and 500 °C, respectively.

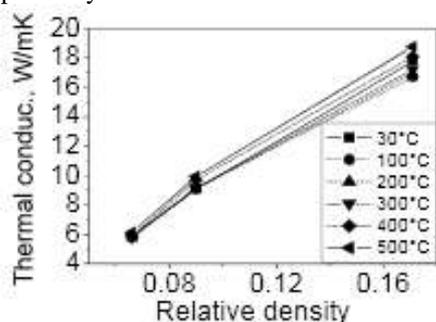
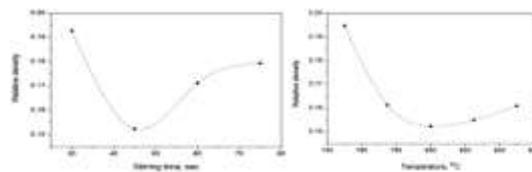
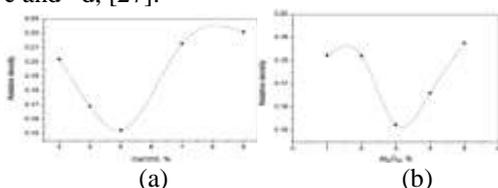


Fig. 2.6: Thermal conductivity of foams at different temperatures

As illustrated in figure 2.6, the results highlighted that the thermal conductivity and its ratio increases in the function of relative density [26].

H. Osman, A. Omran and others studied the optimum parameters affecting the preparation of aluminum foam from recycled aluminum. The parameters are: temperature, CaCO₃ to aluminum scrap wt.% as foaming agent, Al₂O₃ to aluminum scrap wt.% as thickening agent, and stirring time. The results indicated that the optimum parameters are ranging from 800 to 850 °C, CaCO₃ to aluminum scrap was 5%, Al₂O₃ to aluminum scrap was 3% and stirring time was 45 second with stirring speed 1200 rpm. The produced foam apparent densities ranged from 0.40-0.60 g/cm³, as shown in figures 2.7-a, -b, -c and -d, [27].



(c) (d)
 Fig. 2.7 (a): Effect of CaCO₃ on aluminum foam density, (b): Effect of alumina on relative density, (c): Effect of stirring time on relative density and (d): Effect of temperature on relative density.

Commercial A356 cast aluminum alloy as matrix and SiC particles with purity of 98.0 wt.% and mean particle size of 10 μmas reinforcement were used for fabrication aluminum foams via melt gas injection process. Results showed that the cell size of the sample foamed increases with increasing SiC particle concentration at constant foaming temperature and the cell wall thickness increases with increasing SiC particle concentration at constant foaming temperature, figures 2.8-a, -b and -c, [28].

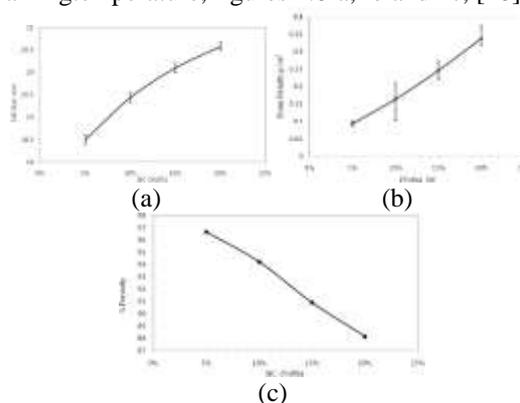


Fig. 2.8(a): Effect of volume fraction SiC particle on the cell size of the aluminum foam, (b): Effect of volume fraction SiC particle on the foam density of the aluminum foam and (c): Effect of volume fraction SiC particle on the porosity of the aluminum foam.

Replicated AlSi7Mg0.3 alloy foams were manufactured by infiltrating preforms of NaCl particles, varying the metal infiltration pressure and the mould temperature. The results showed that when the mould is preheated at 500 °C there is an excessive chill and the liquid metal does not develop a smooth skin through intimate contact with the mould surface. When the mould is preheated at 550 °C the void density decreases by increasing the applied pressure. Increasing the infiltration leads to an enhancement the metal infiltration through the salt pattern., so the void density distribution is more regular and there is a more effective replication of salt particles with a consequent reduced void circularity, figures 2.9-a and -b, [29].

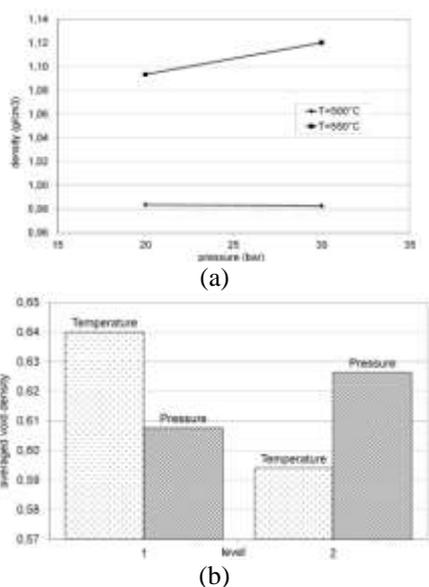


Fig. 2.9 (a): Foam density according to temperature and pressure variations on two levels, and (b): Main effects of temperature and pressure on the averaged void density.

B. Kumar, C. Kumar and V. Reddy produced a low cost aluminium foams with better quality using CaCO_3 as foaming agent in the closed cell aluminium foam and polystyrene granules as space holders in open cell aluminium foam. As illustrated in figures 2.10-a, -b and -c, experimental findings indicated that percentage porosity of 21.771% and 19.18% were obtained for open cell Aluminium foam and for closed cell Aluminium foam, respectively. TiH_2 powder as foaming agent was successfully replaced by commercial CaCO_3 powder in closed cell Aluminium sponge production. Polystyrene granules as space holders are better utilized for open cell Aluminium sponge production. It is found that the properties of Aluminium sponge significantly depend on its porosity, which means that a desired property can be tailored by the sponge density [30].

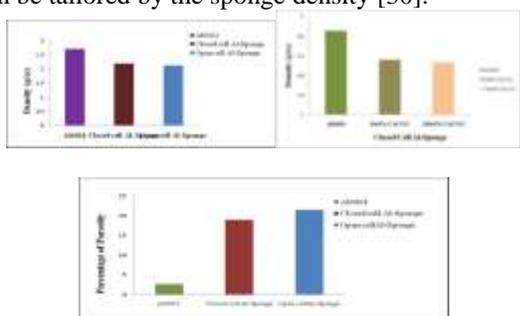


Fig. 2.10 (a): Variation of densities in Al6061 parent metal and developed Al6061 sponges, (b): Variation of density in Al6061 parent metal and developed Al6061 sponge materials with varying percentage of CaCO_3 and (c): variation of porosity in Al6061 alloy and developed Al sponge.

A. Seksak and T. Rath used aluminium-titanium hydride with rice husk ash (RHA) particles to produce a foam with improved pore structure. The particles significantly influence the foam structure by increasing the viscosity of aluminium melt, modifying foam microstructure and increasing the cell wall strength, resulting in an improvement in the structure and an increase in energy absorbed, as shown in figure 2.11.

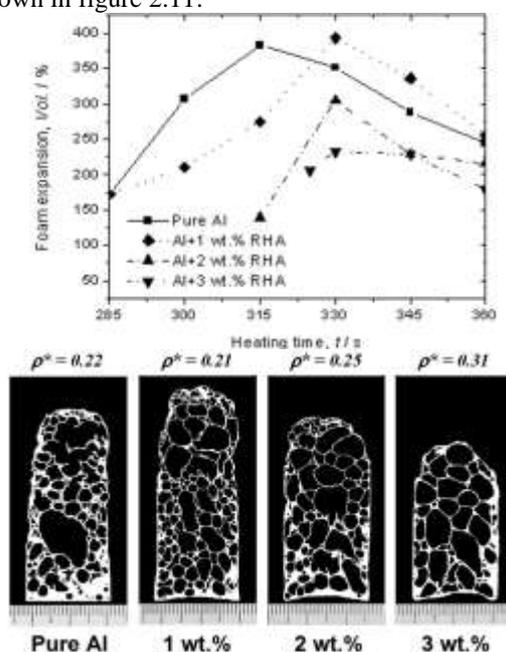


Fig. 2.11: Expansion and pore structure at maximum expansion of Al foams added with rice husk ash at various contents.

Results showed that a larger maximum expansion of composite foams was found at 1 wt.% RHA particle addition, compared with pure Al foams, and an increase in the energy absorption, for a given strain. These improvement in foam structure are resulted from the increasing viscosity of Al melt, the modification of foam microstructure and the increasing strength in the cell walls at which the particles reside [31].

Aluminum foam was produced by replication casting process. Pure sodium chloride of spherical shape with various fractions was used. NaCl bed with porosity ranging from 50% up to 65% was used and the gauge DV8009-Kc of the membrane type with an error of 2.5% was used to estimate the pressure vacuum. In the experimental work, a model describing the interaction between solid particles poorly wetted by molten metal with the associated formation of an “air collar” was developed. The expression for the permeability of replicated aluminum foam was derived on the basis of the “bottleneck” model of a porous medium also it agrees well with the experimental data. Figures 2.12-a and -b show that the aperture radius increases with

increasing NaCl particle size and the permeability of replicated aluminum decreases with increasing pressure to the surface of air collar [32].

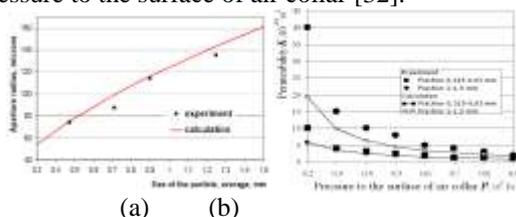


Fig. 2.12 (a): Relation between aperture radius and NaCl particle size ($P = 25$ kPa) and (b): Permeability of replicated aluminum.

The thermal conductivity of Alporas samples in the function of the temperature at 30, 100, 200, 300, 400, 500 °C was determined by using a comparative method. The ratio of thermal conductivity was calculated and shown as an increasing function by the density of the foams. As illustrated in figures 2.13-a, b, -c, -d and -e, findings indicated that in case of the 0.177 g/cm³ density samples, the pressure of the gas environment did not influence significantly the TC data. A slight increase of the heat conductivity was found vs. Temperature (in the temperature ranging from RT to 500 °C) in all the densities. The TC of foam vs. density showed almost linear behaviour [33].

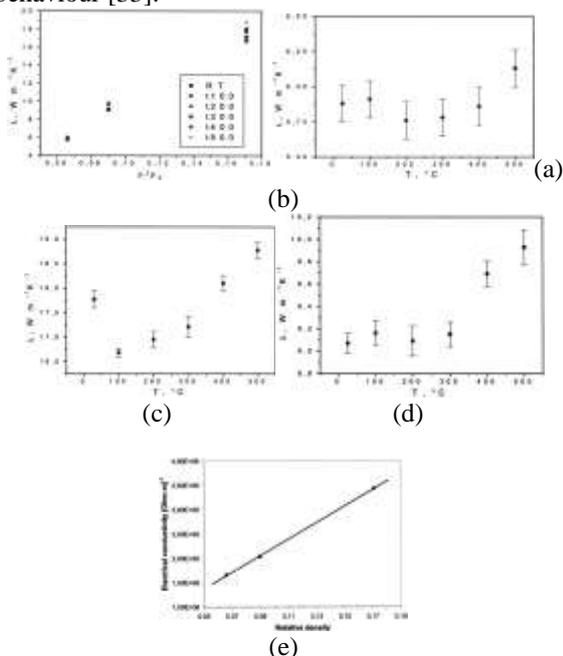


Fig. 2.13- (a): Thermal conductivity of different relative density foams at different temperatures, (b): Thermal conductivity in the function of the temperature in the case of 0.066 relative density, (c): Thermal conductivity in the function of the temperature in the case of 0.171 relative density, (d): Thermal conductivity in the function of the temperature in the case of 0.09 relative density, and

(e): The measured conductivity values vs. the relative densities of the foams.

B. Oana, R. Florea and I. Carcea focused research on Al-Mg alloys with magnesium and silicon carbide (SiC). They used different gas blowing methods (N_2 , SO_2 and C_4H_{10}). They analyzed the samples obtained by electron microscopy and observed that the best results in terms of pore volume gave blowing with C_4H_{10} . Results showed that the viability of the foams obtained by this method and that the foam stability was achieved by depositing of some particles (Al_2O_3 , and SiC) on pore walls. It is also found that spherulite distribution and their size significantly influence the increasing of the porosity of cellular composites [34].

K. Kitazono examined an impact of superplastic deformation on the solid-state foaming process of closed-cell aluminum foams. He used a SP5083 aluminum alloy as a model material. The ARB process enabled for manufacturing of preform plate containing TiH_2 particles. Results indicated that aluminum foams with small and anisotropic pores were produced under the superplastic foaming condition. Also it was found that the aluminum foams having oblate pores with substantially low thermal conductivity, figure 2.14 [35].

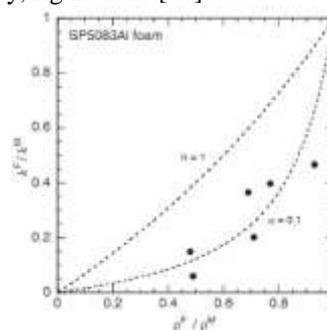
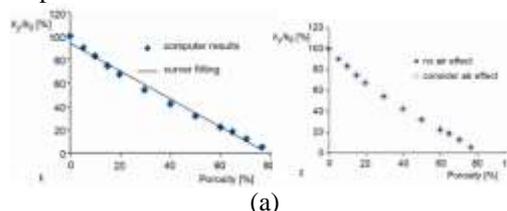
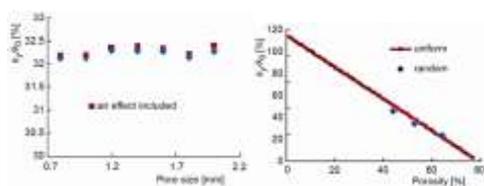


Fig. 2.14: Thermal conductivity of the SP5083 alloy foams measured by the LF method. Broken lines show theoretically calculated values based on continuum theory.

Two-dimensional finite element numerical model to get the equivalent coefficient of the thermal conductivity of aluminum foams with different aperture distribution model was used. Simulation results indicated that apparent TC linearly increases with an increasing the porosity, it was also found that the cell size and the distribution have negligible influences on the thermal property. Figures 2.15-a, -b and -c illustrated the simulation results obtained from the experiments.





(b)(c)
 Fig. 2.15 (a): Relationship of the effective thermal conductivity and the porosity when aperture size keeps constant and the effects of the air filled in the pore, (b): Relationship of the effective thermal conductivity and the pore size and (c): The relationship of equivalent coefficient of the thermal conductivity and different aperture distribution model.

As shown in illustrated figures, the effective TC of closed-cell foam aluminum materials under low temperature coefficient was mainly influenced by the porosity [36].

III. SUMMARY

From the above introduced extensive literature survey, it can be noticed that worthwhile comprehensive efforts have been reported to evaluate thermophysical properties of cellular Al and AMMCs reinforced with ceramic particles used to meet the needs of modern industrial applications.

In the case of aluminium foams, the porosity, cells size and cells size have significantly effect on the thermophysical properties, where it was found that the effective thermal conductivity (TC) increases with an increase of cell size and relative density of foams. TC decreases with the increasing of porosity when the pore size unchanged and when the aluminium foams having oblate pores. It was noted that the sound absorption of the aluminium with closed cell foam is better than those of the open cell foam. The large contribution of thermal contact resistance (TCR) to the total thermal resistance, this due to a small ratios of contact area to the cross-sectional area.

In the cellular aluminium, the TCR has the large contribution to the total thermal resistance for relatively low compressive loads, this due to the small ratios of contact area to the cross-sectional area. Thermophysical properties of cellular AMMCs reinforced with ceramic particles basically depend on type, size and geometry of dispersions, as well as the reinforcement volume ratio "RVR". It was noticed that an increasing of RVR leads to an increase both porosity and energy absorption capability, and also causes a reducing of relative density and TC. While increasing of reinforcement particles size leads to an enhancement of TC and reducing of both porosity and energy absorption capability. TC can be greater for larger cell size foam. Cell size of the sample foamed increases with increasing particles

concentration at constant foaming temperature and cell wall thickness increases with increasing particles concentration constant foaming temperature. It was found that the spherulites distribution and their size substantially influence the increase of cellular composite material porosity. Thermal, electrical conductivity and their ratio increase in the function of relative density. A larger maximum expansion of composite foams depend on the RVR. The improvement in foam structure of the foams are resulted from the increasing viscosity of Al melt. It was also observed that the syntactic foams had lower CTE compared to the matrix. The syntactic foam demonstrated a higher CTE values at higher temperature. By preheating of the mould, the void density can be reduced by increasing the applied pressure. Furthermore an increased infiltration pressure improves metal infiltration through the salt pattern. In these conditions the void density distribution will be more regular and there is a more effective replication of salt particles with a consequent reduced void circularity.

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