Minimizing Metal Wear in Screw Presses in Palm Oil Mills

Basil Okafor
Department of Mechanical Engineering,
Federal University of Technology, Owerri-Imo State, Nigeria

Abstract: Metal wear has been identified as the main problem facing screw presses used in palm oil mills. The flights of the press screws experience severe wear. In a related research by the author (reported elsewhere), a multiple regression double-log model was developed to predict wear in press screws used in palm oil mills. The model served as best fitting curve for predicting wear in the system. Using the model, optimal operating conditions of press speed and throughput capacity has been established. Wear of flights is reduced to minimum at optimal press speed of 8 rev min^{-1} and 2.8485 E-10 m^{3}/s throughput capacity.

Key words: Model, throughput capacity, press speed, minimum wear, flights

INTRODUCTION

Wear results whenever there is relative motion between moving parts of a machine. The rate at which material is removed depends on many variables. This makes generalization difficult, even in apparently simple cases (Stolarski, 1999). Wear life of power screws is thus difficult to predict. However, once the major influencing variables are specified, a reasonable result can be achieved. A general knowledge of the wear mechanism, some simple design and operating guidelines as well as resorting to life testing will help to get the best result (Kragelsky, 1981).

The prediction models: Figure 1 and 2 show quadratic models which gave best fitting curves for predicting the individual influences on wear in press screw flights by press speed, N and throughput capacity, Q. Figure 3 also shows the double-log model which gave the best fitting curve for predicting the combined influences of press speed and throughput capacity on wear of flights (Okafor, 2007).

Maximum values of press speed (N) and throughput capacity (Q): From the quadratic model of press speed, Y = 5.88751E-11 + (1.0441E-4.10) N - (2.5377E.12) N^{2} Y = I + I_{N} I_{N} N; where I_{N} I_{1} and I_{2} are constants; \( \partial Y \partial N = 11 - 212 N; \partial N^{2} = - 212 = \text{max.} \)

Thus to maximize N; \( \partial Y \partial N = 0 = 11 - 212 N; N = 11/212 = 1.0441 \times 10^{-10} / 2 \times 2.5377E.12 = 20 \text{ rev/min max} \)

From the quadratic model of throughput capacity, Y = -5.0179E.10 + (9.874603E.7) Q + (0.00015041) Q^{2}

\( 1 
\text{e} , Y = 10 + 110Q - 12 Q^{2}; \partial Y \partial Q = 11 - 212 Q; \partial^{2} Y / \partial Q^{2} = -212 = \text{max (Kreyszig, 1985).} \)

MINIMIZING PRESS SPEED, N

To maximize Q; \( \partial Y / \partial Q = 0 = 11 - 212 Q ; Q = 11 / 212 = 9.874603E.7 / (2 \times 0.00015041) = 3.28 \times 10^{-2} \text{ m/s} \)

From the double-log model for predicting the combined influences of press speed, N and throughput capacity.

Fig. 1: Response curve for quadratic model of N, Y = 5.88751E-11 + (1.0441E-4.10) N - (2.5377E.12) N^{2}

Fig. 2: Response curve for quadratic model of Q, Y = -5.0179E.10 + (9.874603E.7) Q + (0.00015041) Q^{2}
capacity, Q on wear of press screw flights, value of press speed to give a minimal influence on wear is determined as follows: 
\[ \ln Y = -37.85916 + (1.99383) \ln N - (1.98366) \ln Q; \]
where Y is wear rate of flight.

Hence \( \ln Y = l_0 + l_1 \ln N - l_2 \ln Q \); where \( l_0, l_1 \), and \( l_2 \) are constants.

\[ Y = \text{EXP} (l_0 + l_1 \ln N - l_2 \ln Q); \text{Let } u = l_1 \ln N \; \frac{\partial Y}{\partial N} = l_1 \]

Then \( \frac{\partial Y}{\partial u} = \text{EXP} (l_0 + u - l_2 \ln Q) \); \( \frac{\partial Y}{\partial N} = \text{EXP} (l_0) \); \( \frac{\partial Y}{\partial u} = \text{EXP} (l_0) \); \( \frac{\partial Y}{\partial N} = \text{EXP} (l_0) \);

\[ \frac{\partial Y}{\partial N} = l_1/N \text{EXP} (l_0); \text{EXP} (l_1 \ln N) = l_1/N \text{EXP} (l_0). \text{EXP} (l_1 \ln N) = l_1/N \text{EXP} (l_0). \]

**Test for minimum:** From \( \frac{\partial Y}{\partial N} = l_1/N \text{EXP} (l_0) \), \( \text{EXP} (l_1 \ln N); \text{let } u = l_1 \ln N, \text{hence } \frac{\partial Y}{\partial N} = l_1/N \]

Then \( \frac{\partial Y}{\partial N} = l_1/N \text{EXP} (l_0) \); \( \text{EXP} (u); \frac{\partial Y}{\partial u} = \partial Y/\partial u = l_1/N \text{EXP} (l_0) \); \( \text{EXP} (u). \)

\[ \frac{\partial Y}{\partial u} = \frac{\partial Y}{\partial N} = \frac{l_1}{N} \text{EXP} (l_0). \text{EXP} (l_1 \ln N) \rightarrow \text{minimum (positive)} (\text{Keith, 1982}). \]

Thus, for minimum value of \( N; \frac{\partial Y}{\partial N} = l_1/N \text{EXP} (l_0). \)

\[ \text{EXP} (l_1 \ln N) = 0 \]

But \( l_1/N = 0 \); hence \( \text{EXP} (l_0) \); \( \text{EXP} (l_1 \ln N) = 0 \)

Taking anti-natural logarithm on both sides; \( l_0 \text{EXP} (2.71828). l_1 \ln N \text{EXP} (2.71828) = 1 \)

\[ 15.154 (l_0) \times 15.154 (l_1 \ln N) = 1, l_0. l_1 \ln N = 0.0043545 \ln(N) = 0.0043545/10.11 = 0.0043545/(-37.85916)(1.99383) = -0.000658; \]

hence \( \ln(N) = -0.000658 ; N = \text{EXP} (-0.000658) = 1 \text{ rev min}^{-1} \text{ minimum}. \)

The above minimum value of press speed is obviously not practically feasible. The derived maximum and minimum values however give a range of values within which values of press speed can be manipulated.

**Considering a 70% reduction in wear rate of the flights:** Design data for the twin screw press taken as a case study: Press Speed, N is 12 rev/min. and Throughput Capacity, Q is 2.21 \times 10^{-3} m^3/s.

From the double-log model, \( \ln(Y) = -37.85916 + (1.99383) \ln N - (1.98366) \ln Q \)

\[ \ln(Y) = -37.85916 + (1.99383) \ln(12) - (1.98366) \ln(2.21 \times 10^{-3}); \text{hence } Y = \text{EXP} (-20.775) = 9.495 \times 10^{-16} \]

For 70% reduction in wear rate, \( Y = 9.495 \times 10^{-16} - (9.495 \times 10^{-15} \times 0.70) = 2.84839 \times 10^{-10} \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}. \)

Using an operational press speed of 10 rev/min. (which is practically convenient and also within the minimum – maximum range of values of N); from the double-log model:

\[ \ln((2.84839 \times 10^{-10} \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}) - 37.85916 + (1.99383) \ln(10) - (1.98366) \ln Q \]

i.e., \(-21.9791 = -37.85916 + 4.59096 - (1.98366) \ln Q \)

\[ \ln Q = (-37.85916 + 4.59096 + 21.9791)/1.98366 = -5.6910; \]

\[ Q = \text{EXP} (-5.6910) = 3.376 \times 10^{-2} \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}. \]

The above value of Q is greater than the maximum feasible throughput capacity value of 3.28 \times 10^2 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}. Thus, it is not possible to reduce wear rate of flights by 70% under the above operating conditions.

There are two possible options; either to reduce:

- Operational speed of the press, or
- Percentage reduction in wear rate

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**Fig. 3:** Response curve for double-log model of N and Q;

\[ \ln Y = -37.85916 + (1.99383) \ln N - (1.98366) \ln Q \]

**Fig. 4:** Functional wear rate of flights

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Choosing a press speed of 8 rev min⁻¹ and with 70% reduction in wear rate of flights:

\[ Y = 9.495 \times 10^{-10} - (9.495 \times 10^{-10} \times 0.70) = 2.8485 \times 10^{-9} \text{ m s}^{-1}; \]

Thus, from the double-log model:

\[ \ln(2.8485 \times 10^{-9}) = -37.85916 + (1.99383) \ln(8) - (1.98366) \ln Q \]

i.e.,

\[ -21.979 = -37.85916 + 4.146 - (1.98366) \ln Q \]

\[ \ln Q = (-37.85916 + 4.146 + 21.979)/1.98366 = 5.91538; Q = \exp(-5.91538) = 2.6976 \times 10^{-2} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}. \]

The above value is less than the maximum feasible throughput capacity value of 3.28 \times 10^{-2} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}. Thus, a 70% reduction in wear rate of flights is practically feasible. This means that under the above operating conditions, the flights will assume a wear rate of \(2.8485 \times 10^{-10} \text{ m s}^{-1}\) after initial wear-in.

Figure 4 shows the wear behaviour of the flights and Fig. 5 shows the reduced wear rate of 3.19032 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m s}^{-1} for the flights, giving about 70% reduction in the wear rate of the flights.

**CONCLUSION**

Operating the press at an optimal condition of 8 rev min⁻¹ and throughput capacity of 2.6976 \times 10^{-2} \text{ m}^2/\text{s} will drastically reduce wear in the system. It is however noted that the above result is not a general case. To achieve the best result, each case must be specifically analyzed based on the prevailing operating conditions.

Then, the above approach can be applied in all cases. It is also worthy to note that increasing the throughput capacity is likely to affect the palm oil extraction efficiency of the system. Thus, a compromise optimal condition must be sought for each particular case.

**REFERENCES**


