



Analysis and Comparison of the Projectile Impact Response of an Electron Beam Melt-Ti64 Body Centered Cubic Lattice-Cored Sandwich Plate

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Abstract

Background One potential application of additively fabricated lattice structures is in the blade containment rings of gas turbine engines. The blade containment rings are expected to be able to absorb the kinetic energy of a released blade (broken blade) in order to protect the engine parts from damaging. Metallic lattice-cored sandwich plates provide a gap (free space) between two face sheets, which helps to arrest the released blade and increases the energy absorption capability of containment rings.

Objective The objective was to investigate numerically the projectile impact response of Body-Centered-Cubic (BCC) Electron-Beam-Melt (EBM) lattice-cored/Ti64 face sheet sandwich plates as compared with that of an equal-mass monolithic EBM-Ti64 plate.

Methods The projectile impact simulations were implemented in LS-DYNA using the previously determined flow stress and damage models and a spherical steel impactor at the velocities ranging from 150 to 500 m s⁻¹. The experimental projectile impact tests on the monolithic plate were performed at two different impact velocities and the results were used to confirm the validity of the used flow stress and damage models for the monolithic plate models.

Results Lower impact stresses were found numerically in the sandwich plate as compared with the monolithic plate at the same impact velocity. The bending and multi-cracking of the struts over a wide area in the sandwich plate increased the energy absorption and resulted in the arrest of the projectile at relatively high velocities. While monolithic plate exhibited a local bent area, resulting in the development of high tensile stresses and the projectile perforations at lower velocities.

Conclusions The numerical impact stresses in the sandwich plate were distributed over a wider area around the projectile, leading to the fracture and bending of many individual struts which significantly increased the resistance to the perforation. Hence, the investigated lattice cell topology and cell, strut, and face sheet sizes and the lattice-cored sandwich plate was shown potentially more successful in stopping the projectiles than the equal-mass monolithic plates.

Keywords Electron beam melt · Ti64 · Body centered cubic lattice · Modelling · The Johnson and Cook flow stress and damage model · Projectile impact

Introduction

Metal additive manufacturing (AM) is a relatively new method for manufacturing intricate metallic parts in a near-net shape, with a reduced number of post processing steps

and needs for labor [1–4]. Currently, two methods of metal additive manufacturing namely Electron-Beam-Melt (EBM) and Selective Laser Melt (SLM) have been widely investigated for the fabrication of bulk metallic parts and lattice structures. Extremely high cooling rates in both processes (10³ to 10⁸ K/s) [5, 6] result in the development of residual stresses [7–9] and local variations in the microstructure, mechanical properties and defects formed [10–12]. Columnar grains, submicron size cellular structures and the texture development are commonly found in the SLM fabricated 316L [5, 13–21] and AlSiMg [22–26] alloys. The formation of a metastable martensitic phase α' is further observed in

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the SLM- and EBM-Ti64 alloys [27–31]), which increases the strength, but reduces the ductility significantly [32]. The common defects detected in the SLM and EBM processed metallic alloys include gas voids [33], lack of fusions [34] and a high surface roughness caused by the partially melt powder particles at the surfaces [35, 36], which deteriorate the strength and ductility [35, 37, 38].

Besides bulk metallic parts, lattice structures, cellular, reticulated structures constructed by repeating a unit cell made from plates, struts and walls, can be fabricated using the AM methods in various types of intricate topologies with tailored mechanical properties [39]. These structures have high specific peak stresses, bending strengths, energy absorptions, and strength-to-weight ratios [40] and can be designed with multifunctional properties, including impact/blast resistance, heat dissipation, and acoustic isolation [41–43]. The potential applications of additively fabricated metallic lattice structures include the heat exchangers of the integrated anti-icing system of airplanes [44, 45] (increases the cost and energy efficiency and reduces the power consumption); in the walls and ribs of satellites (allows a single lattice design with no bonding) [46]; in the orthopedic implants [47] (improves the biocompatibility and alleviates the stress shielding and energy absorbing structures (makes it possible to mimic crushable natural structures) [48].

One other potential application of lattice structures is in the blade containment rings of gas turbine engines. The blade containment rings are expected to be able to absorb the kinetic energy of a released blade (broken blade) in order to protect the engine parts from damaging [49]. The turbine blade impinges on a circular containment ring at a velocity between 150 and 500 m s⁻¹, usually at an elevated temperature. Various containment materials have been previously investigated, including Inconel 718 [50], aluminum alloys [51], stiffened aluminum plates [52], bilayer structures of aluminum foam, titanium and dry Kevlar fabric [53], shear thickening fluid treated high-strength Kevlar 49 plain weave fabrics [54] and metal/dry plain-woven Kevlar 29 fabric multilayer structure [55]. In a recent study, a bilayer containment ring arrangement, composed of an Al foam layer, a backing dry Kevlar fabric layer and a small gap between them has been shown as an effective containment system [53]. The foam layer absorbed large amount of impact energy and Kevlar fabric resisted the penetration and provided flexibility. The gap between the two layers arrested the released blade, increasing the energy absorption capability of the containment ring. Metallic lattice-cored sandwich structures may replace bilayer containment ring arrangement, as they also provide a gap (free space) between two face sheets. The cell topology and shape and the relative density affect the mechanical properties of lattices and the cell topology and shape also determines the deformation mode under compressive loads (bending-dominated or stretching-dominated).

In the present study, the projectile impact response of an additively processed Body-Centered-Cubic (BCC) lattice-cored/Ti64 face sheet sandwich plate was numerically investigated, as compared with that of an equal-mass monolithic EBM-Ti64 plate. The projectile impact test simulations of the monolithic plate and sandwich plate were implemented using the previously determined flow stress and damage models and a spherical steel impactor at the velocities ranging from 150 to 500 m s⁻¹. The experimental projectile impact tests of the monolithic plates performed at two different impact velocities were further used to confirm the validity of the used flow stress and damage models for the monolithic models.

Materials, Tests and Material Models

Materials

Mechanical test specimens were machined from an EBM fabricated Ti64 plate with the size of 200×70×15 mm and the projectile impact test plates had the size of 150×150×2 mm. These plates were fabricated in an Arcam EBM Q20plus device using Ti64 ELI Grade 5 spherical 30–110 μm powder. The EBM process parameters were as the followings: the beam speed was 40.5 m s⁻¹; the hatch depth was 70 μm; the scanning layer thickness was 90 μm; and the temperature was 750 °C. Figures 1(a) and (b) show the pictures of the as-built 200×70×15 mm and 150×150×2 mm plates, respectively. The scanning strategy in these fabricated plates was a rotating one, ±45° in the building direction/in the X–Y plane (see Fig. 1(a) for the directions). A 3D optical micrograph showing the microstructures in the X-, Y- and Z-direction is shown in Fig. 1(c). The grains are seen columnar in the building Z-direction (110–150 μm) while the grains are nearly equiaxed in the X–Y plane. The details of the microstructural analysis of the phases formed during processing are given elsewhere [56]. Briefly, the microstructure is consisted of α' (martensite) and α (hcp) + β (bcc).

Projectile Impact Tests

Projectile impact tests on 150×150×2 mm plates (monolithic plates) were performed using a gas-gun set-up as schematically shown in Fig. 2. The set-up is consisted of a gas gun, a barrel and a frame/support fixture. In a typical test, 150×150×2 mm plate with 100×100 impact area (shown in Fig. 1(b)) was fixed on the frame, and a sabot accommodating a steel projectile (12.7 mm in diameter) was propelled by the release of the pressurized air inside the gas gun. A sabot catcher was used to stop the sabot at the exit of the barrel. The projectile velocities before and

Fig. 1 The pictures and sizes of EBM-Ti64 plates: (a) 15 mm-thick plate used for the mechanical tests and (b) 2 mm-thick projectile impact tested plate and (c) 3D optical micrograph showing the microstructures in the Z- (building direction), Y- and X-direction

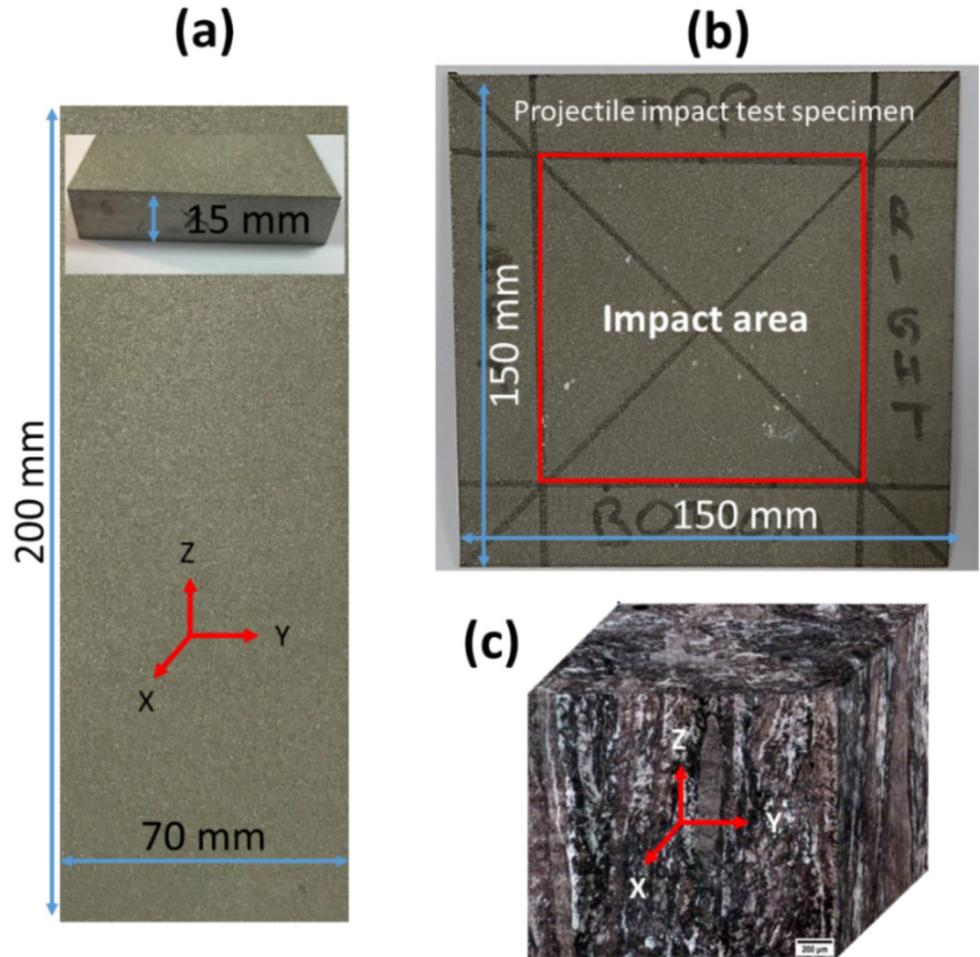
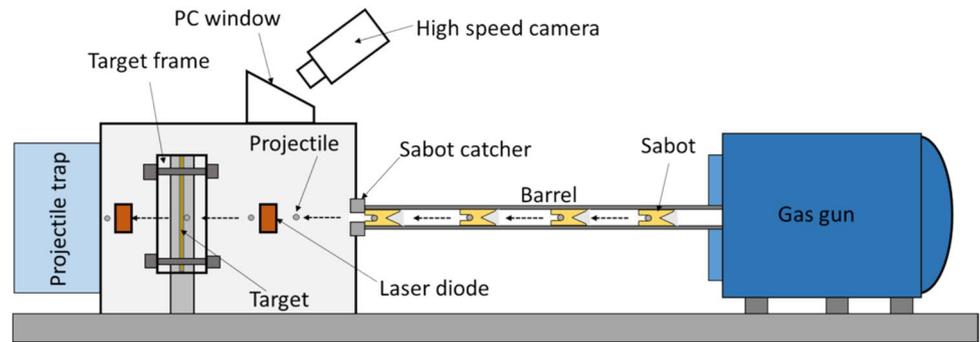


Fig. 2 The schematic of the projectile impact test set-up



after the impact (perforation) were measured using laser velocity sensors. A high-speed Photron SA1.1 FASTCAM camera was used to record the deformation at 20,000 fps. The tests were performed at the projectile impact velocities of 150 and 230 m s^{-1} . A plug was formed at the back of the plates in the case of perforation (230 m s^{-1}). This resulted in an earlier trigger of the laser sensor. In these tests, the high speed camera was used to determine the exit velocity of the projectiles.

Numerical Models of the Projectile Impact Tests

The monolithic plate and BCC lattice-cored sandwich plate projectile impact responses were simulated at the velocities ranging from 150 to 500 m s^{-1} in LS-DYNA. The model geometries of the monolithic plate and BCC lattice-cored sandwich plate with the projectile are shown in Fig. 3. The numerical projectile had a diameter of 12.7 mm, the same as the experiments. In the simulations, the projectile was modelled linear elastic using the constant stress solid elements

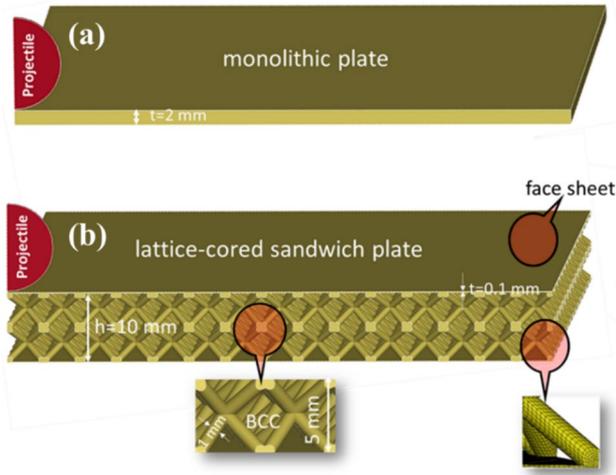


Fig. 3 Quarter models of EBM-Ti64 (a) monolithic plate and (b) lattice-cored sandwich plate

with the following mechanical properties: $E = 210$ GPa, $\rho = 7800$ kg m⁻³ and $\nu = 0.33$ [57]. The monolithic plate and lattice-cored sandwich plate were modelled in quarter with a cross-section of 150 mm. The impact area of both plates and sandwiches was fully constrained, as similar with the monolithic plate projectile impact tests. The thickness of the monolithic plate was 2 mm and the lattice-core structure was 10 mm with a 0.1 mm-thick face sheet at both faces. The BCC core had a strut diameter of 1 mm, a cell size of 5 mm and a relative density of 0.18. The thicknesses of the lattice-cored and the face sheet were selected as such that sandwich and monolithic plate had equal mass. Both plates were modelled with the constant stress solid hexahedral elements and the Flanagan-Belytschko stiffness for hourglass. The contacts in the lattice were AUTOMATIC_SINGLE_SURFACE and the contact between the lattice and projectile was ERODING_SURFACE_TO_SURFACE, as with the contact between monolithic plate and projectile. A mesh sensitivity analysis was performed in the projectile impact test models of the monolithic plate at the impact velocity of 230 m s⁻¹ using 0.25, 0.4, 0.6 and 0.8 mm mesh sizes.

Monolithic and sandwich plates were modelled using the Johnson–Cook (JC) flow stress and damage models (MAT15

in LS-DYNA). The flow stress σ_y in the JC flow stress model is [58]

$$\sigma_y = \left(A + B\epsilon_{ep}^n \right) \left[1 + c \ln(\dot{\epsilon}^*) \right] \left[1 - (T^*)^m \right] \quad (1)$$

where, A , B , n , c , and m are sequentially the yield stress, hardening modulus, strain hardening coefficient, strain rate sensitivity, and thermal softening parameters, $\dot{\epsilon}^* = \left(\frac{\dot{\epsilon}_{ep}}{\dot{\epsilon}_0} \right)$; where ϵ_{ep} , $\dot{\epsilon}_{ep}$ and $\dot{\epsilon}_0$ are sequentially the equivalent plastic strain, strain rate and reference strain rate; $T^* = \left(\frac{T - T_r}{T_m - T_r} \right)$; where T is the temperature, T_m is the melting temperature, and T_r is the reference or room temperature. The plastic strain at fracture (ϵ_{pf}) in the JC damage model is [59]

$$\epsilon_{pf} = \left[D_1 + D_2 e^{D_3 \sigma^*} \right] \left[1 + D_4 \ln(\dot{\epsilon}^*) \right] \left[1 + D_5 T^* \right] \quad (2)$$

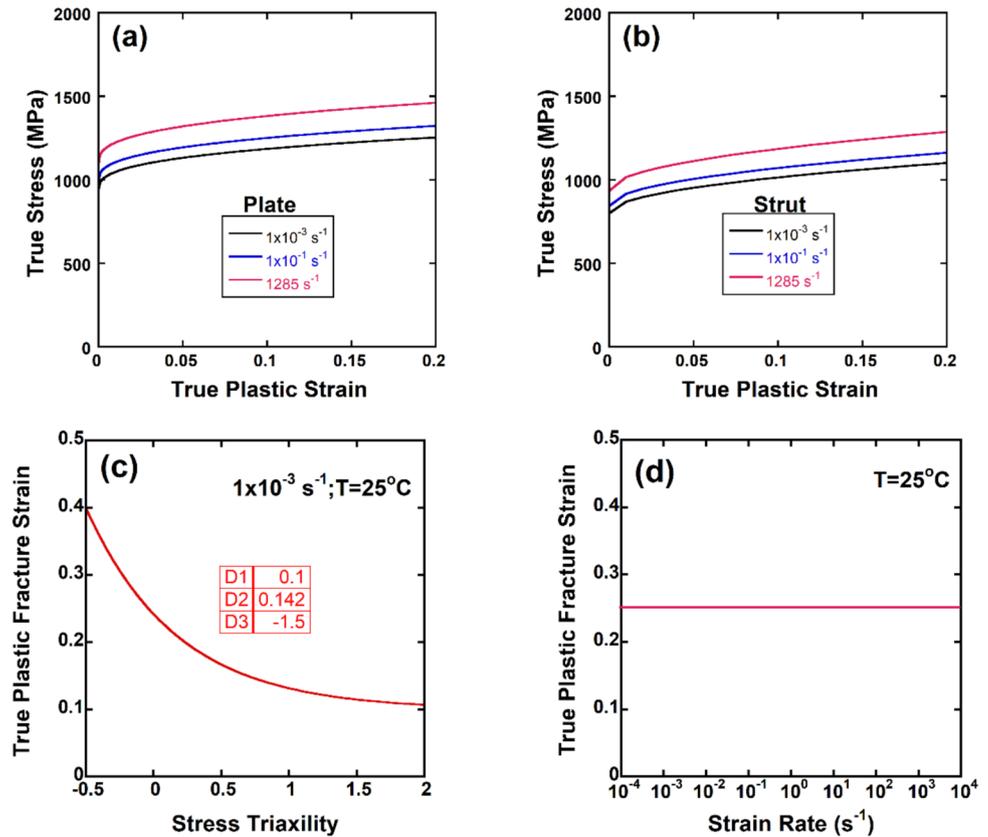
where, D_1 – D_5 are the parameters determined experimentally and σ^* is the stress triaxiality, which is $\frac{\sigma_n}{\sigma_e}$; where σ_n is the hydrostatic stress and σ_e is the equivalent stress.

In a previous study [56], the JC flow stress (A , B , n and c) and damage model (D_1 – D_5) parameters of the investigated EBM-Ti64 monolithic plate were determined using the quasi-static and high strain rate tension tests on the machined standard tension test specimens and a strut based micro compression test was used to determine the lattice material flow stress parameters. The determined flow stress and damage model parameters of both monolithic plate and strut are tabulated in Table 1. A thermal softening parameter of $m = 1$ was used in the models [60, 61]. Although the damage model parameters of the monolithic plate and strut were shown similar through modelling, the JC flow stresses of struts were found to be lower than those of the machined bulk tension specimens [56] (see Figs. 4(a) and (b)). Some what a similar result was reported in a previous study [62]. The surface machining increased the flow stresses of an as-built EBM-Ti64 by 85–95 MPa without altering the failure strains. In another study, tensile tests were performed on small size diameter (0.81 mm) and standard size diameter (8.8 mm) SML-316 test specimens and it was shown that small-diameter samples exhibited ~200 MPa lower flow stresses [63]. This was ascribed to the variations between the microstructures of mini- and standard-specimens due to the involvement of different thermal gradients and

Table 1 The determined flow stress and damage model parameters of plate and strut [56]

	A (MPa)	B (MPa)	n	c	m	T_m (°C)	ρ (kg m ⁻³)	ν	E (GPa)
Plate	937	556	0.35	0.012	1	1653	4350	0.3	117
Strut	800	663	0.49	0.012	1	1653	4350	0.3	117
	D_1	D_2	D_3	D_4	D_5	$\dot{\epsilon}_0$ (s ⁻¹)			
Plate	0.1	0.142	-1.5	0	0	0.001			
Strut	0.1	0.142	-1.5	0	0	0.001			

Fig. 4 The JC flow stress model true stress-true plastic strain curves (a) the plate and (b) strut and the fracture strain variation with (c) stress triaxiality and (d) strain rate (redrawn from [56])



temperature histories during manufacturing. The plate flow stress parameters listed in Table 1 were used to model the projectile impact tests of the investigated EBM-Ti64 plates and the strut flow stress parameters were used to model the projectile impact test models of the investigated lattice-cored sandwich plates in the present study. The equivalent true plastic fracture strain variation with the stress triaxiality is shown in Fig. 4(c). Although the fracture strain exhibits a notch sensitivity, no trend in the fracture strain is seen with strain rate (Fig. 4(d)). Note also that high strain rate tests are near adiabatic, which means that the specimen is heated during deformation. It was stated that the values D_4 and D_5 were coupled and both values approached zero [56]. As the LS-DYNA MAT15 [64] takes into account the adiabatic heating through the internal energy and heat capacity (specific heat capacity = $520 \text{ kJ kg}^{-1} \text{ }^\circ\text{C}^{-1}$ [65]), the heating effect during projectile impact was included in the simulations.

The validity of determined damage model parameters was shown previously through the quasi-static compression testing of $4 \times 4 \times 4$ EBM-Ti64 BCC lattices having a 10 mm cell size and a 2 mm strut size [56]. The use of plate flow stress model parameters together with the plate damage model parameters resulted in higher numerical initial crushing stresses than that of experiments, on the other side, the use of the strut flow stress model with the plate damage model predicted similar crushing stresses and strut crushing

behavior with the experiments. Therefore, the projectile impact models of the sandwich plates were implemented using the strut flow stress model.

Results and Discussion

The projectile velocity versus time curves of the projectile impact models of the monolithic plate at the impact velocity of 230 m s^{-1} using different mesh sizes are shown in Fig. 5. Although the projectile perforates the monolithic plate in all models, the mesh size significantly alters the projectile exit times and velocities. Decreasing mesh size from 0.8 mm to 0.25 mm, as seen in Fig. 5, increases the exit velocity from 83 m s^{-1} to 110 m s^{-1} and decreases the exit time from 105 μs to 85 μs . The reduction of mesh size from 0.4 mm to 0.25 mm, on the other side, changes the exit time and velocity slightly, 0.1%. A mesh convergence at nearly 0.4 mm is therefore determined after the analysis while the models were continued using the 0.25 mm mesh size due to relatively small strut diameter, 1 mm, used in the lattice.

The final deformed pictures of monolithic plates after the impact at different projectile velocities are shown in Fig. 6. The projectile bends the plate at the mid-section and forms an indent/cracks at the front surface of the plate without penetration/perforation at 150 m s^{-1} . The projectile, however,

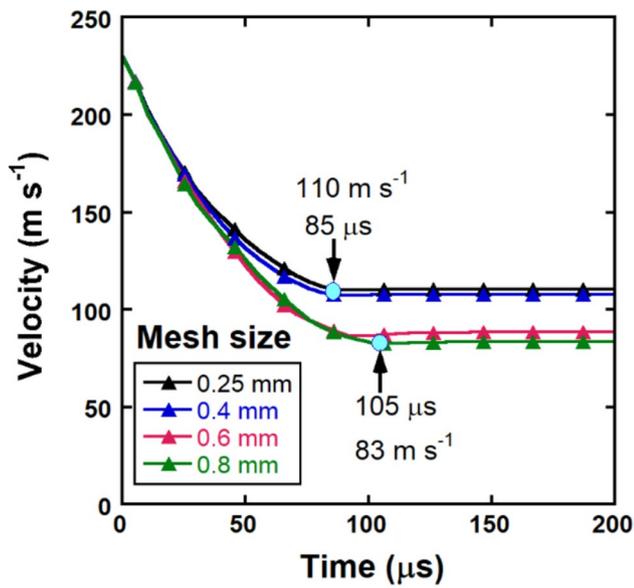


Fig. 5 The numerical projectile velocity versus time of the projectile impact test of EBM- Ti64 monolithic plate at 230 m s⁻¹

perforates the plate at 230, 300, 400 and 500 m s⁻¹, cracking the plate in few pieces at the impact location after the perforation.

Figures 7(a) and (b) show the numerical and experimental deformation time histories of the monolithic plate at 150 and 230 m s⁻¹. At the lowest projectile velocity of 150 m s⁻¹, the projectile induces a small crack at the impact location of the plate numerically while no visible damage is seen experimentally at the impact surface but a small crack propagating at the back side of the plate is observed (see Fig. 7(a), the last picture). At this velocity, the projectile is bounced back after the impact both numerically and experimentally (Fig. 7(a)). When the velocity increases to 230 m s⁻¹, the projectile perforates the plate both numerically and experimentally as seen in Fig. 7(b). After the perforation (at 500 μs), a cracked section (hole) around the impact location is formed, the size of which is very similar to the diameter of the projectile both numerically and experimentally (Fig. 7(b)). Above comparison between the model and experiments shows that the used flow stress and damage model parameters nearly predict the projectile impact

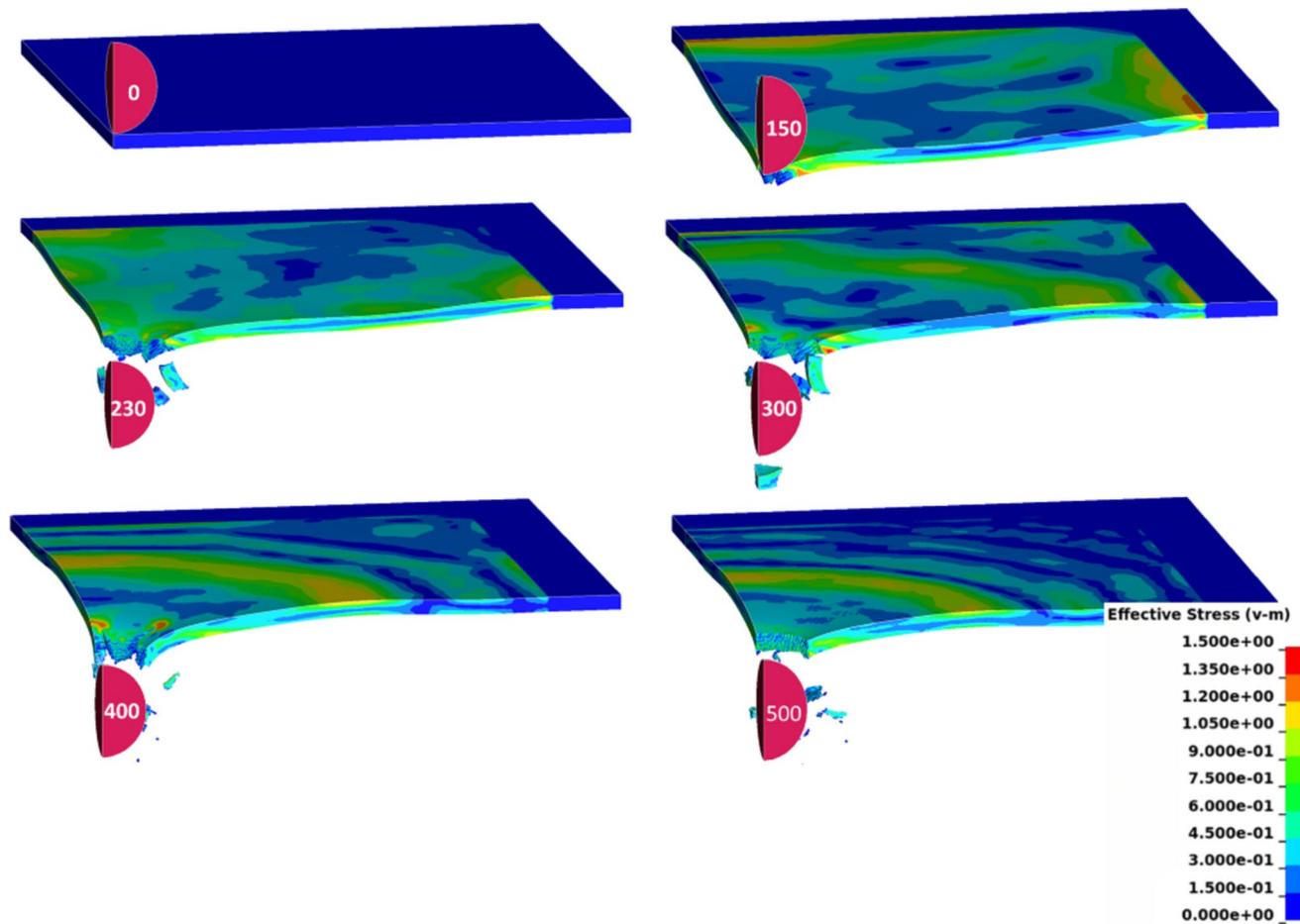


Fig. 6 The numerical final deformation pictures of EBM-Ti64 monolithic plate at different impact velocities (numbers show the initial projectile velocity)

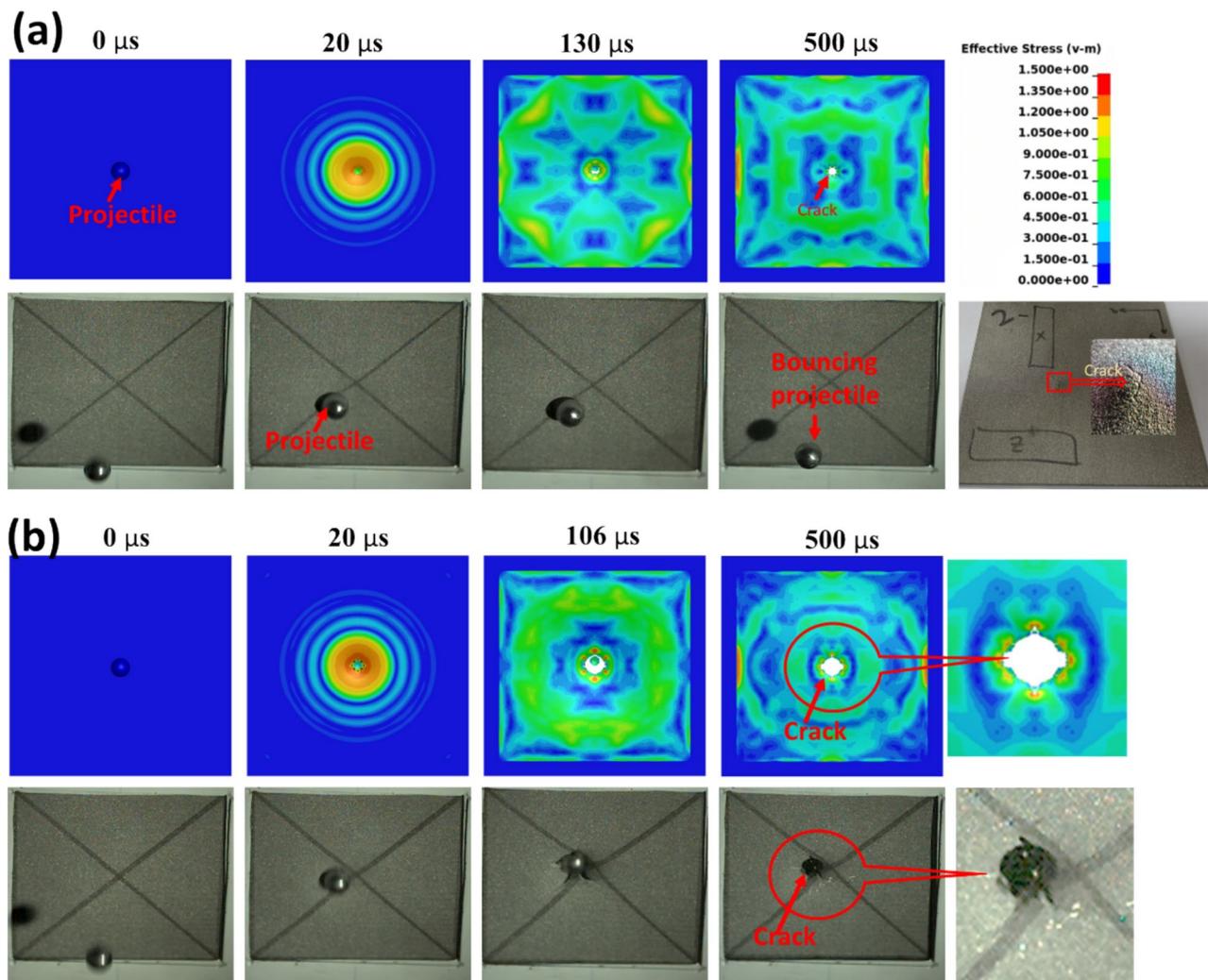


Fig. 7 The projectile impact numerical and experimental deformation pictures of monolithic plate at different times at the impact velocities of (a) 150 m s^{-1} and (b) 230 m s^{-1}

damage formation at two different velocities in EBM-Ti64 monolithic plates. The numerical cracking of the plate at the impacted side and experimental no surface cracking but back surface cracking at 150 m s^{-1} are ascribed to the anisotropic behavior of the EBM-Ti64 monolithic plate, which may be slightly stronger and more brittle in the Z-direction. The exit velocity was measured 107 m s^{-1} in the experiment while 110 m s^{-1} in the model. This result concludes a slightly more brittle behavior of the experimental plate. Since the main aim of the present study is to investigate the projectile impact response of the lattice-cored sandwich plate as compared with that of an equal-mass monolithic plate, this discrepancy between the model and experiment is omitted.

The final deformed pictures of the EBM-Ti64 lattice-cored sandwich plates after the projectile impact at different impact velocities are shown in Fig. 8. As seen in the same figure, the projectile penetrates the lattice core until

about 400 m s^{-1} without perforation. The perforation of the projectile starts after about above 400 m s^{-1} and EBM-Ti64 lattice-cored sandwich plate is perforated at both 450 and 500 m s^{-1} impact velocities as seen in Fig. 8. The deformation in the sandwich plate proceeds with face sheet deformation/cracking and strut bending and fracture locally as also seen in the same figure.

Figure 9 shows the numerical deformation history pictures of monolithic plate and sandwich plate at 450 m s^{-1} velocity, at which both plates are perforated. One clear difference in the deformation behavior between monolithic plate and lattice-cored sandwich, as seen in the same figure, is that the monolithic plate exhibits a local bent area at this velocity while almost no global bending is seen in the lattice-cored sandwich plate. The local bending leads to the development of high tensile, compression and shear stresses through the thickness of the plate. The high tensile

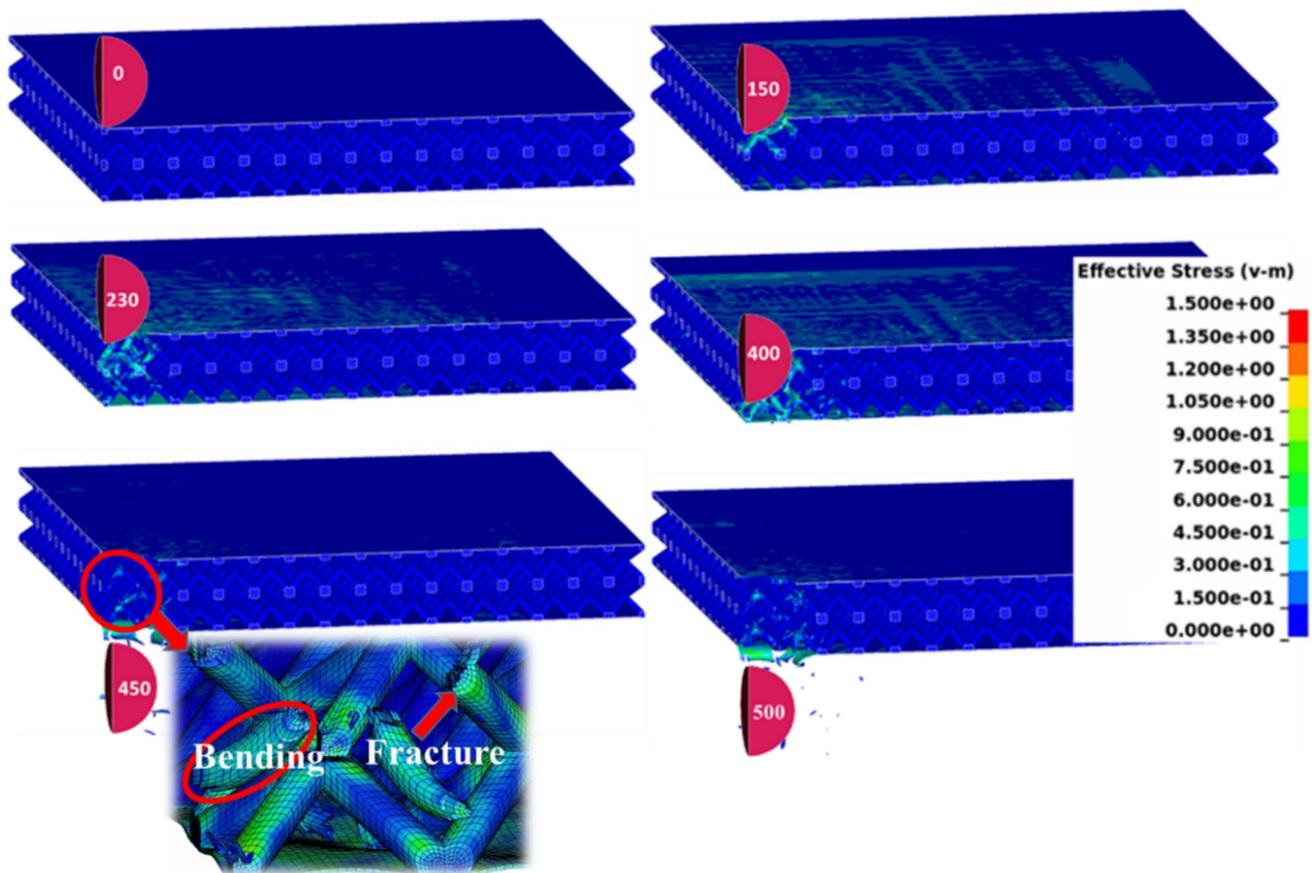


Fig. 8 The numerical final deformation pictures of EBM-Ti64 lattice-cored sandwich plate at different impact velocities (numbers show the initial projectile velocity)

stresses at the distal end of the plate, as marked by the filled arrows in Fig. 10, develops tension cracks at distal end. As stated earlier, the deformation of the sandwich plate however proceeds mainly with the bending and fracture of individual struts in contact with the projectile. The stresses in the sandwich plate are also distributed to a wider area around the projectile as marked by the open arrows in Fig. 10. This stress distribution delays the perforation in the sandwich plate as compared with the monolithic plate.

The pictures of the numerical deformation history of the sandwich plate and monolithic plate impacted at 400 m s^{-1} are shown in Fig. 11, for a comparison. The projectile velocity versus time curves of monolithic plate and lattice-core sandwich plate are further shown in Figs. 12(a) and (b), respectively. The sandwich plate arrests the projectile at about $60 \mu\text{s}$ at 400 m s^{-1} (Fig. 12(b)) while the monolithic plate is perforated by the projectile (Fig. 12(a)). Until about $60 \mu\text{s}$ arrest time, the sequences of sandwich core deformation are clearly seen in Fig. 11. The impact of projectile initially deforms/fractures the face sheet after $5 \mu\text{s}$, at the same time, the struts underneath the projectile are stressed and few are also cracked locally. As the projectile penetrates the

sandwich plate ($15 \mu\text{s}$), the stress is transferred to the horizontal and vertical struts. As compared with the monolithic plate, the maximum effective stress in the sandwich plate is much lower as seen in Fig. 11. The bending and fracture of many struts at the impact location are seen at $40 \mu\text{s}$ and the fracture/cracking of struts occurs both at the nodal points and along the strut length. This bending and multi-cracking feature of the sandwich plate increase the energy absorption and result in the arrest of the projectile. As seen in Fig. 12, the projectile exit velocity increases and exit time decreases as the initial projectile velocity increases. The velocity of the projectile in the sandwich plate seen in Fig. 12(b) quickly declines to zero in $50 - 100 \mu\text{s}$ after the impact at the impact velocities between 150 and 400 m s^{-1} .

The present study shows that the numerical perforation resistance of lattice-cored sandwich plate increased as compared with the monolithic plate. A simple lattice structure of BCC was selected for the present study with a relative density of 0.18, a strut diameter of 1 mm and a unit cell of 5 mm. The use of more complex lattice structures with direction dependent mechanical properties may however result in different results. Few lattices also show

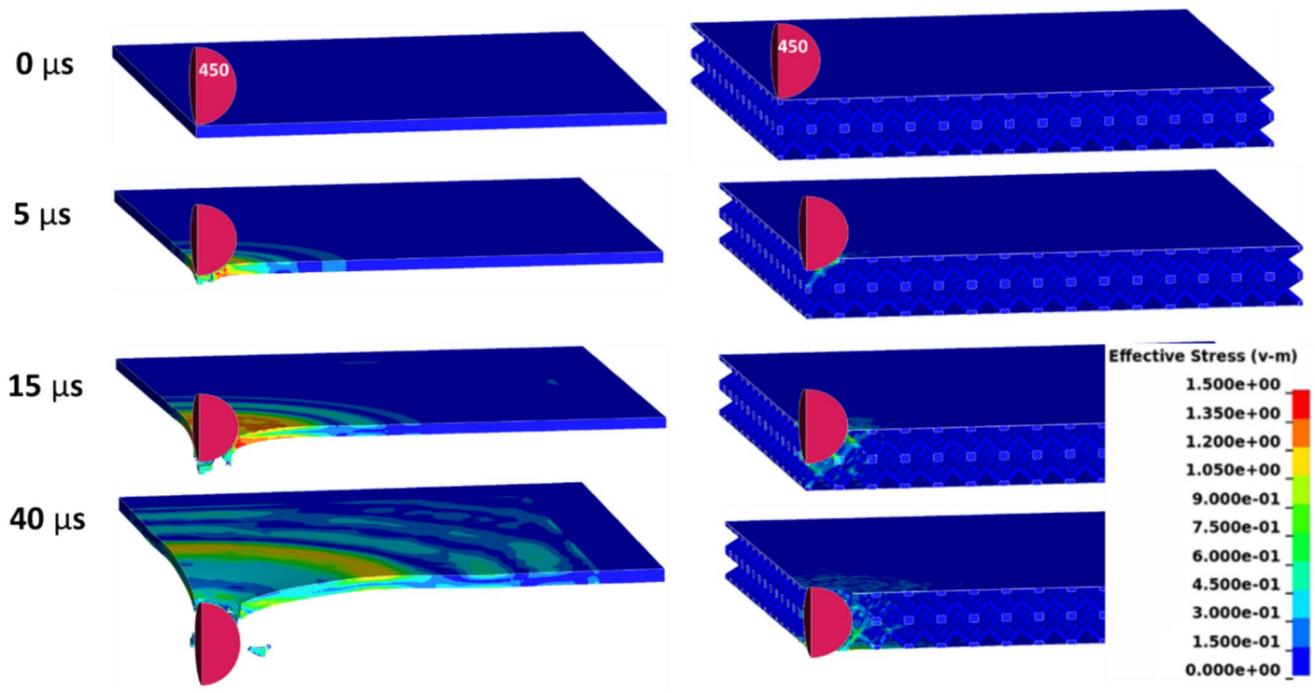
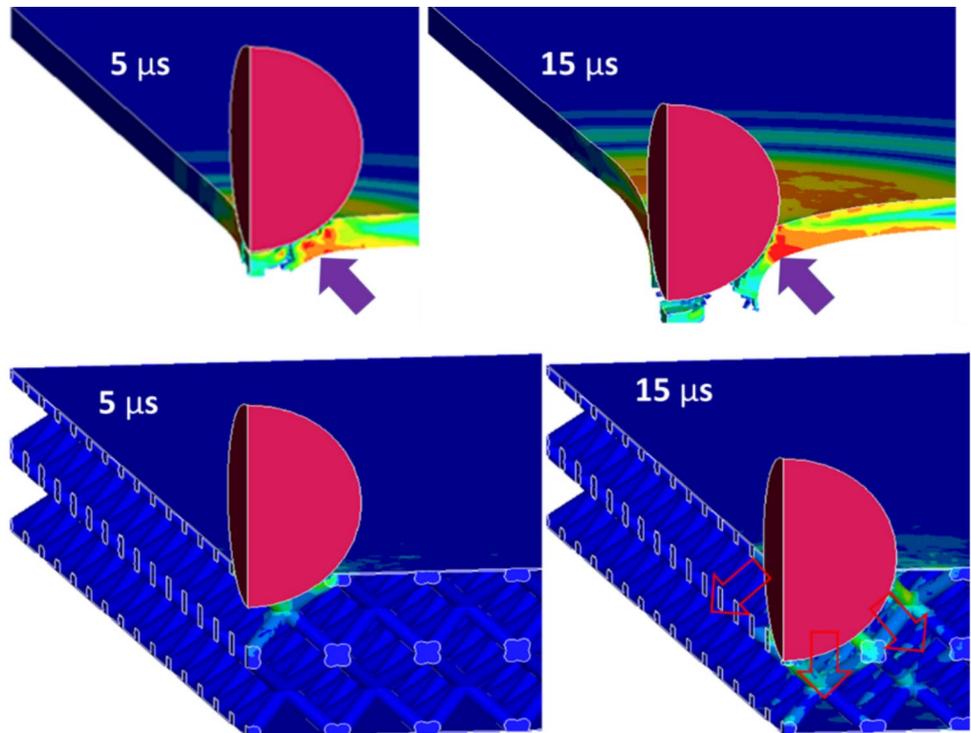


Fig. 9 The numerical deformation pictures of monolithic plate and sandwich plate at 450 m s^{-1}

Fig. 10 The magnified numerical deformation pictures of monolithic plate and sandwich plate at 5 and 15 μs (450 m s^{-1})



a stretching-dominated deformation in which the strength increases significantly over the bending-dominated lattices. The Maxwell criterion [66] is further used for the classification either as bending-dominated or stretching-dominated

$$M = b - 3j + 6 \tag{3}$$

where b is the number of struts and j is the number of joints. The value of M is less than zero for bending-dominated and

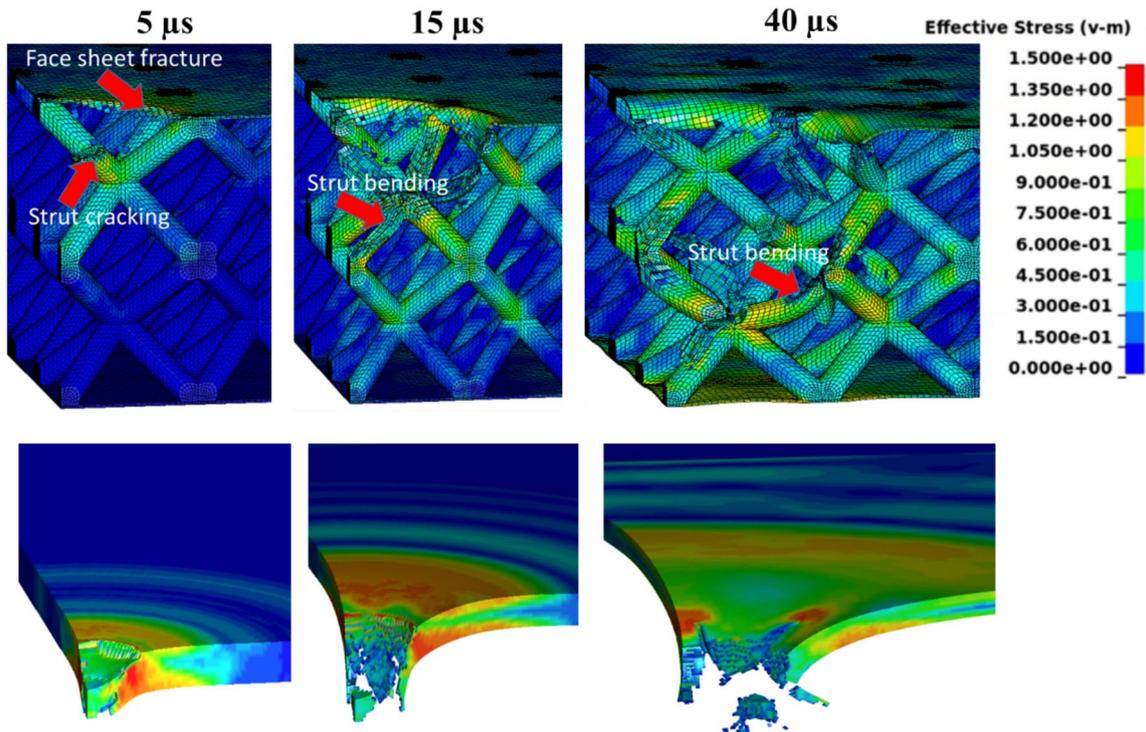
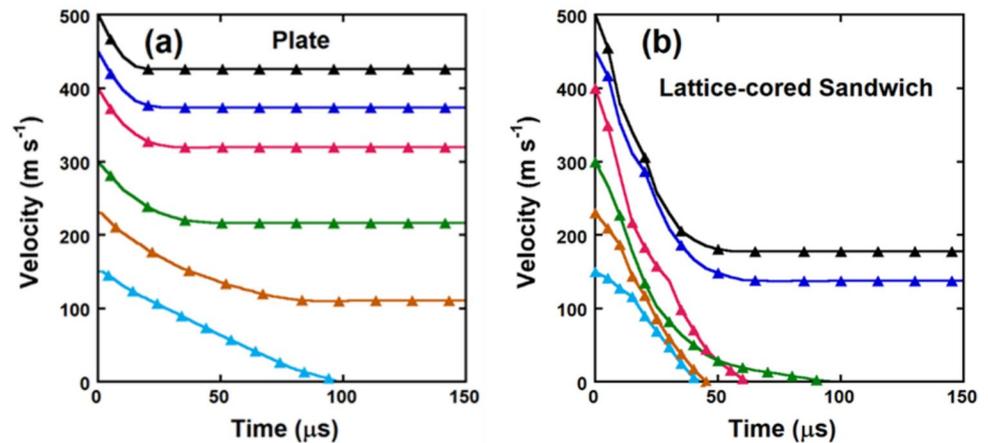


Fig. 11 The deformation of sandwich plate and monolithic plate at 5, 15 and 40 μs (400 m s^{-1})

Fig. 12 The projectile velocity versus time curves of (a) monolithic plate and (b) lattice-cored sandwich plate



either zero or greater than zero for stretching-dominated deformation. The criterion in terms of cell connectivity (Z) is the following: if the number of connectivity is less than 12, the deformation is bending-dominated, and if the number is equal to or higher than 12, it is stretching-dominated [67]. The BCC lattice with 8 connectivity; therefore, is bending-dominated while the FCC lattice with 12 connectivity is stretching-dominated. Further studies will focus on the use of stretching-dominated lattice structures with varying cell size and strut diameter and length.

The processing of 0.1 mm thick face sheets additively is a challenge using the currently available additive machines.

One possible way is to braze the conventionally produced thin face sheets to the additively processed BCC cores. However, brazing at an elevated temperature may induce thermal warpage on the face sheets and core. Another option is to fabricate the sandwich plates with thicker face sheets and then reduce the thickness of face sheets through machining. Both will be investigated as future studies. Furthermore, the sandwich face sheets were modelled using the strut model. In real applications, a separate material model for the face sheets may be needed in order to increase the fidelity of the numerical approach used here.

Conclusion

In the present study, the projectile impact response of equal-mass EBM-Ti64 monolithic plate and BCC lattice-cored sandwich plate were numerically investigated and compared. The impact models were simulated using the previously determined JC flow stress and damage models. The experimental projectile impact tests of monolithic plates confirmed the validity of the used material models. The results showed that the lattice-cored sandwich plate was more effective in stopping the projectiles than the monolithic plates for the studied lattice cell topology and cell, strut and face sheet size. The tensile stresses formed at the back side of monolithic plates resulted in the cracking of the plate at relatively low velocities. The impact stresses in the sandwich plate were however found to be distributed over a wider area around the projectile, leading to the fracture and bending of many individual struts which significantly increased the resistance to the perforation.

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Data Availability The raw/processed data required to reproduce these findings cannot be shared at this time as the data also forms part of an ongoing study.

Declarations

Conflicts of Interest The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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