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# Sustainable machining of CFRP: Evaluation of tool wear and surface quality under variable cutting conditions

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Mustafa, Aisyah Madihah ; Halim, Nor Farah Huda Abd ; Mahad, Maisarah Abdul ; Dahnel, Aishah Najiah ; Ali, Afifah Mohd. ; +1 author

Department of Manufacturing and Materials Engineering, Kulliyyah of Engineering, International Islamic University Malaysia, Jalan Gombak, Gombak, 53100, Malaysia

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## Abstract

CFRP is extensively utilized in aerospace and automotive industries for its exceptional strength-to-weight ratio, which contributes significantly to structural weight reduction and improved fuel efficiency. However, its anisotropic and heterogeneous structure imposes significant challenges during machining. The abrasive nature of carbon fibers accelerates tool wear, especially at high cutting speeds, resulting in tool degradation such as edge rounding and flank wear. Moreover, machining above the polymer matrix's glass transition temperature ($T_g$) worsens surface defects such as matrix smearing and fiber pull-out due to thermal softening. This study systematically investigates the influence of cutting speeds, $V_c$ (130 and 170 m/min) and cutting conditions (dry and chilled air) on tool wear progression and surface roughness during milling of CFRP using uncoated tungsten carbide tools. The highest tool wear (110 µm) was recorded during milling with $V_c$ = 170

m/min under chilled air condition, which is 25.5% higher than dry condition in similar cutting speed. This is primarily attributed to thermal fatigue induced by cyclic heating and cooling at the tool-workpiece interface. Conversely, dry machining produced the highest areal surface roughness (Sa = 5.015 µm), which is 27% higher than chilled air, due to excessive frictional heat. These findings underscore the critical role of optimized cutting parameters and cooling strategies in mitigating tool wear and enhancing surface quality during CFRP machining. © 2026, Malaysian Tribology Society (Mytribos). All rights reserved.

## Author keywords

Abrasion; CFRP; Surface roughness; Tool wear

## Corresponding authors

| | |
|---|---|
| Corresponding author | N.F.H.A. Halim |
| Affiliation | Department of Manufacturing and Materials Engineering, Kulliyyah of Engineering, International Islamic University Malaysia, Jalan Gombak, Gombak, 53100, Malaysia |
| Email address | farahudahalim@iium.edu.my |

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