Artificial neural networks application for modeling of friction stir welding effects on mechanical properties of 7075-T6 aluminum alloy

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Abstract. Friction stir welding (FSW) is a relatively new solid-state joining technique that is widely adopted in manufacturing and industry fields to join different metallic alloys that are hard to weld by conventional fusion welding. Friction stir welding is a very complex process comprising several highly coupled physical phenomena. The complex geometry of some kinds of joints makes it difficult to develop an overall governing equations system for theoretical behavior analyse of the friction stir welded joints. Weld quality is predominantly affected by welding effective parameters, and the experiments are often time consuming and costly. On the other hand, employing artificial intelligence (AI) systems such as artificial neural networks (ANNs) as an efficient approach to solve the science and engineering problems is considerable. In present study modeling of FSW effective parameters by ANNs is investigated. To train the networks, experimental test results on thirty AA-7075-T6 specimens are considered, and the networks are developed based on back propagation (BP) algorithm. ANNs testing are carried out using different experimental data that they are not used during networks training. In this paper, rotational speed of tool, welding speed, axial force, shoulder diameter, pin diameter and tool hardness are regarded as inputs of the ANNs. Yield strength, tensile strength, notch-tensile strength and hardness of welding zone are gathered as outputs of neural networks. According to the obtained results, predicted values for the hardness of welding zone, yield strength, tensile strength and notch-tensile strength have the least mean relative error (MRE), respectively. Comparison of the predicted and the experimental results confirms that the networks are adjusted carefully, and the ANN can be used for modeling of FSW effective parameters.

1. Introduction
The AA7075-T6 aluminum alloy is one of the strongest nonferrous metals, used in various industries nowadays. High strength-to-weight ratio and its property of natural aging have led to the ever-growing use of this aluminum alloy in aerospace and high-tech industries.

7XXX series aluminum alloys are typically composed of zinc (Zn), magnesium (Mg), and copper (Cu) elements combined with aluminum (Al) as the predominant metal. The superior strength of this aluminum alloy is due to the presence of the above-mentioned alloying elements [1]. The existence of these elements in the composition of this aluminum alloy has led to the formation of Al2CuMg and Mg2Zn phases in the final structure. The reason for overall strength of this structure is existence of...
such phases [2]. The simultaneous appearance of copper and zinc increases strength, but also reduces the weld ability of this structure.

There are many articles that investigate AA7075 behavior in different conditions. Much of these articles are the studies about the investigation of mechanical properties, metallurgical properties, how to the crack growth, fatigue behavior, fatigue life and its increasing methods [3-7]. Majzoobi, et al. [8-10] surveyed the fretting fatigue behavior of Al7075-T6 considering the effects of coating and temperature in their work.

Due to having the aforementioned elements (Zn, Cu, Mg and Al) in their structure, 7XXX series aluminum alloys are highly sensitive to heat cracking in the freezing process and also to liquation cracking in the heat affected area [1, 2]. Moreover, the probability of zinc oxidation or evaporation during fusion welding of these alloy types, can be the main reason of serious problems, such as porosity or partial melting [11]. Low boiling temperatures of some elements in the structure, namely zinc and magnesium, often cause numerous problems in laser beam welding [12, 13].

Friction stir welding (FSW) is one of the non-fusion techniques of welding which has eliminated many of the defects associated with fusion welding techniques in aluminum alloy joints. In the process of friction stir welding, a tool creates frictional heat by moving along the joint line of two plates and rotating, simultaneously. It eventually creates a joint from the plasticized material. The process of welding by the FSW technique has various effective parameters including welding speed, rotational speed and axial force of the tool, tool hardness, and sizes of pin and shoulder.

Many experimental works have been done to study the usage of FSW on AA7075-T6 and investigate its parameters and characteristics. These works have survived the effect of welding parameters on microstructure, thermal, mechanical and metallurgical properties of AA7075-T6 welded joints in various conditions [14-19]. Azimzadegan, et al. [20] have investigated the effects of high rotational speeds. Rajakumar, et al. [21] and DebRoy, et al. [22] have studied the effect of tool in friction stir welded joints. Bahrami, et al. [23] have explored this process on AA7075-T6 in nano-scale.

In the case of modeling and simulation of FSW process, it can be noted to applications of numerical methods and the heuristic algorithms, which are the most-used methods in simulating and optimizing this process. The finite element method (FEM) as the most common numerical method and the simulated annealing (SA) algorithms and artificial neural networks (ANN) as heuristic algorithms have been widely employed in the simulation of FSW process. Fratini, et al. [24-26] havw provided the FEM models of FSW in their studies. He, et al. [27] have reviewed the numerical analysis of friction stir welding in their work.

Some works have employed heuristic algorithms for simulation of FSW; Babajanzade Roshan, et al. [28] have used the adaptive neural fuzzy inference system (ANFIS) models and SA algorithm to optimize friction stir welding process of AA7075 and achieve desirable mechanical properties. As mentioned, the ANNs have also been used in predicting and obtaining optimum parameters in the process of friction stir welding. Specifically, in the context of employing the artificial neural networks in predicting and optimizing the FSW process, in addition to how the network trained, the main difference is in the inputs and outputs of neural network that they have been regarded to training networks. Okuyuca, et al. [29] have evaluated the ability of neural networks in predicting the parameters of friction stir welding for aluminum plates. In their study, they took the parameters of welding speed and rotational speed of the tool as network inputs, and the parameters of yield strength, ultimate length variation of specimens, and ultimate strength of the weld as network outputs. Eventually, the results of their work showed an acceptable correspondence between the results of the neural network and those of experimental tests. In a similar study, Shojaeefard, et al. [30] have predicted the mechanical properties of non-cognate friction stir welding on AA5083 and AA7075 aluminum alloys. In their study, they used the speeds of welding and tool rotation as the inputs of the neural network and the final mechanical and metallurgical properties of the weld as the outputs of the neural network. In the end, the results of their work, likewise, showed proper abilities of neural networks for predicting the parameters of FSW process. Similarly, Yousif, et al. [31] have regarded
the welding speed and rotational speed as inputs and the tensile strength, yield strength and elongation as outputs in simulation of the FSW parameters on aluminum alloy plates. Lakshminarayanan, et al. [32] gathered the welding speed, rotational speed and axial force as inputs and tensile strength as an output to survey the FSW on AA7039. Ghetiya, et al. [33] have considered tool shoulder diameter, welding speed, rotational speed, and axial force as inputs whereas the output of their modeling is the tensile strength of AA8014 welded joint. For better comparison, the used inputs and outputs of aforementioned studies about ANN application (references [29-33]) have been shown in table 1.

Table 1. The used inputs and outputs of previous works [29-33].

| Reference No. | Inputs                                      | Outputs                  |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 29            | Welding speed, Rotational speed              | Yield strength, Length variation |
| 30            | Welding speed, Rotational speed              | Tensile shear force, hardness |
| 31            | Welding speed, Rotational speed              | Tensile strength, Yield strength, Elongation |
| 32            | Welding speed, Rotational speed, Axial force | Tensile strength         |
| 33            | Welding speed, Rotational speed, Axial force, tool shoulder diameter | Tensile strength |

As the table 1 illustrates, the authors have regarded 2-4 inputs and 1-3 outputs in their works, while the influential parameters of friction stir welding are much more; among which tool hardness and tool pin diameter can be mentioned as inputs. Similarly, the notch-tensile strength can be considered as output. Although using fewer parameters makes the network training process faster and gives more accurate answers, it simultaneously makes the neural network responses more unrealistic in examining parameters of friction stir welding. Accordingly, this study tries not to ignore any of the influential parameters of the process, while lowering the error of network answers to its minimum by applying correct and proper values for neural networks structures. In this paper, six parameters including: welding speed, rotational speed of tool, axial force, shoulder diameter, pin diameter and tool hardness regarded as inputs of the ANN. Furthermore, four parameters including: yield strength, tensile strength, notch-tensile strength and hardness of welding zone gathered as outputs of ANN.

Figure 1. A Schematic of FSW.

2. Friction stir welding
Friction stir welding was invented by England’s The Welding Institute (TWI) in 1991 [34]. Figure 1
shows the tools sample and a piece being welded by FSW.

In the process of friction stir welding, a tool creates frictional heat by moving along the joint line of two plates and rotating simultaneously and eventually creates a joint from the plasticized material [35].

As figure 1 demonstrates, the process of welding by the FSW technique has various effective parameters. These parameters are including the welding speed, rotational speed and axial force of the tool, tool hardness and sizes of pin and shoulder. Defects in the joints created by this technique are due to behavior of the material when it flows under welding. The material flow is in turn under the influence of the mechanical properties of the material and the tool, and the effective parameters of friction stir welding. Using friction stir welding eliminates the difficulties of fusion welding and also reduces residual stress and distortion created in the welding process [36, 37]. Table 2 presents the effective parameters in the process of friction stir welding and their mechanisms of influence.

Table 2. Parameters of friction stir welding and their influence mechanisms.

| Welding Parameter | Influence Mechanism |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Welding Speed     | As the welding speed increases, higher work hardening is done on the joint area. |
| Rotational Speed  | An increase in the rotational speed, increases the created heat and the intensity of stir. |
| Axial Force       | Based on the equation \( f = \mu k F_n \), as the axial force increases, friction increases as well, and consequently, the created heat is increased. |
| Tool Hardness     | As the tool hardness increases, the friction coefficient between the tool and the material is increased. According to the equation \( f = \mu k F_n \), this leads to an increase in the created friction and heat. |
| Tool Geometry     | An increase in the size of pin and shoulder, increases the contact area between tool and material. As a result, friction and heat are increased while the tool is rotating. |

Investigation of welding zone and its surrounding microstructure areas demonstrate that the FSW process in welding zone affects its near areas. Figure 2 shows the typical friction stir weld in its cross-section, consisting of four main zones [38]:

- **Weld Nugget (WN):** stirring zone by pin rotation, fully recrystallized area.
- **Heat Affect Zone (HAZ):** material zone which is close to welding area, have a thermal effect but no plastic deformation.
- **Thermo-mechanically Affected Zone (TMAZ):** transition zone between HAZ and WN that have plastic deformation without recrystallization and thermal effect (It is usually difficult to distinguish the precise boundary between TMAZ and nugget).
- **Base material (BM):** the material zone that is remote from the welding area. It nearly keeps the original microstructure and mechanical properties.
Studying the influence mechanisms of the parameters, one can conclude that an increase in any of the parameters enhances the flow of material as a result of the heat increase. However, since other factors, such as the reduction of cooling rate due to the temperature rise at the beginning of the process, cannot be ignored, joint properties do not necessarily improve. It can be seen that at first increasing each of the parameters improves mechanical and metallurgical properties of the joint, and after reaching the optimum value, any further increase causes a decline in the properties.

It is observed that grain size reaches its lowest point under 5kN force, where mechanical properties are determined based on Hall-Petch equation, which is a relation between yield stress and grain size. Hall-Petch equation has been determined as follows [39]:

$$\sigma_y = \sigma_0 + k_y/d^{1/2}$$  

Where $\sigma_y$ is the yield stress, $\sigma_0$ is material constant for the starting stress of dislocation movement, $k_y$ is strengthening coefficient and $d$ is average grain diameter.

3. Artificial neural networks

Artificial neural networks (ANNs) have found applications in many optimization and prediction problems in the last decade. ANNs are computational models inspired by an animal’s central nervous system, in particular the human’s brain, which is capable of machine learning as well as pattern recognition [40]. ANN obtains a nonlinear relation among the influential factors of a process and their corresponding outputs that, in this study, are mechanical and metallurgical properties of a joint. Therefore, a neural network enables the researcher to determine outputs for other arbitrary inputs with high accuracy. Employing ANN eliminates any need to carry out experimental tests that are costly and time-consuming. These networks are essentially simple mathematical models defining a function $f: x \rightarrow y$ or a distribution over $x$ or both $x$ and $y$.

Figure 3 represents a neural network. In this network, each input consists of $r$ parameters and each output comprises $s$ parameters. Furthermore $p$, $w$, $b$, $f$ and $a$ represent the inputs, weight matrixes, bias vectors, transfer function in neurons, and outputs, respectively.

Based on their functions, neural networks need to be trained using a set of inputs and their corresponding outputs. Assuming one layer of neuron, training is accomplished through multiplying each input with a variant called the weight and summing it with another variant called bias before entering the neuron. The initial value of both variants can be predetermined. The obtained values from each input are summed up to form the input of the transfer function, and its output is the neuron’s output that needs to compare with the experimental output value. The tangent sigmoid (Tansig) $\phi(x)$, logarithmic sigmoid (Logsig) $\psi(x)$ and linear $\chi(x)$ transfer functions are described as follows [41]:

$$\phi(x) = \frac{2}{1+e^{-x}} - 1$$  

Figure 3. One layer network with R inputs and S neurons.
Through the comparison, an error value is obtained. If it exceeds the permissible error value, the obtained answer is returned to the network for corrections in the weights and biases values until the desired answer is obtained. The network described above consists of one layer of neurons; however, in practice more neurons are needed to interact in parallel constructions to implement a neural network. Neural networks compose of several layers containing the neurons.

3.1. Training of ANN
The ANNs are trained with a training set of input and known output data. There is no exact available formula to decide what architecture of ANN and which training algorithm will solve a given problem and the best solution is obtained by trial and error. In the present study, the feed forward error back propagation (BP) algorithm is used for ANN training, which is the most common and efficient algorithm for training. The BP algorithm defines a systematic way to update the synaptic weights of multi-layer feed forward supervised networks. The networks composed of an input layer that receives the input values, an output layer, which calculates the neural network output, and one or more intermediary layers, so-called hidden layers. The basis of BP supervised learning process, is the gradient descent method that usually minimizes the sum of squared errors between the target value and the output of the neural network [42].

3.2. Implementation of ANN
In the implementation of ANN, there are many parameters that changing them causes alteration of the operation method, speed and accuracy of the network [42]. The number of ANN layers, the number of each layer neurons and rate of network training are some of these parameters [43]. Number of ANN layers and neurons of each layer are important parameters in deployment of ANN, since they are so effective in its operation. The significant point in using ANN is the number of layers and neurons, which are processing units of network. Increasing these parameters does not necessarily lead to speed and accuracy improved. The more complex the structure of the network is, the more time it takes. Although training time may be reduced by increasing the rate of training, if it is lower than a specific limit, speed of the network to find desirable answer will be reduced or if it is higher than a specific limit the network will become unstable. Furthermore, a considerable point in the training of the network is scattering rate of input and output parameters. If scattering of parameters is high, the network will be in trouble. In such cases by employing reasonable changes in the data, scattering is decreased and problem is resolved. In this research all values of each parameter are divided to maximum value of that parameter and normalized [44]. This action decreases scattering rate and distribution of all values between 0 and 1.

In this paper, welding speed, rotational speed of tool, axial force, shoulder diameter, pin diameter and tool hardness regarded as inputs of ANN. Yield strength, tensile strength, notch-tensile strength and hardness of welding zone considered as outputs of neural networks. Figure 4 represents an example of the conceptual structure for this ANN: 4 layers with full interconnection. Six input parameters are logged into input layer to determine four outputs.

3.3. Performance evaluation of ANN
The performance of the ANN models in predicting the FSW effective parameters are statistically evaluated using prediction score metrics. A large number of statistical criteria are available to compare the adequacy of any given model. The performance evaluation statistics used for ANN training in the present study are Pearson coefficient of correlation (PCC) and mean relative error (MRE). These parameters have been determined using the following equations:
Figure 4. An example of the conceptual structure for a network.

\[ PCC = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} \left( f_{\text{EXP},i} - f_{\text{ANN},i} \right)}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{n} \left( f_{\text{EXP},i} - f_{\text{ANN},i} \right)^{2} }} \]  

\[ MRE = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \left| \frac{f_{\text{ANN},i} - f_{\text{EXP},i}}{f_{\text{EXP},i}} \right| \times 100 \]  

Where:

\[ f_{\text{EXP}} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} f_{\text{EXP},i} , \quad f_{\text{ANN}} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} f_{\text{ANN},i} , \quad f_{\text{EXP}} = \text{Experimental}, \quad f_{\text{ANN}} = \text{Predicted} \]

3.4. Generating model function

After the neural network is trained successfully with four layers as it is mentioned above, the values of the four parameters of the network \((p, b, w, f)\) can be obtained. The function which correlates the inputs to the corresponding outputs can be calculated applying the aforementioned parameters. Finally, the model function can be determined as below:

\[ a^1 = f^1(w^1p+b^1) \]
\[ a^2 = f^2(w^2p^1+b^2) \]
\[ a^3 = f^3(w^3p^2+b^3) \]
\[ a^4 = f^4(w^4p^3+b^4) \]

\[ G(g(1), g(2), g(3), g(4)) = a^4 = f^4(w^4f^3(w^3f^2(w^2f^1(w^1p+b^1)+b^2)+b^3)+b^4) \]  

Where \(a^1, a^2\) and \(a^3\) are outputs of the first, second and third layer, respectively. \(a^4\) is the fourth layer output which is equal to the function \(G(g(1), g(2), g(3), g(4))\). The function \(G\) gets the values of six input parameters: welding speed, tool rotational speed, axial force, shoulder diameter, pin diameter and tool hardness. Functions of \(g(1), g(2), g(3)\) and \(g(4)\) represent yield strength, tensile strength, notch-tensile strength and hardness of welding zone as output parameters, respectively. The methodology used for neural network application in this work is as follows:

- Start
- Normalize the data (inputs & outputs)
- Feed the data to artificial neural network
- Find network optimum parameters
Execute network training
Obtain Pearson correlation coefficient
If PCC ≥ 0.99 go to 8, if not go back to 4 with revising the parameters of network
Continue processing until obtaining desired convergence between experimental and predicted values
Obtain weights & biases values
Create the model function
Conduct analysis based on model function
Verify the results using experimental values
Calculate the error for each answer
End

4. Experimental tests
The experimental data obtained from Rajakumar, et al. [45] work. In their study, rolled plates of 7075-T6 aluminum alloy with the thickness of 5 mm were used. Prior to the welding process, the plates were cut to the size of 150×300 mm. The welding was done perpendicular to the rolling direction. Welding was carried out in a single pass and with non-consumptive tools of several hardnesses. The hardness of tools was determined by quenching them in different materials (water, oil, air, and saltwater) in the final step of heat treatment. The chemical composition of the base metal and its mechanical properties are presented in tables 3 and 4. The joint dimensions and welding and rolling directions are shown in figure 5. Figure 6 shows the tool of FSW process.

Table 3. Chemical composition of 7075-T6 aluminum alloy (wt %) [45].

| Material       | Mg  | Mn  | Zn  | Fe  | Cu  | Si  | Cu  | Al    |
|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| AA 7075-T6     | 2.1 | 0.12| 5.1 | 0.35| 1.2 | 0.58| 1.2 | Balance |

Table 4. Mechanical properties of the AA7075-T6 [45].

| Material       | Yield Strength (MPa) | Ultimate Strength (MPa) | Elongation (%) | Vickers Hardness (Hv 0.05) |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| AA 7075-T6     | 410                  | 485                     | 12             | 160                       |

After the welding process, the joints were cut and then machined to the desired size. In this study, American Society for Testing of Materials (ASTM E8M-04) guidelines was followed for preparing the test specimens. Two different tensile specimens were prepared to evaluate the transverse tensile properties. The smooth (un-notched) tensile specimens were prepared to evaluate yield strength and tensile strength in the cross-sectional area. Notched specimens were prepared to evaluate notch tensile strength of the joints. Figure 7 illustrates samples of these specimens with their sizes; figure 7(a)
Figure 7. A machined specimens based on the ASTM standard for a) simple-tensile test, b) notch-tensile test.

Table 5. Results of experimental tests on thirty different samples [45].

| Experiment No. | Rotational speed (RPM) | Welding speed (mm/min) | Axial force (kN) | Shoulder diameter mm | Pin diameter mm | Tool hardness (HRC) | Yield strength (MPa) | Tensile strength (MPa) | Notch-tensile strength (MPa) | Welding zone hardness (VHN) |
|----------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1              | 1400                   | 60                     | 8                | 15                  | 5              | 45                  | 314                | 372                  | 397                         | 203                         |
| 2              | 1800                   | 60                     | 8                | 15                  | 5              | 45                  | 310                | 334                  | 321                         | 185                         |
| 3              | 1400                   | 40                     | 8                | 15                  | 5              | 45                  | 279                | 363                  | 339                         | 194                         |
| 4              | 1400                   | 60                     | 8                | 15                  | 5              | 45                  | 310                | 372                  | 393                         | 198                         |
| 5              | 1400                   | 80                     | 8                | 15                  | 5              | 45                  | 308                | 371                  | 392                         | 197                         |
| 6              | 1400                   | 60                     | 7                | 15                  | 5              | 45                  | 282                | 321                  | 344                         | 180                         |
| 7              | 1400                   | 60                     | 8                | 15                  | 5              | 45                  | 314                | 372                  | 393                         | 199                         |
| 8              | 1400                   | 60                     | 8                | 12                  | 5              | 45                  | 280                | 310                  | 333                         | 193                         |
| 9              | 1400                   | 60                     | 8                | 15                  | 5              | 45                  | 310                | 372                  | 393                         | 198                         |
| 10             | 1400                   | 60                     | 8                | 18                  | 5              | 45                  | 256                | 271                  | 296                         | 197                         |
| 11             | 1400                   | 60                     | 8                | 15                  | 4              | 45                  | 292                | 331                  | 361                         | 194                         |
| 12             | 1400                   | 60                     | 8                | 15                  | 5              | 45                  | 310                | 372                  | 393                         | 198                         |
| 13             | 1400                   | 60                     | 8                | 15                  | 6              | 45                  | 300                | 340                  | 360                         | 197                         |
| 14             | 1400                   | 60                     | 8                | 15                  | 5              | 40                  | 261                | 283                  | 302                         | 186                         |
| 15             | 1400                   | 60                     | 8                | 15                  | 5              | 45                  | 313                | 372                  | 393                         | 198                         |
| 16             | 900                    | 60                     | 8                | 15                  | 5              | 45                  | 245                | 270                  | 310                         | 175                         |
| 17             | 1200                   | 60                     | 8                | 15                  | 5              | 45                  | 290                | 310                  | 360                         | 191                         |
| 18             | 1400                   | 20                     | 8                | 15                  | 5              | 45                  | 255                | 280                  | 320                         | 180                         |
| 19             | 1400                   | 100                    | 8                | 15                  | 5              | 45                  | 245                | 261                  | 283                         | 179                         |
| 20             | 1400                   | 60                     | 6                | 15                  | 5              | 45                  | 263                | 298                  | 320                         | 173                         |
| 21             | 1400                   | 60                     | 10               | 15                  | 5              | 45                  | 285                | 286                  | 356                         | 171                         |
| 22             | 1400                   | 60                     | 8                | 9                   | 5              | 45                  | 242                | 266                  | 284                         | 178                         |
| 23             | 1400                   | 60                     | 8                | 21                  | 5              | 45                  | 296                | 350                  | 312                         | 187                         |
| 24             | 1400                   | 60                     | 8                | 15                  | 3              | 45                  | 264                | 281                  | 302                         | 181                         |
| 25             | 1400                   | 60                     | 8                | 15                  | 7              | 45                  | 284                | 321                  | 346                         | 178                         |
| 26             | 1400                   | 60                     | 8                | 15                  | 5              | 33                  | 271                | 299                  | 324                         | 178                         |
| 27             | 1400                   | 60                     | 8                | 15                  | 5              | 56                  | 282                | 312                  | 336                         | 178                         |
| 28             | 1400                   | 60                     | 9                | 15                  | 5              | 45                  | 301                | 361                  | 383                         | 190                         |
| 29             | 1400                   | 60                     | 8                | 15                  | 5              | 50                  | 310                | 368                  | 391                         | 192                         |
| 30             | 1600                   | 60                     | 8                | 15                  | 5              | 45                  | 314                | 367                  | 397                         | 202                         |
shows the smooth tensile specimen and figure 7(b) illustrates the notched specimen. Tensile tests were carried out with a 100 kN force and speed of 0.5 mm/min. Vickers micro-hardness tester was used for measuring the hardness of the weld metal with a 0.05 kg load. Table 5 presents the results obtained from the experimental tests on 30 specimens.

After the experimental tests, it was observed that increasing the tool rotational speed from 900 RPM to 1400 RPM improves the mechanical properties of the joint. Value of this parameter faces relative decline over 1400 RPM. Moreover, increasing the welding speed from 20 to 60 millimeters per minute increases the strength of specimens, and any further rise of this parameter over 60 millimeters per minute reduces specimen strength. This situation observed for all of the examined welding parameters. Optimum values for parameters of rotational speed, welding speed, axial force, tool hardness, shoulder diameter, and pin diameter were obtained as 1400 (RPM), 60 (mm/min), 8 (kN), 45 (HRc), 15 (mm) and 5 (mm), respectively.

5. Results and discussion
In this work there are two main networks: called “training network” and “testing network”. The first one is used to generate the model function. The second one used the model function to give the results of ANN. In the training network, 15 experimental test results (data of experiments 16-30) are used from the total of 30, as data sets to networks training, while in the testing network 15 different experimental data (data of experiments 1-15) which are not used during training, are used as networks testing. So the whole experimental results did not include in the training sets for modeling of FSW process on Al7075. All the input and output data for training and testing networks are normalized between 0 and 1. Table 6 shows the sample data used for networks training. For investigative purposes, 50% training data sets against 50% test data sets is obtained.

| Sample No. | Rotational speed | Welding speed | Axial force | Shoulder diameter | Pin diameter | Tool hardness | Yield strength | Tensile strength | Notch-tensile strength | Welding zone hardness |
|------------|------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1          | 0.50             | 0.60          | 0.80        | 0.71              | 0.71         | 0.80          | 0.7803         | 0.7258            | 0.7809               | 0.8621               |
| 2          | 0.66             | 0.60          | 0.80        | 0.71              | 0.71         | 0.80          | 0.9236         | 0.8333            | 0.9068               | 0.9409               |
| 3          | 0.77             | 0.20          | 0.80        | 0.71              | 0.71         | 0.80          | 0.8121         | 0.7527            | 0.8060               | 0.8867               |
| 4          | 0.77             | 1.00          | 0.80        | 0.71              | 0.71         | 0.80          | 0.7803         | 0.7016            | 0.7128               | 0.8818               |
| 5          | 0.77             | 0.60          | 0.60        | 0.71              | 0.71         | 0.80          | 0.8376         | 0.8011            | 0.8060               | 0.8522               |
| 6          | 0.77             | 0.60          | 1.00        | 0.71              | 0.71         | 0.80          | 0.9076         | 0.7688            | 0.8967               | 0.8424               |
| 7          | 0.77             | 0.60          | 0.80        | 0.42              | 0.71         | 0.80          | 0.7707         | 0.7151            | 0.7154               | 0.8768               |
| 8          | 0.77             | 0.60          | 0.80        | 1.00              | 0.71         | 0.80          | 0.9427         | 0.9409            | 0.7859               | 0.9212               |
| 9          | 0.77             | 0.60          | 0.80        | 0.71              | 0.42         | 0.80          | 0.8408         | 0.7554            | 0.7607               | 0.8916               |
| 10         | 0.77             | 0.60          | 0.80        | 0.71              | 1.00         | 0.80          | 0.9045         | 0.8629            | 0.8715               | 0.8768               |
| 11         | 0.77             | 0.60          | 0.80        | 0.71              | 0.71         | 0.58          | 0.8631         | 0.8038            | 0.8161               | 0.8768               |
| 12         | 0.77             | 0.60          | 0.80        | 0.71              | 0.71         | 1.00          | 0.8981         | 0.8387            | 0.8463               | 0.8768               |
| 13         | 0.77             | 0.60          | 0.90        | 0.71              | 0.71         | 0.80          | 0.9586         | 0.9704            | 0.9647               | 0.9360               |
| 14         | 0.77             | 0.60          | 0.80        | 0.71              | 0.71         | 0.89          | 0.9873         | 0.9892            | 0.9849               | 0.9458               |
| 15         | 0.88             | 0.60          | 0.80        | 0.71              | 0.71         | 0.80          | 1.0000         | 0.9866            | 1.0000               | 0.9951               |

To increase the accuracy of the ANNs results and the network performance, separate different networks are trained for output parameters. The input parameters in all of the networks training are the same. All of the considered input parameters, including: welding speed, the rotational speed of the tool, axial force, shoulder diameter, pin diameter and the tool hardness are used in each modeling for different output parameters.

As it is mentioned, several networks with different architectures have been trained to find the optimum structure (OS) of ANN. OS is used to predict the considered parameters with the least mean relative error possible. Results of the networks have been investigated. Table 7 demonstrates the
relevant information of network structure and some related results for training networks for each considered output parameters.

Table 7. Related information of three different training networks for each considered output parameters.

| Output parameter | Modeling No. | Rate of Training | Layers Structure | Hidden Transfer Function | Output Transfer Function | PCC   | MRE (%) |
|------------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------|---------|
| Yield strength   | 1            | 0.175            | 6x6x10x4         | Logsig                  | Logsig                   | 0.99899 | 0.9315  |
|                  | 2            | 0.170            | 6x6x4x4          | Tansig                  | Linear                   | 0.99811 | 1.1261  |
|                  | 3            | 0.137            | 6x6x8x4          | Logsig                  | Tansig                   | 0.99835 | 0.9867  |
| Tensile strength | 1            | 0.156            | 6x8x10x4         | Logsig                  | Logsig                   | 0.99976 | 0.9746  |
|                  | 2            | 0.148            | 6x8x8x4          | Logsig                  | Logsig                   | 0.99913 | 1.0012  |
|                  | 3            | 0.124            | 6x6x8x4          | Logsig                  | Tansig                   | 0.99922 | 1.1553  |
| Notch-tensile strength | 1 | 0.160         | 6x8x12x4         | Logsig                  | Logsig                   | 0.99837 | 1.2127  |
|                  | 2            | 0.165            | 6x6x8x4          | Tansig                  | Linear                   | 0.98891 | 1.6696  |
|                  | 3            | 0.150            | 6x6x10x4         | Tansig                  | Logsig                   | 0.99018 | 1.5134  |
| Welding Zone Hardness | 1 | 0.112         | 6x8x12x4         | Logsig                  | Logsig                   | 0.99984 | 0.7397  |
|                  | 2            | 0.098            | 6x8x10x4         | Logsig                  | Tansig                   | 0.99979 | 0.7766  |
|                  | 3            | 0.120            | 6x6x8x4          | Logsig                  | Linear                   | 0.98764 | 0.9891  |

To find the ANNs optimum response, after implementation of multiple networks, some of them are noted in table 7, and investigation of them, the structures shown in table 8 are selected and used for simulation and obtaining the results.

Table 8. Information of selected networks.

| Output parameter | Rate of Training | Layers Structure | Hidden Transfer Function | Output Transfer Function | Training PCC | Training MRE (%) |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Yield strength   | 0.175            | 6x6x10x4         | Logsig                  | Logsig                   | 0.99899      | 0.9315          |
| Tensile strength | 0.156            | 6x8x10x4         | Logsig                  | Logsig                   | 0.99976      | 0.9746          |
| Notch-tensile strength | 0.160 | 6x8x12x4    | Logsig                  | Logsig                   | 0.99837      | 1.2127          |
| Welding Zone Hardness | 0.112 | 6x6x12x4   | Logsig                  | Logsig                   | 0.99964      | 0.7397          |

Results of table 8 show that the values of PCC and MRE are both acceptable for each output parameters, so it is concluded that networks are trained finely.

The selected networks employed to networks testing. Figure 8 demonstrates the predicted values of each output parameters by means of the obtained model function in comparison to the experimental values.

Percentage of relative error values for each fifteen testing samples, at the whole considered output parameters are shown in figure 9. Table 9 shows the achieved values of PCC and the mean relative error for testing samples by use of the selected training networks and their related model function.

As it can be seen the obtained values of PCC from testing in comparison to training, decreased; and the achieved mean relative error values from testing in comparison to training, increased. The PCC values are more than 99.9% for the hardness of welding zone and more than 99.4%, 99.5% and 99.8% for notch-tensile strength, yield strength, and tensile strength, respectively. In addition, the obtained
Figure 8. Predicted values in comparison to experimental values for each fifteen testing samples for different considered output parameters.

Figure 9. Obtained relative error values for each fifteen experiments of testing networks.

Table 9. Achieved values of PCC and MRE for testing networks.

| Output parameter          | Testing PCC   | Testing MRE (%) |
|---------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Yield strength            | 0.99543       | 1.0820          |
| Tensile strength          | 0.99875       | 1.1303          |
| Notch-tensile strength    | 0.99403       | 1.3046          |
| Welding Zone Hardness     | 0.99918       | 0.7917          |
mean relative errors are in small range (0.7917-1.3046), and the predicted values for the hardness of welding zone, yield strength, tensile strength and notch-tensile strength have the least mean relative errors, respectively. According to the obtained results, it is observed that, predicted values form the response of ANN and the experimental values are in admirable agreement. So it can be concluded that the ANNs are tuned finely to predict the FSW effective parameters, and the ANNs can be used in prediction and optimization of this process parameters.

6. Conclusion
In the present study, the artificial neural networks were employed to predict the friction stir welding parameters on 7075-T6 Aluminum Alloy. The rotational speed of the tool, welding speed, axial force, shoulder diameter, pin diameter and tool hardness were regarded as inputs of the ANN. Four effective parameters of FSW process including: yield strength, tensile strength, notch-tensile strength and hardness of welding zone modeled. The obtained values of MRE are 1.0820, 1.1303, 1.3046 and 0.7917 for each parameter, respectively. Also, the values of PCC for all of the parameters are more than 99%. According to the achieved results, it can be concluded when the artificial neural networks are tuned finely, the modeling results are in admissible agreement with the experimental results. Therefore, using ANNs instead of experiments, decreases costs and the need for special testing facilities; and the ANNs can be employed to optimize and predict the effective parameters for FSW process.

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