

**STRESS ANALYSIS OF STRETCHABLE  
ELECTRONIC CIRCUIT**

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**UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA**

**2018**

**STRESS ANALYSIS OF STRETCHABLE ELECTRONIC CIRCUIT**

**by**

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**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the  
requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Science**

**August 2018**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all I would like to express my grateful to the Almighty Allah for giving me chances to being a part of the collaboration project of stretchable electronic circuit between Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and Jabil Circuit Sdn Bhd.

A big thanks for the next important person in guiding me from the beginning until the end of the project is my supervisor, Dr. Abdullah Aziz Saad for his guidance and support. I would like to thank him for his concern and precious time spent for me to ensure the project can be completed in the given time. In addition to that I would also like to express my gratitude to him for his encouragement and help to understand the product from its fundamental that helps me to develop an understanding on the project analysis.

I would also like to express my utmost gratitude to all the lecturers and technical staffs in the School of Mechanical Engineering, the School of Material & Minerals Resources of USM and Engineering & Technology Services (ETS) Department of Jabil Penang for sharing their precious knowledge on their expertise area whenever I consult them during the project. This has certainly helped me in completing the project smoothly.

Lastly, I would like to extend my gratitude to my husband, parents, siblings and beloved friends for their moral support throughout the completion of the whole project and thesis.

Norhidayah Binti Abdul Aziz

August 2018

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	ii
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	iii
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	vi
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	vii
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATION</b>	xi
<b>LIST OF SYMBOLS</b>	xii
<b>ABSTRAK</b>	xiii
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	xv
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1 Research Background	1
1.2 Problem Statement	1
1.3 Objective	2
1.4 Scope of work	2
1.5 Thesis Organization	3
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	
2.1 Mechanical testing for thin film specimen of SEC	4
2.2 Material model for substrate and conductor of SEC	10
2.3 Stress-strain analysis of substrate and conductive ink for SEC	16
2.4 Summary	19

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

3.1	Characterization of material properties	21
3.1.1	Sample preparation	21
3.1.2	Tensile testing	23
3.1.3	Quantifying material properties	25
3.2	Finite element analysis (FEA)	27
3.2.1	Geometries Modelling	27
3.2.2	Meshing	30
3.2.3	Boundary condition	31
3.2.4	Analysis	33
3.3	Summary	36

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

4.1	Characterization of material properties	38
4.2	Stress-strain analysis of three simple geometry of conductive ink	44
4.2.1	Effect of horizontal loading on the geometry	44
4.2.2	Effect of vertical loading on the geometry	49
4.3	Stress-strain analysis of the PDMS substrate and Ag-PDMS conductive ink in thermal sensor circuit applications	57
4.3.1	Effect of loading on the complex geometry of thermal sensor circuit	58
(a)	vertical loading	58
(b)	horizontal loading	63
(c)	biaxial loading	66

4.3.2	Effect of copper replacing Ag-PDMS conductive ink as the circuit	72
4.4	Summary	74
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK</b>		
5.1	Conclusion	76
5.2	Future work and recommendation	77
<b>REFERENCES</b>		78
<b>LIST OF PUBLICATION</b>		82
<b>APPENDICES</b>		83

## LIST OF TABLES

		<b>Page</b>
Table 2.1	Testing technique to characterize mechanical properties for thin film polymer	7
Table 2.2	Summary on tensile testing parameters for rubber/polymer material	8
Table 2.3	Material model used to characterize polymeric substrates and conductive materials	13
Table 2.4	Neo-Hookean model constant for substrate material	15
Table 2.5	Material and structure that is used for the stretchable circuit study	17
Table 3.1	Material used for substrate and conductive ink	20
Table 3.2	Testing parameters for universal tensile test of substrate and conductive ink	24
Table 3.3	Material model and required material properties for the simulation	27
Table 3.4	Meshing Setup Parameter	30
Table 4.1	Material properties for PDMS substrate	40
Table 4.2	Grid Test Study	43
Table 4.3	Normal stress in X, Y and Z-axis and equivalent stress at critical results of zigzag shape in horizontal loading	48

## LIST OF FIGURES

		<b>Page</b>
Figure 2.1	Two different specimen configuration for thin film testing (Eric 2010)	5
Figure 2.2	Stress-strain curves for PDMS with (a) Silver (Ag) composition and (b) Carbon nanotube (CNT) nanocomposites (Larmagnac et al. 2014; Wu et al. 2009)	9-10
Figure 3.1	Experimental sample preparation procedures for substrate material	23
Figure 3.2	Tensile testing samples for (a) PDMS substrate and (b) Ag-PDMS conductive ink	24
Figure 3.3	Image for three different printing shapes with rectangular, zigzag and horseshoe respectively	28
Figure 3.4	Complex design of thermal sensor circuit	28
Figure 3.5	Three major steps for the modelling of thermal sensor circuit	30
Figure 3.6	Schematic diagram for boundary condition used for (a) horizontal and (b) vertical loading direction of basic geometry circuit	31
Figure 3.7	Boundary condition used in thermal sensor circuit design for (a) uniaxial with (i) horizontal and (ii) vertical loading and (b) biaxial with fixed at one nodes	32-33
Figure 3.8	Rectangular models with (a) mesh and (b) boundary condition for result validation process	34
Figure 3.9	Flowchart of the whole research	37
Figure 4.1	Stress-strain curve of PDMS substrate (red line) and Ag-	39



	PDMS conductive ink (blue line) under universal tensile test condition	
Figure 4.2	Simulation validation result for PDMS substrate using Neo-Hookean model	40
Figure 4.3	Simulation validation result for Ag-PDMS conductive ink using multilinear model	41
Figure 4.4	Mesh of Ag-PDMS conductive inks for (a) 0.5 mm (b) 0.3mm and (c) 0.1 mm size	42
Figure 4.5	Equivalent stress of Ag-PDMS conductive ink in horizontal loading for the three different printing (a) rectangular (b) zigzag and (c) horseshoe	45
Figure 4.6	Equivalent stress trends for the three printing shape at critical stress area (section A1-A2) in horizontal loading	46
Figure 4.7	Equivalent stress trends for the three printing shape at lower stress area (section B1-B2) under horizontal loading	47
Figure 4.8	Equivalent stress of Ag-PDMS conductive ink in vertical loading for (a) rectangular (b) zigzag and (c) horseshoe	49
Figure 4.9	Equivalent stress trends for the whole model at section C1-C2	50
Figure 4.10	Equivalent stress of Ag-PDMS conductive ink at critical area in vertical loading for (a) rectangular (b) zigzag and (c) horseshoe shape analysis	51
Figure 4.11	Equivalent stress trends for the three printing shape at the critical stress area (cross section D1-D2) under vertical loading	52
Figure 4.12	Equivalent stress distribution trends for the three printing	53

	shape at lower stress concentration area (cross section E1-E2) under vertical loading	
Figure 4.13	Comparison between the maximum equivalent stress at critical region for both horizontal and vertical loading in the three different shapes	54
Figure 4.14	Bending concepts which show compression and tension phenomenon for (a) from straight to curve and (b) from curve to straight	55
Figure 4.15	Size of width, thickness and radius horseshoe shapes of Copper (Gonzalez 2009)	56
Figure 4.16	Percentage of equivalent plastic strain at 10 % displacement for Copper at region 5 of its horseshoe shape (Gonzalez 2009)	57
Figure 4.17	Equivalent stress of Ag-PDMS conductive ink in thermal sensor circuit under vertical loading	59
Figure 4.18	Equivalent stress of Ag-PDMS conductive ink in different geometry of thermal sensor circuit under vertical loading	60
Figure 4.19	Equivalent stress of Ag-PDMS conductive ink at different width of thermal sensor circuit under vertical loading	61
Figure 4.20	Equivalent plastic strains for thermal sensor circuit under vertical loading	62
Figure 4.21	Equivalent stress of Ag-PDMS conductive ink in thermal sensor circuit under horizontal loading	63
Figure 4.22	Equivalent stress of Ag-PDMS conductive ink in different shape geometry of thermal sensor circuit under horizontal loading	64

Figure 4.23	Equivalent stress of Ag-PDMS conductive ink at different width of thermal sensor circuit under horizontal loading	65
Figure 4.24	Equivalent stress of Ag-PDMS conductive ink at 10 % strains for biaxial loading	66
Figure 4.25	Equivalent stress of Ag-PDMS conductive ink for several vertical, horizontal and curvature circuit in biaxial loading	67
Figure 4.26	Equivalent stress of Ag-PDMS conductive ink for different width circuit in biaxial loading	68
Figure 4.27	Comparison of equivalent stress level for different shape geometry at different loading direction applied for thermal sensor circuit	69
Figure 4.28	Comparison of equivalent stress level for different width geometry at different loading direction applied for thermal sensor circuit at 10% strain	70
Figure 4.29	Maximum equivalent stress of the thermal sensor circuit at different loading	70
Figure 4.30	Equivalent plastic strain occur in biaxial loading	71
Figure 4.31	Equivalent plastic strains for thermal sensor circuit under copper material	73
Figure 4.32	Equivalent plastic strains for thermal sensor circuit using copper in different geometry under biaxial loading	74

## LIST OF ABBREVIATION

SEC	Stretchable Electronic Circuit
PCB	Printed Circuit Board
TPU	Thermoplastic Polyurethane
LED	Light Emitting Diode
PDMS	Polydimethylsiloxane
Ag	Silver
Cu	Copper
FEA	Finite Element Analysis
LSP	Laser Selective Plating
2D	Two Dimensional
3D	Three Dimensional
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
BS	British Standard European Norm
ISO	International Standards Organization
UTM	Universal Testing Machine
CNT	Carbon Nanotube
AgNWs	Silver Nanowires
NPs	Nanoparticles
ANSYS	Analysis System
SW	Solidwork
.sat	Standard ACIS file format
EMN	Element Midside Nodes
DIC	Digital Image Correlation

## LIST OF SYMBOLS

$C_1$	Neo-Hookean Constant
$E_t$	Tangential modulus
$\sigma_{eng}$	Engineering stress
$\sigma_{true}$	True stress
$\sigma_y$	Stress at yield (yield stress)
$\epsilon_y$	Strain at yield
$\epsilon_{eng}$	Engineering strain
$\epsilon_{true}$	True strain
$\epsilon_{plastic}$	Plastic strain
$\epsilon_{total}$	Total strain
$E$	Young's Modulus
$\lambda$	Stretch ratio
$G$	Shear modulus
$\nu$	Poisson's ratio

# ANALISIS TEGASAN LITAR ELEKTRONIK BOLEH REGANG

## ABSTRAK

Litar elektronik boleh regang (SEC) adalah produk elektronik yang telah dibangunkan baru-baru ini untuk memberi keselesaan kepada manusia dalam pelbagai aplikasi seperti sensor. Ia telah dimulakan dengan memperkenalkan litar dengan konsep saling hubungan menggunakan bahan logam dengan mengawal saiz dan reka bentuk saling hubungan yang dimasukkan ke dalam substrat yang fleksibel. Sambungan telah dikembangkan secara berterusan dengan mengawal jenis bahan yang digunakan dan reka bentuk litar untuk meningkatkan ketegasannya. Kajian ini membentangkan tingkah laku tegasan SEC menggunakan bahan polidimetilsiloksana (PDMS) sebagai substrat dan campuran rumusan baru serpihan Ag dan PDMS sebagai bahan litar dalam bentuk cecair yang dikenali sebagai dakwat konduktif Ag-PDMS. Tingkah laku mekanik substrat dan dakwat konduktif dicirikan menggunakan ujian tegangan. Data ujian tegangan digunakan untuk mencirikan sifat-sifat bahan menggunakan model Neo-Hookean dan plastik multilinear untuk dakwat substrat dan konduktif masing-masing mewakili tingkah laku litar dalam perisian Analisis Unsur Terhingga (FEA). Beberapa reka bentuk asas SEC seperti bentuk segi empat tepat, siku-siku dan ladam telah dimodelkan menggunakan Solidwork dan dieksport ke ANSYS Workbench untuk analisis struktur awal. Analisis telah dijalankan untuk menentukan tingkah laku tegasan terikan litar di bawah geometri dan arah beban yang berbeza. Selain itu, analisis struktur juga dijalankan pada prototaip sebenar sebagai aplikasi litar sensor haba. Tingkah laku ubah bentuk litar diselidik untuk menilai struktur integriti litar di bawah geometri, pemuatan dan bahan yang berbeza.

Dapat dilihat bahawa kawasan kritikal untuk tumpuan tegasan bergantung pada arah pemuatan sama ada selari atau tegak lurus dengan percetakan litar. Selain itu, ia menunjukkan tegasan yang tinggi tertumpu di bahagian dalaman kawasan puncak untuk kedua-dua rekaan kekuda dan siku-siku. Tegasan alah bagi dakwat konduktif adalah 0.20 MPa. Manakala, keputusan tegasan terikan untuk keseluruhan litar mudah menunjukkan nilai tertinggi tegasan setara masih di bawah tegasan alah had hingga 10 % terikan yang digunakan iaitu pada 0.19 MPa. Walaubagaimanapun, keputusan tegasan setara tertinggi untuk litar sensor haba telah melebihi tegasan alah untuk pemuatan menegak dan dwipaksi masing-masing pada 66.66 % dan kurang daripada 10 % ubah bentuk plastik. Pemuatan mendatar tidak menghasilkan terikan ubah bentuk plastik pada 0.16 MPa tegasan setara tertinggi.

# STRESS ANALYSIS OF STRETCHABLE ELECTRONIC CIRCUIT

## ABSTRACT

Stretchable electronic circuit (SEC) is an electronic product that has been developed recently in serving human comfort in various applications such as sensor. It was started by introducing a circuit with interconnection concept using metallic material by controlling the size and the design of the interconnection embedded into a flexible substrate. The interconnection has been developed continuously by controlling types of material used and the design of the circuit to enhance its stretchability. This study presents the stress behaviour of the SEC using a polymer material of polydimethylsiloxane (PDMS) as the substrate and a new formulated mixed Silver flakes and PDMS as the circuit material in the form of liquid known as Ag-PDMS conductive ink. The mechanical behaviour of the substrate and conductive ink was characterized using tensile testing. Tensile test data were used in characterizing the material properties using a Neo-Hookean model and a multilinear plastic model for substrate and conductive ink respectively to represent the circuit's behaviour in Finite Element Analysis (FEA) software. Several basic designs of SEC such as rectangular, zigzag and horseshoe shape were modelled using Solidwork and was exported to ANSYS Workbench for preliminary structural analysis. The analysis was conducted to determine the stress-strain behaviour of the circuit under different geometry and loading condition. Besides, the structural analyses were also conducted on a real prototype of thermal sensor circuit application. The deformation behaviour of the circuit was investigated to assess the structural integrity of the circuit under different geometry, loading and material. It can be seen that the critical area for the



stress concentration depended on the loading direction either parallel or perpendicular to the circuit printing. Besides, it showed high stress concentrated at the inner side of crest area for both horseshoe and zigzag design. The yield stress for the conductive ink was 0.20 MPa. Meanwhile, the stress-strain results of the entire model showed that the maximum equivalent stress was below the yield stress for simple circuit limited to 10 % strain applied at 0.19 MPa. However, the maximum equivalent stresses for thermal sensor circuit is exceeding the yield stress for uniaxial vertical and biaxial loading at 66.66 % and below than 10 % plastic deformation respectively. The horizontal loading give no plastic deformation for thermal sensor circuit at maximum equivalent stress is 0.16 MPa.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

Stretchable electronic circuit (SEC) is a technology which has been improved from rigid printed circuit board (PCB's) to be bendable, twistable and stretchable (Bossuyt et al., 2013; Rogers et al., 2010). The SEC mainly consists of flexible or stretchable substrates (i.e. PDMS and Walopur TPU), flexible or stretchable conductive ink as a circuit (i.e. Ag, Cu, Ag-PDMS) and electronic components (i.e. LED, transistor, resistor, capacitor and integrated circuit). The advantages of SEC are flexible for human body application and improves reliability of the devices subjected to strain (Adrega and Lacour, 2010; Gonzalez et al., 2009; Kim and Rogers, 2008). The applications are mostly for sensor like strain sensor, robotic skins and wearable displays (Hu et al., 2016; Sekitani and Someya, 2010; Wang et al., 2011).

### 1.2 Problem Statement

Recently, researchers have shown interests in the development of the stretchable circuit and substrate since both elements are the key aspect to control the stretchability of the SEC. The stretchability is controlled by changing two parameter which are the stretchable material and stretchable design used for both the substrate and conductor (Rogers et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2011). Previous study shows lack of information regarding the stretchability control by design for the material which related to our study which is silver nanoparticles and nanocomposites. Besides, these materials are widely used to print the integrated circuit and previous research show interest on its conductivity only which said still can be improved (Ding et al., 2016).

The stretchability controlled by design shows the stretchable conductor were studied in terms of (1) geometry by controlling the width and thickness and (2) different printing shape of the circuit by introducing horseshoe shape as the best design to reduce the plastic strain. Besides, the substrate design was studied by (Amjadi et al., 2014) which has introduced (3) sandwich structure of substrate material that covers the whole part of the conductor to extend the failure limits of the conductor. Thus, fundamental studies were done in this project to know the limitation of the SEC in application as a basic circuit geometry and thermal sensor circuit using both experimental and finite element analysis.

### **1.3.1 Objective**

Objectives of the research are:

- i. To characterize the material properties of the stretchable circuit material.
- ii. To evaluate the stress-strain behavior of the three different geometries of stretchable circuit under different loading condition.
- iii. To assess the stress-strain behaviour of stretchable circuits in application as thermal sensor circuit under different loading and material.

### **1.3.2 Scope of work**

The research is limit to the analysis for PDMS substrate as the substrate material and Ag-PDMS conductive ink as the conductor material. The preliminary study is on controlling the stretchability by design using Ag-PDMS conductive ink as the circuit material and PDMS substrate for the substrate material using FEA. Several material models in combination with universal tensile test have been selected to define the material properties of the Ag-PDMS conductive ink and PDMS

substrate material. FEA was conducted to study the stress-strain performance of stretchable circuit in thermal sensor circuit application to assess suitable circuit design for future application. All the works in the thesis were conducted at room temperature and the material was characterized using constant tensile load. In addition, the simulation is conducted using static structural analysis.

## **1.5 Thesis Organization**

The thesis is presented in five chapters. In chapter one, a brief presentation of background study, problem statement, objectives and scope of research are introduced. Chapter two consist of three major sections which are on previous testing used to characterize the stress-strain curve of thin film polymer, material model used in finite element analysis which relate to the material properties used for substrate and conductor and the last section shows several analyses involved for SEC experimentally and theoretically. Methodology shows the specimen preparation and tensile testing for experimental part and also modelling and analysis for simulation part. In chapter four, effects of geometry, loading direction and material were presented for simple model and customized SEC model. Finally, conclusion and recommendations for future work is pointed out in chapter five.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter will review three key topics related to the stress analysis of substrate and conductive ink for SEC application. The topics are the mechanical testing for thin film specimen, suitable material models for rubber and structural analysis of SEC. The first part of this chapter will cover the characterization of mechanical properties of substrate and conductive ink which require a review on the suitable mechanical testing for thin film specimen. Secondly, the review will focus on the general material models which have been used by the previous researcher for the substrate and conductive ink material. The third part of this chapter will review on the general stress-strain analysis of the substrate and conductive ink in terms of the materials and structural analysis parameter which has been studied before.

#### **2.1 Mechanical testing for thin film specimen of SEC**

The aim of the mechanical testing is to characterize the stress-strain curve of the material. Several testing has been introduced for the mechanical properties characterization of stretchable electronic circuit as a thin film material such as uniaxial tensile, biaxial tensile, bulge test and nanoindentation test (Eric A Roe B . S . 2010; Merle 2013; Lee et al. 2015). Several researchers have introduced two ways in classifying the testing technique for thin film specimen called testing of free-standing films and supported films (Figure 2.1). Both specimens configuration for thin film testing have their advantage and disadvantage where the freestanding films can directly measure the stress-strain result but challenging in sample preparation at microscale and nanoscale. In contrast, the supported films have simpler sample

preparation where the coating can be directly printed onto the substrates but the result evaluation is very crucial due to the effect of substrates (Eric A Roe B . S ., 2010; Gibson, 2014; Merle, 2013; Midturi, 2010; Whiteside et al., 2016).

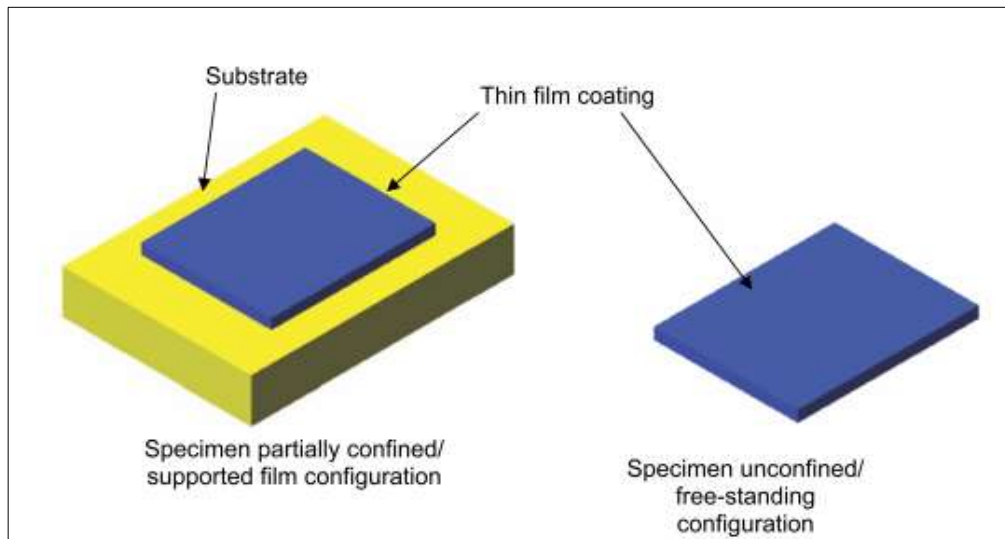


Figure 2.1 Two different specimen configuration for thin film testing (Eric 2010)

The advantage and disadvantage of each of the listing method is reviewed in term of the specimen preparation, experimental setup and data evaluation. Biaxial test is multiaxial tests that consist of two techniques which are wafer curvature measurement and point deflection technique. Wafer curvature measurement is useful for calculating the stress present in the film using mathematical equation. The stress-strain diagram of wafer curvature technique is obtained by heating up the specimen to have a set of strain value with respect to the elongation after heating. This method is suitable to study the thermo-mechanical fatigue life of thin films but the stress-strain curve is highly affected by the temperature. Point deflection technique is a technique which combines the advantage of bulge and nano-indentation test in order to have the material properties of the thin film. However much of the testing using

this technique was conducted using finite element analysis and little experimental work has been carried out (Merle, 2013). On the other hand, the biaxial test is challenging on the experimental setup (Melzer et al., 2011).

Nanoindenter test is useful to have the hardness and modulus of specimen at microscale and nanoscale. It does not require specific specimen size and thickness unless the specimen can be locate on its 2.5 mm diameter test section. However, this technique is extremely sensitive to the surface finish of specimen that can contribute to inaccurate result. In addition, the result involves complex conversion process from load-depth curve to stress-strain curve. The load-depth conversion technique of nanoindentation test is different for different specimen configuration such as freestanding and coating specimen where coating specimen need to consider the effect of substrate (Martínez et al., 2003; Miguel et al., 2015; Sun et al., 2007; Wu et al., 2009).

Bulge test is an indirect method that requires complex equation. The specimen can be prepared in three shapes (circular, square and rectangular) that relates to the stress-strain formula used for data evaluation. The result is measure in terms of residual stress-strain where it classified as indirect testing which conversion is needed to obtain the engineering stress-strain curve. The review on the strengths and weaknesses on several testing used for thin film material is summarized in Table 2.1 (Eric A Roe B . S . 2010; Merle 2013).

Table 2.1 Testing technique to characterize mechanical properties for thin film polymer

Testing	Specimen preparation	Experimental setup	Data evaluation
Uniaxial Tensile	Challenging for micro size sample preparation	-	Give data directly and need simple calculation to have the stress-strain curve
Biaxial Tensile	-	Challenging for experimental setup	-
Nanoindenter	Require no specific specimen size preparation	-	Need complex calculation in converting the load-depth curve to stress-strain curve
Bulge	Challenging sample preparation	Challenging experimental setup	Challenging result interpretation

Uniaxial testing is widely used and most developed by people as a direct testing. The major attraction is on the ease of data interpretation. The stress-strain curve is directly measured involving simple equation and curve fitting. Larmagnac et al, (2014) has reported their research in characterization of conductive ink use for the application of SEC based on Ag-PDMS composites using bulk specimen of large dumbbell specimen with no specific gauge length and width.

Several studies have been reported as a guideline in selecting the commonly used specimen testing geometry for rubber material. There were two type of specimen used either large dumbbell or small strip. The ASTM standard used for the rubber test is mostly not stated. In 2008, British standard was used to test soft polymer specimen with 5 mm specimen width at 100N load cell. In 2012, ASTM D412 was modified to test natural rubber at very small gauge length 10 mm and loading rate 10 mm/min with 500 N load cell. In 2014, large dumbbell specimen was used to test rubber with Ag fillers at lower loading rate 6 mm/min. In 2015, the