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Framework for Stress-Based Pipeline Life Prediction

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Abstract: This research develops a stress-based life prediction framework for pipelines subjected to cyclic loading, incorporating the interactive effects of residual stresses, dents, and gouges. Pipelines are critical infrastructures whose integrity is challenged by mechanical loading, material imperfections, and operational conditions. Traditional studies often address single defects in isolation; however, this study emphasizes the compounding effects of combined residual stresses and dent–gouge interactions on fatigue life. Using mathematical modeling, S–N curves, Paris' Law, and Miner's rule**,** combined with finite element analysis (FEA) simulations, the study demonstrates that tensile residual stresses accelerate crack initiation and growth, whereas compressive residual stresses extend fatigue life. Results also confirm that gouges are more detrimental than dents, but their combined interaction produces a non-linear reduction in service life by several orders of magnitude. The framework provides a more realistic prediction tool for fatigue life estimation, bridging theoretical modeling and industrial application. It offers actionable recommendations for asset integrity management (AIM), including enhanced inspection protocols, defect prioritization, and optimized maintenance strategies. This contribution addresses a critical gap in the literature by unifying stress analysis, defect interaction, and fatigue modeling, thereby advancing both scientific understanding and practical pipeline reliability.

Keywords: Pipeline integrity, Residual stresses, Cyclic loading, Fatigue life prediction, Dent–gouge interaction, Stress concentration, Finite Element Analysis (FEA).

INTRODUCTION

Pipelines represent one of the most critical infrastructures in the oil, gas, and energy industries, serving as the arteries through which vital resources are transported over long distances. Their structural integrity is essential for the safe, reliable, and cost-effective delivery of fluids and gases, directly impacting both industrial continuity and economic stability.[i] However, pipelines are constantly exposed to complex mechanical and operational challenges that may reduce their service life or, in severe cases, lead to catastrophic failure. Among these challenges, cyclic loading resulting from fluctuating internal pressures, temperature variations, or dynamic operating conditions is of particular concern, as it gives rise to fatigue damage, which remains one of the most prevalent causes of pipeline failures.[ii]

In addition to cyclic stresses, pipelines are rarely free from imperfections or internal stress states. Manufacturing processes such as welding, bending, and heat treatment often leave behind residual stresses, which may be tensile or compressive.[iii] These residual stresses have a direct influence on the fatigue behavior of pipeline materials: tensile residual stresses accelerate crack initiation and growth, while compressive residual stresses may delay failure. Compounding the problem are geometric imperfections and surface defects such as gouges, typically formed by mechanical abrasion, and dents, which result from external impacts or compressive forces. Individually, these defects act as local stress concentrators; when combined with residual stress and cyclic loads, they create a complex interaction that significantly shortens the fatigue life of pipelines.[iv]

This reality underscores the urgent need for a stress-based life prediction framework that integrates the combined effects of residual stress, dents, and gouges under cyclic loading. Developing such a framework would allow engineers to estimate the service life of pipelines more accurately, accounting for the synergistic influence of multiple factors rather than considering them in isolation.[v] A predictive tool of this kind would not only advance theoretical understanding but would also have substantial practical implications for asset integrity management, enabling oil and gas operators to optimize maintenance schedules, improve non-destructive testing (NDT) protocols, and establish timely repair or replacement strategies.[vi]

Previous studies have made considerable progress in predicting fatigue life through approaches such as (S–N curves and Paris' law) for crack growth. However, the majority of these studies have treated residual stresses, dents, and gouges as independent factors, overlooking their interactive effects. Experimental observations indicate that even a relatively small gouge (just a few millimeters in depth) may remain benign under stable operating conditions but becomes critical when combined with a dent and tensile residual stresses.[vii] Such scenarios highlight the nonlinear and compounding nature of defect interaction,

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emphasizing the inadequacy of single-factor analyses in capturing the true fatigue behavior of pipelines.[viii]

Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to develop an integrated Stress-Based Life Prediction Framework for pipelines that explicitly incorporates residual stresses along with dent–gouge interaction effects under cyclic loading. This framework will be constructed using mechanical models and fatigue equations, supported by hypothetical datasets that mimic real-world pipeline operating conditions. The outcomes are expected to provide engineers and asset managers with a more comprehensive predictive tool for assessing pipeline integrity.[ix] By offering a more realistic estimate of service life, the proposed framework aims to reduce the likelihood of unexpected failures, extend pipeline longevity, and minimize the overall costs associated with maintenance and repairs.

Ultimately, this research aspires to bridge the gap between theoretical modeling and operational reality, promoting a proactive culture of risk mitigation in pipeline management. It aligns with global efforts to ensure the sustainability of industrial systems and safeguard the safety and reliability of energy transportation infrastructures.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Develop a stress-based prediction framework for estimating the fatigue life of pipelines under cyclic loading.
2. Investigate the influence of residual stresses on the fatigue behavior of steel pipelines.
3. Analyze the interaction effects of dents and gouges on pipeline structural integrity.
4. Construct a mathematical/analytical model that integrates residual stresses, dent–gouge defects, and cyclic stresses.
5. Provide practical recommendations for oil and gas companies regarding inspection and maintenance strategies.

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE:

Scientific Significance:

1) Addresses the knowledge gap in existing studies that focus on single factors without considering the interaction between residual stress and geometric defects.

2) Proposes an integrated analytical framework that could serve as a foundation for future research in pipeline mechanics and fatigue life assessment.

PRACTICAL/INDUSTRIAL SIGNIFICANCE:

1) Enhances pipeline reliability and reduces the likelihood of sudden failures.

2) Supports oil and gas operators in optimizing maintenance costs by improving inspection and repair planning.

3) Strengthens asset integrity management (AIM) practices in the energy sector.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. How do residual stresses affect the fatigue life of pipelines under cyclic loading?
2. What is the relationship between the depth of dents/gouges and the rate of crack initiation and propagation?
3. Does the combined presence of residual stress, dents, and gouges accelerate failure more significantly than each factor alone?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES:

H1: Tensile residual stresses significantly reduce the fatigue life of pipelines subjected to cyclic loading.

H2: The presence of dents and gouges increases stress concentration and accelerates crack growth.

H3: The interaction of residual stresses with dent–gouge defects results in a more severe reduction of fatigue life than individual defects alone.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

♦ Research Approach:

The study adopts an analytical – numerical – comparative approach, combining mathematical modeling, finite element analysis (FEA).

♦ Methodological Steps:

1- Mathematical Modeling:

- Formulation of total stress: $\sigma_{total} = \sigma_{applied} + \sigma_{residual}$
- Integration of defect parameters (dent and gouge) into the model.

2- Numerical Analysis:

- Finite Element Analysis using ANSYS/Abaqus to simulate stress distribution.
- Identification of stress concentration zones due to dent–gouge interaction.

3- Validation and Comparison:

- Comparison of simulated results with published experimental findings.

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• Hypothesis testing across different loading and defect conditions.

4- Result Synthesis:
• Development of a comprehensive stress-based life prediction framework.
• Practical recommendations for pipeline inspection, repair, and maintenance scheduling.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS:

Location:
This study is designed as a case-inspired simulation rather than an on-site experimental investigation. The research assumes pipeline conditions representative of oil and gas transmission lines in the Middle East region, where high operating pressures and temperature fluctuations are common. Although the findings are generalizable, they are contextualized to environments where carbon steel pipelines (API 5L X65) are widely used.

Time frame:
The research covers a hypothetical operational lifespan of **20** years, with the fatigue prediction focusing on cyclic loading conditions that pipelines are expected to experience during this period. The analysis simulates repeated pressure cycles ranging between (100–300) MPa, reflecting daily operational fluctuations over the service life. This timeframe was chosen to capture the long-term degradation mechanisms rather than short-term failure events.

Dataset:
The study relies on a hypothetical dataset inspired by industrial standards and literature benchmarks:

Pipe diameter: 24 inches.

Wall thickness: 12 mm.

Material: API 5L X65 steel.

Cyclic loading: 100–300 MPa.

Dent depth: 3–6 mm.

Gouge depth: 2–5 mm.

Residual stress: ±50 MPa (tensile/compressive).

The dataset is not derived from field measurements but from assumed realistic conditions consistent with engineering practice. This approach allows the model to be validated conceptually while providing a foundation for future experimental validation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

Introduction to Mechanics of Materials:

Properties of Metallic Materials Used in Pipeline Manufacturing:
Metallic materials, particularly steel alloys, form the backbone of pipeline construction for oil, gas, and water transportation due to their superior mechanical properties.[x] Among the most widely used grades is API 5L carbon steel, specifically X65, which provides a balanced combination of toughness, tensile strength, and weldability.

The suitability of metallic material for pipeline applications is determined by several key characteristics:

a) Toughness: the ability of the material to absorb energy before fracture, ensuring resistance to impact and sudden loading[xi].
b) Fatigue Resistance: the capacity to withstand repeated cyclic loads without premature crack initiation or failure.[xii]
c) Corrosion Resistance: essential in aggressive environments involving fluids or sour gases[xiii].
d) Ductility: the ability to deform without losing structural integrity, allowing bending or stretching before fracture[xiv].

Thus, selecting API 5L X65 provides a reliable balance between strength, ductility, and cost-effectiveness, making it a preferred material for large-scale transmission networks.

Stress–Strain Relationship:
The relationship between **stress (σ)** and **strain (ε)** is fundamental in understanding the behavior of metallic materials under loading.
• Stress (σ): the applied force per unit area, usually measured in MPa.
• Strain (ε): the ratio of deformation (change in length) to the original length, a dimensionless quantity[XV].

Graphically represented through the stress–strain curve, the mechanical response of materials can be divided into distinct regions:

- Elastic Region: In this stage, strain is linearly proportional to stress according to Hooke's Law: $\sigma = E.\ \varepsilon$ the material returns to its original length upon unloading, with no permanent deformation[xvi].
- Yield Point: The stress level at which permanent plastic deformation begins, Beyond this point, strain remains even after unloading[xvii].

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- Plastic Region: Strain increases disproportionately with stress, Noticeable elongation occurs, and necking may appear under tensile loading[xviii].
- Ultimate Tensile Strength (UTS): The maximum stress the material can withstand before progressive failure initiates[xix].
- Fracture Point: The final stage where the material ruptures completely.[xx]

Key Mechanical Properties:

- Tensile Strength: The maximum stress a material can endure before breaking, Serves as a measure of the pipeline's ability to withstand high internal pressures (e.g., oil or gas).[xxi]
- Yield Strength: The stress level at which permanent deformation begins, Considered a practical design limit to prevent irreversible deformations during service.[xxii]
- Young's Modulus (E): A measure of material stiffness, Indicates the resistance of the material to elastic deformation under stress.[xxiii]

For carbon steels such as API 5L X65, E ≈ 210 GPa, reflecting high resistance to elastic strains.

Concepts of Cyclic Stresses and Fatigue:

1) Cyclic Loading: Cyclic loading refers to the repeated variation of stress/strain over time, where the applied load oscillates between minimum and maximum values, forming a cycle.[xxiv] It is characterized by the mean stress σ - m, stress amplitude σ - a, and stress ratio R:

$$\sigma a = \frac{\sigma\max - \sigma min}{2} \qquad \sigma m = \frac{\sigma\max + \sigma min}{2}$$

$$R = \frac{\sigma min}{\sigma\max}$$

Fully reversed loading (R = -1): equal tension–compression cycles.

Pulsating loading (R = 0): stress fluctuates between zero and a tensile maximum.

Asymmetric loading: where, depending on operating conditions.[xxv]

Sources of Cyclic Loading in Pipelines:

a) Internal pressure fluctuations (startup/shutdown cycles, demand changes) generating hoop stress variations.

b) Thermal fluctuations causing axial and hoop stresses due to expansion and contraction.

c) Flow-induced vibrations from pumps, compressors, or turbulence.

d) Transient events (e.g., surge or water hammer) producing sudden pressure peaks.

e) Ground movement or support deflection leading to bending-induced cyclic stresses[xxvi].

For thin-walled pipelines, stresses can be approximated as:

$$\sigma\ hoop \approx \frac{Pr}{t} \qquad \sigma\ axial \approx \frac{Pr}{2t} + \sigma\ thermal + \sigma\ bending$$

2) Fatigue Phenomenon as a Major Cause of Failure: Fatigue is the cumulative damage process caused by repeated cyclic stresses, often below the yield strength, that lead to crack initiation, crack growth, and finally fracture.[xxvii]

Stages of Fatigue Failure:

1. Crack Initiation: Micro cracks form at stress concentrators (scratches, dents, welds, or surface roughness).
2. Crack Propagation: Cracks grow progressively under cyclic stress, governed by stress intensity factors and environmental conditions.
3. Final Fracture: The crack reaches a critical size a_c and sudden catastrophic failure occurs ($K_{max} \geq K_{IC}$)

Types of Fatigue:

• High-cycle fatigue (HCF): $N_f > 10^5$ cycles, dominated by elastic response.

• Low-cycle fatigue (LCF): $N_f \leq 10^5$ cycles, where significant plastic strain occurs.

Key Influencing Factors for Pipelines:

• Residual stresses: Tensile residual stress accelerates crack initiation/growth; compressive residual stress may delay it.

• Geometric defects (dents, gouges): Increase stress concentration factors.

• Welds: Often govern fatigue life due to imperfections and residual stress.

• Environment: Corrosion-fatigue significantly reduces life by lowering thresholds for crack growth.[xxviii]

3) S–N Curves and Fatigue Life Prediction:

S–N curves (Wöhler curves): Plot stress amplitude σ_a against cycles to failure N_f . They are essential tools for fatigue life estimation.

Basquin's equation (for HCF): $\sigma_a = \sigma'_f (2Nf)^b$

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For LCF, the strain–life (Coffin–Manson) relationship is used: $\varepsilon_a = \frac{\sigma'_f}{E}(2Nf)^b + \varepsilon'_f(2Nf)^c$

Mean stress corrections: Since mean stress strongly affects fatigue life, different correction models are applied:

Goodman (linear) : $\frac{\sigma_a}{\sigma_{a,safe}} \approx 1 - \frac{\sigma_m}{\sigma_{uts}}$

Gerber (parabolic) : $\frac{\sigma_a}{\sigma_{a,safe}} \approx 1 - \left(\frac{\sigma_m}{\sigma_{uts}}\right)^2$

Morrow/SWT models: often applied for mean stress and non-zero load ratios.

Variable Amplitude Loading:

Cycle counting (e.g., Rainflow method) is applied to decompose load history.

Life is accumulated using Miner's rule: $D=\sum_i \frac{n_i}{N_i}$ failure occurs when $D \geq 1$.

4) Paris' Law for Crack Growth:

When cracks exist, their growth is governed by the stress intensity factor range (ΔK):

$\Delta K = Y \, \Delta\sigma \sqrt{\pi a}$

Paris' Law (valid in Region II of crack growth):

$\frac{d_a}{d_N} = C(\Delta K)^m \quad for\ \Delta K \geq \Delta K_{th}$:

Cycles to grow a crack from initial size a_i to critical size a_c: $N = \int_{ai}^{ac} \frac{d_a}{C\{Y\,\Delta\sigma\sqrt{\pi a}\}^m}$

Critical crack size a_c: determined from fracture toughness K_{IC}: $K_{max} = Y\,\sigma_{max}\sqrt{\pi a_c} \geq K_{IC}$.

Residual Stresses:

● Definition and Sources of Residual Stresses: Residual stresses are internal stresses that remain in a material even after the removal of all external loads.[xxix] They are primarily generated during various manufacturing and processing operations, such as:

• Welding: localized heating and non-uniform cooling induce tensile and compressive stresses.

• Heat treatment: rapid cooling (quenching) and uneven temperature distribution generate unbalanced residual stress fields.

• Mechanical manufacturing processes: including rolling, bending, machining, or surface treatments[xxx].

Although these stresses are not externally applied, they significantly influence the mechanical behavior of materials.

● Types of Residual Stresses:

1) Tensile Residual Stresses: Tend to open micro-cracks and promote their propagation, thereby reducing fatigue life. They are commonly observed in welded zones or surfaces subjected to machining.

2) Compressive Residual Stresses: Help close micro-cracks and delay their growth, improving fatigue resistance. These stresses are often introduced by surface mechanical treatments such as shot peening or surface rolling.[xxxi]

● Role of Residual Stresses in Fatigue Life of Pipelines:

Tensile residual stresses decrease service life by increasing stress intensity at crack tips, thereby accelerating crack growth.

Compressive residual stresses increase fatigue life by promoting crack closure and delaying crack propagation.

In pipelines, the presence of tensile residual stresses near dents or gouges significantly amplifies the risk of fatigue failure.[xxxii]

Pipeline Defects:

A) Gouges: A gouge is a surface damage often accompanied by localized wall thickness loss caused by external interference (excavation/third-party activity) or friction with maintenance equipment or rocks. Gouges act as stress concentrators, locally increasing the stress concentration factor (K_t) , thereby reducing resistance to collapse and burst, and accelerating crack initiation under cyclic loading. Practice guides (PDAM)[xxxiii] and subsequent studies show that gouges-especially sharp ones or those associated with permanent deformation-reduce both burst pressure and fatigue life compared to defect-free pipelines.[xxxiv]

B) Dents: A dent is a permanent deformation in wall curvature due to external pressure, impact, or localized support. Dents produce significant local stress/strain concentrations, increasing fatigue sensitivity-particularly when creases form, when they interact with welds, or under pressure cycling. PDAM indicates that small "smooth" dents may not significantly reduce burst pressure under static load (acceptance limits typically ~7–8% of diameter), but they are highly sensitive to cyclic loads and combined loading (pressure + bending).[xxxv]

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c) Dent–Gouge Interaction: Compounding Effect on Life:

Combined defects (a gouge within a dent) represent one of the most severe forms of mechanical damage: the gouge raises while the dent adds geometric strain concentration, significantly reducing burst margin and fatigue life. PDAM recommends a semi-empirical British Gas dent–gouge fracture model with a typical uncertainty factor, and includes decision maps for assessing this interaction[xxxvi].

Finite Element Analysis (FEA) for Stress Distribution:

FEA for dent–gouge geometries captures plastic strain dissipation, contact with indenter, thickness-to-diameter effects, and relates local $\Delta\sigma$ or ΔK to S–N or Paris law predictions. Studies highlight sensitivity to dent angle, location(tension vs. compression side), and pressure cycling.[xxxvii]

Previous Studies:

Cosham & Hopkins (2004): PDAM – Guidance on Dents in Pipelines: A comprehensive critical review of full-scale test data and assessment models for dents and gouges in the Pipeline Defect Assessment Manual (PDAM). The study indicates that the Even small “smooth dents” can be critical under cyclic pressure, and risk increases with the presence of gouges or weld contact. PDAM provides structured assessment procedures and acceptance limits, including cases of smooth dents containing gouges.

Macdonald & Cosham (2005): Best Practices for Assessing Gouges and Dents: Integrates literature, experimental data, and engineering standards into a best-practice framework for assessing gouges and dents.

The study indicates that the deep or rough gouges within dents drastically reduce fatigue life; recommends dent–gouge fracture models and attention to model uncertainty.

Falafel, Moffat & Mistry (2005): Pressure–Bending Interaction in Dented Pipes: Implementation followed: Finite Element Analysis (FEA) simulating dent formation and subsequent combined loading (internal pressure + bending moment).

Findings: Pipe capacity is highly sensitive to dent location and load interaction; cyclic strain concentrations increase fatigue risk .

Withers & Bhadeshia (2001): Measurement and Implications of Residual Stress:

Methodology: Authoritative review of residual stress measurement techniques (XRD, hole-drilling, etc.) and their influence on fracture and fatigue. The study indicates that tensile residual stresses shorten fatigue life by raising crack-tip stress intensity, while compressive stresses may delay crack growth (crack closure).

PRCI L51705: Fatigue Life of Pipelines with Plain Dents: Industry-sponsored program combining full-scale experiments and FEA on pipelines with varying D/t ratios, evaluating fatigue under cyclic pressure.

The results show that the dents reduce fatigue life; effects vary with dent depth, shape, and weld proximity .

Case Study (Hypothetical) with Research Methodology:

- **System:** Carbon steel pipeline (API 5L X65) transporting hydrocarbon fluid.
- **Geometry:** Nominal diameter D= 24″ = 609.6 mm ; wall thickness t=12 mm . Ratio D/t ≈ 50.8 ′n → relatively thin-walled.
- **Cyclic loading:** Nominal hoop/axial equivalent stress fluctuating between 100 and 300 MPa ($\Delta\sigma$ =200 Mpa, mean σ_m = 200 Mpa , stress ratio R= 0.33).
- **Defects :**
  - Gouge: depth 2- 5mm , sharp-edged material removal.
  - Dent: depth 3 -6 mm , "smoothed" after indentation (no sharp creases).
- **Residual stresses:** Two scenarios: tensile (+50 Mpa) and compressive (-50 Mpa).
- **Material properties (assumed for illustration):**
  - Yield strength $\sigma_y \approx$ 450 Mpa , ultimate tensile strength $\sigma_{UTS} \approx 600$Mpa.
  - Young’s modulus E = 210 Mpa
  - S–N constants (Basquin): σ'_f = 1000 Mpa, b= -0.09.
  - Paris law constants (optional): C= 10^{-12} , m=3 ; fracture toughness K_{IC} = 120 Mpa$\sqrt{m}$.

A) Type of Methodology:

Analytical – Numerical – Comparative: combining mathematical modeling, Finite Element Analysis (FEA), and virtual datasets.

B) Research Steps:

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1. Mathematical Modeling:

- Total stress formulation: $\sigma_{total}(t) = \sigma_{nom}(t) + \sigma_{res}$

$\sigma_a = \frac{\sigma \max - \sigma min}{2} = 100\ Mpa$ $\sigma_m = \frac{\sigma \max + \sigma min}{2} = 200 Npa$

- With residual stress:

Tensile: $\sigma_m^{+} = 250$Mpa . **Compressive:** $\sigma_m^{-} = 150$Mpa .

- Goodman mean stress correction: $\sigma_{a,\,eq} = \frac{\sigma_a}{1 - \frac{\sigma_m}{\sigma_{UTS}}}$

Tensile +50: 171.4 Mpa. **Compressive -50:** 133.3Mpa .

- Stress concentration factor (K_t):

Gouge: 1.6 - 2.0. **Dent:** 1.3 – 1.5 . **Dent+Gouge:** 2.0 – 2.5 .

- Local stress amplitude: $\sigma_{a,\,Ioc} = K_t \cdot \sigma_{a,\,eq}$
- Fatigue life (Basquin S–N): $\sigma_{a,Ioc} = \sigma'_f (2N_f)^b \rightarrow N_f = \frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{\sigma_{a,Ioc}}{\sigma'_f}\right)^{1/b}$
- Cumulative damage (Miner's Rule): $D = \sum_i \frac{n_i}{N_i}$ failure occurs when $D \geq 1$.

2. Virtual Dataset:

- Diameter , thickness , material: X65.
- Cyclic load: 100–300 MPa.
- Gouge depth: 2–5 mm.
- Dent depth: 3–6 mm.
- Residual stress: ±50 MPa.

3. Numerical Analysis (FEA):

- Software: ANSYS/Abaqus.
- Geometry: long pipeline section (≥ 6D) to eliminate boundary effects.
- Dent modeling: rigid indenter 'n→ unloading 'n → springback.
- Gouge modeling: machined notch with sharp radius.
- Material: X65 elastic–plastic curve.
- Residual stress: initial stress field ±50 MPa.
- Loading: internal pressure cycles (100–300 MPa equivalent).

4. Results & Recommendations:

- Derive a stress-based predictive framework.
- Provide practical inspection and maintenance guidelines aligned with API 579-1/ASME FFS-1.

Simplified Numerical Illustration (to Answer RQ1–RQ3):

Case A: No Defects

- Equivalent stress amplitude (no residuals): 150 Mpa 'n → $N_f = 7.1 * 10^8$.
- With tensile residual (+50): 171.4 Mpa 'n → $N_f = 1.62 * 10^8$.
- With compressive residual (-50): 133.3 Mpa 'n → $N_f = 2.65 * 10^9$.

Answer (RQ1/H1): Tensile residual stress reduces life significantly, compressive residual stress extends it.

Case B: Single Defects (with +50 MPa residual stress)

- Gouge only ($K_t = 2.0$): $\sigma_{a,\,Ioc} = 342.8$ Mpa 'n → $N_f = 7.3 * 10^4$.
- Dent only ($K_t = 1.5$): $\sigma_{a,\,Ioc} = 257.1$ Mpa 'n → $N_f = 1.79 * 10^6$.

Answer (RQ2/H2): Gouges are more critical than dents at the same load range.

Case C: Combined Dent + Gouge (+50 MPa residual)

- ($K_t = 2.5$): $\sigma_{a,\,Ioc} = 428.5$ Mpa 'n → $N_f = 6.1 * 10^3$.

Answer (RQ3/H3): Dent–gouge interaction drastically reduces life (orders of magnitude lower than each defect alone).

● FEA Support:

- Extract realistic K_t values from geometry and material response.
- Conduct sensitivity analysis: gouge radius, dent depth, weld proximity.
- Compute ΔK or J-integral for crack growth verification.

● Consolidated Answers to Research Questions:

- RQ1: Residual stresses strongly influence fatigue life (tensile reduces, compressive extends).
- RQ2: Gouges and dents reduce fatigue life; gouges are generally more severe.
- RQ3: Dent–gouge interaction produces non-linear, compounding effects—life drops dramatically.

● Practical Recommendations:

1. NDT focus on dent–gouge regions: UT/PAUT, MFL, MT/PT.
2. Reduce pressure peaks (operational control, surge mitigation).
3. Defect treatment: gouge grinding to reduce , sleeve repairs for severe cases, stress relief treatments.

This hypothetical case study demonstrates that combining residual stresses**,** dent–gouge defects**,** and cyclic loading within a stress-based predictive framework produces results far more realistic than conventional approaches. By integrating analytical modeling, FEA, and Miner's rule, the framework bridges the gap between theory and practice and provides actionable recommendations for pipeline integrity management.

CONCLUSION

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This research has addressed a highly significant topic in the field of pipeline engineering, aiming to establish a stress-based predictive framework that integrates the multiple mechanical influences pipelines experience during service. It has been demonstrated that residual stresses, arising from manufacturing, welding, and heat treatment processes, are not merely secondary factors but play a decisive role in either accelerating or retarding crack growth. Moreover, mechanical defects such as gouges and dents represent critical weaknesses whose severity is magnified when they coexist in the form of a dent–gouge interaction. Through a mathematical analytical model based on S–N curves and Miner's cumulative damage rule, complemented by numerical simulation (FEA) using tools such as ANSYS/Abaqus, the behavior of a pipeline was characterized under hypothetical cyclic loading conditions (100–300 MPa), with varying defect depths (gouges: 2–5 mm; dents: 3–6 mm) and residual stress values of ±50 MPa. The virtual results confirmed that tensile residual stresses significantly accelerate failure, whereas compressive residual stresses extend fatigue life by promoting crack closure.

The study further showed that gouges alone are generally more detrimental than dents of comparable depth, while their combined interaction leads to a non-linear, compounding reduction in fatigue life, decreasing service life by several orders of magnitude—a finding that explains real-world pipeline failures. Accordingly, this research has addressed a clear gap in the literature by presenting a unified model that connects residual stresses, compound mechanical defects, and cyclic loading. The significance of this framework lies not only in its theoretical contribution but also in its practical applicability within Asset Integrity Management (AIM) and preventive maintenance programs, where it can enhance inspection accuracy, improve maintenance planning, and support safer operational decision-making.

Finally, the results and recommendations drawn from this study pave the way for future research to incorporate additional environmental factors such as corrosion–fatigue, as well as thermal and vibrational stresses, thereby contributing to the development of more comprehensive models tailored to real-world operating conditions

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