

# Experimental Study of Genetic Algorithm Optimization on WC/Co Material Machining

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**Abstract** – *In materials machining, using multi objective genetic algorithm to obtain optimal solutions is a trend in recent researches. Non dominated sorting genetic algorithm (NSGA-II) and also multi objective genetic algorithm (MOGA) are capable to optimize more than one objective functions concurrently. This study presents combination of regression (second order polynomial) and soft computing techniques to maximize material removal rate (MRR) and minimize surface roughness (Ra) simultaneously for cobalt bonded tungsten carbide material using die sinking electrical discharge machining (WC/Co EDM). Single objective genetic algorithm (SoGA), MOGA and NSGA-II are used to search for the optimal solutions of WC/Co EDM parameters, pulse on time (T), pulse current (I), flushing pressure (P) and electrode rotation (R). The optimization performances are investigated using Matlab 7.12 (R2011a). The maximum value of material removal rate is obtained from NSGA-II optimization, 178.324 mg/min meanwhile the lowest surface roughness from SoGA optimization, 0.155  $\mu\text{m}$ . MOGA optimization shows medium level of output in the conditions whereby did not dominate for either maximum material removal rate or minimum surface roughness, however the solutions are within the acceptable range of experimental results. Copyright © 2016 Penerbit Akademia Baru - All rights reserved.*

**Keywords:** Genetic Algorithm, multi objectives, regression, EDM, Optimization, Cobalt Bonded, Tungsten Carbided

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Machining of materials can be divided into modern and traditional machining. Broadly used in industrial application, an important die material, cobalt bonded tungsten carbide has very high resistance and strength which resulted to difficulties in the cutting process. One of the earliest modern machining, EDM has taken wide interest among the researchers [1-4] these days in machining such, difficult to cut materials. EDM is an electrical thermo process that is used to remove material throughout the act of electrical discharge in fast manner and high current. The purpose of this work is to examine the capability of SoGA, MOGA and NSGA-II in order to obtain optimal parameters in machining the cobalt bonded tungsten carbide.

In many optimization problems, modeling is used to correlate the relationship between input and output. There are conventional modeling techniques such as Taguchi [5], regression [6] and etc. Artificial neural network (ANN) is one of the most well known advanced modeling

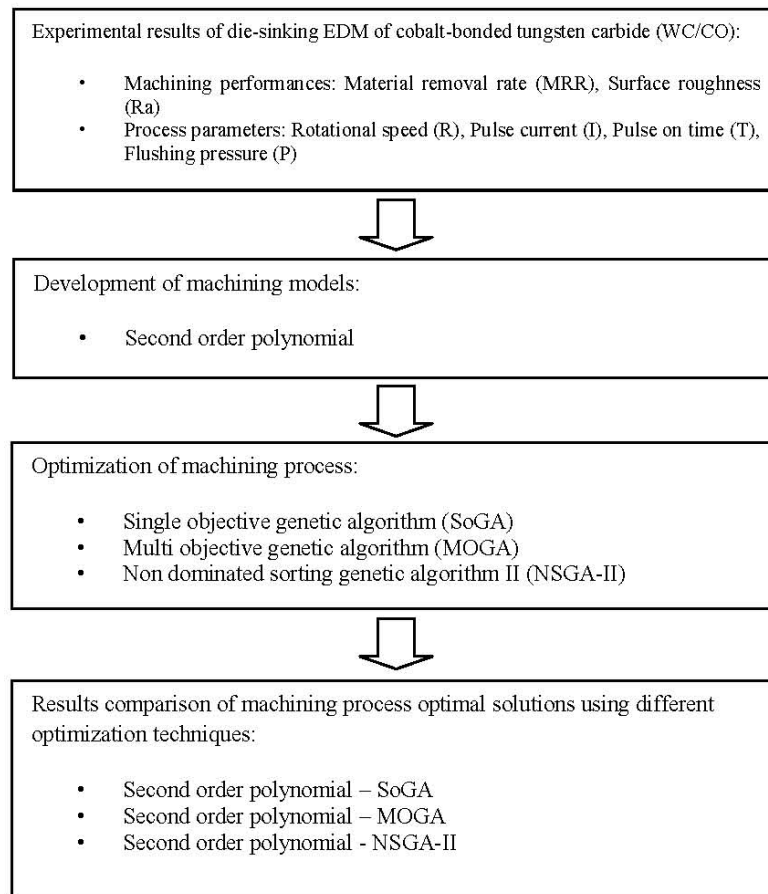
technique being used to solve various real world applications [7]. However, to observe the competency of the optimization algorithms, only one type of established modeling technique which is known as second order polynomial regression is applied. The model is chosen based on the analysis of variance of the experimental results.

Soft computing techniques have recently been used to assist in optimizing machining parameters such as simulated annealing (SA), genetic algorithm (GA), particle swarm optimization (PSO), artificial bee colony (ABC) algorithm and etc. [8-12]. It is observed that genetic algorithm and multi objective genetic algorithm are increasingly used in machining parameter optimization. A genetic algorithm is a robust, easy to use and highly efficient algorithm [13, 14]. The multi objective genetic algorithm is then enhanced in order to satisfy multiple objective problems such as vector evaluated GA (VEGA) [15], MOGA [16], niched Pareto GA (NPGA) [17] etc. As in machining, Bouzakis et al. [18] used MOGA to obtain the optimal parameters which applicable in various cases of milling operation. Mahdavinejad [19] optimized the turning parameters of steel using MOGA and multi objective harmony search algorithm. Sultana and Dhar [20] used MOGA to optimize machining parameters in turning. NSGA-II is mainly a trusted MoGA in machining optimization [21, 22]. Thus; trials are conducted to study the capabilities of three algorithms, SoGA, MOGA and NSGA-II in EDM parameters optimization.

Material removal rate, tool wear rate and surface roughness are some of the most widely considered material machining performances in sequence to obtain the optimal solution of machining parameters [23-26]. In order to achieve the desired level of machining performances, the parameters have to be set correctly for each machining operation. Therefore, we reconsider the data of Kanagarajan et al. [27] to investigate the the most popular techniques (SoGA, MOGA and NSGA-II) to support in reducing the material machining process cost and time particularly to the non experienced machinist.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

Genetic algorithm is a soft computing optimization technique that mimics the process of natural evolution. Genetic algorithm is applied widely in optimizing machining process parameters to satisfy three conflicting objectives of manufacturing world, (i) maximize production rate, (ii) maximize product quality, and (iii) minimize production cost [28]. Genetic algorithm is reliable in searching the optimal solutions of machining parameters [29-31]. Surface roughness and removal rate are the machining performances or the objective functions for this study. The optimal solutions of EDM process parameters using three genetic algorithm optimization techniques, SoGA, MOGA and NSGA-II are observed. The process of this study is given in Figure 1. Four considered process parameters are pulse on time ( $T$ ), pulse current ( $I$ ), flushing pressure ( $P$ ) and electrode rotation ( $R$ ).



**Figure 1:** Research flow

### 3.0 EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

This study is based on the machining experimental results by Kanagarajan et al. [27]. The authors conducted the experiments using an M100 model Electronica die sinking EDM with a transistor controlled power supply. Density for tungsten carbide (WC) is 15.7 g/cc and cobalt (CO) is 13.55 g/cc, where the granule sizes are 6 $\mu$ m and 3 $\mu$ m respectively.

The machining performances are material removal rate and surface roughness. Surface roughness is calculated on a Surfcoeder SE1200 and an average of 5 readings is judged as the absolute surface roughness value. The outcomes are based on L27 orthogonal array.

### 4.0 MATHEMATICAL MODEL

The mathematical model based on second order polynomial regression for material removal rate and surface roughness are shown in equations (1) and (2).

$$\begin{aligned} \text{MRR} = & -30.3660 + 0.1589R + 9.5259I - 0.1241T + 20.8585P - 0.0001R^2 - \\ & 0.2318I^2 + 0.0001T^2 - 9.2131P^2 - 0.0002RI - 0.0000RT + 0.0220RP + 1.9991IP \\ & - 0.0199TP \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

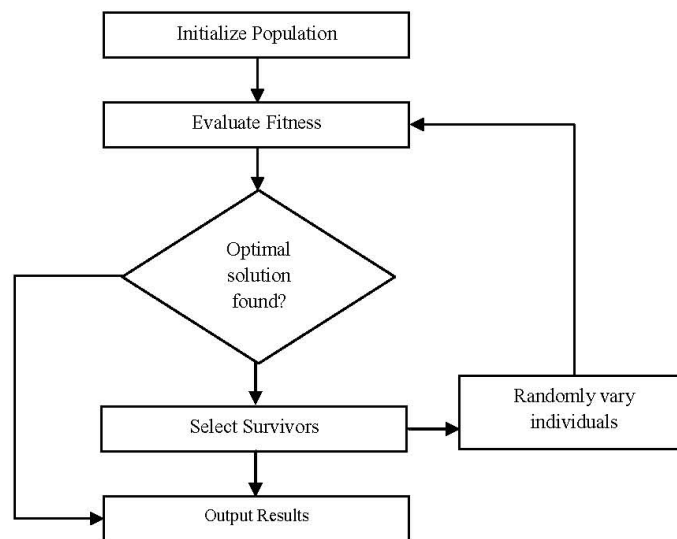
$$\begin{aligned} \text{Ra} = & 4.2307 - 0.0116R + 0.5816I + 0.0099T - 4.7481P + 0.0000R^2 + 0.0085I^2 - \\ & 0.0000T^2 + 2.1239P^2 - 0.0002RI - 0.0000RT - 0.0020RP - 0.2462IP - 0.0018TP \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

## 5.0 OPTIMIZATION

Known for its elitism in searching global optimum, genetic algorithm is chosen as the base of the experimental study. Realistic and robust concept of this evolutionary algorithm, make it reliable to be applied in real world applications.

### 5.1 Single Objective Genetic Algorithm (SOGA)

Genetic algorithm selects individuals randomly from current population to be parents and uses them to produce the children for the next generation. Finally, the population develops toward an optimal solution from the succeeding generations. Figure 2 depicted the conceptual basic algorithm.

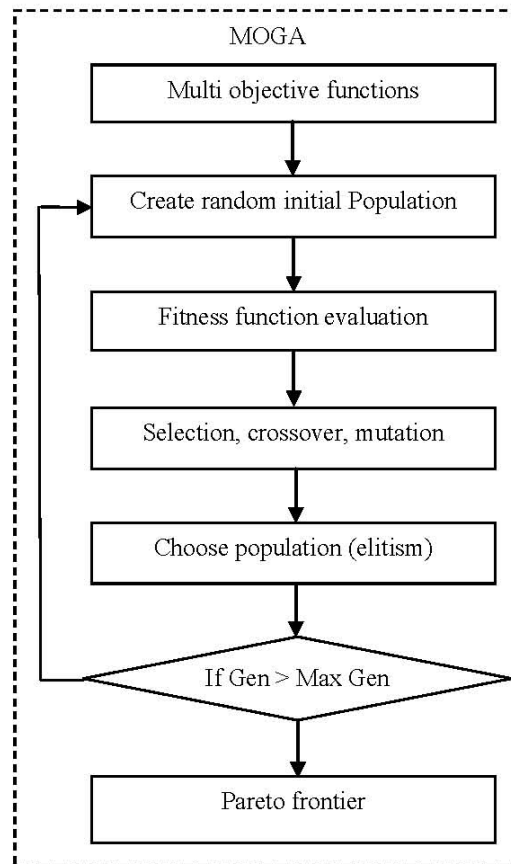


**Figure 2:** Flow of Genetic Algorithm

### 5.2 Multi Objective Genetic Algorithm (MOGA)

Originated from Fonseca and Fleming [16]; multi objective genetic algorithm is developed based on flow in Figure 3. As shown in Figure 3, the initial population is created randomly, followed by fitness function evaluation, selection, crossover and mutation. To maintain the best parents for children reproduction, the elitism concept is utilized. When the criteria are not

fulfilled, the algorithm returns to initial population. And finally, the Pareto solutions are obtained.



**Figure 3:** Flow of Genetic Algorithm

### 5.3 Non Dominated Sorting Genetic Algorithm II (NSGA-II)

NSGA-II (Figure 4) is developed by Deb et al. [21] and widely used in machining parameters optimization. The optimization process can be detailed as below:

NSGA-II description can be detailed as below steps:

Step 1: Population initialization base on the problem range and constraint.

Step 2: Non dominated sorting based on non domination criteria of the population that has been initialized.

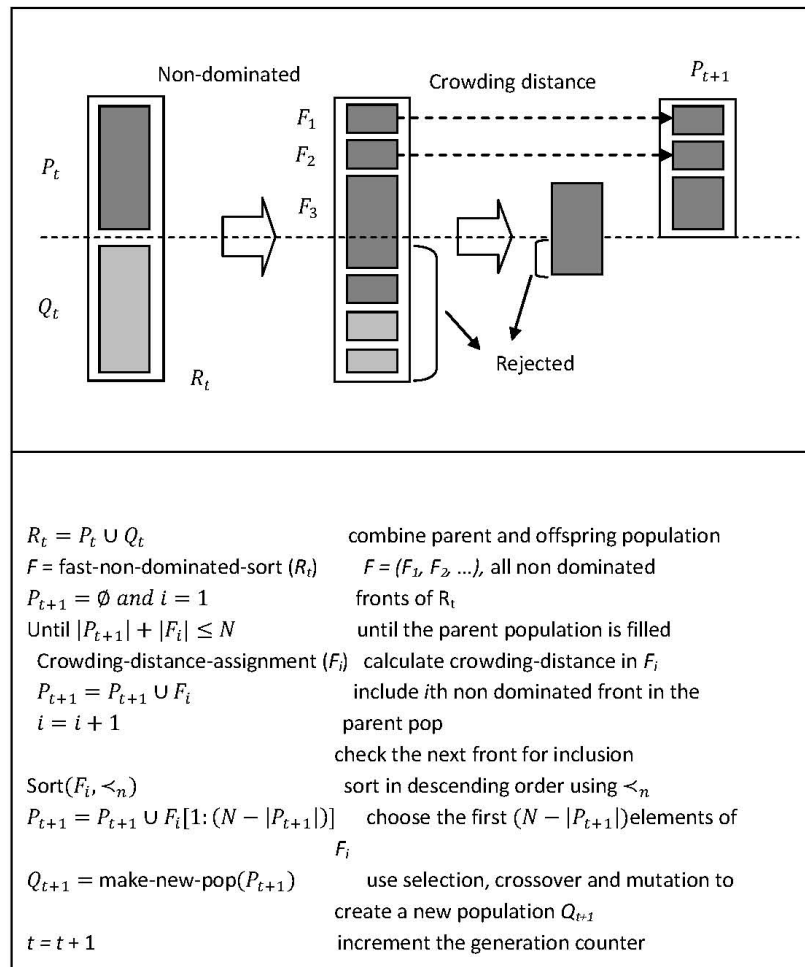
Step 3: The crowding distance value is assign front wise, when the sorting is complete. The individuals in population are selected based on rank and crowding distance.

Step 4: The selection of individuals is carried out using a binary tournament selection with crowded-comparison operator.

Step 5: Crossover and polynomial mutation.

Step 6: Offspring population and current generation population are combined and the individuals of the next generation are set by selection by recombination and selection. The new

generation is filled by each front subsequently until the population size exceeds the current population size.



**Figure 4: NSGA-II concept**

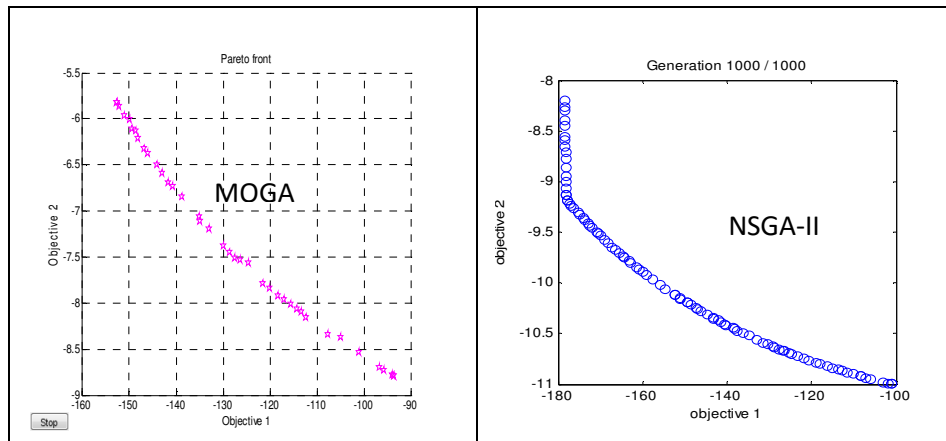
## 6.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The objective functions are listed in equations (2) and (3); the lower bound and upper bound are set to the values as shown in Table 1. Each objective function, material removal rate and surface roughness, have to be run separately with same random state to get optimal solutions. Due to random initial population and to search for better optimal solutions, the solver is run twenty seven times for both material removal rate and surface roughness. The optimal solution for material removal rate is obtained at 25th run. While the optimal solutions for surface roughness is obtained at 21st run. The maximum value for material removal rate is 171.759 mg/min with combination of process parameters  $R = 998.365$  rpm,  $I = 14.960$  A,  $T = 203.680$   $\mu$ s,  $P = 0.995$  kg/cm<sup>2</sup> and the minimum surface roughness is 0.155  $\mu$ m with combination of process parameters,  $R = 996.299$  rpm,  $I = 5.036$  A,  $T = 200.414$   $\mu$ s,  $P = 0.995$  kg/cm<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 1:** Process parameters

Parameters	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Rotational speed, rpm	250	1000
Pulse current, A	5	15
Pulse on time, $\mu$ s	200	1000
Flushing pressure, kg/cm <sup>2</sup>	0.5	1.5

MOGA is an expansion of SoGA optimization technique in order to resolve multi objective problems for the real world application. It is experiential that the results of maximum material removal rate and minimum surface roughness are simultaneously acquired with single run. Maximum material removal rate is 152.660 mg/min and minimum surface roughness is 5.825  $\mu$ m. The optimal parameters are  $R = 978.929$  rpm,  $I = 14.944$  A,  $T = 212.372$   $\mu$ s and  $P = 0.973$  kg/cm<sup>2</sup>. The Pareto front for optimal solutions is shown in Figure 5.



**Figure 5:** Pareto front of MRR (objective 1) and Ra (objective 2) using MOGA and NSGA-II optimization

NSGA-II is a diversification of multi objective genetic algorithm which is a well known algorithm for its elitism. Maximum material removal rate, 178.324 mg/min and minimum surface roughness, 8.199  $\mu$ m values are obtained simultaneously using NSGA-II with  $R$ ,  $I$ ,  $T$ ,  $P$  values are 944.516 rpm, 15 A, 200  $\mu$ s, 1.5 kg/cm<sup>2</sup> respectively. The same results of optimal solutions are generated twice. Figure 5 depicts the Pareto front of material removal rate and surface roughness where NSGA-II is claimed to be good in searching for best spread of solutions compared to MOGA.

Optimization helps in reducing the machining time and increase production rate. The assortment of results is based on the requirement of the process engineer, either to have lower surface roughness or higher material removal rate. The WC/Co EDM process parameters are optimized using SoGA, MOGA and NSGA-II. The second order polynomial model used to maximize material removal rate and minimize the surface roughness values. 100 sets of

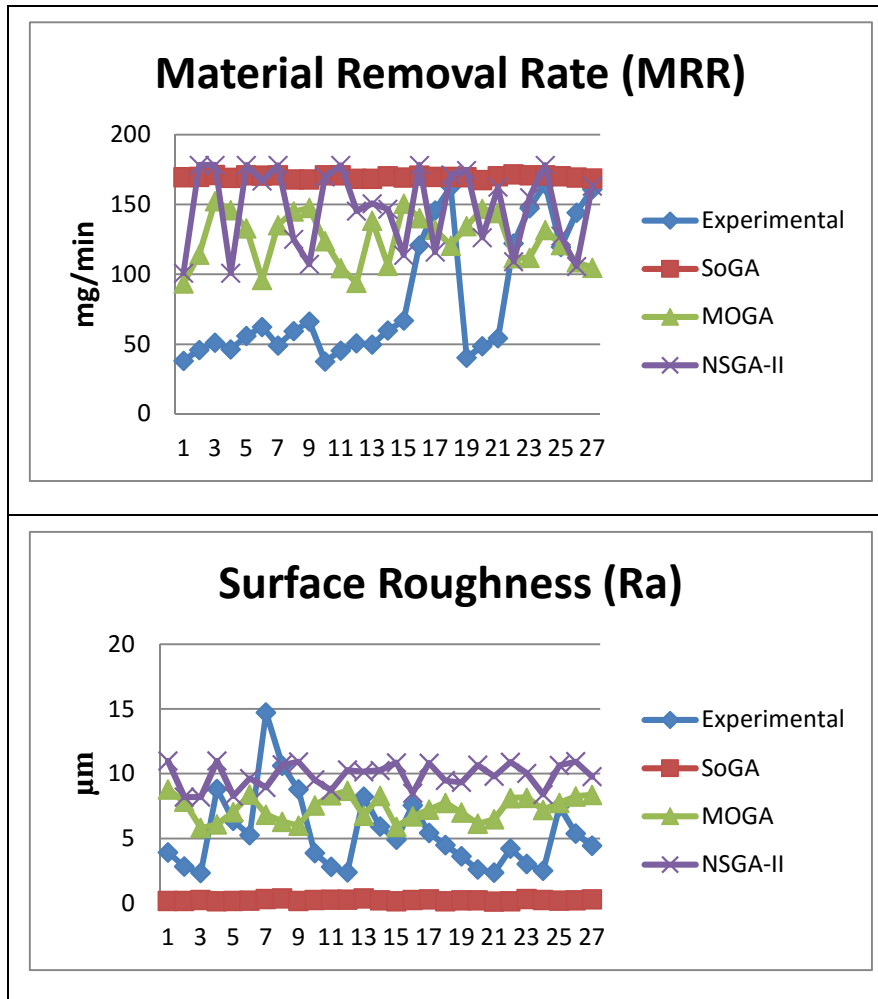
solutions are obtained for each optimization technique but the best solutions among them are chosen and figured out manually in Table 2. The total solutions obtained for MOGA and NSGA-II optimization are 100 solutions each, but to compare with SoGA and experimental results, we only used the first 27 solutions. It is observed that in order to get optimal solutions of material removal rate and surface roughness, the  $R$  values considered are near to level 3 which is in the range of 869.172 - 1000 rpm and most of the  $T$  values are near to lower bound which is in between 200 – 212.372  $\mu$ s. The run time of MOGA is much faster than NSGA-II due to the complexity of the coding of NSGA-II.

**Table 2:** Best set of solutions with maximum MRR and minimum Ra.

	R, rpm	I, A	T, $\mu$ s	P, kg/cm <sup>2</sup>	MRR, mg/min	Ra, $\mu$ m
Experimental	1000	10	200	1.5	164.62	2.52
	1000	5	1000	1.5	54.46	2.37
SoGA	998.365	14.960	203.680	0.995	171.759	-
	996.299	5.036	200.414	0.995		0.155
MoGA	978.929	14.944	212.372	0.973	152.660	5.825
NSGA-II	944.516	15.000	200.000	1.500	178.324	8.199
	944.516	15.000	200.000	1.500	178.324	8.199

The relations of SoGA, MOGA and NSGA-II in EDM optimization of material removal rate and surface roughness are represented in Figure 6. It is proven that SoGA, MOGA and NSGA-II are efficient optimization techniques since the predicted values of material removal rate and surface roughness for all techniques are near to the experimental values. However, optimization of multi objectives problem using SoGA is a waste of time where the optimal solutions for two or more conflicting objectives cannot be obtained with a single run. The value of material removal rate and surface roughness using SoGA technique are almost similar for all 27 times run, subjected to a very limited solution of optimal parameters. SoGA outperforms MOGA and NSGA-II with the lowest value of surface roughness, nevertheless the value obtained is lower than the experimental results. NSGA-II outperforms other techniques in searching maximum material removal rate but less efficient in searching minimum surface roughness. In spite of that, the predicted material removal rate and surface roughness values are trustable since the results are still in the range of material removal rate and surface roughness experimental results. The maximum value of material removal rate is attained from NSGA-II optimization, 178.324 mg/min meanwhile the lowest surface roughness from SoGA optimization, 0.155  $\mu$ m. MOGA optimization of EDM shows medium level of output whereby it did not dominate either maximum material removal rate or minimum surface roughness.





**Figure 6:** MRR and Ra values for 27 solutions

In this case, percentage errors of material removal rate and surface roughness between experimental and SoGA, MOGA and NSGA-II are summarized in Table 3. The bold fonts are the lowest value of percentage error for each SoGA, MOGA and NSGA-II compared to the experimental results. The lowest percentage value of material removal rate is obtained from MOGA optimization which is equal to 121.193 mg/min. Meanwhile the best surface roughness value, 10.694  $\mu\text{m}$  is obtained from NSGA-II optimization. MOGA produced the lowest percent error for both material removal rate and surface roughness on the 25th solution which shows that these values are reliable in solving both objective functions at same time in single run.

Overall, we summarized the comparison of SoGA, MOGA and NSGA-II in terms of objective, solution and time in Table 4. SoGA is able to search for either the highest and lowest optimum value in a single run. MOGA and NSGA-II are capable to optimize process parameters while considering two or more machining performances in a single run.

**Table 3:** Lowest percent error

	Solution No.	Percent Error SoGA, %	Percent Error MOGA, %	Percent Error NSGA-II, %
MRR	24	<b>3.953</b>	19.830	8.316
	25	42.393	<b>1.213</b>	6.601
	27	4.841	34.844	<b>1.445</b>
Ra	8	96.327	40.64	<b>0.51</b>
	12	<b>87.555</b>	263.84	330.84
	25	96.981	<b>4.07</b>	42.63

**Table 4:** Comparison of EDM optimization

	<b>SoGA</b>	<b>MOGA</b>	<b>NSGA-II</b>
Objective	Single objective	Multiple objectives	Multiple objectives
Solution	Single set of solutions	Many sets of solutions without neglecting any of the objective	Many sets of solutions with better spread and convergence of solutions
Time	Run time is very short for single objective but very time consuming for multi objectives	Time efficient	Slower optimization time compared to MOGA

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

This paper presented and discussed the usage of SoGA, MOGA and NSGA-II in solving multiple objective problems of EDM operation in machining cobalt bonded tungsten carbide (WC/Co). This study proven that genetic algorithm as a soft computing technique is reliable in assisting the materials machining process especially to the non machinist experienced. Unlike single objective genetic algorithm, multi objective genetic algorithm can give variety of choices at one time run to the engineers in choosing the process parameters.

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