International Journal of
Artificial Intelligence And Machine Learning In Engineering
Peer Reviewed, Referred & Indexed Journal
ISSN: 3143-4258 www.ijaimle.com Original Research Paper

DATA-DRIVEN QUALITY OPTIMIZATION FOR METAL ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING THROUGH MACHINE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Metal additive manufacturing has emerged as a transformative production technology for fabricating geometrically complex, lightweight, customized, and high-performance components across aerospace, automotive, biomedical, energy, tooling, and advanced engineering sectors. Despite these advantages, consistent quality remains a major challenge because final part characteristics are influenced by complex interactions among process parameters, feedstock properties, thermal history, melt-pool dynamics, machine condition, scanning strategy, layer geometry, environmental conditions, and post-processing operations. Conventional quality control generally depends on fixed parameter windows, trial-and-error experimentation, destructive testing, offline inspection, and operator experience. Such approaches are expensive, time-consuming, and insufficient for identifying dynamic process variations during layer-by-layer fabrication. This paper proposes a data-driven quality optimization framework for metal additive manufacturing through machine learning. The proposed methodology integrates heterogeneous process sensing, edge preprocessing, multi-source data fusion, process parameter management, layer-wise quality monitoring, machine-learning-based defect prediction, Digital Twin-assisted process representation, adaptive parameter recommendation, explainable quality analytics, secure API interoperability, MLOps lifecycle governance, and sustainability-aware computational management. Real-time and historical information involving laser power, scanning speed, hatch spacing, layer thickness, build orientation, melt-pool temperature, optical intensity, acoustic emissions, vibration, chamber conditions, energy consumption, feedstock characteristics, surface quality, porosity, dimensional deviation, and defect observations are continuously collected and analyzed. Machine-learning models identify relationships between process conditions and quality outcomes and predict the probability of defects before completion of the entire build. The optimization layer recommends feasible process configurations according to quality, productivity, material utilization, energy consumption, and equipment constraints. A representative evaluation demonstrates improvements in defect prediction accuracy, porosity reduction, surface quality, dimensional consistency, first-pass yield, process stability, anomaly response time, material utilization, and energy efficiency compared with conventional parameter selection and isolated monitoring approaches. The findings indicate that machine-learning-driven quality optimization can transform metal additive manufacturing from a predominantly reactive inspection process into a predictive, adaptive, and continuously improving production system.

Keywords: Metal Additive Manufacturing, Machine Learning, Quality Optimization, Defect Prediction, Process Parameter Optimization, Data-Driven Manufacturing, Digital Twin, Melt-Pool Monitoring, Predictive Analytics, MLOps, Smart Manufacturing, Industry 4.0.

I. INTRODUCTION

Metal Additive Manufacturing (MAM) has revolutionized modern manufacturing by enabling the production of geometrically complex, lightweight, customized, and high-performance metallic components through layer-by-layer fabrication directly from digital models. Compared with conventional subtractive manufacturing, additive manufacturing significantly reduces material waste while providing greater design flexibility, rapid prototyping, topology optimization, and shorter product development cycles. Technologies including Laser Powder Bed Fusion (LPBF), Selective Laser Melting (SLM), Directed Energy Deposition (DED), and Electron Beam Melting (EBM) have gained widespread adoption across aerospace, automotive, biomedical, defense, energy, and tooling industries because of their capability to manufacture complex engineering components with superior mechanical properties **[1], [2]**.

Maintaining consistent product quality remains one of the most significant challenges in metal additive manufacturing because component characteristics are influenced by highly nonlinear interactions among laser power, scanning speed, hatch spacing, layer thickness, powder characteristics, thermal history, build orientation, machine condition, environmental parameters, and post-processing operations. Minor variations in these parameters may lead to porosity, lack of fusion, cracking, residual stress, dimensional inaccuracies, poor surface finish, and reduced mechanical performance. Conventional quality assurance approaches generally rely on predefined parameter windows, offline inspection, destructive testing, and operator experience, making them insufficient for identifying dynamic process variations during real-time manufacturing **[3], [4]**.

The rapid growth of Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), machine learning, cloud computing, Digital Twins, edge intelligence, and smart manufacturing has enabled continuous acquisition and analysis of manufacturing process data. Modern manufacturing systems collect optical images, thermal measurements, acoustic emissions, vibration signals, melt-pool observations, machine logs, energy consumption, and environmental information throughout the manufacturing process. Machine learning algorithms analyze these heterogeneous datasets to identify quality-related patterns, predict manufacturing defects, recommend optimal process parameters, and continuously improve production quality. Data-driven quality optimization therefore transforms manufacturing from reactive inspection into predictive and adaptive quality management **[5], [6]**.

Industrial implementation of intelligent quality optimization additionally requires secure interoperability among manufacturing execution systems, Digital Twins, inspection platforms, enterprise applications, cloud analytics services, and machine controllers. Standardized APIs, secure authentication, lifecycle governance, protected communication channels, and cloud-native deployment enable reliable exchange of manufacturing information while protecting proprietary industrial knowledge. Sustainable computational resource management further improves scalability for machine learning training, Digital Twin simulation, and fleet-wide manufacturing analytics **[7], [8]**.

Although previous studies have independently investigated additive manufacturing, machine learning, Digital Twins, process monitoring, defect prediction, and quality analytics, relatively few provide a comprehensive framework integrating heterogeneous sensing, edge intelligence, multi-source data fusion, explainable machine learning, Digital Twin-assisted optimization, secure API interoperability, cloud-native deployment, and continuous MLOps governance. Therefore, this research proposes a **Data-Driven Quality**

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Optimization Framework for Metal Additive Manufacturing Through Machine Learning that integrates multi-modal sensing, intelligent data fusion, predictive quality analytics, adaptive parameter optimization, Digital Twin synchronization, secure enterprise integration, and continuous model lifecycle management to improve manufacturing quality, reduce defects, optimize resource utilization, and support intelligent Industry 4.0 manufacturing environments **[9], [10]**.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Srikanth Kavuri (2022) proposed Large Language Model (LLM)-based automation for software test generation and demonstrated that intelligent learning systems significantly improve automated decision-making and software quality assurance. Although developed for software engineering, the concepts of intelligent pattern recognition and predictive analytics provide valuable support for machine learning-based manufacturing quality optimization **[11]**.

Gummadi (2023) proposed a MuleSoft batch-processing architecture for large-scale enterprise data integration and streaming analytics. The research demonstrated efficient processing of high-volume heterogeneous datasets through standardized integration mechanisms. These concepts support scalable management of manufacturing sensor data collected from multiple machines and production lines **[12]**.

Tapia and Elwany (2014) reviewed process monitoring and control techniques for metal additive manufacturing and demonstrated the importance of thermal, optical, and process sensing in understanding manufacturing behavior. Their work established that continuous monitoring during fabrication provides significantly better quality assurance than relying solely on final inspection **[13]**.

Akinapalli (2024) proposed a predictive workload intelligence framework for multi-cloud optimization supporting large-scale enterprise analytics. The research demonstrated that intelligent workload scheduling improves computational efficiency and cloud resource utilization. Similar strategies can optimize large-scale machine learning workloads used for manufacturing quality analytics and Digital Twin simulation **[14]**.

Scime and Beuth (2018) investigated anomaly detection in laser powder bed fusion using computer vision and machine learning techniques. Their study demonstrated that image-based learning algorithms successfully identify process abnormalities before completion of the manufacturing process, providing an important foundation for predictive quality optimization **[15]**.

Khadilkar et al. (2019) investigated deep learning approaches for additive manufacturing quality analysis and demonstrated that advanced neural network models effectively identify complex relationships between manufacturing observations and quality outcomes. Their findings support the use of deep learning for intelligent quality prediction in metal additive manufacturing **[16]**.

Caggiano et al. (2019) proposed machine learning-based image processing for online defect recognition in additive manufacturing. The research demonstrated that integrating computer vision with manufacturing process information significantly improves defect identification accuracy and production monitoring capabilities **[17]**.

Wang et al. (2020) reviewed machine learning techniques for additive manufacturing process monitoring and quality prediction. The study emphasized the importance of combining process parameters, sensor observations, and manufacturing context to improve prediction accuracy while addressing challenges related to data quality and model generalization **[18]**.

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Meng et al. (2020) investigated machine learning-assisted process optimization for metal additive manufacturing and demonstrated that intelligent optimization significantly improves manufacturing quality through adaptive parameter selection and predictive quality assessment. Their work provides important support for adaptive process optimization within the proposed framework **[19]**.

Gummadi (2020) proposed standardized API design using RAML and OpenAPI specifications for enterprise system interoperability. The study demonstrated that standardized APIs improve communication reliability, scalability, and maintainability among distributed systems. The proposed framework extends these concepts by integrating secure API communication with machine learning analytics, Digital Twins, quality optimization, cloud-native deployment, and MLOps lifecycle governance for intelligent metal additive manufacturing environments **[20]**.

III. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of the Proposed Framework

The proposed methodology introduces a layered data-driven architecture for optimizing metal additive manufacturing quality through machine learning. The framework is designed around a continuous cycle in which process parameters and sensor observations are collected, validated, synchronized, fused, analyzed, and associated with quality outcomes. Machine-learning models predict emerging defects, while a Digital Twin-assisted representation maintains build context and supports feasible optimization recommendations.

The architecture consists of a Physical Additive Manufacturing Layer, Process Parameter Acquisition Layer, Multi-Modal Sensing Layer, Edge Intelligence Layer, Data Quality and Synchronization Layer, Historical Build Data Layer, Multi-Source Fusion Layer, Contextual Feature Engineering Layer, Machine-Learning Defect Prediction Layer, Digital Twin-Assisted Build Layer, Explainable Quality Analytics Layer, Adaptive Parameter Optimization Layer, Secure API Integration Layer, MLOps Governance Layer, and Sustainability Management Layer.

3.2 Physical Additive Manufacturing Layer

The Physical Additive Manufacturing Layer contains the metal additive manufacturing machine, energy delivery system, build platform, powder or feedstock mechanism, environmental control system, motion components, and associated controllers. Each machine and build is assigned a unique digital identity.

The framework records manufacturing technology, machine configuration, material category, feedstock batch, component geometry, build orientation, and planned process strategy. These contextual factors are important because identical parameter values can produce different quality outcomes across machines and geometries.

The physical layer executes the actual layer-wise fabrication process. Process events are associated with layer number, spatial region, scan path, and time wherever available.

3.3 Process Parameter Acquisition

The Process Parameter Layer records controllable and configured manufacturing variables. These include laser or energy input, scanning speed, hatch spacing, layer thickness, scan strategy, build orientation, and other process-specific settings.

Parameter values are recorded as actual operational observations where machine interfaces permit. This distinction is important because commanded settings may differ from realized process behavior due to calibration or equipment condition.

Parameter changes are versioned throughout the build. If adaptive adjustment occurs, the framework preserves the exact layer and region where the modification was applied.

3.4 Multi-Modal Sensing Layer

The sensing layer captures heterogeneous information from the manufacturing process. Optical systems monitor melt-pool intensity and visible process behavior. Infrared or thermal sensors observe heat distribution and thermal accumulation.

Acoustic emission sensors capture events associated with process instability, material interaction, and mechanical behavior. Vibration sensors monitor machine dynamics. Chamber sensors observe environmental conditions such as temperature and atmosphere-related indicators.

Energy meters record machine power consumption. Inspection systems contribute layer images, surface observations, dimensional measurements, and final quality results.

Each observation includes source identity, timestamp, build identity, layer context, and data quality information.

3.5 Edge Intelligence and Preprocessing

The Edge Intelligence Layer processes high-volume data near the additive manufacturing machine. Raw images and sensor streams can generate substantial data volumes, making continuous centralized transfer inefficient.

The edge layer performs validation, noise reduction, event detection, image preprocessing, and preliminary feature extraction. Stable process periods can be summarized, while abnormal events retain greater detail.

Safety and severe anomaly conditions are identified locally. If sensor observations indicate critical instability, the system does not wait for remote analytics before generating an alert.

3.6 Temporal and Spatial Synchronization

Additive manufacturing data must be synchronized both temporally and spatially. Sensor observations are aligned with build time, layer number, scan region, and component location where possible.

This synchronization enables the framework to associate an observed melt-pool anomaly with the exact region later found to contain a defect. Without spatial correspondence, model training can become unreliable.

Delayed observations and missing layer data are recorded explicitly. The framework prevents uncertain data from being treated as perfectly synchronized.

3.7 Data Quality Management

The Data Quality component evaluates completeness, consistency, freshness, calibration status, and plausibility. Sensors producing unstable values are assigned reduced confidence. Image quality is assessed for blur, saturation, obstruction, and missing frames. Thermal observations are checked for calibration-related inconsistencies.

Data quality information becomes part of the analytical context. Predictions generated from incomplete or unreliable data are treated cautiously.

3.8 Historical Build Data Repository

The Historical Build Data Layer stores process parameters, sensor features, layer information, machine condition, material batch, inspection outcomes, defect labels, and post-processing results.

Each build record preserves traceability between process conditions and quality outcomes. This traceability supports supervised machine learning.

The repository also stores failed and partially successful builds. Excluding unsuccessful production data would reduce the model's ability to learn defect patterns.

3.9 Multi-Source Data Fusion

The Multi-Source Fusion Layer combines parameter, optical, thermal, acoustic, vibration, environmental, energy, and quality information.

At the feature level, observations from multiple sources are integrated into a unified process state. At the decision level, outputs from specialized models can be combined according to confidence.

For example, an optical irregularity accompanied by abnormal thermal behavior provides stronger evidence of process instability than an isolated image anomaly.

3.10 Contextual Feature Engineering

The Feature Engineering Layer creates predictive variables from synchronized manufacturing information. Features represent current process settings, recent thermal accumulation, melt-pool stability, layer progression, machine condition, material batch, and historical anomaly behavior.

Trend-based features are important because gradual process deterioration may not exceed fixed thresholds. The framework therefore considers changes across recent layers.

Feature definitions are versioned to ensure consistency between model development and production inference.

3.11 Machine-Learning Defect Prediction

The Defect Prediction Layer estimates the likelihood of quality problems before final build completion. Candidate models include ensemble learning, gradient-based tree methods, deep neural networks, convolutional models for image data, and temporal architectures for sequential observations.

Models can predict defect categories such as porosity risk, lack of fusion, unstable melt behavior, surface irregularity, dimensional deviation, and abnormal layer formation.

Predictions include confidence information where supported. Low-confidence outputs are retained for observation rather than automatically triggering aggressive parameter changes.

3.12 Digital Twin-Assisted Build Representation

A Digital Twin-assisted representation is maintained for each active build. The twin stores geometry context, layer progression, process settings, sensor states, anomaly history, predicted defects, optimization actions, and inspection outcomes.

The twin enables comparison between expected and observed process behavior. If a region repeatedly exhibits abnormal thermal or optical characteristics, the system can increase monitoring priority.

The Digital Twin also preserves the effect of parameter adjustments. This supports later analysis of whether an intervention improved quality.

3.13 Explainable Quality Analytics

The Explainable Analytics Layer identifies the process variables and sensor patterns that contribute most strongly to defect predictions.

Operators and engineers can inspect whether a prediction is associated with excessive thermal accumulation, unstable optical behavior, unusual acoustic activity, process parameter combinations, or machine condition.

Explainability improves trust and supports root-cause investigation. However, explanations are treated as analytical evidence rather than definitive proof of physical causality.

3.14 Adaptive Parameter Optimization

The Optimization Layer evaluates feasible parameter adjustments according to predicted quality outcomes. Candidate changes can involve energy input, scanning speed, hatch spacing, scan strategy, and other controllable variables depending on machine capability.

Recommendations are constrained by material limits, equipment capability, validated process windows, and safety policies. The system does not recommend arbitrary parameter values outside approved boundaries.

The optimization objective balances defect reduction, surface quality, dimensional consistency, productivity, energy use, and material utilization.

3.15 Closed-Loop Quality Decision Support

The framework supports multiple automation levels. At the advisory level, recommendations are presented to operators. At the supervised level, approved changes can be implemented after human confirmation.

At higher automation levels, low-risk parameter adjustments can be applied automatically within predefined limits. High-impact changes require authorization.

After implementation, subsequent sensor observations are analyzed to determine whether process stability improved. This creates a continuous observe, predict, optimize, act, and verify cycle.

3.16 Secure API Interoperability

The API Layer enables controlled communication among additive machines, sensors, edge gateways, machine-learning services, Digital Twins, inspection systems, and enterprise applications.

Structured interfaces reduce direct coupling. Versioning allows services to evolve without immediately disrupting all consumers.

Authentication, authorization, request validation, traffic monitoring, and audit logging protect sensitive manufacturing information. Secrets are managed through controlled mechanisms.

3.17 Communication Integrity and Data Protection

Build files, process parameters, sensor data, and quality records are protected during transfer. Message integrity validation reduces the risk of unauthorized modification.

Traffic-hardening principles are relevant because manipulated parameter or sensor information could distort quality predictions. Suspicious messages are isolated before influencing optimization.

Access to sensitive component designs and manufacturing recipes is restricted according to organizational roles.

3.18 MLOps Lifecycle Governance

The MLOps Layer manages defect prediction and optimization models throughout their lifecycle. Model versions are associated with training datasets, feature definitions, validation results, machine context, and deployment state.

Candidate models undergo evaluation before production promotion. Shadow deployment allows new models to process real build data without directly influencing production decisions.

Production models are monitored for prediction error, drift, latency, missing features, and changes in material or machine populations.

When significant deterioration occurs, retraining can be initiated using validated recent data. Updated models require approval before deployment, and rollback mechanisms preserve earlier stable versions.

3.19 Sustainability-Aware Resource Management

The framework monitors material waste, failed builds, rework, energy consumption, and computational utilization. Defect prevention improves sustainability because failed metal additive builds can consume substantial material and energy.

Latency-sensitive monitoring remains near the machine, while historical training and fleet-level analysis use scalable infrastructure.

Nonurgent computational workloads can use resource-aware scheduling where operational policies permit. Efficient model architectures are preferred when predictive performance remains acceptable.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The proposed framework was evaluated through a representative metal additive manufacturing environment containing layer-wise process records, optical observations, thermal signals, acoustic indicators, machine logs, energy data, and final inspection outcomes. The evaluation included stable builds, porosity-related conditions, lack-of-fusion patterns, thermal accumulation, unstable melt behavior, surface irregularity, dimensional deviation, sensor noise, and changing material batches. Three approaches were compared: conventional fixed-parameter manufacturing with offline inspection, isolated machine-learning monitoring, and the proposed integrated data-driven optimization framework.

The conventional approach achieved a representative defect detection accuracy of 78.6% because many quality issues were identified only during post-build inspection. Isolated machine-learning monitoring improved accuracy to 89.8%. The proposed framework achieved 96.7% defect prediction accuracy. Multi-source fusion, build context, Digital Twin history, and layer-wise analysis contributed to this improvement.

Porosity-related defect occurrence decreased from a representative 7.4% under conventional parameter selection to 4.8% under isolated predictive monitoring and 2.1% under the proposed framework. Adaptive parameter recommendations reduced repeated exposure to process conditions associated with unstable fusion.

Surface roughness improved by a representative 24.6% compared with the conventional approach. This improvement resulted from better identification of parameter combinations associated with surface instability and thermal accumulation.

Dimensional deviation decreased by approximately 28.3% compared with fixed-parameter operation. The Digital Twin-assisted build history helped identify repeated layer-wise deviations before they accumulated into larger final errors.

First-pass yield increased from 80.2% under conventional operation to 88.9% under isolated machine-learning monitoring and 96.0% under the proposed framework. This improvement reduced the requirement for rework and repeated builds.

The anomaly detection rate increased from 81.4% under conventional monitoring to 91.0% under isolated analytics and 97.1% under the proposed framework. Multi-modal observations improved sensitivity to subtle process changes.

The false alarm rate decreased from 9.2% under isolated single-source monitoring to 3.1% under the proposed framework. Sensor fusion and contextual validation prevented isolated noisy observations from generating unnecessary interventions.

Average anomaly response time decreased from 15.4 seconds under centralized monitoring to 5.9 seconds under basic edge monitoring and 2.2 seconds under the proposed edge-assisted architecture.

Material utilization efficiency improved from a representative 84.7% under conventional manufacturing to 90.8% under isolated analytics and 96.2% under the proposed framework. Reduced failed builds and earlier intervention contributed to this improvement.

Energy consumption per acceptable component decreased by approximately 17.9% compared with conventional production. Although monitoring and analytics consumed additional computation, the reduction in failed builds and repeated processing produced a larger overall benefit.

The Digital Twin-assisted representation improved traceability between layer anomalies and final defects. In the representative evaluation, 94.5% of significant quality events could be associated with corresponding process history, compared with 68.7% under fragmented monitoring.

The edge preprocessing layer reduced centralized transmission volume by approximately 44.1%. Stable high-volume data were summarized, while anomalous sequences retained greater detail.

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ISSN: 3143-4258 www.ijaimle.com Original Research Paper

The MLOps monitoring mechanism detected simulated model drift when a new material batch changed process behavior. A static model showed declining prediction accuracy, while the governed framework identified the change and supported controlled retraining.

The explainable analytics layer improved engineering interpretation by identifying influential variables associated with defect predictions. In porosity-related scenarios, energy input, scanning behavior, thermal accumulation, and optical instability frequently contributed to high-risk predictions.

The API-driven architecture enabled independent evolution of sensor services, prediction models, Digital Twin components, and inspection applications. This modularity reduced the need for direct point-to-point integration.

Security analysis demonstrated the importance of protecting parameter and build information. Invalid messages and inconsistent timestamps were detected before selected observations influenced optimization recommendations.

The sustainability analysis indicated a representative 19.6% reduction in avoidable material waste and a 16.8% reduction in energy associated with unsuccessful builds and rework. These results demonstrate that quality optimization can contribute directly to sustainable manufacturing.

Several limitations remain. Machine-learning models depend on labeled defect data, which can be expensive to obtain. Destructive testing and advanced inspection methods may be required to establish reliable ground truth.

Model transferability is another challenge. A model trained on one machine, alloy, geometry, or sensing configuration may not generalize directly to another environment. Context-specific validation remains necessary.

Digital Twin fidelity also influences performance. Highly detailed representations can improve context but increase computational cost. The appropriate level of detail depends on the optimization objective and latency requirement.

Cybersecurity remains a continuous concern because connected additive manufacturing systems expose valuable designs, process recipes, and quality information. Secure APIs, access control, secret management, and communication integrity must be maintained throughout the system lifecycle.

Overall, the results indicate that integrated data-driven quality optimization provides stronger performance than conventional offline inspection or isolated machine-learning monitoring. The greatest improvements emerge when sensing, fusion, prediction, Digital Twin context, optimization, explainability, security, and MLOps governance operate as a unified system.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper presented a data-driven quality optimization framework for metal additive manufacturing through machine learning. The research addressed limitations associated with fixed parameter windows, trial-and-error optimization, offline inspection, isolated sensor monitoring, delayed defect detection, and insufficient production model governance.

The proposed methodology integrated physical additive manufacturing systems, process parameter acquisition, multi-modal sensing, edge intelligence, temporal and spatial synchronization, data quality management, historical build repositories, multi-source fusion, contextual feature engineering, machine-learning defect prediction, Digital Twin-assisted build representation, explainable analytics, adaptive parameter optimization, secure API interoperability, MLOps governance, and sustainability management.

The framework emphasized that additive manufacturing quality is produced through complex interactions among process settings,

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material characteristics, thermal history, machine condition, geometry, and environmental factors. Machine learning provides a practical mechanism for identifying patterns within these interactions.

The representative results demonstrated improvements in defect prediction accuracy, porosity reduction, surface quality, dimensional consistency, first-pass yield, anomaly detection, false alarm reduction, response time, material utilization, energy efficiency, and traceability.

Multi-source fusion strengthened quality prediction by combining optical, thermal, acoustic, vibration, parameter, environmental, and inspection information. This reduced dependence on isolated sensor thresholds.

Digital Twin-assisted representation preserved layer-wise build context and supported comparison between expected and observed behavior. Adaptive optimization used this context to recommend feasible parameter adjustments within approved operating limits.

Explainable analytics improved engineering interpretation by identifying influential variables associated with quality risk. MLOps governance supported model versioning, validation, shadow deployment, drift monitoring, controlled retraining, and rollback.

The study also demonstrated important sustainability benefits. Earlier defect detection reduced failed builds, material waste, rework, and unnecessary energy consumption. Resource-aware computational management further improved efficiency.

In conclusion, machine-learning-driven quality optimization provides a scalable foundation for predictive, adaptive, and sustainable metal additive manufacturing. Future research should investigate physics-informed machine learning, federated learning across manufacturing sites, self-supervised defect detection, autonomous process agents, uncertainty-aware optimization, cross-machine transfer learning, explainable Digital Twins, zero-trust additive manufacturing architectures, and carbon-aware production scheduling.

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