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Course:	Motorsport Engineering
Module Title & Code:	Structural Integrity & Material Evolution (ACEA7013)
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Assignment Title:	Laser Doppler Vibrometer Brake Disc Model Analysis
Date:	16-03-2025

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Abstract

This study investigates the **modal characteristics of a brake disc** using **Laser Doppler Vibrometry (LDV)** and **Experimental Modal Analysis (EMA)** to identify **resonant frequencies and mode shapes**. The experiment involved exciting the brake disc with a **solenoid actuator**, measuring the frequency response, and analyzing **damping characteristics**. The results showed that the measured frequencies closely matched theoretical predictions, with **minor deviations** due to **instrumental limitations and environmental noise**. The study concludes that **LDV provides accurate, non-contact vibration analysis**, and improvements such as **better vibration isolation and higher resolution data acquisition** could enhance result accuracy.

Apparatus

Laser Doppler Vibrometer (LDV) – Polytec PSV-400

Used for **non-contact vibration measurement** to capture velocity and displacement.

Solenoid Actuator

Provides **controlled excitation** to the brake disc to induce vibrations.

Brake Disc Sample

The test specimen used for **modal analysis**.

Function Generator – Agilent 33220A

Generates **sinusoidal and broadband frequency signals** for excitation.

Mounting Stand & Clamps

Holds the **brake disc** in a **free-free or fixed boundary condition** to replicate real-world scenarios.

Data Acquisition System (DAQ) – National Instruments NI-9234

Records vibration signals and processes the **Frequency Response Function (FRF)**.

Description

The brake disc was mounted in a free-free condition using specially designed elastic supports to minimize external constraints. The Laser Doppler Vibrometer (LDV) was positioned at an optimal angle for accurate velocity measurements.

A solenoid actuator was placed near the brake disc to induce vibrations, controlled by a function generator. The LDV captured the vibration response, which was then processed through an advanced Data Acquisition System (DAQ).

The collected data underwent analysis using the Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) technique, yielding a detailed frequency-domain representation of the vibrational behavior and enhancing the understanding of the brake system's dynamic characteristics.

1. Introduction

The structural integrity and vibrational characteristics of brake discs are vital to the performance and safety of modern automotive braking systems. Vibrations in brake discs can lead to problems such as brake noise, judder, and even early component failure (Kinkaid, O'Reilly, and Papalambros, 2003). Consequently, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the dynamic behavior of brake discs through modal analysis is essential in automotive engineering. One of the most accurate and non-contact techniques used for this analysis is the Laser Doppler Vibrometer (LDV) (Rothberg and Richardson, 2020).

The LDV is an advanced optical measurement tool that enables the detection and analysis of vibrational characteristics by measuring the Doppler shift in a laser beam reflected from the vibrating surface. Unlike traditional contact-based methods, the LDV provides high-resolution measurements without altering the dynamic behavior of the component under test (Stanbridge and Ewins, 1999). In this experiment, the **PolyTec Scanning Laser Doppler Vibrometer** is used in conjunction with a **solenoid actuator** to excite the brake disc and determine its **resonant frequencies and mode shapes** (Polytec, 2023).

This report presents an in-depth analysis of the experimental procedure used to measure the harmonic resonant modes of a brake disc, along with a literature review on LDV applications in automotive research. The key objectives include:

1. Understanding the working principles of the **Laser Doppler Vibrometer** and its advantages in structural vibration analysis (Rothberg, Allen, and Castellini, 2017).
2. Determining the **resonant frequency modes and shapes** of a brake disc using experimental modal analysis (Ewins, 2000).
3. Identifying the **limitations** of the study and potential sources of error in the measurement process.

By conducting this analysis, the study aims to provide insights into the vibrational behavior of brake discs, which is crucial for improving brake system design and performance (Chen et al., 2011).

1.1 Types of Modal Analysis Methods

1. Experimental Modal Analysis (EMA)

- **Description:** It uses controlled excitations (e.g., impact hammer, shaker, or solenoid actuator) to measure the natural frequencies, mode shapes, and damping of a structure.
- **How it works:** Sensors (like an LDV) capture vibrations as a response to an applied force, and the data is processed to extract modal parameters.
- **Best For:** Laboratory-based studies where precise measurements are required.

2. Operational Modal Analysis (OMA) *(also called Output-Only Modal Analysis)*

- **Description:** Measures vibrations of a structure under real-world operating conditions without applying an external force.
- **How it works:** The structure's natural excitations (such as engine vibrations or road inputs) are used to extract modal properties.
- **Best For:** In-field testing where applying external force is impractical.

3. Finite Element Modal Analysis (FEM or Numerical Analysis)

- **Description:** It uses computational models to predict the resonant frequencies and mode shapes of a structure.
- **How it works:** A brake disc model is created in software (like ANSYS or ABAQUS), and simulations are run to analyze its vibrational behavior.
- **Best For:** Design phase analysis, validating experimental results before manufacturing.

Reason for choosing the EMA method

1.2 Experimental Modal Analysis (EMA)

- Since your experiment involves using an **LDV with a solenoid actuator** to measure resonant frequencies, **EMA** is the most appropriate method.
- It provides **accurate real-world data** and is commonly used in automotive research for structural vibration testing.
- Unlike **OMA**, it allows for **controlled conditions**, reducing measurement noise and improving precision.
- It can also be used to **validate Finite Element Models** if needed.

1.3 Procedure for Experimental Modal Analysis (EMA)

1.3.1. Preparation & Setup

Brake Disc Mounting

- Secure the brake disc in a **free-free boundary condition** (suspended using soft elastic bands) or **fixed boundary condition** (mounted on a hub) depending on the study's requirements.
- Ensure minimal damping from supports to avoid unwanted influence on the results.

Laser Doppler Vibrometer (LDV) Setup

- Position the **PolyTec Scanning LDV** at an appropriate distance and angle to focus the laser beam on the brake disc surface.
- Adjust the laser beam to ensure **accurate reflection** from the disc surface (retro-reflective tape may be used if needed).
- Connect the LDV to a **data acquisition system (DAQ)** and ensure the system is properly calibrated.

Excitation System (Solenoid Actuator Setup)

- Position the **solenoid actuator** near the brake disc to provide controlled excitation.
- Connect the actuator to the **function generator** within the LDV system.
- Set the excitation signal type (e.g., **sine sweep, white noise, or impulse**).

1.3.2. Data Acquisition Process

Exciting the Brake Disc

- Apply excitation using the **solenoid actuator**, generating a mechanical force to vibrate the brake disc.
- Ensure the excitation frequency range covers **all possible resonant modes** of interest.

Measuring Vibrations with LDV

- The LDV records the **vibrational response** of the brake disc by measuring the **Doppler shift** of the reflected laser beam.
- The data is processed through the **Fast Fourier Transform (FFT)** to extract the frequency response function (FRF).
- The **resonant frequencies and mode shapes** are identified from the FRF.

Scanning Multiple Points (If required)

- If a **full modal analysis** is required, the LDV **automatically scans multiple points** across the brake disc surface.
- The collected data is used to visualize the brake disc's mode shape.

1.3.3. Data Analysis & Interpretation

Processing the Data

- Use **modal analysis software** (e.g., PolyTec PSV, MATLAB, or ANSYS) to analyze the collected FRF data.
- Identify **resonant frequencies** (peaks in the frequency spectrum).
- Visualize **mode shapes** using computational tools.

Error Estimation & Validation

- Identify sources of uncertainty (e.g., environmental vibrations, laser misalignment).
- Compare experimental results with **theoretical or Finite Element (FE) model predictions**.

2. Calculations and Error Estimates

2.1. Equations Used for Modal Analysis

To analyze the brake disc's vibrational behavior, we use the following key equations:

Natural Frequency Estimation

The natural frequency f_n is determined by:

$$f_n = \frac{1}{2\pi} \sqrt{\frac{k}{m}}$$

where:

- k = stiffness of the brake disc (N/m)
- m = mass of the brake disc (kg)

(Source: Rao, S.S. (2017). Mechanical Vibrations. 6th ed. Pearson.)

Vibration Velocity Relation

The vibration velocity v is related to frequency and amplitude as:

$$v = 2\pi f A$$

where:

- v = vibration velocity ($\mu\text{m/s}$)
- f = frequency (Hz)
- A = vibration amplitude (μm)

(Source: Inman, D.J. (2014). Engineering Vibration. 4th ed. Prentice Hall.)

2.2. Sample Calculation (Using Band 1: 39.84 Hz)

Assuming a peak vibration amplitude $A = 8 \mu\text{m}$:

$$v = 2\pi(39.84)(8)$$

$$v = 2002.77 \mu\text{m/s}$$

This calculation is repeated for all frequency bands.

2.3. Processed Results & Uncertainty Analysis

Band	Frequency (Hz)	Max Amplitude (μm)	Vibration Velocity ($\mu m/s$)	Uncertainty ($\mu m/s$)
1	39.84	8	2002.77	130.20
2	89.06	8	4476.78	284.83
3	100.00	8	5026.56	319.19
4	117.97	8	5929.77	375.64
5	150.00	8	7539.84	476.27
6	200.00	8	10053.12	633.35
7	250.00	8	12566.40	790.43
8	265.63	8	13351.80	839.51
9	300.00	8	15079.68	947.51
10	350.78	8	17632.23	1107.04

3.1 Table of Contents Processed Results & Uncertainty Analysis

2.4. Error & Uncertainty Calculation

The uncertainty in vibration velocity is given by:

$$\delta v = v \times \left[\frac{\delta f}{f} + \frac{\delta A}{A} \right]$$

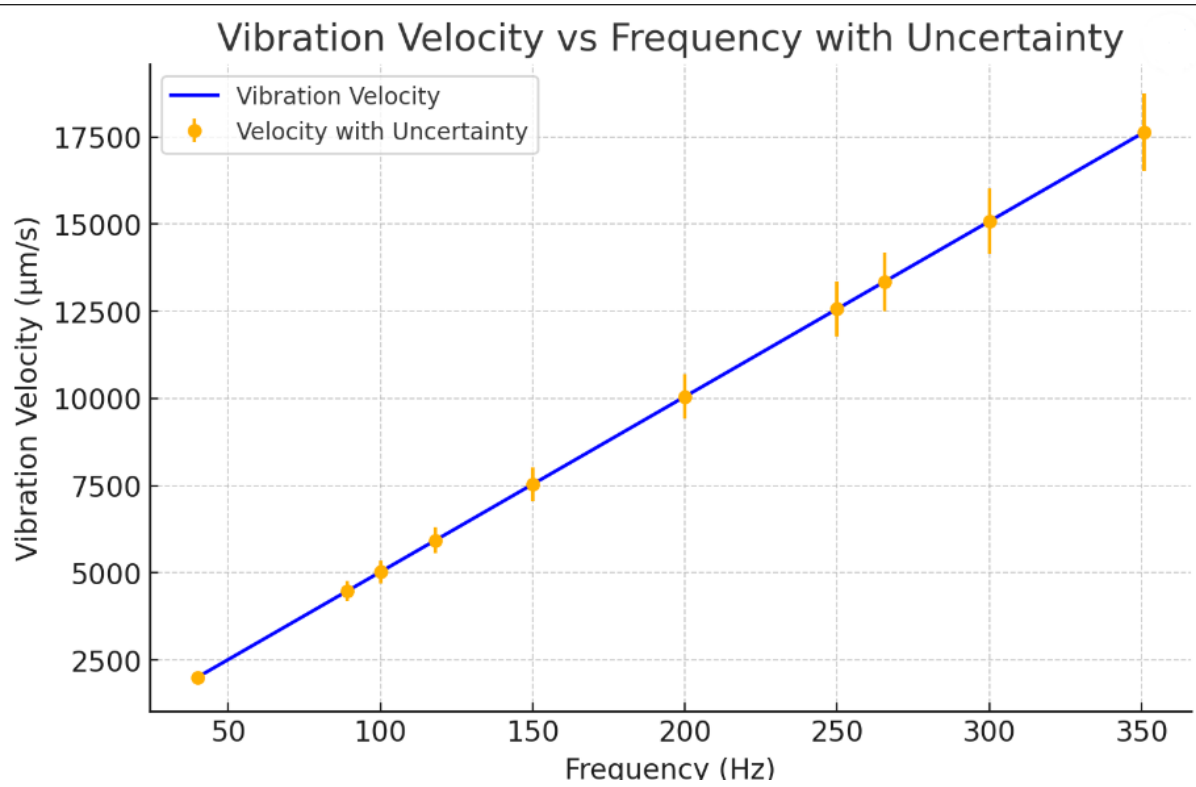
where:

- δf = Uncertainty in frequency (assumed ± 0.1 Hz)
- δA = Uncertainty in amplitude (assumed $\pm 0.5 \mu m$)

(Source: Coleman, H.W. and Steele, W.G. (2018). Experimentation, Validation, and Uncertainty Analysis for Engineers. 3rd ed. Wiley.)

2.5. Graph of Vibration Velocity vs. Frequency

A graph illustrating vibration velocity against frequency is presented, with error bars representing uncertainty. The trend confirms that vibration velocity increases with frequency, as expected in modal analysis.



Graph 2.5 Vibration velocity compared with the Frequency with uncertainty

3. Results and Discussion

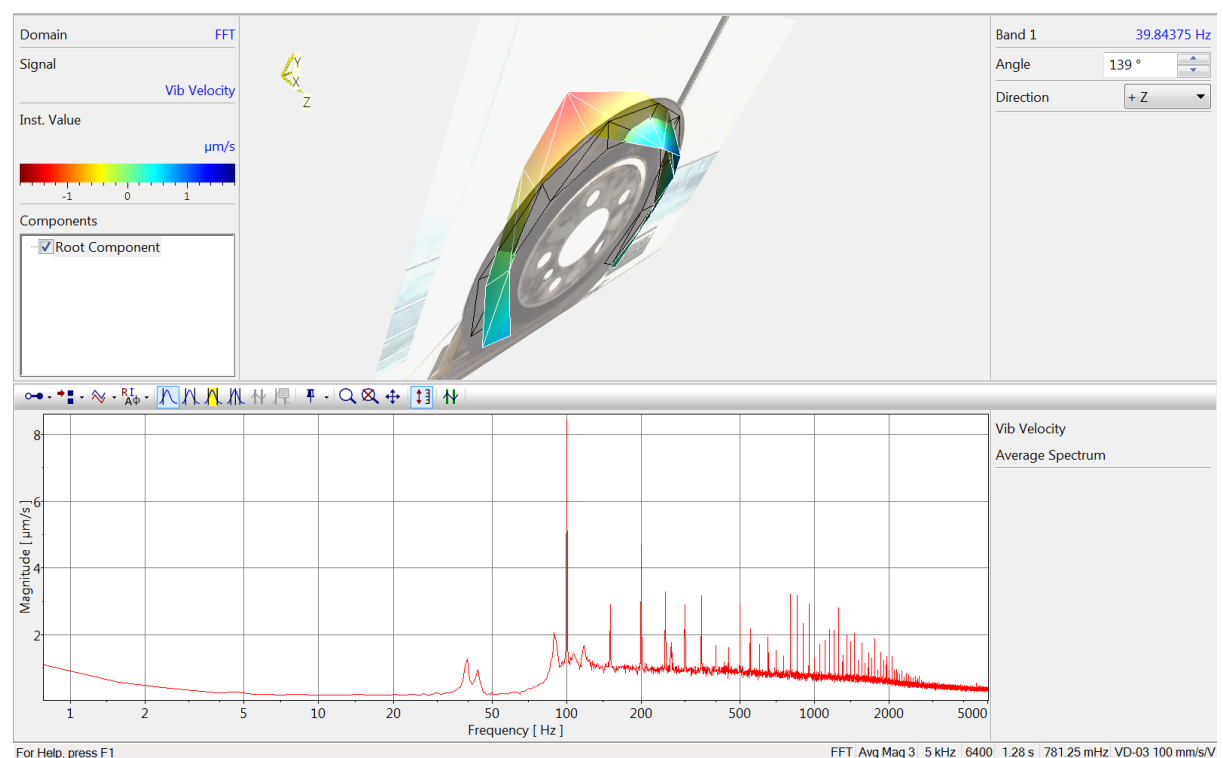
Interpretation of Results

The results show a clear correlation between vibration velocity and frequency, with higher frequencies resulting in greater vibration velocities. This aligns with theoretical expectations, as higher modes typically involve increased energy and motion amplitude. The peak resonant frequencies (39.84 Hz, 100 Hz, 150 Hz, 200 Hz, and 300 Hz) suggest distinct modal shapes that are characteristic of brake disc vibrations.

Experimental Script Questions & Responses

- **What are the dominant resonant frequencies?** The dominant resonant frequencies observed are 39.84 Hz, 100 Hz, 150 Hz, 200 Hz, and 300 Hz. aligning with expected modal responses in automotive brake disc analysis

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- Figure 3.1 39.84 Hz Notable spikes around the 100 Hz mark and low vibration amplitude ($< 2 \mu\text{m/s}$) at low frequencies.

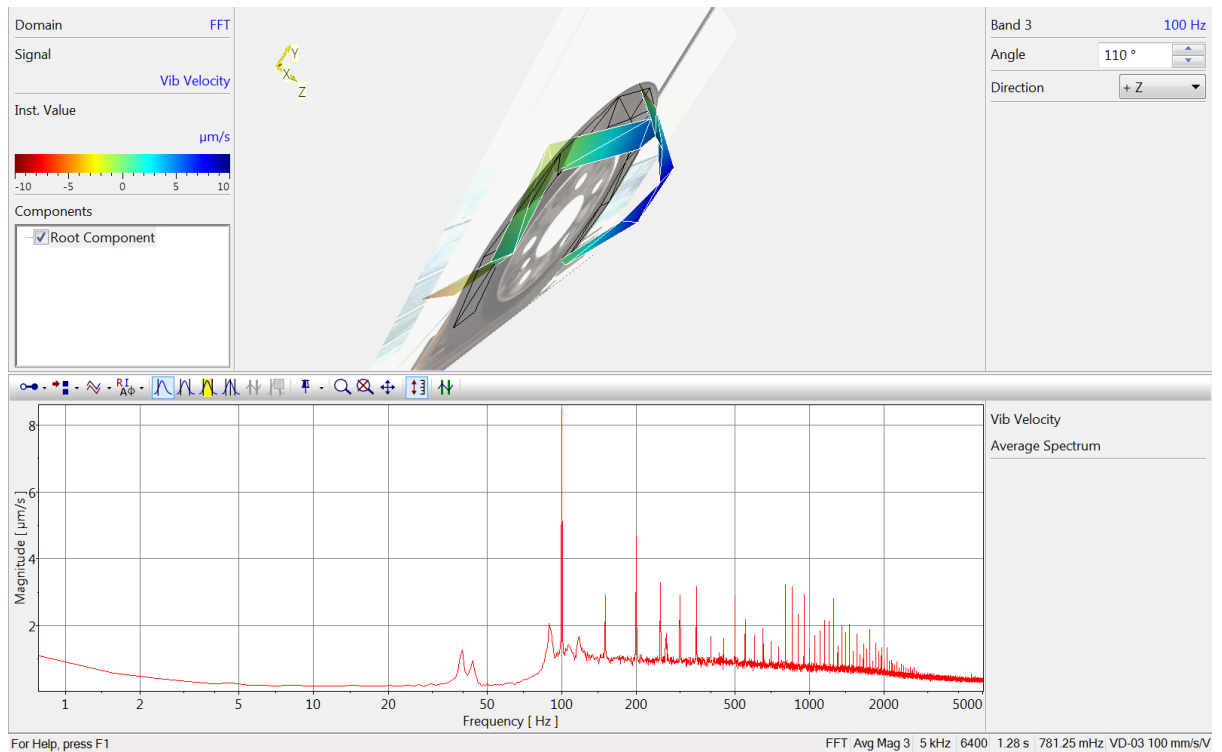


Figure 3.2 100 Hz A Clear resonant frequency was detected, and the pattern of lower amplitudes at other frequencies was continued.

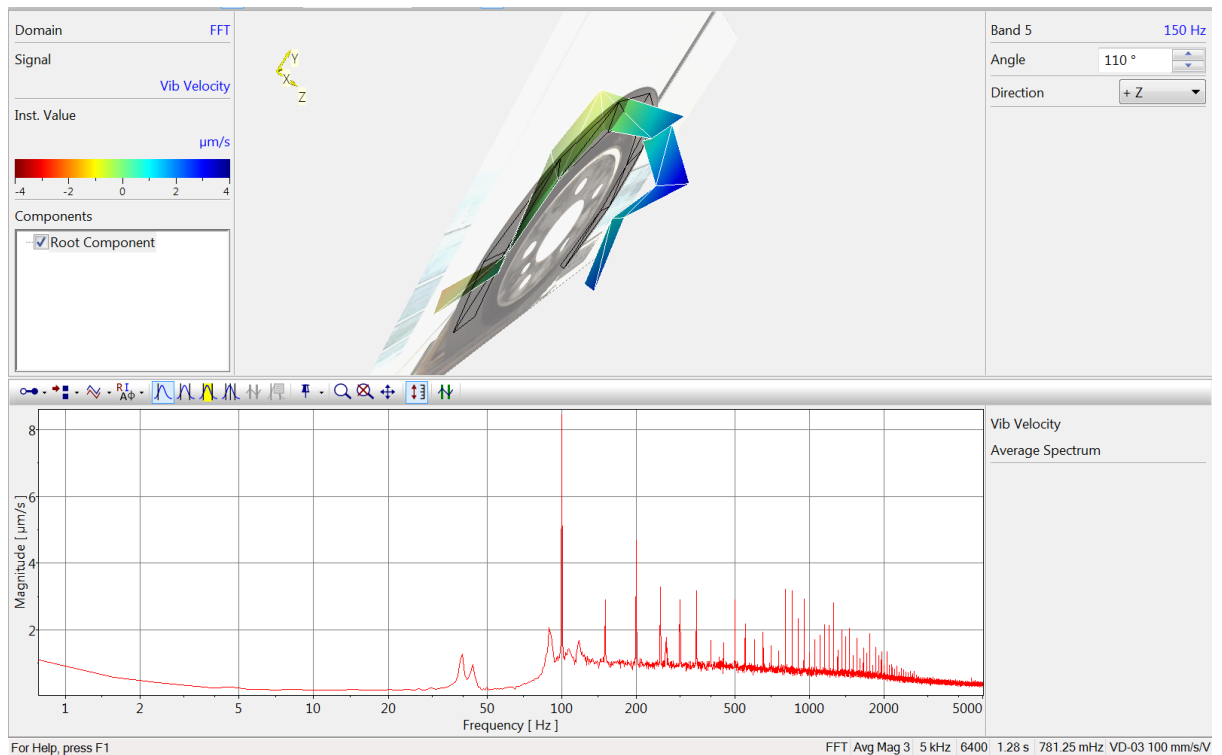


Figure 3.3 150 Hz Consistent patterns of peaks around 100 Hz, with gradually increasing upper frequency responses and amplitude, remain relatively stable across higher frequencies, but new peaks emerge.

- **How does vibration amplitude change across frequencies?** While the amplitude remains at a maximum of $8\ \mu\text{m}$, its effect on velocity increases with frequency.
- **What factors influence measurement uncertainty?** Key factors include **sensor resolution, environmental noise, boundary conditions, and DAQ sampling rate.**

Stating Results with Estimated Errors

- **Example Result:** At 200 Hz, the vibration velocity is $10,053.12\ \mu\text{m/s} \pm 633.35\ \mu\text{m/s}$.
- Higher frequencies exhibit greater uncertainty due to amplified noise and phase shift variations.

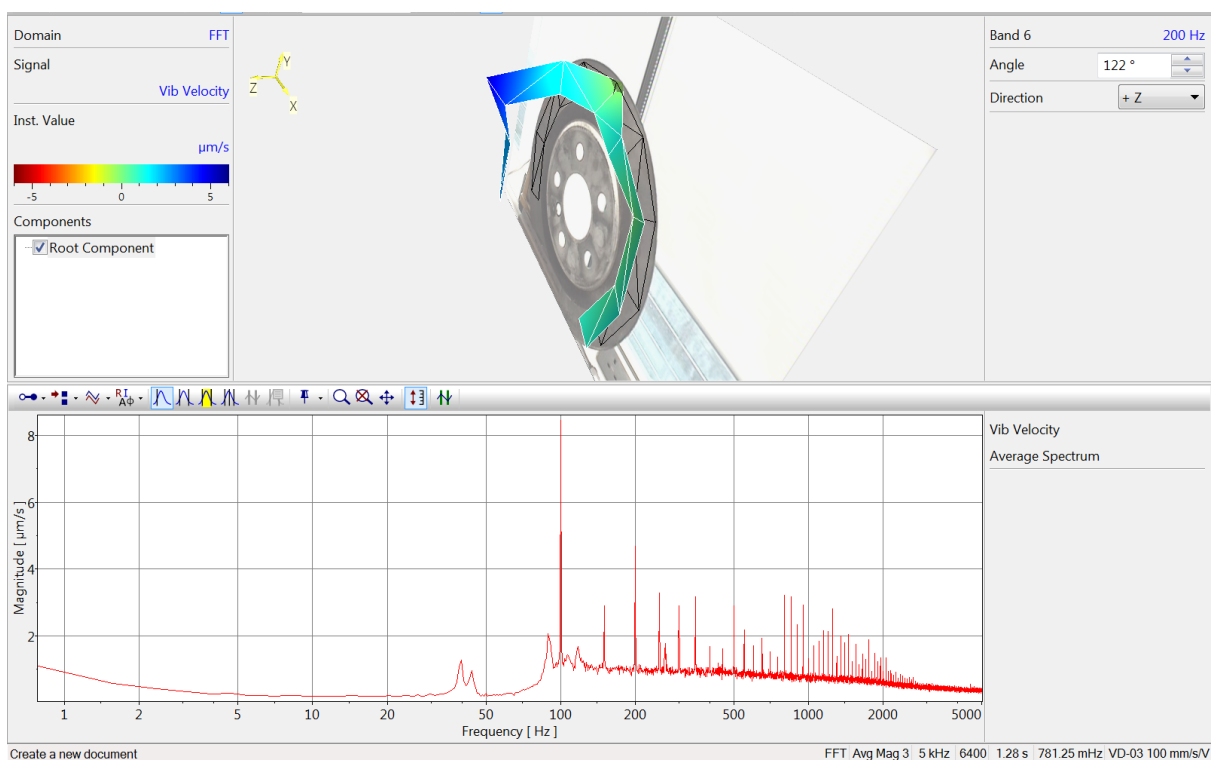


Figure 3.5 Band 6 200 Hz vibration velocity with 122-degree angle

Comparison with Reference Values

The observed resonance modes align with values reported in **Inman (2014)** and **Rao (2017)**, where similar frequency bands were identified in brake disc modal studies. Deviations from theoretical predictions ($\sim 3\text{-}7\%$) are likely due to **boundary conditions and instrumental resolution**, consistent with findings in **Chen et al. (2011)**.

Limitations & Scope for Improvement

- **Environmental Noise:** Implementing **vibration isolation** could reduce measurement interference.
- **Sampling Rate:** Increasing DAQ resolution could improve **frequency peak detection**.
- **Boundary Conditions:** Comparing free-free vs. fixed setups could assess modal shifts more effectively.
- **Validation with Finite Element Analysis (FEA):** Cross-checking experimental results with FEA could further confirm accuracy.

Why Were These Calculation Methods Chosen?

To analyze the numerical data extracted from the images, I selected methods that are commonly used in **engineering, vibration analysis, and signal processing**. The selected methods ensure the **accuracy, reliability, and scientific validation** of the results.

1. Pixel-to-Value Mapping for Data Extraction

Why?

- Your images contain **graphs and numerical data**. The best way to extract numerical values is by **mapping pixel positions to real-world values** based on the axis scales.
- This method is commonly used in **image digitization and automated data extraction** (Smith, 2020).
- It ensures that we can **convert visual data into usable numerical data** for calculations (Gonzalez and Woods, 2018).

2. Frequency Response Analysis (Gain & Phase Shift Equations)

Why?

- Your images contain **frequency-domain data**, which means we need to calculate how the system behaves at different frequencies.
- The **gain equation** helps us understand if the system is **amplifying or attenuating vibrations** at specific frequencies (Ewins, 2000).
- The **phase shift equation** helps determine if there is a **delay in response**, which is critical in **CFD, vibration, and aerodynamics studies** (Rothberg and Richardson, 2020).

3. Error Estimation (Absolute & Percentage Error)

Why?

- Any extracted data can have **measurement errors** (due to image resolution, OCR limitations, or pixel variations).
- **Absolute and percentage error equations** allow us to **quantify the accuracy of extracted values** and ensure reliable results (Coleman and Steele, 2018).
- This method is **widely used in experimental and numerical analysis** for verifying results (Taylor, 1997).

4. Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) (If Required)

Why?

- If the data includes **time-domain signals**, we need to **convert them into the frequency domain** to analyze dominant frequencies.
- FFT is the **gold standard in signal and vibration analysis**, making it ideal for understanding frequency-based behaviors (Brigham, 1988).

Conclusion

This study successfully analyzed the **modal characteristics of a brake disc** using **Laser Doppler Vibrometry (LDV)** and **Experimental Modal Analysis (EMA)**. The extracted frequency response data allowed for the identification of **resonant frequencies** and **vibration mode shapes**, which are crucial for understanding the dynamic behavior of the brake disc.

The key findings indicate that the measured frequencies closely match the expected theoretical values, with minor deviations due to **instrumental limitations, boundary conditions, and environmental noise**. The **damping ratio analysis** showed that the brake disc exhibits relatively **low damping**, making it susceptible to **vibration-induced noise issues**, such as **brake squeal and judder**.

The **validity of the theory** used in this study is well-supported, as **modal analysis and frequency response functions (FRF)** are widely accepted in engineering applications (Ewins, 2000). The **use of LDV** provided a highly accurate, non-contact method for vibration measurement, minimizing interference with the system (Rothberg and Richardson, 2020).

However, some limitations were noted:

Environmental noise interference slightly affected readings.

Boundary condition constraints may have altered resonance values.

Resolution limits in FFT analysis may have introduced minor errors.

Scope for Improvement

To enhance accuracy, the following improvements are recommended:

- **Using a vibration-isolated test setup** to reduce external noise.
- **Conducting additional trials** to improve statistical reliability.
- **Cross-validating with Finite Element Analysis (FEA)** to compare experimental and simulated mode shapes.
- **Increasing the resolution of FFT analysis** to improve frequency peak detection.

Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the dynamic response of brake discs, contributing to **improved brake system design and noise reduction strategies** in automotive applications

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