Preserving Overall Performance of Air Conditioners by Incorporation of Wind-Permeable Floor in Buildings

Presenting Author:
Karl AN

Other Authors:
Ross WONG, Dr. Kelvin SIN, Prof. Jimmy FUNG, Prof. Zhigang LI

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Outline

- Introduction
- Methodology
- Homogeneity of Profiles
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- Results and Conclusion
- Future Work
Hong Kong is one of the most extensively urbanized areas in the world with high population density. Seven and a half million inhabitants live in an area of about a thousand kilometers square.

Large amount of heat generated from the streets and buildings without enough air-ventilation causes the Urban Heat Island (UHI) phenomenon.

Source: (Photo extracted from research studies by Prof. Yuguo Li)
Large portion of energy consumption (>30%) and heat production in the residential area is by the refrigeration cycle of air-conditioning. The outdoor temperature determine the cycle efficiency, coefficient of performance (COP)

\[
COP = \frac{Q_E}{W_I} \leq \frac{T_L}{T_{hi} - T_L} = COP_{ideal}
\]
Thermal stack effect is formed when heated air is driven upward and accumulated through the semi-enclosed building developed by thermal buoyancy.

Field measurement reveals there could be a temperature difference of at least 10°C over a 24 storeys building.

Overall percentage drop in COP of air conditioners could reach a maximum of 26% under no-wind condition.
### Aim of the Study

1. Investigate the effectiveness of the implementation of an open permeable floor in designs of buildings to alleviate the residual heat ejected by outdoor condensing units that is accumulated within semi-enclosed re-entrants of buildings.

2. Investigate the group performances of air conditioners after the implementation of the open permeable floor.

3. Aid the developers/architects during building design stage to achieve a “greener” building.
**$k - \varepsilon$ Model with Corrective Terms**

**Continuity Equation:**
\[
\rho \frac{\partial u_i}{\partial x_i} = 0
\]

**Momentum Equation:**
\[
\rho u_j \frac{\partial u_i}{\partial x_j} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x_j} \left( \tau_{ij} - \rho u'_i u'_j \right) - \frac{\partial p}{\partial x_j} + \rho g_l
\]

**Turbulent Kinetic Energy Equation:**
\[
\rho u_j \frac{\partial k}{\partial x_j} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x_j} \left[ \left( \mu + \frac{\mu_t}{\sigma_k} \right) \frac{\partial k}{\partial x_j} \right] + C_k - \rho \varepsilon + S_k
\]

**Turbulent Dissipation Rate Equation:**
\[
\frac{\partial}{\partial x_j} \left( \mu + \frac{\mu_t}{\sigma_k} \right) \frac{\partial \varepsilon}{\partial x_j} = C_\varepsilon S_k \varepsilon / k (1 - C_{3\varepsilon})
\]

**Energy Equation:**
\[
\text{Work Input (}\mathcal{W}_I\text{)}
\]
\[
S_T = -g \left( \frac{\partial \mu_t}{\partial z} \right) / \sigma_T
\]

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Simulation is carried on an empty fetch with dimensions 2000 m (L) x 1000 m (W) x 600 m (H)

Around 1.5 million structure cells are created with first cell size of 0.5m

Grid Expansion Ratio of at most 1.2 in both horizontal and vertical directions

Standard Wall Function with roughness height set to $20z_0$ where $z_0 = 0.002m$
Homogeneity of Profiles

Inflow Profiles for Empty Fetch

Inflow Velocity Profile: 
\[ u(z) = \frac{u^*}{\kappa} \left[ \ln\left( \frac{z}{z_0} \right) - \psi_m\left( \frac{z}{L} \right) \right] \]
where 
\[ L = \frac{u^2 \vartheta_0}{\kappa g \vartheta^*} \]

Inflow Temperature Profile: 
\[ \vartheta(z) = \vartheta_0 + \frac{\vartheta^*}{\kappa} \left[ \ln\left( \frac{z}{z_0} \right) - \psi_h\left( \frac{z}{L} \right) \right] \]
where 
\[ \vartheta^* = \frac{-q_0}{\rho c_p u^*} \]

Inflow TKE Profile: 
\[ k(z) = \frac{u^2}{\sqrt{C_\mu}} \left[ \varphi_e\left( \frac{z}{L} \right) \right] \]
where 
\[ \varphi_e = 1 - \frac{z}{L} \] for \( L < 0 \)
\[ \varphi_e = \varphi_m - \frac{z}{L} \] for \( L > 0 \)

Inflow TDR Profile: 
\[ \varepsilon(z) = \frac{u^3 \varphi_e\left( \frac{z}{L} \right)}{\kappa z} \]
where 
\[ \varphi_m = \varphi_h = 1 + 5\left( \frac{z}{L} \right) \] for \( L > 0 \), 
\[ \varphi_h = (1-16\frac{z}{L})^{-0.5} \] for \( L < 0 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stability Class</th>
<th>( z_0 ) (m)</th>
<th>( u^* ) (m/s)</th>
<th>( q_0 ) (W/m²)</th>
<th>( \vartheta_0 ) (K)</th>
<th>( L ) (m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Neutral</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.4815</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>( \infty )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Stable</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.473</td>
<td>-30</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>306.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Unstable</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.5085</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>-126.1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Homogeneity of Profiles

Velocity and Temperature Profiles at Various Locations along Centre Line

- **Velocity Profile (Neutral)**
  - $u$ vs. $z$ for $x=10m, 50m, 100m, 500m, 1000m$

- **Velocity Profile (Stable)**
  - $u$ vs. $z$ for $x=10m, 50m, 100m, 500m, 1000m$

- **Velocity Profile (Unstable)**
  - $u$ vs. $z$ for $x=10m, 50m, 100m, 500m, 1000m$

- **Temperature Profile (Neutral)**
  - $T$ vs. $z$ for $x=10m, 50m, 100m, 500m, 1000m$

- **Temperature Profile (Stable)**
  - $T$ vs. $z$ for $x=10m, 50m, 100m, 500m, 1000m$

- **Temperature Profile (Unstable)**
  - $T$ vs. $z$ for $x=10m, 50m, 100m, 500m, 1000m$

Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
Typical 30 storey (3 meters per floor) cross shaped residential building with air conditioners installed at re-entrants is investigated.

Two buildings, with/without permeable floor at mid-level are created for comparison.

4 air conditioners are placed at each re-entrant location of the building.

Each air conditioner is modeled as a volumetric heat source, generating 2500W of heat.

Temperature Data are extracted at three locations A, B and C.
- Approximately 3 million structure cells are created
- Target building is set 5H away from the inflow, lateral, top sides and 15H away from outflow face where H=95m
- Boundary conditions are same as the empty fetch case
- Second Order upwind schemes are used for the discretize the advection terms
- Scaled residuals of flow and turbulence quantities dropped below $1 \times 10^{-5}$
Inflow Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stability Class</th>
<th>( z_0 ) (m)</th>
<th>( u_* ) (m/s)</th>
<th>( u_{10} ) (m/s)</th>
<th>( q_0 ) (W/m(^2))</th>
<th>( \theta_o ) (K)</th>
<th>( \Delta \theta ) (K)</th>
<th>( L ) (m)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Neutral</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.1205</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>( \infty )</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Neutral</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.2405</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>( \infty )</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Neutral</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.4815</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>( \infty )</td>
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<td>4 Stable</td>
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<td>0.102</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>-3.04</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>-0.57</td>
<td>32.42</td>
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<td>5 Stable</td>
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<td>0.227</td>
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<td>-11.14</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>-0.57</td>
<td>97.52</td>
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<td>6 Stable</td>
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<td>0.473</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-30</td>
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<td>-0.57</td>
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<td>0.1545</td>
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<td>303</td>
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<td>0.2745</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>61.4</td>
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<td>4.52</td>
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<td>0.5085</td>
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<td>5H for inflow buffer, lateral and vertical region</td>
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<td>15H downstream region (H=95 meters)</td>
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<td>Symmetry condition for the two side boundaries</td>
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<td>Zero gradient condition for the outlet boundary</td>
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<td><strong>Turbulence model</strong></td>
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<td>k-ε model with corrective source terms</td>
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<td><strong>Mesh Grids</strong></td>
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<td>Approximately 3 million structure cells</td>
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<td><strong>Numerical scheme for pressure term and advection terms</strong></td>
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<td>PRESTO! for the pressure term</td>
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<td>Second order upwind schemes for advection terms</td>
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<td><strong>Wall function</strong></td>
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<td>Standard wall function</td>
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<td><strong>Convergence criteria</strong></td>
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<td>Scaled residuals dropped to below $1\times10^{-5}$</td>
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<td><strong>Air Conditioner Heat Source</strong></td>
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<td>2500W per air conditioner</td>
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</table>
➢ Similar behavior of the temperature profiles are observed for both cases with/without permeable floor under different atmospheric conditions

➢ Different wind speed have minor influence on the magnitude and shape of temperature profiles at the windward side
A temperature drop of approximately 5°C with the implementation of the permeable floor.

A drop of temperature from 314K to 305K is observed under the neutral atmosphere with low inflow wind speed.

Under the stable and unstable atmospheric conditions, temperature decline is also observed but relatively not significant.

Difference in magnitude in wind speed has minor effect on the temperature profiles near the permeable floor location under unstable atmospheric environment.

Without Permeable Floor:

- Temperature maintains an increment trend (Evidence of the continuous accumulation of heat emitted from the air conditioners)
Under stable atmosphere, the temperature drop at location of the open permeable floor are not as obvious those cases under the neutral and unstable atmosphere.

Under neutral/unstable atmosphere, a minor drop of 0.5 °C is observed for the cases with mid/high inflow wind magnitude and drop of approximately 1 °C to 2 °C is observed for the low wind cases.

Despite there is decline in temperature at location C, the drop is not as sharp when compared to the sideward re-entrant at location B.
Smaller the CGPI, the better the efficiency of air conditioners

Improvement in CGPI is significant particularly under neutral and stable stratifications with low inflow wind

Open Permeable Floor is relatively useful to alleviate thermal stack effect under neutral/stable low wind environment compared to other atmospheric conditions with higher wind speed

CGPI for n air conditioners working together is defined as:

$$CGPI_{Tr} (T_{ref}) = \frac{100}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \{1 - \left[ \frac{COP_{Tr} (T_{coil})}{COP_{Tr} (T_{ref})} \right] \}$$

where $T_{ref} = 303K$ and $T_{coil}$ extracted from the simulated temperature at geometric center of air conditioners

$$COP_{Tr} (T_{coil}) = 5.15 - 0.0738(T_{coil} - 273)$$
Conclusions

1. After Implementation of Open Permeable Floor in residential blocks:
   - Elevated air passing through the floor is cooled by natural means
   - Residents above the permeable floor are expected to benefit from better thermal comfort than those below
   - Performance of air conditioners (particularly above the Permeable Floor) are retained with lower operating temperature
   - Over 10% enhancement in CGPI (reflecting group performances of the air conditioners) is achieved.

2. The cooling effect by permeable floor is shown to be more significant under neutral/stable atmosphere with low wind speed compared to other atmospheric stability cases with higher wind speed
Future Work

- Influence of location of Permeable Floor on Temperature Profiles and CGPI values will be investigated.
- Influence of different inflow wind angle of attack on the results will also be investigated.
- Study would be further carried out on a model of a real urban area with topography and clusters of buildings with different shapes and heights.
THANK YOU!