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The effect of different fiber reinforcement on the thermal and mechanical properties of autoclaved aerated concrete

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HIGHLIGHTS

- AAC was produced with the additive of polypropylene, carbon, basalt and glass fiber.
- The effect of fiber type and size in G3/05 and G4/06 class of AAC has been tested.
- Thermal conductivity and mechanical properties of the sample were examined.
- The basalt fiber reinforced AAC have gave better thermal conductivity than others.

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the changes in thermal conductivity value, compression and flexural strength of autoclaved aerated concrete were investigated experimentally by adding polypropylene, carbon, basalt and glass fibers into the G3/05 and G4/06 class autoclaved aerated concrete used as wall elements in buildings and the commercial production of which is made. Fibers were substituted with the aggregate in autoclaved aerated concrete in equal amounts volumetrically. The produced samples were subjected to autoclaved cure as in non-fibrous autoclaved aerated concrete. As a result of the experimental study; it has been seen the thermal conductivity of fiber substituted autoclaved aerated concrete changes linearly with thermal conductivity of the substituted fibers and basalt fiber reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete gives the highest thermal conductivity. But, it has been seen that the best compression and flexural strength was given by the carbon fiber reinforced samples.

1. Introduction

About 35% of the energy consumed in the world is created by the energy needs in buildings [1]. Carbon emissions caused by this is more severe than the emissions caused by the transportation sector. Reduced energy resources and the climate changes caused by the energy resources indicate how important the efficient use of energy resources in the building and in all other areas is.

Looking to the distribution of energy consumed in the buildings, heating and cooling loads of the buildings are seen to have a considerable amount of energy consumption. Therefore, energy-saving in this area is important in terms of both energy resources and carbon emissions.

The reduction of energy consumption for heating and cooling in buildings is associated with one of the biggest heat losses occur in the structure of walls, floors, is associated with increasing the thermal resistance of the roof and windows. When heat loss in buildings is observed, it is seen that about 40% of them occurs in the outer walls [2]. Thus breed of components used in the construction of exterior walls and their thermal transmission resistance is important in terms of reducing energy use.

As the outer wall element in the structures; different wall elements such as brick, pumice and autoclaved aerated concrete (AAC) were used and it is seen that the AAC came to the fore in terms of thermal conductivity and high fire resistance and it was subjected to numerous studies [3–20].

It is a porous construction material obtained with hardening the mortar formed with the mixture of AAC, silica sand (quartzite), cement, lime and water under pressure steam [3]. 60–80% of its structure consists of pores including stagnant air. The thing that provides the feature to be high thermal insulation and the feature of being the most lightweight material is dry air tucked into these tiny pores. The density of AAC varies in a wide range such as

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Table 1
The classes physical and mechanical properties of AAC [5].

Type	Dry density (kg m^{-3})	Compression strength (N mm^{-2})	Flexural strength (N mm^{-2})	Thermal conductivity[a] (W m^{-1} K^{-1})	Fire class
G3/05	500	3.0–3.5	0.6–0.7	0.11	A1
G4/06	600	4.0–5.0	0.8–1.0	0.13	A1

[a] Account value given according to TS EN 1745 [6].

300–1800 kg m^{-3} [4] and compressive strength varies in the range of 1.5–5 N mm^{-2} depending on the density [5]. These classes and their features that were classified due to dry unit volume density and compressive strength of AAC are given in Table 1.

While the porosity of AAC is getting increased, thermal conductivity value is reduced but increase in the amount of pores reduces the compressive strength at the same time. This is an undesirable feature in terms of building materials that require a mechanical resistance. Compressive strength values of AAC is at lower level than the other wall elements and different studies are continuously made to improve the mechanical features of the materials. Of course, the main purpose is to improve the compressive strength without much increasing the thermal conductivity value. When the studies conducted in recent years were examined, it has been seen that some studies on improving mechanical properties of the materials by adding fiber particles into the material have been made [7–15]. By adding different fibers into aerated concrete material, some studies have been made in terms of chemical, microstructure and mechanical properties of the material [16,17–23]. However, while the effect of fiber on the mechanical properties was being examined, it was seen that the number of studies conducted on the effect on thermal conductivity that is an important feature in terms of AAC was not sufficient.

From this point on, the effects of fibers on thermal conductivity value of AAC material were experimentally investigated together with compression and flexural strength properties by adding four different fiber types (polypropylene, carbon, basalt and glass) into two different classes of AAC material (G3/05, the G4/06).

2. Experimental study

For experimental studies, G3/05 and G4/06 class of AAC material samples were produced in the laboratory in sizes suitable for experimental measurements as undoped and doped with 4 different fibers. The codes of the samples prepared are shown in Table 2.

2.1. Materials and method

The aluminum powder used in the experimental studies was obtained from the AKG Kırıkkale AAC plant. In the production of AAC, by mixing the aluminum and mixing water approximately in 1/3.75 ratio, it was made aluminum suspension. In the production of AAC, well water purified in Kırıkkale Autoclaved Aerated Concrete Plants belonging to AKG Autoclaved Aerated Concrete Enterprises Ind. And Com. Co. was used. By calculating the fiber additives by volume, the base material was substituted for quartz in the ratios of 0.304% and 1.095% according to the specific gravity. Polypropylene, carbon, basalt and glass fibers were supplied Dost Chemicals Industrial Materials Ind. Ltd. Co. And experimental samples were produced in Kırıkkale AKG Autoclaved Aerated Concrete Enterprises Ind. And Com. Co. Properties of the fibers used in the study are given in Table 3.

Table 2
The sample codes used in the experimental study.

Fiber type	AAC class	
	G3/05	G4/06
Non fiber	G3	G4
Polypropylene Fiber	G3-PP	G4-PP
Basalt Fiber	G3-BZ	G4-BZ
Carbon Fiber	G3-C	G4-C
Glass Fiber	G3-G	G4-G

2.1.1. Measurements of the thermal conductivity

Measurements of thermal conductivity of AAC samples were measured according to TS EN 12664 [24] standards by heat flow meter method. The measurement was made by Fox 314 device operating according to "Heat Flow Meter" method operating according to one-dimensional heat transfer principle and the device picture and operating scheme of which is seen in Fig. 1. The device basically calculates the heat flux by measuring temperature drop during thermal resistance. For this, by analyzing voltage drops occurring across an electrical resistance, it is reached to the conclusion. In the determination of thermal conductivity [$\lambda = -q''/(dT/dx)$], it is made use of Fourier Heat Conduction Law [25]. Here, λ (W m^{-1} °C^{-1}) is the thermal conductivity of the sample being tested, q'' (W m^{-2}) is the amount of heat flux passes through the material and dT/dx (°C m^{-1}) is temperature gradient and it refers to the thickness relationship of the temperature difference as finite.

Temperature difference between top and bottom surfaces of the material in the experimental measurements was set to 10 °C. Since the measurement principle is based on the one-dimensional heat transfer principles, sample thickness was chosen rather small compared to width and length dimensions. Thus, reducing the heat transfer through the thickness of the side surfaces, the effect of heat transfer was increased. The thickness of the samples was measured automatically by the instrument.

In the experimental measurements, the samples prepared in about 30 mm thickness and in 300 × 300 mm sizes were used. The samples prepared were dried until bringing them to the constant mass in the stove at 105 °C temperature and the measurements were made over the samples brought out the moisture free conditions. In the measurement of thermal conductivity coefficient, LaserComp Fox 314 device (Fig. 1) operating according to the principle of Heat Flow Meter and that is within the Kırıkkale University, Faculty of Engineering was used and the measurements were performed in accordance with TS EN 12664 [24] standards.

2.1.2. Microstructural analysis

SEM images and EDS analysis of experiment samples were performed with 30 kV of Jeol JSM5600 brand Scanning Electron Microscope. In the measurements, first the samples were coated by the gold and the surface was prepared for SEM and then the SEM images of the samples were photographed with Scanning Electron Microscope.

2.1.3. Compressive strength

The samples prepared were taken to the storage section and they were removed from the molds after being waited in steam cure for 4 h at 60 °C temperature. Samples given to steam cure line start to expand and receive outlet quickly. As a result of the bubbles formed by the hydrogen surging as a result of developing reactions in approximately 30 min, partially hardened AAC cake is formed. The samples taken from here is subjected to saturated steam cure at 11 bar pressure and 180 °C temperature for about 6.5–7 h at autoclaves. The products removed from the steam curing are light, porous and have the property of high compressive strength.

Test samples were prepared according to EN 679 [26] standard and were subjected to compressive strength test. In compressive strength experiment, a total of 30 samples were used, including 3 of each group prepared in the dimensions

Table 3
The features of the fibers used.

Fiber type-size	Fiber density (g cm^{-3})	Thermal conductivity (W m^{-1} K^{-1})	Tensile strength (N mm^{-2})	Melting point (°C)
Polypropylene fiber-10 mm	0.91	0.11–0.22	550–700	140–160
Basalt fiber-8 mm	2.50–2.80	0.031–0.038	4150–4800	1450
Carbon fiber-8 mm	1.74–1.80	21–180	3600–6200	3500
Glass fiber-24 mm	2.54–2.60	0.034–0.40	3450	1120