



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL TO PREDICT ROOM TEMPERATURE
BASED ON ROOM GEOMETRY USING COMPUTATIONAL FLUID
DYNAMICS***

MOHAMMED W. MUHIELDEEN AL-GAILANI

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TEMPERATURE BASED ON ROOM GEOMETRY USING
COMPUTATIONAL FLUID DYNAMICS**

By

MOHAMMED W. MUHIELDEEN AL-GAILANI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

January 2017

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Abstract of thesis Submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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January 2017

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Over the years, the growth in economic activities and the population increase in Malaysia have led to an increase in energy consumption in the home. The Uniform Building By-Law Act (UBBL) 1984 only recommends a minimum ceiling height in buildings. Overheating exists in Malaysian homes and the use of air conditioners is a short term solution that implies a higher use of energy to the government. The green building concept relies on a passive solution to lower energy consumption whereby innovative initiatives can be integrated into green buildings at the design stage. One passive method is to consider room geometry to achieve thermal comfort in a naturally ventilated tropical building. This study is concerned with the development of a model to predict room temperature using geometry in a residential building and so achieve thermal comfort inside the house. Data on the air temperature, air velocity and Relative Humidity were measured in 40 rooms in the Klang Valley area as input data for the simulation work. FLUENT (CFD) software was selected for the simulation study where 3D geometry was modeled to simulate the air flow under turbulent k- ϵ standard, by including all the boundary conditions for the walls, the roof, the ceiling and the glass. The selected meshes are the hexhydro/map and the hexwedge/cooper with a 0.2 mesh size; these were used to collect accurate results. The room model that was generated had dimensions of Length: 4 m, Width: 3 m and Height: 2.6 m, instead of 2.5 m as illustrated in the UBBL, and this was validated with actual test rooms in the Klang Valley. The result shows the existing construction materials (concrete) for houses in Malaysia

is suitable material for thermal condition via heat transfer (q), (k) thermal conductivity, (ΔT) temperature difference between inside and outside temperature and (V) is volume, according to the developed equation $q = \frac{k\Delta T}{\sqrt[3]{V}}$, where is applicable to Malaysia and other tropical countries. The finding show the suitable height for all environmental conditions is 3 m.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PEMBANGUNAN MODEL UNTUK MENJANGKAKAN SUHU
BERDASARKAN GEOMETRI BILIK MENGGUNAKAN DINAMIK
BENDALIR PENGKOMPUTERAN**

Oleh

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Sejak kebelakangan ini pertumbuhan aktiviti ekonomi dan pertambahan penduduk di Malaysia telah menyumbang kepada peningkatan penggunaan tenaga isirumah. Undang Undang Bangunan Seragam 1984 (*Uniform Building By Law (UBBL) 1984*) hanya mengesyorkan ketinggian siling minimum dalam bangunan. Keadaan panas lampau wujud di rumah Malaysia yang mana penggunaan alat penghawa dingin hanyalah sebagai kaedah penyelesaian sementara. Keadaan ini memberi implikasi penggunaan tenaga yang lebih tinggi kepada kerajaan. Konsep bangunan hijau adalah untuk mengurangkan keperluan tenaga secara pasif yang mana inisiatif inovatif diterapkan semasa tahap rekabentuk bangunan. Satu kaedah pasif adalah dengan menimbang saiz geometri bilik untuk mendapatkan keseimbangan termal semasa pengalihan tenaga tabii kawasan tropika. Kajian ini adalah berkenaan membangunkan model untuk meramal suhu bilik berasaskan geometri dalam bangunan kediaman untuk mencapai keseimbangan termal dalam kediaman berkenaan. Data berkaitan yakni suhu udara, kelajuan udara dan kelembapan relatif telah disukat dalam 40 buah rumah kediaman di kawasan Lembah Klang sebagai input data untuk kerja simulasi. Perisian FLUENT (CFD) telah dipilih untuk kajian simulasi geometri 3D dimodelkan untuk pengaliran udara dalam keadaan gelora standard $k-\epsilon$, dengan mengambilkira semua keadaan lapisan sempadan untuk dinding, bumbung, siling dan kaca, Mesh yang dipilih adalah hexhydro/map dan hexwedge/cooper dengan dengan saiz mesh sebanyak 0.2 untuk mendapatkan ketepatan. Model bilik yang dijana dengan dimensi (panjang: 4 m, lebar: 3 m dan

tinggi: 2.6 m) dan bukan 2.5 m yang ditunjukkan dalam UBBL 1984, hasil ini telah disahkan dengan bilik-bilik ujian sebenar di Lembah Klang. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahan binaan yang sedia ada untuk bilik adalah bahan binaan (konkrit) yang sesuai membenarkan haba untuk memindahkan ke bilik mengikut membangunkan persamaan $q = \frac{k\Delta T}{\sqrt[3]{V}}$, yang mana ini boleh terpakai di Malaysia dan negara beriklim tropikal. Hasil kajian menunjukkan ketinggian yang sesuai untuk semua keadaan persekitaran adalah 3 m.



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I would like to thank my special wife. Her support, encouragement, quiet patience and unwavering love were undeniably the bedrock upon which the past nine years of my life have been built. Her tolerance is a testament in itself of her unyielding devotion and love. My wife has been my best friend and great companion, loved, supported, encouraged, entertained, and helped me get through this agonizing period in the most positive way.

Mohammed W. Muhieldeen Al-Gailani
January 2017

I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 23 January 2017 to conduct the final examination of Mohammed W. Muhieldeen Al-Gailani on his thesis entitled "Development of a Model to Predict Room Temperature Based on Room Geometry using Computational Fluid Dynamics" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	i
Abstrak	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
DECLARATION BY GRADUATE STUDENT	viii
DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS	x
LIST OF TABLES	xiii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
LIST OF SYMBOLS	xvi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xvii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Problem statement	2
1.3 Objectives	4
1.4 Scope and limitation	4
1.5 Thesis Outline	4
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.1 Introduction	6
2.2 Uniform Building By Laws 1984	8
2.3 Green Building	12
2.3.1 Green Building Index (GBI)	12
2.3.2 Green Building Classification	14
2.3.3 Green Project	15
2.4 Traditional Material	15
2.5 Modern Material	16
2.6 Air Conditioners	17
2.7 Effect on the Environment	17
2.8 Conservation of Energy	19
2.9 Energy Consumption of Air Conditioners	20
2.10 Thermal Comfort	21
2.11 Health and Safety	21
2.12 Parameters	22
2.13 Performance and Sustainability	24
2.13.1 Evaluation IAQ Investigation and Thermal Comfort Level	26
2.13.2 Predicting Temperature	28
2.14 Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD)	28

2.14.1	CFD Modelling	30
2.14.2	CFD Simulation	31
2.14.3	Governing Equation	34
2.14.4	Solver Scheme	36
2.14.5	Convergence Criteria	36
2.15	Summary	37
3	APPLICATION OF DIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS	38
3.1	Overview	38
3.2	Dimensional Analysis	38
3.3	Repeating Parameters Method for Buckingham II Theorem	39
3.3.1	Development of the Dimensionless II Terms	40
3.4	Summary	43
4	METHODOLOGY	44
4.1	Overview	44
4.2	Research Methods	46
4.3	Measurement of Air Temperature	48
4.4	Measurement of Relative Humidity	50
4.5	Measurement of Air Velocity	50
4.6	Data Collection and Analysis	52
4.6.1	Thermal Vision Camera	52
4.6.2	Infrared Thermometer	53
4.7	Data Collection	53
4.8	Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) Simulation	57
4.8.1	Geometry Meshing	60
4.8.2	Construction of Model Classroom with GAMBIT	60
4.8.3	Boundary Conditions	69
4.8.4	Laminar Flow	69
4.8.5	Solver Equations	70
4.9	Calibration Test	70
5	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	72
5.1	Introduction	72
5.2	Dimensional Analysis	72
5.2.1	Development of Room Model Based on II Terms	72
5.2.2	Simulation Model	75
5.3	Calibration Result	77
5.4	Modelling Validation	78
5.4.1	Grid Independence Study	78
5.5	Outdoor Environment Parameters	79
5.6	Indoor Environment Parameters	81
5.6.1	Air Temperature	82

5.6.2	Air Velocity	82
5.6.3	Relative Humidity	82
5.7	Numerical Results	83
5.7.1	Chosen the Equipment / Software	83
5.7.2	Temperature Distribution According to the Room Design	83
5.7.2.1	Room Model with 10 Degree Slope Roof	83
5.7.2.2	Room Model with 30 Degree Slope Roof	84
5.7.3	Wooden Room	866
5.8	Comparison Result	87
5.9	Validation Result	89
5.10	Development of Model	91
6	CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATION	93
6.1	Introduction	93
6.2	Conclusion	93
6.3	Recommendation	94
	REFERENCES	95
	APPENDICES	104
A	Heat Transfer Coefficient Calculation	104
B	PRE-PROCESSING COMPUTATIONAL FLUID DYNAMICS	107
C	DATA COLLECTION	112
	BIODATA OF STUDENT	113
	LIST OF PUBLICATIONS	114

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
2.1	Points of GBI Classification Rating Prashant Kapoor (2012)	14
2.2	Garment Insulation Values, McCullough and Jones (1984)	23
2.3	Fanger's Thermal Sensation Scale (1970)	25
3.1	Dimensionless Variables 363.3: II groups Equations	40
5.1	Field Data	73
5.2	Result of Heat Flux by Using Buckingham Theorem	74
5.3	Relationship Among Air Temperature, Air Velocity and Relative Humidity for Outdoor Environment	80
5.4	Developing Room Model According to the Differential in the Temperature Between Inside and Outside	91

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
2.1 Malaysia Emission Intensity Versus Other Countries Nora H., (2014)	19
2.2 Emission of Global Greenhouse Gasses World Resource Institution, (2014)	20
2.3 ASHRAE Summer and Winter Comfort Zones (2012)	24
2.4 Block Diagram for Thermal Comfort Investigation (2010, Guidelines)	27
2.5 CFD Simulation of CAC and FAC, (Gao, 2009)	30
2.6 A Sample of CFD Modelling, (Stamou and Katsiris, 2006)	31
2.7 A Sample of CFD Simulation (Ng, 2008)	32
2.8 CFD Simulation of the Temperature of the Lecture Hall (Cheong, 2003)	33
2.9 CFD Simulation of the Air Velocity of the Lecture Hall (Cheong, 2003)	34
3.1 Flowchart of Steps to Generate the New Equations by Using the Buckingham II theorem	39
4.1 Site Selection in Klang Valley Area 41	
4.2 Room Layout for Typical House	46
4.3 Flow Chart of the Research	48
4.4 VELOCICALC Thermometer	49
4.5 Experiment Procedure for Measurement of Temperature	50
4.6 Data collection in the middle of room and outside	51
4.7 Experiment Procedure for Measurement of Air Velocity	51
4.8 Portable Infrared Camera, IR FlexCam Thermal Imager	52
4.9 Infrared Thermometer	53
4.10 Sample of Houses in Ampang and Cheras Area Facing North	54
4.11 Sample of House in Serdang Area Facing South	54
4.12 Sample of Government Building Facing North	55
4.13 Wooden House Facing South	55
4.14 Sketch of Side and Plan View Shows the Location of Collecting Data Inside Room	56
4.15 Data Collection Inside the Room in Different Position	56
4.16 Data Collection in Wooden House	57
4.17 Progressive Flowchart of CFD Analysis	59
4.18 Geometry Control Panel	61
4.19 Test Room Geometry	61
4.20 10 and 30 Degree Slope Roof	61
4.21 Straight Roof	62
4.22 Create Real Vertex	62
4.23 Create Straight Edge	63
4.24 Create New Face	63
4.25 Generate Volume	63
4.26 Mesh Control Panel	64
4.27 Mesh Settings Panel	64

4.28	Types of the Mesh	65
4.29	Transcript Window	65
4.30	Examine Mesh Control Panel	66
4.31	Front, Side and Top View of the Meshing Room	66
4.32	Specify Display Attributes Control Panel	67
4.33	Zone Control Panel	67
4.34	Specify Boundary Type Panel and Available Boundary Condition	68
4.35	Specify Continuum Type Control Panel	68
4.36	Laminar Flow Residuals	69
4.38	Calibration Test	70
5.1	Heat Flux vs. Volume for 25 rooms in Klang Valley area	76
5.2	Calibration Result with Wahhad (2016)	77
5.3	Temperature at Different Grid Schemes of Different Temperature	79
5.4	Graphs to Air Temperature, Air Velocity and Relative Humidity with the Time for Outdoor Environment	81
5.5	Temperature Distribution From the Roof to the Room for 10 Degree Slope	84
5.6	3D Modelling of 10 Degree Slope Roof	84
5.7	3D Temperature Distribution of the Room With 30 Degree Roof Slope	85
5.8	Velocity Magnitude in Contour 2D View	86
5.9	Velocity Magnitude in Vectors View	86
5.10	3D Temperature Distribution Inside Wooden Room	87
5.11	Comparison between predict temperature and CFD result	88
5.12	Comparison Predict Temperature with the Cameron and China (2016)	88
5.13	Temperature Distribution Inside the Room	89
5.14	Surface Wall Temperature For The Terraced House Without Window from using Thermal Vision Camera from Outside	90
5.15	Surface Wall Temperature For The Same Wall From Inside Using Thermal Vision Camera	90
5.16	VELOCICALC Meter	90
5.17	Correlation Between Differential in the Temperature and the Height of the Room	92

LIST OF SYMBOLS

A	Area, (m ²)
D	Thickness of wall, (m)
C _p	Specific heat, (J/kg.K)
g	Gravitational acceleration, (m/s ²)
G _{rL}	Grashof number
h	Heat transfer coefficient, (W/m ² .K)
k	Thermal conductivity, (W/m.K)
Nu	Nusselt number
Q	Heat flux (W/m ²)
Ra	Rayleigh number
Re	Reynolds number
t	Time (second)
T _∞	Air Temperature, (°C)
T _{sur}	Surrounding Temperature, (°C)
ΔT	Temperature difference, (°C)
T _s	Surface Temperature, (°C)
q _{CONV.}	Convection heat flow, (W)
q _{COND.}	Conduction heat flow, (W)
u, c	Velocity (m/s)
V	Volume (m ³)
X	Local position along the X-direction under Cartesian coordinate
Y	Local position along the Y-direction under Cartesian coordinate
Z	Local position along the Z-direction under Cartesian coordinate
P	Prototype
m	Model
M	Metabolic heat production rate (J/s.m ²)
W	Mechanical work accomplished rate (J/s.m ²)

Greek Symbols

β	volumetric thermal expansion coefficient, (K ⁻¹)
α	Thermal diffusivity, (m ² /s)
ε	emissivity
ρ	Density (kg/m ³)
μ	Dynamics viscosity (N/m's)
v	Specific volume, (m ³ /kg)
ω	Solid angle,(s ⁻¹)
θ	Angle (degree)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Air Conditioning
ACEM	Association of Consulting Engineering Malaysia
ADPI	Air Diffusion Performance Index
AFFIRM	Awareness, Faculty, Finance, Infrastructure, Research, and Marketing
ASHRAE	American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineering
BEM	Board of Engineering Malaysia
BREEAM	Building Research Establish Environmental Assessment Method
CAC	Ceiling-based Air Conditioning system
CASBEE	Comprehensive Assessment System for Building Environmental Efficiency
CFD	Computational Fluid Dynamics
CO ₂	Carbon dioxide
DBKL	Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur
EPI	Environmental Performance Index
ESD	Energy Sustainable Development
GBI	Green Building Index
HQE	High Environmental Quality
IEM	Institution Engineering Malaysia
LED	Light Emitting Diode
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
MPC	Main Press Center
MySET	Malaysian Society, Engineering and Technology
PAM	Persatuan Arkitek Malaysia
RH	Relative Humidity
SBO	Sarawak Building Ordinance
UBBL	Uniform Building By Low
UK	United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Malaysia has a tropical climate throughout the year where the weather is hot and humid, forcing its citizens to use their air conditioner during unbearably hot days and nights, which can be costly. The electricity tariff was increased in September 2013 and made worse by the new (GST) tax system in 2014. Medium and low cost residential buildings do not have high ceilinged rooms as they are built based on the minimum requirements as tabulated in the Uniform Building By-Law Act 1984 (UBBL). A ceiling fan is available in every house, but it is not capable of supplying a suitable quantity of fresh air to create comfortable conditions and this causes human body temperature to increase with the increase of activity intensity (overheating). According to (ASHRAE 2012), when the surrounding temperature is lower than body temperature, the body releases internal heat by perspiring. As sweat is released, it evaporates into the environment which is what causes the person to feel cooler. As the environment in Malaysia is hot and humid, a person tends to sweat more as the humid air is unable to facilitate the evaporation of sweat, which is formed to release internal heat ($RH > 70\%$). The person will then tend to feel uncomfortable due to the friction between their body and their clothing. A fan can be used to help reduce heat load in a certain area as the air movement produced increases the rate of evaporation of sweat. Another alternative that can be used is the air conditioning unit, which is a more effective solution as it can provide thermal comfort for higher air temperatures (ASHRAE, 2012). It operates by the concept of heat transfer through air compression and expansion. The UBBL has set the standard for terraced houses for the minimum ceiling height which allows the occupants to feel comfortable as well as being affordable. It provides the minimum guidelines based on the minimum ceiling height, the temperature profile, the air change in the room and the RH.

The Uniform Building By Law 1984 (Chapter III, section 44) states that for terrace house the minimum height of ceiling as:

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| – Living room and Bedroom | 2.50 meter |
| – Kitchen | 2.25 meter |
| – Washroom | 2.00 meter |

The ASHRAE handbook is a publication of a non-profit organisation formally known as the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, and is used as a standard for the field of heating, ventilation, air-conditioning, and refrigeration

(HVAC&R). Many experiments were carried out to obtain the readings and then translate them into tables and equations for the purpose of providing a basic and standard platform for such systems. Data collected across the United States of America can be used as a benchmark for other countries as the area is large enough to provide sufficient results that have more or less similar parameters (environmental, geological, etc.) to the rest of the world.

In this handbook, aspects other than the mechanical area are also taken into consideration during the designing of air conditioning systems, such as human thermoregulation. A thorough understanding of how the human body reacts to the environment is vital to ensure not just comfort for the occupants, but safety as well. To know how much heat is needed to help achieve thermal comfort for the occupants of an area, the total amount of heat that is generated needs to be determined. In this case, every aspect that leads to heat load needs to be considered, whereby the net heat produced is equal to the metabolic heat production rate, also taking into account the energy produced by external work (ASHRAE, 2012):

$$\text{Net heat produced (J/s.m}^2\text{)} = M - W$$

M: Metabolic heat production rate (J/s.m²)

W: Mechanical work accomplished rate (J/s.m²)

This research is proposed based on the UBBL statement to estimate the optimum ceiling height for a room in order to develop a room model using the dimensional analysis Π theorem which considers the air temperature, the RH and the volume of the room, and also follows international standards like ASHRAE to attain comfortable conditions inside residents' houses.

1.2 Problem statement

In the past, a ceiling fan has been sufficient to provide a cooling effect on a warm, sunny day. However, in recent years, more and more consumers have resorted to air conditioning on a regular basis to help reduce the heat tension. Apart from this, the number of units installed per area has increased significantly; where in the past one unit was sufficient, now at least two or three are required per house. To be able to keep up with the demand for electricity, the government has invested quite a large sum of money in efforts to upgrade current power plant facilities as well as building new sites for hydro power stations and an independent power plants (IPP). All these plans, however, come

at a price as more land needs to be cleared to make way for site expansion, inevitably destroying the natural habitats of wildlife and water catchment areas, adding impetus to the already increasing global warming (Younggeew Kim, 2013).

The government announced a plan to pursue nuclear energy a few years ago, but Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011 caused the project plan to stop until the demand for energy become a crisis and the government was able to convince the people that nuclear power was the way forward. Until then, other efforts to increase production, reduce wastage, and conserve energy are the only solution (Aref D. L., 2010).

One of the requirements for the green building index (GBI) is indoor air quality, which contributes 20% for the GBI rating, but the ceiling height mentioned only in the UBBL is not based on a study review of the data obtained for Malaysia but on world studies in 1970 because of the relative humidity, temperature condition and different climate performance of many countries. The guideline was never tested experimentally in Malaysia (Communication with Dato' Badaruddin Mohd Isa, Fire Chief Malaysia, 2014).

The UBBL shows minimum height but not the optimum height. Advent of green building uses physical dimensions to improve energy efficiency. Therefore, it is possible to design a thermally comfortable space using only the building geometry.

(Leopold, 2016) predicted indoor temperature and humidity in buildings found in a hot-humid region (Cameroon) using an artificial neural network for an hourly prediction; (Zhu, 2016) proposed an alternative method to predict future weather data generation for a future building energy demand simulation in Shanghai. The combination works of (Awbi, 1991 and Gan, 2010) using CFD to predict the room geometry with a critical size and room ventilation helped in the selection of a suitable geometry for use in the United Kingdom. The target temperature of this study is 27 °C, while the data have been collected when the air conditioning unit was off and the air movement inside the rooms was very slow, where, this target shows agreement with both (Zhu, 2016) in China and (Leopold, 2016) in Cameroon.

Therefore, this research will be based on the development of a room model using CFD and will investigate the minimum geometry (volume, length and height) inside houses to obtain thermal comfort for its occupants. The application of this study is built on the fundamentals of thermal comfort in the ASHRAE handbook

1.3 Objectives

The overall objective of this study is to develop room model by estimating the minimum ceiling height for acceptable air temperature and achieve the thermal comfort condition. Specific objectives are as follows:

- 1- To determine the minimum geometry parameters (volume, area and ceiling height) in houses to reach to the thermal comfort zone for the occupants.
- 2- To acquire base data on room geometry, wall materials and room temperature.
- 3- To design new room model by using CFD and dimensionless parameters.

1.4 Scope and limitation

This study is concerned with determining the minimum geometry parameters for thermal comfort using the air temperature at two different locations in a room: near the ceiling and at the centre of the room. Various parameters or field measurements are measured while conducting the experiments. The experimental results are affected by some unexpected factors, such as the door, the window orientation, the indoor and outdoor climate (where there is a difference in the temperature between indoors and outdoors - $\Delta T \geq 5 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$), the construction material and the physical layout of the room.

Field data is limited to rooms with direct ceiling to exposed roof in the Klang Valley. The data collection conducted was for government buildings and privet houses between 2012 and 2013. The data collection was conducted on sunny days. The adopt methodology followed Cenjal (2014) and Shieh (2007).

Numerical simulation was done by the FLUENT version 16.4 where the air flow was assumed to be turbulent adopting model (k- ϵ) difference for room design following Joel et al., (1999). The indoor ventilation is a major issue and the air temperature, solar radiation, humidity and air velocity are of the most important parameters affecting the natural ventilation inside the buildings (Wahhad, 2016).

1.5 Thesis Outline

There are six main chapters altogether in this thesis.

Chapter 1 (Introduction) included the overview of the study, problem statement, scope and limitation and the objectives.

Chapter 2 (Literature Review) is a compilation of previous studies and other forms of literature that support the methods to be applied in Chapter 3. The review includes the basics of the Uniform Building By Law Act 1984, traditional and modern houses materials, green buildings, thermal comfort concept and CFD simulation application in ventilation studies.

Chapter 3 (Dimensional Analysis) the theoretical study related to the Buckingham Π theorem and the simulation part of theorem.

Chapter 4 (Methodology) will be the detailed explanation and step-by-steps on how to simulate the data that collected from the field study and boundary conditions.

Chapter 5 (Results) includes the discussion regarding the final findings of the study, the obstacles faced in obtaining them, as well as to how it compares to the standards which are already established by certified researchers and organizations.

Chapter 6 (Conclusion) draws an inference of the entire research and how it has accomplished its initially stated objectives. Any other suggestions of improvement to the study and how the findings may be of benefit to society is stated in this chapter.

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