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Experimental Study on Wave Transmission Coefficient of Double Cylindrical Floating Breakwater in a Wave Basin

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ABSTRACT

Floating breakwater is a better alternative than the conventional method. It is an effective coastal engineering unit used to protect coastal regions such as harbours and marinas from erosive waves. It has many other applications such as offshore renewable energy generation, infrastructure preservation, temporary structure, and provides a controlled environment for aquaculture activities. The floating breakwater such as the double cylindrical floating breakwater (DCFB) is claimed to have effective wave attenuation characteristics. A lab scale investigation was done by placing the DCFB in a controlled wave basin in with wave generator to generate wave and wave gauge to quantify the wave transmission coefficient. The wave transmission coefficient represents the effectiveness of the breakwater system in attenuating incoming waves, where an effective breakwater system will result in a low transmission coefficient value. In this study, the DCFB's effectiveness in terms of wave transmission coefficient was investigated with two different configurations where the spacing between the cylinders of the DCFB units are 0.2 m and 0.6 m respectively. Results show that the configuration of DCFB units with 0.5 m cylinder spacing are more effective in absorbing incoming wave height resulting in lower transmission coefficient. Furthermore, some prospective areas had been identified for future enhancement.

1. Introduction

Floating breakwaters are effective coastal engineering structures in reducing the effect of destructive ocean waves on coastal regions such as harbour facilities [1]. The double cylindrical floating breakwater (DCFB) is specifically designed with two rigid cylinders attached with a wall in between and a mesh cage attached below the unit [2]. The configuration is claimed to have effective wave attenuation [3]. Hence, exploring the DCFB unit on coastal protection from destructive ocean waves, including harbour safety, becomes important [4].

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The DCFB structure performance can be properly understood using a quantification unit to represent its ability to mitigate incoming waves [5]. Wave transmission coefficient can be used to assess the relative amount of wave energy remaining after passing through the DCFB by quantifying the wave height changes after passing through the DCFB [6].

The response of the DCFB structure varies with different wave energies indicates that the structure is effective and has potential to attenuate incoming wave energy [7]. Thus, the quantification of wave transmission coefficient of the DCFB in a controlled lab scale experiment serves as an expansion of theoretical practice into actual coastal engineering and planning applications [8].

The study on DCFB is significantly beyond the interest of the academic values [9]. Coastal phenomenon such as storm surges, erosion and other coastal hazards are becoming more severe together with climate change [10]. Therefore, the introduction of DCFB into actual coastal applications can be seen as a desirable solution to the potential environmental hazards in coastal areas [11]. Determining the wave transmission coefficient under different environmental conditions are necessary to identify the most optimum DCFB design and arrangement to effectively protect coastal areas from potential wave damages [12]. Successful application of floating breakwater to mitigate coastal damage not only contribute to the progress in coastal engineering but also improves safety and sustainability of community environments [13].

The increase of human population living near to coastal area and extreme weather patterns due to climate change calls for a greener solution to coastal engineering approaches. The conventional approach of piling type breakwater system often impose change to the natural coastline, subsequently bringing ecological damage will not be sustainable in a long run. In this aspect, a floating breakwater system such as the proposed DCFB will have a better advantage. With proper design specification, floating breakwater systems will have a significant advantage over the conventional floating breakwater. However, to date, the opportunity of applying floating breakwaters in actual site conditions are not well documented. In many experimental studies, the effects of size and arrangement of the DCFB system on transmission coefficient is not fully understood [14].

DCFB systems can be applied for many coastal protection purposes such as small craft harbours and marinas, or even as shoreline erosion control [15,16]. These examples indicate the potential of DCFB as part of an integrated coastal management system. The DCFB system is less intrusive in the shoreline environment as compared to conventional breakwaters and does not cause significant modification on the natural system [17]. It also has the ability to adapt to different wave conditions and can be designed to meet specific application needs, such as offshore renewable energy generation, infrastructure preservation, recreation, temporary structure, and create controlled environment for various aquaculture activities [18-29]. This study investigates the wave transmission coefficients of TCFB with different sizes and arrangements.

The ability of DCFB to mitigate incoming waves is the focus of this investigation. The primary aim is to have an in-depth comprehension on the structure and its functions, as well as to evaluate the structure performance by investigating the wave transmission coefficient. The current study has two objectives: firstly, to quantify the wave transmission coefficient of DCFB with different spacing between the cylinders (0.2m and 0.5m respectively) [12]; and secondly, to compare the wave transmission coefficient of DCFB systems without gap between the DCFB units and with a 0.5m gap between the DCFB units. The experiment was carried out in a wave basin with a wave paddle to generate waves and wave gauges to quantify the wave transmission coefficient.

2. Materials and Methodology

A three units of DCFB cylindrical floating breakwater (DCFB) were placed in a series, one after another, as shown in Figure 1. Figure 1 shows a physical unit of the DCFB for this study with the two rigid floating cylinders attached with a wall in between and a mesh cage at the bottom. In wave basin experiment, as shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3, wave was generated from wave maker and was transmitted along the wave basin towards the sand beach. Wave gauge (WG) 1 was used to measure incoming waves, WG2 was to measure waves reflected from DCFB and WG3 was to measure transmitted waves. In the first objective, DCFB with different sizes were tested. For the second objective, DCFB were arranged 0.5 m apart from one another (Figure 4) and the results were compared to the results from the first objective to determine the effects of different arrangement towards wave transmission coefficient.



Fig. 1. Double cylindrical floating breakwater used in this study



Fig. 2. The physical setup of the three units of twin cylindrical floating breakwater, showing pairs of floating cylinders to form a floating breakwater and the position of wave generator and wave gauges

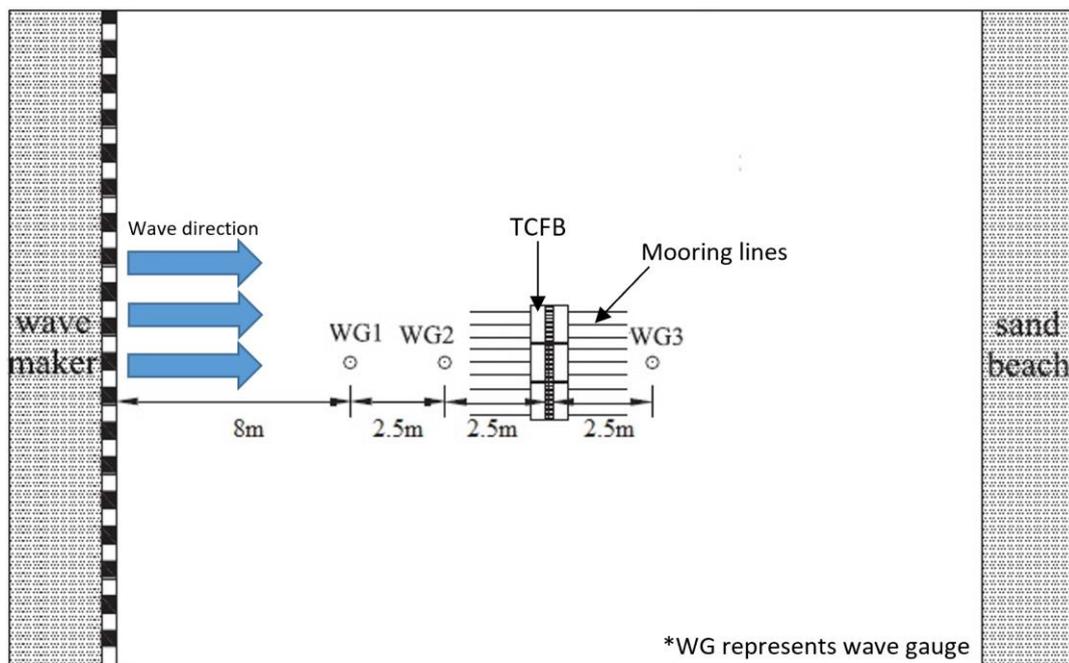


Fig. 3. Three units of double cylindrical floating breakwater located in series

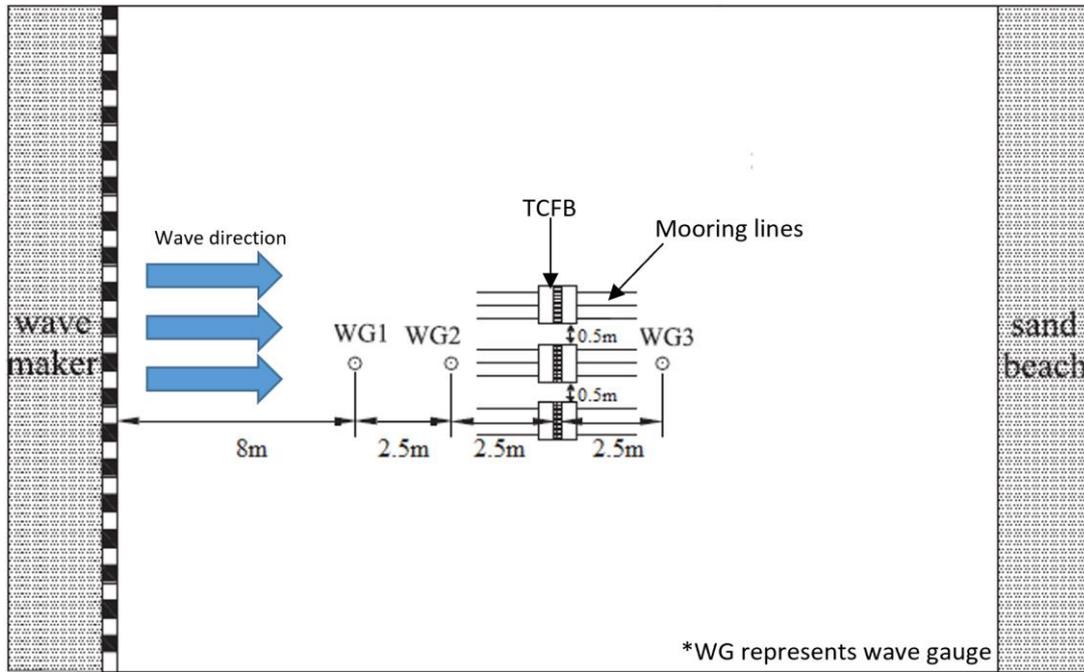


Fig. 4. Three double cylindrical floating breakwaters spaced 0.5m between each other

To quantify the effectiveness of the DCFB, the wave transmission coefficient (K_t) was used to calculate the ratio of transmitted wave height and incident wave height. The formula was given by [30-33]:

$$K_t = \frac{H_t}{H_i} \quad (1)$$

where H_t is the transmitted wave height, and H_i is the incident wave height.

3. Results and Discussion

Initially, the water level was around 0.3 m, when the water level was at rest. When the wave maker was turn on, a wave amplitude 0.3 m was generated above at peak and below at trough of the water level at rest. Figure 5 clearly showed a wave height of 0.6 m (peak minus trough) was generated in the wave basin that heading towards the DCFB. After the incident wave height (WG1) hits the DCFB the wave of lower height was seen leaving the DCFB (WG3), which then direct towards the sand beach. The contact of the incident wave with the DCFB result in energy loss, which the size of DCFB and the arrangement of DCFB results in absorption of a certain amount of energy. The overall effect resulted in a portion of energy leaving the DCFB transmitted at a lower wave height. On average, the transmitted wave height was seen to carry about 0.1 m amplitude, which was equivalent to 0.2 m (two times the amplitude). The rise and fall of the wave height corresponded well between the incident and the transmitted waves. A lower transmitted wave height than the incident was the reason of having less than unity wave transmission coefficient, which was commonly observed by other researchers [31-35].

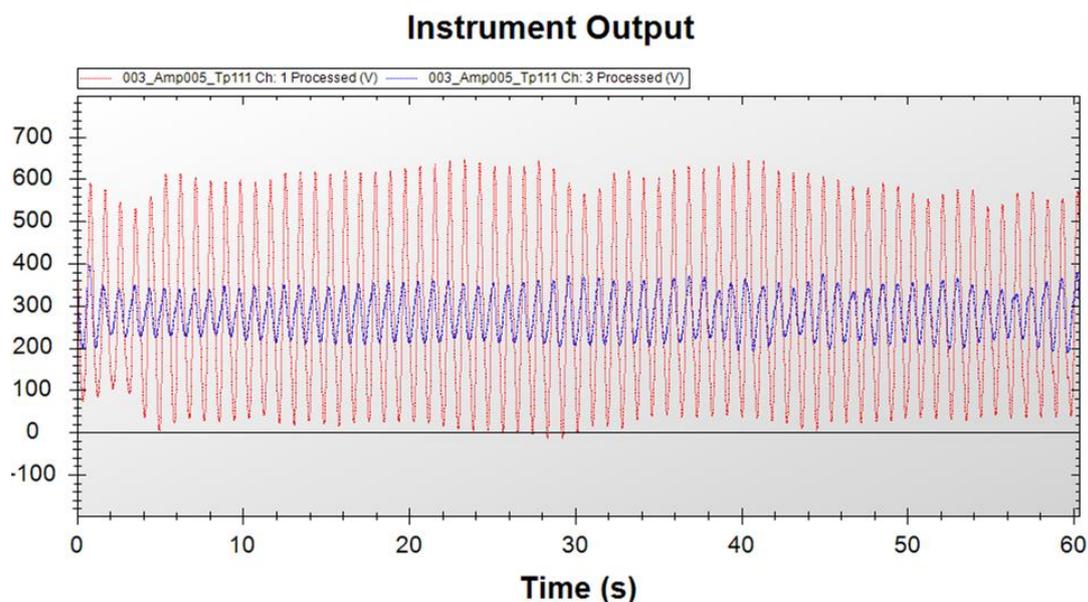


Fig. 5. The heights of the incident wave heading towards double cylindrical floating breakwaters and transmitted wave after the breakwaters. Note the red line refers to incident wave height (WG1), and the blue line refers to transmitted wave height (WG3)

The DCFB was further analysed for wave transmission coefficient. The coefficient indicates the ability of the DCFB structure, that come in direct contact with the wave, to absorb the incident energy before releasing the energy as transmitted wave. A high wave transmission coefficient indicates the structure is unable to absorb the energy, and vice versa. In Figure 6, the transmission coefficient was found to increase with the increasing ratio of wavelength (L) and breadth of the floating breakwater system (B), which is similarly to those reported by Ji *et al.*, [35]. The observation indicates that subjecting the system to a low frequency wave (or high wavelength), as in high L/B ratio, a large amount of energy would be transmitted across the DCFB structure without much resistance. The increasing wave transmission coefficient was found at greater rate of increment, in the range of a low L/B from 1.25 to 1.9, but as the L/B increases to high value range from 1.9 to 3.1, the wave transmission coefficient (K_t) was found to increase at a lower rate. A similar trend was observed when raising the wave height from 0.1 to 0.15 and 0.2 m, that the wave transmission coefficient was found to increase. The corresponding response of DCFB structure to incident wave height of 0.1, 0.15, and 0.2 m has a response of increasing ratio of $K_t/(L/B)$ at 0.43, 0.51, and 0.65, respectively. Thus, either one or both increment the incoming wave height and wavelength, it reduces the ability of the DCFB structure to dampen the wave energy. It was also important to point out that the damping characteristic was only valid right before wave transmission coefficient reached the value of unity. As evident in the Figure 6, the wave transmission coefficient when rose above the unity value, the DCFB structure would appear as enhancing the transmitted wave height, which greater than the incident wave height. As the reason is currently clear, the movement of the structure magnify the wave amplitude after the DCFB structure could be partly responsible for the enhancement of transmitted wave height.

In Figure 6, the spacing between DCFB structures was designed to have 0.2 m size between the floating cylinders, but between the TCFB units there was no gap. In Figure 7, the size between the floating cylinders have been increased to 0.6 m, while the gap between the DCFB units was increased to 0.5 m. The experimentation in Figure 6 was based the condition as layout in the in Abdullah *et al.*, [12]. The experimentation set up in the Figure 7 was to explore the possibility of improving the wave transmission coefficient by increasing the size between the floating cylinders and to introduce a gap

between the TCFB units. The apparent difference between Figure 6 and Figure 7 was that the former examined on the wave transmission coefficient from less than unity to greater than unity, while the latter only focussed on the wave transmission coefficient that was less than unity. If the wave transmission coefficient (K_t) was examined until the value of unity for DCFB with size of 0.2 m (Figure 6), the $K_t/(L/B)$ was found to be 0.41, 0.92, and 2.17 corresponding to wave height (WH) of 0.1, 0.15, and 0.2 m, as in Figure 6. Increasing $K_t/(L/B)$ with the L/B ratio implies the reducing ability of the TCFB structure to absorb the wave energy as the incoming wavelength increases. Whereas in Figure 7, the $K_t/(L/B)$ was found to be 1.76, 0.95, and 0.52 for WH of 0.1, 0.15, and 0.2 m, respectively. Thus, decreasing $K_t/(L/B)$ with the L/B ratio implies the increasing ability of the DCFB structure to absorb the wave energy as the incoming wavelength increases. Since the former was based on DCFB structure size of 0.2 m with no gap, and the latter was based on a size of 0.6 m with 0.5 m gap; hence, increasing the DCFB size and gap were evident to the increase of energy absorption ability of the breakwater system.

In addition to study described above, there are more investigations in the planning stage which are to enhance the research and development to improve the energy damping ability of the DCFB structure. For instance, increasing the mass of the structure. Having a heavier floating breakwater would increase the inertia of the unit that would reduce the response of the floating unit to the incoming fluctuating wave energy. Shape and design improvement, for example, using a slope slide could allow the incoming motion water to rise and fall on the slope surface; thus, dampen the effect of the incoming wave impact. Damping device would be another area of consideration, for instance, fender such as rubber bumper on the side of the structure that in direct contact with the incoming wave would increase impact absorption to result in more unit structure stationary. Active control system is another area of improvement, for example, using active ballast to modify unit mass distribution within the structure could counter the structure motion caused by the incoming wave. Additional studies in the future are related to the mooring system that can affect the movement of the structure.

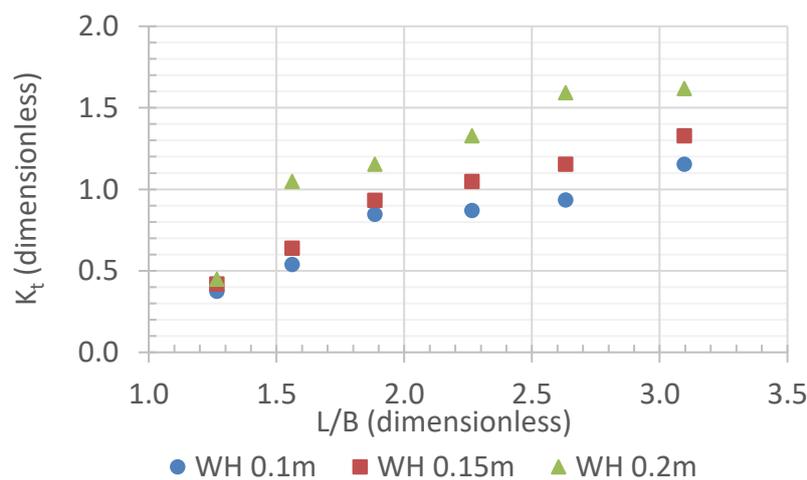


Fig. 6. Transmission coefficients of double cylindrical floating breakwaters (DCFB) in waves with size of 0.2 m between floating cylinders of the DCFB unit, without gap. Note that WH refers to wave height, K_t refers to the wave transmission coefficient, L is the wavelength, and B is the breadth of the floating breakwater system

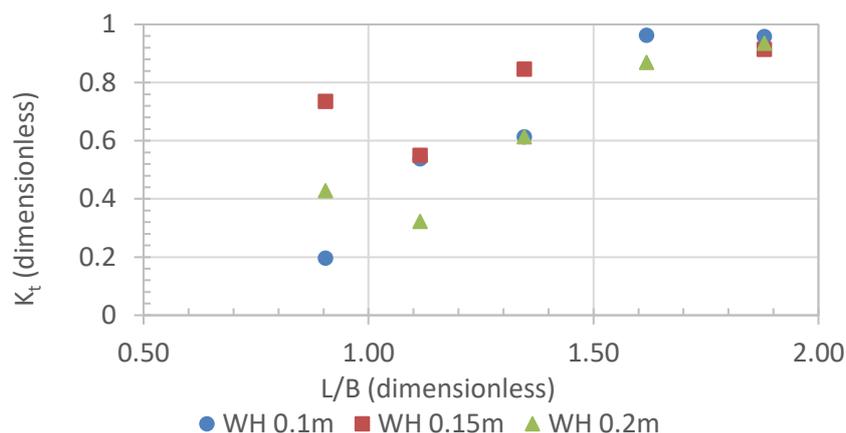


Fig. 7. Transmission coefficients of double cylindrical floating breakwaters (DCFB) in waves with size of 0.6 m between floating cylinders of the DCFB unit, with gap of 0.5 m between DCFB units. Note that WH refers to wave height, K_t refers to the wave transmission coefficient, L is the wavelength, and B is the breadth of the floating breakwater system

4. Conclusion

The double cylindrical floating breakwaters (DCFB) were fabricated and experimental in an indoor controlled environment that one side was wave generator and the other was sand beach used to absorb the transmitted wave. The wave heights 0.1 to 0.2 m were generated and direct towards the DCFB s that the first experiment was investigated with a spacing size between floating cylinders of 0.2 m with no gap. While the second experiment was investigated with spacing size of 0.6 m between floating cylinders with 0.5 m gap between DCFB units. The wave heights were measured using wave gauge located before and after the DCFB, that the ratio of transmitted wave height and incident wave height was taken as wave transmission coefficient, which used to indicate the efficiency of the DCFB structure unit in damping the incoming wave to result in lower transmitted wave height. Results in experiment one showed the wave transmission coefficient could be less than unity when the DCFB units were effective in absorbing the incoming energy of the wave, but as the incoming wavelength continued to increase, the transmitted wave height was found to be enhanced to result in the increase of the wave transmission coefficient to greater than unity that signifies a greater transmitted wave height than the incoming wave height. While focussing on the experimental conditions with wave transmission coefficients less than unity, the DCFB in second experiment with the gap of 0.5 m spacing sizes between structure units was found to exhibit a better damping effect than in experiment one. Furthermore, an improve version of the DCFB is currently in the planning stage, and more improvement can be achieved, for instance, the structure mass, shape and design improvement, damping device, and active control device.

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