Characteristics of Aerodynamic and Noise for Tubular Centrifugal Fan
(2nd report: Effects of Belt Case, Inclination of Blade, Size of Casing and Preventive Plate against Reverse Flow)

by

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The effects of the belt case, the inclination of blade, the size of casing and the preventive plate of a tubular centrifugal fan on both fan noise and the aerodynamic characteristics are experimentally investigated by using three impellers. The results are summarized as follows: A considerable amount of a rise of pressure and fan efficiency can be expected by using the inclined blade and taking off belt case. Therefore, the specific noise level of the tubular centrifugal fan decrease considerably. In the ratio of casing diameter to impeller diameter is 1.32, the more the distance between the preventive plate against reverse flow and impeller becomes short, the more the fan efficiency and total pressure become high.

1. Introduction

It is called as a tubular centrifugal fan which uses a centrifugal impeller in a tubular casing in spite of a scroll casing. In the first report, we studied experimentally the effects of scroll casing and tubular casing, and an areal ratio of inlet to outlet of impeller on the aerodynamic and noise characteristics. In the result, we revealed two points. The first, usually, a centrifugal fan with scroll casing is superior to a fan with tubular casing in the aerodynamic and the noise characteristics. The second, closer to unity, $A_r$ that is the inlet/outlet area ratio of impeller is, higher the maximum efficiency is and lower the specific noise level is.

As a rule, the tubular centrifugal fan adopt special way to transmit the power from electric motor. The way uses a pulley and V belt because it can change a revolution of impeller easily. There are some reasons why the tubular centrifugal fan is lower than usual centrifugal fan with scroll casing in the efficiency and the total pressure. One is that the pressure loss causes when the air flow impacts on the duct wall and other is the belt case for driving belt. It can't be ignored that the belt case of the tubular fan which is on the market take 30% in sectional area of the duct. It is considered that a way to reduce the pressure loss by impact of the air flow and a bend of the stream line is to make incline blade to axial direction. By this way, we can increase the distance that flow reaches duct wall and we can reduce the pressure loss by the impact and by the bend of stream line because an angle of bent become small. Similarly, by increasing the diameter of tubular casing, we can reduce the pressure loss.

From a point mentioned above, we investigate experimentally that the effects of belt case, angle of the inclination of blade, the dimensions of casing and the preventive plate against reverse flow on the characteristics of aerodynamic and noise.

2. Main Symbols

$A_r$ : Inlet/outlet area ratio of impeller
$B$ : Number of blades
3. Experimental apparatus and procedure

The schematic diagram of experimental apparatus is shown in figure 1. The total length of experimental apparatus is about 11 m and a test fan is mounted near the suction end of the duct, where a bellmouth is installed. Downstream of the fan there is a long straight duct, on which an orifice flow meter and a honeycomb which satisfy the JIS standard are mounted, and at the exit of the duct a conical damper is provided to adjust the flow rate. We adjust flow rate by closing and opening the damper. The test fan and discharge duct are connected by a cylindrical diffuser with converging angle of 6°.

Figure 2 shows the schematic diagram of fan. The electric motor for driving impeller is fixed on the tubular casing. The power from motor is transmitted to main shaft of the fan through V belt. The belt case that protects V belt is 267mm in wide and 48mm in thick. The main shaft is located in the center of cylindrical duct by twelve stator vane. The diameter of this duct is 460mm. To research the influence of belt case, we made a fan that the impeller is mounted motor shaft directly and compared the efficiency of two fans. The flow condition at outlet of impeller is measured in four sections at intervals of 90° four section in the radius larger than impeller radius by 10mm. The spanwise measuring point is fourteen points at the intervals of 10mm.
The distance between rear shroud of impeller and leading edge of stator vane is 154mm. We installed the preventive plate in order to avoid back flow at outlet of impeller and made experiment to research that effects of the preventive plate on the characteristics of aerodynamic and noise by changing relative location between the preventive plate and the impeller. The preventive plate is doughnut shape and its inner radius is 10mm larger than outer radius of impeller. It is 4mm thick and made of iron.

Figure 3 shows the schematic diagram of test impellers. The impeller is shown in figure 3 (a), which rear shroud holds vertical to rotating shaft and front shroud holds the angle of 62° to rotating shaft. The impeller is made up of 12 flat plate blade and the area ratio, $A_r$, is 0.47 (called as No.2 impeller). The impeller is shown in figure 3 (b), which rear shroud holds vertical to rotating shaft and front shroud holds the angle of 75° to rotating shaft. The area ratio, $A_r$, of this impeller is 0.41 (referred No.3 impeller). The No.4 impeller is shown in figure 3 (c), the angle of inclination of the front shroud and rear shroud is the same as that of front shroud of the No. 2 impeller. The sectional area at outlet of impeller vertical to stream line is almost same as the No.3 impeller.

These impellers are driven by 2.2 kW 4 pole induction motor at about 1800rpm. The tip speed of impeller is about 43.7m/s in the experiments. From now on, we call fan with No.2, No.3, No.4 impeller as the No.2, the No.3, the No.4 fan. The main dimensions of impellers are listed in Table 1.

### Table 1  Main dimensions of the impellers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impeller</th>
<th>No. 2</th>
<th>No. 3</th>
<th>No. 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$B$ mm</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$D_1$ mm</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$D_2$ mm</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$D_3$ mm</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$Y_1$ mm</td>
<td>145.8</td>
<td>145.8</td>
<td>145.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$Y_2$ mm</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>163.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$C$ mm</td>
<td>140.8</td>
<td>140.8</td>
<td>140.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\xi$ deg</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$A_r$</td>
<td>0.474</td>
<td>0.406</td>
<td>0.335</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Fig. 3 Schematic diagram of impeller.](image)

![Fig. 4 Effects of belt case on characteristic curves.](image)
that the air flowed out the impeller impacts on the duct wall is longer and the pressure loss due to the impact and the reduction in bend of the stream line is reduced.

The reason why efficiency is low generally may be the pressure loss due to the belt case. We show the characteristics of tubular centrifugal fan without belt case in figure 4 (b). In this figure, it is seen that the maximum efficiency of No. 4 and No. 2 fan is almost same and the rise of efficiency and pressure for the No. 2 and the No. 3 fan is remarkable as compared with the No. 4 fan. This is because the velocity at neighborhood of the duct wall for No. 2 fan is higher than that of No. 4 fan in the radial distribution of velocity, so the pressure loss due to the belt case become greater (refer to figure 6). As compared with figure 4 (a) and 4 (b) the fan efficiency, the maximum flow rate and the pressure for the fan without belt case is higher than that of the fan with belt case in all fans. As mentioned above, it is found that the belt case causes large resistance.

Figure 5 shows the effects of three locations of the preventive plate against back flow on characteristic curves for the diameter of casing, \( D_c = 730 \text{mm} \). In this figure, as compare with the fan which mounted the preventive plate over the leading edge of blade \( D = 0 \) and is not installed that, the former is 10% higher in the efficiency, 0.07 to 0.1 in the pressure coefficient and 0.02 in the maximum flow rate than the latter. Moreover, the pressure coefficient, the maximum flow rate and the maximum efficiency increase according as the preventive plate closes leading edge of blade. This is cause the attachment of preventive plate prevents the back flow at outlet of impeller and the pressure loss reduces.

Next, we discuss the effects of diameter of casing on the fan efficiency and the pressure coefficient by used No. 2 fan. In the fan without preventive plate, the fan with casing of 630mm diameter [dotted line in figure 4 (b)] is somewhat higher than that with casing of 730mm diameter in the maximum flow rate, the maximum efficiency and the pressure. This is main cause the back flow region of the latter is wider than that of the former. The pressure loss is generated by next three sources. The first is due to back flow. The second is due to the bend of stream line. The third is
due to impact on duct wall. In the total pressure loss of the second and third source, the latter \( D_c = 730 \text{ mm} \) is smaller than the former \( D_c = 630 \text{ mm} \) because the velocity at neighborhood of the duct wall is smaller the latter than the former. In the total pressure loss of the three sources, the latter is larger than the former. From these facts, the pressure loss due to the back flow in the latter is larger than that in the former. Therefore, it is need to attach the preventive plate in the casing of large size. In the casing of 630mm size, when the preventive plate locates over the leading edge of impeller, the total pressure reduces a little due to skin friction of plate. When the preventive plate is separated more than 20mm from the leading edge of impeller, the total pressure, the fan efficiency and the maximum flow rate does not change in spite of the existence of preventive plate.

The velocity was measured in the section at 165mm upstream to examine the effects of belt case on the aerodynamic characteristics. Figure 6 shows the radial distribution of axial velocity at 50mm ahead of the belt case. In this figure, \( \bullet \) mark is the results in No. 2 fan and \( \bigcirc \) mark is that in No. 4 fan. From this figure, the velocity at neighborhood of the duct wall is higher the No. 2 fan than the No. 4 fan. Taking into consideration that the pressure loss is proportional to the second power of velocity and as compared with figure 4 (b) and figure 4 (a) in the pressure and the fan efficiency, it is found that the quantity of increase of the No. 2 fan higher than that of the No. 4 fan shall be cause the velocity difference in both fans.

\[ m = nB + kV \]  

Where \( m \) is the number of lobes, \( n \) is the harmonic number \( (n=1 \text{ for fundamental tone}), B \) is the number of blades, \( k \) is the index \( (k=-1, 0, 1\cdots) \), \( V \) is the number of vanes. When \( m=0 \) in equation (2), interaction noise does not decay in duct and propagate\(^{(2x3)}\). In the No. 2 ~ No. 4 fan, the interaction noise

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![Fig. 6 Spanwise distributions of axial velocity. (Effects of inclination of the blade)](image)

![Fig. 7 Spectral distribution of fan noise. (With belt case)](image)

![Fig. 8 Spectral distribution of fan noise. (Without belt case)](image)
due to the impeller with 12 blade and stator with 12 vane at the fundamental frequency and the overtone frequency does not decay because m is zero at \( n = 1, k = -1 \) for the fundamental frequency and \( n = 2, k = -2 \) for the overtone frequency. In the over all noise for three fans, the difference between No. 2 fan and No. 3 fan is a little but the noise of No. 4 fan is lower by 3 dB than that of No. 2 fan and No. 3 fan.

As shown in figure 8, the interaction noise generated by impeller-stator interaction also occur in fans without belt case. The difference between fans with belt case and without belt case is a little. In the fan without belt case, rising of the sound pressure level at 2000 Hz frequency region. This noise results from the vibration of duct wall, it is causes that the intensity of duct wall became weaker due to take off the belt case. The effects of location of the preventive plate on the noise generated at \( \phi_{\text{max}} \) point is shown in figure 9. From overall noise in figure (L characteristic), the noise of fan without the preventive plate is 1.3 dB lower than that of fan with that. This result is due to the difference based on interaction noise. In the turbulent noise, the effects of preventive plate is not seen.

The effects of flow rate on the distribution of sound pressure level for the fan with casing of 730mm size is shown in figure 10. It is found from this figure that (1) the turbulent noise over broad band frequency is the highest at maximum flow rate point (\( \phi_{\text{max}} \)) and the noise become low according to reduce of flow rate. (2) The interaction noise contribute overall noise considerably. (3) The interaction noise reduce somewhat at the maximum point (\( \phi_{\text{max}} \)) and the minimumum point (\( \phi_{\text{min}} \)) of pressure coefficient because the wake of blade diffuses. But in comparison of overall noise at these flow rate, that level is almost same except the maximum flow rate point.

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**Fig. 9 Spectral distribution of fan noise.**
(Effects of preventive plate against reverse flow).

**Fig. 10 Spectral distribution of fan noise for each flow (Without belt case).**

**Fig. 11 Dependence of noise and specific noise. level on flow rate (With belt case).**
4.3 Overall noise and specific noise level

To judge the quality of a fan from the viewpoint of noise reduction, the specific noise level, $K_s$, has been used. It is defined by

$$K_s = SPL - 10 \log_{10}(QP_T^2) + 20$$

where $SPL$ is the sound pressure level in dB, $Q$ is the fan flow rate in m$^3$/min, and $P_T$ is the total pressure rise in Pa. Figure 11 shows the change in the overall noise and the specific noise level with flow rate for tubular centrifugal fan with belt case. Figure 11 (a) shows the results based on the overall noise, $SPL(L)$ measured with use of L characteristics of sound level meter and the specific noise level, $K_s(L)$ based on $SPL(L)$ and figure 11 (b) is $SPL(A)$ measured with use of A characteristics and $K_s(A)$. From these results, both $SPL(L)$ and $SPL(A)$ become the maximum at maximum flow coefficient point ($\phi_{max}$) and begin to decrease with reducing the flow coefficient and become flat at the flow rate region which is less than the flow coefficient of 0.2.

On the other hand, both $K_s(L)$, $K_s(A)$ become maximum at the maximum flow coefficient like the overall noise and begin to decrease abruptly with reducing the flow coefficient to $\phi=0.2$ and increase
toward the closing point again. In SPL and $K_s$, the No. 4 fan (● mark) had impeller with inclined blade is the lowest among fans and is the most among fans in the maximum flow. This is cause the pressure loss based on the impact and the bend of stream line reduces due to incline blade.

The results of SPL and $K_s$ for fan without belt case are shown in figure 12. It is found that the overall noise decreases with reducing the flow rate. The specific noise level decreases abruptly from maximum flow coefficient point to $\phi = 0.2$ and become nearly constant from this point ($\phi = 0.2$) to closing point ($\phi = 0.2$).

As compared with the fan with belt case shown in figure 11 and without belt case in figure 12, it is found that by taking off the belt case, an reduction in overall noise by about 2 dB and the specific noise level by 5 ~ 10 dB can be realized. This effect is remarkable in the No. 2 and the No. 3 fan with a little inclined angle blade. This fact suggest that the pressure drop due to the belt case larger than that due to the impact and the bend of stream line.

The effects of preventive plate on overall noise, SPL and specific noise level, $K_s$ for fan with casing of 630mm size and 730mm size are shown in figure 13 and 14 respectively. In figure 13, both SPL(L) and SPL(A) of fan attached the preventive plate located over the leading edge of impeller is higher than that of another location by about 1 dB. Similarly, by reason of this fact, the specific noise level is higher than that of another location by about 1 dB.

The $SPL$ and $K_s$ of the fan with casing of 730mm size are shown in figure 14, when the preventive plate is installed over the leading edge of impeller ($D = 0$, ● mark), $K_s$ and SPL for the fan with the preventive plate are become lower than that of fan without preventive plate by 1 ~ 2 dB. This level is by no means inferior to the normal centrifugal fan with scroll casing.

5. Conclusions

The effects of belt case, inclined angle of blade, the casing of size and preventive plate on the aerodynamic and fan noise characteristics were examined by using three kinds of fans. The results are summarized as follows.

(1) The existence of belt case influence the aerodynamic characteristics of fan. The total pressure of the fan with belt case is lower than that of the fan without belt case by 10 ~ 20% because of the pressure loss due to the belt case. Therefore, the fan efficiency decreases by the same degree. Moreover, the maximum flow rate of fan with belt case reduces by about 20% and the flow rate region having low specific noise level the same as $\phi_{\text{max}}$ -point decreases by about 25% as compared fan without belt case.

(2) The existence of belt case influence the characteristics of overall noise. That of fan fan with belt
case reduces as reducing the flow rate from the maximum flow rate point to $\phi = 0.2$ point and become almost constant between $\phi = 0.2$ and $\phi = 0$. On the other hand, the overall noise for the fan without belt case reduces linearly as reducing the flow rate from the maximum flow rate point to closing point. In the region of low specific noise level, the latter is wider than the former.

3. As far as this experimental results, when the diameter of casing is 1.32 times as large as that of impeller, the fan efficiency and the pressure increase as the preventive plate approach the leading edge of impeller but if that is 1.16 times, when the preventive plate locates over the leading edge of impeller, the fan efficiency and total pressure somewhat reduce.

4. As far as this experimental results, when the the diameter of casing is small, the aerodynamic characteristics are improved by using inclined blade.

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References