Modeling and Simulation of Valve Coefficients and Cavitation Characteristics in A Ball Valve.

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Abstract Ball valve, a rotational motion valve uses ball shaped disk. It is used for on/off or throttling operations. It offers the minimum resistance to flow. To investigate the valve performance and its characteristics, the flow through the valve is studied using numerical technique. In this paper the numerical simulations were performed using commercial code FLUENT, to study the flow patterns and to estimate the valve sizing coefficient, torque coefficient and cavitation index for investigation of cavitating flows. These simulations were performed at different pressure drops and for varying percentage opening of the valve.

Keywords Ball Valve, Cavitation, Numerical Simulation, Valve Coefficients.

1. Introduction

In a ball valve, as the ball move radially across the seal, the opening in the ball is exposed, which allow the flow. It is also categorized as high-pressure recovery valve. At intermediate openings, there are two throttling ports in series, one at the inlet and other at the outlet of the ball. Hence the system experiences double pressure drop, due to which ball valve has better cavitation characteristics.

There have been many reports on valves, in which different flow phenomena were analyzed using CFD technique. The commercial code, STAR-CD™, was used to investigate flow through a ball valve, to estimate the important coefficients [1]. Using AVL-Fire™, the flow containing the bubbles in a ball valve was analyzed [4]. To estimate pressure drop, flow coefficient and hydrodynamic torque coefficient in a butterfly valve ANSYS CFX™ was used [5]. Implementing mixture model of FLUENT™, the cavitating turbulent flow for two dimensional NACA0009 hydrofoil was analyzed [6].

In this research the main objective is to model the fluid domain of 10 inch ball valve, along with the prescribed length of upstream and downstream piping system. ICEM-CFD 12.0 was used as pre-processing tool, while FLUENT 12.0 was used as solver and for post-processing. FLUENT provides a numerical simulation of water through the ball valve and also helps to estimate the pressure drop, volume flow rate, sizing coefficient, torque coefficient, and cavitation index.

Fig. 1 Full port ball valve

2. Flow Parameters

A. Flow Coefficient (C_v): Is a measure of capacity of valve, which takes account of its size and natural restriction to flow through the valve. It is a dimensional value. It can be calculated by following equation

$$Cv = 1.16 \times Q \times \sqrt{\frac{S.G}{\Delta P}} \tag{1}$$

B. Torque Coefficient (C_t): Forces required to operate valves are caused by friction and hydrodynamic forces. Hydrodynamic torque is caused by forces induced by the flowing fluid. It is calculated by the following equation.

$$Ct = \frac{T}{D^3 \times \Delta P} \tag{2}$$

C. Cavitation Index (CI): It corresponds to the intensity of cavitation. It is defined as the ratio of forces trying to suppress cavitation to the forces trying to cause it.

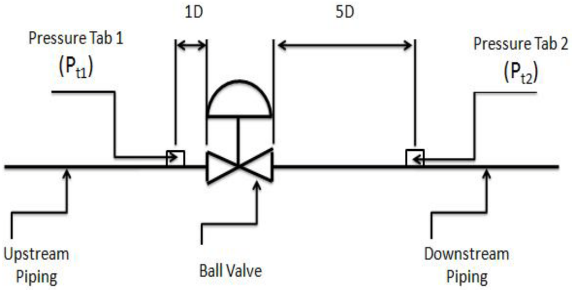

Fig. 2 Schematic diagram of ball valve and piping system

If the reference pressure in numerator is upstream pressure, P_{t1} then

$$CI = \frac{P_{t1} - P_{sat}}{\Delta P} \quad (3)$$

If the reference pressure in numerator is downstream pressure, P_{t2} then

$$CI_1 = \frac{P_{t2} - P_{sat}}{\Delta P} \quad (4)$$

Equation (4) is a preferred form over (3), since downstream pressure is the pressure closer to zone, where cavitation actually occurs. Table1 shows the range of Cavitation Index [7].

Table1: Cavitation index general range

Cavitation Index Range	Intensity Of Cavitation
CI ≥ 2	No Cavitation
1.7 < CI < 2	No Cavitation
1.5 < CI < 1.7	Some Cavitaiton
1 < CI < 1.5	Sever Cavitation
CI ≤ 1 or negative	Flashing

3. CFD Modeling

3.1. Model Description

For this study 10 inch nominal diameter ball valve geometry is used. The required fluid domain was extracted and the prescribed length of piping system was added. Accuracy of simulation mainly depends on quality of grid, hence to get better results, tetrahedral mesh generated using ICEM-CFD 12.0, were converted to polyhedral mesh using FLUENT 12.0.

3.2. Numerical Approach

a) *Turbulence Model:* Working fluid is water, hence incompressible and viscous fluid flows through the ball valve. To capture turbulence, Reynolds Averaged Navier-Stokes (RANS) equation is utilized. Its common form is written as;

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial t}(\rho u_i) + \frac{\partial}{\partial x_i}(u_i u_j) = -\frac{\partial p}{\partial x_i} + \quad (5)$$

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial x_j}\left[\mu\left(\frac{\partial u_i}{\partial x_j} + \frac{\partial u_j}{\partial x_i} - \frac{2}{3}\delta_{ij}\frac{\partial u_l}{\partial x_l}\right)\right] + \frac{\partial}{\partial x_j}\left(-\rho\overline{u'_i u'_j}\right)$$

Where u is the mean velocity and the subscript, i, $j=1\sim3$, refers to Reynolds-averaged components in three directions respectively. These Reynolds Stresses, $-\rho\overline{u'_i u'_j}$, must be modeled in order to close the equation. For this study realizable k-ε turbulence model is utilized.

b) *Cavitation Modeling:* When local static pressure as some points falls below vapor pressure, bubbles are formed. If this pressure recovers downstream then bubbles collapses, which leads to cavitation, if pressure does not recover bubbles are entrained along with the flow, this process is called flashing, which is more severe compared to cavitation. The term nuclei is other name for gas bubbles. For cavitation/flashing to occur, there must be nuclei present. If liquid was completely deaerated (i.e. no nuclei), then liquid will cavitate far below the normal liquid vapor pressure.

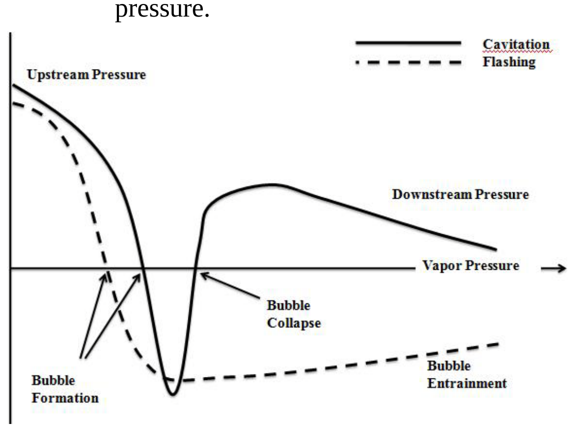

Fig. 3 Pressure variation for cavitation and flashing process

c) *Vapor Transport Equation:* Working fluid is assumed to be a mixture of liquid, its vapor and non-condensable gases. Standard governing equations in Mixture Model and Mixture Turbulence Model describe the flow and account for the effects of turbulence. Vapor transport equation governs the vapor mass fraction 'f', given by

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial t}(\rho_m f) + \nabla(\rho_m \vec{v}_v f) = \nabla(\gamma \nabla f) + R_e - R_c \qquad (6)$$

Where ρ_m = Mixture density,
$\vec{v}_v$ =velocity vector of vapor phase,
γ =effective exchange coefficient,
R_e & R_c = vapor generation and condensation rate terms, derived from Rayleigh-Plesset equations and limiting bubble size consideration.

d) *Working Fluid Boundary Condition:* Table 2 shows the working fluid used in analysis, type of boundary conditions used, phases involved.

Table 2: Boundary condition and other parameters

	For Numerical Prediction of	
	Valve sizing and Torque Coefficient	Cavitating Flow
Working Fluid	Water	Water, Water Vapor, Non-Condensable Gases
Phases	Single Phase Flow	Two Phase Flow (Water, Water Vapor)
Inlet Boundary Condition	Pressure Inlet Boundary Condition	Pressure Inlet Boundary Condition
Outlet Boundary Condition	Pressure Outlet Boundary Condition	Pressure Outlet Boundary Condition

4. Results and Discussion

Simulations were performed at different pressure drops and varying percentage opening of valve. Fig.4 shows the velocity contour plot for 60 percent opening of valve.

Fig. 5 shows Valve Sizing Coefficient graph. The experimental value of Cv for 100 percent opening is 3180 [8]. The value obtained from simulation result for 100 percent opening is 3086. Hence experimental Cv values and numerically obtained values can be compared for validation.

Hydrodynamic torque reduces with pressure drop. As valve is closed hydrodynamic torque increases to a maximum value and then reduces. Torque coefficient remains constant even as pressure varies. As valve is closed torque coefficient increases to a maximum value and then reduces. Fig. 6 shows the graph of variation in torque coefficient. Fig. 7 shows volume fraction of vapor contour, which indicates the cavitating zones. Fig. 8 shows graph of cavitation index for 10 percent opening and varying pressure drop.

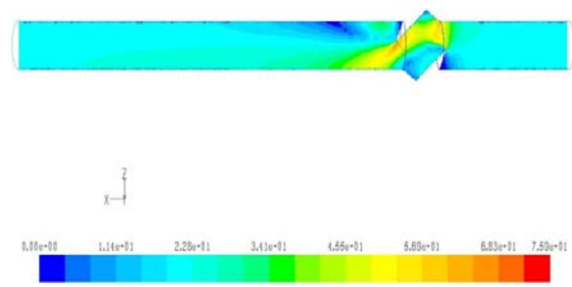

Fig. 4 Velocity contour plot for 60 percent opening

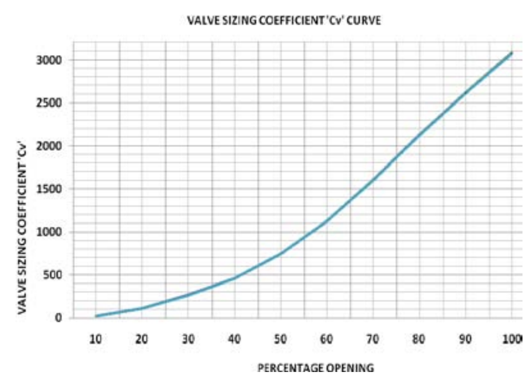

Fig. 5 Graph of variation of valve sizing coefficient

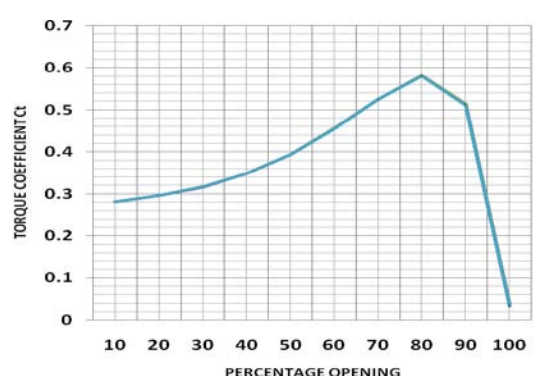

Fig. 6 Graph of variation of torque coefficient

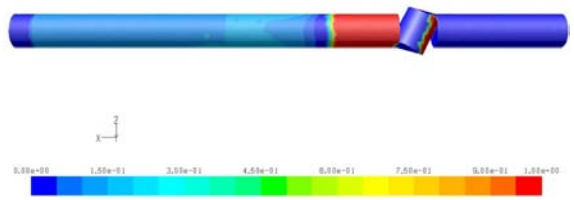

Fig. 7 Volume fraction of vapor phase for 30 percent opening

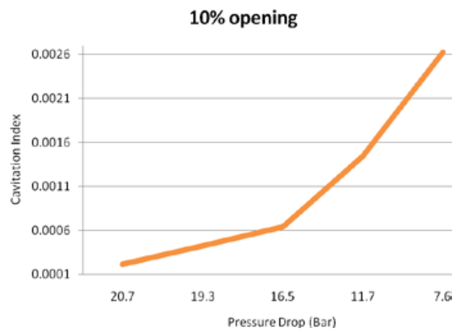

Fig. 8 Cavitation index for 10 percent opening and varying pressure drop

Nomenclature

Symbol	Quantity	Units
D	Nominal Diameter of Ball Valve	mm
f	Mass Fraction	
Q	Volume Flow Rate	m^3/s
$S.G$	Specific Gravity	
T	Hydrodynamic Torque	N-m
u	Mean Velocity	m/s
[illegible]	Mass Averaged Velocity	m/s
α	Volume Fraction	
γ	Effective exchange coefficient	
μ	Viscosity	Kg/m-s
ρ	Density	Kg/m^3
ΔP	Pressure Drop	Pa

5. Conclusions

1. Valve sizing coefficient and Torque coefficient depends on geometry and not on the flow conditions.
2. Maximum hydrodynamic torque occurs at 60% opening, while maximum torque coefficient occurs at 80% opening. Though maximum torque coefficient is obtained at 80 percent of valve opening, it does not mean that hydrodynamic torque is maximum at the same percentage opening
3. Cavitation Index depends on geometry as well on flow conditions. As valve is closed pressure drop across it increases, thus the cavitation index decreases. Hence valve operating at lower percentage opening cavitate severely.
4. Hence while designing the valve systems designer must consider the entire range of sizing coefficient, hydrodynamic torque and torque coefficient and cavitation index

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