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Asymptotic Computational Fluid Dynamic (ACFD) Study of Three-Dimensional Turning Diffuser Performance by Varying Angle of Turn

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Abstract: The main problem in achieving high recovery for a tuning diffuser is flow separation which results in non-uniform flow distribution and excessive losses. Angle of turn is found to affect notably the performance of turning diffuser which its relationship is still unclear particularly for a 3-D case. The present work aims to numerically investigate the effect of varying turning angle, $\emptyset = 30^{\circ}$ - 180° on the performance of 3-D turning diffuser and to develop the performance correlations via integrating the turning angle using Asymptotic Computational Fluid Dynamics (ACFD) technique. Among all the turbulence models examined, the best validated results were obtained with the Reynold Stress Model with enhanced wall treatment of y^+ =1.0 was applied for the intensive simulation. As the turning angle increased from 30° to 180°, the pressure recovery was reduced by 89.3% and the flow uniformity index was raised by 27.7%. Minimal flow separation took place at 0.75 L_{in}/W_1 of 90° turning diffuser whereas maximum flow separation happened at 0.44 L_{in}/W_1 of 180° turning diffuser. The performance correlations of 3-D turning diffuser as a function of geometrical and operating parameters was successfully developed using ACFD method. The ACFD results were kept within ±11.4% of deviation when compared with both CFD and experimental results.

Keywords: Turning diffuser, pressure recovery, flow uniformity, Asymptotic Computational Fluid Dynamics (ACFD)

1. Introduction

A diffuser is a device shaped to decelerate fluid. The main goal of a diffuser is to recover the static pressure of the fluid stream meanwhile reducing its flow velocity. Turning diffuser is often introduced in application such as heating, ventilation, air-conditioning (HVAC) system as an adapter to join the conduits of different cross-sectional areas or an ejector to decelerate the flow and raise the static pressure before discharging to the atmosphere [1 - 3]. A diffuser that is introduced with no turn is known as a straight diffuser, whereas a diffuser introduced with certain angle of turn is called a turning diffuser or a curved diffuser [1, 3]. In fluid analysis, outlet pressure recovery coefficient, C_p and flow uniformity index, σ_{out} are basically used to measure the performances of the diffusers. Asymptotic Computational Fluid Dynamics (ACFD) is the technique combining the asymptotic analysis with Computational Fluid Dynamics that could provide a relationship between dependent and independent variables [1, 5].

The main problem in achieving high recovery is the flow separation which results in non-uniform flow distribution and excessive losses [4, 5]. The geometrical curve shape of turning diffuser will reduce the pressure recovery and flow uniformity and hence the diffuser performance is decreased [5 - 7]. Flow separation occurs when fluid is forced to flow

over a curved surface, the boundary layer no longer attaches to the wall surface and separates from the surface [8, 9]. Researchers found that performance of diffusers were greatly affected by turning angle [10, 11].

Currently, there are available performance correlations of the effect of turning angle on 2-D turning diffuser had been integrated [4]. However, the performance correlations of turning angle on 3-D turning diffuser has not been developed. Therefore, this study aims to investigate numerically the performance of 3-D turning diffuser at various angle (30°, 90°, 120°, 150°, 180°) and to develop performance correlations of 3-D turning diffuser via integrating angle of turn.

2. Methodology

2.1 Performance Index

The performance of diffuser is primarily evaluated by means of:

(i) Pressure recovery coefficient (C_n)

$$C_p = \frac{2(P_{outlet} - P_{inlet})}{\rho V_{inlet}^2} \tag{1}$$

Where,

 P_{outlet} = average static pressure at diffuser outlet (Pa)

 P_{inlet} = average static pressure at diffuser inlet (Pa)

 ρ = density of air (kg/ m^3)

 V_{inlet} = mean velocity of inlet air (m/s)

(ii) Flow uniformity index, (σ_{out})

$$\sigma_{out} = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N-1} \sum_{i=1}^{N} (V_i - V_{out})^2}$$
 (2)

Where,

N = number of measurement points

 $V_i = \text{local outlet air velocity (m/s)}$

 V_{out} = mean outlet air velocity (m/s)

2.2 Modelling

Turning diffusers with different angle of turn, ø=30°, 90°, 120°, 150°, and 180° were modeled as in Fig. 1.

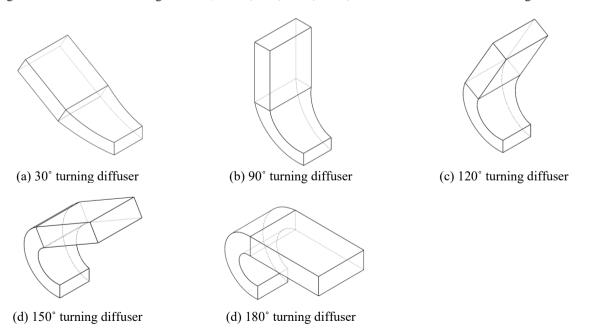


Fig. 1- Schematic diagram of 3D turning diffuser with turning angle of

(a)
$$30^{\circ}$$
, (b) 90° , (c) 120° , (d) 150° , (e) 180°

2.3 Meshing

In this study, hexahedral mesh with skewness less than 0.3 was applied by enabling multizone method. Enhanced wall treatment was applied due to Re $< 10^6$ and there was near wall characteristics that needed to be resolved. The walladjacent cell centroid was placed within the viscous sublayer, $y^+ \approx 1.0$. As the inlet velocity was equal to 14.25 m/s, the corresponding first grid point off the wall was located at 2.8×10^{-6} m. The grid independency study was conducted by increasing mesh elements in each step. The simulations were run on different number of elements and the pressure recovery, C_p was used as reference parameter to determine the convergence of the mesh size. As presented in Table 1, Mesh 4 provides the least deviation of C_p relative to the finest Mesh 5 in every case thus was chosen as an optimum mesh to be adopted in the intensive simulation.

Table 1- Mesh independency check for 3D turning diffuser at varying angle

Turning	Mesh	Elements	Pressure	Deviation,
Angle			Recovery, C_p	%
30°	1	151493	0.469	25.8
	2	203468	0.438	17.4
	3	254897	0.405	8.7
	4	298731	0.375	2.7
	5	341502	0.373	-
90°	1	156484	0.297	26.9
	2	206064	0.273	16.7
	3	254340	0.251	7.3
	4	308286	0.240	2.6
	5	350700	0.234	-
120°	1	164783	0.177	19.7
	2	209486	0.165	11.5
	3	259721	0.159	7.6
	4	300980	0.151	1.9
	5	367845	0.148	-
150°	1	157896	0.126	24.8
	2	216843	0.116	14.9
	3	264861	0.107	5.9
	4	302382	0.103	2.0
	5	351534	0.101	-
180°	1	156735	0.051	30.8
	2	210924	0.047	20.5
	3	252858	0.042	7.7
	4	309120	0.040	2.6
	5	357413	0.039	-

2.4 Governing Equations

The flow was assumed 3-dimensional, steady state and fully developed with negligible gravitational effect. The Reynolds-Averaged Navier-Stokes equations (RANS) as following were solved:

Continuity equation:
$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial v}{\partial y} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial z} = 0$$
 (3)

x-momentum equation:

$$u\frac{\partial u}{\partial x} + v\frac{\partial u}{\partial y} + w\frac{\partial u}{\partial z} = -\frac{1}{\rho}\frac{\partial P}{\partial x} + v\left[\frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial z^2}\right] + \frac{1}{\rho}\left[\frac{\partial(-\rho\overline{u'^2})}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial(-\rho\overline{u'v'})}{\partial y} + \frac{\partial(-\rho\overline{u'w'})}{\partial z}\right]$$
(4)

y-momentum equation:

$$u\frac{\partial v}{\partial x} + v\frac{\partial v}{\partial y} + w\frac{\partial v}{\partial z} = -\frac{1}{\rho}\frac{\partial P}{\partial y} + v\left[\frac{\partial^2 v}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v}{\partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v}{\partial z^2}\right] + \frac{1}{\rho}\left[\frac{\partial(-\rho\overline{u'v'})}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial(-\rho\overline{v'^2})}{\partial y} + \frac{\partial(-\rho\overline{v'w'})}{\partial z}\right]$$
(5)

z-momentum equation:

$$u\frac{\partial w}{\partial x} + v\frac{\partial w}{\partial y} + w\frac{\partial w}{\partial z} = -\frac{1}{\rho}\frac{\partial P}{\partial z} + v\left[\frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial z^2}\right] + \frac{1}{\rho}\left[\frac{\partial(-\rho\overline{u'w'})}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial(-\rho\overline{v'w'})}{\partial y} + \frac{\partial(-\rho\overline{w'^2})}{\partial z}\right]$$
(6)

The applicability of standard k- ϵ (std k- ϵ), shear stress transport k- ω (SST k- ω) and Reynolds stress model (RSM) to close the RANS equations was verified. In present work, pressure-based solver was used to solve the governing equations. Each equation was solved separately in pressure-based solver. SIMPLE algorithm, a robust pressure-velocity coupling algorithm which combine the momentum equation and continuity equation that takes the form of pressure correction equation was applied [12, 13]. The gradient was discretised by Green-Gauss-Cell based. Second order scheme was employed for all terms.

2.5 Boundary Conditions

Table 2 shows the boundary operating conditions used during the simulation. At the solid wall, the velocity was zero due to the no-slip condition. The inlet velocity, V_{in} respective to the $Re_{in} = 6.382 \times 10^4$ was specified at 14.25 m/s. This corresponded to the turbulent intensity, I_{in} of 4.0%. At the outlet boundary, the pressure was set at the atmospheric pressure (0 gage pressure). The working fluid was air at 30°C with $\rho = 1.164 \text{ kg/m}^3$ and $\mu = 1.872 \times 10^{-5} \text{ kg/m.s.}$

Inlet Velocity-inlet Type of boundary Velocity magnitude, V_{in} (m/s) $14.25 (Re_{in} = 6.382 \times 10^4)$ Turbulent intensity, I_{in} (%) 4.0 Hydraulic diameter, D_h (mm) 72 Outlet Type of boundary Pressure-outlet Pressure (Pa) 0 gauge pressure Wall Type of boundary Smooth wall Shear condition No-slip Working Working fluid Air fluid Temperature (°C) 30 properties Density, ρ (kg/m³) 1.164 $1.872\times10^{\text{-}5}$ Dynamic viscosity, μ (kg/m.s)

Table 2- Boundary operating conditions

2.6 ACFD Method

In this study, effects of geometrical and operational parameters (Re_{in} , W_2/W_1 , L_{in}/W_1 , X_2/X_1 , ϕ) were correlated with performance of turning diffuser (C_p , σ_{out}) by using ACFD method. The steps in ACFD technique to develop correlations of performance or turning diffuser included:

- 1. Identifying the dependent and independent variables
- 2. Linearizing the relationship between the dependent and independent variables
- 3. Applying the Taylor's series expansion
- 4. Determining the convergence point and gradients
- 5. Substituting all the constants to complete the correlations

$$C_{p \; 3DTD \; acfd} = f\left(Re_{in}, \; W_2/W_1, L_{in}/W_1, \; X_2/X_1, \; \phi\right) \tag{7}$$

$$\sigma_{out} \,_{3DTD \, acfd} = f \left(Re_{in}, \, W_2/W_1, \, L_{in}/W_1, \, X_2/X_1, \, \phi \right) \tag{8}$$

Applying Taylor's series expansion as below:

$$\eta \left(\phi_{1}, \phi_{2}, \phi_{3}, \dots \phi_{n}\right) = \eta_{ref} + \left(\phi_{1} - \phi_{1 \, ref}\right) \frac{\partial \eta}{\partial \phi_{1}} + \left(\phi_{2} - \phi_{2 \, ref}\right) \frac{\partial \eta}{\partial \phi_{2}} + \left(\phi_{3} - \phi_{3 \, ref}\right) \frac{\partial \eta}{\partial \phi_{3}} + \dots + \left(\phi_{n} - \phi_{n \, ref}\right) \frac{\partial \eta}{\partial \phi_{n}}$$

$$\tag{9}$$

Where,

 η = dependent variables (C_p , σ_{out})

Dimensionless independent groups:

$$\phi_{I} = \left[\frac{Rein}{Rein\ ref}\right]^{a} \qquad \qquad \phi_{2} = \left[\frac{\frac{Lin}{W1}}{\frac{Lin}{Um}ref}\right]^{b} \qquad \qquad \phi_{3} = \left[\frac{\frac{W2}{W1}}{\frac{W2}{W1}ref}\right]^{c} \qquad \qquad \phi_{4} = \left[\frac{\frac{X2}{X1}}{\frac{X2}{Y1}ref}\right]^{d} \qquad \qquad \phi_{5} = \left[\frac{\emptyset}{\emptyset\ ref}\right]^{e}$$

a, b, c, d and e were selected to make all lines could intersect and converge at one point in graph.

 η_{ref} = reference value of dependent variable (intersection/convergence point at y-axis)

 ϕ_{ref} = reference value of dimensionless groups (intersection/convergence point at x-axis)

 $\frac{\partial \eta}{\partial \varphi} = gradients/slopes$ of the corresponding lines

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 CFD Validation Results

The pressure recovery generated using RSM solver model gave the smallest deviation. Standard k- ε model and stress transport k- ω model created relatively higher deviation of results. After the validation was conducted in different aspects, RSM was selected as the most suitable solver model among 3 chosen models to deal with the 3-D turning diffuser case. The ability of RSM model to exhibit the pattern of 3-D flow and examine high swirly flow had given it advantage to deal with current work. The deviation of C_p from different solver models with the experimental result was tabulated in Table 3. The comparison of flow structures between the experimental result and RSM model solver was shown in Fig. 2.

Table 3- Deviation of C_p of different model of solvers

Model of Solvers	C_p	Deviation, %
Experiment	0.221	-
ske	0.464	110.0
SST k-ω	0.306	38.5
RSM	0.240	8.6

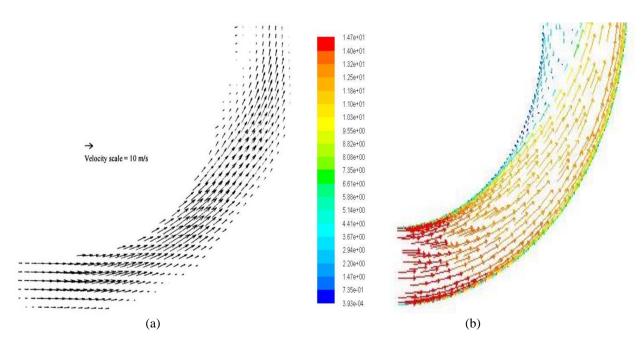


Fig. 2- Flow structures, (a) Flow structure [1], (b) Flow structure of RSM

3.2 Effect of turning angle, ø

As the turning angle increased from 30° to 180°, the pressure recovery was reduced by 89.3% and the flow uniformity index was raised by 27.7%. Increasing turning angle could further aggravate the presence of reverse flow boundary layer. Therefore, the pressure recovery decreased when turning angle increased. Table 4 shows the tabulated results of pressure recovery, flow uniformity and separation point for 3D turning diffuser with 5 varied angle. Fig. 3 - 5 show how severe the flow is deflected towards the concave region as the angle increased due to flow separation that occurred earliest at $S = 0.44 L_{in}/W_1$ in particular for 180° turning diffuser.

	•		O	
Angle of turn, °	Pressure recovery, C_p	Flow uniformity, σ_{out}	Separation point, S	
30	0.375	4.548	-	
90	0.240	4.733	$0.75 L_{in}/W_1$	
120	0.151	4.784	$0.63 L_{in}/W_1$	
150	0.103	4.436	$0.53 L_{in}/W_1$	
180	0.040	5.808	0.44 L /W	

Table 4- Effect of angle of turn on performance of 3D turning diffuser

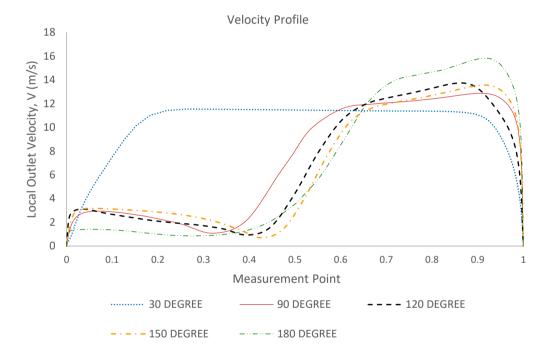
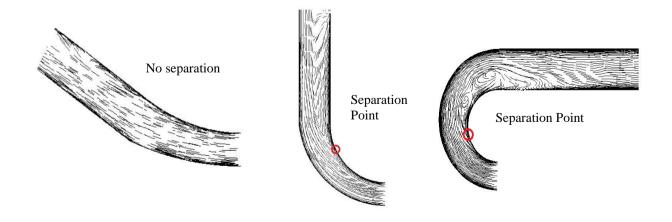
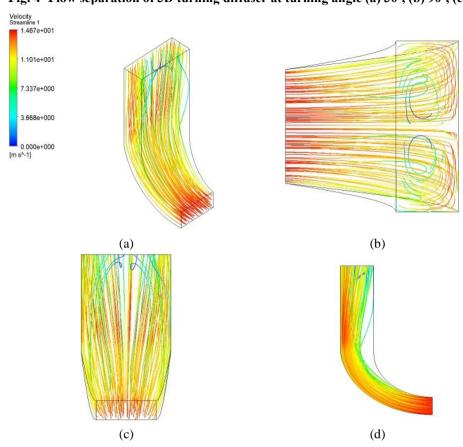


Fig. 3-Velocity profile of turning diffuser at varying turning angle





(a) (b) (c) Fig. 4- Flow separation of 3D turning diffuser at turning angle (a) 30° , (b) 90° , (c) 180°

Fig. 5- Velocity streamline of 90° turning diffuser (a) Isometric, (b) Top, (c) Front, (d) Longitudinal views

3.3 Performance Correlations via ACFD

Applying Taylor series expansion on pressure recovery coefficient of 3D turning diffuser, $C_{p \; 3DTD \; acfd}$:

$$C_{p \; 3DTD \; acfd} = C_{p \; ref} + (\phi_{I} - \phi_{I \; ref}) \frac{\partial c_{p}}{\partial \phi_{1}} + (\phi_{2} - \phi_{2 \; ref}) \frac{\partial c_{p}}{\partial \phi_{2}} + (\phi_{3} - \phi_{3 \; ref}) \frac{\partial c_{p}}{\partial \phi_{3}} + (\phi_{4} - \phi_{4 \; ref}) \frac{\partial c_{p}}{\partial \phi_{4}} + (\phi_{5} - \phi_{5 \; ref}) \frac{\partial c_{p}}{\partial \phi_{5}}$$

$$\phi_{I} = \left[\frac{Rein}{Rein \; ref}\right]^{a} \qquad \phi_{2} = \left[\frac{Lin}{\frac{Ui}{W_{1}}}\right]^{b} \qquad \phi_{3} = \left[\frac{\frac{W^{2}}{W_{1}}}{\frac{W^{2}}{W_{1}}ref}}\right]^{c} \qquad \phi_{4} = \left[\frac{\frac{X^{2}}{X_{1}}}{\frac{X^{2}}{X_{1}}ref}}\right]^{d} \qquad \phi_{5} = \left[\frac{\emptyset}{\emptyset \; ref}\right]^{e}$$

$$(10)$$

 $Re_{in\;ref} = 6.382\;x\;10^4,\;W_2/W_1_{\;ref} = 1.44,\;X_2/X_1_{\;ref} = 1.50,\;L_{in}/W_1_{\;ref} = 4.37,\;\varphi_{ref} = 90^o$

a=2, b=1, c=3, d=3, e=2.8 were selected so that all lines could be fitted in a graph as demonstrated in Fig. 6 and converge at point where $C_{p ref}$ =0.230.

$$\phi_{1 ref} = \left[\frac{Rein}{Rein ref}\right]^a = 1.0$$
, thus $\phi_{2 ref} = \phi_{3 ref} = \phi_{4 ref} = \phi_{5 ref} = 1.0$

$$\frac{\partial cp}{\partial \phi 1} = -0.0028$$
, $\frac{\partial cp}{\partial \phi 2} = -0.3056$, $\frac{\partial cp}{\partial \phi 3} = 0.0592$, $\frac{\partial cp}{\partial \phi 4} = 0.0306$, $\frac{\partial cp}{\partial \phi 5} = -0.0338$ represented the slopes of the corresponding lines.

Substituting all the constants in Equation 10 giving,

$$C_{p\,3DTD\,acfd} = 0.230 - \left(\left[\frac{Rein}{Rein\,ref}\right]^2 - 1\right)\,0.0028 - \left(\left[\frac{Lin}{\frac{W1}{W1}}\right]^1 - 1\right)\,0.3056 + \left(\left[\frac{\frac{W2}{W1}}{\frac{W2}{W1}ref}\right]^3 - 1\right)\,0.0592 + \left(\left[\frac{\frac{X2}{X1}}{\frac{X2}{X1}ref}\right]^3 - 1\right)\,0.0306 - \left(\left[\frac{\emptyset}{\emptyset\,\text{ref}}\right]^{2.8} - 1\right)\,0.0338$$

$$(11)$$

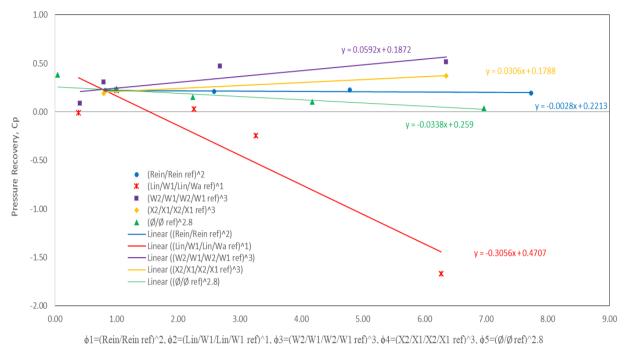


Fig. 6-Outlet pressure recovery, C_p of 3D turning diffuser with respect to $\phi_1 = [Re_{in}/Re_{in\,ref}]^2$, $\phi_2 = [L_{in}/W_1/L_{in}/W_{1\,ref}]^1$, $\phi_3 = [W_2/W_1/W_2/W_{1\,ref}]^3$, $\phi_4 = [X_2/X_1/X_2/X_{1\,ref}]^3$ and $\phi_5 = [\emptyset/\emptyset_{ref}]^{2.8}$

Applying Taylor series expansion on pressure recovery coefficient of 3D turning diffuser, $\sigma_{out \; 3DTD \; acfd}$:

$$\sigma_{out \; 3DTD \; acfd} = \sigma_{out \; ref} + (\phi_{1} - \phi_{1 \; ref}) \frac{\partial \sigma_{out}}{\partial \phi_{1}} + (\phi_{2} - \phi_{2 \; ref}) \frac{\partial \sigma_{out}}{\partial \phi_{2}} + (\phi_{3} - \phi_{3 \; ref}) \frac{\partial \sigma_{out}}{\partial \phi_{3}} + (\phi_{4} - \phi_{4 \; ref}) \frac{\partial \sigma_{out}}{\partial \phi_{4}}$$

$$+ (\phi_{5} - \phi_{5 \; ref}) \frac{\partial \sigma_{out}}{\partial \phi_{5}}$$

$$\phi_{1} = \left[\frac{Rein}{Rein \; ref}\right]^{a} \qquad \phi_{2} = \left[\frac{Lin}{\frac{W_{1}}{W_{1}}}\right]^{b} \qquad \phi_{3} = \left[\frac{\frac{W_{2}}{W_{1}}}{\frac{W_{2}}{W_{1}}ref}\right]^{c} \qquad \phi_{4} = \left[\frac{\frac{X_{2}}{X_{1}}}{\frac{X_{2}}{X_{1}}ref}\right]^{d} \qquad \phi_{5} = \left[\frac{\emptyset}{\emptyset \; ref}\right]^{e}$$

$$(12)$$

 $Re_{in ref} = 6.382 \text{ x } 10^4, W_2/W_{1 ref} = 1.44, X_2/X_{1 ref} = 1.50, L_{in}/W_{1 ref} = 4.37, \phi_{ref} = 90^\circ$

a=2, b=1, c=3, d=3, e=3 were selected so that all lines could be fitted in a graph as demonstrated in Fig. 7 and converge at point where σ_{out} ref=3.1.

$$\phi_{1 \text{ ref}} = \left[\frac{\textit{Rein}}{\textit{Rein ref}}\right]^a = 1.0, \text{ thus } \phi_{2 \text{ ref}} = \phi_{3 \text{ ref}} = \phi_{4 \text{ ref}} = \phi_{5 \text{ ref}} = 1.0$$

$$\frac{\partial \text{Cp}}{\partial \phi_1} = 0.6531, \frac{\partial \text{Cp}}{\partial \phi_2} = -0.2202, \frac{\partial \text{Cp}}{\partial \phi_3} = -0.3288, \frac{\partial \text{Cp}}{\partial \phi_4} = -0.2545, \frac{\partial \text{Cp}}{\partial \phi_5} = 0.4426 \text{ represented the slopes of the corresponding lines}.$$

Substituting all the constants in Equation 12 giving,

$$\sigma_{out \; 3\text{DTD acfd}} = 3.1 + \left(\left[\frac{Rein}{Rein \; ref} \right]^2 - 1 \right) \; 0.6531 - \left(\left[\frac{\frac{Lin}{W1}}{\frac{Lin}{W1}ref} \right]^1 - 1 \right) \; 0.2202 - \left(\left[\frac{\frac{W2}{W1}}{\frac{W2}{W1}ref} \right]^3 - 1 \right) \; 0.3288 - \left[\frac{\frac{X2}{X1}}{\frac{X2}{X1}ref} \right]^3 - 1 \right) \; 0.2545 + \left(\left[\frac{\emptyset}{\emptyset \; ref} \right]^3 - 1 \right) \; 0.4426$$

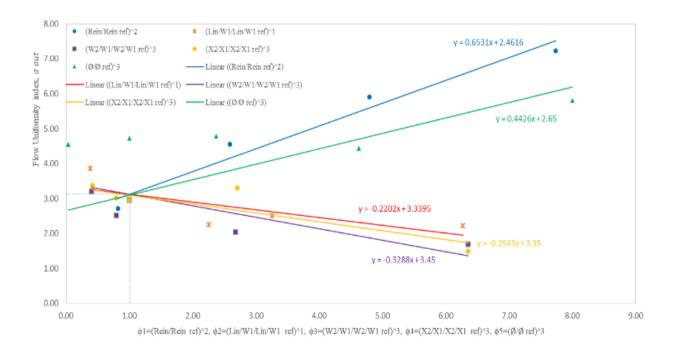


Fig. 7-Flow uniformity index, σ_{out} of 3D turning diffuser with respect to $\phi_1 = [Re_{in}/Re_{in\,ref}]^2$, $\phi_2 = [L_{in}/W_1/L_{in}/W_{1\,ref}]^1$, $\phi_3 = [W_2/W_1/W_2/W_{1\,ref}]^3$, $\phi_4 = [X_2/X_1/X_2/X_{1\,ref}]^3$ and $\phi_5 = [\emptyset/\emptyset_{ref}]^3$

Table 5- Deviations of performance correlations

Correlations	C _p 3DTD acfd	σ_{out} 3DTD acfd
Deviation to CFD (%)	13.7	15.4
Deviation to experiment (%)	7.2	9.4

The ACFD meets adequately both the CFD and experimental results within tolerable deviation as presented in Table 5. Therefore, the developed correlations are dependable to be used to estimate the performance 3-D turning diffuser in future.

4. Conclusion

The performance correlations of 3D turning diffuser as a function of geometrical and operating parameters was successfully developed using ACFD method. The ACFD results were kept within $\pm 11.4\%$ of deviation when compared with both CFD and experimental results. Therefore, the performance correlations are dependable to evaluate the performance of 3-D turning diffusers.

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