Performance Analysis of Multi-Body Modeled Washing Machines (MBomWM)

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ABSTRACT

One of the key features of an automated washing machine is the noise and vibration it produces, or more technically, the decibel level it produces. Numerous of home appliance companies have put in much effort to solve this problem but there is still large room for further improvements especially in the rinse and the spin cycles of a washing machine. This work illustrates the performances of multi-body modelled of washing machines realized with the aim to analyze the vibrational acoustic emission. An experimental measurement has been carried out using a digital sound level meter (SLM) to determine the overall noise produced by four different modelled of automated washing machines with a view of noting the model with the highest sound pressure level during the three different cycles (the wash, rinse and spin). Results show that all the machines produced their highest noise during the spinning cycle. Out of the four different models considered, IPSO HF: 304 has the highest sound level of 99.62dB during its spin cycle when a maximum load of 30Kg was applied, followed by Imesa RC 23 with a 96.13dB. On the other hands, LG: Direct Drive 13 has the least sound pressure level of 84.75dB. With this knowledge in mind, one can advise a buyer of which model to purchase from the market and if an operator must use the machine, how long he can operate such machine without health challenges.

Keywords-- Automated Washing Machine, SPL, SLM, Noise, Vibration

I. INTRODUCTION

A washing machine has more possible noise sources in comparison to other large household electronic appliances [1, 2]. This is due to the existence of complex dynamic assemblies and subsystems narrowed to suit inside a tight design space. Due to wide-ranging of governmental standards globally, increased washing machine design complexity, and the necessity for rapid product development cycle and time to market, it is important to develop a more efficient methodology to address noise and vibration issues [3]. This is because, noise and vibration causes serious problems, both at home and at workplace, and the task of reducing community noise is a subject currently focused on by experts in various countries. Similarly, manufacturers of mechanical products with vibrations causing acoustic noise, more and more find themselves forced to compete on the noise levels of their products [4, 5].

In this research, performance analysis was carry out to test the vibration and noise level of different washing machines during three different cycles (the wash, rinse and spin) with a view to determine which model has the highest sound pressure level.

II. BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Noise levels in domestic appliances is captivating attention from producers because of increased regulation and understanding from customers [2]. Sergio [6] made an attempt to employ a combination of finite-element and multi-body dynamics (MBD) for determining the resonant vibration modes and transient structural response to capture dynamic performance during the initial design phase of the entire machine. This was then combined with indirect boundary-element models for the performance of sound field analysis to detect the effects of sound-absorbing cotton fleece mats of different thicknesses surrounding the washing machine [7].

Hybrid approach – combining numerical techniques and experimental methods have also been developed by Siavoshani and Barpand [8, 9] to address floor-pan vibration and the outcome of the radiated noise in automotive vehicle. This methodology has been effectively adapted for reducing the entire noise level in a standard top-loading washing machine.

Barpand, [8] presented an article for a six-sigma approach for isolating root cause as well as in addressing high noise emanations from a front-load washer-cum-dryer (W/D) machine during common operating conditions. This article was aim to: (1) characterize the “noise” radiation (source/level) of the combination unit in all the three operative modes using IEC60704 standards. (2) identify the root cause of the maximum radiated noise level. (3) test potential material/design possibilities for addressing noise reduction initiatives and (4) develop product-neutral solution portfolio options (performance/mass/cost).

III. TYPES OF WASHING MACHINES
a) Drum-type washing machine: This comprises of cabinet, tub, spring, counterweight, drum, rotor, stator, and damper. In the cabinet, the tub is mounted to store the water for laundry; the rotor is the power source for rotating the drum, is connected with the drum directly; the stator is immovable on the back of the tub. Once the drum starts rotating, the mass imbalance due to eccentricity of laundry generates the vibration, this vibration produced by the drum and tub is then transmitted to the cabinet and the bottom through the damper and spring. At this point, if the inertial moment of the energetic system is amplified to restrain the vibration, the washing machine becomes heavy and the reactive force on the bearing gets also amplified [10]. Consequently, the drum and the tub need to be designed to have higher rigidity and strength.

The drum-type washing machine is further subdivided into:
- front-loader
- a traditional top-loader
- a high efficiency top-loader

Each of the above has its pros and cons. The choice of purchase is therefore dependent on the choice of the buyer.

A three-dimensional (3D) schematic diagram of the washer is shown in fig. 1(a), this washing machine is object of soul’s work, it is a prototype based on the LG F14 02FDS washer manufactured by LG Electronics [8].

![Fig. 1](https://example.com/fig1.png)

Fig. 1: (a) 3D Schematic of the Prototype Washing machine   (b) Schematic configuration of the MR damper.

Fig. 1(b) displays the schematic configuration of a flow-mode magneto-rheological (MR) damper proposed for the prototype washing machine. From this figure, it can be seen that an MR valve structure is integrated in the MR damper. The external and internal pistons are integrated to form the MR valve structure which splits the MR damper into two compartments: the upper and lower compartments. These compartments are completely filled with the MR fluid. As the piston rotates, the MR fluid runs from one compartment to the other through the annular orifice. The floating piston incorporated with a gas chamber functions as an accumulator to house the piston shaft volume as it goes in and leaves the fluid chamber [11, 12].

IV. MATERIALS AND METHOD

A) Materials

Four different models of automated washing machines were considered in this work, among these were those tabulated in table 1 below. The table also depicts the specifications of the above-mentioned machines.

The reasons for choosing these machines were;
- i) they were the only ones readily available.
- ii) to experimentally determine which of the model has less or high level of noise during the three phase of operational processes.

| Table 1: Machine specification |
|--------------------------------|
| S/N | Brand          | Model type    | Maximum load capacity (Kg) | Specialty |
|-----|----------------|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| 1   | Imesa RC 23    | Front loader  | 30                          | Wash, Spin|
| 2   | IPSO: HF304    | Front loader  | 30                          | Wash, Spin|
| 3   | IPSO: HF185    | Front loader  | 18                          | Wash, Spin|
| 4   | LG: Direct Drive 13 | Front loader | 8                           | Wash, Spin|

Other materials were; Load (mass of clothes), Water, Liquid detergent and Digital Sound level meter (DSLM)

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B) Methodology

An MS6700 DSLM with a range of 30-130dB conformed to IEC651 was used to collect SPL measurements of different washing machines inside the operational room during the three phase.

Electrical power and water to the machine were piped to the room and control measures were taken to ensure that noise from the water flow were not influencing the tests. Furthermore, measurements were collated to ensure that the source noise was at least 15 dB higher than the background noise. Since the main objective of the test was to compute the overall sound power level of different models of automated washing machines, the microphones of the SLM was placed in different spinning positions of the machine, as depicted in figure 3 (a-c). The meter measured the SPL of the washing machine noise emission in the free field.

The measurements were taken for five consecutive times by time averaging for 30 seconds and then A-weighted. The overall sound power level was computed for all cases and recorded. The meter readings were also calibrated with an audio Real Time Analysis software in order to abate the meter’s error.

![Fig.3: Measurement of overall noise power level with SLM at different (a) washing (b) rinsing and (c) spinning positions of the machines.](image)

Calibration

The SLM readings were calibrated with Real Time Analysis audio software in order to correct the meter’s error. The calibrations were done at an audio frequency range of 20-20kHz over SPL range of 0dB-150dB at 1 octave and presented in figure 4 (a-d).

Computation

To compute the sound power level, the SPL was averaged over the surface area and integrated over the frequency bands. The sound intensity level of the radiated noise from the washing machine is given by:

\[ L_I = L_P - 10 \log K \]  \hspace{1cm} (1)

Where, \( K \) is a constant dependent on the ambient pressure and temperature.

From theory, at 25°C and typical atmospheric pressures, the constant \( K \) is approximately a unity (i.e 1); thus, the second term of the RHS of equation (1) was ignored and the sound intensity approximated to:

\[ L_I = L_P \]  \hspace{1cm} (2)

Similarly, the SPL is given by:

\[ L_{W} = \sum_{j} S_j X 10^{|l_{10}}/10 \]  \hspace{1cm} (3)

Where, \( S_j \) is the area of each segment (i) of the enclosure.

The sound power for each one octave band was then integrated over the entire range of frequency to give the overall level. These measurements and computations were accomplished for the modelled machines and after every product changes.

V. RESULTS

Four different brands of machines ran through the three different cycles, the wash, the rinse and the spin cycle to determine the exact operational mode that radiated the maximum noise (quantify and qualify). The overall sound power level was computed for each case as shown in table 2.

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Table 2: Specific operational mode showing progressive noise radiation with applied loads for the four brand of machines.

| Machine Brand | Machine’s Max. Capacity (kg) | Applied Load (kg) | 1st Wash Cycle SPL (dB) | 2nd Wash Cycle SPL (dB) | Average Wash Cycle SPL (dB) | Rinse Cycle SPL (dB) | Spin Cycle SPL (dB) |
|---------------|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| IPSO HF 304   | 30                           | 30                | 70.7                    | 73.3                    | 72                         | 78.4                | 95.94             |
| IPSO HF 185   | 18                           | 30                | 66.2                    | 64.5                    | 65.35                      | 66.4                | 86.52             |
| LG Direct Drive | 8                           | 30                | 79                      | 80.78                   | 79.89                      | 80.3                | 81.28             |
| IMESA RC23    | 30                           | 30                | 77.23                   | 77.1                    | 77.165                     | 80.4                | 92.78             |

The average SPL was then computed for the SLM for the wash cycle and it was observed that, the spin cycle radiated the highest noise and this was greater than all other modes of operations for the entire machine brands with respected to the applied load.

![Fig. 4 (a-c): Plot of SPL against machine brand for the three cyclic mode with an applied load of 30 kg](image)

![Fig. 5 (a-c): Plot of SPL against machine brand for the three cyclic mode with an applied load of 20 kg](image)
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VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, an automated washing machine has more potential noise sources compared to other large household electronics appliances. This is due to the presence of complex dynamic assemblies and subsystems cramped to fit within a tight design space. In an attempt to mitigate the problems associated with noise and vibrations, it was pertinent to study the actual effects of automated washing machines on either humans, structures or environment as observed.

This work was aimed at performance analysis of various automatic washing machines using experimental method to predict the brand with the least and highest SPL as well as to provide information that can help to regulate design specifications in view of preventing health challenges due to noise, vibrations and life span of such machines.

From our results, a digital sound level meter reveals that different models of automated washing machines under consideration has their highest SPL at the spin cycle as compared to rinse and wash cycles. Imesa RC 23, IPSO: HF185, IPSO: HF304 and LG: Direct Drive 13 were the four different types of washing machines that were readily available during this research work, after the SPL’s calibration as seen from our findings [in fig. 4, 5, 6 (a-c)], IPSO: HF304 produced the highest noise level of 99.62dB during the spinning cycle, followed by Imesa RC 23 with 96.13dB. On the other hand, IPSO: HF 185, has 87.48dB against LG: Direct Drive 13 with 84.75dB as the least noisy washing machine respectively.

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