Calculation and Analysis of Nonlinear Algorithm for Stability of Nanosilica Powder Soft Soil Pile Foundation

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In order to reasonably evaluate the stability of the embankment supported by the rigid pile composite foundation, a nonlinear algorithm calculation and analysis method for the stability of the nanosilica powder soft soil pile foundation is proposed. First, the soft soil foundation reinforced by the composite structure of “piles (prestressed pipe piles, (cement fly-ash gravel, CFG) piles)—pile caps—geotextile pads” is analyzed through the soft soil embankment test section of the Wenfu high-speed railway. Second, the compressive modulus under one-dimensional confining compression is calculated using the layered summation method. Finally, the deep lateral deformation of the pile foundation soil is measured by an inclinometer to evaluate the actual displacement of the pile foundation soil. In the standard method, the empirical coefficient 1.1–1.7 is multiplied on the basis of the calculation result of this method to correct the calculation error. Combined with the test results, it is shown that nanosilica powder can give full play to its excellent characteristics: promoting hydration speed and hydration degree through the reaction of pozzolan refining and consuming Ca(OH)2 crystals produced by cement hydration. Soft soils and modified soft soils: a certain amount of nanosilica powder can significantly improve the strength of soft soil at different ages.

1. Introduction

Due to the high strength of nanosilica powder soft soil foundation, the nonlinear lateral deformation is obvious. Although the current calculation methods are developed and there are various numerical methods, the most famous one is the finite element method, and the finite element method is also used to study the influence of lateral deformation; the most commonly used method in engineering design is still the standard layered sum method [1]. The method uses a one-dimensional compression test; under the stress state of compression modulus, the layered summation method is used to calculate the compression of soil lateral deformation; the calculation cannot consider lateral deformation caused by lateral deformation, so be on the basis of calculation results are superior to the empirical coefficient of 1.1–1.7 to correct the error of calculation and actual deformation. In addition, the lateral deformation of the foundation soil comprehensive method is to use nonlinear or elastoplastic constitutive relation and use the finite element method to solve the consolidation theory, but this method is generally more complex and the constitutive model of the complex, model parameter test difficulty is high, the error is big, and the calculation results are not ideal, not to improve calculation accuracy. In practical engineering, it still mainly depends on the standard method of the layered summation method and empirical coefficient, which can be easily obtained by parameters [2]. However, the empirical coefficient interval of the normative method is large, and there is a lack of the scientific quantitative value method. The value is mainly subjective, and the results will vary from person to person. The accuracy needs to be improved, and its advantage is simplicity.

E-P curve is the main and easy-to-obtain test curve in soft soil engineering. On the basis of the E-P curve, combined with the constitutive theory of modern soil, it is of
great significance to establish a practical calculation method that can calculate the nonlinear lateral deformation. In the process of application, it is observed that the tangent modulus ET of soft soil changes too fast, which easily leads to the instability of calculation results. Because there is a square relation between the tangent modulus method 2IT (1) Ierse, (1), the strength of soft soil is low, and the general stress level is high, which can easily reach or exceed 0.5 or even easily reach 0.8–0.9, so that the tangent modulus ET decreases rapidly, and the calculation results are easy to be unstable. In order to improve the stability of the calculation, the secant modulus method is proposed to calculate the lateral deformation of shear deformation, so as to increase the stability of the calculation results [3]. At the same time, in the above calculation, a complete E-P curve is needed to obtain the compression modulus ESI under different stress levels. However, the investigation and test reports of many engineering projects in actual engineering do not provide a complete E-P curve, but only provide the initial porosity ratio E0 and compression modulus ESI-2 of soft soil. Since the above two parameters are commonly used in engineering, they are relatively stable and can better reflect the characteristics of soft soil. In general soft soil, the initial porosity ratio of silty soil is E0 = 1.0–1.5 and that of silty soil is 1.5–2.5, and the compression modulus of soft soil is ESI-2 = 2.0–3.0 MPa [4]. These indexes are stable. If a practical nonlinear lateral deformation calculation method can be established from these simple physical and mechanical indexes, it will be more conducive to engineering application. On the other hand, the E-lgp relation only needs one parameter, the compression index CC, to reflect the nonlinear relation of E-p, and this relationship has been recognized by peers in the world. Therefore, if the relation of compression index CC obtained from E0 and ESI-2 can be established, the E-lgp relation can be established from CC, and the E-lgp relation is linear. The linear relation of E-lgp can reflect the nonlinear relation of E-p. In this way, the compression modulus ESI under different stress levels can be obtained from E-lgp and used to calculate the consolidated lateral deformation and shear lateral deformation, respectively, by the above method, so as to calculate the nonlinear lateral deformation of soft soil foundation. In this calculation, only the initial porosity ratio E0 and the compression modulus ESI-2 are required to reflect the deformation. This will bring great convenience to the calculation.

Soft soil is silty clay. The strength of cement soil can be increased by 5%–290% by adding nanosilica powder. As for the modification effect of other soil properties, it is necessary to discuss the strength growth mechanism of nanosilica powder. From the above analysis of the curing mechanism, it can be observed that the strengthening mechanism of nanosilica powder on soil cement mainly lies in the activity of nanosilica powder. In this regard, domestic and foreign researches continue, such as by Ding et al. The binding mechanism of heavy metals in soil treated with nanosilica powder was studied [5]. Afzali-Naniz and Mazloum studied the topology, crystal chemistry, and surface properties of nanosilica powder and nanoetched plagioclase [6]. Abd Elrahman et al. studied the effects of nanosilica powder on soil collapse treatment in the Siwan area of Fars Province, Iran [7]. Because of the different hydration environments, the effect and the optimal dosage of nanosilicon powder will be different. For general clay and soft soil, because of the “secondary reaction” and ion exchange effect of clay particles, nanosilica powder is beneficial to improving the microstructure of cement soil, and the enhancement effect of nanosilica powder is better than that of sand and silt soil [8]. For soft soil with large organic matter content, the enhancement effect is worse. The enhancement effect of nanosilica powder on each kind of soil and the optimum dosage needs to be further studied.

2. Experimental Methods and Algorithms

2.1. Strength Test of Nanosilicate Soft Soil. The ratio scheme of the design is as follows: soft soil parameters (soft soil mass/water mass * 100% is 15%); the parameters of nanosilica powder (= mass of nanosilica powder/mass of soft soil * 100%) were 0, 2.5%, 5%, 7.5%, 10%, 15%, 20%, 25%, and 30%; the ratio of nanosilica powder to soft soil (W/C = water mass/(nanosilica powder mass + soft soil mass)) was 0.45. The ages were 7, 28, and 60 days. Parallel tests were conducted for each ratio [9]. The test instrument is TSY6—IB desktop triaxial compression instrument. Test shear rate was 04 mm/min.

Figure 1 shows the relationship between the content of nanosilica powder $a_w$ and the unconfined compressive strength $q_u$ at various ages. As can be observed from Figure 1, the relative density parameter of silica fume is 2.2–2.5, and the strength increases linearly with the increase of nanosilicon powder content. When $a_w = 250\%$, the strength of the soil reached the maximum value of 2.81 MPa on day 7, which was 3.52 times that of the common soft soil at the same age [10]. When the age is 28 days and $a_w = 30\%$, the maximum strength of the soil can reach 4.51 MPa, which is 3.92 times that of the common soft soil for 28 days. When the age is 60 days and $a_w = 25\%$, the maximum strength can reach 5.36 MPa, which is 3.71 times the strength of ordinary soft soil for 60 days. When the dosage increased from 25% to 30%, the strength growth range of soft soil at 7 and 60 days began to decrease. The linear fitting relationship between $a_w$ and $q_u$ at each age is as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
q_{0.28} & = 0.07a_w + q_{0.28} \cdot 7 (T = 7d, a_w \leq 30\%) \\
q_{0.28} & = 0.12a_w + q_{0.28} \cdot 28 (T = 28d, a_w \leq 30\%) \\
q_{0.60} & = 0.15a_w + q_{0.60} \cdot 60 (T = 60d, a_w \leq 30\%)
\end{align*}
\]

Types $q_{0.7}, q_{0.28}$, and $q_{0.6}$ are the strength values of ordinary soft soil at 7 d, 28 d, and 60 d, respectively. The fitting coefficients were 0.96, 0.99, and 0.96, respectively. In order to facilitate the direct analysis of the enhancement effect of nanosilica powder on soft soil, based on the strength values of ordinary soft soil at 7 d, 28 d, and 60 d, the growth rate of $q_u$ and $a_w$ of nanosilica powder soft soil at corresponding ages is given, as shown in Table 1 [11].

From the above analysis, it can be observed that the strength of soft soil at various ages can be greatly improved by adding nanosilica powder. When the dosage and age of
2. Secant Modulus Method. In this paper, based on the concept of the E-P curve and the Duncan-Chang constitutive model [13], a method is established to calculate the nonlinear secant modulus $E_p$ of soft soil with the E-P curve, and then, the secant modulus $E_p$ is applied to calculate the settlement of foundation caused by lateral deformation. Kondner in 1963, based on the conventional triaxial tests of a large number of soils, obtained the stress-strain relationship of soils by hyperbolic fitting as shown in the following equation:

$$\sigma_1 - \sigma_3 = \frac{\epsilon_a}{a + b\epsilon_a}$$  \hspace{1cm} (3)

In the formula, $\sigma_1$ is the first principal stress; $\sigma_3$ the third principal stress; $\epsilon_a$ is the vertical strain of the sample; $a$ and $b$ are the test constants.

The secant modulus $E_p$ is

$$E_p = \frac{\sigma_1 - \sigma_3}{\epsilon_a}$$  \hspace{1cm} (4)

Define the failure ratio $R_f$ as

$$R_f = \left(\frac{\sigma_1 - \sigma_3}{\sigma_1 - \sigma_3}_{ult}\right)_{\alpha}$$  \hspace{1cm} (5)

Define the stress level s as

$$s = \frac{\sigma_1 - \sigma_3}{\left(\sigma_1 - \sigma_3\right)_{ult}} = \frac{1 - \sin \phi}{2c \cos \phi + 2\sigma_3 \sin \phi}$$  \hspace{1cm} (6)

Then, (4) can be written

$$E_p = (1 - R_f s)E_{i0},$$  \hspace{1cm} (7)

where $E_{i0}$ is the initial tangent modulus, and its expression is

$$E_{i0} = \frac{1}{(1 - R_f S_0)E_{i1}},$$  \hspace{1cm} (8)

where $S_0$ is the initial stress level, that is, the stress level of the soil element under dead weight stress. $E_{i1}$ is the compression modulus corresponding to the self-weight stress of the soil element to the sum of the self-weight stress and the total additional stress [14]. Due to $(1 - R_f S_0) < 1$, so $E_{i0} > E_{i1}$; to simplify the calculation and to be a little bit safer, set $E_{i0} > E_{i1}$; then, the secant modulus $E_p$ is

$$E_p = (1 - R_f S)E_{i1}.$$  \hspace{1cm} (9)

### 2.3. Calculation Parameter Determination Method.

In the proposed calculation method, both the settlement calculation under lateral confinement conditions and the settlement calculation caused by lateral deformation need the compression modulus $E_{i1}$ under different stress levels, and a complete E-P curve is required to obtain this compression modulus [15]. However, the test reports of some engineering projects do not provide complete E-P, but only provide the initial porosity ratio $e_0$ and compression modulus $E_{i1-2}$. Since the above two parameters are commonly used in engineering, they are relatively stable and can better reflect the characteristics of soft soil. Two methods are established to calculate the compression modulus $E_{i1}$ under different stress levels from $e_0$ and $E_{i1-2}$: Method 1: based on $E_{i1-2}$, the compression index $C_v$ is deduced, the $e - 1_{gp}$ curve of the normally consolidated soil is obtained from $C_v$, and then the compression modulus $E_{i1}$ under different stress levels is obtained from the $e - 1_{gp}$ curve.
2.3.1. Method 1. For the E-\(lgp\) curve of normally consolidated soil \([16]\), \(p_0\) is the early consolidation pressure, \(p_1\) is the deadweight stress, \(e_1\) is the initial porosity ratio, and \(C_{cf}\) is the in situ compression index. If the in situ compression curve is required, only point B and the in situ compression index \(C_{cf}\) can be obtained. The coordinates of point B and the in situ compression index \(C_{cf}\) are derived in two parts.

(1) Deduction B. For normally consolidated soil, the early consolidation pressure \(p_c\) is

\[ p_c = y_{sat} h, \]  

(10)

where \(y_{sat}\) is the saturated weight of soil mass, and \(H\) is the depth of soil collection point. B is \(y_{sat} h, e_0\).

(2) Derivation of In Situ Compression Index \(C_{cf}\). The compression modulus formula is as follows:

\[ E_s = \frac{(1 + e_0) (p_2 - p_1)}{e_1 - e_2}. \]  

(11)

The compression index formula is as follows:

\[ C_c = \frac{e_1 - e_2}{1g(p_2 - p_1)}. \]  

(12)

Equations (11) and (12) can be obtained as

\[ C_c = \frac{(1 + e_0)(p_2 - p_1)}{((1 + e_0)(p_2 - p_1)/(e_1 - e_2)) 1g(p_2/p_1)} \]

\[ = (1 + e_0)(p_2 - p_1)/(E_s \cdot 1g(p_2/p_1)). \]

If in (13) \(p_1 = 100kPa, p_2 = 200kPa\), then the compression modulus \(E_s\) is \(E_{s1-2}\) (19) is

\[ C_{cl-2} = \frac{100(1 + e_0)}{1g2E_{s1-2}}. \]  

(14)

If the earlier consolidation pressure is \(p_c \leq 100kPa\), the relationship between \(C_{cl-2}\) and \(C_{cf}\) can be obtained as follows:

\[ C_{cl-2} = C_{cf}. \]  

(15)

(3) Derivation of Compression Modulus \(E_{si}\). The point B and the in situ compression index \(C_{cf}\) deduced above. Thus, the E-\(lgp\) curve of soil in situ compression is

\[ e = \begin{cases} 
  e_0 (P \leq y_{sat} h), \\
  e_0 - \frac{100(1 + e_0)}{1g2E_{s1-2}} \cdot 1g(p - 1g(y_{sat}h)) (P > y_{sat}h). 
\end{cases} \]  

(16)

According to (16), the corresponding pore ratio of soil under dead weight stress is

\[ e_1 = e_0. \]  

(17)

The corresponding pore ratio of soil under the sum of gravity stress and additional stress is

\[ e_2 = e_0 - \frac{100(1 + e_0)}{1g2E_{s1-2}} \cdot 1g(p - 1g(y_{sat}h)). \]  

(18)

Substitute (14) and (15) into the compression modulus formula (17) to obtain the compression modulus of soil at any pressure level:

\[ E_{si} = \frac{1g2 \cdot E_{s1-2} \cdot (p - y_{sat}h)}{100(1g(p - 1g(y_{sat}h))}. \]  

(19)

2.3.2. Method 2. Zhang et al. \([17]\) proposed a method of deducing the E-P curve by AA. The derivation results are as follows:

\[ e = e_0 - \frac{(1 + e_0)p}{0.1088E_s + 0.0015E_s p}. \]  

(20)

Therefore, given the compression modulus \(E_{s1-2}\) and the initial porosity ratio \(e_0\), the corresponding porosity ratio under different additional stresses can be obtained. By substituting (20) into (17) for compression modulus calculation, the relation between the compression modulus \(E_{si}\) at different stress levels and the additional stress can be obtained, as shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3.

3. The Result

It can be observed from the calculation results that, on both sides of the embankment foundation, the calculated results of various calculation methods are not much different from the measured results \([18]\). At the center of the embankment foundation, the calculated results are smaller than the measured ones, and the calculated results differ greatly from the measured ones. However, the calculation results of the method considering the settlement caused by lateral deformation (i.e., method (1) and method (2)) are in good agreement with the measured results, and the calculated results are slightly larger and safer than the measured results. For the settlement time curve of the center point of the embankment base, there is also a large error in the standard calculation method from the whole settlement process, while the calculation method considering the settlement caused by lateral deformation (i.e., method (1) and method (2)) is in good agreement with the measured data. The \(E_{s1-2}\) and \(e_0\) of soft soil are easy to obtain and the values are stable, and the experience is easy to judge, which can bring great convenience to the calculation \([19]\).

The secant modulus total method is used to reduce the fluctuation of the modulus, and the reliability of the calculation results will be improved. The total method is established to calculate the nonlinear settlement of soft soil foundation based on two parameters commonly used in engineering: initial porosity ratio \(e_0\) and compression modulus \(E_{s1-2}\).
4. Conclusions

Although finite element and other numerical methods are modern advanced methods that can take many factors into account, the accuracy of the calculation cannot be guaranteed because of the error of the constitutive model of nanometer silica silky ooze. E-P curves based on a simple test and combined with the experience coefficient correction are still the main settlement calculation methods of engineering application; in order to improve its precision and experience coefficient uncertainty, carry on test the simplicity of its parameters at the same time, and make up for the inadequacy of current commonly used in the engineering calculation method, this study on the basis of previous work, considering the lateral deformation of the nonlinear settlement calculation method, is put forward. The lateral deformation and resistance to the horizontal force of piles in soft soil foundations are one of the key problems in the lateral stability of embankments. The deformation of soil and piles in the middle and lower parts tends to the outside of embankment, which is not conducive to the stability of embankment. There are many engineering accidents of the instability of soft soil embankments, which is related to the failure of this factor in the design. Due to the deformation (or reinforcement) of the geogrid cushion itself, it can stabilize and fix the pile cap (reduce the deformation of foundation soil), and the deformation of surface soil and pile top tends to the inside of the embankment, which is conducive to the stability of subgrade. Therefore, the nonlinear algorithm is very beneficial to the lateral stability of embankment.

Data Availability

The data used to support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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