

Zeitschrift: IABSE reports = Rapports AIPC = IVBH Berichte
Band: 69 (1993)

Artikel: Preload analysis of reinforced concrete flexural members
Autor: Leong, Tuck Wah
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-52574>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 27.03.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Preload Analysis of Reinforced Concrete Flexural Members

Influences des précharges sur les éléments en béton armé sollicités à la flexion

Vorbelastungseinflüsse auf biegebeanspruchte Stahlbetonbauteile

Tuck Wah LEONG

Prof. Dr.
Nat. Univ. of Singapore
Singapore



T.W. Leong, born 1942 in Malaysia. Awarded Ph.D. in Structural Engineering, University of New South Wales in 1970. Other than teaching and research, he has been working as Professional Engineer in Singapore and Malaysia and is also accredited checker in Singapore for large numbers of Civil and Structural Engineering projects.

SUMMARY

An analysis is made of the stress and strain in reinforced concrete flexural members at the preload stage under combined effects of temperature variations and shrinkage. Typical results of such analysis are presented in this article. A «prestressing analogy» is proposed and used by the author to provide a simplified concept of approach to the evaluations of the time dependent stresses in the members up to specified stages of durations of the external influence. The severe effects of temperature and shrinkage can also be opposed or «balanced» by imposing reverse prestressing effects determined from this analogy.

RESUME

L'article analyse les contraintes et les déformations induites dans les éléments porteurs en béton armé sollicités à la flexion, à l'état de mise en charge initiale par l'action combinée des variations de température et du retrait. L'auteur fournit quelques exemples typiques relatifs à cette analyse. Il propose une analogie avec la précontrainte et en déduit un concept simplifié, en vue de déterminer les contraintes en fonction du temps ainsi que les durées spécifiques des influences externes. A partir de l'analogie proposée, il est possible de compenser les effets considérables de la température et du retrait par une précontrainte agissant en sens contraire.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Spannungen und Dehnungen in biegebeanspruchten Stahlbetontraggliedern werden im Stadium der Vorbelastung durch kombinierte Einwirkung von Temperaturschwankungen und Schwinden analysiert. Dafür werden einige typische Beispiele gegeben. Der Autor schlägt eine Analogie zur Vorspannung und ein vereinfachtes Konzept vor, um zeitabhängige Spannungen bis zu spezifizierten Einwirkungsauern zu bestimmen. Insbesondere können aufgrund dieser Analogie erhebliche Temperatur- und Schwindeffekte durch entgegengesetzt wirkende Vorspannung ausgeglichen werden.



INTRODUCTION

Preload serviceability performance of reinforced concrete has seldom been considered in the design. The initial state of stresses caused by drying shrinkage and temperature variations have been frequently considered as secondary and hence negligible. In a large number of cases it is reasonable to ignore this initial state of stresses and performance since shrinkage may or may not act along with the effect of temperature variations. However in many not unusual cases, for example, in deep raft foundations or reinforced concrete walls under rigid end or side constraints, the preload effect of shrinkage and temperature can cause excessive cracking or warping. Hence affecting the serviceability performance of the structural members in the subsequent, loading, stage. The inadequacy of an analytical treatment on the time varying behaviour of reinforced concrete structure with particular consideration given to preload shrinkage and temperature effects has been mentioned in a few separate literatural surveys viz., by the ACI Committee 435(1) and by the unified Code Committee (2,3).

BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

The worst effect in preload analysis is to consider both shrinkage and the variation in temperature acting in unison, i.e. causing longitudinal compressive strains in an unloaded reinforced concrete member. The longitudinal steel reinforcement provides some restraint to shortening so that internal stresses are induced in the concrete and steel. In a reinforced concrete flexural member which contains a preponderance of 'tensile' steel reinforcement near one face, the unsymmetric restraint provided by the longitudinal steel results in a non-uniform distribution of concrete stress and strain. The concrete tensile stresses vary from a maximum value at the face near the tensile steel to a minimum value at the opposite face, whereas concrete compressive strains vary from a minimum in the face near the tension steel to a maximum in the opposite face. The phenomena produce not only longitudinal shortening but also warping to the members. Such warping affects the long term performance of reinforced concrete flexural members particularly slender beams and slabs. Furthermore, when deformation is restrained, stresses developed and whenever concrete is stressed, creep occurs. Similarly, whenever stress is maintained over a constant deformation, it relaxes in the time course. All these bring about a continuous adjustment within such a member for self-equilibrium against the exterior influence.

PRELOAD ANALYSIS OF STRESSES AND STRAINS IN REINFORCED CONCRETE BEAMS

Consider a doubly reinforced concrete beam of rectangular section of width \times depth = $b \times a$ and with compressive and tensile steel areas of A_s' and A_s which are located respectively at d' and d from the topmost fibre. Assuming that at this stage there is no external load acting on the member except that the beam is being subjected to the combined effects of temperature and shrinkage acting in unity (i.e. causing contracting to the member dimensions). At this stage it is further assumed that due to such combined action, the section remains uncracked and that the total strains and stresses are distributed linearly across. Such beam and section together with the strain and stress distributions and the resultants of forces are shown in Figure 1. The equilibrium of horizontal forces and bending moments (taken w.r.t fibre 1) in the section at time t leads to the formation of the following equations (with σ_1 , σ_4 , ϵ_1 , ϵ_2 , ϵ_3 , ϵ_4 all time dependent quantities)

$$(\sigma_1 + \sigma_4) + p E_s (2B \epsilon_2 + 2B r \epsilon_3) = 0 \quad [1]$$

$$\sigma_1 + 2\sigma_4 + p E_s (6B^2 \epsilon_2 + 6B \delta r \epsilon_3) = 0 \quad [2]$$

where $p = A_s/bd$, $r = A_s'/A_s$, $B = d/a$ and $\delta = d'/a$

The linear distribution of strains allows ϵ_2 and ϵ_1 to be expressed in terms of ϵ_1 and ϵ_4 i.e.

$$\epsilon_2 = (1-B) \epsilon_1 + B \epsilon_4 \text{ and } \epsilon_3 = (1-\delta) \epsilon_1 + \delta \epsilon_4$$

By substituting the above expression into Eqs. [1] [2] σ_1 and σ_4 can be expressed as,

$$\sigma_1 = p E_s (Q_1 \epsilon_1 + Q_2 \epsilon_4) \quad [3]$$

$$\sigma_4 = p E_s (Q_3 \epsilon_1 + Q_4 \epsilon_4) \quad [4]$$

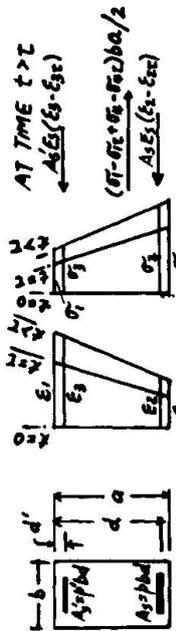


FIG. 1: DEVELOPMENT OF TIME DEPENDENT STRAINS AND STRESSES DUE TO TEMPERATURE AND SHRINKAGE EFFECTS

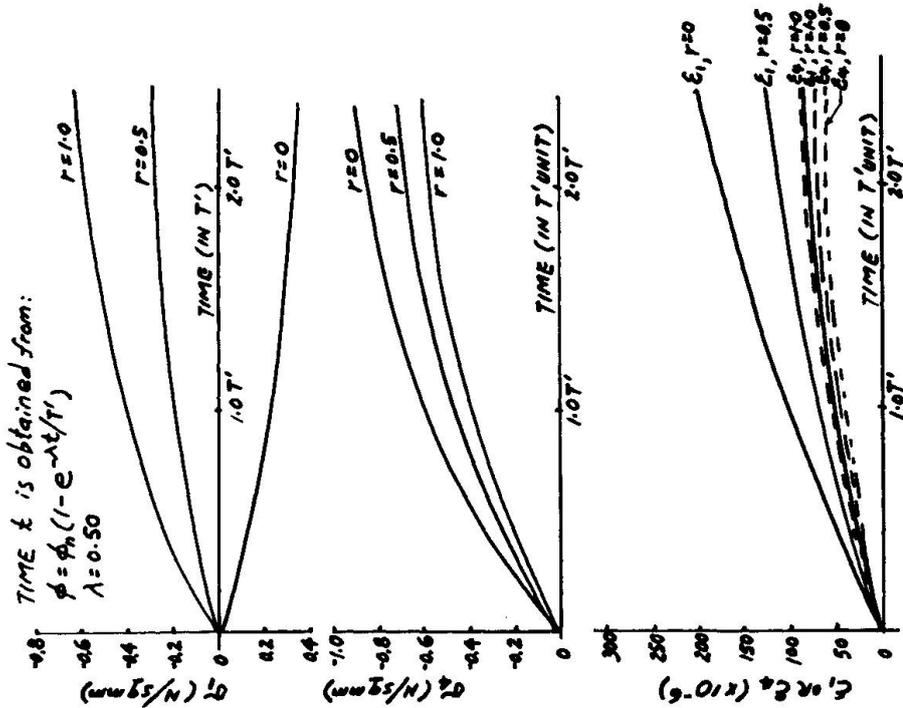


FIG. 2: STRESSES AND STRAINS DUE TO SHRINKAGE ONLY

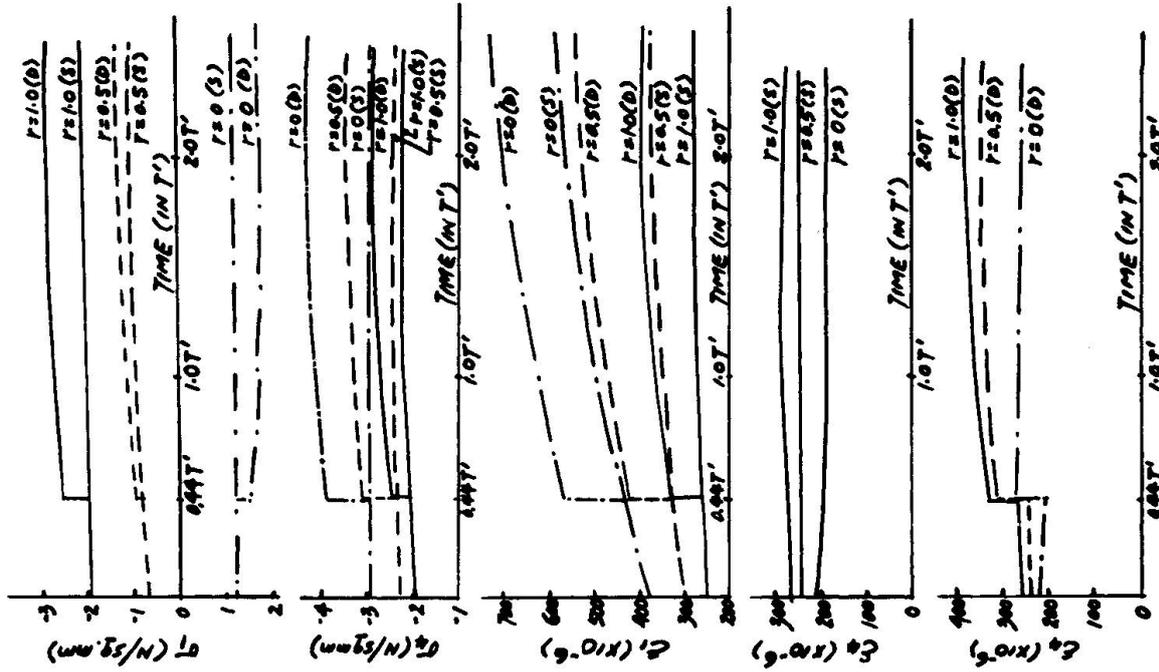


FIG. 3: STRESSES AND STRAINS IN SINGLE(S) AND DOUBLE(D) STAGE PRECAST ANALYSIS DUE TO COMBINED TEMPERATURE AND SHRINKAGE INFLUENCE



$$\begin{aligned} \text{where } Q_1 &= -2\mathbf{B}[(1-\mathbf{B})(2-3\mathbf{B}) + (1-\delta)r(2-3\delta)] \\ Q_2 &= -2\mathbf{B}[(2-3\mathbf{B})\mathbf{B} + (2-3\delta)r\delta] \\ Q_3 &= 2\mathbf{B}[(1-\mathbf{B})(1-3\mathbf{B}) + (1-\delta)(1-3\delta)r] \\ Q_4 &= 2\mathbf{B}[(1-3\mathbf{B})\mathbf{B} + \delta(1-3\delta)r] \end{aligned}$$

The magnitudes of the time dependent strains ϵ_1 and ϵ_4 depends not only on the shortening caused by temperature and shrinkage but also on the sustained stressed developed at the same levels due to restraints provided by the reinforcing bars. The relationship between strain and stress in the concrete has been studied by Trost (3) and Bazant (4,5).

On basis of the principle of superposition in which an ageing coefficient has been incorporated for a range of situations involving stress relaxation histories the general form of this relation can be expressed as,

$$\epsilon = \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{\sigma_i}{E_i} [1 + X_i \phi_i(t)] + X_i \phi_i(t) \frac{\epsilon_{sn}}{\phi_n} + \alpha \Delta T_i \quad [5]$$

in which ϵ , σ , and X are all functions of age τ and time t . In the above expression X is the ageing coefficient which is a function of the relaxation of concrete and ϕ is the creep function. ϕ is related to ϕ_n which is the long term creep value.

In a one stage development the shrinkage and temperature variation are assumed commencing from one age and applying Eq.[5] for concrete strains at levels 1 and 4 in the section, the following equations are obtained,

$$\epsilon_1 = \delta_1 [1 + X \phi(t)] / E_o + X \phi(t) \epsilon_{sn} / \phi_n + \alpha \Delta T \quad [6]$$

$$\epsilon_4 = \delta_4 [1 + X \phi(t)] / E_o + X \phi(t) \epsilon_{sn} / \phi_n + \alpha \Delta T \quad [7]$$

By substituting the above equations into Eqs.[3],[4] and by rearrangement, a pair of simultaneous equations expressing σ_1 and σ_4 are obtained, i.e.

$$\sigma_1 = np[X\phi(t)E_o\epsilon_{sn}/\phi_n + E_o\alpha\Delta T][(Q_1+Q_2)\{1-npQ_4(1+X\phi(t))\} + (Q_3+Q_4)npQ_2(1+X\phi(t))]/R \quad [8]$$

$$\sigma_4 = np[X\phi(t)E_o\epsilon_{sn}/\phi_n + E_o\alpha\Delta T][(Q_1+Q_2)npQ_3\{1+X\phi(t)\} + (Q_3+Q_4)\{1-npQ_1(1+X\phi(t))\}]/R \quad [9]$$

in which $R = [1-npQ_1\{1+X\phi(t)\}][1-npQ_4\{1+X\phi(t)\}] - n^2p^2Q_2Q_3\{1+X\phi(t)\}^2$

In the above expressions the creep function $\phi(t)$ represents the time development of creep in concrete. $\phi(t)$ can thus be used to replace time in an one to one correspondence type of evaluations for the tensile stresses σ_1 and σ_4 in the concrete section. The signs for σ_1 and σ_4 are generally evaluated in negative values (representing tension). By substituting σ_1 and σ_4 values obtained from Eqs.8,9 into 6,7 the time dependent concrete strains ϵ_1 , ϵ_4 caused by the effects of temperature and shrinkage can thus be obtained. The time varying curvature can thus be evaluated i.e. $\rho = (\epsilon_1 - \epsilon_4) / a$. For a simply supported beam if the self weight is negligible and if the curvatures in all other sections are developed in identical manner, the warping deflection at mid-span at time t is thus $\Delta = \rho l^2 / 8 = (\epsilon_1 - \epsilon_4) l^2 / (8a)$

If further stages of changes in the shrinkage and temperature values take place e.g. at a second stage commencing at an age τ (which also marks the end of the first stage), the time variations in σ_1 and σ_4 (i.e. $\sigma_1(t) - \sigma_{1\tau}$ and $\sigma_4(t) - \sigma_{4\tau}$ see Figure 1) can be derived in a similar process as shown above. To obtain $\sigma_1(t) - \sigma_{1\tau}$ and $\sigma_4(t) - \sigma_{4\tau}$ which replace σ_1 and σ_4 in Eqs.8,9 it is only necessary to replace the various variables in these two equations by corresponding modified values i.e.

variable in Eqs. 8, 9 :	n	X	E_o	ϵ_{sn}	ΔT
replaced by :	n_τ	X_τ	E_τ	$\epsilon_{sn} - \epsilon_{s\tau}$	$\Delta T \pm \Delta T_\tau$

The subscript (τ) above is used to denote either changes in the parameter values initiated at age τ or known parameter values at end of the first stage of analysis. In a likewise manner the above derivation and modification processes can be used to obtain the time varying stresses and strains (i.e. using Eqs. [8], [9] and [6] [7]) involving multi-stage changes in shrinkage and temperature values.

TYPICAL PRELOAD PERFORMANCE OF REINFORCED CONCRETE BEAMS

The results of several typical calculations are given in Figs. 2,3 to illustrate numerically the effects of shrinkage and temperature on the stress and deformational behaviour of reinforced concrete beams and slabs. The time dependent stresses and strains in concrete due to shrinkage are as shown in Fig. 2. The parameters used to obtain this set of data are $p=0.02$; $r=0, 0.5, 1.0$; $\beta=0.9$; $\delta=0.1$, $E_o=25 \times 10^3$ N/sq.mm; $\phi n=3.0$; $\epsilon_{sn}=0.003$; $X=0.67$. In the calculations, creep and relaxation of concrete actually alleviate the effects of shrinkage. The effect of compressive reinforcing steel assists greatly in the redistributions of stresses and strains in the sections. These can be seen in the set of figures i.e. in between σ_1 and σ_4 as well as ϵ_1 and ϵ_4 .

The parameters used to obtain Fig. 3 are basically the same as in Fig. 2 except that a temperature difference of 30°C is imposed in addition to the shrinkage effects in the single stage analysis and in the two-stage analysis from $\tau=0.6\phi$ (corresponding to a time $t=0.44 T$) onward such temperature variation has been increased to an accumulated value = 40°C. Results of the single stage analysis is shown in the set of curves marked with (S) whereas those for the two-stage analysis is shown in the set of curves marked with (D). In the second stage of the two-stage analysis the ageing coefficient used i.e. $X = 0.79$ instead of 0.67. The effects of X can be seen in Fig. 3.

UNDESIRABLE PERFORMANCE AT PRELOAD STAGE

The modulus of elasticity used in the above analysis corresponds to a concrete grade strength of only 20 N/sq.mm. and the free long term shrinkage value (ϵ_{sn}) is assumed 0.0003 which is considered moderate. It can be seen in Fig. 2 that the long term value of σ_4 corresponding to $r=0$ may well achieve 1.2 N/mm² in tension. Had ϵ_{sn} been assigned higher values, σ_4 values could have been higher than the tensile strength of concrete. The result as shown in Fig. 3 illustrate how an additional variation in temperature of 30°C to 40°C can actually cause undesirable tensile stresses and cracking (concrete cracks when its actual tensile stress exceeds its tensile strength in the set of reinforced concrete members. The tensile strength for the concrete used in this set of analysis is assumed 2 N/sqmm in numerical value.

A 30°C to 40°C temperature variation seems relatively high. However it can occur in mass concrete pour when a combined variation is caused by the hydration temperature and the ambient temperature.

PRESTRESSING ANALOGY

The developments of stresses and strains in reinforced concrete in the preload stage can also be visualized in a slightly different way. For each beam analysed the effects of shrinkage and temperature can be considered to be replaced by a natural prestressing force (P) and maintaining at certain eccentricity from the centroid of the section. The magnitude and the eccentricity of this prestressing force of nature will eventually produce the same long term (ie. at time ∞) stresses and strains in the concrete. If the section is uncracked the magnitude and eccentricity of this prestressing force (ie. P_{eff} and e) can be obtained by equating σ_1 , σ_4 obtained from Eqs. [8][9] with the expressions, $\sigma_1 = -P_{eff}/A + P_{eff}e/Z_t$ and $\sigma_4 = -P_{eff}/A - P_{eff}e/Z_b$.

To ensure the section remains uncrack the critical values of external influence from shrinkage and temperature must be evaluated. The long term value of σ_4 in Equation 9 (and similar expression in the multi-stage approach) must not exceed f_t which is the tensile strength of the concrete. By setting the long term σ_4 values to f_t and by estimating one of the two influencing variables (ie. between ϵ_{sn} and



ΔT) the limiting value of the other variable can be computed. For example, by equating σ_4 at $\phi = \phi_n = 3$ to $f_t = -2$ N/sq mm in the set of numerical evaluations used in the single stage analysis (with the results as shown in Fig.3) and assuming ϵ_{sn} is maintained at 0,0003, the limiting temperature variations (ie. ΔT) for the flexural sections with $r=0, 0.5$ and 1.0 are respectively 14.5°C , 22.25°C and 27.37°C .

With σ_4 being assigned the value of f_t , the corresponding σ_1 can be obtained from the ratio σ_1/σ_4 obtained from Eqs. 8, 9. Thus σ_1 equals 0.82, -0.92 and -2 N/sqmm corresponding to beam sections containing $r=0, 0.5$ and 1.0 and subject to the combined external influence of respectively $\epsilon_{sn}=0.0003$, $\Delta T=14.5^\circ\text{C}$; $\epsilon_{sn}=0.0003$, $\Delta T=22.25^\circ\text{C}$ and $\epsilon_{sn}=0.0003$ and $\Delta T=27.37^\circ\text{C}$.

The prestressing effects producing the respective σ_1 and σ_4 values in each member can then be computed according to the above prestressing equations. In a rectangular beam of 200 mm x 500 mm (width x total depth) the following results are obtained,

r	r=0	0.5	1.0
P_{eff} (KN)	159	146	200
e(mm)	199	30.8	0

The initial values of P (ie. P_{ini}) which produce P_{eff} (in the long term) can thus be estimated on basis of the materials deformational properties. Reversing the direction of the applications of P_{ini} in these members can effectively provide counterbalancing towards undesirable preload structural performance in the reinforced concrete beams.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The analysis with details given in this article allows the stresses, strains and deflections of reinforced concrete flexural members to be evaluated under preload, temperature and shrinkage effects. The evaluated long term stresses, strains and warping deflections can be compared to those permissible values to assess whether the effect of preload influence has already caused undesirable serviceability problems to the proposed structures. In a reverse process, by restricting the maximum tensile stress in the concrete (to value equals to its tensile strength) the limiting range of combined influence of shrinkage and temperature corresponding to a condition of serviceability limit of cracking in the preload stage can also be determined. This allows preventive measures to be taken (such as providing curing and in the control of temperature) to alleviate the anticipated structural performance. The prestressing analogy enables a reproduction of the long term concrete stresses induced by the external influence of temperature and shrinkage. Analogous prestressing effects in opposite sign can therefore be applied to the members to counterbalance (or even defuse) the undesirable preload stresses.

REFERENCES

1. ACI Committee 435, "Deflections of Reinforced Concrete Flexural Members", Journal of the American Concrete Institute, Proc. v63, June 1966.
2. Beeby, A.W., and Miles, J.R., "Proposals for the Control of Deflection in the New Unified Code", Concrete, v3, No.3, March 1969.
3. Trost, H., Auswirkungen des Superpositionsprinzips auf Kriech-und Relaxations-probleme bei Beton und Spannbeton und Stahlbetonbau, Vol.62, No.10, p.230-238, No.11, p.261-269, 1967.
4. Bazant Z.P., "Prediction of Concrete Creep Effects Using Age-Adjusted Effective Modulus Method, ACI Journal Proc. Vol.69, No.4 (April) p.212, 217, 1972.
5. Bazant, Z.P., Wittmann F.H., "Creep and Shrinkage in Concrete Structures", John Wiley & Sons, New York 1982.