

12 TH INTERNATIONAL BLACK SEA COASTLINE COUNTRIES SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH CONFERENCE

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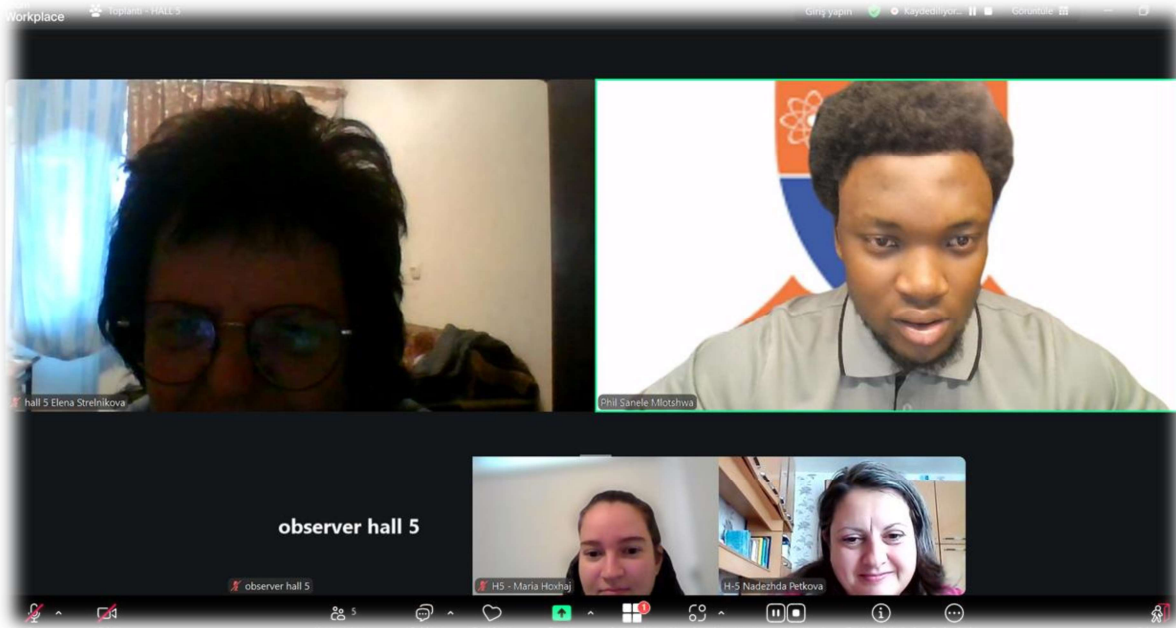
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COMPUTATIONAL MODELING OF LIQUID SLOSHING IN PARTITIONED TANKS

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ABSTRACT

This study develops numerical approaches for analyzing the stability of fluid motion in tanks with partitions of various configurations. The stability of sloshing in horizontally and vertically partitioned tanks is of theoretical and practical importance for aerospace, marine, and terrestrial liquid storage systems. Partitions significantly alter sloshing dynamics by modifying the free-surface frequency spectrum, vortex structures, energy localization, and resonance onset. Neglecting these effects may compromise safety, increase dynamic loads, and reduce system reliability. Experimental investigation of such processes is costly, technically challenging, and often hazardous, requiring large facilities, expensive equipment, and strict safety protocols. In contrast, computational modeling offers a safe and cost-effective tool for exploring a broad range of operating regimes. In this work, potential theory and singular integral equations are combined with the boundary element method, the subdomain method, and the method of prescribed normal modes. The effects of horizontal and vertical excitations are studied for both unpartitioned and partitioned tanks. Parametric regions of stable and unstable motion are identified. The results show that horizontal and vertical partitions strongly affect fluid stability in tanks. These findings are directly applicable to improving the safety of tank systems in aerospace, marine, and energy engineering

Keywords: Liquid Sloshing, Partitioned Tanks, Subdomain Method, Singular Integral Equations, Boundary Element Method,

INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of liquid motion in tanks of various purposes, from fuel reservoirs of launch vehicles and aircraft to containers for transportation and storage of industrial liquids, remains a relevant scientific and engineering problem. One of the most significant factors affecting the reliability and safe operation of such engineering systems is the stability of fluid motion under external disturbances. Oscillations of the free surface (sloshing) can generate additional dynamic loads on the structure walls, reduce the controllability of vehicles, and increase the risk of emergency situations. A particular challenge arises in the analysis of tanks with internal baffles, as their arrangement and geometry substantially alter the flow patterns of the liquid. Experimental investigations in this area are often expensive and potentially hazardous, especially when dealing with large liquid volumes or with fuels and aggressive media. Therefore, the development of efficient mathematical and numerical models of sloshing mitigation is an urgent scientific and technical task. An important aspect of maintaining stability is the consideration of damping effects. A proper selection of damping coefficients allows a significant reduction in oscillation amplitudes and a shift in the system's stability boundaries. A practical tool in this context is the inclusion of the Rayleigh damping matrix, which enables an adequate description of the dissipative properties of the system. Furthermore, one of the promising approaches to enhancing such system reliability is the implementation of special damping devices, such as baffles, floating lids, and other structural elements capable of reducing vibration intensity and providing an additional level of safety. Thus, the study of the stability of fluid motion in tanks with horizontal and vertical baffles, taking into account the influence of damping, which constitutes the focus of the present work, possesses both scientific and practical significance.

Modern operating conditions of engineering systems and the emergence of new structural materials have a significant impact on the stress-strain state and vibration characteristics of structural elements. This necessitates in-depth studies of the strength and dynamic properties of equipment operating under intense mechanical and thermal loads, as well as in interaction with various liquids or gases. The problem of mitigating the liquid oscillation in tanks became particularly important in the 1960s with the advent of space exploration, when inadequate design of fuel tank systems led to loss of stability and structural failure of launch vehicles. Today, the development of advanced, high-performance rockets requires new approaches to the design of fuel tanks, which increasingly exhibit complex or nontraditional geometries (Karaev & Strelnikova 2020, Liu & Li, 2022).

Thus, the investigation of fluid motion stability and the suppression of free-surface oscillations in tanks and fuel systems has remained a relevant research topic over the past decades (Balas et al., 2023, Gani et al. 2025, Strelnikova et al., 2020). To analyse the strength and vibration characteristics of structures, modern numerical methods are employed, including the *R*-functions method (Lamtiuhova, 2025), the methods of singular (Medvedovskaya et al., 2015) and hypersingular integral equations (Strelnikova et al., 2024), the boundary element method (BEM), (Gnitko et al., 2022), the finite element method (FEM), (Murawski, 2020), the finite difference method (Smetankina & Pavlikov, 2021), the finite volume method (Lampart et al., 2005), and the absorption method (Tong et al., 2021). During the design of fuel tanks, engineers employ various methods to reduce liquid oscillations, including the use of internal baffles (Poguluri & Cho 2023), vertical partitions (Strelnikova et al., 2019), different inserts (Choudhary et al., 2021), complete (Sierikova et al., 2023) or partial (Choudhary et al., 2024) coverage of the free surface, the application of advanced materials (Sierikova et al., 2021, Degtyariev et al., 2022), and active control systems (Konopka et al., 2019).

All these solutions are aimed at ensuring a sufficient level of damping, which makes it possible to reduce vibration amplitudes and prevent the system from entering unstable operating modes. In this context, constraints related to the structural mass, available space, and manufacturing technologies are taken into account, along with the requirements for reliability, durability, and

safe operation of the equipment under various working conditions. Therefore, the investigation of fluid motion stability, taking into account damping effects in rigid rotational shells with internal baffles, represents a relevant scientific and engineering problem. The results of such studies can be applied to enhance the reliability and efficiency of technical systems.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Basic Relations

A rigid shell of revolution partially filled with an ideal incompressible fluid is considered. The fluid motion induced by the shell oscillations under external loading is assumed to be irrotational. Under these conditions, there exists a scalar velocity potential Φ such that $\mathbf{V} = \text{grad } \Phi$. The incompressibility condition in this case takes the form

$$\frac{\partial^2 \Phi}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 \Phi}{\partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^2 \Phi}{\partial z^2} = 0. \quad (1)$$

Let S_1 denote the wetted surface of the shell and S_0 the free surface of the fluid. The domain occupied by the fluid is denoted by Ω , which is bounded by the surface $S = S_0 \cup S_1$. It is assumed that the shell structure may contain several internal baffles of arbitrary geometry, which are installed to suppress liquid oscillations. The surfaces of these baffles are denoted by S_{baf} . The geometric configuration of the system is shown schematically in Fig. 1a)-1c).

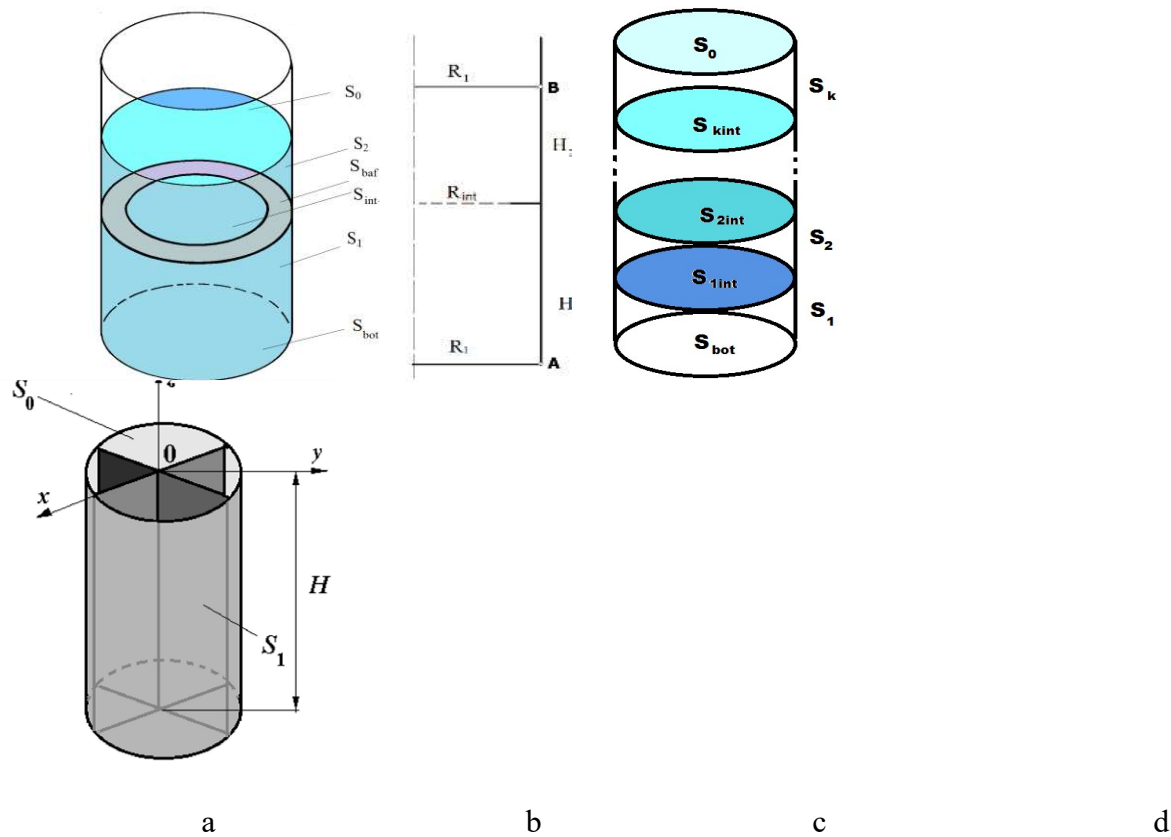


Figure 1. Shells of revolution with baffles.

It is assumed that the tank containing the fluid is subjected to dynamic excitation. The pressure p is calculated according to the Bernoulli integral and is given by (Gavrilyuk et al., 2008) as follows

$$p - p_0 = -\rho_l \left(\frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial t} + gz + a_x(t)x + a_z(t)z \right), \quad (2)$$

where ρ_l is the fluid density, z is the vertical coordinate of the point under consideration, p_0 is the atmospheric pressure, g is the acceleration due to gravity, and $a_x(t)$, $a_z(t)$ are the components of the excitation acceleration.

The liquid volume is divided by the baffles into several subdomains, as shown in Fig. 1c). The internal subdomains have interface surfaces as part of their boundaries. On each interface surface, the continuity (coupling) conditions must be satisfied. On the lateral surfaces and at the bottom of the tank, the no-penetration conditions are imposed. On the free surface, both kinematic and dynamic boundary conditions are applied. The kinematic condition states that the fluid particles located on the free surface at the initial moment of time remain on that surface throughout the subsequent motion. Let the function $\zeta = \zeta(x, y, z)$ describe the shape and position of the free surface as a function of time. The mathematical expression of the kinematic condition in the linear formulation has the form

$$\left. \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial \mathbf{n}} \right|_{S_0} = \frac{\partial \zeta}{\partial t}, \quad (3)$$

where $\mathbf{n}$ is the unit outward normal to the surface, the unknown function $\zeta = \zeta(t, x, y)$ describes the position of the free surface and its variation over time. The dynamic condition requires that the pressure of the liquid on the free surface S_0 be equal to the atmospheric pressure. According to equation (2),

$$\frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial t} + gz + a_x(t)x + a_z(t)z = 0. \quad (4)$$

In addition, the conjugation conditions on the interface surfaces (Gnitko et al., 2016) are added to conditions (3)–(4). For the i -th interface surface, these conditions take the following form:

$$\Phi_{i+1} = \Phi_i, \quad q_{i+1} = -q_i, \quad q = \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial \mathbf{n}}. \quad (5)$$

Let $\mathbf{P}$ denote the points within the domain Ω . For equation (1), the following boundary value problem is formulated:

$$\nabla^2 \Phi = 0, \mathbf{P} \in \Omega, \quad \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial \mathbf{n}} = 0, \mathbf{P} \in S_1, \quad \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial \mathbf{n}} = \frac{\partial \zeta}{\partial t}, p - p_0 = 0, \mathbf{P} \in S_0. \quad (6)$$

Thus, it is necessary to determine the unknown functions Φ and ζ , while the following relation holds on the free surface:

$$\frac{\partial^2 \Phi}{\partial t^2} + g \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial \mathbf{n}} = 0. \quad (7)$$

So, a boundary-value problem is formulated to determine the velocity potential and the function describing the elevation of the free surface, using the subdomain method.

METHODOLOGY

The method of prescribed modes and the reduction of the boundary-value problem to a system of singular integral equations.

The unknown functions ζ and Φ in cylindrical coordinates (r, θ, z) are represented in the form of series

$$\zeta(r, \theta, t) = \sum_{l=0}^m \cos(l\theta) \sum_{k=1}^n d_{kl}(t) \zeta_{kl}(r), \quad (8)$$

$$\Phi(r, \theta, z, t) = \sum_{l=0}^m \cos(l\theta) \sum_{k=1}^{n_2} \dot{d}_{kl}(t) \varphi_{kl}(r, z) \quad (9)$$

Next, according to (Strelnikova et al., 2020), we obtain a solvable system of singular integral equations for determining $\varphi_{kl}(r, z)$. Here, for simplicity, the indices kl are omitted.

$$2\pi\varphi(z_0, R) + \int_{\Gamma} \varphi(z, R)\Theta(z, z_0)r(z)d\Gamma - \frac{\gamma^2}{g} \int_0^R \varphi(\rho, H)\Xi(P, P_0)\rho d\rho = 0, P_0 \in S_1, \quad (10)$$

$$2\pi\varphi(\rho_0, H) + \int_{\Gamma} \varphi(z, R)\Theta(z, z_0)r(z)d\Gamma - \frac{\gamma^2}{g} \int_0^R \varphi(\rho, H)\Xi(P, P_0)\rho d\rho = 0, P_0 \in S_0.$$

The kernels in integral operators in (10) are determined as follows

$$\Theta(z, z_0) = 4/\sqrt{a+b} \left\{ \frac{1}{2r} \left[\frac{r^2 - r_0^2 + (z_0 - z)^2}{a-b} E_l(k) - F_l(k) \right] n_r + \frac{z_0 - z}{a-b} E_l(k) n_z \right\}, \quad (11)$$

$$\Xi(P, P_0) = 4/\sqrt{a+b} F_l(k), a = r^2 + r_0^2 + (z - z_0)^2, b = 2rr_0,$$

where the generalized integrals are introduced by the next formulas

$$E_l(k) = (-1)^l (1 - 4l^2) \int_0^{\pi/2} \cos(2l\beta\psi) \sqrt{1 - k^2 \sin^2 \psi} d\psi, \quad (12)$$

$$F_l(k) = (-1)^l \int_0^{\pi/2} \frac{\cos(2l\beta\psi) d\psi}{\sqrt{1 - k^2 \sin^2 \psi}}.$$

As shown in (Strelnikova et al., 2020), in relations (12), we set $\beta = 1$ when studying the motion of fluid in shells without partitions, and $\beta = 2$ for shells with vertical partitions, see Fig. 1d). After solving the spectral problem (6), we obtain the basis functions $\varphi_{kl}(r, z)$ and $\zeta_k(r)$, as well as the eigenfrequencies ω_{kl} .

Free vibrations of fluid in cylindrical shells

Let us investigate the free vibrations of a fluid in rigid cylindrical shells without partitions, with horizontal partitions, and with vertical partitions. First, we consider a rigid cylindrical shell with a flat bottom characterized by the following parameters: radius $R = 1$ m and length $L = 2$ m. Let H denote the fluid filling height. The horizontal partition is a circular plate with a central opening (an annular baffle) (see Fig. 1). The vertical coordinate of the partition (its height position) is denoted as H_1 ($H_1 < H$). The radius of the interface surface is denoted as R_{int} . Thus, $H = H_1 + H_2$ and $R_{\text{baf}} = R - R_{\text{int}}$.

The numerical results were obtained using the boundary element method. A total of 150 boundary elements were used along the bottom radius (N_b), 120 elements along the wetted cylindrical parts (N_w), and 150 elements along the radius of the free surface (N_0). Further refinement of the mesh did not lead to significant changes in the results. Different numbers of elements were used on the interface and partition surfaces depending on the baffle radius. In the numerical simulations, various values of R_{int} and H_1 were considered. The analytical solution (Gavrilyuk et al., 2008) was employed for comparison and validation of the numerical results. The results are presented in the Table 1 below.

Table 1. Vibration frequencies at $l = 1$ for cylindrical shells.

Reservoir type	ω_{11}	ω_{12}	ω_{13}	ω_{14}	ω_{15}
Unbaffled, BEM Analitical solution	4.1424	7.2286	9.1473	10.7123	11.9624
	4.1424	7.2284	9.1472	10.7112	11.9616
Vertical baffle	5.4582	8.1067	9.8791	11.2574	12.657
Horizontal baffle, BEM Analitical solution	2.6350	6.6446	8.9667	10.6468	11.9876
	2.6350	6.6444	8.9661	10.6467	11.9874

The results for horizontal baffles were obtained for $H_1 = 0.9m$ and $R_{int} = 0.5m$. The comparison of the results demonstrates the convergence and efficiency of the proposed method, confirming its reliability for analyzing fluid vibrations in cylindrical shells.

Forced vibrations of fluid in cylindrical shells

Let the basis functions $\varphi_k(r, z)$ be already defined. We substitute them into formulas (8) for the free-surface elevation ζ and (9) for velocity potential Φ . The obtained expressions are then applied in the dynamic condition on S_0 . As a result, on the free surface we obtain the following relation:

$$\sum_{l=0}^m \cos(l\theta) \sum_{k=1}^n \left[\ddot{d}_{kl}(t) + \omega_{kl}^2 \left(1 + \frac{a_v(t)}{g} \right) d_{kl}(t) \right] \varphi_{kl}(r, z) + a_h(t) r \cos\theta = 0, z = \zeta. \quad (13)$$

By performing the scalar multiplication of equation (13) by the functions $\varphi_{lk}(k = \overline{1, n}; l = \overline{0, m})$ and applying the orthogonality condition of the eigenmodes (Raynovskyy & Timokha, 2020) we obtain the following system of second-order ordinary differential equations:

$$\begin{aligned} \ddot{d}_{k0}(t) + \omega_{k0}^2 \left(1 + \frac{a_v(t)}{g} \right) d_{k0}(t) &= 0, \\ \ddot{d}_{k1}(t) + \omega_{k1}^2 \left(1 + \frac{a_v(t)}{g} \right) d_{k1}(t) + a_h(t) F_{k1} &= 0, F_{k1} = \frac{(r, \varphi_{k1})}{(\varphi_{k1}, \varphi_{k1})}, \\ \ddot{d}_{kl}(t) + \omega_{kl}^2 \left(1 + \frac{a_v(t)}{g} \right) d_{kl}(t) &= 0, k = \overline{1, n}; l = \overline{2, m}. \end{aligned} \quad (14)$$

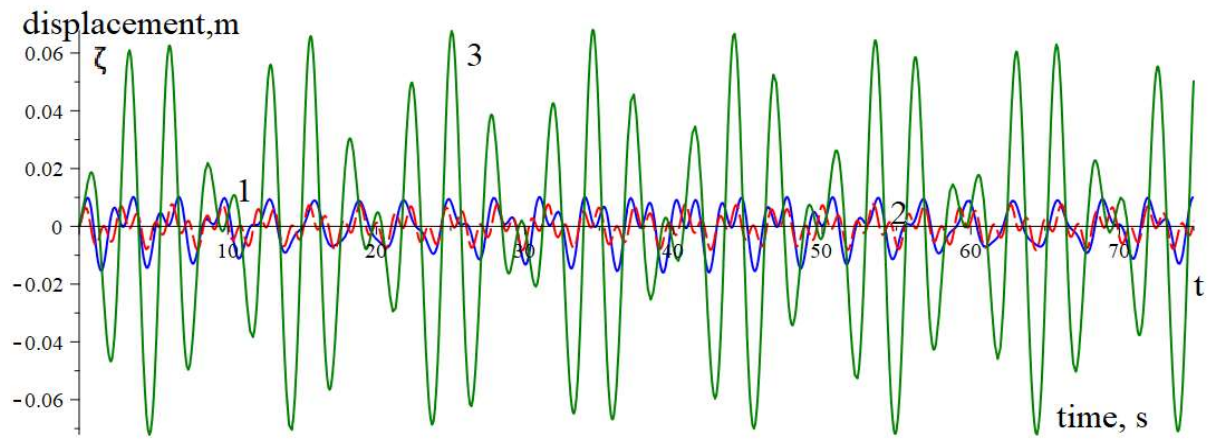
For a unique solution of system (14), it is necessary to specify the initial conditions, that is

$$d_{kl}(t) = d_{kl}^0, \dot{d}_{kl}(t) = \dot{d}_{kl}^1, k = \overline{1, n}, l = \overline{0, m}. \quad (15)$$

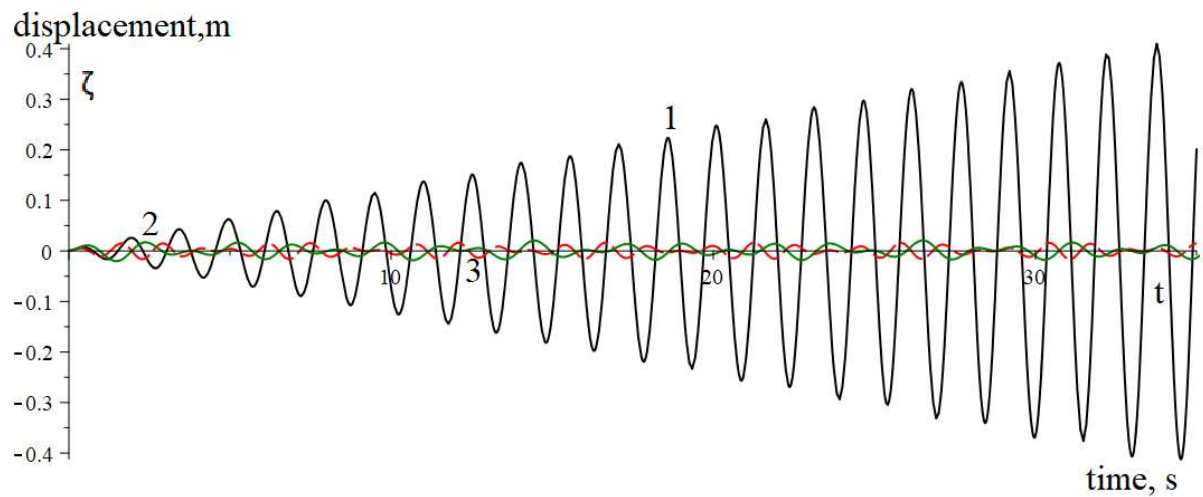
The external loads were selected with the following accelerations

$$a_x(t) = a_h \cos(\omega_h t), a_z(t) = a_v \cos(\omega_v t) \quad (16)$$

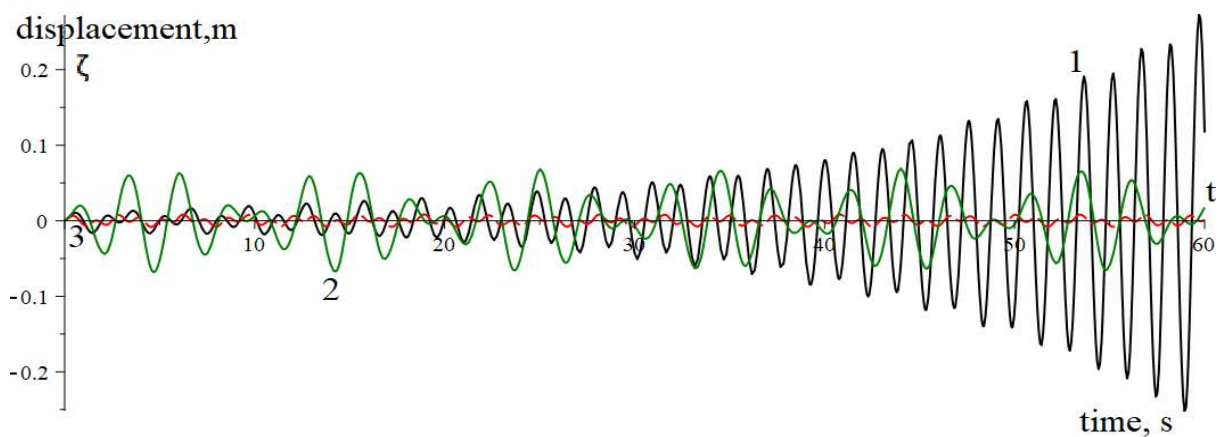
under different values of $a_v, \omega_v, a_h, \omega_h$. Further, the stability of the fluid motion in the tanks under combined loads, both with and without baffles, will be investigated, and the parameters of the baffles that lead to vibration damping will be determined.



(a) $a_v = 1m, \omega_v = 2Hz, a_h = 0.1m, \omega_h = 2Hz$.



(b) $a_v = 1m, \omega_v = 2Hz, a_h = 0.1m, \omega_h = 4.1424Hz$



(c) $a_v = 1m, \omega_v = 8.2848Hz, a_h = 0.1m, \omega_h = 2Hz$

Figure 2. Time-history of free surface level in different cylindrical tanks

Figure 2 illustrates the time histories of free-surface oscillations in tanks with and without internal baffles. Curve 1 corresponds to the un baffled tank, curve 2 represents the tank with vertical partitions, and curve 3 corresponds to the configuration with a horizontal partition. The obtained results demonstrate that the introduction of partitions leads to a pronounced reduction in the free-surface elevation, confirming their damping effect on sloshing motion. Only in case

(a) was a slight increase in the free-surface level observed after partition installation; however, the motion in this case remained stable.

The excitation frequency of 2 Hz is far from the system's resonance region and therefore produces small, regular oscillations without noticeable amplitude growth. In contrast, the frequency of 4.1424 Hz coincides with the first fundamental natural frequency of the liquid in the tank, resulting in a significant linear amplification of surface motion. When the excitation frequency reaches 8.2848 Hz, which is approximately double the first fundamental frequency, a condition of parametric resonance arises. Under such excitation, the oscillations become strongly amplified (exponential growth), and the system exhibits transitions toward instability. These results highlight the sensitivity of sloshing dynamics to excitation frequency and confirm that the inclusion of partitions can effectively shift resonance boundaries and suppress instability even near parametric excitation conditions.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study presents a comprehensive numerical framework for analyzing the stability of fluid motion in tanks equipped with horizontal and vertical partitions. By integrating potential theory, singular integral equations, and the boundary element method with the subdomain approach and prescribed-mode techniques, the developed method enables a detailed examination of sloshing dynamics under combined horizontal and vertical excitations. The results reveal that partitions substantially modify the frequency spectrum, alter vortex structures, and shift the boundaries of stable and unstable motion.

It was shown that an excitation frequency of 2 Hz lies far from resonance, resulting in stable, low-amplitude oscillations; the frequency of 4.1424 Hz corresponds to the first fundamental mode, where the amplitude of the free surface increases markedly; and 8.2848 Hz, being double the fundamental frequency, leads to parametric resonance and pronounced instability. These observations confirm that the introduction of partitions significantly reduces free-surface elevations and suppresses resonance effects, even near parametric excitation conditions.

The findings indicate that properly designed partitions can effectively suppress sloshing, mitigate dynamic loads, and enhance the overall stability and safety of liquid-filled structures. These insights are directly applicable to the design and optimization of tanks in aerospace, marine, and energy systems where dynamic reliability is critical. Nevertheless, the present analysis is limited by the assumption of an ideal, inviscid, and incompressible liquid. In practical applications, viscous effects, turbulence, and fluid–structure interaction may substantially influence the sloshing response and energy dissipation mechanisms. Future research should therefore extend the current framework to include viscous and nonlinear effects, flexible tank walls, and multiphase or stratified fluids. Experimental validation and high-fidelity CFD simulations would further strengthen the predictive capability of the proposed model and support its integration into engineering design practice.

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