



Effect of a magnetic field on water crystallization in tunnel drainage pipes in karst areas

Fabo Liu^a, Min Xu^b, Shiyang Liu^{c,d,*}, Huaming Li^a, Yongqi Geng^{c,d}

^aSichuan Lehan Expressway Co., Ltd., Leshan 614200, China

^bLeshan Traffic Engineering Construction Co., Ltd, Sichuan 614000, China

^cState Key Laboratory of Mountain Bridge and Tunnel Engineering, Chongqing 400074, China, email: cqjtuhsy@163.com (S. Liu)

^dCollege of Civil Engineering, Chongqing Jiaotong University, Chongqing 400074, China

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ABSTRACT

In order to study the inhibitory effect and mechanism of magnetic fields on the crystallization of tunnel drainage pipes in karst areas, a 20-d experiment was performed in magnetic fields of six different intensities in the laboratory, with polyvinyl chloride (PVC) coiled pipes simulating drainage pipes in a magnetic field environment and a solution of calcium chloride and sodium bicarbonate simulating groundwater in Karst areas. The Leshan-Hanyuan Express Way project is the background of the experiment. The crystallization rules in this experiment are determined by the experimental crystal quality and X-ray diffraction patterns. A calcite crystal simulation model was built to calculate the changes in the magnetic field. It was found that the magnetic field reduced the quantity of crystals. As the magnetic flux density increases, the number of crystals decreases to the critical magnetic flux density of 0.1 T, and then remains constant as the magnetic flux density increases further. In some cases, the magnetic field can change the form of calcium carbonate (CaCO₃) from a stable crystal to an unstable one. When the magnetic flux density is increased beyond the critical value of 0.5 T, the crystal form hardly changes. Temperature has no significant effect on the number of crystals formed in the drain under a magnetic field. The test results have important guiding significance for the development of technology for preventing and controlling crystal blockage of tunnel drainage pipes.

Keywords: Magnetic field; Tunnel in karst area; Crystallization in drainage pipe; Magnetic flux density; Temperature

1. Introduction

With the acceleration of China's modernization, the construction of railways and expressways has developed by leaps and bound. There are many tunnels in the karst area of southwest China. The water in this region is nearly saturated with HCO₃⁻ and high in Ca²⁺. As groundwater flows into the drainage pipes, calcium carbonate (CaCO₃) crystals calcium carbonate crystals will slowly form upon the interior wall of the tunnel and eventually block the drainage system (Fig. 1). This seemingly trivial drainage pipe

blockage represents a potential safety risk for the lining structure of the entire tunnel and the effective and smooth operation of the drainage system.

Hasson et al. [1] proposed a scaling rates model for the CaCO₃ deposition. Zhu [2] showed that the conditional solubility product of CaCO₃ depends on the solution pH. Liu [3] used the DBL model to forecast the deposition rate of calcite in a particular area. The factors leading to crystallization and scaling in pipes include high contents of water, bacteria, hyper salinity and dissolved H₂S, CO₂, O₂ or other corrosive gases in the medium [4]. A magnetic field mainly affects

* Corresponding author.

the growth rate and form of CaCO_3 crystal by changing the structure of water clusters [5].

The form of CaCO_3 crystals formed in lignin solution is different from that in pure water. The CaCO_3 crystals formed in a lignin solution have a calcite structure with dumbbell, spherical, elliptical and rugby-ball-like shapes. Both the lignin concentration and temperature of the growth system have a significant impact on the form and appearance of CaCO_3 crystals. During the crystallization of CaCO_3 , there is interaction between CaCO_3 and lignin [6]. The magnetic treatment inhibits the crystal formation, with an induction period of about 8 min, and the crystallization rate decreases by 75.3% compared with the solution without magnetic treatment. A magnetic field affects CaCO_3 crystallization through scale-forming anions. The magnetic memory effect lasts for at least 72 h [7]. Based on the crystal growth kinetics, Larsen et al. [8] studied the scaling mechanism of CaCO_3 in an indoor core flooding test. Taheri et al. [9] studied the damage to reservoir caused by carbonate scaling during waterflooding in Iranian oil fields via an indoor simulation experiment. Charpentier et al. [10] have studied the scaling of CaCO_3 and barium sulfate in sub-surface equipment through dynamic experiments. High voltage electric field can hinder calcium ions from combining with carbanions to a certain extent, at the same time, it can reduce the bonding of calcium ions and carbanions on the calcite growth face also promote the dissolution of scale [11]. As the temperature rises, the scale amount of the system increases [12]. SO_4^{2-} has less impact on calcite than PO_4^{3-} [13]. The addition of SO_4^{2-} slows down the crystallization process [14]. Deposits first within

the rough structures on a pipe surface. If the quantity of deposits is sufficient to fill in the rough structures to form a smooth surface, a similar scaling curve to that of a smooth pipe is observed [15]. PO_4^{3-} can significantly reduce the formation of calcite under constant and supersaturated conditions (temperature: 25°C, pH: 9.0 and 10.0) [16]. With the continuous increase of magnesium ion concentration, the deposition form of CaCO_3 gradually changed from calcite to aragonite [17]. Calcite crystals form at room temperature (25°C). Increasing the solution temperature above room temperature results in aragonite formation [18]. Increasing the Cr(VI) concentration will lead to the inhibition of calcite nucleation and growth and promote the generation of metastable polymorphic substances, such as aragonite and vaterite [19]. The quantity of scale in a system is not significantly affected by HCO_3^- and can be reduced by increasing the initial Cl^- concentration [20].

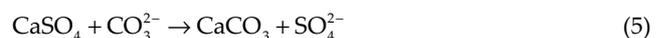
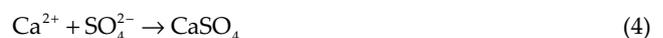
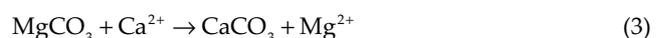
Experts and scholars worldwide have expressed concern regarding the blockage of a drainage system by crystals. The aforementioned study results cannot be directly applied to guide effective prevention of this problem. In this study, we performed an indoor experiment in which electric coils were wound around polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipes to induce a magnetic field, which would separate cations and anions from flowing water and inhibit crystallization and prevent pipe blockage [21–24]. The influence of magnetic field intensity on the crystallization in tunnel drainage pipes in karst area was studied and the experimental crystals were analyzed by X-ray diffraction (XRD). Calcite crystal simulation model was established and the transformation rule of calcite crystal under magnetic field was studied.

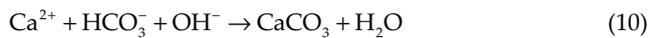
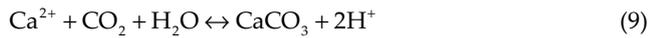
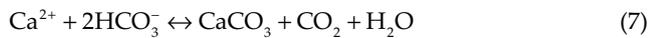


Fig. 1. Drainage pipe blocked by crystals in the Baoligang Tunnel along the Emei-Hanyuan Expressway.

2. Crystals in groundwater from a tunnel in a karst area

Zou et al. [25] tested and analyzed the groundwater in tunnels in karst areas. Most of the water was found to contain carbonate, which is corrosive and can damage the tunnel lining structure and affect the drainage system over a long period of time. The contents of calcium, magnesium, sulfate and bicarbonate in groundwater of Baoligang tunnel on Emei Hanyuan expressway are relatively high. Considering the principle of strong acid replacing weak acid and the principle of reversible reaction, Eqs. (1)–(10) show the chemical reactions in a drainage pipe. We used these equations in conjunction with the results of a water quality analysis to deduce that CaCO_3 is the main component of the scale blocking the drainage system in the Baoligang Tunnel.





3. Effect of a magnetic field on crystallization in a tunnel drainage pipe in a karst area

3.1. Effect of the magnetic flux density on crystallization in a tunnel drainage pipe

3.1.1. Indoor test

CaCl_2 (AR) and NaHCO_3 (AR) solutions are used to simulate groundwater in karst area. We wound 253, 424, 697, 962, 1,482 and 1,989 turns of coils around a 32-mm-diameter PVC pipe and created an induction field by energizing the coils. For each coil setting, five 20-cm-long PVC pipes were used as the test group, and a PVC pipe without coils was used as the control. A transformer and power source were turned on to produce a magnetic field in each PVC pipe. The magnetic flux densities of the six coils were 0.02, 0.05, 0.08, 0.1, 0.5, and 1 T respectively. In order to simulate the actual flow velocity in the drainage pipe of Baoligang tunnel, the flow speed in the drainage pipe is maintained at 35 cm/s by using a velocimeter. The indoor temperature was controlled at approximately 291 K. The test cycle was 20 d. Saturated solutions of CaCl_2 and NaHCO_3 were used in the test. Each test pipe was dried and weighed at the end of the test. The results were compared and analyzed. The test procedure is shown in Fig. 2.



Fig. 2. Indoor test procedure.

3.1.2. Test results

3.1.2.1. Effect of the magnetic field on the quantity of calcium carbonate crystals in a tunnel drainage pipe

The pipes wound with coils producing magnetic fields with different intensities were dried and weighed at the end of the test to calculate the difference in the crystal quantity between each test group and the control before determining the average crystal quantity produced under each magnetic field. The result is shown in Fig. 3. Under all other conditions unchanged, the crystal quantity decreases as the magnetic flux density increases. When the magnetic flux density is 0.1 T, the number of crystals is the least. Further increasing the magnetic flux density produces little change in the crystal quantity. Therefore, the magnetic field inhibits CaCO_3 crystallization under specific conditions. The inhibition effect peaks at a magnetic flux density of 0.1 T. Further increasing the magnetic flux density does not enhance the inhibition effect [26,27].

3.1.2.2. Effect of the magnetic field on the form of calcium carbonate crystals in a tunnel drainage pipe

There are three forms of CaCO_3 crystals, namely vaterite, aragonite and calcite. The crystal stability follows an ascending order of vaterite < aragonite < calcite. During crystallization, CaCO_3 gradually changes from an unstable form to a stable form. The XRD peaks of CaCO_3 crystals were analysed. The diffraction pattern of calcite is typically characterized by multiple narrow peaks. The diffraction pattern of aragonite is characterized by small wide peaks, and the external structure of aragonite is unstable. The diffraction pattern of vaterite typically has a fibre- or coral-like shape. Figs. 4–9 show the XRD scanning of the crystals formed in the PVC pipes of the control and the test groups in the test. When the magnetic flux density is 0.02 T, the high and narrow peaks in the diffraction pattern of the control group show a stable crystal structure, namely calcite. The diffraction pattern of the test groups consists of smaller and wider peaks than those of the control group, indicating that the crystal form becomes unstable under the applied magnetic field.

At a magnetic flux density of 0.05 T, the diffraction peaks of the control group are taller and narrower than those of

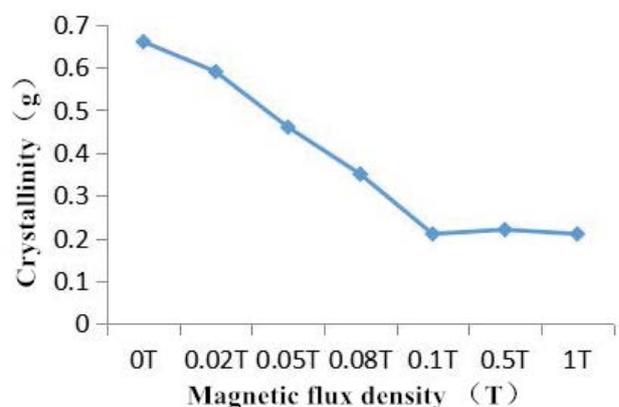


Fig. 3. Average quantity of crystals formed under different magnetic flux densities.

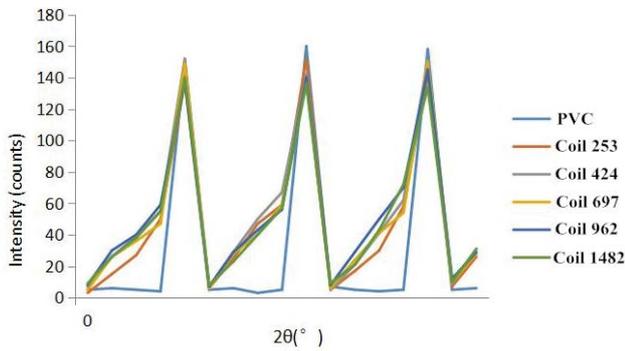


Fig. 4. Diffraction pattern of crystals formed at 0.02 T.

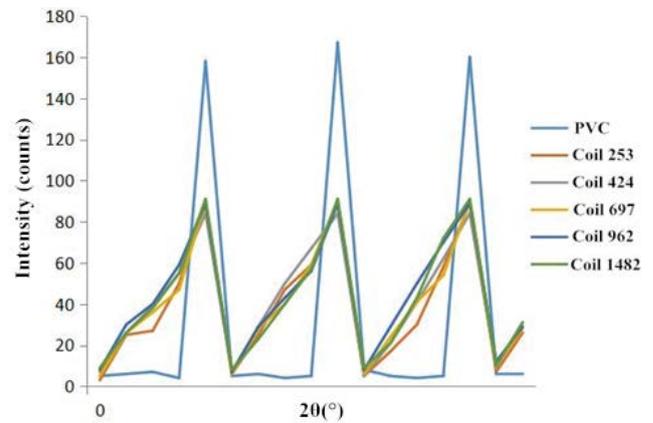


Fig. 7. Diffraction pattern of crystals formed at 0.1 T.

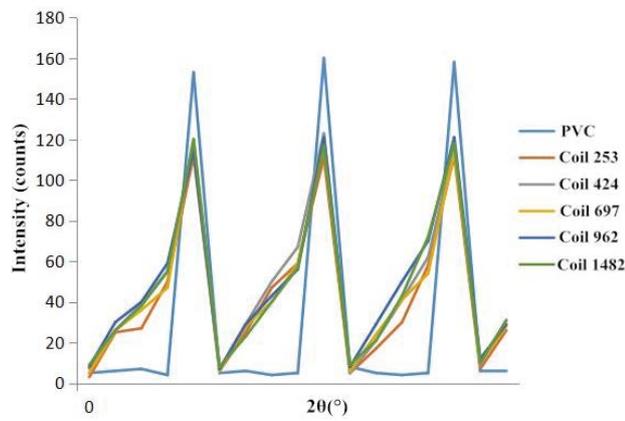


Fig. 5. Diffraction pattern of crystals formed at 0.05 T.

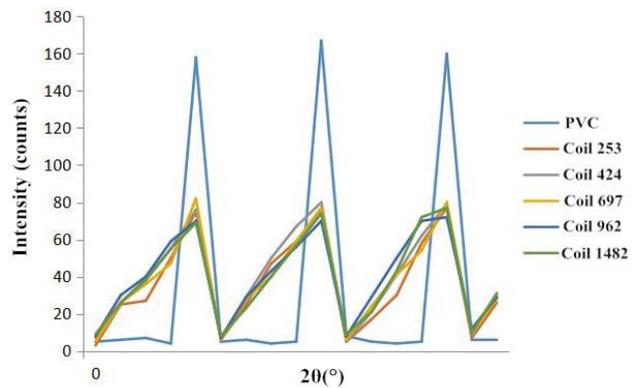


Fig. 8. Diffraction pattern of crystals formed at 0.5 T.

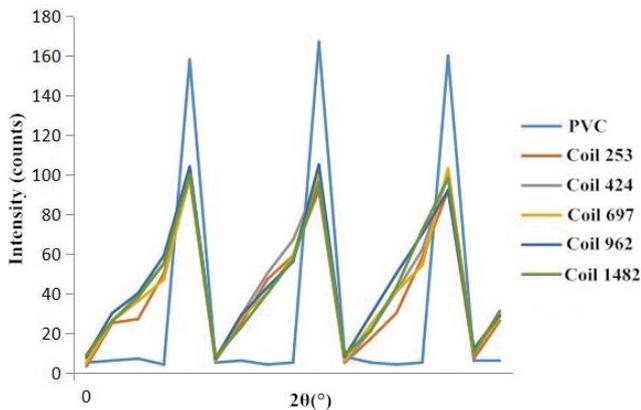


Fig. 6. Diffraction pattern of crystals formed at 0.08 T.

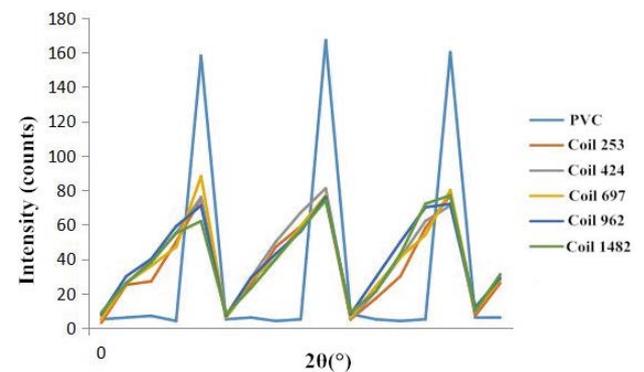


Fig. 9. Diffraction pattern of crystals formed at 1.0 T.

the test groups. In other words, the crystal form of the control group was more stable than those of the test groups. The diffraction peaks of crystals formed at 0.05 T are lower and narrower than those formed at 0.02 T, indicating that the crystal form becomes increasingly unstable as the magnetic flux density increases.

At a magnetic flux density of 0.08 T, the diffraction peaks of the control group are taller and narrower than those of the test groups. This result reveals that the crystal form tends to become unstable under the influence of a magnetic

field. The diffraction peaks of crystals formed at 0.05 T are smaller and wider than those of crystals formed at 0.08 T, showing that the crystal form becomes increasingly unstable as the magnetic flux density increases.

At a magnetic flux density of 0.1 T, the diffraction peaks of the control group are taller and narrower than those of the test groups. In other words, the stability of the crystal form has changed under the influence of the magnetic field. The diffraction peaks of crystals formed at 0.08 T are smaller and narrower than those of crystals formed at 0.1 T,

indicating that the crystal form continues to be unstable as the magnetic flux density increases.

At a magnetic flux density of 0.5 T, the diffraction peaks of the control group are taller and narrower than those of the test groups. This result indicates that the control group has a more regular and stable crystal form than the test group and that the crystal form becomes unstable under an applied magnetic field. The diffraction patterns reveal that a more stable crystal form is produced at 0.1 T than at 0.5 T.

For a magnetic flux density of 1.0 T, the tall narrow diffraction peaks of the control group show that the crystal form has become unstable under the applied magnetic field. However, the magnitudes and widths of the diffraction peaks of crystals formed at 1.0 T are not significantly different from those of the crystals formed at 0.5 T. This result indicates that stability of the crystal form does not continue to change beyond a magnetic flux density of 0.5 T.

An analysis of the XRD patterns of crystals formed in the PVC pipes indicates that an applied magnetic field changes the stable crystal form of CaCO_3 to an unstable crystal form. However, the crystal form does not change beyond a critical magnetic flux density of 0.5 T.

The test results reveal that a magnetic field inhibits CaCO_3 crystallization and destabilizes the crystal form such that the formed crystals can be washed away, thereby reducing the quantity of crystals in the pipe.

3.2. Effect of the temperature on crystallization in a tunnel drainage pipe

3.2.1. Simulation model

A simulation model was established to investigate the effect of temperature on the inhibition of CaCO_3 crystal formation by a magnetic field. The model was a double-layer cubic box ($1.872 \text{ nm} \times 1.872 \text{ nm} \times 3.945 \text{ nm}$) composed of 300 water molecules and unit cells of calcite, as shown in Fig. 10.

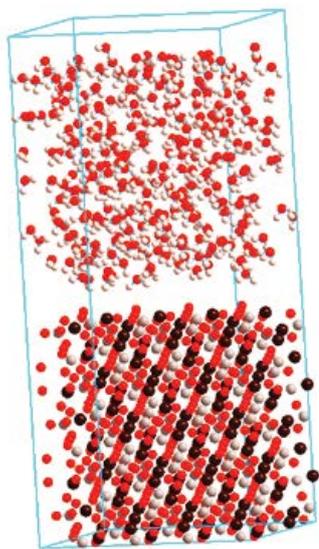


Fig. 10. Model structure.

Most of the CaCO_3 found in nature is calcite. Calcite is most stable among the three crystal forms of CaCO_3 and it is the main component of the crystals in tunnel drainage pipes in karst areas. Therefore, a calcite model was simulated to be representative of crystal formation in tunnel drainage pipes. The effects of external magnetic field and ambient temperature on the stability of calcite were studied.

The simulation conditions of the model are presented below.

- A consistent-valence forcefield was used to model the water molecules, and both calcium ions and carbanions were modelled as charged Lennard-Jones particles.
- Periodic boundary conditions were applied.
- The canonical NVT ensemble that does not perturb the multidimensional scaling (MDS) trajectory was selected for statistical analysis.
- The leapfrog algorithm was used for numerical integration.
- The simulation time step was set at 1 fs, and the total time of each simulation was set at 160 ps.

3.2.2. Calculation results and analysis

This model was used to investigate the effect of the magnetic field and temperature on the calcite crystal and the effects of magnetic field and temperature on the stability of calcite crystal were determined. Simulations were performed to track the changing pattern of the peak strength of the radial distribution function of the calcium ions and carbanions that constitute the calcite crystal. A strong peak of the radial distribution function indicates tight bonding between calcium ions and carbanions and a stable CaCO_3 crystal structure. In contrast, the weak peak of the radial distribution function indicates loose bonding between calcium ions and carbanions and an unstable CaCO_3 crystal structure, showing that the form of calcite crystal has changed. These considerations were used to analyse the influence of the magnetic field and temperature on the CaCO_3 crystal form.

The influence of magnetic field on the radial distribution function of calcium ion and carbon anion in unit cells of calcite is discussed by analysing the calculated radial distribution function at 250, 320 and 380 K under a magnetic flux density of 0.01–0.1 T (step size = 0.01 T), 0.1–1 T (step size = 0.1 T) and 1–10 T (step size = 1 T), as shown in Figs. 11–13.

Figs. 11–13 indicate that at the three investigated temperatures, as the magnetic flux density rises, the peak strength of the radial distribution function of the calcium ions and carbanions declines sharply and then undergoes small irregular fluctuations. This result shows that the magnetic field weakens the bond between calcium ions and carbanions that constitute calcite, gradually destabilizing the calcite. Therefore, a magnetic field can change the CaCO_3 crystal form under specific conditions to an unstable form. However, at a critical magnetic flux density, the ionic bond between the calcium ions and carbanions becomes sufficiently strong to overcome the Lorentz force generated by the magnetic field. When the two forces become balanced, the magnetic field can no longer significantly change the CaCO_3

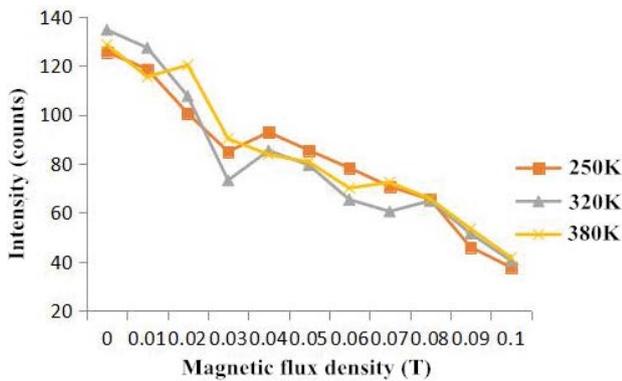


Fig. 11. The relationship between the magnetic flux density and the peak strength at different temperatures (0.01–0.1 T).

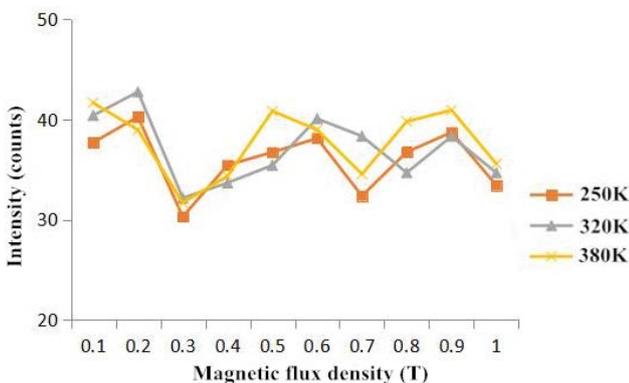


Fig. 12. The relationship between the magnetic flux density and the peak strength at different temperatures (0.1–1 T).

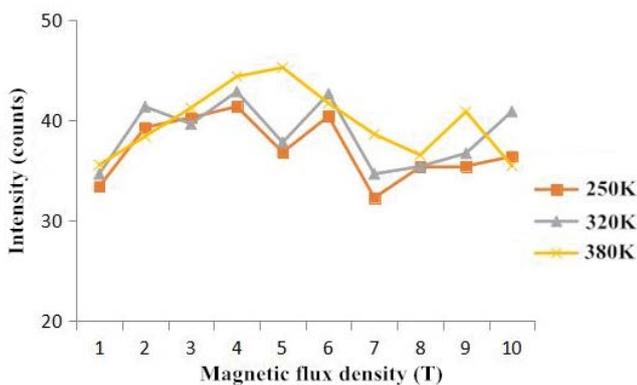


Fig. 13. The relationship between the magnetic flux density and the peak strength at different temperatures (1–10 T).

crystal form. At different temperatures, the peak intensity of radial distribution function of calcium ion and carbon anion is almost the same, indicating that the temperature has little impact on the CaCO_3 crystal form.

4. Conclusions

Crystallization tests were performed on drainage pipes under six different magnetic field intensities, and

simulations were performed on a calcite crystal. The following conclusions were drawn from the results.

- The temperature has little impact on the quantity of crystals formed in drainage pipes under an applied magnetic field.
- Increasing the magnetic flux density destabilizes CaCO_3 crystals. However, there is no discernible change in the CaCO_3 crystal form when the magnetic flux density exceeds 0.5 T.
- Increasing the magnetic flux density within a certain range decreases the quantity of crystals in a drainage pipe. However, beyond the critical value of 0.1 T, the magnetic flux density cannot effectively inhibit crystallization in the drainage pipes.
- The magnetic field reduces the amount of crystals in drainage pipes by inhibiting the formation of CaCO_3 and changing the stable form of CaCO_3 crystals to an unstable form that can be washed away.

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