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1 2	Effects of mineral and superplasticizer admixtures on the mechanical
3 4 5 6	behaviour of lightweight concrete
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25 26	Abstract
27 28	This paper presents an experimental investigation of the combined effect of a
29 30 21	superplasticizer admixture and metakaolin material on the mechanical behaviour of
32 33	expanded clay lightweight concrete containing recycled glass aggregate. The
34 35	optimum dosage of the superplasticizer admixture (type SNF) was adjusted and used
36 37	by weight of cement. The short and long-term mechanical properties of concrete
38 39 40	mixes were measured in accordance with the relevant British / EN standards. The
40 41 42	obtained results were compared with the results of control concrete mixes (without
43 44 45	superplasticizer).
46 47	The results obtained showed that the superplasticizer admixture exhibited a 20%
48 49	reduction in mixing water content. All measured values of unit weight, compressive
50 51 52	and splitting tensile strengths increased when the superplasticizer admixture and
53 54	metakaolin material are used. The concrete mix containing 30% recycled glass
55 56	revealed an increase in the mechanical strength compared with the mix of 15%
57 58	recycled glass. However, the workability of the superplasticizer concrete mixes was
59 60 61	degraded, reaching 44% reduction in slump value.
62	1

Keywords: Superplasticizer admixture, lightweight aggregate concrete, metakaolin, recycled glass, mechanical behaviour.

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1 Introduction

Improving the mechanical strength of lightweight concrete has recently been the subject of much published research into construction materials. The emphasis of much of this research has been on means of improving the density properties of the lightweight concrete for thermal insulation purposes as well as enhancing its load-bearing capability.

Environmental criteria have been also considered with regard to reducing the impact of waste disposal in land fill by reusing these waste and by-product materials as construction materials [Palacios et al., 2009].

One of the main techniques which has been used in developing the strength of concrete is the use of admixtures. The superplasticizer SP (also known as high range water reducer) is often used both in the concrete industry and on construction sites.

Different kinds of superplasticizer admixtures are available. They have similar conjunction roles in triggering dispersive action on the surface of hydration cement particles during the initial hydration reactions [Mollah et al., 2000]. The active ingredients of these products are commonly based on an anionic polymeric surfactant [Hsu et al., 1999]. The molecules of superplasticizer coat the cement grains and change their orientation, causing them to repel one another [Neville, 2000]. Two contrasting properties can be achieved with a superplasticizer admixture:

either an increase in workability, combined with retention of the strength level, or the opposite. The superplasticizer action causes rearrangement of the cement particles, resulting in more regular and allowing better hydration.

The general benefit of this process is that the superplasticizer molecules enhance the propagation of ettringite crystals, which have a nearly cubic shape, instead of a needle-like geometry. This crystalline formation improves the performance of the concrete produced [Neville, 1999].

Several models have been suggested to explain the effect mechanism of superplasticizer on the cement hydration process [Mollah et al.,2000]. One of these models is the adsorption mechanism which attributes the effectiveness of the superplasticizer to the adsorption behaviour of the admixture on the cement particles. It was proposed that the elementary processes were based on both adsorption and desorption [Mortimer, 1993]. Another study reported that the superplasticizer was capable of reducing the surface tension of water. This permits penetration of the molecules in between the solid particles and produces much denser mixes, which consequently reduces the tendency of permeable water [Morin et al.,2001].

The results of fluidising due to use of superplasticizer admixtures are affected by several parameters: for example, dosage of the superplasticizer; type and quantity of aggregate and cement used; mixing procedure and temperatures [Ramachandran et al., 1981].

A growing number of alternatives to the traditional ingredients of concrete mixes have surfaced in recent years. This is as a consequence of the need to reduce the demand on natural resources created by construction materials. One of these alternative materials is recycled glass aggregate. It has been used as an entire or partial replacement for the fine and/or coarse aggregate [Tung, Chi,2011; Andrea et al. ,2007; Chi et al.,2007; Farshad et al. ,2010; Miao,2011]. This approach is useful to mitigate the impact of waste glass which is produced in large amounts every year.

The inclusion of glass aggregate in concrete mixes causes an increase in the expansion phenomena due to the alkali–silica reaction (ASR) produced [Tung, Chi ,2011; Andrea et al. ,2007; Chi et al., 2007; Farshad et al., 2010; Miao, 2011; Chen et al. ,2006; Park et al., 2004;Topcu, Canbaz, 2004; Gerry et al, 2011]. However, this reaction can be reduced by using mineral additives [Tung, Chi, 2011; Gerry et al., 2011].

Metakaolin (MK) is an example of such a mineral by-product materials. It has a higher pozzolanic ratio, used as a partial replacement for cement, and has received considerable interest for its applications to construction. The main effects of using metakaolin are the improvement of the strength and durability of concrete mixes [Parande et al., 2009; Rafat, Juvas, 2009; Dong et al., 2011; Paulo et al., 2010; Karoline, Arnaldo, 2010; Ganesh, Dinakar, 2006; Frias, 2006; Khatib, 2008].

Although much efforts has been paid to investigate the behaviour of sustainable concrete with different compositions, this study considers an attempt to develop the mechanical strength of a newly modified lightweight concrete using a superplasticizer admixture in conjunction with metakaolin was experimentally investigated. This type of lightweight concrete contains different ratios of recycled glass and uses expanded clay as a coarse aggregate.

2 Experimental details

2.1. Materials

The experimental programme described in this paper focused on exploring the influence of the addition of both superplasticizer and metakaolin admixtures on the mechanical behaviour of a newly developed lightweight concrete.

The main ingredients of the concrete mixes were ordinary Portland cement, natural sand, expanded clay, recycled glass, metakaolin and superplasticizer admixture.

Natural sand for building purposes was used as a fine aggregate with a grading which complied with BS EN 12620[BSI,2008].

A medium-grade 8-5R of Techni Clay expanded clay was used as coarse aggregate; it was supplied by the Plasmor Concrete Product Company. The moisture content and particle density of the expanded clay were 20% w/w and 550 kg/m³ respectively. Recycled glass aggregate with particle sizes of 0.5-1 and 1-2 mm was used as a partial replacement for natural sand by volume with two levels: 15% and 30%. The recycled glass was provided by the Specialist Aggregate Ltd Company with a specific gravity of 2.52. MetaStar 501metakaolin material with a constant content (10%) was adopted as a partial replacement for ordinary Portland cement.

The Daracem SP6 superplasticizer admixture of the sulphonated naphthalene formaldehyde condensate SNF was used throughout this study, and its performance complies with BS EN 934-2[BSI, 2009a]. The maximum chloride and alkali contents were < 0.1% and 0.5% by mass respectively. Figure 1 shows the main components of the lightweight concrete mixtures investigated during this experimental work.

The mixing operation was carried out according to BS EN12390-2 [BSI, 2009c] using a 0.1 m³ vertical portable mixer. The fresh concrete was cast in moulds in three layers. Each layer was completely compacted using a vibrating table until there was no further appearance of large air bubbles on the surface of the concrete.

After casting, the samples were kept in laboratory conditions and covered with a nylon sheet to ensure a humid atmosphere around the specimens. After 24 hours, the samples were demoulded, marked and immersed in a basin of water at a temperature of 20 ± 2 °C until the date of the test.

2.2. Selection of the superplasticizer content

In this experimental programme, the workability of the concrete mixes was kept constant, while the strength level was intended to be increased. On this basis, the content of the superplasticizer was adjusted based upon the fluidity features of the

reference lightweight concrete mix (0% G + 0%SP + 0%MK), which possesses a W/C of 0.45. In order to maintain a constant slump (50 ± 5 mm), multi-trial mixes were carried out and the W/C resulting from using the superplasticizer admixture was calculated each time according to the following equation [BS EN 5075-3, 1985]:

$$W/C of SP_{mix} = W/C of R_{mix} \times \frac{(100 - percentagewaterreduction)}{100}$$
(1)

where SP_{mix} and R_{mix} are, respectively, the concrete mix containing superplasticizer and the reference concrete mix .

Since the experimental work scheme was concerned with improving the mechanical strength of the concrete mixes, it was found that 2% superplasticizer by weight of cement was the optimum admixture dosage. This dosage produced higher compressive strength (19.7 MPa at 28-day age) with a maximum water reduction of 20%, equivalent to a W/C of 0.36.

In accordance with these results the optimum superplasticizer content was chosen to produce two modified concrete mixes containing expanded clay, recycled glass and metakaolin materials (superplasticizer mixes). The measured mechanical properties of the former mixes were then compared with concrete mixes with the same constituents without superplasticizer (control mixes). The latter were previously studied and the results are presented in [Al-Sibahy, Edwards, 2012]. The details of the concrete mixes which were adopted in the experimental programme are shown in Table 1.

2-3. Test programme

The experimental programme tests included studying the fresh properties, unit weight, compressive strength, splitting tensile strength and stress-strain behaviour. All of these tests were conducted according to the relevant BS / EN standards [BS

EN 12350,2009; BS EN 12390-7, 2009;BS EN12390-3,2009;BS EN 12390-6, 2009;BS ISO 1920-10,2009].

The short and long-term mechanical properties of the concrete mixes were experimentally measured. Except for the stress-strain behaviour test which was carried out using two cylindrical specimens, an average value of three specimens was taken for each test result.

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Properties of fresh concrete mixes

The behaviour of the fresh status of the concrete mixes in terms of consistency was carried out using a slump test; the obtained results are shown in Figure 2. It can be seen that the workability aspect was degraded when the superplasticizer was used in producing the modified concrete mixes. A clear decrease in the value of the slump was recorded for both superplasticizer mixes, and further compaction work using a poker vibrator was required to overcome the drying condition of these mixes. This could be due to the accelerating effect of superplasticizer admixture, which becomes more effective in the presence of metakaolin material. In turn, this causes rapid hydration of the cement particles and reduces the fluidity time of the concrete mixes. The same cannot be said for the control mixes, where the consistency was still found to be within the acceptable range of workable concrete (50±5 mm). However, the concrete mixes with a glass content of 30% showed a lower reduction in the workability aspect than that of the mixes with 15% glass content. Such behaviour can be attributed to the role of the glass particles in providing extra moisture content for the concrete due to their adsorbing the mixing water [Tung, Chi, 2011; Andrea, et al.,2007; Chi et al., 2007; Farshad et al., 2010; Miao,2011; Chen et al.,2006; Park et al., 2004; Topcu, Canbaz ,2004; Gerry et al, 2011].

3.2 Unit weight

Figure 3 shows the test results of unit weight for the control and superplasticizer concrete mixes at different test ages. The superplasticizer concrete mixes exhibited higher densities than the control mixes. This may be related to the penetration of the superplasticizer fluid and coating of the solid particles, thereby producing a denser mix [Morin et al.; 2001]. The concrete mixes containing 30% glass ratio showed higher densities than those of the samples with 15% glass ratio. This may be attributed to the capability of these mixes to hold the water particles due to the lower tendency of the glass aggregate to absorb the mixing water [Tung, Chi ,2011; Andrea et al. ,2007; Chi et al., 2007;Farshad et al., 2010; Miao,2011; Chen et al. ,2006; Park et al., 2004;Topcu, Canbaz ,2004; Gerry et al, 2011].

In general, except at 28 days' age, both the superplasticizer and the control lightweight aggregate concrete mixes exhibited a continuous decrease in density over time. This behaviour may be caused by two phenomena: the first is the consumption of water by hydration processes and the second is the reduction of free water inside gel pores by evaporation. The increase in density of the concrete mixes at age of 28 days compared with their density at 7 days could be explained by the greater level of hardness due to the pozzolanic reaction of the metakaolin material at this age. Furthermore, acceleration of the cement hydration process can be accounted by the presence of the superplasticizer which provides better water distribution for the cement particles.

3.3 Compressive strength

The compressive strength test results are presented in Figure 4. This figure indicates that the superplasticizer concrete mixes possess higher compressive strength values than the control mixes. This result is in agreement with previous studies [Palacios, et

al., 2009; Mollah, et al., 2000; Hsu, et al., 1999; Neville, 2000; Morin, et al., 2001]. Furthermore, the presence of metakaolin material, which is a mineral admixture plays a role in increasing the compressive strength in conjunction with the superplasticizer admixture. The main significance of the induction of metakaolin material is its role as a filler and, an accelerator for the hydration of Portland cement, as well as its pozzolanic properties [Parande et al., 2009; Rafat, Juvas, 2009]. For the superplasticizer concrete mixes, the concrete mix containing 30% glass produced a higher compressive strength value than that of the mix with 15% glass content. This can be explained by more water being available inside this mix which allows further hydration processes to take place.

For all of the concrete mixes, the compressive strength value increased with increased curing time. The percentage increases in compressive strength for the concrete mixes containing the superplasticizer admixture with 15% and 30% glass ratios at an age of 90 days relative to the control concrete mixes of the same age were 4% and 8.5 % respectively.

Figure 5 shows the cubic concrete samples after the compressive strength test had been conducted. Satisfactory failure modes were observed for all concrete samples which comply with BS EN12390-3[BSI, 2009d] mode-A. All four exposed faces were cracked approximately equally, with a little damage to the faces in contact with the platens without any explosive failure, as shown in Figure 6.

The pozzolanic reactivity of metakaolin material which, is described in BS EN 196-5[BSI EN, 2005] was measured according to the values of compressive strength as in [Paulo et al., 2010]. This was done by comparing with the results of reference mix (0%G + 0% MK + 0% SP) which was previously measured [Al-Sibahy, Edwards, 2012]. The same approach also used to predict the pozzolanic reactivity of metakaolin in conjunction with the superplasticizer admixture on the strength of the concrete. The specific strength ratio *R*, which is an indicator of the contribution of the

mineral admixture and/or the superplasticizer to the strength of the mixture, is defined as:

$$R = f_c/p \tag{2}$$

where f_c is the compressive strength in MPa and p is the hydraulic cement of mineral and/or superplasticizer admixture percentage. The equivalent values of p for reference mix, the control mixes with metakaolin but without superplasticizer and control mixes with both metakaolin and superplasticizer are 100%, 90% and 88% respectively.

By eliminating the reduction effect of the glass aggregate on the values of compressive strength, the contribution of the pozzolanic effect of metakaolin and/or superplasticizer R_p to the strength of concrete is given by Eq. (3).

$$R_p = R_M - R_C \tag{3}$$

where R_M is the contribution of unit hydraulic cement when metakaolin and/or superplasticizer is used and R_C the contribution of unit hydraulic cement to the concrete strength without using metakaolin and/or superplasticizer.

The index specific strength *K*, is the ratio of R_M to R_C . The contribution of pozzolanic effect and/or superplasticizer *P* to the concrete strength can be expressed as:

$$P = (R_P/R_M) \times 100 \tag{4}$$

The values of R, R_p , K and P for the reference, control and superplasticizer concrete mixes at ages of 7,28, 90 and 180 days were calculated and are presented in Table 2.

The contribution of metakaolin and the superplasticizer admixture to the compressive strength of the concrete was plotted in Figure 7. For both control concrete mixes, the improvement in compressive strength due to the pozzolanic effect of metakaolin exhibited a long-term duration (180 days). This is in agreement with the results of [Wild et al., 1996]. The optimum activity was recorded at 90 days age. The combined effect of metakaolin and superplasticizer was clearer in the earlier ages and reached its peak performance at 28-day age with a ratio of 30% contribution to the compressive strength. Thereafter, a reduced effect was observed.

3.4 Splitting tensile strength

 Figures 8 and 9 show the test results of the splitting tensile strength at sample ages of 120 and 180 days. These figures showed increases in splitting tensile strength for the superplasticizer concrete mixes relative to that of the controlled mixes. This could be attributed to an increase in compressive strength of these mixes, resulting from the positive action of superplasticizer admixture with metakaolin. Behaviour consistent with that of compressive strength was recorded for both test ages. When compared with the controlled concrete mixes, the percentage increases in the splitting tensile strength of the superplasticizer concrete mixes containing 15% and 30% recycled glass at 120 days age were 9.4% and 11% respectively. The corresponding percentages at 180 days age were 7% and 21.3% respectively.

BS EN 1992-1-1[BSI, 2004] suggested the following expression to predict the splitting tensile strength of lightweight concrete according to its density and the characteristics of normal weight concrete:

$$f_{lctm} = f_{ctm}.\eta_1 \tag{5}$$

$$f_{ctm} = 0.3 \times f_{ck}^{2/3}$$
(6)

$$\eta_1 = 0.4 + 0.6\rho/2200\tag{7}$$

where f_{lctm} and f_{ctm} are the mean splitting tensile strength of the light and normal weight concrete respectively in MPa ; f_{ck} is the characteristic compressive strength of normal weight concrete in MPa, and ρ is the density of lightweight concrete in kg/m³.

After statistical analysis had been performed, it was shown that Equation (5) was unable to match the results obtained for splitting tensile strength in this study. This is because a reasonable R squared value for the nonlinear regression analysis could not be achieved.

3.5 Stress- strain behaviour

The typical stress-vertical strain relationships of superplasticizer and control concrete mixes are presented in Figure 10. This test was conducted using dial strain gauges for the superplasticizer concrete samples at 28-day age. Lateral and vertical strain gauges were used to measure the stress-strain behaviour of the controlled concrete samples at 140 days age. If the difference in the test age of both concrete mixes was eliminated, it could be possible to compare between the global behaviour of these mixes and to explore the effect of superplasticizer admixture.

It can be seen that a tougher concrete had a larger post-peak branch in the stressstrain curve than the other mixes. The maximum vertical strain observed was 0.00187 for the mix of 15% glass with the superplasticizer admixture. This behaviour could be caused by aging, and the strain value may be decreased with an increase in the curing time.

In this test, lower stress values were observed for all concrete mixes, compared with the results of compressive strength test. This behaviour could be attributed to the different geometries of the samples used in these tests, where cylindrical concrete

samples were used in the stress-strain behaviour test, while cubic samples were used in the compressive strength test.

According to the stress-strain curves, the static modulus of elasticity at the aforementioned test age was measured for both the control and the superplasticizer concrete mixes. The results are shown in Table 3. It can be seen that the highest value of modulus of elasticity was recorded for the control concrete mix containing 30% glass at 16.25 GPa, while similar values were observed for the control concrete mix with 15% glass and the mix of 30% glass with superplasticizer admixture at 13.3 GPa.

4 Conclusions

The results of this study highlight the effect of superplasticizer admixture when used in conjunction with metakaolin and glass aggregate on the mechanical behaviour of expanded clay concrete. The main conclusions of this paper can be summarized as follows:

- The superplasticizer admixture reduced the water content by up to 20%.
 However, the workability of the concrete mixes deteriorated with the use of superplasticizer when metakaolin existed
- An increase in the density values of the superplasticizer concretes was recorded compared with the controlled mixes, and the highest value was for the mix of 30% glass with 2% superplasticizer admixture for all test ages.
- A significant increase in the compressive strength values was achieved when the superplasticizer admixture was used in conjunction with metakaolin, especially at earlier curing ages.
- Increases in compressive strength due to the pozzolanic effect of metakaolin continued long- term (180 days) for both control concrete mixes.

- The contribution metakaolin and superplasticizer admixture to the compressive strength was clearer at the earlier stages and reached its peak performance at 28-day age with an enhancement of 30%.
- Consistent positive improvements in splitting tensile strength to that in compression features were observed at both short-term and long-term behaviours.
- The control concrete mix with 30% glass exhibited highest modulus of elasticity due to its lower strain value at the linear region of the stress-strain curve.

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Figure 2 The workability behaviour of various lightweight concrete mixes



Figure 3: The density of various lightweight concretes mixes.



Figure 4: Compressive strength behaviour of various lightweight concrete mixes







Figure 7: Contribution of pozzolanic effect and/or superplasticizer to the compressive strength of concrete mixes.



Figure 8: Splitting tensile strength of superplasticizer and control mixes at 120 days



Figure 9: Splitting tensile strength of superplasticizer and control mixes at 180 days



Figure 10: Stress-strain curves of superplasticizer and control concrete mixes

Ingredient	Concrete mixes					
		Control mixes		Superplasticizer mixes		
	Reference	15% G+0% SP	30% G+0% SP	15% G+2% SP	30% G+2% SP	
(OPC) cement	392.07	352.84	352.84	352.84	352.84	
Metakaolin	0.00	39.20	39.20	39.20	39.20	
Natural sand	598	508.28	418.59	508.28	418.59	
Glass aggregate. 0.5-1	0.00	43.46	86.93	43.46	86.93	
Glass aggregate. 1-2 mm	0.00	43.46	86.93	43.46	86.93	
Expanded clay	247.50	247.50	247.50	247.50	247.50	
Superplasticizer	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.05	7.05	
W/C	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.36	0.36	

Table 1: Details of concrete mixes

Table	e-2
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0.000
0.000
0.000
0.000
62 6.446
75 16.322
07 18.726
93 17.714
50 5.343
69 15.857
05 18.616
59 15.063
27 21.939
32 28.590
51 23.546
88 19.151
23 28.077
67 30.551
00 26.724
12 27.393

Table 2: Calculated values of R, R_p , K and P for controlled and modified concrete mixes

Mix name	Value of static modulus of elasticity	Age of test	
	(GPa)	(days)	
15%G+ 0%SP	14.30	140	
30%G+ 0%SP	16.25	140	
15%G+ 2%SP	12.80	28	
30%G+ 2%SP	14.38	28	

Table 3. Static modulus of elasticity of concrete mixes