

**OPTIMIZING ALTERNATIVE WIND POWER FOR ENERGY
EFFICIENT BUILDING DESIGN IN TROPICAL HOT-HUMID
CLIMATE OF MALAYSIA**

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF PLATES	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
LIST OF SYMBOLS	xv
ABSTRAK	xvi
ABSTRACT	xviii

PART I- RESEARCH AND THEORETICAL STUDIES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1	Issues and problem statements	1
1.1.1	Global warming and climate change	2
1.1.2	Malaysia climate and the use of mechanical systems	3
1.1.3	Renewable energy scenarios in Malaysia	6
1.2	Research objectives	8
1.3	Hypothesis and research questions	8
1.4	Research scope	9
1.5	Significance of study	11

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1	Introduction	12
2.2	Wind energy	13
2.3	The potential of wind power in Malaysia	16
2.3.1	Rural setting	16
2.3.1.1	Coastal areas	16
2.3.1.2	Highlands and hill slopes	21
2.3.2	Urban setting	23

	2.3.2.1: Wind characteristics in urban area	23
2.4	Small-scale wind power application	28
	2.4.1 Retrofitting and building-mounted wind turbines	28
	2.4.2 Hybrid solar photovoltaic and wind turbines	29
	2.4.3 Building-Integrated Wind Turbines (BIWT)	31
2.5	Wind turbine technology	35
	2.5.1 Horizontal-axis Wind Turbine (HAWT) vs Vertical-axis Wind Turbine (VAWT)	35
	2.5.2 Wind speed and energy calculation	38
2.6	Research gap	39
2.7	Conclusion	40

PART II- EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1	Introduction	41
3.2	Research approach and methods	42
	3.2.1 Theoretical studies	42
	3.2.2 Experimental studies	43
	3.2.2.1: Phase 1: Pilot test	45
	3.2.2.2: Phase 2: Laboratory test on VAWT performance	47
	3.2.2.3: Phase 3: Exhaust air distribution	53
	3.2.2.4: Phase 4: Field test	55
3.3	Data analysis	56
3.4	Conclusion and recommendation	58

CHAPTER 4: RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1	Introduction	59
4.2	Phase 1: Pilot test	61
	4.2.1 Stage 1: Selecting a condenser with the highest velocity	61
	4.2.2 Stage 2: Testing the air distribution of chosen condenser	64
4.3	Phase 2: Laboratory test on VAWT performance	66

LIST OF FIGURES

	PAGE
Figure 1.1: A diagram on how greenhouse effect is created (dpi.nsw.gov.au, 2011)	2
Figure 1.2: The cycle of exhaust air in an air-conditioning condenser unit	5
Figure 2.1: Figure of related issues on literature review	13
Figure 2.2: The creation of air movement	14
Figure 2.3: The map of Malaysia that shows that almost all parts of Malaysia are covered by the sea (Source: http://travelmalaysiaguide.com , 2012)	17
Figure 2.4: The development of offshore deep water wind turbine (Source: offshorewind.net, 2010)	20
Figure 2.5: Wind flows in urban areas are normally characterized by turbulence and wake effect (Source: Vollen, et al., 2010)	24
Figure 2.6: Power law relation for varying wind speed with height and where “ <i>mvs</i> ” is the unit for wind speed ratio (Source: Richards, 2001)	25
Figure 2.7: The wake effect phenomenon and the possible sittings of wind turbines to avoid the disturbed region (Source: Stankovic, et al., 2009)	27
Figure 2.8: CFD simulation on wind flows around building that affect wind power generation (Source: Iglesias, 2010)	27
Figure 2.9: The most suitable juxtapositions of BIWT in low-wind speed condition. From left: option 1, option 2 and option 3 (as refer to table 2.3)	35
Figure 2.10: A diagram of factors to be included for energy calculation of wind generation	38
Figure 3.1: Research methodology flow chart	41
Figure 3.2: Diagrammatic section of the hypothesis made	43
Figure 3.3: The Extech Anemometer Data Logger is used to measure wind velocity in Stage 2	47
Figure 3.4: iWind VAWT and its components (Source: www.iwindenergy.com.my , 2009)	49

APPENDICES

A. Appendix A: Result of monitoring

B. Appendix B: List of publication

PAGE

Table 2.1:	Power density and directionality of wind power	11
Table 2.2:	Wind power potential capacity of wind turbine	12
Table 2.3:	The possible output of HWT pump station will be obtained (Ghosh and Ghosh, 2009)	13
Table 2.4:	Effect of manufacturers of wind turbine that started with new wind speed categories	15
Table 2.5:	The summary of research gap done by other researchers	19
Table 2.6:	Operational time and total operation hours of standard HWT either hours for 1 week	41
Table 2.7:	The summary of experimental section	45
Table 2.8:	Specifications for the test section and the output are with other models available from Wind tunnel, Iowa (Iowa State University, Iowa City, Iowa)	46
Table 2.9:	Selection of power curve from different test (Ghosh and Ghosh, 2009)	50
Table 3.1:	List of 31 students found and an average wind direction	62
Table 3.2:	Wind velocity of 9 place made by wind tunnel measured using Kaimo 3-in-1 Digital Anemometer	66
Table 3.3:	Comparison of both power curve models from laboratory test and manufacturer (Schedule A)	66
Table 3.4:	The average wind velocity at lower inlet (Schedule B)	70
Table 3.5:	The average velocity of flow at 1 distance according to plan area (Schedule C)	72
Table 3.6:	The amount of resistance for each speed for 1 distance tested (Schedule D)	75
Table 3.7:	Wind velocity, total power generated and loss for each wind speed at 1 distance tested (Schedule E)	76
Table 3.8:	The average wind velocity with and without compensating effect at 1 distance (Schedule F)	78
Table 3.9:	Power curve table from manufacturer	81

LIST OF TABLES

	PAGE
Table 2.1: Advantages and disadvantages of wind power	15
Table 2.2: Wind power projects done by Vollen, et al. (2010)	32
Table 2.3: The possible options of BIWT juxtaposition and its criterion (Stankovic, et al., 2009)	34
Table 2.4: Several manufacturers of wind turbines that suited with low-wind speed condition	37
Table 2.5: The summary of research gap done by other researchers	39
Table 3.1: Operation time and total operation hours of standard USM office hours for 1 week	44
Table 3.2: The summary of experimental studies	45
Table 3.3: Specification for iW301 model and the comparison with other models available from iWind manufacturer (Source: www.iwindenergy.com.my , 2009)	48
Table 3.4: Schedule of power curve from manufacturer (Source: www.iwindenergy.com.my , 2009)	50
Table 4.1: List of 35 condensers tested and its average wind velocities	62
Table 4.2: Wind velocities of 9 plot areas on condenser outlet measured using Extech 3-in-1 Digital Anemometer	65
Table 4.3: Comparison of both power curve schedule from laboratory test and manufacturer (Schedule A)	66
Table 4.4: The average wind velocity at blower outlet (Schedule B)	70
Table 4.5: The average velocity of blower at 5 distances according to plot area (Schedule C)	72
Table 4.6: The amount of resistance for each speed for 3 distances tested (Schedule D)	75
Table 4.7: Wind velocities, total power generated and time for cut-in wind Speed at 3 distances tested (Schedule E)	76
Table 4.8: The average wind velocity with and without concentrator effect at 5 distances (Schedule F)	78
Table 4.9: Power curve table from manufacturer	81

Table 4.10:	Result of field test for 3 distances for 10 minutes (Schedule G)	82
Table 4.11:	Comparison of power and wind velocity between manufacturer specification and field test with same range of V (Schedule H)	85
Table 4.12:	Comparison of power and wind velocity between manufacturer specification and field test with same value of rpm (Schedule I)	86
Table 4.13:	Power consumption for typical electrical devices	87
Table 4.14:	Comparison of power and wind velocity between manufacturer specification and field test with same value of rpm (Schedule J)	89

4.3.1	Stage 1: Comparison of power curves	66
4.3.2	Stage 2: Inconsistent wind	70
4.4	Phase 3: Exhaust air distribution	77
4.4.1	Wind velocities of 9 plot areas	77
4.5	Phase 4: Field test	81
4.6	Architectural recommendation	88
4.6.1	Potential source: Cooling tower	88
4.6.2	Application on existing building: Retrofitting	91
	4.6.2.1: Low-rise buildings	93
	4.6.2.2: Medium-rise buildings	94
	4.6.2.3: High-rise buildings	95
4.7	Research Limitation	97
4.7.1	Wind Source	97
4.7.2	Field Test	98
4.8	Conclusion	99

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1	Introduction	100
5.2	Review of thesis objectives and research questions	100
5.3	Thesis conclusion	101
5.3.1	Part I: Theoretical studies	102
5.3.2	Part II: Experimental studies	102
	5.3.2.1 Phase 1: Pilot test	102
	5.3.2.2 Phase 2: Laboratory test on VAWT performance	103
	5.3.2.3 Phase 3: Exhaust air distribution	104
	5.3.2.4 Phase 4: Field test	104
5.3.3	Architectural recommendation	105
5.3.4	Recommendation for future works	106

REFERENCES/ BIBLOGRAPHY	108
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Figure 3.5:	Both tests are measured at 5 different distances	54
Figure 4.1:	Summary of different stages of experimental studies to Investigate the applicability of VAWT on harnessing exhaust air	60
Figure 4.2:	Wind velocities of 35 condensers measured using the Extech 3-in-1 Digital Anemometer	63
Figure 4.3:	Exhaust air distribution on condenser outlet	65
Figure 4.4:	A graph of wind velocity vs. time plotted from Flowmeter software	66
Figure 4.5:	The average wind velocities of blower vs. distance	71
Figure 4.6:	The air distribution of blower at the surface of VAWT blades at 5 distances	73
Figure 4.7:	The exhaust air distribution without concentrator for each plot area	79
Figure 4.8:	The exhaust air distribution with concentrator for each plot area	79
Figure 4.9:	Graph of rpm vs. time for field test	83
Figure 4.10:	Graph of power vs. time	83
Figure 4.11:	The conceptual diagram of relationship between the size of VAWT and source towards wind velocity and VAWT swept area.	84
Figure 4.12:	The conceptual diagram of vertical installation using bigger cooling tower unit	90
Figure 4.13:	The conceptual diagram of horizontal installation using bigger cooling tower unit	90
Figure 4.14:	The conceptual recommendation of integrating the VAWT on the rooftop area	92
Figure 4.15:	The Dabiri concept of fish schooling on VAWT juxtaposition (Source: Dabiri, 2011)	97

LIST OF PLATES

	PAGE
Plate 1.1: The common scenarios of AC condensers on building facades at (a) Dewan Budaya, USM and (b) School of Housing, Building and Planning, USM.	6
Plate 2.1: (a) Map of wind turbines and renewable energy farm in Pulau Perhentian (b) that located on the island's hill top (Source: Zuhairuse, et al., 2009)	19
Plate 2.2: The diagrammatic section of a building taking the advantage of hill slope prevailing winds	22
Plate 2.3: The highlighted areas show the design features that accommodate natural wind in Ken Yeang's bioclimatic skyscrapers designs (Source: Richards, 2001)	26
Plate 2.4: (a) The sharp edge of a typical building is normally creating Turbulence and a disturbed region, thus wind turbine needs to be placed as higher as possible. (b) With the smooth edge or using inducer, winds will be redirect to lower position of wind turbine (Source: Vollen, et al., 2010)	28
Plate 2.5: The examples of hybrid solar photovoltaic and wind turbine	30
Plate 2.6: (a) BAWT is located between diffuser shaped buildings, (b) in a duct through a building and (c) on the top of a building (Source: Mertens, 2002)	31
Plate 2.7: (a) The Castle House, London (www.inhabitat.com), (b) Bahrain World Trade Centre (www.bahrainwtc.com) and (c) Air Apartment, Australia (www.archdaily.com) that integrates the building designs with large-scale wind turbine.	33
Plate. 3.1: The measurement on a condenser outlet (a) that has been divided into (b) 9 plot areas (c) using the Extech 3-in-1 Digital Anemometer	46
Plate 3.2: The generator is tested horizontally (a) using a hand-driller (b) to test the rpm and power generated according to specification	51
Plate 3.3: A blower (a) as a controlled source in creating turbulence and the Extech 3-in-1 Digital Anemometer (b) was placed at the centerline of blower at 5 different distances	52
Plate 3.4: (a) The experimental setup to test the effect of turbulence on VAWT performance. (b) The wooden frame that is used to divide	53

the blade surface of VAWT into 9 plot areas.

Plate 3.5:	Exhaust air distribution with (left) and without (right) concentrator effect	55
Plate 3.6:	Experimental setup for field test at Graduate School of Business Studies, USM	56
Plate 4.1:	(a) The site of chosen condenser and (b) measuring process of wind velocity	63
Plate 4.2:	(a) The dimension of standard condenser and (b) 9 plot areas divided on condenser outlet	64
Plate 4.3:	Comparison of both power curve graphs (a) manufacturer and (b) lab test	69
Plate 4.4:	The major distributions on Plot 3B are caused by downwind that created from blower as shown (a) perspective view and (b) side view	74
Plate 4.5:	Graphs of rpm and power generated from laboratory test at 3 distances; (a) at 1000mm, (b) at 1500mm and (c) at 2000mm.	77
Plate 4.6:	The average wind velocity of 9 plot areas at the optimum distance (a) without concentrator (b) and with concentrator	80
Plate 4.7:	The common types of cooling tower that are used in office buildings and commercial buildings	88
Plate 4.8:	(a) Retrofitted VAWT on low-rise buildings such as eclectic shop house and (b) terrace houses	93
Plate 4.9:	Retrofitted VAWT on medium-rise buildings such as (a) shopping mall (Source: www.asiatravelmax.blogspot.com , 2011) and (b) office building (Source: singaporearchitecture.wordpress.com , 2011)	95
Plate 4.10:	Retrofitted VAWT on high-rise buildings such as bioclimatic buildings; (a) Menara UMNO, Penang (Source www.thecityreview.com , 2010) and (b) Menara Mesiniaga (Source: www.businessweek.com , 2006)	96

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Air-Conditioning
ACEM	Association of Consulting Engineers Malaysia
BAWT	Building-Augmented Wind Turbine
BIPV	Building-Integrated Photovoltaic
BIWT	Building-Integrated Wind Turbine
CFC	Chlorofluorocarbons
CH ₄	Methane
CO	Carbon Monoxide/ Carbon Oxide
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
EE	Energy Efficiency
EERE	Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
GBI	Green Building Index
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
HAWT	Horizontal-Axis Wind Turbine
HBP	School of Housing, Building and Planning
HCFC	Hydrochlorofluorocarbons
HFC	Hydrofluorocarbons
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPS	Institute of Postgraduate Studies
LWSWT	Low-wind Speed Wind Turbine
NEP	National Energy Policies
NO _x	Nitric Oxide/ Nitrogen Dioxide
PAM	Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia/ Malaysian Institute of Architects

RE	Renewable Energy
RES	Renewable Energy Sources
SO _x	Sulfur Oxide
UHI	Urban Heat Island
VAWT	Vertical-Axis Wind Turbine

LIST OF SYMBOLS

rpm	Rotation per minute
V	Voltage (Volts)
P	Power (Watt)
I	Current (ampere)
R	Resistance (Ohm)
f	Frequency (Hz)
C_p	Coefficient of wind turbine performance
ρ	Air density
A	Swept area of the blades (m^2)
v	Wind velocity (m/s)

MENGOPTIMUMKAN TENAGA ANGIN ALTERNATIF BAGI REKABENTUK BANGUNAN BERKECEKAPAN TENAGA DALAM IKLIM PANAS LEMBAP TROPIKA DI MALAYSIA

ABSTRAK

Terletak berhampiran garisan Khatulistiwa, Malaysia mempunyai kelebihan besar iaitu tenaga solar di mana kebanyakan kita menggunakan kelebihan tersebut dengan menjana elektrik menggunakan panel fotovoltaik. Walau bagaimanapun, angin di Malaysia adalah terhad, tidak tetap dan sering tenang menyebabkannya tidak boleh disandarkan sebagai tenaga alternatif dan untuk digunakan sebagai pengudaraan semulajadi ruang dalaman bangunan. Oleh itu, kebanyakan rakyat Malaysia menggunakan sistem penghawa dingin untuk mencapai keselesaan terma dan secara tidak langsung menghindari pencemaran udara. Bangunan moden yang berpenghawa dingin secara keseluruhannya akan menyebabkan fenomena pemanasan bandar atau "*urban heat island*" (UHI) di mana fenomena umum ini menyebabkan suhu bandar-bandar besar adalah lebih tinggi berbanding kawasan luar bandar, lantas menyumbang kepada masalah pemanasan global. Darip dibiarkan terbazir, gas ekzos yang dikeluarkan daripada unit kondenser alat penghawa dingin yang kebiasaannya terletak di kawasan luar bangunan berpotensi sebagai sumber alternatif untuk menjana tenaga angin. Sumber ini adalah cukup untuk menjana tenaga elektrik melalui penggunaan turbin angin menegak berskala kecil. Turbin ini terkenal dengan ciri-ciri "*omni-directional*" yang menjadikannya jenis yang paling sesuai untuk digunakan di kawasan angin berkelajuan rendah. Kebanyakan angin ekzos daripada unit kondenser mempunyai halaju lebih daripada 5.0 m/s dan amaun tersebut sudah cukup untuk menjana elektrik

mengikut kajian literasi yang telah dibuat. Melalui kondenser yang telah dipilih, dengan halaju diantara 8.0 m/s hingga 9.0 m/s, sebanyak semimum 87.0 Watt dijangka dapat dijana mengikut spesifikasi yang telah diberikan oleh pihak pengilang. Sebagai ahli di dalam Protokol Kyoto, ia adalah inisiatif Malaysia untuk meneroka tenaga alternatif ini dalam segala bentuk yang mungkin. Oleh itu, kajian ini dijalankan bagi meneroka sejauh mana angin atau pergerakan udara dapat menyumbang dan dapat digunakan dengan lebih baik bagi kawasan angin berhalaju rendah seperti Malaysia.

OPTIMIZING ALTERNATIVE WIND POWER FOR ENERGY EFFICIENT BUILDING DESIGN IN TROPICAL HOT-HUMID CLIMATE OF MALAYSIA

ABSTRACT

Located near the Equator, Malaysia has a great advantage of solar energy as it abundantly available and people making use of it using solar photovoltaic to generate electricity. Malaysian wind however is light, variable and calm making it unreliable as an alternative energy and too low to naturally ventilate indoor spaces. As the result, most Malaysians resorted to use air-conditioning systems to achieve thermal comfort thus avoiding polluted air. The modern fully air-conditioned buildings are creating urban heat islands hence contributing to global warming. Instead of being wasted, the exhaust air releases from the condenser unit located outdoor is potentially becoming the alternative source in wind power generation and sufficiently generates power using the small-scale Vertical-axis Wind Turbine (VAWT). It is a well-known type for its *Omni-directional* character which is the most suitable type to be used in low-wind speed condition. Most of exhaust air of condensers that have been measured are more than 5.0 m/s and it is sufficient to generate electricity according to literature review. The chosen condenser which has wind velocity in ranges of 8.0 m/s to 9.0 m/s is expected to generate a minimum power of 87.0 W as referring to specification from the manufacturer. As a member of Kyoto Protocol, it is one of Malaysia's initiatives to explore whatever form possible as an alternative energy to meet the protocol requirements. Therefore, this research explores to what extent can wind or air movement be contributively and be better utilized in the low-wind speed regions such as Malaysia.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 ISSUES AND PROBLEM STATEMENTS

1.1.1 Global warming and climate change

Climate change is defined when there is a change in the state of the climate that can be identified by changes of weather conditions persisting for extended period mostly attributed from human activities direct or indirectly (IPCC, 2007). The evidence shows the average global temperatures increasing moderately with significant amounts since the 20th Century (Time for Change, 2009; Pitts, 2004). It was first identified in the 1960s and people are struggling to sustain the world with whatever solutions that are left.

One of the major causes of global warming is the excessive emission of global greenhouse gases (GHGs). GHGs contain gases such as CO₂ and CH₄ which have the ability to trap excessive sunlight which increases the global temperature. This scenario is similar like a glass dome that traps some amount of gases; therefore it also has been referred as “Greenhouse Effect” (Gervokian, 2006).

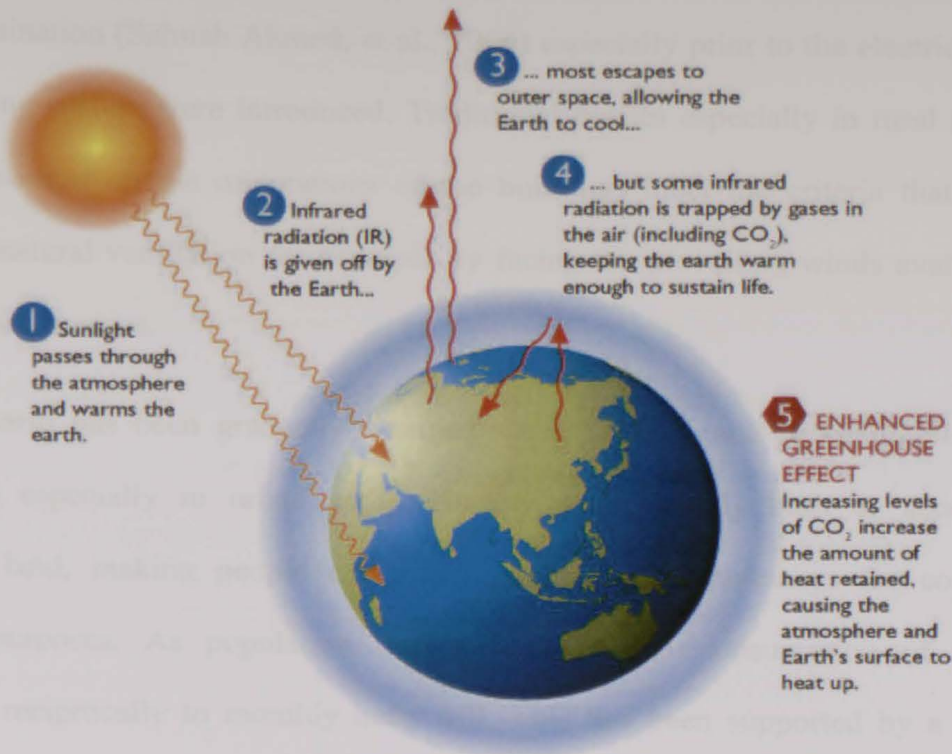


Figure 1.1: A diagram on how greenhouse effect is created (NSW Gov., 2011)

1.1.2 Malaysia climate and the use of air-conditioning systems

Being located near the Equator ($4^{\circ} 0' 0''$ N / $102^{\circ} 0' 0''$ E) Malaysia's weather is classified as hot-humid Equatorial (www.met.gov.my, 2009). It is well-known for the extreme weather which is hot and humid throughout the year with copious of rain. The availability of light winds, year-round warm and pleasant weather with constant temperatures and high humidity make outdoor living is much desirable decades ago (Furturarc, 2010). Therefore, people rely solely on natural ventilation for comfort purposes by having many openings in their houses such as doors and windows in the living rooms, a chimney in the kitchen, and slits near the roof to allow air circulation and

also illumination (Salmah Ahmed, et al., 2006) especially prior to the electrical lighting and cooling system were introduced. Traditional houses especially in rural areas were built by setting up the orientations of the buildings meet the criteria that favor the effective natural ventilation for example by facing the prevailing winds available from land and sea breezes.

This scenario has been gradually changed when land is now becoming limited and expensive especially in urban areas. Houses were densely built to accommodate available land, making people depending on electrical appliances for cooling and lighting purposes. As population grows, demand and consumption of electricity increased reciprocally to monthly hefty bill. This has been supported by a statement from Buttgen (2002), a General Manager of Copthorne Hotel, Tanjung Bungah, Penang in which the air-conditioning solely takes up nearly 70% of the electricity bill in most hotel buildings. Moreover, according to Yeang (1999), a notable Malaysian architect in green building, the modern fully air-conditioned high rise buildings are consumed more than 75% of the total energy consumption.

When most people resort to use air-conditioning systems to cool the buildings, this will aggravate the environment that leads to urban heat island. Malaysia has been experiencing a dramatic increase in usage of air-conditioning which is expected to be higher in the future (Mahlia, 2001; Masjuki, et al., 2001) thus resulting the heat-island intensity in selected cities in Malaysia in the ranges from 2 K to 7 K (Sham, 1991). Heat-island intensity is a measure of the magnitude of urban heat island (Voogt, 2004) that can be higher during the day due to solar heating.

Buildings are responsible for producing over half of all climate change emissions (Roaf, et al., 2005) with 25% globally and 50% for individual countries. The modern fully air-conditioned building that is known as the late 20th century phenomenon, is increasing the cities temperature and becoming urban heat islands. The CO₂ emissions from air conditioning systems have become one of the largest driving forces for climate change around the world (Roaf, et al., 2005) and it has been increasing since the 1980s (EIA, 2006). Thus, the IPCC has been targeted and indicated that building-related emissions could be reduced by about 40% by 2010, and by about 60% by 2020 by using market encouragement and taking a longer term view, the savings from reduced fossil fuel use will outweigh the costs of implementing measures (Pitts, 2004).

Air-conditioning can be referred as self-contained electromechanical devices that cooling the space by providing conditioned air (Gevorkian, 2006). The process is accomplished when energy is added through electricity of natural gas combustion or other energy sources (Hinrichs, 2006). As shown (Fig. 1.2), air-conditioning is a process when air out-side the building inclusive of air discharged from the exhaust is sucked and cooled before being discharged into the occupied space. Exhaust air which contains heat and *Hydrofluorocarbons* (HFCs) or *Hydrochlorofluorocarbons* (HCFCs) or *Chlorofluorocarbons* (CFCs) will be released through the condenser unit that located outside the building. Previously, air-conditioning systems contained CFCs that were harmful and endangering the ozone layer. Currently, with introduction of new refrigerants HFCs which is more environmental-friendly had effectively reduced ozone depletion but there are many systems still use HCFC refrigerants that contribute to depletion of the ozone layer.

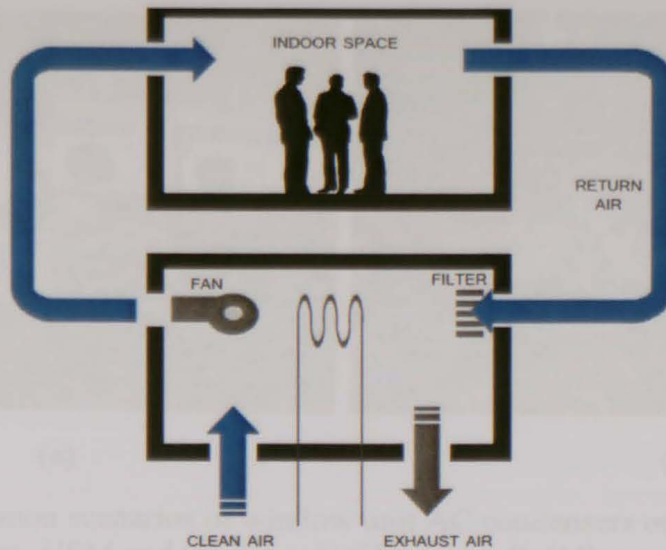


Figure 1.2: The cycle of exhaust air in an air-conditioning condenser unit

The ugly scenarios from the use of window unit AC systems on the building facades can be seen as showed in Plate 1.1. It normally will destroy the building aesthetical value if the juxtaposition of the condensers is not proper integrated with building design. If the condensers are properly integrated with the building design to maintain the aesthetical façade, wastage of the exhaust air can be tapped to generate wind power by small-scale vertical-axis wind turbine (VAWT). Since natural wind is very limited and unpredictable in Malaysia, this research has a wide potential as a pilot study in optimizing wind power in low-wind speed areas by using alternative way.



(a)



(b)

Plate 1.1: The common scenarios of window unit AC condensers on building facades at (a) Dewan Budaya, USM and (b) School of Housing, Building and Planning, USM.

Optimizing the use of alternative energy is one of the main solutions to global warming issue of which many energy policies have been structured. As one of the members of Kyoto Protocol, it is Malaysia's initiatives to reduce global warming based on indigenous resources. Even though the Kyoto target is a relatively small step but it is considered as the first step on a 'ladder of change' (Stankovic, 2009) that moved the world to battle the major problem.

1.1.3 Renewable energy scenarios in Malaysia

Renewable energy (RE) refers to energy resources that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment and can be harnessed for human benefits (Baharuddin Ali, et al., 2008). The new renewable energy is often based on indigenous resources, has the potential to provide energy services with low or zero emissions of both pollutants and greenhouse gases (Abmann, et al., 2006). Electricity derived from any renewable energy source

(RES) is considered “green” because of the negligible impact on greenhouse gas emission (Rahman, 2003). However, the potentiality to build up or develop the new renewable energy system is different to specific region due to its own location and climatic or weather characteristics.

There has been increased interest in using RE technologies in the urban environment as the directive target has been set up to supply electricity generation by renewable sources, especially after successfully achieved by the Europeans (www.awea.com, 2010). Renewable energy holds the key to future prosperity and a healthy global environment, thus it is considered as a promising way to solve the problem of environmental pollution (Himri, et al., 2008) such as major environmental accidents, water pollution, and maritime pollution. Therefore in Malaysia, besides solar energy, the use of other energies should be emphasized to solve the environmental problems.

For the past few decades, Malaysia has already started implementing new technologies to discover its potential of renewable energy (Siti Khadijah, et al., 2009). RE in Malaysia is still at infancy stage because it has not been commercially explored and implemented by all Malaysian. One of the reasons of this major problem is lack of local expertise, spare parts availability, transportation and inefficient energy management. Therefore, energy policies and regulations should play the important role in achieving the goal of sustainable development in Malaysia. According to the 8th Malaysian Plan (2001-2005) and the Ninth Malaysian Plan (2006-2010), Malaysia is targeting for renewable energy to be significant contributor and for better utilization of energy resources (Zuhairuse, et al., 2009). Thus, The National Energy Policies (NEP) has been

created to guide our future energy sector development based on supply, utilization and the environment.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Several objectives have been designated to prove the applicability of the hypothesis structured based on the issues discussed earlier. These objectives hold the key of this qualitative study that mostly focused on experiments.

1. To investigate the applicability of VAWT in harnessing exhaust air of air-conditioning condenser unit.
2. To test the efficiency performance of vertical-axis wind turbine (VAWT) in low-wind speed condition that already available in the local market.
3. To prove that exhaust air of air-conditioning system can be an alternative source for low-wind speed condition, thus potentially substituting the unreliable natural wind.
4. To suggest architectural design solutions on integrating or retrofitting the technology to the existing buildings that used air-conditioning systems.

1.3 HYPOTHESIS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Hypothetically the exhaust air releases from condenser unit could be sourced to generate sufficient amount of electricity that can be harnessed by using the small-scale vertical-axis wind turbine (VAWT). Potentially it becomes one of the alternative sources in

optimizing wind power in low-wind speed regions. The limited studies carried out on wind power generation in low-wind speed region were inconclusive, thus require further investigation. Therefore, four research questions have been stipulated as a guideline in achieving the research objectives:

- Q1: Is wind velocity of exhaust air from the standard size condenser sufficient enough as start-up wind speed and cut-in wind speed for the small-scale VAWT?
- Q2: Does the chosen VAWT performs accordingly to manufacturer's specifications under real condition?
- Q3: What are the characteristics of exhaust air distribution that affect wind velocity in generating wind power?
- Q4: How to apply wind power application on building façade of existing and new building?

1.4 RESEARCH SCOPE

This research focuses on the study of possibilities of wind power in Malaysia which consist the basic principle of wind energy, the potential of wind power in Malaysia, and wind power technology and its application in low-wind speed condition in order to harness wind as alternative energy to be used in energy efficiency building design. Therefore, there are two types of wind that have been studied in this research; natural wind (Part 1: Theoretical Studies) and fan driven (Part 2: Experimental Studies).

Malaysia is targeting the use of renewable energy by National Policy designated by the government. It is one of the ways to achieve the Kyoto Protocol requirements. Besides solar energy, other renewable energies such as wind energy, biomass, tidal energy, hydro energy and geothermal energy should be optimized as well. In this thesis, wind energy is chosen as alternative energy from issues and literature review done in previous section.

Instead of relying on unreliable natural wind, optimizing wind power in Malaysia can be done by alternative way. Exhaust air from AC systems has been hypothesized to be contributing as alternative source in harnessing wind power. The methods done in experimental study are explained in detail in Chapter 3. The results obtained in experimental study are applied in building designs and will be shown in conceptual diagrams at the end of discussions section in Chapter 4.

It is humbly to acknowledge that this research has not been similarly done by any other researchers based on the thorough literature review collected earlier, therefore it is hard to set the benchmark of this research due to the lack of references on the same topic. The methodology structured in this research is the hybrid methods on the researches done on harnessing wind power from natural wind on potential locations and the laboratory tests on aerodynamic systems.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The study on optimizing wind power for energy efficient building design in low-wind speed condition of Malaysia is significant for several reasons:

- This study responds to the Kyoto Protocol (2002) and Malaysia's Energy Policy starting in the 8th Malaysia Plan (2001-2005), further emphasized by 9th (2006-2010) and 10th National Plan has taken several initiatives to explore and promote the use of renewable energy (RE) as alternative source (Lim, et al., 2006). Under the Energy Efficiency in Commercial Buildings (MS1525), energy efficiency (EE) in built environment has been emphasized (GBI, 2009).
- The integration with building designs is important to promote new architectural term, Aerotecture especially in tropical region. It is defined when the building designs incorporate wind power from the early stage of designing. It is important in commercialization of wind turbine applications on different types of buildings. Furthermore, this study responds to the Green Building Index (GBI) that launched by the Malaysian Institute of Architects (PAM) and the Association of Consulting Engineers Malaysia (ACEM) on integrating energy efficiency (EE) effort in Malaysian buildings by using rating systems based on several criteria (GBI, 2009).

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Wind power generation in Malaysia can be considered as a new technology and still in explorations. Lack of technology and references on wind power are due to the unreliable and limited amount of promising wind. Lots of studies have been done by the Westerners but in tropical regions like South East Asia, the studies and available technologies are lagging. The limited studies available were not comprehensively meticulous and supported by research papers to address the shortcomings. Therefore, this chapter discusses and reviews the related literature by analyzing and exploring the alternative way in optimizing wind power in Malaysia.

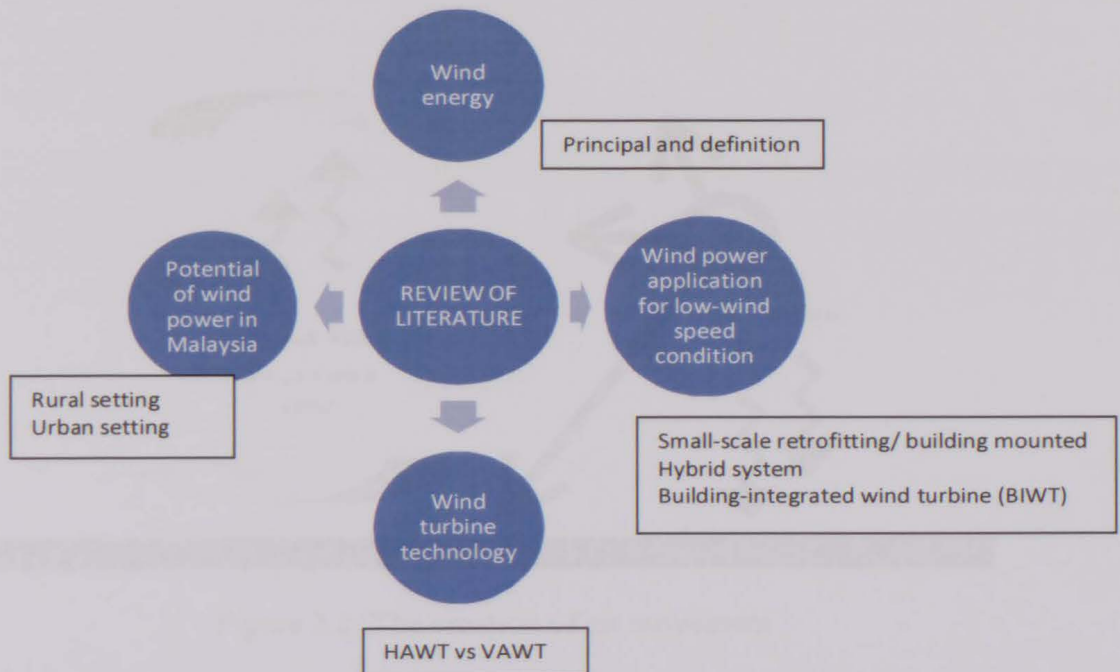


Figure 2.1: Figure of related issues on literature review

2.2 WIND ENERGY

It is imperative in exploring wind power technology to generate wind power, the basic principles of wind energy on how wind is created needs to be understood. Wind is an ancient source of energy created when air moves from an area of high pressure to an area of low pressure. It is a converted form of solar energy as the sun unevenly heats directly the surface of the earth most notably during the day and indirectly at night but also when two different surfaces such as water and land absorb or reflect the heats at different rates (Gevorkian, 2006) (Fig. 2.2). The hot air rises due to this phenomenon and cooler air moves in to fill the void in which it creates the wind. As long as the sun shines, the wind will blow and people will harness it to power their lives (National Geographic, 2009).

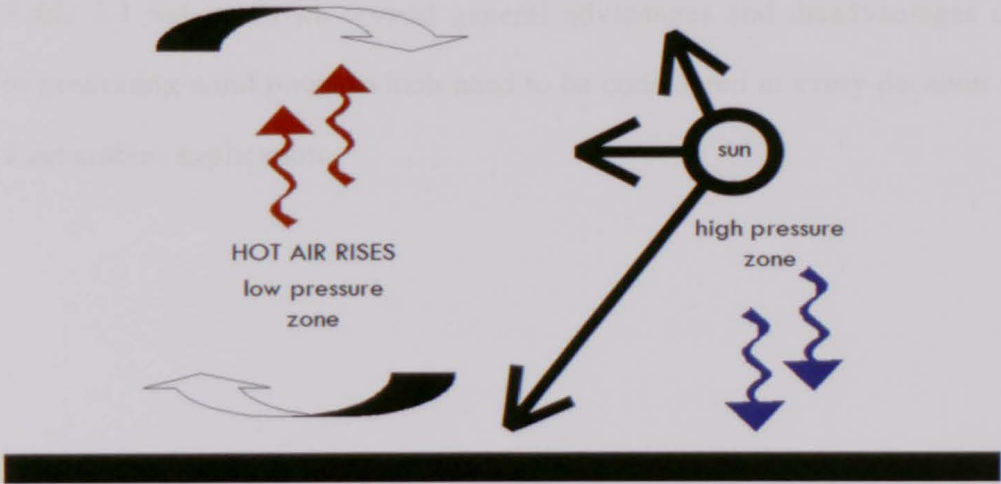


Figure 2.2: The creation of air movement

Even though human being has taken the advantages of wind power for centuries since the ancient civilization of Egypt (proven when people used sail to navigate the Nile River) (www.altenergy.org, 2010), but it generally has been improved significantly since 1970 to generate electricity as a reliable and consistent power (Ackermann & Soder, 2002). Currently, people are aware that wind power is one of the promising new energy sources that can serve as alternative to fossil fuel-generated electricity. Wind power is one of the most environmentally benign sources of energy which does not emit pollutant. According to EERE (2008) wind energy represents as one of the growing renewable energy markets that can add up to its advantages.

Unfortunately, wind is naturally unpredictable and inconsistent energy source compared to other renewable energies such as solar and hydro energy. The unpredictable character of wind is one of the greatest challenges of wind power generation (Gitano-Briggs, 2007). Table 2.1 below shows several general advantages and disadvantages of wind energy in generating wind power which need to be considered in every decision making for wind generation application.