

NONLINEAR BEHAVIOUR OF BEAM-TO-COLUMN CONNECTION IN
REINFORCED CONCRETE INDUSTRIALISED BUILDING SYSTEM

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In the name of ALLAH, Most gracious, Most merciful

To my first teacher, my father

my beloved mother

my patient wife

my gracious aunt, Fatemeh

and my family who respects the knowledge and science.

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ABSTRACT

The connection between beam and column affects directly the integrity of the building structure. In precast reinforced concrete Industrialised Building Systems (IBS), complexity often occurred in the implementation of a new type of beam-to-column connection. This is due to the new IBS arrangement and the consequent new interaction between the jointed elements of beam and column. In this study, an innovative new type of semi-rigid beam-to-column connection, called SMART IBS consisting of beam to column steel connectors and reinforced concrete elements cast together were detailed out. Four full scale experimental tests were conducted to achieve the real behaviour of the connection in H-shape and Cruciform sub-frames. The tests were supplemented with conventional monolithic models representing the moment resisting connection for comparison of structural specifications. Moreover, for obtaining more comprehensive behaviour, nonlinear finite element analysis (NLFEA) using ABAQUS software was conducted. Furthermore, the whole behaviour of IBS using this new connection was researched through 3D linear analysis to include gravitational and seismic time-history loads using SAP 2000 software. The response of the connection was investigated through the study of the ultimate loading capacity, ductility ratio, load-displacement, moment-rotation, modes of failure and crack patterns. The results of this research confirmed that the new SMART IBS beam-to-column connection was a semi-rigid connection with extra beneficial ductility in comparison with conventional reinforced concrete connection. The ultimate strength of the SMART IBS beam-to-column connection was equal to the conventional model. Furthermore, the results of NLFEA were matched up to 90% with experimental tests. In terms of seismic performance, a three dimensional building of SMART IBS seismic performance was better than the conventional reinforced concrete frames.

ABSTRAK

Sambungan antara rasuk dan tiang mempengaruhi secara langsung integriti struktur bangunan. Dalam pra-tuang konkrit bertetulang Sistem Bangunan Berindustri (IBS), kerumitan sering berlaku dalam pelaksanaan sambungan rasuk-ke-tiang. Ini terhasil dari susunan jenis baru sistem IBS dan interaksi baru di antara rasuk dan tiang. Dalam kajian ini satu jenis sambungan inovatif separa tegar dikenali sebagai SMART IBS terdiri dari penyambung keluli dan elemen-elemen konkrit dituang telah diperincikan. Empat ujian skala penuh telah dilakukan untuk menghasilkan tingkah laku sebenar sambungan pada kerangka-sub bentuk-H dan salib. Ujian juga ditambah dengan model monolitik konvensional yang mewakili sambungan rintangan momen sebagai perbandingan spesifikasi struktur. Selain itu, untuk memperolehi kelakuan yang lebih komprehensif kajian tingkah laku struktur analisis unsur tak terhingga (NLFEA) dengan perisian ABAQUS juga telah dijalankan. Seterusnya, kelakuan menyeluruh bangunan IBS dengan sambungan jenis baru ini telah diselidiki melalui analisis tiga dimensi lurus termasuk kesan graviti dan seismik dengan menggunakan perisian SAP 2000. Kelakuan sambungan telah di kaji melalui semakan kapasiti keupayaan beban muktamad, nisbah kemuluran, anjakan beban, putaran, momen-putaran, mod kegagalan dan corak retak. Hasil kajian ini mengesahkan bahawa sambungan SMART IBS rasuk-ke-tiang adalah sambungan separa tegar dengan berkemuluran tambahan yang memberi manfaat berbanding dengan sambungan konkrit konvensional. Kekuatan sambungan SMART IBS rasuk-ke-tiang adalah sama dengan kekuatan model konvensional. Tambahan pula, keputusan NLFEA adalah berketepatan sehingga 90% berbanding ujian makmal. Dari segi prestasi seismik, SMART IBS pada bangunan tiga dimensi adalah lebih baik daripada rangka konkrit bertetulang konvensional.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
	DECLARATION	ii
	DEDICATION	iii
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
	ABSTRACT	v
	ABSTRAK	vi
	TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
	LIST OF TABLES	xx
	LIST OF FIGURES	xxii
	LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xxxix
	LIST OF SYMBOLS	xl
	LIST OF APPENDICES	xli
1	INTRODUCTION	1
	1.1 Background of the Study	1
	1.2 Statement of the Problem	2
	1.3 Purpose of the Study	4
	1.4 Objectives of the Study	5
	1.5 Significance of the Study	5
	1.6 Scope of the Study	6
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	8

2.1	IBS Definition	8
2.2	History Background of IBS	9
2.3	Advantages of IBS	10
2.4	Disadvantages of IBS	11
2.5	Industrialised Building System in Malaysian Governmental Context	13
2.6	Classification of Building Systems in Malaysia	13
2.7	Classification of Industrialised Building Systems	14
2.8	Precast Concrete Structure	14
2.8.1	General Information of Precast Concrete Structural Systems	20
2.8.1.1	Skeletal Systems	20
2.8.1.2	Load Bearing Wall Systems	21
2.9	Beam-to- Column Connections	22
2.9.1	Definition of Joints and Connections	23
2.9.2	Hybrid Connection	23
2.9.3	Criteria for Structural Connectivity	24
2.9.4	Classification of Beam-to-Column Connections	25
2.9.4.1	Load-Displacement Relationships	25
2.9.4.2	Moment-Rotation Relationships	26
2.9.4.2.a	Rigidity (Rotational Stiffness)	26
2.9.4.2.b	Strength (Moment Resistant)	28

	2.9.4.2.c	Ductility (Rotational Capacity)	28
	2.9.4.3	Types of Beam-to-Column Connections Due to Rotational Stiffness	28
	2.9.4.3.a	Pinned Connection	30
	2.9.4.3.b	Rigid Connection	31
	2.9.4.3.c	Semi-Rigid Connection	33
2.9.5		Published Classification of Beam-to- Column Connections	37
	2.9.5.1	Classification of Steel Beam- to-Column Connections	37
	2.9.5.2	Classification of Semi-rigid Precast Concrete Beam-to- Column Connections Using Beam-Line Method	42
2.9.6		Precast Concrete Beam-to-Column Connections	44
	2.9.6.1	PCI Typical Types of Precast Concrete Beam-to-Column Connection	45
		a) Connection Types BC-1	45
		b) Connection Types BC-2	45
		c) Connection Types BC-3	45
		d) Connection Types BC-4	47
		e) Connection Types BC-5	47
		f) Connection Types BC-6	49
2.9.7		Failure Modes of the Beam-to-Column Connections	49
	2.9.7.1	Beam Hinging	50

2.9.7.2	Column Hinging and Strong-Column/ Weak-Beam Principal	51
2.9.7.3	Loss of the Concrete Cover	52
2.9.7.4	Loss of Anchorage of Reinforced Bars	53
2.9.7.5	Shear Failure in Connection	53
2.10	Linear Elastic Analysis	53
2.11	Nonlinear Analysis	54
2.12	Finite Element Analysis (FEA)	55
2.13	Nonlinear Finite Element Analysis (NLFEA)	55
2.14	Nonlinear Solution Methods in Finite Element Analysis	56
2.15	Constitutive Nonlinear Material Properties	59
2.15.1	Steel	59
2.15.2	Concrete	60
2.15.2.1	Concrete under Compression	60
2.15.2.2	Concrete Biaxial Elastic Limits and Strength	63
2.15.2.3	Concrete under Tension	64
2.15.2.4	Concrete Cracking	67
2.16	Seismic Analysis and Behaviour of IBS	68
2.16.1	Seismic Analysis	68
2.16.2	Seismic Performance of Precast Concrete Structures	70
2.16.2.1	Current Practices of precast Concrete Structures in Seismic Regions	70

	2.16.2.2	Seismic Considerations in Precast Concrete Connection	71
	2.17	Summary of Previous Work on Beam-to- Column Connections	73
	2.17.1	Summary of Previous Work on Reinforced Concrete Beam-to-Column Connections	73
	2.17.2	Summary of Previous Work on Precast Concrete Beam-to-Column Connections	75
	2.17.3	Summary of Previous Work on Hybrid Steel-Concrete Beam-to- Column Connections	85
3		METHODOLOGY	88
	3.1	Introduction	88
	3.2	Research Design	90
	3.3	Description of Smart IBS Elements and Beam-to-Column Connection	90
	3.4	Laboratory Equipments	97
	3.5	Procedures in Material Testing	97
	3.5.1	Reinforcement Bars	97
	3.5.2	Steel Plates Used in IBS Connection (10 mm Thickness)	99
	3.5.3	High Tensile Steel Bolts Used in IBS Models	99
	3.5.4	Concrete	100
	3.6	Experimental Models Tests Procedures	102
	3.6.1	IBS H Model Structural Specifications and Details	102
	3.6.2	IBS H Model Initial Members' Capacities Calculations and Structural Checks	108

3.6.3	IBS H Model Construction	109
3.6.3.1	Steel Parts Making	109
3.6.3.2	Steel Spacers	115
3.6.3.3	Strain Gauges on Steel Installation	116
3.6.3.4	Moulding of Concrete	117
3.6.3.5	Casting the Concrete	120
3.6.3.6	Curing the Hardened Concrete	120
3.6.3.7	Polishing and Painting the Concrete Surface	122
3.6.4	IBS H Model Installation and Instrumentation	122
3.6.5	IBS H Model Loading and Recording the Results	133
3.6.6	Conventional H Model Structural Specifications and Details	136
3.6.7	Conventional H Model Initial Members' Capacities Calculations and Structural Checks	137
3.6.8	Conventional H Model Construction	
3.6.8.1	Making the Steel Cage of Reinforcement Bars	139
3.6.8.2	Wooden Mould	139
3.6.9	Conventional H Model Installation and Instrumentation	140
3.6.10	Conventional H Model Loading and Recording the Results	145
3.6.11	IBS Cruciform Model Structural Specifications and Details	146

3.6.12	IBS Cruciform Model Initial Members' Capacities Calculations and Structural Checks	147
3.6.13	IBS Cruciform Model Construction	148
3.6.14	IBS Cruciform Model Installation and Instrumentation	150
3.6.15	IBS Cruciform Model Loading and Recording the Results	155
3.6.16	Conventional Cruciform Model Structural Specifications and Details	155
3.6.17	Conventional Cruciform Model Initial Members' Capacities Calculations and Structural Checks	157
3.6.18	Conventional Cruciform Model Construction	158
	3.6.18.1 Conventional Cruciform Model Steel Cage	159
	3.6.18.2 Conventional Cruciform Model Wooden Mould	160
3.6.19	Conventional Cruciform Model Installation and Instrumentation	160
3.6.20	Conventional Cruciform Model Loading and Recording the Results	166
3.7	Procedures in Modelling and Analyzing by ABAQUS	166
3.7.1	ABAQUS Software	169
3.7.2	Module 1: Part Module- Geometric Modelling & Element Properties	169
3.7.3	Module 2: Property Module- Defining the Nonlinearity of Materials	170
	3.7.3.1 ABAQUS Nonlinear Stress-Strain Curves for Concrete	170

	3.7.3.1.a	Concrete Smearred Cracking Model	170
	3.7.3.1.b	Brittle Cracking Model for Concrete	171
	3.7.3.1.c	Concrete Damaged Plasticity Model	172
	3.7.3.2	Nonlinear Concrete Properties	175
	3.7.3.3	Nonlinear Properties of Steel	176
	3.7.4	Module 3: Assembly Module	178
	3.7.5	Module 4: Step Module	178
	3.7.6	Module 5: Interaction Module	178
	3.7.7	Module 6: Loading Module	178
	3.7.8	Module 7: Meshing Module	179
	3.7.9	Module 8: Job Module	179
	3.7.10	Module 9: Visualization Module	181
3.8		Procedures in Modelling and Analyzing by SAP 2000	181
	3.8.1	SAP 2000 Software	181
	3.8.2	Plan and Elevation of the Overall 3- D Models	183
	3.8.3	Materials and Sections Properties	184
	3.8.4	Fixity between Structural Elements	184
	3.8.5	Non-Seismic Loading Specifications	184

	3.8.6	Seismic Analysis Methods	185
	3.8.6.1	Lateral Force Method of Analysis (Static Equivalent Analysis)	185
	3.8.6.1.a	Base Shear Force	185
	3.8.6.1.b	Distribution of the Horizontal Seismic Forces	186
	3.8.6.2	Time-History Dynamic Analysis	187
	3.9	Analysis of Results and Discussions	188
4		RESULT AND ANALYSIS OF EXPERIMENTAL TESTS	189
	4.1	Introduction	189
	4.2	Terminology	189
	4.3	IBSH Results of H-Models Set-up	190
	4.3.1	IBSH Load-Deflection Results	190
	4.3.2	IBSH Load-Strain Results of Steel Rebars	193
	4.3.3	IBSH Load-Stress Results of Steel Connectors	197
	4.3.4	IBSH Crack Patterns and Mode of Failure	200
	4.3.5	IBSH Load-Rotation Results	204
	4.4	CRCH Results of H-Models Set-up	208
	4.4.1	CRCH Load-Deflection Results	208
	4.4.2	CRCH Load-Strain Results of Steel Bars	209
	4.4.3	CRCH Crack Patterns and Mode of Failure	211

4.4.4	CRCH Load-Rotation Results	212
4.5	Comparison of Test Results between IBSH and CRCH of H-Models Set-up	215
4.5.1	Comparison of Load-Deflection Results between IBSH and CRCH of H-Models	216
4.5.2	Comparison of Load-Strain Results between IBSH and CRCH of H-Models	218
4.5.3	Comparison of Crack Patterns and Mode of Failure between IBSH and CRCH of H-Models	219
4.5.4	Comparison of Load-Rotation Results between IBSH and CRCH of H-Models	220
4.5.5	Comparison of Ductility between IBSH and CRCH of H-Models	222
4.5.6	Comparison of Energy Absorption between IBSH and CRCH of H-Models	223
4.6	IBSC Results of Cruciform Models Set-up	224
4.6.1	IBSC Load-Deflection Results	224
4.6.2	IBSC Moment-Rotation Results	226
4.6.3	IBSC Load-Strain Results of Steel Bars	229
4.6.4	IBSC Load-Stress Results of Steel Connectors	230
4.6.5	IBSC Crack Patterns and Mode of Failure	232
4.6.6	Evaluation of IBSC Beam-to-Column Connection Using Beam-Line Method	235
4.6.7	Rotational Stiffness of IBSC Beam-to-Column Connection Using Beam-Line Method	239

4.7	CRCC Results of Cruciform Models Set-up	240
4.7.1	CRCC Load-Deflection Results	240
4.7.2	CRCC Moment-Rotation Results	241
4.7.3	CRCC Load-Strain Results of Steel Bars	244
4.7.4	CRCC Crack Patterns and Mode of Failure	246
4.7.5	Evaluation of CRCC Beam-to-Column Connection Using Beam-Line Method	248
4.7.6	Rotational Stiffness of CRCC Beam-to-Column Connection Using Beam-Line Method	249
4.8	Comparison of Test Results between IBSC and CRCC of Cruciform Models Set-ups	250
4.8.1	Comparison of Load-Deflection Results between IBSC and CRCC of Cruciform Models	250
4.8.2	Comparison of Moment-Rotation Results between IBSC and CRCC of Cruciform Models	251
4.8.3	Comparison of Crack Patterns and Mode of Failure between IBSC and CRCC of Cruciform Models	253
4.8.4	Comparison of Beam-to-Column Connection Rotational Stiffnesses between IBSC and CRCC of Cruciform Models	255
4.9	Closing Remarks	256
5	NONLINEAR FINITE ELEMENT ANALYSIS AND RESULTS	257
5.1	Introduction	257
5.2	NLFEA Load-Deflection Relationship of the Models and Comparison with Experimental Result	257

5.3	NLFEA Crack Patterns and Mode of Failure of the Models and Comparison with Experimental Result	266
5.4	Closing Remarks	270
6	3-DIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS AND RESULTS OF OVERALL STRUCTURES	271
6.1	Introduction	271
6.2	Displacement Control of the Models under Serviceability Limit State (SLS) Loads	272
6.3	Lateral Displacements of the Models under the Wind Loads	275
6.4	Seismic Analysis of the Models Using Lateral Force Method (Static Equivalent Analysis)	276
	6.4.1 Natural Time Periods of the Models	276
	6.4.2 Seismic Lateral Displacements of the Models Using Lateral Force Method	277
	6.4.3 Damage Limitations of Models	279
6.5	Base Shear Force of Models Obtained from Dynamic Time History Analysis Using El Centro Earthquake Spectra	282
6.6	Lateral Displacements of Models Obtained from Dynamic Time History Analysis Using El Centro Earthquake Spectra	283
6.7	Maximum Axial Force of Columns Obtained from Dynamic Time History Analysis Using BAM Earthquake Spectra	284
6.8	Closing Remarks	286
7	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	287
7.1	Conclusions	287
7.2	Recommendations	289

REFERENCES
Appendices A-H

290
301-349

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
2.1	Classification of five main groups of precast	15
3.1	Steel bars and plate structural properties	98
3.2	Concrete structural properties	101
3.3	Section properties of IBS beam and column in H subframe	107
4.1	Terminology	190
4.2	Summary of comparative load and displacement results of IBSH and CRCH models tests	218
4.3	Comparison of yield/failure order between IBSH and CRCH	220
4.4	Yield loads and their relevant rotation of both IBSH and CRCH beam-to-column connections	221
4.5	Ultimate loads and their relevant rotation of both IBSH and CRCH beam-to-column connections	222
4.6	Ductility ratios of IBSH and CRCH models	222
4.7	Energy absorption capacities of IBSH and CRCH models	224
4.8	Comparison of ultimate load and displacement results between IBSC and CRCC models tests	251
4.9	Comparison of ultimate moment and rotation results between IBSC and CRCC models tests	252

4.10	Comparison of yield/failure order between IBSC and CRCC models	255
4.11	Comparison of rotational secant stiffnesses between IBSC and CRCC models tests	255
5.1	Final failure load and corresponding displacement obtained from experimental tests and NLFEA results of H models	266
5.2	Final failure load and corresponding displacement obtained from experimental tests and NLFEA results of Cruciform models	266
6.1	Terminology of overall structures	273
6.2	Maximum deflections of beams under serviceability loads	276
6.3	Maximum lateral displacement of the models under the wind load	276
6.4	Natural time period of models	278
6.5	Seismic lateral displacements at centres of masses of the models	279
6.6	Storey drifts of models	281
6.7	Maximum base shear force from SAP 2000 time history analysis	283
6.8	Maximum lateral displacement of models obtained from time history analysis	285
6.9	Maximum axial force and moments of columns obtained from time history analysis using BAM (2003) earthquake spectra	287

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
2.1	Structural types of buildings in Malaysia (Thanoon <i>et al</i> , 2003)	14
2.2	Precast concrete framing system	16
2.3	Panel and box system	16
2.4	Steel formwork system	17
2.5	Steel framing system	17
2.6	Rigid frame system	18
2.7	Prefabricated timber framing system	18
2.8	Block work systems	19
2.9	Interlocking block system	19
2.10	Precast skeletal structure for space flexibility layout	20
2.11	The elements of precast skeletal structure (Elliot, 2002)	21
2.12	Precast Walls	22
2.13	Typical load-displacement curve (Park and paulay, 1975)	26
2.14	Connection rotation	27

2.15	Moment-rotation characteristics	28
2.16	Brittle failing in compression	29
2.17	Typical Moment-rotation curve (Park and Paulay, 1975)	29
2.18	Pinned beam-to-column connection examples	30
2.19	Rigid precast concrete beam-to- corbel column connection with cast in-situ top reinforcement bar	31
2.20	Rigid precast concrete beam-to- corbel column connection with welded top and bottom steel plates	32
2.21	Rigid precast concrete U shape beam-to- corbel column connection with cast in-situ top and bottom reinforcement bar	32
2.22	Rigid precast concrete beam-to-column connection with cast in-situ top and bottom reinforcement bar	33
2.23	Sagging and hogging beam bending moments with different connections	34
2.24	Variation of beam bending moments with connection relative stiffness (Gorgun, 1990)	35
2.25	Variation of mid-span deflection with connection relative stiffness (Gorgun, 1990)	35
2.26	Beam deflected profiles with various end conditions	36
2.27	Nondimensional classification of initial stiffness (Bjorhovde <i>et al</i> , 1990)	37
2.28	Nondimensional classification of initial stiffness plus ultimate strength, \bar{M} and $\bar{\phi}$ are as defined in Figure 2.28 (Bjorhovde <i>et al</i> , 1990)	38
2.29	‘Beam reference length’ nondimensional classification diagram considering stiffness, strength and ductility, \bar{M} and $\bar{\phi}$ are as defined in Figure 2.28 (Bjorhovde <i>et al</i> , 1990)	39
2.30	EC3 Classification for beam-to-column connections of unbraced steel frames	40

2.31	EC3 classification diagram for beam-to-column connections of braced steel frames. $\bar{m}, \bar{\phi}$ are as defined in Figure 2.30.	41
2.32	Beam-line method for beam-to-column classification	43
2.33	Beam-to-column connection types BC-1 (Walker <i>et al.</i> , 1973)	46
2.34	Beam-to-column connection types BC-2 (Walker <i>et al.</i> , 1973)	46
2.35	Beam-to-column connection types BC-3 (Walker <i>et al.</i> , 1973)	47
2.36	Beam-to-column connection types BC-4 (Walker <i>et al.</i> , 1973)	48
2.37	Beam-to-column connection types BC-5 (Walker <i>et al.</i> , 1973)	48
2.38	Beam-to-column connection types BC-6 (Walker <i>et al.</i> , 1973)	49
2.39	Possible failure modes for beam-to-column connection (Meinheit and Jirsa, 1981)	50
2.40	Design of special moment frames aims to avoid the Story Mechanism (a) and instead achieve either an Intermediate Mechanism (b) or a Beam Mechanism (c) (Moehle <i>et al.</i> , 2008).	51
2.41	Beam & column flexural capacities at a joint in strong column/weak beam capacity design rule	52
2.42	Newton-Raphson Method	57
2.43	Modified Newton-Raphson Method	58
2.44	Arc-Length Method	58
2.45	Typical and idealized stress-strain curve for steel	60
2.46	Typical Stress-strain curve for concrete under uniaxial compression and tension	61
2.47	Biaxial elastic limit and strength envelopes	64

2.48	Schematic Stress-strain curve for concrete under uniaxial tension	65
2.49	Tension-softening curve (Massicotte <i>et al</i> ,1990)	66
2.50	Tension-softening curve (Al-Shaarbaf ,1990)	66
2.51	Discrete Crack Concept	67
2.52	Types of seismic analysis	69
2.53	Failure of a poorly detailed beam-to-column connection (1976 Tangshan Earthquake, China)	71
2.54	Unseating of precast concrete beams off corbels of columns	72
2.55	Interaction between column and beam during an earthquake	72
2.56	Joint detail used by Pillai and Kirk (1981)	75
2.57	Isometric view of prototype, BC15 (Dolan and Pessiki ,1989)	77
2.58	Prototype connection details, BC15 (Dolan and Pessiki ,1989)	77
2.59	Precast concrete connection Type A (Loo and Yao, 1995)	79
2.60	Precast concrete connection Type B (Loo and Yao, 1995)	80
2.61	Section details of precast concrete connection types A and B (Loo and Yao, 1995)	81
2.62	Some of the specimens' deflection curves (Loo and Yao, 1995)	81
2.63	Connection details for beam-to-column connection (Cheok <i>et al</i> , 1998)	82
2.64	Monolithic H-substitute frame (Abd Rahman <i>et al</i> , 2007)	84
2.65	Precast concrete H-substitute frame (Abd Rahman <i>et al</i> , 2007)	84

2.66	Typical connection details for hybrid steel-concrete precast models (Kulkarni <i>et al</i> , 2008)	86
2.67	Dimensions and arrangement of reinforcing bars (all dimensions are in mm) (Yang <i>et al</i> , 2010)	87
3.1	Gravity loading and sagging-hogging moments (Simulated in H subframe models)	89
3.2	Sway loading and sagging-hogging moments (Simulated in Cruciform models)	89
3.3	Research Design	91
3.4	Smart IBS beam element with hybrid connection ends	92
3.5	(a) Smart IBS column element with hybrid connection ends, (b) cruciform connector for top and (c) cloven box for bottom part of column element	93
3.6	Schematic 3-Dimensional frame using Smart IBS hybrid beam-to-column connection	94
3.7	View and sections of Smart IBS beam element (All dimensions are in mm)	95
3.8	View and sections of Smart IBS column element (All dimensions are in mm)	96
3.9	Longitudinal rebar after the uniaxial tensile test performed	98
3.10	The high tensile Allen bolt mechanism located between the gauges of the testing machine	99
3.11	A sample of crushed cylindrical specimen under compression test	100
3.12	Cylindrical concrete specimen installed in DARTEC testing machine for E modulus and Poisson's ratio tests	101
3.13	Bending moment distribution in a frame under gravitational load	102
3.14	Top column of IBS H model before assemblage (a) View and (b) Sections (All dimensions are in mm)	104

3.15	Bottom column of IBS H model before assemblage (a) View and (b) Sections (All dimensions are in mm)	105
3.16	IBS beam used in H subframe before assemblage (a) View and (b) Sections (All dimensions are in mm)	106
3.17	IBS H model after assemblage (All dimensions are in mm)	106
3.18	Stirrups constructed in lab for reinforced concrete sections	109
3.19	Steel cage of IBS beam consists of longitudinal rebars and stirrups attached (The I shaped steel connector is welded to the end of the reinforced bar of steel cage)	110
3.20	Steel custom I shaped steel connector welded at the end of the IBS beam	111
3.21	Shear links in steel connector area of IBS beam	111
3.22	Steel cage of IBS beam used in IBS H model	112
3.23	Inside of cloven steel box forms the connector of IBS top column	112
3.24	The cloven steel box welded to the longitudinal rebars forms IBS top column	113
3.25	Inside of steel cruciform forms the connector of IBS bottom column	114
3.26	Steel seat plates in cruciform connector of bottom IBS column	114
3.27	The IBS bottom column view from inside of the steel cage	115
3.28	Spacers made from 6 mm bar	115
3.29	Usage of vertical and horizontal spacers	116
3.30	Wires of strain gauges extended to outside of IBS wooden mould before casting the concrete	117

3.31	Strain gauge installed on IBS beam rebar after coating and wire attachment	118
3.32	Rosette strain gauges installed on the web of IBS beam steel connector before covering and wire attachment	118
3.33	Wooden mould for IBS column	119
3.34	The salient steel connector of IBS top column in wooden mould	119
3.35	IBS moulds on shaking table ready for casting	120
3.36	Casting the concrete in IBS moulds	121
3.37	Water sprinkling the hardened concrete	121
3.38	Polishing the IBS beam concrete surface	122
3.39	Painted IBS components	123
3.40	Magnus frame	123
3.41	IBS bottom column installed and waiting for top IBS column assemblage	124
3.42	Steel box used as bottom support of IBS	125
3.43	Steel box used as top support of column tightened with 3 long bolts at each side	125
3.44	Installation the IBS H model column by assemblage of top and bottom IBS columns	126
3.45	Beam-to-column installation for IBS H model	126
3.46	IBS beam connected to the flange of IBS column by four 18 mm Allen bolts	129
3.47	Levelling the IBS connection using spirit level	127
3.48	Total station used for levelling the models	128
3.49	Installing the independent loading frames	129

3.50	Installing the steel plate connector between two added independent loading frames	129
3.51	Load cells and LVDT positions in IBS H model	130
3.52	Load cells and LVDTs under the beam in IBS H model	131
3.53	3-camera photogrammetric method for tracing the model displacements	131
3.54	Steel strain gauges positions in IBS H model	132
3.55	Demec points	132
3.56	Demec points locations in IBS H model	133
3.57	Inclinometers and plexi-glass protector at connection in IBS H model	134
3.58	IBS H model under loading and reading of Demec points	135
3.59	View of loading frame and IBS H model	135
3.60	Conventional H model (a) Elevation, (b) Section details	137
3.61	Bend of 90° hook of 16 mm longitudinal beam rebar at beam-to-column connection of Conventional H model	138
3.62	Conventional H model steel cage constructed from 16 mm rebars and 6 mm stirrups	139
3.63	Wooden mould of Conventional H model constructed from plywood	140
3.64	Wooden mould of Conventional H model on shaking table strapped by three ton capacity Ratchet Straps	141
3.65	Carrying the hardened Conventional H model horizontally	141
3.66	Installation of Conventional H model	142

3.67	Load cells and LVDT positions in Conventional H model	143
3.68	LVDTs for Conventional H model	143
3.69	Strain gauges positions on steel rebars in Conventional H model	144
3.70	Conventional H model Demec points positions	144
3.71	Conventional H model and loading jacks positions on beam	145
3.72	Levelling the 300x300x25 mm steel plate under loading jack with epoxy mortar	145
3.73	Conventional H model	146
3.74	Bending moment distribution in a frame under lateral load	147
3.75	IBS beam used in Cruciform subframe before assemblage (a) View and (b) Sections	148
3.76	IBS Cruciform model after assemblage	149
3.77	Steel cages of IBS beams in IBS Cruciform model with strain gauges installed on steel plate and rebars	149
3.78	IBS column installation in IBS Cruciform model	150
3.79	Instrumented IBS beams of IBS Cruciform model ready for assembly	151
3.80	Steel box used as bottom support for IBS Cruciform model	151
3.81	IBS Cruciform model test model ready for testing	152
3.82	Steel strain gauges positions in IBS Cruciform model	153
3.83	Load cells and LVDT positions in IBS Cruciform model	153
3.84	Demec points positions in IBS Cruciform model	154

3.85	Two inclinometers and LVDTs installed on IBS Cruciform model at beam-to-column area	154
3.86	Loading jack and load cell under the right end side IBS beam in IBS Cruciform model, LVDT No.19 is seen at the top side	155
3.87	Loading jack and load cell at the left end side of IBS beam in IBS Cruciform model, LVDT No.25 is seen at the bottom side	156
3.88	Conventional Cruciform model (a) Elevation and (b) Sections view	157
3.89	Casting the concrete in Conventional Cruciform model	158
3.90	Curing the concrete in Conventional Cruciform model	159
3.91	Steel cage of Conventional Cruciform model	159
3.92	Stirrups of column continued through the connection in Conventional Cruciform model	160
3.93	Wooden mould of Conventional Cruciform model constructed from plywood and cylindrical concrete moulds ready for casting	161
3.94	Painted Conventional Cruciform model	161
3.95	Transmitting the Conventional Cruciform model to test frame	162
3.96	Installation of Conventional Cruciform model	163
3.97	Load cells and LVDT positions in Conventional Cruciform model	164
3.98	LVDTs attached to right beam and column in Conventional Cruciform model	164
3.99	Strain gauges on steel rebars positions and numbering in Conventional Cruciform model	165
3.100	Strain gauges installed on steel rebars of Conventional Cruciform model before concrete casting	165
3.101	Conventional Cruciform model Demec points	166

3.102	View of front side of Conventional Cruciform model under the loading and measuring the Demec points	167
3.103	View of rear side of Conventional Cruciform model	167
3.104	ABAQUS 6.9 main interactive window	168
3.105	Conventional H model in ABAQUS Part module	169
3.106	Concrete Damaged Plasticity model for response of concrete to uniaxial loading in tension	173
3.107	Concrete Damaged Plasticity model for response of concrete to uniaxial loading in compression	174
3.108	Stress-strain relationship of nonlinear concrete proposed by Wang and Hsu (2001)	176
3.109	Stress-strain relationship of nonlinear steel bars, plates and bolts	177
3.110	IBS H model in assembly module of ABAQUS	177
3.111	IBS H model with supports and loads modelled in loading module of ABAQUS	179
3.112	(a) IBS H model and (b) IBS beam-to-column connection meshed in meshing module of ABAQUS	180
3.113	Solution Procedures in ABAQUS	180
3.114	IBS (a) beam, (b) bottom column and (c) top column sections in Section Designer of SAP2000	182
3.115	Plan of Type I models (moment resisting frame)	183
3.116	Plan of type II models (strengthened by shear walls)	183
3.117	Shape of the elastic response spectrum of Eurocode 8	186
3.118	Vertical component of ground acceleration of BAM earthquake (2003)	187

3.119	Horizontal (north-south) component of ground acceleration of El Centro earthquake (1940)	188
4.1	LVDT positions and their relevant displacements and rotations of both IBSH and CRCH models	191
4.2	Load-deflection curves of IBSH beam	191
4.3	Load-deflection curves of IBSH columns	192
4.4	IBSH strain gauges positions and numbering	194
4.5	Load-strain curves of IBSH steel bars	194
4.6	Load-strain curves of IBSH steel bars with strain result cut at 3500 micro-strain due to better clarification of strains at the beam ends	195
4.7	Bending moment diagrams of IBSH beam after and before mid-span yielding point (P=66.5 kN)	196
4.8	Rectangular Rosettes (45 ⁰ Rosettes) used for strain/stress measurement of steel plates of IBSH	198
4.9	Stresses of IBSH steel connectors	198
4.10	Crack patterns and failure mode of (a) IBSH and (b) CRCH model.	201
4.11	Crack patterns of IBSH at mid-span of beam	202
4.12	End plate bending failure of the I-steel connector at (a) left and (b) right end side of the IBS beam	202
4.13	Yielding of end plate of IBS beam	203
4.14	Load-rotation relationship of beam-to-column connection obtained from LVDT 4 of IBSH	204
4.15	Load-rotation relationship of beam-to-column connection obtained from LVDT 5 of IBSH	205
4.16	Load-rotation relationship of beam-to-column connection obtained from LVDT 6 of IBSH	206
4.17	Load-rotation relationship of beam-to-column connection obtained from LVDT 8 of IBSH	206

4.18	Load-rotation relationship of beam-to-column connection obtained from all LVDTs of IBSH	207
4.19	Load-deflection curves of CRCH model	209
4.20	CRCH strain gauges positions and numbering	210
4.21	Load-strain relationship of steel rebars of CRCH	210
4.22	Crack patterns of Conventional Reinforced Concrete model (CRCH) at connection area	211
4.23	Crack patterns of Conventional Reinforced Concrete model (CRCH) at beam mid-span	212
4.24	Load-rotation relationship of beam-to-column connection obtained from LVDT 4 of CRCH	213
4.25	Load-rotation relationship of beam-to-column connection obtained from LVDT 5 of CRCH	213
4.26	Load-rotation relationship of beam-to-column connection obtained from LVDT 6 of CRCH	214
4.27	Load-rotation relationship of beam-to-column connection obtained from LVDT 8 of CRCH	214
4.28	Load-rotation relationship of beam-to-column connection obtained from all LVDTs of CRCH	215
4.29	Comparison between mid-span load-deflection of IBSH and CRCH models in second step of loading (30% of predicted ultimate load)	216
4.30	Comparison between mid-span load-deflection of IBSH and CRCH models until final failure	217
4.31	Comparison between rebars strain at mid-span of CRCH and IBSH	219
4.32	Comparison between rotation of beam-to-column connection of CRCH and IBSH	221
4.33	Load-deflection diagrams of LVDTs under the point loads (6&8) for energy absorption calculation as the area under the curve	223
4.34	LVDT positions and their relevant displacements and rotations of both IBSC and CRCC models	225

4.35	Load-deflection curves of IBSC model (Refer to Figure 4.34 for LVDT numbering.)	225
4.36	Moment-rotation relationship of beam-to-column connection obtained from left side beam of IBSC (LVDT numbers of 22 to 25)	227
4.37	Moment-rotation relationship of beam-to-column connection obtained from right side beam of IBSC (LVDT numbers of 15, 19, 22 and 23)	227
4.38	Comparison of moment-rotation behaviour of left and right side beams of IBSC	228
4.39	Moment-rotation relationship of beam-to-column connection of IBSC	228
4.40	IBSC strain gauges positions and numbering	229
4.41	Load-strain curves of IBSC steel bars	230
4.42	Stresses of steel connectors of IBSC model	232
4.43	Crack patterns of IBSC model. Note: Numbers indicate the load in kN at which crack occurred	233
4.44	Crack patterns of IBSC	234
4.45	Bending of the end plate of the IBSC beam	235
4.46	Definition of beam-line method	236
4.47	Actual moment versus relative rotation curve with beam-lines	237
4.48	Moment versus relative rotations in IBSC model with beam-lines	238
4.49	Actual moment versus relative rotation curve at which rotational stiffnesses were defined	239
4.50	Load-deflection curves of CRCC model (Refer to Figure 4.34 for LVDT numbering)	240
4.51	Moment-rotation relationship of beam-to-column connection obtained from left side beam of CRCC (LVDT numbers of 22 to 25)	241

4.52	Moment-rotation relationship of beam-to-column connection obtained from right side beam of CRCC (LVDT numbers of 15, 19, 22 and 23)	242
4.53	Comparison of moment-rotation behaviour of left and right side beams of CRCC	243
4.54	Moment-rotation relationship of beam-to-column connection of CRCC	243
4.55	CRCC strain gauges positions and numbering	244
4.56	Load-strain curves of CRCC steel rebars	245
4.57	Crack patterns of CRCC model	246
4.58	Crack patterns of CRCC	247
4.59	Beam hinging failure mode of CRCC model with (a) cracked tensile concrete at top side and (b) crushed compressive concrete at bottom side of left beam	247
4.60	Moment versus relative rotations in CRCC model with beam-lines	249
4.61	Comparison between load-displacement of the beam ends of IBSC and CRCC models	250
4.62	Comparison between moment-rotation of the IBSC and CRCC models	252
4.63	Crack patterns of (a) IBSC and (b) CRCC	254
5.1	(a) IBSH model, (b) IBSH model beam-to-column connection, steel connectors of (c) IBS beam, (d) top IBS column and (e) bottom IBS column in ABAQUS	258
5.2	(a) CRCH model and its (b) steel reinforcement in ABAQUS	259
5.3	(a) IBSC model, (b) IBSC beam-to-column connection and (c) steel connectors of IBSC beam-to-column connection (concrete is removed for clarity) in ABAQUS	260
5.4	(a) CRCC model and its (b) steel reinforcement in ABAQUS	261

5.5	Load-deflection relationships of IBSH model until final failure load obtained from experimental test and NLFEA results	262
5.6	Load-deflection relationships of CRCH model until final failure load obtained from experimental test and NLFEA results	262
5.7	Load-deflection relationships of IBSC model until final failure load obtained from experimental test and NLFEA results	263
5.8	Load-deflection relationships of CRCC model until final failure load obtained from experimental test and NLFEA results	263
5.9	Crack pattern and mode of failure of IBSH model at final failure load obtained from (a) NLFEA and (b) experimental test results	266
5.10	Crack pattern and mode of failure of CRCH model at final failure load obtained from (a) NLFEA and (b) experimental test results	267
5.11	Crack pattern and mode of failure of IBSC model at final failure load obtained from (a) NLFEA and (b) experimental test results	268
5.12	Crack pattern and mode of failure of CRCC model at final failure load obtained from (a) NLFEA and (b) experimental test results	269
6.1	IBSMF model in SAP 2000	273
6.2	CRCMF model in SAP 2000	273
6.3	IBSSW model in SAP 2000	274
6.4	CRCSW model in SAP 2000	274
6.5	Actual seismic lateral displacements (d_s) of centres of masses along the elevation of models	278
6.6	Checking the reduced storey drift ratios of models with allowable limitations of Eurocode 8 (α_a , α_b and α_c)	281
6.7	Time history response of base shear force (N) of IBSMF model obtained from El Centro (1940) spectra	283

6.8	Time history response of lateral displacement (mm) of the roof of IBSMF model using El Centro (1940) spectra	284
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACI	-	American Concrete Institute
BIM	-	Building Information modelling
BS	-	British Standard
BSI	-	British Standard Institute
CIDB	-	Construction Industry Development Board
EC	-	Euro Code
ERP	-	Enterprise Resource Planning
FEM	-	Finite Element Method
IBS	-	Industrialized Building System
IBC	-	International Building Code
IBS	-	Industrialised Building System
NLFEA	-	Nonlinear Finite Element Analysis
PCI	-	Prestressed/Precast Concrete Institute
TPS	-	Toyota Production System

LIST OF SYMBOLS

E_c	-	concrete modulus elasticity
f'_c	-	Uniaxial compression strength of concrete
f_{cm}	-	Peak stress of Concrete
f_{cr}	-	Cracking stress of concrete in tension
f_y	-	Yield stress of steel
f_u	-	Ultimate stress of steel
J_{is}	-	Initial rotational stiffness
K_s	-	Nondimensional stiffness
I	-	Second moment of inertia
l	-	Length
M	-	Moment of inertia
T_1	-	Fundamental period of structure
Φ_y	-	Connection rotation at yield load
Φ_u	-	Connection rotation at ultimate load
σ_c	-	Compressive stress of concrete
σ_t	-	Tensile stress of concrete
ε_c	-	Tensile strain of concrete
ε_c	-	Compressive strain of concrete
ε_{c1}	-	Compressive strain in the concrete at the peak stress
ε_{cr}	-	Tensile strain at concrete cracking
ε_{cu}	-	Maximum strain of concrete
ε_y	-	Yield strain of steel

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX	TITLE	PAGE
A	Laboratory Equipments and Tests Performance Details	302
B	Material Tests Detailed Results	315
C	Calculations of Structural Properties of the Models	326
D	Comparison between Abaqus/Standard and Abaqus/Explicit	343
E	Nonlinear Stress-Strain Curves of Concrete and Steel Used in Abaqus	344
F	Calculation of Beam-Line Method Parameters	345
G	Comparison of 3_Camera Photogrammetric Method and LVDT Results of H Model Test	348
H	List of Publications	349

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Industrialised Building System (IBS) is a construction process that utilizes techniques, products, components, or building systems which involves prefabricated components and on-site installation. Industrialisation has demonstrated to reduce the costs, improve the quality and get complex products available at high quality of finishing to vast majority of people (Richard, 2005). Another definition of IBS by Trikha (1999) is a system in which concrete components, prefabricated at site or in factory are assembled to form the structure with minimum in-situ construction.

According to these definitions, the major benefits of IBS are: better quality control, speed of construction, solving the dependency on skilled labour on site and simplified convenient working conditions at lesser variations. On the other hand, the conventional cast in-situ method for reinforced concrete construction has problems like dirty work and difficulties in wet construction, casting in hot or cold weathers and in-doubt quality control such as durability and strength for end-user.

The main difficulty in performance of an Industrialised Building System (IBS) is the connection design and realisation. Furthermore, the integrity of these structures is dependent on efficiency of their connections. Nonetheless if the entire

IBS component prefabricated with the best quality in factory does not join together properly on site, the system will not behave as a monolithic and ductile structure. This phenomenon will be more obvious where the lateral loads (such as wind or seismic loads) becoming the design criteria.

In this study, a new type of semi-rigid ductile prefabricated reinforced concrete beam-to-column connection, patented as SMART IBS, consists of prefabricated precast reinforced concrete beam and column elements with steel end connectors was studied. Four full-scaled specimens consist of H and cruciform subframes using this connection were tested as well as their equivalent conventional monolithic specimens. Furthermore, for obtaining more detailed behaviour, nonlinear finite element analysis (NLFEA) using ABAQUS was conducted. The whole behaviour of reinforced concrete SMART IBS structure is also studied through linear analysis considering gravitational and seismic time-history loads by using SAP 2000. Load-displacement, load-strain, moment-rotation relationships, modes of failure, crack patterns, ultimate strength, ductility, stiffness and energy absorption capacity are the characteristics that made the structural behaviour of the connection comprehensible.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Industrialised Building system (IBS) construction, the success in forming a monolithic structure of moment resisting systems, depends on the execution of beam-to-column connections. Difficulties are often found in newly implemented beam-to-column connections and consequent new interaction between the jointed elements of beam and column.

In this study a new hybrid steel-concrete beam-to-column connection for joining precast reinforced concrete IBS beam and column was studied through experimental test and finite element analysis.

The features of this IBS beam-to-column connection are:

1. Easy and fast installation with fastening four bolts for every beam end
2. No wet work, the connection is not needed to any cast in-situ which is time consuming and dirty and also the dependency on foreign workers will be diminished
3. No welding work at site, results in fast and trusted construction
4. Using both benefits of steel and concrete, ductility of steel in connector regions and solidity of concrete in body of elements
5. Beam replacement ability, flexible connection properties allow the replacement and rehabilitation of damaged beams (probably through earthquake or explosion)
6. Compatibility with architecture, no salient object in the finished view
7. Simplicity of the connection, an innovative hybrid of I shape steel profile at beam ends plus cruciform and cloven box at the ends of IBS reinforced concrete columns

Due to previous full-scale tests many of typical beam-column IBS connections behave as semi-rigid connections, providing semi-continuity to the connected IBS components, reducing sagging moments due to gravity load, as well as enhancing the frame action of IBS skeletal structures. As Elliott *et al* (2004) said Codes of Practice (e.g. BS8110, EC2 and ACI 318) do not cater for these types of connections even though the design and analysis of precast structures are significantly affected by their behaviour. Also EC4, the code of design of composite steel and concrete structures, generally addresses EC3 (the code of design of steel structures) for the assessment of moment-rotation behaviour of composite steel and concrete beam-to-column connections. Although the Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute (PCI) manual (2010) contains descriptions of typical beam-to-column connections fulfilling many functions, the published test results are available for only a few of them. Besides that, each IBS connection has its exclusive arrangement of joints and elements with different materials that makes each connection's behaviour, individual. On the other hand, reliable connection behaviour can only be properly assessed by experimental tests or proven performance (Loo and Yao, 1995).

Furthermore, in most of experimental tests only the joint part of the beam-to-column connection considered by cantilever manner (cruciform subframe) loading in which a concentrated point load is applied on a part of the beam. In conclusion stated by Elliott *et al* (1998): (i) full-scale testing carried out on cruciform shaped specimens has not allowed the redistribution of hogging bending moments at the end of the beam and only hogging moments at the end points of the beams were studied in cruciform specimens and (ii) the ratio of the moment-to-shear force remains constant in cruciform models while in real structure it is not constant. In this study we modelled the whole beam and two end columns in H-shape subframe with two point loading manner enhancing the practical real loads applied on the structure, as well as cruciform one for better investigation of flexural behaviour such as strength, rigidity and ductility of beam-to-column connection.

In addition, a nonlinear finite element analysis was conducted to investigate the behaviour of this new connection subjected to permanent loads. In fact, the inherent complexity of this new hybrid steel-concrete beam-to-column connection and its connected members needs NLFEA to aid the experimental tests for better explanation of the behaviour of the connection. Furthermore, the deformation of each part of a connection will result in a new arrangement in internal forces. The nonlinear finite element analysis considers this internal forces redistribution.

The degree of rigidity of beam-to-column connection greatly affects the behaviour of the global skeletal structures against gravitational and lateral loads. This effect was investigated by performing 3D analysis of the structures by SAP 2000.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to develop an innovative hybrid steel-concrete beam-to-column connection for precast reinforced concrete Industrialised Building System using experimental and nonlinear finite element analyses.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

- i) To establish full- scale experimental laboratory tests of proposed new SMART IBS in H and cruciform subframes and to study the structural behaviour of this new IBS beam-to-column connection.
- ii) To compare the behaviour of the SMART IBS with monolithic conventional reinforced concrete beam-to-column connection through similar full-scale H and cruciform subframes experimental tests.
- iii) To carry out a nonlinear finite element analysis (NLFEA) of proposed IBS beam-to-column connection and monolithic one, using ABAQUS software application and comparison with experimental results.
- iv) To obtain the comparative global behaviour of the 3-Dimensional frames using SMART IBS and conventional reinforced concrete beam-to-column connections.

1.5 Significance of the Study

From this study, a clear understanding on the behaviour and failure mechanism of a new hybrid steel-concrete connection between beam and column in reinforced concrete Industrialised Building System (SMART IBS) is observed. The results of this study will be beneficial in understanding the performance of the connection and its role in the Industrialised Building Systems. Besides that, the

strength of the structure after erection can be predicted too. On the other hand, the safety of the structure after erection can be investigated.

1.6 Scope of the Study

In this study, the full-scale experimental tests of the new hybrid steel-concrete IBS beam-to-column connection were carried out with H and cruciform shape cut-out beam and columns (subframes). The size of the beam and column of both subframes was 300 mm x 300 mm. The H-shape subframe had a 3200 mm clear span and 3300 mm columns height. The cruciform subframe had two 1500 mm length beams in two sides of a 3300 mm column.

The static loads for H-shape and cruciform models were applied gradually in a downward vertical direction and in the form of two points load on $\frac{1}{3}$ of beam length until failure. The loading manner consisted of loading gradually until 10 %, at 2.5 % increasing steps, of calculated failure load then releasing the applied load to zero. At second stage of loading, load was applied step by step to 30 %, was at 5 % increment, of expected failure load then released gradually to zero. Finally, the load monotonically increased at 5% of steps to failure. The loads applied on cruciform shape subframe had two reverse directions at the ends of side beams. Besides that, full-scale monolithic models of those H and cruciform shape subframes constructed conventionally with the same dimensions for the purpose of comparison between IBS models and monolithic conventional ones using similar described point loads as above. The experimental procedures and results are described in chapters 3.6 and 4 respectively.

Furthermore, nonlinear finite element analysis (NLFEA) of all four models had been conducted by ABAQUS finite element software for achieving a better

understanding of structural behaviour of them. The NLFEA procedures and results are described in chapters 3.7 and 5, respectively.

Two real size IBS buildings (5-bay, 3500 mm span, 6-storeys, 3300 mm height) consisted of type I: moment resisting frame system without earthquake load and type II: improved moment resisting frame with shear wall system considering the earthquake load was analysed by SAP 2000 software. The application of this connection is focused on the typical house in Malaysia except the earthquake loads. Therefore, the non-seismic loads applied on the elements of the models were taken with reference to Eurocode 1 (2005). The lateral force method using static equivalent earthquake load was implemented based on Eurocode 8 (2008). In addition, the seismic time-history analysis was conducted using earthquake spectra of Bam earthquake in Iran and El Centro in US. The whole structures analysis procedures and results are described in chapters 3.8 and 6, respectively.

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