Engineering Structures 33 (2011) 1479-1490

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Engineering Structures

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/engstruct

Nonlinear finite element analysis of CFT-to-bracing connections subjected to axial compressive forces

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history: Received 17 January 2009 Received in revised form 27 January 2010 Accepted 21 January 2011 Available online 26 February 2011

Keywords: Concrete-filled tube Bracing Axial force Finite element analysis

ABSTRACT

The Abaqus finite element program together with nonlinear material constitutive models for concretefilled tube (CFT) and steel gusset plate is used to analyze the behaviors of the gusset plate type CFT-to-Bracing connections subjected to axial compressive forces. It is found that the failure of CFT-to-Bracing connections occurs below the connecting area. Local bulged shapes of the steel tube might take place in the areas close to the gusset plate and the fixed end under the failure stage. The ultimate strengths of the CFT columns slightly increase with the increasing of the load ratio and the thickness of the gusset plate. The introduction of the cutouts on the gusset plates slightly increases the ultimate strength of the CFT column and causes more local bulged shapes on the steel tubes below the connection area under the failure stage.

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1. Introduction

A concrete-filled tube (CFT) column consists of a steel tube filled with concrete. Due to the benefit of composite action of both materials, the CFT columns provide excellent seismic resistant structural properties such as high strength, high ductility and large energy absorption capacity. Therefore, CFT columns have gained popularity in supporting heavy loads in high-rise buildings, bridges and offshore structures. Various experimental and analytical studies have been performed on CFT columns [1–17] and special interests have been focused on the connection regions [18–24].

The aim of this investigation is to employ the nonlinear finite element program Abaqus [25] to perform numerical simulations of the gusset plate type CFT-to-bracing connections (Fig. 1) subjected to axial compressive forces P_a and P_g . To achieve this goal, proper material constitutive models for steel gusset plate, steel tube and concrete core are proposed. Then the proposed material constitutive models are verified against experimental data of Yang [26]. Finally, the influence of the thickness of the gusset plate, the cutouts on the gusset plate and the type of loading on the behavior of CFT-to-Bracing connections are studied and discussed.

2. Material properties and constitutive models

The experiment for CFT-to-bracing connections subjected to axial compressive forces (Fig. 1) was carried out by Yang [26]. There are seventeen specimens in total (Table 1). These CFT columns are subjected to compressive forces P_a and P_g to the end of the columns and the gusset plates, respectively. The tested specimens can be categorized into three groups. The first group of the CFT column contains the S specimen which has no gusset plate at all. The S specimen is subjected to axial compressive force P_a to the end only. The second group of the CFT columns contains the P specimens. The first number after P is the thickness of the gusset plate (in mm), which could be 12, 24 and 36. The second number after P is the load ratio $P_a/(P_a + P_g)$ in terms of percentage. For example, P24-67 specimen stands for CFT column having a gusset plate with 24 mm thickness and a load ratio $P_a/(P_a + P_g) = 67\%$. The third group of the CFT columns contains the PH specimens. Same as the P specimens, the first number after PH is the thickness of the gusset plate and the second number after PH is the load ratio. However, the gusset plates of the PH specimens contain circular cutouts. The 24 mm gusset plate has 2 circular holes and the 36 mm gusset plate has 3 circular holes. The dimensions and positions of these holes on the gusset plates are shown in Fig. 2. From Table 1, we can observe that the length H of the S specimen is equal to 795 mm. The length of the rest P and PH specimens is equal to 1590 mm. The diameter D and the thickness t of all the tubes are equal to 265 mm and 7 mm, respectively.





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^{0141-0296/\$ –} see front matter 0 2011 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved. doi:10.1016/j.engstruct.2011.01.018