EXPERIMENTAL INVESTIGATION OF LAMINAR FLOW OF LUBRICANT OIL THROUGH A TRANSPARENT TUBE

A thesis report submitted to the department of mechanical engineering for the partial fulfillment of the degree of Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering.

A Thesis by -

Name:	Student ID:
Topu Sarker	ME2102024527
Musa Karim Suvo	BME2001020425
Ahsanul Hasan	ME2102024501
Abdur Rahim Nakib	ME2102024562
Shaker Hossen	ME2102024547
Saiful Islam	ME2003022017

.....

Supervisor

Md. Minhaz Uddin
Assistant Professor
Mechanical Engineering



DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING SONARGAON UNIVERSITY (SU)
Dhaka, Bangladesh

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APPROVAL

This is to certify that the project on "EXPERIMENTAL INVESTIGATION OF LAMINAR FLOW OF LUBRICANT OIL THROUGH A TRANSPARENT TUBE" By **Abdur Rahim Nakib (ID No: ME2102024562), Musa Karim Suvo (ID No:BME2001020425), Ahsanul Hasan (ID No:ME2102024501), Topu Sarker (ID No:ME2102024**527), **Shaker Hossen (ID No:ME2102024547), Saiful Islam (ID No: ME2003022017) has been carried out under our supervision. The project has been carried out in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Mechanical Engineering of years of 2023 and has been approved as to its style and contents.**

……..
Md. Minhaz Uddin
Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering
Sonargaon University (SU)

DECLARATION

We, here by declare that the work presented in this project is the outcome of the investigation and research work performed by us under the supervision of **Md. Minhaz Uddin**, Assistant Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Sonargaon University (SU). We also declare that no part of this project and thesis has been or is being submitted elsewhere for the award of any degree.

Topu Sarker
ID: ME2102024527

Musa Karim Suvo
ID: BME2001020425

Ahsanul Hasan
ID: ME2102024501

Abdur Rahim Nakib
ID: ME2102024562

Shaker Hossen
ID: ME2102024547

Saiful Islam
ID: ME2003022017

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Authors

Topu Sarker

Musa Karim Suvo

Ahsanul Hasan

Abdur Rahim Nakib

Shaker Hossen

Saiful Islam

ABSTRACT

Fluid is a substance that flows no matter how little the stresses. It has both laminar and turbulent pattern depending on flowing fluid. Reynolds formula is a means of distinguishing the type of flow depending on the flow Reynolds number, Re < 2000 (laminar flow), Re >4000 (turbulence flow) and Re between 2000 and 4000 gives a critical region. It has several applications both in science and engineering field. This paper investigates some important works done on numerical analysis and modeling of laminar flow in pipe. This review is focused on some methods of approach and the analytic tools used in analyzing of the important parameters to be considered in laminar flow such as viscosity, velocity, flow rate, density of fluid and pipe shape. This work was done considering a given form of pipe configuration or shape which is circular pipe & no friction.

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CHAPTER 01: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Background

Laminar flow is a fundamental concept in fluid mechanics, characterized by smooth, orderly fluid motion where layers of the fluid move parallel to each other without significant mixing or turbulence. This type of flow is governed by well-defined principles, making it essential for understanding and optimizing numerous engineering and industrial applications. One significant application is the transport of lubricant oil in mechanical systems, where maintaining a laminar flow ensures efficient operation, reduced friction, and minimized energy losses.

Lubricant oils, primarily used in machinery and automotive systems, reduce wear and tear on components by creating a thin film between moving parts. The flow behavior of lubricant oils within conduits, such as pipelines or channels, is crucial in ensuring that the oil reaches every part of the system effectively. This behavior is influenced by the viscosity of the oil, the dimensions of the conduit, and the flow conditions. For many lubrication systems, it is desirable to operate in the laminar flow regime to maintain a stable and predictable fluid motion, avoiding turbulence that can disrupt lubrication efficiency.

Relevance of Laminar Flow :

The study of laminar flow in cylindrical tubes has significant theoretical and practical importance. Theoretical models, such as the Hagen-Poiseuille law, describe how pressure drop, flow rate, and fluid properties are interrelated under laminar flow conditions. These models are invaluable for designing systems that rely on the precise control of fluid flow, including lubrication systems, microfluidic devices, and biomedical equipment. Understanding the behavior of lubricant oil under laminar flow conditions also enables engineers to optimize system performance, reduce maintenance costs, and enhance the longevity of machinery.

Laminar Flow in Transparent Tubes :

Investigating laminar flow in transparent tubes provides an opportunity to visually observe the fluid motion, analyze velocity profiles, and validate theoretical predictions. Transparent tubes allow for the use of visualization techniques, such as dye injection or particle tracking, to directly observe the flow behavior. This approach facilitates a better understanding of the flow dynamics and offers a tangible demonstration of the concepts described by fluid mechanics theories.

1.2 Reynolds number formulas

Laminar flow in a cylindrical pipe is primarily governed by the Reynolds number (Re), a dimensionless parameter defined as:

$$Re = \rho VD/\mu$$

Where,

ρ is the fluid density (kg/m^3),

V is the average fluid velocity (m/s)

D is the diameter of the pipe (m)

μ is the dynamic viscosity of the fluid (Pa·s)

For $Re<2000$, the flow is generally considered laminar. Under such conditions, the fluid flows in parallel layers with minimal mixing, resulting in a parabolic velocity profile. The velocity is highest at the centerline of the pipe and decreases gradually toward the pipe walls, where it becomes zero due to the no-slip condition.

Lubricant Oil Properties and Their Role in Laminar Flow :

Lubricant oils are typically viscous fluids with properties that can vary significantly based on their composition and temperature. Viscosity (μ), the measure of a fluid's resistance to deformation, plays a critical role in determining whether the flow will remain laminar or transition to turbulence. For a given pressure gradient, higher viscosity oils tend to flow more slowly, requiring careful control to maintain laminar flow.

The temperature dependency of lubricant oil viscosity adds another layer of complexity. As temperature increases, the viscosity of most oils decreases, potentially increasing the Reynolds number and causing a shift toward turbulent flow. Understanding these factors is essential for designing systems where lubricant oils are used, ensuring that the flow remains within the desired regime under varying operating conditions

1.3 Proposed Method

In this modern time, the innovation is gone to a higher level development. In this project the system is proposed to Investigate of Laminar flow of lubricant oil through a transplant tube.The working of this project is easy to explain and less costly. how properties like viscosity and density affect the flow of lubricants under laminar conditions.

1.4 Objective

- To study about laminar flow.
- To study about the functions of parameters like Reynolds number, Fluids properties.
- To measure Reynolds number for a specific experimental setup.

This thesis provides a practical foundation for understanding fluid dynamics and prepares students for industrial applications, research, and further studies in mechanical and chemical engineering

CHAPTER 02: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Literature Review

Research in the area of laminar flow control dates backs in 1930's when early applications of stability theory led to the observation that laminar boundary layers can be stabilized by either favorable pressure gradients or small amount of wall suction. Research was performed in many countries to explore approaches for achieving extensive laminar flow this concept. Stabilization of boundary layer disturbances and instabilities by pressure gradient and shaping became known as Natural Laminar Flow (NLF) and NACA research let to the development of six-series NFL airfoil. International research on stabilization by suction referred to as LFC with suction was intensive at the same time and culminated in the USA in the year of 1960 with flight test of a relatively unswept suction glove on an F-94 aircraft and the X-21 flight tests of a totally new swept LFC wing on a reconfigured WB-66 aircraft. Little laminar flow research was conducted from the mid-1960's to the mid 1970's. However, as a result of increased aircraft fuel costs by the Arab Oil Embargo of the early 1970's, NASA again resumed laminar flow control research in 1976 as a part of the Aircraft Energy Efficiency Program (ACEE); this research was later continued under the Research and Technology Base Program is the subject of this NASA symposium on Natural Laminar Flow and Laminar flow control research. Under the NASA Laminar Flow Program, computational, wind-tunnel, flight, and systems research is being focused at providing the required data base and design methodology to reduce the risks associated with both near- and far-term applications of laminar flow technology. Two approaches are being emphasized to delay the transition process and maintain laminar flow beyond the usual transition Reynolds numbers of 4 x 10^o or less: i.e., natural laminar flow (NLF) which uses favorable pressure gradients and shaping and laminar flow control with suction (LFC) through slotted or perforated surfaces.

Laminar flow control with suction is more complex but will probably be required to some extent in order to achieve extensive laminar flow beyond chord Reynolds numbers of about 20 x 10^o and for wing sweep angles in excess of about 20-25°. [1]

A number of classic experimental works on Newtonian fluids (Darbyshire & Mullin, Citation 1995; Lindgren, Citation1969; Nishi et al., Citation2008; Wygnanski et al., Citation1975, Wygnanski & Champagne, Citation1973) and non-Newtonian fluids (Draad et al., Citation1998; Güzel, Burghelea, et al, Citation2009) have focused on studying the transitional regime and have shown that two distinct flow structures exist: puffs and slugs. [2]

Hedstrom (Citation1952) proposed the intersection method wherein the transition is defined as to occur at the Reynolds number associated with the intersection of the (extrapolated) laminar and turbulent friction factor curves. Although simple, the result is highly dependent on the choice and accuracy of the turbulent model (friction factor curves, e.g. Blasius friction curve) and is regarded as an ambiguous criterion [3]. The occurrence of these structures depends on the Reynolds number (Re-VD/υ); puffs occur at relatively low Reynolds numbers and slugs at a higher Reynolds numbers. Although the transition information on non-Newtonian fluids is very limited, a great amount of information is obtained for Newtonian fluids, through the experimental studies performed in circular pipes that have already been mentioned, it is seen that puffs are found when $Re \leq 2000$ and slugs are found when $Re \geq 4000$ [4]. Metzner and Reed (Citation1955) analyzed data from a series of pipe flow experiments of different non-Newtonian fluids and pointed out that the flow curves deviated from the laminar flow curve at approximately the same Reynolds number Re as Newtonian fluids. [5]

For Newtonian fluids, transition can be predicted in practical applications based on the well-established critical Reynolds number (2100-2300 for pipe flows). Although Re 2300 is usually referred as the critical Reynolds number for transition to turbulence, under controlled conditions, the laminar pipe flow can be maintained for much higher Reynolds number (Hof et al., 2003). [6]

There is a wide range of theories and models available to predict this onset of transition (Avila et al., 2011; Eckhardt et al., 2007), and such a range is due to the difficulty that transition as a phenomenon is not very well defined and occurs over a range of Reynolds numbers (Darbyshire & Mullin, 1995; Draad et al., 1998). For non-Newtonian fluids, a complicating factor is the representation of the fluid behavior in simple rheological models. The commonly used rheological models are the power-law and the Herschel-Bulkley model (Thota Radhakrishnan et al., 2018), which will also form a basis for this study. [7].

The nonlinear partial differential equations describing all general flow fields are called Navier-Stokes equations. In non-dimensional form these equations depend on the Reynolds number, which determines the effect of the viscosity in the flow. The higher the Reynolds number, the lower are the viscosity effects on the flow. The boundary-layer theory is the asymptotic theory of the Navier-Stokes equations for high Reynolds numbers [8].

CHAPTER 03: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology

The experimental setup used to observe laminar flow is described in detail, including equipment, materials, and procedures. Emphasis is placed on the measurement techniques employed to quantify flow characteristics and parameters.

3.2 Materials & Equipment

Lubricant Oil : 15W-40

15W-40 lubricant oil is a multi-grade oil commonly used in automotive and industrial applications. Its viscosity changes with temperature, ensuring reliable performance in a wide range of operating conditions. The key properties of 15W-40 oil relevant to this experiment include.

Dynamic Viscosity (μ):

- At 40°C: ~110cSt (centistokes).
- At 100°C: ~14.5 cSt.
- The viscosity decreases with increasing temperature, as expected for all oils, requiring precise temperature control during the experiment.

Density (ρ):

- Approximately: 850 - 880 kg/m^3

Temperature Sensitivity:

- The “15W” indicates the oil’s viscosity at cold temperatures (winter), while “40” indicates its viscosity at high temperatures.

Thermal Stability:

- Resistant to thermal degradation, ensuring consistent performance during prolonged experimental runs.

Transparent Tube : Polycarbonate tubes.



Figure 3.1: Transparent Tube

Material

Reason for Selection :

- Transparency allows for visual observation of flow.
- High chemical resistance to lubricant oil.
- Durability and structural stability under experimental conditions.

Dimensions :

- Inner Diameter (ID):Typically 8 mm for precise flow visualization and Reynolds number calculation.
- Wall Thickness: 2 mm, ensuring durability while maintaining transparency.
- Length (L): providing enough length for fully developed laminar flow to occur.

Key Features :

- Smooth Inner Surface:Reduces surface irregularities, ensuring consistent laminar flow without disturbances.
- Chemical Resistance:Acrylic or borosilicate glass resists degradation from 15W-40 oil.

Temperature Tolerance :

Mounting and Sealing :

- Mounting: Secured horizontally using clamps and stands to ensure stability.
- Sealing: O-rings and gaskets at both ends to prevent oil leakage and maintain system integrity.

Relevance to Experiment

The transparent tube allows real-time observation of flow patterns, facilitating the analysis of velocity profiles and flow characteristics. Its uniform diameter ensures accurate measurements of flow rate, pressure drop, and Reynolds number.

Pump : 12V DC Pump.

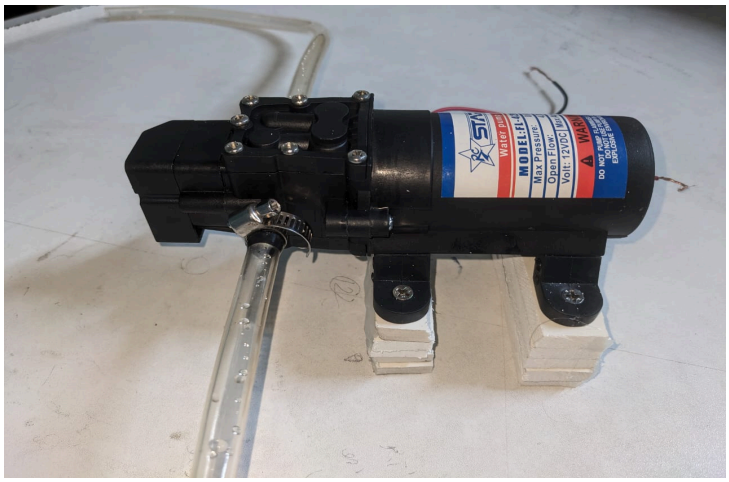


Figure 3.2: 12 volt DC pump

Pump Specifications :

- Voltage: Operates on standard 12V DC power, suitable for battery or power adapter use.
- Power: 30–60 Watts (typical). Provides sufficient torque to drive the pump.
- Current: 3–6 Amps. Ensures compatibility with most DC power supplies.
- Construction: Brushed or brushless type depending on efficiency and cost considerations. Durable housing to handle continuous operation.

Features and Advantages

- Compact Design: Lightweight and easy to integrate into the experimental setup.
- Variable Flow Control:Speed control via a DC motor controller allows precise adjustment of flow rate to ensure laminar flow.
- Durability: Long operational life with proper cooling and lubrication.
- Electrical Requirements
- Power Supply: A 12V DC regulated power supply or battery with sufficient capacity to support continuous operation.
- Wiring: Ensure proper insulation and connection to avoid voltage drops.

Stop watch :

A digital stopwatch with an accuracy of ±0.01 seconds is used to measure the time required to collect a specific volume of lubricant oil for flow rate verification. It features a large display, Start/Stop/Reset functionality, and is powered by a battery (e.g., CR2032). The stopwatch provides a manual backup to cross-check the flowmeter by calculating flow rate using the



Figure 3.3: Stop Watch

Formula,

$$Q = V/t$$

Where Q is flow rate, V is volume, and t is time. Durable and resistant to oil splashes, it ensures precise timing during the experiment.

Weight machine :

A digital weight machine with a precision of ±0.1 grams is used to measure the mass of lubricant oil collected during the experiment. It helps verify the flow rate by converting mass to volume using the oil's density.



Figure 3.4: Weight machine

Formula,

$$V = m/\rho$$

Where V is volume, m is mass, and ρ is density. The weight machine should have a capacity of at least 10 kg and feature a tare function to account for container weight. Compact and reliable, it ensures accurate measurements.

Measurements Cup : 500 ML glass cup**.**



Figure 3.5: Measurements Cup

Specifications

- Material: Glass or clear plastic for chemical resistance to lubricant oil.
- Capacity: 500 ml, depending on expected flow rates and measurement needs.
- Graduations: Clearly marked, with a resolution of 100 mL or finer for precise volume readings.
- Shape: Cylindrical or conical for easy pouring and accurate readings.
- Durability: Oil-resistant, shatterproof, and lightweight for convenient handling.

Relevance to Experiment

Used to collect lubricant oil during flow rate measurements.

Ensures accurate volume measurements for calculating flow rate (Q=V/t).

Transparent design allows easy observation of oil levels during the experiment

PVC Frame : Standard polyvinyl chloride (40*30 mm) Dimensions.

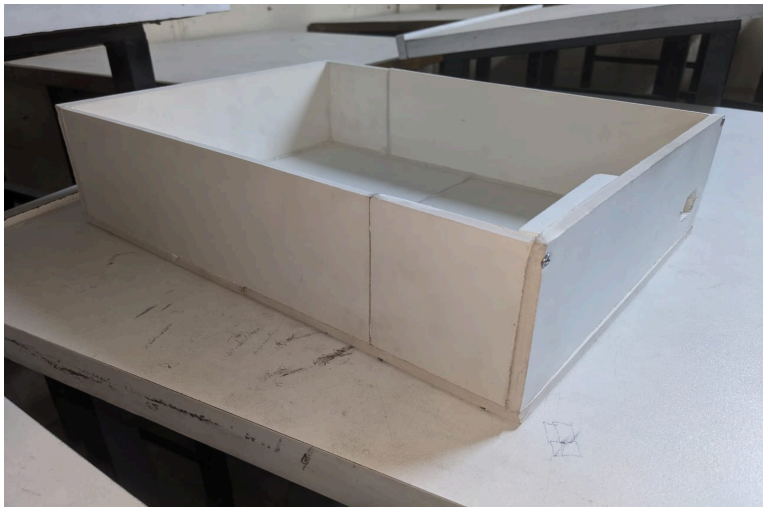


Figure 3.6: PVC Frame

Specifications

- Customizable based on the size of the setup.
- Typical dimensions: Length: 40 cm (to support the tube),
- Width: 30 cm
- Height: 10 cm
- Joints and Connectors: Elbows, T-joints, and couplers for assembling the frame.

- Use PVC adhesive for added stability.
- Base Support: Reinforced with cross-bracing or weighted feet to prevent movement during operation.
- Mounting Clamps: Attached to the frame for securely holding the transparent tube.
- Hooks or Holders: To support auxiliary equipment like a flowmeter, pressure gauges.

Advantages

- Lightweight: Easy to transport and assemble.
- Cost-Effective: Inexpensive compared to metal frames.
- Customizable: Can be tailored to fit the experimental layout.
- Durable: Resistant to corrosion and compatible with lubricant oil spills.
- Relevance to Experiment

The PVC frame ensures that all components remain securely aligned during operation, reducing vibration and maintaining accurate flow and pressure measurements

3.3 Selected Fluid properties

Brand Name	Mark Diamond
Properties of Fluid	Value
Density	850 kg/m^3
Kinematic viscosity at 40°C	110 (mm^2/sec)

Table 3.1: Fluid Properties

3.4 Complete Project Prototype Image



Figure 3.7: Complete Project Picture (top View).



Figure 3.8: Complete Project Picture (Font View)

CHAPTER 04: WORKING PRINCIPLE

4.1 Working Principle

First fill the container with desired fluid. After that, supplying electric power to the DC pump motor will cause the pump to flow the fluid from the container through the calculable pipe. The fluid will flow from the container through the pipe and back to the container in a cyclic way. Initially it may create few bubbles but after running the pump few times it will be a clear laminar flow.

Use a stopwatch to collect data at different times and collect the flowing fluid in a jar at selected times. Then measure the mass of the fluid and calculate Flow rate. Then calculate the velocity using the flow rate by the collected fluid. Takes at least 3 data for each period and calculates the velocity. Then calculate the Reynolds number, if it is below 2000, the flow is laminar.

CHAPTER 05: RESULT AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Data collection :

Data no	Time (sec)	Weight (kg)	Fluid Density (Kg/m^3)	Flow rate (m^3/sec)
1	5	0.062	850	$14.58*10^{-6}$
2	5	0.0625	850	$14.70*10^{-6}$
3	5	0.0623	850	$14.64*10^{-6}$

Table 5.1: Data collection for 5 sec

Data no	Time (sec)	Weight (kg)	Fluid Density (Kg/m^3)	Flow rate (m^3/sec)
1	10	0.120	850	$14.11*10^{-6}$
2	10	0.122	850	$14.35*10^{-6}$
3	10	0.121	850	$14.23*10^{-6}$

Table 5.2: Data collection for 10 sec

Data no	Time (sec)	Weight (kg)	Fluid Density (Kg/m^3)	Flow rate (m^3/sec)
1	20	0.245	850	$14.41*10^{-6}$
2	20	0.246	850	$14.47*10^{-6}$
3	20	0.244	850	$14.35*10^{-6}$

Table 5.3: Data collection for 20 sec

5.2 Mathematical Calculation :

As Laminar flow depands on various parameters and obeys Reynolds Number here we obtained Re as Below calculation

1. Pipe Inner Diameter D = 8 mm = 0.008m
2. Area A = $\pi * \frac{D^2}{4} = \pi * \frac{(0.008)^2}{4} = 5.02 * 10^{-5}$ m²

   Provided Kinematic viscosity of the Oil υ = 110 $\frac{mm^2}{sec}$

   = 110*10^{-6} m^2/sec

Now we obtain the velocity by using measured flow rate in different times,

For 5 sec,

Velocity,

$V_1 = Q_1/A$
$=14.58*10^{-6}/5.02*10^{-5}$
=0.2904 m/sec

$V_2 = Q_2/A$
$=14.70*10^{-6}/5.02*10^{-5}$
=0.2928 m/sec

$V_3 = Q_3/A$
$=14.64*10^{-6}/5.02*10^{-5}$
=0.2916 m/sec

For 10 sec,

Velocity,

$V_1 = Q_1/A$
$=14.11*10^{-6}/5.02*10^{-5}$
=0.2810 m/sec

$V_2 = Q_2/A$
$=14.35*10^{-6}/5.02*10^{-5}$
=0.2858 m/sec

$V_3 = Q_3/A$
$=14.23*10^{-6}/5.02*10^{-5}$
=0.2834 m/sec

For 20 sec,

Velocity,

$V_1 = Q_1/A$
$=14.41*10^{-6}/5.02*10^{-5}$
$=0.2870$ m/sec

$V_2 = Q_2/A$
$=14.47*10^{-6}/5.02*10^{-5}$
$=0.2882$ m/sec

$V_3 = Q_3/A$
$=14.35*10^{-6}/5.02*10^{-5}$
$=0.2858$ m/sec

5.2 Mathematical Calculation :

So, the Reynold's Number is = VD/υ

For 5 sec,

$Re_1 = V_1D/\upsilon$
$= 0.2904 * 0.008/110*10^{-6}$
$= 21.12$

$Re_2 = V_2D/\upsilon$
$= 0.2928 * 0.008/110*10^{-6}$
$= 21.29$

$Re_3 = V_3D/\upsilon$
$= 0.2916*0.008/110*10^{-6}$
$= 21.20$

For 10 sec,

$Re_1 = V_1D/\upsilon$
$= 0.2810*0.008/110*10^{-6}$
$= 21.16$

$Re_2 = V_2D/\upsilon$
$= 0.2858*0.008/110*10^{-6}$
$= 20.78$

$Re_3 = V_3D/\upsilon$
$= 0.2836*0.008/110*10^{-6}$
$= 20.62$

For 20 sec,

$Re_1 = V_1 D/\upsilon$

$= 0.2870 * 0.008/110 * 10^{-6}$

$= 20.87$

$Re_2 = V_2 D/\upsilon$

$= 0.2882 * 0.008/110 * 10^{-6}$

$= 20.96$

$Re_3 = V_3 D/\upsilon$

$= 0.2858 * 0.008/110 * 10^{-6}$

$= 20.78$

The obtained Reynold's number is smaller than 2000 , so flow is laminar.

5.4 Discussion :

The experimental investigation confirmed that the flow of lubricant oil remained laminar at low flow rates, as indicated by a Reynolds number below 2000. The observed parabolic velocity profile aligned with theoretical expectations. Poiseuille's law was validated, showing that the pressure drop correlated with flow rate and viscosity, as predicted.

Temperature affected the oil's viscosity, with higher temperatures leading to increased flow rates. This underlined the importance of temperature control in lubrication systems. While the results largely matched theory, small discrepancies arose from frictional losses and measurement inaccuracies.

Overall, the experiment reinforced the principles of laminar flow and demonstrated the practical relevance of fluid properties in designing efficient lubrication and pipeline systems.

5.4 Cost Analysis

Sl. No.	Product name	Specification	QTY	Unit price	Total price
1	Pump	DC	1	600	600
2	Weight machine	10 kg	1	400	400
3	Transparent tube	2 ft	2	180	360
4	Stop watch	Digital	1	350	350
5	Measurement cup	500 ml	1	480	480
6	Frame	PVC	6	600	600
				Total	**2790৳**

Table 01 : Cost analysis

CHAPTER 06: CONCLUSION

6.1Conclusion :

The experimental investigation of the laminar flow of lubricant oil through a transparent tube provides valuable insights into fluid behavior under controlled conditions. By validating theoretical models like Poiseuille's law and the Reynolds number, this project bridges the gap between theory and practical application.

The findings emphasize the impact of fluid properties, such as viscosity and density, on flow characteristics, while also highlighting the effect of temperature on these properties. This study not only enhances understanding of laminar flow but also equips engineers with the knowledge to design efficient lubrication and pipeline systems in industrial applications.

In conclusion, this project demonstrates the importance of experimental methods in verifying fluid mechanics principles and their relevance to real-world systems.,,

6.2 Future Scope:

Laminar Flow Isolators, advanced containment systems used in pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries, create a controlled environment to prevent contamination during processes such as drug manufacturing and sterile compounding. These isolators maintain a unidirectional airflow to ensure clean workspace by removing airborne particles and microorganisms. Opportunities in the Laminar Flow Isolator market are abundant, driven primnarily by the stringent regulatory requirements in pharmaceutical and biotechnology sectors worldwide. As industries strive for higher levels of product quality and safety, the demand for advanced containment solutions like laminar flow isolators continues to grow. Additionally, the increasing focus on research and development activities in the healthcare sector, particularly in biopharmaceuticals, further fuels market expansion.

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