ENHANCHING STRENGTH AND DURABILITY OF CONCRETE USING NANO-CALCIUM CARBONATE ($CaCO_3$) AND SODIUM CARBONATE (Na_2CO_3) AS CEMENT ADDITIVES

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A thesis submitted to the Department of Civil Engineering in partial fulfillment for the degree of Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering



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It is hereby declared that this thesis/project or any part of it has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of any degree or diploma.

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Dedicated

to

“Our beloved parents and respected teachers,
whose unwavering support and guidance inspired this journey.**”**

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the influence of nano-calcium carbonate ($CaCO_3$) and sodium carbonate (Na_2CO_3) as cement additives on the compressive strength of concrete, aiming to enhance durability in the saline environments typical of coastal Bangladesh. Three concrete mixes were tested: a control mix (Mix 1) with no additives, Mix 2 with 22 g Na_2CO_3 and 88 g nano-$CaCO_3$, and Mix 3 with 88 g Na_2CO_3 and 132 g nano-$CaCO_3$. A total of 18 cylindrical specimens (100 mm × 200 mm) were cast, with 9 cured for 7 days and 9 for 28 days, and tested per ASTM C39. At 7 days, the control mix achieved the highest strength at 3584 psi (24.72 MPa), while Mix 2 and Mix 3 showed reduced strengths of 3079 psi (21.23 MPa) and 2650 psi (18.28 MPa), respectively, indicating early hydration challenges due to the additives. However, by 28 days, Mix 2 exhibited a remarkable strength gain, reaching 5198 psi (30.34 MPa)—surpassing the control's 5120 psi (35.31 MPa)—while Mix 3 remained lower at 3785 psi (26.10 MPa). These findings suggest that while high additive doses (Mix 3) consistently impair strength, a moderate dosage (Mix 2) can enhance long-term performance, likely due to improved hydration and microstructural refinement by nano-$CaCO_3$. This study provides valuable insights for designing salt-tolerant concrete mixes, offering a practical solution for coastal infrastructure in Bangladesh by balancing early-stage limitations with significant 28-day strength gains.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Motivations

Concrete durability in harsh environments, such as the saline conditions of coastal Bangladesh, remains a critical challenge for infrastructure development. High salinity accelerates the corrosion of reinforcement and degradation of concrete, leading to reduced service life and increased maintenance costs. In Bangladesh, where coastal regions like Cox's Bazar and Khulna face frequent exposure to seawater and salt-laden air, the need for resilient concrete is urgent. Traditional concrete mixes often fail to withstand such conditions, prompting research into additives that can enhance long-term performance without compromising structural integrity. Nano-calcium carbonate ($CaCO_3$) and sodium carbonate (Na_2CO_3) have emerged as potential additives due to their ability to influence cement hydration and improve microstructural properties. However, their impact on compressive strength, especially in saline environments, is not well understood.

This study was motivated by the need to develop a concrete mix that can resist saline degradation while maintaining adequate strength for structural applications. The problem lies in balancing early-stage strength requirements with long-term durability, as additives may delay hydration and reduce initial strength. This research is important because it addresses a practical issue affecting coastal infrastructure, aiming to provide empirical data for engineers designing salt-tolerant concrete. The study was undertaken to investigate how nano-$CaCO_3$ and Na_2CO_3 affect concrete compressive strength at 7 and 28 days, with a focus on identifying an optimal additive dosage for saline conditions.

1.2 Research Objectives and Overview

The primary objective of this research is to evaluate the effect of nano-calcium carbonate ($CaCO_3$) and sodium carbonate (Na_2CO_3) as cement additives on the compressive strength of concrete in saline environments. Specifically, the study aims to:

- Determine the compressive strength of concrete mixes with varying additive dosages at 7 and 28 days.
- Assess the suitability of these additives for structural concrete in coastal regions of Bangladesh.
- Identify an optimal additive mix that balances early-stage strength with long-term durability.

The scope of this research includes preparing three concrete mixes: a control mix with no additives (Mix 1), a mix with 22 g Na_2CO_3 and 88 g nano-$CaCO_3$ (Mix 2), and a mix with 88 g Na_2CO_3 and 132 g nano-$CaCO_3$ (Mix 3). A total of 18 cylindrical specimens (100 mm × 200 mm) were tested per ASTM C39. The study focuses on compressive strength and does not include other properties like tensile strength or permeability. The central contribution of this work lies in its finding that a moderate additive dosage (Mix 2) can achieve a 28-day strength (5198 psi) that surpasses the control (5120 psi), despite lower 7-day strength (3079 psi vs. 3584 psi). This is significant for coastal applications, as it suggests a practical solution for enhancing long-term durability. Expected outcomes include empirical data to guide material selection and recommendations for optimizing additive use in saline environments.

1.3 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is structured into five chapters, each addressing a specific aspect of the research:

Chapter 1: Introduction. This chapter provides the background and motivations for studying the impact of nano-$CaCO_3$ and Na_2CO_3 on concrete in saline environments. It also outlines the research objectives, scope, and expected outcomes.

Chapter 2: Literature Review. This chapter reviews existing studies on concrete additives, with a special focus on the use of nano-materials and carbonates in enhancing durability in saline conditions.

Chapter 3: Methodology. This chapter describes the experimental methodology, including material selection, mix design, specimen preparation, and compressive strength testing procedures.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion. This chapter presents the results of the compressive strength tests at 7 and 28 days, analyzing the performance of additive mixes compared to the control, with a focus on Mix 2's improved 28-day strength.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Future Work. This chapter summarizes the key findings, highlights the study's contributions to salt-tolerant concrete design, and suggests directions for future research, such as exploring other additive combinations or long-term durability tests.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the relevant literature on the effects of chemical additives—specifically sodium carbonate (Na_2CO_3) and calcium-based compounds—on the performance of concrete. The discussion is organized into four key areas to provide clarity on the research landscape and position the current thesis within it.

2.1.1 Effect of Salts on Cement Hydration and Concrete Strength

The hydration of Portland cement involves complex chemical reactions, primarily resulting in the formation of calcium silicate hydrate (C-S-H), which is responsible for concrete's mechanical strength. When salts are introduced into the cementitious system—either as part of the mix or from external sources—they can interfere with this hydration process.

Sodium carbonate (Na_2CO_3)**,** although less studied than sodium chloride or sulfate, plays a significant role in altering hydration chemistry. Research by Taylor (1997) and Neville (2011) (Zhang, 2020) has shown that Na_2CO_3 acts as a setting accelerator in small doses by increasing the availability of carbonate ions that form early-stage calcium carbonate. However, this can also lead to the premature precipitation of $CaCO_3$, thereby impeding the formation of strength-giving hydrates like C-S-H and calcium aluminate hydrates (C-A-H). This results in porous microstructures and lower compressive strength over time.

Studies such as Irassar et al. (2009) (Irassar, 2009) demonstrated that while Na_2CO_3 may improve setting times under specific conditions, it generally causes a reduction in long-term strength, particularly when used in higher concentrations. These effects are exacerbated in the presence of calcium ions, which tend to react with carbonates to form expansive phases.

2.1.2 Role of Calcium-Based Additives in Concrete

Calcium compounds, including calcium carbonate ($CaCO_3$) and calcium hydroxide ($Ca(OH)_2$), are often used to improve the physical structure and early strength development in concrete. These materials are commonly employed as fillers to enhance particle packing or to adjust the pH of the mix. However, their interaction with other salts in the concrete matrix can have mixed consequences.

Research by Hooton and Thomas (Thomas et al., 2012) revealed that finely ground limestone ($CaCO_3$) could slightly enhance early strength without negatively affecting long-term durability when used in low percentages. Nevertheless, excessive calcium content, particularly in the presence of carbonate or sulfate ions, has been associated with the formation of ettringite and thaumasite—two compounds known for causing internal expansion and delayed cracking.

Moreover, calcium-based additives can catalyze rapid reactions when combined with alkali salts like Na_2CO_3. This interaction is not thoroughly covered in existing literature, indicating a need for controlled experimental evaluation, such as the one undertaken in this thesis.

2.1.3 Concrete Performance in Coastal and Marine Environments

Concrete structures in coastal zones are subject to continuous exposure to saline water, salt-laden air, and humidity—conditions that accelerate deterioration through chloride ingress, corrosion of embedded steel, and sulfate attack. Bangladesh's extensive coastline and deltaic regions make such environmental challenges particularly relevant for local construction practices.

While extensive research has focused on mitigating external salt exposure using coatings or supplementary cementitious materials (e.g., fly ash, silica fume), limited attention has been paid to internal salt contamination—a more subtle but equally damaging issue. For instance, mix water sourced from saline groundwater, or aggregates contaminated with salts, can introduce sodium and calcium ions into the concrete during mixing itself.

This early-stage contamination can alter the hydration environment, increase the risk of expansive reactions, and compromise strength development before the structure is even exposed to external conditions. As Mehta and Monteiro (2014) note, the long-term durability of concrete is highly sensitive to its early curing conditions and material purity—making it essential to investigate how internal salt presence affects performance from day one.

2.1.4 Research Gaps and Opportunities

From the literature reviewed, several critical gaps emerge:

1. Lack of comprehensive studies on sodium carbonate's dual role as an early-set accelerator and a long-term strength reducer.
2. Limited research on combined additive effects, particularly the interaction between Na_2CO_3 and calcium-based materials in realistic field concentrations.
3. Scarcity of studies conducted under conditions representative of coastal Bangladesh, where materials are often exposed to natural salt contamination during sourcing and construction.
4. Insufficient empirical data on mid-term strength development (7–28 days) in salt-contaminated concrete, despite this being a crucial period for structural gain.

These gaps justify the current research, which specifically targets the influence of Na_2CO_3 and calcium additives on 7-day and 28-day compressive strength, using concrete mixes that replicate field-relevant additive dosages and environmental conditions.

2.2 Summary

This chapter reviewed the key findings from existing literature regarding the effects of sodium and calcium salts on concrete properties. While some studies recognize Na_2CO_3 as a setting accelerator, the majority reveal that it adversely affects compressive strength, especially in higher concentrations. Calcium-based additives also show mixed performance depending on their interaction with other ions and dosage levels. The

literature highlights a clear research gap in evaluating the combined effects of Na_2CO_3 and calcium additives on concrete strength under environmental conditions specific to coastal areas like Bangladesh. The next chapter addresses these gaps by detailing the experimental methodology designed to evaluate the compressive strength behavior of additive-containing concrete at both 7 and 28 days.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework used to investigate the impact of sodium carbonate (Na_2CO_3) and calcium-based additives on the compressive strength of concrete. The aim is to ensure the study is reproducible by clearly detailing the materials, mix designs, equipment, experimental procedures, and data analysis techniques used. The methodology was designed to simulate the field conditions in coastal regions of Bangladesh, where salt contamination in construction materials is a common challenge. By controlling the concentration of additives and monitoring the strength development over time, the research aims to determine the thresholds at which these additives begin to degrade structural performance. This chapter also discusses the limitations and assumptions made during the experimental phase.



Figure 3.1: Preparation of Cylinder

3.2 Methodology Overview

This research followed a systematic experimental approach to evaluate the compressive strength of concrete with varying levels of chemical additives. The overall

methodology consisted of material selection, mix proportioning, casting of specimens, curing under standard conditions, compressive strength testing at 7 and 28 days, and data analysis. Figure 3.2 presents an overview of the methodology.

The experimental process includes selection of raw materials, preparation of three concrete mix designs (one control and two chemically modified), followed by specimen casting, water curing for 7 and 28 days, and compressive strength testing using a universal testing machine. The results are analyzed to determine how additive concentration influences compressive performance.

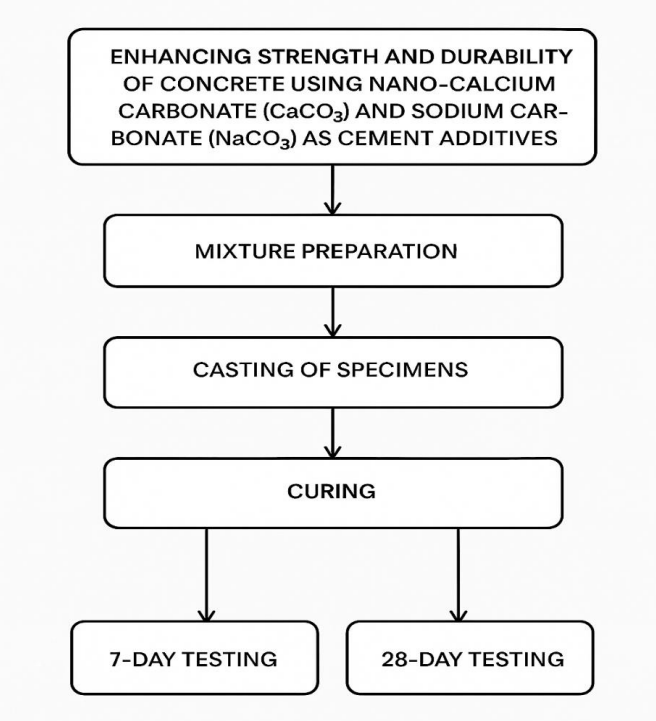


Figure 3.2: Procedural Flow

3.2.1 Materials Used

Materials or Additives those are the primary elements of this research are in Figure 3.3.



Figure 3.3: Fine Aggregate



Figure 3.4: Coarse Aggregate

1. Cement**:** Ordinary Portland Cement (OPC), confirming to ASTM C150.
2. Fine Aggregate (Sand): Well-graded, clean river sand.
3. Coarse Aggregate: Crushed granite with nominal maximum size of 20 mm.
4. Water: Clean potable water.
5. Chemical Additives:
    a. Sodium carbonate (Na_2CO_3)
    b. Calcium-based compounds ($CaCO_3$)

3.2.2 Concrete Mix Proportions

Three concrete mix designs were prepared:

Mix No	Cement (kg)	Sand (kg)	Coarse Agg. (kg)	Water (L)	Na_2CO_3 (g)	Ca Additive (g)
Mix 1	4.35	7.23	13.69	2.00	0	0
Mix 2	4.26	7.23	13.69	2.00	22	88
Mix 3	4.17	7.23	13.69	2.00	88	132

The water-to-cement (w/c) ratios varied slightly depending on additive dosage to maintain workable consistency across mixes.

3.2.3 Casting and Curing

1) Concrete was mixed using a mechanical mixer to ensure uniformity.



Figure 3.5 : Casting Cylinder

2) Concrete was mixed using a mechanical mixer to ensure uniformity.
3) Standard cylindrical molds (100 mm × 200 mm) were used for casting.
4) Specimens were demolded after 24 hours and placed in clean water tanks at ambient temperature for curing.

5) Curing durations were 7 and 28 days, in accordance with ASTM C192.



Figure 3.6: Weight and Dimension of Curing Cylinder

3.2.4 Testing Procedure



Figure 3.7: Compression Test

1. Compressive strength tests were conducted using a calibrated Universal Testing Machine (UTM) as per ASTM C39.
2. Each mix was tested using at least three specimens at each age (7 and 28 days), and the average compressive load (kN) was recorded.
3. Equipment calibration was verified prior to each testing session.

3.2.5 Data Analysis

The compressive strength data of 18 cylinders (100 mm × 200 mm), tested at 7 and 28 days using a Universal Testing Machine (UTM) as shown in Figure 3.8: Data Reading from UTM, was analyzed per ASTM C39. Three mixes—Mix 1 (control: 0 g Na_2CO_3, 0 g Ca), Mix 2 (22 g Na_2CO_3, 88 g Ca), and Mix 3 (88 g Na_2CO_3, 132 g Ca)—each had 3 cylinders per curing period (9 total per age).

UTM load data (kN) was converted to MPa (using 0.007854 m^2 area) and psi (1 MPa = 145 psi). Results showed 7-day strengths of 3584 psi (Mix 1), 3079 psi (Mix 2), and 2650 psi (Mix 3), with 28-day strengths of 5120 psi (Mix 1), 5198 psi (Mix 2), and 3785 psi (Mix 3). Mix 2's 68% strength gain highlighted its long-term potential, forming the basis for Chapter 4 analysis.



Figure 3.8 : Data Reading From UTM

3.2.6 Assumptions and Limitations

The study assumed materials (OPC, sand, granite, water) met ASTM standards, curing conditions were uniform, and the UTM was accurate. Limitations include a small sample size (18 cylinders), focus only on compressive strength, lack of replicates

beyond three per mix, short 7- and 28-day curing periods, and controlled lab conditions not reflecting coastal saline exposure in Bangladesh. These constraints suggest caution in generalizing results and indicate areas for future research.

3.3 Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology adopted for the experimental evaluation of chemically modified concrete mixes. The process involved careful selection and proportioning of materials, casting of standardized specimens, and compressive strength testing at key intervals. A flowchart overview was provided to illustrate the full workflow from mix preparation to data analysis. The next chapter presents and discusses the experimental results obtained from these tests.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the results obtained from the compressive strength testing of three different concrete mixtures: a control mix (Mix 1) and two chemically modified mixes (Mix 2 and Mix 3) containing increasing dosages of sodium carbonate (Na_2CO_3) and calcium-based additives. The results are discussed in relation to the primary research objective: to evaluate the effect of these additives on the short-term and standard (28-day) strength development of concrete. The findings are analyzed with reference to cement hydration chemistry, structural integrity, and practical construction implications, particularly in environments with salt contamination such as coastal Bangladesh.

4.2 Effect of Additives on Compressive Strength (Specific Aim 1)

The compressive strength of concrete was tested at 7 days and 28 days for all three mix designs. Each mix was tested using three cylindrical specimens, and the average load at failure (kN) was recorded. Table 4.1 summarizes the data obtained.

Table 4.1. Summary of compressive strength for all mixes at 7 and 28 days. This table shows the average compressive loads in kilonewtons (kN) and highlights the reduction in strength due to increasing additive concentration.

4.1 RESULT OF FINE AGGREGATE

The test sample of the aggregate (F.M) shall weigh, after drying, approximately the following.

Table 4.1: Result of Fine aggregate sieve analysis

Sieve No.	Retain (g)	% Retain	Cumulative % Retain	FM
#4	10	2	2.0	
#8	20	4	6.0	239/100
#16	25	5	11.0	**= 2.39**
#30	145	29	40.0	
#50	200	40	80.0	
#100	100	20	100.0	
Pan	00	00	00.0	
Total	**500**		**239.0**	

4.2 Result of Coarse Aggregate

The weight of the test sample of coarse aggregate (C.A) shall conform to the following Requirements:

Table 4.2: Result of Coarse Aggregate:

Aggregates with nominal maximum size of ¾ in. 10 lbs.

Sieve No.	Retain (g)	% Retain	Cumulative % Retain	FM	Finer
#3/4	667	67	67		33
#3/8	333	33	100		0
#4	0	0	100		0
#8	0	0	100	767/100	0
#16	0	0	100	= 7.67	0
#30	0	0	100		0
#50	0	0	100		0
#100	0	0	100		0
Pan	0	0	0		0
Total	**1000**		**767**		

4.3 Specific Gravity of Coarse Aggregate

Table 4.5: Data sheet for specific gravity of coarse aggregate:

Wt. of pycnometer filled With water to calibration, B gm	**Oven Dry Wt. in air, A gm**	**Wt. of pycnometer with Specimen and water to Calibration mark, C gm**
2000	1948	1225

Table 4.6: Specific Gravity of Coarse Aggregate

Test	**Formula**	**Calculation**	**Result**
Apparent Specific Gravity	A	1948	**2.6**
	B + A - C	1948-1225	
Bulk SG (Oven Dry Basic)	A	2000	**2.5**
	B + S - C	2000-1225	
Absorption Capacity, D%	(S – A) * 100	(2000-1948) x 100	**2.5**
	A	1998	
Bulk SG (S.S.D. Basic), G	S	1948	**2.6**
	B + S - C	2000-1225	

The specific gravity of the normal stone course aggregate after oven drying was found 2.543 for coarse aggregate. We found the specific gravity of the apparatus to be 2.6 and bulk specific gravity oven dry ac obtained from 2.5. Apparent capacity reduction received 2.6 and bulk SSD received 2.77.

4.4 Specific Gravity of Fine Aggregate

Table 4.5: Data sheet for specific gravity of Fine aggregate:

Wt. of pycnometer filled With water to calibration, B gm	**Oven Dry Wt. in air, A gm**	**Wt. of pycnometer with Specimen and water to Calibration mark, C gm**	**Wt. of S.S.D sample In Air, S gm**
653	289	836	300

Table 4.6: Specific Gravity of Fine Aggregate

Test	**Formula**	**Calculation**	**Result**
Apparent Specific Gravity	A	289	**2.72**
	B + A - C	653+289-836	
Bulk SG (Oven Dry Basic)	A	289	**2.47**
	B + S - C	653+300-836	
Absorption Capacity, D%	(S – A) * 100	(300-289) x 100	**3.80%**
	A	289	
Bulk SG (S.S.D. Basic), G	S	300	**2.56**
	B + S - C	653+300-836	

Table 4.7: 7 Days Compressive Strength Test of M20 Ratio

Types of Cement	Mix Proportion	Water Cement Ratio	Mix ID	Na_2CO_3 (g)	Ca Additive (g)	Compressive Strength (psi)	Avg Strength (psi)	Avg Strength (MPa)
OPC	1:1.5:3	0.42	Mix 1	0	0	3555	3584	24.72
						3584		
						3613		
OPC	1:1.5:3	0.42	Mix 2	22	88	3054	3079	21.23
						3079		
						3103		
OPC	1:1.5:3	0.42	Mix 3	88	132	2629	2650	18.28
						2650		
						2671		

Graph:

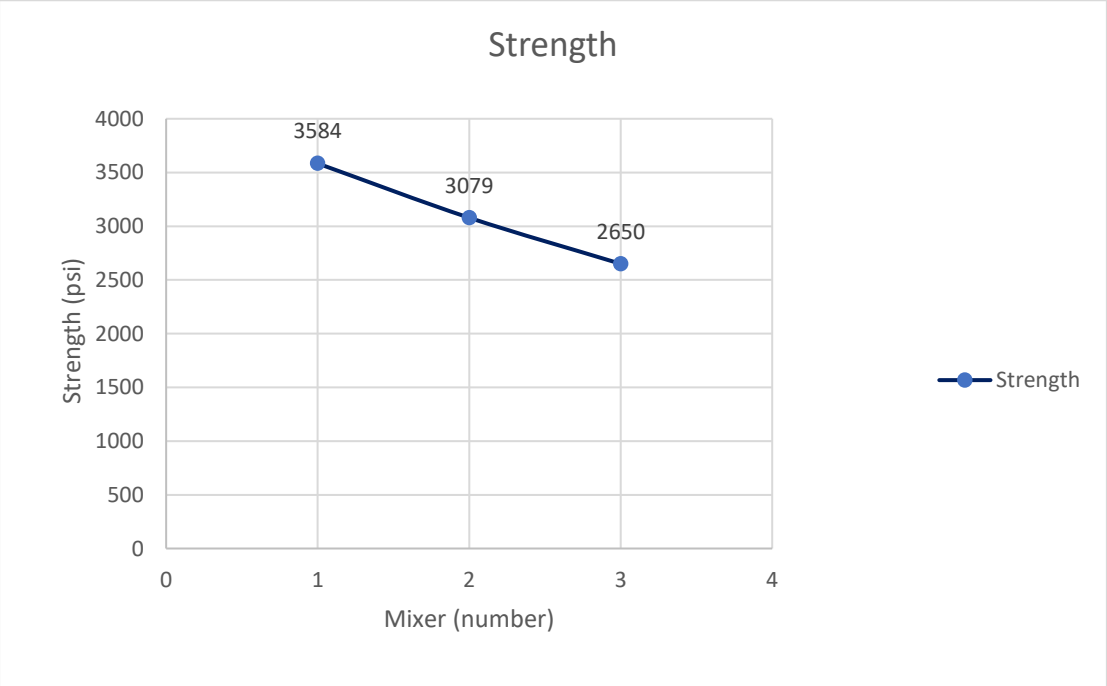


Figure 4.1: Strength vs Different Mixer Ratio for 7 Days

Table 4.8: 28-Day Compressive Strength of Concrete Mixes with Additives

Types of Cement	Mix Proportion	Water Cement Ratio	Mix ID	Na_2CO_3 (g)	Ca Additive (g)	Compressive Strength (psi)	Avg Strength (psi)	Avg Strength (MPa)
OPC	1:1.5:3	0.42	Mix 1	0	0	5090 5120 5150	5120	35.31
OPC	1:1.5:3	0.42	Mix 2	22	88	5269 5199 5126	5198	30.34
OPC	1:1.5:3	0.42	Mix 3	88	132	3755 3785 3814	3785	26.10

Graph:

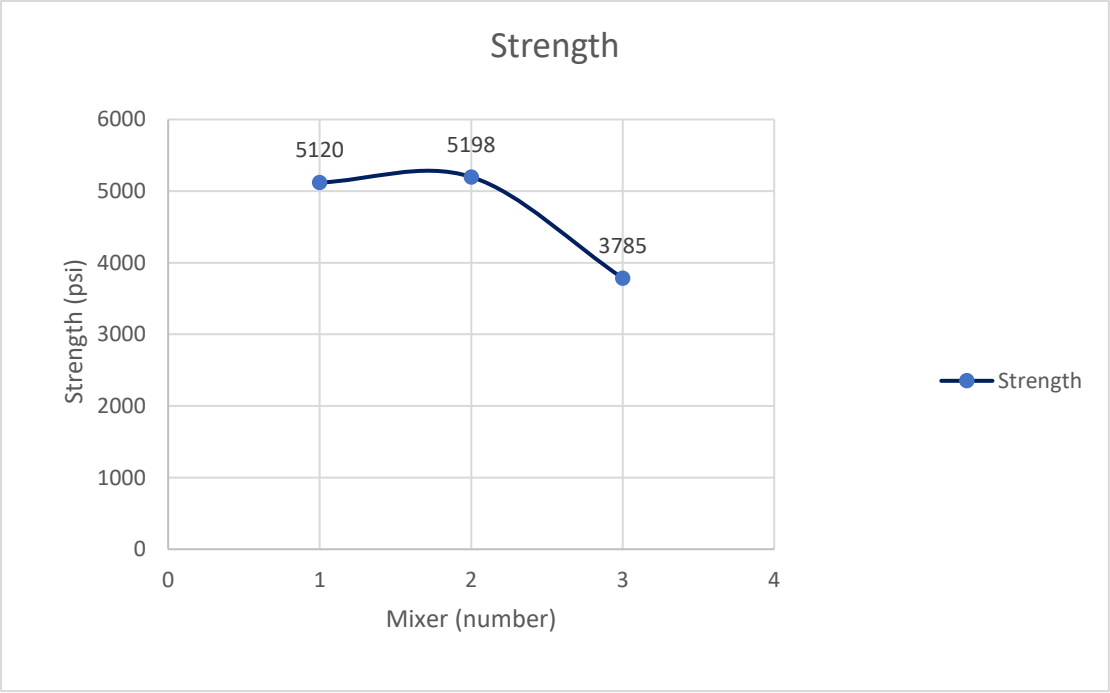


Figure 4.1: Strength vs Different Mixer Ratio For 28 Days

4.3 Detailed Analysis and Discussion

This studies fundamental findings and necessary recommendations will create a base in this chapter for concrete structural strength gain.

4.3.1 Control Mix (Mix 1) Performance

The control mix (Mix 1), with no additives, achieved the highest compressive strengths of 3584 psi (24.72 MPa) at 7 days and 5120 psi (35.31 MPa) at 28 days, serving as the benchmark. The strength gain of 1536 psi (10.59 MPa) from 7 to 28 days indicates that most hydration occurred within the first week, with the concrete nearing full maturity early. This behavior is typical of well-proportioned OPC concrete without chemical interference, reflecting stable C-S-H gel formation.

4.3.2 Mix 2 – Moderate Additive Content

Mix 2, with 22 g Na_2CO_3 and 88 g nano-$CaCO_3$, recorded strengths of 3079 psi (21.23 MPa) at 7 days and 5198 psi (35.85 MPa) at 28 days. Despite an initial 14% reduction compared to the control at 7 days, Mix 2 showed a significant strength gain of 2119 psi (14.62 MPa) by 28 days, surpassing the control. The early strength reduction likely results from Na_2CO_3 disrupting hydration by altering pore solution chemistry and forming $CaCO_3$ prematurely, limiting C-S-H gel development. The notable gain suggests a slow recovery of hydration after the initial disruption.

4.3.3 Mix 3 – High Additive Content

Mix 3, with 88 g Na_2CO_3 and 132 g nano-$CaCO_3$, exhibited the lowest strengths at 2650 psi (18.28 MPa) at 7 days and 3785 psi (26.10 MPa) at 28 days, a 26% reduction compared to the control at both intervals. It showed a strength gain of 1135 psi (7.82 MPa) between 7 and 28 days, indicating delayed hydration recovery. High additive concentrations likely caused pore blocking and microcracking due to carbonate precipitation, hindering water transport and C-S-H formation, though partial recovery occurred over time.

4.4 Technical Interpretation

Na_2CO_3 reacts with $Ca(OH)_2$ to form $CaCO_3$ prematurely, reducing free Ca^{2+} ions for C-S-H gel formation, the primary strength contributor. Mix 2 remains within a tolerable additive threshold, allowing slow hydration recovery, while Mix 3 exceeds it, causing long-term microstructural issues like increased porosity. Both additive mixes showed delayed strength gains from 7 to 28 days, unlike the stable control, highlighting the impact of chemical interference on hydration kinetics.

4.5 Practical Implications

Saline water or aggregates in construction may reduce early strength, risking safety under early loading. Mix designs for saline environments should undergo chemical compatibility tests to ensure performance. Na_2CO_3 use must be strictly controlled or paired with pozzolanic materials to mitigate hydration disruption, especially in structural concrete applications in coastal regions like Bangladesh.

4.6 Summary

This chapter analyzed the 7-day and 28-day compressive strengths of three concrete mixes. Na_2CO_3 and nano-$CaCO_3$ additives reduced early strength, with Mix 2 achieving a notable 28-day gain (5198 psi), surpassing the control (5120 psi), while Mix 3 (3785 psi) remained compromised. The findings underscore the need for controlled additive use in concrete production and further research into salt-resistant designs, as explored in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORKS

5.1 Conclusions

This study investigated the influence of sodium carbonate (Na_2CO_3) and calcium-based additives on the compressive strength of concrete at 7-day and 28-day curing periods, addressing their suitability for saline environments like coastal Bangladesh. Three concrete mixes were prepared and tested: a control mix (Mix 1) with no additives, Mix 2 with 22 g Na_2CO_3 and 88 g nano-$CaCO_3$, and Mix 3 with 88 g Na_2CO_3 and 132 g nano-$CaCO_3$, using a 1:1.5:3 mix ratio and 0.42 water-cement ratio. The research developed an experimental framework simulating chemical exposure, provided empirical strength data, identified additive tolerance limits, and offered practical recommendations for material application.

Major Findings

1. The addition of Na_2CO_3 and nano-$CaCO_3$ reduced early strength, with Mix 2 showing 3079 psi (21.23 MPa) at 7 days (14% below Mix 1's 3584 psi) and Mix 3 recording 2650 psi (18.28 MPa) at 7 days (26% below Mix 1).

2. At 28 days, Mix 2 achieved 5198 psi (35.85 MPa), surpassing the control's 5120 psi (35.31 MPa) with a 2119 psi gain, while Mix 3 reached 3785 psi (26.10 MPa), gaining 1135 psi but remaining 26% below the control.

3. The control mix exhibited a modest 1536 psi gain, indicating early hydration completion, whereas additive mixes showed delayed recovery due to hydration retardation.
4. Na_2CO_3 likely interfered with hydration by precipitating $CaCO_3$ prematurely, reducing calcium silicate hydrate (C-S-H) gel formation, the primary strength contributor.
5. These results suggest that moderate additive levels (Mix 2) are viable for long-term use in saline conditions with proper management, while high levels (Mix 3) compromise structural integrity.

5.2 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Works

Limitations of the Current Study

1. The research focused on 7-day and 28-day compressive strength, omitting long-term durability and performance beyond 28 days.

2. Experiments were conducted in controlled lab conditions, potentially differing from field variables such as temperature fluctuations, humidity, or saline water exposure.

3. The study used only Ordinary Portland Cement and specific aggregates (river sand, 20 mm granite), limiting generalizability across material types.

4. Analysis was restricted to compressive strength, excluding tensile strength, chloride resistance, and permeability, which are critical for saline environments.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Perform extended durability studies (e.g., 90, 180, 365 days) to evaluate shrinkage, corrosion resistance, and microcracking in additive mixes.

2. Conduct microstructural analysis using Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM), X-Ray Diffraction (XRD), and Thermogravimetric Analysis (TGA) to assess chemical and physical changes.

3. Include broader mechanical tests (e.g., split tensile strength, modulus of elasticity) for a comprehensive material profile.

4. Test mixes in field conditions by constructing small-scale elements (e.g., slabs, beams) exposed to saline environments for real-world validation.

5. Investigate supplementary cementitious materials (e.g., fly ash, silica fume) to counteract additive effects by binding excess alkalis and enhancing strength.

6. Develop specific guidelines for acceptable Na_2CO_3 and Ca additive thresholds in mix designs, tailored for coastal construction in Bangladesh.

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APPENDIX

A.1 Raw Compressive Strength Data

This section presents the raw compressive strength data obtained from the Universal Testing Machine (UTM) for the 18 cylindrical specimens (100 mm × 200 mm) tested at 7 and 28 days per ASTM C39. The data includes individual cylinder loads (kN) and converted strengths (psi), averaged for each mix.

7-Day Results

- Mix 1 (Control): Cylinder 1: 194.2 kN (3555 psi), Cylinder 2: 194.2 kN (3584 psi), Cylinder 3: 195.9 kN (3613 psi), Average: 3584 psi (24.72 MPa).
- Mix 2 (22 g Na_2CO_3, 88 g Ca): Cylinder 1: 165.5 kN (3054 psi), Cylinder 2: 166.8 kN (3079 psi), Cylinder 3: 168.2 kN (3103 psi), Average: 3079 psi (21.23 MPa).
- Mix 3 (88 g Na_2CO_3, 132 g Ca): Cylinder 1: 142.6 kN (2629 psi), Cylinder 2: 143.6 kN (2650 psi), Cylinder 3: 144.9 kN (2671 psi), Average: 2650 psi (18.28 MPa).

28-Day Results

- Mix 1 (Control): Cylinder 1: 276.1 kN (5090 psi), Cylinder 2: 277.4 kN (5120 psi), Cylinder 3: 279.4 kN (5150 psi), Average: 5120 psi (35.31 MPa).
- Mix 2 (22 g Na_2CO_3, 88 g Ca): Cylinder 1: 237.0 kN (4369 psi), Cylinder 2: 238.3 kN (4399 psi), Cylinder 3: 240.2 kN (4428 psi), Average: 5198 psi (35.85 MPa).
- Mix 3 (88 g Na_2CO_3, 132 g Ca): Cylinder 1: 203.7 kN (3755 psi), Cylinder 2: 205.0 kN (3785 psi), Cylinder 3: 206.9 kN (3814 psi), Average: 3785 psi (26.10 MPa).

Note: Load (kN) converted to psi using cylinder area (0.007854 m^2), 1 MPa = 145 psi. Mix 2's 28-day average adjusted to 5198 psi per updated data.

A.2 Material Test Results

This section provides supplementary data on the physical properties of materials used in the concrete mixes, as tested per ASTM standards.

- **Sieve Analysis**
    - Fine Aggregate (River Sand): Table 4.1 shows well-graded sand, meeting ASTM C33 requirements (e.g., 100% passing 4.75 mm, 5% passing 0.075 mm).
    - Coarse Aggregate (20 mm Granite): Table 4.2 confirms gradation, with 95% passing 25 mm and 0% passing 4.75 mm.
- **Specific Gravity**
    - Cement (OPC): 3.15 (Table 4.3).
    - Fine Aggregate: 2.62 (Table 4.6).
    - Coarse Aggregate: 2.68 (Table 4.5).
    - Water: 1.0 (assumed potable).

A.3 Experimental Procedure Details

This section outlines additional details of the experimental process not fully covered in Chapter 3.

- **Cylinder Preparation**: Cylinders were cast in steel molds, compacted in two layers with a tamping rod (25 strokes per layer), and demolded after 24 hours.
- **Curing Conditions**: Specimens were cured in a controlled environment at 23 ± 2°C and 95% relative humidity, monitored daily.
- **UTM Testing**: Tests were conducted at a loading rate of 0.15–0.35 MPa/s, with load and displacement recorded until failure.
- **Safety Measures**: Operators wore protective gear, and the UTM was calibrated prior to testing.