Comparison of FAHP and TOPSIS for Evacuation Capability Assessment of High-rise Buildings

Peng Mei, Yan-Jun Qi, Yu Cui, Song Lu, He-Ping Zhang

Abstract—A lot of computer-based methods have been developed to assess the evacuation capability (EC) of high-rise buildings. Because softwares are time-consuming and not proper for on scene applications, we adopted two methods, fuzzy analytic hierarchy process (FAHP) and technique for order preference by similarity to an ideal solution (TOPSIS), for EC assessment of a high-rise building in Jinan. The EC scores obtained with the two methods and the evacuation time acquired with Pathfinder 2009 for floors 47-60 of the building were compared with each other. The results show that FAHP performs better than TOPSIS for EC assessment of high-rise buildings, especially in the aspect of dealing with the effect of occupant type and distance to exit on EC, tackling complex problem with multi-level structure of criteria, and requiring less amount of computation. However, both FAHP and TOPSIS failed to appropriately handle the situation where the exit width changes while occupants are few.

Keywords—Evacuation capability assessment, FAHP, high-rise buildings, TOPSIS.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE world population surpassed 7 billion in 2011 and this number will reach 9.15 billion in 2050 [1]. More and more people emege to cities, which are under great population pressure. Mainly driven by this, planners and designers have been trying to achieve higher land utilization ratio, which means providing more floors on limited land area. As a result, lots of high-rise buildings have been or are being built in many cities.

In high-rise buildings, evacuation is an important problem which has been proved by many disastrous incidents. For example, the terrorist attack on the WTC in New York in 2001 resulted in about 2800 deaths, and the fire in a high-rise apartment building in Shanghai in 2010 led to 53 deaths. To assess the Evacuation Capability (EC) of high-rise buildings, lots of computer-based models have been developed [2]. Many programs such as buildingEXODUS [3] and SIMULEX [4] are widely adopted in performance-based design nowadays.

For complex buildings, inputting and running of simulations are time-consuming [5], [6]. The whole process may take days or even weeks. However, it is often the case that designers or assessors have to perform an assessment on scene and/or within a short time limit, which makes those softwares not suitable for the job. Up to now, there are few literatures about assessing EC under building environment with multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM) approaches. In this paper, fuzzy analytic hierarchy process (FAHP) and technique for order preference by similarity to an ideal solution (TOPSIS) are proposed for EC assessment of high-rise buildings and the results are compared.

II. METHODS AND DATA

A. FAHP

FAHP is an extension of AHP [7] basing on the fuzzy set theory [8]. It is efficient in solving problems with imprecision, uncertainty and vagueness [9]. The triangular fuzzy number (TFN) [10], was used to describe linguistic variables (Table I).

The steps of the FAHP are as follows:

STEP 1: Build the hierarchical structure and make pairwise comparison matrices of criteria using TFN. $M_{ij}=(a_{ij}, b_{ij}, c_{ij})$.

STEP 2: Check the consistency with consistency index (CI) and consistency ratio (CR) suggested by Saaty [11].

TABLE I 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic variables</th>
<th>Positive TFN</th>
<th>Positive reciprocal TFN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equally strong</td>
<td>(1, 1, 2)</td>
<td>(1/2, 1, 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately strong</td>
<td>(2, 3, 4)</td>
<td>(1/4, 1/3, 1/2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>(4, 5, 6)</td>
<td>(1/6, 1/5, 1/4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very strong</td>
<td>(6, 7, 8)</td>
<td>(1/8, 1/7, 1/6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely strong</td>
<td>(8, 9, 9)</td>
<td>(1/9, 1/9, 1/8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Intermediates are omitted.

STEP 3: Calculate $S_i$, the value of the fuzzy synthetic extent: $S_i = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{j=1}^{n} M_{ij} / \sum_{j=1}^{n} \sum_{i=1}^{m} M_{ij}$ (1)

STEP 4: The possibility of $S_i = (a_i, b_i, c_i) \geq S_j = (a_j, b_j, c_j)$ is defined as follows:

$$V(S_i \geq S_j) = \begin{cases} 1, & b_i \geq b_j \\ 0, & a_i = c_j = (b_j - c_j) - (b_i - a_i), \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

Calculate $\min V(S_i \geq S_j)$, the minimum degree of possibility.

STEP 5: The weight factor is given by $W = (d(A_1), d(A_2), ..., d(A_n))^T$ (3) where $A_i$ are $n$ criteria, $d(A_i) = \min V(S_i \geq S_j)$. The normalized weight vector is $W = (\omega_1, \omega_2, ..., \omega_n)^T = (d(A_1), d(A_2), ..., d(A_n))^T$ (4)

STEP 6: Calculate the scores and rank the alternatives.
B. TOPSIS

The TOPSIS [12] is a MCDM method for ranking and selecting several possible alternatives. For a problem, suppose \( m \) alternatives are evaluated with respect to the \( n \) criteria. The values of all criteria constitute a decision matrix denoted by

\[
X(x_{ij})_{m \times n} = \begin{bmatrix}
    x_{11} & x_{12} & \cdots & x_{1n} \\
    x_{21} & x_{22} & \cdots & x_{2n} \\
    \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\
    x_{m1} & x_{m2} & \cdots & x_{mn}
\end{bmatrix}
\]

The procedure of TOPSIS can be expressed as follows:

STEP 1: Calculate the normalized value \( r_{ij} \) for normalized decision matrix:

\[
r_{ij} = \frac{x_{ij}}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{m} x_{ij}^2}}, \text{ for benefit criterion} \quad (6)
\]

\[
r_{ij} = 1 - \frac{x_{ij}}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{m} x_{ij}^2}}, \text{ for cost criterion} \quad (7)
\]

STEP 2: Calculate the weighted normalized decision matrix. The weighted normalized value \( v_{ij} \) is calculated as

\[
v_{ij} = w_j r_{ij} \quad (8)
\]

where \( w_j \) is the weight of \( j \)-th criterion, which will be determined using FAHP.

STEP 3: Determine the positive ideal solution (PIS) and negative ideal solution (NIS):

\[
A^+ = (v_{i1}^+, v_{i2}^+, \cdots, v_{in}^+) \quad (9)
\]

\[
A^- = (v_{i1}^-, v_{i2}^-, \cdots, v_{in}^-) \quad (10)
\]

where \( v_{ij}^+ = \max_j v_{ij} \) and \( v_{ij}^- = \min_j v_{ij} \).

STEP 4: Calculate the distance of each alternative from PIS and NIS as follows:

\[
S_j^+ = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{n} (v_{ij}^+ - v_{ij}^+)^2} \quad (11)
\]

\[
S_j^- = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{n} (v_{ij}^- - v_{ij}^-)^2} \quad (12)
\]

STEP 5: Calculate the relative closeness \( R_j \): \n
\[
R_j = S_j^- / (S_j^- + S_j^+) \quad (13)
\]

STEP 6: Rank the preference order according to the descending order of \( R_j \), that is, larger \( R_j \) means better alternative.

C. Hierarchy, Data and Evacuation Scenarios

The hierarchical structure of EC was built as shown in Fig. 1. Exit width (\( A_1 \)), occupant type (\( A_2 \)), occupant number (\( A_3 \)), and maximum distance to exit (\( A_4 \)) are included in level 1. The number of children (\( B_1 \)), male adults (\( B_2 \)), female adults (\( B_3 \)), and elders (\( B_4 \)) are considered as sub-criteria of \( A_2 \).

In consideration of the design of refuge storey and the premise that the refuge storey are places of relative safety, the floors 47-60 of a 60-floor building in Jinan were chosen as object of study. The floors 47-58 of the building are apartments, floor 59 is a restaurant, and floor 60 is used for sightseeing.

![Fig. 1 Hierarchical structure of criteria](image1)

Data for \( A_1 \) and \( A_4 \) were acquired according to the floor plans (Fig. 2). The values of \( B_1 \) to \( B_4 \) for floor 47-58 were determined due to the apartment layout (Table II). For floors 59-60, these data were provided by proprietors. To synthesize the weights of all criteria, data were normalized, and the raw and normalized data can be found in Table III.

Three scenarios were designed in this paper. Scenario 1 (S1) is an original scenario which uses the data in Table III. In Scenario 2 (S2), a fire near the left stair on floor 51 was considered and the left staircase of floors 51-60 is unavailable for evacuation. For Scenario 3 (S3), the occupant numbers of floors 59-60 are halved. For validation, Pathfinder 2009 (PF) was used to simulate the evacuation time.

![Fig. 2 Floor plans of F47-50, 51-54, 55-58, 59, and 60, sequentially](image2)

### Table II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Layout</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Male adults</th>
<th>Female adults</th>
<th>Elders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-bedroom</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-bedroom</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three-bedroom</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Floor</th>
<th>( A_1 ) (m)</th>
<th>( B_1 )</th>
<th>( B_2 )</th>
<th>( B_3 )</th>
<th>( B_4 )</th>
<th>( A_3 )</th>
<th>( A_4 ) (m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47-50</td>
<td>2.4 (1.000)</td>
<td>5 (0.000)</td>
<td>7 (0.942)</td>
<td>7 (0.942)</td>
<td>6 (0.990)</td>
<td>25 (0.896)</td>
<td>39 (0.025)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-54</td>
<td>2.4 (1.000)</td>
<td>3 (0.400)</td>
<td>7 (0.942)</td>
<td>7 (0.942)</td>
<td>6 (0.990)</td>
<td>23 (0.904)</td>
<td>39 (0.025)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-58</td>
<td>2.4 (1.000)</td>
<td>4 (0.200)</td>
<td>6 (0.950)</td>
<td>4 (0.333)</td>
<td>20 (0.917)</td>
<td>33 (0.175)</td>
<td>29 (0.275)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>2.4 (1.000)</td>
<td>1 (1.000)</td>
<td>108 (0.100)</td>
<td>108 (0.100)</td>
<td>1216 (0.100)</td>
<td>29 (0.275)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>2.4 (1.000)</td>
<td>0 (1.000)</td>
<td>70 (0.417)</td>
<td>70 (0.417)</td>
<td>0 (1.000)</td>
<td>140 (0.417)</td>
<td>29 (0.275)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### III. RESULTS

Five experts have been asked to make their judgments of the pairwise comparison matrix using linguistic variables. As listed in Table IV, relative weights of $A_1$ to $A_4$ were calculated using (1)-(4). The weights of $B_1$ to $B_4$ were determined by the walking speed of different occupants given by Shi [13].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>$A_1$</th>
<th>$A_2$</th>
<th>$A_3$</th>
<th>$A_4$</th>
<th>$B_1$</th>
<th>$B_2$</th>
<th>$B_3$</th>
<th>$B_4$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\omega$</td>
<td>0.346</td>
<td>0.161</td>
<td>0.336</td>
<td>0.157</td>
<td>0.232</td>
<td>0.266</td>
<td>0.279</td>
<td>0.223</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The EC scores of all floors in each scenario were calculated with FAHP and TOPSIS separately and the evacuation simulations for each scenario were conducted with PF. All results are shown in Table V.

### IV. DISCUSSION

The weights of criteria in level 1 were acquired basing on the judgments of experts, and the rank of importance is $A_1$, $A_3$, $A_2$, and $A_4$, from highest to lowest. Furthermore, the importance of $A_1$ and $A_3$ are on the same level and so are $A_2$ and $A_4$. This is compared with the equation given by Togawa [14]:

$$T_{move}=\frac{N_{tol}}{W_{eff} \times C} + \frac{L_{min}}{V}$$

where $T_{move}$ is the evacuation time, $N_{tol}$ is the total number of occupants to be evacuated, $W_{eff}$ is the effective width of exit, $C$ is a coefficient which shows the number of occupants passed an exit per meter per second, $L_{min}$ is the distance between exit and the closest occupant, and $V$ is the average walking speed of occupants. In this equation, the occupant number and the exit width are taken into account in one term and the distance and the walking speed in another. The factors in the same term could be regarded as criteria which affect the evacuation time in a similar way and may have nearly equal importance. This agrees, to some extent, with the results of criteria weights in this study.

In S1, all floors have the same exit width. Consequently, $A_3$ becomes the criterion of overwhelming importance. The values of $A_1$ for Floors 55-58 are the smallest of all floors, which makes their evacuation time the shortest. The values of $A_1$ have an apparent effect on evacuation time of other floors as well, and the effects of $A_2$ and $A_4$ are hard to recognize. The ranks of EC acquired by different methods are exactly the same for S1 (Fig. 3). It indicates that FAHP and TOPSIS both worked well in assessing the EC of all floors in this scenario.

The values of $A_1$ for floors 51-60 become 1.2 m for S2. The result of simulation shows that the evacuation time of floors 59-60 increase significantly, whereas the evacuation time for floors 51-58 remain nearly the same as in S1 although the exit width is halved. This is mainly because that for floors 59-60, the stair size is not large enough to contain all occupants simultaneously and the congestion on the stairs prevents occupants from entering the stair cores. However, for floors 55-58, the occupants are so few that they can reach the exit without queueing even the exit width is only 50% of S1, and that’s why their simulation results vary slightly. Fig. 4 shows the ranks of EC acquired by different methods for all floors in S2. The rank in S2 is the same as in S1 according to the evacuation time: floors 59-60 are still the last two and the other floors are almost unaffected by the change of exit width. However, the EC scores calculated with both FAHP and TOPSIS don’t agree well with the simulation results. The EC scores for floors 51-58 are lower than that in S1 because of the lower exit width, which actually has limited effect on evacuation time for these floors. This indicates that both FAHP and TOPSIS can’t correctly deal with this kind of situation where the exit width changes while the occupants are few.
Fig. 5 shows the ranks of EC of all floors in S3. The evacuation time for floors 59 and 60 in S3 is about 50% of that in S1. It’s easy to understand because the occupants on them are halved. Floor 60 remains the last when ranking, whereas floor 59 moves up to the second. The occupant number of floor 59 is not the second least, but shorter evacuation distance and no slow occupants (i.e. children and elders) make it surpass floors 47-54. PF and FAHP ranked all floors in the same order, but TOPSIS occupants (i.e. children and elders) made it surpass floors 47-54.

The comparison of results demonstrates that FAHP performs better than TOPSIS in accuracy of EC assessment of high-rise buildings. Besides, we believe that the FAHP is superior to TOPSIS in following aspects.

Firstly, both FAHP and TOPSIS need the weights of all criteria for assessment, but FAHP can handle a multi-level hierarchical structure by determining the weights with pairwise comparisons. Although TOPSIS works well for single level hierarchy, in order to deal with more complex problems, researchers have developed other extensions of TOPSIS [15], [16] which tackle the difficulty of determining the weights by combining TOPSIS with other methods, such as FAHP.

Furthermore, after determining the weights and normalizing the data, FAHP appears to be more practical, because addition and multiplication involved in FAHP are much easier than extraction of a root needed in TOPSIS.

V. CONCLUSION

The EC of floors 47-60 of a high-rise building in Jinan were assessed with 3 scenarios considered. A hierarchical structure of EC was constructed and the relative weights of all criteria were calculated based on the judgments of experts. The EC scores of all floors in the each scenario were calculated with FAHP and TOPSIS separately. The evacuation time were also simulated with PF. The results were compared with each other and following conclusions have been drawn.

The relative weights of criteria in level 1 indicate that exit width and occupant number are more important than occupant type and the distance to exit in evacuation of high-rise buildings. The comparisons of ranks of floors in 3 scenarios show that FAHP performs better than TOPSIS for EC assessment in the aspect of handling the effects of occupant type and distance to exit, tackling complex problems with multi-level structure of criteria, and requiring less computation. However, both FAHP and TOPSIS fail to correctly deal with the situation where the exit width changes while the occupants are few.

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