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Comment on “Measurement of Gravitational Acceleration Using Bernoulli’s Equation”

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Letter to the Editor:

Comment on “Measurement of Gravitational Acceleration Using Bernoulli’s Equation” by T. Jang et al. (*Phys. Teach.* 62, 268–271, 2024)

Authors:

John H. Lienhard, V
Department of Mechanical Engineering
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge MA 02139 USA

John H. Lienhard, IV
Department of Mechanical Engineering
University of Houston
Houston TX 77204 USA

We read the paper by Jang et al. [1] with great interest. The authors describe two elementary experiments for measuring the gravitation acceleration. The experiments are based on a jet of water flowing out of a hole in a tank. The authors concluded that their Experiment II was less accurate than their Experiment I. Here, we show that Experiment II gives results quite close to Experiment I if the data are reduced differently.

Experiment II requires a value for the velocity coefficient of a sharp-edged orifice, c_v . The authors cite our 1984 paper [2], which applies viscous fluid flow principles to show that c_v is very nearly equal to one. In other words, $c_v \cong 1$. We discussed in detail why the historical value of $c_v = 0.98$ is not correct. So, we were surprised that the authors used $c_v = 0.98$ (from a handbook) to reduce the data in Experiment II.

How does the difference in c_v affect the results? From equation (16), the experimental value of g is proportional to $(c_v)^{-2}$. If we take $c_v = 1$, instead of $c_v = 0.98$, the reported experimental values (10.11 and 10.18 m²/s) are reduced to 9.71 and 9.78 m²/s. The reduced values differ from the official value in Daegu province ($g = 9.7981$ m²/s) by only -0.9% and -0.04% . Thus, Experiment II yields results comparable to Experiment I (9.84 ± 0.19 m²/s).

Our paper focused on laminar boundary layer theory, so it is understandable that the authors may have preferred the handbook value of c_v . However, the data from Experiment II should be reduced using $c_v = 1$. With the correct c_v , the experiments introduced by Jang et al. provide an excellent introduction to several aspects of elementary physics.

References:

- [1] T. Jang et al., “Measurement of Gravitational Acceleration Using Bernoulli’s Equation,” *Phys. Teach.* 62, 268–271 (2024).
- [2] J.H. Lienhard, V and J.H. Lienhard, IV, “Velocity coefficients for free jets from sharp-edged orifices,” *J. Fluids Engineering*, 106, 13–17, (1984).