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Exploring The Use Of Natural Ventilation Strategies To Create A Healthy Indoor Environment

Anaebonam, C. Kenneth; Barnaby, Jude & Okafor, Callistus

Department of Architecture,
Faculty of Environmental Sciences,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT
This architectural journal focuses on the importance of using natural ventilation strategies to create healthy indoor environments. Architects and designers are increasingly using sustainable and passive design solutions to improve air quality and energy efficiency. Natural ventilation, which involves using fresh air from outside to circulate within buildings, offers many benefits. It reduces the need for mechanical systems, promotes better air quality, and improves the well-being of occupants. This journal explores different natural ventilation strategies and how they can be designed and implemented effectively. It discusses the principles behind natural ventilation, including factors like building orientation, window placement, and airflow patterns. Case studies are presented to showcase successful examples of natural ventilation in different types of buildings, such as offices and residential complexes. These case studies evaluate the performance and feedback from occupants. The journal also addresses challenges and considerations related to natural ventilation, such as adapting to different climates, managing noise and pollution, and finding the right balance between fresh air and thermal comfort. Best practices and guidelines are provided to help architects and designers determine appropriate ventilation rates, meet occupant needs, and ensure proper maintenance and monitoring of natural ventilation systems. Looking ahead, the journal explores future trends and innovations in natural ventilation, such as advanced technologies and computer modeling. It highlights the potential for integrating natural ventilation with other sustainable systems to create even healthier indoor environments. In conclusion, this journal emphasizes the importance of natural ventilation in creating healthy indoor spaces. By understanding the design principles, studying real-world examples, and considering challenges and future possibilities, architects can make informed decisions to create sustainable and occupant-friendly buildings.
Keywords: Natural ventilation, Indoor environment, Ventilation strategies, Building orientation

INTRODUCTION

Indoor air quality (IAQ) is a critical factor in the health and well-being of building occupants, particularly in residential buildings where people spend a significant amount of time. Poor IAQ can contribute to a range of health problems, including respiratory illnesses, allergies, and asthma, and can have a negative impact on cognitive function and productivity (Kim et al., 2021). In addition, indoor air pollution has been linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke, and lung cancer (World Health Organization, 2018). Therefore, ensuring good IAQ is essential for creating healthy and sustainable indoor environments.

Ventilation is one of the most important factors in maintaining good IAQ, as it helps to remove pollutants and maintain comfortable temperatures and humidity levels (Chen et al., 2018). There are several types of ventilation systems that can be used in buildings, including natural ventilation, mechanical ventilation, and hybrid systems. Natural ventilation relies on passive airflow through openings such as windows, doors, and vents to remove stale air and bring in fresh air from outside (Givoni, 1998). Mechanical ventilation, on the other hand, uses fans and ductwork to circulate air throughout the building, and can be designed to provide both supply and exhaust air. Hybrid systems combine elements of both natural and mechanical ventilation to optimize energy efficiency and IAQ (Awbi, 2003).

Despite the importance of ventilation, many residential buildings in Nigeria and around the world do not have adequate ventilation systems or rely on inefficient and outdated systems (Bari et al., 2018; Eftekhari et al., 2020). In some cases, buildings are designed without proper consideration for ventilation, leading to poor IAQ and potential health hazards (Kilincarslan & Yilmaz, 2018). This is particularly concerning in high-rise buildings, where natural ventilation strategies may be less effective due to factors such as wind patterns and building orientation (Nikolopoulou & Steemers, 2003). In addition, high-rise buildings may have limited access to outdoor spaces such as balconies or terraces, which can further limit natural ventilation opportunities.

Therefore, it is important to investigate and optimize natural ventilation strategies in high-rise buildings to ensure healthy indoor environments for residents. This can involve studying the building design and orientation, the distribution of openings and vents, and the use of air flow simulation software to optimize natural ventilation strategies (Nikolopoulou & Steemers, 2003). In addition, it may be necessary to consider the use of mechanical ventilation systems or hybrid systems to supplement natural ventilation in certain conditions (Eftekhari et al., 2020).

Overall, the optimization of natural ventilation strategies in high-rise residential buildings is an important area of research with implications for public health and building design. By investigating the role of ventilation in creating healthy indoor environments, this study aims to contribute to a growing body of literature on sustainable building design and health-promoting environments. The specific focus of this study is on the Condominium Kuje in Abuja, Nigeria, and the optimization of natural ventilation strategies in this high-rise residential building.

As buildings become increasingly energy efficient and airtight, there is a growing concern that indoor air quality (IAQ) may suffer as a result. Poor IAQ can lead to a range of health issues, including respiratory problems, allergies, and headaches, as well as decreased productivity and comfort. One key strategy for ensuring healthy indoor environments is effective ventilation, which involves the exchange of indoor air with outdoor air to dilute pollutants and control temperature and humidity.

In residential buildings, ventilation plays a particularly important role in promoting IAQ and occupant health. Studies have shown that poor IAQ is a major problem in many homes, due to factors such as inadequate ventilation, use of indoor combustion appliances, and the presence of pollutants from sources such as tobacco smoke, cleaning products, and building materials. Effective ventilation can help to remove these pollutants and ensure that indoor air is fresh and healthy.

However, achieving good ventilation in residential buildings can be challenging, particularly in high-rise condominiums. These buildings often have limited opportunities for natural ventilation, and rely on mechanical systems to provide fresh air. In addition, there are often competing demands for energy efficiency, indoor comfort, and occupant preferences, which can make it difficult to strike the right balance between ventilation and other factors. However, high-rise buildings face unique challenges in achieving effective natural ventilation due to factors like increased height, limited access to cross ventilation, and potential wind turbulence. Consequently, innovative design strategies are necessary to optimize natural ventilation and promote healthy indoor environments.

To address these challenges, there is a growing interest in optimizing natural ventilation strategies in high-rise buildings. Natural ventilation, which relies on natural forces such as wind and buoyancy to drive air movement, can be an effective and energy-efficient way to provide fresh air and maintain thermal comfort in buildings. However, to be effective, natural ventilation must be carefully designed to account for factors such as building orientation, layout, and wind patterns.

Verandahs, also known as balconies or terraces, have been utilized in architecture for centuries and play a significant role in this context. These open or partially enclosed spaces attached to buildings provide various benefits, including access to outdoor areas, protection from direct sunlight and rain, and the potential to facilitate natural ventilation. Verandahs play a significant role in creating a healthy indoor environment in high-rise buildings. They contribute to natural ventilation by facilitating the entry of fresh outdoor air and removing stagnant or polluted indoor air, thus improving indoor air quality (Leaman, 2006; Humphreys, 2005). Verandahs strategically positioned to take advantage of prevailing winds induce airflow through the building, ensuring a constant supply of fresh air for occupants (Santamouris et al., 2015). Additionally, verandahs provide shaded outdoor spaces, mitigating solar heat gain and reducing reliance on mechanical cooling systems for thermal comfort (Heschong, 2018). This promotes energy efficiency and lowers energy consumption (Heo et al., 2020). Furthermore, verandahs create a connection to nature and offer views of the outdoor environment, supporting biophilic design principles and enhancing occupants' psychological well-being (Kellert et al., 2008; Hartig et al., 2014). They serve as extensions of indoor spaces, providing areas for social interaction and outdoor activities, which contribute to a sense of community and improved social well-being (Joye, 2007). Lastly, verandahs offer protection from the elements, shielding occupants from direct sunlight, rain, and wind, and creating a comfortable microclimate within the building (Kwok and Grondzik, 2020). Overall, well-designed verandahs optimize natural ventilation, enhance thermal comfort, provide a connection to nature, support social interaction, and offer protection from the elements, thus creating a healthier indoor environment in high-rise buildings.

Aim

The study will also explore the relationship between ventilation and other factors such as energy efficiency, occupant comfort, and building design. The ultimate goal of the study is to provide insights into the design and operation of residential buildings that promote healthy indoor environments through effective ventilation strategies, with the aim of improving occupant health and well-being

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method employed for the architectural journal on exploring the use of natural ventilation strategies to create a healthy indoor environment involves an extensive review of existing literature, research papers, scholarly articles, and industry publications related to natural ventilation strategies, indoor air quality, occupant well-being, and sustainable design and real-world case studies of buildings that have implemented natural ventilation strategies. This method involves collecting data on design approaches, ventilation systems, occupant feedback, and performance evaluations. It provides insights into the effectiveness and challenges associated with different natural ventilation strategies.

FINDINGS

Thermal comfort is defined as "that condition of mind, which expresses satisfaction with the thermal environment" (ISO Standard 7730 in 1994). Thermal comfort is affected by heat, convection heat, radiation and absorption of heat loss (evaporative heat loss) and retained the heat produced by the human metabolism can be removed. This will maintain thermal equilibrium with the environment. Any gains or losses outside this range, the heat will cause discomfort. Many studies conducted shows thermal comfort can influence occupants in it. (Marzita Puteh et al., 2012) The thermal comfort is usually attributed to two main parameters: (I) the thermal comfort feeling due to the balance between accumulated and lost calories in the body; and (II) the control of the climatic conditions including sun position and radiation, temperature, humidity and winds. (FME-Republika E Kosoves)

In order to control the climate effects on the school spaces, simple measures should be taken by designers at the beginning of the design process. These are concerning:

- Orientation of buildings: orientation of learning spaces towards South and North is recommended as such orientation provides a protection against direct sun rays. This preferential orientation can deviate of about minus or plus 30° (because of site requirements or because of the orientation of the prevailing winds) without much consequence on the classroom comfort
- Placement of buildings: the distance between buildings from façade to façade shall be proportional to the height of the buildings to allow fresh air and natural light in the lowest levels. For the same reasons, a minimum 4.0 m distance shall be kept between the main facades and the enclosure wall

- Shape and design of buildings as for example, the possibility of transversal air flow for the renewal of fresh air with natural cross ventilation during the hot season, or the choice of a four slopes pitch roof in areas with heavy snow fall
- Landscaping: vegetation can play an essential role in creating a microclimate, whenever needed. Plantation of trees contributes effectively in the protection from dust, winds and sunlight. In addition the plantation of lawn shrubs and bushes allow the protection against the sunlight reverberation and reflected glare from the ground
- Appropriate building elements: this includes the appropriate roof drainage and site drainage around the buildings, the shading with adjustable shutters on windows, sun breakers, sun screening, overhangs and/or galleries that could bring additional protection against sunlight, especially when the building orientation is unfavourable.

Adequate building materials, including façade materials with possible reflection of the sunlight, insulation materials to increase the walls and roof thermal inertia

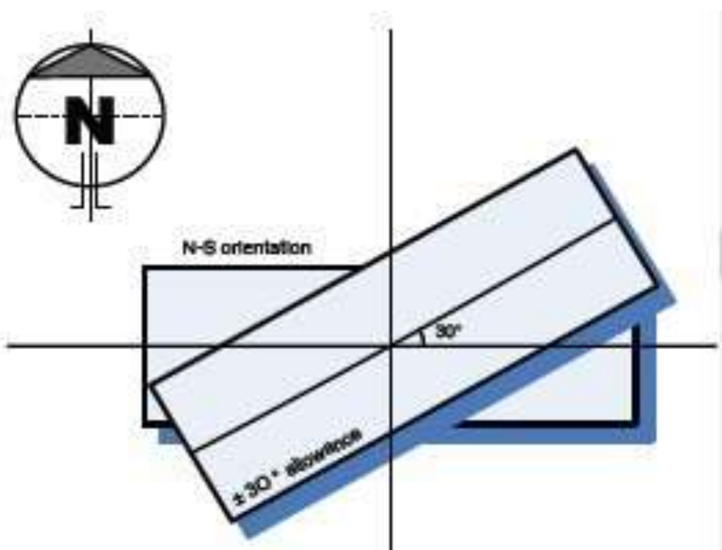

Figure 2-5 Classroom preferential orientation (FME-

Passive climate control can be achieved through 3 means: (I). Orientation for sun : the best compass direction, or orientation, for the essential daylight admitting windows is North-South (see fig. 2.5): the North elevation, in Kosovo has no direct sunlight on the window planes and the South elevation has minimal sun rays striking the window planes with the smallest angle Republika E Kosoves) of incidence during the course of the day: at the hottest part of the day, the sun will be at its highest and the angle of incidence to the South-facing windows will be at its narrowest. Sun from this orientation is the easiest to screen out.

(ii). Cross-ventilation will be a natural comfort factor for the hottest part of the year. But, in the higher elevations, the need is more likely to exclude air that has been heated by passing over hot dry ground. In any case, a building group with rooms with the option of openings both sides are not economical, although this is the optimum recommendation.

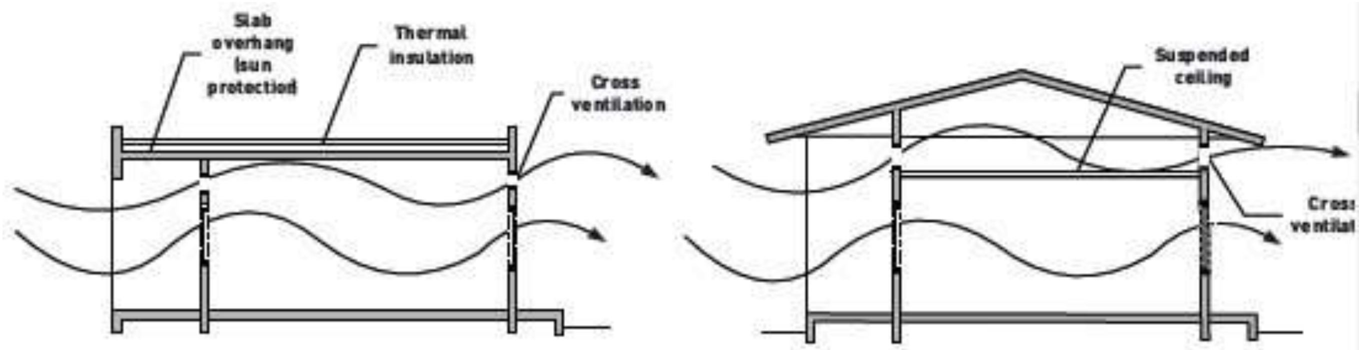

Figure 2-6 thermal comfort cross ventilation

(iii). Sun Screening: effective sun screening devices can be designed to operate in any orientation, since sun angle is entirely predictable.

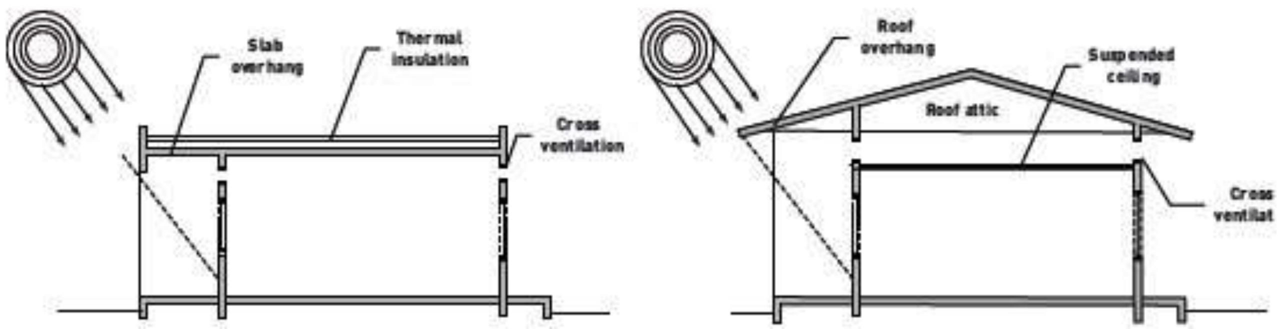

Figure 2-7 Thermal comfort Sun protection (FME-Republika E Kosoves)

Two factors that can influence ventilation are:

- Orientation: spaces or rooms creating strong smells need to be located and separated from the main learning areas. This is particularly true when it comes to the cafeteria and the kitchen within the building. As well as being placed on the leeward side of the rest of the school, so that the prevailing wind do not push the foul odour into the learning environment
- Windows: Wind pressures are positive (push) on the windward side of the building and negative (suck) on the leeward side. This encourages good cross-ventilation in rooms with windows and/or doors on opposite sides. This also has to be carefully controlled to prevent too much air movement in windy conditions. For much of the time, windows are used to provide passive ventilation. Therefore windows have to be carefully designed to allow for different weather conditions. Ideally, windows in classrooms should have ventilation options that include all of the following:
  - small, high-level windows, which allow small amounts of ventilation in high wind;
  - Trickle ventilators for cold weather, high winds and when other windows are closed for security;
  - Large, main central windows for still, hot, summer weather;
  - Small windows at bench height for all-round ventilation – may have to be closed in high winds to prevent papers flying.

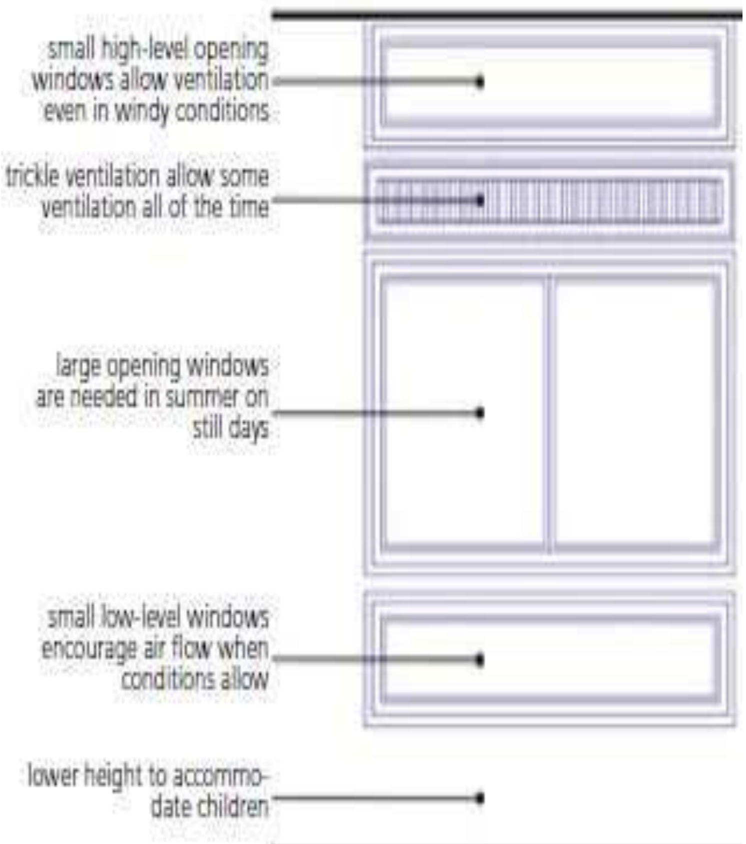

Figure 2-8 ventilation conditions for various conditions

Ventilation is defined as “the process by which clean air, normally outdoor air, is intentionally provided to a space and stale air is removed” (Liddament, 1996,). This process can be accomplished by a natural, mechanical, or hybrid system. Natural ventilation is defined as “the air flow resulting from the designed provision of specified apertures such as open able windows, ventilators, shafts, etc. and can usually be controlled to some extent by the occupant” (CIBSE, 1977)

Natural ventilation are driven by forces which can be wind pressure or pressure generated by density difference

1. Wind driven ventilation occurs as a result of various pressures created on the building envelope by wind. These pressure differences drive air into the building through openings in the building envelope’s windward side, and drive air out of the building through openings in the building envelope’s leeward side. This strategy depends mainly on pressure difference between inlets and outlets as a driving force. It includes the following two strategies:

- Single-sided ventilation Single-sided ventilation, operates by openings located in one side of the building. As a general rule of thumb, it is effective up to a maximum depth equals to the double of a space height (CIBSE, 1977).

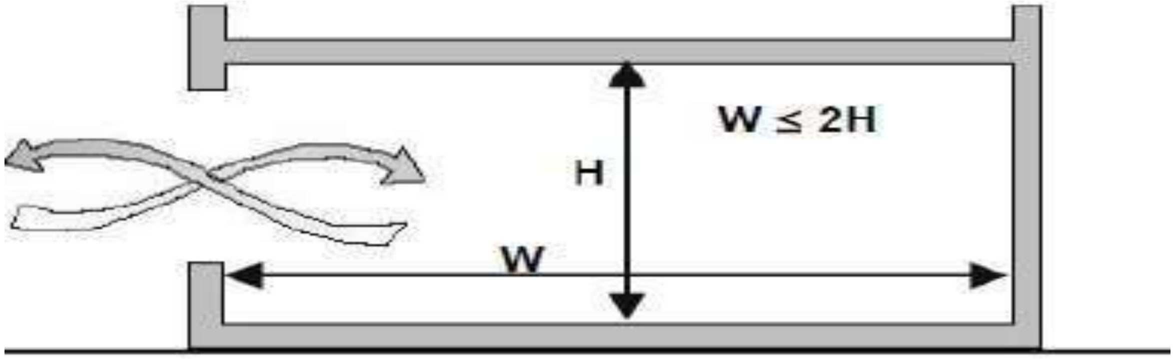

Figure 2-9 single- sided ventilation

- Cross ventilation Cross ventilation is more effective than single-sided ventilation strategy. It is used to create airflow paths between building inlets and outlets, which passes through the occupied level of the building (Omar S. Asfour, 2015). Cross ventilation is effective up to a maximum depth equals to five times the height of the room (CIBSE, 1977). It can be driven by wind effect, as in the case of using wall openings, or by stack effect, as in the case of using atrium ventilation, where the resulting flow path is vertical.

It is also important to plan good distribution of openings. Openings located at opposite walls are more effective for cross ventilation, compared to those located at adjacent walls. Also, vertical position of the inlet should be in relation with the occupied level of the space. Generally, low inlet is recommended for cooling and high outlet is recommended for stack ventilation. The minimum window area should be about 5% of floor area, with the use of tickle ventilation to secure the minimum flow rate (Smith, 2001).

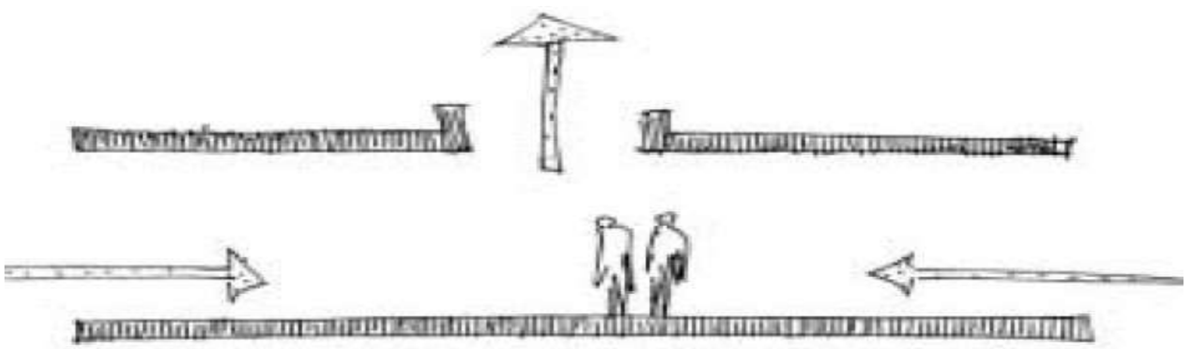

Figure 2-10 stack ventilation

2**.** Thermal buoyancy is sometimes referred to as the stack effect or the chimney effect. The difference in density creates pressure differences that pull air in and out of a building through suitably placed openings in the building envelope. When the indoor air temperature exceeds the outdoor temperature, an over-pressure is built up in the upper part of the building and an under-pressure is formed in the lower part.

CONCLUSION

The research findings from the literature review and case studies highlight the importance of thermal comfort in creating healthy indoor environments, particularly in residential spaces such as condominium. The thermal comfort of occupants is influenced by factors such as heat, convection, radiation, and metabolic heat loss. Maintaining thermal equilibrium with the environment is crucial for occupant satisfaction and well-being.

Design measures can significantly impact thermal comfort in buildings. The orientation of buildings, preferably towards the south and north, provides protection against direct sun rays. Adequate spacing between buildings allows for fresh air and natural light in lower levels, while the design of buildings, such as incorporating transversal airflow and suitable roofing, can facilitate natural cross-ventilation and protect against extreme weather conditions.

Landscaping, including the planting of trees, shrubs, and bushes, contributes to creating a favorable microclimate by offering protection against dust, wind, and excessive sunlight reflection. Appropriate building elements such as adjustable shutters, sun breakers, and insulation materials further enhance thermal comfort and energy efficiency.

Passive climate control methods, including orientation for sun, cross-ventilation, and effective sun screening devices, can optimize thermal comfort. Considerations for ventilation include locating spaces with strong smells separately from learning areas and designing windows that allow for different weather conditions and ventilation options.

Natural ventilation, driven by wind pressure or density differences, is an effective strategy for providing fresh air. Single-sided ventilation and cross-ventilation are two commonly employed approaches. Cross-ventilation, facilitated by well-distributed openings on opposite walls and suitable inlet and outlet positions, can be driven by wind or stack effects.

In conclusion, the findings emphasize the significance of considering thermal comfort in the design of indoor spaces, particularly in educational settings. By implementing appropriate design strategies and natural ventilation techniques, architects and designers can create healthy and comfortable indoor environments that promote the well-being and productivity of occupants

Recommendations

Based on the research findings on natural ventilation strategies and thermal comfort in creating a healthy indoor environment, several recommendations can be made.

Firstly, designers should prioritize the orientation of buildings. A preference for south and north orientations is recommended as it minimizes direct sun exposure. However, deviations of about plus or minus 30 degrees from these orientations can be considered without significant impact on thermal comfort. Proper building orientation provides protection against direct sun rays and contributes to a more comfortable indoor environment.

Optimizing the placement of buildings is also crucial. Maintaining an appropriate distance between buildings allows for fresh air and natural light penetration, particularly in lower levels. It is recommended to have a minimum distance of 4.0 meters between main facades and the enclosure wall. This spacing facilitates airflow and ensures adequate ventilation throughout the building.

The shape and design of buildings play a significant role in promoting natural ventilation. Architects should incorporate design features that facilitate natural cross-ventilation, especially during the hot season. This could include the provision of transversal airflow paths or the choice of a four-slope pitch roof in areas with heavy snowfall. These design considerations enhance airflow and improve thermal comfort within the building.

Landscaping can also contribute to creating a healthier indoor environment. Strategic placement of vegetation, such as trees, shrubs, and bushes, can create a microclimate and provide protection against dust, wind, and excessive sunlight. By incorporating greenery, designers can enhance the overall comfort and well-being of occupants.

The selection of appropriate building elements is another important recommendation. Architects should consider the use of adjustable shutters, sun breakers, overhangs, and galleries to provide additional protection against sunlight, especially when the building orientation is unfavorable. The choice of reflective facade materials and insulation materials for walls and roofs can further improve thermal comfort by increasing the building's thermal inertia.

Proper window design is essential for effective natural ventilation. Windows should be designed to allow for different weather conditions and provide ventilation options. This may include incorporating small,

high-level windows for ventilation during high winds, trickle ventilators for cold weather, large central windows for still, hot summer weather, and small windows at bench height for all-round ventilation. A well-designed window system ensures proper airflow control and enhances occupant comfort.
In terms of ventilation, designers should consider the placement of spaces with strong smells, such as cafeterias and kitchens, to prevent odor transfer to the learning environment. Additionally, rooms with windows and/or doors on opposite sides encourage cross-ventilation, which can be further optimized by carefully controlling airflow to prevent excessive movement in windy conditions. By implementing proper ventilation strategies, designers can ensure a constant supply of fresh air and maintain a healthy indoor environment.
Maximizing natural ventilation strategies is crucial for enhancing indoor comfort. Wind-driven and thermal buoyancy-driven ventilation techniques should be leveraged to achieve optimal airflow. Implementing single-sided ventilation and cross-ventilation strategies, while considering factors such as depth and distribution of openings, inlet and outlet positions, and window area requirements, can significantly improve thermal comfort and air quality within the building.
Finally, educating building occupants about the benefits of natural ventilation is important. Occupants should be encouraged to actively participate in utilizing and optimizing natural ventilation strategies. Providing guidance on opening and closing windows, adjusting shading devices, and maintaining a comfortable indoor environment can contribute to the overall success of natural ventilation strategies.
By implementing these recommendations, architects, designers, and building professionals can create indoor environments that prioritize thermal comfort, promote occupant well-being, and optimize the use of natural ventilation strategies to enhance the overall quality of the indoor environment.

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