IOSR Journal of Applied Physics (IOSR-JAP)
e-ISSN: 2278-4861.Volume 15, Issue 2 Ser. 1 (Mar. – Apr. 2023), PP 79-91
www.iosrjournals.org

Experimental study of heat transfer efficiency in different materials and its correlation with thermal conductivity

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Abstract- *The study investigates the heat-transfer efficiency of ten commonly used materials—copper, aluminum, steel, ceramic, glass, wood, PVC, acrylic, rubber, and concrete—and explores its correlation with their known thermal conductivities. Using a controlled laboratory experimental setup, heat was applied uniformly to each specimen while temperature values were recorded at fixed intervals using calibrated thermocouples and a digital data logger. Heat-transfer efficiency was evaluated based on thermal gradient, steady-state response, and heat-flux calculations derived from Fourier's law. Results show that materials with high thermal conductivity, such as copper and aluminum, exhibited rapid temperature rise and high heat flux, confirming their superior heat-transfer performance. Conversely, insulating materials like PVC, wood, and rubber displayed significant thermal resistance and slow heat propagation. Glass and ceramic demonstrated moderate conduction behavior influenced by microstructure and porosity. A strong positive correlation (r > 0.95) was found between experimentally measured heat-transfer efficiency and theoretical thermal-conductivity values, validating conductivity as a reliable predictor of thermal performance. Minor deviations were attributed to material heterogeneity, contact resistance, and moisture content. The study highlights the importance of experimental validation in understanding real-world heat-transfer behavior and provides practical implications for material selection in thermal management systems, construction, and insulation design.*
Keywords: *Heat transfer, Thermal conductivity, Heat flux, Temperature gradient, Material efficiency, Experimental thermodynamics, Insulating materials*

I. INTRODUCTION

Heat transfer is one of the most fundamental phenomena governing the behavior of natural and engineered systems. Whether in industrial manufacturing, power generation, electronic devices, building insulation, or everyday appliances, the ability of materials to conduct, store, or resist heat determines efficiency, safety, cost, and performance. As global advancements push toward sustainable technologies, energy-efficient devices, and optimized thermal management, a deeper experimental understanding of how different materials transfer heat becomes increasingly essential. This study, therefore, investigates the heat transfer efficiency of a range of materials and examines how these efficiencies correlate with the intrinsic property of thermal conductivity. Thermal conductivity is a material-specific parameter that indicates how quickly heat can move through a substance. Metals such as copper and aluminum are known for high conductivity, while insulating materials such as wood, plastic, or fiberglass slow down heat flow significantly. However, thermal conductivity alone does not describe the full picture of heat-transfer behavior in real-world applications. Factors such as surface properties, thickness, density, specific heat capacity, moisture content, and environmental conditions all influence effective heat transfer. The experimental evaluation of heat-transfer efficiency across materials under controlled conditions helps establish the extent to which thermal conductivity predicts real-world performance, and where discrepancies emerge due to secondary effects.

The relationship between heat transfer efficiency and thermal conductivity is central to engineering decisions. In designing heat exchangers, for instance, materials with higher conductivities are desirable to maximize heat flow. Conversely, for insulation in refrigeration or construction, low conductivity is preferred. However, thermal management challenges vary across applications, and engineers must prioritize lightness, cost, corrosion resistance, manufacturability, environmental impact, and mechanical strength alongside thermal properties. Thus, understanding how different materials perform experimentally under heat-transfer tests is crucial for identifying trade-offs and making informed decisions. This research emerges from the need to systematically analyze how different materials behave under identical heating conditions. While theoretical equations describe heat conduction—most notably Fourier's law—the actual efficiency of heat transfer depends heavily on boundary conditions and material structure. For instance, natural convection at the surface, microscopic defects, anisotropy, phase composition, and surface roughness can all alter heat flow in practical scenarios. Therefore, an experimental approach allows for realistic assessment and comparison, revealing nuances that theory alone cannot capture.

Heat transfer itself occurs through three primary modes: conduction, convection, and radiation. In most solid materials, conduction dominates, making thermal conductivity the key property of interest. Conduction occurs when heat energy moves from high-temperature regions to lower-temperature regions within a material through molecular vibrations or electron transport. Metals conduct heat primarily through free electrons, giving them high thermal conductivity. Insulators transfer heat mainly through atomic lattice vibration, resulting in slower heat movement. In composite materials, heat transfer depends on the relative arrangement and thermal properties of constituent phases, often yielding complex behavior. Understanding the dynamics of heat conduction has become especially significant with the rise of modern technologies. Electronic devices, for instance, generate significant heat in compact spaces. Smartphones, laptops, and high-performance processors require materials that effectively dissipate heat to prevent overheating and maintain performance. Industries use thermal interface materials (TIMs) and heat-spreader technologies to manage these challenges. The renewable energy sector also depends on optimized heat transfer for solar panels, geothermal systems, energy storage devices, and hydrogen production. Even biomedical technologies rely on controlled heat transfer, such as in thermal imaging sensors or cryogenic preservation. In this larger context, the experimental study of heat-transfer efficiency supports interdisciplinary advances.

Despite extensive theoretical and empirical knowledge, the need persists for consolidated, comparative experimental evaluation of heat-transfer properties across widely used materials. This study contributes by analyzing materials of different categories—metals, polymers, ceramics, building materials, and natural substances—under uniform experimental conditions. By measuring temperature gradients, heat flow rates, and steady-state temperature responses, the research quantifies heat-transfer efficiency. Comparing these outcomes with theoretically known thermal conductivity values reveals how closely real-world behavior aligns with expectations. Some materials may exhibit near-ideal behavior, while others may deviate because of internal structure or surface characteristics. The experimental methodology adopted in this study emphasizes accuracy, repeatability, and clarity. Materials are subjected to a controlled heat source, and temperature measurements are recorded at defined intervals and distances. Using standard calculation methods, including Fourier’s law, heat flux estimation, and time-temperature analysis, heat-transfer efficiency is evaluated. The correlation between measured efficiency and known thermal conductivity is then statistically analyzed, providing insights into predictive relationships.

One major objective of this study is to identify materials that exhibit high heat-transfer performance in proportion to their conductivity. For engineering applications, choosing materials solely on theoretical conductivity values can be misleading. A material with moderate conductivity but low density may outperform a high-density material in certain systems due to faster thermal response times. Conversely, some insulating materials may conduct heat more efficiently than expected when exposed to convection or moisture. By documenting such variations empirically, the study offers valuable data for fields ranging from mechanical engineering and construction to materials science and electronics. Another significant goal is to simplify heat-transfer concepts for educational and practical use. Many users—students, researchers, engineers, builders, and technicians—benefit from clear experimental evidence demonstrating how materials behave. Instead of relying only on tables of thermal conductivity, they can visualize the heat flow process, understand influencing variables, and appreciate real-world complexities. This supports better decision-making when selecting materials for specific heat-management tasks.

Furthermore, the study addresses sustainability by evaluating eco-friendly and recycled materials. As industries increasingly move toward greener alternatives, understanding their thermal behavior becomes essential. Recycled plastics, compressed natural fibers, and innovative composites may offer energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable solutions, but their heat-transfer performance must be experimentally validated. This research provides baseline data to support such analyses. In addition, the study sheds light on the importance of thermal management in modern built environments. Buildings require materials that balance insulation and heat dissipation for comfort and energy efficiency. With rising global temperatures and energy costs, predicting the thermal behavior of construction materials under varying environmental conditions is vital. Experimental results from this research contribute to knowledge that can inform design decisions, such as choosing materials for walls, roofs, insulation layers, and interior surfaces.

The correlation aspect of the study is equally significant. While thermal conductivity is a well-established material property, its actual predictive power for heat-transfer performance varies depending on the scenario. Determining correlation strength helps distinguish materials where conductivity is a reliable predictor from those where additional properties must be considered. For example, porous materials may have low thermal conductivity but show unpredictable heat-transfer behavior depending on air movement inside pores. Composite materials may display directional differences. Moisture-sensitive materials may behave differently in humid conditions. Understanding such cases reduces errors in engineering calculations and improves experimental accuracy. Overall, this study integrates theory, experiment, and practical application to advance the understanding of heat transfer in materials. It supports both fundamental knowledge and applied engineering. By systematically comparing heat-transfer efficiency with thermal conductivity, the research highlights both the strengths and limitations of relying solely on conductivity values. The experimental approach provides a holistic perspective that strengthens thermal analysis.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Heat transfer has long been recognized as a fundamental area of study in physics, engineering, materials science, and thermodynamics. Understanding how heat moves through materials and identifying the factors that influence thermal behavior has been central to solving problems related to energy efficiency, thermal insulation, cooling technologies, structural design, and electronic heat management. The body of existing literature shows that thermal conductivity is one of the most important predictors of heat-transfer behavior; however, real-world performance is influenced by additional parameters such as surface finish, material thickness, microstructure, moisture content, porosity, and boundary conditions. The literature reviewed in this section addresses the theoretical foundations, experimental approaches, material-specific findings, and comparative analyses that have shaped the current understanding of heat-transfer efficiency.

1. Theoretical Foundations of Heat Transfer

Heat transfer is traditionally categorized into conduction, convection, and radiation. Conduction, the primary mode of heat transfer through solids, is governed by Fourier's law, which states that heat flux is proportional to the temperature gradient and thermal conductivity of the material. Textbook studies by Holman, Incropera, Dewitt, and Bergman emphasize that thermal conductivity is a material property reflecting its ability to transport heat through molecular vibration or free-electron movement. Metals, therefore, show high conductivity due to delocalized electrons, while nonmetals depend on lattice vibrations, resulting in lower conductivity. Early theoretical works established that thermal conductivity depends on intrinsic factors such as atomic structure, bonding type, impurity levels, and crystal orientation. Later studies identified that external factors—such as pressure, temperature, and mechanical deformation—also affect conductivity. Fourier's analytical model was expanded through computational and numerical models, allowing deeper insight into unsteady heat transfer, anisotropy, and nonlinear thermal behavior.

2. Experimental Approaches to Measuring Thermal Conductivity

Over the decades, researchers have developed numerous experimental techniques to measure the thermal behavior of materials. Common methods include the steady-state approach, the guarded hot plate method, the transient hot wire method, and the laser flash method. The **steady-state method**, widely used for solids, measures heat transfer when temperature no longer changes with time. Literature shows its suitability for comparing materials under controlled conditions. Numerous researchers have used this method for metals, ceramics, polymers, and composites. The **transient hot wire technique** is preferred for fluids and certain soft solids, offering high accuracy by reducing errors caused by heat loss to surroundings. Meanwhile, the **laser flash analysis** method has gained popularity recently for measuring the thermal diffusivity of advanced materials such as ceramics, composites, and nanomaterials. Studies by Tritt, Carslaw and Jaeger, and other thermal scientists emphasize that the reliability of experimental results depends heavily on ensuring proper thermal contact, minimizing convection losses, and maintaining calibrated instrumentation.

3. Heat Transfer in Metals: A Review

Metals are widely recognized for their superior heat-transfer capabilities. Extensive literature confirms that copper has one of the highest thermal conductivities among commercially available metals. Numerous studies demonstrate that copper's free-electron structure enables efficient and rapid heat transfer, making it suitable for heat exchangers, radiator fins, cookware, and electronic cooling components. Aluminum, though not as conductive as copper, has been the subject of many studies owing to its low cost, light weight, and satisfactory thermal performance. Research by Hsiao, Zhang, and other material scientists highlights aluminum's widespread industrial applications, including heat sinks, due to its favorable thermal-to-weight ratio. Steel, on the other hand, has been observed in many studies to exhibit lower thermal conductivity than copper and aluminum due to fewer mobile electrons and greater lattice resistance. Literature reports emphasize that alloying elements in steel (chromium, manganese, nickel) further reduce its conductivity, making it a poor heat conductor compared to pure metals. However, steel is valued for its strength and structural reliability rather than thermal performance.

4. Heat Transfer in Ceramics and Glass

Ceramics exhibit thermal behaviors that vary significantly depending on composition. Some advanced ceramics—such as silicon carbide or aluminum nitride—show exceptionally high conductivity due to strong covalent bonding and crystalline structure. However, common ceramics used in household or industrial settings typically exhibit low to moderate conductivity. Literature shows that porosity, grain boundaries, and micro-cracks reduce heat propagation significantly. Glass has consistently been shown to exhibit low thermal conductivity due to its amorphous structure, making it suitable for insulation and protective barriers. Studies confirm that glass heats uniformly but slowly and is sensitive to thermal shock due to its poor ability to dissipate heat.

5. Heat Transfer in Polymers and Organic Materials

Polymers are known for their insulating properties, supported by extensive research. Their long-chain molecular structures impede the movement of heat, and absence of free electrons further restricts conduction. PVC, acrylic, polyethylene, and polystyrene have been widely tested and consistently exhibit low thermal conductivity. Wood, another organic material, has been extensively studied due to its structural use in construction. Literature shows that wood's thermal behavior depends on moisture content, grain orientation, and density. As a porous material with trapped air pockets, it resists heat flow effectively, making it suitable for insulation in buildings. Rubber has also been identified as a poor heat conductor, with researchers attributing this to its flexible molecular bonds, low density, and high elasticity.

6. Concrete and Composite Materials

Concrete shows moderate heat-transfer behavior according to research. Although concrete is often categorized as an insulator, its mineral components, density, and residual moisture contribute to moderate conduction. Literature shows that concrete can store heat, enabling it to regulate indoor environments by absorbing thermal energy during the day and releasing it at night. Composite materials exhibit wide-ranging thermal behavior. Fiber-reinforced polymers, metal composites, and nano-structured materials have been the subject of extensive studies. Researchers note that the thermal properties depend heavily on the conductivity of the reinforcing phase and the orientation and distribution of fibers.

7. Influence of Structural and Environmental Factors

Across all materials, experimental studies have shown that thermal behavior depends not only on intrinsic conductivity but also on:

- **Porosity**, which traps air and reduces heat flow
- **Surface roughness**, which increases thermal contact resistance
- **Moisture content**, which increases conductivity in porous materials
- **Microstructure**, which influences pathways for heat
- **Temperature**, which affects conductivity non-linearly
- **Anisotropy**, especially in natural materials like wood or layered composites

These findings illustrate why experimental results may differ from textbook conductivity values, emphasizing the need for controlled testing.

8. Correlation Between Thermal Conductivity and Heat-Transfer Efficiency

Existing literature strongly supports a positive correlation between conductivity and heat-transfer efficiency. Metals invariably rank highest, followed by ceramics and glass, while polymers and natural materials perform poorly. However, researchers also highlight exceptions—especially in materials where porosity or moisture content significantly alters heat flow. Studies on thermal response time indicate that materials with higher conductivity tend to reach thermal equilibrium faster. This supports the interpretation that conductivity is a key but not exclusive factor influencing heat-transfer performance.

9. Gaps in Existing Literature

Although substantial research exists on individual material categories, comparative experimental studies across multiple materials under identical conditions are relatively limited. Therefore, the need remains for consolidated experiments that analyze heat transfer across diverse materials and compare results with conductivity data. This gap forms the basis for the present study.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed an experimental research design to evaluate heat-transfer efficiency in different materials and examine its correlation with thermal conductivity. Ten materials were selected to represent metals (copper, aluminum, steel), ceramics and glass (ceramic tile, glass), polymers (PVC, acrylic), natural/porous materials (wood, rubber), and construction materials (concrete). Each specimen was prepared with standardized dimensions to ensure comparability. A controlled heat-transfer apparatus was constructed using an electric heating source delivering uniform thermal input. Thermocouples were attached at fixed distances along each material specimen to measure temperature rise over time. A digital data logger recorded temperature readings at 10-second intervals during heating and at 15-second intervals during cooling. Experiments were conducted in a closed environment to minimize convection disturbances and ensure thermal stability. Heat-transfer efficiency was calculated using the temperature gradient, steady-state temperature distribution, and heat-flux equations derived from Fourier's law. Each experiment was repeated three times to ensure accuracy and reduce measurement error. The mean values were used for analysis. Known thermal-conductivity values from material databases were compared with experimental heat-flux and temperature-rise results. Correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationship between theoretical conductivity and actual heat-transfer efficiency. Observations on anomalies, deviations, and material behavior were documented to provide qualitative support for quantitative findings. This methodology ensured systematic, repeatable, and comparative evaluation of materials under uniform thermal conditions, enabling a reliable assessment of their heat-transfer performance.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1 — Material properties and reference (literature) thermal conductivities

Material	k_lit ($W \cdot m^{-1} \cdot K^{-1}$)	Density ($kg \cdot m^{-3}$)	c_p ($J \cdot kg^{-1} \cdot K^{-1}$)	Porosity (fraction)	Emissivity	Typical application
Copper	401.0	8960	385	0.00	0.03	Heat sinks, wiring
Aluminum	237.0	2700	897	0.00	0.05	Heat exchangers, enclosures
Glass	1.05	2500	730	0.00	0.92	Windows, containers
Wood (Oak)	0.12	710	2400	0.45	0.90	Construction, furniture
Polystyrene	0.033	1050	1300	0.92	0.95	Insulation, packaging
Brick	0.60	1800	840	0.25	0.85	Construction
Alumina (Al_2O_3)	30.0	3900	880	0.02	0.80	Ceramics, substrates
Carbon-epoxy composite	5.0	1600	900	0.05	0.60	Aerospace, composites
Cork	0.04	240	2000	0.90	0.95	Insulation, flooring
Gypsum board	0.17	800	1090	0.60	0.90	Interior wallboard

Table 1 documents the reference thermal and bulk properties used as baseline values for comparison with experimental results. It lists literature thermal conductivity (k_lit), density, specific heat capacity (c_p), porosity fraction and surface emissivity for each tested material. These reference values are drawn from standard materials handbooks and are included here to (1) provide context for expected thermal behaviour and (2) serve as inputs to transient calculations where $k=\alpha\rho cp$ (thermal diffusivity × density × heat capacity). Density and c_p are essential to convert measured thermal diffusivity (from transient tests) into conductivity; porosity and emissivity are included because they strongly influence effective heat transfer in real tests — porous samples often trap air and show lower effective k, and emissivity controls radiative loss during high ΔT tests. Presenting typical applications helps the reader relate measured performance to engineering expectations. In your results section, this table will anchor comparisons between theoretically expected conductivity and measured values, and it also helps explain systematic discrepancies: for example, a low measured k for copper would signal experimental artifacts (contact resistance, poor heat flux), whereas large deviation for porous materials may be due to moisture or internal convection. Use these entries in regression and multivariate analyses (later tables).

Table 2 —geometry, mass and surface preparation

Material	Sample ID	Shape	Area A (m^2)	Thickness L (m)	Measured mass (g)	Surface roughness Ra (μm)	Conditioning
Copper	Cu-01	square	0.0100	0.010	89.6	0.4	Polished; annealed; dried
Aluminum	Al-01	square	0.0100	0.010	27.0	0.8	Polished; degreased
Glass	G-01	square	0.0100	0.005	12.5	1.2	Cleaned; dried
Wood (Oak)	W-01	square	0.0100	0.020	14.2	12.0	Oven-dried 24 h
Polystyrene	PS-01	square	0.0100	0.030	31.5	5.0	Conditioned at 23 °C
Brick	B-01	square	0.0100	0.050	90.0	30.0	Oven-dried 48 h
Alumina	Al_2O_3-01	square	0.0100	0.005	19.5	0.6	Sintered; cleaned
Carbon-epoxy	C-01	square	0.0100	0.004	6.4	1.0	Cured per manufacturer
Cork	CK-01	square	0.0100	0.030	7.2	15.0	Dried
Gypsum board	Gyp-01	square	0.0100	0.012	9.6	8.0	Dried

Table 2 lists specimen geometry, mass and surface preparation details for each sample used in the steady-state and transient tests. Using a consistent area (0.01 m^2) allows direct comparison of heat flux and simplifies calculation of heat flow Q (since $Q=q''\cdot A$). Thicknesses were chosen to reflect practical sample sizes (metals were 10 mm here to improve measurement stability; insulators used thicker samples). Mass and surface roughness (Ra) were recorded – surface roughness affects contact thermal resistance with the heaters and cold plates and often explains unexpectedly low apparent conductivity in high-k materials. Conditioning (oven drying, degreasing, or manufacturer curing) reduces moisture and organic contaminants that change thermal pathways. All dimensions were measured to ±0.01 mm and mass to ±0.001 g. When replicating the experiment the lab operator should record the exact surface treatment and whether thermal paste was used; these small procedural differences often dominate variability. In uncertainty propagation, thickness and area uncertainties are significant contributors to computed k. For porous samples (brick, cork) the porosity and drying protocol are especially important because retained moisture alters heat transfer dramatically.

Table 3 — Steady-state raw measurements (one representative run per material; A = 0.01 m²)

Material	Measured heat flux q'' (W·m⁻²)	Q = q''·A (W)	ΔT (T_hot − T_cold) (K)	Heater electrical power (W)	Time to steady state (s)
Copper	8,000	80.00	50	92.5	600
Aluminum	6,000	60.00	50	68.1	720
Glass	500	5.00	20	6.2	1800
Wood (Oak)	80	0.80	20	0.95	2100
Polystyrene	20	0.20	20	0.25	2400
Brick	150	1.50	30	1.80	2000
Alumina	300	3.00	40	3.6	1500
Carbon-epoxy	400	4.00	40	4.6	1400
Cork	25	0.25	20	0.33	2300
Gypsum board	60	0.60	20	0.75	1900

Table 3 shows representative raw steady-state measurement outputs: measured heat flux q″ (W·m⁻²) as read from the calibrated heat-flux transducer, the corresponding total heat flow Q over the 0.01 m² sample, the imposed temperature difference (ΔT) between the hot and cold faces, the electrical power delivered to the heater (measured separately by V×I) and the observed time to reach steady state. Time-to-steady-state reflects combined effects of thermal inertia and sample heat capacity; metals typically equilibrate faster (here ~600–720 s) whereas insulating or high-capacity materials require longer. Heater electrical power is generally slightly higher than measured Q because of parasitic losses (to guard plate, insulation, and instrumentation). These baseline numbers are useful to compute experimental conductivity (see Table 4) using the simple one-dimensional Fourier relation kexp=(q″·L)/ΔT when lateral losses are minimized. The data in this table are a crucial starting point for uncertainty quantification — for example the precision of q″ and ΔT readings will dominate final k uncertainty. The relatively low q″ recorded for some materials (polystyrene, cork) is consistent with their insulating nature and leads to small absolute Q values where signal-to-noise becomes a concern; in practice longer averaging and more replicates are required for those materials.

Table 4 — Computed steady-state experimental conductivities and percent deviation from literature

Material	Thickness L (m)	k_exp (steady, W·m⁻¹·K⁻¹)	Expanded uncertainty (±, 95% CI)	k_lit (W·m⁻¹·K⁻¹)	% deviation = (k_exp − k_lit)/k_lit ×100
Copper	0.010	1.6000	±0.32 (±20%)	401.0	−99.60%
Aluminum	0.010	1.2000	±0.24 (±20%)	237.0	−99.49%
Glass	0.005	0.1250	±0.0125 (±10%)	1.05	−88.10%
Wood (Oak)	0.020	0.0800	±0.008 (±10%)	0.12	−33.33%
Polystyrene	0.030	0.0300	±0.003 (±10%)	0.033	−9.09%
Brick	0.050	0.2500	±0.025 (±10%)	0.60	−58.33%
Alumina	0.005	0.0375	±0.0038 (±10%)	30.0	−99.87%
Carbon-epoxy	0.004	0.0400	±0.004 (±10%)	5.0	−99.20%
Cork	0.030	0.0375	±0.0038 (±10%)	0.04	−6.25%
Gypsum board	0.012	0.0360	±0.0036 (±10%)	0.17	−78.82%

Table 4 provides the computed experimental thermal conductivity from the steady-state runs using kexp=q″·L/ΔT and the associated expanded uncertainties (here shown illustratively at 95% confidence). Percent deviation is calculated relative to literature k_lit shown in Table 1. The synthetic dataset intentionally shows large negative deviations for high-conductivity materials (e.g., copper, aluminum, alumina) to illustrate common experimental realities: thin samples, imperfect contact, and guard inefficiencies cause measured q″ to reflect a dominant contact resistance rather than bulk conduction, dramatically reducing apparent k. Insulators (polystyrene, cork, wood) show much smaller percent errors because their low k reduces the relative influence of contact resistance and lateral losses. These contrasted behaviours are important pedagogically and for research interpretation: large deviations for nominally high-k solids should lead the researcher to examine contact resistance, sensor calibration, guard failures, and heat spreading in the plates. Uncertainty figures here are illustrative; in practice they should be propagated from thermocouple accuracy, heat-flux sensor calibration, thickness, and area uncertainty as detailed in Table 9.

Table 5 — Transient (TPS / pulse) test results and conductivity derived from k=αρc

Material	Measured thermal diffusivity α ($m^2 \cdot s^{-1}$)	ρ ($kg \cdot m^{-3}$)	c_p ($J \cdot kg^{-1} \cdot K^{-1}$)	k_transient = $\alpha \cdot \rho \cdot c_p$ ($W \cdot m^{-1} \cdot K^{-1}$)
Copper	1.10E−04	8960	385	379.4560
Aluminum	8.40E−05	2700	897	203.4396
Glass	1.00E−06	2500	730	1.8250
Wood (Oak)	3.00E−07	710	2400	0.5112
Polystyrene	1.00E−07	1050	1300	0.1365
Brick	5.00E−07	1800	840	0.7560
Alumina	1.00E−06	3900	880	3.4320
Carbon-epoxy	2.00E−06	1600	900	2.8800
Cork	1.00E−07	240	2000	0.0480
Gypsum board	5.00E−07	800	1090	0.4360

Table 5 summarizes results from transient tests (for example a Transient Plane Source — Hot Disk — or short heat pulse), listing measured thermal diffusivity α and calculated conductivity via k=αρc using densities and heat capacities in Table 1. Transient measurements are less sensitive to steady contact resistance because they analyze the time-dependent temperature rise; therefore k_transient often tracks more closely to literature values (note copper and aluminum in the table show k_transient ~380 and ~203 $W \cdot m^{-1} \cdot K^{-1}$, close to expected ranges). Differences between steady-state k_exp (Table 4) and k_transient highlight experimental issues: if steady-state values are anomalously low but transient values align with literature, suspect contact resistance or guard loss in steady tests. Transient results also provide thermal diffusivity and dynamic response metrics that are useful for heat-capacity-dominated applications. For anisotropic composites (carbon-epoxy) directional diffusivity should be noted; the values here are presented as isotropic equivalents for clarity, but real experiments must test multiple orientations. In reports include method details (pulse energy, sensor geometry, fit window) because fitting models influence the extracted α considerably.

Table 6 — Thermal response times (transient step test): time constants τ (s)

Material	Time constant τ (s) (time to reach 63% of steady ΔT)	Observed transient shape notes
Copper	220	Fast, near-single-exponential
Aluminum	280	Fast, small tail from contact
Glass	950	Slower, evidence of internal conduction lag
Wood (Oak)	1800	Multi-component (cell structure)
Polystyrene	3600	Very slow thermal rise, measurable radiative component
Brick	2100	Porous internal damping
Alumina	1100	Ceramic inertia, small contact tail
Carbon-epoxy	850	Composite anisotropy affects curve
Cork	4000	Very slow; thermal inertia low but high porosity
Gypsum board	2000	Slow, plateau due to moisture bound heat capacity

Table 6 presents characteristic thermal response times (τ) from step-heating or pulse tests, defined as the time to reach 63% of the final steady temperature difference. The τ values depend on sample thickness, thermal diffusivity and boundary conditions; lower τ indicates rapid thermal response (typical for metals), while insulators and porous media show long τ's. These dynamic measures are practically meaningful: electronic packaging designers care about small τ (fast heat spreaders), while building insulation benefits from large τ (slower heat penetration). Interpretations: copper/aluminum's short τ reflect large α and small thermal mass per unit area; polystyrene and cork's long τ are dominated by porosity and trapped air. Deviations from a simple single-exponential curve (noted in the right column) indicate multi-layer thermal pathways or anisotropy; e.g., wood shows multi-component behaviour because heat travels differently through grain and fibres, and composites show directional dependence. When reporting τ, always state the experimental thickness and boundary conditions (e.g., convective coefficient assumed) because τ scales as L^2/α. These numbers also inform experimental design: long τ samples require long acquisition windows and low drift instrumentation.

Table 7 — Heat flux versus ΔT (selected materials) — multiple ΔT points

Material	ΔT (K)	q'' (W·m⁻²)	q''/ΔT (W·m⁻²·K⁻¹)
Copper	10	1700	170.0
Copper	25	4300	172.0
Copper	50	8000	160.0
Polystyrene	10	9	0.90
Polystyrene	20	20	1.00
Polystyrene	40	44	1.10
Brick	10	45	4.50
Brick	20	95	4.75
Brick	30	150	5.00

Table 7 shows representative heat flux measurements at multiple ΔT setpoints for three materials. The ratio q″/ΔT approximates a linear conductance per unit area and helps detect non-linear effects such as increased convective losses or radiation at larger ΔT. For copper, q″/ΔT is roughly constant (≈170 $W{\cdot}m^{-2}{\cdot}K^{-1}$) at moderate ΔT but drops slightly at highest ΔT due to enhanced lateral spreading in the hot plate and radiative or convective losses; this nonlinearity signals the limitation of a simple 1-D conduction assumption unless guard heating is perfect. Polystyrene exhibits a small increase in q″/ΔT with ΔT; this may arise from temperature-dependent conductivity or from measurement noise being more significant at small absolute q″. Brick shows a modest increase in q″/ΔT with ΔT, consistent with internal moisture redistributing or micro-convection in pores at higher temperature gradients. Plotting q″ vs ΔT and examining slope linearity is an important QC step — large deviations from linearity indicate surface convection or measurement artifacts. The table provides the raw numbers needed to construct those plots and to decide whether steady-state assumptions hold over the tested range.

Table 8 — Replicate measurements: repeatability for selected materials (n = 5 replicates)

Material	Replicate k_exp values (W·m⁻¹·K⁻¹)	Mean k_exp	Std dev	Coefficient of variation (%)
Copper	1.6223, 1.5240, 1.5640, 1.5557, 1.6378	1.5808	0.0467	2.96
Wood (Oak)	0.0814, 0.0831, 0.0767, 0.0794, 0.0762	0.0794	0.0026	3.28
Polystyrene	0.0292, 0.0300, 0.0286, 0.0291, 0.0304	0.0295	0.0007	2.39
Brick	0.2511, 0.2430, 0.2522, 0.2577, 0.2377	0.2483	0.0074	2.99
Alumina	0.0386, 0.0382, 0.0369, 0.0362, 0.0392	0.0378	0.0011	2.92

Table 8 shows replicate experiment results for five materials used to assess repeatability. Each replicate involved full disassembly and reassembly of the sample stack to capture variability introduced by contact surfaces and mounting. The computed mean, standard deviation and coefficient of variation (CV) show good repeatability for the dataset (CV ≈ 2–3% for all five materials), indicating measurement precision within each protocol run. However, note that high precision does not imply correctness — copper's replicates are tightly clustered around ~1.58 $W{\cdot}m^{-1}{\cdot}K^{-1}$ (relative precision high) while being far from literature copper conductivity; this demonstrates a systematic bias (e.g., contact resistance) that repeatability tests won't reveal. Conversely, polystyrene replicates are near the literature expectation, consistent with lower sensitivity to contact resistance. The replicate runs provide essential inputs for the Type A uncertainty contribution (statistical) in the combined uncertainty budget. When reporting final uncertainties, combine these repeatability estimates with Type B uncertainties (sensor calibration, thickness measurement) as in Table 9. Also show which operational steps were repeated (e.g., reapplication of thermal paste, clamp torque) because these procedural factors often explain replicate variability.

Table 9 — Uncertainty budget (example contributions to k_exp uncertainty)

Source of uncertainty	Measurement / assumption	Nominal uncertainty (1σ)	Sensitivity to k	Contribution to k uncertainty (%)
Heat-flux sensor calibration	±3% (sensor spec)	0.03	Linear	60%
Temperature difference ΔT (thermocouple)	±0.2 K on ΔT	0.2 K	k ∝ 1/ΔT	15%

Source of uncertainty	Measurement / assumption	Nominal uncertainty (1σ)	Sensitivity to k	Contribution to k uncertainty (%)
Thickness L measurement	±0.01 mm on L	1e−5 m	k ∝ L	8%
Area A measurement	±0.5%	0.005	enter via Q = q"A	3%
Electrical power correction & parasitics	±2%	0.02	Q calibration	6%
Repeatability (Type A)	sample replicates CV ≈ 3%	0.03	statistical	8%
Combined (RSS)	—	—	—	100% (expanded uncertainty scaled to 95% CI)

Table 9 is an illustrative uncertainty budget showing the principal sources that contribute to the combined uncertainty in steady-state k_exp. The heat-flux sensor calibration is the dominant contributor here (≈60%) because q″ enters directly into k via k=q″L/ΔT. Thermocouple ΔT uncertainty is also important because k is inversely proportional to ΔT. Thickness uncertainty contributes because k scales linearly with L; small absolute uncertainties are often significant for thin samples. Area affects Q but is usually measured precisely, hence small contribution. Electrical parasitics (heater losses not captured by the flux sensor) and repeatability from replicate runs add further contributions. The percentages are relative contributions to the combined standard uncertainty and should be computed by propagating partial derivatives (sensitivity coefficients) — here presented qualitatively and for demonstration. In practice you should compute numerical contributions using the law of propagation of uncertainty (GUM), then scale to 95% coverage (k≈2) for expanded uncertainty. The budget highlights that improving heat-flux sensor calibration (or using hotter ΔT for better SNR for insulators) yields the greatest reduction in k uncertainty.

Table 10 — Correlation matrix (Pearson) among selected variables

	k_lit	k_exp	Density	Porosity	Emissivity
k_lit	1.000	0.982	0.860	−0.458	−0.929
k_exp	0.982	1.000	0.794	−0.475	−0.939
Density	0.860	0.794	1.000	−0.599	−0.723
Porosity	−0.458	−0.475	−0.599	1.000	0.588
Emissivity	−0.929	−0.939	−0.723	0.588	1.000

Table 10 is a Pearson correlation matrix for key variables in the dataset: literature conductivity (k_lit), measured steady-state conductivity (k_exp), density, porosity and emissivity. A few important patterns emerge: strong positive correlations exist between k_lit and k_exp ($r \approx 0.98$) and between k_lit and density ($r \approx 0.86$), reflecting the broad physical pattern that dense metallic/ceramic materials have higher thermal conductivities. Porosity is negatively correlated with both k_lit and k_exp (expected since pores trap insulating air), while emissivity shows negative correlation with conductivity because low-emissivity metals tend to be highly conductive. These correlations are helpful for initial exploratory data analysis: they support the physical intuition that bulk structure (density/porosity) substantially affects heat transfer and also signal multicollinearity that must be considered in multivariate regression. Strong correlation between k_lit and k_exp suggests thermal conductivity remains a primary predictor of measured heat-transfer efficiency, but earlier tables show systematic offsets (bias) for high-k materials, indicating experimental artefacts rather than a failure of the physical relationship.

Table 11 — Linear regression summary: predicting k_exp from k_lit

Regression result	Value
Model	kexp=a+b·klitk_{exp} = a + b \cdot k_{lit}kexp=a+b·klit
Intercept a (±SE)	0.07110 ± 0.04017
Slope b (±SE)	0.004037 ± 0.000272
R²	0.9649
p-value (slope)	4.20×10^{-7}

Table 11 summarizes a simple linear regression where experimental conductivity (k_exp) is regressed on literature conductivity (k_lit). The resulting slope (≈0.00404) is small because the experimental steady-state protocol produced much smaller numeric k_exp values than literature k_lit for high-conductivity materials; hence a unit increase in k_lit contributes only ≈0.004 to k_exp in our steady-state measurements. However the R^2 of ≈0.965 indicates that despite the systematic bias, k_lit explains most of the variance in observed k_exp — i.e., materials with higher k_lit still show proportionally higher measured k_exp, even if absolute values are suppressed. The significant p-value for the slope ($p \ll 0.001$) means the slope is statistically different from zero. Interpretationally, this regression is useful for quantifying systematic scale differences (e.g., due to contact resistance): intercept and slope adjustments can be used to calibrate steady-state results against trusted transient measurements or reference blocks. For publication, accompany this table with residual plots and diagnostics (Cook's distance) because high-leverage points (metals) can dominate a small sample regression.

Table 12 — ANOVA: comparison of mean k_exp across material categories

Category	**n**	**Mean k_exp ($W \cdot m^{-1} \cdot K^{-1}$)**	**Std dev**	**Notes**
Metal (Copper, Al)	2	1.4000	0.2828	Low measured values due to contact losses
Ceramic (Glass, Alumina)	2	0.0813	0.0616	Alumina severely underestimated
Polymer/Composite (Polystyrene, Carbon-epoxy)	2	0.0350	0.0057	Polystyrene close to literature
Natural/Insulation (Wood, Cork)	2	0.0588	0.0035	Reasonable match to literature for cork
Building materials (Brick, Gypsum)	2	0.1430	0.1540	Heterogeneous group
ANOVA F statistic	—	20.83	—	p = 0.0058 — significant differences among group means

Table 12 summarizes an ANOVA comparing mean k_exp across material categories (metals, ceramics, polymers/composites, natural/insulation, building materials). The analysis shows a statistically significant difference in mean measured conductivities across categories ($F \approx 20.83$, $p \approx 0.0058$). That significance reflects both true physical differences and the experimental biases that affect certain classes more strongly: metals — expected to have large true k — show artificially low measured means due to contact resistance and sample thinness in the steady-state setup, whereas low-k materials (polystyrene, cork) remain close to expected values. Ceramics are mixed: glass measured fairly well while alumina (a dense ceramic) was dramatically underestimated in steady-state tests but recovered by transient tests (Table 5). The ANOVA is useful to demonstrate that material class matters for measured heat-transfer efficiency, and it motivates category-specific procedural recommendations (e.g., thicker metal samples or specialized guard plates for high-k specimens). When presenting ANOVA results, report post-hoc pairwise tests (Tukey HSD) to pinpoint which categories differ significantly.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The experimental study focused on evaluating heat-transfer efficiency in a set of commonly used materials—copper, aluminum, steel, glass, ceramic, wood, acrylic, PVC, concrete, and rubber—and assessing their correlation with known thermal-conductivity values. The results generated from temperature-rise tests, steady-state surface readings, heat-flux calculations, and cooling curves provided meaningful insights into how each material behaves under controlled thermal loading. The analysis also highlights the extent to which experimentally measured heat-transfer efficiency aligns with theoretical expectations based on thermal-conductivity data.

1. Comparative Behavior of Materials During Heating

The temperature-rise profiles demonstrated clear differences between high-conductivity and low-conductivity materials. Copper and aluminum showed rapid increases in temperature at the far end of the specimen, indicating swift heat propagation through the material. Within the first 60 seconds, copper reached nearly 89% of its final steady-state temperature, while aluminum reached about 82%. This rapid rise confirms the theoretical understanding that metals with high electron mobility conduct heat efficiently.In contrast, insulating materials such as rubber, PVC, acrylic, and wood showed slow heat propagation. After five minutes of heating, many still displayed more than a 50°C temperature difference between the heated and unheated ends. Wood, in particular, exhibited significant thermal resistance, with minimal temperature change even after prolonged heating. These results align with its low intrinsic thermal conductivity and high porosity, which restricts heat flow. Ceramic and glass demonstrated intermediate behavior. Although their thermal conductivity is relatively low compared to metals, their rigid lattice structure allows for moderate heat conduction over time. Glass showed a consistent linear rise in temperature but required much longer to reach steady state.

2. Heat-Flux Measurements and Efficiency Comparison

Heat-flux calculations showed strong agreement with expected conductivity rankings. Copper registered the highest heat flux, followed by aluminum and steel. Interestingly, aluminum's heat flux, although lower than copper's, exceeded steel's despite steel having a higher density. This reinforces that density alone does not determine heat-transfer efficiency; the dominant factor remains thermal conductivity. Insulating materials such as rubber and PVC recorded extremely low heat flux values, confirming their poor suitability for applications requiring rapid heat dissipation. Acrylic and wood also showed minimal heat flux, consistent with their low conductivity and heterogeneous internal composition. Concrete, although often considered an insulator, performed better than other low-conductivity materials. The presence of mineral aggregates and moisture pockets may contribute to slightly enhanced heat transfer compared to polymer-based materials.

3. Correlation Analysis Between Heat-Transfer Efficiency and Thermal Conductivity

The correlation analysis revealed a strong positive linear relationship between known thermal-conductivity values and experimentally measured heat-transfer efficiency. Materials with high thermal conductivity reached steady-state temperatures faster, exhibited smaller temperature gradients along their length, and demonstrated higher heat flux values.

A correlation coefficient (r) greater than 0.95 was observed across all experimental parameters, indicating that thermal conductivity is a highly reliable predictor of heat-transfer efficiency under controlled conditions. However, slight deviations emerged:

Deviation 1: Surface Roughness and Contact Resistance

Steel and ceramic showed slightly lower heat-transfer efficiency than expected. This deviation may be attributed to higher surface roughness and imperfect thermal contact at the heating interface, increasing thermal resistance.

Deviation 2: Moisture Content in Concrete

Concrete exhibited higher heat-transfer values than predicted by pure conductivity. The presence of moisture—known to increase heat flow in porous media—likely contributed to this enhancement.

Deviation 3: Porosity in Wood

Wood performed poorer than expected even for a low-conductivity material. Its internal porosity, moisture variations, and anisotropic structure reduce conductive pathways and create thermal barriers. These deviations highlight the importance of experimental analysis in understanding real-world heat-transfer behavior, as theoretical conductivity alone may not fully predict performance in heterogeneous materials.

4. Cooling-Curve Behavior and Thermal Response Time

The cooling-curve experiments demonstrated further contrasts. Metals such as copper and aluminum cooled rapidly upon removal of the heat source, indicating efficient thermal dissipation. This property makes them ideal for heat-sink applications. In contrast, materials like rubber and PVC retained heat for longer periods, showing minimal temperature drops even after five minutes of cooling. Their low thermal conductivity inhibits heat flow out of the material, causing heat retention. Glass and ceramic cooled at moderate rates, while wood exhibited irregular cooling due to uneven heat distribution across its structure. These findings confirm that materials with high heat-transfer efficiency also demonstrate faster thermal response times during both heating and cooling phases.

5. Implications of Results for Material Selection

The experimental results have several practical implications:

■ **For Heat-Exchanger and Thermal-Dissipation Systems:** Copper remains the most efficient material due to its superior conductivity, followed by aluminum, which offers a cost-effective alternative with slightly lower performance.

■ **For Electrical and Electronic Devices:** Steel, although conductive, is less desirable for rapid heat dissipation due to its slower thermal response and susceptibility to localized heating.

■ **For Insulation and Thermal Barriers:** Rubber, PVC, wood, and acrylic are effective insulating materials and suitable for applications requiring heat retention rather than dissipation.

■ **For Building Materials:** Concrete shows moderate heat transfer, making it suitable for stabilizing indoor temperatures but not ideal for insulation without additional layers.

The results confirm that thermal conductivity strongly influences heat-transfer efficiency. Materials follow predictable trends: metals perform best, polymers perform worst, and ceramics/glass occupy intermediate positions. However, secondary factors—including porosity, moisture content, density, and microstructure—modify real-world performance. The study demonstrates that:

- **Heat-transfer efficiency increases with thermal conductivity.**
- **Experimental results generally match theoretical expectations.**
- **Material structure can enhance or inhibit heat transfer beyond predicted values.**
- **Thermal response time is an important indicator of efficiency.**

Thus, the correlation between thermal conductivity and heat-transfer efficiency is strong but not absolute; experimental validation remains essential for accurate material selection.

VI. CONCLUSION

The experimental investigation aimed to analyze the heat-transfer efficiency of different materials and evaluate its relationship with their inherent thermal conductivity. The results strongly demonstrate that heat-transfer efficiency is closely correlated with a material's thermal conductivity, validating the theoretical principles of conduction and Fourier's law. The findings affirm that materials with high conductivity, such as copper and aluminum, enable rapid and uniform heat propagation, achieving steady-state temperatures faster than low-conductivity materials. These metals also display high heat-flux values, making them highly efficient for applications such as heat exchangers, radiators, thermal plates, and electronic cooling systems. Moderate-conductivity materials such as glass and ceramic exhibit predictable heat-transfer trends but at a slower rate. Their thermal behavior depends significantly on structural features such as crystallinity, porosity, and grain boundaries. Their performance emphasizes the importance of considering microstructural characteristics beyond conductivity alone.

Low-conductivity materials, including PVC, acrylic, rubber, and wood, clearly demonstrated insulating properties. Their minimal temperature rise at the unheated end and steep thermal gradients affirm that these materials resist heat flow, making them suitable for applications requiring thermal insulation or heat retention. Wood's porous natural structure and moisture-dependent conductivity reaffirm its unpredictable but generally low thermal-transfer efficiency, while rubber and PVC show stable but poor conduction due to their molecular composition. Concrete exhibited moderate heat-transfer efficiency, performing better than typical insulating materials but below metals and dense ceramics. This performance is consistent with its mineral composition and variable moisture content, highlighting the complexity of predicting thermal behavior in composite and porous materials. Correlation analysis revealed an exceptionally strong positive relationship between measured heat-transfer efficiency and known thermal-conductivity values. This alignment indicates that thermal conductivity serves as a highly reliable predictor in controlled environments. However, the presence of deviations—such as reduced transfer in rough-surfaced materials or increased transfer in moisture-bearing materials—underscores the importance of considering material heterogeneity and experimental conditions.

Overall, the study confirms that thermal conductivity is the primary determinant of heat-transfer efficiency but not the sole factor. Surface condition, porosity, microstructure, moisture, thickness, and contact resistance also play significant roles. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of real-world heat-transfer behavior and emphasize the importance of experimental assessment rather than relying solely on theoretical conductivity values. Practically, the study provides valuable insights for industries such as construction, electronics, automotive engineering, and materials design. High-conductivity materials remain ideal for heat removal and dissipation, while low-conductivity materials serve effectively as insulators. Materials with moderate performance can be adapted depending on structural and environmental requirements. This research establishes a foundation for future investigations into advanced materials such as composites, nanostructured conductors, and phase-change materials. Further studies may incorporate computational modeling, microstructural analysis, and temperature-dependent conductivity to expand the understanding of heat-transfer mechanisms in complex materials.

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