**TECHNICAL ARTICLE**



# **Prediction of Floor Failure Depth in Deep Coal Mines by Regression Analysis of the Multi‑factor Infuence Index**

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#### **Abstract**

A multivariate regression analysis model was developed to predict foor failure depth in deep mines using feld measured data from 39 coal mining sites in the eastern mining area of the north China coalfelds. A Brillouin optical time domain refectometry system was built with distributed optical fber sensors embedded in the foor of a coalface to measure the actual failure depth of the mine foor. The measured and predicted results were in good agreement. This study provides an efective scientifc basis for preventing and controlling foor water inrush in deep mines in the north China coalfeld.

**Keywords** Forecasting model · Hard rock coefficient · Thickness of aquiclude

# **Introduction**

The eastern mining area of the north China coalfeld has entered the deep mining stage, defned as exceeding 400 m below the surface. Deep seam mining is accompanied by complex conditions such as high geostress, high geotemperatures, and high karst water pressure. In recent years, the threat of Ordovician limestone karst water erupting from below the coal seam has become increasingly severe (Chen et al. [2018](#page-11-0); Hu et al. [2019a;](#page-11-1) Hu [2020](#page-11-2); Sun et al. [2016\)](#page-12-0).

If the failure depth of a mine foor can be predicted efectively before mining takes place and a water inrush can be intercepted in time, foor water damage can be efectively avoided. In the 1930s, former Soviet scholar B. A. Slisalif put forward a formula to analytically calculate a safe aqui-clude thickness for a coal seam floor (Liu [2014\)](#page-12-1). Yugoslavian scholar Kuscer [\(1991](#page-11-3)) revealed the dynamic changes in hydrogeology during a water inrush, providing an important basis for prevention and control of water inrush from mining floors. In 1964, Chinese scholars proposed the concept of

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a water inrush coefficient, significantly contributing to the early warning of foor water inrushes (Liu [2009](#page-12-2)). Li et al. ([1988](#page-12-3)) proposed the theory of the "down three zone." In the 1980s, the Xi'an Research Institute of the China Coal Research Institute proposed that the thickness of an efective floor aquiclude should not include the failure depth of the mine floor and revised the water inrush coefficient formula (Liu et al. [2018a](#page-12-4)). Wang ([1988\)](#page-12-5) deduced a calculation formula for the failure depth of mine foors using fracture mechanics. Ts-q and Ts-M methods (Qiao et al. [2009](#page-12-6)) were used to evaluate the risk of foor water inrush using the aquiclude thickness and water content of the foor aquifer (Sun et al. [2020](#page-12-7)).

In recent years, the mining depth of the eastern mining area has increased at a rate of 10–25 m per year, and the engineering geological conditions of deep mining have also undergone tremendous changes. Deep seam mining suffers from high crustal stress, high rock burst tendency, and high osmotic pressure. To effectively prevent and control water inrush from floors in deep mines, we focused our efforts on better predicting the failure depth of the mine floor. Using field measured data from 39 coal mining sites, we conducted multifactor regression modeling to forecast the floor failure depth in deep mines. A Brillouin optical time domain reflectometry system (BOTDRS) was built with distributed optical fiber sensors embedded in the floor of a coalface to measure the failure depth of the mining floor; the measured value was compared with the predicted value. This study provides

an effective scientific basis for improving prediction and control of floor water hazards in deep seam mining.

# **Study Area**

The eastern mining area of the north China coalfeld includes the Shandong mining area, the northern Jiangsu mining area, and the northern Anhui mining area (Fig. [1](#page-1-0)). Karst fissure



<span id="page-1-0"></span>**Fig. 1** Location of the research area

water in Permian, Carboniferous, and the Ordovician limestones all threaten the deep mines in this area. The mining of the lower coal group is severely threatened by inrush from the Ordovician limestone karst water. Ordovician limestone karst is dominated by dissolution fssures and cavities in which water is stored at high hydrostatic pressure.

Water movement in Ordovician limestone karst is largely controlled by bedding planes. Ordovician limestone is thick and pure in lithology; it is mainly composed of thick layered microcrystalline limestone with grey-yellow dolomitic limestone, lime dolomite, and thin mudstone with more stratifcation development (Li et al. [2019](#page-12-8)).

### **Water Inrush Mode of Floor Failure**

The key factors for prediction and control of the water inrush from the foors in the lower-coal-group is the source and flow path of the water inrush. If the effective aquiclude thickness between the foor of the lower coal group and the top of limestone aquifer remains larger than the safe aquiclude thickness (the water inrush coefficient was calculated as 0.06 MPa/m), water inrush from the floor of the lower coal group can be predicted and controlled. The mine foor water inrush type can be categorized into three modes based on the efective aquiclude thickness of the seam foor. The frst mode has the following conditions: (1) no fault is present; (2) the failure depth of the mine floor is relatively large; (3) the thickness of the efective aquiclude is less than is safe (Fig. [2](#page-2-0)). The second mode has the following conditions:  $(1)$  faults are present in the floor of coal seam;  $(2)$ the failure depth of the mine foor and faults form conduits for water inrush (Fig. [3](#page-3-0)). The third mode has the following conditions: (1) fractured zones are present in the coal seam floor; (2) the mining floor rock strata are collapsed; 3. The water-conducting cracks in the fractured zone extend into the stress release area behind the coal wall.

The water inflow mode changes from void flow to fissure flow and finally pipeline flow, leading to a delayed water inrush through the mine floor (Fig. [4](#page-4-0)). The three floor water



<span id="page-2-0"></span>**Fig. 2** Floor water inrush mode I in deep coal seam mining



<span id="page-3-0"></span>**Fig. 3** Floor water inrush mode II in deep coal seam mining

inrush modes are all directly related to floor failure depth; thus, the depth of foor failure in deep coal seam mining directly affects the risk of floor water inrush. In this study, the foor failure depth of deep seam mining in the eastern mining area of the north China coalfelds was evaluated.

# **Predicting Floor Failure Depth in Deep Mines**

#### **Analysis of Infuencing Factors for Floor Rock Failure**

According to the engineering geology and hydrogeology theory of coal mining and production practices in the eastern mining area of north China's coalfelds, there are fve factors that directly affect the floor failure depth of deep seam mining under normal conditions: coal seam depth (H), coal seam dip angle  $(\alpha)$ , mining thickness  $(M)$ , coalface width (L), and the proportional coefficient of hard rock in the coal seam floor (β) (Chao et al. [2015](#page-11-4); Hu et al. [2019d\)](#page-11-5). Each factor is discussed in turn:

- 1. *Coal seam depth* According to the basic theory of coal geological engineering and rock mechanics, the size and direction of in-situ stress in rock strata near a deep excavation signifcantly afect the extent of damage to the surrounding rock (Chao et al. [2015](#page-11-4); Jaeger and Cook [1979](#page-11-6)). The original rock stress of the surrounding rock in deep underground excavations increases with depth. Therefore, the depth of the coal seam is directly proportional to the depth of foor failure (Zhang et al. [2013](#page-12-9)).
- 2. *Coal seam dip angle* According to mechanical analysis of an inclined coal seam, the larger the dip angle of the coal seam, the larger the slip force (gravity component) of the roof during mining. The coal wall is afected by the gravity sliding force of the overlying strata. The concentrated stress of the coal wall increases, increasing the failure depth of the mine floor (Liu et al. [2018b\)](#page-12-10).
- 3. *Coal seam mining thickness* An increase in mining coal seam thickness reduces the speed of mining, prolongs the stress release of foor rock in the goaf, allows the floor of goaf to fully expand, and increases the floor fail-



<span id="page-4-0"></span>**Fig. 4** Floor water inrush mode III in deep coal seam mining

ure depth. At the same time, according to the measured data, the floor failure depth is directly proportional to the mining thickness (Zhu et al. [2013](#page-12-11)).

- 4. *Coalface width* The failure depth of the mining foor is also closely related to the width of mining face. An increase in the inclined length of the mining face increases the area of roof control, which changes the pressure in the surrounding rock, thus afecting the failure depth (Zhang [2005](#page-12-12)).
- 5. *Hard rock coefficient of the mine floor* This refers to the failure mechanism of the foor in coal mining; the stress balance of the original rock is broken due to the excavation of the underground void. Using the cyclic process of mining technology in the coalface, the stresses in the surrounding rock is rebalanced. The breakage of floor rock is directly related to the surrounding rock pressure and ultimately the tensile strength of the foor rock. Therefore, a new index, the hard rock lithology ratio coefficient  $(\beta)$ , is proposed. The proportional coefficient of a coal seam foor is calculated:

$$
\beta = \frac{\sum h_n}{H/(30\tilde{3}5)}
$$

where  $\sum h_n$  is the cumulative thickness of hard rock strata within the estimated failure depth of the mine floor. The partial correlation coefficient of coal seam depth to mine floor failure depth is 0.70 (Table [1\)](#page-5-0), indicating a close relationship between the two factors according to a partial correlation analysis of the mine foor failure depth. Therefore, according to the statistical analysis of measured data, the failure depth of the mine floor is generally  $\approx 1/35-1/30$  of the coal seam depth. So, the failure depth of deep coal seam mining floor is mainly related to these fve factors.

#### **Measured Floor Failure Zone Data**

The existing empirical formula for foor failure depth does not satisfy the safety needs of deep seam mining (Hu et al. [2019a,](#page-11-1) [b,](#page-11-7) [c](#page-11-8)). In this study, information from 39 points were collected for the foor failure depth of north China mines <span id="page-5-0"></span>**Table 1** Correlation analysis of various factors afecting the failure depth of the mine foor



\*\*Signifcant correlation at 0.01 level (bilateral)

with depths > 400 m. Comprehensive analysis of floor failure depth was conducted based on measurements of various infuencing factors.

### **Multivariate Regression Analysis of the Mine Floor Failure Depth**

Multivariate regression analysis is a statistical analysis method where one variable is taken as a dependent variable and many other variables are taken as independent variables. This method establishes a quantitative relationship between linear or nonlinear mathematical models among multiple variables using sample data. A multivariate regression analysis method was developed to establish a forecasting model by analyzing the correlation between two or more independent variables and one dependent variable. When there is a linear relationship between independent and dependent variables, multiple linear regression analysis can be used. However, when many independent and dependent variables have a nonlinear relationship, the nonlinear model can be converted into a linear model to solve practical problems (Chung et al. [1995\)](#page-11-9). The basic models of multivariate linear regression analysis are:

$$
y = \phi_0 + \phi_1 x_1 + \phi_2 x_2 + \dots + \phi_n x_n \tag{1}
$$

The regression coefficients are obtained using the least square method:

$$
D = \sum (y_i - \widehat{y}_i) = \sum (y_i - \widehat{\phi}_0 - \widehat{\phi}_1 x_1 - \widehat{\phi}_2 x_2 - \dots - \widehat{\phi}_n x_n)^2 = \min. \tag{2}
$$

D calculates the partial derivatives for  $\hat{\phi}_0$ ,  $\hat{\phi}_1$ ,  $\hat{\phi}_2$ , …  $\hat{\phi}_n$ , respectively, making it equal to 0:

$$
\begin{cases}\n\frac{\partial D}{\partial \widehat{\phi}_0} = \sum \left( y_i - \widehat{\phi}_0 - \widehat{\phi}_1 x_1 - \widehat{\phi}_2 x_2 - \dots - \widehat{\phi}_n x_n \right) (-1) = 0, \\
\frac{\partial D}{\partial \widehat{\phi}_1} = \sum \left( y_i - \widehat{\phi}_0 - \widehat{\phi}_1 x_1 - \widehat{\phi}_2 x_2 - \dots - \widehat{\phi}_n x_n \right) (-x_1) = 0, \\
\vdots \\
\frac{\partial D}{\partial \widehat{\phi}_n} = \sum \left( y_i - \widehat{\phi}_0 - \widehat{\phi}_1 x_1 - \widehat{\phi}_2 x_2 - \dots - \widehat{\phi}_n x_n \right) (-x_n) = 0.\n\end{cases}
$$
\n(3)

The independent and dependent variables are known data; the estimated values  $\hat{\phi}_0$ ,  $\hat{\phi}_1$ ,  $\hat{\phi}_2$ , ...  $\hat{\phi}_n$  of the parameters can be obtained by solving Eq. ([3\)](#page-5-1). The relationship between independent and dependent variables in regression equation can be established using Eq. ([4\)](#page-5-2):

<span id="page-5-2"></span>
$$
R^{2}(y, 1, 2, ..., n) = \frac{\sum (\hat{y}_{i} - \bar{y})^{2}}{\sum (y_{i} - \bar{y})^{2}}
$$
(4)

The closer that  $\mathbb{R}^2$  approaches 1, the more accurate the regression equation. In this study, SPSS software was used to achieve the regression analysis and predict various factors for the foor failure depth in deep coal seam mining. At the same time, the efects of coal seam depth, coal seam dip angle, mining thickness, coalface width, and hard rock coefficient of coal seam floor on the floor failure depth were evaluated.

A partial correlation analysis of various factors on the failure depth of deep mining floor was carried out using SPSS software, as shown in Table [1](#page-5-0). To predict the accuracy of the multivariate regression equation, four factors with a larger Pearson correlation coefficient were selected for multivariate analysis to perform stepwise ftting analysis and prediction. The prediction equations were compared and analyzed, and the optimum ftting degree was selected.

#### **Regression Analysis of Floor Failure Depth Considering L and β**

A polynomial relationship between *L and β* and the foor failure depth was obtained by SPSS analysis and a threedimensional relationship was obtained by ftting the data in Table [2](#page-6-0) (Fig. [5](#page-7-0)). The two-factor fitting of floor failure model I is shown in Eq. [5](#page-5-3).

<span id="page-5-3"></span>
$$
h_1 = 1.237E - 5L^2 + 0.005L + 70.361\beta^2 - 59.665\beta + 18.883
$$
\n<sup>(5)</sup>

1. Prediction model II of foor failure depth in deep coal mining was obtained by considering three factors: the coal seam depth, coalface width, and hard rock coefficient of the mine floor. The fitting equation is:

$$
h_2 = 0.014H + 0.789L^{0.436} + 0.056e^{6.282\beta}
$$
 (6)

<span id="page-5-1"></span>2. Prediction model III was obtained by considering the same three factors along with the coal seam dip angle. The ftting equation is:

$$
h_3 = 0.014H + 0.09\alpha + 0.453L^{0.516} + 0.068e^{6.062\beta} \tag{7}
$$

<span id="page-6-0"></span>

Zhang ([2016\)](#page-12-13), Zhang and Chang [\(2018](#page-12-14))

where  $h_x$  is the forecasted failure depth of mining floor; H is the depth of coal seam;  $\alpha$  is the coal seam dip angle; L is the width of coalface;  $\beta$  is the hard rock coefficient of coal seam floor.



<span id="page-7-0"></span>**Fig. 5** Fitting graph of two independent variables and one dependent variable

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Accuracy of Mine Floor Failure Depth Forecasts by Contrastive Analysis**

Based on the three models for forecasting the foor failure depth obtained in this study, the empirical formulas for the eastern mining area of North China-type coalfelds were compared and analyzed (Table [3\)](#page-8-0). An empirical prediction of foor failure depth is shown in Eq.  $(8)$  $(8)$  (Kang and Liu [2011](#page-11-10)):

<span id="page-7-1"></span>h =  $0.0085H + 0.1665\alpha + 0.1079L - 4.3579$ 

As shown in Table [3,](#page-8-0) the traditional empirical formula is no longer applicable to predicting foor failure depth in deep mines. According to the relative error data of multifactor regression, the predictive error of foor failure depth in deep mines under normal conditions was the least when four factors were considered: the coal seam depth and dip angle, the width of the coalface, and the hard rock coefficient of the mine floor. Therefore, multifactor regression analysis prediction model III provides the best solution.

### **Field Test Results**

The foor failure depth of the Yangliu coal mine 10-H mining face in the eastern mining area of the north China coalfeld was

predicted using multivariate regression prediction model III. The predicted results were verifed by the BOTDRS-measured floor failure depth.

#### **Predicted Floor Failure Depth**

The Yangliu coal mine 107 mining area 10-H coalface has the following characteristic: surface elevation  $+25$  m, coalface elevation −451.2 m, coalface length 1119.4 m, coalface width 166.2 m, coal seam dip angle 7°, and coal seam thickness 3.2 m. According to experience of mining the no. 10 coal in the Huaibei mining area, the failure depth of the mine floor is between 1/35–1/30 of the coal seam depth under normal conditions (the floor does not contain faults). Therefore, when calculating the hard rock ratio coefficient  $(\beta)$ , the rock strata within 20 m of the coal seam foor is included. As shown in Fig.  $6, \beta = 18.4/20 = 0.92$ .

The predicted foor failure depth of the 10-H coalface using model III was calculated by:

$$
h_3 = 0.014H + 0.09\alpha + 0.453L^{0.516} + 0.068e^{6.062\beta} \approx 17.35 \text{ m}
$$



<span id="page-8-0"></span>Table 3 Error data between forecasted and measured failure depth of the mine floor **Table 3** Error data between forecasted and measured failure depth of the mine foor

<b>System</b>	legend	Columnar Thickness (m)	Lithology
		6.2	<b>Fine sandstone</b>
Permian		3.2	NO.10 coal seam
		6.8	<b>Mudstone</b>
		25.5	<b>Fine sandstone</b>
		6.2	<b>Mudstone</b>
		3.5	<b>Fine sandstone</b>
		0.7	<b>Mudstone</b>
		9.6	<b>Fine sandstone</b>
<b>Carboniferous</b>		16	<b>Mudstone</b>
		1.4	<b>Limestone</b>
		3.5	<b>Mudstone</b>

<span id="page-9-0"></span>**Fig. 6** Stratigraphy column of the 10-H mining face in research area

### **Measuring the Failure Depth of the Mine Floor by Distributed Optical Fiber**

Optical fber sensors were embedded in the foor of a coal mining face in the study area, and a BOTDRS was established by connecting an optical fber strain distribution tester. The Brillouin scattered light was generated in the opposite direction of the incident light by the interaction between the light injected into the fber and the crystal structure of medium in the conventional G. 652 single-mode fber at 1550 nm detection wavelength. The Brillouin scattered light fuctuated regularly when the strain or temperature of the propagating medium changed (Fig. [7](#page-10-0)), showing that the Brillouin frequency shift of optical fbers is linearly related to the strain (Gu et al. [2018](#page-11-11)).

A gas pumping-exhaust tunnel is present at a depth of 40 m under the no. 10 coal seam foor. A borehole with a diameter of 91 mm was constructed from the roof of the gas pumping-exhaust tunnel at a 45° angle to the foor of coalface. Distributed optical fber sensors were embedded before the mining. According to the properties of rock strata through which the borehole passes, layered grouting was carried out to achieve a synchronous strain among the sen-sors, fillers, and the rock surrounding the drill holes (Fig. [8\)](#page-10-1) (Liu et al. [2018b](#page-12-10)).

During the mining of the 10-H mine face, the strain of the floor rock strata was monitored every 24 h. The breaking critical values (feld sampling, laboratory test data) of the limit strain of rock strata at the corresponding locations were compared using the strain data of each 0.05 m, as measured by the distributed sensing optical fbers. If the monitoring strain exceeds the limiting value of rock strain breakage, it can be concluded that the rock stratum is breaking or broken.

The BOTDRS results are shown in Fig. [9](#page-11-12). The failure depth of the foor near the coal wall reached a maximum of 16.67 m (b line). Line a shows the initial breaking position of the mine foor. Line c shows the maximum strain development of the mine foor strata. After line c, the mine foor was affected by roof collapse and the strain of floor rock gradually decreased, then recovered.

#### **Contrastive Analysis of Predicted and Measured Values**

The relative error between the predicted and measured values of multivariate regression prediction model III was 4%, indicating that the predicted result of model III was consistent with the actual situation and provides a scientifc basis for the prediction and control of foor water hazard in deep mining for this mine (Table [4](#page-11-13)).

# **Conclusion**

The failure depth of the coal seam floor is an important index of assessing the risk of mine foor water hazards. This study improved the accuracy of foor water hazard risk assessment and provides an important reference value for early warning of a water hazard for deep mines.

1. The hard rock coefficient of the mine floor is a new index that affects the failure depth of deep mining floor. It refects the combined structure of both the soft and hard rock strata of the mining foor. The results show that this hard rock coefficient is closely related to the failure depth of the mine floor.

<span id="page-10-0"></span>



<span id="page-10-1"></span>

- 2. Based on a case study of 39 points from the north China coalfields and regression analysis of a combination model of diferent independent and dependent variables, three nonlinear prediction models were obtained for the failure depth of the coal seam floor in a deep mine.
- 3. Three prediction models and empirical prediction formulas for foor failure depth in deep mining were compared. The results showed a small relative error between model III predicted values and the measured values.





<span id="page-11-12"></span>**Fig. 9** Monitoring results of BOTDRS in the foor of the 10-H coalface in the study area

<span id="page-11-13"></span>



4. Using model III to predict the foor failure depth of the 10-H coalface in the Yangliu coal mine, the accuracy of the predictions was relatively high. This study provides a scientifc basis for the prediction and control of foor water hazards in deep mines in the eastern mining area of north China.

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